



# NAVY NEWS

January 2017

## Dawn of the carrier



● AN F-35B Lightning II strike fighter prepares to land on the deck of the USS America during sea trials involving Royal Navy personnel. The jets will fly from HMS Queen Elizabeth, which will make her debut in her home of Portsmouth later this year (see pages 18-19)

Picture: Darin Russell, Lockheed Martin

### Surf's up for JEF(M)

*Royal Marines take part in amphibious landings in Oman*

### Streets ahead

*Bomb disposal students learn from the best in the business*



# BEACH



## SURF'S up.

Royal Marines of 4 Assault Squadron ride a breaker on the Omani foreshore as the preliminaries to the largest amphibious exercise east of Suez last year drew to a close.

All the constituent parts of the Royal Navy's Joint Expeditionary Force – plus a few extra – and all three of the sultanate's armed forces were thrown into the combined amphibious workout, Omani Cougar 2016.

Cougar? Yes, it received its name before the RN's autumn deployment was re-branded JEF.

In keeping with almost every military codename, there are, naturally, no cougars in Oman (except perhaps in the zoos...)... but there at least were Omanis. In Oman.

Anyway... Poised in the Arabian Sea ready to move troops and their kit from ship to shore were Britain's flagship HMS Ocean, assault ship Bulwark, military ro-ro ferry MV Eddystone Point and Omani landing ship Nasr Al Bahar.

Ahead of the main assault, commandos in RIBs – the pre-landing force, assessing the

suitability of a beach for a full-scale invasion.

Because, for the Brits involved with Omani Cougar at any rate:

- the beaches and approaches were unknown;
- the terrain demanding;
- the distances challenging;
- the heat broiling (still in the mid-to-high 30s Celsius, even in November);
- the sand and dust irritating. Constantly.

In preparation for the raid on a fictitious enemy, Omani staff joined Bulwark and worked closely with their UK counterparts to command the operations.

As part of the exercise, the task group conducted air defence drills with F-16 Falcons from the Royal Air Force of Oman, landing craft training drills with the Royal Army of Oman, maritime security and boarding training with various Omani warships and helicopter operations with the Merlins of 820 Naval Air Squadron.

Every one of Bulwark's landing craft (four LCUs – big, slow – and four LCVPs – smaller,

faster) was put in the water en masse, probably the last time they'll do so from the assault ship for a while as she's laid up this winter; the squadron and their craft will move across to HMS Albion as she emerges from her lengthy slumber.

"Seeing all eight of Bulwark's landing craft work the beach and deliver in their primary role in challenging conditions set the standard for our amphibious operations in the future," said a proud Lt Jim Fuller, 4 ASRM's commander and Bulwark's amphibious operations officer.

The craft and their RM/RN crews faced no sterner test than Omani Cougar's climax: a nighttime 'over the horizon' amphibious raid by Juliet Company, 42 Commando and Omani troops making use of Bulwark, Ocean and the Omanis' landing ship Nasr Al Bahar.

After conducting a 'black light' landing ashore in the middle of the night, all forces moved quickly inland to take their objectives, sped across the desert in the Royal Marines' Viking armoured/amphibious vehicles.

"Landing Juliet Company on the beach in one cycle of darkness in our armoured

Vikings was a really worthwhile exercise for ships and marines alike," said Maj Andy Mallows RM, Officer Commanding Juliet Company."

"As we're reconfiguring as a new 'Special Purpose Task Group' for the next phase of the deployment, it was great to practise some proper amphibious warfare."

Proper amphibious warfare is almost certainly going to result in casualties.

A mile inland and a cluster of tents signified the presence of the Commando Forces Surgical Group and their makeshift medical 'centre' offering Role 2 support (performing emergency surgery/patching up a casualty for onward transport – and more protracted treatment – at a field hospital or aboard RFA Argus).

Although exercised regularly at its home base at Chivenor and around the UK, it's the first time the facility and its 16-strong staff have deployed overseas in three years.

So instead of the perils of rain and mud, sand, dust and desert heat – still over 30°C even in November – were the medics' enemies.

To keep the dust at bay – as much as possible – staff and

patients had to pass through a 'cleansing station' as the staff fought to maintain the same hygienic standards you'd expect from a hospital here in the UK.

Inside, a couple of consultant anaesthetists, orthopaedic and general surgeons, nurses and medics ready to X-Ray casualties – if necessary – operate and stabilise them before a helicopter flew in to a nearby landing site established by 42 Commando.

"When deployed in the last few years we have always been at larger facilities," explained Surg Cdr Ed Alcock, in charge of the facility.

"This exercise is a return to our roots and an opportunity to re-learn how to deploy a small mobile facility like this one in support of amphibious operations."

Among the training scenarios played out in the sands of Oman, a marine with a gunshot wound to the abdomen who needed rescuing from the battlefield by a Land Rover ambulance.

The team worked quickly and methodically to get the wounded marine on to the operating table where they checked him over for further

injuries. The general and orthopaedic surgeon scrubbed for surgery and they simulated, stabilising the abdomen before the patient was moved to the helipad and evacuated.

A surgical group the size of that which was deployed is limited by the amount of blood it can hold on site, so an attempt at resupplying from HMS Ocean was made.

The blood, vital for successful surgery, was landed on the beach by the Royal Marines and quickly transferred successfully to CFSG who were delighted as it was the first time this had been tested, apparently.

Not content with demonstrating firsts ashore, the medical team also proved – again for the very first time – that they could return surgical instruments by helicopter to Ocean and re-sterilise them in the ship's operating theatre facility.

While all this was taking place relatively close to shore, nearly 200 miles from the main exercise area – an 11-hour truck ride for the commandos of Lima and Mike Companies – were hammering away with live ammunition.



pictures: lphot paul hall, hms ocean



# HI-HEADS, BZS AND JESUS



Now you might think, given the expanses of open space in a country like Oman with its endless desert once you move inland from the often lush coastal strip, that you can let rip with military firepower pretty much anywhere.

Nope. Just as in the UK, there are dedicated ranges allocated for live firing training.

Unlike those areas in Britain, however, they immediately reminded the marines of their recent campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The training area allowed the Royal Marine Commandos to conduct live firing tactical training from four-man teams all the way up to full company assaults involving around 100 commandos supported by vehicle-mounted heavy weapons such as mortars and heavy machine-guns.

"The range offered varied terrain and our Omani partners allowed us to train quite freely with vehicles and heavy weapons," explained Maj Tom Noble, Officer in Charge of Lima Coy.

"It was also an arduous and realistic training environment,

similar to the terrain we will be conducting joint exercises in with other Gulf states when we continue our deployment with Ocean."

Beyond the infrequent opportunity to work out with all three of Oman's armed forces (the last such exercise was three years ago), much of Omani Cougar was a watershed for 2016's amphibious deployment.

While Ocean ploughed on into the Gulf to take her place as the flagship of Combined Task Force 50 (see page 5), the bulk of 42 Commando (Juliet and Mike Coys) and Bulwark turned around and headed for Somaliland.

"To execute amphibious training on this scale, in these conditions, was a real high point of this deployment, and fully demonstrates the usefulness of amphibious forces - projecting power from the sea," said Bulwark's CO Capt James Parkin.

"Omani Cougar was the product of many months of planning with our Omani partners, and was conducted in a challenging training area."

Across the Gulf of Aden - and, hence, across 'Pirate Alley' (three attacks/incidents

in 2016) lies Somaliland, the region of Somalia which roughly equates to the historic state of British Somaliland.

Here, unlike much of this troubled African nation, there is law, order, a government and apparatus thereof, such as its coastguard.

They received some training from Bulwark's assault squadron and boat teams with the aim of enhancing their abilities to protect home waters and lawful seafarers.

The training coincided with Bulwark's 15th birthday which was so low key apparently there wasn't even a cake for 500 or so sailors and Royal Marines aboard to enjoy.

But Capt Parkin did invite his youngest sailor (Chef Stan Leach, a toddler when Bulwark was launched in Barrow in November 2001), and his oldest (WOET(ME) 'Tex' Marshall) to join him for an unusual photograph, posing with the very bottle of champers (or rather what's left of it) used to launch the assault ship when Lady Walker, the wife of the Chief of Defence Staff at the time, uttered the immortal words: "I name this ship..."

She maintains an avid interest in all things Bulwark,

including spending a week aboard earlier this year.

The current mission meant a birthday visit was out of the question, but the patron did send her ship a message of goodwill.

"I remember the day of the launch particularly well, and have followed HMS Bulwark's adventures since then with pride and interest. Although the Ship is about to conduct a well-earned refit, I look forward to the next 15 years being as varied and rewarding."

After a return trip through the Bab al Mandeb narrows (protected by HMS Daring - see page 7), Bulwark became the first RN vessel into Haifa in Israel in several years.

"It's not everyday you are taking the ship at action stations through the Bab Al Mandeb and only a short time later conducting pilotage through the Suez Canal," said Lt Cdr James Robey, Bulwark's navigator.

"As my first time navigating a capital ship, the deployment has been a wonderful and challenging experience.

"It has also been a fantastic opportunity to work with so many partner nations during this deployment, such as

Egypt, Oman, Albania and the Israelis."

As well as the usual VIP/flag flying events on board, ashore a 50-strong group led by the Chaplain, Father Charles Bruzon, headed off on a two-day whistle-stop tour of the Holy Land, taking in the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem, the many religious sights and sites in Jerusalem, the Sea of Galilee at Capernaum, ending with a quick dip (well bob) in the Dead Sea (see page 27).

Among those joining the bish on his biblical tour was LWtr Natalie Parkes.

"The church service led by Father Charles by the Sea of Galilee is a memory that will undoubtedly last a lifetime," she said.

"Bulwark's was the first visit by a major Royal Navy warship to Israel for many years, so I felt honoured to be part of such an important event."

There was a final chance for the sailors and green berets to let their hair down in Barcelona, then it was time to turn for home.

"As I only finished my training last year, it has been a hugely rewarding challenge commanding a troop of 30 marines for the first time,"

said Lt Jim Hudson from 42 Commando.

"For it to have been on the Royal Navy amphibious flagship has been absolutely hoofing!

"The ship's company have been fantastic and great fun to work with - it's been a real learning curve for me and I'm certainly looking forward to future deployments."

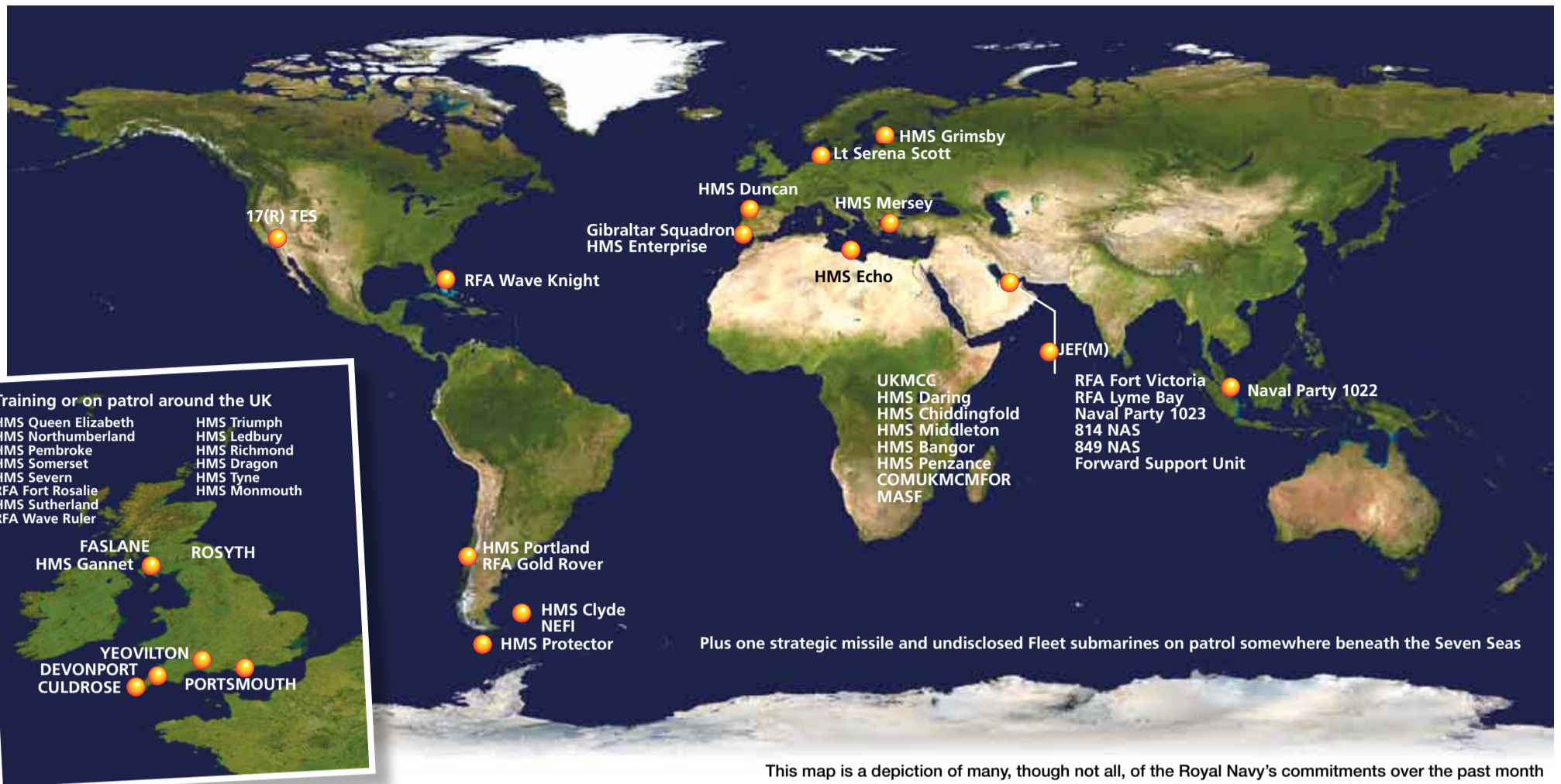
Which won't be on Bulwark. At least not for the near future. Because by the time you read this (a) Bulwark will be home in Devonport (b) winding down to go into extended readiness as her sister Albion awakens from her five-year slumber.

Bulwark goes into her hibernation with one last award to put in her trophy cabinet: capital ship of the year - the sixth year in a row she's collected the title.

"It's testament to the hard work and dedication of the hundreds of sailors and marines who have served in this amazing ship over the past 12 months," said Capt Parkin.

"I am utterly proud of, and profoundly humbled by, this fine body of men and women - and supremely grateful for the support of their families too. Bravo Zulu, Bulwark."





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

**FLEET FOCUS**  
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WELCOME to the year of the carrier. **HMS Queen Elizabeth** – the biggest warship ever built for the Royal Navy – will debut in her homeport of Portsmouth this year. We look behind the scenes at the work going on ahead of her beginning flying trials with her **F-35Bs** (see pages 18-19). In the Gulf, **820 NAS** – the first squadron due to operate aircraft from the carrier – were on duty with the current Fleet Flagship (see page 13).

Flagship **HMS Ocean**, the US Navy's premier task group in the Middle East (see page 5) is under Royal Navy command – the first time Britain has taken charge of an American naval force in the region. Ocean, along with **HMS Bulwark**, took part in a combined amphibious workout east of Suez (see pages 2-3). Omani Cougar formed part of the JEF(M) deployment.

Type 45 air defence destroyer **HMS Daring** (see page 7) has provided cover for British warships and merchant shipping sailing through the Bab al-Mandeb strait at the foot of the Red Sea.

**HMS Grimsby** (see pages 16-17) notched up a number of notable achievements during her deployment with NATO in northern Europe and the Baltic Sea.

Divers aboard Grimsby dealt with a number of historic ordnance and this month we feature an element of the training **bomb disposal** personnel may undertake (see pages 22-23). Royal Navy divers are among the instructors at a tri-Service regiment based at Defence Munitions Kineton in Warwickshire.

Enjoying a much warmer climate were the crew of **RFA Wave Knight** as she played host to Prince Harry during his Caribbean tour on behalf of the Queen (see page 21).

The crew of **HMS Scott** have been kept busy with a series of exercises ahead of a training and assessment period (see page 13). Some of her personnel took the chance to climb the highest mountain in Spain during a stopover in Gibraltar.

The crew of **HMS Enterprise** (see page 5) have been thanked for saving the lives of more than 9,000 migrants in the Mediterranean.

Two Midshipmen training at **Britannia Royal Naval College** got the chance to sail the high seas on a French Naval schooner *L'Etoile* (see page 24).

In UK territorial waters and **HMS Sutherland** (see page 11) watched Russian warship Vice Admiral Kulakov as she passed through the English Channel on her way back to Russia.

**HMS Severn** dropped normal fishery protection duties for a few days to help train submarine skippers of tomorrow in the final phase of their training and assessment on the infamous Perisher course (see page 6). **HMS Somerset** also took part.

Leeds is to be the affiliated city of new hunter-killer submarine **HMS Audacious** (see page 5).

The crew of **HMS Smiter** (see page 6) rescued a kayaker from the Solent on one of the coldest days of the winter so far.

After 18 months out of the water veteran minehunter **HMS Brocklesby** (see page 6) is back where she belongs following a massive overhaul.

Royal Navy officer Lt Serena Scott looks back on her first year as the RN's Exchange Officer at **Marineschule Mürwick**, the German equivalent to BRNC (see page 21).

The Coastal Forces Heritage Trust (see page 25) works to keep alive the illustrious history of the Royal Navy's **Coastal Forces** – and the pivotal roles they played in both the Mediterranean and Far East, as well as D-Day operations.

Finally, plans have been submitted for a new £11m building for **Royal Navy Reservists** in Cardiff Bay (see page 7). The base will house the RNR, Royal Marine Reserve and the University Royal Naval Unit.

# First Sea Lord's message to Service personnel

## Our future is strong

**R**eading the news over the past few weeks you'd be forgiven for thinking that the Royal Navy had packed up and gone home, leaving Britain undefended.

The reality is altogether different, and should be judged by action not by commentary. As First Sea Lord, I owe it to our sailors and marines, many of whom spent Christmas away from their loved ones, to ensure the country recognises how hard they are working for our island nation.

Today, the Royal Navy has 30 ships and submarines, and over 8,000 of our personnel – regular, reserve and civilian – committed to operations at home and around the world.

We continue to fulfil our standing commitments, from supporting British overseas territories in the Caribbean, Gibraltar and the Falklands to the Royal Marines' ongoing support to counter-terrorism at home. A ballistic missile submarine is currently on patrol deterring state-based threats against the UK and our NATO allies, as has been the case 24 hours a day, every day, for the last 47 years.

In Northern Europe and the Baltic, we are responding to the highest level of Russian naval activity since the end of the Cold War.

In the Mediterranean and the Aegean, we continue to work alongside our European partners to counter arms-traffickers and people smugglers, and to stem the flow of migrants.

Meanwhile in the Gulf we are working to protect international shipping in a region which is essential to the UK's economic security.

Sadly the world is less certain and less safe. But our sense of responsibility has not changed. The Royal Navy does have challenges, in people, budgets and equipment, but these must be put in perspective.

Our challenges are those of a first-rate Navy. You don't hear about the same issues in many other navies – and believe me, they exist – because they don't operate with the same sophistication or expectation.

The Type 45 destroyer is a case in point. It is a hugely innovative ship, and the propulsion systems have turned out to be less reliable than originally envisaged.



Money is now in place to put this right, but what is beyond doubt is that these ships offer one of the best anti-aircraft capabilities in the world. If they weren't up to the job then the US and French navies would not entrust them with protection of their aircraft carriers in the Gulf.

The UK, like any developed economy, has to control public spending. Difficult decisions had to be taken to balance the books and retiring the Harpoon missile system was one. That weapon was reaching the end of its life, which is why we are exploring the advanced technologies that will take its place. Last autumn the Royal Navy held the largest international gathering of autonomous systems ever staged, and we will shortly trial both an energy weapon and artificial intelligence at sea. We can be proud of these efforts. These are the technologies that will maintain our superiority over more conventional navies.

We must also ensure that the focus on our current challenges does not obscure the scale of investment which is currently taking place or its significance for the UK's place in the world.

With the cutting of steel for the future **HMS Dreadnought**, the renewal of the nuclear deterrent has begun, but it's the impending arrival of the Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers, and their air group of fifth generation fighters, that really mark the beginning of a new era.

If you need a further reminder of the practical and symbolic power coming our way, consider the international significance attached to the recent deployment of the Russian carrier *Kuznetsov* and her battle

group to the Mediterranean. When the French carrier *Charles De Gaulle* enters refit this year, Western Europe will be left without a large aircraft carrier for operations, which again highlights the strategic value that two carriers flying the White Ensign will bring to our nation, and our partnerships, in the decades ahead.

Backed by a commitment to meeting NATO's requirement to spend two per cent of GDP on defence, 2015's Defence Review mandated the necessary supporting components in place to ensure a balanced Fleet, including new F-35B Joint Strike Fighters, Type 26 frigates, Maritime Patrol Aircraft and Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships.

Crucially, the government has repeatedly stated its ambition to grow the size of the Royal Navy by the 2030s through the construction of a new class of general-purpose frigate. This will be a complex warship, able to protect and defend and to exert influence around the world, but deliberately shaped with lessons from industry to make it more exportable to our international partners.

This is hugely significant. For most of my 38-year career, the story of the Royal Navy has been one of gradual, managed contraction. Now, at long last, we have an opportunity to reverse this trend, rebuilding in particular resilience in our destroyer and frigate numbers, the backbone of a fighting Navy. This would also permit a more frequent presence in parts of the world in which we have been spread thin in recent years in order to support the UK's growing global economic ambitions.

So, rest assured, I intend to work with the government in the coming months and years to deliver their ambition for a larger Navy. Only this will ensure the Royal Navy can continue to deter our enemies, protect our people and promote our prosperity in these uncertain times.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones

## Enterprise receives Sword of Peace

THE crew of HMS Enterprise have been thanked for saving the lives of more than 9,000 migrants in the Mediterranean.

The survey ship received the Firmin Sword of Peace from Armed Forces Minister Mike Penning while alongside in Gibraltar, following their deployment on Operation Sophia.

Philip Harper, Commanding Officer of Enterprise, said: "After two-and-a-half years deployed away from the UK, and with another four months yet to run, my ship's company are very proud to have received the Firmin Sword of Peace for their lifesaving efforts."

"This award recognises not only the commitment of my sailors, but also the sacrifices made and separation endured by their families."

Mr Penning said: "Through the stellar efforts of HMS Enterprise and her crew, the Royal Navy has continued to provide vital support in the Mediterranean, saving thousands of lives."

"We remain committed to this operation, which is hitting the criminal gangs responsible for putting innocent lives at risk."

During his visit to Gibraltar, Mr Penning was given a tour of Enterprise by Cdr Harper, and presented a number of other medals and awards to individual members of the ship's company.

Enterprise's role in Operation Sophia is now being carried out by her sister ship HMS Echo.

Vessels working on tackling human smugglers and arms traffickers in the Med have so far rescued around 30,000 migrants seeking to travel to Europe.

In addition to Enterprise, several other RN ships have deployed to support operations in the Mediterranean, including HMS Bulwark, Diamond, Richmond and RFA Mounts Bay.

Following support provided to the operation since July, Mounts Bay will now return to the UK to prepare for redeployment to provide security and assurance to British overseas territories in the Caribbean. There she will be involved in counter-narcotics patrols, and will be on standby to support disaster relief operations.



# Flagship takes command of US force It's over to Ocean

**THE US Navy's premier task group in the Middle East is under Royal Navy command – the first time Britain has taken charge of an American naval force in the region.**

For three months, HMS Ocean is not merely the flagship of the UK but also flagship of Combined Task Force 50, the US Navy's premier strike force in the Middle East.

It falls to the staff of the Commander Amphibious Task Group, Cdre Andrew Burns, to choreograph the day-to-day activity of Ocean, destroyer HMS Daring and ro-ro military ferry MV Eddystone Point, plus a clutch of US destroyers.

The helicopter assault ship relieved gigantic carrier USS Dwight D Eisenhower (five times her size) as Ike completed sustained strike operations against ISIL forces in the region; her flight deck was the springboard 1,770 combat missions against ISIL forces in the region, during which its aircraft dropped more than 1,900 items of ordnance.

The emphasis during Ocean's tenure of command will be on working with American and friendly forces in the region and clamping down on any illegal activity across two and a half million square miles of ocean.

Cdre Burns said both navies maintained an "enduring presence" in the Middle East

but by taking charge of the US task group, they had begun "another chapter" in their close partnership.

Handing over responsibilities to the Brit in Eisenhower's hangar, Admiral Jim Malloy said he could not "think of a more capable officer and friend to continue the mission out here."

Ocean was visited by Prime Minister Theresa May, who said: "As Britain steps up to forge a new, positive, confident role for our country on the global stage, the Royal Navy will be an important part of our vision, pursuing our objectives of security on land and at sea and helping to ensure the free flow of international trade."

Among Ocean's first tasks as flagship was hosting the US Marine Corps' half-helicopter/half-turboprop, the second time in a year the MV-22 Osprey has made use of Britain's flagship.

The White Knights of USMC Medium Tilt Rotor Squadron 165 flew aboard Ocean in the Gulf to give the US aircrew experience of landing on a deck much smaller than the Ike, and to give RN aircraft handlers the chance to refresh skills they learned 12 months ago or, for recent arrivals, to learn new ones.

Ospreys can carry 24 troops with all their kit – a similar capacity to the Merlins of CHF – but higher (25,000ft), faster (over 300mph) and further (over 1,000 miles).



