



NAVY NEWS

OCTOBER 2013

**NOT ANY
OLD LION**

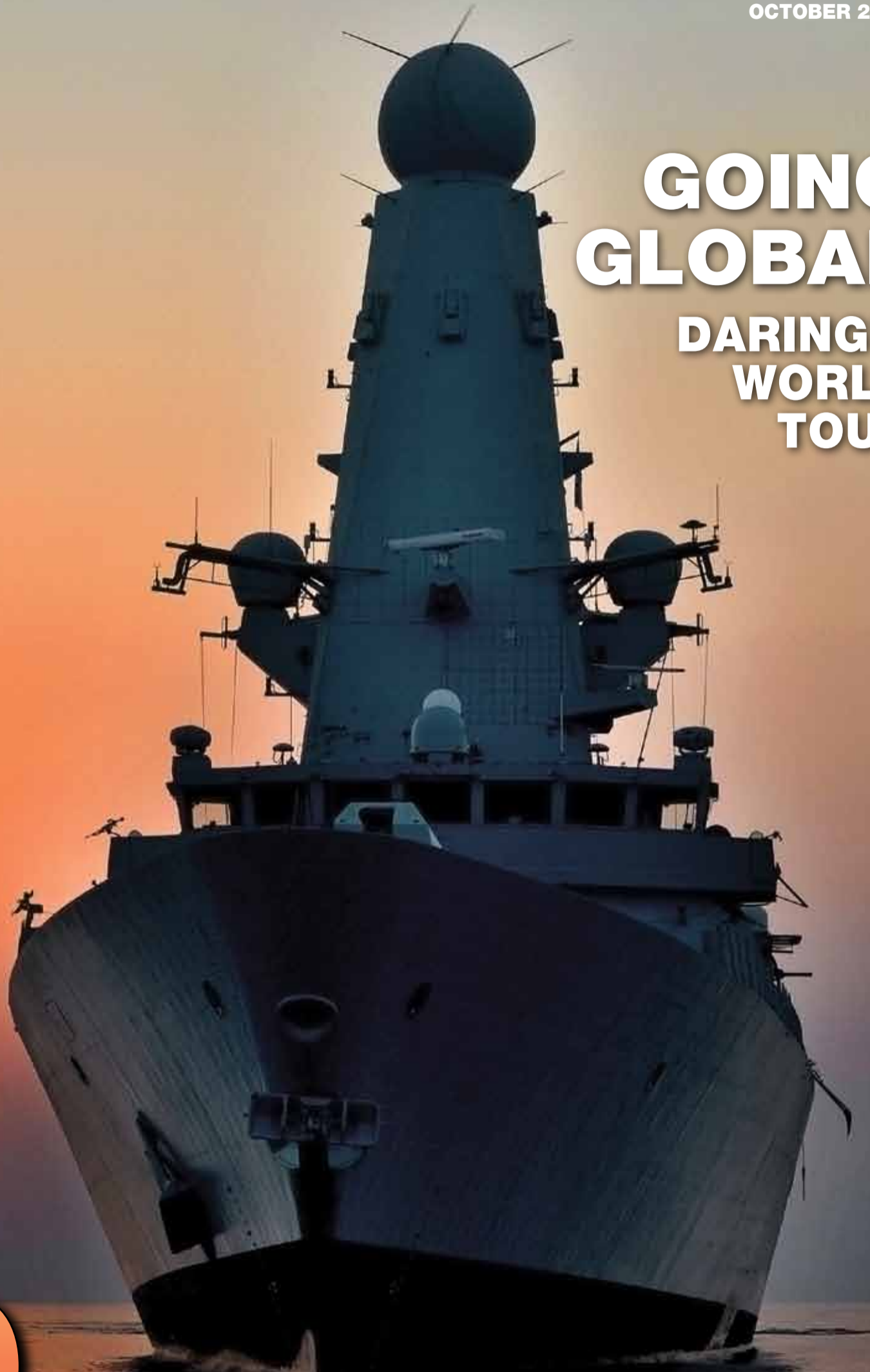
**WORKOUT IN
ALBANIA FOR
COUGAR FORCE**

**ROCK
SOLID**

**ALL EYES ON
GIBRALTAR
SQUADRON**

**GOING
GLOBAL**

**DARING'S
WORLD
TOUR**



**RED
DRAGON**

The sun goes down on HMS Dragon as her five-month stint in the Gulf on her maiden deployment draws to a close. The Type 45 is now homeward-bound having handed over duties to HMS Montrose. See page 17.

Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins, RN Photographer of the Year



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WISDOM TEETH

ANYONE here been to Albania?

Ask that question a few years ago and tumbleweed would probably start drifting across a silent courtyard.

But now, well, *everyone's* been to Albania. Everyone who likes blowing things up, storming ashore from landing craft and buzzing about in green and grey whirlybirds.

Why? Because the Balkan country – known for its love of Norman Wisdom, once having a king called Zog, and being among the most isolated nations on earth during the communist era – is a hidden gem when it comes to military training.

There are abandoned Cold War bunkers and bases aplenty, old jets, there are mountains a short distance from the coast, arid plains – in early September it's still around 30°C – deep sheltered bays and beaches with shallow gradients. Basically, pretty much everything you might want to do on a major amphibious exercise.

Oh, and inviting hosts who, as one of the newest members of NATO, are very keen to let others visit their playground.

Three times the Royal Marines have taken advantage of Albanian hospitality in the past three years. For the last two of those, they've brought along a task group.

The second Albanian Lion was the first serious run-out for the UK Response Force Task Group as its Cougar 13 deployment got under way: four days of fire and fury played out among the mountains and islands of the south of the country.

It was also a step up from the inaugural exercise 12 months ago: more marines, more kit, more vehicles, fast jets, more assault craft.

Before you can put 3 Commando Brigade ashore with all its martial panoply – the Royal Marines of 42 Commando, the guns of 29 Commando Regiment RA, the medical and supply facilities of the Commando Logistics Regiment, the engineers of 24 Commando Regiment RE – you have to know your enemy and his terrain.

It fell to 539 Assault Group's Amphibious Beach Unit to range up and down the Albanian coast around the port of Vlorë seeking a suitable place for the amphibious task group – HMS Bulwark, Illustrious, Mounts and Lyme Bay – to disgorge men and matériel.

"We initially carried out a reconnaissance of the coastline identifying what parts would be best for arrivals and departures and the one we selected is perfect for its shallow beach and deep drop off making it ideal for our needs," explained signaller L/Cpl Matthew Richards.

With a landing site found, it was time for the amphibious ships to dock down, allowing the Adriatic to pour into their stern docks and the waters to rise around the landing craft and Offshore Raiding Craft so 300 green berets could move ashore in the initial wave.

In pitch black conditions, with only glow sticks to guide them the commandos effortlessly kitted up with ammunition and stores, before heading out into the night in their chariots o' war.

Their destination was a narrow

strip of beach lit only by dim port and starboard lights against a wall of darkness – a secret gateway to Albania through which scores of vehicles and hundreds of commandos would pass over the four day exercise.

Watching it all from above, a Flying Tiger – a Merlin of 814 NAS – relaying information back to Bulwark's cavernous ops rooms.

"As the Marines landed on a narrow beach, undertook a cliff assault, and faced crossing a peninsula, having this eye-in-the-sky was an invaluable asset," said Capt Andy Atkinson, in charge of the Royal Marines' support troop for the flagship's Assault Squadron.

Indeed, while the commandos are scaling cliffs and blowing stuff up, it's easy to forget the massive logistical and naval effort serving as the hilt behind the blade.

"The Combined Operations Room is the nerve centre of Albanian Lion, the experts are gathered here and are advising the marines on the ground, it is our role to ensure the operation runs smoothly and that we recover our men," said Bulwark's ops room manager PO Chris Aspin.

"We're at action stations, all of the deployed ships are on high alert, and as a team we must fulfil our mission."

So far so sneaky-beaky. What you want is some action.

So as dawn broke over the Bay of Vlorë, red balls of flame mushroomed skywards, followed by the crack of thunder, as explosions ripped across the rocky island of Sazan.

Sazan, which sits just off the end of a rugged, uninhabited peninsula guards the entrance to the bay.

Not three miles long and only a mile across at its widest point, it was once home to a Soviet submarine base and chemical and biological weapons plant.

The fireballs – simulating air strikes by RAF jets – announced the arrival of the green berets of Mike, Juliet and Kilo Companies, who'd scaled the cliffs in the dark to surprise the foe.

Their mission? To restore the rule of authority to the 'lawless' island from smugglers, to curb social unrest and the rise of terrorist groups.

Unbeknown to the 'smugglers' hiding out on the island, they had been observed for the preceding few days by the commandos' Surveillance Reconnaissance Squadron. Their intelligence provided the crucial information for the air strikes – which in turn paved the way for the final assault by the Bickleigh-based Royal Marines.

Save for a small naval base used to strangle contraband routes between Albania and southern Italy (barely 45 miles to the west across the Otranto Strait), Sazan is largely deserted.

It is, however, still home to more than 100 buildings and 5.7 square kilometres of trenches and bunkers.

Troops from Juliet, Kilo and Mike Companies spent 11 hours clearing their way through a maze of tunnels and buildings gathering information for further operations

over the next few days.

"Moving up through the valley was pretty challenging, you've got a lot of kit on and the heat even at night time is considerable," said Lt David Kirk, commander of 5 Troop, Kilo Company, who led the assault.

"Our part of the attack lasted about six hours and although challenging, all our aims were achieved.

"We knew it was going to be difficult before we started so we mentally prepared ourselves beforehand and just pushed on through."

5 Troop and the rest of their green-bereted comrades were watched for part of the exercise by Maj Gen Xhemal Gjunkshi, the Albanian military's Chief of Defence Staff, and the UK Ambassador to the Adriatic state, Nicholas Cannon.

Meanwhile on the mainland... Exercises such as Albanian Lion aren't all fire and fury. Recent experience has shown that sailors and marines are just as likely to be plucking civilians from the line of fire as the gods of war below, such as in Libya and Lebanon.

So the scenario of the exercise in Albania – an insurgent group causing widespread internal unrest in a fictional foreign country – included an NEO: Non-combatant Evacuation Operation in the Albanian foothills.

The site chosen: an old airfield outside the industrial town of Kuçovë, roughly half-way between Vlorë and the Albanian capital Tirana.

Like Sazan, Kuçovë (pronounced kur-chover) was off limits to almost all Albanians during the Cold War as one of its key military districts.

The airfield south of the small town – known in communist days as Stalin City – was once a base for 1950s vintage MiG-19 jets. They're still here, parked on the standings and in front of the hangar, but no longer operational.

Having driven the 'insurgents' away, Juliet Company secured the field ready for the evacuation of fearful civilians – played by staff from the British Embassy in Tirana and officer cadets from Dartmouth – to begin.

To make the exercise as realistic as possible Foreign and Commonwealth Office staff were on hand to deal with the humanitarian element.

The cadets were given various 'parts' to play to challenge the FCO team – such as lack of id, mixed-nationality marriages, carrying pets or weapons (both are no-nos).

And having been 'processed', the BRNC cadets found conditions on the abandoned airfield as they awaited their airlift to Illustrious 'rudimentary'.

"We had to remove two bats from the room we were staying in before we could get our heads down," said 21-year-old OC Charlotte Boak.

OC Ben Lay added: "It was useful to see the evacuation from the inside. I now feel that I know a lot more about the effort and preparation which has to be put

into an exercise of this sort."

For many of the commandos this was their first taste of an evacuation exercise.

They found themselves holding back a violent mob and insurgents with guns – and at the same time allowing in a local woman in labour and in need of urgent medical attention, as well as a Brit fleeing the country with a pet which held a passport.

Allowed through into Kuçovë – following the appropriate checks carried out by Capt James Greswell and his Juliet Coy comrades – were British and EU citizens and anyone in a life or death situation and in urgent need of assistance. Once through the initial commando cordon, it's down to the FCO to process and take decisions on the future course of action.

"If we are holding a location in a war-torn country with the nearest alternative 100 miles away many people would turn to the British for that 'special relationship' we have with other nations and we would hope that would apply the other way round," said Capt Greswell.

With the evacuees safely, er, evacuated, it was time for the last act of Albanian Lion in Vlorë Bay.

With Bulwark docked down a few hundred yards away, HMS Illustrious' Guard of Honour formed up on her flight deck ready for the arrival of Bujar Nishani, President of Albania.

He came aboard Lusty off Vlorë at the end of the first Albanian Lion last November.

And he did so again to witness the conclusion of the 2013 exercise. He hopes there will be many more Albanian Lions to come.

"I believe that the biggest benefit of this joint exercise is the establishment and consolidation of friendship and co-operation between our two armed forces," he told British and Albanian military commanders gathered on Illustrious.

"I also believe and hope that the experience and background earned during the joint exercises of recent years will serve for other exercises of this kind until the establishment of a sustainable tradition in this regard."

The commandos especially – from the upper echelons of the Corps to the booties on the ground – certainly want to come back to this part of the world.

"This is the second time I have trained in Albania and the mixture of heat, altitude and mountainous terrain make it the ideal training environment for the Royal Marines," said Sgt Chris Davies of 30 Cdo IX Group, who enjoyed his "action-packed few days" in the Balkans.

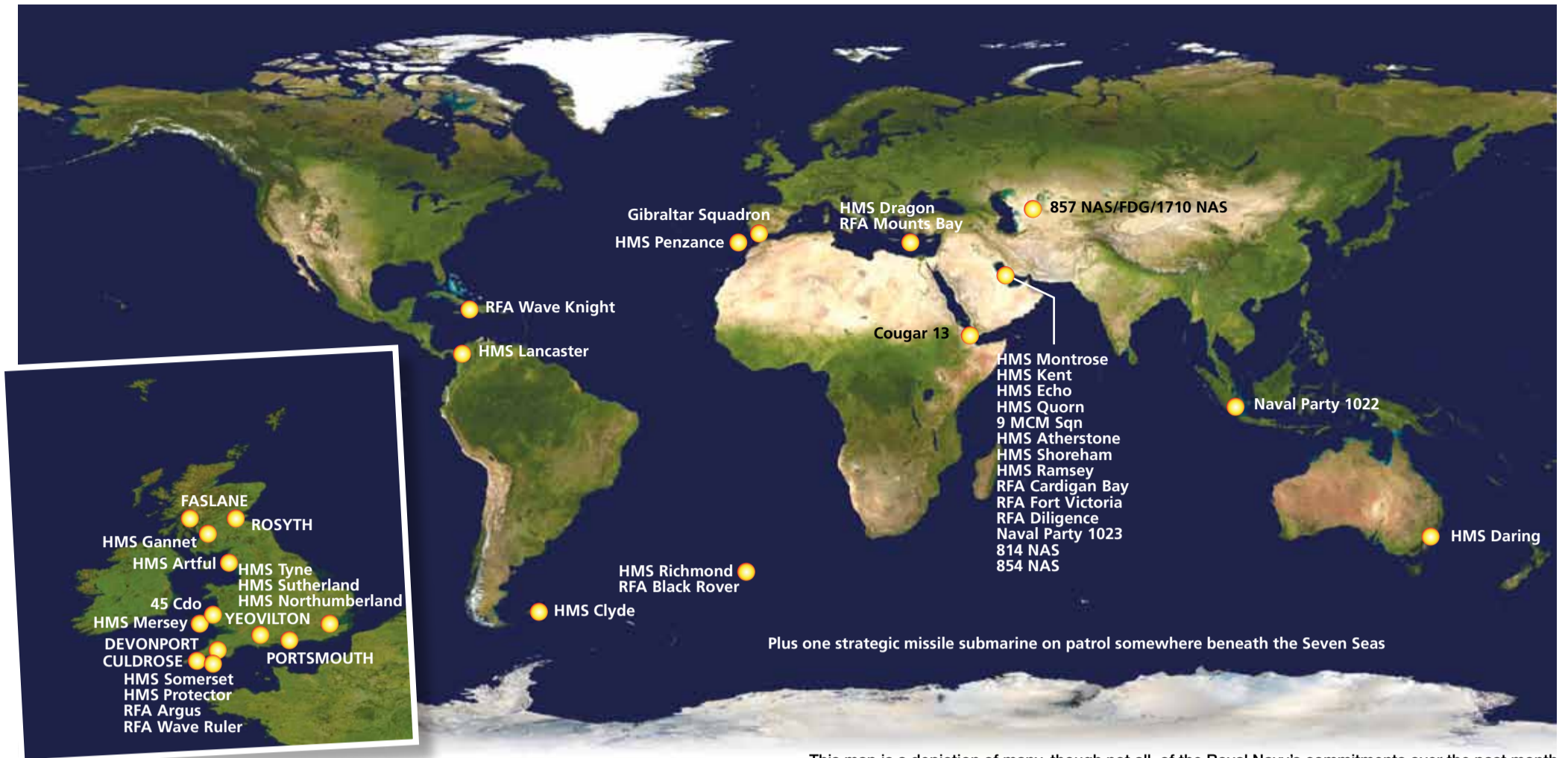
Further up the commando command chain, and 3 Cdo Bde's Deputy Commander Col Kevin Oliver praised the ranges in southern Albania as "some of the best training areas the task group has ever used".

And from the head of the Corps, Commandant General RM Maj Gen Ed Davis, a simple, but very powerful word of thanks to the hosts: "We could not have been better supported, nor made to feel more welcome."





pictures: po(pho) sean clea, rri(po)tyx3, po(pho) ray jones, hms illustrious, la(pho) arron hoare, hms bulwark



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

This map is a depiction of many, though not all, of the Royal Navy's commitments over the past month

THE days are closing in and the year is on the wane. But the activity of the Senior Service in 2013 is probably at its peak right now – as the merest glance at the map above shows.

Leading our business this autumn, the **Cougar 13** deployment by the UK Reponse Task Group comprising **HMS Bulwark, Illustrious, Montrose, Westminster**, elements of **3 Cdo Bde, 42 Cdo, Armoured Support Group RM, Commando Logistics Regiment, 829 NAS, 815 NAS, 659 Sqn Army Air Corps, RFAs Mounts Bay, Lyme Bay, Wave Knight, Fort Austin** and **MV Hurst Point** which took part in their first set-piece exercise of the autumn in the Adriatic: **Albanian Lion** (see pages 2-3).

After the bulk of the task force had passed through Suez, the first of the set pieces in the second phase of the deployment got under way, **Red Alligator** with the Saudis, followed by a chance encounter with the **USS Kearsarge** which allowed one of her Osprey tiltrotor craft to drop in on **HMS Illustrious** (see page 6).

Cougar has also allowed the first run out for the RAF's Merlins with 3 Commando Brigade – a foretaste of the future when the helicopters replace the Sea Kings of the **Commando Helicopter Force** (see page 10).

Arriving in Sydney as you read this is **HMS Daring** – just in time for the 100th birthday of the Royal Australian Navy, celebrated with an International Fleet Review in the great natural harbour of the country's largest city. Courtesy of her trials to date, the first Type 45 has been off the radar – but no longer. *We round up her global tour to date in the centre pages.*

Daring will be away until well into the New Year. Not so the other 45 currently deployed, **HMS Dragon**, which is due back in Portsmouth this month after seven months in the Gulf (see page 17).

The Dragon's place in the region has been taken by **HMS Montrose**, which has spent the 7,500-mile journey east from Devonport training, training, training, testing, training, and then doing a bit more training to prepare her (see page 13)...

...Which almost exactly mirrors **HMS Westminster's** passage east to relieve **HMS Kent** – although she's been more closely bound with the Cougar task group than the Scottish duke (see page 9).

Now home are **HMS Argyll** and her **211 Flight/815 NAS** which returned to Devonport and Yeovilton respectively after seven months in the Atlantic and Pacific (see page 7).

HMS Lancaster has continued her Caribbean odyssey by visiting Colombia before taking part in a major international exercise (see page 5).

There was no £100m drug-busting drama for the Red Rose this month, but tanker **RFA Wave Knight** did strike a £9m blow against the illegal trade by snaring a smuggler off Jamaica (see page 5).

HMS Richmond has taken her place in the Southern Hemisphere, stopping off at the remote British outposts of first Ascension, then St Helena (see page 10).

There's been quite a lot to get excited about in the world of fixed-wing flying over the past month. The first British pilot has taken off from – and landed on – a carrier at sea in an **F35 Lightning II**. The honour fell to the RAF's Sqn Ldr Jim Schofield, supported by an RN-led team of technicians – aboard the **USS Wasp** (see page 8).

Two squadrons have returned to the Fleet Air Arm fold: **809 NAS** will be the first RN formation to fly the F35 (see right); and the Hawks of **FRADU** have a new identity, **736 NAS** (see page 12).

The announcement of 809's rebirth was one of four speeches **First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas** gave in five days in mid-September: at **RUSI**; at the **DSEI** defence exhibition (supported by **HMS Sutherland** and **Tyne**), at **London International Shipping Week** (supported by **HMS Northumberland**); and a 150th anniversary dinner at **BRNC** in Dartmouth (supported by **HMS Somerset** – see pages 5 and 30). The admiral used his address at **DSEI** to focus on the white heat of technology which will revolutionise the RN over the coming decade – and how the Navy and industry should work together to harness their collective talents (see page 8).

● An 809 Buccaneer of 809 NAS, crewed by Lt Mike Rowell RN and Lt Mike Cochrane USN, fly over a Soviet *Kresta II* cruiser during Exercise Northern Wedding in the late 1970s



Phoenix rising

THE name of an historic Naval air squadron which smote the foe from the North Cape to the grey wastes of the South Atlantic will return as the first Fleet Air Arm formation to fly the nation's next-generation strike fighter, the **Lightning II**.

Britain's most senior sailor, **First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas**, today announced that **809 Naval Air Squadron** will re-form to fly the future jump jet, sharing the skies with the RAF's legendary **Dambusters**, also earmarked to operate the aircraft.

From 2020, the **F35 Lightning II** will provide the punch of Britain's new aircraft carriers **HMS Queen Elizabeth**, which is due to be launched in Scotland next summer, and her sister **HMS Prince of Wales**.

The RAF announced in July it would keep the name of the **Dambusters** – **617 Squadron** – alive when it forms its first squadron as part of the future **Joint Lightning Force**.

Admiral Zambellas told **RUSI's** Maritime Conference last month that the Fleet Air Arm would breathe fresh life into a squadron which had an outstanding pedigree of striking at the enemy.

"This squadron number is a golden thread which weaves its way through the proud history of carrier strike, from World War 2 through to the **Buccaneers** flying from the post-war **HMS Ark Royal**, to the iconic **Sea Harriers** which served with such distinction in the **Falklands** in 1982.

"It could not be a more fitting squadron name for the new era of UK carrier strike."

The admiral says there's an admirable spirit of collaboration between the **RAF** and **Royal Navy** when it comes to the new combined **Lightning force** – "a powerful chemistry" – and **617 Sqn** is "a good choice" for the Air Force's first **F35** unit. "617 did some of their best work over the water – and so they will do again," he added.

Of the 107 historic front-line naval squadron numbers no longer in use, **809** is being

resurrected because its longest and strongest affiliation was with the **Buccaneer**, a legendary low-level strike bomber flown by both the Fleet Air Arm and **RAF**.

809 Naval Air Squadron flew the aircraft on and off for 15 years between 1963 and 1978 – it was the Navy's last **Buccaneer** squadron.

Memorably, **809** has been immortalised by author **Rowland White** in his bestseller *Phoenix Squadron*, describing the long-range mission **Buccaneers** from **Ark Royal** flew as a show of strength in support of **British Honduras** – today **Belize** – when the country was threatened by neighbouring **Guatemala** in 1972.

The squadron's actions also were captured on camera by the **BBC** during their hugely-popular documentary series *Sailor* when **HMS Ark Royal** visited the **USA** in 1976.

In previous incarnations, the squadron's aircraft supported an attack on **Hitler's** flagship **Tirpitz**, defended the famous **Pedestal** convoy to **Malta** against air attack, and supported the invasions of **North Africa**, **Italy** and **southern France** during **World War 2**. Post-war, its aircraft saw action in the **Suez** operation of 1956 and, most recently, from the decks of **HMS Hermes** and **Invincible** during the liberation of the **Falklands** in 1982, for which **809** was specially re-formed.

In its new role **809** – whose motto is simply 'Immortal' – will be based at **RAF Marham** in **Norfolk** when not at sea as part of the **Joint Force Lightning** which is being formed to operate the strike fighter.

The joint force means that air and ground crew on the squadrons will be drawn from both the **Royal Navy** and **Royal Air Force**, so **Naval personnel** will serve with **The Dambusters** and their **Air Force counterparts** will do likewise on **809 NAS**.

■ **Lightning II** flight deck trials, page 8

Keeping the pressure on the pirates

LEADING the fight against piracy across 2.5 million square miles of the Indian Ocean is a Royal Navy team who've taken charge of an international task force.

It's the first time the Senior Service has been in charge of **Combined Task Force 151**, half a dozen ships from half a dozen nations whose sole aim is to deter, disrupt and, if necessary, hunt down modern day pirates.

The British-led staff joined support ship **RFA Fort Victoria**, their command ship for the duration of the RN's tenure of command.

Heading the effort is **Cdre Jeremy Blunden**, former commanding officer of **HMS Newcastle** and **Bulwark**, who took charge of the force – comprising ships from the **USA**, **Pakistan**, **Turkey**, **South Korea** and **Australia** as well as **Fort Vic** – and is determined to build on the success of **Cdre Muhammed Ihsan Qadir**, from whom he took the reins of **CTF 151**.

Although pirate attacks have fallen drastically – there were over 170 in 2010 and 2011, just three dozen last year and only a handful this year as a result of the military effort, as well as merchant ships taking increased efforts to protect themselves and the internal situation in **Somalia** improving – **Cdre Blunden** says the threat remains and the international effort must persist.

"The pirates have run out of hostage vessels and it is highly likely they may try to resume their activity when the sea state calms and conditions become more conducive between the monsoons this autumn. We will need to be constantly on our guard," he said.

"I am delighted to command this unique multinational force at sea tasked with protecting the free flow of global maritime commerce."

CTF 151 is one of three task forces operating under the 29-nation **Combined Maritime Force** dedicated to safeguarding the waters east of **Suez** (**CTF 150** tackles terrorism and smuggling in the Indian Ocean, **152** deals with securing the Gulf).



Monkey suits HMS Artful

YOU can never have too many pictures of monkeys holding the crest of the £1bn nuclear submarine for which they are named...

This is Artful the Monkey, official mascot of Artful the Submarine; both were revealed to the world last month – although there was rather more pomp and ceremony around the boat's naming (and considerably fewer nuts...).

Two days before Lady Zambellas, the wife of First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas and the boat's sponsor, officially named Artful, a nine-strong team from the submarine made the five-mile trip from Barrow to South Lakes Wild Animal Park to adopt a ten-month-old baby ring-tailed lemur (which is not actually a monkey, but an arboreal primate).

The inspiration came from the submarine's crest – although the creature on the boat's historic symbol, chosen in 1945 by the Admiralty's advisor on heraldry for the first Artful, is actually an unspecified species of primate.

"Having walked around the wildlife park with my wife last year, I remembered they had little monkeys and thought that adopting one as a mascot would be a good idea," said 24-year-old Lt Aaron Williams from Bradford. "We wanted to do something quirky to mark the naming ceremony."

"When I did a little research into the crest, I found out that it was chosen to represent the quality of artfulness, monkeys having the reputation of being clever and resourceful creatures."

Sadly the new mascot will be going nowhere near his boat (monkey + £1bn submarine, what could possibly go wrong?). Animals have been banned from Her Majesty's ships since the 1970s for reasons of hygiene.

Which is a shame because the RN had a long and unusual history of mascots from the animal kingdom, from Simon the Cat which kept the vermin at bay on HMS Amethyst on the Yangtze; to Barbara the polar bear, rescued as a cub from drifting ice off Greenland and a ship's mascot until growing too large and re-homed in Portsmouth; and Winnie, another monkey mascot who travelled with Great War torpedo boat HMS Velox.

"We won't be able to get Artful on board, but the crew will still take an interest in him and no doubt a few of the guys and their families will be visiting the wildlife park in the future to see how he is doing," said Lt Williams.

As for the submarine, she's been eight and half years in the making.

The naming ceremony is roughly the equivalent of launching a surface ship – there's no slipway for submarines, which are inched out of the gigantic Devonshire Dock Hall at BAE's Barrow yard. It does include smashing a bottle of beer from a local brewery against the bow (a tradition at the Cumbrian yard), performed by Lady Zambellas.

Artful's the third of the Fleet's seven Astute-class hunter killers. Building on the extensive trials and tests of her older sisters Astute and Ambush – both of which are due to carry out their first operational patrols in a matter of months – Artful is due to enter service in 2015.

Tug o'war(ship)

IF ONLY you could see the mouse at the other end of this photograph...

HMS Lancaster's tug o'war team (in a very fetching yellow kit, one might add) give it their all on their way to silver in an international sports day ahead of a major naval exercise.

The frigate sailed into the Colombian city of Cartagena to join other navies mustering for the annual UNITAS exercise.

The Red Rose entered the Caribbean port firing a 21-gun salute – which the Colombian Navy returned – before hosting several British defence firms for two days showcasing the best of UK industry to the wider world.

Sailors from the Colombian Naval College, as well as sailors from other ships taking part in UNITAS were also invited aboard to see how she operates.

UNITAS typically draws the navies of much of North and South America as well as visitors (HMS Dauntless flew the flag for Britain in 2012) and has been running since the end of the '50s to promote solidarity and defence of the Western Hemisphere.

This year 19 warships from nine countries – Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Peru, the UK and USA – committed to the ten-day exercise, which began and ended in Cartagena.

As part of the bonding for the countries involved in UNITAS at least eight of the participating nations put their hats in the ring at a sports day.

Lancaster's tug o'war team – comprising all the ship's bosuns – overpowered the Canadians and Americans, but couldn't match the pulling power of a team from Honduras.



The football side reached the semi-final of a (very) mini world cup – knocked out on penalties (obviously) by Peru – while the first Lancasterian past the post in a five-kilometre run around the Colombian Naval Base was CPO(ET) Buck Taylor in eighth place, three minutes behind the Brazilian winner.

Away from the base, an eight-strong team from the Portsmouth-

based warship put their skills to good use by revamping a school on Tierra Bomba Island as part of a community relations project, giving the building a fresh lick of paint that will last for years.

"Our links with the Colombians are growing stronger each year and to be able to exercise together and discuss future ship building projects and developing capabilities has been hugely

beneficial," said Cdr Steve Moorhouse, the ship's CO.

"The presence of a number of other South and Central American navies together with US and Canadian units also makes UNITAS a wonderful vehicle for Lancaster to exercise and maintain her core skills – while highlighting the Royal Navy's presence in the region."

Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen, HMS Lancaster

Somerset helps BRNC's anniversary

FRIGATE HMS Somerset spent two days moored on the River Dart in the shadow of the *alma mater* of the Royal Navy's officer corps to celebrate 150 years of officer training in Dartmouth.

She took a break from intensive Operational Sea Training off the South Coast to head the short distance up the Dart – a visit coinciding with a dinner celebrating Dartmouth's influence on the world's navies over the past century and a half (see page 30).

Both dinner and Somerset's visit marked the moment in September 1863 when HMS Britannia arrived in Dartmouth.

She was the first of several hulks to be used to train officer cadets for the Fleet, before the imposing Britannia Royal Naval College opened on the hill overlooking the small town in 1905.

All 21 of HMS Somerset's commissioned officers trained at BRNC, led by the frigate's CO Cdr Mike Smith who passed through the college 22 years ago.

"Somerset looked magnificent in the Dart, overlooked by the College," he said, "It is a special place for all officers in the Royal Navy."

His ship was greeted by a significant number of onlookers as she slowly made her way up the Dart.

Equal numbers were in attendance to wave her off as she left, returning to high tempo training at sea.

The two-day pause in her OST workout was actually part of the training; as ambassadors for the UK, RN warships are expected to host functions, stage ceremonies and attend major events – such as Daring at the Australian Fleet Review this month.



Knight moves

THIS is what £6.4m of cannabis looks like – and it will never reach dealers, let alone the streets of the UK after being snared by RFA Wave Knight in the Caribbean.

Upwards of £3m of the drug is thought to be resting on the seabed after the tanker gave chase to a suspicious fishing vessel, whose crew began tossing their cargo overboard.

The tanker was on patrol when she came across Miss Tiffany – and sent her sea boat off in pursuit, armed with a US Coast Guard boarding team.

When the boat reached the fishing vessel, the drug runners began ditching weighted bales of marijuana before their craft was boarded by the Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment.

Thanks to the efforts of the crew of Wave Knight's second sea boat, some 55 of those bales were recovered and brought aboard the auxiliary.

In all, a haul of some 1.2 tons (1,276 kg) with a street value of around £6.4m was recovered by Team Wave Knight with an estimated further 1,200lbs (540kg) of drugs sinking before the sailors could haul the bales out of the Caribbean.

Total disruption to the drug-runners: about £9m with seven crew of the Miss Tiffany arrested and their boat handed over to Jamaican authorities.

"The entire ship's company – RFA civilians, US Law Enforcement Team and Royal Navy personnel alike – as well as HQ and prosecuting staff ashore – are delighted with the result," said Capt Chris Clarke RFA, Wave Knight's Commanding Officer.

"Once again the joint approach to counter narcotic operations has resulted in another successful take-down."

It was the fifth significant bust by British naval forces in the past couple of months.

Lancaster bagged £100m cocaine and £700,000 cannabis, her sister HMS Argyll disrupted a \$116m (£73m) drugs shipment in the Pacific, and Wave Knight herself intercepted a drug-smuggling go-fast in a joint effort with the Dutch.

Those successes were underlined by Defence Secretary Philip Hammond. "The work of the Royal Navy across the globe and in particular in the Caribbean on counter-narcotics operations is vital to protecting us here at home," he said.

"This drugs bust follows recent successful interdiction and deterrence operations by HMS Lancaster and HMS Argyll in the Caribbean which all contribute to ensuring illegal drugs do not reach our streets."

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Enterprise is Spock 'n' span

READY to boldly go (sorry) once more after a three-month revamp is the star ship (sorry again) of the Navy's survey flotilla, HMS Enterprise.

Since coming home from a nine-month mission charting the waters east of Suez in late May, the Devonport-based ship has been in dry dock in Falmouth for her five-yearly overhaul.

Her hull, engines, hi-tech survey kit and messes for the 48 crew have all been improved – as the ship's company will find in a matter of weeks during training around the UK.

Her new 'Sealion' hull coating (which feels rubbery and slimy to the touch even when dry, hence the name) means marine growth cannot cling on (sorry once more), reduces the risk of mechanical damage, ensures a smooth surface, reduces drag and hence means less fuel is required to power Enterprise through the Seven Seas.

After 30,000 hours (178 weeks or nearly three and a half years) running, Enterprise's main generators were fully serviced and overhauled to prepare them to work in the coldest or warmest waters.

Another engineering task was the first revamp of her propulsion system in the decade since she was built. Enterprise – and her sister Echo – are propelled by Azipod thrusters.

The Azipod is an electric motor driving a fixed pitch propeller in a submerged pod outside the ship's hull. Not only does it save space inside the ship (and is economical), it gives the two sisters high manoeuvrability.

Her enhanced multi-beam sonar suite – it can take up to 4,000 soundings per second, giving minute levels of detail when updating charts used both by the RN and merchant navies around the world. The improved sonar places HMS Enterprise in the vanguard of any hydrographic work carried out on the Seven Seas.

Enterprise's satellite communications kit has been improved with extra bandwidth at sea so the ship's company can beam up (sorry, starting to run out of *Star Trek* puns now...) and down more data.

And, junior sailors' recreation area has been given a £15,000 new look courtesy of welfare funds, the RN's Rebalancing Lives initiative, and BAE Systems.

All of which will be put to the test during the next six months, with ongoing trials, Joint Warrior exercises off Scotland and Operational Sea Training, pushing the ship – and sailors – to their operational limits before Enterprise deploys again in 2014.

We've moved

THE editorial team of *Navy News* has now moved from HMS Nelson to join the bulk of the RN's media team at Navy Command in Leach Building.

As a result the editorial phone numbers and postal address have changed – but not our email addresses.

We can now be called by dialling 02392 62 (civilian) or 93832 (military) followed by:

- 5257 Editor Mike Gray
- 5255 News Editor Richard Hargreaves
- 3553 Editorial Office Manager Sue Sullivan/ Archivist Trevor Muston
- 5341 Graphics Andy Brady

For editorial submissions, letters to the editor, books for review and the like, our new address is:

- Navy News
- Navy Command
- Leach Building
- HMS Excellent
- Portsmouth PO2 8BY

The business side of *Navy News* – subscriptions, advertising, business manager and accounts – will remain in our long-standing offices in Leviathan Block for the time being.

Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones, HMS Illustrious



SILHOUETTED against the setting Red Sea sun, the unmistakable outline of a Merlin... and the rather ungainly form of the US Marine Corps' MV-22 Osprey – half helicopter, half turboprop – approaching HMS Illustrious.

The world's first tiltrotor aircraft – capable of carrying two-dozen American marines into battle at twice the speed of a conventional helicopter – made its second appearance on the deck of Britain's venerable carrier.

At the controls of the MV-22 Capt Goudy USMC and Lt Al Wootton RN – a Fleet Air Arm Lynx pilot on a three-year exchange with our American brethren.

The duo are based on the assault ship USS Kearsarge (home to 12 Ospreys) which passed Lusty as she headed south through the Red Sea on the latest stage of her Cougar 13 deployment.

The encounter allowed Illustrious the chance to practise hosting this chimera of an aircraft once again – it first put in an appearance on her deck off the Eastern Seaboard of the USA back in 2007.

Present at those trials and again in the Red Sea was Lusty's Lt Cdr Nigel Terry, who says the opportunity of working with the tiltrotor craft again was one not to be missed.

"This is an invaluable opportunity to continue to grow our ability to work together with other nations – absolutely essential in modern naval operations.

"It allows us to grow our understanding of our different procedures as well as providing valuable training for our deck crews."

There are no plans at present for Britain to acquire any MV-22s, but given the close co-operation between the US and Royal Navy around the globe, the ability to operate an Osprey from the flight deck of a British carrier could prove a useful skill to have.

The Osprey isn't the only bird of prey to drop in unexpectedly on Illustrious in the Red Sea – but you couldn't fit it in your cabin...

...unlike the European scops owl which accidentally ended up on Lusty's flight deck while the carrier was conducting a piracy sweep off the coast of Yemen.

It was spotted by LA Mikaele Mua hiding under the ship's crane and handed over to the carrier's resident ornithologist (and meteorologist), Lt Chris Patrick.

Chris knew the small bird stood no chance of survival if it remained out on deck – where

temperatures by day even in mid-September were averaging 40°C.

And thanks to his skills as a weatherman, he knew the bird stood no chance of getting ashore with the wind off the Arabian Peninsula increasingly strong.

So for a few days he decided to treat the owl to life in his cabin, building it a small cage and feeding it water and scraps of meat – but the birdwatcher knew this was only a temporary solution.

"I knew that the owl needed to eat live food that it had caught itself," explained Chris, a member of the RN Bird Watching Society.

"With no insects or bugs aboard Illustrious, it was clear to me I needed to get it ashore as soon as it was fit enough."

That opportunity presented itself off the coast of Oman. Lusty's flying programme was amended to insert 'free bird to shore' and the helicopters on deck, including a Merlin call sign Night Bird, were moved out of the way (furiously-spinning rotors + feathered friend = bad, for bird and mechanical beast...).

Upon the green signal from Flyco, the owl looked at the carrier's ski ramp curiously, before deciding on a vertical lift-off before heading for the shores of Oman.

"It looked in good condition when it left and was heading to shore with the prevailing winds – we all hope it made the journey safely," Chris added.

When not hosting rare birds, Lusty has been playing her full part in the latest stage of the UK Response Force Task Group's autumn deployment.

The first task through Suez was a three-day exercise in the Red Sea with three Saudi vessels. Formed up off the coast of the Kingdom (left to right in the picture below by Lusty's LA (Phot) Nicky Wilson) are the great carrier, frigate HMS Westminster, Saudi supply ship HMS Boraida leading frigate HMS Makkah and RFA Fort Austin, frigate HMS Abah and finally Britain's flagship HMS Bulwark (and not in the frame, although they sailed through the canal in company with the task group are RFA Lyme Bay and ro-ro ferry Hurst Point).

The four British and three Saudi vessels joined forces for Exercise Red Alligator, a mix of navigational/officer of the watch manoeuvres (such as choreographing a photoshoot – the official RN term is Photex) and ensuring smooth communications.

Personnel from both navies were also given the chance to cross decks and stay on the

different ships to experience life on board.

Capt Andy Atkins, of HMS Bulwark's permanent Royal Marines unit, 6 Assault Squadron, left his amphibious comrades behind and crossed to the Makkah.

"As their frigate is a French design it was very similar internally to what we are used to in the Royal Navy. I was made to feel very welcome and am very pleased that I was offered the chance to see how another navy operates at sea," he said.

Lt Cdr Sharokh Esfahani was on hand to help to explain the traditions and conventions of Saudi Arabia. As the cultural advisor to Cdre Paddy McAlpine, the commander of the task group, he visited all the Royal Navy ships ahead of the personnel exchanges, briefing sailors on the history of Saudi Arabia, highlighting not just some of the difference, but also similarities of the two cultures... among them, presumably, the lack of alligators or cougars in the country...

And the Commander of the Western Fleet of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Navy, Cdre Al Haarbi, visited Bulwark at the beginning of the exercise so that he and Cdre McAlpine could discuss plans and tactics.

After a month or so in the Mediterranean, the task group has begun to splinter with ships and units breaking off to do their own thing before returning to the fold.

Hence Westminster headed off for some submarine hunting with the Italians (see page 9), Montrose traded places with Dragon in the Gulf (see page 13), and RFA Mounts Bay stayed behind off Albania to support another, smaller scale exercise, by 3 Commando Brigade, Dragon Hammer, after the main Albanian Lion had run its course.

Red Alligator was the first of several set-piece exercises for Cougar in the Middle East, squeezed into around two months.

Running right now (if you're reading this in early October) is Sea Khanjar – Arabic for dagger – in the United Arab Emirates.

Also lined up before the force heads back through the great manmade link between the Mediterranean and world beyond are Jebel Dagger (Jordan); Omani Dagger (hopefully self-evident), although the planned Anglo-French Djibouti Lion, due to take place this month, has been cancelled.

Parts of the Cougar group will also link up with the European Union naval force which is committed to stamping out piracy off the Horn of Africa and ensuring aid is safely delivered to Somalia.



Forth, Clyde and now the Med

JUST three months after emerging from a major overhaul, minehunter HMS Penzance left her home on the Clyde to take up the UK baton from HMS Ledbury on NATO duties in the Mediterranean.

The Sandown-class ship will join a small force of like-minded sailors in Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 2, whose job it is to patrol the Mediterranean – but it also can be found in the Black Sea, eastern Atlantic and occasionally the other side of the Suez Canal.

The group has the dual task of working together so that should there be a clear and present danger from mines in the 21st Century, it's ready to tackle them, as well as dealing with any historic ordnance littering the seas that it comes across, anything from the two World Wars to more recent conflicts such as the Balkans in the 1990s.

The NATO force consists of minehunters from Italy, Turkey, Germany and the UK, plus a command ship from the Deutsche Marine as the Germans are currently in charge of the group.

Some of Penzance's crew are veterans of NATO missions, such as LD Baker from Portsmouth who last worked with the international mine force back in 2006.

"It's been a while since I've worked under the NATO badge, but I'm really looking forward to working as part of a task group again," said the 28-year-old. "It was a great experience last time in the Baltic, and I have no doubt it'll be just as successful this time around."

And others like 23-year-old AB Ryan Matthews from Bolton are NATO rookies.

"It's great to be deploying for something we've prepared and trained hard for," he said. "I'm particularly looking forward to seeing how other navies do things and getting to know some of the lads on their ships when we're operating together."

Following her revamp in the shed at Rosyth, Penzance spent the summer undergoing trials and Operational Sea Training courtesy of the RN's globally-respected FOST organisation.

A rigorous programme has ensured that both the ship and the ship's company are fully prepared for the NATO mission, ready to make her contribution to the safeguarding of sea lanes.

"Our departure is the culmination of a very challenging period," said Lt Cdr Nick Unwin, Penzance's CO.

"Only four months ago, we took responsibility for the ship from Babcock Marine as the refit period drew to a close and we moved back on board.

"Since then, my ship's company has worked tirelessly to complete trials and training to deploy and I am immensely proud of what they have achieved. The support we have had from all areas has been tremendous not just from Naval organisations but also from our families we leave behind too.

"This particular commitment is a long-standing, enduring commitment our Royal Navy mine countermeasures vessels have undertaken for many years and our upcoming work in the Mediterranean region will continue to build and strengthen our working relationships with our NATO colleagues."



It's good to be back...



THERE'S something very 'mission completed' about this shot of the men of 211 Flight, 815 Naval Air Squadron, striding across the standings at RNAS Yeovilton.

And you know what? It is mission complete for the Lynx flight and her floating airfield - for the past seven months HMS Argyll. Both have travelled around half the world - Africa, South Atlantic, South America and Caribbean - on their Atlantic/Pacific deployment.

Both returned to their respective homes on the same day last month - 500 folk on the jetty at Devonport to see the frigate for the first time since February and slightly fewer in Somerset to welcome the WAFUs.

In Plymouth, the celebratory atmosphere included tugs blasting jets of water into the air, the ship's Lynx conducting a flypast, Her Majesty's Band of the Royal Marines playing to the crowds and Plymouth Pipe Band entertaining the ship's company as they sailed up the Hamoaze.

Take away warfighting (thankfully, there wasn't any) and Argyll's mission

covered the gamut of what the RN does: working with foreign nations (exercising with west African navies on the way south); reassurance to British citizens in our South Atlantic territories, including the Falklands; some adventurous training (following in Shackleton's footsteps across South Georgia); humanitarian aid (saving the life of a Japanese fisherman off the Cape Verde Islands); drugs busting in the Pacific which led to \$116m (about £73m) of narcotics being seized.

The counter drugs work continued once through Panama as Argyll joined our American, Colombian and Canadian allies on Operation Martillo, codename for the international effort to strangle the illegal narcotics trade in the region. The Americans thanked the frigate for her efforts, presenting CO Cdr Tim Neild with a 'snowflake' flag; a snowflake with a red cross over it, signifying a cocaine bust.

All of that action should have maintained spirits in the long months away from home. If not, there was always clubz, in the form of LPT Barry Chambers.

"The deployment was really good, personally speaking, highlights were Bermuda and Key West," said Barry who was met by his fiancée Leanne Jackson and their son, four-year-old Alfie.

"I kept the ship's company in date with their fitness tests and staged adventure training for them - kayaking, climbing Table Mountain in South Africa, diving with sharks and cliff jumping, to name a few. It all helps keep up morale and makes the most of any visits.

"It's good to be back though." His fiancée says the couple's son has spent weeks yearning for dad to return. "Now they can play 'boys' games'," she says, "which I'm not good at."

After Argyll's NAS Lynx had completed its mini display over Plymouth it headed east to home. At the controls was pilot Lt John 'JP' Phillips who quit his job as an accountant for Shell in London (which was very office bound) to join the Fleet Air Arm (which isn't).

Five years since taking that momentous decision, he loved his time with Argyll - although it did mean leaving his two-month-old son Rudy behind with his wife Hannah.

"Rudy has changed massively - when I went away I put him down and

he stayed still now he's a bit of a rascal crawling all over the place causing carnage for his parents.

"It's been a hugely enjoyable deployment - it's been fascinating to see such a diverse mix of countries in such a short time while conducting operations.

"The best experience has to be flying around South Georgia. The scenery was stunning and we were dropping off a bunch of guys for an exercise, so the flying was exciting too."

Cdr Neild was nearly knocked over by his children Lucy, six, and Josh, four, as they ran to hug him off the ship. For now, this is the last time dad will be going to sea for some time.

"This is my swansong as far as the ship goes. And it has been an amazing deployment to go out on," said Cdr Neild, who leaves Argyll in late September to study for an MBA before taking up a post in Whitehall.

"HMS Argyll's deployment stands as an exemplar in the defence community as to the flexibility and agility represented by a UK frigate on operations.

"We have conducted a vast range of tasking across half the globe. The capacity we built in Africa, the reassurance and training in the South Atlantic and the \$116 million worth of drugs we helped stop in Central America all show the value for money that a most capable warship, such as HMS Argyll, provides. I am immensely proud of my 'Band of Brothers' for their commitment and professionalism throughout."

As he is of his wife Claire - and all the extended Argyll family.

"Claire's done a fantastic job keeping the home fires burning while I've been away," he said.

"Naval wives tend to have that in common, the multi-tasking like working and keeping the family together while the men are away. They do things that we men would not even dream of doing when we are at home. But it is payback time and now our turn to take a turn at home."

The Type 23 travelled 35,000 nautical miles during her deployment, visiting 16 countries across eight time zones during 206 days away.

Picture: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies, HMS Heron



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The White Heat of the future Fleet

LIFTING off the end of the USS Wasp's flight deck, this is a milestone moment in the future of British naval aviation.

This is the first take-off at sea by a British pilot in an F35 Lightning II – the jump jet of tomorrow for HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales.

During a week of trials aboard the American amphibious assault ship, RAF Sqn Ldr Jim Schofield successfully launched his F35B and brought it safely back down on to the deck of the Wasp – by day and night.

He was not only the first Briton to do so, but the first non-American (Italy, Israel, the Netherlands, Japan, Norway, Denmark, and Canada are all investing in or showing an interest in the stealth strike fighter).

As well as simple sorties to gain take-off and landing experience, the F35 also lifted off the deck with various payloads.

The data gathered by the RAF pilot and his American colleagues during more than 40 successful take-offs from and landings on the Wasp will prove indispensable when it comes to operating the new jet at sea: the US Marine Corps will be doing that in just two years' time, the Fleet Air Arm and RAF likewise in 2018 from the deck of the QE.

And while it was an RAF man at the controls for these trials – known as Development Trials II – backing him up in the Wasp's hangar was a team of air engineers and technicians led by Lt Cdr Robin Trewnnard-Boyle.

Both the light and dark blue contingents are delighted both with the performance of the F35 – which will be the first fifth generation jet fighter to fly from a British aircraft carrier – but also the wider Lightning II programme.

"The aircraft has performed fantastically," said Lt Cdr Trewnnard-Boyle.

"For the pilot it's much easier to fly and, as far as I'm concerned, it's much easier to maintain.

"The F35 has very much been designed with the maintainer in mind. All the components we need to change and the work we have to do is easier – and hence quicker."

Sqn Ldr Schofield was apprehensive about his first night flights from the Wasp, but thanks to the advances made in the two generations since the Harrier was designed, found them to be "a breeze".

As for the overall trials, he summed them up in a single word: staggering.

"The UK is going to be very pleased with the F35," the RAF pilot said.

"It's a great jet to fly – definitely fifth generation in every sense.

"For all of those people at school now looking forward to joining the RAF or the Royal Navy, they are going to have a lot



Picture: Todd McQueen, Lockheed Martin

of fun flying this jet."

The F35 is just one of several major equipment projects which is at the heart of what First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas says is "nothing less than a maritime renaissance".

In a rousing address at the UK's biggest military and security trade show, the Defence Security and Equipment International exhibition in London's Docklands, which focused heavily on the importance of the white heat of technology to the Royal Navy of today and tomorrow, Admiral Zambellas told industry leaders that their efforts were vital to the re-birth of the Fleet.

He described the Navy's re-equipment programme as one of the biggest engineering projects in the country at present.

"Far from being stopped in the water at a time of austerity and fiscal pressure, the UK is experiencing an extraordinary renewal of its maritime capability," he said.

"And the scale of the UK's investment in this programme matches the scale of the UK's ambition to be a genuine international player with real influence and authority in the world."

Right now the RN possesses six Type 45 destroyers, all commissioned; four have deployed, Daring is on her second tour of duty and seeing whether her Sea Viper missile system can take out incoming ballistic missiles.

In the domain of the hunter-

killer submarine, Astute will carry out her first operational patrol in the near future.

The Type 26 'global combat ship' is rapidly taking shape (*see right*), while the RFA fleet is also evolving with new tankers on the order books.

As for the skies, Admiral Zambellas says the "rejuvenation" of naval aviation – he himself flew in Sea Kings in the 1980s – "is no less dramatic".

The Fleet Air Arm's entire helicopter fleet is being replaced: Merlins for Sea Kings; Wildcats for Lynx; Merlin Mk2s for Mk1s.

And on the fixed-wing front, aside from the trials aboard the Wasp, the first Fleet Air Arm Lightning II squadron (809) is being formed – *see page 4*.

No new piece of naval equipment captures the public imagination more, however, than the two new carriers taking shape in Rosyth.

The launch of the first, HMS Queen Elizabeth, next summer "will be a real moment of national awakening", Admiral Zambellas believes.

"Why? Because she will be the first of two 'big deck' aircraft carriers capable of delivering a full spectrum of diplomatic, political and military options. Instruments of national power – symbols of national authority on the world stage – national icons. The Navy 'back in business'."

Such investment, Admiral Zambellas told industry leaders, was not merely good for the RN, but also good for UK businesses – there are more than 100 firms supporting the carrier project alone.

Although both carriers will be complete in a decade's time and all but the last Astute will be in service, the rejuvenation of the RN Fleet will still be ongoing in 2022.

Construction of the Type 26 frigates will be in full swing, as will construction of the replacements for the Vanguard-class ballistic missile boats to name a few major projects.

Such investment will devour nearly half the defence equipment budget – "a very sizeable wedge", the admiral concedes.

"The headline figures are, of course, eye-catching," he added.

"But that is only when viewed through a short-term lens. The reality is that the naval platforms which are being built today will have long life spans – very long life spans. So this longevity delivers real 'bang for buck'. Don't buy me a frigate that lasts only half as long."

And while the public might view Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales as 'Royal Navy', the First Sea Lord sees the carriers as "universal sockets" into which the Army, Air Force and Special Forces can plug themselves.



Picture: BAE Systems

THIS is the best idea yet of how the Royal Navy's frigates of tomorrow will look.

Computer artists have unveiled the latest impressive imagery of the Type 26 Global Combat Ship which show the design of the new vessel dramatically taking shape after three and half years' work.

From 2020, these ships will take the place of the trusty Type 23s which have been the nation's safeguard and protector against submarine attack – and much more – since the early 1990s.

The images were revealed at the DSEI exhibition by BAE Systems, as it announced the first contracts had been placed for some of the key equipment aboard.

Work will begin on the first – as yet unnamed – ship in the class of a planned 13 in just three years' time, with that same vessel due to be in service as soon as possible after 2020.

A combined RN-MOD-BAE 550-strong team has been working on the design of the ships since the spring of 2010 and those efforts have reached the stage where BAE are ready to issue the first contracts.

The ships will be powered by a combined diesel electric or gas turbine system – meaning they'll be capable of high speeds, but also cruise along extremely quietly. Rolls-Royce have been selected to design the 26's gas turbines; MTU will provide the diesel generator sets and David Brown Gear Systems have been asked to develop the gearbox.

The fourth contract has been placed with Rohde & Schwarz to work on the vessels' communications system.

The Type 26 will be slightly longer than the Duke-class they replace (148m to 133m) and slightly heavier (5,400 tonnes to 4,900).

It incorporates many of the features of the similarly futuristic-looking Type 45 destroyers – chiefly angled sides and an enclosed upper deck for increased stealth.

Sea Ceptor missiles will fend off incoming air attack, there'll be a medium calibre gun on the forecastle, vertical missile silos for other weapons, and the flight deck will be able to accommodate an RAF Chinook.

To speed development of the 26s along – and to help them into service – proven technology from their predecessors will be used.

As with the Type 45 destroyers the new vessels are being designed with the future in mind so it will be easier to adapt them to new technology introduced to the Fleet during the course of their lifespans.

As for their predecessors, the oldest Type 23, HMS Argyll, is expected to serve until around 2023, while the youngest, St Albans, will be on duty until around 2036.

"We have already seen Army Apache helicopters operate successfully from HMS Ocean off the Libyan coast back in 2011 – an obvious blueprint for the future. Aboard Queen Elizabeth, they will be tiny. Unless, of course, a couple of squadrons embark. And why not? I challenge the Army to think that way."

Similarly, Admiral Zambellas can envisage US Marine Corps F35s lifting off the ramp of Britain's carriers.

Given past experience – US and RAF Harriers flying from the Invincibles, Chinooks on Ark Royal and Lusty during the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns, Apaches on Ocean – such

collaborative efforts don't demand too great a leap of imagination.

But in the realm of technology, the First Sea Lord believes the Navy and industry must "think ahead and innovate".

He continued: "The future will bring all sorts of surprises, including unmanned dogfights in the skies, and not necessarily with hardkill weapons, but with cyber and jamming. And this unmanned air control or sea denial will extend to space, the sea surface and below.

"The march of technology is remorseless, its options expanding exponentially. The drumbeat gets ever louder. In the maritime domain we need to be ready for it. We need to embrace it. And we need to exploit it."

The admiral believes there is a wealth of talent, both in the RN and UK industry, which can – and should – be pooled to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

"The Royal Navy runs more nuclear power stations below the sea than the rest of the UK does on land," he explained – before listing some of the other cutting edge kit in the hands of Royal Navy personnel: "strategic missile systems, high-voltage electrical ship's propulsion systems and electricity generation, top-end weapon sensors and missile systems, space-based systems, and everything in between, leading sonar systems, active and passive, leading software, leading off-board systems above, on and below the sea surface."

Making best use of this talent and forging a stronger partnership between the RN and industry, harnessing what Admiral Zambellas calls "positive ambition not negative competition" will give the Navy of tomorrow "premier league maritime capability" with "high-end, state-of-the-art military hardware" – as well as giving value for money for the British taxpayer.

The admiral's warmly-received speech was one of three he gave in the capital in four days to tie in with a series of maritime events – DSEI, a conference at RUSI, and the inaugural London International Shipping Week.

As well as addresses from Britain's ranking sailor, the events were also supported by the presence of HMS Sutherland and Tyne, berthed at the Royal Docks next to the ExCeL centre which was home to DSEI, and HMS Northumberland up river at Canary Wharf as a backdrop to the shipping week.

Before hotfooting it to the North East for a visit to her namesake county, Northumberland hosted a string of leaders from the shipping and maritime world – to whom the ship's company stressed the importance of the RN in securing global sea lanes.

As did Admiral Zambellas when he addressed the shipping week.

Although Britain's Merchant Navy has shrunk substantially since World War 2, it is still the fifth largest merchant fleet in the world.

And it – as well as ships sailing under other flags – is responsible for delivering over 90 per cent of the goods on which Britain relies, not to mention fuel such as liquefied natural gas.

"Predictions indicate that the sea will become more – not less – important to us," the admiral said.

"If global trade at sea is to continue unmolested – and the world is going to feed and fuel itself in the coming decades – then internationalised maritime security is a basic ingredient, not a choice."

In recent years, among the most molested trade has been off the Horn of Africa – although thanks to the recent combined efforts of international navies, the scourge of Somali piracy has been mostly strangled.

Lawlessness in the waters on the opposite side of the continent, however, continues to pose severe problems for oil and shipping companies.

The First Sea Lord said the Royal Navy was helping to set up a trade and information sharing centre in the Gulf of Guinea to deal with the threat of maritime crime in the region – estimated to cost £2bn a year.



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|--|---|

FIRE from HMS Westminster's main gun lights up a thin streak of the Mediterranean night, somewhere off Crete for the frigate's final training before shifting to her operational theatre.

Away for the next six or so months ensuring pirates, smugglers and other folk you really don't want popping around for tea strangle the Middle Eastern sea lanes, the Portsmouth-based warship has been training by day and night against potential foes by land, sea and air as she headed east.

The Type 23 sailed with the Cougar task force – and found herself slap bang in the middle of the international media spotlight when she arrived in Gib (at the peak of recent diplomatic tensions) – but has spent quite a bit of her deployment acting semi-independently and she'll break away for good later this autumn to tackle piracy and other criminal activity in the Indian Ocean as she relieves HMS Kent.

So while the amphibious forces were heavily engaged in Albanian Lion, Westminster was off demonstrating how she can shield said prized assets.

Because there's no chance of putting any Royal Marines ashore if a submarine has sunk the assault ships, hence the need to shield the group with two Type 23 frigates (Westminster and Argyll).

So let the eternal game of cat and mouse between submarine – Italian diesel boat ITS Salvatore Pelosi – and submarine hunters – the 'capital ship' plus the Italian destroyer ITS Francesco Mimbelli – begin.

Both the surface ships have been built to hunt down and kill enemy submarines. Westminster has

the added advantage of being the flagship of the Captain of Anti-Submarine Warfare, Capt Hugh Beard, a former submariner. Send a thief to catch a thief...

"As a former submarine commanding officer, I am a poacher-turned-gamekeeper and I have really enjoyed my experience with the capabilities of Westminster to try to defeat the Italian submarine Pelosi," he said.

So there was a battle of minds, wits and nerves – Team Westminster and *Squadra Francesco Mimbelli* vs *Squadra Salvatore Pelosi* – for several days (described by some as "action-packed", but as ASW is often dubbed "awfully slow warfare", we're assuming it was rather more cerebral).

There was also the chance for some of the sailors to experience life on board a partner nation's vessel. From HMS Westminster, medical officer Lt Moira McLellan spent two days on the *Mimbelli*.

"It was a very enjoyable visit and interesting to see the similarities in the day to day workings of both navies. However, the culinary differences were very apparent, with pizza being served on Mimbelli's bridge at 10 in the morning," she said.

Beats dunking Hobnobs in your brew at stand-easy...

Continuing east through the Med, the frigate let rip (technical term) with the gun by day and night – the latter described by her sailors as "the ship's biggest laser beam", which seems quite apt on the evidence of the 'beam' streaking across this photograph.

The 'warriness' continued once alongside in Crete courtesy of the NATO board and search training centre (more about that from Montrose – see page 13), while the weapon engineers fine tuned

their systems and sensors so there should be no issues working with friendly warships in theatre.

In theatre. Because once one of Her Majesty's warships is in the Red Sea, Gulf or Indian Ocean, she's in an operational theatre under the banner of UK Maritime Component Command in Bahrain, which directs the RN's Middle East mission.

First you've got to get there.

Suez is always an experience (although no Gully Gully Man these days). More so with a task group. Throw three Japanese Maritime Defence Force ships into the mix. And merchantmen. And HMS Dragon coming the other way making for the Med.

After a 14-hour transit and a couple of hours at anchor in the Great Bitter Lake, the task group emerged the other side into the Red Sea ready to begin exercising with the Saudis (see page 7).

Having spent the entire canal passage on the bridge, Capt Beard was particularly pleased to leave the canal with nothing significant to report – beyond the fact that he's got a top team ready to patrol 2½ million square miles of ocean (that's eight times bigger than the North Sea).

"My ship's company is now ready to take on the extensive responsibilities from HMS Kent, fully prepared for our future mission," Capt Beard says emphatically.

Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Rosenbaum, HMS Westminster

Mediterranean mezze

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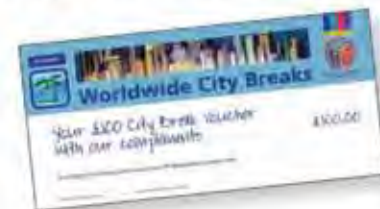
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Atlantic outposts

WITH those slightly ominous clouds and rugged coastline, you'd be forgiven for thinking HMS Richmond is anchored off Cornwall or maybe Scotland.

But this is the tropical British outpost of St Helena, latest port of call for the Portsmouth-based frigate on her North and South Atlantic deployment.

And it's also home to Richmond's LS(EW) Jamie Fowler. But such are the vicissitudes of getting there (first a 12-hour flight, then a three-day boat ride: cost about £2.5k) he's not been back since leaving over a dozen years ago to pursue his career in the RN.

So what better place for a family reunion than aboard his ship? And what better place to receive your third good conduct badge?

So surrounded by his loved ones in the wardroom, the St Helena was presented with the award – signified by a third V-shaped stripe worn on his uniform – by the frigate's Commanding Officer Cdr Rob Pedre (pictured below).



"Of the 12 years I have served in the Royal Navy, without doubt one of the proudest moments in my career has got to be visiting my home island whilst serving in HMS Richmond," said the warfare specialist.

"Having the opportunity to show my family where I work and live whilst deployed has been fantastic and for them to see the captain present my third good conduct badge has been the icing on the cake!"

Before dropping anchor off St Helena, the ship's 815 Naval Air Squadron Lynx was sent up to carry out an aerial survey of the island – at just 47 square miles it's about three times the size of Portsmouth.

It's also one of the most remote inhabited places in the Seven Seas – the nearest land is 1,200 miles away – and with little prospect of immediate help from the outside world should a disaster strike, the 4,000-plus inhabitants will be left to their own devices.

Which was why St Helena's emergency services asked Richmond's Lynx to carry out a survey, helping locals to draw up disaster recovery plans. (Luckily, although the island is volcanic in origin, there's not been an eruption for an estimated seven million years.)

Once the aerial survey was completed, and with the ship safely anchored off the capital Jamestown, the ship's company hosted a number of visits from the islanders – affectionately known as Saints – including groups from several schools, VIPs led by the Governor Mark Capes, and the local radio station.

St Helena's the second British Atlantic territory Richmond's visited south of the Equator. A few days beforehand, the Type 23 stopped off at Ascension Island.

Like St Helena, it doesn't have a harbour to accommodate a large warship, so she anchored off the capital Georgetown for the 14-hour visit.

Unlike St Helena, however, Ascension has a rather large airfield – the base is a vital staging post in the air bridge between the two Atlantics. That same air bridge meant there was mail and stores waiting.

RAF and US Air Force personnel from Wideawake Airfield, plus island officials and local scouts, were invited on board during the brief stay.

There was sufficient time for lunch and a ship's tour... and there was sufficient time for some of the ship's company to visit the Green Mountain, English Bay and carry out some diving.

Pictures: LA(Phot) Gaz Weatherston, HMS Richmond



CHuFfed with Mk3

ROYAL Marines have been given a glimpse of tomorrow as their future air power joined them on deployment for the first time.

As well as the Royal Navy's amphibious forces, the green berets ride into battle in the Sea Kings of the Commando Helicopter Force.

The veteran helicopters will be retired after nearly 50 years' service by 2016. In their place will come the much more modern and powerful Merlin.

The distinctive green giants joined the commandos in Albania – their first taste of operating in the field with the Royal Marines – during the first major exercise of the Navy's headline deployment of the year, Cougar.

Although the Fleet Air Arm has been flying Merlins since the late 1990s, it's a different version – designed principally, though not exclusively, for submarine-hunting.

The RAF have been flying the battlefield versions of the Merlin – the Mk3 and Mk3A – for the past decade and have extensive experience of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. For the past 18 months, they've been passing on that experience to CHF air and ground at RAF Benson in Oxfordshire ahead of the Sea Kings' retirement.

The Cougar 13 deployment to the Mediterranean and Middle East provided the first opportunity for the Merlins and marines, in the form of 3 Commando Brigade, to work together in the field.

Having leapfrogged across central Europe to Tirana, the Merlins from 78 Squadron – comprising Royal Navy and Air Force personnel – trained with a detachment of RAF Hawks from 100 Squadron before leaving the airbase for the field, where they were deprived of most of the usual creature comforts.

The CHF team provided more than three dozen personnel, supplying vehicle mechanics, drivers, signallers, chefs and stewards, experts in aviation operations, setting up refuelling stations, a field kitchen, and a signals HQ to maintain contact with flagship HMS Bulwark – basically everything they've been



● A pair of Merlin Mk3s fly past *Illustrious* in Vlorë Bay, carrying 105mm field guns as underslung loads

Picture: LA(Phot) Arron Hoare, HMS Bulwark

doing for decades with the Sea Kings, but this time with Merlin.

From this makeshift set-up, the Merlins were expected to work seamlessly with the staff aboard Bulwark – who have a vast operations room and impressive communications suite at their disposal – and meet the front-line demands of the marines, ferrying men and material around southern Albania during the crux of the exercise, as the commandos pushed in from the coast around the port of Vlorë.

All of which was played out in real-time. The Merlin Mk3 can carry two dozen troops with kit, or in a 'flying ambulance' role, 16 casualties on stretchers. It can also lift artillery pieces, Land Rovers, or five tonnes of equipment slung beneath it if required. It doesn't have a sonar and submarine hunting kit like its Royal Navy counterpart – but it does have a stern ramp for troops to climb on and off.

The RAF Merlins found themselves sharing Albanian skies with Army Air Corps Lynx from 659 Squadron and Fleet Air Arm Lynx of 815 NAS operating from the deck of veteran carrier HMS *Illustrious*, one of ten Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels taking part in the Cougar

deployment.

All told, Albanian Lion proved a very useful pointer to how tomorrow's CHF will look.

"The success of the RAF's detachment has begun to inform Commando Helicopter Force and the Commander UK Task Group as to how it will operate the Merlin in the future," said CHF's Lt Gareth Plunkett.

"There's still some way to go to achieve the full capability of the force equipped with their Sea King Mk4s, but once the Merlin is adapted for maritime operations, the Commando Helicopter Force will continue to be at the forefront of the Response Force Task Group's air power.

"The exercise was also a great success for 78 Squadron; they deployed into the field and operated jointly from an austere location to support 3 Commando Brigade for the first time."

The entire CHF force is going through the transition to new helicopters: the two front-line Sea King squadrons, 845 and 846 NAS are switching to Merlin, while 847 NAS, who provide battlefield reconnaissance and support, have just retired their Lynx and are converting to the successor Wildcat right now at RNAS Yeovilton.



Iron Duke tests her gun mettle

HMS Iron Duke took a few steps closer to taking on front-line duties after firing a number of her weapons systems during ongoing post-refit trials off the South Coast.

The Portsmouth-based Type 23 was out of the line for nearly a year and a half as she went through a major revamp, not least becoming the first RN ship to receive Artisan radar (which can track 800 targets 125 miles away simultaneously).

For now, however, the focus has been on testing proven technology: close range machine-guns, the 3lb saluting gun (above) and submarine defence.

"There's a lot of work preparing and conducting safety checks on the weapons and the mountings, especially for their first use," said CPO 'Cat' Stephens, 33, the ship's senior ordnance engineer.

"The practice firings went well and reminded the younger sailors what we are all about."

The firing of the torpedoes included testing the firing system from the ops room and in local control.

High-pressure air ejects the Sting Ray torpedo (which is also carried by Merlin and Lynx helicopters) from its tubes just forward of the Type 23's hangar.

A small parachute slows its descent into the water and, being a dummy, the 100kg torpedo was recovered by the frigate's sea boat teams.

It is a last resort defence mechanism – the ship's Lynx or Merlin should have hunted down any potential underwater foe long before it's within close range of a Type 23 – but the sight of it popping over the side is still worth seeing.

"As it was a training torpedo I wasn't expecting much but it was really impressive when it 'fired' off," said ET(WE) 'Sam' Kelly.

Prize winners

CASKS of Swordfish beer, courtesy of the generous folk at Wiltshire brewery Wadsworth, are inbound to: Mr D Livesey, Rugby, Warwickshire; Ian Holliday, Hartlepool and Tony Davie, Chineham, Hampshire.

All correctly answered that Taranto was the harbour where Fleet Air Arm Swordfish crippled the Italian Fleet in 1940.

And the winner of two free nights at Edinburgh five-star hotel Nira Caledonia is Fiona Douglas from Glasgow.

Both competitions appeared in our August edition.

Minehunters' evolution No.9

AFTER a four-decade absence an historic Royal Navy minehunting force has been reborn in the Gulf.

For nine years between 1962 and 1971 the 9th Mine Sweeping Squadron safeguarded the region's waters when many of the countries bordering the Gulf were British protectorates.

Forty years later and with a permanent Royal Navy mine warfare force stationed in the Gulf again, the squadron name – with sweeping in the title replaced by counter-measures – has been resurrected to give the ships and personnel involved a stronger sense of identity.

To mark the rebirth of 9th Mine Counter-Measures Squadron (MCM9), the five ships in the force – minehunters Shoreham, Ramsey, Atherstone and Quorn and command/mother ship RFA Cardigan Bay – have funnel badges celebrating their parent unit.

Like the squadron title, the badge is an homage to its forebear, featuring a dhow but with a yellow background to emphasise the hot environment in which the ships operate (it's currently 44°C).

The RN's senior officer in the region, UK Maritime Component Commander Cdre Simon Ancona performed the honours on HMS Ramsey, unveiling the first funnel badge which, he said, provided "a unity of purpose, effort and pride".

Which is exactly what the officer in charge of the Mine Warfare Battle Staff, Cdr Neil Marriot, hopes it will achieve.

"The badge provides distinctiveness – a collective team identity and a single banner to sail under. It illustrates a unified force with a common purpose with an enduring commitment to the Gulf."

The current Bahrain-based force began life in late 2006 as Operation Aintree with two minehunters, HMS Ramsey and Blyth. From 2008 the group doubled in size with the arrival of a pair of Hunt-class ships, Atherstone and Chiddingfold.

Come 2013 and operating under the banner of the RN's overarching east of Suez mission, Operation Kipion, the minewarfare force has been bolstered with a battle staff, mother ship, Lynx helicopter flight and a repair and logistics organisation.

