



NAVY NEWS

APRIL 2018

Top of the world

Tour of beauty

HMS Protector helps to preserve Antarctica

G'day sport

Sutherland flies the flag during visits to Australia

■ Crew members from HMS Trenchant survey the ice in the Beaufort Sea off Alaska as the nuclear-powered boat joins two American submarines for a multinational maritime ice exercise in the Arctic Circle
(see centre pages)
Picture: US Navy





La même chose, s'il vous plaît...

COMMANDO Helicopter Force detachment?

Oui.
On a French helicopter carrier?
Oui.
Couple of aircraft?
Oui.
Mission Jeanne d'Arc?
Oui.
To the Pacific Rim?
Oui.
Yes, there's a distinct feeling of *déjà vu ici*. Except that this year there's a different ship (Dixmude), different CHF squadron (847), different helicopter (Wildcat) and different air and ground crew.

After last year's first exchange between the Yeovilton-based wings of the Royal Marines and the Marine Nationale and its flagship Jeanne d'Arc amphibious deployment – a couple of Merlins, plus personnel – the link up has been continued for the 2018 roll-out of the operation.

A 40-strong detachment of Brits, led by Lt Mike Wells, left home at RNAS Yeovilton for the two-day flight down to the south of France to join 50 US marines, two Spanish Cougar helicopters and 133 French officer cadets who are beginning their operational training.

They were treated to a traditional French departure from the Marine Nationale's principal Mediterranean base – coffee and pastries aboard with the families before a formal parade on the 5,200-square-metre flight deck.

After Dixmude's CO Jean Porcher had inspected the parade and Guard of Honour, it fell to the Deputy Commander of the French Navy, Vice Admiral Denis Béraud, to conduct the formal inspection and wish all aboard: *Bon vent et bon mer* – fair winds and following seas.

The first two days out of Toulon were dedicated to earning the fliers – more used to flying recce for the Royal Marines over the battlefield – the qualifications needed to fly on and off Dixmude (which is a hybrid HMS Ocean/Albion).

At the same time, CHF engineers developed their understanding of and relationship with *les chiens jaunes* – the flight deck officers who rule the Dixmude's deck.

Their Yellow Dog nickname comes from the bright surcoats they wear to stand out on a busy flight deck by day and night... and the ability to bark orders and instructions above the noise of the wind and aircraft engines.

After achieving 'deck currency' the fliers moved up a gear by shifting loads slung in giant net

bags between vessels in the task group (known as vertical replenishment) and wet winching (lifting stranded sailors/aircrew out of the water) – bread and butter actions to most naval aviators, less so to fliers used to scouring the battlefield looking for enemy forces.

When the deck was cleared of helicopters, everyone on board was invited to take part in a tractor pull competition (the vehicles are normally used to shunt aircraft around).

847 provided two of the 22 competing teams, lining up against French sailors, marines, an army Gazelle helicopter team and the US Marine Corps. The hosts won but the Brits took a creditable third place – importantly ahead of the USMC and the embarked Gazelle Flight.

Such fun events have served as useful *brise-glaces* (icebreakers...) to introduce Dixmude's guests to life aboard a French ship, as has daily interaction with the crew.

"Being the only female on the detachment I share a cabin with a female French crew member which has given me the opportunity to experience and learn more about the Marine Nationale's way of life," said LWtr Alice Booker, the sole writer aboard the Dixmude, which has helped her to integrate with the ship's logistics department.

Engineer PO Stu Connell added: "The PTI onboard has enabled me to run circuits for both the ship's company and detachments.

"The first weeks have been very intense. Getting used to the way of life, working routines and combating the language barrier have proved challenging but very rewarding."

The task group, which also includes the frigate FS Surcouf, will sail as far east as French Polynesia (including Tahiti) – a journey of a good 15,000 miles – and New Caledonia, 900 miles off the east coast of Australia, destinations very infrequently visited by the Royal Navy.

"To have the opportunity to be involved in a deployment like this one is rare," says pilot Lt Matt Clark.

"I'm very much enjoying my time onboard. The ship's company have been very welcoming and we've integrated well into the routine.

"I'm really looking forward to the rest of my time onboard and hopefully by the end of it I will be able to say this in French."

After a brief visit to Beirut where ambassador Bruno Foucher held a function aboard and hailed the amphibious assault ship as one of the "jewels in the French Navy", the task group entered Suez to begin the 'business end of the deployment'.

The Lion's tou

FOUR helpings of Oz?

That's just greedy. Most matelots – if they're lucky – get one Pacific deployment in a lifetime... and with it one stop in Australia.

But a month? Four ports? A week in Sydney? Well that's about as good as it gets.

A Far East deployment remains the epitome of the hackneyed 'join the Navy, see the world': destinations generally beyond the wallets and holiday allowances of most ordinary folk, not to mention acclimatising to the temperature and time differences.

HMS Echo had a quick turnaround in Fremantle after taking part in the search for missing Malaysian airliner MH370 four years ago and, more recently, HMS Protector stopped in Tasmania as she headed south.

But no British ship has been to Sydney since HMS Daring took part in the Royal Australian Navy's centenary celebrations back in 2013.

Five years on and in a post-Brexit world the UK is looking increasingly to the Commonwealth and wider world on matters of trade and security – both trumpeted by the Fighting Clan on the Antipodean leg of her seven-month Pacific Rim deployment.

Sutherland made an 11,000-mile dash from home, stopping briefly in Gibraltar, Crete and the Indian Ocean British territory of Diego Garcia, to reach Australia – smashing the ship's previous 'miles sailed in a month' record.

The crew used the long journey out to train intensively, with the ship's Wildcat even firing her flares – decoys for heat-seeking missiles – as part of tests

of its defensive aids suite.

Equally prepared for the worst are the frigate's emergency party who were put through their paces with a 'crash on deck' exercise should the Wildcat suffer an accident.

"It is vital that the ship's company can react instinctively to any helicopter emergency," said CPO(UWW) Peter 'Bernie' Manning, in charge of damage control training aboard the Fighting Clan.

"The temperature on the upper deck was around 30°C which added another element of challenge for the firefighting teams."

And nine Royal Marines of Juliet Company, 42 Commando, have learned every inch of the frigate by day and night by 'dry drilling'. The green berets from Bickleigh are aboard to provide force protection and to conduct board-and-search operations should Sutherland encounter suspicious vessels.

Every day on board the commandos conduct some form of training from 'dry drills' with no ammunition to live firing packages and operating in the dead of night so they can respond at a moment's notice.

Despite the rapid journey to Australia, there has been some downtime for the crew such as the 'row the Suez' challenge where sailors and marines take it in turns to row two kilometres and beat the ship through the canal... which the rowers did in 10h 34m 26s; junior engineer ET(WE) Ben Northcott posted the fastest individual time: a mere 6m 39s.

Another mainstay of seafaring is the fun 'crossing the line' ceremony when a ship passes the

Equator. Seven out of ten sailors and marines aboard Sutherland – 144 souls in all, including the CO Cdr Andy Canale – were 'baptised', before jumping into the Indian Ocean for 'hands to bathe' with the small matter of 3,700 metres of water (12,139ft) underneath them.

Four days in Fremantle allowed the ship to restock food for the first time in five weeks with AU\$60,000 (£33,000) of food and drinks to keep the ship's company fed.

The 1,600-mile journey to Stop No.2, Adelaide, took Sutherland through the Great Australian Bight, which seems to be the Southern Hemisphere's equivalent of the Bay of Biscay, where even the most hardened of sailors might suffer seasickness.

Once the crew had found their feet again, the ambassadorial role of championing Brand GB began in earnest.

Canberra is about to invest 35bn Australian dollars – about £20bn – in reinvigorating its fleet, including nine new anti-submarine frigates... while the RN has started replacing Sutherland and her 12 sisters with the Type 26 and 31e.

Both – and the 31 especially ('e' for export) – are being designed with one eye firmly on the overseas market.

So Sutherland has been used as a showcase for the teams behind the frigate designs to all willing to listen, among them defence industry minister Christopher Pyne; his South Australia city is a key shipbuilding centre.

The minister's visit was one of four major events, alongside a VIP reception and capability





r of Australia

demonstration, a defence industry capability day and a media event, with RAN officers, defence industry leaders, lobbyists and politicians coming on board.

Adelaide posed one problem for the 220 crew: what time is it? The city is located between time zones... making it ten and a half hours ahead of the UK... and making working out the time back home slightly more tricky when calling loved ones.

Melbourne is 30 minutes ahead of Adelaide... and 600 miles to the east.



The Fighting Clan's stop in Melbourne coincided with St David's Day... and, despite her unassailable bond with Scotland, the frigate celebrated Wales' national day assisted by a vibrant ex-pat community and some Welsh tenors.

Just two days were allocated for the stop in the home of Neighbours – enough time for an industry reception, a trip to the local football stadium to watch the Melbourne derby (City vs Victoria – the latter won 2-1) and a chance to get to know the Kiwis of HMNZS Te Mana, also alongside in Adelaide.

The New Zealanders were in town to participate in the Royal Australian Navy's largest exercise of the year, Ocean Explorer.

The invitation to participate extended to Sutherland, which linked up with the tanker Sirius, frigate Parramatta and the Australian flagship, helicopter/amphibious assault ship HMAS Canberra, in the waters between the mainland and Tasmania.

As well as the rare chance to work with the RAN in its home waters (the two navies work side-

by-side on a daily basis in the Indian Ocean), it was a chance for Sutherland to demonstrate her prowess in submarine hunting – again with one eye firmly on selling British tech to the Australians.

And so to the final port on the Australia leg of the deployment.

You can't put a price on the sight of the White Ensign billowing on a warm, but rather overcast, late summer's morning in the shadow of Sydney Harbour Bridge and Opera House, the ship's company dressed in whites, the thunder of cannon across the bay from a ceremonial salute which temporarily drowns out the skirl from Alistair Park, the lone piper from 4 Scots, who added Scottish culture to Brand GB.

Overhead, the ship's Wildcat flew with cameramen from local news outlets, while a boat brought more journalists and their camera crew to join the ship; Sutherland's lensmeister LPhot Sam Seeley went ashore to receive the best spot to capture the frigate's arrival... and evidently found it from the iconic image above.

With seven days in the city, there was plenty of downtime as well as the official business, allowing the crew to visit the Blue Mountains, Bondi Beach and the Opera House, as well as a good smattering of sport: skydiving, body surfing and cricket.

"The initial jump out of the plane was surreal, a massive adrenaline rush. It was a thrill," said ET(CIS) Michael Shaw.

"Once we were through the clouds we could see for miles and miles – it was incredible. I'd love to do it again."

The bunting was out in force again in Sydney, this time to

celebrate Commonwealth Day in company with HMAS Anzac, berthed just ahead of the Brit.

And the Wildcat crew have been trumpeting their helicopter (the RAN typically operates the maritime version of the Americans' Blackhawk).

The aircraft was among various pieces of kit demonstrated to a group of engineering students from the University of New South Wales; they discussed the technical aspects of equipment, maintaining it, and life aboard with Sutherland's specialist engineers and technicians as part of the UK's Year of Engineering... which doesn't stop at the cliffs of Dover.

All such events, and many more, have demanded a lot of effort from the ship's company and especially for the logistics department, called upon to support the numerous functions such as hosting the head of the Australian Navy, Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, dinners and ceremonial sunsets.

Piper Park performed at the latter as he did as Sutherland slipped out of Sydney Harbour, playing a farewell to the city – and the country.

"We loved our time here. Thank you to the Royal Australian Navy for their support and hospitality," said Cdr Canale.

"We said goodbye to Australia after a busy four weeks of defence engagement and challenging exercises with allies.

"Each and every one of my sailors is serving his ship and the Royal Navy with distinction and I am extremely proud of how they are responding to the many challenges we've faced."

So. One question. Next stop is Guam. Can it top Australia?

(0)slo-motion to clear WW2 mines

THE waters around Norway's capital are considerably safer after a two-week hunt by the crew of HMS Cattistock.

Experts from the Portsmouth-based minehunter found more than ten WW2 mines and torpedoes during a concerted search for unexploded wartime bombs with a NATO task group.

Norway was occupied by the Nazis between April 1940 and the war's end, with the RAF making repeated attempts to disrupt shipping between Oslo and Germany – an operation codenamed 'gardening vegetables', with Oslofjord itself also given the cover name 'onions'.

Twin-engine Hampden bombers, or four-engine Lancasters and Halifaxes, dropped between one and two dozen mines at a time, just one or two seconds apart from a mere 600ft over the fjord.

Around 1,500 British 'A' mines were sown in the fjord and its many inlets – some triggered by a ship's magnetic field, others by the noise vessels made as they passed overhead.

While the major sea lanes were cleared in the immediate aftermath of the war, the fjord covers 766 square miles (1,984 square km) with countless lesser inlets, estuaries and the like.

In fact, around 100 mines have been discovered by ships and divers and neutralised, but there remains a lot of unexploded ordnance in the fjord.

The latest sweep for 'vegetables' in the 'onions patch' was carried out by NATO's Minehunter Group 1 – Cattistock, plus two Norwegian and one German hunter.

"The environmental conditions were incredibly challenging – water temperatures down to freezing, often causing the formation of ice, and air temperatures consistently well below freezing. So diving operations were unusually demanding," said LD Karl Atkin.

"We often went down to 60 metres in zero visibility and had to identify the mines by touch.

"The deep dives bring a heavy decompression penalty too – we had to conduct 'stops' at various depths on the way up. When we do, we're motionless in the water column and get very cold very quickly!"

In the first few hours of the operation, the ship found two A Mk6 mines, and had to lift them using the Enclosed Mine Lifting Bag.

The diver first prepares the mine by attaching a lifting strop, then a second diver descends with the lifting bag and attaches it to the strop before pulling the pin on the bag.

That triggers a ten-minute timer which inflates the bag when the time is up, lifting the mine in a controlled manner to the surface.

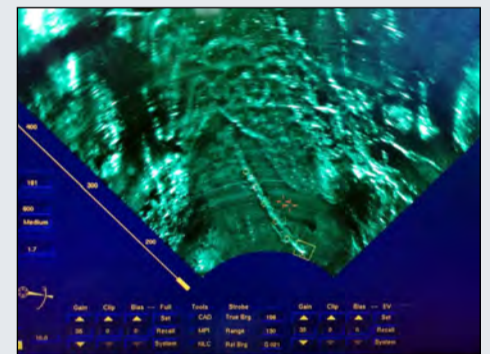
The mine is then towed on the surface and finally lowered to the seabed in the disposal area for demolition.

"During our final spell of minehunting, we were forced to abandon the last two miles of our task due to thick sea-ice closing the bay," said Cattistock's CO Lt Cdr Charlie Wheen.

"There were people walking their dogs on the frozen sea, where we should have been mine hunting!"



● A WW2-era mine is brought to the surface of Oslofjord and (below) a sonar scan shows the wreck of the German cruiser Blücher, torpedoed in the narrows in April 1940



In all 27 mines and four torpedoes were found by the NATO group with the Brits accounting for more than one third of the haul.

As it is cod breeding season, there was no bang at the end sadly – Norwegian environmental authorities wouldn't allow any detonations.

Instead, the crew let off steam with some R&R in Norway's capital and a day of skiing and snowboarding in Oslo's Vinterpark.

Upon leaving Oslo, Cattistock passed over the wreck of the German heavy cruiser Blücher, sunk in narrows about 16 miles south of the city during the opening minutes of the German invasion.

The brand-new ship – crammed with troops as well as her crew – was torpedoed as she passed historic Oscarsborg fortress and capsized minutes later, killing upwards of 800 soldiers and sailors.

Passing over the wreck – a protected war grave – Cattistock used her Sonar 2193, which can locate a football at depths up to one kilometre, to scan the 200m-long hull of Blücher.

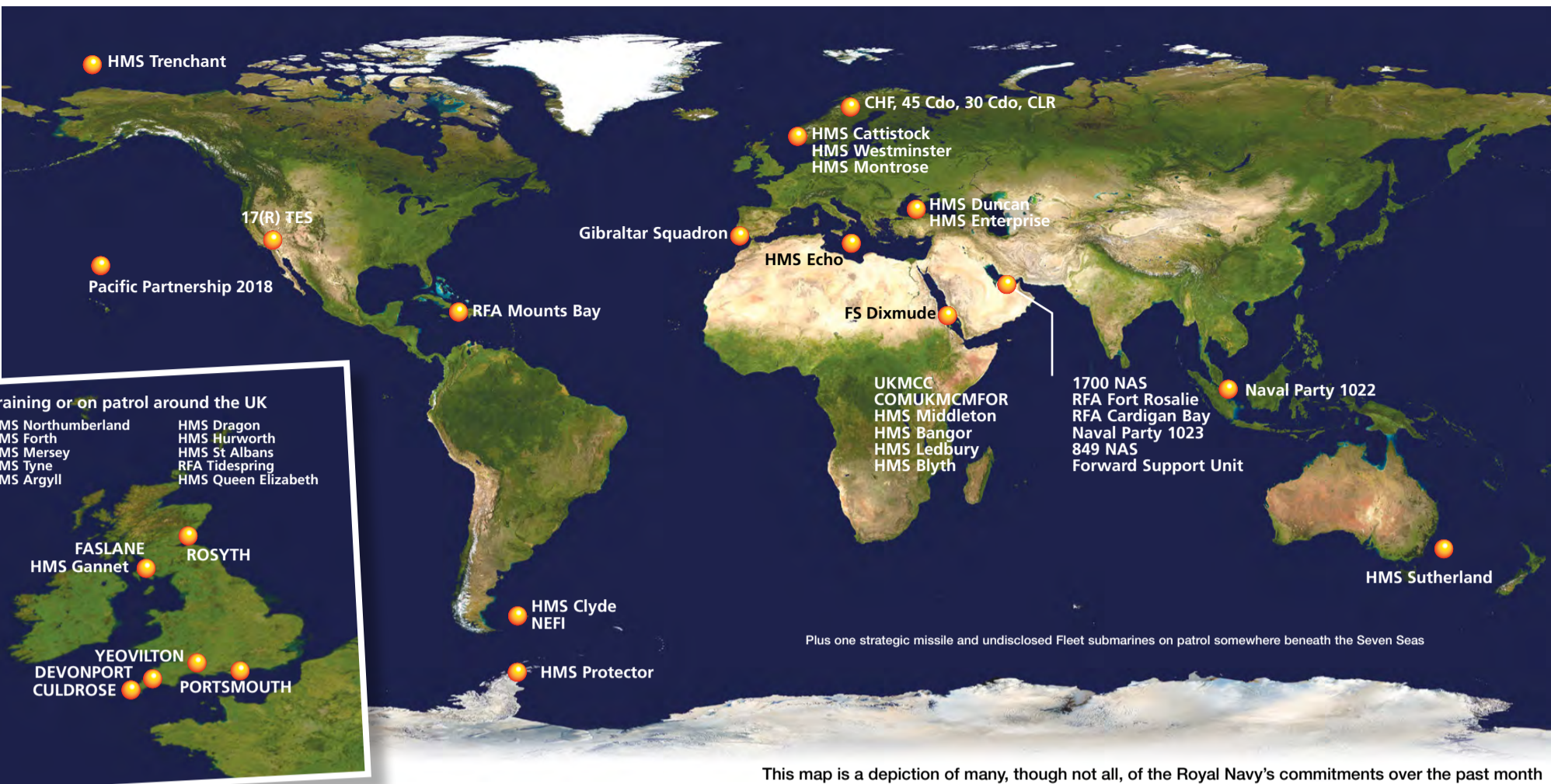
"Because of the orientation of the wreck, the sonar scan only shows the underside of the keel in a long thin strip," said Lt Cdr Wheen. "Sonar 2193 doesn't provide the same fidelity as the survey ships, but it was still exciting to see it on the screen."

"Overall it's been an excellent period of tasking in a beautiful part of the world – but in very challenging conditions."



pictures: lphot sam seeley, hms sutherland





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

FLEET FOCUS
 Protecting our nation's interests

WITH the 'Beast from the East' versions one and two dumping snow across the UK, it is appropriate that the white stuff dominates this month's edition of *Navy News*.

Security issues mean we do not get to report on submarines very often so it's great to give so much coverage to **HMS Trenchant** as the T-boat takes part in ICEX off Alaska, punching through metre-thick ice to surface (see page 1 and centre pages).

While the Silent Service is in action in the Arctic, **HMS Protector** has faced the ice fields of Antarctica (see pages 14-15). The ice patrol ship covered 4,000 nautical miles in just four weeks, with the unspoilt environment the focus of her latest work package.

Royal Marines are very much at home in the snow, with a number of units, including **845 NAS**, **45 Cdo**, **30 Cdo**, **CLR** and the **Viking Squadron** undertaking cold-weather training in Norway (see page 17).

HMS Cattistock was also off Norway (see page 3) ensuring the waters near Oslo were safer. The minehunter found more than ten WW2 mines and torpedoes during a two-week hunt with a NATO task group.

Heading to the Arctic for winter training was **HMS Westminster** (see page 10) and her crew took time out to pay their respects to those who perished on the Arctic Convoys. Personnel also held a service of remembrance over the wreck site of HMS Royal Oak before travelling to Tromsø, where members of **829 NAS** visited the Tirpitz memorial.

Snow in the UK kept Naval Service personnel busy (see page 7), with Servicemen and women from **RNAS Culdrose** helping to clear roads in Helston, Royal Marines from **Commando Logistic Regiment** delivering vital medication to a holidaymaker in North Devon, Royal Marines and commando engineers from Chivenor flying in supplies to isolated communities in Cumbria and personnel from **Viking Squadron** pushing cars and lorries out of the snow at a service station in Wales.

A sunny but bitterly cold morning saw a handful of hardy spectators turn out to greet **HMS Forth** as she arrived in Portsmouth for the first time (see page 6). The new offshore patrol vessel sailed from BAE's Scotstoun yard on the Clyde.

Forth berthed in front of **HMS Queen Elizabeth** after the aircraft carrier returned from successfully completing her helicopter trials (see pages 18-19).

Not all of the Naval Service shivered last month; some were enjoying far warmer weather, particularly **HMS Sutherland** (see pages 2-3) as her Pacific deployment took her to Sydney – the first Royal Navy warship to visit the iconic Australian city in five years.

A team of British military medics have joined the USNS Mercy for the Pacific Partnership deployment (see page 10).

Also feeling the heat was **RFA Mounts Bay** (see page 9) as personnel delivered much-needed assistance to communities in Colombia, Jamaica and Barbados.

In the Gulf, **RFA Cardigan Bay**, along with **HMS Bangor** and **Ledbury**, joined the Americans and French for Oman's annual naval exercise (see page 6).

The Royal Navy continues the **Year of Engineering** (see right and page 21) with numerous STEM around the UK, including the country's largest, the Big Bang Fair.

Innovation is also top of the agenda, with the Royal Navy's **Discovery, Assessment and Rapid Exploitation (DARE)** team leading a number of projects, including unmanned system development, aimed at improving capability (see page 11).

Finally, Royal Navy submariner Brett Wild guided partially-sighted teenage skier Millie Knight to three medals at the **Winter Paralympics** in South Korea (see page 41).

Igniting spark for future generations

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

NEARLY half of the people within the Naval Service are employed in an engineering or technical trade.

More than that, every sailor at sea with the Royal Navy lives and works with technology, much of it at the cutting edge; it's an inherent part of what we do, every day.

So in this sense we are all already, to a greater or lesser extent, involved in technical and engineering activities and this should surprise none of us.

This is an astonishing era of progress, largely enabled by new technology and the Navy, as much as any other large organisation with an interest in staying one step ahead of the competition, is planning ahead for the next generation by recruiting the right people with the high-end skills they need to safeguard both our national interests and the Navy's future.

2018 is the Year of Engineering, our chance as part of a nationwide campaign of events to help recognise and celebrate the great contribution that engineering makes to our country and within our Service. The government is supporting events and initiatives across the UK which will inspire young people and encourage them to join the engineering profession.

The government recognises that Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) skills are vital enablers of national prosperity but faces a significant challenge in that the number of young people taking up STEM subjects in secondary education and beyond is too low to meet the future demand for these skills.

The Naval Service's future success is indivisible from the UK's strength in this area, so we have been working with companies from across the defence, maritime and engineering sectors to address this skills challenge.

Central to this work has been our sponsorship of University Technical Colleges.



● **LET(MESM) Johnathan Trebell, right, watches over children interacting with engineering at the Royal Navy's stand at the Big Bang Fair in Birmingham** Picture: LPhoto Dan Rosenbaum

These colleges are state-funded, non-selective schools which are supported by a range of local and national employers and universities to provide specialist technical education to students aged 14-19.

There are around 50 colleges across the country and the Royal Navy is currently working alongside seven of these, with another four in our sights.

All of these colleges are engineering specialists and some offer particular skills of interest to the Royal Navy, including nuclear and cyber skills.

The Royal Navy is also engaged in a number of STEM outreach programmes alongside industrial partners and the other services.

A national STEM road show is currently touring the UK, aiming to reach over 130,000 children at 450 schools and with a particular emphasis on encouraging girls to study these

subjects. Research has shown that the natural curiosity and aptitude of children at age 10 is more or less the same for boys and girls, yet only 13 percent of engineering roles are currently occupied by women.

Since every role in the Royal Navy is open to everyone regardless of gender, this potential pool of talent presents a huge opportunity for the Royal Navy if girls can feel able to buck the trend and continue their STEM studies into secondary education and beyond.

Not every student we work with will want to join the Naval Service. But in supporting the development of skills required for a successful career in the design and manufacture of advanced systems, and the associated research and development, the Royal Navy will contribute to outcomes which can benefit Defence and the nation in the long term.

■ **Big Bang Fair, see page 21**



Taming the Beast

MOST of our readers will have been affected by the vicious 'Beast from the East' – the rather nasty snowstorm which caused havoc across the British Isles at the beginning of March.

Few of you will have experienced the late blast of winter quite like this, as seen from the bridge of brand-new tanker **RFA Tidespring**.

The storm left the forecastle of the 37,000-tonne support ship blanketed in snow – with the odd footprint of crew members clearly visible, despite the flurry.

This foreboding image was captured by apprentice communications/information systems specialist Matt Bromage who said the view from the bridge made it look like Tidespring was "sailing into hell".

The ship, built to resupply new carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales, was in the South West exercise areas at the time where earlier the same week she'd attempted her first RAS with HMS Queen Elizabeth, a manoeuvre scuppered by the approaching storm.

A few miles away on the Lizard peninsula, personnel from **RNAS Culdrose** chipped in as upwards of 15cm of snow were dumped in the Helston area, blocking the main road past the base.

Numerous sailors who owned 4x4s helped to get cars stuck in the drifting snow going once more, while the runway snow ploughs were put to use clearing the roads around the base.

And PO Terry Duffield struggled on foot to feed the falcon of the wildlife control unit, which helps to prevent bird strikes against helicopters and Hawk jets; handlers were unable to get to work and some of the birds of prey needed a daily feed.

In North Devon, Royal Marines from the **Commando Logistic Regiment** battled snowdrifts up to 10ft deep to deliver vital medication to a

convalescing holidaymaker.

With emergency services unable to reach Lynton, they called in Arctic driving specialists from Chivenor, 20 miles away.

The holidaymaker suffered from epilepsy and was visiting the area for a week of recuperation in a holiday cottage; the family was due to return home to Gloucester, but became stranded.

Having collected the essential medication from hospital in Exeter, Land Rovers fitted with snow chains managed to get to within 1.2 miles off Lynton. From there, Sgt Paul Gatehouse and Marine Daniel Hemingway continued on foot to deliver the aid.

It wasn't the only delivery courtesy of CLR. Cold-weather warfare specialists from the regiment and **24 Commando Royal Engineers**, responded to a plea for help from authorities in Cumbria to help isolated communities.

The snow cut off 150 properties for five days, especially in the eastern extremities of the county.

Even the Arctic-trained snow and ice drivers from CLR were unable to get through the snowdrifts, so a Chinook from RAF Odiham flew in the supplies, with the troops delivering them.

"The experience and training gained through years of deploying to Norway has been really valuable for all of the taskings that have been set for us," said WO2 Simon Bridgeman, leading the RM team on the ground.

"We know how to survive and operate in these extreme conditions, it is brilliant to be able to put them to use to help those members of the public that need us."

Another 40 Royal Marines and commando engineers from Chivenor were deployed with their specialist vehicles across Devon, performing a variety of tasks helping the emergency services while **Viking Squadron** personnel returning from a training exercise in Wales helped push lorries and cars out of Magor Services near Newport.

Spy-de-hi from Mersey

FOR the third time in two months, the Royal Navy has kept a constant eye on a Russian naval force passing the UK.

Patrol ship HMS Mersey and an 815 NAS Wildcat helicopter from RNAS Yeovilton were dispatched to follow the progress of three Russian ships as they made their way up the Channel.

The Russian spy ship Feodor Golovin (pictured here by LPhoto Louise George with Mersey shadowing her), landing ship Alexander Ostrakovskiy and tanker Yelnya had been supporting Russian operations in Syria.

Mersey broke off from a regular fishery protection patrol in home waters and sailed to meet the Russian trio as they approached the Channel, taking over from the French Navy which has monitored the task group's progress through the Bay of Biscay.

The patrol ship has spent 72 hours tracking

the Russians as the vessels made their way into the North Sea, handing over to the Dutch Navy once the three ships had passed through the Strait of Dover.

"Ships like HMS Mersey are the eyes and ears of the Royal Navy around the UK – we are at sea for 320 days a year, so Mersey provides the Navy with a ship ready to respond at short notice like this," said Lt Alexandra Karavla, the patrol ship's Executive Officer.

AB Ryan Flynn is one of the warfare specialists who has been tracking the Russian ships' progress.

"Exciting operations like these are why I joined the Royal Navy," he said.

"I love these ships because one day I will be conducting a fishery protection boarding and the next day I will be following Russian warships off the South Coast. It's the best job in the world!"



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A good Oman

AN NH90 helicopter leaves the destroyer Chevalier Paul as the French ship follows RFA Cardigan Bay during Oman's major annual naval exercise.

Three of Britain's five ships permanently based in the Gulf joined the Americans and French as guests of the sultanate for the 23rd iteration of Khunjar Hadd (Sharp Dagger).

The exercise tests the ability of the Omani Navy to work with warships from other navies which regularly operate in the region... such as the RN and US.

Cardigan Bay acts as mother ship to all four Royal Navy minehunters based in the Middle East.

Two of them – HMS Bangor and Ledbury – joined her for Khunjar Hadd, comprising one quarter of the international force mustered off the Omani coast.

The hosts threw their patrol ships Al Dhafirah, Al Muazzar and Al Bat'nah into the mix, alongside the French destroyer, two US Coast Guard patrol boats and two fast coastal protection ships for the four-day workout.

The exercise centred on a fictional scenario, taking place in the Gulf of Oman, in particular the waters off the capital of Muscat which had been 'mined' and needed to be rendered safe to allow shipping to get in and out.

Just for good measure, participants also faced threats in the air, threats on the sea, joint manoeuvres, helping vessels in distress, communications between navies who speak four different languages (Arabic, French, British and American English – and, yes, the latter is important; what is a 'casualty' in the US Navy is a 'breakdown' in the RN, for example).

"I would say the biggest take away is learning the capabilities of our coalition forces," said Lavashti Washington, communications officer on fast patrol ship USS Hurricane.

"Hopefully I'll get to participate next year and take what we learned this year and build upon it to get even better."

The exercise culminated with a simulated air attack on the entire naval force. The Chevalier Paul, as the task group's air defence ship – she's Project Horizon, similar to our Type 45s – protected the vessels.

