



# NAVY NEWS

JANUARY 2016

## SAR swansong

*Rescuers from 771 NAS take a final bow*

● HMS Vengeance leaves Devonport following her £350m refit. The nuclear boat headed for her home on the Clyde, where she will carry out trials before returning to duty for the Royal Navy. See page 9 Picture: Edward Low, DE&S

*Royals in raptor*  
*Marines from 45 Cdo*  
*take flight in Osprey*

# BACK WITH A VENGEANCE





## Clyde's fire and fur rescues

AN RAF search and rescue Sea King takes on fuel from HMS Clyde in a dramatic long-range mission to help a British tourist bitten by a fur seal in the South Atlantic.

The incident on Salisbury Plain Beach on remote South Georgia saw the man sustain a major injury to his arm that required urgent medical attention.

The Russian cruise ship, the MV Akademik Sergey Vavilov, headed 800 nautical miles to the Falklands as British Forces launched a rescue mission.

An RAF Hercules and yellow Sea King were dispatched from Mount Pleasant while Clyde sailed at speed to a position 200 nautical miles east of Stanley.

Due to the long distances involved, the helicopter flew to Clyde and refuelled before travelling a further 100 nautical miles to the cruise ship, from where the man was winched into the helicopter.

The helicopter returned to the Falklands, where the injured man was taken to the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital in the capital.

Fur seals are larger than normal seals, weighing up to 317kg (700lbs), and can walk or run on their flippers. They gather on beaches in large numbers during mating season and are known to be aggressive if approached.

It's the start of the tourist season in South Georgia and the Vavilov – which also acts as a polar exploration vessel – was on an 11-night cruise with 92 passengers, who each paid at least £6,676.

It was the second rescue mission in days for HMS Clyde, as she also sailed to help rescue 200 cruise passengers from their blazing ship.

The islands' patrol ship provided assistance to more than 200 souls who took to boats when fire broke out in the engine room of the 11,000-tonne cruise ship Le Boreal.

Clyde picked up an SOS from the vessel and sailed at full speed – 21 knots – to the spot where the Le Boreal, carrying 347 passengers and crew, was in trouble.

It took four hours to reach the French-registered liner off the northern end of Falkland Sound, while Clyde's crew prepared their ship to deal with possible casualties and to offer assistance.

"Once at the scene it was evident that the vessel had taken on water – most probably from the fire-fighting effort – and was listing heavily to port," said Lt Nathan Geddes, Clyde's marine engineer officer.

Most of the passengers and crew had taken to lifeboats – nearly 80 in smaller craft, who were winched to safety by RAF Sea King rescue crews, the rest in two larger boats, each with more than 100 souls on board. A skeleton crew remained on Le Boreal in an attempt to deal with the accident.

Clyde's sailors established communications with both larger lifeboats and sent across her sea boat to conduct a thorough check on the well-being of those aboard. Other than seasickness there were no casualties reported.

After resupplying one of the lifeboats with fuel and ensuring that the passengers were given food and water, Clyde escorted both craft to the sheltered waters of Falkland Sound.

Once there, Clyde's Rigid Raider and Zodiac boats from Le Boreal's sister L'Austral transferred the passengers – who paid up to £8,500 each for their cruise – to the latter ship.

■ *Summer wonderland, see page 11*

# Flight deck's X-

IN A heavy snow flurry, a Merlin waits in the hover off HMS Bulwark's port beam as the 19,000-tonne assault ship pitches and rolls furiously.

The shadow cast by the assault ship's superstructure moves across the deck as Bulwark corkscrews with the motion of the ocean.

The flight deck officer is unperturbed, calmly gesturing to the helicopter to slip sideways, gliding over the sweeping deck, before being guided safely down.

Four handlers stride out – rather awkwardly, like the robot army of an evil empire – and tie the helicopter firmly to Bulwark with lashings.

And then, in an instant the sea is becalmed, the snowstorm gives way to a perfect summer's day.

No, the flight deck officer doesn't possess godlike qualities. He does, however, have a brand new 3D simulator at his disposal, which will prepare aviation teams for real-

life flight deck operations like never before.

Just installed at Culdrose, the flight deck trainer uses X-Box technology (a Kinect motion sensor to react to the student's movements, a hand controller to take charge of the helicopters if needed) to immerse trainees in every conceivable scenario involving aircraft operating from the decks of Her Majesty's ships.

The old simulator used at the School of Flight Deck Operations wasn't bad. The graphics were a bit blocky and glitchy. It did, however, have a frustrating habit of crashing – followed by a 20-minute reboot. Which is not good when you've a tight instruction schedule; three quarters of the training for flight deck crews these days is 'synthetic' (ie no real aircraft are involved).

The flight deck officers under training would still wave their arms in the air – but it was down to the assessors to press the relevant buttons on the program to get the helicopters

to respond. And it could only handle one aircraft at a time.

All of which has been resolved with the revamp.

Programmers from Frome-based software developers SEA have recreated all the helicopters currently in service with the Fleet Air Arm – and all the ships they operate from presently, plus the Queen Elizabeth.

They've also programmed 28 possible scenarios flight deck teams might face, from the basics of landings, take-offs and refuelling all the way up to crashes on deck.

Come March, you'll be able to guide an F-35B in to land on the Queen Elizabeth's deck (two years ahead of the real thing...). Or an Apache. Or maybe a US Marine Corps Osprey – they're being installed during the next upgrade, as are Type 26 frigates and the new Tide-class tankers.

You can bring the cloudbase down, turn the sea state up to six (sadly it doesn't go all the way up to 11...), switch on a

snowstorm, flick from day to night, put the lights on in the cabs and on the deck.

It's all projected on to a parabolic screen about 25ft wide and 10ft high – "the biggest games screen in Cornwall" (no, you can't plug your X-Station into it...).

It's impressive. How impressive?

You can see the hand signals made by the pilot as the four digital aircraft handlers remove the lashings tying his Merlin to Bulwark's flight deck.

"This is cutting edge – these graphics are as good as you'll find on your X-Box or PlayStation," says Lt Buck Taylor, who'll soon be joining the team running the biggest flight deck of all: QE.

"It's a step towards emulation rather than simulation. It's closer to the real thing."

On the control console a stick figure – think The Saint, sans halo – moves in time with the flight deck officer, showing that the signals have been recognised by the Kinect box.



## The big bang reality



THAT'S going to wake up the neighbours... even if they are a good mile away.

Throwing up a plume of water and mud around 1,000 feet high, this is the death of a 1,500lb (680kg) German mine dredged up from the Solent seabed in the early stages of work to prepare the harbour and approaches for the arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth next year.

Strekker, a crane barge removing debris from a site earmarked for dredging, hauled up the WW2 GD mine – probably dropped by the Luftwaffe during the Battle of Britain – about one mile off the Southsea seafront.

A bomb disposal team of RN clearance divers from Southern Diving Unit 2 on Horsea Island towed the device overnight to open waters a mile or so from Bembridge, Isle of Wight, where they carried out a controlled explosion.

A cordon of approximately ¼ mile was in place during the explosion which had only a minimal impact on shipping.

"These mines were laid in their thousands during WW2, but are rarely encountered these days – it's only the second one we have dealt with in three years. The other one was in the mouth of the Thames," said PO(D) Richard Ellis, in charge of the six-strong team which dealt with the explosive.

"The mine was in quite good condition, and they were engineered to a very high standard which is probably why it has stayed safe all these years."

As for the dredging, that should be under way in earnest this month so Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales can safely navigate the Solent. A £31m contract was placed last summer with Fareham-based Boskalis Westminster Ltd to ready the harbour for the ships, dredging the approach channel, inner harbour area and berth pocket, making them deep and wide enough for the carriers.

In all, around three million cubic metres of clay, sand and gravel – that's enough to fill Wembley Stadium three times over – will be removed from the harbour by suction hopper and dredgers.

Massive investment in Portsmouth is needed to accommodate the two leviathans, with work ongoing since July to rebuild Middle Slip Jetty, the carriers' future berth.

■ **Work to start on mine warfare memorial at Gunwharf, page 19**

# -Box of tricks

This is all for those standing out on a windswept deck. For Type 45 crews, there's a small room which looks out on the digital deck – replicating the enclosed compartment on the destroyers. No, it's not as much fun...

Well over 100 flight deck, flying control officers (Flycos) and handlers will be using the facility which occupies what looks like a pebbledashed 1950s council house.

"This improves training no end," says Lt Neil Harris, training officer at the RN School of Flight Deck Operations.

"You can start slowly on the simulator, build things up and really pile on the pressure. You can make hundreds of mistakes – without harming anyone or anything – and everything is recorded so you can go through things afterwards. Then the guys move on to the dummy deck for the authenticity.

"We're only scratching the surface. There's massive potential with this new simulator."



pictures: po(phot) paul a'barrow, rnas culdrose

# Guess who's just back? Game over

THE big red capital letters probably give it away.

And the cap tallies.

Anyway... More than 200 families reunited as destroyer HMS Duncan returned home from her maiden deployment in the Gulf.

And there was a smaller, but equally warm and heartfelt greeting for the ship's Lynx helicopter and crew who flew back to their base in Yeovilton.

Both weighed in to the ongoing struggle against the forces of Daesh, with the destroyer serving as part of the Theodore Roosevelt carrier battle group as air strikes were launched.

In addition Duncan policed shipping lanes in seven different seas and two oceans as she added nearly 50,000 miles to her (hitherto fairly low) odometer.

And she served as the testbed for the Gulf debut by the new Wildcat helicopter – also based at Yeovilton – which was using the flight deck at the same time as the more common sight of the Lynx, the aircraft it is replacing.

For 22-year-old AB(WS) Karl Murray from Peterlee, Duncan's maiden deployment was also his first tour of duty.

"This trip has been an adventure and it has made me appreciate all the small things you miss at home a lot more, like family, my girlfriend and Newcastle United," he said (luckily for them in that order...)

"Working with allied navies, I am glad to have been able to do my job for real."

Since leaving the dockyard wall back in March, the ship has run a healthy lifestyle pilot to see how sailors' diets can be improved.

With the introduction of healthier meal options, the ship consumed ten tonnes of couscous, a multitude of healthy



pulses including chickpeas and lentils, and tonnes of fruit (more conventionally, they also saw off 12,000 eggs and 16 tonnes of potatoes).

Hand-in-hand with an improved diet, Duncan's clubz, Sgt Chris Abrams kept all 200 sailors and commandos on their toes. He's the first Royal Marines PTI aboard a Royal Navy warship in four decades.

"I've really enjoyed the challenge of helping people lose weight as keeping active during

long patrols at sea can be a real challenge.

"This trial has helped break that status quo and get people interested in their health and fitness again."

The biggest losers aboard shed around 20kg (more than 3st in old money).

Continuing the numbers game, the ship's company got through enough toilet roll to wrap around the 150-metre long ship over 3,000 times (that's 900 kilometres... or 560 miles... or

Portsmouth to Scapa Flow in the Orkneys), while the engines guzzled enough diesel to drive a Ford Mondeo around the world 5,000 times.

The milestone for 28-year-old pilot Lee Holborn was notching up his 1,000th flying hour as he brought his Lynx back to 815 NAS in Somerset.

"It has been really strange to not have Lee around for such a long time," said his girlfriend Alice Nolan, who was waiting for him on the standings.



● Lynx Flight Commander Lt Sally Lawrence-Archer greets her husband William Jones at Yeovilton while (inset) AB Gareth Hutton cradles his ten-week-old daughter Ava with his wife Becky in Portsmouth

Pictures: LA(Photos) Paul Hall and Dan Rosenbaum

"He's missed many birthdays and weddings that I have attended without him. It's great to have him back and we can now return to the more normal things in life. We will continue house-hunting which has been on hold for the past nine months!"

As have the remainder of Duncan's families. "I'd like to thank them for the support they have provided us in achieving all we've done – we've all very much been looking forward to some time at home," said Cdr Rich Atkinson, the destroyer's commanding officer.

"This deployment has been the culmination of a lot of hard work by HMS Duncan's crew from bringing her into service in late 2013, through intense training and preparations in 2014 and then into this successful period of operations."

THE first foray by the Commando Helicopter Force to eastern Europe with their new Merlin helicopters ended successfully.

The commando fliers provided some of the physical 'hardware' to a simulation-driven exercise involving 20 nations, played out over the three Baltic States: Arrcade Fusion.

Some 1,700 military and civilian personnel from across NATO converged on eastern Europe for the exercise – the annual workout of NATO's Allied Rapid Reaction Corps.

The 2015 incarnation of Arrcade Fusion was staged across around 75,000 square miles – about ten times the size of Wales – with Lielvarde Air Base, home of the Latvian Air Force, serving as the hub, and base for D Flight, 846 NAS.

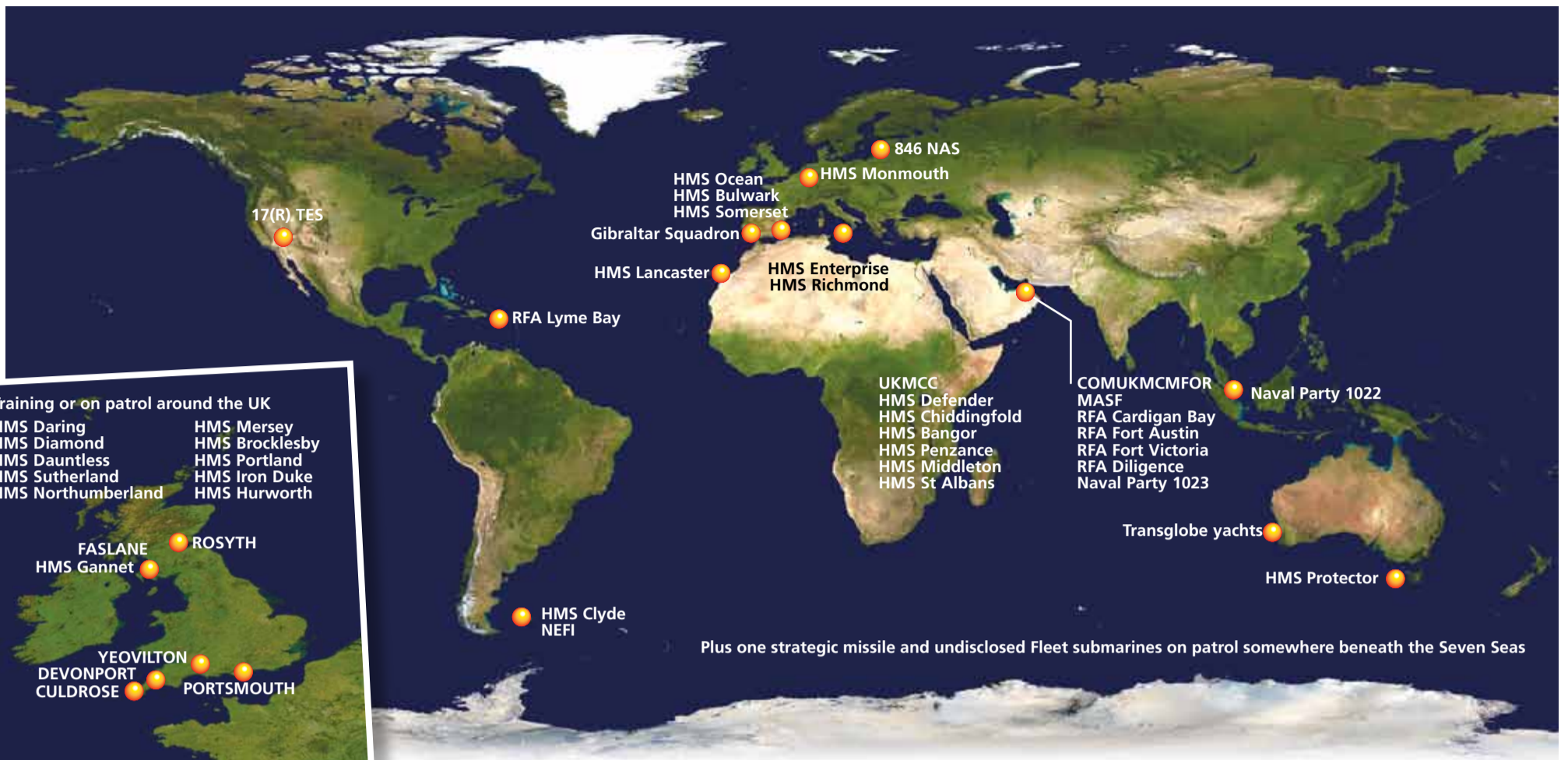
"This deployment has tested D Flight's ability to support a real-time task at a considerable distance from our main operating base," said Flight Commander Lt Cdr Alex Hampson.

"This ensures that the D Flight personnel are ready to respond to any mission – always at five days' notice to deploy.

"For many of the aircrew and engineers this deployment was 'operations normal', but for some it was the first time that they have deployed and subsequently operated abroad.

"They've experienced foreign operating procedures, liaised with foreign agencies when conducting their duties and have lived in a large-scale battle camp alongside their British Army counterparts and many other partner nations alike."

The detachment hopped back across Europe, during which one of its Merlins – ZJ121 – clocked up its 4,000th flying hour (that's just shy of 24 weeks) when it landed at Poznan in Poland during a refuelling stop.



Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Daring	HMS Mersey
HMS Diamond	HMS Brocklesby
HMS Dauntless	HMS Portland
HMS Sutherland	HMS Iron Duke
HMS Northumberland	HMS Hurworth

ROSYTH

HMS Gannet

FASLANE

YEOVILTON

DEVONPORT

CULDROSE

PORTSMOUTH

Plus one strategic missile and undisclosed Fleet submarines 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

ROYAL NAVY **FLEET FOCUS**  
Protecting our nation's interests

THE future of the Royal Navy looks secure following the most positive look into the state of the Senior Service in living memory (see pages 6-7). The **2015 Security and Defence Review** promises to not just sustain the RN, but grow it. The review looks to forge a Senior Service around three pillars – a carrier task group, the strategic deterrent and an amphibious force.

But our first edition of the new year focusses very much on the present – particularly ships and units operating overseas. We start with our amphibious forces as men from **45 Commando** joined the US Marine Corps for Exercise Blue Raptor (see centre pages). Corsica was the destination as the troops were landed ashore from **HMS Ocean** courtesy of Osprey, the USMC's primary assault support aircraft.

Also enjoying some winter sun in the Mediterranean was **HMS Somerset** (see page 8) as the Type 23 frigate deployed for six weeks, calling in at Malta and Valencia.

Somerset was joined by **HMS Bulwark**, whose personnel paid their respects to the dead of two world wars at Capuccini Naval Cemetery in Malta (see pages 18-19).

The Med was also the centre of activity for **HMS Richmond** as her Royal Marines boarding party recovered cannabis worth around £3m during one of her security patrols (see page 6).

**HMS Enterprise** has also been operating in the area (see page 6) as she continues to rescue migrants.

Heading east to the Gulf and **RFA Fort Victoria** called in at Duqm, a man-made port in Oman (see page 8) to see if it is a possible alternative to the country's other two main ports for supplying the RFA.

The minehunting crew from **HMS Atherstone** also paid their respects to the fallen (see pages 18-19) as they restored the last resting place of a Royal Marine in the New Naval Cemetery in Muscat before making the long journey back to Portsmouth (see right). Colleagues from **HMS Bangor** and **Penzance** (see pages 18-19) helped restore an historic ship's bell and smarten up graves at St Christopher's Cathedral in Bahrain.

**HMS Duncan** returned home to Portsmouth from her maiden deployment in the Gulf (see page 3). Hundreds of loved ones welcomed personnel as the destroyer arrived in Portsmouth. On her way out to the Gulf was **HMS St Albans** (see opposite page).

Also enjoying the sun – and the southern hemisphere's summer – was **HMS Protector** (see page 8) as she visited Tasmania on her way to patrol the Ross Sea.

In much colder climes was **HMS Clyde**, who found herself involved in two dramatic rescues in the South Atlantic (see page 2). The patrol ship also called in on South Georgia (see page 11) as the remote island welcomed its first tourists of the summer.

Into Europe, and **HMS Monmouth** spent a week in Hamburg (see right), promoting UK businesses.

In the submarine world **HMS Vengeance** returned to the fleet (see page 9) following her mid-life refit in Devonport, while the White Ensign was hoisted for the first time on the third Astute-class submarine **Artful** (see page 6) in Faslane.

The start of 2016 also marks the end of an era for Royal Navy Search and Rescue after six decades of saving lives (see pages 14-15) as the curtain comes down on **771 NAS** at RNAS Culdrose and **Gannet SAR Flight** in Prestwick.

And finally.... looking back on how their work has evolved is the **Weapon Engineer Branch** of the Royal Navy as engineers mark the 70th anniversary of the branch. (see pages 20-21).

Looking to the future, we offer a peek at how the **Royal Marines Museum** could look as it moves to a Victorian boathouse in Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard (see page 17).



**Moin moin, Monmouth**

FRESH from conducting deck landing training off the south coast of England with the Fleet Arm Air's new Wildcat helicopter, **HMS Monmouth** spent a week in Hamburg promoting UK firms, strengthening the bond with Germany, and a spot of downtime in one of Europe's most exciting cities.

The frigate has spent 2015 coming back to life after a major revamp in her native Devonport and showed off some of the upgrades she'd received to Hamburgers during a capability demonstration, at which her CO Cdr Phil Tilden addressed guests in German (he was a lecturer in expeditionary warfare/counter-piracy at the German Navy's Tactics Centre in Bremerhaven in 2008).

The Black Duke sported a large GREAT Britain banner – bearing the greeting Moin moin Hamburg (North German dialect for "mornin'" or "G'day") – and served as the backdrop for promoting British industry, technology and innovation.

Jaguar-Land Rover – the UK's largest auto manufacturers (actually owned by Indian giant Tata...) – provided a, er, Jaguar and Land Rover for the jetty. And drinks giant Diageo (who very much are British) promoted their products – they're the biggest spirits producer on the planet alongside a major player in the world of beer and wine.

Despite being in service for more than 20 years, this was Monmouth's first time in Hamburg apparently. When not hosting on board (including a ceremonial sunset), the ship's company sampled Christmas markets, toured the city by coach, scaled an indoor rock-climbing wall and took on a local side at football. (Yes, the Germans won. No, not on penalties.)

"It's always fun playing the local teams at football during foreign port visits," said ET (ME) Damian Boyle. "We may not have won this time but both sides went away smiling."

**It's crazy in the canal**

PASSING under the 404-metre span of the Friendship Bridge, minehunter **HMS Atherstone** approaches the mid-way point on her long, lonely journey home.

After three-and-a-half years as part of the UK's mine warfare force safeguarding shipping and sea lanes in the Gulf and environs, the Crazy A was making her lone way back to Portsmouth in time for Christmas.

Although it's only 1,100 miles as the crow flies from Bahrain to Suez, the small matter of sailing around the Arabian Peninsula means the canal linking the Mediterranean and the world to the east is roughly half way between the Gulf and Portsmouth.

With minehunter crews trading places every six to seven months, most sailors return to the UK courtesy of an RAF aircraft to Brize Norton.

For the final crew embarked on the ship's deployment, there's the challenge of a six-week odyssey bringing Atherstone back, plenty of stops in ports rarely visited by the Royal Navy, and the unique, high emotions of a naval homecoming (due just before Christmas... and just after this edition printed).

"Sailing Atherstone home after her three-and-a-half year deployment in the Gulf is an excellent experience for my crew," said Lt Cdr Mark Headley, the Hunt-class ship's commanding officer.

"They've worked tirelessly throughout the deployment to ensure that the ship has provided

maximum operational effectiveness in keeping maritime traffic safe.

"Obviously, it is a good feeling to have passed through Suez, but more challenges await us on the remainder of the voyage home and we will ensure that we keep up the good work of Maritime Security Operations throughout the rest of our time deployed."

The last stop east of Suez was Aqaba for some training with the Royal Jordanian Navy.

"The voyage home so far has been very enlightening and rewarding," said AB(D) Ben Phillips, one of seven clearance divers aboard Atherstone.

"Visiting Jordan was a brilliant opportunity to experience a new culture where Royal Navy ships do not often have the chance to go.

"All of the guys are looking forward to sailing through the Mediterranean and making sure that we finish the deployment well – just as we started it in Bahrain."

Since leaving Portsmouth in May 2012, Atherstone has covered more than 50,000 miles – that's twice around the world – and spent more than 8,630 hours (just over 51 weeks) on operational tasks.

She's taken part in 14 joint UK-US training exercises and conducted extensive surveys of sea lanes to ensure they remain open for lawful shipping... a mission now being carried out by her sister **HMS Middleton**.

# Saint no sunshine

IN THE growing murk of a winter's day on the Solent, the screen of a well-wisher's mobile phone provides momentary light as HMS St Albans heads out on patrol.

And it's a damn sight warmer and brighter where she's going.

Barring any changes to her programme over the festive period, the Saint should now be well into her first sweep of the Indian Ocean making sure terrorists aren't using it as a smuggling route.

The frigate is replacing her Pompey-based sister Richmond on maritime security duties (the latter Type 23 spent the final couple of months of her three-season deployment patrolling the Med, with some success – see page 6).

In preparation for nine months away, the crew – 225 men and women, including one Merlin flight (more about them in a minute), Royal Marines boarding team, ScanEagle drone operators – have gone through two fast-paced (and arduous) training periods with the Flag Officer Sea Training.

Among those 225 tried and tested souls, 19-year-old ET(WE) Sam Calligan, who is “really looking forward” to a first tour of duty in a Royal Navy uniform.

“It will be my first trip away with the Navy and I can't wait to actually do my job away from home.”

And continuing the ‘firsts’, the first fully souped-up Merlin Mk2 – the official designation is System Release 8 – embarked on a frigate for the Indian Ocean mission.

Tried and tested in European waters over the past couple of years – including a large-scale anti-submarine exercise in the Atlantic in 2014 and the migrant rescue mission in the Mediterranean last spring and summer – the helicopter carried by the Saint features enhancements specific to the Gulf region, notably an integrated Defensive Aids Suite and improved ballistic protection as well for the first time offering better protection against the threat of missiles and small arms fire.

Those improvements come on top of the upgrades already fitted to the Merlin Mk2 fleet – operated by 814, 820, 824 and, in this case 829 Naval Air Squadrons, all based at Culdrose.

These include a fully-digital cockpit for the two pilots, to a touch-screen weapons and sensor suite for the observer and aircrewman in the rear of the 14-tonne helicopter, and a fully integrated electro-optic and infra-red camera which can beam imagery back to St Albans' operations room day and night.

A new radar means the helicopter can detect, track and classify more surface ships than ever before – assisted by the Automated Identification System (AIS) used by vessels – which will allow Flight Commander Lt Cdr Lauren Hulston and her team to go about their business more efficiently in the congested waters of the Gulf.

“Merlin Mk2 really is the world's most advanced maritime helicopter – with the upgrades it is as good as it gets,” said Lt Cdr Hulston.

“Embarking on a Middle East deployment is a great opportunity to prove and test such a great piece of equipment.”

The Saints didn't need to get that far to prove its potency.



Sinner (cool callsign...) was carrying out a routine patrol as the frigate made her way towards her first port of call, Gibraltar, when her aircrew sighted a small boat.

The boat's crew panicked and began to dump packages into the ocean – an action watched live in the ops room courtesy of Sinner's camera/comms system.