"Since 2006 the organisation has grown and is now very well supported," said HMS Ramsey's PO Sam Dixon – on his fourth tour of duty on the Bahrain hunters. "I really like the badge. It gives us a single identity."

As for the historic squadron, it was originally formed of four Ton-class sweepers – Appleton, Kemerton, Flockton and Chilcompton – which were specially fitted for the rigours of operating in the Gulf.

They were based in Aden and later Bahrain, and had their pennant numbers painted in Arabic on the stern. The force remained in place until the summer of 1971. When Bahrain and Qatar became independent nations and Trucial States formed into the United Arab Emirates, the squadron was disbanded.



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May the Hawks be with you



THERE'S a new number on the muster list of Naval Air Squadrons – a homage to 'top guns' of old and the first days of Culdrose airbase.

You probably won't be able to read the figures 7-3-6: its Hawk jets are likely to be rushing past in a blur at over 600mph as you're manning the GPMG on the upper deck or scanning the horizon from the bridge as the dark blue dots bank in and out of the Fleet off Plymouth.

For over 40 years those jets – in the past they've been Sea Vixens, Canberras and Hawker Hunters – have trained ship's companies in the art of fending off aircraft and missile attack.

And they'll continue to do so in the future, but no longer under the banner of the Fleet Requirements Air Direction Unit.

Commonly – and thankfully – abbreviated to FRADU, it's merged with the RN Hawk Detachment at Yeovilton to form 736 Naval Air Squadron, based at Culdrose.

The decision to resurrect the historic squadron was taken as part of the rejuvenation of fixed-wing fast jet flying in the Senior Service ahead of the arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales and their Lightning IIs – as evidenced by the announcement to form 809 NAS (see page 4).

The Lightning II is yet-to-be-

proven technology. 736's Hawks are tried and trusted having been in service for nearly 40 years.

The squadron flies 14 Hawks – the jet of choice not just for 736, but also RAF and RN fast-jet training and, of course, the Red Arrows – principally to test the reactions and responses of British and foreign warships undergoing training with FOST off the coast of Devon and Cornwall.

The Hawks either simulate enemy strike fighters making low-level attacks on shipping or make high-speed sea-skimming passes akin to (though slower than) anti-ship missiles.

In addition, the 736 aircraft train students from the Royal Navy School of Fighter Control in the art of directing jets on to targets.

And the Fleet Air Arm's eyes in the sky, the surveillance Sea Kings of 849, 854 and 857 Squadrons (all based at Culdrose) also 'play' with the Hawks as their observers are taught airborne early warning, fighter control and the identification of ground targets.

As befits a naval squadron, 736 has a serving officer in charge – CO Lt Cdr Tim Flatman, a hugely-experienced Harrier

and Hawk pilot. His fellow fliers are a mix of military and civilians, all with a lot of fast jet time under their belts. How much? Collectively, over 52,000 flying hours – that's 309 weeks, or just short of six whole years.

Over the 90 years of the Fleet Air Arm's existence (it started out in 1924 as the 'Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Air Force' before parting company with the RAF in the 1930s) there have been around 220 Naval Air Squadrons (not all concurrently). In 2013, there are 16.

So with 200 or so unused numbers to choose from, why 736?

Well... All 700-series numbers denote training and trials units; 800 are for front-line squadrons... and the Hawks aren't front-line.

736 was picked because of its ties to Culdrose. When HMS Seahawk was commissioned on April 18 1947, it was Supermarine Seafires from 736 NAS which took part in the opening ceremony's flypast.

736 began life in 1943 as the School of Air Combat, teaching experienced fighter pilots the latest tactics and techniques – a sort of Royal Navy 'Top Gun' school.

The squadron moved to Culdrose in 1950 flying Sea Furies – the Fleet Air Arm's last piston-engined fighter – before switching to Meteor and Attacker jets, still with the remit of teaching pilots the art of aerial combat.

When the fighter school moved to Lossiemouth, so too the squadron, where it taught experienced pilots to be air warfare instructors and trained foreign pilots to British standards.

Aircraft: BAE Hawk T1
Crew: 2
Engines: 1x Rolls-Royce Adour Mk951 Turbofan
Wing Span: 9.94m (32ft 7in)
Length: 12.43m (40 ft 9 in)
Ceiling: 13,565m (44,500ft)
Rate of climb: 47m/s (9,300ft/min)
Speed: Mach 0.84 (1,028 km/h, 638 mph)
Endurance: 2,520km (1,565 miles)

Facts and figures

heat-seeking missiles being introduced.

736's final incarnation before its new role was from 1965 until 1972, still at Lossiemouth, as the jet strike training squadron with the legendary Blackburn Buccaneer (see below).

Picture: PO(Phot) Bernie Henesy

IWM PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES

THAT'S quite a view.

Two Blackburn Buccaneer S1 bombers of 800 Naval Air Squadron pass over HMS Eagle some time in 1964 – probably July or September of that year as the carrier conducted flying trials following an extensive refit.

Impressive as this photograph is – and it is – it becomes even more so when you realise that the person behind the lens was flying upside down just 80ft above the pair of jets at the time he pressed the button.

In this month when a legendary Buccaneer squadron is re-born, we thought our dip into the seemingly inexhaustible archives of the Imperial War Museum should reflect one of the great names in naval aviation.

Eagle had just emerged from a four-year £30m refit (the equivalent cost today would be at least ten times that figure, putting it on a par with, say, the mid-life overhaul of a Vanguard-class submarine) which brought the carrier into the missile age.

Gone were many of the guns which had previously defended her, in their place the Seacat missile, the superstructure was rebuilt (including the addition of the 984 radar with its large searchlight-shaped dish), steam catapults installed, air conditioning was fitted throughout, bunks replaced hammocks, there was even an ice cream counter installed.

Just one month before Eagle paid off at the end of the '50s to begin her modernisation, the Admiralty had placed an order for 50 new strike bombers capable of flying below enemy radar coverage to deliver nuclear bombs, if necessary, at speeds just short of the Sound Barrier.

The Blackburn NA39 was the aircraft which met the requirement – better known as the Buccaneer, the world's first low-level high-speed strike bomber.

The first Buccaneer took to the skies in the spring of 1958. By the time the prototypes had conducted more than 30 launchings from and landings on HMS Victorious, the aircraft had sufficiently impressed the powers that be to invest.

In March 1961, the first front-line Buccaneers, the S1, were delivered to 700Z Flight at RNAS Lossiemouth in northern Scotland. Following 16 months of trials and evaluation, the first front-line Buccaneer squadron – 801 – was ready to

operate with HMS Ark Royal.

It was joined at the Scottish air base first by 809 NAS (January 1963) and then 800 NAS (March 1964), with eight Buccaneers to fly from Eagle.

They flew aboard Eagle for the first time on July 15 1964 in Lyme Bay for eight days of trials, sharing the deck with twin-boomed Sea Vixen fighters and propeller-driven Gannet airborne early warning aircraft.

Although the Buccaneer has gone on to assume legendary status in aviation circles, the S1 was underpowered – it couldn't lift off the deck with a full load of fuel or weaponry (sadly the wonderfully-named Green Cheese anti-ship missile had been abandoned in favour of conventional bombs, rockets and, *ultima ratio*, a WE177 nuclear bomb).

Hawker Siddeley – they'd absorbed the Blackburn Aircraft Company in 1960 and would in time become British Aerospace and ultimately BAE – had already come up with a solution, courtesy of the Rolls-Royce Spey engines which gave the Buccaneer 40 per cent more thrust.

The improved S2 had just made its maiden flight as Eagle was carrying out trials with her S1 and by late 1965 was beginning to replace the original version.

In all some 84 Buccaneers flew under the White Ensign in four front-line squadrons (803 NAS completes the quartet), fed by 736 NAS, the Jet Strike Training Squadron.

The Speys gave the bomber a top speed of Mach 0.85 at 200ft – just under 650mph – with a payload of 16,000lbs (one third of its overall weight).

The enhanced Buccaneer would remain in service with the Navy until the demise of traditional carriers in the late 70s, but the RAF – latecomers to the Buccaneer world, they only began flying the jet towards the end of the 1960s – would continue operating the bomber into the 90s. It saw action in the first Gulf War before being phased out in March 1994 – 42 years after the Admiralty had set down its original requirements.

■ THIS photograph (TR 023143) – 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.



Fighting fit

PEEK-a-boo, Royal's coming for you.

With his 'simunition' pistol at the ready, a Royal Marines Commando from HMS Montrose stalks his way around a unique training ship – ready for the frigate's mission east of Suez.

The combined Royal Marines and Royal Navy Boarding teams from the Devonport-based frigate spent four days at NATO's board and search training centre in Souda Bay on Crete for a final honing of skills.

Thanks to its specialist facilities – the island is home to FORACS (FORces sensors and weapons Accuracy Check Site) which tests the myriad of sensors, communications, radars and sonars to ensure they're in full working order, allowing NATO ships to pass crucial information to each other accurately – Crete is typically the last port of call for any RN ship heading to the Middle East.

It's also home to the Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre, whose *pièce de résistance* is a former Hellenic Navy training ship, the Aris, now used to allow visiting ships' companies to fine tune their board and search skills through its narrow passageways and cluttered compartments.

For added realism, teams take their training to the next level courtesy of weapons which fire 'simunition' – simulated ammunition, which possesses most of the characteristics of the real thing, minus the blood.

"The facilities are first rate – there's a new fast-rope gantry located within the grounds which provided the Royal Marines with the ability to practise a fast-rope from a simulated helicopter," explains Lt Cdr Tony Marden, Montrose's weapon engineer officer.

"The centre's experienced staff are drawn from a variety of backgrounds that include counter-terrorist police, Greek Special Forces and enhanced boarding teams.

"They impart real-life experiences and stimulate thought on the varying tactics that can be employed when undertaking a boarding."

As any member of a boarding team will tell you, it's a tense, stressful and very physically demanding affair – particularly in the Gulf heat (even in the depths of winter, it's still around 20°C by day). Nor are such temperatures much fun for the frigate's firefighting teams. To be sure, inside Monmouth is lovely and air conditioned. But if there's a crash on deck or the like...

To ensure all aboard live up to the RN's 'fit to fight' mantra, Montrose's clubz LPT Keir Woodhead has turned to the kettle. Kettle bells to be precise – heavy metal weights with large handles which look like a kettle of yore.

Here comes the science bit.

A workout with such gym kit teaches you how to use your entire body to produce and apply force.

End of science bit.

Being at the peak of physical fitness is crucial, but there's more to board and search than rapid

roping, clambering up ladders and stalking around a vessel. There's a cerebral element – as taught by the experts in Crete, who explained the intricacies of crew psychology to help them when it comes to searching suspicious vessels for real. As a rule, Royal Marines clear a ship and make it safe for Royal Navy personnel to focus on search techniques.

Despite the intense training and high temperatures (low 30s Celsius in early September) the Royal Marines continued their tactical training into the hours of darkness – even though they were offered the opportunity to take a rest.

The collective training came together in a final exercise where a non-compliant vessel (ie one which doesn't want to be stopped and searched) was boarded by the green berets, who ensured it was safe for their sailor comrades to come aboard and gather evidence. It's a not uncommon occurrence faced by RN boarding teams east of Suez.

"This has been a good experience for everybody involved and a lot of effort has gone in to make the most of the training received," said Capt Chris Nightingale RM, in charge of the 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group boarding team aboard the Type 23.

"The centre provides an excellent opportunity to work with other nations and compare and contrast our procedures in a fantastic environment with excellent facilities. If we take just one thing away and improve overall operational effectiveness, then it is time well spent."

With ship and ship's company at the very pinnacle of physical, mentality and military agility, time to relieve HMS Dragon and take her place as the RN's Gulf guardian.

The outgoing Type 45 exchanged equipment, stores and expertise – courtesy of a face-to-face meeting between the command teams – with the incoming frigate somewhere off the Horn of Africa to allow Montrose to seamlessly take over.

"This meeting of two of the UK's most powerful warships sends a message to our friends in the region that the UK is prepared to honour our commitment to maintain peace and stability," said Cdr James Parkin, Montrose's CO.

"Our meeting at sea shows that thousands of miles from home in international waterways, UK ships maintain the ability to interact with one another and maintain a sustainable presence in some of the most challenging areas of the world."

Lt Joseph Sharples, Montrose's Lynx pilot added: "After all the training and exercises we have conducted, the ship feels fully prepared to deal with any challenges that we might be presented with over the coming months.

"It will, of course, be difficult being away from loved ones over Christmas and the New Year but everybody on board recognises the vital role we are playing."

Picture: LA(Phot) Alex Knott, HMS Montrose



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ON THE ROCK AIR

ON A summer's morning the Mediterranean sun has finally burned through the dense fog hugging the sea.

The eastern slope of the Rock is bathed in a brilliant yellow while the rays of the sun dance on the gently-rippling surface of the water.

Every few seconds, a school of dolphins leaps triumphantly out of the sea stirred up by HMS Scimitar.

In the cabin, the patrol boat's Commanding Officer Lt Rob Garner leans forward and grabs his radio, checking the channel is set to 16 – the frequency for international mariners.

"Spanish warship Papa Seven Nine, this is British warship Papa Two Eight Four."

"I consider you to be violating the UN convention of the law of the sea, Article 19, governing the right of innocent passage."

"Your activities are being recorded and will be reported to higher national authorities."

"You are to leave British



As the international media spotlight focused on Gibraltar during recent tensions over The Rock, one of the Royal Navy's smallest units found itself in the eye of a diplomatic storm.

RICHARD HARGREAVES joined the Gibraltar Squadron on patrol in the territory's waters.

Gibraltar territorial waters immediately."

This is the third warning given to the vessel.

Silence.

Five or six hundred yards ahead of us is 'Spanish warship P79': the corvette SPS Vencedora. She's laboriously making her way east at three to five knots. There's not a soul to be seen aboard. The only movement comes from her radar, turning continuously. At this speed she doesn't even generate a wake.

Scimitar stays a good distance behind Vencedora, following her for the latter stages of her dog-leg through

British waters – all recorded by the Naval station at Windmill Hill from its commanding position overlooking the strait.

On the electronic navigation chart in front of Lt Garner, the limits of Gibraltar's territorial water – shaped rather like a tooth fitting around the outline of the peninsula – are clearly marked.

And the Vencedora is clearly inside them. For good measure the crew take photographs of the Spanish vessel against the iconic outline of the Rock.

This 'watching us, watching you' lasts for 15 or 20 minutes. As soon as the Spanish warship leaves Gibraltar's waters,

Scimitar turns away.

This, for the Royal Navy, is the reality of recent tension between Britain and Spain – friends, EU partners and NATO allies in every other respect – over this territory.

In the media it's been portrayed as something of a military stand-off: border disputes, ships squaring up, political rhetoric.

Except on the ground it's nothing like that.

It's not the 38th Parallel separating the two Koreas. It's not some maritime Berlin Wall. It's not a replay of the Cod War – when Icelandic and British ships clashed regularly over fishing rights – in warmer climes. There are no guns brandished – by either side.

It's all rather polite. And while, at times, it does get a bit lively (notably when the Gibraltar government laid an artificial reef near the end of the runway to protect its diminishing fish population), it does keep the Royal Navy's small – but key – presence on the Rock extremely

busy.

Dispel any myths of 'fun in the sun' or a 'sunshine tour'. The Gibraltar Squadron – Scimitar, her sister Sabre and three RIBs – are on the water daily (and often nightly) exerting "UK sovereignty of Gibraltar while contributing to force protection of units using the base".

The duty crew are on call for seven days, round the clock. No alcohol. No swimming (you can't hear your phone/pager). No leaving the Rock. Work during the day – including at least one patrol by Sabre or Scimitar, two by the RIBs – and be prepared to respond swiftly at all other times.

There's a visiting warship – not just RN, like HMS Ledbury in early August and some of the Cougar task group mid-month, but NATO allies – in every fortnight or so, for which the squadron must provide protection entering and leaving

port (they'll also simulate fast attack craft to keep the visitor's gun crews alert).

But the bulk of the day-to-day business is asserting the UK's sovereignty over its – crowded – territorial waters, extending 1.5 miles west into Gibraltar Bay, three miles into the Med in the east, with the 'cap' of the tooth three miles south from Europa Point into the famous Strait of Gibraltar.

In the west there are two or three giant tankers permanently at anchor in Gibraltarian waters and a cluster of merchantmen waiting to fill up on both sides of the Rock, taking advantage of the cheap fuel available at this gateway to the Mediterranean/Atlantic.

Throw in jetskis, yachts, pleasure cruisers, fishermen, swimmers, kayaks and canoes, and cruise liners (today it's P&O's Azura, whose upper deck is lined with passengers watching Scimitar patrolling), and it gives you an idea of the



ROUND THE CLOCK

complexity. Oh, and there are 200 or so merchantmen passing east and west through the strait daily.

There are around ten official military or police organisations using Gib's waters on a regular basis, from the Royal Navy to police and border agencies. Quite often they'll work together – particularly when it comes to stopping drug, tobacco or people smuggling across the strait.

Nor is there anything wrong in official Spanish vessels sailing through Gibraltar's waters – “innocent passage” means they can sail from A to B, but deviating from course is unlawful. As is loitering. Or doing anything other than passing through. All are classed as an incursion.

Incursions by Spanish warships are rare. More likely you'll encounter one of the fast patrol craft of the *Guardia Civil* (Civil Guard) – there's no British equivalent; it's a mix of Coastguard, customs, navy and fishery protection. It's often for the latter reason they enter

Gibraltar's waters, inspecting Spanish fishing vessels. They are not allowed to do so.

To the Gibraltar Squadron, it doesn't matter who's making the incursion. Each one demands a response from them.

Five years ago, the RN boats were dealing with around 20 or 30 incidents a month. Two years ago, that figure had doubled. In 2013, it's at the 90-100 mark. Three a day.

“Seventy-five per cent of our job is flying the White Ensign,” says Lt Garner.

“For example, once a day we'll put in an appearance at Ocean Village” – a Gunwharf-esque waterfront leisure and flats development – “It focuses the minds and reminds people we're here.”

Many Gibraltarians don't need reminding. In fact they follow the squadron's movements with mobile phones and social media, snapping the boats as they head out on patrols or recording any incursions. Some give minute-by-minute accounts of incidents via Twitter.

“We're Twitter superstars,” jokes HMS Vivid reservist LS Alex Harper, on a 12-month stint in Gib (regulars do two years on the Rock).

“But it's been rather strange seeing yourself or your boats on the BBC or Sky News.”

Most of the time, the patrols are carried out away from the international media, if not the Twitterati.

“There are long days – and nights,” says AB Rob Jones from Newark. “We are very busy on the water. But we enjoy that. It's the job we came out here to do.”

Gibraltar, says HMS President reservist LS ‘Kiwi’ Townsley, “is a unique place – a good place to be. It's über British.”

“But this is *not* a sun draft. Tensions have been raised, but it's an interesting job – much more interesting than the Gulf.”

And it is also, says the Commander of British Forces Gibraltar, Cdre John Clink,

“woven into the fabric of the Royal Navy”.

With 100 personnel stationed here, the Senior Service forms the second largest entity in the 400-strong British military presence on the Rock (the biggest is the 225-strong Royal Gibraltar Regiment).

Although in recent years Gib has become a bit of a ‘boom town’ in the banking and internet world as well as enjoying a reputation for cheap fuel for ships, the military remains the second-largest employer in the territory (after the government) and accounts for around seven per cent of its GDP.

It's a key forward staging post for the RAF and RN; barely, if any, Royal Navy vessel passing this way doesn't stop in Gib.

And while matelots of yore yearn for a pint at the Donkey's Flip-flop or the Mad Monk, followed by the legendary/infamous chicken on a fist (as it sounds), the commodore

is quick to stress that the Gibraltar of 2013 “has changed enormously” and while it's not the same as “dusty boots on the ground in Afghanistan” nor is it some sleepy backwater harking back to apocryphal halcyon days of Empire.

“We are providing a sensible presence in a highly-charged situation,” he explains.

“Windmill Hill is ‘on patrol’ – or rather ‘on watch’ monitoring one of the world's busiest choke points all the time.

“As for the Gibraltar Squadron, it's been at high readiness for the past 18 months. It's a small, very busy unit.

“Throughout it's been the hallmark of professionalism, showing superb judgment.

“We put enormous responsibilities on its sailors in a very challenging diplomatic situation. And without exception they've done a truly outstanding job – and I am very proud of what they have achieved.”

A short distance from the HQ in The Tower, which really is a throwback to the days of colonies and the British Empire, the shell of a Victorian boathouse (and former seaplane base) houses a modern two-storey building which is home to the squadron.

From here it's a 60-second walk to either the three RIBs or the two patrol boats Scimitar and Sabre.

In under five minutes you can be out of the confines of the base and harbour and patrolling Gib's waters.

Lt Garner is filing his report following this morning's sortie. “You have to strike a balance,” says the 27-year-old junior officer.

“We're armed, they're armed. So you need to show restraint – but you also need to get out there and assert our sovereignty.

“We know what we have to do – and we get out there and do it. It is a fascinating job – particularly right now. It feels very real.”



picture: cpl scott robertson, bftmq gib



● The RAF's parachute display team arrive in spectacular fashion



● A green beret catches a breather between demonstrations with HMS Mersey offshore



● You never forget your first bazooka... A youngster tries an anti-tank weapon for size at the Royal Navy Village



Bourne again

QUESTION.

What has six ships, hundreds of naval personnel, Royal Marines storming ashore from landing and raiding craft and an audience of 1.3 million people?

You were going to say Albanian Lion weren't you?

Wrong.

The answer, obviously, is Bournemouth Air Show, a free festival of the skies laid on over the August Bank Holiday weekend along the Dorset resort's seafont.

The RN has typically dispatched a guardship to the event (often an RFA Bay-class amphibious vessel), but this year six ships were mustered off Bournemouth for a mix of public spectacle and training opportunity for Naval and commando reservists under the banner of the Regional Forces West annual exercise.

In all, some 600 RN personnel took part from full-timers in the form of frigate HMS Northumberland, fishery protection ship HMS Mersey, minehunters Brocklesby and Blyth, patrol boats Blazer and Smiter, and the Merlins of 829 Naval Air Squadron, to Royal Marine recruits from RMR Mersey and RMR Bristol, plus RNR sailors from across the West Country providing the logistical support and taking part in the training themselves.

Obviously the sight of Royals storming up the golden Dorsetshire sands every day, rescuing hostages and taking down pirates proved to be an eye-catching sight... as did Merlins with commando snipers leaning out of the side... divers from HMS Blyth crawling up the beach on a recce... and Pacific 24 RIBs from the minehunter giving chase to, catching up with, and overpowering a pirate vessel (as played by Smiter), all the while 980 yachts (that's 980, not 1,000) bobbed around just off the beach.

Just for good measure, a couple of 829 NAS Merlins and the Black Cats Lynx display team strutted their stuff in the air show – as did the RN Historic Flight's magical Swordfish (sharing the skies with a Mk8 Lynx) and a twin-boomed Sea Vixen fighter.

Each evening tourists were treated to a Beat Retreat at East Cliff, courtesy of HM Band of the Royal Marines, Collingwood.

And upwards of 250 Sea Cadets and Sea Scouts could be found round and about the bazaars, ferried out to the six visiting warships for a taste of life aboard a Royal Navy warship, while a few were treated to a day aboard the French Navy's sail training ship L'Étoile.

From youth to experience – and Russian convoy veteran Jim Scammell. The 91-year-old leading stoker completed three of the hellish trips to the Murmansk region in World War 2, before being torpedoed in destroyer HMS Somali in September 1942 by U707. Two out of every three souls aboard perished.

Very belatedly, the Arctic Medal was cast earlier this year and is being issued to the diminishing band of veterans, plus their relatives, to honour their service delivering supplies to the USSR.

Some of the medals have been presented in very low-key fashion. And other recipients, like Mr Scammell, have been fortunate enough to be treated to the five-star treatment, courtesy of HMS Northumberland, whose ship's company invited him aboard the Type 23 after the medal presentation ashore.

"The Arctic convoys were grim and I'm glad the government has finally recognised our efforts and sacrifices," the veteran said. "I'm really grateful to all the members of the public who came up to shake my hands after the ceremony."

Aboard Northumberland, as well as giving Mr Scammell a comprehensive tour, today's stokers presented him with a fresh set of overalls (embroidered with the frigate's crest, of course.)

"The Navy has pulled out all the stops for me. The whole thing has been wonderful," said the nonagenarian.

The busiest day saw 400,000 people (that's more than twice the size of Bournemouth's population) converge on the town's seafont. Those watching proceedings weren't solely tourists, however. Business and political leaders – various MPs, defence minister Dr Andrew Murrison and France's naval attaché to the UK – were among the guests of proceedings.

Overseeing it all from the RN's perspective was Falklands and Iraq veteran Cdre Jamie Miller, Naval Regional Commander for Wales and the West of England, who was delighted with the combination of spectacle and the chance to include some training for the reservists in his domain.

"Each year we try to do new things and make our part of the show bigger and better. This year we brought more elements together than ever before and gave huge numbers of people a close and personal 'heartbeat' insight into the Royal Navy and the opportunity to meet our people ashore and at sea."

He added: "I'm delighted with the way this has gone. Resoundingly upbeat feedback I have received from all quarters is testament to the cheerful hard work and professionalism of all the regular and reserve personnel involved."

"This is now one of the biggest shows in the country – indeed one of the top ten in the world – and our participation on land, at the Royal Navy Village, in the air and at sea, is a major component of its success. We are looking forward to coming back next year."



● Palm sun day... Not a scene from a tropical island, but a Lynx returning to HMS Northumberland just off Bournemouth pier as filmed by a TV crew



● Mersey, Blyth and Northumberland 'parked' off Bournemouth on a glorious late summer's day

pictures: [a]photo/ maxine davies, frpu east



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Near the end of Dragon's tale

BUT not quite. And there was a twist too.

The penultimate month of the inaugural deployment by HMS Dragon in the Gulf has proved no less demanding, no less varied and, probably, no less hot than the four which preceded it (it was still in the high 30s and even low 40s Celsius into September...).

And there was still time for some firsts. First B1 overhead, for example. The US Air Force's strategic bomber was part of an impressive array of air power – Apache gunships, F/A-18A Hornets, Sea Hawk helicopters, Sea Eagle drones, plus Dragon's own 815 Naval Air Squadron Lynx – involved in the Anglo-American Spartan Kopsis, a test of air and naval forces working together.

Dragon met up with the command and support ship USS Ponce (pronounced pon-say) and destroyer USS Shoup to test both the command and control structure of different vessels with different technology, as well as their respective ops rooms teams.

To add to the already potent ability of Dragon's radar suite – capable of tracking scores of contacts at distances of over 250 miles – she was assisted by an 'eye-in-the-sky' Sea King from 849 NAS which scours the skies doing the same courtesy of its Searchwater radar.

As proven in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Searchwater's equally adapt at looking down, tracking targets on the ground or surface.

So for all the panoply of US air power suddenly at Dragon's disposal, it was the presence of the trusty Sea King which stirred the juices of the destroyer's ops room team as she sought to build up a total picture of the world around her.

Baggers (officially a Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control) have worked with a Type 45 before in this part of the

world – HMS Diamond linked up one in the same region about this time last year – but not with D35.

The reams of data the collective radars gathered were fed back to the teams of radar operators and aircraft controllers in Dragon's hi-tech operations room.

"It is all about directing the right aircraft on top of the right vessel at the right time, whether that is for identifying and targeting purposes, or, if required, for engaging with weapons while still at a safe distance from the ships," explained Sub Lt Ali Taylor, one of three fighter controllers aboard Dragon whose job it is to direct aircraft on to targets.

"This was a far more highly complex exercise in comparison to previous exercises in which we have participated. The command and control of such a large number and type of aircraft was incredibly challenging.

"It's another fantastic demonstration of how maritime and air power provides more than the sum of their parts, when they operate so closely together."

Lt Cdr Jason White, D35's principal warfare officer, added: "Working with the SKASaC has allowed us to build on our knowledge of air activity in the Gulf by giving us the full surface picture, enabling us to know what is going on for hundreds of miles around."

The Bagger was the fourth different type of whirlybird to use Dragon's sweeping flight deck (which is large enough to accommodate a wocca-wocca) in seven days.

The deck is unmanned during take-off and landing – bodies only appear when it comes to strapping a helicopter down, refuelling and the like, with movements directed by the flight deck officer from a small compartment overlooking the deck.

The WAFUs got quite excited



● A US Apache approaches the USS Ponce with Dragon following astern
Picture: Sgt. Mark Scovell

earlier in the deployment when they were flying two Lynx simultaneously from Dragon (the extra helicopter subsequently transferred to RFA Cardigan Bay to support her mission with the UK's Gulf-based minehunters).

So it must have felt like Christmas had come early when the gamut of RN air power, plus a US Navy helicopter dropped in over a busy week.

In addition to her own Lynx and the visiting Bagger, there was a Merlin – mainstay of the RN's maritime security mission in the Middle East, they're fairly infrequent visitors to a 45.

And given the substantial US presence, Seahawks are regularly buzzing about. It's always important to be able to work seamlessly side-by-side with the forces of our closest ally, so they dropped in on Dragon.

Of course, you'd probably expect Dragon or any of her five sisters to work hand-in-hand with heavier-than-air craft. It's what she was built for.

Minehunters, however, are a bit of an unknown quantity in the destroyer world. They generally bumble around independently or stick to their own – partly due

to the nature of their mission, partly due to their slow speed.

They're also ickle. Particularly ickle if you've, say, just been working with one of the largest warships in the world. Like the Nimitz.

Dragon parted company with the 100,000-tonne supercarrier and linked up with all four of the Royal Navy's Bahrain-based minehunters – Her Majesty's Ships Ramsey, Shoreham, Atherstone and Quorn – total displacement: circa 2,500 tonnes.

Small and slow they might be but thanks to their size and, in the case of Ramsey and Shoreham, their thrusters, they are incredibly manoeuvrable.

And, of course, they're much more adept at hunting mines than Dragon (which would probably only find one if it were floating on it à la some World War 2 movie).

With link ups between the two disparate types of ship rare (the last was during an international mine warfare exercise back in May), every effort is made to enhance the shared understanding of how the different vessels operate

and how they react in various situations.

In doing so, Dragon removed her normal air defence 'hat' and assumed the role of 'minor war vessel protection unit'.

Her four charges were all eager to engage in some tactical training and development as well as fine-tuning some core aviation skills courtesy of Dragon's Lynx, callsign Flametrap 455.

It fell to Atherstone, leading the minehunting group, to coordinate a highly-complex series of manoeuvres designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of operating a large 8,000-tonne destroyer in very close proximity to a 650-tonne minehunter – made all the more challenging when there are another three minehunters almost alongside.

With temperatures reaching 40°C by day at this time of year, and never dropping below 32°C at night, the collective training took place in testing conditions – both for personnel and machinery.

After some delicate ship handling at close quarters it was time for Dragon to send her Lynx helicopter aloft to hone the aviation skills of the mine crews. A number of willing volunteers from each ship in turn were winched from their own vessels and deposited safely on Dragon – an invaluable experience not merely for the minehunter sailors but also the Lynx winchman.

After a whistle-stop tour around the destroyer – it took slightly longer to get from aft to the bridge on Dragon compared to a Hunt or Sandown – it was time for the visitors to disembark courtesy of the Type 45's two Pacific 24 sea boats (and their impressive 'Thunderbirds' launching system) back to their vessels.

"This is my first time on a Type 45 and it's exhilarating," said 25-year-old Sub Lt Richard from Royston in Hertfordshire.

"It looks and feels new and when you realise all of the ways

in which thought has been put into how to make her a better ship to live in and fight with, you can see that the money has been well spent."

The combined training didn't end there for Atherstone – nicknamed the Crazy A – which took on the role of a merchant ship not wanting to be boarded.

Which didn't faze the Royal Marines of 43 Commando, attached to Dragon as its experts in board and search. Under the cover of the .5 calibre machine-gun on the Lynx and Dragon's array of weaponry aimed at Atherstone, a swift and effective approach was made and the 'target' boarded by the commandos.

And that rounds up things east of Suez just about.

With diplomatic tensions rising in the eastern Med over the situation in Syria, Dragon shifted to the region as a precautionary measure to safeguard the UK's bases in Cyprus.

Which wasn't part of the original deployment. So a twist in the tail.

So off the Horn of Africa there was a change of Celtic warriors in the Gulf with Scotland (HMS Montrose) replacing Wales.

The frigate continued east, the destroyer west then north (passing the Cougar task force as she sailed north through Suez).

"The past five months have been both challenging and rewarding in equal measure," said D35's CO Capt Iain Lower.

"As we pass the baton of maintaining our enduring presence in the Gulf region we do so having achieved much to advance our understanding of the formidable Type 45 destroyer – particularly when operating in company with aircraft carriers and other air defenders."

Dragon's due back in the Solent in the middle of this month – and expect a surprise when she does reappear...

Pictures: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins, RN Photographer of the Year

Flying visit to Yeovilton by horse fraternity

SENIOR aviators at Yeovilton welcomed representatives of the horse-riding community and journalists to an informal forum for an exchange of information about military flying and the interaction with horse-riders.

Cdre Jock Alexander, the CO of Yeovilton, welcomed the guests and outlined the operations that take place at the air station and the units that fly helicopters.

"Our aircrew are doing today's business often in extremely demanding environments," said Cdre Alexander.

"Low flying is essential in reducing the risk to helicopters, and this is the case whether the operational theatre involves war-fighting operations, peace-support or peace-keeping duties, or even humanitarian relief.

"We have to train the way we plan to operate and that entails low-flying training in Somerset and the adjacent counties."

Cdr Neil Thompson, in charge of flying operations, talked about the challenges of low flying, the limitations imposed on low flying in helicopters in the UK and the aircrew's awareness of its impact.

"Our task is to train our aircrew to be as professional and effective as possible, but we also have a responsibility to the local communities and we won't fly lower than is necessary for the task and, wherever possible, we vary our flight paths to distribute the disturbance," he said.

"If the aircrew see horses with riders, they will do all they can to avoid them but, in some cases, last-minute manoeuvring near the horse can be more disturbing than a gentle climb to increase height."

The event was held in the main flying briefing room of 848 Naval Air Squadron, which trains all Sea King aviators and engineers of the Commando Helicopter Force.

Squadron CO Cdr Richard Sutton explained how aircrew are trained and gave some insights into operational low flying.

"Flying training, and particularly low flying, is a highly technical challenge. It requires regular practice and is tightly controlled," he said.

"We are flying our guests to show them how difficult it can be to see horses and their riders – particularly if they don't help us by wearing high-visibility garments."

Yeovilton's engagement with the horse-riding community is founded on a productive collaboration with the British Horse Society, which has provided unstinting advice and support and had representatives at the forum.

Bridgwater College's Cannington Equestrian Centre and Bicton College Equine Centre were represented by Michael 'Pepsi' Kohler and Alex Robinson-Barr respectively.

Pepsi Kohler said: "The day was absolutely fantastic and very informative."

"I now appreciate the role that our helicopters play and understand their training needs."

"If there is one message I will reinforce, it is the need for horse riders and their horses to be more easily seen by wearing high-visibility attire."

Alex Robinson-Barr echoed that, adding: "I felt privileged to be given such an amazing insight into what the aircrew do and experiencing the flight."

"You just don't appreciate how busy they are and we – the riders – usually focus on our concerns and our pursuit of safety without realising what a challenge it is for the helicopters to operate effectively and safely."

See air power

THE Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton has opened a new exhibition on the development of the two Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers, currently in build.

The exhibition, Naval Air Power in the 21st Century, features film of their construction.

www.fleetairarm.com



● Birmingham URNU students watch as HMS Exploit exercises with a Search and Rescue Sea King from 771 Naval Air Squadron off the Lizard Peninsula

Coastal classroom

PATROL boat HMS Exploit has continued her busy tempo of operations after summer leave by embarking 11 Officer Cadets from Dartmouth for Initial Warfare Officer Foundation (IWOF) Training.

As part of the new training system at BRNC, young warfare officers complete a 13-week package of simulator time, theory lessons, academic work and a period at sea in a P2000.

For those in Exploit this was a coastal navigation training package off the coast of South Devon and Cornwall, day running out of Devonport.

"IWOF running is an enjoyable break from regular URNU work with students," said Exploit's Commanding Officer Lt Si Shaw.

"It's good to train the future warfare officers, ensuring their embryonic navigation and Officer of the Watch skills are developing."

"I always tell them they can each make up to ten mistakes a day in Exploit – I won't shout as the next time they are on the bridge of a warship they'll have to know what they're about."

The cadets all take turns as Officer of the Watch (OOW), Quartermaster, on the chart and on the radar.

Each must display their ability to run the chart effectively before they leave BRNC and go to their specialist fleet time warship for nine months.