"It is always fantastic to visit Oman, and even more of a thrill to have had the opportunity to exercise with our close partners, the Royal Navy of Oman," said Lt Cdr David Armstrong, chief-of-staff of the RN mine warfare force in the Gulf.

"With the threat neutralised and the minehunter force having provided safe passage in and out of port, the exercise concluded having proven the ease with which the different nations can operate together."

Back in the UK, the latest UK Mine Warfare Battle Staff formed up to prepare for their six-month tour of duty aboard Cardigan Bay.

By the time Cdr Ashley Spencer and his staff of 19 personnel (drawn from across the RN and coalition forces which operate in the Gulf) arrive, the new permanent facilities at HMS Jufair should be ready for occupation by all Brits based in Bahrain.

Three months of training are required to turn the 20 men and women into a 20-strong team.

Should they pass their validation test – directing minehunter movements during the fortnight-long Joint Warrior exercise in Scotland in April – the staff will head out to Bahrain in May.

Picture: MCS2 Kevin J Steinberg, USN



Forth dimension

WHILE the majority of the UK was bracing itself for the arrival from Siberia of the worst weather of the winter (see page 5), a handful of hardy souls were more interested in the Royal Navy's new offshore patrol vessel (pictured arriving in the Solent by LPhoto Barry Swainsbury).

Sub-zero temperatures were made more bearable (just) by sunshine as HMS Forth made her way into Portsmouth for the first time after sailing from BAE's Scotstoun yard on the Clyde.

Forth's superstructure glinted in the weak sun as the £116m patrol ship entered her homeport, accompanied by tugs Christine and Suzanne – who welcomed her with sprays of water – and two Ministry of Defence police launches.

Members of the first ship's company lined her deck, along with BAE staff and civilian contractors, as the vessel made her way to South Railway Jetty, with the Gosport-bound ferry pausing to allow her to go past.

"She's a nice looking ship, it's good to see the Royal Navy getting new ships," said Sylvie Wickham, who took a break from walking her West Highland Terrier Rosie to watch the new ship.

Ron Hawker, taking his daily constitutional along the seafront, added: "Not a patch on the new carrier but she's larger than I expected to be honest."

Forth, the first of the Navy's next-generation patrol ships, has a crew of just 40, half of whom trade places with another 20 on leave/undergoing training every few weeks.

"It's a privilege to be the first CO of HMS Forth and I'm delighted to have brought her into Portsmouth," said Cdr Bob Laverty.

"The ship has the opportunity to be at the leading edge of the future of the Royal Navy, and to get it

right – not just for ourselves, but importantly, for those ships which come behind us."

After she berthed, the Blue Ensign was lowered and the White Ensign flew from Forth for the first time.

The patrol ship – pennant number P222 – displaces around 2,000 tonnes and will be on duty up to 320 days a year, conducting month-long patrols.

As well as her crew, the new ships will be able to carry an additional 50 personnel, such as Royal Marines boarding teams for specific missions.

It was somewhat warmer just a couple of weeks later on the Clyde when the third of the second-generation Rivers was rolled out of her shed for her official naming – the equivalent to a traditional slipway launch.

Eighteen months after the first steel was cut, a bottle of spirit from Nelson's Gin Distillery and Gin School in Uttoxeter crashed into the hull of HMS Trent after Pamela Potts, whose husband Vice Admiral Duncan Potts is director of the Defence Academy at Shrivenham, uttered the immortal words: "I name this ship..."

The ship's sponsor was guest of honour at the ceremony – the first held at Govan, rather than across the Clyde in Scotstoun, where her two older sisters were named; that yard is Trent's first stop once lowered on to a barge and taken the short distance downstream for fitting out.

Trent receives her first sailors next month, but already has her first affiliate: Nottinghamshire County Council, with the East Midlands city represented at the event by its Lord Mayor and Sheriff.

Trent will be handed over to the RN later this year, Ship 4 Tamar is complete outwardly and work on Spey is well under way.

Baggers bow out over Holland

FOR the last time a Royal Navy Sea King has appeared in European skies after completing its final mission on the Continent.

For two weeks, a helicopter from 849 Naval Air Squadron at Culdrose has been directing the actions of supersonic F-16 jets over the North Sea and northern Holland – a key stepping stone

for its successor working with the UK's new F-35 stealth fighters in a couple of years time.

It's the task of 849 with their distinctive radar-equipped helicopters to scour the skies for threats to a naval group – and to direct interceptors such as F-16 Falcons in for the kill if necessary.

A 40-strong detachment of air and ground crew was dispatched to the Dutch Air Force Base at Leeuwarden in north-eastern Netherlands for Exercise Skinners' Gold 4 – an exercise the squadron has attended in previous

The Sea King Mk7 flew eight night missions with its observer/radar operator in the back of the helicopter choreographing the movements of up to four Dutch jets at a time either using voice commands (English is the common language of the skies) or by using the military's data-sharing system, Link 16.

The Brits guided their Dutch colleagues to intercept up to half a dozen 'enemy' jets at a time – which proved to be invaluable training for 849, particularly as the scenarios played out over Dutch and North Sea skies could not be recreated back in the UK.

It all helps pave the way for the Sea King's replacement, Crowsnest – a Merlin Mk2 helicopter fitted with a similar, but more modern radar/sensor suite which will operate from the flight decks of new carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales.

The weekend break between the two weeks of the exercise allowed most of the team to explore the Netherlands; many headed to Amsterdam just a couple of hours away from the air base.

"It's important that we get these opportunities to relax and experience a different culture, especially for the more junior members of our detachment," said observer Lt Ben Selwood.

"For them to see that the Royal Navy is not all about hard work is invaluable and has provided a good chance for them to bond with those they work with outside of the often hectic work environment."

With the exception of a couple of Baggers – the name comes from the trademark radar sack/bag on the side of the fuselage – operating in the Middle East, the fortnight in Leeuwarden was the last overseas detachment for the squadron.

Blue Lion on the road to the front line

THE Blue Lion rides the waves again as HMS Northumberland emerges from refit.

The 24-year-old frigate becomes the latest Type 23 to complete a late-life revamp which will help keep her in service until 2029 – the most significant change involving ripping out her Seawolf air defence missiles and putting Sea Ceptor, with its 'mushroom farm' silo, in its place.

The refit in the hands of Babcock did not end there; there's a new command and control system to mesh all the data from Northumberland's many sensors together so the ops room team can make sense of what's happening around them.

All of which makes F238 the most advanced frigate in the Fleet. In particular Sea Ceptor – successfully fired by Argyll and Westminster on the ranges – is, says WEO Lt Cdr 'Rocky' Hudson, "revolutionary and a massive leap in the capabilities in the ship to defend itself and others."

The chefs have a new galley and fridges, while all the messes have been upgraded with the latest entertainment systems installed to make downtime for the 180 men and women on board more pleasant.

"The warrant officers' and chief petty officers' mess has been redesigned and refurbished to the highest possible standard with lighter oak-effect bulkheads and new bar, making it feel spacious and homely," said EWO WO1 'Rab' Butler.

And, rather less exciting, unless you like paint or engines (or both), the hull has naturally been given a makeover, as have the main generators, the gas turbines and the diesel-electric motors... which are now getting a thorough testing in the South West exercise areas under the frigate's new CO, Cdr Ally Pollard.

"The ship's company are relishing the opportunity to demonstrate their professional capabilities and return HMS Northumberland to her rightful place," she said.

"For many, this is their first ship and they are looking forward to the chance to challenge themselves over the next few years whilst getting the opportunity to see some foreign ports of call."

Cardiff back on the books

SHIP No.2 in the RN's next-generation of submarine hunting frigates will carry the name of the Welsh capital around the world.

After a break of two decades, the name of Cardiff returns to the RN's inventory as the second Type 26/City-class frigates, following HMS Glasgow into service... and preceding HMS Belfast (whose name was announced last year, but she'll be the third 26 laid down at BAE's yards on the Clyde).

The name was announced on St David's Day at Cardiff's Mansion House in a short ceremony attended by students and sailors from the Welsh University Royal Naval Unit based at Penarth.

Type 26 Cardiff will be the fourth ship to bear the city's name; the most recent was the Type 42 destroyer which paid off in 2005 after more than a quarter of a century's service.

The new Cardiff will join the Fleet in the middle of the next decade – and take over from HMS Dragon as the RN vessel affiliated with the Welsh capital.

The Royal Maritime Club
(Formerly The Royal Sailors' Home Club)



The 154th Annual General Meeting
of the Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street, Portsmouth,
will be held in the
Trafalgar Ballroom of the club on
Tuesday 22nd May 2018 at 1030.

Commanding Officers are requested to encourage maximum
attendance from their ships and establishments.
ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

From Salisbury Plain to Salisbury's streets

RM help ferry passengers

ROYAL Marines donned gas masks for three weeks in Wiltshire as they tested Britain's ability to fight in the event of a chemical attack... and then found themselves wearing them for real just days later.

Troops from Bravo Company, 40 Commando, were activated as part of a major military response to the poisoning of Russian former spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in Salisbury.

They joined Army specialists searching the historic city for traces of the nerve agent used in the attack and helping to ensure the public were safe.

The Norton Manor men were called in as the lead commando group – arriving in Salisbury fresh from their participation in the UK's annual Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) warfare exercise, Toxic Dagger.

The Corps trained extensively for the threat of chemical warfare in both Gulf wars – thankfully they were not used by Saddam Hussein's forces against British troops in either conflict.

Fifteen years later, and the threat remains – and Britain maintains specialist teams to defeat it, drawn from Public Health England, the Atomic Weapons Establishment and the government's military labs, Defence Science and Technology Laboratory.

They provide the scientific brain to the commandos' brawn; at DSTL's headquarters a team is on hand to tell the Royal Marines what dangers they face and how to deal with them.

"Because the threat is a technical, scientific one, the ability to reach out to organisations with specialist skills greater than ours is crucial," said Lt Col Paul Maynard, 40 Cdo's CO.

The exercise included company-level attacks and various CBRN scenarios based on the latest threats for ultimate realism, building up to a raid on a suspected chemical weapons lab.

The final scenario was a full-scale workout involving government and industry scientists and more than 300

military personnel, including the RAF Regiment and the RM Band Service – casualty treatment was a key part of Toxic Dagger.

A chemical decontamination area was set up not merely to treat 'polluted' commandos, but also any wounded prisoners brought in; once cleansed, casualties can be treated in field/regular hospitals.

"Everything is a lot slower because of the chemical agents we come across," explained L/Cpl Joel Lawrence. "With chemical casualties there's the clean/dirty process to go through which is manpower intensive."

First there is dry decontamination, a clean area to remove contaminated clothes, before moving to the wet area, where the naked casualty is hosed down.

"It's quite hard work because everyone needs to get involved moving casualties – big lads with all their equipment on, they are quite heavy," explained B/Sgt Caitlin O'Malley of RM Band Plymouth, helping to run the casualty clearance station.

The chemical weapons suits and respirators don't merely make stretcher bearing more difficult – they make everything more difficult.

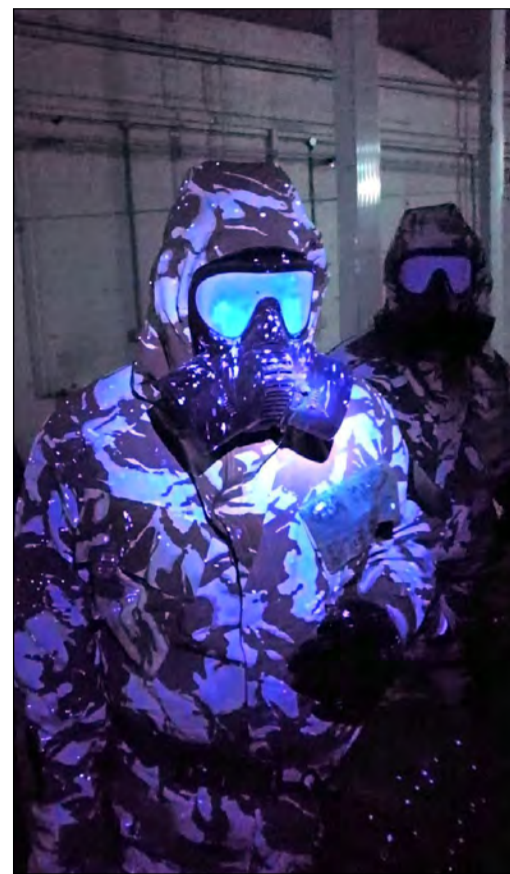
"You are a lot larger, more cumbersome – the suits and respirators make walking and talking more difficult," said Mne Ben Cook.

"The respirators restrict your vision, which makes aiming and firing your weapon harder."

So it's good that every year the Corps refreshes its skills with such an exercise, says Bravo's Officer Commanding Maj Rob Garside.

"Working with DSTL means we have the most up-to-date information and a realistic exercise. This ensures we are well prepared for a CBRN operating environment," he added.

"It is vital we can make rapid decisions and are able to protect and support specialists who come in to deal with any incident. On operations these specialists are on hand to advise and we must ensure we already have a strong understanding of their capabilities and what they require of us as a military force."



ROYAL Marines came to the rescue of stranded ferry passengers stuck for three hours in sweltering heat.

A team of four marines from 42 Commando from Bickleigh came across the stricken vessel as they were conducting training with Sierra Leone military off the capital Freetown.

The ferry was carrying locals between the city and Lungi, across the mouth of the Sierra Leone River and the location of the country's principal airport.

The Brits – a four-man 'Short-Term Training Team' – were out with Sierra Leone personnel on a recce when they encountered the ferry.

Although there was no SOS call over the radio, the ferry's crew indicated using hand signals that they were in distress.

Together with local military, the marines crossed to the ferry and tried to fix the fault.

The commandos found both the ferry's engines out of action – one had seized up a few days earlier, while the sole working motor had also packed up because it had run out of fuel.

When it became clear that the team couldn't get the ferry moving again, the decision was taken to evacuate the most distressed or ill passengers, transferring them to small Sierra Leonean government boats and taken back to land.

"A number of passengers were infirm, distressed or with young children and infants and there were cases of dehydration," said Lt Tom Brunt, in charge of the small Royal Marines training team.

The commandos stayed with the ferry until all the needy had been safely transferred and waited until fuel turned up so the craft could resume its journey.

The 42 Commando team were in the country looking at potential sites for a larger package of training they will deliver over six weeks spanning March and April to help Sierra Leone forces enhance their border security.

An Officer asked for confirmation of the advice he had been given by his admin staff on the issue of accrued rights from AFPS75



"Many thanks for your response. Your knowledge, as ever, is impressive and your assistance invaluable. Morale had taken a tumble. I am now off to a certain Admin Officer to teach him the error of his ways and suggest that he should probably subscribe to the Forces Pension Society as well."

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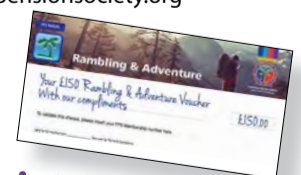
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Jamaica

● From left, Members of the RLC led by Cpl Jennifer Macphee; Engineers Paul Hearne and Richard Federkiel fix security lights; 2/O Gary Barrowcliffe and 3/O Elizabeth Nelson-Taylor; Laundryman John Smith and Std Dominic Smyth; 2/O Barrowcliffe presents a signed photo of RFA Mounts Bay to Marsha Keeys, principal of the children's home

If you have a problem... if no one else can help... and if you can find them... maybe you can hire...

THE BAY TEAM

WHEN the going gets tough, the RFA get going...

Personnel from RFA Mounts Bay have delivered much-needed help to communities in the Caribbean.

Nearly half of the ship's company joined forces with staff from the British Embassy in Bogotá, Colombia, for one of the toughest community projects undertaken by the vessel on her Caribbean deployment.

Hijos de Maria Sede Luis Carlos Galan school, based in Cartagena, needed a total makeover.

The school caters for children who have been the victims of physical and sexual abuse, from pre-grade to fifth grade, with space to teach up to 270 children in shifts throughout the day.

During eight hours of graft personnel:

- Overhauled all of the classrooms, hallways and outside areas.
- Repaired light fittings and installed strip lighting.
- Painted and rehung classroom doors.
- Installed new cisterns in the school toilets.
- Repaired air conditioning units.
- Replaced broken windows with polycarbonate, mosquito nets and privacy sheets.
- Painted the building.

Prior to the work being carried out, Commanding Officer of RFA Mounts Bay Capt David Buck presented a signed and framed photograph of the vessel to school principal Marisol del Risco Duarte.

The school receives little in the way of funding and relies upon charitable work to keep constantly running.

"The school is focussed on providing care and education for children who have been the unfortunate victims of physical and sexual violence in this highly-deprived area of the city," said Capt Buck.

"Therefore, this has been a very worthy and noble project for the Mounts Bay and British Embassy staff volunteers, who can be rightly proud of their efforts and achievements."

At the end of a hot and busy day the school was totally transformed, with staff and pupils excited to get back to the business of teaching and learning.

Third Officer Euan Ramsay, Visit Liaison Officer for Cartagena, said: "It was a great experience; the children now have a school they can be proud of – Mounts Bay loves it when a plan comes together."

Next up and an orphanage in Jamaica received a makeover.

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary, also known as Ready For Anything, sent their Bay Team to help the City of Refuge Children's Home.

Nestled some 3,650ft above sea level high in the

Blue Mountains that overlook Jamaica's capital city Kingston, the orphanage provides a safe home for children subjected to physical and sexual violence and in some cases abandonment.

Funding is raised predominately by volunteers from the Glad Tidings Assembly church, based in Florida, USA, whose members also visit periodically to provide aid and support when they can.

Once the orphanage was singled out as requiring assistance, two teams from RFA Mounts Bay and a small team from the British High Commission, headed up by Karen Matheson, wife of the Assistant Defence Attaché, sprang into action to provide it.

The RFA Bay Team, a mixture of RFA, RLC and REME personnel, was organised by Seaman Grade 1 (SG1A) Jonathan Roberts.

During the day the team:

- Degreased and painted the kitchen and larder areas.
- Painted the main office, including bookcases and units within the playroom.
- Fixed a security light, fitted strip lights fitted and checked electrical fittings.
- Emptied out, reorganised and restacked storerooms.
- Fixed planks in the playground and replaced washing lines.

Additionally, RFA Mounts Bay ship's company managed to raise £248.60 – 990.61 Jamaican dollars – from various on-board activities, including quizzes and general collections.

This money was presented to the orphanage and will go towards completion of the playroom by enabling the volunteers to purchase, chairs and cushions.

SG1A Roberts said: "At the end of a busy day, the volunteers and staff couldn't believe what we managed to achieve in such a short time.

"It was a good day and we managed to achieve what the home wanted in the time that was available to us. The kids and volunteers at the home were very happy to see us and were impressed with the transformation."

Earlier on her deployment, Mounts Bay visited Barbados, where eight volunteers offered their services at the Barbados Military Cemetery.

The caretaker of the cemetery asked personnel to reinstate the names, which had weathered with age, as well as clean the graves and the main memorial.

"To assist with the upkeep of such an historic site has been a great privilege and certainly one of the most rewarding and humbling experience that I have had within the RFA so far," said Communications Apprentice John Millen.

The main memorial lists a number of Royal Navy ships and establishments and names of those who perished from the Royal Marine Light Infantry.



Colombia

● Top, AB Jonathan Roberts, Sgt Oliver Devlin and Cdt Daniel Davies prepare the paint; CO Capt David Buck cleans a window; Below, Operations Officer Jonathan Church paints a window grill with Nicola Davies; Bottom, Members of the ship's company presented flags to the children at the school in Cartagena

Pictures: CPO Mark Amato



Barbados

● Top, Bradley Priddey and Philip Brock repaint the gravestones; Right, Communications Apprentice John Millen jet washes a memorial; Below, Curator Mr Morris with members of the RFA Mounts Bay team



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Mercy mission for British medics

A TEAM of British military medics have joined a US hospital ship to deliver health care and aid to Asian and Pacific nations.

For the next few months, the USNS Mercy – roughly the size of Britain's biggest warship, HMS Queen Elizabeth – spearheads the Pacific Partnership deployment, an annual tour of the Pacific by an international team of military medical personnel, led by the Americans.

It's only the second time Brits have taken part in the deployment. Back in 2016, five RN dental personnel spent five weeks treating the mouths of Vietnamese and inhabitants of the Republic of Palau.

Two years down the line and not only is the UK involved in the mission, it's in charge of half of it.

Peter Olive, who's previously commanded frigate HMS Argyll and minehunter Ledbury, is the deputy commander of Pacific Partnership – the first time in its 13-year history that a Brit has been given the role.

Capt Olive is in charge of the other ship assigned to the deployment, the fast-cat ferry USNS Brunswick.

The Mercy is a converted oil tanker, typically crewed by 70 civilian and military personnel – rising to nearly 1,300 on front-line operations.

The San Diego-based vessel has beds for 1,000 patients – making her the fifth largest hospital in California, or equivalent to Derriford in Plymouth – with all the facilities you'd expect to find in a major city hospital.

And the USNS Brunswick is a large grey catamaran, normally used to transport more than 300 troops or marines, but for the sake of this exercise, home to an international mix of medics.

When she breaks off from the Mercy, she'll visit Yap, 1,700 miles south of Japan and 700 miles east of the Philippines, as well as Palau, Malaysia, and Thailand, while the hospital ship will continue on to Indonesia, Vietnam and Sri Lanka.

Capt Olive sailed with the Mercy to Pearl Harbor on the first leg of the deployment – a “really impressive” experience with a “buzzing” ship's company.

“Our team has been drawn from across US defence, partner militaries and civilian agencies – they're all great people who I am very honoured to be working with,” he said.

Indeed, more than 800 military and civilian personnel from the United States, Canada, UK, Australia, France, Peru, and Japan are committed to the deployment, intended to test the ability of the participants to respond to a major disaster as well as fostering good relations in general with the countries visited.

It was the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami which killed hundreds of thousands of people and caused devastation and disruption across a vast area which prompted the first Pacific Partnership.

More than a dozen years later, the mission's director, Rear Admiral Don Gabrielson, says the deployment is just as valid today.

“The challenges we face with natural and man-made disasters do not respect borders or national sovereignty,” he explained.

“This dynamic mission enables many nations and subject matter experts to come together to pursue solutions to complex problems while enhancing preparations for disaster emergencies that reduce the severity of their impact.”

Mercy spent three days in Pearl Harbor before beginning the 4,000-mile journey west to Guam.

“Being a part of the Pacific Partnership mission is really an amazing experience,” said Barron Garvey, Mercy's cargo officer.

“What we do touches so many lives and you can't walk away from this deployment without having been impacted by the people we help and the experiences of the mission.”



● HMS Westminster's ship's company pay tribute to those lost at Scapa Flow; A wreath was laid at the Loch Ewe memorial to those who perished on Arctic Convoys; Lts Brian Witham, George Ridley and Chris Ford of 829 NAS at the Tirpitz memorial

Westminster pays tribute at WW2 memorials Heroes of the north

ECHOES of war in bleak, cold northern waters reverberated around HMS Westminster as she headed into the Arctic for winter training.

From the horrors of death in the narrow confines of the fjords to the seemingly endless expanse of Scapa Flow, the crew of the Portsmouth-based frigate were reminded of the sacrifices made by sailors during WW2.

The frigate headed north for a couple of varied months of training, from teaching expert navigators the art of taking not just an individual warship but entire task groups through challenging waters to hunting submarines in the sub-zero temperatures and near total dark of the Arctic in winter.

First stop: Loch Ewe in northwest Scotland, marshalling point for ships sailing to or back from the Soviet Union during World War 2.

“Every sailor has deep respect for those who served in the Arctic Convoys, but having re-read their story and taking Westminster back through the same waters in the depth of winter I felt that we had to take some time to recognise the sacrifice of all those who served in what was proportionally the most deadly theatre of war,” said Cdr Simon Kelly, Westminster's CO.

Visiting the convoy memorial and museum proved a useful – and sobering – eye-opener for the sailors.

“Seeing photographs of the weather

and sea conditions experienced by the sailors and seeing how they were equipped made the team really appreciate the value of the new Arctic clothing they had been issued,” said Cdr Kelly.

There was one final stop before crossing the Norwegian Sea: Scapa Flow, the RN's anchorage in both world wars and the last resting place of 833 men and boys when battleship HMS Royal Oak was torpedoed in 1939.

Westminster paused over the wreck site – marked by a buoy – for a service of remembrance after navigation students had tackled some of the difficult approaches around the enormous natural harbour.

The frigate hosted the RN's Specialist Navigator Course which expects students not merely to choose safe routes for their own ships, but choreograph the movements of an entire task group.

Students are taught to manoeuvre at high speed in challenging waters, close to land to simulate the pressures the navigators will experience when using these skills for many ships.

Westminster with her two Rolls-Royce Spey gas turbines powering the ship along at speeds over 28 knots is the ideal vessel for such training.

“In an attempt to find new and challenging routes, the

course has taken HMS Westminster to some of the hidden gems that warships don't routinely get to visit,” said Weapon Engineer Officer Lt Cdr Matt Cox.

And few waters can be trickier to negotiate than the Norwegian fjords – steep sides, deep bottoms but narrow, frequently peppered with rocks and islands. In the depths of winter add little daylight and, potentially, ice to the navigator's problems.

The RN doesn't venture as far north as the city of Tromsø – winter training for its ships is normally restricted to the waters around Harstad and Narvik to the southwest.

The visit allowed the ship's flight from 829 NAS to pay their respects to their unit's forebears who flew through these skies to cripple the Tirpitz 74 years ago.

In April 1944, 829 NAS sent nine Fairey Barracuda bombers as part of a strike force of more than 120 aircraft launched from British aircraft carriers under Operation Tungsten.

“A theme throughout the deployment has been the remembrance of the World War 2's Arctic Convoys,” explained Flight Commander Lt George Ridley.

“We've experienced the challenges of the Arctic firsthand – its always cold, and often unpredictable, nature of the Arctic environment.”



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DARE to INNOVATE

Fast track to winning edge

WHIZZ-BANG weaponry and jaw-dropping sci-fi projects are always going to hog the headlines when it comes to military innovation.

Rail guns launching projectiles at over twice the speed of a rifle bullet (Mach 7) are being developed by BAE Systems with American backing. These 'shells' need no explosives as they hit their target – over 100 miles away – at Mach 5 with enough force to spoil anybody's day.

In the UK the Dragonfire consortium is working on a laser directed energy weapon which at low power can dazzle sensors, or at full energy can damage or destroy aircraft, drones or small vessels – punching a hole in metal for just a few pennies per shot.

The US Navy's Zumwalt-class destroyers – highly experimental, strange-looking ships that showcase a raft of advanced technology – broke many naval architectural rules (as well as causing military bean-counters many a sleepless night).

But innovation does not have to have a big price ticket, and the beauty of harnessing cutting-edge technology – often developed in a commercial environment – is that off-the-peg systems or kit can often be easily adapted to fulfil a vital military function.

The new 3D printing 'Creator Space' workshop at Culdrose is a good example, able to print parts for aircraft and drones – such facilities are also going to sea in American ships and the Royal Navy could well follow suit.

Two major events staged by the Royal Navy in the past 18 months or so (and the creation of a new post) have firmly cemented the Royal Navy's place in the van of military innovation.

Unmanned Warrior in October 2016, played out along the west

coast of Scotland and Wales, presented an opportunity for companies large and small to demonstrate the capabilities of remotely-controlled craft, drones and submersibles, with military and commercial experts being able to discuss trends and possibilities face-to-face.

That was followed last year by Information Warrior, when data and intelligence was under the spotlight.

The creation of the post of Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff Innovation – the first incumbent being Capt Sharon Malkin – will help embed a new culture of innovation within the Naval Service, allowing the development of a network of smaller commercial firms and military specialists who can identify possibilities and develop them quickly for use in Defence.

There are three facets to the current innovation drive – a culture of challenge and experimentation, commitment to the agile adoption of technology, and the empowerment of Naval personnel to become entrepreneurs – ideas to implementation.

The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) is helping smooth the path for such innovation (see right).

Lt Cdr Lee Packer, Innovation Programme Manager for the Royal Navy, said: "The Defence and Security Accelerator competitions provide the Royal Navy with a unique opportunity to both engage with a broad spectrum of small to medium-sized enterprises, whom are often new to Defence, and explore technologies from adjacent and disruptive markets.

"This rapid development process, with collaboration at its core, will provide battle-winning capabilities to the hands of the user."



Ship uses its brain

A SHIP that teaches itself about the health of its systems – allowing engineers to see weeks into the future – are just two examples of the Royal Navy's drive to rapidly harness the power of new technology.

The ship with a brain is the result of a Defence-led innovation scheme making use of a 'two-stage recurrent neural network', allowing the ship to predict problems before they happen.

As the neural network – a mathematical model that is representative of how a simple brain would think and learn – crunches reams of data from various ship systems, it will 'learn' patterns and behaviours of interaction, and the various causes and effects at play.

Navy personnel will then be able to view the status and predicted health of those systems up to a fortnight in advance.

Seizing this opportunity, the Royal Navy has invested £150,000 in the development of a trial neural network on board a destroyer, with the possibility of pulling it through to the new Type 26 if it proves successful.

Warships are complex – the Type 45 can record ten million data points a day from sensors across its platform systems, from propulsion shafts to diesel engines.

With this huge and diverse

dataset, the type of 'machine learning' that is possible in a neural network will likely have a significant effect on maintenance schedules and support in the future, improving the ship's availability *vice* capability, saving money and delivering efficiency.

DecisionLabs is currently training its neural network on 1.8 billion lines of Type 45 Platform Management System data – provided by Programme Nelson, which is leading the Navy's artificial intelligence initiative – so it is primed for deployment.

The system becomes gradually smarter and more capable, and there are plans to instal the system in HMS Diamond for trials.

This will enable sailors on the front line to validate assumptions that the network makes, and by adding further context to events highlighted in the data trawl, the neural network will undergo further 'training' to make the model even more accurate.

Diamond's neural network emerged from Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA), founded in 2016 to find exploitable innovation which could benefit UK defence and security.

The organisation claims that its "competitive environment drives innovation faster into Defence and helps to bridge the innovation gap."

DecisionLabs was one of 170 initial submissions to the first Defence Innovation Fund competition *Revolutionising the human information relationship for Defence*, which sought to find new technologies, processes and ways of operating to improve Defence staff's ability to analyse and exploit data for decision-making.

DASA aimed to increase user capacity and allow for the rapid integration of new systems.

DecisionLabs was one of seven projects selected for phase 1, and one of two companies awarded phase 2 funding under DASA's

fast-track stream. It is also working on a separate programme using a network trained on aircraft which could be pulled into Defence.

The MOD are working closely with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in order to shape it, ensure its applicability to military aircraft, and expand it to naval vessels and other vehicles.

As a result of the competition new funding avenues have opened up – DecisionLabs' wider research has been match-funded by Rolls-Royce and the project has clear exploitation routes in both the civil aviation and military markets.

Joe Hemming, DASA Exploitation Lead, said: "Defence is driving innovation into the conversation and is poised to utilise its £800m over ten years innovation fund to deliver a disruptive effect. The RN's at the forefront of such innovations, leading unmanned system development and AI exploitation to name but two."



Is NOVUS kosher?

INNOVATION is not just the latest shiny piece of kit – it is also adapting existing technology to gain greater advantage or capability from existing systems.

One such example is the way in which improvements to the algorithms and control software of Sonar 2076, in service with Royal Navy submarines, are being used to make similar advances in the shipborne equivalent, Sonar 2087.

There is much commonality between the submarine sonar and that fitted to Type 23 anti-submarine frigates, which means that significant developments reported by the Silent Service could be transferred straight over to the surface flotilla.