In the fading light of a December day in a combined effort involving the Merlin and one of St Albans' sea boats, sailors succeeded in hauling around 320kg of cannabis out of the sea; it has an estimated value on the streets of the UK of £1m.

“The Mediterranean is a well-known smuggling route for drugs into the UK,” said Lt Cdr Jeff Gulliver, the frigate's second-in-command.

“The team trained long and hard at home for tasks such as this. Having only just deployed from Portsmouth, it was great for them to prove themselves so soon.”

Cdr Rich Hutchings, the Saint's commanding officer, believes the combination of his ship with the upgraded helicopter will continue to make a huge difference to the challenging mission he and his ship's company face into the summer.

“The Mk1 Merlin was widely recognised as a huge enhancement to any ship,” he said, “but having seen the Mk2 version in action, the upgrades are truly impressive.”

“St Albans sailing with an outstanding helicopter gives us a huge leap forward.”

And the rest of his ship and ship's company? “St Albans has been tested and proven fully fit for operational missions wherever and whenever the government needs.”

“It's a lengthy and highly complex process to prepare for a deployment like this but the ship's company is absolutely ready to go and excited about the opportunities and challenges ahead.”



## Bilateral thinking

THIS is hunting mines in the Gulf, US and UK style.

A giant US Navy Sea Dragon (more than twice the weight of a Royal Navy Merlin) passes HMS Bangor during a fortnight of combined training involving the mine warfare forces of the two navies.

British and American mine warfare experts practised making a Middle East port safe for mariners should underwater explosive devices ever be laid in the harbour or sea lanes leading to it.

Three of the RN's four-strong force based in Bahrain took part – Bangor, her sister Penzance (both designed to deal with mines in deeper waters) and HMS Chiddingfold, which specialises in locating devices in the shallows; the final ship in the force, HMS Atherstone is making her way home and her replacement Middleton is nearing the Gulf.

Joining them were the clearance divers of Fleet Diving Unit 3, who are held at high-readiness, deploying at short notice from their base on Horsea Island to clear ports around the globe.

The Americans committed their minehunters Gladiator and Devastator (yes, they're cool names...), plus the USS Ponce, (pronounced pon-say...) as a mother ship for the huge Sea Dragons of Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 15 (they perform minesweeping), expeditionary mine warfare specialists and a team testing a bevy of unmanned devices.

The actions of all were directed by Cdr Paul Ottewell, in charge of RN mine forces in the region.

“Although both the US Navy and the Royal Navy are rightly proud of their minehunting capabilities, it is imperative that we continue to prove that both navies can operate successfully together,” he said.

“This exercise provided an ideal opportunity for our units to not only enhance their core skills but also to understand how they should operate when part of a multi-national task group.

“I am immensely proud of how the task group has performed, sometimes in the face of significant engineering challenges and inclement weather, successfully meeting the objectives of the exercise.”

## Gannet take on Desmond

THE duty rescue crew from HMS Gannet fought storm-force winds and torrential rain for eight hours as Cumbria was hit by the heaviest rainfall in the county's history.

With Storm Desmond unleashing chaos across northern England and parts of southern Scotland, the Sea King crew were scrambled to an emergency in Cockermouth at the request of Belfast Coastguard.

The aircrew provided a detailed overview of the town – large parts of which were already under several feet of water – for rescue teams on the ground.

The crew then searched buildings and vehicles in the area – many of them abandoned – and ensured that remaining occupants were safe and well.

Next up was the rescue of an elderly woman from her home close to the banks of a river. The crew evacuated the distressed lady from her house and winched her to safety from her back garden.

The helicopter crew were also asked to look at the possible evacuation of two elderly residents from a Cockermouth home that was surrounded by rising floodwater. The fliers decided that the inhabitants would be safer in the building while emergency services continually monitored the situation.

Then reports from police in Carlisle said people were trapped in floodwater – including several reportedly clinging to lampposts.

The Sea King searched the area, working with local rescue teams to evacuate casualties before returning to base at Prestwick after ten hours in the rescue areas and almost eight hours on flying operations.




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## Richmond's hash haul

THIS is what around £3m of cannabis looks like – bagged by the eagle-eyed crew of HMS Richmond on patrol in the Med.

The frigate sent up her Lynx from 815 NAS on a routine security sortie; the aircrew spotted a suspicious craft and moved in to investigate.

As the Lynx neared the vessel, crew members could be seen throwing packages overboard into the sea.

The packages were fished out of the water by Richmond's Royal Marines boarding team which had been sent in a RIB.

The drugs boat quickly fled the scene while Richmond's team recovered 1,015kg of cannabis that was bound for mainland Europe – and potentially the UK.

"The team remains at high readiness throughout their time onboard for exactly this type of situation," said Capt Paul Simmons RM, in charge of the commando detachment.

"With the assets available in HMS Richmond we can detect smuggling vessels over large distances, close with the location and quickly move to intercept."

CO Cdr Mark Anderson added: "The Mediterranean is a known route for smuggling drugs into Europe and the UK. As soon as the smugglers were detected it took minutes to launch the ship's boarding team and intercept and recover the drugs."

His ship was due home from a nine-month mission to the Med/Indian Ocean/Gulf as this edition printed.



## No winter respite in migrant mission

WRAPPED in thermal blankets after spending hours in open boats, these are some of the 468 migrants saved by the sailors of HMS Enterprise in two winter-day rescues by the survey vessel.

Unseasonably good weather in the central Mediterranean meant the mass migration of people continued into December – with the ships of the EU Naval Force Med ready to respond, as it has since May.

On November 24, Enterprise – which has been attached to the EU task group since last summer – joined German tanker FGS Berlin in a dawn-till-dusk operation, picking up nearly 300 people from three dinghies 20 miles off the Libyan coast.

A Spanish patrol aircraft spotted one of the small craft off Sabratah, west of the Libyan capital Tripoli, and Enterprise and Berlin closed in.

In a three-hour operation, 165 people were picked up from a couple of unseaworthy dinghies – which were then sunk by the two ships.

With the rescue complete, the duo received orders to move about 20 miles to the east where another dinghy had been spotted.

Here the ships found 125 people crammed aboard another overloaded, unsafe dinghy and rescued all aboard.

By the end of the combined rescues, 54 people had been picked up by Enterprise, 236 by the German vessel, which subsequently took all the migrants aboard to land them in Augusta, Sicily.

The second day of action, December 3, saw Enterprise, Spanish frigate Canarias and an Italian helicopter from the carrier Garibaldi directed to respond to reports of a couple of boats about 30 miles off Libya.

Enterprise took more than 400 people on board, the Spanish warship over 300; the Canarias made for Cagliari in Sardinia, while Enterprise put the migrants she saved ashore on the small Italian island of Lampedusa.

Enterprise's rescues bring the total number of people saved by the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean since May to more than 7,500.

In addition to the people rescued under the banner of Operation Sophia, more than 40 people have been reported to Italian authorities as possible smugglers and 43 boats confiscated or destroyed.

## Be joyful about Artful

THE third of the Astute-class submarines has officially joined the Royal Navy.

Defence Equipment and Support transferred the £1.2bn hunter-killer Artful – one of seven successors to the long-serving Trafalgar-class – to the Silent Service in her home port of Faslane.

"The formal addition of this world-beating submarine is another key milestone in the development of the Submarine Service," said Rear Admiral John Weale, head of the Silent Service.

"And Artful will enter service much more quickly than her sister submarines Astute and Ambush. I very much welcome her greater firepower, state-of-the-art communications equipment and advanced stealth technologies into the fleet."

The next landmark date for the boat will be an official commissioning ceremony in March when her Sponsor, Lady Amanda Zambellas, will formally welcome the boat into the fleet at a ceremony in the home of the Submarine Service, HM Naval Base Clyde.

"This is a really important milestone in the life of Artful as she takes her place in the Fleet under the White Ensign," Lady Zambellas said.

"I'm extremely proud of my association with the submarine and look forward to her commissioning next year when I will also meet the ship's company."

Under CO Cdr Stuart Armstrong, Artful will now complete operational sea trials before deploying to the Western Atlantic later this year. ■ Artful families' day, page 29



# 'This is a vote of confidence in the armed forces'

## More people. More confidence.

AND we have never been in a position to write that in the wake of a defence review before.

For despite the certain air of foreboding which always precedes Parliament's study of the state and future of Britain's armed forces, the 2015 Security and Defence Review – the first in-depth look at the nation's armed forces, their equipment, men and women, and the world in which they operate for five years – promises to not merely sustain the Senior Service, but grow it (a little).

With gain comes some pain, however. The MOD's civilian arm will be substantially cut. And there will be considerable pressure to make sure that it delivers on everything laid down in the 88-page document.

But the document announced to the House of Commons by Prime Minister David Cameron at the end of November is, Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Sir Philip Jones told personnel at Culdrose, "a defence review which lays to rest the ghosts of the last one."

The 2010 review was set against the backdrop of austerity and the need to cut government spending across the board. It is one of the darkest chapters in the modern history of the Royal Navy: end of the Harriers, end of the carriers, end of the Type 22s, end of the line for 5,000 men and women who were laid off.

Five years down the line, the Whitehall coffers are in a fundamentally better position – as Prime Minister David Cameron put it: "Our renewed economic security means that today we can show how we can afford to invest further in our national security."

But while UK finances are more secure, the world around us is not; the global security situation is even less certain than it was in 2010.

Back then, the Arab spring hadn't sprung. Daesh – the now-favoured term for ISIL – simply didn't exist, certainly not in its present form. The Crimea belonged to the Ukraine not Russia. In the intervening five years, Moscow has "become more aggressive, authoritarian and nationalist" – and confrontational with the West.

Mr Cameron told Parliament that our nation faced threats from three key areas – and these underpinned the reasoning behind the 2015 review:

- the increasing threat posed by terrorism and extremism
- the resurgence of state-based threats
- and hacking/cyber threats



● Admiral Jones chats with personnel from 771 NAS

Picture: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow, RNAS Culdrose

With those threats in mind – and with eyes fixed firmly on ten years hence – the review looks to forge a Royal Navy around three pillars: a carrier task group, the strategic deterrent and an amphibious force.

The rest of the RN will be formed around those pillars in what Whitehall labels 'Future Force 2025'.

Of the first pillar, the two new carriers Queen Elizabeth (beginning sea trials this year) and Prince of Wales remain the jewels in the proverbial crown of the future Navy.

One will be adapted for use as a commando carrier in place of HMS Ocean, the other will be a dedicated strike carrier.

Fundamental to that role are 38 F-35B Lightning IIs being ordered, 24 of them used to form two front-line operational squadrons: 617 and 809 NAS, both based at RAF Marham. The plan under the 2015 review remains to acquire a total of 138 of the stealthy strike fighters in due course.

Not pressing ahead with replacing the second pillar, the Continuous At-Sea Deterrent, would be, in the current climate, "irresponsible" says the review.

Extensive design work has already been carried out on 'Successor', the replacement for the Vanguard boats which uphold Operation Relentless; designed in the 1980s, the V-boat force will be obsolete by the beginning of the 2030s.

Four successors will be required to perform the ongoing mission, each carrying up to eight missiles with 40 nuclear warheads in total.

Some £600m has been spent

on Successor to date; the design phase alone will cost just shy of £4bn, while the bill for the overall project – demanding a 20-year national effort – is projected to be £31bn, with an extra £10bn set aside should the scheme run over budget. The first new boat is not now expected to enter service until the early 2030s rather than 2028 as originally planned.

Fundamental to the safety and security of the Successor boats' patrols, as well as Fleet submarines, will be maritime patrol aircraft, a capability axed in the 2010 review and resurrected in the 2015 study.

Mr Cameron announced that the RAF would get nine Boeing P-8 jets based at Lossiemouth, from where they would protect the nuclear deterrent, hunt down hostile submarines and assist SAR operations at sea.

There will be a sizeable RN presence on that new RAF squadron... while 750 Naval Air Squadron, which trains FAA observers, will be called on to help train RAF crews.

Also within the realm of nuclear deterrent, following successful trials in the Pacific (by HMS Daring) and off Scotland (by her sister Dauntless) – the latter exercise saw a ballistic missile launched from UK soil and intercepted by a US warship – there will be further investigation into using Type 45 destroyers for ballistic missile defence.

Nuclear war is the ultimate, traditional threat. The review was published just ten days after the latest series of terrorist attacks in Paris.

UK Special Forces – including the Royal Marines' Special Boat Service – will receive extra

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


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# Confidence in what we have done and what we do. More ships. More capability.'




The naval core of **Joint Force 2025** will comprise

- 4 V-boats providing the strategic deterrent 
- 7 Astute-class hunter-killers 
- 2 Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers, one adapted as a Royal Marines amphibious assault ship 
- 19 destroyers and frigates  
- up to 6 offshore patrol vessels 
- 12 minehunters 
- 3 survey ships 
- 1 Antarctic patrol ship 




## Royal Marines

- 3 Commando Brigade 
- 2 assault ships 
- 2 Merlin Mk4 squadrons 
- 1 battlefield Wildcat squadron 

## Fleet Air Arm

- 1 F-35B Lightning II squadron (plus one RAF) 
- 2 maritime Wildcat squadrons 
- 4 Merlin Mk2 squadrons 

## Royal Fleet Auxiliary

- 6 fleet tankers 
- 3 solid support ships 
- 3 amphibious support ships 

## In addition

- 9 P-8 maritime patrol aircraft (RAF) 

equipment and funding and, says the review, RN warships will increasingly work alongside the UK's civilian law enforcement agencies in territorial waters.

Beyond UK shores, a new permanent base for RN forces in Bahrain – HMS Juffair – will be completed, in addition to work already carried out to enhance the facilities of the Senior Service headquarters there, including accommodation, sports and welfare centre (including free Wi-Fi for personnel) and support for ships using the naval base, especially the minehunters permanently based in theatre.

Equally-heavily-engaged in the Middle East theatre are the RFA in support of not just UK but wider coalition maritime security operations. Forts Victoria (currently deployed), Austin and Rosalie are growing increasingly long in the tooth, and will be replaced by three new vessels – in addition to the four Tide-class tankers being built as part of the MARS programme.

The other mainstay of the east of Suez mission – the destroyer/frigate flotillas – have suffered death by a thousand cuts through the decades. This force will remain 19 strong: six Type 45s, which will all receive improved engines, and 13 frigates.

All the Type 23s will be replaced; there will be eight fully souped-up Type 26 frigates with the focus on anti-submarine warfare and five 'Type 26 light' – cheaper, lighter, general-purpose frigates which will be designed with an eye on the export market.

And looking beyond 2030, Mr Cameron said there was potential

for increasing the size of the frigate flotilla.

One area where increase is certain is in personnel: 400 extra sailors will be recruited.

"One of the best things for morale in our Armed Services is that those serving in our Army, Navy or Air Force and those who are planning to join our Army, Navy or Air Force can see that there will be a bigger Navy with more ships, there will be a bigger Air Force with more planes and people, and our Armed Services will be better equipped and supplied than they ever have been," the premier told the Commons.

While the number of sailors will rise, the MOD's civilian personnel will be cut by nearly one third by the end of Parliament to 41,000.

And around 30 per cent of the defence estate will be sold off – a considerable amount of it to meet the requirements of housing; Whitehall reckons more than 50,000 homes could be built on the land it disposes of.

And there is pressure to produce.

Having had most of the items on its 'wish list' ticked off in the review, it is now down to the men and women of the Senior Service to prepare for, train for and finally operate this future force.

As Admiral Jones put it to personnel at Culdrose during one of a series of briefings for all serving personnel and civilian staff held across the Service in the wake of announcement.

"We have made the case for a bigger, better Navy. Now we have to deliver."

## 'What a Navy it's going to be...'

"THE government's Strategic Defence and Security Review – announced by the Prime Minister in November – set a bold new course for the Royal Navy. As we begin a new year, it's worth reflecting on all that we've achieved in 2015 and the sheer scale of the future that awaits us.

Within the next few years, the Royal Navy will be one of only a handful of navies with the means to deliver both a continuous at-sea deterrent and 100 per cent carrier strike availability.

Indeed, the chancellor's announcement that there will be 24 F35-B Joint Strike Fighters to fly from our carriers by 2023 will make us the most powerful carrier navy after the United States.

The National Shipbuilding Strategy will replace our 13 existing frigates but, with the Prime Minister's aspiration to build "a bigger Navy with more ships", there is the potential to increase this number in the future – a prospect we haven't had for decades.

Add to this a completely-modernised Fleet Air Arm, Astute-class submarines, better kit and a new counter-terrorism focus for the Royal Marines, new stores ships and tankers for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and continued investment in our Reserve Forces, and you have one of the most modern and capable navies in the world.

Seen alongside our nation's economic ambitions, this puts the UK at the forefront of the world's rising maritime powers.

All this marks quite the change. For over



● First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas tries his hand on an F-35B simulator, watched by RN and RAF pilots. Possession of 24 of the jets to operate from HMS Queen Elizabeth from 2023 will make the RN the second most powerful carrier navy in the world

half a century we've been accustomed to getting smaller: now, we must believe in growth, and we must deliver it. Despite the continuing public spending restraint, the government has deliberately chosen to invest in defence and security, and especially in the Royal Navy.

This is a vote of confidence in what we have done and in what we do, and it places real responsibility on our shoulders, with more people, more ships and jets and more capability. Now our task from within the Navy is to match that with more leadership, drive, energy, efficiency and innovation.

Our focus remains where it is needed most: foremost on the frontline and people, but also for spares and support.

On the homefront, we must work more like a business to cut out waste and drive down

costs, and we must be more imaginative in looking for new and better ways of working. But, we've just the people, military and civilian, and the attitude to do it.

In particular, we will ensure that our newly-revised operational programme will bring very welcome extra stability to help to further alleviate gapping and to allow you and your families to plan.

We know it won't all be plain sailing, and there will be some tough days ahead as we rethink and reset. Courage in leadership and management – and courage individually – matter most of all.

We have achieved so much because we believed in the Royal Navy's role in our nation's future. But the opportunity does not end with the review – and nor should our ambition for

the Navy. We must maintain the momentum into 2016 and beyond, deepening our partnerships and pushing the boundaries of technological innovation, and we must be fearless in seeking new opportunities too.

Finally, we must do all these things alongside our most important priority: to protect our Nation's interests at home and around the world, every single day.

In the past year, we've helped reduce the number of Ebola cases in Sierra Leone to zero.

We've rescued thousands of lives in the Mediterranean, led the largest NATO exercise in a decade and we've stood alongside our two closest allies on operations against Daesh.

We've done all these things, and more – above and below the waves – alongside our routine commitments. This is a testament to the ability, the dedication and resilience of everyone involved.

The future Royal Navy will do all these things too, and more, but undoubtedly with a scale and sophistication beyond anything we have seen before.

In this new year, we must maintain our momentum – we've got a lot of work ahead of us.

Your Royal Navy has waited for such an opportunity for generations and now it's yours to deliver. What a privilege – and what a Navy it's going to be!"

*George Zambellas*

To download the complete review, go to [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-security-strategy-and-strategic-defence-and-security-review-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-security-strategy-and-strategic-defence-and-security-review-2015)



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# Recce reveals the potential for port

THIS looks like a rather barren and drab Middle East port.

But the people of Oman moved mountains to get RFA Fort Victoria to use it. Literally.

For where 3/O Steve Andrews got his camera out on the jetty and took this snap, the rocky Arabian coastline once stood.

This is Duqm, a man-made port carved out of rock and mountain on the Omani coast roughly half way between Muscat and Salalah, tested by the support ship to see whether it's a possible alternative to Oman's other two main ports for resupplying the 32,000-tonne vessel with food, fuel and stores – so Fort Victoria can do the same for British and Allied warships on patrol in the region.

Twenty years ago, Duqm was a fishing village. By 2020 the goal is to turn it into a city of 100,000 inhabitants with an international port, upmarket hotels, a motorway and airport to become one of the most important business and tourism hubs in the region.

A huge new dry dock – the second largest in the Middle East – has been built with breakwaters which stretch for four kilometres, while coastal peaks have been flattened – as one of Duqm's port officials explained to Fort Victoria's officers while showing off the state-of-the-art new facilities.

"We're here to assess the potential of Duqm for being resupplied," explained RFA Fort Victoria's Operations Officer, First Officer Susan Cloggie-Holden.

"It's taken months of planning; today we've

brought the key players and logistics experts together to walk through the possibilities."

HMS Echo became the first Royal Navy vessel to use Duqm in the spring of last year while her sister Enterprise surveyed the approaches to the new port in 2010 making sure they were navigable.

RFA Fort Victoria is the largest UK naval vessel to visit the new port so far. Her pioneering visit explored options for the safe and secure transfer of stores between adjacent ships.

Capt Kevin Rimell, Fort Victoria's CO, said: "Our primary role is providing replenishment-at-sea to warships, but we also need to replenish ourselves – this place has great potential for that."

And a RAS at sea is just what Fort Victoria went on to do – with an imposing 42,000-tonne US Navy assault ship.

USS Kearsarge needed "some gas" to allow her to continue on her way through the Gulf.

Apprentice CIS specialist Lynn Patterson said: "This is my first trip at sea. I was conducting the role of communications voice operator during the tactical manoeuvring phase. I couldn't believe how impressive looking USS Kearsarge was."

Kearsarge can carry up to 25 helicopters as well as eight Harriers and several Ospreys.

During the RAS Fort Victoria passed 541,000 gallons (2,048 cubic metres) of military diesel and 138,500 gallons (525 cubic metres) of aviation fuel.



● Personnel dived on wrecks off Malta and climbed across a bridge missing its deck in Spain



● Water was everywhere during the upper-deck challenge, won by the Executive Department

# Sunset over Somerset

THE SUN sets over HMS Somerset during her short but action-packed deployment to the Mediterranean.

Trading the grey skies of Devonport for the late winter sunshine of the Med, the Type 23 frigate's first port of call was Malta, where she joined HMS Bulwark in providing security protection during the European Heads of Government meeting.

During a stop in Valletta to refuel, the ship's company marked Remembrance Sunday, holding a service on the flight deck.

Somerset also took part in a boarding exercise with the Maltese Armed Forces, some of whose officers were re-united with their old colleagues from BRNC Dartmouth.

The good weather then broke and, with large waves breaking over the bridge, Somerset kept on her mission, patrolling the waters, providing detail of everything that flew or floated back to Bulwark during the week-long conference.

Once the heads of government had safely departed, Somerset's crew celebrated with a press-up challenge, raising several hundred pounds for charity by completing 12,000 press-ups in a day.

The target was smashed with the final total being 21,730, thanks to ETWE Philip Howarth who 'lifted and lowered' 2,000 times.

Somerset then headed to

Valencia, where she became the first Royal Navy ship in a number of years to visit Spain's third-largest city.

While alongside Somerset hosted a delegation led by Juan Carlos Valderrama Zurián, the Central Government Representative for the Valencia region, and representatives from the Civil Guard and the port authorities.

Somerset's CO Cdr Michael Wood said: "Spain is an important ally and close partner, especially at sea, as both nations have a

strong maritime heritage and work together on a regular basis to counter the scourge of piracy, criminality and terrorism."

During the visit and tour of the ship's facilities discussions included the recent successes in counter-narcotics operations that have been achieved through cross-border co-operation, resulting in over half a billion pounds of drugs being seized in a single boarding.

Cdr Wood added: "It is also wonderful to be able to repay in some small way the hospitality extended by Spain to the large ex-pat community."

As well as the government delegates, the ship hosted a lunch for representatives of the Armed Forces charities and the wider ex-pat community.

Whilst most of the ship's company toured the historic city, some of the more adventurous enjoyed a spot of gorge walking at Venta Del Morro, which included abseiling and crossing a

perilous bridge that had lost its deck.

Sailing back to Valletta, there was a final chance to take advantage of the good weather to hone damage control resilience in a tough upper-deck challenge.

Personnel 'fought' their way through fender forests, leaped over Yokohama barriers, swam through underwater hazards before inflating and testing the spray hoods on their life jackets with the aid of a well-placed hose.

At the end of the day, the Executive Department showed that experience can make up for creaking bones as they took first prize.

The crew also found time for some traditional sports, including a volleyball tournament.

Somerset was welcomed back to Malta by some good weather, which allowed personnel to dive in the clear waters on sunken tugs and wrecks from WW2, including HMS Maori, the Tribal-class destroyer, which was scuttled after being damaged in 1942.

"It was something I'd wanted to try and getting to learn and dive on the old ships surrounded by wildlife was great," said debut diver MA Emma Hallett, 21.

"The wreck of HMS Maori was incredibly eerie – however very interesting to visit."

Meanwhile on land, the Selima Hotsticks proved too much for the ship's hockey team but the rugby team enjoyed a 74-23 win against the Malta Gladiators.

Somerset returned home to Devonport in time for Christmas.

Main picture: LSC Lauren Davis



# Devil of a journey to Tasmania

Picture: LA(Phot) Nicky Wilson



THE Royal Navy's ice patrol ship is pictured alongside in Tasmania on her unusual route to the Antarctic.

HMS Protector, which left Plymouth in October, arrived in Hobart via Gibraltar, the British Indian Ocean Territory of Diego Garcia and Perth.

She will take a number of Australian and New Zealand officers onboard when she heads to the Ross Sea – the Australian end of the Antarctic – for fishery patrols in the Southern Ocean.

Protector, which is thought to be the first Royal Navy vessel to visit the Ross

Sea in around 80 years, will be upholding conservation rules of the Antarctic Treaty System.

Her crew will inspect fishing vessels and support the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources with their Australian counterparts.

CO Capt Rory Bryan said: "We are delighted to be able to work in partnership with our Australian and New Zealand colleagues."

Protector will spend two months operating in the Ross Sea before returning to her normal patrol area in the South Atlantic – meaning she will circumnavigate Antarctica.

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Picture: LA(Phot) Pepe Hogan

## Having a blast with the mother 'NLAW

WANT to see £17,500 of firepower leaving the launcher of a Next-generation Light Anti-tank Weapon?

The Fire Support Group of Yankee Company, 45 Commando, did – and let rip on the range for a week.

The Arbroath-based green berets missed out on the chance for live firing with their fellow commandos in Wales back in the spring last year because they were deployed with HMS Bulwark in the Med.

Six months later their chance came at Otterburn ranges, three dozen miles outside Newcastle, and a week of non-stop firepower, beginning with machine-guns and ending with some tankbusting – mostly played out in strong winds and heavy rain as autumn weather descended on the ranges next to the England-Scotland border.

Impressive as two lines of machine-guns hammering away are, the party piece of Exercise Black Storm was some live missile firing – three NLAWs, one Javelin.

Javelin is nearly twice as heavy and costs nearly ten times as much, but can knock out enemy armour at four times the distance (about 2,500 metres or 1½ miles) of the smaller NLAW anti-tank missile.

Army instructors did their best to wind up Mne Danny Dugan – who was selected to fire the 'Jav' – with hair-raising tales of missiles going rogue on the range, while a sizeable crowd of soldiers and marines gathered.

"There was a gasp of shock when the missile left the launcher and started curving off to the left – only for a sigh of relief to hit as the missile curled back towards the target after taking a dogleg," said Mne Kev MacNeish. "Everyone was buzzing."

The lighter NLAWs are only effective at tanks closer than 600 metres – under 2,000ft – and can be fired directly into the target ("hitting with a massive bang"), or can climb and plunge into the turret from above, known as 'top attack', "leaving the target in pieces and everyone on a high," said Kev.

