



# NAVY NEWS

JUNE 2017

## Small world

● HMS Ranger's Ensign flutters in the stiff spring breeze as she leads HMS Dasher and 12 more P2000s out of Portsmouth Harbour. All of 1st Patrol Boat Squadron gathered in the Solent for their first combined exercise in more than a decade. See pages 16-17.

Picture: LPhoto Louise George



## Daring's deeds

*Emotional homecoming for Type 45*

## Eye of the storm

*40 Cdo tested to the limits*



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# Bird away!

THERE'S fast... and there's Sea Viper fast.

The Navy's premier weapon against air attack leaves a trail of fire and smoke over HMS Diamond's forecastle as the destroyer proves her ability to defend the Fleet.

The third of Britain's six Type 45s headed to the empty waters – and emptier air space – off north-west Scotland to prove that her air defence missile system, plus the men and women who operate it, are up to the demands of an impending deployment.

In Sea Viper's 'sights': a Mirach target drone, heading through the Outer Hebridean skies at around 500mph, simulating a missile attack on Diamond. The Type 45 used her 'Phased Array 1045 Radar' – the rotating "ball" on top of the main mast – to track dozens of aircraft and other objects across thousands of square miles of airspace, identify the threat and take it out.

With the words: "Stand by for Sea Viper function", the silo lid over the missile flipped open and the missile erupted in a brilliant flash of fire and plume of smoke.

Just two and a half seconds after erupting from its silo, the 450kg Aster missile had accelerated to more than four times the speed of sound – it took NASA's gigantic Saturn V moon rockets 76 seconds just to reach Mach 1.

High over the Atlantic the missile manoeuvred at G-forces which no human being could withstand to close in for the kill.

"A moment later an explosion in the sky marked the missile destroying her target – all in all, a successful week's work for HMS Diamond," said her Commanding Officer Cdr Ben Keith.

"I am immensely proud of my team and the work they put in over the past few weeks to make this successful test firing possible.

"We have proven once again that the Type 45 is a world-beating ship when it comes to air defence and this firing gives us all the utmost confidence in Diamond and her systems in advance of our deployment later this summer."

The Sea Viper firing rounds off a busy few months for Diamond; following on from an intensive training package in preparation for her next operational deployment later this year.

The successful missile firing was the final 'tick' for the destroyer and ship's company. They return to Portsmouth later this month for a spot of maintenance for Diamond and leave for the crew before they head on deployment in late summer.

# An Indian spring

HMS Richmond and Indian frigate Tarkash joined forces off Plymouth for the annual get-together between the two Commonwealth navies.

Normally held in or near the stretch of coast in India which gives the exercise its name – Konkan – this year it fell to the RN to host its long-standing ally, who dispatched their relatively new Talwar-class frigate some 6,000 miles to the UK for the 2017 incarnation.

The British weather curtailed some, though not all, of the joint training which saw the Tarkash – billed as a 'stealth frigate' and taking her name from the Sanskrit for 'quiver of arrows' – and Richmond make use of the South Coast Exercise Areas off Plymouth to conduct advanced warfare drills.

Four members of each ship's company traded places for the day to learn about life in the two navies, their similarities and differences; the Indian Navy grew out of the Royal Navy, taking many of its traditions and practices.

That was 70 years ago – since when the Indian Navy has become a very powerful, independent maritime force, but one which maintains close ties with the RN, not least because the UK maintains a permanent presence in the Indian Ocean.

"Our visit to the Tarkash was a truly memorable experience," said Sub Lt Luke Murphy. "It gave us the opportunity to get involved in a wide variety of tasks from riding in the sea boat to witnessing the exercise from the operations room.

"This provided us with a great appreciation for the capabilities and professionalism of the Indian Navy."

After the weather cut short the joint training and the guests had been returned to their original ships, Tarkash made for London to take part in events celebrating the 'UK-India year of culture' (she was welcomed into the capital by cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar).

As for Richmond, she took part in Konkan after a busy period of spring training, chiefly testing her anti-submarine warfare skills against would-be submarine skippers of tomorrow undergoing Perisher. She paid a short visit to the capital upon finishing with Tarkash, including taking part in the historic Ceremony of the Dues at the Tower of London.



# The good

DID you hear the one about the Type 45 destroyer called upon to protect global shipping from missile attack?

True story. Yes. For the first time one of the Navy's class of 21st-Century air defence destroyers has used her aerial shield – Sampson and long-range radar, feeding data to her Sea Viper missiles (which thankfully didn't have to be fired) – in one of the most congested and dangerous stretches of water on the Seven Seas.

Twice in the past 12 months ships have been hit by missiles in the Bab al Mandeb Strait, victims of civil unrest in neighbouring Yemen.

That prompted Britain to dispatch HMS Daring for two extended periods to ensure the safety of merchant shipping running the gauntlet of 'missile alley'.

The destroyer – designed and built for exactly this mission, albeit safeguarding naval task groups – passed up and down the strait 20 times, helping more than 800,000 tonnes of shipping through – that's nearly 100 times her own displacement or the equivalent of four World War 2 convoys.

Previously we've trumpeted the Daring class for providing protection for carrier battle groups in the Gulf – British and American.

Whilst the US Navy has raved about the aerial picture the 45s have been able to provide support to operations east of Suez, hitherto there's been little in the way of direct threat in the skies.

That most definitely wasn't the case in the BAM – as it's abbreviated in military terminology.

Each passage was a tense affair, demanding sailors and Royal Marines remain alert for hours on end.

Depending on the speed of the merchant vessels, it could take up to 12 hours to run the gauntlet of the narrows with Daring's ship's company frequently at action stations (117 hours in all, with the longest patrol lasting 40 days).

Cdr Marcus Hember – who took charge of D32 half-way through the deployment – said it was vital to the UK's prosperity, as well as wider global trade, that the narrows remained open to shipping as one of the most important 'choke points' on the Seven Seas. If it were ever closed, it would have a severe impact on global trade – not least the fuel from the Middle East delivered to the UK by tankers passing through the Red Sea.

"So I am proud that Daring has played a significant part in reassuring the international community that international trade routes remain accessible and in maintaining the wider regional stability in the Gulf area," he added.

Beyond keeping the sea lane open and reassuring shipping, Daring's deployment proved an invaluable learning experience for escorting Britain's new carriers.

The combination of the long-range radar (the big black slab behind the main mast), Sampson radar (the spiky, spinning ball on the main mast) and the Sea Viper missiles (held in a silo on the forecastle) and the way Daring made use of them, said Lt Cdr Ben Kadinopoulous, "shows that we can defend the carrier battlegroups, so our doctrine is right".

He continued: "Our work in the Bab al Mandeb changed everything – sustained operations, close to shore, going up and down the strait, picking up this or that ship.



"We handed over to HMS Monmouth back in April, before once again finding ourselves running the gauntlet that is the BAM.

"Despite now being veterans of this waterway, everyone aboard Daring treated the transit like it was the first time – the ship's company closed up to action stations for a further six hours transit of this narrow choke point of the coast of war-torn Yemen."

Lt Cdr Mark Rowbotham, Daring's head of marine engineering, added: "The ship's company got into a rhythm and they knew they were doing a job for real. So morale was really high."

To ensure the destroyer could sustain long periods of high-tempo operations, the logistics team on board ensured there was plenty of fuel and food aboard; Daring refuelled 16 times at sea, taking on board more than 7½ million litres of diesel – enough to fill 112,000 family cars.

After the seven-month stint in the Gulf, there was finally a chance to relax with a short visit to the Israeli port of Haifa – though not for Daring's male and female rugby sides who took on the local Wild Boars.

The women's 7s ran out 35-5 winners on a rather sandy, but solid pitch. The men's full XV delivered an equally comprehensive victory over their hosts, thanks to a captain's performance from POET(WE) Ash Peace who scored a hat-trick of tries in the 29-7 triumph.

For a history hit, a sizeable number of the crew made the pilgrimage to the holy city of Jerusalem.

Daring became only the second Type 45 to venture into the Black Sea (Duncan was first, a couple of years ago), visiting Constanta in Romania and Varna in neighbouring Bulgaria.

The stop at the former allowed the destroyer to train with a former RN favourite, ex-Type 22 frigate HMS Coventry, now Regele Ferdinand, sold with HMS London (Regina Maria) to Bucharest back in 2004.

The aim of both Black Sea visits was to show support for the UK's Eastern European allies and underline Britain's commitment to the region and NATO allies.

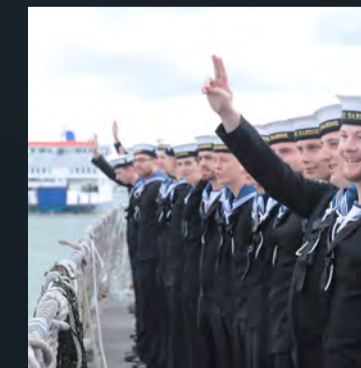
And most importantly of all it was a chance for the ship's company to tell their sponsor, the Countess of Wessex, what they'd been up to; for the first time she joined the destroyer, albeit briefly, while on deployment.

Another Black Sea visitor was Cdre Peter Sparks, Commander of the Portsmouth Flotilla, who flew out to thank the sailors and marines for their efforts and present several awards to those who stood out in particular.

Back through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles and into the Ionian Sea, Daring passed the Greek island of Kefalonia, where a handful of crew led by CO Cdr Marcus Hember and chaplain Thomas James disembarked to remember the ship's predecessor.

Daring has no battle honours, but islanders regard the ship as heroes, for back in 1953, they were first to respond to a devastating earthquake which reduced most of the capital of Argostoli to rubble.

Daring's sailors set up field hospitals, provided food and scoured the ruins of the town in the hope of finding people buried alive.





# shepherd

Sixty-four years later, survivors of the quake and their descendants were on hand to describe the aftermath of the natural disaster and the vital help Daring's sailors offered.

Proof of the affection in which the previous Daring – scrapped back in 1971 – is held by locals can be found in HMS Daring Street and a memorial plaque, where Cdr Hember placed a wreath on behalf of today's ship's company for the upwards of 800 people killed by the quake.

The small party which landed in Kefalonia rejoined the Type 45 in Barcelona – XO Lt Cdr Hugh Botterill guided the ship the 1,100 miles across the Med to Daring's final port of call, which was a thoroughly-deserved R&R rather than flag flying three-day visit.

Not among the destinations of Daring's nine-month tour of duty was Holland. So the mountain came to Mohammed.

Aboard throughout the deployment was Royal Netherlands Navy warfare officer Lt Dennis van Kinderen, who leaped at the chance for a two-year exchange with the RN – and was assigned to Daring.

An officer for five years, Lt van Kinderen had spent the bulk of his career with Dutch amphibious forces – so life aboard an air defence destroyer was an eye opener for the 32-year-old from Hoogerheide, just across the Netherlands border from Antwerp.

"I was excited to join Daring for her operational deployment and see how similarly both Navies operate," he said.

"The deployment has seen us operating in a number of roles from maritime security to anti-piracy. I hadn't expected to get as much operational experience as this and at the same time have been able to study. This has been the best thing to happen to me since joining the Navy.

"We have had some great times over the last months. I have been privileged to work with a great team, and worked in a busy and varied operational environment. Dubai is definitely top of the list for me for port visits, and it has been great being part of British wardroom who enjoy a good run ashore."

And so to Portsmouth and a rare mid-afternoon homecoming (all the base's tugs were busy in the morning helping Dutch amphibious ship Rotterdam berth). Overhead, the Wildcat of 825 NAS which had been Daring's 'flying steed' throughout her time away conducted a fly past.

This is the first time Wildcat – successor to the now retired Lynx – has supported a full deployment by a Type 45. Beyond supporting Daring, the new helicopter was shown off to a string of navies based or operating in the Middle East: French, Dutch, Pakistan, Oman, Saudi Arabian, Bahraini and United States.

The aircraft flew more than 240 hours and only missed two operational sorties due to minor unserviceability issues – which were quickly rectified by the senior maintenance rating, CPOAET Martin Colbourne, and his team of seven aircraft engineering technicians.

Flight Commander Lt Andrew Henderson said that the time aboard Daring had demonstrated that Wildcat was many times more potent and effective than its forebear.

"It's a really capable aircraft at the beginning of its life and it's got a great deal of potential for further enhancements as the aircraft continues towards full operating capability.

"Daring's command and principal warfare officers really

got to understand what the Wildcat can bring to bear, from intelligence and surveillance collection or in simulated blue water Navy engagements."

At his side throughout in the cockpit was pilot Lt Dal Nwokora who completed an impressive 364 deck landings over the nine-month period.

"The extra power in the engines and more powerful tail rotor make the Wildcat absolutely suited to operations at sea," he said.

"We landed on numerous different countries' ships, and everywhere we went there was a great deal of interest in our new aircraft as it was often the first time the Wildcat had been seen by those nations."

High performance wasn't just restricted to the aircraft; the Flight also had a good haul in promotion signals during the deployment, with six members of the Flight selected for promotion including both the Flight Commander and pilot – very rare.

The flight had the luxury of a family reunion at Yeovilton 24 hours before their shipmates.

Amid the usual joy of a homecoming, there was a poignant moment for the ship's company and the family of LET Simon Allen.

The marine engineer died following a road accident in Malta in the first weeks of the deployment.

As a mark of respect for the Lancastrian, his shipmates left a gap as they formed Procedure Alpha for Daring's ceremonial entry to Portsmouth Harbour.

For the rest of the 240 souls aboard, the homecoming was, in Cdr Hember's words, "a wonderful and rewarding moment".

He continued: "Everyone on board has contributed to the security and stability of one of the most important areas of the world for international trade, something for which they truly deserve recognition.

"I am proud of everything they have achieved during this long deployment and hope they enjoy some well-earned time with their families and loved ones."

For the youngest sailor aboard, AB(WS) Jake Hobday, the past nine months had been hard work – but also unforgettable.

"The deployment has been long but I've learned loads and been to places in the world I never thought I would see," he said.

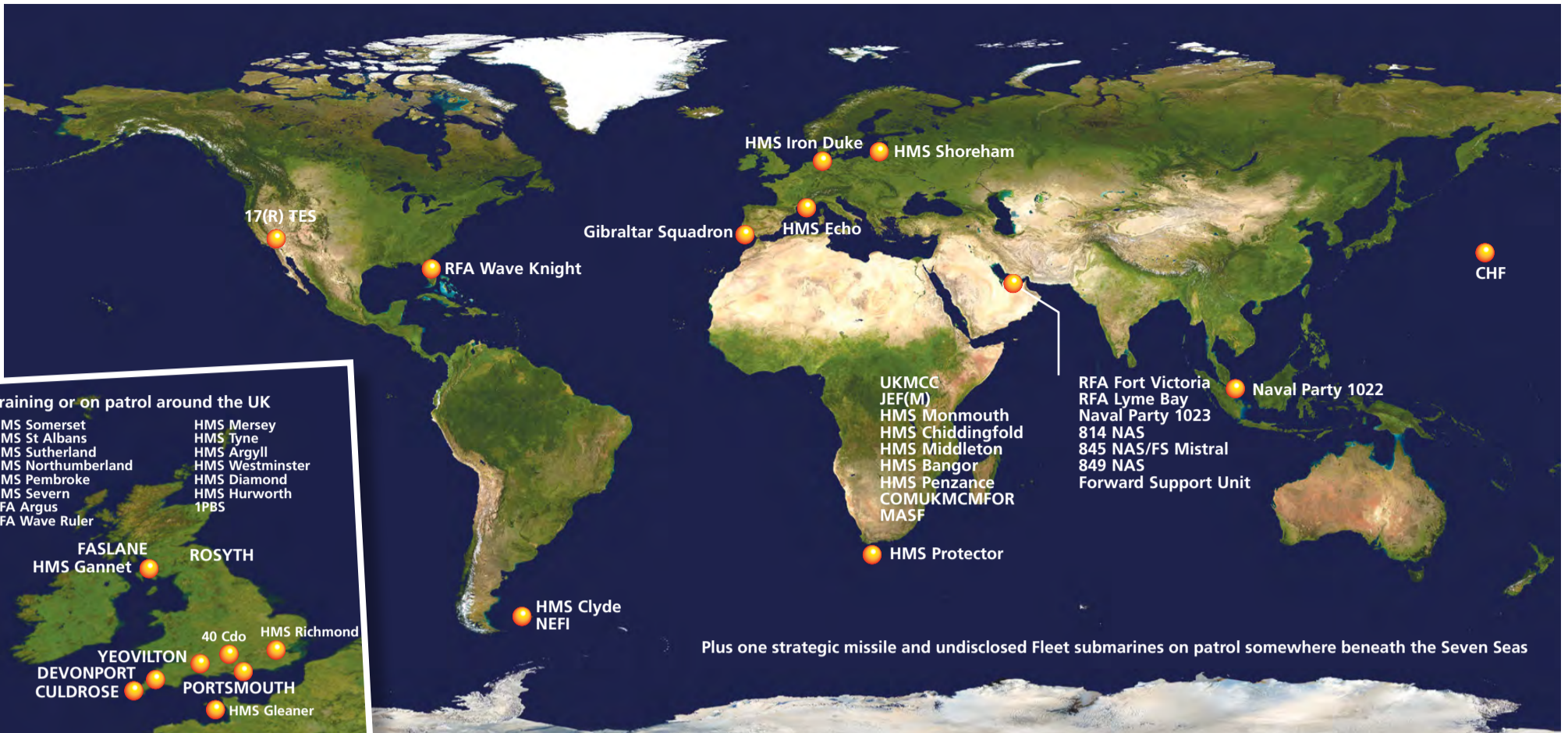
"I've made great friends and it has been amazing sharing this deployment with them. My highlights have been skydiving in Dubai, celebrating my 19th birthday while at sea off the coast of Somalia and being part of the important mission that HMS Daring was tasked with."

And from the RN's Commander of Operations – Rear Admiral Bob Tarrant, the man who directs the work of all Britain's warships, submarines and naval aircraft on front-line duties around the globe on a daily basis – praise for Jake and his shipmates for their "professionalism, operational grit, and infectious enthusiasm".

He continued: "HMS Daring has represented the RN and the UK superbly in a challenging deployment protecting UK interests in the Middle East region, her ship's company should be justifiably proud of their achievements."



pictures: lphotos sean gascoigne, guy pool and dan rosenbaum, and et(we) joseph lloyd



Plus one strategic missile and undisclosed Fleet submarines on patrol somewhere beneath the Seven Seas

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

ROYAL NAVY FLEET FOCUS Protecting our nation's interests

WE kick off this edition with a rare sight – 14 P2000s of the **1st Patrol Boat Squadron** gathered in one place (see pages 16-17). The vessels, which have all undergone recent upgrades, are usually scattered throughout the UK but met in Portsmouth for an unusual photex in the Solent.

**HMS Daring** returned home to Portsmouth (see pages 2-3) following her nine-month deployment to the Middle East. During her time away, the Type 45 destroyer visited 12 countries, steamed 50,000 miles and undertook 20 patrols of the Bab-al-Mandeb strait to reassure merchant vessels and keep the sea lanes open for trade.

Taking over from Daring in the Middle East was **HMS Monmouth** (see page 5). The Devonport frigate earlier spearheaded the UK's involvement in Alligator Dagger 17, involving the USA and France.

The fourth of the Royal Navy's Astute-class submarines, **HMS Audacious**, has entered the water at Barrow (see page 9), a few months after being formally named.

**HMS Diamond** tested her Sea Viper air defence missile system off north-west Scotland (see page 2).

The Fleet Ready Escort – which includes **HMS St Albans**, **Mersey** and **Somerset** – has been activated twice as frequently in the opening months of 2017 compared to 2016 (see page 7).

Personnel from **RFA Wave Knight** paid their respects to those lost liberating the Falkland Islands 35 years ago (see page 11). Members of the ship's company attended memorial services to those who perished aboard RFAs Sir Galahad and Sir Tristram.

Sailors from **HMS Gleaner** helped Channel Islanders mark the 72nd anniversary of their liberation from German forces (see page 9).

**HMS Echo** briefly broke away from her international mission dealing with migrants in the Med to fly the flag for Britain in Monaco (see page 9).

Type 23 frigate **HMS Iron Duke** joined around 300 vessels in Hamburg for the German port's huge harbour birthday festival (see page 13).

Back in the UK, and hitting the ground running were personnel from **40 Commando** as the Taunton-based unit was put through its validation exercise ahead of taking over as Lead Commando Group (see centre pages). Exercise Wessex Storm on Salisbury Plain featured more than 1,500 military personnel.

Coxswains from 2 Troop, **539 Assault Squadron Royal Marines** tested their skills on their Offshore Raiding Craft as part of the squadron's force-generation package (see page 19).

Living in the field was the focus for landing craftmen of **1 Assault Group Royal Marines 6 Ops Squadron**, who spent a week on Dartmoor and at Mount Edgecombe Country Park (see page 19).

Commandos from **4ASRM** left the comfort of assault ship HMS Albion to take their landing craft for a week-long expedition to the Isles of Scilly (see page 13).

Naval Service personnel were rewarded for their work in the latest **operational honours** list (see page 15). Recipients included those taking part in counter-Daesh operations in the Middle East to helping prevent people smuggling in the Med.

We also take a look behind the scenes of **HMS Calliope** (see pages 26-27) at the RNR unit on the banks of the Tyne.

Finally, we give readers the chance to vote for the **Navy News People's Choice** photo (see page 6) in this year's Peregrine Trophy contest – the equivalent of the Oscars for Naval Service photographers.

# Dawn of new age of maritime power

## VIEW BRIDGE from the BRIDGE

IN the latest of our monthly features on the future of the Royal Navy, we look at the age of the new super carriers.

THE recent launch of China's first domestic built aircraft carrier was a significant milestone in that country's efforts to establish a true ocean-going Navy.

Building and operating a carrier is one of the most demanding military industrial tests for any nation.

It's taken China over three decades of development to reach this point, and it will take longer still to fully master the complexities of maritime air power.

Earlier this year, Brazil chose to abandon the modernisation of the carrier Sao Paulo mid-refit and decommission her without replacement, which is an indication of just how tough it gets.

However, it should come as no surprise that China has pursued this goal with such unremitting focus.

Ever since the eclipse of the battleship in the Second World War, the aircraft carrier has been the hallmark of great power status. It remains a yardstick by which rising nations demonstrate global ambition and China is by no means alone.

India's first domestically-built carrier is currently fitting out and Russian officials

regularly speak of their own carrier ambition. Of course, the United States remains ahead of the pack, with the first of a new generation of super carriers, the USS Gerald R Ford, now conducting sea trials.

The impending arrival of two 65,000-tonne carriers for the Royal Navy is therefore a moment of profound strategic significance for the United Kingdom.

The fact that HMS Queen Elizabeth will enter Portsmouth just eight years after construction commenced is impressive by most international comparisons; that she will soon be followed into Service by a sister ship is also significant.

Across the Channel, the sole French carrier Charles De Gaulle is in dry dock for her mid-life upgrade.

Having participated in most of France's major military operations over the past 15 years, the Marine Nationale will sorely miss this crucial capability over the next 18 months.

In contrast, with two ships, the Royal Navy will have one Queen Elizabeth-class carrier available for operations 100 per cent of the time.

When paired with credible numbers of F-35B Strike Fighters, the Queen Elizabeth-class will form the nation's strategic conventional deterrent.

They will sit at the heart of joint and coalition operations, forming the hub for a network of military capabilities spread across land, sea, air, cyber and space.

While they are first and foremost fighting ships, they will be ready to respond to emerging crises around the world, providing the UK with the means to deliver aid and disaster relief at speed and in scale.

As exemplars of British technology and engineering, they have the capacity to host trade fairs in support of UK prosperity overseas, aided by the best ambassadors our country could wish for: the men and women of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

In short, they provide political and military choice – hard and soft power – in a way that no other capability can match.

All this potential rests on the fundamental flexibility of maritime power.

In essence, HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales each represent 4.5 acres of sovereign British territory capable of moving 500 miles a day and free to deliver power and influence at a time and place of our choosing, alone or in partnership.

So, as we await HMS Queen Elizabeth's arrival in Portsmouth and the naming ceremony of HMS Prince of Wales, we can be proud of what we have achieved and excited by the prospect of what is to come.

Already these two ships represent our industrial and engineering expertise: and once in Service they will symbolise our military power and national authority in the world for decades to come.



● The first of the USA's new super carriers, the USS Gerald R Ford

# Time for Trenchant

WEARING traditional submariners' pullovers to protect them from the chill of a spring evening, the men of HMS Trenchant take their boat towards open waters for the first time in nearly four years.

After a major revamp in her home base of Devonport, the hunter-killer returned to sea, beginning trials and training ready for the final chapter of her proud career.

One of the many roles of the Fleet submarine is to protect Trident submarines carrying the UK's nuclear deterrent; to hunt and, if necessary, destroy any threats to the Nations' ultimate weapon – hence the hunter-killer tag.

In addition, they carry Tomahawk cruise missiles to strike at an enemy's military infrastructure – as the Silent Service has done in Kosovo, Iraq and Libya.

After completing the longest patrol ever conducted by a British nuclear submarine in May 2013 – a marathon 11-month deployment – Trenchant underwent the most extensive refit (known as a Revalidation and Assisted Maintenance Period or RAMP) ever conducted on a hunter-killer.

Her nuclear reactor and propulsion systems have been upgraded, as have the weapons and sensors aboard, such as the latest generation Sonar equipment. The 28-year-old boat remains at the cutting edge of submarine operations.

To prepare for the return to sea, the control room team spent many weeks in the Talisman simulator in Devonport.

The realistic instruction and assessment there – demonstrating their ability to safely operate in busy shipping lanes with large merchant vessels, small fishing boats, high-speed ferries, warships, submarines and military aircraft – culminated in Trenchant's crew being deemed ready to take the boat to sea for more complex and demanding live training including test firings of an exercise variant of the heavyweight Spearfish torpedo.

The boat and her 130 crew were also assessed by the head of the Submarine Service, Rear Admiral John Weale, and Director of Submarine Support for DE&S, Rear Admiral Keith Beckett, who donned overalls to thoroughly inspect Trenchant from forward to aft and review and talk with the ship's company.

"I was incredibly impressed by the knowledge and enthusiasm of the crew, who were eager to explain what had happened during the maintenance period," said Admiral Beckett.

"Equally, Babcock Marine – the main contractor – was keen to show off a very high standard of workmanship."

The final act of preparing to sail was loading the weapons stowage compartment (better known as the bomb-shop) with her allowance of live torpedoes in a detailed evolution that has echoes of a process used as long ago as World War 2.

"This maintenance period has proven to be extremely demanding with many complex work packages taking place," said the submarine's operations officer Lt Cdr Charles Thornton.

"The crew have been very busy preparing the boat and have shown huge amounts of pride and ownership of Trenchant. We're all really keen to return to operations and use the kit that the engineers have all worked so hard to maintain."

Trenchant will now conduct trials ahead of Operational Sea Training before she is declared ready to resume front-line duties wherever her country requires her.