The software developed by Thales UK for use in submarines is known as NOVUS, and the innovative element of this strand of work is the fact that it can be rapidly adapted for use by Type 23s.

Funding has not been allocated for full-scale trials, but a £70,000 investment under DARE – the Royal Navy's Discovery, Assessment and Rapid Exploitation team – will allow the system to be "fast to adopt" if the benefits NOVUS brings appear to be worth pursuing, or "fast to fail" if the benefits

are marginal.

HMS Sutherland, visiting Australia as *Navy News* went to press, has been acting as a platform for Thales-developed trial software, allowing sailors at the sharp end to test the new configuration as well as acting as a shop window for the sonar system – if allied navies buy 2087, there will be plenty of chances to improve international anti-submarine warfare capabilities.

The open architecture underpinning 2076 and 2087 is also at the heart of the submarine sonar training facility (Venturer) recently opened at Faslane.

The Thales-supplied Rapidly Reconfigurable Training Technology (RRTT or R2T2) system has been designed so that it can easily be reconfigured to future upgrades to provide high-fidelity hands-on training, ensuring that individual operators train on the right software configuration to support specific missions and submarine fits.

Thales also believes that in the future this principle could be easily applied to other naval training, such as naval communications, anti-submarine warfare, and mine countermeasures.

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OK. From their distinctive 'coal scuttle' helmets these are quite clearly German *Stosstruppen* – assault/stormtroops.

And those signs definitely are not French, Flemish or German. (They're actually Finnish.)

So what have German soldiers storming a railway line in Finland got to do with the Royal Navy?

Well... Our 'lucky dip' into the Imperial War Museum's magnificent archive of imagery from the Great War this month takes us to the Baltic at the beginning of April 1918 and a largely-forgotten episode from WW1 featuring a largely-forgotten Royal Navy flotilla.

Last month we featured the efforts of the Royal Naval Division to avoid being steamrollered by the German juggernaut on the Western Front as Berlin launched its supposedly war-winning offensive.

That massive assault was just one consequence of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk which brought an end to fighting on the Eastern Front. It also brought the curtain down on Royal Navy submarine operations in the Baltic.

Nearly a dozen small C and larger E-class submarines were dispatched to the Gulf of Finland in the autumn of 1915 in a bid to curb German Navy operations in the region and upset the Kaiser's war effort by operating from Russian bases against merchant traffic – especially ships bringing Swedish ore to Germany. HMS E19 and E9 both scored early triumphs; the former under Lt Cdr Francis Cromie, who dispatched four ore carriers in one day, while Max Horton – the man who would defeat the U-boat in WW2 – repeated the feat over two days the following week. The double strikes became known as 'the submarine massacre of 1915'.

The Baltic flotilla never really reached the same dramatic heights again, despite Cromie personally accounting for ten merchantmen plus the German cruiser *Undine*. The boats remained a threat, but successes were few while Russian resolve, never especially strong, collapsed in the spring of 1917 when the Tsar was toppled.

Overnight, friendly Russians



turned into "ravaging savages", while Cromie's servant was elected the captain of the cruiser *Dvina*.

Cromie warned that such ill-discipline would end in disaster. He was right. When the Germans attacked that autumn, the Russians crumbled. Riga – long-time base of the British flotilla – fell in September 1917, prompting the submarines to seek a new home in Helsingfors (today Helsinki), where the Finns offered brief sanctuary.

As 1917 drew to a close, the long-oppressed Finns declared their independence from now-Bolshevik Russia. By the spring of 1918,

independence had turned to civil war as 'Reds' in the south of the country clashed with 'Whites' (non-communists) outside the main centres of urban population.

Having conquered most of the Baltic, Berlin had no intention of allowing Finland to fall to the Communists; its covetous eyes looked to a new Germanic empire in eastern Europe.

And so in April 1918, with financial backing from the Whites, the Germans threw their weight behind the anti-Communist cause, committing the 10,000 men of their *Ostsee* (Baltic) Division – seen here sweeping through Oulunkylä, today a suburb of the

Finnish capital, just four miles north of the city centre. In a pincer move, several hundred German marines were landed in the port. The Red forces were defeated in less than 24 hours, their ringleaders executed, the rest rounded up and imprisoned in the historic fortress of Suomenlinna in the harbour entrance.

The Royal Navy's Baltic flotilla could be found around three miles south of the fort – but only by divers.

With the Gulf of Finland now dominated by the German Navy, there was no chance of escape for the seven remaining submarines in the force.

Cromie had no intention of allowing

his submarines to fall into German, Finnish or Communist hands. When the Germans landed on Finnish soil, skeleton crews took the craft out off the island of Harmaja where they were scuttled in a three-day mass suicide.

Deprived of a prize, the Germans were at least relieved that these 'pests' no longer posed a threat to their ships.

The boats were subsequently salvaged by the Finns – some in the 1930s, the remainder in the 1950s. As for their crews, they made for St Petersburg, then eventually for Murmansk in the Arctic and home.

Not so Francis Cromie. Appointed Naval Attaché to Russia in the aftermath of the Tsar's overthrow, he became sucked into the chaotic world of post-revolutionary Russia.

In July 1918, the British Government had agreed to send an intervention force to Russia – part of an international effort to defeat the Bolsheviks, an effort which would ultimately fail... but only after five years of bloodshed and upwards of three million dead.

Among the casualties was Cdr Cromie – the only British naval attaché to be killed in the line of duty.

The British Embassy in St Petersburg was regarded as a centre of anti-Bolshevik resistance. On the last day of August 1918, the secret police forced their way into the building, intent on seizing official papers – and any counter-revolutionaries.

The commotion caused by the illegal search reached the ear of Cromie, who drew his revolver and strode out of the meeting he was in to confront the Bolsheviks. The result was an unequal gunfight which the submariner lost. Cromie was shot running down the main staircase towards the entrance. His lifeless body was then mutilated and ransacked, while the police kept the embassy staff at bay with rifle butts.

He was posthumously awarded the DSO for "distinguished service in the Allied cause in Russia" and a devotion to duty which "cost him his life".

■ This photograph (Q 57958) is one of more than ten million held by the Imperial War Museum. They can be viewed or purchased at www.iwm.org.uk/collections/photographs, or by calling 0207 416 5309.

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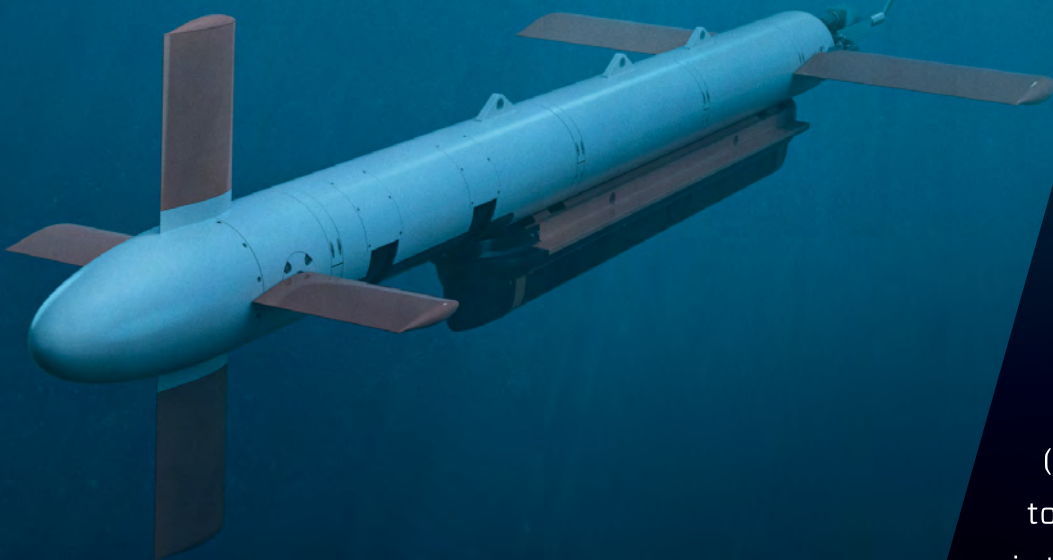
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Ice patrol ship leading the way in helping to pro

HMS PROTECTOR makes her way through the pristine Lemaire Channel in Antarctica during her hectic fourth work package of her ice patrol season.

Nicknamed the Kodak Gap, the channel is one of the top tourist destinations in the region, with steep cliffs lining the iceberg-filled passage. The channel is 11km long and just 1,600m wide at its narrowest point.

Protector covered more than 4,000 nautical miles on her latest work package, sailing from the Falkland Islands with a long list of tasking:

- Embark an international team of inspectors to check on popular visitor sites to ensure they were being

looked after;

- Support the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in their global social media campaign;

- Conduct informal base visits to stations run by different nationalities located on the peninsula;

- Survey shipping routes to improve safety for commercial vessels;

- Recover a team of scientists from the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) who had spent two months monitoring Chinstrap penguins at Harmony Point, Nelson Island.

The Antarctic Peninsula is one of the world's few unspoilt ecosystems and presents great opportunities

for scientific research; providing predictive data on climate change uninfluenced by direct human factors.

However with 45,000 tourists visiting Antarctica during the 2016/17 season as well as 40 different nations having bases in the area, the risk of human influence on this unique part of the world increases year on year.

All nations who have a presence in Antarctica are signatories to the Antarctic Treaty, which protects the region from exploitation as well as preserving an area of great environmental significance.



Although there are a few airfields capable of accommodating twin-seater aircraft, the majority of visitors to the region arrive by ship.

Protector's main task for the period was to position an International team of inspectors at various sites along the peninsula, supported ashore by the ship's Royal Marines team.

The team of inspectors, made up of representatives from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), WWF, International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO) and the Argentinian Antarctic Institute, worked to develop guidelines for tourism for these sites in order to minimise the impact of visits on the ecosystem.

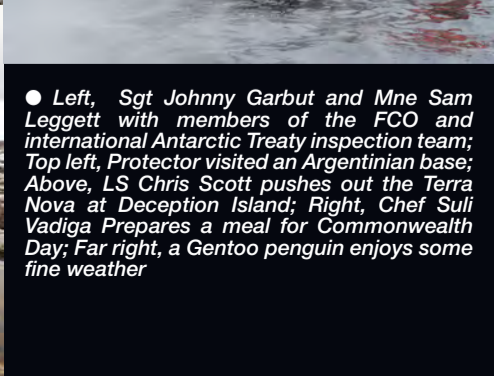
Just bringing this team together

required Protector to visit three different locations on the peninsula separated by 314 nautical miles, with a similar drop-off schedule to get them home to their respective countries.

However with the team – comprising UK, USA and Argentinian personnel – assembled, and favourable weather, they were able to assess and develop guidelines for 11 visitor sites over a two-week period.

During this time the ship visited popular tourist sites such as Deception Island and Port Lockroy on the western side of the peninsula before travelling east to the Weddell Sea, where ice is more prevalent.

The journey through the Weddell



● Left, Sgt Johnny Garbut and Mne Sam Leggett with members of the FCO and international Antarctic Treaty inspection team; Top left, Protector visited an Argentinian base; Above, LS Chris Scott pushes out the Terra Nova at Deception Island; Right, Chef Suli Vadiga Prepares a meal for Commonwealth Day; Far right, a Gentoo penguin enjoys some fine weather

Beauty

Preserve one of world's last unspoilt ecosystems

Sea really put Protector's ice-breaking capabilities to the test as she navigated through dense floes of sea ice to reach new visitor sites. In doing so Protector went to places that very few other ships have managed to reach this season.

With visitor site reviews complete, and the inspectors safely heading home on their respective ships, Protector continued working through a busy programme of updating the survey data for some of Antarctica's most beautiful, but navigationally-challenging, areas.

Surveying sites such as the Lemaire and Neumayer Channels will improve seabed data for the popular cruise ship areas as well as providing stunning vistas for the

ship's company to enjoy.

The journey also provided plenty of material for Nick Romeril, an artist-in-residence from the Scott Polar Research Institute.

Nick witnessed so many inspirational views during his four weeks onboard that he produced around 40 preliminary paintings and predicts that the material will keep him busy for at least the next 18 months.

Survey tasking saw Protector's boats away from the ship most days, visiting bases along the peninsula.

Although these informal base visits are encouraged by the Antarctic Treaty as a form of "self policing", Protector took the opportunity to engage with other nations and

bolster the relationship between the Royal Navy and Militaries/Polar Organisations of Chile, Argentina and Ukraine.

Every nation the team visited welcomed them with open arms and it was fascinating and inspirational to see the science, research and conservation that they so passionately engaged in.

In addition, engineers were called upon to conduct a structural survey of Wordie House, a legacy heritage building from Base F, a UK expedition which ran from 1947 to 1954.

The house, on Winter Island, is named after James Wordie, the chief scientist and geologist on Shackleton's Endurance expedition of 1914-17.

In later years Wordie was also an advisor to Operation Tabarin – a top-secret expedition ordered by the British government in 1943 to establish the country's first permanently occupied research stations in Antarctica.

The hut stands on the foundations of an earlier building, used by the British Graham Land Expedition from 1935-36. The original hut was destroyed in 1946, possibly by a tsunami.

This visit saw Protector fulfill her wider commitments to support the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust in preserving sites of historical interest in the region.

"This work package has demonstrated in a very short space of

time just how capable HMS Protector and her ship's company are in this most testing of environments," said Cdr Simon Bodman. "From surveying to pushing through the sea ice and visiting some of the most remote places on the planet in support of our national and international partners in promotion of the Antarctic Treaty, it has been incredibly busy but ultimately rewarding and enjoyable work package where we have been doing our part in preserving this environment for future generations."

You can follow HMS Protector's activities on Twitter at [@HMSProtector](#)

**Report: Surg Lt Cdr Andrew Lundie
Pictures: LPhot Ben Shread**



● Left, the skeleton of a whale lies on a beach; Above left, Chef Latifah Forde prepares a meal for Commonwealth Day; Above right, hydrographers LS Kevin Rail and AB 'Mo' Farrah at work; Top right, HMS Protector's image is reflected in the pristine waters of the Antarctic; Bottom right, Protector passes an abandoned whaling boat on Deception Island

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Great, we can put the fire on

COMMANDO fliers turned up the heat for trekkers at remote Arctic cabins.

Merlins from 845 NAS were called in to help the Norwegian Trekking Association, which runs cabins for walkers and hikers across the country.

Those at Lappjord are about as remote as it gets. Just half a mile from the Swedish border, ten miles from the nearest road, the cabins provide accommodation for up to a dozen people who want to explore the surrounding area.

With the Merlins conducting winter training just 35 miles to the north, the 845 team offered to help their hosts with a winter resupply.

The Mobile Air Operations Team – who establish makeshift landing sites for Merlins and Wildcats to use on the battlefield – were on hand on the ground to help the fliers offload their cargo.

For the aircrew, the log delivery was useful load-lifting training; the Merlins can carry 105mm howitzers, Viking armoured vehicles, stores and ammunition slung beneath the 11-tonne helicopter.

During their Nordic Eagle winter deployment, CHF also focussed on night flying to makeshift landing sites.

And while it was colder in Portsmouth (about -4°C) than it was in Bardufoss in the Arctic Circle (a balmy -2°C), the Royal Marines were treated to the natural beauty of the Aurora Borealis.

The northern lights and the artificial lights from a Royal Marines BV tracked vehicle and Merlin Mk3 merged in the frozen wastes of northern Norway as the Merlins practised 'whiteout' landings and take-offs.

Also operating out of Bardufoss were X-Ray Company from 45 Commando (Arbroath) and personnel from the Commando Logistics Regiment (Barnstaple), 50 warriors from the Army's 3 Division (Salisbury Plain) and 250 members of the US Marine Corps.

They all converged on an old German airfield, 200 miles inside the Arctic Circle, for expert instruction from Royal Marines Mountain Leaders

for what the Brits dubbed Exercise Cold Enabler... and the Americans called White Claymore.

"If you can operate in this environment, you can operate in any environment," said Maj Si Welch, the Royal Marine in charge of Cold Enabler.

The Arctic novices learned how to build makeshift shelters (from little better than fallen trees through to wigwams and poachers' shelters), build fires, gut fish and cook reindeer – the very basics of survival in northern Norway.

The terrain around Bardufoss is peppered with lakes and rivers – all of which are frozen at this time of year.

Despite extensive training on measuring ice thickness and frozen lake and river crossing there is always the risk that a patch of ice might not support a person or vehicle.

To ensure everyone knows how to clamber back up should that happen, there's the much-feared ice-breaking drill: cut a hole in the ice, jump in, get out.

"Bardufoss tests every aspect of soldiering from surviving in the Arctic to avalanche drills and frozen lake crossing," said Capt George Eatwell of 30 Commando IX Group.

USMC platoon leader 1Lt Patrick Tabb said: "The temperatures are constantly sub-zero and there's a nasty wind chill. It takes it out of the men. So as a commander you have to bear that in mind."

For the past few weeks, the Viking Squadron have also been in Norway, teaching the USMC how to operate their armour under Project Odin, as the 'Semper Fi guys' look for a vehicle suited to such extremes as they expand their cold weather warfare capability.

"The instruction has been fantastic," said US Marine Sgt Scotty Lyall. "We don't have a vehicle like this, and this is exactly what we need in this environment."

The British soldiers will take their experience and knowledge to eastern Europe as part of the international 'Enhanced Force Presence' in Poland, Latvia and Estonia.



Pictures: PO (Phot) Si Ethell, RNPOTY, and PO (Phot) Dave Gallagher

From snow to the sandy mountains of Oman

ROYAL Marines swapped snow-capped peaks in the Highlands for the sandy-brown rock faces and mountains of Oman to help local forces fight in extreme terrain.

A 15-strong team of commando mountain leaders from the elite Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron took to the mountains of Musandam – overlooking the Strait of Hormuz – to pass on skills they usually use in the Arctic, Highlands or Dartmoor.

The Omani Army has formed a specialist unit

focused on training soldiers in mountain and urban warfare, based in the mountains outside the capital Muscat.

Those specialists spent six weeks in the UK last year working with the marines of 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group learning the basics of moving around mountain terrain, getting used to ropes, knots, and heights, as well as hauling heavy packs around and coping with the British weather.

Just as the Royal Marines have experts in

cold weather/high altitude warfare – mountain leaders – so the Omanis have created 'jebel guides' to perform the same function in their forces ('jebel' is Arabic for 'mountain').

After some refresher training around the Omanis' base near Muscat, the two teams moved to the jagged ranges of Musandam where temperatures were above 20°C.

During the final training exercise the troops came ashore from Royal Navy of Oman landing craft, were met by the jebel guides who led

them on a vertical assault, across an arduous mountain route so they could set up, construct and occupy observation posts from where they could watch an enemy position before launching a formidable final attack.

Capt George Eatwell said: "The experience of mountaineering in a hot, dry and arid environment brought its own challenges, but a lot was learned and significant value gained from training both in this unique environment and alongside the Omanis."

With helicopter trials complete, commando assault stations tested, and basic sea manoeuvres over, a weapons fit no

on the cusp of ca

RIGHT, bring on the fast jets. For with helicopter trials now completed that's the looming milestone for the nation's flagship of tomorrow.

A month in the western Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic provided just what HMS Queen Elizabeth needed to prove herself as a *helicopter carrier*. Next stop: *aircraft carrier*.

A team of 56 aircrew, analysts and engineers from the Air Test and Evaluation Centre at Boscombe Down flew aboard the carrier with two specially-adapted Merlins and Chinooks, each packed with sensors and data recorders.

Similar sensors were placed around the ship to record information such as pitch, roll, wind speed and how the superstructure and layout of the carrier's flight deck affected its flow over the deck.

So after the brief pit-stop in Gibraltar, the ship headed into the Med for good weather... and into the Atlantic for more challenging weather to test the helicopters in a range of sea and weather conditions.

The Chinooks set down 450 times on the sprawling deck, the Merlins 540, with the two helicopter types airborne for around ten hours a day – about as much daylight as you'll get in mid-February.

Both helicopter models were pushed to the limit to determine the extremities at which rotary wing aircraft can safely operate, with the data collected used not merely to set the Ship-Helicopter Operating Limits for Merlins and Chinooks, but also RN Wildcats and Army Air Corps Apaches.

"We've learned about the wind patterns on deck – this is a new design of ship and the way wind moves across the deck and affects flying is something that we've focused on in these trials," explained test pilot Cdr Matt Grindon, in charge of the detachment.

"Whilst turbulence is normal, one of my pilots has described it as the 'Hand of God' grabbing you and pushing you down on to the ship, which obviously requires a big power demand to stop the aircraft descending, so that's given us some interesting insight.

"Nonetheless we have been able to clear a much wider envelope than we expected. We've been challenged, but that's exactly what these trials are for."

Overseeing all flight deck operations during the month-long trials was Queen Elizabeth's outgoing Wings – Commander Air – Cdr Mark Deller, who says the helicopters and flight deck crews were exposed to pretty much the full range of sea and weather conditions the carrier is likely to operate in when she begins front-line duties in a couple of years' time.

"The ship has held up well, the deck is good and consequently the aircraft have behaved themselves, so all good news," he added.

Without the helicopter trials there could be no F-35s joining off the Eastern Seaboard of the USA this autumn; Merlins will be on standby around the clock for search and rescue duties should a Lightning II crash.

There are no jets yet. But there are four fast-jet jockeys already aboard as the carrier eyes up the F-35's

debut.

Lt Cdr Ed Phillips, Cdr Mike Mullen USN, Col Phil Kelly and new Wings Cdr James Blackmore bring the experience of thousands of deck landings and multiple worldwide combat operation tours to Queen Elizabeth.

"Bringing a jet to sea again is not a simple prospect," says Cdr Blackmore, who flew the very last Harrier from HMS Ark Royal nearly a decade ago.

"There are only a handful of nations in the world who operate aircraft carriers and aircraft at sea. In simple terms, when an aircraft leaves the deck, it leaves its runway and the runway isn't where it left it when it comes back.

"The runway pitches, rolls, heaves, moves, gets covered in waves – all those things are at play when you bring an aircraft on to the deck. That will be a unique thing for many of our people, and we need to train to understand and work with the challenges involved in conducting our air operations safely."

Given the size of the new carriers and the missions they are likely to face during their five decades in service, it's not just going to be Lightning IIs roaring down the deck.

Experience over the past 15 years with the previous generation of Harrier carriers shows they're just as likely to be launchpads for helicopter assaults by commandos – especially now HMS Ocean is out of service and there's no dedicated helicopter carrier in the Fleet.

So it will be down to the new carriers to serve as the launchpads for commando helicopter assaults in

future... as the previous generation of Harrier carriers also did in the later stages of their careers. So...

Hands to Assault Stations. Hands to Assault Stations.

Marines from Lima Company, 42 Commando, went through the basics of moving from their quarters in the bowels of HMS Queen Elizabeth to forming 'sticks' filing on to Merlins on the flight deck, collecting kit, including weapons and ammunition in a carefully orchestrated process, on the way to the flight deck.

"The training has gone really well," said Lt Col Mark Searight, the carrier's amphibious operations officer.

"It's been an education for the ship's company as to what the helicopter assault ship role will entail, and also for those who assist me to achieve aviation assault operations: assault guides, FLYCO, the logistics department who make sure they can sustain the operation and troops sufficiently; the ammunition personnel in the air engineering department who make sure we have got the right ammunition. It's a complex process."

Helicopter assaults have been used to devastating effect by Britain's Armed Forces since Suez. But there's no assault if you can't get to the launch position.

To date Queen Elizabeth has had to rely on refuelling in ports – Invergordon, Portsmouth, Gibraltar – to keep her cavernous tanks topped up.

To truly be a projector of power around the globe she's going to need a floating filling station with her.

Hand-in-hand with the construction of the carriers came four new Tide-

class tankers which will be at the heart of any future battlegroup, providing fuel for the ships and their aircraft, plus other stores and supplies.

For the first time carrier and tanker met up in the Western Approaches – more than 100,000 tonnes of battleship grey sailing parallel at speed only metres apart.

Although the gunline was fired across from RFA Tidespring that was as far as the first attempt at a replenishment at sea went; the approaching winter storm forced the vessels to break off before a double probe – an American invention which doubles the rate that fuel can be delivered – was transferred to Queen Elizabeth.

That doesn't mean that the link-up was a waste of time, however.

"It will provide useful data needed for all the vessels in each class," explained the tanker's navigator 2/O Paul Stubley.

"A replenishment between two large vessels bring challenges – particularly with ship interaction and the precariousness of transferring fuel and stores whilst under way."

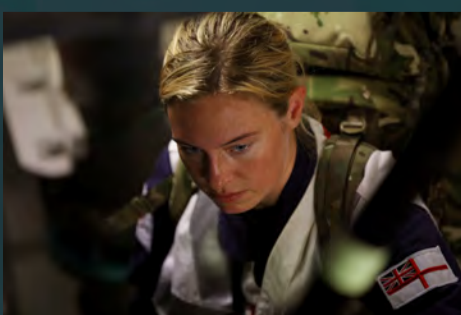
Indeed, if the two vessels are too close, hydrodynamic forces can push the ships together – with potentially fatal consequences.

"Meeting up with RFA Tidespring is an exciting thing for us – we've been talking about it for a long time now," said CPO Jay Early, overseeing the safety of the evolution aboard the carrier.

"One of the things I always say to our guys is, regardless of this being a trial, it's still real for us; there are lines under tension, the ship is moving,



pictures: po(phot) dave jenkins and lphot dan rosenbaum, hms queen elizabeth



under way in Portsmouth, and F-35s gearing up to fly aboard this autumn, future flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth is

Carrier operations

equipment is swinging around, the dangers are very real.

"A RAS is one of the most dangerous evolutions carried out at sea during peacetime. Safety is paramount at all times. 'Slow is pro' is one of my key sayings to make sure our people stay safe."

Despite the non-RAS minor setback, the carrier's first Commanding Officer Capt Jerry Kyd is more than pleased with the "rapid progress the ship is making toward becoming an operational aircraft carrier."

"HMS Queen Elizabeth is performing well and the marriage at sea of the Lightning and our carrier in a few months time will be a hugely symbolic event, putting on notice that the UK is on the cusp of returning to fixed-wing carrier operations at sea and a return to serious maritime power projection."

But let's not get ahead of ourselves too much just yet. It'll be 2020/21 before his ship is fully operational.

The ship has come through her first major assessment by FOST – could the ship's company cope with fire/flood? With a crew of around 700 to 740, and some 3,300 compartments, even with the technological leaps and automated systems, there is a lot of real estate to protect. At action stations, there are only 50 spare hands around the ship should anything untoward occur. (Old hands will be assured that for all the 21st Century tech, should the carrier's hull ever be punctured, there are plenty of blocks of wood around the (very wide) passageways.

So even after a year on board and three spells at sea, the most recent

the first time as a commissioned warship, everyone aboard is still finding their feet.

"Every day is a school day," says WO1 Dave Gerraghty, the most senior rating aboard as the carrier's Executive Warrant Officer, who's been with the ship for 15 months.

"We're still learning. I don't think we'll fully know about her until 2020. So we're still writing the Haynes manual."

The 43-year-old was Daring's EWO on her world tour five years ago.

"Times everything by three on here," he says. "The size, the challenge, the rewards."

"What you really notice is the impact that the media has. Everything you do is noticed – and there are a lot of armchair critics out there."

Those critics might think differently if they had the chance to look around Britain's largest ever warship and meet her men and women.

The statistics and superlatives aren't out of place. There's no British warship like her.

Junior rates enjoy six-berth cabins, senior rates enjoy two, officers one and two, 547 TVs throughout the ship, and you can set the temperature in your living quarters thanks to individual air conditioning controls.

"The accommodation is first rate – in some cases better than ashore," says 24-year-old MA Mel Coyle from Rochdale.

"I think you have the best of both worlds – you can have some personal space if you need it, but there are also large messes, so when you want to be social, you can join in with everyone else."

Mel is one of 13 permanent staff

assigned to the carrier's medical centre – the term sick bay seems woefully inadequate – bolstered on operations by a full surgical team to provide Role 2 care (performing life-saving surgery so casualties can be transferred to permanent hospital facilities ashore).

More typically, however, it's the mundanity of a GP's surgery to deal with: coughs and colds, sprains, sporting injuries, check-ups in the dental surgery.

"I spent three months on Daring and thought: 'this is a big ship'... and then I came on here and it was 'wow'," Mel adds.

She joined the ship in April 2016 and, like her shipmates, had to wait until early last year to move on board.

"It was great to get on the ship at last – it created that 'ship community' and kept morale up," she continues.

"You're not lacking anything here in the medical centre – it's good equipment. And we have a good team."

PO(Medical Tech) Stefan Dolby is one of only 15 pharmacy technicians in the RN and runs a facility akin to something you'll find on the high street... with one big difference, no prescription charges.

He's also responsible for the 12 first aid posts around the ship, stocks of bandages and splints.

"We're as busy as any shoreside facility, with the same seasonal fluctuations: coughs and colds right now, insect bites and hayfever remedies in the spring.

"It's a good team, a good department with good facilities and we provide the ship's company with an excellent service."

So the sick bay is super-sized. What about the NAAFI? Yup. It's more of a mini supermarket: fridges, freezers, coffee machines dispensing high-street brands. Should the three galleys aboard fail to meet your food needs, you can even pick up frozen pizzas. And while crisps, Mars bars and Pot Noodles will never go out of fashion, protein bars and supplements are increasingly popular – especially when marines are on board – while vape liquids, virtual reality headsets and phone/tablet cables reflect modern consumer trends.

"The range has grown massively over the years and the customers' needs have changed," explains NAAFI manager Douglas Reekie who's been serving for 28 years. "Young people are much more into their fitness. We sell far fewer cigarettes and beer than we did on the Ark Royal in the 80s."

Something that's not changed since the 80s is the Friday menu: it has to be fish for lunch. Two hundred portions of battered cod in the aft galley alone (as well as 150 battered sausages and 50 pies; plus the salad bar as the healthy option). There are just three chefs on duty in this kitchen, which is expected to deliver three meals daily, normally to 400 people, but up to 700 at full capacity.

"It's challenging," says new chef Sean Wadsworth, 18, from Bolton. "At Raleigh we were only cooking for about 20 people at a sitting. So the size of the ship is difficult to get your head around."

"I love coming into work. I'm working with food every day – that's what I joined up to do. And it's a good ship."

Like a quarter of the ship's company, Sean has never served at sea before. That brings challenges, chiefly a lack of experience of their jobs and life in the RN... but also an absence of baggage. They don't file up the gangway with any preconceptions.

Roughly one in every eight sailors aboard is female – 80 out of 620 at present – although many of the traditional male/female distinctions aboard have been tossed aside; showers and heads are unisex, something QE has inherited from Daring.

AB Wilf – a very ugly ventriloquist's dummy who first started in *Sailor* with HMS Ark Royal in the 70s – is another.

Wilf – real name Mr Parlanchin (Spanish for 'talkative') – was used by the EWO to bring a bit of fun to Daring on her world tour; as a dummy (that's Wilf...) he can say what his shipmates cannot.

Wilf's not enjoying life much aboard the new carrier, though. "He was held for ransom and tortured on the ship's TV channel," says Dave, shaking his head.

Kidnap and torture aside, the crew do have some good points though. "This is the best ship's company I've ever worked with," says the EWO.

"We're seeing the ship come to life. She was a building site when I joined. Now, we're turning her into our home."

"I'm working with a really diverse, energetic ship's company. Everyone's working to a common goal: get the ship to the USA, get the aircraft on board. That's a massive carrot for us."