● PM Theresa May on board HMS Ocean in Bahrain with the ship's CO Capt Rob Pedre on the right  
Picture: LPhoto Ben Shread

## Audacious goes to Elland Road

AFTER six years without one of Her Majesty's warships to take under their wing, the people of Leeds now have a bond with the Royal Navy once again.

The Yorkshire powerhouse, for seven decades associated with a succession of HMS Ark Royals, will be the affiliated city of new hunter-killer submarine HMS Audacious.

The fourth of the Astute-class boats was due to be formally named (launched) by her sponsor Lady Jones (the wife of the First Sea Lord) in the gigantic Devonshire Hall at BAE's yard in Barrow as this issue of *Navy News* was printed.

Leeds' links with RN warships goes back to Ark Royal III which was 'adopted' by the city shortly before she was sunk in 1941; its inhabitants then raised around £9m to build a replacement which came in the form of Ark Royal IV, the Audacious-class carrier which served for a quarter of a century. And most recently Leeds had a strong association with the Harrier carrier.

But with her demise following the 2010 defence review, the famous name has been in abeyance – and Leeds has been shipless.

Members of Audacious' crew visited Leeds United's Elland Road home for a tour and were then seen pounding the city centre streets during the civic Armistice Day parade.

The affiliation with the football team – currently enjoying their most successful season in a decade – was cemented when the submariners were invited to attend a match.

## Lusty's last voyage

WELLWISHERS pack the Round Tower to witness the final departure of Illustrious.

The Royal Navy's former aircraft carrier left Portsmouth following a career spanning 32 years and more than 900,000 nautical miles.

In Rosyth work continues at a pace to bring HMS Queen Elizabeth to life ahead of her first entry to Portsmouth this year – and many of those on board have fond memories of Illustrious.

CPO Richard Byers, from Portsmouth, serves on board HMS Queen Elizabeth and is in charge of the ship's fire detection systems.

He said: "I was lucky enough to serve in Illustrious twice, once in 2007 and again in 2011 and I have fond memories of my time on board. But it makes me even more aware that

there are massive differences in the systems that I worked on then compared with what I work on now."

LA(AH) George Medcalf, who served on board Illustrious for two-and-a-half years at the start of his career, said: "I really enjoyed my time on Illustrious and I'm sad to say goodbye to the ship but I had good times on board."

Illustrious was commissioned in 1982 at the end of the successful mission to liberate the Falkland Islands and took part in a range of operations until 2014, including evacuating Britons from the Lebanon in 2006 and delivering humanitarian aid after Typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippines in 2013.

The ship will now be recycled by Leyal Ship Recycling Ltd in Turkey.





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## Fruitful visit to Kiwi Navy's 75th birthday

THE most senior officer in the RN – First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones – and the most senior rating – Warrant Officer Naval Service WO1 Steve Cass – pose for a quick shot on the flight deck of HMNZS Otago as the Commonwealth navy celebrates its 75th birthday.

The frigate was flagship for a fleet review in Auckland Harbour as Governor General Dame Patsy Reddy took the salute from eight New Zealand and international warships – from China, Australia, Korea and Japan, Indonesia and India – joined by VIPs.

The two-hour-long sail past, during which the Otago was accompanied by a waka – Maori war canoe – was the high point of six weeks of celebrations and commemorations, codenamed Operation Neptune after the cruiser, largely crewed by Kiwis, was lost with all but one hand in the Mediterranean in December 1941.

Given commitments elsewhere, the RN was unable to provide a vessel for the review, but the Royal Marines Band Portsmouth made the 23,000-mile round trip to perform at various events.

“It really was the most impressive series of events, and the Royal New Zealand Navy delivered in splendid style, despite the devastating damage and disruption in Kiakoura and elsewhere caused by an earthquake the week before,” said WO1 Cass.

## Richmond fills RBL's coffers in Cardiff

HMS Richmond paid her first visit to Cardiff in more than a dozen years, helping to raise at least £18,000 for the Royal British Legion's key annual fundraising campaign.

Sailors from the Portsmouth-based frigate threw themselves into supporting the Poppy Appeal and remembrance weekend events around the Welsh capital.

The Principality (formerly Millennium) Stadium hosted a capacity crowd of more than 55,000 rugby fans... and the Aussies for an autumn international. The visitors ran out 32-8 winners, so most of the crowd went home disappointed – but not before they'd pumped £18,000 into the collecting tins and buckets.

A busy Saturday concluded with the RBL Wales Festival of Remembrance, where a contingent of sailors represented Richmond.

The Sunday of the visit saw the gangway opened to 3,000 members of the public for a look around and to hear the RN story from the mouths of sailors.

Spreading the Navy word continued on the final day of the stay in Cardiff as groups of sailors hit schools and colleges.

# Kayaker saved by HMS Smiter

A COASTGUARD helicopter pulls away from HMS Smiter after the patrol boat's crew rescued a 61-year-old kayaker from the Solent on one of the coldest days of the winter.

A student aboard the P2000 spied a black object in the water off Lee-on-the-Solent as the boat and RNLI responded to an SOS: a kayaker had capsized and was unable to right himself in his craft.

Smiter, which was conducting a regular weekend patrol with students from universities in London, responded to the Mayday around lunchtime on Sunday November 27.

Lookouts quickly sighted the overturned kayak near a cluster of yachts, but there was no sign of the kayaker himself.

Thanks to the vessel's height advantage over the RNLI's speedboats, he was spotted a few minutes later about a mile away from his craft by second-year medical student OC Sam Martin.

“He reported a black floating object and we went to investigate,” explained Lt Stephanie Buttery, Smiter's Commanding Officer.

“As we got closer realised it was a man. We tried to recover him by the pilot ladder but he

was in and out of consciousness, so we set up the recovery stretcher used for unconscious casualties.

“Once he was onboard we offered initial first aid in company with the local RNLI who were onboard by now and I began coordinating with the Coastguard.”

The Coastguard helicopter quickly appeared and the casualty was winched to safety, before being flown to hospital in Southampton. The whole rescue operation lasted just 30 minutes.

“As a university student it is great to get out of the lecture theatre and get aboard a P2000,” said Sam.

“To be on a ship during a winch recovery is not something many university students experience.

“It was fantastic to be a part of putting into practice what we learn as smoothly as was done by ship's company and students alike; this only reinforces why we learn what we do. It was such a coincidence to receive a Mayday call of a man in the water shortly after we finished a man overboard exercise. We all wish the kayaker a speedy recovery.”



## From T-boat target to FOST's favourite

IN THE (slightly blurry) cross-hairs of a prospective submarine commander is HMS Severn – and beyond evasive manoeuvres, there's not a lot she can do about it.

The patrol ship dropped normal fishery protection duties for a few days to help train submarine skippers of tomorrow in the final ‘live action’ phase of their training and assessment on the infamous Perisher course.

After a few days of high-speed manoeuvres with the Trafalgar-class submarine and Severn playing cat and mouse in close proximity, Perisher closed with a day-night exercise with the added frisson of HMS Somerset entering the fray.

The frigate was charged with hunting down the submarine – and making sure Severn, playing the role of a vital supply ship, was not torpedoed.

Hugging the coast disguised as a fishing vessel with her radars switched off, running different engine configurations and with bright lights flooding the cargo deck, Severn did her utmost to remain undetected and watched the game of hunter and hunted from a safe distance.

Having helped train submariners, the boat was on the other foot when Severn herself had to undergo ten days of intensive assessment of her own: Operational Sea Training.

All 45 sailors – rather than the usual 30 – were aboard for (deep breath) 12 damage control exercises fighting simulated fires and floods; two ‘safety of life at sea’ events involving boarding a damaged vessel to provide assistance; machinery breakdowns; force protection exercises and live firing shoots using the main 20mm cannon and machine-guns.

Over the ten-day appraisal, the ship carried out 21 pilotages, going to a buoy three times, to anchor twice and to sea each morning then alongside each night to undergo inspections.

Having never been in charge of the emergency sea party before, ET(ME) Dominic Bell particularly impressed the assessors for his zeal in dealing with the chaos the FOST staff caused.

“Being given a position of authority and responsibility like this is such a great motivator,” said the junior engineer. “I was shocked when I was chosen, but eager to take up the position.”

His hard work – and that of his shipmates – paid off for Severn received a ‘very satisfactory’ assessment from the FOSTies (who normally pronounce RN vessels ‘satisfactory’), with the logistics department singled out for praise, earning a ‘good’ rating and the unofficial accolade of the best FOST staff had seen in 18 months.

## Brock back in the dock

SAFER, faster, cheaper (to run), ‘minehunter’ and now wetter.

After 18 months out of the water veteran minehunter HMS Brocklesby is back where she belongs, with the waters of Portsmouth Harbour lapping at her 196ft hull.

The ship is the latest Hunt-class vessel to undergo a massive overhaul, chiefly focused on replacing old Deltic diesel engines, which powered her successfully for 33 years, with much more efficient, modern Caterpillar motors which should significantly cut her fuel bill.

Other systems have been

serviced and, where necessary, replaced, a new chilled water plant installed and her decks and hull have been treated, repaired and re-painted – some 9,000 maintenance tasks in all, requiring 190,000 ‘man hours’ (or the equivalent of one person working solidly for more than 21 years).

Marine engineer PO John Benson said: “We are looking forward now to getting onboard.”

The refit continues afloat in the dockyard, ahead of harbour and sea trials, Operational Sea Training in the summer and active duties in the autumn.

# Review offers blueprint for UK shipbuilding

RECOMMENDATIONS aimed at transforming the UK's shipbuilding industry have been welcomed by the head of the Royal Navy.

Shipbuilding expert Sir John Parker identified key areas where government and industry must invest in order for UK shipbuilding to thrive.

Sir John said the Royal Navy was keeping vessels in service “well beyond their sell-by date” because their replacements were ordered too late by Whitehall.

He warned there was a lack of urgency to finish ships, changes to designs and specifications added to delays and costs and there was a failure by those at the top to ‘grip’ these expensive projects.

The net result, said Sir John, was a “vicious cycle” which was “depleting the RN Fleet and unnecessarily costing the taxpayer.”

Sir John, who previously was in charge of Harland and Wolff in Belfast and

Babcock International, among other companies, was asked by the government in March last year to look into the way the Navy buys its ships.

The results of his eight-month study will help the government draft its National Shipbuilding Strategy.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones welcomed the report's recommendations, saying Sir John had recognised the “latent potential” and “capacity” in the wider UK shipbuilding sector.

“The Royal Navy now has a hugely ambitious growth agenda for the first time in a generation,” he said, with an increased defence budget and the opportunity to grow the Navy. “That is a hugely ambitious and optimistic place to be and I am determined to make sure that right across the nation people recognise that their Navy is ready to respond to that and grow in an appropriate way, and I think that is good news.”

Sir John said he understands that modern warships are hugely complex machines, but says that alone does not explain why it takes so long to conceive, design and build.

A class of four giant cruise liners – much larger than the Royal Navy's new aircraft carriers – can be designed, ordered, built and delivered in just six years.

For the smaller Type 23 frigate the process took around 23 years for 16 ships.

For its successor, the Type 26, the timescale likely to be around three decades.

Sir John said investment was needed in modern digital engineering, industrial innovation, competitiveness, apprenticeship and jobs, and the government needed an export focus.

He said that despite the MOD possessing “many highly competent and committed individuals”, too many people had too much say at times in the process.

Sir John said industry and government

did not look hard enough at the export market. For Type 31s, Sir John recommends a separate lead yard or alliance as the best way forward.

In terms of industrial strategy, Sir John identified a ‘renaissance in UK shipbuilding’ and recommended that other yards across the UK should be considered to build future Naval ships in a ‘virtual shipbuilding model.’

Sir John said warships should be built in British yards for national security reasons and to sustain the UK's shipbuilding capability.

Although the RFA Tide-class tankers are being built in South Korea, Sir John suggests that industry, using the virtual shipbuilding model approach, could compete effectively against international competitors for future RFA vessels.

The government will publish its response to the report – and implementation plan – in the spring.

# State-of-the-art warships work together Deepening friendship

**TYPE 45 destroyer HMS Daring has protected merchant vessels and Royal Navy ships sailing through the Bab al-Mandeb strait.**

The Portsmouth-based warship has provided reassurance in the region, being equipped to tackle possible air and surface threats with her combination of surveillance radars and Sea Viper missiles.

The destroyer also escorted the Navy's Joint Expeditionary Force task group including Devonport-based HMS Bulwark, flagship HMS Ocean, and the MV Eddystone Point.

Around 95 per cent of Britain's economic activity depends upon the sea and a vast amount of global trade passes through the region.

HMS Daring is one of six destroyers, and continues the role her sister ship HMS Defender carried out earlier this year.

"An island nation needs a strong shipping industry and a strong shipping industry needs military support and protection," said Jonathan Roberts, of the UK Chamber of Shipping.

"The Royal Navy is the best of the best. There is no safer pair of hands in the world and the work they do in protecting UK ships, and the goods and people they carry, is deeply appreciated and respected."

Daring operates with the Royal Navy's newest type of helicopter – the Wildcat Mk2 – which extends the ship's capability beyond the horizon and uses its cutting-edge targeting system and surveillance radar to help reduce the threat of waterborne attack.

The ship has also been operating as part of Combined Task Force 150, and will use its Royal Navy and Royal Marines boarding teams to conduct counter piracy, counter terrorist and counter smuggling operations.

Its main effort is to disrupt terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and Al Shabab and deter piracy and other unlawful activities at sea



● Personnel aboard the JS Suzutsuki wave farewell to HMS Daring in the Gulf of Aden

in an area spanning from the Suez Canal, through the Red Sea, Indian Ocean and into the Gulf of Oman.

"We're proud to be helping keep ships in the region remain safe but it only represents a fraction of what the Royal Navy does," said Commander Philip Dennis, the CO of Daring.

"With 8,000 people deployed, from HMS Portland in the South Atlantic to HMS Ocean in the Gulf, the Royal Navy is meeting commitments around the globe while investing in new technology."

Having safeguarded shipping, Daring's focus shifted to counter-terrorism/smuggling/piracy in the shipping lanes of the Middle East.

And there she found the JS Suzutsuki, also assigned to Combined Task Force 150, the international force of warships drawn from around half a dozen nations committed to maritime security.

The rare link-up between the two destroyers

afforded a two-day break from the routine of prowling hundreds of miles of ocean.

Sailors from the two ships traded places to experience life aboard the respective vessels for what the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force – the official title of Japan's Navy – called "mutual understanding with the British Navy and deepening of friendship".

Bridge teams practised some joint manoeuvring, communications teams made sure Daring and Suzutsuki – Japanese for 'clear moon' – could talk to each other over the airwaves (English being the common language used), before the Japanese launched their version of the Blackhawk helicopter to record the movements of the two ships on camera.

"It was a real privilege to work with our Japanese counterparts, even for a brief time," said Cdr Dennis.

Daring worked with Suzutsuki's older sister Teruzuki after providing assistance to the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan in 2013.

## £11m home planned for Reserves in Wales

PLANS have been submitted for a new £11m home for Royal Navy Reservists in Cardiff Bay.

The base, an artist's impression of which is shown below, will house the RNR, Royal Marines Reserve and the University Royal Naval Unit.

The project will be delivered by the Reserve Forces' & Cadets' Association for Wales (RFCWA) in partnership with the Royal Navy and Associated British Ports (ABP), who have offered the Navy a long-term lease on the waterfront site.

The new build will provide state-of-the-art training and classroom suites, accommodation, administrative services, as well as social and fitness facilities. There will also be access to the waterfront and docking facilities for visiting warships.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock said: "The Royal Navy has a strong connection to South Wales and this investment reflects the Royal Navy's continued commitment to the area. This project reflects

the high value we place on our Reserves Forces and an appreciation of the support the South Wales' communities give to our Armed Forces."

The site will provide shared facilities for three Naval units, the RNR unit HMS Cambria, the Royal Marines Reserves Cardiff Detachment and Wales URNU.

CO of Cambria Cdr Steve Fry said: "We are very excited about this project. This significant investment will provide great opportunities for our Reservists and for anyone wishing to be part of the Reserve Forces. The site is the perfect location to meet our requirements."

James Cooper, ABP Chief Executive, said: "We are proud to be chosen to develop a facility that will play such a vital role in the Service's future. The port and its customers play a significant role in the regional economy, supporting 2,000 jobs, and there is considerable room for expansion."

If planning permission is granted it is hoped that work will start this year and be completed by 2019.



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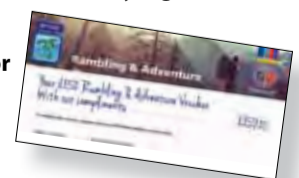
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# Hammon toast for URNU crew's efforts



Picture: LPhoto Dave Jenkins, FRPU East

WHEN we heard the entire 1st Patrol Boat Squadron were getting together in Portsmouth, we had visions of a truly impressive, unique sight.

Sixteen P2000s zipping along in formation. Magnificent.

Ok, maybe 14. Scratch HMS Raider and Tracker off the list as they're needed to provide protection for Faslane.

Still, 14 would still be a truly impressive, unique sight.

We got two.

HMS Ranger (P293) and HMS Smiter (P272).

What we did get, however, was all 14 crews together, plus the squadron staff headed by Cdr Mark Hammon, all squeezed aboard the two boats in Portsmouth ahead of a three-day conference.

Each boat is used to immerse 14 university students at a time in the world of the Senior Service as part of the University Royal Naval Units scattered across England, Wales and Scotland. Thanks to their size they can reach parts of the UK (and beyond) many RN vessels cannot... and fly the flag for the Senior Service accordingly.

But the craft are increasingly called upon to support duties across the RN: navigation/final exercise training at Dartmouth, playing the part of fast attack craft as larger ships go through Operational Sea Training; providing security and transport for the Jutland 100 events in Orkney; and acting as targets for the RAF (their size – not 70ft long, manoeuvrable and capable of 20-22kts).

And the RN is also increasingly making use of them

to give junior sailors – officers and ratings – greater experience and autonomy than elsewhere in the Fleet.

The ablest warfare officers might be in command of a P2000 within four years of entering Dartmouth, while leading hands might find themselves as the boat's marine engineer officer, a post traditionally held by a senior rating.

Autumn – when many 'freshers' have just joined the URNUs and the boats themselves are undergoing some maintenance – presented Cdr Hammon with the rare chance of getting his men and women together to discuss the state of the squadron, plans and programmes for the future, and a spot of team building.

There was, said Cdr Hammon, much to celebrate in the squadron over the past 12 months. Every boat has now completed the engine upgrades, which means they're no longer limited to 14kts, but can now reach 20kts – making them much more useful vessels for wider RN training.

Collectively, the P2000s sailed 38,000 miles – one and a half times around the world – over the summer alone as they gave students an extended insight into naval life, ranging around Europe (55 ports in 16 countries, including Bruges, Exeter and the Caledonian Canal).

"The conference was a great opportunity to improve squadron efficiency by building our corporate knowledge and to learn lessons from our counterparts," said Cdr Hammon.

"It has been a fantastic opportunity for me to brief the entirety of the squadron and for us to build the *esprit de corps* which sustains our operations."

# UTC students enjoy taste of life as Navy engineers

## Tyne takes world role

STUDENTS from five University Technical Colleges have been visiting Royal Navy training establishments and a state-of-the-art warship to find out what engineering is like at the sharp end.

More than 50 students, all from UTCs affiliated to the Royal Navy, visited the Type 45 destroyer HMS Dauntless and training establishments HMS Collingwood and HMS Sultan to look at hands-on air, marine and weapon engineering.

The young engineers came from five UTCs that are affiliated to the Royal Navy – Scarborough, South Wiltshire, Bristol, Derby and Plymouth.

The students lived on a ship for the week.

Nathan Munday, 14, a student from Scarborough UTC, said: "I found the RN visit very inspirational towards my career choices and it gave me an idea about the lifestyle of being in the Navy, which I thoroughly enjoyed."

Fellow student Jack Mitchell, 14, said: "The week was fun and interesting and I liked meeting new people and making friends; I liked going to the military bases and going into the helicopters and experiencing what it's like to be in one. I want to be a vehicle mechanic."

Freddie Pitchford, 14, also studying engineering at Scarborough UTC, said: "The engineering opportunities and the other curricular activities were extremely enjoyable and very interesting."

"I made many new friends and met new people, and I learnt a significant amount about the engineering opportunities and really enjoyed my time."

CPO Andy Hampson said: "Hosting the UTC students has been a real pleasure and given us the opportunity to showcase the full range of engineering opportunities available within the Royal Navy."

"It was great to see the students get involved with some of the hands-on practical tasks whilst also having the chance to sample what life on board is really like."



● Left: POAET Dwain Powell talks to one of the students at HMS Sultan; Above: CO of 824 NAS Cdr Ian Fraser with students at RNAS Culdrose

Pictures: PO(Phot)s Paul A'Barrow and Nicola Harper

WO1 Stu Clayton added: "It was encouraging to see the level of engagement and enthusiasm of the students that attended."

"I am sure they all benefited from the experience whether or not they decide to join the Royal Navy at some time in the future."

"I'm looking forward to further opportunities to work with our affiliated UTCs in the future, particularly those that attend the Junior Leaders Field Gun competition later this year."

The Royal Navy is supporting the next generation of engineers by working closely with the affiliated UTCs to help develop skilled individuals that will support industry and help address the national shortage of engineers.

The Service is committed to the enduring success of the UTC concept by providing access to world-class facilities and technical expertise to enrich the development of UTC students.

■ SIXTY young students from

11 schools in Cornwall have taken part in the annual Merlin Engineering Challenge at 824 NAS, RNAS Culdrose.

Run by engineering firm Lockheed Martin, students had to devise a mechanism to recover a Merlin helicopter that had crashed in the desert, using the quickest possible method.

Commander of Air and Engineering Jeff Bell judged the competition, and announced that Camborne Science and International Academy was the winning team.

He was particularly impressed by their "pulley system and lightweight frame" as well as the "enthusiasm and fun they brought to the event."

Emily Brown, who was on the winning team, said: "It feels amazing to have won, we are so ecstatic."

"I have always wanted to work at RNAS Culdrose as an engineer, so to be here has been a dream for me."

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# Appointment with an admiral

HMS SUTHERLAND monitors Russian warship Vice Admiral Kulakov, an Udaloy-class destroyer, as she passes through UK territorial waters and those of other NATO member states.

Vice Admiral Kulakov had been operating in the Eastern Mediterranean; she was under escort by NATO warships during her return journey, which took her through the English Channel.

In a routine example of the work conducted by the Royal Navy's Fleet Ready Escort, Type 23 frigate HMS Sutherland deployed from Devonport Naval Base early on Saturday December 3 to a position at the western edge of the English Channel in good time to meet the Kulakov as she arrived in UK waters.

Sutherland's job, along with her NATO colleagues, was to keep a watchful eye on the Russian ship, providing

reassurance to the nations that border the North Sea and English Channel.

The frigate also kept track of Kulakov's position and movements, reporting them to the NATO Maritime Commander's Headquarters on the outskirts of London.

Remaining at a respectful distance, but with the Russian warship clearly visible, the Royal Navy sailors kept watch on every movement through their binoculars and used state-of-the-art radars to track her course and speed.

Cdr Trish Kohn, Commanding Officer of Sutherland, said: "This transit is being continually monitored through a coordinated response between the Royal Navy and our NATO partners.

"The transit of Russian ships from the Mediterranean to their northern ports is not unusual, but the Royal Navy is ready at all times to protect UK

territorial waters."

Sutherland has been tasked with patrolling the seas around the UK since the summer, holding the duties of Fleet Ready Escort; this follows the work of Portsmouth-based Type 23 HMS Richmond and Type 45 HMS Duncan earlier last year.

In addition to being able to carry out escort duties, Sutherland is also a highly capable submarine-hunter, fitted with the latest towed array sonar and the advanced Merlin Mk2 helicopter, able to find and track submarines that may attempt to enter UK or allied waters undetected.

This vital work can result in the ship staying at sea on operational tasks for weeks and sometimes months at a time, protecting the nation's seas and supporting the Trident submarines which provide the United Kingdom's strategic nuclear deterrent.

Pictures: LPhoto Dave Jenkins



JANUARY 1917. A world still at war, a war still bogged down in seemingly unbreakable stalemate.

Fighting on the Western Front had largely closed down for the winter after the bloodiest year of battles yet. The front line had shifted little over the previous 12 months, despite the holocausts on the Somme and at Verdun which cost the warring nations 1.8 million casualties.

The Eastern Front proved far less rigid, but still the great offensive by the Tsar's armies to capture Warsaw and Lemberg had stalled after an advance of no more than 30 miles and around one million Russian casualties.

The Romanians had thrown their hat in the ring on the Allied side during the summer. By December their capital had fallen to the Germans.

In the Mediterranean, Ottoman troops had tried to take the Sinai peninsula, only to be repulsed by the British who, in turn, tried – and failed – to take the fortress of Gaza as part of a thrust into the Holy Land.

The war at sea had also failed to deliver victory. The only clash of the British and German Fleets during the

entire war proved to be a serious disappointment to the Royal Navy and a momentary fillip to the morale of its foe... which found itself mostly bottled up in its North Sea ports and the British blockade of its merchant traffic unbroken; coupled with a poor harvest, it meant Germans were beginning to starve. Germany turned to a root vegetable for its salvation. Her people dubbed 1916-17 'the turnip winter'.