Picture: LPhoto Ken Gaunt



## WELFARE

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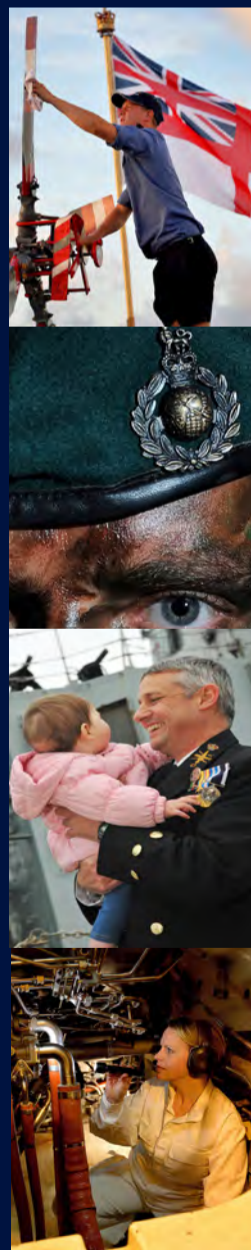
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# Your chance to vote for favourite photograph



THIS month you have an opportunity to vote for one of the winners of the prestigious Peregrine Trophy awards. We have shortlisted five photographs for the Navy News People's Choice Award, which recognises images which have had a major impact on the publication over the past year.

The Peregrine Trophy's primary purpose is to encourage the production of eye-catching, powerful imagery that can be used in the media to demonstrate the operations and activities of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines. The role of photography, portraying the work of the Royal Navy, has never been more important.

The shortlisted photographs are pictured here. To vote click like on your favourite image on the Royal Navy Facebook page. Voting closes at 11.59pm on Sunday June 18.



● LPhot Joel Rouse's image of a Royal Marine taking part in Exercise Black Alligator in the USA



● Above left, LPhot Sean Gascoigne's picture of wakeboarder L/Cpl Tony Evans; Above right, LPhot Dave Jenkins took this image of HMS Somerset accompanying the Russian destroyer Admiral Vitze Kulakov; Right, The northern lights captured by PO Phot Si Ethell; Below, a live firing exercise by members of the RMR, photographed by PO Phot Ray Jones



IF you are recommended for Leading Hand/Corporal and wish to switch to the photographic branch, read **RNTM 026/16**.

Follow the work of the award-winning photographers on Facebook at **Royal Navy Photographers**



# 'Gator aid for Monmouth

WITH the spray from HMS Daring's fire hoses spattering the lens of ET(WE) Joseph Lloyd's camera, HMS Monmouth heads into the Indian Ocean sunset – and the crux of her nine-month deployment.

The Black Duke took over from Daring as the RN's major surface ship in the Middle East and was immediately thrown into a succession of exercises designed to sharpen her skills for the task ahead.

The Devonport frigate spearheaded the UK's involvement in the fortnight-long Alligator Dagger 17, linking up with the formidable force that is the US Navy's PHIBRON 8 (8th Amphibious Squadron) – flagship USS Bataan, assault ship USS Carter Hall, the US Marine Corps' 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, support ship USS Ponce and France's 5th Marine Regiment.

The amphibious forces focused on getting ashore and 'fighting' their way inland, making use of Djibouti's live-fire ranges for more authentic training, while Monmouth concerned herself with protecting the task group from air and submarine attack, small boat operations and maritime security operations – known by US forces as vessel board search and seizure (VBSS).

The Type 23 carries two specialist board-and-search teams – Royal Marines from 43 Commando in Faslane (the green team), the rest ship's company (blue), all trained by experts at HMS Raleigh.

With US Marines playing the opposition, Monmouth's team was expected to track down 'terrorists' who had taken over support ship USS Ponce (pronounced pon-say).

The Americans laid on a detailed and complex scenario for the commandos to deal with: the small team had to secure part of a vessel nearly four times larger than their own, then search for contraband such as weapons or illicit drugs.

"The first real chance for the RN and RM boarding teams to work together was great; we learned a lot and we're grateful for the guys on the USS Ponce for the work they put into the scenario for us," said Capt Will Steven RM, in charge of the green beret detachment aboard Monmouth.

As well as the boarding, HMS Monmouth also made a quick



trip to the local garage to grab some fuel – the tanker US Naval Ship Kanawha.

The oiler, similar in size to the UK's Wave-class ships, can refuel two ships simultaneously, which she did, providing black gold for Monmouth to starboard and the USS Bataan to port. The Kanawha can pump nearly 3½ million litres of fuel every hour from her tanks.

"The whole exercise has provided us with a valuable opportunity to maintain our fighting edge whilst being able to train with some of the nations and ships we will be working with over the coming months," said the Black Duke's CO Cdr Ian Feasey as Alligator Dagger 17 drew to a close.

Barely had Alligator Dagger ended and Monmouth's men and women drawn breath than the commandos were moving gingerly around the upper deck of South Korean destroyer Choi Young as four navies focused on the renewed piracy threat in Africa.

Ships and aircraft joined forces to test their anti-piracy skills in the Gulf of Aden, the very waters where modern-day brigands are likely to strike.

Piracy was a major problem in the region at the end of the last decade, but the concerted response of shipping companies to beef up protection and the world's navies to drive 'pirate action groups' from the ocean had largely strangled the crime.

But in March, the tanker Aris 13 was hijacked by two pirate skiffs – the first successful action of its type in five years.

Joining Monmouth in the counter-piracy validation exercise – run by Combined Task Force 151, the Bahrain-based

international naval formation charged with keeping the 21st Century buccaneers in check – were destroyer Teruzuki and a P-3 maritime patrol aircraft from Japan, South Korean destroyer ROKS Choi Young and American assault ship USS Carter Hall.

The Black Duke dispatched her Royal Marines boarding team to the Choi Young to conduct a search and seizure drill (pictured above)... then permitted Korean marines to storm Monmouth for a similar exercise in return.

"It was a unique opportunity to get onboard a warship with an ally we so rarely see," said Capt Steven.

"Although there are clear differences in the way we conduct our business, we're broadly of the same mindset – even with the language barrier that was obvious right from the start."

Each warship staged a scenario for the others to play out, thereby maximising the training benefit and developing some crucial combined skills among the units involved.

"I think the South Koreans found it useful," said PO(UW) Simon Stockley, a member of HMS Monmouth's 'blue' Royal Navy boarding team.

"We tried to make the scenario as realistic as possible on-board and of course we didn't want to make it too easy for them either."

With the Japanese commander of the task group pleased with the performance of all vessels, Monmouth broke away and headed east through the Gulf of Aden towards the Gulf of Oman to join the task force dedicated to strangling terrorism and smuggling (CTF 150); she's due to return to dealing with piracy later on in her deployment.

# Ready for Gulf mission

CREW 4 of 2nd MCM Squadron will soon be heading for six months in the Gulf having completed training in the UK.

Preparation for the Kipion deployment reached its climax with nine weeks of intensive instruction and exercises off north-west Scotland.

With HMS Cattistock as both their home and workplace, Crew 4 came through four weeks of Operational Sea Training, and stepped up to the next level of assessment – the ability to work as part of a task group – during the first of 2017's fortnight-long Joint Warrior war games.

Crew faced fires, floods and casualties – and close contact with the enemy in a realistic and escalating exercise scenario, while still continuing their core role of minehunting. The involvement of real aircraft and surface vessels, rather than the simulator, added to the realism in sharpening the crews' responses.

For the mine warfare specialists, the highlight was the chance to conduct live firings of the Seafox remote mine disposal vehicle and diver-placed charges on dummy mines found by Cattistock's sonar operators.

With the assessors satiated, Cattistock headed back for her home base of Portsmouth to grab some leave and prepare to fly out to Bahrain to take charge of her sister vessel HMS Middleton as part of the latest rotation of mine warfare crews maintaining the RN's four-strong minehunting force permanently stationed in the Gulf.

"My crew performed brilliantly during a very intense period of training – reflected in their growth in confidence, their professional abilities and their overall output," said Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Anthony Pimm.

"I am immensely proud of what we have achieved – we are now a close-knit team."

# Shoreham slips into NATO role

HMS Shoreham arrived in Liepaja to take her place with a NATO task group – just in time for an official reception, followed by the Anniversary Day of the Declaration 'On the Restoration of Independence of the Republic of Latvia'... typically shortened to Independence Day (thankfully), one of the biggest parties in the Baltic.

It meant the waterfront in Latvia's principal naval city was heaving – with some 4,000 people seizing the opportunity to look around the four ships of Mine Countermeasures Group 1.

The group is one of two specialist minehunting formations (No.2, which is about to be commanded by the RN for the next 12 months, focuses traditionally on the Mediterranean region), roaming the waters of northern Europe dealing with the detritus of wars past and collective training to ensure NATO's navies can cope with mines present and future.

Group 1, currently led by Estonia's ENS Wambola, cleared up 33 mines in the narrow – and busy – waters of Oslofjord, leading to Norway's capital, before arriving in Latvia.

The force spent a week off Latvia on HODOPS – Historical Ordnance Disposal Operation; as a result of 20th Century conflicts, the Baltic is particularly littered with mines, bombs, torpedoes and other discarded weaponry and explosives.



# Double the effort from escorts

THE tanks of RFA Wave Ruler pump their black gold into The Saint to sustain her work as one of the guardians of home waters.

A regular, everyday occurrence – especially in the opening months of 2017, for the ships assigned to monitor the activities of foreign warships around the UK.

Those vessels – the Fleet Ready Escorts – have been activated more than twice as much in the opening months of 2017 as they were last year, in HMS St Albans' case five times since January.

The Portsmouth-based Type 23 added 16,525 miles to her odometer between January and mid-May. She's spent 79 days at sea – or three out of every five days – conducted a circumnavigation of the UK, supported Dutch and Norwegian Submarine Command Courses around the fjords, and completed five 'live' operations (including following the Russian carrier Admiral Kuznetsov and cruiser Pytor Velikiy from the Bay of Biscay through the English Channel and North Sea; two Steregushchiy-class corvettes, some of the newest ships in the Russian Navy, as well as the Admiral Essen, a Russian frigate).

Also activated as FRE, the vessels 'scrambled' to respond to urgent incidents and unusual goings-on in and around the UK, at times this year have been St Albans' sisters Sutherland and Somerset, plus patrol ship HMS Mersey.

The latter two were involved in a protracted operation last month to monitor the progress of new Russian Kilo-class submarine Krasnodar as she made her way down the Dutch coast, past Dover and through the Channel.

Mersey broke off her regular fishery patrol in the North Sea when



she was called upon to identify and track the surfaced submarine towards British Territorial Waters.

She sprinted at more than 20kts to intercept the Kilo, using a combination of knowledge of shipping lanes, radar and finally binoculars and the Mk1 eyeball to locate the Russian boat, keeping an eye on her as she negotiated the myriad of oil rigs and complex shipping lanes close to Britain's coast, before handing over to Somerset.

"Locating, intercepting and escorting a Russian submarine is at the heart of the coastal protection work we are always ready for when patrolling home waters," said Mersey's CO Lt Cdr George Storton.

The Type 23 shadowed the diesel-electric boat – just 18 months

old and designed to hunt down either enemy shipping or enemy submarines – for well over a day, keeping an eye on the Krasnodar until it had left Britain's backyard (pictured left from an 820 NAS Merlin).

Though FRE is unglamorous, invariably played out beyond the horizon, out of sight of the public, often uncertain and unpredictable, and invariably in unpleasant weather (St Albans was battered by 45kt winds around Shetland), the Saints say there are also some tangible positives to take away from the numerous activations in 2017.

"It feels like we've been away for longer than we have because of the uncertainty of not knowing when we'll be back home," said assistant weapon engineer officer Sub Lt Ben Carver.

"It feels like we're doing something productive for the country."

AB(WS) George Cotterell added: "Being away from home and not knowing when I'll be back has been difficult. However, I've enjoyed spending time with my oppos. Being FRE has allowed me to further my professional skills and will help in furthering my career."

It's also taken the ship to destinations close to home but not necessarily regularly visited: Shetland, Orkney, western Norway.

"I enjoyed visiting Lerwick in Shetland because it's somewhere I wouldn't normally visit outside the Navy," said Sub Lt Carver.

LS(Sea) Damien Bye added: "I've enjoyed seeing places I wouldn't normally get to see. The hardest thing has been not knowing when we're going away or when we'll be back. In the next few months I'm looking forward to spending some time alongside and seeing friends and family."

After a spot of advanced training for principal warfare officers around the UK, the Saints are looking forward to (uninterrupted) summer leave.

"Thank you for your particularly informative email and for putting my mind to rest, very much appreciated"

Alan Crawford, FPS Member



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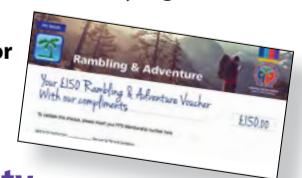
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# Casino Royal Navy

SURROUNDED by superyachts owned by billionaires and millionaire playboys, survey ship HMS Echo adds some 'functional pussers' grey chic' to one of the world's most exclusive harbours: Monte Carlo.

The survey ship briefly broke off her international mission dealing with migrants in the central Mediterranean to fly the flag for Britain in Monaco.

Home to the world's most famous casino and grand prix, the tiny nation (two square kilometres – smaller than Echo's home base of Devonport) is also the seat of the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO), charged with ensuring all the world's seas, oceans and navigable waterways are surveyed and charted.

As one of the world's leading maritime nations – particularly when it comes to providing highly-accurate charts for mariners – Britain dispatched Echo to represent the UK at the inaugural IHO general assembly meeting.

"In a harbour full of gleaming billionaires' toys and superyachts, the plain grey and unique, functional chic of HMS Echo looked even more distinctive, easily stealing the attention and interest of the public, locals and visitors alike," said Lt David Elsey, the ship's logistics officer.

"Despite some eye-wateringly-expensive company, the specially-designed, cutting-edge survey ship Echo, had no problem holding her own in terms of price tag."

During the 36-hour 'pit stop', Echo provided the backdrop for Britain's presence at the get together, culminating with the hosting of an official reception aboard on behalf of the UK National Hydrographer, Rear Admiral Tim Lowe, attended by more than 100 guests and delegates representing 36 different countries from Argentina to Japan.

Despite some rather 'un-Mediterranean' wet weather, the evening was a great success and helped support the important international cooperation that ensures safe navigation at sea.

Once the official reception was complete, several members of the ship's company proceeded ashore in an attempt to recreate the famous casino scene from the James Bond movie *Goldeneye* – with varying degrees of success. Alas not everyone (or anyone...) came away driving an Aston Martin, but all enjoyed a unique and prestigious night out.

The following day, most of the ship's company were able to get out and explore the principality, heading back to key sights visited including the casino once again, yacht club, oceanographic museum and the Formula One racetrack.

Navigator Lt Phil Boak visited Monaco with Echo as her gunnery officer three years ago. "Both visits were excellent, particularly for the warm hospitality offered, the opportunity to see the IHO in action and explore the attractions of Monte Carlo."

It also allowed crew to tick the world's second smallest state off their travel bucket list, having already visited number one last month; a brief spell alongside in the Civitavecchia, the port of Rome, allowed them to see the smallest country, the Vatican City.

On completion of the visit, Echo resumed her mission with the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean task group on Operation Sophia, preventing the illegal trafficking of people from Africa to Europe.



# Gleaner feels liberated

SAILORS from the smallest ship in the Royal Navy proudly paraded through the heart of St Helier to help Channel Islanders celebrate the 72nd anniversary of their liberation from Nazi tyranny.

The crew of Her Majesty's Survey Motor Launch Gleaner joined local military and cadet forces for the annual re-enactment and celebration of events on May 9 1945.

The Channel Islands were the only part of the mother country to be occupied by German forces in World War 2. They were so heavily fortified by the Nazis that no attempt was made to liberate them when Allied forces freed neighbouring Normandy and Brittany in the summer of 1944.

Instead, islanders endured nearly an extra year under the jackboot until German forces across Europe threw in the towel, prompting the dispatch of a small task force to Jersey and Guernsey to take the surrender of German forces and re-establish British rule.

Ever since, the anniversary of liberation has been a day of major celebration; 2017 was no exception as Jersey folk lined up outside the States Building to the accompaniment of music from the Band of the Island of Jersey for the annual parade.

The marchers headed to Liberation Square passing a sea of crowds cheering and waving flags. After falling out, various re-enactments were



performed for the spectators, who filled the streets to near capacity, before there was a more solemn act of thanksgiving and commemoration.

"It was great to be part of the celebrations," said AB(HM) Joel Bradley.

"I especially enjoyed the march as we got so much support from the locals who were cheering us on the whole time."

Gleaner's crew then led the way along with Jersey Field Squadron for the final march past, where the salute was taken by Jersey's Lieutenant Governor, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton.

Afterwards, all parade participants were hosted by the bailiff in the Pomme d'Or hotel – where the Union Flag was

first raised again back in 1945 – and had a chance to meet local veterans from all three Services.

"Even though we've only been here for a few days everyone has made us feel so welcome," said Gleaner's executive officer Lt Max Parsonson. "The crew are really looking forward to the work we have ahead of us but today has been all about enjoying the parade and meeting some of the locals."

Gleaner has just completed the initial survey of Portsmouth Harbour ahead of the arrival of new carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth and is now conducting a detailed survey of Saint Helier, resuming work that she started last summer; she will stay there for several months before hopping back across the Channel.

# 24 is the new 22 on Mersey

BOAT crews from HMS Mersey are buzzing around fishing vessels faster, more comfortably and for longer thanks to upgraded sea boats.

After more than a decade using the trusty Pacific 22 on operations in home waters, the Caribbean and the Mediterranean, the Portsmouth-based patrol ship has swapped the old 22ft RIBs for the Pacific 24s (which are actually 25½ft long).

With greater endurance, the 24s carry more sailors (and marines if necessary) on better seating at higher speeds and, given the relatively small crew aboard Mersey and the nature of her fishery protection duties, all the ship's company got acquainted with the replacement boats when delivered to the ship.

Under the guidance of 1st Lieutenant Lt Dan Sykes-Gelder and bosun LS 'Geoff' Hurst, the crew were put through a week of intensive training before they were satisfied the boarding parties were ready for the rigours of fishery protection.

"Sea boat operations are our bread and butter and these faster, stronger, more agile boats allow us to conduct our marine enforcement task more effectively," said Mersey's XO Lt Martyn Mayger.

"The two Pac24s mark a significant increase in Mersey's capability, but the boats have their work cut out for them – we are a busy ship."

LS Hurst added: "On paper, the new Pac24s are a fantastic bit of kit, the department as a whole has been eager to get to grips with them and see what they can really do."

# Audacious move puts latest boat in the water

WATERS lap at the hull of the fourth of Britain's seven next-generation hunter killer submarines as HMS Audacious was 'launched'.

Four months after she was formally named by Lady Jones, the wife of First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones, the 7,500-tonne Astute-class boat was inched out of the Devonshire Dock Hall at Barrow, her home for the past eight years, and then gently lowered into the water of the neighbouring dock.

"The launch marks an important milestone in the Astute programme and demonstrates our pride in building submarines for the Royal Navy," said Will Blamey, managing director of BAE Systems' Submarines, whose

men and women have been toiling on the boat since March 2009.

"Audacious enters the water in a more advanced state of build than any previous Astute-class submarine, which puts us in a good position for the next phase of work – the testing and commissioning of her complex systems."

Although the boat is still in the hands of her builders, Audacious' RN crew were instrumental in the boat's roll-out and maiden immersion.

"Audacious entering the water for the first time is a key milestone – it made me feel immensely proud to be part of the Astute project, particularly as Audacious' Commanding Officer," said Capt Scott

Bower, who previously was in charge of the third boat in the class, HMS Artful.

"It is also a key moment for the crew. It is at this stage she starts to become a real entity and something the crew can really feel involved with."

They had control of the submarine's systems used to keep her afloat and remained onboard throughout because, as qualified submariners, they are crucial for ensuring the vessel's watertight integrity.

Once they were happy that the Irish Sea wasn't seeping into the boat, a tug guided Audacious into the wet dock quay where she will now remain for her test and commissioning phase.

Picture: BAE Systems



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# Fallen Knights are never forgotten

HIGH on a rocky clifftop overlooking a remote inlet, sailors from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary remember one of their services darkest hours – and the blackest day for British arms in the Falklands.

The crew of tanker RFA Wave Knight used the 35th anniversary of the conflict to pay tribute to those lost liberating the South Atlantic islands during six weeks of fighting in the spring of 1982.

The campaign was moving into its final stages by June 8 1982, with British Forces closing on the capital Stanley.

Part of the grand plan for seizing Stanley involved transporting troops by ship to support a push from the southwest.

But amphibious support ships RFA Sir Galahad and Sir Tristram were bombed by Argentine jets before the troops could be offloaded.

The Welsh Guards suffered the highest number of casualties in the tragedy, but seven of the 50 men killed at Fitzroy were RFA crew. Sir Galahad was subsequently scuttled, so badly damaged was she, while Sir Tristram underwent extensive repairs.

Having spent much of her time patrolling the Caribbean and supporting the international fight against illegal drug trafficking, Wave Knight shifted hemispheres to pay her first visit to the Falklands as part of the Navy's long-standing patrols of the island chain to offer reassurance to the islands.

It also brought her close to some of the most hallowed sites in recent Royal Navy history.

Commanding Officer Capt Karl Woodfield led a service at San Carlos – where the main landings to liberate the islands took place – while the tanker was



anchored in the nearby bay, before being joined by a group of the ship's company and islanders at a memorial service at Fitzroy led by Padre Rachel Cooke to remember those aboard the two Knights of the Round Table.

"It was a lovely service and the spectacular weather on the day made it very special," Capt Woodfield said.

"The RFA committed 23 of its 24 ships to the Falklands task force and operating in the military exclusion zone around the islands, and it is therefore a very important part of RFA history.

"For me the service was very poignant as I did my officer training with a cadet who lost his brother on the Sir Galahad.

"We received a very warm welcome from the Fitzroy community, who do a fantastic job maintaining the memorials, and who fully supported our RFA memorial service."

The patrols of the Falklands allowed crew to join a battlefield tour of Mount Harriet, visiting the penguin colony on Bertha's Beach, and conduct some medical training with the RAF and Army medical team based at Mount Pleasant.

The local military doctors, medics, dentists and nurses spent a day aboard Wave Knight to see the facilities the ship



has to offer in the event of an emergency. "This was my first experience on an RFA ship – and it was a great one," said Unit Medical Officer Sqn Ldr Dinesh Swaminathan.

"Learning about the different roles of the ship, the varied work done by the crew, and specifically the medical issues which can present at sea, it was interesting to compare the similarities – and differences – of providing healthcare at sea, to that ashore."

For the ship's medical technician Rob Kipling the visit was particularly rewarding, as he had spent 27 years in the RAF as a medic before joining the RFA three years ago.

"From my own background working in the RAF in particular as an instructor, I am aware of how useful it is to see how the other Services operate, to gain a better understanding when we work together on operations," Rob said.

"The ship's medical team have thoroughly enjoyed welcoming the RAF aboard hopefully giving them a snapshot of providing healthcare at sea."

The medical visit followed that from an RAF Chinook the previous day, which spent time practising winching drills from Wave Knight's flight deck.



## Five earn their Wildcat wings

THREE pilots and two observers from 825 Naval Air Squadron have earned their wings by completing training on the newest aircraft in the Royal Navy's operational fleet.

The five students, part of the Wildcat Operational Conversion Course, were presented with the coveted Royal Navy wings badges by Cdre Andrew Betton in their squadron's base at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset.

Cdre Betton told them: "I am struck by the sense of passion and pride of our new 'wings' and I'd like to take the opportunity to mention the importance of families for their support throughout this.

"I wish you every success as you make the transition into front line operational capability, out there striving and achieving excellence."

The Wildcat is the latest military helicopter to be brought in to the Fleet Air Arm. Meanwhile 825 NAS is delivering training to aircrew and engineers while generating frontline Wildcat flights in support of operations worldwide.

Lt Scott Sunderland is one of the five students, referred to as 'ab initios' meaning 'from the beginning' in Latin.

He said: "I have always loved aviation and dreamt of becoming a pilot from a very young age. Naval aviation has always fascinated me and joining the Fleet Air Arm allows me to take a helicopter on board a warship, and do the job I've dreamed of doing while travelling the world."

During the ceremony, AET Connor Steel was presented with the 'Live Your Life Award', given to him for the significant contribution he made as an engineer embarked in RFA Argus during the Wildcat course.

Lt Alex Halliday, who earned his observer wings and is also a qualified engineer, said: "Joining the Royal Navy seemed to offer something different from an office career and I liked the idea of engineering. After spending the best part of two years in training qualifying in both engineering and aircrew roles, today gives me a great sense of pride. I feel very lucky to be in a position where I can do both."

## Liverpool focus of Armed Forces Day

A TYPHOON fly-past and a gun salute from the waterfront will herald a parade of 1,000 Armed Forces serving personnel, veterans and cadets through Liverpool, the focus of this year's Armed Forces Day commemorations on June 24.

The parade will end at Princes Parade, where the Red Arrows will also conduct a fly-past.

Navy, Army and RAF personnel will be manning displays and interactive activities in their Service 'villages' along the waterfront and a Royal Navy ship will be open to visitors.

Meanwhile from 12.30pm in the display arena at Pier Head Cruise Liner Terminal car park, an action-packed programme of events will take place featuring unarmed combat and gymnastic displays, field gun races, combat engineer bridging demonstrations and performances by military bands.

The RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight of Lancaster Bomber, Spitfire and Hurricane will conduct fly pasts at 1.50pm after which Dragon Boat racing and cadet rowing competitions

will run in Princes Dock.

The day's events will conclude at 5pm with a military massed bands finale followed by the Royal Marines Band Beat Retreat and Ceremonial Sunset ceremony on board the RN ship overflowed by the Royal Navy Historic Flight's Swordfish aircraft in formation with the latest Wildcat helicopter.

Event organisers are issuing advice to veterans who are attending the day, particularly those who wish to march in the parade.

Liverpool City Council working with veterans' organisations is managing the allocation of places.

For those associations wishing to apply for places, either click the link at the bottom of the web page: <https://www.armedforcesday.org.uk/get-involved/afd-national-event/> or contact [cultureliverpool@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:cultureliverpool@liverpool.gov.uk)

The Armed Forces Day National Event programme will close officially with a service at the Church of Our Lady and St Nicholas on June 25 at 2pm.

## Missiles cash

MORE than half a billion pounds are being pumped into new and existing missiles to protect the Fleet and its aircraft from air attack.

An extra £323m is being spent buying more Sea Ceptor missiles, replacement for Seawolf and gradually being introduced to Type 23 frigates (HMS Argyll is the trials ship for the project). It will also shield the successor Type 26s from incoming aircraft and missiles.

Already in service, and the Navy's principal weapon in the anti-air war, is Sea Viper, carried by Type 45 destroyers to defend a naval task group from air attack.

The current inventory of Vipers needs to be maintained, repaired and overhauled to ensure the system remains at the forefront of technology; £175m has been committed by the MOD to service them.

