



NAVY NEWS

November 2016

Lion heart

● *FLEET Flagship HMS Ocean ploughs her way through the Adriatic during Albanian Lion, a key component of the Royal Navy's Joint Expeditionary Force (Maritime) deployment (see pages 2-4)*

Picture: PO(Phot) Si Ethell, CHF



Tomorrow's world

Unmanned Warrior offers glimpse of naval operations to come

Carrier countdown

Finishing touches for future flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth





Force to be r

A HAWK jet swoops overhead. Two 'enemy' patrol ships advance at high speed.

The threats from the air and sea result in the call to action stations – condition Zulu – in HMS Bulwark as personnel don their anti-flash gear.

Fleet flagship HMS Ocean – complete with her 1,100-strong contingent of ship's company, Royal Marines and aircrew from all three Services – faced the same scenario a few hours later.

It's tense in Ocean's ops room as repeated warnings are made to the Hawks before they head north for 736 NAS's temporary base at Tirana airport in Albania.

The threat at sea came from Albanian Navy patrol ships Oriku and Lisus, taking on the role of attack vessels Combattante II and Tarantul III.

Throw into the mix shore raids by Royal Marines, the rescue of civilians stranded at sea and a Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation – ensuring the safety of people displaced by violence – and you have got the biggest Royal Navy deployment of the year.

Along with RFA Mounts Bay – bristling with Royal Marines – and MV Eddystone – bristling with kit used by the Royal Marines – the two, currently largest ships in the Royal Navy, are on the annual deployment of a crisis-focused amphibious task group, Joint Expeditionary Force (Maritime),

AROUND 2,000 UK military personnel joined their Albanian counterparts for Exercise Albanian Lion, part of the Royal Navy's annual deployment of amphibious task group, the Joint Expeditionary Force Maritime 16 (JEF(M)16). **Lorraine Proudlock** joined the group in the Adriatic.

JEF(M), (pronounced *jeff'em*).

More than 2,000 UK military personnel on board the ships joined around 250 Albanian personnel for Exercise Albanian Lion, conducting a number of serials on land and at sea off the coast of the small country on Europe's Balkan Peninsula.

A Tailored Air Group made up of Merlin and Wildcat (Navy), Chinook (RAF) and Apache (Army) helicopters, along with lead elements of 42 Commando, the Royal Marines Lead Commando Group, Royal Navy divers, Commando Gunners from 29 Royal Artillery and Commando Engineers from 24 Rgt – including one sniffer dog and two force protection dogs – took part in the exercise, which has run for the past five years.

Albanian Lion formed part of a series of demanding exercises in the Adriatic and the Gulf, reinforcing the UK's relationships with allies and ensuring that the task group is ready to respond if called upon at short notice, anywhere in the world.

The UK takes its leading role in the NATO Very High Readiness Joint Task Force in 2017.

Bulwark's ship's company of 380 personnel was bolstered by 200 members of battlestaff from Commander Amphibious Assault

Group (COMATG) and 3 Cdo Bde.

The entire exercise was overseen by Cdre Andrew Burns, COMATG, who said: "I continue to be hugely impressed by the ingenuity, resilience and professional dedication shown by every sailor, marine, soldier and airman under my command in meeting the objectives for this deployment."

Brig Jim Morris, Commander 3 Cdo Bde, added: "Albanian Lion went really well. It's a great opportunity to run out the lead Commando group and do some great training ashore with Albanian commando units. It's really a great place to train."

"We are the force that will eventually go ashore to deliver whatever effect it is we are asked to do. So whether it is the soft end of things, as we have seen earlier this week with a non-combatant evacuation operation, through to some of the punchier stuff that we can do in commando forces."

"Not only are we training but we are ready to react should the need arise around the world."

It's as real as it gets (*without actual war*) but for a number of first-time sailors it's the perfect way of getting in their sea days.

"It's a great experience for me as I am working with high-ranking officers," said AB Tess Farrow, of

HMS Albion, who found out she was joining the staff of COMATG four days before joining Bulwark.

Tess, 30 this month, joined the RN last year after eight years working in public relations.

"I wanted something more, something with promotion opportunities and my mum was an officer in the Royal Navy."

Tess, who won the Royal Navy Writers' Association Trophy for notching up the highest average mark in her exams at HMS Raleigh, is hoping to transfer to the officer corps.

"I am loving it here. I wanted to go to sea and I'm enjoying the ramp-up in role for me and it's good to have a different routine to being shoreside," added Tess; her typical day starts at 5.45am with a spot of phys before starting work at 8am, usually working through until 8pm.

Albania, which joined NATO in 2009, has around 20,000 people in its armed forces, including 5,000 reservists, and elements of the country's air force and navy visited Bulwark and Ocean during the exercise.

The Albanian Naval Force – *Force Detare* – operates mainly patrol vessels (28 plus two mine warfare ships) from their headquarters at Durres in the north and their base at Pashaliman in the south – a little-used facility where the rusting hulks of four Whiskey-class submarines previously owned by the Soviet Union can be seen.

Bulwark's commanding officer, Capt James Parkin, said: "Albanian Lion is the culmination of many





eckoned with

months' work to achieve full readiness. "We are seeing the gentle ramping up of a fictitious country, surrounded by other fictitious countries. We hope the aggressive nations will back down but we may have to project power ashore to calm things down.

"It has been a challenging and fascinating test of the nation's amphibious ability, in a realistic environment, and again proved the flexibility and utility of this vital war-winning capability.

"Albanian Kommandos are learning from us, the best in the world. We are integrated with two Albanian patrol ships; they don't have ships of this size. It's been mutually beneficial."

Kommando troop leader Lt Roland Poçi agreed: "We have done lots of different training, my guys have really enjoyed it.

"We really get along with the UK forces, we've got a good history of working together.

"My troop has been working with Kilo Company, planning a raid on Sazan Island. The Albanian terrain is great for training as we have mountains, seas and rivers."

Albanian Lion has particular significance for HMS Ocean as she later heads through Suez to take charge of coalition operations against Daesh in the Gulf.

The warship will assume the role of the US Navy's Command Task Force 50 – reporting directly to the US Fifth Fleet Commander.

"It's a huge honour that we will be doing this," said Ocean's CO Capt Rob Pedre.

He went on: "Albanian Lion is

an excellent exercise, it gives us a chance to put our Tailored Air Group through its paces as well as our amphibious capability.

"Albanian Lion is representative of operations we may conduct when we go East and as for putting the task group through its paces, I can't think of a better location.

"It's recognised how unstable the world is today and its important to show the Royal Navy is able to deploy whenever and wherever it is needed."

Back to Ocean and her ops room, where warfare specialist AB Jack Drake (*honestly, that is his real name*) is being kept busy dealing with the fast-jet threat.

"These exercises are fun, it's great to put into practice all of the training," he said.

Next door is the amphibious ops room, currently ruled over by Royal Navy Reserve watchkeepers Hattie and Henry, affectionately referred to as H², of HMS Sherwood and Flying Fox respectively.

Back to the bridge and AB Melchion Quammie has one of the best views on the ship – as the flyco logger it is his job to record all take-offs and landings.

"We've been really busy, three-plus pages of records on one watch. My favourite by far is the Apache with its big guns," said the AB, who joined Ocean, his first ship, in January this year.

He watched as 30-plus personnel carried out one of the thrice-daily

fod (foreign object debris) plods on the flight deck. Once the all-clear was given, an RAF Chinook HC2 from 27 Squadron landed on two spot, shortly followed by an Army Apache AH Mk 1 from 662 Squadron.

Ocean is carrying two Merlin iMk3s from 845 NAS, two Chinooks and four Apaches for the exercise.

LA Tom 'Scotty' Scott, in charge of the firefighting systems in Ocean, said; "It's really busy which is good. We've done a lot of flying with different aircraft; tiring work but good to do.

"An eight-hour shift can be pretty busy particularly on such an exercise. The challenge is integrating the Army and RAF into being on a ship and it is satisfying to see that."

Scotty admitted life on board can be testing.

"It takes time to get used to living with 30 men but they become your family.

"It can be hard to find your own space sometimes but there is good camaraderie," said Scotty as he went to make the tea, wearing the obligatory red sombrero.

It's also non-stop in the galley as manager PO Jamie Marples oversees the feeding of 1,100 personnel.

"The biggest challenge is the sheer number of people – breakfast takes two hours," he said.

His 12-strong team use up an average of 750kg of potatoes each day, 18 40kg tins of baked beans and 720 eggs just for breakfast.

Sunday dinner on board involves preparing 100 chickens, 100kg of

beef or lamb, vegetables and 1,000 Yorkshire puddings and stuffing balls.

"Menus are planned a week in advance and it all has to be delivered for £2.83 per head per day, less than a police dog (£7) or a prisoner (£9). We still manage to do themed nights – we had an American night the other day featuring OFC, Ocean-fried chicken (*get it?*), barbecue hot dogs and chilli dogs."

While Ocean's forces were enjoying a relatively leisurely lunch, back on Bulwark it was a case of action messing – caterers have 45 minutes to prepare, feed and clear up.

Seven minutes were allocated for personnel (still wearing anti-flash gear) to neck their chilli and rice, using paper plates and plastic cutlery.

"I love action messing, I can scoff my food down without anyone knowing who I am," said AB Farrow.

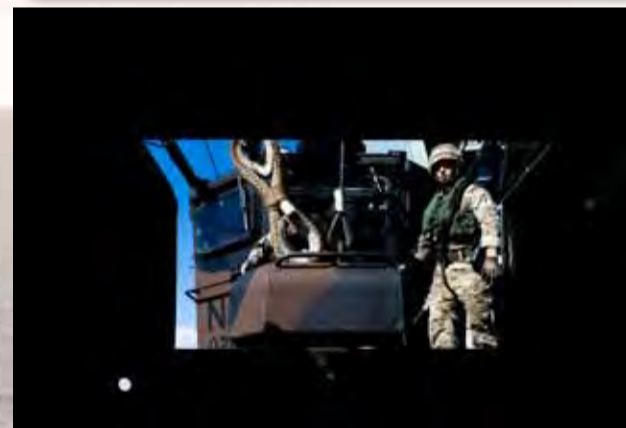
Over on RFA Mounts Bay and the 69-strong crew have been joined by 350 personnel, mainly marines, along with 150 vehicles, including Offshore Raiding Craft and ribs.

The addition of Royal Marines was keeping 3/O Andy Turner busy.

"My main role is to make sure all the weapons are ready for firing, as well as my engineering role. I work closely with the Royal Marines Force Protection Team and we have had a lot of amphibious taskings."

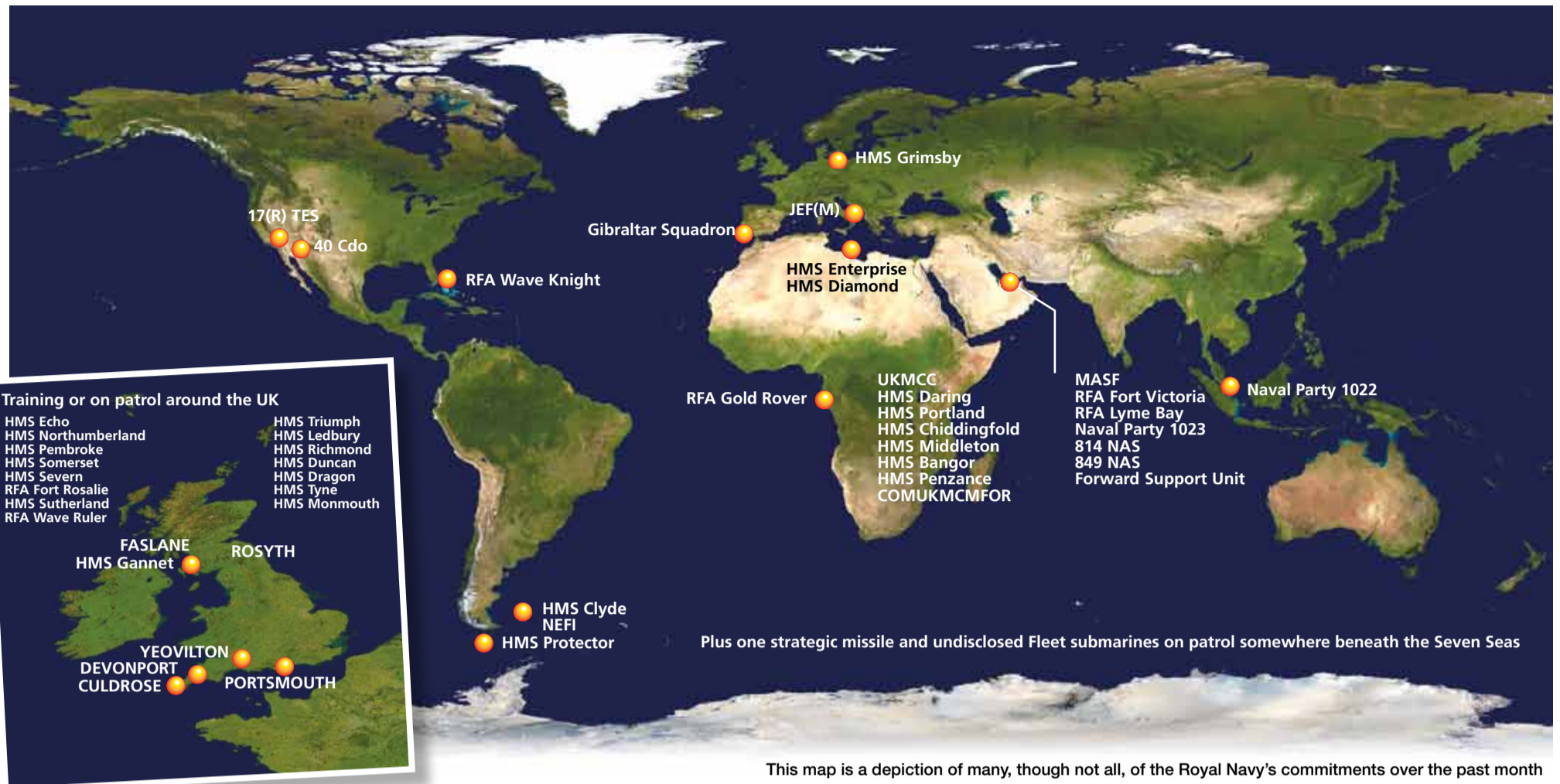
Deep down the ship and the vehicle deck is a hive of activity as marines prepare for a night raid on the island of Sazan, an operational military base in the far south, with a detachment of military personnel

■ Continued on page 4



Pictures: PO(Phot) Si Ethell, PO(Phot) Dave Gallagher and LPhot Paul Hall





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

ROYAL NAVY **FLEET FOCUS**
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Force to be reckoned with

THE Royal Navy's largest deployment of the year dominates this month's edition as the **Joint Expeditionary Force (Maritime)** reached Albania (see pages 2, 3 and 4).

Exercise Albanian Lion featured personnel from all three UK Armed Services based in Fleet Flagship HMS Ocean, HMS Bulwark and RFA Mounts Bay, with MV Eddystone supporting the operation.

Royal Marines Reservists also enjoyed their largest deployment – 12 tough days at the ranges of Sennelager in Germany (see page 9) for **Exercise Commando Phoenix**.

Ground-breaking trials in the form of **Unmanned Warrior** off the west coast of Scotland (see pages 18-19) saw the Royal Navy host defence firms, academics and scientists exploring ways in which autonomous and unmanned technology could shape the future of the Senior Service.

Down south, HMS Raleigh to be precise, and boat experts tested the **Pacific 24 Mk4** sea boat (see page 22) ahead of its debut with the front-line fleet in the coming months.

The Fleet Air Arm's newest helicopter is on its first full operational deployment in the Middle East (see page 11). **Wildcat's** 204 Flight is using **HMS Daring** as her home until next spring.

Work continues apace at Rosyth as the finishing touches are applied to **HMS Queen Elizabeth** (see page 15) ahead of her departure next spring.

The carrier's Flyco team headed south to RNAS Culdrose (see page 21) to launch and recover F-35B fast jets from a flight-deck simulator. The simulator software has been adapted to include the new carriers and their air power.

Thirteen per cent of the ship's company of HMS Queen Elizabeth are women, believed to be the highest ratio in the Fleet, and nine of them lined up in front of their ship to promote next year's WRNS100 Centenary (see page 20).

Heading to the Caribbean and **RFA Wave Knight** helped residents in the Bahamas deal with the devastation of Hurricane Matthew (see page 7).

Back to Plymouth and **HMS Albion** is being brought back to life (see page 23) ahead of taking over from HMS Bulwark as the UK's on-call assault ship next year.

In Ireland and **HMS Severn** spent a few days visiting Cork – and the rare chance to work with the Irish Navy (see page 6).

Personnel from **Northern Diving Group** (see page 13) replaced the Royal Navy's standard on the wreck of HMS Royal Oak – an act they perform each year to check on the condition of the wreck.

Also paying their respects to the fallen (see centre pages) were personnel from **HMS Clyde** as the patrol ship visited the official Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery at Ajax Bay in the Falklands. Sailors also visited memorials to HMS Sheffield and Glamorgan during the ship's latest patrol.

Back in the UK and submariners past and present gathered in Exeter (see pages 16-17) to unveil a memorial to one of its sons, Lt Richard Sandford VC, winner of the nation's highest honour for gallantry for his part in the daring raid on Zeebrugge in 1918. The centenary of the raid will be marked with a memorial paving slab but the **Submariners' Association** is also putting up traditional blue plaques. A new blue plaque was also put up in the Hampshire village of Catherington in honour of Royal Marines officer Herbert George, one of the Cockleshell Heroes.

Finally, chefs and stewards from the Naval Service put up a strong showing (see page 27) at the annual tri-Service competition **Exercise Joint Caterer** to find out who delivers the best scran in the UK Armed Forces.



● Midshipman Michael Golden by the grave of his great-great-grandfather Michael Sweeney, who died in 1918



● HMS Ocean's CO Capt Rob Pedre with members of the Albanian air force

■ Continued from page 3

constantly on the two-square-mile isle – a far cry from the days when more than 3,000 troops called it home.

The island is full of tunnels and bunkers, testament to the former communist state's fear of a Western invasion during the Cold War.

Now it welcomes 'invaders' and who better than the Royal Marines as they cam-up, check their weapons and kit and then get some last-minute rest while waiting for the ship's dock to flood up.

Also waiting are nine personnel from Fleet Diving Unit 2 working as a pre-landing force.

"We go ashore first and use handheld sonar to ensure there are no obstructions for landing craft," explained AB(D) Kieron Dimmock.

Mounts Bay's CO Capt David Buck said: "Albanian training conditions are first rate and RFA Mounts Bay is really the workhorse of this exercise. We are very much a military ship."

"The geography of the Albanian coastline lends itself to a number of training evolutions. It is popular with the Royal Marines and for the RFA it offers good coastal training."

Following Albanian Lion, HMS Ocean became the first major Royal Navy warship to visit Alexandria in Egypt in eight years.

And for the first time in the 98 years since he was laid to rest at Hadra Cemetery in Alexandria a family member was finally able to pay tribute to Pte Michael Sweeney, one of World War 1's last victims.

The soldier from 6th Battalion, Prince of Wales Leinster Regiment died barely two months before the guns fell silent.

Midshipman Michael Golden, who is undergoing training on the helicopter carrier, said: "It was an honour to be able to visit the grave of my great-great-grandfather Michael Sweeney."

"As the first member of my family to visit his grave I'm grateful to the Royal Navy for helping me to provide a measure of closure to my family. It's poignant that both he and I were both brought to Alexandria in the service of their country."

It wasn't the only act of remembrance during Ocean's stay as Capt Pedre laid a wreath at the Alexandria Naval Unknown Soldier Memorial in a well-attended ceremony alongside members of the Egyptian Armed Forces.

Whilst alongside the ship hosted a reception on behalf of British Ambassador John Casson and welcomed onboard a number of civilian and military dignitaries, including Assistant Defence Minister Major General Asem Ab El Mohsen, Alexandria Naval Base Commander Rear Admiral Mohamed Ahmed Mahmoud and Chairman of the Alexandria Chamber of Shipping, Mohamed Mousally. All were treated to the traditional spectacle of a Royal Naval Ceremonial Sunset on the ship's flight deck.

On a less formal level, the ship's football team took on a local side... and lost 2-0.

At the visit's end, Ocean linked up in the Mediterranean with HMS Bulwark for combined manoeuvres with the pride of the Egyptian Navy, the brand-new frigate ENS Tahya Misr.

"It's been a great honour and privilege to bring my ship and ship's company to Alexandria and I am extremely grateful for the warm welcome we have received," said Capt Pedre.

"HMS Ocean's visit highlights the closeness of the relationship between the Royal Navy and the Egyptian Navy and our continued desire to cooperate in the maritime domain."

Ocean and Bulwark then headed East through Suez, with Bulwark due to return home to Plymouth in December, while Ocean is due back in March 2017.

Sub rescue role for 45s

TYPE 45 destroyers are now able to come to the aid of stricken submariners and divers around the world following a successful trial fitting a recompression chamber to their flight decks.

Hitherto, the system has only been deployed with the Type 23 frigate flotilla.

The RN keeps two recompression chambers on standby to support the submarine community, each weighing 13.6 tonnes and housed in an ISO container.

It can accommodate up to 11 people at a time, shrinking the size of the damaging gas bubbles that have formed in the tissues of divers – or submariners who have undertaken an emergency departure from their boat – who rise to the surface too quickly.

The chambers – far larger than similar devices permanently fitted to Hunt and Sandown-class minehunters – are held at six hours' notice to move in Devonport.

After nine months of planning, HMS Dauntless was selected as the testbed by the Submarine Escape Rescue and Survival (SMERAS) team from Gosport.

"In the unlikely event of a submarine being in distress, our preferred method of rescue is clearly on the surface, or via the NATO Submarine Rescue Submarine from Faslane," explained WO1 Steve Micallef.

"If submariners have to leave their boats underwater, they could possibly suffer from the bends, or decompression sickness. Having a broader range of surface ships to carry our two recompression chambers quickly to the scene provides us with more options, should our services ever be required."

You say 'boomer', I say 'bomber'...

NOW there's a mighty warship which makes any foe think twice about attacking... and an American 'boomer'.

HMS Tracker makes sure no-one interferes with the arrival of one of the most powerful men o'war on the Seven Seas, the strategic missile submarine USS Tennessee.

The patrol boat and the rest of the Faslane force protection armada turned out in strength to usher the 18,500-tonne submarine safely up the Clyde and into Gareloch.

The boat, normally based at Kings Bay in Georgia, home of the nuclear deterrent on America's Eastern Seaboard, paid a rare visit to the home of the UK's ultimate force.

It's the second time in 13 months Clyde Naval Base has hosted one of the US Navy's ultimate leviathans; USS Wyoming made use of the facilities in September 2015.

The Ohio-class submarine is the counterpart to the UK's Vanguard-class boats, although they are about 70ft longer, and 2,500 tonnes heavier with around 20-30 more crew.

Their principal weapon, the Trident II D5 missile system, is identical, however, although the Americans can carry up to 24 of the devices, British submarines were built to launch no more than 16.

The head of US Strategic Command, Admiral Cecil D Haney, said the visits first by Wyoming and now Tennessee to Faslane were indicative of the "special relationship with the UK, and complements the many exercises, training, operations, and other military cooperation activities conducted between our two nations".

Vanguard-class boats fairly frequently take advantage of American hospitality, using Kings Bay as their base when conducting missile trials.

Picture: LA(Phot) Stevie Burke, FRPU(North)



At home on the Range(r)

IT'S always nice to go home, even if it is only for three hours.

To do so with your own warship to show it off to your parents and contemporaries, that's extra special.

Nearly half the population of the village of Flushing, opposite Falmouth, took the chance to have a look around HMS Ranger when her 27-year-old CO Lt Jonathan Eastburn brought her in to the quay for an afternoon visit.

Ranger is assigned to Sussex University to give students an insight into the Senior Service.

So the 68ft boat is normally found either in her home base of Portsmouth or in and around the Solent/Sussex coast.

As part of training, however, her CO was given permission to drop in on his home village of Flushing (population 670) ahead of FOST exercises in area – probably the first time a British warship has called on the small community on the left bank of the River Penryn.

Somehow 300 people filed on and off whilst at Flushing quay (the normal complement is five or 18 with students embarked), including the CO's extremely proud mum and dad David and Judith, and local schoolchildren.

"Having grown up in Flushing I thought it would be nice to take the opportunity to host an informal 'ship open to visitors' while alongside," said Lt Eastburn.

"Aside from having obvious significance to me, it seemed that some exposure to the Royal Navy for a village that is not normally visited could only be a good thing."

Dreadnought resurrected

THE first steel has been cut on the most powerful warship Britain has ever built: HMS Dreadnought.

Yes, you read that correctly. And it is 2016, not 1906.

One of the most symbolic names in Royal Navy history has been dusted off after more than 35 years and assigned to the first of the next-generation nuclear-missile-armed submarines, hitherto known as the Successor programme.

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon set the steel cutter in motion at BAE's Barrow Yard, to begin work on the first compartment of the 17,200-tonne submarine. Those first sheets of steel will eventually be home to the control panels and switchboards of Dreadnought's nuclear reactor.

Dreadnought, whose name was formally announced on Trafalgar Day, will be constructed alongside the four final hunter killers in the Astute class.

At the same time, millions of pounds are being pumped into honing the final design of the boats, improving facilities in the yard to meet the high-tech demands of a 21st-Century submarine, and acquiring some of the 'long lead' items the craft will require.

Even though the design is not yet complete, some

facts and features are set in steel.

At 152.9m (501ft) long, the new boats will be three metres longer than their V-boat predecessors, but displace 1,300 more tonnes.

Dreadnought is also due to be fitted with a new lighting system which can imitate night and day – making it easier for crew to get used to normal life after three months submerged.

There will be nearly 13,000 electrical items aboard, enough piping to cover the distance of a marathon and 20,000 pieces of cable stretching 215 miles, or from the boats' future home in Faslane to Leeds.

For the first time in a British submarine, there'll be a dedicated compartment for studying, a gym (rather than gym kit squeezed into odd spaces), and separate quarters for female crew.

When in full swing, the Dreadnought class will be the biggest defence project in the UK.

The name was last held by Britain's first nuclear-powered submarine (1960-80) and, before that, by the battleship (1906-1919) which was so powerful and revolutionary that all subsequent capital ships were referred to as dreadnought... while all battleships which preceded her were dubbed pre-dreadnoughts.





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Beanz meanz shipz

SHE may be the most advanced frigate in the Fleet, but some things still require all hands on deck.

Lower decks on HMS Westminster were cleared and sailors mustered for the arduous task of 'storing ship' – filling the freezers, fridges and pantries with dry, fresh and frozen goods.

Routine business – and not ordinarily worthy of a little news story – but it's not been done aboard the Type 23 in a couple of years as the ship has been in refit in Portsmouth.

With the overhaul complete, the frigate is due to begin sea trials in December – which means sea time and therefore plenty of scrum to sustain the 180-plus souls on board.

Carried aboard on the very first load by a daisy chain of men and women on the jetty, flight deck and down into the bowels of the 4,500-tonne man o'war were: more than one tonne of potatoes, 3,400 rashers of bacon, 200kg of chicken, and 520kg of baked beans... plus several boxes of Jacob's crackers, Angel Delight and some crates of peanut butter.

More than 800 engineers, technicians and shipwrights from BAE Systems have swarmed over the 24-year-old warship to prepare her for the final decade of her life.

She's the first ship to receive the Navy's new shield against air attack – the Sea Ceptor missile system, which is also being installed on sisters Argyll and Montrose during their revamps in Devonport.

Ceptor (short for interceptor) replaces the veteran Seawolf which has protected the frigate flotilla more than 35 years.

The large trackers which guided the old system have been removed and replaced with its successor's smaller, more powerful sensors.

And the silo has been adapted to accommodate the new supersonic missiles, heavier, over one metre longer and with a range of more than 25km (15 miles), more than twice that of Seawolf.

In addition, engineers have installed the Artisan radar (rapidly becoming standard fit on 23s); it can track more than 800 objects simultaneously as close as 200 metres and as far away as 200,000 (200km, 125 miles, or from Portsmouth to Calais as the crow flies).

A shiny refurbished main 4.5in gun has been lowered back into place on the forecastle; it can rain 21kg shells down on enemy targets more than 27km (16 miles) away at the rate of up to 24 per minute.

Before the dry dock was flooded, the hull received a coat of anti-fouling paint which will stop algae and other marine organisms sticking to it... and slowing the ship down.

And just for good measure... the bridge was completely revamped. And the galley. And the mess decks and communal areas, as the ship's company discovered when they moved back aboard recently.

They have to wait another couple of months before taking the 'capital ship' back to sea – basin/harbour trials have to be conducted on most systems and equipment, while the crew must undergo training and finally assessment before being authorised to sail a multi-million pound warship. Once trials are complete, Westminster is due to be handed back to the RN next spring.



● Watching you watching us... Two sailors on HMS Richmond's bridge wing observe the Russian nuclear-powered Kirov-class 'battle-cruiser' Pyotr Velikiy as the Admiral Kuznetsov carrier task group moves through the North Sea.

The frigate sailed from the Shetland Islands to monitor the progress of the Kuznetsov, believed to be making her way to Syria to support Russia's anti-Daesh military operations.

In addition to the Kuznetsov and Pyotr Velikiy, two Udaloy-class destroyers, Vice Admiral Kulakov and Severomorsk, are assigned to the task group.

Picture: PO(Phot) Des Wade

Eire force

HMS Severn left fish behind for a few days for a visit to Cork and a rare chance to work with the Irish Navy.

The Portsmouth-based warship, which devotes the bulk of her time to ensuring fishermen stick to international quotas, made for waters off the Old Head of Kinsale to join forces with Lé Orla... which devotes the bulk of her time to ensuring fishermen stick to international quotas.

Orla began life as HMS Swift, one of the Peacock class of boats patrolling waters around Hong Kong.

When the colony reverted to China two decades ago, she was sold to the Republic, renamed and pressed into service as the Orla.

Overlooked by the beautiful and rugged coastline of the south coast of Ireland – it's in these waters that the Lusitania was infamously torpedoed a century ago – Severn and Orla practised various exercises using each other as 'targets'.

Orla's boarding team, led by their Executive Officer Lt Shane Mulcahy, climbed up a ladder on to Severn's cargo deck, secured it for his team to follow, then made for the bridge to take charge.

Once the scenario had ended, the Irish demonstrated several of their techniques and drills to their British counterparts, including their firm use of restraints.

It was then the turn of Severn's team to get into their boats as Orla played the part of a vessel in distress. Severn's boarding team came to the rescue led by her First Lieutenant, Lt Angie Violante USN.

The RN team practised extinguishing fires, stopping floods and administering first aid to casualties while being supplied with equipment from afar by boat.

Following a night at anchor, both ships weighed and returned to sea to carry out some Officer of the Watch manoeuvres, testing bridge teams in their ability to communicate and accurately handle their ships in close company with others.

With four Young Officers under training on board, Severn's bridge team leapt at the opportunity.