On the bridge they must display the required emergency actions of the OOW, make routine shipping reports and navigate the ship safely.

Additionally, like URNU students, they man the lines when coming alongside and learn basic seamanship under the supervision of the Navigator's Yeoman (NY) – one of the five-strong RN crew.

The week saw Exploit sail daily for coastal navigation training within a mile of the shore between Mewstone and Dodman Point.

Ship liaison officers sought

GREENWICH is hosting a spectacular regatta in September 2014 – and is now recruiting liaison officers to help the event run smoothly.

From September 5 to 9 up to 50 tall ships will gather on the Thames after racing from Falmouth to the Isle of Wight then cruising round Kent.

In order to ensure the vessels get maximum benefit from their stay in the royal borough, each ship will have a nominated liaison officer, with the larger Class A ships probably needing two such officers.

Organisers are looking for individuals who are fit, resourceful, reliable, good communicators and able to act on their own initiative – and ideally have some sailing experience.

Liaison officers will be expected to look after their ship for every aspect of the visit – it could involve sorting out dock facilities, mail runs, trainee compassionate issues, transportation, attending functions and sports events and handling emergencies.

Once selected, liaison officers will be invited to



"The BRNC cadets get stuck in on part of ship – the next time they enter and leave harbour they will be on the bridge, so it's beneficial for them to learn what happens on the lines," said AB Nick Bolt, Exploit's NY. "It also gives us some extra manpower..."

Following the busy week of IWOF tasking, Exploit embarked ten of her own URNU students from Birmingham and Warwick universities for the first sea weekend of the term.

Each URNU aims to complete as many training weekends as possible – and Exploit and Birmingham URNU led the way last year with 15.

"We embarked in Devonport and made passage around the coast to Cardiff, stopping at Falmouth and exercising with a 771 Search and Rescue Sea King off the Lizard," said Mid Will Zealey.

"There were several gales heading in from the Atlantic, so the Boss didn't want to hang about but press on to Cardiff and get in safely."

Exploit's Marine Engineer Officer CPO Tug Wilson added: "Entering Cardiff Barrage lock at 0200 in the pitch dark with no moon was quite a sobering experience, and definitely our trickiest entry into our home port."

"We must navigate through two locks, conduct a hairpin turn into the marina and sternboard on to the berth amongst multi-million pound yachts. It's quite a challenge."

The Exploit crew had been away from home since June 8 on summer deployment and other tasking.

She was then due to take the board of the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association to sea and enjoy several URNU sea weekends before entering refit in the middle of this month in Holyhead.

For further details see www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/tallships or email tall-ships@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Greenwich is expecting thousands of visitors and crew for the event, organised by Sail Training International – the first major tall ships event in the capital since 1989.

Valuable stories of the sea

HAVE you a tale to tell of life at sea? The telling could be worth £1,000...

The Marine Society and *Nautilus Telegraph* have teamed up to promote a new creative writing competition, with a top prize of £1,000 and a clutch of other prizes including Kobo Aura e-readers and Kobo gift vouchers.

And the competition, open to serving and non-serving seafarers, is free to enter.

The Marine Society has organised the competition with the *Nautilus Telegraph* to help promote its latest online course *Writing@Sea*, a follow-up to the award-winning *Maths@Sea* programme.

Writing@Sea concentrates on the fundamentals of written English, including report-writing, formal letters and essentials of grammar.

It has been specially-produced for those in the maritime sector using examples, assignments and tests which use language and imagery familiar to seafarers.

The competition theme is *Life at Sea*, and there are two categories – poetry (maximum 80 lines or 800 words) or a short story (maximum limit 3,000 words) – in three separate divisions: seafarers, non-seafarers and under-18s.

Apart from one overall top prize of £1,000, there are three prizes in each of the two categories – the top three will each win a Kobo Aura and vouchers worth £250 (first), £150 (second) and £75 (third).

With two categories in each of those three divisions, that means there is a total of 19 prizes there for the taking.

Entries should be sent to the *Writing@Sea* Creative Writing Competition, MSSC, 202 Lambeth Road, London SE1 7JW, or email competitions@ms-sc.org

For more details on the competition, and the *Writing@Sea* and *Maths@Sea* initiatives, see www.marine-society.org which also has the full terms and conditions.

The closing date is December 31 2013, with the winner being announced the following month.

Judges for the competition will be Mark Windsor, the Marine Society's Director of Lifelong Learning, and authors Howard Cunnell, Jeremy Reed, Colin Darch and Bob Jackman.

Writing@Sea, hosted by the Marine Society, costs £15 and can be bought online from www.marinesocietyshop.org

● HMS Exploit, en route from Plymouth to Cardiff, enters Falmouth as storm clouds gather

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● HMS Daring replenishes in the Pacific with USNS Guadalupe while cruiser USS Lake Erie follows on



● Daring's Commanding Officer Cdr Angus Essenhigh and ET(WE) Daniel at the Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor



● Daring's pilot Lt Walker (right) puts his Lynx into a dive above the mother ship as she replenishes off Hawaii with USNS Guadalupe. Observer Lt Alex Tuckwood is seated to his left. Below is the view from the Lynx as Daring (top of picture) passes the first line across to the American tanker



● LT Paul Kitching leads the sack race with Lt Cdr Joe Harper on the right during Daring's old school sports day – the destroyer can be seen in the background

Join Daring and

JOIN the Navy and see the world. That old slogan dates back to the days when international travel was the preserve of the privileged few. These days it won't break the bank to fly to an exotic destination – but there is still a good deal of cachet in sailing into a foreign port on board one of Her Majesty's warships. And the sailors of HMS Daring have been doing quite a lot of sailing into foreign ports as they approach the furthest point of their global deployment. The destroyer sailed from Portsmouth at the end of May, having undergone the comprehensive training package required of such a major undertaking. Stores loaded, she headed west along the Channel and into the Atlantic, her

first destination being Puerto Rico, the 'gateway to the Caribbean'.

While crossing the Pond Daring conducted training exercises with RFA Wave Knight, such as assisting with range clearance for gunnery and using her embarked Lynx to bring the tanker's aviation capability up to date.

Daring had a prime berth in the heart of Puerto Rico's capital city San Juan, where cruise liners normally moor.

Although not a long stop; just two nights – and with official duties on the light side, the sailors had more time to relax than they would normally expect.

It was also a chance for the hockey and football teams to have their first run-outs, although the results were not what they would have hoped for.

On leaving Puerto Rico, Daring linked up with the Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATFS), an international monitoring and detection organisation combating the trade in narcotics and people-smuggling.

Daring used her sophisticated sensors to build a picture of activity in her vicinity, which was shared with regional partners and the US Coast Guard as she steamed towards Central America.

The Type 45 continued training with Wave Knight, including a replenishment at sea (RAS), Officer of the Watch (OOW) manoeuvres and more aviation.

Having bid farewell to the tanker, Daring steered towards her next challenge – the Panama Canal.

No Type 45 had gone through the canal before, or operated in the Pacific, and passing through the waterway involves much preparation and paperwork.

Most would argue it is worth the red tape as sailing through the canal is one item on most seafarers' 'to-do lists'.

So in mid-June at 6.30 on an overcast, hot, humid morning, Daring began the 44-mile transit from Atlantic to Pacific.

She first had to negotiate the Gatun Locks, passing through three chambers to climb to 26m above sea level before entering Gatun Lake, the world's largest artificial lake at the time of its completion in 1913.

"The scenery was extraordinary, and we were later to find out that we had come through at just the right time," said Lt Becca Brown.

"The rainy season had begun three weeks prior to the transit, turning a dry brown landscape back into luscious green rainforest."

It took the destroyer over three hours to cross the lake and sail into the Culebra Cut, a man-made channel carved through the mountains.

A stranded dredger caused a bottleneck and reduced the overall speed of advance to a leisurely six knots, though with an experienced pilot on board, the warship was able to safely pass some very large ships in the wider – albeit still very narrow – parts of the canal.

With one lock to go the heavens opened, soaking everyone on the upper deck, though most were reluctant to take shelter as they wanted to see Daring through to the end of the canal.

The downpour finished as the ship exited the final two Miraflores locks which returned her to sea level.

The ship's company had just one more seamanship evolution to complete – berthing the ship in Balboa, almost directly under the Bridge of the Americas, one of only two bridges joining North and South America.

Lt Brown said: "I was privileged to be able to stand in for the Navigator for part of the transit and drove the ship



through a section of Gatun Lake and the famous Culebra Cut."

Daring's clubz also had a hand in the transit – LPT Si Radford said: "It is an immense achievement for me."

"Last year I was at the helm taking Daring through the Suez Canal for the first time, and now I can say I was the first to drive a Type 45 through the Panama Canal."

Balboa, the port of Panama City, hosted Daring for two nights, and a reception was organised by the British Embassy – the first opportunity for the ship to dust off the red carpet.

Sailors ventured into Panama City itself and returned with examples of the eponymous hat (though the Panama originated in Ecuador...)

Leaving Panama, Daring made her way up the coast of Central America, adding her weight to the Counter-Narcotics Task Force.

She also took part in her first RAS with a foreign tanker during this deployment, the US Naval Ship Henry J Kaiser providing the fuel.

Another first of the deployment was a flight deck barbecue – and having enjoyed warm sub-tropical weather for the best part of two weeks, in true British fashion the weather turned as the coals were lit and sailors stood shivering in shorts and T-shirts eating their burnt sausages under leaden skies.

Daring reached San Diego after just over a week at sea, and enjoyed her longest break to date.

Having been allocated a berth on Coronado Island in the Naval Air Station, the ship was in full view of downtown San Diego.

Her second official reception of the deployment commemorated the anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic, an event normally hosted annually by the British Consulate in Los Angeles.

The ship also welcomed trade delegations organised by the UK

Department for Trade and the Royal Navy warship is seen in place to showcase the best of the ship.

It was not all work, however, full advantage was taken of the California, with trips to San Francisco, Sea World and Petco Park, the Padres baseball team (who were on a winning streak until they turned up...).

The ship's program in San Diego took her west to Los Angeles, where the long sea cruise was over.

allowing exercises in tactical development and time with US Navy personnel. Lt Meyer, an Army class destroyer, spent three days in San Diego.

Lt Alex Tuckwood spent three days in San Diego, an American ship, saw an amazing opportunity to see how the US Navy operates and how the ship's program is very welcoming."

Daring's Fighter Control team was able to conduct their first deployment, controlling F-35s at Marine Corps Air Station Miraflores.

Lt Duncan Stradling said it was a great chance to put the ship's refined during training into practice. "I was also very excited to see jets from the world famous air station!"

The destroyer put into San Diego in early August, and no time was lost alongside than the ship's company was preparing for an evening reception on the ship and refuelling.

The reception had an official consequence – an offer to the US Navy's Independent Certification Exercise (ICE) team.

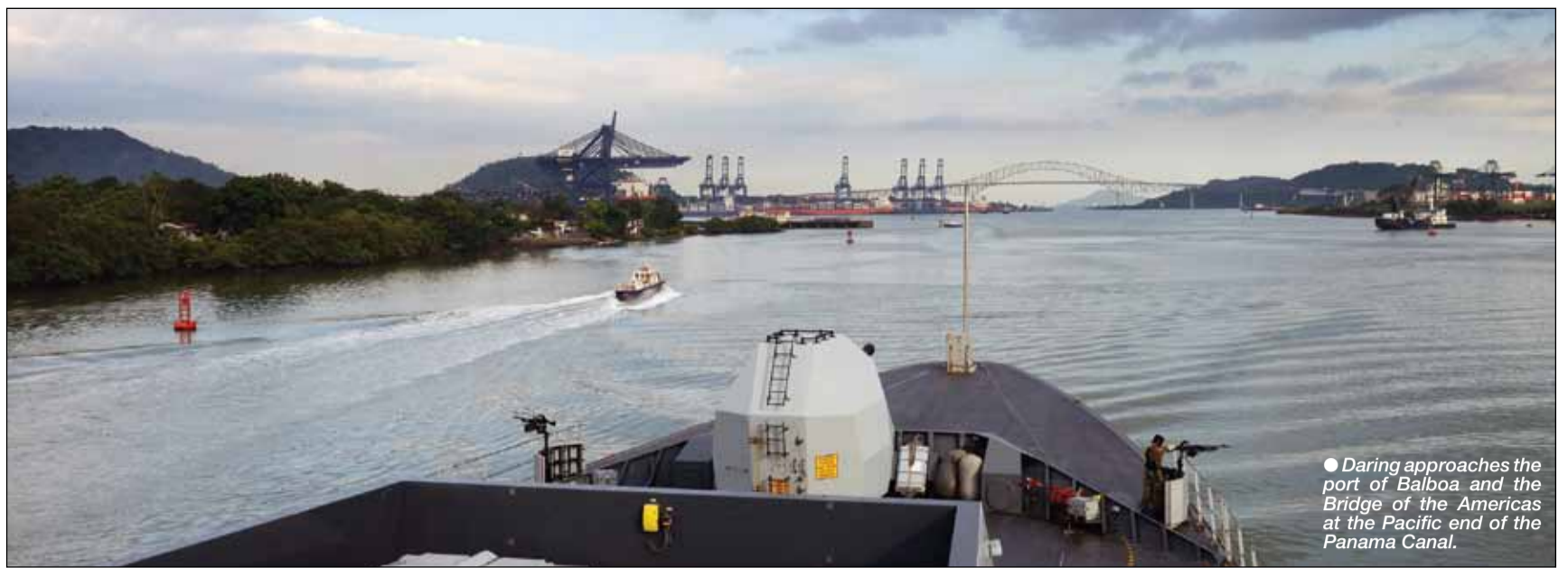
Early next morning, the ship's company visited the USS Arizona Memorial, which straddles the battleship, for a private ceremony.

The memorial presents the story of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and commemorates the victims. The ceremony, led by Fr Peter, paid respect to the 1,177

Pictures: LA(Phot) Keith Morgan



... Carter pay their respects at the USS



● Daring approaches the port of Balboa and the Bridge of the Americas at the Pacific end of the Panama Canal.

see the world



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David Yates,
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crewmembers who were lost in the Arizona during the attack in December 1941.

Bugler Forde played the *Last Post* (pictured above) and Daring's CO, Cdr Angus Essenhigh, and ET(WE) Daniel Carter, the youngest member of the ship's company in the visiting group, laid a traditional lei at the memorial wall.

Cdr Essenhigh said: "The opportunity to visit and commemorate the sacrifice made by the sailors and marines of the USS Arizona was a unique privilege for Daring's ship's company.

"It also served as a poignant reminder of the US entry into World War 2 and the long-standing friendship between the UK and USA, which remains as strong today as then."

Daring's Command Leadership and Management team visited Oahu Cemetery to lay a wreath at the graves of three members of the Fleet Air Arm who were killed in action during World War 2.

One of the party, LAET Jason Patrick-Saunders, said: "It was a moving service – I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to pay my respects."

Daring's host ship, Ticonderoga-class cruiser USS Port Royal, took her duties seriously and issued a series of sporting challenges, and while the British footballers notched an easy win, the hosts took the softball honours.

A local rugby side proved stiff competition for a Daring XV, tough-tackling their way to a 45-5 victory.

Daring's participation in the IDCERTEX put her in a flotilla with Ticonderoga-class cruiser USS Lake Erie, Arleigh Burke-class destroyers USS Hopper, USS O'Kane and USS Chafee, and tanker USNS Guadalupe.

The Americans were keen for Daring to participate fully, meaning a full programme of RASing, a surface exercise, a force protection exercise, an electronic warfare exercise, OOW manoeuvres, counter-harassment training, a boarding exercise and personnel exchanges.

The programme culminated in a 'propulsion demonstration' – essentially a drag race between all the ships, with Daring finishing a close second.

The last days of her time alongside

in Hawaii included an 'old-fashioned school sports day', featuring leap-frog, egg and spoon, sack and running races.

Most of the ship's company either took part or offered support – even Flight Commander Lt Cdr Joe 'the Salty Wizard' Harper, a veteran of 37 years' service, with only six months left in the Royal Navy, was drafted in as a last-minute substitute and defended his team's honour in a sack race.

Oahu had plenty to offer in the form of long sandy beaches, hill walking and water sports.

A number of sailors qualified as PADI divers during the stay, then reaped the benefits of diving in warm, clear waters.

Several tried their hand at skydiving, offering a near-perfect view of the island. For the less-adventurous there was snorkelling, surfing, wakeboarding, camping and the fabled Waikiki Beach.

Daring left Pearl Harbor with all minds focussed on the Type 45 trials, for which preparations had to be completed as the ship steamed for the Marshall Islands.

For the first time since leaving the UK, Daring did not conduct exercises with other ships, though she did become the first Type 45, and the first RN ship for some time, to cross the International Date Line.

As Daring advanced a day from 00.01am Tuesday August 13 to 00.01am on Wednesday August 14, Executive Officer Lt Cdr Steve Wall was reportedly disappointed that nobody had 'lost' their birthday...

The date switch provided a source of confusion and banter amongst the ship's company as Logistics Officer Lt Cdr James 'Gene' Hackman tried to persuade his shipmates that they would have to work an extra day at the end of their careers to recover the lost day.

The Type 45 had to navigate a narrow channel between two small islands to enter the lagoon at Kwajalein, in the Republic of the Marshall Islands – one

of the largest in the world.

Having referred the matter to the Naval Historical Branch, this was the first recorded call by an RN warship to this small, idyllic location.

The visit served as both a fuel stop and an opportunity to rest and enjoy the beautiful views of the islands and the stunning sunsets.

With facilities somewhat basic – the island is only three miles long by half a mile wide – Daring's visit team organised a beach banyan and barbecue at one of the stunning local beaches.

A clutch of sporting fixtures was organised, with the footballers thrashing a combined US Army/Kwajalein team while the cricketers made the most of time ashore to get some much-needed training prior to the upcoming 'Navy Ashes' match between the Royal Australian Navy and Daring.

For the less sporty there were white sandy beaches to explore whilst taking in some local snorkelling.

Kwajalein has some of the best diving in the world; 40 sailors became temporary members of the local diving club to enjoy unique sights – including the wreck of wartime German cruiser Prinz Eugen, which sank in the atoll following nuclear tests in the 1950s.

Surg Lt Sophie Butterworth, the dive co-ordinator, said: "To be allowed to dive on the wreck of the Prinz Eugen was an amazing experience.

"It also gave us an opportunity to get up close with numerous sharks, turtles and stingrays."

In celebration of the birth of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's son, sailors 'spliced the mainbrace', an old naval tradition in which a tot of rum (or a soft drink) is used to toast the occasion.

As *Navy News* went to press, Daring was preparing to represent the RN at the Royal Australian International Fleet Review, a celebration of the centenary of the first entry of the Royal Australian Navy fleet into Sydney.



● HMS Daring alongside in San Juan, Puerto Rico – the first port-of-call on her nine-month global deployment



● Daring at the berth on Coronado Island with the San Diego skyline in the background

A penny for your thoughts

NAVY News has arrived for September, and now, in my 92nd year, I am still enjoying it and what the Navy is doing to keep us free from all dangers around the world.

August was my wife's 89th birthday, so we spent a few days in Pompey. I was trained as Boy 2nd class at HMS St Vincent on, I think, about a shilling a week (I can't work out today's money) but about 5p!

At 16 years of age I had my first run ashore, so it was across the ferry to Pompey; one penny return on the ferry.

Now, 75 plus years later, it costs, for an old fellow, £1.90 return.

Well, that was the best pee I ever spent! Into Aggie Westons, sing a hymn, sign the pledge (which I never kept...) then rush back aboard.

Dear old Aggie had a big place in the old Navy lads' hearts. That lady did so much to keep us on a true course to lasting happiness.

— George Drewett
President 1st Destroyer Flotilla

Size is everything

I WAS very pleased to see the central poster of our Navy in the September issue. I was reminded of the publication by *The Daily Telegraph* in (I think) about 1953 (give or take a bit!) of the Royal Navy as it was then. They, too, did scale models but, to give an idea of scale, HMS Vanguard was about the same size as your version of the Hunt Class MCMV.

They did a picture and name for every ship (as opposed to listing the ships under one heading) but nevertheless the Fleet took up one whole page of the full-sized paper. I think today's ships, to the same scale, would fit in the top left corner of a similar page.

— Mr K Akerman,
Plymouth, Devon

Grandpa's pride

I WAS delighted and proud when I opened August's *Navy News* to see my grandsons in your article "Brothers and allies take up gun challenge", the only error being Luke is 29 and Shane is 27.

I am a regular reader, as *Navy News* is my annual present from the lads' mum and dad for Father's Day.

I joined the Service aged 15 years as a Boy Seaman in 1948 at St Vincent, going on to serve mainly in HMS Jamaica, Eagle, Flamingo, Lochinvar and Salvator, being demobbed in 1958 (couldn't stand the heat of 18 months - two year commissions!).

Being a member of the Jamaica Association keeps me up to date with the Service (grandsons help in that way as well).

— Jan Pascoe (ex L/Sea)
Helston, Cornwall

Heavy shelling

IN *Navy News* August's Photographic Memories, there was a fine picture of Warspite firing her guns but I don't think she fired shells nearly two tons!

The shells were approximately 1,938lb or 880 kilos!

PS: I enjoy reading the *Navy News* every month.

— Birger Axelsen
Fredericia
Denmark



Little Britannia

OVER the years I have been struck by the names of some men alive a century ago and how well they would pass for names of fictional villages.

My copy of the April 1912 Navy List offers such gems as Kerrison Kiddle, Lockhart Leith, Fawcett Wray and Marrack Sennett, all of them Commanders.

Recent research regarding Royal Navy flag officers has been a treat. The name of Vice-Admiral Sir Peveril Barton Reiby Wallop William-Powlett (1898-1985) is a marvellous example of the genre.

The image of the quintessential English village is surely captured in Peveril Barton and Reiby Wallop - it's easy to picture their village greens, churches and pubs!

The same is true for the names of Admiral Sir Sackville Carden (1857-1930), Admiral Sir Compton Domville (1842-1924), Admiral Sir Phipps Hornby (1785-1867) and Vice-Admiral Sir Lumley Lyster (1888-1957).

Another village name that



Each month Pusser's Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tippie to the writer of our top letter. This month's winner is Lester May.

may be more familiar is that of Rear-Admiral Tufton Beamish (1874-1951) both he, and his son, MP for Lewes for nearly half a century.

I hope that these names may have helped conjure up images of a distant green and pleasant land

for the men in their commands far from home.

The names are fantastic, and their parents must be saluted for giving pleasure more than a century after their Christening, but where are their likes today?

I wonder if men - and women, too (Saffron Walden, perhaps) - today have such wonderful names; real village names could be an inspiration.

A Nempnett Thrubwell and Winfrith Newburgh might, though, have a hard time at school!

Parents need not buy a book of boys' names when they have to hand a road atlas of Great Britain.

Indeed, there is a good reason for parents to find interesting names, as a search online for common names is never easy, whereas names that are unusual or signal need no flag.

— Lester May
Camden Town, London

Tense Trent transit

READING the Panama canal story (p7 of September's *Navy News*) - LPT Baz Chambers, if you were down below, even THAT canal can't have been very exciting!

I have just returned from a twelve-week cruise on my thirty foot narrow boat from the top of the locks on the Wigan flight to Shireoaks near Worksop and back.

Taking in five tunnels, (the longest of which is 2926 yds!) my wife and I plus two chocolate labs navigated the River Trent, which is a big river.

We also had to contend with 60ft (and bigger) gravel barges. It was, I assure you quite exciting, especially when we had a bit of roughers and we were adrift from our mooring, and ended up 60yds down the canal!

— ex-Ck Paul Eddleston
Preston, Lancashire

Surprise sub

I SERVED in the Navy, aboard TRV20, a torpedo recovery vessel, stationed in Malta.

In 1953, prior to the Coronation fleet review in June, TVR20 was chosen to represent HMS Surprise, then used as the Royal Yacht. The vessel was accompanied by several submarines, in what Mr Lancaster described as a 'porpoise formation'. If any readers can recall this event, or if they served on TRV20 do contact me through *Navy News*.

— Ken Lancaster
Accrington, Lancashire



Generous Jackpot

TO MARK the 33rd anniversary of Black Tot day back earlier this year, Pusser's Rum generously donated two ceramic 'Nelson's Blood' decanters as special prizes for the best letter writers in our November and December *Navy News* - instead of the usual 'Jackpot' bottle of Pusser's Rum.

Each special-edition ceramic decanter (pictured above) holds one litre of three-year-old rum at 42 per cent ABV - and normally retails for around £99 and is sought after by collectors.

— Robert W Shuck,
Ogwell, Devon

Arctic? No, probably Canada...

I WAS watching the six o'clock news on BBC1 last month and they were commemorating sailors who, 70 years ago, were on the Russian Convoy escort duty, then up came a picture of a warship covered in ice, that it looked more like an iceberg than a ship and surprise, surprise, there I was on the fo'c's'le.

I recognised it immediately for I still have the original photograph as well as copies of the national newspapers and the London Illustrated News showing HMS Vansittart, with the headlines: "Thro' frozen hell to Russia" escorting a convoy of tanks to Russia and all the ships got through.

At the time, March 1943, I realised that this was pure propaganda because we were never on the Russian runs, we were in the North Atlantic escorting a convoy of 38 ships to North America and I think we lost about 16 ships before we got half way across.



That was towards the end of December 1942 and we did face some of the worst storms and arctic conditions, losing one man overboard.

It was estimated we had well

over 200 tons of ice onboard and the captain announced that we had 20 minutes to try and clear some of the ice from our starboard side before Vansittart capsized.

Working in 15 minute shifts we

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not publication. E-mail correspondence also requested to provide information. Letters can 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 publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, or images. Letters which particularly provoke debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues. The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



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The pride of the West



YOU wait all year for parades by the West Country's finest sailors and then two come along in three days...

Fifty years after the good folk of Plymouth bestowed their highest honour on the Senior Service the bond between the great South-West city and the Navy was renewed.

And two days later, the people across the Hamoaze in Torpoint turned out in force to cheer on sailors from HMS Raleigh as they celebrated their ties with the Cornish town.

To Plymouth first, where 500 RN personnel – drawn not just from Devonport Naval Base but also 42 Commando and 30 Commando, plus HMS Raleigh across the water in Torpoint as well as the veterans' community – were on parade for the 50th anniversary freedom march.

"The people of Plymouth have a special affection for the Royal Navy – as can be seen by the warm welcome by the crowds here today – and I and the city salute the dedication, courage and professionalism of the Royal Navy," Plymouth's Lord Mayor Cllr Vivien Pengelly told the massed ranks of sailors and commandos.

"This is a highly significant and iconic occasion in the history of Plymouth. There has been Royal Naval activity in Plymouth for 400 years including Drake and the Armada."

The mayor said that despite the Royal Navy being on active service around the world presently, a large number of submarines, ships and other units based in the Plymouth area had been able to spare personnel for the event – something which was greatly appreciated.

The event began with a 13-gun salute from the Royal Citadel as the sailors and Royal Marines stepped off. Led by HM Royal Marines Band, the marchers were joined by veterans and standard bearers waiting at the Minster Church of St Andrew before the parade marched around the heart of the city, ending in the Armada Way piazza.

There the Deputy Lieutenant of Devon, Vice Admiral Sir Richard Ibbotson, the Lord Mayor and Rear Admiral Ben Key, Flag Officer Sea Training, took the salute.

Cllr Pengelly presented the Freedom scroll to Rear Admiral Key, enshrining the Royal Navy's historic right to march through the city.

"This was the highlight of my career," said 21-year-old CH Morag Barnett, who's been in the RN for three years.

"I felt proud to be part of this. It was great to see so many people cheering us. There were more people than we thought would be here. It was a great occasion."

She works in the naval base itself and was joined on the parade by personnel from hunter-killer submarines HMS Trenchant and Torbay, bomber HMS Vengeance (in refit in the yard), frigate HMS Sutherland, green berets of 30 Commando (Stonehouse Barracks), 42 Commando (Bickleigh, just outside the city) and 1 Assault Squadron (housed in a new complex in the Naval Base), plus trainees from the RN Submarine School at HMS Raleigh.

The Freedom of the City was first granted to the then Plymouth Command of the Royal Navy in September 1963 and close to 1,000 sailors marched up to the Hoe for the civic event.

Five decades later, Admiral Key told the people of Plymouth the bond between them and the RN was as strong as it was in the age of Drake – and the Senior Service remained at the heart of the community in Plymouth and the South-West – and would be so for the next 50 years as well.

"Plymouth continues to play a vital role in the Royal Navy's support to naval operations on the frontline worldwide," he told Plymouthians.

Two days later, it was Raleigh's turn to shine as around 350 officers, sailors and new recruits took part in their Freedom parade, led by the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Commando Training Centre.

They marched through the heart of the town, as they have done every two years since Torpoint granted the honour in 1997, down to the ferry lanes, where the Mayor of Torpoint, Cllr Mike Pearn, was invited to inspect the platoons.

"We are so lucky here in Torpoint to have Raleigh on our doorstep to provide us with employment. The trainees and staff also provide valuable help and assistance with community projects for which we are grateful," Cllr Pearn told the gathered sailors.

"You young men and women are a credit to HMS Raleigh, the Royal Navy and your country."

Responding on behalf of his establishment, Commanding Officer Capt Bob Fancy told the people of Torpoint Raleigh relied on their support, day in, day out. "I would like to take the chance to remind everyone that what we are celebrating here is an exceptional community of people within this Cornish town of Torpoint."



Pictures: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon, FRPU West

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SEPTEMBER 2013 FUNDRAISER OF THE MONTH



PAMELA BROWN MBE JP DL

Queen of Events

Pamela organised two major events in commemoration of the Battle of the Atlantic, VE Day and VJ Day celebrations. The sell-out events – a concert in the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall and a 40s-themed tea dance featuring the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Portsmouth – raised a stunning £23,100.17



Cash for splash

THE RN Swimming Association took to the waters of the Solent to swim the 3½ miles from Ryde on the Isle of Wight to Stokes Bay in Gosport to raise money for the Royal Navy and Royal Marine Charity.

The Navy swimmers joined pupils from Portsmouth Grammar School and set off from the island in two teams, with safety canoeists close by, keeping a careful eye on the passing cargo ships.

The first swimmer to land back on the beach in Gosport was Lt Rhodri Humphreys, from RNAS Yeovilton, completing in 1hr 15m.

Lt Humphreys, who is also planning to swim the English Channel for the charity, said: "It was cold when we were waiting for

a tanker to pass, but once we got going the conditions were quite good with a relatively calm sea. We were able to raise a lot of money for the charity."

The first female to step ashore was Cdr Ellie Ablett, from the RN's HQ in Portsmouth. Finishing in a time of 2hrs 15m she said: "I was not only swimming for the RNRMC but also for Arthritis Research UK. The race marshals looked after us very well, and I must thank my husband, who was my safety canoeist, for keeping up my morale all through the swim."

The RNSA competes throughout the year and has won the Inter Services over the past 13 years. They will compete in the GB Masters, Sheffield next month.



WHILE YOU LIFT SPIRITS YOU CAN RAISE MONEY!

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity makes grants to boost morale, motivation and physical and mental well-being to the serving and veteran communities and families.

With a schedule of celebrations and socials – Trafalgar Night, the Corps Birthday, fireworks night, pantos and Christmas balls to name a few – you could help raise funds at these events which will help us maintain our crucial support now and for years to come.

To join our 'celebrations and socials' campaign, contact 023 9254 8289 or fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk



The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (no. 6047294) and is a registered charity (no. 1117794) and Scotland (SC041898)



Pictures: AB Matt Heal and SAC Adam Porter

Merlin's magical 1,000km to Milan

IN THE heat of this summer a team of 14 RN and RAF riders set off from RAF Benson to begin the first stage of Merlin 1000's mission to cycle from their base in Oxfordshire to Milan, Italy and in the process raised over £10,000 for the RNRMC, RAF Benevolent Fund and the Forces Children's Trust.

Taking their name from the Merlin 28(AC) Sqn flies, the number marks the 1,000 gruelling miles of open road travelled – across four countries, steep alpine climbs and mountain descents.

The cyclists (pictured above) pedalled through winding English countryside, verdant French fields, scenic Swiss pastures, climbing through the Alpine Simplon Pass to enjoy views of cascading waterfalls in the Italian gorges.

Generously sponsored by Winklebury Cycles of Basingstoke, who provided the CUBE bikes, and Rides on Air, Wallingford, who provided all spare parts, the cyclists started by covering 76m across the South Downs to the ferry terminal in Portsmouth.

A well-timed arrival allowed the group to pause for breath at HMS



Team mechanic Ft Sgt Dave Bryson keeps them on the road

Excellent, meeting the crowds at the South Coast Proms.

Stage four, from Tours, saw the hardy cyclists tackling part of the Tour de France route, four days before the professional riders, covering a punishing 169 km.

Although not the longest stage of the ride, Merlin 1000 organiser Lt James Finn said: "This stage, described as 'flat' by the Tour commentators, put significant burn through the legs of us mere mortals – no roaring crowds or podium finishes for us, but we were very pleased to get this under our belts. It's an experience that

few will get the chance to achieve."

On to Stage 10, the team needed to conquer the Alps and a day's ascent of nearly 7,500ft. Sadly, due to rain and mist and temperatures down to minus 2 with the windchill, the team made a careful descent towards Italy.

Sgt Stephanie Cole explains: "The route down from the Simplon Pass in the Alps led us into a warmer Bavenovo in Italy, and the following day we were in Duomo di Milano, the city's magnificent Gothic cathedral.

"It all got pretty hairy towards the end, though, with three riders crashing within one mile of the finish line. Tram tracks, cobbled streets and crazy driving do not combine well with 14 cyclists!"

Fortunately no injuries ensued, only pride hurt for those dismounted as they pressed on to their final destination, one of the world's finest gothic cathedrals in the Piazza del Duomo di Milano.

At journey's end, basking in the warm late afternoon sun, the champagne was uncorked and the riders reflected on their incredible adventure. To raise the grand total of £10,300, visit their website: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/Merlin1000> One third will be donated to RNRMC.

EVENTS

October 11

Red, White and Blue Day
On the day, schools will lead activities and workshops to raise awareness on the difficulties faced by Service children and families while pupils are encouraged to donate £1 to wear the patriotic colours of red, white and blue. Last year over £40,000 was raised.

redwhiteblueday.co.uk

December 7-8

British Military Tournament
An unforgettable show at London's Earls Court featuring the White Helmets Motorcycle Display Team, The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery, the legendary Command Field Gun competition and a special tribute to current and former Service personnel who have overcome disabilities.

tinyurl.com/BMT-RNRMC

Divers' dividend delivers

A GOOD turn from the divers of minehunter HMS Brocklesby to help a stuck ferry netted a £2,000 thank-you for the Royal Navy and Royal Marine Charity.

The dive team from the Portsmouth-based ship cut away rope tangled around the propeller of the Ben-My-Chree – which prevented the ferry leaving the Isle of Man as planned on its regular Douglas-Heysham run.

And while the divers were at work getting rid of the obstruction, generous passengers had a whip-round – delighted that their sailing had only been slightly delayed, not cancelled.

Ferry operators the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company matched the £1,000 raised by those aboard, with the collection going to the charity.

Brocklesby was in the Isle of Man capital to support the opening of the Tynwald, the world's oldest parliament.

The minehunter was berthed just along the quay from the ferry port, and when the skipper of the Ben-My-Chree found his propeller fouled, he asked Lt Cdr Stuart Yates for help from the ship's dive team.

PO(D) Darren Lewis, LD Martin Platts and AB(D)s Dan Box and Tom Davies were soon in the water in their dive boat and could clearly see through the Irish Sea waters the prop and the obstruction.

Dan and Tom entered the water and after 20 minutes of using only their diver's knives they had cut away enough rope to fill a large wheelie bin, freeing the prop and enabling the Ben-My-Chree to sail.

When the pair returned to the surface they were greeted by the passengers and some of the crew lining the upper deck, clapping and cheering.

"It was a great feeling to get appreciation from the public. We were glad we could help. We were just in the right place at the right time," said Dan.

The Ben-My-Chree then sailed within 15 minutes of the divers completing their work – ensuring one of the island's key links with the wider world remained open.

As the ferry made her way out of harbour, her passengers continued waving and cheering as they passed Brocklesby.

"It was an excellent day's work which reinforces public support for our nation's Armed Forces," said Tom.

Fist of fundraising

THREE intrepid air traffic controllers have tackled what is described as the 'Greatest Adventure in the World' this summer – the Mongol Rally from the UK to Ulaan Bator in Mongolia.

Choosing for their trusty steed an eye-catching, fist-waving Nissan Micra, Lts Will Scown, Jon Ford and CPO Adam Marshall (pictured right) set off from RNAS Culdrose in mid-July.