It's almost time to start chewing...

With thanks to Lt Cdr Lindsey Waudby



Air views aboard warship

THREE members of Oxford URNU spent a week aboard HMS Ocean to observe aviation training.

Mid Emily O'Donovan and OCs Emily Herbert and Luke Harris spent their first day with the Weapon Engineering Department.

After scran, the focus turned towards the ship's main role as a LPH with an in-depth look at the helicopters on board.

The OCs observed operations from the Flyco as 27 Squadron RAF embarked along with their Chinooks. As the first dogwatch arrived, Mid O'Donovan and OC Harris went down to the hangar to participate in a circuit training session led by the 'Club Swinger' and attended by members of the ship's company.

The next few days saw the trio undertake a whirlwind programme packing in everything from watching a standard manoeuvre from the Bridge to learning how to play uckers with Sub Lt McNeil in the wardroom to a task book session in the Met Shack with the SMETO.

They were also given the opportunity to tour

the flight deck with the Air Operations Officer, watching Chinooks and Merlins land and take off.

They also toured the ship's operations room and the 'role two' medical facilities, which contained a fully functioning operating theatre.

While they were in the sickbay, OC Herbert and Harris took the opportunity to complete the medical sections of their URNU training task books.

As potential warfare officers, Mid O'Donovan and OC Harris had several opportunities aboard the warship.

OC Herbert said: "My dad served on board as a Royal Marine when the ship was newly built and given the family connection to the ship I am extremely pleased that I had the opportunity to also experience time at sea with HMS Ocean before she left the Royal Navy."

On one of their final evenings on board, the URNU trio spent a watch with the AMEO, and got fully acquainted with the ME systems.

Report: OC Luke Harris



● Mid Emily O'Donovan

RAF swap aircraft for a day aboard P2000

HMS Example played host to an eager team from Royal Air Force College Cranwell.

The inter-Service visit allowed the RAF visitors to experience a day on one of the Royal Navy's fast inshore patrol boats, and build an understanding of the maritime environment the ships operate in.

The five-strong RAF cohort each took turns at steering the ship as the QM, and as part of the man overboard recovery team during a practise.

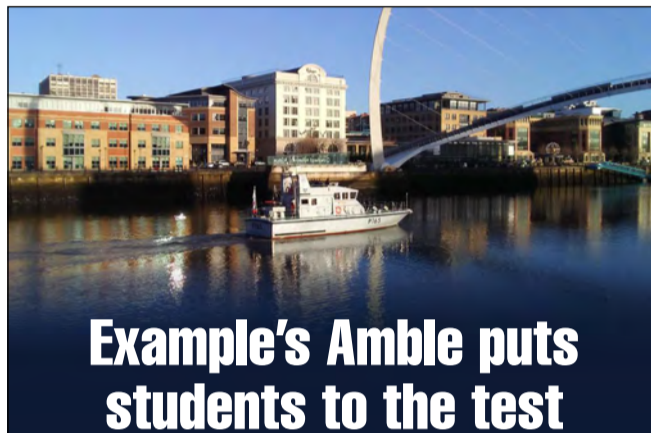
Example's CO Lt Duncan Napier said: "The whole day was a valuable opportunity for Royal Navy and Royal Air Force personnel to interact and for the RAF team to learn about the different challenges we have in a

ship and the way we operate. We enjoyed having them on board and would certainly welcome them back."

It was for many of the visitors the first time they have ever been on board an RN ship, and there were certainly some surprises, including how far afield the P2000s deploy (as far as St Petersburg in the past), and how many people can fit into HMS Example (20, and she is only 20m long).

One of the RAF visitors said: "We had a great day, and really enjoyed the fantastic opportunity to get out and about with the ship and the crew."

You can follow HMS Example on Twitter @HMSEXAMPLE.



Example's Amble puts students to the test

HMS Example set off from her berth at HMS Calliope with seven students, one Training Officer and five ship's company on board for a sea day up to Amble.

The day served as a 'Senior Student Navigation Day', allowing second year students an in-depth view into the pilotage, route planning and anchorage process.

The river transit was used to refresh the students on chartwork and pilotage, with half down below and half conducting visual pilotage training from the CO.

Upon reaching the mouth of the river, the students manned the helm and took up the officer of the watch duty for the transit to Amble.

As we approached our destination, Senior Midshipman Bethan Davies took the con to guide Example into the anchorage just north of Coquet Island, in sight of the Northumbrian village of Amble.

With Example lying under the guns of Warkworth Castle, a cooked lunch was prepared by the students (imaginatively dubbed 'Pasta Surprise'); this also allowed an opportunity to re-jig the watches in preparation for the return transit.

Example then weighed anchor and set sail (figuratively speaking) for home. Unfortunately, the wind and the waves also began to pick up as she turned south.

The sea state provided a new challenge for the students. They soon discovered plotting fixes on paper charts becomes immensely more interesting while being thrown around the bridge, and thus tested not only their ability to keep a steady hand and a cool head but also to persevere and work well under pressure.

The ship was also zigzagging between an abundance of fishing buoys in the area, and the spray gave the CO and bridge team a refreshing drenching every so often.

The students fought through and continued the visual fixing routine down the coast until Tynemouth Priory, standing on the cliff top, came into view.

The Tynemouth piers acted like a calming hand on the waves, with the movement almost completely disappearing as Example passed through them into the still waters of the Tyne. We were back at HMS Calliope in time for tea (leftover Pasta Surprise...).

Acting Mid Bethan Davies said of the day "It was a great opportunity for us to re-visit the navigation lessons we have learned over out time in the URNU."

Report: OC Florence Lennon-Butler



Charging in for top year of activities

STUDENTS from Liverpool URNU tested survival suits aboard HMS Charger on the Mersey.

The tests will prove invaluable as the unit prepares for a deployment to Ireland, a sports weekend in Portsmouth and a summer deployment to France.

The unit are aiming for a high-paced academic year of events, which started with a new entry weekend at Dartmouth.

Senior Midshipman James Brackenbury said: "For some this was the first experience they would have of the Royal Navy."

"The students were trained and tested on Practical Leadership Tasks, basic navigation and the dreaded swim test."

"The whole event really dropped everyone in the deep end, both literally and figuratively, but was an extremely enjoyable experience for all involved."

First year OC Courtney Watson added:

"We completed tasks and our swimming test. It was a hard but fantastic day and I feel we were all able to bond as a group, as we got to know each other better. I developed more knowledge about the Royal Navy and it was a pleasure to meet the officers there at BRNC."

Members of LURNU went to Market Drayton and Maryport for Remembrance weekend.

At Market Drayton we were hosted by the Royal Naval Association, as we are every year. In both towns the first years put their drill practice to good use as we proudly represented the Royal Navy in the parades.

First year OC Jack Langan found the weekend an exceptional opportunity, saying: "It was the first real test of drill for some of the first years, but we pulled it off."

The first years also commented that the weekend was "moving" and "an honour" – something many university students would

never have the opportunity to do.

First years have also been out on HMS Charger on the Mersey several times over the last few months.

Skills covered included charts, safety procedures, and driving the ship.

OC Josh Middlemass found that "getting to sit at the helm and steer the ship for the first time was an amazing opportunity, invaluable to my learning experience."

OC Beth Morris values her sea weekends for the skills she has gained with chart work, something that will ready the first years for future deployments, and even for BRNC.

At the end of 2017 we celebrated Horatio Nelson with our Trafalgar Night, where many of the first years experienced a mess dinner for the first time.

The URNU is the most worthwhile thing you can do at university. With the exception of your degree, maybe...

Report: OC Millie Harvey

Lessons from 42 Cdo

OXFORD URNU Officer Cadet Mark Anderton took part in a Potential Officer Visit to 42 Commando Royal Marines.

The tour gave candidates a glimpse into the day-to-day operations of a Royal Marines unit while also affording the opportunity to view the facilities available such as the gym and rehabilitation centre. The most humbling aspect of the visit was seeing the memorial dedicated to Marines who gave their lives while serving in 42 Commando.

Next the candidates were treated to a weapons display, including the Glock and SA80.

Afterwards, the candidates went to Brisworthy Woods where they were taught the basics of living in the field, including preparing a 'bivi' and eating rations, before spending the night in a bivi.

Later the candidates took part in a lesson in unarmed close combat learning basic strikes, falling techniques and how to disadvantage an opponent.

Next the candidates learned, in detail, about the training pipeline for a Young Officer as well as hearing about the personal experiences of a YO who had recently completed his training. Finally, the candidates enjoyed a very welcome curry dinner in the Officer's Mess.

Report: OC Mark Anderton

Junglies curry favour

MEMBERS of the Oxford URNU visited 845 'Junglies' squadron based at RNAS Yeovilton and flew in a Mk3 Merlin helicopter.

The squadron is one of three that form the Commando Helicopter Force, a specialist amphibious unit operating the Merlin HC3/HC3A helicopter providing troop transport and load lifting support to the Royal Marines.

The OCs were given a presentation by ops officer Lt Olly Everett detailing the role of the squadron, CHF, recent operations and the future role of the unit.

After a safety brief, including in-flight emergency procedures, in the cargo bay of one of the Merlins in the hangar, the OCs went for a curry lunch in the wardroom at HMS Heron.

The OCs donned helmets and visors to experience a flight in one of the Merlin HC3 helicopters. Each OC had the opportunity to venture onto the open rear loading ramp mid-flight secured to a dispatcher strap.

Sub Lt Cate Moore said: "The OCs are very grateful to the staff of 845 who made their experience so informative and enjoyable. The flight was amazing."

Report: Sub Lt Cate Moore

Wooing potential WEs

WEAPON Engineering General Service and Submarine Service Branch Managers Lt Cdr Paul Maddison and Lt Cdr Ivor McQuaid visited Oxford URNU to brief Officer Cadets on the fantastic opportunities available to the potential WE graduate officers.

The comprehensive presentation covered the role of Weapon Engineer Officers and an in-depth explanation of the two-and-a-half year training pipeline.

The brief also showcased the many benefits afforded to graduates leaving university to join the branch, including City & Guilds awards, Chartered Engineer status, MSc opportunities and the joining bonus.

For the second period of evening training RN Mine Clearance Diving Officers from Southern Diving Unit briefed the unit on their role.

OiC Team 2, Lt Cdr Jonny Campbell, and OiC Team 1, Lt James Oxley, briefed the unit on military diver training, explosive ordnance disposal and recent operations.

They also demonstrated some of the world-class equipment they use which afforded the opportunity for some of the Officer Cadets to dress in the 'bomb suit' and diver helmet.

Fair inspires thousands of schoolchildren En-jen-eering lesson

JENNY the robot entralls visitors to the UK's largest STEM fair.

The Royal Navy stand proved a big draw at the Big Bang Fair at the NEC in Birmingham.

The annual event is aimed at young people aged seven to 19, bringing the classroom to life and showing them the exciting and rewarding opportunities that exist for them, with the right qualifications and skills.

The RN stand gave youngsters the chance to take part in PlayStation-style challenges based on Type 45 destroyers and simulate controlling Merlin helicopters and F-35B jets taking off and landing after completing missions.

They could also design the most efficient turbine blade and test it on an interactive gas turbine model and build and test their own pneumatic logics circuits to understand how valves work.

Would-be naval engineers also watched humanoid robots perform salutes, physical training instruction and show off their dancing skills as a practical demonstration of computer-coding.

As part of a 3D-printing demonstration models were printed by young visitors to demonstrate the printing technology which is used by the Royal Navy ashore and on board ships at sea.

The award-winning event also attracts some of the most STEM-talented school students and hosts the finals of The Big Bang Competition.

The annual contest recognises and rewards young people's achievements in all areas of STEM, as well as helping them build skills and confidence in project-based work.

Meanwhile, in Scotland RN engineers from HMNB Clyde are visiting primary schools throughout Argyll and Bute to help launch a major STEM competition in partnership with the Primary Engineer organisation.

Lt Cdr Christopher Pinder, who is leading the navy engineers during the visits, said: "By getting involved in the project we hope that it sparks the children's interest in STEM and maybe even leads to some considering a rewarding future career in engineering."

The project involves pupils from different age groups building two types of model car – the first using shoe boxes and the second, more complex model, built using balsa wood, motors, circuitry and batteries.

Each school will then hold their own internal competition,



● Above, Sub Lt Andy Richards, a future MESM, demonstrates Jenny the robot at the Big Bang Fair in Birmingham; Left, Sub Lt Joseph Bushell helps visitors with one of the engineering challenges



2018. YEAR OF ENGINEERING

team members from one side of the 'minefield' to the other.

"Usually for STEM events we focus on 'hard skills', different variations on engineering, but for this we decided to use our tried and tested 'soft skills' approach to try to get across the importance of good communication in difficult circumstances," said PO Bates.

"Every team really got into it and we got a good level of competition between teams trying to beat each other over the three days. The different approaches to the task were interesting to see and hopefully all those who took part will take away something from the event that will help them later in life."

A second Navy team were from the UTC Portsmouth and consisted of CPO Andy Hampson and Cdr Sophie Shaughnessy and demonstrated pneumatic principles to the students using FESTO STEM Learning Systems.

The students were then given a pneumatic circuit to build to mimic the demonstration.

putting the models to the test climbing up and rolling downhill to find the school winner.

The ten schools will enter their winning car at a Celebration Day at Dunoon Grammar School in May.

Navy engineers from HMS Collingwood, HMS Diamond and the RN UTC Team attended the STEM fair 2018 at the Centre of Excellence in Engineering, Manufacturing and Advanced Skills Training, CEMAST, at Lee-on-the-Solent.

The team from HMS Collingwood and HMS Diamond, (Lt Carl Marin-Ortega, PO 'Bash' Bates, PO Daz Hills and ET Stephen Morris) attended the event, both representing the Navy and as STEM Ambassadors.

Their challenge, entitled 'Midnight Minefield' required the groups to safely get as many

Running like well-oiled machine

THE Royal Navy's contribution as a strategic partner to the wider national Year of Engineering 2018 (YOE18) campaign continues to go from strength to strength.

With engineers involved across every aspect of Naval business, they demonstrate why, on a daily basis, they form the 'beating heart' of operational capability, ensuring that every one of our units is maintained, prepared and sustained for, and on, worldwide operations.

There are many ways that you can contribute to the RN's Year of Engineering 2018 campaign, which is detailed in [RNTM 07-064/17](#), but you can also share your experiences on Instagram or Twitter, using [#yoe](#), [#inspireanengineer](#) and [#takeacloserlook](#) and linking in [@YoEgovuk](#) and [@RoyalNavy](#).

Even if you are not on Instagram or Twitter, you can keep up to date with what's going on as part of the Year of Engineering 2018 campaign by joining the YOE18 Defence Connect group, visiting the Year of Engineering 2018 page on the Defence Intranet, or by visiting the DfT's website at [www](#).

[yearofengineering.gov.uk](#).

The campaign is seeking to raise the profile of engineering in society by highlighting the way engineers are involved across our everyday lives and encouraging young people to take a closer look.

The YOE18 Calendar of Events is developing all the time; there have been Race For The Line events across the country, there was an RN presence at the national Big Bang Fair in Birmingham and also at the FAA Innovation Day.

In April there are further Race For The Line events, STEM Outreach and Undergraduate Leadership Programme events, all tied to April's theme of "Engineering: Improving Lives".

Later in the year the Royal Navy is also involved in the European Human Powered Submarine Races and a students' ship design competition, organised in conjunction with a partner organisation, UKNEST, which runs until December.

This is your Year of Engineering and there is so much going on for you to be part of, whether you are at sea or ashore; be proud to be an engineer and tell everyone what you do.

Apprentices are well rewarded

AS job descriptions go, the Royal Navy Accelerated and Undergraduate Apprenticeships Schemes are unique.

You must be physically fit, yet able to live in a confined space, keen on maths and computers, but prepared to go for weeks without wi-fi or a phone signal.

In return, the role offers school-leavers a £31,100 starting salary, the chance to travel the world and potential to achieve a fully-funded university degree.

The Royal Navy's newest posts for aeronautical, mechanical, nuclear and weapon technicians are among Britain's best-paid apprenticeships.

Dependent on the apprenticeship scheme there is also opportunity to spend a final year topping up their training to a bachelor's degree in manufacturing engineering.

Candidates need a minimum of 48 UCAS points from qualifications in maths, science or engineering (such as A-levels, BTEC or equivalent) and a minimum of 3 GCSEs or equivalent at grade 4 or better including English, maths and science.

Harrington Woodhead, 20, decided to drop out of Southampton University while in his second year of a master's degree in mechanical engineering.

He wanted to study engineering in a real-world setting, so he switched to an apprenticeship with the Royal Navy and signed up as a probationary Leading Engineering Technician.

Harrington said: "I wanted an adventure rather than sitting at university for another two years."

His ambition was to become a submarine officer having been inspired by family friends.

"My end goal was to join the navy as an officer, but this came

up when I was halfway through my second year and I took the opportunity," he said.

"The engineering you do at university is the theory side and not relevant to anything in the real world. You have to do more training once you have finished there to start your next job.

"What we are doing here is engineering that is relevant to a nuclear reactor and other systems on a submarine. My friends at university were surprised when I told them, but I think they are quite jealous now."

Fraser Prentice, 19, applied to study biochemistry at Glasgow and Dundee universities after leaving school but started to have second thoughts.

Fraser, from Braehead in South Lanarkshire, said: "I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I was not one of these kids that had in their mind that they wanted to be a fireman or whatever – that was never me.

"I put myself forward for uni, but half-heartedly. Halfway through the summer I changed my mind and decided I didn't want to go to university because I started looking at the military."

Fraser, who had been in an air cadet squadron with links to the RAF, visited an Armed Forces careers office where he found out about a Royal Navy apprenticeship that would see him become a submarine nuclear engineer.

"It was more the education path," he says, when asked what drew him to the Submarine Service.

"It is a hard life and a difficult career. However, you do get time to advance your qualifications and your knowledge. Any chance or opportunity I get, I'll grasp it."

For more details visit: <https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/engineers>

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● Lt Jon Edmonds, LS Jennifer McCullogh and CPO Lee Evans; Right: Lt Chris Evans lowers communications cables down through the thick ice



● Images, US Navy and Cdr Charlie Ball, RN



TRENCHANT GETS THEIR SKATES ON

THE Silent Service is making plenty of white noise as a Royal Navy submarine punches through thick ice at the top of the world.

HMS Trenchant joined fellow nuclear-powered USA boats Connecticut and Hartford for Ice Exercise 18 – ICEX – in the frigid waters of the Arctic Circle.

On her way to ICEX, Trenchant travelled via the North Pole, where all lines of longitude converge, enabling the boat to effectively circumnavigate the world in a mere 28 minutes.

Co-ordinated by the US Navy's Arctic Submarine Laboratory, based in sunny and much warmer San Diego, ICEX is designed to test submariners' skills in operating under the Arctic ice cap.

"It has been a unique opportunity to put into practice our below-ice skills," said Trenchant's CO Cdr David Burrell. "Working alongside the US submarines is great for us. It is like dogfighting in an ice jungle."

As Trenchant first surfaced in the Beaufort Sea, she was greeted by Commodore Faslane Flotilla, Cdre Jim Perks, and his US counterpart Rear Admiral James Pitts.

Both men were flown in by helicopter from Ice Camp Skate – a headquarters established on a lonely ice floe some 150 miles north of Alaska.

"With every ICEX we are able to build upon our experience and continue to learn the best way to operate in this unique and harsh environment," said Adm Pitts.

"We are constantly testing new tactics under the ice and this exercise allows us to do this on a larger scale and alongside our UK, joint and academic partners."

"From a military, geographic, and scientific perspective, the Arctic Ocean is truly unique, and remains one of the most challenging ocean environments on earth."

Also keen to see Trenchant was architect Cdr Sarah Coles, from the Royal College of Naval Constructors, which has been heavily involved in the trials.

"I was really interested to see how she was progressing and getting first-hand accounts of how she had performed in breaking through the polar ice," she said.

For the Royal Navy ICEX allows submariners to test a series of equipment, notably sonar, against live 'targets' and to practice tracking and simulating attacks against other submarines.

Trenchant was visited by Fleet Commander Vice-Admiral Ben Key, who said: "Being able to operate under the ice alongside our US allies remains a cornerstone in providing security to the UK and protecting our vital North Atlantic lifeline."

Among the busy exercise schedule, there was also a moment to pause and reflect on the sacrifice of submariners Paul McCann and Anthony Huntrod, who tragically lost

their lives following an explosion on board HMS Tireless during a previous ice exercise.

The Reverend Mark Mander, Chaplain to the Royal Navy's Faslane Flotilla, held a memorial service on the ice in remembrance of them and their service.

A service was also held on board Trenchant, before members of the crew gathered on the ice to lay wreaths. Included were flowers and letters from the two submariners' families.

PO Andrew Curran said: "This was a great moment to reflect on the loyalty and professionalism of our fellow submariners and the dangers we all face together."

WO2 Geoff Howarth added: "It was a moving service which allowed us all to remember their ultimate sacrifice and reflect on our common brotherhood as submariners."

ICEX is being run from the ice camp, named after USS Skate, the first submarine to surface through open-water surrounded by ice in 1958 and the first submarine to surface through the Arctic ice at the North Pole in March 1959.

Since the success of Skate's surfacing, Arctic operations have been a crucial part of the missions conducted by nuclear submarines.

Adm Pitts added: "We must constantly train together with our submarine units and partners to remain proficient in this hemisphere. Having submarines on the surface is a clear demonstration of our proficiency in the Arctic."

The first Arctic under-ice operations by submarines were carried out in 1947-49. On August 1, 1947, the diesel submarine USS Boarfish, with Arctic Submarine Laboratory's founder Dr Waldo Lyon onboard serving as an ice pilot, conducted the first under-ice transit of an ice floe in the Chukchi Sea.

In 1958, the nuclear-powered USS Nautilus made the first crossing of the Arctic Ocean beneath the pack ice.

A series of temporary shelters and home to up to 50 military personnel and scientists from the UK, USA and Canada, Ice Camp Skate is a barren place, with temperatures frequently dropping to -40°C.

While self-contained, the camp relies on a lifeline of small Twin Otter aeroplanes to fly out from Deadhorse near Prudhoe Bay and land on an airstrip cut into the ice.

As the ice moves – the camp can move up to seven miles in a day – cracks can appear and so far personnel have had to rebuild the airstrip twice.

The RN meteorological and communications specialists team living in this austere environment are taking detailed weather measurements, which not only help in supporting the airbridge but also can predict movement of the camp.

Communications specialists also drill through the ice sheet to set up equipment to communicate with the submarines and set up monitoring equipment to assess how the exercise is progressing.

LS Jennifer McCulloch explained that the training she had had in Norway with the Royal Marines had really helped when facing the challenges of daily living on the ice.

"It is the simple things like eating and going to the heads that become surprisingly difficult," she said.

Lt Jon Edmonds also described the experience as a unique opportunity to put into practice what he had learned and said that the Arctic was "a perfect environment to test equipment to destruction so see how it performs in the most extreme of environments."

Director of the Arctic Submarine Laboratory Larry Estrada said: "The advantage of having a camp on the ice floe is to provide a stable platform to deploy a tracking range, sensors and test equipment for the exercise."

"For this year's exercise, the Navy needed a large and very stable ice flow to support the tracking range and a fixed-wing runway. The camp uses daily aircraft flights to maintain its logistics 'lifeline' back in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska."

At the heart of Skate is a multinational command centre. From here, camp personnel keep tabs on everybody leaving or returning to camp, monitor any changes in the weather or the ocean environment and control the movement of vehicles and aircraft.

Range Safety Officers in the command centre monitor and control all movements of the submarines.

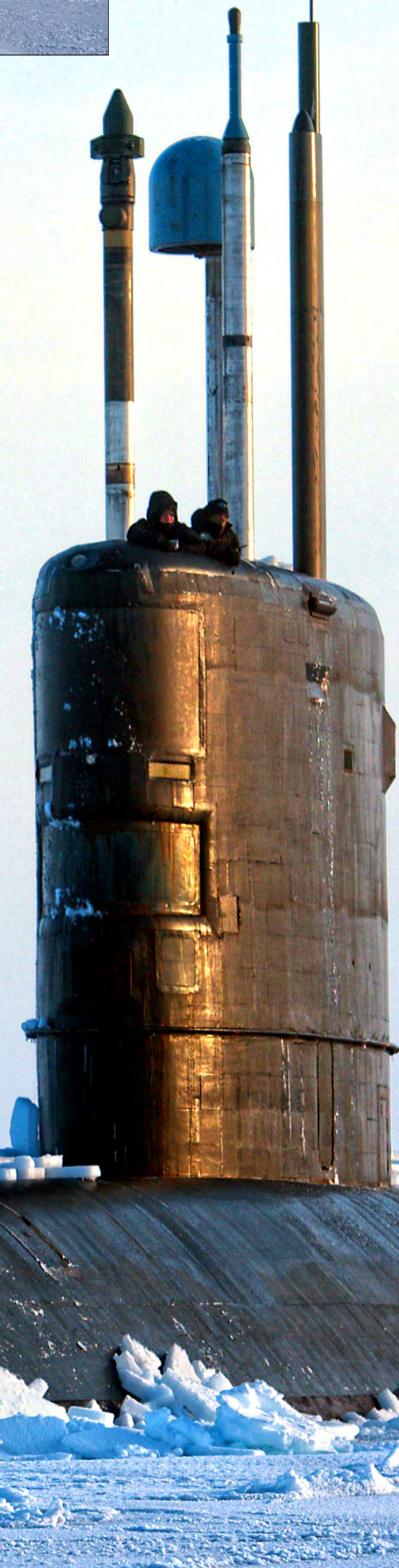
In addition to its command-and-control capabilities the temporary camp houses a galley, a medical bay for potential injuries, a diving shelter torpedo recovery, basic lavatory infrastructure and warm storage for science experiments and gear that should not be frozen.

After the completion of ICEX, ASL along with team members from University of Alaska Fairbanks and Ukpeagvik Iñupiat Corporation will dismantle the camp and return the site to its original condition.

"Great care is taken to preserve the environmental integrity of the ice floe," said Estrada.

During the five-week exercise, Trenchant, along with US fast-attack submarines, the Seawolf-class Connecticut and Los Angeles-class Hartford, will conduct multiple Arctic transits, a North Pole surfacing, scientific data collection and other training evolutions.

"The run ashore is a bit bleak, but I would not have missed this for the world; it has been a fantastic opportunity to experience something different," said one submariner.





● From left, Sgt 'Disco' Rich leads the CO and RSM through 'Peter's Pool'; Smiley faces in the pool; Sgt Joe Long at the sheep dip; The end is in sight with a run

Musicians and marines put through their paces at Lympstone

Born to be wild

I'M A Royal Marines Musician, get me out of here...

Would-be members of the Navy's world-famous band put on brave faces as they prepare to go through the 'sheep dip' – a short, water-filled tunnel – watched by fellow trainees.

Fifty trainee musicians from the Royal Marines School of Music were taken out of their comfy surroundings (en suite individual cabins, classrooms, halls and practice rooms) in Portsmouth...

...and endured a week in the wild down at the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone, near Exeter, where the Navy's elite seaborne infantry earn their coveted green berets.

Also out in the elements were members of 1 Assault Group RM, for Regimental Sergeant Major WO1 Kevan Roberts's leaving run.

Although Royal Marines mostly crew and command the group's substantial flotilla of landing craft, raiding craft and small boats, they're supported by a dark blue team of marine and weapon engineers, loggies, survival equipment and seamanship specialists, plus German, Dutch and US Coast Guard personnel serving on various exchange programmes.

To foster the RM's legendary 'all of one team' spirit and mentality, 1 AGRM's departing RSM suggested the endurance course on Woodbury Common – one of the challenges every Royal Marine must come through to earn the green beret.

Just shy of 50 personnel – some of them fairly apprehensive as they hadn't experienced the course before – turned up at CTCRM in Lympstone on a bitterly cold (3°C), windy and rainy day.

Despite the initial apprehension of some, the atmosphere was fairly upbeat – helped by the Royal Marines taking part in the run offering advice and encouragement to their 'blue beret' comrades.

After a quick warm-up, the runners headed off around the course under the guidance of Sgt 'Disco' Rich (1 AGRM's PTI) with the expectation of warm dry clothes, a hot wet, maybe even some hot food at the end of the course...

...except that Sgt Rich was too busy photobombing every image recorded of the occasion to provide the food and drinks. All that was left was to put on dry clothes and return to RM Tamar.

"Everyone got back on the coach in high spirits – it was a most successful day," said WO1 Graham Smith. "Everyone having smiled a lot, laughed a lot, shivered a lot and most importantly returned injury-free with memories of a very different leaving run."

As well as performing at public events up and down the land such as the Mountbatten Festival of Music in the Albert Hall, homecomings, (de)commissioning ceremonies, in time of war, the RM Band Service has a key role to perform.

Its men and women act as stretcher bearers and assist medical teams both on warships

and the casualty treatment ship RFA Argus, as well as in the field.

That means they must be expected to endure the hardships their commando brethren are used to, hence the 'survival week' at Lympstone.

By day temperatures never got higher than 8°C, were more typically around 4°C and, at night, dropped below zero.

Under the guidance of the school's physical trainers LPT Iona Mannerling and Sgt James Plowright and with the help of C/Sgt Terry Ansell and Cpl Matthew Potts, the trainees began by learning the basics of survival – building shelters from natural resources (trees, foliage) in Gidley Woods, as well as cooking fish and chickens from scratch.

Having survived a very cold night in the open, the trainees moved to the training centre itself to tackle the gruelling endurance course – a six mile cross-country slog, mixed with various obstacles such as pipes, tunnels and the sheep dip – the dreaded 'bottom field' assault course (which commando recruits are expected to complete in just five minutes) and the Tarzan 'death slide' which also features a 30ft rope climb up a near vertical wall.

"The trainees seemed to enjoy the week thoroughly as it was certainly a change of scenery from instruments and music practice," said Iona.

Their charges are now back in Portsmouth where they've resumed their musical training (two years and eight months for musicians, two years for buglers).





● Chef Jonathan Stigle from Team Plymouth plates up his starter featuring pan seared honey duck

Pictures: LPhoto Rory Arnold

Devonport deliver perfection on plate

PORTSMOUTH v Plymouth. The dockyard derby.

Temperatures rise and it can get a little tasty. But away from football, the competition was equally fierce as chefs from Portsmouth and Devonport went into battle to see who would represent the Royal Navy at the annual tri-Service cookery showdown. And it was Devonport's chefs and stewards who made it through to Exercise Joint Caterer later this year after taking the title from Portsmouth. Each team, of two chefs and a steward, were required to produce a three-course meal with accompanying wines within 90 minutes.

Enjoying the fare at Admiralty House were guests including Cdre Jim Higham, Commander of Portsmouth Naval Base, and Kim Richardson from Greenwich Hospital, sponsors of the event. "The skill of those cooking and serving, and their knowledge and confidence was phenomenal. It's been a very pleasurable experience and the food has been exceptional," said Kim. The Portsmouth team rustled up grilled fillet of hake to start, pan roasted rack of lamb for the main and a vanilla panna cotta for pud. On the Devonport menu was pan seared honey duck to start, torched Devon mackerel fillet for the main and a deconstructed citrus

burst cheesecake. CPO Joey Murray, who organised the event, said: "Every year the flotillas hold their own individual cook-and-serve competitions in order for our chefs and stewards to showcase their flair and skills. "From the success of the individual flotilla competitions, we decided to hold an overall cook off between the winning teams in order for them to have bragging rights throughout the Fleet as the best team." Devonport's team will be part of the Naval Service Culinary Arts Team bidding to beat the Army and RAF at Joint Caterer, which is held at the Defence Academy, Shrivenham, in the autumn.