"It was fantastic to work with the Irish and to conduct these manoeuvres," said trainee Sub Lt Tom Isaac. "Chances like these are rare and I felt privileged to be part of the team that made it happen. It truly was a great Navy day!"

After a close sail past to complete the exercise, Severn concentrated on the journey into Cork through waters steeped in maritime history.

After passing Haulbowline Naval Base and the colourful waterfront of Cobh (as Queenstown invariably the last port of call for transatlantic liners before the New World, including the Titanic) Severn continued up the River Lee all of the way into the centre of Cork. With the help of tugs she berthed at Custom House Quay (pictured below), as far up the river as seagoing vessels can get (a road bridge stops ships going any further) for a weekend's rest and relaxation in Ireland's second city.

"Lé Orla and the people of Cork made Severn feel most welcome," said Lt Chris Poulson, the ship's second in command. "Usually patrolling by ourselves, this was a fantastic opportunity to train alongside a professional ship of a service that shares so much of the Royal Navy's principles and high standards. Our only regret is that we couldn't stay in Cork for longer."



Feel the Wrath of Monmouth

THE northwesternmost tip of mainland Britain came under a two-day hammering from HMS Monmouth's main 4.5in gun as the gunbay team were given the order 'empty the magazine'.

And they did: 175 rounds crashed down on the Cape Wrath range in 15 shoots – high-explosive, practice, star shells – in a co-ordinated eight and a half hours of fire and fury bringing lead and steel down on the barren Scottish headland, culminating in a ten-round 'fire for effect' salvo – ten 46lb shells landing in close proximity one after another at around the speed of sound.

And just for good measure, France's FS Primauguet and Spain's EPS Victoria were dropping rounds on the range with their 100mm and 76mm main guns respectively.

Directing the fall of shots both ashore and aboard Monmouth were the expert observers/spotters of 148 Battery Royal Artillery from Poole, who've guided the guns of the Fleet successfully in Iraq and Libya in recent years.

Joining them for the second Joint Warrior exercise of 2016 were their US counterparts from 2nd Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (2nd Anglico), normally found at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

Earlier this year, the Poole-based gunners – drawn from the Army, RN and RM – were invited to California to train with 1st Anglico, making use of their hi-tech indoor and extensive outdoor ranges.

This month's Joint Warrior war games provided the perfect opportunity for 148 Battery to repay the hospitality shown by their American cousins and invite them to Scotland for some gunnery funnery.

They directed the second day of the shoot – bringing to an end two months of work with the Americans for Monmouth, most recently found off Nova Scotia for the largest naval exercise Canada has hosted in a couple of decades.

And the shoot also completed the Black Duke's weapons workout before deployment.

Every one of her weapons systems has to be fired before she can be permitted to head out on operations.

Just 24 hours before the gunnery shoot, the Devonport-based warship was off the Outer Hebrides firing her Seawolf missile at a drone target.

The ship then made a beeline for Cape Wrath, battling 30kt winds and a choppy Sea State 4 (waves of up to 8ft) to take her position on the gunline for the shoot.

Her gunnery officer Lt Cdr Simon Shaw was delighted with the way his team – and his gun – performed.

"The shoot at Cape Wrath was the undoubtedly highlight of Joint Warrior, something for which the gunnery team had been drilling since we left Canada. It was also a pleasure working with 148 Battery," he added.

72 down, 678 to go...

THE first occupants of a massive expansion of accommodation at Faslane have moved into their new cabins.

Over the next 12 months, 750 new en-suite cabins are being built on the Clyde to accommodate an influx of submariners as boats are transferred from Devonport to Scotland.

On a typical day, 6,800 RN, RM and civilians work at Faslane. That will rise to 8,200 by 2022.

There's accommodation on site for just shy of 2,800 military personnel, but with the latest blocks going up, that will rise to 3,529 by the end of 2017.

The latest additions to the site have double beds, a lockable storage area, WiFi, communal areas and improved laundry facilities.

QE's AIS up the sleeve

SHIPSPOTTERS can now follow the movements of HMS Queen Elizabeth on their phones and computers.

The carrier has switched on her Automatic Identification System (AIS), a global tracking system which provides details of a ship, location, speed and cargo for the world to see, plus the last five ports of call (Rosyth, Rosyth, Rosyth, Rosyth and Rosyth...)

It's been a legal requirement of vessels over 300 tonnes to carry the system for the past 15 years (warships and military vessels switch it off in times of war/operations).

It should be a pretty dull feed for a while. The ship's not moved in over two years, since being transferred to the basin at Rosyth for fitting out, and won't be starting sea trials until the spring.

Weather's a bit Grim...

IF IT'S Joint Warrior, it must be rougher.

Actually, this is just before the UK's autumn war games off the Scottish coast, a less-than-clement Irish Sea as seen from the bridge of HMS Grimsby.

The minehunter led a NATO task group on a 1,500-mile odyssey from the Baltic to its home base on the Clyde to participate in the second of 2016's Joint Warrior exercises – running until the end of next week.

The weather in the English Channel and Irish Sea was particularly challenging, with gale force winds and a strong swell causing large pitch and roll, which made basic tasks onboard extremely difficult.

Grimsby joined Standing Mine-Countermeasures Group 1 at the end of its summer 'fun' – a concerted sweep along Norway's northern coast which resulted in two dozen pieces of historic ordnance being discovered (bombs, mines plus a bus...) between Hammerfest and Trondheim.

Luckily, the fun (wartime ordnance, explosions) continued on Grimsby's first

assignment in the Baltic.

Exercise Northern Coast was typical NATO minehunting fare; escort a task force through a minefield to keep sea lanes open.

As part of the hunt for the fictitious minefield, the force came across – and destroyed – WW2 era mines and bombs, all of which were sent to kingdom come.

Around the Danish island of Bornholm, the focus switched to manoeuvres in formation, towing and rescue exercises of stricken vessels proving the effectiveness of the crews in various scenarios they might encounter on operations throughout the world, before beginning the long journey to Faslane, which every vessel in the eight-ship group reached undamaged.

Once Joint Warrior is over, the task group will make the 1,500-mile return journey back to the Baltic to resume patrols.



Kent proves the Dahl-ing of Cardiff

FOR four days this autumn Kent was in Wales.

Not a geographical error on our part (for once), rather, a visit to Cardiff by frigate HMS Kent, which spent a long weekend at Britannia Quay.

The visit coincided with centenary celebrations of the birth of author Roald Dahl; the 'City of the Unexpected' weekend which drew thousands of visitors to the city centre and Bute Park.

When the ship's company opened the doors and hatches to the public, they were inundated by almost 700 visitors in a little over four hours.

"Visiting your home city on a warship is a great experience, and I've been looking forward to this for a while," said 30-year-old LS(AWW) Gareth Drysdale from near Cardiff.

"It's a fantastic place, with so much to do and it was great to be able to show people what we do."

Senior representatives from the police, ambulance and fire and rescue services as well as council members and the Army and RAF were invited to watch what the Navy does on humanitarian and disaster relief operations – and where this fits in with the domestic challenges the UK encounters.

"Cardiff is a great city, and I'm delighted to have had the opportunity for Kent to visit – not least coinciding with the Roald Dahl centenary activities," said the frigate's CO Cdr Daniel Thomas.

"We were made to feel incredibly welcome by everybody we met and it was great to see so many people enjoying a tour."

Knights clear up in wake of Matthew

HATCHET job... A sailor hacks away at a fallen tree on Andros Island in the Bahamas as RFA Wave Knight helps out in the wake of Hurricane Matthew.

The tanker broke off her counter-drugs patrol in the Caribbean and made for the islands' capital Nassau after the storm to see what help the Bahamian Government needed.

Wave Knight has a specialist team of Army Commandos aboard specially trained to provide humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

Their numbers were bolstered by the tanker's own electrical and mechanical engineers and US Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment – actually on board Wave Knight for drug-busting duties.

Local authorities asked Wave Knight to fly troops the 36 miles to Andros in her Lynx, assess the damage to the island and fix roofs and electricity generators and components at the Bahamian Defence Force base.

In addition, the helicopter – from 815 NAS in Yeovilton – was called on to ferry food to Andros for both the military and civilian populace (more than 7,000 souls).

Grand Bahama bore the brunt of Matthew's brutal force but Andros, 100 miles to the south, also suffered – although thankfully no one across the islands were killed.

When the relief parties got to the military bases on Andros – home not only to the Bahamian Military, but also a test centre



used by the British and US Navies to assess sensors and systems on submarines and submarine-hunting frigates – they were given their tasks.

While the RFA party concentrated on the base, the Royal Engineers and Coast Guard began driving around the area in a bus, armed with chainsaws and hand tools; each time they came across a road that was blocked by trees and debris or power lines that had trees laying across them, they would clear the route – five roads were re-opened as a result.

"The work was tiring; a lot of heavy lifting was required, but the locals were very grateful for our efforts," said 2/O Chris Marchant, Wave Knight's Communications Officer.

Whilst clearing one of the routes, WO2 Jason Betts was

informed of a 79-year-old British expat who had a garden full of debris, so a small contingent of his Royal Engineers team split off to clear it.

Back on the base, the RFA technical team were carrying out assessments and repairs to generators, air conditioning units and other small-scale tasks which would have otherwise taken days to fix. Their efforts freed up Bahamian military personnel to focus on helping the local community.

"This was Wave Knight's first task to a disaster situation this year and although the tasks were not lifesaving, they still were of importance to both the local communities and the Royal Bahamian Defence Force who showed a great deal of appreciation," said the tanker's CO Capt Nigel Budd.



The ice locker

A US bomb disposal expert and a robot approach a booby-trapped car while smoke from a detonated homemade bomb scars the Icelandic horizon.

The Royal Navy's Fleet Diving Unit 2 joined like-minded bomb disposal technicians from 13 NATO and Allied nations to discuss how to deal with 'the war on our doorsteps' – the growing threat of terrorists inflicting mass casualties with a bombing campaign.

Exercise Northern Challenge 16, run by NATO at Keflavik, just outside the Icelandic capital Reykjavik, saw the latest in home-made bombs recovered around the world over the past few years reassembled, reactivated, then finally rendered safe – either by being detonated, or by being defused for a second time.

Some 22 teams from 14 countries answered the invitation from exercise director Lt Marvin Ingólfsson.

Given atrocities in Paris and Brussels over the past 12 months there was an added realism to the fortnight-long information exchange/live exercise.

Ideally, the Explosive Ordnance Disposal experts – in the case of the Royal Navy's mine clearance divers, based either with the Fleet Diving Squadron on Horsea Island in Portsmouth Harbour or the units in Plymouth and Faslane – neutralise rather than blow up any home-made device so the mechanism can be analysed and a database of disposal techniques built up.

As Northern Challenge progressed, so the devices laid became increasingly complex and realistic for EOD director Lt Cdr Sean 'Central' Heaton to deal with – but exactly what he wanted to see so the disposal operators were tested to the limit.

"Terrorist bombs are no longer just being placed in areas where there's conflict," he said.

"The lines of where conflict is have become blurred, so the role of the EOD operator is probably more important than it has ever been. The next incident could be right on one of our doorsteps."

Picture: US Navy

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Phil Babbington, FPS Member



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Phoenix nights

Pictures: PO(Phot) Ray Jones and LPhot Barry Wheeler

Royal Marines reservists put their shooting skills to test

TRACER fire from a .50 calibre heavy machine gun lights up the sky in Sennelager, Germany.

Around 120 Royal Marines reservists deployed to the ranges for the largest annual exercise in the RMR calendar, Commando Phoenix.

Conducted over 12 arduous days, the exercise encompassed a variety of training including a General Purpose Machine Gun Sustained Fire (GPMG SF) course; a Heavy Machine Gun (HMG) course; Assault Engineer (AE) training; 81mm Mortar dry training and live firing attacks from individual up to Company Group level.

The exercise concluded with a Company Group advance to contact with direct fire support.

The 116 square kilometre ranges at Sennelager, just outside Paderborn, are home to a replica town for urban warfare training – ‘Tin City’ – as well as extensive open spaces for more general infantry training.

Commando Phoenix was the culmination of 12 months training and was witnessed by a number of key personnel within the Corps, including Deputy Commandant General Royal Marines, Deputy Commander 3 Commando Brigade and Deputy Commander Maritime Reserves, as well as the Minister for Defence Veterans, Reserves and Personnel.

Supported by elements of the Regular Royal Marines, including 43 Commando and Commando Training Centre, the exercise aimed to improve individual and team battlefield skills in order to provide highly-trained personnel for potential operations with the Royal Marines and wider Armed Forces.

Marine Julian Kiley, 30, said: “Training doesn’t really end when you get your green beret. The next challenge is to make myself more deployable and more of an asset to the Corps.



● A reservist enjoys the ranges at Sennelager; Cpl Chris Rowland directs a gunner during one of the exercises

“I’m out here doing the heavy machine gun course.

“It puts the onus more on a team, working together around one weapon system to become as accurate and efficient as you can.”

Designed to be even more challenging than the previous year, the exercise also provided the opportunity for the Phase 2 Marines to conduct a survival training package, one of the key elements required to pass onto the trained strength of the RMR, after completing

Phase 1 training and the Reserve forces Commando Course.

Lt Col Richard Maltby, Commanding Officer of Royal Marines Reserve Bristol, said: “The men are enjoying it immensely.

“Exercise Commando Phoenix provides an excellent opportunity for them to hone their live firing and fieldcraft skills, and the fantastic ranges at Sennelager offer a great location to conduct this training.”

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Flying pulsing through Vanes

IT'S always great to see a legend of Naval aviation... and a Swordfish...

CPO Andy Vanes from RNAS Yeovilton has notched up over 9,000 flying hours (over 53 weeks or more than one year...) in nine different aircraft types with the Royal Navy's Fleet Arm and achieved 100 hours with the only flying Mk1 Swordfish.

CPO Vanes, born in Tipton, West Midlands, left school in 1970 aged 16 to join the Royal Navy initially training as a chef before transferring to the aircrewman branch in 1977.

"When I met with the equivalent of a careers officer at my Gloucestershire school he asked me what I wanted to really do. I wanted adventure and I quite liked the idea of being a chef. He suggested the Army but I said I thought surely the Royal Navy would be better and that's where I signed on the dotted line."

After training at Lee-on-the-Solent and basic flying training in Wessex Mk1s at RNAS Culdrose, Andy was streamed to the Wasp HAS Mk1 and completed his operational flying training as a missile aimer in 703 NAS at RNAS Portland.

Appointments to HMS Naiad and Ashanti followed before he qualified as a Wessex HU Mk5 SAR crewman at 772 NAS. Further appointments to Wasps followed with the training team at 829 NAS and as the ship's flight crewman onboard HMS Euryalus.

In 1982 Andy completed Commando Operational flying training with 707 NAS at RNAS Yeovilton. The period during and after the Falklands conflict resulted in a number of short notice appointments to 772 'A' Flight onboard HMS Illustrious, 771 search-and-rescue flight at

RNAS Culdrose and 845 NAS on Ascension Island.

Eventually Andy returned to Yeovilton, the spiritual home of the Fleet Air Arm, for the Sea King HC Mk4 conversion course and subsequently 846 NAS. This was followed by an appointment as senior aircrewman based at RNoAF Bardufoss in Norway and 707 NAS Commando Aircrew Training Sqn at Yeovilton.

In 1993 Andy left the Royal Navy and joined the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) Air Branch the following year.

Aircraft flown by CPO Vanes

- Wessex Mk1
- Wasp
- Wessex Mk5
- Sea King Mk4
- Jetstream T3
- Swordfish
- Wildcat HMA2

He has also flown in the Gazelle and the utility helicopter AW109

As a reservist, he joined Heron Flight (the Royal Navy's communication flight) in 1998 as one of the operations team and subsequently flew as a qualified right-hand seat crew member in the Jetstream T3 aircraft, flying

some 2,800 hours until the demise of the unit in 2008.

AgustaWestland contracted Andy's experience in 2010 to teach foreign students based in Vergiate in Italy and in 2012 he returned to 848 NAS in their operations room. He also joined the Royal Navy Historic Flight (RNHF) as a volunteer Swordfish crewman.

As one of the Swordfish team he regularly occupies either the observer or the telegraphist air gunner's cockpit in the Swordfish when she is travelling around the country attending commemorations and air shows.

In 2014 he joined 825 NAS as their chief aircrewman flying in the very latest Navy helicopter the Wildcat HMA2.

"I've had a few testing times but mostly it has been absolutely fantastic! Would I do it all again? Yes I would, of course I would," said Andy.

Interoperabilität in Med

THE Navy's newest helicopter will deploy with a foreign warship for the first time.

A Wildcat flight from 825 NAS in Yeovilton will join a German frigate throughout its deployment to the Mediterranean next year.

It's the second time in recent years that a helicopter from

the Somerset air station has supported an Allied warship on front-line operations.

Over the winter of 2012-13, a Lynx was based on the French frigate FS Surcouf throughout a counter-piracy/terrorism patrol off the Horn of Africa, resulting in considerable success.

Watch out, the cat's about

IS IT a bird?

Is it a plane? No it's quite obviously a Wildcat. Off the starboard bow of a Type 45 destroyer.

The Fleet Air Arm's newest helicopter is on its first, full operational deployment in the Middle East, using HMS Daring as her home and launchpad until next spring.

Wildcat has been in service for a couple of years with 825 NAS and has completed a front-line tour of duty in the Americas with HMS Lancaster.

It's also been tested in the Gulf heat when Daring's sister HMS Duncan was operating in the Middle East last autumn. Experts from the helicopter's home base in Yeovilton assessed how it coped with the heat and dust, laying down the limits at which Wildcat can operate.

That short debut has allowed this autumn/winter's full deployment to the region with the air and ground crew of 204 Flight aboard the destroyer throughout.

"Wildcat may look like a Lynx Mk8, but it offers so much more," explained Lt Andrew Henderson, the 35-year-old Flight Commander from Bath and one of the Royal Navy's most seasoned Wildcat operators.

"The one we're flying off the back of HMS Daring is only a year old and we're still learning about all the things it can do."

"We are in a privileged position to be here in the formative early period of the Wildcat's service and the work we do on this deployment will have a positive effect on the way the aircraft is used for years to come."

The easiest way to distinguish the two helicopters – both built in Yeovil by Westland/AgustaWestland/Leonardo – is from the tail plane; Wildcat has one, Lynx doesn't.

Otherwise, the nose of Wildcat is less cluttered than a Mk8 and it's painted light/dark grey rather than simply grey all over.

It's not how Wildcat looks that will assist Daring's deployment, but the next-generation equipment and sensors fitted to her from the fully digital cockpit (all computer displays, no dials) to the more powerful engines (better suited to the heat and humidity of the Gulf) and weaponry and sensor systems (the 360° full-colour surveillance radar helps crew pick out their prey and, if necessary, engage them).

"One of the important things we will be

doing on this deployment is educating the ship about just what the Wildcat can offer," said Flight Observer Lt Kev Regan, 37, from Liverpool.

"Because it looks like a Lynx Mk8 people assume it offers the same capability. It actually offers a lot more and we are looking forward to demonstrating just what this new aircraft is capable of."

Which comes to the fore now Daring is in her operational theatre east of Suez, monitoring the movements of scores, if not hundreds of vessels simultaneously, everything from fishing skiffs through dhows to oil tankers and container ships.

Most, though not all, are going about their lawful business; the skill is identifying the one which isn't.

"Maritime trade is the lifeblood of the UK economy and industry so it's incredibly important we keep up this work to keep the sea lanes secure, following on from the successes of our sister ships before us," said the destroyer's CO Cdr Phil Dennis.

"A vast amount of the world's trade passes through the Middle East by sea and it's our job, alongside partner nations, to ensure this legitimate maritime activity may proceed without threat."



Pictures: PO(Phot) Ray Jones



WO1 marks 4,000 hours in the skies

COLLEAGUES pay tribute as WO1 Si Lewis completes his 4,000th flying hour.

The milestone came in a Merlin Mk2 of 814 NAS, aka the Flying Tigers, at RNAS Culdrose.

Si joined the Royal Navy in 1982, initially as a junior stores accountant and served in HMS Berwick. But after being awarded his 'Wings', he flew in Sea Kings with 814 NAS embarked in HMS Invincible.

Further frontline appointments worldwide followed, with HMS Ark Royal, 810 and 820 NAS before he joined 700M Intensive Flying Trials Unit in 1998 to introduce the

Merlin into service.

Task complete with the Merlin Mk1, Si moved to 824 NAS, first as a PO and Qualified Aircrewman Instructor then promotion to Chief Aircrewman responsible for converting the Sea King Mk6 community to Merlin.

In 2004, a tour with 829 NAS and ship borne flights was next on the agenda before returning to the Sea King world with 771 NAS and search-and-rescue duties as a newly-promoted Warrant Officer.

Returning to 814 NAS and the Merlin Helicopter Force, Si has served with

the Flying Tigers for over ten years and completed his momentous aviation milestone in fine style, with the Commanding Officer of the squadron, Cdr Brendan Spoor.

"Getting my 4,000 whilst with the Tigers is a real career high for me," said Si. "I love this squadron and I love the job."

"The variety of tasking is incredible. My most memorable job was supporting in an effort to rescue victims of kidnapping, but it's hard to choose a favourite as I have done so many amazing flights from hunting submarines to rescuing those in need at sea."

Picture: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow



The Hood Battalion of the Royal Naval Division trudges through the Picardy mud in November 1916, weary and exhausted from their exertions – storming German positions on the Ancre, the last set-piece action of the Battle of the Somme.

The RN's famous official photographer Lt Ernest Brooks visited the Ancre when the division returned to the front line in early 1917 and recorded a post-apocalyptic wilderness for posterity.

But of the battle itself, there is little record on camera – this is a still from *The Battle of the Ancre*, an official documentary commissioned by the government which is now held by the Imperial War Museum.

The soldier marching at the front looking at the camera is believed to be deputy company commander Sub Lt Trevor Jacobs – he was “cinematographed” as the battalion passed through the ruins of Englebelmer, barely three miles behind the front line.

Over two days, Jacobs had watched almost every officer around him die or be wounded. His company entered the battle 150 strong. It returned to Englebelmer with barely 80 souls.

Such losses were mirrored throughout the RND. The Ancre cost it nearly 4,000 casualties – the sixth heaviest loss the *entire* RN suffered in the Great War.

The reason why?

Well, the capture of the strongpoints of Beaucourt and Beaumont Hamel would improve the Allied position on the Somme.

But really, the Battle of the Ancre was driven by pride, prestige and politics. Beaumont Hamel was one of the objectives on July 1, the first day of the Somme. Four and a half months later, it was still in German hands.

And a victory now, at the end of the fighting season, would stand the British Army in good stead for the coming year both with its Allies and with the politicians and public at home.

And so after a five-day barrage, at 5.45am on Monday November 13 1916, officers' whistles sounded all along the 1,200-yard front held by the Royal Naval Division.



On the men's left, Beaumont Hamel. Directly ahead, Beaucourt, 1½ miles distant, on their right, the barely discernible course of the swollen Ancre and what was left of the rail line to Arras.

At their side, six British divisions all smashing their way forward over craters where there had once been farmland and ruins where they had once been villages.

The Hood and Drake battalions made good progress – the preparatory barrage had largely smashed the

German lines.

Not so Hawke and Nelson battalions, which ran straight into a German strongpoint they had no knowledge of. German machine-guns cut them down. By mid-morning, neither battalion existed as an effective fighting force.

But then even for the battalions finding the going rather easier, the toll was fearful. The Hood was reduced to 300 men, Drake to an alarming 80. That these two battalions not only

to advance was largely down to the personal courage of the Hood's commander, Bernard Freyberg.

He carried his makeshift force to within a few hundred yards of their goal, taking 400 prisoners to boot. A final concerted effort to reach Beaucourt shortly after mid-day by every battalion which were still battle-worthy was bloodily repulsed.

Divisional commander Cameron Shute decided only tanks could win the day. An hour before dawn on November 14, these modern miracles

of warfare moved forward, guided by a junior naval officer.

A combination of German fire and Somme mud brought the armour to a halt, but the tanks did at least knock out the German redoubt which had inflicted so many casualties on the Hawkes and Nelsons 24 hours before.

Otherwise, it was left to the bravery of individual leaders to carry the attack forward once more. Again Bernard Freyberg came to the fore. Three times the attack he led faltered. Three times Freyberg, a champion swimmer, stood up and waved his men forward. Finally, on the fourth assault, enemy resistance seemed to melt away.

Men who minutes before had poured lead and steel into the attacking sailors now surrendered in droves. Perhaps 500 or 600 Germans emerged from battered trenches and shattered dugouts with their hands raised.

The enemy guns subjected the attackers to one last ferocious barrage which badly wounded Bernard Freyberg. Carried from the field of battle, he would subsequently receive the VC for his deeds on the Ancre. A generation later, he would lead the unsuccessful defence of Crete against Hitler's airborne troops.

There was no end of praise for the rest of the Naval division. No army formation had advanced as far nor taken as many prisoners during the Somme offensive.

Not that Trevor Jacobs felt like celebrating. “I never saw anything so tragic,” he wrote as he marched back over the battlefield to Englebelmer. “It was a shambles, any amount of our brave fellows being all round in shell holes and with terrible wounds – some of them with half a head blown off, others without legs and arms, and others with numerous bullet wounds.”

The father-of-one was killed on the Ancre on February 4 1917 while leading a company of Hoods once again. He is buried four miles away at Queens Cemetery in Bucquoy alongside more than 700 other Allied fallen.

■ This photograph (FLM 2369) is one of more than ten million held by the Imperial War Museum. They can be viewed or purchased at www.iwm.org.uk/collections/photographs, or by calling 0207 416 5333.

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814 in seven heaven

SEVEN operations in one year – all while switching from one aircraft variant to another – earned 814 Naval Air Squadron the Fleet Air Arm's most coveted award.

More than 700 men and women at RNAS Culdrose fell in in one of the air station's hangars for Divisions to see the Merlin squadron singled out by the head of the Fleet Air Arm, Rear Admiral Keith Blount, who handed over the Australia Shield to the Flying Tigers' CO Cdr Brendan Spoons and LAET John Simpole.

The shield is presented annually to the most effective naval air squadron on the front line. No FAA unit could match 814's accomplishments in the past 12 months – three out of every four hours flown by its helicopters was an operational, rather than training, sortie:

- operated from four different flight decks and four different land bases;
- completed the conversion from the original Merlin to the fully-digital and far more potent Mk2;
- helped save the lives of 4,747 people while searching an area four times the size of Britain during the migrant rescue operation in the central Mediterranean;
- supported the broader EU effort to stop human trafficking from Africa;
- hunted submarines off Sicily in one of NATO's largest naval exercises...;
- ...and did the same from HMS Ocean in the Baltic;
- saved the life of a kitten trapped in a car bumper following a 300-mile journey;
- took over from her sister squadron 820 NAS in the Middle East in the never-ending struggle against piracy/smuggling/terrorism.

The shield was the most prominent award handed over by Admiral Blount, who presented a clutch of Long Service/Good Conduct medals and clasps; Admiral Sir Dudley Pound awards to Lts Luke Wraith and Chris Ford for their achievements during Merlin training, and the RNAS Culdrose 'Live Your Life Award' to the junior rating who stood out the most (Logs(SC) Greg Jones).

The admiral told his audience he always seized the opportunity to visit Helston.

"It is with huge pride that I stand before you to mark not only Divisions, but also to present these awards," he told the massed ranks and guests..

"Culdrose is my native home in the Naval Service and it's always very comforting to return and meet the people I've served with throughout my time and present awards and medals to fellow members of the Fleet Air Arm."

Survey is studied

A BIG 'thank you' to all *Navy News* readers who took part in our survey earlier this year.

The exercise is being carried out across all three Services, and the data for *Navy News*, *RAF News* and *Soldier* magazine is still being analysed.

But we are already picking up on some of the suggestions made, and over the coming months will be making some improvements to our pages.

The names of three respondents have been picked at random, and they will be receiving vouchers (with thanks to the RNA and the Marine Society-Sea Cadets) or a one-year subscription to *Navy News* shortly.

The three picked out were D Brown of Kent, D McCausland of Northern Ireland and R Mitchell of Dunfermline – we will be in touch shortly.



Man of mud

AND man of humility. Hollywood star Henry Cavill swapped Tinseltown for Woodbury Common to raise money for Royal Marines and their families, plus Devon's Air Ambulance.

The 33-year-old, who's donned the famous blue and red costume in Superman's last two big-screen outings, formed a team to join Royal Marines on their annual 'Commando Challenge' weekend – when they give members of the public a chance to try some of the endurance tests which make green berets what they are.

Marines are expected to commando crawl through a muddy pit, wade through a waist-deep stream, negotiate tunnels and finally come through the infamous 'sheep dip' (a short tunnel filled with muddy water)... and so were competitors attempting 4, 10 and 17km variants of the challenge.

"It was great," said a still-muddy Henry at the end. "It's very important to support this charity because a lot of people don't realise the hardship of serving. It's important to support those people because they're out there protecting us and there's a family supporting them from home."

One of the Royal Marines who joined the Man of Steel on the course was 22-year-old L/Cpl Ben Laws from Ipswich. "Henry was a really down-to-earth guy and he gave the challenge a good go – definitely living up to his on-screen persona," he said.

"He put a lot of effort into the day and really became part of the team, motivating the others and taking it all in his stride. Of course we made sure he got properly muddy and he was a very good sport about it all."

Picture: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon, CTCRM



Picture: Keith Woodland

Garden honours divers' sacrifices

NAVY divers can contemplate the sacrifices made by their forebears thanks to a new memorial garden in their spiritual home.

Some 268 clearance divers have lost their lives in war and peace – the job is among the most dangerous in the Service even without the prospect of rendering bombs, mines and unexploded devices safe.

Those men are now officially remembered at the Defence Diving School on Horsea Island in Portsmouth Harbour.

The garden is the brainchild of WO Steve Vernon, chairman of the RN Clearance Divers Association, and colleagues.

They asked students from Fareham College to assist with the scheme – they are required to spend time with industry to develop their skills as part of their landscaping and builders' courses – while the association raised money for the required materials.

With the garden finished after two years' work, serving and former divers – including a handful of WW2 veterans – gathered on Horsea for a service of dedication where the names of all members of the branch who had died in action were read out.

"I served with many of those whose names were read out – I was so glad to hear that some of my old shipmates have been remembered," said Gerald Morris, one of the wartime divers who attended the ceremony.

At the conclusion, a bell was rung five times, traditionally an indication for all divers to start, finish or complete their work.

Guest of honour and diving officer Capt Jim Nisbet performed the honours to unveil a plaque and formally open the garden, proclaiming it "a magnificent and long overdue memorial to the branch – and a great credit to the association for making this happen."

Never forgotten

THIS is the haunting sight of the White Ensign 'raised' on one of the Navy's most hallowed sites.

A few feet below the surface of Scapa Flow, the huge natural harbour in Orkney which served as the Navy's home through two world wars, members of Faslane's Naval Diving Group replace the RN's standard on the wreck of HMS Royal Oak.

Seventy-seven years ago, the battleship was sunk at anchor by German submarine U-47, which evaded Scapa's defences.

The 25-year-old ship sank in a matter of minutes, taking 834 sailors and Royal Marines down with her – many of them boys.

