



# NAVY NEWS

MAY 2018

## In from the cold

*HMS Trenchant makes her way up the Thames River in Connecticut following the successful completion of ICEX, during which she carried out exercises with US Navy submarines at the North Pole (see page 3)*

Picture: PO(Phot) Arron Hoare



**HMS SUTHERLAND IN PACIFIC**

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# Sutherland feels the heat ...

## Royal Marines share training tips with USMC

ROYAL Marines opened the window on their training as they put their counterparts from the US through their paces on the Pacific island of Guam.

Using cutters, night vision goggles, assault ladders, and fast boats, the men of Juliet Company, 42 Cdo, joined the USMC to share their skills, expertise and equipment to board and search craft in the naval base.

The Royal Marines made full use of HMS Sutherland's short stop in Guam – the first port of call on the Asiatic leg of the warship's seven-month Pacific Rim deployment.

Following a reshuffle of the Corps, 42 Commando have become the amphibious/ naval warfare specialists, including taking over board-and-search duties traditionally performed by 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group.



In Guam, the Force Reconnaissance Company of III Marine Expeditionary Force and other specialist US military units were keen to join the Brits.

"Their lads are cut from the same cloth as us, with the same motivations and aspirations as ourselves," said L/Cpl Charlie Rushton.

Training activities included night-time fast roping on to rooftops, boat assaults by day and night, climbing 40ft up spindly, twisting ladders and using mechanical (ie prising open) and thermal breaching (ie cutting through steel) techniques to force their way into compartments.

To ensure a realistic environment, US Navy and Coast Guard vessels were involved, including submarine tender USS Frank Cable and USCG cutters, stepping up from compliant boardings – when a vessel's crew willingly allow an inspection team aboard – to opposed (when a crew will obstruct and do everything bar shooting to prevent their craft being searched).

"It was a great opportunity to work with a partner nation whose doctrine is similar to ours, which made working with them easy," said Sgt Lee 'Whiskey' Walker RM, second in command of Sutherland's boarding team.

"Our US colleagues made an

extensive amount of assets available, which enabled a wide range of boarding serials."

At the end of a challenging and demanding two weeks, the group had identified and refined their tactics, techniques and procedures, which will significantly improve working together in the future.

The stopover in Guam also enabled members of the frigate's crew to enjoy a rare diving opportunity.

Lt Cdr Alexander Knight and Sub Lt David Ferguson, encountered turtles and sharks as they dived on the world's only double shipwreck.



historically important wreck was fantastic; swimming through the hull of the ship at a depth of 25m is an experience I shall never forget," said Sub Lt Ferguson.

From Guam, HMS Sutherland made her way to Japan and the home of the US Seventh Fleet: FLEACT (Fleet Activities – roughly the equivalent of HMNB) Yokosuka.

The dockyard, 30 miles south of Tokyo, is the largest US naval base outside the mother country, home to one carrier strike group, three cruisers and a destroyer squadron, supported by 27,000 men and women.

Sutherland has so far visited Australia and Guam on her seven-month deployment which is a mixture of 'floating salesroom' for UK plc showcasing the best of British industry and innovation, and conducting exercises with Allied navies in the region – chiefly the RAN and USN to date.

Earlier in her deployment, Sutherland and the HMAS Toowoomba united at the wreck site of Australia's first submarine.

For the first time since the remains of HMAS AE1 were discovered in the tropical waters off Papua New Guinea, Britons and Australians held a joint service of remembrance in honour of 35 men killed in the first days of World War 1.

A 103-year search for the 181ft boat ended in December last year when a specialist research vessel located the shattered hull around 1,000ft down off the Duke of York Islands.

The E-class boat – the mainstay of WW1 – was built in Barrow, given the prefix A for Australian and sent to the Dominion with a mixed crew of 18 Australians, 16 Britons (all her officers, plus men who'd transferred from the Royal to the Royal Australian Navy) and one New Zealander.

In September 1914 she and her sister AE2 were sent as part of the force dispatched to drive German forces out of New Guinea.

One day after the capture of the key port of Rabaul, AE1 headed out on patrol and was never seen again.

For the four submariners serving aboard Sutherland, the event was especially significant.

"Being a submariner means being part of a family, no matter what navy you belong to. Rest in Peace, crew of RAN Submarine AE1," said Leading Regulator Kevin Lewis – one of HMS Sutherland's policemen.

where the divers swam through a natural hole in the coral reef and exited at a depth of 41m.

"It was exhilarating; I haven't dived such a deep hole formation before and the variety of fish we saw as we passed through was amazing," said Lt Cdr Knight.

The team then dived on the double shipwreck of the WW2 Japanese Imperial Navy Freighter Tokai Maru, which rests on the WW1 German frigate SMS Cormoran.

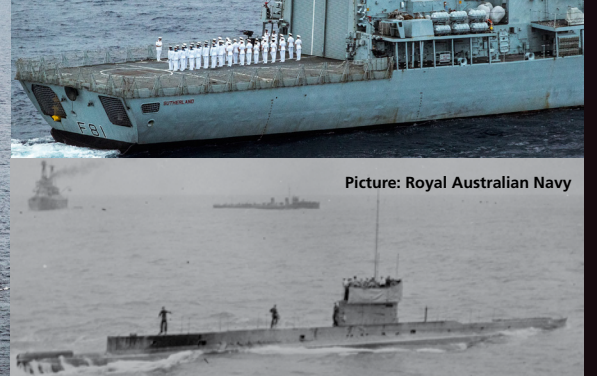
The two vessels are largely intact, with key features such as the bridge and heavy calibre weaponry still identifiable.

"To dive on such a renowned and

Organised by CPOET (ME) Jonathan "JC" Cowell, the expedition started by diving the Blue Hole,

● Below, HMS Sutherland arrives in Yokosuka; Right, Diving with the turtles; Far right, Sutherland united with the HMAS Toowoomba to pay their respects to the lost submarine AE1, bottom right

Pictures: LPhoto Sam Seeley, HMS Sutherland, and US Navy



Picture: Royal Australian Navy





# ...and Trenchant plays it cool

## Submarine crew on top of world

THE sound of willow upon leather. Quintessentially British. The sound of willow upon leather in the snow. Twenty-five Celsius below zero. At the top of the world.

Also quintessentially British. And slightly barking. While professional cricketers in the UK bemoaned the weather which stalled the opening of the county championship, the crew of HMS Trenchant grabbed bat and ball for a few overs at the North Pole.

A few weeks after punching through the ice off Alaska, the hunter-killer emerged once again in the white desolation, but this time at the top of the world... 2,750 miles from (and 37°C colder than) her home base of Plymouth.

Despite temperatures of -25°C – your breath will begin to freeze on a beard if you have one, so too your nostrils, eyelids, eyelashes...

Trenchant broke through the ice on five occasions to surface during IceX/Polex, along with USS Hartford and the Seawolf-class Connecticut.

As reported in last month's *Navy News*, the five-week ICEX is designed to test submariners' skills in operating under the Arctic ice cap.

Co-ordinated by the US Navy's Arctic Submarine Laboratory, based in sunny and much warmer San Diego, the three boats conducted multiple Arctic transits, surfaced at the North Pole, collected scientific data to advance understanding of the environment and completed other training evolutions.

"The exercise has been excellent – very well conducted," said Trenchant's CO Cdr David Burrell.

"To get back into the world of 'under-ice warfighting' has been an excellent experience."

While at the North Pole, the American boats fired several training torpedoes to test advancements made to weapons systems for operating under the ice.

The torpedoes, which did not have warheads and carried minimal fuel, were recovered by US Navy and Coast Guard divers and lifted by helicopter out of holes drilled in the ice.

"The data we collect from these tests drives constant improvement in the torpedo while giving the submarine force a chance to demonstrate its skill at employing these weapons," said Cdr Matt Fanning, CO of the Los Angeles-class USS Hartford.

"The United States has significant national security and economic interests in the Arctic. The submarine force must be able to demonstrate its ability to preserve and protect those interests as we have for more than 60 years," he added.

The Hartford spent several weeks preparing for the exercise – checking everything from calibration and use of special sonar systems that detect ice keels to training on how to cut the ship's



● Trenchant and her crew at the North Pole; Bottom of page, Trenchant makes her way up the Thames River in Connecticut

Pictures: PO(Phot) Arron Hoare



hatches out of the ice, Fanning said.

The crew also received help and training from a specialized ice pilot that was on board.

About 20 percent of the current crew were on board when the Hartford participated in the exercise two years ago.

Those who went through the exercise before – "they call it 'TWICEX,'" Fanning said – helped inform their shipmates about what to expect.

ICEX was also supported by more than 50 Alaska National Guardsmen as part of their Arctic Eagle 2018, a statewide exercise involving national, state and local agencies conducting sustained operations in Arctic conditions.

Alaska Army National Guardsmen with 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, began preparations by outfitting three UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters to carry six-and-a-half hours of fuel in internal and external fuel tanks.

The helicopters underwent training flights to test the new weight of the birds.

The extra fuel allowed the unit to rendezvous at the US Navy's Ice Camp Skate and get back to their staging location in one trip.

Ice Camp Skate was a temporary camp on a sheet of ice in the Arctic Ocean.

"Sometimes we do things differently, so it is really great for us to get together to plan and really coordinate our operations," said 1st Lt Cade Cross, a pilot with the 1-207th.

"[This exercise] gives us experience as well as a unique opportunity."

The unique opportunity took the aviators more than 1,000 miles north of their home location at Bryant Army Airfield and into extreme cold temperatures.

"The cold can cause things to break on the aircraft," Cross said.

"No matter where we are asked to go, we should be able to get there and execute ... unless there are other factors out of our control."

The Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Wing

supported the exercise with an airdrop mission, partnering with Marine Corps riggers from 1st Air Delivery Platoon, Landing Support Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group.

They conducted airdrop operations via a 249th Airlift Squadron C-17 Globemaster III transport aircraft on to the Beaufort Sea.

Air Guardsmen from the 176th Wing's 211th Rescue Squadron crewed an HC130J Combat King II aircraft and airdropped equipment, including an Arctic Sustainment Package and 10 pararescue personnel from the 212th RQS, into the camp.

The ASP is an airdroppable package, including rescue personnel, which provides shelter, heat, transportation, fuel and food for 28 individuals for up to six-and-a-half days in extreme conditions.

