



NAVY NEWS

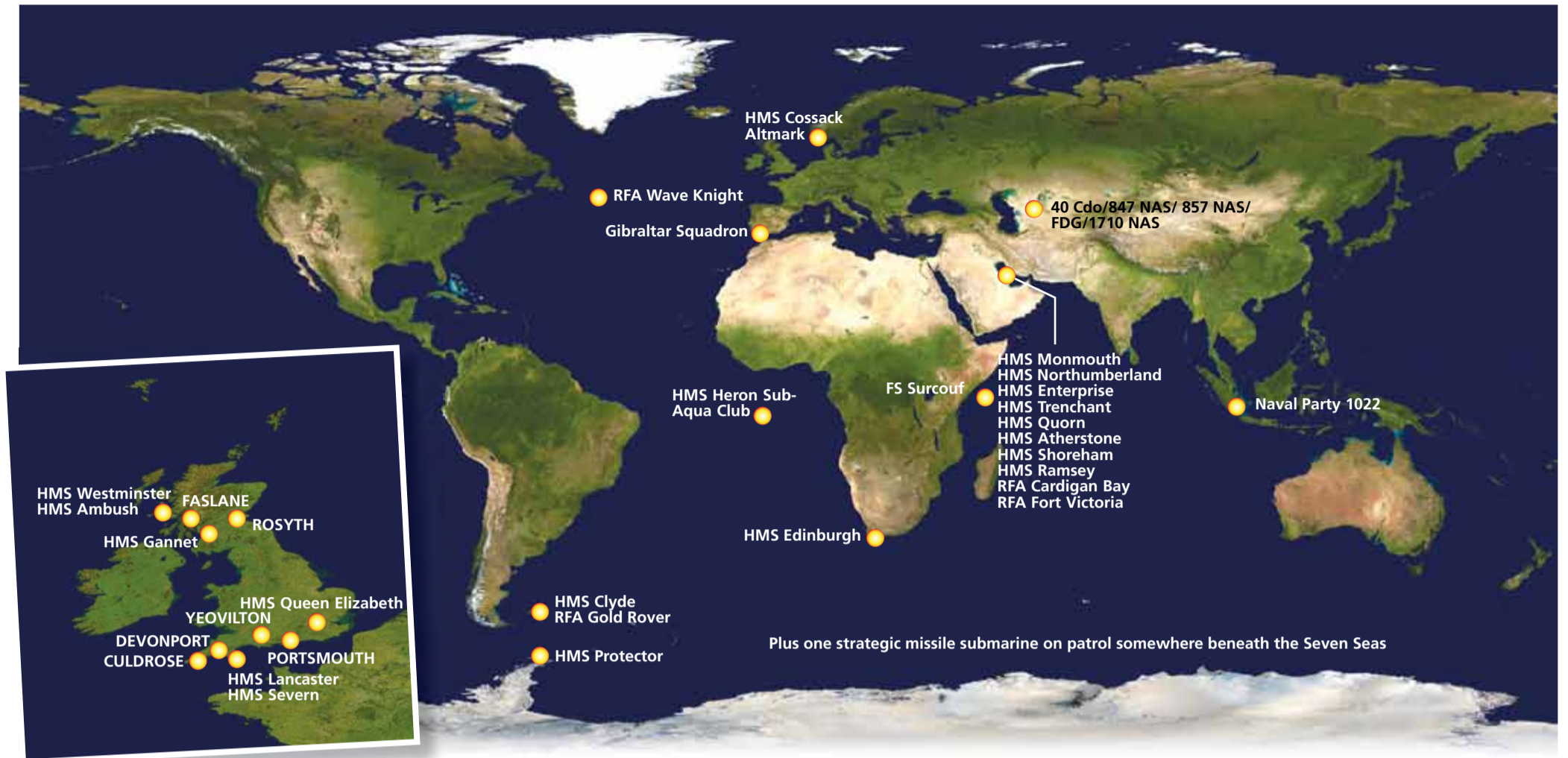
FEBRUARY 2013



FIRE FOR EFFECT

Flares fired by her Lynx 'Black Knight' provide the stunning backdrop to HMS Monmouth as she patrols the Gulf. The Devonport frigate has been honing her skills to the max as 2013 begins. See pages 22-33. Picture: LA(Phot) Will Haigh, HMS Monmouth

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JANUARY is a month for reflection on the year past and anticipation of the year to come.

February is a month for purging and purification. Getting rid of pirates would be a good place to start. Which is exactly what **217 Flight/815 NAS** did by stopping a pirate action group with the French frigate **Surcouf** (see right).

It's been a dramatic few weeks in the life of Britain's newest nuclear submarine **HMS Ambush**. The hunter-killer has been handed over to the MOD – which means she now flies the White Ensign – and has completed diving and speed trials, where she proved a particularly challenging foil for frigate **HMS Westminster** (see opposite).

HMS Queen Elizabeth sailed up the Thames to Parliament to give our political leaders an idea of the scale of Britain's biggest warship – courtesy of a little help from graphic designers (see page 8). The future carrier was also blessed by a visit from Oscar-winner Sir Ben Kingsley, who paid a surprise visit to Rosyth where she's being completed (see page 6).

A combined effort by sailors from **HMS Severn** and **HMS Lancaster** prevented a holed tug from sinking off Torbay, while just three days later **HMS St Albans** towed a fishing boat to safety off Rame Head (see page 5); and the fliers of **HMS Gannet** saved the life of a hypothermic climber near Glen Coe (see pages 14-15).

That last rescue occurred in the wake of the launch of **Search and Rescue 60**, celebrating six decades of life-saving helicopter missions by the Fleet Air Arm (see page 9).

It's not just the weather in the UK which has demanded the RN to come to the aid of others. Ice patrol ship **HMS Protector** punched her way through the Antarctic floes to assist the cruise liner **Fram** which was at risk of becoming trapped (see pages 14-15).

Right, that's quite enough of the cold. We want cheering up with some sun.

HMS Northumberland spruced up a community centre in Tanzania during a break from counter-piracy duties (see page 21).

The Naval Air Command Sub-Aqua Club from **HMS Heron** went diving on wrecks in the warm, azure waters off Ascension (see page 19)...

...and the divers of **HMS Atherstone** plunged into the warm, not-so-azure waters of the Gulf as they began 2013 with a bang, disposing of lots of old plastic explosive (see page 10).

The Bahrain-based minehunter also linked up with frigate **HMS Monmouth** for some mutually-beneficial training; it's been a hectic month for the Black Duke – escorting tankers, practising pirate take-downs, avoiding incoming missiles, plenty of gunnery funnery, etc etc ad infinitum (see the centre pages).

The remainder of the Gulf minehunting force – HM Ships **Shoreham**, **Ramsey**, **Quorn** and **RFA Cardigan Bay** – have celebrated six years of the RN's presence in the region (see page 10).

Back from the Gulf is **HMS Diamond**, who completed her maiden deployment right at the end of 2012, as did **HMS Blyth** (coming home from the Med on NATO duties) and **Sutherland** (back from the Indian Ocean) – see page 4.

Meanwhile, heading off on deployment as the year opened: tanker **RFA Wave Knight** (to the Caribbean – see page 5) and **847 NAS** (to Afghanistan – see page 6). For the latter, this is the final time they'll fly their trusty Lynx. When they return, they'll convert to the new Wildcat.

Also deployed for the final time is **HMS Edinburgh**; Britain's last 42 has been in South Africa soaking up the austral summer before resuming Atlantic Patrol South duties (see page 13).

And finally... Older readers might remember an insolent ventriloquist's dummy from **HMS Ark Royal IV** and the *Sailor* documentary in the 1970s. Well, Little Wilf is back... and promises to be just as cheeky when he sails with new destroyer **HMS Daring** later this year (see page 16).

Picture: Marine Nationale



THIS is the moment Royal Navy fliers helped the French snare a dozen suspected pirates off the Somali coast.

A Lynx from 815 Naval Air Squadron hovers overhead as a boarding team from the French frigate **FS Surcouf** closes in on a 'pirate action group' off the Somali coast.

The capture marked the end of a dramatic 24-hour chase through the Indian Ocean after the **Surcouf** – which is the mother ship for 217 Flight in a unique Anglo-French deployment – and the USS **Halyburton** responded to an SOS from the merchantman **MSC Jasmine** after she came under attack from pirates armed with rocket-propelled grenades around 260 miles off Somalia.

The crew of the container ship, bound for Kenya, retreated to an impregnable citadel aboard their 31,000-ton vessel, while the **Halyburton** sent her helicopter aloft to scour the sea for the attackers.

It found the suspect whaler – which by then was towing another vessel with several men aboard.

Meanwhile the **Surcouf** was making best speed to the scene – she was 200 nautical miles away from the location of the attack when the merchantman sent out her distress call.

With the sun rising over the

Indian Ocean on Sunday morning, *le chef du détachement aéro* (flight commander) Lt Mike Curd and pilot Lt Chris Southworth lifted off the deck of the **Surcouf** and went in search of the suspect vessels in their Lynx, while the frigate's boarding party headed out in fast boats.

The helicopter, normally based at **RNAS Yeovilton** in Somerset, quickly located one boat with two men in it – and ordered it to stop.

The suspects did so, cutting their engine and putting their hands behind their heads. When the **Surcouf** boarding team subsequently searched the craft, they found no weapons, only a dozen flasks and a couple of cans filled with petrol.

With the suspects detained, the **Surcouf** and **Lynx** went in search of – and again quickly located – the second vessel.

Once again the **Lynx** ordered the boat to stop... and once again the boat, this time with ten men aboard, obliged.

"Our **Lynx** actually performed the 'stop' and support to boarding of both the suspect vessels and provided airborne support to the subsequent boarding operations," explained Lt Curd.

"It was a long and tiring day that began before dawn, but by the end of it we were proud of a job well done; the procedures

and routines we'd practised so many times worked extremely efficiently and by nightfall we knew we had played a large part in the successful apprehension of a dozen suspected pirates."

All 12 men arrested – all Somalis – were subsequently transferred to the **Surcouf** while the team aboard the ship gather evidence for possible future legal proceedings.

It was the first *saisie* (bust) of the winter for the 815 **Lynx-Surcouf** combination; the double act are attached to the European Naval Force on Operation **Atalanta** until next month, dividing their time between hunting down pirate action groups and safeguarding aid shipments to Somali.

In the six days before Christmas the frigate safely shepherded a shipment of cereal on the **MV Rockaway Bell** from **Salalah** in Oman to **Mombasa** in Kenya.

The **Surcouf's Lynx** was airborne throughout the 1,700-mile escort mission, conducting daily surveillance missions of the vast ocean.

Thanks to such escort duties and the combined efforts by international naval forces prowling the Indian Ocean these past 12 months ensured only five ships were hijacked in 2012 – and none have been seized by pirates since last May.

Sir George to succeed Sir Mark

FOLLOWING a 43-year career with the Royal Navy, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope is to stand down as the head of the Service in April.

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond has announced that Admiral Sir George Zambellas will succeed Sir Mark as the Chief of the Naval Staff.

Sir Mark has been head of the Senior Service since July 2009. In a career which began in 1970, the submariner commanded two boats – **Orpheus** and **Splendid** – then frigate **HMS London** and carrier **HMS Illustrious**. After two years as Commander-in-Chief Fleet, he succeeded Admiral Sir Jonathon Band as First Sea Lord in July 2009.

Sir George, who joined the Royal Navy in 1980, is a former helicopter pilot who's commanded three ships – minehunter **Cattistock**, and frigates **Chatham** and **Argyll** – and was in charge of the UK's amphibious forces helping to introduce **HMS Albion** and **Bulwark** unto service. He and his staff supported Operation **Highbrow**, the evacuation of civilians from the Lebanon, in July 2006.

Most recently he was Fleet Commander – the second most senior post in the RN – until November 2011 and is currently Commander Allied Maritime Command (Northwood) for NATO.

He takes over from Sir Mark at a time when there are numerous changes in post in the upper echelons of the MOD as announced by Mr Hammond.

Air Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford will take over as the head of the RAF from Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton in July; Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach will become Vice Chief of the Defence Staff in May 2013; and an announcement on the new Chief of the Defence Staff to take over from General Sir David Richards will be made next month.



Catch me if you can...

SILHOUETTED against the Scottish isles by the fiery winter sky as she rides a crimson tide, the newest and most advanced submarine in Britain's arsenal – HMS Ambush – is an almost serene sight.

Do not be fooled by appearances. The second of Britain's Astute-class submarines is a truly formidable opponent for those who might hunt her.

Just ask HMS Westminster – the RN's No.1 submarine hunters – who found the £1bn boat to be as elusive a foil as she's ever likely to face.

The 'capital ship' is the Fleet's lead anti-submarine warfare frigate, purpose-built to hunt down – and destroy – underwater threats.

She's commanded by the Captain Anti-Submarine Warfare, Capt Hugh Beard, and is fitted with Sonar 2087 which is the best in the business.

Westminster joined Ambush for the latest stage of the boat's trials; having left builders BAE in Barrow last autumn, the boat is at the beginning of the long road to operational service.

Westminster was on hand to provide support, test her ops room team in tracking an A-boat, and test her stokers

to see whether they could keep pace with Ambush.

Among the trials, by far the most fun for hunter and hunted were the speed runs both on the surface – where, unlike in days of yore, submarines are slower – and whilst dived.

So, game on. While Ambush was being thrown around, Westminster was doing her utmost to track her – tricky on the surface because of Ambush's speed, much trickier below because of her innate stealthiness.

With her gas turbines at full power, Westminster gave chase – and for good measure sent her Lynx Mk8, 'Rosie', from 815 Naval Air Squadron, into the air to keep pace with Ambush.

"Ambush proved to be a truly invisible adversary and a swift one at that," said Lt Cdr 'Mickey' Rooney, Westminster's weapon engineer officer.

"Under the waves Ambush came into her own. With an impressive turn of speed and her signature proving to be whisper-quiet, she is living up to the investment made in this next generation of technology."

Lt Cdr 'Sunny' Lister, from the staff of Flag Officer Sea Training, who was aboard Westminster to observe the trials, added: "The silhouette of Ambush bow-on is an impressive sight – not too

dissimilar from the 'bombers' but much smaller. She looks awesome – and I am glad she is on our side."

Whilst on the surface, the two warships practised a towing exercise – not an especially common occurrence between ship and submarine – before the tow rope was hauled back in by a good 20 exhausted sailors.

How heavy is the tow rope? As Westminster's buffer, PO(Sea) 'Smudge' Smith, griped, "a lot heavier than it looks, shipmate."

Following the three days of trials, Westminster turned for home leaving Ambush somewhere below, running silent and deep.

It's been a momentous few weeks in the life of the Mighty Bush.

The White Ensign now billows over the boat (when she's on the surface, that is) after she was officially handed over to the MOD following those successful trials.

With flurries of snow sweeping across Gare Loch, AB George Sherwin – fittingly wearing the trademark woollen white pullover of the Silent Service – raised the White Ensign for the first time on his boat.

Saluting as the Royal Navy's standard was hoisted, Ambush's Commanding Officer Cdr Peter Green said: "It is a proud day for all of us. To see the boat flying the flag of the Royal Navy is fantastic and shows just how far we

have come in such a short space of time."

As for the man performing the honours, sonar specialist George said: "It was fantastic to see her become part of the Fleet. We've all worked really hard to get to this point and to be part of the handover has been memorable."

The handover followed a signing ceremony onboard the hunter-killer as Tony Wilcox, head of acceptance for BAE Systems, joined Cdr Green in signing the 'certificate of acceptance'.

It means Ambush, which was launched at Barrow at the end of 2010 and arrived on the Clyde in September, had officially completed the first of two phases of contractor sea trials.

As well as the formal transfer to the MOD, Ambush – officially she doesn't earn the prefix HMS until she's commissioned later this year – hosted her sponsor, Lady Soar.

It's the first time she's visited the boat in her new home on the Clyde, and the ship's company were keen to appraise her of progress.

As well as a presentational video recalling the highlights of the trials around Scotland – which saw Ambush link up at sea with her older sister Astute for the first time – special

demonstrations of some of the submarine's systems were laid on, including the 'optronics' which have replaced traditional periscopes on this new class of boats.

"The detail on the screen is amazing. It's a clear demonstration of the technology that sets Ambush apart from previous submarines," said Lady Soar, whose husband Admiral Sir Trevor was in charge of diesel boat HMS Ocelot and nuclear-powered hunter-killer HMS Talent.

On completion of the tour Lady Soar was hosted for lunch by the senior rates' mess before undertaking a tour of the engine and manoeuvring rooms.

"The boat looks remarkable and the ship's company are in excellent spirits. I'm exceptionally proud to be the sponsor of a boat that has achieved so much in such a short space of time," Ambush's sponsor added.

AB Adam Scott, a tactical systems specialist, said: "It's great to have a sponsor who is so interested in how we're doing. It's an opportunity to show off the boat – and brag a little about all we've done."

Ambush is now undergoing a maintenance period before returning to sea in the spring to resume trials and training.



● Rosie turns the other cheek... Ambush glides past Westminster, whose Lynx Mk8 is readied for launch and (right) Capt Hugh Beard, Westminster's CO, follows Ambush as the sun goes down while (below right) the frigate's sea boat returns from a short trip to the hunter-killer



Come (home) rain or shine

YOU don't need Mexicans for a Mexican Wave. Or Mexican temperatures. Or even a big sporting occasion.

No, a drab, damp wintry Saturday by the Hamoaze is just as good – especially if you need to keep warm while waiting for **HMS Sutherland** to turn up (pictured below).

The Fighting Clan was the first of three RN vessels arriving home in a seven-day period leading up to Christmas – and, yes, that seems a long time ago indeed now.

(Navy News' absurdly-early festive deadline prevented these homecomings featuring in our January edition – just in case you were wondering.)

The wind and rain was something of a shock to the system for Sutherland's 200 sailors and Royal Marines, who'd been used to temperatures well over 30°C on anti-piracy and terrorism duties in the Indian Ocean.

We deliberately didn't write 'enjoying temperatures well over 30°C' – for carrying out boarding operations in such heat is physically and mentally demanding...

...and not just for the boarders. Temperatures in Sutherland's Merlin 'Warlock', which provided overhead cover on every boarding mission as well as performing a myriad of other duties, topped 40°C, while the helicopter's maintainers toiled in heat of 50°C at times – and 90 per cent humidity – to ensure the aircraft was always ready for sorties.

So wind, rain and 6°C in Plymouth were probably welcome – but not as welcome as the sight of 400 loved ones waiting on the blustery jetty.

"To come home just in time for Christmas after a really successful deployment was a magical time," said Sutherland's Commanding Officer Cdr Al Wilson.

"I am hugely proud of what my team achieved over the six months, whilst remaining cheerful and utterly professional throughout."

He and his ship departed Devonport on a grey and cool summer's day back in July to take the Royal Navy's enduring fight to pirates, drug-runners, smugglers, terrorists and anyone else who might use the sea lanes of the Indian Ocean for criminal purposes.

The mission ranged from the Gulf to the shores of Tanzania and, beyond the broad maritime security task, saw exercises with regional navies and other vessels attached to the Combined Maritime Forces.

There was time ashore in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, where the ship's company helped to revamp an orphanage, in Dubai, where sailors were invited to watch the grand prix down the road in Abu Dhabi, and on the way back to Blighty, some of the crew made the pilgrimage to the

ancient city of Petra, carved out of the Jordanian rock.

AB(CIS) Peter Hodgkin said: "Sutherland's my first ship and with this being my first deployment – and first time away from the UK – I was nervous, but excited."

"There have been some tough times, but overall I have really enjoyed it, especially the team spirit of the ship and all the good work that we have achieved on operations."

Sutherland's Devonport-based sister HMS Northumberland is continuing where the Fighting Clan left off (see page 21).

IF THE Fighting Clansmen and women were damp, the ship's company of **HMS Blyth** were drenched, nay, drowned (see the second and third pictures, left).

Loved ones waited in appalling conditions by the shore of Gare Loch as the minehunter completed her duties leading a NATO force around the central and eastern Mediterranean in the second half of 2012.

AB Santa joined shipmates – most wearing Father Christmas hats – on the upper decks and while a piper provided the appropriate skirl from the forecabin of the Sandown-class ship, the Band of HM Royal Marines Scotland provided the musical accompaniment shoreside as families waited for the 37-strong ship's company to arrive.

"It is fantastic to be reunited with our loved-ones in time for Christmas," said Lt Cdr Davey. "The entire crew have been looking forward to spending the festive season at home and taking a well-deserved break."

Blyth served as the command ship for NATO's Standing Mine Counter-Measures Group 2, a permanent force whose make-up changes depending on which navies provide vessels; in this instance, it was the UK, Turkey, Germany and Italy.

The challenging deployment saw the small ships operate in all parts of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, conducting numerous exercises in mine hunting, surveillance, maritime security operations, and generally providing a NATO force at high-readiness to respond to global events.

Arriving in the region at the end of July, Blyth passed through the Bosphorus and into the Black Sea to work with the forces of Romania and Bulgaria, before taking her place in the task group.

The ships were soon involved in Exercise Poseidon, where they conducted mine hunting serials and, at the same time, came under simulated attack from fast-attack craft, helicopters and Romanian MiG 21 jets.

Blyth bid a fond farewell to her NATO task group colleagues at the beginning of December after brief

stops in the Turkish ports of Mersin and Aksaz, beginning the 3,000-mile journey home.

A Sea King from HMS Gannet – Britain's busiest military Search and Rescue unit – showed its appreciation overhead, while Faslane-based tugs squirted their fire hoses to show their gratitude for Blyth's deeds although their blasts of water rather merged with the Faslane monsoon.

"It is a testament to my team's efforts that we have taken the challenges in our stride and performed well throughout the mission," said Lt Cdr Davey.

"It was with some sadness that we said goodbye to our multi-national colleagues. What this deployment showed was how the Royal Navy helps promote stable and co-operative relationships with friendly and neutral nations around the world. By working and training together we help bring down barriers and promote common understanding."

CONTRAST the foul weather the minehunter endured with the unseasonably fine winter's morn on the Solent 24 hours later as **HMS Diamond's** inaugural deployment came to an end with a massive turnout – and a bit of a surprise for 21-year-old Emma Davies from Weymouth.

She was on the receiving end of a proposal of marriage from AET George Halsall, who's spent the past six months maintaining Diamond's Lynx. And you'll be delighted to know she said 'yes' (see the photograph bottom left).

Many of George's colleagues in 208 Flight disembarked the previous day, as Diamond made her way up the Channel, and flew into their home: 815 Naval Air Squadron based at RNAS Yeovilton.

The flight comprised two aircrew, eight maintainers, a controller and two Royal Marines commandos to support their green and dark blue comrades in Diamond's sea boats during board and search operations.

"To keep the helicopter serviceable in the Gulf made this my toughest deployment yet," said LAET Gav Daniels from Weymouth.

"Working with the US Navy was the highlight – especially seeing the jets launch from USS Enterprise, the star of *Top Gun*."

Flight Commander Lt Tim Elliott added: "We had an extremely busy deployment and I cannot thank my team enough for all their hard work."

"During our time in the Middle East we flew well over 100 sorties, ranging from carrying out air intercepts to casualty evacuations and sorties to maintain regional stability."

"My Flight worked in some extremely challenging conditions with temperatures continually exceeding

45°C, so we were looking forward to some proper British weather. After the heat of the Middle East what we all wanted was some rain!"

Which is exactly what they got flying into their Somerset base...

Portsmouth for Diamond's entry was as sunny and dry as Yeovilton was wet (see the fourth photograph down on the left).

The last time the third of Britain's six Type 45 destroyers saw home, the ship and the nation were still basking in Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

Six months on and the 'jewel in the RN crown' had clocked up more than 31,000 miles on security and counter-piracy patrols in the Indian Ocean, Gulf of Oman and Gulf.

The ship worked with the FS Charles de Gaulle carrier group in the Mediterranean on the way out and three United States Carrier Strike Groups in the Middle East, including the escort of the US carriers through the Strait of Hormuz.

Diamond's fighter controllers exercised with the US Navy's F18 Hornets and controlled F22 Raptor and F15 Strike Eagle aircraft from the United States Air Force.

Diamond also exercised with the navies of Australia, Canada, France, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates.

While carrying out the counter-piracy part of her mission, the ship's specialist boarding team carried out assurance visits to local fishermen and traders and held boarding training with regional allies.

"We achieved a tremendous amount on this deployment and I pay tribute to my fantastic ship's company," said Diamond's CO Cdr Ian Clarke.

"We provided reassurance in the Middle East, under the Combined Maritime Forces, worked closely with regional allies and three US carrier groups and really pushed the air defence capability of these fantastic new destroyers."

Diamond worked alongside other Royal Navy units in the region – minehunters based in Bahrain and their support ship RFA Cardigan Bay, plus the first link-up between an eye-in-the-sky Sea King Mk7, from 854 NAS, and the new breed of destroyers.

As well as time at sea in the region, Diamond visited Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman and the United Arab Emirates, plus Gibraltar and Crete and the cities of Athens and Barcelona while on transit to and from the Middle East.

"It was a busy few months but working with the other navies was enjoyable – as were all the fascinating places we visited," said PO David Turner.

"Although what we achieved was immensely rewarding, after six months away it was good to know that we'd be back in time to be reunited with loved ones for Christmas."



pictures: cpo(phot) tam mcdonald, frpu north, la(phot) vicki benwell, frpu west, and la(phot) guy pool, frpu east

Astute lessons acted upon

LESSONS have been learned and steps taken in the wake of the tragic shooting aboard HMS Astute in 2011.

Procedures involving armed guarding on ships and submarines in harbour have been tightened. In addition, the maximum amount of alcohol sailors are allowed to drink in the 24 hours before going on duty – ten units – has been halved to five. No alcohol is permitted at all in the final ten hours before duty.

The changes were recommended by two Service Inquiries, published following the two-week inquest into the fatal shooting of Lt Cdr Ian Molyneux, killed during a visit by the submarine to Southampton in April 2011.

Southampton Coroner Keith Wiseman heard considerable evidence of a heavy drinking culture and was told that AB Ryan Donovan may have drunk as much as 20 pints of cider and lager, plus cocktails and double vodkas in the 48 hours before going on duty.

While Astute's duty officer considered Donovan fit for duty, subsequent toxicology reports suggested he was still over the drink-drive limit at the time of the shooting.

The junior rating subsequently fired his SA80 rifle in Astute's control room, shooting dead the boat's weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Molyneux, firing seven rounds in 13 fateful seconds.

Lt Cdr Molyneux was posthumously awarded the George Medal for attempting to stop Donovan, who was jailed for 25 years for the officer's murder, as well as the attempted murders of Lt Cdr Chris Hodge, CPO David McCoy and PO Chris Brown.

Recording a narrative verdict Mr Wiseman said he would write to the Navy with a number of recommendations, including asking for it to consider random breath testing – a move welcomed by Lt Cdr Molyneux's widow Gillian.

"I can only hope that these recommendations will be fully implemented and improvements will become evident across the Service and Ian's death will not be in vain," she said outside court.

"My intention is not to put an end to sailors' runs ashore and I fully understand that many traditions are deeply embedded in Naval life. My wish is to focus attention on the consumption of alcohol and the carrying out of safety-critical duties."

Even before the shooting aboard Astute, work was already under way to improve alcohol awareness across the Naval Service – particularly before carrying out safety-critical duties.

This work is complemented by the introduction of legislation as part of the Armed Forces Act 2011, which will permit testing for alcohol (breath, blood or urine) in support of disciplinary proceedings against any individual conducting safety-critical duties.

Releasing the details of the Service Inquiries – one dealing with armed guarding in general, the other the background to the fatal shooting – Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Phil Jones said all but one of the 39 recommendations those reports made had been, or were being, introduced, including alcohol education and policies.

"This was an appalling and unprecedented incident," Vice Admiral Jones said.

"The Submarine Service is a tight-knit community of professionals, all supported strongly by their families. Lt Cdr Ian Molyneux was a much-admired and respected member of that community and he is sorely missed.

"Our thoughts remain with Mrs Molyneux, her family, and those others affected by this tragic event."

The Service Inquiries can be read at www.gov.uk/government/publications/release-of-the-reports-of-two-service-inquiries-following-the-shooting-incident-onboard-hms-astute-on-8-april-2011.



Sailors' bravery in Torbay tug rescue

THESE are the final moments of the motor vessel Emsstrom, sinking off the Devon coast with HMS Severn and a tug in attendance – the aftermath of a dramatic night-time rescue by sailors from the fishery protection ship and frigate HMS Lancaster.

Their combined efforts couldn't save the 80m (262ft) vessel – but they were able to prevent the tug which had been hauling her from foundering after a night-long battle against the elements.

Sailors from the two warships struggled in dark, freezing conditions to plug a hole in the damaged hull of Christos XXII and pump out tons of water to save it from sinking off Hope's Nose, near Torbay.

They fought against the in-rushing English Channel, hammering wooden wedges into a foot-long gap, caused when the Emsstrom rammed into the tug as she towed her from Germany to Turkey.

The RNLI's lifeboats from Exmouth and Torbay had been first to respond to the SOS and took off most of the tug's crew. But their pumps were unable to stem the inflow and the Christos XXII was in danger of foundering.

At that point Severn and Lancaster, which was sailing from her home base of Portsmouth to Plymouth, arrived on the scene.

Both warships sent sailors across in their boats, and while the damage teams went aboard the tug to try to save it, the sea boats moved around the 70m (230ft) hull of the Christos XXII to try to locate the gash, while the Lancaster team, led by chief stoker

CPO 'Chelsea' Halsey, went into the bowels of the stricken craft to do the same.

"It was very cold, there was very little light and they were going into an unfamiliar space," said Cdr Steve Moorhouse, HMS Lancaster's Commanding Officer. "It was quite a demanding job for everyone."

"They found a reasonably-sized gash in the engine room, hammered soft wood into it. The water was cold, waist deep and at times the sailors had to duck their heads under to get the wedges in."

While they were struggling against the Channel, Severn's diesel pumps were in action.

The temporary repairs the sailors carried out managed to stem the tide, while the pumps got rid of 70 tons of water an hour to stop the Christos XXII sinking.

Because of the fumes in the enclosed room and the temperature of the water – hands became numb with cold and unable to grasp the hammers – the sailors were rotated over the six or seven-hour rescue mission, and hot food was sent across to keep up their energy levels.

"The team came back very cold and tired but high on adrenaline and big smiles on their faces at a job well done," said Cdr Moorhouse.

"There's no doubt in my mind that the tug would have foundered without the Royal Navy's efforts."

"Our training really made a difference. Chief Halsey said that working in the flooded engine room was just like being in a replica of the DRIU."

"You hear a lot of mayday calls off the South Coast and more often than not they don't turn into anything. We quickly realised this

was the real thing. We helped as any mariner in the world would do in the same circumstances."

Just three days later, the crew of the frigate HMS St Albans stopped the stricken fishing boat Lady Ellen being dashed on the rocks of Rame Head in Plymouth Sound, towing it to safety before a pilot boat helped the vessel into Plymouth.

St Albans had been just a couple of miles away when she picked up a mayday from the 18ft fishing boat, whose engine

had failed close to the Cornish headland. She had started to drift perilously close to the rocks.

The Saint sent her sea boat with marine engineers aboard away to possibly restart the engines or, at the very least, tow the Lady Ellen away from the cliffs.

They found the tiny fishing boat would require more substantial repairs in Plymouth, so hauled her away from Rame Head and passed the tow to pilot cutter Tamar Racer to take the Lady Ellen back to the Barbican.

Caribbean (k)nights

ENJOYING sunnier climes while it's brass monkeys here is tanker RFA Wave Knight.

She's spending the first half of 2013 joining the international fight against the drugs trade in the Caribbean as well as being on hand to help out should any natural disasters strike the region (the hurricane 'season' begins on June 1).

Wave Knight takes over from fellow Royal Fleet Auxiliary Argus which carried out the same mission – Atlantic Patrol North – in the second half of 2012.

She sailed west – the first Naval Service vessel of 2013 to deploy – after a lengthy overhaul in the hands of Cammell Laird in Birkenhead, who revamped her engine, cabins and mess decks, enhanced her air conditioning system and generally spruced up the 12-year-old tanker following her most recent deployment, a stint in the Gulf and Indian Ocean supporting the large-scale maritime security operation.

For this deployment Wave Knight has loaded specialist stores to help countries in the event of a natural disaster.

"Following a particularly busy regeneration period, Wave Knight's ship's company has risen to the challenge of a short notice change of programme and we are now fully-prepared – and looking forward to an extended tour to the Caribbean," said Capt Ross Ferris RFA, the 31,000-tonne tanker's Commanding Officer.

"Our flexibility and capability is ably demonstrated by Wave Knight's action-packed programme."

"This time last year on operations East of Suez and this year's operations in the Caribbean, and with a major refit en route, 2013 promises to be no less busy and satisfying."

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HMS and HMAS Type 26?

THE Royal and Royal Australian Navies could work together to build the frigates of the future thanks to a treaty between London and Canberra signed by Defence Secretary Philip Hammond and his Australian counterpart Stephen Smith.

Part of the closer co-operation between the two Commonwealth nations will see whether the design of the RN's next-generation frigate – the Type 26 'Global Combat Ship' – could be shared with the Australians.

The RAN's Adelaide-class frigates are coming towards the end of their lives, just like the RN's older Type 23s which are due for replacing at the end of the decade.

Design is already well under way on the Type 26s which are intended to be capable of multiple tasks courtesy of what naval architects call a 'flexible mission space' with equipment for a specific mission: sea boats or unmanned air, surface and underwater craft.

Like their predecessors, they'll be fitted with air defence missiles – the Sea Ceptor system currently under design – a medium calibre main gun, the latest radar and sonar sensors, and there'll be a Merlin or Wildcat helicopter on the flight deck.

It's a design which could also meet the needs of the Royal Australian Navy, Mr Hammond said visiting HMAS Stirling naval base, the frigate Perth and submarine HMAS Farncomb.

"Areas of potential co-operation include future frigates, with the Royal Navy's Type 26 design, a cutting-edge blueprint that could be the first of many opportunities for future collaboration," he added.

"In times of budget pressures for all nations, it makes sense to maximise economies of scale and work with our friends to get the best value for money on all sides."

Ultra efficient Bulwark

THE nation's flagship is also the nation's most effective warship – so deem the powers that be.

HMS Bulwark's efforts in a very busy 2012 earned her the Efficiency Pennant – a small blue and white standard which reflects the efforts of her ship's company to maintain the highest levels of operational capability.

Last year saw the assault ship lead exercises in the Arctic (Cold Response), shield Olympic sailing events in Weymouth Bay for two months (Operation Olympics) and, almost straight afterwards, head to the Mediterranean to be in charge of the Cougar task group deployment.

In all, 2012 placed great demands on the ship's company – and they rose to the challenge, as acknowledged by Rear Admirals Duncan Potts, Rear Admiral Surface Ships, and Clive Johnstone, Flag Officer Sea Training.

They presented the RN Capability Award and Efficiency Pennant – the latter collected by the longest-serving junior rating aboard the 18,500-ton capital ship, 27-year-old Ch Michael Farnaby.

"The ship's worked hard over the past year during a hugely-varied programme. It's great that our work has been recognised at such a high level of the Navy," he said.

Bulwark's Commander Engineering, Cdr Nigel Wright, was singled out for a Standing Joint Commander (UK) commendation for his work contributing to the success of Op Olympics.

Bulwark's CO Capt Andrew Burns is delighted that the dedication of his 320-strong ship's company (80 of whom are Royal Marines Commandos of 4 Assault Squadron) in 2012 have been recognised on high.

"The ship's company delivered an extraordinary range of activity on behalf of Defence during 2012," he said.

"Bulwark executed each task to an exceptionally high standard and I'm delighted that this has been recognised.

"Every member of the Bulwark team should be justifiably proud of their achievements."

As the UK's flagship and on-call assault ship, 2013 continues at a similar pace: Operational Sea Training, the latest Joint Warrior exercise in north-west Scotland and another Cougar task group deployment.



Meet Duncan, Duncan, Duncan...

THIS, we believe, is the largest gathering of Duncans in nearly 30 years.

There are 99 Duncans in this photograph by LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins. We know, because we counted them...

Admittedly some are called Phil. There's a Karl in there. And a James. And at least a dozen women – and Duncan is not renowned for being a feminine name.

This is just over half the ship's company of HMS Duncan – the sixth and final Type 45 destroyer – grouped on the grass in front of the main mast at HMS Nelson.

The air defence destroyer now has a full complement of sailors as more than 80 men and women, mostly junior ratings, officially joined the ship's company.

Their joining means the entire Type 45 fleet is 'crewed up' – well over 1,100 souls in all,

spread among Her Majesty's Ships Daring, Dauntless, Diamond, Dragon, Defender and now Duncan.

Although Duncan is now fully manned, the new joiners won't be setting foot on their ship until she arrives in Portsmouth next month; she's in the final stages of fitting out at BAE's Scotstoun yard following two spells of sea trials last year.

Instead, they'll be dispersed among the five Ds, all based in the Solent and, right now, all at home (Daring's just emerged from maintenance, Dauntless and Diamond are recently back from deployment, Dragon is gearing up for her maiden deployment and Defender is going through training ahead of her commissioning – see page 12).

Among the new joiners pictured above in the January sunshine is AB(WS) Karl Murray.

"I am extremely excited to be joining one

of the most advanced warships in the world – particularly with this being my first draft on a ship since joining the Royal Navy," he said.

"I am looking forward to finding out more about her roles and capabilities during our forthcoming period of sea trials."

As for 'Phil' and 'James', well Phil is Cdr Phil Game, the ship's senior naval officer who has guided Duncan from the day she was launched in October 2010, while James is Cdr James Stride, the destroyer's first commanding officer.

And Duncan? Well, the destroyer takes her name from Admiral Adam Duncan, 1st Viscount Duncan of Camperdown, who routed the Dutch fleet in the North Sea in 1797; the tactics he used are believed to have inspired Nelson's actions eight years later at Trafalgar.

His name was last carried by one of Her Majesty's Ships from 1957 to 1984, courtesy of a Type 14 frigate.

Last Lynx over Helmand

THE wings of the Royal Marines have headed out to Afghanistan for the final time – in their current guise at any rate.

Air and ground crew of 847 Naval Air Squadron left their home at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset in early January to begin a five-month stint in support of Allied troops on the ground, including their brethren from 40 Commando on patrol in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand.

It's the last time the squadron – one of three front-line units in the Commando Helicopter Force – will fly the trusty Lynx helicopter on active service after four decades.

When they return from Afghanistan, the squadron will begin converting to the new Wildcat, successor to the Lynx, as it begins to enter service with the Army Air Corps and Fleet Air Arm.