"All the fire support group had been looking forward to getting some valuable trigger time. This was a hoofing week."

# You wait ages...

Pictures: Edward Low, DE&S



## ...then two come along at once

YOU wait three-and-a-half years to see the most powerful machine in Britain's arsenal moving through the Tamar... ..and then two come along in a week.



Preparing to take her place on the right of the line is Her Majesty's Submarine Vengeance, which sailed from Devonport after undergoing her mid-life regeneration in the dockyard.

Taking her place in the same facility over the next four years is the lead vessel in the V-boat force carrying the nation's nuclear deterrent, HMS Vanguard, as she receives a reactor refuel.

Since 2012, more than two million man hours have been devoured readying Vengeance to resume patrols

on Operation Relentless, the deterrence mission the Silent Service has carried out – without a break – since 1969.

Vengeance – the newest of the four-strong Vanguard class, all based at Faslane – was refuelled and received a complete overhaul of her equipment and computer systems, as well as the installation of improved launch equipment for her Trident missions in the £350m refit.

The overhaul just starting now on Vanguard is not quite as comprehensive – 'only' £200m – with the focus on replacing the reactor core.

The 16,000-tonne leviathan will be overhauled at the same time with new sonar added, upgrades to computer and communication systems and equipment



● Vengeance, right, passes Vanguard

and machinery replaced.

It will demand the efforts of around 2,000 people at Babcock, plus 100 firms in the supply and support chain.

Vengeance will now undergo extensive trials – and her 130 crew extensive training – before she resumes her Relentless patrols from Faslane.

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Matt Davies, FPS Member

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# Summer Wonderland

## Clyde's visit heralds start of tourist season

**A** GROUP of King penguins keep a watchful eye over the former whaling station at Grytviken as South Georgia welcomes its first tourists of the summer season.

Yes summer. Temperatures on the South Atlantic island average a high of up to 7.5°C (*very* occasionally soaring to the low 20s Celsius), meaning the British territory retains its huge volume of ice and snow.

The austral summer is when scientists and researchers welcome a stream of visitors – and among them were the men and women of the Royal Navy's patrol ship HMS Clyde.

The vessel's recent patrol took her further south than normal as she called in on South Georgia, some 2,151km from Tierra del Fuego, the southern-most tip of South America.

A particularly harsh journey, during which a large iceberg spotted almost 400 miles from the territory, proved testing for the ship's navigator. For many of the crew it was the first time they had actually seen an iceberg.

The approach to Cumberland Bay was dotted with bergy bits and growlers, forcing Clyde to slowly weave her way towards King Edward Point, where the crew later gathered for a team photograph.

The first evening saw Clyde host the team from the British Antarctic Survey (BAS). The reception's refreshments were served with a dash of sea ice collected earlier in the day from the ship's sea boat.

**P**ersonnel from the ship then enjoyed a day exploring the old whaling station at Grytviken (Swedish for The Pot Bay), named by the Swedish surveyor Johan Gunnar Andersson in 1902.

Three former whaling boats are now all that remains of a once large fleet. Among them is the ship Petrel, built in Oslo in 1928 and used as a whaler and then a sealer for some 30 years before being discarded – still bearing her whaling gun at her bow.

Up until it was abandoned in 1966, Grytviken processed more than 54,000 slaughtered whales, producing 455,000 tonnes of oil and 192,000 tonnes of meat.

South Georgia is also the last resting place of polar explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton.

The next activity for Clyde's crew was not for the faint-hearted: A traditional swim from the jetty at King Edward Point to the ship and back.

With sea temperatures at around 2°C, half of the ship's company took part and were rewarded with the chance to defrost in the BAS team's sauna.

Watching much of the activity was the abundant wildlife, including Elephant and fur seals and King and Gentoo penguins.

Clyde's Marine Engineering Officer Lt Nathan Geddes said: "South Georgia was a truly amazing place, the transit there was a little rough but when we finally entered Cumberland Bay the scenery was magnificent."

"There was lots to explore ashore including the old whaling station and the spectacular wildlife, it's definitely a special place and a run ashore that I will always remember."

**M**embers of the BAS team took groups of sailors to tour Penguin River (more a stream really), where they ran the gauntlet of fur seals, and Maiviken, a cove at the north end of the Thatcher Peninsula between Cumberland West Bay and Cumberland East Bay. "The scenery and wildlife were breathtaking," said Lt Geddes.

"At points it felt like you were in a *Jurassic Park* movie, particularly when the large birds hovered overhead eyeing up their next meal."

"The fur seals kept the ship's company on their toes, popping up from the undulating heath and barking like guard dogs."

Some crew

members were also lucky enough to receive a guided tour around the BAS station from the scientists, gaining an insight into their lives on the remote territory and the importance of the wide-ranging scientific research conducted on the island.

The BAS team's job is to ensure South Georgia's largely-unspoiled environment remains that way.

Nearly two-dozen people live at King Edward Point, with the main effort to monitor fishing stocks – the waters around the island are rich with the profitable Patagonian toothfish, mackerel icesh and Antarctic krill.

Clyde also gave a lift to the new South Georgia Postmistress – becoming her first customers of the season at King Edward Cove (there has been a post office there since the 1920s).

**I**t gave the new postmistress the chance to perfect her sales pitch with Clyde's crew before the first passengers arrived from a cruise ship, which docked in the cove.

Clyde concluded her icy adventure with a patrol around the island, including visiting the dramatic Drygalski Fjord.

At its entrance, the icebergs were in abundance, large and compact and all different shapes and sizes. This time however they were much easier to spot which put the navigator's mind at ease.

The 1.6km-wide bay, along the south-east coast, was charted by the Second German Antarctic Expedition in 1911-12 and named after Professor Erich von Drygalski, leader of the First German Antarctic Expedition from 1901-1903.

Clyde then began the 860-mile journey south to her permanent base in the Falkland Islands from where she will continue her routine patrols of the South Atlantic.



Pictures: Lt Nathan Geddes, AB(Sea) Donald Morris and Lt Aaron Revell



FRIDAY, January 7, 1916, and the waterfront at 'W' Beach, Cape Helles – better known as Lancashire Landing, where half a dozen VCs were won on the first morning of the invasion ('six before breakfast'), is a hive of activity.

Yet in two days' time, this beachhead, paid for with the blood of thousands of Allied soldiers, will be abandoned to the enemy as the curtain comes down on the Gallipoli misadventure.

Our monthly flick through the Imperial War Museum's photographic archive once again relies upon the trusty lens of the RN's official chronicler of the campaign, Lt Ernest Brooks.

By the time Brooks captured this scene, the Dardanelles campaign was winding down – the footholds at Anzac Cove and Suvla Bay were evacuated in December.

But on the 'toe' of the Dardanelles, French and British forces – including the Royal Naval Division – held firm, outwardly at least.

By January 1916, there was just a skeleton garrison holding the Allied lines – eight sailors from the RND, for example, holding a tangle of craters and trenches which the French had dubbed La Ravine de la Mort – Death's Gully.

The Turks were not oblivious to the possibility of evacuation – particularly after the beachheads on the western shore of the peninsula had been abandoned.

On the very day Brooks took this photograph, the Ottoman Army tried to storm the lines at Gully Spur. It was bloodily repulsed.

Despite fairly choppy weather the evacuation of W and neighbouring V Beaches



went, by and large, without a hitch. On the final night of January 8-9 nearly 17,000 men – a quarter of them belonging to the RND – were brought off safely. Left behind were vast quantities of stores and more than 1,500 vehicles, while 500

animals had to be slaughtered. Slipping away from Gallipoli was considerably easier – and less costly – than storming its shores nine months earlier. "We just took our rifles off the parapet, marched down to the beach and sailed away,"

Sub Lt Ivan Heald of the Hood Battalion, Royal Naval Division, wrote a week later.

The Germans – who had directed the defence of the Dardanelles – conceded the evacuation was superbly planned and brilliantly

executed.

Would that the whole campaign had been run in such a fashion. It cost the RND 1,653 men killed on the field of battle, another 840 who died of illness or from their wounds, and more than 5,000 wounded. Just two

men were taken prisoner – testament to the ferocity of the fighting on the peninsula.

Overall Allied casualties reached the 250,000 mark during the 14-month campaign. The toll on the Ottoman side was roughly the same.

For Turks, Gallipoli was – and remains – a defining moment in their nation's history. They had defeated the forces of two Great Powers.

Not so Mustapha Kemal – the future Atatürk – who had been one of the most energetic leaders of the peninsula's defence. He was on leave when the Allies evacuated.

"Had I been there and allowed the English to get away," he supposedly remarked, "I would have shot myself."

Former Durham miner Joe Murray was not sorry to leave Gallipoli. No man was. But the RND sailor-soldier didn't feel the sense of failure which haunted many Dardanelles veterans. "The Turks did not beat us – we were beaten by our own High Command," he confided in his diary. Murray did, however, wonder whether the souls of his fallen comrades would forgive him for abandoning the peninsula.

"Throughout the ages, great battles have been fought and many men have died, but I doubt so many men have died in such a small area," he mused.

"The battlefield became a cemetery occupied by the living as well as the dead."

■ This photograph (IWM Q 13693) is one of more than ten million held by the Imperial War Museum. They can be viewed or purchased at [www.iwmcollections.org.uk](http://www.iwmcollections.org.uk), by emailing [photos@iwm.org.uk](mailto:photos@iwm.org.uk), or by phoning 0207 416 5333.



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# LAST ACTION

**T**HE morning of Friday January 1.

Many of you will probably have a hangover. Almost certainly you'll have a lie in.

If anyone rings at 9am, they're likely to get some choice Anglo-Saxon down the line for waking or disturbing you.

But not in one building at RNAS Culdrose. Or HMS Gannet.

When the call comes through, it will provoke a mixture of relief and melancholy as naval aviators are formally stood down from search-and-rescue duties.

For thus will the curtain come down on round-the-clock rescue missions by the Fleet Air Arm in the UK after more than six decades.

But until the phone rings, it's business as usual, the pace unrelenting; it can't afford not to be – lives depend on the response of the distinctive red-grey Sea Kings.

Two hundred and thirty-nine lives, to be accurate – assisted in 261 (as of November 24 2015 when we visited).

The Scillies – about 20 minutes' flying time from Culdrose – account for around one third of the jobs, almost all of them medical cases beyond the abilities of the islands' cottage hospital.

Otherwise, August is typically the busiest month. It was in 2015. The Sea Kings were scrambled 47 times and saved 43 souls in the process. People stranded by the tide (by studying the charts and tables, the fliers can pretty much predict precisely where they'll be called out...). Slipped down cliffs. Carried out to sea by the current. Not all of them were tourists. Locals do get caught out as well.

While Gannet (traditionally the UK's busiest military SAR unit) spend most of their time in the mountains of western Scotland, 771 is focused on the Western Approaches and the coast (and immediate environs) of Cornwall: around 108,000 square miles of land and sea... or 78 times the size of its native county. With helicopters designed back in the 1950s.

"When the phone rings, you're never quite sure what it's going to be. It's always dangerous to assume: we've done that before," says observer Lt Cdr Andy Watts.

When the phone rings. There's no teleprinter to rip rescue details from. The alert comes through from the rescue co-ordination centre in Scotland.

The listener jots down the information – and then sounds the alarm ("it's quite a racket, with flashing lights"). The seven duty engineers ready the helicopter for take-off, the flight crew don their kit and plan their course of action (there's no fireman's pole, although it would be rather easier to navigate than the flight of stairs in clunky boots and a cumbersome flying suit).

By day, whichever red and grey Sea King is waiting on the standings has to be in the air in 15 minutes (typically it's off the ground in seven or eight), by night 45 minutes (again it's whittled down to 20-25).

All of the crews try to get in one training mission a day. For the duty crew – on call for 24 hours from 9am – a sortie is compulsory, preferably some night-time training (two of their mandatory 15 flying hours a month must be in the dark).

In the evenings, the aircrew retire to five spartan cabins (one is grandly titled the Duke of Cumberland Suite), each with a single bed, adorned with a pusser's trademark blue blanket and rather worn mattress.

There's no rhyme or reason to the call-outs. You can spend a few days and nights on duty. *Zilch*. Or you could be alerted two or three times in a single night.

Today I'm in the safe and extremely experienced hands of one of the non-duty crews: pilot and flight commander Lt Cdr Rick Boyes, second pilot Lt Matt Taylor, observer Lt Jon 'Stretch' (he's tall...) Hounsme and aircrewman CPO Dave 'Bomber' Brown.

We're on a two-hour jaunt around western Cornwall and some of 771's favourite training haunts.

"We can get into places no-one else can," says Stretch.

To prove the point, we touch down on the saddle at Gurnard's Head, on the north Cornish coast half a dozen miles from St Ives. We set down on a ridge overlooking a mostly-disused quarry near Falmouth.

In fact, pretty much all of the south-western tip of Cornwall is one big training ground for the rescuers.

It's bleak (especially with the year on the wane), it's very hilly, and the coastline is treacherous. It's beloved by tourists for its beaches, but the rocks have seen the demise of many an ill-starred mariner in days of yore.

And yet the rocks, cliffs and promontories prove popular. Walkers. Climbers. Adrenalin-junkies.

Take a rock the 771 fliers dub 'The Tombstone' which rises above Cribba Head – "a gnarly bit of granite" just along the coast from the famous open-air theatre at Minack.

It's the end of November. It's blowing a hoolie. Bit of rain in the air. Civilisation is some distance away. And yet there are people strolling around near the cliff edge.

Leaning out of the cargo door, Buster guides the pilots in to a safe position above the sandy-coloured rock.

3 o'clock, 30 yards.

20 yards.

Easy.

Easy.

Steady.

Time to lower the winch – today's casualty is walking wounded, so no need for the

stretcher.

While Buster is busy in the back, the pilots have one eye on an escape route.

"You are always thinking about a 'flyaway'," explains Lt Cdr Boyes. "If an engine fails, it's not like in the simulator. It just goes."

There are several hundred yards of sea to the northwest and some beach – enough distance to build up speed should the rescue have to be aborted. As the flight commander says, *every single knot counts*.

And at the same time, Buster is contemplating the best way of bringing our injured climber up.

Winch him up immediately, obviously.

No.

Winch him over the sea, not directly up the rockface. It's much safer. (Think the episode of *The Simpsons* when Homer is bounced down the side of a cliff, eliciting 32 'dohs'...)

In Falmouth Bay, we 'play' with the tug Menai; it's been booked by 771 to practise various drills. The helicopter circles the boat a couple of times as Buster looks for potential snags, obstructions and any FOD lying on deck which might be whipped up by the Sea King's downwash.

The winching area on the Menai is about 8ft by 5ft. It's big – certainly by 771 rescue standards. They can – and do (remember the Fastnet in 1979, for example) – pluck someone from the cockpit of a yacht which is no more than six square feet in size. Then throw masts and lines moving around wildly into the equation.

But not always.

"There was a fishing vessel we were called to off Eddystone," says Lt Cdr Boyes.

"When you can see the boat through the cabin's upper window, you know it's not going to work. It wasn't a life-threatening situation, so the best thing to do was to leave it."

Stretch adds: "You fly in conditions when normal aircraft are grounded, but you do not take undue risks."

"You work on the assumption: save the aircraft first, then the person on the winch and finally those in the water or on the cliff. If you can't save the aircraft, you can't save anyone."

The missions that make crews think, says Lt Cdr Boyes, "are the ones 100 miles out into the Atlantic."

Top up in Tresco before heading out over the expanse of the ocean (the nearest landfall to the west is 2,000 miles away in Newfoundland).

These are the missions the public remember – the archetypal search and rescue, er, rescue, like in the Hollywood blockbuster *The Guardian*.

There's probably one or two of these a year.

Panamera, a French trawler which sank off the Lizard in



# ON HEROES

November 2013... but not before every man aboard was winched to safety.

Or another French vessel, *Le Sillon*, dashed on rocks in early 2014... but not before all six men aboard were saved.

They cheerfully posed for a quick snap in the warmth and comfort of the crew room back at Culdrose once they'd recovered from their ordeal.

"Even as engineers you get something out of SAR – you see the helicopter coming back from a rescue and the people climbing off it," says PO(AEM) Andy Bonnett. "It really puts something into perspective."

For 771 – like every other part of the RN – is a team effort. The aircrew are the 'faces' of SAR. They don't get anywhere without technicians, engineers, avionics experts toiling in the squadron's relatively-new hangar.

Today, a group is working on the tail section of one of the helicopters in deeper maintenance.

*Thwack. Thwack. Thwack.* No dainty taps here. *Give it a good hammer.*

But then that's Sea King all over. It's a flying brick. To be sure, it's not indestructible, but it's solid, good old-fashioned engineering, the sort your dad would find lifting up the bonnet of his Ford Cortina on the driveway in the '70s.

"It's old, but it's also sturdy and reliable. It's like the shirehorse of the skies – it just keeps going," says PO Martin Greenwood.

PO(AEM) Andy Bonnett adds: "They've been in service for so long that there are very few faults that you've not come across before. But it's not an aircraft which has been designed with maintenance in mind, plus it's had a lot of extra equipment fitted to it down the years, so that makes our job trickier."

Among the extra equipment, installed, an infra-red camera controlled by the observer. Struggling to find that missing walker at Land's End? On the TV screen he appears clearly as a white figure against the faded grey of the cluttered terrain. "If you're stuck anywhere, generate some heat – we'll find you," says Stretch.

Otherwise he relies on radar. A very old radar. It's got an orange screen (remember those?). The picture sweeps (remember that). It's overlaid with a gridded map of western Cornwall. It all looks state of the ark, but it works. And it's real. The picture it provides is what it sees – it's not gone through a computer processor. The observer can rely on it implicitly.

The rest of the cab is similarly antediluvian. While the Wildcat and Merlin communities are basking in the digital glow of their 'glass cockpits', Sea King pilots

gaze upon a world of almost total analogue.

Each pilot has 11 dials to monitor, plus another 18 in the central console. And there are a good 100 switches, buttons, knobs, handles.

It's old school – but again, it has its merits.

"You're properly flying the aircraft," says Lt Cdr Boyes, "not operating it."

But it can be physically draining – as well as mentally.

Sea King is the RN's oldest and slowest helicopter. Headwinds are the killer.

During winter storms two years ago, one of the Sea Kings had to fly up to Bristol on a sortie, before returning to base. It's a flight of a little over an hour in normal weather. Fighting rain and headwinds of 70 to 80mph, at times the helicopter's effective ground speed was a mere 20mph. The journey took three and a half hours.

That's a flight which all the crew recall instantly. But then they generally recall every mission. "You might not remember the names, or even the faces, but you always remember the incident – and I've done nearly 300," says Lt Cdr Watts.

You'll find mementos of some of 771's finest hours lining the corridors and crew rooms of their headquarters: past triumphs and thank-yous from those helped, visited or with whom 771 have worked down the years. Photographs of flooded Boscastle back in 2004. A fireman's yellow helmet donated by the team from Ballincollig near Cork. A stray beany hat. A solitary slipper with the squadron's ace of clubs motif. A star spangled banner flown over the Capitol in Washington on behalf of a US Coast Guard exchange pilot. And, er, WW2 tankbuster Hans-Ulrich Rudel, leading a formation of Stukas into action on the Eastern Front.

As for the letters of gratitude, there are enough to fill a lever-arch file every year. Cards. Letters. Schools appreciating courtesy visits. Youngsters drawing dramatic scenes of 771 in action against backdrops of fire and lightning. And grateful notes from those assisted.

"My husband has seen you flying around Cornwall many times and always wanted to go up with you," the wife of one medical case wrote. "Just not like that!"

Her sentiments underline the strong bond between Cornish folk and *their* squadron. From Penzance to Portreath, Land's End to the Lizard, St Ives to St Mawes they turned out to see the Sea Kings' birthday formation flypast last year.

"Down here you notice a lot of support for 771 Squadron – and the Navy, much more so than in Yeovil," says PO Greenwood, who joined the Ace of Clubs from Yeovilton.

"People see the red and grey Sea Kings as their own."

They do. Which is both good

and bad.

Good because SAR is quite simply the best PR RN, er, PR can buy.

It's always good publicity. No wars, no politics gets in the way. Rescues are, by and large, good news.

And it's good too that when residents of nearby Porthleven see – or hear – the helicopter heading off over Mounts Bay and ring up the squadron asking where it's heading.

To many in and around Helston and the Lizard, the Search and Rescue cabs are Culdrose.

So there's a bit of a misconception that when they go, Culdrose goes.

Neither's true. A few 771 cabs run on for a couple more months for training purposes (the squadron stands down on March 31 – as do the Commando Helicopter Force Sea Kings up the A30/303 in Yeovilton).

As for Culdrose, well it's the aircraft carrier on land, fundamental to training air and ground crews for the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers... and they're going to be around for half a century.

That's a future the Sea Kings won't see. One will be turned into a Culdrose gate guardian, the rest will be up for disposal.

The youngest Sea King has flown more than 9,000 hours, the older helicopters 13,000 – that's 77 weeks.

And don't assume that they'll end up in some breaker's yard.

There are models in the civilian world which have flown four times as many hours as the retiring Fleet Air Arm Sea Kings. At one time, there were plans to extend the venerable aircraft's military life into the 2030s.

"It's a strange feeling – we've been doing this for years, and we could keep on doing it," says Bomber, who's leaving the Service with the end of SAR.

"We get a huge amount from it – it's the only operational flying in the UK. It's a unique experience you don't get anywhere else in your career."

Also moving on is Lt Cdr Watts.

"It's been a good innings, but it's time to move on," he says, contemplating a new career in teaching.

It will be rewarding – just not the same kind of rewarding as search and rescue.

"Any job where you can say 'I made a difference', where you've saved a life, that's a good job."

Reporting by  
Richard Hargreaves

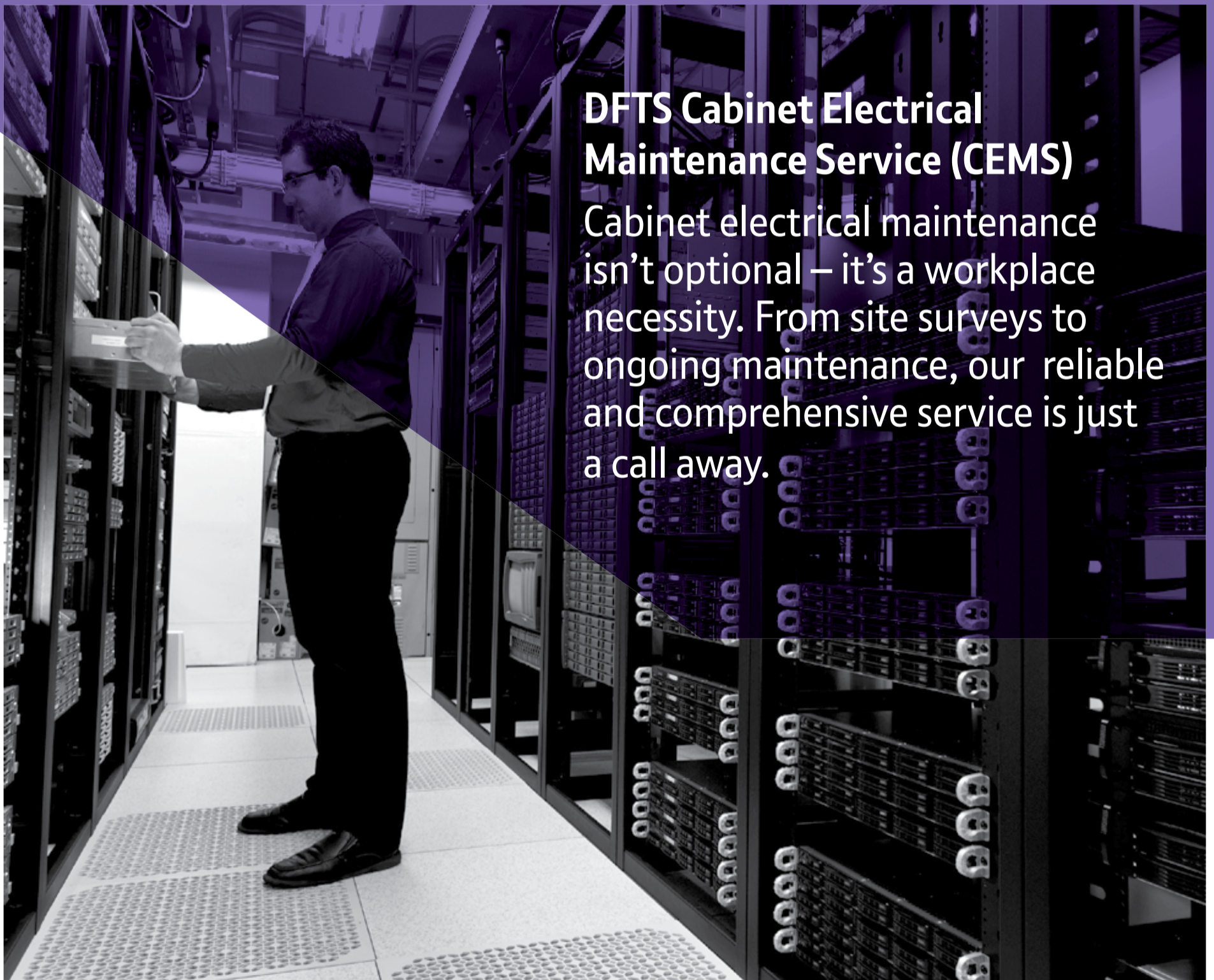


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# Boatbuilding back in boats building

THE 'forgotten craft' of the Royal Navy – and Portsmouth dockyard's 'forgotten building' – are no longer overlooked thanks to a £6m 'working museum'.

The huge Boathouse No.4 will serve as a tribute to the crews of vessels dubbed 'the Spitfires of the sea' and will train new generations of shipwrights.

Since the RN decided it no longer needed the large building near Victory Gate, it's only been used sporadically for temporary exhibitions and events.

That's now all changed as it's reopened permanently; boatbuilding has returned to the ground floor – where RN landing craft, launches and fast boats were once either constructed or maintained.

And on a new mezzanine floor, there will be a free, interactive exhibition detailing the deeds of small boats from the days of Nelson to WW2, as well as a waterfront bistro/restaurant.

The boathouse is one of the few surviving examples of 1930s military architecture.

Bringing it back into use is the brainchild of Peter Goodship and colleagues at Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust. It's pumped around £2m into the restoration project, with the remainder provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the government's Regional Growth Fund – because it's providing training and jobs – and various charities.

"I hope people will be wowed by the building – it's an attraction in its own right. There simply aren't many examples like it," Mr Goodship says.

The building that you see today is only half the size of the structure originally planned – construction was cut short by the outbreak of war in 1939.

The boathouse was built on top of one of the oldest structures in Portsmouth dockyard – a canal from the 1660s which links the harbour with the mast pond (where many small boats were kept in the RN's heyday). The now-underground canal and the locks serving it are still used today.

Had Hitler not plunged Europe into chaos once more, the building would have stretched all the way south to the edge of the dockyard at Victory Gate – where the visitor centre and jetty for HMS Warrior can be found today.

The big corrugated slab facing people as they enter the historic dockyard was only intended as a temporary structure sealing off the finished half of the boathouse.