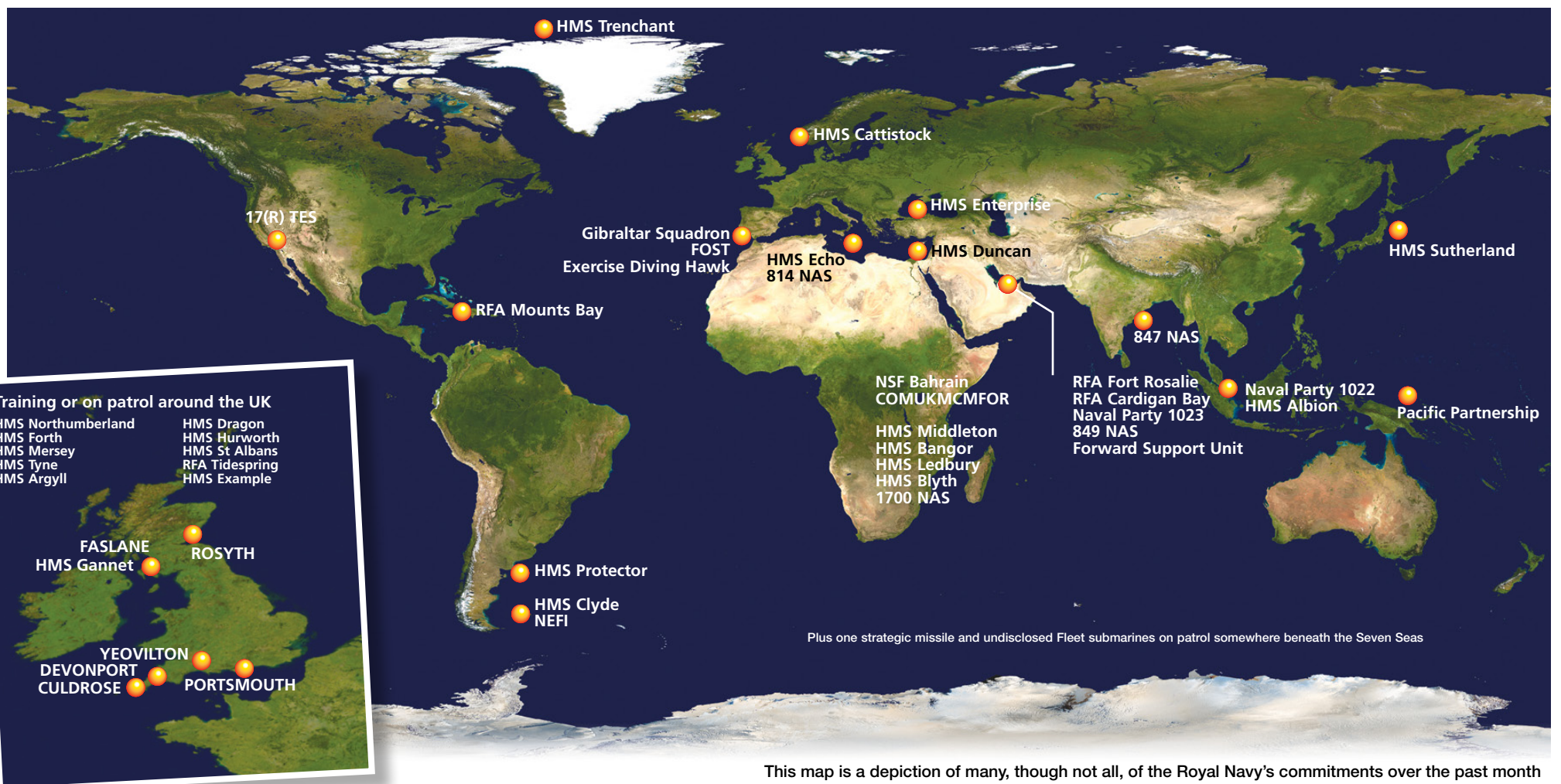
"This marks a significant point in history since this was the first time dropping the Arctic Sustainment Package out of the HC-130J, Combat King II," said Air Force Lt Col Eric Budd, commander of the 211th Rescue Squadron and pilot in command of the mission.

At the culmination of POLEX, Trenchant headed for the USA and the Naval Submarine Base at Groton in Connecticut, also home to the USS Hartford.

Known as home of the US submarine force, Groton is on the Thames River in New London County, some 130 miles from New York.







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

THE ROYAL Navy's presence in all four corners of the world is highlighted in this month's *Navy News*, kicking off with submarine **HMS Trenchant** (see page 3) and her work under the ice at the North Pole.

At the other end of the world, **HMS Protector** responded to a request to deliver a 49-tonne excavator to the British Antarctic Survey base at Rothera, deep in the Antarctic Circle (see page 7).

Up to the Pacific and **HMS Sutherland** continues her epic seven-month deployment with visits to Guam and Japan (see page 2).

Also in the Far East is Fleet Flagship **HMS Albion** (see page 15), whose ship's company paid tribute at the graves of their predecessors during a visit to Singapore.

In the USA Royal Navy personnel have been involved in two major milestones in the **F-35** programme (see page 5). Fleet Air Arm and RAF pilots aboard four of the British strike fighters took on fuel from an RAF tanker, while a former RN pilot completed the final flight of the 11-year System Development and Demonstration programme.

Back East and a small group of Royal Navy personnel are taking part in the US-led **Pacific Partnership** 2018 medical deployment to Micronesia (see page 14).

In the Mediterranean and **814 NAS**, **829 NAS** and **HMS Duncan** joined half a dozen navies off Sicily for NATO's biggest submarine exercise of the year, *Dynamic Manta* (see centre pages).

Also in the Med was **HMS Echo** as she sailed to Cyprus to share her experience of rescuing migrants with the island's rescue teams (see page 14). So far the survey ship has rescued more than 6,100 people since her deployment began at the end of 2016.

Personnel from **RNAS Culdrose** and **HMS Raleigh** took a trip to the Med for a spot of scuba diving off Gibraltar (see page 29). Exercise Diving Hawk featured plenty of opportunities to view wrecks near the Rock, as well as some encounters with fish and turtles.

Back in the UK and the nation bade farewell to **HMS Ocean** (see page 13) after 20 years' of Service. The Queen, who launched, commissioned and rededicated the Mighty O, joined personnel and their families for the decommissioning service in Devonport.

Also passing into history was **829 NAS** as the squadron merged with **814 NAS** to form the largest Merlin helicopter unit in the UK (see page 6).

April also saw the Royal Navy welcome **HMS Forth** into service (see page 6). The first of the new generation of Offshore Patrol ships was formally commissioned into the Fleet in Portsmouth.

**HMS Cattistock** returned to Portsmouth following four months in the Baltic Sea working on clearing historic ordnance (see page 5).

A **V-boat** also received a warm welcome as she returned to Faslane (see page 6). Around 200 family members gathered at Rhu as the submarine made her way up the Clyde.

Memorial stones have been dedicated to two naval heroes – Capt Alfred Carpenter and Royal Marines Capt Edward Bamford – from the first commando raid as part of commemorations marking the centenary of the attack on **Zeebrugge** (see page 17).

Two members of **HMS Clyde**'s ship's company joined more than 100 military personnel, veterans and historians for a battlefield tour in the Falklands (see page 15), 36 years on from the conflict.

New recruits to **HMS Raleigh** can now seek extra inspiration as a portrait of medical assistant **Kate Nesbitt** was unveiled (see page 17). The painting of Kate, the first female sailor to earn the Military Cross, will hang near that of Jutland VC winner Jack Cornwell.

The Year of Engineering continues with youngsters from across the UK gathering at HMS Sultan for the **Royal Navy Engineering Challenge** – Exercise Clean Sweep (see page 19).

Finally, our popular **Mystery Ship** competition has now moved to its new home on Noticeboard (see page 34).

# Home and away

## RN's vital roles in the UK also warrant appreciation

### VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

LOOKING back on the last few months, there can be no doubt that the Royal Navy has been living up to its plans for a 'year of expanding maritime horizons'.

Our ships have been making their presence felt in all of the world's oceans and coverage of **HMS Sutherland** in the Pacific, **HMS Protector** in Antarctica and **HMS Trenchant** under the polar ice cap in this edition of *Navy News* are all fine examples, showcasing both the range and the breadth of our activity.

These global operations are vitally important components of the Royal Navy's efforts to promote international maritime security, whilst supporting the Government's Global Britain agenda.

They enhance our interoperability with our allies and they provide exciting opportunities for our people to visit new countries and enjoy new experiences along the way.

It's absolutely right that these deployments should grab the headlines, but at the same time we shouldn't forget just how much is going on closer to home too.

Some may regard the Navy's contribution to homeland defence as something of an insurance policy, there to be called on in case of an emergency.

Our augmentation of the police following last year's terrorist attacks in London and Manchester, support to local communities in the face of heavy snowfall this winter or, most recently, deployment of Royal Marines to assist in containing the chemical weapon attack in Salisbury are all examples that fit with this sort of insurance analogy.

But another definition of insurance is "to provide protection against a possible reality" – acting to prevent emergencies happening in the first place. And this far more accurately describes our role.

The Royal Navy offers far more than an emergency response force in the UK, we are always active on a variety of operations around the UK.

Our Fleet Ready Escorts increasingly find themselves called upon to escort foreign warships as they transit around the UK, and our MCMVs, Fleet Diving Units, and Inshore Patrol Vessels all have their part to play in securing our Britain's coastline from a variety of threats on a daily basis.

A particularly important element of our routine work in UK home waters is fulfilled



● The guard of honour marches on at HMS Forth's commissioning

Picture: LPhoto Dan Rosenbaum

by the Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) of the Fishery Protection Squadron.

Tasked with patrolling the country's economic exclusion zone, they support DEFRA by inspecting fishing vessels to enforce UK and EU fisheries legislation, thereby ensuring our country's natural maritime resources are protected.

Their persistent presence around the UK also leaves them ideally placed to protect our offshore installations, conduct escort duties and, when called upon, support the coastguard and border force agencies in their efforts to counter the threat to our country posed by smuggling and modern slavery.

For the last 15 years our River-Class OPVs have proved their worth several times over.

As we look forward, demand for this sort of patrol activity around UK waters and those of our dependent territories will no doubt endure.

So the arrival of our new, improved and even more capable 'Batch 2' OPVs is welcome news. It was great to see the first of class, **HMS Forth**, commission, while also looking forward to the imminent arrival of the second, **HMS Medway**, which is about to start sea trials.

Another three of these ships are in build and will soon be joining them too. Together, both classes will continue this vital work as an integral part of the Royal Navy's efforts to protect and promote our nation's interests around the world – and at home.



# Welcome back Cattistock

ROYAL Navy minehunter HMS Cattistock returned home to Portsmouth Naval Base following four months in the Baltic Sea with Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 1 (SNMCMG1).

During her deployment the Hunt-class MCMV took part in a series of multinational exercises and operations, alongside her NATO partners, with the focus on clearing historic mines from the seabed.

The deployment saw the ship transit up the east coast of the United Kingdom, across to Norway, down the east coast of Denmark and through the Kiel Canal to as far down as the Channel Islands.

Lt Cdr Chris Hollingworth, the new Commanding Officer of HMS Cattistock, said: "Having joined the ship two weeks ago I've been incredibly fortunate to inherit such a competent and cheerful ship's company. Their approach is entirely flexible and they go into everything with a 'can do' attitude. They're truly a fantastic bunch and it's an honour and a privilege to be appointed as their Commanding Officer."

A chilly February was spent working in Norway with the Norwegians, Germans, and Dutch, searching the Oslofjorden for ordnance dropped during World War 2 to disrupt German shipping in Oslo.

During this period, the ship found 13 mines and torpedoes, accounting for half of the overall task group haul and of these, four were lifted to the surface by divers, and then towed over two miles to a safe area for disposal.

The ship worked around the clock in sub-zero temperatures and often-heavy snow, using sonar, Seafox and divers to identify contacts of interest. While the battle to remove over



● Above, Oliver Perkins waves to his dad; Left, LCh Emmanuel Craig with son Payton

Pictures: LPhoto Barry Swainsbury



1,500 air-dropped munitions in the Oslofjorden remains ongoing, Cattistock and SNMCMG1 helped to make the area considerably safer for merchant shipping to operate in.

From there Cattistock headed south, conducting navigation training in the Lille Belt narrows off Denmark, before a 14-hour transit through the Kiel Canal and back to the North Sea.