Until then, however, the final

variant of the Lynx the 847 men and women will be using – the Mk9A – remains a potent weapon.

The Mk9A has more powerful engines which provide an all-year capability with the helicopter's performance not too badly affected by extreme temperatures.

The 7.62 mm General Purpose Machine Gun on the old skidded Lynx, which were phased out by 847 last year, has been replaced by the .5in M3M Browning on the Mk9A, which has a longer range, improved accuracy and multi-role ammunition.

The squadron spent much of 2012 preparing for its current mission, including more than a month in southern California at El Centro air base, where conditions to some degree replicated those in Afghanistan – certainly far better than anywhere in the UK might.

While deployed, 847 will be based at Camp Bastion, from

where the helicopters will carry out essential surveillance and reconnaissance missions while also supporting ground troops.

"In many ways it is the end of an era as the Lynx has served us and the Army so well since the 1970s. The variant we are taking over to Helmand is the Lynx Mk 9A, which is optimised to deal with harsh conditions such as the heat, dust and mountain ranges in Afghanistan," said Lt Col Nick Venn RM, 847 NAS's Commanding Officer.

"It is ideal for the environment and the boys and girls of this squadron have been training really hard over the past few months to prepare themselves for theatre.

"We're really excited that when we return around May time we will be the first to work with the new Wildcats in service. They are incredible machines."

One of the Lynx teams now deployed consists of 24-year-old



pilot Lt Alex Lovell-Smith, AET Tom Wallis, 22, and Royal Marine L/Cpl Ross Howling, 25, who's on his second tour of duty; for his colleagues, this is their first taste of Helmand... and their last taste of the Lynx.

"You do build up an attachment to the aircraft," said Lt Lovell-Smith. "The Lynx continues to serve the Armed Forces extremely well and will be missed. But we are looking forward to the opportunity of being the first to work on the Wildcat as it is always exciting to work on brand new aircraft."

The Wildcat, built and designed by AgustaWestland in Yeovil, is due to enter active service later this year. It is fitted with more powerful engines so it operates well in extreme heat such as in Afghanistan, where the air is thinner and dustier.

Yeovilton will become the home of the entire Army and Navy Wildcat fleet, with a centre-of-excellence training academy.

£9m invested in new 9mm



GO AHEAD, make my day.

Except that this obviously isn't a .357 Magnum in the hands of commando Sgt Steve Lord. It's a 9mm Glock 17 – which in the coming weeks and months will become the standard-issue pistol of Britain's Armed Forces.

Some 25,000 Glock 17s will replace the long-serving Browning following a £9m deal with Viking Arms in Harrogate to provide the military with their first new standard-issue pistol in more than 40 years.

The Glock 17 Gen 4 – to give it the full title – is not only much lighter than the Browning currently in use, it is also more accurate and its magazines can carry more bullets (17 compared with its predecessor's 13).

Personnel across all three Services will receive the new pistol with priority given to troops deployed to Afghanistan.

Commando units, such as 40 Commando currently deployed in Helmand, typically use the weapon for close-quarters fighting, room entry, and when reconnaissance teams are on missions.

All Royal Marines and Royal Navy personnel deployed to Afghanistan are pistol-qualified and those working in forward headquarters carry a pistol.

Away from the sands of Helmand, pistols are used heavily by Royal Marines boarding teams from 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group, and by Viking vehicle commanders – they can be exposed in their turrets and have limited ability to bring longer-barrelled weapons to bear.

As for the dark blue world of the Senior Service, pistols are carried in Royal Navy armories for use by aircrew, divers and officers involved in boarding operations.

WO1 Mark Anderson RM, who tested the new Glock before the contract was awarded, said: "Pistols are vital in close combat and are a key part of a soldier's armoury. Reliable, light and easy to carry, the Glock inspires confidence and performs exceptionally well."

After four decades of trusty service the long-standing Brownings were proving increasingly difficult to maintain so a contract for a replacement was put out by Whitehall two years ago.

Picture: Andrew Linnett, DE&S



Gandhi on the gantry

ENJOYING a privileged view of Britain's future flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth, this is one of the nation's greatest actors. In a fluorescent jacket and hard hat. In the control cab of Goliath, one of the UK's biggest cranes.

Sir Ben – of *Gandhi* and *Schindler's List* fame among other great films – was shown around the 104-year-old dockyard, built just over a century ago as a base in WW1 for battle-cruisers.

Today the same yard is piecing together the capital ships of the 21st Century, led by the Queen Elizabeth.

The Oscar-winning actor enjoyed a bird's eye view of the 65,000-tonne leviathan, which is nearing completion, by climbing into the cab of the Goliath crane.

'set for new adventures

HMS Somerset has returned to sea after nine months out of action undergoing a £20m overhaul in her home base.

The frigate is being put through her paces off the South Coast – a chance for ship and ship's company to shake off the refit cobwebs.

Following four six-month deployments to the Middle East in five years, the most recent one to the Gulf ending in March 2012, it was time for a spot of 'regeneration' courtesy of the shipwrights and technical experts at Babcock.

Given the ship's punishing schedule over the past five years, her refit allowed crew to spend more concerted time at home, as well as fit in the requisite training and other courses ready to breathe fresh life into the frigate.

As for their ship, Somerset has received a new 'brain' – the DNA(2) command system which is central to her ability to deal with threats in the air, on the surface and under the ocean – the latest variant of the SeaWolf missile system, which effectively doubles its range coping with incoming enemy missiles and aircraft, and the latest MOD computer system (DII(F)) has been installed making it easier for the ship to share information with the rest of the RN and Armed Forces.

Crews should enjoy working in a new-look galley, while most of Somerset's weapons systems and sensors have undergone upgrades and alterations and new coats of paint applied to the hull – not only making her look smarter but also allowing her to cut through the seas more efficiently.

All in all, a very comprehensive package – completed, says Babcock's managing director Mike Whalley "safely, efficiently, to quality, and on time".

It now falls to Somerset's CO Cdr Mike Smith and his team to turn what was a lifeless hull back into a fighting unit ready to cope with any demands placed on her.

"I'm incredibly proud to be taking Somerset back to sea after what has been a highly-productive upgrade," he said.

"The ship now has increased capability to meet the needs of an adaptable Royal Navy and is ready to return to the active fleet."

Victoria falls in

BUSINESS as usual somewhere east of Suez...

The largest ship in the Naval Service – RFA Fort Victoria (34,000 tons) – delivers pallets of supplies to the destroyer USS Jason Dunham to allow the American warship to continue her work safeguarding the most powerful surface ship afloat, carrier USS John C Stennis.

2013 opened as 2012 ended for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary – except with a different ship providing the all-too-often-unsung logistic support to the international naval effort in the Indian Ocean and Gulf.

Fort Vic has recently taken over from tanker RFA Wave Ruler (she arrived home in Portland in early January) with Combined Task Force 53.

If that number doesn't ring any bells it's because it's an unsung American-led naval group dedicated solely to meeting the supply needs of the many warships from many nations involved in the massive counter-piracy/terrorism/smuggling/people-trafficking effort, described in short by military figures as 'maritime security operations'.

The task force's operating area is vast: from the sands of Egypt through the Red Sea, the Horn of Africa, Indian Ocean north of a line drawn roughly from the southern border of Somalia to Karachi in Pakistan, plus the entire Gulf.

Slotting neatly into this force – which includes US Combat Logistics Force ships, Strategic Sealift, Special Mission ships and logistics aircraft – Fort Vic is working hard to maintain the great reputation the Royal Fleet Auxiliary has earned over many years in the region.

The ship has just completed a multi-million-pound refit in Dubai which will help to carry her through to the end of a four-year deployment east of Suez.

Fort Vic carries a mix of 'wet' (fuel for ships and aircraft, water) and 'dry' (food, spare parts, ammunition)

stores; she's officially classed as a Fleet Replenishment Ship – we call her a 'one-stop' supply ship, a sort of floating supermarket meeting all the Navy's needs.

There is always an RFA vessel assigned to CTF53, and during her four-month attachment to the force Fort Vic's predecessor Wave Ruler was in constant demand.

The tanker clocked up more than 27,000 miles, as she sailed to meet up with coalition ships for 52 replenishments at sea (better known by every sailor simply as a 'RAS').

In doing so the tanker delivered 2.9 million gallons of marine fuel – enough to fill the tanks of nearly a quarter of million Ford Focuses... if they ran on marine fuel – and 119,000 gallons of aviation fuel (sufficient for a 'mere' 10,200 Ford Focuses...).

"The service provided by RFA Wave Ruler was first-class," said Lt Cdr David Noon, the only non-American on the staff of CTF53; he sorts out the logistical requirements for all non-US ships.

"Whenever I received a request for a RAS from any non-US ship, the requesting unit always sought Wave Ruler. The arrival in theatre of RFA Fort Victoria has been seamless and, within a very short time, she has provided outstanding support to all ships."

Not that Fort Victoria is simply a 'one-trick pony' delivering supplies. Last year she was the flagship of a highly-successful Royal Navy/Royal Marines counter-piracy surge.

And in a couple of months she'll be repeating that mission – to a degree. This time she'll be home to a battle staff from the Singaporean Navy as they take the reins of CTF151, the dedicated pirate-busting force in the Indian Ocean and off the Horn of Africa.

Picture: MCM2 Deven B. King, US Navy



Arctic heroes' belated medal

SEVENTY years after they took part in the worst naval journey in the world, veterans of convoys to Russia will finally receive government recognition for their deeds.

Prime Minister David Cameron has announced the belated casting of the Arctic Convoy Star – a full campaign medal to be worn with pride alongside other decorations for service in WW2 such as the Atlantic, Burma or Pacific Stars.

His decision follows more than ten years of lobbying by the dwindling band of veterans – thought to number between 200 and 400 and all now in their late 80s at their youngest – who claimed delivering vital supplies to the Soviet Union from 1941-45 not only tipped the balance against the Nazis, but had never been properly recognised by Whitehall, even though Churchill himself acknowledged it was "the worst journey in the world".

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 four-year struggle to provide material to support the Soviet war effort 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.

Following a review by senior diplomat Sir John Holmes last year, which recommended the government act as quickly as possible given the age of veterans, Mr Cameron told the Commons that campaign medals would be cast both for the Arctic men and also Bomber Command crews, similarly ignored at the war's end.

"I'm very pleased that some of the brave men of the Arctic Convoys will get the recognition they so richly deserve for the very dangerous work they did," the premier told fellow MPs.

Criteria and details of how to apply for the medal are being drawn up by the Cabinet Office. We will publish them as soon as they are confirmed.



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Capital ship 'visits' the capital

DINKY? Now who's dinky?

Some newspaper articles branded the carriers 'dinky' (after a toy manufacturer popular up to the 1970s).

But thanks to the team behind the 65,000-tonne leviathan, we can now show you how the future flagship might look – and dwarf the Palace of Westminster,

among other locations – courtesy of several artist's impressions and graphics.

At 280 metres (918ft) long the carrier, which will enter service later this decade, is 15 metres longer than the Palace of Westminster (which runs along the Thames for 265m or 870ft).

Her masthead would rise 58m (190ft) above the river – not as

high as Big Ben (96m or 315ft), but six metres (20ft) taller than Nelson's Column.

As for the width, well with a flight deck beam of 70m (229ft), she'd stretch nearly one-third of the way across the Thames.

With the first of the two super-carriers nearing outward completion at Rosyth on the Forth, the Aircraft Carrier Alliance wanted to demonstrate the sheer size of Her Majesty's Ships Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales, using graphics of the ships alongside at Westminster and in their home base of Portsmouth.

"They're stunning images and show that the UK can expect two really spectacular ships once construction is complete," said Ian Booth, programme director of the Alliance.

As well as being longer than the iconic Victorian parliament building, each ship is three times longer than Buckingham Palace, five times the length of the Angel of the North, equivalent to 28 of London's world-famous red buses parked end-to-end and 66m (216ft) longer than Brunel's magnificent Clifton suspension bridge.

Obviously, only computer graphics can 'park' the carriers on the Thames at Westminster – but how far up London's great artery could they sail?

Type 23 frigates are regular visitors to the Pool of London, passing through Tower Bridge before berthing next to HMS Belfast.

Carriers such as HMS Illustrious or Ocean, which spent much of last summer on the Thames safeguarding Olympic



Carrier Integrated Project Manager Paul Bowsler explains the work that has gone into the completed forward island to HMS QE's Senior Naval Officer Capt Simon Pettitt
Picture: LA(Phot) Guy Pool, FRPU East

events in the capital, go no further than the loop in the Thames at Greenwich.

According to the experts at the UK Hydrographic Office in Taunton it's not Queen Elizabeth's draught – the depth of the ship below the waterline – which poses a problem but her width.

Her draught of 9.9m (32½ft) is only a couple of metres more than Illustrious.

But with a beam of 39m (128m), widening to 70m at the flight deck level, unlike her predecessors she'll be too big to fit through the Thames Barrier.

So this is the only time you'll ever see her in the capital...

As for the real thing, well outwardly Queen Elizabeth is now almost complete.

The largest section of the hull, an 11,300-tonne segment which was delivered to the assembly yard in Rosyth late last year, is being joined to the ship as we speak.

The forward island (uniquely, the ships will have two towering above the flight deck) is due to be shipped from Portsmouth to the Forth this month and installed next month.

That forward island (the official and rather dull designation is

Upper Block 07) is six decks high, home to 87 compartments, and the commanding officer's day cabin, and accommodation for the carrier's navigator.

Perhaps most importantly, it contains Queen Elizabeth's bridge – and for the first time a Naval officer has cast his eye from it.

QE's Senior Naval Officer Capt Simon Pettitt clambered up to the bridge on a visit to BAE's Portsmouth facility to see progress being made on his ship.

"It really brings home the amazing ship that is being gradually revealed to my team in Rosyth," he said.

"To be able to stand where captains for the next 50 years will stand and steer the ship into operations is wonderful."

He continued: "When the block is installed on Queen Elizabeth it'll be an event which will transform the overall appearance of the vessel – and make her clearly identifiable as an aircraft carrier and fighting ship."

Although the forward island is one of the smaller segments in the gigantic carrier jigsaw at 680 tonnes, it nevertheless contains a mind-boggling 43 kilometres (26½ miles) of cabling – that's

longer than a marathon – and 3,101 pipes, plus most of the consoles.

It's the first carrier section to leave the yard painted in its final colours; the ship's true badge still has to be painted on to the structure, but a motif has been added to give an idea of the size.

Upper Block 07 will be joined in Rosyth this month by the final two sections of the flight deck, followed during the summer by the aft island (home to flying control, or Flyco, from where flight deck operations are choreographed) which a barge will ship from Scotstoun on the Clyde around to the Forth.

The last external piece of the gigantic jigsaw, the ski ramp which will help propel the F35 Joint Strike Fighters into the air – similar to the ramps which did the same for Harriers on the Invincible-class carriers – is due to arrive in the winter.

Queen Elizabeth is due to be 'launched' – more accurately 'floated out' of a specially-extended dry dock – next year and will begin sea trials in 2017, with the next-generation jump jets joining her the following year for extensive trials.

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So others may live – for six decades

THE Royal Navy's helicopter heroes kick-started a year of events to celebrate six decades of lifesaving at Britain's biggest boat show.

Two days of demonstrations from 771 Naval Air Squadron at the London Boat Show raised the curtain on Search and Rescue 60 which will pay tribute to all Fleet Air Arm helicopter SAR crews and units.

The RN traces its current search and rescue mission back to January 31 1953 when a dozen Dragonfly helicopters from 705 Naval Air Squadron in Gosport responded to pleas for help in East Anglia and the Netherlands after the 'great flood'.

In the course of seven hours' flying, more than 840 people were rescued; one single pilot accounted for 111 souls saved, while another lifted 102 people to safety.

Since then, the bravery and skill of Fleet Air Arm crews has been demonstrated in incidents at sea large and small – the Fastnet race tragedy of 1979, the Penlee lifeboat disaster in 1981, the Piper Alpha oil rig explosion in 1988, the stricken ferry MV Riverdance in the January storms off Blackpool in 2008.

Of the original seven RN SAR units, only two remain today: 771 NAS at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall and, at Prestwick in Ayrshire, HMS Gannet – Britain's busiest military Search and Rescue base.

In 2011 – the most recent year for which annual statistics are available – Fleet Air Arm Sea Kings were scrambled 542 times and rescued or helped 459 souls from the Channel Islands and Western Approaches to the Irish Sea, Isle of Skye and Atlantic off the Irish coast.

Events for SAR60 are still being planned, but in the South West, this year's Culdrose Air Day (July 24) will be Search and Rescue-centric.

There's a long-running SAR exhibition at the National Maritime Museum, Falmouth, where 771's Lt Cdr Andy Watts will run through six decades of rescues in a talk on Wednesday February 27 from 6pm (call 01326 214546 or see www.nmmc.co.uk for details).

A dedicated area on the RN website has been set aside to highlight upcoming events as well as SAR stories down the years. See www.royalnavy.mod.uk/News-and-Events/Special-Events/SAR-60



Premier ship divisions

DOLPHINS all – and proud of them.

Submariners form up at Faslane for divisions as the port crew of HMS Vanguard await inspection by Capt David Graham, Superintendent Fleet Maintenance at Clyde.

The 130 or so deeps on parade at their home base form half the ship's company of the strategic deterrent submarine.

Each of the four Trident-missile-armed boats – Vanguard plus her sisters Vigilant, Victorious and Vengeance – has two crews as part of the Silent Service's enduring commitment to carry out deterrent patrols.

When active (Vengeance is currently out of the line undergoing her mid-life refit in Devonport) one crew is actually in charge of the boat, while another is back at base undergoing training, courses, perhaps enjoying leave, so that once a boat returns from patrol or training exercise, they can take

charge – and thus ensure a permanent presence at sea going back to the late 1960s.

You'll probably recognise the dolphins – a submariner's badge of honour, the symbol that he knows his boat inside and out and is permitted to join an elite band of underwater warriors – these men are wearing.

And there's quite a few Golden Jubilee (blue ribbon with a red and white stripe down the middle) and Diamond Jubilee (red ribbon with a red and white stripe down the middle) on display.

Beneath them, however, not a few of Vanguard's deeps wear the deterrent patrol pin – HMS Resolution, with a Polaris missile, wreathed in bands of electrons to represent nuclear power and bearing the motto 'always ready' – which recognises their unique service.

The pin was introduced for V-boat crews back in 2010. Every serving man

who has sailed on a deterrent patrol for more than 30 days is eligible for a silver pin – or recognition badge

– while those who have completed 20 or more patrols have earned the gold version.

And 20 patrols is a considerable commitment – when associated training and exercising is taken into account, it could add up to eight years below the surface.

The design of the pin pays homage to the very first deterrent boat, which conducted the first patrol with Polaris missiles on June 15 1968.

She and her sisters paid off in the 90s when the Vanguard-class and their Trident missiles entered service.

Not a day has been missed since the round-the-clock patrols began, with submariners past and present having successfully conducted more than 300 missions.

Picture: CPO(Phot) Tam McDonald, FRPU North

A feather in Montrose's cap

THE traditional pusser's beret was adorned for one day only with a red hackle as HMS Montrose celebrated her affiliation with 3rd Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland – better known as the legendary Black Watch.

For more than 200 years, officers and men of the Black Watch have been granted the unique privilege of wearing a red hackle in their headgear – and every year Montrose also marks the tradition by granting sailors the right to wear the distinctive red vulture feather in their berets, for one day only which, in 2013, was Tuesday January 8.

The origin of the Black Watch wearing the red hackle is uncertain, although the most likely source is the clash in the French Revolutionary Wars at Geldermalsen in the Netherlands in 1795.

A British cavalry regiment retreated, leaving two field guns for the French. The Black Watch promptly mounted an attack and recovered the guns, and as a reward, during a King's birthday parade later that year a red hackle was given to every man on parade to wear in their bonnet.

The tradition persists; the Black Watch celebrate 'red hackle day' on or near January 5.

"We are inordinately proud of our connections with the senior regiment of Highlanders, and our temporary deviation from naval uniform regulations is entirely justified to commemorate the close friendship between the Black Watch and the most Scottish ship in the Navy," said Montrose's CO Cdr James Parkin, who fixed a red hackle to his beret.

"We embarked a team of Scots from the battalion at sea last year – something which was greatly enjoyed by all – and look forward to sending a group of my sailors to Inverness to experience life in the field before we deploy overseas later this year."

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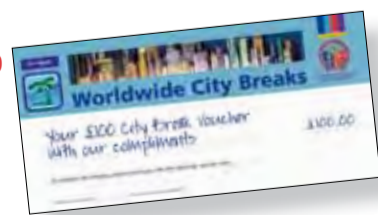


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Six of the best

ALL is quiet on New Year's Day.

Except if you're a Royal Navy minehunter deployed in the Gulf with a shedload of old plastic explosive you want to get rid of in style...

While many of you were recovering from the previous night's exertions on January 1, HMS Atherstone marked the turn of the year by getting rid of some old plastic explosives (pictured above).

That unwanted ordnance was held aboard RFA Cardigan Bay, the 'mother ship' for the Royal Navy's Bahrain-based minehunting force.

Atherstone's clearance divers – experts in diving operations and explosive ordnance disposal – headed across to the large Bay-class ship to pick up the explosives.

The amphibious support ship opened her stern doors and flooded her cavernous loading dock – more used to accommodating large landing craft and Mexeflote power rafts than Atherstone's small diving boat which sailed inside and made a 'beach landing' on the sloped deck.

Once safely 'beached' the divers set about preparing the quantity of plastic explosives before heading back out to sea.

Once clear of RFA Cardigan Bay, the team made up a floatation device which was rigged to leave the explosives about ten metres (32ft) below the surface of the water.

With everything ready, a five-minute safety fuse was lit. The dive boat then retreated to a safe distance and waited for the inevitable outcome.

BOOM! Happy New Year.

"Explosive ordnance disposal is one of the core parts of our job as clearance divers and this was a great opportunity to prove our capability at sea – and with style – on New Year's Day," said Atherstone's lead EOD operator and ship's coxswain, 34-year-old PO(D) 'Daz' Carvell.

Watching proceedings from the bridge of the Crazy A was CO Lt Cdr Ben Vickery. "This was a great opportunity for the EOD team to get some good hands-on training with live explosives. This procedure is similar to what we would do if required to clear a floating sea-mine".

He continued "It is never great being away from home at this time of year but we are working hard and keeping busy with lots of training. Most people managed to either phone or email home and wish their families a Happy New Year".

Later on the same day, Atherstone's gunners set about honing their skills with some target practice which went on into the evening and allowed them to test their state-of-the-art night vision goggles.

With tracer rounds aplenty and flares all ablaze, HMS Atherstone was awarded third prize by RFA Cardigan Bay in the New Year's firework contest, narrowly beaten by London and Sydney...

The big bang for Atherstone came just ten days after a milestone for the ship and all in the Royal Navy's mine warfare community who've served in the Gulf: a permanent presence in the region.

On December 21 2006 – when nations around the world were gearing up for Christmas, the people of Turkmenistan were mourning the death of their president

and Australians were mourning the retirement of cricketer Shane Warne – two British minehunters arrived in Bahrain to little fanfare.

Half a dozen years later and that constant presence has, says the man leading the operation Cdr Martin Mackey, "given the Royal Navy an extraordinary opportunity to deepen specialist knowledge and its force is widely acknowledged by most of their international colleagues as being world leaders.

"We're looking forward to celebrating many more milestone achievements in the future."

The mission began with Her Majesty's Ships Ramsey and Blyth; come early 2008 it was decided the force – then known as Operation Aintree, today they come under the broad banner of the UK's east of Suez mission, Operation Kipion – should be bolstered with a pair of Hunt class ships to join the Sandowns.

Enter the Crazy A (Atherstone) and Cheery Chid (Chiddingfold). Ever since, the minehunting force has been four-strong – supported by a 'mother ship', which acts as a command and engineering ship and base for the Fleet Diving Squadron, who are experts in clearing mines in very shallow waters.

To sustain four warships in Bahrain, there's a permanent engineering staff in port, the ship's companies are rotated every six to seven months, and the ships themselves are brought home (7,500 miles for the Portsmouth-based Hunts, a couple of hundred more for the Sandowns based on the Clyde) for a refit every three to three and a half years.

Perhaps little known outside the minehunting community is the presence of a permanent expert advising on everyday environmental conditions affecting mine warfare training; as the current hydrographic and meteorological officer Lt Matt Yemm points out: "Saying it's going to be hot and sandy just doesn't cut it in the complex world of modern Naval operations.

"The underwater environment here is very complex. With warm surface water flowing in through the southern Gulf being modified as it moves north it then sinks causing an outflow of deeper cooler water; therefore the seas of the region are subject to large changes in temperature, salinity and current – all of these factors have an impact on mine warfare operations."

"It is my job to ensure that the ships and the battle staff have an up-to-date and accurate picture of what is happening above, on and under the water to help them tactically exploit the operating environment."

The battle staff he refers to are drawn either from 1st Mine Counter-Measures Squadron (MCM1), from Faslane, or their Portsmouth counterparts MCM2; the latter are currently embarked on Cardigan Bay for six months and led by

Cdr Mackey.

He's been out in the Gulf before in charge of a minehunter – but then since 2006 pretty much everyone in the minehunting community has served in Bahrain.

Some 2,000 crew, 200 mine warfare battle staff, over 400 engineers – who provide support both alongside and aboard the mother ship – have passed through the force in six years. Many have been out more than once – one sailor is apparently on his seventh tour-of-duty.

As for the ships, Ramsey and Atherstone are on their second extended stints in the region, while Pembroke, Grimsby and Middleton have also served in the Gulf.

So what's been achieved? Well, more than 35 international exercises have been completed, most recently the largest ever staged in the region, involving 30 nations and spread across 1,000 miles of ocean.

Other achievements since 2006 include:

■ For the first time, the RN successfully deployed its REMUS unmanned underwater vehicle, which are now key to the Navy's Gulf mission, and are routinely used;

■ A concerted sweep of the northern Gulf in 2008 to finally declare it clear of the lingering mine danger from the 1991 and 2003 wars with Iraq so merchant shipping could safely use those waters. As it was, the search found no historic mines – and meant the sea could be re-designated as former mined areas;

■ The Royal Navy has honed its ability to work in warm, difficult waters – both classes of UK minehunters were designed during the Cold War and originally intended for use in the temperate waters of northern and western Europe. The skills and equipment perfected in the Gulf were used to effect off Libya last year when HMS Brocklesby and Bangor disposed of mines off Misrata and Tobruk.

Today the force comprises Hunt-class HMS Atherstone and Quorn, plus Sandowns HMS Ramsey and Shoreham.

The UK is not the only nation to deploy minehunters in the Gulf; the US Navy operates between four and eight of its Avenger-class vessels, which regularly work side-by-side with the Brits, who are widely considered as one of the world leaders in mine warfare.

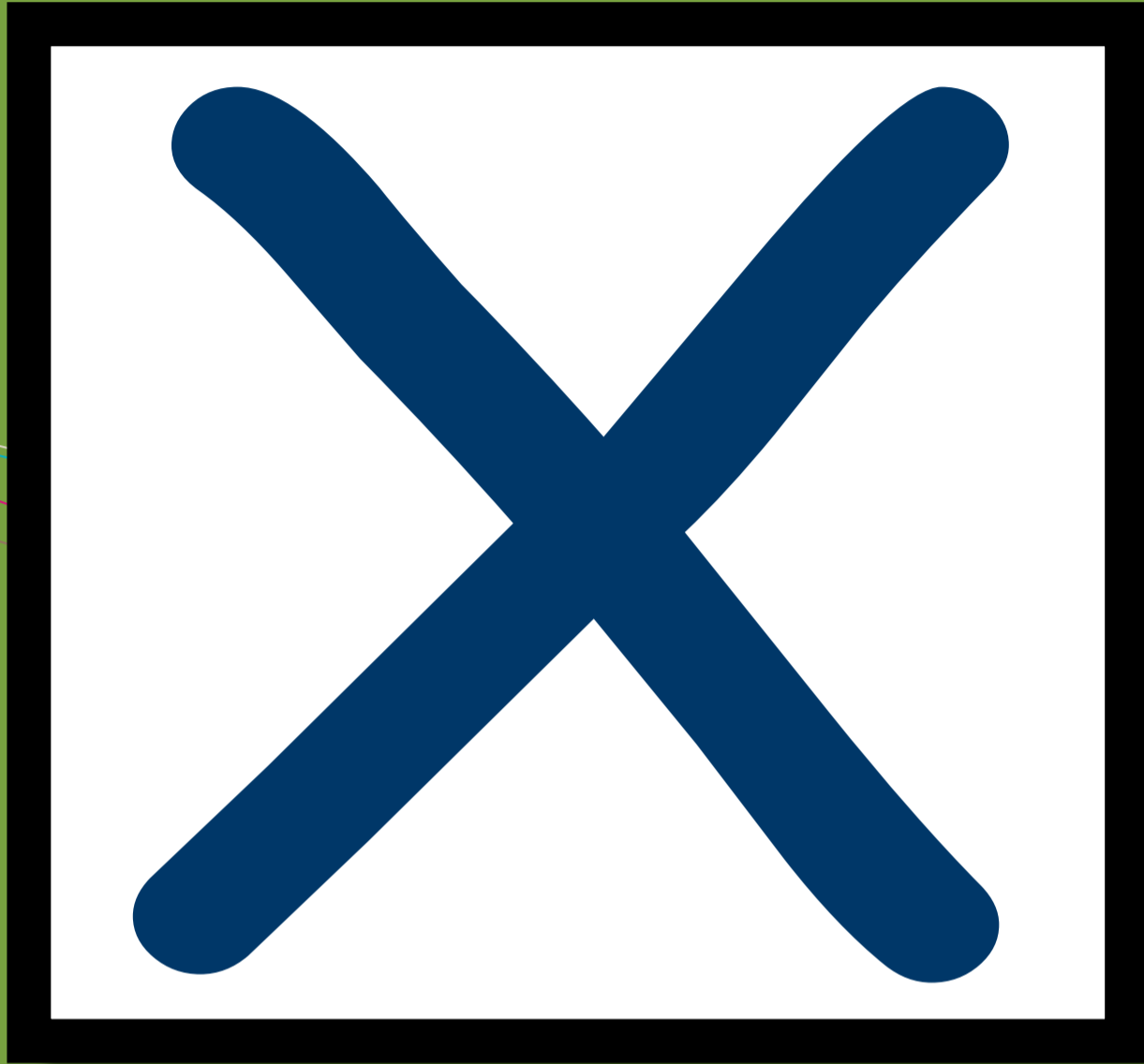
When at sea in Cardigan Bay, Cdr Mackey and his staff assume the role of 'surface mine counter-measures commander', taking charge of both UK and US ships and over 600 people.

"Cardigan Bay is ideal for supporting any mine counter-measures operation in the region – national or multi-national – because she is so versatile," says Cdr Mackey.

"She can embark my staff – made up of both RN and Royal Naval Reserve personnel – and comfortably act as a command ship, but also fulfils the vital role of providing fuel, stores and support services to our ships, divers, unmanned underwater vehicles so that they can spend longer at sea without having to return to port."



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The
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NAVY signs new Defender.

New defender undergoes trials with the Royal Navy.

£1bn Defender makes debut.

Yes, yes, yes, we could continue with footballing puns aplenty.

But then it's not a bad analogy when referring to the fifth Type 45 to join the Fleet.

She's got the best *kit* in the surface fleet.

She can *tackle* dozens of opponents simultaneously (we can't tell you how many, that's obviously classified).

We can, however, tell you how many Sea Viper missiles she can *shoot*: 48 (you can count the launchers by standing on the bridge and looking down on the silo). All firing at once against incoming aerial targets would be quite a *volley*...

After commissioning in Portsmouth on the first day of spring, she'll spend the remainder of the *first half* of 2013 preparing for her biggest test to date: Operational Sea Training off Plymouth in the autumn.

Pass that and she'll be *fit* to make her *international debut* in early 2014.

Dodgy footballing analogies aside (or should that be *a-side*?), HMS Defender does have formal links with a league side.

As with the rest of the Type 45 flotilla, Defender has split allegiances: she's affiliated to the cities of Glasgow and Exeter.

But when it comes to football teams, there are no divided loyalties: Exeter City all the way.

The sailors don the club's colours when representing the RN wherever they go.

The bond between ship and club was cemented at the end of last year when the Grecians hosted Rotherham United (the visitors won 1-0).

The Defenders were given a tour of the stadium and mementoes were exchanged on the pitch at half-time between the club's chairman and Cdr Phil Nash, Defender's CO, and members of



● The sun shines on the righteous... A glorious summer's day (just the one in 2012...) greets HMS Defender as she arrives in Portsmouth for the first time

Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Mumby, FRPU East

the ship's team were presented to a very appreciative crowd.

Just under 4,000 people saw the sailors that day – but that's not the biggest crowd Defender has enjoyed during her short life to date.

No, an estimated 10,000 people gathered on the south bank of the Clyde on Trafalgar Day 2009 to see her sponsor, Lady Julie Massey, send the partially-completed ship scurrying down the Govan slip and into the river.

The latest Defender joins a

proud lineage going back to the end of the 18th Century.

Previous incarnations have included a gunboat, a gun brig (lost off Folkestone in 1809), and a captured French privateer.

In the days of steam, the Defender name was resurrected in 1883 in a small torpedo boat, one of four dispatched to New Zealand to defend the colony.

Armed with a 'spar torpedo', she was expected to ram her foes, embedding the torpedo in their hull; it would explode beneath the

waterline.

Technology had improved somewhat by the time of the next Defender, an Acheron-class destroyer which saw action at Heligoland Bight in the first days of war in 1914 as well as the two seminal big-gun clashes of the conflict: Dogger Bank and Jutland.

At the latter, she was holed by shrapnel from a German 12in shell intended for the battle-cruiser Lion. Patched-up, she then took the damaged destroyer

Onslow in tow and helped her back to Aberdeen.

Defender survived the remainder of the war to be scrapped in 1921, but the name was back in little more than a decade, this time as a D-class destroyer.

The Mediterranean was her battleground when war came, coming through the evacuations of Greece and Crete in the spring of 1941 when many RN vessels (including her sister Diamond) did not.

Fate caught up with her in July that year on the Tobruk run, supporting the besieged North African fortress.

She was attacked by Junkers 88 ace Gerhard Stamp; the bomb actually missed the destroyer, but the blast was sufficiently close and powerful to break her back.

No-one aboard was killed and the Australian destroyer Vendetta took her in tow initially, but ultimately she proved beyond saving and she was scuttled off the Egyptian coast.

The penultimate Defender was the 13th of the popular Daring class to be ordered – but the fifth to be laid down as many ships in the destroyer programme were cancelled.

When the order was placed she was Dogstar, but the ship was renamed Defender before the first steel was cut at Alexander Stephen's yard on the Clyde.

As Cold War warriors go, Defender led a remarkably varied life. She took part in operations off Korea, located the wreck of the Prince of Wales off Malaya, bombarded the Johor coast during the Malay emergency, brought the last king of Iraq to Britain on a state visit, escorted Britannia on a royal tour of the Baltic then was sent straight to Suez during the 1956 crisis, took part in the withdrawal from east of Suez and finally served as a target ship in the Forth – and that's just a quick potted history.

She was broken up in the spring of 1972.



Battle honours	
Heligoland.....	1914
Dogger Bank.....	1915
Jutland.....	1916
Calabria.....	1940
Spartivento.....	1940
Matapan.....	1941
Malta Convoys.....	1941
Greece.....	1941
Crete.....	1941
Libya.....	1941

Class:	Type 45 destroyer
Pennant number:	D36
Motto:	<i>Defendendo vinco</i> – by defence, I conquer
Builder:	BAE Systems
Laid down:	July 31 2006
Launched:	October 21 2009
Commissioned:	March 21 2013
Displacement:	8,500 tons
Length:	500ft (152m)
Beam:	70ft (21.2m)
Draught:	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:	1 x Lynx or 1 x Merlin

Facts and figures

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES



THIS – depending upon your perspective – is either the aftermath of one of the most stirring episodes from the Royal Navy's WW2 annals...

...or a flagrant breach of neutrality committed by pirates...

Our photographic rewind through the past 100 years or so of the RN with the Imperial War Museum takes us to Jøssingfjord, 200 miles southwest of Oslo, in the second half of February 1940.

It was here that Fate caught up with the German tanker, after spending six months trying to evade the clutches of the Royal Navy.

Since leaving Texas in August 1939, her crew had not set foot on land. The Altmark had ranged around the Atlantic supporting the 'pocket battleship' Admiral Graf Spee as she waged her *guerre de course* against British shipping.

Since mid-December, however, the tanker had been a support ship without a ship to support, for the Graf Spee had been scuttled off Montevideo after running into the Royal Navy at the Battle of the River Plate.

She made for home, carrying 299 British sailors in her hold, men captured by the Graf Spee before the warship sank their vessels.

By February 15, Altmark was almost back in Germany, hugging the coast of Norway. She had not escaped the attention of the Norwegian Navy, whose men carried out boarding inspections – but failed to find the Britons held prisoner below.

The next day, however, an RAF Hudson reconnaissance aircraft spied the tanker, the name A L T M A R K – painted in brilliant white on her stern – clearly visible.

A Royal Navy task force was already at sea, hunting the tanker: five destroyers and two cruisers. Barely an hour later, the force caught up with its prey.

The Altmark made a dash for the confined waters of Jøssingfjord, just a mile and a half long and a few hundred metres wide. It was no sanctuary.

After dark on February 16, British task force flagship HMS Cossack entered the narrow waters with orders to board and seize the German tanker and free the prisoners – with or without the Norwegians' co-operation.

The Norwegians did not co-operate. Nor did the Altmark. After an abortive attempt to break out of the fjord, she unsuccessfully tried to drive the Cossack into the steep shore.

At this point Cossack struck. Brandishing pistols, machine-pistols and carbines, three dozen officers and men stormed the tanker.

For a few minutes there was "wild shooting". Two German stewards and a stoker fell down. A handful of Altmark's crew tried to flee across the ice. Cossack's

searchlights fell upon them, as did bullets. Several Germans fell through holes in the ice, others made it to the shore – by which time the Altmark herself was in Royal Navy hands.

When the door to the hold was eventually opened, a voice inquired: "Are there any Englishmen down there?" "Yes – we're all English!" came the response.

"Well, the Navy's here!" The prisoners cheered. By midnight they were aboard the British destroyer and bound for Leith. Within a day they would be free men, "the whole English-speaking world thrilled" by their rescue.

The Norwegians protested against a flagrant breach of their neutrality. The Nazis branded the Royal Navy 'global pirates' and the 'The Navy's here' became one of the most popular phrases of the day.