● LCh Russell Aitken of Team Portsmouth and Ch Jonathan Stigle from Plymouth; LCh Stephen Dooley; Plating up a meal

Ship shape and Bristol fashion

THE Lord Mayor and Lord Lieutenant of Bristol were special guests of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity at HMS Excellent. Councillor Lesley Jones and Mrs Peaches Golding were given a tour of the RNRMC's offices before being welcomed on board their city's namesake HMS Bristol by CO, Lt Cdr David Price. Both guests were treated to a presentation and a tour on board the Royal Navy's training ship. The visit was organised to mark the connection between the city of Bristol and its namesake ship while furthering the relationship between the city and the RNRMC. "I think the HMS Bristol is absolutely fabulous. As a trustee of SS Great Britain, I enjoy the engineering of ships and the thing I like about the SS Great Britain is that the wonderful engine and screw system on board, is now used in every ship across Britain and the world," said Mrs Golding. One of those serving on board HMS Bristol is Bristol born, AB (WS) Matthew Tagg. Having joined the Royal Navy at 19, he did his standard training at both HMS Raleigh and HMS Collingwood before serving for a year and a half in HMS Daring.



He said: "It's a privilege to serve in HMS Bristol with the family background I have in the city of Bristol itself. "It was also an honour to meet the Lord Mayor and Lord Lieutenant and to have them on board." The ship, which is a destroyer, was built in the late 1960s and saw action during the Falklands conflict. Today, she plays host to up to 17,000 visitors per year and continues to be a training and accommodation ship docked permanently alongside in Portsmouth's Whale Island.



● Jack's family look on as WO Matt Newman, right, is joined by CPO Neil Campbell in getting their hair cut off for CLIC Sargent

Matt finish for dad

AIR Engineers from HMS Sultan and RNAS Culdrose united to show their support for a colleague by having their heads shaved for the young people's cancer charity CLIC Sargent. WO1 Matt Newman decided to undergo the challenge after his 16-year-old-son Jack was diagnosed with stage four Hodgkin Lymphoma. It has been a particularly challenging time for not only Jack, but for all of his family. Chemotherapy sessions have meant that Jack has had to drop out of his college studies and has lost some of his hair. Throughout this time they have been receiving pastoral support through the Divisional Chain, RN/RM Welfare, Chaplaincy and civilian charities including CLIC Sargent, who offered Jack a grant to put toward anything that would assist him during his treatment and recuperation. Matt said: "Thanks to an early prognosis Jack's chances of making a full recovery are very good, but the help we've received from charities such as CLIC Sargent has been invaluable. "When we found out about Jack's illness, he was very concerned about losing his hair and I promised him that if he was going to lose it then I would too. It's great to have the support of those who work around me." To make a donation towards Matt's fundraising challenge visit: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/jacknewmanfund>

Haven't you grown!



SURG Lt Deona Chan celebrates with family friend AB Brandon Wong as he completed his Phase One training at HMS Raleigh. Deona's father was great friends with Brandon's grandfather and the two families keep in regular contact. Brandon, who plans to become an Electronic Warfare Specialist, was awarded the Captain's Prize for Best Turnout and Bearing during his basic training. "I always remembered him as a five-year-old boy. It is amazing to see that he has grown into a young man and joined the Royal Navy," said Deona. "I am very pleased to see that he has made a lot of good friends and he seems to be inspired and motivated by good role models during Basic Training."

Community upgrade

A £2m upgrade to a Helensburgh community site has been announced to mark the first anniversary of the joint development plan between the Royal Navy and Argyll and Bute Council. Building Contractor Stewart & Shields Ltd has been awarded a contract to upgrade the Drumfork Centre in Helensburgh's Churchill Square. The work is being solely funded by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity. "A huge amount of effort has been expended to get this exciting and important project to this stage," said Captain Craig Mearns, Captain of HMS Neptune. The refurbishment is due to be completed in August with the centre reopening later this year. The revamped building will feature an area for a registered childcare provider and five multi-purpose function rooms that can be used for activities.

The only charity dedicated to supporting children whose parents serve, or have served, in the Naval Service.

Originally set up as an orphanage, we now assist children with a wide range of needs and at times of family crisis. Applications can be made at any time and those seeking assistance can contact the office directly for an application form, or download it from our website.

311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth PO2 8RN • t 023 9263 9534 e caseworkers@nrnmchildrensfund.org.uk
www.nrnmchildrensfund.org.uk

RNRMCF Registered charity number: 1160182 • Patron: HRH The Duke of York, KG, GCVO, CD

■ MUSIC fans can see HM Royal Marines Band Collingwood at a series of concerts in Fareham this year.

The band will appear at the Millennium Hall on the base on June 20 and 21, September 19-20 and December 13-15.

Tickets are available at £12.50 to £15 or season tickets from £40-£50.

For details email navyband-cwdcsec@mod.uk

■ THE Parade Ground at HMS Sultan was transformed for an afternoon as the Forces Cinemas Movie Machine rolled in to Gosport for an extra special treat.

Personnel and their families enjoyed one of two free showings of the new Marvel film *Black Panther* in an 80-seat cinema on wheels.

■ SECOND Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir Jonathan Woodcock was both a judge and the guest of honour at a Strictly Sultana Charity Ball at HMS Sultan, held in memory of Max Quilter.

Max was born with a heart defect to Lts Gail and George Quilter in the summer of 2017. He underwent his first life-saving surgery at just 90 minutes old. Despite initially recovering well and undergoing further planned surgery, Max died in his parents' arms following a heart attack at just 12 weeks old.

So far, over £5.5k has been raised from the ball for the charities who have supported Max and his family.

If you would like to donate, please visit <https://www.justgiving.com/remember/480356/Maxwell-Quilter>

■ PERSONNEL across HMS Collingwood flocked to sample some sweet treats at a cake sale held to raise funds for Woodentots, the base's nursery.

Thanks to their combined efforts the sale raised £180, which will help fund new equipment and family days.

■ A TEAM of sailors from Victory Squadron visited Trafalgar School, Portsmouth, to support a flag-raising ceremony.

Attending the event were the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Councillor Ken Ellcome, Cdre Andy Cree and Cdr Matt Stratton, Chair of Governors and a host of other guests, to witness and support the 'Raising of the House Flags'.

The students voted on their House names and selected four ships involved in the Battle of Trafalgar.

A whole school tutor competition was then launched for students to design house flags, with the winning designers working with a graphics expert to produce their school flags.

■ SSAFA has been awarded a grant of £6,000 by the Annington Trust to support SSAFA's new Short Breaks provision in 2018.

The grant will enable SSAFA to offer places on the breaks at a reduced cost to families who have a child with an additional need and/or disability.

Two weekend-long breaks will be available in spring and winter for up to 90 family members. For more information visit www.ssafa.org.uk

■ STAFF and students from St Francis School in Fareham were celebrating when HMS Collingwood's Base Warrant Officer visited and presented them with a cheque.

St Francis School, which caters for children aged between two and 19 with severe learning difficulties, relies on two ageing minibuses to provide essential sports and educational trips.

To obtain a new vehicle from the Variety Club, they needed to raise a contribution of £14,000.

The Warrant Officers' and Senior Rates' Mess at HMS Collingwood raised £2,000 through a range of activities.



Royal Marines mark Freedom of city honour Birmingham's new blues



THE heart of Britain's second city was brought to a halt on a busy shoppers' Saturday as the finest naval infantry and military band in the world paraded through the streets.

The Royal Marines celebrated their newly-awarded Freedom of Birmingham by marching through the city centre to the applause of crowds and clicks of smartphones.

Brummies were treated to more than an hour of perfect military pomp and ceremony in celebration of their council's decision to bestow the city's highest honour on the Corps, joining 15 other military units going back to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in 1946.

Despite being 75 miles from the nearest sea, city leaders decided that given the "close relationship of our people with the Royal Marines" the Corps was worthy of its highest honour.

There is a permanent RM presence in Birmingham in the form of a 61-year-old Royal Marines Reserve detachment (which comes under RMR Mersey), sharing a home with the city's RNR unit, HMS Forward, a

stone's throw from St Andrews.

They were joined by the new head of the Corps, Commandant General Maj Gen Charlie Stickland, the men of 40 Commando, personnel from the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone, the RM Band Collingwood, veterans and cadets, all marching into Victoria Square.

Lord Mayor of Birmingham Cllr Anne Underwood inspected the massed ranks before addressing those present at midday, followed by the presentation of the freedom scroll to the general, who handed a commando dagger to the Lord Mayor.

"Although this great city is positioned in the centre of the country, far from the sea, it has many links with the Corps. Birmingham has long been a fertile recruiting ground for us and we are still recruiting," said Maj Gen Stickland.

"In recent years, the Royal Marines have been hugely indebted to Selly Oak Hospital and then more recently the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham for its truly outstanding support of our hundreds of casualties from both the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.

"We will be forever grateful for their medical staffs' surgical skill and subsequent

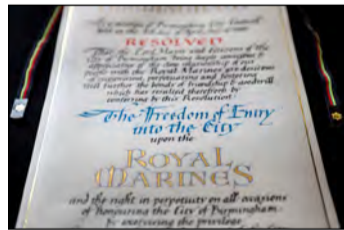
care when dealing with our wounded colleagues."

He singled out just three of many Royal Marines from Birmingham who had distinguished themselves over the past, from Sgt Norman Finch who won the VC at Zeebrugge in 1918 and has a monument erected in his name in the city centre, to GC winner L/Cpl Matt Croucher, a member of the city's RMR detachment, decorated for selflessly throwing himself on to a booby trap to save his comrades in Afghanistan – he survived and so did they. And, lastly, Maj Gen Stickland remembered Mne Jonathan Crookes, killed by an IED in Afghanistan in July 2010 when he tried to aid comrades pinned down by insurgents.

The title was awarded to the Corps ten months ago, but due to commitments it was the end of February before its men and women had the opportunity to formally receive the scroll and then exercise their right as freemen.

They join Type 42 destroyer HMS Birmingham, the local RNR establishment HMS Forward and current Type 45 destroyer HMS Daring.

Pictures: LPhoto Joe Cater



Fun on slopes thanks to charity for blind



● Carl Williams with guide Lee Cole in Italy

A BLIND veteran from Buckinghamshire has been skiing in Canazei, Italy, with other vision-impaired Armed Forces veterans, thanks to national military charity Blind Veterans UK.

Former Royal Navy man Carl Williams, 46, skied in the Dolomites mountain range with 24 other vision-impaired skiers as part of the charity's 41st annual ski trip.

Carl learned to ski 14 years ago with the support of Blind Veterans UK and has helped organise the event since 2013. He skis with the support of a guide who gives him instructions via a microphone and earpiece.

Carl said: "The Blind Veterans UK ski trip is one of the highlights of my year. Being out on the slopes for a week gives me enough confidence to bottle up, take home and use for whatever other challenges I face in my day-to-day life.

Carl joined the Royal Navy in 1990 as an Artificer Apprentice, however during his training at HMS Daedalus his central vision started to deteriorate rapidly.

Following extensive medical tests at Royal Naval Hospital Haslar he was diagnosed with a hereditary eye condition known as Leber's Optic Atrophy, which left Carl with only limited peripheral vision.

He was medically discharged from the Navy in 1991 at the age of 19 and registered blind.

Carl said: "My time in the Navy was sadly cut very short. It's a period of my life I still dream of in full technicolour and I miss it a lot. But I do think that losing my sight at a young age made me very adaptable, and I wasn't going to let it stop me living my life."

He joined Blind Veterans UK in 1991 and attended the charity's Brighton training and rehabilitation centre. He was given mobility training with a long cane and took cooking, braille and IT courses to help him adapt to his sight loss. Carl even learned to ride a bike again during his first year with Blind Veterans UK, and went on to complete a London to Brighton tandem bike ride to raise funds for the charity.

"The charity equipped me with the life skills and determination to keep going when the chips were down, for which I'm truly indebted," added Carl, who has now a successful career in IT.

If you, or someone you know, served in the Armed Forces or did National Service and is now battling severe sight loss, find out how Blind Veterans UK could help by calling 0800 389 7979 or visiting blindveterans.org.uk

Not just a pipe dream for Irene

MOUNT Everest, an RNRMC flag and bagpipes.

It can only mean top fundraiser Irene Robinson is at it again.

The globetrotter – who two years ago played her bagpipes on all seven continents – climbed the famous mountain to raise more cash.

During the eight-day climb to base camp, Ms Robinson, from Poole in Dorset, had to face bitter temperatures of -14°C degrees while battling the tough altitude on Everest.

"It took every ounce of physical and mental strength that I had to push myself to reach Base Camp," she said.

"It was bitterly cold, my drinking water had frozen and I couldn't feel my fingers but I was ecstatic to be at the top of the world with my bagpipes, while flying the RNRMC flag."

No stranger to a challenge, in 2016 Irene travelled more than 50,000 miles; visiting seven continents while playing her bagpipes and helping to raise £10,000 for the RNRMC in the process.

However, according to Irene, her Everest expedition was both "physically

and mentally" the hardest thing she has faced.

Yet, like before, Irene once again managed to play her bagpipes in another of the world's most extreme locations.

"I played my pipes at The Good Luck hotel tea house in Lobuche – much enjoyed by the locals. But the pipes do not sound their best in extreme temperatures."

Describing what she will remember most about the challenge, Irene recounted: "I will never forget the magnitude, splendour and feeling of isolation at being in the Khumbu Glacier surrounded by the magnificent Himalayas."

"Trekking back, we saw the most beautiful sunset on Everest that will be forever in my mind's eye."

Having visited many of the world's most beautiful yet dangerous places, Irene is now just happy to relax and reflect on her adventure.

"I'm looking forward to completely feeling myself again, reflecting on what I have achieved and enjoying

how grateful I am that it's been such an incredible, once-in-a-lifetime journey."

Recently recognised at an RNRMC Supporters' Reception, Irene has been an exceptional representative for the charity and has been wholly committed to helping support the Naval family through adventurous fundraising.

Discussing what fundraising for the charity means to her, Irene said: "It means the world to me to do this for the RNRMC. I have continually been inspired by the stories I hear and the people that I have met through the charity."

"My incentive for this challenge was to raise a RNRMC flag at Everest Base Camp, and now I've done it."

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity has been the national charity of the Royal Navy for over ten years.

In that time, enthusiastic fundraisers like Irene have helped to contribute to the £51m that the charity has distributed to sailors, marines, veterans and their families.

For more information on the RNRMC, call 023 9387 1520 or visit www.rnrmc.org.uk



Top fundraiser Gibbo joins us

TOP fundraiser CPO Andy Gibbs has joined the RNRMC.

Andy, pictured above left, has raised more than £525,000 for the Armed Forces community over the past ten years.

Known as 'Gibbo', he plans to use his fundraising experience to help raise money for sailors, marines, veterans and their families.

Originally brought up in Oxfordshire, CPO Gibbs joined the Royal Navy in 1987 and has been in the Service for over 30 years.

His interest and passion for fundraising began almost ten years ago after reading about the great work being undertaken at Headley Court – an Armed Forces Rehabilitation Centre that benefits from RNRMC support.

His first high-profile fundraising effort came in 2008 when he decided to walk across Scotland, raising £10,000 in the process.

Having completed ten years with a different national charity, CPO Gibbs decided that he not only needed a new challenge but that he wanted to raise money directly for the national charity of the Royal Navy.

Speaking about his decision to join the RNRMC's volunteer fundraising team, he said: "After previously raising over £525,000, I thought it was time to join the RNRMC team to raise money for a charity that directly affects serving members of the Royal Navy and veterans alike. The grants awarded by the RNRMC to other Armed Forces charities who support Naval veterans was another reason I have started raising funds for the charity."

He continued: "The RNRMC has a very different approach to that of other charities I have raised funds for. "This includes the team being

made to feel very welcome with personal messages of thanks after completing big collections, it makes the team feel really appreciated."

As a seasoned fundraiser, Gibbo has learned more than a few things about how to raise money for charity.

Discussing the key to his past success and his advice for those thinking of fundraising, he said: "The most important thing to remember when fundraising is that whatever figure you raise on the day is always more than what the charity had prior to your event."

"Start small and set small targets, then build up slowly to bigger events and collections."

"It's also not only about raising funds for the charity but more importantly raising the profile of the charity and spreading the word of what the charity stands for and promotes."

Of course, behind every great fundraiser is a great team. This is no different for Gibbo, who leads a reliable and experienced group of individuals who help him collect, come rain or shine.

Enthusiasm about his team, CPO Gibbs said: "The team are critical to what we do. Penny Harris and I run our team and we have a number of volunteers who we contact for collections depending on numbers of permitted collectors."

"We like to concentrate on transport hubs pre sporting events, such as targeting train stations and tube stations specifically that have a large footfall to maximise collecting potential."

CPO Gibbs and his hardworking team, who often give up their weekends to raise money for the RNRMC, have already hit the ground running.

After only a few months of collecting for the charity they have raised over £11,000.



● Scott Mather and David Burnside receive the shirt from Sunderland legend Kevin Ball

Canny move will really help, pet

SUNDERLAND AFC have teamed up with the RNRMC to raise funds to help support sailors, marines and their families.

The club generously donated 21 signed match-day shirts from their local derby against rivals Middlesbrough.

Donated to the RNRMC to mark November's Remembrance weekend, the shirt worn during the match is the team's away strip and is grey with a gold trim featuring a special Remembrance Day Poppy Insignia.

Each of the shirts being auctioned have been personally signed by a Sunderland AFC player.

As the national charity of the Naval Service, the RNRMC ensures that all money raised is distributed to those in need across the Fleet; to those serving at home and abroad, to veterans

and their families. This auction will help to ensure that those who serve in the Naval fleet, often for extended deployments, will have a support network to call on if they ever face life with injury, bereavement or illness.

Representatives of the RNRMC were in attendance for the reverse fixture against Middlesbrough in February, with Sunderland AFC's Kevin Ball making a half-time presentation to CPOs Scott Mather and David Burnside, who are both based at HMS Calliope in Newcastle.

Speaking about Sunderland's generous donation, Fundraising Project Leader at the RNRMC Laura Burnett said: "We're incredibly grateful to Sunderland AFC for this kind donation. This gesture helps recognise the sacrifice made by those from

the North East who have served, or who are serving their country.

"The money raised through the auctioning of these shirts will help us to continue supporting our Naval family throughout the Fleet."

Martin Bain, Sunderland AFC CEO, added: "The club is proud to support the Armed Forces wherever possible, and we hope that the funds raised through this auction will help the charity in their vital work."

"Service in the Armed Forces is part of the fabric of the North East and we were pleased to welcome the charity's representatives to the Middlesbrough game."

The shirts that were auctioned raised close to £1,000 with all funds going to help support sailors, marines and their families.

Ten make awards shortlist

THE list of cadets who face the final hurdle in the CVQC Westminster Awards 2018 has been released – and this year the standard was so high that 40 have been named instead of the expected 30.

This year saw a record number of nominations and judges found it tough settling on those who will make it through to the final selection event, to be held early this month in Somerset.

Ten contenders represent Sea Cadet units, and if successful in the selection event, could be packing their bags for a trip to South Africa in the summer, enjoying lunch on a visit to the House of Lords – and would be in the mix for the top prize.

The competition is not looking for the best of the best – it aims to identify selfless, determined individuals who always keep their heads up and remain positive through adversity; those who have overcome a personal challenge or gone the distance to help someone.

The Sea Cadet ten are:
Rose (Brentwood unit); Charlotte (Stratford-upon-Avon); Larissa (Chelmsford); Rose (Maldon and District); Alex (Belfast (Formidable)); Ellie (City of Salford); Jordan (Ashington); Samuel (Weymouth); Tyler (Dundee); Katie (Warsash).

For more details on the scheme see www.cvqo.org/westminster-award/

NCS scheme offered again

SEA Cadets is delighted to once again offer the NCS programme to teenagers across England.

NCS – National Citizen Service – helps build young people's confidence and self-belief. It consists of three phases – a residential trip, life skills and a social action project.

It is the third time the charity has offered the scheme, with its pilot in 2016 shortlisted for a CYP Now Award.

Cadets learnt important skills while making a real difference in their communities by running social actions projects such as helping homeless veterans, buying Christmas presents for disadvantaged teenagers, and running a fun day for adults with additional needs.

The summer programme will take place in June and July and is open to 15, 16 and 17-year-old cadets in England. Interest can be registered by emailing NCS@ms-sc.org

Josh joins RN

JOSH has launched his dream career after joining the Royal Navy straight from Irvine unit.

He set his sights on the Senior Service after getting a taste for the nautical life with the cadets.

Josh, 16, is now undergoing basic training at HMS Raleigh and hopes to be a Warfare Specialist.

His friends at Irvine unit presented him with a celebration cake – which he sliced up with a Naval sword.

Speaking from HMS Raleigh, Josh said: "Since I was young I always wanted to join the Services, and then I joined the Sea Cadets and got a feel of what it would be like in the Royal Navy. "I'd recommend the Sea Cadets to anyone."

Market Harbourough beat the big freeze

WHEN the 'Beast from the East' struck at the beginning of March, it looked like it would put paid to Sea cadet activity in the Leicestershire town of Market Harbourough for a few days.

But the Executive Officer of Market Harbourough unit, Lt (SCC) Richard Chester, had other ideas.

The Royal Marines Cadet volunteer thought that Training



Ship Fernie could use the adverse conditions to the group's advantage – and staff and cadets agreed...

"Very soon after questioning whether the cadet training would continue that evening due to the snow fall and confirmation of all local schools being closed for the day, Lt Chester rang up and posed the idea of reaching out to the community and also engaging the available cadets who were off school," said unit Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Shane Daly RNR.

"With no hesitation, the call was put out to the Ship's Company and over the two days, we had 15 volunteers who came forward and provided assistance in delivering essential items, clearing footpaths, driveways and access routes to nursing homes and the vulnerable."

Local radio station Harbourough FM broadcast the unit's offer, and the calls started to roll in.

One example was at the Willows Nursing and Residential Home, where cadets shifted snow from paths to allow access by staff, carers and support services (pictured left).

Other businesses in the town helped the cadets in their efforts – Screwfix, for example, provided a snow shovel.

In other cases it was simply a matter of delivering milk, bread or other items for people with limited mobility in order to tide them over until the ice and snow melted.

"Supporting the community is a big part of being cadet and to all, there was a great sense of



● Cdt 1 Chester and Cdt Reeves brave the freezing conditions to deliver shopping to a grateful couple in Market Harbourough who had been housebound because of the snow

pride of what was achieved," said Lt Daly.

"However small the task appeared, we knew it would make a huge difference by someone being fed, preventing an injury or more importantly, accessing care."

"Following success within the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and National Citizenship Service, our bond within the

community is bigger than ever.

"Throughout the two days and still today, we are receiving praise for our efforts ranging from small gifts, MP's tweets and 5,000 likes on Facebook."

Other benefits included the chocolate biscuits provided by a woman who was keen to show her appreciation for the efforts of the cadets.

Former Captain mourned

A FORMER Captain Sea Cadets who later went on to become the Corps' Chief Executive has died at the age of 74.

Capt Peter Grindal joined the Royal Navy at Dartmouth in 1961, and while still a midshipman under training he saw action in Brunei while on board a river motor launch.

In 1968 he was appointed to his first command, HMS Brave Swordsman – one of a pair of fast patrol boats.

And when we say fast, we mean fast – although the then Lt Grindal assumed command towards the end of her Naval career, in her prime Brave Swordsman's three gas turbine engines gave her a top speed of over 50 knots, or 60mph.

From 1969-71 he undertook the Long Gunnery Course at HMS Excellent, and had several seagoing appointments as Gunnery Officer.

He also commanded two frigates, HM ships Zulu and Ariadne.

In the late 1980s Capt Grindal was in charge at new entry training establishment HMS Raleigh at Torpoint in Cornwall, and he finished his Naval career in 1992 as Commodore Amphibious Warfare, picking up a CBE shortly before retirement from the Active List.

That same year he was appointed Captain Sea Cadets, and over the next eight years with the organisation he also took on the roles of Chief Executive and finally Development Advisor.

After retirement he maintained his links with youth work through Bath Abbey, and in his later years he wrote a much-admired book on the Royal Navy's role in the abolition of the slave trade, *Opposing the Slavers*.

Cadets and volunteer staff represented the Corps at Capt Grindal's funeral.

Academy pupils visit BRNC

PUPILS from Dartmouth Academy have been rewarded for their positive behaviour for learning with a visit to Britannia Royal Naval College.

The group of 20 pupils, who are currently in years 7 to 11, spent the morning at the college finding out about the Royal Navy and taking part in some of the training.

They were introduced to the theory of ship stability and took part in teamworking and leadership training on BRNC's low ropes training facility.

The activities were based on elements of the initial naval training course for Officer Cadets.

One of the Academy pupils, 12-year-old Charlie, said: "We've learnt about boats and how they float, also we've learnt about the Royal Navy and what they do."

"We had to use teamwork to go across the wires on the low ropes. We went all around the course and if you fell off you had to start again."

"There were supposed to be sharks and crocodiles on the ground... It's been really, really fun."

The visit followed the recent signing of a twinning agreement between BRNC and Dartmouth Academy aimed at strengthening ties.

Under this agreement Officer Cadets from BRNC and pupils



● (Above) Pupils from Dartmouth Academy learn principles of ship stability at Britannia Royal Naval College; (right) the visiting group test themselves and their leadership and teamwork skills on the college's low ropes course

of the Academy will meet and interact in an educational, cultural and sporting environment, with the intention of improving the understanding of the Royal Navy, community relations and international culture

PE teacher Mike Canning said: "As teachers we record a score after each lesson based on the pupils' attitude and behaviour. This group had the best scores and so as a reward they've come to the College."

"As an aside to that, quite a few of our pupils live in houses just outside of the college."

"They've spent their whole lives growing up here and have

never come on to this soil.

"For them it's a tremendous opportunity to see what's on the other side of the fence."

"Others have families that are in the Royal Navy."

"The idea is to get across to them all the things the Navy does, to motivate and inspire them to do something different if they want to."

The arrangement works two ways – a group of Officer Cadets from BRNC have also spent time at Dartmouth Academy helping with odd jobs and teaching the pupils some Royal Navy basics such as knot-tying, chartwork and drill.



Worthing college welcomes RN CCF



Penarth cadets shine

An AWARDS ceremony at Maindy Barracks, Cardiff, saw Penarth unit's AC Matthew (pictured above) appointed Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for South Glamorgan for 2018, in recognition of the outstanding contribution he has made to TS Glamorgan.

An extremely likable and popular cadet, AC Matthew was presented with his award by the Lord Lieutenant herself, Mrs Morfudd Meredith.

His main duties for the coming year will be acting as an assistant to the Lord Lieutenant at various official engagements within the county of South Glamorgan.

On World Cancer Day 2018, OC Cameron, a member of Penarth unit, took time out of TS Glamorgan's busy 75th anniversary celebrations to spend time collecting funds at the local Morrison's superstore on behalf of CLIC Sargent Cancer Charity.

Driven by his desire to help others who had suffered with the various forms of this disease – like his friend Lauren, from Cardiff unit, who was diagnosed in 2014, Cameron contacted Rhys Pursey, the store's charities manager, to ask if a collection could be organised.

Mr Pursey agreed, and Cameron duly attended the store in Newport Road, Cardiff, on the appointed date.

After a full day collecting, when all the coins and notes were totted up, it emerged that Cameron had collected the amazing amount of £1,162.72 from generous shoppers.

A NEW Royal Navy Combined Cadet Force (CCF) section has been opened at Northbrook Metropolitan College in Worthing, West Sussex.

And there to officially sanction the occasion and celebrate the establishment of the section was a former CCF cadet, Cdre David Elford, Naval Regional Commander for Eastern England.

The event was hosted by Nick Juba, Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Brighton Metropolitan College.

"It is a real great honour to be invited to open your Combined Cadet Force Royal Navy Section at Northbrook Metropolitan College," said Cdre Elford.

"I would like to thank all those who have worked so hard over the last year to create the conditions which have led to its formation, and in particular I must congratulate the Contingent Commander, Lt Neil Cockcroft, for his drive and enthusiasm."

Royal Navy Cadets took centre stage during a parade led by Lt (CCF) Cockcroft RNR, who also served in the Royal Navy as a Physical Training Instructor and is now Senior Tutor on the Uniformed Services course at the college.

"Today has been fantastic," said Lt Cockcroft.

"We've been planning for this day for a long time.

"It's such a pleasure to have finally reached this point after all the hard work that the young people have put in.

"We are growing as a unit and the CCF is enhancing the profile of the college in the community and the Greater Brighton area."

The new Royal Navy Section joins the Fire Service Cadet section from the college and is funded as part of the Cadet Expansion Programme (CEP), with an aim to promote a military ethos in schools, and instil core values in young people



● (Above and below) Cdr David Elford, Naval Regional Commander for Eastern England, officiates at the formal opening of the Royal Naval Combined Cadet Force section at Northbrook Metropolitan College in Worthing

Pictures: LPhoto Barry Swainsbury

that will help them get the most out of their lives, and contribute to their communities across the country.

The pupils develop key qualities such as self-discipline, loyalty and respect, strong leadership, teamwork and resilience.

The programme focuses on CCF units and ensures pupils from state schools get a chance to experience life-enriching activities as part of school life.

This creates positive benefits in all areas of school life, including character skills strongly valued by employers looking for leadership, teamwork, communication skills, integrity and career progression.

"The cadets have given me the chance to improve my self-confidence," said LC Curtis, aged 19.



"We get to do some amazing things with the Combined Cadet Force, like flying in a helicopter and sailing around the Isle of Wight.

"I'm also getting some great experiences out of it as well, including an opportunity to lead others and take control, which I haven't done before."

High-calibre instruction

CADETS from St John's School, Leatherhead visited HMS Collingwood as part of their Combined Cadet Force programme, which aims to teach teamwork, leadership and self-reliance.

The party of cadets split into

four groups to tour round the Base, including the Weapons Training Section, part of the Maritime Warfare School, to learn about the maintaining and firing of the Navy's weapons systems.

In the Future Training Unit,



● Emilia lifts a 4.5in shell, watched by her colleagues

Pictures: Keith Woodland

they were shown the latest state-of-the-art computer modelling which is used to train senior rate maintainers on the new Queen Elizabeth-class carriers, showing them in great detail the hydraulic hatches and weapons-handling equipment and allowing them to familiarise themselves with how these can be used and maintained whilst out at sea.

The cadets were also shown how the mechanised weapons-handling system stores and moves weapons efficiently to achieve optimum performance and space allocation on board the limited confines of a ship.

Transferring into the nearby Virtual Reality (VR) suite, the cadets 'visited' the Bridge of the new Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier and undertook various tasks using the VR equipment, including fighting a fire, launching an aircraft and preparing a remote-controlled explosive device.

The cadets then toured the 4.5 Mark 8 Gun in the Weapons Engineering Training Unit, where PO Alan Bates entertained them with a full explanation of



● PO Bates explains the workings of the 4.5 Mark 8 Gun

the gun's mechanics and how a shell is loaded and fired (pictured above), and then gave the cadets an opportunity to lift one of the 37 kilogramme rounds to demonstrate how challenging this would be on an actual warship at sea.

They were then introduced to the cutting-edge technology employed by the base's Phalanx gun system fitted to the carriers,

which fires 90 20mm rounds every 1.2 seconds.

Cadet Ben Webb said of the visit, "It's been really interesting as I'm keen to join the Royal Navy on the engineering side and this visit has definitely encouraged me."