Northern Diving Group returns to the wreck each autumn – as an official war grave it receives special permission – to check the state of Royal Oak, note any oil potentially leaking from the upturned hull, and finally, to pay their respects by replacing the White Ensign.

This year the team was also given the duty of placing three memorial plaques within the Royal Oak.

Two were in memory of crew members Mne Kenneth Edwin Hall and AB Stoker Joseph Paschal Wilkins, the third featured a photograph of Janet Yorke, whose brother perished in the

sinking, and who recently passed away.

"It was an honour and a privilege to place the new Ensign and plaques on the war grave of HMS Royal Oak," said AB(D) Stephen Kendrick, one of the team who went down to the wreck.

"Throughout the diving there were very deep emotions running through my mind – from a sense of honour to great sorrow. I will always remember this moment. May they rest in peace and never be forgotten."

Back on the surface, a memorial service was held by the Royal Oak Memorial in Scapa Flow, followed by a wreath-laying at sea above the wreck of the vessel.

"For over 30 years Northern Diving Group has built a strong affiliation with HMS Royal Oak, the HMS Royal Oak Association and the Kirkwall branch of the Royal British Legion," said Lt Cdr Tony Hampshire, the diving group's CO.

"We are honoured to be in a position to pay our respects to those brave men and boys who paid the ultimate price on that cold October night in 1939.

"We see it as our duty to ensure that the 'Old but Firm' HMS Royal Oak continues to fly her Battle Ensign to this day."

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FROM STREET TO FLEET

Welcome to the best room in the 'house'

THE biggest warship ever built for the Royal Navy will go to sea before Christmas – without leaving the jetty.

HMS Queen Elizabeth is to undergo a two-week fast cruise at Rosyth in order to test all of her systems.

"If all goes well we will make sure things go wrong in order to allow the crew to test their protocols," said Aircraft Carrier Alliance MD Ian Booth. "The ship will really come alive.

"Pretty well everything is in and turned on. It's working pretty well how we expected and so far we are getting good results.

"We're not home and dry but so far all the issues we have dealt with. There are going to be issues because the ship is a prototype."

An army of around 900 workers is applying the finishing touches to the 284-metre long carrier, which is due to leave Rosyth next spring to begin her sea trials.

She and her sister ship dominate the skyline at Rosyth. At 56 metres tall, from keel to masthead, the ships are four metres taller than Niagara Falls

One of the best views from Queen Elizabeth can be found in the flying control tower, pictured right. The bespoke tower will allow Cdr Air Cdr Mark Deller, pictured left, to "orchestrate the ballet" on the flight deck from his "Papal balcony" above his team.

One of the four seats will be occupied by Lt Cdr Flying, running the flight deck. The second will be taken by an air traffic controller (the ship has a team of 12); the third spot will go to the deck operations officer, overseeing the movement of helicopters and jets onto the six take-off/landing spots. The final seat is for a pilot working as the landing signals officer.

"We've been in the simulator,

operating in a sea state six, which gives a pitch of 12 metres and a roll of five to six metres," said Cdr Deller. "She's a long ship so will pitch and roll but landings and take-offs are doable in those conditions."

It is a mere 20 or so months before the carrier heads to the Eastern Seaboard of the USA to collect her F-35Bs. Initially a few will belong to the UK with the majority operated by the United States Marine Corps and the Italian Navy.

"We have a very taut programme towards a first deployment in 2021, which will be a showcase for the country," said the ship's CO Capt Jerry Kyd.

"Coming from Ark Royal and Illustrious, Queen Elizabeth is truly breathtaking; here we have something special. These are not ships, they are sea bases.

"We will have the RAF and USMC embarked. From 2019-2020 the USMC will embark regularly."

Testing of the all-electric power generation and propulsion architecture – being delivered by a sub-alliance of Thales, GE Marine, Rolls-Royce, and L-3 – is well advanced.

"High voltage and low voltage distribution systems have been commissioned, all six generators are commissioned and load-tested, and the propulsion system has been used to drive both shaft lines up to maximum harbour speed/power in all configurations," said Mr Booth. "To support propulsion system testing, Queen Elizabeth has been fitted with two sets of brake blades in place of her propellers."

Her weapon-handling system is up and running, thermal spray coatings on her flight deck are well under way and her visual landing aids are being installed.

Following her departure from Rosyth, Queen Elizabeth's 697-strong ship's company will put the vessel through around 11 weeks of sea trials before arriving in Portsmouth in early summer.

Eight weeks have been set aside for a rectification programme before her first-of-class flying trials take place in 2018.

"I saw the last Harrier flight in the North Sea in 2010 and it was an emotional time," said Capt Kyd, who is relishing the thought of aircraft on the ship.

"We will have 40-plus aircraft, the F-35B, Merlin Mk2 and Crowsnest. It's all about how many aircraft can you get off, the sortie generation rate.

"In the mid 2020s I would love to see that deck and hangar absolutely smashed with aircraft. We will have a small number of UK F-35Bs for our first deployment in 2021 but we will have the USMC."

The CO is also looking forward to the USMC arriving with their V-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft.

"V22 for me would be Christmas. I do expect the USMC to embark with V22, it is a fantastic piece of kit.

There are a lot of policy decisions but this mixing and matching is not an issue with the size of our flight deck and hangar.

"We can park aircraft in different configurations than the US.

"There is no reason why we couldn't have 70-plus aircraft on the ship. As UAVs come in you may see racking and stacking of hundreds of UAVs.

"Evolution is a fact of life. Who knows where we will be in 30 years but I believe we will have UAVs and will need to launch them.

"This is truly remarkable and we should be very proud."

In the shadow of QE is her younger sister Prince of Wales, which is due to arrive in Portsmouth a mere two years later. Lessons learned from QEC means POW has been constructed about nine months faster than QE.

So far around 54 per cent of her blown fibre cable has been installed and around 59 per cent of her pipes, with pipe pressure and cable tests well under way.

■ *Flight deck training, see page 21.*



Defence student's study coup

A UNIVERSITY of Portsmouth student has been awarded a prestigious Naval Engineering Science and Technology Forum scholarship, one of only 12 in the UK.

Emma Barclay, 22, studying BSc Business Information Systems, was awarded the scholarship by the United Kingdom Naval Engineering Science and Technology Forum for students interested in employment in the naval defence sector.

Emma applied for the scholarship, worth £3,000, after completing a 12-month industrial placement at QinetiQ.

She wrote a 500-word essay on 'The role of autonomous technology in the future Royal Navy' and submitted this with her CV and a reference from her personal tutor.

She was invited to attend an interview at the Lloyds Register Foundation building in London with a panel of representatives, to whom she had to present on the same topic as her essay.

She said: "I'm fascinated by cyber security and interested in project management and both are key to a career within the defence industry, which is what I've set my heart on."

Emma is in her final year of a four-year sandwich degree and when she graduates next year she hopes to secure a job in the defence industry or with the Royal Navy.



Carrier ops on the table

THE finest legal minds in the world's two finest navies sit around a table at HMS Excellent – the first time they've held joint talks.

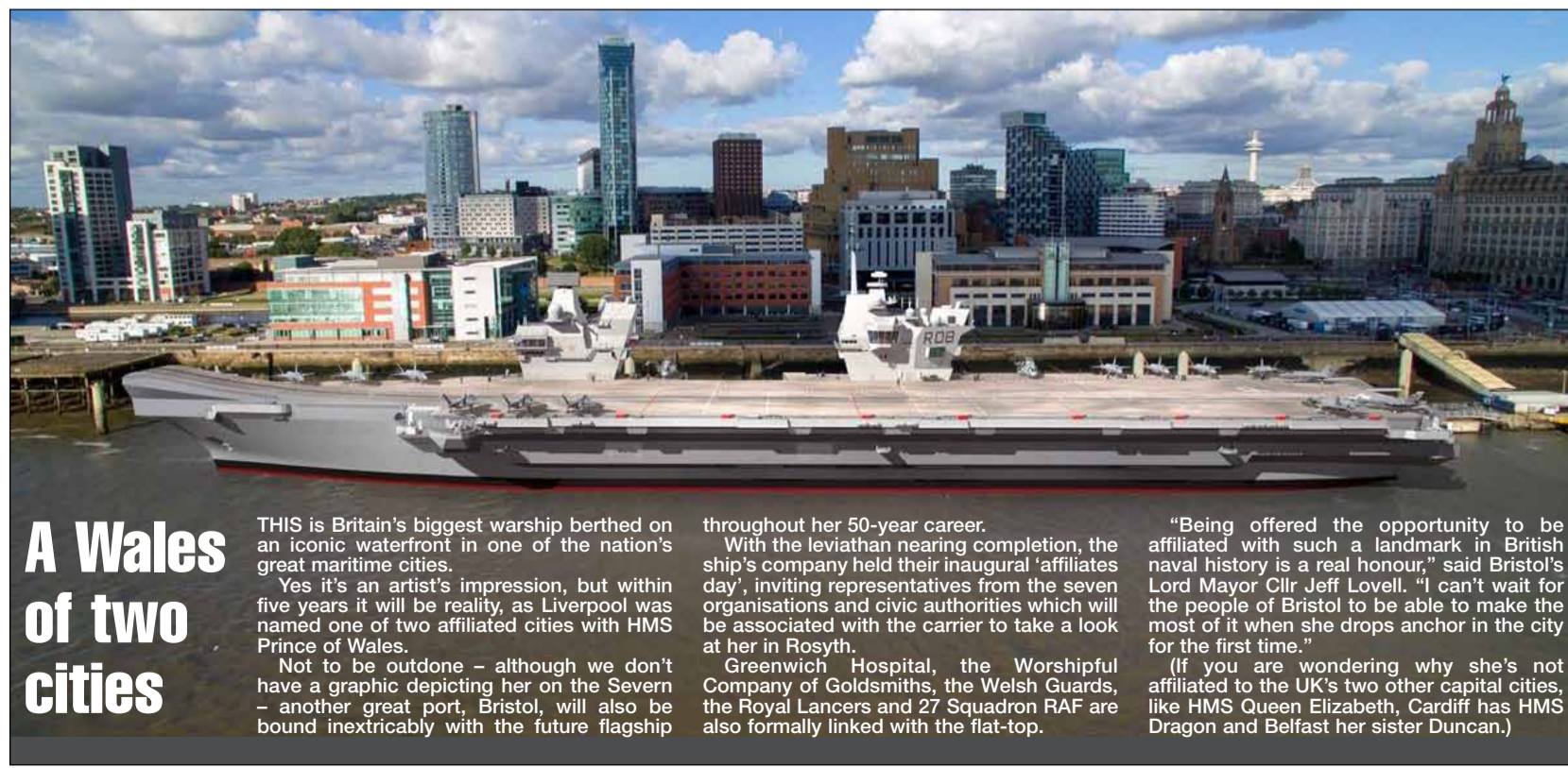
Vice Admiral James Crawford III (second from the left) is Judge Advocate General of the United States Navy. And sitting opposite (second from the right) is Cdre Andrew Jameson, Commodore Navy Legal Services.

On the table for discussion: carrier operations.

With the RN on the cusp of returning to traditional aircraft carrier operations when HMS Queen Elizabeth joins the Fleet next year, it is keen to learn the legal aspects of any operations by the ship, her aircraft and the supporting strike group (frigate, destroyer, tanker, submarine) – something with which the Americans have decades of continuous experience.

Legal issues they will deal with cover everything from personnel matters through rules of engagement all the way up to international treaties.

"Our American partners lead the world in carrier strike group operations. So we are delighted to be working with the US Navy JAG to help maximise our legal readiness in support of our nation's return to carrier strike," said Cdre Jameson.



A Wales of two cities

THIS is Britain's biggest warship berthed on an iconic waterfront in one of the nation's great maritime cities.

Yes it's an artist's impression, but within five years it will be reality, as Liverpool was named one of two affiliated cities with HMS Prince of Wales.

Not to be outdone – although we don't have a graphic depicting her on the Severn – another great port, Bristol, will also be bound inextricably with the future flagship

throughout her 50-year career.

With the leviathan nearing completion, the ship's company held their inaugural 'affiliates day', inviting representatives from the seven organisations and civic authorities which will be associated with the carrier to take a look at her in Rosyth.

Greenwich Hospital, the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, the Welsh Guards, the Royal Lancers and 27 Squadron RAF are also formally linked with the flat-top.

"Being offered the opportunity to be affiliated with such a landmark in British naval history is a real honour," said Bristol's Lord Mayor Cllr Jeff Lovell. "I can't wait for the people of Bristol to be able to make the most of it when she drops anchor in the city for the first time."

(If you are wondering why she's not affiliated to the UK's two other capital cities, like HMS Queen Elizabeth, Cardiff has HMS Dragon and Belfast her sister Duncan.)



Trafalgar Day remembered

EIGHT in the morning on October 21 and, with glorious autumn sunshine streaming through HMS Victory's rigging, today's Navy pays its annual tribute to yesterday on the most sacred day in the Senior Service calendar.

With the immortal signal 'England expects that every man will do his duty' raised on the partially-dismasted flagship (Victory is in the middle of the biggest overhaul in her post-active career), the 211th anniversary of triumph and tragedy at Trafalgar was commemorated.

Triumph in the form of the greatest naval victory in the age of sail; tragedy in the loss of Britain's finest naval leader Nelson, plus 465 fellow sailors.

As the Rev David Robinson led the short service of thanksgiving, Victory's Admiral in Charge and Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock placed a wreath on the plaque marking the spot on the quarterdeck where Nelson was fatally wounded by a French sniper.

Vice Admiral Woodcock said the "professionalism and dedication of our sailors and marines were traits as prevalent today as they were in 1805, and just as essential today as our personnel work tirelessly to defend our Nation's interests at home and across the globe."

Zeebrugge and Cockleshell raid

SUBMARINERS dip their standards in salute of one of the Service's greatest heroes – the sixth to receive a commemorative plaque in his home town.

Deep past and present converged outside 15 Cathedral Close, Exeter – today part of the city's Cathedral Choir School – to unveil the memorial to Lt Richard Sandford VC, born nearby 125 years ago, and winner of the nation's highest honour for gallantry for his part in the daring raid on Zeebrugge in 1918.

Sandford commanded the obsolete submarine C3, packed with explosives and crewed by a handful of men who were charged with blowing up a viaduct – just one element of a grand plan to block the Belgian port and prevent German U-boats sailing.

The bridge carried a railway line linking the shore with Zeebrugge's Mole, which arched out into the Channel.

Sandford guided his boat alongside the piles supporting the viaduct before lighting the fuse on the charges and abandoning C3 before the men were picked up.

C3 blew up with tremendous force, destroying both the submarine herself and the viaduct, reduced to twisted rails and pieces of shattered wood.

Sandford was badly wounded in the left thigh and right hand and spent several months recuperating in hospital – during which he was awarded the Victoria Cross.

Although he recovered and returned to the Silent Service, he succumbed to typhoid fever just 12 days after the war's end.

Come April 2018, a memorial paving slab will be placed in an



Submariners, veterans and guests remember the bravery of Richard Sandford VC in Exeter (courtesy of Matt Round Photography) with (top right) a rare portrait of HMS C3's CO and (bottom right) the damage to the Mole caused by the submarine exploding

Exeter street to mark Sandford's bravery as part of a national campaign honouring Great War VC winners.



But the Submariners' Association is also performing its own commemorations by erecting traditional blue plaques at pertinent sites.

Around 120 guests, including Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Devon Cdre Jake Moores (a former submariner), Submariners' Association president Rear Admiral Niall Kilgour and chairman Jim McMaster, Richard Sandford's descendants

and crew from HMS Trenchant who formed a guard of honour, watched as the Dean of Exeter Cathedral, the Very Reverend Dr Jonathan Draper, led the service of commemoration.

"He was a remarkable, very brave man and an inspiration to all submariners," said 'Sandy' Powell from the association's national management committee.

"It was an excellent day, everybody appeared to enjoy themselves and the rain stayed away."

The association's mission to remember its finest leaders with blue plaques continues; the next to be installed will remember legendary WW2 'ace' David Wanklyn VC at Knockinaam Lodge, Portpatrick, next spring.

THERE is a new blue plaque too adorning a property in quintessential Hampshire suburbia, a memorial to the man who led arguably the greatest raid in Royal Marines history.

The stone reminds anyone who wanders down Glamorgan Road in Catherington, a village just north of Waterlooville, where Herbert George – better known as 'Blondie' – Hasler spent much of his life.

In 1942, the 28-year-old Royal Marines officer dreamed up, then trained for and finally led a team of a dozen commandos into the heart of occupied France to blow up enemy shipping in Bordeaux Harbour – a deed immortalised in print and on celluloid as the Cockleshell Heroes.



Hasler and fellow marine Bill Sparks, who shared a canoe in the 60-plus-mile paddle up the Gironde in December 1942, were the only two men to survive, escaping through neutral Spain; the rest either drowned or were executed by the Germans under Hitler's notorious 'commando order'.

The attack crippled six German freighters – Churchill praised the feat and claimed it helped shorten the war by up to six months.

As a result numerous memorials to Operation Frankton have been erected on both sides of the Channel over the years, but none in the village which Hasler called home for much of his life.

Cllr Sara Schillemore said it

“From Admiral to Seaman Gunner, we were all shipmates – once Navy, always Navy.”

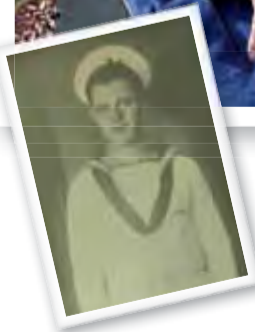
Derek Banham, Resident of The Royal Star & Garter Homes

Derek Banham entered the Royal Navy in 1943, aged 18. He later joined HMS Loch Craggie, and took part in the Battle of the Atlantic. On Churchill's orders, his ship found and sank a German U-boat responsible for the torpedoing of seven Allied ships. The memories of this are still with him.

Today, Derek receives specialist nursing and therapeutic care so he can retain his mobility and independence. However, as a charity, The Royal Star & Garter Homes can only continue to care for Derek with your help.

Derek's story of courage and loss is just one of many that make our residents so deserving of the respect and care we give them. Please show your support for veterans such as Derek and others like him at this time of Remembrance by leaving a gift in your Will to acknowledge those who gave so much for us.

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Heroes honoured



● A rather stern portrait of 'Blondie' Hasler, Cockleshell Hero, sailor and resident of Catherington, Hampshire, and (right) Lord Ashdown dedicates the plaque observed by Hasler's neighbour Cdr Bill Evershed (Rtd)

2016 Picture: Richard J Veitch



was time to put that right and with the help of the residents' association arranged for the plaque to be installed on Hasler's former home (he died in 1987 aged 73).

Former Royal Marine and SBS officer and later leader of the Lib Dems Lord Ashdown, a historian of the mission both in print and on television – he called it the "most courageous raid of World War 2" – performed the unveiling honours alongside Brig Richard Spencer, Deputy Commandant General Royal Marines, and green beret/historian Ewen Southby-Tailyour, Hasler's biographer.

"For a community to embrace any of its heroes in all their guises is heartwarming for those of us who continue to serve," said Brig

Spencer.

"Operation Frankton was a unique operation that had a huge strategic effect in terms of enabling the Battle of the Atlantic to continue, keeping supplies coming into our country."

Hasler cared little for the film (which strayed considerably from the true story of the raid – he boycotted the premier, but his mum didn't), certainly didn't like the word 'cockleshell' (made up for the book which preceded the movie – the canoes were actually called cockles) and never regarded himself as a hero.

His neighbour, retired RN commander Bill Evershed, said Hasler "carried the loss of his men all his life".

Cdr Evershed continued: "If he had been here today he would have been intrigued but he would not want any fuss about his achievements."

"It was in 1946 that he first took me sailing in Portsmouth Harbour and the Solent thus nurturing a love of sailing which I took forward into my own later career in the Royal Navy."

"I wish for him to be remembered as a unique character. He was one in a thousand."



U-boat 'sunk by monster' found

THIS is the unmistakable shape of a submarine, upright but battered and resting on the bed of the Irish Sea – which may solve one of WW1's strangest naval mysteries.

If submarine historians are correct, then this is German UB-85 – victim, if her hysterical skipper is to be believed, to a 'sea monster' off Stranraer at the end of April 1918.

The wreck – whose aft is clearly crumpled in this sonar scan – was found by engineers working for Scottish Power and the National Grid as part of a £1bn project to lay cables carrying power from Scotland to England and Wales.

Officially, the 180ft boat was lost when she tried to dive when she came under fire from the guns of drifter HMS Coreopsis.

In their haste to dive, the crew failed to close a hatch properly, causing the boat to start flooding. She surfaced, all 34 crew spilled out and were rescued, then the Irish Sea closed over the stricken boat.

UB-85's captain, Kapitänleutnant Günther Krech, apparently told his captors his boat was the victim not of Royal Navy gunfire or the rash actions of his crew, rather a monster with "large eyes, set in a horny sort of skull. It had a small head, but with teeth that could be seen glistening in the moonlight."

"Every man on watch began firing a sidearm at the beast, but the animal had hold of the forward gun mount and refused to let go."

In the struggle between U-boat men and beast, the boat was damaged – and promptly fell prey to Coreopsis.

Dr Innes McCartney, naval historian and expert on the submarine wrecks littering the waters around the British Isles, has narrowed the find down to UB-85 or her sister UB-82 (lost with all hands to depth charges in the North Channel a fortnight earlier).

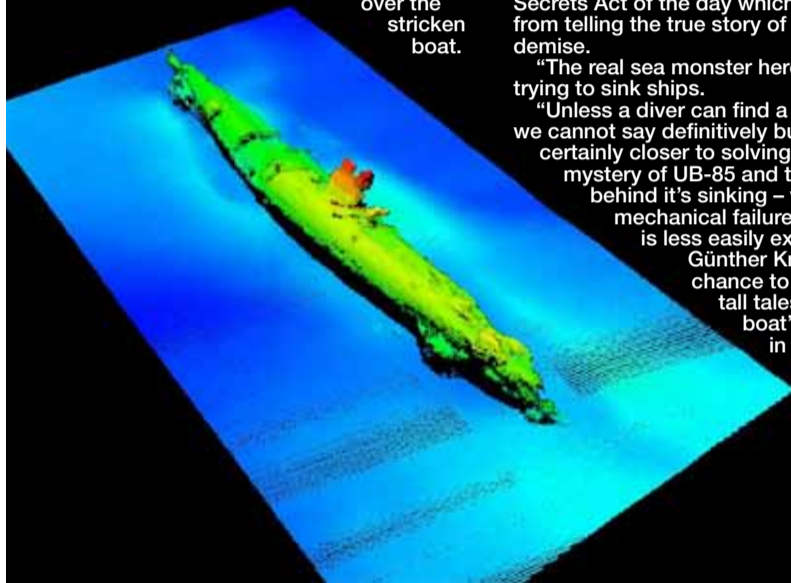
He dismisses talk of beasts – a post-war invention of journalists conniving with wartime Royal Navy officers, bound by the Official Secrets Act of the day which prevented them from telling the true story of many a U-boat's demise.

"The real sea monster here is the U-boat, trying to sink ships."

"Unless a diver can find a shipyard stamp, we cannot say definitively but yes, we're certainly closer to solving the so-called mystery of UB-85 and the reason behind it's sinking – whether common mechanical failure or something that is less easily explained."

Günther Krech never had the chance to correct any of the tall tales surrounding his boat's end as he died in 1919 while still a prisoner of war.

Picture: Scottish Power



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'Top Gun mee'



Picture: Mike Gray

EXCITING. Excellent. Extraordinary. World first. Spectacular. Unprecedented.

Not always terms that are applied to Royal Navy trials.

But Unmanned Warrior 2016 is a very different beast – and years from now could be seen as the Navy's 21st Century Turbinia moment.

Turbinia was the brainchild of engineer Charles Parsons, whose innovative steam turbines were not registering much interest with the Admiralty in the late 19th Century.

So Parsons and his demonstration boat, Turbinia, gatecrashed the 1897 Spithead Diamond Jubilee Fleet Review, outpacing chasing vessels as it raced past the rows of warships.

Shortly after it was decreed that RN warships should henceforth use steam turbines...

Organisers hope Unmanned Warrior (UW16) will spark another fundamental change, this time in the way technology is used, rather than the equipment itself.

It was also a chance for the military, industry and academia to meet at the sharp end of a trial programme in the kind of

●(Left) A ScanEagle is recovered after a reconnaissance flight from the South Uist range in the Outer Hebrides

GROUND-breaking trials off the west coast of Scotland are exploring ways in which autonomous and unmanned technology could shape the future of the Royal Navy. MIKE GRAY reports from Unmanned Warrior 2016 at BUTEC in Kyle of Lochalsh and the Outer Hebrides. Pictures by LA(PHOT) BEN SHREAD.



collaborative powerhouse rarely seen outside times of conflict.

Those hoping to watch previously-unseen kit at work might have been initially disappointed by the 50 or so drones, robots and systems gathered in the Highlands – most have a proven pedigree, though some were cutting-edge.

The innovation came in the way these machines, the companies, scientists, engineers and the international military came together to see how they could make a total greater than the sum of the parts.

There was also the opportunity to break out of the mindset of incremental change, slow-paced development and inter-factional barriers that can cause the defence procurement process to become mired in red tape, protocol and regulations.

Cdr Paul Hornsby, of the Royal Australian Navy, said: "Australia was uncertain as to whether this could come together, but it has been an unprecedented opportunity and the Royal Navy has established a first-class facility here.

"We have had real-world military commanders being able to talk to scientists and industry, and the result is that we have been able to do things in two days that I would have thought would normally take two years."

The American view was similar – Capt Beth 'Gabby' Creighton, of the US Navy, said: "When we started we didn't know what would happen, but it has been an amazing journey."

Unmanned Warrior had a number of objectives over five 'themes' – geospatial intelligence (GeoInt), ISTAR (intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance), anti-submarine warfare (ASW), mine countermeasures (MCM) and command and control (C2).

Perhaps most obvious was the chance to remove humans from danger, an area explored by the MCM element of UW16 at the British Underwater Test and Evaluation Centre (BUTEC).

There was also the chance to blend the most effective use of unmanned machinery with the most effective use of human operators, such as in sea searches – of which more later.

But UW16 was not, organisers repeatedly declared, an excuse for seeking to cut personnel numbers – as automated technology assumed mundane or dangerous roles, so personnel would take on enhanced supervisory or analytical positions.

Then there was the spectre of Augustine's 16th Law, which states that as more is spent on defence, you get less for your money (the Law, one of a series of tongue-in-cheek observations by American businessman and high-ranking Army civilian Ralph Augustine, predicts that by 2054, the entire US defense budget will buy just one aircraft, to be shared by the Navy and Air Force...)

Many participants in UW16 spoke of the need to break out of the cycle of ever-increasing spending on equipment that is only marginally better than that which it replaces.

As Rear Admiral Paul Bennett, Assistant Chief of

Naval Staff (Capability), said: "I fundamentally believe that this is a transformational opportunity for maritime forces to take a jump into the future by understanding this technology."

The admiral continued: "We are clearly going to have to do this. It just makes complete sense.

"In this exercise we are proving that these things can operate together, and rather than being transfixed by a piece of technology we are able to develop with industry the means of operating it all."

Admiral Bennett said vehicles and sensors will develop rapidly, and it is vital that such systems are able to adapt to each other.

"We must explore with industry a different way of delivering this capability.

"Our relationship with industry will be absolutely crucial.

"Putting this all together and exploring it for three weeks is incredible, otherwise you are just in a meeting room with industry and we can only move forward slowly.

"If we can get an understanding of how all this will interact, and how we can draw it together and command and control it, so we can build a picture of future capability, which will almost certainly be a mix of autonomous, unmanned, remote and manned."

Enough of the theory – what was there to see?

The exercise was played out from three sites on the west coast of Scotland, with some 40 participants taking up the invitation from the Royal Navy to demonstrate their wares.

A small-scale trial in Cardigan Bay kicked things off, with the Thales Watchkeeper Remotely Piloted Air System, as used by the Army, demonstrating its capability in a maritime role.

For UW16, drones undertaking ISTAR duties were based at the Hebrides range on South Uist.

From the hilltop range control complex, scientists, engineers and Royal Navy personnel monitored the progress of various drones and their targets.

One unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), the Griffon Outlaw SeaHunter, mapped the sea bed using lasers, while another – the Boeing-Insitu ScanEagle – searched the surface for particular targets.

ScanEagle typified the way in which machines can take the drudgery out of a task and reduce the risk of mistakes.

Using ViDAR (Visual Detection and Ranging) developed by Hood Technologies and Sentient, the aircraft scans the sea, and any object of interest triggers a closer look by the aircraft's high-resolution main camera turret.

All such targets are located on an electronic chart and flagged up to the operator, who can decide what action to take – such searches are currently made by long-range aircraft burning tonnes of fuel, often with members of the crew relying on the Mark One eyeball to look for objects on the sea.

Benbecula Airport also played its part, hosting Leonardo Helicopters' SW-4 SOLO unmanned air system.

The 1.8-tonne single engine helicopter dwarfed the other aircraft on UW16, and featured a back-up human pilot who spent much of his time reading books.

The pilot is there for regulatory and failsafe reasons

for testing and development only – ultimately, such an 'optionally piloted' aircraft would either be completely unmanned or piloted as normal.

BUTEC at Kyle of Lochalsh was the second base, where a motley collection of miniature submarines, surface-skimming craft and UAVs combined to present new answers to an age-old problem.

Again, diverse systems combined to increase the power of the collective – craft in the water were able to keep in touch with controllers on shore by using a small UAS (in this case a Blue Bear Blackstart) to relay data back over the horizon.

The controllers on the jetty at Kyle were in a rather unprepossessing C2 hut – a Heath Robinson-type construction of a standard 20ft ISO container with a frame perched on top.

This was MAPLE, a mobile unit housing a bespoke version of a Royal Navy combat management system, and which integrates the unmanned vehicles into the broader picture.

On BUTEC's media day, ACER (Autonomous Control Exploitation and Realisation – a collaboration between QinetiQ, BAE Systems, Thales and Seebyte) was in the care of two Leading Hands – LS Sarah Burns was in the process of handing over to LS Matthew 'Beeker' Baker-Irons before she went off to take a promotion course.

The Hydrography specialists are both data managers and analysts with the RN MASTT (Maritime Autonomy Surface Testbed Team), with Beeker joining in May.

"It is nice to be part of the trials team, and it is good to have industry supporting us," he said.

LS Burns added: "I have been here for five weeks so far, and it has been hard work but interesting collaborating with industry. We are working at the cutting edge, with cutting-edge technology."

Industry, in return, recognised the value of the ratings' input – it is sailors like Beeker and Sarah who will operate such equipment in the future, so their views are closely considered.

"These two are dealing with millions of pounds worth of equipment – there is nothing like this stuff out there in the Fleet," said Jon Harrington, a former RN officer who now works for QinetiQ and is one of the industry leads on the Hell Bay IV trial, part of the MCM theme of Unmanned Warrior 16.

"We are letting them get on with it and they are doing a cracking job – and they are providing excellent feedback to us to improve the system."

The third base was Stornaway on the isle of Lewis, the centre of anti-submarine warfare trials.