10,000 miles, 27 days and 14 countries later, they pulled into the car park at the Chenggis Hotel in Ulaan Bator, capital of Mongolia.

The Micra had survived the worst roads imaginable. Indeed, significant credit must go to the RNAS Culdrose's metal workshop who built a sturdy sump guard – the envy of the other teams.

With some determined driving through the Carpathians, on to the southern reaches of Siberia, the Navy team finished 13th out of 200 teams.

"The highlight of the rally was passing through the Mongolian



border on a sunny evening, taking in the incredible landscape of the Mongol steppe for the first time," said Will Scown.

The rally did take its toll and the Navy trio were all physically and mentally drained at the end.

We were shocked at how poor the roads were, but this was balanced out by how well our little Benfield Motors-sponsored Micra suffered the conditions.

"It managed almost all the off-road driving with little fuss;

our hand winch was called upon just once to drag us out of some particularly deep, soft sand."

The sailors raised £8,500 for the RNRMC, Operation Smile, and the Heel and Toe Children's charity, providing free therapy to children with cerebral palsy and dyspraxia.

The last word goes to Adam Marshall, whose enthusiasm made this event happen. He said: "This truly was a fantastic experience and one we will never forget."

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CONTACT US: FUNDRAISING@RNRMC.ORG.UK / 023 9254 8289 | FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: RNRMC.ORG.UK | FIND US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER



Picture: LPhoto Joel Rouse

Tutu hot in Race for Life

In the 35 degree heat of the Gulf, the ship's company of HMS Kent found the energy to stage two major fitness challenge fundraisers for their chosen charities, Cancer Research and the Diabetes Research and Wellness Foundation.

First off the blocks were the female sailors (pictured above) who brightened up the blistering upper decks completing the 5K Race for Life in hot pink tutus raising over £1,000 for the fight against cancer.

Twenty two laps of the ship later, event organiser AB Nat McGrogan said: "This charity means a lot to us all, in some way or another, so it was our pleasure to raise this money. We hope it will make a difference in the future and it just shows that wherever you are in the world you can still raise money for people that matter!"

HMS Kent is conducting a broad spectrum of maritime security operations with the Combined Maritime Forces contributing to the security and stability in the Gulf region.

Meanwhile, another 19 members of the ship's company conducted a 10k charity run; 43 fierce laps of the upper deck. Despite the intense heat, the runners set a fast pace and the first runner home, CPO Robbie Roberts, completed the distance in 38 minutes. LLOGS Jenna Brodie was the first female finisher in 53 minutes. This event raised over £700 for the diabetes charity. A number of the runners have decided to continue to raise money for the same charity by taking part in the Great South Run later this month.

Leading Physical Trainer (LPT) David Heming, who organised the event, said "Diabetes is close to my heart as my partner has Type 1 diabetes and everyday is a struggle; although there isn't currently any cure I hope that the money raised will go towards helping people to cope with the illness".



Picture: Petter Nyquist

Gym clubs trek Harry's cause

WALKING with the Wounded, which has Prince Harry as its patron, has partnered with the gym club business LA Fitness on a national campaign to raise more than £150,000 to support the Armed Forces wounded, injured or ill as they make the difficult transition from military to civilian employment.

All 80 clubs across the UK and Ireland are putting maximum fundraising effort towards supporting 80 ex-Service personnel as they re-train, learning new skills for life outside the forces.

Tony Orme, LA Fitness' Marketing Director said: "We chose a charity to get all of our clubs engaged and involved, with each club to be responsible for raising enough money to support at least one ex-Service man. "We are also looking to develop a re-training programme that might involve ex-Service personnel training as personal

trainers or working at LA Fitness clubs."

The first in-club challenge took place in September with club members and staff trekking 335km on gym equipment to simulate the Walking with the Wounded South Pole expedition. The South Pole in-club challenge is hoped to raise more than £40,000.

Prince Harry said: "The vision behind Walking with the Wounded - re-integrating wounded Servicemen and women successfully back into civilian life recognises the unquenchable spirit and drive of these young people. It aims to harness their determination and energy, whilst adjusting their mindset to face the numerous challenges that lie ahead. I urge everyone to support them."

LA Fitness' CEO Martin Long is leading the way by taking part in the Scottish Coast to Coast challenge while head office staff join the Yorkshire 3 Peaks challenge in October.



● PO's Dan Hill and Ben Smith
Picture: LPhoto Dan Hill

Double act for Variety

PO Ben Smith and PO Dan Hill are helping to raise money for the children's charity Variety during a challenging marathon weekend.

The two will take part in the Bournemouth Bay half marathon over October 5-6, cycling straight on up to London and during the next morning by the Royal Parks half marathon in the heart of the city.

Ben and Dan became firm friends on their senior rates leadership course and have promised to push themselves hard in the drive to raise funds for the charity.

Dan said: "Having each other to keep us going will only increase our performance, the Navy training we have received will ensure that we don't let anybody down."

To sponsor the pair visit: <http://www.justgiving.com/Ben-Smith31>

Legends in London

THE theme of the British Military Tournament this year will be 'British Legends'.

The popular forces tournament, now in its fourth year, will feature dramatic re-enactments and daring stunts by 500 participants, 100 horses and two camels.

Also taking part will be live bands from the Royal Army, Royal Air Force and the Army plus numerous displays.

Held on December 7-8 at Earls Court London, all money raised will be donated to the ABF, The Soldiers Charity, The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund.

Boeing Defence UK will be sponsoring this year's event and show goers will be able to view an Apache helicopter and a scale model Chinook helicopter amongst other displays.

For more information and bookings visit: www.britishmilitarytournament.com

Bucket list helps kids

WHY would you walk uphill towards the Base Camp of Everest for six solid days?

Cdr Dave Bridger, Deputy Chairman and a trustee of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund, has the straightforward answer: "Because we can and in doing so we help those who cannot."

Dave is joining five hardy, yet slightly 'mature' friends fulfilling a 'bucket list' wish to scale these heights while raising funds for the essential work of the Naval charity.

As *Navy News* went to press, Cdr Bridger was more than ready to get on with the trek after almost a year's planning. He said "It's the end of the monsoon season now but my one dread is walking all the way to Base Camp and not getting one clear view of the mountain."

RNRM Children's Fund helps naval children in need, hardship or distress.

If you can contribute, do visit www.justgiving.com/DaveB-EBC or text RNRM58 followed by the amount donated (ie RNRM58 10) to 70070

A lesson in Lifeworks follows miracle recovery

JUST after midnight on Friday April 13 2012, Merlin pilot Lt Ryan McGiven's life changed irrevocably.

Flight decks are inherently hazardous places - never more so than at sea, at night with a ground running aircraft thundering beside you. Stepping back to inspect the rotorhead, Ryan's world went into freefall; he fell headlong into the ship's helicopter liftshaft and the lights went out.

In a recovery nothing short of miraculous, considering his grievous life-threatening injuries, 18 months later, Ryan sits attentively listening to Lifeworks coach Shaun Maloney, as they wrap up the week-long course.

The banter amongst the delegates and coach indicates that warm friendships have been forged in the past week.

On the course are Servicemen and women looking to identify



● Lt Ryan McGiven (centre) with coach Shaun Maloney and Occupational Psychologist Sharon Patmore from the RBLI "Lifeworks" course

Picture: Maisie Carnwath RBLI

their strengths and define their aspirations for future work as they make the transition from a military career to civilian life.

The regular fully-funded residential Lifeworks courses are regularly held at the British Legion Village in Aylesford in Kent but also venturing north to Catterick, Preston and Edinburgh.

Royal British Legion

Industries' business development manager Brig. Geoffrey Dodds explains: "Originally designed two years ago for injured Service personnel, the Lifeworks course is now available to veterans and for the first time this year family members are eligible to apply for places.

"RBLI has a strong history of vocational rehabilitation, working with military charities to support personnel through the transition to civilian employment."

Ryan's recovery has been boosted by the excellent support from Hasler Company based in HMS Drake following intensive medical care and rehabilitation

treatment since the accident.

"This has been an ideal place to test out whether I have the physical and mental stamina to cope with a normal working week.

"My fatigue levels are huge mainly due to my brain injury. But I've always been a thinker and a do-er. I just need to take my ambition and match it to what I can manage effectively. I'd love to teach, or coach but I've still got some way to go, Lifeworks is an excellent way to help me to get there."

Army Medic Mark Taylor joined the Lifeworks course four years after suffering chronic illness after picking up Q fever and Typhus on a tour in Afghanistan. The illness

severely impacted on his ability to function normally.

"It was a massive contrast going from being fit for frontline duties to not being able to pick my son up. I felt angry and isolated but Hasler Company have been amazing, rescuing me and sorting out this course, I've now got a CV I am proud of and identified goals I'm ready to tackle. It's been amazingly helpful learning about support networks available."

To find out more about Lifeworks visit: rbli.co.uk/employment_solutions/workshops/88/ or email lifeworks@rbli.co.uk

A friendly invitation to preserve

If you are reading this then consider yourself invited to join the Friends of the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth, while also supporting HMS Victory.

The Friends help to finance specific projects, purchasing and collecting important items and providing volunteers. Friends' privileges include free entry to the Museum and HMS Victory and, through reciprocal agreements, free access to the RM Museum, the RN Submarine Museum and the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton.

Friends receive regular issues of the newsletter 'Scuttlebutt' and can attend lectures, lunches and other events held throughout the year. Visits are jointly arranged to places of interest, locally, nationally and occasionally overseas.

Friends carry out varied tasks from archiving information, working on displays or helping at events the museum holds throughout the year. If you are interested in helping (whether as



● Friends of the RN Museum (Group 199) with Dame Ellen Macarthur
Picture: Martin Marks, Group 199

a friend or not), please contact either Adele Wise on 02392 727561 adele.wise@nmrn.org.uk or David Baynes on 02392 831461.

Vice-Chairman of the Friends Lt Cdr John Scivier said: "The Friends provide a tremendous opportunity for those with an interest in the history of the Royal Navy to be actively involved in the maintenance and promotion of

our naval heritage.

We are constantly looking for 'new blood' to join so I would encourage all with an interest in preserving our heritage to join The Friends."

More information can be obtained at the Royal Naval Museum web-site. Visit: www.royalnavalmuseum.org and click on 'Museum friends' in the right hand navigation bar.



• John (left) and Sam Dixon
Picture: Dave Sherfield

Brother leads the way

A ROYAL Navy recruit has been given top tips during his first week of training at HMS Raleigh – by his younger brother, who is eight weeks further down the same path.

Trainee Naval Airman Sam Dixon joined brother John at the training establishment in Cornwall for ten weeks of intensive training to prepare for a future career at sea.

Although John started two months earlier, the brothers found themselves in the same training division, sharing the same accommodation block.

Sam, 25, said: “We’ve both always wanted to be in the Armed Forces and decided to start the recruitment process around about the same time.”

“I was a little jealous that John managed to get in before me, but it had its plus side because he’s helped me a lot during my first week.”

“Week one is a real shock to the system, but I think overall I’ve settled in well.”

John, 22, didn’t realise his older brother would be in the same division until he saw his name on a board.

“We’d heard rumours that our junior class would be joining us at the start of our week eight, and seeing his name on the list was a bit of a surprise,” said John.

“I was really happy because not many people get a chance to see their family during the course.”

Lavant link

MINEHUNTER HMS Ledbury has a new commanding officer – maintaining a link with a West Sussex village.

After two years in charge, Lt Cdr Justin Hains has handed over to Lt Cdr Simon Pressdee – an old pal who grew up in the same village of Lavant near Chichester, population 1,600.

Lt Cdr Hains, 40, led the crew through a seven-month deployment to the Arabian Gulf and, more recently, a three-month period in the Mediterranean and Northern Red Sea, providing the UK’s contribution to the NATO high-readiness mine countermeasures group.

HMS Ledbury is currently in Portsmouth undergoing routine maintenance prior to operations and exercises in the Baltic later this year.

Afghan medal

AN employee at Clyde Naval Base has been awarded medals to mark her service in Afghanistan.

Adele McGookin received the Civilian Service Medal Afghanistan and the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal 2011 for more than two years’ service in operational theatres.

The MOD civil servant, currently in charge of the Secretariat at Faslane, has notched up a total of 849 days on operations, and was one of the first civilian advisers in Afghanistan.

Americans call

US NAVY officer cadets have been finding out the extent to which the South West of England supports the Royal Navy.

Five USN midshipmen, and their instructor, spent two weeks in the UK, part of which was at BRNC in Dartmouth, HMS Raleigh in Torpoint and at RN Air Station Culdrose.

The visit was carried out as part of a training exchange agreement between BRNC and the US Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland.

Imaginations soar as lecturer cites battle

AN imaginative speaker from one of the UK’s top business schools used the Battle of Britain to inspire project managers from the South West’s largest engineering organisations.

Stephen Carver had 200 managers from Babcock and the Ministry of Defence at Devonport Naval Base happily ‘flying’ model planes in mock hand-held dog fights to mimic the Battle of Britain (right).

Stephen, a lecturer in Project and Programme Management at Cranfield University, was invited to return to Devonport to present his famous Battle of Britain lecture at the Joint Ministry of Defence/Babcock Programme and Project Management Forum following his earlier, very successful, 1066 presentation.

He used the World War 2 air battle to illustrate the complexity and dynamic nature of projects and the pivotal role of leaders in creating the conditions for



success.

He highlighted the importance of having capable, well-trained, professional people in the right jobs and empowering them to make the necessary decisions.

Naval Base Commander Cdre

Graeme Little said: “Stephen brings programme and project management to life.”

“He tells a story with plenty of humour, is utterly engaging and creates a compelling set of messages that are easily translated

to project and programme delivery.

“He has an excellent rapport with the audience.”

Simon Reid, Head of Submarine Output at Babcock International Group, said: “An inspiring and thoroughly entertaining event that has provided some serious food for thought, no matter what programme or project those fortunate enough to have attended work within.”

“Programme and project management is central to what we do, and this series of joint Babcock and MOD events is hugely valuable and rewarding.”

Ian Beresford, Engineering and Technical Director at QinetiQ UK, said: “We found Stephen’s presentation to be very informative and compelling”

Stephen is rated as one of the top lecturers at Cranfield, famed for taking complex management concepts such as project, programme and crisis management and distilling them into fun and informative lectures.

Italy and UK honour victims of war at sea

IN THE grounds of the Merchant Navy Memorial at Tower Hill in London, Royal Navy sailors and their Italian comrades salute the seafarers who kept the UK’s sea lanes open in two global conflicts last century.

The ceremony (right) was one of numerous Anglo-Italian events to mark the visit of sail training ship ITS Amerigo Vespucci, which spent five days in Docklands as part of her summer tour of north-west Europe.

Berthed in West India Docks, the 80-year-old sailing ship is on a training cruise giving 98 cadets a taste of life as a naval officer.

Amid duties such as leadership and the fundamentals of seafaring, there is the honour of representing Italy on foreign soil and working with allies.

So Capt Curzio Pacifici and some of his ship’s company headed to Trinity Gardens to lay a wreath in company with RN personnel to the men of the Merchant Marine.

Here are honoured 36,000 men who have



no known grave but the sea – 12,000 from the Great War, twice that many from World War 2.

For three years in WW1, Italians and Britons fought side-by-side for the Allied cause. From 1940-43, however, the Royal Navy and *Regia Marina*, as it was then, fought a bitter battle – and not just for mastery of the Mediterranean.

Although the Battle of the Atlantic is typically seen as a struggle against the U-boat, in the early stages of the war around 30 Italian submarines joined in the struggle, operating

out of Bordeaux. They sank more than 100 ships – over half a million tons of shipping.

Seven decades on, and Italy is one of the UK’s strongest NATO allies with the RN and *Marina Militare* working side-by-side not just in the Med but also frequently east of Suez in the struggle to keep sea lanes open.

Such co-operation is likely to become even more frequent. The San Marco Regiment – Italy’s counterpart to our commandos – are looking to train with the Royal Marines. The Italians will be flying F35 Joint Strike Fighter from the deck of their carrier *Cavour* before the decade is out, and next year plan to send one of their *Orizzonte*-class destroyers – similar to the Type 45s – to take part in the Joint Warrior exercises off Scotland.

The sailing vessel, which has a ship’s company of 280, left Livorno in Tuscany in early July and visited Hamburg, Antwerp, Lisbon and Malaga before returning home last month.

Birth of prince is celebrated

THE Royal Navy at home and abroad has celebrated in traditional fashion the birth of Prince George.

Some 600 sailors gathered to ‘splice the mainbrace’ – drinking a tot of rum – at Portsmouth Naval Base, following direction from the Queen.

The Royal approval for the centuries-old custom, so-called as a tot of rum was a reward for the most difficult emergency repair on a ship-of-the-line (the mainbrace being a vital piece of rigging, a rope which could be several inches thick), was also appreciated as far away as the Falklands, where HMS Clyde also heeded the signal.

The patrol ship, just back in a blustery, midwinter Mare Harbour after a busy week, not only ensured all Naval personnel in the area were able to comply, but also invited the Commander British Forces, Air Cdre La Forte, on to the flight deck for the ceremony.

Joining him were the Queen’s Harbour Master for East Cove Military Port, where the patrol ship is based, the Naval Support Cell, the Naval contingent from the British Forces South Atlantic and Islands (BFSAI) HQ and the team at Naval Engineering, Falkland Islands (NEFI).

And in all cases, soft drinks were available for those who declined the tot because they were on duty or refraining from alcohol.



• From left, AB(HM) John Downs, PO(Phot) Ray Jones, PO(METOC) Rob Steenson, LS(HM) Tom Vokes and LS(HM) Charlie Bowers on Mount Etna in Sicily

Jack versus the volcano

WHILST alongside in Palermo, Sicily for an operational stand down, 40 sailors from HMS Illustrious took the opportunity to visit Mount Etna, writes PO(Phot) Ray Jones.

At over 3,000m high, Etna – Sicily’s most popular tourist attraction – is the tallest active volcano on the European continent, and is in an almost constant state of activity.

After a long coach trip from the ship, the group split up and made their own way up the volcano.

To walk all the way to the authorised crater area and return

was reckoned to take some seven hours – but we only had five.

All-terrain vehicles ferry tourists all the way up (at a cost) but most took the cable car to 2,500m and either walked the rest of the way, or took another all-terrain vehicle.

The desolate landscape was reminiscent of images from the moon – shades of brown and grey loomed out of the mist as we walked up from the cable car terminus, with the temperature dropping as we ascended – from a balmy 30°C at the foot to just 10°C at 2,900m.

Arriving at the craters, seeing

the smoking mouth of the fiery giant, amid its heat and vapours, was an unforgettable experience.

The ground was hot underfoot, steam rose from openings in the earth, and you truly felt that the ground was alive beneath your feet.

Craters were scattered all around, each the result of a massive eruption.

All too soon we had to head back down the mountain, to face the long drive back to the ship.

It was a very long and tiring day – not to mention expensive – but all who attended were glad that they had made the trip.



Newspaper features Adventure

THIS is the front cover of one of Russia’s leading English-language newspapers.

And yes, that is Haslar Bridge in Gosport behind the sailors saluting on the yacht.

If that’s a bit of a surprise, it certainly was for the Royal Navy sailor who took this shot – LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell – who turned up at the Joint Services Adventurous Training Centre for what she expected would be a fairly routine job.

The Russians brought their cadet training yacht *Adventure* – donated to the Russian Navy by the RN a decade ago – to Gosport as part of their participation in the latest Tall Ships race around northwest Europe.

After visits to Helsinki, Riga and ports in Poland among others, the *St Petersburg*-based yacht was placed 13th out of 31 vessels competing.

Adventure’s visit was greeted by various UK military personnel and the occasion recorded for posterity by an official RN photographer... who didn’t expect it to make the cover of an international newspaper.

“It was all a rather surreal experience. We couldn’t speak Russian and there was no interpreter – but one of the crew did speak some schoolboy English, so he had a go at translating,” said Vicki.

“Despite the language barrier, they were a great bunch of lads and we had a good time.”

Few of the crew of the *Adventure*, a *Nicholson 55* which was built for the military back in 1972 and used for 30 years for a mix of yacht racing and adventurous training, had been to the UK before.

They used the 1,500-mile journey from the Gulf of Finland to the Solent to learn the art of sailing and team-building.

Royal guest at puppy show

MORE than 200 members and supporters of the Britannia Beagles attended the Annual Puppy Show at BRNC, at which the Princess Royal was the special guest.

On arrival the Royal visitor was introduced to the Captain of the College, Capt Jerry Kyd, the Senior Master of the Britannia Beagles, Admiral Sir James Eberle, the judges and the Honorary Secretary Cdr Rory Jackson.

With 2013 being the 150th anniversary of naval officer training on the Dart, the Princess visited the newly-refurbished Naval College Museum before moving on to the kennels to meet staff.

Both judges, Wayne O’Brien, of the Eton College Beagles, and Lizzie Salmon, Director of the Association of Masters of Harriers and Beagles, considered the puppies to be of a very high standard.

The Princess Royal then presented winners with their trophies, including Champion Puppy Pageant, walked by 12-year-old Emma Milner.

The Britannia Beagles are one of the oldest such packs in the country, dating back to 1878 – almost 30 years before the Naval College was built.

Logistics awards are presented

STUDENTS at the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS) have been celebrating their success – and the hard work put in by their instructors – at the school's annual awards ceremony.

A total of 29 awards were presented to the top students at the school, situated within HMS Raleigh, ranging from recruits who had completed their specialist training courses to sailors undergoing career advancement training.

Among the winners was PO Ricardo Santana, who was awarded the John Smith Memorial Prize for achieving the highest overall exam results during the Petty Officers Supply Chain Qualifying Course 2012-13.

Lt Matthew Cullen was presented with the Worshipful Company of Chartered Secretaries and Administrative Award for applying himself to every aspect of his professional Logistic Officer course, while AB Logistician Gareth Williams was presented with the Robin Hodson Apprenticeship Prize, awarded for being the NVQ student of the year for the Supply Chain School.

This year's Chief Naval Logistics Officer award went to WO1 Archie Deacon, who was recognised for his leadership, exceptional personnel management and determination to ensure that the junior sailors under his command are fully competent to serve at sea.

Cdr Rich Harris, the Commandant of the DMLS, said: "The DMLS Annual Awards Ceremony recognises the exceptional efforts of all of my staff and trainees."

"To succeed, and pass training, at the DMLS is an achievement in itself, but to rise to the top of each cadre is magnificent and is recognised accordingly."

"I am especially pleased that PO Santana has done so well because he is now a member of my training staff – his own success during training is an example of the best the Royal Navy has to offer."

Drapers Hall hosts frigate visitors

LINKS between the Senior Service and one of the oldest livery companies in London have been further strengthened following a visit to the capital by three sailors from HMS Monmouth.

The company – or the 'Master and Wardens and Brethren and Sisters of the Guild or Fraternity of the Blessed Mary the Virgin of the Mystery of Drapers of the City of London', to give it its full title – is one of the Twelve Great Livery Companies, and counts Horatio Nelson as one of its former members.

A more recent member of the Royal Navy, former Chief of Defence Staff Admiral the Lord Boyce, was elected Master Draper in July.

Lt Phillips, Lt Thomas and LS Bell, of HMS Monmouth – recently returned from a seven-month deployment – were invited to attend the Company's annual service, held at St Michael's in Cornhill.

Lt Phillips said: "We were honoured to be able to attend the service and recognise the good work that the Drapers achieve for the community around them, including their very generous donation to our own Welfare Fund."

"They continue to honour the very high standards of charity and service that have become their heritage."

Now mainly a charitable institution, the Drapers trace their foundation back to 1361, and their home – Drapers Hall – was the former home of Thomas Cromwell, having been bought by the Company from the Crown in 1543.



● Two pupils from Antony School study a model of a submarine in its glass case
Picture: Dave Sherfield

Pupils take a look beneath the sea

PUPILS from Antony School in Torpoint paid a visit to the Submarine School at HMS Raleigh to find out how the Royal Navy operates beneath the waves.

As part of the primary school's 'Under the Sea' topic for the term, children from Years 3 and 4 were invited to tour the heritage centre to pick up useful facts and figures before looking at some of the equipment used in submarines.

As well as interactive touch screens, there were plenty of models of boats and information films.

Class teacher Jake Imrie said: "The children had a fantastic visit to HMS Raleigh and found out lots of interesting facts about submarines and the science behind them."

"The children were completely engaged during the whole visit and came back to school bursting to tell the other children all the new things they had found out."

"The visit motivated and encouraged the children to carry out further research themselves and has meant that the children have become completely engrossed in their current creative learning topic of 'Under the Sea'."

Five go exploring misty breakwater

A CHANCE to walk on the famous Plymouth Breakwater that creates a safe anchorage in the Sound and protects Plymouth from the sea is a rare opportunity not to be missed, writes *Devonport Naval Base press officer Guy Boswell*.

So a team from the base seized the chance to venture out by small boat to be landed on the mile-long granite structure for an intriguing experience.

The only thing that spoiled the trip was that, for the first time in many days, the clear blue sky of the summer heatwave gave way to a dense sea mist that blotted out the wonderful views of Plymouth we were expecting.

Although we can all see the breakwater only two miles out to sea – except on a misty day – it is inaccessible unless you have special permission from the Queen's Harbour Master (QHM). However, this inaccessibility only adds to the mystery of the place and makes it more of an adventure.

The MOD is responsible for the upkeep of the officially-protected building, which plays a key role in ensuring the Royal Navy and other people working and playing on the water have a safe and calm haven.

CPO Peter 'Frenchy' France was our water taxi driver and expert guide.

He captained us across the calm sound and made sure Sarah

Paz and Tania Milburn (Naval Base Commander Learning and Development), Guy Boswell and Debbie Carpenter (press office) and Julie Simpson (QHM) safely climbed a vertical ladder from the pontoon.

Sarah and Tania manage the work experience programme for students placed in the base, and they wanted to see first-hand what the students' week entails in order to better inform students about the types of activities they would undertake at a placement with the QHM.

QHM placements are always popular and the feedback is always excellent; placements are available across the base and can often be tailored to the student, such as a day with the MOD Police dog handlers and the Royal Navy Provost, or an afternoon with the physical trainers or the press office.

Once on the breakwater we were fascinated by the carvings from more important visitors than us in the huge, heavy stones that make up the breakwater – such as the Duchess of Kent and Queen Victoria.

Because the tide was up, there was no sense of height and we were close to sea level – luckily it was calm, because storm waves crash over the top, even at low tide.

We were all amazed

that such an obviously major engineering and logistical feat was achieved in the early 19th century – the Breakwater is Plymouth's own ancient monument, was started in 1812 and took 70 years to build.

Amazingly there has been little erosion, but ten to 100-tonne blocks are regularly replaced on the flanks to protect it from the worst waves.

Walking on the breakwater is surprisingly easy because normally slippery granite has been given an effective grip by Mother Nature in the form of barnacles.

There are few visitors, apart from occasional fishing competitions when hundreds spend the night and day on the top.

A request to stage a triathlon run on the breakwater was refused due to the dangers.

With little to look at through the mist we concentrated on Frenchy's 'Fascinating Facts'.

Apparently the many holes in the granite are either for posts or designed as possible habitats for research.

The breakwater is used as an outdoor laboratory by Plymouth University, which also puts nets up to catch insects.

There are also buildings such as

storage blocks, and an old round fort which is not part of the breakwater, despite appearances from land, and is used to house pilots.

The ultimate destination is the far western lighthouse at the entrance.

It is no longer manned by lighthouse keepers, but remains an eerily-abandoned unusual residence for rare occupants such as the Fastnet Yacht Race officials.

Everything fitted is curved to sit snugly against the walls, including beds, fireplace and kitchen.

The curved window frames are made of rust-free brass, and the loo has no cistern or sewage system – it is a simple long drop to the sea for waste.

Burnt oil covers the surfaces from when the light was a naked flame, regularly fuelled by the keeper who was woken every four hours to keep the fire burning.

Now, sadly, the fire is replaced by several tiny bulbs.

After six floors of descent we walked the entire length to the eastern end of the breakwater – to find a rather scary globular metal cage high up on a pillar.

This is a refuge for shipwrecked sailors, who clambered up treacherous footholds to perch precariously in some form of dubious safety above the high waves, hoping someone would come to rescue them.

With this sobering thought we fell quiet – and were somewhat keener to get back to the safety of our offices.



Clocking up hours in the air

A ROYAL Navy Reserve Air Branch pilot has clocked up 4,000 military flying hours.

Lt Cdr Tim Taylor celebrated his achievement with colleagues and friends on 736 Naval Air Squadron by 'attacking' Royal Navy warships during the weekly Thursday War training serial off the Cornish coast.

His Hawk T1 jet was simulating air attacks on behalf of Flag Officer Sea Training, flying out of RN Air Station Yeovilton.

Lt Cdr Taylor joined the RAF in 1986, gaining his wings in 1988 before the first of three operational tours flying the Tornado F3.

In 1995 he undertook an exchange tour with the Fleet Air Arm on Sea Harrier FA2s, and so smitten was he with the jump jet that he transferred to the Royal Navy and served in all three Harrier squadrons, 899, 800 and 801 – achieving the role of Senior Pilot on 800 NAS.

Tim left the Fleet Air Arm in 2003 – but still hooked on Sea Harriers, he joined the RNR Air Branch and continued to fly them until the type was taken out of service in 2006.

A quick requalification meant he could continue flying military fast jets – in this case, the Hawk.

Tim has also flown more than 4,000 hours for British Airways and Virgin Atlantic, and is now a training captain on Falcon 900 business jets for TAG Aviation UK.

And he also manages to squeeze in time as a qualified Hawker Hunter pilot, carrying out trial and evaluation work.

■ CULDROSE-based aviator Lt Cdr Roger Moffatt has passed the 6,000-hour mark.

Lt Cdr Moffatt, who leaves the Service next year after nearly 35 years in the Royal Navy, was at the controls of a Merlin Mk 2 trials aircraft when he achieved his 6,000th hour, flying the helicopter from MOD Boscombe Down to Culdrose.

Roger has served in 824, 826, 819, 705 and 706 Naval Air Squadrons, and after experience in operational evaluation flying on the American Seahawk SH60 aircraft in Maryland, he began a long career in test flying.

He has flown both fixed-wing and rotary aircraft, including the Gazelle, Sea King, Seahawk, Scout, Merlin (all marks), Lynx, Squirrel and Grob.

Students on base

A GROUP of 15 Military Mentor students spent an afternoon at HMS Collingwood experiencing life in the Royal Navy as weapon engineers.

The students, all enrolled within the Forces Ready 16-19-year-olds programme at the Military Mentors Academy, visited the Phase 2 training establishment as part of their training.

The Fareham-based organisation specialises in giving young adults a grounded and complete programme for a route into a Service career.

The afternoon included a visit to the Close Range Weapons Section, where students experienced simulator runs using a range of weapons.

The Academy is run by former Servicemen and women who now share their military training, expertise and experience with young adults.

Training focus

A DELEGATION from the Republic of Singapore Naval Staff, led by the head of Singaporean Naval Training Col Soh, visited HMS Collingwood and the Maritime Warfare School to meet First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas, review Royal Navy simulation training and explore future amphibious training opportunities.



Boy Seamen project is completed

A PROJECT to provide a permanent and lasting memorial to teenaged Royal Navy Boy Seamen killed by enemy action has been concluded.

The inspiration for the project, which covers all 16 - and 17 - year-olds who died serving their King and country in 80 warships during World War 2, came from 91-year-old Jim Reed, himself a Boy Seaman in 1937.

In 2010 Jim was about to write his memories of the era when he discovered that these Boys did not have a dedicated memorial.

He also wanted to find out how many were killed - and to date he has identified 572, most notably the 125 who died when HMS Royal Oak was torpedoed while anchored in Scapa Flow in 1939.

Jim's idea was to place a stone memorial plaque in the floor of Portsmouth Anglican Cathedral and produce a Book of Remembrance giving the names, service record, warships lost and the dates to enable relatives and the public to understand the tragedy of so many young boys who paid the supreme sacrifice.

He wrote to the Cathedral, and the letter was picked up by the Chapter Clerk, Jonathan Lloyd, who went straight to his own church in Portsea to look at the RN memorial.

On seeing the number of Boys amongst the names of the casualties, he also championed the idea of a separate and dedicated memorial.

Having been warned that the process could be slow, and funding commitments had to be made, Jim decided to go ahead and plans were made for the memorial and book, as well as lists drawn up of Boy Seamen who died in the war.

Through appeals in *Navy News*, the RNA, local papers and broadcasters, contributions flowed in, and when the target was reached it was decided that a Book of Remembrance should be presented to the main Naval Divisions where recruitment and training of Boys was carried out - Portsmouth, Devonport and Chatham - and also at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral and the HMS Ganges Association in Melbourne, Australia.

The last placement and dedication of a book, at Liverpool, took place during the Battle of the Atlantic 70th anniversary commemorations earlier this year.

The British Books of Remembrance are available for viewing at the following sites:

■ **Devonport Naval Base:** in the Guardhouse (Entrance) and can be viewed on request;

■ **Portsmouth** Anglican Cathedral: a chained edition for viewing is placed on a seat beside the stone plaque in the south west ambulatory of the cathedral at the west end of the nave, close to the south west doors. Another copy is held in the Vestry;

■ **Chatham:** A copy is held at the St George's Chapel, and can be viewed on request;

■ **Liverpool:** A copy is in place in a newly-restored Lectern and Library of Remembrance in Liverpool Anglican Cathedral and can be viewed on request.

Jim and the project team have expressed their thanks to everyone who has supported the cause.



● Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel salutes convoy veterans after presenting Arctic Star medals at the Cenotaph in London

Pictures: S/M Nigel Huxtable

Tribute to veterans at Biennial Parade

THE Royal Naval Association's Biennial Parade in London is always a good opportunity for old shipmates to get together.

But for two veterans of the Arctic convoys it meant the chance to catch up with seven decades of news.

Shipmates Albert Foulser and Bill Perks both served in World War 1-vintage destroyer HMS Walker at the same time - but had not met up again since the ship decommissioned in Barrow 70 years ago.

They were reunited - much to their surprise - when they were presented with their Arctic Star medals by Second Sea Lord Admiral David Steel and Veterans Minister Mark Francois during the parade in Whitehall.

The sailors happily reminisced about their time on the ship

and recalled some of their old shipmates while chatting with other members of the RNA afterwards at the Civil Service Club.

HMS Walker, which saw brief service at the end of the Great War, survived the second global conflict and was scrapped in 1946.

The presentation of 11 Arctic Stars by the Naval officer and minister - himself a member of Rayleigh branch - was just one element of the parade, one of the Association's major ceremonial undertakings.

More than 500 shipmates and 58 standards featured in the march to the Cenotaph.

And it was not just an occasion for the RNA - the invitation to join their ranks had gone far and wide, and shipmates marched with comrades and national standards from the Netherlands and

Belgium (through connections in the International Maritime Confederation) as well as a contingent from the Irish Naval Association.

Many friends from other naval associations also marched thanks to links established through the Conference of Naval Associations (CONA), and the Merchant Navy were also represented.

Leading the parade were 40 sailors from HMS Collingwood and Sultan - recognition of the RNA's contribution to their training through mentoring - and music was provided by the band of the South West Sea Cadets, prizewinners at the recent Sea Cadet Corps national band competition at the Tower of London.

The Second Sea Lord addressed the parade at the Cenotaph, during which he praised the Association for the numerous ways they are helping the modern Navy.

"Behind each sailor and marine stand their families, their relatives and all who have served before," said Admiral Steel.

"The wider naval family numbers in excess of 500,000.

"This is an impressive support network and the RNA is at the core of the support provided.

"You quite literally provide unbelievable assistance to those who have served, those who serve now and those who will serve in the future.

"That is why I am so pleased to be with so many of you today, to be able to remember our past but also to look to our future.

"As Chief of Naval Personnel I am, personally, delighted to be able to express my heartfelt thanks for all that you do to look after those serving our country in the wider Naval Service today."

Shipmates met afterwards in the Civil Service club, with Parade

Marshal S/M Mick Kieran leading the singing late into the afternoon.

■ Heads of the Navy past and present stood side by side as they paid tribute to the men who kept the supplies flowing into Britain during the two world wars.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas, former 1SL Lord West and the head of the RFA, Cdre Bill Walworth, joined serving and veteran sailors at the annual Merchant Navy Service.

The ceremony is held at the monument to all those who died under the Red Ensign in action - the memorial at Trinity Gardens in Tower Hill is to the Merchant Navy what the imposing monuments at Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth are to the Royal Navy.

Here are honoured 36,000 men who have no known grave but the sea - 12,000 from the Great War, twice that many from 1939-45.

Several people - particularly standard-bearers - had to make a rapid journey across London from Whitehall to attend the ceremony, having played their part in the earlier RNA Biennial Parade.