And £41m is being spent on the Meteor air-to-air missiles, first for RAF Typhoons then, from 2024, for Fleet Air Arm and RAF F-35B jump jets operating from HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales.

## Star ship's crew visit spiritual home



IF YOU were to pick a ship with the best chance of getting good weather, would you choose the one with no fewer than six forecasters onboard?

Well it didn't work too well for the crew of HMS Enterprise who exercised their freedom of the town of Tiverton on a rather damp day.

Having arrived home in Devonport after three years away in brilliant sunshine, the weather could not last.

On the day, despite a fairly constant downpour, there was plenty of support. The Mayor and councillors turned out in their full ceremonial uniform, along with sea cadets from TS Hermes. Even

the horse Zabor from the RNRM Stables at Bickleigh came along.

Following an inspection, the Mayor congratulated the ship on her achievements and her CO Cdr Philip Harper replied, explaining that when sailors are away for long periods of time they think a lot of home and for Enterprise the market town of Tiverton is her spiritual home.

Parade commander and XO Lt Cdr Matt Warren sought permission to exercise the freedom of Tiverton and, led by the RM Corps of Drums, the ship's company marched with the Queen's Colour flying and bayonets fixed.

Picture: LPhot Caroline Davies

## Peek behind the scenes

BRITANNIA Royal Naval College opens its gates to visitors on Saturday July 8.

The open day, which runs from 11am to 4pm, will feature stalls and demonstrations to give visitors a taste of the training offered by the college.

Other attractions include river tours, an opportunity to visit the college's state-of-the-art ship's bridge simulator, a falconry display and military bands.

BRNC currently transforms around 400 civilians into military leaders each year.

The open day is free and refreshments will be available.

THE tell-tale explosive plume of water thrown up by a torpedo impacting a steamer, condemning another merchantman to a watery grave.

June 1917 and the Kaiser's U-boat crews are riding a wave of success.

It is four months since they were unleashed and allowed to sink any shipping they encountered – irrespective of its destination or nationality.

Sinkings rocketed. By the end of June some three million tonnes of shipping have been dispatched; this month alone, 687,507 tonnes ends up on the seabed, the second highest total of the year.

No-one was more successful than Lothar von Arnauld de la Perière, ace of aces. No submariner has ever surpassed his record – more than 450,000 tonnes of shipping sunk (or ten Titanics).

His exploits in U-35 were immortalised on film: *Der magische Gürtel* – the magic belt or, more liberally translated (and as demonstrated on the film's poster), the invisible ring, circling the British Isles.

There was nothing magical about the U-boat. It was no wonder weapon.

It was small, could not dive particularly deep (no more than about 160ft), was sluggish and severely restricted when dived, possessed limited ammunition (no more than 16 torpedoes and 140 rounds for the deck gun) and spent most of the time surfaced rather than submerged, even when carrying out its attacks.

Since the outbreak of war in 1914, few things had troubled the Admiralty more than U-boat menace. At times it had paralysed senior officers – some were simply ignorant (hence the loss of the Hogue, Aboukir and Cressy to a single submarine inside an hour); others were perturbed at the damage a torpedo strike might cause (hence Jellicoe's caution at Jutland).

In harbour, elaborate boom and net defences protected the Fleet, but on patrol there was little defence beyond zig-zagging and an attentive Mk1 eyeball, little offence beyond ramming (the only action HMS Dreadnought saw was crushing U-29) or gunfire.

But by June 1917, the tide was beginning to turn – although it would be the autumn when the effects would make themselves felt.

Convoys had just been introduced – grouping merchantmen, offering safety in numbers and protection in the form of

destroyers, whose numbers had been bolstered by the arrival of the US Navy.

A convoy stripped the sea of individual merchantmen – easy prey for any U-boat – and few submarine commanders dared to attack shipping under escort; the feared wolf pack was still a generation away.

As it would be in the 1939-45 conflict, technology was at the heart of defeating the U-boat.

The three-man Sea Scout SSZ airship was the mainstay of the anti-submarine campaign, easily able to sight a boat on the surface or just below it, and capable of sinking it with depth charges. No U-boat commander would show his hand if he knew air power was present.

But even an airship relied on persistence, keen eyes or luck to kill a U-boat.

The real art was finding a submerged submarine. In the early years of WW1, great hopes were invested in the hydrophone – an underwater microphone.

In its infancy, it was sorely limited – it couldn't establish a U-boat's range or bearing and the engines of a ship could distract or confuse operators, trailing the device either from a ship or even an airship.

In June 1917, experiments began with a new location device which used quartz piezoelectric crystals to send noise in the form of a 'ping' through the water; if it hit an object – namely a U-boat – the signal would bounce back.

To disguise the nature of the new system, it was given the acronym ASDIC – Anti-Submarine Division 'ic'.

Like many of WW1's weapons or sensors, it would take another world war to perfect its use.

ASDIC never saw action in the Great War; the first trials ship wasn't fitted with the system until 1920 and it wasn't rolled out to the Fleet until the mid-20s.

It remains the mainstay of the hunt for enemy submarines to this day – although the name ASDIC has been replaced by the preferred American term, sonar (sound and ranging).

The hydrophone still exists to a degree: aircraft drop sonobuoys into the ocean to listen for submarines, while the airship trailing a hydrophone has been replaced by the Merlin dipping its sonar.

■ This photograph (Q 20343) 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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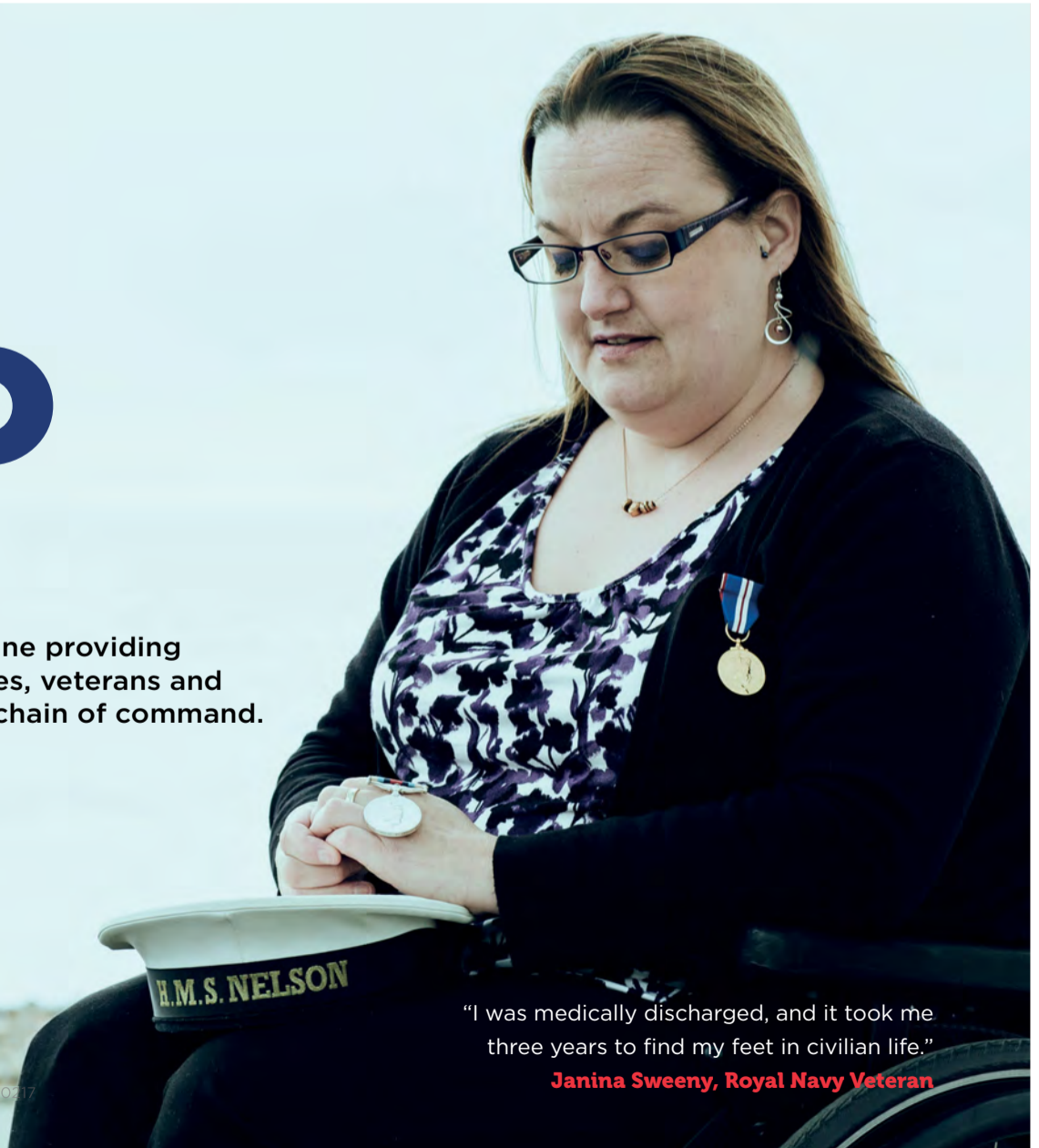
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"I was medically discharged, and it took me three years to find my feet in civilian life."

**Janina Sweeny, Royal Navy Veteran**



# Little Elbe room as port parties

## HMS Iron Duke found it a bit of a squeeze as she arrived in Hamburg.

The frigate is helped by tugs as she negotiates the hectic waters of Germany's greatest port as the city throws one of the biggest parties on the planet.

It is 828 years since Emperor Frederick Barbarossa granted the merchants of Hamburg freedom from customs duties on ships sailing downstream and into the North Sea... effectively the 'birth certificate' of the port.

That key date is today the excuse for the world's largest harbour festival.

While nearby Kiel Week is much more yachting-focused; Hafengeburtstag ('harbour birthday') is a celebration of all vessels which ply their trade on the Seven Seas.

More than 300 vessels large and small headed up the Elbe to Germany's greatest port.

Such is the importance of the festival – and RN-Deutsche Marine relations – that Britain dispatches a major warship to the three-day event,

this year the Portsmouth-based frigate... fresh from a demanding period of training.

The British warship was granted the privilege of kicking off the event, leading the Grand Arrival Parade that officially marked the start of festivities.

Once in the heart of the port area – which is no more than a mile from Hamburg's city centre – Iron Duke remained alongside for the duration of the birthday party, allowing her ship's company the chance to experience the huge variety of spectacular displays, live music, and many other attractions the world's biggest port festival had to offer.

"This was truly an exciting opportunity for Iron Duke, especially after we'd completed a period of intensive sea training," said Lt Josh Alvey, one of the frigate's officers of the watch.

"Everyone onboard had been looking forward to taking part in such a prestigious festival – it brought a welcome change to our focus and marks the beginning of our future programme."



# Happy (239) landings

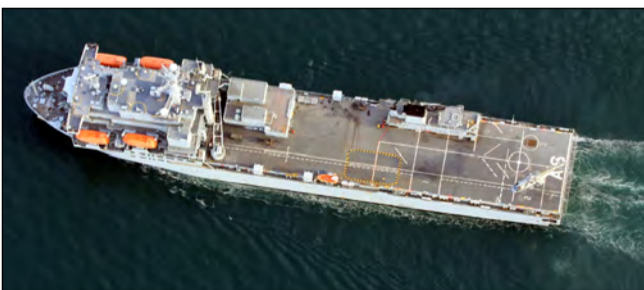
PICK your spot... trainee pilots hover over RFA Argus during their course on operating Merlin helicopters at sea.

Along with observers and aircrewmembers, the aviators embarked in Argus, which has three landing spots on its deck and has a hangar to allow the aircraft to be stored and maintained.

The embarkation began with the pilots testing their skills with a package of deck landings, including night landings.

The crews were then tested through a series of secondary roles sorties. These involved undertaking different tasks with the helicopter around the ship at sea – ranging from picking up and dropping off underslung loads to the deck, winching simulated casualties in stretchers from the ship and using the aircraft's hoist to winch up fuel hoses and refuel from the ship while hovering next to it.

One of the pilots Lt Ross Wiltshire said: "Landing on a moving ship at night can be hard work, but you get a great sense



of satisfaction when you get the aircraft safely down onto the deck."

Once the first phase was complete, the crews were set a series of flights where they had to protect ships from various threats, both on and under the water.

For the underwater battle, the crews utilised the Merlin's state-of-the-art sonics suite, comprising an active dipping sonar which is lowered into the water beneath the aircraft, and its ability to drop sonar buoys which they can monitor from a different location, in order to locate and

track an enemy submarine.

LACMN Josh Bramley, whose role includes operating the sonics, said: "The tactical sorties were very busy, but it was great to see all our training working when we found a submarine."

During their time away, 824 Sea Flight flew a total of 108 sorties during nearly 170 flying hours from Argus, including 239 deck landings.

The trainees have now returned to RNAS Culdrose to complete their training, before being awarded their coveted wings and being assigned to front-line Merlin squadrons.

# Bootnecks exploit Scilly season

ROYAL Marines left the comfort of assault ship HMS Albion for a 200-mile round trip to the westernmost point of the UK to hone their amphibious skills.

The 62 commandos of 4 Assault Squadron took four of their landing craft for a week-long expedition to the Isles of Scilly.

The archipelago with its rocky coastline and numerous beaches presents an excellent training ground for the RN's experts in amphibious landings – from navigating the treacherous waters to ensuring the sand on the beaches could withstand the pounding of RM vehicles rumbling ashore.

The squadron took two Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel (LCVPs) and a pair of larger, slower, but more useful roll-on, roll-off Landing Craft Utility (LCUs).

Thanks to the range and facilities aboard the latter, they can – and do – operate independently of their mother ship without any external support.

And so it was for Exercise Mary's Marauder as the green berets practised day and night navigation and pilotage in the unfamiliar and difficult tidal waters of the Scillies.

They rehearsed tactical beach surveying and reconnaissance, all directed from a temporary base established at Porthmellon



skills," said Albion's CO Capt Tim Neild. "I am thrilled that the Royal Navy continues to receive such strong support from the islanders, which I am more than happy to reciprocate."

Five sailors and marines from Albion volunteered to support the Ten Tors Challenge.

Each spring hundreds of competitors aged 14 to 19 attempt 35, 45 or 55-mile treks across Dartmoor inside 36 hours.

The five Albion volunteers were assigned a remote checkpoint at Okement Hill.

The five-day deployment started at Okehampton Military Camp, with detailed safety and weather briefs before the teams travelled to their temporary canvas 'bases' on the moor, by foot, road or Merlin helicopter from 846 Naval Air Squadron.

"I've never done this kind of event before," said LReg Wissam Orsali. "I was amazed by the enthusiasm of everyone I met."

Beach in Hugh Town, the largest settlement in the islands.

The exercise coincided with the 28th world pilot gig championships, providing the additional opportunity for the Royal Marines to support the organisers as well as enter a seven-man gig (Gibraltar, which came 15th out of 26 racers in the super veterans category) alongside other boats from the 25-strong Tamar gig club.

"The Isles of Scilly are an amazing environment for my Royal Marines to hone their highly-professional amphibious

its interaction with other navies and empires, providing a unique insight into the political, military and cultural contexts of the day.

Importantly, it also explores the life of the ordinary sailor in peace and war, the cult of the naval hero, and the navy and its sailors in popular culture.

The course draws on a range of naval experts, curators, and access to the rich collections of Portsmouth's naval museums.

Through a flexible distance format, students will learn from short videos of leading naval experts and the latest scholarship and debates in the field, providing a well-structured and engaging history of the Royal Navy.

- What was the Royal Navy's role in British history, and that of its empire?
- What did a naval surgeon carry on the Mary Rose?
- Why did Nelson become such a hero?
- What was it like to be stoker on the first ironclad, HMS Warrior?
- How did it feel to be a sailor in the world wars?

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# Sailors and marines rewarded for their exceptional service

## The bravest of the brave

NAVAL Service personnel have been rewarded for going the extra mile as the 47th operational honours list was revealed.

The list includes Servicemen and women from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines who have displayed bravery, commitment and meritorious service on a wide variety of operations.

From taking part in counter-Daesh operations in the Middle East to helping prevent people smuggling in the Mediterranean, these sailors and Royal Marines have demonstrated exceptional skill and commitment on missions.

**Cdr Mark Vartan**, former CO of HMS Enterprise, is appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire.

His citation tells of his outstanding leadership aboard the vessel, which returned home to Plymouth in April after a three-year deployment sailing across the globe and saving thousands of lives at sea.

Enterprise was tasked at short notice to evacuate entitled personnel from the British Embassy in Tripoli and then was at the heart of operations to prevent people smuggling in the Mediterranean. She evacuated more than 200 British citizens from Libya, rescued 9,180 people attempting to undertake deadly crossings of the Mediterranean and destroyed 117 unseaworthy vessels used by people traffickers.

Cdr Vartan, who led the ship from July 2014 until September 2016, said: "Hearing I had received this honour was a real ray of sunshine. I feel honoured to have been chosen to receive this award which goes to show the exceptional results of HMS Enterprise and all those who have served on board over the last three years."

Enterprise's coxwain **AB(Sea) Sarah Griffiths** was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service.

Her citation read: "During arduous and occasionally harrowing operations, she has spent up to 13 hours a day in a boat, with temperatures frequently exceeding 30°C."

**Mne Mark Wheeler** was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Bravery for his work assisting migrants in the Aegean Sea.

He was part of a detachment of Royal Marines



● From left, Mne Mark Wheeler; entitled personnel make their way onboard HMS Enterprise off Tripoli; PO Bethany Burton from HMS St Albans

on board the MV Vos Grace, a vessel chartered by the UK Border Force to assist with the mission to counter people trafficking.

His citation reads: "His craft was picked up by a large wave and thrown onto rocks, sustaining loss of power and in danger of capsizing. Thrown across the boat by the impact, Wheeler injured his shoulder and arm, resulting in the temporary loss of feeling in his hand."

"Abandoning all thought of his safety, demonstrating extraordinary courage and fortitude, Wheeler dragged drowning children into the boat with his good arm, even having to resuscitate a child on the deck until help arrived."

Commander of the RM detachment **Cpl Edward Main** was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service.

**Cdr Stephen Higham** receives an OBE for leading personnel aboard HMS Defender during her deployment to the Middle East supporting international counter-Daesh operations.

During the nine months the ship was deployed, Defender broke records and set new standards as an air defence warship. Despite the stresses and strains that a nine-month deployment puts on any

complex warship, not a single day of operational tasking was lost due to defects under Cdr Higham's leadership.

The result was that HMS Defender regularly supported US and French carrier groups launching strikes on Iraq and Syria. The Portsmouth-based ship was also responsible for tackling drug smuggling, at one point seizing over a tonne of hashish being trafficked across the Indian Ocean.

Cdr Higham said: "I am hugely proud to receive this honour on behalf of the men and women who worked alongside me over the course of our deployment."

"The average age of my ship's company during the deployment was in the low 20s, and they proved themselves to be a resilient, professional group of people who worked tirelessly to get the job done."

Defender's communications technician **LS Craig Jacobs** was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service.

**POET(ME) Bethany Burton** was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire for her work onboard HMS St Albans during her deployment.

In May 2016, one of the ship's four generators

suffered a catastrophic failure and initial assessments suggested the engine would need to be replaced. But PO Burton worked with her team in temperatures above 45°C to strip the engine down to its component parts and rebuild it.

A job which should have taken three weeks, the engine repair was completed in just ten days thanks to PO Burton and her team working day and night to restore it.

PO Burton said: "What we did while on deployment was a big task, and for some of the younger guys it was the first time they had done anything like it. But it was an exciting challenge, and the feeling of relief and satisfaction when we started the engine and it worked after all our efforts was immense."

Former CO of HMS St Albans, **Cdr Richard Hutchings**, is awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service. He led the Type 23 frigate during her nine-month Gulf deployment.

The lead trainer for firefighting and damage control on board HMS St Albans, **CPO Peter Muir**, was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service.

■ See page 34 for the full list.

## "I still find it difficult to talk about my experiences at sea."

Derek, resident of The Royal Star & Garter Homes

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

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

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# The importance of being



pictures: Iphotos louise george, paul hall and dan rosenbaum, and paul andrews



ON AN unseasonably cold late April morning, there's the gentle purr of engines and the trickle of water from bilges into the corner of Portsmouth Dockyard's No.2 Basin.

There's not been a gathering like this for at least a decade, perhaps never (the records are a little hazy...).

Tucked in the northwest corner of the basin among the usual Border Force cutters and Hunt-class minehunters, 14 P2000 patrol boats berthed two and three abreast.

Even with 1st Patrol Boat Squadron present in its entirety (P2000s 15 and 16, HMS Raider and Tracker, are permanently assigned to protect submarines in Faslane), the craft take a small proportion of the man-made harbour.

A couple of minutes after Colours, the 'gangway' (a sort of glorified stool) is moved to the side, lines are cast and HMS Ranger carefully reverses away from HMS Biter, turns 45 degrees to starboard then passes through the 80ft-wide basin entrance and into Portsmouth Harbour.

One by one, Ranger's sisters peel away from their moorings, straighten up and follow the leader as she makes her way towards the open waters of the Solent.

As they move through the harbour, they acknowledge Her Majesty's other ships in base: Mersey, Duncan, Tyne, Victory, Iron Duke. Every 30 or so seconds for just shy of ten minutes.

They saluted them all out... and four hours later they saluted them all back in again.

As the flotilla passes ironclad HMS Warrior, it's joined by wartime fast craft gunboat MGB81 an HMS Medusa, used to protect harbours and the D-Day landings from U-boat attacks; the progenitors of the today's patrol boats found the opportunity of playing with all 14 P2000s too good to miss.

Because this sight is rare. Possibly even unique.

The facts that the boats are scattered high and low around the British Isles and, for the past five years, have been undergoing a major overhaul which will see the class in service until at least 2033, have prevented a full get-together for many a year (there's some suggestion the last such gathering was in 2004).

The revamp hasn't just added a decade on to the ships' lifespan, it's added ten knots to their top speed.

Out went the old engines which also power Challenger 2 tanks. Inserted in their place the Caterpillar C18 diesel. More efficient and faster.

It's more than given the patrol boats a fresh lease of life. It's allowed them to extend their reach (hence deployments as far east as St Petersburg, a good 1,500 miles' sailing from Portsmouth)



The completion of upgrades to every vessel and the end of the Easter deployment for the P2000s of the 1st Patrol Boat Squadron allowed a rare – possibly unique – get-together for combined exercises in the eastern Solent. **RICHARD HARGREAVES** joined HMS Ranger to observe the impressive manoeuvres.

and expand their usefulness at home.

As has another shake-up in the world of the University Royal Naval Units.

First and foremost, the boats serve higher education institutions, giving students a taste of what the Senior Service does: HMS Blazer serves the universities of Portsmouth and Southampton, HMS Smiter for Oxford, and Pursuer for Glasgow and Strathclyde.

A couple of years ago, the RN separated running the URNU unit and the boats themselves. One team looks after the students on and around campus, the other operates the assigned P2000. It's relieved the crew of a lot of admin and non-sailing duties... and freed up the entire Archer class for wider duties supporting the Fleet.

Hence, they are used to give cadets at Dartmouth their first hands-on navigational training; where possible they introduce rookie ratings at HMS Raleigh to life at sea aboard a warship (albeit a very small one); test the responses of gun crews on larger warships by pretending to attack them; provide security for major public events such as the America's Cup or London 2012 Olympics; and they fly the flag in places at home and abroad the mainstream RN is often unable to reach.

Today in the Solent, it's mostly URNU students embarked, plus a handful of affiliates or supporters, and a few VIPs.

Aboard Ranger, five crew (a lieutenant in charge, a chief as XO, another chief serving as marine engineer, a leading hand as their deputy/weapon engineer officer), five URNUs from the University of Sussex in Brighton and a couple of guests: 1st Patrol Boat Squadron CO Cdr Mark Hammon and Capt Roger Readwin, in charge of all the RN's minehunters and patrol boats.

They're aboard Ranger because she's the best P2000 in the squadron; the Fleet Efficiency pennant flutters fiercely above our heads.

With great accolades comes great responsibility.

It's fallen to Ranger's young CO Lt Jon Eastburn to organise the core events at the annual squadron exercise ('squadex').

With the end of the P2000s' Easter deployments – which took some to Dublin and the Isle of Man, others to Hamburg – there was the very rare opportunity for every vessel to converge on Portsmouth for various activities from a pub quiz to complex officer of the watch manoeuvres.

For a good three hours, the

P2000s conducted their version of synchronised swimming, manoeuvring together in ten formations – mostly together, occasionally in two divisions of seven – such as:

- Champagne – an arrowhead of 13 ships 50 yards apart, with Ranger in the lead.
- Flying Fish – two arrows each of seven P2000s
- Formation B – all 14 P2000s forming a line abreast, flanked by MGB81 and Medusa.

The squadron was given 24 square miles of the eastern Solent to 'play' in between Nab Tower and the Witterings.

Apart from the occasional passing merchant ship and a lone helicopter buzzing around overhead, the only witnesses to the display of seamanship are the participants themselves.

Which seems a bit of a shame because it is quite a spectacle.

Seeing the small patrol boats silhouetted against the spring sun turning in sync or falling in line astern, you can't help feeling a yearning for the castles of steel of the Grand Fleet manoeuvring in battle formation. Except they were 20,000-tonnes-plus. And a P2000 is 54 tonnes.

So what do you get for your 54 tonnes? You get an engine room, senior rates' mess (which doubles as the quarters for female students), a dining area and galley, a couple of heads and showers, and bunks for half a dozen sailors in the forecabin. Above deck, there's another mess, the CO's cabin and the enclosed bridge (only used when it's foggy) and the flying bridge on top. It's exposed. There's a paltry windscreens which is about 6in high and only really shields the crew from a bit of spray. Otherwise, it's like being on the bridge of the Compass Rose. Navigation, fixes and measurements are done the old fashioned way... with a little help from a mobile phone at times for communications (you still get a signal this close to shore).

"Getting all 14 boats together has been pretty hard work, but to see it all come together, it makes for an impressive sight. It's pretty cool," Ranger's CO says.

"To do this job at this stage in my career – I've been in the Navy seven years and this is my second appointment – is second to none. It's great that the Royal Navy gives us the opportunity to experience what it's like to command – the people you see here are the naval leaders of tomorrow."

The youngest P2000 CO is

a mere 24, the oldest a near-geriatric 29. Almost all of them are in just their second job after completing their training; in their first they demonstrated ability and a flair for command.

It makes them barely older than the undergraduates under their wing, but they do have experienced senior rates to call upon, like Ranger's XO CPO 'Tex' Marshall.

After a career in the dark arts of electronic warfare, buried in the bowels of a big ship staring at a computer screen, life on Ranger is "right out of my comfort zone", he says. "I'm enjoying the experience," he says. "It's all hands-on on these ships. Everyone helps each other."

"We try to run Ranger like a big ship, within reason, giving the students watches for example."

What's the best advice he, as a veteran matelot, can give a fresh-faced undergraduate?

