



NAVY NEWS

MARCH 2013

HEROES HOME EARLY

DELTA MEN
FINISH
MISSION

FIT FOR A QUEEN

NEW CARRIER
TAKES SHAPE

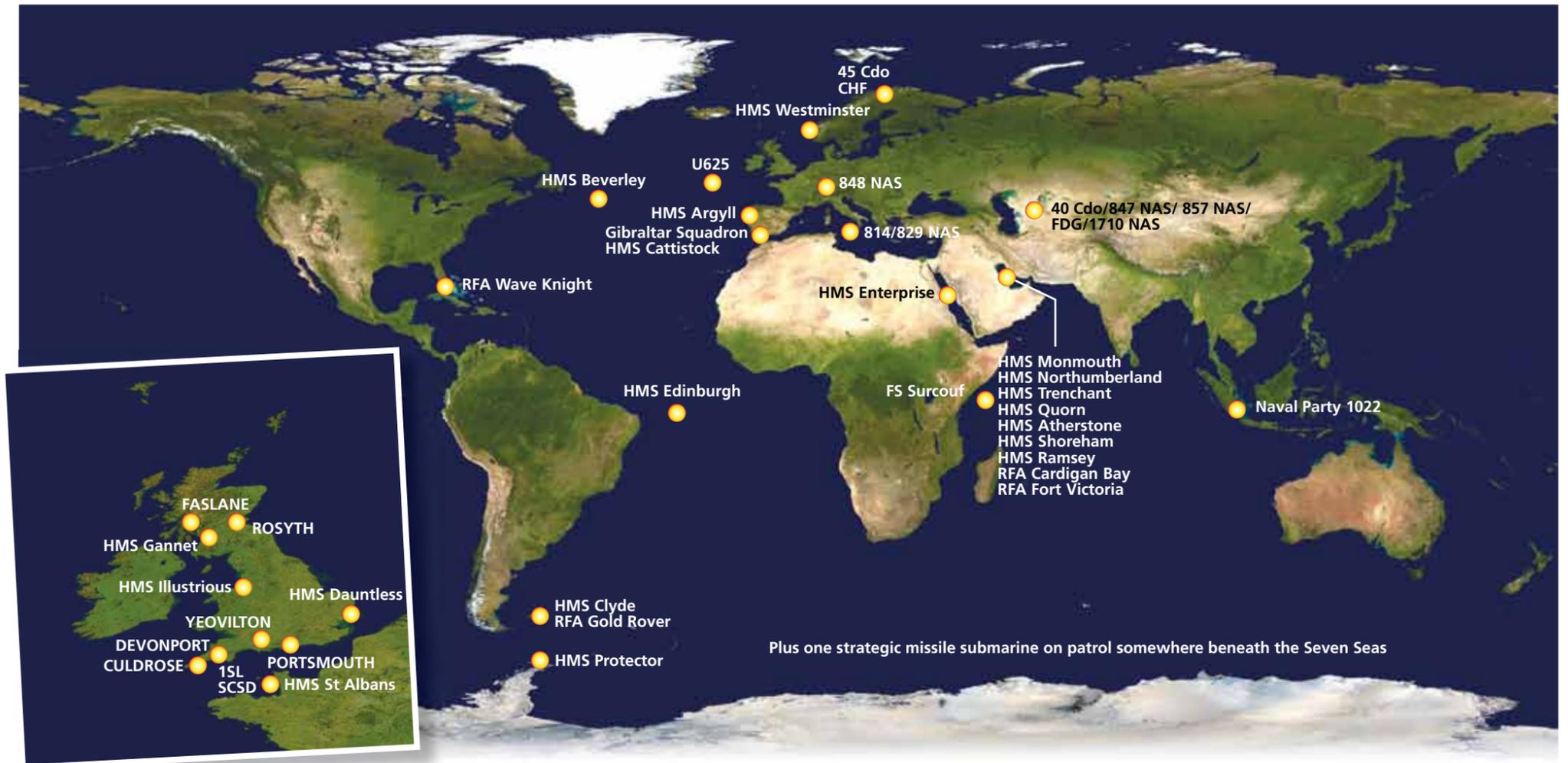


THE CAT'S WHISKERS

The first production model of the Fleet Air Arm's next-generation helicopter, the Wildcat, demonstrates its agility during its maiden flight over Somerset. The helicopter, which begins replacing the Lynx later this year, rolled off the production line at AgustaWestland and will soon be handed over to 700W - W for Wildcat - Naval Air Squadron at Yeovilton. See page 9.

Picture: AgustaWestland





FLEET FOCUS

Protecting our nation's interests

WE BEGIN our monthly round-up with some good news. Good news certainly if you're a member of **Delta Company, 40 Commando** – or a friend or family member of one of those green berets.

Two months earlier than expected, the Delta boys left Helmand, their mission complete – although the work goes on for 500 or so of their comrades, who remain in theatre till next month (see pages 22-23).

Flagship **HMS Bulwark**, plus **Montrose, Dasher, Echo** and **539 Assault Squadron RM** paid tribute to **First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope** as he made a valedictory visit to Plymouth (see page 7).

The sail-past the admiral enjoyed was one highlight of a busy week in the Sound, which was also the setting for **Staff College Sea Days**, when the RN shows what it does for the benefit of its sister Services (see page 8).

The Merlins of **829** and **814 NAS** have flown across southern Europe to take part in NATO's biggest anti-submarine exercise, **Proud Manta** (see page 4).

(Just) east of Suez, survey ship **HMS Enterprise's** magnificent sonar suite discovered Red Sea canyons perhaps not seen by human eye since the waters inundated the region millennia ago (see page 6).

Sailors from **HMS Monmouth** were given a sample of big carrier ops when they joined the USS John C Stennis on patrol in the Middle East (see page 5)...

...and eight naval airmen have joined US flat tops on a more permanent basis – the **USS Kearsarge** and the **Dwight D Eisenhower** – to learn about the safe operation of fast jets and helicopters, paving the way for the **Queen Elizabeth**-class carriers (see page 13).

As for the ship herself, massive strides have been taken by **HMS Queen Elizabeth** this past month; her forward island has been delivered, the bow is now complete, and her nascent ship's company are writing the carrier's manual (see pages 16-17).

Also north of the border, **Northern Diving Group** helped to raise a Dunkirk 'little ship' from the bed of Loch Lomond (see page 10).

HMS Argyll has departed Plymouth for a six-month tour of the Atlantic, north, south, east and west – first port of call Lisbon – (see page 4), while up the coast minehunter **HMS Cattistock** sailed from Portsmouth to take up NATO duties with a minehunting force roaming the Med (see page 6).

HMS Dauntless became destroyer-cum-carrier as she played host to three Lynx for the first time, helping trainee air and groundcrew from **702 NAS** get some at-sea experience (see page 6).

The Fleet Air Arm's first front-line **Wildcat** helicopter – successor to the Lynx – has taken flight (see page 9 – and you might have noticed it on our front page...).

The fliers of **Commando Helicopter Force** have been honing cold weather and mountain flying skills – some in northern Norway, others in Bavaria (see page 15).

Staying where it is cold, **HMS Westminster** has been charging around the fjords near Bergen – hosting **Top Gear** legend Jeremy Clarkson, who's making a documentary on wartime convoys to Russia. He absolutely loved the Type 23 experience (see page 14).

And talking of love... Liverpool loved **Lusty**. The great carrier arrived on the Mersey on Valentine's Day for what might have been her final visit to the port (see opposite).

As well as flying the flag for the RN on Merseyside, she spent five days in Liverpool kindling interest in **Battle of the Atlantic 70th Anniversary commemorations** in May. And as part of our lead up to those events, for the next three months, we're dedicating our Ship of the Month feature to ships with ties past or present with the Battle of the Atlantic – precisely 70 years after the 12 or so weeks of fighting when the struggle reached its climax. This month, the ill-starred Lend-Lease destroyer **HMS Beverley**, sunk in under two minutes escorting a convoy in April 1943 (see page 12).



● A trainee navigator takes a fix on St Albans bridge during the training off Guernsey (you'll have to take our word for it...)

If you can navigate here...

THE Royal Navy's newest navigators were put through their paces as they guided HMS St Albans safely through the rock-strewn waters of the Channel Islands.

The Type 23 frigate provided the ideal platform, and the waters around Guernsey and Jersey, the perfect setting for the new navigators.

Following shore-based training at HMS Collingwood, the student navigators joined the youngest of Britain's 13 Type 23 frigates for instruction across the Channel.

With many notorious submerged rocks and fast-flowing tides, their calculations and plans have to be extremely accurate.

That training reached its climax in the confined waters of the Great Bank (off the south-west coast of Jersey) and Little Roussel (between Guernsey and Herm, which is peppered with rocks).

Navigation instructor Lt Cdr Tom Howe said: "If you can safely navigate in these waters in the winter, you can navigate a warship anywhere in the world. The students are pushed to the limits, conducting navigation at night time, around rocks, in awkward anchorages and entering harbour."

"Our simulators are brilliant for practising, but there is no substitute for driving a real ship to add to the pressure that will be felt in a few weeks' time when they join their ships, as long as they pass the course that is."

The waters around the Channel Islands are heavily used for navigational training, but what made St Albans' stint unusual was that the students were mostly submariners.

Not only did they have to contend with fast-paced mental arithmetic but also with the unfamiliar engine controls and wheel orders of a surface warship.

The Saint's time in the Channel Islands wasn't devoted entirely to navigational training. The frigate also hosted the Lieutenant Governor of Jersey Sir John McColl and his wife Lady Gene to view the work of trainee navigators and meet members of the ship's company.

Away from the ship – and during one of the brief periods alongside – the Saints grabbed at the chance of some adventurous training during 'CO's week'.

Six sailors headed to the Brecon Beacons to make use of Talybont – the RN's Outdoor Leadership Training Centre, which has just celebrated its 50th birthday.

Around 1,600 sailors and Royal Marines make use of the centre and its facilities each year as part of the Navy's over-arching 'fit to fight, fit for life' initiative.

The cross-section of the ship's company were determined to get the maximum use of the centre during Exercise 'Stal-ybont' by climbing the tallest peak in the area, the 886m (2,906ft) Pen y Fan, try their hand at rock climbing and race each other in a mountain bike challenge.

Another group headed to Milton Keynes to make use of the indoor ski slope, where 1,700 tons of real snow are built into nursery slopes – for those new to skiing and snowboarding – and more challenging, steep descents for the more experienced.

DCT is the place to be

IF YOUR name is HMS Bulwark...

Fresh from her starring role in action-packed demonstrations for future military leaders (see page 8) and a farewell sail-past by Britain's most senior sailor (see page 7), the nation's flagship was flung into five weeks of rigorous training and inspection to ensure she's ready for anything the world can throw at her.

Nearly 100 inspectors and assessors – a mixture of hugely-experienced officers and senior ratings – joined HMS Bulwark to put her ship's company through their paces over the next month off Plymouth.

After leading the RN's key deployment of 2012, **Cougar**, to the Mediterranean in the autumn, the amphibious assault ship has enjoyed a winter break, undergoing a spot of maintenance in her home port.

She awoke from her wintry slumber a few weeks ago to shake off the cobwebs and hone skills such as flight deck operations, gunnery and running landing craft in and out of Bulwark's 'party piece', her cavernous loading dock.

The exacting team from the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation, based like Bulwark in Devonport, inspect every aspect of the ship and ship's company.

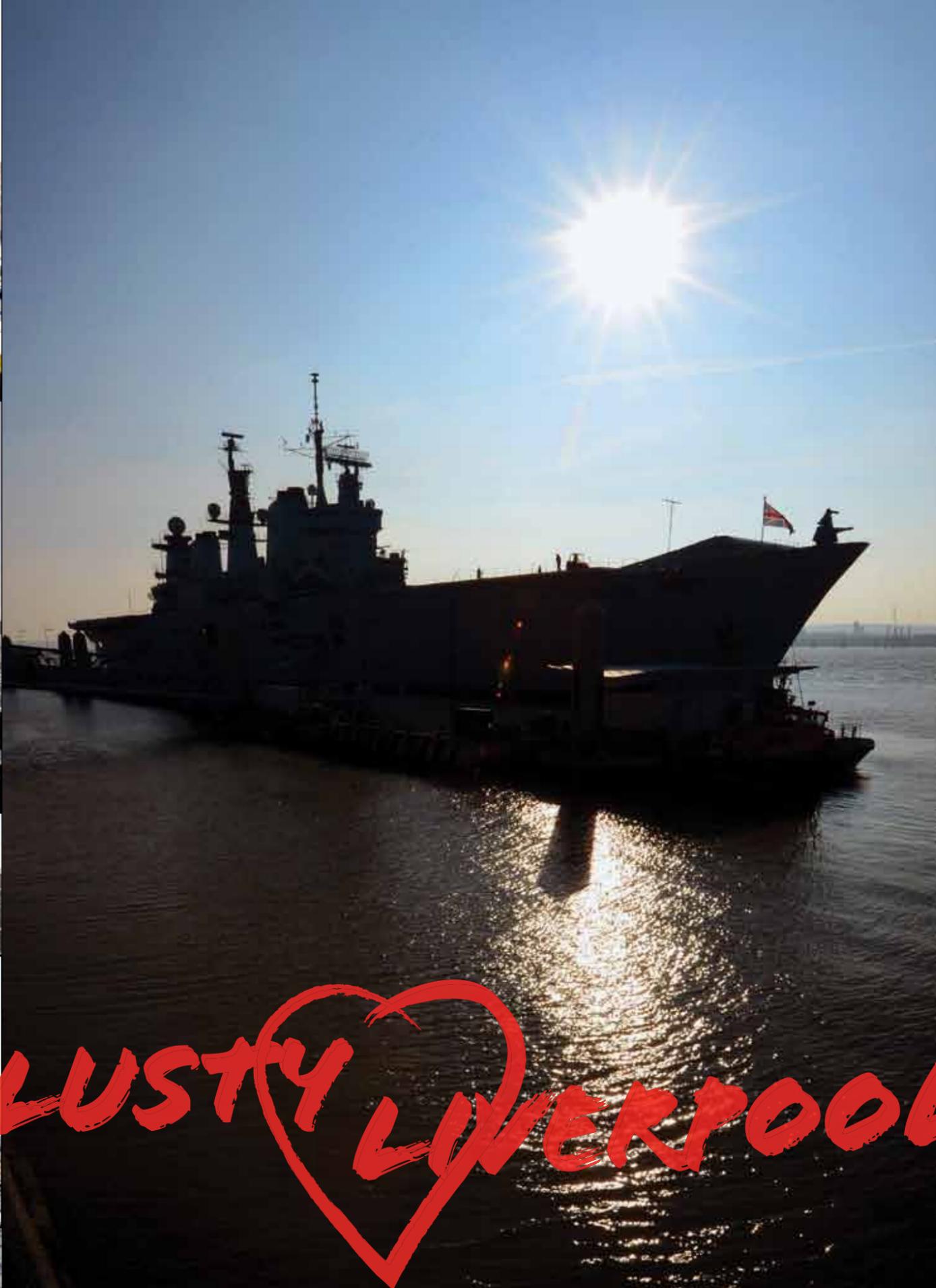
They're giving the flagship what's known as Directed Continuation Training, which is training unique to the ship and her mission – in Bulwark's case the ability to put more than 700 Royal Marines with all their kit ashore... and bring them back again if required.

In addition to testing the flagship's amphibious capability, the FOST staff will also test and assess every aspect of the ship's fighting ability: warfare against surface, submarine and air attack, the ability to command a task group, disaster relief missions and large-scale evacuation of civilians such as the Royal Navy has conducted in the Lebanon and Libya in recent years.

"Although the ship has recently completed a period alongside, the ship's company have been working hard to maintain and prepare the equipment of this complex warship," said Bulwark's CO, Capt Andrew Burns.

"They are now keen to demonstrate their professional skills in every facet of their work, including warfighting operations. This period of training is critical in maintaining our readiness to deploy for any tasking that the Government may require of us and we are looking forward to the challenges that it will provide."

Once the training is completed, his ship will be on call to respond to global events as the flagship of the UK's Response Force Task Group.



AND she really felt the love on what might have been her last time in the shadow of the Liver Building.

With the grand old lady of the Fleet due to retire at the end of next year – and as she's the nation's on-call helicopter carrier global events can always play havoc with her future programme – she made the most of her five days in the North West's premier port.

Her visit to Liverpool was used to re-affirm the Royal Navy's long-standing links with the area – and kindle interest in forthcoming Battle of the Atlantic 70th anniversary events.

Liverpool will be the focal point of national events over five days in May.

The evidence from Lusty's visit, berthed at the impressive Cruise Liner Terminal, suggests the people of Liverpool are certainly ready to commemorate. In large numbers.

Over the weekend of her stay, the carrier threw her 'doors' open to the public. Almost 6,000 people passed across the gangway on both of the days.

"Large queues built up on the waterfront to board the ship – reflecting the huge levels of interest and the enduring love affair that Liverpool has with its Royal Navy," said Cdr Rob Taylor, who's head of the carrier's weapon engineering department.

The Portsmouth-based warship has also hosted a number of events to promote careers in engineering and wider events targeted at young people to enthuse them in science and technology.

Some 253 engineering students from a range of local schools, colleges and universities including Wirral Met College,

Kirkham Grammar School, KGV Southport, Southport College and Liverpool University were treated to a four-hour engineering symposium which looked at a wide range of applications for engineering skills.

Almost half of Lusty's crew of over 650 are engineers and many of them were on hand to demonstrate some of the ship's technology in action and promote careers in the engineering sector.

Other visitors from Wirral College were more interested in naval cuts...

Trainee barbers, led by tutor Denise Billing then set to work on some of the ship's company.

Taking the Royal Navy's regulations on haircuts as a rough guide, the budding team of Nicky Clarkes set about the task of grooming the ship's company in a rather makeshift salon.

In just over two and a half hours they had attended to the locks of over 35 of the ship's company. The students – all reassuringly nearing graduation – delivered a broad range of ladies' and gents' hair cuts under the supervision and guidance of college lecturers.

Disappointingly, the take-up for highlights, curling and hair extensions was low. Supporting salon staff were made up from Lusty's crew.

Another highlight (hairdressing pun intended...) of the visit was an after-dinner performance to more than 160 local dignitaries by rising singing star 22-year-old Danielle Thomas from Waterloo, Liverpool.

She performed a set piece in the ship's enormous hangar, which was followed by a performance by the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Scotland.

Danielle said: "I had an amazing time. Everyone was amazing, very welcoming.

I feel very honoured to have had the opportunity to sing onboard."

As for Battle of the Atlantic events, Liverpool was home to the Western Approaches Command in World War 2 – it was from here that the struggle against the U-boat was successfully directed.

Major events are also planned in Derry-Londonderry (another key staging post in the Battle of the Atlantic) from May 10-12 and in London from May 8-13.

But it is in Liverpool that 70th anniversary commemorations reach their climax between May 24 and 28 with services of thanksgiving, parades, demonstrations, flying displays and a gathering of around two dozen warships from around the world.

Lusty herself won't be there. Her spring 2013 is devoured by the latest Joint Warrior exercise off Scotland, followed by two months of Operational Sea Training – billed as 'pre-season training' for a ship's company to prepare them for any eventuality on the Seven Seas – off Plymouth.

And so after five memorable days, Capt Martin Connell, Lusty's CO, reluctantly gave the order: Prepare to cast off at 4pm on Monday February 18.

"It was with a considerable tinge of sadness that we left Liverpool – for what might be the last time," he said.

"We were all made to feel incredibly welcome and Liverpool lived up to its reputation as one of the friendliest, most vibrant and welcoming places for a ship such as Illustrious to visit.

"I know that the forthcoming Battle of the Atlantic commemorations will further tighten the bonds between the Royal Navy and this great city and I am sure that the ships attending will be afforded the same great welcome we have had."

pictures: po(phot) ray jones and la(phot) keith morgan, hms illustrious

829 and 814 go a-hunting in the Med

THE Royal Navy's best submarine-hunting helicopters are pitting their wits against their chosen foes right now in the warm waters of the Mediterranean.

Merlins from Culdrose in Cornwall made the 1,400-mile trip across Europe to join fellow anti-submarine specialists from the world's navies for the biggest NATO exercise of its type.

Each year the international military alliance gathers ships, submarines, maritime patrol aircraft and helicopters in and off Sicily for Proud Manta – and 2013 is no different.

Although Merlin is designed primarily as a submarine hunter, in its 11½-year front-line career it has assumed a much wider role as an all-round warrior: hunting pirates, taking down drug smugglers, search and rescue duties, shifting personnel and stores around.

Its crews are always keen to return to their roots, however. So three Merlins and 75 personnel from 829 and 814 Naval Air Squadrons at Culdrose are the Royal Navy's commitment to the two-week Mediterranean war game.

As well as air and ground crew, logistics experts were flown to US Naval Air Station Sigonella in eastern Sicily, the hub for the aerial side of Proud Manta, to meet all the needs of the Fleet Air Arm helicopters.

At Sigonella, they joined up with Americans, Canadians, Norwegians, Italians, French, Germans, Spanish, Greeks and Turks.

814 – also known as the Flying Tigers – are used to large-scale exercises like Proud Manta (they were out here two years ago, while their sister squadron 820 visited Sicily in 2012); 829, on the other hand, typically provide ship's flights for Type 23 frigates, working in the cramped confines of the hangar, and with a small flight deck on which to set the Merlin down.

So the chance to work as part of a larger team – and with more space to work with – was something the 829 men and women have jumped at.

“Merlin is one of the best anti-submarine aircraft in the world and this is a great chance to prove that we are equally capable of operating from ships or land-based airfields at home or abroad,” said Cdr Steve Windebank, 829's CO.

“Taking part in an exercise like Proud Manta is a fantastic opportunity for our crews to practise their anti-submarine warfare skills while working alongside our NATO partners.

“I hope everyone involved takes something away from this year's exercise.”

Defender sails up the Tyne

NEW destroyer HMS Defender has paid her first visit to a non-Naval port – North Shields on Tyneside.

The Type 45 took a break from a period of intensive trials and training to spend five days alongside on the Tyne.

Although she wasn't open to the general public during her stay (that was left to her sister Dauntless which was making use of the same Northumbrian Quay a week later) she hosted local defence industry leaders, cadet groups, veterans of the Royal Naval Association and college students studying the Armed Forces.

The ship, which commissions in Portsmouth on March 21, also hosted battle space managers (the modern air force terminology for fighter controllers) from RAF Boulmer which is just up the coast near Alnwick.

'Ready for any challenge'



Picture: LA(Phot) Joel Rouse, FRPU West

GLIDING past Devonport's famous and historic covered slip and the statue of Silly Billy – aka King William IV – on a majestic February day (and there weren't many of those...) is Her Majesty's Ship Argyll.

As this is the printed word, you cannot, of course, hear the skirl from five members of the City of Plymouth Pipe Band, embarked for the passage down the Hamoaze and into the Sound – a nod to the Type 23's proud Scottish heritage.

Nor can we bring you cheers from families gathered at Devil's Point, the traditional place of send-off for deploying Devonport vessels.

They'll be there again six months hence when the frigate

makes her way back up Plymouth's great artery.

In between, the small matter of an Atlantic deployment, north and south, east and west.

Much of Argyll's time will be spent off the coast of West Africa, focusing on stamping out drug running.

She's also due to provide reassurance to the UK's overseas territories and our friends and allies in the region.

On completion of her mission in the Atlantic, the emphasis shifts to Caribbean and more counter-narcotics work, plus 'regional engagement' – working with local navies and nations to fly the flag for Blighty – before finally heading back across the Atlantic and home.

“As we sail from Plymouth we can reflect on ten months of hard work and preparation for this deployment in which my ship's company have achieved fantastic results,” said Cdr Tim Neild, Argyll's CO, as his ship departed.

“This milestone marks the beginning of a fresh challenge for Argyll and I am hugely confident that we'll deliver success in all that is asked of us – and in doing so will make a significant contribution to maritime security and British interests worldwide.”

Since completing her previous deployment ten months ago, Argyll has been extremely busy conducting operations in home waters, representing the UK and Royal Navy at National Armed

Forces Day events in Plymouth, Belgian Navy Days and a highly-prestigious UK Trade and Investment initiative in Hamburg. The crew have undertaken an intensive period of training and maintenance to prepare for the tasks ahead.

For one sailor onboard, 26-year-old former lifeguard ET(WE) Shaun Murray (26) from Plymouth, the deployment is the first of his RN career.

“I am really excited to be given the opportunity to travel the world and see places that I wouldn't normally be able to visit. I know there will be a lot of hard work but after all of the training I have received, I feel ready for any challenge,” he said.



The Buck starts here

MEET the men and women making sure there's a permanent Royal Navy minehunter presence in the Gulf, 24/7/365.

This is (almost) the full complement of the UK Mine Counter-Measures Force, mustered on the jetty in Bahrain for a 'clear lower deck' to mark the arrival of their new commander, Cdr Jim Buck (front right).

So formed up are (back row, left to right): 31 sailors from Sandown-class warship HMS Ramsey, 38 and 37 souls from Hunt-class ships HMS Atherstone and Quorn respectively, and 31 men and women who form the ship's company of Ramsey's sister HMS Shoreham.

We say almost the full complement because duty watches were, of course, still

aboard their ships while the rest of their shipmates lined up on the concrete.

In front of them, the 25 engineers of Fleet Support Unit 2.

And then there's the mine warfare battle staff (16 souls) drawn from Mine Counter-measures Squadron 2 (MCM2) in Portsmouth.

At the front, alongside his CO, is the Chief of Staff, Lt Cdr Ben Stait.

In all, 155 Naval personnel – although that's not quite all it takes to sustain the four-strong force, for there's the ship's company of RFA Cardigan Bay (60 plus), whose vessel is the 'mother ship' for the force (and home to the battle staff), and the staff of the UK Maritime Component

Commander, the RN's senior command in the region, in Bahrain itself.

Cdr Buck has just taken over from his predecessor at MCM2, Cdr Martin Mackey, while his Portsmouth-based staff take it in turns with their comrades from north of the border, MCM1 in Faslane, to direct the minehunters' mission in the Gulf – a mission which has now been going for more than six years.

The task of the force is to hone the RN's ability to find mines in warm, sandy waters, strengthen the Navy's bonds with regional navies and Coalition warships patrolling the Gulf, and generally contribute to the wider international effort to ensure these waters are safe and secure for all mariners.

NATO again drinks from 'the fount of maritime expertise'

THE international naval fight against piracy, terrorism and any other threat on the high seas has exchanged one Royal Navy leader for another.

With Admiral Sir George Zambellas about to take over as First Sea Lord, command of NATO's Maritime Headquarters – responsible for Operations Ocean Shield (counter-piracy) and Active Endeavour (terrorism) *inter alia* – has been formally transferred to Vice Admiral Peter Hudson during a brief ceremony

in Northwood, London.

He takes charge at a time of significant change for NATO – it is merging its two naval headquarters (Northwood and Naples) into a single Maritime Command at Northwood.

That single headquarters – comprising 300 officers and ratings – will be in charge of all NATO's operations at sea, such as its four permanent naval groups, its response force task group, plus the aforementioned ongoing operations.

In his farewell address, Admiral Zambellas said NATO continued to accord Britain “a singular honour”.

He explained: “By deciding to place its Maritime Command here in Northwood, it is something more than a tacit acknowledgment of how NATO rates Britain's maritime prowess and the important role Britain still has to play in maritime security – not only as a key buttress of the Atlantic bridge but as a fount of maritime expertise.”

“It is also a tangible demonstration that Britain itself continues to place NATO at the very heart of our defence. Indeed, NATO is and will remain an indispensable relationship.”

Vice Admiral Hudson, who has commanded three Royal Navy warships – Her Majesty's Ships Cottesmore, Norfolk and Albion – directed the EU's counter-piracy effort for 12 months and most recently has been NATO's High Readiness Maritime Force Commander.

Bristol is back...

AFTER three months' work, veteran destroyer HMS Bristol returned to the foot of Whale Island – but a slightly different home from when she left on November 5.

The Falklands veteran, which serves as floating accommodation and a training ship, has been moved about 140 metres (459ft) to the east of her previous mooring.

That slight move and new berth – paid for by Portsmouth International Port – creates an increased turning circle of 300 metres (984ft) for vessels using the nearby commercial facilities.

With ever-longer ships wanting to call at Portsmouth the work was vital and the port can now receive larger vessels with ease.

Portsmouth-based contractor ML UK Ltd dredged the site of the berth to seven metres (23ft) below the level of low tide. They then sank large piles, 24 metres (78ft) into the sea bed.

Each of the two 'dolphins' they have created to make the berth is constructed with three steel piles.

Bristol continues to provide a wide variety of training opportunities for service personnel, for example, medical staff exercise casualty evacuation routines, maritime security personnel practice board and search techniques, while marine engineers develop heavy machinery lifting and handling skills. Last year over 5,000 training days were achieved onboard.

Bristol also provides accommodation for Service personnel and youth organisations such as Sea Cadets.

“It is good to be back at Whale Island. We provide an important training asset that allows trainees to work within a realistic ship environment but without impact on the day-to-day business of the operational fleet,” says Bristol's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr David Price.

...and so is Merlin – on Somerset

FOR the first time in a year, the Devonport-based HMS Somerset welcomed a Merlin aboard – and the frigate took another small step down the long road of regeneration.

Despite the very large 'flying tiger' motif of 814 Naval Air Squadron painted on the nose, it was 829 NAS who brought the aircraft safely down on to Somerset's flight deck (it's commonplace for the Merlin formations, all based at Culdrose, to exchange helicopters).

The Merlin landed on Somerset on a very grey day in Plymouth Sound, guided by the flight deck team – their first taste of helicopter operations since the frigate emerged from a £20m revamp last month.

Among the improvements to Somerset since she last went to sea are enhanced sensors, weapon systems and a refurbished flight deck (Merlin weighs 14 tonnes fully laden and has a famously-powerful down-draught).

“As a Naval aviator, I'm very proud to command a ship capable of operating aircraft like the mighty Merlin,” said Somerset's CO Cdr Mike Smith.

“The return of 829 Naval Air Squadron's aircraft and personnel, after a year-long separation, signifies the fact that Somerset is swiftly regaining the capability required to return to front-line operations later this year.”

The ship has been out of action since March 2012 when she returned from her fourth six-month tour of duty east of Suez in five years. She's continuing her post-refit sea trials off the South Coast.

Americans follow RN mine lead

BRITISH mine warfare experts are sharing their expertise with our American cousins in the Gulf as the US Navy follows the Royal Navy's lead by introducing its mini robot submarine: Seafox.

The battle-proven bit of kit, which has been used to ensure the waters off Iraq are mine-free and in 2011 helped HMS Brocklesby locate and destroy a mine laid by pro-Gaddafi forces off the besieged port of Misrata, is now being introduced on US minehunters in the Gulf.

The Americans have followed the RN's progress with Seafox – a small unmanned underwater vehicle which is controlled from the operations room of Hunt or Sandown-class ships – for several years in the Gulf.

The four-foot-long craft moves through the water at up to six knots, tethered to the mother ship by a 3,200ft-long fibre-optic cable. It sends back a live video feed to its controller who uses the four motors and hover thrusters to guide Seafox into place so a charge can be precisely laid should a mine be found.

The Royal Navy has a four-strong force of minehunters permanently stationed in Bahrain – two Hunts (Atherstone and Quorn) and two Sandowns (Ramsey and Shoreham), each equipped with the mini submersible.

The quartet regularly work alongside their US Navy counterparts on exercises – and 'cross deck', sending Brits on to American ships (and vice versa) to share their experiences.

Among the RN Seafox experts the Americans could turn to is LS Mark Titman of HMS Atherstone who's on his third deployment to the Gulf as part of the regular rotation of crews through the minehunting force.

"With the ship sat still in the water, and the crew in defence watches, inevitably the captain and ops team are focused on the image coming from the camera – so the pressure is on to get the Seafox to maintain position," he explains.

"Being the focus of attention is never easy. But I really appreciate the team spirit onboard and the social calendar includes some great opportunities to participate in sports and shore visits."

Naval mines represent a highly-efficient, highly cost-effective, low-technology weapon which can inflict massive damage – but even the threat of mines, rather than their actual presence, is sufficient to deter shipping from using sea lanes, which happened off Iraq until a concerted effort by the Royal Navy at the end of the last decade to make the waters safe.

As the civil war in Libya showed, mines are still in use and still dangerous; in that instance, Brocklesby located a mine crudely attached to an inflatable boat and sunk off Misrata. It was Seafox which found the device – and beamed back a chilling black and white image of it – then safely blew it up.

Other devices in use include drift mines – released and allowed to float in the current and as such indiscriminate in their nature. Moored mines are tethered to the sea bed and designed to float below the surface at specific depths based on the intended target, while bottom mines rest on the sea bed and generally carry the largest explosive charge (up to 1½ tons).

A clutch of Dutch run Raleigh's RAS rig

SAILORS from the Dutch Navy topped up their skills at topping up ships thanks to HMS Raleigh's unique replenishment training facilities.

A group of 13 seaman specialists used the Torpoint establishment's RAS training rig, which simulates the transfer of stores, food, fuel, and personnel between auxiliary vessels and warships.

The training was given by instructors from the Royal Netherlands Navy supported by Raleigh personnel and forms part of the Dutch sailors' eight-month course to prepare them for promotion.

"These students are our future petty officers

and being able to train here is very valuable as we currently don't have a facility like this," said Dutch instructor Boatswain Niels Van Rooden.

"This facility enables us to train in a controlled situation. If we were to put them on a ship straight away accidents could happen, whereas this gives us more time to explain things on the spot."

Various nations use the facilities at Raleigh, primarily those conducting Operational Sea Training in Plymouth. The Dutch have gone further and trained their seamanship specialists at Raleigh for the past few years.



● One of the Stennis' flight deck team briefs the Monmouth sailors about safety on the flat top

Picture: Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Chelsy Alamina, US Navy

Royals return Swede boats

TWO years of testing fast assault boats by the Royal Marines have ended with the craft being returned to Sweden.

Four CB90s were loaned to the Corps, which is looking at adding a dozen 'force protection craft' to its arsenal in the second half of the decade.

The green berets need a boat which is fast, can provide accurate and effective firepower to protect ships and landing craft, and can put a small raiding/reconnaissance party of commandos ashore well in advance of the main force – and a long way from the mother ship.

The CB90 has a top speed of about 45kts thanks to its water jet engines (which also allow it to turn on a sixpence) and is similar in size to the smaller landing craft (vehicle and personnel) used by the Royal Navy's amphibious forces.

"We're hugely in debt to the Swedish Navy for lending us four of their CB90s," said Col Garth Manger, Commanding Officer of 1 Assault Group RM.

"We've been able to test the CB90 in a wide variety of coastal conditions.

"In doing so we have learnt a great deal about the type of craft that we need both to support the Royal Navy in providing force protection to the Fleet, but also in looking for a replacement for one of our assault craft. The CB90 is a great craft and we will be sorry to see them go back home."

Col Manger's thanks came as he hosted a Swedish delegation in Plymouth. The two parties toured the new amphibious centre taking shape at Weston Mill in Devonport, RM Tamar.

A final design for the future RM craft has yet to be chosen.

Anyone for Stennis?

YES, 15 of us...

Sailors from HMS Monmouth leapt at the chance to join one of the world's biggest, most powerful warships – USS John C Stennis – when the two met up on patrol in the Gulf.

The flat top is flagship of Carrier Strike Group 3 – one cruiser, four destroyers and an auxiliary – and home to elements of nine squadrons of fast jets (Hornets, Super Hornets, Prowlers), prop planes (Hawkeyes, Greyhounds) and helicopters (Seahawks).

In all, up to 90 aircraft take off from and land on her deck – the fixed-wing aircraft courtesy of cats and traps – supported by 6,500 sailors and air/ground crew.

The chance to watch the awesome sight of active flight deck ops was too good for the Black Dukes to turn down – especially as it offered a glimpse into the future with the RN's next-generation carriers which will see a return to the days of the big fleet carriers.

"I was amazed at the size and complexity of the Stennis, and I am looking forward to the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers – if they are anywhere near as capable as the Stennis we will have quite a formidable ship to operate," said the Black Duke's Medical Officer Surg Lt Steve Woolley.

"We were very well looked after by our American counterparts and it was a great day for all lucky enough to get across."

During their visit, the Brits watched flight operations from the flag bridge and toured several spaces throughout the ship including the flight deck, hangar bay, jet shop, and the carrier air traffic control centre.

"As the Royal Navy moves toward the rebirth of its fixed-wing carrier operations, it has been an invaluable education," said Cdr Gordon Ruddock, Monmouth's CO. "My team and I have had our eyes opened to the complexities of what we are about to generate."

AB(CIS) Sordan Bate added: "I have never seen anything like this ship before. It was very interesting

to see flight operations and the way everyone was always busy."

While the Black Dukes were being royally hosted by the Americans, 15 carrier crew were being treated to life on a pusser's grey which is 20 times smaller than the Stennis and has 1/30th of the ship's company.

The American guests were treated to an extensive tour of the Type 23 frigate and enjoyed the full range of hospitality onboard.

"I am grateful for a fully extensive tour of HMS Monmouth, including the exciting ride in your helicopter, 'Black Knight'. We all want to say a big 'thank you' to the British Navy for their kindness over the day," said dental officer Lt Anderson USN.

During the tours of each vessel there was extensive cementing of the special Anglo-US relationship, exemplified by the exchange of gifts: baseball caps from the Americans and RN emblazoned tea-cups from the British.

With the link-up done, Monmouth broke off her Gulf patrol momentarily to visit Doha in Qatar. And once she was alongside, politicians from across Europe descended on her to see how the Senior Service is helping to keep the waters of the Gulf safe.

The Plymouth-based frigate, which has just passed the half-way point in her deployment to the Gulf, was visited by 25 MPs from 11 countries who served on the Transatlantic Defence and Security Co-operation Sub-Committee, led by Briton Sir John Stanley, MP for Tonbridge and Malling.

The delegates' visit to the Type 23 frigate in Doha was part of an on-going mission to examine the contribution of the Armed Forces of NATO countries to the security and stability of the region – and to understand current military operations.

That afforded the Black Duke's ship's company an excellent opportunity to give their first-hand experience of the ways in which she has provided assurance,

assistance and deterrence whilst patrolling the busy sea lanes of the Arabian Gulf, in support of the Combined Maritime Forces.

Before visiting Monmouth, the delegates visited HMS Atherstone, Ramsey and Shoreham, three of the four British minehunters

based in Bahrain.

In various guises and incarnations, the RN has maintained a permanent minehunter presence in the Gulf for more than six years.

FAA handlers join US flat tops, page 13

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Souped up squadron

SOUPEd up for 2013 with new, faster vessels is the smallest squadron in the Royal Navy.

The Faslane Patrol Boat Squadron has begun 2013 a full ten knots faster than it ended 2012 after upgrading.

The squadron, which is charged with protecting ships and submarines operating out of Faslane and high-value shipping in the Firth of Clyde, traded in its older models (P2000 patrol boats HMS Dasher and Pursuer) and replaced them with newer, faster ones (Tracker and Raider).

As 2013 opened, the five-strong crews of both boats got the chance to familiarise themselves with their new vessels, conducting a series of exercises.

With Raider temporarily in dock, the crews of both boats made use of Tracker, practising firing their armament of machine-guns and 5.56 rifles, as well as exercising with a search and rescue Sea King from HMS Gannet in Prestwick.

Raider meanwhile was receiving a new Mercedes engine – one of two which helps propel these second-generation P2000 boats at speeds of up to 24kts (the top speed of the first batch of boats is a mere 14kts).

“We were given help from two submariner Engineering Technicians who are on long-term loan to the Squadron and the rest of the crew helped where possible,” said CPO Nick Calvert, Raider’s marine engineer officer.

“No engineer looks forward to a main engine change, but in the end it proved to be an interesting and at times enjoyable evolution.

“I did feel a bit uncomfortable at having warfare branch ratings using tools on my new engine, though!”

With the change completed and tested, Raider was able to join Tracker for the next exercise – a circumnavigation of the Isle of Bute.

This gave trainee officers on both ships a rare opportunity to test their pilotage and ship-handling skills navigating the narrow – even for a P2000 – Kyles of Bute at the northern tip of the eponymous island.

“One of the best things about being based on the Clyde is having such a beautiful landscape on our doorstep”, says Lt Cdr Sam Nightingale, CO both of Tracker and the Faslane Patrol Boat Squadron.

“Being able to explore some of the more remote parts of our area of operations whilst developing the skills of our young officers is one of the more pleasant ways to spend a day at sea.”

As for Dasher, she’s returned to her role of a decade ago serving as Bristol University Royal Naval Unit’s boat, while Pursuer is doing the same, but for students of Glasgow and Strathclyde universities.



D33 becomes R33

FOR the first time three Fleet Air Arm helicopters have touched down on the back of a Royal Navy destroyer.

The trio of Lynx from 702 Naval Air Squadron in Somerset joined HMS Dauntless off the south coast as the fliers get their sea legs.

702 is used to prepare aircrew and engineers who’ve learned the basics of helicopters and teaches them how to master the Lynx Mk8, the helicopter which is the mainstay of the Royal Navy’s warship operations around the globe.

D33 herself had a Lynx Flight embarked throughout her maiden deployment to Africa, South Atlantic and the Americas last year.

Key to the training is the operational conversion phase, which involves putting trainees through their paces at sea.

Mechanics and technicians learn how to maintain the hi-tech helicopter in the cramped confines of a hangar which pitches and rolls with the motion of the ocean; they also learn how to integrate with a ship’s company.

And fliers learn how to take off, land and conduct other manoeuvres at sea – just as they’ll be expected to do for real when they join the front-line Lynx squadron 815, also based at RNAS Yeovilton.

For this ‘at sea’ training, the air and ground crew typically join a Royal Fleet Auxiliary – RFA Argus is the usual choice as the dedicated aviation training ship – or perhaps a carrier such as Lusty (R06).

But for the first time, the students are making use of a Type 45, its huge flight deck (which can accommodate a Chinook) and its cavernous hangar (which can take two Mk8 Lynx with some room to spare).

Due to the space and aviation facilities afforded by the Navy’s state-of-the-art Type 45 destroyers, they are able to operate routinely with two embarked Lynx helicopters – herself paved the way for this with trials two years ago – or just one of the much larger Merlin.

As it is, two Lynx from 702 have embarked for the training; the third paid a (literally) flying visit as the squadron’s Commanding Officer, Cdr Anthony Rimington, landed to meet the students and see how they were progressing (he’s pictured above at the front of the team).

So Dauntless found herself in the unique position of operating three helicopters – underlining the flexibility and capability of new destroyers. “By dealing with three aircraft, I think it just goes to show how versatile and flexible a T45 can be,” said the destroyer’s CO Cdr Adrian Fryer.

“Dauntless has been thoughtfully designed and is proving well suited to conducting this type of high-tempo flying operations.

“It’s a great opportunity for us to integrate these aircraft and more importantly these aircrew into our ship’s company, and provide them with the platform and support they need to achieve their training.”

Lt Cdr Gareth Ingram, the senior aviation training officer aboard the Portsmouth-based warship, added: “This phase of training marks the culmination of three to five years of instruction for the trainees.

“During this period on Dauntless, they will be engaging in an exercise scenario which will test the limits of not only their flying ability but their ability to operate effectively within a tactical war-fighting scenario.”

Dauntless returned from her maiden deployment to the North and South Atlantic in the autumn, since when the ship has undergone some minor maintenance in Portsmouth.