The cavernous hall was put into operation 75 years ago still exposed to the elements – the roof wasn't finished until later so the gantry cranes which are used to lift boats in and out of the water still bear the wartime green/cream camouflage intended to trick German bomber crews.

When the Admiralty did get around to completing the roof, they did a rather nice job indeed – lovely wood panelling (which has stood the test of time remarkably well) and in the region of 3,000 panes of glass which have proved a pain to restore and replace (but ensure the building is filled with light).

New workshops, stores and even a boat-building library have been created for the college students – whose work on boats in the main part of the hall will be carried out in full-view of the public.

For visitors, the mezzanine floor is home to an interactive exhibition on small RN craft over the past 200 years and a 120-seat restaurant which looks out on some of the historic boats on the museum's inventory, such as the Green Parrot (a launch used, *inter alia*, to ferry the Queen around the harbour), High Speed Launch 102 (used by the RAF to rescue downed aircrew in the Channel) and D-Day veteran Motor Gunboat 81 (which helped guide Allied troops into Sword beach).

It's the story of the latter two fast craft and their ilk – the 'Spitfires of the sea' – which is the heart of the exhibition.

They can watch short films detailing the exploits of these crews – such as Augustus Agar VC who sank the Soviet cruiser Oleg in Kronstadt or the boats which took part in the 1942 raid on St Nazaire to knock out the main dock – and learn about their missions putting agents ashore in occupied Europe or clashes with German S-boats.

Visitors will be able to take a close look at the launch James Bond used to escape Spectre assassins in *From Russia With Love* (subsequent Bond and *Battle of Britain* director Guy Hamilton served in small boats in WW2) and see how Nelson's navy transported field guns ashore – slung beneath cutters (yes, really) their wheels apparently made it easy to haul the boats up a beach.

"Small boats have played a vital role but they are often overlooked," said Mr Goodship. "And between the wars especially Britain was a world-leader in building these craft."

"But no one is interested in simply looking at the boats. It's the stories behind them and the men who crewed them. And people want to do something. We want the exhibition to be about touching."

With the latter in mind, various activities for young and old have been designed, from rowing a boat on land to climbing a mast to reach the crow's nest and yardarm and firing a swivel gun from the early 19th Century at targets.

And down below, scores of students – up to 80 a year on a 48-week course under the International Boat Training College from Lowestoft, plus young people from Portsmouth's Highbury College going through similar instruction – will be working on new small boats.

"This building won't just produce boats and people who are boat-builders," Mr Goodship said. "The skills they will leave with could be put to use restoring historic buildings, antiques, or general joinery and carpentry."



# Yomping into the yard?

**THIS is the Royal Marines Museum.**

Yes, really.

Not as you know it now: a Victorian officers' mess turned into a series of exhibition rooms.

No, this is how the Royal Marines Museum could look in three years' time – housed in a Victorian boathouse in Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard.

Bosses at the National Museum of the Royal Navy are looking to move the showcase for the Corps past and present from Eastney to within the walls of the Navy's premier visitor attraction.

The proposed move is the centrepiece of an ambitious £17.5m transformation of the Royal Navy's museum and educational facilities awaiting the green light from lottery chiefs.

If they give their seal of approval to Project SeaMore (so called because visitors would be able to see more...), the revamp will also revolutionise the Admiralty Library – the RN's ancient and famous repository for the printed word.

It will retain that vast collection, but it will also house artefacts: ship models, bells, uniforms, Royal Marines' Bergens, photographs, boots, medals, standards.

Most of the historic storehouse the library occupies is empty. It would be brought back into use as a broader 'centre of discovery', containing not just books and manuscripts, but also the images, documents and physical objects they refer to under one roof.

In the case of the Royal Marines Museum, the goal is to bring the story of the Corps to a much wider audience than before – especially those who wouldn't necessarily be interested in the RN's seaborne infantry.

With the historic museum at Eastney being somewhat out on a limb, tourists have to make a dedicated effort to visit.

Whereas 750,000 people look around the historic dockyard every year, the Royal Marines Museum only attracts around 35,000 visitors.

Its location and the building itself are impressive, but the latter is proving increasingly expensive to maintain, doesn't necessarily lend itself to modern displays and exhibitions, and only has space for around five per cent of the Corps' vast archive of relics going back to 1664.

By moving into the building currently occupied by Action Stations – keeping the cinema on the upper floor to show films, but also host performances by the RM Band – the rest of the former boathouse can exhibit around one third of the marines' archives. Visitor numbers are expected to pass 200,000 a year.

That means items such as an intricate casket presented to Zeebrugge raid VC winner Norman Finch by his comrades or clothing designed Sir Ernest Shackleton for Royal Marines fighting in Russia at the end of WW1 can be shown. For starters.

If the move goes ahead, the future of the existing museum building remains to be determined, but the imposing Yomper statue will remain in situ as it's become an icon on the Portsmouth waterfront (with a smaller replica to go in the Action Stations building).

"The mission of the National Museum of the Royal Navy is to be a beacon of excellence in

enabling people to learn, enjoy and engage with the story of the Royal Navy and understand its impact in shaping the modern world," said Prof Dominic Tweddle, the NMRN's director general.

"A new museum for the Royal Marines will enable us to tell the personal stories of service, bravery, sacrifice and team spirit that epitomise the Corps and reach a much wider audience."

John Rawlinson, SeaMore's project director and also executive director of the dockyard visitor experience, says the 21st-Century library embraces "a unique way of thinking. Imagine documents, books and artefacts

all under one roof – it's every researcher's dream."

The chancellor kick-started SeaMore with £2m of LIBOR funding – the fine levied on banks for illegally fixing exchange rates – given to the national museum in his autumn spending review.

It still needs to raise another £2m, with the remaining £13.5m being met (hopefully) by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Last year the HLF indicated it liked the plans – but its pot of money for hand-outs was empty. The museum will learn around the end of April if its renewed bid has succeeded. If approved, the new-look museums would open around February 2019.



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# Caroline's key role in Jutland anniversary

HISTORIANS and conservation experts are well on course to finish a £15m restoration of Britain's last Jutland survivor – ready for her opening on the battle's centenary.

Cruiser HMS Caroline will be rededicated as a living memorial to the greatest naval battle fought in European waters on May 31, one of a series of events marking the 100th anniversary of the clash of dreadnoughts; services are also planned at Jutland Bank (involving British and German warships), at Kirkwall Cathedral in the Orkneys and by the shores of Scapa Flow, home of the RN's Grand Fleet during WW1.

Light cruiser Caroline is the only British vessel left out of 150 which went into battle with the German High Seas Fleet on a Wednesday afternoon in May 1916.

By the battle's end more than 8,500 men were dead – two thirds of them British – and 25 ships were at the bottom of the North Sea.

HMS Caroline served with the scouting forces that day, firing a dozen rounds at the Germans, plus a couple of torpedoes.

The fact that she survives to this day – unlike the more famous capital ships which fought at Jutland – is down not to her role in the battle but the fact that she served as the home of naval reservists in Belfast for nearly 90 years.

They've been based ashore since 2011, allowing ambitious plans to turn the 100-year-old cruiser into a floating museum.

The new-look ship will be officially unveiled on May 31 in a ceremony which will commemorate both Jutland and the Irishmen who served at sea in the Great War.

Around ten thousand men from a then-united Ireland fought with the Royal Navy and Royal Marines between 1914 and 1918; one in three of the 1,017 men killed when battle-cruiser HMS Indefatigable blew up at Jutland hailed from the country.

"Caroline is a living legend," explained Capt John Rees, who's leading the restoration project on behalf of the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

"We are breathing new life into what is an internationally-significant piece of world history.

"We must not underestimate the value of Caroline and the resonance of her history and position in Northern Ireland, so it is a matter of pride for us as well as a contribution to local communities that the ship is brought back to life."

Experts are stripping out asbestos and adapting the ship ready for an influx of visitors –

Caroline is berthed just half a mile from the new Titanic Museum which is pulling in some 800,000 tourists a year – before installing audio-visual hardware and software and displays to bring the ship's story to life.

A mixture of Northern Ireland government and Heritage Lottery Fund money is paying for the Caroline project. She's due to open to the general public the day after the centenary.

After spending five months open to visitors, the cruiser will go into dry dock for a month in November for work conserving her hull, before returning to Alexandra Dock close to the old pump house – which will be turned into a ticket office and visitor centre, to be restored and opened by May 2017.



● Sailors from HMS Bangor restore the ship's bell at St Christopher's Cathedral in Bahrain  
● Main image: Personnel from HMS Bulwark pay their respects at Capuccini Naval Cemetery in Malta  
Picture: LA(Phot) JJ Massey



# Ships' personnel Far away

IN THE shadow of palm trees and under the Mediterranean sun, sailors from HMS Bulwark pay their respects to the dead of two world wars laid to rest in Malta.

After ceremonial and security duties at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, sailors and Royal Marines from the assault ship crossed Grand Harbour and headed to Capuccini Naval Cemetery, a mile inland.

In the Great War, Malta and neighbouring Gozo served as the main casualty treatment centres for the Mediterranean theatre and especially the campaigns in Gallipoli – which Bulwark visited in April last year for centenary commemorations – and Salonika.

More

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# pay tribute to fallen from two world wars but close to our hearts

than 135,000 sick and wounded were handled by hospitals and convalescence homes.

A generation later, Malta was in the eye of the Axis storm as Italian and German aircraft tried to bomb it into submission; the islands were crucial to holding Britain's position in North Africa.

In all, there are 1,045 Commonwealth war dead buried at Capuccini (plus more than 1,440 Service personnel who died in Malta in times of peace, and 137 non-Commonwealth war dead), including 22 men killed when battleship HMS Russell was sunk by a mine in April 1916.

Also at eternal rest in Capuccini are five sailors from an earlier HMS Bulwark, who died during service on the Mediterranean Station in Malta in 1905.

Their 21st-Century successors, led by CO Capt Nick Cooke-Priest, Anthony Vella Gregory of the Maltese government and representatives from the British High Commission, paid their

respects in a short service.

"Services such as this always underline the commitment and bravery of those who have gone before and it is particularly poignant that sailors from a previous Bulwark are buried here," said Capt Cooke-Priest.

Further east and the minehunting crew from HMS Atherstone also paid their respects to the fallen.

Personnel set to work restoring the last resting place of a Royal Marine in the New Naval Cemetery in Muscat.

There, 102 years ago exactly, shipmates from HMS Swiftsure laid 29-year-old Cpl Frederick Edward Swinerd, Royal Marine Light Infantry, to rest.

Eleven Servicemen are buried in the cemetery in Ra's Al Kindah Bay and a seven-man team from the Hunt, passing on her 7,500-mile journey from Bahrain to Portsmouth went ashore for a day's graft cleaning and maintaining the graves.

"It was a very satisfying experience to be able to pay our respects in such a way," said PO(MW) Gary Belcher.

Minehunting crews from HMS Bangor and Penzance also rolled their sleeves up to smarten gravestones – in their case those at Bahrain Christian Cemetery – as they helped the Dean of St Christopher's Cathedral, the principal Anglican church in Bahrain.

A 15-strong team from Penzance got stuck in at the cemetery, where a mixture of Service personnel and civilians are buried.

Sailors swept paths, laid out tables and chairs and even chopped up and disposed of a large fallen tree.

At the cathedral, Bangor's sailors painted community facilities and helped restore an historic ship's bell gifted by Capt Charles Kendall in 1956.

# Memorial to divers at spiritual home

THIS is the memorial to the Royal Navy's heroes of the deep which will rise from the waters in their spiritual home in just two years' time.

The RN mine warfare and diving community past and present has raised more than two thirds of the £320,000 needed to start work on a permanent – and eye-catching – monument in Vernon Creek in Portsmouth.

The creek – and HMS Vernon – were the home of mine warfare and diving for more than seven decades until the mid-1990s when the Navy decided the site was no longer needed.

The creek, once used as a berth for minesweepers, now sits in the heart of Gunwharf Quays shopping and leisure centre, visited by more than eight million people every year.

With no permanent memorial to the site's proud history, the mine warfare community set about fundraising to provide one.

Five years down the line, they have collected more than £220,000, around half of it courtesy of the mine warfare community, particularly large and active associations, such as veterans of the Ton Class Association.

With more than two-thirds of the total in the kitty, the team behind Project Vernon can start placing orders for the various parts of the unique monument.



The bronze monument depicts a diver dealing with a moored mine, both of which are mounted on a plinth. It was designed by Australian-born sculptor Les Johnson – who's behind statues to firefighters, miners and Battle of Britain fighter group commander Keith Park.

The plinth will be installed in the creek this summer, while work begins on the base and finally the statue before the finished memorial is unveiled in September 2017.

In the meantime, there's the small matter of raising around £100,000 to finish 'Project Vernon', including major events in London and Portsmouth.

You can support the divers at [www.vernon-monument.org](http://www.vernon-monument.org) or [twitter.com/VernonMonument](https://twitter.com/VernonMonument).

## Visitor milestone for M33

FIRST World War survivor HMS M33 has welcomed its 50,000th visitor.

The warship, which fought in the Gallipoli campaign, has been wowing visitors at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard since it opened in August.

Lesley Wills, a descendant of the Richard Chapple who served on the M33 during the Gallipoli Campaign in 1915, said: "I came down with a school group and it was a brilliant experience for them.

"That for me is what it's all about

– teaching the next generation about these things.

"It's fantastic going on board, it feels like my grandad's memory is being kept alive."

■ The Mary Rose Museum will reopen this summer following a refit.

Visitors will have an unrestricted view from bow to stern after walls that separated them from the hull are replaced with glass.

They will also be able to access the upper deck through an air lock.

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## Rapid progress



● Engineers in the class of December 1949 at HMS Collingwood. Back row, from left: A Norman, P Crowe, H Mackon, P Day, K Livessy, R Dunlop, R Butler and C Hayward. Front row, from left, R Clark, P Fenner, A Fulton, D Murphy and T Rolls



● Below: Radar workshops at Collingwood circa 1940s/50s



● Right: ET(WE) Sam Scott, of HMS Lancaster, in the new No4 uniform  
● Left: A WE officer gets to grips with the Phalanx system



● Above left: LOEM Tony Terzza teaches measurements to trainee WEMs in 1984; Above right: An Exocet missile is launched from a Type 21 frigate; Left: The Operations Room aboard Type 12 frigate HMS Plymouth



**W**E were wanted then and WE are wanted now. This month marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Navy's Electrical Branch, now known as the Weapon Engineer branch.

Established to preserve skills gained during World War 2, the branch has undergone many revamps, name changes, and deals with far more technical work, but one thing has remained constant – the need for engineers.

For it's the engineers who are responsible for, among other things, protecting ships and crew. They maintain and operate the ship's complex communications, detection and weapons systems, including missiles, guns and anti-submarine torpedoes.

Engineers are also responsible for the sophisticated electronic equipment, including active sonar to detect submarines and air-to-surface surveillance radar.

The Fleet rapidly expanded during WW2, when officers, artificers and mechanics gained a wealth of experience.

The Admiralty Board realised the importance of ensuring these skills were not lost to the Royal Navy in peacetime; the result was the forming of the Electrical Branch on January 1 1946.

Engineers are often referred to as 'Greenies', a term which evolved to describe the officers and ratings responsible for the support of electrical engineering functions in RN ships.

Warrant electricians wore dark green uniform in 1918 but after the establishing of the Electrical Branch, all electrical officers wore the green stripe.

In 1960, the Engineering Specialisation Working Party was tasked to look at the continued suitability of having an electrical branch and an engineering branch in a technological age when the systems coming into service with the County-class destroyers, particularly Sea Slug and gas turbine propulsion systems, required a broader engineering approach.

This resulted in the branch changing its name to the Weapons and Radio Engineering Branch in 1961 and four years later the Weapons and Electrical Engineering Branch.

A further study in the 1970s resulted in the formation in 1979 of an Engineering Branch, comprising weapon engineering, marine

engineering and air engineering sub branches.

The following 20 years saw the computer age and the introduction of more sophisticated systems aboard ships. The 1980s also saw the new aircraft carriers with the first, HMS Invincible, bringing in new computer command systems, radar, electronic warfare suites and sonar.

Technology progressed from valves through solid state and into silicon chip technology and associated computer-based systems, all in a matter of ten years.

Lessons learned during the Falklands Conflict in 1982 resulted in a number of new weapons systems, particularly proven weapons systems with special emphasis on close-range aircraft and missile defence.

The first Gulf War in 1990 saw the need to work more closely with coalition forces, meaning the Royal Navy had to acquire equipment that could quickly be fitted to ships moving into the war zone to allow identification and communications between numerous air and sea platforms.

In 1992 a new study was produced which recommended that the existing Operations Branch should be rebranded as a new Warfare Branch to keep up with increased automation in data processing and improvements in weapon equipment reliability. The following year saw the Operations Branch and Weapons Engineering Sub Branch form a Warfare Branch – which took in the Greenies.

The specialist categories on board major warships were aligned with various areas of warfare specialisation:

- The Above Water Warfare ratings were responsible for compiling the air and long-range surface picture in the ops room using data received from onboard sensors and other units. They also manned the ship's guns and missile systems and looked after the associated stores and small arms.

- The Under Water Warfare ratings were responsible for the operations of passive and active sonar systems and maintaining a sub-surface picture. They were also involved in submarine and torpedo contact procedures.

- The third specialisation took in electronic warfare, communications and mine warfare.

In 2007 Greenies returned into a streamlined Engineering Branch, merging artificer and mechanic rates and, with all engineering rates, a new rate of engineering technician was formed.

There were big changes to the WE branch last year as the Royal Navy's world of communications and information system moved from the warfare branch.

Sailors from HMS Diamond, Trenchant and Somerset became the first to receive the new badges marking the merger of CIS with WE and CISSM (Submarines) with WESM (Submarines).

The change was one of several in weapon engineering introduced as part of the Faraday programme which aims to make the engineering branch better.

The close ties between the WE and CIS branches – with engineers and the warfare world working 'hand in glove' for a number of years – plus the increasing skills of the CIS



● From left: Test pieces manufactured by Leading WEM courses in the 1980s and 1990s; Gunbusters in front of the 6in gun turret of the cruiser HMS Tiger in 1977; A Seawolf fired from Type 22 frigate HMS Brazen; LWEM(R) McKnight and LWEM(O) Routlige, the last 20mm Oerlikon maintainers in HMS Beagle; A Harpoon firing aboard a Type 23 frigate





# ...s for Navy engineers

## Trophy tribute to founding father

THE WE Branch are to award a new annual trophy to the individual who has made a significant achievement in weapon engineering excellence and technical advancement during the past year.

The award, the Rear Admiral Bateson Trophy, sponsored by the Institute of Engineering and Technology, will be engraved with the winners' names and retained at HMS Collingwood. Winners will also receive £300 cash and the competition is open to all officers and ratings in the WE General Service cadre.

Rear Admiral Stuart Latham Bateson was the first Electrical Flag Officer in 1949. He joined the Royal Navy in 1916 and carried out his cadet training at Keyham College, followed by a midshipman year in HMS Marlborough.

He then joined HMS Walpole and went to the Gulf of Finland in support of a raid on Kronstadt Harbour in 1919.

While on the experimental staff of HMS Vernon, he was involved with mine development trials, including the conversion of submarine M3 into a minelayer and the alteration of the stern of the cruiser minelayer HMS Adventurer to make her capable of laying mines at high speed.

He served at the Admiralty in the Directorate of Torpedoes and Mining before being appointed Fleet Torpedo Officer Mediterranean on the staff of Admiral Sir Dudley Pound.

As the CO of HMS Latona he undertook a record-breaking journey from the Clyde to Alexandria via the Cape of Good Hope, completing the 15,258-mile journey in 31 days.

From Alexandria, Latona made 12 successful runs to Tobruk in support of the Army, at times being obliged to unload some 150 tons of cargo in 55 minutes under air raid conditions and at night.

On October 25 1941, while on her 13th run, she was sunk by what was believed to be the only successful night attack by a combined force of German and Italian bombers.

After an appointment as Flag Captain to Rear Admiral Rawlings in HMS Ajax which, as a light cruiser, at one stage was the heaviest unit in the Mediterranean, owing to the severe losses sustained in the area, he became Naval Assistant to the Controller of the Navy involved in provisioning for the Pacific War.

On September 3 1945, as the CO of HMS London, he received the surrender on board of the Japanese Forces at Sebang one day before the general surrender of Japan.

On returning to the UK, Rear Admiral Bateson was appointed as a Captain to be the Director of the Naval Electrical Department and given the task of establishing the Electrical Branch.

In 1949 his achievements were recognised with the creation of a new Naval rank and he became the first Electrical Flag Officer.



● Rear Admiral Bateson



● Clockwise from top: A Seagnat decoy missile firing; An ET(WE) CIS in a Type 23; WE workshops at Figsard Building in HMS Collingwood; Phalanx CIWS training at Collingwood; ET(WE) Adam Dearden carries out an internal comms repair in HMS Lancaster; A WE mans the RAS comms in HMS Lancaster

branch in network operation, administration and maintenance, meant boundaries between the two branches have become blurred.

And so, as of April 1, the formal transfer of all warfare CIS and CISSM personnel into the Weapon Engineering Branch began.

Today's ET(WE)s train in a new building at HMS Collingwood. Rutherford Building – named after weapon engineer and former CO of the base Vice Admiral Malcolm Rutherford – was officially opened this month.

“Now is a particularly exciting time to be a weapon engineer,” said Fleet Weapon Engineering Officer Cdr Ian Teideman.

“Naval engineers, whether air, marine or weapon, have always been at the forefront of new technology. This is particularly true as a weapon engineer; The next generation of missile, Sea 'ceptor, is being fitted to our Type 23 frigates, Radar 997 gives us a very capable new sensor and the Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers have extensive network technology.”

During WW2 electrical training was not confined to one site but the need for a permanent home became quickly apparent as technology advanced.

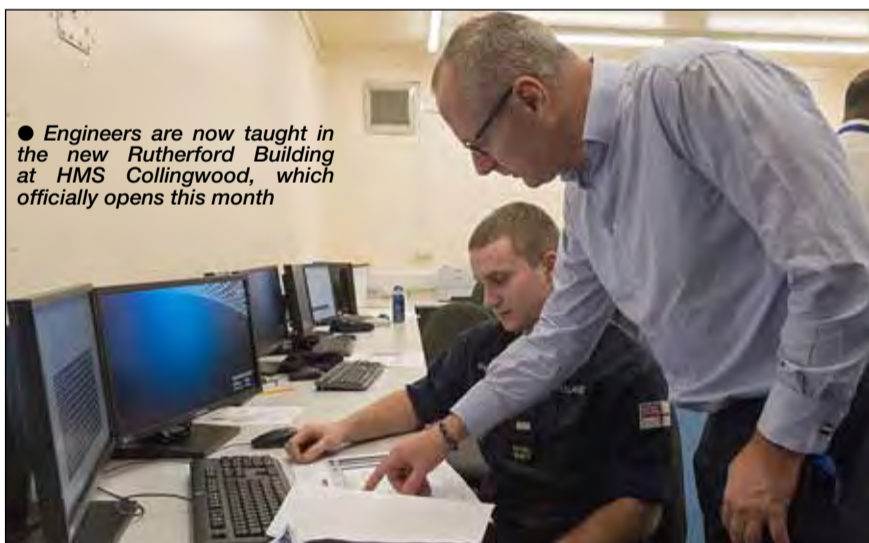
In 1939 the Admiralty had acquired Collingwood, 197 acres of farming land, under a compulsory purchase order for £7,290 (more than £2 million by today's standards).

The land owner claimed that it was some of the finest cornland in the South of England but, in local opinion, it was much the best snipe marsh in the country.

It was certainly wet and boggy and it took until the mid 1950s to clear sufficient water to allow the construction of anything better than a single-storey building or concrete prefab.

Wireless telegraphy ratings started their training in June 1940, and a radio direction finding school was added in 1942.

Most other training facilities from around



● Engineers are now taught in the new Rutherford Building at HMS Collingwood, which officially opens this month

the country were eventually relocated to Collingwood and by 1947 it was established as the Electrical School of the Royal Navy and work to set up a cohesive electrical branch began in earnest and the base took over the training of both officers and ratings in the maintenance of all electrical and radio equipment in the fleet, except that of the Fleet Air Arm.

Collingwood is now the Royal Navy's largest training establishment – and the largest in western Europe – delivering training in warfare, weapon engineering, diving, physical training, chemical biological radiation nuclear and damage control, sea survival, seamanship and military skills.

Cdr Teideman added: “The recent Strategic Defence and Security Review committed to new capabilities like the Type 26 Global Combat Ship, where skilled technicians will

be fundamental to the fighting capability of the class.

“We need to ensure that our engineers are properly equipped and trained for the next generation of systems.

“Recent changes, such as the integration of the WE and Communications sub branches and new training courses being run by HMS Collingwood will ensure that WEs are right at the centre of new areas of warfare, such as cyber and network defence.”

The majority of warship technology now and for the future will involve electrical technology, ensuring that the WE branch can lay claim to being the ‘new Greenies’.

Historical references courtesy of *The Greenie: The history of warfare technology in the Royal Navy* by Patrick A Moore

For details on a career as a Navy engineer visit [www.royalnavy.mod.uk/engineers](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/engineers)





# Osprey has a tilt

Pictures: LA(Phot) Des Wade, HMS Ocean and Staff Sgt Keonaona Paulo, USMC



THEY can go up and down, side to side and definitely catch the eye.

They can carry 24 fully toolled-up marines. They can travel further, faster and higher than a helicopter.

Meet the Osprey – the US Marine Corps' primary assault support aircraft.

Men from Arbroath-based 45 Commando Royal Marines got the chance to experience flights in the unusual-looking aircraft during a series of training exercises with their US colleagues.

And to round-off the series, green berets from Whiskey Company took part in a ground assault in Corsica with men from the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (A).

Corsica is no stranger to ospreys, they account for just one of the 323 species of birds spotted on the French island, birthplace of Napoleon.

But it was an osprey like nothing the islanders had seen before as the marines were dropped in the mountains, that account for two thirds of Corsica, which is to the west of Italy and south east of France.

The assault group took off in an Osprey from Royal Navy flagship HMS Ocean, where the aircraft and US Marines have been working for the past few weeks – the first time in five years such a force has embarked.

Exercise Blue Raptor represented the latest phase in the US Allied Maritime Basing Initiative which seeks to improve the integration of US forces with allies operating in the Mediterranean.

Between them, three Osprey aircraft undertook nearly 30 flights, spending more than 40 hours in the air during day and night training exercises.

The mountainous island – which covers 8,680 km<sup>2</sup> (3,350 square miles) – provided an ideal training ground for the US and UK marines, as Osprey dropped them off in a remote area where the troops gathered to retake a town (empty of course) from enemy forces.

The assault group made their way through the dense, sometimes rocky, undergrowth towards the town where close-quarter fighting resulted in the joint force seeing off the enemy.

The entire crisis-response exercise was overseen by planners at Solenzara Air Force Base on the island.

Ocean's Amphibious Operations Officer Lt Col Chris Gosney said: "Working with the French armed forces to plan and develop a US-UK combined exercise in Corsica has been an invaluable opportunity to strengthen the relationship with our allies."