Enforcing the blockade of the North Sea was a reminder that the war at sea was unrelenting – and neither Allied or Central Powers slackened their efforts, even in the depths of winter.

On the ninth day of the new year, aged battleship HMS Cornwallis (pictured below) was making her way back to Malta after a patrol of the eastern Mediterranean.

The Middle Sea was a subsidiary theatre; the best men and equipment were dispatched to the Western Front, the latest, most

powerful warships to the North Sea.

Every one of the battleships assigned to the RN's Mediterranean Fleet predated HMS Dreadnought, the revolutionary capital ship which rendered all before her obsolete.

Though outdated, Cornwallis had performed sterling service, particularly to the troops fighting in Gallipoli. The battleship provided gunfire support throughout the doomed Dardanelles campaign, from attempting to charge the narrows, to pounding Turkish positions on the first day of the invasion and hammering enemy lines at Suvla during the evacuation (which proved far more successful than the initial landings...); she dropped 6,500 large and medium calibre shells down on Ottoman positions in three days – 90 rounds an hour.

Also on patrol this Tuesday, veteran German submarine U-32 which had been transferred from northern waters to the Austro-Hungarian base at Pola (today Pula in Croatia) to ensure the Allies did not treat the Mediterranean as *mare nostrum*.

In command, 29-year-old Kapitänleutnant Kurt Hartwig – a contemporary of Wilhelm Canaris, Hitler's future spy chief – and among the Kaiser's most able submariners (he would end the war as Germany's 14th most successful U-boat ace with more than 190,000 tonnes of shipping dispatched to a watery grave).

On the seventh, Hartwig had sunk the Italian steamer Rosalia L about 140 miles from Malta. Now, just 70 miles off the British island, the Cornwallis crossed his path. He sent a torpedo into her starboard side.

Fourteen men were instantly killed, most of them stokers and most of them from Chatham. But counter-flooding and damage control efforts by the 700 crew kept her afloat. Perhaps she might survive the ordeal.

Or perhaps not. It took Kurt Hartwig 75 minutes to manoeuvre his boat into position for a second shot. It dealt the killer blow. Within half an hour, HMS Cornwallis was gone, the 13th largest warship sunk by U-boat.

The ship's official chroniclers waxed lyrically about her demise, painting an almost peaceful picture of her death

throes. Cornwallis was more than a man o'war, they wrote, but a home to hundreds of souls; some men had spent five years aboard.

"The bosun's mate piped the old ship down," they recalled. *The Song of Simeon* was carried across the sea as the Mediterranean closed over the hull.

The surviving crew were transferred to Malta. Hartwig returned to Pola. He would command U-32 for another nine months, sinking another 18 merchantmen and earning the 'German VC', Pour le Mérite – the coveted Blue Max – for his efforts.

After a refit over the winter, U-32 resumed patrols in the spring of 1918 under a new commander, Kurt Albrecht. She returned to her old hunting ground around Malta where she was depth charged by HMS Wallflower on May 8. All 41 souls aboard were killed.

■ This photograph (Q 21122) 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](http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/photographs), or by calling 0207 416 5309.



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# Tamar and Spey to join OPV fleet

WORK has begun on the first of two more Offshore Patrol Vessels for the Royal Navy.

HMS Tamar and Spey will join Forth, Medway and Trent, with the first vessel due to enter service next year.

The contract with BAE Systems includes £287m for the building of Tamar and Spey as well as support for all five ships, taking the total value to £635m.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin pressed the button on a plasma cutting machine at BAE's Govan shipyard to cut the first steel on Tamar.

Iain Stevenson, Managing Director of BAE Systems Naval Ships, said: "Our investment in the latest digital design technologies and new processes is enabling us to deliver equipment of the highest

quality at the lowest possible cost."

Tamar and Spey will be manufactured at Govan before being floated to Scotstoun to be fitted out. They are expected to be delivered in 2019.

Like the other vessels of their class, they will carry out counter-terrorism, anti-piracy, anti-smuggling and maritime defence operations, and are expected to be equipped with a 30mm cannon and a flight deck capable of receiving a Merlin helicopter.

Displacing around 2,000 tonnes, they will have a maximum speed of 24 knots and will be able to sail 5,500 nautical miles before having to resupply.

The first OPV, Forth, entered the water in August last year and is due to be delivered to the RN in the second half of this year.

Medway is due to be floated up in the spring, while Trent is undergoing construction at Govan.



# Summit to be proud of...

FIVE sailors from HMS Scott enjoy the sunrise at the peak of the highest mountain in Spain.

The group headed to Mulhacén in the Sierra Nevada range during the ship's visit to Gibraltar for her fleet support period.

At 3,479m it is the highest mountain in both continental Spain and the Iberian Peninsula, as well as the third most prominent peak in Western Europe after Mont Blanc and Mount Etna.

Organised by AB Pusser Hill, the trekkers included LS(HM) Bully Bullivant, ET(ME)s Paddy Conlan and Smudge Smith and LMA Chelle Carter. The group climbed for five hours for two days, with a final two-hour climb on day three to the summit, where they were rewarded with breathtaking views.

"This has been my first opportunity to use my qualification as a Mountain Leader and it provided a valuable opportunity for me and some of my colleagues to achieve something really rewarding in our own time," said AB Hill.

"Although not the most technically challenging mountain, it is perfect for beginners as it provides a very challenging environment with sub-zero temperatures and high altitude as well as some incredible views."

Back onboard the ocean survey ship and the crew carried out a series of exercises ahead of its Deployed Continuation Operational Sea Training - DCOST.

This month will see a six-day training and

assessment package, like an OFSTED, to ensure Scott is safe to continue her deployment in the coming months.

Preparations started with whole ship Damage Control Low Level Drills where, in each scenario the ship has sustained damage. Crew were divided into groups to co-ordinate personnel and construct 'builds' from equipment held onboard in order to stem the flow of water into the vessel.

It fell to assessors CPO(SR) 'Stevie' Doyle and PO(HM) 'Richie' Faulkner to ensure that everything that they have learned on their Basic Sea Survival Course can be remembered and applied correctly.

The ship's company then moved on to both fire-fighting and damage-control exercises with a scenario in which the Devonport-based ship had collided with a shipping container on the starboard bow. Throw in a couple of casualties that, of course, had to be carefully looked after, and everybody was kept pretty busy.

"We have tried to make these training exercises as interactive and enjoyable as possible ensuring that every member of the ship's company is able to participate and learn something," said CPO Doyle. "Ultimately, whether we are under assessment or not, it is important that any member of the ship's company knows what to do if a real incident were to occur."

Training will continue over the next couple of months, alongside Scott's primary survey tasks.



# Flying Fish prepare for carrier role

FROM one flagship to another...a Merlin Mk2 from 820 NAS lands on HMS Ocean in the Gulf.

Later this year the squadron - known as the Flying Fish - will fly the first aircraft to land onboard HMS Queen Elizabeth as she sails from Rosyth to make her debut in her homeport of Portsmouth.

As well as 820 NAS, a Merlin Mk2 from 814 NAS, AKA the Flying Tigers, also provided support to Ocean.

Both crews spent Christmas in the Gulf supporting Commander Task Force 50, Cdre Andrew Burns.

Both squadrons are no strangers to the Gulf, having operated in the region over the last ten years in a number of roles.

The aircraft and crews are familiar with HMS Ocean having spent time training with her on several occasions over the past six months preparing for the deployment.

For a number of the squadron though this is their first time living and working at sea which brings its own challenges.

AET Alex McGeorge said: "Being at sea is completely different to being at Culdrose and it took a little while for everyone to find their sea legs."

"My training has really helped though. Don't get me wrong, sharing a mess deck with 30 other lads is something you have to get used to, but the banter makes it all right



and I've realised just how little space I really need for my kit.

"We live together in the same messdeck, and work together in the hangar and on the flight deck to make sure the helos are ready for flying."

The Flying Tigers embarked with pilot Lt Nick Grimmer (he of the rescued cat fame, see page 26), who was keen to build on his operational experience.

"The deployment of the Flying Tigers has been a brilliant experience for our engineers and aircrew," said Lt Grimmer.

"It has taken them from a land base in the Middle East, on to RFA Fort Victoria and

then onto the UK's Fleet Flagship HMS Ocean.

"The training and operational opportunity is second to none. This is what we joined up for."

Ocean's Air Group is being commanded by 820's Lt Cdr Edwin Cooper, who said: "820 NAS are proud to serve on board the Fleet Flagship."

"With our two Merlin multi-mission helicopters, we are at a high level of operational readiness to assist CTF50 and protect our national interests."

"Our embarked time will also prepare us well for the first helicopter operations from the deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth."

Pictures: LPhot Ben Shread





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**THE JOURNEY DOES NOT HAVE TO END!**

# 'Harrier was amazing but F-35's miles ahead'

THAT'S the verdict of CPO Rob Warnett, pictured in front of both aircraft at Patuxent River in Maryland.

During his near-20 years in the Royal Navy, the engineer has worked on both jets, and got the chance to be reacquainted with the Sea Harrier at the Naval Air Station.

The former Royal Navy aircraft is owned by Art Nalls, the only person in the world to privately own a working Harrier jump jet.

The aircraft, which Art rebuilt, now lives at St Mary's County Regional Airport – less than eight miles from Pax River.

Art is a former USMC pilot who retired in 1989. After building up a property empire he started buying planes, including a Russian Yak-3 fighter and a Czech L-39 Albatros, and purchased the FA2 Sea Harrier around ten years ago.

Rob is now the UK F-35B Mechanical and Low Observable Systems Specialist at the Integrated Test Force at Pax, taking part in the final stages of initial testing for the F-35B ahead of its first-of-class trials on board HMS Queen Elizabeth next year.

"The Harrier was an amazing aircraft to see fly, although it wasn't without its challenges to maintain," said Rob.

"In a lot of cases you had to be pretty dexterous to accomplish the more difficult tasks and in some cases you needed to be able to 'see' by touch; it certainly was not an aircraft designed with maintenance in mind!

"The stories of having to dismantle the aircraft to such a deep level to merely change the engine still amazes (and baffles) many. To go from an aircraft such as the Harrier, with everything connected by rods, linkages, cables etc, and move

to an aircraft such as the F-35 is certainly a quantum leap in design.

"The F-35 is a very clever aircraft with so many sophisticated and novel design features that I still find myself being amazed even after all of these years on the programme, and those features are still being improved upon now.

"From a maintenance perspective, the F-35 is miles ahead of the Harrier. Components are a lot more accessible and overall it is a lot more mechanically reliable, with more onus now put towards software."

Rob began his RN career on 899 NAS at RNAS Yeovilton before moving on to 801 NAS; he served on Operation Southern Watch, maintaining the no-fly zone over southern Iraq as well as on Operation Palliser in Sierra Leone in 2000.

He was then drafted to Sea Harrier Aircraft Maintenance Group before rejoining 801 NAS.

After promotion to LAEM, and with the imminent demise of the Harrier, Rob volunteered for an early move to RAF Cottesmore to join the new Joint Force Harrier. He was part of the initial integration into 3 (Fighter) Squadron with the Harrier GR7/7A before operational tours in HMS Invincible and in Afghanistan.

When 800 NAS reformed as a Harrier GR squadron Rob pretty much carried out every available job, from a Grubber Sup to AEO Wtr and carried out a further two tours in Afghanistan and further deployments in Invincible.

After he was picked up for PO he returned to RAF Cottesmore to Harrier Depth Support, running a maintenance and modification bay prior to aircraft rebuild and flight test phase.

In 2011, when it was announced the Harrier was to be retired, Rob widened his engineering knowledge by joining 7 Air Assault Battalion REME at Wattisham Airfield working on the Apache AH Mk1 Attack Helicopter and did another tour of Afghanistan.

Not long after returning to the UK he was told he had been picked to represent the RN and UK as one of the 'Early 12' engineers on the F-35 programme.

Rob initially trained at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida with the US Marine Corps Fighter Attack Training Squadron – VMFAT-501, known as the Warlords – before moving over to California to help establish 17(R) Test and Evaluation Squadron at Edwards Air Force Base.

"I, along with my RAF counterpart, would also travel back to Eglin to help author and test the maintainer ground running course along with USAF, USN and USMC maintainers; we would both subsequently become the UK's first maintainer ground runners for the UK and our respective Services," said Rob.

"I have been very privileged to be part of many pivotal moments in Fleet Air Arm history. These have seen me serve on board the carriers HMS Illustrious and Invincible, as well as partake in the iconic history of the Harrier to now be helping to shape the future of Naval aviation on the groundbreaking F-35B Lightning II.

"The F-35 is by far the most advanced aircraft the RN has ever operated, even before you take into account its stealth capabilities, and it is a pleasure to be part of spearheading the UK in this globally-joint venture – and I look forward to seeing her operate from the QEC."

■ F-35B sea trials, see pages 18-19



● Capt Brown stands in front of the Vampire following the first landing by a jet on the flight deck of a Royal Navy carrier

## Legendary aviator's medals find new home at Yeovilton

THE medals, photographs and log books of the Navy's – and nation's – greatest aviator today have a new home: the Fleet Air Arm Museum.

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous benefactor, the impressive personal collection of Capt Eric 'Winkle' Brown has been saved for the nation.

No man flew more aircraft (486), took off from a carrier flight deck on more occasions (2,407) and landed back safely on a carrier (2,271) than the quiet Scotsman, who passed away last year aged 97.

Such was his esteem and expertise that long after he'd left the RN and reluctantly given up flying, he was consulted on the design of Britain's two new aircraft carriers.

And over the past decade or so, the aviator was 'rediscovered' by historians who championed his deeds in print, on the radio and in television documentaries.

Capt Brown also worked extensively with the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton – among his last public appearances was one to unveil a bust in his image in the galleries – sharing memories of his service, which form a key part of the archive.

When his papers and medals – among them the Distinguished Service Cross (1942), Air Force Cross (1947) and CBE (1970) – were listed for auction at Bonhams in London, with an asking price starting at £150,000, it was feared the historic collection might end up in a private collector's hands.

But thanks to what it describes as "the intervention of an incredibly generous donor" the National Museum of the Royal Navy – the umbrella organisation for all the official Senior Service museums – was able to acquire the collection for £165,000.

"It is fair to say that Captain Brown was by many measures the Fleet Air Arm's most significant pilot of the post-war period and we are thrilled and honoured to be able to class this



● Capt Brown's medals

collection as one of our own," said Prof Dominic Tweddle, the Director General of the National Museum.

"We can now preserve the record of innovation which is contained within Capt Brown's log books, which includes previously untapped information, and display them for the world to see."

The pilot's personal effects will now join the De Havilland Vampire which he landed on HMS Ocean in 1945 – the first jet ever to touch down on the deck of an aircraft carrier – as well as the goggles and gloves which he wore during his tests.



● Capt Brown in 2014



Picture: Dane Wiedmann, Lockheed Martin

## Navy unit's boffins win first innovation accolade

BOFFINS whose advice helped save the Navy a multi-million pound helicopter repair bill following the Ebola relief mission in Sierra Leone have been rewarded.

The team of specialist engineers, technicians and scientists from 1710 NAS in Portsmouth Naval Base have been named the MOD's first 'innovators of the year' for their work to ensure the state-of-the-art helicopters remained free from disease – and safe to fly.

The Navy dispatched three helicopters from 820 NAS with RFA Argus in the autumn of 2014 as part of the wider effort by the UK's Armed Forces to first halt the spread of Ebola, then hopefully eradicate it from Sierra Leone.

Neither the ship nor the helicopters were directly involved in the treatment

of sufferers of the disease; Argus acted as a helipad for the Merlins which flew people, medical supplies and kit around the Commonwealth country.

The threat of infection was ever-present during the six-month mission, however.

The team from the corrosion control and husbandry section at 1710 challenged the advice of a major aircraft manufacturer and proved that the disinfectant recommended would have had a potentially catastrophic impact on the Merlins, based at Culdrose in Cornwall.

They carried out a series of tests with experts from the government's laboratories at DSTL Porton Down in Wiltshire, which showed either that the various recommended disinfectants

failed to destroy the Ebola virus – or that they killed the disease but also had a corrosive effect on helicopter parts.

"When we tested the three materials that were recommended for aircraft disinfection, every one of them was corrosive and one of the products would have had catastrophic consequences if it had been used," explained team leader Andy Dutch.

"What we found was that not only would the recommended disinfectants have eaten our aircraft, they were very poor at killing Ebola virus as well, and could have put personnel at significant risk of infection.

"The recommended disinfectants were relatively pH neutral, but this does not necessarily make them safe for use on aircraft – sea water can be relatively pH

neutral but we all know how corrosive that can be."

Instead, the 1710 experts suggested a strong alkaline cleaner, already used to keep military aircraft clean safely – but never used against diseases.

It was tested on the extremely dangerous 'live' Ebola virus at Porton Down – with successful results.

"As expected the alkaline cleaner that we proposed was as good at killing Ebola as household bleach but without any of the damaging effects," said Andy.

The citation for the inaugural innovation award, which was presented to the squadron by the Minister for Defence Procurement, Harriet Baldwin, as well as a second award for their acquisition efforts, said 1710's work had contributed "to the global understanding

of biological security".

1710 is a unique unit in the Fleet Air Arm, comprising personnel from all three Services plus civilians. Their job is to carry out front-line repairs to damaged/broken helicopters, come up with 'quick fixes' to problems – they saved the Army upwards of £20m by fitting stretchers to Gazelle helicopters – and monitor fuel quality, corrosion and airframe fatigue.

CO Cdr Chris Ling said he was "extremely proud of the squadron's achievement, and the very clear professionalism and initiative they demonstrate in all that they do."

The head of the Fleet Air Arm, Rear Admiral Keith Blount, added: "It is wholly fitting that the work of 1710 has been singled out for yet further recognition."





# Making some more friends in the north

HISTORIC explosives dealt with? Tick.

Establishing stronger relationships with NATO countries? Tick.

Representing the Royal Navy and UK abroad? Tick.

Working in freezing temperatures? Tick. (It was minus 18° at one point.)

Punching above her weight? Tick.

Eaten 3,600 sausages? Tick.

That's an impressive list of achievements by HMS Grimsby – and MCM1 Crew 6 – during her deployment as part of the First Standing NATO Mine Counter Measures Group, or SNMCMG1 in northern Europe and the Baltic Sea.

Crew aboard the Sandown-class vessel also found time for some charity fundraising, attending high-profile military shows, hosting VIPs and attending Remembrance services during the four-month deployment.

SNMCMG1 is one of NATO's four high-readiness task groups. Grimsby worked with the German tanker FGS Elbe and minehunters the Norwegian Maaloy, Lithuania's Skalvis, Estonia's Sakala, Belgium's Narcis, the Dutch Willemstad and Latvia's Imanta. The Skalvis and Sakala were formerly HMS Cottesmore and Inverness respectively.

Grimsby left her home at Faslane in late summer, with her first duties being the Bournemouth Air Show and the Blyth Tall Ships Regatta, where she acted as guardship.

The ship then made the 600nm crossing to Copenhagen to join her colleagues in SNMCMG1 and prepare for Exercise Northern Coast 16.

Grimsby was thrown straight into the

deep end, with the exercise providing valuable war-fighting experience to her 42-strong ship's company, as well as allowing personnel to use their training experience to detect high-tech drill mines.

At the end of the exercise, Grimsby visited Rønne on the small Danish island of Bornholm, where uncharacteristically warm weather saw the crew go ashore for some downtime wearing T-shirts.

Next up was a visit to Swinoujscie in Poland before Grimsby left the Baltic Sea via the Kiel Canal and headed to Cherbourg, encountering rather rough weather in the English Channel.

Grimsby was reunited with her NATO partners *en route* to Norway at the end of Joint Warrior, missing out on the fun after undergoing a fortnight of maintenance.

Much like the lochs of north-west Scotland, the sheltered waters of the west coast of Norway provided plenty of opportunities to hone seamanship skills and diving operations.

The fjords in and around the western Norwegian coast offered a great opportunity for navigational training for the bridge team with officer of the watch manoeuvres conducted in company with all SNMCMG1 units. This involved seamanship serials culminating with *Hauptbootsmann*, which consisted of all eight ships passing lines between each other simultaneously while remaining in a very close diamond formation.

The highlight of the week was the combined passage of Lysefjord, 26

miles long and never more than a mile wide.

The stunning scenery provided an ideal backdrop for a joint photograph before the group weekend in Stavanger.

The 300 or so British, German, Latvian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Dutch and Belgian sailors lined up various adventurous training activities, including hiking and kayaking.

After sailing from Norway the group headed south and the long journey to Klaipėda in Lithuania via Copenhagen for fuel.

The transit offered Grimsby the opportunity to conduct further exercises, this time including a low-flying German maritime patrol aircraft. Klaipėda also marked the first visit for the group to a Baltic State, something that was apparent with the much colder weather and the first snow of the deployment.

The SNMCMG1 remained within the Baltic States as they proceeded north to Tallinn, Estonia, where weather was even colder, with temperatures plummeting to -18°C.

Grimsby provided a large guard of sailors to the British Tallinn Remembrance parade – held in deep snow – and attended by ambassadors Estonian military officials and the defence attaches of Britain, Canada and the USA.

Next up was the Gulf of Riga to conduct historic ordnance disposal.

Within the first 24 hours Grimsby's crew had identified and disposed of

a large Soviet M-16 mine, utilising the Seafox mine disposal system and a diver-placed charge.

The fast turn-around of identification and disposal allowed Grimsby to detect more than double the amount of mine-like contacts (43) in her area, compared with the other units within SNMCMG1.

Grimsby also located an unexploded Soviet torpedo which was disposed of by the Estonian ship Sakala.

Following the operation, Grimsby went alongside in Riga for the Latvian independence weekend, where the ship hosted local media.

Another week of historic ordnance disposal was followed by SNMCMG1 travelling north to Helsinki through exceptionally high seas and rough weather; at one point the ship rolled to starboard by 38 degrees.

As a non-NATO member Finland used SNMCMG1 to demonstrate their latest equipment, with Grimsby's CO Lt Cdr Will Blackett invited aboard the Katapatan-class MCMV Purunpaa.

SNMCMG1 began to reduce in size after Helsinki as some ships returned to their home ports for Christmas.

Grimsby conducted a final few exercises with the group, and the Finnish navy, during a transit from Helsinki to Karlskrona in Sweden before making the long journey home to Faslane, via the Kiel Canal and Portsmouth.

The deployment saw Grimsby notch up visits to ten countries and travel 6,200 miles.

MCM1 Crew 6 this year begin Operational Sea Training before deploying to Bahrain in the summer.



Pictures: PO(MW) Jonathon 'Crispy' McCloy, HMS Grimsby





# Royal Navy e Countdown



WE can imagine standing on the flight deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth and watching F-35Bs take off and land.

That's one of the many things Royal Navy personnel took away from their time in the USS America for the third and final sea trials of the Lightning II stealth fighter.

As Navy News reported last month, a small team of UK personnel spent three weeks embarked in the amphibious assault ship putting the fifth-generation aircraft through its paces in the Pacific Ocean.

The team – Lt Cdr Dale Collins, POAET(M) Sam McNicol, LAET(AV) Tom Rudge, Sgt Scott Bradbury, Cpl Martin Whatmough and WO1 Scott Alexander RAF – are all part of the Integrated Test Force Logistic Test and Evaluation Team, a component of Air Test and Evaluation Squadron – known as VX-23 – based at Naval Air Station Patuxent River in Maryland.

“There were lots of firsts for us and the US Marine Corps,” said Sam. “It was the first time I’ve been in a foreign carrier, working with the USMC and trying to integrate everything we have done so far.

“That was challenging but interesting. It was the first time an F-35B power module was changed at sea, the first time the lift fan was changed; the first time the aircraft carried out a live firing at sea; the first time the F-35B has taken off and landed at sea while fully loaded (with bombs).”

Tom added: “We saw the first live ordnance load carried out on the F-35B at sea, and we evaluated max weapons load the aircraft could take off with, designed to see how much the aircraft could load. We trialed different ways of loading the missiles and, while the USMC are fairly aligned with us, particularly with health and safety, it was a great learning



Pictures: PO 1st Class Benjamin Wooddy and PO 3rd Class Kyle Goldberg, US Navy; Darin Russell, Matthew Short and Andy Wolfe, Lockheed Martin





# Engineers reflect on F-35B sea trials down to carrier strike

experience and will help when we get on to the Queen Elizabeth.”

The trials team was hoping for rougher seas and weren't disappointed, with the Pacific delivering a sea state five – waves of between 2.5 and four metres.

“We had four or five days with an intense sea state, so the ship was rolling and pitching,” said Dale.

“These trials were all about expanding the envelope. We were looking for higher sea states and we were able to work in those conditions.”

The UK team evaluated the work as the USMC carried out the first F-35B engine change at sea, in the hangar of the America.

“People assume you've got a lot of room but with the equipment swinging from cranes in a hangar in a sea state five was an eye-opener,” said Dale. “It was a constant process to stop the work, when possible, and check. The continual assessment was important to us.”

“The formal process for evaluating a task... part of it is identifying deficiencies in the tools, publications, manpower required two years before HMS Queen Elizabeth embarks her first F-35s. We have identified improvements now as we had a team from Queen Elizabeth aboard which was great.”

Sam added: “It was a lot about the support equipment; the area required to do the work; where we put all the equipment. That was a big learning curve.”

“When you have a lift fan, which is big/heavy, suspended on a crane with about 6in each side of the lift fan well and the ship is rolling so the equipment sways, we needed to see how achievable it was.”

“It all went really well. Everything was

strapped down but there was a lot of ship movement, and testing at sea was a big important step and it all held up well.”