After the winter break, training resumes – including an extensive period of gunnery on one of the naval ranges around the UK – interspersed with visits to her affiliates.

The Type 45 dropped in on Great Yarmouth (where public interest was overwhelming) and was due to arrive in the second of her affiliates, Newcastle, as *Navy News* went to press.



Boldly going where no one has seen before...

CARVED through the land of the ancients, this is a grand canyon – Red Sea-style, possibly not seen since the end of the last ice age.

This is just one of several stunning images produced by Royal Navy survey ship HMS Enterprise, on a nine-month mission to improve our understanding of the waters east of Suez.

After leaving the Egyptian port of Safaga, the Devonport-based hydrographic ship fired up her state-of-the-art surveying equipment – revealing the hidden natural wonders of the Red Sea in the process.

Although the canyon looks an imposing feature – and it is – it’s not actually that grand. It’s only a couple of hundred metres (about 650ft) deep... whereas the real Grand Canyon is one mile deep, up to 18 miles wide and extends more than 250 miles.

Still, it’s a very impressive natural feature – but how did it come about? Allow Cdr Derek Rae, Enterprise’s Commanding Officer, to shed some light.

“These features could be the result of ancient rivers scouring through the rock strata before the Red Sea flooded millennia ago.

“Some may be far younger – and still in the process of being created by underwater currents driven by the winds and tidal streams as they flow through this area of the Red Sea, carving their way through the soft sediment and being diverted by harder bed rock.

“Or there is always the possibility that they are a combination of the two.

“It is however, almost certain to say that this is the closest that humans will ever get to gaze upon these truly impressive sights hundreds of metres beneath the surface.”

Here endeth today’s geography lesson. Now it’s time for science.

The images are the result of the returning echoes from sound pulses transmitted from the sophisticated EM1002 multi-beam echo sounder fitted to Enterprise’s hull.

Although not in the visible electromagnetic spectrum of energy, the 100kHz ‘ping’ transmitted by the sonar many times every second can be processed to produce highly-accurate measurements of the seabed – fundamental in determining if the depth of water is safe for navigation and shipping.

Unlike the old lead line of the great Captain Cook in the 18th Century, modern techniques allow 3D images to be viewed in colour – albeit artificial ones – allowing the wonders of Mother

Nature to be ‘seen’ for what is possibly the first time.

When not uncovering Nature’s hidden wonders, the survey ship has been making friends with the Egyptian Navy.

Although Enterprise has deployed to the Middle East six times in her ten-year career, until now she has never visited the port of Safaga, which lies on the west shore of the Red Sea some 250 miles south of Suez.

Safaga is headquarters of the Egyptian Navy’s Red Sea Command – and links were forged formally and in the sporting arena during the survey ship’s visit.

The base’s rear admiral and commodore were invited to lunch and they, plus a party of Egyptian naval officers, were given a tour of Enterprise to give them an idea of what she – and her ship’s company – can do.

In return, ten members of Enterprise’s ship’s company were given the opportunity to tour the frigate and patrol boats alongside by the Egyptians.

In the less formal arena of sport, Enterprise’s scratch football team took on their hosts.

They held the Egyptians until the last ten minutes of the match before ‘diplomatically’ allowing the locals to knock in four goals for a 5-1 triumph in the age-old RN tradition of ‘letting your host win’.

Although the main reason for the visit was to rotate her crew to sustain Enterprise’s mission – one third of her ship’s company is always in the UK on leave or on training courses while their shipmates are deployed – the opportunity

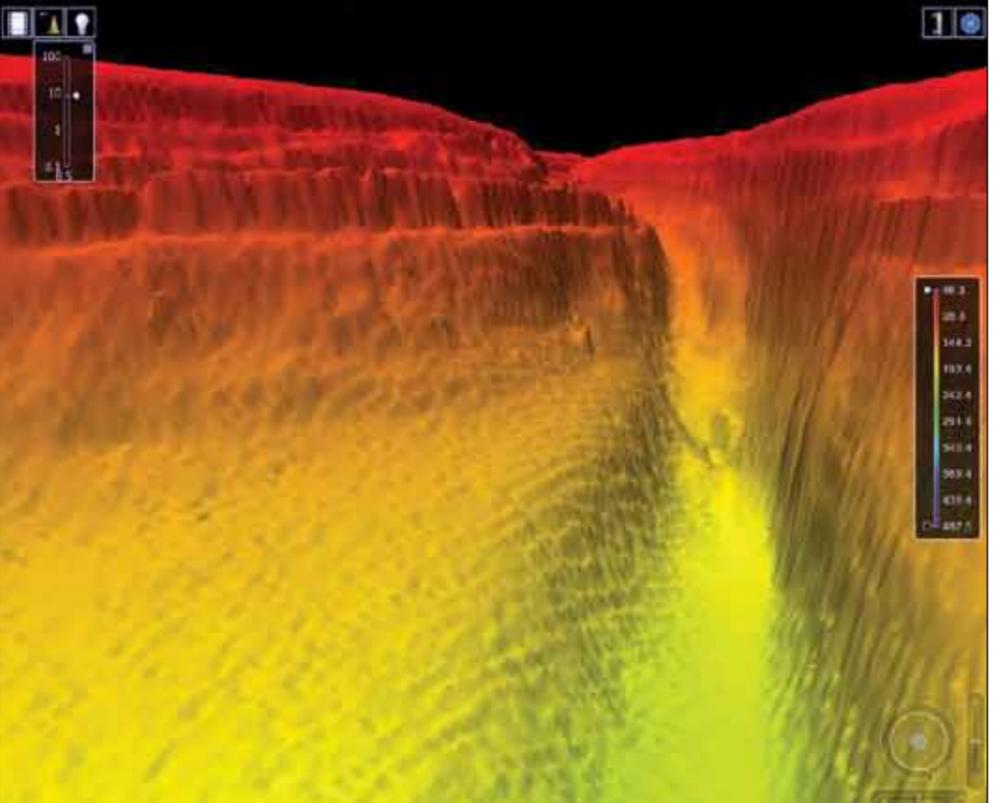
to embark essential supplies and allow the ship’s company to soak up Egyptian culture was not to be missed.

Some sailors headed up the coast to Hurghada, with a few following in the footsteps – or should we say fin strokes – of underwater explorer Jacques Cousteau.

Red Sea diving comes highly recommended and, as Lt Griffiths observed, “The water was noticeably warmer than at this time of year at home.”

Enterprise will remain in the Middle East until May, building on the successes of her sister HMS Echo, which discovered numerous wrecks and obstacles during a mammoth 19-month deployment to the same region.

As well as helping to update some of the 3,300-plus Admiralty Charts which are used by many of the world’s seafarers (including the Royal Navy), the survey ship will also support the wider international naval effort to prevent piracy and other criminal activities in the Indian Ocean and environs.



Cattistock’s NATO mission begins

PORTSMOUTH-based minehunter HMS Cattistock has joined a NATO minehunting force, picking up where HMS Blyth left off at the end of 2012.

The Hunt-class ship sailed at the beginning of February to take her place in Mine Counter-Measures Group 2 (SNMCMG2), the NATO force which patrols the Mediterranean.

Although the make-up of the group constantly changes as different ships from different nations leave or join, the mission remains constant: to defend sea routes from the threat of underwater mines and to carry out joint training exercises the length and breadth of the Med.

“We are well prepared and have been looking forward to

working alongside our NATO allies in the Mediterranean,” said Cattistock’s Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Stephen Higham.

“This deployment is a great opportunity for the ship to learn from shared experiences, contribute to regional security and showcase the Royal Navy’s skill as the world’s leading experts in mine warfare.”

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'If I could re-join I would...'

ON A grey day with a curtain of Channel murk lowered over Plymouth Sound, two Royal Marines ORCs sweep around the stern of RFA Lyme Bay as they escort Britain's foremost sailor aboard patrol boat HMS Dasher.

This sail-past through battleship grey mustered off Plymouth was the highlight of a two-day valedictory visit to Devonport for First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope.

The admiral is ending his 43-year career in the service of the Navy and the nation with a farewell tour of his establishments to thank the men and women of the Naval Service for their continuing dedication.

Admiral Sir Mark spent the first of his two days in Devon returning to his submariner roots, with a visit to hunter-killer boat HMS Talent, the second enjoying the sail-past as ships undergoing training paused to

show their respects.

Reflecting on the present and upbeat about the future, Admiral Stanhope said: "It has been a great privilege to be the First Sea Lord.

"The Royal Navy continues to make a positive difference on operations around the world, has highly professional, motivated and courageous men and women – and in only five years' time will be flying jets from the carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth.

"If I could re-join I would." As well as commands of carrier HMS Illustrious and frigate HMS London, the admiral was in charge of two boats in his Silent Service days: traditional diesel boat HMS Orpheus and nuclear-powered hunter-killer HMS Splendid.

Trafalgar-class Talent is one of the successors to Splendid, and the T-boat's captain Cdr John Aitken was delighted to host Admiral Stanhope aboard.

"It was an absolute pleasure



● Admiral Stanhope acknowledges the salutes from his men and women as HMS Dasher moves through Plymouth Sound

to host the First Sea Lord, a fellow submariner, for lunch onboard Talent.

"We were honoured to present him with a brass commemorative model submarine fabricated

onboard by LET Ben Paul in appreciation of his strong leadership of the Royal Navy."

The visit to Talent in the confines of Devonport naval base was a rather private affair.

The sail-past was a very visible (and audible) farewell.

All Flag Officer Sea Training units undergoing instruction broke off their training to show their appreciation for Admiral Stanhope's four decades of commitment to the Service.

The admiral embarked on P2000 HMS Dasher and was joined by FOST, Rear Admiral Clive Johnstone, for the occasion, while Offshore Raiding Craft provided escort.

The mini flotilla moved among vessels including survey ship HMS Echo, flagship HMS Bulwark, amphibious support ship RFA Lyme Bay and frigate HMS Montrose – which sent a 17-gun salute echoing around the Sound – while ship's companies lined the upper decks and doffed caps.

With the sail-past over, Admiral Stanhope returned to Devonport for a tour of the new landing craft centre of excellence at Weston Mill – RM Tamar, which will be operational

later this year.

After lunch onboard Talent, the First Sea Lord's tour to the south west concluded with a fond farewell from naval personnel who lined his route as he departed.

As First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff since 2009, Admiral Stanhope has been the head of the Royal Navy, chairman of the Navy Board, and responsible to Secretary of State for Defence for the fighting effectiveness, efficiency and morale of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

As a member of the Armed Forces Committee, he also supports the Chief of Defence Staff in the management and direction of the Armed Forces.

He will hand over the office of First Sea Lord to Admiral Sir George Zambellas in April following an equally emotional farewell visit to Portsmouth-based units.

Pictures: LA(Photos) Vicki Benwell and Dean Nixon, FRPU West



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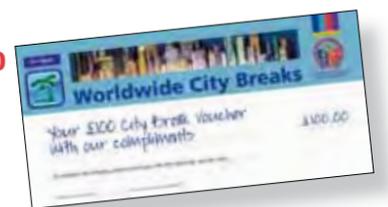


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This is what we do...

DID someone say 'action'?

You want a Lynx swooping down on a pirate ship as ORCs and sea boats give chase? *Simple.*

You want a RAS in the fading February light, with waves breaking against the hull of a tanker? *Not a problem.*

The crack of thunder from a 4.5in gun to wake up the neighbours on a Monday morning? *Yes, we can do that.* Oh, you want some Bagger and pinger action too? *Yep, we can provide Sea Kings and Merlins.*

But just don't expect us to do it every week...

The action-packed week in question was Staff College Sea Days (which in 2013 has reverted to its long-standing moniker, after a brief dalliance with the title 'Maritime Combat Power Visit').

For the uninitiated, Staff College Sea Days gives military leaders of the future attending the Joint Services Command and Staff College at Shrivenham days at sea. Hence the name.

All three of the Armed Forces get to 'show off' to their brethren, with the RN choosing this year to focus on waters off the Devon and Cornish coasts.

The aim of sea days is to show, albeit briefly, the staff course students what the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Fleet Air Arm can – and indeed do – do, day in, day out, around the world on operations.

After a boat ride out to make use of HMS Bulwark's party piece, her cavernous amphibious dock, some 250 students – RN, RM, Army, RAF officers, plus numerous counterparts from international military, including Rwanda, Nepal, USA and China – made their way up to the flagship's flight deck.

That offered them a grandstand view of proceedings: a mock pirate take-down, simulated battle damage repair, the thunder of naval gunfire support from

HMS Montrose (more on them in a mo...), and the technically-demanding practice of refuelling between ships at sea while on the move (aka RASing).

"Sea Days provide a good opportunity to show other Services – and international students – what we can do," said Bulwark's Commanding Officer Capt Andrew Burns.

"Many of the UK officers from the other Services would not have been to sea before.

It's a fantastic chance to build good relations with other nations who may be working with us in the future.

"We are showing the flexibility of the Response Force Task Group which could be on contingency tasking anywhere across the globe."

Complementing the all-action demonstrations were static displays aboard Bulwark of helicopters and boats, and experts were on hand for the students to ask questions about their roles.

Cdre Toby Williamson, Senior Officer Joint Services Command and Staff Course, said: "With up to 300 students from countries across the world as well as the three Services, it makes this course rewarding and diverse.

"A successful student from a few years ago from China has recently taken command of his country's first aircraft carrier."

As well as the battleship grey participants, a Merlin from the Flying Tigers – 814 Naval Air Squadron – in Culdrose and Lynx from 815 Naval Air Squadron in Yeovilton joined in overhead.

539 Assault Squadron Royal Marines provided the fast raiding craft, while their fellow green berets from 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group are the UK's 'go-to guys' when it comes to board and search operations.

SEA days added a little frisson to Montrose's February.

The Devonport-based frigate neatly slotted in a cameo amid two months of intensive Basic Operational Sea Training.

The demonstrations for the staff college students came in week three of the rigorous eight-week assessment – an assessment the Type 23 must pass for she's earmarked to deploy later this year.

Over those eight weeks, the 190 souls aboard Montrose must come through fires, floods, air raids, submarine attacks, take down pirates, fend off terrorists in fast boats – and, as the training reaches its climax, deal with many of these problems simultaneously.

Montrose's sailors are also expected to deal with the basics of worldwide operations, such as taking on supplies on the move – fuel pumped across, pallets of dry stores such as spare parts and food carried across by jackstay, and a helicopter shifting bulky items (or personnel for that matter) from the flight deck of a Royal Fleet Auxiliary such as Black Rover on to Montrose.

All of which is played out against a semi-real-world scenario, 'superimposed' on BOST by the staff of the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation.

In this instance (once again), the tubthumping nation of Ginger is once again stepping up its pressure on the small Brownian enclave in the south west of Britannica, trying to wrest control of the territory and absorb them into Ginger.

In the opening stages of BOST, however, the weather in the Channel proved to be as aggressive as the simulated Ginger forces.

"Even with Force 8 weather conditions – and an increasingly agile programme – all the required training has been delivered," explained the frigate's CO Cdr James Parkin.

"The crew of Montrose showed

their fighting spirit by ensuring that the ship is ready and eager to move on to the next phase of training. The Ginger forces should be aware that Montrose is ready to fight them – and win."

For added spice Montrose – who calls herself (rather bravely) 'the most Scottish ship in the Fleet' (stand fast Edinburgh... and Argyll... and Sutherland... and Duncan... and Clyde... to name a few) – found herself coming to the assistance of Bulwark as sea days kicked off.

As two enemy fighter-bomber attack aircraft tried to strafe and bomb the assault ship whilst she was replenishing with RFA Black Rover, Montrose steamed past at maximum speed to put herself in the way to protect the flagship.

It was lucky for the pilots that this was just a demonstration as the frigate's operations room team and close-range gun crews were closed up at action stations, ready to fire their Seawolf missiles and guns to deadly effect.

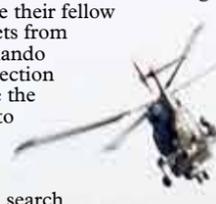
After the aircraft had flown overhead – put off by the impossible odds of success – the pilots tried to attack Bulwark on her unprotected side.

Montrose responded with another example of power, using her Rolls Royce Spey gas turbines to turn at 28 knots to pass under the stern of Bulwark, once again positioning herself 'up threat' – as those watching ran to the other side of the flight deck to see.

And while all this looked rather spiffing and stirring to the staff college students... it's an integral part of BOST: protecting the high-value unit (typically it's an RFA, but you really can't get much higher value than the nation's flagship).

To finish off Sea Days, Montrose provided the bang. As she steamed past again at close range, her 4.5in gun barked out high explosive shells towards the enemy with devastating accuracy.

Hmmm, maybe we can do this every week after all...



The Royal Maritime Club
(Formerly The Royal Sailors' Home Club)



- NOTICE -

The 149th Annual General Meeting of the Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street, Portsmouth, will be held in the Trafalgar Ballroom of the club on Thursday 25th April 2013 at 1030. Commanding Officers are requested to encourage maximum attendance from their ships and establishments. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

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● Lt Curd chats with le chien jaune on Surcouf's 'deck of taking flight'

No confusion over les diffusions

WITH 217 Flight of 815 Naval Air Squadron approaching the end of their trailblazing three-month stint aboard French frigate FS Surcouf, chasing pirates (and catching them – witness last month's bust of a dozen suspects off the Somali coast), the Lynx flight commander Lt Mike Curd has had time to reflect on some of the differences – and surprisingly similarities – in the language used by Jack et Jacques:

“Surrounded on every side by our French colleagues, you can imagine that language is a topic close to our hearts.

After all, the RN is famous for its peculiar turns of phrase and expressions; a vernacular known as Jackspeak, and we've discovered that the *Marine Nationale* is no different.

The first few weeks on board were spent in a haze of translation as we tried to get to grips with the basics of life on board in another language.

Some phrases or names are easy, and translate literally – for example *le pont d'envol* = “the deck of taking flight”, or flight deck.

Others bear no direct link to their English equivalent – *la passerelle*; literally “a gateway or gangway”, but in fact the bridge.

Others are somewhere in between; *le Second* – the Executive Officer, because he is Second in Command.

Other phrases which are steeped in tradition in the Royal Navy, such as to make a “pipe” (because in the days of steamships, instructions were spoken into a hollow pipe connecting the bridge to other compartments), are purely literal when converted to French; in this case ‘a pipe’ is *une diffusion*; literally the spreading of information. Thus to ‘make a pipe’ becomes *faire une diff!*

And, as time has gone on, we've discovered that the *Marine Nationale* is just as rich in strange terms and unique ways of referring to people or things as the Royal Navy.

On *le pont d'envol*, we listen to instructions barked out by *le chien jaune* – the Flight Deck Officer or ‘yellow dog’ on account of his yellow surcoat and abrupt manner when taking charge!

The medical assistant is *le sorcier* – ‘the sorcerer’, mixing up his pills and potions, and the cooks *les magiciens* – performing magic tricks to make decent meals out of their limited ingredients! Other traditional names include *le Pacha* – the captain, from the old Ottoman for a sultan or other person of high rank.

Along the way we've also picked up some turns of phrase that are not specific to the Navy, but in common use, such as *la petite soeur* – ‘the little sister’; a second round of drinks! Or to *faire la grasse mat(mée)* – ‘make the fat morning’; a lie-in.

Neither of which are things you'll find us doing until we get home and are on leave, of course... after all, we can't stay in our *niches* for a *petite caille* all day, there's work to be done out here in the Indian Ocean! ”

Lt Curd and his flight are due to complete their deployment aboard the Toulon-based ship this month and return to their home in Somerset.



Wild about Wildcat

WITH the Somerset countryside flashing past in a blur, this is the very first front-line model of the Fleet Air Arm's new helicopter taking flight.

This is the first of 28 Wildcats which will be the backbone of Navy operations at home and around the globe in just two years' time, taking over from the long-serving Lynx.

Prototypes of Wildcat have been flying for a few years – and have undergone more than 700 hours of trials and tests in the skies around the UK, including deck landings on HMS Iron Duke 12 months ago.

And the Army Air Corps has its hands on 11 of its versions of Wildcat (which are slightly, but not significantly different).

But ZZ397 is the first true Wildcat HMA2 – Helicopter Maritime Attack Mk2 – which will see active service in the hands of Fleet Air Arm aviators.

It took flight from Agusta Westland's Yeovil factory – the first of at least four of the naval variants to be delivered this year.

“Outside Wildcat is recognisable as the same breed as its Lynx predecessor – but inside it's altogether a different beast,” said Lt Cdr Paul Allen of the Wildcat team at Yeovilton.

On the flying side, the new helicopter has more powerful engines – giving the pilot around one third more power than a Lynx – and new avionics.

And on the fighting side, there's a glass cockpit with four large colour displays, replacing dials and screens of old.

Brimming with sensors, hi-tech communications kit, the latest GPS and navigation system, Seaspray radar which provides 360° surveillance, a Wescam electro-optic system mounted in the nose turret which has infrared, TV and laser designation for surveillance and combat.

As for firepower: Sting Ray torpedoes, a .5in M3M machine-gun mounted by the side door and new light and heavy versions of the Future Anti-Surface Guided Weapon – the next-generation missile for use against targets at sea and on land.

All in all, fully loaded. The first air and ground crew from 700W (W for Wildcat) Naval Air Squadron have been trained on how to fly and maintain the helicopter – which builds on some of the best bits of Lynx, but is much more advanced and complex.

And those 700W trailblazers

are wild about the Wildcat.

“Years of development work have gone into this aircraft and the ease with which information is presented to the pilot reflects this,” says Lt Cdr Mark Swindells, 700W NAS test pilot.

“The philosophy that the aircraft will tell the pilot if something is wrong massively reduces the normal workload and allows the pilot to contribute more to the overall ‘warfighting effect’ that this potent aircraft can generate.

“Out of the many different types of aircraft that I've evaluated on night vision goggles, this cockpit is one of the best out there.”

His Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Rob Taylor, says that from an observer's viewpoint “the most startling change is the amount of information available.

“With the moving maps, various layers displayed on the tactical view and the superb Electro-Optic Device it becomes a matter of prioritising what is most important. That is the observer's job in a nutshell.

Lt Cdr Taylor continues: “We obviously leave the flying of the aircraft to the pilot, but we no longer have distractions such as warnings and cautions or gauges to read on a regular basis as the aircraft will let you know if there is a problem.

“This allows us to fight the aircraft more efficiently. Having been involved since 2006 with the ‘Human-Machine Interface’, aircrew have had a say in the design of the cockpit from the early stages; the seat is comfortable and there is no more leaning forward or twisting in the seat to operate the sensors as they have been designed around the aircrew.

“It is fully night-vision goggle compatible so flying by night is virtually as easy as day flying.

“Overall you feel like you are integrated into the aircraft not just a body in a cockpit.”

Once Wildcat is officially ‘released to service’ – a document which authorises flying – later this spring 700W will begin working out ‘tactical development’.

That means determining how to make best use of the helicopter and all its Gucci new kit on front-line operations, as well as devising the courses which will train existing and future air and ground crew in Wildcat operations.

Once they've done that, 702 NAS – the training squadron

which feeds the front-line flights of 815 NAS – will begin teaching personnel. The maritime Wildcat is due to be declared operational in early 2015.

In all, 62 Wildcats are being

bought by the MOD to replace the existing Mk8s flown by 702 and 815 NAS and the Mk9s flown by the Army Air Corps and 847 NAS.

When they return from their current deployment in Afghanistan, 847 will begin converting to Wildcat, flying the Army's variant.

Picture: AgustaWestland

From silver to gold for Air Day

LAST year's Yeovilton Air Day won gold in the ‘Tourism Event of the Year’ category at the South West Tourism Excellence Awards – one better than its achievement in 2011.

The show, which took place last July, attracted nearly 30,000 visitors.

It also attracted glowing testimonies from the judges who described the 2012 air day as “a major event with excellent levels of repeat business and year-on-year improvements, acting as a major draw to the area.”

They didn't merely look at what organisers laid on in the Somerset skies, but also the overall visitor experience was scrutinised for the awards.

“I am very proud of my team in putting on a top-class event on the ground and in the air, despite being extremely busy delivering the high demands of our operational commitments worldwide,” said air station CO Cdre Jock Alexander.

Audrey Huelin, director of AHA Events which organises the air show with the Yeovilton team, added: “It shows how we all strive to make the air show more entertaining and exciting for the families that attend each year. It is a privilege to work with the men and women of the Royal Navy.”

The 2012 event marked the 30th anniversary of the Falklands campaign; 126 aircraft and over 1400 men from Yeovilton were deployed in ships in the South Atlantic.

In addition, last summer's show attracted exceptionally-rare displays to the UK including the Antonov AN-124 Ruslan which had not been seen on the UK display circuit for 20 years.

Plans are well under way for this year's air day, which takes place on Saturday July 13.



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Nelson's uniform goes to France

THE uniform that Nelson wore at the Battle of Trafalgar has been loaned to a museum – in France.

The National Maritime Museum (NMM) announced that the uniform is to go on display at the Musée de l'Armée at the Hôtel National des Invalides in Paris.

It will be the first time the uniform has left the UK since it returned from Trafalgar, along with Nelson's body.

The undress uniform, in which Nelson was fatally wounded on HMS Victory's quarterdeck, will be one of the key exhibits in the forthcoming *Napoleon et l'Europe* display, which will run from March 27 to July 14.

But the uniform will be back at Greenwich for the NMM's new *Nelson, Navy, Nation* gallery in October, which will look at how the Royal Navy shaped individual lives and the course of British history in the troubled 18th century.

One of the treasures of the museum's collection, the uniform clearly shows the fatal bullet-hole in the left shoulder as well as the bloodstains on the sleeve and tails.

While the uniform is 'on tour', Nelson's full dress uniform will be displayed in its place.

Mary Rose hits target

THE Mary Rose Trust has reached its £35 million target – now all attention turns to the opening of the new museum in Portsmouth later in the spring.

A final push for the remaining £35,000 – 0.1 per cent of the target – paid off last month when the total edged past £35 million.

The other 99.9 per cent was raised through donations from the Heritage Lottery Fund, charitable trusts, corporate and private sponsors and through the tireless efforts of volunteer fundraisers.

At the heart of the new museum is Henry VIII's warship, an historically-important vessel – one of the first to be able to fire a broadside.

She came to grief when she heeled over in the Solent in July 1545, leading an attack on a French invasion fleet, but was raised in October 1982 in a pioneering marine archaeology project.

When the museum opens, many of the 19,000 artefacts spilled from the wreck and later reclaimed from the sea bed will be displayed around the hull – the first time the collection has been under one roof, allowing an unparalleled insight into Tudor life.

It will also be the first time the hull will be seen clearly – up to now it has been shrouded in preserving sprays.



● Former Dunkirk Little Ship Skylark IX rises from the bed of the River Leven in Scotland, thanks to the Northern Diving Group

Skylark rises again thanks to RN divers

THE boat may look battered and forlorn, but the men of the Northern Diving Group have every right to feel proud – for they helped raise Skylark IX, believed to be the only Dunkirk 'little ship' in Scotland.

The divers from Faslane volunteered to help enthusiasts raise the 50ft pleasure cruiser which had settled on the bed of the River Leven at the southern end of Loch Lomond, where she'd spent her later life carrying tourists.

Back in 1940, the small cruiser had been pressed into service by the Royal Navy and used to bolster the defences of Poole Harbour.

But when the urgent call for shipping went out in May 1940 as the Germans overran France, Skylark IX was sent across the Channel to help bring the British Expeditionary Force home.

She's credited with bringing 600 men back to the UK during the Dunkirk evacuation.

Seven decades on and, with her days as a cruiser on Scotland's largest loch done, the boat fell into disrepair, the elements took their toll and Skylark IX sank on the Leven at Balloch.

Although the water is only about five feet deep, it took a two-day operation involving the diving group and special buoyancy bags to finally lift the 30-ton boat out of the river.

"Normally when you use flotation bags, you rely on the depth of the water to help you –



● Members of the Northern Diving Group with the newly-raised Skylark IX

the closer you get to the surface, the air in the bags expands," explained Lt Cdr Richard Osbaldestin, in charge of the diving group.

"In such shallow water that's not possible.

"So this was pretty unique training for us – we routinely raise things from the seabed. It's our bread and butter.

"Raising the Skylark was completely different – it was more

a case of pushing her up than lifting her and really good training for the guys."

Once lifted, the boat was beached and the plan now is to restore her, giving local young people the chance to learn boat-building skills in the process.

"Once she was raised, we found she was actually in pretty good nick, considering how old she was and how long she'd been on the bottom of the river," said Lt Cdr

Osbaldestin.

"I walked past her a few days ago and she was covered in tarpaulin.

"Someone had written on it: 'This little ship saved 600 souls.' It was the most moving piece of graffiti I'd ever seen."

The boat is registered with the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships which lists over 100 craft from the 1940 evacuation which are still with us today.

Hello you Winkers!!

AN APPEAL in last month's *Navy News* to track down Little Wilf has paid dividends.

We told how WO1 Dave Garraghty, the Executive Warrant Officer in HMS Daring, was bringing back unruly ventriloquist's dummy Little Wilf to help him maintain morale on board the Type 45 destroyer.

WO1 Garraghty also wondered where the original Wilf and his 'minder' – John Pooley – or his band the Winkers had got to.

Shortly after we hit the streets we received the following email:

"Hello you Winkers!!

"It's the Real Wilf here calling from Portugal.

"Now come on, *Navy News* – there is only one Little Wilf.

"See the picture (below) of a recent reunion with Big Wilf (Admiral Wilfred Graham, centre) and the Joss (Fleet Master at Arms Tom Wilkinson, left) with John Pooley and me at the Union Jack Club.

"As for the latest fraud (the Osprey one was also a copy, by the way) – how very Daring!!!"





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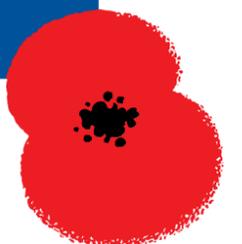
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Old, damp... and indispensable

OBSOLETE, likely to roll heavily, and with a very wet upper deck in relatively calm seas, no-one would call HMS Beverley a classic ship – certainly not in the traditional sense.

She is no Hood, no Vanguard, no Ark Royal. There are no classic lines. She took part in no classic battles – no Jutland, no Matapan, no Crete.

But when Britain was in dire straits, Beverley was a ship turned to almost in desperation. And she delivered. In spades.

The ship was No.36 of 50 unwanted destroyers who suddenly found themselves wanted when war came.

She was transferred to the Royal Navy in the autumn of 1940 as part of the Lend Lease deal with the USA – Britain's dire need for escorts was met by obsolete American destroyers in return for a 99-year lease of bases in the Caribbean, Bermuda and Newfoundland among others.

She began life 22 years earlier as the USS Branch, a Clemson-class destroyer laid down in the final weeks of WWI.

And as such, on completion in 1920, she found herself with little to do. Not a year and a half into her active life and she was mothballed, laid up in Philadelphia.

Life was breathed back into her in the autumn of 1939 with war engulfing Europe; she patrolled up and down the Eastern Seaboard until the deal between Washington and London.

In Halifax, Canada, on October 8 1940 the Stars and Stripes were lowered and the White Ensign raised.

Renamed and given a Royal Navy badge – as with many Lend-Lease ships such as Richmond and Campbeltown, her US heritage is



celebrated by a star on that crest – Beverley gave sterling service, safely escorting 30 convoys in the Mediterranean, Arctic and Atlantic.

On the first day of April 1943, she departed Northern Ireland, one of eight warships assigned to protect ON176 – four dozen merchantmen – on the Outbound North run (from the Old World to the New). The vessels were mostly laden with ballast; they would be loaded with food and war materiel once they reached the Americas.

As North Atlantic convoys go, ON176 was pretty routine. Routine ships. Routine weather (typically heavy off Iceland, foggy nearer Newfoundland). Routine threat (nine U-boats mustering to form a *Gruppe*, Group, or 'wolfpack').

The wolfpacks usually gathered in the dreaded 'air gap' – a stretch of ocean maybe 400 nautical miles across where the German submariner could roam without the fear of attack from the air. The gap, south of Greenland, was beyond the range of Allied air power based in Newfoundland, Iceland or Britain.

As ON176 neared the gap, Beverley collided with a merchantman. She was still seaworthy, but her ASDIC – the wartime term for what we today know as sonar – was wrecked and she was limited to 15kts.

For a little over a day she limped along at the rear of the convoy column – not suspecting that the enemy had found ON176 and was readying to pounce.

Beverley's end was sudden and

brutal. Day was slowly giving way to night on April 11 1943. The Northern Lights streaked across the spring sky particularly vividly this morning, the captain of U188 observed in his log.

Kapitänleutnant Siegfried Lüdden was an inexperienced U-boat captain – he'd transferred from the Luftwaffe to the Navy in April 1940 – in an inexperienced boat. This was U188's first war patrol.

So far, it had been a fruitless five weeks at sea since leaving Kiel. But now "a wonderful sight" presented itself to him: "a wall of merchant ships overlapping".

At a range of 2,000 metres – 2,180 yards – he fired a spread of four torpedoes, then manoeuvred his boat around to continue his attack with his stern tubes.

Ninety-four seconds after firing one of Lüdden's torpedoes hit – the U-boat commander thought it was a tanker, but it was actually Beverley. A gigantic dark mushroom cloud filled Lüdden's periscope sight, followed by a white column of smoke.

Beverley lasted no more than a minute. She was hit by certainly one and possibly two of U188's 'fish'.

One or two, it made little difference. The damage was instantaneous and catastrophic. The destroyer's back was broken, her engines failed, power failed. In barely 45 seconds, she was gone, disappearing stern first.

For those trapped below decks death, though terrible, was also rapid. As she vanished beneath the waves, an almighty explosion tore her apart – probably her boilers, for steam hung on the surface of the Atlantic.

Despite the swiftness of her demise, perhaps as many as 20 of her 155-strong crew managed to jump into the sea before Beverley sank.

They had nothing to cling to beyond debris – the destroyer had gone down too quickly to launch her Carley floats.

The horror of being shipwrecked 550 miles south of Greenland and 600 miles east of St John's in water barely above freezing temperature was now compounded by the hunt for U188.

In a scene reminiscent of *The Cruel Sea*, corvette HMS Clover began to drop depth charges in the water as the shipwrecked sailors screamed; the resulting blasts did no damage to Lüdden's boat, but did see off many of Beverley's crew. In the end, just four men were rescued.

Beverley was one of only two ships lost in ON176; the steamer Lancastrian Prince went down with all hands the following day after being torpedoed by U404.



Atlantic..... 1940-43
Malta Convoys.....1941
Arctic.....1942

Class: Clemson-class destroyer
Pennant number: DD197
Builder: Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company
Laid down: October 25, 1918
Launched: April 19, 1919
Commissioned: July 20 1920
Commissioned into the Royal Navy: October 8, 1940
Sunk: April 11, 1943
Affiliate: Beverley/Merthyr Tydfil
Displacement: 1,215 tons
Length: 95.8m (314ft 4in)
Beam: 9.7m (31ft 9in)
Draught: 3m (9ft 10in)
Speed: 35 knots
Complement: 152
Propulsion: Turbines generating 26,500shp
Armament: 1 x 4in gun, 'Hedgehog' anti-submarine projector, depth charges

What vessels had not broken away for other ports such as Halifax or St John's arrived safely in New York on April 20.



IWM PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES



THIS is what six depth charges would do to a U-boat caught on the surface of the Atlantic.

Some 400 miles off the westernmost point in Ireland, the crew of U625 scramble into lifeboats as their submarine loses a brief, but ferocious, battle with a Sunderland flying boat in March 1944.

Pilot Sidney Butler faced a hail of flak from the Type VII U-boat as his aircraft of 422 Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force, made its attack after catching U625 on the surface.

Oberleutnant Siegfried Straub was struggling with diesel engine problems and was limping westwards, trying to make contact with a wolfpack.

By this stage of the Battle of the Atlantic, U-boats were directed to 'fight it out' on the surface against aircraft rather than try to dive – never was a submarine more vulnerable than whilst submerging.

After the Sunderland passed, Straub dived, but almost immediately brought her back to the surface, then spent the next 90 minutes deciding what to do – all the while Butler circled the scene, keeping his aircraft just out of range of the U-boat's 20mm flak guns.

In the end, Straub determined U625 was beyond saving; he ordered his men to abandon ship, while he signalled to other boats to come to the rescue, before setting the scuttling charges.

At least two boats did respond to the 25-year-old officer's mayday signal.

U256 was badly damaged by another Canadian Air Force bomber, in this instance a Wellington, and was forced to abandon her rescue mission.

So too U741, which was hunted for hours by aircraft and destroyers.

As for the crew of U625 – this is among the last photographs of them alive. A storm raged the following day and no trace of the 53 men or the boat was ever found.

■ THIS photograph (C 4292) – 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.

Talks recall Atlantic sacrifices

THREE talks at the home of wartime codebreaking this month help to get events surrounding the Battle of the Atlantic 70th anniversary under way.

Two official Royal Navy historians – Jock Gardner and Dr Malcolm Llewellyn-Jones – and diving expert Innes McCartney will help to shed light on the six-year-long battle to keep Britain's lifelines at sea open in the face of the Nazi threat.

The battle is the Royal Navy's key commemorative effort for 70th anniversary events marking WW2 sacrifices (the RAF chose the Battle of Britain, while the Army marked victory at Alamein last autumn).

To set the ball rolling ahead of the main events in London, Derry-Londonderry and finally Liverpool in May, Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire is hosting the day of talks March 16.

Now a museum, Bletchley Park was the home of Ultra codebreakers in WW2 – the men and women who famously broke the supposedly unbreakable Enigma code used by the Germans.

That they broke the code was thanks in no small measure to RN personnel seizing codebooks and even a working Enigma machine (such as a boarding party from HMS Bulldog who went aboard the sinking U110 in May 1941).

Mr Gardner will explain the role of Ultra in the Battle of the Atlantic, while his Naval Historical Branch colleague Dr Llewellyn-Jones will look at how 'special intelligence' – as it was known at the time – influenced the battle for SC130 in May 1943; the convoy safely made it from the New World to the Old without losing a single ship, while three U-boats were sunk and another one was damaged.

Finally Mr McCartney will talk about the U-boats' inshore campaign at the war's end and the wrecks of sunken German submarines around the UK.

Tickets for the day-long event cost £45 and include a guided tour of the Bletchley Park site, plus lunch and light refreshments. Details at www.bletchleypark.org.uk or call 01908 640404.

■ Details of other 'BoA70' events are now beginning to 'firm up'.

There will be an Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral on May 8, a fly past by the Fleet Air Arm the following day and RN ships in the capital will be open to the public on May 11 and 12. More precise information – including which ships are attending – will be revealed at www.royalnavy.mod.uk/BoA70.

In Derry-Londonderry, the RNA will dedicate a statue on May 11, and there will be a parade the next day, plus wreath laying in the River Foyle.

Up to two dozen ships will be in Liverpool from May 24-28, with a national service of commemoration in the Anglican Cathedral on May 27.

Shaun gets another piece of POW going

WHILE most of the media attention has been fixed on her sister Queen Elizabeth, work on HMS Prince of Wales is continuing apace.

Twenty-one-year-old apprentice Shaun Collins was given the honour at BAE Systems' Portsmouth facility, pressing the button to cut the first steel on the latest segment of the 65,000-tonne carrier.

And thus did work begin on Centre Block 02 – which will sit beneath the Prince's flight deck and house cabins for the ship's company to inhabit, plus mess decks, a laundry, a bakery and parts of the hangar.

It will sit on top of another section also being built by BAE in Portsmouth, Lower Block 02.



Picture: Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Corbin J. Shea, US Navy

Getting a handle on the future

THIS is the awesome sight of an Osprey – the US Marine Corps' unique aerial battle wagon – lifting from the deck of the assault ship USS Kearsarge off the Eastern Seaboard of the USA.

And guiding it safely into the sky is LA(AH) Wayne Bowring – RN, not USMC – one of three experienced Fleet Air Arm aircraft handlers assigned to the ship.

As well as dealing with the world's first tilt-rotor aircraft (the Osprey can land, take-off and hover like a helicopter, but once airborne can fly like a traditional propeller-driven aircraft at speeds over 300mph and heights above 25,000ft), the trio are directing Seahawk helicopters and American AV8B Harriers safely on to and off the deck of the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship.

The Brits are three of eight Fleet Air Arm personnel working with the US Navy as part of a Long Lead Specialist Skills programme to help pave the way for flight deck operations on Britain's biggest ever warships.

In five years' time F35 Joint Strike Fighters, Chinooks, Merlins, and Wildcats will be buzzing around the deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth (followed two years later by her sister Prince of Wales).

The Royal Navy's never had a flight deck like it – roughly the size of three football pitches – and with nearly four decades having elapsed since the days of the big carrier (the last one was HMS Ark Royal IV of *Sailor* fame in the late '70s), we need to build up the experience of working on a large flat-top. Hence the exchange programme.

Wayne's joined on the Kearsarge by fellow handlers CPO Scott Iszard and LA Damian George – collectively they have more than 40 years' experience of working on RN carrier decks.

"We've been very welcomed," says Scott. "People want to talk to you and find out what you're doing here. I think that will wear off, but there are days where you see people you haven't seen before. We've enjoyed our time here so far."

As well as the handlers on the Kearsarge, five FAA personnel are enjoying a similar experience aboard the carrier USS Dwight D Eisenhower – with the added excitement of catapults and arrestor wires for Hornets,

Super Hornets and Prowler jets, plus Hawkeye and Greyhound propeller-driven aircraft.

On both leviathans, the Royal Navy handlers had to pass US Navy qualifications to allow them to operate on a working flight deck.

"It's been a big eye opener to see how things are run differently: routines, manpower, general quarters, battle stations," says Damian. "It's a lot more to take in than I expected. There's a lot more people and a lot more spaces, but it's fun. It's enjoyable."

He continues: "Just trying to get used to the way another group of handlers do their job on a different type of flight deck with different types of aircraft is not easy."

"Trying to get your head around how their routines are different and the working hours – it's all totally different."

His shipmate Wayne agrees: "I feel really good about being here because it's a completely different challenge for me. I am looking forward to the next eight months."

Damian adds: "If you come on board and get involved, get out there, enjoy the flight deck and do what you're here to do, then nine months will go like that and we'll be on an Osprey out of here."

As for our American cousins, they're loving the Jackspeak and banter which the Brits have brought to the Kearsarge's COMPTUEX (Composite Training Unit Exercise) – a sort of US Navy combination of Operational Sea Training and Joint Warrior.

"Their terminology is hilarious – so having them joke around in between flight quarters is a blast because they bring something new to the table every day," says Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 3rd Class Josh Lyman.

The Brits are similarly enjoying their time with the US Navy.

"They are a great bunch of people," says Damian. "They've really welcomed the three of us in. Nobody's said a cross word to us and I think they're welcoming because we're something new, something different."

"We've come with fresh opinions, fresh ideas and a fresh set of eyes on a lot of things, and I think that most of them will listen to our opinions and they'll take them on board."

Scott adds: "What I'm hoping to achieve on board USS Kearsarge is to take all of the good things that I've learned from your way of operating your flight deck

and all the stuff that we do and put both together, so that when we go back and start writing the Standard Operating Procedures for the new carrier, we can mix

them both together."

With thanks to PO(3rd Class) Karen Blankenship, USS Kearsarge.
Writing the Queen Elizabeth 'manual', page 16-17



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Thanks in Bahrain

MID-way through her eight-month deployment to the Middle East, HMS Northumberland paid her first visit to Bahrain – hub of the Royal Navy's ongoing east of Suez mission.