"In particular working so closely alongside the US Marine Corps has been a huge success on many levels; from the basics of understanding different terminology and operating procedures at the planning stage, to conducting aviation raids, side by side, during the execution phase."

Osprey were on HMS Ocean while the Royal Navy flagship was deployed on Cougar 15.

USMC Osprey returned to Ocean in early October and then used it as a 'lily-pad' throughout NATO's Exercise Trident Juncture, which Navy News reported on last month.





# t at Blue Raptor



The MV-22 Osprey is unique in that it uses two engines positioned on fixed wing tips that rotate to allow the MV-22 to land and take off vertically.

Blue Raptor was designed to allow green berets and US Marines the opportunity to familiarise themselves with, and use, each other's assets in order to respond to developing situations around the world.

A keen focus of the training has been getting to know the aircraft, weapons and communications systems.

"Both Royal Marines and the US Marine Corps gained understanding of each other's tactical approach to the same mission, which is valuable experience for future exercises," said Cdr Adie Baker, responsible for aviation operations in Ocean.

Mne Sam Fowler, of 1 Troop W Company, said: "Working with the US Marine Corps has been a very beneficial experience as we've been able to work with them and learn a bit about how they operate.

"From rations in the field to the M16 assault rifle we've been able to get hands on and up close with the equipment they use, and rely on, as have they with us.

"We've always had a close relationship and this exercise is allowing us to strengthen this bond.

"The Osprey is certainly a battle-winning asset, able to take us deep behind enemy lines. It was also a great laugh getting thrown around in the back."

Cdr Baker added: "Having just taken over as Commander Air, it was terrific to have the opportunity to work with the Osprey so early in my tenure.

"While they have visited Ocean in the past, having them embarked for a few weeks for amphibious exercises was the next step in increasing our ability to operate more closely with our allies."

During their time on Ocean, Osprey aircraft landed marines from both nations ashore for wader exercises and undertook a low altitude training flight in the French Alps.

Blue Raptor also enabled medical teams from the Royal Navy and US Navy to work

together, including treating "casualties" from ground assaults.

Four personnel from a US Navy Medical Team were embarked in Ocean and got to compare their medical equipment with that used by RN medics.

The major limitation of the Osprey is the space in the back of the aircraft. There is only room for two patients on stretchers in the middle of the floor and up to four walking wounded.

In reality only one patient on a stretcher could be carried in the CASEVAC role once the aircraft was loaded with the medical team and force protection personnel.

Maj Ian Moore, Air Operations Officer and lead planner for the Osprey embarkation, said: "The MV-22 landing on Ocean's flight deck for the first time in five years represented the culmination of many months of work on both sides of the Atlantic.

"This marked the first important step ahead of the embarked period where we were able to demonstrate the USMC and Royal Navy's ability to work together at sea."

● Below: Ocean's ship's company gather with men from 45 Cdo and the USMC on the flight deck at the end of the exercise



## Meet the committee

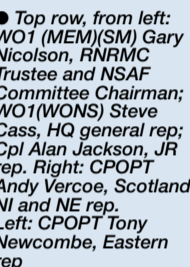
A FEW times a year the Naval Service Amenity Fund committee meets to decide where some of the largest in-Service grants we offer are allocated.

They represent the entire Royal Navy and as such, come from different branches, specialisations and areas around the country.

Often these grants are more than £10,000 and require close collaboration with our funding partners to obtain maximum funding possible.

Such funding partners or family charities include the Nuffield Trust for the Forces of the Crown, SSV, RN Sports Lottery, Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund and the Rebalancing Lives fund.

If you think you have a deserving project that could boost morale or increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Royal Navy, then seek out your regional representative or request a grant application form at [mygrant@rnrmc.org.uk](mailto:mygrant@rnrmc.org.uk) where you'll be notified of whether your project qualifies for the next major grants meeting.



● Top row, from left: WO1 (MEM)(SM) Gary Nicolson, RNRMC Trustee and NSAF Committee Chairman; WO1(WONS) Steve Cass, HQ general rep; Cpl Alan Jackson, JR rep. Right: CPOPT Andy Vercoe, Scotland, NI and NE rep. Left: CPOPT Tony Newcombe, Eastern rep

OTHER NSAF Committee members are:

WO1 (RSM) Phil Gilby, RM rep; Lt Nicholas Toms, officer rep; WO2 Ian Davies, RM rep; CPO (SR) Stephen Doyle, Western rep and POAC Stephen Hughes, FAA Representative



● Children from the group get their hands dirty at the Glasgow Science Centre

## Day out of this world

THE HMS Neptune Special Needs Support Group held a Family Event at Glasgow Science Centre funded by the RNRMC.

Thirty members of the group took part in many practical activities and experiments, particularly enjoying the Space Explorers show in the planetarium, which allowed them to take a trip around the solar system, calling in on Mars and Saturn.

Mum Emma Trotter said her son hadn't stopped talking about the day out and couldn't wait to return to the centre.

"These important events wouldn't be possible without the support of the RNRMC and we'd like to offer a huge amount of thanks from all our group members," said WO2 David Wynne.

# Sports projects top list of fund winners

A RAFT of sporting disciplines, associations and events within the Royal Navy are the biggest winners in the latest round of Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity funding for in-Service personnel.

More than £180,000 has been awarded to a variety of morale-boosting projects, amenities, sporting and leisure facilities following the latest round of grantmaking awarded by the charity's Naval Service Amenity Fund – with sports projects dominating the proceedings.

In the south west, RNAS Culdrose successfully secured nearly £35,000 towards a community climbing wall.

It is expected that as many as 2,000 serving personnel will use the wall per year with a further 600 dependants and civilians benefiting from the facility. Matched funding comes from the Sports Lottery and nearly £20,000 has been contributed by the air station's welfare fund.

The cool heights of Val Claret in Tignes

meanwhile await the Royal Navy Winter Sports Association, who receive £13,000 (plus £16,000 from the Sports Lottery), toward the cost of ski and snowboard hire for grassroots athletes and tuition at the RN Alpine Championships 2016.

To supplement overheads normally gained through corporate sponsorship, Royal Navy Field Gun (including Maritime Reserves and Royal Marines) received a £30,000 grant, which will be divided among 22 international teams.

The teams will once again face-off on June 4 at HMS Collingwood at the annual Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity Field Gun Competition.

Arbroath-based 45 Commando will be getting physical thanks to a Combat Conditioning Area (CCA). With additional contributions from the Nuffield Trust for the Forces of the Crown and Rebalancing Lives, the CCA is comprised of a 20 x 20 metre square of rubberised flooring and equipment locker; the latter will assist training for up to

60 ranks at any time.

Hundreds of Royal Marines, their dependants and members of the Royal Marines Association, will also benefit from a near-£40,000 contribution toward the development of a Junior Non-Commissioned Officers' Club at RMB Chivenor.

Patrons of St Margaret's Royal Naval Church and Memorial Chapel in HMS Neptune will benefit from the replacement of some of the oldest church furniture on the site.

Finally, as many as 620 Service children look set to have another fantastic season of summer camps made available to them through a variety of Kings Camps being held in bases around the country.

A £37,500 grant will reduce the costs of sending children to camp at HMS Temeraire, HMS Collingwood, HMS Neptune and HMS Drake.

To apply for a grant in the next round, which takes place in February, email [mygrant@rnrmc.org.uk](mailto:mygrant@rnrmc.org.uk) for information.

## Racing to help charity

MESS members of HMS Collingwood's Wardroom have donated funds to the RNRMC raised from a horseracing sports night.

The effort was undertaken as part of a launch event celebrating the newly-refurbished and rebranded Wardroom bar, 'Woody's' – a £30,000 project that was paid for by the charity's Naval Service Amenity Fund.

Around 70 people attended the night.

Wardroom members presented the £781.70 cheque to members of the charity's Naval Service Amenity Fund, who gathered at the training establishment to officially open the new space, formerly known as the 'Buzz Bar', and also decide on the next round of deserving projects.

As many as 6,700 serving personnel, 1,500 dependants and 500 civilian workers per year are expected to benefit as a result of the bar's refresh.

## Children can help to commemorate Jutland Payroll scheme award

THE Battle of the Somme was one of the bloodiest battles of WW1, with 20,000 British soldiers losing their lives on the first day of the battle.

In all, the campaign cost nearly 1,300,000 dead and wounded soldiers on both sides.

On the high seas the Royal

Navy took on the might of the German Navy in a move to control shipping lanes and freedom of movement in the Battle of Jutland.

On Friday October 14, Red, White and Blue Day 2016 will be joining the rest of the UK and remembering the momentous

events of 1916 which had a huge impact on the outcome of the war.

The day is an opportunity for schoolchildren to attend school dressed in red, white and blue and to donate just £1 to support the work of ABF The Soldiers' Charity, the RAF Benevolent

Fund, and the RNRMC.

You can get involved by registering on our website at [www.redwhiteblueday.co.uk](http://www.redwhiteblueday.co.uk)

You can also follow Red, White and Blue Day on social media using the hashtag #RWBDay or on Facebook at [Facebook.com/redwhiteblueday](https://www.facebook.com/redwhiteblueday)

THE RNRMC won the Best Fundraiser honour on behalf of the Royal Navy's payroll giving scheme (PRG) at the National Payroll Giving Excellence Awards 2015.

Led by the charity's Payroll Giving Business Development Executive Dean Rogers, the RNRMC has helped increase the

number of members of the Royal Navy's PRG scheme to 40 per cent of the Naval Service since 2008 (from 3,200 to 11,500).

Each year Dean visits 130 ships, submarines and Naval establishments around the world, highlighting the work of the RNRMC and its payroll giving scheme.



### GO THE DISTANCE! MAKE EVERY MILE COUNT!

You can help us wherever you are in the world by taking part in a run, row, swim or cycle.

Your challenge is to cover the number of miles you are from Twickenham before the Army v Navy rugby game. For example, if you are based in Portsmouth, you could row 80 miles. If you are based in Lympstone you could cycle 180 miles. You could do this individually or as part of a team, with your starting point being your unit, ship's current location or your affiliated town. Raising sponsorship will help your charity care for you, your family and oppos.

Register now and measure up to the challenge! Search 'Road to Twickenham' on the Virgin Money Giving website or contact: [fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk) T: 023 9254 8289

Registered charity in England and Wales (1117794) and Scotland (SC041898).

**the road to TWICKENHAM** [rnrmc.org.uk/events/roadtotwickenham](http://rnrmc.org.uk/events/roadtotwickenham)




### FUNDRAISER OF THE MONTH

**Daniel White**

IT'S not easy running the Great South Run dressed as a Stormtrooper (we imagine), so we were utterly amazed when Daniel White not only completed the race in 2hrs 29m 50s but that he did it with an injured leg!

Daniel also impressed in his fundraising efforts in the run-up to the big day. Amazing!

To date Daniel has raised in excess of £1,700 for RNRMC and Candle Lighters charity.





# Come on, only another 10,000 miles to go

THEY'VE run, rowed and cycled the distance to India and back, helping raise money for charity along the way.

A five-man team from HMS Richmond covered 10,500 miles while on a nine-month deployment to the Gulf and raised £2,000 to split between the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and Prostate Cymru.

While many sailors take their physical training very seriously, this small team pushed their bodies to the max by running, rowing and cycling the distance from the UK to the furthest point of their deployment and back again.

Aware of the length of time Richmond would be away from home waters, CPO Tim Cox set about developing a challenge to raise money for charity.

He said: "Deploying for nine months is a long time; it's important to keep fit and stay motivated. I wanted to stretch a physical challenge over the entire period, with the aim of raising as much money for charity as possible."

"I realised that with a small team of five it

would be possible to collectively run, row and cycle 10,500 miles, the distance to India and back."

The team made use of the onboard treadmills, rowers and bicycles to complete the challenge.

LS Taff O'Connell, the youngest member of the charity challenge team, said: "That was the hardest challenge I have done during a deployment, it required real discipline to put in the miles. But raising money for charity made it all worthwhile."

Sub Lt Tom Stapley-Bunten, who also took part in the event, said: "Finding time to put the miles in was the hardest part. I had to push myself every day to complete my contribution, 300 miles of rowing, 500 miles of running and 1,300 miles of cycling."

Richmond completed her contribution to Operation Sophia, the European-led operation to tackle the migration crisis in the Mediterranean, where she was involved in several rescues.

She was due to return to Portsmouth as *Navy News* went to press



● Rowing on the light deck are, from left, CPO Tim Cox, LS Taff O'Connell and PO Robbie Doyle

Picture: LA(Phot) Luron Wright

# Making light work of task

THE staff of the Royal Navy's Commander UK Mine Countermeasures Force based in Bahrain lifted the equivalent weight of a Hunt-class mine countermeasures vessel – raising almost £1,500 for charity.

Over seven days, 15 members of COMUKMCMFOR bench-pressed 615 tonnes (615,000kg).

The total weight was split between the staff, resulting in each member having to lift between 4,000-12,000kg each day for seven days.

Contributions from friends and family raised almost £1,500 which will be distributed between the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, the National Deaf Children's Society and Merchant Taylor's Guild School.

AB 'Bobby' Ball, the event organiser and an electronic warfare specialist, said: "This was a real challenge for the staff, with many of them never having lifted weights before, so we put a robust training plan in place so that everyone would be able to



lift their daily allowance."

He added: "Some of the staff enjoyed it so much that they lifted far more than they needed to, with some lifting the equivalent of a double-decker bus every day."

The COMUKMCMFOR staff were asked for ideas on events to raise money for charity during their six-month deployment to Bahrain.

Cdr Paul Ottewell, Commander COMUKMCMFOR, said: "I am mightily impressed with the grit,

determination and fitness shown by the team and how everyone overcame increasingly sore muscles, putting in maximum effort and achieving our goal ahead of schedule."

"As a mine warfare battle staff it was very appropriate that we should 'lift' an MCMV. I am immensely proud of my staff's achievements, not only in this challenge but how they have performed over a period of prolonged and diverse operations in the Middle East."

## Help to survive

BLANKETS, hats and other items of warm clothing have been collected at HMS Raleigh for people living on the streets of Plymouth.

The Royal Navy training base in Torpoint answered a plea for donations from Hope Baptist Church in Peverell.

The church runs the Plymouth City Soup Run on Monday evenings, providing hot food to homeless people.

LReg Nathan Blight, who organised the collection, said: "We try our best to support good causes here at HMS Raleigh and when the church contacted us we were keen to help."

The church is also putting together survival boxes and volunteers are appealing for shower gel, toothbrushes, shampoo and socks.

If anyone would like to get involved in the Plymouth City Soup Run either on a Sunday or Monday night they should contact [maddison@btinternet.com](mailto:maddison@btinternet.com)

## Breasting the waves

COMMANDOS cycled across the Atlantic in a bid to beat their ship back to the UK to raise money for charity.

Thirty Royal Marines and Army commandos aboard Navy support ship RFA Lyme Bay aimed to cover the 4,454 nautical (5,125 ordinary) miles from the Caribbean to Southampton on exercise bikes in the vessel's gym in under 15 days.

That's how long the amphibious ship, which has been in the region carrying out counter-narcotics patrols and providing humanitarian assistance in the wake of natural disasters – chiefly in Dominica and the Bahamas after storms Erika and Joaquin, was due to take to reach the UK from Cuba.

The challenge, on behalf of breast cancer charity Coppafeel, demanded a round-the-clock effort from the commandos, who form the Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief Troop aboard Lyme Bay.

To support the team visit <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/thecommandos>

## Tour De Rehab aids SSAFA

MEMBERS of the Regional Rehabilitation Unit in Portsmouth took part in a Tour De Rehab cycle ride to raise funds for SSAFA.

A team of four, LPT David Howarth, POPT Ben Booker, Flt Lt Emma Vidler and physio Simeon Wyatt, set off from HMNB Portsmouth to visit all the primary rehab care units in the south.

Over two days the cyclists called in at HMS Excellent, Thorney Island, Southwick Park, HMS Collingwood, HMS Sultan, Marchwood, and RM Poole, covering 108 miles.

## Doc goes for gold

RECENTLY-RETIRED UK Armed Forces Director of Rugby Lt Cdr 'Doc' Cox continued to maintain the link between Service rugby and raising money for the Royal British Legion.

Not content with abseiling down Northampton's Lift Tower, rugby friends talked him into wearing a golden morph suit to double the money raised.

In doing so, through the generosity of work colleagues, Servicemen from around the world and Old Northamptonian Rugby Club he raised £1,400 for the charity.

# Supporting Children

of Royal Navy and Royal Marines (serving and ex-serving) who are IN NEED, HARDSHIP or DISTRESS



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# Reservist follows in ancestor's footsteps

RESERVIST Cdr Mark Hankey followed in the footsteps of his great, great, great-grandfather during a visit to the Falklands.

Capt James Clark Ross arrived in Port Louis, East Falkland on April 6 1842, after some 136 days at sea.

Ross was no stranger to the harshness and remoteness of the Falklands, having experienced similar climates whilst exploring the Arctic some ten years earlier in search of the fabled North West Passage.

Trapped by ice, he embarked on a series of overland trips to map and explore the region when he discovered the Magnetic North Pole. Following on from this

success, as an experienced Arctic officer and leading expert on magnetism, he was ordered to go to explore Antarctica.

On the second of two such expeditions he called in to the Falkland Islands where he was invited by the Islands' first Lieutenant Governor, Lt Richard Clement Moody, to investigate the relative merits of Port Louis versus Port William as a future main settlement for the colony.

Ross chose Port William, which eventually became known as Stanley.

Cdr Hankey was delighted to see that Ross's name survives not only in Stanley on one of its main roads, but also on the

hull of a British Antarctic Survey ship that frequently visits the Islands.

"When Sir James Ross first set foot on the Falkland Islands there were fewer than 50 reported inhabitants and access to the UK was something people could only dream of," said Cdr Hankey.

"I am sure that he would be proud to not only see his name remembered but also the development of this unique, thriving and wonderful place.

"What took him many months to get to, can now be done in less than a day, his navigational and magnetic studies helped to make this possible."



# Solid as a rock

## Buster revels in squadron deployment

RESERVIST LH Buster Browne takes the wheel of a RIB during a patrol of the waters around Gibraltar.

Buster, 43, from HMS Sherwood, spent nine months deployed on the Rock with the Gibraltar Patrol Boat Squadron.

"As the vessel's coxswain it was my job to look out for any potentially threatening small craft in or around the British Gibraltar Territorial Waters," he said.

"The boat was powerful, reaching speeds of 40 knots, and could be used to transport supplies and personnel to and from British Naval vessels.

"The sea states went from calm to very rough, so it kept me on my toes.

"It was up to me to make a call on the weather and if it was safe for us to leave the harbour, I made the decision to return to base quite a few times."

Buster was one of four Reservists with the 26-strong squadron.

As well as patrolling the water, Buster was duty leading hand on a weekly rota with three other leading rates, responsible for the daily checks on-board HMS Sabre and HMS Scimitar, ensuring the vessels' alarm systems were operational and that the bilges were safe.

It wasn't all work though; Buster also had

time to keep up his fitness levels.

"A few of my colleagues and I would run up the steps on the Gibraltar Rock for exercise about twice per month," he said.

"This was about a six-and-a-half mile trip in total from Devil's Tower, where our camp was, up to the top of the Rock and back down again.

"The clouds came up and over the top of the Rock so you had to have your wits about you, just in case the weather turned for the worse."

Ahead of travelling aboard, Buster was asked to 'act up' a rank during his deployment to work as a leading seaman, although this became substantive from July this year.

He added: "I was the first line manager for eight able seamen, delegating tasks as needed. This was a great experience even though I was thrown in at the deep end a bit with my promotion, but I grabbed the opportunity to develop my leadership and management skills with open arms.

"Being away from home was a bit difficult at times, but my partner and I made it work. I hope to now take all of the experience I gained through this deployment and put it towards furthering my Royal Naval Reserve career."



● Keith Davis with Sub Lt Sampson-Jones

# Dedication's what you need to succeed

A 29-year-old from Birkenhead has been named the Royal Naval Reserve Young Officer of the Year.

Sub Lt Chris Sampson-Jones became the first recipient of a ceremonial sword donated by the MacRobert Trust, a charity which supports military training, during a ceremony at Britannia Royal Naval College.

Since joining the RNR in July

2012, Chris has impressed with his dedication to his training and his motivation to succeed.

He has also made a significant contribution to his unit, HMS Eaglet, undertaking a range of duties, including acting as the Officer of the Guard for the rededication of the WW1 memorial in Liverpool.

Chris, who currently works at the University of Chester, said:

"There have been numerous highlights throughout my training, from watching the sun set over the mid-Atlantic from the flight deck of HMS Iron Duke to singing while yomping across Dartmoor; the list goes on.

"There comes a point in life where you realise you can achieve pretty much anything if you are sufficiently motivated."



● Members of the Armed Forces Hindu Network celebrate Diwali at HMS President Pictures: POA(Phot) Owen Cooban

# Forces unite to celebrate Diwali

LONDON reservist unit HMS President was transformed as the Royal Navy hosted a festival of Diwali for the Armed Forces Hindu Network.

Prayers, the lighting of *diyas* (candles) and traditional Hindu dancing marked the event, which ended with a traditional communal meal.

Diwali, the festival of lights, is the highlight of the Hindu religious calendar, and marks the new year.

Surg Lt Cdr Manish Tayal, Chair of the Armed Forces Hindu Network, recalled his first experience of Diwali in the Royal Navy

"During the first phase of training at BRNC Dartmouth, you're not allowed out of the college. Diwali fell during this period, and I'd never before been away from home on Diwali, so I asked if I could visit my family for the day to celebrate with them. I was (rightly) told no, I understood but was a bit upset about it.

"On Diwali day, we had our usual schedule of serials. Returning from one of our sessions, I went into my cabin (which I shared with four others) and found 24 trainees plus our three assistant divisional officers in the cabin.

"The cabin was draped in orange, rows of tea lights, along with onion bhajis, samosas, Bombay mix, and drinks, and Indian music playing from a laptop.

"The group shouted 'Happy Diwali' and explained they'd noticed how upset I was about not being able to celebrate, so arranged a surprise Diwali party for me.

"They'd looked on the internet and found that Diwali celebrations consisted of orange, lights, food and music/dance - our assistant divisional officers bought the tea lights, food and drink from town, one of the group had lots of Indian music from a previous trip to India for a friend's wedding, and the orange was the plastic sheets we'd all been issued as part of our kit for training.



● Surg Lt Cdr Manish Tayal

So I explained the story of Diwali and its message to the group, and we had a great party."

Armed Forces Hindu Network Champion Rear Admiral Andrew McKay said: "Our message is that the Armed Forces includes people from all faiths and backgrounds, and all make a vital contribution to protecting the UK's security.

"As their champion, I am particularly proud of the Hindu sailors, soldiers, airmen who defend our nation's interests at home and abroad."

Diwali spiritually signifies the victory of light over darkness. The festival preparations and rituals typically extend over a five-day period, but the main festival night of Diwali coincides with the darkest, new moon night of the Hindu lunisolar month Kartika.



## Maintaining Naval links with school

YOU'VE just retired from your job as head of ceremonials at the Royal Navy after a spectacularly successful high-profile event.

Or maybe you are leaving the Naval Service after leading much-admired Royal Marines bands.

Where next?

You could probably do a lot worse than taking a post at the 'Cradle of the Navy'...

And that is exactly what Nigel Griffiths and Richard Harvey did – and both are now plying their respective trades at the Royal Hospital School.

The school was founded in 1712 by Greenwich Hospital in London, providing education for the orphans of seafarers both military and civilian.

It prepared youngsters for a life at sea, and prided itself on the teaching of such skills as navigation and general seamanship.

By the 20th Century the school was suffering lack of space, so the gift of land beside the River Stour in Suffolk from a shipping owner allowed for the creation of the school's current extensive campus in 1933.

A key element of the campus is a large parade ground, and much of the work put in by Nigel and Richard will be seen to best effect on that unforgiving square.

But with some pretty impressive credentials already – Nigel was in charge of the ceremonial side of the naming of new aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth in July 2014, while Richard served in all the Royal Marines Bands, and was Director of Music for those of Scotland, Plymouth and Lymstone – they are used to the limelight.

Both men took over from former Naval Service veterans.

Richard's predecessor as Bandmaster, Roger Jones, retired in November at the school's Remembrance Sunday Divisions after 25 years at the school – and that followed a couple of decades or more in the Royal Marines Band Service.

Richard left the Band Service in 2013 after 24 years and opened a coffee shop in Devon, but found himself being inexorably drawn back to music.

Now he works with the members of the various school ensembles – including the concert band, orchestra and big band – on the practical rather than academic side of music.

He has already tapped into his past life by taking the school's Corps of Drums to perform at a concert by the Royal Marines Association band in Portsmouth.

Nigel, who is also the school's deputy estate manager, followed in the precise footsteps of former Head of Ceremonial John Snoddon, who spent ten years ensuring pupils achieved the highest standards of drill.

John served 36 years in the Royal Navy, ending his career as a warrant officer.

One of his roles was as the Navy's Senior Drill Instructor – he was the man who trained the Senior Service participants at the official handover of Hong Kong in 1997 and at the Queen Mother's funeral in 2002.



● Royal Navy personnel escort two Range Rovers emblazoned with HMS Queen Elizabeth and RN logos Picture: Mike Dodd/Beadyeye.tv

## Queen Elizabeth crew in driving seat

ROYAL Navy personnel drove Jaguar and Land Rover vehicles at the Lord Mayor's Show parade in London to mark the start of a partnership with HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The Jaguar C-75 supercar, which features in the James Bond blockbuster *SPECTRE*, made its public debut at the show.

The bespoke car was accompanied by the new Jaguar XE sports saloon, a Jaguar

F-Type and two bespoke Range Rovers.

The appearance marked the start of Jaguar Land Rover's partnership with HMS Queen Elizabeth, the Royal Navy's future aircraft carrier and flagship.

Capt Simon Pettit, Senior Naval Officer of the carrier, said: "I am delighted that Jaguar Land Rover are supporting HMS Queen Elizabeth and I look forward to a long and

fruitful association."

HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales aircraft carriers will be the biggest and most powerful warships ever constructed for the Royal Navy.

They will be used by all three sectors of the UK Armed Forces and will provide eight acres of sovereign territory which can be deployed around the world.

# Duke sad to see the end of the Sea King

THE DUKE of York presented nine student aviators with their Wings – 34 years after his own parade.

Three pilots, four observers and two aircrewmembers were awarded their Wings at a ceremony at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall.

An air traffic controller was also presented with his Certificate of Competence.

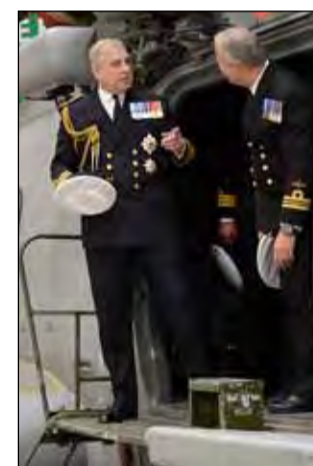
The ceremony, which marks the official start of a flying career within the Fleet Air Arm, was performed in the hangar of 849 NAS.

The parade marked two milestones; the last-ever Sea King helicopter Wings were awarded (the aircraft will go out of service in 2018) and the first Wings were awarded to students who have trained exclusively on the latest Merlin helicopter – the Mk2.