All of the team were impressed by the performance of the stealth fighter.

“Seeing the aircraft take off and land is so impressive; it is so steady, particularly at night with the after-burners glowing,” said Sam. “The Harriers always appeared to struggle a bit landing and taking off but Lightning looks seamless.”

“But the best part for me was having a team from Queen Elizabeth onboard. It was a bonus to be able to pass on valuable information about what we will need on the carrier. We have been able to identify issues now and solve them before sea trials in 2018.”

For veteran Dale, the USS America was probably his last embarked US ship, while for Tom the trials offered him his first time at sea.

“It was all pretty good, the ship is fairly new and everything worked,” said Sam. “The food on board was very different – there weren't any beans for breakfast, I mean, what's that all about? Neither were there any cups of tea.”

At Pax the UK has a team of 20 people working for the ITF on every aspect of test flying, led by Cdr Toby McCann a maintenance test observer, and consisting of three test pilots (one RN), a mission systems specialist, two aircraft engineering officers (one RN), nine maintainers (four RN) and four engineering specialists from QinetiQ.

The trials in the USS America were the final embarked tests before the aircraft's first operational deployment with the US Marine Corps, expected to take place in the USS Wasp at the end of the year.

“Now we are working flat out ahead of the first of class flying trials in HMS Queen Elizabeth in 2018,” said Cdr McCann. “We will be learning all of the lessons from the USS Wasp and USS America. It's a huge event for us, planning and testing ahead of embarking on the carrier.”

The return of fixed-wing aircraft to the Royal Navy is being relished by the team.

“It's been a really good learning experience, particularly working with the USMC,” said Tom. “I enjoyed the trip overall. There were so many firsts and it has helped me to imagine serving in HMS Queen Elizabeth and working with 619 and 809 squadrons.”

Dale added: “It's been a long time for the UK since it had fixed-wing aircraft on one of its warships. But it's not all about the flying, that's the sexy stuff, but for me it's the moving the aircraft around, the maintaining, the refueling. It takes a lot of people to do that.”

“The things we are taking away from the USS America are where the aircraft parks, where to lash them down, where to fuel them etc. All of this will make the first-of-class flying trials a success.”

Dale, who visited HMS Queen Elizabeth at Rosyth last year, concluded: “Sam and I both come from the Invincible-class carriers and people try to compare them but you can't.”

“Queen Elizabeth is twice as wide and about 100ft longer than the USS America. To stand on the flight deck of QE is simply breathtaking. The width of the flight deck and the width of the hangar amazed me. The workshop spaces, the crew areas, they are so much bigger and it is the first ship that has been purposely built for the F-35.”



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# Royal thanks RFA for Caribbean tour



FROM disaster-relief work to a high-speed £40m drugs bust, the crew of RFA Wave Knight were again in the spotlight during their Caribbean deployment.

And also onboard for six nights was Prince Harry – along with a 12-strong team – as he visited six countries in the same number of days on behalf of the Queen.

The RFA's VIP visitor joined the ship in Antigua, before heading to the nearby islands of St Kitts and Nevis, where the prince was promoting conservation projects.

Harry travelled in the ship's seaboat to Lovers Beach on Nevis, where he visited a turtle conservation project.

When travel by boat was not suitable, Harry travelled in the ship's Lynx helicopter, including to Pigeon Island in St Lucia.

Next stop was St Vincent, where Harry visited Kingstown's botanical gardens. During the stop, members of Wave Knight's ship's company met community leaders and charity workers.

Grenada was the next port of call, where Harry visited a mangrove restoration project set up in the wake of the devastation wrought by Hurricane Ivan in 2004. Many of the islanders spoke to the crew about how grateful they were for the help provided by HMS Richmond at the time.

A reception was held by the Governor General Dame Cecile La Grenada, at which members of Wave Knight met numerous representatives from across the Commonwealth.

Cadet Sophie Williams said: "It was great to attend this kind of reception, not only to celebrate a Royal visit, but to get the opportunity to chat with people from different countries and explain to them

the work RFA Wave Knight has been doing in the region."

The final stop on the Royal tour for Wave Knight was Barbados, where the ship's company enjoyed some down time. The country was celebrating 50 years of independence.

As Harry left the ship for the final time, Kensington Palace tweeted: "Thank you to the crew of RFA Wave Knight for your support on Prince Harry's Caribbean visit – we have been well looked after."

The ship's Commanding Officer Nigel Budd said: "By all accounts they enjoyed the experience of staying onboard, and I am proud of the work put in by every department on board the ship."

The ship's 3/O Chris Gorchkov added: "To have played a part in supporting the royal visit and to be thanked by Prince Harry himself made all the hard work of the past few weeks worthwhile."

Flight Commander Richard Bell said: "After a decade of flying the aircraft it has been a privilege for me to be the Flight Commander of the final Lynx APT (N) deployment. After over 40 years of service the Lynx has proved that it remains a very capable platform – be it conducting disaster relief in the Bahamas, taking down drug smugglers or supporting Prince Harry on his recent tour, this deployment has been a fitting swansong for a helicopter that has been defined over the years by its superb versatility."

Wave Knight, which earlier helped islanders on Tobago cope after being lashed by 110mph winds from Hurricane Matthew, is now resuming her counter-narcotics duties and providing disaster-relief support in the region.



● Lt Serena Scott with German Officer Cadets

## Where eagles dare, so does our RN officer

ASSESSING a 20-minute presentation about the Battle of Trafalgar is normal for any Royal Navy training establishment.

But in this instance the student delivering the presentation is a German Officer Cadet at the Marineschule Mürwik (MSM), the German equivalent to Britannia Royal Naval College.

And assessing is Lt Serena Scott, a year into her role as the RN's Exchange Officer – the first training manager to be appointed to the warfare assignment.

Following a three-month language course, Lt Scott arrived at the academy in Germany's most northern city, Flensburg.

"The language barrier has provided amusement, as I spent the first few weeks requesting performance not tap water in the mess – *Leistungs Wasser* instead of *Leitungs Wasser*," said Lt Scott.

"Writing and conducting 21 mid-period appraisals in German has also put a new perspective on the role of a DO," she added.

In contrast to BRNC's three entries of 100-150 cadets, the MSM has a single entry of 240-260 officer cadets starting each July. The majority of cadets come straight from school as the military sponsor over 90 percent through university after their year at the Naval Academy. The current role of the Exchange Officer is to run a division, which presents a diverse range of challenges and opportunities for cultural exchange.

The daily routine starts with a meeting at 7.05am, before the divisional muster at 7.15 (outside come rain, shine, ice or snow) and then disperses to lessons. The Divisional Officer is responsible for guiding the cadets through their education.

As Divisional Officer, Lt Scott has been responsible for instructing on seamanship theory, supervising and supporting the cadets as they learn navigation.

She also teaches presentational/teaching skills, law and sports along with sailing, power boating (similar to BRNC's motor whalers) and is now qualified to supervise training on the 30m square rigger mast in preparation for sailing in the Gorch Fock, the German Navy's tall ship.

The major part of all these activities is conducted in German, although Lt Scott also assesses the English NATO Standard Language Profile Oral Examinations.

Lt Scott, who served in HMS



● Lt Serena Scott

Manchester, Southampton, Cornwall and Scott before transferring to the Fleet Air Arm and gaining her Wings as an observer in 2009, was also able to complete her RYA Day Skipper course with British Forces Germany at Kiel Training Centre before it closed.

The twinning agreement with BRNC also saw Lt Scott's division taking part in the Basic Leadership Development Exercise (BLD) on Dartmoor and at BRNC.

"Mess and work life at MSM is somewhat different to the UK," she said. "There are no married quarters and all staff over the age of 25 have to arrange their own private accommodation."

"The German Armed Forces' adoption of the EU Working Time Directive has brought time sheets, clocking in and out, and days off in lieu have become commonplace even during training."

Given an absence of formal mess dinners, Lt Scott organised a well-received Battle of Trafalgar Dinner, complete with sea shanties and homemade chocolate ships of the line to highlight RN traditions.

Lt Scott, who has three sons, is also completing her final year of her PGDip in Training Management and Consultancy at the University of Portsmouth.

This includes a research project into the assessment of leadership exercises during initial naval officer training.

Her experiences in Germany support this as she has already been involved in the final exercises for the last crew.

"Assessing leadership in a foreign language after a 50km march at -4°C creates additional challenges," said Lt Scott.





Pictures: LPhoto Sean Gascoigne

**SERGEANT** Leanne Howard marches down the street to start the initial work of destroying an Improvised Explosive Device, or IED.

Two suspicious packages have been found in a corner shop at the end of 'Coronation Street.'

Take a peek through the windows of any of the houses and they are only one-room deep.

And rather than urban Weatherfield, this Coronation Street is deep in the rural south Warwickshire countryside.

Nearby is a railway station, complete with train, next door to a hotel. A school stands near a café; A garage, Army recruiting office, police station and homes are all dotted around.

All are props for Armed Forces personnel learning how to deal with IEDs.

The idea is to replicate a site where an explosive device may be planted by an individual or terrorist group.

The 2,500-acre Defence Munitions Kineton site is one of the homes of, deep breath, the Defence Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Munitions and Search Training Regiment – DEMS.

The tri-Service regiment comprises a number of instructors, including at Kineton three from the Royal Navy – CPO(D) Ian 'Shep' Shepherd, PO(D) Jan Cocking and LD Keith Lister.

DEMS Trg Regt, part of the Royal School of Military Engineering, is the initial provider for all explosive ordnance disposal and search training courses.

The regiment is split over two sites – St George's Barracks at Bicester, where training is given in conventional munitions disposal and at Kineton, which specialises in IEDs.

Over the course of a year, 2,600 students will pass through DEMS, taking part in one of the 73 courses offered, with around 600 of those students attending courses at Kineton.

There are seven courses running at Kineton. Two eight-week courses run concurrently and interdependently; No1 Operator and No2 Operator. Following theory time in the classroom, students work in teams from across the courses on practical assignments.

"It makes us more efficient and people start building relationships," said Officer in Charge Maj Simon Bratcher. "Whilst it can be a solo game, it is still a team sport."

The students range from junior ranks through to senior ones, with junior ranks having to be able to question the actions of seniors. The experience can vary as well, with some students fairly new to bomb disposal while others have a great deal of experience.

"We are also dealing with the idiosyncrasies of all three Services; making sure people in the training environment are respectful and it's also

about getting the best out of people," said Bratcher.

"The team is a very important side of the work. There can be a huge rank range, but junior ranks need to be able to question senior ones because there is a lot of stress involved."

"Every job is different. I could lay one out 100 times and make 100 different scenarios. You can't follow a flowchart as it not so much about the device but the whole situation. The operator could be the target, for example."

"In Iraq it was the type of devices, but in Afghanistan it was the sheer number. You have to be able to cope with all of that."

"Explosive' devices are built and placed by a troop of soldiers, known as the Terrorists. They make around 5,000 devices a year. They are also responsible for ensuring all devices are accounted for at the end of each day."

"We can't use explosives for the training because there may be a buzzer or small flash bulb. It means to show if they fail," said PO Cocking, who has been in the RN for 28 years.

The pass rate for each course is around 70 per cent, with students who fail given the chance to return and redo the course.

It is at Kineton and St George's Barracks at Bicester where the Royal Navy's bomb disposal experts from the diving world learn their trade.

A number of stations are dotted around Kineton, providing a range of scenarios



# Streets ahead

## Bomb disposal students learn from the best

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At the end of Paveway Road is Coronation Street, a row of terraced houses with a corner shop. This is where students Sgt Howard, of the Royal Logistics Corps, and AB(D) Rory Cartwright Taylor (known as CT), find themselves as they are faced with two suspicious packages.

Leanne, on the No1 Operator's Course, makes her way to the shop to take an X-ray of the parcels.

Upon her return she and CT, who is on the No2 Operator's Course, develop the X-ray in their bomb disposal truck and determine what is in the parcels.

Questioned by Shep and watched by fellow students, Leanne and CT establish the two letters contain different devices but the threat from both is a flash hazard rather than a blast hazard so Leanne dons her fire-retardant overalls before making her way back to the shop where she intends to destroy the 'unstable' parcel before later cutting in to disarm the second.

She places a projected water disruptor – devices that can blast an IED apart – on one of the parcels and returns to the truck. CT then fires the weapon remotely and the sound of the 'gun' reverberates down the road.

Leanne returns to the shop only to find the recoil from the weapon had dislodged the parcel, which remained active, and it was lying

under the weapon. A second, larger water disruptor was deployed to destroy the parcel.

Leanne then entered the shop to cut her way into the second device and make it safe. Wherever safety allows, bomb disposal experts retain as much forensic evidence as possible to help with police investigations.

As the No2 operator, CT is aware – and agrees with – all of the steps Leanne is taking.

"This course is really good," said CT, a member of the Northern Diving Group based in HMNB Clyde. "It's good working with the other Forces. I play a lot of rugby so get on with most people."

At another of the stations, the Army's Maj Ben Foster, on the No1 course, is searching for a device hidden in scrubland.

"He is looking for signs that people have been on the ground," said PO Cocking. "It's really hard to place devices when it snows as you can't disguise footprints that well."

The officer creates a clear path for himself, using pea canes to establish a 'doorway' big enough to work through.

For the task Maj Foster is wearing protective clothing, which includes a cooling system, to circulate cold air around his body and into his helmet to prevent the visor from fogging up.

All the operators also have the option of using the unmanned ground vehicle CUTLASS, the new generation of the RCV Wheelbarrow.

Controlled via computer, it features advanced optics and a three-fingered gripper-equipped manipulator arm.

Heading east down the M40 and 35 miles away is MOD Bicester, where the training area stretches over more than 200 acres and has 32 separate specialist training spaces, including a cave complex and EOD dive pool. The £100m training base opened in 2013, bringing together bomb disposal experts and teams who search for devices for the first time.

DEMS consists of four specialist squadrons, each of which provides training in a realistic environment designed to prepare students for demanding tasks. Courses consist of both theory and practical lessons that are constantly reviewed to ensure currency.

Munitions Squadron provides instruction in all aspects of ammunition safety and management, from safe storage methods through to the transportation, quality assurance and surveillance of complex weapon performance.

Search Squadron instructs students in all aspects of search from high assurance search to the basic patrol level used by combat units.

Search Squadron also provides instructional support to the Police National Search Centre, providing specialist input to Police Search Team and Police Search Advisor courses.

Conventional Munitions Disposal Squadron delivers a wide range of single and tri-Service

courses focusing on the disposal of conventional, biological and chemical munitions; courses including Royal Navy elementary, intermediate and advanced underwater EOD.

Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) Training Squadron instructs students in all aspects of IEDD.

Several international courses are run every year and DEMS also assists in the training of civil police students in EOD and Search.

The Royal Navy has two Fleet Diving Squadron Area Diving Groups – Southern and Northern – comprising around 100 divers in total, providing diving, explosive ordnance disposal and underwater engineering to the Fleet.

SDG comprises Southern Diving Unit One, based in Plymouth, and SDU2 in Portsmouth, while NDG is split into NDU1 and NDU2, both based at HMNB Clyde.

The work of SDU2 hit the news headlines several times towards the end of last year as dredging work to prepare for the arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth in Portsmouth later this year unearthed German WW2 bombs.

Today they continue to be tasked with a large array and quantity of ordnance that would otherwise present a significant danger to the public and critical national infrastructure, both on the foreshore, at sea, and on occasion, inland.



## Cadets find their feet in the forest

OFFICER Cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College took two days out of their busy schedule to create a forest garden at a Torquay primary school.

The 25 Officer Cadets who make up the college's Astute Division went to Watcombe Primary School to clear an overgrown area at the bottom of the school's playing field and furnish it with pathways, a pond and a fire pit.

OC Charles Cormack said: "The difference between before and after is staggering. It demonstrates what can be achieved in a short time with a motivated team."

The Officer Cadets, who are just a few weeks away from finishing their initial training, also had the opportunity to eat lunch with the pupils. There was much excitement amongst the children as they were able to ask questions about the Royal Navy and the training programme.

OC Edward Campbell, who led the BRNC team, said: "It has been a great opportunity for us to get involved with the local community and to be able to provide this outdoor space for the pupils. It has also continued our own development of teamwork and leadership which are vital for our careers in the Royal Navy."

Astute's Divisional Officer, Lt David Clark, and four of the cadets were invited to the school assembly. They talked to the pupils about the Navy's core values – commitment, courage, discipline, respect, integrity and loyalty – and how they're similar to the school's own set of values – respect, reliability, confidence and aspirations.

Lt Clark said: "The children made us feel extremely welcome and they clearly understand the need to abide by the school core values, both in and out of school."

"As future leaders in the Royal Navy, we encourage our Officer Cadets to speak in public as they will be required to deliver orders with inspiration and confidence in the very near future."

"However, presenting in front of excited children in an assembly provided them with a completely different challenge all together, in particular, dealing with the range of questions. The level of engagement in the assembly clearly demonstrates the pupils have the confidence – core value – to ask questions in order to develop their own level of knowledge."

As well as the outdoor work, some of the cadets spent time working indoors to decorate and move furniture in order to increase the school's capacity to host meetings and work space for the children.



## Milestone for pilot

THE Senior Pilot of an RNAS Culdrose front-line Merlin squadron is celebrating after reaching 4,000 flying hours.

On returning from a training sortie in one of the squadron's Merlin Mk 2 anti-submarine helicopters, Lt Cdr Dave Thomas was greeted by 829 NAS's CO Lt Cdr Kay Burbidge, with a bottle of Champagne, along with a celebratory flag in his honour.

David joined the Royal Navy in 1997 and, after passing out of Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth, was awarded his Wings on 810 NAS in 2001, which operated the Sea King Mk 6.

He has flown Sea Kings with 819 NAS at RNAS Prestwick in Scotland, 820 NAS and 849 'A' Flight at Culdrose, as well as Merlin Mk1s with 824 and 814 NAS. He qualified as a Helicopter Flying Instructor in 2006 and returned to flying tours on 824 and 820 NAS with the Merlin Mk1 and then joined 829 NAS on the Merlin Mk2.

Throughout his service David has flown on operations across the globe, in particular Naval operations in Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Gulf and the Far East, as well as embarked operations on board many of the Royal Navy's aircraft carriers, destroyers and frigates.

"It has been a great honour and privilege to fly 4,000 hours for the Royal Navy," said Lt Cdr Thomas. "In the 20 years of my aviation career so far, I have been lucky enough to experience some of the best flying available, from negotiating the heavy seas of the North Atlantic to the jungles of West Africa, and the deserts of the Middle East to the tundra of the Arctic Circle."



● Midshipman William Jones on board the Etoile during the rougher stage of the crossing from Dartmouth to Brest

# Navy officers enjoy their French leave

Two officers training at Britannia Royal Naval College have been sailing the high seas on a French Naval schooner.

Midshipmen Gordon Pickthall and William Jones were invited to join the crew of the two mast sailing ship L'Étoile for the passage from Dartmouth to Brest.

The ship is one of two owned by the French Navy, and is used primarily to provide training for 15 French Navy Officer Cadets each week, focusing on crew cohesion and seamanship.

During their time on board the two Royal Navy officers were able to get close to the elements and experience the full force of wind, tide and sea states.

While under way they became part of a four-on, four-off watch system with six-on, six-off at night.

Their duties involved making sure that the sails were set correctly and taking turns at the helm.

They were also on standby to react to any abnormal occurrence or to manoeuvre the ship.

In the middle of one night they were both called upon to assist tacking Étoile, recovering the foresails taken down by the crew as waves were coming over the bow – a challenging situation due to the moderate sea state, strong tide and high winds.

Between watches the two men were given a bunk in a set of three, where trainee officers and passengers are normally accommodated opposite the main mess.

With personal space limited it was comparable to a mess deck aboard a modern warship. Living on board was tiring because of the enhanced motion of the ship as she crossed the Channel, but the food cooked in the galley was a great source of morale to



● The two Midshipmen aboard the Etoile, and pictured with the crew on the deck



the crew.

Mid Pickthall said: "This was an opportunity not to be missed. Sailing L'Étoile back across the Channel to her home port in rough November weather had its challenges."

"Fortunately we were working with a motivated and experienced crew, who were more than happy to include us."

"The crew on board all said how they loved the more rustic way of living and the importance the ship still has on understanding the raw elements of the sea and ocean."

"All in all it was a great trip, and a good chance for me to practise my French."

As well as giving the midshipmen the chance to revisit a bygone era, the trip also allowed them to gain an understanding of how the French Navy operates.

Mid Jones said: "It was an insightful trip on board this historical ship and interesting to see how more traditional seafaring practices still have a bearing in the modern Navy today."

"It was good too to find out about the different approaches used by the two Navies to train officers."

"The French remain a part of the École Navale, their equivalent of BRNC, for up to

three years, where they cover all their leadership and professional training, passing out as the finished product."

"Whereas in the RN we pass out from BRNC 30 weeks after undergoing extensive leadership training, then spend up to several years in phase two learning our trades."

One of the traditions the two Royal Navy officers were invited to take part in was the Thursday Banquet – a larger meal for all of the ship's company.

Once alongside in Brest the two men were invited to this, getting a full four-course meal held in the ship's main mess deck with the entire crew and *capitaine*. Roast duck was the main course, with a variety of French cheeses composing the main dessert.

Mid Pickthall said: "The crew explained that they had a tradition in the French Navy of having a larger lunch for the crew and captain as it was not only very sociable but a great morale boost."

"When they asked us what we did on Thursday I simply remarked: 'Well, we go to war!' – Thursday Wars. We had a good laugh about this."

"At sea the food was equally good despite the pitching of the vessel in typical November seas."

A variety of local specialities from Brittany were a common theme, such as *andouillette*, a type of coarse sausage that is a regional delicacy."

Built entirely from oak, L'Étoile is covered in copper below the waterline. She is the 15th vessel to bear the name.

The ship played a role in WW2, leaving Brest on June 18 1940 to evacuate the French Navy based at École Navale – the day that Charles de Gaulle made his appeal for French forces to join him in the UK.

She then joined the Free French Naval Forces and still flies the Cross of Lorraine flag.

Today the ship's crew is mostly made up of French Naval ratings and NCOs commanded by a *capitaine*, equivalent in rank to a lieutenant in the Royal Navy.

The ship often makes international trips, and in recent years has crossed the Atlantic to visit the Caribbean and made a port visit to New York.

She also represents the French Navy in tall ships races.

BRNC has a twinning agreement with the École Navale, which was recently reaffirmed by the commanding officers of both establishments, Capt Jolyon Woodard for the Royal Navy and Rear Admiral Benoît Lugan for the French Navy.





## £1m boost from LIBOR bank fines

FAMILY projects supported or overseen by the RNRMC have been given £1m by the government.

Summer camps for youngsters, relationship counselling for struggling couples and the creation of a new 'army' of volunteers to help sailors, marines and their families struggling with issues such as loneliness and isolation, or who are in need of practical assistance all received grants.

The Kings Camp Foundation and relationship charity Relate will receive £200,000 each.

The former runs a summer camp scheme for children of serving personnel, while Relate has been working with the RNRMC on a pilot scheme to help couples in difficulties due to the pressures of Service life, a scheme which will now be extended.

The bulk of the handout, some £550,000, will be pumped into the RNRMC's new volunteer campaign programme, Helping Hands, to recruit and train volunteers who can then provide practical and moral support to RN and RM families.

The remaining £50,000 from the government – courtesy of the LIBOR fund, the fine imposed on the banking industry for fixing exchange rates – will go on administration, workshops and a launch event.

The money was announced by Chancellor Philip Hammond in his Autumn Statement.

## Accolade for fundraising

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity triumphed at the annual National Fundraising Awards, winning a coveted Institute of Fundraising Award 2016, for Best use of Events in conjunction with charity partner the Outward Bound Trust.

Between the charities devised and executed City Three Peaks, one of the most ambitious fundraising events the City of London had ever seen. Last September, 40 plucky men and women could be seen on the London skyline abseiling three of the capital's most iconic buildings; 30 St. Mary Axe, The Leadenhall Building and 20 Fenchurch Street – otherwise known as The Gherkin, The Cheesegrater and The Walkie-Talkie.

With 564m/916ft of descent, City Three Peaks was the longest civilian abseil in history and the first time that anyone had abseiled these three buildings before. City Three Peaks raised over £2m for the RNRMC.

The judging panel praised the execution and delivery of a truly unique event which demonstrated excellent partnership working between the two charities and three buildings to benefit serving and former Naval personnel and their families and young people throughout the UK, for years to come.

The National Fundraising Awards are the only accolades in the sector that recognise and reward fundraising excellence and best practice, celebrating the work carried out by UK fundraisers every single day.

The RNRMC was the only military charity to win an award at the event, though the Royal Marines Charity was shortlisted.



# We're submariners, get us out of here

A GROUP of submariners relax on the beach at Tynemouth at the end of their coast-to-coast cycle ride for charity.

The deeps left their boat HMS Audacious and headed off on the first day of their three-day ride, reaching Greystoke near Penrith 45 miles away and 4,402ft above sea level.

Day two saw the cyclists ride 40 miles, and another 4,307ft, ending up at Parkhead Station on the Hexham to Allendale line. The night was a disruptive one as a thunderstorm brought flooding to the area.

The final day started with a steep (gradient of 16 per cent) 2.5 mile climb to reach Crawleyside, near Stanhope.

However from the top it was 30 miles of old railway lines and cycle paths down through Consett, Rowlands Gill and Swalwell to the banks of the Tyne.