Cadet Fraser added: "I'm really enjoying my visit. It's interesting to learn how it all works."

Titles go South – and East

SOUTHERN Area won three of the four categories at the National Five-a-side Football Championships, held at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre, Lincolnshire, at the end of February.

The fourth category – Junior Girls – was won by Eastern Area.

The results were:

Junior Boys:

Gold – Southern; Silver – Northern; Bronze – London.

Junior Girls:

Gold – Eastern; Silver – North West; Bronze – South West.

Senior Boys:

Gold – Southern; Silver – Eastern; Bronze – North West.

Senior Girls:

Gold – Southern; Silver – Northern Ireland; Bronze – Eastern.

Naturally interested

THREE Royal Marines Cadets from Queensferry and three Sea Cadets from Edinburgh Trinity attended the Scottish Natural Heritage and Youth Parliament reception.

Ex-Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale MSP was also at the event, and was so taken with the cadets that she even tried on one of their caps.

Given her appearance on TV's *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here* the Royal Marines Cadets also offered her some jungle training.

Marianne Sandison, of Scottish Natural Heritage, said they were delighted to have Edinburgh Trinity and Queensferry cadets join the conversation about the importance of nature and the outdoors to young people.

Find out more at www.nature.scot

Have a say on training

VOLUNTEERS and cadets are being encouraged to have their say on the Sea Cadet Training Programme.

The charity's training team has launched a competition with cash prizes, and is asking units to send in ideas for the New Entry Cadet to Cadet, and Cadet to Cadet First Class sessions.

All units are encouraged to have a go, and there is no limit to the amount of times you can enter.

Having your say means the Corps can help equip even more teenagers with all the things they need to cope with and enjoy the big and changing world they're going into.

See www.sccheadquarters.com/try-a-new-tack (a password-protected section of the website).

Gib Cup delay

THE first icy blasts of the Beast from the East, which brought snow and ice to most of Britain early last month, led to the postponement of the Gibraltar Cup competition.

A statement from Sea Cadet Corps HQ said: "This is obviously disappointing, but we have had to consider the safety of all our cadets and volunteers, who would have been travelling from across the country."

Staff at HQ are seeking to reschedule the event for a later date, when hopefully the weather will be little more hospitable.



Charity stall for Huntingdon

SHIPMATES from Huntingdon branch held their first charity stall of the year at the Tesco superstore at Bar Hill, Cambridge.

On the Saturday morning, S/Ms Karl Webb and Pete Aston set up the display with the branch's display boards and rum tub, RNA flags and merchandise, and armed with joining forms and details of the Royal Naval Association to hand.

Later in the day they were joined by S/Ms Martin Girvan and Janette Ground (the newest member of the branch).

Sunday saw S/M Karl return, with S/M Graham Murray, to complete the collection.

As with previous years, the stall was very popular and allowed shipmates to chat with the community and encourage those with RN service to join the Association.

In early February, the branch held its AGM.

The vice chairman, secretary, and committee member were re-elected - S/Ms Catherine Fearon, Mark Fearon, and Janette Ground respectively.

France Nord meet in St-Lô

ALMOST 30 members of France Nord branch attended lunch in the historic town of Saint-Lô in Normandy in mid-February.

The event was organised by S/Ms Ray and Liz Yeowell, and was held in unseasonably warm weather, prompting members to raise a glass to all shipmates 'chilling' back in Blighty.

Is anyone planning to visit Normandy/Brittany this summer? The branch holds lunches during the third week of the month at various towns and villages in the area - and extends a welcome to all shipmates.

For details of events see <https://sites.google.com/site/rnafrancenord/> or please contact alan.gard@sfr.fr for further details.

Loss of H5 remembered

MEMBERS of the Llandudno branch attended a memorial service at sea to honour the crew of submarine HMS H5, lost with all hands in Caernarfon Bay on March 2 1918.

Assisted by the RNLI, the group - including an ex-submariner - laid a wreath on the waters and recited the names of those lost.

H5 was rammed by a merchantman which mistook her for a U-boat, and amongst the 26 who died was an American - the first submariner from his country to die in the war.

Cadets care for Cheltenham standard

SUNDAY February 25 2018 was a very sad day as Cheltenham branch laid up their standard and officially decommissioned the Branch.

The age of the remaining few shipmates and a lack of new members forced the decision to be made.

Between the two World Wars a group of ex-Royal Navy Servicemen got together to form an association that became known as the Cheltenham Royal Navy Old Comrades Association.

After World War 2, in 1947, the Old Comrades became the Royal Naval Association with over 100 members, and the Old Comrades standard was laid up in a local church.

A new RNA standard was commissioned and remained in use until 1983 when that, too, was laid up in the same church.

A second new RNA standard was commissioned in 1983, and was in use until January this year, when the branch closed down after 70 years' service to the town of Cheltenham.

During those seven decades the branch was active at all military events in and around Cheltenham.

At the decommissioning ceremony the present standard was laid up and placed in the care of the Cheltenham Sea Cadet unit TS Legion - Cheltenham RNA and Sea Cadet unit have always had a close relationship.

This is believed to be the first time that

an RNA standard has been decommissioned into the care of a Sea Cadet unit.

TS Legion takes its name from the World War 2 destroyer HMS Legion purchased in 1941 by the people of Cheltenham with their War Bonds and public donations.

Legion lay alongside the sinking carrier Ark Royal in November 1941, rescuing many of her crew.

Legion was lost to German bombs in March 1942 in Grand Harbour Malta, and a plaque in Cheltenham Town Hall pays tribute to the 11 crew who died that day.

The Cadet unit has also taken the RNOCA and the 1947-1983 RNA standards under their safekeeping, and all will be displayed in their Drill Hall.

Ceremony marks end of Oman branch

A SIMPLE ceremony at the British Embassy in Muscat marked a sad occasion as the Muaskar al Murtafa'ah branch of the RNA in Oman closed after over 40 years of continuous support.

Branch chairman CPO Ian Vansittart presented the branch's standard to the Defence Attaché, Cdre Henry Duffy, and the Naval and Air Attaché, Cdr Kevin Broadley, for safekeeping.

CPO Vansittart first came to Oman in 1987.

As an aircraft engineer, he was attached to the Royal Air Force of Oman and worked to maintain their Skyvan fleet.

He fell in love with the country, and has lived there ever since with his wife Suzanne, who served a stint as the Warden of Salalah.

He joined the RNA branch in Muscat on arrival, but unfortunately recent years have seen a decline in membership numbers.

Cdre Duffy said: "It is a real honour to receive this standard, and it will hang in pride of place on the Defence Attaché's office wall in the Embassy. However, I hope that one day the Standard can be returned when this branch of the RNA reopens in future."



From left: Cdr Kevin Broadley RN (Naval and Air Attaché), CPO Ian Vansittart and Cdre Henry Duffy RN (Defence Attaché) at the British Embassy in Muscat

Close calls for Ernie in Far East

A VETERAN who is believed to be the oldest Naval Japanese POW survivor has died at the age of 103.

Walter Munn - known as Ernie - was born in London in December 1914, and an unhappy childhood began when his mother left the family home when he was just two.

Lying about his age, he joined the Royal Navy at the age of 14 years, and he eventually rose to the rank of chief petty officer.

In 1941 his ship was sunk and

he was fortunate to survive, but this was just the beginning of a most turbulent chapter of his life.

He was transferred to Shanghai to serve in river gunboat HMS Peterel, which was monitoring movements of the Japanese army in China.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941 Peterel suddenly became a target, and when her CO refused to surrender she was attacked by larger vessels at point-blank range.

Ernie was blown into the river

where he was captured trying to escape and spent the next three-and-a-half years as a Japanese POW, at which time his weight dropped to just six stones.

His role in the Peterel action was recounted as part of Desmond Wettern's book *The Lonely Battle*.

He was repatriated 18 months after the war finished but remained in the Navy, moving the family to Portland when he worked at the South Coast base.

On leaving the Navy after

serving his full 22 years Ernie went to work at the Admiralty Underwater Weapons Establishment in Portland, where he stayed until retirement - completing a total of 50 years service to the Crown.

Before he died Ernie told his daughter Deborah that he never expected to see his 30th birthday let alone be married and have a family - when he died he not only had a married daughter, but two grandsons and five great grandsons.

Despite the dark times, his family say he loved his life in the Royal Navy, and they never heard him talk of anything but his pride at being a sailor.

100 up for Winnie

A MEMBER of the HMS Manchester Association, S/M Winnie McAllan, has celebrated her 100th birthday at her home in the United States.

Winnie is the widow of George McAllan, who served in the Royal Navy for 20 years including spells on board HM ships Exmouth, Manchester and Belfast.

She last travelled from her American home to a reunion in the UK at the age of 96.

Rochdale honours carrier

THE people of Rochdale have honoured arguably the most famous ship in the Royal Navy over the past century.

Veterans from HMS Ark Royal - a name synonymous with Naval air power from the Great War until 2010 - were present as an avenue honouring the carrier was formally named in a suburb of the Lancashire town.

After a short parade through the Castleton district, two miles from the town centre, HMS Ark Royal Avenue was dedicated.

The carrier, in various incarnations, was associated with Leeds - so why the honour in Lancashire?

Well, the avenue is located on the site of the former Whipp and Bourne factory - the firm which provided switchgear for the Ark and other historic vessels including Titanic and the Royal Yacht Britannia.

Former factory employees joined former Ark crew and other veterans, plus Castleton residents and schoolchildren, who laid wreaths on behalf of those who served in Ark Royals down the years.

"It is brilliant that the council has invested so much time and money in these wonderful signs," said Gregory Cranfield, who served on the fifth HMS Ark Royal (the Harrier carrier) during the Gulf War.

"They are a lasting legacy to Whipp and Bourne and everyone who served on the Ark Royal. It was a really moving and emotional day.

"I was proud to play my part in keeping our seas and the UK peaceful and safe by serving on the Ark Royal."

Cllr Janet Emsley, Rochdale Council lead member for the Armed Forces, added: "It was particularly moving to see different generations of people present to witness the sign unveiling at this special event.

"Whipp and Bourne will always be synonymous with Castleton and the event was a vivid reminder of the major role it played in winning the peace and keeping our high seas safe.

"Thanks to everyone who supported the ceremony and a special mention to those who travelled from far and wide to join the celebration."

Centenarian visits base

A VETERAN who played his part in one of the most famous battles of World War 2 has paid a visit to Devonport Naval Base.

Centenarian Lloyd Seaward is a member of the HMS Exeter Association, and one of a handful of former crew members of the Royal Navy heavy cruiser which took part in the battle which was the culmination of the search for the formidable German pocket battleship Graf Spee off Uruguay in 1939.

HMS Exeter retired badly damaged during the initial battle, which ended with the scuttling of the German raider off the estuary of the River Plate.

Next year is the 80th anniversary of the battle, which provided a boost to British morale during a bitter winter in the UK.

Lloyd joined a reunion of HMS Exeter veterans in Exeter with a visit to the city's cathedral for a special service and a civic reception.

He visited Plymouth because his former ship was repaired in Devonport following the battle.

His visit, his first in 80 years, included the Devonport heritage site and the wardroom.



Naval staying power?

NAVY News reader Chris Cope has contacted us in connection with the obituaries published in last month's paper.

"The obituaries that you published in the March issue, where ages are disclosed, contained the names of 45 men and two women who have served in the Naval Service," said Mr Cope.

"Bearing in mind that the vast majority were men and that, on average, women live longer than men, it is remarkable that the average age at death of the men was 87, slightly behind that of the two women, which was 90.

"The overall average was 88. Clearly, those who served in the Navy live a long life.

"Perhaps the Navy's recruitment campaign should now read 'Join the Navy and live till you're 88'..."

Train of thought

JAMES Walker contacted RNA Central Office over the story of Seaman John H Carless, VC, killed in action at Heligoland Bight aboard light cruiser HMS Caledon on November 17 1917.

His death and the award of his VC was commemorated in 1992 – the 75th anniversary – by the placing of a headboard on a BR Class 31 diesel loco that was named after him.

The board is now on display in Walsall Museum.

Photographs of the engine show that the RNA played a role in the matter, and James would like to know if the project was a one-off, maybe by a local branch, – or was it part of broader venture to commemorate Naval heroes, co-ordinated centrally?

Award presented to sister of pilot

AN AWARD acknowledging the sacrifice of a Naval aviator has been presented to his sister 60 years after the crash that killed him.

Mabel Lloyd was joined by members of her family at a ceremony in Belfast City Hall, where the Lord Lieutenant of Belfast, Mrs Fionnuala Jay O'Boyle, presented her with an Elizabeth Cross.

The medal honours the memory of Lt Edward Wright, who died when the Fairey Gannet AS1 he was flying crashed in Nicosia on February 20 1958 – the Belfast-born pilot's 29th birthday.

The third eldest of six siblings, Lt Wright was married and had a daughter, but both are now dead, and Mabel is the last surviving sibling.

Two others died in the incident – Lt Wright's best friend, Lt Raymond Greer, also from Belfast, and Lt Frank Chivers.

The three men, of 847 Naval Air Squadron, were carrying out a night patrol in the anti-submarine variant of the aircraft during the Cyprus Emergency.

The Gannet, which was powered by a double turboprop engine, suffered engine problems and Lt Wright attempted to land.

He was forced to go round again, and on the second attempt the aircraft crashed, killing the three aviators.

The Naval squadron had deployed three Gannets to RAF Nicosia to patrol the waters around the island, looking out



● Family members of Lt Edward Wright at Belfast City Hall. From left: Jennifer Wright, Janet Baxter, Trevor Wright, Lord Mayor of Belfast Cllr Nuala McAllister, Lt Wright's sister Mabel Lloyd, Charles Lloyd, Lord Lieutenant Mrs Fionnuala Jay O'Boyle and Florence Wasson

for ships smuggling arms to insurgents – the Gannets were supporting the Shackletons of 38 Squadron RAF.

Lt Wright married his wife Sheila in 1954 and the couple had a daughter three years later, but Carol, who had been born with health problems, did not live to see her fourth birthday.

Also present at the City Hall ceremony was the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Nuala McAllister, the Senior Naval Officer in Northern Ireland Cdr Rob Milligan, Lt Paul Melling, assistant training officer at the current 847 NAS, and Emma Jones, representing HMS Hibernia.

Lt Melling also had a presentation to make, giving Mabel an 847 squadron badge.

Lt Wright's niece, Janet Baxter, said that members of the family who travelled to the City Hall brought with them family photographs and a journal which "Uncle Eddie" had kept during his training in Cornwall.

"The journal seems to be an assessment type record with writings about his experiences and current political/historical events accompanied by sketches/drawings by him which are quite impressive," said Janet.

Memories of Lt Wright are sketchy because he had already joined up when Mabel was a young child – he first signed up for the Royal Marines before transferring to the Royal Navy as an officer.

Mabel told the *Belfast Telegraph* that the news of Lt Wright's death took some time to reach the family, as they had no telephone.

John is mourned

AREA 12 is mourning the loss of their former standard bearer, who went on to become chairman of Belfast branch.

S/M John Bain, a Royal Marine who saw action overseas, and who won awards for his skill as a standard bearer, died in January.

↓ RNA Central Office, Room 209, Semaphore Tower (PP70), HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.
↓ admin@royalnavalassoc.com
↓ 023 9272 3747
↓ www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

Riders branch formed

SHIPMATES will be interested to hear about a newly-formed branch of the RNA – the Riders branch, which was due to be formally commissioned this month.

Riders branch secretary S/M Roslyn Hastie-Murray said: "Our members are brought together by our passion for and interest in motorcycling as well as our desire to support the aims and objectives of the charity and the core values of unity, loyalty, patriotism and comradeship.

"We will attend appropriate events throughout the year to raise awareness and fundraise for the charity and its support of serving and ex-Service Navy personnel, building on the core value of Comradeship – friends in fun, fellowship and need."

Full membership is available to those who have an interest in motorcycling as well as a maritime background in the Armed Services, such as Royal Navy or Royal Marines, and associate membership for those who have not served but who wish to support.

"We aim to be diverse in our membership, with all ages and genders included, and to encourage all members to play an active role within the branch nationally and – as the membership increases – into areas, forming local groups to meet," said Roslyn.

"For many people this will be a second membership of the Association itself so that we can continue our support for our current branches in the UK and other parts of the world.

"We currently have 100 members on our Facebook page who we hope will make applications to join the branch itself.

"Our Commissioning Inaugural Meeting will take place on Saturday April 14 at the Royal British Legion Club in Jesmond, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which is the base location for RNA Tyne branch.

For more information email chairman S/M Bernie McPhillips (bmcphillips@btinternet.com) or secretary S/M Roslyn Hastie-Murray (sec.ridersrna@yahoo.com) or see their Facebook page – [Royal Naval Association Riders Branch](https://www.facebook.com/RoyalNavalAssociationRidersBranch).

Club meeting

THE Type 21 Club reunion is to be held on October 12-13 in Plymouth.

Details will be confirmed in due course – see www.type21club.org or contact Paul Gower at type21clubpro@gmail.com

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the February edition (*right*) was RFA Regent, which briefly took the name Shahzadela for her voyage to the breaker's yard.

The correct answers were provided by G Mortimore, of Ryde, IoW, who wins £50.

This month's mystery ship (*above*), a Coastal Forces steam gunboat, was launched at White's of Cowes on Valentine's Day 1942.

Just seven of the planned 60 steel vessels were commissioned, and this, the last of class, was later used for trials of Rolls-Royce gas turbines in the 1950s.

This vessel's wartime CO, the son of a famous Naval captain, won a DSC and went on to forge a glittering career as an ornithologist, painter, conservationist and broadcaster.

He had already won an Olympic medal at Berlin in 1936, was a national gliding champion, and helped to create an effective camouflage scheme for warships.



1) What was the name of the ship, and 2) what was the name of her illustrious CO?

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 May 11.

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 June edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 278

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

CASUALTIES											
OUT A/C						IN A/C					
PILOT	AIR	OTHR	PILOT	AIR	PASS	PILOT	AIR	OTHR	PILOT	AIR	PASS
						1	2				3
OTHER FEATURES											

● The accident card which records the barest details of the Gannet crash that killed Lt Edward Wright, Lt Raymond Greer and Lt Frank Chivers in February 1958 in Cyprus

Lt Wright's wife Sheila received a telegram, and then had to travel up from the seaside town of Bangor by train to let the rest of the family know.

The family were not able to hold a funeral for Lt Wright – because of logistical issues of transporting a body back to the UK, he was buried in Cyprus.

Mabel Lloyd visited her brother's grave in 1993 at the

Wayne's Keep Military Cemetery in Nicosia, and his name has been inscribed at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

The Elizabeth Cross is a 'commemorative emblem' given to the recognised next of kin of members of the British Armed Forces killed in action or as a result of a terrorist attack after World War 2.

The Royal Alfred Seafarers' Society

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Become a champion

AS A follow-up to LGBT history month, the RN's sexual orientation and gender identity network Compass is looking for people across the Service to champion their cause.

Several personnel already act as Compass allies – people who do not identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, but who wish to support the community.

An ally can help LGBT sailors and Royal Marines by knowing the issues, demonstrating leadership, challenging inappropriate behaviour/comments, offering support and guidance, creating an atmosphere where people can be themselves, tackling common assumptions – not everyone is heterosexual, not every LGBT person is 'out'.

"Being an LGBT ally and championing diversity and inclusion isn't just about following the right policies and codes of practice. It's about changing minds, challenging views and giving people the tools and confidence to do and say things differently," said lead ally and careers manager Lt Cdr Jane Pizzi, based at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth.

The ultimate goal of Compass allies is to create a better workplace for all – by empowering people to be themselves at work, they are encouraged to reach their full potential, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

"In my current role I am fortunate to travel around the country and meet the dedicated personnel I represent," said WO1 Andrew Leaver MC, RSM of the Royal Marines Reserve, Naval Service LGBT Assistant Advocate... and a Compass ally.

"Being the LGBT Assistant Advocate for me is just about two things: being a good human being and truly living by our Royal Marines codes and ethos. I am proud to champion the LGBT community. With the help of this network I deeply believe our Royal Navy, Royal Marines, and the nation we protect, are the better for it."

Lt Cdr Isha Harvey, a logistics officer with Commando Helicopter Force HQ at Yeovilton, has been recognised by the Fleet Commander for her support of the RN's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic organisation and is a keen Compass ally.

"Sexual orientation and gender do not define a person, the same as race and religion," she says.

"We should all be striving for a world where no-one is made to feel bad or have to hide how they live their lives. That's why I want to play a decisive role in creating an open community."

As well as working alongside Compass, allies often work in collaboration with other LGBT networks in the Armed Forces.

If you feel you could become an ally or could support Compass, contact: jane.pizzi249@mod.gov.uk (93832 8974); Lt Cdr Helen Wright helen.wright606@mod.gov.uk (93832 5517); Andrew.Leaver859@mod.gov.uk (93832 5669); or Navy-compasnetwork@mod.uk

From pay day to holiday

THE Royal British Legion is introducing a holiday planner tool to help Service families plan and budget for their holiday as part of its Moneyforce website.

The site, running for five years in partnership with the MOD, was established to help military personnel and their loved ones manage their financial affairs.

The GoalSaver: Holiday Planner tool helps users plan for a holiday by working out how

On the Beaton track

ONE hundred and fifty years ago the name Beaton was synonymous with bringing cooking to the masses.

In 2018, near namesake Mike Beaton is hoping the healthy eating/cooking message is getting through to Millennials and Generation Z.

The Royal Marines colour sergeant and veteran chef is looking to fellow marines and sailors to follow his lead, going into schools and colleges to show teenagers that they can easily ditch snacks, energy drinks and fast food – and earn skills for life.

For the past decade, assisted by a handful of marines or matelots, Mike has spearheaded the Corps' EAT initiative – Education Awareness Team – passing on nutritional advice to schools, colleges, community groups, sporting associations, even elite sports such as Scottish Rugby Union, England Rugby League and England netball.

Web users may remember the enthusiastic Scotsman from the RN's social media channels, promoting dishes like 'chicken curry in a hurry', ending with his trademark 'boom!' sign off.

He brings that same energy to his EAT roadshows. In 50 minutes to an hour, he'll warn of the threats posed by energy drinks, save you money on breakfast and knock up a mean chicken curry – all the while selling the RN and RM to his audience.

Nominally based at CTCRM in Lymington, he spends three out of every four weeks on the road, speaking to anyone and everyone willing to hear his cooking/nutrition message, schools especially.

There are currently 350 educational establishments lined up to receive an EAT visit – which will keep Mike and his assistants busy for two and a half years.

That demand, a need for more chefs in the RN and general societal concerns about obesity – including what he calls the 'Pot Noodle/sandwich culture' in some military single living accommodation

"I regularly come across teenagers who've never chopped an onion or even eaten a strawberry," Mike says. "Fewer and fewer youngsters are cooking."

Mike talks about 'fuelling' the body – a good breakfast of cereal and a home-made smoothie (a beaker half filled with various fruit, then topped with spinach, oats, a bit of natural yoghurt, honey and milk, blend for a few seconds and boom...) – and 'ownership of food', ie knowing what you're eating.

"Eleven sugar cubes a day is the recommended intake. An energy drink contains 20," he says with exasperation.

"You can buy a cereal drink for £1.50 – or you can buy a box of cereal for the same price which will last a week or two. No brainer. Some drinks promise 50 grammes of protein. The body can only take 22 – so you're wasting the rest!"

He believes young blood is vital for spreading such messages

much it will cost in total based on their requirements, how much they will need to save, and by when.

Other tools available include a household budget planner, a GoalSaver planning tool, credit card calculator to reduce card debt, and a 'MoneyFit challenge' to assess financial fitness.

All can be found at www.moneyforce.org.uk or via www.facebook.com/Moneyforce.



● With the help of a mini stove, frying pan and basic ingredients, Mike shows volunteers at HMS Excellent how to make his signature chicken curry in a hurry. Boom! Picture: LPhot Sean Gascoigne

to 14, 15, 16-year-olds.

So he laid out a demonstration for senior officers and staff at HMS Excellent – aided by a dozen junior ratings whom he hopes will follow in his footsteps, accompanied by top tips for keeping the audience enthralled.

"Food is great for socialising," he says while demonstrating the art of chicken curry in a hurry. "Keep chatting while you're cooking, tell people about yourselves, about your job, about the places you've been. Show them you're a real person. And throw in a bit of humour. Every girl's dream is a Royal Marine..."

Among those copying the chef was 21-year-old CH Nathan Thompson, who's served aboard HMS Westminster but is keen to get into schools and spread the cookery/RN word.

"On board has its challenges. Cooking in bad weather is very interesting. You've got to make sure that things are secure at all times," he says.

Paul's Foxy cool recognised

THE calmness, skill and expertise by a supervisor in Yeovilton's control tower when a vintage jet made an emergency landing has been recognised by the head of the Fleet Air Arm.

Rear Admiral Keith Blount presented a personal commendation to Lt Cdr Paul Clark, duty flying supervisor in the tower's visual control room in May last year when the undercarriage on the 55-year-old Sea Vixen failed as the veteran fighter returned from Duxford Air Show.

Before deciding to make an emergency landing, various options were discussed by the pilot, control tower and the Sea Vixen's engineers to determine the best and safest course of action. Throughout Lt Cdr Clark provided balanced and informed oversight without hindering the air traffic control team in the execution of their duties.

When it became clear that the Sea Vixen – callsign Foxy Lady – would have to land without her wheels down, Lt Cdr Clark began to recall senior air department personnel.

Until he was relieved by the air station's Lt Cdr Flying and Cdr Air, he ensured that all appropriate actions were completed, all the

"It's hard work, but it's rewarding work. And I would certainly like to go into schools."

Twenty-five-year-old LWtr Katie Williams, who's served in HMS Kent in the Gulf and is now on carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, said: "I definitely would like to go out to schools to promote the Navy. I think it's important to stress that at sea, you don't just do one job, but several – I'm trained in firefighting and first aid, for example."

Listening intently to Mike's presentation was the RN's senior logistics officer Rear Admiral Chris Gardner.

He's seen how engineers have fired up youngsters to follow in their footsteps by visiting schools and colleges, setting challenges and the like – and believes roadshows like the RM chef's could work for the culinary world.

"I think this is a brilliant initiative. It exposes people to the Armed Forces often in places

where there is no direct contact with the military, it promotes a healthy lifestyle and shows there's a career out there as a chef," the admiral said.

"There are so many cookery programmes on television, people watch them, enjoy them, but that doesn't mean that they make what they've just seen. In fact, there's a national shortage of chefs."

"It's our young men and women who are the best advocates for the Royal Navy and for the logistics branch – if they can go back to their former schools, pass on their knowledge and a few skills in the process, it will engage people."

If you're interested in assisting Mike as he travels around the country or wish to begin your own EAT roadshows, he can be contacted via michael.beaton408@mod.gov.uk.

■ You can follow Mike on the move via twitter @CommandoChef.



Comms Shack

THANK you to those who have taken the opportunity to engage with and influence the CIS MDT. Here are some of the questions that have been raised:

What recognisable qualifications will CIS Specialists be awarded under the new split-stream construct?

Although not confirmed yet, a number of avenues to accrediting or awarding qualifications to CIS Specialist career development are being explored; these include: awarding a Level 3 ICT apprenticeship, providing training material and test facilities to complete vendor specific training (CISCO, JUNOS, Microsoft), and awarding a significant number of credits towards a Foundation Degree in Information Technology and Communications. If these avenues prove deliverable, individuals will be required to conduct some self-study and professional evidence gathering to achieve the associated accreditation.

Are specialists going to get trade pay?

Defence Engineering Remuneration (DER) will be awarded to all members of the Engineering Branch, which includes CIS Specialists. Trade pay is not the correct word for this remuneration. The nature of how DER will be introduced is still to be resolved, as it will be awarded across the three Services, and there remains some debate as to how best to deliver it. DER is expected to be brought in during 2018.

Will there be a fast-track system for CIS Specialists?

The intent is to bring in a fast-track system for General Service CIS Specialists in the very near future. This process will align with the General Service Technician fast-track system that already exists.

If you have any specific questions relating to CIS evolution, e-mail project lead Lt Cdr Tim Lawrenson: tim.lawrenson513@mod.gov.uk so we can capture your thoughts and keep the information flowing.

24/7 line for mental health

FUNDING for Armed Forces mental health services will rise to £220m over the next decade – including a new 24/7 helpline.

The new number – 0800 323 4444 – is available around the clock for personnel and their families, allowing them to access the help, advice and support they need anywhere, anytime.

Combat Stress – the leading mental health charity for veterans – has been commissioned to run the new helpline, backed by a deeper partnership with the MOD and run by a team of specially-trained professionals.

The MOD currently has a network of 20 'hub and spoke' mental health centres, comprising 11 hubs and a further nine teams.

It's your 2-6

REMEMBER: these pages are for you – Serving personnel and their families.

If there's a message, story or initiative you wish to communicate via the Royal Navy's internal communications channels, contact us via navymediacomms-icmailbox@mod.gov.uk.



time maintaining a calm and professional demeanour that helped ease the tension during a significant event.

The Sea Vixen, flown by the vastly experienced Cdr Simon Hargreaves, threw up flame and sparks as it travelled along the runway on its fuselage for several hundred yards before stopping.

The pilot was unharmed, but the former 899 NAS jet suffered extensive damage. Lt Cdr Clark remained on duty for several hours and throughout the following day supporting a range of subsequent activities including planning for the recovery of the Sea Vixen and the return of the airfield to normal operations.

Admiral Blount said Lt Cdr Clark's actions – especially

helping a small and relatively inexperienced team – directly contributed to the successful outcome of a potentially catastrophic incident and his "actions and calmness under pressure demonstrated the finest attributes of the Fleet Air Arm".

The Sea Vixen had a notorious reputation during its 13-year service with the Royal Navy – spanning the end of the 50s through the early 70s – with one in three of the 145 jets built lost to accidents.

Foxy Lady is still in the repair shop today as engineers and charity Navy Wings look into the best way of restoring the fighter to flying order, which is expected to cost upwards of £3m.

Picture: Focus82 Photography

No career barriers

Joe's 2038 vision is exemplary



Richie's rewarded

REMEMBER Somalia?

PO St Clair Renroy 'Richie' Richardson certainly does – every day.

A decade after counter-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa were in the headlines, the international mission to stop robbery and kidnapping on the high seas will continue till at least the year's end under the EU's Operation Atalanta.

Run from Northwood since December 2008, the EU Naval Forces mission seeks to clamp down on pirates (a battle largely won), protect World Food Programme shipping delivering aid to Somalia and keeps an eye on fishing activities off the Somali coast.

Caterer Richie has been assigned to the mission's HQ since last year, organising visits for the myriad of military and civilian dignitaries and leaders from across the EU who follow the operation's progress.

His efforts have been rewarded with the Atalanta medal, presented by Royal Marine Col Rich Mantrill, who had another surprise up his sleeve for the Vincentian: a Long Service and Good Conduct badge to mark 15 years of consistently-high standards and service.

Originally from Coull's Hill, St Vincent, in the Caribbean, Richie joined the RN in 2002.

He's worked in the galley at CTCRM and aboard HM Ships Nottingham, Dragon, Daring and several minhunters, service which has taken him to the Falklands, USA, Gulf, Med and Baltic.

"This is a very proud moment in my life," said Richie. "It's a big achievement. I've come a long way since the cold winter days of basic training in Cornwall, where I saw snow for the first time."



Starbucks? Fewer bucks

SERVING personnel and veterans can now enjoy 10 per cent off coffee and food if they hold a Defence Privilege Card.