Overseeing that mission is the UK Maritime Component Command, headed by Cdre Simon Ancona, who visited the Devonport-based frigate once alongside to thank the ship's company.

The commodore invited Brig Gen Ahmed Khalifa Salman Al Khalifa, commander of the Royal Bahrain Naval Force, a major supporter of the work carried out by Coalition naval forces.

Twenty-seven nations are committed to the Combined Maritime Forces, providing ships to support three permanent Combined Task Forces: 150 and 151 (maritime security/counter-piracy in the Indian Ocean); and 152 (the Gulf).

"Northumberland has come alongside fresh from providing valuable and direct support to the Combined Maritime Forces," said Cdre Ancona.

"She is operating in a challenging environment and it's obvious the ship's company have risen to the challenge."

No port visit is complete without the opportunity to get kitted out for a game of rugby and Bahrain RFC were very willing to test their skills against the sailors – who'd only played together five times in the previous two years.

Despite a strong performance, the ship's company lost 21-12 to the locals, but the result was a big improvement on the frigate's run out in Muscat, Oman – Northumberland's previous port of call.

Buffer Jamie McNeil, the team captain said: "I feel the performance that they gave was great. Training was limited in the run-up to the game but we have further games to look forward to and prepare for."

Jezza drops in on Wezza

TOP Gear legend Jeremy Clarkson feels the bracing Arctic breeze on the flight deck of HMS Westminster – a brief taster of what sailors went through 70 years ago to deliver vital aid to Russia.

The motormouth presenter joined the frigate off Norway – he's making a documentary on the Arctic Convoys – where the Portsmouth-based warship has been conducting submarine warfare training with our Norwegian allies.

Jeremy flew aboard Westminster near Stavanger courtesy of the ship's Lynx helicopter – which he was quite taken with and had it pegged for top spot on the Top Gear 'cool wall'.

His film crew, meanwhile, had sailed from the UK with the frigate to capture three days of scenes including day and night flying, day and night live firings, a (mock) main machinery space fire (to emulate a torpedo hit), torpedo-loading drills, and the ship conducting torpedo counter-measures – all helping to show how today's Royal Navy might deal with the threats the men of WW2 faced on the terrible convoys to Russia.

Around 3,000 sailors and merchant seamen

were killed between 1941 and 1945 delivering vital supplies to the Soviet Union.

It was a mission which helped to tip the balance against the Nazis and Churchill acknowledged it was "the worst journey in the world", but it was only at the end of last year that Premier David Cameron announced a campaign medal would be cast to honour the sacrifices made on the Arctic runs.

The *Top Gear* presenter got a feel if not for the dangers, then certainly the dreadful weather conditions the Arctic heroes faced – sub-zero temperatures, Sea State 8 (waves of 9m, or 30ft, and more) and biting winds of up to 60mph. The ship conducted high-speed manoeuvres, simulating the counter-measures of 1940.

"As busy as the day was, the film team did find time to chat with the ship's company as well as deliver the obligatory PR shots, sign calendars, books and even a rubber duck," said Lt Cdr Mickey Rooney, Westminster's weapon engineer officer.

Jeremy also found time to join the senior rates in their mess, leaving with a commemorative HMS Westminster coin.

Impressed by the operations room, Jeremy remembered the ship's starring role in the

Bond film *Tomorrow Never Dies* – and needed no encouragement to take the captain's chair for some scenes for the documentary, which is due to air in the summer or autumn.

What really impressed the presenter, however, was the frigate's turn of speed (prompting the outburst: "Holy Mother of God...")

He wrote in his *Sunday Times* column: "The No.1 must-have experience is a Type 23 frigate turning hard to port at almost 30 knots."

The presenter got off the frigate in Bergen – feeling "achingly proud to be British".

With Jeremy and his team gone, Westminster resumed her duties as the UK's foremost submarine hunter, acting as an aggressive target for the budding submarine captains undergoing the International Submarine Commanders' Course – also known as 'the Perisher'.

The grim weather conditions didn't let up for the frigate – she faced a complete 'white out' in the middle of the night while conducting high-speed 'eyes-only runs' directly at the submarine, "a series of laps even the Stig would have struggled with," Lt Cdr Rooney added.



Jacks of hearts...

TWENTY-FIVE sailors and Royal Marines make quite possibly the most romantic use of the Navy's distinctive red survival suits by showing their feelings to loved ones back home in Blighty on February 14.

This was the unique Valentine's 'card' sent back by the ship's company of HMS Monmouth – out on patrol in the Gulf.

"I wanted to give the ship's company something to send home to their families that was personal, but still involved as many people as possible," explained the frigate's photographer Will Haigh.

He climbed into the back of the ship's Lynx, Black Knight, then choreographed the sailors and marines into position for the perfect shot. "I was really pleased at how the photograph turned out and I hope people's loved ones will like it as well," said Will.

As well as organising a spa day back in the UK for their other halves, Will's romantic shipmates sent eBlueys and emails home in time for Valentine's Day – an estimated 1,500 loved-up messages in all. Families often use the ship's Facebook page to post messages and keep in contact, but traditional methods of communication such as letters and parcels still remain popular, especially at Christmas and special occasions such as February 14; more than 300 sacks of post were delivered to Monmouth by BFPO in the first six weeks of 2013.

The Black Duke wasn't alone in sending unusual *billets doux* home. HMS Northumberland's sailors also formed hearts (with their hands or pusser's grey rope – so not quite as visible from the ship's helicopter...) while the men of 40 Commando dipped into their pockets and pulled out (wait for it...) packets of Love Hearts.



Enter the first Avengers

THESE are the Avengers assembled.

Left to right, Lts Keith Webb and Mark Finnie (both aged 27), 26-year-old Sub Lt Tom 'Tug' Wilson and Lt Alan 'AJ' McInnes (28) are ready to take on the world after becoming the first students to complete training as Fleet Air Arm Observers in the new Avenger trainer – parked on the Culdrose tarmac behind them.

The quartet passed the 16-week course with 750 Naval Air Squadron at the Helston airbase – which means they can now progress to front-line instruction as helicopter observers.

In very simple terms, pilots 'fly' a helicopter; the observer – a title which harks back to the very first days of the Naval aviation – 'fights' it, responsible for navigation and weapons systems.

The course with 750 teaches students the basics of being a Fleet Air Arm Observer; from there the successful candidates move on to bigger Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control conversion (849 NAS), Merlin (824 NAS) – both based at Culdrose – or Wildcat with 702 NAS at Yeovilton.

After being selected from the many who apply to fly for the Navy, the four observers went through officer training at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, before moving to 750 at Culdrose. Here they have learned to take command of an aircraft (and on occasion several aircraft) to achieve a mission safely.

Until last year, trainees learned the fundamentals of being an observer in the trusty Jetstream – which, outwardly, didn't look much different from the replacement King Air Avenger.



With the Jetstreams increasing aged and the gap between what instructors could teach in them compared with the demands of frontline helicopters widening, the decision was taken to leap into the 21st Century with the Avengers in a £52m deal with Ascent Flight Training.

Among the many benefits of the new aircraft, the real world appears on a colourful computer display in front of a trainee observer's eyes, and the instructor can superimpose extra

targets and weather conditions – something not possible on the Jetstream – to make things more challenging.

And the first four to take on the new course – the students proudly called themselves 'the first Avengers' ("If you're not first, you're last") – certainly found it a challenge; it's reputed to be one of the toughest courses in the Royal Navy.

Mancunian Lt McInnes thought the course was "one of the toughest hurdles I have ever faced".

Lt Finnie, from Bo'ness near Falkirk, added: "The course has been a steep hill to climb which has made it all the more rewarding to pass."

And from Lt Webb, from Withington, south Manchester: "Military aviation is a challenging profession, which makes success in this service all the more satisfying."

As to why Fleet Air Arm helicopter observers learn the ropes of their trade in a prop plane not a helicopter – an hour's flying in a fixed-wing aircraft is roughly half the cost of the same in a helicopter.



Every cap has a gold lining...

IT DOES now – if you're a female Royal Navy officer of the rank of commander or higher.

The caps of those officers will now more prominently reflect that achievement – something their male counterparts have long enjoyed.

New tricorne caps are being introduced this spring and summer which feature a more distinctive band of gold braid (as pictured) and, for female officers who attain flag rank, two bands.

The caps of male officers of commander rank and above are clearly marked with gold braid on the peak.

Not so the existing tricorne hats worn by their female counterparts – the single line of 3mm gold Russian braid around the headband doesn't really stand out, which means the proper marks of respect are often missed... causing embarrassment on both sides.

All of which Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel was keen to redress for the 48 female officers of commander rank and higher.

So a group of female commanders worked with the Defence Clothing team to come up with something more obvious.

The result? 3mm gold braid on the rim of caps and a double-width row of braid for commander, captain and commodore and two rows of double-width braid for flag officers (the 'fit' of the tricorne itself hasn't been redesigned or altered, however).

The new caps – approved by Princess Anne as Chief Commandant for Women in the Royal Navy and First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope – will be available from the early summer.

Female commanders will be able to exchange their current tricorns *gratis*, while those promoted to that rank in the future will receive a revised grant to reflect the cost of tailoring.



Thrall of the mountain Sea Kings

WE have had snow in the UK. We have had cold snaps. And we have mountains.

So why would the Junglies of the Fleet Air Arm head overseas to hone their winter flying, engineering and survival skills?

Well, there has been snow in the UK – but not a widespread blanket many feet deep.

And while it has been cold, it has not quite reached the levels of Arctic Norway, where the mercury regularly shrinks to 35 degrees of frost.

And while Snowdon, Ben Nevis, Cairn Gorm *et al* can be deadly dangerous, nothing in the UK can match the pinnacles of ice-clad rock that rear up near the Wafus' base camp at Penzing in Bavaria.

Starting in Norway, members of the Commando Helicopter Force have been taking part in the annual Clockwork cold weather training package at Bardufoss, 200 miles inside the Arctic Circle.

The Joint Helicopter Command (JHC) base, at 69° North, sharing an airfield with the Royal Norwegian Air Force and the commercial airport, has supplied training and support for UK military aviators for 42 years.

The current training programme consists of three major elements – survival, military training and Arctic flying.

The terrain around Bardufoss, in a valley surrounded by mountains, provides the ideal environment – not only does the temperature plunge in the harsh Arctic landscape, but peaks rise to 5,000ft along steep-sided valleys, giving testing mountain flying and low-level navigation areas.

Weather conditions can change

rapidly over a short period of time, catching out those who are unwary, ill-prepared or badly-trained – the wind-chill factor can reduce the temperature to some 50 degrees below freezing.

For these reasons it is mandatory for all JHC personnel of all ranks to undertake the seven-day Cold Weather Survival Course (CWSC) before they can deploy into an extreme cold weather environment and operate and live safely in arduous field conditions.

Taught by the elite Royal Marines Mountain Leader cadre, the Royal Navy's cold-weather specialists, students spend the first two days of the course in the lecture room and familiarising themselves with the vital and potentially life-saving equipment they will be using in the field phase of training.

Learning to survive 'in the freezer' starts with moving and navigating through deep drifts on snow shoes, carrying heavy bergens, with the first night spent in ten-man tents.

This allows people to hone their personal admin skills – making sure they wear clothing correctly, store it properly and don't lose anything vital, like glove liners or headgear, as well as cooking and heating safely.

They move on to navigation exercises, avalanche drills, and building camouflaged four-man tents for the night.

Days three and four represent the survival side of training, including building snow shelters – a labour-intensive job involving piling up to 1.5 tonnes of snow

into a mound before tunnelling an entrance and sleeping area into the centre.

This becomes home for the evening with a surprisingly cosy 0° Celsius inside – the warmest night spent outside.

The final night is spent in the woods near the old German World War 2 airfield – the dreariest place in the area, as it was supposedly constructed by the Germans after consulting locals, who with straight faces advised them to build their airstrip in the worst possible place.

Here, left only with the contents of their pockets and a survival knife, students learn to construct shelters from the trees themselves in the form of a brushwood bivouac.

The final day brings the infamous, dreaded ice-breaking drills, which involves each individual jumping into a snow hole cut into a frozen lake fully clothed whilst carrying their bergen – the student then has to dig deep using all their mental and physical strength to pull themselves clear of the icy water.

Aircrew training at Bardufoss consists of lectures as well as around 25 flying hours per pilot and aircrewman dedicated to general Arctic flying training.

The course includes landing techniques in re-circulating snow; load-lifting, troop drills, landing on mountain peaks, navigation and formation flying in daytime and at night using night-vision goggles.

This extreme cold weather environmental flying training not only prepares aircrews for flying in Arctic conditions, but also provides valuable pre-deployment training for operations such as



● The classic fairytale turrets of Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria as seen from the cargo door of one of 848 NAS's Sea Kings

Afghanistan – flying techniques used to overcome 'white-out' conditions caused by heavy re-circulating snow are very similar to those used for desert 'brown-out' conditions, where it is sand that is kicked up instead of snow.

And it was this combination of snow, high altitude and unforgiving rock walls that was also on the agenda for the rookie flyers of 848 Naval Air Squadron, the Junglies' training unit.

Three Sea Kings headed to southern Bavaria for two weeks of intensive training for pilots, air crew and ground support.

Throughout their time in Bavaria, the Junglies were hosted by *Lufttransportgeschwader 61* (Air Transport Squadron 61) in Penzing, Landsberg, three dozen miles west of Munich.

From Penzing they are carrying out valley flying, pinnacle and ridge approaches and, importantly, wind-finding and assessment techniques. All these sorties are identical to those carried out by Commando Helicopter Force front-line crews currently flying in Afghanistan.

And it wasn't just the Alpine flying that was useful – the journey south from Yeovilton across Europe took two days, as AB Ashleigh White, a student aircrewman, explained.

"As a trainee, I and the other ten students spent weeks planning the route," said Ashleigh.

"There are plenty of additional considerations we needed to think

about: diplomatic clearance, flight plans, foreign laws and regulations – all this on top of the usual factors such as diversion plans, foul weather routes, 'down bird' and emergency procedures.

"We also got to practise some rapid re-planning when one of the airfields we were going to refuel at closed at the last minute due to weather. Whilst you can't plan for all eventualities safety is our number one priority."

No matter how thorough the planning, the crews have to maintain a degree of flexibility and forethought.

Sub Lt Dan Howes, a trainee pilot, experienced this first hand as he guided his Sea King over

Germany.

"Just as we crossed into Germany, the aircraft had a generator failure," he explained.

"This is when our training kicked in and we reacted accordingly.

"We diverted to a nearby airfield. The engineers we had on board swiftly resolved the problem and we re-planned the route.

"Due to the delay we now knew that it would take two days to finish the transit, so we planned for an overnight stop in Wiesbaden – a US Air Force base.

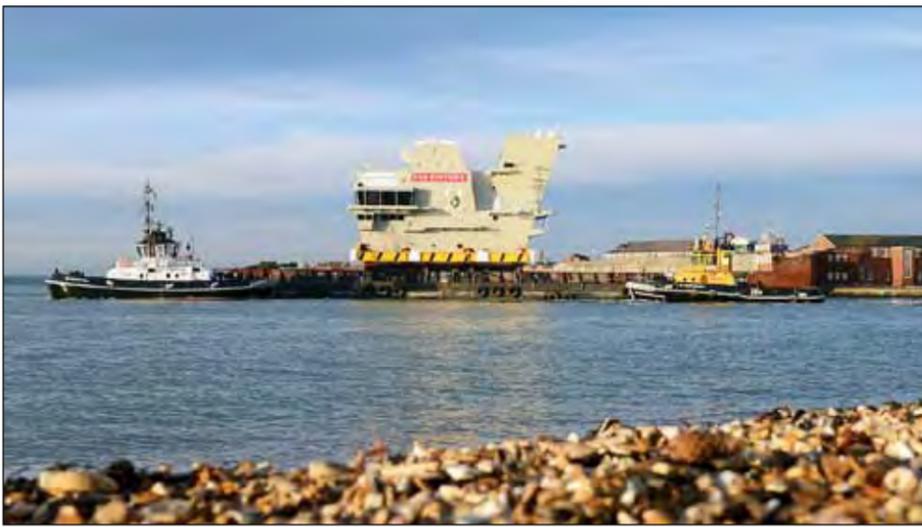
"The following morning we arrived at Penzing with no further snags and began preparation for the mountain flying."



● From left: Lt Cdr Sean Cox RN Lynx 659 Sqn OC, Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Philip Jones and Capt Matt Briers, Commanding Officer Commando Helicopter Force, during a visit by the Admiral to Bardufoss



● A Junglie Sea King operating in Norway



Building a ship, building



● Island hopping... (Top) Tugs shepherd the barge carrying the forward island out of Portsmouth Harbour and (above) out into the Solent as the hovercraft scurries across to the Isle of Wight while (below) a welder works on the lower bow section shortly after the middle bow was craned into place by Goliath

Pictures: LA(Photos) Chris Mumby and Gaz Weatherston and the Aircraft Carrier Alliance



IT USED to be that the only Queen guaranteed coverage daily in the news outlets of this nation is the one who resides in a rather large 'house' at the top of The Mall.

But muscling in on the monarch's domain this past month or so has been her namesake... who resides in a large dock on the north bank of the Forth.

Indeed, barely a day has passed without HMS Queen Elizabeth hitting the headlines.

Artist's impression gives idea of epic scale of future carrier.

Oscar-winning actor visits Britain's future flagship.

Photographers capture progress on Navy's next carrier.

Middle bow lowered into place.

Upper bow lowered into place.

Forward island completed in Portsmouth.

Iconic forward island sails by barge from Portsmouth...

...and safely passes under Forth Bridge.

The pace of construction of this gigantic jigsaw these past few weeks has been – to the outsider at any rate – breathtaking.

And perhaps a little surreal.

Like an island without a carrier gliding past Round Tower.

The 700-tonne structure is not the largest piece of the gigantic jigsaw.

But it is arguably the most iconic.

So cameras (and smartphones with cameras) were at the ready at dawn on Thursday February 8 as a sea-going barge began to carry it out of Portsmouth Harbour.

It took four days to prepare the forward island – there are two on the carrier thanks to her unique design – for the 550-mile journey to Rosyth.

And as the island was passing through the Strait of Dover, the Goliath crane which dominates the Rosyth skyline was lifting the upper bow into place – thus completing the forward section of the leviathan.

The 1,000-tonne section was lowered on to the already-completed bulbous and middle bow sections.

As a result, Queen Elizabeth is now around two-thirds complete and weighs around 36,000 tonnes (her final displacement will be 65,000 tonnes).

After their weekend break, the 2,000 or so staff at the Babcock yard returned on Monday February 11 to see the forward island passing beneath another icon of engineering, the Forth Rail Bridge.

Such sights might be eye-catching, but they're not unusual.

"You notice change and progress almost every day. Different sections are being added constantly," said Cdr Steve Lynn, the ship's weapon engineer officer.

"But when the island is lowered into place, that's the point that Queen Elizabeth will look like a true warship."

Which should be any day now. Goliath is due to pick up the island – in a specially-fitted lifting frame – and raise it on to the flight deck.

The forward island is home

'Feel proud, for you

IF BUILDING the largest warship in the nation's history demands an unprecedented national effort, then forging a ship's company to take this magnificent battle wagon to sea requires selecting a blend of experience and expertise in the RN.

The nascent ship's company (18-strong in mid-February) draws on a wealth of experience – big ships (the senior naval officer, executive warrant officer, leading writer), Type 45 technology (weapon and marine engineer officers), bringing ships into service (weapon and marine engineer officers again) to name a few.

"We will take the best bits from the old Ark Royal, Illustrious and other ships, but what we devise will be unique," explains Cdr Steve Lynn, weapon engineer officer. "Queen Elizabeth is like nothing we've ever had."

Indeed. There are few, if any, sailors left in the Service from Ark Royal IV.

But then Ark was built in the '40s and '50s, used cats and traps and had a complement of more than 2,600 with a full air group embarked.

As for the smaller Harrier carriers, well the aircraft were '60s technology, the ships themselves were designed in the '70s.

Queen Elizabeth is a child of the Noughties. Although she too will carry jump jets (admittedly the next-generation ones) and there'll be a ship's company of 680-700 (and 1,600 plus when her air group and staffs are on board) which is similar to the Invincibles, that's where the similarities end.

But there is a golden thread running through the past five or six decades of RN carrier operations: the sailor.

The training's different, to be sure, and women didn't go to sea in the mid-70s. But Ark Royal IV and QE are just (admittedly very big) lumps of battleship grey without the right people knowing what to do in every circumstance.

Which is exactly what is troubling the minds of the first ship's company.

They have to devise the 'manual': *How to operate a Queen Elizabeth-class carrier.*

This 'manual' will feature at least 150 'standard operating procedures': everything from dropping anchor, coming alongside, and pre-sailing checks to launching the sea boats and tackling fires.

Before for you can do any of that, you have to be able to find your way around the ship.

"She's just so *biiiiig*," says LWtr Claire Butler with a strong north-east accent. "I tried to show the senior rates' mess to the chief writer, took a wrong turn and..."

So maps and guides to help new joiners are essential. Specially-marked routes – such as on Albion or Bulwark to help marines find their way to the loading dock or flight deck – might be used; at the height of operations, Queen Elizabeth could find herself with an extra 1,000 personnel embarked.

For the ship's company, computer 3D modelling is being considered so a sailor could walk through the carrier and find their way around – similar to the Subsafe simulator used by trainee submariners before they join a boat.

The weapon and marine engineers are involved in the installation and testing of equipment at an early stage like never before; in the past they've only really got involved when the ship's finished. On Queen Elizabeth they're at the heart of the process right now – still a few years before the carrier goes to sea.

Otherwise, the technology is more evolution than revolution – particularly for sailors of the Type 45 generation.

"The one area which is different is network – it's on a scale and of a complexity we've never seen," explains Cdr Lynn.

It's the spine of the ship, the central core. It's not just behind weapons, sensors and command systems. It's behind everything. Engines. Lighting. Communications. Desktop computers.

There are 2,000 kilometres of fibre optic cable aboard (that's 1,242 miles – or nearly enough to stretch from London to St Petersburg) and, looking to the future, there's the potential for installing another 4,000 kilometres (2,484 miles – or



not too far short of London to Baghdad...)

But if something goes wrong with a cable will it be a case of scouring hundreds of kilometres of wire to find the fault?

In theory, no. The system should be able to re-route the information automatically. "You will not have to send someone in to repair it – the system should find a way around it," Cdr Lynn explains.

A network which fixes itself? That must make the engineers' job easy...

"There is an awful lot to do and you go through every set of emotions, but I cannot think of any engineering job in the Navy that's better than this one," Cdr Lynn adds. "It's fantastic."

Much of his team's work will involve making sure the automated systems are fully functioning – and that the ship's company know how to use them.

There's a considerable degree of automation on a Type 45 – such as sensors which report whether a hatch is properly closed. Being bigger, QE takes that up a level or two.

There are around 250 cameras

fitted on *any* ship.

Each MT30 generates 36 megawatts of power.

Individually, the engines could provide enough power for a town the size of Burnley or Guildford.

Together, they can generate enough power to meet the needs of a town like Blackpool.

And combined with the four diesel generators, the 109 megawatts produced could power Portsmouth or Swindon.

Watching Goliath lift the engine from the dockside on to the ship was a very proud Tony Graham,

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Forging a ship's company...

You will be part of history...'



● Rear Admiral Steve Brunton, director of ship acquisition at the MOD's Defence Equipment and Support organisation, is flanked by the first nine members of Queen Elizabeth's ship's company – whose numbers have since doubled

Picture: LA(Phot) Paul Halliwell, FRPU North

monitoring compartments. That's in addition to other sensors, automatic fire systems etc etcx.

The level of automation is unprecedented – and unavoidable.

There will be some 3,500 compartments in the finished carrier with a ship's company of 680-700.

That's 95 tonnes of warship for every member of the ship's company (double a Type 45 and one third more than on HMS Ocean). It means a change in the way we do things.

"We cannot do rounds every day – we'll visit the important compartments obviously. But with the number of ship's company, you simply cannot check all 3,500," says Cdr Lynn.

Some jobs will change little, however. The support LWtr Butler provides – travel, administration, accommodation, pay, courses,

forms and so on – is much as it would be if she were aboard the carrier (except that the ship's office is still an empty shell – although when Claire joined QE in October, it didn't even exist).

Claire is the most junior member of the ship's company and, as of mid-February, the only one with a Queen Elizabeth cap tally.

"I was over the moon at being drafted to Queen Elizabeth and I am massively enjoying being here – there's a nice family feel," she says.

"Everybody has made me feel so at home – I've been involved in everything and that's made it a great experience."

Which is exactly what her bosses want to hear.

Capt Simon Petitt, the carrier's Senior Naval Officer, says: "When people ask the ship's company: 'What's it like to serve on Queen Elizabeth?' I want the response to be: 'Great, really exciting.' There's certainly a buzz about this ship."

This is the other half of the Queen Elizabeth story. Forging an identity.

Almost every day – and certainly every week presently – there's one or other milestone being passed: block X delivered, first engine installed, block Y completed, forward island being transported.

That's tangible. "I sit at my desk, look left, and see the ship changing in front of me," says Executive Warrant Officer WO1 Dave Smith.

What's not tangible – and what he and his shipmates are making every effort to kindle – is the spirit of Queen Elizabeth.

Some ships are renowned as 'happy' – Newcastle springs readily to mind. And some aren't (no, we're not saying which ones...).

"We are very conscious we are the first ship's company. We set the 'feel' of the ship," says Cdr Lynn.

Capt Petitt adds: "A ship's persona is intangible. It's down to the people to set the right attitude, to give the ship her name and reputation."

In many respects that's identical to any new ship: Astute, Ambush, Defender, Duncan.

"My job is to make a new joiner feel welcome – that's the same in York, Bulwark, or any ship in the Fleet. How we look after our people is first and foremost," says WO Smith.

"Of course, visually you get a 'wow' when you arrive – that feeling: This is what I joined for."

Forging an identity extends beyond the confines of Dock No.1, Rosyth.

The first affiliations are being formed – livery companies, the Grenadier Guards, 1st Battalion Royal Regiment of Scotland, the capitals of England and Scotland, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

In fostering the spirit of Queen Elizabeth, they are helped by the insatiable appetite for news of progress. Each milestone is recorded by photographers and trumpeted around the world via the internet.

The ship's company also feel duty-bound to 'sell' the Queen Elizabeth story to the wider RN – and the world.

"Although we're up in Rosyth, we're out there with our Queen Elizabeth cap tallies, lanyards, we're ambassadors for the ship.

We enjoy showing people around her – no, we're proud to show off our ship," says WO1 Smith.

And how. VIP visits are aplenty – from the premier to Oscar-winning actors – but also undergraduates, sailors in training are shown around; they're the future of the RN after all.

Speak to anyone involved in the carrier and the same words come up: 'size', 'scale', 'pride', 'history', 'unique', 'family', 'awesome'.

"This is a truly remarkable project. Unless you've seen her and set foot on her, you cannot really appreciate it.

"Nothing conveys the enormity of what the Royal Navy has embarked on and the scale of HMS Queen Elizabeth – not video, film, photographs or presentations.

"This is a very exciting place to be."

'Exciting'. That's another word which pops up a lot. But so does 'challenging'.

This is, after all, the biggest engineering project in the UK right now. The levels of complexity are right up there with space flight.

That might seem daunting – but it is, says WO Smith, also inspiring.

"Being on the Queen Elizabeth puts fire in your belly. I get up each morning and feel that I want to be a part of this," he says.

He's spent 27 years in the RN and served as the EWO on a flurry of ships and units (York, Bulwark, Portsmouth Flotilla) as well as the Royal Yacht.

"For me this is the pinnacle. I cannot think of a better finish to my career.

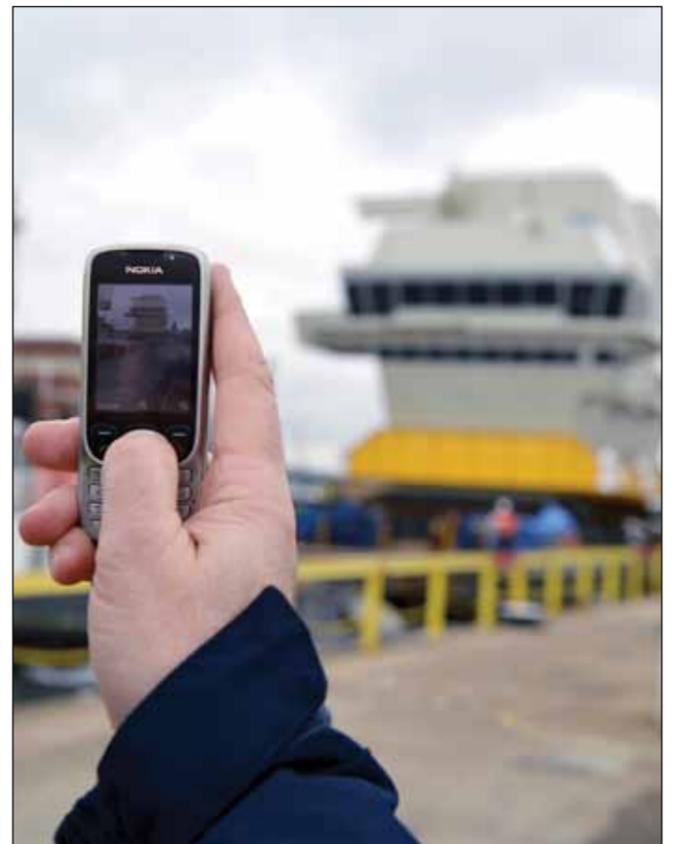
"And I would hope that the young able seaman joining the ship wants to be where I am in 25 years' time."

Cdr Lynn adds: "More than anything it's a huge privilege to be involved. This ship will be the centrepiece of the Royal Navy for the next 50 years."

By the year's end, the ship's company will stand at around 75 strong.

What happens if you're asked to join her?

Says WO Smith: "If you're drafted to Queen Elizabeth, feel proud – for you will be part of history."



● Today's giant piece of the Queen Elizabeth jigsaw is sponsored by a well-known mobile phone manufacturer... A Portsmouth dockyard worker takes a shot of the forward island before it leaves the Solent by barge and (below) the middle bow section is lowered into place on a chilly night in Rosyth



Director Ships at the MOD, who said the sight of the engine being carefully moved on to QE "brought the biggest grin to my face since Christmas Day".

He continued: "To have successfully lifted the most powerful engine in the Royal Navy on to the biggest ship ever built for the Royal Navy using the biggest capacity gantry crane in Europe is a major milestone.

"Everyone involved should take huge pride in their contribution to this national endeavour."

Words echoed by Queen

Elizabeth's Senior Naval Officer, Capt Simon Petitt. "The ship is awesome – it surprises everyone who works on board," he says. "Outside, the sheer size of her is difficult to comprehend, but inside it really hits you.

Inside is rather less complete than externally – some compartments, such as the bakery, and most of the accommodation cabins are finished (although there's no power to them), others are still empty shells – but that's quickly changing.

With all this work going on, the

photographer from the Aircraft Carrier Alliance clambered more than 200ft up to the cab of Goliath to produce a panorama of Queen Elizabeth as she appeared at the end of January 2013.

The resulting image (top centre) looks rather like a giant Lego set. The bow is on the left, the stern on the right.

About to be lifted into the dock imminently are 'Tango' and 'Uniform' segments – sections of all warships are labelled from A-Z (depending on the length) using the phonetic alphabet (Alpha,

Bravo, Charlie...) – which will complete the length of Queen Elizabeth at the waterline.

The blue and white containers on the flight deck support the engineers, technicians and shipwrights working on the construction project.

Those running athwartships – from port to starboard beam – cover the joints between the blocks and ensure the weather is kept at bay as the blocks are welded together.

So, all in all, nothing much to report really...



Artful – but not dodgers

A COMBINATION of fun, onboard rivalry and strong promotion for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity Payroll Giving Competition resulted in the Navy's newest, most advanced and powerful Astute-class submarine, HMS Artful, winning first place.

In just three months, the boat – in built at Barrow – achieved a massive 83.72 per cent increase in sign-ups.

The boat and four runners-up will each receive a £1,000 prize for their welfare fund – in addition to the bi-annual operational grant made by the charity to front-line units' welfare funds.

Wtr(SM) Grant Weaver – front row, eighth from the left in the above photograph – said the A-boat's impressive result was down to

organising a challenge between junior and senior rates and the wardroom to see who came top of the sign-up chart. (The JR's won overall, with the logistics and communications departments both having 100 per cent sign-up.)

"Every month, we displayed the percentages that each mess had reached and that really got the competition going," Grant said.

"Everyone who joined the boat and came into the office for paperwork went out with a sign-up form in their hand, and there were lots of posters everywhere publicising the scheme as well.

"In my previous unit I worked with someone who was a big RNRMC supporter so I already knew about the great work the charity does

with people who are finding things tough.

"Once people here found out about the benefits of getting involved, they were pleased to sign up."

The money will be going towards funding a team-building event at Easter for the boat.

Payroll Giving to the RNRMC of just £5 a month only costs you £4 if it is donated before tax.

In return, you receive automatic sports insurance and help the RNRMC to support you through hard times and good.

Sign up through your Payroll Giving representative, by asking your BWO, EWO or Coxswain for a form, online at the charity website or by contacting Dean Rogers on 02392 548 417.



Red Rose rows and rows

HMS Lancaster pushed the boat out to raise over £500 for the RNRMC by rowing the equivalent distance of Scotland to Denmark in just one day.

The equivalent of 400 miles was rowed by 80 members of the ship's company on two rowing machines over 24 hours.

Organiser LPT Ian 'Robbo' Robinson and CPO 'Baz' Hearn kicked off proceedings with gusto. "We all had to do 30-minute stints, which seemed easy enough when I put my name down," said Robbo, "however, it soon became harder than I expected."

He was inspired to run the 'rowathon' after being involved in a similar event when serving at HMS Sultan and determined it "seemed easy enough to organise whilst onboard".

Once the first few rowers were through and distances recorded, like any matelot event, competition set in.

Average distances achieved were 6,500-7,000 metres (four miles), however the race for title of 'King Rower' was fiercely contested.

In the end, there were only a few metres separating first and third place. Victory was seized by LET (ME) McCrea (pictured above), who said: "I enjoy my phys and rowing is by far my favourite."

The event ran smoothly with plenty of support from the ship's company throughout, even through the long silent hours.

Some rowers just did one stint but others showed their grit – or foolishness – and came back for more. Some even rowed in fancy dress... all in the name of charity, mate.

Cakes and cards go down well

MEMBERS from the WRNS Benevolent Trust and RNRMC came together at HMS Collingwood to raise funds from a pre-Christmas cake and card sale.

The event was held in the base sports centre and over £450 was raised in total.

POPT Helen Richardson said: "It was a great event. We were able to bring awareness and raise the profile of such a worthy cause."



To Holland back

IT'S said that during a regular working day onboard a warship at sea, the average sailor can expect to walk a few miles, but PO(CIS) James 'Dutchy' Van-Der-Linden, from Blackburn Lancashire, is no average sailor.

The 30-year-old is part way through a 1,000-mile run raising funds for the RNRMC while aboard HMS Monmouth during her Gulf deployment.

Pounding the heaving decks has already put paid to two pairs of trainers, two iPod armbands, two pairs of headphones and gallons and gallons of water.

Dutchy fortunately overcame a dodgy knee injury back in January to reach the 500-mile mark.

He said: "My original challenge was to run 1,000 miles within seven months – the duration of Monmouth's deployment. But now I'm well on course to finish within six months, which is my revised goal."

One thousand miles is the equivalent of running from Plymouth to Gibraltar (as the crow flies) and the distance is being achieved by running around the ship's upper deck.

Seven full laps is equivalent to one mile and the senior rate is hitting the tarmac whenever he

can get ashore during the ship's port visits.

After an initial sprint out of the starting blocks, Dutchy has settled into a steady pace and is now covering six or seven miles a day in between his defence-watch commitments, with the odd rest day here and there.

One of his main challenges has been gaining access to the upper deck between flying operations, boarding operations, gunnery practice serials and the unpredictable rough seas.

As the deployment heads into the spring, Dutchy's main concern will be the heat. Temperatures can be expected to hit 40°C, so he is now in a race against time and the final few hundred miles will be the biggest challenge.

Running for a charity close to his heart and with the support of peoples' donations has given Dutchy particular inspiration.

He added: "So far the total raised stands at £850 through my online web page; with more sponsorship committed on numerous sponsorship forms both onboard and at home."

Anybody wishing to sponsor him can do so via: www.virginmoneygiving.com/DutchyVanDerLinden

Dynamic duo done

CREDITING their strong friendship, mutual support and a resilient sense of humour, LNNs Sam Marsh and Laura Fallon completed their tough undertaking of running 13 half marathons in 2012 when they finished the Northampton race in December.

Starting back on March 4 in Bideford, the two Naval nurses faced and overcame various hardships, including coping with a plague of injuries, to achieve their goals.

Both runners have had a busy year with their work commitments; Sam was preparing to deploy to Afghanistan this year and Laura is studying for a specialist nursing role within RCDM Birmingham as well as being on parade duties at both the Albert Hall and the Cenotaph for Remembrance.

Laura was unable to run the Tavy 13 half-marathon in Tavistock due to injury, but not to be undone she entered the Birmingham event to ensure she ran the promised 13 races.

Meanwhile, Sam has battled a recurrent injury, yet managed to run all the originally-agreed races against enormous odds.

"The small runs such as the Adderbury half marathon with a limited number of entrants created a warm and personable atmosphere," said Sam.

"But the hilly runs like the Falmouth half marathon, which was early on in the programme of marathons, proved to be much more challenging than expected."

The Bristol half marathon – one of the largest running events in the country – produced an exciting atmosphere while the race back in their home town of Plymouth was demanding but the route held no surprises for the pair. Lastly, a Wellingborough multi-terrain Santa fun run, held at Stanwick Lakes near Nottingham, proved a high point to end this major physical challenge.

You can show your appreciation for the duo's efforts at virginmoneygiving.com/SamandLauraBd.



Currie's favour for BLESMA

THIS might look like an everyday occurrence in the grounds of Britannia Royal Naval College.

Trainee officer. In combats. Carrying rifle. Weighed down by bergen.

Except that this is a personal crusade by budding Fleet Air Arm pilot Lt Victor Currie to honour the men of 1982 – and help those wounded in action.

The 26-year-old recreated the famous yomp by Royal Marines across the Falklands 31 years ago, covering the same distance in the grounds of the Dartmouth college.

Weighed down with webbing, SA80 and 20kg (44lb) of kit, Victor completed 282½ circuits of the ramps surrounding the parade ground at the historic Naval college – that's the equivalent of 96 kilometres (59½ miles), the distance between San Carlos and just outside Port Stanley, where the Royal Marines prepared for the final battles for the liberation of the South Atlantic islands.

Starting at midnight, Lt Currie was initially joined by Sub Lts Bob Milligan and Luke Chambers. By daybreak the trio had collectively completed the distance, but Lt Currie decided to go further, eventually finishing his personal challenge at 8.47 pm – just short of 21 hours after he had started.

"I wanted to complete the whole distance in homage to all those who took part in the yomp in 1982. As a group we wanted to raise money for BLESMA, the British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association, by doing something active that would inspire others. There are lots of charity runs, but we wanted to do something with a military angle, so Sub Lt Milligan came up with this idea," said Victor.

A yomp is Royal Marines' slang for a long-distance march carrying full kit. There is a suggestion that the word is an acronym for 'Your Own Marching Pace'.

On May 21 1982 Royal Marines and Paras disembarked from ships at San Carlos on the western shore of East Falkland to make for the islands' capital Stanley. Carrying full kit and their equipment the walk took three days carrying a load of 36kg (79lb).

The three reenactors hoped to raise £500; so far more than £700 has come in – and they're still collecting: www.justgiving.com/lukechambers

Victor has nothing but admiration for those who took part in the original yomp. He said: "The hardest part of my walk was keeping going and the boredom. I was constantly doing maths and fractions in my head, working out how long I had left to go."

"I was also thinking of the guys back in 1982 for whom it would have been a lot harder. Although for me it was tiring, I knew when I got to the end I could go straight to bed unlike them who then had to face the final fight."

News in brief

■ THE POs' mess on HMS Bulwark has raised £1,000 for two newly-adopted charities. £500 has been donated to POOCH, a cancer charity which specialises in oncology for outpatients in Plymouth. Another £500 has been given to Gables Farm in Plymstock, which cares for and rehomes cats and dogs from the south-west. The cash was raised from flight deck BBQs, beard growing and PO Simon Smith's sponsorship money for completing the Plymouth half marathon in 2012. Members of the mess, together with their loved ones, also spent a couple of days working alongside staff at Gables Farm walking dogs, maintaining the grounds and clearing out animal shelters.

■ STUDENTS from a Culdrose-based training squadron swapped their flying suits for gardening overalls to help the National Trust re-open an overgrown pathway. Lts Mark Finnie, Keith Webb, Allan 'AJ' McInnes and Sub Lt Tom "Tug" Wilson took a break from navigation training to clear a wall of trees and thorns at Predannack airfield near the Lizard. They cleared a path wide enough for walkers and vehicles to pass through safely and allow the National Trust access to areas previously only accessible on foot. Lt Finnie said: "The work was hard but rewarding and I would like to thank Darren Neville from the National Trust for his patience and pasties!"

■ A GROUP of engineering officers under training at HMS Collingwood gladly swapped their pencils for paintbrushes to help give Stubbington Youth Centre a new makeover. The Phase 2 officers, who are studying to become deputy weapon engineers on the System Engineers Management Course, escaped the rigours of their lessons for one day to assist volunteers in tidying up and giving a new lick of paint to the centre's interior. Sub Lt Adam Thompson, who headed up the team of budding Laurence Llewelyn-Bowens, said: "It was nice to spend time away from the classroom doing something different and making a difference in our local community."

■ SUBMARINERS from HMS Torbay have accepted a cheque presentation on behalf of Help for Heroes to recognise the charity fundraising efforts of a Royal Mail sorting office. The Royal Mail 300 club, a charitable fundraising group based at the Plymouth sorting office, Plymouth, raised over £690 for Help for Heroes. The money was raised through various activities, including a sponsored walk organised by mail worker Geoff Barry. CPO Geoff Howarth of HMS Torbay said: "My sister is a member of the 300 club committee and asked me if we could receive the cheque from Geoff, in uniform, as he rarely gets the recognition he deserves for his efforts. "Geoff raised no small amount, I think you'll agree, and was quite humble about his efforts."

■ The Warrant Officers and Senior Rates mess at Culdrose has been recognised for supporting a Cornish heart charity. WO Steve Cass, the mess president, received a certificate from the charity Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY) in recognition for their mess' efforts to raise more than £700 courtesy of a social event and raffle. The event celebrated everything Cornish and included a performance by the Mousehole Male Voice choir. WO Cass said: "As a proud Cornishman, it was particularly satisfying to see locals and those from up country enjoying the atmosphere and entertainment."