Cattistock conducted a route survey in the German Bight before heading to Amsterdam and Zeebrugge, testing their seamanship skills in a variety of challenging conditions, including rafting, towing and damage control exercises.

In Antwerp, the ship and Crew 8 said goodbye to CO Lt Cdr Charlie Wheen and hello to Lt Cdr Hollingworth.

With her new captain, Cattistock returned to mine clearance operations off the north coast of France. For seven days, the team battled strong wind and tides, painstakingly identifying large rocks and concrete sinkers, before successfully identifying and disposing of an historic 1,000lb US bomb.

A brief port visit to St Malo, France, followed, with Cattistock welcoming onboard 600 visitors in just one day.

"As a young officer under training, it has been a privilege to train with NATO, and a rare opportunity to complete serials not normally experienced during specialist Fleet time training," said Sub Lt James Wagstaff.

Cattistock will now undergo a period of maintenance before deploying at the end of the year.

# NEARLY THERE

## New milestones in F-35 programme

THOUSANDS of feet above the Eastern Seaboard of the USA four British jets of tomorrow took on fuel from an RAF tanker – preparation for their impending arrival in the UK.

A second major milestone in the F-35 programme saw the final developmental test flight over Maryland.

Fleet Air Arm and RAF crews are preparing around the clock to deliver the first F-35B Lightning II stealth fighters – the striking power of the nation's two new aircraft carriers – to their new home at RAF Marham in East Anglia.

Having learned the art of flying fast jets in the UK – earning their wings on Hawk trainers at RAF Valley – all pilots selected for the F-35 programme cross the Atlantic and learn to master the new fifth-generation fighter at the US Marine Corps' base at Beaufort in South Carolina.

Training on the multi-million pound jets will remain Stateside, but the UK's front-line F-35 squadrons – firstly 617 Sqn RAF, later 809 NAS – will operate from Marham, each with mixed RN/RAF air and ground crew. There's just the small matter of 4,134 miles separating Beaufort and Marham – most of it Atlantic Ocean...



...And the F-35B has a range of about 1,000 miles.

Hence the need for air-to-air refuelling (aka 'tanking')...several times.

So the RAF dispatched one of its Voyager tankers from 10 Squadron at Brize Norton to Cecil Airport in Jacksonville, Florida, to practise refuelling manoeuvres by day and night with the jets over the USA's east coast.

It's not the first air-to-air refuelling with the F-35Bs... but it is the first crewed entirely by the RAF.

Two RN and two RAF Lightning IIs manoeuvred into position to take on fuel – inserting the nozzle of their fuel intake (the probe), into the funnel-shaped drogue which delivers that fuel.

The tanker – a modified Airbus 330 airliner – can pump as much as 132,000lb of fuel over a five hour mission, or enough fuel to fill an F-35B's tank nine times.

The coming few months mark a key period in the rebirth of Britain's carrier strike force. As well as 617 Sqn debuting at Marham, in the late summer HMS Queen Elizabeth will conduct her first trials with the new aircraft off the east coast of the USA.

Around the same time former Royal Navy pilot Peter 'Whizzer' Wilson flew the final flight in the 11-year System Development and Demonstration programme.

The testing has seen more than 9,200 flights, accumulating more than 17,000 flight hours – nearly two years – for all three variants of the F-35.

The final development flight, which was carried out by Wilson, occurred at Naval Air Station Patuxent River in Maryland, when US Navy test aircraft CF-2, pictured landing above, completed a mission to collect loads data while carrying external 2,000-pound GBU-31 Joint Direct Attack Munitions and AIM-9X Sidewinder heat-seeking missiles.

More than a thousand development flight test engineers, maintainers, pilots and support personnel took the three variants of the F-35 to their full flight capability to test aircraft performance and flying qualities.

The test team conducted six at-sea detachments and performed more than 1,500 vertical landing tests on the F-35B variant.

The developmental flight test team completed 183 Weapon Separation Tests; 46 Weapons Delivery Accuracy tests; 33 Mission Effectiveness tests, which included numerous multi-ship missions of up to eight F-35s against advanced threats.

"The F-35 flight test program represents the most comprehensive, rigorous and the safest developmental flight test program in aviation history," said Greg Ulmer, Lockheed Martin's vice president and general manager of the F-35 programme.

"The results have given the men and women who fly the F-35 great confidence in its transformational capability."

Pictures: Lockheed Martin



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# Time to go Forth

IT'S time to enter the Forth dimension now the RN has formally welcomed its new patrol ship into the naval family.

The first of five second-generation patrol vessels was ceremonially commissioned on a rather muggy, grey spring day in Hampshire.

During an hour-long ceremony in Portsmouth Naval Base, Lady Sponsor Rachel Johnstone-Burt inspected the guard of honour and ship's company, accompanied by Forth's first CO Cdr Bob Laverty.

With the commissioning of the £116m ship, he has firm orders from Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Ben Key to "proceed forthwith for service".

Admiral Key was one of three senior officers (First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones and Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Ships), Rear Admiral Chris Gardner completed the trio) plus families, friends and affiliates at the waterfront ceremony.

Just as her predecessors, Forth will be expected to perform varied duties at home and abroad, from acting as the UK's eyes and ears around Britain's coast and protecting fishing stocks to flying the flag in British territories and supporting international military operations such as stopping people trafficking in the Mediterranean.

All these duties have been performed by HMS Tyne, Severn or Mersey, while HMS Clyde has safeguarded the Falklands.

The second-generation River class take the best aspects of the first batch and blend technological improvements made over the past 15 years.

"We've got the keys, we've moved in and we're now rearranging the furniture to suit us," said Cdr Laverty, whose crew have been learning how to operate Forth since she arrived in Portsmouth in February.

And what Cdr Laverty has learned so far is that the new ships "will be a fine addition to the fleet. They are highly capable and versatile warships.

"The body of work being put in by my ship's company

will be reflected in not just one, but all five brand new ships being delivered to the RN."

ET(WE) Jamie Philpott is still finding his sea legs on what is his first permanent draft (he spent a month each on Mersey and Somerset as part of his training), but otherwise likes his Forth experience.

"I learned most of what I know on a Type 23, which is so different – all the satellites are different, the radars are very different. Forth is very new, very modern and very capable by comparison.

"I'm the first person in my family to serve in the Armed Forces, so it's a proud thing to go home and tell your parents about. There were a number of things which appealed to me when I joined up; things that I perhaps wouldn't have the same opportunity to do as a civilian. I absolutely love it."

Designed for a total crew of around 58, but requiring only 34 to go to sea, Forth can spend up to 320 days a year on operations. The larger crew allows a rotation of personnel to ensure they get to spend time at home or on training.

The ship was having some new comms equipment fitted post-commissioning before resuming her trials and training ahead of being declared ready for operational duties.

"We want to know what she can do – and what she can do for the Navy," said Cdr Sarah Oakley, in charge of the Fishery Protection Squadron.

"Seeing my squadron grow and being given shiny new 'toys' to play with at the same time is absolutely fantastic."

'Shiny toy' No.2, HMS Medway, should be on her maiden sea trials by the time you read this, followed by Trent (launched), Tamar and Spey. One of the five will replace Clyde in the South Atlantic, while the first generation Rivers will go into reserve (Severn has already paid off).

The new ships are 30ft longer than their predecessors, four knots faster, have a range of more than 6,000 miles, flight deck (only Clyde of Batch 1 has), and there's space for a detachment of up to 50 Royal Marines on board.



Picture: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum



## Thumbs up for Bahrain base

IT WAS opened by royalty, but it's the ordinary men and women of the Senior Service who benefit from the new accommodation, recreation and support complex now in use in Bahrain.

The Duke of York and Crown Prince of Bahrain, Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, jointly performed the honours as the UK Naval Support Facility was officially dedicated – the first new RN establishment opened overseas in nearly half a century.

On a daily basis, it's home to around 200 British military personnel and supporting civilians who live and work in half a dozen cream-coloured blocks, a huge stores/workshop complex on the waterfront in Bahrain, or at the UK Maritime Component Command HQ – the hub of RN operations east of Suez – just up the road.

The two princes, accompanied by international military and civilian VIPs, were taken on a tour of the complex, which is a gift from the King of Bahrain to the Royal Navy for its longstanding support to his nation and its wider peacekeeping efforts in the region.

They had a look around the central welfare building – home to the gymnasium, games room, cinema, cafe and dining facility (pictured), and chatted with sailors, soldiers, airmen and civilian staff from the UK who work in Bahrain as part of Operation Kipion.

"For an operational theatre the support facility – including the accommodation – is amazing," said PO Sally Franks. "Every time I visit the galley I always find a tasty option – KBR are doing a great job. I've been to Bosnia and Afghanistan so I've experience 'normal' operational accommodation that is extremely basic. Everyone here should be grateful for this great facility."

Cpl Ben Webster RM added: "I think the support facility is brilliant. Previously, although we were living in hotel accommodation – some people could be quite isolated.

"Now we get to socialise in the welfare buildings, in the social areas for games, quizzes or to watch a film. It's good to have my own living space with ensuite – it's a home from home similar to the Royal Marine Barracks back in the UK."

There's accommodation for 300 people on site – with space for an additional 200-250 short-term – secure berthing and support facilities for RN/coalition vessels operating in the Gulf, plus all the sport and recreational facilities they need... and a radio station.

BFBS station manager Dave Roberts said: "This is undoubtedly the best forces facility I've ever stayed at. I've been all over the world from Cyprus, Gibraltar, Iraq, Falkland Islands to Northern Ireland and Iraq. The accommodation and welfare facilities are second to none; to be honest, they provide the escape required whilst away from home and loved ones to allow some work-life balance."



Picture: LPhot Stevie Burke

## Giving bombers a welcome return

WITH the high ground above Faslane still capped by the late winter snow, the nation's ultimate guardians of peace return home from patrol.

Around 200 family members and loved ones gathered at Rhu – including a good number who braved the water lapping at their feet on the narrow spit – to greet this V-boat home, before being bussed up the road to the base for an emotional reunion.

The nature of submarine operations – and V-boat missions in particular – often means families and crew are denied the homecomings the surface fleet has enjoyed for decades (for security reasons we cannot tell you the name of the boat, for example).

But increasingly the RN and RM Welfare Team is attempting to make the boats' returns to Faslane more open and enjoyable for all.

While crew disembarked, activities for their families were laid on in Faslane's Supermess: buffet lunch, games, face painting and a children's entertainer.

Louise and Neil Bonner had set off from Staffordshire at five in the morning to welcome home their son David from his first deployment.

"We are so happy to be here to meet David when he arrives back at Faslane and we are really impressed with all the effort that's gone into organising the homecoming," said mum.

"We were met at the train station and taken to Helensburgh where we got straight on the coach with all the other families. We really appreciate how kind and thoughtful everyone has been throughout the day."

Mum-of-two Hayley Hart was particularly pleased that her husband Colin was coming home. Hayley broke her ankle on New Year's Eve while putting out the wheelie bin. Her leg has been in a cast since and she has depended on the support of her mother-in-law, who travelled up from Lancashire to help out with her two boys, seven-year-old Jack and Henry, aged four, and SSAFA who even organised a dog-walker for the much-loved family pet.

"I am so grateful for the amazing help and support I have received during this deployment and especially the past few weeks," said Hayley.

"Now I can't wait to see my husband and the boys are so excited too. Jack and Henry were both up at 4.20am to help me put up welcome home banners for their daddy."