Woking profile is raised

WHEN Woking branch held their annual Armed Forces and Veterans Day parade through the town at the end of June they knew they would get a warm reception from bystanders.

But they did not count on the breadth of coverage in the media, including a centre spread of pictures in a local paper - much to the delight of ceremonial officer S/M Rod Fraser.

The parade, to Jubilee Square, was led by 15 standards, with around 100 veterans and serving personnel marching behind.

After a service of remembrance, Mne Fraser of 40 Commando Royal Marines laid a wreath on behalf of the Armed Forces, and a lady emerged from the crowd to lay a wreath on behalf of the Belgians.

Since then shipmates have had little chance to rest on their laurels.

A charity lunch was held in August in aid of Help for Heroes, the branch charity for this year, and more than 70 guests enjoyed a meal of fish and chips.

The raffle raised £250 and will be put together with some of the flag day collection to be sent to the charity towards the end of the year.

Shipmates also attended the annual Sea Sunday service at Coldharbour - an appropriate-sounding location, though the little community actually lies near Dorking high up in the middle of the Surrey Hills.

Planning continues for the Remembrance ceremonies, featuring more input from the branch, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in March.

Collingwood revisited

MEMBERS of the HMS Collingwood Association paid a visit to their *alma mater* thanks to association chairman and secretary S/M Mike Crowe.

The most senior visitor, Arthur Brunwin, still lives near the training establishment, but was returning for the first time since he joined as a young man in 1940.

"It's changed so much - I can't recognise anything! But I have very fond memories of my time here," said Arthur.

The visiting group was welcomed by Cdr Andy Phenna, base Executive Officer and second-in-command, and they enjoyed a tour of the various training facilities.



● A Sea Cadet band and serving personnel lead the RNA Biennial Parade along Whitehall



● Lord West (furthest from camera), Admiral Sir George Zambellas and Cdre Bill Walworth pay their respects at the Merchant Navy memorial in London

Picture: LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell

Naval Quirks

NORMANDY, JUNE, 1944: AN AMERICAN LCI (LANDING CRAFT, INFANTRY) RETURNS TO SOUTHAMPTON FROM THE BEACHES..

.. SHE PICKS UP SOME BRITISH TROOPS AND, AS NO ORDERS COME, SHE JOINS A NORMANDY-BOUND CONVOY ..

Oh, I do like to be beside the -

Shaddup!

Where are you going?

I don't know!

Short Interval

Proceed!

.. AS SHE PASSES AN ISLE OF WIGHT SIGNAL STATION, THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TAKES PLACE: -

MICAH

↓ 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



Bill wins Rayleigh accolade

RAYLEIGH branch members have chosen S/M Bill Vernon (above) as their Shipmate of the Year.

S/M Bill, who joined the branch in 2011, won the accolade for his work as branch welfare officer, and his continuous efforts to support the branch with acquisitions enabling colleagues to enjoy film and video entertainment.

"It was a genuine surprise to receive the award as voted for by my peers, and an enormous honour," said S/M Bill.

Set in stone

A '2,000-year memorial' has been unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum in honour of Malaya and Borneo veterans.

The granite stone is expected to last for centuries, providing a fitting reminder of the effort and sacrifice made by an estimated 30,000 men who fought in World War 2, the Malayan Emergency, the Confrontation and further conflicts in south-east Asia.

The memorial was unveiled by Gen Sir Garry Johnson MC, President of the National Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association, in the presence of Datuk Zakaria Sulong, High Commissioner for Malaysia.

Some 300 members from the 28 UK branches of the NMBVA attended the ceremony at Alrewas in Staffordshire, part of the Royal British Legion family of charities.

Salute to Saracén

Comus calls it a day

THE HMS Comus Association has closed down on a high note after 26 years of comradeship.

Members decided at their 2011 annual general meeting that the association would wrap up this summer marking the 60th anniversary of the Korean armistice.

"HMS Comus sailed for the Far East in 1947 and remained there until it returned to Portsmouth for scrapping in 1958," said S/M Ken Hindmarsh.

"The crews had been changed every two-and-a-half years by travelling out by troopship. The later commissions did the journey by aircraft.

"To say the least, the ship was worn out when she returned.

"HMS Comus was involved in the Korean War from the start in 1950.

"Four British Empire Medals and one Mention in Despatches were awarded to members of the ship's company.

"It took part in all operations, bombarding North Korean targets, trainbusting, carrier crash boat, rescuing downed aircrews and supporting landings with American Rangers and South Korean guerrillas.

"Comus was the only ship to be bombed in the Korean War, sustaining a hole on the waterline.

"LSto Addison was killed and LSto John Bannister was awarded the DSM for his actions in getting the ship under way after the incident.

"On our passage from Japan to Hong Kong for a rest and refit, we had to do a patrol of the Formosa Straits, escorting British merchant ships into the main ports of Communist China.

"On one occasion we had six Nationalist gunboats surrounding us, telling us to heave to.

"While signals were being sent to Hong Kong they switched off their searchlights and disappeared. Still didn't find out why..."

The final reunion, at the Maritime Club, was attended by association president Admiral Sir Jeremy Black, Gunnery Officer in Comus in 1955, and guests of honour were long-time supporters Anne and Peter Hartley, from Sunderland - Anne's father served in the ship on the 1949-52 commission.

"We have had 26 years of great reunions, making new friends and meeting old shipmates from 60 years ago," said S/M Hindmarsh.

"It couldn't have been better."

Maidstone sea service

MORE than 100 guests attended the 25th anniversary of Maidstone branch's annual sea service, which was held at Aylesford Parish Church.

Members of branches from all over Area 2 paraded through the village, headed by the band of Westerham Sea Cadet unit and a total of 18 standards.

After the service the parade marched back to Aylesford Community Centre, the salute being taken by guests of honour Vice Admiral John McAnally, National President of the Association, and the Mayors of Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling.

After the admiral inspected all units everyone retired to the centre for a buffet.

The evening was rounded off by some musical entertainment.

Help online

VETERANS in Scotland can now get HELP on vital issues at the click of a button thanks to a new website set up by the charity Veterans Scotland.

The website offers help and advice on a range of issues including Housing, Employment, Links to the right connections and Practice - let your health professionals know you are a veteran.

www.veterans-assist.org



● Relatives and friends of the crew of HMS Saracén gather in front of the memorial to the boat and the spies she put ashore in Corsica: (l-r) Dannie Nicholas, Tina Minister, Terry Hodgkinson, Josée Hodgkinson, Graham Raikes, Anthony Lumby and Alison Lumby

Bastia's citadel featuring Saracén's bronze badge honouring her, while extensive efforts have been made by British historians and French surveyors and marine archaeologists to find the wreck of the S-class boat, which is thought to lie in 1,000ft of water - but no trace of her has been found yet.

And there are regular ceremonies to remember the sacrifices Saracén and the spies made seven decades ago, particularly poignant in this 70th anniversary year.

Representatives of the Corsican government, civil and military authorities, the mayor of the local commune, the President of the Anciens Combattants - the French equivalent of the Royal British Legion - and Belgian, Corsican

and British relatives of the agents and the crew of HMS Saracén gathered on the beach at Cupabia to lay wreaths and hear tributes to the men's bravery, and a bronze replica of the submarine's crest of HMS Saracén was presented by historian and author Terry Hodgkinson, who's done much to cast light on Operation Frederick and find the boat's wreck.

The crest will be fixed to the wall of the town hall in nearby Coti-Chiavari, while a photograph of Saracén's commanding officer will be hung inside.

Former Wren Elizabeth Raikes, who's married to the cousin of Saracén's first lieutenant - later Vice Admiral Sir Iwan Raikes, Flag Officer Submarines in the mid-70s - said the ceremony was

a moving affair.

"Many holidaymakers turned their back on this idyllic scene and joined the party gathering around a large grey granite monument at the back of the beach of Cupabia," said Mrs Raikes.

"The wind whipped clothes around bodies of the onlookers; hands clutched hats, protection against the heat of the sun.

"It was a 'hairs on the back of the neck job' seeing the place where the submarine came in, looking at the monument and hearing what happened to the spies.

"Today it is a peaceful panorama: an expanse of white sand fringing blue sea and surrounding hills clothed all year in green maquis."



● The five members of the original ship's company with their special guest at the final HMS Middleton (L74) Association reunion in Leamington Spa. From left, Donald Ould (ex-Sub Lt RNVR), Reg Hann (ex-Sub Lt RNVR, later Captain RNVR and association president), Mike Alston (ex-OS CW, later Sub Lt RNVR), Lt Cdr Stuart Yates, John Haynes (ex-Cook) and Ray Smith (ex-AB)

Middleton group disbanded

WITH membership declining in numbers, the HMS Middleton (L74) Association has disbanded after almost 30 years in existence.

The group was formed in 1984 after 12 members of the ship's company of the World War 2 Hunt-class destroyer attended the commissioning at Rosyth of the present day minehunter which bears the same name.

Their most prestigious member was arguably Admiral of the Fleet Sir Edward Ashmore, who was the original ship's initial First Lieutenant.

The decision to disband was made after consultation with all members, and it was decided that course of action was preferable to drifting into oblivion.

Members confirmed the decision at the final reunion, held at the RNA Club in Leamington Spa, when just five of the original ship's company attended.

Leading the guests was, appropriately, Lt Cdr Stuart Yates, then CO of the modern Middleton

and currently in command of her sister ship, HMS Brocklesby.

As the wartime Middleton spent much of her service life in northern waters, including many Russian convoys, it is not surprising that most of her surviving members qualified for

the Arctic Star medal.

One of them was the honorary secretary, S/M Mike Alston, who was one of the 40 veterans to receive the award from Prime Minister David Cameron at 10 Downing Street in March of this year.

Fred walks tall

THE shipmates of Netley branch joined members of the RAF Association, Royal British Legion and Merchant Navy Association to observe Armed Forces Day.

The parade was supported by serving RAF personnel and contingents of the Sea Cadet Corps, Army Cadet Force, the Air Training Corps and Scouts as it marched through the Hampshire village, led by the St Andrew's Pipe Band of Hamble.

Maj Gen Balfour took the salute, while guests included the Mayor of Eastleigh, local MP Mike Thornton and the chairmen

of the local parish councils.

A drumhead service, conducted by Rev Roland Wort of HMS Collingwood, was held following the march, and the day concluded with a Ceremonial Sunset.

S/M Fred Dymond, aged 95 (and one of six nonagenarians in the branch) was presented with his Arctic Star medal by Gen Balfour - the officer's father was a Commander (G) and served in Arctic convoys in HMS Bulldog.

S/M Fred dismissed suggestions he should ride in a wheelchair for the parade, and marched all the way.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery submarine in our August edition (right) was HMS Opossum, and Mr G Hewitt, of Preston, wins £50 for naming her.

This month's ship (above) was a destroyer built and commissioned in the 1960s but whose most notable service came in the early 1980s, when she was temporarily a flagship and bombarded enemy positions ashore to great effect.

(1) What was her name, and (2) what was her name after she joined the Chilean Navy?

We have removed the pennant number from the image.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2



8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is November 13. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our December edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 224

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

Med incentives

WITH the introduction of the new AFPS 15 there is now a strong financial incentive for individuals to be promoted (jaw trade specific promotion policy) at the earliest opportunity.

The 2013/14 promotion board saw good numbers taken at both LMA & POMA levels. However, there were a significant number of ratings (strongly recommended for promotion) who were not presented to the board.

Promotion Pre-Requisites

There are a number of pre-requisites (annotated within BR3) that need to be achieved before the Common Reporting Date (CRD).

The shortfalls and reasons why individuals were not seen at this year's promotion board were due to being out of date for RNFT, out of date for OPS and educationally not qualified for the next rank.

Many of these not presented to the board could easily have been avoided.

A plea from the Career Management (CM) team is to ensure individuals take ownership for your career and ensure you meet all of the criteria for promotion, before CRD, and if selected are eligible for promotion before your Common Promotion Period.

Assignment Opportunities

The final batch of non-volunteer redundancies left this year and in line with SDSR, a more streamlined navy is in operation.

This has meant that there are now opportunities for cross pollinated assignments between the Royal Navy Medical Service (RNMS) and Royal Marine Medical Assistant (RMMA) cadres.

The RNMS has a wealth of knowledge and experience gained from previous operational tours, this quality will again be tested this year during the upcoming RN commitments of Op Cougar as part of the RFTG; Joint Warrior; Ex Cetus; the re-integration of RFA Argus and Primary Casualty Receiving Facility (PCRF) and the Commando Forward Surgical Group deployments.

Supplementary to the non-traditional assignments and commitments held by the RNMS, the Med OR CM team are always looking for volunteers for augmentation roles to a multitude of tasks across the world and recent deployments have seen service in the Caribbean, California, Albania and Middle East regions.

RNMS individuals interested in short term training team support and mentoring should make themselves known through their chain of command to the relevant CM.

Engineering for Everywoman

THE UK has the lowest proportion of female engineers in Europe – just 8.7 per cent – and another 2.2 million employees will be needed in the next five to ten years to meet the demand, so encouraging more women into the sector is becoming an economic imperative.

In November, Everywoman Leadership Academies are offering ten places to females in the RN to attend a day of inspiration, learning and networking to help develop leadership skills for women working in the Science, Technology, Engineering and manufacturing industries, allowing them to develop the confidence to realize their full potential.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel stated at the recent Naval Servicewomen's conference that creativity and innovation comes from diversity of thought and experience.

Drafty's corner



As mentioned before, the opportunities for more diverse assignments continue and will do so for the foreseeable future.

The RNMS CMs have an interest in populating two areas of employment; we are actively promoting employment within the Commando Medical role and the introduction of the first female MASMs. Any interested parties can gain further information from the following publications:

- RNTM 123/13 for Implementation of Mixed Manning in Submarines – Applications Process for Women Serving in the General Service to Transfer to the Submarine Service.

- 2012DIN07-159 Instructions for the All Arms Commando Course (AACC).

In line with the Defence Medical Services 20 (DMS20) upscale, the RNMS are steadily recruiting both sideways transfers and direct entry students to join the Medical Technician (MT) cadres.

This year saw 11 candidates successfully enrolled into university courses studying to become an Operating Department Practitioner (ODP), Biomedical Scientist (BMS), Pharmacy Dispenser (PD) or Radiographer.

The initial calling signal for 2014 entries into the RNMS MT cadres will be published in Jan 14.

Candidates are reminded to read and follow the correct process for application detailed within the signal. Further information on educational eligibility can be found by contacting the RNMS Branch Managers.

Queen Alexandra Royal Naval Nursing Service (QARNNS)

The QARNNS has seen many of its nurses employed in a wide and diverse set of roles over the past 12 months.

These have ranged beyond the normal clinical roles undertaken and have seen nurses utilised in support of operations beside Herrick in other areas of the world.

They have also been supporting the RN during exercises and training in Canada, working in the Fleet and on RFA platforms.

Flexibility has been one of the key strengths of the QARNNS, they perform admirably, not only in the maritime environment but the land environment too.

Favourable reports on the working ethos of the QARNNS bolster their kudos and have seen many areas of the Service keen to utilise members of the QARNNS within their teams.

Opportunities continue to arise for QARNNS to be employed in either short to medium term assignments in more diverse roles.

Whilst we try to inform all areas of these as these arise, it is not always possible given some of the time frames involved.

Keeping your CM, CPO Watson (NAVY PERS-CM OR MED NAHPCPO), informed of your preferences and willingness to participate in wider service opportunities, will assist in the selection of appropriate individuals for these tasks.

Career Management Team

The Nursing and Allied Health Professionals (NAHP) team have been involved in churn over recent months and have seen the removal of the SO2 MA and NAHP CM post.

The new process for NAHP CPO assigning will be taken on by CPO Watson (CM NAHP CPO).

Further CM changes have seen the arrival of Cdr Murray (SO1 NAHP CM), Surg Cdr Henry (OCM SO1 Med), Surg Cdr Smith (SO1 Dent Pol & OCM) and WO1 Roper (BM Med).

Finally, the RNMS will continue to provide medical care in operational and exercise theatres around the world. Volunteers are always welcome and should contact their respective CM to discuss future opportunities.

Embracing cultural diversity to succeed

SOME people believe that Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) is about favouring minority groups.

According to Cdr Chris New, who leads the D&I team, this is a misunderstanding. He explains: "D&I is about creating an environment in which the Naval Service can recruit and retain the best people, and get the best from those people by making them valued members of their teams."

"This benefits our operational capability which ultimately benefits the whole Service."

This message is at the heart of the new biennial core and advanced D&I training packages which are mandatory for all members of the Service, other than Cdre/Brig ranks and above who attend a day's training at Shrivenham instead.

Maximising operational capability is also the key driver behind a number of networks.

"Networks matter because we use them to acquire and transfer knowledge from people who are like us, and we all have them, be they formal or informal".

The newly-established Naval Servicewomen's Network is a professional network aiming to help Servicewomen achieve their potential, and the revitalised Naval Service Parents Network offers practical support to parents (male and female, single or a couple) balancing the requirements of parenthood with a Naval career.

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum is well established and networks exist for a range of religious and belief groups including Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Jews, Buddhists, Christians and Humanists.

The Service has traditionally been poor at retaining mothers with young children. Since vast amounts of money have been invested in recruiting, training and employing our Service personnel

(up to £1m by the time they have completed ten years service) it makes economic sense to work to retain them and their skills.

A maternity coaching programme has been trialled and rolled out which introduces the sources of support (eg Naval Families Federation and the relevant networks), briefs expectant mothers on the career management arrangements, introduces them to their DO for the period of maternity, allows them to build their own networks amongst other expectant women, and helps them plan their return to work.

Maternity physical training helps them to regain fitness, and post-natal coaching supports them as they return to work – "suddenly balancing two full time jobs" as one new mother described it.

Parents now have a new source of support when their regular childcare arrangements won't meet their needs.

The Naval Nanny Scheme, operated through the RNRM Children's Fund, can source trained and accredited nannies from recognised agencies, anywhere in the country, at fair and reasonable rates.

The charity can even help with the cost where this becomes an issue. This scheme might, for example, help a parent who needs to travel out of area for a meeting or a course, who has a short-notice tasking, whose family or regular carer becomes ill or unavailable, or whose unit has a programme change. The contract for the naval nurseries is also being re-negotiated with the aim of providing a fuller service with greater consistency across the major bases.

The policy for Service couples With Dependent Children has been updated to bring in joint career management interviews for couples before the primary carer returns to work.

The aim of these is to allow flexible and pragmatic discussions to take place and for career profiles to be agreed which will meet the needs of both the couple and the Service.

The maximum age of the youngest child has been raised from the 8th to the 11th birthday. This means that parents with primary school aged children now have a choice over whether to send them to boarding school.

Flexibility is also a strand of the RN People Strategy which is looking at making better use of home working, career breaks, cultural changes and reduced commitment in order to allow personnel to better balance life and work commitments.

Where Service personnel believe they have been treated unfairly, improvements in the recording and management of complaints, under the oversight of the Service Complaints Management Cell, should now give personnel much greater confidence that their complaints are being managed and processed properly, and mechanisms are in place (including the Services Complaints Commissioner) for those who are not satisfied.

The key is to ensure that your complaint has been properly recorded in JPA – there is now a special course available to train EWOs to do this.

All these changes, details of which are on the D&I Intranet site, aim to improve retention and make the Service more attractive to potential recruits.

Improving retention means that we can reduce recruitment and training costs, keep the best people for longer, thus capitalising on their experience. Our operational teams will become stronger, and the Service will have more money available for fuel, spares, ammunition and social activities.

Global band of brothers

SEPTEMBER's events for the international maritime community culminated in a dinner at BRNC Dartmouth to celebrate 150 years of Royal Navy and international naval training on the River Dart.

The navies of no fewer than 26 nations were represented and Minister for the Armed Forces, Andrew Robathan, Minister for Defence Personnel Welfare and Veterans, Mark Francois, and Minister for International Security Strategy, Dr Andrew Murrison, all attended the event.

Before dinner the guests were treated to the precision and pomp of a Beat Retreat on the historic Quarterdeck by the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Commando Training Centre.

An appropriate backdrop was provided by the Wildcat helicopter on the parade ground and HMS Somerset, which was moored on the River Dart.

There is a long tradition of training international naval officers at Dartmouth. When the Prime Minister took the salute at a passing out parade last autumn, he saw cadets from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, Barbados, the Bahamas, Kuwait and Jordan.

3,200 cadets from 68 different countries have passed through the doors of the college in the past four decades.

The guests, drawn to the UK from across the globe, were addressed by the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir George Zambellas, who gave a speech celebrating the international brotherhood of the sea. He said: "Superficially, our nations may sometimes be separated by politics or policies, by different levels of funding, by differences in capability, but deep down – as a maritime family – we are all supported by the same water and driven by the same currents."



● International guests from 26 Navies were represented at the BRNC 150 Anniversary.

Picture: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon

The admiral said it had been a veritable 'maritime jamboree,' what with the RUSI Maritime Power Conference; the Defence and Security Equipment International exhibition; the London International Shipping Week and the Dartmouth 150 dinner all taking place in the same week.

He spoke about the Royal Navy's tradition and ethos, and how Dartmouth provides its starting point. "Dartmouth jumps the gap between our history and the contemporary Royal Navy just as it turns civilians into officer cadets." He added: "I like to think that the ethos which soaks into the character of the cadets is why so many countries – so many of you – send your cadets here to train."

And the First Sea Lord described the enormous value he places on the common bond provided by Dartmouth which

permeates relationships at the most senior levels.

With 20 current heads of navy educated at the College, he described Dartmouth as being "the jewel in the crown of our international training partnership here."

Admiral Zambellas said the RN had a plan to reinvigorate Navy training and education during the first ten years of their careers, and he was looking forward to giving his international guests the chance to work in partnership to shape the plans to their nation's needs.

He said: "I am really excited that we are about to embark on an ambitious new project – Project Gunroom as we have called it – an ambitious plan to reinvigorate the training and education given to our people during the first decade of their naval careers.

"The RN has some excellent new kit coming – and needs bright, highly-skilled, imaginative and flexible people to make it work well."

"I cannot realise this ambition without your participation – you and your navies are as integral to the future of Dartmouth as you have been part of its past. Think about that – we want you and we want to hear what you have to say."

NEED to get your message across?

To feature in the Navy News' Two-Six pages contact Navy Command Media – Internal Comms Staff Officer: Lt Cdr Emma McCormick, 93832 8809, email (Dii) NAVYMEDIACOMMS-IC-TL (External) NAVYMEDIACOMMS-IC-TL@mod.uk

Air Branch Chief makes a load of difference

THERE are not many jobs in the RNR where you might find yourself abseiling down a cliff to hook a cargo net around a cow with a ten-tonne aircraft hovering above you, but CPO Air Engineer Artificer Paul Jeyes doesn't mind admitting to getting a buzz from such unusual load-lifting tasks.

CPO Jeyes, from the RNR Air Branch, is one of only two

Helicopter Handling Instructors (HHI) qualified to teach Landing Point Commander (LPC) and Rigger Marshaller (RM) courses at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall.

Students on his courses learn how to set up loads ready for lifting and how to marshal aircraft into tight spots, as well as learning how to select a landing site for a helicopter to land.

Paul explained: "Sometimes it's obvious things like the slope of the ground or the height of trees close to the site that can only be appreciated close up; it's vital decisions like that, which can make all the difference in this job."

Squadrons must have qualified load-lifting teams and landing point operators when deployed at sea or with detachments away from their home base. These teams can work independently from the ship and often manage more than a single helicopter.

Navy helicopters are regularly called upon to move underslung

loads between ships, or for ship to shore manoeuvres such as disaster relief or for supporting military operations on land.

Having recently briefed some tough-looking Paras on a big Army brigade exercise Paul said: "They weren't going to be messed about on how to embark the Chinook but they all listened carefully to my safety instructions!"

Paul has enjoyed a varied career with the Fleet Air Arm, serving on both Sea King and Merlin squadrons, and has just completed an engineering degree course at Plymouth University.



● CPO(AEA) Paul Jeyes supervises an underslung load exercise with 771 NAS



● AB Natasha Rook in Cyprus

Superb support

A RESERVIST'S wife has spoken out for the first time about the amount of support she received at home whilst her husband was mobilised to serve in Afghanistan.

Nicky Parsons, from Derbyshire, is married to Derek, a petty officer in the RNR normally based at Nottingham's training unit, HMS Sherwood.

Nicky said: "I'm very proud of Derek and his achievements. I feel he would have been a different person to live with if he hadn't joined the Reserves because it was something he had always wanted to do.

"There would always have been the 'what if' at the back of his mind if he hadn't deployed.

"I felt very well supported while he was away. The staff at HMS Sherwood had regular contact with me; in fact the CO called me on many occasions to check how I and the children were getting on."

Derek and Nicky have been happily married for 18 years and have three young children. He was mobilised for a year in total, having to complete pre-deployment training before completing a six-month tour of duty working alongside regular Service colleagues.

Derek was also the first rating of the RNR to be mobilised in an Information Operations role in Afghanistan.

Nicky said: "My family are very close and were also very supportive. Most of Derek's family are ex-military and were regularly in contact to make sure the children and I were okay.

"We have also many friends who are ex-military and they were



● PO Derek Parsons from HMS Sherwood with his wife Nicky.

great, obviously knowing what it's like to be deployed and left behind."

Returning from his tour of duty Derek fitted quickly back into his civilian life working for Anglian Home Improvements, as well as slotting back into family life at home.

Nicky explained: "If your partner is deployed aboard on operations, of course there will be difficult times, but on the whole life continues as normal – particularly if you have a good support network around you like me.

"When Derek arrived home, it took some time to accept that two people were now making the decisions in our home as I was used to doing this all myself while he was away. If I'm perfectly honest though, getting back to normal was far easier than I anticipated."



● Olympic boxer Nicola Adams, model Katie Piper, artist Tracey Emin, Oscar-winning actress Dame Helen Mirren, Lt Cdr Tony Scott, AB Glen Parsonage, model and fashion guru Grace Coddington, supermodel and musician Karen Elson, while seated centre is 2011's Nurse of the Year and AIDS awareness campaigner Helen Allen.

Picture: Annie Leibovitz

Annie frames President

In the shadow of Tower Bridge, HMS President's Lt Cdr Tony Scott and AB Glen Parsonage lined up with a mix of celebrity and fashion royalty, Olympians, and inspirational women from the world of the arts and charitable work, including Dame Helen Mirren, gold-medal-winning boxer Nicola Adams and artist Tracey Emin.

Which is a very nice memento of an unusual photoshoot staged at London's Royal Naval Reserve headquarters.

But what makes it extra special is the snapshot was taken by the world's most famous female photographer, the legendary Annie Leibovitz.

Over the past 40 years she's photographed the who's who of rock and roll: Sting, Fleetwood Mac, John Lennon, the Rolling Stones, king of pop Michael Jackson, Lady Gaga, the iconic cover of Bruce Springsteen's *Born in the USA* album, plus a naked and heavily pregnant Demi Moore for the front of *Vanity Fair* magazine (which caused quite a stir a couple of decades ago) as well as the Queen, the Obama family and Microsoft maestro Bill Gates among others.

Now she's been commissioned by retail giant Marks and Spencer to shoot its autumn fashion collection featuring a dozen women – 'Britain's Leading Ladies'.

Over several days during the summer, Annie photographed the ten – Olympic gold-medal winning boxer Nicola Adams, chart-topper Ellie Goulding, 2011's Nurse of the Year and AIDS awareness campaigner Helen Allen, model Katie Piper, artist Tracey Emin, Oscar-winning



● Annie Leibovitz at work behind the camera at HMS President

actress Dame Helen Mirren, model and fashion guru Grace Coddington, supermodel and musician Karen Elson, novelist Monica Ali, ballerina and *Strictly Come Dancing* judge Darcey Bussell, singer-songwriter Laura Mvula and charity boss Jasmine Whitbread – at various locations.

The last of the shoots was staged at President, with London's iconic river crossing as the backdrop. Reservist Lt Cdr Scott had the arduous duty of press liaison officer, assisted by AB Parsonage – a full-time writer on the unit's staff.

And there was plenty of time between the shoots for the sailors to take a few snaps of their own with Tony's Canon EOS 600D camera... until he handed it over to Annie. "There was a hush all around when I did," says Tony. "Helen Mirren whispered to me: 'You do know that's the most famous photographer in the world?'"

"For the rest of the day Annie's staff kept coming up to me saying: 'Wow, you have Annie Leibovitz photos on your camera. How cool

is that?' Very.

"Meeting Annie Leibovitz and having her take my photo is an honour usually reserved for the A List," said Glen, who equally enjoyed his brush with celebrity.

"It's not everyday that A Listers – film stars, No1 pop stars and inspirational women like Katie Piper – turn up at work.

"All of the ladies were amazing and Dame Helen, Ellie Goulding and Katie Piper happily posed for photos and chatted to us. Ellie looked especially good in my cap and should consider a career in the RN!"

As for the professional photographer at work, well once the shoot was over there was time for a natter.

"I had a good chat with her at the end," said Tony. Her dad was in the US Air Force and she spent her childhood travelling from base to base – she spoke highly of the armed forces in general and said it was a wonderful childhood."

See the results of Annie's work at HMS President on their Facebook page: <http://bitly.com/presannie>



Social climbing

EXERCISE Intrepid Mountaineer saw a group from the Media Operations specialisation of the RNR (MOS) muster in the Ogwen valley at Bethesda cottage for an exciting weekend of mountain biking, rock-climbing and real mountaineering (above).

The expedition also provided an opportunity to engender team ethos as well developing individual qualities such as courage, commitment, discipline and leadership.

Helped with funding from Royal Navy charities, contributions covered the costs of the accommodation, mountain-bike hire, rock-climbing equipment hire and instruction plus food.

Organiser Lt Doug Wylie said: "Without the financial assistance of the Sir Donald Gosling Maritime Reserves Amenity Fund, HMS Excellent's AT Fund, the MOS Mess Fund and public funds in lieu of rations this project

would not have been possible, so we were all very grateful.

"I hope to expand on this adventurous training initiative and increase the group size at another suitable venue next year – hopefully with similar funding".

Lt Cdr Jo Shipley said: "It's essential for our young MOS officers to experience the benefits of adventurous training.

"As the MOS Specialisation Training Officer, I can see that these activities would naturally test an individual.

"When somebody is negotiating a single-track downhill mountain bike trail, battling against strong winds, walking along exposed mountain ridges or even climbing a rock face in adverse weather conditions, then you really need to be committed and have plenty of courage and fortitude.

"These attributes are also vitally important when supporting the RN in our professional role".

Cyprus challenges

DURING the day AB Natasha Rook, from HMS Sherwood, is a supervisor at a Midlands Co-op store, but her Reserve training has given her a passion for travel.

Her military career has so far taken her far from the Nottingham-based unit on three military training exercises to sunny Cyprus – the most recent during this past summer.

Natasha, now 24, joined the RNR four years ago to see what Navy life was like before deciding if she wanted to be a regular full-time sailor.

She said: "Travelling has always been a passion of mine, so being able to do this in my role as a reservist is great.

"It's been so enjoyable putting my military training into practice under physically challenging conditions and high temperatures, similar to those I would experience if on mobilised service.

"Originally, I was unsure if I wanted to join the Royal Navy full time but I've now decided that balancing my civilian role in customer service and my part-time military career is a much better option for me.

"Training is mainly focused on upper deck security duties for ships, as this is an area I am specialising in.

"We took part in a range of exercises that were designed to prepare us for real-life scenarios such as dealing with threats to security and helping casualties.

"If you enjoy a challenge and are happy to be pushed outside your comfort zone to achieve training targets from time to time, being a Royal Naval Reservist could be for you.

"I've made some great friends; have improved my leadership skills, which has benefited my civilian job, and have taken part in fantastic training courses that I would never have had the opportunity to do otherwise."

Dummy run for Calliope

REMEMBERING their shipmate AB Mick Sherriff, who lost his fight with a cancerous brain tumour in December 2012, two teams from HMS Calliope took part in both the Great North 5k and Great North Run half marathon in September.

The reservists' chosen charity was St Benedict's Hospice in Sunderland, where Mick received care and support during his illness.

The teams hope to raise £2,000 for the hospice as a way of showing their gratitude for the excellent care he received.

To add to their challenge, the reservists chose to invite Ruth, the unit's rescue dummy, with seven of the team carrying all six stones four pounds of her weight, on a stretcher for the full 13.1 miles.

Team leader LS Elle Forrest said: "We are all fit and good runners but Ruth brought a new dimension to the event.

"We trained hard and hope to raise more than £2,000 for charity.

HMS Calliope's CO Cdr Andy Collier was impressed with the initiative and training of the teams as they prepared for the run.

He said: "Elle and the team really typify the commitment, teamwork and sense of community spirit that makes the Royal Navy and her Reserves the best in the world."



● WO1 Paul Hurlow receives his valedictory certificate from HMS King Alfred's CO Cdr Anthony Stickland (left) with his previous CO Cdr Geoff Bewley (right)

Farewell to the last ranger

THE Warfare Sea Reserves cadre said a warm farewell to one of their stalwart, long-serving members at the RNR branch's training weekend held at Henley Park Range last month.

WO1 Paul Hurlow ran his last range as Chief Range Officer over the weekend.

With over 20 years service and three mobilisations to military operations under his belt, this highly-respected reservist fired his last round down the range.

Within the branch, WO Hurlow held a number of national Sea Reserves appointments including Warrant Officer Training and Eastern England Regional Force Protection Officer. He was instrumental in setting up and running the popular Helios Encounter series of Reserve force exercises in Cyprus.

During the Olympics he was mobilised as second-in-command of the Greenwich Park Olympic Venue. This significant contribution to this was recognised by an Army Commendation.

Paul received his valedictory certificate from his CO at HMS King Alfred, Cdr Anthony Stickland, marking a tremendous contribution to the Service.



Picture: SSgt Bruce Cobbeldick US Army

Kabul bulletin

FOUR days after the attempted attack on the Presidential Palace in Kabul, Naval reservist Cdr Jane Allen escorted 25 members of the media into President Karzai's palace.

"I helped with escorting the move of the No 10 Press Corps accompanying the Prime Minister, David Cameron, on his visit to Afghanistan", said Jane. "It was a fiercely hot day with aircraft, road and helicopter moves, but thankfully all went according to plan."

Mobilised for a six-month tour of duty in May, Jane recently worked alongside BBC reporter Gethin Jones.

After his visit to Helmand, Gethin travelled north to Kabul to interview the Deputy Cdr of ISAF, Lt Gen John Lorimer, the senior British Army officer in Afghanistan.

This interview will feature in the BBC's week of Remembrance next month.

Each week a service of Remembrance is held at HQISAF where the names of the coalition force members who have paid the ultimate price are read out, together with the number of Afghan Security Forces who gave their life for their country.

Ensuring both parts of the Remembrance service were filmed, Jane explained: "This helps to put the UK losses into perspective, against the deaths suffered by other contributing nations, and the fatalities suffered by the Afghans."

Jane will remain in Kabul for the November ceremonies and is due to return to the UK towards the end of the year. After 33 year's service this is likely to be Jane's last operational tour in a long and varied RNR career.

Sherwood's show

ON his annual visit to the HMS Sherwood the Commander of Maritime Reserves Cdre Andrew Jameson had the opportunity to look around what will soon be come the Nottingham RNR's new home, Foresters House on Swiney Way in Toton.

Building work started in August on the £1m renovation project that will see both RNR and RMR units co-locate with some of the county's Army Reserve units on one site for the first time.

Cdr Martin Clegg, Commanding Officer at HMS Sherwood, said: "During the visit Cdr Jameson had the opportunity

to see the excellent location of our new site, discuss our plans for the new HMS Sherwood and the tremendous opportunities there will be to work closely with the Army Reserve and our neighbours next door at Chetwynd Barracks.

"In previous correspondence with the Commodore, he has stated that he is very keen for us to extend our reach into the local community and further develop our links with local employers.

"I believe we will be better able to achieve this at our new site." The renovation project will be complete by early 2014.



Picture: Lt Cdr Heather Lane

Braving Bestival

WITH the RN's Fit for Life team otherwise engaged, 11 fit Royal Navy Reserves were invited to march onto the main stage to warm up tens of thousands of festival-goers at the Isle of Wight's 2013 maritime-themed HMS Bestival.

Leading from the front, former Navy Command PTI Lt Cdr Grassy Meadows, who now serves in the RNR's Media Operations specialisation, the nine reservists from HMS King Alfred and one Naval Nurse from HMS Forward

busted some moves that went down a storm with the huge crowd, who joined in enthusiastically with the military style work-out.

Headline acts over the four-day Bestival included Elton John, Fat Boy Slim and Snoop Dog, but the reservists will never forget the massive cheer that erupted at the end of their fitness routine with dance troupe Sink the Pink.

Lt Alan Bradley said: "It was a great way of raising awareness of our local Reserve unit - we certainly gave it our best shot."