With thanks to Lt Cdr Heather Lane and Lt Sally Armstrong, MOS



43 x 9 x 500 / 8 = 4,825

NO, OUR mathematic calculations have not gone haywire... The 43 is the Commando unit. 9 is the number of Royal Marines aboard HMS Monmouth. 500 is the number of miles the guys cycled. And 8 is the number of days it took them to ride 4,825 miles. The commandos – who provide the sharp sword of the Plymouth frigate's boarding team on patrol in the Gulf – set out to notch up 4,825 miles exactly. That's the distance from their base at 43 Commando Royal Marines Fleet Protection Group in Faslane to the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building in the Gulf metropolis of Dubai. The nine-strong team did so on one bike, mounted on a turbo trainer on the port bridge wing of the frigate during one of its routine patrols of the area. There was one Royal Marine continuously cycling on the bike, 24 hours a day – with each commando expected to cover at least 500 miles (roughly the distance from Plymouth to Faslane) – and all while the green berets were still fulfilling their boarding duties and other responsibilities on board. Temperatures by day in the Gulf were already touching 30°C and the Royals faced the added challenge of cycling into 30kt winds at times when Monmouth powered through the sea. The lads averaged just short of 30mph, achieving their goal not in ten days as originally planned, but just short of eight. As of mid-February, those efforts raised more than £2,100 for the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund, the Royal Marines' over-arching charity; the trust supports the recovery, quality of life and through-life challenges of all Royals and their families. "The good progress took its toll – the team struggled to move up and down the ladders on ship and sitting down has never been more painful," said Capt Will Hall, in charge of RM Boarding Team 3 on Monmouth. "Several iPods fell victim to excessive amounts of sweat, making the long night shifts that bit more painful. "The lads are now resting their weary legs – but funds continue to roll in on Monmouth as the team conduct some slightly less-tiring charity events for the ship's company." To show your support for Monmouth's marines, visit www.justgiving.com/faslane-to-dubai

Picture: LA(Phot) Will Haigh, HMS Monmouth



Hot-shot phot's phot of hot shot

JUMPING for joy, Rangers' captain Lee McCulloch celebrates scoring for the legendary Glaswegian side in front of 48,500 fans at Ibrox Stadium.

The moment was captured by one of the Royal Navy's most experienced photographers – and 'Gers fan – CPO Thomas 'Tam' McDonald – and now it's helping to raise money for the club's good causes. A limited edition print of the photograph is being auctioned by the team during 2013, with proceeds going to the Rangers Charity Foundation and Erskine Hospice, which provides medical care and support for Forces veterans.

Just ten prints of the image have been made, with No.1 going to the Rangers captain – who received it from Tam when the photographer visited the footballers' training ground at Murray Park on the northern outskirts of Glasgow to

hand over a framed copy.

Forty-two-year-old Tam, who lives in Jamestown, Balloch, with his wife Yvonne and his two daughters Emma (11) and Abi (seven), is in charge of the photographic section at Faslane. The award-winning lensman has produced some of the Royal Navy's iconic imagery over the past decade – in particular covering 3 Commando Brigade's deeds in Iraq in 2003.

Tam was given a guided tour of the training facilities by the Rangers captain, who told the senior rating: "It's an honour and a privilege to receive such a gift; I hope the remaining nine prints raise greatly-appreciated funds for the nominated charity foundations."

"This one will take pride of place, and is going straight up on my wall as soon as I get home."

The photograph was taken on November 10 last year when Rangers hosted Peterhead and, more important, 460 Service

personnel as part of Remembrance weekend and a celebration of ties with the Armed Forces.

Some 110 Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel – a mixture of regulars and reservists – were invited to join their Army and RAF counterparts at Ibrox.

They were drawn from HMS Dalriada, Victorious, Portland, RNHQ Rosyth, 43 and 45 Commando Royal Marines, HMS Gannet and Kent.

The match – which saw Rangers triumph 2-0 – began with CPO Barry Aitken and LS Barry Holmes leading the teams on to the pitch.

After a minute's silence in respect for the nation's war dead, two Royal Marines from RMR Scotland abseiled into the stadium and presented the match ball to the officials.

At half time, all members of the Armed Forces, led by the Naval Service, were paraded onto the pitch to receive a standing ovation from the crowd.

Collingwood's community Victory

TWO of the wettest days in the depths of winter saw sailors from Victory Squadron at Collingwood helping Portchester Community Association (PCA) move into their new location.

The team of sailors put their muscles and organisational skills to excellent use, shifting heavy furniture and dismantling unwanted items.

AB Jack Lloyd said: "It gives you such a warm feeling in your heart, to see your efforts making a difference. It's nice to be able to give back some help to the local community."

Nick Hall, Chairman of Portchester Community Association told the Collingwood team: "We owe you all a huge thank-you. You've made our job a lot easier and without your help we would have not been able to move in time."

Portchester Community Association facilities provide a venue for groups wishing to hold activities and is a community development centre for those living close by and for other organisations requiring local venues which serve the public, including the NHS blood drives.

On the ropes at Raleigh...

A ROYAL Marine PTI based at HMS Raleigh has scaled new heights for charity by completing a rope climb totalling over 3,000 feet – that's higher than the world's tallest building.

Sgt Rob Garthland heaved himself up a 30 foot rope in HMS Raleigh's gymnasium a whopping (technical term...) 110 times between 7am and 4pm, meaning he surpassed the height of the Burj Khalifa tower in Dubai, which stands at 2,722 feet.

Rob hopes to raise at least £1,000 for the Children's Hospital Fund from his efforts.

Sgt Garthland, 32, who joined the Corps in 2001, said: "It was the first time I'd attempted anything like this and I must admit it felt pretty good to get to the end."

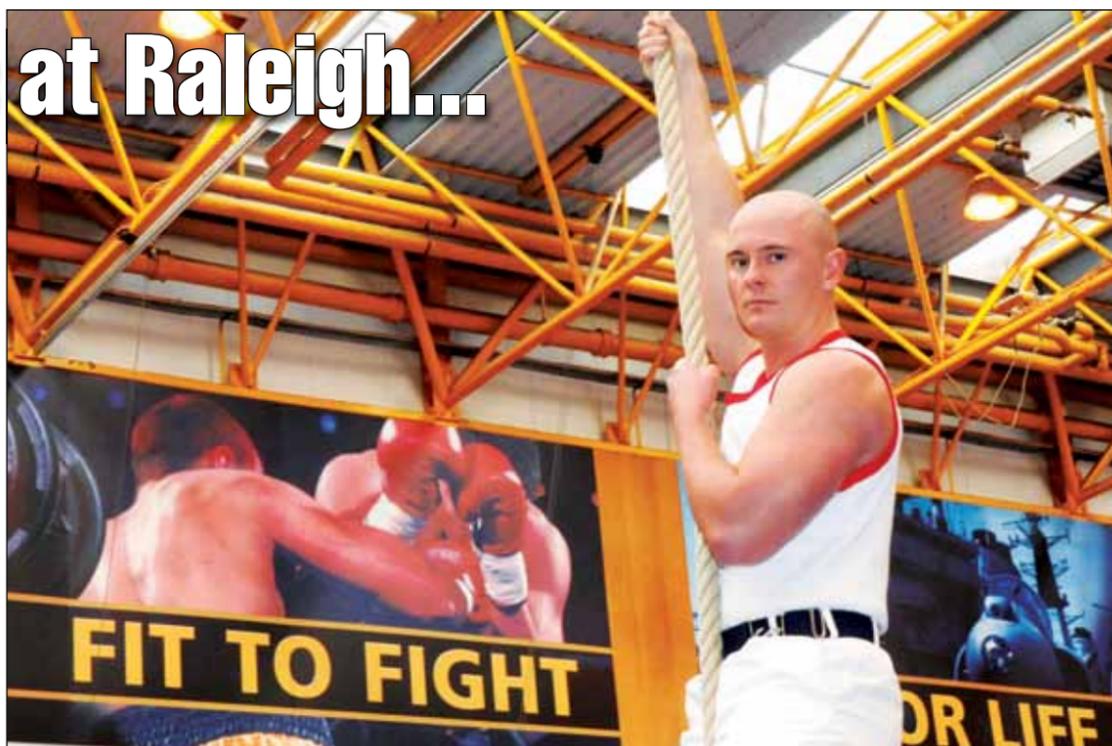
"There is technique to the climb and I was teaching some of the others as we were going. It is tough and I can certainly feel it in my legs and arms, but overall I'm glad I've done it and I hope people will continue to show their support."

Rope climbing is one of the toughest challenges for recruits to master during their basic training.

Throughout the day, Sgt Garthland encouraged others from Raleigh's departments to have a go and see how many climbs they could muster.

Sailors and Royal Marines from the establishment's Military Training Unit – who instruct personnel in board and search operations as well as the use of rifles and small arms – came out on top, completing 86 climbs as a team.

Picture: Dave Sherfield, HMS Raleigh





● John Turuta (left) with Cdr Anthony Rimington, the CO of 702 Naval Air Squadron

A grand total for engineer

AN aircraft engineer who has served the Royal Navy for 42 years has reached his 1,000th flying hour at RN Air Station Yeovilton.

John Turuta, aged 61, who works on RN Lynx helicopters, takes to the skies with pilots to give expert engineering advice.

Reaching 1,000 hours is a significant milestone in the career of anyone involved in aviation – and it is thought to make him the most experienced of all ‘flying maintainers’ in the Service.

John said: “I’m really proud. I’m the first engineer to do this and may well be the last. “Although it’s taken 22 years to get here I’m not ready to stop yet.”

John joined the Navy in 1971, seeing active service in the Falklands and the Gulf before he left in 2000.

He continued to work with the Navy at Yeovilton as an Aircraft Engineer for Serco, contracted to support RN engineering activities, and has tinkered with the engines on Wasp, Lynx and Wessex helicopters, and even hovercraft.

John has been on 702 Naval Air Squadron, the training squadron for Navy Lynx, for 18 years alone.

Lt Cdr Alex Sims, 702’s 38-year-old Training Officer, said: “He’s been serving longer than I’ve been alive, and this achievement is remarkable.

“He’s a real asset to the Royal Navy and Serco and, hopefully, there are many more years left in him yet.”

John was honoured in a presentation by Yeovilton CO, Cdre Jock Alexander, and Lynx Wildcat Maritime Force Commander Cdr Kev Flemming.

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Old friends reunited at Raleigh parade

TWO former schoolfriends were reunited at a parade at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall.

Capt Bob Fancy and Col Dominic May RM were pupils of Lytchett Minster School, in Dorset, between 1976 and 1981.

They were in the same class, and played rugby together. After school they went their separate ways, but both joined the Naval Service in 1983.

And their latest reunion came about because the two men are commanding officers – Capt Fancy, who is now the CO of HMS Raleigh, invited Col May, CO of the Commando Logistic Regiment RM, to be the VIP inspecting officer at one of Raleigh’s regular passing-out-parades.

The parade is the culmination of the ten-week initial naval training course for new recruits to the Royal Navy, and as the VIP Col May was invited to inspect the parade and take the salute during the march-past.

Capt Fancy said: “The passing-out-parade at Raleigh is an important occasion when we celebrate the success of the recruits and acknowledge the courage and determination they have shown to complete the arduous ten-week initial naval training course.

“To reinforce the importance of the parade and the sense of occasion we invite a senior officer to be the VIP, and it was a particular pleasure and privilege

to invite my old school friend who is also in command.”

Col May, whose unit is based at Chivenor, North Devon, originally joined the Corps as a recruit and was commissioned in 1989.

A specialist Mountain Leader, he has seen active service in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Col May said: “It was an absolute privilege and an honour for me to participate in such a superb occasion for the future of our magnificent Navy.

“I am hugely grateful for the invitation to pass the recruits of Cunningham 14 Division out of initial naval training, and to be afforded the opportunity to share in such a momentous, spectacular and very poignant day for all of those involved.

“From a personal perspective, the day was all the more special as it provided a fantastic opportunity for me to join forces again with my old friend after a period of some 30 years or so.

“On so many levels, it was a very special day indeed and I congratulate Capt Bob and the staff of HMS Raleigh on a job very well done indeed.”

Capt Fancy is a submariner by specialisation, serving in both diesel and nuclear submarines.

He completed the Submarine Command Course in 1995 and has commanded HM Submarines Trafalgar and Triumph.



● Former schoolfriends Capt Bob Fancy, Commanding Officer of HMS Raleigh, and Col Dominic May, CO of the Commando Logistic Regiment RM



Academy pupil feels the heat

A SCHOOL pupil has been learning what it takes to be a firefighter during work experience with the Defence Fire Service at Clyde.

During her week-long stint at Faslane, 15-year-old Lauren Wilkes (above) practised working with breathing apparatus, performed ladder drills, first aid, and was tutored on how firefighters deal with road accidents.

Lauren decided she wanted to spend her work experience with the fire service after seeing a TV programme on how they respond to incidents.

“I saw it and thought I would like a go,” said Lauren. “It appealed to me because it was a hands-on job and you are helping people.”

She added: “My time here has been really good and the best bit has been practising rope rescue – I got to abseil from the naval base’s multi-storey car park.”

Clyde’s 28-strong force of firefighters are split into four watches, available round the clock to respond to incidents.

Some are also retained firefighters in Dumbarton, Helensburgh and Garelochhead.

Fire Station Chief Jim Gray said: “The main difference between the Defence Fire Service here at Clyde and our counterparts outside is that we specialise in marine fire fighting.

“Obviously we need to know how to deal with fires on board ships and submarines, and after our basic course we go on to further training focussing on this aspect.”

He continued: “I sometimes get asked by those interested in a career with the Fire Service what is the most important thing they can do to prepare.

“The key is to get fit. I would also advise them to visit their local fire station if they can – they will be able to give more information, and if you ask nicely you might even get a tour.”

Students tour HMS Diamond

A GROUP of 16 students from Henry Cort Community College in Fareham enjoyed a visit to Type 45 destroyer HMS Diamond as part of the SkillForce programme.

SkillForce is an educational charity that works in partnership with schools, drawing upon the skills of ex-Forces personnel to inspire young people to succeed.

Students on the ‘Community, Character & Contribution’ course are studying different types of roles within the community.

The visit introduced students to different roles within the RN, allowing them to look around one of the newest ships and to meet professionals at work.

Year 11 students Freja Clarke and Rebecca Frost are both interested in joining the Navy so were particularly keen to gain insight into life onboard and to talk to sailors about their careers.

They spent time with the Logistics Department learning about career opportunities.

They said: “It has been fantastic and everyone on board HMS Diamond has been really friendly and helpful.”

Head honchos back in Illustrious



Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones

HMS ILLUSTRIOUS is the last of the three Invincible-class ships in the Royal Navy, and is due to bow out in 2014.

So it seemed a good time for her original Commanding Officer and a number of his Heads of Departments to return to the ship for one of their periodic reunions.

The former captain is now Admiral Sir Jock Slater, who went on to become First Sea Lord.

And amongst his HoDs were Rear Admiral Tolhurst (Executive Officer), Rear Admiral John Trewby (Weapon Engineer Officer), Rear Admiral Lees (Supply Officer), Capt John Smith (Marine Engineer Officer), Capt Ted Hackett (Wings), Surg Cdr Roberts (Dental Officer) and Rev Jones (pictured left with current CO Capt Martin Connell and some of his officers).

Also there were Mrs Diana Daniels, the widow of the former Air Engineer Officer, Alex Marsh, who was in charge of building the ship at Swan Hunter, and the wives of party members.

After a tour of the ship and a briefing on recent operations carried out by Illustrious in her role as a helicopter carrier, the party enjoyed lunch in the Admiral’s Dining Room.

Illustrious, the UK’s High Readiness Helicopter and Commando Carrier, played an important role in the Cougar 12 deployment to the Mediterranean last year.

Farewell – after more than 180 years

FOUR Warrant Officers have received their Valedictory Certificates for long service from Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel and the Warrant Officer of the Royal Navy, WO1 Terry Casey.

Between them, WO1s Darren Hedges, ‘Sam’ Allardyce, Andy Rainey and Paul Colloby have chalked up more than 180 years serving their country.

And between them they have travelled to the four corners of the globe in diverse and exciting assignments above and below the surface of the oceans.

For them the time has come to face new challenges and look for new opportunities – but each and every one of them commented that, without doubt, they would gladly do it all over again if they had the opportunity.

Bidding farewell, with dignity, to those who serve long engagements is an initiative being championed by Admiral Steel and WO Casey.

They have recently updated the Valedictory Certificates to reflect the sacrifices that the Service person and their families have made over the years – these particular Warrant Officers admitted that they would not have succeeded or achieved as much as they had done had it not been for their families.

In the near future, all Valedictory Certificates will be awarded in a special folder, which will also include letters from the RNRMC and the RNA and Association of Royal Navy Officers – both letters will promote a closer and continued link to the Naval Service family through association and charity membership.



● From left: WO1 Terry Casey, WO1 Darren Hedges, WO1 ‘Sam’ Allardyce, Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel, WO1 Andy Rainey and WO1 Paul Colloby

Picture: LA(Phot) Keith Morgan



Award for life-saving senior rate

A ROYAL Navy Petty Officer has been commended for his quick response in administering life-saving first-aid to a visitor at HMS Raleigh.

PO Paul 'Ticker' Tock (above) was on duty looking after the Royal Yacht Squadron during their stay at the training base in Cornwall.

As well as planning for the visit, PO Tock made sure he was available throughout the squadron's stay and was first on the scene when one member, Keith Topley, started to choke.

PO Tock immediately took charge of the situation and his life-saving actions have earned him the award of a commendation from Rear Admiral Clive Johnstone, Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST).

The citation for the award reads: "Demonstrating extreme calm, utter presence of mind and considerable physical strength, he carried out successfully the Heimlich procedure on the gentleman, who was close to unconsciousness, and consequently most probably saved the gentleman's life."

PO Tock is currently serving at Raleigh as an instructor within the Seamanship Training Unit, passing on his extensive knowledge of boat driving to members of the Royal Navy undergoing training for promotion or the front-line.

The citation also describes him as being a key and inspirational member of the training team.

The senior rate said: "In the Royal Navy you are told what a great job you've done regularly, but receiving a commendation from FOST kind of makes it all worth while, giving me something to look at and read in years to come, and hopefully one day to show the grandchildren."

The Royal Yacht Squadron and Mr Topley have also expressed their gratitude to PO Tock for his organisational skills and quick thinking action.

Mr Topley said: "I am grateful for the opportunity of thanking PO Tock for his presence of mind and skill in applying the Heimlich manoeuvre to me when I was struck by a violent choking attack."

"I was told by an experienced GP, who was present shortly afterwards, that, but for PO Tock's speedy action, the consequences might have been much more serious."

It is not the first time PO Tock has been in the spotlight – he was a member of the 2000 Devonport field gun crew which completed a clean sweep of trophies and achieved a world record time during the final Royal Tournament.

Thinking big

FROM the largest ship in the Fleet to the largest training establishment in the Royal Navy – WO1 Matt Rowlinson is thinking big.

WO1 Rowlinson has just taken over the role of Base Warrant Officer at HMS Collingwood, having served more than two years in helicopter carrier HMS Ocean.

"I deem it an honour and a privilege to be assuming this appointment," said WO1 Rowlinson.

"A marine engineer by trade, HMS Collingwood has always been considered the arch-rival."

"However, I aim to do my utmost to take forward the exceptional reputation this establishment has in delivering training."

His predecessor, WO1 Mark Hannibal, is moving on to the Waterfront Manning Office in Portsmouth.



Somerset on canvas

THE Executive Officer of HMS Somerset, Lt Cdr 'Des' Hiron, presents a painting of the frigate to her outgoing CO, Cdr Paul Bristowe.

The watercolour, commissioned by Lt Cdr Paul Evans from artist Gordon Frickers, shows Somerset at dawn in the Red Sea, and was paid for by the officers who served onboard Somerset under Cdr Bristowe.

The artist worked from photographs supplied by Lt Cdr Evans, although Mr Frickers travelled to Devonport to check any minor details unique to the ship, and to check he had the correct shade of grey (modified by the pale yellow light of dawn).

Cdr Bristowe took the ship through a counter-piracy deployment – hence the setting.



Reward for CHF stalwart

A ROYAL Navy air engineer working on an RAF base has been awarded the MBE.

WO1 David Rowlands (above), of 78 Squadron RAF Benson, is currently part of a Royal Navy team based at the Oxfordshire air station, preparing for the transition of Merlin Mk3 and Mk3A aircraft from RAF to RN ownership.

Previously based with Commando Helicopter Force at RN Air Station Yeovilton as the Operational Fleet Controller, he was responsible for the administration, allocation and movements of 37 Sea Kings.

During his tenure the decision was taken to retire the Sea King Mk4 and WO1 Rowlands had to liaise with other MOD departments and compile the retirement plot, whilst still maintaining the aircraft operational focus and capability.

He was commended for making an invaluable contribution over a long and distinguished career – his outstanding knowledge and management skills have ensured the success of Naval rotary wing aircraft deployed in Afghanistan and on worldwide exercises.

On hearing that he was to be presented the MBE, WO1 Rowlands said: "I am extremely honoured and humbled to have been considered for such an award and feel tremendously proud to have been recognised for the small part I have played in the overall success of the Commando Helicopter Force."

Reservist is budding author

A FORMER member of the Royal Navy is trying to get used to life as an author – and looking forward to renewing her acquaintance with life in a dark blue suit.

Melanie Brown, who joined the RAF as an air traffic controller but transferred to the Royal Navy in 2004, leaving in 2010, wrote *The Wedding Cake Tree*, which was published late last year.

It is based on a journey around the UK driven by a series of letters left by a recently-deceased mother to her daughter, who must travel in company with a war-weary Royal Marine to discover the secrets of her mother's life – the author describes it as a 'simple story', as much a celebration of the British landscape as an exploration of love.

The book, written under her pen name Melanie Hudson, is published by Arthur H Stockwell, but as an independent author Melanie is her own agent and publicist and has been out on the road marketing the novel, which has enjoyed steady sales and positive reviews.

She is also creating a screenplay as she would like to see the story filmed with proceeds going to charity.

A signing/publicity event will be held at Cairngorm, where part of the story is set, and Melanie has also started to write another book, *Indigo Starlight*, in which the main character is a female Royal Navy helicopter pilot.

Melanie is also looking forward to working part-time at Culdrose as she has just been accepted back in to the Navy as a reservist.

For more information see Melanie's website at www.melanie-hudson.co.uk/

Breakfast supplied to Cawsand pupils

BREAKFAST for 120? No problem – not for a Royal Navy chef, anyway.

But this was not the start of a new day on board one of Her Majesty's ships.

For four junior chefs on the final day of training, their remit was to give 120 children, staff and guests at Furlanend Community Primary School at Cawsand a flying start to the day.

A team of five from the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS) at HMS Raleigh visited the Cornish school as part of Farmhouse Breakfast Week, which promotes the benefits of a healthy breakfast and local produce.

Led by LCh Gavin Davies-English, an instructor at DMLS, the team started work at 7am to serve up a full breakfast of sausage, bacon, scrambled egg and toast in time for the children's arrival around 9am.

Ch Louise Shepherd said: "There is nothing like the smell of fresh bacon in the morning, especially when you're hungry."

"Breakfast is one of the easier meals we've been taught to produce during our training."

"The worst thing about it is the early start, but after ten months in the Navy I'm used to that now."

Seeing the clean plates and lots of smiling faces, LCh Davies-English was pleased with the team.

"They worked really well together and everything was ready on time."

"Basically each one put into practice all that we have taught them over the past 27 weeks, ensuring that the children had a balanced breakfast, cooked in the healthiest possible way, to promote the importance of a good meal to start the day."

The event was organised by Class Cremyll teacher Leisha Chapman, who said: "Considering we had so many children to feed in such a small place I think the breakfast went extremely well."

"Some children went up for seconds and even thirds."

"We are really grateful for all the free donations, which I know in today's climate is really hard for companies to do."

The school day ended with the teacher talking to the children about their learning and whether they think that having a healthy breakfast is beneficial."



● Naval chefs Louise Shepherd and Robert Mallon with Jenna, Peter and Josh

The school day ended with the teacher talking to the children about their learning and whether they think that having a healthy breakfast is beneficial."

The four junior Navy chefs are now ready for sea.

Lt Cdr Simon Hallett, Chief of Staff at DMLS, said: "Royal Navy chefs are trained to adapt to unfamiliar environments ranging from a well-equipped kitchen, such as the facilities here at the school, to a disaster-relief situation on board a deployed warship, where they may have to improvise in far more demanding conditions."

Produce for the breakfast was supplied free of charge by Westaways Sausages, Tregagles, Trewithen Dairy, Barnecutts Bakery, Helen Davy, Paddy Knott and Cornish Orchards.

The annual breakfast week is organised by a division of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, an independent body set up to help make British agriculture more competitive by providing research, marketing and such activities on behalf of farmers and growers.

Road safety honour for Roger

A MEMBER of Corporate Services at the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton has been given a prestigious award by the Institute of Advanced Motorcyclists.

Roger Carson (pictured right, holding his award, with his bike at the museum) has been a keen member of the Institute for the past dozen years, during which time he has taught hundreds of motorcyclists the finer techniques of safe driving.

"My mission is to make motorcyclists appreciate their own vulnerability and anticipate the danger and potential consequences caused by other, less-aware motorists," said Roger.

He was awarded the Chairman's Award for the South West region of the Institute for his "significant contribution to the running of the Institute's social events and tuition programmes."



Navy theatre in the limelight



● From left: Emma Heath, Bex Hannigan, Randy Vince, Jane Blatch-Gainey and Lt Cdr Philippa Sargent

ROYAL Navy thespians featured amongst the winners at the Southern Daily Echo Curtain Call Awards – the Olivier awards of the South Coast.

The glittering annual ceremony, held at the De Vere Grand Harbour Hotel in Southampton, was attended by over 400 amateur actors and production teams, including nearly 40 members of the RN Theatre Association.

Nominated in four categories, members from the Admirals' Players (Whale Island), Collingwood RSC and HMS Sultan Theatre Group were delighted to see Randy Vince and Jane Blatch-Gainey win Best Supporting Actor and Actress in a Shakespeare Production for their respective performances in last summer's *Much Ado About Nothing* performed in Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard

alongside HMS Victory.

Bex Hannigan (Director) collected the Best Pantomime Award for Collingwood RSC's 2011 version of *Cinderella* in which Jane Blatch-Gainey and Emma Heath were both nominated for Best Pantomime Performance, with Jane coming away with her second award of the night.

The final nomination was for Lt Cdr Philippa Sargent, who directed *Much Ado About Nothing*, who took runner-up spot.

Cdr Julian Philo, Chairman of the RNTA, said "It was an amazing evening and I was delighted to see so many of our talented actors and actresses triumphing at such a prestigious event." Anyone interested in joining the RNTA should email rntheatreassociation@gmail.com to be put in touch with their nearest group.

EARLY.

Early's good.
Early bird. He catches the worm.
Early warning. Ensures Ginger and Algie can down the beastly Hun.

Early Renaissance. Gave us van Eyck and Donatello.

And early homecomings. Well, they're just peachy.

Two months sooner than expected, the green berets of Delta Company, 40 Commando, arrived back at Norton Manor near Taunton – their mission done.

Patrol Base Clifton – their home for four months over the autumn and winter of 2012-13 – is now Camp Eagle, in the hands of the Afghan National Army.

With the Delta Company standard lowered and the Afghan banner raised, it was into the back of a Chinook...

...then wait at check-in at Camp Bastion...

...then into the back of an RAF C17...

...then a 3,500-mile flight...

...then off the C17 at Brize Norton...

...then a two-hour bus journey to Somerset.

If the green berets were a tad excited on that long and rather rigmarolic journey, the mood at Norton Manor was positively electric.

Sisters Aliyah and Grace Plummer, aged ten and four respectively, donned matching pink hooded tops, emblazoned with the words: My daddy, my hero.

'Hero' – L/Cpl Grant Plummer, from Bury, Manchester – stepped off the bus and promptly swept his girls up into his arms.

"It's brilliant to have such a great welcome from my family," he said. "These two are even more beautiful than when I left."

"I am very pleased to be back after a constructive period in Afghan."

Their dad was also met by his mother Mandy and fiancée Samantha Chadwick, with whom he'll shortly be tying the knot in Cyprus.

"We're all very pleased he is back safe and sound. When Bastion was attacked last year when he'd only just got out there I was all stressed," said Samantha. "But it's been very calm and he's been very good at keeping contact. We're all looking forward to family time together."

Mne Sam Bramwell, 24, of Birkenhead, Liverpool, was greeted by ecstatic wife Laura and their daughter Esme, aged seven months, as he stepped off his bus at Norton Manor Camp.

Sam, a machine-gunner, said: "It is great to be back and see Laura and Esme again. It's especially good to see Esme – she was only two months old when I left and has grown so much. I'm looking forward to catching up with her growing."

He said the tour had been calmer than expected – but successful – and he had kept in touch with his family while in Afghanistan: "In contrast to previous Herricks this was quieter in terms of kinetic activity. But we were in an enabling role to help the Afghan forces take responsibility."

Laura, a health and safety worker, said: "It has been hard with Esme, but she is lovely. She is only young but has already been in hospital twice with illnesses, which has been very stressful. Now it is time for Sam to have the sleepless nights!"

Delta's Sgt Chris Foster, 31, said the tour of duty

at Clifton had been enjoyable – and different from previous spells in Helmand. "For a start it has been a lot less kinetic, a lot less action but as I've been here so many times now it's good to see it coming to an end and it's in a position where I feel that we have done something. It's less 'us' and more 'them', and everything is less kinetic, so I feel we've had an impact and something has been achieved."

Delta's mission since arriving in theatre in the autumn was to train and mentor Afghan National Security Forces in preparation for the handover of the region to the Afghans.

"We're leaving now because we always said that when the Afghans were good enough to take ownership for lead security responsibility that we would go," said Lt Col Matt Jackson, 40 Commando's Commanding Officer.

"They are good enough and we're going."

He and his men presented Camp Eagle to Col Ab-Azim-Safi, a senior corps commander in the Afghan National Army.

"We had a good relationship with the British forces in Helmand. We conducted many operations together, but we are happy they are going back to their families and back home," said the Afghan colonel.

"If we have the right support our Army is capable of providing security. We are working to support our soldiers wherever they are based in this province and elsewhere. So we are optimistic and we are hopeful that we are going to have more success."

Although Delta's mission at Clifton/Camp Eagle is done, their fellow Norton Manor marines remain in the theatre.

And they too are taking huge strides with the



At the going do



ghan forces they're mentoring. Such as 3rd Kandak (battalion) 215 Brigade Afghan National Army in Nahr-e Saraj. The unit now has its first 27 reconnaissance troops and tanks to four weeks of tutelage of 40 Commando. The newly-qualified recce forces – known as 'warriors' – can now carry out vital information gathering missions, crucial to providing security for International Security Assistance Force troops to withdraw from a combat role next year. Cpl Pete Evans, from Aintree, Liverpool, led a team of seven marines instructing the Afghan soldiers in infantry skills and map reading. "A lot of the warriors are illiterate so the map reading was about getting them used to seeing maps," he explained. "By the end of our week most were able to plot and give a six-figure grid reference with some even giving eight-figure references, which is very impressive." For many in 40 Commando Reconnaissance Troop this was a new and challenging task. Most of the mentors were relatively junior green berets, exposed to a teaching role for the first time. Their depth of knowledge impressed their Afghan students, many of whom thought their instructors were sergeants such as their professionalism and bearing. "This was quite an interesting assignment for us as operational marines with very little mentoring experience," said Mne Lee Howell from Westonsuper-Mare. "The warriors on the course were all keen to learn. For us, this was an opportunity to consolidate everything we have learnt and to pass on those skills." The Afghan soldiers on the course were hand-

picked for recce training having passed out of basic training 18 months previously. Working alongside the commandos were the ANA's own instructors; an intelligence officer taught intelligence and evidence collection, while a search team advised on how to deal with home-made bombs, and mechanics provided basic vehicle maintenance instruction. "They are starting to teach themselves which is a really positive development and one that means they can progress in the future," Cpl Evans added. Each marine instructor was presented with an Afghan 'kholay' hat and a scarf from their Afghan colleagues. The recce unit wasn't the only Afghan force to pass out after completing training under RM guidance. The Royals at HMS Price – the headquarters of 40 Commando's operation in the Nahr-e Saraj district – have also been helping training 'Explosive Hazard Reduction' experts. These experts – drawn from both the Afghan National Army and Afghan Uniform Police – will find and destroy improvised explosive devices throughout Nahr-e Saraj. "We teach them how to use search equipment and ground sign awareness," explained Sgt Kev Clark, an ISAF instructor from the Army's 11 EOD Regiment. "For guys that are in the main illiterate they picked up the procedures extremely well, they ask a lot of good questions." The soldier is part of the mix of forces in 40 Commando's battlegroup, now comprising five RM companies – Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Command and Logistics – plus a company of Gurkhas, and

an armoured infantry company, including a troop of Leopard 2 tanks from the Danish Jutland Dragoon Regiment (Viking Company). To sustain such an operation requires a huge – and daily – logistical effort. Come the end of January, 40's Immediate Replenishment Group completed its 150th mission delivering supplies and men to far-flung forward bases across the Nahr-e Saraj district. The group – a mix of Royal Marines and soldiers – is the busiest call sign in the entire district, on the 'roads' – or rather desert tracks – daily in support of 40 Commando on Operation Herrick 17. From September to the end of January, the group delivered 2,180 tonnes of stores (that's more than the weight of patrol ship HMS Clyde) and transported over 350 troops safely to their destinations (that's equivalent to a full Airbus 330 passenger jet). Preparation for a patrol starts the night before with Company making any last-minute changes to the next day's load. The number of vehicles deployed will vary according to the location being visited and what stores are being delivered. Then on the morning of departure any passengers are rounded up to join the column. Once loaded, the vehicles depart, leapfrogging from patrol base to patrol base, delivering kit to one or collecting personnel from another. On return the vehicles either prepare for another afternoon patrol or for the next day's mission. Despite their familiarity with the landscape, the men in the group – ten Royal Marines, ten soldiers from the Royal Logistic Corps and a Gurkha from the Royal Gurkha Rifles – are always mindful of the threat posed by Improvised Explosive Devices

and the dangers of travelling on poor roads in inhospitable terrain. "We are definitely the busiest call sign in the Nahr-e Saraj Area of Operation. We are out most days – often six out of seven – which makes the tour go really fast," said Cpl Tom Allen of the Royal Logistics Corps. "Everyone in the area of operations appreciates the work of the IRG – especially as we bring them mail." Mne Conor Bohan added: "On one occasion one of our wagons got stuck in a wadi – we had to jump into waist deep water to hook up a line and drag the vehicle out – all the while there was a very real threat warning for that immediate area." 40 Commando Battle Group Logistics Officer, Maj Paul Barden RM, who commands the IRG, said: "Logistics remain an important aspect of any campaign, more so as the redeployment of UK forces draws near. "Now that Afghan National Security Forces are good enough, we can focus on being there to support them if required, whilst the group continues to sustain our own forces. "The focus on re-shaping the ISAF footprint during this deployment has been a marked change to any previous 40 Commando tour, but this is what successful transition looks like." 40 Commando – serving in Task Force Helmand under the British Army's 4th Mechanised Brigade – are the last major Royal Marines unit to deploy to Afghanistan after a dozen years of conflict. The green berets remaining in theatre are due to join their Delta Company comrades back home in Blighty next month.

Down of the sun...



pictures: la(photos) rhy's o'leary, 40 cdo, caroline davies, rnas yeovilton, and cpl jamie peters rlc

Careless research spoils programmes

WITH reference to the letter from Andy Field ('Hood' footage made me fume, February letters) I couldn't agree more, and spotted most of the same inaccuracies as he did in the programme on Channel 4.

In addition I did not feel that it threw any more light as to how HMS Hood met her tragic end.

Recently BBC *Look North* from Newcastle-on-Tyne featured an item regarding destroyer operations in the North Sea by the Royal Navy in World War 1.

However, the footage shown depicted German torpedo boats and destroyers.

I telephoned to point out the error and how perhaps it was an insult to the brave Royal Navy sailors.

I was told that they had requested the footage from central records and that was what had been supplied.

With the centenary of the start of World War 1 next year, no doubt there will be further examples of incorrect images.

Ones regularly used to depict the Battle of Jutland are the aerial bombing tests carried out in the USA in 1921 by General 'Billy' Mitchell – the surrendered German battleship *Ostriesland* and cruiser *Frankfurt* are shown being bombed and subsequently sinking off Cape Henry, USA, *Ostriesland* having the dubious distinction of being the first battleship sunk by aerial bombing.

When one sees the care taken by commercial film makers to supply accurate computer generated images (examples being *Titanic* in 1997 and the recent TV movie regarding the sinking of the Cunard liner *Laconia* by

U156 in 1942), I wonder why the same care can not be taken by documentary makers in the selection of relevant images/film to accompany their programmes.

Looking forward to reading other views on the subject in *Navy News*.

– Ian Richardson
High Shincliffe, Durham

... Having been a regular reader of *Navy News* for many years, I have to agree with Andy Field 100 per cent.

I never served in the Senior Service myself, but I am the son of a rating, who served on board the Royal Sovereign before World War 2.

For over 50 years I have been a railwayman and, like Andy, fume when footage is shown on TV with the wrong clip.

He is so right – why do these programme-makers grab the first can off the shelf and think it will do?

Sailors travelling to Plymouth or Portsmouth always end up with a London, Midland and Scottish engine, which travels to the North.

Like Andy comments, the programme is now ruined for me.

– Peter Griffiths
Salisbury, Wilts

... Like your correspondent Andy Field, I too was disappointed at the Channel 4 documentary *When Bismarck sank HMS Hood*.

There seemed to be a lot of discussion as to whether HMS Hood was turning or not; yet I had assumed this for many years having seen the film *Sink The Bismarck* many decades ago.

– Timothy Smith
Chippenhams, Wiltshire



Gunnery echoes down the decades

I WISH to comment on Vic Everest's article in last month's issue of *Navy News*.

I joined my first ship, HMS *Undine*, an anti-submarine frigate of the 6th Frigate Squadron, in Malta in 1956, which at that time was on Cyprus patrol doing boardings of vessels to stop arms being smuggled into the island.

On return from one of these patrols to Grand Harbour at around 0200 we tied up to a buoy behind a darkened destroyer.

At around 0400 we were awakened by our action stations bells and were told to quickly cast off from the buoy and headed out to sea at a higher speed than usual.

Having cleared the harbour our captain came onto the broadcast system and told us that the destroyer we had tied up behind was an Egyptian destroyer; he also told us that the Suez Canal was closed and the conflict was in process.

We chased the destroyer for some days with instructions to detain/destroy, but she was lost up among the Greek islands.

The ship was then told to A/S sweep across the area of the Marmara Denzi for suspect Russian submarines, then join up with the

Fleet en route to Suez and continue A/S sweeps of the Fleet with the rest of the squadron.

On arrival at Suez, hostilities broke out and one of the ships to 'open up' was the French battleship *Jean Bart* with her 15in guns.

At that precise moment we were directly behind her and I was part of the watch on deck. The whole area lit up and the noise was terrific, which made our ears ring on the upper deck – as has been mentioned, there were no ear protectors then.

After the conflict we had a target shoot of our own, again without ear protection.

I was designated 'spotter' for the 4in aboard and sat on the back of the director, during which time the director/gun traversed onto the starboard beam and fired!

No one had noticed that this brought me within feet of the twin barrels when it fired ... For the next six weeks I was stone deaf and on excused duties.

From that time on I was a member of the Tinnitus Club and all of the uncomfortable attributes of it.

– Christopher Roddis
Ex L/S Gunner/Diver

... I refer to the article in the February issue by Vic Everest on Naval fire in the '50s.

I can assure him that anti-flash gear (*Hood & Gloves*) was provided in the 1950s.

I also wonder what C-class destroyers he served in, as they all had 4.5in MkVs, not 4.7in as he claims.

I served on two of the class myself, plus the fact I have an excellent book called *C Class Destroyers* by Cdr David Hobbs, which confirms my statement.

Perhaps the GI on HMS *Manxman* – that's if they carried one – did not issue it out.

– Ken Satterthwaite (Ex CGI)
Kings Langley, Herts.

... REGARDING Vic Everest's letter about Naval gunfire in the 1950s (*February letters*).

I was captain of the only 'all-cooks twin 4in gun's crew' in the Navy on board HMS *Belfast* in 1960.

Nothing changed – No 8s the dress and no anti-flash clothing or ear protectors; although as can be seen in the photograph above, we were given helmets.

– Doug Morris, PO Ck
Sandy, Beds

Size is important...

ON page 6 of the February issue of *Navy News* is a report of the new handgun to be issued to HM Forces, a 9mm Glock.

In the article on the same page about 847 NAS replacing their Lynx with Wildcats and getting new bigger guns on this model, you said that they were replacing their 7.62mm with a .5in!

For goodness' sake, for comparative purposes call it what it really is – a 12.7mm heavy machine gun.

It's not hard; the UK Armed Forces use 5.56mm, 7.62mm, 9mm, 12.7mm.

Saying .5in is so American, and the last time I looked in my passport I'm still British as are most of your readers.

Metric only please.

– J H Fairlamb
Berwick upon Tweed



● HM Y Britannia on a later visit to Grand Harbour, Malta

Impressive manoeuvre in Grand Harbour

TWO pieces for your Comment page arising from previous correspondence on the Royal Navy's presence in Malta.

I lined the quay of Grand Harbour for the arrival of the Royal Yacht *Britannia* in 1954 followed by three cruisers in line astern.

These sailed past *Britannia* in salute to the Queen before slowing to a halt in line; they then executed in unison a 180-degree rotation to face back down Grand Harbour before anchoring.

A really impressive display of controlled seamanship to the awe of the watching thousands.

The second piece is more informal naval news from 1954 Malta which I hope will be remembered.

The Methodist church in Floriana used to run a social

evening after the service on Sunday evenings, for which a large Naval presence gathered.

The Minister always started the evenings proceedings with news announcements, and on one occasion he brought the house down by announcing "HMS *Forth* has sailed..." – the submarine squadron depot ship never sailed anywhere.

There was a gap of astonishment from the large congregation, thinking some disaster had occurred.

When this died down he completed his announcement with "...to Grand Harbour" (from its berth at Manoel Island).

The congregation roared with laughter for some minutes.

– Peter R Alp
Kegworth, Derby

Will they keep the red flag flying?

IN MAY this year, the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic will be marked in London, Londonderry and Liverpool.

The battle lasted nearly six years but the tide turned in favour of the Allies in May 1943.

A significant feature of the Battle of the Atlantic was the convoy, protected by warship escorts, and sometimes aircraft, against U-boats and surface raiders.

From 1943, the Atlantic Ocean afforded safer passage for the vast amount of shipping that brought men and supplies for the invasions of occupied Europe.

Central to the Battle of the Atlantic were the ships and men of the British Merchant Navy, and of other Allied nations, often making no more than eight knots in convoy, bringing essential food and supplies to our islands.

Some 5,000 merchant ships,

and more than 30,000 British merchant seamen, were lost.

Our nation rightly salutes the Armed Forces' contribution to victory.

Rather less is made of the hugely important contribution of the Merchant Navy – its part in our economy is still significant today, with over 90 per cent of our trade carried in ships.

Battle of the Atlantic 70 affords an opportunity for the United Kingdom to salute the Merchant Navy and its seafarers – and I trust we will see the Red Ensign, the flag of British merchant ships since 1674, flown from public buildings.

Some may see red at the thought of a flag of that colour flying in May but the Red Duster, close up on town hall flagpoles, will surely be above all that.

– Lester May (Lt Cdr Rtd)
Camden Town, London



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: Lt Cdr Lester May (Rtd).

A marquee profession

I READ with interest *Squatters take over Sail Loft* in February's *Navy News* (page 44).

I was the baby of the last class to be trained as a Sailmaker in the loft above the gym in what was then HMS *Victory* in 1961.

There were five of us ABs undertaking our first year of formal instruction – on weekdays we learned geometry, measuring and design as well as cutting out and sewing, which was all done by hand with palm and needle.