From there the riders followed the river through the centre of Newcastle down to Tynemouth and the beach – 55 miles were covered that day.

The cyclists hope to have raised around £1,500 in sponsorship and are now planning next year's trip to Holland.

Meanwhile, their colleagues embarked on a mission to see how far they could row from their base at Barrow.

Thirty-one members of the boat's personnel took part in the Escape from Barrow event, volunteering to row for 30 minutes each to raise funds for the RNRMC.

First to row was POPT Dave Berry who got Audacious off to a flier, setting the bench mark for the submariners to follow, which actually worked out to be a great motivator.

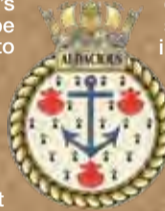
As the day progressed, so did the distance and also individual targets. ETME Millward set a very respectable 7,066m but only for ETWE Moss to lay down 7,199m straight after.

The atmosphere was now heating up with the competitive spirit HMS

Audacious has become renowned for over the last two years.

LET Janicki pulled 7,336m, which seemed to only fuel the rest of the boat's company desire to beat his distance.

ETME Smith – AKA the Pudding – stepped up to the mark and destroyed Janicki's target, which shocked spectators, and resulted in the furthest distance of the day at 7,405m.



There was still time for more Audacious competitiveness, MEO versus the WEO. First up the MEO LT Cdr Batsford, recently off patrol, stepped up to the plate with a very impressive 7,275m.

Next up the WEO LT Cdr McQuaid, a keen ultra athlete who spends most weekends running around hills, gripped and ripped his way through the 30 minutes to a very competitive distance of 6,877m.

The row raised £330.31 for the RNRMC.

## FUNDRAISER OF THE MONTH HMS Somerset



SAILORS on board Plymouth-based warship HMS Somerset have raised hundreds of pounds for charity by powering a static rowing machine.

Warrant officers and chief petty officers completed a 24-hour sponsored Rowathon in aid of the Royal British Legion and the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity.

They rowed the equivalent of 311km – the distance from Plymouth to London – and raised £900.

WO1 Gordon Hannah, HMS Somerset's executive warrant officer, said: "It was tough going, but everyone chipped in with a few kilometres. The ship's company were very supportive. We had people cheering us on at all hours of the day. We are proud of the money raised for these fantastic charities."

The ship's commanding officer, Cdr Tim Berry, said: "What an achievement from Somerset's warrant officers and chief petty officers. A great deal of personal grit and determination went into completing the rowathon and it has raised an outstanding amount of money for charities close to all our hearts. This event shows what fantastic people we have in the Royal Navy and epitomises our core values."

Having just completed a period of maintenance alongside, the ship is now in final preparations to resume duties as the Royal Navy high-readiness ship in the near future.

## Flying Tigers star in pilots' calendar

A 2017 charity calendar is bringing together some of the Royal Navy's most elite pilots with some of the UK's cutest cats, all in the name of charity.

The Flying Tigers and Kittens calendar was produced by teams at RNAS Culdrose following the rescue of a kitten from the car bumper of Royal Navy pilot Lt Nick Grimmer in June last year.

All proceeds from the sale of the calendar will help the RNRMC in its mission to support sailors, marines, and their families for life.

Lt Grimmer, who flies Merlin helicopters with 814 NAS (aka the Flying Tigers), discovered the cat – now affectionately known as 'Tigger' – after driving 300 miles from Birmingham Airport to RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall.

"I'd landed at Birmingham after a holiday and travelled via Bristol and Bath before arriving in Cornwall quite late," said the 32-year-old pilot. After getting out of his car, the young lieutenant heard a purring noise but didn't discover the source until the next morning.

"I looked in the boot, under the bonnet and climbed all over and under it and still couldn't find what was making the noise. I called up some of our air



● Lt Grimmer with Tigger

engineers who came and helped me to start dismantling my pride and joy."

After taking off his rear bumper the Lieutenant was greeted by a tiny tiger-striped kitten.

Remarkably, the cat was unharmed after the long journey. An attempt on social media to find the kitten's owners, failed, so Lt Grimmer adopted the kitten.

Calendars are available via <https://www.rnrmc.org.uk/flying-tiger-kittens-calendar-2017>

## Tickets scheme saving lives

THINK of Wimbledon and the word tradition comes quickly to mind.

The world's oldest tennis tournament is renowned for its unique traditions – the all-white dress code, the way players are addressed, its Royal patronage and its playing surface to name but a few.

For spectators, one of the best traditions – along with strawberries and cream and The Queue – is the Ticket Resale scheme, whereby Show Courts tickets no longer required are re-sold for charity.

Run by a small team of honorary stewards from a kiosk at the top of Aorangi Terrace, the scheme has raised over £2.5m for charity since it began in 1954.

Last year, despite a very wet first week of The Championships, the scheme raised a record £170,682 which, for the ninth year running, has been matched by HSBC, the official banking partner of The Championships, making the total £341,364.

The proceeds of the Ticket Resale scheme are distributed to charity. A total of £100,000 was donated to ABF The Soldiers' Charity, Fire Fighters Charity, the Metropolitan & City Police Orphans Fund, the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund and the RNRMC.

Donations totalling £165,000 have also been made to sporting and local charities including The Dan Maskell Tennis Trust, Fields In Trust, Give It Your Max, Mitcham Town Community Trust, Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for Disabled People and St George's Hospital Charity.

## Haven at Sultan

CARE and welfare services at HMS Sultan received a significant boost when Chaplain of the Fleet, the Venerable Ian Wheatley visited to officially open new facilities within The Haven.

The new facilities include a kitchen extension, which offers cooking and coffee bar facilities within the Chaplaincy Service's drop-in centre.

In addition, the extension has opened up existing space for visitor services, including the Blue Room, complete with an Xbox One for gaming.

COTF led prayers of dedication before officially cutting the ribbon alongside Capt Peter Towell, the Commanding officer of HMS Sultan.

COTF said: "I would like to thank all those who have been involved with the conception of these new facilities. It's so easy in life to just leave things as they are so to actually be bold enough to conceive something like this and to follow it through will make a real difference."

"This new space will enhance the role of the chaplaincy here. If someone wants to come over and hang out or speak to a chaplain but the only time they can speak to a chaplain is over a meal time then at least there is an opportunity to still get fed and this will just help to make this a happier and more relaxed place. It's a really well delivered and nicely conceived space with a good feeling about it."



## Flagship hosts national treasures

THREE Chelsea Pensioners enjoyed a tour of Fleet Flagship HMS Ocean during her stopover in Bahrain.

The veteran trio were in the kingdom for the 200th anniversary of the Bahrain/UK relationship.

Ocean's Executive Warrant Officer Carl 'Speedy' Steedman, pictured above with the trio, invited the pensioners aboard the

helicopter carrier.

Derek 'Yorky' Layton, John Honey and David McIntyre were welcomed by the CO Capt Rob Pedre before being taken on a tour by Speedy, CPO Mick Rickwood and Paddy Ashe.

The highlight of the visit, particularly for Yorky, was visiting the bridge to sit in the Captain's chair.

WO1 Steedman said: "It was an absolute pleasure and a real honour to welcome Yorky, John and David on to our ship."

"The Chelsea Pensioners are a national treasure and it was great to see the scarlet coats walking Ocean's decks. Although a couple were in their 80s they cut about like our youngest sailors."

# Former Royal now helping veterans

A FORMER Royal Marine injured in Afghanistan has set up a company aimed at helping former Armed Forces personnel.

Dickie Bennett established Breaking Ground Heritage to help a programme called Operation Nightingale, which provides respite activities, heritage industry training and helps wounded personnel into work.

Projects are aimed around archaeological excavations and the post-excavation work.

Dickie, who joined the Marines in 1996, served with 45 Cdo, 40 Cdo, CLR and as a recruit troop instructor at CTCRM.

The heavy weapons anti-tanks specialist deployed to Afghanistan on four occasions.

Following his medical discharge in 2011 with spinal injuries, he gained a first class honours degree in archaeology from the University of Exeter and is currently studying postgraduate archaeology with the aim of undertaking a PhD.

"The projects offer a way of social support during medical recovery as well as a pathway to higher education and networking opportunities," said Dickie.

The work has featured on Channel 4's *Time Team* and the BBC archaeology programme *Digging for Britain*.

"Participants are also given the opportunity to assist in local community engagement activities and have given presentations and lectures, contributed to professional reports and articles, and represented the project at



● Dickie Bennett, pictured top right in his Royal Marine days, set up Breaking Ground Heritage, which helps former Armed Forces personnel

history fairs and shows.

"A strong focus of BGH is on allowing the public, and the participants themselves, to discover that nobody is 'just a soldier' and that military training and values provide an excellent foundation for lifelong learning, development and achievement," said Dickie.

"Not every participant who gained from the project will set

out to complete a degree or to work in heritage full time but we know it helps increase a person's confidence."

Over the past 12 months BGH has successfully provided places to more than 65 wounded, injured or sick serving and veteran personnel.

This year will see BGH undertake or assist in a minimum of eight projects, ranging from the

prehistoric Bronze Age, the Iron Age, the 17th century (Potential POW's), WW1 research and excavations, as well as providing veterans and Service personnel to the Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust's HMS Invincible excavation that will be going on over the next few years.

For further details visit [www.breakinggroundheritage.org.uk](http://www.breakinggroundheritage.org.uk) or telephone 01823 410127.



## Bees head to Collingwood

ANGELA Whitworth gets stuck in to beekeeping duties at HMS Collingwood.

The beehive is the latest part of a new conservation project launched at the base.

Interserve employee Angela, the Merchant Navy Liaison Voyage Administrator, volunteered to assist with the bees.

"I've always wanted to have a hive in my garden but I've never lived anywhere large enough," she said. "When I found out about this project I immediately volunteered to help out."

"My first visit was scary, interesting and an education on bees' behaviour. I'm looking forward to spending some more time with these little guys, they are incredibly important to all of us and to lose them would be disaster."

The hive was the brainchild of Collingwood's environment and energy manager Mark Powell, who collected bees from Funland in Hayling Island after a swarm set up home at the top of the Runaway Mine Train ride.

Mark hopes to also be producing and selling HMS Collingwood's very own honey within the next year.

## Riders support RNBT



A TEAM of sailors from Victory Squadron, HMS Collingwood, have donated £250 to the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust (RNBT), following their support to Prudential RideLondon FreeCycle in July 2016.

LH Des Mukungurutse, pictured left, who presented a cheque to Corinne Day, RNBT events and publicity officer, said: "We appreciate all the work of the RNBT and wanted to support them."

Corinne said: "Victory Squadron have always had very strong links with RNBT and Pembroke House. We are so grateful for the thoughtfulness of staff and students."

## Better read than Dead...

SOME people think shamelessly trying to read a copy of *Navy News* in an unusual or exotic location will get them in the paper.

Works for us...

Holding up a copy of our November issue – which, admittedly, features 'the other ship' (HMS Ocean) in the JEF(M) task group – is Capt James Parkin, CO of HMS Bulwark.

The amphibious flagship visited Haifa – the first RN vessel to do so, we believe, since HMS Echo in 2011 – for a mixture of exercises with the Israeli Defence Force and flag flying for the UK (she hosted a GREAT Britain event for VIPs/movers and shakers).

The 560 men and women aboard were also given some downtime to explore the historic land.

Trips to culture sites such as the holy city of Jerusalem have been laid on, as was a dip in the Dead Sea, with the obligatory cheesy pose in waters which are a balmy 26°C even in late November.





● Lt Cdr David Pickles with Thomas and Jessica

## Proud day for Pickles family

AN OFFICER who has a high-profile role on the Royal Navy's new aircraft carrier is proud that he shared a significant day with his two children.

Lt Cdr David Pickles, is Air Traffic Control Officer of HMS Queen Elizabeth, currently in build in Rosyth and due to enter her home port of Portsmouth for the first time later this year.

Now David has been able to see his son and daughter take part in Remembrance Day ceremonies in the uniform of TS Diamond, the Sea Cadet unit at Rushden.

Cdt Jessica paraded the Sea Cadet standard on the day, while Junior Cadet Thomas laid a wreath at the Northamptonshire town's war memorial.

And proud dad David was not just there to watch – he took part in the parade as a representative of the Royal Navy.



● Captain of the Sea Cadets Capt Phil Russell RN (left) presents the burgee to PO (SCC) Ian Harris, Officer-in-Charge of Ruislip unit, and to Junior Cadet Ben

## Burgee presented to Ruislip unit

THE Captain of the Sea Cadet Corps Capt Phil Russell RN made an informal visit to Ruislip unit in Cordingley Road after the building reopened following major repairs to the flooring.

Around two-thirds of the unit's premises were flooded in the exceptionally heavy rain that fell on the evening of June 23 last year, and since then the cadets have been meeting in church halls in both Ruislip Manor and Ickenham.

Capt Russell also took the opportunity to present Ruislip's annual efficiency award – a burgee – indicating that the unit achieved a mark of over 75 per

# Conference season for HQ staff

NOVEMBER saw the Captain of the Sea Cadet Corps, Capt Phil Russell RN, the Sea Cadets' Chief Executive Officer Martin Coles and a host of staff from Sea Cadets headquarters visiting areas up and down the country to meet with staff, volunteers and cadets.

These area conferences give the

management team at headquarters the opportunity to look back at the previous year's achievements and plan progression for the coming months and years.

At the beginning of the month cadets also had their say at the annual Cadet Conference.

This gathering gives cadets a platform to

voice their valued thoughts on the direction of the organisation – letting the leadership team know what they think are the highlights of cadet life.

Cadets took part in talks and workshops, had the opportunity to test out the new Marine Engineering Pod and best of all – enjoyed an early Christmas dinner!

# Engineering award for leading trainee

A FORMER Peterhead unit Sea Cadet has won a prestigious Corps engineering award.

Jake Strachan, 18, was awarded the Fisgard Plate and a cheque for £100 from the Fisgard Association, a reward for achieving the highest marks in his engineering training in the Sea Cadets.

The trophy was presented to Jake at the UK Sailing Academy (UKSA) at Cowes, Isle of Wight, where Jake is currently undergoing the Officer Cadetship course.

The UKSA is a youth charity that uses sailing and watersports as a catalyst to transform young people's lives.

Jake's ambition is to qualify both in command and in engineering in the superyacht world.

But, equally importantly, he intends to return to his roots at Peterhead unit to help train the younger cadets.

Jake said: "It's an honour to receive the award and a great way to top off my cadet career after putting in so much work."

"I'd like to work my way up through the ranks of the superyacht industry and hopefully progress quickly."

"I am hoping to circumnavigate the Arctic Circle during my training."

The Fisgard Association was formed in 1996 as a social organisation for artificers old and new who trained at the apprentices training school HMS Fisgard at Torpoint, just across the water from Devonport.

All 'baby tiffs' started their training there, undertaking classroom and practical studies in mechanical and electrical engineering, maths, English, physics and general studies.

Out of that came a desire to promote engineering in the young, with the hope that it would help improve the recruitment of technicians into the Royal Navy.

Fisgard Association member Lt Cdr Steve White (Rtd), a former radio electrical artificer, met Jake and presented him with the Fisgard Plate, after which they were given a guided tour of the UKSA facility.



● Jake Strachan (centre) is presented with the Fisgard Plate by Lt Cdr Steve White RN (Rtd) of the Fisgard Association (right) With them is UKSA CEO Ben Willows



● From left, Vic Gellett of Reigate RNA, Reigate unit's Cadet of the Year AC Iain, and Clive Hill of the RNA

## Prizes for Reigate activities

REIGATE Sea Cadets' annual presentation evening saw awards given to cadets for sailing, rowing, band activities, fundraising and drill, and for commitment to the unit.

The awards were presented by unit president Capt Mark Windsor RN (Rtd).

This year the Reigate branch of the Royal Naval Association attended, and their chairman Vic Gellett, accompanied by Clive Hill, announced a new award for the 'Cadet of the Year'.

The first holder of the trophy is AC Iain, and as the RNA have decided to provide a new trophy every year each cadet will be able to keep his or her award as a reminder of their time in the Corps.

In addition, a special award was presented to Ian Archer, who has retired after 28 years with the unit.

Ian served as chairman of the management committee, treasurer, committee member and chaplain, and was also District Chaplain.

He was presented with a statue of a sailor engraved with the thanks of all at Reigate unit TS Ark Royal, and his wife Jenny was presented with a bouquet of flowers.

# Gun run showdown in London

NAVY News regularly features Sea Cadet and Volunteer Cadet Corps units taking part in field gun competitions – which prompted Alfred 'Tom' Thomson to get in touch with us.

Alfred was at one time a CPO Instructor to No 1 Tooting Gun Crew, and sent a couple of images of his trainees in action.

But the cadets in the images weren't just at any old competition.

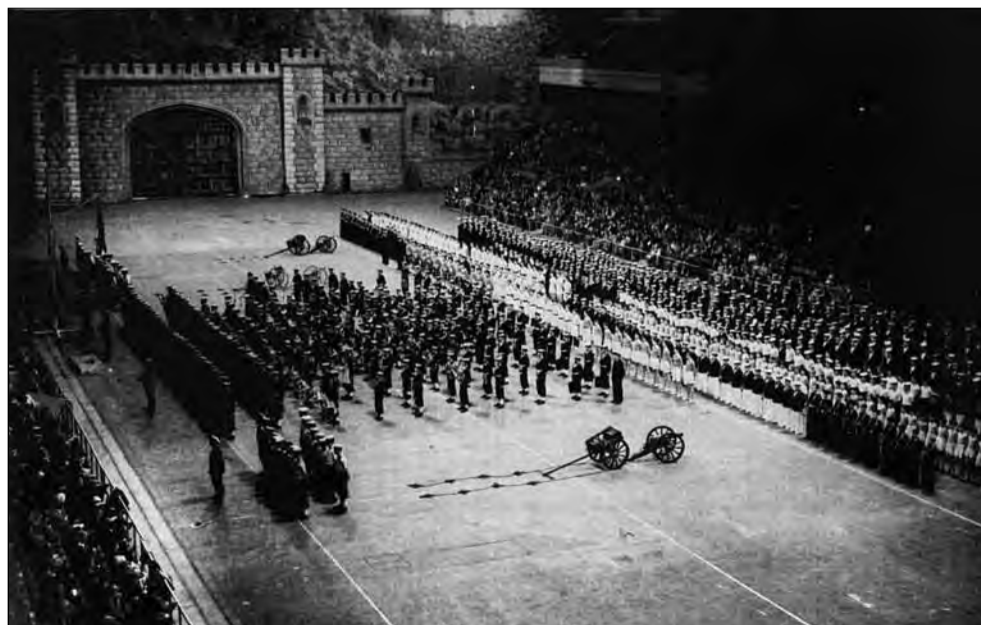
Their skills, determination and stamina were put to the test on hallowed turf (or sand) – the image (right) was taken in 1951 at Earls Court in London, and features a competition between Mitcham, Wimbledon and Tooting units.

Happily (for Tom) the contest, which was run in the presence of Princess Elizabeth, was won by the Tooting crew.

Cadet field gun teams of 65 years ago did not have the easiest time training for the big occasions.

"We had to practise in school playgrounds and the roads," said Tom, who now lives on the Isle of Wight.

"It was rather limited to what



we could do, which mainly consisted of shifting gun wheels, action fronts and action rears firing three rounds.

"These were fireworks the

size of a tennis ball which were struck by a match and put down a barrel. Each of these fireworks cost 2s 6d."

Earls Court was the home

of the Royal Tournament from 1950, having moved from the smaller Kensington Olympia, through to the final official event in 1999.



● First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones is pictured with AC Lydia, of Chislehurst and Sidcup unit

Picture: PO(Phot) Owen Cooban

## On duty at Admiralty Service

SEA Cadets from Chislehurst and Sidcup unit were on duty at a major event in the Royal Navy calendar in London.

ACs Alice, Lydia and Matthew travelled to St Martin-in-the-Fields church on the eastern side of Trafalgar Square to support the Admiralty Service.

The church has long-established links with the Admiralty.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones, officers and ratings hosted guests, friends and supporters at the service, which marked the beginning of Advent.

Music was provided by a brass quintet from the Royal Marines Band HMS Collingwood and the choristers of the Royal Hospital School at Holbrook, near Ipswich.

Chaplain of the Fleet the Ven Ian Wheatley gave the key address, speaking of the humanitarian life-saving work of the Royal Navy and emphasising the need for compassion in society today.

The Annual Service, and the reception which followed in the crypt provides an opportunity for the Naval Service to thank sponsors and supporters of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC); MooD International, ESRI UK and the facilities company ISS provided sponsorship of the Service.

The Sea Cadets assisted with the retiring collection of donations from guests to the benefit of the RNRMC.

## Clean sweep for St Albans

THREE teams from St Albans unit made it a clean sweep in the Hertfordshire District Seamanship competition as teams from across the county came together to battle out the annual hotly-contested event.

It was a closely-run contest, with only a few points separating first and second positions, but all three St Albans teams won their individual contests, taking the overall title.

Sub Lt (SCC) Ted Hill RNR said: "I am very proud of the teams – they were magnificent, especially as they had little time to practise and hone their skills with other events taking place in the St Albans Sea Cadet calendar."

"For all three teams to come in first position in their respective age categories is unprecedented and a credit to the cadets and the unit as a whole."

## Gold at the palace

THIRTY cadets from across the country visited St James's Palace, London, where they received their Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Awards from Debra Searle, who rowed the Atlantic alone as part of the 3,000 mile Atlantic Rowing Challenge.

Cadets shared their experiences with the Patron of the Award, the Duke of Edinburgh.

# Memorable time for Scarborough group

SCARBOROUGH Sea Cadets had a weekend to remember as they travelled to London for the national November Ceremonies.

The 36 cadets and 12 staff enjoyed a packed and interesting schedule, with Sunday's parade at the Cenotaph, in front of the Queen and the Prince of Wales, at the pinnacle.

The team travelled down in the early hours of Friday morning by minibus convoy to Sea Cadets HQ.

Whilst there they had lunch with Captain Sea Cadets Capt Phillip Russell before a tour of the building.

The afternoon was spent at the Tower of London, whilst LC Brandon and two staff members went to the Royal Albert Hall for the Royal British Legion's Festival of Remembrance rehearsals, meeting the other participants, the Royal Marines Band Portsmouth and the stars of this year's performance – Michael Ball, Alfie Boe and Alexander Armstrong.

The pace didn't drop for the second day.

Ten cadets joined Brandon and staff for a day at the Royal Albert Hall, helping sell programmes and acting as wheelchair orderlies for older patrons for the day's two performances, with the Queen and Royal Family in attendance at the evening show.

The rest of the unit started their day at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, followed by a boat tour, then a stop-off at the world-famous black door of No 10 Downing Street.

This was swiftly followed by an emotional service for both cadets and staff at Westminster Abbey for the planting of the remembrance crosses.

The afternoon was spent cheering on the Lord Mayor's Show and a quick stop for shopping in Covent Garden.

While tickets were typically scarce for the Royal Albert Hall, the cadets in attendance had some of the best seats in the house – directly opposite the Queen – for the evening's performance.

The cadets swelled with pride as LC Brandon led out the standards perfectly as the others watched the humbling and poignant show.

Sunday started early for everyone as they headed to Whitehall to form up for the parade.

Cheered on by the crowds, TS Scarborough led the cadet contingent past the Cenotaph and round to Horse Guards, where Prince Charles took the salute from proud CO Sub Lt (SCC) Natalie Davies RNR.

After the parade was dismissed the ship took the opportunity to march up the Mall to Buckingham Palace for a photograph to finish off what was an unforgettable experience.

Sub Lt Davies said: "The cadets did the town proud and I have never been so overwhelmed with pride."

"The amazing weekend was a culmination of a lot of hard work from everyone at TS Scarborough – each one will remember this experience for life and I'm honoured to be the Commanding Officer of such a fantastic team."

Cdt Kirsten said: "I felt so proud marching through London with so many heroes that were so friendly and really made us feel part of a team."

"They were all so interested in what we were doing and at the end congratulated us on our marching, which was a huge honour."

"After the parade was finished our staff decided to march us up to Buckingham Palace."

"I had never experienced anything like it."

"The tourists treated us like we were movie stars, taking selfies with us as we marched up the Mall – it was the best possible ending to an unbelievable weekend."



● Cdre Jamie Miller (Naval Regional Commander Wales and Western England), centre, with Sub Lt (SCC) David Eivers RNR, Commanding Officer of Stoke-on-Trent unit, and Able Cadet Jack

Picture: Tom Eivers

## Ark Royal joins Diamond fleet

STOKE-on-Trent unit again proudly hosted the local road haulage company Diamond Freight and Uttoxeter RNA for a ceremony to name another of the company's trucks.

On this occasion the lorry was given a name that firmly linked to Royal Navy carrier aviation – HMS Ark Royal.

And as befits a naming ceremony, a VIP was invited along to the unit for the day.

That VIP was Cdre Jamie Miller, Naval Regional Commander Wales and Western England, who unveiled and named the truck.

Cdre Miller served in the last Royal Navy ship to bear the name, the Invincible-class aircraft carrier.

Diamond Freight was set up by former sailor Malcolm Knight, who retired from the Royal Navy as a Leading Seaman gunner.

He served in HMS Diamond, a Daring-class destroyer built by the John Brown yard at Clydebank in Scotland and launched in 1950 – hence the name of the company.

All of his trucks are now named after British warships.

The haulage company is now run by his son Simon Knight, who is a staunch supporter of Stoke-on-Trent unit.

Malcolm and Cdre Miller have been friends for some 20 years.