But the Altmark incident, as it has become known, cemented plans in Berlin for the invasion of Norway; it was clear, Hitler decided, that however neutral the Scandinavian country proclaimed to be, she was powerless in the face of the great powers.

In a little over six weeks, Germany invaded Norway to 'protect' that neutrality.

After their victory in Norway, the Nazis erected a plaque in Jøssingfjord: *Here, on February 16 1940, the Altmark was attacked by an English pirate. It was destroyed in 1945 when the Germans surrendered.*

The Altmark resumed her duties as a tanker for the Kriegsmarine – but the name was tarnished. Retitled Uckermark, she once again supported commerce raiding operations before being sent to the Far East in the autumn of 1942 carrying supplies for the Japanese war effort.

She reached Yokohama and delivered 5,000 tons of fuel before blowing up in mysterious circumstances in the harbour. Such was the force of the blast it killed 53 crew but also wrecked the raider Thor and the captured Australian liner Nankin berthed next to her.

As for the actions in Jøssingfjord, they're regarded by some as the last major boarding fought by the Royal Navy – but it is not the end of the boarding story, of course.

Today board and search is the mainstay of RN operations in the Middle East and Caribbean in particular.

Training is imparted in a building at HMS Raleigh which, in part, aims to recreate a merchant ship. Its name, appropriately, is Cossack.

■ THIS photograph (HU 27803) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@iwm.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.

42 reasons to be proud

SAILORS past and present are gearing up to bid farewell to the backbone of the Fleet as the trusty Type 42 destroyers prepare to bow out of service after nearly 40 years.

A farewell tour, a ceremonial final entry to Portsmouth – the naval base most associated with the workhorse destroyers – and what promises to be a highly-charged decommissioning ceremony are planned by HMS Edinburgh to close the book on the Type 42 story.

Children of the 60s – the first, HMS Sheffield, was ordered in late 1968 – the 16 ships built (two for Argentina) in what are also sometimes known as the ‘Sheffield class’ after their progenitor, have acted as the shield of the Fleet from the mid-70s until the second decade of the 21st Century.

In more recent years, and especially with the arrival of their more potent successors, the Type 45 destroyers, the 42s have evolved to become all-purpose warships, as much at home on patrol in the Gulf, South Atlantic or searching for drug-runners in the Caribbean – hence the ‘workhorse of the Fleet’ tag.

But as recently as 2011, they returned to their original role; HMS Liverpool directed aerial missions over Libya.

The sterling service given by the 42s has not been without the highest price.

HMS Sheffield and HMS Coventry were both lost in the Falklands in 1982 – Shiny Sheff to an Exocet missile, Coventry to Argentine bombs after her Sea Dart missiles had already taken out several enemy aircraft. Twenty men were lost in each.

Given the ships’ lengthy service and large ship’s companies – nearly 290 in the early days, 240-250 more recently – perhaps as many as 40,000 officers and ratings have served in the Type 42 ‘club’ down the years (put another way, that’s more people than the current strength of the RN/RM).

So given the numbers and the fact that the destroyers are as symbolic of the past four decades of the Royal Navy as the Harrier jump jet and the Invincible-class carriers, their passing will be marked in style.

Once Edinburgh returns from the final 42 deployment – see above right – in March, she’s lined up to take part in 70th anniversary of the Battle of Atlantic commemorations in London and Liverpool.

She will also visit Leith to end her long, proud association with the Scottish capital and say farewell to her Edinburgh affiliates.

Thereafter, a ceremonial final entry to Portsmouth is planned with a fly past and bands on May 31, followed on June 6 by the formal act of decommissioning alongside in the naval base.

And as one Type 42 era ends, another begins. The recently-formed Type 42 Association is holding its first reunion at HMS Excellent on July 13 featuring live music, raffles, food, a specially-brewed Type 42 bitter, and above all oppos and four decades of 42 dits.

Entry is £10 for full members of the association or £20 for non-members; details from T42A Reunion, PO Box 4, Havant, PO9 1JN or see www.type42association.co.uk.

■ Navy News will also be marking the end of the 42s with a special supplement – probably in our June or July edition.

We’re looking for some of your favourite (clean, unclassified!) stories and photographs of experiences aboard.

If you’re interested in helping, email words/images to edit@navynews.co.uk or snail mail to Navy News, Leviathan Block, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH, and mark your submission ‘Farewell to the Type 42s’.

Edinburgh elation in the Rainbow Nation

IF THE cap fits...

Well, maybe it’s a bit too big, but this youngster is certainly enjoying wearing it...

...and certainly didn’t want to give it back to HMS Edinburgh’s Officer of the Watch 4, Lt Christopher Barber.

The junior officer – pictured here by LA (Photo) Dan Rosenbaum with medical officer, Surg Lt Katherine Rawlinson – was part of a group from the veteran destroyer who visited the Red Cross War Memorial Children’s Hospital in Cape Town.

The visit to the hospital – a South African equivalent of London’s world-famous Great Ormond Street – was perhaps the most uplifting event during a two-week mid-deployment break for the Fortress of the Sea.

The Navy’s last 42 is on her final deployment – six months in the South Atlantic, which are due to end next month, thus bringing the curtain down on the active career of her class.

Having called in on Casablanca in Morocco and Nouakchott in Mauritania on the way south and made two crossings of the southern ocean – which is rarely benign, even in the austral summer – the 27-year-old warship needed to steel herself for a third crossing to Britain’s South Atlantic dependencies, hence the fortnight alongside in Simon’s Town, home of the South African Navy.

Personal and professional relationships between the Royal Navy and its South African counterparts were cemented during HMS Edinburgh’s



previous visit to South Africa in 2011 and have been reaffirmed through friendly, but hard-fought, sporting competitions.

The warship’s Mk8 Lynx helicopter and her crew took the opportunity to fly to Ysterplaat airfield in Cape Town, 20 miles to the north of Edinburgh’s berth.

The air base is home to South African Air Force Super Lynx – and their visiting Fleet Air Arm cousins always make use of the airfield and the unique

environment of the Cape, not least because there was every chance the choppy South Atlantic seas could limit flying opportunities during the next passage west.

“Six months in the South Atlantic will inevitably take its toll, and timely maintenance of the ship and the ship’s company is vital,” said Edinburgh’s Commanding Officer Cdr Nick Borbone.

“Simon’s Town provides the resources to ensure Edinburgh is in the right material state for the

remainder of the deployment; it also offers fantastic opportunities for the ship’s company to recharge ahead of the next phase of operations.”

As Edinburgh struck out into the Atlantic once more she was joined by Cdre The Honourable Michael Cochrane who is the head of the Portsmouth Flotilla – which supports Solent-based ships at home and at sea.

■ Teeside teatime aboard Edinburgh, page 27

Junglies go back to their birthplace

TWENTY members of 845 NAS head to Borneo next month in the footsteps of the men who gave the Junglies their proud nickname.

Half a century ago the aircraft of what is today known as the Commando Helicopter Force proved indispensable in supporting Royal Marines in the jungles of Borneo during the incursion of Communist forces from Indonesia.

The helicopters helped to maintain frontier strongpoints, dropped troops at locations where they could ambush Indonesian forces, and were also used in highly-secretive operations across the border to attack Indonesian bases, sometimes with wire-guided anti-armour missiles.

Fifty years on and the group from 845 – one of three present-day front-line Jungle squadrons, all based at Yeovilton – will spend 12 days in Borneo.

“We’ll be taking part in a battlefield tour of Borneo as part of the squadron’s commitment to honouring our heritage and as the finale to 845 NAS’ 50th anniversary celebrations of becoming a commando helicopter squadron,” explained Lt Charlie Peschardt, organising the return to the jungle.

“Sixteen Junglies were killed during the action, and a memorial at Nanga Gaat was erected to honour these heroes of the jungle.

“This will be the focus for today’s members of 845 NAS – we’ll refurbish it and pay our respects.”

Personnel will undergo jungle survival training in Brunei to prepare them for a river expedition to the Kapit District where the memorial is sited.

The group will also be carrying out community work in the area – just as their forebears forged links with the local population in the 1960s.

Rare Red Sea link-up

WITH the Middle East winter sun giving their grey hulls a pale golden sheen, two old friends meet up 5,000 miles from their Plymouth home.

Survey ships HMS Enterprise (left) and HMS Scott (right) met up in the southern Red Sea – the former collecting data on these waters, Scott passing through on her way to the Gulf of Aden to begin three months of work.

The very nature of survey operations means the five ships in the Royal Navy’s globally-respected hydrographic squadron – HM Ships Protector (currently in the Antarctic), Enterprise and her sister Echo, Scott and Gleaner (the smallest ship in the Fleet) – spend long periods away, working independently.

So this was a rare opportunity to refresh skills which are required when operating with other warships – Officer of the Watch manoeuvres to test the bridge teams and tactical (radio) and flashing light communications (using traditional lamp signals).

Scott put her sea boat in the water to deliver a spare part for one of Enterprise’s satellite systems and while the transfer was conducted the ships manoeuvred in close company for approximately one hour.

“Being in close company with another ship can be challenging and requires regular training to ensure it is done safely. It has been some time since Enterprise has had this opportunity, so to meet up with Scott – albeit for a short period – was extremely valuable for my bridge team,” said Lt Mark Wilton, Enterprise’s navigator.

Enterprise is nearing the half-way point of a nine-month deployment picking up where her sister left off during 19 months of data-gathering east of Suez and in the Mediterranean. The ‘star ship’ of the hydrographic squadron has already discovered unknown wrecks in one of Dubai’s ports.

As for Scott, this is the first time in four years she’s been east of Suez. Her survey routine was typically summers in the North Atlantic and winters in the calmer waters on the other side of the Suez Canal – but that was upset when HMS Endurance flooded back in 2008.

For two Austral summers, Scott filled the gap left by the Red Plum with surveying work around Antarctica.

With HMS Protector now active, normal service has resumed for Scott which was the very last Royal Navy ship to deploy in 2012, leaving her home port at 11.15pm on December 21 (fog delayed her departure, hence the ungodly hour).

At 13,500 tonnes Scott is the fifth largest ship in the Fleet and represents the Royal Navy’s only deep-water survey ship. Her size is determined by her hi-tech surveying and sonar suites; the latter can survey the deepest ocean in continuous lines up to 400 miles long (Enterprise, on the other hand, specialises in gathering data closer to shore in shallower waters).



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Business as usual



● HMS Victory, which is undergoing restoration – hence the lack of masts and rigging

NORTHERN or Southern hemisphere, ice and snow are just another factor in the business of the Royal Navy – and it has been very much business as usual.

You would expect the Senior Service's ice patrol ship to cope with such conditions – but the unpredictable nature of Antarctica can still throw up new challenges.

So when pack ice began to build up around a Norwegian cruise liner off the frozen continent, HMS Protector was just the ticket to ensure the passengers continued to enjoy their trip unhindered.

The Portsmouth-based survey ship smashed through ice up to four metres (13ft) thick to clear a way through the Antarctic Sound – a strait at the eastern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, 650 miles from South America – so the Fram could continue her progress.

The Fram, which gives tourists the chance to sample the stark beauty of the frozen wastes, had been following the icebreaker through gaps in the pack ice when she began to be surrounded by fast-moving floes, blocking her path and trapping the bow.

Protector immediately turned back to keep the channel clear, approaching the Fram from astern and breaking up the ice in a delicate two-hour operation, which saw the icebreaker moving at just two knots.

"This is what we do in the ice patrol ship – we are the Royal Navy's equivalent of a Swiss Army knife – red, versatile and always there when you need us," said Protector's Commanding Officer Capt Peter Sparkes.

"Protector's ship's company are highly-trained and well-equipped to deal with a spectrum of operations in Antarctica.

"That we are able to do so, so readily, is a clear demonstration of the Royal Navy's global reach and operational preparedness."

Sub Lt Rowland Stacey of the Royal Canadian Navy, currently on exchange with the Royal Navy and serving with Protector, added: "This was an extremely impressive feat – operations in ice can be very challenging, but HMS Protector made it look easy.

"I am delighted to be a part of this team."

Ice conditions in Antarctica are

● A sailor clears snow from the name board of Type 45 destroyer HMS Dauntless in Portsmouth Naval Base (left) while snow settles on the guns and gun port lids of HMS Victory (below)

Pictures: LA(Phot) Arron Hoare (HMS Protector); PO(Phot)s Paul A'Barrow and Simmo Simpson (FRPU East)

extremely variable and subject to the vagaries of the continent's wind and local currents.

Ships can quickly become beset when the concentration of pack ice increases.

Once they are trapped, ships may have to wait for days, or even weeks, to escape.

The incident took place just a few miles from where Protector cut through the ice 12 months ago to prevent the ship herself being trapped – and a team of scientists stranded on James Ross Island.

One year on and after the Fram mission, Protector resumed her patrol of the British Antarctic Territory, supporting an international inspection team's surveys of environmentally-sensitive sites.

The ship is due to complete three further five-week patrols of the continent before heading north at the beginning of April and the onset of the austral winter.

Another Royal Navy unit well-versed in operating under harsh conditions is HMS Gannet.

One of Gannet's Sea Kings, based at Prestwick on the Ayrshire coast, rescued a hypothermic climber stranded on a ledge in freezing conditions in Glen Coe in the middle of last month – 'most likely' saving his life.

Scrambled at 5.25am, the helicopter was airborne in 22 minutes and on the scene at Glen Coe, 80 miles to the north, at 6.05am.

The climber had been out in the mountains since 8am the previous day – almost 24 hours, by the time he was recovered.

The alarm had been raised late in the evening when he failed to return to his accommodation.

Glencoe Mountain Rescue Team was alerted and out on the mountain, but had been unable to locate the walker in appalling blizzard conditions with 50mph winds.

One of the pilots described the flying conditions as "probably the worst I have ever experienced in the mountains".

Lost on the 3,658ft Stob Coire nan Lochan, a subsidiary peak to Bidean nam Bian, the climber was located by the helicopter at around 2,500ft on a ledge with an overhang above it and nothing but fresh air below it.

"When the alarm went off I assumed it would be a medical

transfer job, just because it was so early," explained pilot and aircraft commander Lt Cdr Craig Sweeney.

"When we were told it was a climber up a mountain, we knew it could be very serious and that it was likely he had been out all night.

"From being in bed and getting the call to being airborne in the helicopter, it was just 22 minutes.

"It was an extremely dark night and absolutely freezing.

"We managed to speak to the casualty on his mobile as we were flying up and he was very confused.

"The signal was bad, but we established that he had a torch with him and we advised him to shine it for us once he heard the helicopter, just so that we could locate where he was."

Lt Cdr Sweeney continued: "When we got up the mountain, we could see a number of torch lights and we knew there were five members of Glencoe Mountain Rescue also up there.

"We asked them to flash their torches, which meant we knew that the one remaining rather dim torch we could see, which didn't flash, was most likely our casualty.

"And luckily it was. We found him very quickly, but he was in a really difficult place on a small ledge with an overhang above him.

"The air temperature on our instruments was -8°C and with wind chill I'd hazard a guess that it was probably more like -20°C.

"In the helicopter we could just see the rock face out of one side of the aircraft and nothing but whirling snow out of the other.

"Our aircrewman, CPO Dave Rigg, was winched out to where the torchlight was.

"He was put down on around 100ft of wire, but it wasn't long before he was reporting back that the snow was so thick he could no longer see the helicopter.

"Considering a Sea King is 9.5 tonnes of aircraft and therefore quite big, that's a good indication of the lack of visibility.

"The substantial experience of both Dave and our observer Lt Cdr Martin 'Florry' Ford really came into play – with Florry unable to see Dave, he had to essentially use finger-tip touch on the winch wire to sense whether Dave was on the ledge with the casualty or not.

"The whole winch recovery was done by Florry assessing the pressure on the winch



l in ice and snow

line and with purely verbal communications from Dave – it's rare not to be able to actually see the winchman.

"In the meantime, Lt Jon Wade, my co-pilot, and I were really struggling to control the helicopter with some ferocious up- and down-draughts, not to mention the strong wind.

"It is probably the worst conditions I have ever experienced in the mountains.

"We were going from full power to no power at all in the space of just seconds to try to maintain a steady hover for Florry and Dave.

"Once Dave was with the climber, though, there was no messing around – he got him into a harness really rapidly and they were immediately winched out to the helicopter – it was extremely dangerous on the ledge.

"All in all, from the moment we spotted his light, to him getting in the helicopter was about ten minutes – it was really hazardous and we wanted to get in and out of there as quickly as we possibly could."

With the climber safely on board, the helicopter sped to Fort William, with Dave – who is also a qualified paramedic – monitoring him en-route.

Once there, the strong winds continued to make life very difficult for the pilots – landing at West End car park in the town is routine for the helicopter, but the strong winds blasting down the mountains meant the crew had to make three landing attempts before getting the Sea King safely on the ground.

The casualty, who had been well-clothed and equipped, was transferred to Belford Hospital in a waiting ambulance.

He was kept in briefly for observation, but was discharged shortly after.

The helicopter then returned to the mountain to airlift the five members of the mountain rescue team off the hill.

"It was really important to us to go back and recover the mountain rescue team," continued Craig.

"They had been out on foot in those awful conditions, risking their lives for some hours before we even got there.

"They had done a fantastic job, and, I have to say, with the wind at the strength it was and such poor visibility, I'm not surprised they had not managed to locate him – any shouts to try to alert him would have been lost in the wind and, ditto, they would have been unlikely to hear any cries for help from him either."

The RAF's Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre at Kinloss



● Norwegian cruise ship *Fram* amidst the ice floes of the Antarctic Sound (above) and following HMS *Protector* to more open water (right)

Barracks is in charge of tasking all aviation rescue assets throughout the UK.

Their CO, Sqn Ldr Jon Heald, praised the crew's efforts, saying: "They not only launched well within declared readiness [in dark hours, search and rescue crews and helicopters should be ready to move in 45 minutes, 15 minutes during the day], but located the casualty quickly, extracted him and managed to transfer him quickly to hospital.

"This prompt reaction most likely saved his life – the response was extremely 'can-do' and effective."

Gannet answered another emergency call the following day after an avalanche swept climbers around 1,000ft down the side of Bidean Nam Bian.

The snowslide claimed the lives of four mountaineers, while the RN Sea King carried a fifth, badly-injured, climber to hospital in Fort William

The helicopter was also heavily used to move members of Glencoe

and Lochaber Mountain Rescue Teams around the area as they searched for missing or buried climbers.

It was somewhat quieter in the South of the UK when Portsmouth, like many other areas, was blanketed by snow.

While causing widespread disruption to transport, business and education, it meant a brief spell of peace and quiet around the city's naval base – and two RN photographers, PO(Phot)s Paul A'Barrow and Simmo Simpson, ventured out to record it.

For some ships it was quite a change – new Type 45s HMS *Diamond* and *Dauntless* had recently returned from the much warmer climes of the Gulf and the Americas respectively.

But just a stone's throw away lay HMS *Victory*, which has seen it all before in her 250-year history.

The 18th-Century warship is undergoing extensive restoration work, including the removal of her three masts, bowsprit and rigging – the most comprehensive remedial work carried out on Nelson's flagship in more than 40 years.



● Norwegian cruise ship *Fram*, as seen from HMS *Protector*



● Separated by 250 years and 200 metres, Type 45 destroyer HMS *Diamond* and HMS *Victory*, the oldest commissioned warship in the world, are dusted with snow in Portsmouth



Wilf is back – more Daring than ever...



Picture: Mark Owens (HQ Scotland)

● Keith Brown MSP, the Scottish Government's Minister for Welfare and Veterans (second left) with RN medical specialists in Edinburgh

Medical partnership celebrated by awards

IT MIGHT have seemed a little incongruous to see a variety of Royal Navy medical specialists gathered on the parade square of an artillery barracks on a cold January morning were it not for the presence of a small field hospital and a series of journalists.

The venue was Dregghorn Barracks on the edge of Edinburgh, and the event was the Scottish launch of the Military Civilian Health Partnership Awards, which showcases the valuable combined work done by the Defence Medical Services (DMS) and the NHS across the UK.

Although the event had a heavy Army influence, the Navy was keen to demonstrate that it plays an important role and to show the diversity of what they do.

Surg Cdr Simon Leigh-Smith is a Naval surgeon who, as a member of the DMS, works as a consultant at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

He has also completed two tours in Afghanistan in charge of the Medical Emergency Response Teams, being flown into 'hot' landing sites to extract casualties and conduct lifesaving work as they fly back to Camp Bastion.

"This relationship is hugely beneficial and important to everyone in both the DMS and the NHS," he says of the partnership.

"It is a truly symbiotic one. DMS personnel are reliant on the NHS for training and ongoing experience whilst the NHS benefits from the military medical advances, especially those made during conflicts."

This 'symbiotic' relationship has resulted in experience being shared to mutual benefit.

Medical personnel who work in the civilian sector bring current knowledge and practices to the battlefield, adapted to the high intensity and specific-injury theatre.

So whilst the Role 2 hospital at Bastion is never as busy as the A&E department of a major UK hospital, they do deal with a far

greater number of extreme trauma injuries such as gunshots and blast injuries, rarely seen in the UK.

The knowledge they bring back with them can then be integrated into the methods of medical staff at home – such as the adoption by some UK air ambulance crews of the CAT tourniquet, developed for use in Iraq and Afghanistan, which has saved countless lives since.

Surg Lt Cdr Maria Coates is a general surgery speciality registrar at NHS Tayside, a clinical research fellow at the University of Dundee – and a Maritime Reservist who has recently assumed command of Dundee-based Tay Division.

She supports the awards and feels it is important to raise awareness of the partnership.

"In recent years we have become more aware of the value that civilian and military health workers bring to the country's Servicemen and women, and the awards are a fantastic way to give individuals, institutions and ideas national recognition for this."

Also supporting the event, attended by Keith Brown MSP, the Scottish Government's Minister for Welfare and Veterans, was a group from Clyde Naval Base – CPO John Abbot, the medical centre practice manager at HMS Neptune, MA Stephanie McLaughlin and 43 Cdo's LMA Michael Beavis.

The Neptune team have to deal with all the usual cases, but also need to be prepared to react in the event of a nuclear incident.

LMA Beavis described his role as a medic – and as a former Royal Marine himself, who served in the Falklands Conflict, Keith Brown was all too aware of the necessity of battlefield medical support.

The awards, started in 2008, are now biennial, and the awards ceremony will take place on May 21 in Cardiff.

The nomination period runs until February 18 and the shortlist will be announced on April 9.

● www.militarycivilianhealthawards.org

DESPITE being one of the Royal Navy's longest-serving seamen, AB Wilf's Service record and current whereabouts are the subject of speculation.

He appeared to have risen to the exalted heights of lieutenant in the 1980s, as he featured in *Navy News* in the uniform.

But he has now reappeared in one of the Navy's most modern warships – busted down to able seaman again.

The man behind Wilf's reinvigorated career is WO1 Dave Garraghty, Executive Warrant Officer (EWO) of HMS Daring, who is behind a number of initiatives to maintain morale in the Type 45 destroyer, as well as ensure old Naval traditions survive.

Wilf was one of the stars of the 1970s fly-on-the-wall *Sailor* TV documentary filmed on board HMS Ark Royal – a ginger-haired ventriloquist's dummy with a world-weary attitude.

Wilf had a knack of saying the kind of things others would love to have said but which would end up in a disciplinary hearing – because they came from Wilf (or actually his 'minder' John Pooley), he always got away with it.

"I thought it would be nice to bring him back – though he has not been at sea since 1976," said WO Garraghty.

"He appeared to be very good for morale on Ark Royal."

Daring's Wilf came from eBay – one of legions of the 'Mr Parlanchin' doll produced in Spain in the 1970s (Parlanchin loosely translates as 'talkative'...)

Wilf's role on board Daring will be simple – but crucial.

"I will get intelligence from him, which I can feed to the Commanding Officer and Executive Officer," said WO Garraghty.

"And he will get his own show on the ship's television channel every Saturday night, just life Wilf in Ark Royal."

"I would like to keep it as close to the original as possible – the original Wilf had his own little house, so we are getting the chippy to build him one in Daring."

"That will be after Basic Operational Sea Training, of course – we will be a bit busy with that."

"I was going to keep him back for when we deploy, but he has been out already, meeting the crew.



● WO1 Dave Garraghty with AB Wilf during a visit to the offices of Navy News

Picture: Trevor Muston

"He bumped into the CO on 2 Deck – to be fair, he shook his hand and said 'Welcome on board, Wilf'."

He was spotted at HMS Osprey in 1984 – *Navy News* carried a story and picture with the dummy in lieutenant's uniform; we can only speculate as to why he is back at AB rate now, though further promotions will not present a problem in terms of uniform.

"One of the sailors on board, a petty officer, is a bit of a seamstress, and she has been making him different rigs."

Again, like the original Wilf

(named Little Wilf in homage to the carrier's CO, Capt Wilf Graham, or 'Big Wilf') lives in a gash bag when he is not touring the ship talking to crew members.

The EWO hopes that Wilf will encourage sailors to talk about any issues they may have – the original was seen as a spokesman for the lower deck, although some of the officers were said to have become tired of his jibes (and some of the humour would not pass muster today).

Having said that, WO Garraghty would like to meet the original Wilf – and asked if anyone

involved with him (perhaps even a member of his 'house band', the Winkers) knows what became of the pint-sized sailor.

Any offers to us, and we will pass them on to WO Garraghty.

The reappearance of Wilf is only part of the EWO's plan to reinvigorate some old Naval traditions.

Another pet project is to have a thriving uckers scene on board the Type 45.

Uckers is the Royal Navy's exalted version of ludo, with rules that vary from ship to ship (although *Navy News* holds a standard agreed version – contact us for a set or see our website).

"I was taught uckers by WAFUs on my first ship, HMS Sheffield, in 1994, and I have played ever since," said WO Garraghty, "though I'm not that good – I keep getting eight-bitted by a WO2 on board..."

He believes the game is effective at encouraging interaction, which can help build team spirit in a ship where sailors are more used to playing electronic games.

"Each of the messes has a console, but players are in a world of their own, and there is no interaction," he said.

"Whereas with an uckers board it is becoming a bit of a spectator sport in the messes, with people gathering around."

"The big worry is future generations will not know what uckers is, yet it is a big part of our heritage."

"The junior rates haven't even got a board in their mess at the moment."

One of Daring's uckers boards came from HMS York after she decommissioned, and the EWO also noted that uckers has got a following in the destroyer's wardroom now.

"It brings camaraderie, but also a competitive edge as well," he added.

WO Garraghty's support of Navy heritage even extends to furnishings.

He has a curtain at his door made of the 'birdie fabric' familiar on warships from the 1970s onwards (which he thinks may have been a Lang and Potter fabric, possibly designed by an admiral's wife).

Strangely enough, Wilf has a very smart casual jacket made of the same fabric, lined with silk.

And another relic of HMS York – a reclining chair – is now officially the EWO's very own 'throne' on board Daring.

RN is one of top 100 employers

THE Royal Navy has been recognised as one of the top 100 apprentice employers in the UK for the second year running.

The accolade was announced at the National Apprenticeship Awards at The Skills Show in Birmingham – and the Service narrowly missed out being selected as the top employer after winning the South Central area final in Chichester just before this event.

The prestigious Top 100 list, now in its second year, is compiled by the National Apprenticeship Service in partnership with City & Guilds, and recognises excellence in businesses that employ apprentices.

After a rigorous selection process the most outstanding apprenticeship employers went forward to feature in the list, which showcases the breadth of such employers.

The award acknowledges the outstanding progress made by the Naval Service Apprenticeship team, led by the RN's contract manager, Cdr Sean Winkle, and overseen by delivery manager Paul Redstone, whose company Babcock (formerly VT Flagship) are contracted to coordinate the apprenticeship programme.

Every new recruit joining both



● From left: John Chudley of NAS, Cdr Sean Winkle, Paul Redstone and Dragon's Den winner Lee McQueen

the Royal Navy and Royal Marines will undertake an apprenticeship appropriate to the trade they have chosen during their basic training.

They then have the opportunity to progress to a higher level apprenticeship (or award) at the next stage of their professional training (usually on the Leading Hands Qualifying course).

A Level 2 Apprenticeship is broadly equivalent to five GCSEs (A-C) and a Level 3 Apprenticeship to two A-Levels

(A-E), so the Navy is offering genuinely valuable, nationally-recognised qualifications alongside the training.

An important component of the apprenticeship is the Functional Skills package each trainee receives – maths, English and ICT are taught early in the apprenticeship and have done much to raise overall educational standards.

And all at no additional cost to the Navy as each apprentice

enrolment draws down money from the Government's Skills Funding Agency.

Flag Officer Sea Training Rear Admiral Clive Johnstone, responsible for overseeing training in the Naval Service, said: "I am absolutely delighted that the hard work of the many people involved with delivering apprenticeships has been recognised in this way."

"However, it is also important to realise that the apprenticeship itself is mapped very closely to the core training we deliver to all our people, so this is really acknowledgement of the excellence of the whole Naval Service training machine."

"It is also very gratifying to note that we are the only military Service to have received this prestigious award."

Chief Executive and Director General of City & Guilds Chris Jones said: "To be named a Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer is a sign of excellence and the Royal Navy should feel incredibly proud of what they've achieved. I hope that other employers will be inspired by their success to discover the benefits apprenticeships can offer."

● See the full Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers List at www.apprenticeships.org.uk

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Exploits afloat and aloft

● HMS Exploit exercises with the Weston-super-Mare lifeboat off Flat Holm in the Bristol Channel



BLUE skies, blue seas (well, blue-grey) – it's not your typical British winter weather.

Which is why the students of Birmingham were pleased to get the chance to stretch their sea-legs and spread their wings, thanks to a chance encounter with a lifeboat and an opportunity set up by Lt Si Shaw, Commanding Officer of the University RN Unit (URNU) in the heart of England.

A group of students were out at sea in BURNU's very own warship, patrol boat HMS Exploit, when they got the chance to test their lifesaving skills.

The Archer-class boat had been undertaking navigation training around Flat Holm, a small low-lying island in the Bristol Channel.

"On the flying bridge, the Boss was going through fixing points and shipping reports, when on VHF we were hailed by Weston lifeboat," said OC Nick Smith.

"The CO spoke to them on VHF and they came alongside for their own training."

The Weston-super-Mare Atlantic 75 lifeboat was on her own routine training exercise in the area, but a planned boarding session had had to be cancelled

when the 'target' yacht became unavailable.

Under the brilliant sun – though in bitter-cold wind – the lifeboat crew spotted Exploit and intercepted her at speed.

RNLI lifeboats regularly exercise with Royal Navy search and rescue helicopters from Culdrose in Cornwall and Prestwick in Scotland, as well as the yellow RAF aircraft, but it is not that common for them to do so with an RN warship.

"It was a valuable training serial for the lifeboat crew, whose inexperienced crew members practised boarding a moving bigger vessel," said Lt Shaw.

"For Exploit, our URNU midshipmen benefited from seeing the RNLI at close quarters, seeing their boat-handling abilities and questioning them on their role."

Exploit and the RNLI swapped contact details and planned a second exercise for the following weekend.

On that occasion, the RNLI brought two lifeboats, more crew – and offered the URNU midshipmen a ride in their craft.

Mid Holly Griffiths said: "The quick buzz around the Bristol Channel was pretty cool, although I think we all wished that Exploit

● Mid Sam Herrmann on the Squirrel helicopter simulator at RAF Shawbury



● Squirrel helicopters in the hangar at RAF Shawbury at the end of the day

could go as fast as the RNLI lifeboats."

Maybe next year that would be possible as the P2000s are re-engineered with a more capable – and faster – propulsion plant...

Some of Exploit's student complement also took to the air before the end of 2012, making the 50-mile journey to RAF Shawbury for a truly joint flying afternoon.

The students took up an invitation from a Royal Navy officer – helicopter instructor Lt Ben Brazenall – who is attached to an Army unit (the Army Air Corps' 660 Squadron) at the Defence Helicopter Flying School at an RAF base – a very purple day for the students from the most landlocked URNU in the country.

"We got really excited when the Boss announced he'd organised an afternoon's flying at RAF Shawbury," said Mid Sam Herrmann, from Birmingham City University.

"We took ten students, although the Boss was inundated with volunteers from the 60 students in our URNU."

Lt Shaw said: "Our main focus with the students is, quite rightly, to take them to sea in Exploit and expose them to the sea environment whilst passing on the Naval message."

"However we also engage in adventurous training and, where possible, other military activities so as to get the defence message across to our young URNU midshipmen, who are the leaders



● Birmingham URNU students in front of a Squirrel helicopter with their CO Lt Si Shaw (fifth left) and 660 Sqn Pilot Lt Ben Brazenall (to the right of Lt Shaw)

of tomorrow.

"The visit to 660 Squadron allowed us to do just that."

The ten chosen students donned flying overalls (which led to the inevitable *Top Gun*-style poses and photos), flying helmets and gloves, and then enjoyed an afternoon's flying over the clear, crisp skies of Shropshire on a cold winter's day.

Every naval, army and air force rotary-wing pilot, along with international students from countries like Iraq, pass through the doors of the Defence Helicopter Flying School.

The URNU students were able to mix with some of these pilots in the officers' mess and crew room before and after their flying sortie

in the Squirrel aircraft.

Mid Griffiths, an air engineering bursar from Warwick University, was able to discuss her future career with the newly-joined Royal Navy pilots at 660 Sqn.

Although the squadron is Army, it trains naval and army pilots, using RN and Army instructors.

The next stage for the Navy pilot is type training at an RN air station on specific aircraft, including the Lynx, Wildcat and Merlin.

Some students were allowed to sit in the front of the Squirrel and 'fly' the helicopter, with interesting results.

However, all the students enjoyed a sortie in the Squirrel Helicopter Simulator, where for some even taking off was too difficult.

Mid Alex Kay, from nearby Harper Adams University College, said: "In the simulator, once I'd mastered taking off, I was able to fly over my university at Newport, Shropshire, buzz my lecturers and return for tea and stickies..."

Lt Shaw added: "At the end of the day, the students didn't want to hand back their flying overalls, and in some cases we had to prise them off the Mids!"

"Days like this help reinforce the Naval message and particularly support the Fleet Air Arm – I think we may see a peak in pilot recruitment when these student graduate."

"Our main effort is to get the students to sea in Exploit, but occasionally we have green Army days in trenches with the OTC and flying days such as this."



● RNLI crew members train with HMS Exploit in the Bristol Channel

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Skills for Logistics and the Logistics Guild have launched a new Government backed initiative that sees companies offering a 2-week work placement and feedback to Service leavers.

Diving and delving into island history

CLIMBING a mountain, brushing up on history – Royal Navy diving expeditions deliver more than you might expect.

That was certainly the case for the team that flew out from the UK to explore the waters around one of the remotest outposts in the Atlantic Ocean – Ascension Island – at the tail-end of last year.

A dozen members of the Naval Air Command Sub Aqua Club (NACSAC) branch at HMS Heron, led by WO2 Gary Bonds, the Deputy Engineering Training Officer at RN Air Station Yeovilton, headed south with a list of objectives which collectively made up Exercise Ocean Surprise.

Top of the list was the obvious one – to dive the wrecks and reefs around the volcanic outcrop, some 1,000 miles west of Angola in Africa.

But spinning off from that were numerous other benefits – providing an update to the UK Hydrographic Office, developing individual qualities of self-discipline, teamwork, leadership, initiative and resourcefulness, and gaining further individual diving qualifications.

Because of the remoteness of Ascension, diving is limited to 30 metres maximum depth and decompression stops are not permitted, as the nearest recompression chamber is more than 1,200 miles away.

That did not prevent the sailors from notching up 189 dives, equating to 8,019 minutes (or over 133 hours) underwater.

And pretty comfortable minutes they were, too – the sea temperature was around 24°C



● Expedition members at Bonetta Cemetery on Ascension Island: from left, WO2 Gary Bonds, POAET George 'Ed' Edwards, CPO John 'Rudders' Wilson-Rudd, CPO Mark 'Brad' Bradbury, LAET Karrina 'Berti' Bertinshaw, LAET Graham 'Del' Delleur, POAET Jim Kite, CPO Graham Lockett, AET Wayne Coogan, Capt Geoff Bowker, AET Amy Taylor

Picture: Sqn Ldr Andy Wilson (RAF)

(the island lies just south of the Equator), and visibility in the unpolluted sea was in excess of 20 metres, allowing the divers a terrific view of the teeming, diverse wildlife that lives off the coast.

Time off from diving was necessary every few days to reduce the build-up of nitrogen in the body, and members of the expedition used this time constructively by planning future dives, conducting diving theory training and undertaking maintenance.

The sailors also scaled the 859-metre-high Green Mountain, where the contrast between the bone-dry volcanic rocks at sea level and lush bamboo at the mountain top was most marked.

Another visit on the agenda was

to Bonetta Cemetery, a mournful reminder of the lot of Royal Navy sailors in the 19th Century.

During the 1830s Ascension Island became an important sanctuary for the ships of the West Africa Squadron that had been given the task of eradicating the slave trade.

But a visit by HMS Bann in 1823 caused mayhem – she arrived with fever on board, and the illness spread to claim the lives of 50 sailors and members of the garrison ashore.

Ships patrolling inshore along the coast were particularly prone to illness, much borne by mosquitoes, so a designated post was set up at Sydney Cove in Clarence Bay on the north-west coast of Ascension, where fever-stricken ships could sit in a state

of quarantine.

Originally renamed Comfort Cove, this was a relatively sheltered spot where ships could limp in to allow their crew to rest and recover.

Food and fresh water were left near the cove by members of the garrison, who retreated to a safe distance before the signal was given allowing sailors to pick up the stores and provisions to take back to their ship.

Medical help would also be provided, but no direct contact was permitted until the ship was declared free from fever.

The place soon became known as Comfortless Cove – a name it retains to this day – and one of the few reminders of around 30 years of use is Bonetta Cemetery, just behind the beach in a secluded hollow.

Named after HMS Bonetta, which visited in January 1838 while in the grip of yellow fever, the graveyard contains the mortal remains of sailors from numerous ships in addition to four from Bonetta – though it does not represent the whole picture.

There are two other cemeteries in the area (one of which curiously contains no graves), but there are also a number of unmarked graves near a car park on a lonely valley, and a single anonymous grave at the northern end of the bay.

Many other naval victims of sickness were buried at sea, either en route to Ascension or just offshore.

WO Bonds said: "This was a good opportunity for the RN expedition divers to visit such



● Marine life spotted by expedition members in the waters around Ascension – from top, a moray eel, a brown spiny lobster (or crayfish or longlegs), and a porcupinefish, also known as a balloonfish

an historic site to learn about the challenges of the RN in past generations such as dealing with fever on board ships and the need to put stricken sailors ashore to protect the remainder of the ship's company.