Summer weekends were taken up with erecting and rigging marquees for naval charities and events in local naval establishments.

How we could have done with

the muscle bosuns who now use the loft to carry up our 54ft by 24ft sodden wet Pusser's Canvas Marquees and hoist them into the roof to dry out after a rainy Saturday or Sunday.

I am still punching holes in canvas over 50 years later in my own business, so I think I have the last laugh on the Tiffs and GIs who called us sea-going seamstresses.

You know what they say – 'Marine Engineers to thousandth, Chippies to the nearest sixteenth and the Sailmaker to the nearest foot and he will stretch or shrink it to size' – ha, ha!

– Alastair J C Duncan (Ex CSLMKR – Chief Sailmaker)



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The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD

CLASSIC JACK

BY TUGG

...IT WAS 'ER VOICE THAT TURNED ME ON - ONLY A FEW WORDS AN' I WAS HOOKED! - I COULD 'AVE LISTENED FOR EVER!

WHAT DID SHE SAY?



ALL OF OUR AGENTS ARE BUSY RIGHT NOW - PLEASE HOLD.....



● HMS Sheffield, believed to be in her revised camouflage scheme after her 1942 refit

Exercise Strikeback was memorable (and rough)

Your article on the 'Shiny Sheffield' (February page 12) brought back so many happy memories and I am sure you must agree the Town-class cruisers looked the part unlike these ugly monsters of today's navy.

I was a Leading Signaller in Sheffield when the photograph was taken, as you say, probably during Exercise Strikeback during which (if my memory is correct), there were 480 ships and submarines participating.

Sheffield was stationed far above the Arctic Circle where we experienced the most constant and wonderful display of the Aurora Borealis which covered the heavens.

This was followed by one of

the most violent storms I ever encountered in my life at sea and I would be so bold to say was equally as bad as the one the Sheffield encountered during her Russian convoy days.

When we plunged into a trough we disappeared from sight and the spray from the next roller bearing down on us appeared as if a mesh curtain had been drawn across the sky.

Then we clawed and climbed our way to the top of the next wave and on reaching the summit the screeching of the wind was deafening.

And so it went on for four days. The sight of the RAS group was something to behold with the convoy of supply vessels

stretching as far as the eye could see in all directions, and with the destroyer escorts sweeping down between the columns in a submarine search (Operation Beetroot) it left an image I will never forget.

Sheffield was indeed a fine ship and we were all proud of her.

We were 'Cock' of the Home Fleet and then went on to achieve the same accolade with the Mediterranean fleet as flagship for FOF and FO2 Med.

It was a sad day on our return home to Portsmouth to pay her off to reserve, but then, she truly deserved the rest.

- Ron Blanchard (ex-Chief Yeoman)
Burntisland, Fife

Mysterious medal There must be more than that...

MY FATHER served in the RN from 1939 to 1951 when he transferred to the Royal New Zealand Navy and where he served till 1961.

When he passed on, in his effects, among his many rowing, boxing and sporting medals, was a medal inscribed 'Portsmouth Flotilla 1948 Bumping Circle Winner' (pictured).

Can anyone enlighten me as to what this competition was/is?

I have asked museums and other sources but no-one seems to know. My best guess is an inter-mess competition.

- Derek Priscott
New Zealand



I HAVE been reading the *Navy News* for over 30 years and have watched the once great Royal Navy, once the largest Navy in the world, serving the largest Empire ever known, become what it is today.

I am 90 years old and thought the *Navy News* was representing old and present navy personnel, but lately the letters printed are pathetic.

I've written some about sea and ships but the rum winners are about RN people fraternizing with the 'Brylcream Boys' - very interesting.

Then we have the sailors getting up early to collect mushrooms from the surrounding fields, followed by one boasting that he had never been issued with ear-plugs or anti-flash gear.

Has the Service become so boring that these petty happenings 'made their day'?

- Tom 'Happy' Day
Parkstone, Poole

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.





Last Blue Mariner mourned

THE Royal Navy has lost its last link with a hugely-popular wartime band who not only entertained the Senior Service but also the nation.

Trombonist Ron Clitheroe, who died a month short of his 102nd birthday, is believed to be the last member of the **Blue Mariners**, an eight-strong swing band who performed through most of World War 2, and also during the first months after hostilities ended, entertaining troops in occupied Germany.

Mr Clitheroe had tried to join the Royal Marines Band Service but apparently didn't meet their physical requirements.

Instead he served with 'Harry Tate's Navy' - the Royal Naval Patrol Service, which used converted trawlers and other small vessels as minesweepers and coastal patrol craft.

Their base, HMS Europa in Lowestoft - better known as the Sparrows' Nest - also had a reputation as a centre for music and entertainment, and early in the war some of the best pre-war musicians in the Commonwealth formed what became the official band of the RNPS: the Blue Mariners.

Thanks to the quality of its musicians, the Blue Mariners quickly picked up a reputation, performing regularly on the BBC, in London theatres and recording for record labels such as Decca.

Seven decades later, some of their recordings can still be found on iTunes and Amazon in digital format.

When other duties allowed, Mr Clitheroe was a regular performer with the Blue Mariners alongside saxophonist Freddy Gardner, regarded as one of Britain's leading jazz and dance band musicians in the '30s and '40s.

After leaving the Navy, Mr Clitheroe, who died in Prestwich, Manchester, resumed his pre-war career as a professional musician, and played in a backing band for Frank Sinatra. In later life he became an insurance agent.

Quickmatch group marks anniversary

IN 1938 Britain looked to new destroyer requirements for the Royal Navy, writes S/M Bryan Burdett, president of the **Ex-HMAS Quickmatch Association**.

These ships evolved into the O-to Z-classes, of which the Q-class became the Third Emergency Flotilla.

Each class consisted of eight ships.

In 1941 Australia was given an offer to man five of the N-class, which they did.

It was also suggested that they man three of the M-class, but due to them not being fully completed it was proposed that they man three Q-class - Quiberon, Quickmatch and Quality.

Lack of personnel meant that only two were manned by the Royal Australian Navy.

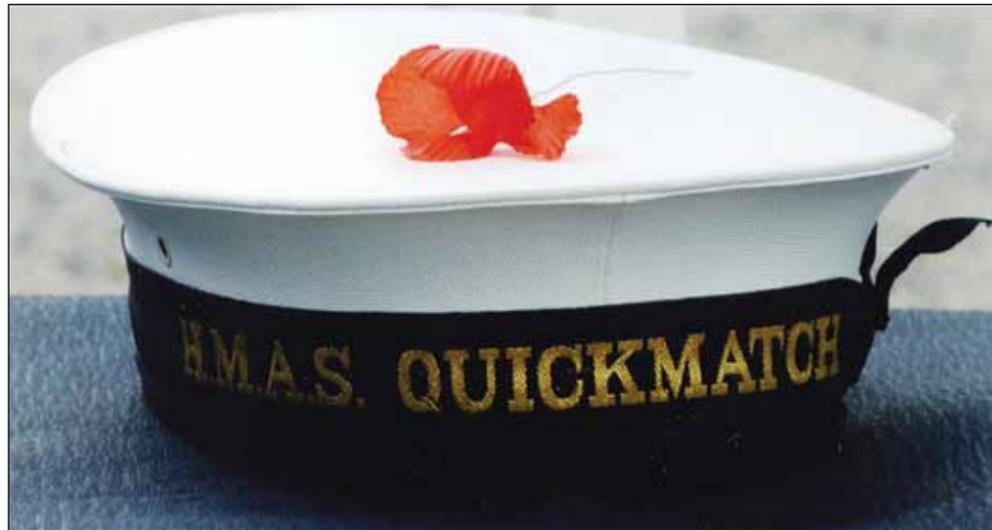
Quickmatch was crewed from two drafts, mostly 17- to 20-year-olds who sailed from Australia in March 1942, and also from RAN personnel already serving in the Royal Navy.

At 11am on a sunny and warm morning in September 1942 the White Ensign was struck and she was commissioned.

HMAS Quickmatch was adopted by the people of the borough of St Pancras during Warship Week in March 1942, and a sum of over £100,000 was donated towards her construction costs of over £400,000.

The ship was also adopted by the Crusaders of St Ursula's Convent School in Greenwich and, upon commissioning, sailors received from the girls many letters, parcels and books for the ship's library.

Many men formed a close relationship with the girls as pen-pals, and we received, last year, a very lovely letter from one of the girls reminiscing about



'her' sailor - S/M Percy Mann, who sadly passed away in the 1960s, although the letter was answered by S/M Mick Given, who remembered him.

Quickmatch and Quiberon were built by J S White at Cowes on the Isle of Wight, and both saw service, with distinction, in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Indian and Pacific Oceans.

After the war Australia returned the N-class ships in exchange for three Q-class vessels - Quadrant, Queenborough and Quality. The remaining Q, Quilliam, was transferred to the Royal Dutch Navy.

In 1951 four Australian Qs were converted to Type 15 anti-submarine frigates - Quickmatch, Quiberon, Quadrant and Queenborough. Quality, because of hull deterioration, was not converted.

All served from 1955-72 on the

Far East station with the SEATO and FESR fleets.

Quickmatch served five tours of duty before being decommissioned in 1963, having steamed more than 500,000 miles - the equivalent of more than 20 times round the world.

She was sold for scrap in 1972.

In September last year a major commemoration and reunion was held at the Waverley RSL in Melbourne, Australia, to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the commissioning of the Qs.

It was attended by more than 100 ex-destroyer and frigate crew members, with some representatives of other Q crews.

A march to the local cenotaph behind a full Navy band through the shopping centre paused to allow some of the older members to join in with their walkers and sticks.

A commemoration service by

a Navy chaplain and a wreath-laying ceremony on behalf of all eight Q ships, St Pancras (now Camden council) and St Ursula's was followed by the *Last Post* and the laying of poppies for the fallen.

Letters of acknowledgement and congratulations to the Ex-HMAS Quickmatch Association were received from the UK MOD, the Chief of the Royal Australian Navy, the Premier of Victoria State and the Naval Association of Australia, amongst others.



Gesture of appreciation

IN the September 2011 edition of *Navy News* we printed a story about a wreath-laying ceremony carried out from the cruise liner MS Boudicca off Malta.

Douglas Banks, Chairman of the **HMS Indomitable Association**, was aboard Fred Olsen ship Boudicca on a cruise which included Valletta - a port with particular links to the wartime aircraft carrier.

Indomitable was part of Operation Pedestal, to lift the Axis siege of Malta in 1942, and 11 years later, as she approached Grand Harbour, there was a fuel explosion that swept through four decks, killing and badly burning members of the crew and all but ending the ship's active service.

A request by Douglas to the captain of the cruise liner for a simple memorial ceremony garnered such interest that hundreds of crew and passengers attended.

Douglas took another cruise on Boudicca last October, and presented a plaque of Indomitable's ship's badge (above) to the liner's captain, as well as a brass plaque saying the association wished the liner, her captain, crew and passengers "smooth seas and a fair wind and a safe harbour."



● Dennis Miller picks out his twin brother George's name on a memorial board in the new Band Service Memorial Room at the Royal Marines School of Music in Portsmouth

Memorial honours military musicians

A new memorial to Royal Marines musicians killed in the two world wars has been opened in Portsmouth.

The **Band Service Memorial Room** at the Royal Marines School of Music lists the 448 musicians lost during the two conflicts.

Special guest at the ceremony was Dennis Miller, of Portsmouth, whose twin brother George was killed in 1941 while serving as a Boy Bugler in HMS Barham.

The battleship was torpedoed in the Mediterranean and sank with the loss of 841 lives.

Dennis had also applied to join the Royal Marines as a bugler but was turned down as he had a gap in his teeth, which meant he was unable to play.

Had he been accepted it was likely he would have served alongside his brother in Barham.

"I think about George often and wonder what kind of life he would have had," said Dennis.

"So being invited to the opening of the memorial room has been an absolute privilege - it has been beyond my expectations."

Maj Jason Burcham, Director of Music (Training) at the school, said: "The Memorial Room is a living commemoration to those musicians and buglers who made the ultimate sacrifice."

"It is a place for us to remember with pride the achievements of our forbears and current comrades in all aspects of their operational and ceremonial roles and endeavour to live up to their example."

Drummers and buglers at the school displayed their talents on the parade ground before the room was officially opened.

Previously the boards honouring the Marines were displayed across different sites at the school and Band Service HQ but the new room brings them under one roof for the first time.

Were you at the 'college of knowledge'?

WERE you at the 'college of knowledge on the hill' at Rosyth?

If so, you may be interested in joining the OCAAA - the **Old Caledonia Artificer Apprentices' Association**.

"Old, well yes - some members are, but not all, and age is a number, not a description," said S/M Mike Ketley, chairman of the OCAAA.

"The word 'artificer' may have all but disappeared from Naval parlance - 'technician' is now the favoured terminology - but there are many who are proud to have served as 'Tiffies'."

"HMS Caledonia, the 'college of knowledge' on the hill overlooking Rosyth Dockyard, trained Royal Navy Artificers from 1937 until 1985, when the role was assumed by HMS Sultan in Gosport.

"Caledonia began life as the



● HMS Caledonia 1937-39, painted for the OCAAA by Bob Walker - the picture now hangs in the wardroom of MOD Caledonia in Rosyth

former SS Majestic, moored in Rosyth 1937-39, before transferring to the newly-built shore establishment of the same name in 1940, via temporary

accommodation in Rosyth.

"Now a MOD establishment, Caledonia is the headquarters of the Naval Regional Commander.

"The OCAAA was formed in

1982 with the aim of fostering friendship and comradeship between Caledonia-trained artificers with a common bond of training, experience and service in the Royal Navy.

"The link is maintained in a newsletter, published two or three times each year and sent to all members, and through a biennial reunion for members and partners, which takes place in different locations over a weekend and includes a dinner-dance, local excursions and the annual general meeting.

"Although artificer training at HMS Caledonia ceased 28 years ago, OCAAA still attracts new members and will continue to exist for many years to come.

"Life membership of the association costs just £25, with no annual subscription."

Anyone interested in joining should visit www.oaaaa.org or contact sec.oaaaa@yahoo.co.uk

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



Builder selected for MTB

THE project to create a working replica of a wartime motor torpedo boat has taken another step forward.

Project MTB 718 aims to build and operate a full-scale Fairmile D MTB, based on MTB 718, as built by Alex Robertson in Scotland in March 1944.

The boat would be classed as an 'operational replica' – an accurate rendition of the original, but with modern adaptations to meet current safety regulations, and could be the first of an 'operational memorial squadron', using members of her wartime crew to tell the story of the cloak-and-dagger missions carried out by the 15th Motor Gunboat Flotilla between 1943 and 1945.

S/M Malcolm Tattersall, the man behind the project, said that R Cann and Son Ltd of Totnes has been selected as the approved shipbuilder.

Once funding is in place and contracts signed the project should guarantee around £3m of work and provide jobs for eight time-served shipwrights and two apprentices.

The boat will be built using Scottish larch, re-establishing a link with Scotland and the people of Shetland.

Not only did the original boat ferry agents, ammunition and mail in the night across the Channel, collecting agents, shot-down airmen and escapees and other fugitives, but she also fulfilled a similar role across the North Sea, helping the so-called Shetland Bus team which used fishing boats to link Shetland and occupied Norway.

While supporting Allied saboteurs and French Resistance personnel in the struggle to liberate occupied Europe, one of MTB 718's 'passengers' was future French President François Mitterrand.

Donations are still needed to secure the future of the project – cheques can be made out to 'The Federation of Naval Associations Project 718' and sent to Mr Tattersall at 39 Fairfield, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 6JB.

Naval associations join forces as CONA

HOW many Naval Associations are there?

Where are the branches? Where are the details of how to join?

The simple answer is that we don't know the answers to any of these questions, writes Capt Paul Quinn, Secretary to the Conference of Naval Associations.

The world of associations can be confusing for serving and retired sailors and marines.

Add in to the mix the fact that the associations mostly work independently, don't share info or use their buying power together.

So, under the sponsorship of the Second Sea Lord, the major associations got together to see if we could develop a register of associations and see if there was mileage in the associations getting together to work more closely.

Well, all that is nine months ago, and the great news is that getting together is such a good idea that the main associations have decided to set up the Conference of Naval Associations, or CONA for short.

Some things were agreed early on:

- 1 This is not about merging, but co-operation – keeping individual identity is vital;
 - 2 We all face the same issues;
 - 3 We need to make it easy to find the right association;
 - 4 We can better share information;
 - 5 We can act as a voice for veterans and for the Royal Navy.
- Talking is all very well, but what have we done so far?
- 1 Almost completed our first go at the register;
 - 2 Set up a Facebook page (please like us);
 - 3 Identified best value suppliers

and passed details around;

1 Extended standard insurance to all who want it;

2 Extended invites to all associations to parade at Whitehall on September 8 – standards very welcome and tot provided – and lay wreaths at the Cenotaph with the RNA. Contact Andy on 023 9272 0782 if you are interested;

3 Cascaded lots of information to CONA members.

What is next, having made a good start?

Firstly, we need to establish a simple website. We have already obtained the domain name www.cona.org.uk

Secondly, we need to open up membership beyond the founding members to anyone who wishes to join.

Thirdly, to use the chance to speak up on Naval Service issues and to support our serving and veteran community.

Fourthly, to negotiate some great benefits – look out for some really good news coming here.

So all Naval Service associations are warmly invited to parade and march at the Biennial Parade, sponsored by the RNA, in Whitehall on Sunday September 8 and for refreshments at the Civil Service Club.

Presidents will be invited to join the review party at the Cenotaph.

Finally, any other Naval association/organisation who would like to join CONA should contact Paul Quinn on paul@royalnavalassoc.com or telephone 023 9272 2983 for further information and a chat.

Alternatively call in at Semaphore Tower.

The founder CONA members are the Association of Wrens, Britannia Association, Federation of Naval Associations, Fleet Air Arm Association, Fleet Air Arm Officers Association, QARNNS Association, Submariners Association, Surface Warfare Officers Association, Royal Fleet Auxiliary Association, Royal Marines Association and the RNA.

The Secretariat can be contacted at: CONA, Room 209, Semaphore Tower, HM Naval Base Portsmouth, Hampshire PO1 3LT, tel 023 9272 0782.

Altmark board is in museum

S/M KEN Satterthwaite, chairman of the HMS Cossack Association, has been in touch following the article in last month's *Navy News* about the Altmark incident.

"In that article you state that the plaque was destroyed after the war," said S/M Ken.

"If you are referring to the two-sided noticeboard, I can assure you that it is still in being.

"One side is in the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth and the other side resides in at the Airborne Museum at Duxford.

"I know this as at our reunion in 2010 we marked the 70th anniversary of the incident as our reunion theme.

"Prior to the reunion I contacted the living relatives of Admiral Vian (then captain of Cossack) and – lo and behold – I was asked by his daughter, Mrs Susan Keates, if I could find a home for the one side of the noticeboard which she had in her possession.

"Apparently this had been presented to her father after the 2nd Airborne had taken it down when they were part of the liberation army in Norway."

S/M Ken contacted the museum in Portsmouth, who were very keen to have such an artefact, and it was presented during the association's reunion weekend.

"As a point of interest, we had as a member the only known living survivor of the prisoners held on Altmark at that time – Noel Bevan, who has sadly crossed the bar," said S/M Ken.

Noel was a young New Zealand merchant navy man on board the Ashlea when the freighter was caught by Graf Spee.

The sailors were ordered from their ship, which was subsequently sunk by explosives, and ten days later they were loaded on board the German raider's supply ship Altmark.

There they remained, in increasingly harsh conditions, for more than three months until the tanker was intercepted by HMS Cossack in Jøssingfjord, on the coast of Norway, and the Allied sailors freed.

The Cossack Association continues to thrive – it has around 200 members, of which a small number served in the World War 2 destroyer – and is always looking for new members. It also boasts a substantial archive.

1 www.hmscossack.org

Thanks to stalwart pair

TWO long-serving committee members stood down at the Shrewsbury branch annual general meeting.

S/M Bill Edwards, who joined the RNA in 1977 and became a member of Shrewsbury branch in 1988, was awarded a certificate of

Life Membership.

He has been branch treasurer for the past ten years, and under Bill's stewardship branch finances have managed to cover all its obligations to the RNA nationally and also allowed the branch to enjoy a wide range of social activities whilst remaining healthily in the black.

S/M Bill was presented with his certificate by chairman S/M John Turner.

S/M Don Hulme, who joined the branch as an associate member in 1999, previously served in the Cheshire Regiment.

He was awarded the RNA Certificate of Appreciation, presented by secretary S/M Les Watkins.

The certificate, the highest award that can be given to an associate member, was for outstanding work as Social Secretary.

Relentless search

AN HMS Relentless Association has been formed, open to anyone who served in the destroyer, which began life as H85 but was later converted to a frigate (F185).

Relatives of anyone meeting that criteria can join as an associate member.

The first official reunion is due to be held on November 30 this year in Chatham, and the new group hopes to contact as many former shipmates as possible.

1 www.hmsrelentless.co.uk



Members of Lee-on-the-Solent and Stubbington branch have elected S/M Neville Saunders as their first Honorary President. Shipmates gathered at Neptune Court along with members of S/M Neville's family and Gosport MP Caroline Dinéage, who presented him with a framed certificate in recognition of his presidency

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our January edition (right) was HMS Shipham, and Mr S Wren, of Waterlooville, wins the £50 prize.

This month's mystery ship (above) was launched in Belfast in July 1944 and completed in the last weeks of the war.

The frigate had a stop-start career, spending years in reserve, and was finally decommissioned in the summer of 1965, going for scrap in early 1970.

One of the highlights of her career saw her spend two days fighting a fire on a tanker loaded with 30,000 tons of crude oil in the Gulf in May 1955.

(1) What was the name of the frigate, and (2) what was the name of the oil tanker she assisted?

We have removed her pennant number from the image. Complete the coupon and send



it to Mystery Picture, *Navy News*, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is April 12. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our May edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

Home fund is boosted

THE president of Harrogate and District branch, S/M John Stray, along with secretary S/M Doug Pointon and branch member S/M Les Hall, visited Lister House, the Royal British Legion residential care home in Ripon, North Yorkshire.

During the visit S/M John presented Life Membership to Les and to S/M Malcolm Sutcliffe, a resident at the home.

Les and Malcolm were founder members of the branch, which was formed 43 years ago, and have held various committee positions.

After such sterling service it was felt they deserved recognition for their loyalty and service to the branch and the Association.

S/M John also presented a cheque for £100 to Lister House matron Sue Bayram, to be put towards the Lister House Amenities Fund.

Lister House has more than 70 beds, and is one of six RBL residential homes which caters exclusively for ex-Service people and their dependants.

Pershore helps local charities

PERSHORE and District branch handed out cheques totalling more than £2,000 during their charities presentation evening.

The recipients for 2012 were:

- 1 Friends of Pershore Hospital (£500);
- 2 Mercian Regimental Charity (£500);
- 3 Throckmorton Chapelry (£250);
- 4 Pershore Volunteer Centre (£250);
- 5 Midlands Air Ambulance (£460);
- 6 1st Pershore Scouts (£200).

The presentation took place at Pershore Naval Social Club and representatives from each of the beneficiaries attended, including special guest Cpl Jeavons from Mercian 2 Regiment, who received the cheque on behalf of the regimental charity.

The cheque was presented by chairman Ted Annis who had raised £130 of it from his and Margaret's



Cpl Jeavons with members of Pershore and District branch

54th wedding anniversary party in August.

The branch had already raised £150 the previous Christmas for the charity which had been sent in, but it was decided to continue fundraising for the 'local heroes'.

There was also a special presentation of £600 to the Pershore Relief in Sickness charity, raised from the sale of *Pershore People & Poems* by Ernie Fuller, a book put

together by Trudy Burge as a tribute to the late Victor John Smith.

When presenting cheques, branch treasurer S/M Terry Brimmell said that a further £300 of the charities money had already been paid out for the purchase of a memorial bench for local campaigner Win Summerton which was formally blessed and dedicated by the RNA Branch Chaplain.

Capital progress for NCHQ

OVER 200 personnel from Navy Command HQ were the first to receive the Financial Military Capability (FINMILCAP) presentation from the Head Office's transformation team headed by Louise Tulett and General Nick Pope.

Based on the Defence Reform report, which focused on the need to strengthen financial capability and performance management – the presentation showed how the Armed Forces will be taking responsibility for the finances and capability.

There will be much greater accountability for performance and costs with increased freedom for Service Heads to flex agreed budgets to achieve the best capability outcomes.

Cdre Chris Richards, ACOS (Warfare) at NCHQ said: "We are delighted to have had the FMCT team down to assist with the 'breakthrough' month where we cease debating possible models and approaches and move towards implementation, establishing the conditions to accept our new responsibilities after April 1 2013.

"This event marks the start of a busy month of Head Office handovers, with the arrival of the Maritime Capability Team from London and individual HQ teams gearing up for managing delivery of several exciting Maritime Programmes."

For those who were not able to attend, a quick summary of FINMILCAP's aims are:

- Placing finance and capability at the heart of decision making;
- Improving financial planning and placing more focus on delivery;
- Focusing on the medium and long term, not just in-year management;
- Making every pound add value to defence;
- Relaying timely and reliable information that reports the past, monitors the current and scopes the future;
- Allowing better decision making, less bureaucracy, clearer outcomes and fewer processes;
- Developing a trained and motivated workforce engaged in delivering the best for Defence;
- Taking decisions that make sense in the future, not just for now;
- Creating effective delegation and empowerment for Commands.

FINMILCAP will involve an intensive planning round once every five years rather than every year to enable strategic planning and more realistic financial assumptions.

It will be the Commands' responsibility to develop their plan and deliver the changes for Defence.

Action in crisis

THE Augmentation, Crisis Manpower and Planning (ACMP) cell within CNPERS delivers prioritised Naval Service (NS) augmentation manpower, in two distinct areas; personnel deployed on current UK and multi-national operations, and augmentee support to a wide range of national, public, UK resilience and ceremonial events and RN exercises.

In times of national crisis (ie national industrial action, natural disasters, state funerals) the ACMP cell will act as the manpower ops room to co-ordinate NS personnel in support of the UK's Standing Joint Commander.

Augmentation to be expected in 2013:

Operational Posts

Despite the drawdown in Afghanistan, there remain a number of interesting and exciting positions available to personnel of all ranks and specialisations both there and in many other far flung corners of the globe. Personnel could be augmented to Bahrain, Tampa, Oman, the UAE, Djibouti, Nigeria and even the Seychelles.

Dual Positions

Even if you are not augmented on an op tour you could still be asked to fulfil a dual position. This means that as well as conducting your day job, you will



Drafty's corner

be at readiness to leave your desk and deploy on an operation to a specified location either in the UK (MOD, PJHQ etc) or overseas. Your Career Manager will notify you if you are in one of these posts.

You and your CO should expect you to conduct two weeks' briefing/training per year, and you may also require theatre specific pre-deployment training, weapons training and kit issue on taking up your assignment. Dual positions are usually at five or ten days' notice to move.

Events and Exercises

It is unlikely that 2013 will

be anything like as busy as 2012 when the Olympics meant that augmentation reached unprecedented levels.

However, there is still a busy event programme throughout this year.

The key UK events are the Battle of Atlantic 70 Celebrations (London, Liverpool and Derry-Londonderry in May), Armed Forces Day (June 29) and the South Coast Proms (July).

The two Exercise Joint Warriors will require augmentation in April and October and Cougar 13 requires significant augmentation support in August.

How to get involved

Personnel are nominated via Career Managers (CM) for these jobs. However, a volunteer is always preferred.

If you would like to know what is available, speak in the first instance to your CM, who may put you in touch with ACMP.

There is a great deal of benefit to be taken from these short-term assignments both professionally and personally and all are encouraged to take these opportunities.

In particular, as the UK makes plans to draw down numbers in Afghanistan, anyone still hoping for an op tour in this theatre has only a limited time remaining and should contact their CM as soon as possible.

E-learning portal for personnel

SOLDIERS, Sailors, Airmen in fact any Service personnel who require generic training in business and management can now make use of Civil Service Learning – both via an e-learning portal and face to face training courses to meet defence requirements for professional and functional training in commercial, finance and project management.

CSL also includes courses on problem solving, mentoring, leadership, motivation, IT (including Excel, Visio and Access) presentation skills and commercial awareness. The CSL portal can be accessed at the following link:

<https://civilservicelearning.civilservice.gov.uk/>

Once registered all CSL e-learning products and online resources are free of charge. Face to face courses can also be booked online at the portal but these do incur a fee on a pay-as-you-go basis. At the time of booking you'll need to have line manager approval and financial authorization for the course from your budget staff.

Details of courses run at the Defence Academy College of Management and Technology can be found through the online prospectus at www.da.mod.uk/prospectus. The defence learning Portal is at www.dip.rmiluk



● Wtr Millington, Std Formes and LWtr Maynard in the newly-furnished 6 Tango Starboard Forward mess

Tango transformed

ENJOYING bright, newly-refurbished surroundings are the ladies of 6 Tango Starboard Forward Mess of HMS Illustrious – one of 38 mess decks to receive a revamp during the carrier's winter alongside in Portsmouth.

After completing her duties with the UK Response Force Task Group in the Mediterranean last autumn, Lusty returned home for a few weeks of maintenance on the Solent.

The ship was also given a £17,000 grant from the RN's Rebalancing Lives Fund to make general improvements to the junior rates' mess decks.

All 38 messes received up to £500 to spend on items to improve their members' quality of life when off duty.

In December and January, after weighing up the options and ensuring they remained within certain criteria (such as fire and safety), the messes were able to buy cushions, pictures, coffee machines and surround-sound systems among a myriad of improvements. Some messes even chose disco lighting and hard drives.

"The improvements were welcomed by everyone in the Mess and they make a big difference to life aboard," said LS Natalie Maw who lives in 6T Port Forward Mess.

"The pictures and cushions are particularly popular as they have brightened up the mess no end."

Money from the Rebalancing Lives initiative is available to all ships in the Fleet.

Lusty is now back at sea training around the UK with the next generation of Merlin helicopters.

BFBS calling...

BFBSTV's bespoke news programme, British Forces News, has launched a free app to bring the top military stories straight to your smartphone.

British Forces News reporters provide coverage from around the world, so the app has the latest updates from the Services.

Head of News Mark Popescu said: "We know how important it is for all the Forces and their families to have the latest news wherever they are. Our new app means you really can have BFBS news at your fingertips."

The British Forces News app is suitable for Android and iPhones and can be downloaded now from the App Store.

BFBS TV's flagship programme, British Forces News is broadcast live every weekday at 18.30 CET on BFBS 1 and in the UK on Information TV at 18.30, on Sky 212 or Freesat 401, and online at www.bfbs.com/news.

Lifelong support for severely injured veterans

A NEW benefit will mean that seriously injured veterans will be guaranteed financial support of around £7,000 a year for life.

In April the MOD and Department of Work and Pensions will introduce the Armed Forces Independence Payment, a brand new benefit for members of the Armed Forces and former members of the Armed Forces who have been seriously injured as a result of their service.

This new benefit, the AFIP, worth £134.40 a week to those eligible, is in addition to the financial support they receive through the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

Minister of State for Defence, Personnel, Welfare and Veterans Mark Francois said: "The men and women of our Armed Forces have served their country with honour and bravery so it is only right that those seriously injured by their service receive financial support to help with the additional costs associated with their injuries.

"So I am delighted that seriously-injured serving personnel and veterans will be able to avoid the unnecessary duplication of reassessments and continue to receive disability benefits via these new arrangements.

"This is part of honouring the Armed Forces Covenant and I look forward to the introduction of the Armed Forces Independence Payment in April."

Work and Pensions Minister Esther McVey said: "A considerable sacrifice is made by a number of courageous members of the Armed Forces who have been injured as a result of their service to the

nation.

"That is why we are simplifying and streamlining the welfare support for the most severely injured veterans when they return to the UK.

"It will help to recognise the unique support needs of veterans."

The Armed Forces Independence Payment will be an alternative to the Personal Independence Payment.

It will be paid by the DWP and distributed to those seriously injured through the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and will not affect any other benefits to which claimants are entitled.

However, those eligible will not be able to also receive Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance.

All eligible Armed Forces personnel and veterans with a Guaranteed Income Payment (GIP) of 50 per cent or higher under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme will receive a letter from the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency and will be invited to apply for the new Armed Forces Independence Payment.

Anyone with a GIP of 50 per cent or higher will have serious injuries.

Once a claim has been made and is successful, the individual will receive the payment for life with payments made by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Specific queries and advice relating to welfare claims should be directed to the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency on 0800 169 2277 or by e-mail: www.veterans-uk.info.

Anyone for tennis?

DREAMING of strawberries and cream and the finely-tended tennis courts of Wimbledon?

At the time of writing, snow quietly flurries past the window but for those keen to be on the spot when Andy Murray (photographed right with Service Stewards) tops his 2012 triumphs to win the Men's singles tournament for the first time since 1936... it is time to get your application in.

For those who can be spared to act as Service stewards at the All England Lawn Tennis Championships you will need to ensure that an authorised absence is made on JPA during the period of Sunday June 23 to Monday July 8 (Sunday 23 is a mandated emergency training day and July 8 is a spare day in case of delays to the schedule). MOD approval has been given for Service support.

Service personnel will be required to commence work, in uniform, from 9.30am each day

until close of play which may be up to 9.30pm although use of the roof on the Centre Court can occasionally lead to later finishes.

However, shift working patterns ensure individuals are not on duty for the whole period. All volunteers will be selected on military character, fitness and appearance.

Service stewards will wear uniform and will be very much on show to the general public so it is essential that they have a good presence and bearing as they are effectively ambassadors for the Service and firmly in the public eye on imagery broadcast around the world.

All applications must be supported by an employing officer's recommendation and submitted in written form, not emailed.

If you are interested check out DIN 01-005 (2013) Those who wish to volunteer must fully



Credit: Neil Tingle / AELTC

complete Annexes A and B of the DIN and submit to BWO, F26, Atlantic Building, HMS

Collingwood, Newgate Lane, Fareham, Hants, PO14 1AS to arrive no later than April 19.

Doctor consults far-flung sailors

THE Service Complaints Commissioner Dr Susan Atkins visited HMS Clyde and HMS Edinburgh at East Cove's military port during her recent tour of Falkland Islands based military units to introduce herself to deployed maritime operations and to provide opportunities for focus groups for units across the Armed Forces.

Dr Atkins is the first to hold the post of Service Complaints Commissioner, established in 2008 as a fully-independent position outside the structures of the Military and Civil Services.

"I have to build a picture of Service life and understand what the Navy is doing.

"I speak to the First Sea Lord and the Naval Secretary on a monthly basis but these visits are the only way to give my reports credibility" she said.

On board HMS Clyde, the Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Mark Anderson hosted a tour of the ship and invited Dr Atkins to hold a discussion forum with Senior Ratings who have had previous experience of handling the complaints process.

Lt Cdr Anderson said: "It is a pleasure to host such an important member of the Service Complaints organisation.

"The challenges facing us in the Falkland Islands are unique and it is reassuring that they are being considered at the highest levels."

Following her visit, Dr Atkins expressed her thanks to the ship's company for introducing her to their unique operating environment and explaining their roles in such an accessible way.

How do we smooth the path to civilian life?

LORD Ashcroft is asking former Service personnel and their families what more could be done to improve the transition to civilian life for those leaving the Armed Forces.

The peer, who was appointed last year as the Prime Minister's Special Representative for Veterans' Transition, is launching a website through which veterans, families, and others with an interest in the area can report their experiences, including problems they have encountered, and make suggestions as to how the process could be improved.

Contributions will be considered as part of Lord Ashcroft's official review of transition, which will report at the end of 2013.

The website can be found at: www.veteranstransition.co.uk.

Contributions can be made on the 'Have Your Say' page.

The review will consider all aspects of transition including employment, health, housing and education. As well as listening to the experiences of individuals, Lord Ashcroft's team will consult industry, local authorities and government departments, as well as other bodies including Service charities and the Armed Forces themselves.

Where necessary, Lord Ashcroft will recommend to the government specific changes of policy or practice. The work aims to build on the Armed Forces Covenant, which commits the government to ensuring that veterans receive fair and equal treatment and are not disadvantaged as a result of their

service to the nation.

Lord Ashcroft said: "It is very important to me to get a feel for what those going through the process of leaving the Services actually experience.

"I want to know whether there are gaps between the government's good intentions and what happens to individuals on the ground.

"We will consult widely, but I also want to hear directly from those who have a view and want to be heard.

"The experiences of individuals and families who have made the transition from military to civilian life will play an important part in the review, and ultimately, I hope, in ensuring those who have served the country get the support they deserve."

Job fair online for Service leavers

SAILORS were amongst the 800 Service personnel who took part in a two-day online job fair run by the Career Transition Partnership.

This innovative event created an online one stop shop for service leavers to visit and receive expert guidance on the opportunities open to them guided by CTP, the partnering agreement between the Ministry of Defence and Right Management.

With over 50 vocational trainers present online, advice was given from a range of exhibitors to allow those logged in to see the breadth of future opportunities available to them.

This first event held in January saw hundreds of people, many based outside the UK to log onto the platform from their work stations or home computers to enable them to download

information, chat in real time with both exhibitors and other Service leavers to share ideas and advice.

The technology used was developed by UBM a firm that is also delivering similar capability for training fairs in the United States.

Over 18,500 Service leavers come onto the civilian job market in the UK through the Career Transition Partnership each year with this number on the increase due to military redundancies.

Many of these personnel are skilled technicians, engineers, project managers, administrators, drivers, chefs, telecommunications and logistics personnel.

Eighty-two per cent of the Service leavers who visited the

site indicated that they found the technology easy to use and the content of real benefit while 96 per cent stated they would attend a similar online event.

David Duffy, Managing Director of CTP, said: "I'm delighted with the success of this event, vital for ex-military to help with their transition into civilian work.

"We look forward to continuing to deliver similar events for Service leavers in the future."

The CTP has assisted 170,000 leavers with their transition to civilian life and supports thousands of organisations looking to employ ex-Service personnel, to find out more about CTP visit www.ctp.org.uk.

Swap fags for swag

THOUSANDS of smokers in the military are being encouraged to 'swap fags for swag' and consider the financial benefits of quitting on the 30th anniversary of No Smoking Day. The campaign launches at the end of February while No Smoking Day is on Wednesday March 13. For more information see: www.nosmokingday.org.uk/military/

NAVAL FAMILIES FEDERATION

NFF is here for Reservists too

THANK you for keeping the office busy; families continue to utilise the NFF for assistance with their individual issues or concerns, and we ensure that the trends of concern are fed into the Chain of Command, to senior military personnel and Government, writes Emma Prince of the Naval Families Federation.

NFF Chair Kim Richardson, spoke to the Navy Board at the end of February, taking the views and concerns of Naval Service families direct to the First Sea Lord and Second Sea Lord, along with other senior and key personnel. We will cover the points raised in the next edition of *Navy News*.

Reservists

With Reservist commitments due to rise and their ranks due to swell, the NFF has attended a number of workshops and meetings recently on the subject.

Work is ongoing to understand how these changes can best be managed and we are very happy to be involved in the consultation process, ensuring that the effect on both Regular and Reservist families are considered when policies are reviewed.

Regular and Reservist personnel and their families had the opportunity to provide feedback in the recent public consultation *Future Reserves 2020: Delivering the Nation's Security Together*.

This information will be used to inform Government policy, which will be set out in a White Paper later this year.

Keep an eye on our website (www.nff.org.uk) for updates on Reservists.

NFF Chair gives evidence to the Defence Select Committee on education

Visit the NFF website to watch a

video stream of NFF Chair giving evidence to the Defence Select Committee inquiry on educating the children of Service personnel.

The NFF presented evidence gathered by our recent website poll, the Army and RAF Families Federations also submitted feedback.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete our webpoll; all comments submitted have been presented to the Committee for their information.

Following on from the evidence session, the Defence Select Committee launched two online consultations on Educating the Children of Service Personnel and the Education of Service Personnel.

The feedback from personnel and their families has been passed to the Committee to inform their inquiries into the workings of the Armed Forces Covenant and education.

New Homeport

The spring 2013 edition of the NFF's *Homeport* magazine is due to hit the streets this month. It contains a bumper 40 pages of news and information for families.

Highlights include information on universal tax credits and the changes to the benefit system, an update on churn within the Naval Service, and an interesting article about balancing Service life with family life.

If you would like to join the mailing list e-mail: editor@nff.org.uk and we will post a free copy to you.

School appeals

The nature of Service life means that families are subjected to moves at any time in the school year.

This can have an impact on securing new school places, and in some circumstances you may

not be able to secure a place at your preferred school. In such situations parents have the right to appeal.

The Admissions Authority for your preferred school should notify you in writing as to whether they can offer a place; if they cannot the letter should include details of how to appeal.

Visit the NFF website for a helpful article that explains the appeals process.

At every stage of the appeals process the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) is available to offer advice and support on individual cases.

You can contact the CEAS helpline on: 01980 618 244 or e-mail enquiries@ceas.uk.com.

Community Covenant e-newsletter

The Armed Forces Covenant team publish a regular e-newsletter on the Community Covenant.

It highlights the work being undertaken by local authorities and the Armed Forces Community to reduce disadvantage to Service families.

The latest edition includes reports from the Community Covenant Conference and looks at successful Community Covenant Grant Scheme projects.

To join the mailing list e-mail: covenant-mailbox@mod.uk

Competition: Be a mascot for the Army V Navy Rugby Union match

Through the NFF, the Royal Navy Rugby Union is offering the chance for two children from Naval Service families to act as mascots, and lead the Royal Navy XV team onto the pitch for their clash against the Army at Twickenham on April 27.

The winners will also receive a replica top, a family ticket to the match in a prime location, and a

goody bag.

Visit www.nff.org.uk for details. Competition closes March 31.

Free/low cost summer holidays

There are a number of great initiatives running this year, that provide free or low cost holidays to Service children and their families.

Follow the links for full information, eligibility criteria, and to apply.

■ The Annington Challenge is an eight-day action-packed adventure holiday for teenagers costing just £50. Visit: www.anningtontrust.org

■ The Royal British Legion is offering free, week-long family holidays in traditional British seaside resorts. Visit: www.britishlegion.org.uk

■ SSFAA Forces Help is running free, short activity breaks in the UK for young people with an additional need/disability and their siblings and young carers. Visit: www.ssafa.org.uk

■ FAB (Family Activity Breaks) is offering activity holidays around the UK for bereaved military families at a cost of just £50 for the whole family. Visit: www.fabcamps.org.uk

How can we help you?