The Duke was based at Culdrose in the 1980s and carried out his flying training and joined his first frontline squadron at the station.

He said that it was "sad to see an old friend coming to the end of a career" but that he looked forward to a future where the "Fleet Air Arm continues to be of importance to the nation."

The CO of 849 NAS, Cdr Roger Kennedy, said: "Today is the culmination of several years



● Above: The Duke is shown around a Merlin Mk2; Left: Wings recipients celebrate

of hard work and dedication by the students, and a celebration of their success.

"Reaching the end of the course and being awarded Wings is a considerable achievement and there is no greater reward for all those involved in the training to see them standing here on the day.

"It is also the end of an era – we will never see another Sea King Wings Parade.

"The Sea King is still

operational and will continue to serve on the frontline until its capabilities transfer to the Merlin helicopter."

CO of RNAS Culdrose, Capt Adrian Orchard, said: "I wish those who have received their Wings today, the very best of luck in their future flying careers. They are graduating at a very exciting time for the Royal Navy and the Fleet Air Arm.

"We were delighted that fellow Fleet Air Arm aviator the Duke

of York could present the Wings.

"It was great to be able to show him the new Merlin and update him regarding the bright future facing Culdrose.

"With the Royal Navy's new aircraft carriers due to come into service soon, we are looking forward to operating large numbers of aircraft from the flight decks of ships again – something he will remember well from his flying days in the Fleet Air Arm."

## New tankers herald bright future for RFA

THE Royal Fleet Auxilliary has a new chief at the helm.

Cdre Duncan Lamb has been appointed Assistant Chief of Staff Afloat and Head of Service for the RFA, replacing Cdre Rob Dorey.

Cdre Dorey said: "The introduction of the four new Tide-class tankers, which will work alongside a growing modern Navy with new aircraft carriers, Type 45 destroyers, Astute

submarines, Merlin, Wildcat and F-35B aircraft, clearly demonstrates that the RFA has a secure future."

Cdre Lamb, who joined the RFA 38 years ago, said: "I firmly believe that we are well-placed to grasp the opportunities as well as face the inevitable challenges that the future holds.

"We have the exciting prospect of bringing four new tankers into service with the RFA, and will see a range of major warships

entering service which demonstrates defence's commitment to global influence."

Cdre Lamb has predominantly spent his career at sea with commands across the RFA flotilla.

Shore appointments have included Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff Afloat Support, Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff Strategy and Development, COMRFA Staff Warfare Officer and RFA Staff Warfare Officer to FOST.



● Cdre Duncan Lamb



● Lt Cdr Martin Ford with Rear Admiral Keith Blount

## Milestone in the air for Florry

A VETERAN member of Royal Navy Search and Rescue unit, HMS Gannet, achieved a significant landmark in military aviation... flying for over 7,000 hours – or 41 weeks – or ten months.

Lt Cdr Martin Ford – known to his colleagues as Florry – spent three years with the Prestwick-based SAR operation and achieved his milestone on exercises, training and on rescue missions around the UK and on operations abroad.

Florry, 52, who is from Redruth in Cornwall, has also seen action in the Gulf War and in Kosovo.

He said: "It is an honour to achieve 7,000 hours flying with the Royal Navy and particularly within the Search and Rescue sphere. I have been lucky enough to fly with some great people."

The unit's CO, Lt Cdr Charles Fuller, said: "This is a tremendous achievement. All those hours are packed with bravery and skill, whether it was during one of his 950 rescues in the depths of a Scottish winter or in action during the Gulf War. If you are in trouble, you want to see Florry coming to rescue you."

Another Gannet officer won the Prestigious Green Endorsement for his part in a daring rescue on Scotland's highest mountain, Ben Nevis.

Lt Jon Green, a senior pilot and the unit's Executive Officer, was involved in the search for two missing climbers on the iconic peak in January last year.

Hampered by storm-force winds and driving snow, the mountain rescue team (MRT) were unable to reach the men, leaving Gannet's Sea King helicopter as the climbers' last hope.

Showing exceptional skill, judgement and bravery in the conditions, Jon and his crew were able to drop the MRT close to the stricken climbers, who were recovered to safety alive.



● Lt Jon Green

## Tribute as CPO raises £400,000

A ROYAL Navy CPO who has raised £400,000 for Help for Heroes by leading a group that sets up and leads walking challenges and fund collections across the UK has been honoured by a charity.

Andrew Gibbs, 45, set up and leads Doing it for Heroes, a group of dedicated volunteers raising funds to help provide better facilities for British Servicemen and women wounded or injured in the line of duty.

Since setting it up over seven years ago he has inspired around 35 people taking part in each challenge.

He has been named as the UK's 388th Point of Light and received his award at West Ham's football ground.

He was inspired to set up the charity in 2008 on the return journey from an eight-month deployment in the Middle and Far East. They set up a walk from Glasgow to Edinburgh carrying a Help for Heroes stretcher and raised £14,000 for the charity and their work has continued from there.

"It is an immense honour to receive this award," said Andy. "It is all about the team that helped me achieve all that we have done for Help for Heroes."

First established by President George H.W Bush in 1990, more than 5,000 US Points of Light volunteers have been recognised in the USA. UK Points of Light was launched in April 2014.

## Pair share love of rum

TWO former Royal Navy officers are venturing into the world of commerce.

Vincent Noyce and Giles Colligan, who first met at Dartmouth in 1989, both served in HMS Illustrious and Nottingham.

The duo, who live in Portsmouth, have formed the Rum Club, which began selling rum online in November last year.

Vince said: "Men and women leaving the Service should not be afraid of the world of commerce, particularly being told they know nothing about it after years of serving their country."

"A huge amount of what happens in daily business in the Royal Navy draws direct parallels to the civilian world. Not least basic administration, organisation and leadership – all of which are essential to the success of any business."

For further details visit [www.the-rum-club.com](http://www.the-rum-club.com)



Is this really where you sleep dad?

**LITTLE Rosie Campbell has fun with the curtains in the sleeping quarters on a Royal Navy submarine.**

The five-year-old, daughter of LH Paul Campbell, was one of 130 loved ones who enjoyed a rare glimpse into life aboard Artful as the boat held a families' day.

Friends and family joined the crew of the Navy's newest Astute-class submarine at HMNB Clyde, where they were given an opportunity to visit the vessel during a day of fun activities.

The Royal Navy's Silent Service seldom allows people to visit the nuclear-powered submarines, so the day was a unique look into the crew's lifestyle, operations and life on board.

"It was fantastic to welcome so many of the crew's family and friends on board Artful," said CO Cdr Scott Bower.

"It can often be difficult for those closest to us to imagine what life is like for the serving submariner."

"This day has hopefully provided an insight to what life beneath the waves is like – the challenges and attractions of the job."

Artful left Barrow-in-Furness on August 13 last year and arrived at her new home on the Clyde seven days later.

Since then the crew have been putting the submarine through her paces during a period of intense sea trials.



● Above left: AB(TS) Simon Wassell explains what goes on in the control room; Above: Colette Barr climbs down into the boat's casing; Left: Maureen Park, from Carlisle, with Chef David Slater



Pictures: LA(Phot) Guy Pool

It was formally accepted into the Royal Navy in December.

The Astute-class vessels are the most advanced and powerful submarines Britain has ever sent to sea, and one person who was particularly impressed was Alan Hill, grandfather of crewmember Lt Aaron Williams.

Alan said: "What a fantastic piece of kit. The day has been

such a success.

"What a great opportunity this has been to gain an insight into what my grandson does for a living."

Helen Holland, the mother of Artful's Lt Richard Holland, agreed: "Apart from the weather, the day has been fantastic."

"I can now understand how the men on board go to sea below

the surface for months on end without needing to communicate with the outside world."

Artful is the third of the Royal Navy's new Astute-class attack submarines.

The 7,400 tonne vessel was constructed by BAE Systems in Barrow and is based, along with her sister submarines Astute and Ambush at Faslane.



● CO Cdr Daniel Thomas

## CO tries to curry favour

THE Commanding Officer of HMS Kent tested himself in the ship's galley as he took on the challenge of running a curry night for his crew.

Helped by Executive Officer Lt Cdr Robert Pearce and Assistant Logistics Officer Mid Andrew Pandyan, Cdr Daniel Thomas prepared a chicken curry with all the usual trimmings, using a recipe supplied by Mid Pandyan.

The CO and XO also served the crew, who were rather shocked to see them in the galley.

After the meal both stayed on to help clear up the galley, with Lt Cdr Pearce showing great prowess in drying dishes.

It was an incredibly successful evening and HMS Kent was happy to report there have been zero instances of 'Delhi belly' in its wake.



● Mid Andrew Pandyan

## Suite fit to bear Sue's name

A VETERAN civilian worker at HMS Sultan has been honoured with a new fitness suite bearing her name.

For the past 11 years Sports and Recreation Centre (SARC) Administrator Sue Berrow, pictured right, has been putting together sports programmes, arranging gym membership, handling bookings for clubs and societies, and generally supporting physical training staff.

Recognised for her contribution towards the ongoing success of the SARC, the new fitness suite has been designed to offer a quieter alternative.

Creating a 'female-friendly facility' it also provides an area where members of the Armed Forces, who are preparing to return to work following childbirth, can bring their babies as they train.



Sue said: "I just kept laughing when I heard, as I honestly thought it was a joke until all of a sudden the boss turned up with a plaque. I am a little taken aback, but I'm very pleased, and I think it's quite an honour to have it up there."

"Because keeping fit has

always been my hobby, to work in this environment is just the best, and it's a place I enjoy working in and working out in."

CPOPTI Lee Derbyshire said: "We know that some of the girls aren't fans of going into an area where some of the guys are lifting big heavy weights and looking quite sweaty, so we decided that we wanted a female-focussed area."

Cdr Sophie Shaughnessy, the Executive Officer of HMS Sultan who formally opened the suite, said: "Sue has given a number of years of extremely dedicated, loyal and cheerful service to all the people who come in to the SARC."

"So as a thank-you to Sue and to preserve her forever in SARC history, we decided it appropriate to name the new fitness suite after her."



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\*Rum may be substituted based on stock available



## Success of first meet

THE inaugural presentation to the Naval Servicewomen's Network established at BRNC was delivered by the executive assistant of the establishment's captain, Lt Max Stiles.

She drew an audience – men and women, cadets from the college, personnel from HMS Raleigh and veterans – eager to hear how she earned her dolphins; she was one of the first three women in the RN to serve in a submarine on patrol.

Members of the Britannia Association also had similar stories to share; one retired WRNS officer told the NSN about the time she spent an unscheduled night on a USN submarine during AUTEK in the late 1980s. Her presence was such a milestone that the crew auctioned her sleeping bag for charity!

After the presentation, female cadets hosted recruits at dinner in the impressive setting of Dartmouth's Senior Gun Room. Through letters sent subsequently recruits said thank you "for enlightening us and making us look more positively into a future careers in the Royal Navy" and "it was engaging and inspiring".

Event organiser Lt Cdr Nicky Cullen said: "I am delighted at how well our inaugural NSN event went at BRNC; we certainly had a level of diversity that I wasn't expecting, but we definitely managed to capture the NSN's tag line and 'inspire and empower' our young officers and recruits, as well as 'share' successes with others. I am also extremely pleased that BRNC and Raleigh have now established a stronger bond through the NSN and we intend to arrange further events for our female trainees in the future."

## Neil's GEMS of an idea saves you £350k and nets him £10k

# Tregenza's bonanza

IT MAY be small, but a little widget invented by Culdrose senior rating Neil Tregenza has saved the Merlin community more than £350,000 – and netted the engineer a cash reward.

The simple device – the chief petty officer dubs it the 'Triggs Extraction Tool' – is now being used around the globe by his fellow helicopter engineers, meaning Merlin rotorheads no longer have to be sent all the way back to Cornwall to have a routine component replaced but can be fixed in theatre. It's saved hundreds of thousands of pounds – and means the helicopters are not out of action for as long.

CPO Tregenza, who serves with the Merlin training squadron, 824 NAS, was inspired by the sight of a rotorhead being delivered to the workshop in Culdrose from the Gulf, where the helicopters are operating around the clock.

A crucial bolt, involved in connecting the rotor blade to the main rotorhead, had seized in place. This had prevented a routine component replacement from taking place and had therefore required that the entire rotorhead be detached from the airframe and brought back to the UK.

Neil, who's worked as a mechanic his entire career in the Royal Navy, recognised that similar tools which he had at home could – with some modification – be used to extract the bolt from the rotorhead.

Beyond saving the MOD a lot



of dosh, his brainwave has earned him the MOD's GEMS award of over £10k; the scheme recognises money-saving and innovation by Service personnel and civilians across the Armed Forces.

The award was presented by the head of the Fleet Air Arm, Rear Admiral Keith Blount, who was introduced to the Triggs Extraction Tool by its inventor

(pictured above by PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow) in the Merlin repair facility.

"It was a bit of a light-bulb moment to be honest," Neil explained. "I had the idea, designed it and then used the facilities at the Culdrose workshops to make the tool myself."

"It worked first time! It is great that any idea, no matter how small it may seem, can have such a positive impact."

"It has made things a lot easier for the aircraft engineers in theatre, but unfortunately, now that I have been given an award, I am going to have to buy the cakes!"

That's not a bad thing...

"As ideas go, this is right up there with the best of them," Rear Admiral Blount said. "Everyone will benefit from this invention and it ensures that we get the maximum out of our aircraft whilst they are in theatre."

## Where to look

### RNTMs

RNTM 338/15 Engineering General Service Training Return of Service Course List – amendment to Marine and Weapon Engineering Technician Training  
RNTM 342/15 The Submarine Service – Defence Connect  
RNTM 343/15 Faraday – Engineering General Service and Engineering Submarine Service revised branch badge availability at clothing stores  
RNTM 354/15 Narrowboats Emma, Andrew and Trafalgar – 2016 availability

### Galaxy briefs

28-2015 Reform to the Service Complaints Process

27-2015 1SL to all Navy Command TLB civil servants and all civil servants who support the maritime domain across Defence

26-2015 SDSR 15 – Delivering the most modern Navy in the world  
25-2015 Introduction of the Scottish rate of income tax from tax year 2016-17

### DINS

DIN 2015DIN03-026 Naval Service Boat Operating Limitations  
DIN 2015DIN05-035 Changes to the structure of the RN Media Communications and Engagement organisation  
DIN 2015DIN09-032 Buckingham Palace Royal Garden Parties 2016 – Naval Service Personnel



## 'appy days

WE'RE introducing a whole new section to the Royal Navy website dedicated to you as the Service person.

Named MyNavy (it took us some time to come up with that...), this is the start of a new approach, bringing useful information to your fingertips.

Our first challenge was to find a way to bring to life the details of your Royal Navy career and lifestyle package in a useful and engaging way.

We took a look at the current tools available to you then scratched our heads a bit at the language and presentation.

The kind people of Greenwich Hospital stepped in to help, offering guidance and support to make sure that this is set up to be useful to you, and offer some independent thinking on the issues of life both inside and outside the Royal Navy or Royal Marines

After a quick rethink and a new approach to the structure, we've designed something – downloadable as a web app to your mobile phone or tablet – which lets you quickly run through where you are in your career and reckon up the various benefits to you in Service life.

There's more work to be done, and there's still some language to unravel, but take a look and let us know what you think – or feed it back through your divisional officer.

The MyNavy section works on your PC, mobile phone or tablet (admittedly DII's Internet Explorer 8 browser is likely to defeat it but do take a look on Google Chrome).

We want to know how this could be more useful to you. Do you already know the full package of benefits available to you? Do you need to know where to go for help or advice? What would make a difference to you using this and telling your oppo about it?

Life in the Service has its own demands, so we've put together something that tells you what's available to you at your fingertips.

Take a look at [www.royal-navy.mod.uk/mynavy](http://www.royal-navy.mod.uk/mynavy).

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# No blind eye to safety

## NavySafe

THIS is the first in a series of articles from the Navy Safety Centre, writes Lt Nicholas Hallatt. We'll start by looking at what it is, what it does, and how this is important to us all.

The headline may not seem too exciting at first glance, but I encourage you to read on and hopefully you will realise that what we do and are trying to achieve is of huge importance to you and your friends and colleagues.

Every year there are numerous avoidable accidents in the Royal Navy which lead to damage to equipment – and, more importantly, our people.

The effect of such accidents on your health and career could be devastating. It could even cost you your life – reason enough for you to be interested.

'Health and safety' has become one of those dreaded phrases which, for many people, conjures up images of people in suits, carrying clipboards, who seem to put as many obstacles as they possibly can in the way of you

making the RN a safer place to work.

However, we realise that no matter how many 'bright ideas' and buzzwords we come up with, none of it will be successful without your input.

Creating a safer working environment isn't just about ticking boxes to keep people happy, and making sure you don't get caught doing things wrong. It's about wanting to do things the right way, and making sure everyone around you is doing the same.

Over the coming months we'll be looking at ways we can all contribute to achieving a safer Navy, and what can happen when we let things slip.

In the meantime, I encourage you to visit our NavySafe site on DII and take a look at our video 'I chose to look the other way'.

It should leave you in no doubt how important it is that we all take responsibility when it comes to safety matters, and what can happen when you choose to turn a blind eye.

That's our contribution to

## Event will inspire women

SENIOR women from across the Armed Forces and the Civil Service will join Armed Forces Minister Penny Mordaunt at a Women in Defence/Inspiring the Future event at the Ministry of Defence in London on the morning of January 12.

Based around a 'speed career dating' event in MOD Main Building, the programme will see up to 100 young women meeting and networking with representatives of the Forces and external organisations, gaining an insight into the opportunities available to them after school, college or university.

The event is being held in collaboration with Inspiring the Future as part of a wider campaign which aims to broaden young women's minds to a range of jobs in a variety of sectors.

The intention is to showcase the roles and jobs that are available within Defence where women are hugely under-represented.

While men make up around 90 per cent of the Forces, many 'firsts' are now being recorded for women across almost all sectors of defence, the latest including the first Tornado squadron commander, submariners and senior lawyers.

The event will introduce young women to the wide variety of jobs available in the defence sector, including engineering, physical training, human resources, medical and dental, pilot, strategist, ship's captain, lawyer, accountant, chef, driver, logistician, project manager and many more.

See [www.inspiringthefuture.org](http://www.inspiringthefuture.org) for more information.

# Major media impact

GLOBAL media coverage of lifesaving efforts which saw 4,747 people rescued in the Mediterranean earned the men and women of HMS Bulwark the highest accolade in the maritime media world.

The assault ship's two-month stint on Operation Weald – Britain's initial response to the migrant crisis in the central Mediterranean – made the best contribution to a positive image of the Senior Service in 2015 (such as the rescue effected, right, pictured by LA (Phot) JF Massey).

And in so doing, Bulwark collected the Desmond Werrern Fleet Award – presented in honour of the former *Daily Telegraph* journalist, Fleet Street's last true naval correspondent.

For the past 20 years, awards have been held in the late writer's name, in 2015 hosted at the Institute of Directors in London and attended by more than 150 people.

As well as applauding Cdr Gavin Edward, Bulwark's public relations officer during Weald (as well as the head of the ship's weapon engineering personnel), guests also rose for Rear Admiral Chris Parry, who took the Desmond Werrern Media Award for best journalistic contribution.

The Falklands veteran and former CO of HMS Fearless has been challenging infractions of UN law via a wide range of publications and conferences, championing the rights of innocent passage for mariners and underlining the importance of the oceans for global trade.

The Mountbatten Award for best maritime book – the seafaring equivalent of the Man Booker Prize – went to Professor Barry Gough for his *Pax Britannica*, a history of the RN's role in the British Empire between 1815 and 1914.

*National Geographic* and Windfall Films took the



Donald Gosling Award for best TV programme for their documentary *Raising the Costa Concordia*.

The National Museum of the Royal Navy's impressive revamped website – it acts as the interactive, multimedia hub for six RN/RMs museums – received the First Sea Lord's Digital Media Award.

The work of Prof Alastair Couper from Cardiff University

in maritime education and research earned him the Maritime Foundation's Maritime Fellowship Award.

And veteran documentary maker Chris Terrill, who has repeatedly recorded life on the front line with both the Royal Marines and RN in a series of TV programmes and books, was singled out for a lifetime achievement award by the Maritime Foundation.

## Fighting fit in fighting ships

A NEW website aimed at giving RN and RM personnel a 'one-stop shop' for all things sporting, adventurous training and physical education is due to go live this month.

NavyFit – hosted on the home page of the Defence Gateway – replaces the former PDev Portal.

Once logged on personnel will find a wealth of information about the 40 sports associations – and how to join – plus the various adventurous training opportunities available.

There is also a whole area devoted to physical education with advice on health activities such as quitting smoking and understanding alcohol limits, information on the Royal Navy fitness test plus a new weekly highlight of fitness plans, lifestyle tips and diet and nutrition information.

"The strategy behind NavyFit is to show that time is not a barrier to exercise," explained Capt Mike Young, Head of Physical Development. "Research by HMS Temeraire has demonstrated that personnel like to work out three times a week but do not always find the time."

### NAVY fit

"The new NavyFit weekly updates in particular will aim to give a variety of exercise programmes that can be completed in a shorter space of time – in just 20 minutes for example – but at a higher intensity."

The launch will be supported by videos featuring personnel during daily workouts, posters around all establishments and units, and a variety of interactive material on social media.

"We would urge personnel to have a look at NavyFit on the Defence Gateway and understand the vast array of sporting and AT opportunities available to them – and for their chain of command to be aware fitness is mandated in the Royal Navy and people should feel able to take part," added Capt Young.

The Defence Gateway is accessible via a link on the RN Intranet and personnel must ensure they have an account to be able to log on.

# A Haiyan mighty fine effort

FLEET Commander Vice Admiral Sir Philip Jones presented his Commendations to Royal Navy, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and civilian staff for their outstanding efforts.

He presented Samantha 'Sam' Chapman (pictured right), a Royal Navy press officer from Petersfield, with a Chief of Joint Operations Commendation on behalf of his colleague at PJHQ – Lt Gen John Lorimer.

The 34-year-old was rewarded in recognition of her "outstanding contribution" in telling the story of efforts by the Royal Navy to help the people of the Philippines in the wake of the devastating Typhoon Haiyan in late 2013.

Sam was onboard HMS Daring to cover the destroyer's involvement in an exercise with Australian, Malaysian, New

Zealand and Singapore navies.

Instead the Type 45 was diverted east – and Sam volunteered to stay on board the ship as the media officer, remaining with the destroyer until HMS Illustrious arrived three weeks later and she then moved across to the carrier to continue the media effort.

Her citation read: "HMS Daring was under an intense media spotlight but Sam's modest demeanour and strong interpersonal skills meant she became a highly effective member of the Daring team. Once at the islands the media interest was insatiable and the pace of action on board tremendous but Sam matched this at every turn with insightful and imaginative press releases."

"She was invaluable in providing a positive profile of the UK's assistance during this crisis in a manner that exemplified her professionalism and passion for the Royal Navy, the Ministry of Defence and the UK government."

A former regional newspaper journalist, Samantha is married to Lt Liam Flatt. He was on board Illustrious when the carrier



also sailed to the Philippines and she was able to briefly reunite with him before flying home three days later.

Sam said: "To have been awarded a commendation – and also to be the only civilian – is an honour of which I am extremely proud. My time on Daring for Op Patwin was a test of everything I know – professionally as a PR expert and journalist – but also

as a human being by witnessing what these people had lived through and the fact they were still smiling and welcoming us."

"To be able to tell the story of the kindness and strength of my Naval colleagues in their hour of need was an honour and an unforgettable experience."

Commendations were awarded at a ceremony in Portsmouth with 37 personnel recognised.

## NAVAL FAMILIES FEDERATION

We've had another busy month here at the NFF. Here are a few highlights:

### Taking your concerns to the top

Our director Anna Wright had a successful meeting with the minister responsible for personnel, welfare and veterans, Mark Lancaster. The three topics which she drove to the top of the meeting's agenda were manpower, service accommodation and education, highlighting evidence gained from your feedback regarding those areas. The minister was very receptive and took everything on board. We look forward to reporting back on developments and progress on these issues. Watch this space.

### Changes to Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) for families returning from overseas

Previously spouses and older children in Armed Forces families were not eligible for state benefits, such as JSA when they initially returned to the UK after their posting, because they had not been residing in the country for the previous three months. Now this policy has been changed, and has been updated to ensure that they are no longer at a disadvantage.

It is a great example of how we, as the NFF, can use evidence provided by you to work with central government to influence policy reviews. Evidence from a Naval family, who contacted us, has instigated this change to policy (full details can be found on our website, [www.nff.org.uk](http://www.nff.org.uk)) and crucially highlights how we really can champion your voice and get it heard at senior levels, so please, please, please continue

## Contact NFF

■ 023 9265 4374/admin@[nff.org.uk](http://nff.org.uk)/Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.

Or visit [www.nff.org.uk](http://www.nff.org.uk) for news, our free, quarterly Homeport magazine and monthly e-update.



to share your views, concerns and opinions with us.

### The NFF's new Regional Liaison Team

We welcome three new members of staff to our Regional Liaison Team, who will enable us to develop our activities and engagement across the UK and mean that we will be able to provide an enhanced local interface between the Naval Service, your families and those organisations which have a responsibility to support you.

The team comprises: Jenny Ward (Regional Team Manager, also responsible for the Midlands); Nicola Thompson (South of England); new recruits Mark Harris (Scotland and Northern Ireland); Jenna Hargreaves (Northern England) and Alexandra Aspinall (for Wales and the West of England).

Finally, a thank you to all those who have contacted us during 2015, which has been our 12th year offering a voice to the Naval Family. We'd like to wish all *Navy News* readers a happy new year and look forward to hearing from you in 2016.



## The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust

Supporting The RNBT Family



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## Award for local hero

A TEWKESBURY cadet was honoured by his community when Air Vice Marshall Sir 'Dusty' Miller, Chairman of the Armed Forces Special Interest Group of The Honourable Company of Gloucestershire, presented LC Will Fish (pictured above) the Award for Service to the Community of Gloucestershire for 2015.

Will's service is recognised throughout the town as exemplary and making a difference to many people, from support at the Abbey, assistance to pensioners, fundraising in the Town Hall for the Mayor's charity tea mornings as well as being a stalwart at the unit.

Special mention was also made of his support during the flood emergency of recent years.

The presentation of the award and a cheque for £250 was made in the presence of the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, Dame Janet Trotter, Will's parents and representatives of the Corps and unit.

The unit celebrated Trafalgar 210 in style with a mess dinner at Guphill Manor Hotel.

The dinner was attended by 70 unit staff, committee members and partners, local dignitaries and Sea Cadet staff from other units in the district, and from as far afield as Avon, Somerset and South Wales.

The stars of the evening were the cadets, who not only acted as stewards, but also performed such traditional duties as piping VIPs aboard.

The occasion provided an ideal opportunity to present to Ted Keeper the Captain Sea Cadets Award for long and meritorious service to the unit.

Ted, an ex-Fleet Air Arm Swordfish pilot, has been an enthusiastic member of the unit committee for 35 years.

The presentation was made by unit chairman Sarah Griffiths.

When Tewkesbury unit CO Sub Lt (SCC) Tristan Cooper RNR heard that a local pre-school group was looking for a boat for its play garden, he immediately made contact and offered the group a Bosun dinghy hull that had reached the end of its sailing life.