As for the mission of the Trident-missile-carrying Vanguard-class submarine, we're into the 49th year of continuous peacekeeping patrols, and coming up on the 50th anniversary of the very first mission, when HMS Resolution left Faslane armed with Polaris nuclear missiles.

## Birds turn into tigers

ONCE they were Kingfishers. Now they are Tigers as 829 Naval Air Squadron passed into history after 14 years in its latest incarnation...

...and merged with 814 Naval Air Squadron – the Flying Tigers – to form the largest Merlin helicopter formation in the UK.

829 has been decommissioned as part of a shake-up of the Merlin Mk2 force to support the carrier-led task groups of tomorrow... as well as the Type 23 (and later 26) frigates needing Merlins to hunt submarines.

829 stood up in its most recent form (it traces its history back to 1940 and a torpedo-bomber squadron in 2004 specifically to provide Merlin flights for 23s, a duty now performed by 814 NAS and Tungsten, Kingfisher and Mohawk flights permanently dedicated to working with small ships.

The end of 829 NAS for now also marks the end of the flying career of its CO, Cdr Kay Burbidge.

She told her men and women that the Fleet Air Arm continued to require their "genius and passion" as part of the new merged squadron.

"We are saying thank you and farewell to a squadron, but not the ethos behind our professionalism and dedication.

"Thank you for all that you have done, all that you are going to do and, above all, for serving with the distinction that you have so richly earned. "Your legacy will continue."

Cdr Mike Currie, head of the grey Merlin force, said the reorganisation of his squadrons was part of broader changes at Culdrose to support the UK's two new carriers – while at the same time continuing existing missions.

"The Merlin Mk2 is in high demand with a number of strategic tasks to fulfil," he explained.

"We have been looking at how my force is organised to create a squadron structure to not only deliver Merlins for the new aircraft carrier, but also sustain our current tasking."



# Protector digs deep

## Ice patrol ship completes weighty task

THE frozen environment of Antarctica is the last place you might expect to receive a request to embark a bright orange commercial excavator.

However, HMS Protector was asked to do just that at the end of her current ice patrol season when the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) requested support to transport their newly-acquired 49-tonne excavator from the Falkland Islands to their station at Rothera, deep within the Antarctic Circle.

The machinery was needed to strengthen the base's jetty in preparation for their new research ship the Sir David Attenborough (of Boaty McBoatface fame), which enters service next year.

Protector was prepared for requests of this nature. Her onboard crane, which previously had been rated to lift loads up to 30 tonnes, had been tested and approved during the ship's previous maintenance period in Cape Town to lift loads up to 60 tonnes.

While in South Africa, the crew added a sheave (crane pulley) block and then filled two 30-tonne water bags to prove that it was capable of taking the weight.

Such a capability would be essential, particularly down in Rothera where there would be no crane shoreside to lift the excavator off the ship.

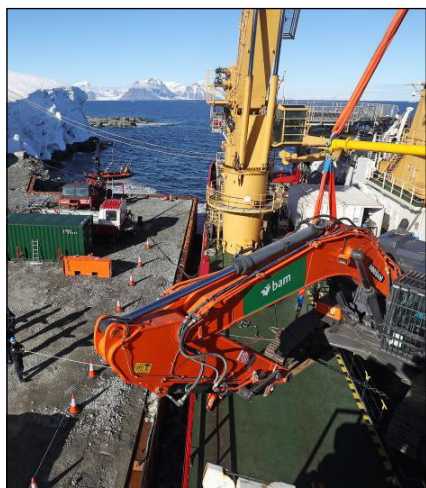
Back in the UK, BAS had purchased in anticipation a suitable machine, the Doosan Excavator and had transported it down to the Falklands ready to move down to Antarctica.

The main body of this weighed 40 tonnes, with an additional counter weight of nine tonnes, and was accompanied by various spares and parts in two shipping containers.

Planning started early, with the ship's Engineering Officer Lt Oliver Fairbairn working out, cross-checking (and then reviewing) calculations such as dimensions, clearance heights for the crane, ship stability and load spreading to ensure that the excavator could be safely embarked on the ship.

There was plenty of external support as BAS sent their own expert to help advise on how best to achieve the task.

In the build-up to the embarkation the



● The excavator is craned off HMS Protector at the BAS base of Rothera

crane was parked next to the jetty and looked ominously large.

A day was set aside to load the excavator onboard and, under the careful supervision of the buffer CPO James McCafferty, assisted by LS(SEA) David Laird, and using the delicate craning skills of PO(HM) JP Priestly, the excavator was attached and slowly lifted up and transferred into the specially prepared hold.

Although it was undoubtedly a tight fit, all the planning was vindicated, albeit at times with not much to spare.

Along with the crane came a specialist team of four operators and engineers who would operate the crane down in the Antarctic. For at least one of them this marked a somewhat change in scenery as he was more accustomed to demolishing buildings in London.

Once at sea, crossing the notoriously unpredictable Drakes Passage, it was important to maintain constant vigilance on the excavator to ensure that none of the restraining strops loosened; 49 tonnes moving around in the main hold could do extensive

damage. After an uneventful passage the ship arrived in Rothera, where it was met by the station leader Paul Samways.

After a quick recce the reverse process was carried out and the crane was safely landed and handed over to the custody of Paul and his team.

The excavator will remain in Rothera for the next couple of seasons.

"This task was just one example of the close-working relationship that the Royal Navy has with BAS and the wider scientific community while operating in and around the Antarctic peninsula," said Protector's Cdr Simon Bodman.

"I am delighted that we were able to help BAS in delivering this excavator and am proud both of the capability of the ship in being able to embark such a load and the way that my team approached and executed the task. It was a great example of the teamwork and professionalism that makes the Royal Navy so effective."

You can follow the ice patrol ship's activities on Twitter at @HMSProtector.



## Baby boomer

THIS is one of the US military's ultimate war machines... guarded by one of the RN's smallest craft.

P2000 HMS Raider was part of the ring of steel thrown around ballistic missile submarine USS Maryland when the 'boomer' (what we call a 'bomber') paid a routine visit to the home of the UK nuclear deterrent force, HMNB Clyde.

As with all comings and goings of major assets at the base, the Maryland was met by the vessels of the Faslane Patrol Boat Flotilla – a collection of RN and RM small craft and patrol boats – intended to fend off any surface attack in the narrow waters of the Clyde estuary.

The Ohio-class boat is the second American 'boomer' to make use of Faslane in the past 12 months; the New Mexico dropped in on the Clyde base last summer.

The Americans operate 18 boats in the class; Maryland was the 13th to enter service in the early 1990s, making her slightly older than the V-boats which are the mainstay of the UK's nuclear deterrence.

Normally based on the Eastern Seaboard at King's Bay in Georgia, Maryland is slightly longer and heavier than our Vanguard, crewed by around 20 more submariners (circa 155) but can also carry one and a half times as many Trident missiles as the British boats (24 to 16).

Picture: LPhoto Stevie Burke, FRPU North



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# Keeping the pressure on

IT MIGHT be 300 miles from the sea and in the middle of a sweltering, dusty Iraq, but there are four Royal Navy officers in Baghdad as part of the UK's contribution to the fight against Da'esh.

In fact, there are 40 British personnel at Union III – the small base situated in the International Zone and within the grounds of the former Ba'ath Party headquarters which ruled Iraq under Saddam Hussein's tyrannical regime.

Whilst most of the UK contingent are from the Army, a small but vital contribution is provided by Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Air Force personnel in a coalition made up of some 75 nations from across the globe.

It's not the first time that the Royal Navy has been in Baghdad, but now rather than gunboats on the River Tigris fighting the Central Powers as they did during World War 1, they are there to help the Iraqi Security Forces as part of a US-led multi-national coalition known as Operation Inherent Resolve.

The roles of the four RN officers reflect the breadth of the work the coalition is doing not only to help the Iraqi Forces with the 'close battle' but also to build up their capabilities for sustained long-term success: intelligence support, logistic assistance, ministerial level capacity building and information operations to help counter the insidious message of Da'esh.

It's by chance that the four Senior Servicemen are in Baghdad at the same time as three of the billets are rotational between the Services and a reorganisation of the command structure has seen a number of posts moving from the headquarters in Kuwait forward to Iraq.

"For the first three months of my deployment I was the only 'dark blue' member of the Royal Navy in Union III – my post is always filled by the Royal Navy Logistics Branch so it's nice to have some company," said Cdr Jon Asbridge.

"This has been a fascinating opportunity to work hand-in-glove with my Iraqi counterparts as part of the Combined Joint Operations Command, providing logistics advice and assistance in support of the Iraqi Security Forces' anti-Da'esh operations.

"I'm sometimes asked how a Navy logistician can support a land campaign but logistics is about getting the right 'stuff' in the right place at the right time; it doesn't really matter what that 'stuff' is!"

As the headquarters for Inherent Resolve's Combined Joint Task Force, Union III is also on the itinerary for most VIP visitors to Iraq, including PM Theresa May and Vice Admiral Tim Fraser, the UK's Chief of Joint Operations.

Both emphasised the important role that the British military is playing in the fight against Da'esh and also that while Iraq may have regained control of her territorial boundaries in late 2017, there remains a job to be done to ensure the defeat of this terrorist organisation.

"The Royal Navy's small, but vital presence, in Baghdad will continue to play a key role in helping the international community move towards this goal," Cdr Asbridge added.



# A Rock-solid performance

THE waters of the Rock are in very safe hands after its Royal Navy guardians received a big thumbs up during their annual assessment.

Experts spent a week putting the sailors of the Gibraltar Squadron through the mill before passing judgment on the 26 sailors and Royal Marines.

Based in a newish complex opposite The Tower in the historic naval base, the squadron operates two fast patrol boats – HMS Sabre and Scimitar, now the smallest vessels under the White Ensign in the RN with the decommissioning of HMS Gleaner – plus several RIBs.

Their job is to safeguard visiting British and allied warships, patrol UK territorial waters and challenge any unlawful incursions – all of which makes the squadron one of the busiest units in the Navy, in action daily.

That doesn't mean they can escape the scrutiny of the RN's principal assessors from the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation.

The FOST staff ensure every vessel in the Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary is fit to perform front-line duties wherever they go in the world, from providing two-month bespoke training packages for capital ships such as HMS Albion and Queen Elizabeth, six to eight weeks for destroyers and frigates, four or five for minehunters and survey ships and a few days for small craft like P2000s and the Gibraltar Squadron.

While the UK has been hit twice by 'beasts from the east' in recent weeks, Gibraltar too has been suffering unseasonal weather: high winds and rainstorms, enough to trigger rockfalls and cause damage to buildings and scaffolding.

It wasn't enough to deter the FOSTies who flew out from Plymouth to put the squadron through its paces... at the same time as expecting it to perform its day job of territorial patrols.

They took Sabre and Scimitar to sea in a series of exercises which tested crews' response to any and all emergencies – the first time some of the ship's company had gone through the FOST experience.

"With the staff onboard my team were able to concentrate on dealing with emergencies as they arose and really throw themselves into the scenario," said Scimitar's CO Lt Tom Loxton.

"The benefits of this realistic training speak for themselves and I was extremely proud to see us come away with some very high scores and positive feedback from the FOSTies."

Although the two craft were not graded against each other, only on individual performance, there was still a natural level of friendly competition between Scimitar, Sabre and the HQ staff. That competition ensured all passed with a grade of 'very satisfactory' ('satisfactory' is a standard pass).