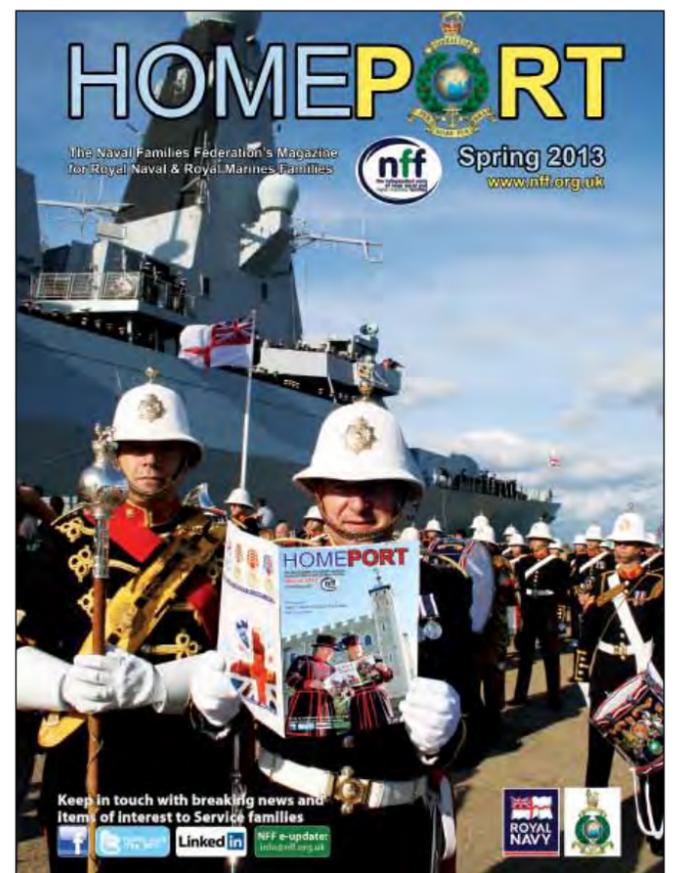
The NFF offers support, advice and representation to Royal Navy and Royal Marines families.

We understand that being part of a Service family can bring about unique challenges; we can provide support on individual issues and highlight areas of concern to the Chain of Command and Government.

If you have an issue or concern you would like to raise, please get in touch.

Keep in touch

There are numerous ways to stay in touch with the NFF for breaking news and information



of interest to you and your family.

Why not visit our website: www.nff.org.uk - it is updated as and when announcements are made.

You can find us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, or join us on LinkedIn. Alternatively e-mail: editor@nff.org.uk to subscribe to our quarterly Homeport magazine, or e-mail: info@nff.org.uk for our e-update (sent every other month).

Contact us

If you have any comments on the issues discussed in this article, or would like to raise a matter of concern, please e-mail the NFF on: admin@nff.org.uk or telephone: 023 9265 4374. Postal correspondence can be sent to: NFF, Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.

Deaths

Rear Admiral Linley 'Lyn' Middleton, CB, DSO. After National Service in the South African Army he transferred to the South African Air Force, where he learned to fly, and in 1952 he joined the Royal Navy and qualified as a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm. Over the next decade he served in carriers HMS *Indefatigable*, *Centaur*, *Bulwark*, *Eagle*, *Victorious* and *Ark Royal*. While flying *Sea Hawk* jet fighter-bombers in 897 NAS from *Eagle* in 1956 he had an unusual series of accidents: he was picked up from the sea after engine failure near Malta that resulted in ejecting; later his aircraft caught fire on launch and he ditched into the sea under *Eagle's* bow, and shortly afterwards after a catapult failure he fell off the bow but had the nerve not to escape from his aircraft until *Eagle* had passed over. He went on to pilot the *Sea Fury* ground-attack fighter; the *Sea Hawk* jet on ground attack missions during the Suez crisis; the *Scimitar* day-fighter and the *Buccaneer* low-level bomber. 1964-65 he taught young officers at Dartmouth to fly the *Tiger* Moth and 1966-67 he commanded 809 Naval Air Squadron in *Hermes* when the ship was still equipped to fly fixed-wing aircraft. He was on the staff of Flag Officer Naval Air Command 1971-73, chief staff officer to Flag Officer Carriers and Amphibious Ships 1975-77 and Director Naval Air Warfare 1978-79 when the *Sea Harrier* was brought into service. He was captain of the frigate *Whitby* in 1970-71 and of the 2nd Frigate Squadron and commanding officer of *Undaunted* and *Apollo* 1973-75. 1980 he was the captain of HMS *Hermes*, flagship of the naval task force that liberated the Falkland Islands from Argentine military domination in 1982. In a single weekend he recalled his crew from Easter leave and stored his ship so that she was ready to sail three days later and in mid-Atlantic *Hermes* was designated the Task Force's flagship and Middleton became senior aviation adviser to the Task Force commander. He retired in 1987 being appointed CB. He later became managing director of British International Helicopters until 1992 and was a member of the Guild of Air Pilots and Navigators. December 3. Aged 84.

Cdr Anthony Shaw MBE. Born in British Columbia, he learnt to fly in America and began his career as a Naval Airman 2nd Class in 1942. Qualifying as a Fleet Air Arm pilot, his first major front-line operation was in support of the Allied landings at Salerno in Italy flying *Seafires* from HMS *Attacker*. Seconded to the South African Air Force, he flew the *Spitfire*, dive bombing German positions in Italy; later he rejoined *Attacker* for the invasion of southern France but was shot down and captured. En route to a POW camp he managed to escape but was re-captured, however, he convinced his captors that it would be easier to surrender and that they would be taken to America and put to work on a farm if they "disappeared" with him; they contacted the Resistance who hid them all until the American Army arrived. His two captors were shipped to a farm in America and Shaw returned to 879 Squadron aboard *Attacker* and flew numerous sorties during the Aegean campaign. 1944 he returned to the UK having been appointed MBE for his "gallantry and devotion to duty". He learnt to be a deck landing control officer and sailed with 899 NAS in the carrier *Chaser* to the Far East. He demobilised from the RNRV in 1946 and after time as the King's Messenger rejoined the Royal Navy as a regular. He re-qualified in *Spitfires* and spent two years with 813 NAS flying the *Blackburn Firebrand* strike aircraft off Home Fleet carriers. 1951 he qualified as a test pilot at Farnborough and recounted numerous life-threatening incidents in his autobiography *The Upside of Trouble* (2005). He was commended by the US Navy for his work flying as a member of an American squadron based at Atlantic City, going superonic for the first time and assisting the integration of the British inventions of the angled deck and mirror landing sight into American carriers. Later service included Lt Cdr (Air) at Abbotsinch Air Station, Lt Cdr (Flying) in HMS *Hermes*, Defence Adviser in Sierra Leone and work with Sea Cadets in London. He retired in 1974. November 21. Aged 89.

Lt Cdr Norman Sailes DSC, FAA Pilot. Learned to fly as a Naval Airman 2nd Class and commissioned into the RNRV(A)

on obtaining his wings. He acquired the nickname 'Tiny' because he struggled to reach the foot controls of even the *Tiger* Moth. In 1942 the hook of his *Swordfish* bounced over nine arrester wires on HMS *Dasher*, a converted banana boat, and his aircraft toppled over the side; he was rescued after climbing onto the wing. 1944 in front of VIPs he ditched a *Tiger* Moth that was not fitted with a landing hook, instead the flight deck crew of *Ravager* were supposed to grab hold of the wings but it slewed and plunged into the water; he sat on the tail awaiting rescue. On a third occasion he crashed into five Avenger torpedo bombers parked in the bows of HMS *Queen*. As senior pilot of 853 Squadron in 1945, he helped to plan and lead an attack on the U-boat base at Kilbourn in the fjords of Arctic Norway; this was the last British air raid of World War 2 and the last naval offensive in Europe. U-711 was damaged by two near misses and drifted off into the fjord where it sank a few hours later. The attack lasted seven minutes and U-711 was the last U-boat to be sunk by the Fleet Air Arm; although Sailes's plane was hit by shellfire and one man was wounded, he nursed the aircraft home and was awarded a DSC. He completed 1,250 flying hours in 21 different types of aircraft and made 464 deck landings during four years of war service. He was demobbed in 1946 but stayed in the RNRV and his flying experiences were recorded for the sound archive of the Imperial War Museum. December 27. Aged 92.

Lt Cdr David Waters. Completed training in HMS *Barham* 1929-30 and the cruiser *Berwick* on the China station (1930-32) then spent a year in *Achilles*. 1935 he volunteered for the nascent Fleet Air Arm and flew with 821 Naval Air Squadron from *Courageous* and 813 NAS from *Eagle* pre-war. During the Phoney War he was a flying instructor in 767 NAS and in 1940 he led a number of bombing attacks on Italian ports. The fall of France prompted a night-time escape to North Africa and he took off with five ground crew as passengers in an aircraft designed to carry only three crew, navigating by a school atlas. When 767 eventually reached Malta, the Axis powers were deceived into thinking the island had been suddenly reinforced. August 13 his plane lost visual reference when flares used to illuminate targets went out and he plunged into the sea; managing to get into a partially-inflated life raft with his air gunner, he was captured and imprisoned; he made an unsuccessful attempt to escape. Post-war he worked in the Naval History Section of the Admiralty then in 1960 was recruited by the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich as curator of navigation and astronomy, and was later made deputy director. Wrote the definitive account of the Battle of the Atlantic, a 400-page study with many charts and diagrams which remained classified for nearly 50 years until it was released to the Public Records Office in 1987 and has since been published as a book by the Navy Records Society. Emigrated to New Zealand in 2003. November 28. Aged 101.

Lt Cdr E L 'Ted' Goodacre VRD. Served 1940-46 (HO) in destroyers during World War 2 as a Telegraphist; later L/Tel on board HMS *Orwell* in the Russian convoys and HMS *Springdale* in the Pacific. Joined the RNRV (later RNR) and was commissioned direct as a Lt; later Lt Cdr and was the CO of No.1 Wireless District; retiring in 1972. Member of Russian Convoys Club. January 3. Aged 90.

Lt (SD) Gordon James Thomas Hunt. Served 1945-83. Boys training at HMS *St George*, *Ganges* and *Ulster* then *Vanguard* (Royal Tour to South Africa), *Birmingham*, *Victory* (ship), *Scorpion*, *Charity*, *Chevron*, *Chichester*, *Tenby* (Dartmouth TS), *Aurora* (Beira) also HMS *Excellent* Field Gun Crew. *Takoradi*, Ghana Navy 1963-65; *Cerberus*, Royal Australian Navy; Base Gunnery Officer at *Cochrane* 1973-76; Liaison Officer 12 Sqn RAF 1976-82 and Divisional Officer at HMS *Nelson* 1982-83. January 18.

Jack 'Nutt' Nuttall AB. Served 1943-46. November 17.

Arthur Morris. Joined as a Boy Seaman at HMS *Bruce* (1948-49) and served in HMS *Warrior*, *Jamaica*, *Terror*, *Ocean*, *Illustrious*. Founder of HMS *Bruce* register. January.

John Kenneth Valleley 'Jack' Holden EM1. Served 1948-57 in HMS *Rampura*, *Cochrane*, *St James* and *Vigilant*.

Gerald R 'Robbie' Robinson CPO Shipwright 1st Class. Served 1947-72 at HMS *Fisgard* then HMS *Indomitable* (Training Squadron), *Centaur*, *Cambrian* and *Hermione* Building in Alex Stephens Yard (1st Commission); also *Lochinvar*, *Cochrane* and *Merlin* (Dalgety Bay). Ex-Edinburgh RNA. January 2. Aged 80.

John A Pateman A/POE1. Served 1947-63 HMS *Boxer*, *Cheviot*, *Dolphin*, *Collingwood*, *Vanguard* and *Defender*. November 24. Aged 81.

Peter Rolfe Seaman branch. Served in HMS *Morecambe Bay* (Korean war). HMS *Morecambe Bay* Association. January.

Robert 'Bob' Hanvey CMT(O). Served 1949-73. Trained at RNH Haslar then served in HMS *Dampier* and *Pickle* also at Royal Arthur, *Rooke*, *Gannet*, *Sea Eagle* and RN Hospitals *Plymouth*, *Haslar* and *Bighi* (Malta). Member of the RN Medical Branch Ratings & Sick Berth Staff Association. January 19. Aged 83.

James Daniel Ford CPO Radar Electrician. Served 1950-72. Electricians course at HMS *Collingwood* then HMS *Flowerdun*, *Tamar* (Hong Kong W/T), *Mounts Bay*, *Truelove*, *Adamant*, *Jupiter*, *Diadem*, *Afrakander* (S Africa W/T), *Sussex*, *Wakeluf*, *Plymouth*, *Vernon*, *Blackpool*, *President* (RN Tactical College), *Rothesay* and *President* (Whitehall W/T WIST). Royal Naval Electrical Branch Association. December 14. Aged 80.

Gerald 'Nash' Sto Mech. Served 1946-48 in HMS *Wigtown* Bay, *Truelove*, *Octavia*, *Espliego* and *Carnarvon Bay*. Royal Naval Engineers Association. January. Aged 85.

Alick 'Moo/Jock' Cowie Engineer room branch. Served 1951-63 in HMS *Aisne* then *Submarines Alaric*, *Alderney*, *Ambush*, *Amphion*, *Thermopylae*, *Truncheon* and *Toten*; also HMS *Raleigh* and *Dolphin*. January 29. Aged 79.

David 'Spider' Kelly CCEL (Electrical branch) Chatham rating (Deal). Served for 28 years in HMS *Surprise*, *Hydra*, *Bermuda*, *Bacchante*, *Diamond*, *Llandaff* and *Terror*. Wicket keeper for the RN cricket team and Combined Services. St James' branch of the Royal British Legion. January 14 at his home in Spain. Aged 81.

Anthony 'Tony' L Murray LEM. Served 1946-56 in HMS *Indefatigable*, *Ganges*, *Alamein*, *Cumberland*, *Eagle*, *Gambia* and *Vanguard*. HMS *Gambia* Association. January 31. Aged 81.

George Simonds L/Ck. Served 1948-54 HMS *Ceres*, *Royal Arthur*, *Victory*, *Implacable*, *Royal Yacht Victoria* & *Albert*, *Sursay*, *Tyne*, *Drake*, *Chevron* and *Daedalus*; also Royal Fleet Reserve 1955-57. Wizard & Cadiz Associate member. February 2. Aged 83.

Ronald James Spragg. Served 1942-46 in HMS *Black Swan* and as a gunner in HMS *Norfolk* during the action against the *Scharnhorst*. Old HMS *Norfolk* Association. January 5. Aged 89.

Arnold William Ware AB. Boys training at HMS *St Vincent* then served in HMS *Cleopatra*, *Glasgow*, *Vernon*, *Plover* and *Comus* (Korean War). Worked on the construction of the Hong Kong MTR then the Singapore MTR and played *World Bowls* for Singapore. HMS *Comus* Association. January 19 in Australia. Aged 82.

Jim Hutchison Diver First Class. Served HMS *Phoebe* on the *Pedestal* Convoy to Malta 1942. Had an extraordinary life including being saved by a shark - its dead (or stunned) body kept him afloat after he was blown from his ship by a torpedo strike (as recounted in *Navy News* May 2011). February 6. Aged 90.

R A 'Dick' Press Electrical Artificer. Joined HMS *Fisgard* 1949 (Series 7). Qualified as Electrical Artificer 1953 HMS *Collingwood*. Member of 'The Magnificent Seven' reunion group. January 24.

Allan Barr ME1. Joined as a National Serviceman and served 1954-56 in HMS *Daring* and *Carisbrook Castle*. Upon leaving he joined *Glasgow* and *TMS Comus* Wallsend Sea Cadets and served 25 years, finishing as CO. HMS *Daring* Association. Aged 81.

Peter Richardson L/Tel. Served 1948-57 at HMS *Ganges* and in *Vanguard*, *Daring* and *Opossum*. HMS *Daring* Association. Aged 80.

Ken Carson Chief Radio Supervisor. Served 1948-73 *Ganges*, *Slangkop* W/T (Bermuda), *HMS Romola*, *Opossum*, *Whitehall* W/T, *Dalrymple*, *Newfoundland*, *Tyne*, *Kranji* W/T (Terror), *Hardy*, *Royal Arthur*, *Carysfort* and *SEATO HQ* (Bangkok). Served a further 18 years in the Foreign Office in 11 British Embassies. HMS *Opossum* Association. December 31. Aged 79.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Peter R Wood Coder. Served 1942-46. After basic training he became a wireless operator then a coder responsible for transforming messages on the British equivalent to the German Enigma machine. 1943 he served HMS *Primula* (Flower-class corvette) on convoy duties from Gibraltar to Alexandria then posted to *Symi* (Greek island), followed by sweeping for mines around the UK then fishery protection. *Scarborough* RNA, formerly of *Filey* and *Whitby* branch. January 16. Aged 87.

Dennis Charles East Leading Stoker. Served 1943-47. Ex chairman and life member of *Nuneaton* branch. December 8. Aged 87.

George Stuart Stoker 1st Class aboard HMS *Brocklesby*. Bude RNA. January 19. Aged 89.

Forsythe 'Sye' Dobie. Post-war service. After training as an electrician at HMS *Collingwood* he served on *Motor Torpedo Boats*. He became *Wrexham* branch president in the late 80s and was an Area 10 committee member until a few years ago. January 30. Aged 81.

Arnie Soulsby ERA/4. Served 1944-46 in HMS *Mayina*, *LCT36* and *Maintenance* at Alexandria and *Trincomalee*. *Stourbridge* RNA. January 30. Aged 90.

Keith Victor Lawrence AB RP2. Served 1944-46 in HMS *Vengeance*, *Golden Hind* and *Amethyst*. *Margate* branch. February 3. Aged 87.

Robert Henry 'Joe' Clark. Served as Admiral's Coxswain in HMS *Ranee* and *Montclare*. *Harlow* RNA. January 18. Aged 87.

Patricia Douglas (nee Ridley-Thompson) 2nd Officer WRNS. Served 1945-51 at HMS

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.dii.mod.uk

AB Mcknight. Onboard HMS *Argyll* in Plymouth, would like to swap for any shore base in Portsmouth or any ship alongside Portsmouth for a year. 2050 mini-gun, gpmg, spo 103 courses to be completed. HMSARGL-War-WSAB6@mod.uk

Ask Jack

Drake and HMS *Nuthatch*. Command Sports Officer (Plymouth) and played cricket and hockey for the RN and Combined Services. Honorary member of ARNO and a member of *Monmouth* RNA. November 30. Aged 89.

Jack Wright. Treasurer of *Hanworth* RNA. Great supporter of *Pembroke* House.

John Carrington. Joined HMS *Ganges* aged 15 and became a *Button Boy*. Trained in the Electrical Branch, finally becoming a submariner. Served at HMS *Pembroke*, *Cachalot* and *Orpheus*. He was a civilian instructor with *TS Queen Elizabeth Sea Cadet* unit in *Clydebank*. City of *Glasgow* RNA. February 2. Aged 73.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION

R 'Bob' Aitken L/Ck. Submarine Service 1954-57 in HMS *Thule* (54-55), *Thorough* (55-56) and *Trespasser* (56-57). Scottish branch. Aged 80.

F W 'Frank' Bridges AB UC3. Submarine Service 1955-56 in HMS *Alcide*, *Taciturn* and *Anchorage*. *Norfolk* branch. Aged 78.

Lt Cdr P C 'Nick' Carter. Submarine Service 1947-70 in HMS *Trespasser*, *Alliance*, *Truncheon*, *Taciturn*, *Artful* and *Finwhale*. *Portsmouth* branch. Aged 88.

Lt Cdr P S 'Peter' Davis DSC. Submarine Service 1946-49 in *Alliance*, *Truclent* and *Token*. *Dolphin* branch. Aged 85.

S G H 'Steve' Diamond AB LTO. Submarine Service 1940-44 in *P612*, *HMS Taku*, *Parthian* and *Rorqual*. *Medway* Towns branch. Aged 90.

G W 'George' McNabb L/Sto. Submarine Service 1949-54 in *Aurochs*. *Merseyside* branch. Aged 86.

FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION

Ronald Norfolk LAM(A). Served 1943-46 in *South Africa* and *Ceylon*. *Essex* branch and *Brightlingsea* RNA. December 29. Aged 87.

William Davis AM(A). Served 1943-46. Treasurer (1996-2013) of *Bristol* and *District* branch and a member since 1994. February 3. Aged 88.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION

Len Handscomb L/Sto Mech. Served aboard HMS *Fancy*. January 9. Aged 86.

Fred Connell AB. Served aboard HMS *Orestes* and *Maenad*. January 13. Aged 87.

William Brunger Tel. Served aboard HMS *Fancy*. January 24. Aged 87.

Reg Astbury ERA4. Served aboard HMS *Cockatrice*. January 24. Aged 82.

Frank Wisbey AB. Served aboard HMS *Cockatrice* and *Wiaf*. February 5. Aged 79.

AIRCRAFT HANDLERS ASSOCIATION

William 'Billy' McRobbie NA AH3. Served 1955-58 in HMS *Eagle*, *Ark Royal* and *Bulwark* also *Naval Air Stations Daedalus* and *Seahawk*. *Gosport*. November. Aged 73.

Frederick McCulloch WO1 AH. Served 1967-2000 in HMS *Eagle*, *Bulwark*, *Invincible* also *Naval Air Stations Seahawk*, *Goldcrest*, *Osprey*, *Fulmar* and *Heron* 848 Squadron. *Portland*. 2013. Aged 63.

Dave Clapham NA AH3. Served 1959-62. *Bradford*. November.

Hugh Rose (Rosie). I have been searching for the location, address or any news of my old shipmate Hugh Rose, an EM(A) with me last seen in 1958. I was drafted into a front-line squadron (803) and after training for deck-landing duties at *Lossiemouth*, joined HMS *Victorious* sailing to the Mediterranean and on to America. Hugh (aka Rosie) was drafted to another carrier, of which I cannot remember the name, but thought it was HMS *Eagle* or HMS *Ark Royal* - or perhaps another ship? We were, of course, *Aircraft Electricians* in the FAA. Promotion in that branch was slow, so he may have remained an EM(A) as I did. We spent two years together at HMS *Heron* (Yeovilton) and I used to take him to his parents' address on my motorbike and drop him off on my way home. Some time ago I wrote to that address, but my letter was returned by the postal authorities saying 'Address not known'. My local sorting office kindly spent time trying to find out why, but were unable to find the reason - perhaps it's part of the M25 or M3? I have signed into 'Forces Reunited', and have tried Facebook and other places without any luck at all. I am now in my twilight years (83 this month), and I hope once again to find Rosie while I and hopefully he, are still walking (painfully) this planet! Contact Jack Andrew at jack.andrew1@ntlworld.com or write to 25 Newmarket Way, *Hornchurch*, *Essex* RM12 6DR.

Fire-ravaged documents: Clive moved to Canada in 1997 after 22 years service with the RN, leaving as a CPOMEA(M). On June 13 2008 he lost his home and everything in it in a forest fire. 'Everything' included the pack of certificates and documents

he received when he left the Navy. He has been able to replace much of the content but is missing the job description for a CPOMEA(M). If anyone can help with a copy of this document from this time (1997) or know where one can be obtained, could they contact Clive Jones at clive@eastlink.ca or write to 124 Candy Mountain Road, *Mineville*, *Nova Scotia* B2Z 1K4, *Canada*.

Paddy McEvoy: Lawrence is seeking to make contact with his old stoker oppo, Paddy McEvoy. Lawrence served in HMS *Fife* when the ship did a world tour from 1969 to 1971. He remembers being with Paddy in Malta where the ship was berthed for five months after a major fire onboard in 1971. You can contact Larry at lawrencehughes78@hotmail.com or write to 43 Rosslyn Drive, *Moreton*, *Wirral* CH46 0SU.

HMS Centaur: Michael McAuliffe is seeking an old friend, Joe Hunt, with whom he served in HMS *Centaur* in the early 1950s. They started as *Stoker Mechanics* but the role was changed to *Engineer Mechanics*. The inseparable twosome sailed together to the Far East, returning to *Plymouth* in May 1956. Not only were they keen on keeping fit, they also played football for the ship and socialised together. Joe went on to do the submariners course. Michael lived in *Culpeper Street*, *Angel Islington*, in 1956 whilst he thought that Joe lived in *South East London*. They have not seen each other since 1956. If you can help contact Michael at micmarmc@btinternet.com or tel: 01895 639751.

HMS Cicilia: Seeking anyone who served in this happy ship. Contact Albert Valler, 14 *St Andrews Court*, *High Street*, *Burntisland*, *Fife* KY3 9AL, or tel: 01592 870129.

Gosport opens up

FOR one special day next month, Royal Navy heritage sites in Gosport will be on show to the general public to help save an historic submarine.

On Saturday April 20, HMS *Sultan*, *Fort Blockhouse* and the *SETT* - Submarine Escape Training Tower - will open their doors as part of a fundraising drive to save HMS *Alliance*, the World War 2-era boat which forms a major part of the Royal Navy Submarine Museum in Gosport.

The programme starts two days earlier, when historian Chris Donnithorne talks about *Fort Blockhouse* at 7pm on Thursday April 18 at the museum.

Tours of *Fort Blockhouse* will include a visit to the Submariners'

Memorial Chapel, the Officers' Mess (including paintings by Wylie) and a look at the *SETT*.

Visitors to *Sultan* will also see *Fort Rowner*, the Fleet Air Arm aircraft hangar and the Marine Engineering Museum.

Chris Munns, Director at the RN Submarine Museum, said: 'We are really grateful to our Royal Navy neighbours in Gosport for granting access to their impressive heritage and their continued support of our bid to raise the last amount of money required to save our own historic HMS *Alliance*.'

Tickets are available from www.supportusalliance.co.uk or from the Submarine Museum (www.submarine-museum.co.uk).

Sports lottery

January 19: £5,000 - LH P Slade; £1,500 - LH A Rose; £500 - AB C Stannard.

January 26: £5,000 - PO J Dumbreck; £1,500 - PO D Finley; £500 - LT S Patton.

February 2: £5,000 - Mne C Bohan; £1,500 - Mne D Chatterton; £500 - CPO D Brown.

February 9: £5,000 - Cdr M Maher; £1,500 - PO S Hutchins; £500 - AB A Baul.

Entries for the Deaths column and Swap Drafts in April's Noticeboard must be received by MARCH 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. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to - The Editor, *Navy News*, HMS *Nelson*, *Portsmouth*. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.

Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.

There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

Awards and rewards

NOT quite the BAFTAs or Oscars – though possibly on a par with the Brits – HMS King Alfred, the South's largest RNR unit, has rewarded stellar performances amongst its ranks.

2012 saw two ratings from King Alfred, in Portsmouth, achieve stardom in their own right – LS(Logs) Kathy Pink, for her outstanding contribution to military operations supporting EUNAVFOR's counter-piracy operations in Djibouti, and AB Jamie Killeen, for his performance during initial naval training, impressing staff at HMS Raleigh and in the unit with both his high level of fitness, his sense of humour, his bearing and for his confident leadership skills.

LS Kathy Pink's commitment to wider Naval operations led to her being awarded Best Reservist at HMS King Alfred, but she was also the RN's selection in the Best Reservist nominee at *The Sun's* Military Awards for 2012.

Nominated for her inspirational story in overcoming serious brain surgery, which was followed by years of fighting her way back to fitness, Kathy deployed in logistics support to the counter-piracy mission in the Indian Ocean.

Kathy enjoyed the glittering televised Millie awards in December in the Imperial War Museum, seated next to the Duchess of Cornwall, and although she did not win the Best Reservist category award, she said: "I was honoured to be in the company of so many military heroes with highly inspirational stories – it was very motivating and emotional."

"I was so proud to represent the RNR."

Jamie, who joined the RNR just under a year ago, was rewarded for his outstanding performance throughout initial naval training as Best Reservist in INT at the unit.

In his civilian life, Jamie is a supervisor for a security company that installs alarms and CCTV systems in Portsmouth and is hoping to qualify as a diver to assist with underwater force protection of the Navy's ships.

Jamie said: "I was so proud listening to the citation and being presented with the award at our drill night by the Regional Commodore."

"I'm meeting such a diverse group of people in the Reserves – I was even training alongside a brain surgeon!"

No messing about on river for President

THE Queen's Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant was just one highlight of a busy and memorable year for HMS President's rowing team.

The London RNR unit has its own traditional Thames waterman cutter, the Arthur Tisdall VC, named in honour of the 21-year-old sub lieutenant from President who was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross at Gallipoli in World War 1.

So instead of normal weekend rowing training, the reservists spent early 2012 sanding, varnishing and painting the Arthur Tisdall VC in preparation for its starring role in the pageant. "There was wonderful camaraderie amongst all those taking part," said organiser Acting Sub Lt Fai Lee.

"Everyone was focused on ensuring the boat would be fit for the Queen – and so it was."

With competition for places it was decided those who had contributed most to maintenance would get priority.

Having been blessed with fine weather for maintenance, pageant day in June, of course, was more akin to a winter's day.

"It was a long day and we ended up completely drenched, cold and exhausted," said Sub Lt Tamar Howard-Pearce, "but it was such an unforgettable experience."

Tamar had the role of stroke, ensuring the other five rowers kept up a steady pace.

"It was fantastic to be rowing straight through the heart of London in our naval cutter, saluting the Queen and being cheered on by those wonderful crowds," she said.

Accompanying Tamar and Fai as rowers were Lts Katie Kendrick and Martin Shouler, PO Jacqui Peel and AB Damien Spratt, while Lt Andrew Thomas performed his familiar role of cox.

Rear Admiral Mike Gregory, Lord Lieutenant of Dunbartonshire, was the boat's official passenger, accompanied by Lt Tony Scott as second passenger and photographer.

With the pageant behind



● HMS President's 2012 Great River Race crew passing the Palace of Westminster

them, the unit's rowers soon resumed their weekend training regime, focusing on preparing for September's Great River Race.

The race starts in Docklands before proceeding past President to the finish line 21 miles upriver in semi-rural Surrey.

A President crew has rowed the Arthur Tisdall VC in every Great River Race since 2004, joined each year by more than 2,400 rowers in over 300 other crews competing in every conceivable rowing vessel, from park boat to Hawaiian war canoe.

Unlike the pageant, the 2012 Great River Race enjoyed near-perfect weather, and in a private race-within-a-race, President finished behind BRNC's crew but well ahead of HMS Raleigh.

The crew consisted of Lts Martin Shouler, Andrew Thomas and James Seton, AB Guy Woodward and New Entries Mathew Mazhuvanchery and

Andrew Porter.

Mathew, a Master Mariner in civilian life, particularly enjoyed his first Great River Race: "After a strong sprint finish, urged on by our cox, we were rewarded with a champagne stop on our row back to our moorings at Richmond when some friends of the Navy spotted our White Ensign."

The rules require each boat to carry at least one passenger, but President carried two – Lt Katie Kendrick and Ms Misa Kousalová.

Katie, the unit's new First Lieutenant, said: "We were pleased with our time of just over three hours, despite some choppy conditions in places, and especially with our position in the competitive Services Boat category."

After a return to the normal weekend training regime, the year finished with a different challenge – a team entered the Royal Marines Reserve (RMR) 2012 Christmas Thames Rowathon,

an indoor competition on rowing machines in which teams row 215 miles, the length of the Thames.

Held at RMR City of London in Wandsworth, competitors from President, the Royal Marine Cadets Kingston Detachment, the Sea Cadet Corps, Southfield Community College and the RMR took part in the gruelling two-hour challenge.

RMR London won the event, with a joint President/Sea Cadet team finishing second.

2013 is shaping up to be another busy year, with one highlight being the Tudor Pull, a ceremonial event for Thames Waterman Cutters between Hampton Court Palace and the Tower of London on Sunday April 21.

Other events include the Great River Race, an inter-divisional rowing competition for the unit's ship's company and a multi-day expedition up the Thames to Oxford and back.



● WO(NN) Elaine Grist, Matt Withers and LNN Sarah Hudson on the Gunwharf escalator
Picture: Lt Cdr Heather Lane RNR

Instant response to tumble

MARITIME Reserves from HMS King Alfred leapt into action at Portsmouth's Gunwharf Quays shopping centre while manning a Reserves recruitment stand.

Opposite the stand was an escalator – and when a shopper tumbled down it, Matt Withers RMR raced to assist the lady, while WO(NN) Elaine Grist searched for the emergency stop then assessed the woman's injuries.

Elaine is a theatre nurse, and helped by Leading Naval Nurse, Sarah Hudson, who works in an A&E unit, the two provided first aid until the centre's medical teams arrived.

Elaine said: "As fully-qualified nurses, we are also serving members of the Reserves Defence Medical Services and we deploy to field hospitals on operations dealing with severe trauma victims."

"Having mobilized to Iraq during the conflict to set up the hospital, and then to Afghanistan twice since, the urge to respond is immediate and automatic."

"It was good to be useful on the scene. We also came across a vehicle accident that had just happened on the A3 as we returned from a recruiting event in Guildford, and stopped to check if there were any casualties."

Personnel from the RNR and RMR are supporting a national recruitment campaign aimed at boosting the part-time force.

In the South East, HMS King Alfred and London Division RMR personnel have been getting out and about in the region's towns, travel hubs and shopping centres to raise visibility of the Reserves.

Among them was Sonny Smith RMR, recently back from six weeks on a 932-square-mile Californian military range, exercising with regulars from 42 Cdo.

Diving branch rebuilt – and expanding

THE Royal Navy Reserves Diving Branch feature in the current (March) edition of *Sport Diver* magazine following a visit to Portsmouth by editor Mark Evans.

In the past *Sport Diver*, partner magazine of the PADI Diving Society, has run features on specialist military divers in the full-time Forces – a good read but showing an aspect of diving only open to those who take the Queen's shilling.

But there is an alternative – and when Lt Cdr John Herriman, head of the RNR Diving Branch, contacted Mark he was keen to take a closer look – this article is based on his *Sport Diver* feature.

The branch has been rebuilt over the past two years, and aims to expand from the current 30 members (ranging from saturation divers to chefs, including a large number of ex-military divers) to 40 over the next couple of years.

The branch supports the Navy's clearance diving branch on some of their work, primarily within the UK but it could potentially be anywhere in the world.

Lt Cdr Herriman said: "We have a more limited capability than our regular counterparts because of the training burden, and therefore only dive to 30m maximum on open-circuit scuba equipment, albeit with full-face masks and bail-out cylinders."

"We can be involved in repairs to ships, underwater searches, surface cover, all manner of operations, and we do all undergo basic bomb disposal training."

The RNR Diving Branch will accept recruits with any formal diving qualification (civilian or commercial) and a minimum amount of time in the water.

After initial basic training, candidates



can do a diving acquaint weekend where they receive briefings about the branch and do physical training to prepare them for a selection weekend.

The weekends are hard work but easily achievable by anyone who is relatively fit and well motivated.

If successful, next up is a similarly full-on fortnight of basic military dive training. While those being taken on by the branch must have a diving qualification, the diving and kit used by the military is slightly different to civilian, so over this period recruits will get to grips with Navy diving.

Full-face masks, underwater comms,

bail-out cylinders, switching blocks and surface-to-diver rope work are the norm.

The next stage is a two-week course on underwater search techniques, and finally the reservist divers head off for two weeks of basic bomb disposal training, during which they are shown how to identify suspect devices and work with their regular counterparts to get them safely defused or destroyed.

So, basically, eight weeks of training and you can be a member of the branch – though the decision to sign up as a reserve is not something to be taken lightly as the Navy still expects a high level of commitment, and it will take roughly two years to become a fully-qualified diver.

Of the training weekend at Horsea Island that he visited, Mark said: "As I arrived, several of the reservists had just started a punishing series of 'circuits', which involved leaping off the top of the training tower into the water, putting on their fins and swimming across the water in their wetsuits, then climbing out and running around the buildings at the bottom of the lake back to the tower, and then doing it all over again."

"John said that it was a good way to get set up for the day's training, getting the adrenaline flowing and the blood pumping."

"Then the reservists donned their scuba kit and – pairing off into buddy teams linked by a buddy line – began swimming lengths of the 1km-long lake following the main jackstay."

"This brought back memories of doing this several times a day twice a month when myself and six other lunatics (and I use that word in its truest sense) were training

for the world's first – and still only – relay scuba crossing of the English Channel.

"So as I waited on the bottom next to the jackstay, camera in hand ready to shoot some photographs of the dive teams as they passed, I knew exactly what it felt like to be finning along that seemingly endless cable!"

"Next up was a training session for doing an underwater search."

"The divers all got into the water together and fanned out into a line, with a length of rope running from the diver at one end all the way along the other divers and then up to a support inflatable."

"They then worked on moving as one unit over the seabed. This approach meant that an area could be systematically and thoroughly gone over, with no risk of divers separating or missing sections of the bottom."

"As the day came to an end, I took the time to speak to several of the reservists to find out what motivated them to join the diving branch, and what they enjoyed about being part of the RNR."

PO(D) Mick Openshaw told Mark: "I joined the Navy in 1977 but didn't start diving until 1981, when I completed a Ship's Diver course."

"I changed to Clearance Diver in 1983 until finishing my time as a Senior Military Diving Instructor at the Defence Diving School in 2005."

"This is when I transferred to the RNR to continue diving and use my expertise to help with recruiting and training the new diver recruits coming through within the RNR."

James Standley said: "I had a former

Employers briefed on RNR duties

RESERVISTS from HMS King Alfred in Portsmouth took their bosses on a tour of HMS Dauntless to raise awareness and understanding of the important work that Reservists carry out when at sea in a support capacity.

The visit took place during a break in the Type 45 destroyer's busy programme.

The group visited the bridge, control room, hangar, operations room and wardroom, exploring the ship's sea boat and gathering a good understanding of how the Navy operates these new warships.

The evening visit to Portsmouth Naval Base and Reserves HQ for the South East included a briefing, reception and presentation hosted by HMS King Alfred and senior representatives from the South East's Reserve Forces and Cadet's Association (SERFCA).

This offered local employers a chance to meet RNR personnel from different branches and to discuss the Future Reserves 2020 vision and the Maritime Reserves' regional recruiting and awareness outreach campaign.

John Atkins, sales director of Aish Technologies Ltd in Poole, said: "I know my own company is proud to be involved in supporting the Royal Navy's operational capability, not only by providing equipment but also by supporting the volunteers of the Royal Naval Reserve."

John employs Lt Cdr Simon Lewis, who regularly commits his spare time outside his normal working day to support training at King Alfred and is also the unit's Employers' Liaison Officer, co-ordinating with SaBRE, the Government's marketing campaign supporting Reserves and their employers.

Supporters of the SaBRE campaign include the major political parties, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Institute of Directors (IOD), the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF) and the Trades Union Congress.

At the reception in HMS King Alfred following the evening tour, Sarah Treseder, Chief Executive of the Royal Yachting Association in Southampton was presented with a SaBRE Employer's award certificate by Col Charles Ackroyd, Chairman of Hants and the Isle of Wight SERFCA and the Deputy Executive of SERFCA, Lieutenant Colonel Chris Booth.

Sarah expressed her delight at receiving the award and declared her interest in encouraging more employees to consider opportunities within the Reserve Forces.

1,550 firms across the South East have had their commitment to supporting the Reserve Forces recognised, in formally meeting SaBRE's criteria for providing significant assistance to their employees, allowing their staff to contribute to national defence interests with part time military service commitments to the Reserve Forces.

Other Employers represented at this event were AWE Ltd, Datanet Communications, DSTL, (Portsmouth West) representatives from the Home Office in Central London, Ricardo UK PLC, The Royal Yachting Association, Virgin Experience Days and South Central Ambulance Service.

In his address to guests, Jeff Pattison, Chairman Employer Support representing SERFCA, expressed his sincere thanks and pointed out the benefits to business and employers in the additional personal development and training that military service can provide, with Reserves bringing back to the business community qualities of leadership, initiative and management much sought after by companies.



● The UKMCC – complete with Reservist augmentees – line up with commander Cdre Simon Ancona (just left of centre) in Bahrain

Specialists vital to Bahrain operations

THE UK Maritime Component Command (UKMCC) represents the Royal Navy in the Middle East, and is currently the only forward-deployed maritime battlestaff.

Established in its current form in November 2001 in Bahrain following the September 11 attacks in the United States, and in recognition of the increased importance of the region, its first version formed up when the then Rear Admiral James Burnell-Nugent deployed his headquarters ashore from the UK Task Force that was coincidentally in the Gulf.

Currently commanded by Cdre Simon Ancona, the 73-strong UKMCC is co-located with the US Fifth Fleet and US Naval Forces Central Command (USNAVCENT) within the Naval Support Activity Bahrain (NSA) base – better known to older members of the Service as HMS Juffair, which closed in 1971 after 36 years of Naval service.

The UKMCC contributes to the maritime security of the Middle East region – 2.5 million square kilometres of sea – a region of vital strategic importance to the global economy.

At any one time, the Royal Navy contributes four minehunters; two frigates or destroyers; RFA Landing Ship Dock and a Fleet tanker; UK Maritime Trade Organisation (MTO), based in Dubai, aviation, and more than 1,200 personnel to the region.

And vital to this commitment is the presence of RN Reservists, who currently deploy as Individual Augmentees into the UKMCC HQ in Bahrain.

The current crop of reservists embedded with their regular counterparts fall into four of the RNR specialist roles – Media Operations, Information Operations, Communication Information Systems (CIS) and Intelligence officers.



● CIS specialists AB Siyid Mursal and LS Bill 'Pops' Jackson



● Media Ops specialists Lt Cdr Carolyn Jones and Lt Dusty Miller

There are currently two Media Ops officers who are dual-hatted, providing media support to both the UKMCC, including all the ships deployed in the region, and the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), a 27-nation coalition which contributes to the fight against piracy, narcotics and arms-smuggling in addition to supporting maritime security within the Joint Operating Area (JOA).

Lt Cdr Carolyn Jones, from Fleet Media, currently leads the UKMCC Media/Deputy Public Affairs Officer CMF team.

Located in the US Naval Central Command building, she works closely with her American Public Affairs counterparts and has become the spokesman for CTF 151 on Somali-based piracy, the role played by international forces to combat it and the use of best management practices by the maritime industry for protection against pirates' techniques.

The team present media briefs twice a day and Carolyn has to ensure the Command staffs are fully aware of any global events with a media impact which may influence the JOA.

When asked how she finds the role Carolyn, who is never short of a word or two, said: "I have found this role to be both demanding and rewarding – it is a great job for a professional Media Ops Reservist. "There is a lot you can take



away from it that will help you in the future.

"The job is constantly evolving and there is so much scope for you to put your own stamp on it."

Lt Roy 'Dusty' Miller from HMS Eaglet is UKMCC SO3 Media/Assistant Public Affairs Officer CMF and completes the media team.

He has the hands-on role of escorting journalists, creating and editing the articles sent in by the ships in the region and delivering briefs to the commands.

In addition Dusty has had to turn his hand to photography in order to satisfy the huge appetite for images which crop up on a daily basis.

When asked what have been the key lessons he has learned and can take away from this deployment Dusty said: "Teamwork – pure and simple teamwork."

"The working relationships and interaction between the various roles and people within the UKMCC are completely different from those found in civilian careers."

The UKMCC provides and supports one Info Ops officer who is embedded within CMF – Lt Cdr Kerry Anderson, from HMS Hibernia.

Kerry's day is taken up creating plans and preparing information to give military commanders a crucial edge in the operations area.

Working within a littoral environment covering illegal activity at sea and land (which fits the piracy model perfectly), he is involved in everything from operational security to psychological operations.

When asked what he considered to be the most rewarding part of his job, Kerry replied: "I get tasked by command to achieve an aim and then I am trusted to see the project through from its creation to completion."

He continued: "I am lucky to be part of a 27-nation partnership, and this brings me into contact with some great people."

As a forward-deployed battlestaff, communications and the CIS specialisation forms a pivotal role within the HQ function.

LS Bill 'Pops' Jackson, from HMS Flying Fox, and AB Siyid Mursal of HMS President support the extensive N6 (comms and IT) team within the UKMCC as

watchkeepers.

Trained to the same level as their RN counterparts, they handle radio, satellite and electronic communications between ships, submarines and shore bases.

Although currently deployed ashore within the UKMCC, in 2011 Siyid completed an operational tour afloat in support of Operation Ocean Shield which is NATO's counter-piracy effort off the coast of Somalia and the Indian Ocean.

Of the main challenges faced by an N6 watchkeeper, Bill said: "The tempo can be quite intense, especially during busy periods."