"Ask questions. Listen. Above all, enjoy your opportunity."

Because the opportunities are limited. Most URNUs have 40-50 students on their books. Almost every unit is oversubscribed.

One in four students will make the step up from an URNU to the regular RN.

For the three quarters of students who resume a regular civilian existence when they graduate, what will they take away from the URNU experience? If they're frugal, they might take some dosh – there's £10 per drill night (up to 36 in an academic year), an annual bounty (circa £160), £40 per day if they join the Easter or Summer deployments.

They'll take away memories and a bond of camaraderie, an understanding of what the RN does – which is the chief goal of the URNU initiative: to help the leaders of tomorrow grasp the importance of sea power to an island nation like ours – and a leadership qualification, the Chartered Management Institute Award. "There are a lot of people out there with degrees," says 21-year-old economics student Jordan Hardwidge from Cambridge. "Here's something to offer when an employer asks: what else have you got?"

He's considering a career working with international charities. He's also looking to become a Royal Navy Reservist – as is 21-year-old Emily Smith, studying neuro science. She only learned of the URNU in her final year at university.

"It's been such an eye-opener. I had no idea about any of what the Royal Navy gets up to," she says.

"You also learn how to lead, particularly in stressful situations, which is useful as a civilian – not just in the military world."

Jordan adds: "Discipline – something that doesn't come naturally as a student. The other thing I've been struck by is how inclusive the Navy is. You look around you and you see that





# g (more than just) URNU

the best people are going to rise to the top. It doesn't matter what your background is."

This summer the boats will stretch their legs once again. Some will make it as far as Orkney and the 100th anniversary of the battleship HMS Vanguard's destruction. Others will support training and events such as Bournemouth Air Show on the South Coast. And others still, including Ranger, will head to the Baltic to support the US Navy in its annual international exercise, Baltops.

It's the unusual destinations which make the P2000s great ambassadors for both the UK and the RN. They're invariably small seaside towns or ports. They're not always exotic.

"Padstow was awesome," says Jordan after sailing with Ranger on her Easter tour of western England, Wales and the Republic of Ireland. "World's best Cornish pasty..."

"Anyone can go to Amsterdam, but sail into Antwerp? Bruges? Mevagissey? It's these little places, places you would never think of." Ok, Antwerp and Bruges are quite well known - but you get the point. The P2000s call in at ports the RN doesn't always visit or cannot due to the size of its vessels. Usually that's good. But not always.

"Last year we got stuck in Eastbourne for ten days because of the weather. Ten days..." the voice of 19-year-old Harrison Kerr, aiming to join the RN as a medical officer, trails off. And he's from Eastbourne...

"If you live by the sea in the UK and have seen the White Ensign, it's more than likely flown on one of these craft. They go places where the rest of the Navy cannot get to," says Cdr Hammon.

"Last year, we had seven together in Leith and thought it would be fantastic to see all 14 boats. With all the refits complete, we've been afforded that opportunity - the first time since at least 2004. And it's been thoroughly worth it.

"These ships are doing a cracking job - for the Navy and for the country. They are so much more than university training boats - they are used as much by the rest of the Navy."

For Capt Readwin, P2000s are a breeding ground for future admirals (several current flag officers cut their teeth a couple of decades ago in these patrol boats).

"It's a unique command and a unique opportunity - tomorrow's leaders showing their mettle in charge of these craft," says Capt Readwin.

"They are out there around the UK almost every day, a grey ring of steel around the UK."

"Plastic, sir," Lt Eastburn reminds him. "Our hulls are plastic..."

A grey ring of plastic around the UK doesn't have the same resonance...



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# Life's a gas

## Marines and sailors enjoy their skills courses

**ROYAL Marines aboard their Offshore Raiding Craft head to the firing ranges at Castlemartin in West Wales.**

Exercise ORC Thunder saw personnel from 2 Troop, 539 Assault Squadron Royal Marines get to grips with improvements to the craft and test coxwains' skills.

The ORCS, which have had their engines upgraded, were earlier taken out around Plymouth Sound and the River Tamar – with the Troop stopping for the occasional fish and chip lunch.

Formation driving, contact drills and beaching on both the riverbanks and the shore, in testing conditions also featured in the amphibious training drills.

Personnel also took part in night landings, working alongside members of 29 Cdo RA. The Fire Support Group from K Company joined 2 Troop for sea-to-land firing exercises in Pembrokeshire, featuring the general-purpose machine gun and heavy machine gun.

The exercise was part of 539's force-generation packages based around the South West coast.

The exercises ended with some adventure training in Newquay.

It wasn't just the Royals who got to have fun on the water – logistician AB Georgia Robbins took part in the Green Skills Course ahead of working with 1 Assault Group Royal Marines.

The first two weeks consisted of briefings, using a respirator, first aid and weapons training, prior to the 'dreaded' third week in the field.

"I didn't really fancy getting gassed, as I don't have my glasses fitted into my respirator thus I cannot see anything through it," said AB Robbins. "This became apparent when I held hands with who I thought was my friend in the chamber, but was actually a lieutenant commander."

The first day out in the field saw AB Robbins serve as a foot model for a session on how to tape up your feet. The week continued with the focus on improving map-reading skills.



● 539's Cpl Tom Copp and Mne Jake 'Fonzy' Fonseka pose for a quick selfie before leading the boat group out to the live firing range in West Wales; Right, AB Georgia Robbins gives the thumbs up during her Green Skills Course



"After a few days of map reading we went on a night exercise," said AB Robbins. "I fell over several times into gorse bushes which sting every inch of your body."

"But my favourite part of the course was the cam and concealment and the stalking. I was the only one who managed to get both shots off and not be seen."

"The three-week course was a hoofing experience and the instructors were amazing. On top of this I also made many new friends. Now I am looking forward to my first deployment with 1AGRM."

Living in the field was also the focus for landing craftmen from 1AGRM's 6 Ops Squadron.



Their green skills week began in the lecture theatre with presentations on survival skills before heading off to Dartmoor for a navigation exercise, followed by a survival exercise at Mount Edgecombe Country Park.

The marines were given practical lessons on fire-making, shelter construction, how to set up traps and what vegetation was safe to eat.

"The green skills week was great, it allowed us to revise our basic soldiering skills," said Mne George Vickers.

Members of 6 Ops also deployed to RM Instow for a week of small boat training, putting theory into practice on the river before heading to Saunton Sands for a day of surf drills. The squadron was joined by elements of 539, 4ASRM and CO 1AGRM.



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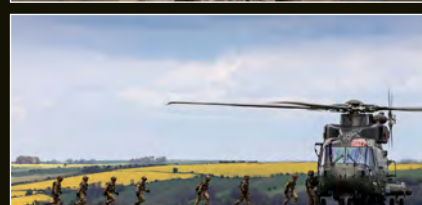
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# EYE OF THE

Royal Marines from 40 Cdo p



# THE STORM

## Put through their paces on Salisbury Plain

AVIATION assault, fast-roping, FISHing (fighting in someone's house) and fighting in the forest.

Except there's no forest on Salisbury Plain, so the few areas of beech trees and coniferous woodland had to do.

Around 700 personnel from 40 Commando decamped from their Norton Manor home near Taunton to Wiltshire for one of the biggest exercises undertaken by a Commando unit in over a decade.

Exercise Wessex Storm served as a validation exercise for 40 Commando as the unit prepares to take the mantle of Lead Commando Group from 42 Commando.

For three weeks 40 Commando were put through their paces on England's principal workout area for ground forces, Salisbury Plain, the largest military training area in the UK at 150 square miles, which offers the opportunity to conduct difficult training programmes such as urban operations and aviation drills.

The unit was boosted by the arrival of 42 infantry – along with their Carl Gustav M4 anti-tank weapons – from the United States Marine Corps.

Personnel from Fox Company, 3 Platoon, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine, known as the 'Magnificent Bastards' made the journey to the UK from Camp Pendleton in California.

The base comprises more than 125,000 acres – around 1½ times larger than Salisbury Plain.

Capt Joe Carvill, training officer with 40 Cdo, said: "Their positive approach and adaptability throughout the exercise has proved, again, the closeness and interoperability we share with one of our closest allies."

Wessex Storm ensured every element of 40 Cdo completed intensive training serials. Close-combat companies Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta completed battle exercises, including fighting in a mock village, defensive operations, being dropped into battle by helicopter and more conventional ground advances across the Plain.

Yankee Company from 45 Commando in Arbroath were appointed Royal Marines Additional Resources Table, providing personnel to act as enemy forces for Wessex Storm.

"My favourite part of the exercise was



● Mne Enoch Cheung

the fighting in woods and forests phase, it was action packed, interesting and very tense," said Mne Enoch Cheung, on his first deployment with 40 Cdo.

Mne Cheung, 24, a rifleman in Delta Coy, added: "I left training at the Commando Training Centre, joined 40 Commando and deployed on exercise in the space of a week."

"Deploying so soon has given me the ability to put the skills I learned at CTC into practice and a chance to get to know and mix with the guys."

Delta Coy's primary role is protected mobility, so Mne Cheung worked closely with the amphibious all-terrain vehicles of Viking Squadron.

In addition to the close-combat companies, the logistics element of the unit – Alpha and Bravo Echelon, also known as 'A Ech' and 'B Ech' – were put through their paces.

They had the demanding job of resupplying the men on the ground, whether that was providing water and rations to fuel the people, or ammunition and equipment to fuel the fight.

Vehicle mechanics were also busy ensuring all the vehicles and equipment were maintained and serviceable to allow the companies to remain combat effective

throughout Wessex Storm.

The exercise actually began at Royal Marines Base Chivenor in North Devon and culminated in a full battlefield exercise involving elements of 3 Cdo Bde, 24 Cdo Royal Engineers, 29 Cdo Royal Artillery and Joint Helicopter Force attacking enemy pockets of resistance on Salisbury Plain.

Not to be forgotten, personnel from Commando Logistics Regiment made sure the exercise ran like clockwork and everyone was fed.

CHF, the wings of the Royal Marines, deployed a Merlin Mk3 from 845 NAS, a Wildcat from 847 NAS, Chinooks from 18 Sqn RAF and Apache attack helicopters from 656 Sqn ACC. The aircrew were joined by personnel from CHF HQ and CHF Combat Supply Squadron.

Throughout Wessex Storm, commandos used TES – Tactical Engagement System – equipment, which enables force-on-force warfighting and provides realistic and accurate information on the effect of battle on personnel, vehicles and even buildings.

The system is invaluable to commanders as it allows them to assess and review tactics, troop movements and identify key areas for improvement.

Wessex Storm, which involved more than 1,500 personnel, was overseen by the British Army's Field Training Unit.

Also being put to the test were soldiers from the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards, 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards and Reserve elements from 3rd Battalion The Royal Welsh and 104 Regiment Royal Artillery.

The Welsh Guards Battlegroup was honing its operational effectiveness and it was the first time in living memory that the Battlegroup comprised three Welsh regiments.

"Our final battle exercise was ten days long and involved pushing out to complete four missions, pushing forward to make contact with the enemy as well as stabilisation in an urban environment," said Capt James Marsden, Welsh Guards Adjutant.

WO2 Dan Cope added: "This training is about being ready to deploy anywhere in the world – we have to be prepared in defence and attack and be capable in the urban environment."

40 Commando now take on the role as Lead Commando Group, ready to deploy at five days' notice anywhere in the world to deal with a crisis.



Pictures: LPhot Joel Rouse and PO Photos Si Ethell and Dave Gallagher



# PROJECT FIREFLY

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**Find out more** – further information can be found in 2015DIN 01-213 or email the Firefly team on [NAVYPERS-CMFFMAILBOX@MOD.UK](mailto:NAVYPERS-CMFFMAILBOX@MOD.UK)

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



## Boxers enable cash

ROYAL Navy staff from HMS Neptune, the shore establishment at HM Naval Base Clyde, presented a cheque for £405 to the Helensburgh Branch of Enable.

The money was raised during a charity boxing show at the base. LPT Will Callen and PT Darren West went along to the Helensburgh Waterfront with Captain of HMS Neptune, Capt Craig Mearns, to present the cheque to Angela Pearson of the Helensburgh and District Branch of Enable.

"I would like to say a big thank you to HMS Neptune for the donation which will help guarantee the future of our clubs and contribute to forthcoming outings," said Angela. "Your kindness is a reflection of the long-standing relationship between the Royal Navy and the local community."

Enable Helensburgh runs two clubs on Tuesday and Thursday evenings for adults with learning disabilities. These clubs are self-supported and are run by volunteers in order to encourage and provide the members opportunities to engage with others in various social activities.

As well as the cash donation for Enable, the team also took along 50 Easter Eggs which were presented to The Helensburgh and Lomond Autism society.



## Career milestone over Indian Ocean

WOT no Champagne or cake?

No, just some black biro scribble on a spiral notebook several hundred feet above the Indian Ocean to mark a career milestone in Lt Cdr Mike 'Lusky' Luscombe's distinguished FAA career.

Mike joined the RN back in 1983 and started flying the following year. Since then he's flown in 230 different aircraft (107 of them Sea Kings) including (deep breath): Sea King Mk 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, Chipmunk, Bulldog, Gazelle, Merlin, Griffin Lynx Mk 3, 7, 8, Dauphin, MD902 Explorer, Apache AH1 and the Firefly.

The pilot has spent the equivalent of 41½ weeks – more than nine whole months – at the controls of those helicopters over the past 33 years.

He's currently serving with UK's last operational Sea King formation, 849 Naval Air Squadron conducting surveillance patrols from RFA Fort Victoria over the Indian Ocean and Gulf, monitoring traffic in the air and on the sea's surface.

# Explosive time for would-be engineers

A MK 3 Lynx helicopter packed full of engineering QR codes was just one of an impressive array of Royal Navy displays enjoyed by youngsters at The Big Bang @Solent.

The event is the South Coast's biggest event for young people to explore the options for careers within science, technology engineering and maths (STEM).

More than 1,000, 11-16 year olds attended the event at The Hilton at the Ageas Bowl, Southampton.

Suzanne Lewis, Team Manager at the Education Business Partnership, who organised the event, said: "The event is all about inspiring children to explore all the careers and opportunities that they can go on to do post-16 involving science, technology, engineering and maths. In particular, we hope to inspire girls to consider a career within these areas."

"We invite all schools from the Solent region, from the Dorset border to West Sussex and right up to Winchester. We've also increased the number of exhibitors up to 68 this year."

The Lynx was manned by a combined team of volunteers from the Defence College of Technical Training's Royal Naval Air Engineering and Survival Equipment School, who provided the airframe, and representatives from Southampton Careers Office.

CPO Sandra Parkinson from the Training Design and Support Organisation, who design and maintain courses within the school, said: "It's lovely to see the kids running freely around



● Sub Lt Bash with New Forest Academy pupils Maddie Larkin, Thea Haycock, and Maddie King

Picture: PO Phot Nicola Harper

the aircraft, pressing buttons and asking lots of questions.

"For a lot of the children they won't have had an opportunity to get up close to a helicopter, let alone sit in one so it's really nice."

"They've been asking about the aircraft's capability, how fast does it go and how high it can climb."

"A lot of them already know that the Wildcat has replaced the Lynx and they're really keen to learn a little bit more and understand what the differences are between the two."

Elsewhere at the event, Royal Navy participation also included Reserves from HMS King Alfred, who used an interactive

model of a WR-21 Gas Turbine Engine to teach students about how design and maintenance can be combined to improve an engine's efficiency. In addition representatives from the Royal Navy University Technical College team were also in attendance with their robot 'Jack' to promote UTC Portsmouth.



## Full STEM ahead

PUPILS from Colgrain Primary School in Helensburgh give the thumbs up after spending a day at HM Naval Base Clyde as part of a school-wide science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) project.

Six pupils and two teachers from the school visited the Queen's Harbour Master Clyde to learn about how radar works.

Accompanying the children were Lt Cdr Dave Pinder of the base's Education and Resettlement Centre, who arranged the visit, along with CPO Murray Anderson.

Showing the children around the QHM "Eyrie" was Ian White, Deputy QHM Clyde, who demonstrated how they use radar to monitor ship's movements within the dockyard port which they manage.

"Recently I gave a presentation to head teachers in the area offering our assistance with STEM," said Lt Cdr Pinder. "The Royal Navy is recognised for the quality of their outstanding engineers and the base is happy to give a flavour of that expertise to local schools."

## Career opportunities

BAE Systems has launched its Movement to Work programme in Portsmouth for the fourth consecutive year.

Movement to Work assists young people who are not in education, employment or training by developing their career skills to help them secure employment.

This year, the Portsmouth programme was launched with a taster day at Highbury College. Thirteen participants are spending four weeks completing the programme, including two weeks at the Skills Development Centre in Portsmouth Naval Base.

Their progress will be monitored by BAE Systems trainers to ensure that they complete the scheme with transferrable workplace skills.

In 2016, Reece Mann completed the Movement to Work programme with BAE Systems and is now on the Engineering Advanced Apprenticeship.

He said: "The scheme ultimately helped me with a career that I didn't think I would ever achieve in the position I was in my life at that point. I'm now training to become a Marine Electrical Fitter, and I'm so glad I took advantage of the Movement to Work."



● Mid Barrie jumps in

## In at deep end

TRAINEE officers from Britannia Royal Naval College visited the National Maritime College of Ireland in Ringaskiddy, Cork.

Five Young Officers travelled to NMCI to further enhance the relationship between the two colleges.

The Royal Navy YOs were hosted by Irish Naval Service Officer Cadets and their staff officers during their visit, in which they carried out a range of training activities.

They spent time in the bridge simulators carrying out coastal navigation and pilotage exercises, conducted sea survival training, trained in the Damage Repair Incident Unit, and took part in AT on the Dingle Peninsula.

Midshipman Craig Barrie said: "I thought the whole experience

was really beneficial. The Irish Defence Forces work closely with the RN so I enjoyed finding out more about the training that the Irish cadets face and how the Irish Naval Service works."

The YOs have just finished their Initial Warfare Officers (Foundation) course at BRNC, and were selected based on strength of their performance throughout the training.

"This was my fourth visit to NMCI in the last year in what is now a well-established termly training opportunity with the Irish Naval Service," said BRNC Liaison Officer Lt Paul White.

"NMCI's bespoke facilities are fantastic for development, and our YOs hugely benefit from the additional navigation exercises whilst forging new friendships with their peers."

The Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund

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www.rnrmchildrensfund.org.uk

# Twickenham's 22,000 reasons to give thanks

## Ale sales will aid RNRMC

DORKING Brewery has launched an ale in support of the RNRMC.

More than five per cent of sales of Defaulters Pale will go to the charity.

The brewery is owned by RN Reservist Neel Singh, who said: "Partnering with the charity provides us with a great opportunity to provide additional revenue to help personnel and their families."

"We have a great beer that is available wherever you are in the country. We hope people like the name – it's designed to inject a bit of humour."

Since taking over Dorking Brewery just over a year ago the brewery has trebled in size and is on course to move to a state-of-the-art site near Capel in Surrey, producing over 24,000 litres a week.

Defaulters Pale is available to *Navy News* readers at an introductory price of £30 for 18 x 330ml bottles, excluding postage and packaging to mainland UK.

To place an order email [navy@dorkingbrewery.com](mailto:navy@dorkingbrewery.com), or for more information visit [www.dorkingbrewery.com](http://www.dorkingbrewery.com)



**YOU ran and cycled to help the RNRMC's Road to Twickenham campaign raise more than £22,000.**

Members of Wales University Royal Navy Unit (URNU) took on the Twickenham 100 challenge by walking from HMS Victory in Portsmouth to Twickenham in a day.

The team of eight students and their Commanding Officer left from HMS Victory at first light for the 100km trek to the stadium.

The journey took them through Hampshire and the Surrey districts into Greater London and they completed the distance in 17 hours 30 minutes. The challenge was also in support of RNRMC and they raised over £1,500.

The team members were CO Lt Alex Kelley and OCs Eve Ashton, Jordan Maddocks, Kelsey Rowsell, Emma Bishop, Oliver Green, Matt Williams, Jonathan Skinner and Sam Murkin

Lt Kelley said: "The walk was primarily a team-building exercise, but we were also hoping to raise money for RNRMC under their #Twickenham100 challenge, marking the 100th anniversary of the Army v Navy game."

"It was tough but the students were great keeping everyone in high spirits when the tiredness and sore feet set in."

"Most people set out to walk this distance over 24 hours so to do it without stopping in less than 18 hours was amazing and I am really proud of what the team achieved."

Four Royal Navy sailors based at HMNB Devonport in Plymouth cycled the 500 miles to Twickenham for the centenary of the Army v Navy rugby match.

The cyclists – CPOs Jason



● Staff at HMS Collingwood raise funds in the gym

Gay and Matt Brown and POs Danielle Setterfield and Howard Peplow – were supported by WO1 Natasha Pulley and CPO Paddy Kerr for the five-day ride.

Howard said "Raising awareness and money for charity is extremely important to me, I have benefitted from RNRMC funding like many other serving personnel, and the support they give to Naval Service families and elderly veterans is extremely important."

The proceeds were being divided between the RNRMC and Cancer Research.

Danielle said: "Cancer has affected my family so much in the last few years."

"My hope is that by raising money for research and contributing to the awareness of cancer will give promise to the next generation; in particular my two young children."

"I truly hope that a cure is found so that our children never feel the hurt that this disease can inflict."

Staff from HMS Collingwood

have spent a week challenging themselves to do 100 various activities daily to raise funds for the Twickenham100 campaign.

Day one saw staff completing 100 miles of rowing on rowing machines placed outside Howe Building.

Then, staff pushed themselves to complete 100 circuits of the tough assault course and swam 100 lengths of the pool.

Another day, another venue and the sports centre saw 290 students completing circuits offering various challenges including rope climbs, weightlifting, wall bar lifts, box jumps, 20 metre sprints and cycling. The 100 activities target was smashed again and again.

The final challenge saw staff complete a run of 100 miles around the camp.

Physical Training Instructors from HMS Sultan skied a whopping 100 miles for the Twickenham100 challenge.

Using two SkiErg machines, designed to incorporate the whole of your body in a cardio vascular workout, the team from the sports centre swapped over to fit the 100-mile challenge around their core training of the establishment's personnel.

LPT Adam 'Ads' Scott said: "The Twickenham100 challenge provided a really good opportunity for the PT staff to come together as a team to not only show our support for the RNRMC but also our capacity as a department."

"We've been really lucky too in that the establishment got right behind what we were trying to achieve with lots of people digging deep to show their support for a fantastic cause."



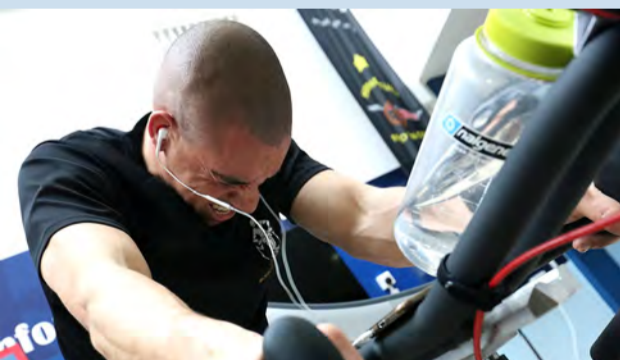
● From left, CPO Matt Brown, PO Danielle Setterfield, CPO Jason Gay and PO Howard Peplow



● Members of Wales URNU during their walk from Portsmouth to Twickenham; Below, PTIs at HMS Sultan skied 100miles in the base's gym

## FUNDRAISER OF THE MONTH

HMNB Clyde



ROYAL Marine PTI Sgt William Thomas pedals away furiously as part of a 100-hour cardiovascular challenge at HMNB Clyde.

The non-stop event involved around 100 personnel, who took it in turns to run, cycle or cross-train at the base's supermess.

Starting the event was Cdre Mark Gayfer, Naval Base Commander Clyde, the first of a number of volunteers – both Service and civilian – who maintained the challenge.

Captain of HMS Neptune, Capt Craig Mearns, who participated in the challenge, said: "This was a tremendous event and a great example of how the Naval Base can come together for a fantastic cause."

"Thanks to the sweat and hard work of everyone involved we have raised an amazing £2,369.09 for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity."

During the 100-hours some 2,277.9 km were covered with donations collected throughout.



## Roll up for show

ADVANCE tickets are now available, at a special discounted rate, for the HMS Sultan Summer Show on June 17 and 18.

Tickets are available from a number of local vendors and online now at: <https://hmssultan.ticketstv.co.uk/>

Appearing alongside the show's traditional acts will be Atkinson Action Horses, famed for their recent roles in *Poldark*, *Victoria* and *Peaky Blinders*.

Three-time British Motorcross Freestyle Champion Jamie Squibb and the Squibb Freestyle Stunt Team will be performing death-defying airborne motorcycle acrobatics and ground-based stunts.

In addition, Rockwood Dogs Display team will be showing off their tricks from the big screen, exciting all dog owners and animal lovers alike.

This year's show includes a new adrenaline zone packed with high ropes, zipwires and a reverse bungee catapult.

Gates will be open on both days at 10am with tickets available at £20 family (two adults and two children), adult £8, OAP/Disabled £6, child (aged 5-14) £4. Under fives go free.

## Do say hello

STAFF from the RNRMC will be out in force again this month raising money and engaging with the public at a number of events.

We hope to see you at:  
HMS Collingwood open day on June 3; The Fayre in the Square at Helensburgh on June 10; Yeovil Marathon on June 11; HMS Sultan Summer Show on June 17-18; The Royal Highland Show on June 22-25; Ascot Races on June 23; Armed Forces Day and the International Festival of the Sea at Liverpool on June 24.





## Meet the pocket rockets

ROCKET cars line up in front of the Harriers on the dummy deck at RNAS Culdrose for a 'Bloodhound Challenge.'

More than 250 children descended on the Cornish base to spend the day racing their own rocket cars.

The challenge is inspired by the Bloodhound Project, a global scheme to set a new land-speed record and inspire children to enjoy, explore and get involved in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

As well as enjoying the thrill of high-speed racing and competing against their peers, the students were also treated to a wide range of interactive displays to

showcase the variety of roles undertaken by the Fleet Air Arm.

This included taking part in fitness drills, demonstrations of survival equipment at sea, completing mental agility tests and seeing inside a helicopter.

Throughout the day the pupils also had the opportunity to speak to military personnel about their potential future careers in STEM.

Lt Helen Forster, who organised the day, said: "We came away from the day incredibly impressed with the students' designs, and their infectious enthusiasm."

"We designed a fun-packed day which allowed the students to see what we do

at RNAS Culdrose, interact with STEM concepts and to portray some of our proud Naval heritage.

"It was a great day enjoyed by children, teachers and sailors alike. Events like this are a chance for our sailors to explain what they do and hopefully inspire the next generation."

Commander of Air Engineering Jeff Bell had the honour of announcing the winners at the end of the day and awarding them with their prizes.

St Hilary was the winning primary school and Helston Community College was the winning secondary school, both with the fastest cars in their category.