● Hong Kong Sea Cadets held their 48th annual parade at the Police Training College in November. The parade featured 19 units – a total of 450 officers and cadets. The Inspecting Officer was Mr Rimsky Yuen, Hong Kong's Secretary for Justice, and the event also featured the Hong Kong Police Band. The parade was just one of a number of events in a busy month for Hong Kong cadets – other duties in the diary (which drew heavily on members of the guard unit) included the ceremony to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Sun Yat-sen, the 'father of the nation' of the Republic of China, remembrance ceremonies, a family fun day at the Hong Kong Maritime Museum and a Cantonese Opera Day event



## Family pride across the generations

SEA Cadet Alex proudly stands with his mother Karen and her partner Paul Trethewey at Wallasey unit in North West Area (above) before heading to the Remembrance ceremonies in London.

The three joined the Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph where they marched with the Gallantry Medalist League.

Karen was honoured to be wearing the medals of her late grandfather, Capt Harry Moorhouse Royal Artillery, who was awarded the Military Cross for his gallant actions during the German Spring Offensive of 1918.

He survived the war and then went on to serve in World War 2.

Paul is pictured wearing the Air Force Medal and the Russian Order for Personal Courage, which were awarded to him for his part in the rescue of Russian seamen from a storm-stricken vessel in 1991.

Alex has been a Sea Cadet at TS Astute for just over a year and he has ambitions to join the Royal Navy as a marine engineer.

It will be breaking new ground for the family, seeing as Karen's grandfather served in the Army and her partner Paul served in the RAF.

## Bonfire night boosts funds

NORTHAMPTON unit raised £250 for the replacement of training equipment at their annual bonfire and fireworks evening.

The event fell in the middle of a busy period for the cadets; it was preceded by a Hallowe'en party and members of the unit also helped the local Royal British Legion raise more than £2,700 for the annual Poppy Appeal.

In total 98 Sea and Royal Marines Cadets, supported by 28 instructors, went on to parade at three venues across Northamptonshire – the ceremonies at Northampton, Thrapston and Brackley.

## Anti-bullying drive

THE Sea Cadet Corps was proud to be part of Anti-Bullying Week, a national awareness initiative that aims to highlight the problems that bullying causes, and encourages all children, teachers and parents to take action against bullying throughout the year.

The week, which ran from November 14 to 18, saw units deliver dedicated lessons to show support for the event and educate cadets in an effort to stamp out bullying.



● Crew members take a break during fundraising to catch up on the latest RNBT newsletter

## BZ for big effort by crew of small ship

SMALL ship, massive effort – as recognised by the Royal Navy Benevolent Trust at the charity's annual general meeting.

MCM Squadron 2 Crew 7 were invited to Collingwood to hand over the proceeds of two years' fund-raising efforts: £1,478.28 – or £32.85 per sailor – to their chosen good cause, which has supported RN and RM past and present (plus their families) for a century.

Crew 7 have spent most of their time assigned to HMS Ledbury, plus a stint in the Gulf heat aboard HMS Chiddingfold.

RNBT bosses singled out PO Wayne Cook in particular as the cheerleader of the crew's charitable efforts, organising numerous events, including a charity sports day in the searing heat aboard the Cheery Chid.

He, AB 'Pickles' Pickering and Ledbury's XO Lt Liam Andrews made the short trip to Collingwood for the AGM, attended by Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock and Nick Jellicoe, grandson of WW1 RN leader Admiral John Jellicoe who established the Grand Fleet Fund in 1916, forerunner of the RNBT.

CO Lt Cdr Tom Trent was unable to attend due to paternity leave but said of his crew: "This is yet another display of the fantastic effort of RN personnel to look out for their 'oppos', regardless of circumstance and whether serving or retired.

"BZ to them all and thanks to Corinne Day at RNBT in particular for her unwavering enthusiasm for our efforts!"



# Vet reaches new heights to help others

A ROYAL Marine veteran and Paralympian who contracted Q Fever when on duty in Afghanistan has invented a new type of wheelchair that lets users raise themselves up to eye level.

Philip Eaglesham, from Northern Ireland, served in Afghanistan as part of Taunton-based 40 Cdo and caught the illness on his last day of a six-month deployment.

The bacterial infection leads to physical debilitation which, in Phil's case, means he has been so weakened that he cannot lift a coffee cup or play with his children and is confined to a wheelchair.

When he returned from Afghanistan he customised a Segway by putting a seat on it in order to be at the same height as his wife and friends – but soon found he didn't have the core strength to hold himself up, and also discovered that it wasn't legal on roads and footpaths in the UK.

That led him to designing the elevating wheelchair. It is still in the development stage and Phil has launched a crowdfunding campaign to raise the £600,000 needed to build two fully working prototypes.

"In October 2010, Helmand Province, Afghanistan my life changed forever," he said. "Since then I've struggled with the why's and what's, as to the nature of 'why me?'"

"As my health deteriorated I began to find the reason: that I was given an opportunity not only to change my life path but also the lives of possibly millions of disabled people the world over.

"With the support I've had, it became vital to find like-minded people who had the foresight of giving disabled people the ability to live in an able-bodied environment, rather than constantly trying to adapt or structurally change everything.

"To take a disabled person back to a social height, to aid social interaction but also increase independence has been key.

"The whole team have worked endlessly to produce what we now call VICTOR, to enable not



● Top, the VICTOR wheelchair is able to be raised to put users at eye level. It was designed by former Royal Marine Phil Eaglesham, pictured above and during his Service career, right



only myself but those in varying degrees of circumstances to conquering horizons that we've previously avoided at all costs."

The all-terrain chair has been designed by the Medical Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre team at the University of Sheffield and is also designed to mount kerbs and small steps and can turn on the spot.

It will reduce the need for costly adaptations to kitchens and bathrooms and will help countless lives.

Phil represented Ireland in the Paralympic Games in Rio in Air Rifle Shooting and hopes the new prototype wheelchair will be ready in time for this year's Invictus Games for disabled Service personnel in Toronto.

He has been supported by The Royal Marines Charity and Help for Heroes.

For more information please visit: <https://www.victormobility.com> or on Facebook at [Victormobility](#) and Twitter [@victormobility](#)

## Taste of life in the Navy

A GROUP of youngsters from Devon schools went behind the scenes to be shown life in the Royal Navy.

The work experience week showed a wide range of career opportunities as a trainee officer at Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth, or rating at HMS Raleigh and life on board a warship at Devonport Naval Base, how the Ministry of Defence Police dogs are trained and how to keep fit as a sailor.

One of the 12-strong group Harrison Lake, 14, of Devonport High School for Boys, said: "It was really good to come on this week. The best part was seeing how to become an officer at Dartmouth and trying to work out how to steer a ship on the simulator."

He said his ambition was to become a Royal Navy nuclear engineer with support from the Royal Navy in studying for a degree while working.

"I was thinking of becoming a Navy pilot, but coming on this work experience week has changed my mind. I didn't realise what was on offer in the Navy – you can virtually do anything that suits you."

Eden Lynch, 14, of Plymstock School, Plymouth, was inspired by life as a Royal Navy medic.

She said: "I'm really interested in becoming a Navy medic. You get as close to the frontline action as you can without fighting. The medical people told me they went to Afghanistan and Sierra Leone. It really appeals to me."

Eden learned that she can sign up the Navy when she is 16 and then progress to training as an officer after a scholarship and further education.

Her friend Isabelle Stephens, 14, also of Plymstock School, said: "It's been really interesting with the best bits being doing the fitness training in the gym. We did the same bleep test as the Navy and I did two-and-a-half kilometres in under 13 minutes.

"I'd like to be an officer, probably a warfare officer. The bridge simulator where you take part in steering a pretend ship was the best bit we did. We also saw the police dog training, that was good. My grandad was in the Navy on HMS Sheffield during the Falklands – I've researched that and it all looks exciting to work in the Navy."

## Cake effort

A JUNIOR rate helped raise £360 for Children in Need.

AB(CIS) Jodie-Marie Kershaw, who works for MCSU, organised a bake sale and raffle, with colleagues – RN, civil servants and contractors – all contributing and, in some cases, donning their pyjamas.

The Royal Navy & Royal Marines  
Children's Fund

The only charity dedicated to supporting children whose parents serve, or have served, in the Naval Service.

Originally set up as an orphanage, we now assist children with a wide range of needs and at times of family crisis. Applications can be made at any time and those seeking assistance can contact the office directly for an application form, or download it from our website.

311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth PO2 8RN • t 023 9263 9534 • [rnchildren@btconnect.com](mailto:rnchildren@btconnect.com)  
[www.rnrmchildrensfund.org.uk](http://www.rnrmchildrensfund.org.uk)

## Reservist joins Deeps

A MARITIME Reservist from HMS Dalriada in Govan has been using his engineering expertise at the home of the UK Submarine Service.

Lt Cdr Alex Cross is a former regular member of the Armed Forces who left around a year ago and now works for systems and engineering technology company Fraser-Nash Consulting.

With the support of his employer, Alex recently joined the Royal Naval Reserves' Engineer Branch and has been working with the Submarine Flotilla (SUBFLOT) at HM Naval Base Clyde.

"I served with the Royal Navy for 22 years and after I left I wanted to maintain those links with the navy and with old friends," said Alex.

"Many of the engineering skills you learn in the military are transferrable so my employer has seen the benefits of me joining the Engineer Branch."

In July 2014, after an absence of 21 years, the Engineer Reserve Branch was reintroduced to the Royal Navy. From sensitive electronics and information systems, to huge gas turbine engines and sophisticated weapons, Royal Navy engineers are responsible for some of the most advanced technology in the world.

There are currently 60 Reserve Engineers serving with the branch around the country with more sought.

"It has been a pleasure to get back into uniform and provide support to the submarines at HM Naval Base Clyde," said Alex.

"It has been interesting to see how much things have changed since I left the Royal Navy. It's nice to see a larger number of attack submarines at Clyde and to see people I have worked with over the years rise up the ranks.

"The last couple of weeks have proven that RNR Engineer Branch officers can integrate seamlessly into the base and provide positive support to the Fleet."

■ Thinking about joining the Engineer Reserve Branch? For those who are ex-regular, entry is through the Armed Forces Career Office.

Most personnel will join in their previous rank or rate with the same pay scale. Those who complete their required 24-day commitment and are in-date for the Royal Navy Fitness Test could earn a tax free bonus of up to £1,725. The age limit for service is currently 57.

## Observers nearer to their Wings

THREE Royal Navy trainee observers took a big step towards gaining their Wings at a graduation ceremony on 750 NAS at RNAS Culdrose.

Lt Ross Gallagher and Nik Wielbo and Sub Lt Riley Handforth successfully completed Observer Basic Flying Training after joining 750 NAS last year.

Since then they have flown on the King Air 350ER Avenger aircraft, learning its systems and sensors and how to operate in all weathers and environments.

They have been taught how to command a crew, operate and deploy an aircraft tactically as well as build on elementary navigation skills they were taught at RAF Barkston Heath and Cranwell in Lincolnshire.

They graduate having flown around 20 hours on the Grob Tutor, 50 hours on the Avenger and countless hours in simulators.

After 750 NAS they will be streamed to either Merlin at Culdrose or Wildcat at Yeovilton.

Sub Lt Handforth said: "It was challenging, but very rewarding."

Lt Gallagher picked up both the Sir Douglas Evill and the Daedalus Trophies for best overall grades at ground school, simulator and airborne sorties from 750 NAS and the Military Flying Training System.

The Westlands Trophy was awarded to Lt Wielbo.



● British Airways pilots in the Vanguard-class control room simulator at HMNB Clyde

Picture: LPhoto Stephen Burke

## Day out on the Clyde

THIRTY pupils from Saint Mary's Primary School in Alexandria visited HM Naval Base Clyde as part of a class project and as an opening to career discussions.

Throughout the visit the group of children and their teachers were treated to an action-filled day which gave them an insight into the wide range of activities which take place at the base.

The children enjoyed a display by Ministry of Defence Police sniffer dogs and a visit to the fire station where they were given a guided tour of the facilities.

The next port of call was to the Royal Marines of 43 Commando, who cooked up some rations and showed them how to camouflage themselves.

The marines also demonstrated how to get in and out of a Zodiac inflatable boat as if they had just landed on a beach to conduct a mission.

After lunch in the staff canteen, the visit ended with the MOD Police from the Clyde Marine Unit hosting the children on a boat trip.

The officers used two launches to take all 30 children out on the water.

# Airline pilots learn to sail submarines

**A TEAM of British Airways pilots visited the home of the UK Submarine Service to compare sailing a nuclear submarine with flying an airliner at 38,000ft.**

Led by Senior First Officer Tim Chambers, the editor of British Airways' flight operations safety magazine, the pilots were welcomed to HM Naval Base Clyde by Cdr Justin Codd.

Cdr Codd, known in the Royal Navy as "Teacher", is responsible for deciding which candidates pass the intense 23-week long submarine command course, known as Perisher, which all would-be commanders must pass.

"Airliners and submarines are both exceptionally complex machines, relying on well-trained crews to ensure the safety of their craft and that of everyone on board," said Tim.

"One key difference between submarines and airliners was just how well all of the Royal Navy officers and ratings knew each other despite being part of a much larger crew.

"In comparison, we regularly fly with people that we have only just met, which we overcome by applying our training and standard operating procedures.

"It was fascinating to hear how similar our training can be too.

"For example, using only a periscope, submarine commanders have to visually assess when a nearby warship threatens the safety of their boat.

"They must balance keeping regular checks on their position, course and speed while minimising the use of the periscope in order to remain hidden.

"These fundamental skills are similar to pilots' situational awareness of their aircraft and the surrounding environment. Our stick and rudder skills, the pitch attitudes and thrust settings that are appropriate to ensure the aircraft is always under our control."

Both pilots and submariners always consider three criteria to make safe decisions: the status of their craft in terms of its control, its navigational position relative to any terrain, obstacles or current, as well as

any tactical/commercial factors relating to their current mission.

Commanders who make decisions based on one or two of these criteria in isolation can potentially be jeopardising the safety of their boat or aircraft.

A highlight of the visit was the pilots trying their hands at sailing a submarine in the Vanguard class bridge control trainer, which tilts and turns just like a flight simulator.

"The submarine simulator showed that the handling of a 16,000 tonne submarine is nothing like an aircraft – no fly by wire, no glass cockpit and lots more momentum," said Tim.

"When we tried to execute an emergency surface on the simulator we were sadly left 30 metres underwater rather than on the surface as intended!

"On behalf of British Airways, I must thank the Royal Navy for this valuable, interesting and inspiring learning opportunity: it reiterated the value of effective leadership in terms of managing the operation of a craft and the need for highly professional crew."

## Charity tidies up graves

STAFF from a military charity have been remembering those who gave their lives in the two world wars by carrying out much needed maintenance work on the headstones of heroes buried in a Penryn cemetery.

Four headstones showed signs of weathering and moss growth, which led a team from Turn to Starboard in Falmouth to conduct a clean-up operation.

The group scrubbed and cleaned the headstones at St Gluvias churchyard of those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and attended to their plots.

Charity founder Squadron Leader Shaun Pascoe (Rtd) said the charity was approached by the Falmouth branch of the Royal Air Force Association (RAFA) after a member of the public spotted the graves needed some attention.

He said: "RAFA asked for our support after been informed that some Commonwealth war graves in the cemetery looked like they weren't been attended to.

"In the meantime, the RAFA branch has contacted the Commonwealth War Graves Commission who were not aware of two of the graves, and are now looking into replacing two of the headstones."

Turn to Starboard, who help military personnel affected by operations by taking them sailing, is partnered with RAFA along with other national military charities including Help for Heroes, ABF, RNRMC, the Prince's Trust, The Endeavour Fund and more recently the Royal British Legion.

## Dropping in

OFFICER Cadets under training at Britannia Royal Naval College were given an insight into what it takes to become a Royal Navy submariner.

The group were given the chance to look around the Royal Navy Submarine School at HMS Raleigh and see the facilities used to train Servicemen and women to operate beneath the waves.

OC Daniel Sandillon-Charlton said: "It was a great experience and interesting to see how life as a submariner would be very different to that in General Service."

Fellow Cadet Tim Pearce said: "The visit has definitely convinced me that I should go subs."

## Hospice help

CREW members from HMS Duncan visited the NI Children's Hospice, their adopted charity, to present a cheque for £2,500.

During the visit they were shown around the grounds and a video presentation of what the hospice is all about by Jenay Doyle, a fundraiser for the children's hospice.

# Cadets find it plane sailing Visitors mean business

A TEAM of Officer Cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College marked the anniversary of the Fleet Air Arm's greatest success by carrying a half-size replica of a WW2 biplane.

The group of eight budding aircrew carried the 200kg model of the Swordfish plane for approximately two miles (four people at a time), while dressed in 1940s aircrew uniform.

The challenge took place at RNAS Yeovilton and raised money for the Royal Naval Historic Flight.

It coincided with commemorations for the Battle of Taranto in 1940. In two waves, 21 Royal Navy Fairey Swordfish aircraft, launched from HMS Illustrious in the Mediterranean and attacked the Italian Fleet in Taranto harbour. The operation effectively halved the Italian fleet and gave the Royal Navy a tremendous advantage in the Mediterranean.

Officer Cadet Myan Goddard came up with the idea for the challenge and enlisted the support of OCs Christian Sugden, William Arnold, Guy Warry, Mathew Walker, William Price, Emma Turner and Jordan Gallagher.

OC Sugden said: "It took a high level of fitness to carry the replica between four of us such a distance, and teamwork played an important role."



STUDENTS from City College Plymouth visited HMS Raleigh for an insight into the Royal Navy and the role that civilian staff play in supporting the base.

The 14 students, aged from 19 to 45, are currently undertaking a two-year business and hospitality foundation degree. During their time at Raleigh they were able to talk with Royal Navy personnel at varying stages of their careers about their time in the Service.

The students were shown the facilities used to train Royal Navy chefs and stewards at the Defence Maritime Logistics School and were invited to witness training.

They were also introduced to civilian contract staff that support HMS Raleigh in a number of ways, from managing the accommodation to carrying out cleaning, providing retail outlets and meals for the

staff and trainees who live on base.

Part-time student Donna Powell, 30, said: "I've been working in catering since I was 16 and in the last year-and-a-half I've started as a pub manager. Being in the Royal Navy does seem to be quite a good thing for a youngster to start off with."

The visit formed part of the students' research for their current assignment analysing the influences and different strands within hospitality management, both now and in the future.

Alison Banks, the City College programme leader for hospitality and tourism, said: "I'm trying to give the students a little taste of every single opportunity they may choose and show them different strands of the hospitality business and life, so that when they end up being in charge they will have more awareness of the people they employ."







# Kaddish for Jewish dead

**A YOUNG Air Force cadet salutes recently-retired Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford in front of the Whitehall Cenotaph.**

A typical scene from a typical Remembrance Day parade in the capital, right? Wrong.

It's not Armistice Day, but seven days later. This is the act of thanksgiving for Jews who have served this country – and, when necessary, died for it.

A week on from November ceremonies and the same location is the setting for the annual parade by the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women, joined by Jews serving in today's Armed Forces.

For the 2016 ceremony, around 1,000 men and women, plus the band of the Coldstream Guards, took to London's streets, with the air chief marshal taking

the salute after participants had placed wreaths at the foot of the Cenotaph.

Like the monument to the fallen, the Jewish act of remembrance dates to the 1920s and generally follows the format of the national parade/ceremony the previous weekend.

Where it differs, however, is the presence of a religious element in the form of prayers and hymns – largely absent from other Armistice Day commemorations – led by Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis and Rabbi Reuben Livingstone, the Principal Jewish Chaplain to HM Forces (and a Major (Chaplain) in the Army Reserve).

“To hear the Jewish mourner's prayer (the Kaddish) and a traditional synagogue hymn in Hebrew, with music provided by the Band of the Coldstream Guards, in the centre of power of a major world democracy is both haunting and powerful,”

said Cdr Daniel Weil, diversity lead for the Armed Forces Jewish Community which acts as the network representing serving regular and reserve Jews.

“It is a timely reminder that the UK is an extremely diverse country, made up of different communities who integrate effectively to make society vibrant, colourful and welcoming; and for the Jewish community, who turns out in large numbers to witness the Parade, of their debt both to their ancestors who served and of their continuing direct personal close links with the British Armed Forces.

“As always, it's a poignant time when we can remember our fallen comrades and those currently on operations but it is also an excellent opportunity to remind both the British Jewish community and the broader public that Jews have served in the Armed Forces for more than 350 years and continue to do so with distinction and significantly in disproportion to the size of the community in the UK.”

Followers of the Jewish faith have served the Navy and nation with distinction for centuries, from Capt Alexander Schomberg, who fought in a succession of battles with the French in the 1750s, through WW2 submariner and VC winner ‘Nat’ Gould, Capt Fredman Ashe Lincoln who was a minewarfare expert, commando in the Mediterranean and Germany, and one of the country's senior lawyers after the war; to wartime Wren Teresa ‘Terry’ Susskind who worked with computer genius Alan Turing in cracking German Enigma codes.

Picture: AndyTylerPhotography.co.uk



# Chaplains see sea for chaplaincy get-together

THERE was a Navy bish, Army bish and RAF bish underneath the arch of a rainbow...

What a cracking example of Inter-Service religious harmony.

The three senior military chaplains in the land – the Navy's Chaplain of the Fleet the Venerable Ian Wheatley (at the top of the steps), the Army's Chaplain General the Reverend Dr David Coulter (next down) and the RAF's Chaplain in Chief the Venerable Jonathan Chaffey – met aboard Nelson's flagship to discuss an impending get-together of Forces clergymen.

Come the end of this month, the Navy will be hosting the International Military Chief of Chaplain Conference – an annual get-together of clergy from the world's armed forces.

The five-day meeting, which begins on January 30, has grown from a gathering of senior NATO clergy back in the early 1990s to embrace the highest-ranking military chaplains from the world's armed forces.

Picture: LPhoto Louise George

# Child care – tax free

TAX-FREE child care will be available to around two million households.

The scheme will be available for children up to the age of 12 (or 17 for children with disabilities).

To qualify, parents will have to be in work, and each earning around £115 a week and not more than £100,000 each per year. For every 80p you pay in, the government will top up the remaining 20p – equivalent to the tax most people pay.

Visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tax-free-childcare-10-things-parents-should-know>



# WELFARE

## Your WelComE account card...

A WelComE account card is assigned to you for your entire military career and can be used to access **telephone** and **Internet** services whilst deployed.

You should receive it after basic training. If you haven't been given it, speak to your admin officer. For more information visit: [www.mywelcome.co.uk](http://www.mywelcome.co.uk)

**Lost your account card?** No worries! Speak to your admin officer who will be able to provide you with your WelComE account number and a password to reset your PIN.

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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 Mii 94374 3172  
E-mail- [navycnr-rnsrtrainingassist@mod.uk](mailto:navycnr-rnsrtrainingassist@mod.uk)





## Grandson in family pilgrimage

AN electronic warfare instructor from HMS Collingwood has made the journey to Canada for a special commemoration event.

CPO Lee Hayward travelled 3,500 miles to Ajax, in Ontario, from his home in Littlehampton to represent his late grandfather 'Jock' Hunter, and Jock's contribution to the Battle of the River Plate in the 7th HMS Ajax.

The event marked the 40th anniversary of the 8th HMS Ajax's visit to the town and the 1976 Freedom of the City.

In attendance were members of the ship's company for various memorial tributes, including a march through the town, in which Lee took part (above).

Jock died in 1987 unaware of the policy in the town of Ajax of naming roads after sailors who served at River Plate.

So it was left to chance and his observant wife, Mary, to discover in 1988 the honour which their family name held.

After Mary had read a newspaper article about Ajax and the street-naming tradition, curiosity quickly led her to contact the Mayor of Ajax to enquire further as she was sure of Jock's involvement but had heard nothing about this.

After checking his Service documents it was confirmed that Jock had served in the battle in HMS Ajax, and that Hunter Drive was to be named in honour of him.

Lee has longed to visit Hunter Drive for many years, and recently joined the HMS Ajax & River Plate Veterans Association, which led him to receive an invitation for the Ajax visit, which was reported in our November edition.

Lee said: "My wife, Elizabeth, and I were blown away by the overall reception and friendliness of all the people we met in the town of Ajax."

"Overall the weekend and events which took place were beyond our expectations immensely."

"I felt enormous pride and was so humbled to accept the street dedication of my grandfather's name."

"It was really special to be able to say a few words in attendance of the Mayor, residents of Hunter Drive, and members of the Ajax and River Plate Association on behalf of my family whilst still serving in the Royal Navy."

# Plymouth celebrate 70th anniversary

PLYMOUTH branch president Cdre Ian Shipperley and 200 members and friends extended a warm welcome to their VIP guests at their 70th anniversary dinner and dance.

Branch patron the Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Cllr Pauline Murphy, Consort Cllr Brian Vincent and Rear Admiral John Clink, Flag Officer Sea Training, were the principal visitors to the event, which was held in the Warrant Officers & Senior Rates Mess at HMS Drake.

In his welcome address Branch Chairman S/M Des McCarthy expressed pleasure in having serving personnel from as far afield as Portsmouth, representatives from RNA Liskeard branch, the Royal Marines Association and a large contingent of former anti-submarine warfare instructors.

Branch member Rev Martin Kirkbride proposed the toast to "Our Guests and Ladies" and branch secretary Arthur Gutteridge proposed the toast to "the City of Plymouth".