"We were honoured to be able to pay our respects to the RN sailors interred there."

Once designated a 'sloop of war'

in the 19th Century, Ascension Island still has a vital military role – the RAF base at Wideawake Airfield is a refuelling stop for the airbridge between the UK and the Falklands.

It also houses a European Space Agency rocket tracking station, the BBC World Service Atlantic relay station, and is a vital element in the GPS navigation system.



● (Above) One of the RN divers examines an anchor while surrounded by a shoal of black durgon



● Exploring the coast of Ascension Island

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Wildcat runs wild at Heron

THANKS to funding from the RNRMC, the new Lynx Wildcat has been brought to vibrant life at RNAS Yeovilton.

The junior rates within Yeovilton's SE section had a crewroom in serious need of an update; and a grant from the RN's dedicated charity provided enough money to refresh the entire room with water heater, sinks and taps, furniture, breakfast bar and most importantly, that essential of Naval life, a toaster.

Careful marshalling of their cash, and canny use of special offer sales, left a small amount of money in the kitty for pictures for the walls.

Rob Heath said: "Rather than buying some generic framed pictures, we took inspiration from the aircraft at Yeovilton and contacted local graffiti artists who helped us plan a design.

"We chose graffiti as a good way of attaining a bespoke wall covering which

blends into the room rather than being confined to a frame.

"The Senior Maintenance Rating Chief in charge of the SE section was reluctant and held reservations about the graffiti style painting, but was impressed by the result."

The mural also has the words 'For Rick' written in the clouds as a reminder of an SE rating killed some years ago.

The work was done by the Paintsmiths: <http://www.donesgraffiti.com/>

RNRMC grants on the rise

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) granted £5,300,000 in 2012 to the Naval Service family and related charities – an increase on the previous year's total of £5,100,000.

The grants made covered the full range of the RNRMC's beneficiary group and supported those who served long ago, as well as giving increased support to today's serving sailors and marines and their families.

Benevolence support included £439,500 to the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust and £560,000 to the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund.

Among the 16 other charities supported were Blind Veterans UK, SSAFA Forces Help, the Not Forgotten Association and Erskine as the RNRMC greatly expanded its ability to reach beneficiaries in need.

Support to the serving community grew, with £1,300,000 granted to improve facilities, provide families days and fund major refurbishment projects through the Amenity Fund, and £19,600 for the 137 Herbert Lott Efficiency Award citations.

A grant was also given to each RN and RM Reserve Unit in recognition of their contribution to Op Olympics, and HMS Bulwark received £8,000 to help produce a commemorative book of their participation.



● Ex-Royal Navy Leading Seaman, Eddie Gravett, received nursing and therapeutic care at the Royal Star & Garter last year, aided by a grant from the RNRMC

The RNRMC is working with the Naval Families Federation to investigate how specific grants might go to help families.

In recognition of its core duty, a total of £228,000 was paid through the £12,000 immediate grant to the 19 families of those who died in service during the year.

RNRMC Chief Executive Robert Robson said: "We are delighted to have been able to grant more this past year.

"We have only been able to do because of the supporters backing us, to whom I offer a big thank you whether you give through

your pay, fundraise for us or are one of our increasing band of volunteers.

"The RNRMC is unique in being the grant-maker to the many causes and charities that exist to help our serving and veteran Naval Service community.

"I am particularly pleased that we have been able to provide more money to give families a breather or a bit of fun – we will be doing more with families in the future.

You can support the RNRMC in a number of ways. For more information please visit rnrmc.org.uk.

Payroll giving competition winners

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity Payroll Giving Competition results are in, with the five winning teams each receiving a £1,000 prize for their welfare fund.

The competition was launched last September, when all ships, submarines, units and establishments were invited to sign up to the Payroll Giving scheme.

The five winners are those who achieved the highest percentage increase in sign-ups by January 2

this year. Their prizes are in addition to the bi-annual grant that the RNRMC makes to every welfare fund in the Naval Service.

- The winners are:
- 1st: HMS Artful
 - 2nd: MCM1 Crew 2 (HMS Blyth)
 - 3rd: 829 Naval Air Squadron
 - 4th: HMS Temeraire
 - 5th: 1 Assault Group Royal Marines

Take the Twickenham challenge

THE annual Army v Navy showdown takes place at Twickenham on Saturday April 27 and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) is the chosen charity of the day.

The top-class rugby match, famous for its fierce rivalry, will see the two Services battle it out for the coveted Babcock Trophy. But if you cannot get to the game, you can still show your support by getting involved in the challenge set by the RNRMC.

The charity is calling on all units, ships, squadrons, submarines and establishments to support it by getting on 'The Road to Twickenham'.

All you've got to do is cycle, row, swim, walk, run, crawl or hop (forwards, backwards or sideways) the distance it would take you to get from wherever you are in the world to Twickenham Stadium at TW2 7BA.

If you are in Portsmouth, this is a quite reasonable task of just 70 miles – so that's under three marathons or seven bouts of ten miles.

But if you're in the Falklands, you might perhaps want to put a team together to notch up the collective miles to Twickenham's gates.

How tough you want to make your challenge is totally up to you, but this is a great way to keep fit and raise funds at the same time.

To get involved, search 'Road to Twickenham' on the Virgin Money Giving website or call the Fundraising Team on 023 9254 8289.

All money raised will be given to serving personnel, their families or former personnel of the Naval Service.



Picture: LA(Phot) Maxine Davies, HMS Northumberland

● During a brief break from anti-piracy and maritime security operations off the east coast of Africa, sailors from HMS Northumberland have helped renovate the grounds of a Tanzanian community centre during a port visit to Dar es Salaam

Northumberland gets to grips with Tanzania

SAILORS from HMS Northumberland spent a day helping to revamp a community centre in Tanzania during a break from anti-piracy patrols.

During a break from anti-piracy and maritime security operations off the east coast of Africa, a party from Northumberland headed to the Kigamboni Community Centre while their ship was berthed in Dar es Salaam.

The community centre was set up in 2006 to offer shelter and education to children, but also runs a mobile library and promotes adult learning initiatives.

The 25 volunteers from the ship helped to install windows and doors, repair fencing, and build 'houghle beds', which will be used to grow vegetables in dry conditions.

As a sign of their appreciation the community centre members performed an impressive musical and acrobatic dance – demonstrating just some of the skills they're taught at Kigamboni.

The centre's founder, Festo Chengula, was fulsome in his

praise. "The place looks great after all the hard work. The centre members love having guests and you are all welcome to visit again."

In an exchange of gifts HMS Northumberland donated 85 football shirts, courtesy of the Royal Navy Football Association, together with a rugby ball, football and Northumberland crest and commemorative coin.

The ship's LPT Andrew Davidson said: "All my shipmates were moved by the day at the centre. We felt a great sense of achievement knowing that we'd helped in every way possible."

His Commanding Officer Cdr Paddy Dowsett added: "Our visit to Dar es Salaam has been a real success.

"Not only has it reaffirmed and strengthened the commitment the United Kingdom has to Tanzania, it has also allowed my team to give something to the local community."

His ship is still in the early stages of her patrol of the Indian Ocean. She's due home in Plymouth in May.

Edinburgh's capital project in Mauritania

SAILORS from HMS Edinburgh spent part of their recent visit to West Africa sprucing up an orphanage in Nouakchott, the capital city of Mauritania.

The ship's chaplain Rev Charles Bruzon and 54 crew overhauled the orphanage, clearing five skip loads of rubbish from a compound around the site, then giving the building itself a deep clean and a lick of paint.

Rev Bruzon said: "The project was mutually beneficial and undertaken in a spirit of cooperation – the orphanage undoubtedly benefitted from our sailor's efforts and the volunteers came away with a renewed perspective and appreciation of the privileges we enjoy compared to those in other parts of the world."

Edinburgh's commanding officer, Cdr Nick Borbone, added: "Looking around at the sheer effort that has gone into improving the orphanage, it is clear that although my team only had seven hours to work on this project, these children will now enjoy a better life than they did yesterday."

From West Africa the veteran destroyer headed further around the coastline to the southern shores of South Africa, and is now on patrol in the South Atlantic.

The Type 42 is on her last operational tour, and set off from Portsmouth in September last year for her six-month deployment across the Atlantic.

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Join us on Facebook:
search for 'Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity'
www.rnrmc.org.uk

The RNBT need you

THE Royal Naval Benevolent Trust is looking for volunteers to become Trustees from April this year for the Naval charity.

The RNBT was formed under Royal Charter in 1922 to provide for those who are serving or have served as Warrant Officers and below in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, and their dependants, who find themselves in need or distress.

The Trust's beneficiaries are referred to as The RNBT Family.

Every year, more than 4,000 applicants are assisted: for further details go online: www.rnbt.org.uk.

A founding principle of the Trust is that it is predominantly run by serving and retired sailors and Royal Marines.

Accordingly 11 of the 17 trustees (including the Trust's Vice President) that form the RNBT's governing body are drawn from serving and retired RN ratings and RM other ranks and are known as Ordinary Member Trustees.

Vacancies will occur for four Ordinary Member Trustee positions with effect from April 1 2013 as part of the RNBT's routine governance 'refreshment' programme.

The election of volunteers to fill these positions, including those who are standing down but may wish to stand for re-election, will happen in the first week of March.

Are you interested; can you contribute; do you want to find out more?

If so contact the RNBT's Portsmouth based Head Office on 02392 690112 or apply online: rnbt@rnbt.org.uk

The closing date for applications is February 28.

Celebrations with the RNBT

OFFICERS Lt Cdrs Bainbridge, New and Webster and Lt Tim Bird of Navy Command's Joint Support Chain team hosted a standee in early December in aid of the RNBT.

Members of the Logistics and Infrastructure Staff dug deep to donate and were treated to home-made Christmas-themed cakes.

The staff are based on the fourth floor of Leach building on Whale Island and are responsible for managing and overseeing the Royal Navy's considerable real estate across the country, and logistics for all ships, submarines and the Royal Marines.

Lt Cdr Paul Bainbridge, who started his RN career as a 'jack dusty' in 1980, said: "It was great to have the opportunity to raise some money for the RNBT."

"I have seen many examples of the fine work that they do throughout my time as a rating and an officer, it truly is a worthy cause!"

But it isn't just Naval personnel getting behind the charity, as students from Portsmouth University dedicated funds from one of their events to the RNBT.

Members of the University of Portsmouth Law Society held a ball to raise funds for the RNBT and also help the students gain valuable information for a career in law by inviting local legal professionals and lecturers.

The UPLS said they chose the RNBT as it is a community-orientated charity with strong ties to Portsmouth.

The UPLS were keen to support a charity that gave back to the community wholeheartedly.

Santina Taylor, the former Social Secretary of UPLS and the driving force behind the event, said: "It was a wonderful evening. A lot of people put a lot of effort into the night, I am so pleased that it was such success."

During the ball a raffle was held with prizes donated from local businesses.

A total of £300 was raised for RNBT.

The RNBT thanked all involved for their fundraising efforts.



Picture: LA(Phot) Arron Hoare

Snow ho ho

YES, we know it's not Christmas any more. Even the last pantomimes have played their final shows and closed their doors. The last lingering on-offer Christmas pudding has been cleared off the supermarket shelves.

But still, there is something irresistible about the sight of 20 just so cheerful Santas and one dashing reindeer amid the snow of the Antarctic, so we shall deny the facts of the calendar and immerse ourselves once more in festive cheer.

The icebreaker paused her survey work at Deception Island – a semi-submerged volcano off the Antarctic peninsula – to allow the fancy dress runners to race to raise money for sick youngsters and their families in East Anglia.

As ice exploration and survey ship HMS Protector got stuck in to her first stint in the chilly waters of the Polar region, around one third of the ship's company donned festive costumes for this Santa dash on behalf of the ship's affiliated charity, East Anglia's Children's Hospice (EACH).

The Santas and lone Rudolph gathered for a gentle warm up led by the Portsmouth-based ship's Executive Officer, Cdr Don Mackinnon, who was at the time in command of the 5,000-tonne icebreaker as part of her regular rotation of crew.

Amid perfect weather conditions, and under the watchful eye of two seals that had taken up post next to the ship, the Santas completed their run, one of eight organised on behalf of the

Great Scott is centre stage

SURVEY ship HMS Scott is at the heart of a mural at Plymouth's Child Development Centre.

The ship's Commanding Officer Cdr Pat Mowatt paid a special visit to the centre to hand over a donation of £500 and was welcomed with a tour of the centre and a visit to the activities room with its wall adorned with a colourful mural featuring Plymouth and HMS Scott.

Cdr Mowatt said: "I feel honoured that HMS Scott takes centre stage of what is a fantastic work of art. This really brightens up the room and I'm sure it will be enjoyed by all the children and their parents visiting the centre."

Never Forgotten

JULY 2012 saw PO Paul Swaby embark upon a triathlon to raise funds for the Not Forgotten Association, which was founded 92 years ago with the sole aim of providing recreation, outings and leisure activities for serving and ex-service disabled men and women.

Paul completed this challenging feat in two hours 25 minutes in the gym at HMS Sultan; as a result he and his friend CPO Baz Woodley, were able to present the Not Forgotten Association with funds raised to £1,128.

This figure was more than double Paul's estimated total, as the senior rate had expected to raise about £500, but with the support of his shipmates, family, friends and members of the Warrant Officers and Senior Rates mess at HMS Nelson the total was boosted.

children's hospital at Christmas (although the remaining races took place in the less-exotic surroundings of Essex and East Anglia, raising £34,000 in the process).

For the Protector dash, the ship first had to break through a sheet of snow-covered ice around Deception Island – although it's approaching the height of the Austral summer, temperatures by day just about climb above 0°C – before coming to a planned stop.

Some of the ship's company disembarked to test the ice and drill samples to ensure the surface was safe before Protector's eager Santas and Rudolph filed down the accommodation ladder and prepared for their race.

"With 21 hours of daylight in every 24, our working day in Antarctica tends to be a long one. The other day, for example, our first boat group departed the ship at 8.30am and the last one finally got back at 11 that night," Cdr Mackinnon explained.

"With that sort of work pace it's therefore nice to be able to take a break from operations now and again, and do something both for fun, and also to help our affiliated charity at the same time.

"Santa's traditional home might be the North Pole, but as you can see he has helpers that visit the other one too!"

As part of her affiliations with Cambridge (home, inter alia, to the British Antarctic Survey and the Scott Polar Research Institute), Protector has been bound with EACH since August.

The charity provides support to

families and care for children and young people with life-threatening conditions across Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk.

Providing care and support wherever the family wishes, in families' own homes, in the community or at the hospices, their care teams help children and their families with the emotional

and physical challenges they face, helping them to make the most of life.

"The photographs of the Santa run in the Antarctic are stunning and really capture the essence of what Santa runs are all about – having fun while raising vital funds for such an important cause," said EACH's Denise Norris-Fenn.

Vanguard digs deep for Islay

SUBMARINERS from HMS Vanguard headed out to Islay at the end of last year to aid fundraising efforts on the island.

The fundraising was in support of the Ciara Caskie Allan Appeal, a charity that supports eleven-year-old islander Ciara Caskie Allan and her family who are seeking proton therapy in the US.

Aged three, Ciara suffered a stroke due to a brain haemorrhage and was diagnosed with a brain tumour. She has undergone brain surgery three times and regularly attends Glasgow's Yorkhill Children's Hospital for treatment.

Five submariners from HMS Vanguard (Port) took part in a 32-mile fun-run across Islay, passing a rugby ball among the runners on the way.

Their efforts raised £2,511 on the day, and added a further £1,137 to the appeal from a sponsored cycle ride from Land's End to John O'Groats.

Five more submariners headed out to Bowmore's Ideas Centre with brushes at the ready to give the support centre's rooms a fresh lick of paint.

Cdr Sean Ryan, commanding officer of HMS Vanguard, said: "It was a fantastic opportunity to rekindle old friendships and make a good number of fresh ones."

"We have been in receipt of outstanding hospitality and it has been overwhelmingly clear that there is a vibrant, energetic community here where our nation edges into the Atlantic, an ocean that is so much part of our history and identity as a maritime nation."

British Lung Foundation Burrow Hill Training Fund

The British Lung Foundation (BLF) is pleased to announce availability of the 'Burrow Hill Training Fund'. Under this scheme, funding is available to support vocational training, healthcare professional training and medical research related to ex-members of the Armed Forces of the Crown and their dependents who are suffering from any disease of the chest. The following 3 grant types will be offered:

1. Vocational Training

Grants to provide assistance with vocational training for ex-members of the Armed Forces of the Crown and their dependents who are suffering from any disease of the chest or related illnesses. This could cover any type of vocational training.

Amount per award: Up to £1,000

2. Healthcare Professional Training

Grants to assist in advancing the education of persons training to be healthcare professionals specializing in the treatment of chest diseases with a preference for those working with or intending to work with members or ex-members of the Armed Forces of the Crown. This might include training such as specialist nursing qualifications etc.

Amount per award: £2,000

3. Research Project Grant

A grant to fund medical research into the causes and treatment of chest diseases, in particular amongst members or ex-members of the Armed Forces of the Crown.

Amount available: £120k (one award available)

Application submission deadline: 18 February 2013.

For further information and to make an application, please see the 'Healthcare Professionals > Research > Available Grants' page of the BLF website: <http://www.blf.org.uk/Page/Available-grants>



TRAINING DAY



● AET 'Marty' Pellow reaches for the Black Knight's winch during aircrew training in the Gulf and (below) 'I love the taste of the quarterdeck in the morning...' Atherstone's AB Chris 'Hassle' Hoath is subdued by one of Monmouth's boarding team during a joint counter-piracy exercise



SWEAT saves blood.

Practice makes perfect. He who is trained in the severest school is best. Fail to prepare, prepare to fail.

All good military maxims. Ok, the last one comes from football hardman Roy Keane... who nicked it from Benjamin Franklin...

But you catch our drift. If you're fully trained, you're fully prepared.

If you want to, say, safely escort a supertanker through 'pirate alley'. Or maybe take down some pirates who've hijacked a merchantman.

Need to rid the ocean of a giant red inflatable imperilling the sea lanes? Not a problem. Ne'er-do-wells firing missiles at your helicopter? Chuck out a load of flares.

Yes, all this – and more – has devoured the time of the men and women of HMS Monmouth.

While most of you were tucking into turkey and tuning into Her Majesty, then dragging yourselves wearily back to work post-festive season, the Black Duke has been on patrol in the Gulf. Training. Training. Doing a bit more training. Then some more. A spot of tea. Then a bit more training again. Dinner, followed by a dessert of training.

ANYWAY, we'll begin with some training. Avoid-that-incoming-heat-seeking-missile training to be precise.

And whilst the foe and decoy have changed over the past six decades, the fundamentals of avoiding a 'fox two' (air-to-air heat-seeker) or shoulder-launched MANPADS (small hand-held surface-to-air missiles) haven't. Fire defeats fire.

Infra Red Counter Measures (flares to you and me) draw the incoming missile away from the helicopter's engines on to a much hotter target.

A good 100 or so flares can be pumped out by Monmouth's Lynx, Black Knight, as part of the helicopter's Defensive Aids Suite, making for a wonderful, impromptu firework display, with the decoys arcing over the frigate at dusk (see the film strip on the right for proof...).

All too often in our articles and features about deployed frigates and destroyers we fail to give the ship's flight their full due.

A couple of pictures of the Merlin or Lynx looking Gucci, a passing reference to the helicopter's importance. That's about it.

So allow us to introduce you to Black Knight, HMS Monmouth's Lynx, provided by those good eggs at 815 NAS.

A ten-strong team – Flight Commander/Observer Lt Ed Barham, pilot Lt Rob Dixon and eight expert technicians and maintainers – keep the Lynx Mk8A ready for flying at, in some cases, five minutes' notice.

When not pumping out flares (which is most of the time), Black Knight of 215 Flight, normally based at 815 Naval Air Squadron in Yeovilton, provides Monmouth's long-range eyes, ears (and claws).

Aboard the frigate Team Black Knight are bolstered by a two-man Royal Marines Maritime Sniper Team from 43 Commando who provide cover for the ship's green beret/dark blue boarding teams when they're inspecting merchant vessels, and, to safely launch and recover the helicopter, a team of four flight deck officers, drawn from the ship's company – a caterer, senior computer technician, policeman and department co-ordinator.

The caterer is PO(CS) 'H' Hetherington, who was also senior flight deck officer until the newly-appointed RPO Ian Peacock successfully qualified and took on the reins.

"Working with the Flight is a great job – you feel part of the team very quickly," said 'H'.

"It's a big responsibility. When it's late at night, pitch black and the ship is rolling around, you know that the pilot is relying on you to get him back over the spot safely; it's then down to him to actually put it in the right place!"

At sea Black Knight is always on standby to scramble: search and rescue duties, responding to a pirate attack, casualty evacuation, or the more mundane tasks of ferrying people and kit around.

When the frigate's in the midst of maritime security work, the helicopter's either up using her sensors sweeping the ocean for ships – she's flown many hours conducting surface searches around the Gulf's vast oil fields, using her hi-tech kit to detect and classify shipping beyond the reach of the Black Duke – or she's ready to pounce in support of the boarding team.

The snipers provide top cover or, if needs be, commandos can rapid rope (abseiling without a mountain...) out of the side of Black Knight on to the deck of a suspect vessel.

Which is just what they did during a major exercise testing the abilities of the British and Americans to keep the sea lanes of the Middle East open.

Over five days, the Devonport-based frigate joined forces with the USS Winston S Churchill and American air power for Lucky Mariner – an annual link-up between the military and merchant shipping to show how the two can work together to ensure safe passage on the high seas.

The east of Suez theatre includes two of the world's great 'choke points' – narrow stretches of water which, if blocked, have global ramifications.

Each day 17 million barrels of oil pass through the Strait of Hormuz, while 3-4 million barrels are moved through the Bab-al-Mandeb Strait, gateway to the Red Sea.

In a typical week, more than 500 ships pass through Hormuz – three in every five of them energy carriers (including liquefied natural gas which is used in the UK).

The Black Duke was given the task of providing close-in protection to two behemoth tankers alongside several US Navy and coast guard patrol ships, a USNS supply vessel and the air defence destroyer USS Winston S Churchill (which always has a Royal Navy navigator aboard).

At the height of Lucky Mariner, Monmouth was sent in to 're-capture' the Bahamian-registered Arcturus Voyager – 333m (1,092ft) long, displacing 160,000 tonnes, and lumbering along at a little over 5kts (6mph).

Black Knight delivered the commando boarding team by rapid rope on to the tanker, while Monmouth's sea boats delivered the rest of the boarders – demonstrating how the Royal Navy responds should pirates or terrorists try to take over a merchant vessel... exactly as commandos from RFA Fort Victoria did on the Italian MV Montecristo in the autumn of 2011, thereby freeing the crew.

"It was great to be able to demonstrate to the tanker captains how we would be able to deal with threats and offer them a level of protection," explained Lt Chris Hollingworth, one of Monmouth's principal warfare officers.

"We were able to neutralise potential threats by both directing support aircraft and using our 4.5in Mk8 gun."

Monmouth's Commanding Officer Cdr Gordon Ruddock was delighted with the outcome of the exercise.

"It will give confidence to the merchant marine community that we are ready, willing and able to protect them should they need us," he said.

"With fully-laden cargos of over 150,000 tonnes, it is important that merchant ships such as these are able to transport their cargo around the world without fear of piracy or other attack."

Lucky Mariner provided a welcome break for Black Knight from the routine of scouring the Gulf for suspicious shipping.

"Flying the only single-pilot helicopter in the RN is a job that all pilots on 815 Squadron are rightly proud of," said Lt Dixon. "In this hot environment, it becomes an even greater challenge to get the most out of the aircraft."

IT'S hot and sticky in the cab. It's hot and sticky in the Black Duke's hangar for the maintainers looking after the Lynx who've worked ceaselessly to ensure the helicopter's always ready to scramble.

Well, not ceaselessly to the letter. They did stop for a couple of days. December 25 and 26 to be precise.

Christmas Day was spent at sea where LS(UW) Steve Sheppard was on duty at his console, bracing himself for the obvious festive puns – "While Sheppard watches ops by night" – the bridge team were on the lookout for Santa, the bish led both a Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve and a morning service (accompanied by the smallest nativity scene most people had ever seen) on December 25 itself.

Beyond those on watch, Christmas Day is a relaxed affair, even on patrol: officers serving the dinner, Secret Santa, opening of presents, satellite phone calls home, and radio interviews with stations in the ship's native West Country.

The biggest surprise to come out of the ether was reserved for LS 'Ritchie' Richardson who was expecting to be questioned on air but didn't expect the interviewer to be his girlfriend, Rachel Abbol. "I couldn't really believe it," said Ritchie, "but it really made the day for me!"

And the traditions continued into Boxing Day. Apparently, in warmer climes, December 26 is a day for 'hands to bathe' in the RN (news to us as well...).

With the frigate stopped in the water for over two hours and a marksman keeping a lookout for sharks, diving, jumping and the more-than-occasional bellyflop into the Gulf – where even at this time of year the water's still about 24°C – were the order of the day.

AND then it was time for more training. With a bang.

There can be few better ways to shake off the festive cobwebs than a spot of gunnery funnery.

So just two days after Christmas, the 4,500 tons of battleship grey reverberated and the muzzle of her 4.5in gun flashed.

Command approve.

Four-five ENGAGE.

Four-five SHOOT.

And with a press of the pedal a 4.5in high-explosive shell was hurled at 868 metres per second (or 1,943 miles an hour) out of the barrel.

After the 'Kryten' – named after the angular-headed Red Dwarf character – had successfully fired its 8,200th round (of its life, not on the day...), the remaining upper deck weapons and their crews were put through their paces.

The 30mm cannon provides close-in protection for Monmouth, spewing out up to 650 rounds a minute against targets on the sea (up to 10km/six miles away) or in the sky (up to 2½km/1½ miles away).

In this instance, the foe was the 'killer tomato', a big red inflatable object which quickly deflates when pierced by shells.

As it's big, red and inanimate, it sounds like a sitting, er, tomato. But wind, spray and a heavy roll actually make it tricky to hit as it rolls in and out of the various weapons' arcs.

With all these flashes and bangs going off, you might think the Royal Marines detachment aboard were feeling a bit left out.

Luckily, they were more than catered for when Monmouth put into Bahrain – and they were let loose in the 'ship in a box'.

Ship in a box? It's a apply to a training facility the inner compartment shipping containers – h

It's ideal for board a Mnes Jack Brent and P a night exercise in our art of 'room clearance' means safely entering compartments.

To add to the real powered air-soft simu in the facility – ranging pistols to claymore min

They really pack a Personal Protective Equ magazines are fitted an

"The instructors wer approachable, while th added a level of realis

difficult to achieve in environment," said C Will Hall RM, in char of the commando detachment aboard th Black Duke.

His men – Roy Marines Boarding Tea

3 – were looking forward to putting those skills use...

...so it was quite fortunate that some pirates hove into view.

Not any old pirates, mind you. No, the Pirates of Atherstone.

FOR a few days, the Black Duke and the Crazy A joined forces in the Gulf for some mutually-benef training.

The minehunter pu her normal role to play of a pirate mother ship the Black Duke's special party take their skills to

Level 2 in fact – an un non-compliant boardin terminology – which pirates won't shoot, but surly and awkward.

So Atherstone's cr to resist the boarder come quietly, which m exchange between the 43 Commando Fleet P the ersatz pirates.

With cat-like tread, the pounced on the Hur freshly-honed clear an skill at arms to subdu initial resistance, while provided cover.

With the minehunter s it was time for Monmo team to climb aboard search its compartment

The pirate take-down a week's exercise involv only saw the Black Duk but also vice versa.

The frigate put her F manoeuvrable and with to test Atherstone's u art of fending off fast a use 'live assets' to tra benefit to the Crazy As.

On the final day of th was a chance for the vessels and experience ships.

"The transfer of pers is a brilliant way to allow working practices," sa Officer Lt Peter Davi enduring ethos – all of long underwritten the M to deal with ever-chan sea."

For Monmouth's CO what life aboard Ather the minehunter on two

"As a commanding o sense of pride and own something which never said. "It was particu closely with my old shi

Typically the mine w on their own or with opportunity to 'play' w not to be missed.

"Operating with M fantastic opportunity show their profession mine countermeasures working with a Type the operational enviro Atherstone's Comman Vickers.

And then it was time company. In Monmou doing a bit more traini

NEWS

term the US Coast Guard
ity they've built to replicate
s of a merchantman using
ence the 'ship in a box' tag.
nd search teams – such as
Ryan Billington carrying out
main image – to practise the
. As the name suggests, it
and checking cabins and

ism of the training, high-
alation weapons are used
g from rifles, shotguns and
es.

punch – so much so that
quipment must be worn when
d rounds are flying.

e incredibly hospitable and
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Royal Marines of
rotection Group and

e Black Duke's commandos
nt-class ship, using their
nd search techniques and
e the Crazy A's crew after
overhead Monmouth's Lynx

secured by the green berets,
outh's Royal Navy boarding
the 750-tonne warship to
ts and personnel.

was one of the highlights of
ving the two ships which not
ke make use of Atherstone,

Pacific 24 sea boats (highly
n a top speed nearly 40kts)
pper deck gunners in the
attack craft – the chance to
n against was of particular

their time in company, there
ship's companies to swap
e life on board each other's

onnel between ships at sea
y the exchange of ideas and
aid Atherstone's Executive
s. "It's the Royal Navy's
one company – which has
Naval Service and its ability
ging threats to security at

, the link-up reminded him
tone is like; he commanded
tours of duty in the Gulf.

fficer, you develop a great
ership over your ship – it's
leaves you," Cdr Ruddock
arly enjoyable working so
o."

varfare vessels either work
their own genius – so the
ith one of the big toys was

Monmouth has been a
for Atherstone's crew to
alism as well as what a
vessel is capable of when
23 frigate, particularly in
nment of the Gulf," said
ding Officer Lt Cdr Ben

e for the two ships to part
th's instance, she fancied
g...



Three cities of Malta

AS A keen supporter of the Royal Navy I was a bit surprised that you mistook some Maltese city names in printing the visit of HMS Illustrious in November.

We are proud that HMS Illustrious has been affiliated with what we call the three cities in the article (*December, page 5*) with the heading *Lusty visits Malta*.

The three cities' names should read Cospicua (or Bormla) Senglea (or L-Isla) and Vittoriosa (or Birgu).

We are also sad that this can be her last visit to Malta.

I will be more than happy, that you as editor of the *Navy News* make a note of this in your next issue of the paper.

I myself am proud that my grandfather served in the Royal Navy for 25 years but on the other side I am Maltese and proud of our small island which gave her utmost in most of the conflicts which took place in the last 100 years.

Please forgive me if I have been a bit of a critic although you are doing a great job with the *Navy News*.

— Paul Mallia
Malta GC



● HMS Hood at Scapa Flow

'Hood' footage made me fume

WAS there anyone else who, like me, settled down to watch the recent Channel 4 documentary *When Bismarck sank HMS Hood*, and three minutes in was (not so) quietly fuming?

We were promised new, unseen, colour footage of Hood.

And what we seemed to get were bows-on shots of Repulse, her aircraft handling cranes and triple 4in mounts clearly visible, and a broadside view of what looked like HMS Iron Duke, possibly in her gunnery training role.

Later on in the documentary we saw Churchill sailing past a Nelson-class, and yes, Hood.

I'm not sure, but I think that the pictures of that battleship in heavy seas were of a modified Queen Elizabeth-class (possibly Warspite), and not the Prince of Wales.

Actually, the commentary never actually seemed to claim the ship on screen was the ship being spoken of, but the assumption was certainly there.

In true 'Mr Angry' mode I emailed Channel 4 to point out the errors, and got an acknowledgement and the assurance that my comments would be passed on to the programme makers. (Actually I emailed twice, the second time to apologise for my



JACKPOT! Each month Pussers Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tipple to the writer of our top letter. This month's winner is: Andy Field.

Mr Angry tone, and to point out how the images were incorrect).

Naturally, I've heard nothing since. But I have started to wonder, does it matter?

Was it, as I asserted in my first email, "sloppy editing", or was I overreacting, because I had some detailed knowledge of warships?

Is it enough for documentary-makers to illustrate their programmes with "eye candy", in this case, pictures of Royal Navy ships? (you can almost imagine the conversation in the editing suite: "Well, it's grey and floating, so it'll do").

Would the same hold true for a documentary on say, England's 1966 World Cup victory, illustrated with pictures of any old football match from 1966?

So does it all matter? Was it sloppy editing, or just a complete lack of knowledge of someone who has no interest in warships or World War 2, and was working to a tight time schedule?

Or is it symptomatic of something else, say the 'sea blindness' we often hear of?

Or am I really just 'Mr Angry - A Naval Nerd'?

I'd be interested in what other readers of *Navy News* think.

— Andy Field
Eye, Suffolk

A grateful thanks

WE WOULD like to thank the Royal Navy HMS Drake establishment in Plymouth for all their help and support.

In 2009 my husband, AB Cowell, who was serving on HMS Campbeltown, came down with bowel cancer.

Things didn't go to plan and every year he has had operations and treatment. Without the help of the Navy we don't know how we would have managed.

The Naval Personal and Family Service and Drake doctors have been a Godsend.

We would also like to thank Hasler for their help with organising help within the home.

— Sarah Cowell, Ernesettle, Plymouth

Flagging up an interest

THANK you for publishing my story on Capt P Ligertwood's RMLI Platoon flag (*January, page 28*).

I have had calls from as far afield as Australia (RMAQ Brisbane), also veterans of HMS Renown, HMS Diana and HMS Hermes.

I will inform you of reunions as they are due.

— Don Ligertwood RMHS RM Rtd, Plymouth



Naval fire in the '50s gave me gunner's ear

WHENEVER I see gunnery ratings on ships closed up at action stations on documentaries or news items on the television I see that everyone is wearing anti-flash gear at their station.

Especially when salutes are fired from the saluting guns. The crew are always wearing white overalls with hoods and gloves and wearing ear protectors.

I find this most amusing and enclose a photograph of A gun's crew, a twin 4in mounting, on HMS Manxman when we were on a foreign commission in 1951. Note the dress, which was No 8s.

At the time this was the normal dress of the day while at sea, and that was how we dressed to man and fire the guns.

At no time were we issued with, or offered, anti-flash clothing or ear protectors.

I can imagine the reply from the ship's GI if anyone asked for such a thing.

I served on two other C-class destroyers as a leading seaman QA2 on 4.7 guns, and at no time was any protective clothing issued.

My, how times have changed!
— Vic Everest (tinnitus sufferer caused by naval gunfire)
Cheshunt, Herts

Formidable memories of carriers

THANK YOU for printing my daughter's letter (*January*).

I would like to add a couple of points she didn't know about!

The Formidable was not the only 'fleet carrier' to be hit by the kamikazes.

All six were hit over the period of the battle for Okinawa, none of which were mentioned in the book *The Royal Navy Day by Day*.

Another interesting point, the hit on Formidable on May 9 1945 happened to be the day after VE Day (Victory in Europe).

One of the Formidable's pilots won the last Victoria Cross of World War 2 — Lt R H Gray VC DSC.

On a visit to the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton a few years ago they didn't even know about it (no wonder they call it 'the forgotten war').

No celebration or relaxation for the British Pacific Fleet.

— Tom Day
Poole, Dorset

... I REMEMBER HMS Formidable being hit and also two other carriers, by kamikazes as HMS Euryalus was the ack-ack escort ship to the carriers.

At this time, May 1945, we were with the American Fleet and under Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Halsey, Third and Fifth Fleet, and joined Task Force 58 and 37 for Operation Iceberg, for which I have about 30 pages of copies in my archives.

This included operations on Sakishima Gunto Islands and the reoccupation of Okinawa.

Also in the area were carriers HMS Illustrious, Indefatigable,

Victorious and Indomitable, all associated with Task Force 57, 63, 111 and 112 over this period of time.

— Mr K J Taylor,
(HMS Euryalus 44-46 Ex RM)
Broadstairs, Kent

... THE article on Formidable memories revived much of that time on May 4 and 9 1945.

I was serving as a signalman onboard Formidable during those traumatic days and vividly remember both kamikaze hits as I was on the compass platform at the time (our TBS call sign was 'Lucky'...).

I too share the views and opinions of Mrs Geary's father.

Sadly this magnificent ship had a very short career, having first commissioned at the beginning of World War 2 — she was actually launched on August 17 1939 and was decommissioned and laid up in reserve seven years later in 1946 and subsequently scrapped at Inverkeithing in November 1953.

There was a Formidable Association for many years until its closure, sadly, several years ago when the declining numbers fell to about 30 members.

I share many of the thoughts of your contributor about Formidable and this well-built Belfast ship.

I subsequently served in other Harland and Wolff-built ships — Bulwark and Belfast — all of them very happy ships!

Tom Warden
Bridgwater

Never saw Skegness

HAVING read the *Skegness stranding* letter in your December issue, it reminded me of early 1940 as a young volunteer to the Navy when war broke out.

I was sent to Skegness — it was a new Naval depot, and I was there for six weeks very severe hard training.

I lost over 1½ stone in that time.

The only time we left the depot was every Saturday morning on a five-mile run/march in formation

with all gear on — out and back.

We never saw Skegness, and also no beer places.

We were then sent to Shotley for another six weeks, boys' training schedules — yes, and one of our company was not only 42 years old, but also a trawler skipper in Civvy Street.

I finally served in three destroyers. Though it may be of interest.

Ernie E Southon
Canterbury, Kent

Opinion

PROFESSIONAL development training. Not exactly front-line, you might think. A bit artificial. Classrooms and computer screens.

But a glance through this month's edition tells another story.

A ship is saved from sinking because of skills learned in a damage repair instructional unit — an artifice, certainly, but one which rocks and rolls and deluges trainees with cold water. Very much like the real thing, in fact.

A Royal Navy Lynx helicopter based on a French warship helps capture a pirate action group off the Horn of Africa — testament to a range of specialist skills honed through training.

HMS Monmouth is a constant hive of activity, with everyone from gunners to boarding specialists taking every opportunity to brush up their capabilities, alone and with Gulf minehunter HMS Atherstone.

The soon-to-be HMS Ambush works through a programme of contractors' trials, and as she does her consort HMS Westminster uses the occasion to put her own Ops Room to the test, training

against one of the most capable and stealthy boats in the seven seas. Patrol boat HMS Exploit, with a group of students on board, hastily arranges an *ad hoc* exercise with an RNLI lifeboat.

Elsewhere, Naval personnel — regular and reservists — dive off Malta and Ascension Island as part of Adventurous Training trips.