## Running to bring in funds

ROYAL Naval Benevolent Trust financial controller Rob Jesson proudly shows off his medal for completing this year's London Marathon.

Rob, who achieved a time of 4hrs 10min, said: "It was an amazing experience and brilliant atmosphere on the day."

"The crowds cheering on the streets of London got me through the painful last few miles."

"I am so grateful to everyone who generously sponsored me raising money for RNBT."

As much as he enjoyed the experience, he hopes that someone else can pick up the baton to do it next year so he doesn't have to do it again.

Anyone wishing to donate can do so at: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-web/fundraiser/showFundraiserPage.action?userUrl=RobJesson&fald=808580&isTeam=false>

Three runners completed the marathon to raise funds for the Royal Star & Garter homes.

The 26.2-mile course was completed by Pauline Shaw, director of care and service development, Matt Petersen, a member of the body of governors for the charity, and Trevor Griffiths, an ex-Serviceman.

Trevor completed the course in 4hrs and 33mins, while Matt finished in 5hrs 13mins and Pauline in 5hrs and 54mins.

So far over £9,000 has been raised for the charity which will go towards providing nursing, therapeutic and dementia care to the ex-Service community.

## RNR pair reunited

A MARITIME Reserves family reunion saw mother and daughter standing shoulder to shoulder in the Naval Support Facility, Bahrain.

Lt Cdr Suzanne Wood RNR and AB Charlotte Wood, who are both members of the Royal Naval Reserve Information Operations specialisation, have had a family reunion in Bahrain.

Suzanne has been deployed to Bahrain since February and is working for the Combined Maritime Forces.

"This job has given me a great opportunity to meet and work with colleagues from many other nations," she said.

"I have learnt a huge amount from this deployment and I am pleased to see that we are making a real difference in the region."

Charlotte was on a personal visit to Bahrain but took the opportunity to learn more about the work that goes on in CMF.

Charlotte, who also gave a brief to the Command Team about Information Warrior, said: "It was brilliant to see my mum and see the impact that each person brings to the task force."

Charlotte and Suzanne are both members of HMS President in London.

## Knockout day

SAILING charity Turn to Starboard will be hosting a family fun day on July 9 with a bouncy castle, face painters and an 'It's A Knockout' competition.

The event at Malpas Park in Truro, will be held in aid of the charity who help veterans affected by military operations by taking them sailing.

For those not competing, a fun fair, hot food stalls and a beer tent, sponsored by Skinner's Brewery, will also add to the day, which runs from 11am until 5pm.

Teams of ten can enter by contacting the Turn to Starboard office on 01326 314262 or email [ellen@turntostarboard.co.uk](mailto:ellen@turntostarboard.co.uk).

# Accolade for diver as sailor collapses

**PETTY Officer (Diver) James Craker, of MCM2 Crew 8, has been recognised for providing life-saving assistance to a fellow sailor.**

Cdre Will Warrander, the UK Maritime Component Commander based in Bahrain, presented PO Craker with the Certificate of Commendation from the Royal Humane Society during a ceremony onboard HMS Middleton.

As HMS Cattistock's senior first aider, his calm but urgent response to the sudden and dramatic loss of consciousness of one of the senior rate engineers ensured that the correct initial actions were taken to treat the casualty.

PO Craker said: "I am just happy that my team and I were able to help the DMEO in his time of need and that he was able to return to his family."

"I commend my team's swift and professional response to what was a distressing time. This commendation is as much for them as it is for me."

Cattistock was undergoing training on the west coast of Scotland and taking part in an exercise to render support to a stricken vessel.

At approximately 1055, the deputy marine engineer officer was on the upperdeck getting dressed into an immersion suit as he prepared to cross to the vessel to provide engineering expertise.

Stating that he didn't feel very well, the DMEO suddenly collapsed. The alarm was raised immediately and PO Craker rushed to the scene and found the DMEO conscious but unresponsive.

Clearly and calmly directing his team, he was able to administer oxygen and commence observations without delay.

Moments later, the casualty suffered a seizure lasting for approximately two minutes. PO Craker was able to turn the casualty onto his side with the help of his team and restrain him to prevent injury.

Throughout the seizure, PO Craker continued to reassure the casualty, and encourage his junior team. He retained complete control of the incident.

Once the convulsions had subsided, the DMEO was cut out of his immersion suit and he began to regain consciousness.

Nominating a lead first aider responsible for the casualty, PO Craker went to the bridge to brief the captain on the situation.

Training was immediately suspended and the ship proceeded towards Faslane while simultaneously preparing for a coastguard helicopter winch transfer.

Meanwhile, PO Craker and the first aid party assisted the DMEO, now fully conscious but unresponsive, to the Senior Rates' mess where he was treated for shock and kept under observation.

Within 30 minutes of the initial call to Belfast Coastguard, the helicopter was on site and PO Craker gave a comprehensive casualty handover to the winchman.

The DMEO was then airlifted to Glasgow's Queen Elizabeth University Hospital where he was admitted.

A report from the hospital later highlighted the value and importance of PO Craker's initial actions in safeguarding the casualty's longer-term health and praised the quality of the handover.

PO Craker, whose primary role onboard is to supervise diving and conduct explosive ordnance disposal, together with Crew 8, deployed to the Gulf at the end of last year.

CO Lt Cdr Charles Wheen said: "I'm extremely proud of PO Jim Craker and the entire first aid team."

"They are well-trained and we exercise regularly in preparation for such an eventuality, but they showed cool heads and great teamwork to provide life-saving assistance to one of their shipmates."



● PO James Craker receives his commendation from Cdre Will Warrander in Bahrain

## Time for a big brew

SSAFA is urging tea drinkers to take part in the charity's annual Big Brew Up this month.

All donations that are drummed up at your tea party will go to SSAFA, which provides vital support for members of the Forces, past and present, and their families when in need.

Big Brew Up runs from June 19 to 23 and fundraising packs are available at [ssafa.org.uk/bigbrewup](http://ssafa.org.uk/bigbrewup).

SSAFA provides lifelong support to anyone who is currently serving or has ever served in the Royal Navy, British Army or Royal Air Force, and their families. This includes both regulars and reserves.

For more information visit [www.ssafa.org.uk](http://www.ssafa.org.uk) and follow the charity on Twitter: @SSAFA.

# Deep's aiming high to raise funds for air ambulance

TWELVE medical staff from the home of the Navy's submarine fleet will hit the heights, not the depths, on June 16.

The dozen sailors from HMS Neptune in Faslane, led by CPO(MA) Scottie Hird, will take on the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge to raise money for The Great North Air Ambulance

Service (GNAAS). "We chose this charity as a member of the team recently lost his sister and it was her wish that any charity fundraising was done in the name of the GNAAS," said Scott. "In addition to this there are quite a few of us on the team who are from the region that the service covers."

The GNAAS works within the Northern Trauma Network, which is made up of eight Trauma Units and two Major Trauma Centres covering the area from the Scottish Borders to North Yorkshire.

The air ambulance activates primarily for life-threatening incidents or

potentially life-threatening incidents.

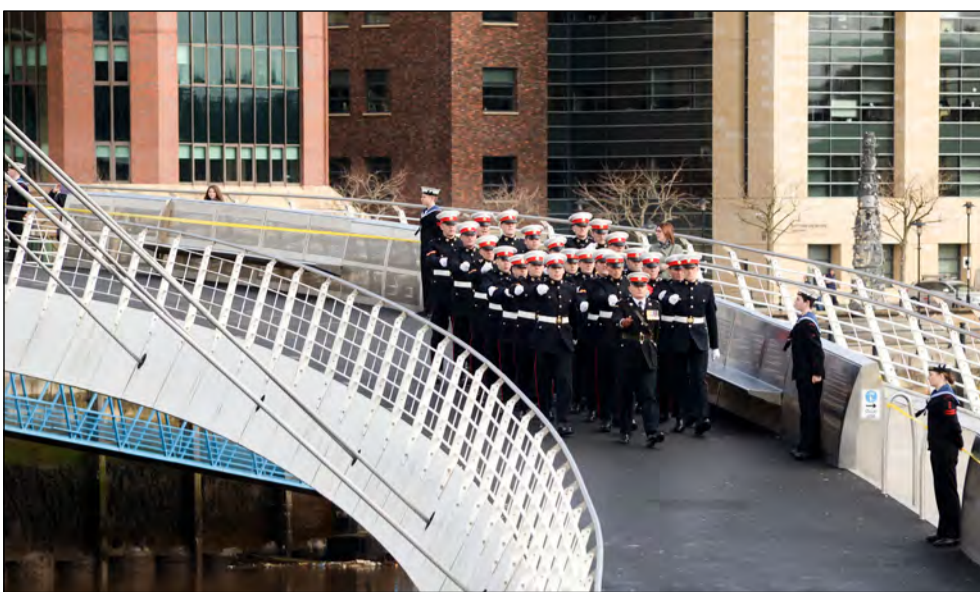
Scott and his team have raised £250 so far and are hoping to increase that figure to at least £1,000 for the charity.

The Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge is a walking challenge route with the circuit normally starting and ending at Horton-in-Ribblesdale, visiting the

three highest peaks in Yorkshire: Pen-y-Ghent (691m), Wharfedale (728m), and Ingleborough (723m). The route is 24-miles long and includes 1,585m of climbing.

To support Scott and his colleagues, you can make a donation via: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/ScottHird>

# FOB on t



● Members of Tyne Detachment RMR march across the Gateshead Millennium Bridge to HMS Calliope last year

HMS CALLIOPE holds a special place in the annals of the Royal Navy, writes Mike Gray.

It was the name borne by a Victorian corvette that clawed its way to safety in the teeth of a violent tropical cyclone in March 1889, her engine running red-hot and her crew working to the limit as she inched her way out of tiny Apia Harbour in Samoa and rode out the storm in the open sea.

While Calliope survived, 12 other ships – including three German and three American warships – were either wrecked or driven ashore; the American crew of screw steamer USS Trenton, lost in the storm (though all but one of her sailors survived), cheered the gallant escape of the British ship.

That celebrated combination of highly-capable sailors in a well-built ship was a Victorian exemplar – and still provides inspiration to a modern Naval establishment.

Because of that the plucky corvette subsequently spent decades on the River Tyne as depot ship for the local RNVR unit.

The name is now borne by the Fleet Establishment on the south bank of the Tyne at Gateshead Quays, just below the Sage concert venue and a stone's throw from the birthplace of local hero Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood, the man who finished off the Battle of Trafalgar after the death of Nelson.

That connection with a seagoing ship was not lost on Commanding Officer Cdr Ian Berry when he took up the reins in September last year.

His unit has deck and cabin naming and numbering conventions which would be familiar to those who have spent time in a Royal Navy warship.

"If people can regard Calliope like a warship again, then it

doesn't come as such a shock when they join a ship in the Fleet," he said.

"We want our Reservists to walk onto a warship, whatever it is, and not feel any different to a Regular."

The living ship analogy suits a stone frigate – but in some respects Calliope also acts as a kind of forward operating base or FOB for the Royal Navy in the North East of England.

Calliope has pedigree as a Naval Reserve unit, but in its latest incarnation the establishment hosts a clutch of different organisations, some Naval, some tri-Service, including civilian staff.

It is still home to the thriving Tyne Division RNR, which meets weekly, drawing members of the ship's company from across the far north of England – some members on the Cumbrian coast drive two hours or more to attend drill nights.

Calliope is a Phase 1 Initial Training Establishment for Naval Reservists, using drill nights and weekend courses at HMS Raleigh and BRNC Dartmouth to militarise then marinise recruits, followed by a bespoke confirmation course before they go on to specialist Phase 2 training.

Calliope then ensures core skills, such as weapon handling, firefighting, navigation and first aid are topped up, and personnel get the chance to practice boatwork and seamanship on small boats on the Tyne, on HMS Example when she has capacity, and in visiting RN ships that call into the North-East.

In recent years, the unit has deployed personnel operationally to the Gulf, Iraq, Afghanistan and to home waters in the Offshore Patrol Vessels, either mobilised or on Full Time Reserve Service, as well as deploying to support exercises such as Joint Warrior.

With around 50 personnel drilling, or participating in weekend training each week, it is on target to grow to a ship's company of 175 personnel – 120 trained strength – by March 2019.

Alongside them are the Royal Marines Reservists of Tyne Detachment, the largest of six such satellites of RMR Scotland.

The Royals moved in from Anzio House, on the opposite bank of the Tyne, when Calliope received a £3.1 million upgrade and reopened in its present form a year ago.

The move brought savings through co-location – and it also brought a new boat store for the RMR, the only new building in the renovation programme.

Capt Rich Garman RMR is second-in-command of Tyne Detachment, having left the regular Corps just over a year ago.

He has bags of experience with both green and blue shades of the Naval Service – including boarding operations with HMS Somerset and a tour on Op Herrick with 40 Cdo – and with family ties to the North East, he spent time with Tyne Detachment before making the seamless transfer to the RMR.

"The transfer has been relatively easy, and a lot of familiar faces here have helped," said Capt Garman.

"It has also been relatively new for everyone, moving from Anzio House, with the move being undertaken over a period of time."

Capt Garman explained that although Tyne is a sub-division of RMR Scotland, their new home in Calliope offers plenty of opportunities for shared training and administrative support, which is "a big win for both sides".

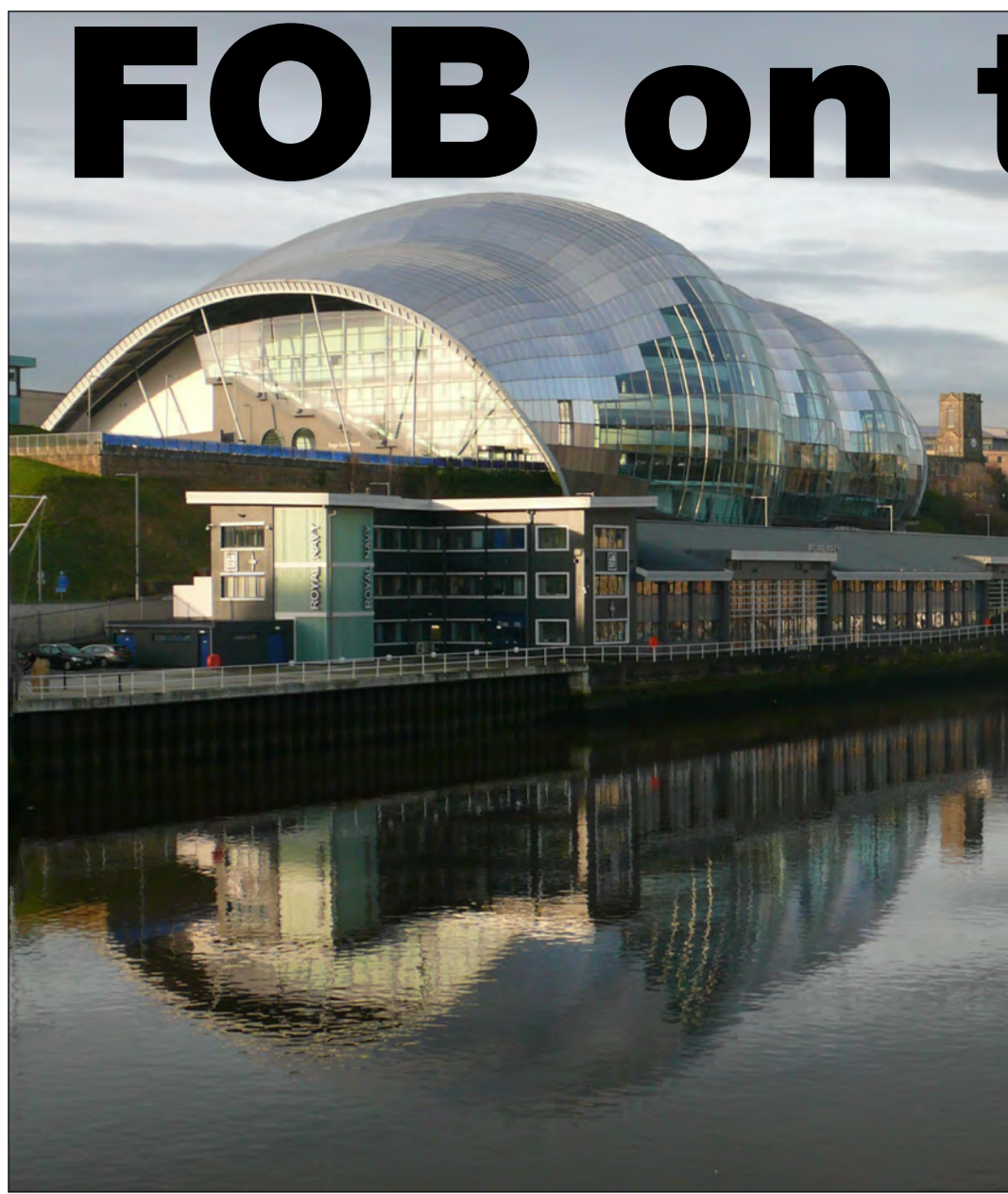
One recent example saw a first aid course run by Calliope with a couple of spare spaces which were offered to the wider Calliope community, including Marines Reservists and permanent RN Staff based in the unit.

Around 30 of the Tyne contingent will be at Calliope on most evenings out of a total strength of up to 50 – with members working some distance away (including offshore) a full attendance is not a common occurrence.

Tyne Detachment also has a role in the recruitment pipeline – there is a 'holding troop' for candidates waiting to start training, and the occasional prospective recruit to the regular Corps who turns up to build knowledge and show commitment to the Royal Marines.

There is a small boat section based on the Tyne with inshore raiding craft – a sub-set of 1 Assault Group based at RM Tamar in Devon – and while the bulk of their specialisation training is carried out in the South West, troops can still get out on the water locally and work with HMS Example to hone their skills.

And as maritime rules of the road are an important factor in



● (Above) The refurbished HMS Calliope below the Sage Centre in Gateshead

● (Left) P2000s HMS Example and HMS Archer sail beneath the Gateshead Millennium Bridge (the 'Winking Eye') en route to HMS Calliope

The Archer-class patrol boat normally berths at Calliope and in addition to vacation deployments with Northumbrian students or supporting the Fleet it is often away conducting training or on operations supporting the Fleet.

HMS Example's CO, Lt Tom Stapley-Bunten, said: "I and the crew feel particularly fortunate to have HMS Calliope as our home port."

"The prominently-positioned RNR base gives the ship a strong sense of identity and affiliation as well as increased reach and logistical support along the North East coast of the UK."

"Indeed, we look forward to hosting a cohort of HMS Calliope reservists this summer on our deployment to Scotland and the East Coast of England."

Example's berth on the Tyne at Calliope's pontoon is one of the last elements of the upgrade to be completed, and when finished will offer an enhanced facility to cater for up to four P2000s alongside at any one time.

Northumbria URNU, meanwhile, has its own presence in Calliope.

Ashore is the URNU HQ, where the CO of the unit shares an office with the captain of the patrol boat.

"It makes planning and co-ordination much easier when we are in the same office, and the Ship's Office is just next door," said Lt Paul Barnes, CO of the URNU, which includes students at the universities of Newcastle, Durham, Northumbria, Teesside and Sunderland.

"It has also been massively helpful to have other units here, such as the RNR and RMR."

URNU Cox'n C/Sgt Mick O'Donnell added: "There is mutual support within the building – we help each other out



● Members of Tyne Detachment RMR practise creating a cache in the car park of HMS Calliope – from left, Mne Phil Malone, Sgt Si Schofield and LICpl Paul McCully

# the Tyne



where needed, and instead of an email you can just nip along the corridor and talk.

"If a student is applying to join the RN or RNR and has a question, we can just walk along to the Armed Forces Careers Office and get an answer straight away."

C/Sgt O'Donnell, the first Royal Marine in the job of cox'n, is a former weapons instructor in commando units, but has embraced the move to driving a desk.

"It is very different but totally rewarding," he said.

"It is the first time I have worked with students, and I think of them as my kids.

"They come here to learn about us and about themselves. We try to give them confidence to achieve their ambitions – it's all about what we can do for them.

"For example, we get the students to organise training and functions – and one of our former students now works for a PR company down in London organising big events."

The roles of commanding the URNU, which was established in 1994, and the associated patrol boat were split apart five years ago, which allowed the captain of the ship to devote more time to Fleet tasking while the URNU CO can spend more time on engagement with universities and the community, representing the Royal Navy at ceremonies and public events.

Northumbria URNU has just over 50 members – pretty much full strength – but as a good number generally leave in their third year the recruitment process is a permanent feature.

The Armed Forces Careers Office, covering all three Services, also moved the bulk of its operations to Calliope when the establishment reopened, and Naval recruiters have found it useful to work in the same office complex as experts from other Services.

The Navy-sponsored office has seen numbers of enquiries rising, and although the office recruits for the wider Naval Service (including carrying out

recruitment tests for the RFA), they do particularly well in recruiting to the Royal Marines.

"We are a really busy office – one of the five busiest AFCOs in the country," said Naval Careers Advisor WO1 Karl Dewing.

One of the key elements in WO Dewing's team is the serving sailor.

"If we have young hands on holdover we send them out to do outreach work," he said.

"We have a brilliant one here at the moment – they are like a magnet to youngsters when they go out to talk to groups."

The final piece of the Calliope jigsaw is DTUS, the Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme, a bursary scheme run by the Defence Academy to provide engineering and technical graduates to the Royal Navy, Army, RAF and the MOD Civil Service.

The scheme provides academic and financial support to students alongside adventurous training and sporting opportunities.

DTUS students must attend an approved 'Partner University' and will be affiliated to one of four squadrons – Calliope is home to the Newcastle unit, known as Trojan Squadron, which provides academic mentoring, guidance, personal development and military training skills for bursars at Newcastle University, Northumbria University and the University of Strathclyde.

DTUS bursars join the Reserve Forces and receive training pay for attendance at regular drill nights and for weekend and vacation activities, in addition to the £4,000 per annum bursary.

"We are one of four DTUS squadrons around the country," said Lt Kris Storey, First Lieutenant of Trojan Squadron.

"We look after a group of students doing technical degrees at university – a total of 153 students, of whom 38 are Naval Service at the moment.

"The Naval students are all studying engineering, and we normally graduate five to ten each year.

"They earn £4,000 a year while they are here, then they go

straight to Dartmouth.

"We basically administer the students through and make sure they are on course, stay fit and provide them with opportunities to attach to the Service.

"We work hard to get exposure to Royal Navy ships and submarines.

"DTUS has grown massively – we started with 30 bursars and six staff in a trial, and we now have 153 students and six staff.

"Calliope is great at supporting us, even though we are just a lodger unit here."

Lt Storey, who has been in the RN for 14 years, has now left DTUS and joined 1710 Naval Air Squadron in Portsmouth.

Quite apart from permanent and lodger units, Calliope also hosts military units which are operating a long way from their home base – recent 'guests' include a team of Navy divers from the Fleet Diving Group who had linked up with local police divers, 28 personnel from 847 Naval Air Squadron, who were on exercise in the area, and a Squirrel helicopter from 705 NAS Defence Helicopter Flying School.

Scottish P2000 HMS Archer was also a lodger for a while – a blast from the past for Cdr Berry, who was one of her early Commanding Officers, some 30 years ago.

On a busy day, Calliope could see more than 400 people on site through the day and evening.

Renovations managed by Northern East England Reserve Forces and Cadets Association include a larger area for training, 'transit' accommodation space for 24 users in bunks, new classroom and office facilities, a state-of-the-art fitness suite with climbing wall (a conversion of the old Drill Deck), and improvements to the external appearance of the building – Calliope has a high-profile site on the Newcastle-Gateshead quayside.

Co-location helps save infrastructure costs of separate sites, as well as providing better facilities all round, and the administration support is also extended to personnel from



● HMS Example, the Northumbrian URNU patrol boat based at HMS Calliope, sails up the River Forth to Rosyth earlier this year

visiting ships, and sailors and marines living locally – access to MOD IT means there is no need for expensive commutes to Scotland or the South to access the systems.

And it is not just the military who benefit – in the spirit of the FOB analogy, Calliope has a major local effect, whether providing personnel or versatile space for major public sporting, civic or entertainment events or rooms for local Pilates classes or community groups.

The extent to which Calliope plays its part in the community can be seen in such details as the unit's external lighting system, which can be colour-coordinated with the Sage and the Millennium Bridge, according to WO1 Scott Hill, Calliope's Unit Warrant Officer.

At the time of *Navy News*' visit, the site was also preparing to act as the landing site for a charity zip wire running from the iconic Tyne Bridge, thereby keeping the RN in the public eye in the North East.

Lt Cdr David King, the Unit Operations Officer, noted Calliope was something of a Tardis – many compartments are not immediately apparent as they are below street level, built into the bank of the Tyne.

At the heart of Calliope is the new Drill Deck – a hall featuring floor-to-ceiling windows on the north wall with sweeping views across the Tyne to Newcastle.

It was here that contingents from all of Calliope's units gathered to hear an address by Cdre Martin Quinn, Commander Maritime Reserves, who visited the establishment to get a sense of the reservists' impact on the North-East.

The Commodore also presented awards to a number of personnel to mark their long service.

AB1 Porteous-Ford and LS Forrester were awarded the Volunteer Reserve Service Medal and CPO Wolfe and WO1 Andrew were presented with valedictory certificates.

Following the parade, Cdr Berry said: "The Commodore visits his 19 units once or twice a year – but this is the first time he has been to Calliope since our 'refit'."

"It is a great opportunity for him to see the improved facilities which support our training and experience the upbeat atmosphere which will enable the unit to grow and deliver more support to the Fleet.

"It was also good for him to see the interaction and mutual support between the RNR and RMR here on Tyneside."

As he contemplated the Commodore's visit, Cdr Berry was also mulling over the last day of his working week – writing a fistful of reports, preparing to deliver a presentation for the North of England Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA)

AGM, and representing the RN at the signing of an Armed Forces Covenant with a significant local employer.

"Typically I or colleagues are out twice each week doing local engagement to promote the Royal Navy and its Reserves in the region," he said.

"But it's not all work. We have a healthy social programme which integrates families whose support is crucial – we have a horse race night coming up. It is the sort of thing you would hold on a ship, so we do it here."

Cdr Berry – who was born not far south of Calliope in County Durham and brought up in the North-East – joined the RNR while studying at the University of Dundee in 1982.

He commanded a number of patrol vessels and minesweepers before qualifying as a Principal Warfare Officer, after which he served in Type 42 destroyer HMS Cardiff between 2001 and 2003.

Overseas roles included working with the Americans in the Gulf, NATO tasking off Libya and counter-piracy operations east of Suez.

Having completed the Advanced Command and Staff Course, Cdr Berry joined Commander Maritime Reserves HQ in 2013 as Staff Officer Force Generation and Capability. He now plays a key role in making the most of the unit and developing the next generation of Tyneside's Reservists.