The squadron's CO Lt Cdr James Myhill said that the favourable assessment was the result of weeks of training and planning.

"I was particularly impressed by members of the squadron who have only been with us for a short period or indeed, have only been in the Navy for a short time," he added.

"Everyone stepped up to the mark to demonstrate to FOST that the RN Gibraltar Squadron remains an effective and capable team, delivering success on operations down here in the Mediterranean."

"The training package delivered by FOST applies pressure to individuals and to units, testing their materiel and administrative readiness as well as their ability to fight, and keep fighting when things go wrong."



● Observers from 148 (Meiktila) Cdo Bty RA watch the fall of shot during Exercise Burmese Chase at Camp Pendleton, California, in 2016

Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Gallagher, 3 Cdo Bde

# Battery in need of more (man)power

FANCY guiding an F-35B to drop bombs on a target? Call down a hail of steel and fire from a 4.5in gun on to enemy positions? Directing missile fire from Apache gunships?

If you're a junior rating and this sounds like just the ticket, the specialists of 148 Meiktila Commando Battery Royal Artillery want you.

The Poole-based battery – part of 29 Commando Regiment RA, the Royal Marines' artillery support – provides fire support teams which operate covertly, ahead of the main body of ground forces, directing close-air support, missile strikes, naval gunfire support, artillery and mortar fire.

That frequently means being at the razor's edge of the action – the teams are expected to deploy by all possible means: parachute, submarine, helicopter, boat, vehicle, ski or foot.

Eleven of the four dozen positions in the Army-run battery are held by RN personnel; a draft typically lasts four years.

"The battery offers an excellent opportunity for ratings that may be looking for a particularly challenging assignment and something totally different from any other job in the Naval Service," said PO Leigh 'Pickle' Branson.

"If you're that way inclined, the opportunities are there. In my first week I was jumping out of a helicopter. Last week I was parking a boat on the back of a submarine."

"It's a unique, fantastic place to work for RN personnel – working alongside the army. Something you wouldn't do anywhere else in the Navy."

A week long aptitude course will be run between June 18 and 22 at Poole and Okehampton Camp. For details see [RNTM 01-011/18](#).

# New tanker delivered

THE third of the RFA's four new-generation tankers has arrived at the A&P yard in Falmouth following a mammoth delivery journey from Asia.

Tidesurge spent more than a month hopping across the Pacific and Atlantic from the yard in South Korea where she was built via Japan, Hawaii, the Panama Canal and Caribbean – an odyssey of around 16,000 miles.

Now the work of turning her into a military tanker begins – one third of the £450m budget for the quartet is being spent in Blyth as bespoke UK comms and weapons systems are installed – with some 27 British firms involved in that side of the process.

Once finished, the Fleet will get a 39,000-tonne tanker carrying up to 19,000 cubic metres of fuel and 1,400 cubic metres of fresh water, which will be at the heart of task group operations, especially carrier groups.

And for those of you who don't think in cubic metres... 19,000 cubic metres are the equivalent of 19 million litre bottles of cola... or the capacity of more than 350,000 'supermini' fuel tanks.

As Tidesurge arrived in Cornwall to begin her four-month conversion, Tiderace departed to start her sea trials and work-up ready to begin front-line service.

The lead ship in the class, RFA Tidespring, is already in service, providing fuel to British and visiting warships going through training off Plymouth.

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THIS is the battered wreck of veteran cruiser HMS Vindictive being inspected by German sailors in the port of Ostend in the aftermath of the second attempt to bottle U-boats up in their Flanders base.

Three weeks after the much-trumpeted Zeebrugge raid, the Royal Navy returned to the Belgian coast in a bid to block the German Navy's Flanders base at Bruges.

Ostend had been attacked on the same night as Zeebrugge (the mission was cunningly codenamed Operation ZO) but had failed due to a combination of bad weather and dogged enemy defence.

And so whatever inconvenience the attack on Zeebrugge caused the Germans, their submarines could still come and go freely via the waterways which linked Bruges with the North Sea via the harbour at Ostend.

On the night of May 9 1918 a force crossed the Channel once again. Despite the heavy losses suffered at Zeebrugge, there was no shortage of

volunteers to lead Operation VS – this time the cover name was selected from the titles of the two blockships, Vindictive and Sappho.

Vindictive had taken a battering at Zeebrugge as the springboard for the assault on the mole.

Now, stripped of all but essential equipment, her bow partially filled with concrete as protection against enemy fire and to help her sink, she led the assault on Ostend.

It soon became a single-handed affair when Sappho dropped out with engine trouble.

By the time Vindictive approached her objective, a hellish concert was playing in Flanders. Motor torpedo boats knocked out machine-gun posts at the end of the pier, the RAF attempted to bomb German positions around the port and the Royal Marines artillery was subjecting the town to a bombardment from its

positions outside Ypres.

As Vindictive closed on the entrance to the canal, a sea fog rolled in and obscured the view of friend and foe. The cruiser steamed up and down the coast trying to find the canal, succeeding on the third pass.

With the mission on the verge of success, Vindictive prepared to swing around and lie across the channel. First one propeller shaft failed, preventing the ship from completing her turn. Then German shellfire wiped out most of the bridge team, including Cdr Alfred Godsal, Vindictive's bold captain.

His wounded deputy Victor Crutchley took command, ordered the scuttling charges set, then scoured

the ship for any survivors while the remaining sailors scrambled down the side on to a waiting motor launch under ferocious machine-gun and small arms fire.

As that boat withdrew to transfer survivors to destroyer HMS Warwick, another moved in and made four passes searching for survivors; it found three.

Twenty-one men on both sides died that night. Crutchley and the two motor boat commanders, Lt Cdr Geoffrey Drummond and Lt Cdr Roland Bourke, would all be awarded the VC for their bravery.

Ostend was largely blocked – certainly to larger warships and submarines, although smaller craft

could still negotiate the partially-blocked channel at Zeebrugge.

Prime Minister Lloyd George, rarely a man to praise any military leader, told the raid's architect, Admiral Roger Keyes, that the attack on Ostend "puts the finishing touch to the gallant achievement at Ostend.

"These are thrilling deeds that give heart to a people... They enrich our history, they enrich the character of our people, they fertilise the manhood of the land."

■ This photograph (Q 49186) is one of more than 12 million held by the Imperial War Museum. They can be viewed or purchased at [www.iwm.org.uk/collections/photographs](http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/photographs), or by calling 0207 416 5309.

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# Lights... camera... action stations...

SPORTS fans will be familiar with post-match analysis, where pundits pore over key moments in a game.

Coaches also study the minutiae of play, hoping to iron out the wrinkles in a system or gain a crucial advantage over the opposition.

And while such TV punditry might be more interesting to those in the messdeck than yesterday's battle damage exercise (BDX), a typical Thursday War serial has many more working parts than your average sports fixture.

So the principle of using video to improve performance is one that is easily transferable from elite athletes to warfighters – and one that has the potential to save lives as well as money.

Timely and effective debriefing is an essential part of successful training, so revisiting a successful (or not-so-successful) serial helps reinforce crucial elements, especially when trainees can see for themselves what happened.

This is particularly useful when the nature of the training means that none of the trainees is able to get an holistic, overall perspective during the session, for example during the hullabaloo of fighting a fire or plugging a breach in a hull.

So the Sea Riders of FOST (Flag Officer Sea Training) are making good use of commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) camera equipment to give them a comprehensive view of training sessions on board ships.

Body- and helmet-mounted cameras, supplemented by wide-angle cameras attached to bulkheads by clamps or magnets and drone-mounted equipment, capture the action, whether at the seat of a fire or in HQ1.

Video and stills imagery will all be downloaded to a standalone laptop, where it can be analysed and edited so that key moments can be played back to the trainees, or for wider audiences who would benefit from a demonstration of what went well – and what didn't.

The equipment will be made available to all FOST Lead Sea Riders, and will be used in all internal and external parts of ship.

It is hoped the camera trial will be extended to force protection exercises as well.

Using COTS equipment means there will be minimal need to train operators, and it should also keep costs down, while maximising the gain from live training serials.

Applied effectively, the FOST team believe the use of video and stills imagery has the potential to improve first-time pass rates for ships on serials.

Given the cost of repeating serials, the trial and subsequent purchase of this equipment proves good value for money.

Video also gives FOST staff the ability to better review training scenarios and tweak or target the training accordingly.

This will also lead to savings in terms of both time and money, by omitting elements of training that are not required and improving the elements that are retained.

FOST training is manpower intensive, with staff required to observe the actions of the crew, and this creates a heavy burden on staff training hours, particularly when individuals have to cover any gapped billets.

Video coaching is also expected to ease this burden on FOST manpower allocation.

The trial and subsequent adoption of GoPro equipment was carried out under the umbrella of DARE, the Royal Navy's Discovery, Assessment and Rapid Exploitation team, which aims to find cost-effective and relatively simple 'quick fixes' that can make a big difference in



a short time.

"During the proof of concept some teams were slightly apprehensive about being filmed initially," said Lt Cdr Suzanna Seagrave, who works in the FOST organisation.

"However, everyone looks good in anti-flash, and in the general bedlam teams quickly forgot that the cameras were even running.

"Feedback from ships involved in initial proof of concept has been positive, and DARE funding is being used to develop the most effective ways of using

video techniques in conjunction with more traditional reporting and de-briefing.

"From a bean-counting perspective it is almost as expensive to run a 90-minute BDX serial during a Thursday War as to pay a Premiership footballer for the same amount of time.

"By capturing the exercise in real-time, the amount of training benefit that can be gained for the same investment is increased.

"The only downside is that DARE isn't funding the popcorn..."



## Breaking down barriers

The RN Innovation Team, DARE, was established within Navy Command HQ with the mission "to energise and accelerate innovation throughout the Naval Service in order to support operational capability".

To achieve its mission, DARE is working across the organisation to inspire collaboration, promote innovative practices and break down some of the barriers that have historically prevented innovation from being realised.

Led by Capt Steve Jose and supported by two Lt Cdrs, one civilian and a WO1 FTRS, DARE recognises and champions that innovation is not limited to technology, or people, or process, but is an opportunity to deliver beneficial change across all areas of our business.

As such, DARE operates across several functional areas, and specifically culture – the Royal Navy must empower its people to be more innovative, providing them with the freedom to explore and generate ideas, and the support to cultivate those ideas to offer value and benefit.

As such DARE sponsors:  
GEMS: This is a Minister  
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sponsored Defence-wide ideas management scheme, where any person can submit a proposal that offers capability or business enhancement, improvement or efficiency. See <http://GEMSONLINE.MOD.UK>

**DARE Open Innovation Competition:** This initiative enables personnel to draft a two-page proposal to request up to £25,000 of funding for concepts/ideas that seek to either deliver benefit in their area, develop evidence for a business case, or deliver a minimum viable product for assessment.

The competition empowers the individual to challenge the system and learn fast.

Over the past nine months DARE has received, reviewed and fed back on over 150 project proposals, with 51 being selected for funding, ranging from a 3D printing 'Makerspace' to a mindfulness project in HMS Albion, through to an unmanned man overboard technology demonstrator and the use of GoPro (see above).

For more information, email: [NAVYMARCAP-INNOVATION-DARE@mod.uk](mailto:NAVYMARCAP-INNOVATION-DARE@mod.uk)



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# Don't rain on my parade

**STORMS** bookended her career so perhaps it was only right that the final day in HMS Ocean's active career was cold, wet, blustery.