In short, there is training, then there is Royal Navy training — varied, challenging and based on believable scenarios.

The value of realistic, tailored training has long been valued in the Senior Service. Just think of the reputation of the Nelsonian gunners, drilled into a widely-feared fighting machine.

Or at the 50th anniversary of the RN's Outdoor Leadership training Centre at Talybont-on-Usk, a far-sighted move in 1962.

And the fact that the Navy has just been chosen as a top 100 apprentice employer for the second year running suggests that such farsightedness in training is still embedded in the Navy psyche.

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD



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CLASSIC JACK

BY TUGS

GEDDOUT!
YEW DIDN'T!
A VALENTINE CARD!
FROM THAT CRACKER...

... IN THE MET
OFFICE!?
'OW D'YOU
MANAGE IT?
WHAT'S THE BIG
SECRET?

HE TELLS
LIES.



Kenya and Charybdis

IN THE January issue, Lt Cdr C F T Poynder states in his letter *My pride in Pedestal* that the only cruiser in Force X was HMS Kenya.

The last passage to Malta also included the Dido-class cruiser HMS Charybdis.

Kenya and Charybdis were at the vanguard of this squadron, side-by-side fighting off these last heavy bombing and torpedo boat attacks.

Also on the return journey to Gibraltar, Charybdis and Kenya side-by-side under a heavy attack are seen in a stunning picture on page 193 in the book *Pedestal* by Peter C Smith.

PS: Charybdis has been mentioned in the last five editions of *Navy News!*

— James Duckworth
Ex Sec, Charybdis Survivors' Association

Ulster's busy programme

I REFER to Eddie Summerfold's letter (*December*), in which he refers to HMS Ulster's island-hopping as 'dogsbody duties' whilst on the West Indies station.

He might be interested in HMS Ulster's June 21 1957 programme for Hurricane Guardship Cruises: July 30 – Bermuda; August 2 – St Kitts; August 5 – Anguilla; August 9 – Tortola, Virgin Islands; August 12 – San Juan, Puerto Rico; August 17 – St John and English Harbour, Antigua; August 21 – Portsmouth, Dominica; August 24 – Bridgetown, Barbados; August 29 – Kingstown, St Vincent; September 2 – Union Island, Grenadines; September 5 – St George, Grenada; September 9 – Port of Spain, Trinidad.

Showing the flag and providing much-needed assistance to any island unfortunate enough to be devastated by a hurricane was certainly never considered to be 'dogsbody' duty.

I can, if requested, forward details of the 'cruises' following Port of Spain.

— J Gordon Jones,
Wenvoe, Cardiff

When Peacocks flew the nest

CAN I respond to Jim Jarvie's letter (*January*)?

HM ships Peacock, Plover and Starling were sold to the Philippines and departed Hong Kong on the colony's hand-over to the Chinese.

I have cap tallies for Plover and Tamar, if anyone is interested.

— Barry Cuckow
Worthing, West Sussex

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you

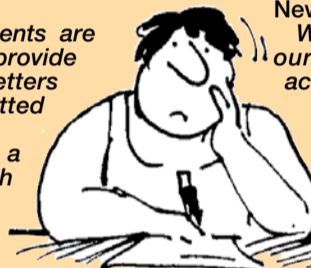
have the permission for us to publish it.

Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in *Navy News*, nor can we reply to every one.

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



Great Glen dash

I SENT in what I think is a Mystery Ship answer, HMS Brereton; whether it is or not, I thought a few details might be of interest!

Lt Cdr Nick Barker was the captain when I joined as an AB and we learnt that he wouldn't have the ship with an open bridge and insisted it was topped off to enclose it properly.

At one stage we were up the west coast of Scotland when a message was received that Polish trawlers were operating inside the UK fishing limits on the east coast of Scotland.

For timing reasons the decision was made to go through the Caledonian Canal to get to the

poachers as quick as possible.

Unfortunately we damaged a propeller during the journey, which didn't go down too well, and the timing for the crossing was, I believe, 23 hours – and I believe the RN decided no more ships would go through as a result.

I have enclosed a copy of a photo up the top of the locks with Ben Nevis in the background.

Nick Barker provided the crew with Breton-style soft hats in navy blue and orange for the officers; I don't think anyone else had ever done that.

It was a good ship's company and we had a hard but good time.

— Roy Blackman (Ex AB & L/Seaman), Bottesford, Notts

Heroic tug rescue

READING about HMS Formidable's kamikaze attacks not mentioned in some *The Royal Navy Day by Day* editions, (*January*), I too was involved in an incident that is not in the latest edition of *The Royal Navy Day by Day*.

On Boxing Day 1955, in Sliema Creek, Malta, a north-easterly 'regale', a severe local gale, blew up.

The 6th Frigate Squadron was ordered to sea to ride out the gale. As HMS Undine left Sliema Creek to turn toward the sea she was hit by heavy seas.

The sea washed four sailors off the foc's'le into the sea.

At this time we, minesweeper HMS Leverton, were ordered

to slip our moorings to look for survivors, but we were useless and became a victim of the weather because of our high freeboard.

It took us the rest of the day and part of the evening to secure to our bow and stern buoys. We did not have a full ship's company on board because of the RAs.

The food we had that day was pot-mess and corned beef sandwiches.

The hero of the day was the large RMA tug Sea Giant; a crewman jumped into the water and saved a sailor.

The crewman received the BEM whilst the Sea Giant's Master received the MBE.

— E Booker
Southsea, Hampshire

Vote for the battleship!

MANY of us are concerned about the size and shape of the modern Royal Navy, and now another nautical icon is under threat!

The battleship token, part of the Monopoly board game since 1935, may be discarded by the makers in favour of a new token.

Your readers have until February 5 to vote for the battleship to

stay – go to www.facebook.com/Monopoly and help to keep the battleship afloat. Who ever selects the wheelbarrow, anyway?

One vote may be cast every day and, among the alternatives offered as a new token, is a helicopter.

— Lester May, Camden Town,
London



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Pupils tour frigate

SOME 60 children from a Hampshire school were given an end-of-term treat when they were hosted on board a warship.

The pupils, along with ten members of staff from Year One at Crofton Hammond Infant school in Stubbington, were given a guided tour of HMS Argyll during a weekend break in the frigate's training programme.

Cdr Tim Neild said: "It has been a real pleasure to host the children from Crofton Hammond Infant School onboard, particularly as they are our future."

"It was good to see the smiles on so many faces as they toured the ship, and hopefully the visit to the ship and of our helicopter has given them some lasting memories."

Headteacher Jacky Halton said: "It was quite a challenge for the ship's company and my staff to take 60 young children aboard a warship – but it was more than worth it."

"The children were thrilled to visit a warship and are lucky to have had this opportunity at such a young age."

The young visitors, wrapped in their winter woollies, were given a tour of the top deck weapon systems and displayed their climbing prowess when navigating between decks from the bridge to the operations room.

The visit came after an arduous eight-week period of sea training for Argyll, followed by a successful firing of its Seawolf missile system.

On leaving Portsmouth, Argyll supported new pilot training for 702 NAS by practising landing on the flight deck, as well as hosting fledgling frigate captains for their final training.

First Sea Lord visits RN staff east of Suez

SUBMARINERS one and all...

Newly-qualified crew members of HMS Trenchant proudly hold up the symbol of a submariner in the presence of Britain's highest-ranking underwater warrior, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope (right).

The head of the Navy visited the majority of the Royal Navy's forces deployed east of Suez when he called on the hub of its operations in the region, the UK Maritime Component Command in Bahrain.

From there the actions of nine warships, RFAs, plus Fleet Air Arm Lynx and Merlin are directed – a mission involving more than 1,300 men and women of the Naval Service.

The First Sea Lord engaged in a whirlwind round of visits to meet as many people as possible – he called on frigate HMS Monmouth, which has recently arrived in the region as the RN's constant 'Gulf guardian', three of the four-strong minehunting force

(HM Ships Shoreham, Quorn, and Atherstone) plus their mother ship RFA Cardigan Bay.

And on hunter-killer submarine Trenchant, as we mentioned.

There he joined nine men who have been awarded their coveted dolphins – a sign that they know the Trafalgar-class boat inside and out – during the Devonport-based submarine's nine-month tour of duty.

"It was a tremendous pleasure to host the First Sea Lord during his visit to HMS Monmouth," said the Black Duke's Commanding Officer Cdr Gordon Ruddock.

"That Admiral Stanhope was able to communicate his thanks on behalf of the Service to our ship's company for their diligence and commitment away from friends and family at Christmas was appreciated by all."

The headquarters and support staff of the UKMCC were not missed out, nor the two dozen RN and RM personnel directing Combined Task Force 150 (half a dozen ships sweeping the Indian



Ocean for criminal activity) plus the engineers and experts of the Fleet Support Unit Bahrain and the minehunters' logistics support team – all vital to keeping the Fleet running round-the-clock.

"I was delighted to be able to visit the sailors and marines

forward deployed in the Middle East region over this festive season so that I could personally thank them for their professionalism, commitment, humour and courage," Admiral Stanhope said.

"I am immensely proud of all our people and their families."



Phot is in the pictures

A ROYAL Navy photographer has been in the pictures rather than taking them.

And we are not just talking about any old film – CPO (Phot) Nathan Dua was an extra in the film *Les Misérables*.

CPO Dua (above) played the part of 'Convict 363', who is one of hundreds seen pulling on ropes to bring a galleon into a dock at the start of the film.

Filmed at Portsmouth Naval Base last spring, Nathan answered a request by Universal Pictures for thin, gaunt-looking men.

Spending two days on set at the end of March, Nathan dressed up like a 19th Century French convict and stood in waist-deep water as rain, wind and wave machines simulated a fierce storm.

"Having spent 26 years in the Royal Navy, I thought I had experienced some pretty wild storms, but the storm effects generated on set of *Les Mis* was by far the wildest," said Nathan.

"It was absolutely relentless – by the end of the day we were totally soaked."

"Even though I knew it's a musical I didn't realise that we'd all be singing at the start, so we had to practise that the day before so we got it right for the scenes the next day."

Nathan, who works as the Eastern Photographic Manager at HMS Excellent, Portsmouth was one of several Royal Navy personnel who took part in the film, with scenes shot both at Portsmouth and at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich.

FOST at Collingwood

FLAG Officer Sea Training Rear Admiral Clive Johnstone paid a special visit to HMS Collingwood as VIP for the RN Leadership School passing-out parade and Victory Squadron graduation.

As well as carrying out his formal duties, FOST – escorted throughout by Cdre Mike Mansergh, Commodore of HMS Collingwood – also visited the Communications Department in Lyster Building to take a look at the Queen Elizabeth-class facility and the Close Range Training Simulator.

Raleigh reunions at passing-out parade

BROTHERS-in-arms and a married couple were among those reunited during HMS Raleigh's final passing-out parade of the year.

Trainee AET Luke Clarke was pleased to see his brother Jamie – also an AET – after a four-month separation.

Jamie had spent the past three months on operations in Afghanistan, maintaining the Sea Kings of 857 Naval Air Squadron.

Luke, having just finished his initial ten-week training, also invited his grandparents Paul and

Jean Chappell, who both served in the Navy.

Trainee warfare specialist David Edmonds was delighted to have his Naval Dental Nurse wife Rachael at the parade – Rachael joined the Royal Navy last year after a career in the RAF, and David – then an RAF corporal – attended her passing-out parade in July.

David spent 11 years in the RAF but was seeking a new challenge.

He will now specialise in hydrography and meteorology.

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Staff and cadets gather to bid farewell to First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope after his visit to Britannia Royal Naval College

Leading by example

THE Royal Navy's top admiral has been sharing his thoughts on leadership with the next generation of leaders.

Meeting a group of officer cadets undergoing their initial naval training at Britannia Royal Naval College, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope led a discussion on the principles of leadership and talked about his own experience gained during his 43-year career.

During his day at Dartmouth Admiral Stanhope took the opportunity to see aspects of the newly-enhanced initial naval training course for officers, introduced last year.

He also saw cadets undergoing a leadership exercise in the Dart maritime training area – part

of a demanding four-day exercise which was the culmination of the second stage of initial naval training, known as the 'marinisation phase'.

In crews of seven, the officer cadets use motor whalers and picket boats in a tactical scenario, based on a humanitarian operation, bringing together the skills they have learnt throughout their course, including leadership, navigation and seamanship.

Admiral Stanhope also met a class of trainee warfare officers in Dartmouth's state-of-the-art ship's bridge simulator, which can be configured to test students' in a wide range of scenarios.

The admiral was naturally familiar with the surroundings – he undertook his own initial naval training at BRNC in 1970.

50 years of service recognised

A ROYAL Marines officer has been formally thanked for 50 years of service – including some of the Corps' toughest campaigns of the past decades.

A citation read at the celebratory lunch in Maj Cameron March's honour stated that his career "has been characterised by excellence throughout, conspicuous from the outset in your selection as a King's Badgeman in 1964."

It continued: "Operationally you have participated in some of the hardest-fought campaigns in living memory; most notably in Aden and later during Operation Corporate [the Falklands Conflict] when you fulfilled that most crucial of leadership roles as Company Sergeant Major within Lima Coy 42 Cdo."

Maj March was selected for commission in June 1983, and he retired from regular service in 1996 after 33 years.

He then entered the Civil Service "and embarked upon the work that all of us privileged to know you today will regard as perhaps your greatest legacy - the development of Operational Stress Management and Trauma Risk Management," the citation stated.

"Such crucial work, which is acknowledged as best practice around the world and has aided so many of those in uniform as well as those outside the Service who have been exposed to trauma, was properly recognised in your appointment as a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

"You have been and will remain an inspiration to all."

Maj March, aged 66, joined the Corps in January 1963 and over the course of his career served in 41 Cdo, 42 Cdo, 45 Cdo, RM Poole, RM Eastney, 3 Cdo HQ, 539 ASRM, CTCRM, DRORM, and HMS Warrior at Northwood.

In the Civil Service, the officer also supported Operation Telic [Iraq] as staff officer dealing with operational stress management and trauma risk management in 2003.



Computerised warship

IT's HI-TECH – and it's green.

But whether any of the world's major navies will be interested in a full-sized version is another matter...

Michael Murphy, a former LROG, contacted us about a Polish friend of his, George Kwiecer, who lives in Melbourne, Australia.

"George has an interesting hobby, which he has taken up in his retirement," said Michael.

"He builds model ships, and his latest is a

warship which has been crafted almost entirely from discarded computer components (pictured left).

"The hull has been constructed from two pieces of timber and the only other materials, other than the computer components, are a child's toy helicopter, a golf ball and a razor handle.

"Perhaps you might consider a heading of 'the Recycled-class warship'..."

Birthday parmo in the South Atlantic

SO IT'S your birthday, and you fancy a special treat. Who wouldn't?

For one sailor on the last serving Type 42 destroyer, that treat was a taste of home.

And to make it a bit more special, it was served up to him by the boss.

AB Warfare Specialist Gareth Gibson turned 22 on board HMS Edinburgh whilst deployed in the South Atlantic.

Gareth, from Redcar near Middlesbrough, is partial to a parmo – something of a regional speciality on Teesside, consisting of deep-fried breadcrumb chicken covered in a béchamel sauce and topped with cheese.

Believed to have been introduced to Middlesbrough by an Italian after World War 2 in the form of *escalope Parmesan*, the dish can now be found in many varieties across the North-East, featuring such variations as extra meat or garlic sauce, and it is often served with chips and salad – now regarded as an essential part of the culinary scene in the Boro area.

And it is a dish that has legs – as Italian migrants and their influence spread, so versions of the parmo have cropped up around the world, including South Korea...

It was pretty much the classic

Teesside parmo that Gareth was served by Cdr Nick Borbone, the Commanding Officer of HMS Edinburgh.

Gareth, who previously worked as a pharmacist in a hospital, joined the Royal Navy in February 2009 seeking a sense of adventure and challenge.

His primary job on board involves monitoring the air picture in the Operations Room whilst being on constant standby to respond to threats against the ship.

He is on his second deployment to the South Atlantic, and this time he was away over festive period.

Gareth said: "It is tough being away from home for such a long time, especially being away over the Christmas period.

"Being served a birthday meal from the Commanding Officer of HMS Edinburgh was not only a big surprise to me, but also a rare treat especially when he served me my favourite meal from back home."

Edinburgh, the last Type 42 Destroyer in the Fleet, is due to return to the UK from the South Atlantic next month.

● Cdr Nick Borbone serves up a birthday special – a parmo – to AB Gareth Gibson on board HMS Edinburgh



Plaudits at swimming club

MORE than 30 young swimmers from the Plymouth Royal Navy/Royal Marines Swimming Club marked a year of success with an awards ceremony held at RM Stonehouse in Plymouth.

The swimmers, sons and daughters of RN and RM staff, train in pools at HMS Drake in Devonport and HMS Raleigh in Torpoint.

The event was arranged by WO Diego Walker and his wife Helen, who have been on the club committee since their eldest daughter Chloe was five.

Chloe is now 20, and is a regular instructor at the club, and while dad is about to leave the Navy after 34, he will continue as club chairman.

Swimmer of the Year awards went to Katie Want and Pete Redbourn, while Teacher of the Year – as voted by students and parents – went to June Porter.

RFA captain retires after 44 years

THE arrival of supply ship RFA Fort Rosalie on Merseyside may not have made the headlines, but it was a momentous occasion for her Commanding Officer.

For the ship's move to the Cammell Laird shipyard at Birkenhead represented the end of Capt Dale Worthington's final voyage after 44 years at sea with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

The ship's final three-month deployment saw her supporting counter-piracy operations east of Suez, and included visits to Diego Garcia, the Seychelles, Oman and Mumbai in India.

Capt Worthington joined the RFA in 1972 after four years in the Merchant Navy, and was the first commanding officer of the new fleet replenishment tanker RFA Wave Ruler, which was regularly employed in the Caribbean; the ship scored notable successes in the fight against drugs-runners.

Capt Worthington admitted the final walk down the gangway was inevitably emotional, but added: "After 44 years at sea I am looking forward to spending more time with my wife and family, and spending time walking in North Wales, golfing and mastering fly-fishing."

New skills for children

IT IS not often that schoolchildren have to escape from a stricken submarine – but you never know...

If said submarine had a party from High View School in Plymouth on board, then rescuers could probably rely on the youngsters to know the ropes, because some of them have done the training.

Maybe not the whole nine yards, but enough to make for an exciting day at the school.

It all came about when seven members of HMS Raleigh, the training establishment at Torpoint in Cornwall, visited the nursery children as part of the Early Years theme 'Guess Who?'

As well as talking to the children about their jobs, and answering questions on a variety of subjects from medals to guns, the staff also gave pupils a chance to try their hand at some naval skills, including marching, PT – and how to escape from a submarine.

Lt Cdr Steve Lovett, Raleigh's First Lieutenant, said: "When the school approached us we asked for volunteers to attend and were delighted with the number of people who came forward.

"This was a good opportunity



● PO Ricardo Santana lets one of the pupils from High View School try on his cap

Picture: Nicki Dunwell

for us to introduce the Royal Navy to some of the youngest members of society.

"Hopefully meeting some of our staff may have made a lasting impression on the children, who may go on to forge their own career in the Royal Navy in the future."

The Foundation Stage pupils are learning about important

people in society, the jobs they do, and how they influence lives.

Class teacher Jessica Lane said: "We felt that the Armed Forces have such a major, influential role in Britain, especially in the South West, and that this would be a unique opportunity for our children to learn about our wider community.

Olympic rowers are tested at Lympstone

OLYMPIC rowers were tested to their limit by elite Royal Marines in their bid to win future medals.

Members of the GB rowing team's lightweight squad hoping to qualify for the 2016 Rio Olympics had to negotiate a two-day version of the gruelling programme on offer at the Commando Training Centre RM at Lympstone.

The ten rowers, including London 2012 silver medallists, said the extreme physical test, which included breaking ice in order to crawl through a flooded tunnel, had made them better athletes, and they felt inspired by the Navy's amphibious troops.

They said they had learned the Royal Marines' team ethos and how to push themselves mentally and physically beyond their expected limits.

On the other side they also earned the Marines' respect.

An exhausted Richard Chambers, veteran of Beijing and London, said: "This was really good. It took us out of our comfort zone; two hours of hard physical tests – so different to what we'd normally do.

"We have come back more of a team now because we had to work together in order to get through it."

He said the experience, in which they learned about the history of the Corps, what makes a good commando and talking to Royal Marines with front-line combat experience, was humbling:

"We soon realised that what we go through as athletes doesn't compare with the Royal Marines," he continued.

"We are not as tough mentally or physically but we now know that there is always an extra ten per cent reserve we can fall back on once we gain that mental robustness."

Visit co-ordinator Capt Steve Cotton RM praised the rowers, saying: "The Olympics were compulsory viewing for us.

"There is a lot of cross-over in terms of physical and mental fitness between Marines and elite athletes.

"They did very well considering their training is so different.

"I hope they go away with that ability to build on their mental attitude necessary to get medals."

Every one a winner

A ROYAL Marines officer who played a major part in the musical celebrations for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee events last year was awarded an OBE in the New Years Honours list.

Lt Col Nick Grace, the head of the Portsmouth-based Royal Marines Band Service, organised and conducted the music at the Jubilee Muster and review of the Armed Forces at Windsor in May.

In his role as Principal Director of Music for the RM Band Service, Lt Col Grace led the massed bands from the three Services – more than 450 musicians and pipers – in front of the Queen and millions of TV viewers around the world.

His 30-year career has included serving with the RM Band on the Royal Yacht for five years, and during the Gulf War of 2003 he led the band acting as casualty handlers in concerts on HM Ships Ocean and Ark Royal just days before the start of the conflict.

■ A former Royal Navy pilot was also awarded an OBE in the list for his outstanding performance as an aviation safety advisor.

Nick Dunn left the Service on Christmas Day as a Commander, and apart from his role as Safety Management Advisor at Navy Command HQ, he flew anti-submarine Sea Kings before being appointed the first Merlin Senior Pilot.

He commanded 814 Naval Air Squadron and the Merlin Helicopter Force, and spent some time working with industry to promote sales of the EH101, of which the Merlin is a variant.

He is now a safety officer for the Dartmouth Steam Railway and River Boat Company – the same organisation he worked for before joining the Royal Navy in 1982.

■ Meanwhile a recently-retired officer who was awarded an MBE in the Birthday Honours List has travelled to Buckingham Palace to receive his award.

Lt Cdr Stuart Hobson (rtd) was recognised for his dedication to the UK's seaborne nuclear deterrent patrols and for helping to promote relations between the Royal Navy and the US Navy.

In a 38-year career Lt Cdr Hobson served in Polar ice boats HM Ships Renown, Repulse and Resolution and Vanguard submarines Victorious and Vengeance, and he finished his time with the Royal Navy as Officer-in-Charge of Clyde Naval Base's Strategic Weapons Support Building.

■ Another key member of staff working with the national strategic deterrent has received a valedictory award certificate after 33 years in the Royal Navy.

WO1 Jeff Griffiths left the Mob and Devonport at the end of last year – then returned this year in a new guise, having joined Babcock's Tactical Weapons Test Organisation.

■ AET Thomas Baker has been presented with the Trainee of the Term award at RN Air Station Culdrose on the completion of his professional training with search and rescue unit 771 Naval Air Squadron.

AET Baker won the award by his outstanding performance – including academic achievements, attitude and military bearing – while training on Sea King aircraft.

■ Officer Cadet Peter Whiteley has been nominated for a top Naval award after winning a major engineering prize for a master's degree project at the University of Cambridge.

That in turn led to him being nominated for the Naval Review Prize, offered for the best papers and articles written by members of the Service for the independent quarterly journal which promotes debate within the Royal Navy.

OC Whiteley's study into the fault detection in wind turbine gearboxes earned him the prize of the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) Institute, Babcock Award for the Best Mechanical Engineering Student of the Year.



Schemes gathering impetus

TWO major RNA initiatives are steaming full speed ahead – to the benefit of the Association and serving members of the Royal Navy.

The Shipmates programme is 'going great guns', according to General Secretary S/M Paul Quinn – over 1,000 Service leavers had signed on by the end of 2012, either at local branches or on the HQ roll.

A new member of staff has been taken on as Shipmates Programme Administrator – former LStd Rachael Tate started before Christmas, and can be contacted on 023 9272 3747 or at rachael@royalnavalassoc.com

S/M Paul said there had been a very positive response from those introduced to the scheme, with many saying it was great to find a group making contact with them.

The initiative is being expanded to include social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and the RNA website also now publishes all Full Time Reserve Service opportunities, Resettlement Notices and other specific vacancies that may be of interest to Naval Service leavers.

A key benefit of the programme, described as 'an arm round the shoulder' for those leaving the Service, has always been the contacts network – someone moving back to their old home area can hook straight into a network through the local RNA branch, with the Association acting as a gateway to a range of other organisations.

Meanwhile the mentoring programme is also proving a big success, with most trades at HMS Sultan covered and all Phase 2 classes at HMS Collingwood benefiting from the scheme.

Mentoring by the RNA is seen as an integral part of the Royal Navy's bid to foster qualities such as honour, duty and loyalty in young sailors.

Oops...

A REPORT in last month's edition incorrectly stated that the Arbroath branch of the Royal British Legion laid up their standard and closed down at a gathering at RM Condor, supported by Angus branch of the RNA.

In fact, it was the RNA branch which closed down, with shipmates supported by members of Arbroath RBL, which is very much alive and kicking.

We would also like to clarify that Jean Allen, who featured in a story last month about the bell of the Anita Dan (later HMS Endurance), is the sister of river pilot John Allen, not his widow, as we were advised by a third party.

Tartar reunion

THE tenth reunion of the HMS Tartar Association will be held on October 4-7 at the Three Queens Hotel in Burton-on-Trent.

During the weekend a visit will be made to the National Memorial Arboretum to dedicate a plaque in memory of all who served in Tartar.

For further details contact Des and Linda Powell on 07866 928496 or email linpowe@btopenworld.com

Maltese rendezvous with Illustrious

TWO members of the HMS Illustrious Association who were holidaying in Malta at the end of last year had been tipped off that the helicopter carrier would be visiting the island that month – so went prepared.

S/Ms Frances Garton and Jim Clavell packed their 'uniforms', enabling them to take part in several commemorative events,

courtesy of the ship.

The visitors took part in the royal reception for the Earl and Countess of Wessex, the Three Trumpets ceremony recalling the affiliation of the ship to the Three Cities (Senglea, Vittoriosa and Cospicua) in 2005, and the wreath-laying at the Church of Our Lady of Victories in Senglea.

The Three Trumpets ceremony saw local

Sea Cadets parade each of the cities' trumpets before the three mayors reunited them on a plinth, recreating the ship's badge.

S/M Jim said they were grateful to Lt Cdr Stuart Slowther and Lt Hugh Biddlecombe, their escorts of the three events, and to Capt Martin Connell, Commanding Officer of the carrier.

Plymouth dine at Drake

THE main event in the Plymouth branch calendar – the annual dinner and dance – attracted 250 members and guests to the WOs and SRs Mess at HMS Drake.

Guests of honour included the Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Cllr Michael Wright – who is ex-RN – Rear Admiral Simon Lister and his wife Anita, and RNA National Chairman S/M Chris Dovey and his wife Gail.

Also in attendance were serving Royal Navy personnel, Sea Cadets and members of other branches.

The Loyal Toast to the Queen was followed by toasts to Plymouth branch, guests and the City of Plymouth.

Once again mess catering manager Annette Hellyer and her staff provided top-notch service, and the Sea Cadets were congratulated on their now-customary immaculate turn-out.

Thanks were expressed to S/M Sue Gutteridge and her social team for another organisational triumph, and to mess president WO1 Chris Isaacs and his members for the use of their excellent facilities.

Vindictive date

THE inauguration of the restored Vindictive memorial in Ostend will now take place on Friday May 24.

The memorial, which includes the bow of the Victorian cruiser, was moved to make way for redevelopment, which also allowed restoration work to take place.

The new date will allow the Belgian royal family to attend the ceremony, which recalls the daring mission on May 9-10 1918 to block U-boats' route to open water.

The ceremony will take place during *Oostende voor Anker* (Ostend at Anchor), a major annual maritime festival that attracts some 200,000 visitors

HQ open days

RNA HQ is planning five open days for this year – April 19, May 10, June 28, September 20 and October 11, though May and June are already fully booked.

There are around 35 places on each day, so if you are interested contact S/Ms Andy or Nigel.

Shrapnel injury put Royal in sick bay

LAST month's version of events on board HMS Newfoundland during Operation Treador in the Red Sea prompted S/M Alan Waite to contact us with his recollections of the clash with Egyptian warship Domiat, formerly the River-class frigate HMS Nith.

"On October 29 1956 HMS Newfoundland, with HM ships Crane and Modeste, left Aden just after midnight for the Red Sea.

"On 30th HMS Diana joined the squadron, Task Force 324. Orders were then issued on 31st to carry out Operation Treador at which Newfoundland and Diana headed north at full speed, leaving the two frigates to follow at their best speed.

"At this stage the crews closed up at action stations and while the

last southbound convoy from the canal was being checked on the starboard side a ship with no lights was spotted.

"The next thing the Domiat was illuminated on our port beam. The signal was given 'Stop or I fire' then 'Report when stopped'.

"It was then spotted that Domiat increased speed and turned and threatened to ram Newfoundland, so A and B 6in and the Royal Marines P1 and P2 4in mountings opened fire along with the 40mm Bofors that could bear.

"Y turret could not bear until just before the action finished.

"Diana was on our stern and managed to also engage the target which only lasted a few minutes. In all, nine broadsides were fired.

"Domiat capsized and sank in three minutes and only one survivor was picked up by our whaler before

we left the scene due to possible threat of MTBs, leaving Diana to search for survivors, of which she picked up 68 before being ordered to rejoin Newfoundland leaving men still in the water – this was done because of two unidentified ships on the radar.

"Later that day 55 survivors were transferred to Newfoundland and then on the 2nd returned to Diana, which then took them to the French Naval base at Djibouti.

"A suspected attack by three MTBs developed that night on the radar in which Y turret engaged, but was proved to be false.

"The frigates Crane and Modeste were operating independently to find the Egyptian frigate Rashid, ex HMS Spey, and it was during this operation Crane was attacked by five Israeli jets with rockets and small bombs, resulting in several hits on the ship and injuring a Bofors gun crew.

"One jet was shot down and another was damaged, possibly crashing in the sea, by Crane's gunfire.

"From then on Newfoundland settled down to patrol a line called Mike-Mike, the frigates to patrol the coastline and Diana returned to the squadron before returning to the UK via Mombasa.

"Crane later returned to Singapore to pay off and Modeste to Aden where Newfoundland joined her for some R&R before returning to the Red Sea where she spent Christmas at sea – an Army supply ship delivered mail Christmas morning – and New Year was spent at the French base at Djibouti before returning to the



Toys are delivered

MEMBERS of City of Glasgow branch visited Yorkhill Children's Hospital to deliver toys, games and drawing materials to the playgroup.

S/Ms Joan Lowe, Anne McKinnon, Frank Halliday, John Fox, Thomas Gates and chairman Kenn McKinnon (above) were

invited up to the playgroup's office for tea and goodies, allowing them to have a good chat with staff and discuss the distribution of the toys and other items.

S/M Kenn then handed over a cheque for their funds, raised by branch members throughout the year.

Statue to be unveiled

LONDONDERRY branch has a pivotal role in organising the city's Battle of the Atlantic 70th anniversary events in May.

The city, along with Liverpool and London, is commemorating the Royal Navy's struggle to keep the supply lines open throughout World War 2.

Londonderry's turn in the

spotlight is on May 10-12, during which time an 8ft bronze statue of a sailor will be unveiled on the old HMS Ferret/Sea Eagle site in memory of those who died in the Atlantic between 1939 and 1945.

For more details of events in the UK City of Culture 2013 see the HQ website at www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

Honour for Peter

WORLD War 2 veteran Peter Lambert has been awarded life membership to the Association.

S/M Peter is a founder member of Stafford branch, and has worked for his fellow shipmates in a number of roles, from committee member to escort of the branch standard.

He also works tirelessly in enhancing the branch's reputation in the public eye.

When the branch had its own clubhouse he also played a key role in running it, with all the associated tasks.

Branch secretary S/M Gwyn Roberts said: "His stalwart work within the RNA and the branch in general made him an asset.

"The branch feel lucky to have a member of his calibre and his life membership to the Royal Naval Association is very well deserved."



● S/M Ernie Havis admires the model of HMS Dahlia

Dahlia refit complete

THERE was a pleasant surprise at a meeting of the Cheshunt and Waltham Cross branch when a model ship was returned to shipmates.

The model is of HMS Dahlia (K59), a Flower-class corvette, which was adopted by Cheshunt in 1942 during Warship Week.

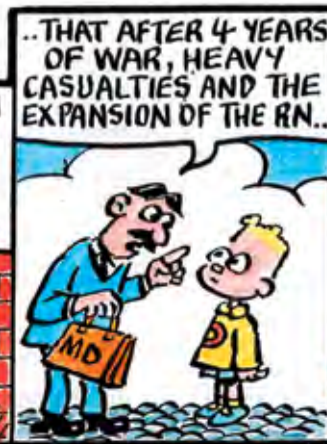
The model had undergone a major refit, and was (re)presented to the branch.

The model was made by S/M Len Shipman, and was displayed in a room at the Conservative Club.

The model has been repaired and restored by members of the North London Military Society, unbeknownst to the branch – modellers included Gary Elmes, Mark Gilbert, and Brian and Jack Snary, who have brought Dahlia back to pristine condition.

The chairman of the Conservative Club has agreed to display the model in the main part of the building, along with an explanatory booklet and photographs of the ship's company and the ship herself on convoy duty.

Naval Quirks



↓ 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



Battle of the Atlantic and SAR memories

THIS year sees two major anniversaries for the Royal Navy – the Battle of the Atlantic 70th and the helicopter Search and Rescue 60th.

Navy News and the Royal Navy communications organisation will be covering both anniversaries in detail, but we want to look beyond the official records.

Do you have any recollections of either the Battle or of rotary-wing Search and Rescue missions over the years?

And do you have any photographs which might deserve a wider audience?

If you have any anecdotes, recollections or images which help us describe the human dimension – life on board escort warships or merchantmen on the high seas, maybe, or a memorable rescue mission in a Navy helo – and you are happy for us to publish them in the paper and online, then please send them to *Navy News*, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH or email edit@navynews.co.uk

Such information may also be of interest to the wider media and broadcasters, so we may in some circumstances get back to you to see if you are happy to talk to journalists or film-makers about your experiences – please include a contact number or email address.

Hotel full

WITH months still to go, this year's National Conference in Liverpool is already looking to be a major gathering of shipmates.

More than 500 have booked the Adelphi Hotel package, and the establishment is now full.

The gala dinner, at the same venue, is also nearly full.

Area 10 has identified some alternative accommodation, including the appropriately-named Lord Nelson Hotel in Horton Street, near Lime Street station – say you are with the RNA party for special rates.

If you are having problems finding accommodation for June 14-16 contact Dave Tollerton at Stoker8@virginmedia.com, or call 0151 933 4992.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our December edition (right) was HMS Sluys, which went on to become the Iranian ship Artemiz.

Eddie Summerfold, of Bury, wins £50, while William Smith, of Kidlington, Oxford, wins a bottle of rum, kindly donated by Pusser's Rum, in the same draw.

This month's mystery ship, above (foreground) was a trawler which, with her sister, acted as an RNR training ship in the 1970s, as well as testing mine countermeasures equipment, before being returned to her owner in 1983.

Our ship gave her name to the class – (1) what was her RN name, and (2) what was her original name? We have removed her pennant number from the image.

Complete the coupon and send

MYSTERY PICTURE 216

Name

Address

My answers (1)

(2)

Was Jellicoe behind town's Navy link?

ALRESFORD branch celebrates its 20th anniversary with a formal lunch on April 14, with former Controller of the Navy and branch president Admiral Sir Derek Reffell and several founder members planning to attend.

And although the branch only commissioned in 1993, the historic Hampshire market town had connections to the Royal Navy long before that date.

The most notable link between the town, near Winchester, and the Navy was the coal-burning Hunt-class minesweeper HMS Alresford – otherwise known as a 'Smokey Joe' after the enormous amount of smoke produced by

their boiler design.

She was laid down on the River Clyde on April 30 1918 and launched in 1919.

The ship's crest was the result of liaison with the town clerk to reflect Alresford's badge, a black rampant lion on a white and chequered field with a Latin motto *Cavendo Tutus*, translated into English as 'Safe by Taking Care'.

Why should a town of only a few thousand souls have come to the attention of those who name warships?

The theory is because of the connection between Alresford and Viscount Jellicoe, who was born and bred in Southampton, 15 miles to the south-west.

By 1919 Jellicoe had risen to the rank of Admiral of the Fleet – the same year that his younger brother, Rev Frederick Jellicoe, was appointed vicar of St John's Church, Alresford.

And also the same year that HMS Alresford was launched, part of a class that had been renamed to avoid confusion with signals. Surely that was no coincidence?

Although HMS Alresford had been designed to keep the seaways safe by sweeping them of mines, the end of World War 1 made her too late to see action and she was thus modified and went into service as a tender to the Navigation School in Portsmouth.

For the next 20 years she

steamed round the Isle of Wight carrying classes of naval cadets – including the Duke of Edinburgh at the start of his naval career – teaching them the rudiments of navigation.

During this period the town supplied hampers of watercress to the ship, and in return the crew made several visits to Alresford to partake in various sporting contests (although invariably losing at football).

At the start of World War 2 HMS Alresford was converted back to her original role of minesweeping and became a warship at last.

She carried explosives to Cherbourg for the blowing up of harbour installations there to prevent them falling into German hands, she managed to shoot down a German bomber, and took part in the costly raid on Dieppe in August 1942, surviving enemy fire and managing to tow a vessel fully loaded with Canadian wounded back to Newhaven.

She also undertook minesweeping duties in the Channel and continued with her duties with the Navigation School.

Sporting links to the town, together with the town's support of the ship, were also continued throughout the period of conflict.

In 1945 HMS Alresford was placed in reserve and in 1947 she was sold for scrap.

But the links to the town remain – a replica of the ship's crest, a photograph of the ship and a commemorative plaque, which were personally presented by the officers and crew, hang proudly as a permanent memorial on the south wall of St John's parish church, New Alresford.

The establishment of a branch of the RNA has also maintained and strengthened the naval links.

Alresford is an active branch of around 40 members, meeting at the Recreation and Leisure Centre at Arlebury Park.