The international coffee giant has teamed up with the Defence Discount Service to offer the discount at all its stores across the UK and Ireland by simply showing their card – or proof of application – when they get to the till.

To sign up to Defence Discount Service, visit www.defencediscountservice.co.uk or use its free mobile app for iPhone and Android.

Serving Armed Forces, reservists, spouses/partners of serving personnel, veterans, MOD civil servants, bereaved family members, war/service widow(er)s, cadets aged over 16 and NATO personnel in the UK are all eligible.

Privilege cards cost £4.99 for a five-year membership.

FROM the jet pilots of tomorrow to flying helicopters, chefs and leading the guard at Windsor Castle – female role models from the Royal Navy spent three days with London schoolgirls to mark International Women's Day.

Year 9 students from across the capital learned about the vast range of careers in the Senior Service open to women – hearing from the people performing those very roles.

Lt Danielle Welch joined the Fleet Air Arm a decade ago as a Lynx pilot and flew humanitarian aid missions in the Caribbean before transferring to the fast-jet world; she's coming towards the end of her training on Hawks at RAF Valley.

"Originally this was a job I didn't think I could do – it's a job I would have liked to have done, but I didn't see myself as the stereotypical super-fit alpha male – that's the image of a fighter pilot portrayed by society and the media," the 33-year-old said.

"Some of the questions from the girls here have been straightforward: how did I get into it? What's the best bit about the job? That sort of thing.

"But there have been a few which I wasn't prepared for and it's been fascinating to see what they think of the Royal Navy and what it means to them."

PO(AH) Joanne Barlow deals with jets on the ground – or on the deck of American supercarrier USS Dwight D Eisenhower... and is now passing on that expertise to Britain's newest flat-top, HMS Prince of Wales.

"When I worked with the US Navy they don't have many female deck handlers and I was the only female senior rating on board," said the 36-year-old.

"It was interesting that a lot of the females looked up to me. Some wanted to be like me, and if they stayed they would like to be doing what I'm doing, it was really nice to have that positive impact with the Americans as well as my own handlers."

She continued: "International Women's Day is a chance to showcase jobs and roles the women of the Royal Navy are doing and succeeding at, and



● Former Lynx flier Lt Amy Dobson helps a young student into a flying suit during the second of the open days in the capital
Picture: Sgt PJ George, DDC

this is a unique way of showing the British public not just what women can do but also what the Royal Navy does around the world."

Lt Cdr Nicola Cripps was inspired to join the Navy thanks to a visit from the RN's presentation team. She went on to study physics at university before joining the Service as a training manager.

Her career has taken her all over the world and last year she had the honour of being one of the Captains of the Queen's Guard at Windsor Castle.

"It was an historic moment for the Royal Navy and something I'd never dreamt I'd get the chance to do – seeing the Navy out on the streets of London and more importantly me and my sailors engaging with the public," she said.

It's the second year the RN's community engagement team has held this event in London. By spreading it over three days, not one, the Navy's message reached three times the number of youngsters who attended the inaugural session.

"What's really important is that girls get to meet people who are doing jobs they normally only read about or see on the TV," said Lt Cdr Hannah Mackenzie, in charge of the CET.

"It's important for them to understand that none of the careers in the Royal Navy are restricted – everyone has a chance to do all the jobs. If you want to join the Royal Marines you can, if you want to fly a helicopter you can, or drive a warship you can."

Lisa Marie, aged 14, from St

Anne's Girls' School in Enfield, was impressed by the range of careers on offer to women in the Navy and enjoyed the stories and experiences from their travels.

"I've really enjoyed speaking to the people from the Royal Navy and they have some really good backgrounds that have brought them to here.

"I like what they've said and it seems to be an exciting job with travel and seeing things you wouldn't normally experience," she said.

Where to look

DINs

01 Personnel

DIN 2018DIN01-027 Selection, Training and Employment of RN/RM/RAF NCO Applicants to become Army Pilots
DIN 2018DIN01-028 Live Entertainment on Operations and Overseas Deployment
DIN 2018DIN01-029 Voter Registration for May 2018 local elections
DIN 2018DIN01-030 (Deep breath) The provision of assistance with making a claim under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) for injury sustained on or after 6 April 2005 or for a claim at the point of service termination for those who are eligible under the War Pensions Scheme (WPS) for injury sustained up to 5 April 2005 (And breathe!)

02 Security and Intelligence

DIN 2018DIN02-002 Volunteers for Specialist HUMINT Duties – Interrogation (Op METIS) OS

03 Policy and Operations

DIN 2018DIN03-003 Handling of Flying Complaints from the public in the UK

05 Management, Organisation and Business Practice

DIN 2018DIN05-008 829 NAS Decommissioning
DIN 2018DIN05-010 Historical Child Sexual Abuse Inquiries – Changes to the Preservation and Retention Order

07 Training and Education

DIN 2018DIN07-031 Courses at the Joint Service Sub Aqua Diving Centre in 2018
DIN 2018DIN07-032 Joint Service Adventure Training (JSAT) Air Activities – Paragliding, Parachuting and Gliding – Course Schedules 2018/19
DIN 2018DIN07-033 2018/19 Defence Cyber Education and Training

09 Honours, Awards, Royal and Ceremonial Events

DIN 2018DIN09-002 Armed Forces Day – Saturday 30 June 2018
DIN 2018DIN09-003 The Professional Engineering Institution Churchill Medal Award 2017/2018

10 Sports and Social Events

DIN 2018DIN10-011 Royal Navy Golf Championships 2018
DIN 2018DIN10-012 Royal Navy Golf Championships 2018 General Competition
DIN 2018DIN10-013 Military Participation in the Invictus Games 2018

RNTMs

01 Personnel
RNTM 01-008/18 Divisional Training in the Royal Navy and Joining Instructions for Divisional Officers' Course
RNTM 01-011/18 RN Aptitude Dates for Volunteers to Serve with 148 (Meiktila) Cdo FO Bty RA

03 Policy and Operations

RNTM 03-009/18 Scaling and Competency Requirements of CBRNDC Qualified Personnel on Surface Ships

04 Equipment, Support and Estate

RNTM 04-008/18 Maritime CSISR Support Unit (MCSU) – Services Provided by the RFA Electronic Support Group (ESG)
RNTM 04-009/18 Regional Support Units - compliance checks and controls
RNTM 04-014/18 Transfer of Landing Craft Between Squadrons
RNTM 04-016/18 DII-Minervad: Incompatibility Between TrilogiView and PowerPDF

ASK YOURSELF:

- Were you made in the Royal Navy?
- Do you want to give others the opportunity to make it in the Royal Navy?
- Are you seeking a rewarding Second Career?

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Positions are nationwide, employed on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) (NCS) Limited Commitment.

Salary starts from £30k with promotion opportunities to rise to £43k.

FTRS rates of pay apply (Reviewed annually and pensionable).

For more information contact:

PSTN- 01929 403172

Mil- 94374 3172

E-mail- Jane.anneda513@mod.gov.uk



First look at new RM museum

THIS is your first glimpse of the new Royal Marines Museum – two years before the doors open on the £18m visitor attraction.

Directors promise a much more interactive, hi-tech and visual museum which will immerse tourists in the world of the Royal Marines from the birth more than 350 years ago through to their present-day commando role... not forgetting the RM Band.

They revealed their eye-catching vision for the museum as they learned that Portsmouth Historic Dockyard had smashed its way into the top five cultural/historical attractions in the UK.

Outside London only Stonehenge, the Roman baths in Bath, Chester Zoo and the RHS gardens at Wisley pull in more punters according to the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (theme parks are not covered).

The dockyard welcomed more than 900,000 visitors in 2017, with the entire National Museum of the RN (which includes the Fleet Air Arm and RN Submarine Museums, HMS Trincomalee in Hartlepool and Jutland veteran HMS Caroline in Belfast) showing a 17 per cent rise in tourists through the doors – 10 per cent higher than the national average.

Bosses attribute the success to the massive investment made over the past decade (such as the new Mary Rose museum and revamp of HMS Alliance) and new attractions such as HMS M33, the monitor which fought at Gallipoli.

The new look and new location for the Royal Marines Museum is part of the grand plan.

Its long-standing home in Eastney wasn't suitable for such an overhaul – and its distant location, away from the city's other historic attractions, meant it was missing out on hundreds of thousands of potential visitors.

So the NMRN decided the Corps should join the core of the RN's historic ships and displays



in the dockyard, taking over the boathouse which houses the Action Stations display.

Key exhibits planned in the new RM galleries include: a suspended real Lynx helicopter; landing craft used by commandos in daring raids and a host of large audio-visual displays capturing iconic Royal Marines in action around the globe.

"The former museum in Eastney was a great place but only got 25,000 visitors a year," said John Rawlinson, the NMRN's director of visitor experience.

"By moving it to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard we expect to get at least 250,000 visitors going to the museum. That's a ten-fold increase of people having access to the incredible story of the Royal Marines."

Last month, the National Museum submitted its second and final bid for cash from the Heritage Lottery Fund: almost £14m towards the cost of creating the new museum in Boathouse 6.

Its submission also includes funding to give a public airing

to a collection of two million items currently in storage in Storehouse 12 for 'The Navy Unlocked'. A decision is expected mid-summer.

Before then, there's an exhibition by Scottish artist Lachlan Goudie, who's spent the past seven years sketching and painting the shipwrights of the Clyde and Forth as they built two classes of warship for the RN.

He's produced upwards of 60 paintings of Type 45s and Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers – paintings which are on display in Portsmouth until June 8.

"The time I spent documenting the construction of the carriers was an extraordinary experience," the Scotsman said.

"Art belongs everywhere and even amidst the noise and bustle of heavy engineering I was staggered by the unusual beauty and colour of ship construction."

And leading historians will shed new light on the 'first commando raid' with a two-day conference in Portsmouth on the eve of its 100th anniversary.

The Zeebrugge Raid on St

George's Day 1918 sought to bottle up German U-boats in their bases in Flanders by sealing their exit to the North Sea – the harbour entrance at Zeebrugge.

At a time when the British Army's back was against the wall on the Western Front, the raid by blockships, submarines and assault teams of Royal Navy sailors and Royal Marines was a partial success – but a major fillip to morale.

The centenary of the raid is being commemorated with events in the UK and Belgium, with the NMRN looking in-depth at the attack during its Zeebrugge Conference on April 20 and 21.

Confirmed speakers include Prof Andrew Lambert, one of the UK's leading naval historians, and naval author Dr Donald F Bittner.

Among the subjects covered are the role of the Flanders U-boats, the planning and execution of the raid, the use of propaganda and the lessons learned.

Tickets are available at www.historicdockyard.co.uk/events and cost from £30 per person.



● A depiction of the Battle of Scheveningen in August 1653, during the First Anglo-Dutch War. In the centre the Dutch flagship Brederode grapples with the English flagship Resolution

The birth of the Navy

THE 17th Century marked the beginning of the Royal Navy as a permanent national maritime fighting force, writes Prof Eric Grove.

It was created by the Republican regime of the interregnum and established as a 'Royal Navy' by Charles II and his brother James.

Two contrasting books provide new perspectives on this key period. The first is on Vice Admiral Sir John Lawson, a man of radical religious views who came to prominence in the Commonwealth Navy but who played a key role in the Restoration of the crown.

His blockade of London forced the end of the Army's attempt to subvert parliament and furthered the process that led to the return of Charles II. Lawson continued in the latter's service until he died as a result of wounds received in action. Written by genealogist Gill Blanchard the book is a welcome attempt to reveal the importance of a rather neglected figure in British naval history.

The author provides new light on the uncertainties of the admiral's descent and family but her grasp of naval history is far from certain. She misses out her subject's role in the opening battle of the First Dutch War – an action that first made Lawson's name, and which was rather more than a 'skirmish'. Neither was it caused by English attempts to search the Dutch ships but by Dutch refusal to accept English claims to sovereignty of the narrow seas. The reason for overlooking this important point seems to be that Lawson's log book of his time in his ship HMS Fairfax only begins after the Battle of Dover. There are other sources, however, and this omission casts doubt on the author's overall grasp of the naval historical background.

Her book *Lawson Lies Still in the Thames – The Extraordinary Life of Vice Admiral Sir John Lawson* (ISBN 978 1 4456 6123 0, Amberley, 287 pages, £20) has interesting material and is worth a read but it must be treated with great care and is not the last word on an interesting and neglected subject.

The Restoration Navy was 'Royal' more than just in name. This is shown by Dr J. Davis Davies in his latest book *Kings of the Sea; Charles II, James II and the Royal Navy* (ISBN 978 1 84832 400 8, Seaford, Barnsley, 288 pages, £30). Dr Davies is an established expert on the 17th-Century Navy and this shows in this magnificently-researched and clearly-argued study.

The author demonstrates that Charles and James, not the self-advertising Samuel Pepys, played key roles in the development of the service. Charles II was perhaps the most 'hands-on' monarch in the history of the Royal Navy, deciding on the building of ships, choosing their names and supervising, in a highly informed way, their design. He and James also ensured that English construction emphasised powerful warships, as well as the newly-introduced royal yachts that were not just pleasure boats, but significant naval units with a wide range of roles for which they could be mobilised quickly.

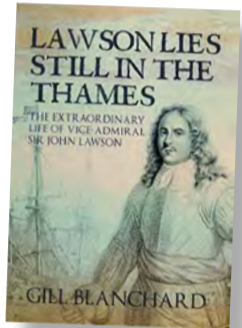
Charles' brother James, as Lord Admiral, played a key supportive role in naval development and deployment and, even when forced to give up this title because of the Test Act, continued as an adviser of influence and a presence – unminuted – at meetings of the Board of Admiralty that had replaced him. One of his important contributions was his dominant role in introducing the long lieutenants' examination in 1677, a development usually attributed to Pepys and a key factor in the professionalisation of the officer corps.

Charles was also very interested in naval activity in the Mediterranean, an area highly important for English trade. Having received Tangier as his personal property as dowry for his Portuguese queen, Charles made attempts to develop it into an important base. These proved ultimately abortive and Charles himself chose to abandon and demolish the colony in 1684.

English activities against the Barbary pirates used other, more suitable places to provide shore support. King Charles also took great interest in expanding hydrographic knowledge and sponsored the first ever survey of British coastal waters by Greenville Collins.

On his accession to the throne James II and VII busied himself with repairing the damage the enforced austerity of the final years of Charles' reign inflicted. This benefited his successors William III and Mary II more than him, following what Dr Davies calls an 'Inglorious Revolution', the last successful seaborne invasion of England.

This is a very important study that authoritatively re-writes the history of this key formative period of our naval history, and places responsibility where it belongs, in the 'Kings of the Sea' and not their Secretary. It is a handsome, well-illustrated volume and is necessary reading for everyone interested in the history of the Royal Navy.



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Ask Jack

John Macbeth Naval Airman AE initially joined HMS St Vincent in 1967 and went on to serve at HMS Condor. Mark Bandrowski, ex-POAE(WL), joined the Fleet Air Arm with John and believes that he left the Service in 1981. Mark is trying to locate him. If you can help please contact him on tel 07879 016720, 01362 858238 or email markbandrowski52@icloud.com

Daily Mail Transatlantic Air Race 1969. Ken Rimell is trying to track down the Wessex chopper crew who flew the RN Phantom pilots from Wisley to the Post Office Tower London to win this race. A reunion is to be held in 2019 to mark the 50th anniversary of this event and also the 100th anniversary of Alcock and Brown's crossing of the Atlantic 50 years earlier. If those in the Wessex would like to contact him he will forward further details. Tel: 01243 265929 (evenings) or email ken.rimell@btopenworld.com

HMS Newcastle. Looking for Bill Scrivens and Gerald Flanagan, who served with my husband Ted Bliss in the Far East circa 1957-58. I have photos and a Christmas Day menu that they may like. Contact Rita on 01280 703591 or email rita.bliss@tesco.net

HMT Robert Bowen. Seeking descendants of the crew of HMT Robert Bowen, which sank in the North Sea between Aberdeen and Peterhead on Feb 9 1940. Please reply to daughter of crew member A S Wilson: S. Wilson, 16a George St., Cambridge, CB4 1AJ.

HMS Saintes Association. As member numbers are decreasing our association is hoping to regroup with other ex-serving Battle-class destroyer associations. If anyone can assist please contact the secretary, Fred Terry, on 01252 625974, email fred.terry1@ntlworld.com

Ship Adoption. Between Oct 1941-March 1942 Warships Weeks were organised in cities, towns and villages to raise the cost of building one of His Majesty's ships. Once the target had been raised the community adopted the vessel along with her crew and the bond was strengthened by presentations and visits. Most of the V&Ws in commission were adopted. Can anyone provide more information or photographs of the links between town and ship to add to my webpage: http://vandwdestroyerassociation.org.uk/V&W_ShipList.html Contact Bill Forster on 01727 838595 or email billforster@vandwdestroyerassociation.org.uk

HM Submarine Resolution 1st Commission. My older brother, Ken Frewer, was one of the first COs and is now 87. He, with Mike Henry, were the first captains, Port and Starboard, of Resolution and Ken had responsibility this side of the Atlantic for aspects of the liaison with the yard and of the fitting-out before commissioning. I am preparing an obituary notice for Ken as he is seriously ill. Can anyone who served with my brother help me to fill in the gaps and give me an idea of why he was such a respected commander? Contact Richard Frewer on 01225 316485 or 0772 5479789.

Vice Admiral Lord Nelson's statue in Trafalgar Square. Retired Chief Sailmaker Alastair Duncan noticed that the coil of rope behind this statue is left-handed laid, which is most unusual as in his experience most cordage is right-handed laid. Can anyone give a reason for this and its use. Tel: 01803 865374 or email secretarymmm215@gmail.com

Deaths

Cdr William J Maggs. HMS Plymouth, Warrior, Sultan, Terror, Blackwood, Caledonia, Ausonia, Illustrious, also Victory RNB and Dir Gen Ships. Feb 6. Aged 93.

Capt Michael E Heathcote RM. RM Eastney, HQ 3 Cdo Bde RM, 42 and 45 Cdo RM, RM Plymouth, CGRM and HQ Tg Gp RM. Feb 15. Aged 86.

Lt Cdr (AEO) Andrew 'Tom' T Hawkes FAA. Served 1942-80. Artificer Apprentice at HMS Rosyth and RNATE Newcastle (1942-44) and Sparrowhawk, Orkneys (1944-45). Aboard HMS Berwick he joined 802 Naval Air Squadron (Seafires) at Trincomalee and HMS Venerable Ceylon (1945-46), then HMS Hornbill at RAF West Raynham (1948-50) and 809 Sqn HMS Seahawk; 1952 aboard Vengeance cargo transporting to the Far East. Instructing airframes/engines at HMS Gamecock and promoted to engineering Sub Lt in 1958. Sea Vixen IFTU Yeovilton, HMS Ark Royal and 892 Sqn HMS Victorious then as Eng Lieutenant at RNAS Yeovilton and Daedalus MARTSU. Project Manager for Phantom airframe at McDonnell Douglas in the USA (1965-67) for which he was awarded an MBE. AEO 767 Sqn Yeovilton (1969-71), AEO Lt Cdr HMS Daedalus (1972-74) then (1976-79) MOD RAF, Whitehall. Project Manager at HMS Centurion (1976-79) and finally Chief Inspection Officer MARTSU HMS Daedalus until 1980. FAA Association. Feb 12. Aged 91.

Lt Cdr Peter E S Lilley. HMS Excellent, Phoebe, Devonshire, Dryad, Nelson, Woolaston, Dainty, C-in-C Fleet and RANS Yarra. Feb 21.

Lt Cdr Thomas P Southall. HMS Hermes, Bulwark, Seahawk, Daedalus, FOF3 and 814 and 826 NAS. Nov 17.

Lt Cdr Sir Herbert K Speed RD RNR. RNR Unattached. Jan 12. Aged 83.

John N Meade. Joined at St Angelo (Malta). From the training vessel HMS Hawkins he joined the electrical branch onboard HMS Royal Oak in 1939 as a Boy 1st Class and was onboard when she sank; the family believe that he is the

last known survivor of this disaster living in the UK. Leaving the Navy in 1953 he followed a career in aircraft engineering. Feb 4. Aged 95.

David Gillies A/Stoker 1st Class. Served 1943-46 HMS Duke, Squid, Vernon, Flora, Imperieuse, Danae, Victory and Birmingham. Dec 21. Aged 94.

Anne Adams (Nee Carter) Wren SA. Served at Caledonia. Feb 10. Aged 84.

Dennis Sparkes AB. Served 1948-50 at Royal Arthur, Drake (three times), HMS Vanguard, Padstow Bay (Howe), Group 145 Port Division Devonport. Feb 12. Aged 87.

Andrew Gudgeon RFA Chief Officer.

Robert M Liggard WOMEA(P). Joined as a Junior Marine Engineer 1958 and retired 1989. He served in HMS Raleigh, Carron, Camperdown, Bellerophon, Virago, Sultan, Hermes, Cavalier, Galatea, Hecla, Achilles, Bacchante, Fisgard, Broadsword, Brilliant, Defiance and Avenger. Feb 25. Aged 76.

Walter 'Ernie' E S Munn CPO. Joined aged 14 in 1930 - he lied about his age in order to enlist. At the start of World War 2 he served in HMS Scorpion, which was later sunk by Japanese forces south of Singapore. Later posted to HMS Peterel in Shanghai monitoring movements of the Japanese army of the occupation in China 1941 until Pearl Harbor was attacked and the Japanese demanded the surrender of Peterel, but she refused with returned fire and inevitably was sunk. Walter was blown into the river where he was captured (the bravery of her crew was recounted in Lt Desmond Wetton's *The Lonely Battle* - Walter is mentioned several times). He spent the next three-and-a-half years as a Japanese prisoner of war and was repatriated 18 months after World War 2 ended. Post-war he served at the NATO base in Portland. After serving the RN for 22 years he worked at the Admiralty Underwater Weapons Establishment in Portland until his retirement. HMS

Ganges Association and the Burma Star Association. Feb 20. Aged 103.

Robert 'Bob' T Horn AB/RC3. Served 1944-48 in HMS Sussex, Venerable and Contest. March 4. Aged 90.

Barry Thomas EM. Served aboard HMS Concord 1955-56, also HMS Trafalgar and Hampshire. HMS Concord Association. Jan 29. Aged 82.

Royal Naval Association

David Morgan CPO. Served 1950-75 in HMS Fleetwood, Loch Fada, Bulwark, Dainty, Cavendish and Chatham Dockyard. Chesham and Amersham branch. Feb 19. Aged 89.

Dorothy Cliff Wren Telegraphist. WW2 employed on both German and Japanese Morse code intercept duties, passing on to codebreakers such as those working at Bletchley Park. Past Welfare Officer and a Life Member of St Austell RNA. Feb 21. Aged 92.

John Connelly. Joined the Royal Navy as ME 1966 and served HMS Raleigh, Ulster, Albion, Sultan, Falmouth, Nelson, Porton Down and Fawn; medically discharged 1974. Emigrated to Western Australia to join his daughter. Member of Rockingham and District, WA. March 1. Aged 70.

Association of RN Officers/RNOC

Surg Rear Adm John B Drinkwater OHS. HMS Drake, Ganges, Undine, MDG(N), RNH Stonehouse, Haslar and Malta. Feb 11. Aged 86.

Cdr James M Child LVO. HMS Saker, Delight, Dryad, Eagle, Tiger, Wave, Hornet, Tersichore, Victory RNB, RANS Barcoe, NATO and DG Naval Manpower. Feb 12. Aged 92.

Cdr Allan R 'Roger' Godfrey. HMS Dryad, Falmouth, Artemis, Porpoise, Porpoise, Valiant, Finwhale, Centurion, DNOT, RNC, Greenwith and NDC Latimer. Jan 28. Aged 77.

Lt Cdr Gerald B G 'Gerry' Beard. HMS Albion, Victory RNB, Mercury, Drake, Royal Arthur, Warrior, Centurion, Adamant, NATO and Malaysian Government. Feb 14. Aged 89.

Reunions

June HMS Blackcap/RNAS Stretton, Warrington. This will be the 30th year that the annual service of commemoration has been held and unfortunately will be the final one. Any shipmates who served between 1942-58 are invited. The service at St Cross Church, Appleton Thorn will take place on June 3 at 12 midday followed by refreshments in the Village Hall. Standards from other associations are always welcome. For further information please contact Bernie Cohen on 078067 82720 or email b.cohen2@ntlworld.com

July Royal Marines Signals & Telecommunications Technicians. Reunion to be held at CTCRM July 21. Information/registration point outside Signals Store (open from 0830 July 21). All to be seated in the Falklands Hall for 10am. For further information visit <http://royalmarinesigs.com/> or ring POC WO1 Neil Ledger RM Signals Specialisation Advisor on 01392 414089 or email neil.ledger@mod.gov.uk

ledgers69@mod.gov.uk Returns no later than June 20 for catering.

HMS Bronington 1976 crew. I am hoping to organise a reunion for July. Further information can be obtained from Mike 'Plug' Sinker on 01395 516997 or email msinker1@hotmail.com

September SD 15 Course - BRNC Dartmouth 1978. A 40th anniversary reunion will be held at BRNC September 28-30 and will include a Black Tie mess dinner in the SGR. Other activities are also programmed for the weekend. Details are available from Chris Jordan on 023 9246 3495 or at chrisjordan8789@gmail.com

ASWI Association (Formerly TASI). Annual reunion, AGM Dinner and Dance to take place Sat Sept 29 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea. For full booking details see <http://aswassociation.org.uk/> or contact Bill Bailey on 01752 491418.

October HMS Lowestoft Association. Reunion is to be held on October 5-8 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea. All who served during her RN service (1961-86) are welcome including wives, partners and/or guests. One, two or three-night packages are available, also Saturday night Gala dinner only if preferred. For further details and bookings call Isle of Wight Tours on 01983 405116 or contact ian@hmslowestoft.co.uk (07778 546861).

HMS Endurance. A 50-year reunion to celebrate her first commission (Oct 1968-69) will be held at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, on October 5-7. Thirteen members of the original crew have already registered. For further information contact 'Jan' Hunt on 0116 267 5339 or email jansbolt@btinternet.com

November HMS Relentless Association. Annual

Sports Lottery

Feb 10: £5,000 - Cpl A Lockwood; £1,800 - Mne D Bruce; £800 - AB M Stewart; £600 - AB P Rafferty; £500 - AB A Nelson; £400 - CPO J Baxter.

Feb 17: £5,000 - LH D Reed; £1,800 - CPO S Day; £800 - AB C Morton; £600 - Sgt J Oldale; £500 - Cdr J Holroyd; £400 - Sub Lt A Alcock.

Feb 24: £5,000 - PO C Impy; £1,800 - AB L Swan; £800 - AB M Grech; £600 - AB J Marner; £500 - AB J Raper; £400 - Mne A Dorey.

March 3: £5,000 - AB M Lazenby; £1,800 - Lt Cdr P Stanton-Brown; £800 - AB J Fiddes; £600 - S/Lt C McNair; £500 - AB R Hurdley; £400 - LH P Booth.

Talking Navy News

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 07770 088388 and leave a message, or email studio@patn.org.uk A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in May's Noticeboard must be received by April 11

reunion to take place over the weekend of Fri 2 - Mon 5 November at the Aztec Hotel & Spa, Bristol. All ex-Rusty Rs welcome. To book places or for further information on the reunion contact IOW Tours on 01983 405116, email info@iowtours.com or contact the Association Secretary on 023 9259 9640 or email Secretary@hmsrelentless.co.uk

Lt Cdr William B 'Bill' Norton. HMS Osprey, Vernon, Terror, Bulwark and Weapons Dept (Naval). Jan 5. Aged 82.

Submariners Association

Francis Kinsey CPO RE(L). Joined 1961 and served in HM Submarines Sealion, Alcide, Artemis, Resolution and Revenge. West Of Scotland branch. Feb 11. Aged 83.

John Scarrott L/Sea UC. Served 1959-63 in HM Submarines Thule (59-61) and Ambush (61-63). Cheltenham & W. Mids branch. Feb 13. Aged 79.

Ronald 'Ron' Slade PO RE. Served 1941-53 in HM Submarines Trusty, Clyde, Truculent and Truant. Cheltenham & W.Mids branch. Feb 21. Aged 95.

Royal Marines Band Service

Frederick J Mills RM. Served 1939-54, joining as a band boy aged 15 yrs. HMS St Vincent, HMS Emerald, Belfast, and HMS Terror. Played saxophone and clarinet. Dec 11. Aged 93.

Trevor J Attwood RM Bdmr. Entered the RM School of Music Deal aged 14 with local brass band experience and given lessons on the violin and cornet. Member of emergency firefighting team with the Green Goddess fire engines in Glasgow during the national strike 1977. Secretary to the Principal Director of Music at HQ Royal Marines School of Music in Deal. His specialist organisational skills giving space for a specialist team, hastily assembled, were vital when IRA terrorists exploded a bomb killing 11 in the Deal Barracks in September 1989. Awarded the MBE. Nov 12. Aged 67.

Raymond J West RM Bd/Sgt. Jan 5. Frederick F Wyllie RM Musn. December 17.

Terrence W Parker RM Musn. November 11.

Frederick G Wain RM Bd/Sgt. November 5.

Stan J Thomas RM Bd/C/Sgt. October 25.

Raymond C 'Bunny' Bunch. October 4.

Neil Eyre. September 2017.

Algerines Association

Derek Haskins LSM. Served aboard HMS Rattlesnake. November 20. Aged 88.

James Turner AB. Served aboard HMS Rinaldo. Nov 29.

Leslie Carter ORD ART. Served aboard HMS Rinaldo. Nov 31.

Kenneth Barrett AB. Served aboard HMS Chameleon. Feb 8.

Desmond McCarthy Sto1. Served aboard HMS Moon. Feb 15.

Ernie Broome PO Sto. Served aboard HMS Larne. Feb 18. Aged 97.

THAT'S it - my 109th edition over a nine-year spell as Editor of *Navy News*, and well over 250 editions in nearly 22 years since I first joined the newspaper of the Royal Navy.

When I wrote my first stories for the paper back in September 1996 I already knew the high regard in which it was held across the Naval Service and beyond.

Part of the paper's success is the fact it maintains good old-fashioned principles of journalism - be accurate and honest, know your audience and always try to inform, educate and entertain them, acting as a paper of record.

Our readers, from the old and bold centenarians to junior Sea Cadets not yet in their teens, are both our fiercest critics and most loyal supporters, keeping us on our toes - and letting us know in no uncertain terms when we do slip (it does happen, occasionally...).

The editorial team (there are three of us in total, with four more colleagues supporting us and the business side of things) endeavour to bring you a snapshot every month of Naval Service activity across the board, whether at sea, in the air or on land, at home and abroad.

After 33 years as a journalist I am not straying too far from the fold - I now join the excellent team at the Naval Families Federation as editor of *Homeport*.

So thank you for buying and reading *Navy News* - it is something of which the Naval Service can be proud, and I truly believe it is one of the most professional, most attractive and dynamic 'specialist' papers you will find anywhere, let alone within the military.