● HMS Example (P165) and HMS Archer (P264) alongside HMS Calliope's pontoon on the Tyne, while a Squirrel helicopter of 705 Naval Air Squadron Defence Helicopter Flying School sits on the car park 'flight deck'

REPORTING

Individuals		Vehicles	
A	Age	S	Shape
B	Build	C	Colour
C	Clothing	R	Registration
D	Distinguishing Features (Including ethnicity)	I	Identifying Marks
E	Elevation (height)	M	Make and Model
F	Face		
G	Gait		
H	Hair		
S	Sex		

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- A Age
- B Build
- C Clothing
- D Distinguishing features (including ethnicity)
- E Elevation (height)
- F Face
- G Gait (style of walking)
- H Hair
- S Sex

and for vehicles

- S Shape
- C Colour
- R Registration
- I Identifying marks
- M Make and model

Security is everyone's business, so make it yours. For further information contact NC PSyA on 023 9272 6480.

## Sultan's staff shed the lbs

TWENTY-EIGHT military and civilian personnel at HMS Sultan signed up for a ten-week fitness and healthy lifestyle challenge – with 16 still standing at the end.

Under the guidance of LPT Rob Docker, the 16 who were able to make it to the end collectively weighed 46.7kg (103lb) less than they did back in January.

No man shed more than Richard Thompson (8.5kg) and the winning female was CPO Catherine House, who lost 5kg.

Individual training programmes were designed around personal goals, with many of those participating taking advantage of the nutritional advice available in order to shake off the excess from the festive season.



● (Left to right) Capt Barry Doig (DACOS Naval Intelligence), former First Sea Lord Admiral Lord West, Capt Chris Clough (head of Defence Intelligence (Maritime)), the Princess Royal and her husband Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence, Admiral Robert Sharp (US Office of Naval Intelligence) and RN Commander Operations, Rear Admiral Bob Tarrant

## Keeping the RN one step ahead of foes

GATHERED on the deck of Britain's most famous warship, senior Naval officers and the Princess Royal pose briefly for the camera before heading below to mark the centenary of the finest hour in British naval intelligence.

Around 100 RN intelligence officers past and present converged on HMS Victory for the 100th anniversary dinner to mark the so-called Zimmermann Telegram.

Back in 1917, the forerunner of what would become Bletchley Park in WW2 and GCHQ today, the Naval Intelligence Division (NID) in the Admiralty led by the legendary figure of Capt Reginald 'Blinker' Hall, intercepted, decoded and translated a note from the German Foreign Minister, Zimmermann, to his ambassador in Mexico.

The potentially explosive note offered the Mexicans the return of land lost to the USA if they declared war on Washington.

The intercepted telegram was presented to the Americans at just the right moment – the Germans had just unleashed an unrestricted U-boat campaign against all shipping. It helped tip the balance and in April 1917, a previously-neutral United States joined the Allied cause.

Today, the NID has evolved into the Maritime Branch of Defence Intelligence, headed by Capt Chris Clough, who presided over the centenary dinner with guests of honour being HRH the Princess Royal, Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence and Admiral Robert Sharp, the Commander of the US Office of Naval Intelligence.

This year's dinner also welcomed former First Sea Lord Admiral Lord West, author and historian Professor Lord Peter Hennessy, the RN's Commander Operations, Rear Admiral Bob Tarrant and partners and allies from the USA, New Zealand and Canada as well as from across government. Dr Tony Wells, the academic and historian, gave a speech on the detailed intelligence and strategic handling surrounding the Zimmermann telegram.

Both the UK's Naval Intelligence Division and the US Office of Naval Intelligence have their roots in the 1880s: in his welcoming speech, Capt Clough used this historical continuity to demonstrate the genuinely strategic effect that comes from maritime intelligence, the strength of integration with allies and, also commemorating their 100th year, the enormous contribution made in code-breaking, photographic interpretation and intelligence analysis by members of the Women's Royal Naval Service.

## Sultan's new lecture hall

THERE are improved lecture facilities at Sultan with the opening of the new Dreadnought Theatre.

It's taken 18 months to develop the auditorium, which has seating for 305 people and space for another 60 if required.

The modern presentation suite features three projector screens, theatre-quality sound and new IT facilities.

The first duty of the refurbished facility, which replaces the Brunel Theatre, was to host the Chief Naval Engineering Officer's annual conference.

# Praise for folk who keep the Merlin whirlin'

THE answer is 111.

The question? How many men and women does it take to maintain a squadron of Merlin Mk3 commando-carrying helicopters?

Actually, the true figure is 170, but we'll come on to that... All the engineers, technicians and avionics experts of 846 Naval Air Squadron line up on the pan at RNAS Yeovilton in front of one of their aircraft to mark being cited by the RN's senior engineer for their efforts.

Vice Admiral Simon Lister singled out 846 – one of two Junglie Merlin squadrons dedicated to supporting Royal Marines on the battlefield – for the work they put in to maintaining their helicopters.

When the Merlin's predecessor, the Sea King Mk4, retired at the end of March last year, it fell on 846 and her sister squadron 845 to immediately step into the trusty helicopter's shoes. Immediately.

Instead of a full complement of 176 engineers, 846 could call upon just over 100 due to switching to the Merlin and medical downgrades. On top of that, some of the key supervisors were relatively new to their jobs. And rather than the planned eight helicopters to look after, there were 11 Merlin on its books.

It was the perfect recipe for chaos and failure, but 846's men and women rose to the challenge, working long days and weekends, to ensure the Merlins were ready to operate from anywhere in the UK at immediate notice.

In addition, many of the junior ratings came up with time and money-saving ideas to speed up the repair and maintenance programme.

Seventy trainee engineers earned their spurs under the squadron's tutelage, the helicopters deployed to Germany, Guernsey and Gibraltar twice, and embarked seven times in HMS Ocean, Bulwark, Argus and RFA Mounts Bay.

As more and more engineers grew accustomed to the Merlin, the serviceability rate of the helicopters climbed to more than 50 per cent, over ten per cent higher than the RAF achieved in their final year before handover. The Mk3s and their crews were clocking up more than 200 flying hours a month.

"Without the initiative, enthusiasm and dedication of 846's engineering team – and their willingness to consistently go the extra mile – the squadron and CHF would not have been able to achieve such a successful first year of Merlin at Yeovilton," said Admiral Lister in awarding a citation.

Picture: PO Phot Si Ethell, CHF



## Small name, huge achievements

THE title of most senior nursing officer in the RNR will remain north of the border at HMS Scotia – but in new hands as one of the most experienced nurses in the land stood down.

Even though she retired from NHS Scotland two years ago Cdr Pauline Small (on the left of the picture) continued her reservist role as the Senior Officer, Naval Nursing, for the Royal Naval Reserve.

After 18 years in the RNR, Cdr Small has decided the time has come to retire from it too, handing over her responsibilities to Cdr Kit McKinley (on the right of the picture – and also based at the Rosyth reservist unit).

Cdr Small has been an inspirational officer both in her unit and her branch, filling a variety of roles: regional training officer, national Nursing Service co-ordinator and national nurse recruiter.

Earlier in her career, she became the first member of Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service (QARNNS) Reserve to secure a clinical placement at the Defence Medical Service Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court.

She was also the first officer from QARNNS Reserve to be appointed as head of department and deck co-ordinator in the Primary Casualty Receiving Facility on board RFA Argus, during Exercise Medical Endeavour.

And she deployed to the Princess Mary Hospital at RAF Akrotiri in 2006, providing niche skills in a tri-Service environment.

Her commitment to the Naval Service was rewarded with presentation of the QARNNS Reserve Centenary Trophy in 2005.

In 2014, she became the first military nurse to be appointed to the Nursing Times Inaugural



Leaders list and this achievement was reinforced with a Commendation from Flag Officer Reserves in February 2016. Cdr Small also received two Achievement Awards from Scotia in 2003 and 2007, recognising her commitment to the unit.

Cdr Tom Knowles, Scotia's CO, said "Pauline has been an inspiration to many within her branch, as well as blazing a trail for women within the Service.

"Her counsel, commitment and courage will be sorely missed by all of those who worked with her."

Handing over her post to Cdr McKinley, Cdr Small offered this advice to her successor: "Be your own person, uphold the values and traditions of the Service and most importantly always remember to be a leader, not just a manager."

## Where to look

### RNTMs

- 01 Personel
- 01-038/17 Entry Requirements for branch transfer into the PT Specialisation
- 01-037/17 Royal Navy Engineering Technician Mentoring Scheme (RNETMS)
- 03 Policy and Operations
- 03-023/17 Signatory levels for marine engineering underwater hazard tables in surface ships
- 05 Management, Organisation and Business Practice
- 05-010/17 CNPERS and CNPS Divisional Restructure
- 07 Training and Education
- 07-032/17 Submarine Coxswain's AGM & Formal Dinner 9 June 2017
- 07-034/17 Warrant Officers' Staff Course (WOSC)
- 07-035/17 Generic Joining Instructions for Personnel Attending Courses at HMS Raleigh; RNSMS, DMLS, Triumph Squadron and MTU

### DIBS

- 13/16 Pay 16, the new Armed Forces pay model
- 16/16 New Employment Model: Amendments to Enhanced Learning Credits and Further Education and Higher Education
- 30/16 New Employment Model (NEM) Officers Talent Management
- 32/16 New Employment Model (NEM): Managing Leave and Flexible Working on JPA

### DINS

- DIN 2017DIN01-078 Realignment of Retirement Age for Naval Service Officers with Service prior to 1 Apr 99 (RA55 Scheme) – 2017 Round [Supersedes DIN 2016DIN01-049 and DIN 2016DIN01-143]
- DIN 2017DIN01-092 Armed Forces Childcare Voucher Scheme [Supersedes DIN 2013DIN01-168]
- DIN 2017DIN01-094 Tax-Free Childcare (TFC) Scheme for eligible working parents
- DIN 2017DIN02-001 Volunteers for Specialist HUMINT Duties – Agent Handler (Op Samson) OS [Supersedes DIN 2016DIN02-005]
- DIN 2017DIN07-062 Defence Learning Environment (DLE) and Introduction to Learning Technologies (ILT) Training Courses August 2017 - July 2018
- DIN 2017DIN07-065 Refund of Engineering Professional Body Fees [Supersedes DIN 2016DIN07-061]
- DIN 2017DIN07-067 Joint Service Adventurous Training Sub-Aqua Diving 2018 Expedition Dates for Ascension Island, Cyprus and Gibraltar [Supersedes DIN 2016DIN07-090]
- DIN 2017DIN10-029 Exercise Rothiemurchus Challenge 2017
- DIN 2017DIN10-031 British Army Motorsports event – Archers Express 2017



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## Mosque visit forges fresh links with Midlands' Muslims

WHO'LL blink first? A youngster tries to out-stare NA(AH) Brent Richardson as sailors bring a taste of the RN to Britain's second largest – and most landlocked – city.

Half a dozen sailors and Royal Marines from Wales and Western England Outreach Team dropped in on Birmingham Central Mosque to give one of the country's largest Muslim communities an insight into their daily work around the globe.

Two presentations were laid on by the team: one aimed at young people, the second at adults and community leaders – more than

150 people in all.

The team ran through RN history and the need for Naval power, before focusing on today's roles, the training sailors and Royal Marines receive and likely career progress. They also staged a Q&A session, fitness workshop and healthy eating/cooking demonstration.

"The mosque was so supportive and welcoming to the team," said PO 'Fred' Perry, in charge of the Youth Engagement Team. "We are delighted to have been invited. The presentations were extremely well received and we aim to develop our

relationship with Birmingham Central Mosque throughout the year."

As the sailors left the mosque – only the second purpose-built Muslim house of worship in the UK – one of the elders told them: "I really enjoyed meeting members of the RN and finding out about their training and careers. It was interesting to find out about the RN's role around the world protecting our security, both today and in the future."

The next goal is to organise a visit to one of Her Majesty's ships for some of the mosque's congregation.

## Mentoring scheme warrants interest

ARE you a veteran Naval engineer with bags of experience which you're keen to share with your branch colleagues?

If so, you're just the person needed to help the next generation of senior ratings under the new RN Engineering Technician Mentoring Scheme (RNETMS).

Naval engineering's most senior warrant officer Matt Rowlinson is looking to his fellow WO1s – or those subsequently commissioned as officers – to nurture the men and women following in their footsteps.

Unlike previous mentoring initiatives, there's no formal, long-standing bond between an individual mentor and a mentee.

It will, however, require long-term commitment to professionalism across the branch when it formally begins on June 1.

Before the scheme goes live, WO1 Rowlinson is asking his colleagues to register via the Defence Connect system, build a

profile and become a mentor.

Seven in every ten engineers are classed as 'millennials' – aged 30 or under. The early stages of their careers are heavily structured from basic training through to becoming a section or group head on a ship or squadron.

So RNETMS is primarily aimed at giving POs and CPOs access to mentors who are experts in the same specialisation – and also outside the direct management chain. They will be able to offer:

- general career advice;
- an assessment of strengths and weaknesses and how to address the latter;
- options for professional development (additional qualifications/members of professional bodies)
- independent advice from engineering issues to divisional matters.

With the push to generate PO and CPOs as quickly as possible, there will be an inevitable drop in age and experience.

"The success of RNETMS is wholly reliant upon the active participation of both mentors and mentees," said WO1 Rowlinson.

"Warrant officers of all engineering disciplines are strongly encouraged to register for, participate in and promote this scheme.

"CPOETs and senior POETs are equally encouraged to register and reap the benefits of ready access to centuries of experience and knowledge."

See [defenceintranet.diif.r.mil.uk/libraries/4/Docs11/20170419.1/20170331-How%20To%20Use%20RNETMS.pdf](http://defenceintranet.diif.r.mil.uk/libraries/4/Docs11/20170419.1/20170331-How%20To%20Use%20RNETMS.pdf) for further information and to create a mentor profile, click [defenceintranet.diif.r.mil.uk/libraries/4/Docs11/20170419.1/20170330-Creating%20Your%20RNETMS%20Mentor%20Profile.pdf](http://defenceintranet.diif.r.mil.uk/libraries/4/Docs11/20170419.1/20170330-Creating%20Your%20RNETMS%20Mentor%20Profile.pdf).

## PCap and NPS are the new CNPERS/CNPS

SINCE May 8, Navy Command's Personnel Division has been re-organised with CNPERS and CNPS split into two new directorates: Assistant Chief of Staff (People Capability), which will be responsible for all manpower planning and delivery, and the Head of Naval People Strategy which will be responsible for all Naval personnel policy; Cdre Mike Bath is assuming the new role of ACOS(PCap), while Angela Pope is joining NCHQ as the head of the new NPS arm.

"This restructuring aims at achieving three things: that those in the front line whose hard work we exist to support, see no interruption in service

from the Personnel Division; secondly, by bringing together career and branch managers, manpower planners, and the promotions team into a unified 1\* structure, we improve our service to the front line; and thirdly, equally important, that we have the capacity to address the two strategic challenges that are shaping the future for people in the Naval Service; manpower recovery – which is improving in many critical areas, but still slower than I'd like – and the Armed Forces' People Programme," said Cdre Bath.

Further details of the re-structuring can be found in RNTM 05-10/17.

## REWARDING JOB VACANCIES IN RECRUITING

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## Uckers title up for grabs

UCKERS – a variation on Ludo, to the uninitiated – is the Navy's oldest game, sponsored by its oldest drink, played on its oldest ship (and some might say by its oldest members...)

Not true! From the most junior sailor to Prince Harry, uckers is still played by Naval personnel and UK military forces, on ships and in shore establishments throughout the world, by all ranks.

The World Uckers Championships, open to civilians and Service personnel, sponsored again this year by Pusser's Rum, are being held in the Royal Naval Museum, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, on October 28.

The final is to be played on Nelson's flagship, HMS Victory.

The winning pair will receive a magnificent 'Top Blob' trophy, a litre ceramic decanter of Pusser's Rum, an uckers board and a certificate from the museum.

Applications can be made either by contacting [community@nmrn.org.uk](mailto:community@nmrn.org.uk), or by telephone on 02392 545033. A £2 entry fee will be taken on the day – all proceeds will go to Naval charities.

The competition is for doubles players, and single entrants will be teamed with a partner on the day.

Running in parallel is a free caption competition, in which entrants must provide captions to a number of cartoons.

It closes on October 21 – see [www.facebook.com/veteransoutreachsupport/](http://www.facebook.com/veteransoutreachsupport/)

## Gateway open

THE Veterans UK Gateway is now open for business, providing a single point of contact for veterans seeking advice and support and putting them in touch with the organisations best placed to support their need – from healthcare and housing to employability, finances, personal relationships and more.

See [www.veteransgateway.org.uk](http://www.veteransgateway.org.uk)

# Word is spreading

APPLICATIONS to join Project Semaphore have risen since volunteers have been out training veterans.

The project is an RNA initiative designed to address the issue of digital isolation amongst maritime veterans, and the first tranche of volunteers who will teach digital skills have now attended their training days.

They are now out and about, training and supporting eligible candidates using their own bespoke training iPads.

And organisers say Project Semaphore has seen a rise in applications since the volunteers have been able to demonstrate, using their own iPads, the benefit of being connected to the internet – some interested applicants have been won over by having the chance to see the devices and handle them.

A number of RNA branches have commenced weekly iPad training sessions for the applicants in their branches, which brings advantages through group learning, sharing training as well as fostering a social bonding round technology.

One shipmate observed that "they will be messaging their shipmates sat next to them to order a cuppa next..."

One candidate, in true skimmer style, even decided to hold his iPad training onboard a vessel at sea, much to the delight of his supporting volunteer.

Nigel King a volunteer based at Waterlooville branch, has been holding weekly iPad training nights in the branch which gets all the candidates together to learn and share their experience.

Project Manager Sharon Brown said: "Right from the start of this project I was clear to all that this was not an IT project – it was a people project, and now that the training and issuing of iPads is under way that is very clearly the strength of this project.

"Bringing veterans together, assisting one another with getting



● Shipmate candidates Tucker, Edwards and Wright in deep thought whilst receiving iPad mentoring in the Sea Cadets building in Holyhead

online, helping your oppo – a true core value amongst those who have served.

"I have been heartened by the dedication of all our volunteers who are giving their time to train and support the digitally isolated candidates.

"The project has touched the lives of candidates from a broad background, including World War 2 veterans, a 91-year-old Legion D'honneur recipient and recently-widowed and isolated veterans.

"Some of the stories coming through are highlighting the real benefit this project is making to lives."

One candidate contacted project managers to say: "I wish to express my sincere thanks for making available to me the iPad."

"I'm 91 years old, widowed – my wife died five weeks before our 70th year anniversary, August 2015, leaving a deep void.

"Gary Daisley (volunteer) called last night straight from doing a day's work to give me two hours of his time, with instructions, with more to

follow."

The RNA have established a formal agreement with the Sea Cadets where individuals within the Corps can assist veterans getting familiar with their iPads and being online as part of

their Duke of Edinburgh award activities.

This relationship is further harnessed in Holyhead where candidates used the Sea Cadets building to conduct their iPad training.

## Battlefield tour

RESERVISTS from HMS Scotia travelled to Ypres to learn about the significance this area played in World War 1 and to participate in the Menin Gate ceremony.

They were accommodated at Talbot House in Poperinge, which during the war was rented from a local family and rebuilt into a club house open to all soldiers, and turned out to be a perfect base for the reservists.

On the first evening, which included a meal at a local restaurant, AB Gordon Brand gave a moving talk on Lt Cyril Aldin Smith, the only member of the Naval Service recorded on the Menin Gate Memorial of 55,000 names. Lt Smith was a

Royal Naval Reservist.

Next morning the group headed to Ypres itself for a three-hour tour which one experienced battlefield tourist described as "the best I've experienced."

After the tour some of the group stayed in Ypres to visit local museums, while others returned to Poperinge.

That evening the touring party headed to the Menin Gate to join the ceremony in memory of Allied troops who died fighting in the area – an event which has taken place every evening since November 1929, except during the German occupation of Belgium during World War 2, when the ceremony continued at Brookwood Cemetery in England.

Lt Cdr Tim Haddow kindly waived the chance to lay a wreath at the Gate, allowing AB Mollie Osbourne to undertake that honour, doing herself, the unit and the Royal Navy proud.

Sunday gave 18 matelots the chance to roam Belgium on hired bikes, the two groups visiting more historic sites and a museum without mishap (despite some unorthodox riding styles).

The touring party was particularly indebted to Surg Lt Cdr Wilson, without whom this visit would never have happened – his fluent French and sense of humour made a big difference on this busy trip.



## X-craft hero is fêted

SERVING submariners and veterans were joined by a hero of the Submarine Service during their Birthday Dinner at Faslane.

More than 200 members of the Silent Service held their annual 'Gambit Dinner' to mark the 116th birthday of the Royal Navy Submarine Service.

Guest of honour this year was Cdr John Lorimer, the last survivor of the mission to sink German battleship Tirpitz.

Operation Source – which resulted in two VCs – was coordinated from HMS Varbel, the HQ of the 12th Submarine Squadron at Bannatyne on Bute.

It involved six midget submarines (X-Craft) being towed by larger submarines to Norway to attack Tirpitz, Scharnhorst and Lutzow.

The attacks on Scharnhorst and Lutzow had to be abandoned, but X5, X6 and X7 reached Tirpitz, with the first two laying charges against her hull on September 22 1943.

Forced to surface and surrender, the crews were taken on board Tirpitz as POWs.

Along with several colleagues, John Lorimer, now 94, was awarded the DSO for his bravery.

Tirpitz was out of commission until April 1944 and was knocked out for a further two months by an attack by the Fleet Air Arm. Finally, in November that year she was sunk by 12,000lb bombs.

John Lorimer spent 18 months in a German POW camp.

Cdr Lorimer was invited to the Submarine Birthday dinner after some excellent detective work by WO Andy Knox, Submarine Service CWO, who took what little information he had and tracked down the veteran deep.

"The Submarine Birthday dinner is an important date for the Service and having Cdr Lorimer in attendance made it an extra special event," said Rear Admiral John Weale, Rear Admiral Submarines.

"The X-Craft crew's achievements were legendary and typified the values which the Submarine Service still hold dear today – courage, camaraderie and selflessness."

During the night £605 was also raised for the RNRMC.



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[www.royalmaritimeclub.co.uk](http://www.royalmaritimeclub.co.uk)

## Naval express runs again

THE most famous train in Royal Navy history took to the rails for the first time in 70 years to mark the unique service's centenary.

Through the final 18 months of the Great War and through most of WW2 the 'Jellicoe Express' was the vital lifeline for sailors serving at the Fleet's principal wartime base, Scapa Flow.

Upwards of 600 sailors a day, plus their luggage, supplies and mail for the Fleet, were carried by the railway service which ran from Euston in London to Thurso – a distance of 717 miles covered in 21½ hours.

As the First Sea Lord was Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, the service – the longest ever run in the UK – earned the title The Jellicoe Express.

Despite the demands on the wartime rail network, the service was rarely late and often arrived early.

From Thurso, boats took the men across the Pentland Firth to Scapa where a myriad of battleships and other vessels anchored when not on patrol.

To mark the centenary, for one day only, a steam train travelled on the stunning Highlands section of the route between Inverness and Perth, while plaques commemorating the express' vital role in both world wars were unveiled at five stations.

There were few stops along the express' route – such as Crewe to allow sailors coming from the West Country to join the train, or Rosyth and Invergordon so they could alight at other key RN bases.

Given the exigencies of wartime, facilities on the train were rudimentary – there was no catering, apparently no toilets and frequently no room as the service was overcrowded... prompting sailors to dub it The Misery Express.

Volunteers or the Red Cross set up stalls at stops to provide sustenance to the travelling sailors and marines: the Patriot Barrow in Perth operated around the clock, while further up the line in Dingwall, the Red Cross brewed more than 130,000 cups of tea for thirsty travellers.



## Visitors welcome Daring

CHRISTCHURCH branch members visited RNA Central Office in Portsmouth with members from several other branches.

After being told about the work done by staff in the office and enjoying a buffet lunch, shipmates were then taken on a boat trip around the harbour, during which flasks containing an appropriately Naval pick-me-up were passed around – and around...

On returning to shore a very special treat was in store.

Families were gathering to welcome home HMS Daring after a nine-month deployment.

RNA members were encouraged to mingle with the excited friends and families of the crew, and shipmates handed out cardboard sailor hats to the many children waiting expectantly for their loved ones.

S/Ms found it a very moving experience and joined in the applause and cheering as the ship drew alongside.

They all felt proud and privileged to have been included in the welcome home to members of the Royal Navy.

## Glasgow date

THE HMS Glasgow Association asked the City of Glasgow branch to organise a venue for their get-together.

S/M Brian MacKenzie arranged for the RBLs in Knightswood to host the evening in their club.

Ten RNA shipmates and guests attended along with 40 from the Glasgow Association.

The RNA was presented with a plaque and a bottle of very special rum – all in all a very good night was had by all.



# Portsmouth marks WRNS 100

PORTSMOUTH Naval Base and HMS Nelson are to mark the centenary of the founding of the Women's Royal Naval Service over a weekend in the autumn.

The WRNS 100 weekend, which will run from September 29 to

October 1, will include a Ceremonial Sunset to be staged on board a warship and a formal Mess Dinner with guest speakers.

Souvenirs will be made available to attendees.

A church service will be held on the Sunday.

The event is open to all serving or former female ranks and rates of the Royal Navy, Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service and the WRNS who have served at HMS Nelson, Portsmouth Naval Base or on board

Portsmouth-based ships.

Details of the weekend, timings and ticket prices to be confirmed in due course.

To register your interest, email CPO Sue Emery on [susan.emery369@mod.uk](mailto:susan.emery369@mod.uk)

## Lifesaving initiative by Newark

MEMBERS of Newark branch and lifesavers from Newark Community First Aid and Newark Fire Station gathered at the Odeon cinema – but they weren't there to see the latest blockbuster release.

At the Remembrance Day parade in 2014 chairman Peter Wilderspin collapsed, but the swift reactions of members of Newark Community First Aid, White Watch from Newark Fire Station and the availability of three mobile defibrillators saved his life.

To show their gratitude, just over £2,000 was raised to buy and install a defibrillator.

It was decided to install the unit on the outside wall of the Odeon cinema as it is situated where the annual Remembrance Day parade forms up.

It will also benefit users of the cinema, Newark Library and local shops.

No 9 Area Chairman S/M Keith Crawford and his wife Yvonne were present to unveil the defibrillator.

Branch secretary S/M Kevin Winter thanked all those who had contributed to the purchase of the defibrillator, including No 9 Area, which contributed £300.

Also present were Kevin Walsh from Newark Community First Aid and Dennis Rhule, an off-watch firefighter, who were instrumental in saving Peter's life and were made Honorary Branch members as a consequence.

# Poignant visit to view bell

THE last time Ernest Matchett saw the ship's bell of HMS Vestal, the minesweeper was in her death throes off the coast of Thailand.

More than 70 years later, the former leading stoker, now 91, was reunited with two iconic objects recovered from the Vestal – the last RN ship lost in World War 2.

Vestal was one of several ships of the East Indies Fleet patrolling off the coast of what was then Japanese-occupied Siam on the evening of July 26 1945 – the very day that Clement Attlee's Labour Party was swept into power in a landslide election victory.