With the assistance of the cadets the old boat was loaded onto a trailer and taken the 15 miles to Shurdington Pre-School near Cheltenham, where staff set it into the garden.

In mid-October the old boat – renamed Bertie by the children, and by now brightly painted and looking very smart in its garden setting, was duly 'launched' by the children and their teachers, who were all in fancy dress for the occasion.

Tewkesbury XO Lt (SCC) Ron Matthews RNR expressed on behalf of the CO his delight at seeing the old boat, which had seen much service with the Royal Navy and the Sea Cadets over the years, now set to give many more years of fun and play for the children.

# Plymouth Drake put on a show for inspection

PLYMOUTH Drake unit has passed a formal inspection with flying colours.

The unit's Royal Naval Parade, staged at HMS Vivid in Devonport Naval Base, is a formal inspection undertaken every two years by the Corps to ensure units are run and perform according to the Corps' mandate.

This year's inspection involved the checking of documentation and records for training, health and safety and general administration.

The cadets themselves are also assessed and asked to demonstrate elements of their training syllabus.

Cdr Nigel Morton, Sea Cadet Area Officer, inspected the guard of honour with the unit's commanding officer Chief Petty Officer Robert Adamson.

Cadets also demonstrated to guests and parents skills such as weapons handling, first aid, piping, marine engineering, physical training and seamanship.

Among the guests were the Lord Mayor of Plymouth and members of the RNA and RMA.

Unit chairman Helen Palmer said: "It was a very enjoyable evening where the unit invited prominent guests from the local community, Armed Forces and parents to witness what being in the Sea Cadets is all about."



● Members of Plymouth Drake Sea Cadet unit on parade at HMS Vivid  
Picture: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies

# Drummers shine at celebration

NEWTOWNARDS cadets were closely involved with ceremonies to mark the birthday of the Prince of Wales at Hillsborough Castle, County Down.

The unit's Drum Corps started their training weeks before their Royal Naval Parade at the end of October.

The royal gun salute at Hillsborough was the cadets' first public event, and they turned in a polished performance alongside the Band of the Army Cadet Force.

The cadets had been travelling to Ballymena to practise alongside their Army colleagues, and put extra time and effort in by coming to cadets early each night and practising at home.

The Officer in Charge of Newtownards, Sub Lt (SCC) Neal Somerville RNR, said: "This is an amazing thing for the cadets to be a part of – the qualifications they will be able to achieve from this Drum Corps is incredible."

"I am extremely proud of the progress that cadets have made, and I am very proud to be in command of such a talented unit – they manage to amaze me with everything they take part in and do."

"The Newtownards Sea Cadets Drum Corps are a credit to not only themselves and the unit but also the North Down and Ards borough."

"They are an inspiration to all young people to learn new skills and challenge themselves to try something new."

# Cardiff plays vital role

CARDIFF unit cadets were once again asked by the Cardiff Central branch of the Royal British Legion to attend and help at the opening of the Field of Remembrance at St Johns Church in the city centre.

Cadets and staff attended the initial church service before helping the branch to open the Field of Remembrance.

They then helped position memorial crosses with and for the associations who attended.

The Legion's Annual Festival of Remembrance Wales was held in St David's Hall.

Cardiff cadets again had vital roles, by selling programmes and poppies to patrons, many of whom commented favourably on the cadets' courtesy and standards of dress.

The cadets also took part in the muster parade on stage, alongside the RBL and ex-Service associations.

Not only did they parade the unit's standard, but they also had the honour of carrying the War Widows' standard and that of the Missions to Seamen.

This year TS Cardiff was joined for the first time on stage by cadets from Llanelli unit.

Lynne Woodyatt of the RBL said they were grateful to the cadets and staff who assisted at the evening's event, which was attended by the Lord Mayor of Cardiff, the Lord Lieutenant of South Glamorgan, and the Naval Regional Commander for Wales and Western England, Cdre Jamie Miller.

# Royalist video

A VIDEO charting the progress of the Corps' new flagship TS Royalist from keel-laying to operating at sea with cadets on board is now available on the Sea Cadets website – see 'Flagship Build' at [www.sea-cadets.org/flagshipbuild](http://www.sea-cadets.org/flagshipbuild)

# Feeling the pressure

BRITAIN'S young people admit to feeling 'stressed' for almost five hours a day, according to a report commissioned by the Sea Cadets.

It revealed that youngsters aged between 12 and 18 are exposed to a number of worries and fears on a daily basis, including having too much homework, potentially being laughed at for what they are wearing and 'just not fitting in'.

The number one worry is the pressure of whether they will pass their exams at the end of the year.

Social media adds to the anxiety – more than one in ten teens are worried about whether they're being left out of group messages on WhatsApp or Facebook.

A spokesman for the Sea Cadets, which commissioned the study to highlight the issues young people face and how they can get support, said: "There will be millions of people out there who can sympathise with the stresses and worries that teenagers face."

"Whether it's bullying, their education or even both, it's enough to make a young adult feel isolated at school."

"The challenges teenagers face are endless – and twice as tough for youngsters at a time in their lives when they're still working out who they are and what they can be."

"What they really need to realise is that they're not alone. Many people will have already faced these worries and there will

be others who are going through the same thing.

"But despite this, talking to teachers, friends and family is the most important thing to do – a problem shared is a problem halved."

And being a Sea Cadet can help you with that – the national charity works with 14,000 young people each week in 400 UK towns, building confidence through challenge and a safe environment where young people can work out who they are.

The research revealed six in ten teens are still feeling the stress and worry right through the evening when they're supposed to be relaxing at home.

They'll have at least one bad night's sleep a week and one in five doesn't talk to their family to try and help out.

During a typical day, teens will get stressed or worried about four different things so by the time the weekend comes, a third will be feeling relieved while four in ten will be feeling excited.

A further one in five will be happy, but already dreading Monday coming along.

Thirty one per cent of teens said that if they're having a hard day, they don't feel they could talk to their teachers and only seven per cent felt they could 'always' talk to them.

In fact, four in ten teens agreed that they wished their teachers did more to stop or prevent bullying at their school, while 30 per cent said they wished their teachers were less 'scary'.

One in ten don't believe they 'belong' at their school or college and over half have admitted to

lying about something important to try to fit in with peers.

Another stress many teens are facing is their future career and education, in fact they'll think about it four times every week.

The spokesman added: "It's sad to see that many teens are worried about approaching their teachers when they're feeling stressed or worried."

"Cadets tell us that taking part in their local unit, gives them a sense of security and many describe it like a second family where they find positive role models and get support from trained volunteers."

"The team work and confidence cadets build through Sea Cadets can help them harness the challenges they face now to help them better navigate whatever the future holds."

## The top 30 most common stresses for teenagers

- Passing exams
- Having too much homework
- Missing a homework deadline
- Having to stand up in front of class and talk
- Being asked to answer a question by a teacher and not knowing the answer
- Just not fitting in
- Potentially being laughed at for what they're wearing
- Having spots
- Their shape/size
- Whether they are going to get into trouble
- Being bullied
- Losing a valuable item
- Not having a boyfriend/girlfriend
- Spelling tests
- Being left out of a group conversation on WhatsApp or social media
- Having the most up-to-date phone
- Not being clever
- Not being good at sports
- Not being invited to a party/concert/gig
- Having to queue for lunch near older students
- Not having the same curfew as friends
- Potentially being laughed at for their hair cut
- How long it takes for someone to reply to a text or similar
- When parents' evening looms
- Secrets 'getting out' at school
- Being peer pressured into smoking, drinking and/or taking drugs
- Being the shortest in the class
- Having to wear glasses
- Someone picking on you over social media
- Being the tallest in the class.

# Trafalgar Night dinner at ~~RAF~~ HMS Halton

THE small contingent of Royal Naval Training Management Officers at RAF Halton (the RAF's Phase 1 recruit training establishment) were so loath to miss Trafalgar Night, that they 'commandeered' the officers' mess from the RAF for the evening and organised their own function, incorporating all of the nautical tradition, pageantry and heritage that has come to be associated with the event.

And local Sea Cadets were invited to help out at the event.

Lt Chris Gough RN, a Training Manager at the Defence Centre of Training Support (DCTS) – fellow officers also work at the Joint Information Activities Group (JIAG) – said: "You can barely move without bumping into a signal flag or wooden warship."

Part of the transformation saw the commissioning of 'HMS Halton', with particular emphasis placed on nautical decoration and imagery to impress the heritage of the Senior Service on their light blue brethren.

Training manager Lt Sam Balmond, project officer for the event, said: "We were keen to eliminate all references in the mess to the RAF to emphasise the transition to a Naval wardroom – this involved the production of gangway banners, modified ship's crests and even nautical prints to cover the RAF ones."

With the RAF having celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain in September, the evening's speeches focussed on parallels and similarities between the two Services and their respective battle honours – a theme echoed by the guest of honour, Naval Secretary Rear Admiral Simon Williams, who spoke of the close working relationship and cooperation between the two Services.

A detachment of Sea Cadets from Aylesbury unit, led by First Lieutenant PO (SCC) Jason McCowan, helped out with piping guests on board and other duties.

The cadets' attendance was a nod to the service of boys at sea –



● NAVSEC Rear Admiral Simon Williams, accompanied by Lt Sam Balmond, is piped aboard 'HMS Halton' by Sea Cadets from Aylesbury unit  
Picture: Christopher Yarrow (RAF Halton)

it was common in Nelson's Navy for under-16s to have taken the King's Shilling, with 31 serving on HMS Victory alone and the youngest in the Trafalgar fleet being just eight years old (so too young to join the Junior cadets

today).

Mirroring their historical counterparts, the Sea Cadets exemplified the values of the Corps, turning to in their No1s to deliver a sterling performance of ceremonial drill and piping.



## Abingdon receives pennant

ABINGDON unit has hosted a pennant presentation evening.

Principal guest of the evening, and Inspecting Officer, was Vice Admiral Duncan Potts, Director General, Joint Force Development & Defence Academy, and former Captain of HMS Marlborough.

The Sea Cadet training ship shares the same name as the Type 23 frigate.

Vice Admiral Potts made the presentation of the pennant to the unit, congratulating the cadets on their hard work in gaining an award to which every unit aspires.

"He had a keen rapport with the cadets and his enthusiasm for a naval career was inspiring, as he spoke to each cadet while carrying out the inspection, and later presented individual annual awards," said Hilary Green, chairman of the unit management team.

After the ceremony, Dee Kallie, Worshipful Master of St Edmund Masonic Lodge No.6451, presented a cheque from the Berkshire Masonic Charity of £2,000 which will go towards a replacement for the unit's minibus.

Mrs Green accepted the cheque on behalf of the unit, noting the huge support it had received from local community organisations.

Parents, staff and cadets were joined by local sponsors and long-time community supporters, including the Abingdon Bear Club and the town's Lions Club and Rotary Club.

The guest list also included the Mayor of Abingdon, Cllr Helen Pighills, the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, Tom Birch Reynardson, the Deputy Lieutenant of the county Felicity Dick and Michael Badcock, Chairman of the Vale of White Horse District Council.

The unit management team and Parents' Association provided refreshments.

## Let Gosport eat cake

GOSPORT unit Sea Cadets got a big surprise when they were donated an impressive cake by Cdre Richard Farrington.

The commodore, who lives in Gosport, recently retired from the Royal Navy after 34 years' service, including command of both HMS Nottingham and the Devonport Flotilla.

The cake was made for his leaving dinner and donated to TS Hornet after the event.

One staff member who enjoyed a slice of cake was PO (SCC) 'Scouse' Rycroft, an instructor at the unit who served with Cdre Farrington in Type 42 destroyer HMS Nottingham.

LC Barry said: "The cake was delicious and much appreciated by the cadets and we thanked Cdre Farrington for his kind thought in donating it to us. A terrific surprise."

## Surprising day

GLASGOW unit member OC Tiffany enjoyed one or two surprises on her birthday.

It all started when she was awarded a miniature barrel as the prize for the most improved Sea Cadet in Glasgow unit.

The prize was donated by the Incorporation of Coopers of Glasgow, and is now called the Coopers' Trophy.

As it formed part of the Earl of Wessex Awards, Prince Edward did the honours – and, just to make her day, to promote OC Tiffany to the rank of Able Cadet.



# Capital project

MORE than 100 Sea Cadets from across the capital took part in the Lord Mayor's Parade in the City of London to celebrate the arrival of the 688th Lord Mayor.

This year Sea Cadets are one of the chosen charities for the Lord Mayor of London's Appeal; the money raised through the appeal will replace the charity's two offshore yachts that have been in service for 16 years.

Thousands of people lined the streets to watch the procession, including the Sea Cadets float, which was designed this year with the theme of nautical adventure and fun.

All was made possible with the generous support of the Worshipful Company of Management Consultants and Quattro Plant Ltd.



● The newly-clad and weatherproofed headquarters of New Romney unit at Littlestone

## New Romney says thanks to supporters

A PRESENTATION evening was held to thank the various organisations and people who provided grants, gifts and a lot of volunteer time to enable the headquarters of New Romney and District unit to be greatly improved with heavy-duty plastic cladding.

This will preserve the exterior of the building and improve the weatherproofing for many years ahead, protecting the headquarters from the harsh conditions at Littlestone, on the Kent coastline.

The grants and financial assistance to carry out this work has been provided mainly by Kent County Council through their members' grant, Shepway

District Council from the Community Chest, the Roger De Haan Charitable Trust and Waitrose supermarket.

Other generous assistance in supplying the Fortex Cladding materials was from Bliby Plastics of Ashford, and the labour supplied voluntarily by C & J Godden Ltd with assistance from members of staff at TS Veteran.

Anyone interested in joining or civilian volunteering at the Sea Cadets can contact the Officer in Charge at New Romney and District Sea Cadets, TS Veteran, The Greens, Littlestone, New Romney TN28 8NR, tel: 01797 361494 or email [oitcveteran@aol.com](mailto:oitcveteran@aol.com)

## Trawl ship opportunities

YOUNG people from Devon set sail on a confidence-building adventure along the South Coast thanks to a donation from a local charitable trust.

The group of 11 Teignmouth Sea Cadets, aged between 12 and 17, embarked on a return journey from Brixham in Devon to Fowey in Cornwall on a week-long sail training exercise provided by the Trinity Sailing Foundation.

The training is designed to challenge and motivate young people, as well as contributing towards their RYA qualifications.

This year, two groups that underwent sail training have benefited from a donation made by charity patron, Lord Clinton.

Lord Clinton's Charitable Trust funded this voyage as well as that of a group from a Devon-based adoption charity earlier in the summer.

Upon arrival in Brixham, Charles Fane-Trefusis, son of Lord Clinton, greeted the cadets to hear about their adventure.

Trinity Sailing Foundation director Toby Russell said: "We are very grateful for the support we have received from Lord Clinton's Charitable Trust over the years."

"Donations are absolutely critical in keeping our sail training opportunities available for young people of all backgrounds and abilities, as many of the groups we provide sail training for would otherwise not be able to afford to take part."

The vessels used by Trinity are Brixham-built trawlers dating back to the 19th Century.

Leader, built in 1892, has been



● Sea Cadets from Teignmouth unit with staff and crew aboard converted Brixham-built trawler Leader

restored to its former glory, but has minimal modern technology.

Speaking of his time in Leader, Sea Cadet Euan Crago said: "We were all friends at the beginning of this trip but having to work together, doing things like raising the sails and keeping below deck tidy has helped make our friendships stronger."

Lara Caine, who was skipper for the week, said: "The sail training we provide aims to build self confidence in the kids."

"By taking them out of their comfort zone at the beginning of the week, they appreciate the support of their friends and crew members and realise they can do things they have never done before."

Lord Clinton's Charitable Trust, which is connected to the property and land management

## Historic day for Wallasey

WALLASEY cadets were privileged to take part in the "most important event" in the unit's 77-year history.

TS Astute, formed on October 6 1938, is proud to be the 'first Mersey unit', and their patron is the Duchess of Cornwall.

Last September Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council bestowed the Freedom of the Borough on the officers and crew of their affiliated vessel, HMS Astute, and also on to cadets and staff of Wallasey unit in recognition of their work in the community.

The programme began with a thanksgiving service conducted by unit padre Revd Jeff Staples at a packed St Nicholas Church.

The regular congregation was augmented by invited guests, including the Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff of Merseyside, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Wirral and around 90 dignitaries, councillors and their wives.

The Naval Service was represented, *inter alia*, by Cdre Gary Doyle, Naval Regional Commander Northern England and Isle of Man, Cdre Mike Walliker, Commander of Faslane Flotilla, Cdr Gareth Jenkins, Commanding Officer of HMS Astute and Cdr Phil Russ, Area Officer North West Sea Cadets.

Some 80 officers and crew of HMS Astute and 60 officers, instructors and cadets from Wallasey unit also attended, as did representatives from Sefton and Runcorn units.

Following the service, the ceremony took place on the seafront where the Freedom Scrolls were read out.

At that point bayonets were fixed, colours unfurled and the parade marched around the town, led by the band of the Royal Armoured Corps.

Unit chairman John Mason said: "This is the most important event in the 77-year history of Wallasey Sea Cadet Unit."

business Clinton Devon Estates, provides charitable support at a regional, national and international level, with preference given to Devon-based charities.

John Varley, Estates Director for Clinton Devon Estates and a Trustee of Lord Clinton's Charitable Trust, said: "Lord Clinton's Charitable Trust supports local or regional charities with a focus on developing and empowering young people."

"The Trinity Sailing Foundation not only meets these criteria but provides so much more."

"We are proud to support this charity which provides young people with a unique learning opportunity and also preserves a part of Devon's heritage, through the maintenance of Brixham's historic trawlers, which may otherwise be lost."



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## Pupils benefit from family atmosphere

WEST Hill Park School offers pupils a high level of responsibility, specialist lessons within specialist classrooms, and a wide range of sporting, music, drama and extra-curricular activities with the emphasis on development of the whole child.

All children receive the level of support needed within small classes, using a variety of teaching methods and experiences.

Children take part in a comprehensive program of sports taken to a high level, including team matches, tournaments, county and national events.

All children swim at least once a week and there are opportunities for horse-riding, karate and archery to name but a few.

Forest School gives children the opportunity to make camp fires and build dens within the school grounds.

Each break-time holds an element of exploration, whether it is imaginative play in the woods, playing football, taking part in a tennis match or completing a project in the Design and Technology studio.

The arts play a fundamental

part in the school ethos as children develop their confidence both on and off the stage.

There are opportunities to sing in choirs, learn a musical instrument, play in an orchestra and other ensembles, create works of art and complete stunning wood and metal work projects.

West Hill creates a family atmosphere for both its boarders and day pupils.

It is a happy and thriving school, and the proof can be seen in all of the confident, respectful, enthusiastic and talented children.

Have you considered prep school education?

It is more accessible than you think, and West Hill Park offers a broad academic curriculum supported by sport, swimming, music, art, drama, design and technology as well as Forest School.

For further information about CEA and top-up bursaries or to arrange a visit please call Mrs Ramsay, Registrar 01329 842356 or email [admissions@westhillpark.com](mailto:admissions@westhillpark.com) or visit the website [www.westhillpark.com](http://www.westhillpark.com)

# Prince is surprise guest at parade

STUDENTS like to welcome special guests to the Duke of York's Royal Military School, to show them the site and explain why it's such a unique and iconic place to study for GCSEs and A-Levels.

This term they proudly welcomed Prince Harry to inspect the Parade.

The visit was kept as a complete surprise to students and staff, who felt extremely honoured to receive him.

He presented senior prefects with their medals and spoke at length with the students, discussing their future career plans.

The following week, students were very pleased to meet the British Army's Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Nicholas Carter.

All students were on parade to salute Gen Carter, who inspected the ranks before touring the school with senior prefect students.

He later officially opened the school's new buildings – which include teaching blocks, junior boarding accommodation, a sports hall and a drama studio – by unveiling a brass plaque.

The school has a strong military ethos and is popular with parents serving in the Armed Forces.

Therefore, it was fitting for Gen Carter to compliment the



● Prince Harry presents a school medal to one of the pupils on parade at the Duke of York's Royal Military School

school during his address on how well it prepared those students considering a career in the Armed Forces.

Chris Russell, the school's Executive Principal, said: "General Sir Nicholas Carter's visit to officially open our

new teaching facilities was a tremendous honour.

"He is the most senior ranking member of the British Army, and our students and staff were highly impressed by his visit.

"We particularly welcomed his positive comments regarding the

school's achievements and ethos, which helps to develop character and resilience."

Our next Open Morning is Saturday March 12.

To book your place, please call our Registrar on 01304 245073.

■ [www.doyrms.com](http://www.doyrms.com)

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"The School provides an outstanding level of care." (OFSTED)

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**Open Morning: 12 March 2016**  
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- Over 80% of our students secure their first or second choice of University.
- Every student is encouraged to achieve their potential in a supportive community.
- Military ethos helps develop character and life skills.
- Active lifestyle including sport, music, drama and activities.
- £24.9 million refurbishment has delivered a new sports centre, high-quality accommodation and teaching blocks and a performing arts centre.
- Students have the flexibility of full and weekly boarding.

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Ministry of Defence

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# New headmaster at Royal Hospital School



THE Royal Hospital School, Holbrook, Suffolk (left), has a new headmaster – Mr Simon Lockyer – from this month.

On announcement of his appointment, Mr. Lockyer said: “It is a great privilege to have been appointed as the next Headmaster of the Royal Hospital School.

“Whilst I am sad to be leaving my home in Portsmouth, I will be returning regularly as the School continues to foster its links with the Naval families, both serving and retired.

“RHS is a very special school providing an outstanding broad education.

“I hope that parents who are looking for a school that provides excellence in teaching and learning, but also outstanding opportunities in sailing, music, design technology and sport, will consider following a well-established pathway to Holbrook.

“Following on from the excellent work of my predecessor, James Lockwood, I will continue to support the emphasis placed on the traditional values of loyalty, integrity, commitment and respect for others.

“I believe strongly in establishing high aspirations and providing the broad opportunities and encouragement that will enable each and every pupil to discover a genuine sense of self belief which will develop strong foundations for their future.”

Simon was born in Portsmouth and his family has a long association with the RN – the son of a Naval officer, he was educated on a military bursary before going to university in Newcastle.

He gained his PGCE at the University of Cambridge and last year completed a Masters in Educational Leadership at the University of Buckingham.

Simon is currently Second Master at Portsmouth Grammar School, where he has been in post for the past six years.

Previously, Simon worked both in the state and independent sectors – his last job was as

Housemaster and Head of Department at Wellington College.

Simon joins the co-educational HMC boarding and day school for 11 to 18-year-olds at an exciting time in its development; pupil numbers are at their highest, the school’s most recent Independent Schools Inspectorate report rated it ‘excellent’ in every area and the governors have announced a visionary ten-year strategic plan focusing on excellence in teaching and learning.

With around 200 pupils with some connection with the RN, Royal Marines or other Services, RHS has considerable experience in providing the stability and pastoral care that is so invaluable to services families.

Through its parent charity, Greenwich Hospital, the school offers generous means-tested bursaries on boarding places to children of serving or retired Naval personnel providing life-changing opportunities that may not have been otherwise affordable.

In the School’s most recent ISI inspection report it states: “Pupils show strong moral and social awareness and their sense of British values is highly tuned as a direct result of the School’s links with the Royal Navy.”

For more information or to book a place at our Open Morning on Saturday May 14, please contact Kate Evers, Registrar on 01473 326136 or [admissions@royalhospitalschool.org](mailto:admissions@royalhospitalschool.org) [www.royalhospitalschool.org](http://www.royalhospitalschool.org)

## QVS is on a mission to care

QUEEN Victoria School (QVS) at Dunblane in the south of Scotland is a co-educational boarding school fully funded – parents don’t pay fees – by the Ministry of Defence to provide stability and continuity of education for the children of UK Armed Forces personnel who are Scottish, or who have served in Scotland or who have been members of a Scottish regiment.

There are 277 pupils in the School, ranging from Primary 7 through to S6.

Age ranges within each year-group are wide, however, because of the very varied and inevitably disrupted educational backgrounds from which the pupils come.

One pupil came into S3 having been to 13 different schools, others into P7 having been to 11 different schools – and these are not just different schools, but different education systems as well.

If QVS pupils were not at the School, they would be attending whichever was the local school in the area in which their parents were

posted.

QVS has a particular brief from the Ministry of Defence to care for those eligible families who could not otherwise afford boarding education.

Ceremonial – piping, drumming, Highland dancing and drill – constitutes an important part of the life of the School and is a visible link between the pupils and the work that their parents have chosen to do in the UK Armed Forces.

The Pipes, Drums and Dancers of QVS are internationally renowned, having played at tattoos both at home and abroad, such as the Basel Christmas Tattoo 2013 and the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo 2012.

Academic results are consistently well above the national averages, however, and there is a wide programme of extra-curricular activities, games and the Combined Cadet Force.

Major sports are rugby – where QVS is generally considered to “punch well above

its weight” as a small school – and hockey, although there is a growing commitment to football as well.

QVS pupils and their families greatly value the strength of mutual support in a school community where all recognise the reality of Service life.

Set in 45 acres of beautiful Perthshire countryside, Queen Victoria School is easily accessible by road, rail or air.

There is no substitute for visiting a school, meeting its pupils and staff and picking up the atmosphere.

If you would like to know more before travelling to Dunblane to visit the school, however, and to request a DVD, please contact the Admissions Secretary on +44 (0) 131 310 2927.

Alternatively, you can write to the Admissions Secretary, Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, Perthshire FK15 0JY, United Kingdom, or visit the school website at [www.qvs.org.uk](http://www.qvs.org.uk)


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Generous assistance with fees for all serving and retired RN and RM personnel.

**Open Morning: SATURDAY 14 MAY, 9AM**  
To book contact Admissions on 01473 326136 or [admissions@royalhospitalschool.org](mailto:admissions@royalhospitalschool.org)

  
The Royal Hospital School

**Queen Victoria School**



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Queen Victoria School in Dunblane is a co-educational boarding school for the children of UK Armed Forces personnel who are Scottish, or who have served in Scotland or who have been members of a Scottish regiment.

**The main entry point is into Primary 7 and all places are fully funded for tuition and boarding by the Ministry of Defence.**

Families are welcome to find out more by contacting Admissions on **+44 (0) 131 310 2927** to arrange a visit.

Queen Victoria School  
Dunblane Perthshire  
FK15 0JY  
[www.qvs.org.uk](http://www.qvs.org.uk)

  
Ministry of Defence

# State boarding places still available

SERVING parents haven't missed the boat if the school admissions deadline has passed.

Service personnel who have missed the local authority October schools admission deadline can still apply for a state boarding school place – and their applications will be given a higher priority if they qualify for the MOD's Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA).

That's the message the **State Boarding Schools' Association (SBSA)** is giving forces families who know their circumstances may change before the start of the new school year.

State boarding is available through 38 schools across the UK. Tuition is provided by the state, meaning that parents only pay for boarding, typically

around £4,000 per term, well below the maximum CEA.

However, most local authorities rarely deal with state boarding school applications and sometimes give confusing advice to parents.

Whilst the admissions process for boarding applications is supposed to be the same for state day and state boarding schools, the reality is it just doesn't work that way.