"The demands placed on the N6 team as a whole are high, but that said, it's great to play my part."

In typical James Bond style the Intelligence team like to hide in the shadows and minimise their time in the spotlight.

That said, the UKMCC benefits from having two lieutenants whose role requires them to conduct operational intelligence analysis, gathering and information assessment on ships, people and aircraft.

It is a vitally important role undertaken by reservists within the UKMCC – Capt Jon White, UKMCC Chief of Staff, said: "These individuals are important in building the intelligence picture within the JOA, which helps the command team prepare for any potential threat or eventuality coming our way."

With the impact of Future Reserves 2020 (FR2020) already under way and the reserves being required to develop and expand the support roles demanded by the regular Navy, the UKMCC is at the forefront of regular and reserve integration, working at a high tempo in an operational environment.

Cdre Ancona said: "Reservists bring a range of expertise and experience which often adds another dimension that can be hugely beneficial in the operational environment."

"UKMCC would find it impossible to function without their input, and it is this interoperability that is important as we look to the future with FR2020."



● Information Operations officer Lt Cdr Kerry Anderson



Crucial roles in exercises

THREE members of HMS President in London had crucial roles to play in two large international exercises in late 2012.

Lt Cdrs Howie San and Pat Shinner (above) swapped their civilian careers – the former with a financial software firm in London and the latter with a global telecoms giant – and donned their naval uniforms for Exercise Joint Warrior off Scotland.

At the same time Lt Tony Scott (below), global enterprise architect for engineering consulting firm Arup, deployed to the Med with the French Navy for Exercise Noble Mariner.

As the Submarine Control Team reporting to the Joint Warrior Task Group Commander, Howie and Pat worked in the ops room of frigate HMS Kent, directing Norwegian submarine HNoMS Utvær as she engaged warships from a dozen nations.

With 22 ships from a dozen nations taking part, the Ula-class diesel-electric submarine was much in demand, with Howie and Pat ensuring her movements did not conflict with that of other boats operating in the area – including a very special arrival.

A day before starting Joint Warrior, Kent was assigned safety ship to oversee the first open water dive of the RN's newest nuclear submarine, HMS Ambush.

Howie said: "It was a privilege to see the latest addition to the Fleet and one of the most powerful submarines in the world."

1,200 miles away, Lt Scott was one of a number of personnel from President and other RNR units who deployed for Noble Mariner, an annual exercise which has an important role in the certification of the NATO Response Force (NRF).

Noble Mariner 12 would certify the capacity of France to lead the maritime component of the NRF, and units taking part included 26 warships from ten NATO nations as well as helicopters, maritime patrol aircraft and jet fighters from carrier FS Charles de Gaulle.

Tony was based in French Durance-class replenishment tanker Var, which is equipped with HQ facilities.

He worked as a battle watch captain in the mine warfare battlestaff, responsible for the conduct of minehunting ships and divers from a number of nations – the role he performed while mobilised to the Gulf in 2009.

"Although French-led, our battlestaff in Var included representatives from ten NATO countries," said Tony.

"We all spoke English – mostly – and I was incredibly impressed with how well integrated we became in no time at all."

He added: "I was pleased to be able to make a difference during the exercise, training French personnel in modern NATO mine warfare practices."

"It was a vindication of the training the RNR has given me."

"But it wasn't all one-way learning. "For example I spent one day of the exercise in FS Pegase, a French mine hunter, and found some of their capabilities to be very impressive indeed."



Warm welcome and cold nights

THE historic city of Bristol offers a wide range of accommodation to residents and visitors alike.

Including some cosy bunk spaces aboard one of Her Majesty's smallest ships – and the cooler charms of the odd igloo...

The igloo in question became home for the night to some members of Bristol's University RN Unit (URNU), and resulted in not only a tidy sum for charity, but also a fair bit of publicity for the students.

And it all started with someone else's endeavours.

With businesses, schools and colleges closed by around five inches of snow, URNU member Jess Railton decided to gather a group of friends and build an igloo up on the Downs.

They found a promising-looking ring of packed snow – someone else had started and abandoned it – and decided that it was just right for the foundations for their own effort.

Using a recycling box and bricks of snow shaped by the box lid, the group of eight – including other members of the URNU – finished the structure in four hours, with the tallest of their group, at 6ft 3in, just managing to

finish the roof.

A casual remark by a passer-by, who wondered if they were sleeping in it that night, planted the seed of an idea for raising money for charity.

They nipped home, picked up sleeping bags and warm clothing, set up an online donation page, and returned to their home for the night.

Although warmer – or less cold – than the sub-zero temperature outside, the igloo was still less than toasty, and after their (sensible) friends had gone home for the night the intrepid students turned in.

Between the cold and the drunken, curious students calling by, the quality of the night's sleep was officially "sub-par".

But once the sun rose the following morning, they got into warm clothes (stored inside their sleeping bags, as per cold survival drills), brewed some tea and contemplated the day.

As more and more people stopped by, the igloo started to take on minor celebrity status – so much so that BBC Radio Bristol hooked up a live interview with them outside it, and within an hour a BBC cameraman turned up to film for a short news item

on the television.

They continued to receive visitors all afternoon (and rattle a collecting tin for the charity Crisis), then settled in for another night in the cold – after having repaired some damage to the roof caused by too much heat in the igloo.

The second night was much more comfortable – they were better prepared, and had a little help such as that from a mother and her two young sons who dropped in with some homemade soup and bread.

With lectures to attend, that was the final night under ice, though there was more filming to be done for the BBC (who brought in a cold-weather expert to laud the students' efforts) – and the igloo was even listed for sale on the rightmove.co.uk website.

Perhaps the most telling result of their privation was that they raised some £400 in their collection tin at the igloo, with a further £900 online – with Gift Aid, that meant a windfall for Crisis (a charity for single homeless people) of more than £1,500.

But not all URNU students slum it in Bristol.

Our old friends from the Birmingham URNU decided to shun their normal patch during a crisp, bright February sea weekend and motor up the River Avon to Bristol.

It was the first such visit for a year by P2000-class patrol boat HMS Exploit, which is more normally seen in North Somerset or South Wales on such weekends, and very pleased they were with their spot in the port's Cumberland Basin at the high-profile Arnolfini berth in the city's commercial heart.

"Most of the P2000s based around the UK for URNU tasking can sail regardless of tide, particularly the unlucky few in 2 Basin – unlucky as they are based in Portsmouth, ripe for additional Fleet tasking," said the Commanding Officer of HMS



● HMS Exploit approaches the Clifton Suspension Bridge in the Avon Gorge

Picture: Mid Nick Smith

Exploit, Lt Si Shaw.

"However, in Cardiff, Exploit and Express – the Wales URNU P2000 – must negotiate two tight locks in a heavily-constrained tidal port.

"We can only sail approximately two hours before and two hours after high water and must proceed with the tide to other similarly-tidal ports in the Bristol Channel.

"Therefore to reach Bristol we sailed at 6.30am to make the high water slot in Bristol – for most of the students there was a shock that this hour actually existed..."

Once alongside, Exploit became the centre of attention for Saturday afternoon passers-by.

And for two on board, the visit was memorable – Mid Matt Hobbs and AB Nick Bolt are both Bristol and West Country lads.

"I've been in the URNU for three years so it was really good in my final year to take Exploit into my home town and bring my family onboard to see the ship," said Mid Hobbs.

"My Dad joked with the Boss about how much we've been in *Navy News* recently, as he'd been following our travels."

Following a well-earned run ashore in Bristol, Exploit took passage back along the Avon and a lumpy Bristol Channel to her

berth in Cardiff, affording the students more chances to learn maritime skills such as seamanship, navigation and pilotage.

For the ship's company after a busy weekend of providing training to the students, you might think a little time off would be in order.

However with Squadron Staff Covered Continuation Training (similar to Operational Sea Training for her bigger sisters) in a few weeks, Exploit returned to sea to train up her crew of five during the week – then enjoyed a long weekend's leave after a high tempo start to the year.



● The Bristol students inside their igloo – Jess Railton second right



● A student works on the roof of the igloo

RESETTLEMENT

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Of course, what you must do first is work out whether the scheme is right for you or anyone in your family.

What is 'Access to Success'? The scheme isn't for everyone. Entrance is restricted to those who

- have no previous higher education qualification and are new to the OU
- live in England (being in the Services or part of a Service family counts, wherever you are posted)
- have an annual household income under £25,000.

It's aimed at people who may not have previously considered going to university but perhaps have gained more confidence through their work or Service experience.

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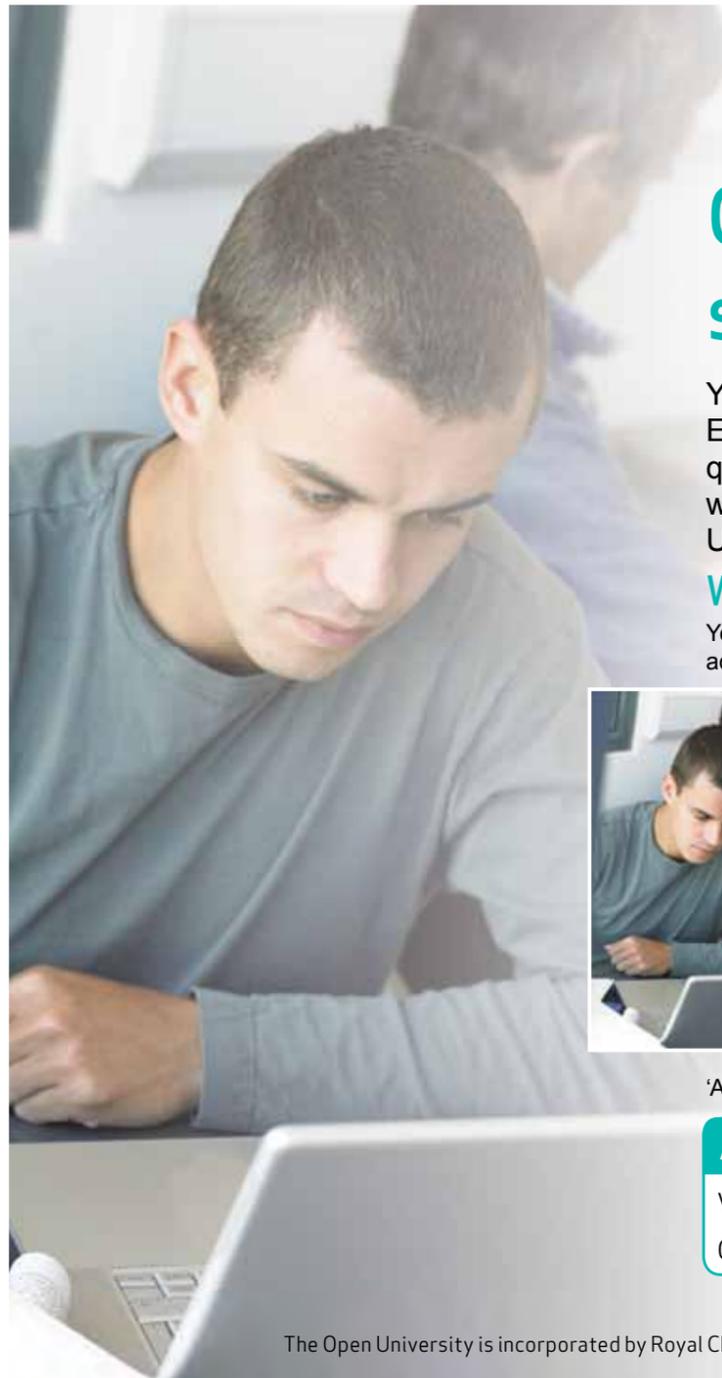
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Museum seeks stories

AN APPEAL for untold stories of the Royal Navy's colonial forces has been launched by the National Museum of the Royal Navy to feature in a new major exhibition, *HMS – Hear My Story*, due to open in spring 2014 in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

One of the rare stories that has already been discovered is that of LS Mohammed Rahim, who was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for bravery during World War 2 for risking his life to save a wounded seaman in a secret operations raid.

LS Rahim received his DSM "for gallantry going to the rescue of a wounded seaman, regardless of heavy fire."

He received serious wounds on February 10 1944 when, at night, he was steering a small motor launch from Chittagong, in modern day Bangladesh, down the coast of Burma to pick up a Secret Operations Executive agent.

In a close-quarters encounter with Japanese forces he was wounded, and strongly recommended for an award.

Three other Indian crewmen were also injured and one died, but received no official recognition.

Matthew Sheldon, HMS project director at the museum, said: "The Royal Indian Navy existed from 1934-50.

"At its height, 28,000 men served, usually in unglamorous small ships.

"They suffered over 1,000 casualties, with many others wounded.

"However, very little has been recorded about the lives and contributions of these and other colonial forces of the Royal Navy."

LS Rahim was the recipient of one of the only 23 DSMs awarded to Royal Indian Navy personnel during the war, all for operations off Burma 1942-45.

"HMS will tell the undiscovered stories from the ordinary men, women and ships which have made the Navy's amazing history over the last 100 years," said Mr Sheldon.

"This story will not be complete without knowing more about the naval volunteer forces from the Caribbean to the Singapore Strait."

The National Museum of the Royal Navy would like to hear from anyone who can help with the missing stories of the Royal Navy's colonial forces.

For more information on *HMS*, contact the Museum on 023 9272 7595 or visit www.nmnrn.org.uk/hms

HQ group visits Sikh temple

AMONGST the staff working in Northwood Headquarters' tri-Service Unit Personnel Office is Sgt Khem Singh Malhotra.

CPO(Wtr) Bernie Dath, a Diversity and Inclusion champion, joined forces with Sgt Malhotra to organise a visit to the Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall Gurdwara.

The aim of the visit was for staff to broaden their cultural knowledge of the diverse background of the Armed Forces, in line with First Sea Lord's Diversity and Inclusion policy.

The visit included a detailed talk on the founding of the Sikh religion, in which the core belief is that everyone is equal regardless of religion, belief or social standing as they do not have a formal hierarchy.

The visitors were also educated on the historical relationship between the British Armed Forces and the Sikhs by Birindar Singh Kharbanda, and concluded with an extensive tour of the magnificent temple.



● *ET(ME) Carl Bruce (right...)* points out the safety issues of working on a lathe to AB Ted
Picture: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon

Ted joins ship – and ship welcomes Betty

LEARNING the ropes in the operations room of the Royal Navy's on-call helicopter carrier HMS *Illustrious* is the youngest – and fluffiest – member of the ship's company: AB Ted.

The soft toy – complete with

junior rating's cap and *Illustrious* tally – was donated to the ship by one of the RN's longest and staunchest supporters, Betty Hockey.

As a thank-you for many decades of kindness, the warship's CO Capt Martin Connell hosted Mrs Hockey, who's just three

years shy of her 100th birthday.

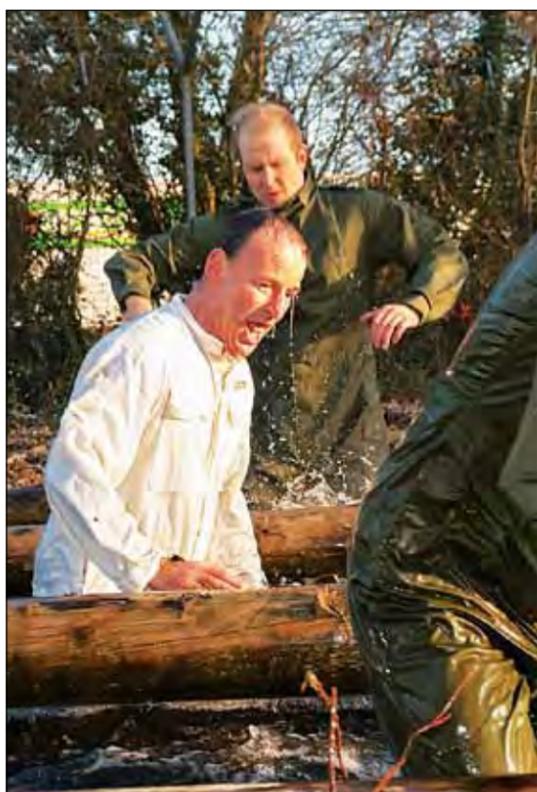
For more than 70 years, Mrs Hockey has shown her appreciation for the Armed Forces, from running a wartime concert party to these days providing ships with specially-tailored teddy bears.

The latest of these soft toys – as well as AB Ted, there's also Marine Ted, complete with commando kit – travelled with the helicopter carrier on last year's *Cougar 12* deployment to the Mediterranean.

Ted received a comprehensive tour of the ship and was well received by members of the ship's company, while extra teddies donated by Mrs Hockey were sold to some of *Lusty's* crew, with profits going to the carrier's

● *Betty Hockey is greeted by Capt Martin Connell, Commanding Officer of HMS Illustrious*

Picture: CPO(Wtr) Aurora Allen



● *Cdr Phenna experiences one of the Tough Mudder's 'log bog jog'*

Tough going for quartet

A TEAM from HMS Collingwood have accepted what is billed as "probably the toughest event on the planet" – the Tough Mudder.

Lt Tim Lawrenson, part of the Surface Stream Training Project Team at the Fareham training establishment, is one of the intrepid quartet who are participating in the event.

Tim said: "Our team is made up of a range of ages and fitness levels, and we are all benefitting from the preparation for this event – if we can do it, anyone can!"

They have enlisted a coach who is taking them through a high-intensity training package.

Their training began just before Christmas, with the team practising similar activities they will experience at Tough Mudder, working out in an assault course session at Collingwood.

They received support from Cdr Andrew Phenna, Executive Officer at Collingwood, who joined in their first training session.

The efforts of the team will be put to good use, raising funds for charity.

Tough Mudders are 'hardcore' obstacle courses of 10-12 miles, designed by members of the Special Forces, which aim to test individuals both physically and mentally.

Teams who enter participate in a

welfare fund.

Mrs Hockey has been a friend of *Illustrious* throughout the carrier's three-decade career, visiting regularly.

In the past she has brought on groups of veterans and even sailed with the ship for a short period at sea.

On this occasion, weather conditions prevented her from embarking on the ship.

Instead she dined with Capt Connell at the Royal Naval Historical Branch, 250 yards from *Lusty's* usual berth on Victory Jetty.

Mrs Hockey was born in 1916 and her association with the Forces stretches back to World War 2. Wishing to make a contribution to the war effort, she helped to run a concert party, the Non-Stops, who performed in most British and American bases and even on Royal Navy warships.



● *Lt Cdr Nick London, Cdr Andrew Phenna, Lt Ben Lipczynski and Lt Tim Lawrenson*

diverse array of activities, from high ropes to cargo nets suspended above cold water – and much worse.

The event, which is dubbed 'more a way of thinking', requires strength, stamina, determination and

camaraderie – all key aspects of Royal Navy ethos.

Tough Mudders are used as team-building events, a chance to improve fitness for those bored with marathons, or just a personal challenge.

Artists interpret dockyard

SOME of the finest creative talent in Kent is being exhibited at the Historic Dockyard Chatham until May.

Art in the Dockyard, staged in No. 1 Smithery, features paintings, sculptures, photography and mixed-media artworks – all inspired by the dockyard itself – in an introspective and diverse exhibition sponsored by Hatten Wyatt Solicitors and Advocates.

Stephen Turner, guest curator of the exhibition, said: "As an artist working in the dockyard myself for many years, it has been a great experience and privilege to be able to share and bring together the insights of others."

"This art exhibition brings together a diverse range of responses to the Historic Dockyard in Chatham.

"It includes work inspired by the texture of time-worn brick, steel and the massive timbers of its buildings and collection of ships.

"There are sensitive investigations of light and its reflections on ever-present water and through glass.

"For some, the experience of discovering the dockyard has stirred personal meditations on the passing of time and key moments from both recent and more distant past.

"This is particularly evident in a body of work submitted on the Jubilee theme, with its reminder of a 400-year royal connection.

"This is not a world of black and white, but rather a place of innumerable meanings defined by the many shades of grey between."

Art in the Dockyard runs until May 6 and is included in the normal dockyard admission price.

Details of special events and exhibitions being held at the Historic Dockyard in 2013 can be found at www.thedockyard.co.uk

Tiny Hermes

A MODEL of HMS *Hermes* which took modelmaker Rex Hunt more than five years to build was one of the star attractions at the Fleet Air Arm Museum's Model Show last month.

The model shows *Hermes* as she was during the Falklands War, complete with Sea Harriers and Sea Kings.

The show, now in its 17th year, is the biggest of its kind in the South West and attracts some 2,000 visitors as well as more than 100 traders and clubs, exhibiting everything from model aircraft and boats to figures, tanks and dioramas – including a flying display which featured tiny jets.

Competitions featured prizes sponsored by Airfix, which was also behind the popular 'Make and Paint' workshop.



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● The imposing view of Bismarck from astern during sea trials in the Baltic in March 1941

The never-ending Bismarck saga

IN 1999, Robert Winklareth, an American engineering analyst, published *The Bismarck Chase*, a book that claimed to shed new light on the famous pursuit.

It was a rather odd work that tried to make sense of photographic and film material that had clearly been printed the wrong way round, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

The book's interpretations were thus fundamentally flawed and I remember, with my fellow expert Bill Jurens on the 2001 expedition to find Bismarck and Hood, rather dismissing the book as perhaps the worst written on the subject.

The author has now made amends by publishing a new study which, from its title *The Battle of the Denmark Strait*, (*Casemate*, £19.99 ISBN 978-1-91200-123-4) claims to offer a new 'Critical Analysis of the Bismarck's Singular Triumph' in sinking HMS Hood on Empire Day 1941.

Happily, the author has now got his pictures right and has made amends by using them and other sources to produce a more-or-less accurate description of not only the Denmark Strait action but the whole Bismarck episode.

This illustrates the first problem with the book. It does not concentrate on the subject in its title, but begins with a rather needless 64 pages on historical background dating back to before World War 1.

The meat of the book comprises 124 pages on the engagement in the title, supported by 30 pages of appendices at the back. The rest of the Bismarck episode takes up another hundred or so pages. The book is therefore basically a rather mistitled second attempt at the whole Bismarck episode.

This is a pity, as there is much still to be said on the whole question of the loss of the Hood, the effectiveness of Admiral Holland's tactics and the actual dynamics of the explosion that blew up the great ship. The author is generally supportive of Holland, but his discussion lacks depth. One of my students, Richard Woodman, studied this quite recently and his work is available on the Hood Association website. This seems to have passed the author by.

With perhaps less excuse, the same fate has befallen the book published after the 2001 expedition to find the Hood wreck by Rob White and David Mearns, that set out the consensus views of those on it. Neither is there any mention of Bill Jurens' considered rebuttal of our conclusions setting out a debate that has still not been settled. There are some references to the views of 'some British historians' that seem to refer to us, but it is all rather cryptic.

Oddly enough, Winklareth has seen and used Jurens' key earlier article on the sinking that must be the starting point of any study of the subject and which got the latter on the 2001 expedition. If this piece, however, why not the other? There is also no mention of Bruce Taylor's major study of Hood. As readers of this column know, I have some problems with this book, but it must be consulted by anyone writing on this subject.

This is not to say that there is nothing useful in the new book. Winklareth has worked hard on the gunnery aspects of the battle and has studied the shooting of both sides in great and interesting detail. Some of the utility is mitigated however, by the author not fully distinguishing between 'salvos' and 'broadside'. And how many rounds were fired in each from which turrets. This is not uncommon, but given his hard work on gunnery detail it is rather a pity. There is work still to do.

Also the author cannot resist going into great detail on the characteristics of the ships he mentions as if he is writing a naval reference book. This wastes space that might have been used to great advantage and clogs up the analysis and storytelling which at times is admirably clear and gripping. This information should have been consigned to appendices, rather than the interesting matters that are discussed there and which are very salient to the main text and should have been part of it.

The maps are especially good and helpful and the book is well illustrated with photographs and drawings, although the standard of reproduction is none too good. The author is quite a good artist and he uses his own drawings to effect. His depictions of Hood sinking, however, do leave something to be desired. Further detailed analysis of the images taken on board Prinz Eugen might have helped here.

Having examined the wreck on the sea bed, I find it quite impossible to accept that the ship went down as illustrated in the sketches with her midships and forward sections undamaged. The author should have tried to explain how the ship he illustrates came to be the shattered wreck on the bottom of the Denmark Strait.

There are various possible explanations for the events subsequent to the original magazine explosion aft that require much further research (most sadly not apparently undertaken by the recent failed expedition to retrieve Hood's bell). Secondary (or even tertiary) explosions forward seem to me most likely, although their most spectacular result was the blown out conning tower rather than the loss of the hull section forward of 'A' turret that Winklareth mentions in passing.

Its absence, like that of the covers to 'A' and 'B' turrets, and, most importantly perhaps, the loss of the outer plating for much of the starboard side, needs much further study both on the spot and ashore.

The book could have been much better, but unlike its predecessor, it is a serious contribution to Bismarck and Hood literature and does much to vindicate its author.

Commanding a

WHAT sort of barometer do you need to gauge the pressure of the Royal Navy?

Assessing facts and figures, manpower, efficiency and the more intangible qualities of morale, motivation and 'the will to fight and win,' is a task that can never be finished.

You can take a snapshot of the Fleet at any one time, but circumstances and demands are constantly changing and it's vital to keep a grip on the overall picture in order to make the right decisions.

Providing this 'barometer' is a powerhouse of collective experience lodged within five of the Navy's most experienced Warrant Officers.

The Warrant Officer for the Naval Service WO1 Terry Casey (profiled in the October edition of *Navy News*) and the five Command Warrant Officers have their desks in Navy Command Headquarters, but it's rare to find them together in Leach Building on any one day.

Usually they are out and about, visiting the naval community in their respective branches to impart news and information, and return with feedback for their Admiral and senior officers.

Discussing topics of interest with Mr Casey are the CWOs for Surface Ships; Submarines; Royal Marines; Fleet Air Arm, and Reserves – each selected by the respective admiral to represent their particular fighting arm, responsible for upholding its values and standards for promoting the Naval core values among its men and women.

An essential part of the job for each Command Warrant Officer is to act as the 'eyes and ears' of his or her admiral, gathering the opinions of the ratings cadre, reading the pressures of the Naval Service and reporting their findings back up the chain.

It's a two-way process – the Command Warrant Officers are responsible for explaining strategic policy, which means they must have a good handle on the political and operational reasons behind policy decisions, and they must be completely up-to-speed with changes to policy, terms and conditions.

This feedback is such an essential tool of RN management and leadership that every Command Warrant Officer is required to report its readings to his admiral on an annual basis, and his or her advice and findings influence their decision-making when policy is formulated. The fighting arm Admirals then report these findings to the Navy Board.

The moral component – the will to fight and win, which the Command Warrant Officers are tasked to deliver – encompasses many of the qualities and high professional standards essential to the Royal Navy.

Some, like equipment and good administrative support, are tangible, others such as morale, courage, loyalty, leadership and pride, and the uniquely maritime challenge of living in the confined space of a unit for long periods of time without complaining, are harder to quantify, but all are essential to the Navy's ethos.

"It's morale, it's whether we have confidence in our leaders, confidence in the support we've got and our equipment, then all the soft issues, leave and harmony," explains WO1 Casey.

"They're all the bits of information that feed into the barometer to give the overall view of whether we're getting it right or wrong."

He added: "The Command Warrant Officers need to identify threats to this moral component, whether they come from personnel issues, churn, equipment failings or challenges to morale from changes to terms and conditions."

"You have to gain the trust of people you talk to quickly. All the Command Warrant Officers do this, and we know through experience that the best way to do it is face-to-face."

That's the introduction done. Now let's meet the five CWOs...

'Spending weeks in a tube is not for everybody...'

EVERY branch in the Royal Navy takes its people away from home and families for weeks or even months at a time, but only the Submarine Service removes them from regular contact as well.

"It is a unique situation," said WO1 Chris Green, who has been CWO for the Submarine Service for two years.

"For the majority of the time, the sense of being away without communications is the main difference between us and other fighting arms – it is not only a difficult situation for our submariners but also for the families left behind."

"Everyone has time away from their families, but with us it's not just time away, it's also not being able to communicate whilst the boats are at sea."

He explained: "When a submarine has been away for weeks, or months, it's essential to ensure that when they get back you can tell them anything they've missed in the meantime."

"Whether it's pensions, policies, news, or stopping any negative rumours which fill the gap, it's important to be able to pass it to the sailors when they go alongside."

Pensions, allowances, the pay freeze, changing terms and conditions of service – the majority are shared issues and recurring themes among the CWOs, but each branch has its unique concerns. For submariners there has been disquiet over pay and allowances. There is also much discussion about the T-boats being based in Scotland – it's planned that the remaining Trafalgar class will move to Faslane along with some areas of submarine training in the near future.

Like all the CWOs, WO1 Green believes there is no substitute for face-to-face meetings. He said: "I try to get out and visit the boats when it can be arranged without disrupting their programme."

"I have visited several units whilst at sea including a T-boat while she was coming back from deployment. I went out to Gibraltar and joined her coming through the Med, which was excellent because you get four to five days at sea while the lads are a captive audience."

"When you're living with them for four to five days you get a better feeling than when you just visit for an hour or two – you get a lot more feedback because the lads come and talk to you about various topics and issues."

Lads – and soon to be lasses too, for the Submarine Service will take its first women in a couple of months. It's a welcome step for Mr Green.

"Having females is a positive move and we should welcome it with open arms," he said. "In this day and age it would be absolutely ridiculous for the Submarine Service not to tap into that talent."

"It opens up new doors and career paths for females. As long as we learn from any issues when they first arise, it can only be of benefit."

"Of course there will be issues and concerns, but we're all mature enough to see what they're going to be and deal with them."

Mr Green joined the Navy straight from school in 1977, on his father's birthday (a great birthday present), and began training as a submariner five years later – so he has now been in the branch for more than 30 years.

He said: "The Navy's changed tremendously in those years, but it is still a good career. I would certainly join again."

"The benefits are immense but you have to look for them, they're not given on a plate. Spending weeks on end in a tube with 60 other people is not for everybody, but it is for a lot of people and I think we must make sure our people don't think the grass is greener on the other side."

● (l-r) WO1s Annette Penfold (Royal Naval Reserves), Chris Green (Submarine Service), Andy Strickland (Surface Fleet), Terry Casey (Warrant Officer Naval Service), WO1 Andrew Craig (Fleet Air Arm) and WO1 Bruce Riach (Royal Marines)

Picture: LA(Phot) C



'With a reservist, you're getting something extra'

RESERVISTS have a big future in the Navy – their numbers are set to double by 2020 to meet Defence Review targets.

The RNR will increase by 55 per cent, its Royal Marines counterpart by over 40 per cent.

Being a Naval Reservist is a big commitment, because most Reservists have other full-time jobs, so every time they deploy it affects not just their family, but also their employer and work colleagues.

As Command Warrant Officer for the Royal Naval Reserve, a large part of WO1 Annette Penfold's job involves working with employers, as well as with the 2,800 maritime reservists who make up her parish.

"Reservists need the support of their employer because their commitment of 24 days a year is a lot to ask," she said.

"Reservists will have to sign up to a specific training period and be liable for a mobilisation period that could last up to 12 months."

"Employers need to be as accommodating and flexible as possible, and we in the Armed Forces need to stress the value of employing Reservists."

"We need to get the message out that if they employ a reservist, they are getting something extra – the commitment and reliability and 'can do' attitude."

WO1 Penfold works closely with SaBRE, the MOD marketing campaign which aims to gain and maintain the support of employers of reservists. SaBRE has a network of companies and businesses which publicly back the reserves, and holds functions and presentations to encourage others to do the same.

A reservist herself since 1989, and awarded the MBE in the 2013 News Year's Honours, WO1 Penfold is keen to emphasise the commitment and uniqueness of her fellow reservists.

"When reservists attend drill night, they've probably already done a full day at work and hurried to their unit to be on time," she said.

WO1 Penfold had already been in the Royal Naval Reserve for more than 20 years when, in 2010, she was appointed Command Warrant Officer for the RNR – the first woman to hold the title.

WO1 Penfold joined the RN in 1978 as a training support assistant in HMS Dauntless and spent 11 years in the Women's Royal Naval Service with a series of rapid promotions and busy jobs. One of her superiors commented that she would not make a very good Wren – but she might make a very good leading Wren.

In 1989 she had to leave the WRNS because she was pregnant with her first child. She joined HMS Vivid and re-trained as a navigation specialist.

"People joining now are amazed at how archaic attitudes were back in 1989," she says.

"We've come on in leaps and bounds. Of course it's not an easy choice to make – who wants to leave a young baby and go to sea? – but now, at least, women have that choice whereas they didn't before."

She added: "I have three children and a serving husband who was often away. I managed to maintain a career and have a family because the Navy has been flexible and allowed various levels of commitment throughout my time."

"I've been very lucky in leaving the RN and joining the Reserves, so I could have both."

Authorities at all times

(Marines),
(Service),
aire Myers



'Treating people more like adults...'

WO1 Andy Strickland joined the team in November 2012 to become Command Warrant Officer Surface Ships.

His branch includes all General Service ratings as well as the 67 units under Rear Admiral Surface Ships, and his previous job, in the career management cell in Portsmouth, stood him in good stead to take on this very big role.

"I haven't been selected for this job to be a 'yes-man' to the admiral, and I will be entirely honest with senior officers," he said.

"The admiral needs someone to be able to tell him how I think it is, and he wouldn't want me to hide anything because I didn't think he wanted to hear it."

He added: "When I go round ships and speak to the personnel, I'm very much a friendly force, I'm not going to be running back to Navy Command HQ and reporting what individuals have told me in certain ships – that's not the purpose of the job."

"Of course if individuals have specific questions to raise about their own circumstances, that's part of my role as well, and I will try to help."

"I should be available to source the answers on policy questions, certainly current themes like pay allowance and pensions, as these are issues that people are really concerned about and they want the correct answers."

"But the purpose of visiting units, talking to personnel and gathering feedback is that their information will feed into a bigger picture."

WO1 Strickland joined as a junior seaman operator and specialised in mine warfare.

Very much a 'small ship' man, he spent the early years of his career in minehunters and was rapidly promoted – when he was selected for WO1 in 2004 he was only 34, the lower age limit for such a promotion.

Although the job allows him to be a little bit 'tribal' about his branch, he's careful not to be too partisan about small ships, although he admits his background probably helped.

"Don't get me wrong, the guys in frigates and destroyers absolutely do a fantastic job," he said. "But the level of responsibility and autonomy guys have in small ships, plus the expectation that they can work unsupervised, is far higher."

He added: "Small ships are working really hard doing MCM ops in Bahrain. When they're back in the UK they're concentrating on the defence of the UK military tasks, or providing military aid to the civil community, or generating to go back out to Bahrain where they're at their peak working with our international partners who want them to be there."

"They haven't got a big gun on the front and the recognition for people in the minor war vessels and MCMVs is difficult to achieve because they're not all fancy and glamorous, they're in the background working hard."

His first assignment as a warrant

officer in 2004 was responsibility for the programming of ships deploying to Atlantic Patrol Tasks North and South.

"Looking back, I think I was a competent Chief Petty Officer who thought he knew a bit about the Navy and soon learnt there was a lot more out there. From there I still wanted more."

He got more. In 2007 he was appointed executive warrant officer in Westminster and found himself east of Suez taking part in her Orion deployment.

In 2009 he was appointed to the career management cell in Portsmouth where he was responsible for career management of more than 4,500 junior ratings.

Looking back to his own days as a junior rate, he believes certain aspects of the Service are better than they were.

He said: "Accommodation ashore is far better than it was and in our new ships it's improving."

"I'd like to think we all our people in a more mature way and more like adults. We're not living in the 1960-70s Navy where everyone turned up and did what the Chief said."

"Our junior rates are generally better educated than when I joined and education means you form opinions, so we have to expect to receive opinions and learn how to deal with it."

He finds the Royal Navy as compelling now as when he was a schoolboy in Blaydon, Newcastle, and watched on television as the Falklands task force set off.

"I still find this job fascinating – every day brings something different. The day I get up and don't want to do this any more will be the day I leave."

'Life is more fun in the Fleet Air Arm...'

OF ALL the five fighting arms, the Fleet Air Arm has probably seen the most change over the last few years.

WO1 Andrew Craig, an air engineering mechanic, became Command Warrant Officer for the FAA in May 2012, in the midst of all the changes.

He came to the job from RNAS Yeovilton, (his seventh posting there) where he had assisted in the management of junior rate personnel released on redundancy, so he has seen the downside first-hand. However, he believes the future is looking brighter.

"The biggest challenge for us at the moment is that all the equipment is changing," he said.

"We have Wildcat, Avenger, Merlin Mk 2, Mk 3 and the Joint Strike Fighter coming in and we still have the legacy aircraft to manage."

He continued: "Merlin Mk1 and Sea King specialists are retraining on Merlin Mk 2 and Mk 3; Lynx specialists are retraining on Wildcat, and the F35 Joint Strike Fighter is beginning to increase their manning numbers."

"One consequence for the Fleet Air Arm's engineers is that they will all have been retrained within the next four years."

WO1 Craig has a wide breadth of experience in engineering, logistics support and manpower management, all of which gives him a valuable overview of the branch as it goes through a period of transformation.

He said: "The future is bright and morale is very positive at the moment."

"Times were challenging in 2010 because of the Strategic Defence and Security Review, but there are encouraging times ahead, especially as people embrace these future opportunities."

The Fleet Air Arm is the most 'joint' of all the fighting arms, with a good number of its 5,500 men and women working or training alongside the other Services.

It makes for a complex chain of command, in which FAA personnel live and train with Army and Air Force personnel.

"All the CWOs face familiar challenges – complaints about accommodation, pay and allowances and uncertainty about the future," he said.

"The Fleet Air Arm has a few further specific challenges, such as shortage of married quarters in Culdrose and uncertainty about long-term planning."

WO Craig continues: "There is more variety and we're historically more stable because people tended to train on a type, so they were more settled."

"I believe, as I always have, that life is more fun in the Fleet Air Arm."

'We require guys to have that extra bonding...'

WO1(RSM) Bruce Riach looks after about 7,200 Royal Marines, one of the largest of the branches, but he believes the closest-knit.

"We put a huge emphasis on standards and behaviour – all the Naval Service do – but we require guys to have that extra bonding," he says.

"The Royal Marines have a great selection process followed by fantastic training, and generally our peer groups look after each other."

As the Marines have a regimental system, Mr Riach does not hold the prime responsibility for upholding standards and behaviour in the Corps – that belongs to the Corps Regimental Sergeant Major, WO1 Ally McGill.

But like his fellow CWOs, his job is to talk to serving personnel and their families, gauging the current pressures on the Corps and reporting concerns up and down the chain.

He believes the challenge for the Corps post-Afghanistan is to continue to improve two unique skills – amphibious and cold weather warfare training.

"Both are feathers in our cap, and unique from a military skills aspect. Mountainous and cold weather warfare training is very arduous, but in military training terms it offers something you can't get anywhere else."

"It is an ideal environment to perfect basic skills and administration. If you lose a glove on Dartmoor, you get a cold hand. If you lose it in Norway, you're a CASEVAC case."

He added: "The other unique skill is amphibious. The guys enjoyed Cougar in the Mediterranean last year. As long as training like those and the annual USA exercise go on, morale is high."

"We have to train for everything, because anything could happen and our job is to be the UK's contingency forces, ready to react to any situation, anywhere in the world at short notice. "The Corps has been extremely busy

over the past decade, primarily with Afghanistan, which has resulted in some extra issues we have had to deal with, but overall, I believe the manpower pressures within the Corps are considerably less than a year or two ago."

He explained: "Generally, the lads are happy and there's much less negativity than there was this time last year, when a lot of corporals handed their notice in."

"At the time there were any number of jobs going in personal and maritime security, and when private companies are offering a salary of £90K, it's obviously very tempting to a young corporal, although even with a far better financial package on offer outside we still had the majority of our corporals not submitting their notice, which I believe says a lot about their commitment and enthusiasm for the Royal Marines."

"The Marines are very employable elsewhere, as their intelligence and educational levels make them attractive to employers – research shows we have the most highly-educated recruits."

He added: "When you look at their current financial package, with no pay rises, and a reduced pension, you can see why there was such a rush to leave, and often when a Royal Marine puts in his notice, it is because his wife or family do not want to take the strain of repeated deployments."

"Hopefully now our people should be able to spend more time with their families, and with the reduced pull from the maritime security industry, the overall package provided within the Corps – the lifestyle, pride, being part of a highly professional organisation, sport adventure training, good mates, medical and dental cover – will be seen as beneficial and something they want to be part of."

"Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind" Ref: NN

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● Lt (SCC) Paul Mooney RMR

Community award for Guernsey CO

FORMER Royal Marine Paul Mooney is already making a splash in a new role with the Sea Cadets. Lt (SCC) Paul Mooney RMR, the Commanding Officer of Guernsey unit, was the winner of the Outstanding Individual Achievement Award as part of the 2012 community awards in Guernsey.

The awards ceremony took the form of a sell-out tea event which attracted a crowd of more than 200 to St James, with others looking on from the public gallery. Awards were up for grabs in six categories, with more than 90 nominations being received across the classes.

Lt Mooney's win was on the back of the "huge impact on the Guernsey Sea Cadets, according to the awards organisers, who added that he was "chosen as the winner for his exceptional leadership, energy and enthusiasm."

"He has profoundly re-energised an organisation whose continued existence was in question."

Sadie Siviter de Paucar, development manager at the Guernsey Community Foundation, is delighted with the success of this year's event.

"The Community Awards are now in their second year and are proving to be hugely popular with the voluntary sector," she said.

"We often receive compliments from people who are delighted that the efforts and dedication of the sector are being recognised in this way."

"We would like to extend our congratulations to all the winners. They should be very proud."

Third clasp

GRAMPIAN District Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Brian Mair RNR was on the receiving end of a pleasant surprise at the latest Northern Area Sea Cadets conference held at HMS Scotia, Rosyth.

Captain Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor presented Lt Cdr Mair with the third clasp to the Cadet Forces Medal, marking more than 30 years of adult service.

The officer started as a cadet at Stonehaven unit in 1974, moving onto the unit staff in 1980.

He was appointed First Lieutenant in 1985, serving in the role for 13 years, and in 2002 was appointed District Officer – a role he maintains today.

Units almost halfway to ship appeal target

SEA Cadet units are almost halfway to their £250,000 target in the Corps' training ship fundraising campaign – and the Senior Service have weighed in to help.

Organisers set units a challenge to raise a quarter of a million pounds towards the total of £5.6m to replace sail training ship TS Royalist, with the bulk of the total (over £4m) having already been raised through corporate sources.

As of the end of January, £114,600 had been pledged, with £13,687.89 actually in hand.

The campaign was formally launched in 2009, recognising the fact that the Corps' flagship was approaching 40 and a new tall ship was needed to take over when Royalist reached the end of her useful life.

Royalist has been in service since 1971, taking youngsters to sea for training cruises which not only teach maritime skills but also help with personal development and team-building.

Sea Cadet Headquarters in Lambeth have been getting exciting updates from units across the UK on the events that Areas,

Districts and the units themselves are running or planning over the coming months.

With more than 120 units keen to get involved so far, many have been sharing their fundraising ideas with HQ staff and telling them how much they wish to raise.

Manchester District raised £1,500 by doing a bag pack in their local shopping centre which featured Altrincham and Bollington and Macclesfield, the latter with help from their affiliated ship HMS Mersey.

The River-class offshore patrol vessel joined forces with TS

Ardent to raise £1,000 towards the project.