At last light that fateful Thursday a formation of three Japanese aircraft was spotted heading for the Royal Navy force.

Despite the ferocious anti-aircraft fire thrown up by the warships, one enemy kamikaze smashed into the Vestal's superstructure, causing extensive damage and killing 14

men – almost all of them in the minesweeper's engine room.

Ernest Matchett had been on watch in the boiler room at the time of the attack and was badly injured, suffering perforated ear drums.

He and his remaining surviving shipmates were transferred to other British vessels.

Vestal herself remained afloat but was so badly damaged she had to be scuttled about 60 miles southwest of Phuket – the very last Royal Navy warship lost to enemy action between 1939 and 1945.

Thailand-based divers found Vestal's wreck about a decade ago – and confirmed its identity when they recovered the bell, which was returned to the Royal Navy for safekeeping.

When Ernest, today living in Hawtonville, near Newark-on-Trent, learned the bell was being cared for at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth, he was keen to see it – and show his family.

Accompanied by his son Glenn and grandson Robert, the veteran made an emotional return to Portsmouth to visit the museum, whose curating staff Rebecca Drummond and George Malcolmson had an unexpected treat for Ernest.

He was unaware in the chaos of the kamikaze attack that his

## Beacons mark anniversary

THE RNA is one of four charities to be supported by the World War 1 Beacons of Light project, which will mark the centenary of the end of the conflict.

Taking its lead from the remark by Foreign Minister Sir Edward Grey in 1914 – “the lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime” – 1,000 Beacons of Light will be lit at 7pm on November 11 2018 throughout the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories.

As well as the millions who were killed or injured on the front line, the event will also commemorate the huge army of men and women who supported the war on the home front.

So far more than 800 councils, communities and organisations have confirmed their involvement.

See details on the RNA website at [www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/news/ww1-beacons-of-light-11th-november-2018/](http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk/news/ww1-beacons-of-light-11th-november-2018/)

RNA Central Office, Room 209, Semaphore Tower (PP70), HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.

[admin@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:admin@royalnavalassoc.com)

023 9272 3747

[www.royal-naval-association.co.uk](http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk)



● S/M Ernest Matchett with the bell of HMS Vestal at the national Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth

## £50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our April edition (right) was HMS Resource, which was based mainly at Alexandria between 1941 and 1944.

The correct answers were provided by B Willing, of Gillingham in Kent, who wins our £50 prize.

This month's mystery ship (above) was launched at the John Brown shipyard on the Clyde in January 1945 and first deployed in 1947.

After a period in reserve she deployed to the Med in 1954; following a collision with a sister ship in the Bay of Biscay she was repaired and converted before being sent to the Far East.

The Battle-class destroyer was broken up at Blyth in 1978.

1) What was her name, and 2) in what year was the Peninsular War battle after which she was named?



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 received by July 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 August edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.


### MYSTERY PICTURE 268

Name .....

Address .....



My answers: (1) .....

(2) .....



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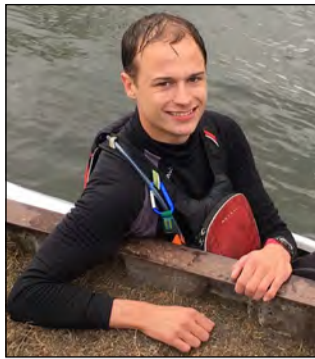
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## Bronze for Reading kayaker

A SEA Cadet from Reading unit claimed third place in the junior class of the gruelling four-day Devizes to Westminster canoe race over the Easter weekend.

LC Simon, 17 (pictured above) took on the 125-mile race with Stephen, also 17, and secured bronze in a time of 17h 26m 31s. They competed against 90 other pairs in the 15-18 category, kayaking for long periods – including more than five hours on one day – without any rest.

Simon, a member of Pangbourne Canoe Club, is now hoping to take a kayaking coaching qualification through Sea Cadets, which welcomes 10- to 18-year-olds for adventure.

Simon, who is currently revising for his A-Levels, said: "I don't have much free time – any hour I have is spent training, revising and being at Sea Cadets! "At Sea Cadets, I try to focus on helping others. I love helping others to try to improve."

Simon is hoping to go to Plymouth University to study mechanical engineering, with the view to becoming an officer in the Royal Navy.

He has been kayaking since he was young and has taken part in the race twice before.

"It's a very difficult thing to be doing. It is mentally and physically demanding, but the hardest part is the mental side of it," he said.

"You stay on a campsite in-between, and you make friends with different people and get through it together."

"You just hope it won't hurt the next day – but it does! I'm still aching quite a bit now."

## Torbay are recruiting

TORBAY unit has a volunteer vacancy for a Commanding Officer/Officer In Charge.

The successful applicant will be responsible for the safe, fun and effective delivery of training at the unit and would also be responsible for leading the volunteer instructional team and therefore delegate duties under their command whilst also liaising with the Unit Management Team.

If you are an inspirationally-motivated individual with the ability to lead enthusiastically by good example you could be the right person.

Torbay would also welcome any interest for volunteers who would like to become a uniformed or non-uniformed instructor. No ex-Service or ex-Sea Cadets experience is required as full training is provided. Working with young people and some knowledge of the Royal Navy or the Sea Cadets would be an advantage.

To register an interest, contact the unit at [tstorbayscc@talktalk.net](mailto:tstorbayscc@talktalk.net) or via website [www.sea-cadets.org/torbay](http://www.sea-cadets.org/torbay)

# Top officers attend launch of new units

TWO new Royal Marines Combined Cadet Force sections have opened – and both received seals of approval from senior Naval Service officers.

First up was Ernest Bevin College in Tooting, South London, where one of the Royal Navy's most senior admirals attended the Grand Opening ceremony, hosted by college principal Rukhsana Sheikh.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathon Woodcock took time out from his busy schedule in Portsmouth to attend the event.

"We are very excited to launch the Combined Cadet Force at Ernest Bevin College because of the opportunities it will provide for our students, particularly in gaining leadership skills and expanding their horizons," said Rukhsana.

"We are grateful for all the support we have received from both the Royal Marines and Royal Navy in preparing for our cadets' first parade, and look forward to the expansion of the unit and the opportunities this will bring."

Admiral Woodcock inspected the cadets before he took the salute and addressed assembled VIPs, parents and college staff.

The creation of the new unit makes Ernest Bevin's cadets only the second CCF Royal Marines detachment in London.

The Royal Marines CCF Contingent Commander is Capt Nick Mason, a former platoon commander with the Mercian Regiment who also doubles as a geography teacher.

"It's been a fantastic day for the college and I'm really proud of our cadets," he said.

"To be at the start of something that is going to be big makes me very proud."

The new RM CCF unit is part of the Cadet Expansion Programme, aiming to promote a military ethos in schools, instil values in young people that will help them get the most out of their lives, and contribute to their communities across the country.

The programme focuses on CCF units, ensuring that as



● Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathon Woodcock talks to a cadet in the new Royal Marines CCF unit at Ernest Bevin College in Tooting, London  
Picture: Sgt Russ Nolan RLC

many pupils as possible from state schools have the chance to experience the life-enriching activities of military cadets as part of school life.

"I've been in the Cadets for about six months and it's been interesting and really good," said L/Cpl Areeb Sheikh, 17.

"I like being part of a group like this and I'm gaining a lot of confidence, working together with others."

"I get a lot of pride being one of Ernest Bevin's, Royal Marines Cadets."

Following close behind Ernest Bevin College was a CCF detachment bringing together two schools in the North East – Dame Allan's School and St Thomas More Catholic School.

The first Royal Marines CCF unit in Newcastle held its inaugural parade in front of Brig Richard Spencer, who took their salute as the Deputy Commandant General of the Royal Marines – the second most senior Royal Marine in the country.

Their first parade was held

exactly 104 years to the day after a similar cadet unit paraded at Dame Allan's Schools, before World War 1 in 1913.

That unit, then called the Cadet Corps, became one of the first such units in the North East. Now over a century, two World Wars and four Monarchs later the CCF has opened once again.

"I was a cadet myself, many moons ago", said Phil Wildsmith, biology teacher, Head of Boys and Contingent Commander.

"We're developing some great work here, most notably a partnership with St Thomas More School, and getting the cadets involved with our outdoor activity department."

"I did my basic officers course down in Devon with the Royal Marines and I'm looking forward to putting it all into practice."

Back in 1913 the Cadet Corps drew from just Dame Allan's Schools and continued through the best part of the 20th Century in various forms right up until the early 1960s.

Now 57 years later the CCF has re-established those links and will recruit girls and boys at Dame Allan's Schools and St Thomas More School in Blyndon.

"I feel very proud to be part of the Cadets – it's something new and unique in Newcastle," said RMC Diya Varghese, 15.

"I see myself as a leader, do really well and gain greater opportunities in the future."

The unit is proving popular with many in both schools and recruitment is strong, offering a broader view to develop leadership, teamwork and discipline within their ranks.

"They are also working closely with the outdoors activities department at Dame Allan's and

● (Left) Brig Richard Spencer, Deputy Commandant General of the Royal Marines, at the first parade of the Dame Allan's Schools/St Thomas More School RM CCF unit in Newcastle

● (Right) Cadets at the combined Newcastle unit

Pictures: LPhoto Pepe Hogan

## Portland celebrate 60 years

PORTLAND unit has celebrated 60 years of serving the local community, providing thousands of young people fantastic opportunities to have fun, to learn new skills, take up new challenges and make new friends.

To mark their Diamond anniversary, Mayor of Portland Cllr Sandy West presented awards at the annual prizegiving evening and cut the commemorative cake with A/Cdt Chelsye-Louise.

A new trophy was provided by Portland branch of the Royal Naval Association, who also recently passed the 60 year mark, in recognition of the close ties between the two organisations.

The unit was honoured to be granted the Freedom of the Isle of Portland in their Diamond year by the Town Council in recognition of many years supporting the community.

The new award acknowledged the individual contribution that the young people of the unit make towards the community.

The President of Portland RNA, S/M Dick Barton, made the inaugural presentation of the Diamond Community Award to O/Cdt Harry.

Unit president Capt John Harvey RN also presented the most junior Sea Cadet, Cdt George, with the unit's Burgee Award following a unit review.

## College success

STUDENTS from Redcar & Cleveland College are celebrating taking a step closer towards securing future employment with the Royal Navy.

Following a successful event held at the college, 22 Uniformed Public Service students completed and passed an initial assessment – the highest of any North-East training provider during this year's recruitment process.

Two of the students performed so well that they have been offered university scholarships to study engineering should they wish to pursue careers in the Navy.

Students will now move on to the second phase of recruitment when representatives of the Royal Navy's recruitment team return to the college for interviews.

Jane Richworth, Uniformed Public Services lecturer at the college, said: "This is a great achievement, both for the students and for the team at the college, which is focused on making sure that our learners are receiving the best opportunities for future employment."

"The students really enjoyed taking part in the first stage – it has been a huge confidence boost for them to see that they already have options for their future once they complete their studies."

"We look forward to helping the successful students through the remainder of the process when the Royal Navy team returns to the college to carry out the second stage."

## Good start

NORTHAMPTON unit cadets started the season with a week at Thrapston boat station – 29 cadets gained 30 RYA qualifications as well as clocking up 960 training hours on the water.

The Royal Marines Cadets detachment were also out and about, spending Easter weekend at Bodney Camp learning fieldcraft and teamwork with fellow RM cadets from across the area.





## Petchey awards presented

MORE than 60 young people from Sea Cadet units across London and Essex gathered in Kensington to receive prestigious Jack Petchey Foundation Achievement Awards.

The event, at the Great Hall, honoured 63 award-winners aged between 11 and 25 who received medallions to go with their framed certificates and cheques for £250 each, which had already been presented.

They were nominated by their peers and leaders for a variety of achievements big and small.

In addition, 13 adults were also celebrated with Leader Awards, having demonstrated, in an outstanding way, an ability to motivate young people.

They each received a medallion and a framed certificate.

Sea Cadet units in London and Essex have received funding of £1,627,800 from the Jack Petchey Foundation since funding started in 2002.

London Area Sea Cadets Officer Cdr James Nisbet, who was presenting the awards, said: "I am very humbled and proud.

"We have fantastic cadets and volunteers in the London Area, and this afternoon has been the Oscars for our Area.

"To be able to celebrate and recognise these cadets who are exceptional and inspirational young people is a real added bonus to what we are able to offer them as an organisation.

"I thank the Jack Petchey Foundation for their support, and also the cadets, their parents and unit staff for making this afternoon happen."

Winners included: Thomas, 14, of Orpington unit, who remained calm and use of skills learnt at Sea Cadets when his friend received a serious head injury in the countryside.

Thomas stemmed the bleeding and treated him for shock while waiting for the ambulance he had alerted.

His friend lost over a pint of blood, and if it had not been for Thomas' actions the injury could have been much worse.

Jade, 16, has made a real impact on Edgware & Mill Hill unit in the year since she joined.

A team player, Jade is excellent at unifying the cadets, acting as a mentor to members of the unit and helping them to adjust.

Myles, 14, of Walton-on-the-Naze unit, was nominated for activities outside Sea Cadets – he is a member of the Colchester and District Fencing Club and was selected to represent Great Britain in fencing in Poland.

Niah, 16, joined Tooting & Balham unit in 2013 as a Royal Marines Cadet, but injuries in 2015 affected her ability to carry out field work, so she switched to become a Sea Cadet. The award recognises her commitment to her new training programme and to catching up with her peers.

Ewan, 15, a member of Clacton-on-Sea unit, has proved to be a loyal, hard-working cadet.

He devotes free time at the weekends and in the evenings to the unit and encouraged his mother to join as a volunteer.

Sir Jack founded the Foundation that bears his name in 1999 to recognise the positive contributions young people make to society and to support them in achieving their potential.

Since then it has provided support to a wide range of 2,000 initiatives across London and Essex and has reached a milestone, investing £100m.

Sir Jack Petchey, 91, said: "I am passionate about our awards scheme, which enables young people to be recognised, valued and rewarded for their achievements and positive contributions to society."

# Royalist at regatta



SEA Cadets welcomed people aboard its flagship, TS Royalist, at this year's Rendez-Vous Tall Ships Regatta in Greenwich.

The Corps flagship was berthed in London over the Easter weekend for the popular event, which is thought to have attracted more than one million people.

Sea Cadets, with Seafarers UK, was the festival's official charity partner and also had a stand in Greenwich town centre during the four-day event.

Royalist, along with a dozen or so other ships, was berthed at Woolwich Pier on Royal Arsenal Riverside in Woolwich, and was open to visitors from the Thursday to Saturday afternoon.

Cadets from across the country, who had returned from an offshore voyage, were excited to be interviewed for ITV News about their involvement in the festival and their offshore experience.

Sea Cadets' CEO Martin Coles said: "Sea Cadets was delighted to be official charity partners for the 2017 Tall Ships Festival and is hugely grateful to the Royal Borough of Greenwich for this fantastic opportunity.

"We were very excited to show off Sea Cadets' flagship, TS Royalist.

"Sea Cadets is extremely proud of TS Royalist, which is one of five offshore vessels that offers cadets the chance to experience adventure at sea, at a heavily subsidised cost."

The Festival was hosted by Greenwich across two sites – the Maritime Greenwich UNESCO World Heritage site in Greenwich town centre, and the Royal Arsenal Riverside in Woolwich.

The regatta was the ceremonial start for a race, which marked the 150th anniversary of the Canadian Confederation.

More than 30 tall ships gathered at Greenwich prior to sailing for Quebec in Canada, via Portugal, Bermuda and Boston.

Highlights of the Regatta weekend included an opening show featuring Squeeze front-man and Greenwich resident Glenn Tilbrook, followed by a sound, light and water show from Spark! and Hydromania.

The following night brought a farewell firework display at the Woolwich site, while Sunday saw the Parade of Sail as the tall ships left London and sailed downstream, through the Thames Barrier and into the open sea.

Alongside UK-based ships were vessels from countries including Portugal, Spain, Holland and Germany.

The three largest participating ships – including the elegant 1,050-tonne Norwegian ship Christian Radich – also welcomed visitors via a shuttle from Greenwich Pier.

● TS Royalist berthed at Woolwich Pier in London (top left) and arriving at the pier for the start of the Rendez-Vous Tall Ships Regatta (left)



● Lt Cdr (SCC) David Carter RNR receives his retirement gifts

## Stalwart volunteer retires

A LONG-SERVING Sea Cadet volunteer has retired after more than 60 years serving the Corps around the country.

Lt Cdr (SCC) David Carter RNR has stepped down from his role as an adult volunteer at Marlow – but his influence stretches far beyond Buckinghamshire.

David joined the Sea Cadets at the age of 16 in Shooter's Hill, London.

On turning 18, he remained on as a member of instructional staff, a role he has been performing ever since.

In that time, as he moved with his public service career, David has volunteered with Sea Cadet units in every corner of the country, including Hartlepool, Liverpool, Slough, Canterbury, Swindon, and Henley-on-Thames.

David has also held important roles in radio communications, including being responsible for the national development of this subject in the 1970s.

Between 2003 and 2012, David was also second-in-command of the Sea Cadets in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, with responsibility for running training events and competitions for over 200 cadets.

David's retirement was marked at the Sea Cadets' annual St George's Night Mess Dinner, held at their unit headquarters on Wethered Road, attended by more than 50 supporters, including a number of former cadets and staff members from David's time in the Sea Cadets.

Lt (SCC) Nick Jones RNR, the unit's Commanding Officer, said: "David's commitment to the Sea Cadets over the years has been truly outstanding.

"In this time he has influenced the lives of countless young people around the country, helping them to develop into responsible adults."

## SSAFA helped

Huddersfield Sea Cadets joined members of the Huddersfield and District Army Veterans Association, members of the Royal British Legion, and members of the public to support a gala concert in aid of the SSAFA.

The Band of the Yorkshire Regiment performed at Huddersfield Parish Church; concert-goers also saw a film about the work of SSAFA, which has a UK caseload of 70,000.

The money raised from the concert in Huddersfield will help SSAFA support 360 people in West Yorkshire – work done by unpaid volunteers who are part of the oldest military charity.

Steven Stynes of SSAFA said: "Huddersfield Sea Cadets had a very smart turnout.

"It is hoped that they enjoyed the concert. The cadets were immaculate."

# Late call for ocean race

TWO Teign Valley Sea Cadets made a successful journey to Portugal by water after securing places on the first leg of the transatlantic Rendez-Vous 2017 Tall Ships Regatta.

ACs Jake and Lewis, both students at Teignmouth Community School's sixth form, sailed to Sines on board Jolie Brise – and the gaff-rigged pilot cutter took the honours at the finish of the first leg.

The 17-year-olds are representing Teignmouth on the voyage and have joined the crew on one of the world's most famous tall ships – but for one of them, there was little time to prepare.

Lewis, who has been a cadet for about four years, was asked if he wanted to join the ship just hours before it left Torbay after one young person dropped out and, later that afternoon, he was at the harbour ready to leave.

His dad, Matthew, said: "He was a bit shell-shocked when we got the call.

"He just put some clothes in a bag and then headed down. The short notice was probably a good thing, in a way, as he had no time to think about it or get nervous."

He added: "At Sea Cadets, he



likes being in a team and getting involved in different things. He's grown to really enjoy it. He's really taken to it."

After Portugal, Jolie Brise headed to the Canary Islands, from where she will race on to Bermuda, the United States, Canada and France on a journey that totals 7,000 nautical miles.

Jake (above left) and Lewis are being sponsored by Teignmouth Town Council on the first leg of the voyage, with Jake having joined the tall ship in London, where it was berthed for Greenwich Tall Ships Festival.

His mum, Sue, said: "He loves



Sea Cadets. It's great for him socially. He likes boating, but he also likes doing everything else – and doing it right.

"When he found out that he had been selected for Jolie Brise, he was amazed, but very, very happy.

"He's in sixth form, and he had to stay on after school for three or four weeks, and had to go in over the Easter holidays, to put in the extra time he will miss.

"He's also got homework to do while he's away, if he can get on to the internet. He's very dedicated."

Jolie Brise is a famous name in



# An opportunity missed

WHEN I first saw *A Tale of Two Navies* advertised I was most interested.

I knew Tony Wells by his reputation and experience on both sides of the Atlantic and expected to read a valuable contribution to the history of the Naval dimension of the Anglo-American Special Relationship in 'my' period of post-1945 Royal Navy history. Sadly, I was to be disappointed, writes Prof Eric Grove.

Nor was there mention in the sparse bibliography of *A Tale of Two Navies; Geopolitics, Technology and Strategy in the United States Navy and the Royal Navy* (Naval Institute Press, £35.50 ISBN 9781682471203) referring to much of the important work done on this period by historians on either side of the Atlantic. Consulting such works might have done something to prevent the egregious errors that mar the book.

Some are small but significant and they mount up. Prince Louis of Battenberg was First Sea Lord in 1914 but not Chief of Naval Staff (the posts were only combined in 1917). There were also other reasons than his German name for his replacement by Fisher.

Turning to a more recent CNS, I was surprised to see the late Sir Henry Leach's name repeatedly spelled 'Leech', including in the index. He did not, as the author says, go across to Downing Street for his famous meeting with Mrs



● Britain's then flagship – and last conventional carrier – HMS Ark Royal (R09) is berthed opposite the USS Nimitz at Norfolk, Virginia, in 1976 for the USA's bicentennial celebrations

Thatcher at the outset of the Falklands War but to the Prime Minister's Room in the House of Commons (to which he was almost denied entry by security staff who did not recognise his admiral's uniform!).

Repeatedly, the book says that Conqueror's attack on Belgrano was the only time a submarine has torpedoed a hostile warship post-1945. This error – also repeated in the recent TV series *Combat Ships* – is simply untrue. In December 1971 the Pakistani submarine Hangor torpedoed

and sank the Indian frigate Kukhri. Moreover in 2010 the South Korean Navy's corvette Cheonan was blown in half by a North Korean submarine.

Strangely the book says that the Argentine submarine Santa Fe, lost at South Georgia, was a modern German-built boat; it was, in fact, an old former American vessel. It was not forced into South Georgia by mechanical trouble (she was sent there on a reinforcement and supply mission) and she was effectively sunk not scuttled.

## THE GROVE REVIEW

The book also implies that the Argentine carrier Veinticinco de Mayo was confined to port throughout the war. It was, in fact, a major threat at the outset of the conflict as the British command fully appreciated. Attack on this ship was authorised before the famous Rules of Engagement change allowing attacks on all Argentine warships outside the Twelve Mile Limit (qwnot just the Belgrano). One might have expected from an author with an intelligence background a rather deeper analysis of the intelligence issues surrounding British perceptions of the Argentine threat at the time of the sinking. It is also simplistic to call the sinking of the Sheffield (not due only to bad luck as the book argues) 'revenge' for the Belgrano. The Exocet-fitted Super Etendards had been out already but had not found a target.

The author makes the valid point of the importance of American supplies of the AIM-9L Sidewinders to the victory of the Sea Harriers, although a bit more technical detail on the advantages of these weapons would have helped. Another key Anglo-American dimension not addressed, however, is the

importance of using American satellite communications that allowed contact to be maintained with the British SSNs unable to communicate on the British system.

The author is very critical of Sir John Nott, although he does not allow the controversial Secretary of State to defend himself by just ignoring his interesting and revealing memoirs. This misses an important and intriguing Anglo-American dimension in that Nott lost faith in his own Naval Staff's advice after briefings in the USA. This is an issue that a more inquisitive analyst might have addressed.

The book also makes much of Denis Healey's brief membership of the Communist Party in his youth. The reader is invited to connect this with the demise of the carrier programme when he was Secretary of State. There is nothing about the true dynamics of the debate, the RAF's well-argued 'Island Stance' versus the carriers, all in an East-of-Suez context. Healey repented of his decision in later life, saying he had been seduced by the apparent sophistication of the Junior Service's arguments.

There are issues here about the Royal Navy's loss of clout in

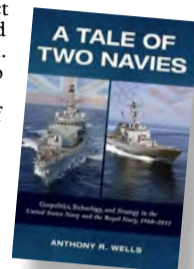
Whitehall, notably the loss of the independent Admiralty's Civil Servants, but this point could have been made more firmly. In fact the story of changes in the central organisation of defence in Britain is both rather garbled and incomplete.

The book is based very much on the author's own important studies which take up over half of a four-page bibliography. The references to this work gives the main authority to the book, especially the interesting chapter on naval power in the 1967 war, based on a paper prepared for the Center for Naval Analyses in 1977. The references to other papers only make one wish for more of the originals.

On reflecting on a deeply unsatisfactory overall book I thought it was a great missed opportunity. The author has done much good work and his papers are worthy of publication as they stand. A collection of selected works would have been a most useful and significant contribution to recent naval history and modern maritime strategy.

There is much that is interesting in this flawed work. It does not live up to the surprisingly favourable comments on the cover but it does contain original and high-quality grain that an informed reader can separate from the opinionated and frankly erroneous chaff.

The 250-page book is available on the internet for £23-27 and there is an electronic version (ISBN 978-16824-71210).



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# Successful end to rowing season

ROYAL Navy rowers capped off a successful season with impressive performances in the global Indoor Rowers League (IRL).

Over the course of eight monthly challenges (4min, mile, 6,344m, 5k, 1min, 2k, 10k and 500m) designed to test a range of power, aerobic capacity and endurance, there were many with top-three finishes.

The team competition, with ten members per team and eight best each month to score, saw the RN Indoor Rowing Performance Programme OO Power take the title, just holding off Sub 7 and two Finnish teams, with RN Drill Power Plus finishing fifth.

Lt Cdr Jim Thomson (NCHQ) finished third in the men's open category, ahead of CPOPT Daz Hoare (HMS Bristol), with the next two places filled by WO Paul 'Tiny' Nash (HMS Temeraire) and Lt Callum Fraser (HMS Vanguard).

Also in the top 20 were: Lt Cdr Jim 'Jekyll' Hyde (DES Bristol) ninth, Sgt Sam Arnold (CTCRM) 11th and top RM, Cpl Dave Moody (40 Cdo) 12th and second RM, Lt Stu Moss (HMS Sultan) 14th and Lt Cdr Rory West (HMS Collingwood) 16th.

All competed in the men's heavyweight category, but the best man results saw Nash in sixth place, closely followed by lightweight CPO Tim 'Apples' Cox (Collingwood) in eighth spot with Thomson and Hoare 12th and 13th respectively.

The best woman saw lightweight Lt Cdr Ruth Guest (QA Hospital) finish fourth, noting she won every monthly challenge on her way to the

women's lightweight 20-plus title. Lt Cdr Charlotte Peattie (PJHQ) took 31st place and was third in the women's heavyweight 30-plus category.

Thomson and Hoare were first and second in the men's heavyweight 40-plus category, with Hyde and Arnold in the same positions for the men's heavyweight 30-plus, where praise is due to PO Matt Parkinson (Collingwood) for his fourth place and just reward for commitment.