New 'Smart' boards equals smarter sailors

HANDS up those who have been in the Navy long enough to remember learning in a stuffy classroom with the squeak of chalk on the blackboard?

Or what about the endless whirr and click of a carousel slide-projector, as the halogen bulb tries to burn through the fading slides?

Remember those bleached-out crooked images projected on the wall of a dimly-lit room as the class shouted 'focus!?' More likely the chances are that you know well the grinding experience of 'death by PowerPoint' as the tutor reads monotonously from slide 45 of 70.

The good news for the RNR is that HMS Wildfire has just become the first Reserve training unit to take delivery of the exciting new Smartboards - interactive learning tools that will transform the classroom and teaching methods used for generations, leaping towards an interactive, shared instructional experience.

These shiny pieces of kit, seen first at HMS Raleigh, will now be rolled out to all of the Maritime Reserve units across the UK, demonstrating another major investment in resource, infrastructure and new kit for the rejuvenated Reserve Forces.

In simple terms, a Smartboard is a computerised projector screen and touch screen on which you can use special pens to highlight and annotate features.

Smart training programmes can also record trainees' responses so that an instructor can follow their progress throughout a course.

Capt Martin Quinn, the new Deputy Commander of the Maritime Reserve, visited HMS Wildfire on the day of the launch.

He said: "The Maritime Reserve is now capable of delivering education in



● An interactive Smartboard transforms a lesson at HMS Wildfire

Picture: Lt Cdr Grassy Meadows

Smartboard technology, reflecting the expectations and standards of society.

"It is pleasing to see a complex and visionary investment programme delivered with tangible benefits for training at unit level."

Wildfire's CO Cdr Stephanie Shinner said: "This is a fabulous new facility to complement our modern unit."

"This new technology will also help to attract new recruits to benefit from our first class facility, which the Smartboards are only a part of."

"I have now delivered my first Command Brief using the Smartboard and I am excited about this new equipment."

At 19 years old, Luke Smithson has now started his Initial Naval Training after nine months in New Entry.

He said: "This is really high tech stuff. I haven't seen anything like this anywhere and I am glad it's come to the Navy Reserves."

Reservist instructor CPO Shaun Pennicott added: "This is an amazing piece of kit with so much potential for the student and instructor. They are really easy to use."

Capt Mark Wyatt from the RN's Future Reserves Infrastructure project said: "Smart technology allows us to develop modern training techniques, and it is part of the RN's vision to exploit technology in the development of its reserves forces."

"There are aspirations to deliver network-enabled training and support, which will reduce training pipelines allowing reserves to serve with regulars on the front line."

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career transition partnership
The Ministry of Defence working with Right Management

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University of Brighton

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Picture: Annie Leibovitz

Annie frames President

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Over the past 40 years she's photographed the who's who of rock and roll: Sting, Fleetwood Mac, John Lennon, the Rolling Stones, king of pop Michael Jackson, Lady Gaga, the iconic cover of Bruce Springsteen's *Born in the USA* album, plus a naked and heavily pregnant Demi Moore for the front of *Vanity Fair* magazine (which caused quite a stir a couple of decades ago) as well as the Queen, the Obama family and Microsoft maestro Bill Gates among others.

Now she's been commissioned by retail giant Marks and Spencer to shoot its autumn fashion collection featuring a dozen women – 'Britain's Leading Ladies'.

Over several days during the summer, Annie photographed the ten – Olympic gold-medal winning boxer Nicola Adams, chart-topper Ellie Goulding, 2011's Nurse of the Year and AIDS awareness campaigner Helen Allen, model Katie Piper, artist Tracey Emin, Oscar-winning



● Annie Leibovitz at work behind the camera at HMS President

actress Dame Helen Mirren, model and fashion guru Grace Coddington, supermodel and musician Karen Elson, novelist Monica Ali, ballerina and *Strictly Come Dancing* judge Darcey Bussell, singer-songwriter Laura Mvula and charity boss Jasmine Whitbread – at various locations.

The last of the shoots was staged at President, with London's iconic river crossing as the backdrop. Reservist Lt Cdr Scott had the arduous duty of press liaison officer, assisted by AB Parsonage – a full-time writer on the unit's staff.

And there was plenty of time between the shoots for the sailors to take a few snaps of their own with Tony's Canon EOS 600D camera... until he handed it over to Annie. "There was a hush all around when I did," says Tony. "Helen Mirren whispered to me: 'You do know that's the most famous photographer in the world?'"

"For the rest of the day Annie's staff kept coming up to me saying: 'Wow, you have Annie Leibovitz photos on your camera. How cool

is that?' Very.

"Meeting Annie Leibovitz and having her take my photo is an honour usually reserved for the A List," said Glen, who equally enjoyed his brush with celebrity.

"It's not everyday that A Listers – film stars, No1 pop stars and inspirational women like Katie Piper – turn up at work.

"All of the ladies were amazing and Dame Helen, Ellie Goulding and Katie Piper happily posed for photos and chatted to us. Ellie looked especially good in my cap and should consider a career in the RN!"

As for the professional photographer at work, well once the shoot was over there was time for a natter.

"I had a good chat with her at the end," said Tony. Her dad was in the US Air Force and she spent her childhood travelling from base to base – she spoke highly of the armed forces in general and said it was a wonderful childhood."

See the results of Annie's work at HMS President on their Facebook page: <http://bitly.com/presannie>



Social climbing

EXERCISE Intrepid Mountaineer saw a group from the Media Operations specialisation of the RNR (MOS) muster in the Ogwen valley at Bethesda cottage for an exciting weekend of mountain biking, rock-climbing and real mountaineering (above).

The expedition also provided an opportunity to engender team ethos as well developing individual qualities such as courage, commitment, discipline and leadership.

Helped with funding from Royal Navy charities, contributions covered the costs of the accommodation, mountain-bike hire, rock-climbing equipment hire and instruction plus food.

Organiser Lt Doug Wylie said: "Without the financial assistance of the Sir Donald Gosling Maritime Reserves Amenity Fund, HMS Excellent's AT Fund, the MOS Mess Fund and public funds in lieu of rations this project

would not have been possible, so we were all very grateful.

"I hope to expand on this adventurous training initiative and increase the group size at another suitable venue next year – hopefully with similar funding".

Lt Cdr Jo Shipley said: "It's essential for our young MOS officers to experience the benefits of adventurous training.

"As the MOS Specialisation Training Officer, I can see that these activities would naturally test an individual.

"When somebody is negotiating a single-track downhill mountain bike trail, battling against strong winds, walking along exposed mountain ridges or even climbing a rock face in adverse weather conditions, then you really need to be committed and have plenty of courage and fortitude.

"These attributes are also vitally important when supporting the RN in our professional role".

Cyprus challenges

DURING the day AB Natasha Rook, from HMS Sherwood, is a supervisor at a Midlands Co-op store, but her Reserve training has given her a passion for travel.

Her military career has so far taken her far from the Nottingham-based unit on three military training exercises to sunny Cyprus – the most recent during this past summer.

Natasha, now 24, joined the RNR four years ago to see what Navy life was like before deciding if she wanted to be a regular full-time sailor.

She said: "Travelling has always been a passion of mine, so being able to do this in my role as a reservist is great.

"It's been so enjoyable putting my military training into practice under physically challenging conditions and high temperatures, similar to those I would experience if on mobilised service.

"Originally, I was unsure if I wanted to join the Royal Navy full time but I've now decided that balancing my civilian role in customer service and my part-time military career is a much better option for me.

"Training is mainly focused on upper deck security duties for ships, as this is an area I am specialising in.

"We took part in a range of exercises that were designed to prepare us for real-life scenarios such as dealing with threats to security and helping casualties.

"If you enjoy a challenge and are happy to be pushed outside your comfort zone to achieve training targets from time to time, being a Royal Naval Reservist could be for you.

"I've made some great friends; have improved my leadership skills, which has benefited my civilian job, and have taken part in fantastic training courses that I would never have had the opportunity to do otherwise."

Dummy run for Calliope

REMEMBERING their shipmate AB Mick Sherriff, who lost his fight with a cancerous brain tumour in December 2012, two teams from HMS Calliope took part in both the Great North 5k and Great North Run half marathon in September.

The reservists' chosen charity was St Benedict's Hospice in Sunderland, where Mick received care and support during his illness.

The teams hope to raise £2,000 for the hospice as a way of showing their gratitude for the excellent care he received.

To add to their challenge, the reservists chose to invite Ruth, the unit's rescue dummy, with seven of the team carrying all six stones four pounds of her weight, on a stretcher for the full 13.1 miles.

Team leader LS Elle Forrest said: "We are all fit and good runners but Ruth brought a new dimension to the event.

"We trained hard and hope to raise more than £2,000 for charity.

HMS Calliope's CO Cdr Andy Collier was impressed with the initiative and training of the teams as they prepared for the run.

He said: "Elle and the team really typify the commitment, teamwork and sense of community spirit that makes the Royal Navy and her Reserves the best in the world."



● WO1 Paul Hurlow receives his valedictory certificate from HMS King Alfred's CO Cdr Anthony Stickland (left) with his previous CO Cdr Geoff Bewley (right)

Farewell to the last ranger

THE Warfare Sea Reserves cadre said a warm farewell to one of their stalwart, long-serving members at the RNR branch's training weekend held at Henley Park Range last month.

WO1 Paul Hurlow ran his last range as Chief Range Officer over the weekend.

With over 20 years service and three mobilisations to military operations under his belt, this highly-respected reservist fired his last round down the range.

Within the branch, WO Hurlow held a number of national Sea Reserves appointments including Warrant Officer Training and Eastern England Regional Force Protection Officer. He was instrumental in setting up and running the popular Helios Encounter series of Reserve force exercises in Cyprus.

During the Olympics he was mobilised as second-in-command of the Greenwich Park Olympic Venue. This significant contribution to this was recognised by an Army Commendation.

Paul received his valedictory certificate from his CO at HMS King Alfred, Cdr Anthony Stickland, marking a tremendous contribution to the Service.



Picture: SSgt Bruce Cobbeldick US Army

Kabul bulletin

FOUR days after the attempted attack on the Presidential Palace in Kabul, Naval reservist Cdr Jane Allen escorted 25 members of the media into President Karzai's palace.

"I helped with escorting the move of the No 10 Press Corps accompanying the Prime Minister, David Cameron, on his visit to Afghanistan", said Jane. "It was a fiercely hot day with aircraft, road and helicopter moves, but thankfully all went according to plan."

Mobilised for a six-month tour of duty in May, Jane recently worked alongside BBC reporter Gethin Jones.

After his visit to Helmand, Gethin travelled north to Kabul to interview the Deputy Cdr of ISAF, Lt Gen John Lorimer, the senior British Army officer in Afghanistan.

This interview will feature in the BBC's week of Remembrance next month.

Each week a service of Remembrance is held at HQISAF where the names of the coalition force members who have paid the ultimate price are read out, together with the number of Afghan Security Forces who gave their life for their country.

Ensuring both parts of the Remembrance service were filmed, Jane explained: "This helps to put the UK losses into perspective, against the deaths suffered by other contributing nations, and the fatalities suffered by the Afghans."

Jane will remain in Kabul for the November ceremonies and is due to return to the UK towards the end of the year. After 33 year's service this is likely to be Jane's last operational tour in a long and varied RNR career.

Sherwood's show

ON his annual visit to the HMS Sherwood the Commander of Maritime Reserves Cdre Andrew Jameson had the opportunity to look around what will soon be come the Nottingham RNR's new home, Foresters House on Swiney Way in Toton.

Building work started in August on the £1m renovation project that will see both RNR and RMR units co-locate with some of the county's Army Reserve units on one site for the first time.

Cdr Martin Clegg, Commanding Officer at HMS Sherwood, said: "During the visit Cdr Jameson had the opportunity

to see the excellent location of our new site, discuss our plans for the new HMS Sherwood and the tremendous opportunities there will be to work closely with the Army Reserve and our neighbours next door at Chetwynd Barracks.

"In previous correspondence with the Commodore, he has stated that he is very keen for us to extend our reach into the local community and further develop our links with local employers.

"I believe we will be better able to achieve this at our new site." The renovation project will be complete by early 2014.



Picture: Lt Cdr Heather Lane

Braving Bestival

WITH the RN's Fit for Life team otherwise engaged, 11 fit Royal Navy Reserves were invited to march onto the main stage to warm up tens of thousands of festival-goers at the Isle of Wight's 2013 maritime-themed HMS Bestival.

Leading from the front, former Navy Command PTI Lt Cdr Grassy Meadows, who now serves in the RNR's Media Operations specialisation, the nine reservists from HMS King Alfred and one Naval Nurse from HMS Forward

busted some moves that went down a storm with the huge crowd, who joined in enthusiastically with the military style work-out.

Headline acts over the four-day Bestival included Elton John, Fat Boy Slim and Snoop Dog, but the reservists will never forget the massive cheer that erupted at the end of their fitness routine with dance troupe Sink the Pink.

Lt Alan Bradley said: "It was a great way of raising awareness of our local Reserve unit - we certainly gave it our best shot."

New 'Smart' boards equals smarter sailors

HANDS up those who have been in the Navy long enough to remember learning in a stuffy classroom with the squeak of chalk on the blackboard?

Or what about the endless whirr and click of a carousel slide-projector, as the halogen bulb tries to burn through the fading slides?

Remember those bleached-out crooked images projected on the wall of a dimly-lit room as the class shouted 'focus!?' More likely the chances are that you know well the grinding experience of 'death by PowerPoint' as the tutor reads monotonously from slide 45 of 70.

The good news for the RNR is that HMS Wildfire has just become the first Reserve training unit to take delivery of the exciting new Smartboards - interactive learning tools that will transform the classroom and teaching methods used for generations, leaping towards an interactive, shared instructional experience.

These shiny pieces of kit, seen first at HMS Raleigh, will now be rolled out to all of the Maritime Reserve units across the UK, demonstrating another major investment in resource, infrastructure and new kit for the rejuvenated Reserve Forces.

In simple terms, a Smartboard is a computerised projector screen and touch screen on which you can use special pens to highlight and annotate features.

Smart training programmes can also record trainees' responses so that an instructor can follow their progress throughout a course.

Capt Martin Quinn, the new Deputy Commander of the Maritime Reserve, visited HMS Wildfire on the day of the launch.

He said: "The Maritime Reserve is now capable of delivering education in



● An interactive Smartboard transforms a lesson at HMS Wildfire

Picture: Lt Cdr Grassy Meadows

Smartboard technology, reflecting the expectations and standards of society.

"It is pleasing to see a complex and visionary investment programme delivered with tangible benefits for training at unit level."

Wildfire's CO Cdr Stephanie Shinner said: "This is a fabulous new facility to complement our modern unit."

"This new technology will also help to attract new recruits to benefit from our first class facility, which the Smartboards are only a part of."

"I have now delivered my first Command Brief using the Smartboard and I am excited about this new equipment."

At 19 years old, Luke Smithson has now started his Initial Naval Training after nine months in New Entry.

He said: "This is really high tech stuff. I haven't seen anything like this anywhere and I am glad it's come to the Navy Reserves."

Reservist instructor CPO Shaun Pennicott added: "This is an amazing piece of kit with so much potential for the student and instructor. They are really easy to use."

Capt Mark Wyatt from the RN's Future Reserves Infrastructure project said: "Smart technology allows us to develop modern training techniques, and it is part of the RN's vision to exploit technology in the development of its reserves forces."

"There are aspirations to deliver network-enabled training and support, which will reduce training pipelines allowing reserves to serve with regulars on the front line."

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Deaths

Rear Admiral Michael L Stacey CB. Entered Dartmouth 1942. During the war he served in HMS Hawkins (Indian Ocean and Normandy landings), Meteor (Russian convoys) and Cowdray. As S/Lt he served HMS Rotherham (Singapore), Cambrian (Dutch East Indies) and Shoreham (Persian Gulf). As a lieutenant he commanded fast patrol boats and was senior officer of the 1st Fast Patrol Boat Sqn. After torpedo and anti-submarine course he served in HMS Tyne, Bermuda and Euryalus (Med) then as Staff Officer of Dartmouth Training Squadron in HMS Vigilant. Anti-submarine training officer at HMS Osprey in Portland then promoted to commander 1958. Commanded new frigate HMS Blackpool, was Deputy Director of Joint Anti-submarine School in Northern Ireland then Commander RN Barracks, Devonport. Appointed captain

1966 he was Chief Staff Officer to the admiral commanding Reserves then captain of 6th Frigate Sqn and commanded new frigate HMS Andromeda. Later Deputy Director of Naval Warfare then Captain of HMS Tiger. 1975 promoted to rear admiral and served as the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Policy) before being appointed Flag Officer Gibraltar and NATO Commander of the Gibraltar/Med area, retiring 1979. July 15. Aged 89.
Cdr Aylmer H Alexander. Joined 1951 as a marine engineer cadet, and after submarine courses in 1958 became a training officer at HMS Dolphin. Specialised in HTP (High Test Peroxide) maintaining HM Submarines Explorer and Excalibur. Later MEO of HMS Arethusa. Remained in the Navy until 1988 when he joined White Ensign Association based in HMS Belfast,

helping retired officers and ratings to find jobs in civilian life. August 8. Aged 80.
Cdr T V Giles Binney FAA. Drafting Cdr HMS Daedalus (Lee-on-Solent). Flew Avengers and Sea Fury Korean War. Later Naval attaché Lisbon and Ethiopia. Aug 15.
Lt Cdr (SCC) Frank Spendlow RNR. Joined 1933, served HMS Ganges, Nelson, Skate, Viscount, Douglas, Grenville, Durban, Ark Royal, Somali, Oribe, Derby, Rhyl, Manxman and Cossack. Aug 1. Aged 96.
David Jacobs CBE. Joined RN aged 18. After working as an announcer in the Forces' Broadcasting Service joined the staff of Lord Louis Mountbatten as chief announcer on Radio SEAC in Ceylon, eventually becoming assistant station director. Left RN 1947 and joined BBC as a newsreader and announcer. Appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London in 1983, president of Kingston RBL and appointed CBE in 1996. Sept 2. Aged 87.
John Howard. Served HMS Mercury and Montclare. Morecambe Bay Association. July. Aged 82.
Ian McKenzie CPO(OEA). Served HMS Jamaica, Barrosa and Antrim, also RAN. August 21.
Brian 'Buggys' Keeble NA AH3. Served 1957-66 at Gamecock, Heron, Ariel, Seahawk, Daedalus and Victory also HMS Eagle and Victorious. Aircraft Handlers Association. July. Aged 74.
Grahame Francis AB UC3. Served in HM Submarine Revenge (Stbd) 1969-73. Past member of Derbyshire Submariners Association. September 1. Aged 64.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Geoffrey 'Geoff' Perry. Survivor of HMS Puckeridge, torpedoed in the Med 1943 by U-617, then served in HMS Charlock on Arctic convoys. Member of former 1st Destroyer (Hunts) Association and Flotilla member of Flower Class Corvette Association. Chairman of Wolverhampton RNA. July 7. Aged 89.
Keith Walker PO Stoker. Served at HMS Ganges and Raleigh, also HMS Blake, Bulwark and Ark Royal. Wolverhampton branch. July 31. Aged 70.
Michael Beech. Associate member Uxbridge RNA. August 15.
William George Keeble. Joined RN aged 16 and served throughout WW2 in various ships. Onboard HMS Rodney when she was involved with the sinking of the Bismarck. Founder of Johannesburg RNA; received the MBE 1993. August 7. Aged 96.

Sports lottery
August 17: £5,000 - CPL Q Brown; £1,500 - WO1 D Cameron; £500 - AB2 B White.
August 24: £7,500 - S/Lt O Prowle; £2,500 - CPO S Markham; £1,000 - Cdr T Ash; £800 - LH B Bonell; £700 - AB A J King; £600 - CPO I Dove.
August 31: £5,000 - LH R J McCann; £1,500 - AB1 B A Wardle; £500 - Cdr M J Dreelan.
September 7: £5,000 - PO D Bolton; £1,500 - Mne R Davies; £500 - Mne D Booth.

Reunions

October 2013
Royal Naval Photographer's Association AGM and reunion at the Wessex Hotel, Bournemouth, October 4 to 7. All ex-photos welcome. Further details from Ray Whitehouse, RNPA Social Secretary at ray@chilston.com or write to Mulberry House, Mulberry Hollow, Angmering, West Sussex, BN16 4JB, tel: 01903 366505.

November 2013
The Neptune Association AGM at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Staffordshire, November 2. A short service at the Neptune and Kandahar Memorial to be held at 1200 followed by the AGM in the Rose Room at 1400. We will remember the 836 men lost in HM ships Neptune and Kandahar on December 19 1941. See www.hmsneptune.com or tel: 07941 440113.

February 2014
HMS Penelope Association reunion in Blackpool February 21-23. Open to all who served in the cruiser 1938-44 or frigate 1963-92, relatives of those who did so are very welcome. Details of membership and reunion: Mike Bee mike.bee@ntlworld.com or write to 1 Ogdellows Street, Mirfield, WF14 9AB.
HMS Andromeda Association F57 13th annual reunion at the North Stafford Hotel, Winton Square, Station Rd. Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2AE, Feb 28 to March 2. Full programme including optional tour of Wedgwood factory. All commissions, ranks and partners welcome. Details: rickmatthews57@btinternet.com or tel: 07836 747070.

April 2014
HMS Loch Fada Association reunion celebrating 70th anniversary of K/F390 commissioning, Royal Beach Hotel, St Helens Parade, Southsea, PO4 0NR, April 11-14. AGM Saturday 12 at 1000, dinner 1900. Contact IOW Tours enquiries@iowtours.com

com mentioning F390. Tel: 01983 405116 or secretary Frenchy.f390.sec11@virginmedia.com, tel 01252 310767.

May 2014
HMS Saintes Association reunion at Cedar Court Hotel, Huddersfield, May 9-12. Ex-shipmates and guests welcome. Weekend includes visit to York and 'Last of the Summer Wine'. Contact Ron Miles, 01404 43177, 38 Cypress Close, Honiton, EX14 2YW.

Ask Jack

Back Copies: I have copies of Navy News from 1999 to 2010, which I would like to give to anybody willing to collect from Twickenham. Contact Philip at molandwaldo@yahoo.co.uk, tel: 020 8892 9095.
Richard Mead(ies): I am trying to locate boyhood friend Richard, who was born to Jack and Joan Mead(ies) on August 16 1939 and for most of his youth lived in Haywards Heath. In the mid-1950s he joined the RN as a boy/junior entrant and worked his way up to CPO. At one stage, I understand, he became a Drum Major attached to a military band. If anyone has information please contact Peter Loring at peter.loring@live.co.uk, tel 0118 9786157 or write to 5 Green Croft, Wokingham, RG40 1QE.

Swap Draft

LSC N Doyle wanting to swap for any deploying sea draft, current assignment onboard till June 2015. Contact HMS PROTECTOR-LSC

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Entries for the Deaths column and Swap Drafts in November's Noticeboard must be received by **October 14**

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Pirate links celebrated at Portrush

THERE are strong links between North Antrim and Scotland, which are separated by only a dozen miles at the Straits of Moyle, south of the Mull of Kintyre – links that were celebrated at a summer event by members of Portrush unit.

That proximity has led to political and military alliances in the past – including that between Edward Bruce, brother of Scottish hero Robert the Bruce, and pirate Tavish Dhu, or ‘Black Tavish’.

In 1315 Edward Bruce was fighting the English in Ireland, for which he claimed the crown.

His forces, camped near Coleraine, were desperately short of supplies as they sought to hold off the army of the Red Earl, Earl of Ulster Richard de Burgh.

The Earl had sent word to England for help, and four supply ships were sent to rendezvous with the Earl on the River Bann.

However, a storm forced them to take shelter in the Skerries, a string of rocky islands just off the coast at Portrush – which just happened to be Tavish Dhu’s base.

The ships were captured and the supplies diverted to Edward Bruce – but the gesture was ultimately in vain, as Bruce was eventually driven back to Scotland.

Local legend has it that Tavish Dhu’s body was buried on the Skerries – along with his treasure.

And it is that legendary figure that the Sea Cadets of Portrush helped to celebrate at the Pirates of Portrush Day, an event that included a street parade, re-enactment, fun day and pirate-themed treasure hunt, along with live music and plenty of skull-and-crossbones flags (above).

Historic day

SEA Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets from Keighley unit took part in a ‘medieval day’ at Cliffe Castle in the Yorkshire town.

The cadets formed teams and took part in a tug o’war and a space hopper relay, though the position of space hoppers in medieval society has yet to be fully explored.

The Marine Cadets demonstrated how to erect a bivvy shelter or bivouac and cook ration packs.

New headquarters for Bournemouth

BOURNEMOUTH unit has a new headquarters following an official opening ceremony conducted by the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset.

Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets were joined by staff, families and friends as Mrs Anthony Pitt-Rivers formally opened the new unit at Gloucester Road in Boscombe.

It also marks a new chapter for the unit, who will be sharing their HQ for the first time – the new building is also a community centre.

Also at the event were the High Sheriff

of Dorset, the Mayor and Mayoress of Bournemouth, local MP Tobias Ellwood – and it was also the first official duty for the new Captain Sea Cadets, Capt Jonathan Holloway, who was accompanied by the Chief Executive of the Marine Society Sea Cadets, Martin Coles.

Formed in 1939, the Bournemouth unit was based at Wesley Close for the past quarter-century – though the unit found a temporary home at Townsend Community Centre until

they were ready to move into the new facility.

Their former home was demolished last year to make way for new housing, but the unit had a longer-term view, raising £375,000 over ten years (which included a substantial input from Bournemouth Borough Council) to build and operate their own new HQ.

The name of the training ship will remain the same – and staff and cadets hope that the new location and better access will attract new members to TS Phoebe.

Top prize for former cadet

PPO (SCC) Jack Palmer has been awarded the Defence Maritime Award for Youth Logistics Training at HMS Raleigh.

The award is given to the trainee who achieved and maintained the highest standards during youth logistics training – otherwise known as the first class cook steward qualification.

Jack won a trophy, a framed certificate and a cookbook, presented to him by Capt Bob Fancy, the Commanding Officer of Raleigh.

Following the prizegiving ceremony and a formal buffet, Jack spent the rest of the day talking to high-ranking Naval officers and fellow prizewinners.

“It was a great day and the highlight of my Sea Cadet career,” said Jack, now a uniformed member of staff at Nottingham unit.

Ben to the rescue

A MEMBER of Conwy unit was able to put his Sea Cadet training to help a friend during a medical emergency.

While at school, OC Ben Robinson’s friend had an asthma attack, and although he used his inhaler it was having no effect and

he was struggling to breathe.

Ben, in a calm manner, reassured his friend and alerted the teachers.

He then texted his friend’s mother to tell her that her son had been taken ill.

The friend lost consciousness at one stage, at which point Ben

requested that an ambulance should be called as a matter of urgency.

Paramedics treated the youth, who by that point was found to have no pulse, and gave him oxygen before transferring him to hospital, where he has now made a full recovery.

Both the school and the youth’s mother said how impressed they were with the manner in which Ben dealt with the situation and the actions he took – and that the training he had received through the Sea Cadets had given him the confidence to take charge of the situation.

Ben’s mother said that she was very proud of her son, and that the training in first aid at the unit had enabled him to assess and deal with the situation.



● Sea Cadets on parade in Redcar for Armed Forces Day. Army and air cadets also joined the parade, and later competed in a keenly-contested drill competition, with Cleveland Army Cadets taking the honours

Picture: LA(Phot) Will Haigh

Prominent roles on big day

NAVAL elements past, present and future had prominent roles in the Armed Forces Day programme in Lincoln.

Participating under the banner ‘The Nation’s Shield’, Cdt Lewis Mount, of Lincoln unit, joined PO(EW) Rob Nelson, of the RN Element at the Defence EW Centre at RAF Waddington, and former CPO(OPS)(EW) Mike ‘Bungy’ Williams, of RNA Lincoln and a civilian data analyst at the Defence EW Centre, for a photocall publicising the event.

Visitors to the Lincoln programme saw exhibitions, demonstrations, musical interludes – and a flypast by aircraft of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight on

their return from the national Armed Forces Day event in Nottingham.

Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets from Beccles unit travelled to the Royal Plain in Lowestoft to take part in the Armed Forces Day.

The president of the unit, Alf Muffet – who is also a member of the RNA, RNPSA and RBL – had the honour of parading the Union Flag, while L/Cpl Charlie Lees was given responsibility for hoisting the flag.

Members of the unit also took part in physical training displays throughout the day, and had roles in the drumhead service and closing ceremony.

Peter makes Master Coxswain

A BRADFORD cadet has been awarded his Master Coxswain’s Badge – one of the highest awards a cadet can achieve.

POC Peter Wood is believed to be the only cadet in West Yorkshire with this award, and is the first in living memory for the unit.

To qualify, Peter has obtained a number of qualifications in boatwork which have taken him

several years of hard work and dedication, both in the classroom and on the water.

“I have been in the Sea Cadets for just over five years now,” said POC Wood.

“Since joining Cadets I have many new friends and have been able to do things many people my age only dream of doing.

“To reach this level, I have

travelled all over the UK to undertake courses and training at Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth, MOD Caledonia at Rosyth and Thrapston Boat Station, and attended the National Trafalgar Day Parade in London as a member of the Armed Guard.”

Peter hopes to pursue a career as an officer in the Royal Navy.

Trophy presented

CADETS and staff at North Shields unit have been presented with the McBeath Trophy for 2012.

The trophy, founded by Rear Admiral John McBeath – Honorary Commodore of the Sea Cadets between 1958 and 1975 – is awarded to a unit in the Corps that has shown particularly meritorious performance over the previous year.

And for the CO, PO (SCC) Martin Sims, the presentation evening was doubly memorable, as he had just passed his ODP 2 to become a sub lieutenant.

Rosemary McBeath, daughter of the rear admiral, travelled to Tyneside to make the presentation.

Global gathering

SEA Cadets from around the world descended on HMS Raleigh in Cornwall to take part in a summer training camp.

The 44 youngsters, aged between 15 and 21, hailed from Australia, Belgium, Bermuda, Canada, Hong Kong, Russia, Singapore, South Korea and Sweden.

During the week they tackled the establishment’s obstacle and assault courses, watched a firefighting demonstration, and enjoyed a waterborne tour of Devonport Naval Base.

They also visited Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth.

MSSC Training Activities Officer Nicola Martin said: “The camp has been running for many years and is held over a three-week period in London, Portsmouth and one of the Sea Cadet Training Centres.

“The camp has never been held at HMS Raleigh and the aim was for the cadets to make the most of their time on the base and gain an insight into the opportunities on offer to UK Sea Cadets whilst learning about the customs and traditions of the Royal Navy.

“Overall we wanted to ensure the cadets had a taste of British life and culture whilst also having fun.”

Fierce competition

NORTHAMPTON and Rushden unit took part in the annual Dragon Boat Races on the River Nene, organised by the local Rotary Club to raise funds for the Air Ambulance and other charities.

The cadets are used to competing against bigger opponents – they are usually one of the youngest teams – but in their three timed races they showed they meant business, coming a close third in the first race and being beaten for first place in a photo finish in the next.

In between races they trained for the Dragon boat by taking their Trinity 500 along the waterway.

And as everyone in the unit has a role in the racing – whether on the water or raising sponsorship money – there was a widespread sense of satisfaction at a final total of just over £400 raised.

Dieppe raid ceremonies

SEVEN Sea Cadets and four staff from Sussex units attended three official commemorative ceremonies at various memorials in France to mark the passing of those who died in the 1942 Dieppe raids.

Cadets also attended a night vigil at the Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, escorting mayors from Newhaven and Brighton and the High Sheriff of Sussex as they lay wreaths.

They also carried standards for the Royal British Legion and Canadian veterans.

The cadets stayed at a youth hostel which was a 14th Century chateau in Le Treport, where Joan of Arc was imprisoned.

Back to help

A FORMER air cadet who went on to join the Royal Marines Band Service returned to his roots to help cadets prepare for a major public display.

Bugler Nathan Crossley, once a member of 461 (Chichester) Squadron, attended the weekend Sussex Wing Band Camp at Crowborough Training Centre, where he coached the drummers on the Saturday then helped the whole band on Sunday as they prepared for two days on duty at the Shoreham Airshow at the end of the summer.

New leader

AFTER five successful years at the helm of St Austell unit – including the winning of four burgees – Sub Lt (SCC) Sally Truscott RNR is to take up the pivotal role of Deputy District Officer for Cornwall.

Filling Sally’s shoes is Sub Lt (SCC) Ben Nash RNR, who has been with the Corps for 15 years, and who has already commanded a unit in Gloucestershire.



Try-out for Tonbridge

CADETS from Tonbridge School CCF experienced a day in the life of the Royal Navy when they visited HMS Collingwood in Fareham.

A group of 25 members of the unit were shown the bridge simulator, used to train navigators.

Cadet Nick Collins, one of the pupils who undertook a scenario as a navigator, said: “It wasn’t too bad – quite tricky, but it went better than expected.

“I’m not sure I’m in a rush to do it again anytime soon – it was a lot of responsibility.”

They also visited the Weapon Engineering Training Section and were put through their paces

during a drill training session.

As part of their wider visit to Hampshire the cadets also visited HMS Victory in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

Sub Lt Keith Sammons, one of the accompanying staff members, said: “I would hope the boys have enjoyed their visit.

“This was the first time I’ve been in the bridge simulator and I have to say it’s an impressive bit of kit.”

● Tonbridge cadets in the WE Section: from left, Elliott Thomson, Sam Riley, George Wheadon, Ryan Skilton, Pak Hei Hao, Jeffrey Leung, James Whiffen, William Scott

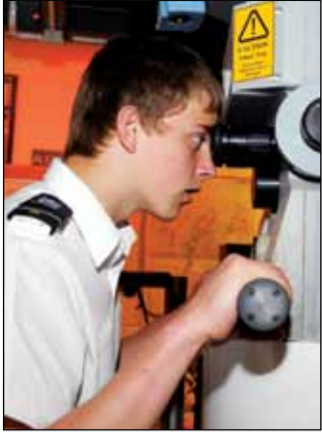
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● Alexander Wild at the periscope in the mock-up of a submarine's control room at the RN Submarine School

Picture: Dave Sherfield

Students look to the future

ROYAL Navy-sponsored students from Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College have paid a visit to the South-West to get an insight into their future careers.

The group of 28 Lower Sixth students spent a week in the area, visiting various Royal Navy establishments including RN Air Station Yeovilton and Devonport Naval Base, where they were given a tour of frigate HMS Montrose and submarine HMS Turbulent.

The culmination of their visit was a look around the RN Submarine School at HMS Raleigh.

The school provides training to officers and ratings specialising in weapon engineering and warfare operations, with courses ranging from initial professional training, to allow submariners to operate beneath the waves, to later career courses which prepare personnel for promotion and to use new equipment.

Christopher Baish, 17, said: "As someone with ambitions to become a warfare officer in the future, it was a great opportunity to be allowed into the warfare trainer, to try out some of the things that I will hopefully be doing in my career."

"The weapon engineering explanation was also fascinating, and the museum had both a wealth of information and a hugely knowledgeable guide in the form of CPO Graham Hunter."

Welbeck, in Woodhouse near Loughborough, is a purpose-built college which helps prepare students for life as an officer in the Armed Forces or within the Civil Service.

Boat show duties

SEA Cadets from across the North West and North Wales headed for the All Wales Boat Show at Conwy to demonstrate their seamanship and rowing skills.

The cadets showed visitors to Deganwy Quays Marina how they would recover a man overboard, examples of knot and rope work, and explained the different types of distress flares and how they are used safely. They also piped visitors aboard their display stand.

Teams of cadets showed off two Trinity 500 rowing boats in the marina, impressing the crowds as they rowed along the River Conwy.

Bivvy boost

CADETS from Hastings unit are looking forward to more training under canvas following a donation from the Sussex Police Property Act Fund.

Such funds take money received by the police from the sale of found property and from property confiscated by order of court and then sold, and distribute it to good causes – in this case, the Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets will receive new bivvy expedition training equipment.



● Sea Cadet bands at the Tower of London

Capital show

VISITORS to the Tower of London were treated to an additional attraction when the Sea Cadet Corps held its annual band competition at the landmark site.

Hundreds of cadets from across the UK competed in front of 25,000 visitors, with bugler and drummer soloists starting the day on the green next to the Byward Tower.

By midday ten bands took to the moat for the marching band competition – cadets competed in regional heats to make it to the finals – and the awards ceremony was held on Tower Green.