Not the 'beast from the East', but an 'unwelcome guest from the West' drove the drizzle along Weston Mill Jetty as the Queen stepped out of her Land Rover in the shadow of the helicopter carrier.

The gusts did their best not merely to drown out the monarch's words as she read the Mighty O's valedictory, but snatch the speech out of her hands.

It did not. Nor did it thwart the flypast by Merlins, Wildcats, an Apache and a Chinook which thundered overhead during a 'mad minute' which saw Ocean bow out of service after two decades.

The helicopters appeared as the last cries of the Royal salute died down and the Band of HM Royal Marines struck up the first bars of the National Anthem.

As Lt Lindsey Gascoigne lowered the Royal Colours, the White Ensign was hauled down from the main mast and, at 11.44am on Tuesday March 27 2018, HMS Ocean became plain Ocean.

The Queen launched, commissioned and re-dedicated the assault ship over its busy life.

She urged the ship's company lined up before her to reflect on the ship's "considerable achievements" but above all to "always treasure your memories of HMS Ocean".

Which shouldn't be too hard on either front. The ship began and ended her active life helping lives in the Caribbean devastated by Hurricanes Mitch in 1999, Irma and Maria in 2017.

In between, she spearheaded Britain's peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone, led the assault on the Al Faw peninsula in Iraq, launched Apache strikes against Gaddafi's forces in the Libyan civil war, weighed into the fight against drug running in the Caribbean, helped safeguard the 2012 Olympics and took part in a myriad amphibious exercises from the fjords of the Arctic to the tropical heat of Southeast Asia.

"Thousands of sailors and Royal Marines have called Ocean their home and responded to the call in peace and war," the ship's final Commanding Officer Capt Rob Pedre said.

"My team have risen admirably to

every challenge they faced during my time in command. They exemplify all that is great about the Royal Navy."

For 25-year-old Logs(SC) Georgia Robins from Preston and Logs(SC) Jasmine Brent, aged 21, from Barnstable, Ocean has been their first ship, each spending 12 months onboard.

Jasmine was inspired to join the RN by its humanitarian work – and within weeks found herself in the Caribbean doing just that.

"The last deployment was what I joined up to do: helping people, getting stuck in," she said. "When we got there the devastation was so great that we thought we were on a film set. But there's so much that this ship can do. And we did it."

Georgia added: "We would go on deployment again tomorrow with Ocean. It's a great ship's company and it's really sad to break that up. We're all best friends and sisters."

Their 60-sailor mess, like others aboard, is now a spartan affair: many of the trappings, such as the entertainment systems, have been sold off to raise money for the RNRMC and affiliated charities while, despite the young logicians' pleas, the ship's company are scattering to the four corners of the Senior Service.

As for the Mighty O, the day after the Queen's visit, the ship was moved to dry dock for work on the hull as part of the £84m sale to Brazil.

A small cadre of Brits remain with the ship... alongside a growing number of Brazilians as the latter prepare to take it over officially on June 30; not having a helicopter carrier, the South Americans need to learn how to run one.

Senior air traffic control officer Lt Cdr Helen Edward is one of those passing their experience on... all the while soaking up the final days of her second draft to Ocean.

"I think to myself: I will never be in the same place as all these people again, so I need to savour every moment while it lasts, keep a snapshot as a memory," she said.

"The ship is just a metal hull, it's the people you meet along the way that make it special."

Ocean has perhaps never enjoyed the affection of the public as much as the

Harrier carriers (she was outnumbered three to one and was based throughout her career down in the less populous South West), but her accomplishments are many and great.

"She's never had the glamour associated with the other carriers," said Lt Edward, who served in HMS Ark Royal's final commission. "Ocean's very much a workhorse."

The ship's last Executive Warrant Officer, WO1 'Speedy' Steedman, is one of the self-styled 'Ocean originals': members of the first ship's company who were also on board for the final commission.

"It's a day of very mixed emotions. It's been lovely to welcome the Queen - you have to give her credit for coming back again and again to see her ship and to meet her men and women."

He was one of 30 people who dined with Her Majesty in the specially-decked-out senior rates' mess (Chef Carl Tester and his galley colleagues served up gin-cured pollock, roasted loin of Dartmoor venison and layered white chocolate panna cotta.)

"She was on good form with the crew – she puts everyone at ease wonderfully," WO1 Steedman continued.

"Ocean has been part of my life for six years. Part of me is passing into history with Ocean going. I was with her at the beginning, I'm here at the end. I think the sadness will hit me in the next 24 hours."

His daughter Emma was one of three children of crew who presented the Queen with flowers as she departed.

It has become traditional in recent years to applaud ship's companies or squadron personnel as they file 'off stage' at the end of a public event – decommissionings especially.

It was repeated as Ocean's men and women marched off to the strains of the RM Band once the formal ceremony was done.

And as the Queen stepped on to Ocean's hangar lift which carried her and VIPs to the carrier's vehicle deck, a spontaneous round of applause echoed through the hangar.

It wasn't just the crew's service to the nation that guests appreciated this day.



pictures: cpo(phot) matt ellison and lphot baz wheeler





# Joan of sparks

NOW that's how to attract attention...

This is the stunning sight of a Royal Marines' Wildcat helicopter firing decoy flares as it climbs over French assault ship Dixmude in the Bay of Bengal.

The battlefield helicopter tested its defensive aids suite during a training flight off the east coast of India on the eve of a visit to the great city of Chennai.

The flares emitted here by the flight crew are the aircraft's last line of defence against heat-seeking missiles – intended to generate more heat than the engines/exhaust and draw the missile away from its intended target.

Luckily, there was nothing but warmth and friendship awaiting Dixmude, her Royal Navy helicopter detachment and task group in India, where the Brits retraced the history of Empire.

Having sampled the birthplace of British rule in eastern India at Fort St George (still the seat of government in the region), the Brits called in at St Mary's Church, the oldest British building and Anglican church in the country (it goes back to 1678).

A 34-strong team of pilots, observers, aircrewmembers, engineers, technicians and staff from 847 Naval Air Squadron/Commando Helicopter Force in Yeovil are accompanying the state-of-the-art aircraft on the Joan of Arc deployment.

The Wildcats normally act as the eyes for the Royal Marines on the battlefield, but have left the commandos behind to work with French and US forces on the Dixmude.

It follows a similar arrangement last year when two troop-carrying Merlin helicopters completed a similar deployment aboard Dixmude's sister Mistral – all part of the closer Anglo-French military cooperation agreed back in 2010 between Paris and London.

Upon sailing from Chennai – known as Madras until the mid-90s – Dixmude conducted combined exercises with Indian destroyer INS Rana and corvette INS Kirch, plus her escorting frigate FS Surcouf.

On the rare occasions the flight deck is not busy with French and British helicopter activity, it serves as a makeshift sports field for the mixed ship's company.

After a tractor pull earlier in the deployment, more traditional sports – football, rugby and basketball – were organised off the Indian coast with the Brits losing out in all three.



# Echo shares her rescue expertise

WHEN you've saved more than 6,000 lives at sea, a search and rescue exercise must be as easy as riding a bike.

But just in case the main routes used by migrants from Africa and the Middle East shift to Cypriot waters, the veteran lifesavers of HMS Echo shared their experience with the island's rescue teams for the first time.

The Plymouth-based survey ship has been assigned to the Mediterranean since the tail end of 2016; her crew have rescued more than 6,100 men, women and children as part of the mercy element of the migrant mission, and destroyed 65 dangerous rubber boats and skiffs, plus handed over 15 suspected smugglers to European Naval Force authorities as part of the deterrent side of the operation.

But no two rescues are the same and with barely 60 miles of sea separating Cyprus from war-torn Syria for example, Cypriot authorities were keen to see how they might respond to a sinking ship off their southern coastline and three casualties (aka dummies) in the water.

The Cypriot Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre provided a patrol ship, Tomakis, a rescue helicopter and nurses, while Echo co-ordinated the efforts at sea, lapping up the rare opportunity to work with air power (the

survey vessel has no helicopter, or even a flight deck, just a small area for winching people on and off).

"It was great fun for us to be carrying out an aviation serial for exercise as opposed to the real life scenario executed not five weeks before," said marine engineer officer Lt Dan Sercombe.

Echo took charge of the surface search to find the dummies in the water; all three were found – good weather aided the hunt, but it still demanded some eagle eyes on the bridge wings – and winched up to the Cypriot helicopter so they could be flown ashore for treatment.

"Working with the Cypriot authorities is important for all the UK's assets in the Mediterranean," said Echo's operations officer Lt Cdr Tom Becker.

"Given the high number of migrants still trying to cross into Europe, understanding one another's rescue systems ensures we can operate in the joint environment more efficiently and share experiences."

After a change of half her crew in the latest watch rotation in Cyprus, Echo has returned to the central Med alongside ships of the EUNAVFOR which is leading the counter-smuggling/migrant rescue mission (Operation Sophia) off the Libyan coast.



# Saying 'yep' to Yap, making pals in Palau

ORANGE balls of fire billow as 'war' briefly returns to a Pacific island paradise 73 years after the guns fell silent.

Explosive ordnance teams blew up long-forgotten wartime shells and bombs unearthed on the tiny island of Peleliu in Palau, scene of some of the most bitter fighting of World War 2.

The Palau islands – 500 miles east of the Philippines and 500 north of Papua – were the latest port of call for the US-led Pacific Partnership 2018 deployment.

Each year, the US military sends ships and personnel on a goodwill tour of the Pacific region – the deployment grew out of the international response to the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami which devastated swathes of the region and killed hundreds of thousands of people.

For the 13th iteration, the Americans have committed two vessels: hospital ship USNS Mercy and the fast military transporter USNS Brunswick, the latter uniquely commanded by a Brit, Capt Peter Olive.

After a mammoth crossing of the Pacific via Pearl Harbor and Guam, the deployment began in earnest in Yap, one of the Federated States of Micronesia.

The remote archipelago – the Philippines are 800 miles to the west, Papua 750 miles to the south, Japan 1,700 miles to the north while heading east, the nearest landfall is Costa Rica, over 9,000 miles away – was once key to the liberation of the Pacific.

Ulithi Atoll, 100 miles east of Yap, became a major staging post for the US Navy, including the hospital ship USS Mercy, and the British Pacific Fleet during the Okinawa campaign in early 1945 as upwards of 700 ships massed here.

The concentration of shipping drew kamikaze attacks and, once the invasion of the Japanese island began, Ulithi became a major casualty treatment centre.

Seven decades later, the visit of the Pacific Partnership force allowed today's generation to thank the 800 or so Ulithis for the hospitality they afforded them during the war – a recurring theme of PP2018.

Mercy's short stay allowed her crew to deliver medical supplies and provide health care and for Lt Cdr Mark Middleton – in charge of the medical detachment spread across the two ships – to make a little piece of history as the first naval officer to apparently visit Ulithi since 1945.

At each stop on the deployment, medics, engineers, vets and disaster relief experts pour ashore to offer advice and assistance, and join locals at sporting and community activities, making Pacific Partnership a mission unlike any other.

On Yap, islanders and school children invariably joined in many of the activities; the visitors staged a brass band concert, accompanied by plenty of "impressive cultural dancing" and offered youngsters a 'soccer' coaching session (complete with bespoke Pacific Partnership-logged footballs).