And it was no coincidence that the more conventional Joint Warrior exercises – major biennial UK Armed Forces manoeuvres which attract ships, aircraft and land-based units from NATO allies – were taking part in the same neck of the woods at the same time as UW16.

The parallel operation allowed data gleaned by the robotic flotillas to be packaged and presented to the organisers of Joint Warrior, thereby adding a further element of realism – the information was being used as real-time intelligence in an unfolding scenario.

Indeed, for weeks before Joint Warrior got into its stride,



●(Above left): a RIB is used to monitor a REMUS 100 marine survey robot; (left). Among the various vehicles seen by visiting VIPs was the Vm5800 Ocean Module

ts Formula 1'

shoals of underwater gliders and sea skimmers from different firms and different nations had followed pre-set courses far out to sea in order to gather as much GeoInt as possible.

As it happened, for much of the period the notoriously-fickle autumn weather did not play a major role as day after day of blue skies and calm seas allowed rapid progress in the trials programme.

But it wasn't just the equipment that was worked hard – even support functions like the Hebrides range was challenged to step outside its normal parameters, as it turned its focus east to the Minch rather than out to the thousands of square miles of empty Atlantic Ocean to set up a temporary air lane (“a genuinely unique experience,” according to Bill Biggs of QinetiQ).

The collaborative nature of UW16 was exemplified by one particular incident, according to Fleet Robotics Officer Cdr Peter Pipkin, the man at the heart of UW16.

A satellite communications system supplied by one firm on trials ship Northern River (owned by SERCO, chartered by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory or DSTL) developed a fault, so a BAE Systems engineer did a spot of fault-finding, Thales delivered a replacement cable and a QinetiQ engineer on board fitted it, all in short order so as not to impact on Unmanned Warrior.

“We need to open our minds and ask ourselves how we might be able to exploit some of these technologies,” said Cdr Pipkin.

“The key is to assess more rapidly and implement it more quickly.”

BUTEC has been notching world firsts on a regular basis – the first, in early October, saw five vehicles working in three ‘domains’ (air, surface and sub-surface) or, in military parlance, “the world’s first multinational, multi-squad goal-based collaborative autonomous tasking.”

By the third week in October that flotilla of vehicles had grown to ten.

Contributing to that growing understanding were ten industrial participants, four nations, some 250 people and 28 vehicles operating in the air, on the water or beneath the surface – a much larger number than would normally be expected to operate such devices, swollen by the need to gather data and run the trials.

Cdr Hornsby was particularly struck by the diversity of the various MCM task groups, likening it to the alarming (for an enemy) prospect of “lions, tigers and bears hunting together as a wolf pack.”

He added: “Industries who have not been here have really missed out.

“This is Top Gun meets Formula 1.”

For the purpose of UW16, Cdr Pipkin said autonomous systems could carry out assigned tasks such as a search or data-gathering, operating alone or in groups but with no need for human intervention, while ‘unmanned’ implied there was a human somewhere in the loop, perhaps remotely piloting an aircraft.

He emphasised that none of the equipment on UW16 was offensive in nature – this was all about gathering information for analysis; UK forces always have a human in control of a weapons system.

The collaborative approach

● (Right) an underwater robot is recovered after a surveying run at the BUTEC facility in Kyle of Lochalsh; (Far right) the Atlas ARCIMIS boat, capable of supporting unmanned surface vehicles in a variety of roles including mine countermeasures, is put through its paces at BUTEC

of UW16 is at the heart of the new Defence Innovation Initiative and the £800m fund that supports the generation of ideas to benefit both defence and British businesses.

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said: “The sheer scale of this exercise demonstrates how our Armed Forces are leading in developing futuristic technologies to keep us safe at sea, or in the air.

“This is part of our new approach to harnessing innovation, backed by a rising defence budget, to ensure we keep ahead of our adversaries.”

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones said: “Unmanned Warrior is a clear demonstration

of the Royal Navy’s ambition to lead and win through technological innovation.

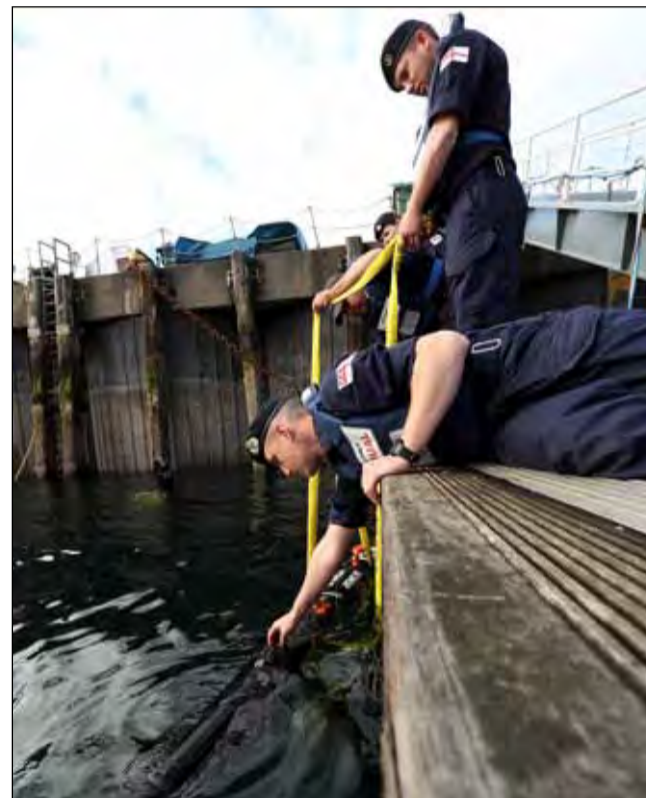
“Unmanned maritime systems will change how we operate, but they’re just the start.

“Our pursuit of new technologies and ideas – from big data to 3D-printing – will ensure we remain one of the most capable and successful navies in the world.”

● (Right) A REMUS marine robot is readied for launch at Kyle of Lochalsh as the sun lights up the mountains of Skye; (Below) A ScanEagle is recovered after a mission from the Outer Hebrides



Picture: Mike Gray



● (Above) Royal Navy members of the MAST team launch a REMUS 100 marine robot

● (Left) Two Bladerunner fast craft flank the Royal Navy/DSTL MAST (Maritime Autonomy Surface Testbed) vessel as they streak across the calm waters off the Kyle of Lochalsh during Unmanned Warrior programme





Carrier boasts top ratio

THIRTEEN would seem to be a lucky number for the Royal Navy's flagship of tomorrow.

Because thirteen per cent of the ship's company of HMS Queen Elizabeth are women – believed to be the highest ratio in the Fleet.

Some 83 of the 650 or so souls assigned to the carrier are female with every rank and rate represented in this photograph (with the exception of middies, who'll join when the ship is fully in service to conduct their training).

The nine female sailors lined up at Rosyth (a long way) in front of their ship to promote next year's WRNS100 Centenary and the role of women in the RN of today.

Three of the 83 women are former Wrens, including air traffic controller Lt Trish Chatfield.

"I've been considering the differences between my first time at sea, back in 1994, and my current role on board HMS Queen Elizabeth," she said.

"One thing I remember from my first sea draft was the fact that there weren't any female senior rates and only a couple of junior officers serving on board at the time. Regardless of whether you were an able seaman, leading hand or a junior officer, we were all new to serving at sea and had no

experience in this area. It was quite a challenge to be accepted by some men on board which made our early integration even harder.

"But HMS Queen Elizabeth is a very different experience. Women are represented at every rank and rate and in every department and they bring with them the vast amount of experience from their previous sea drafts across all Navy platforms – not just aircraft carriers. It is very exciting to see that women are a key part of the Royal Navy's newest and most anticipated project for many years.

"Although women's role models don't necessarily have to be other women, the really positive aspect is that they are now serving across all branches and at all levels to help inspire future generations of both men and women."

AB(CIS) Georgia Cocks added: "The world is changing and the Royal Navy is changing with it. "The UK now has a second female prime minister; the Navy has female mine clearance divers, pilots, engineers, navigators and in the near future, women may soon be qualifying to become combat-ready Royal Marines."

Learn more about the centenary at www.wrns100.co.uk.

📖 Award for QE steward Janine, page 32



Brollies for Brocklesby

IN DRIVING autumn rain, a Guard of Honour from HMS Brocklesby helps the people of Lowestoft remember the crews of some of the Navy's smallest craft.

The Suffolk town was the hub of operations by the Royal Naval Patrol Service in WW2 – the umbrella headquarters for some 6,000 vessels from trawlers and minesweepers down to whalers, drifters and motor launches.

Sparrows Nest Gardens served as the HQ – HMS Europa – now home to a memorial museum to the 70,000 men and women and focal point for an annual service of remembrance.

Thousands of merchant sailors, fishermen especially, were recruited for minehunting/sweeping and patrol duties, either in converted trawlers or craft specially built for the mission.

More than 250 RNPS vessels were lost between 1939 and 1945, taking over 15,000 souls down with them.

Six able seamen, one petty officer and HMS Brocklesby's gunnery officer Lt Dan Buttar headed to England's easternmost town to provide a Guard of Honour for the ceremony.

They were joined by a small number

of RNPS survivors, descendants and relatives, as well as representatives from the local cadet groups and the public, to remember those who have passed and their vital work during the war.

Lt Buttar said he and his shipmates were struck by the scale of sacrifice made by their wartime forebears.

"They served in all theatres of the war, braving extremely hostile conditions with little in the way of protection to ensure that sea lanes were kept open and convoys made it to their destinations, so we were happy to provide a ceremonial guard for both the service and the opening of a new lift at the museum," he said.

AB 'Fitz' Alleyne added: "It was good to be involved in a piece of our Navy's modern history. We also got the opportunity to learn about a part of our history that we didn't know much about."

He and his shipmates were most recently in the Gulf for a seven-and-a-half-month stint aboard HMS Middleton as Crew 2 2nd MCM Squadron. Back in the UK, they're assigned to Brocklesby which is currently in Portsmouth Naval Base undergoing a massive overhaul.



● Beginning their conversion from skimmers to deeps, five of the first nine Surface Flotilla/FAA personnel to transfer to the Submarine Service... (l-r) CPO Rich Coles, Mike Impey and Gary Reid, LLogs Mike Theobald and Wtr Nikki Wells

Going deep – first transfers begin

THE first nine sailors swapping life above the waves for below have begun their conversion to submariners.

Back in February, the Submarine Sustainable Manning Programme put a call out across the entire Naval Service for sailors, Fleet Air Arm personnel and Royal Marines to transfer to the Silent Service as it sought three dozen new engineers.

More than 100 men and women have shown an interest in the initiative to date.

The initial nine transferees made up nearly half of the latest intake to the renowned Submarine Qualification (SMQ) course at Faslane, followed by a

second tranche of 13 beginning their training in January.

The aim is to have all 36 new deeps serving on boats by early 2018.

All must go through the ten-week SMQ course to develop an intimate and instinctive knowledge of more than 30 complex engineering systems which operate nuclear submarines and keep their crews safe.

They will receive weekly tests to check on their progress before sitting an in-depth oral exam.

The junior rates will then be assigned to a submarine, with the senior rates going on to do specialist career training as marine or weapon engineers at HMS Sultan or HMS Raleigh.

Finally, after a period at sea, they may be awarded their coveted dolphin badges which mark them out as a fully qualified member of the UK's elite underwater forces.

CPO Rich Coles switched from a career maintaining helicopters at Culdrose for one as what he describes as an operator/maintainer (remember those?) in the Submarine Service – where he's also offered, he says, "more recognition of the quality job that you are doing. That was a big part of things – progression and recognition."

"The course is well taught and there is a lot to it – it is very in-depth. In the Submarine Service you are a maintainer/operator and you need to know everything

about your kit and how it works," he said.

Wtr Nikki Wells submitted her transfer request at the first opportunity.

"Submarines are something completely different for me and, I think, more challenging. This is a really lovely place to live. You can travel to Glasgow or Edinburgh really easily and you have Loch Lomond on your doorstep. There's lots of variety of things to do too."

CPO Gary Reid spent 26 years in the Fleet Air Arm – 25 as an engineer, the last in an office (which he hated).

"The Submarine Service is giving me the opportunity to get back to hands-on engineering for the next ten years or so.

"The SMQ course is exactly what I needed – it is the perfect practical antidote to the year that I spent in that office!"

CPO Mike Impey is another aviation convert having done "pretty much every job and gained every qualification available to me in the Fleet Air Arm".

He continued: "I fancied a new challenge. It is fairly rare to get an employer to pay you to do something completely new."

LLogs(CS) Mike Theobald: "I thought that moving to Scotland and the Submarine Service would offer me something different and the chance to stay in the Navy."

"This is my first time working up here and we are finding it really nice. The people are nice,

Glasgow is on our doorstep, and Helensburgh has really good facilities too.

"The course is intense, with lots to learn and submariners have much more responsibility on board."

Those who complete all their submariner training and earn the coveted Dolphins insignia will receive a £5,000 'golden hello' – but they will be expected to remain in the Submarine Service for five years.

Volunteers must have at least three years left to serve; accept an extension of service; be Medically Fully Employable and hold, or be willing to hold, sole British nationality.

If you're interested, contact 9380 25887.



MAIN Deck. Fixed wing. Launch Satans 1 and 2.

Lt Cdr Jim Cobbett leans forward on his chair to watch the flaps raise and lower on an F-35 on the flight deck. A roar. A whoosh. The jet is airborne. A second stealth fighter taxis into position before repeating its leader's actions.

Jim relaxes in his chair. "Custard cream anyone?" Lt Richie Turrell presses a mouse button and the jets pause in mid air, the lights go up and five officers sitting on wooden chairs in front of a giant concave screen discuss how the take-offs went.

Collectively, the quintet have more than 100 years of carrier operations under their belt. Hundreds, thousands of hours of seeing Harriers, Sea Kings, Merlins, Lynx, safely on and off the flight decks of Invincible, Ark Royal, Illustrious.

But they've never launched or recovered an F-35. Which is why the Flyco team from HMS Queen Elizabeth are sitting in a semi-circle in front of the flight deck simulator's main display.

We've featured the sim - housed in a drab pebble-dashed building in one of Culdrose's far-flung corners - a couple of times before during the past 18 months.

It wasn't designed for this. It was meant to train flight deck officers on frigates, destroyers, RFAs.

So good was the software - which uses Microsoft Kinect technology to respond to arm and hand movements - that it was adapted to include the new carriers and their air power.

It's still got a few glitches (on our visit the jets had a habit of pirouetting upon leaving the ramp and then porpoising into the ocean), but it beats table-top exercises.

"The best thing about the simulator is reacting to a visual stimulus, rather than a script which is what we worked

After table-top exercises, meetings and simulators, HMS Queen Elizabeth's flight deck team finally got the chance to practise their skills on the

on before," says Lt Cdr Cobbett, Queen Elizabeth's Lieutenant Commander (Flying).

With handlers, flight deck officers, vehicles and the aircraft themselves all moving around the deck and responding to the Flyco team's instructions, it's a chance to see whether the procedures drawn up on paper will likely work in practice.

To reach this point, they called upon their own experiences, those of the Americans (both standard flat-top operations and F-35 trials conducted on the USS Wasp), and dipped into the Fleet Air Arm archives to study Ark Royal IV (Britain's last big-deck carrier, retired nearly 40 years ago now).

"Carrier operations are bloody dangerous, but they're not rocket science," explained Cdr Mark Deller, Queen Elizabeth's Commander Air.

"They are written in blood. Our forefathers did the difficult bit. I'd be a bloody fool not to look back through our history and ignore it."

He was Commander (Air) on Lusty at the end of the Noughties. And many of the hand signals and instructions from the old ships are being carried over.

But when it comes to ship and aircraft, everything is (generally speaking) bigger, faster, louder.

TOP DECK

The F-35 is considerably taller than a Harrier - you can't reach the wings from below (not if you're 5ft 10in you can't) - wider and heavier.

It's reckoned, for example, it could take 20 minutes to move a jet from one corner of the hangar to the lift to the flight deck.

To ensure jets and helicopters are in the right place at the right time, with the right crew, right payload, right fuel load and right mission plans - and to ensure the aircraft don't end up flying into the middle of a gunnery exercise run by other ships in the battle group - the new carriers will rely on AGMA: the air group management application.

"It's brand new, we've had nothing like it before," Cdr Deller said. "It will provide all the relevant departments, sections and units with the information they need. Ultimately, it will dictate what can and cannot be done."

"My dad was a helicopter pilot. He would have used salt and pepper pots on a coffee table and moved them around. It's essentially the same thing today, but the technology has moved on."

It will be 2018 before any F-35 touches down on Queen Elizabeth, but the ship will be expected to conduct flying operations from the moment she leaves Rosyth next spring.

Indeed, her sea trials will be akin to a mini-deployment with just one refuelling pitstop. The only way to get sailors, spare parts and supplies on board will be by helicopter.

So while the Flyco team are playing with pixels, a few hundred yards away one of the flight deck watches is marshalling real Merlins around on one of Culdrose's trump cards, the dummy deck.

This too is the first time the handlers have been out on deck since they joined Queen Elizabeth (they'll be back a few times yet to hone skills).

The air department will be 113 men and women strong when the ship begins operating; at present it numbers a little over 70 - roughly the same size as on the Harrier carriers - with one watch of about two dozen souls always on duty to support flying.

"In Rosyth, we've done a lot of paper exercises and got involved in 'whole ship' training such as firefighting, duty watches and generally getting to know the layout by going on board three or four times a week," said Sub Lt 'Tiny' Richardson, one of two flight deck operations officers.

"But nothing beats the real thing. We had the guys down at Predannack practising fire-fighting. Real smoke. Real heat. Real oil. Really good for team work."

Indeed. It's easy to forget how powerful the downdraught of a Merlin lifting off is - flattening tall grass a good 100ft away.

Or the smell and heat spewing from the exhausts and nozzles of a Harrier as it taxis past. Not to mention the constant high-pitched whining roar of their Pegasus engines.

The noise from a Harrier at take-off or landing reaches 125-130 decibels. An F-35B? About 155. So 25 to 30 more. Shouldn't be too much louder. Except the scale is exponential.

125 dB is loud. You need to wear ear plugs. You have to shout into someone's

ear in the hope of being understood. "The Harriers were kittens," Lt Cdr Cobbett points out. "The F-35 is a man-eating tiger."

Having spent months in the classroom or performing non-aircraft handling duties on board the ship in Rosyth, did the deck team find it hard getting back into the rhythm of choreographing jets and helicopters?

"It's a fairly small branch, you either know of or have served with some of the guys, so although this is the first time we've worked together with real aircraft, it's gone really well," said 34-year-old LA(AH) Richard Fisher, a veteran of Bulwark and Ocean's flight decks.

"But then again, as a branch we're known for our 'can do' attitude.

And invaluable though the dummy deck is, it represents yesterday's not tomorrow's carriers. You don't get a sense of scale of the flight deck (it's twice as wide) or of the excellent view offered by the new Flying Control (a poky compartment on the Invincibles, now effectively an airfield control tower chopped in two).

For Capt Jerry Kyd, the chance for his flight deck team to move real, working helicopters and jets around is a key milestone as Queen Elizabeth "goes from concept to reality in front of our eyes".

He continued: "We've talked about Queen Elizabeth for nearly 20 years and now we're on the cusp of delivering her. We're just six months away from going to sea and everything is really stepping up a gear. To see all the coming together is really heartening."

He continued: "There is nothing more complicated than operating an aircraft carrier at sea, demanding a level of training not replicated anywhere else. So I cannot stress how vital this work at Culdrose is. This is the start of a journey, laying the foundations not just for our ship but also HMS Prince of Wales. We are the vanguard for the next 50 years."



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



Picture: Dave Sherfield

Navy's new sea boat offers much smoother ride Pickin' up good vibrations

RACING up and down the Lynher, Tamar and beyond for the past few months, this is the Navy's new £225,000 sea boat which has completed extensive trials.

Boat experts at HMS Raleigh have tested the Pacific 24 Mk4 to its limits ahead of its debut with the front-line fleet in coming months.

Whitehall ordered 60 of the craft from BAE Systems in Portsmouth in a £13.5m deal last year, with the first handed over to the Royal Navy's Sea Sense Training Centre at Jupiter Point near Torpoint for evaluation.

Although it looks identical to its predecessor (cunningly named the Mk3), the replacement boat

(actually 25, not 24ft long despite the title), is faster, has a longer range, is more economical and more environmentally friendly.

It's also all-digital (dials have been replaced by computer displays with the sole exception of the compass) and, above all, more comfortable.

The new boats – which will be used by vessels from fishery patrol ships all the way up to new carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales – were ordered chiefly to deal with the problem of 'whole body vibration.'

Seats on the existing Pacifics are fixed to the boats' hulls with no suspension. Sailors and marines riding in them are advised to actually

hover slightly above the seat and bend their knees to alleviate the strain and punishment to the spine caused when the craft hit the water – unrealistic on anything but very short journeys.

Nitrogen suspension on seats fitted to the successor craft should largely eradicate this 'whole body vibration', sparing the backs of the six passengers the Mk4 carries, plus the two crewmen.

"They are a marked improvement on what we had before – I like them," said CPO Chris Pye, the chief instructor at Jupiter Point and the coxswain throughout the trials, which were far more extensive than any endured by the three earlier

variations of the Pacific 24.

The boat was driven at speed, conducted emergency stops, tight turns and an endurance run; it covered 90 nautical miles at a new top speed of 36kts (the Mk3 ran out of fuel if it ran at 20kts for four-and-a-half hours). Dummies were placed in the seat to record engine noise.

Though more comfortable, there are limitations to the new boat. As it is fully computerised, the sensors on the engine can be somewhat sensitive. And travel by sea remains a demanding experience, however good the suspension is on seating.

"We took the boat in a Sea State of 3-4 [waves up to 8ft] and you could see the passengers being bounced

around on their seats which means they suffer fatigue very quickly," said Chris, who has 13 years' experience of driving the RN's boats.

"Yes, these boats are definitely more comfortable, but if you can see the guys in front of you bouncing up and down, tossed around like rag dolls, then you should be slowing down."

Otherwise, the boat handles identically to its predecessor, which means boat crews across the Royal Navy, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and MOD Police who'll receive the Mk4 by the end of the decade, need little more than an hour's briefing on operating the new model.



We're on the Lorient express

I'M AN Officer Cadet, get me out of here...

Here being the River Scorff in Lorient, Brittany, as the RN's leaders of tomorrow joined their French counterparts for a week of training – in the hands of French green berets.

Every officer in the *Marine Nationale* is expected to complete an arduous 100-hour exercise run by the French Navy Commando School as part of their initial training.

Over the week in the hands of the commandos, the rookie officers are tested in open water swimming, unarmed-combat, obstacle courses, endurance

marches and nautical raids.

Four Brits volunteered to try their hand at the test as part of links between Dartmouth and the Ecole Navale near Brest.

The first exercise consisted of a 10km stealth march to a location next to a river, whereupon the teams donned wetsuits and flippers to swim their way back to the base approximately five km away.

Other tasks included a night-time exercise carrying two casualties on stretchers, a 60-metre tunnel crawl and the construction of Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats for a four-and-a-half-hour canoe towards the sea.

"It was definitely what I would call 'type two fun' – fun afterwards but not at the time," said OC Isobel Rawlinson.

"There was a great sense of satisfaction on completion of the exercise.

"I feel that each cadet will have learnt something about themselves and come away more knowledgeable about their own capabilities.

"Being in a 'foreign' environment was testing at times but I found that with my limited French and the French cadets' willingness to help us out, there were never any big issues for us to deal with."

Appliance of science

AROUND 65 students from schools across Devon and Cornwall visited HMS Raleigh for the regional launch of this year's Engineering Education Scheme.

The scheme, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary, runs in England and Scotland.

It links teams of Year 12 students and their teacher with local companies to work on real, scientific, engineering and technological problems.

The scheme provides students with an in-depth experience in the subject area, enabling them to make an informed decision about their future studies and career.

Working in teams of between four and six people, each group has six months to complete

the task set for them by their sponsoring company. Two of the teams this year are being sponsored by the Royal Navy.

During their day at HMS Raleigh the students were introduced to the requirements of the scheme and took part in some practical team-working challenges, including an assault course, similar to those undertaken by the Royal Navy's new recruits.

Schools taking part this year are: Devonport High School for Boys, Ilfracombe Academy, Plymstock School, Plymouth High School for Girls, Stoke Damerel Community College, Tor Bridge High, University Technical College, and Tavistock College,

which last year won the regional heat, the first time they competed in EES for a number of years.

The scheme is run by the Engineering Development Trust. The charity delivers over 30,000 science, technology, engineering and mathematics experiences each year, for young people age 11-21 across the UK.

The Royal Navy is among the organisations offering a range of career opportunities in engineering and other technical areas.

Picture: Dave Sherfield



The Lion awakens

THE lights go on and the computers whirr into life this month on HMS Albion as the rebirth of the mighty lion continues apace in Plymouth.

The assault ship was mothballed in the wake of the 2010 Defence Review, leaving her sister HMS Bulwark to carry the responsibility of Britain's on-call assault ship.

Next year the two ships trade places as Bulwark goes into hibernation and Albion completes a massive two-year keel-to-topmast overhaul.

Albion has been gradually coming to life since the middle of 2015. A year into her refit work below the waterline was completed allowing her dock to be flooded and the ship moved to neighbouring 5 Basin for completion of the multi-million-pound refit.

Today she sits high in the water, her superstructure covered in scaffolding and tarpaulin, and with the 87-strong ship's company ticking off milestones by the week as they gear up for the crew moving back on board in late January, the arrival of the first commanding officer in half a dozen years in March, sea trials in June, being formally handed back to the RN and a rededication in the autumn and Operational Sea Training at the year's end.

It is a mammoth undertaking – 3,500 people have swarmed over the ship so far (September 2016 saw the activity reach its peak with 500 people a day toiling on board). By the time the revamp is finished, the ship will have devoured 1.3 million 'man hours' (it would take one person nearly 150 years to complete...).

Some jobs proved less challenging than others; the intersleek paint applied to the hull did its job and kept the 577ft-long ship largely free of marine life; a jet wash got rid of most of the muck accumulated sitting in the water for five years.

And other tasks have proved monumental; Albion is the first vessel to be equipped with a fresh, rather than salt water cooling system, which has meant new piping throughout. It means, however, that the sailors and the hi-tech systems

aboard should be far cooler in the Gulf region than on other warships, minehunters especially, whose systems struggle to cope with the extreme heat.

Some 25 miles of new electrical cables have been installed, as have more than two miles of replacement pipework, 100 pumps have been overhauled, 1,500 valves replaced and 20,000 square metres of steel in 34 ballast tanks have been preserved (that's enough to cover three football pitches).

Elsewhere, the Phalanx automated gun system is being fitted in place of Goalkeeper, which is being retired across the Fleet so there's only one close-defence weapon engineers need to learn to maintain.

Already fitted on the main mast is the Artisan radar which can track more than 800 contacts as close as 125ft or as far away as 125 miles.

To deal with so much additional data, the operations room has a new 'brain', the DNA2 command system.

But what about the soul of the ship? Well, in January around half of Bulwark's ship's company will transfer to Albion to form the kernel of the new ship's company (as old Illustrians became new Elizabethans when the last Harrier carrier paid off).

And already the current crew have been reminding affiliates – notably the city of Chester – and the ship's sponsor, Princess Anne, that the ship is on her way back.

"We've done our utmost to keep the spirit of Albion alive – certainly while we've been refitting her, with ship's company attending memorial services to Jutland, Remembrance Day parades, visiting our affiliates," said head of weapon engineering Cdr Mark Jones. "That will only step up in 2017."

And into 2018? The ship will complete her amphibious training in the spring with a full-on workout with the Royal Marines and Commando Helicopter Force in the South West before her first deployment in nearly a decade in the late summer.

Picture: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies



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All aboard for a South

THE flag of the Commando Logistics Regiment flutters in the strong South Atlantic breeze as the Falklands mist all but devours HMS Clyde.

This is Ajax Bay, location of Red Beach in May 1982 where the liberation of the islands began in earnest, site of the legendary field hospital dubbed the 'Red and Green Life Machine' and, when the sound of battle faded, location of a small memorial cairn.

It is typically Falklands. Tricky to get to by land. Sparsely inhabited. Barren. Windy. Treeless. Haunting echoes of 1982. You're missing only penguins and seals to get a Falklands 'full house'.

Visits here, even by the islands' permanent Naval guardians on HMS Clyde, are rare; the official Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery just a couple of miles away across the bay is a more frequent stop.

But spend a few hours looking around Ajax Bay, as Clyde sailors did on a nine-day patrol, and you'll find a world barely

changed in more than three decades – untouched by human hand, for no one lives here.

The abandoned meat processing plant which served as home to the field hospital in 1982 is slightly more derelict than it was then, but still standing, its walls daubed with faded, but still-legible graffiti.

Wandering around the ruins proved motivational for HMS Clyde's LMA Will Randall.

"Seeing the 'Red and Green Life-saving Machine' cemented my understanding of an operation far from home, where training and skill saved so many casualties and prevented further loss of life," he said.

"The story of those who worked there is truly inspirational and definitely a place for all members of the medical branch to visit and appreciate."

Across the bay, there is human habitation – the tiny settlement of San Carlos, half a dozen or so farming families, who maintain that finest of quintessential British traditions: afternoon tea and cake, provided to a very grateful shore party by Gerald and Doreen Dickson.

The Dicksons are two of the 2,932

inhabitants of the 770 or so islands which make up the archipelago; almost all live on East Falkland, just 144 on the second largest isle, West Falkland.

One fifth of those live in its largest settlement, Port Howard, another stop on Clyde's hop.

It's the gateway to West Falkland, home to a vital ferry link across Falkland Sound and a small airstrip.

The patrol ship's crew were hosted by locals and shown around the museum, cemetery and airfield (with an impressive airport terminal...).

An airport for 30 people?

Yes, because helicopter is by far the fastest and easiest way of getting around the islands (but for the loss of Atlantic Conveyor in 1982, most commandos would have flown to Stanley, rather than yomp 50 miles over difficult, wintry terrain), even better, dare we say it, than the grey funnel line.

So the ability to work with whirlybirds is fundamental to Clyde's ability to patrol the islands, be they S-61s (the civilian version of the Sea King, used by Bristol International) the AW189 (a sort of stretched Lynx, used by the search and rescue service), or the military machines of the FAA and RAF.

Clyde is the only ship in her class with a flight deck (her older River-class sisters have cargo decks suitable for winching, but not for landing).

As a result, she's equipped with specialist aviation equipment, carries crew specially-trained to operate helicopters, and a helicopter signals officer (Lt Will Dewing) to oversee all work with air power.

As the ship operates 9,000 miles from home and (to date) has never come back to UK waters, any assessment of her helicopter handling demands a visit from experts from back in Britain.

They did just that, putting Clyde through eight days of assessment – the culmination of an extensive period of appraisal to determine whether the ship and her three dozen crew are ready for all eventualities as they patrol the Falklands.