Island connection celebrated

A CONNECTION between the Isle of Wight and the 'Cockleshell Heroes' raid on Bordeaux has been marked by the local branch of the RNA.

In December 1942 ten Royal Marines from the RM Boom Patrol Detachment, led by Maj 'Blondie' Hasler RM, carried out the daring raid against the Nazi war effort in occupied France.

Operation Frankton saw the men slip away from submarine HMS Tuna off the Gironde estuary in five two-men canoes or cockles, aiming to paddle 105 miles upriver to place limpet mines on Axis shipping in the port.

Of the five canoes launched, only two struggled past enemy defences to press home their attack, and just two of the ten commandos survived to make it back to Blyth.

Information was discovered revealing that the canoes used in the heroic raid were designed by Fred Goatley of East Cowes.

Fred was retired at the

time, but acted as a consultant to SARO (Saunders-Roe) Laminated Woodwork Ltd at Folly Works on the River Medina at Whippingham.

The work was carried out after much consultation between Fred and Maj Hasler.

The 9ft double-ended paddles were also made on the island by Morey and Co, timber merchants in Newport.

To commemorate the island connection, branch members attended the unveiling of an information panel adjacent to the now-derelict Folly Works (pictured above).

Also in attendance were members of Fred Goatley's family, Sea Cadets from Ryde unit, island dignitaries and members of the Isle of Wight Society, who funded the project.

Aegean tribute planned

THIS year sees the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the destroyers HM Ships Panther, Eclipse, Hurworth, Rockwood, Dulverton and Intrepid, plus Greek destroyers Queen Olga and Adrias, writes S/M Albert Poulter.

The destroyers were lost between September 26 and November 14 1943, fighting the war in the Aegean Sea and during the Battle for Leros.

The battle, a crucial element in the Dodecanese campaign, was a grim episode for the Allies, with British troops being heavily attacked less than two weeks after landing, capitulating within two months.

Many British troops were lost or taken prisoner on the islands.

The 70th anniversary commemoration festival, to be held on Leros in Port Lakki later this year, is for those shipmates that lost their lives in HMS Intrepid and the Greek destroyer Queen Olga – both sunk on September 26-27 in Port Lakki Bay.

However, all shipmates and relatives, past and present, irrespective of ship or status, would be very welcome if they would like to attend.

The other aforementioned destroyers will not have a monument in the Dodecanese area, and shipmates and relatives of those who died are also welcome to join in to remember them.

The Greek destroyer Adrias, which suffered damage with the above destroyers, has its monument along the shore, not far from the Intrepid monument, with memorial ceremonies on October 22.

The Island of Leros is small and beautiful and the people are most welcoming.

The navy expression 'Once Navy, Always Navy' I think is very true.

From when I joined the Navy at 18, in the first week in January 1943 as Ordinary Seaman (CW) (I was demobbed as PO(RM)R in August 1946), the Navy has been like one big family, always friendly and willing to help each other.

RN veterans and their relatives are getting fewer at these memorial services, and as some of you are thinking of booking holidays in the Greek Islands, I thought you would like to know beforehand, that your attendance at Leros to swell the ranks would be very much appreciated.

Truculent collision recalled

A CEREMONY remembering the 64 sailors and dockyard workers who died after a collision between a submarine and a merchantman in the Thames 63 years ago has been held at Chatham.

The men were lost when HMS Truculent, on sea trials, collided with the Swedish tanker SS Divina on January 12 1950 in the estuary after confusion over lights.

Some died when the boat sank, others escaped but were swept to their deaths in the icy river.

The ceremony also remembers five crewmen of an RAF Coastal Command Lancaster who died when their aircraft crashed during the rescue operation.

The service, organised in the main by Medway Towns Submariners Association chairman S/M Archie Watt, was held at the St George's Centre, attended by more than 200 people.

Some 20 standards were in attendance, representing Submariners Associations, the RNA, RNR, Royal Engineers Association, Merchant Navy, RAF Association, Royal British Legion and Sea Cadets.

Fitting send-off

SOME 18 members of East of Scotland RMA, along with our Standard bearer S/M Roddy Campbell and bugler S/M Jeff Smart, gathered at the Parkgrove Crematorium, Frickheim, in Angus, to attend the funeral of the late A/Cpl James Parsons.

James served in the Corps from 1947 until 1970, including drafts to Malaya, Cyprus and Aden.

A resident of Kirriemuir for the past 20 years or so – alone since his wife Lottie died in 2000 – he died in late August aged 83.

As the Crown Office could not trace any family members, and to save him from a pauper's grave, the Arbroath branch of the Royal British Legion Scotland approached the East of Scotland RMA, who in turn contacted the RMA central office who arranged for payment of the funeral, therefore giving James a send-off as a befitting tribute to a fellow Royal Marine.



● VICTORIA Cross holder Lt George Hincley was remembered on the anniversary of his death – December 31 1904 – in the Victorian Chapel at Ford Park cemetery in Plymouth. Veterans and standards from Plymouth and Saltash branches, the Association of Wrens, and the Associations of the RFA, HMS Ganges, Merchant Navy and Coldstream Guards attended. Lt Hincley won the VC as an AB aboard HMS Sphinx in China in October 1862, rescuing two wounded officers from open ground while under heavy fire



● Albert Poulter (centre) with Vice Admiral Elleniadis of the Hellenic Navy (right) and two clerics in Leros last September



Watch out for the new edition of TwoSix

THE latest edition of *TwoSix.tv* features an interview with the Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel, and features on Reservists, the Armed Forces Covenant, Diversity and Inclusion training, Divisional update and a message from the Commandant General Royal Marines.

You can view recent *TwoSix.tv* videos online through the Royal Navy website or on the dedicated YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TwoSixTV>

The DVD has been aligned with the Personnel Support Brief to provide an enhanced package for sharing information. If you want to get your message out through these pages or the *TwoSix.tv* DVD, please contact:

- Pauline Aquilina: 9621 85984
- WO1 Russ Billings: 93832 5081

Pauline Aquilina is also the first point of contact for the RN Facebook site.



Kitchener scholarship sought

IF YOU are interested in developing your academic credentials, you are invited to apply to the Lord Kitchener National Memorial Fund.

The Council of the Lord Kitchener National Memorial Fund offers for competition up to 25 scholarships tenable from October 2013.

The value of each scholarship is £750 and will be paid to scholars towards the beginning of their course.

To be eligible you have to be a British subject and have served, or be a family member of someone who has at any time served or is serving on a full-time engagement with the Armed Forces.

You must also be due to begin your first degree with a UK university in October 2013.

Serving or former Service personnel may be considered up to the age of 30.

Find out more information online at www.lknmf.com. Applications must be returned before May 31.

FPS answers

THE Forces Pension Society answers questions about redundancies and pensions:

Q. There will be a large number of redundees going through the resettlement process. Will this raise any specific issues?

A. Yes it will, and the first issue is in relation to the service counted for pension. Confusion is arising in cases where the individual has more than one period of service.

The two periods are treated quite separately unless they are aggregated together to form one period of service.

To aggregate is simple. Just write to SPVA requesting that they aggregate your two periods of service together. Aggregation may only be done whilst in service.

Redundancy benefits statements

The information appearing on the redundancy benefits statements. There is a lump sum and that is normally three times pension.

One chap told me I was wrong because he had not been awarded a preserved lump sum and he had the paperwork to prove it.

Sure enough his paperwork did not show his preserved pension lump sum but the fact is he is entitled to it.

Needless to say, I advised him to challenge the benefit statement. Some would say that the challenge is not necessary as the system would pick up the entitlement in due course but, from my point of view, it is easier to raise it now than in 30 years time when goodness knows how good the corporate memory will be about, what by then will be, obsolete schemes.

Since this discovery we have found many other instances of missing preserved lump sums and, more immediately missing resettlement grants.

The average amount of preserved lump sum missing from benefit statements has been in the region of £21,000 and the Other Ranks resettlement grant in AFPS 75 is just over £10,000 – not to be sniffed at.

Q. So what is the best tip you can give those leaving the Armed Forces?

A. Check your pensions and redundancy documentation carefully and challenge anything you think is wrong.

If you can't do it yourself, join the Forces Pension Society and we will do it for you.

Trophy lives



THE February Trophy of the Month features **Trophy number 4374** – King George V's Bible.

The first HMS King George was a King George V class of 1911 dreadnought and commissioned in November 1912 as Flagship Home Fleet under Vice Admiral Sir George Warrender.

During the Battle of Jutland, HMS King George V was remarkably undamaged – unlike her sister ship HMS Audacious which was sunk by a mine off the northern coast of Ireland.

Decommissioned in 1919, she was used as a training ship between 1923 and 1926 and then scrapped in accordance with the provisions of the Washington Naval Treaty.

The Bible was presented to the World War 2 battleship of the same name by King George VI.

Commissioned in 1940, HMS King George V operated as part of the British Home and Pacific Fleets.

A much more active warship than her predecessor, the ship earned battle honours for Atlantic 1941, Bismarck 1941, Arctic 1942-43, Sicily 1943, Okinawa 1945 and Japan 1945.

Operations against the Japanese in the Pacific meant she was present at the formal Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay on September 2 1945.



The Bible was used by the ship's chaplain until the vessel was decommissioned in 1949.

The Bible is currently on display in St Ann's Church in Portsmouth Naval Base.

The Church is usually open to visitors, but passes need to be arranged for anyone who does not hold a Portsmouth Naval Base security badge.

Please contact the Verger's office on 023 9272 4232 to make the necessary arrangements.

Warmest thanks go to the team at St Ann's: Mrs Wendy Smith, Honorary Historian; the Revd Keith Robus RN, Chaplain; and Mr Alan Lee, Verger. Thanks also to Jenny Wraight, Admiralty Librarian (Naval Historical Branch) who provided information and assistance for this month's feature.

Five-year celebration for RNSWOA

THE RN Surface Warfare Officers' Association (RNSWOA) was created in January 2008 with the aim to perpetuate the common bond between past and present Royal Naval Executive, Seaman and Warfare Officers.

The Association has an increasing membership of around 2,000 serving and retired Warfare Officers with a spread from sub lieutenant to admiral.

Membership is open to all Surface Warfare Officers who have completed a key professional course – from the Initial Warfare Officer (IWO) Course to the Principal Warfare Officer (PWO) Course (or its previous 'Long' course equivalent).

Vice Admiral Phil Jones (the Fleet Commander) is the Association's President.

Its objectives are:

- To provide guidance, mentoring and support to

current Warfare officers.

- To develop links with the UK defence business community.
- To develop links with other maritime warfare associations eg RAN NWOA.

The RNSWOA holds a number of social and sporting events throughout the year, such as the Annual Reunion Dinner, to be held at HMS Collingwood in late March this year.

This is well attended and used to 'dine out' Warfare Officers from the RN, as well as act as a focal point for a number of professional course reunions.

More information can be found at the Association's website www.rnswoa.org.uk, by contacting the Secretary at secretary@rnswoa.org.uk or via the professional group on www.Linkedin.



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THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...

February 1973

More than 8,000 men of the Royal Navy and a fleet including aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal were set to take part in a series of training exercises in the Mediterranean this month.

Medtrain 73 was a larger affair than usual, with most of the 28 participating ships assembling in Gibraltar, amongst them two guided missile destroyers, eight frigates, four submarines and five Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels.

February 1983

Most people associate Venice with gondolas, not London taxis – hence the raised eyebrows when a black cab was spotted on the deck of assault ship HMS Fearless when she visited the Italian city.

There was even a question asked in the House of Commons by Tam Dalyell about the vehicle and the purpose of Fearless's visit.

Armed Forces Minister Dr Peter Blaker said that the visit was an informal one for rest and recreation during the ship's deployment as Dartmouth training ship.

And the taxi, he added, "was purchased and is maintained privately by members of the ship's company for use ashore", and was carried, at the discretion of the CO, only when it would not interfere with operational activity.

● Ark Royal and Fearless together in 1975



February 1993

The latest estimates suggested that more than two million people would flock to Merseyside at the end of May for the fleet review to mark the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic.

The Duke of Edinburgh was expected to review around 40 warships from 16 navies and a number of merchant ships that would simulate a wartime convoy off the coast of Anglesey.

February 2003

The man believed to be the last surviving fighter pilot of the Great War was reported to have died in Canada at the age of 106.

Henry Botterell was certainly the last surviving Royal Naval Air Service pilot from the war, during which he flew with No. 8 Squadron, known as Naval 8, and after April 1918 with 208 Squadron RAF, Naval 8's successor.

His sole kill was an artillery spotter balloon near Arras – not quite as easy a target as it sounds as such balloons were heavily defended. He managed to set the balloon alight but was clearly heartened that the observer escaped by parachute as he was reported to have given the German a cheery wave before flying his aircraft back to Blighty.

Deaths

Capt Alan Tate Royal Marines MC. Joined the Royal Marines in 1942 at Deal. A few days after the Normandy landings he joined 45 Commando as one of the replacements for the heavy casualties which the Royal Marines had suffered.

Served in Korean War. HMS Morecambe Bay Association. December. Rodney Meecham. Fleet Chief. Joined as Bow Seaman in 1946 and served for 24 years in Loch Vayatie, Helmsdale, M277, Daring (two commissions), Protector (South Atlantic), Rook (Gibraltar), Orestes and Fleet Chief radar instructor at Dartmouth College.

branch. December 1. Aged 83. Terry Greenslade. AME. Served 1946-1949 at Royal Arthur, RAF Hedsnesford, Glory, RAF Thorney Island, 703 NAS (a/c Mosquito) and boxed for the Navy, Birmingham branch and in later years, Bournemouth branch. October 28. Aged 84.

William Bernard 'Happy' Day DSM RM. After training at Deal he served in the Mediterranean and on board Rodney before returning to Deal as an instructor and was an early volunteer for the Commandos when they were formed in 1941.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION John Walklate. Electrician. Served 1954-56 in Adamant, Stourbridge and District branch. Aged 76. John 'Jimmy' Green. AB RP2. Served 1953-62. Trained at Ganges and St Vincent and served in Corunna, Sheffield and Troubridge.

Ask Jack

HMS Wildgoose: Was the CPO of HMS Wildgoose your grandfather, father or shipmate 1944/45. He was a good family friend but I no longer have his name as my family have all passed on.

John 'Nob' Martin. PO. Served aboard Cheviot 1945 and a member of the association. January 3. Donald Newman. Stoker. Served 1943-47 in Cambrian. 2012. Aged 87.

Douglas 'Sam' Franks also known as 'Stooge' in Maidstone RNA where he was the long-time rum boss. Served in Collingwood, Europa and in minesweepers (Liverpool), HMT Ixion, BYMS 2062 and Pembroke. December 21. Aged 86.

Reunions

MARCH 2013 HMS Diana Association: The reunion will be held from March 1 to 3 at The Park House Hotel, Blackpool. Will members and any ex-matelots who have served in HMS Diana, any commission who wish to join us, please book early as we always get a fantastic crowd at the Park House.

Ronald James 'Taff' Symonds. CPO Aircraft Mechanic. Joined the FAA 1950 completing 23 years. Service included Hermes and Ark Royal followed by four years in the Sultan of Oman's Air Force. December 1. Aged 79.

James 'Jim' Albert Fleming. Bounty Boy communicator. Served on armed trawlers Hugh Walpole (PQ18 Russian convoy) and Northern Gem; also HDML 1012 (Mediterranean secret operations). Coastal Forces Association and South Harrow RNA. December 26. Aged 88.

APRIL 2013 HMS Illustrious Association: The Southern Branch is holding a reunion from April 26 to 29 at the Sherborne Hotel, Dorset. Saturday at the FAA Museum, Sunday attend St Bartholemews then lunch at Fox & Hounds, Charlton Adam. All Illustrians welcome.

Peter Nelson. PO Ck. Served 1961-83 in Bellerophon, Eagle, Bulwark (Heron ACMN), Ark Royal, Osprey and Southampton. Fulfilled a full supporting role in the Cowes Sea Cadets in the 1990s, including the position of CO. Cowes RBL and the Aircrewman (ACMN) Association. December 6. Aged 69.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION Ronald 'Ron' Lewis. Leading Torpedo Operator. Served 1943-47 in submarines Virulent, Tantalus, Saga and Alaric. Former Mayor of Rochdale and member of Rochdale Submariners Association. October 16. Aged 87.

SEPTEMBER 2013 HMS Fisgard, Series 47, January 1963: Grand Reunion Weekend September 6 to 8 in Portsmouth. Series 48 and Series 49 welcome. Come and meet your old classmates after 50 years.

Ken Spillsbury. Able Seaman Radar. Served 1949-51 National Service in Drake, Wizard and Defiance. Wizard and Cadiz Association. December 6. Aged 81.

A D 'Andy' Crehan. LRO(G). Submarine service 1975-78 in Oracle. Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire branch. Aged 83.

OCTOBER 2013 HMS Daring (1952-54) Commission: The last reunion will take place from October 4 to 7 at Thoresby Hall, Notts. Details from Owen Simpson at owens53@btinternet.com or tel: 01453 860564.

Elsie Maybury. Wizard and Cadiz Association Committee member. December 10. Aged 78.

J 'John' Hymas. WO MEA(P). Submarine service 1955-84 in Scotsman, Trenchant, Thermopylae, Alaric and Grampus. Gosport branch. Aged 83.

HMS Arethusa Association: 25th Reunion at the Tillington Hall Hotel, Stafford from October 4 to 7. Contact Tom Sawyer mail@hmsf38arethusa.plus.com Tel: 01653 628171 or write to 6 Sycamore Close, Slingsby, York YO62 4BG, North Yorkshire.

Michael 'Alfie' Hines. A/Cook. Served 1958-68. Trained at Pembroke before serving in Centaur, Belfast, Maidstone and Triumph also shore establishments Daedalus, Victory, St Vincent, Ganges and Dolphin. He played football for both the Navy and Combined Services. December 8. Aged 71.

John 'Jack' Deeble. PO Radio Mechanic FAA. Served 1940-45 in Victorious (Pacific War) and Pursuer (Arctic convoys and Operation 'Dragoon'). December 21. Aged 91.

MAY 2013 D-Boats Association: The annual reunion will be held from July 5 to 7 at the SNCO & NCOs Mess, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. The association is open to new members. Any new member who would like to join us should contact John Fisher at johjackie.fisher1@virginmedia.com or

W G 'Bill' McLean. CPOCA. Served 1953-76 in Ceres, Pembroke, Mars, Mull of Galloway, Birmingham, Ganges, Royal Charlotte, Neptune, (Tamar, Maidstone, Defender, Drake, Hecate 1st commission), Lincoln and Jaguar. Last appointment Instructor RN Supply School at Chatham. December 26. Aged 76.

FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION William Crofts. NAM 1 (AE). Served from 1947-1954. St George (basic training), Kestrel, Gamecock, Daedalus, Vengeance, Peregrine and Falcon (Malta 1953). Royal Fleet Reserve five years. Great Yarmouth branch and in later years the Daedalus

Flag list

Serving Flag and General Officers of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines - January 14 2013

Naval Command First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff: Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope GCB OBE ADC, (to be relieved by Admiral Sir George Zambellas KCB DSC April 2013)

Assignments

Lt Cdr T J Berry to be CO of HMS Severn from February 4.

Honours

ST Chicken OBE (RM) Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Nuclear & Chemical, Biological): Rear Admiral J H J Gower OBE Senior British Military Adviser, US Central Command: Rear Admiral T P Fraser

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@a.ii.mod.uk

Promotions in and appointments to the Military Division of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath

As Knight Commander Vice Admiral Andrew David Hugh Mathews CB As Companions Vice Admiral Charles Anthony Johnstone-Burt OBE Rear Admiral Simon Robert Lister OBE

Promotions in and appointments to the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire

As Commanders Rear Admiral Simon Boyce Charter Col Matthew Edward Porter OBE As Officers Capt Andrew Betton Cdr Nicholas Geoffrey Dunn Lt Col Nicholas John Grace Cdr Timothy Mark Hulme Surg Cdr Anthony Wayne Lambert Cdre Richard William Mason Cdre James Mark Slawson ADC

Appointments to the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire

As Commander Cdre William Michael Walworth OBE Royal Fleet Auxiliary Queen's Volunteer Reserve Medal Acting Cdr Simon Roscoe Cottam RNR Selections for Meritorious Service Medal WO2 D M Aston, WO1 S R Clay MBE, WO1ET(ME) A P Crowe, WO1(RSM) D J Davitt, A/WO1 D P Egan, CP(O)D I J Fleming, WO1 D C Halliday, WO1 S J Humphreys, WO2 J M Jenner, CSgt W Kennedy, WO1 J Mann, WO1MA C J Murray-Jones, WO1AET J J Roland, WO1Log (Wtr) M G Ross, WO1 ET(ME) M J Rowlinson, WO1 RSM S C Shepherd MBE, WO2 S O Sheppard, WO1 ET(ME) J G Smith, CPONN J D Taylor, CSgt G A D Thomas, WO1 J Todd, WO1(SR) D M Wake, WO2 C S Watson.

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

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If you can't always find a copy of NAVY NEWS, help is at hand! Complete this form and hand it in at your local newsagent, they'll arrange for a copy of each issue to be reserved for you.

Entries for the Deaths column and Swap Drafts in March's Noticeboard must be received by February 11 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.

Close look at liner

IN OUR last edition we reported on the annual National Training Weekend of the Maritime Trade Operations (MTO) branch of the RNR, held in Hampshire.

One activity involved visiting a luxury cruise liner – and this is Sub Lt Mark Tooth's account:

"Members of the MTO branch of the RNR visited the *MS Independence of the Seas* at her home port of Southampton as part of a programme of contact between MTO and the merchant shipping community.

"The *Independence of the Seas*, a Freedom-class cruise ship operated by Royal Caribbean Cruises, is a 15-deck cruise liner specialising in year-round European itineraries as well as Atlantic crossings to visit Florida and the Caribbean.

"At 339 metres long and 154,000 tonnes, *Independence of the Seas* is one of the six largest cruise liners in service – and nearly 60 metres longer than the new Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers being built for the Royal Navy, which measure 280 metres long and 65,000 tonnes.

"The RNR personnel, led by Cdr Ron Wray, were taken on a tour of the ship by Staff Captain Rune Erikson, starting with the state-of-the-art bridge, which spans 40 metres.

"The *Independence of the Seas*, berthed next to the Southampton Boat Show, provided the perfect position to view the panorama of smaller vessels on show, including Sunseeker yachts down to Topper sailing dinghies.

"At 63 metres high the cruise ship towered above all other vessels in Southampton Docks.

"With a crew of 1,360 and accommodation for 4,370 passengers – many of whom were boarding that afternoon in preparation for sailing – the ship was a hive of activity.

"The *Independence of the Seas* has its own internal shopping 'promenade', offering a variety of shops, bars and restaurants – and leading into an array of entertainment the RNR could only dream of on Royal Navy ships.

"There is a two-storey theatre seating 1,200 which hosts a show every night as well as a cabaret lounge and ice-skating rink.

"For passengers looking for an unusual wedding there is the Skylight Chapel, at the very top of the ship, which can seat 40 guests.

"For those looking for a more sports-based holiday, the ship boasts the H2O Zone, an interactive water park, as well as a climbing wall, Flowrider for surfing, volleyball, basketball and a mini golf course.

"After two hours of visiting all the main decks, Cdr Wray and his team left Staff Capt Erikson with the herculean task of boarding thousands of passengers and crew before making ready to sail later that afternoon."



Reward for loyal support

A LONG-SERVING Maritime Reserves support worker has been rewarded for his loyalty.

Trevor Hunter was presented with the Imperial Service Order Medal for a long, meritorious Civil Service career with naval reservists.

Trevor, an administration officer for the past 17 years at HMS Vivid, the Maritime Reserves unit in Plymouth, received the medal on his retirement from the Civil Service.

The medal, awarded to personnel who have served more than 25 years and who have put zeal and interest into their job, was presented by Cdr

Ian Pethick (left of picture), the CO of Vivid.

Cdr Pethick said: "After 17 years working with us here at HMS Vivid, Trevor deserves a well-earned rest.

"It has been a privilege to work with Trevor and he thoroughly deserves his medal for all his hard work, conscientiousness and for always maintaining his sense of humour."

Trevor said: "I enjoyed everything about my job at HMS Vivid, especially the banter and camaraderie and I am overwhelmed to have received this award for doing a job I enjoyed."



● Lt Henry Watts receives his Lord Lieutenant's Commendation certificate from Mary Prior

Derek makes mark in Helmand Province

A RESERVIST from HMS Sherwood in Nottingham is the first RNR rating to be mobilised to Afghanistan in an Information Operations role.

LS Derek Parsons, aged 44, from Ripley in Derbyshire, spent much of 2012 mobilised with 15 (UK) Psychological Operation Group (15 POG), including six months on active service based at Lashkar Gah in Helmand Province.

15 POG is responsible for providing support to British Forces and is part of 1 Military Intelligence Brigade.

As a tri-Service unit, it is formed from specialist personnel drawn from across the UK's Armed Forces – both regular and reserves.

"Being the first Royal Naval Reserve Information Operations Rating to be mobilised gave me a real sense of achievement," said LS Parsons.

"I was proud to be working in Afghanistan with 15 POG; we worked with a number of military and non-military agencies to undertake a variety of projects."

Before deploying to Afghanistan LS Parsons completed compulsory Royal Navy pre-deployment training to develop his Afghan cultural awareness, hone his military skills and improve his fitness in preparation for his land-based role.

Although he found his pre-deployment training first class, LS Parsons explained that nothing could prepare him for his arrival at Camp Bastion.

"The dust hangs in the air like fine talcum powder and gets everywhere and inside everything, but the biggest challenge was coping with the climate," he said.

"It was really cold – Afghanistan was not supposed to be cold!"

However, as his operational tour continued the intense heat that LS Parsons had expected came to Lashkar Gah.

"Standing 24-hour guard duties was really uncomfortable in the dry, dusty heat," he said.

"To keep hydrated I had to



● LS Derek Parsons, pictured in Afghanistan last year

drink 14 litres of water a day on average."

Long working days in the heat and dust, combined with the noise of helicopter movements throughout the night and the daily call to prayer at 4am, all took their toll.

Despite the stress on his body and mind, some aspects of life in Afghanistan brought excitement.

"Helicopter transfers were something of *Boy's Own* stuff and I always enjoyed them," said LS Parsons.

However, the need to wear body armour and always carry

a weapon ensured that he never forgot that this was no comic book adventure.

"Even when off-watch my rifle was never more than an arm's length away – whether I was eating in the mess, at the gym or sleeping."

The arrival of casualties was also a tragic reminder of the realities of conflict in Helmand Province, but there were also some highlights.

"It was great to be interviewed by the BBC on Armed Forces Day in June, because it meant that people knew we were there – and that really mattered," said the

then-junior rating.

"And I was really chuffed to be informed that I had been selected for promotion to petty officer."

While serving in Afghanistan Derek knew that he was not only supported by the other members of 15 POG, but also from a distance by his family at home in the UK.

"My family have backed me throughout my reserve career, and without their constant support my time in Afghanistan would have been even more challenging," he said.

"Their relief when I arrived safely back at RAF Brize Norton at the end of my tour was overwhelming."

Back in the UK, and settling back into normal routines, LS Parsons reflected upon his tour of duty in Afghanistan with pride.

"I am pleased to have supported the local Afghan people, who were genuinely grateful for the assistance we provided," he said.

"I am particularly proud to have represented the Royal Naval Reserve so far from the sea and to have been the vanguard for the ratings in the Information Operations specialisation."

In civilian life Derek Parsons is a field installations manager for Anglian Home Improvements – and a keen ballroom dance teacher.

He is married to Nicola and they have three children.

He continues to serve in the RNR, at Sherwood, and to train within the information operations specialisation.

His promotion to petty officer will be effective this year.

Sherwood is one of 13 RNR units, five satellite divisions, and three specialist units across the UK.

The RNR supports the Royal Navy in meeting its ongoing tasks, both at home and abroad, in times of war, conflict, tension and peacetime, and some reservists – such as padres, doctors, nurses and Merchant Navy officers – are recruited specifically for their civilian skills.

Flying Fox volunteers commended

NINE of Bristol's most outstanding volunteers were awarded the coveted Lord Lieutenant's Commendation for Meritorious Service at a ceremony held at the Merchant Venturer's Hall in Clifton.

The awards, given annually by the Lord Lieutenant of the County and City of Bristol – currently Mary Prior – honour the commitment many individuals make to the county's Reserve and Cadet Forces.

Amongst those receiving the awards were Lt Henry Watts RNR, a member of HMS Flying Fox, the Royal Naval Reserve unit in Bristol.

Henry joined the unit in 2006, where he quickly completed his training to become an Amphibious Warfare Officer in only three years.

During his career as a reservist, Henry has undertaken a demanding front-line mobilisation in Afghanistan.

He has also taken a leading role in unit recruitment, looking into new channels to engage with the youth of Bristol.

His CO, Cdr Susan Jameson RNR, commended Henry's dedication to the RNR, and said: "Henry plays a pivotal role in the unit, and it's often remarked how he leaves a lasting impression with his superb diligence and tenacity."

Commenting on the ceremony, Brig Tony Dalby-Welsh, Chief Executive of the Wessex Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, said: "Each recipient of the Lord-Lieutenant's awards is a credit to their unit and community."

"These incredible people should be very proud of their achievements, and are all very worthy of recognition for the good work they've done for the Reservist Forces."

"Without individuals such as these, it would be impossible to offer such a valuable service to young people in the region."

Another member of Flying Fox, Lt Cdr Steve Yates RNR, was similarly honoured by the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, Dame Janet Trotter.

The officer was presented with his certificate at the University of Gloucestershire's Fullwood House.

Cycle 'tour' aids hospice

A LEADING Hand from HMS Flying Fox joined members of his family on a charity cycle ride.

LS (Sea) Sean Townsend RNR, together with his son, daughter and 17 members of his team from sponsors Itec, took part in the St Luke's Hospice Tour de Moor event late last year, cycling a 15-mile route across the Plym Valley and Dartmoor to raise vital funds for the Plymouth charity.

The event aimed to raise £60,000 to help St Luke's to continue the service they provide to patients with terminal illness and support to the patients' families.

Sean Townsend, an analyst for Itec, said: "Taking part in the Tour de Moor has been a fantastic experience. The route was pretty challenging – some of those hills were very steep indeed!"

The Itec team are already making plans to return this year – some are even considering the endurance 35-mile route.

Commodore completes his tour at Sherwood

THE Commander of the UK's Maritime Reserve Forces has completed a programme of visits to all Maritime Reserve units by making his first visit to HMS Sherwood in Nottingham to meet RN and RM Reservists based there.

Sherwood is the home of the Royal Navy in the East Midlands and the RNR unit for reservists across the East Midlands, South Yorkshire and further afield.

It is also home to the Nottingham Detachment of RMR Merseyside.

Cdre Gareth Derrick RN attended the unit's annual review and Roll of Honour, where he presented medals and awards to reservists in front of gathered civic dignitaries, employers and families.

"I am very pleased to be at HMS Sherwood," said Cdre Derrick.

"This is my first visit to Nottingham and is long overdue, but it has been worth the wait. I have now visited all RNR and RMR units.

"On behalf of the Navy Board I would like to thank you, and your families and employers, for your excellent support.

"I can assure you that all of your efforts

are appreciated by all senior members of the Royal Navy."

Cdre Derrick presented CPO Samantha Martin with the Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire's Certificate for Meritorious Service.

The award is made in recognition of exceptional service by a volunteer and ranks in precedence just after honours bestowed in the New Year and Birthday Honours lists.

"I was thrilled to have received this award – and it was fantastic to have been presented with it by Cdre Derrick," said CPO Martin.

"I just get on with my job and do it to the best of my ability, so to be honoured in this way is lovely."

LS Derek Parsons was awarded the Afghanistan Campaign Medal by Cdre Derrick following his mobilisation to Helmand last year (see above).

"I am really proud to have represented the Royal Naval Reserve in Afghanistan, so far from the sea, and to have helped the local Afghan people," said LS Parsons. "To have been presented with my campaign

medal by Commander Maritime Reserves was a real honour."

Cdre Derrick also presented the Volunteer Reserve Service Medal to Surg Cdr Brendon McKeating in recognition of his long and efficient service of proved capacity in the Reserve Forces.

Cdr McKeating, who joined the RNR after serving as a regular, is a former CO of Sherwood and Head of the RNR Medical Branch. For the past eight years he has also been Chairman of the British Medical Association Armed Forces Committee.

Awards were also made to members of Sherwood's ship's company in recognition of their service and performance.

Lt Jeff West was presented with the Gilbert Towle Sword; AB Jonathon Browne received the Chief Radio Supervisor Hall Trophy; and AB Sarah Newby picked up the Commanding Officer's Trophy.

Cdre Derrick used his visit to talk about how changes to the Reserve Forces in the Government's Future Reserve 2020 (FR20) Strategy will affect the Maritime Reserves.

"We are committed to significantly

expanding Reserve Forces and doing more with them," he said.

"There will be more opportunities for high-quality training with the regulars and more opportunities to serve alongside them on exercises and operations, but we will protect the nature of Reserve Service."

During the evening six promotions that will come into effect this year were also announced, and Sherwood's CO Cdr Martin Clegg, thanked reservists for their commitment and contribution during 2012.

"This has been an exceptional year for HMS Sherwood with a number of our reservists supporting the Windsor Armed Forces Muster and Thames River Pageant celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

"A large proportion of our ship's company were also mobilised for Op Olympics – the security operation for the London Olympic Games," he said.

"Meanwhile my Recruiting and Outreach team and Initial Naval Training staff have worked extremely hard to promote HMS Sherwood and the Royal Naval Reserve and to attract and train new recruits."

Dive honours wartime Malta convoy heroes

A GROUP of maritime reservists from two London-based Royal Naval Reserve units flew out to the Mediterranean to mark the 70th anniversary of the legendary convoy to keep Malta going – Operation Pedestal.

Nine members of HMS Wildfire, in Northwood, and one individual from HMS President in central London, took part in Exercise Wild Pedestal, a mix of remembrance, diving, outreach work and adventurous training for the ten reservists.

The visitors set up base camp in Xjemma, in the north of the island, sorting out bunks and supplies in preparations for the busy programme ahead.

That day they were warmly welcomed by the Maltese branch

of the Royal Marines Association at a reception at the Sun in Splendour in St Julians.

There, according to the expedition newsletter, they “met, toasted, were toasted, sang with, were sung to, and even danced with, a number of old sweats called Nobby, Jan, Smudge, Dinger, Pusser, Jock, Taff, Yorky, Tommy, Chopper, Brum and names various.

“Too many to remember, but all proudly answer to the name ‘Royal’.

“We were well-hosted and thank the RMA for showing ‘Jack’ such great hospitality.”

The following morning the hard work began.

The group quickly realised there was going to be a lot of studying to do if they wanted to pass the diving qualification they had been signed up for.

Not only were there training

dives to be undertaken, but the novices also had their heads in books for a fair amount of time as the theory and practice of diving were studied in tandem.

There was a brief break in their studies when the sailors swapped wetsuits for No 1s and mustered in Floriana to join veterans on parade for a march to the National Cenotaph, where Lt Paul ‘Nobby’ Clarke and LS Sue Bell laid wreaths in honour of all those who defended Malta during its darkest hour.

For three years, the island was besieged by the Axis powers, coming under ferocious air attack in 1941 and 1942 in particular.

The German-Italian onslaught reached its climax in the spring and summer of 1942 – at a time when Rommel was driving on Suez and Britain’s entire position in the Mediterranean might collapse.



● AB Geraint Prisk (HMS Wildfire) and AB Dave Cannon (HMS President) on the wreck of HMS Maori

With Malta’s fortunes at their lowest ebb, a massive naval force – four carriers, two battleships, seven light cruisers and more than 30 destroyers – was gathered to shield 14 merchant ships delivering supplies to the island in August 1942.

More than half the merchantmen were sunk, as well as carrier HMS Eagle, two cruisers and one destroyer – more than 400 souls were lost in the Pedestal convoy alone – but the operation demonstrated the Allied resolve to support Malta.

The reservists’ participation in the remembrance ceremonies ended with a reception at the Royal British Legion hosted by the local branch of the Royal Naval Association, where once again the visitors were delighted by the welcome they received.

Then it was back to work at the Subway Diving School in Bugibba, where the group continued their diving programme.

Over the next few days, the team cracked on with training and assessments (and PO Morgan, tired of cold showers, grabbed a toolbox and tackled the plumbing and water heater, ensuring his colleagues had a welcome hot shower on their return from their labours).

The trainees rose to the challenge and were soon as happy underwater as they were on the surface – everyone left Malta with the PADI Open Water

qualification, having experienced a range of conditions at various (invariably attractive) locations around the island.

PO John Morgan followed the Wildfire sailors’ every move, practising underwater photography in preparation for the culmination of their visit – the challenge of laying a poppy tribute on the wreck of HMS Maori in the Grand Harbour.

The Tribal-class destroyer was sunk at her moorings in Grand Harbour on February 12 1942 with the loss of one crew member, when Axis bombers pounded the port.

The wreck was subsequently raised and the bow section was scuttled in the approaches to Valletta at the war’s end.

It lies in around 14m (46ft) of water and has become a popular dive site.

As well as unfurling the Royal Navy’s standard on the wreck of the Maori, expedition organiser PO Morgan had planned for the team to lay a poppy wreath on her hull – although weather conditions on the day of the dive meant only the more advanced could participate.

“Wild Pedestal has been a successful and very enjoyable

exercise,” said John.

“From conception to execution, the whole thing has been extremely challenging for all involved.”

While the days were spent underwater, the evenings were spent with the boys and girls of TS St Paul, the Sea Cadet unit in Kalkara.

PO Morgan and his colleagues organised a pirate-themed *It’s a Knockout*-style sports event for staff and cadets, although from the victory dances it was best to leave the Cadets versus Staff tug of war as a draw.

The reservists also accepted the ‘Chairman’s Challenge’, building a “somewhat shaky” human pyramid to sign the deckhead not once, but twice.

“All in all,” said Lt Clarke, Exercise Wild Pedestal had been “a job well done.”

He continued: “We participated in the ceremony at the National Cenotaph and honoured those who died during Operation Pedestal; we established links we hope will continue with the Sea Cadets in Malta, the RMA, RNA and British Legion; and the team got a new adventurous training qualification under their belts and had the privilege of seeing the wreck of HMS Maori close up.”