Mike Gray

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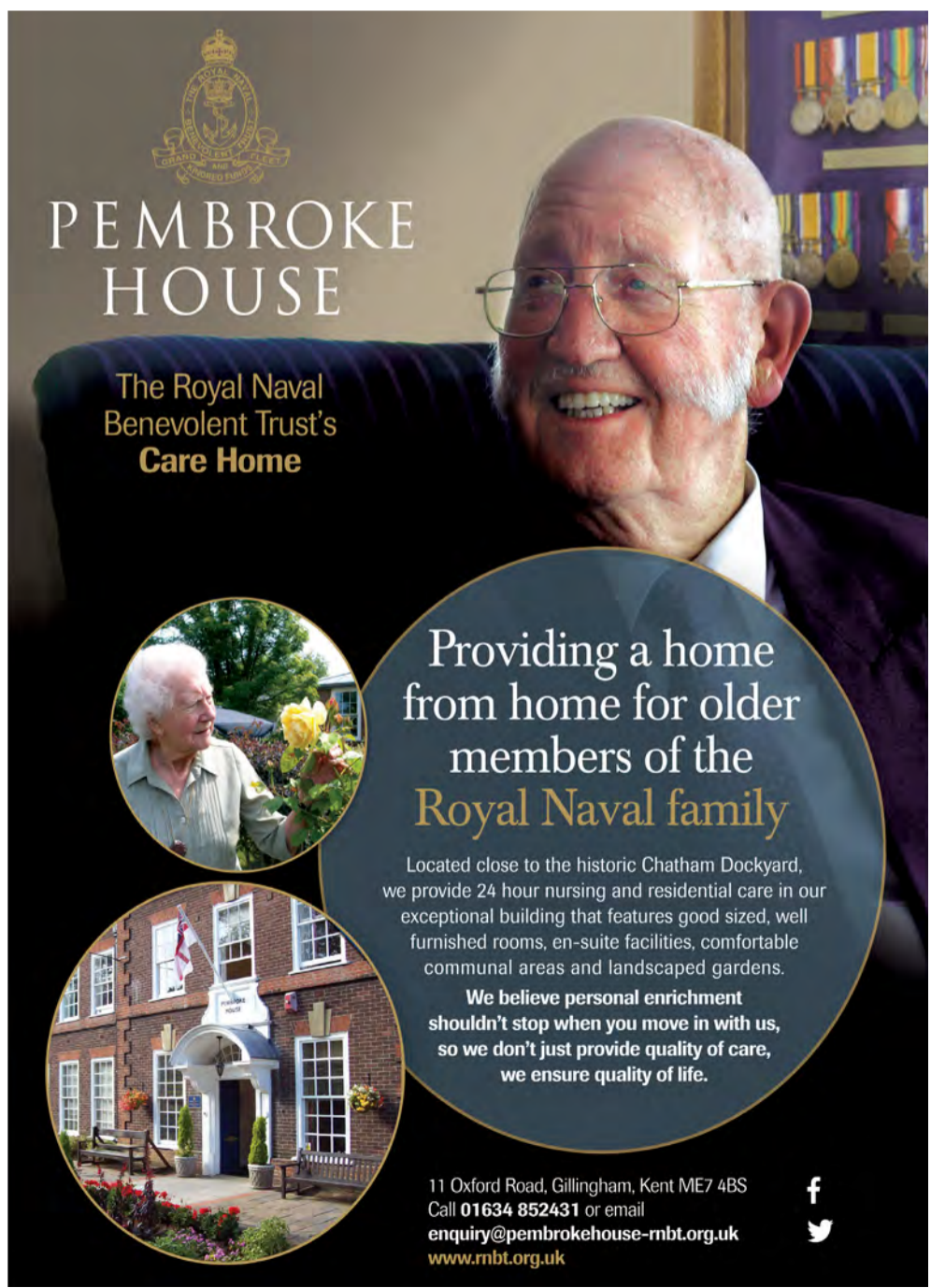
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Nominate a great technician

THE Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) is calling for nominations for its **Armed Forces Technician of the Year Award**, which recognises individuals in the UK Armed Forces who have demonstrated exceptional engineering.

Last year's winner was WO2 Ram Kumar Rai, Clerk of Works within the Royal Engineers and current Deputy Facilities Manager in Bahrain.

In April 2015, after the devastating earthquakes in Nepal, WO2 Rai was deployed as the technical lead for 69 Gurkha Field Squadron on Op Marmat, the humanitarian and disaster relief operation. He developed a shelter design based on the materials supplied in aid packs which could be rapidly erected using basic trade skills. Two weeks after the tour he was called to oversee the technical aspects of Op Marmat 2 as the principal Clerk of Works.

Responsible for managing the contract, overseeing designs and quality management, WO2 Rai was pivotal to the Engineering Group's design capability.

He was also involved in the proof-of-concept for an earthquake-resistant stone and reinforced concrete home design using local construction techniques such as stone soring for foundations and bamboo scaffolding for roof erection.

The winning technician will receive a trophy, certificate, £1,000 and two years' free IET membership.

Celebrate a serving technician by nominating them before May 18 2018, 1700 (BST) at www.theiet.org/techawards

Regal progress

Lessons for life

At Dauntsey's we believe that adventure not only helps children let off steam, but plays a vital role in equipping them with the skills and behaviours to set them up for life after school. Understanding risk and not shying away from it is an important life skill. Pupils can develop risk management through being exposed to it while they still have the support of a school environment.

Adventure education enables pupils to demonstrate and adopt behaviours that will help them lead a fruitful and interesting life, in which they are organised and flexible, willing to have a go and learn from their experiences.

The adventure programme at Dauntsey's starts in the Lower School with short experiences that serve as an introduction, such as learning to kayak on the Kennet and Avon Canal, camping in the school grounds, or a night hike on Salisbury Plain. As students move up the school, they get involved in more challenging activities such as the Devizes to Westminster canoe race, trekking in the Himalaya or crewing our Tall Ship, Jolie Brise.

The results are remarkable. Pupils who started as relatively quiet and cautious by nature grow in confidence and are willing to take on new experiences. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem rise dramatically as they discover what can be achieved, often under challenging conditions – and this pays noticeable dividends in terms of academic progress.

Dauntsey's is fortunate to count a number of the children of serving members of the UK Armed Forces amongst our pupils, and welcomes new enquiries from Service families considering boarding entry.

For further information please visit www.dauntseys.org

Queen's College, Taunton, has a long-standing reputation for educating children from Forces families, including the Royal Navy. Last September, Queen's had a scheduled Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) inspection.

Head Teacher Dr Lorraine Earps (pictured below) said: "We were absolutely delighted that the inspectors recognised the work which is going on in the school and appreciated the unique nature of our community."

"Their judgements of 'excellent' for pupil development



and 'good' for pupil achievement were extremely pleasing.

"Throughout the report, the inspectors comment on the 'pupils' highly positive attitudes to learning', 'strong rapport between pupil and teacher', 'high expectations', 'enthusiastic teaching', 'excellent opportunities to achieve in a wide and varied range of activities', 'strong community ethos', 'excellent behaviour', 'strong culture of inclusion', 'celebration of diversity' and a 'high awareness of how to keep safe'."

Dr Earps added: "I would like to express my personal pride in the pupils, staff and wider community."

"I feel very fortunate to have the privilege to lead such a wonderful school and am delighted the inspection team recognised the very real qualities which exist at Queen's College."

Forces families receiving CEA pay only 10 per cent of boarding fees as part of the Queen's College all-inclusive package.

To find out more, call 01823 340830 or email admissions@queenscollege.org.uk



Educating the whole person

Cranbrook School is a state-funded co-educational grammar school with integrated day and boarding provision. With six boarding houses being home to 250 boarders, the overall school population is 770.

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Being keen to educate the whole person, the school runs a wide range of extracurricular

activities, both evenings and weekends, offering the Combined Cadet Force and Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, plus a broad range of sports, music and drama.


Boarders are admitted from Year 9 (13 years) following a test to assess suitability, and students are from a wide-ranging area.

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Its Navy connections remain strong and the traditional values of loyalty, commitment, courage, respect, service and integrity continue to underpin the school's core aims and philosophy.

"We are extremely proud of our connections with the Naval community and the tradition of helping the children of seafarers access an outstanding education enriched by our maritime heritage," said Headmaster Simon Lockyer.

The Seafarers' Bursary has life-changing potential for the recipients, giving them opportunities to pursue their interests and make the most of their talents at one of the country's leading co-educational independent schools.

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For more information about the Seafarers' Bursary visit www.royalhospitalschool.org/seafarersbursary or contact admissions@royalhospitalschool.org

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Picture: LPhoto Dan Rosenbaum

Hall of fame

SADLY we can't bring you the melodies, only the spectacle.

And there are few spectacles more impressive than a full house at the Royal Albert Hall for Britain's Armed Forces' No.1 musicians: the massed bands of HM Royal Marines.

Once again, the famous venue was a sell-out for the three performances of the Mountbatten Festival of Music.

Prince Harry was guest of honour on the third and final performance – his first official duty as Captain General Royal Marines, having taken over from the Duke of Edinburgh in December last year.

He was one of more than 14,000 people entertained by the Marines band, led by Lt Col Jon Ridley for the first time as Principal Director of Music. He said the 46th festival had "surpassed all expectations".

The festival is one of the longest-running shows in the Albert Hall's diary; the 2018 event focused on events a century ago, commemorating the raid on Zeebrugge, the award of the King's Badge to the Royal Marines and the Armistice which put an end to the bloodshed of the Great War.

You can watch the performance for free via the RM YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6R5ECMLS-Q



Swansea freedom honour for Cambria

SOUTH Wales' Royal Naval Reserve unit have received the City of Swansea's highest honour.

Sailors from HMS Cambria and Tawe Division, which is a satellite Reserve unit located in the port, had the Freedom of Entry conferred on them by Swansea Council – meaning that the Navy now have the right to march through the city bearing arms.

A formal ceremonial presentation of the official Freedom scroll by the Lord Mayor, Cllr Philip Downing, to the Commanding Officer of HMS Cambria, Cdr Steve Fry, took place in the Guildhall, followed by a parade and inspection.

The Guard then exercised the right to march through the streets of the city to the National Waterfront Museum via St Helen's Road, West Way, Oxford Street and Princess Way, led by the Royal Marines Band Portsmouth.

Cdr Fry said: "The Royal Naval Reserve has had a presence in Swansea for more than 70 years and the Royal Navy has always recruited strongly from Swansea, with one third of the current ship's company from the city."

"HMS Cambria is deeply honoured to receive this significant recognition of our strong links with the City and County of Swansea."

"Many of us on parade live and work in the city and are very grateful for the honour that has been afforded to us."

We look forward to an ongoing relationship with this city and its residents.

"We would really like to encourage members of the public to come down and say hello and show their support to the unit."

Cllr Downing added: "Reservists play an increasingly vital role in the Royal Navy, often taking part in operations around the world."

"Not only do they potentially put their lives at risk, but they also play an important part in promoting a greater understanding of the Royal Navy and its work."

"Here in Swansea, we're enormously proud of our serving and former Armed Forces men and women. Granting Honorary Freedom of the City and County of Swansea to HMS Cambria further shows how much the council and communities across the city appreciate everything our Armed Forces do to protect the freedom and democracy that we cherish."

HMS Cambria was originally based in Cardiff Docks and then moved to Sully, Vale of Glamorgan, which the unit shares with Wales URNU.

Having originally begun life as a reserve wireless unit with just one recruit, the unit expanded to 48 by 1970. In the future an £11m bespoke building will house HMS Cambria when the unit moves back to Cardiff Bay in a modern training environment to be shared with the URNU and RMR.



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Royal Navy run riot to take Commonwealth title

THE Royal Navy Rugby Union team did not take long to get established in the only game of the Commonwealth Navies Cup 2018 – thrashing the Royal Australian Navy 61-0.

Played at Burnaby Road in Portsmouth, the match saw the home side score nine unanswered tries – converting eight of them.

The first score was not long in coming, the RN turned over from a RAN scrum and Fairbrother was on hand to pick up and touch down to chalk the first points onto the board, Humphrey from the touchline nailed his kick and within ten minutes the RN were 7-0 up.

Their dominance continued and Chambers scored the first of his three tries shortly after, having turned over in their own half, the RN quickly countered and worked swiftly through the backs before the ball worked out wide to

Chambers who cleared the line and added another five points. Humphrey nailed another kick from the touchline and within 20 minutes the RN were 14-0 to the good.

After Chambers scored his second try, again covered by Humphrey, the RN ran in two more, courtesy of Seta and Fairbrother. Conversions by Humphrey left the half-time score at 35-0.

The second half started just as the first had finished and the RN added another seven points shortly after the re-start thanks to a try by Priddey and a Humphrey conversion.

After 50 minutes Head Coach Pascoe began to ring in the changes, one of those was Sammy Davies, his second game in an RN shirt since undergoing knee surgery and it was not long before he added a try of his own to the tally.

With the bench emptied the RN powered on through to score another two tries before the end of the game; Chambers completed his hat-trick and then moved on to setting Raumakita up for his second of the night. The wind had died down on both occasions and normal services were resumed for Humphrey who slotted both kicks.

With the score at 61 – 0 and the clock turned red the referee drew the game to an end, resulting in the RN being crowned the Commonwealth Navies Rugby Cup Champions 2018.

Pictures:
LPhoto Joe Cater



Brett guides skier Millie to three medals

A Royal Navy Submariner from Glasgow brought back a trio of medals from the **Winter Paralympics** where he was a guide to the youngest member of the British Team.

HM Naval Base Clyde's Brett Wild travelled to South Korea to take part in the 2018 Winter Paralympics with partially-sighted skier Millie Knight.

The pair arrived at the holding camp with the rest of Team GB to acclimatise to the different time zone, get used to the snow conditions and complete some final training preparation.

Brett said: "It was absolutely brilliant to travel out to Korea so early and to be able to acclimatise and get used to the completely different snow conditions. This prepared us to go into the races fresh and allowed us to do our best."

The pair got off to a flying start in their first race on the snow, winning silver in the Women's Downhill event finishing 0.86 seconds behind defending Paralympic champions from Slovakia.

The Women's Super G event brought more success with Millie and Brett crossing the finish line in 1 minute 33.76 seconds and winning their second silver medal of the games.

Brett has been skiing since he was three years old and began racing when he was



just seven. He has also raced for the Navy and Combined Services team.

He has been skiing with Millie for the past two years and the pair were keen to build on their success in last year's World Championships where they won gold and silver medals.

On the final day of the games Brett and Millie added a bronze medal to their collection, taking third place in the Women's Slalom, helping the ParalympicsGB team meet their UK Sport target of six to 12 medals, with the ambition of seven.

The pair arrived back in the UK as *Navy News* went to press, feeling proud of what they achieved for Great Britain, and with good reason.

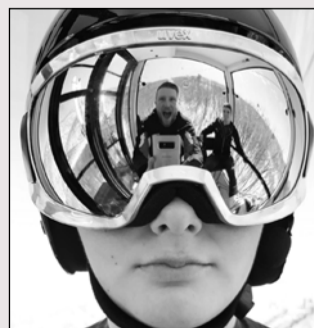
Since starting to ski together in February 2016,

Millie and Brett have won a total of 19 medals – eight gold, nine silver and two bronze.

"I am so grateful to the Royal Navy for this unbelievable opportunity and I am so proud to be representing them here as well as the British Paralympic Association and Great Britain," said Brett.

"Having the opportunity to ski with Millie at the Winter Paralympic Games is an incredible honour, made even more special by winning two silver medals and one bronze while skiing with one of my best friends.

"It's been a long and difficult season, but to secure the first medal for ParalympicsGB at the games and to go on to win two more feels absolutely amazing."





Great gig for Ian

ROYAL Marine Ian McCormack made his competitive gig rowing debut at the six-mile Three Rivers Race.

The longest event of the season provided the opening fixture for Ian and the rest of the Help for Heroes Gig Rowing Team.

The race, hosted by Caradon Gig Club in Saltash, started on the River Tamar and saw around 80 boats navigate a unique figure-of-eight course, taking in the Rivers Tavy and Lynher before returning to the dual start/finish point under the Tamar Bridge.

The Help for Heroes team finished the race in one hour and 45 seconds, four minutes faster than in 2017, placing 55 of 79 compared to last year's 72.

Ian, who was among three novices in the team, serves with Hasler Naval Service Recovery Unit in Devonport Naval Base.

The 41-year-old, pictured above, contracted salmonella poisoning in 2014 which compromised his immune system resulting in reactive arthritis.

He could not walk and lost the use of his hands. Through intensive rehab and with the right medication he is now more mobile, but still has relapses and will not be returning to active service.

Despite his illness, Ian leads an active lifestyle, adapting his activities to suit what he can do to regain his purpose in life, rather than focusing on what he can't do.

"High impact sports no longer work for me, so rowing is ideal," said Ian. "I really missed doing



competitive sport and being part of a team. Rowing is a great way of keeping fit. I have to keep active as it helps my joints. Doing sport helps me regain as much of my old life as I can."

The Three Rivers Race was the first time Ian had rowed competitively with the Help for Heroes team and he is keen to keep going.

He said: "The race was great. As soon as we got off the line we caught a couple of boats and then we passed a few more. I loved the turns and the technique involved. I really enjoyed it. It was great fun."

The crew now look ahead to what will be their fourth World Pilot Gig Championships in the Isles of Scilly, held over the May Day Bank Holiday weekend.

"Our main aim in the Scillies is to do better than the team did last year to push Help for Heroes forward. We don't just want to be a team that turns up, we're there to compete. We have a great team ethos and camaraderie, so it should be good."

For more details about the charity visit www.helpforheroes.org.uk/get-support



Tyne leap to take Salmon Trophy

PERSONNEL from the Fishery Protection Squadron competed for the coveted Salmon Trophy at the unit's annual sports contest.

Members of HMS Tyne, Forth, Medway and Trent took part in three flight-deck contests – basketball, Swedish long ball and football.

The teams competed as Batch 1 and 2, with Batch 1 winning the basketball 19-13.

Batch 2 hit back by winning the Swedish long ball 17-11, which meant that football would be the deciding sport.

Batch 1 took the victory with a last-minute goal to win 3-2.

Commander of the squadron Cdr Sarah Oakley joined Captain Mine Warfare and Patrol Vessels Capt Roger Readwin in presenting the Salmon Trophy to HMS Tyne, a fitting final victory before she decommissions later this year.

Best results achieved at world class Medal haul for indoor

SEVEN medals were won by Royal Navy indoor rowers as they achieved their best results at the World Rowing Indoor Championships in the USA.

Many other rowers just missed out on medals at the event in Alexandria, Virginia.

The event had gained added stature and credibility with FISA, the World Rowing governing body, assuming overarching responsibility.

The first event featured PO Sean Gaffney (RNAS Yeovilton) in the Men's Para Rowing PR3 (Physically Disabled) Open Hwt 2k race, where he started as one of the favourites, unsurprisingly as he was the current world record holder (6 mins 34.3 secs).

A very competitive race followed, with the lead changing a number of times, to see him finish in 6 mins 35.2 secs to gain a hard-earned silver medal.

Later in the day he gained another silver medal in the able bodied Men's Hwt 50+ 500m in a time of 1 min 24.2 secs.

Not content with this, seven days later he won the PR3 1k Open race in 3 mins 04.1 secs at the CRASH-B Championships in Boston, USA.

Thus Gaffney reinforced his position as one of the top two in the world for the PR3 category and looks forward to competing as a Para Power Lifter at the forthcoming Commonwealth Games in Australia, where he has been selected to represent Wales.

Two other individual silver medals were won by the 'Tiny Tim' duo.

'Tiny' is WO Paul 'Tiny' Nash (HMS Temeraire), who rowed a superb lifetime personal best in the Men's Hwt 50+ 2k in a time of 6 mins 17.7 secs.

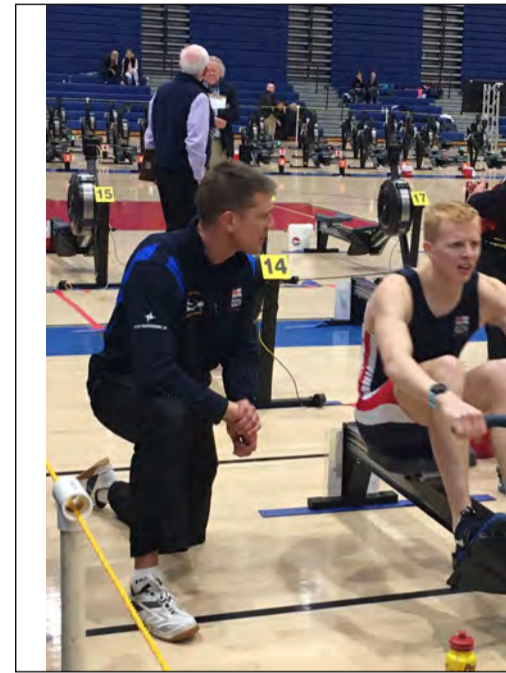
Rowing a consistent pace for the majority of the race, just 2m ahead of his nearest rival for over 1,700m, this opposition faded in the final 300m in the face of his relentless pressure.

'Tim' is CPO Tim 'Apples' Cox (HMS Collingwood), always battling in the mix at the forefront of races, who was rewarded for his commitment and courage to take second place in the Men's Lwt 40+ 2k in a time of 6 mins 42.1 secs.

POPT Al 'Dick' Treacy (HMS Sultan) first competed in the World Championships in 1996 (in Boston, USA) alongside



● Sean Gaffney reinforced his position as one of the top two in his category



● Clockwise from above, Mid Giles Piggott is urged on by POPT Al Treacy; Exhausted Emily Loftus and Lt Cdr Ruth Guest recover from their efforts; LH Natalie Thorpe is encouraged by CPO Tim Collingwood; Members of the RN Indoor Rowing squad in the USA; Competitors in the Men's Hwt 40+, from left, Lt Cdrs Jim Thomson and Jim Hyde, Lt Stu Moss, Graham Benton and Lt Col Tom Blythe



Nash; 22 years later they again lined up on adjacent 'ergs' in the Men's Hwt 50+ as Treacy took seventh place in 6 mins 39.1 secs.

The final individual medal was won by Lt Cdr Craig Guest (HMS Albion) in the Men's Hwt 30+ where his 2k time of 6 mins 21.1 secs took third place.

Attempts to achieve a family double of individual medals were just thwarted when Lt Cdr Ruth Guest (INM Alverstoke) finished 4th in the Women's Lwt 30+ 2k in 7 mins 41.3 secs.

However, the family 'his and hers' medals were later achieved as they both achieved bronze

medals in the Mixed (2 Men + 2 Women) 2k relay, supported by the Temeraire pairing of Nash and Emily Loftus.

The Men's Hwt 40+ 2k saw four Royal Navy finishers in the top ten: Lt Stu Moss (Sultan) 6 mins 20.5 secs, Lt Col Tom Blythe (JSU Northwood) 6 mins 26.2 secs, Lt Cdr Jim Hyde (NCHQ) and Lt Cdr Jim Thomson (NCHQ) dead-heating in 6 mins 27.6 secs in sixth, eighth, and ninth positions respectively.

Lower down the finishing order in their respective races were Temeraire duo POPT

Richard 'Chazz' Charrett with seventh in 6 mins 51.0 secs in the Men's Lwt 30+ and CPOPT Helen Richardson tenth in 7 mins 57.2 secs in the Women's Hwt 40+.

LH Natalie Thorpe (NPOF BDSUS) was 11th in the Women's Hwt 30+ in 7 mins 42.6 secs, just one place behind Emily Loftus (Temeraire) in 7 mins 41.6 secs.

By far the most competitive categories were the Men's Open Hwt and Lwt 2k races, featuring high performing Olympians and World Championship water rowers from across the globe.



● The Royal Navy on the attack; MA Nicola Albutt, who has been chosen for the UKAF squad

Super 7

A NUMBER of Royal Navy netball players have been chosen for the UK Armed Forces Netball Association Squad.

MA Nicola Albutt, LNN Abigail Wrigley, AET Anthea Kaptein, MA Jordan Ayton, POMA Samantha Usher, LWtr Megan Bailey and Sub Lt Kiani Pay were given the news at a dinner to mark the end of the Inter-Service Netball Championships.

The contest is the culmination of a season of netball for all three Services. The championship is held on a rotational basis between the Services with the Royal Navy hosting the championship at HMS Collingwood, Fareham.

Each Service entered three teams of a maximum of 12 players to compete in the Masters, Development or Open competitions.

The first match of the open ended 46-19 in favour of the Army against the RAF. Match two saw the Navy beat the RAF 51-28, while the third

Championships in the USA Indoor rowers



Thus Cpl Dave Moody (40Cdo), Lt Nick Howe (RM Stonehouse) and Mid Giles Piggott (HMS Albion) enjoyed personal introductions to the crowd as they entered the arena in gladiatorial style.

Moody posted the second fastest RN time for the day with a 34th place 6 mins 19.5 secs in the Hwt race, with Lwts Piggott 13th in 6 mins 39.0 secs and Howe 16th in 6 mins 59.5 secs.

Just one more medal to report, noting that four Royal Navy teams competed in the event's concluding relay races.

The Men's Open Hwt 2k

relay was a very competitive race featuring many of those Olympians and World Championship water rowers.

The Royal Navy quartet of Thomson, Hyde, Moss and Moody brought all guns to bear on the opposition as they achieved a third-place finish. Close behind was the all Lwt team of Cox, Charrett, Piggott and Howe.

Also finishing in fourth place, in the Mixed (2M+2W) relay, just behind their fellow teammate bronze medallists, were Blythe, Richardson, Treacy and Thorpe.

All those competing had committed and benefited from long-term structured training regimes to develop performance, most working within groups, including the RN Indoor Rowing Performance Programme initially established under LPT Ollie Osborne (HMS Drake) and carried forward by Lt Cdr Jim Thomson.

Team Manager Paul Winton (MCTA) (5th Men's Hwt 60+ 2k) was more than content with the Royal Navy team's achievements to conclude the racing season.

Report: Paul Winton

are called up for UKAF

match saw the Army beat the RN 50-20 to take the title.

The development competition began with the RN losing 17-56 to the Army, with the winners going on to beat the RAF 49-18. The final match saw the RN miss out by four points, losing 33-37 to the RAF.

The RAF won the Masters contest, beating the RN 54-17 and the Army 48-27. The first match saw the Army beat the RN 52-23.

A number of presentations were made by Capt (Ret'd) Graham Robinson, BFBS; Second Sea Lord Sir Jonathan Woodcock, President of RNNA; Lt Col Andrea Zanchi, ANA Chairman; Ms Jane Lomax and Ms Elly Moore, EN Selectors and Mrs Jan Burke, Team Poppy.

L/Cpl Vakoaca Bolakoro of the Army picked up the Team Poppy Fair Play Award and the Open player of the championship accolade. The Army's L/Cpl Kate Loach won development player of the tournament.



● RN team captain LNN Abigail Wrigley Pictures: LPhoto Joe Cater



Female fighters debut at Corps Championships

ROYAL Marines boxer Luke Skinner-Brown cools off during the annual Corps Boxing Championships.

The 40 Commando team walked away as the Corps boxing champions, while it was down to points for two women in the ring at the Commando Training Centre.

It was the first time women competed in the tournament.

For Sub Lt Rebecca Carman, representing Taunton-based 40 Commando, it was a hard-fought win.

"I was fighting a girl from the Royal Logistic Corps. I knew that she had a few more bouts than me," said Sub Lt Carman, pictured above.

"She was a bit more experienced and she was a little bit heavier than me, so I was quite lucky that I got to put some weight on before the fight.

"There was a lot of pressure in front of my colleagues to do well, so I was quite nervous going in.

"I don't think I've ever been hit so hard in my life, so at first it was a bit of shock but I

think I eased into it in the second and third rounds and kind of got into my stride a bit later in the fight."

As a result, she's been offered the chance to train alongside the England team.

40 Cdo's boxing coach, WO2 Wilf Rees, said: "She's going to go up with the Navy squad to the England development camp and the England women's team are going to have a look at her and see how she gets on up there.

"She's only had four bouts and she's won them all. Her boxing skills are fantastic.

"She needs to move her head more so she doesn't get caught with so many shots on the nose! But it's all stuff we can work with."

Back at the gym in Norton Manor Camp Sub Lt Carman's been keeping up the momentum with the rest of the squad, as the only female on the team.

It's something she relishes.

She added: "It was pretty intense training. Sprinting in the morning, sparring in the afternoon. So it takes a lot of commitment, I think."

Pictures: LPhoto Joe Cater



Summers' winter swansong



ROYAL MARINE Jamie Summers zooms down the **Cresta Run** as the Senior Service team bid to win the Inter-Service Prince Philip Trophy.

The Lt Col was in his last season as a Royal Navy rider after 25 years of service to the sport.

And his team didn't disappoint as the Royal Navy snatched the coveted title after two years of Army domination.

Speed proved the name of the game as male and female riders from all three Armed Forces rode faster and faster on the famous course at St Moritz, Switzerland.

This year was the first time in 100 years that the Cresta Run had opened its doors to female military riders.

Two females from each Service put themselves through the punishing and bruising task of learning to ride the run and by race day, all six were well matched and riding well.

In the inaugural female Inter-Service contest, Sub Lt Tosca Barnes took the spoils, with Lt Emma Yearling securing third place.

The leading male riders, two of the three fastest Servicemen of all time, Capt Tom Wythe from the Army and Surg Cdr Dave Potter from the Royal Navy had been going head to head and were extremely well matched.

Army team captain Maj Paul Chishick had just a few days to find form after returning to the UK for work commitments, while Mne Ed Hill, the Royal Navy's second man, mixed brilliance with agony.

Come race day, conditions were a crisp -8°C, with glorious sunshine bathing the Engadine. The run was looking immaculate, with every snowflake from earlier heavy falls having been removed, every scratch lovingly repaired with snow, smoothed with shovels and then spritzed with water to leave a glistening snake of smooth, fast ice.

The hour arrived and the first man, C/Sgt Tim Armon-Jones, set off to start what would become an epic race.

The first course saw two RAF riders, Cpl Jules Plowman and Gp Capt Tim Below, fall at Shuttlecock, along with Lance Corporal of Horse Rob Tonkin.

Surg Cdr Potter set the early pace with a 53.76 and after the first course, the RN were just 2.28 seconds in front.

However, the Army pushed hard in the second course, reducing the deficit to just 1.25 seconds.

C/Sgt Armon Jones and Lt Jonny Palmer-Tomkinson did especially well. Capt Scott Pryor also rode well to give the Army some real momentum going into the third course.

In reply, the Royal Navy's fifth man, WO1 Craig Birkby, also improved his time to allow the top four to really push on the third course.

The whole season came down to the third course of the race, with the Army needing 1.25 seconds to gain victory.

C/Sgt Armon-Jones led the charge with a 57.16, which Lt Cdr Andrew Mills matched with a 56.95, gaining the RN an invaluable 0.21 seconds.

Capt Wythe slowed a little to a 55.10 while Surg Cdr Potter pushed hard for what would turn out to be the fastest ride of the day, a 53.61.

The Royal Navy's cushion grew to 2.95 seconds. However, Maj Chishick responded with a 54.49, his fastest ride of the season.

The RN's top beginner, Mne Matt Harding rode next and posted his second fastest time of the season, a 57.68, but this now left the Army 0.24 seconds in front with just one rider from each service to come.

Lt Palmer-Tomkinson rode an ice-cool 57.64, which left everything hanging on the last ride of Mne Hill - who rode a great 55.68.

This heralded celebrations for the RN team and commiserations for the Army.

The closest race in record had come down to just 1.72 seconds separating the teams, ending the Army's run of two successive victories.

Surg Cdr Potter won the Lord Trenchar Trophy for his combined time of 161.88 seconds and the Auty Speed Cup for the fastest individual time, his 53.61 on the third course.

● Below, from left to right, Mne Matt Harding; Lt Emma Yearling; Sub Lt Tosca Barnes; Surg Cdr Dave Potter, WO1 Craig Birkby, Col Kev Oliver and Lt Col Jamie Summers

Pictures: Crestaphotos.com