After Clyde's regular 'customers' Bristol and the SAR fliers had completed a series of day and night deck landings and winched crew on and off the flight deck, Clyde teamed up with the RAF's 1310 (Tactical Support) Flight and their



th Atlantic smörgåsbord

47 Chinooks. The veteran helicopters are too large and heavy to set down on Clyde's deck, but that doesn't stop them practising winching drills – the first time, apparently, they've done so with Clyde in the nine years she's been based in the Falklands. "It was a fantastic opportunity for my flight deck ratings and I to work with such an iconic aircraft – an opportunity probably unique to this theatre of operations," said Lt Dewing. Again most readily accessed by air, not sea, is the most southerly of the Falklands' uninhabited islands, Sea Lion, served by a strip and a twin-prop service. Indeed, there's no port here, not even a jetty. Small and nimble though HMS Clyde is, she can only anchor offshore and send a sea boat in.

Fourteen sailors managed to wade ashore – kelp and breaking surf meant their boat could get no closer than 100m from the shore – where they were immediately surrounded by the local lion populace, which was keen to protect its new-born pups.

They were also treated to the sight of killer whales barely 15ft from the beach circling for food.

"Luckily, they were a lot further down the beach than our landing point," said ET(ME) Moray Horn from Bo'ness in Scotland.

"To see them so close was astounding – a memory I'll never forget."

Having navigated their way around a colony of penguins and watched elephant seals scrap on the sand, the sailors made for a cliff top on the southwestern coast.

Few memorials are more remote than that erected here to destroyer HMS Sheffield, fatally damaged when she was hit by an Exocet missile; she became the first British warship lost in action since World War 2.

The shore party carried out basic maintenance before formally paying their respects.

Rather closer to civilisation is the Falklands' newest Naval monument, though its location is no less exposed or evocative.

Two days before the end of the 1982 conflict, Argentine forces fired an Exocet missile from a makeshift battery

at Hookers Point, near Stanley airfield.

The target? HMS Glamorgan, whose guns had provided support to the Royal Marines of 45 Commando, assaulting Argentine troops dug in on Two Sisters mountain – one of the final battles in the assault on the capital.

With her mission accomplished, the destroyer moved away from the coast to re-join the bulk of the Royal Navy task force – only to come within range of the anti-ship missile.

The Exocet was spotted by the ship soon enough to begin evasive manoeuvres, but she could not avoid the missile.

It struck aft and though much of its blast was diverted into the air, the ship's fully-fuelled and armed Wessex helicopter exploded in the hangar, her Sea Cat missile system was blown overboard and sailors 150ft away were knocked off their feet by the blast as flames shot 100ft into the air.

Had the Exocet impacted a matter of inches lower, it would have exploded in Glamorgan's main missile magazine – and the resulting explosion would have torn the ship apart. As it was 14 men were killed, all subsequently buried at sea.

It took nearly 30 years to erect a memorial – long after other ships sunk or badly damaged received monuments, earning Glamorgan the tag 'the forgotten ship'.

She was not forgotten by Clyde, whose sailors ventured out to the memorial – an imposing slab of polished Welsh granite

Sub Lt Ben Easton, one of the trainees learning the art of navigation aboard Clyde, said: "My father served in the Falklands not long after the war and I was very proud to continue my family's tradition of honouring those who gave their lives in the conflict."

His Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Conor O'Neill, added: "Maintaining and commemorating the Royal Navy's heritage in the islands is an important part of Clyde's mission and on a beautiful Falklands morning it was a privilege to mark Glamorgan's sacrifice."

It is also part and parcel of any tour of duty in the Falklands. Penguins. Sea lions. Meet the locals.

"Patrolling these beautiful islands is Clyde's primary mission and I'm very glad we got so many of my sailors ashore to meet the people that we're

here to protect," Lt Cdr O'Neill said.

Back at Mare Harbour and Clyde gave soldiers, airmen and civil servants a two-day insight into her job by taking them to sea.

The packed visit programme started with a fascinating-yet-deadly-serious demonstration of fire and damage control (flooding) counter-measures; the consequences of an incident on board are multiplied at sea, as any support may be beyond reasonable reach.

There was added spice to the man overboard exercise with the islands AAR search and rescue helicopter joining Clyde's sea boat and rescue swimmer AB(Sea) Hopkins in winching accident-prone Ruth the Dummy from the icy South Atlantic.

Lulls in the action were exploited by the three-dozen-strong ship's company who explained their roles on board to visitors – from the bridge to the engine room, taking in the galley and weapons systems on the way.

The icing on the cake came in the form of a series of mock attacks on Clyde by air and sea – the latter courtesy of one of the patrol ship's own sea boats, the former via two RAF Typhoons.





HMS Sultan supports Poppy Day

TRAINEES from the Engineering Technician Initial Career Course (ETICC) at HMS Sultan are set to join thousands of street collectors on November 3 in support of the Royal British Legion for London Poppy Day.

A class of trainees from the Defence College of Technical Training's Defence School of Marine Engineering, currently undertaking submariner training, will travel up as part of a group of 80 personnel.

London Poppy Day started in 2006 with ten volunteers raising £500. It now involves around 2,500 volunteers, military and civilian, raising over £1m in 2013 and 2014 and £875,000 last year.

HMS Sultan ETME (SM) Declan Luby, 19, (pictured above) said: "We've had an opportunity to volunteer and the lads have all come forwards and I think it will be a great honour to be involved."

ETICC Divisional Officer Tom Davis said: "DSMarE ETICC were keen to support this important event and are extremely proud to see how many of our young people wish to get involved in raising money for the Royal British Legion.

"It is important to instil a sense of pride in the uniform, and what better way than to be involved in an event such as this that reminds us all of those who have worn the uniform before us?"

"Although the poppy is synonymous with remembrance, it is also important that our guys and girls appreciate that the sale of the poppy directly funds the good work of the Royal British Legion, whose efforts support those still serving as well as those who have retired from the Service, in so many different ways."

Courts seeking new recruits

NAVAL personnel leaving the Service who are looking for a new career have been invited to consider a role as a Judge's Clerk in Her Majesty's Court Service.

Judge's Clerks work in the Royal Courts of Justice, and can work all over the country.

This unique service is currently recruiting – for further information about the role and the possibility of visiting the RCJ contact Sheila Glasgow on Sheila.glasgow@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk

An arresting career

POLICING the patch is the foundation of the boys in blue – and that stretches to the boys (and girls) in dark blue.

What makes life in the RN Police that bit different is the nature of the patch – it's pretty much global, and could involve a stint on a tropical island, or at sea involved in counter piracy operations.

The RN Police (formerly the Regulating Branch) – whose motto *Ne Cede Malis* translates as 'Do not yield to adversity' – can trace their heritage back more than 300 years and traditionally throughout the centuries have been seen as the 'gatekeepers' of discipline and good order within the Naval Service.

Today's RN Police, for a variety of reasons, is a very different organisation to the old Regulating Branch.

Changes to the Service justice system, current and emerging legislation, the changing face of crime and warfare, as well as a need to adopt modern policing techniques and follow best practice, has brought about a transition of the RN Police into a modern policing organisation that is more akin to their civilian counterparts. They are, for example, subject to statutory inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, and have recently been inspected.

The inspection findings provided a very positive endorsement of the RN Police, describing them as a committed and professional workforce.

The police's primary role is to support the entire Navy's operational effectiveness by providing an investigative and policing service.

This includes policing at sea, across the UK main port areas and overseas including in Bahrain, Cyprus, Gibraltar, the Falklands and of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, where officers are sworn in as British Indian Overseas Territories Police Officers.

They are trained in a wide range of policing disciplines, including: forensics (as crime scene investigators) specialist interviews, custody, crime prevention and community policing. They also receive additional specialist training alongside civilian police.

Many qualifications gained are nationally accredited. At sea their role extends to security functions, helmsman or Flight Deck Officer with responsibilities for the safe launch and recovery of the ship's helicopter on frigates and destroyers.

The Royal Marines Police Troop is integrated in the RN Police and is responsible for providing policing to a deployed 3 Commando Brigade, and for providing the general policing and investigative duties for the Corps within the UK. As the field police for the brigade, they are responsible for route signing, convoy control, all aspects of traffic control, continued law enforcement, and they can also

travel alone and you go faster but travel together and you go further."

LWtr Gilly St-Hilaire, who works at the Waterfront Logistics Support Group in Portsmouth and who comes from St Vincent and the Grenadines, was a key member of the organising team.

He said: "I've been in the Navy over 13 years and never have I experienced an event like this; seeing friends and families laughing and enjoying themselves, whilst promoting the strong core values of the Royal Navy made it all worthwhile. Long may it continue."

His work colleague LLogs(SC) Janelle Gerald said: "This was the first event I know of which was carried out for RN people from the Caribbean;



● Recording evidence (above) forensic work at the scene of a crime and (right) two RN Police Officers prepare for a patrol around Portsmouth

be called upon to provide armed force protection.

Personnel may also be selected to undertake Close Protection duties with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The majority of the RM cadre serves in Plymouth, with small detachments situated in Arbroath, Chivenor, and Diego Garcia.

The RN Police comprises Naval officers, ratings and RM ranks, and the professional head of the RN Police is the Provost Marshal (Navy), who is appointed under statute by the Queen.

Traditionally, all police were drawn from the ranks of existing sailors and marines as the specialisation recruited only from within the Naval Service through 'sideways' entry.

But next month sees the first direct entry recruits joining HMS Raleigh – an exciting change for the RN Police that will ensure they continue to recruit the best people for a rewarding career in this unique maritime policing environment.

Once they pass out of basic training, they'll receive instruction in basic seamanship skills, learn how to fight fires and undergo damage control training.

That will allow them to join a ship for six months for the 'marinisation' phase of their training, aimed at providing them with an awareness of other arms of the RN, coupled with experiencing life at sea in a busy warship.

Then it's on to the 14-week RN Police Initial Qualifying Course at the Defence College of Policing at Southwick Park, just outside Portsmouth.



There they will learn military and criminal law, go through personal safety training, search techniques, forensic awareness principles, how to deal with victims of crime and suspect interviewing skills, culminating in an environmental phase to consolidate the training.

On successful completion, they'll be promoted to leading hand and assigned to a regional RN Police Headquarters (Portsmouth, Devonport or Faslane) which will contribute to gaining an advanced apprenticeship and eventual Diploma in Policing. Recruits will also undergo leadership training at the RN Leadership Academy as well as specialist custody training and Level 2 First Aid.

Promotion opportunities within the RN Police mean the path is clear right up to Warrant Officer for the right people. For recruits who display outstanding academic and leadership potential, there is the option of a unique fast-track scheme to commission as an officer.

Furthermore, the RN will fund and provide opportunities to achieve educational qualifications to assist them to achieve this.

Direct entry candidates will take a starting salary of at least £14,492 when they commence basic training, which will increase to £29,474 within two years.

In addition to meeting the standard requirements for joining the RN, candidates must undergo a separate RN Police selection process which will assess powers of observation, written and verbal communication skills, team ethos, leadership qualities and motivation to join the RN Police.

The RN Police is looking for team players and independent thinkers with a passion for helping people. You must be physically and mentally fit, well-organised and a good communicator.

If you think you have what it takes to be a member of the Royal Navy Police, you should speak to a careers advisor at any Armed Forces Careers Office – see www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers for more information. In-service candidates should contact their local RN Police.



Hockey Helen is highlight at NSN conference

INSPIRATIONAL individuals from the Services and the world of sport fired up and educated attendees of the fourth annual conference of the Naval Servicewomen's Network, this year hosted by HMS Collingwood.

Keynote speaker – and Olympic gold medal winner – Helen Richardson-Walsh (pictured above by Keith Woodland) opened proceedings with an inspiring and bold account of her life experiences and the journey she endured to triumph with the GB hockey team in Rio.

Describing the preparation, motivation and struggle which she experienced along the way, she captivated the audience with the strength of her determination; she was eagerly quizzed about her battle to succeed.

Following her curtain-raiser, the morning session consisted of presentations exploring key topics from wellbeing and resilience to women in ground close combat.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones addressed the conference before opening the Wellbeing Fair which was held in the gymnasium.

Britain's senior sailor told the audience he was "proud to lead a Navy where women serve as divers and submariners, pilots and engineers; where they have been awarded MCs for courage under fire and have risen to command fighting ships and major shore establishments.

"We've come a long way, but we're not in a position to say 'job done'. So don't for a minute think that we're going to stop or slow down on my watch, because this is a priority. So I want to continue to support and work with the NSN, and our other diversity networks, to ensure that life in the Royal Navy is as good as it can be for everyone."

The Wellbeing Fair, organised by HMS Collingwood clubz POPT Ayeshea Lockton and LPT Regaina Crawley, featured numerous interactive stalls presented by various RN sports, medical, dental, charitable and financial organisations.

Visitors to each stall received advice and guidance on health, fitness, nutrition, financial support and charitable support available to RN personnel.

Sports teams were also present and gave demonstrations of the variety of sporting activity across the RN.

"This is the first time we have included an interactive activity fair in the conference programme," said conference organiser Lt Cdr Lucy Ottley.

"I think it is great that there are so many organisations in support of our people and we have so many opportunities available to us."

The final item featured a panel of Naval speakers sharing unique accounts of their experiences with mental and physical health, followed by a Q&A session with the audience.

Fun on the menu for new Caribbean network

A FAMILY barbecue and fun day formed the first event of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Caribbean Support Network.

More than 150 people enjoyed authentic dishes, including ackee and saltfish, at the event at the Cockleshell Community Centre at Eastney in Portsmouth.

Families attended from personnel based in HMS Queen Elizabeth, Commando Logistics in Chivenor, HMS Dragon, Iron Duke and Westminster, to name but a few.

Std Fitzbert Alleyne, who hails from Trinidad and Tobago and is currently serving in HMS Brocklesby, said: "The network is designed to enable us to support each other. As I always say,

meeting new people from different parts of the Caribbean for the first time was great. I am really looking forward to the next event."

The network was set up in March and is designed to provide a "home away from home" and support Caribbean Service personnel and their families.

It is also designed to provide in-Service mentors for junior personnel from within their own community as well as providing a focal point for the two way-exchange of information between personnel and the RN/RM for issues unique to Caribbean personnel.

If you are interested in joining the network, information can be found on their official Royal Navy Facebook page or on the Royal Navy intranet.

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● Cooking up a treat at the network barbecue

Plate expectations

Near-perfect score for Naval Service chefs at tri-Service contest

THEY practised for months, perfecting their dishes in a bid to win a coveted Inter-Service trophy.

So the last thing Naval Service chefs needed was a fire alarm slap bang in the middle of their prep.

But that's what they had to deal with at Exercise Joint Caterer at the Defence Capability Centre at Shrivenham.

However, keeping cool in the heat of the kitchen is second nature to Naval caterers, who picked up numerous accolades at the three-day competition.

"The fire alarm was a little bit of an issue, but the guys just kept their concentration," said LCH Stevie Stokoe, captain of the *Parade de Chef* team, which saw the Naval Service Culinary Arts Team (NSCAT) receive the best marks for 11 years – close to 100 per cent.

"The reason we got such a high mark was because our kitchen was immaculate and the reason why was because they did not stop," said LCH Stokoe.

"Our two commis chefs were running around the kitchen like lunatics for the whole service; one of them is still in training and the other only finished last week. They must have burned 1,000 calories in that morning alone."

The NSCAT *Parade* menu featured a starter of compression of rabbit, consisting of loin, leg and liver with pickled baby beetroot, pickled shallot, prune ketchup, beetroot puree and focaccia crisp.

The main course was beef, potato, carrots and mushrooms; braised beef cheek, potato Dauphinoise, Chantenay carrots, carrot puree, mushroom and celeriac emulsion, broccoli, calabrese, beef crackling and reduced braising liquor.

The 80 VIP diners were then served a dessert of chocolate Bavarian, cherry jelly and pistachio cake with a cherry sorbet, pistachio macaron, sour cherry gel, toasted pistachio and carob nib soil and macerated cherries.

LCH Stokoe was joined by Chef Tom Andrews, from HMS Talent, LCH Kat Taylor, LCH Mark Penlington and Chef Claire Forster. They were assisted by commis chefs AB Jonathan Kelly and AB Louis Smith.

More than 50 personnel from the Royal Navy, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and US Navy chefs on an exchange programme competed at the three-day contest, which is aimed at developing culinary skills as well as building team spirit.

NSCAT, which narrowly lost out to the Army, still picked up 82 awards – seven golds, 21 silvers, 41 bronze, two certificates of merit, ten best in class and the Team Ethos Trophy.

LCH Stokoe added: "The commitment I got from the guys was second to none. Bearing in mind it was a young team I couldn't have asked for a better bunch of guys."

"Two of them had experience of it before but others had never worked in that sort of environment until three weeks ago."

Personnel competed in a range of classes, including in the live theatre where they had the added pressure of completing a dish to a set time in front of hundreds of spectators.

The Open Field Team Challenge – held in a car park – saw three personnel from HMS Ocean produce a two-course meal for 20 covers, with their menu including burritos with chicken and rice, beef steak on a herb pancake, Mexican baked chocolate and chilli cheesecake and a sponge pudding.

The display salon showcased decorative cakes, sculptured lard carvings and buffet platters – which survived the 188-mile journey from the Defence Maritime Logistics School at HMS Raleigh.

Awards are given according to creativity, workmanship, composition and presentation – including taste.

Team captain Chief Petty Officer Si Geldart said: "It was a fantastic performance for a novice team. The *parade* team did fantastically well for a team that had only been together for three weeks. The results they achieved, with the judges saying that it was the best *parade* performance they'd seen in 11 years, is a phenomenal achievement."

"Everyone walked off stage with a medal. I couldn't ask for any more as the team captain. Their commitment was brilliant, their enthusiasm was brilliant."

Team director 1/O Pat Prunty RFA said: "I look forward to building on these strengths and further developing the skills of individuals and team performances."



● Clockwise from top left: Elephants sculpted from lard; LCH Cat Taylor at work as part of the *Parade* team; NSCAT team captain CPO Si Geldart; A chocolate, cherry and pistachio dessert served by the *Parade* team; Chefs compete in the theatre; US Navy chef Frida Karani joined the Naval Service team as part of an exchange programme

Pictures: LPhoto Louise George





I've got the T-shirt

REGARDING the story in September's edition of *Navy News* about T-shirts being issued throughout the Silent Service, here is a photograph of my T-shirt.

I wore this T-shirt while on holiday but served as a submariner in the 1960s.

Norman Leslie
(ex HMS Osiris and Odin)
Bangor

Star bought beers in South of France



● **Errol Flynn visited HMS Forth after meeting crew members in a bar in France**

I CAME across your excellent magazine a few days ago – there is so much in it.

The article on HMS Raleigh brought back many memories for me.

One of my classmates there in 1948 was Peter Pogue, a Southend lad, *pictured right*.

Later we served in the Med on LSTs Dieppe and Striker, then on the submarine depot ship HMS Forth, which was like a town to us.

On a visit to Villefranche I was ashore with Wilbur Flynn, another stoker, and standing at the bar was the Hollywood actor Errol Flynn.

Suddenly the door burst open and Pogue came in, saw us and shouted 'oi Flynn.'

He meant Wilbur of course but Errol turned round with a very annoyed look on his face. Things were sorted OK and he asked us what we were – we told him we're the British Navy.

He bought us a beer and exchanged a bit of chat with us. The next day he came aboard to visit the wardroom.

While on board he bowed to the quarterdeck, just like Sir Robin of Locksley! Happy days.

I am now off to take advantage of your £30 yearly subscription offer.

Alf Lee
Chatham Division 1947-56



● **The man overboard incident in the 1950s**

Eggs in a mess

I'D like to share a little dit that haunts me to this day.

I was duty killick with the fire watch on HMS Hampshire in the late 1960s and had the job of making the evening fry up for the watch. I grilled the bacon and was frying the sausages and starting to crack about two dozen eggs into a humongous frying pan.

As the watch queued up I was plating up and they trotted off to the mess deck we had set aside.

The sound of 'uuugh' and 'what's this?' sounded through the ship.

I had fried the eggs in Tepol sanitiser. All the containers looked the same.

Years before I'd joined my first ship from Ganges and all the juniors spent three months on different parts of the ship.

I'd worked my way around and did various jobs.

One afternoon I was asked to help out in the wardroom that evening. I turned up and dressed the table then went into the area behind the galley and found the PO Chef fast asleep.

I couldn't wake him up so I pinched his wallet and ordered a takeaway from the local Chinese.

I served the meal to the officer of the watch and his wife, who commented on the best meal they had had on board.

Jim 'Fess' Parker
Stockport

Cabbala memories

IT was very interesting to read about Wren Jacqueline Leitch in the October edition of *Navy News*.

After spending a week at Butlins in Skegness in 1943, we were kitted out and sent to HMS Cabbala for training as coders.

My first ship was a fleet minesweeper HMS Strenuous on Christmas Eve 1943, then the destroyer Blackwood, which was torpedoed.

Later, in a very overcrowded Chatham, one always volunteered to get out of the place and I ended up on Sainfoin. We embarked troops at Calcutta in August 1945.

I went home to Sheerness in 1946.

Desmond Curtis
Milton Keynes

Worth saving

I RECENTLY heard an emotive piece of music, Lillian Elkington's *Out of the Mist*, written in the 1920s and inspired by HMS Verdun emerging from the mist carrying the Unknown Warrior from France to Great Britain.

Lillian stopped writing when she got married but nearly all of her music was found in a Worthing shop.

Surely this music is part of our national heritage and should be preserved for future generations.

Greta Girle
Billingshurst

In the bag

A STORY in the September edition of *Navy News* referring to the Swordfish as a 'stringbag' because it would carry anything took me back to a day in 1944 at RNAS Inskip.

While working on an aircraft our attention was drawn to a Swordfish taxiing by to take off.

Between the bracing wires and struts of the starboard wings were firmly fastened one bicycle and a large suitcase.

D Joynes
New South Wales

Chaos as officer fell off submarine

A RECENT obituary reminded me when, in the mid-1950s, the officers' submarine was sailing from the UK to the Far East for a much-needed refit.

In the middle of the Indian Ocean, an officer decided to squat on the side ballast tank to examine under the top casing.

As waves do, one deposited him in the briny.

Myself and a fellow crewman at the rear of the small bridge watched his rear end bob aft, just missing a rusted plane guard, and rapidly disappeared astern.

My swifter fellow colleague unclipped the horseshoe buoy and tossed it over.

The first Lieutenant rapidly appeared to take over from the officer of the watch and, with much difficulty, the dunkee was finally located.

The casing party mustered and a line was thrown, which the victim grabbed, pulling the thrower into the sea.

The officer gallantly gave the buoy to the new unfortunate and all ended well.

That was enough excitement for us but we later exercised with the Siamese Navy.

We were sailing at night in a darkened convoy from Bangkok harbour and just missed a Siamese monitor ship.

A Lillington
Melbourne, Australia



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

JACKPO

Can you help out?

SOME TIME ago I acquired a car badge with obvious Naval connections.

Can any of your readers identify it?

If so and someone would like it I will pass it on.

Bob McMorran
robert.mcmorran@sky.com

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Invitation from Cleopatra

I HAVE to disagree with Phil Symes letter regarding the last tot (September edition of *Navy News*).

I also joined in the spring of 1970, March in fact, as advanced party for the third commission.

I was a killick Jack Dusty who was also responsible for the rum issue. On joining we went to the Med for three months, where I calculated that we needed to obtain some rum from Malta, or we would run out before stopping in Gib.

We returned to Devonport in June where the remainder of the 2nd Commission left the ship and the 3rd commission was completed.

We went into a short refit where we were billeted in Drake Barracks.

Where I disagree with Phil is that we were back on board on July 31, when the last day of the tot

issue was made.

I, however, was on leave at this time, returning onboard the following Monday to find that all my tot measures had disappeared.

After a few days they were all returned at various times, discreetly, and I quickly returned them to Royal William Yard.

The following year I was tried out using plates instead of the trays for Junior Rates, and it went better than I had expected.

If Phil Symes wants to have a reunion with Cleopatra shipmates, we have a well-supported association which meets in May of each year. The association site can be found by looking for HMS Cleopatra OSA.

Peter Barwick

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and full address, not necessarily for publication. If you submit a photograph which you did not take please ensure you have permission to use it. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions.

Praise for Team Portsmouth's runners



MORE than 240 runners took part in the unique 1.8 mile Basin Run in HMS Nelson, in a bid to fundraise for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity – and maybe set a new personal best in the process.

After a warm-up, inspired and led by Royal Navy PTIs, the runners made their way to the start-line.

An air horn marked the start of the race and soon, a swarm of Royal Navy personnel, contractors and civilians crossed the start line.

Some runners were sporting some great fancy-dress costumes, including tooth fairies, Where's Wally, a vicar and even a rogue Pokemon being chased by a horde of Pokeballs.

The course spanned the outskirts of the naval base with an incredible backdrop of Navy ships, including HMS Dragon, as they made their way along Fountain Road and towards the finish.

This year's trophy winners included Ashley Scott as the fastest male to finish, Jo Meek as the fastest female, Fleet Diving Squadron as the fastest team and Best Dressed went to the Serco Team who were sporting a fleet of homemade ships.

Captain of the Base and RNRMC Trustee Col Mike Tanner RM presented the awards and thanked everyone for "taking the time out of their days" to support the RNRMC cause and praised the 'Team Portsmouth effort.'

Marathon bike bid by C5ISR

SIX members of the Maritime C5ISR Support Unit based on Portsdown hill have just completed their third MCSU Challenge.

This year the challenge saw the team cycle through four countries (England, France, Belgium and the Netherlands), covering just over 570 miles in 5½ days.

The team, led by CPO Matthew Pritchard, began the epic journey with a night at HMS President in London, meaning the challenge got under way early morning in the shadows of Tower Bridge.

The first day took the team from London 91 miles through the South Downs and into Dover, where they took a ferry to Calais.

The second day took the team along the coast from Calais up through Dunkirk and Ostende before turning inland to Ghent after 107 miles and home for the night on a barge.

During the day, the team took the opportunity to visit and pay their respects at the Dunkirk War memorial.

The third day was another 106 miles across Belgium then into Holland with Eindhoven providing the stop for the night; most of the journey was following two of the many canals.

The fourth day was the longest of the challenge, a leg-burning 126 miles, which took in the bridge at Arnhem, before the riders ventured further north to the outskirts of Amsterdam.

The fifth day, took the team on the reverse of one of the most popular routes for cyclists down the north coast from Haarlem to Hook of Holland, the other direction is favoured more due to the following wind.

The 53 miles were quickly cycled before a 6½-hour ferry crossing to Harwich.

On arrival in Harwich, the unit's commanding officer, Cdr David Baines, greeted the team before joining them on a further 28 miles to Colchester Garrison.

The final day took the team back into London.

The team consisted of CPO Matthew Pritchard, Lt Simon Hearnden, CPO Ryan Aspin, PO Austin Gray, PO Derek Nicholls, Mr Chris Allsworth and alongside Cdr David Baines. LH Sarah Buchanan and LH Luke Willis expertly supported the team throughout the week.

For the third year in a row the main charity was the RMRMC, with fundraising split 50/50 with the MS Society which is the unit charity for the year.

Record crown for dinghy duo

AN intrepid pair of charity fundraisers from the Royal Navy and Ministry of Defence have been crowned Guinness World Record breakers for the Longest Distance Sailed in a Double Handed Dinghy.

Leading Seaman Phil Slade and MOD employee Mark Belamarich sailed 572.73 kilometres (309.25nm) from Plymouth's Royal Navy and Royal Marines Sail Training Centre Camber on Plymouth Sound to Whale Island in Portsmouth.

The challenge, which took more than three days to complete (71hrs and 45mins), took place in June in aid of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity. To date the pair have raised nearly £2,500 – just shy of their £3,000 target.

"It's a relief to have the record finally confirmed," said Phil, who works with 30 Commando Information Group at Stonehouse, Plymouth, managing the sailing centre.

"It has been agony waiting; always asking did we or didn't we break the record. We couldn't be happier with the news. It has made all the pain worthwhile."

Guinness World Records verified the details officially with the following wording: "The world record for the longest distance sailed in a double-handed dinghy is 572.73 km (355.88 mi; 309.25 nautical



● Phil and Mark in their Bosun-class dinghy Picture: LPhot Joel Rouse

miles) which was achieved by Phil Slade and Mark Belamarich (both UK) who sailed from Plymouth to Portsmouth via France, between 14-17 June 2016."

They were finally able to celebrate alongside friends and colleagues at the RNRMC Camber Sailing Centre, Plymouth where the pair were presented with their certificate and congratulated by Maj Steve O'Sullivan, who said: "It gives me great pleasure to present this Guinness World Records certificate to Mark and Phil to confirm their great achievement. We are very proud of them."

"This was completed in the great tradition of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

"They overcame adversity, doubts of others and all that the sea and wind could throw at them to prove nothing is impossible if you are determined and skilled enough and forge a great partnership."

The pair, who were tracked by a satellite tracking device and a Guinness World Records support team, beat the current record of 555.6 km (300 nm/approx. 345 miles) – the equivalent of crossing the Channel twice – in a basic, unmodified 14-foot Bosun-class dinghy.

FUNDRAISER OF THE MONTH

HMS Defender



DON'T worry, the sweat, the pain, the aches, the tears were all worth it.

Lt Cdr Jason Eacock, HMS Defender's second-in-command, and ET(WE) Rhys Davies sweat in the Middle East sun during a 'row the Suez' challenge – just one of a string of fun/sporting events during the destroyer's nine-month deployment to the region.

The demanding stint in the Gulf – mostly assigned to a US carrier strike group – allowed the 230 sailors and Royal Marines to let their hair down on occasions, with 'whole ship' activities organised to keep up morale and help the RNRMC.

Now back from both deployment and subsequent leave, crew have had the chance to tally their efforts (£7,500 or well over £30 apiece) and hand it over to the charity.

Some of the events tapped into fund-raising activities back in the UK, like the Road to Twickenham. Others were Defender-only affairs from the flight deck summer fête to a charity auction (AB(Sea) John Burns paid for the privilege of trading places with CO Cdr Steve Higham for a day) while the senior rates' mess and wardroom gave up all their leftover dib-dobs from the various foreign ports visited while away.

"The ship's company took immense pride in raising this money for such a worthwhile cause," said Lt Cdr Sean Trevelyan, Defender's Senior Naval Officer.

"It is of course the charity that so many of our sailors and marines can relate to. They did have fun along the way and, dare I say it, got a little fitter too!"

After two deployments to the Gulf, Defender has now begun an extensive refit/upgrade package in Portsmouth Naval Base.

From Land's End to, er, Lossiemouth...

FOUR members of 849 NAS decided to mix a major UK Maritime exercise with a momentous charity cycle ride that covered most of the country.

The group of four set off on their adventurous journey from Royal Naval Air Station in Cornwall to RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland after deciding not to hop on the coach provided.

Instead they jumped on their cycles and covered the distance from Land's Ends to John O'Groats, which was estimated to be over 1,000 miles.

The team was made up of Lt Cdr James Taylor, CPO Shawn Gimbert, PO Ricky Collins and LAET Alexander Griffiths.

The quartet took 14 days to make the journey. They slept in tents and were supported throughout by LAET Matt Galliver and AET Luke Britzman, who kept up their spirits and logistical demands.