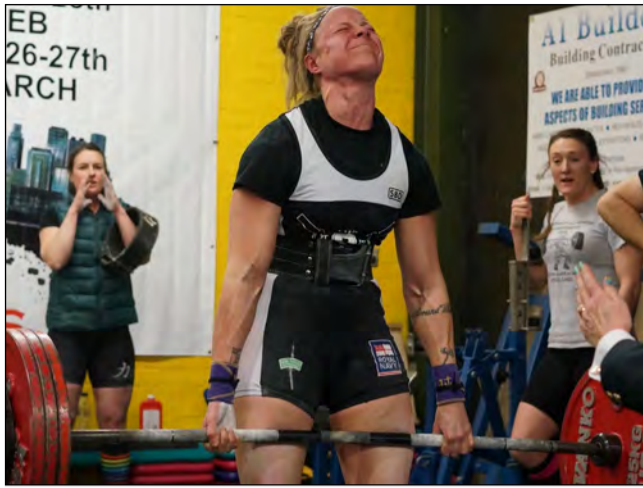
Nash was second in the men's heavyweight 50-plus, as were RN team manager Paul Winton (MCTA) in the men's heavyweight 60-plus and POPT Ian Robinson (HMS Neptune).

Cox was third in the men's lightweight 40-plus. The list of top-three RN placings was completed by Fraser and Moody in the men's heavyweight 20-plus.

Service constraints prevented a number of IRL participants from recording the full range of challenges, including Lt Col Tom Blythe (PJHQ) who recorded excellent results in the men's heavyweight 40-plus, POPT Rich 'Chazz' Charrett (Temeraire) in the men's lightweight 20-plus and Lt Craig Guest (HMS Albion), who missed just one challenge and was denied the opportunity to bid for the men's heavyweight 30-plus as best man and in the open category.

Those interested in taking up the sport should make initial contact with local PT staff and thereafter with Paul Winton [navytmcta-mvaoc2@mod.uk](mailto:navytmcta-mvaoc2@mod.uk).

The 2017 Royal Navy Championships take place at HMS Temeraire on November 2.



● Weightlifters LPT Mel Haslam, left, and Cpl Sam Fowler, right, in action for the Royal Navy

# We got the power

## RECORDS tumbled during the British National Drug Free Powerlifting Championships.

LPT Mel Haslam led the way for the Royal Navy women in the full power category as she finished third overall, securing her place at the World Championships in Boston.

She also broke the WDFPA World Deadlift record, retained her Royal Navy bench press record and broke her RN records in the squat, deadlift and overall total.

POMA Kate Nesbitt retained her Royal Navy squat record and finished in sixth place overall.

For the Royal Navy men, AB Joe Cane was by far the most impressive as he earned himself second place overall and a slot in the World Championships. He also secured new Senior Service records in the squat and bench.

Lt Mike Hawkins finished seventh overall, earning a personal best on his squat, 190kg at 84.9kg bodyweight.

POCA James Cox finished eighth overall with a full power total of 622.5kg, while AB Ash Crabtree finished sixth overall, earning himself an impressive 565kg total at 81.3kg bodyweight.

The male single lift saw Cpl Sam Fowler achieve a Royal Navy record in deadlift with a 230kg lift, which also earned him a fourth place overall and he can represent Scotland in the World Singles Championships in Antwerp later this year.

POMA(SM) Chris Martin finished first in the Masters 1 category and added the British Masters unequipped squat record to his British Masters equipped squat record. These also broke both Scottish records adding more titles to his name.

Maj Mike Carty finished first in the squat single lift and broke the British, European and World Military records in the process, achieving an impressive 240kg in the U100kg category.

Alongside this more RNPA personnel entered a GBPF divisional competition

earlier in the year at HMS Temeraire and the results were:

LCH Wes Mcguinness entered the full power competition and came first for the open class and broke the South West GBPF record for his age and weight group with a staggering 245kg squat.

LSC Ria Mugglestone entered her first powerlifting competition and achieved a very commendable 330kg total competing in the U72kg category.

LReg Zara Holland has been going from strength to strength with her lifts and she proved this with her totals going up in every competition. Her final total at this event was 260kg.

The RNPA are still on the lookout for more people to join their team. If you think you have what it takes get in touch with any of the following personnel:

Lt Mike Hawkins at [NavytrgBRNC-CLTNG@mod.uk](mailto:NavytrgBRNC-CLTNG@mod.uk); POPT Andrew Davey at [Andrew.Davey755@mod.uk](mailto:Andrew.Davey755@mod.uk) or LPT Mel Haslam at [HMSMTRO-EXEC-PTI@mod.uk](mailto:HMSMTRO-EXEC-PTI@mod.uk)

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DRIVING THE ROYAL NAVY COMMUNITY FORWARD ONE JOURNEY AT A TIME



# Life's a beach

THE rain in Spain put a downer on the first couple of days of the Royal Navy Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association's tour to Andalusia.

Once the bad weather gave way to sunshine, the pilots headed to the coast at Matalascañas, which offered smoother conditions and helped prepare for the stronger thermals, which would later be encountered inland in the mountains.

C/Sgt Grant Oseland kicked off proceedings with a 22km flight, up the coast and back again in light, technical conditions, following the dunes which in places rose to 200ft above the western tip of the Atlantic coast of Spain and the waves crashing onto the beach below.

For the rest of the week, as conditions improved, the remainder of the flying was centred on sites within easy reach of the small rural town of Algodonales, with its own mountain rising behind.

In comparison to the smooth coastal flying of the day before, the turbulent, thermic air made for good cross-country attempts, but required serious resolve on launch and a cast-iron stomach in the air.

Once again C/Sgt Oseland led the way with a 60km flight to the Andalusian town of Ronda and back, while the remainder either enjoyed the local flying or committed to cross-country flights and landings, requiring a retrieve from the supporting ground crew.

The following two days provided more challenging conditions early in the day, with strong winds on the mountain launch making take-off impossible

until late afternoon, after which calmer conditions prevailed and flights of several hours could be enjoyed.

The final day was spent at a new flying site – El Bosque, on the edge of the Sierra de las Grazalema mountains.

Strong conditions once again meant excellent flights were had by all, with climbs possible up to 5,500ft using only the power of the sun to give the thermals energy.

Most pilots flew in excess of three hours, including dental Surg Lt Cdr Emma Holland, who only completed her initial paragliding training in 2016.

The tour put the RN pilots in a good position ahead of the Inter-Service Paragliding Championships this month.

If you are interested in taking up paragliding, please contact the RNHPA Secretary Lt Cdr Tim Oatley on 07528 069052.

As with all UKAF Paragliding Activity it is conducted in conjunction with the Army and RAF. The RN played host to the RAF in Spain, including Flt Lt Giles Fowler RAF.

Giles's next achievement will be the solo non-stop Paramotor Flight from the Eastern most point of the UK to the Western most point, a total distance of 500kms. The flight is to raise money for Breast Cancer research. If you wish to donate visit <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Giles-Fowler> or follow him at <http://www.xcmag.com/2017/04/coast-to-coast-for-cancer-research-uk/>



## Keith builds up to 268-miler

FIFTY-mile race? No problem.

Lt Cdr Keith Mabbott made short work of the South Downs Way ultra-marathon, completing the course in 9hrs 23min, despite suffering with a minor injury and a cold.

The officer, based with the 1st Mine Counter Measures Squadron at HMNB Clyde, is now preparing for the Great Glen Ultra from Fort William to Inverness in July.

In September he is planning to compete in the Glenmore 24-hour race and two months later the Wendover Woods 50-miler.

All the events are being viewed as preparation for The Spine – a massive 268-mile non-stop race (that's more than ten full marathons) in January.

"I am under no illusions that this is a serious undertaking, and certainly the most difficult challenge I have faced yet", said Keith, who has previously not raced more than 110 miles.

The Spine, which takes an average of five days, encompasses the Pennine Way, Peak District, Yorkshire Dales, Northumberland National Park, Hadrian's Wall and the Cheviots, finishing at the Scottish Borders. Participants can opt to rest each evening or run throughout the night.

## Day on the water to mark 70 years

THE Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Yacht Club will host a day of dinghy sailing on June 17 to mark its 70th year.

Aimed at bringing together members, their friends and families and serving or former members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Naval Reserves or Royal Marine Reserves, the day will include training, a regatta and an evening barbecue. All abilities are welcome, from complete novice to salty sea dog.

The event will take place at Papercourt Sailing Club in Surrey.

The event costs £20 pp (minimum age 12) including all sailing, barbecue and equipment. Shore-side supporters are welcome to join, with a barbecue-only price of £13 pp.

To book, visit [www.rnvr.org/dinghy](http://www.rnvr.org/dinghy), email [jonathanotter@mac.com](mailto:jonathanotter@mac.com) or call 07747 865282.



## Six courted by UKAF squad

SIX members of the Royal Navy Netball team joined the UKAF squad in Dublin for the first set of fixtures against Ireland.

The six – coach Lt Cdr Linda Cairney, LNN Abbey Wrigley, LStd Lizzie Rowe, LSC Shanda Hanson, Std Lucy Darke and AET Anthea Kaptein – saw the UKAF team win the first game 39-33.

The rematch was won by Ireland 51-44.

The Royal Navy netball team lost their Inter-Service crown for 2017 as they were beaten 37-22 by the Army.

The Senior Service women had earlier beaten the RAF 44-16 at the championships in Aldershot.

Lt Cdr Cairney, pictured right, also won the Sports Official of the Year Award for 2016 at the UK Armed Forces Sports Awards.





● Lt Cdr Jill Monnox competes in the dressage on Sonny  
Picture: Pat Green

# Flying start in Tri-Service contest

ROYAL Navy showjumpers punched above their weight at the first contest of the Tri-Service competition.

Some 180 competitors took part at Addington Manor Equestrian Centre in Buckinghamshire, representing all three Armed Forces, along with Reserves, Cadets, the Police and Service Saddle Clubs.

Day one included team showjumping classes and the first leg of the Loriners Inter-Service competition. Despite some good jumping rounds from Cdr Jo Bollen, Lt Becca Brown, PO Sophie Fuller and PO Amy Taylor the RN finished only one pole behind the RAF, who also tailed the Army by a couple of fences.

With two more legs of the Loriners competition to go there is all to play for.

PO Fuller picked up a rosette in her novice 37 dressage test, where she was awarded a very creditable fifth place.

Day two saw a complete turnaround of fortunes with the individual performances of many RN riders dominating dressage and showjumping classes.

PO Sophie Fuller and Smiler jumped impressively against stiff competition in the 1.10m class to come second in the line-up, and then completed an equally faultless and stylish round in the 1.15m class to win and accrue significant qualifying points towards riding at the London International Horse Show in December.

Lt Cdr Jill Monnox and Sonny, who at only five years old is very much in his formative years, impressed the judge to win the Prelim 12 dressage class and came second in the more challenging novice 24 class.



● PO Sophie Fuller on Smiler

Picture: Geoff Marston

Sub Lt Ellie Berisford (RN Cadet Force) on Wooley jumped brilliantly in the 1m showjumping class to win and bravely fought it out against bigger horses in the 1.10m class to achieve fourth place.

PO Amy Taylor on Zenna rose to the challenge of the 1m and 1.05m classes; jumping smoothly and with pace she achieved second place in both classes.

Finally Lt Donell Fairweather was keen to give his veteran horse Brandy Snap a decent leg stretch and a very effective showjumping round earned him a fifth place rosette in the 90cm class.

Personnel wishing to get involved in dressage, showjumping and eventing should contact Cdr Bollen at [royalnavydsje@gmail.com](mailto:royalnavydsje@gmail.com)

## Sailors sweat it out for spartan

ROYAL Navy LWtr Lex O'Donnell competes in the 'burden-carrying-phase' of the XDubai Spartan Race.

The senior rate was part of team FSU01 from the United Kingdom Maritime Component Command and Fleet Support Unit.

Held in searing heat at the Endurance Race Track in Bahrain, the team competed in the super event – a ten-mile obstacle-based run comprising a fire run, wall climbs, tyre pulls, rope climbs and burden carrying.

Any member of the team unable to complete an obstacle was required to perform an extra 30 burpees.

The RN team completed the course in one hour, 30 minutes to finish 34th out of the 100 teams taking part.

"I really enjoy the physical aspect of the Royal Navy and relished the opportunity to compete at the XDubai Spartan Race in Bahrain," said LWtr O'Donnell. "It was a fantastic chance for some of the UKMCC staff to come together and compete as a team."

"I would definitely compete



at a Spartan Race again in the future if given the opportunity."

The challenge allowed the team to see how far they could push themselves both physically and mentally, and allowed them some 'relaxing' time away from their operational commitments in the UK HQ on a rare weekend off. Although it was one of the hottest days of the year, peaking at over 40°C, the team thoroughly enjoyed the event.

## Cup final victory to round off season

AN 89th-minute goal from a free-kick was enough to give BRNC Dartmouth's football team victory over City Police in the Devon Wednesday league George Lang Cup final.

The match held at Weston Mill in Plymouth was BRNC's first outing since their tour of Gibraltar and the team were keen to retain the cup, which they'd lifted for the first time last year.

As the game looked like heading into extra time, BRNC showed the same grit, determination and fitness that got them through the Devon FA cup final not long ago.

OC Abdul was brought down on the edge of the area in the 89th minute providing BRNC with a great opportunity. LPT Jamie Le Page stepped up, curled his effort over the wall and straight into the top left corner.

BRNC held on for the final few minutes and the final finished 1-0 to BRNC. LPT Le Page, making his final appearance for the team, was named man of the match.

The week-long development tour of Gibraltar involved some intense training sessions and three matches against local sides.

The team also took the chance to find out about the military importance of the Rock. They visited the Gibraltar Squadron and were given a trip around the rock on board HMS Sabre and a Pacific 24 RIB.

Their first opponents on the field were the Gibraltar under 21 international side, who proved too strong and won 3-1.

The second game of the tour saw BRNC lose 5-0 to a Combined Services team before losing 3-1 to Bruno's Magpies, a Gib second division team.

## Marine takes national light-heavyweight title

# Hail the champ

ROYAL Marine George Crotty gets the better of Great Britain's No1 Tom Whittaker-Hart to take the England Boxing 2017 light heavyweight title.

The victory, his first as a senior, is also his tenth national championship win – having achieved every possible domestic title from minor to elite.

Mne Crotty, based with 45 Cdo, is in his third season with the Royal Navy and Royal Marines boxing squad, and entered the national championships as the No2 seed.

On the route to the national finals, Mne Crotty won the Royal Navy light-heavyweight belt and the UK Armed Forces Championship title for the second year in a row.

As a seeded boxer, he found himself with a bye through to the quarter-finals which were held in the Magna Stadium, Rotherham.

He faced Ryan Amos (Bad Boyz ABC), a short stocky pressure fighter. An accomplished performance from the Royal Marine meant that the Eastern Counties boxer could settle his feet to land any solid shots and the decision was unanimously awarded to Mne Crotty.

In the semi-finals Mne Crotty met current English title belt holder Harry Woods (Towerhill ABC).

A cagey first round could have gone either way but deft footwork and superior hand speed meant that Mne Crotty was dominant in the second and third round and the judges agreed putting the Royal into the senior finals for the first time.

In the final, Whittaker-Hart (Rotunda ABC) was much the taller opponent at 6ft 4in, giving him the greater reach.

But Mne Crotty's southpaw stance and blistering speed meant he effectively

landed eye-catching shots with multiple phases of attack.

He was crowned National champion by a split decision – four judges to one.

Already part way through his Great Britain squad assessment, the victory should help his case for a place on the GB Podium Potential team with a view to vying for a place in next year's Commonwealth Games.

Mne Crotty was joined at the finals by two other RNRM boxers, making this the most successful RNRM boxing team for more than a decade.

ETME Luke Fisher boxed No3 seed Joe Laws in the quarter-finals and, despite a valiant effort, the judges saw in Laws' favour.

Mne Jack Stringer drew GB No1 seed Ben Whittaker and, despite giving a strong account of himself, Whittaker got the nod.





## Twickenham tears for Senior Service They tried so hard

MORE than 80,000 spectators packed into Twickenham for the centenary Army v Royal Navy rugby union spectacular.

Prince Harry, patron of the Invictus Games, was among the crowd, which was further boosted by the millions watching the match on TV.

The Army were quick to establish their authority as they looked to take the Babcock Trophy away from the current holders, the Senior Service.

The Navy were penalised for hands in the ruck, allowing James Dixon to kick a penalty to put the Army 3-0 up. Army winger Junior Bulumakau then scored the first try of the game, but the kick was not converted so the score stood at 8-0.

At the start of second quarter the Army were penalised and Jon Humphrey kicked for three points to close the gap.

But it was not long before things took a downward turn again when the dark blues were reduced to 14 men after the referee awarded a yellow card to Gareth Rees (foul play spotted by TMO). With Dixon kicking the penalty for another three points the Army extended their lead 11-3.

It is testament to the Navy side that they did not allow the Army to score any more points before half time despite being a player down. So when the whistle blew both teams and the crowd knew they were in for an exciting second half.

Keen to stamp their authority on the match the Army scored their second try a few minutes into the start of the second half as winger Chris Leatham dived over the line to stretch the Army lead 16-3.

Dom Taylor came on to replace Ben Fox, winning his 11th and final cap for the Royal Navy, as he leaves the Royal Marines in August.

Shortly afterwards, Navy fullback Jon Humphrey took a heavy knock and was

taken off the pitch in the medical vehicle. Rhys Dimmock-Williams stepped into the full back role and Scott Makepeace replaced lock Matt Harvey.

To the delight of the Navy supporters a period of sustained possession saw the Navy side pressuring the Army deep in their half. Attack after attack moved closer to the try line and when the group of bodies dropped over the try line it was Ben Priddey who claimed the Navy's first try, after the referee requested TMO assistance.

Gareth Rees kicked a successful conversion and the Navy were back in the game, closing the gap 16-10. Robinson replaced Mason in the front row.

Then it was the turn of the Army to pile on the pressure as their winger Bulumakau scored his second try of the day, converted by Dixon to keep the pressure on the Navy 23-10.

More replacements followed, Collins replacing Priddey in the front row and Raumakita replacing Myers as centre. Before they could get amongst the action, the Navy were penalised again for hands in the ruck, Dixon's kick extended the lead 26-10 and another penalty on the 72nd minute allowed Dixon to add a further three points with eight minutes left to play.

But the Navy side were not going down without a fight and as the final replacements came on – Owen Evans and Dave Pascoe (winning his 35th cap for the Navy) for Rees – Seta Raumakita flew down the wing and dived over the line for the Navy's second try of the day, 29-15.

A final rally by the Navy came in the form of a try by No 8 David Fairbrother in the 79th minute. The scoreboard showed 29-20 but the Navy were out of time and the Army claimed their 61st Inter-Service title. Man of the Match unsurprisingly

went to Bulumakau.

A special mention goes to Gareth Evans. Winning his 27th cap for the Royal Navy, he has been playing for the Senior XV since 2004 in a number of forward positions including 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8. He has announced his retirement from playing, but is looking forward to moving into coaching so his experience will not be lost to the Navy team.

Head Coach, Ash Coates, will be rightly proud of the performance of the team he has mentored since 2014. During this time the contest has become much more competitive, and indeed he can look back on 2016 as the year the Navy won the IS championship.

To go one better and win two years in a row was always going to be a tall order, a feat not achieved since the consecutive wins in 1973 and 1974.

The Navy side can hold their heads up high; they played well, scoring three tries like the Army, but following the loss of full back Jon Humphrey to injury and the temporary reduction to 14 players in the first half because of the yellow card, the advantage went to the Army. Overall, the 100th match will be remembered for being a highly-competitive match and a great display of amateur rugby.

Team: Kyle Mason, Ben Priddey (c), Gareth Evans, Edd Pascoe, Matt Harvey, Ben Fox, Sam Matavesi, David Fairbrother, Gareth Rees, Nathan Huntley, Matt Bowden, Greg Loydall, Eldon Myers, Greg Welling, Jon Humphrey. Replacements: Harry Collins, Mark Owen, Chris Robinson, Scott Makepeace, Dom Taylor, Dave Pascoe, Rhys Dimmock-Williams, Seta Raumakita.

■ Royal Navy Women were thrashed 95-0 in their fixture against the Army at Kneller Hall, while the RN Mariners lost 68-27 to the Army at the same venue.



## Pole position to take silverware

EIGHT cars and nine drivers saw a bumper turn out for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Car Racing Team for the second round of the AFRC at Silverstone.

Leading from the front after a successful round of the 750MC Super Cooper Cup was Lt Cdr Keith Attwood (FOST) in a Mini Cooper, now on his third race meeting.

After retiring at Donington Mne Adam Dewis (RM Poole) had fixed his oil leak on his Vauxhall Astra, and CPO Steve Hutchings (Sutherland) repaired his drive shafts on his Peugeot 106.

Old hands from the Donington meeting were also out, Cpl Mark Inman (3Cdo) VX220, CPO Stirling Moss (Cattistock) in another Astra, PO Jim Cantwell (829 Sqn) was joined by Cdr Richie Scott (PJHQ) in the Team Peugeot 206, pictured above, and PO Sean Graham (Dragon) was in the Sultan Locost. Finally veteran, Andy Yeomans (Ex FAA Tiff and Warfare Officer) was in his Porsche 944 Turbo.

Practice was emotional for Hutchings, who found his rebuilt drive train was still not quite right and suffered a CV joint failure causing him to both retire from practice and the race meeting.

Scott had concerns with vibrating brakes and only managed five laps before coming in. Stirling beached himself at Cope on cold tyres but managed to get going again. Everyone else qualified successfully on a warm and dry Saturday.

The race was mid-afternoon on the National Circuit which

saw 36 cars line up and after a Green Flag Lap all drivers got a clean start, apart from Yeomans who still seemed to be tied to the jetty (he was in third gear) and was last into turn one.

The best starter was Scott who gained six places into turn one. Over the next couple of laps most drivers found their race pace, although Stirling appeared to have a boost issue and poor brakes which meant he was running slower than normal.

On lap three, while running in 21st place, Dewis overtook into Cope, lost the rears and after a left, right, left, managed to miss the gravel trap and connect with the tyre wall – a hard coming alongside. He was OK, but his car was not as pretty. The Safety Car was deployed.

Cantwell took over the Peugeot drive and the remainder of the team pitted successfully. Inman was leading the RN charge and was racing much quicker cars on the straights, but had them on the corners. He finished tenth overall and a Class C win.

Stirling was second RN, in 22nd; Yeomans was 23rd, Cantwell third RN, 29th, Attwood fourth at 30th and Graham fifth RN at 32nd.

Attwood is now second in the AFRC championship and first novice, Stirling fourth and Inman seventh.

Scott was crowned Eastern Command Champion and Inman is the Royal Marines Champion.

The next round is the Cadwell training day on July 27 and the Inter-establishment race meeting on July 29.



## Honours for visitors

HMNB Clyde took the honours as six teams competed in the Northern Region Rugby 7s tournament at Helensburgh Rugby Club.

As well as Clyde, teams took part from Helensburgh RFC, HMS Queen Elizabeth, Ambush, Vengeance and the Submarine Qualifying Course.

The highlight was the final between Helensburgh and HMNB Clyde, which was a closely-fought battle with the Naval Base team winning in the dying moments of the match, 19-12.

Event organiser POPT Wayne Dawson said: "There was a lot of talent on show today but the outstanding man of the tournament was Marine 'Mat' Chase."

## Tickets on sale for T20 series

MILITARY charity Blesma, The Limbless Veterans will be the Inter-Service T20 Cricket charity of the year for this year's tournament.

The round-robin series between the Army, the Royal Navy and the RAF will be held at Lord's on June 8.

Tickets are available to buy

online at <https://tickets.lords.org>, over the phone by calling 0207 432 1000 or can be bought at the gate on the day. They are £17 for adults, £8.50 for the over 65s and £5 for under-16s.

Gates open at 9am with the first match starting at 10am. Play is expected to last until around 7.15pm.



● The Royal Navy Mariners were beaten 68-27 by the Army, while the RN Women suffered a 95-0 defeat at the hands of the Army

Pictures: Alligin Photography / © Nick Flexman and Neil Kennedy

# Triathletes under starter's orders for new season

## Tough get going

**COMMANDER** Toby Clay glides through the warm waters of Mallorca during a Royal Navy **Triathlon** Association training camp.

The sea at Ca'n Picafort bay, on the eastern side of the holiday island, allowed the team to get in valuable training in the water ahead of this summer's Inter-Service competition.

Twenty sailors and Royal Marines in the squad also notched up the miles on foot and on their bikes.

The athletes included Combined Services

Sportsman of the Year Cpl Richard Ebbage RM.

The team tackled some of the famous road climbs of Mallorca, a favourite training

location of Olympic cyclist Sir Bradley Wiggins; although none could quite match his time in conquering the Sa Colabra.

A typical training day started with a sea swim before breakfast followed by cycling, varying from a 20km intense time trial, through to a 100-mile hill-climbing endurance ride.

All of the team covered in excess of 400 miles throughout the camp, something that would be a real challenge without a dedicated training period that the warm weather training camp offers.

The gaps in the training program are filled with strength training in the gym, yoga, transition training and of course, the third sport, running.

Planning is already under way for next year's warm weather training camp, so for any budding Triathletes, contact the Royal Navy Triathlon Membership Secretary, Lt Cdr Alex Higgins, or look up the association on Facebook.

Meanwhile over in Florida, three members of the association took on the Ironman 70.3 Triathlon in Haines City.

Fleet Air Arm aircraft engineers POAETs David Roberts and Craig Gilbert, along with LAET Tom Amery, are based

at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort in South Carolina.

More than 2,000

competitors undertook the 1.2-mile swim in Lake Eva, followed by a 56-mile cycle and finishing with a 13.1-mile run.

All three clocked up over 21mph for the first 38 miles of the bike stage, before the tail wind turned into a headwind, bringing the average speed down to 18mph. All completed the cycle stage in less than three hours.

The final discipline involved running three laps of Lake Eva, where the three rolling hills, combined with temperatures over 27°C, finally took its toll.

"Volunteers and local residents made it bearable with their incredible support and encouragement; some residents even had hosepipes out to cool us off," said POAET Roberts.

LAET Amery was the first of the three to finish, with an overall time of 5hrs 57min and 43sec. He was 48th in his 25-29 age group and 765th overall.

POAET Roberts' time was 6hr 11min 31sec, putting him 122nd in the 35-39 age group and 886th overall. An injured POAET Gilbert saw him finish in a time of 6hr 48min 36sec, 149th in the 35-39 age group and 1,174th overall.

The trio are part of the UK team attached to the USMC F-35B Lightning Squadron VMFAT-501. More than 110 UK personnel are currently in Beaufort preparing for the standing up of 617 Squadron and its move to RAF Marham in Norfolk next year.



● Top, Lt Hannah Best descending Sa Colabra; Above, Lt Cdr Chris Wilcox during the ascent in Mallorca; Right, POAET David Roberts celebrates finishing the Ironman 70.3 Triathlon in Haines City, Florida; Below, POAET Roberts with fellow aircraft engineers POAET Craig Gilbert and LAET Tom Amery, with their medals