In reply the Lord Mayor



● Lord Mayor of Plymouth Cllr Pauline Murphy and Consort Cllr Brian Vincent (seated centre of picture), flanked by Flag Officer Sea Training Rear Admiral John Clink and his wife Jacqueline, and surrounded by members and guests of Plymouth branch at their 70th anniversary dinner and dance

expressed her delight in being able to attend St Nicholas Church in HMS Drake a few weeks beforehand as patron, to celebrate 70 years since the branch was commissioned.

Cllr Murphy also mentioned that the evening's gathering demonstrated not only the

enduring, historic and mutual respect that exists between the city and the Naval Services based there, but also the sense of pride they all took in their city.

Rear Admiral John Clink was delighted to present Shipmates Gloria and Keith Richards with the Royal Naval Association

Certificate of Appreciation for admirable service throughout their ten years of membership.

Former Royal Navy personnel within the Plymouth catchment area can obtain details about membership of the branch from Secretary Arthur Gutteridge on 01752 849176.



## Third award to Ashford cohort

THE recent presentation of the Legion d'Honneur to S/M Cedric Hollands brings to three the total number of Ashford branch Normandy veterans to have received the honour.

All three were present at the Ashford meeting held at the Elwick Club in the last week of November, providing an opportunity for the group picture (above).

S/M Cedric served in W-class destroyer HMS Kempenfelt, which served in the Mediterranean (including the Anzio landings), at the Normandy landings (where she supported the assault with gunfire) and in the Far East.

Flanking Cedric in the picture are S/Ms Terry Dickinson and Bert Hazeldon.

Terry served in LCF21 - a Landing Craft Flak - which helped protect the invading Allies from German air attacks.

Bert served in HMS Trollope, a Captain-class destroyer escort which was torpedoed on July 6 1944 off Cap d'Antifer in Normandy.

More than 60 sailors died, and the ship was written off as a constructive loss.

Although handed back to the Americans, she was scrapped soon after.

All three shipmates served in Burma in the war against Japan.

## Free counselling offer for veterans

ARMED Forces and National Servicemen veterans who are experiencing loneliness, depression or bereavement qualify for a free counselling scheme.

Aged Veterans Counselling, a government-backed organisation supported by veterans' charities, is rolling out the scheme across the UK.

Any man or woman who is 66 years or over and who was in the military or completed National Service qualifies - check online for full details, as carers and relatives can also seek support.

Many men and women of this age suffer loneliness, depression or anxiety.

This can be as a result of bereavement, marital problems or a whole host of other issues.

Aged Veterans Counselling are able to offer in-home counselling provided by accredited professionals.

An initial half-hour session can be followed by a further five free sessions, which has proven to have a positive impact on those who participate.

The service is funded by the government's Armed Forces Covenant pledge (via the Aged Veterans Fund), which has been directly paid for by fines imposed on the major banks

relating to LIBOR.

Aged Veterans Counselling are contactable, in confidence, on 0300 0120 247 or online at [www.agedveteranscounselling.org.uk](http://www.agedveteranscounselling.org.uk)



● Cdr Martin Gill, Commanding Officer of HMS Vanguard, RNA branch chairman S/M Paul Walker, RNA vice president S/M Geoff Thornton and RNA secretary S/M John Rance

## A wide welcome

LEEDS Headingley No 1 branch commemorated the Battle of Trafalgar by holding a dinner at Horsforth Golf Club.

Almost 100 members and guests enjoyed a memorable evening, amongst them Cdr Martin Gill, the Commanding Officer of submarine HMS Vanguard, and his wife Hayley, who were the guests of honour.

Shipmates were also thrilled to welcome 20 ship's company from HMS Ceres, the Leeds-based Royal Naval Reserve unit.

And in recognition of the importance that organisations such as the RNA attend each other's events, shipmates were delighted when the Yorkshire branch of the Malaya and

## Cardiff school visited

MEMBERS of Cardiff branch made their annual visit to Roath Park Primary School in Cardiff to remember former pupils of the school who died in World War 1.

The event began over ten years ago when a plaque, bearing the names of the fallen, was handed to the RNA by someone who found it in an antique shop in Dorset.

Cardiff branch of the RNA then presented the plaque to the school.

At each annual visit - always arranged for around 10am - the children cook a breakfast of bacon sandwiches for their visitors and talk to them about their lives and experiences.

This year it was fitting that the visit took place on November 11, and in the year of the centenary of the Battle of the Somme, where many of the former students were killed.

## Circular feedback

EACH month the Command Warrant Officers send out the RNA Semaphore Circular to all RN/RM ships, units, squadrons, commandos and establishments - normally going to the BWO or EWO as the RNA point of contact.

Following feedback RNA Central Office in Portsmouth is going to produce a smaller version aimed at the serving Navy/Marines, enabling them to see member benefits, the great things RNA members get up to, and how the organisation supports serving personnel both now and when they leave the Forces.

Any feedback or ideas to Andy on 023 9272 0782.



# Association parades at Cenotaph

NATIONAL President Vice Admiral John McAnally laid a wreath on behalf of the RNA at the Cenotaph at the Remembrance ceremonies in London, and on a lovely autumnal day 46 shipmates paraded down Whitehall and round for the salute at Horse Guards by the Prince of Wales.

A number of shipmates gathered for a small service conducted by the Chaplain of the Fleet and RNA 'Bish' Rev Ian Wheatley in the Garden of Remembrance.

The National President, despite his bashed bowler hat, managed to once again engage in a chat with members of the Royal Family – this year it was the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince Harry.

# Starlight service

THE DISABLED veterans who live at the Royal Star & Garter Home in Surbiton were joined by family, friends and supporters for the Starlight Service at St Matthew's Church in Surbiton at the beginning of last month.

Rev Helen Hancock led the special festive service, which celebrated loved ones past and present through music and readings.

The charity's choir – the Star & Garter Singers – made their first official appearance, singing Christmas classics such as *Winter Wonderland* and *I Saw Three Ships*.

Denise Prior Terry, whose father Ernie Prior died at the Surbiton home in July, said: "This was a beautiful service, which is appreciated and brings comfort to those attending in memory of their loved ones."

www.starandgarter.org

# Meet the new Chairman

NEW National Chairman S/M Keith Ridley began his tenure by thanking his predecessor and two Vice Chairmen for their service to the Association.

"I would like to start by acknowledging and thanking three shipmates who have given endless hours of their personal lives to the Association, these are my predecessor, Chris Dovey, Mike Heskest, who has just stood down from being the National Vice Chairman and Mike's predecessor, Keith Crawford who stood down in 2015," said S/M Ridley.



"Sadly, all three have suffered setbacks with their health which curtailed their service as National Chairman and Vice Chairmen.

"On your behalf I thank them

for the tireless and endless hours they gave both in and outside of committee meetings and for their commitment to our great Association."

Keith was born in South Wales, but his family moved to London

when he was four.

At 16, straight out of an East London comp, Keith followed his brother "into the Royal Navy's elite branch as a Junior Engineering Mechanic – Stoker!"

At the age of 17 he was serving in HMS Albion, which supported operations in Brunei and Borneo.

Following a medical discharge from the Navy in 1966 he embarked on a 39-year career in local government housing and with a housing association.

Keith settled in Cambridgeshire, and over the past 40 years has dedicated much of his spare time to the ex-Service community in St Neots – he joined the local RNA branch in 1976.

He has served at all levels of the

RNA, first as branch secretary, then president, chairman and at Area and National level within No 6 Area as Deputy National Council (NC) Member and for the past four years as NC Member.

"During my term of office I want to see the RNA continue to expand," said Keith.

"Whilst joining online is steadily increasing, we cannot afford to sit back on our laurels and expect Central Office to wave a magic wand to increase the membership.

"Branch committees and individual members all have an important role to play by spreading the word.

"Always endeavour to have a membership application form in your pocket when out and about!"

# Shetland to honour lost submarine E49

SUBMARINE E49 was built by Swan Hunter on the Tyne between 1915 and 1916.

She was launched in November 1916, and along with a C-class submarine was sent to Shetland as U-boats were harassing shipping.

On March 10 E49 came into Baltasound with sea damage, and when she left again on March 12 she struck a German mine off the island of Balta.

She was lost with all hands.

The Shetland Sub-Aqua Club found the remains of the submarine in 1988, and she has been dived on since that time.

In 1990 Harold Evans was the local policeman in Baltasound when he arrested three divers for stealing the mast and associated equipment from the wreck site.

"The divers were later dealt with at Lerwick Sheriff Court," said Mr Evans.

"As there are centennial commemorations taking place in respect of WW1, I thought that it would be appropriate to erect a commemoration/information board overlooking the site of the loss.

"There will now indeed be

such a board, mounted on a plinth of local stone.

"The board will contain information relating to E49, its loss, a photograph of the Commander or First Lieutenant, a listing of the crew and an underwater photograph of what remains of E49 – mainly the conning tower and quite a lot of the superstructure.

"It is anticipated that the plinth will be unveiled on March 12, the centenary of the loss."

Mr Evans has requested a White Ensign to be used at

the unveiling of the memorial, which could then be hung in the Unst Boat Haven Museum in Shetland.

Mr Evans hopes the unveiling will be carried out by relatives of men who lost their lives in the sinking.

"This project is well supported by the people of Unst and local organisations," said Mr Evans.

"I am also compiling an archive of the crew, copies of which will be placed in the Shetland Archives in Lerwick as well as Unst Heritage Centre."

# £50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery tanker in our November edition (right) was RFA Tidereach, which was built by Swan Hunter at Wallsend.

The correct answers were provided by J Ramsbottom of Leeds, who wins £50.

This month's mystery ship (above) was very much in the tradition of the small, fast attack boats of the RN's Coastal Forces (see p25) – but she was built with training in mind.



Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Entries must be with us by February 12.

More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our March edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.



● S/Ms Chrissie Hughes (Shipmates and Oppos Administrator) and Andy Christie (RNA Deputy General Secretary) at the Learning and Development Day at Navy Command HQ on Whale Island in Portsmouth

# All about shipmates and oppos

THE RNA Central Office team attended the Navy Command HQ Learning and Development Day at Leach Building to explain to everyone the Shipmates and Oppos programme.

This programme is designed to offer an 'arm around the shoulder' when personnel leave the Royal Navy or Royal Marines – someone to guide them through the maze of help and support available to ex-regulars.

Registration is part of the release process – completed at the UPO and provided you want it – and the RNA will make sure the new leavers are okay each year for the following five years after the

end of their service.

Former Master-at-Arms S/M Chrissie Hughes has just finished a tour of all Royal Navy and Royal Marines establishments in the West Country to ensure that UPO staff are fully up to speed.

And Central Office has been thrilled with the warm reception she has received, and the enthusiasm for the programme that everyone has.

If you want to learn more about Shipmates and Oppos go to [www.shipmatesandoppos.org.uk](http://www.shipmatesandoppos.org.uk) or ring 023 9272 0782 – RNA Central Office is on the 2nd floor of Semaphore Tower in Pompey Dockyard, so pop in for coffee and a chat!

# One-stop service is developed

THE Ministry of Defence has announced that the Covenant Fund will work with Royal British Legion (RBL) and other charities to set up a one-stop service to better support the UK's Armed Forces veterans community.

The £2m Veterans Gateway programme will help veterans find and access advice and support on a broad range of issues, including healthcare and housing.

The new service will provide a 24/7 phone number, with an empathetic and professional voice at the end of the line, a dedicated website and a mobile app to make it easier for former Service personnel to access support on a range of issues including housing, employability and health.

It will give veterans, regardless of age or location, a simple point of contact to turn to for advice and help in accessing an array of public, private and charitable services which are out there.

This move responds to calls from veterans' charities and groups for help in navigating the wide range of services and organisations set up to support those who have served in the Forces.

As part of the Armed Forces Covenant, which the government enshrined in law to ensure that Service personnel are not disadvantaged by their service, £2m was set aside to set up the service. The £10m a year Covenant Fund is supported by LIBOR fines, levied on the banking industry for manipulating the LIBOR (London Interbank Offered Rates).

It has now been decided to award a grant to a group of charities led by the RBL, with support from other charities Combat Stress, SSAFA, the Armed Forces Charity, Connect Assist and Poppyscotland, who will provide the service to ensure no veteran is left behind.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said: "On leaving the Armed Forces, the overwhelming majority of our veterans move well to civilian life, but the assistance can vary depending on where they live.

"By setting up and funding this single point of access we'll make sure that it is easier for former Service personnel to get the support they need to buy a house, access medical care or get a job.

"It's right that our veterans, to whom we owe so much, get the assistance they need easily and when they need it."

Director General of the RBL, Charles Byrne, said: "We are honoured to have been awarded the grant to establish the new Veterans' Gateway with our partners at SSAFA, Combat Stress and Poppyscotland.

"The new service will ensure that all British Armed Forces veterans, wherever they are based, can get help quickly and efficiently from whichever organisation is best placed to provide it.

"With so many military charities and specialist support organisations working in the sector it is paramount that our veterans can navigate the field in front of them and the Veteran's Gateway will help them do that."

The service will be formally launched in the first half of this year.

MYSTERY PICTURE 263

Name .....

Address .....

My answers: (1) .....

(2) .....

RNA Central Office,  
Room 209, Semaphore  
Tower (PP70), HM Naval  
Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.

admin@royalnavalassoc.  
com

023 9272 3747

www.royal-naval-  
association.co.uk



# Being a Dukie is special Scottish link at QVS

IF YOUR son or daughter is in Year 11 studying for their GCSEs, they are no doubt contemplating their future plans.

At the Duke of York's Royal Military School, we acknowledge that studying for A-Levels with friends whilst living away from home in a safe boarding environment is an important stepping stone to university and adult life.

The opportunity, guidance and support that Sixth Form at the Duke of York's Royal Military School offers is invaluable.

Students of Centenary House, for Sixth Form boarders, share common aims; to develop academic rigour, close friendships, career ambitions and independence in a caring, lively environment.

Staff members are passionate to ensure that each and every student embraces a crucial sense of possibility in what they can achieve, and has the ambition and confidence to drive themselves to be the best they can possibly be.

There is no glass ceiling for those new in the Sixth Form.

All positions of responsibility are open to everyone, from



● Students in the Sixth Form common room

becoming a prefect to roles in the ceremonial part of school life.

Being a Dukie is special and past students are fully committed to developing a Dukie network with the Dukies' Association.

The Duke of York's Royal Military School is a state boarding school meaning that

education is paid for by the state, and parents only have to cover the cost of boarding fees.

These are £12,495 per year (£4,165 per term) for 2016-17.

To book a place at our Sixth Form Open Morning in January, visit [www.doyrms.com/Open-Days](http://www.doyrms.com/Open-Days) or call 01304 245073.

QUEEN Victoria School exists for the benefit of Forces families who have a link to Scotland.

If you are Scottish, have served in a Scottish regiment or are based in Scotland, QVS could be just right for you and your family – and let's be very clear on that point, we are here for you and your family and we are funded by the MOD.

Our Boarding House teams take the care of your children exceptionally seriously and a recent report by the Care Inspectorate underlines that.

In pupil support, we have an excellent GIRFEC (Getting it Right for every child) system in place.

On the academic side, last year 65 per cent of our students in S5 gained three Highers or more. This compares to a national

average of around 30 per cent.

Academic ability has no bearing on admissions here; we have a comprehensive year group, so to get those results is tremendous.

And, in addition to all of that, there are our fantastic traditions of sport, piping, drumming, dancing, parades and CCF, as well as an extensive hobbies programme that keeps everyone busy while they are here.

If you haven't considered QVS as an option yet, perhaps this will change your mind.

You can phone +44 (0)131 310 2927.

Alternatively, you can write to Admissions Secretary, Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, Perthshire FK15 0JY, United Kingdom, or visit our website [www.qvs.org.uk](http://www.qvs.org.uk)

## Wrap-around care at Clifton

AT Clifton College, we are proud of our strong military traditions, and that we have been the school of choice for many Forces families for over 150 years.

Our Forces community values the flexibility and individual support that our wrap-around care offers day, flexi-boarders and boarding pupils.

Clifton College is a co-educational school for children aged 2 to 18 located in the leafy suburb of Clifton in Bristol. The largest city in the South West, Bristol is home to two universities and is a cultural centre for arts and music.

The college has a unique house system which provides houses for both day and boarding pupils and offers a nurturing and supportive atmosphere in which children thrive.

House staff have many years' experience of the

challenges faced by Forces families and they ensure that every child receives individualised care and guidance.

Our outstanding facilities and more than 45 extracurricular clubs and activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and LAMDA, offer limitless opportunities for pupils to find and follow their passions.

In fact, the Preparatory School was recently included in the *Sunday Times*' top 100 preparatory schools list for excellent SATs results.

We offer a 20 per cent discount for our Forces families. Call our Admissions Team on 0117 405 8396 or go to [www.cliftoncollege.com](http://www.cliftoncollege.com) to book a personal visit or a place on our upcoming Open Day on February 4.



2-18 co-educational day and boarding school  
20% discount for Forces families

CLIFTON COLLEGE  
[cliftoncollege.com](http://cliftoncollege.com)

## Queen Victoria School



### Raising to Distinction

Admissions Deadline

Sun 15 January 2017

Queen Victoria School in Dunblane is a co-educational boarding school for the children of UK Armed Forces personnel who are Scottish, or who have served in Scotland or who have been members of a Scottish regiment.

**The main entry point is into Primary 7 and all places are fully funded for tuition and boarding by the Ministry of Defence.**

Families are welcome to find out more by contacting Admissions on +44 (0) 131 310 2927 to arrange a visit.

Queen Victoria School  
Dunblane Perthshire  
FK15 0JY  
[www.qvs.org.uk](http://www.qvs.org.uk)




LEADERSHIP ● CHARACTER ● PRIDE ● SELF-DISCIPLINE ● SPIRITUALITY ● SPORTSMANSHIP ● RESPECT

## The Duke of York's Royal Military School

# Open Mornings

Saturday 28 January & Saturday 11 March 2017

Located on a beautiful 150 acre site in Dover, Kent, The Duke of York's Royal Military School is a state boarding school for students aged 11 to 18.

We welcome applications from any student who wants to study GCSEs and A Levels at our unique and iconic school with its strong traditions.

### Why choose us?

- An independent school atmosphere at an affordable price. £4,165 per term\* covers ALL the boarding costs, with the education paid for by the State.
- GCSE results significantly above the national average
- Graded 'Good' in all areas by Ofsted.
- A £24.9m building programme has just been completed to enhance our already impressive school site and facilities including new boarding houses, teaching blocks, drama studio, sports centre and climbing wall.
- Full and weekly boarding available.
- Students enjoy an active lifestyle including sport, music, drama and outdoor activities, with over 70 clubs and activities offered.
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Ministry of Defence

\*Fees are reviewed annually

# Food, glorious food at Queen's College Taunton

PUPILS of Queen's College, Taunton, are enjoying a transformation in the catering facilities and food provision.

The college has embarked on a £450,000 programme of improvements, including a new servery in the Dining Hall and state-of-the-art kitchens.

At the forefront of the project is healthy eating, with the college catering team working in a unique strategic alliance with the Institute of Food, Brain and Behaviour.

Both the main school and nearby Highgrove Nursery have also received five-star food hygiene awards this year.

Head Teacher Dr Lorraine Earps said: "Queen's embraces the importance of metacognition (reflection about the thinking

process) throughout our entire curriculum, as a means of providing our young people with the skills needed to be independent and creative thinkers.

"It is essential, therefore, that we ensure our student family is supported with the best possible choices for a healthy lifestyle.

"This is part of our continuing investment across Queen's College's services and estate."

Dr Earps, who became the first female Head of Queen's last summer, is looking to strengthen its links with the military – Forces families receiving CEA pay only 10 per cent of boarding fees.

To find out more about Queen's College, go to [www.queenscollege.org.uk](http://www.queenscollege.org.uk), email [registrar@queenscollege.org.uk](mailto:registrar@queenscollege.org.uk) or call 01823 340830.

# Olympian is VIP visitor



After unveiling a plaque, Saskia spoke to the 750 pupils and 200 staff about her Olympic experiences, the importance of a healthy body and mind and having the determination and commitment to get to the top.

Saskia then visited the School's youngest sailors at neighbouring Alton Water reservoir who were taking part in the School's Year 7 Sailing Week (above) during which they learn the basics of sailing and work towards their RYA Level 2 qualification.

Andy Nutton, Director of Sailing, said: "It was wonderful that Saskia took the time to come

and see our youngest sailors on the water, providing some words of wisdom and inspiration.

"Whilst neighbouring Alton Water Reservoir is the natural home for RHS sailors, the team squads and those competing in national and international fleets and following the Olympic Pathway will be using the new indoor sports facilities for strength and conditioning, fitness and yoga on a regular basis".

The Royal Hospital School is a co-educational boarding and day school for 11 to 18 year olds set in 200 acres of Suffolk countryside overlooking the River Stour.

The school provides generous bursaries for both retired and serving Naval families through as well as discounts on those eligible for MOD CEA.

See [www.royalhospitalschool.org](http://www.royalhospitalschool.org), call 01473 326136 or email [admissions@royalhospitalschool.org](mailto:admissions@royalhospitalschool.org). Next Open Morning Saturday May 6.

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Improvements to boarding facilities include a new common room and reconfiguration of the boarding space.

Our Spring Term Open Mornings take place on Friday 20 and Saturday 21 January and are an informal way to visit the school and meet our pupils and Headmaster, Mr Butcher.

We offer academic, all-rounder, art, drama and music scholarships for pupils in years 3-6 and our next Scholarship Day is on Friday February 3.

A new music school was completed in September – the perfect place for singers and string players to rehearse before a series of special concerts in Venice in October.

Our sporting teams continue to have fantastic seasons, from athletics and swimming to rugby, hockey, netball and cricket.

We recently celebrated at the National History Museum a group of Year 7 artists coming third in the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation Global Canvas Art and Poetry contest.

Our new Roundhouse in the woods has been a popular addition to our Forest School and served as a perfect base for hosting a Forest School summer event with local primary schools.

To find out more about life at Perrott Hill please email [admissions@perrotthill.com](mailto:admissions@perrotthill.com) or call 01460 72051.

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The 2016 ISI inspection rated Bromsgrove as excellent in every category.

Bromsgrove has a vibrant arts scene, with many opportunities for pupils to perform both large and small projects, from an adaptation of *King Lear* at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2015 to a large cast winning acclaim

with *Sweeney Todd* at the local theatre and Year 9 and 10 pupils performing *The Musicians* at Birmingham's REP theatre.

To enhance this further, a new performing arts centre with a concert hall, studio theatre and multiple rehearsal areas will be completed by September 2017.

There is considerable strength, too, in sports, with a large number of representatives at county, regional and national level.

The school's U18 rugby team won the NatWest Schools Trophy in 2015 and 2016.

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# Welbeck students visit European battlefields

DURING the autumn term, students from Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College visited the battlefields of northern France and Belgium.

Students were taken to see the various monuments and cemeteries, which enabled them to appreciate the scale of the sacrifice at the Somme.

Members of the touring party were encouraged to remember that the names carved in the limestone pillars and arches each have their individual stories – a fact that was brought to life by some of the students on the trip who went in search of their fallen family members.

Royal Navy student Greer was able to find the grave of his great grandfather, Pte W J Smylie.

He was a member of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, and died with many of his comrades on July 1 1916.

With the help of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission app, Greer was able to find out that his ancestor was buried at Connaught Cemetery near Thiepval, and Greer found the exact location of Pte Smylie's headstone.

Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College is a co-educational full boarding college, where students are funded by the Ministry of Defence on a means tested basis.

It offers an A-level education to preselected students following a career as technical or engineering Officers within the Armed Forces or the MOD Civil Service.

[www.cwgc.org/app](http://www.cwgc.org/app)

● Greer, a student at Welbeck Defence 6th Form College, is pictured kneeling next to the grave of his great-grandfather, Pte Smylie of the 9th Bn Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers



# Long-distance learning from Marine Society

SEAFARERS can take their GCSEs and A-Levels wherever they are in the world, thanks to a series of tutor-supported distance-learning programmes offered by the Marine Society.

Marine Society, a maritime charity that supports lifelong learning and development, offers 42 subsidised GCSE and A-level courses for serving Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel.

Greenwich Hospital donates a £100 grant towards each qualification, and courses can be further subsidised by Royal Navy Standard Learning Credits.

Study materials are provided and courses are supported by an academic tutor.

Students complete a set number of assignments, a mock exam and, when they are ready, a final exam, which can be taken on deployment or on ship.

In the past, learners have sat their exams in Afghanistan and the Falkland Islands, among other locations.

Nick Chubb, Business Developer for the Marine Society, said: "Being at sea should not be a barrier for those who want to further their education and gain qualifications.

"We do not want seafarers, no matter where they are in the world, to miss out on opportunities.

"Marine Society understands how challenging their lives can be, which is why our courses are tailored and flexible to suit the needs of each individual."

Alongside distance-learning courses, Marine Society also provides crew libraries and a book shop, as well as additional educational opportunities.

Marine Society records indicate that at the moment the most popular courses for GCSE and IGCSE are English, mathematics, science, psychology and law.

At A-level, the most popular courses are biology, business studies, English, history and mathematics.

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**Sky-high options**

WOMEN have been taking up roles in Royal Naval aviation ever since the Women's Royal Naval Service was formed in 1917.

It is thought that many of the 2,000 or so members of the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF) immediately after the Great War were originally members of the WRNS who had supported the Royal Naval Air Service.

By 1939, when the WRNS organisation was reinvigorated, the list of tasks that its members could undertake had expanded, and included flying transport aircraft.