● LS Sue Bell (HMS Wildfire) at Sweethaven Village – also known as Popeye Village – near Mellieha in northern Malta. The village was built as the set for the 1980 film *Popeye*, and is now a tourist attraction



● (Above) Royal Naval Reservists carry out diving training as part of the PADI Open Water course

● (From left) AB David Cannon, PO John Morgan, AB Niall Fanning, LH Sue Bell, Lt Paul Clarke, Lt Harriet Clews, AB Geraint Prisk, PO Tony Metelko and AB Reg Smith



● Royal Navy trainees attempt to transport a stretcher across a river at the Outdoor Leadership Training Centre at Talybont-on-Usk



● Members of the Talybont community join Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel at the bench created by naval volunteer Colin Huntley (seated left). Also seated is the High Sheriff of Powys, Lady Sue Large.



● Then and now – the old Brecon and Merthyr station at Pant-y-Rhiw, and the same location now (right, pictured by Gary Davies, who works at the OLTC)



Penblwydd hapus

...OR HAPPY Birthday, to those not familiar with the Welsh language.

The birthday being celebrated was that of the Royal Navy's Outdoor Leadership Training Centre (OLTC) at Talybont-on-Usk.

And Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel, as Chief of Naval Personnel and Training, was invited to mark the occasion.

Vice Admiral Steel unveiled a commemorative plaque at the facility, in the Brecon Beacons, and also unveiled a memorial bench, acknowledging the OLTC's former role in the local transport network.

An outpost of the Royal Naval Leadership Academy, the OLTC trains more than 1,600 personnel annually.

The centre's primary role is the delivery of the Able Rates Leadership Course (ARLC) for Phase 2 Trainees (students) – a foundation leadership course for all trades within the Royal Navy.

This course uses Adventurous Training (AT) as a means to deliver Command, Leadership and Management with the aim to develop individuals, enabling them to function as an effective team member/party in a front-line unit.

Whilst at OLTC students live in tented accommodation in all weathers and survive the week on ration packs, overseen by a team of 11 naval leadership instructors, two civilian staff and a keen volunteer.

The building that is now the Naval Outdoor Leadership Training Centre was formerly the Stationmaster's Cottage at Pant-y-Rhiw station on the old Brecon and Merthyr Railway.

This section of the railway was built in 1863 and the platform at Pant-y-Rhiw opened in 1909.

After the local valley was flooded and Talybont Reservoir filled in 1938, the platform served few people, and on December 31 1962 the railway closed to passengers.

On November 30 1962 HMS

Collingwood bought the Stationmaster's Cottage at Pant-y-Rhiw to serve as a naval training centre – the establishment was represented by Commanding Officer Capt H H Hughes and Executive Officer Cdr P L K Needham.

Fast-forward 50 years, almost to the day, and members of the Talybont community who are still proud of their affiliation to the Centre and the Royal Navy attended the two unveiling ceremonies.

These included Lady Sue Large, the High Sheriff of Powys, the vice chairman of the local council, the licencees of the White Hart Inn, Usk Hotel and Belvedere Hotel, a representative of the Forestry

Commission – as well as Paddy the owner of the local burger wagon.

The memorial bench was handmade by keen historian Colin Huntley, from railway artefacts he found locally.

Colin – an ex-regular – is a naval volunteer, and an invaluable member of the staff who has been working at the OLTC for the past 15 years.

Leadership Training Officer WO1 Paul Willetts said it was a great pleasure to invite the Second Sea Lord and members of the local community to the ceremonies.

Pictures: LA(Phot) Guy Pool and LA(Phot) Nicky Wilson



● Vice Admiral David Steel unveils a commemorative plaque at Talybont, watched by RN staff and members of the local community



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Another good year at Eastbourne

EASTBOURNE unit is planning yet another successful year having been awarded both the Stephenson Trophy and the coveted Gibraltar Cup for the second year in a row.

The Stephenson Trophy is presented annually to the best unit in each of the areas, and Eastbourne took that honour in the Southern Area.

It is awarded after units are assessed on a number of criteria, including cadet and staff training qualifications (Eastbourne have managed to achieve in excess of 400), attendance of local civic ceremonies, area and national events.

The Gibraltar Cup is an annual competition held at the Royal Marines Commando Training Centre at Lympstone in Devon, and awarded to the best National Royal Marines Cadet Detachment.

Eastbourne was absolutely delighted to have recently been nominated for a third year.

Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Stephanie Juniper RNR said: "We are so proud of everything the unit has achieved and the great enthusiasm, commitment and pride shown by each and every cadet."

"It is truly amazing – we couldn't have asked for more"

The cadets were also given top marks in their annual Royal Navy Parade, the honour of attending the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Royal Pageant and both the Buckingham Palace concert and garden party and the National Trafalgar Parade, as well as local events including Airbourne, the Beachy Head marathon and – for the first time – they carried the town's colours flag during Remembrance Sunday Parade.

After 13 years at the helm, Bob Hamblyn, the unit's chairman, has finally hung up his towel.

He said: "It has been a fantastic 13 years and it is truly incredible to see the unit grow from strength to strength."

"The Sea Cadets have always been dear to my heart and I will surely miss it."

"I wish the new interim chairman, Mike Jones, all the best and hope the unit can keep on growing."

Volunteers on list

TWO volunteers with the Sea Cadets made the Queen's New Year's Honours list.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Terry Gillard RNR was awarded an MBE and CPO (SCC) David Moody was awarded the BEM.

Lt Cdr Gillard works tirelessly in the background of the Corps, designing and running adult training courses.

He was a member of the Berkshire District team before taking over as ASO (IM) and is currently HQSO (IM).

CPO Moody is a member of Jersey unit whose links with the organisation go back almost six decades.



Bishop calls by Reins are handed over during RN inspection

SOUTHPORT had the honour of hosting the first visit by the Bishop of the Forces to a Sea Cadet unit.

The Rt Rev Richard Moth was visiting the North West of England and staying as a guest of Southport unit's padre, Fr David Gamble, who is parish priest of Our Lady of Victories Roman Catholic church in Hightown.

And as befitted a special visit, the cadets and juniors had a great time showing the bishop exactly what Sea cadets get up to.

PO (SCC) Tim Petford, Officer-in-Charge of Southport, said: "Father Gamble told us Bishop Richard really enjoyed the night (and the cakes!) and asked me to pass on his thanks to the Officer-in-Charge, First Lieutenant and all the cadets and staff for a most enjoyable evening."

Four of the unit's cadets qualified in the cook/steward specialisation were also able to assist at a dinner held by Father David at the church the following evening.

THERE has been a change at the top of Bollington and Macclesfield unit.

Lt (SCC) David Thickett RNR has handed over the reins at TS Ardent to Lt (SCC) Karen Black RNR after eleven-and-a-half years in command.

The handover was carried out during the annual Royal Naval Inspection, when units prove that they are operating to the strict guidelines laid down by the Sea Cadet Corps and their sponsors, the Royal Navy.

Lt Thickett took command in May 2001 as a fresh-faced young Probationary Petty Officer (PPO).

During his time at the helm, the unit has grown in strength and confidence to become a vibrant and successful team.

Although relinquishing the role of commanding officer, Lt Thickett is staying on to undertake the duties of executive officer and assist the new CO to take the unit forward.

A few days after the handover TS Ardent dined out the retiring CO at AstraZeneca, attended by members of staff and the unit management committee as well as the unit's president Lord West of Spithead, who was the Commanding Officer of HMS Ardent when she was sunk during the Falklands campaign and is now Life President of the Sea Cadet unit.

He was joined by members of the HMS Ardent Association, with whom the unit maintain a very close relationship.

Just a fortnight after the handover, the unit was advised that it had achieved the top status at the annual Inspection and had consequently been awarded the Sea Cadet Corps' coveted burgee for the fifth year in a row, putting it in the top 25 per cent of units across the country.

Volunteer call

SEA Cadets featured prominently on ITV's *This Morning* daytime show last month.

The flagship show's 'You Can Be Heroes Week', run with the help of the Prince of Wales featured Sea Cadets alongside other Youth United organisations.

The second day of the initiative broadcast footage of Sea Cadets at a Youth United event at Safeside in Birmingham.

The campaign aims to encourage people to volunteer, or get involved with a charity.

To find out more about volunteering with the Corps see the special volunteer page at www.sea-cadets.org/volunteer.aspx, or email volunteer@ms-sc.org

Jubilee Volunteer award for Corps

THE SEA Cadets have announced they have received the coveted Queen's Diamond Jubilee Volunteering Award 2012.

To mark the Diamond Jubilee, 60 recipients were announced through a joint Buckingham Palace and Cabinet Office Press Notice.

The nomination of the Corps was endorsed by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, highlighting the staunch support the organisation enjoys from the Royal Navy.

A spokeswoman for Marine Society Sea Cadets, the parent

organisation of the Corps, said: "This award is recognition of the great work that Sea Cadets and our volunteers do, and we are immensely proud and honoured to be recognised in this way."

Captain Sea Cadets, Capt Mark Windsor RN, said: "This award is the icing on the cake for what has been an incredible year for the Sea Cadets, culminating in our 55-strong diamond formation of boats carrying the Commonwealth flags in our Patron the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Thames river pageant in June."

Former Second Sea Lord and now trustee Sir Alan Massey said: "I'm absolutely thrilled for all

those who have made this happen through their tireless efforts."

And MSSC president Admiral Sir Peter Abbott added: "This is wonderful news and so well-deserved – a grand way to end a grand year."

"Many congratulations to you all."

The award will be formally presented at a reception at Buckingham Palace in late spring.

The Sea Cadets are in good company – other recipients include the RNLI, the Scouting Association, the NSPCC, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Sue Ryder, the PDSA and the London Olympic Gamesmaker volunteers.



First diplomas for Rye



Badge of honour

A SEA Cadet from Reigate unit has been chosen as the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey's Cadet.

LC Nicole Lambert attended a reception at Clandon Park in Guildford, where she was presented with her badge and a certificate by the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, Dame Sarah Goad (pictured above).

RYE unit are celebrating after PO James Jury and LC Edward Jury scooped top grades in their exams – giving the Kent group their first such diplomas.

They both gained distinctions in the Level 2 BTEC First Diploma in Public Services – a course which combines theory and practical elements with an emphasis on leadership, teamwork, communications, problem-solving and fitness.

This internationally-respected qualification is equivalent to four GCSEs at A*-C level, or standard grades at levels 1-3 in Scotland.

The syllabus has been designed to improve valuable life skills.

Cadets learn professional CV preparation, interviewing techniques, communication, first aid, adventure training, health and nutrition.

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The Officer-in-Charge at Rye, CPO (SCC) Steve Smith,



● LC Edward and PO James Jury with their Level 2 BTEC First Diploma in Public Services certificates, presented to them by Rye OIC CPO (SCC) Steve Smith (centre)

said: "Presenting these awards has been one of the highlights of the year and makes volunteering worthwhile."

"Both James and Edward have worked hard in their free time, attending Rye Sea Cadets and working towards the Diploma."

Ex-cadet is ideal role model



● Cdr Ian Harrop with award-winners from Gosport unit

A FORMER Sea Cadet who is now a commander in the Royal Navy was the ideal person to present prizes at the Gosport annual awards evening, according to the unit's commanding officer.

PO (SCC) Carlton Strudwick, in his address, said how pleased he was that Cdr Ian Harrop, Commander Marine Engineering at HMS Sultan, would be presenting the awards, as the former cadet was an ideal role model for the current members of the unit.

Also present at the evening was the Mayor of Gosport, Cllr Richard Dickson, accompanied by Cllr Heather Carr.

Unit patron Rear Admiral Tony Whetstone RN (rtd) and his wife were also in attendance, as was unit president Cdr Mike Shives RN (rtd).

Other guests included life vice president Ann Bowden, Capt John Rimington of the Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation, Clive Evans (Gosport Rotary), S/M Nobby Clark, chairman of the Gosport branch of the Royal Naval Association, Capt

John McGrath (Chairman Portsmouth Retired Naval Officers' Association) and Brian Baker (Karwan Lodge 8970).

After the award winners had picked up their prizes and certificates, the final presentation of the evening was made.

And that saw Cllr Carr, on behalf of the mayor, hand a cheque for £200 to the unit's general fund.

The cash came from the Mayor's Charity Fund, and the donation demonstrated his support for the marvellous work done by unit management committee, the commanding officer and staff in providing such worthwhile activities for the young people of Gosport.

In his closing remarks Cdr Harrop praised the cadets for their smart turnout and for the effort they had shown during 2012 in gaining the awards.

He commented on how the things he had learnt as a Sea Cadet had given him a sound basis for his later career – and how much fun and friendship he had experienced as a cadet.



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Busy finish followed by busy start

THE final months of the year are always a busy time for Sea Cadet units, with the Trafalgar Day parades, Remembrance ceremonies and Christmas activities playing major roles in unit diaries.

Almost 100 cadets from Northampton and Wellingborough unit, including the Diamond Division (Rushden), turned out for their Remembrance Day parade, with three of them proudly wearing medals of loved ones who fought in various wars.

Squeezed into the programme at the end of November was the Diamond Division annual prizegiving, with LC Rosie Russell winning the honour of Cadet of the Year.

That month also saw the Eastern Area conference, at which the unit was awarded the David Gay trophy for the best participation and training in sailing and the Stephenson Trophy for being the best unit in Eastern Area.

December saw the unit take the prizes for best unarmed squad, best piping team and best individual piper at the District drill and piping competition.

And with the juniors competing for the first time, TS Laforey sent along A and B teams, with the A team winning.

Participation at the Eastern Area football competition was not quite as successful, with both the junior girls and the senior boys narrowly missing victory.

The year closed with a carol service and the cadets' Christmas dinner, attended by almost 80 members, while the unit's Christmas disco was held at the Royal Navy Club in Northampton.

Even though 2013 is still young, the unit's attention is now turning to serious matters.

The Eastern Area drill and piping competition was due to be held as *Navy News* went to press, and in the middle of this month the unit will be examined in detail for their Royal Naval Inspection.



● LC Connor Tracy (centre) with PO (SCC) Darren Brydon, First Lieutenant at Edinburgh Trinity unit (left) and Officer-in-Charge Sub Lt (SCC) Andrew Bell RNR

Trinity member wins accolade

FOR the first time in many years, Edinburgh Trinity unit has a Lord Lieutenant's Cadet.

LC Connor Tracy has been a member of the Corps since February 2011, and his enthusiasm has helped him work up to the level of leading cadet – no mean feat in that timescale.

"He has always excelled at every activity he has become involved with and has inspired others to follow suit," said Sub Lt (SCC) Andy Bell RNR, Officer-in-Charge at Edinburgh Trinity.

"He currently holds a second-class specialisation in seamanship and third-class specialisations in cook steward and a first aid qualification.

"He has also excelled on the water, holding an RYA Level 2 in power boating, with a coastal endorsement, RYA YSS Level 1 in sailing and a rowing qualification.

"LC Tracy is a credit to the Corps and will be a tough act to follow."

Rowers challenged to circle the globe

SEA Cadets are known for their rowing (or 'pulling') prowess – but an attempt to row around the world over a long weekend sounds quite ambitious...

Fortunately the burden will be shared by the whole Corps.

Units across the UK have been invited to help row the circumference of the world – 24,900 miles, give or take the odd mile – in 80 hours between April 18 and 21.

This will coincide with an attempt by the Sea Cadet Headquarters team to row a Trinity 500 boat along the canal network from Abingdon to the Thames.

The HQ's hand-picked team for the row from Abingdon to Tower Bridge is now complete, and 30 units have already signed up – though organisers are hoping for 100 more to make it a big success.

And just to make sure everyone has a chance, cadets from some of the 400 UK units will be taking to rowing machines at approved British rowing clubs to help reach the target, avoiding the need to head out onto the water.

All this effort is part of the Ship Ahoy initiative, which is designed to build a replacement for the Corps' training ship TS Royalist.

The Sea Cadets' flagship has been taking cadets to sea since 1971, giving them a chance to learn new skills and master situations outside their normal environment.

Sailing the tall ship in stormy seas or navigating busy waterways requires character and is an effective way of building team spirit.

But Royalist is now more than 40 years old and reaching the end of her useful life with the Sea Cadets, so a £5.6 million appeal was officially launched in 2009 to build a replacement.

On Trafalgar Day last year,



● Units have been challenged to take up their oars to help fund the replacement for TS Royalist

with around £4 million raised from corporate sources, the spotlight was shifted to the cadets themselves, with the units challenged to raise £250,000.

The new ship will probably look similar to Royalist but will benefit from current technology which will greatly reduce running costs when compared to the existing sailing brig – Royalist costs around £440,000 a year to keep at sea.

The replacement will also have advanced safety and navigation features, making it possible for her to visit virtually every port and marina in the UK.

Royalist has seen around 30,000 cadets train on board in the past four decades, and it is expected that the new ship will have a similar lifespan.

The Corps hopes the ship will be commissioned and ready for

the 2015 sailing season.

Other initiatives which have contributed to the fund to date, or soon will, include:

■ Tyne South District, including Jarrow, Hebburn and Sunderland, Gateshead, South Shields and Seaham units, led by Lt Cdr (SCC) Alfred Simpson RNR, raised £2,106.88 on Christmas Eve bag packing at Asda at the Metrocentre.

The event also demonstrated how units in a district can get together to raise some cash.

■ Doubling as a reconnaissance for the rowathon, a small MSSC team will take on a cycle challenge as they bike the 71 miles from Abingdon to Tower Bridge on March 15-16 to raise even more for the appeal.

■ Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel has asked the Royal

Navy to support the appeal.

Vice Admiral Steel has written to all RN ships and establishments asking them to weigh in as the Corps works towards its target.

■ Cdr John Greene, Cdr Paul Haines and Lt Cdr Cliff Lewis are running the 2013 Virgin London Marathon in aid of the appeal.

■ SCTC Weymouth will be using the centre's climbing wall to ascend 5,895 metres – the equivalent of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

Ten people will make 73 climbs in 12 hours, a challenge they hope to complete by the end of April.

For advice or help on joining the rowathon, or undertaking some other form of fundraising for Ship Ahoy, contact events@ms-sc.org or download the fundraising pack and associated forms from the Sea Cadets website.

New division named after heroic wartime submariner

A NEW training division honouring a wartime hero who led a Sea Cadet unit in Kent has been formally opened at HMS Raleigh.

Gould Division is named after William 'Tommy' Gould, one of two submariners awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery on board the submarine HMS Thrasher in 1942.

The division is one of four which make up the initial naval training school at Raleigh, responsible for the instruction and welfare of new recruits undergoing their ten-week induction to the Royal Navy.

Tommy was a petty officer on board Thrasher when the submarine was attacked by German aircraft off Crete, leaving two unexploded bombs on board.

Tommy and the submarine's second-in-command, Lt Peter Roberts, were given the job of dislodging the bombs.

While one bomb had landed on the casing and could be thrown over the side with relative ease, the other had penetrated the submarine's outer casing and was resting on the pressure hull.

In perilous conditions the two men had to crawl 20ft under the casing to retrieve the bomb – with the risk that the submarine could be forced to dive at any moment if enemy aircraft returned.

Easing it from where it had lodged, Gould held the bomb still while Roberts put an old potato



● Cdre John Weale (centre) and trainee ET Christopher hold Tommy Gould's Victoria Cross, while trainee AET Jack Sipple holds the standard of the Submariners Association

sack around it and tied it with a length of rope.

With Gould lying flat on his back with the bomb in his arms, Roberts lay in front of him, dragging him by the shoulders as he crawled along, gradually moving it forward towards the casing hatch.

Reaching the hatch, the two men manhandled the bomb 100ft forward to the bows and then dropped it overboard, while Thrasher went full astern to get clear.

The action not only saved their submarine but also allowed her to continue her operational patrol.

The formal opening of the new division was held to coincide with the passing-out parade marking the end of training for the first group of recruits to complete the course within Gould Division.

Cdre John Weale, Deputy Flag Officer Sea Training and a fellow submariner, was the guest of honour at the ceremony and unveiled the tribute.

The opening was also attended by representatives of organisations that had links with Tommy, including branches of the Submariner's Association, as well as some of his friends.

Lt Dominic Rotherham, Gould

Divisional Training Officer, said: "There were many contenders for a divisional name.

"However, Tommy Gould represents someone current and relatable who can be an inspiration for our recruits.

"His actions on that day epitomise the Royal Navy's core values of commitment, courage, discipline, respect for others, integrity and loyalty, which underpins all that we do here at the initial naval training."

Gould was born at Dover on December 28, 1914 and died on December 6, 2001.

Leaving the Royal Navy in 1945 and deeply attached to his Jewish roots, Tommy helped to found the '43 Group', an English anti-fascist group set up by Jewish ex-Servicemen.

He also joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and, was commissioned as a Lieutenant RNR.

He commanded the Sea Cadet unit at Bromley, in Kent, and subsequently reached the rank of lieutenant commander.

His VC was sold at Sotheby's in October 1987. It is held by the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women at the Jewish Military Museum in Hendon, who kindly lent the medal to HMS Raleigh for the opening ceremony.

Lighter dinner at Stonehaven

STONEHAVEN unit held their annual Cadet Mess Dinner at their headquarters – and there was plenty of light by which to eat this year.

The event takes place at the end of each year and involves the cadets being treated to a three-course meal that follows the traditions and etiquette of the Royal Navy.

Overall planning and preparation was done by the charity trustees and unit parents and supporters, with the adult instructional staff assisting at the event by providing the service to the assembled cadets.

On the night everything was controlled by the Mess President, who this year was LC Ross Lawson, ably assisted by his deputy LC Calum Stephen.

Guest of Honour was Tom Hay, a representative of the HMS Diana Association, which affiliated with the unit a couple of years ago and has since made a number of generous donations towards unit funds.

The event also saw the introduction of Rev Maggie Jackson, who will be taking on the role of unit chaplain after the departure of Rev David Stewart last year.

After the meal a number of cadets showed off their musical skills by playing their chosen instruments for the entertainment of the ship's company before everyone headed home.

Commanding Officer Sub Lt (SCC) Sean Fraser RNR was pleased that the event went off without a hitch.

He said "This year everything has gone smoothly and proceeded to plan – which is a great relief after the drama of last year, when poor weather resulted in a local blackout mid-way through and the remainder of the dinner had to carry on in torch and candlelight only.

"This is the one time when all of the adults involved with the Sea Cadets can show their appreciation for the effort and dedication the youngsters put into their various activities over the year, which keeps us up there as one of the most successful units in the area, if not the UK."

He continued, "Sadly it seems that the good weather was not to stay and the recent storms have resulted in severe damage to our kayak shed and the loss of some equipment, the cost of which we have yet to establish.

"However, we have time for this to be sorted out and we will be back up to strength once our boating season starts again at end of April."

The festive break is the only time the unit is officially closed during the year, and the cadets were all back into the swing of things by the second week of January.



● A day for reflection – Royal Marines Cadet Noah Cockram's image is caught on the polished surface of the war memorial in Caterham, Surrey, during last year's Remembrance parade. The Honour Guard was provided by cadets from TS Zephyr in Caterham, and the picture was sent in by John Wood, the Detachment Commander Caterham Royal Marines Cadets

BRNC funds berths on sailing ship

THE generosity of the good folk at Britannia Royal Naval College has meant that local Sea Cadets can enjoy a spell aboard a square rig sailing ship later this year.

Members of **Dartmouth** unit will be taking up places on Corps flagship **TS Royalist**, thanks to a donation from the BRNC charity chest.

The College has given £1,000, which will be used to send six cadets to sea for a week on board **Royalist**.

The vessel undertakes six-day voyages for up to 24 cadets at a time around the UK and near continent from March to November, giving youngsters a taste of life at sea working as the crew of the ship.

Cadet **Leanne Bovey**, aged 15, one of those who will be spending a week on **Royalist**, has been a Cadet for just over a year.

Leanne said: "I think I'll benefit a lot from going on the **Royalist**."

"It'll be good to learn outside the classroom and I'm looking forward to meeting lots of new people."

"I'm considering a career in the Royal Navy, so I'm planning to take advantage of every opportunity the Sea Cadets can give me."

The unit will also use part of the donation to subsidise members of the junior section when they take part in offshore away-days on board **TS John Jerwood**.

Cadet **Emily Hodge**, aged 15, spent a week on **Royalist** in 2011 and is looking forward to another challenge.

"This donation will help towards my bursary for a trip on the **John Jerwood**," said Emily.

"I had an amazing week on **Royalist** last year, but with **John Jerwood** being a power boat, it's going to be completely different."

"I'm hoping to get more qualifications from my time on board and some more sailing experience, which will help me in the future as I'd like to have some sort of career on the water."

Since 2000 staff and officer cadets under training at BRNC have raised over £118,000 for good causes through a variety of charity events.

At the end of each term donations are presented to representatives from organisations deemed successful in their bid by the College Charity Committee.

As well as the donation to the Sea Cadets, beneficiaries this term included the Townstal Community Hall Association, who were given £250 to assist with the cost of providing vital services free of charge to the community. Representatives from SSAFA Forces Help were given a cheque for £100 as the proceeds from the annual 'Big Brew' event.

Rowcroft Hospice received a donation of £282.60 raised during the College's 'Yellow Day Cake Sale' and a presentation of £500 was also made to Bidwell Brook School towards the development of their new playground.

Scottish units help at charity concert



MORE than 60 cadets and staff from Scottish units lent their support to the Seafarers UK Royal Marines Band concert at the Usher Hall in Edinburgh.

Six units were represented – **Dunbar, Musselburgh, Leith, Edinburgh Trinity, Grangemouth and Airdrie**.

Cadets and adult volunteers helped out in the galley and pre-concert reception, hosted jointly by Seafarers UK and the Sea Cadet Association in Scotland.

They also sold programmes

- *With the Royal Marines Band Scotland and the Edinburgh Gilbert and Sullivan Society singers onstage, cadets line up in front of the audience as Capt Nick Davies, the Scottish representative of Seafarers UK, addresses the audience*

and raffle tickets, and manned the collecting cans for the retiring collection in aid of Seafarers UK.

The concert achieved a record audience of 1,100 people, with the Sea Cadet Association of Scotland accounting for 88 of them.

The show itself featured four conductors, the Royal Marines Band Scotland (including a talented organist) and the Edinburgh Gilbert and Sullivan Society – and the general consensus was that the performance was one of the best seen.

The occasion also allowed some of the cadets to share their experiences with the 140 members of the audience at the reception.

AB Finlay Cummings, of Musselburgh unit, described the skills, experience and self-confidence she has gained from being a member of the Corps for more than two years.

A good year but further challenges lie ahead

ST AUSTELL cadets can look back on the second half of 2012 with a certain amount of satisfaction.

The unit, based at **TS Hood**, has seen members take part in offshore training, a visit to a state-of-the-art Royal Navy warship, represent the unit at civic events, and bag their share of the silverware on offer at Corps sporting events.

AC Lewis Winnett and AC Rowan Truscott had an excellent time whilst sailing aboard the tall ship **TS Royalist**, flagship of the Sea Cadet Corps.

Cadets and staff were also invited to visit Type 45 destroyer **HMS Dragon**, the fourth of the six-strong class of air defence ships, on her visit to Fowey in Cornwall during a break in her Flag Officer Sea Training programme.

St Austell cadets again won the Cornwall District seamanship competition, and gained a very respectable third place in the South West Area competition, held this time at the **Weston-super-Mare** unit.

And once again it was a St Austell cadet who was chosen as the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for Cornwall – POC Tom Hocking is now actively engaged in this high-profile role.

During 2012 cadets represented their unit in all competitions, and their success and enthusiasm are in no small part down to the efforts of the staff (under the leadership of Sub Lt (SCC) Sally Truscott RNR), committee and parents.

One dark cloud on the horizon is the condition of the unit's workhorse – the minibus, which is nearing the end of its useful life and urgently needs replacing.

But such headaches are there to be beaten, and if the same level of commitment and hard work is carried on through 2013 Sub Lt Truscott and her team can look forward to an exciting and 2013.

Hectic programme on Rock for CCF party

TWO dozen members of the **Calday Grange Combined Cadet Force** enjoyed a busy programme when they undertook an expedition to Gibraltar.

The 24 cadets, representing the Royal Navy, Army and RAF contingents from Wirral-based **Calday Grange Grammar School CCF**, have just returned from a hugely successful expedition to Gibraltar.

Hosted by the Royal Gibraltar Regiment, the cadets and adult supervisors spent eight very full days and nights undertaking a huge variety of activities whilst on and around the Rock, including sailing, kayaking, diving and water-skiing.

There was plenty of off-duty time in the programme as well, with trips to see the famous Barbary apes and to visit some of the 30km of caves and tunnels which honeycomb Gibraltar.

There were many highlights of the trip, including being able to stand in the middle of a live runway to be photographed.

The main road from Gibraltar to Spain crosses at its centre, and is believed to be the only international airport to have a road across the runway.

Another highlight was a day of scuba diving, held in Rosia Bay, the very spot where the badly-damaged **HMS Victory**, bearing the body of Admiral Nelson, was towed after the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

Coincidentally, the **Calday** party were in Rosia Bay, once the site of a Royal Navy victualling yard, on Trafalgar Day itself.

Main Street, with its shops and cafés, was a particular draw for the **Calday** party, who were to be seen in their distinctive maroon



● *Dinghy sailing in the sunshine within sight of the runway at Gibraltar (above) and the **Calday Grange CCF** group pictured in the middle of the airport runway (right)*

'Operation Caldean Rock' hoodies window-shopping or enjoying a cool drink in the 85°F heat, while the folks back home were shivering in autumnal chill.

The success of the visit was in no small part down to the warm welcome and support from their Gibraltar hosts.

Party leader Maj Derek Adcock said: "Everyone had a brilliant time and came back with many happy memories."



New wheels for New Romney



NEW Romney unit's annual presentation evening was a particularly memorable event – during proceedings they were presented with their new minibus.

The £17,000 cost was met by £10,000 from **Magnox**, £5,000 from the Little Cheyne Court Wind Farm Community Fund and £2,000 from Kent County Council.

The evening began with the cadet band playing to a packed deck of guests and parents, followed by the dignitaries making individual presentations to cadets who have

● *From left: Cllr Carole Waters, county councillor for Romney Marsh, John Maundrell of Magnox and Lt Cdr (SCC) Don Davies RNR (retd), chairman of New Romney unit, in the new minibus.*

made the most improvement during the past year.

A further demonstration was given by the Junior Cadets, showing their proficiency at tying a variety of knots.

The new minibus will be used to transport cadets and the band to all events and numerous activities.

Guest of Honour was Cdr Andy Giles and other guests included John Maundrell, engineering manager at **Magnox**, Cllr Carole Waters, the county councillor for Romney Marsh, Cllr Roger Joynes, the Mayor of New Romney, and representatives from the RNA and Submariners Association.

The minibus was presented by Mr Maundrell and Mrs Waters. Hon Alderman Terry Preston

thanked the generosity of the sponsors on behalf of the unit.

The minibus will be made available for use by other community groups in the area.

In his reply, Mr Maundrell said how impressed he was with the cadets and the unit and what a pleasure it was to see so many youngsters, who are often viewed in a poor light, devoting so much time and effort to improving their lot.

Concluding proceedings, Cdr Giles thanked the unit for a very enjoyable evening and congratulated the cadets on the progress made and encouraged them to continue the many activities and achievements into the future.

Following this a buffet in the wardrobe was enjoyed by all.

Successes come across the board

AND speaking of reflecting on a job well done, it wasn't a bad year for **Rickmansworth** and **Watford** unit as well, both collectively and individually.

Cadets from the unit formed a crew in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee pageant, bearing one of the Commonwealth flags, while staff at the unit volunteered as Olympics Gamesmakers.

The unit also won a burgee for 2012 when Captain Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor assessed the level of **Rickmansworth** and **Watford's** efficiency, putting it amongst the top 25 per cent of Sea Cadet units in the country.

Cadets won accolades at district level for their participation and achievement in boating regattas and courses, and they also won trophies at both district and London Area levels in waterborne and other training-based activities, with the power-boating trophy being the most coveted piece of silverware in their locker.

Individually the members of the unit have also stepped up to the mark, with cadets gaining more offshore sailing badges and more waterborne qualifications than in previous years.

And it was because of the offshore activities that one of the youngest members of the unit was awarded the Cadet of the Year prize.

Tom Lisle was offered a place in the London Area race squad on 35ft yachts because of his aptitude and natural ability for sailing.

The whole unit is rooting for him as he prepares for his first competitive races around the east coast of England this year.

The full Nelson



On the Town once more

WITH the sun about to set on the current generation of warships named after cities (HMS Edinburgh ends the Type 42 story when she decommissions in June), prodigious naval historian Neil McCart has focused on the previous bearers of the names.

Town-class Cruisers

(Maritime Books, £29 ISBN 978-1-904-45952-1) charts the careers of all ten ships which were the mainstay of global operations in WW2 – and, for the six which survived the conflict, the early years of the new Cold War era.

It's probably fair to say that Fate was kinder to some of these light cruisers – built under the limitations of inter-war treaties which restricted tonnage.

History has largely forgotten Southampton, Liverpool, Birmingham, while a cloud hangs over HMS Manchester's demise (damaged, she was scuttled during Pedestal; her captain was subsequently court-martialled).

Sheffield – 'old Shiny' – came through WW2 (including the Bismarck chase) mostly unscathed.

Gloucester earned a reputation as a 'dogged warrior' – the Fighting G nickname lived on, long after she went down off Crete.

Edinburgh was the 'gold ship' – torpedoed returning from Russia with £1.5m gold bullion aboard (payment for Allied aid to the USSR); all but half a dozen bars were recovered in salvage operations 40 years later... by which time the gold was 30 times the original value.

Such histories and more are recounted by McCart in a very accessible manner – although some of the Towns are more comprehensively covered: 16 pages for Southampton, for example, more than 50 for Sheffield – in part due to their length of service: Southampton was sunk in 1941, Sheffield was the last of the class to pay off in 1967.

And the stories of all ten cruisers are, rightly, liberally sprinkled with first-hand accounts, bringing the ships – and their actions – to life.

And death as well. Capt Basil Brooke of HMS Southampton paints a horrific picture of his ship's final moments – the upper deck bulging, wooden planks split with steam and smoke rising, fires raging across the wardroom flat, watertight doors buckling, an entire damage control party wiped out, spilled oil from the galley burning fiercely.

Southampton fell victim to the Luftwaffe in January 1941, a fate her sister Gloucester shared four months later off Crete, where the carnage wrought by German air power was equally frightful.

Thanks to mostly private archives, the volume is excellently illustrated.

But today's readers might be surprised by memorial postcards produced by the firm of A Abrahams of Plymouth.

In 2013 these postcards, featuring a portrait of a ship on a black background, bordered by rolls of honour, appear slightly mawkish – something you might expect in the Edwardian era (there was a raft of such material when the Titanic went down), but possibly not in the early '40s.

This is a fine and worthy anthology of the Town class.

For completeness' sake, a list of sources/bibliography and references would have been handy – the same goes for an index – but there is a useful appendix detailing each ship and the alterations they went through during their careers.

IN 2004 John Sugden published the first volume of his life of Nelson subtitled 'A Dream of Glory' which covered the great man's life until 1797 and the loss of his arm at Santa Cruz, Tenerife.

There has been much expectation about its sequel, which finally appeared at the end of last year. One can see why it took so long. Subtitled 'The Sword of Albion' it is a *magnum opus* indeed, running to over 1,000 pages, including notes and index, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

Reading *Nelson: The Sword of Albion* (Bodley Head, £30 ISBN 978-0-224-06098-1) takes time but it is well worth the effort. Sugden has trawled through a multitude of sources not only to tell the story of Nelson's life in unsurpassed detail, but to fill in a great deal of background information on the characters who entered the admiral's life and the world in which he worked.

A good example of the latter is the chapter 'Mastering the Machine', which is an excellent analysis of the challenges and dynamics of running the Mediterranean Fleet in 1803-05.

Another particularly interesting chapter covers Nelson's role in naval diplomacy in the political and strategic kaleidoscope that was the Mediterranean theatre in this period.

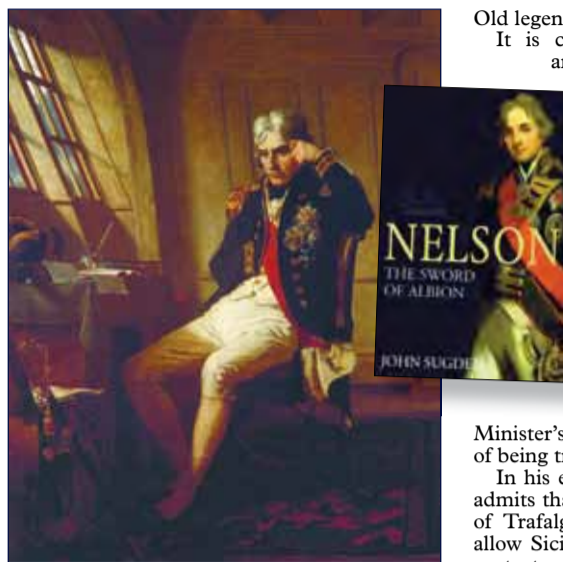
Nelson's activities *vis-à-vis* the Barbary Corsairs are now almost forgotten as are British attempts to use Ali Pasha of Janina, the Albanian warlord, as a strategic asset. Now they have full modern coverage. Sugden makes a convincing case that Nelson and his fleet played a key role in preventing a French descent on Greece.

Sugden paints a fair picture of Nelson's less-than-happy and controversial role in re-establishing the Neapolitan monarchy in 1799.

He is critical of his role in the treatment of Admiral Caracciolo and admits there is a case to answer about Nelson's eventual acceptance of the armistice with the French and Neapolitan Jacobins, a decision he later reversed under pressure from the King and Queen.

His defence of Nelson is a subtle one: Sugden argues that "lazy judgements do violence to what were complex, frustrating and quickly evolving events." Nelson, he concludes, was acting "honestly" in "impossible circumstances". He supported the armistice to save the city from further fighting, but "the royal response aborted the compromise, and Nelson reneged on the treaty in aid of the smooth restoration of the monarchy that was for him the ultimate as well as by far the most important objective."

It was, of course, in Naples that Nelson met Emma Hamilton. Sugden covers the relationship and the consequent breakdown



● A pensive Nelson in his cabin on the morning of Trafalgar with his last letter to Emma Hamilton on the desk before him. As painted by Charles Lacy

THE GROVE REVIEW

of Nelson's marriage in an interesting way. He has less sympathy for Emma than some and tends to quote critical, rather than positive, commentary. Emma was indeed a challenge to the prim and snobbish attitudes of the British establishment of the day, but she had linguistic and artistic talents that Nelson clearly appreciated.

Sugden makes clear how both Hamiltons were of great assistance in his wider work in the Mediterranean, forming a triangle that greatly enhanced the effectiveness of his command. Lady Nelson was the main victim of these developments and Sugden's sympathy for the poor woman is infectious. I shall try not to refer to her as 'Tom Tit' in future.