"Not even the occasional downpour was enough to stop my team from getting out and doing great things, whether through sport or volunteer work," said Capt Olive.

"We enjoyed a brilliant show from the Pacific Fleet Deep Six Brass Band and you couldn't tell who was having more fun – my team or the students.

"The people of Yap were amazing and its kids inspiring."

And the same could pretty much be said about Palau, 275 miles to the southwest.

A major humanitarian aid exercise (with Capt Olive as one of the 'casualties', medical clinics run with local health providers, engineering support to community and school projects, sport and community events (Capt Olive posted sixth in the 5k run, Army medic Cpl Darren Phillips fifth in the half marathon) and, on Peleliu especially, the echoes of World War 2 once again.

"The impact of the war is still evident across the island," said Capt Olive. "There are still thousands of pieces of unexploded ordnance scattered across the jungle and reefs."

The Battle of Peleliu was one of the longest and most ferocious of the entire Pacific Campaign. It took US forces two and a half months to capture the island – half the size of Portsmouth – despite enjoying a five-to-one superiority in men and tremendous military support. Of the 10,900 Japanese defenders, all but 200 gave their lives.

US Marines and Japanese medics jointly laid a wreath in honour of all those killed in 1944, while Capt Olive was invited to join the US bomb disposal team in getting rid of some of 1,200lbs of once-dangerous explosives.

That was by far the most solemn part of a two-week visit which, Capt Olive said, would remain fixed in the hearts and minds of everyone aboard the Brunswick.

"The people of Palau are warm and their hospitality is gracious. We enjoyed working, meeting, sporting and dancing with them.

"Palau is truly a breathtaking place to be cherished – we left with sadness in our hearts, but with the joy of many new friendships."

Pacific Partnership is the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance/disaster relief mission in the Asia-Pacific involving more than 800 personnel from the USA, Britain, Japan, Philippines, France, Canada, Peru and Australia.

While Brunswick – with Americans, Britons, Japanese and Australians aboard – has been focusing on the Pacific islands, the larger Mercy has continued westwards to Indonesia with three British medics aboard – Lt Cdr Middleton, Capt Oliver Britland RMC and Flt Lt Stu Lowry – before moving on to Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

And next up for Capt Olive and his team: eastern Malaysia then Thailand and Vietnam.



● Japanese medic Sgt Takuya Yamada and PO(MA) David Nicholl check a patient's blood pressure at a community health fair in Yap and (below) Capt Peter Olive plays a casualty treated by Sgt Yamada, Brit Cpl Darren Phillips, and US Army Sgt Alexa Falls during a search and rescue exercise in Palau



● Patient turns painter as Capt Olive touches up a windowsill at Dalipebinaw Elementary School in Yap while (below) Gunnery Sgt Walter Greber and Japanese Lt Cdr Satoshi Hirokami lay a wreath at the Peleliu Peace Memorial Park





# Echoes of battle – 36 years on



A GROUP of military personnel gather on the left of this picture as an RAF Typhoon soars over an Army Rapier Battery during a battlefield study of the Falkland Islands conflict.

More than 100 military personnel in more than 40 vehicles made their way in convoy out of Mount Pleasant on East Falkland.

This was the beginning of Exercise Atlantic Legacy, an event months – if not years – in the planning and in recent weeks the main focus of energy for all members of British Forces South Atlantic Islands on the Falkland Islands.

The brainchild of Lt Gen Patrick Sanders Commander Field Army, inspired and encouraged by a number of veterans, Exercise Atlantic Legacy represented an unprecedented assembly of serving military personnel, academics, as well as veterans and commanders of the 1982 Falklands conflict.

The aim was a thorough and critical analysis of the conflict as described by those who were there making decisions on the front line, as well as the identification of lessons at all stages and in all aspects of the campaign.

Among the senior veterans who took part was Cdre Michael Clapp, who commanded the amphibious task force and was one of the principal orchestrators of the landings at San Carlos.

General Sir HM Rose also attended as the senior military veteran. He Commanded 22 Regiment SAS throughout the campaign and at its conclusion was instrumental in arranging the surrender of the Argentine Commander General Menendez in Stanley.

In addition, a selection of serving personnel from across the British forces in theatre were chosen to take part. This included two members of HMS Clyde's ships company, who were lucky enough to be invited to attend; Sub Lt Christian Mannsaker and Flight Deck Officer, PO Mark Cotton.

On the first day the battle study group proceeded to Mount Sussex and San Carlos Water to discuss the San Carlos landings.

From this position it was identified that air cover was imperative, and how the landings proved extremely dangerous and susceptible to Argentinean air attack.

Often the first indication given to the forces ashore of an inbound air raid would be the sounding of a ship's siren.

A sign of the hurried nature of the Combined Operation was that there



● Personnel from HMS Clyde joined Exercise Atlantic Legacy in the Falklands

were some veterans who were unaware to this day what this signal meant.

Whilst the veterans gave first-hand accounts of what took place, some of the current assets in the Falklands gave a demonstration of what it was like to operate in the battlespace.

An RAF Typhoon flew overhead simulating an Argentine aircraft whilst an Army Rapier Battery was set up by the landing beaches and HMS Clyde steamed up and down the sound to represent the vessels of the Royal Navy Task Force which patrolled 'Bomb Alley' 36 years ago.

The 19 warships, including SS Canberra, would continually run the gauntlet to land troops and equipment in order to establish a strong hold.

In San Carlos Water today, a buoy marks the wreck of HMS Antelope, sunk by Argentine forces and one of four Royal Navy escorts lost during the campaign.

From here, the convoy headed east across the Island towards Darwin and Goose Green, following in the footsteps of the 2 Para, whose efforts to liberate those settlements have become justly famous.

Focus then shifted to Fitzroy Sound on the east coast which was the scene of the greatest single loss of life over the course of the war, when RFA ships Sir Tristram and Sir Galahad, carrying detachments of the Welsh Guards, were attacked at anchor and caught fire.

HMS Clyde came to anchor in Port Fitzroy as a backdrop to the diorama described to the syndicates.

After Fitzroy the study was almost exclusively land based, following the path of British Units across East Falkland as they advanced towards the capital,

Stanley.

Here the truly inhospitable nature of the landscape (described by serving Army personnel as 'the worst bits of every exercise area in one place') was readily apparent, with veterans more than willing to recount their own experiences of the harsh winter conditions and fierce fighting that went on as they struggled through bogs and over razor sharp ridges and treacherous rock runs.

The exercise concluded in Stanley, where accounts were given of the surrender at Government House, and of the immediate aftermath of the campaign, when further personnel were brought in to repair damage, restore infrastructure and process the thousands of Argentine POWs.

Veterans and serving personnel were hosted at Government House by the Governor, with further discussions held.

Over the course of the five days of the exercise, it was clear that many factors relevant 36 years ago are still relevant today such as the importance of communication, liaison between units and the need for closer integration in joint operations.

Exercise Atlantic Legacy was a success in that it brought many important lessons once more to the forefront of UK military thought and drew some of these from personnel who were never questioned at the time during the post conflict reports.

In addition for those involved, it was a once in a lifetime opportunity to walk the battlefields with the commanders who fought there, share in their experiences and to gain a unique insight into a key chapter of our recent military history.

**Report: Lt Andy Nolan, Marine Engineer Officer, HMS Clyde**



## Albion's tribute to fallen in Far East

PERSONNEL from HMS Albion paid their respects at the graves of their predecessors in Singapore.

A tragedy aboard the former Albion, an aircraft carrier, resulted in the deaths of Lt Bruce Brown, Mids Peter Daws and Michael Sheppard and PO Frederick Trainsell.

All were killed when a Wessex helicopter of 848 NAS crashed during the Borneo campaign in December 1965.

Their graves are four of 4,500 Commonwealth Service personnel, prisoners of war and civilians at Kranji War Cemetery.

PO Chris Heale had a particularly poignant visit as the cemetery is the final resting place of his great uncle, PO Stoker William Sharland, who served in HMS Repulse, the battlecruiser which sank off Malaysia in 1941.

The act of remembrance took place as the Royal Navy's Fleet Flagship made a five-day visit to Singapore at the start of her historic deployment to South East Asia.

Albion left Devonport at the beginning of February bound for the Mediterranean. After undertaking amphibious and aviation exercises in Greece and Cyprus, the assault ship proceeded through the Suez Canal at the end of March.

HMS Albion berthed at Sembawang, which was a British naval base until 1971.

Today it frequently hosts visiting ships from the US, Australian and New Zealand navies.

The last major Royal Navy warship to visit Singapore was HMS Daring in 2013, but in addition to HMS Albion, this year will also see the frigate HMS Argyll arrive in the region for exercises with Commonwealth partners.

Among the local groups who were welcomed aboard HMS Albion while she was alongside were members of Singapore's Guards, an elite spearhead unit who, like the Royal Marines, are experts in amphibious and urban warfare.

Aside from defence engagement, Singapore also provided a wealth of sporting opportunities with HMS Albion's football team beating British Forces Singapore 8-4, while the rugby team took on Singapore's national select side

at Queenstown Stadium in a fiercely competitive match which ended 31-12 to the home team.

There were also opportunities for golf and paddle-boarding, while others chose to explore the attractions of one of South East Asia's most dynamic cities.

PO Leslie Punshon said: "I joined the Navy to see the world, and I've never been to the Far East before – hands down Singapore has been one of the best experiences I've had to date."

Prior to arriving in Singapore, Albion met up with RFA Fort Rosalie.

In unseasonal Middle Eastern rain, Albion's seaman specialists and logisticians began to receive 30 loads of ammunition and stores were transferred via heavy jackstay using a rarely used because it's only fitted on a handful of vessels.

The resupply by Fort Rosalie – at 42 she's 27 years Albion's senior – was among the last acts of her current deployment supporting Allied warships patrolling the Indian Ocean on the lookout for terrorist activity, pirates and smugglers.

Indeed, as Albion made a beeline for Singapore, the Fort took on – rather than delivered – supplies to help her on her way west.

As a dry supply/stores ship, Rosalie carries only fuel to power the 23,000-tonne ship along and any helicopters she's carrying.

So having replenished others for the past six months it was time to become the replenished when she met veteran French tanker FS Var.

Over three hours, the Var pumped 550 'cubes' – cubic metres – of fuel into the auxiliary's tanks... enough to fill up 10,000 family-sized cars.

The next few weeks will see HMS Albion link up with a French naval task group, while Royal Marines will undertake a period of jungle training in Brunei.

Albion's Commanding Officer, Capt Tim Neild, said: "As a great maritime trading city, Singapore served as the ideal gateway for HMS Albion's time in Asia-Pacific."

"This region includes some of the world's largest and fastest-growing economies, and has a big part to play in the UK's own future prosperity."



● Below, from left, HMS Antelope explodes in San Carlos Water; RFA Sir Galahad on fire; Government House in 1982







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# Honouring heroes of Zebrugge raid

**MEMORIAL stones have been dedicated to two naval heroes from the 'first commando raid' as part of commemorations marking the centenary of the attack on Zebrugge.**

The 1918 raid on the Belgian port – then occupied by the Germans – attempted to seal enemy submarines in their base at Bruges by blocking their exit to the North Sea.

Despite narrowly failing, the attack was hailed as a triumph and gave the British public a morale boost at a time when the Army was fighting with its back against the wall on the Western Front.