The winners were:

- Best Solo Bugler (Silver Bugle Trophy): AC T Cox – Portland unit;
- Best Solo Drummer (Alan Wain Brass Drum Trophy): L/Cpl K Jennings – Harrogate;
- Best Dressed Band (City of Plymouth Cup): Poole
- Best Original Composition (Seamans Cutter Cup): Portland;
- Best Cadet Drum Major (Directors Award): LC A Lewis-Carthy – Sutton Coldfield;

- Best Corps of Drums (Haynes Shield): Massed Bands SW Area;
- Best Marching Display (Display Trophy): Poole;
- Best Musical Display (Summer Shield): Massed Bands SW Area;
- Best Bugle Section (the Bugle Section): Massed Bands SW Area;
- Runner's Up to Best All Round Band (the Runner Up): Poole;
- Best All Round Band (Eason Bassett Goblet): Massed Bands SW Area.

Captain Sea Cadets Capt Jonathan Holloway said: "The cadets worked incredibly hard to perform in front of thousands of visitors, which is a tough task for any young person."

"The blustery winds and rain couldn't dampen the spirit of the Sea Cadets."

"I would like to thank Tower of London for hosting the event, and we look forward to the next national band competition."



● Competitors prepare (left) and march out (above) to show their musical talents at the Tower of London

Courses test cadets

CADETS from across the UK took part in two courses at either end of the country.

Thirty youngsters joined Combined Cadet Force RN Course Argyll Adventure, based initially at Garelochhead Training Area and then among the Munros in the Arrochar Alps.

The course develops the cadets' hill-walking skills and mountaineering, culminating in a three-day expedition in the hills.

In addition, cadets have the chance to use the facilities at Clyde Naval Base, including the sports hall, sailing centre – used for dinghy and yacht sailing – climbing wall, mountain biking and orienteering.

Some 400 miles south, Dartmouth saw a major gathering of 160 Sea Cadets and CCF cadets, as well as 60 supervising staff and instructors, for a week of courses and activities.

The pattern was that cadets took a five-day course leading to a qualification, followed by 36 hours of college activity.

- Courses included:
- Leadership (LM Level 3 Certificate);
 - National Pool Lifeguard Qualification;
 - Power Boat Level 2 (Displacement and planing);
 - RYA Dinghy Sailing;
 - Yachting – RYA Competent Crew;
 - Paddlesports – BCU 2-star;
 - Sub Aqua – BSAC Ocean Diver Certificate;
 - Band Course – Music Performance BTEC.

The college and Royal Navy side of the programme included:

- A mess dinner in the Senior Gun Room;



● Cadets help a colleague during leadership exercises at Dartmouth (above), while another cadet enjoys the view during Argyll Adventure

- A chapel service;
- Ceremonial Divisions, with Flag Officer Sea Training Rear Admiral Ben Key as Reviewing Officer;
- Beat Retreat and Sunset.

The Band Course provided orchestral music for the mess dinner and chapel, and a marching band for Divisions, Beat Retreat and Sunset.

During Ceremonial Divisions, Lt Cdr Nigel Huxtable (who took the pictures here) was presented with his Cadet Forces Medal, while Lt Cdr Sue Moody received a clasp to her medal.



Waltham on the march

OVER the past year Waltham Forest unit has been busy training hard and fundraising to take part in the 97th International Four Day Marches in Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

The marches, also known as the 'Walk of the World', attract around 45,000 walkers across the world, including 5,000 military personnel from almost 40 different countries.

Military teams have to walk 40km (25 miles) a day for four days – not far off four marathons.

Adults over 19 also do this carrying 10kg of weight.

The British Armed Forces and Cadet Organisations make up the second-largest contingent at Nijmegen behind the Dutch Armed Forces, with around 200 personnel.

This year there was also an RN road marching team from HMS Collingwood, and it is thought that Waltham Forest are the first military team from the Sea Cadets to qualify for some years.

The team of Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets was always going to find the event a challenge, and they worked hard right from the start as temperatures rose into the 30s Celsius with little shelter.

By the second day the team had lost two cadets due to leg and ankle strains, and by the third day they were down a further two because of blisters. On the final day the remaining team members all qualified for their prized Nijmegen Medal, which they can proudly wear on their uniforms at local events.

Team leader C/Sgt (SCC) Michael Somogyi said: "This was my third time completing Nijmegen."

"It is certainly a special event and one you will never forget."

"Individual effort, personal determination and team work is really put to the ultimate of tests, and I would challenge anyone to think of a tougher event in the Sea Cadet calendar."

Lt Cdr (SCC) Bev Johns RNR, CO of the unit, said: "The cadets and staff who took part in this really deserve their medals, and I'm so pleased for all of them and everyone that supported the team that the hard work paid off."

Rowing relay goes ahead

HOLYHEAD unit held its rescheduled 12-hour sponsored boating relay for the TS Royalist replacement appeal after the initial date – a month before – proved too blustery.

Cadets and adults took part in a relay of power boating, kayaking, sailing and rowing, with unit boats on the water for the whole 12 hours, starting at 8am.

The least time a cadet spent on the water was six-and-a-half hours, and the most was nine hours; the safety crew managed even longer stretches in glorious weather with a pleasant sea breeze.

Plenty of water and sun cream was supplied, and the onshore control centre was the quarterdeck of Holyhead Sailing Club, providing good viewing and communications.

Sailing through

BUXTON unit had a good day out beside the seaside when they competed in the North West Sailing Regatta in Southport.

As the most easterly unit in the North West area, Buxton are the furthest from the sea – but thanks to regular sailing weekends on Ernwood reservoir, they performed strongly on the day against 60, winning two of the four sailing races and coming second in the others.

Matt Naden and Sophia Palfreyman won the Bosun class, and Aaron Naden the Pico, meaning that all three qualified for the National Regatta, due to take place as *Navy News* went to press.

Trailblazing ladies' trials

FIVE rugby union players from the ladies team were being assessed at the England Academy trials as *Navy News* went to press.

AB Sam Alderson (HMS Scott), Lt Charlotte Fredrickson (COMUKTG), AB Stacey Hargrave (HMS Richmond), LWtr Lauren Morton (RNPDT&MC) and Sub Lt Helen Stevenson (HMS Collingwood) were all put forward by RNRU bosses.

It's the first time the RN has nominated players for trials, although the Army and RAF are already represented at this level – and gives the RNRU the chance to demonstrate the high quality of players in its ranks.

Should any of the quintet be successful, they will be invited to join a regional academy squad with a number of training sessions and matches taking place later in the season.

Duncan does it for England

HMS Duncan welcomed England football internationals Alex Scott and Jordan Nobbs aboard the destroyer ahead of their World Cup qualifier against Turkey at Fratton Park.

The footballers were greeted by members of the Royal Navy women's team as well as crew members on the Type 45, which was commissioned last month, and took part in a photo shoot and an impromptu kickabout on the ship's flight deck.

The ladies were playing two qualifiers for the 2015 finals on the South Coast – against Belarus at Bournemouth's Goldsands Stadium (a 6-0 victory), followed by the clash against the Turks at the home of Pompey; ticket prices for the latter match were halved for military personnel.

England will also have to overcome the Ukraine, Wales and Montenegro in Group 6 if they want to make their third successive appearance in the finals, which next time around will be held in Canada.

Also on the FA front... but

not on the international stage... Culdrose FC has been singled out by the game's governing body for its standard in coaching and safety.

The club has been awarded FA Charter Standard Community status – the highest status it can give to a team.

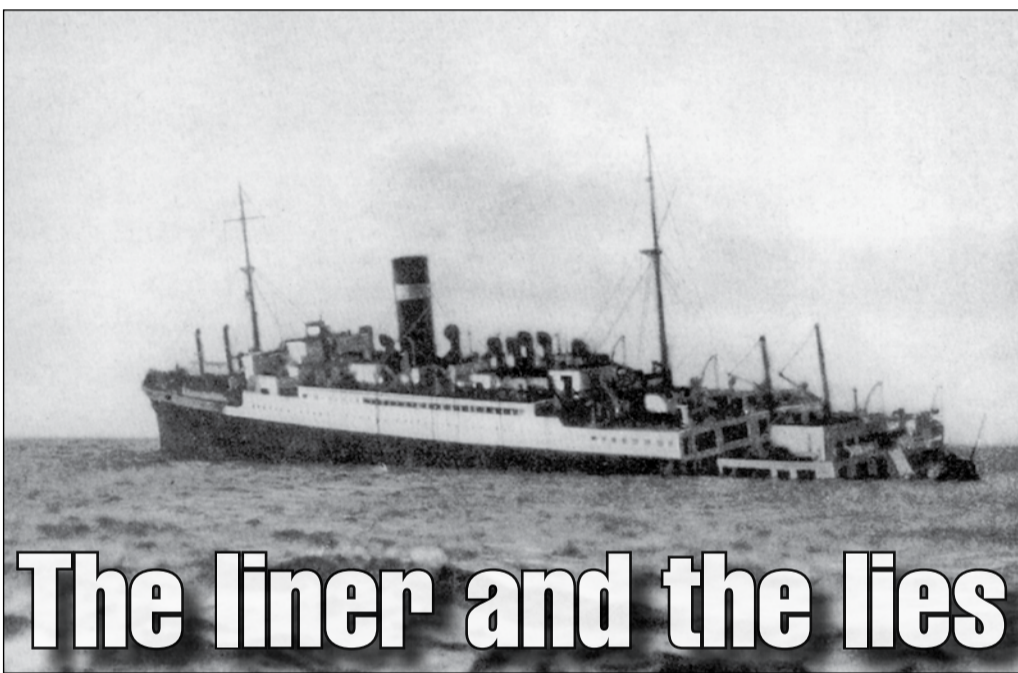
More than 6,800 clubs up and down the land in 300 leagues are recognised with Standard status in various forms ('standard' is the lowest level, then 'development club' and finally 'community club'), with 12 in Cornwall attaining the highest level.

"This is the culmination of a lot of hard work that began back in 2005 as a vision to link the youth and senior club to allow a natural pathway for players from the age of five into adult football," said Lt Cdr Andrew Plenty, chairman of Culdrose Youth FC and vice chairman of the senior club.

"We now have 14 teams boasting over 200 senior and youth players providing a real tangible community link through football."



REVIEW



The liner and the lies

THE bigger the lie, the more it will be believed.

Normally attributed – rightly or wrongly – to Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda ringmaster certainly lived by the aphorism in the opening weeks of WW2.

On the very first day of the conflict – not 12 hours after Chamberlain's lugubrious address announcing Britain had declared war on Germany – the Canada-bound liner Athenia was torpedoed by the German submarine U-30 around 60 miles off Rockall.

It was the first blow in the Battle of the Atlantic, the longest and most bitter of the Royal Navy's 20th-Century battles.

A major rescue operation was mounted – a cluster of Royal Navy destroyers gathered at the scene, as did merchantmen. Their presence, plus the fact that it took more than 14 hours for the Athenia to sink meant that 1,300 of the 1,400 or so souls aboard were saved (*she's pictured above shortly before sinking on the morning of September 4*).

As the first British ship lost in the war – and given the fact that there was a good smattering of politicians and celebrities aboard (among the latter, actress Carmen Silvera – best known to Britons years later as Rene's wife in sitcom *'Allo 'Allo*) – the liner's sinking made front-page news on both sides of the Pond.

And in Germany too. Except that with Goebbels pulling the string, it wasn't U-30 which had doomed the Athenia but

the British; they'd sunk the liner – by mines or torpedoes – to draw the Americans into the war (just as Germany's unrestricted submarine campaign had done in WW1).

And so on the airwaves and in newspapers and magazines in the autumn of 1939 – when the Western Front really was all quiet – the sinking of the Athenia was an international *cause célèbre*.

It never reached the heights of the Lusitania disaster – after the WW1 submarine campaign, world opinion rather expected the Germans to be beastly when hostilities resumed.

But in the diplomatic spat between Berlin, London and Washington which rumbled on for several months, the fate of the passengers and crew has often been overlooked. They left copious testimony of the final hours of the Athenia and Francis M Carroll has mined that archive in the excellent *Athenia Torpedoed: The U-boat Attack That Ignited the Battle of the Atlantic* (*Pen & Sword*, £19.99 ISBN 978-1781-59171-0) which gives voice to those aboard, while setting the disaster in the context of Great Powers at war.

Most of those who died on the Athenia did so when the torpedo struck – or in its immediate aftermath. The evacuation of the ship was remarkably calm and orderly, although there were horrific sights: one couple were vapourised by the torpedo blast, charred bodies were carried through the decks by the intruding Atlantic, while a priest administered the last rites to a young mother trapped in a collapsed stairwell as the waters rose. She was able to hand her baby to safety before the sea engulfed her.

Some of the survivors suffered what we would now call post-traumatic stress disorder. Years after the sinking one young girl broke down whenever she heard the songs sung in the lifeboats while awaiting rescue.

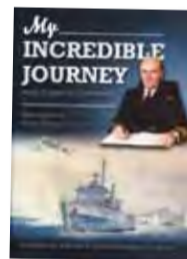
As for Goebbels' web of lies, well they were only truly unravelled post-war. Throughout the remainder of 1939, the Nazi propaganda and diplomatic machines stuck to their guns. The Party organ, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, screamed 'Churchill sank the Athenia', while the German Navy urged Americans not to travel to the USA in the small steamer Iroquois when it sailed in October.

The British, it warned the American Embassy in Berlin, were planning some misfortune to befall her "under Athenian circumstances".

The only lies were German ones. The sinking of the Athenia was a war crime – U30's commander Fritz-Julius Lemp disobeyed orders and sank the liner without first identifying her.

When he returned to port at the end of September, the pages detailing the attack were stripped out of the boat's log and replaced with false details of Lemp's movements. As for the submarine commander, after a brief admonishment from U-boat chief Karl Dönitz for disobeying standing orders, he was awarded the Iron Cross and promoted.

And the big lie? Well there's no empirical evidence in Germany to show whether or not Goebbels' countryfolk believed his outlandish Athenia propaganda campaign, but the Americans weren't fooled. Only one in ten thought the British responsible for the sinking. Two in every three blamed Berlin.



A BOOK does not have to be an academic masterpiece to add to our knowledge and understanding of the Royal Navy.

At one end of the scale the specialists delve deep into the archives, uncovering gems, revising trains of thought and constantly reassessing the strategy and politics of maritime power.

At the other lies the labour of love from a member of the Senior Service who feels the need to record his or her experiences for posterity.

And two such titles demonstrate the variety of possibilities, approaches and tones which can be used to shine a light into the often-closed world of the Royal Navy.

Rear Admiral Peter Dingemans' book, *My Incredible Journey* (*Brevin Books*, £19.95 ISBN 978-1-85858-501-7) is a well-judged collection of incidents and anecdotes woven together by the narrative of his career path "from cadet to command".

Humour is a strong feature in the Admiral's account, even in the darkest days of the Falklands Conflict, during which the author was the Commanding Officer of assault ship HMS Intrepid.

That humour surfaces early – such as in the account of the 1950s eye tests, taken by potential officers, in which the Admiralty placed a great deal of faith.

"To ascertain whether we suffered from any eye problems, candidates for interview had special drops put into their eyes, then after approximately one hour the medical staff checked for any lurking or undiscovered optical disease," he recalls.

"These drops caused blurred vision, which we were assured would pass leaving us bright eyed and bushy tailed by the time we reached The Naval College, a five-hour train journey from London.

"The medical examination over, eight of us were lined up behind a member of the college staff and instructed to put our hand on the shoulder of the cadet in front. So, in one long bleary-eyed crocodile formation, the future hierarchy of the RN weaved their way blindly across London to the train station."

That mix of science, bathos and pragmatism is ever-present in a book that covers the period between the 1950s and 1980s when the Navy was confronted with rapid changes in technology and society.

And underscoring the whole tale is the humanity that forms the foundation for the RN's ethos and *esprit de corps*, personified by the thoughtful approach to all tasks by Rear Admiral Dingemans.

His involvement with frigate HMS Berwick is typical.

Having just finished a two-year stint in the Directorate of Naval Plans, Peter was told on the Friday to "take a good long leave" while lengthy courses were arranged. "We'll ring you in a few months."

The following Monday the phone rang, and he and a First Lieutenant were sent to Gibraltar to take over the "crabby" Berwick.

"A Royal Navy ship is painted battleship grey. This one looked as though someone had used up all the dregs in the old tins of paint they had had lying around, which were, unfortunately, at least six different shades of grey.

"She looked like an old tub in bad camouflage, not a ship of Her Majesty's Navy.

"The ship's company showed no pride in the ship, and in the previous couple of days, before our arrival, something mysterious had appeared on the previous First Lieutenant's bunk. It had been covered with a large pile of gash (rubbish)."

The ship was eventually brought round, and the CO's reputation as an inspirational leader meant that he was the only possible choice to command the regenerated Intrepid, his former ship, when the elderly LPD was taken out of mothballs to join the 1982 campaign in the South Atlantic.

A particularly nice touch to the book is the inclusion of other perspectives on the Falklands by sailors on board or those who passed through their care.

From hasty recalls to the ship in 1982 (some treated with incredulity and disdain by those who had just left Intrepid) to the horrors of warfare, these accounts

add to those of Peter Dingemans to provide an intriguing glimpse of the minutiae of the campaign, from the powerful effect of the Captain's calm voice over the broadcast system to the shock of discovering two hand grenades clattering around inside a spinning tumble-dryer in the ship's laundry.

The easy style of writing, the diversity of Rear Admiral Dingemans' assignments and the heroism and determination of those involved in the Falklands makes this a thoroughly enjoyable and informative read.

The time frame of Harry the 'B' Horne's offering picks up just as Rear Admiral Dingemans' is winding down, but covers events which are momentous in their own way.

A *Yachtsman's Tale* (*self-published*, ISBN 978-1-62407-420-2) covers the last dozen years or so of the Royal Yacht Britannia, and Harry guides us through the lower deck of one of the "most prestigious ship in the world."

His reasons for joining may not have been the most positive – he was "less than happy" in the frigate HMS Hermione and his CPO suggested he should apply.

It proved a good move for Harry, and his subsequent time as a 'yottie' are recounted through a series of vignettes in a roughly chronological order.

Major events such as the evacuation of civilians from Aden in early 1986 are covered, as are the regular cruises, including those to the Western Isles – apparently the Queen's favourite time to be on board.

But, as in Peter Dingemans' book, the tiniest details are often just as memorable, such as Harry's dit about downtime in western Scotland: "A walk ashore was occasionally on offer, sometimes even a bar B Q on a beach well away from the Royal party.

"The Duke was normally in charge of the Royal Bar B Q and all the kindling would be cut to his exact requirements by the Shipwrights.

"This should have lit quite easily had they not used fire retardant off-cuts on one occasion, causing much frustration to the Duke and embarrassment to the Chippies."

Harry's tales bring to life the rarified – even quaint – way of life on board an iconic Royal Navy ship.

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● 'Zombie' ET 'Bill' Wyman is surrounded by shipmates including CPOs Ian March and Tom Thorne and ET James Kirk.

Picture: CPO(Phot) Tam McDonald, FRPU North

This race should be a Thriller...

NO JOKES about the living dead taking over Faslane...

Mind you, the bloke in the middle looks armless enough.

These five brave souls – and ten shipmates – from HMS Ambush are gearing up for Britain's biggest zombie race (yes, you read that correctly and, no, it's a 'sport' never featured in these pages before...).

The submariners have volunteered for the Zombie Evacuation Race, a five-kilometre obstacle race through Edinburgh next month, chased by the undead – in scenes similar to this summer's Hollywood blockbuster *World War Z* (minus Brad Pitt...).

"I'm doing this to keep fit and healthy. I've run two marathons and a 100k ultra before, but I signed up for this zombie race because it sounds like really good fun – it's unusual and a good way to stay in shape," says weapon

engineer CPO Tom Thorne, who's in charge of the Ambush team.

"When you're at sea for long stretches it's important to stay active and keep fit. We do have some fitness equipment on board – spinning bikes and a rowing machine – but it's nowhere nearly as exciting as being chased by zombies."

On arrival a 'sergeant major' from the British Army's fictional RAZOR unit – Royal Armoured Zombie Outbreak Response – informs runners that the country is in a state of lockdown due to a zombie virus spreading.

They have to reach the safety of an evacuation point five kilometres away, overcoming obstacles such as dark abandoned buildings, smoke, and 'corpses' in a 'zombie hospital'.

And all the time the living dead are hot on their heels, trying to rip three fluorescent Velcro tags worn on the evacuees' running belts.

Racers can enrol at www.zombieevacuation.com either as an 'evacuee' (runner) or as a zombie (chaser). Those who cross the finish line receive a dog tag declaring them either 'survivor' or 'infected'.

So far around 4,000 people have signed up for the October 12 event, with similar numbers expected at other zombie races in Saffron Walden (October 5), Almondsbury in Bristol (October 20) and Nutley in East Sussex (October 27).

Although it's not a typical 'sport', Ambush's participation in the zombie evacuation has the (bitten and mauled) thumbs up from the RN's home of physical education, HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth.

"It's a great example of Naval personnel volunteering to participate in something different that is community based – and keeps them fit," says Temeraire's Cdr Gareth Hughes.

They think it's all Oval. It is now...

WE JUST won the Ashes. No not, the blokes on the right. The ones in white.

WO1 Dave Pottle – Base Warrant Officer of HMS Sultan in Gosport – found himself enjoying a little bit of cricketing history at The Oval as England held on to the sport's most coveted trophy with a comprehensive series defeat of their mortal foe.

Dave, pictured here with WO1 Lee Murrell of the Army Air Corps, volunteered to steward at this summer's test season – which began with the visit of New Zealand and ended with the triumph over the Aussies – and was one of those picked from across the Services.

Just as at Wimbledon, the Forces stewards provide a military presence, helping the civilian stewards, as well as performing a ceremonial function such as forming a guard of honour for the Ashes urn and a backdrop to prizegiving ceremonies like this one. All give up their leave to be part of the occasion.

"This is the fifth year I have been involved with cricket. So many of the Service volunteers I work alongside arrange their commitments to ensure they have a chance of being part of the events year in year out," said Dave.

"It was such a privilege to be able to represent the Royal Navy at the matches. It's a lot of responsibility, with so many people



from all over the world potentially watching you, it's so important to do a good job. To see the team celebrating right in front of us was the icing on the cake with a huge cherry on top."

If it looks a tad gloomy at this prizegiving it's because the game ended very late in the day. Despite

England's best efforts, bad light defeated their attempts to close the series with a win and the final match ended in a draw, with the hosts retaining the Ashes 3-0.

"It's been a brilliant season," said CPO(ACMN) John Fagan from the Commando Helicopter Force, who was the central

co-ordinator for the military cricket stewards.

"We started off with the New Zealanders, then the International Cricket Champions Trophy and finished off with the Ashes series at Lords and the Oval. The cricket has been breathtakingly fantastic at times."

Netballers go Stateside

THE USA was the destination for the RN Netball Association's 2013 tour – the first for three years.

The visitors won two of their five fixtures against sides in Florida (a sixth game was cancelled) during the 12-day tour.

With just one training session under their belt to introduce the newer members to the complete team, and with some members playing for the first time in years, they headed across the Pond.

Coping with tropical storms and high humidity, the RN team were thrown in at the deep end.

After opening defeats against Miami Beach Pacesetters (31-14), Caricom (33-24) and Fort Lauderdale (47-14), the team bounced back with two very physical and high-paced wins.

Orlando were put to the sword 39-8, followed by another impressive winning margin against Winterhaven (31-13).

By the end of the tour, through the efforts of coach Lt Linda Harris, each player had got some valuable court time, and the team were playing a tightly disciplined game.

This, combined with the numerous opportunities organised by tour manager LPT Emma Phillips for team-building activities – cycling, kayaking, and visits to Orlando's theme parks – and the opportunity to train local US teams served to produce a beneficial tour for all.



Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Weatherston

Taly-Ho in the rain

TEAMS from across the Navy and Royal Marines converged on the RN's outdoor leadership centre in mid-Wales for the third Brecon Beacons Challenge: a two-day test of mountain walking, mountain biking and kayaking.

The teams arrived at the Talybont-on-Usk centre the night before the event to pitch their tents and attend the team captains' brief... all except HMS Illustrious, who decided to follow their satnav to Usk rather than Talybont (about 20 miles away...).

The four-strong teams face either an intermediate or advanced course; the former involves up to 23km walking through the mountains followed by a 29km bike ride and 500m in an open boat, while the advanced level takes the walking up to 31km and biking to 35km, and the same 500m in an open boat, with a points system determining the winners.

"The Beacons Challenge is physically demanding no matter what category you enter," explained Sgt Marvin Williams-Thomas, a Royal Marines PTI based at Talybont.

"With each day taking anywhere between four and six hours to complete, competitors will be calling on reserves of extreme endurance and stamina they didn't know existed."

All teams set off on the walk in good spirits. Armed with a map, compass and a big bag of Haribo, teams headed out at five-minute intervals. By the day's end only 12 seconds separate the two front-runners in the intermediate event, although Kilo Coy 42 Commando enjoyed a comfortable lead in the advanced contest.

The good weather of the first day was replaced by constant rain on the second as the teams hopped on their bikes and thrashed themselves around.

And a challenge it was, for mid-way teams had to dismount bikes, jump on a canoe and make their way across Ponsticill Reservoir around a buoy and back.

Located on the buoy was a board containing ten shapes and colours. In order to score any bonus points teams had to remember all ten on their return to Talybont (only one of the 16 teams succeeded...), while the two Sultan teams who entered decided to follow each other... and get lost in Wales.

HMS Westminster didn't get lost. They lifted the intermediate trophy – an engraved plaque of Welsh slate presented by Brig Ged Salzano RM – having beaten Lusty by 49 seconds. Kilo Company were clear winners in the advanced competition, setting a record time around the course.

Gliding high on IS success

ROYAL Navy pilots toasted success at the 2013 Inter-Services Regional Gliding Championships, dominating competition from both military and civilian teams.

This year it was the RN's turn to host the event, choosing Husbands Bosworth Glider Centre in Leicestershire, where Service teams flew alongside civilian entrants in the Midlands regional gliding contest which ran simultaneously with the Inter-Service competition.

Lt Will Ellis and WO Andy Farr (both Heron gliding club) took the individual open and club class titles respectively.

Team honours were also secured by the Senior Service with some steely-eyed help from Capt Paul Jessop and team captain Lt Rob Hines. Not to be completely outdone by these seasoned pilots, Jordan Richards finished an impressive ninth overall in his first competition.

He was awarded the Sproule Mug by the RN Gliding and Soaring Association as the most improved pilot at this year's competition while best performance went to Lt Ellis.

"We came here to compete," said Lt Hines. "It was a fantastic week of hard-fought competition against the other Service teams."

"We ended up dominating the field, proving we are not just here to make up the numbers."

There are three gliding clubs in the RN – Seahawk (Culdrose), Heron (Yeovilton) and Portsmouth (based at the former HMS Daedalus site).

"Gliding in the Navy is looking good at all levels," says Lt Hines. "We run annual expeditions, which over the past couple of years have included Germany, France and South Africa, and are open to novices and experts."

"We're getting very competitive at the top end of competitions, and even at grass roots for Adventurous Training (AT) there are plenty of opportunities, giving us a greater selection of people to choose from."



● Shaw-fire success... HMS Torbay's AB Rob Shaw smashes the three-year-old 100m breaststroke record

Picture: Matt Reid, RAF Cranwell

Swimmers' lucky 13

IN THE closest and most exciting Inter-Services men's swimming contest in living memory, the Navy again edged out the light blues.

The last time the RAF won the competition was at RAF Cranwell in 2000. Since then 12 consecutive outright wins by the RN had blown everyone else out of the water, writes Lt Cdr Alan Walker.

First to enter the pool in 2013 was Lt Rhodri Humphreys (Heron) in the 800m freestyle; he took a creditable third place while long-serving RN skipper WO Mike Nolan (Collingwood) was placed sixth.

The RAF were cock-a-hoop on nine points with the Army on seven, leaving the Navy with five. Something needed to happen to get the RN back in contention and something did in the 100m butterfly.

Step up Lt Jack Lay (Talent) who cruised home in first place within 0.6 seconds of the record. Cpl Matt Edwards (CTCRM) in third place was upgraded to second when the Army's experienced S/Sgt Ferguson was disqualified: 11 points to the RN and eight to the RAF gave the Navy a one-point lead.

In the 200m backstroke, LPT Stu Mantle (Nelson) raced home to win in 2m 17.36s. WO Nolan, the Inter-Service record-holder 12 years ago, eased into second place, leaving the RAF to scuffle for third and fifth places, to give the RN a five-point lead over the airmen.

AB Rob Shaw (Torbay) then plundered the three-year-old 100m breaststroke record, shaving 0.54 seconds off. Such was the talent in

this race that upcoming star AB(D) Josh Spibey (SDU1) could only manage fifth place, while the RAF clawed back a point.

The RAF narrowed the gap further courtesy of victory in the 400m freestyle – RN 40, Air Force 36, Army 28 – and then took the Navy to the cleaners in the 4x2 individual medley. A maximum 11 points for the airmen and minimum three for the sailors put the light blues into a four-point lead.

Now was the Navy's turn to look at clawing-back. AB Jeremy Osborne (MCM2), in training for the Commonwealth Games, eased to a timely 54s first place in the 100m freestyle and Matt Edwards bagged third to halve the RAF's lead.

The RAF struck back in the 100m backstroke with a first and fifth (eight points) to take a five-point lead with just three events and the relays to go.

Next up AB Shaw took gold in the 200m breaststroke (six points) and Recruit Spruce got two points for his fifth. RAF 69, RN 66, Army 53.

Osborne showed his Games potential with a magnificent 1m 57s in the 200m freestyle, taking more than four seconds off the record, while Lay also beat his old record to take second. Their one-two was sufficient to edge the RN into a one-point lead.

This was a bit close for comfort. The noise inside the Cranwell pool was deafening. Surely that wasn't someone playing the *Dambusters* theme?

The final individual race was the two-length sprint, the 50m freestyle.

AB Spibey came into his own to take a splendid first place and the dependable AB Oilly Bott (Trenchant) ensured the RN took seven points and doubled the lead over the Air Force.

Back came the hosts in the medley. Max points from them leveled the scores at 90 apiece (the Army were way behind on 64).

Only the 6x2 freestyle relay to go. Eighteen Spartan warriors thrashing out 36 lengths, three at a time in around 2m 30s.

Motivated by LPT Mantle, the team of Spibey, Humphrey, Bott, Mantle, Spruce and Lay appeared focused and able to achieve the result needed: a win.

Leading from the start the RN showed their hearts of oak: a confident Spruce increased the lead and, with a clean takeover Jack Lay finished the race with a cheeky smile at the RAF... and a new Inter-Service record.

Final scores: RN 98, RAF 96, Army 68.

The overall result saw a new championship best and the Navy have now overtaken the RAF with the most consecutive team wins (13).

Despite being decimated by non availability, the RN women gave a good account of themselves.

The team were never in contention for the overall trophy, but outstanding individual performances saw medals from AB Samantha Eagle (DMTC Birmingham) in the 400m freestyle (silver) and 100m backstroke (gold – and a new Inter-Service record); LWtr Sarah Feltham (HMS Duncan) 100m back (bronze); and Lt Emma Kearsey-Miles (St Albans) 200m backstroke (silver).



● A slightly startled looking Mne Simon Ingham (RMR London) on the fifth leg of The Big Row, supported by (l-r) Lt Cdr Derek Powles (NCHQ), CPO Shaun Gibbs (Sultan) and UK 50+ multi-sprint record holder CPO Collin Leiba (Drake)

Picture: Roman Skyva

Big row, big win

A 12-strong team of sailors and Royal Marines took an indoor rowing title ahead of 76 other squads at a charity event in London which raised nearly £500,000 for one of the world's poorest nations.

The Big Row at Old Spitalfields Market in London drew celebrities, TV presenters, city leaders and former First Sea Lord Admiral Lord West, all set upon supporting the rowers and helping to restore a Victorian steamer on Lake Malawi, turning it into a floating clinic to meet the medical needs of the country's inhabitants.

It'll cost around £2.5m to bring the old vessel back to life, with the Big Row aiming to raise £1m courtesy of teams of collectively rowing 1,000,000 metres.

For added incentive, there was a competitive edge to the event – and the Senior Service rose to the challenge.

The Royal Navy team had representatives from each arm of the Service, including three Royal Marines from RMR London, who readily committed to the cause, despite a lack of race experience.

"The vast majority of teams were made up from corporate organisations based in London, but there were some very tall, muscular men with the long levers and the competitive demeanour of regular on-the-water rowers," said Paul Winton of the RN Indoor Rowing team, "Game on."

Each team was allowed between ten and 20 rowers, with each expected to row a minimum of 500m over the 10,000m distance.

The Royal Navy team were in the second of the two heats, and hence had the opportunity to gauge the level of performance by the first 39 teams, where the best time set was 33m 25s.

With the RN bystanders in the first heat, it allowed former newsreader and TV presenter Angela Rippon to interview the team. CPO Shaun Gibbs from HMS Sultan explained his 'Grip it and rip it' approach to racing.

ET(ME) Ian Allen (HMS Astute), a high-class rower, took the RN into a lead that was never lost, although there was pressure from two other teams up to halfway, but Capt Will Hale (RMR London), Lt Cdr Derek Powles (Naval Command), Paul Winton (MCTA), Mne Si Ingham (RMR London) and WO1 Andy Patience (Collingwood) ensured the lead was maintained.

WO2ET(MESM) John 'Jellyboy' Eales (HMS Vanguard), Mne Paul Derham (RMR London), POAET Rich Galpin (Sultan), CPO(SE) Gibbs and Lt Cdr Rory West (Naval Command) increased the Navy's lead to allow former 'Mr Plymouth 1992' CPOET(MESM) Collin Leiba to display his UK 50-plus multi-sprint-record talents on the final 1,000 metres.

By this stage a large, bustling crowd had gathered around the Royal Navy team, whose performance had been displayed across the many screens following the race.

Winners in 32m 10s (the average pace was 500 metres rowed in 1m 36.5s), even handicapping adjustment to teams' times, allowing for female competitors, could not deny the RN Men (average age 39) their glory. Lord West of Spithead appeared content.



Polo first for FAA

TEAM captain Lt Bob Santrian (CHF) makes a dash on his horse Mananita during the inaugural clash between the titans of the skies (the FAA and the RAF) on the polo pitch at RMAS Sandhurst.

And you'll be delighted to know that the skipper led his side – Lt Tom Burrows (on exchange with RMAS Sandhurst), Lt Hironobu Suzuki (RAF Cranwell) and Surg Cdr Michael Bowen RNR – to a 7-3½ win over the light blues.

The match proved to be extremely exciting and entertaining for both players and spectators with the speed of the FAA team dominating most of the play.

A four-chukka contest saw the naval airmen demonstrate

formidable team work and good communication skills and, apart from a worrying third chukka where the opposition threatened to turn the tables, managed to hold the RAF at bay on a well-manicured pitch.

Lt Burrows demonstrated his total (some might say suicidal) commitment by plummeting off and crashing through the goal posts whilst trying to score (the only fall of the day), the ball eventually being coaxed through the posts by the team's highest handicapped player, Lt Suzuki.

Neil Wilmott from sponsors Serco presented prizes and accepted a FAA polo shirt as a mark of thanks at the end of the game which the two forces hope will become an annual contest.

In memory of Mike

AGAINST the drab grey backdrop of the stern of HMS Dragon, AB Sofia Burns runs her mile-long leg of a memorial relay race (she did it in one second under seven minutes).

The Mike Till Relay Race honours the sailor of the same name, a chief weapons mechanic and keen runner who was killed aboard HMS Sheffield in the Falklands.

A year after his death, his family presented the Fleet with the Mike Till Trophy – a wooden sculpture of an Albatross soaring over a breaking wave – awarded for the 50 x one-mile relay under way at sea...

... which doesn't take into account the fact that you can't run around the upper deck of a Type 45 (unlike 42s and 23s).

So a makeshift track on the dockside in the emirate of Fujairah was used instead.

An early start was made to get ahead of the heat of the Middle East day – a peak temperature of 38°C was predicted – and the final runner completed the course a gruelling 5 hours 3 minutes and 25 seconds later.

The Royal Marines detachment onboard

lived up to their reputation for high levels of physical fitness and posted an impressive array of times, all under 5m 33s; 27-year-old Mne Ed Hill from Derby led the way with 5m 2s.

"I am used to running extreme trails back home, often through snow and ice, but this was something else, a real challenge," he said.

AB Rachael Wooley was the fastest female over the same distance, coming home in 6m 15s.

Dragon's WEO Lt Cdr Kevin Miller, one of the older relay runners at 45, ran home in a credible 6m 35s.

"The heat and humidity proved a real challenge and it was a struggle to match the pace set by the earlier runners, who had the advantage of a few years over me too," he said.

"The turnout was great and there was a real competition for places to compete in this prestigious event that shows the level of commitment of the crew onboard Dragon to run in these gruelling conditions."

Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins, RN Photographer of the Year