So far they have raised almost £2,500 for their three chosen charities RNRMC, the Royal Marsden Cancer Charity and Motor Neurone Disease Association.

Get the rum in...

THE Rum Club has been asked by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity to represent them in selling a rare rum.

Caroni 1997 was gifted to the charity by the Worshipful Company of Distillers (WCD) for the purpose of raising funds for the charity.

This rum is from the famous, but now closed, Caroni Distillery in Trinidad. The distillery was established in 1923 on the site of the old Caroni Sugar factory. In 2001 the Trinidad government sold a 49 per cent holding in Rum Distillers Limited (Caroni's Rum division) to Angostura. Caroni shut in 2002.

It was noted for its single cask heavy rum which it manufactured for the Royal Navy.

The Rum Club is owned and run by two ex-Naval Officers.

This particular batch was bottled and labelled to mark the 350th anniversary of the Royal Marines in 2014.

This is the last chance to purchase this limited edition rare rum via The Rum Club website www.the-rum-club.com, with all proceeds going directly to the RNRMC.

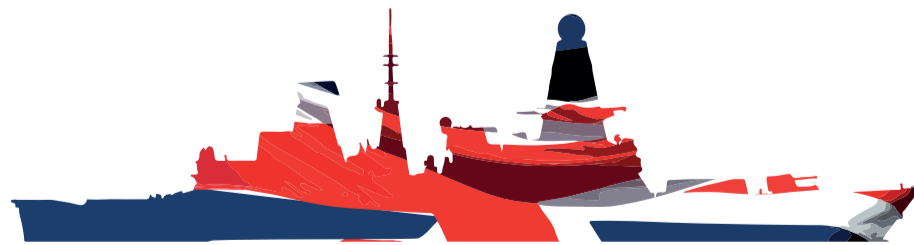
Giles Collighan, director of The Rum Club, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for us to help a charity which we have fervently supported over many years."



Military & nautical artist, designer & photographer



IN SUPPORT OF



£3 from all Royal Navy themed prints is donated to RNRMC

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Scimitar in Smir Nick's great marathon journey

THE Red Cross coffers in Gibraltar are more than £10k healthier thanks to an international yacht race supported by HMS Scimitar.

The patrol boat broke free from the bonds of The Rock and escorted the 48 participants of the 2016 Ocean Village/Boatshed Gibraltar Morocco Yacht Rally to the port of Smir – 28 nautical miles away in North Africa.

Scimitar acted as the 'safety boat', on stand-by for search and rescue duties – thankfully not needed during the six-hour race, which has taken place since 2000 and this year drew record numbers.

Scimitar was the first Royal Navy warship to visit Smir and was welcomed alongside by the Naval Regional Commander.

With the race passing off without a hitch, the ship's company were given a few hours ashore to see the souks and souvenirs available in Tétouan.

"This was my first foreign 'deployment' in Scimitar and it was great to be part of an event that raised a significant amount for charity," said her CO Lt James Bradshaw.

"My ship's company enjoyed the welcome change of pace from providing security to Gibraltar."



NICK Bates celebrates running the Cape Town Marathon – and raising money for Cancer Research UK.

Lt Cdr Bates, 41, a 'pinger' by trade, also completed the Great North Run, raising a further £500 to add to the £1,500 raised from finishing the London Marathon in 2015 for IFAW.

"It means I've run marathons in Europe and Africa with my goal to run a marathon in every continent before I turn 50," he said.

"South America (Rio Marathon) or Asia (Beijing or Great Wall Marathon) are my most likely continents to defeat in 2017.

"I do give to certain charities monthly but I also like to choose a new charity every year that any money I can raise from 'hands-on' events (such as runs, etc) goes to.

"I chose South Africa purely because I'd never been there but was always a place I'd wanted to visit and meant I ticked off a lifetime goal of diving with Great White Sharks, whilst also allowing safari and post-marathon relaxation in the wine-making region around Stellenbosch."



Ostrich tales aid school

YOUNG author Mischa Carson shows off her book which she and her father wrote to raise money for a school in Uganda.

Mischa, eight, and her father John, who works with the Royal Navy Police, published the book *Noisy Ostrich and Quiet Ostrich Adventures* to help St Michael's School.

"Originally the book was a bit of fun, we just wanted to bring the two wacky characters to life and produce a book," said John. "The book is all self-financed and self-published through Amazon."

The book follows the adventures of two ostriches travelling on their red London bus.

The family have donated a copy of the book, which is aimed at children aged two to seven, plus a video of Mischa reading it to the school in Uganda.

It's available in paperback and Kindle formats from Amazon.

It's Mr Lucky

IS CPO(MW) Jonathan Aylett the luckiest man in the RN?

Probably not – ability played a good part as well. But he'll never forget October 10 2016.

The 44-year-old senior rating, on the staff of Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla, found himself on the signal that day listing those selected to go to Dartmouth to begin training as an officer (in his case logistics, rather than mine warfare).

After that news, he checked the results of the RN Sports Lottery which he's been playing since he joined the RN in 1998 with just one minor £800 win. On October 10 2016, make that two wins, this time the top prize of £5k.

"Today's a good day – a double whammy," the chuffed senior rate said.

He intends to spend his winnings on a family holiday to Ghana with his wife Antoinette, daughter Scarlett and son Nathan to celebrate his father-in-law's 70th birthday.



Picture: Gemma Butterworth

ROYAL Navy personnel put their backs into it for the annual Edgar Evans tug-of-war challenge on Brambles Bank.

Royal Navy Reservist Penny Mordaunt, MP for Portsmouth North, was among the team who took on sides from Laughton & Co Explorers, SJP Solent Business and a Portsmouth Fieldgun and wives team, all aiming to raise funds for the Buckland Park Play Centre Association.

Brambles Bank, between the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth, is only accessible a few times each year.

The Edgar Evans Club was the brain child of Leading Diver Eamon 'Ginge' Fullen RNR and former LPT Rob De Silva.

The club was formed under the premise of taking on challenging and adventurous activities and events with

an aim of raising money for its chosen charity.

The club formation has been inspired by PO Edgar Evans, who served at HMS Excellent both as a gunner and also trainer of the Portsmouth Command gun team at the Royal Tournament at Earls Court in 1907.

Edgar was chosen by Robert Falcon Scott to join the Terra Nova expedition of 1912 to the Antarctic whose aim was to reach the South Pole.

Ginge was fortunate enough to have served on HMS Endurance during a Patrol of Antarctica.

Edgar perished on the return journey having been beaten to the prize by Roald Amundsen. Edgar left a wife and three children in Buckland, Portsmouth.

Rob is a trustee of the Buckland Park

Play Centre Association, located in the same street where the Evans family lived, and the current chosen charity of the Edgar Evans Club.

The club holds its AGM at the Warrant Officers, Senior Rates and Senior NCO Mess at HMS Excellent, the building is named after Edgar, the first Royal Navy building not to be named after an Admiral or Victoria Cross holder.

A formal dinner and auction was held in the Senior Rates mess of HMS Victory the same evening which raised further funds for the Club charity.

The tug-of-war team comprised: Lt Cdr Al Nekreus, Penny Mordaunt, PO Graham Butterworth, LD Ginge Fullen, Gemma Moore and Flt Lt James Tong of the RAF. Rob DeSilva and WO Dickie Henderson officiated.

Engineers of future rewarded

NEWLY qualified and future Ministry of Defence engineers were rewarded at an awards ceremony in Plymouth Naval Base.

The Defence Equipment and Support (DES) organisation's Advanced Engineering Apprentice Deeds and Awards Ceremony took place at HM Naval Base Devonport.

This awards the new intake of apprentices to Devonport with their Deeds of Apprenticeship and celebrates the graduation of the completing apprentices.

Lorna Stubbs, Apprentice Development Manager (Devonport), said: "I am extremely proud of what we can offer here in Devonport.

"The Deeds and Awards ceremony will hopefully instil a sense of achievement and belonging to an apprenticeship they should be justly proud of."

This year sees the highest number of new joiners in Devonport since the scheme started in 2009, with a total of 17 bringing the total number of DE&S Apprentices based in HMNB Devonport to a record number of 41.

Ben Ham, apprentice with Defence Quality Assurance Field Force (South Plymouth), said: "The apprenticeship over the past three years has grown and now with this year's deeds and awards has firmly cemented it as a highly regarded and integral part of HMNB Devonport.

"I hope with my achievements I have inspired all the current phases and the new joiners to do their best.

"I'm thankful for the MOD DE&S for the opportunity given to me for a new career."

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Reserves at centre of games

ROYAL Navy Reserves unit HMS Calliope was at the centre of the action for the Great North City Games.

Staged the day before the Great North Run, the games attracted crowds of more than 25,000.

World-class athletes from around the globe competed on the banks of the Tyne.

The highlights included Britain's Greg Rutherford winning the long jump in his first competition since winning Olympic bronze in Rio.

Briton Laura Muir won the one-mile event nine days after sealing the Diamond League title in Zurich.

Kenya's Olympic 800m champion David Rudisha held off Ireland's Mark English for victory in the 500m, while James Dasalu won the 100m in a photo finish with fellow Briton Chijindu Ujah.

Desiree Henry set a new British record of 16.57 seconds in winning the women's 150m, as Jake Wightman won the men's one-mile race in four minutes 5.70 seconds.

Mo Farah wowed the crowds on both days – first of all he was introduced to the crowd and on day two he won the Great North Run for a record third consecutive year.

HMS Calliope is the principal Royal Naval Reserve training unit for the North East of England, and home base for some 100 Naval reservists.

Torpoint's tribute to jewel in crown

AIRCRAFT handler PO Stacey Cameron briefly dips the Royal Navy's standard as sailors with just weeks of experience and veterans of 35 years' service marched through the heart of Torpoint.

Crowds lined the streets of Torpoint to watch their Servicemen and women celebrate the freedom of the small Cornwall town.

Around 350 personnel from HMS Raleigh – associated with the town for 76 years – took part in the parade, forming up at the ferry lines by the Tamar where they were inspected by mayor Cllr John Crago.

"It's a very proud day, not only for me, but for the whole community of Torpoint," he told the massed ranks of ten platoons.

"We are extremely grateful to have HMS Raleigh on our doorstep. We consider HMS Raleigh really to be the jewel in the crown."

He then took the salute outside the Torpoint Comrades Club in Antony Road, alongside Raleigh's CO Capt Ellie Ablett, as the RM Band Plymouth led the sailors through the streets.

Capt Ablett, who's recently



taken charge of Raleigh, said there was an inseparable bond between Torpoint and her establishment.

"It's vital for HMS Raleigh to have a link with the town. There is a large number of civilian staff that work in the establishment and we benefit from their

experience and longevity, but it's also the community projects that we are involved in and the support we get from the town for the work that we are doing.

"Over 20,000 of those currently serving in the Navy started their careers here and that's not just ratings, but also

a third of our officer cadre who began their life as ratings."

Despite being located in Torpoint since the beginning of 1940, it was 1997 before Torpointers bestowed their highest honour on the base; sailors last exercised their freedom back in 2013.

Rescues result in final award

ONE of the final acts of bravery by the Fleet Air Arm's full-time rescuers earned them one last life-saving award.

The crew of Sea King Rescue 193 fought extremely challenging conditions to lift one Irish and one French fisherman to safety in a double-rescue off the Cornwall coast last November – barely a month before such missions were handed over to civilian fliers.

The red/grey helicopter from 771 NAS at Culdrose was scrambled to pick up a crewman aboard the Irish fishing vessel Patrick after he crushed his arm in a hydraulic winch.

When the aircraft reached the craft, the weather had worsened considerably and the crew of Lt Cdr Steven Hopkins (pilot and aircraft commander) Lt Philip Ross (second pilot), Lt Jason Sawyer (observer) – made several attempts in the darkness before successfully lowering winchman CPO(ACMN) Mark Shaw on to the Patrick to pick up the wounded man.

They then set off for their second rescue of the night more than 50 miles away, again an injured fisherman (a wounded hand), on the French vessel Le Nautile.

After establishing communications with Le Nautile's skipper, CPO Shaw was dropped on to the deck and the second casualty was rescued. Both fishermen were flown to Royal Cornwall Hospital in Truro.

Presenting the Edward and Maisie Lewis Award to the crew, Shipwrecked Mariners' Society chairman Cdre Malcolm Williams said both rescues had been carried out "with great skill and cool professionalism by a highly efficient team in testing conditions."



Also honoured were the crew of HMS Clyde, who collected the Lady Swaythling Trophy for the most outstanding feat of seamanship over the past 12 months – in their case helping 200 passengers from a fire-ravaged cruise liner.

The travellers took to lifeboats in Falkland Sound when fire broke out aboard Le Boreal in tricky conditions last November.

Clyde provided food, water and assistance to the stricken passengers and shepherded their lifeboats to more sheltered waters where the patrol ship's boats transferred people to another liner.

Home for D-Day craft

THE last remaining vessel to disgorge armour on to the Normandy beaches will be given a permanent home in Portsmouth.

Landing Craft Tank 7074 – one of 800 similar vessels charged with ferrying tanks across the Channel and directly on to foreign sand – will take pride of place in the city's D-Day Museum as part of a multi-million revamp of the memorial/attraction for the invasion's 75th anniversary.

Some 8,000 vessels from battleships to tiny lighters took part in Operation Neptune, the Naval element of the Normandy invasion, but fewer than 20 remain.

"Not only will it strengthen the D-Day Museum's collection but it will be a powerful reminder of the important role this humble, but vital workhorse played in the success of D-Days," said Prof Dominic Tweddle, Director General of the National Museum of the RN.

Attractive move

NORTHERN Ireland's Royal Naval Reserves have every reason to be riding on the crest of a wave.

HMS Hibernia at Thiepval Barracks in Lisburn has won a top UK prize for recruiting and retention after a busy outreach year.

Their former Commanding Officer Cdre Martin Quinn returned to hand over the Philip Dark Trophy to current Commanding Officer Cdr Neil Downing and former Commanding Officer Cdr Ian Allen.

Robin Hood at Sultan

IT'S pantomime season. Oh no it isn't. Oh yes it is. Well at HMS Sultan anyway. This year's festive fare from the Gosport establishment's theatre group is Robin Hood (plus his Merry Men – hoorah! – and the cohorts of the evil Sheriff of Nottingham – boo!).

The team are laying on half a dozen performances from November 25-29 at 7.30pm (except Sunday) with matinees on Saturday and Sunday at 2.30pm. Tickets (£6 for adults, £5 for pensioners/children) can be booked at www.sultantheatre.org.uk.



ETs Point home

POSING next to the funnel of MV Anvil Point are three very junior – and one very experienced – naval engineers sampling life in the Merchant Navy on an inaugural three-week exchange.

The RN runs a Merchant Navy Liaison Voyage scheme to give an insight into life under the Red Duster, but until now it's been aimed solely at the warfare branch.

CPO Dave Oakley from Devonport's Engineering Training Squadron took advantage of the changes and, after 12 weeks' getting to grips with engineering challenges aboard assault HMS Bulwark, took the trio aboard the military ferry in Gibraltar.

The vessel is used to ship bulky material to operational theatres as well as training areas overseas, shifting nearly 200 armoured vehicles, trucks and Land Rovers at a time.

The ro-ro – one of four under contract to the MOD – comes in at 23,000 tonnes fully laden (heavier than HMS Ocean, but 30ft shorter), yet is crewed by no more than 22 souls, half the complement of a Royal Navy minehunter.

The RN engineers were immediately able to put their skills to work in removing fuel injectors on the two main diesel engines.

Over four days alongside, the young engineers quickly became a part of Anvil Point's engineering department, dealing with mechanical, electrical, auxiliary maintenance and servicing issues.

And they stayed aboard when the ship sailed for the UK; they were given an insight into the pre-sailing checks, different routines and procedures in the merchant fleet as they shadowed the duty engineer on his daily checks.

"The experience has been one of the highlights of my time in the Royal Navy. The engineering team onboard made us feel part of their small team," said ET (ME) Sam Faulkner.

"I really enjoyed the hands-on work and being able to see how the Merchant Navy engineers work and operate."

Back in the UK, Sam and his colleagues Alex Wells and Ash Clark have been assigned to engineering roles across the Devonport Flotilla.



● Warrant Officer of the Naval Service WO1 Steve Cass flanked by WO1 Glen Haughton, the Army Sergeant Major (left), and WO1 Clive Martland, who was Chief of the Air Staff's Warrant Officer at the time

WO is me. And me. And me too...

THE most senior sailors, soldiers and airmen outside the officer corps gathered to compare notes on board HMS Victory at an event hosted by the Warrant Officer of the Royal Navy, WO1 Steve Cass.

The Army Sergeant Major, WO1 Glen Haughton, and Chief of the Air Staff's Warrant Officer, WO1 Clive Martland, attended a formal dinner in the WOs and SR Mess on Nelson's flagship, each bringing six senior WO colleagues.

WO1 Cass was accompanied by seven colleagues, and the Royal Marines Corps' Regimental Sergeant Major also attended with six senior other ranks.

The event was designed to build and strengthen bonds and cohesion amongst the tri-Service WO community.

It was also attended by former Army officer Florence Everett and Lee Mooney, of Military Mutual Insurance.

Mr Mooney was especially thrilled to receive the ship's tour and sit at the top table for the dinner as a family ancestor was a powder monkey during the Battle of Trafalgar.

The Royal Naval Association kindly donated Pusser's rum for the toast to the immortal memory of Lord Nelson.

During the gathering the uniqueness and similarities between the three Services was discussed, as were the challenges they face.

Reference was made to HMS Ocean, which had just deployed with RAF, Royal Marines and Army personnel onboard, and the strength in cohesion that joint exercises, operations, training and social occasions help bring.

With a combined military experience of more than 900 years between them, the attendees had plenty to talk about and feedback was positive.

It is hoped to make this a regular event, with each Service taking the lead to host and organise in turn.



Mayoll's triumph in female awards

HMS Queen Elizabeth steward Janine Mayoll was singled out for special recognition at the inaugural Women in Defence awards in the capital.

The junior rating, who works in the carrier's wardroom, performed her duties "in a manner far above that expected of her during a period of almost unparalleled personal adversity", in the words of her citation; she battled cancer and suffered a string of family tragedies, losing both parents and her husband.

Beyond regular stewarding duties, her work has meant a lot of support for the flood of VIP visits to the carrier as she nears completion in Rosyth.

More than 200 women connected with the Armed Forces were put forward in five categories, with AB Mayoll named a winner in the 'special awards' category.

The 32-year-old, originally from Nuneaton, said she felt "truly humbled and proud" to be recognised.

She continued: "It was absolutely brilliant to be part of this event. My award was for overcoming personal challenges and it has given me huge confidence to see that my service is valued by the Royal Navy and I can still have a successful career

in the Service.

"It was just really inspiring to hear all of the stories from those receiving awards; I literally haven't stopped smiling."

Janine joined the RN in 2009, was named Steward of the Year in training, and served with HMS Daring on her trials deployment to the USA.

She has represented her Navy and nation at the RBL's Festival of Remembrance in the Royal Albert Hall, lined the upper deck of Daring as she sailed past the Statue of Liberty, and is convinced sailing into Portsmouth for the first time with her new ship next year will be one of the highlights of her Naval Service. She'll also be one of the faces of Wrens 100, next year's centenary of women serving in the Navy.

Janine says the career she signed up for seven years ago had turned out far better than she imagined.

"There are no limits other than an individual's determination to succeed – I joined the Navy hoping to travel and was looking forward to a career that would challenge me.

"I'm proud of the job that I do and all that I have achieved in my seven years' service so far – I look forward to many more ahead of me."



Warfare is on the table

THE inaugural AWW Branch Symposium took place at the birthplace of Naval gunnery, HMS Excellent.

The event was opened by Cdre Philip Warwick (ACOS Warfare) to an audience of over 90 LHs, POs, CPOs and WO1s.

All key AWW subjects were discussed, together with a brief by Hilary Jukes from the RNRMC, which sponsored the event.

In addition, Roger Martin from DSTL gave a comprehensive brief on on-going naval gunnery trials, with QinetiQ providing a demo of a current Force Protection Training Tool (Pointer) during the afternoon stand easy.

A key point of discussion was the new AWW pipeline training, which starts this month, delivering able rates into the AWW cadre from Phase 2 training, giving the branch dedicated AWW ABs for the first time in a generation. This is the initial

entry to achieve a full consolidated training package from AB-CPO (AWW). LS (AWW) and PO (AWW) training has fully migrated from Temporary Employment Modules (TEMs) to full career training. This major shift in strategy combines core branch training with a full complement of Type-specific weapon systems training, resulting in fully qualified LS and POs platform-ready on completion of training.

The Warfare Branch Manager and AWW Career Managers delivered in-depth briefings on branch make up and career management, including advice on SJARs.

"Overall a great day for the AWW Cadre, laying down a baseline for future briefings and reinvigorating the high standards of AWW that we should all be striving to achieve," said organiser WO1 Nige Smith (NCHQ SHIPS WOPNS).

From sport to people support

LONG the spiritual – and actual – home of Royal Navy sport, HMS Temeraire has reinvented itself as the centre for 'people support'.

The Portsmouth-based unit remains the home of physical training and the focal point for all sporting activities.

But it's now the Naval Service's Centre of Health and Wellbeing, the home of Naval Service 'People Support'.

The Temeraire team believe People Support is a much more 'user-friendly' title than the clunky Personal, Family, Community Support & Physical Development.

The relaunch also saw the renaming of the Family Services Specialisation – a significant part of the People Support organisation – as 'RN Welfare'.

To celebrate the transformation, the establishment held its first ceremonial divisions since 1988, when Temeraire was dedicated.

Guests of honour were Rear Admirals Simon Williams and Chris Gardner, plus representatives from the RNRMC, Greenwich Hospital, Naval Families Federation and the Naval Service Sports Charity. Also present were 140 members of the People Support team.

Over the past two years Temeraire has evolved and grown to become the home for all of this diverse range of 'people support'.

With an indisputable link between health, wellbeing, sport, fitness and the retention of sailors, increased cohesiveness in delivering that support has never been more important.

ICE ICE, Navy

MORE than 26,000 Service personnel and their families have downloaded an emergency app for their phones in the first year it's been available.

The ICE (In Case of Emergency) app was designed by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre and is available for free from the Defence Gateway on Apple and Android devices.

It directs the user to the most appropriate organisation when faced with a family emergency.

Where to look

- DIN
- 2016DIN09-023 - Revised Regulations for the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal
- 2016DIN01-149 - Alternative to Personal Cheque Encashment for Service Personnel deployed overseas
- 2016DIN07-127 - Information Management Courses for Sep 16 – Jul 17 at the Defence Academy of the UK – Shrivenham

- RNTM
- RNTM 311/16 - Casualty Notification Officer (CNO) Training
- RNTM 312/16 - Funeral Officer (FO) Training
- RNTM 303/16 - Advanced Apprenticeship (AA) Scheme - Pathfinder Trial
- RNTM 298/16 - The Annual Manpower Change Programme (AMCP) - Delivering Strategic Manpower Change
- RNTM 294/16 - Royal Navy Submarine Service Calendar of Events – 2016/17
- RNTM 286/16 - Change To Reporting of Strength Test Element of Royal Navy Fitness Test
- RNTM 283/16 - RNFT Following Maternity

TO KICK off, a huge 'thank you' to everyone who took part in our Childcare survey.

We're extremely grateful for the valuable feedback we received and we were delighted to hear from a broad section of Service personnel, spouses and dual serving couples.

To read our full report – which we presented to the Ministry of Defence and Chain of Command – go to our website at www.nff.org.uk and click on 'survey publications'.

Our Director Anna Wright represented Naval families' views at the Armed Forces Pay Review Body in October; many thanks to those who took the time to share their thoughts on pay and charges with us.

We covered a range of feedback, including: your reaction to recent pay awards, the Future of Accommodation model; operational temp; spousal/partner employment; CAAS; SLA and SFA; allowances (for example LSA) and remuneration for particular categories of service.

The information and feedback you gave us was extremely valuable, and will

Naval Families FEDERATION

also help us to represent you more effectively in our future engagements.

On a different note, we are delighted to learn that the government has announced that it will extend its Forces Help to Buy scheme to 2018, to help many more to get on the housing ladder. So far 10,000 people have been assisted by the scheme.

It has been great to see so many companies awarded Gold by the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS). The latest awards ceremony took place last month at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, with the Duke of Edinburgh presenting awards to employers who have gone above and beyond to support the Armed Forces community and their families. We were delighted to see

organisations which we have worked with and championed over the years, such as Recruit for Spouses and Hampshire, Doncaster and Dundee Councils, recognised for their support and commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.

Finally, we are pleased to welcome our new Transition Liaison team member, Lucy Heaver. Lucy joined us last month and will be undertaking research into the area of 'transition', to better understand issues facing families transitioning out of the Naval Service and identify the support available to them.

That concludes this month's round-up. Continue to provide us with your feedback and questions either via email admin@nff.org.uk, social media or call on 023 9265 4374.

Navy HQ fights off the flab

HUNDREDS of people. Dozens of stalls. One long queue (at the food tasting table).

And a simple message – small changes can make a big difference.

The second Navy Command Headquarters health fair was opened by Naval Secretary Rear Admiral Simon Williams and Command Secretary Deana Rouse, indicating the importance of the event to both the military and civilian workforce.

Both made it clear that the health of staff is important, and that it is easy for an individual to

make a significant difference.

"If you want to do a 100-mile cycle ride, that's fine, but if you can just do a little bit more, that marginal difference will lead to an improvement in your lives," said Admiral Williams.

Deana added that the fair encompassed mental health as well as physical health, which was reflected in the range of stalls, sessions and talks.

They included inspirational health and wellbeing stories, Pilates and zumba taster sessions, a talk on caring, and stalls devoted to sexual health, and the

effects of alcohol and drugs.

There was also the odd freebie, edible or otherwise – pedometers were handed out, along with a competition for the most steps taken at the fair.

The event was organised by Jytte Oates, assistant civilian workforce advisor, Gill Windsor, HR business partner for Navy Command, and a small team of NCHQ staff.

For more information on health, fitness, sports and AT see the Navyfit site at royalnavy.mod.uk/navyfit, using your Defence Gateway login.

High and Dolomitey

PAUSING briefly for a selfie on the top of a rocky peak in the Dolomites is LPT James 'Arnie' Arnold – believed to be the first junior NCO in RN history to lead a major British Army overseas expedition.

Alongside Royal Marine Sgt Ash Sleight, the clubz led a level-three AT exercise in Italy for eight members of 16 Military Intelligence Company who wanted to character-build, test their leadership qualities and experience some stunning Italian scenery.

The result was Exercise Northern Ferrata, which reached its peak (sorry) with an ascent of Cima di Mezzo.

Here, 3,154 metres above sea level, Italian and Austro-Hungarian troops fought for supremacy 100 years ago – and left behind *via ferratas* (or *Klettersteige* in the German-speaking climbing community); the Cima di Mezzo is about as high as you can get by Klettersteig mountaineering.

Whilst the 21st-Century climbers were thankfully spared the horrors of Alpine warfare, they did get a taste for the challenging conditions the troops faced, even at the height of summer.

"The weather in the Dolomites is extremely changeable and unpredictable – clear skies and high temperatures in the mornings often turn to thunderstorms in the afternoons," explained Arnie.

"It gets hot (around 30°C) and dehydration was a major risk. At least two litres of water were carried per person each day on to the mountain, with another litre in reserve."

The exertions were worth it, however.

Arnie added: "The historical importance of the Dolomites in World War 1 also gave participants the opportunity to examine artefacts and fortifications in a unique setting – an environment with scenery unparalleled in the world."



WELFARE

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REWARDING JOB VACANCIES IN RECRUITING

Apply to become a Careers Adviser

Flag Officer Sea Training is currently seeking RN and RM WO's, Senior Rates and SNCO Service Leavers and former Service (those that left Service under 2 years), to work in Armed Forces Careers Officers around the UK, as listed on the map.

Employment is on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) (NCS) Limited Commitment.

Salary starts from £29k with promotion opportunities to rise to £41k.

FTRS rates of pay apply (Reviewed annually and pensionable).

For more information contact:
PSTN- 01929 403172 Mil 94374 3172

E-mail-
navycnr-rnsrtrainingassist@mod.uk





● Kate Jamieson with Nick Hewitt aboard HMS Victory

Victory flag to fly at top of Mt Kilimanjaro

A SELF-CONFESSED 'Nelson Nut' has been handed a modern HMS Victory flag by The National Museum of the Royal Navy to wave when she reaches the top of Mount Kilimanjaro.

Kate Jamieson, 26, who appeared on *Mastermind* in 2013 on the subject of Lord Nelson, visited Portsmouth Historic Dockyard to be given the flag on board Victory.

"I was told to take something personal with me to the summit. A lot of people take football flags, shirts but I think given my background and love of naval history, and where Victory is where it all began, this is probably one of the few objects that would sum me up as a person!"

Kate visited Victory when she was a child, picking up a museum book on Nelson. She said she found him fascinating.

She added: "For one man, he managed to leave a huge mark in history and he led a very interesting life."

The NMRN's Head of Heritage Development, Nick Hewitt, said: "We love to inspire people, like Kate, and for them to take something special away from visiting any of the museum's attractions."

"It's fantastic she has chosen to take on this climb for charity and we wish her all the best."

Kate was climbing Mt Kilimanjaro's summit as *Navy News* went to press. The climb is expected to last around six days from start to finish. She is doing it for charity, in memory of a relative who passed away recently.

She has been doing ten-mile walks and intensive gym sessions to get in shape for the big climb.

Kate wants to raise more than £500 for a charity called the Guillain-Barré & Associated Inflammatory Neuropathies (GAIN), which supports those affected by Guillain-Barré Syndrome and other associated inflammatory neuropathies.

For more information on the charity, visit: <http://www.gaincharity.org.uk/> To find out more about Kate's climb, visit her blog: <http://www.adventuresofkate.co.uk/>



Pembroke people party

SAILORS from Victory Squadron, HMS Collingwood, joined residents at the RNBT's Pembroke House for their annual garden party.

The trainees helped residents, served the food and drinks and took part in Ceremonial Sunset.

The event was attended by representatives from the Ganges Association, who presented the home with a cheque for £1,000.

The RNBT also benefitted from a 24-hour pool-a-thon at the Royal pub in Portsmouth.

Chef Jon Crichton, the landlord and regulars – including the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Portsmouth – raised nearly £400 for the trust.

Jon and the team completed 276 games and managed to forego sleep for 24 hours.



YOUNGSTERS suffering from poor eyesight in Nicaragua show their thanks to the sailors of aviation training ship/floating medical facility RFA Argus.

Some 40 crew from the Falmouth-based ship dipped into their pockets to pull names out of a hat during a Euro 2016 sweepstake, with the proceeds going to Global Brigades Nicaragua to buy reading glasses for children in rural communities with eyesight problems.

Grand cycle trek Cadets' history lesson

INTREPID cyclists from the Royal Navy Welfare team completed a 1,000-mile cycle ride in aid of charity.

The riders left Arbroath in Scotland and averaged 100 miles a day and stopped overnight at military bases en-route during the ten-day journey.

WO2 Neil Adler, who headed the team for the final leg from HMS Drake in Plymouth, said: "The team has been fantastic and I'm full of praise for them to have persevered for so long."