One member of that World War 2 cadre was Dorothy Mitchell, who took part in the national VE 70 anniversary commemorations in 2015 – and who was reminded of the dangers faced by naval aviators during the war when she read about a wartime memorial in an article in *The Wren* magazine.

Speaking of an air crash in the summer of 1945 in which two WRNS petty officers died, Dorothy said: "From 1944-45 I served at HMS Condor as an Air Mechanic Electrician.

"We all knew most of our colleagues, including PORMs, in one way or another.

"I remember July 27 because my best friend went to Crail to spend her birthday on the 28th with her twin sister who was serving there.

"We heard that there had been a crash on the 27th but no details were announced about casualties and I was pleased that it was not an aircraft from our squadron.

"I heard the sad news about Isobel [Squires] and Pauline [Gompers] the next day.

"We went as usual to the mess for dinner at noon on the Monday, and the recovered fuselage of the Barracuda was standing there on its nose. It was so very sad."

Wrens continued to enjoy opportunities in maritime aviation after World War 2.

Cate Whitewood, who worked as an Air Mechanic Airframes and Engines, was involved in several high-profile events, including taking part in Earthquake 69 (RN and RM Display Team at the Royal Tournament) being part of the winning international search and rescue team in 1973 and, as a PO Air Fitter, leading the first Wren Air Mechs (707 NAS) on detachment to Germany.

Cate said: "Joining the Wrens as an air mechanic started the beginning of my life's journey as an adult, and expanded my



● Cate Whitewood (top) with colleagues Jan Shillott, Glenda Mansfield and Rene Long – the Wrens' winning team for the 7th International Search and Rescue competition in 1973

horizons with exciting career opportunities."

It also laid the foundations for a career in defence systems engineering.

Today, women in the Royal Navy continue to play a full role in the aviation world, as exemplified by Air Engineer Officer Lt Sarah Geneux.

Lt Geneux served three years as a reservist at HMS Cambria, but decided to put her mechanical engineering degree to good use by becoming a regular.

In her previous job in the military aerospace industry she had worked on the design of aerial parachute systems – and when she joined up she was able to use those same systems, often for humanitarian purposes, dropping vehicles and supplies into disaster zones such as the Philippines in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan in late 2013.

That role, as part of the helicopter load lifting preparation team in HMS Illustrious, was outside her normal role as air weapons supply officer, but knowledge of load on airframes made her ideal for the job.

Having spent a year getting acquainted with HMS Queen Elizabeth – looking at the maintenance and safety aspects of unmanned magazines – Lt Geneux recently moved to Navy Command HQ as Aviation Facilities Officer where she reviews helicopter flight safety issues.

Opportunities exist outside the workplace as well – Lt Geneux has been to Himalaya twice, the second time as a Mountain Leader, a qualification gained through the Royal Navy.



**NAVY NEWS**

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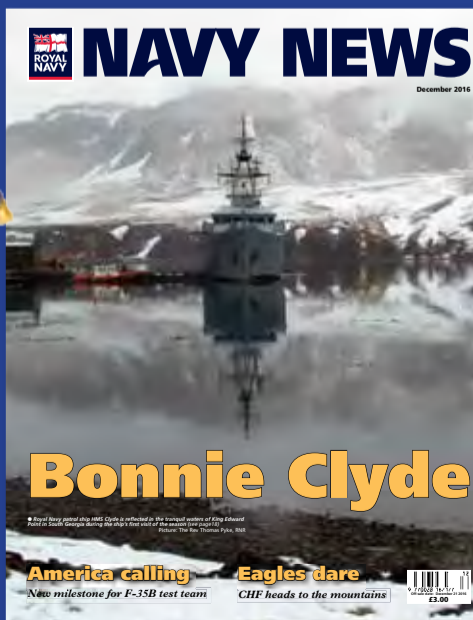
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# When fact and fiction collide

MANY of those interested in the era of the sailing Navy in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic period had their interest stimulated by the seven novels written by C S Forester about his fictional hero Horatio Hornblower.

This character acquired even more fame when the books were converted into a television series (*with Ian Gruffudd, right, in the lead role*), often repeated. Among those fascinated by the Hornblower story are Heather Noel Smith and Lorna Campbell, respectively a genealogist and retired Methodist minister and an educational technology consultant.

They have combined their efforts and expertise, and, most of all, their laudable enthusiasm, to investigate the real young officers who would have been the fictional Hornblower's fellow midshipmen in the frigate *Indefatigable* during her famous engagement with the French ship of the line *Droits de l'Homme* in 1797, writes Prof Eric Grove.

The CO of *Indefatigable* was Captain Sir Edward Pellew (later Admiral Lord Exmouth), an officer who has had a mixed reputation. The authors follow more modern research and significantly add to it by painting a convincing portrait of Pellew in a highly-positive light.

He was a "trusted commander, admired mentor and lifelong friend" to the young men whom he took under his wing in the early part of their careers.

Noel-Smith and Campbell have studied all 17 real 'young gentlemen' who were in *Indefatigable* during the *Droits de l'Homme* fight. The authors have exploited a commendably wide range of sources to find out as much as they can about the officers' lives and careers. In the process they have produced a fascinating, absorbing and important study of a sample of young officers from a remarkably wide range of backgrounds who inhabited a Royal Navy frigate's gunroom at the end of the 18th Century.

An officer whose career mirrored, in some ways, that of Hornblower was Nicholas Pateshall. He was the son of a deceased country squire, put into the Royal Navy as a 13-year-old volunteer to help support himself and his family. He rejected his first ship which – like Hornblower's in the first novel – was commanded by a sick captain with no prospects of action. Unlike the fictional officer, Pateshall returned home, much to the displeasure of his mother. Eventually, however, he obtained a berth in *Indefatigable* that was the making of the young man. He followed Pellew into the difficult-to-command ship of the line *Impetueux* where

## THE GROVE REVIEW

the officers were faced with a mutiny. This affair has unjustly given Pellew the reputation of being a tyrannical captain. Restoring discipline in the contemporary Navy was never pretty.

Commissioned lieutenant in 1801, Pateshall was an officer in the First Fleet to Botany Bay, an interesting experience but not one that provided financial support in terms of prize money. This situation began to improve as the war went on and Pateshall eventually gained command of sloops in various theatres. He was a captain by the end of the war and, on half pay, played a prominent part in the society and politics of Hereford before becoming a Rear Admiral on retirement and receiving the Naval General Service Medal issued to survivors of the wars in 1847. He died in 1856 at an age of 73.

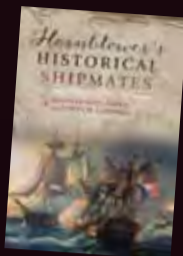
One of the most notable features of these midshipmen is how many of them came from relatively-lowly backgrounds in the mercantile marine. The most notable was Jeremiah Coghlan, an Irishman who impressed Pellew with his conduct at the wreck of the East Indiaman *Dalton*. Pellew offered him a berth in *Indefatigable*. He rose rapidly from able seaman to master's mate and, for a time, midshipman; the rate reflected Pellew's needs. Coghlan went on to distinguish himself in action to receive early promotion to lieutenant. More service in small ships confirmed Coghlan's reputation as an aggressive and effective officer. In 1810 he became a captain in command of HMS *Caledonia*, Pellew's flagship in the Mediterranean Fleet. The end of the war put him, like very many others, on half pay, but Coghlan was restored to duty to carry out some naval diplomacy in Brazil from 1826 to 1830. Captain Coghlan died in 1844, lauded as an officer of "intrepidity, firmness and humanity."

Others were less fortunate. James Bray, appointed as a result of local Falmouth connections, was lost with the brig HMS *Plumper* when it ran ashore. Another unfortunate was William Warden, from the British community in Lisbon, with which Pellew had connections. Warden stayed with Pellew as a lieutenant, moving with his mentor to the East Indies where he obtained independent command but died

"of excessive fatigue and exposure" during a gale in 1807; the weather in this period was as bad as it can be today. There is nothing new in such extreme conditions.

Most unfortunate was Richard Delves Broughton, the son of a vicar like many other officers. He was related to a good friend of Pellew's and the latter took him in *Indefatigable* and then to *Impetueux*, even though he considered the young man 'odd'. He was promoted to lieutenant but was soon court martialled for "neglect of duty and unofficerlike conduct." He managed to obtain a temporary berth in a frigate commanded by his brother-in-law but eventually purchased a commission in a cavalry regiment and died in India in 1806. This was a unique failure, the only one of Pellew's "young gentlemen from Implacable not to forge a successful naval or civilian career."

These and other stories are clearly told in this excellent book that sheds much useful light on the naval officer corps, both commissioned and warrant, of the period. **Hornblower's Historical Shipmates: The Young Gentlemen of Pellew's Indefatigable** (Boydell, £25 ISBN 978 178327 099 6) is also a notable example of how historical novels and the encouragement to new researchers given by the New Researcher's Conference sponsored by the British Commission for Maritime History and the Society for Nautical Research provide a synergy leading to really important progress in naval history.



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● Lt Callum Fraser in action

## Medals haul for rowers

ROYAL Navy sportsmen and women picked up 11 medals at the Welsh National Indoor Rowing Championships in Cardiff.

Thirteen personal bests were also recorded as the Senior Service team built on their success at the RN Indoor Rowing Championships, reported in last month's *Navy News*.

Gold medals were won over the classic 2km distance by Lt Craig Guest, of HMS Collingwood, in 6min 17.3sec and Lt Alex Kelley (Wales URNU) in 7min 25.3sec in the men's and women's 30-plus heavyweight categories respectively.

WO Tiny Nash (HMS Temeraire) confirmed his position at the head of the UK men's heavyweight 50-plus rankings with a controlled win in 6min 21.9sec, albeit with competition close behind. PO Sean Gaffney (RNAS Yeovilton) rowed a world-class time of 3min 05.1sec to win the men's adaptive – legs, trunks, arms category.

Lt Cdr Jim Hyde (DES Bristol) won his first medals at a national championship, taking bronze in the men's 2km heavyweight 30-plus in 6min 27.8sec, later going one better with a show of power to row 100m in 14.3sec.

Silver medals in the perpetually unforgiving 2km races were also won by Lt Cdr Ruth Guest (Institute Of Naval Medicine) in the women's lightweight 30-plus with a personal best of 7min 38.3sec and Lt Col Tom Blythe (JSU Northwood) who set a personal best of 6min 25.4sec in the men's heavyweight 40-plus.

NA(SE) Aaby Aldridge (HMS Queen Elizabeth) took third place in the women's open heavyweight 2km with a season's best of 7min 43.9sec.

CPO Tim Cox (Collingwood) was just edged out of a medal in a blanket finish of a very high standard in the men's lightweight 40-plus 2km in 6min 43.0sec, but took silver in the 500m (1min 30.8sec).

LPT Aaron Snowdon (Collingwood) could have made good use of a blanket to stay warm through his extended recovery after rowing a superb debut race in the men's open heavyweight 2km in 6min 23.2sec, to finish sixth, ahead of fellow debutant Cpl Dave Moody's (40 Cdo) in 6min 27.8sec (eighth), behind fourth-place finisher Lt Callum Fraser's (HMS Vanguard) who rowed 6min 20.4sec.

Solid performances, just outside medals, were posted in the men's heavyweight 30-plus by Sgt Sam Arnold (CTCRM) in 6min 28.7sec, PO Matt Parkinson (HMS Collingwood) in 6min 37.4sec, a personal best, and Lt Cdr Dan McMahon (RNAS Culdrose) in 6min 43.10sec.

CPO Mark Campbell (Collingwood) was ecstatic with his men's lightweight 40-plus personal best of 7min 45.7sec, as was POPT Chazz Charrett (Temeraire) with his personal best of 6min 49.9sec, which secured him fourth place in the men's lightweight 30-plus.

# Madness in the mud it isn't

YOU'VE probably heard of the Spartan Race and Tough Mudder obstacle course event, but now the Senior Service has taken it a step further.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines **Obstacle Course Racing Team** has been set up to promote the sport across the Naval Service.

The team made its debut in East Sussex for the UK Championships, where 15 runners took on a 15km course, which included scaling ropes, climbing over multiple walls, jumping in and out of muddy water, rope climbing, load-carrying and the infamous 'killer' – an obstacle consisting of rings, chains and very thin bars requiring ninja warrior-style skills.

CPO(AWW) Dale Streeter, currently serving in the Brighton AFCO, said: "In my first year of doing OCR I've managed

to qualify for the World Championships in Canada and the UK Championships.

"I sort of fell into OCR running as I had really fallen out of love with normal running and needed something to motivate me again. So with a little persuasion from a friend who has been running in OCRs for the last three years, I did my first one in July and totally loved the buzz and the feel of the race.

"As you progress you start to get more and more into it, and want to better yourself after each race. In the UK Champs, I raced against the top 50 OCR runners in my age group and it felt like a good way of improving myself, knowing the guy who has just passed you is the same age as you spurs you on harder to try and beat him.

"I'm looking forward to a full-on attack for this year's events and representing

the RNRM team."

Team coordinator PO(AWW) Robert Potter, of HMS Queen Elizabeth, said: "I stumbled across the sport in 2012, when I was offered a last-minute place to compete in the Spartan Race, which at the time was a relatively unknown event. I immediately fell in love, and have raced competitively since with some reasonable results including qualifying for the World OCR Championships 2016 in Canada."

The new team is planning bespoke training days this year and attracts discounts for race entry and kit.

Anyone interested in joining the team should read **RNTM 236/16**. You can follow the team on Facebook at **Royal Navy and Royal Marines OCR Association** or on Twitter **@RN\_RM\_OCR**



## Battle of bases

HMS Sultan welcomed trainees from Victory Squadron, HMS Collingwood, for an afternoon of sport in the **Battle of the Bases**.

The competition saw the trainees compete with their Sultan counterparts from the Defence College of Technical Training's Royal Naval Air Engineering & Survival Equipment School and the Defence School of Marine Engineering across six sports.

Basketball, rowing, football, crossfit, throwdown, climbing, running and the base's new trim trail were among the activities and for many of the trainees involved, it was a first introduction to inter-establishment competition.

A trophy was presented to Sultan who won five out of six of the sports, with the climbing ending in a draw.

LPT Adam Scott who organised the activities said: "The event was a great success and I was really pleased to be involved with it.

"Competitive sport is a really good way to keep fit throughout your career."

## One discipline wins majority of Royal Navy awards

# The ball of fame

**THE Royal Navy's 2016 Sports Awards were given a golden touch thanks to a triple Olympic champion.**

The Navy's very own Lt Pete Reed – a gold medallist rower in the last three Olympics – joined senior naval officers in presenting awards to outstanding sports stars who have put the Navy in the spotlight during the last 12 months.

The NATO Cup for the Sportsman of the Year went to triathlete Corporal Rich Ebbage, while the Sportswoman of the Year was won by Air Engineering Technician Anthea Kaptein for her exceptional talents across three sports – football, netball and basketball.

Triumphing in the team award and presented with the Sports Control Board Cup were the Navy's netball team – winners of the 2016 Inter-Service title for the first time in 23 years.

Cpl Ebbage, 25, from Ripon, North Yorkshire, enjoyed an outstanding year as the top Services middle-distance triathlete.

He set records throughout 2016, winning national and international races at both national and international competitions.

He said: "I am delighted to have achieved this award considering that there was some extremely stiff competition.

"I would have not been able to participate in a lot of the races without the support of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Sports



● Second Sea Lord and Lt Peter Reed with members of the Royal Navy Netball team; Lt Cdr Cairney is pictured on the far left

Association."

AET Kaptein was described as a hugely talented multi-sportswoman whose impact at all three sports helped secure inter-service success across the board.

AET Kaptein, 26 from Merseyside, said: "Winning sportswoman of the year is a massive achievement and just proves that all the hard work you put in throughout training and in your own time pays off and is

recognised in a positive light.

"In the year ahead I hope to finally win Inter-Service football after many years of trying, retain our netball title and compete for a decent ranking in the UK Armed Forces team championships.

The Young Sportsperson of the Year went to Mne George Crotty for his exploits in the boxing ring.

His citation said he was a prodigiously-talented boxer and

was crowned UK Armed Forces Champion in his first season.

Lt Cdr Linda Cairney, hailed as the talismanic leader of the netball team, won the Sports Official of the Year Cup.

Her citation said: "Her influence over the past several seasons cannot be overestimated. As one of the few Level 3 netball coaches in the country, Lt Cdr Cairney is the epitome of a first-class sports official."



● Above: Cpl Rich Ebbage; Below, AET Anthea Kaptein

Pictures: LPhoto Barry Swainsbury



She said she was delighted with her own award and the prize bestowed on her netball team.

"This is an exciting time for elite military netball and I am privileged to be part of it," she said.

Joining Lt Reed in presenting the awards at HMS Nelson wardroom were Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock and Naval Secretary Rear Admiral Simon Williams.

# Shooting and triathlon debut on Bulwark Great sports

MEMBERS of HMS Bulwark's new **clay pigeon shooting** club take aim over the Gulf of Aden, while below many of the ship's company relax in the sea following the vessel's first **triathlon**.

Both sports debuted on the amphibious flagship during downtime from Joint Expeditionary Force (Maritime), JEF(M) east of Suez.

The shooting club, organised by the ship's Amphibious Operations Officer Lt Col James Fuller, was set up after a grant from Grassroots Sports Funding allowed the purchase of a trap, clays and ammo.

Lt Col Fuller, along with keen clay pigeon shooters PO(AC) Edd Johnston and PO(CS) Chris Faulkner, organised the contest on the ship's flight deck.

More than 90 sailors and Royal Marines received an induction session before taking part.

"This is the perfect demonstration of a grass-root sport; for many of the individuals this was the first time they have ever held a shotgun," said Lt Col Fuller.

"The Royal Navy and the Royal Marines have a thriving clay pigeon shooting association and it was with their advice that we were able to get the ball rolling.

"I am sure that the Bulwark club will help feed some fresh enquiries into the RNRMCPSA.

"With very little outlay and just a little initial preparation, it is such a simple activity to stage.

"If the reception is anything like that which we experienced on Bulwark, every ship should look to host a shoot at sea when programmes allow."

For more information on

organising a clay pigeon club for your unit please visit the RNRM rifle association website at [www.rnrmra.org/rncpsa.htm](http://www.rnrmra.org/rncpsa.htm)

Sixty sailors and marines from J Coy 42 Cdo took on the challenging triathlon, beginning with a 200m swim in 28° water.

Entering and exiting the water via the ship's dock, competitors made their way to the flight deck where spinning bikes were set up for a 6.5km cycle. The final discipline involved running 2.8 miles – 14 laps of the ship's upper deck.

The triathlon was won in 30 minutes 24 seconds by Mne Henry Barrett from Suffolk, pictured receiving his trophy from Capt Parkin.

"It was great fun to be able to conduct a triathlon from a warship in the middle of the ocean, and it was made even better by the fact I won," said Henry.

On completion of the triathlon, the remainder of the ship's company were able to conduct 'hands to bathe'.

The sportsmen and women were protected from possible Nobbies – sharks – by lookouts on the flight deck.

Bulwark's CO Capt James Parkin said: "It was heartening to see so many of the ship's company and embarked forces take part in the first ever Bulwark triathlon.

"It was certainly no easy feat, involving immense physical exertion in some very warm conditions. Additionally, the opportunity to then hold a 'hands to bathe' is something which doesn't get to happen very often.

"However, my sailors and marines have been working very hard recently on JEF(M) and it's a fantastic opportunity to be able to give them something back for all their efforts."



● Mne Henry Barrett receives his triathlon trophy from Bulwark's CO Capt James Parkin



## Future's promising but legend retires

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Cycling Association's female riders achieved their best levels of participation and results for a single season last year.

Nine of the association's women took part in competitive events across most disciplines, setting several new Navy records along the way.

AB(CIS) Gabrielle Saunderson, the RNRMCA's Ladies' Secretary, *pictured above left*, set a new Navy record in the ten-mile and 50-mile individual Time Trials with times of 23.17 and 2:15.39 respectively.

CPO Billi Staite and Rachel Hackman set a new RNRMCA record in the two-up ten-mile Team Time Trial, while Lt Cheryl Goodwin took third place in the Inter-Service XC MTB Championships.

For the first time in the history of Navy cycling an all-female team (Saunderson, Hackman and Caitlin Brown) represented the Navy at a National event – the RTTC National three-up Team Time Trial, (a 32-mile, hilly race), finishing in fifth place.

The RNRMCA road race championships were held at BRNC. Lt Kerry Woollard battled fiercely with AB Kathy Azopardi and Rachel Hackman around a punishing hilly and technical circuit for the title of Navy Champion, with Rachel edging it over the line first by only a few seconds.

With her husband and cycling team partner Rob, Jane Smith set a new RNRMCA record in the mixed ten-mile Tandem Time Trial. Jane also represented the Navy in the Torq 12 XC MTB event – a 12-hour team endurance off-road race.

Caroline Stewart claimed an impressive fourth place overall in the Banjo Cycles CX summer series and continues to race for the Navy in cyclo-cross events throughout the winter season.

The RNRMCA needs more female racers to build on these results, if you're inspired visit [www.navycycling.co.uk](http://www.navycycling.co.uk) or [Facebook/RNRMCA](https://www.facebook.com/RNRMCA) and Instagram [#RNRMCA](https://www.instagram.com/RNRMCA)

■ Royal Navy cycling legend WO1(PT) Sean Childs, *pictured above right*, has retired from cycle racing after 15 years at the top of his game.

Sean has held almost every position on the committee and holds most club records and honours.

He has decided to stand down from cycling completely to, at last, focus his attentions on his family.

He will continue to play an active role in mentoring the present committee.

We wish him well and thank him for his huge contribution. BZ.



## Behind every woman...

AIRCRAFT Engineering Technician Ciaran Nash of 824 NAS was named FA Manager of the Month for his dedicated work with RNAS Culdrose Women's Football Team.

Ciaran only started training as a coach last summer, but has always had a passion for football. He has played for, and always supported, Culdrose FC so coaching them seemed like the obvious next step, and too good an opportunity to miss.

Ciaran's award recognised his motivational skills and the enthusiasm he has given the team, made up of local Helstonians, during their weekly practices and matches. His coaching skills will also benefit greatly from the club's recent affiliation with the Real Madrid Foundation.

"I am shocked to have won, but it's a great honour," he said. "It is mainly down to the women showing up every week, working hard and training regularly.

"Lots of people on the squadron ask about the matches and we are gathering more support as the results are slowly getting better. The team are improving every day and I am really proud of them."



# Navy boxing team prove a knockout in Australia Victorious in Victoria



ROYAL Marine boxer Jay Whittaker lands a punch on Australian international Harry Garside during a tour Down Under.

The Marine faced one of the toughest opponents but gave a great account of himself as the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Boxing Association took on the best boxers in the state of Victoria – and won by two bouts.

The Reggio Calabria Club in Brunswick, Melbourne, was sold out for the tournament – billed as the most exciting line up since the Commonwealth Games in 2006 – which featured ten Australian internationals.

Mne Nathan Greenaway opened the show against Luke Bones, who was awarded victory by the judges.

Second up was Mne Andrea Rufolo, who beat the first international boxer, Shaun Thomas.

Diver Bradley Chapman faced local hero Dean Clark in a thrilling contest from first bell to the last. An explosive bout with barely a break in the action, both boxers landed solid blows and there was little to choose between them until the last round where Chapman finished the exchanges to convince the judges to mark in his favour.

Following Garside's victory over Whittaker, it was the turn of ETME Luke Fisher against international boxer Luke Pilarinos, who just edged the win.

Diver Robbie Matthews was up next against local man Matt Cleave. Matthews used his head to get inside the longer reach and land some solid and eye-catching punches – winning the bout on a unanimous decision.

AB Callum Lynn took on another popular Victoria boxer in Mason Smith, who took the bout on a split decision following a solid performance by Lynn.

There was little to choose between Mne Chris Godridge and Parok Wol but a decision by the referee to award the Royal a count in the last round edged the bout for the Australian.

An exceptional performance by LPT Liam Short saw him win the boxer of the tournament title following victory over Sebastian Karner.

The most experienced Navy boxer Mne George Crotty faced international Donald Jones. A strong but slightly unorthodox boxer, Jones proved a handful for Crotty, who showed flashes of brilliance throughout when he gave himself the room to work but an uncomfortable bout meant that Crotty had to work for his win.

Another clash of internationals was next as Mne Jack Stringer met Dave Drapac. Despite a two-year break from boxing while he undertook basic training for the Royal Marines, Stringer countered his opponent brilliantly with eye-catching solid shots.

Despite a convincing performance the judges found in Drapac's favour by split decision.

Mne Ben Jones faced yet another international Ikena Enyi, who had flown in especially for the contest. Enyi was a handful from the outset, inflicting two cuts to Jones's eye and forehead by leading with his elbows and head. Jones showed true Royal Marines' spirit and secured a unanimous victory.

The youngest of the Navy boxers, AB Nathan Levers met international Adrian Paoletti, former Commonwealth Games and World Championships participant. In the last two rounds the Navy man landed the stronger and clearer shots on the counter to secure a unanimous and impressive win.

Mne Kallum Radley was last up and with the team competition at 7-6 the result of his bout would determine if the Royal Navy came away with the team win or would have to settle for a draw.

Radley began fast and dominated early on. He took the decision out of the judge's hands as he dropped his opponent with a well-timed left hook to the body in the latter half of the first round; a shot from which Riboni would not recover and the Royal Marine secured a knockout victory as well as ensuring a team victory by eight points to six.

Picture: Marty Camilleri