In fact, many state boarding schools set their pupil admissions numbers (PAN) to cater for the changing needs of Service personnel and many larger schools will have boarding places even in the summer before the Year 7 September intake.

As a result, they can receive late applications after the October deadline and indeed

after March, when day-school places have been allocated.

Applications for other year groups will be accepted at any time of year before the start of Year 10.

To apply for state boarding, parents must complete an application through their local authority or the school's local authority if they live abroad. A separate application form must also be completed for the

boarding school itself.

What's more, parents who qualify for the CEA will be prioritised over applications for children of civilian parents, regardless of whether they live in the same county as their chosen school, elsewhere in the UK or overseas.

Once the application has been submitted the child must also undergo an assessment to determine their suitability for

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If you're thinking about taking your GCSEs and A-levels, please contact us for free, independent and confidential advice on 020 7654 7029/7050 or email [education@ms-sc.org](mailto:education@ms-sc.org) Find out more at [www.marine-society.org](http://www.marine-society.org)

boarding, which will include a face-to-face or Skype interview and a boarding reference from their current school.

Some schools are selective so the child will also need to pass an entrance exam, but this will be explained on the individual schools' admissions criteria.

Paul Spencer Ellis, chairman of the SBSA and headmaster at the Royal Alexandra and Albert School in Surrey, said: "Few counties have a state boarding school so most local authorities have little or no experience of dealing with boarding admissions and parents are frequently advised that they cannot apply for

a boarding place after October. That simply isn't the case.

"Yes, our day school places fill up fast and boarding places at some of the specialist MOD and smaller schools go by March, but the majority of larger state boarding schools will still have places until the summer because they aim to cater to the needs of parents, such as Service personnel, whose circumstances can change radically over the course of a year."

For advice on applying for state boarding or for more information, visit [www.sbsa.org.uk](http://www.sbsa.org.uk) where you can also download a free Parent's Guide.

## Improved access

THE **Chartered Management Institute (CMI)** is offering internationally recognised management and leadership qualifications to members of the Royal Navy, who have already completed accredited learning during their career.

### The requirements:

To be eligible personnel must meet the following criteria:

- ✔ Currently serving in the Royal Navy, in the Reserves or a veteran;
- ✔ To have completed an accredited course on or after January 1 2010.

### Added value for Royal Navy personnel:

CMI offer 12 months free membership to those in the Royal Navy undertaking one of their qualifications.

Membership offers access to CMI's complete range of membership benefits, including ManagementDirect – CMI's complete online portal of management and leadership resources, to the opportunity to

network at one of their popular regional events.

Learners also have the opportunity to take their qualification further by working towards Chartered Manager (CMgr) status.

Awarded only by CMI, becoming chartered demonstrates the vast range of skills and experience gained during a career in the Royal Navy and validates it against benchmarks recognised by those working and recruiting in the civilian sector.

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● Valletta 2018 Foundation chairman Jason Micallef with George Cini, John Finley and Joshua Terry in Strait Street, Malta

## Great to see new life for the Gut

I HAVE enclosed a photograph. I am third from the left of the picture, which was taken during my last visit to Malta.

I was given a guided tour of Strait Street by the Valletta 2018 Foundation.

I am sure it will evoke many memories from your older readers and ex-matelots who, like myself, had the pleasure of experiencing many a great night down the famous street.

All the years I have been visiting Malta it has been a shame seeing the street in such a down-trodden state, no doubt like other ex-matelots have experienced, when they have visited the island over the years.

This has been since 1979 when the Royal Navy stopped using Malta as a major navy base.

It was very pleasing to see during my personal guided tour that a great deal of work and effort has, and still is being done, to renovate the area – not as we knew it though.

Two new corporate banks have already been put in place and there are plans to open several new bars and hotels.

For those who can remember



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

the TICO TICO bar, it is still there, as is the old tattoo shop.

This has all been possible by the investment of £60 million from corporate enterprises and other investors. The good work and organising is being carried out by Jason Micallef.

The people of Malta know the street as Strait Street. It was named *Strada Stretta* by the Italians, but known passionately by us matelots as the Gut.

John Leslie Finley  
Liverpool

# Hospital after a ship's bell

IT WOULD be very much appreciated if, by the medium of your excellent journal, you would ask of your readers if there is anyone who could/would present/provide a ship's bell to the chapel of Hospital Island, Minorca.

An enthusiastic team from the Friends of Hospital Island Association is restoring the chapel and the work is now just about complete.

But they desperately want a

bell to complete the work. They think an old ship's bell would be ideal.

They would pay for transporting it out there etc. If anyone has any ideas as to where they might locate a bell it would be guaranteed a much-cherished and secure place in its new home.

Your readers may recall that Vice Admiral Byng is best known for the loss of Minorca in 1756 at the beginning of the Seven Years' War.

His ships badly needed repair and he was relieved of his command before he could see

to his ships or secure the extra forces he required.

He was court-martialled and found guilty of failing to "do his utmost" to prevent the island falling to the French following the Battle of Minorca.

He was sentenced to death and shot by firing squad on March 14 1757.

During a recent visit by HMS Richmond, a White Ensign was dedicated at a service in the church.

Cdr Richard Thorne Rtd  
Richardw.thorne  
@ntlworld.com

## Would love to reminisce about D-Day craft

I WAS one of the veterans pictured in the November *Navy News* story about the restoration of LCT 7074.

For me, the event was of particular importance and interest as 7074 was a 'chummy' craft.

I was the No.1 in LCT 7069 which was built alongside in the same yard as 7074 in 1944.

The two craft were launched within days of each other, and both were units of the 17th LCT Flotilla.

7069 was sunk off Omaha Beach in the storm of June 19-21, 1944. We shared work-up, exercises and drinks in each wother's wardrooms during those few pre-D-Day months.

Should there be any other surviving veterans from either of these craft, I would be delighted to be in touch.

Paul Motte-Harrison  
Shoreham-by-Sea



LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and full address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it. Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in *Navy News*, nor can we reply to every one.

We do, however, publish many on our website, [www.navynews.co.uk](http://www.navynews.co.uk), accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues. The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.

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## Shorts

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines **Brazilian Jiu Jitsu** team took the honours at the first Public Service Championships at Lichfield.

The Navy side sent 17 ranks to the event designed to showcase and test UK public services while raising money for Help for Heroes and the UK BJJ Youth Team.

Tough opposition was provided not only by teams from the Army and RAF but also the police, fire service and prison service.

The Navy team won the championship, with the Army second, RAF third, police fourth, prison service fifth and fire service sixth.

Anyone interested in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu should contact their unit PTI or contact C/Sgt Sam Sheriff at 40 Cdo, 93780 4293.

THE Royal Navy Men's **Fencing** team took the Inter-Service championship for the second year in a row.

The ten-man team, which included a mix of regular and reservist fencers from the Navy and Royal Marines, won two of the three encounters against the Army and RAF at HMS Temeraire.

Captained by Lt Cdr Keith Bowers of HMS Portland, it was only the fourth time the Royal Navy had won the title since 1957.

THE United Kingdom Armed Forces **Cricket** Coaching Association (UKAFCCA) will be holding a UKCC Level 2 cricket coaching course at HMS Temeraire on February 8-12.

This is a joint-Service course for which the RN has been allocated six slots.

Accommodation for all students who require it has been secured in the sports accommodation.

Anyone interested should contact Capt Morris at [Simon.Morris542@mod.uk](mailto:Simon.Morris542@mod.uk) or 03067938200 or 07557213847.

PERSONNEL from HMS St Albans swapped their Type 23 frigate for rowing boats.

Forty members of the ship's company competed in a rowing regatta at Whale Island in Portsmouth while their ship was in refit.

The Wardroom team were crowned winners.

A TRI-SERVICE snow sports team for wounded, injured and sick Service personnel and veterans were handed the keys to a new minibus.

The vehicle, provided by Ford of Britain, will support the Armed Forces Para-Snowsports team, which includes former Royal Marine Paul Spanner.

Previously known as the Combined Services Disabled Ski Team, the team is changing to the Para-Snowsports title to reflect growth into the snowboarding and Nordic skiing disciplines.

SOME of the best amateur jockeys in the country will be in action at Sandown Park in March.

The horseracing event on March 11 includes the Grand Military Gold Cup.

For details and special-offer tickets for military personnel visit [www.sandown.co.uk](http://www.sandown.co.uk)



Pictures: LA(Phot) Will Haigh, 40 Cdo

# Seahawk swoop on cup



HMS Seahawk secured the Royal Navy Rugby Union Cup for the fourth time.

The Navy's airmen from RNAS Cudrose powered through heavy rain, storm-force winds and thick mud at Devonport Services' Rectory ground in Plymouth to take the title in an enthralling 19-12 victory against the Royal Marines of 40 Commando, from Taunton.

Led by team captain LAET John Lamsin, Seahawk took to the field in worsening conditions that were never to improve throughout the evening's encounter.

They were the first to register points as fullback AET Matt Horton slotted home a penalty, giving them an early advantage.

The Marines regrouped quickly and came back with added pressure on the Cudrose defensive line which brought about the first of only two tries during

the game, putting Seahawk temporary behind on the scoreboard.

The 40 Cdo try galvanised the Cornish airmen, and, helped by far too many mistakes by the Marines, gave Horton further chances to kick for goal, of which he landed two nicely between the sticks.

It was clear the Marines were looking to hold out until the break but a long downfield kick once again from Horton, put them within touching distance of the try line.

Successive scrums brought out a strong defence by 40 Cdo, but drive after drive eventually resulted in a penalty try being awarded, and with two more points from Horton's boot, at the break Seahawk were 16-5 to the good.

The second half started with worsening weather conditions and scoring was always going to be difficult.

However Horton's boot was soon in action again and a fourth penalty for the airman put them clearly in the driving

seat. 40 Cdo looked beaten but a final effort in the last ten minutes saw them pull back a try and conversion to bring them back to a single score of drawing level.

But in spite of a couple of half chances the solid Seahawk defence held out for a 19-12 victory and the Rugby Navy Cup was heading down the A30 to Helston and RNAS Cudrose.

Capt Ade Orchard, RNAS Cudrose's Commanding Officer, was on hand to congratulate the winners.

"It was a totally awesome game and the boys did a stunning job in terrible conditions. I am, again, a very proud captain."

**HMS Seahawk:** Chris Warner, Chris Ellor, John Court, Gav Harmer, Hayden Wilkinson, John Lamsin (Capt), Guy Pallett, Jim Kava, Ryan Cox, Sam Carter, Bobby Conroy-Smith, Greg Loydall, Matthew Holland, Richard Binns, Matt Horton Reps: Chris Olliffe, Rob Lockhead, Paddy Marsh, Jack Grady, Toby Horwood, Nasiko Ify Kava, Dan Cockin.

# Duo team up to take charge on field



● Lt Charlotte Fredrickson aboard HMS Victory

A NEW year, a new grey away kit and new leadership on the field for the Royal Navy **Rugby Union** (Women)'s team.

Lt Charlotte 'Freddie' Fredrickson (PJHQ, Northwood) has been appointed as the RNRU(W) captain for the 2016 season and will be assisted by POET(WE) Sarah 'Jenks' Jenkins (HMS Kent) as vice-captain.

The new appointments come ahead of the start of what will be a busy and demanding season for the ladies, with their first match against Ivel RFC on January 27.

"It's obviously a privilege to be asked to captain the RNRU(W) this season," said Lt Fredrickson.

"It is a role I will relish and one I am looking forward to getting started with.

"The season will be a good one for the RNRU(W). We are lucky to have a new training support group, including a new lead coach, which is looking to drive the team forward. "Our season includes a trip to France to play the Marine Nationale,



● POET(WE) Sarah Jenkins

the RAF at home as part of the Inter-Services and Army/Navy Day so it is all to play for. Having Jenks alongside me as vice-captain makes it all a very exciting prospect."

POET(WE) Jenkins said: "I am very honoured to be asked to become vice-captain for the forthcoming season, especially after missing last

year's season due to an operational tour; I can't wait to get the season started."

POET(WE) Jenkins is currently serving in HMS Kent and her CO Cdr Dan Thomas was keen to applaud her achievement.

"It is an honour to have any member of my ship's company represent the Service at sport and particularly so with PO Jenkins achieving the coveted position of vice-captain," he said.

"As a Commanding Officer, I feel it is important that my ship's company can be released to play sport and Sarah is testament to this."

The RNRU(W) season culminates with the Inter-Service match against the Army at Kneller Hall ahead of the Seniors match at Twickenham on April 30.

Tickets for the Twickenham match are available at [navyrugbyunion.co.uk/tickets](http://navyrugbyunion.co.uk/tickets). Follow the RN Rugby Union teams on [Twitter @RNRugby](https://twitter.com/RN Rugby).

Words and pictures: Lt Cdr David Martin RNRU (W) Comms Rep

# Seniors enjoy carnival field day down under

THE Royal Navy Seniors **football** team led the way to victory as the RNFA toured Australia.

A 60-strong party, including the women's and veterans' teams, arrived in Sydney for some light training sessions.

The first group of matches saw the RN women thump the Royal Australian Air Force 6-0. The seniors beat the RAAF 3-0 while the veterans earned a 2-2 draw.

The day was overshadowed by a serious injury to one of the seniors' players, LAET Tom Ardley, who suffered damage to his left knee as well as a broken tibia.

RNFA referee Phil Eddie then had the honour of being one of the mascots at the A-League derby between Sydney FC and Sydney Wanderers.

The following week all three RNFA teams were in action against Australian Army sides.

The RN women earned a 0-0 draw in their match while the seniors ran out 6-0 victors in their game. The final encounter of the day saw the vets in action, but they lost 1-0.

The next few days provided an opportunity for some rest and rehabilitation with the physio team of Maj Mick Hart and Mrs Hilary Edwards ensuring the players were patched up for the final game.

Cultural visits into Sydney and the surrounding areas were encouraged, the women's team visiting Taronga Zoo and the Sydney Tower, and all the teams making use of the Captain's Walk, a coastal path from Bondi Beach to Coogee Beach.

The final Carnival game was an all-Navy affair, with the seniors up first, winning 7-0.

The vets team also had a comfortable 5-1 victory. Finally, the women's team, who with a victory of five goals or more would secure the Carnival Cup. The match ended 3-1 to the RN, not enough to secure the title.

The women had a final game against the Koalas,

an invitational team from the Australian National 2 League. The match finished 2-2.

The RNFA teams watched the ADF teams take on the New South Wales Emergency Services' teams prior to attending the Carnival Dinner.

The seniors collected the trophy for Carnival Champions 2015, with CPOPT Steve O'Neil and CPO Andy Todd named best player of the tournament for the vets and seniors respectively.

The tour party spent the final couple of days sightseeing before boarding their plane for the long flight back to the UK.



● The new PTIs put on a display of strength in front of 200 guests to mark the end of their six-month course, led by PO Donna Chapman, pictured below left

Main picture: LA(Phot) Ken Gaunt



## You've got to hand it to Donna...

THE first Royal Navy physical training course in 127 years to be led by a female coach has produced its first graduates.

PO Donna Chapman has guided 15 recruits through the gruelling six-month course at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth – the Navy's School of Physical Training.

The graduates have qualified as physical training instructors and will now be dispersed among ships and shore establishments.

They put on a spectacular display of strength, courage and agility in front of 200 guests – including friends and family – to mark the end of the arduous course.

PO Chapman, 31, said: "I feel elated, knowing how far these students have come in a relatively short time. But for me it has been stressful at times making sure they make the grade. However, it's definitely the highlight of my career and I shall follow their progress with interest."

The 70-minute display included many of the traditional skills taught on the course, including club swinging, rope climbing, gymnastics, the hornpipe and performing at height on a window ladder.

WO1 Wayne O'Kell, Temeraire's training officer, said: "It was pleasing that so many guests were able to see the display which represents such an important day in the career of Navy physical trainers."

Among the students was LPT Paul

Sykes, 26, who said: "It was a tough course but very rewarding. I've come a very long way in six months, and that's down to the excellent coaching."

The other students passing out were: Will Ballanger, Ryan Billington, David Clayton-Charlesworth, Cameron Forbes, Mel Haslam, Kurtis Jacques, Jamie Le Page, Tom Monday, Martin Potter, Aaron Squance, Alex Stocker, Emma Ochiltree, Iona Mannering, and Joe McGarry.

## Hot Air team rise to win top trophy

A WHOLE year's worth of sport at HMS Sultan came down to a winner-takes-all decider in the **Engineer's Trophy**.

Since the start of last year, engineers and trainees from both of the Defence College of Technical Training's Royal Naval Air Engineering and Survival Equipment School and Defence School of Marine Engineering have competed for points in nine different sporting events.

The events have each been worth five points and have included traditional sports such as cross country, athletics and football and also novelty sporting events such as the Easter *It's a Knockout* and the Trafalgar Fun Run.

With just two points separating the schools the trophy's outcome would be decided on the rugby pitch.

LPT Liam Saunders, who organised the Engineer's Trophy on behalf of the establishment, said: "We continually try to



● Action from the rugby decider in the Engineer's Trophy

Picture: LA (Phot) Dave Jenkins

evolve the Engineer's Trophy to ensure that it's not just about the physical training, but also about bringing the whole establishment together to have some fun.

"It's been great to be involved and we have even managed to raise some money for a few charities like the children's wards at Queen Alexandra Hospital in

Portsmouth and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity along the way."

With a bumper crowd of spectators from both schools cheering on the rugby players, both teams started out showing plenty of energy and commitment.

While the Marine Engineers

were clearly well organised and defended resolutely, they were unable to match the Air Engineers' slick and aggressive performance going forward and were eventually defeated 36-0.

The result ensured that the Air Engineers had not only won the rugby but also the Engineer's Trophy.

Capt Trevor Gulley, the Commanding Officer of HMS Sultan, congratulated the winners of the rugby and in a separate event also presented the Engineer's Trophy to the Air Engineers' sports captains LAET David Taylor and CPO David MacMenemey.

Capt Gulley said: "The competition has been fantastic. To see the trophy go down to the last event really speaks volumes as to the spirit that is in everything we do here."

"The relationship between the air and marine engineers within Sultan is one which goes with us when we're on operational deployments around the world."



● Team one celebrate climbing Ben Nevis

## Mixed mountain fortunes for crew

SAILORS from HMS Iron Duke climbed the highest mountains in England, Scotland and Wales within 24 hours.

Two teams, led by LPT Stephen 'Jack' Daniels, started the **Three Peaks Challenge** but poor weather conditions meant only team one completed the task.

Team one, consisting of LPT Daniels, Lt Lauren Ruffell, PO(AWW) John 'Arthur' Lowe, LS(AWT) Louis Vine-Scratcherd, ET(WE)s James Thacker, Sam Woodacre and Ifan Warrington-Banfield, set off at 5am to climb Ben Nevis in Scotland, reaching the summit three hours later.

They then drove to the Lake District to take on the 900m Scafell Pike.

Lt Ruffell said: "I found Scafell particularly difficult, but about a third of the way up the views were just amazing. It was really impressive and the views just got better all the way up, which certainly helped to provide some incentive."

Team two, of LS(AWT) John Haslam, AB(WS)s Will Stennet,

Tom Rowley and Matthew Taggart, also completed the first two climbs.

The teams headed for their final peak, Snowdon experienced vastly differing weather conditions.

LS(AWT) Vine-Scratcherd said: "We couldn't have picked a better day. We had good weather throughout which obviously made things easier for us."

"Three peaks was definitely a challenge and I am really pleased we achieved it, there was no way I was not going to do it – the lads in the mess would have never let me live it down."

But Iron Duke's team two encountered poor weather and two team members sustained minor injuries, forcing LPT Daniels to abandon the climb.

AB(WS) Taggart said: "The last of the climbs was in theory the easiest but made much harder by the fact I was tired and the weather was so horrible. I am not going to lie that when Jack called time I was initially relieved but it is such a shame we were unable to complete the challenge. Maybe next time."

## Hosts take the honours in capital marathon

ROYAL Navy and Royal Marines runners contested the Challenge Cup as part of the US Marine Corps **Marathon** in Washington.

Sgt Richard Powell (USMC) set the pace and was pursued by Cpl Adam Stokes, of 40 Cdo. Lt Alex Lockett, of 771 NAS, tucked in with the USMC athletes for the first half of the race.

As leaders closed in on the finish line, Sgt Powell began to fade and was passed by Cpl Stokes shortly before the end.

Cpl Stokes's consistent pacing saw him finish in 2:34:30 (16th in the race), some 45 seconds ahead of Sgt Powell.

With USMC runners taking the next four Challenge Cup places, the cup was lost by some 30 minutes but Cpl Stokes restored some pride, and a moral victory of being first home in the challenge.

The lack of mileage due to service commitments and injuries told over the last six miles for the other RNRM runners but

Lt Lockett still finished in 2:48:03, CPO John Gormley (GCHQ), in only his second marathon, recorded a time of 2:58:53 and Cpl Stay (RM Poole) 3:06:14.

The ratio of victories over the USMC now stands at 24-14 to the RNRM. For further details on RNRM distance running contact:

WO1 Andy Marshall: [DES IS-SUSM-DDLP AMEOS1](#); C/SGT Pete Belcher: [NAVY TRG CTRM-SW CISTC SACI](#); Lt Cdr Ginge Gough: [NAVY PERS-TEMAIRE RNSOS](#)

# Lord of the rings



Picture: LA(Phot) Iggy Roberts

A ROYAL Navy gymnast made it a hat-trick as he was crowned British Over 30s Men's Masters Champion for the third year in a row.

Lt Jamie Weller, 35, also helped Portsmouth Gymnastic Centre take the men's team title for the second successive year.

The officer in charge of the RN Mobile News Team achieved the highest floor and parallel scores of the entire competition in the National Final at Lilleshall National Sports Centre in Shropshire.

Lt Weller, who is based at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth, competed in all six apparatus – floor, pommel, rings, vault, parallel bars and high bar. He performed a range of routines, from multiple twisting somersaults and strength moves to build his difficulty scores.

"At 35 years old my body is taking a lot longer to recover," he said. "I am starting to feel really old when I stand next to these young 20 year olds, but its always enjoyable to see their face when I pull out a few of my big tricks as the old man still has it!"

Lt Weller, from Kent, first took part in gymnastics at the age of 11 and continued while he was at Coventry

University, taking part in a number of international events.

"I also coached Birmingham University's Gymnastics Club and ended up competing against them," he said.

Lt Weller, who is vice chair of British Schools Gymnastics, retired from competitive gymnastics when he joined the Royal Navy in 2005 but the 2012 London Olympics revived his interest where he was the flag bearer at the opening ceremony, marching the Union and Olympic flags.

He was also officer in charge of ceremonial flag raising at the O2 for the duration of the Games.

The centre hosted the gymnastics, trampolining and basketball competitions.

"I was watching the gymnasts and decided I can still do some moves so I started competing again," said Lt Weller, who trains twice a week (in a good week).

"I am excited that the Royal Navy Gymnastics Team has now been formed and next year the Royal Navy will be entering a team for the first time ever into this National event as well as other competitions across the country.

"The RN has a nice team being developed and if we can medal in our first year of competing next year it would be an amazing achievement for such a new sport in the RN."

The RN team has groups of personnel across the country training at various locations so anyone interested in taking part should look at the **RN Gymnastics Facebook** page.



● Lt Weller's medal and certificate

## Rowers reap championship awards

FORTY Naval personnel put on a powerful show at the Royal Navy Indoor Rowing Championships.

Held at the Sail Loft Gym in HMNB Portsmouth, men's and women's individual races were held over 2000m and 500m, grouped into categories by weight and ten-year age groups.

The men's heavyweight 30-plus 2k race was keenly contested with LET(WE) Kieran Heffernan (HMS Collingwood) winning in 6min 20.7sec, the fastest time of the day.

Lt Craig Guest (Collingwood) was a close second in 6min 24.9sec, a personal best, while Lt Cdr Jim Hyde (HMS Northumberland) finished third in 6min 31.7sec.

Col Matt Jackson (MOD London) rowed 6min 29.6sec in the men's heavyweight 40-plus category, ahead of Lt Cdr Rory West (Collingwood), with a time of 6min 35.7sec.

Ady Cherrington (HMS Temeraire) edged out POPT Daz Hoare (Collingwood) by 0.1sec to take third place with a time of 6min 42.1sec.

CPO Collin Leiba (MCTA) did just what was necessary to win the men's heavyweight 50-plus 2k in 6min 50sec, then went on to row the fastest 500m of the day in 1min 20.4sec.

Collin's strength is over shorter distances

and he has designs on the Age Group World Record of 1min 18.3sec in the near future.

LD Willy Bowman (Fleet Diving Unit) was the second fastest 500m rower of the day in the men's open (any age) heavyweight category as he rowed 1min 21.5sec.

Lt Nick Howe (HMS Severn) was the fastest men's lightweight 2k rower in the open category with a time of 6min 48.4sec.

Next fastest was LH Andy Card (MOD London) in the 40-plus age group, with a time of 6min 56sec.

Fastest RN woman in a 2k was POPT Julie Stroud (RNAS Culdrose) in the 30-plus age group as she rowed a very controlled race to win in 7min 52.0sec.

The fastest men's team over ten minutes was Acorn (Collingwood), who rowed 3,339m at an

average pace of 1min 28.3sec. The fastest mixed team of West Country Randoms, rowed only 62m less in an average 1min 29.9sec consisted of Col Jackson, Lt Howe, POPT Stroud and Sgt Tim Hughes (42 Cdo).

Royal Navy indoor rowers now move on to compete at British, European, English and World Championships over the next few months.



● POPT Julie Stroud in action, watched by LPT Ollie Osborne; Left: Lt Cdr Rory West  
Pictures: Anne Yates

## Flying the flag for UK in Oz

THE Royal Navy Senior Men's cricket team joined hundreds of players from six countries competing in the International Defence Cricket Challenge in Australia.

The RN squad arrived in Sydney and enjoyed a day's sightseeing, including a tour of the famous harbour, before a lunch of fish and chips.

The squad then departed for Canberra, where the IDCC was to be played out.

A warm-up 40-over match against the Royal Australian Navy saw the visitors win by six wickets.

The IDCC saw hundreds of cricketers from the Armed Forces of six countries – Australia, New Zealand, UK, Fiji, Malaysia and Pakistan – compete over two weeks. A record field of 16 men's and women's teams took part.

The RN team, representing the UK Armed Forces, then beat the might of the Royal New Zealand Army in a T20 warm-up game at the Freebody Oval.

The IDCC contest saw the RN face one of the pre-tournament favourites, the Pakistan Navy, in a 50-over match, with the

Pakistani side easily winning with 26 overs to spare.

Next up for the RN was an ANZAC Barbarians XI. The RN's Alvin Pollard secured a bonus-point win by striking a six with ten overs to spare after bowling the ANZACs out for 180 runs.

The RN team was full of confidence going into the final 50-over game against the Royal Australian Navy but were dismissed for 125, 68 short of their target.

The RN needed victories in their final two 50-over games against the New Zealand Army and Australian Air Force to make the semi-finals.

Unfortunately they lost by six wickets to the NZ Army but picked up a bonus-point win in the final group game, beating the Air Force by four wickets.

Their final game of the tournament saw the RN lose to the Australian Army for the fifth-place slot.

The men's final saw the Pakistan Navy beat the Malaysian Air Force, while the British Army beat the Royal Australian Navy in the women's final.