What emerges from this book is the central importance of the Mediterranean to both Nelson and British strategy in this period. Indeed Trafalgar itself was fought to prevent the Combined Fleet entering the Mediterranean and restoring the naval balance there in Napoleon's favour.

Sugden clearly recognises that the invasion threat had passed when Trafalgar was fought and that the French invasion plans were always less than practical. He cannot resist, however, contradicting himself and saying that somehow Trafalgar did indeed save Britain from invasion.

Old legends die hard.

It is clear that Nelson thought that an annihilating victory at sea would give Napoleon cause to accept defeat. This totally misreads Bonaparte's strategic vision, which had little place for naval forces.

Despite Trafalgar, Britain and her allies lost the War of the Third Coalition. As Corbett perceptively put it in his analysis of the Trafalgar campaign, "the sea had done all the sea could do", but Napoleon was still master of Europe.

William Pitt died in a depression. Sugden does not relate this to negative events in Europe, but he does point out that the Prime Minister's death diminished Emma's chances of being treated properly by the state.

In his excellent concluding chapter Sugden admits that the "immediate strategic influence of Trafalgar was limited." It did, however, allow Sicily to be held effectively as a British protectorate and a key base and source of supplies for the continued British presence in the region. This should not be underestimated.

It was also a refuge for the Neapolitan monarchy and there is something tidy about Nelson's final victory securing the land where he had been granted his Dukedom of Bronte. For a time, Nelson pined for this duchy he had never seen, but Sugden points out that by the time he died Nelson had settled for a future with Emma and daughter Horatia at "paradise Merton" – a future he was sadly never to see.

There are one or two other places where I differ with the author. His account of Nelson's death is somewhat romanticised. In an era of inaccurate muskets, I am not sure the word "sniper" is correct for the man who discharged the fatal ball. The shot may well have been discharged in the general direction of the officers in sight, but its landing place was a matter of chance. Few people survived the upper deck of Victory unscathed.

Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that overall this book is a magnificent achievement. Sugden himself says that no work can be 'definitive' as new research takes place all the time even in well-ploughed territory.

It will, however, probably remain by far the most comprehensive account of Nelson's life.

Some of the author's choice of modern words grates a little, but the book is generally very well and accessibly written. Indeed it is so interesting that it's hard to put down – despite its weight! The price is also most reasonable for a volume that is substantial in every way.

It should be in every Nelson and Naval historical library.



More than an MOD warrior

BACK in 2000 naval historian and retired admiral Richard Hill published a biography of one of the figures who shaped the Cold War RN, Admiral of the Fleet 'Terry' Lewin.

A paperback of the award-winning *Lewin of Greenwich* was planned – but the publishers were taken over and that was that.

Twelve years later Lord Lewin's son Tim arranged for a new print run – but in ebook format (Kindle, Kobo and ePub) for just £4.99 from the usual online retailers/bookstores.

Among the naval leaders of his generation, Terry Lewin is probably overshadowed, certainly in the public's eye, by the late Sir Henry Leach – the admiral who famously urged Mrs Thatcher that Britain could and should re-take the Falklands in 1982.

Lewin, by contrast, is seen as more of a 'Whitehall warrior' (one title of this biography considered, and rejected) – he filled seven posts at the Admiralty and, later, the MOD.

Which rather ignores his ability as a naval leader, his wartime service, and his immense personal warmth.

He commanded the destroyer *Corunna*, served as XO of the Royal Yacht and, in the mid-60s, was CO of HMS *Hermes* during the withdrawal from east of Suez.

He proved to be a popular captain of the carrier – she enjoyed the sobriquet 'Happy *Hermes*', he showed an interest in the welfare of his men and their families more akin to the present-day than the '60s and was equally modern when it came to the rum ration (it was dished out at the day's end, once flying was over, and sailors could have a beer instead if they so wished).

As for Lewin's wartime service, he came through two of the worst convoys of the war (PQ16 to Russia, Pedestal to Malta).

The latter played heavily on his mind during the Falklands conflict 40 years later. As Chief of Defence Staff, the admiral reminded the War Cabinet that two in every three merchant ships on Pedestal had been lost.

As an authorised biography this is a book largely favourable to its subject. It's also not been revised to make use of official documents released since 2000 – ie anything after 1970.

But it remains an excellent insight into the man and the Royal Navy in the post-Imperial/Cold War era.



● HMS Colossus leads Neptune, St Vincent and other dreadnoughts past Inchcolm Island towards Scapa Flow in 1918

Enduring appeal of the castles of steel

WE USE the word 'magnificent' in our review column sparingly – the *Navy News* team isn't prone to hyperbole.

But there is no more apt adjective for Ray Burt's *British Battleships of World War One* (Seaford, £45 ISBN 978-1-84832-147-2).

First published in the mid-1980s (as an oversize volume extending to more than 300 pages), Mr Burt has revised and enhanced his seminal book a generation later.

What stands out, above all, in this second edition are the improved production values in publishing in the intervening quarter of a century.

Burt's original tome featured more than 300 B&W images; in the revised edition, that figure has swelled to over 500.

On glossy paper, they have reproduced beautifully. As have the numerous plans and diagrams of the ships drawn by the author (who's an accomplished draughtsman) and colour profiles of the ill-starred Audacious, Repulse and Lion.

The author evidently has a treasure trove of a photographic library – and not just the usual Wright & Logan-esque images of battleships entering or departing harbour.

There are many fitting-out photographs of these great vessels being completed – a window not just on the RN of the day, but also great shipbuilders such as John Brown on the Clyde.

Burt charts the design and career of all 20 classes of battleship and battle-cruiser, from the progenitor Dreadnought through to Furious, Courageous and Glorious (the latter two were completed and converted post-war into carriers, Furious was a bastard child – half battle-cruiser, half carrier initially, until her big guns were removed).

In an age where you can count the number of British capital ships on one hand, this volume is a reminder of the sheer number of dreadnoughts once possessed. The Iron Dukes, Warspites, Lions and Tigers are well known.

But HMS *Monarch*? Erin? Hercules? The first King George V? This really is a reminder of the Grand Fleet at its grandest.

Thanks to Beatty's pithy remark at Jutland and Jellicoe's failure to annihilate the High Seas Fleet, the capital ships of the day have suffered a bit of a bad press over the past century – certainly compared with their German counterparts.

Such criticisms, says Burt, are generally unfair. German battle-cruisers were better armoured; but as a rule they were outgunned by their RN equivalents, which were also better seakeepers. As for battleships, they were pretty evenly matched.

Indeed, the author argues that the big ships of the Grand Fleet were, generally speaking, a match for any of their contemporaries: their guns were excellent, their machinery reliable, they were fast and possessed "unmatched seagoing qualities".

This rose-tinted view of the Hun at the expense of the Grand Fleet is nothing new. Back in 1921, one American naval commander protested at the praise lavished on the 'Made in Germany label'.

"We Anglo-Saxons are too prone to think the other fellow's goods are superior to our own."

If you like your castles of steel – and let's face it, destroyers, cruisers, carriers and the like can't hold a candle to the imposing beauty of these leviathans – then this book is a 'must'.

The £45 price tag might be off-putting, but shop around and you should be able to shave one third off.



● Mne Ed Hill (back to camera) scores a hit on Rob Sage of the GB Veterans

Bowers ensures title is ours

THE title of fencing's Inter-Services 'Champion at Arms' belongs to Lt Cdr Keith Bowers who proved himself 'best of the best' at the end of one of the busiest weeks in the RN fencing calendar.

Over the course of the four-day competition in Grantham, Keith won the men's individual sabre and picked up silver in the foil, giving him the highest points tally in the competition.

His success capped a brilliant performance by the RN's male sabreurs, who picked up four of the five top places.

Cdr Dicky Barton and Lt Rubin Nash tied for third, while AB Fred Noakes came in fifth.

Mne James Huntley secured a bronze in the épée, while Noakes and Mne Ed Hill added third-place finishes in the men's foil to the RN tally.

Unfortunately the RN were pipped to the post in the men's team event, with four victories to the RAF's five. The Army finished in third place, failing to win a single match.

In the ladies' competition, the RN were unable to

field a team and the RAF only contended a single weapon, leaving the Army with a clean sweep.

The Inter-Services came hot on the heels of the RN knockout, held at HMS President.

Fourteen units competed against each other, with a team of RN CCF cadets from Elizabeth College taking first place; 43 Cdo and HMS Kent came second and third respectively, while President and Navy Command tied for fourth place.

In the evening 50 RN fencers and guests attended the annual fencing dinner in President's wardroom, and the following day saw a match against a national veterans' team, in which the Navy men won 7-5 but unfortunately the ladies lost 6-0.

A series of grass-roots fencing events will take place at various training and shore establishments in 2013 to introduce sailors and marines to the sport.

The next of these will take place in Brunel Gym, HMS Sultan, on Wednesday February 20 between 2.30pm and 4pm. See pdeportal.co.uk/sports/fencing/news for details.

Men's triumph is ISIN on cake

HAVING won the RN Inter-Command indoor hockey tournament, the Portsmouth and Royal Marines teams emerged victorious from the Tri-Service Inter-Command event as well, consigning the two RAF Commands to the third place play-off, writes Lt Cdr Alan Walker.

The top two Service teams would normally compete in the West of England Indoor National League qualifying competition, but this year special dispensation was successfully sought for one RN team and one RAF team to take part in the further rounds at Bristol University.

Permission was granted by the 'can-do' West organisation, but even so the RN had great difficulty raising a team – and the luckless RAF had to withdraw – leaving the RN to hold up the Services end yet again.

The RN were one of eleven teams playing off in three pools for one place in the National play-offs. The West winner would join up with those from North, East, South, Midlands and the previous season's bottom NIHL club in a further play-off, with the eventual winner enjoying promotion to the lower of the national indoor leagues.

The Navy team comprised three submariners (AB Ben Wain, the U21s keeper, Lt Mark Dixon and CPOMEA Stu McNally), two engineers (POAET Mark Stanton and LET(ME) Danny Makaruk), and two green berets (Commando doctor Dave Potter and Mne Nicoll) with Navy Secretary Steve Lemon, stepping down to assistant coach in favour of newly-installed team coach POPT Sam Howard. Because the team was short of five players from the usual maximum 12, both coaches were changed as 'hostilities-only' potential players.

The seven lads gave absolutely everything – how well they played had to be seen to be believed and, as usual, they were in the running for the top spot by winning their pool.

The 'been there before' Bath Uni Buccaneers and Cheltenham each won their pool. Three teams left for a three-way play-off, one to go through. A Pompey team once won through to the NIHL in the 2003/04 season. Played eight, lost eight, in two consecutive weekends in Hull was the sad record back then, although it was always thought that Cheltenham and Harborne (Birmingham) could have been there for the taking. Our lads were playing so well – you just wished you could 'magic in' the missing five, not least to provide badly-needed fresh legs.

Anyway, it was not to be and the RN team emerged with great credit after two defeats brought about purely by sheer exhaustion.

The relative strength of the RN and RM contingent meant the 'best of both' was too much for the

other two Services at the senior men's level in the *Inter-Services Indoor Competitions* (ISIN).

So once again the RN went away with the top two trophies out of the five competitions, the ISICT and ISIN cups.

Six Inter-Service indoor wins out of eight – and eight ISICT wins in eight years – is a pretty good record left by former RN seniors' coach Steve Lemon as he hands over to POPT Sam Howard.

The results at the ISIN were:

Ladies: 1 Army, 2 RAF, 3 Royal Navy.
U23 Men: 1 RAF, 2 Army, 3 Royal Navy.
Masters: 1 RAF, 2 Royal Navy, 3 Army (the RN beat the Army 5-2).
Seniors: 1 Royal Navy, 2 Army, 3 RAF (the RN beat the Army 8-4 and RAF 7-5).

In the outdoor form of the game, the *Inter-Command tournament* reverted to the more usual end of Indoor season spot to prepare for the outdoor Inter-Services competition in March.

Coming hot on the heels of a busy indoor season, the close proximity of both may have had an adverse effect upon availability of players to take part in both.

The women's event ended with three teams of players from four commands – well, actually five commands: Plymouth produced five players, Portsmouth and Air had four between them, Scotland, led by the ebullient Laura Laing did brilliant to get eight players.

Something extra special was served up by the RM Band Service – ever since Musns Amy Drinkwater, Kat Beard and Alice Hudson have been playing for the RN, there has been talk that one day, the Bandies would eventually produce a team.

Produce a team they did: ten players, led by Amy, took the field resplendent in pink, keeping alive a tournament that had looked to be threatened at the very least.

With Portsmouth and Plymouth combining and each team making adjustments to even out the numbers, the brave Scotland team lost both their matches – only for want of a goal-getter – but without them the event would have been the poorer.

The Bandies won one and lost one (Alice Hudson top-scored with four goals), and the Portsmouth/Plymouth/Air 'mixyblob' won both their matches, which was probably on the cards from the start.

The men's event was down to four teams – Scotland were unable to field a side.

Plymouth had come to do well and immediately upset the apple cart by beating the Marines 2-1 in the first match.

Portsmouth, with Micky

Warriner back from injury looked business-like as first Tim Lomas then Jon Hamilton tucked away a brace each. Naval Air scored early on through Callum Watkins and near the end from Andy Carter, but that was all they could manage in a 5-2 scoreline. Alex Colbourne got Pompey's fifth.

Plymouth v Pompey on paper looked good for a draw, but a 3-0 Portsmouth lead through Stu McNally, Rowan Edwards and Colbourne proved unassailable. Fred Parry got a consolation short corner conversion late on.

Smarting over their defeat by Plymouth, the Marines took on Naval Air and gave them a 3-0 sorting out. With two or three really top Fleet Air Arm players missing, a goodish side was beginning to look a bit ordinary....

Two games were left for the morning of the second day and three teams still had everything to play for; Portsmouth were on six points, with Plymouth and the RM on three each.

Day 2 and Naval Air faced Plymouth. The Westos raced into a 4-0 lead inside 16 minutes with two from Alistair McInnes, one from M Nocoil and another from Gavin Roberts.

Once the bacon sarnies were all gone, the WAFUs got down to business with goals from Andy Carter, Mark Yates and Chris Shakespeare. Unfortunately for them, then Roberts and Nocoil each got another for 6-3. McInnes scored his hat-trick and then Plymouth got another short corner conversion late-on for 8-3 to consign Naval Air to a third defeat and a most-unaccustomed wooden spoon.

Plymouth now had six points to match those of Portsmouth and 11 goals for and 7 against. If RM could beat Portsmouth 1-0 or 2-0, Plymouth could win on goals for.

Needless to say, the final match, intelligently seeded by Secretary Lemon, would be assured of a maximum turnout. A splendid match ensued; the flair and talent of the Portsmouth side matched the rapidly-improving RM team time and again. Chances went begging or were brilliantly saved.

1-0 or 2-0 to RM would let Plymouth in, the Royals needed a 3-0 win to win outright....

No-one thought about a 0-0 scenario... which is how it ended – seven points to Portsmouth, six to Plymouth, four to RM and 0 to Naval Air.

Sixty players got three matches in each and a good time was had by all.

Squatters take over Sail Loft

Continued from page 44
227.5kg. MA Mea Taylor Greaves achieved an excellent 235kg in the under 90kg class, made all the more impressive by her having only started training with weights a few weeks prior to the competition.

As well as full power, there were single lift entries, with the bench press being won by Zach Woolley with an outstanding 150kg in the 82.5kg class. The deadlift title was taken by POPT Jamie 'Sticky' Stickley who pulled 250kg in the 110kg class.

For more information visit the RNPA website sites.google.com/site/rnpowerlifting/home or search on Facebook.



Do not adjust your set...

THE shirt held up by WO Keith Humpleby might be a tad (well, very) garish.

But thanks to it, one of the country's top Rugby League teams, and several hundred Leeds Rhinos fans, the coffers of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity have been swelled by £2,952.50...

...as you can see from the large cheque Keith, fellow matelot CPO Steve Swales (Leeds Armed Forces Careers Office) and Leeds Rhinos and England star Jamie Jones-Buchanan are holding on the Yorkshire side's hallowed Headingley turf.

Second row forward Jamie, a key member of Leeds' Grand Final winning side, presented the cheque – proceeds from sales of the limited-edition shirt worn by the Rhinos in their clash with Hull FC back in July (the Rhinos traditionally play in easier-on-the-eye blue and yellow).

The game was staged to show the two clubs' support for Armed Forces Day – an occasion close to Jamie's heart. "My stepfather was in the Navy and

served on HMS Courageous when I was growing up. I lived for a while at Faslane, so know first-hand the great job that our Armed Forces do to keep us safe both at home and abroad," said the England star.

"This was a great effort by the Leeds fans and I am sure it will be very much appreciated by the charity.

"We are proud at the Rhinos to be able to support such a great cause and I am pleased to be able to hand over the cheque."

Yorkshireman and RNRL stalwart Keith says the Rhinos have a habit of pulling out all the stops for the military.

"This was the third year that the Rhinos have had an Armed Forces Day and fans should not underestimate how much it means to the guys to receive such a warm welcome from members of the public whilst they are at home," said Keith.

"The Leeds and Hull fans were magnificent and the boys are already looking forward to next year's game."

Top cars for top men

SERVING and injured Royal Marines spent a day on the Donington track in some of the world's best sports cars courtesy of an invite from a former rally driver.

After breaking his neck 25 years ago, Graham Raphael has extensive experience on having 'a body that doesn't fully function' (his words) – and is inclined to help members of the British Armed Forces who've been injured on active service.

Thanks to the links between RMR City of London and the capital's branch of the Royal Marines Association, Graham said he'd love to see the green berets on Donington race track, test driving some top motors. How could I refuse, writes Capt 'Scotty' Mills RM, RMR City of London.

I didn't take too long to get 15 volunteers together – indeed I took seven ranks from Hasler Coy, two ranks from Termoli Troop (40 Cdo RM), and the rest from the unit.

The day started with an early drive to Donington Park via RMR Birmingham, who kindly put us up for the night.

We were met by the race team who took us through introductions and registration in the Paddock Suite.

Graham had pulled out all of the stops, and through his links with the various car manufacturers he managed to get each dealer to send us their top motors.

The looks on the lads' faces were a picture as car after car arrived on low-loaders: Maserati Quattroporte, Aston Martin DB9, Rolls Royce Ghost, Audi R8, GT Spyder, Lotus Caterham, and many others. These were our toys for the day! Hoofin'!

Donington had also arranged for us to have several GT British Tour rally car drivers to show us the ropes as we went through several familiarisation laps and high-speed circuits.

The skill and expertise of the drivers was incredible as they pushed each car in turn to its limits.

Then it was our turn, with each of us enjoying the experience of driving at high speed around one of the UK's premier race circuits with the rally drivers encouraging and guiding throughout.

We also had the opportunity to conduct skid-pan training, a cross-country driving course and also a trip to the Grand Prix Collection and museum.

All in all it was a fabulous opportunity – one which will live long in the memory banks of all who attended.

This was a coming together of several arms of the Royal Marines, the RMA, RMR, Hasler Company, Termoli Troop 40 Cdo RM and UK Sport.

The generosity shown to us by the Donington Park team and Graham was incredible and there is a real tangible feeling that people really do want to help where they can.

Such activities do make a real difference as some of our men who are recovering from injury attempt to rebuild their lives.



Picture: Kit Houghton

Bob'll dazzle them at Olympia

YOU can't beat an all-action Fleet Air Arm photographer...

This is trainee Junglie pilot Lt Stephen Currie and his trusty steed Bob (note the wings on his cap!), wowing the crowd at the **International Horse Show** at Olympia.

The naval aviator was the sole RN representative facing up to the cream of the Army's riders at the Service Jumping Championships.

Using all the skills he has learnt as a student pilot on 848 Naval Air Squadron, he flew around the course and achieved a commendable fifth place on horse Bob, an eight-year-old Irish sport horse which Stephen has owned and trained for seven of those years.

An avid rider, the pilot has grown up with horses: "I got back into showjumping with the Royal Navy in 2011 and in my first year with the Royal Navy and Royal Marine Equestrian Association show jumping team took part in the Royal Windsor Horse Show and also qualified and jumped at

Olympia last year.

"Olympia is considered by many top equestrian stars as the best indoor international horse show in the world and to be given the opportunity to not only jump in this historic arena, but to do it whilst proudly wearing the uniform of the Royal Navy is a unique and life-fulfilling achievement."

"My fifth place this year is two up from last year, and hopefully in 2013 the Royal Navy can continue this upward trend."

Stephen continued: "This year, I have been moving around completing several different short courses before joining 848 NAS."

"Due to the high work rate of the squadron and the flying course I am on, I made the decision to leave Bob with my trusted trainer in Shropshire, and commuted weekends to train."

The presentation guest of honour was Rear Admiral Simon Charlier who is the President of the Combined Services Equestrian Association and also a very keen horseman.

Double blow for U19s

RN U19 v Kent FA

The RN U19s played their second fixture of the season at Victory Stadium and, after a frenetic start by both sides, the game finally settled down.

The Kent left back was making a number of powerful runs at the heart of the RN defence but the back four more than held their own with AB Bee (HMS Portland) only required to hold one driven ball at the RN goal.

On 14 minutes the ball nestled in the back of the Kent net after some intricate play by the RN. ET Power (Raleigh) picked up the ball just inside the Kent half and he played a through ball into the path of AET Wharton (824 NAS).

He held onto the ball and it looked like the chance was lost but he cut back onto his right foot and laid the ball off to AET Mellows (Sultan) who fired it into the net.

The goal fired Kent into action. Their left back was allowed to carry the ball to the byline and he squared across the goal only for the ball to be missed by everybody. It was then retrieved on the Kent right from where it was pulled back to the edge of the 18-yard box and the shot was driven past Bee.

Kent started to take control of the game and a long ball over the top allowed a shot on target that was pushed away by Bee.

From the resulting corner the cross bar was rattled and as the ball rebounded back into play the RN were let off as it hit the Kent forward and sailed over the bar.

As the half-time whistle approached Kent got their noses in front for the first time. A ball over the top enabled the centre forward to run through on Bee and with one touch he struck it through the keepers' legs and into the back of the RN net.

The second period opened with Kent straight on the attack, firing a shot over the top of the Navy goal.

The visitors enjoyed the lion's share of possession and when the RN did have the ball it was often clearing their lines.



ONSIDE with Lt Cdr Neil Horwood, RNFA

On 54 minutes the sailors gifted a goal to the visitors. A long throw was called for by Beech, but it appeared that both he and Bee went for it. Beech mis-kicked leaving Bee stranded and the ball bounced along the front of the goal and was tapped in to the RN net to the delight of the Kent entourage.

The RN were deflated and it could have been worse two minutes later as, after a long run by the right back, the ball was squared and at the far post was a Kent player totally unmarked and he somehow managed to miss the open goal from one yard.

Amateur Football Alliance v RN U19

The RN U19 kicked off on an uneven surface at Colney Heath FC against the AFA on a crisp December afternoon. Manager WO1 Marty Wallace made a number of changes from the side beaten 5-1 by Kent and started with five debutants.

The RN back four restricted AFA to shots from distance and Bee was rarely troubled in the RN goal, although it took great work by ET Power (Raleigh) to deny AFA on the break after 14 minutes.

The RN had their first real sight of goal on 20 minutes when a run by Power enabled a first-time shot from Hodgson, but it sailed over the crossbar to safety.

AFA had the ball in the RN net on 25 minutes but it was disallowed by the assistant referee for offside.

On 34 minutes the RN took the lead; intricate play led to Power being tripped just inside his own half and from the resulting free kick Goode delivered a ball that the goal keeper fumbled, leaving Hodgson to nod into the unguarded net.

Shortly after the break, AFA

were level. A goal kick from Bee was won in midfield by the AFA and as it dropped to the centre forward a speculative shot from distance went through the keeper's hands and under the bar to level.

The RN were clearly rattled by this uncharacteristic error from one of their most consistent performers this season and another foul on the edge of the box gave AFA another chance but the free kick was fired over the bar. A run down the left was blocked for an AFA corner and Bee did well to save at his near post before a good passing move gave AFA another opening but this was denied with a tremendous saving tackle by Goode at the expense of another corner.

As the RN struggled to get out of their half it was not surprising that AFA took the lead on 58 minutes. An unstoppable shot was fired in from 20 yards; it struck Bee's upright before nestling in the far corner of the net.

The keeper later atoned for his earlier error with a couple of fine saves. Firstly the AFA left winger cut in and tried to curl the ball round him but he did well to push the ball away; then another long range effort bounced awkwardly to the left of Bee and he pulled off a great one-handed save to keep the score at 2-1.

In stoppage time the RN had a chance to grab a point as Clayton burst into the box and pulled the ball back across the face of the goal. There was no-one able to get the vital touch and the ball was cleared.

Marty was disappointed that his side had not managed to get a result from the game but having given debuts to seven players as he builds the squad for Dallas next month, he knows only too well that his squad is a 'work in progress' as they knuckle down in 2013.

Clay time at BRNC

A DEDICATED covered shooting enclosure is among the modifications made to the **clay pigeon shooting** range at Britannia Royal Naval College.

The new covered enclosure comprises a concrete floor, wooden roof and walls on three sides with shooting bays at the front – replacing the original gravel base and makeshift shooting cages. It has been paid for with a grant from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Sports Lottery.

"These modifications are fantastic improvements to the range making it a challenging all-weather shooting ground," said Lt Sam Stephens, BRNC's head of navigation and, of greater relevance in this instance, the college's 'clay pigeon officer'.

"As well as the regular club users we introduce around 40 people each term to the sport of clay shooting, both staff and the Officer Cadets, through grassroots sports sessions."

"In the past year, seven people from Dartmouth have gone on to shoot for the Royal Navy, some of whom were completely new to the sport when they arrived at the College."

"Clay target shooting is a great way of improving military skills and also helps to build individual confidence with weapons. The ability to pull a trigger and see the effect is a great way to learn."

The new facility, paid for by the RN and RM Sports Lottery, BRNC's welfare fund and the Britannia Association, was formally opened by the college's CO Capt Jerry Kyd.

He, along with other invited guests, was challenged to test his marksmanship on helium-filled balloons and exploding clays.

A team of qualified coaches is on hand at Dartmouth, among them club manager CPO Bill Amery.

"In addition to Officer Cadets, we offer shooting to Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary groups from ships and establishments in the South West for team building and adventure training," Bill explained.

Anyone interested in clay pigeon shooting can contact CPO Amery on ext 7252 or email BRNC-IS.C.

Picture: Craig Keating, BRNC



Hatchet ratchets it up

Continued from page 44 Collingwood's AB Owens.

Lowthorpe started the bout well, but half-way through the opening round Owens started getting the upper hand, giving Lowthorpe two standing counts before the fight was stopped.

Just before the interval ET(ME) Handley was boxing Plastow from Cambridge University. Over the three rounds Plastow charged in, head down, attacking the body, while Handley struggled to get him off and was caught on the rope numerous times. Handley tried to counter box as much as possible but it was not enough as Plastow won a unanimous decision.

After the break Sultan's ETME Mckee stepped into the ring against Wakeford, the uni team captain. In the first, both boxers were throwing some great shots with loads of power in them.

In the next round, Wakeford managed to land some telling blows knocking down Mckee, more off-balance than hurt by the shot. Just before the end of the round, Wakeford landed a flurry of punches which led to a stoppage. Mckee can learn from this and come good for the Navy Cup this month.

Next up for Sultan was team captain LAET Graham against Collingwood's AB Bennett.

This was the moment when Sultan needed a good performance from their team captain – and they got it.

Straight from the bell, Graham was in high spirits and started landing some big bombs from distance.

In the second round, the Sultan man started to move through the gears, landing some really telling blows to head and body.

The referee gave Bennett a standing count half-way through the round. Bennett was allowed to continue, but the bout did not go much further with Graham making the referee intervene and stop the bout with Graham crowned the champion.

In the next clash, two Sultan lads and friends were matched against each other after both coming off losses.

The bout started well for AET Marriott who took the fight to his opponent, ETME Dumbril.

The second was much the same with Marriott attacking the body, but in the third Dumbril started doubling up on his jab followed by a rear hand.

That started to confuse Marriott and took him out of his game plan. In the end Dumbril was awarded a unanimous decision.

Next up: ETME Cook (HMS Lancaster) against Chung from Titchfield; both lads had boxed four times with four defeats, although Cook had been robbed a few times.

The bout started at a frantic pace with neither boxer giving an inch. It stayed that way for the rest of the encounter with both fighters showing a great deal of courage and determination.

Cook was landing some great combinations throughout. At the sound of the bell both lads got a standing ovation. Chung in the red corner won a majority decision by the closest of margins.

To bring the night to a close Sultan's LET Gilchrist faced AB Pearson.

After an even first round which saw both boxers throwing numerous jabs, the second switched to the pair opting for power.

Mid-way through the second Pearson caught Gilchrist flush, thus bringing a stop to the bout.

In another great night of boxing the final standings were as follows:

1 Sultan (11 pts); 2 Gosport, Portsmouth and Titchfield ABC (8); 3 Collingwood and Cambridge University (5); 4 Nelson (1).

...Which means that Sultan have now won five fight nights on the bounce.

Paignton feel the pain as RN dominate

THE RN rugby union women's 1st XV opened their 2013 account with an impressive performance against Paignton Ladies at the Rectory.

Right from the whistle, the RN dominated Paignton and pushed them down to their 5m line, writes *Maj Steve Melbourne, RNRU.*

The RN stole the Paignton line-out ball and pressurised their line, resulting in a try for scrum half Lt Caroline Oakes (857 NAS). AB Sam Alderson (HMS Scott) stepped up and kicked the conversion for a 7-0 lead.

Runs by LET (WE) Emily Atkins (HMS Portland) caused no end of trouble for Paignton and gave the Navy backs a good platform to work from.

However, the Navy were penalised for not 'rolling away' and a quickly-taken penalty by Paignton pushed the RN back into their own half, with only staunch Navy defence stopping Paignton from scoring.

The Navy responded through Cornwall flanker Lt Charlotte Fredrickson (849 NAS) who was playing at centre for this game. She showed her pace to set up the RN's second try, scored by Lt Paula Bennett-Smith (NATO Northwood), which was again converted by Alderson, for a 14-0 half-time lead.

The Navy Ladies started the second period strongly and only the 'scramble' Paignton defence stopped an early Navy try.

However, it was at the cost of a player as Paignton were reduced to 14 players for ten minutes.

Playing with 14, Paignton continued to fight back, keeping the RN pinned in their own 15m for long periods.

The Navy eventually 'broke out' and the ball came along the line to winger ETWE Lauren Tobbell (HMS Portland), who showed her pace to take the ball deep into the Paignton half; only a last-ditch tackle stopped the Navy adding to their score.

Navy Coach NA Chris Ellor (RNAS Yeovilton) brought on AET Kate Broadbent (CHF HQ) for NNS Alice Kightley (Defence School of Health Care Education) in the second row.

Nineteen minutes into the second period, Paignton gave away a penalty close to their line and a quick 'tap' led to a try for Fredrickson with Alderson scoring the conversion (21-0).

The Navy made another replacement, with Bennett-Smith being substituted for the returning Kightley.

Paignton continued to battle and were rewarded for their endeavours just before full time as Paignton scored an unconverted try. Final score 21-5 to the RN.

Assistant Coach Ellor said: "I was really pleased to see how well this development squad came together to win this game, particularly with several new players."

"This was Caroline Penrose's first game as captain and I was impressed with how well she performed under pressure."

Man of the Match went to AET Zoe Harrup (848 NAS). This was her first game of rugby and she won every lineout ball (both RN and Paignton) and put in some brilliant tackles.

Next up for the women is another home tie, this time against Plymouth Albion on February 6.

Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Herron, RNAS Yeovilton



On your marks...

TWENTY-three records were set in the Yeovilton pool as HMS Yeovilton hosted the RN's annual swimming championships for the first time.

The men's swimming title was retained by the Royal Marines (99 pts) beating East (86 pts) and West (45 pts), writes *Lt Cdr Alan Walker.*

In the 100m fly Cpl Matt Edwards (CTCRM) and Lt Bolton (Devonport) knocked Commonwealth Games swimmer AB Jeremy Osbourne into third place. Lt Bolton also got a good second place in the 100m breaststroke.

LPT Stu Mantle won both backstroke events; he beat newcomer Mne Mackenzie and local boy AET Dickinson in the 200m. Mne Steve Winterbach defended his 2011 100m breaststroke title in a faster time; AET King got close to him, as he also did in coming third behind Navy team skipper Nic Vaughan in the 200m freestyle.

RNAsa deputy chairman Al Witt celebrated his promotion to commander by winning the 400m and 200m freestyle events.

The 4x2 individual medley usually sorts the men from the boys; we saw why Jeremy Osbourne had taken it easier earlier when he cruised to victory over Inter-Services achievers, Mnes Hall and Hogan.

The best race of the day was the men's two-length freestyle won by ET (ME) Olly Bott, with Hogan second. It was also good to see another PT branch 'Billy the Fish' emerge in the shape of LPT Keir

Woodhead from ARO Plymouth.

The 100m freestyle 'blue riband' event was won by Edwards and Vaughan for the RM with Olly Bott coming through fast. Full results are to be found on the RNAsa website.

There were 30 male swimmers taking part in the ten events and an empty lane was something of a rarity. By contrast there were only 11 swimmers in the ladies' competition.

A somewhat-worrying phenomenon has become noticeable: the apparently-growing trend of late for Portsmouth Command to have difficulty in raising full teams for sports events - across the board. Perhaps it's a passing phase, but the Portsmouth team comprised only three ladies where the West team at least had eight.

Not to be at all put out by the size of her team, engineer Lt Emma Kearsey (Fleet HQ) swam an Inter-Services winning time in the 200m breaststroke. She also went on to win the punishing 4x1 individual medley and the 200m freestyle. Engineers rule ok?

Emma's three produced 18 points for her Portsmouth team. One point behind was Musn Caitlin O'Malley. She won the 100m backstroke, the 100m butterfly and came second in the 200m backstroke. This was pretty remarkable because she was swimming for the West women whilst also being team and match secretary for the mainly men's team as RM Corps secretary.

Lt Sarah Vines from Sultan was selected to swim in September's Inter-Services but missed it due to family illness. Here she got two second places in the 50m free and

100m back to earn ten points to add to the six scored in winning the 100m Freestyle. The Pompey girls were not going down without a fight.

Despite the dispensation to be able to swim in three individual events, it seemed the West girls mostly decided to play safe and only get in the water for two - all except a very competitive AET Briggs (Yeovilton).

That she produced 500m of sheer have-a-go slog to earn eight points for her three third places was due to an unpopular disqualification for going walkabout when clearly exhausted in the middle of one of her two 200m races.

Her 'DQ' did not go down well with the spectators, who voiced their displeasure at such churlishness.

DSA Debbie Imm finished well in the 200 and 100m breaststrokes. Not really a breaststroker, Debbie seems to have inspired a workplace colleague, DSA Joanne Nightingale, to attend (and her dental surgeon boss to release them both).

Jo cracked out a first in the 50m free and second in the 100m free. Navy Swimming salutes that SDS and practice manager - what a splendid example of 'can do' for RN Sport.

LPT Vicky Jarvis was due to depart HMS Somerset for HMS Collingwood - that is good news for RN coaches to be able to work on her times for the 2013 Inter-Services after she won the 100m breaststroke and took second in the 100m freestyle.

Lt Jenny Salt (Collingwood) and the third member of the Portsmouth team earned third

places in the 50 and 100m Freestyle so they are ready-made training partners...

Spare a thought for Wtr Rebecca Mitchell (Neptune): she earned nine precious points for her West team. Although a breaststroke specialist, she swam freestyle in September's Inter-Services after a knee-op.

All credit to her as she fights her way back to breaststroke knee fitness with a careful third place in the 100m breaststroke to add to a second in the individual medley.

LET Donnachie and MA Lobban earned a collective ten points for their West team. Portsmouth were defeated in both relays by the need to put four swimmers in each race; with just three, they could only watch as West swam away with the title.

Squatters take over Sail Loft

THE final RN powerlifting competition of 2012 took place at the Sail Loft Gym in Portsmouth in December.

The aim of the contest was to give novice lifters a chance to compete alongside more experienced lifters in the squat, bench press and dead lift.

The competition was open to all personnel across different weight categories and was well attended with 26 athletes taking part.

Each competitor was allowed three lifts per discipline, with the aim of a final maximum lift to contribute to their combined overall total.

Lee Evans, representing the Royal Marines, managed an impressive 390kg in the 67.5kg class, an exceptional effort from a young man entirely new to the sport.

At 75kg was the man who founded the Royal Navy Powerlifting Association, POPT Sean Cole.

Appearing in his swansong competition, Sean achieved a colossal 510kg total and a new personal best in the squat of 180kg. Newcomer David MacPhee put in a fine effort with a total of 470kg.

The 82.5kg category was all-action with ten competitors vying for top honours. The eventual winner was MA Daniel Evans - in his first appearance for the RN, though no stranger to the sport - with an incredible 602.5kg total, unofficially breaking the British deadlift record with a herculean 277.5kg. Daniel also took the overall best lifter trophy; Royal Marine Sam Dew took second in this class with a total of 580kg.

At 90kg, representing the Silent Service, was Wes McGuinness who totalled 515kg.

The 100kg class was won by fellow submariner LMA Chris 'Doc' Martin, who produced a total of 580kg. Steven Blackmore, in his first competition, took second place with 535kg, showing a great deal of talent and promise for future meets.

As powerlifting is an equal opportunities sport, the ladies gave it their all. Lt Rachel Cunningham achieving an impressive 315kg total in the under 80kg class followed by Nat Sikora, a cross fit enthusiast, who totalled

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Hatchet ratches it up

STEPHENSON'S hangar at HMS Sultan was the setting for the annual boxing clash with the engineering establishment warfare neighbours, HMS Collingwood.

Thanks to the efforts of LPT Kennett, the building was transformed from an old hangar into something more akin a great boxing venue such as the Royal Albert Hall and Madison Square Garden, writes *PO(PT) Daz 'The Hatchet' Hoare, HMS Sultan boxing coach.*

Defending their title, Sultan had nine boxers lined up for a contest which saw fighters from HMS Nelson, Cambridge University, and a combined Titchfield,

Gosport and Portsmouth ABC, step into the ring as well as competitors from Collingwood.

First up was LET Ashworth against Gosport lad Tom Gregory (pictured left). Ashworth was only in his second bout, Gregory in his 11th.

There was a difference in the standard of boxers, but Ashworth took the fight to his opponent. At the end of the bout everyone believed Ashworth had done enough only to be robbed by a majority decision.

Next up for Sultan was ETME Lowthorpe, facing his first contest against

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