"We have received good support throughout the country. It's really heart-warming. The hardest part was the beginning with two days of hard climbing totalling more than 230 miles between Helensburgh to Carlisle

and then Carlisle to Liverpool. Luckily for us the weather was fantastic. The hardest weather to deal with is a head wind."

He added: "Part of the reason for this challenge is to highlight our work which is to support Royal Marines and their families, especially when they are deployed."

"Troops operate most effectively on operations away from home when they are fully concentrating on their jobs, secure in the knowledge their families are being looked after."

The riders are WO2 Darren Taylor, CPO Neil Ingram, PO Jenny Wheldon and Keith Warham. They are raising funds for the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's fund.

OFFICER Cadets under training at Britannia Royal Naval College stepped aboard the Royal Navy's oldest commissioned warship – HMS Victory.

The group of 30 Cadets are currently undertaking their three-week initial sea acquaint on board the Portsmouth-based Type 23 frigate HMS Richmond.

They took the opportunity to visit one of the few surviving ships from the Georgian Navy located within Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

OC Arran Deakin said: "It was amazing to see how sailors before us used to live and work. After previously spending time on an Astute-class submarine the changes in technology in 250 years are incredible."

"It really makes you realise how technology has developed and that it is really exciting to be part of a Navy with a vast array of modern assets."

"It is easy to take for granted how comfortable life can be nowadays, even on a submarine. On board HMS Victory life was very difficult. They lived in very confined spaces in appalling conditions."

OC James Pottage said: "The visit was very engaging and consolidated the theory behind the lectures we receive at BRNC. I particularly enjoyed learning the origins and history behind the everyday phrases that we still use today on board which are commonly known as Jack Speak."

James the first – but not the last



HISTORY was made when the Royal Navy hosted a Merchant Navy officer from Chevron Shipping.

Third Officer James Shepherd sailed as part of the crew of HMS Richmond.

Chevron Shipping are keen supporters of the Royal Navy's Merchant Navy Liaison Voyage scheme, with many young Royal Navy officers gaining first-hand insights into merchant shipping on voyages with them since the beginning of 2015.

On this occasion the Royal Navy arranged for James to join HMS Richmond during her Flag Officer Sea Training week of Operational Sea Training.

"I was aware that Chevron had hosted young officers from the Royal Navy aboard to assist in completing their studies," said James.

"As such I was very pleased to be invited as the first officer from Chevron Shipping to be their guest aboard HMS Richmond to see for myself the

operations and systems aboard a warship. Of particular interest, during the final part of the week HMS Richmond undertook a replenishment at sea, in this case taking on diesel fuel.

"The Navy has a very different procedure for undertaking this operation by comparison with our ship-to-ship operations."

"Whilst the interaction forces between the two vessels remained, they were countered with the smaller vessel increasing speed to around 18 knots to punch through the pressure zones which is not something I had previously experienced."

"I thoroughly enjoyed my week aboard and received an outstanding welcome."

"It was a real learning experience and whilst a lot of operations are carried out differently within the Merchant Navy, at the end of the day we are all governed by the same 38 collision regulations!"

James is now researching the requirements to join the Royal Naval Reserve.

Ruby's mini triathlon

THE daughter of a Royal Navy Warrant Officer has completed a sporting challenge in memory of her friend who died of cancer at the age of ten.

Inspired by the Olympics, Ruby Cass did a two-mile run, two-mile cycle and one-mile row to raise funds for Cancer Research UK.

Ruby's friend Jess Pawlyn died last year following a long battle against leukaemia.

"Ruby was devastated at the loss of her friend, who she met at school in Cornwall before we moved to Hampshire," said WO1 Steve Cass.

"They were extremely close and the best of friends."

Ruby hoped to raise £200 but so far has reached £465 and donations can still be made at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Alison-Cass>



● Ruby, left, with Jess and, right, Ruby on the rowing machine



Berry joins HMS Raleigh bake-off team

AFTER all the speculation following the shock switch of TV's highest-rated show from BBC1 to Channel 4, there was a surprise at HMS Raleigh's bake-off for the World's Biggest Coffee Morning...

...except that it was Natalie, not Mary, Berry leading the campaign to produce the finest victoria sponge west of the Tamar.

The LPT and fellow clubz joined trainee chefs in the kitchen to produce several cake delights... which were promptly wolfed down by their shipmates, who dipped into their pockets to the tune of £167.80 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

"We were really grateful for the generous donations and a great turn-out of people from within Raleigh. I've got personal experience of a family member and a close friend being diagnosed with cancer. Macmillan is a great charity to support," said Natalie.

A second coffee morning, organised by ESS, the contractor that provides catering services at the base, raised £117.48.

The World's Biggest Coffee Morning is Macmillan's biggest annual fundraiser to help people facing cancer. Run since 1990, it has raised more than £138m to date.

Cake-making boost for cancer fund

PERSONNEL at HMS Collingwood embraced their baking skills with a series of events in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.

The Chaplaincy kicked off the annual events with cups of coffee, homemade slices of cake and hot bacon rolls on offer in return for donations.

Pastoral worker Kathy Smith and AB Rosie Amott were tasked with manning the cake stall, collecting contributions and serving up slices of cake.

LPT Luke Steele decided to continue the fundraising efforts in the Chaplaincy the following week through another cake sale, with his late father as the motivation to support Macmillan.

For the Babcock Integrated Training Support

Centre another successful year of Macmillan fundraising was on the cards, with the team holding their annual coffee morning along with a cake raffle.

Organiser Hayley Packer said: "Macmillan is close to the hearts of many staff in the ITSC, given that one in three families are now affected by cancer in some way."

The last of the fundraising events was arranged by the Royal Navy Police within Atlantic Building, providing a themed spread of sweet and savoury items. With crime scene cake, the RNP pulled out all the stops to encourage colleagues to get involved and give into temptation.

The final total raised for Macmillan by HMS Collingwood this year is £1,035.



Naval personnel cover 120km during AT course in wilderness

Can we paddle? Yes we can

MILES of clear water, imposing mountains and blue skies – the perfect setting for a spot of adventurous training, writes Sub Lt Karl Byrne, based at HMS Sultan.

Exercise Canpaddle saw 12 students from the Army and Royal Navy travel to Trail's End Camp to the west of Calgary in Canada to improve their personal paddling skills and/or achieve intermediate or advanced qualifications.

The Joint Services course covered a wide range of activities, ranging from traditional skills such as lining, poling and sailing to more arduous paddling in grade 4 rapids.

Upon arrival and settling into the

camp we were taught the correct rescue drills and how to recover pinned boats.

This was essential training that was delivered early on to ensure that each student could act safely in the event of a capsize which proved to be invaluable during the latter stages of the course as the rapids increased in size and frequency!

The second day consisted of shake out on the lakes before we started the first of two multi-day journeys.

The Kootenay River is classed as a sustained grade 2 and grade 3 river. The high frequency of the rapids was testing and it is generally accepted that one day on the Kootenay River is the equivalent to three days paddling

in the UK.

This first journey lasted for three days, of which we were unsupported which meant we had to carry all of our tents, rations and personal kit with us.

Red Deer was the name of the second river that we travelled and provided plentiful grade 3 and grade 4 rapids.

Each paddler took it in turns leading the group and assessing which was the best route to take whilst taking into consideration the limitations of the group, safety and fatigue.

This proved to be a challenging task due to the storms in 2013 being so intense it moved the river up to 300 metres in places, which was of course not documented on our river guide!

One of the key attributes to navigating the river successfully was communication and teamwork. Without exercising good followership an unpredictable grade 4 rapid could send even the best lead paddler swimming and quickly turn into a dangerous situation.

This river was also a three-day journey through the Canadian Rockies. It was a great opportunity to get some coaching and feedback from some fantastic coaches and everybody's personal paddling greatly improved in spades.

Wildlife was plentiful with some of the group even sighting a brown bear and an eagle.

The total distance travelled over

the two-trip period was in excess of 120km and with assessments complete, the Joint Services have a new batch of 4* leaders and 5* instructors.

Exercise Canpaddle overall has been a fantastic experience and allowed me to develop my personal paddling skills on exciting rivers leading groups of 3* canoeists whilst also testing my leadership skills in unfamiliar environments.

AT events are open to all Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel. More information on paddle sports within the Royal Navy can be found in the Navy Fit Portal on the Defence Gateway at www.atga.mod.uk

Pictures: Jason Law

Coins help vets

JUBILEE Mint has launched a number of new limited edition Remembrance Day coins to support the work of the UK's oldest Armed Forces charity, SSAFA, to mark the annual Remembrance Day commemorations.

The coins are available in solid gold, silver, and base metal with two per cent of the retail price going directly to SSAFA, helping the organisation to continue carrying out their vital work in support of serving personnel, veterans and their families.

Approved by Buckingham Palace, the coins range in price from £5 to £9,995 and all feature a unique design of the iconic poppy and an official portrait of the Queen, who has been patron of SSAFA for 60 years

SSAFA fundraising director Tegan Jones said: "SSAFA helps 60,000 people every year and donations are vital to enable us to continue providing the practical, emotional, and financial assistance that we give to veterans, serving personnel and their families."

To view the coins visit <http://jubileemint.co.uk> and type 'Remembrance' into the search box.



● Cdre Jerry Kyd with LA Jonathon Holding

Handling history

EIGHTEEN months of hard work saw three pilots, five observers and one aircrewman receive their flying wings at RNAS Culdrose.

The formal ceremony, which marks the official start of a flying career within the Fleet Air Arm, was performed in the hangar of 824 NAS in front of families, friends and senior officers from the Royal Navy.

Cdre Jerry Kyd, captain of HMS Queen Elizabeth was guest of honour and addressed the students after they received their wings.

"RNAS Culdrose is the home of carrier aviation," he said. "It is a seminal, profound and hugely exciting period to be in the Royal Navy, and you will become the centre piece for defence."

"It is now your turn to stand out of the shadow of the great people who have come before you. Remember your

training, it defines what you are and what you can be."

History was also made at the parade with LA Jonathon Holding being the first student to pass out after direct entry into the Fleet Air Arm.

Also present was Lt Nicola Williams, the only female officer to receive her wings at the ceremony. She said: "The course was really detailed and very challenging. I am really looking forward to working on the front line. It feels brilliant to finally get here – this has been my goal from day one, and I am so happy."

Commanding Officer of 824 NAS Ian Fraser said: "Today marks your transition from being students to the front line, and for the squadron it highlights the efforts of the trainers as well. The British public expects you to succeed, we expect you to succeed, and we know each and every one of you will rise to the challenge."



● Sophie (foreground) with other students from the Scottish Space School at the University of Strathclyde

Sophie is a space cadet

CONGRATULATIONS to Cadet Sophie, from Ardrossan unit, who has won a trip to NASA's Lyndon B Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.

Sophie applied for the chance to visit NASA during her stay with Strathclyde University's Scottish Space School in the summer.

At the end of the course, attended by 100 Scottish students, she was one of 40 invited to undertake an interview, which she had to do by video link from the middle of the English Channel as she was on Sea Cadet duties.

And she received the good news that she had been selected from the captain of the vessel, as she could not pick up a signal on her mobile, according to her local paper the *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald*.

Sophie, 17, also recently received an award in recognition of her work with *1,000 Girls, 1,000 Futures*, a programme to get more women into the Global STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) Alliance.

The 'Learning Journey' to Houston takes place in the last two weeks of October every year, and just ten of the students at the Scottish Space School are chosen to join the trip.

The facility is NASA's Manned Spacecraft Center, where human spaceflight training, research, and flight control are conducted.

The Scottish Space School is one of the most successful outreach programmes of the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Strathclyde.

The programme is made up of a mix of lectures, laboratories and workshops on a space theme, delivered by academics and researchers from the Faculty, as well as visiting NASA representatives.

London on guard

SEA Cadets from London Area greeted the Lord Mayor of the City of London with a guard of honour as part of the grand opening of the annual Sheriff's Ball.

The Guildhall provided a stunning background as guests from the City joined the Lord Mayor and Sheriff, Alderman Charles Bowman and Dr Christine Rigden, to raise money for the Lord Mayor's Appeal – Sea Cadets are one of the Lord Mayor's chosen beneficiaries.

The guests were impressed by the bugle call, sounded by PO Michael, and the professional attitude of the cadets on show.

Overall the event raised £70,000 which will go towards funding a new Rustler 42 yacht, giving more cadets the chance to experience an offshore voyage.



● Cdre Bob Fancy inspects cadets at the inaugural parade of the Charter Academy CCF unit in Portsmouth

Picture: LPhot Kyle Heller

Charter makes mark

THE Royal Navy's links with a Portsmouth school have been strengthened by the launch of a new Combined Cadet Force unit.

Charter Academy's Navy-led detachment was opened in style with a rousing display by the Royal Marines Corps of Drums.

The unit's 15 cadets were inspected by Cdre Robert Fancy, the Navy's Commander of Core Training, watched by parents and teachers.

Cdre Fancy said: "Today's opening is part of a plan to expand the CCF footprint in the UK."

"Pupils at Charter Academy now have the opportunity to take part in great life

experiences which can form an important part of their personal development.

"At the same time the new and future recruits can learn all about core values such as ambition, respect, commitment, loyalty and courage which are an important part of military life."

Academy Principal Clive Barnes added: "The opening of the new unit is all about widening participation between the school and the Armed Forces and maximising the willingness to have a go at anything and everything."

"This also promotes the opportunity for children to aspire and have opportunities

to leave Portsmouth and meet fellow cadets across the country."

The cadets, aged between 14 and 17, will get to try their hand at a wide variety of Navy pursuits with emphasis on leadership, afloat activities and adventurous training.

Activities could include kayaking, sailing and power-boating, as well as earning qualifications in skills such as first aid, life-saving and diving.

The Cadet Expansion Programme was launched in June 2012 by the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister with the aim to deliver 100 new cadet units in English state-funded schools.

Cardiff celebrate centenary

CARDIFF unit held a formal parade in mid-September to celebrate its centenary.

VIPs included Captain Sea Cadets Capt Phil Russell, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of South Glamorgan Colin Jones, Deputy Lord Mayor of Cardiff Georgina Phillips, and Joanne Burgess, great-great-granddaughter of Cdr James Rimmer-Schofield, who founded the unit in 1916.

Music was provided by the band of TS Kittywake (Torfaen unit) while the Divisions were inspected by Capt Russell, making his first formal visit to the unit.

After touring the unit's facilities with CO, CWEM(O) Michael Dixon, Capt Russell presented each Cardiff cadet with a commemorative bosun's call.

A buffet was provided by the unit's Parents and Friends Association, organised by PFA Chair Wendy David, which was followed by the traditional cake-cutting ceremony – using a sword provided by S/Lt Allison Ward – performed by the CO's wife Julie and the youngest member of the unit, JC Jack.

The evening ended with a toast to Cardiff's next 100 years.



Medal and a trophy

WESTON unit had a visit from Captain Sea Cadets Capt Phil Russell.

Capt Russell inspected the cadets and watched while rehearsals for the upcoming RNP evolutions were carried out.

His main job of the evening was to present former CO Lt Cdr (SCC) Ron Roberts RNR with his Captain's Medal for 50 years service to the Corps, and in particular TS Weston.

The Captain also brought with him the Captain's Cup and pennant (pictured above), given to the third best unit in the country – Weston were joint winners for 2015 and it is their turn to have the trophy.

Berets presented

MORE than 100 students who joined the Duke of York's Royal Military School this academic year were presented with their all-important uniform berets at a special ceremony.

This tradition takes place once Year 7 students have completed a period of parade training after joining the school in September.

The beret is an essential part of each student's ceremonial uniform, worn on parade and special occasions.

Students can also wear the cap badge of a family member who has served in the armed forces on their dress blues. It is called their 'heart badge' and is a recognition of their family's military heritage.

All hands to the pumps

ROYAL Navy firefighters stationed at RNAS Yeovilton Fire Station have been helping 1st Charltons Sea Scouts with their fire safety badge work.

CPO Mark Berryman and his team hosted the visit by the local Sea Scout troop from Keinton Mandeville, initially teaching them about the dangers of fire, what to do in the event of a fire and fire safety in the home before letting them loose on the equipment used at the air station.

Scout Leader Warren Lee said: "We are massively grateful to CPO Berryman and his team for taking the time to educate and entertain the scouts."

"Their professionalism and sense of fun have enabled the scouts to make good progress towards their fire safety badges and other awards."

"We have also invited the fire department along to help finish the badge work in Keinton Mandeville, and hopefully present the badges and certificates to the scouts."

CPO Berryman said: "It has been a pleasure to host such an enthusiastic group of young people."

"They have listened intently while learning the critical importance of fire safety – not just in the Royal Navy but life.



● Sea Scouts from 1st Charltons troop test their skills on an RNAS Yeovilton fire tender

Picture: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum

"I think they've managed to have quite a bit of fun too."

Scouts took it in turn to try on safety equipment, then got first-hand experience of the fire tenders and hoses.

Sea Scout Amy, visiting the

day after her tenth birthday, said: "That was ace – you Royal Navy guys are the best..."

1st Charltons is an expanding and very enthusiastic Scout group of young people, aged between 10 and 18, who meet in

Keinton Mandeville Village Hall on a Monday evening.

Sea Scouts are members of the international Scouting movement, aiming to develop young people's confidence, sense of adventure and outdoor skills.



Students' mettle is tested

TACKLING fires and battling to save a ship from sinking were among the highlights of a visit to HMS Raleigh by 13 students from University Technical College (UTC) Plymouth.

The students, members of the UTC's Combined Cadet Force (CCF), spent two days at the Torpoint base where they experienced training similar to that carried out by new recruits to the Royal Navy.

In Raleigh's multi-million pound simulator the cadets worked together to plug breaches in the hull and stop the flow of water, while the facility rocked from side to side.

On the demonstration fire-ground the youngsters, aged between 14 and 18, tried their hands at putting out a fire using the appropriate extinguisher in a safe and controlled environment.

Cadet Pedro, aged 15, said: "Our overnight trip to Raleigh was phenomenal. It was a life time opportunity and everyone should have a go."

Cadets were hosted overnight at the National Sea Cadet Centre within the base.

Cadet Clarissa, aged 16, said: "It pushed my boundaries. It really made a difference and we are stronger as a team."

UTCs are an educational concept developed by the Baker Dearing Trust (www.utcolleges.org) in response to the continued demands from industry for an increase in the number of well-educated and highly-skilled engineers and technicians.

Plenty of winners

TIME at Sea Cadets provides young people 'time out' from the pressures of modern life and the chance to broaden their horizons, ultimately setting them on a path to a brighter future.

And now Sea Cadets has launched its first ever raffle, and by taking part you could enable more young people to be part of Sea Cadets.

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● Competitors at the National Combined Regatta at ExCeL in London's Docklands

Trophies head south

THE major trophies from the Sea Cadet Corps two big regattas headed south this year as **London** and **Southern** took the honours.

The first contest was at the ExCeL in London's Docklands, where some 450 cadets competed in the National Combined Regatta.

Having qualified through district and area competitions, the finalists faced challenging weather in the capital.

Looking on was a two-star General, Maj Gen Randal Munro, who was delighted to meet and watch the cadets in action.

And while competitors and supporters were not caught up in the event there were stands to visit, including the Royal Navy/Royal Marines, BP Maritime, CVQO and the SCC Engineering POD.

Southern emerged as victors at the awards ceremony – and there was another reason for smiles all round, as Captain Sea Cadets, Capt Phil Russell, proposed to his partner Jackie Gale.

The full results were:
Overall Regatta Winner (Navy League Cup): **Southern Area**;
Overall Paddlesports Winner (Antrim & Down Cup): **Southern**;
Boat Handling:

Rowing Boat Handling (Mitchell Trophy): **Salisbury (Southern)**;
Sailing Boat Handling (P&O



● Captain Sea Cadets Capt Phil Russell proposes to his partner Jackie Gale at the National Combined Regatta awards ceremony

Trophy): **Edgware (London)**;
Power Boat Handling (Stirling Wheel): **Southampton (Southern)**;

Overall Boat Handling (Stena Sealink Trophy): **Southern**;

Rowing:
Boys Junior (Ridgewell Cup): **Salisbury**;

Girls Junior (Wain 1999 Cup): **Bangor (Northern Ireland)**;
Boys Open (Hornblower Cup): **Salisbury**;

Girls Open (Burton Cup): **Wakefield (Eastern)**;
Overall Trinity Class Trophy (Dawson Trophy): **Southern**;
Yole Junior (Junior Mixed Cup): **Salisbury**;
Yole Open (Open Mixed Cup): **Salisbury**;
Yole Open Single Boys: **Fraserburgh (Northern)**;
Yole Open Single Girls: **Salisbury**;
Overall Yole Class Rowing Trophy (Badger Cup): **Southern**;

Paddlesport:

Paddlesport Cross Stream (Admiral Bell Davies Cup): **Southern**;
Paddlesport Flat Water – Open Girls (Ulster Cup): **Southern**;
Paddlesport Flat Water – Open Boys (Mike Pool/Bosum Trophy): **Southern**;
Paddlesport Flat Water – Junior Girls (Barbara Simpson Cup): **Southern**;
Paddlesport Flat Water – Junior Boys (Nottingham Cup): **Southern**.

Almost a month later the focus switched to the north-west and the National Sailing and Windsurfing Regatta at Southport.

And this time the victors' laurels went to the cadets from **London Area**.

The full results were:

Sailing classes:

Open Bosun: **CFC Z Kurtulus and CFC J Kurtulus (London Area)**;
Open RS Quest – CFC E Robertson and Cdt C Weighill (**Eastern**);
Junior Topper – Cdt H Bennett (**South West**);
Open Picos – **LC G Rowing (London)**;
Open PY – Series Winner: **Cdt D**



● Action from the National Sailing and Windsurfing Regatta at Southport

Johnson (**North West**);
Open PY – Class Winner: **South West**;

Windsurfing classes:

4.5m Class: **OC C Baptista (London)**;
5.5m Class: **AC S Lythgoe (London)**;
6.5m Class: **AC S Bevan (South West)**;
Overall Windsurfing Winning Area: **London**;
Regatta Overall Winning Area: **London**.

Hastings' oldest cadet turns 90

HASTINGS unit helped celebrate the birthday of their oldest cadet when he turned 90 years of age.

Bernard Mallion was a cadet in 1939 – the year the unit was first formed in the town.

On the evening Mr Mallion toured the classes, where the cadets were practicing drill, seamanship, leadership skills and map reading.

Following this he had a birthday tea with the cadets, then fielded questions from them on how the unit has changed over the decades (*pictured right*).

When he first started parading the unit was based at the Bathing Pool, and he was one of 30, but within a few months there were more than 130 cadets.

Not having enough instructors, some of the cadets – including Mr Mallion – were turned away.

He was devastated, but after mulling it over for a while he realised the instructors hadn't



taken any names, so chancing his luck he returned the following evening.

He was allowed back in, and has

maintained links with the Sussex unit ever since.

He remained a cadet for a few years before joining the Royal

Navy and serving on board HMS Ramillies.

Mr Mallion has kept his ties with the unit, and been a loyal supporter throughout; he still carries out regular maintenance at the unit every week, even on the day of his birthday.

Mr Mallion, a retired firefighter, was even climbing the unit's 30ft mast just a few years ago, although senior staff have now banned him from this practice...

Hastings' youngest cadet, JC Maisie, said: "I had an amazing evening and it was interesting to find out about what the unit was like when it first started."

"We still do activities that they learnt about then, plus a whole lot more."

Hastings unit is open two nights a week.

For further information email tshastings@btconnect.com or visit www.sea-cadets.org/hastings



● Rear Admiral Blount presents LJC Macfarlane with the 2016 Burgee

Kettering strengthen FAA links

KETTERING unit strengthened its affiliations with the Fleet Air Arm by hosting Rear Admiral Keith Blount, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Aviation, Amphibious Capability & Carriers) and Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm.

The unit carried out Ceremonial Divisions with Admiral Blount taking the salute from the guard of honour, with other guests including Mayor of Kettering Scott Edwards, Cdre Jock Alexander, CEO of the Fly Navy Heritage Trust, Capt Andy Barnwell, Chairman of the unit, and Lt Colonel Robert Blomfield, Chairman of RFCA in Northamptonshire.

TS 800 NAS proudly bears the name of the Fleet Air Arm fixed-wing fighter squadron which was decommissioned in 2011.

"We are unique among Sea Cadet units," said unit CO Lt (SCC) Marc Pether RNR.

"It's a great honour to be able to keep the squadron name alive."

Kettering is the only unit with a Fleet Air Arm cap tally, and in addition to traditional ties with Portsmouth and Devonport Naval Bases can boast links to RN Air Stations at Yeovilton and Culdrose.

They also have an affiliation with 736 NAS, equipped with 14 Hawk jet aircraft.

Amongst the usual activities of sailing and seamanship, Kettering cadets also take on airborne pursuits and even look at air engineering aspects on visits to the two Naval air stations.

As well as presenting the unit with a prestigious Sea Cadet Burgee for the year in recognition of continued success of the cadets, Rear Admiral Blount also presented C/Sgt Bell with his Cadet Forces Long Service Medal for 12 years' service, and Lt Pether with his 1st Clasp to the Long Service Medal for 18 years' service to the Sea Cadet Corps.

Sweet victory for Vigilant

THE Sea Cadets' 35ft Tradewind yacht TS Vigilant, part of the Corps' offshore fleet, made its mark in the ATSO Cowes Small Ships race.

Not only did it win its Class C1 race, but the crew also lifted the Richard Langhorn trophy, awarded on votes from the rest of the fleet for the vessel that best represents the spirit of the race.

Votes flowed in after the Vigilant crew undertook a marathon baking session ('the Great British Sail Off') using the small oven onboard their vessel, to supply more than 300 cupcakes for all the other crews.



Home is proud of veterans

A CARE home in Banstead, Surrey, celebrated the contributions and sacrifices its residents have made to the UK in their seafaring backgrounds to mark national Older People's Day on October 1.

The Royal Alfred Seafarers' Society has provided nursing care and accommodation to support elderly, sick or disabled seafarers, their widows and dependants for more than 150 years.

One of the home's tenants is Roy Ticehurst (above), who spent time as a Naval guard in Sri Lanka, protecting members of the WRNS and supplies, and also saw action in the D-Day landings.

Roy, who moved to the Royal Alfred Seafarers' Society as a tenant in 1992, has taken part in projects run by the society to raise awareness among the younger generation of the important role both Navies play in our society.

Home manager Anne Kasey said: "Roy's time at sea and at the D-Day Landings is just one of the amazing stories our residents tell every day."

"Many residents and tenants have spent time serving their country, whether through the forces, in the Merchant Navy or battling the elements as fishermen to contribute to the economy of our island nation."

"We are proud of all our residents every day, but this Older People's Day we want to raise awareness of the sacrifices many of the people who live here have made and celebrate their stories."

"As our population grows older, it's important we acknowledge the role of older people in our communities and celebrate all they have to offer for us to learn from."

Town remembers 'other' HMS Ajax

THE town of Ajax in Canada was named after the wartime Royal Navy cruiser – but a visit by her successor in the 1970s merited civic ceremonies to mark the anniversary.

Farmland beside Lake Ontario was converted to a huge munitions plant during the war, supplying shells to the Royal Navy.

At the war's end, the new community stayed put; it needed a name and chose one that would reflect their *raison d'être*.

Thanks to the Battle of the River Plate, in which Ajax took part, the town of Ajax – believed to be the only town in the world named after a ship – was born.

Most of the streets are named in honour of those who served at the River Plate and in HMS Ajax.

The HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans Association retains very close links with the town, and the most recent trip was made earlier this year.

It marked the anniversary of a visit by the cruiser's namesake in 1976, when the Leander-class frigate sailed up the St Lawrence Seaway into Lake Ontario.

Several members of that crew, one cruiser veteran and other association members marked the anniversary.

Besides obligatory excursions to Niagara Falls and the CN Tower, *inter alia*, the town laid on three days of special events.

The first was the unveiling of an 'Historic Wall' in the Veterans Point Gardens, containing the names of over 4,500 crew members who served at the River Plate in Ajax, Achilles and Exeter, those who served in Ajax generally, and many who visited 40 years ago, plus association chairman Peter Danks.

Malcolm Collis, on behalf of the association, presented the town a bench to go next to the wall.

Nigel Masters presented to the Sea Cadets an award in memory of Vice Admiral 'Tubby' Squires who had been the frigate captain



● (Above) The British visitors march through Ajax in Canada; (below) Members with the respective road signs at the association reunion in Southsea last month

at the time of the visit.

Next day saw a departure from the town's street-naming policy with new names in honour of some of the frigate crew – although first stop was Collis Lane to show Joseph his great grandfather's street.

Then off to London Lane, under construction, for the presentation of the street sign by Mayor Steve Parish – the lane honours Exeter veteran Jim London.

Others honoured were Alf Larkin (Larkinly Lane), Nigel Masters (Masterson Lane), Mike Fox (Foxtrot Lane) and former Master-at-Arms Fred Coates (Coates-of-Arms Lane).

Signs were also presented to Alan Styth (Stythinson Street), Glyn Seagrave (Seagrave Street), Ian Cunliffe (Cunliffe Street) and Peter Danks (Danks Ridge Street), in recognition of his work with the association.

Hunter Drive is named after Stuart 'Jock' Hunter, in Ajax at the River Plate, who died years ago not knowing he had a street.

His grandson Lee Hayward, a serving CPO, along with his family, was there to receive the street sign and plaque, fulfilling a



long-held family wish.

The final stop was Darbyshire Court, dedicated to Ian Darbyshire.

The next day saw the Navy men trying to remember how to march before setting off behind the association's standard, with marching bands, to re-enact the Freedom of the Town march of 40 years ago. Fortunately fixed bayonets were not evident...

Two of the group, whose marching days were over, were transported by a Willys Jeep.

At the Royal Canadian Legion a service rededicated the frigate anchor, presented when Ajax was scrapped – her bell hangs in Council Chambers and is rung to

commence proceedings – and the day ended with a civic reception.

The final day saw Whitby Yacht Club take the visitors sailing along the lake to the port of Oshawa, where Ajax had berthed 40 years ago.

The first event of 2016 was a memorial service and lunch at the National Memorial Arboretum in April around our Battle of the River Plate memorial.

The final event was the reunion in Southsea when 50 members gathered, including three cruiser veterans – one of whom, Ted Wicks, was at the River Plate.

For further information about the town and the association visit www.hmsajax.org

New Remembrance Centre opens at arboretum



A NEW Remembrance Centre has been officially opened at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) in Staffordshire.

The £15.7 million project is the result of a successful fundraising campaign and a final generous contribution from the Royal British Legion, of which the NMA forms a part.

The iconic new building was designed by the prestigious Glenn Howells Architects, and at its heart is an interactive exhibition providing a preview of the arboretum and an introduction to the concept of

Remembrance, which was made possible by a £2.85 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

There are also a wide variety of high quality, interactive activities, which engage audiences of all ages. Visitors will experience an immersive film experience, projected onto multiple screens inside 'The Drum'.