The CO of Mersey, Lt Cdr Sarah Oakley, said: "The crew of HMS Mersey are proud to be able to support this venture, as it provides fantastic opportunities for young people, who may turn out to be the Royal Navy of the future."

Lt (SCC) Karen Black RNR, CO of Bollington and Macclesfield unit, thanked Mersey for their generosity and said: "It was very satisfying to be able to work with our affiliated ship, to help provide a valuable resource for the future."

Throughout 2012, HMS Mersey held several charity events on board and raised £500 for the appeal, while the Bollington cadets' bag-packing at Sainsburys before Christmas matched the ship's donation and the total raised by Altrincham.

The fundraising has not been confined to the UK – Malta unit raised £152.89 towards the New Ship Appeal through supporter donations on top of the £666 they had already pulled in.

Some 40 units have already signed up to take part in 'Sea Cadets Row Around the World in 80 hours' rowathon between April 18-21, as reported in February's Sea Cadet pages.

HQ is still pushing for 100 units to take part, so if you want to get on board email HQ on events@ms-sc.org

If every cadet in the Corps did two miles the target would be reached.

With British Rowing organising access to rowing machines around the UK and a hand-picked team rowing from Abingdon to Tower Bridge it promises to be an impressive event – see www.justgiving.com/row-the-world to support the HQ team.

Royalist, a 24-metre square rigged Brig, underwent a major refit in 1992, but spiralling costs have made it uneconomic to continue to maintain the vessel.

She has taken more than 30,000 cadets to sea, and it is hoped that the new ship – which will probably look similar to Royalist – will be ready for the 2015 sailing season.



● Cadets and staff from Newhaven and Seaford unit gather at the obelisk memorial to those who died in the wreck of HMS Brazen below the cliffs of Newhaven in 1800

Brazen remembered

MEMBERS of Newhaven and Seaford unit gathered at St Michael's church in Newhaven for the annual memorial service in honour of those who died in the wreck of HMS Brazen 213 years ago.

Following the church service the cadets and other guests went to the churchyard where Cdt Hemmings laid a wreath on the obelisk memorial to the ship.

The service was also attended by the Mayor of Newhaven, Cllr Graham Amy, members of Newhaven Coastwatch and a representative from Newhaven Coastguard.

HMS Brazen was originally a privateer captured from the French in late 1798 and put back into service as the 18-gun sloop of war HMS Brazen.

In the autumn of 1799 she sailed from Devon under Capt James Hanson and headed east up the Channel to take up station off the coast of Sussex and Hampshire to counter the threat of French raiders.

On January 25 1800 Brazen intercepted and

captured a French ship south of the Isle of Wight, which was sailed into Portsmouth with a dozen British sailors as a prize crew.

Now short-handed, Brazen was caught in a violent storm the following morning and driven on to rocks beneath cliffs just west of Newhaven.

Only one of her crew of over 100 survived – reportedly a non-swimmer by the name of Jeremiah Hill who was dragged from the sea by two men using a mobile farm crane – and more than 90 bodies were washed ashore in the following days.

The tragedy moved the people of Newhaven to form a committee and press for a lifeboat, paid for by Lloyds of London and local donations, some 20 years before the RNLI was formed.

The churchyard monument to Hanson, his officers and men was paid for by the Commanding Officer's friends – the body of Capt Hanson was one of the few which was never recovered from the sea.

Frosty reception for Megan

A SEA Cadet on an exchange visit from South Africa found the British weather a bit of a shock on her arrival.

Megan Dawson, from Port Elizabeth, visited the UK as part of the Sea Cadet International Exchange Programme.

And having only ever left the continent of Africa to visit cousins in Australia, she found the Arctic conditions here very much colder than anything she was used to.

In spite of the sub-zero temperatures and her first glimpse of snow and ice, she enjoyed a packed programme which included a course at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall, a sightseeing trip to Central London, her very first pantomime – *Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood* at Nottingham Playhouse – visits to several Sea Cadet units and a prizegiving evening at HMS Sherwood where she is pictured in the photo (above right).

On her return to Port Elizabeth – a coastal city and major seaport with a population of almost 250,000 in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa



● South African Sea Cadet Megan Dawson with (from left) Sue Dewey, Chairman of Nottingham Sea Cadets, Cdre Gareth Derrick, the Commander Maritime Reserve, Cllr Carol Pepper, Chairman of Nottinghamshire County Council, Cdr Martin Clegg RNR, the Commanding Officer of HMS Sherwood and Sub Lt (SCC) Adam Crump RNR, the CO of TS Orion

– Megan's suitcase was full of gifts, Sea Cadet and Royal Navy memorabilia and several new sweatshirts and woolly jumpers...

She is now hoping to join the Royal Navy as an officer cadet when she graduates from university.

Ellesmere Port has new leader

ELLESMERE Port unit has seen a flurry of awards at the start of 2013 – but bade farewell to their stalwart commanding officer.

After 22 years as CO of TS Forward – and more than four decades involved within the unit – Lt Cdr (SCC) Toni Cioma RNR retired on New Year's Day, handing over the reins to PO (SCC) Arron Ainslie after the ship's company returned from Christmas leave.

Staff and cadets at the unit wished Lt Cdr Cioma well in his retirement and thanked him for his 45 years of commitment, dedication and service to the Cheshire unit.

The North West Ambulance Service has awarded the unit a bronze award for first aid training – and as only a few providers in the region have received such an award the unit is proud of its achievement.

Two members of the unit have achieved awards from the vInspired charity.

Congratulations to APO Robert Bellis and PPO James Evans on gaining their v50 and v100 awards for 150 hours volunteering with the Corps.

Officer in Charge PO (SCC) Arron Ainslie said: "Well done to both members of staff and congratulations from all at TS Forward."

vInspired is an independent charity that helps young people discover the value of volunteering for the benefit of themselves and others.

The organisation uses online resources to inspire offline actions, providing opportunities and support for young people to get involved with good causes in their communities.

Ellesmere Port has once again secured burgee status for this year within the Corps.

The burgee is the highest award that can be won by a unit in recognition of the hard work of the volunteers, cadets and the unit management committee.

PO Ainslie has congratulated his ship's company on the achievement, and "for maintaining the excellent standards for which TS Forward is renowned."

Prestigious burgees are awarded to the top 25 per cent of units across the country as a sign of the efficient manner in which they operate.



● POC Callum Malone in discussion with Cllr Althea Smith, the Mayor of Southwark, during a recent visit to the unit headquarters

Southwark exemplar

A PRESTIGIOUS award at the end of a busy year was the cherry on the cake for a cadet at Southwark unit.

POC Callum Malone had already earned an ILM Certificate in Leadership, a BTEC in Public Services, a BTEC in Music and his Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award during 2012.

But then Captain Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor announced that POC Malone had been awarded the Commander Brown Award for the cadet best fulfilling the aims of the Corps.

Apart from his qualifications, POC Malone also played his

part in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee River Pageant, coxing the Southwark Trinity 500 boat and having a role in the London Area Guard at the National Trafalgar Day Parade in Trafalgar Square.

POC Malone said: "I cannot deny that this award is very nice but nothing touches the pride felt in having such an important part in the river pageant or being a member of that guard marching down the Mall to Trafalgar Square."

"My aim for the coming year is to see all TS Cossack cadets involved in spectacular events like these."

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Jessica is Board pick

CAPTAIN Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor was on hand to present a badge of office and appointment certificate to POC Jessica Burton, the London Area Navy Board Cadet for this year.

POC Burton (*above, with Capt Windsor*), a member of Tooting and Balham unit, was given the badge and certificate during the London Area conference, hosted by HMS President on the north bank of the Thames near Tower Bridge.

And POC Burton had an immediate opportunity to start work in her new role – she was invited to deliver a presentation to the conference on her personal experiences and intellectual gains as a result of her seven years as a Sea Cadet.

Shop with the Corps

CADET shoulder slides are now available at the official Sea Cadet Corps online shop, at www.seacadetsshop.org

The site boasts a wide range of Sea Cadet-branded goods and other useful equipment, including flagstuffs, bosun's calls, stickers water bottles and aprons.

If you need an outboard engine or a rudder for your unit's Trinity 500 boat, you may find just what you need at the website.

And there is a range of clothing for Sea Cadets, Junior Cadets and instructors, with the added opportunity to customise it to your unit.

Also featuring under the 'new in' section of the shop are beanie hats and sports caps bearing the Corps logo as well as butterfly-clasp pin badges.

Splicing heavy rope and plaiting dough

CADETS from Methil and District unit have been learning traditional naval skills during training sessions.

The first element came in the form of a challenge from staff at the Methil Heritage Centre, who asked if cadets would mind splicing a "wee piece of rope".

The "wee piece of rope" turned out to be an eight-strand, four-braided rope – and quite a job.

With splicing tools in hand and under the guidance of Ian Hill, the splicing began.

"It took the best part of the day to complete the splice – the rope was not the easiest to work with due to wear and tear, but the end result looks not too bad," said Mr Hill.

"When the splicing was nearly finished Mr Hill explained that the rope was reduced gradually to give a neat, tapered finish," said Leading Junior Cadet Mia Dair.

"It looks great. We got to handle and use some of the tools for splicing and they are really sharp."

Splicing a rope is an historic seafaring skill which allows the ends of two ropes to be joined together without a knot, retaining most of the strength of the original rope

Another skill on the agenda was cook stewarding.

Members of Methil have been training hard in the galley – and it was not just soap suds they have been up to their elbows in.

Under the watchful eye of Civilian Instructor Alan Innes, the cadets have been learning the basic elements from setting tables to producing delicious homemade bread.

"We have been training hard and table-setting sounds easy, but CI Innes sets a really high standard – and when we get it right its brilliant," said Cadet Connor Methven.

Alan said: "In the Sea Cadet Corps, the cadets can train to a high standard within cook

● **Cadet Natalie Dobbie (left) and OC Amy Newell preparing to bake bread plaits and rolls**

Pictures: Sub Lt (SCC) Fiona Sekkat RNR

stewarding.

"Any hotelier who has the opportunity to employ our young people will get an individual with an excellent foundation of knowledge and ability."

And the benefits of the training were felt all around.

"When we made the bread, it was great – we got to take the plaited loaf home, but we left the bread rolls for our shipmates," said Cadet Natalie Dobbie.

"We even made a huge pan of soup to go with them."

And OC Amy Newell added: "I have never made bread before – in fact there are loads of things I have never done before, but I can do them with the Sea Cadets."

● **Job almost done – Ian Hill helps Methil cadets with their rope-splicing challenge**



Awards for dedication to New Romney

AWARDS for dedicated service to the Sea Cadets have been presented to two members of New Romney and District unit.

During a ceremony at unit headquarters in Littlestone, awards were given to PO Simon Matthews and Civilian Instructor Petra Mortimer by unit chairman Lt Cdr (SCC) Don Davies RNR (Rtd).

PO Matthews joined the unit in October 2005 and is now First Lieutenant.

He is also a member of Littlestone lifeboat crew and relief First Lieutenant on the Sea Cadet Corps' offshore power vessel TS John Jerwood.

Petra Mortimer joined the Sea Cadets in 2003, starting as Administrative Officer, progressing to Junior Cadet Instructor and Assistant Bandleader specialising in the glockenspiel.

Officer in Charge Alan Bell congratulated both Simon and Petra and thanked them for their dedication, which has made a significant contribution to the continued success of the unit.

Recreation role for Kevin

GRAMPIAN Assistant District Officer Lt (SCC) Kevin Morris RNR has been appointed as the Area Recreation Officer for Northern Area.

Lt Morris's new role will involve the organising and running of all competitions and regattas for Sea Cadet units from Scotland and the North of England, as well as preparing them for national competitions.

Before taking up the post Lt Morris was the Commanding Officer of Stonehaven unit for a decade before retiring last year.

Lt Morris said: "I have travelled the length and breadth of this country coaching and supporting cadets over the past 20 years so I kind of know all the ins and outs, and with the support of the Area staff I am looking forward to fulfilling this exciting and challenging role."

Lt Morris succeeds Lt Cdr (SCC) Jim Hearl RNR, who has been appointed Area Training Officer.

Gosport in community's good books



● Gosport cadets help transfer library stock from the town's Discovery Centre to a nearby community centre

'COMMUNITY service' has a judicial ring about it – but members of Gosport unit have not been flouting the law.

They have been undertaking community service as part of the cadets' training programme where youngsters are encouraged to go out into the community to help other people.

On this particular occasion, Nicola Hepple, assistant manager at the Discovery Centre, had asked the cadets to help in moving the extensive stock of library books from the centre, down three flights of stairs and across the road to the community centre, where the new library will be located.

Nine cadets and two adult volunteers mustered at the centre at 10.30 on Saturday morning and were briefed by Nicola – the best part of which was where the cadets were told that, on completion of the task, they would be supplied with 'tea and stickies' in the best Naval tradition.

Discovery Centre staff also entered into the spirit of the event by dressing up as pirates.

Nicola then led her team of enthusiastic cadets away to begin the task and, in very short order, the books were flying off the shelves and were on their way to the community centre.

When the task was completed to Nicola's satisfaction she thanked the youngsters for all their efforts and good humour and, true to her word, the promised 'tea and stickies' materialised – which all the cadets agreed was the best part of the evolution.

The cadets who took part were:- POC Rich, OC Killeen, OC Barry, OC Sherman, Cadet Kitcherman, Cadet A Frasle, Cadet F Frasle, Cadet Sherman, Cadets J and J King and Junior Cadet First Class Hatch.



● S/M Tommy Atkins, chairman of the Royal Marines Association (Malta GC), presents a cheque to Lt (SCC) James Davis RNR (Rtd), chairman of Malta GC Sea Cadet unit, watched by unit CO Lt Donald Montebello RMR (right) and other RMA members

Boat fund boost

FIVE members from the Royal Marines Association (Malta GC) have paid a formal visit to Malta GC unit.

The group were taken for a short tour round the Rinella Gun Powder Magazine, which currently houses the headquarters of the cadets.

S/Ms Tommy Atkins (RMA chairman), Charles Nelson (treasurer), Kate Nelson (secretary), John Rafferty (member) and Bob Barnes (member), were met by unit chairman Lt (SCC) James Davis RNR (Rtd) and Commanding Officer Lt Donald Montebello RMR.

The RMA party were introduced to unit staff and cadets, and at the end of Parade Night were invited to witness Evening Colours.

After the ceremony Tommy Atkins presented a cheque for €1,258 to be added to the unit's Boat Fund – the money came from Malta RMA and branches and individuals in the UK.

Lt James Davis thanked the RMA for their generous donation and for the strong support they have always given to the Malta GC Unit.

The guests were later invited to the unit wardroom for a cocktail party.



Good golly, Ollie that's a fast time

TWELVE RN indoor rowers competed at the English Indoor Rowing Championships (EIRC) held in Manchester's Velodrome.

Excellent performances by all competitors over 2,000m included one gold, two silvers and two bronze medals – and a number of personal and seasonal bests, writes Paul Winton.

Performances augured well for the imminent World Indoor Rowing Championships (WIRC) in Boston USA, where ten of these rowers would be competing.

BRNC's LPT Ollie Osborne (pictured in action above by Anne Yates) won the men's 30-plus heavyweight in a personal best time of 6m 11s dead, leading all the way as he set the third-fastest time of the day overall.

His blistering finish, after a committed and controlled 'cruise', is the key to his success and further medal potential at WIRC.

Lt Cdr Jim Thomson (Lancaster) was a comfortable second place in 6m 20.9s.

CPO Collin Leiba (Drake) will be 50 in three months' time, thus his bronze medal in the men's 40+ heavyweight was achieved against a range of comparative youngsters. Well known for his sprint capabilities over shorter distances, he has focused on developing aerobic performance to enhance medal potential at longer distances. The watching crowd were impressed by his efforts and ability to dig deeper than appeared possible as he finished in 6m 29.2s, just short of his best time.

Fellow age groupers Lt Cdrs Rory West (Northwood) and Derek Powles (Excellent) both pushed towards season's bests in 6m 42.2s (tenth) and 6m 49.9s

(16th) respectively.

Although Paul Winton (MCTA) won the European 55+ heavyweight 2,000m the previous day, he faced greater competition with 'youngsters' in the wider age range of 50+ as he finished tenth in 6m 56.8s, just under five seconds slower than 18 hours previously in Germany.

Steve Penberthy (Temeraire) was disappointed with his 7m 16s (16th), but should be reassured that he remains highly-ranked in the category.

WO2 Adrian Walker (Neptune) celebrated the end of his career in the Royal Navy with an eighth-place finish in the men's 40+ lightweight in an excellent time of 7m 10.3s.

ET(ME) Ian Allen (Sultan) was a rowing coach ('on the water') and personal fitness trainer prior to joining the Service; his good technique, allied to improving strength and endurance, realised benefits as he won bronze in the highly-competitive men's heavyweight open in a time of 6m 21.5s.

Competing alongside Allen was LAET Oliver Irvine (Sultan), who posted a personal best 6m 44.2s in 16th place – his technique characterised by regular upward gazes, apparently seeking divine guidance.

AB(CIS) Sophia Burns (Collingwood) realised the benefits of recent training to finish an excellent fifth place in the women's heavyweight open, knocking 15 seconds off her RN championship-winning time as she finished in 7m 55.2s. Lt Maxine Ashby (BRNC) went one place better, setting a personal best of 8m 38.9s, in the women's lightweight 40+.



● RN veteran CPO Neil Martin attempts to return a shot served up by Army Major Chris Wilson

Picture: Cpl Paul Shaw, RLC

Squash under the cosh

THE RN came away empty-handed from the 2013 Inter-Services squash championships hosted by the Royal Air Force at Halton, writes Lt Cdr David Cooke.

On the first day of the championships – in its new two-day format – all four categories started at 10am, each allocated one court in an ice-cold squash court area which did not benefit from any heating whatsoever.

Having swept the board in the 2012 event, the Army were not playing on the first morning; the RN were in action against the RAF in the U25s, ladies, seniors and veterans competitions.

In the U25s there were comfortable wins for Mne Ryan McKechnie (42 Cdo) and Sub Lt Jez Green (Astute) but losses for the other three team members. The seniors nearly pulled off victory against their RAF opponents with wins for Lt Phil Clark (PJHQ) and Sgt Richie Hall (Cdo Logs) and the vets almost gained an unlikely win against the airmen going down 2-3, Cdrs Martin Jukes (Abbey Wood) and Tony Rackham (PJHQ) providing the victories. Unfortunately the ladies were unsuccessful in breaking their duck.

In the afternoon, the U25s played a much-fancied Army side fielding an Army senior player, Jones, at number one.

Unfazed, McKechnie again showed his skills and destroyed Jones 3-0, and when followed by another win for Green, the match was very much in the balance.

However No.2 seed, AB Toby Gaylor (Drake), was unable to nail his man in the decider and the RN went down 2-3 again. Neither the veterans nor seniors were able to repeat the morning's performances, both going down 0-5, as did the ladies.

The second day was all about the Army versus RAF in all categories.

Once again the Army fancied their chances of a clean sweep, but the players in light blue had other ideas as their ladies beat their Army opponents 3-2.

Victories for the Army in the U25s and veterans paved the way for some classic and breathtaking squash in the senior final.

When ex-RN champion Damien May, now Flt Lt May RAF, came on court the match score stood at 2 each, what a decider!

Rallies of 30 shots a point were not uncommon throughout the five games, but it was May who proved the stronger of the two players and snatched victory in the fifth game, giving the RAF the title and breaking the dominance of the Army in the category which went back to 1995.

There was a lot of top-quality squash throughout the tournament and although the RN did not come away with any silverware, scores and results in many matches did not reflect just how much the Navy players have closed the gap on the other two Services, particularly in the seniors and veterans sections. Had the U25s been at full strength they would have undoubtedly have won comfortably.

■ Remaining on the squash court, racketball is the fastest-growing racket sport in the country.

It's attracting non and current squash players and those coming to an end of their squash-playing career but who want to stay fit.

The scoring system is the same as in squash and is played in a normal court; the racket is slightly larger than its squash counterpart and the ball is soft and does not need warming up. Most RN establishments have rackets and balls which can be signed out.

A racketball competition is planned at Temeraire on May 16-17, open to all – novice and known squash players alike.

Details from Lt Cdr Cooke Rns04@fleetfost.mod.uk or 02392 723741.

RN tries batting with Gating

FORMER England cricket captain Mike Gating shared his vast experience of the game with the Royal Navy team as they begin their 2013 pre-season training.

The all-round cricket legend – who captained the England team for three years in the mid-80s – joined the Navy cricket squad at the Ageas Bowl, home of Hampshire County Cricket Club.

The help of Mike, who hit more than 4,400 runs for England in a test match career spanning the late 1970s through to the mid-90s – not to mention 2,000 runs in the one-day format – was enlisted following an informal discussion during a dinner engagement last year.

The training session at the Hampshire cricket academy focussed on batting and fielding with the RN batsmen being assessed under the experienced eye of the England and Middlesex hero.

"Meeting the lads and having the opportunity to contribute to the training session was great," said Mike.

"I know how important sport is to the Royal Navy – and the military as a whole – and I'll be looking out for how the Navy's cricket team gets on this season.

"The Navy have some very talented cricketers and they will no doubt be very competitive during the 2013 season."

Lt John Stephenson, the RN's cricket manager, added: "It was a pleasure to have Mike along for the start of our pre-season training and the lads got a real lift from talking with him and experiencing some one-to-one coaching.

"We met Mike at a dinner in 2012 and we were delighted when he agreed to come along in his own time and support Navy cricket – it's been a real honour."

Navy boarders are flying high

■ Continued from page 44 concentrating on getting into top slot elsewhere in the Alps.

They were also joined this year by members of the GB development squad, who provide both stiff competition and also a demonstrable link between this top level of Service winter sport and selection opportunities at international level, something the CSWSA competitions have enabled many times in the past.

For more information about RN winter sports, visit www.rnwsa.co.uk; more results and pictures from Meribel can be found at www.cswsa.org.

Inaugural netball contest proves a hit

EIGHT teams drawn from the RN, United Services and Portsmouth University took part in the RNRMC charity netball tournament.

The unique collaboration allowed eight teams – including the RN 1st and 2nd teams – to compete in two mini-tournaments of elite and grass roots netball.

At the grass roots level, US 1 comprised a majority of players that had only played netball for two months. Despite playing against mid-table University 3, their enthusiasm and energy ensured that they competed with gusto throughout their first game.

Their inexperience on the court meant that they suffered a defeat in the hands of a more experienced team, effectively captained by Grace Edwards, and they lost 7-41.

For most teams this would have been a huge blow, but US 1, guided and encouraged by experienced shooter, Rachel Asquith, came back fighting.

Under the captaincy of Sub Lt Alice Brindley, the team improved and learned from the experience. That stood them in

much better stead against a lower-table University 4, superbly captained by Amy Hewick. The experience of the students was still too great for US 1 as shooters Kim Rowe and Anna Swabey provided accurate shooting to give their team a 31-14 victory.

US 2 comprised more experienced players that were further along the player development pathway. Still inexperienced in competition netball, they did an excellent job in their first game, with Hon Mid Hayley Armstrong defending well against University 4 to win 28-19.

Despite this strong start, US 2 fought hard in their second game against a better University 3. Strong leads in attack by the students allowed them to pull away, ending with a winning score of 33-14.

US 1 then faced US 2 in a closely-fought contest. US 1 were determined to triumph to leave the tournament with one win under their belts, whereas US 2 wanted to secure a place in the final.

It was a fiercely-contested game with neither team willing to give any room for manoeuvre. US 1 goal defence, Wtr Emily Wilkinson, put pressure on US 2's goal

attack Surg Lt Jo Laird. However, US 1 crept ahead in the final quarter to secure a 22-17 victory.

The final was an all-uni affair and a closely-fought contest. The stronger University 3 overcame their fellow students with a convincing 18-8 win.

Captain of US 2, Hon Mid Frances Elliott from Southampton URNU, was named player of the grass roots tournament for her performance as goal attack.

The RN and University of Portsmouth elite teams competed for the Sodexo Defence Trophy; Sodexo are sponsors of the RN Netball Association – thanks to their support, the squad is now the largest it has been in over a decade.

The Navy team has been in training since September for this month's Inter-Services tournament, so the mini-tournament against the students served as a good warm-up.

The contest began with the RN 2nd team competing against the University 1st team. Despite valiant efforts from the two RN shooters, ABs Lynsey Hellier and Keli Holmes, the students were able to pull

away and dominate the second half of the game to win comfortably 32-23.

The RN 1 then faced University 2 – and the sailors dominated. The controlled performance of RN 1, under the solid captaincy of AB Gemma Williams, was too good for the university and, despite valiant efforts in defence by Rebecca Goddard, the RN won 36-23.

The University 1st and 2nd teams then competed against each other for a place in the final. This was a closely-fought game with both teams wanting to secure a victory. University 1 under a calm and controlled captain, Katie Nichols, was too strong for the second team despite captain Megan Gibson's leadership and drive. University 1 won convincingly, 41-17.

RN 1 had to beat RN 2 to secure a Naval place in the final. Despite the leadership and drive of RN 2 captain LPT Natalie Berry, the experience of the first team shooter, AB Alumita Lutu was too much for the second team defence as she accurately placed the ball in the net.

The strong teamwork of the first team centre-court players and solid defence became apparent in the second half as RN

1 pulled away and dominated the rest of the game, winning 27-14.

RN 1 versus University 1 was a fitting finale to a very successful tournament. The RN fought hard against the University and were ahead in the first half.

The Navy's set plays were working and the game was flowing in the RN's favour as they worked hard to hold the lead.

However, the regular training of the students quickly became apparent as they moved their game up a gear and started to dominate.

Solid, accurate and confident shooting by Sarah Blackmore established a strong lead and despite valiant efforts, the RN could not close the gap. The students pulled away to ensure a comfortable win in the final quarter, 24-17.

As well as proving to be an enjoyable event – and an excellent warm-up for the Inter Services – the tournament also raised £620.27 for the RNRMC. There are now plans to make the contest an annual affair.

More details on RN netball are available from team coach Lt Linda Harris on 02392 625945.

RNRU's tough examination

Ladies not happy after 8-0 drubbing

THE Royal Navy Rugby Union senior XV began the road to Twickenham and their April showdown with the Army with a narrow defeat to Oxford University in Portsmouth.

The match (pictured right by Paul McCabe) was switched from Oxford as the students' pitch was deemed unplayable – and weather conditions continued to play a significant role in the match on the South Coast: driving rain made the lineout a lottery and handling became difficult.

From the kick-off the rustiness of the Navy became very apparent as Oxford – coming off the back of a victory the previous week against the Army – had the better of the early exchanges. This saw them going ahead early with a converted try, 0-7.

From the restart the Navy took the game to Oxford and were awarded a penalty. Maintaining the momentum, Mne Jonah Jones (42 Cdo) put the ball deep into the Oxford half. A mis-timed lineout allowed Oxford to clear their lines and so ending another Navy attack.

The best move of the half started with a strong run from CPO(AET) Sam Thompson (Sultan) who offloaded to ET(WE) Cooper (Collingwood). Eventually the ball ended up in the hands of winger NA(AH) Aaron Hunt (Culdrose) who was only stopped by a gang-tackle from Oxford.

However, the Navy refused to be denied and ET(WE) Dale Sleeman (Raleigh) crossed the Oxford line for the first Navy try, converted by skipper PO(AET) Dave Pascoe (771 NAS), 7-7.

The Navy started to up the pressure in defence, which resulted in Oxford dropping the ball. Hooker Capt Chris McArdle RM (HMS Ocean) hacked the ball through and AB Sam Davies (HMS Portland) playing his first Senior XV game claimed the converted try to give the Navy a 14-7 lead.

Half-time changes in the front row allowed PO(AET) John Court (RNAS Culdrose), Lt Ed Gaught (HMS Somerset) and Mne Josh Terry (RM Poole) into the game.

The first Oxford attack of the half gained them a well-worked, converted try 14-14.



The referee eventually lost his patience with the constant infringements and reduced the Navy to 14 men for ten minutes.

A good attack by Oxford allowed the scrum-half to find his way to the line for another converted try, 14-21.

Sleeman continued to frustrate the Oxford defence as they had real difficulty in stopping him breaking their defensive line. However, handling errors stopped the Navy making more of these breaks.

Mne Mathew Tichias (42 Cdo) and LAET John Clay (Yeovilton) replaced the hard-working Sleeman and Pascoe. However, more ill-discipline by the Navy reduced them to 14 players once more.

Oxford continued to pressurise the Navy until the final whistle, earning themselves another win over a Service team 14-21.

RN director of rugby Cdr Andy Kellett said of the game: "As a match, we lost it through our poor discipline. However, I was encouraged by phases of our play which we can build on in the coming weeks."

Head coach PO(AET) Owen Salmon added: "We blooded some

new players this evening in awful conditions and they stood up well to the challenge against a good Oxford side. We will take a lot away to work on, but I was pleased we finished strongly in our first game in four months."

Elsewhere, the RN women lost to a strong Plymouth Albion side at Devonport Services.

The match began with Albion putting pressure on the Navy defence, which held up well – great testament to the work of both the team and the coaches.

The Navy managed to break through the Albion line and pushed up field and into the Albion 22-metre.

At the scrum, the Navy were put under pressure by the larger Albion pack and only some good tackles by fly half LET(WE) Sarah Jenkins (Collingwood) and LStd Helen Ing (Fleet DNPERS) prevented an Albion try.

The Navy defence held strong until the 20-minute mark, when Albion went over to score an unconverted try 0-5.

From the restart, the Navy worked hard and the centre partnership of Logs Fiesha Greene (Illustrious) and ET(ME) Lavinia Vakurivalu (Drake) made

some good runs. However, Albion managed to break through and score their second try (converted) for 12-0 lead.

The Navy forwards continued to battle at the breakdowns, with AB Loz Morton (HMS Nelson) directing them well. After a period of sustained pressure by Albion, they managed to score a third try for 17-0.

From the restart, the Navy looked focused and pressurised the Albion defence. Moments before the half time whistle, the Navy scrum half, Morton, scored a try for a 17-5 score to Albion at the break.

The second period opened with an Albion try (unconverted), but the Navy continued to work hard to slow their opponents' attack and only some last-ditch tackles by POCT Zoe Beer (RAF Digby) and ET(WE) Sarah Mitchell stopped Albion scoring.

Albion won a scrum on the Navy five-metre line; even after some staunch defending, it resulted in another try.

The RN capitalised on some poor discipline by Albion and Morton scored her second try of the game.

A good passage of play by

Albion was met by a resolute Navy defence, but Albion scored in the corner for a score at the whistle of 44-10.

A cold and snowy afternoon at Yeovilton saw a replay of last year's RNRU Inter-Command final between the tournament favourites, Naval Air Command, and the Royal Marines.

The RM team arrived fresh from their training camp with Exeter Chiefs and were keen to exert pressure right from the kick-off.

With the stiff cold wind at their backs the Marines were instantly on the attack driving into the 22m with some strong running from Mne Tichias and Cpl Tom Holliday (6 Ops).

However, the Naval Air's defence held firm, but resulted in a series of penalties at the breakdown, this in turn led to four unsuccessful penalty kicks at goal.

Naval Air seemed to weather the early storm and started to put some phases together with LA Ben Priddey (Culdrose) carrying well, unfortunately the ball was spilt forward too many times to create any sustained pressure. Mne Jon Marlin (42 Cdo) playing at full back also made two excellent try-saving tackles.

Naval Air's forwards started to get a foothold in the game and following a 5m scrum, their No.8, NA Joji Voyasala, powered over the line to open the scoring.

Moments later Air Command put some phases together from a lineout and the ball again found its way to Voyasala who handed off his defender and ghosted past two players to score under the post. RN senior XV skipper PO Dave Pascoe converted for a half-time score of 12-0 to the airmen.

Unfortunately for the Marines the second half started as the first ended with a try from Air Command, this time from Priddey with a trademark dive over the line from a powerful rolling maul. This was to be the last score of the match.

The rest of the half saw the Marines on the attack but they were unable to break Air Command's defensive line even when the airmen were reduced to 14 men for ten minutes. Air Command were also unable to use the strong wind to exert any pressure on the Marines' line. Final score 17-0.

KEYNSHAM Town Ladies hosted the RN women in the first football fixture of 2013.

Unfortunately, very much like the bleak weather at the start of 2013, this was to be a disappointing opener to the year for the RN women.

The squad was not at full strength for this game, but on a positive note it did give the fringe players a chance to stake a claim for a place in the starting 11.

Keynsham started brightly and immediately put the RN under pressure, firing a shot over the crossbar in the first minute.

The Navy soaked up this pressure and denied Keynsham any clear chances.

Against the run of play, the RN even thought they had gone ahead in the 17th minute when PO(UW) Julie Hewitt put the ball in the back of the net, only to be flagged offside.

Both sides created further chances, but it was Keynsham who made the breakthrough in the 35th minute.

This rocked the sailors – they conceded two further goals before half-time.

Two forced changes were made to the RN line-up at the break due to injury and illness.

Unfortunately, this unsettled the Navy, particularly in defence, with players playing out of their preferred positions.

Only three minutes into the second period, Keynsham had extended their lead to four.

The RN never regained a foothold in the match and the final 8-0 defeat was one that the squad would rather forget.

This was an extremely disappointing result for the ladies; they will not want to be on the receiving end of such a defeat again.

Law rules with the rod

TEN hardy souls braved the weather at the Portsmouth Command winter angling championships at Southwick Park.

Conditions were extremely unfavourable to say the least – howling wind, lashing rain and a good dusting of snow thrown in for good measure.

However, despite these facts one man overcame all these adversities and absolutely blew the rest of the field away, and that man was none other than local water bailiff Ken Law, who made the most of his end peg advantage (No.39).

Using corn and pellet on the method feeder, Ken heaved 104lb 4oz on to the scales.

His catch was made up purely of carp with the largest fish being over 15lbs.

Second was another associate Paul Hitchcock (peg No.43), who managed a creditable 44lb 8oz, and third was POET(ME) Dave McAllen, who managed to sneak out 21lb 6oz (peg No.50).

For those who are keen to get into competitive match angling, or are just looking for general information on angling in general within the RN please contact CPOMEM(L) Harvey at currucox@btconnect.com.

Thunder storm to victory

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The first team regulars all played well with a lot of cameo performances from new blood giving the RNRL coaching staff a lot to build on when the next fixture takes place: a trip to Humberstone to face Hull Dockers on February 23.

That match pits the Navy's coach Danny against his brother Martin Johnson – a former RNRL player himself and, now a centre with the Dockers.

Mud on the road. And off it...

THE RN-RM Motorsport Association's off-road team were in action at the Rickshaw Ramble at Bramley training area.

The Hampshire base is a former WW2 ammunition depot which has a fantastic assortment of buildings, old railway lines and flooded tunnels under the current main line, and fields full of buried unexploded ordnance – all of which promised to make an exciting and challenging event, writes PO Dutchy Holland.

Attending only their second off-road navigation event were LAET Rory Lowther (815 NAS) and LAET Andrew Richman (702 NAS), who felt a little more prepared for what was ahead of them, after success at Longmoor.

Joining them were PO Trevor Harmer from (848 NAS) who paired up with Keith Poulton, an ex-CPO who is currently working at Westlands and Lt Cdr Russ Clark from (815 NAS) paired up with his wife Penny.

A last-minute change to the regulations meant only two cars were needed for a team, so Rory and Andrew (still in Andrew's 47-year old Series 2a Land Rover) paired with Trevor and Keith in Trevor's 'modded-up' Range Rover. Russ and Penny in their Defender 90tdi, got together with one of the civilian teams.

The format is simple – but the tasks are complicated: each vehicle has a driver and a navigator for



● Russ and Penny Clark splash through one of many large water features on the Rickshaw Ramble

the day, working through a series of exercises designed to test a combination of navigation skills (using a variety of maps and diagrams) and off-road driving techniques.

Instructions are given at the starting gate and planning is done on the hoof. Electronics are banned, a stopwatch and compass is all that is required.

The evolutions can last anywhere from ten minutes for a 'gymkhana' through narrow gates (nothing to do with horses) to hour-long orienteering challenges gaining stamps on a card.

Penalties for breaking the speed limits imposed, missing gates or

checkpoints and timing infractions all add to the complexity.

A supposedly-simple event to ease all competitors into the day, a set of instructions had to be followed to take them along a route dotted with letter boards which were noted down.

Due to some dodgy tulip diagram reading (by pretty much everyone competing) all three RN vehicles had to abandon the set route and get to the finish line or else receive hefty penalty points for being late.

Next was a gymkhana and a regulation test.

The gymkhana was a short route of 100m or so which had

to be completed as quickly as possible and without hitting any of the route markers.

It included a cheeky reverse into a garage (which due to the old series Landie's turning circle being akin to a Type 45, they had a bit of trouble with).

The regulation is given as a set route, marked on a map with a distance and a speed, the navigator has to calculate the exact time required to complete the route and ensure that they arrive at the finish at the right time. This was carnage. Although Rory and Andrew didn't have much trouble with it, many others did.

Next, orienteering – exactly the same as on foot, but more fun. The worst part was having to get to each point in order.

With 23 locations across the area and only 45 minutes to reach them all, it was a pretty tall order. With only ten stamped off, Rory and Andrew were forced to race for the finish line or receive a penalty for being late.

The next serial: a sequential – a series of gates had to be visited in order and from a particular direction for a letter board to be seen and noted down.

With some brilliant driving by Rory and some expert navigation by Andrew, they smashed through, getting every gate, arriving at the finish with 15 minutes to spare.

Within minutes of getting in they were back out for the scatter: letter boards, whose locations



● Over the Moon (Park)... AET Ross Taylor pulls a trick of the first kick in the slopestyle final at Moon Park, with the stunning sight of Meribel in the background
Pictures: PO(Phot) Owen Cooban, CNR

Navy boarders are flying high



● A Navy skier passes a gate in the giant slalom and (below) the impressive sight of the opening ceremony by torchlight



IN AN action-packed week in Meribel in the French Alps the best alpine skiers, riders and telemarkers of the three Services came together for the Inter-Services Snow Sports Championship.

The competition, which comes after the three single Services events – the Navy's was held at Tignes in France in January – provides an opportunity for the very best of each of the Forces' winter sportsmen and women to challenge themselves and their opposite numbers in a world-class environment.

Two years ago we reported how the RN's alpine skiers had triumphed for the first time in 43 years and this year it was the male snowboarders' turn to win the overall championship competition, writes Cdr Richard Winter.

And that competition was tough, the Army and RAF have historically fielded strong women's and men's snowboard teams and the RN's medals have previously been limited to a few talented individuals. This year though the discipline and extra team training have obviously paid off with a real strength in depth in the RN team not seen before. The results speak for themselves, with Lt Mick Hawkes and AET Ross Taylor picking up medals across all the snowboarding events.

The men gained a double-podium result in the slopestyle thanks to Lt Simon Mackosz in second place; who was also awarded the best trick trophy.

While top team honours may have gone to the men's team, the RN snowboarders are a cohesive lot and genuinely form one team of riders.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, the extra preparation paid off for the women riders too. Lt Alex Kelley and LPT Lucy McKenna came home with a fist full of medals as overall individual second and third-placed riders.

And in another RN-heavy finishing podium at the slopestyle event, AB Mel Southern took silver and Surg Lt Cdr Stephanie Ingram took bronze.

For the Navy's women alpine skiers there was also success but of a longer-term kind. It has proven

difficult in the past to raise a full team, especially for the downhill event, which is not practised at the RN championships (last year there was no representation).

Hats off then to the women's alpine team who not only produced a full team for every event but succeeded in getting a team result in every event too, including the downhill!

No medals this year – and disappointment for the RN's women's captain, Lt Holly Dennis, who suffered injury in a practice run, but a good omen for future years of success as the team develops.

In the men's alpine, Lt Chris Sharrott RN took two bronze podium places keeping the White Ensign in view but the Army dominated the early events and the RAF scooped the latter prizes, despite a sterling effort by Lt Tom Constable in the fast and furious slalom race, ensuring that this year the overall men's alpine competition went to the Army.

A recent addition to the competition, the telemark events are a bit of a two-horse race with only the Army and RN submitting full teams. As might be expected of the RN team, its leading lights are Royal Marines, and Lt Col Huan Davies and Maj Rob Thorpe came away with a clutch of medals, ensuring that even though the final overall result was an Army win, the Senior Service was frequently represented on the leader board.

Alongside the Service teams an open competition is held and traditionally provides an outlet for the Combined Service Disabled Ski Team to compete on equally-demanding terms as the other racers.

Set up as part of the Battle Back programme, the CSDST now regularly submits para-athletes to international-level competitions. Indeed even while the Inter-Services champs were under way, one of the teams was

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● RNRL captain AET Mark Robinson (Yeovilton) gets the Brothers moving
Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Mumby, FRPU East

Thunder storm to victory

A LITTLE bit of history was made when the Navy's Rugby League team welcomed professional opposition to Burnaby Road for the first time.

The visitors – Gateshead Thunder – made the long trip down from the north-east as part of pre-season training with a bit of team-bonding thrown in for good measure, writes RNRL spokesman WO1 Keith Humpleby.

RNRL head coach Danny Johnson was under no illusions as to the task facing him – and especially his players with six first-team regulars unavailable as a result of operational commitments.

However by the time the final whistle blew Johnson and the rest of the coaching staff were more than impressed with the performance his team put in against the Thunder.

The Tynesiders had in their ranks four loan players from Super League side Hull Kingston Rovers and if the Brothers' coaches were in any doubt about the quality of their opponents, the first few minutes brought it home in no uncertain terms.

With barely four minutes on the clock the visitors were over for their first try, swift handling from the kick-off and an offside penalty gave Thunder the advantage, which they duly took out wide with a great conversion RNRL were down by six points.

A good response was needed and it came with the first meaningful RN attack; good pressure through midfield gave Darren Bamford room on the left and a great pass found Mike Haldenby, who beat the cover and the RN were back in the game.

The see-saw nature of the game continued as Thunder struck back with another converted try out on the left for Colquhoun, converted by Gav Beasley.

Full of belief the Navy kept their heads up and pressured the Thunder line to seek the score. After back-to-back penalties RNRL closed on the line only to be held up short.

On the next play, however, influential RN skipper Mark Robinson crashed over to poach the try and Bamford's conversion made it 10-12 to Gateshead.

As the game moved into the second quarter Thunder crossed a further three times before the RN could respond.

The RN third and final try was a result of great build-up and pressure to the Thunder line. The Brothers' attack drew in the defence before an inch-perfect pass from Robinson found Matt Corrigan five metres out; he had a stroll to the line for his score. Another Bamford conversion rounded off the half, with referee Dennis Nowell signalling the end of an action-packed and entertaining first 40 minutes, 16-28 to the visitors.

The second half went very much the way of the Gateshead outfit, who scored a further four unanswered tries against an RN team who were always competitive but lacking in experience as a team. Final score: RNRL 16 Gateshead Thunder 48.

With the coaches agreeing on unlimited substitutions, Johnson was able to rotate all his 24 squad players during the second period.

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ARMY vs NAVY
SATURDAY 27TH APRIL 2013
TURF WAR
THE BABCOCK TROPHY at TWICKENHAM STADIUM
TICKETS ON SALE NOW - NAVYRUGBYUNION.CO.UK - 0844 879 4941
ADULTS £20 / JUNIORS £10 / FAMILY £40
Combined Services 122 v Oxfordshire 122 Kick off 12pm - Army v Navy Kick off 5pm
Live entertainment throughout the day including The Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines
Tickets include admission to matches at KNELLER HALL Kick off 10.30am
Army Women v Royal Navy Women - Army Masters v Royal Navy Masters