Enhanced learning facilities are a fundamental part of the new centre; new spaces will allow school visitors to grow from 15,000 to 25,000. The learning team is harnessing the arboretum's assets – the

memorials, the local area and wildlife – to generate a greater understanding of Remembrance in a relevant and engaging way.

The Remembrance Centre is also host to new exhibition galleries, a large restaurant and shop, and separate coffee shop.

Adjacent to the centre is a new landscaped area to explore, Heroes' Square, featuring commemorative paving stones, engraved with cap badges or crests of the Royal Navy, the British Army, the Royal Air Force and City Livery Companies.

A new sensory play garden, full of textures, scented foliage, and natural materials, offers another way to engage younger visitors.

At a preview gathering Maj Gen Patrick Cordingley, Chair of the Appeal Council, thanked those who had played a role in the campaign – including *Navy News'* graphics officer Andy Brady, who provided drawings for the engraved pavings, and who was invited to the event.

David Addis, chairman of the Regulating Branch and RN Police Association, was one of those attending the preview event.

He said it was a proud day for his members – former and serving Reggies and police officers raised £3,000 in just seven months to have their own paving slab laid in Heroes' Square.

Russians seek convoy veterans

OVER the last couple of years the Russian Embassy has made a big effort to present an Ushakov medal in person to each and every surviving veteran of the Arctic Convoys, according to Konstantin Shlykov, Head of Press Office at the Russian Embassy in London.

Today, after some 3,000 presentations, only about 150 of them are waiting for a medal, which will be presented in the next few weeks.

However, despite all the Russians' efforts and those of the UK Ministry of Defence, they have been unable to locate some 160 veterans.

They are publishing on their website a list of names, with their last known area of residence, in the hope that readers will be able to trace them – see <http://www.rusemb.org.uk/fnapr/5780>

Falklands date

A MESS dinner to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the Falklands Conflict for all personnel still serving in the RN/RM who took part in the fighting will take place on Friday June 9 2017 in HMS Collingwood Wardroom.

This will be an All Ranks/Rates event; the only criteria for attendance is possession of the South Atlantic Medal with Rosette, and to still be serving full time on any form of commitment.

Further details of the dinner will be issued in due course, but if you are eligible you are strongly encouraged to save the date now.

Any questions on the event should be forwarded to Cdr N J Hall RN at NAVY.PSYA-INFO-CYBER.SY.SO1 or 9380 27142.

Woking mourns

WOKING branch members are mourning the death of their chairman S/M Ian Fraser.

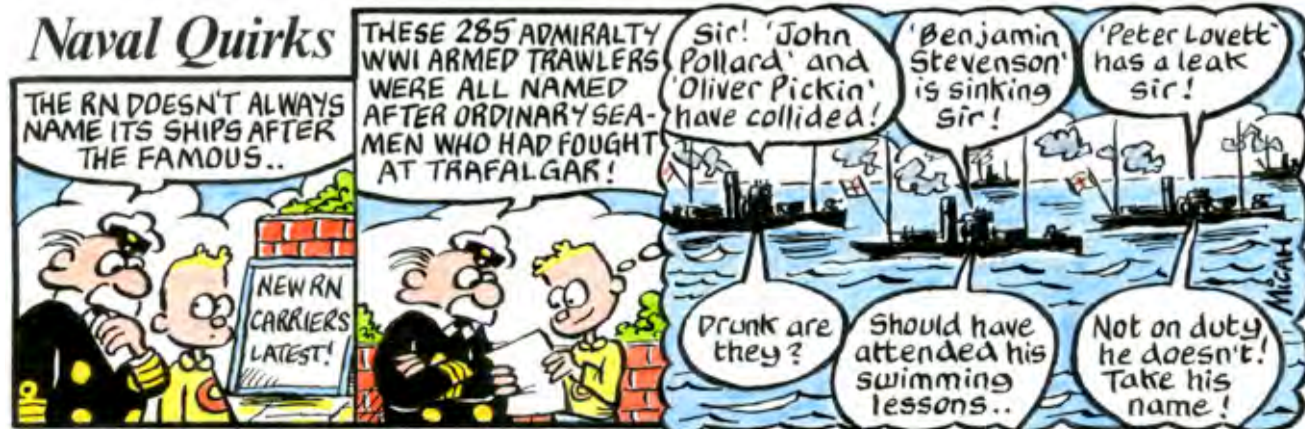
Ian joined the Navy in October 1951, training as an electrical mechanic at HMS Collingwood, going on to serve in HMS Theseus, Bellerophon, Messina, NP 1214 and HMS Victory.

Leaving the service in 1958 he became a manager with the GPO.

He joined Woking in 1986 – he and his wife June were very active members – and he became chairman three years ago.



● THE Scottish Area Chairman models the new RNA tartan commissioned for the National Conference in Perth, Scotland, next June. Anyone wishing to purchase the tartan can contact Brian directly – his number is in the RNA Diary



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PLANNING for the future

CAPT Bernard D Cole (USN retd), now an emeritus professor at America's National War College, is an acknowledged expert on the Navy of the People's Republic of China.

His *Great Wall at Sea*, published a few years ago, is probably the standard work on the subject and his *Asian Maritime Strategies* is also required reading for anyone interested in sea power in that most vital of maritime regions, writes Prof Eric Grove.

He has also written on China's energy supplies and Taiwan's security. Now he has brought these strands together in a short 214-page analytical survey that relates Beijing's naval growth to energy and foreign policies: *China's Quest for Great Power – Ships, Oil and Foreign Policy* (Naval Institute Press of Annapolis £29.50, ISBN 978-1612-578-381).

All three are intimately connected. As the author sums up in his conclusion: "Beijing believes its continued legitimacy depends on ...the Chinese Communist Party, the legitimacy of which in turn depends on the support of the Chinese people."

"That support requires a healthy, improving economy which, in turn, requires ever-increasing energy supplies. China's economy is international and maritime. China believes that a strong, globally capable navy is required to secure that international economy and the foreign-resources required to support continued economic growth."

The growth of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (it probably sounds better in Mandarin – and there are recent reports that it has indeed been changed to 'Chinese Navy') has certainly been impressive, as Professor Cole makes clear.

The rapid expansion in the fleet of highly-capable air defence destroyers leading towards a new, even more capable 10,000-ton cruiser-sized Type 055 'destroyer'; an amphibious fleet that includes LPDs and a new LPH under construction; numerous modern well-armed nuclear and conventionally powered submarines; a programme of three aircraft carriers; perhaps most

● Assault ship PLANS Chang Bai Shan leaves Portsmouth Harbour after a high-profile visit to the UK at the beginning of last year Picture: L(Phot) Guy Pool



maritime national means of exerting force at a distance. As the author puts it: "Barring some massive domestic petroleum discovery, China's dependence on imported oil and natural gas will continue to increase annually – and it will remain a net energy importer. This, in turn, will increase the importance of the sea lines of communication over which petroleum flows. None are more important than those that cross the Indian Ocean, and none are longer or pose a more difficult problem for the maritime planner."

For one thing, the growing Indian Navy has a view about increased Chinese activity in what it regards as its ocean as much as the PLAN regards the 'China Seas' as theirs. This could well lead to trouble. It has already led to Indian-US entente.

The extent of China's overall maritime power is probably not fully appreciated here in Britain. China has a leading position in global fisheries, merchant shipping, shipbuilding and ports, not to mention the world's second navy. Professor Cole's book makes this clear in a balanced and well-informed way but it makes a sobering read to the USA and her allies.

Happily the Chinese espouse a 'win-win' cooperative approach but when the People's Republic's interests are seriously threatened, a robust approach is likely. The possibilities for confrontation with the USA and its allies and friends are therefore great.

What the UK's position in such a situation would be is an interesting thought, especially given the Five Power Defence Arrangements with Singapore and Malaysia.

China's Quest for Great Power is an excellent starting point for a beginner in this important subject area and a useful update to those already interested in Chinese maritime strategy, for whom the extended 36-page bibliography will prove most useful for further study.

THE GROVE REVIEW

importantly, new supply ships; all this means that the PLAN is acquiring a quality and reach to match its quantity.

Already it is the world's second navy in terms of tonnage and the Chinese have ambitions to possess, by mid-century – and the anniversary of the creation of the 'Peoples Republic' – a global navy that can defend China's maritime interests world wide.

This latter role is defined as, firstly, preventing action of which China "does not approve" within the 'Second Island Chain'. That runs from Yokohama in Japan out to beyond the Philippines to the Marianas to the western tip of New Guinea. Second comes the protection of overseas investments and nationals through evacuation operations if necessary (China has already engaged in such operations off Yemen). The third dimension is the safeguarding of sea lines of communication on which the health of China's economy depends, both for trade and energy imports; fourth, but

intimately connected to the first role, is backing regional maritime interests such as fisheries and sea bed resources. This is an especially important role given China's aggressive pursuit of her sovereign 'rights' in the Yellow, East and West China Seas; 'rights' that have been denied by legal judgements that China persistently refuses to accept.

In 2015 China published a military strategy that put a new emphasis on maritime forces and roles. This was in the context of four 'scenarios':

1. large-scale high-intensity 'defensive' war (effectively against the USA);
2. large-scale high-intensity 'anti-secession' conflict (eg over Taiwan, which could, of course, lead to the first scenario);
3. medium to small-scale conflict over islands and maritime boundaries (such as in the South China Sea – which could also lead to escalation and US intervention);
4. and small-scale low-intensity operations such as evacuation operations.

The Chinese Fleet is not without its problems: lack of operational experience; inexperience in air operations; possible opposition to an enhanced role from within other parts of the PLA that face cutbacks to fund naval expansion; corruption; the effects of the duality of political Communist Party and operational Naval control; too many shore installations; doubts over the quality of non-commissioned personnel; training shortfalls; problems of integrating naval with air force and long range missile forces; and possible bureaucratic weakness in strategy formulation at the highest level. Some of these have been identified and are beginning to be addressed but they remain serious challenges.

The book relates these naval developments to the wider economic and foreign policy background. The extent of Chinese foreign investment and an increasing dependence on seaborne energy imports makes important

Super six put on great show

SIX drivers from the RNRMMSA took to the track at Rockingham Speedway near Corby for the final round of the Armed Forces Race Challenge.

This was the biggest Royal Navy team of the season. Cdr Richard Scott and Mne Adam Dewis were in the Navy Team Peugeot 206 GTI and PO Sean Graham was in the Sultan Locost.

LH Seb Unwin was in his BMW 318, Lt Mike Wells in his MR2 and Cpl Mark Inman RM and CPO Gareth Moss had their first outings in their Vauxhall VX 220 and Astra.

A wet practice saw everyone qualify in very difficult and slippery conditions.

Lining up on the start line had Adam Dewis in 23rd place, Seb Unwin 19th, Mike Wells and Stirling Moss 12 & 13th and Mark Inman in third place.

The weather didn't improve but all 32 cars made the banked first corner, and jostled for position in the fog on the



● Lt Mike Wells in his Black MR2 at Rockingham

Picture: Nick Rogers

banking.

On lap five a BMW M3 guest car hit the wall coming off the banking and the safety car was deployed, leading to an early pit stop for many to gain position.

Sean Graham had to retire the over revving Locost but everyone else were back on track.

As the rain stopped the conditions became more treacherous and many had trips across the grass but everyone made the finish.

Great results for the RN saw Cpl Inman and LH Unwin finish

first and second respectively in class C. Mne Dewis finished third on PI, while Lt Wells took first place in Class A.

AFRC run 40 minute races with a forced pit stop and the opportunity to run two drivers in the 750MC series.

This year has been all about consolidation, as we develop a team spirit, gain new drivers and experience.

We are always looking for new drivers. Visit <http://www.armedforcesracechallenge.net/>



Adam happy with cross championship

THE final rounds of the 2016 Motocross season saw some close racing for both the Inter-Service and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Championship.

The championships are incorporated into the Acerbis Scott Nationals, where the competitors ride along with other Service personnel and civilians.

Sub Lt Adam Figgins put in one final push to try to make up the deficit built up by the RAF's SAC Matt Readman earlier in the season, but came up short for the individual Inter-Service title.

Sub Lt Figgins was still able to take the RNRM Championship with a number of top five positions.

Mne Nicholas Carbury held off the challenge from Mne Rich Turner for second position in the RNRM Championship and took the top honours.

Mne Carbury gradually improved throughout the season, putting himself in a good position to challenge for the title in 2017.

Unfortunately, Mne Turner was to suffer a setback mid-season when his gearbox failed, scuppering any chances of catching Mne Carbury.

The final round at Pontrilas also saw great improvement from Mne Humble-Smith, having previously ridden Enduro; he is quickly getting to grips with motocross.

If you are interested in getting involved contact either Team Manager Mne Nicholas Carbury or the RNRMMSA Secretary through the RN Sports Intranet.



Karting success

A ROYAL Navy kart heads towards first place during a race at Round Six of the Inter-Service **Karting** Championships.

LAET Craig Beesley, of HMS Queen Elizabeth, and LET Alan Grier, of HMS Vigilant, shared the driving of Kart 98 to help put the Senior Service into fourth place in the championships.

The racing, which took place at Llandow Kart Club, saw a second RN kart – No 45 – also compete, with POAET Adam Myhill, of 1710 NAS, and Sub Lt Gary Chivers, from HMS Sultan, sharing the driving.

LET Grier and POAET Myhill set out for qualifying with LET Grier achieving fifth military place and POAET Myhill reaching 18th.

As the 36-strong grid set off, through possibly the tightest first series of corners in the championship, the majority of karts made it through unscathed.

Kart 98 had an average start and dropped to seventh but managed to slowly work its way through the pack. Kart 45 had a bumpy start and dropped to 30th before working its way to

a safe 17th place.

With the first driver swap 45 minutes into the race, LAET Beesley carried on in kart 98 and again slowly worked his way past karts ahead.

The next driver swap was at 75 minutes with kart 45 where Sub Lt Chivers carried on. With more than an hour remaining LET Grier went back out in kart 98 for his last 30-minute stint and by the time he was due to come in for the final driver swap, he was in second place.

After a final quick change LAET Beesley returned to the track in kart 98 and slotted into fourth place.

Kart 50 from RAF Waddington was leading by ten seconds but LAET Beesley was reeling him in, and with 14 minutes left of the race, took the lead.

Kart 45 had a tangle with other karts, which left it in 23rd place. With the sun quickly setting, kart 98 passed the chequered flag in first position and kart 45 in 23rd.

It is now all to play for in the final round at Rowrah in Cumbria.

Harry's a star for the future



PHASE Two sailor Harry Tansey was only introduced to judo a few months ago – but picked up a spirit of **judo** award at the annual Royal Navy Judo Championships.

The contest, which took place at RNAS Yeovilton, helps determine the team for the Inter-Service championships.

Aged 19, AET Tansey was the youngest of the 21 competitors, while WO1 John Thacker was the eldest at 55 (he first fought for the RN at the Inter-Service contest in 1978).

There were some great battles on the day, including the bout between LPT Alex Stocker, of HMS Sultan, and Cpl Colin Francis from CTCRM in the -66kg category.

CHF's Lt Stephen Watson took on Sub Lt Dave Ferguson of HMS Ledbury. In each respective encounter experience triumphed over youth.

In the team event the Royal Marines team consisting of Mne Tommy Richardson (MOD Caledonia), Sgt Rob Bennett (CTCRM Lympstone) and Mne Peter Van Der Westhuizen (30 Cdo IX Gp) beat the Royal Navy, winning the title back after a three-year drought.

AET Tansey, who will pass out as a qualified AET on Merlin Mk3 in January next year, said: "I'm a white belt and have been only doing judo for two months.

"I'm really enjoying it so far but its physically hard work and takes a lot of concentration."

WO Thacker added: "An Ippon is the equivalent of a knockout punch in boxing and you need one of these to win the contest using your opponent's power against himself.

"To achieve a win (Ippon) you must throw your opponent flat on their back, holding them down for 20 seconds or obtaining a submission by applying an arm lock or strangle."

Commonwealth Games gold medalist and Royal Marine Chris Sherrington also attended the championships.



● Harry Tansey in action at the judo contest at RNAS Yeovilton; Right: Veteran John Thacker

Pictures: LPhoto Dan Rosenbaum



Royal Navy Rugby Union Referee



Want to "keep your boots on" and stay involved complete the RNRU subsidised RFU Level 2 Refereeing Course:

- Stay Active
- Personal Development
- Expenses Paid
- Subsidised Training
- Subsidised Kit
- Male & Female Referees
- Needed

Courses run around the UK throughout the year

For further details contact:
Gaz Fairbairn
rugbytime@hotmail.co.uk



www.navyrugbyunion.co.uk/community-rugby/referees

Toughest of tests for the weekend warriors

LONGMOOR training area in Hampshire provided the ideal venue for the RNRMCA MTB XC Championships and grassroots day.

Carl Perry and Karl Hille delivered coaching on the basic skills that would enable all riders to take on the afternoon course, focussing on reading the trail, bike position, speed control on loose surfaces and cornering.

The first half was the flatter, faster section that saw the riders sweep into the forest before tackling some high-speed whoops along a ridge line and plunging over a couple of banks.

Back into the forest for a section of flattish 'recovery' riding before plunging down a loose, rutty trail.

The next section was designed to test speed control and accuracy of line choice with a tight twisty section through trees that were waiting to catch the bar ends for the careless, then back out onto the open trail.

For the more experienced there was a line up and over a bank before a sharp right. The name of the

game was commitment as once the right had been taken at the top, there was no stopping on the loose steep descent.

The A-line finished with a sweet bottom section involving a high-speed right and a left before bursting out onto the main trail of flat-out whoops and splash pools.

For the less experienced, a short transition down the path before a slightly more forgiving descent to the bottom of the A-line; braking and speed control were what this line was all about.

With all riders back on the same trail, a short, loose leg-burning climb was rewarded with a beautiful new piece of single track through the forested hillside before a double root drop onto the main path.

A short path ride led to a double down-and-up through the gully at the bottom of the hill before the serious business of climbing back to the start area; and for those unused to racing XC, it is this section that sorts out the racers from the weekend warriors.

The afternoon saw two races within one; the

seniors and veterans would look to put in five laps, the women and novices would do three.

Pre-race favourite Stu Mackenzie was first home for the seniors in a time of one hour 15 mins and 14 secs.

Sam Powell was next home in an excellent time of just under one hour 18 minutes. Next home was Craig Gould on an Enduro bike in third place and first Royal Marine in.

In the vets, Rob Smith, stalwart of the MTB Race scene, set a pace that few others could stay with despite using the event as a final spin prior to undertaking a 24-hour solo event three days later!

In the novices, converted roadie Stu McPhail posted some lap times that would have not embarrassed him if he had been in the Seniors, and even demonstrated his future potential by finishing the race and then heading out for another lap, just because he could.

Rachel Hackman was crowned champion in the women's race, her first outing in a mountain bike race.



Time to get your skates on

THE Royal Navy Winter Sports Association's **Alpine Championships** take place in January.

The championships will involve Alpine racing in slalom, giant slalom, super giant slalom, ski cross, snowboard parallel giant slalom, boarder cross and slopestyle.

Instruction will be available for beginners, as well as for more advanced participants in both skiing and snowboarding.

The event will also feature races for novices and beginners in both disciplines.

For details see **2016DIN10-041**.

On course for holiday reward

LEADING Diver Matt Coburn's **golf** skills won him a week's holiday in France.

The reward was for the top golfer at the Royal Navy Clearance Divers' Association annual golf championship.

The tournament, which took place at Portsmouth Golf Course, comprised 27 holes of golf and the winner was decided on the best

Stapleford score from the whole day.

This year's prize for the top golfer increased from the usual piece of crystal and covered green jacket to a week's holiday, courtesy of chalet company Alpotholics.

Matt, *pictured*, who plays off a 21 handicap, took the title from the previous year's winner on countback.



Ruling the waves

Senior Service retain their Inter-Service title

THE SLALOM fleet bears down on the start line at the Inter-Service **Windsurfing Championships** – where the Royal Navy held on to their title.

A team of eight RNSA windsurfers took part in the Inter-Service and Royal Navy Championships, held at the Weymouth and Portland Sailing Academy.

Winds between 18-24 knots provided ideal conditions for the three-lap five-mile races.

A fleet of 20 Navy, Army and RAF windsurfers took part; seven fast and furious races

were completed on day one and an additional three in slightly less-favourable conditions on day two.

The RAF did not have a full team so the battle was between the Army and holders Royal Navy.

The consistency of AB ET(ME) Tom Eskdale, Lt Cdr Paul Morris, Capt Adrian Wallis, WO1 Dave Strudwick, CPOAET Gavin Nicholson and Lt Jason 'Tom' Sawyer meant the Navy won and retained the title of Inter-Service champions.

The competition was also used to determine the Royal Navy Windsurfing Champion,

with AET Eskdale looking to protect his 2015 title.

The racing between the top three Royal Navy sailors was very close, with Capt Wallis finishing third and Lt Cdr Morris tied on points with AET Eskdale at the end, with AET Eskdale clinching the title based on most races won.

The Inter-Service champion was Wg Cdr Simon Kent, who sailed consistently well.

The Royal Navy Windsurfing team would like to thank the RNSA, Wayne Shirley and Jon Glass for their support as race officers for the race and novice fleets.



● AET Tom Eskdale leads Lt Cdr Paul Morris and Wg Cdr Simon Kent into the jibe



George holds on to his title

ROYAL Marine **boxing** star George Crotty lands a punch on the Army's John Marvin during the Civil War contest at Bethnal Green's York Hall.

The contest, between the England team and English title series contenders known as the ETS Knights, gives boxers the chance to fight for an English title belt.

Mne Crotty, fighting for the England squad, met Marvin in the light heavyweight category and was also competing to retain his Southern Area belt.

Crotty outclassed his opponent in all three rounds to win by a unanimous points decision.

He can now look forward to a busy boxing season including the opportunity to fight for the English light-heavyweight title, the RNRMBA Australia tour, the International Box Cup and trials to join Team GB.

If you are interested in boxing or wish to find out more, visit www.rnrmbboxing.co.uk



Different strokes

TWELVE personnel took part in the first Northwood HQ **watersports** day in Middlesex.

Event organiser POPT 'Robbo' Robinson said: "This was a great way for tri-Service personnel at a busy unit such as Northwood to get out and try something new."

"AT/CA is a fantastic way of achieving fun, whilst developing people in many different ways."

One group began with stand-up paddle boarding, while the other began with kayaking.

"We had such a great day, we came away with aching faces from laughing so much" said AB Victoria Aldrich, who was paddle boarding for the first time.

Each group learned the basics of balance, buoyancy, turning, and falling in the water, while playing a range of fun games, ensuring everyone got wet.

"The games we play are great learning tools for all, as the participants do not realise how many different strokes they are acquiring, whilst splashing around and having fun with their oppos," said kayak instructor CPOPT Tony Newcombe.

Paddle boarding can be used as a Challenging Activity, in which any senior rate or above can be assessed and qualified as a paddle boarding CA leader, by completing a one-day assessment via PT staff.

As for kayaking, the Joint Service Adventurous Training scheme offer personnel avenues in all AT disciplines to try, learn and instruct at all levels at the discipline of your choice.

For further details, contact your PT staff or visit the defence gateway on MOD Intranet.



Soaring over the Solent

THIS was the view facing 16 novices as they tried their hands at gliding.

The Royal Navy Gliding and Soaring Association (RNGSA) held its annual training week at Lee-on-the-Solent airfield.

Following safety briefings, the students found themselves getting the gear out to set up the field and were soon up and away, into the air.

All were given an aero-tow launch to 3,000 feet above the Solent to get used to being airborne and to the glider they would be flying for the rest of the week.

Good weather blessed the course, during which the students were taken through the British Gliding Association training syllabus step by step by the volunteer instructors.

This covered effects of controls, flying in a straight line, not so easy as it seems, turning and stalling followed by more and more of the take-offs and landings as they learned to handle the glider and grew in confidence.

By day four most of the students were competent enough

to fly the whole sortie from take-off to landing and to enjoy the wonderful feeling of soaring like a bird over the Solent with only the noise of the wind in their ears and the sea and Isle of Wight below.

Unfortunately, the final day dawned wet and windy and so there was no flying.

LMA Jade Morris said: "An experience that can only be likened to a rollercoaster. Each day we were given more and more manoeuvres to do ourselves, some on the course had worked their way up to loop the loops, whilst others were mastering the art of landing the planes unaided."

"All in all the week was a complete success. I would encourage everyone to have a go."

WO1 Pony Moore added: "It was my first experience of flying a glider and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I will definitely spread the word about this great sport."

The Royal Navy has three gliding clubs, at Lee, RNAS Yeovilton and RNAS Culdrose.

For more details visit www.rngsa.com



● Mid Alison Barrett managed to capture a 'selfie' while a few thousand feet in the air with La Tournette, close to Mont Blanc, in the background; From left, Cdr Stu Blackburn, Cdr Jerry Ovens, Mid Barrett, Lt Cdr Karl Weston and CPO Steph Cahill

Navy pilots reach for the skies

FIVE intrepid paragliding pilots from the rapidly-growing Royal Navy Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association made up the majority of the Joint Services Adventurous Training Course in Annecy, France, this year.

They were part of the Pilot Development Course, designed to put the pilots through their paces in the relatively (honest) safe environment above Lake Annecy.

The course is split in two phases; the first is almost like carrying out a Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) assessment as the pilots are subjected to a number of controlled failures of their equipment several thousand feet above the lake (just in case a soft landing is required).

These include such events as partial collapses of the wing up to full stalls and the pilots are trained on how to overcome such events should they occur.

On one occasion this included the inadvertent deployment of the reserve parachute and a rather wet landing for Cdr Stu Blackburn as he landed safely in the lake.

CPO Steph Cahill decided against taking the plunge and enjoyed the view above Lake Annecy as he performed wing-overs under the supervision of probably the best paragliding instructor in the world, Jocky Sanderson.



● A wet landing for Cdr Stu Blackburn

The second week of the course had the pilots venturing further afield and flying numerous mountain sites in the valleys around the Mont Blanc mountain range.

Here Mid Alison Barrett managed to capture a 'selfie' whilst a few thousand feet in the air with Mont Blanc in the background. As the week progressed the flying sites became more and more adventurous as skills developed and confidence soared.

The course is run once a year as part of the Joint Services Adventurous Training (JSAT) Scheme. It is free for all members of the RNHPA with over 15 hours flying

time and is designed to aid progression onto the higher qualifications within the British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (BHPA).

This year a total of nine students attended the course, of which five were Royal Navy personnel, a reflection of the increase in popularity of the sport within the Naval Service.

Whilst in Annecy the opportunity was taken for the handover of chairmanship of the RNHPA. Cdr Jerry Ovens RN (Rtd), after serving the association for many years, stood down as chairman, handing over the responsibility to Cdr Stu Blackburn.

Jerry will remain active within the association and become vice chairman. The association would like to take the opportunity to thank Jerry for all his hard work.

The RNHPA still has the funding to support a further two junior rates or RM equivalent in purchasing their kit once qualified as a club pilot through the JSAT Scheme in either Crickhowell, South Wales, or the Alpine Training Centre in Bavaria.

If you have any questions about paragliding or wish to use the JSAT scheme please contact your local PT staff or call membership secretary Lt Cdr Tim Oatley on 07528 069052 for more details.



'Beasts' of Windsor

A TRI-SERVICE team of eight personnel from Northwood HQ successfully completed the Windsor 'Beast' Spartan Race.

The 'Beast' comprised 16 miles of cross-country terrain with 35 obstacles to overcome.

Firstly the team had to overcome varying height walls, jumping over ditches and water crossings. They then crawled under barbed wire fences, waded through water tunnels and threw spears at haystacks for pinpoint accuracy.

There were many weighted distance carries involving logs, breeze blocks, sandbags and buckets through varied terrain.

The monkey bars and rope climbs were the biggest challenges of the day with both coming at the latter end of the course with tired bodies all round.

If any obstacles were not completed then you were ordered to complete 30 penalty burpees as punishment before you were allowed to move on. There were quite a few burpees completed by the Northwood HQ team...

The final obstacle was a fire-pit jump to then finally cross the finish line where they received their medals.

"It was a fantastic day, a right giggle from start to finish," said AB Godfrey.

The team consisted of CPOPT Newcombe, Sgt Latusek, Sgt Baldwin, Cpl Game, LH Faulkner, L/Cpl Vanegas, L/Cpl Attwell and AB Godfrey.



Royal leaves rivals in his wake



ROYAL Navy wakeboarder Tony Evans sets the bar high in a competition.

The Lance Corporal picked up a title as the Royal Navy Wakeboarding Association made its debut in an Inter-Service contest.

The Royal Marine, based at Chivenor, won the men's boat contest with ease - helping him towards an overall silver medal, and is now in line for a call-up to the GB squad.

The green beret provided the icing on the cake for the RNWBA, which was only formed earlier this year, and which enabled the Senior Service to take part in the Wakeboard and Waterski Inter-Service competition for the first time.

Wakeboarding developed from a combination of waterskiing, snowboarding and surfing. The rider is either towed behind a motorboat or closed-course cable system. Largely a 'freestyle' sport, edging techniques are used to move the board and perform jumps, either using the



● The team, from left, LETWE Laura Saunders, Surg Lt Cdr Stephanie Ingram, POPT Lucy McKenna, LETME Lyndin Atkins (lying down), LAET Ross Taylor, Sub Lt Sandra Olmesdahl and L/Cpl Tony Evans on his board

natural wake of the boat or artificial features such as kickers or sliders.

Tony, originally from New Zealand, first strapped into a wakeboard in 1999, and had consistently been on NZ National podiums and represented NZ at the World Championships.

However, prior to the Inter-Services, he had almost retired from the sport, having barely been on the water over

the past five years.

Despite this his flawless repertoire of huge spins and inverts (going upside down), impressed the judges and other Services alike.

He topped this off with a fourth position in the cable event meaning he took the overall silver medal at the championships, which were held at Box End Park in Bedford,

Despite some of the athletes having never ridden behind a boat before, there were remarkable performances from both the women's and men's teams.

The boat event, consisting of a simple 'out and back' down the length of the lake, sees competitors seeking to impress the judges by jumping over the wake of the boat and performing tricks, which are marked for a number of categories, including technicality, run composition and overall impression.

The cable event allows the riders to use the static features to perform similar tricks, which are marked using the same criteria.

Despite the fun factor, the sport is not without its risks; 'tweaked knees' (due to flat water landings), muscle strains, concussions, and shredded hands (from grasping the handle) are all common injuries.

Chairman of the RNWBA Surg Lt Cdr Stephanie Ingram said: "The interest in RN wakeboarding has been astonishing. In addition to

winning an Inter-Service title at our first competition, the progression and development of the riders throughout the season has been incredible to watch.

"Further support from the RN will allow us to facilitate training, coaching and equipment into the next season, with hopefully more medals on the horizon."

The association, which has PO Matthew 'Beano' Ellison leading the men's team and POPT Lucy McKenna leading the women, was established this year and now has 90 members.

Wakeboarding is currently a Category 4 'non-recognised' sport in the RN, and the association's entry into the Inter-Service competition was only made possible due to a grant from the Sports Lottery.

The association welcomes both beginners and experienced riders to join the club, in addition to waterskiers. Anyone interested should join the Facebook group [Royal Navy Wakeboarding](#) for further information.