Eight Victoria Crosses were awarded to participants, an honour revisited as part of Great War centenary commemorations with unique paving slabs dedicated in the towns, villages or boroughs with which recipients were most associated.

Which is why serving sailors, dignitaries and descendants of Capt Alfred Carpenter gathered in Barnes in South West London and those connected with Royal Marine Capt Edward Bamford met in Haringey in North London.

Capt Carpenter commanded the cruiser HMS Vindictive which served as the springboard for an assault on the mole at Zebrugge by raiding parties of sailors and Royal Marines, one of them led by Capt Bamford.

Vindictive came under ferocious fire from German guns as she approached the Mole, but Alfred Carpenter seemed oblivious to the danger, first bringing his ship alongside the harbour wall, then moving around his ship encouraging his men to ever greater deeds.

AB John Biglin manning a mortar on the cruiser's forecabin, was amazed by Carpenter's good luck. "How the Captain of Vindictive escaped seemed to be a miracle, as his clothing was perfectly riddled, but he did not flinch."

Frequently pictured after the raid with the ship's cat in his hands, Alfred Carpenter felt that every member of his crew deserved a medal for their part in the attack, but his fellow officers decided their captain was worthy of special distinction and nominated him for Britain's highest decoration.



● Capt Carpenter



● Capt Bamford



● Left, Capt Carpenter's granddaughter Rosemary Fitch talks to Cdre David Elford at the unveiling of his memorial stone in Barnes. Below left, Lt Gen Sir Jim Dutton led the tributes at the unveiling of the stone dedicated to Capt Bamford in Haringey



The memorial stone to Capt Carpenter, who would go on to become a rear admiral, was unveiled in gardens on Church Street in Barnes in the presence of the officer's granddaughter, Rosemary Fitch.

The Royal Navy was represented by Cdre David Elford, Naval Regional Commander for Eastern England.

"Captain Carpenter is remembered as a war hero and an outstanding citizen of this borough. I hope his memory serves as an inspiration to future generations of where selflessness, bravery and service can get you," said Cllr Lisa Blakemore, Mayor of Richmond upon Thames.

Edward Bamford had already been decorated for bravery aboard HMS Chester at the Battle of Jutland when he was assigned to command of company of marines at Zebrugge.

He led them with the same disregard for personal safety, helping to establish a strongpoint before leading a charge on a

German battery. Throughout, he set "a magnificent example to his men". His men repaid him by electing him to receive the Victoria Cross in a public vote when the survivors returned to Deal.

He survived the war only to die a decade later from pneumonia while serving on the China station.

Lt Gen Sir Jim Dutton RM, former Governor of Gibraltar and Commandant General Royal Marines, led the tributes to Capt Bamford at the new commemorative plaque at Hornsey War Memorial.

"It's a great honour to be invited to unveil this Victoria Cross monument to Capt Edward Bamford VC," the general said. "The people of Hornsey and Highgate should be very proud of him and his bravery."

The two unveilings ushered in a week of events in Britain and Belgium marking the raid as *Navy News* went to press; we'll have full coverage next month.



## Medic's deeds will inspire recruits

AS BULLETS whip up the Afghan sand in her wake, 21-year-old medical assistant Kate Nesbitt rushes to help gravely-wounded soldier John List.

The portrait of Kate's deeds – which made history as she became the first female sailor to earn Britain's third highest military honour, the Military Cross – now hangs in the chapel at HMS Raleigh in Torpoint... joining a famous painting of Jutland VC winner Jack Cornwell in inspiring a fresh generation of young recruits.

Kate, who is now a CPO(MT), ran across 70 metres of open ground peppered with enemy fire to reach L/Cpl List, of 1st Battalion The Rifles.

Nearly a decade later, the two were reunited as the painting by Nick Bashall, one of the country's leading portrait and battlefield artists, was unveiled.

Despite the incident being a defining moment in both their lives, neither Kate nor John remember too much about it.

"All I remember is Kate getting to me, telling me that everything was going to be fine," said John, now a civilian working as an outdoor activities instructor in northern Cornwall.

"I would have died without a doubt if Kate hadn't done what she did."

What she did was to spend 45 minutes stemming the blood loss from the soldier's gaping wounds, constructing an artificial opening to allow him to breathe, thus saving his life.

"I can't remember what was going on at the time. My job was to get to John, be his medic and get to his side as quickly as I could."

"It seems a lifetime ago now and I certainly don't see myself as brave. I was just doing my job."

With funding from the Gosling Foundation and Greenwich Hospital Trust, Mr Bashall was commissioned to recreate the moment on canvas. Kate modelled on several occasions and painted a verbal picture of the incident.

The artist has first-hand experience of Afghanistan, having spent two months in Kabul living with 2 Para.

"The most difficult part of the painting was to make it real, convincing, as though you were there right in the action. I was aware that if I didn't achieve that, I would create something kitsch and shallow," he said.

"Kate approached the project in a completely professional way and as is her nature was always understated. Creating this picture from imagination and the stories required her considerable input throughout. This was very much a joint operation."

"I was pleased with the result, it was the best that I could do, no stone was left unturned."

For the senior rating – pictured above with outgoing Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir Jonathan Woodcock beneath the portrait – it's still a rather surreal experience.

"My dad and I are in awe of the painting and the story it tells," Kate added. "It's very overwhelming knowing the painting will be hanging next to the famous Boy Cornwell painting for years and years to come."

## SBS legend's medals up for auction

EIGHT medals awarded to the most highly decorated post-war NCO in the Royal Marines are to be auctioned next month.

Col Sgt Gilbert Rex Howe, known as Gillie, served in the RM and Special Boat Service for 32 years, from 1946 to 1978.

Such was the esteem in which he was held by his peers, some joked that the old SBS motto 'By Strength and Guile', really ought to read, 'Not by strength, but by Gillie'.

Serving with both 40 and 42 Cdo, Gillie was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for bravery 'of the highest order' and 'aggressive spirit' against enemy bandits in Malaya on February 21 1951, taking command of his sub-section when his officer was wounded and pressing home two attacks.

Serving later in Borneo in 1963-4, he was awarded the Military Medal as a Sergeant while leading a Combat Tracker Team of dogs, SBS members and Iban tribesmen in pursuit of enemy terrorists in the Bornean jungle over a four-month period.

Later in his career Gillie became deeply involved in the development of revolutionary Close Quarters Battle techniques and long-range pistol shooting, and was also instrumental in



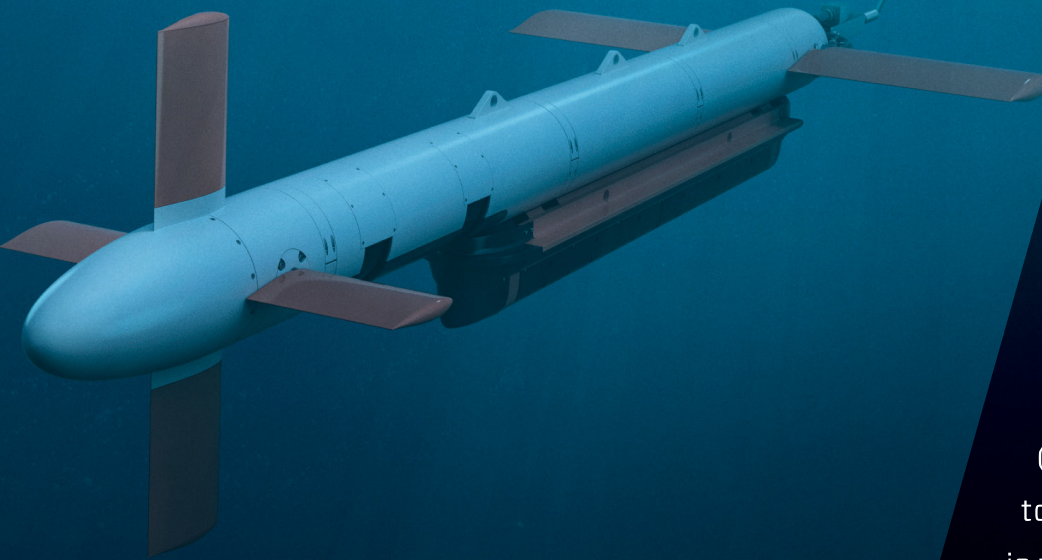
the refining of maritime counter-terrorism techniques for terrorist incidents taking place on oil platforms, at ports and on ships at sea. In addition to his earlier gallantry awards he was awarded the BEM and MSM for his later work as an SBS instructor.

A passionate canoeist, he and fellow Marine Ted Tandy smashed an incredible three hours from the previously SAS-held record for the Devizes to Westminster canoe race in 1961.

Gillie died in 2012 aged 83. His medals, being offered for the first time at auction, are being sold together with a matching set of court-mounted dress miniatures and his Royal Marine uniforms. These are accompanied by a rare archive of related paperwork and documentation, photographs, diaries and newspaper cuttings.

The medals, expected to fetch between £70,000-£90,000, will be sold at Morton & Eden in London on June 27.





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ENSURING  
AN UNDERSEA  
ADVANTAGE  
KNOWS NO BORDERS.***

Mines don't recognise borders, nor should the most advanced mine hunting solutions. Only Northrop Grumman's advanced AQS-24 family of sensors deliver unparalleled performance with complete adaptability. From hardware versatility (deployable from helicopter or unmanned surface vessel) to increased speed in mission execution, the AQS-24 is the future of mine warfare. *That's why we're a leader in advanced undersea technology.*

***THE VALUE OF PERFORMANCE.***

***NORTHROP GRUMMAN***



## Lessons in maritime aviation

AEROSPACE engineering students were in their element during a STEM event at RNAS Yeovilton.

Students from Bridgwater and Taunton College had the opportunity to get up close to the Royal Navy's newest helicopter, the Wildcat HMA2, and gain knowledge and understanding of just how advanced and complex maritime aviation is.

During their visits students were able to take a walk around the inaugural Fleet Air Arm Innovation Day.

The aim of the event was to encourage an innovative mind-set and culture across maritime aviation.

● AET Ben Rand showing Joshua Muench and Kelsey Green the top half of a Merlin Mk3 helicopter

Picture: LPhoto Guy Pool



# Sparkling bright ideas

## Clear winners in Royal Navy's seabed challenge



2018. YEAR OF ENGINEERING

YOUNGSTERS from across the UK gathered at HMS Sultan to compete in The Royal Navy Engineering Challenge – Exercise Clean Sweep – to mark the Year of Engineering 2018.

Held in partnership with University Technical Colleges (UTCs) and affiliated employers, schools, Babcock and BAE Systems, the challenge involved building a remote-controlled vessel capable of recovering objects on the seabed.

It was aimed at inspiring young people to engage further with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Seventy-five competed in the challenge, with several enjoying the opportunity to experience 24 hours of Naval life, including a night on board HMS Bristol.

This year's challenge was affiliated with the aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales.

The task was to build a remote-controlled vessel that can recover objects on the sea floor that need to be removed before the ship arrives in port.

Outside of competition itself, the youngsters were given the opportunity to enjoy several STEM-related displays and activities including tours of the Gosport base's facilities, such as helicopters, gas turbines and diesel engines.

Prizes were awarded across six different categories between groups aged 14-16, and 16-18, for apprentices from industry aged 18-24, with teams Extracting



● Edward Thompson and Thomas Ralph of The Royal Hospital School; Jordan Waller, from Portsmouth UTC, works on his team's entry Pictures: LPhoto Rory Arnold

Compass from UTC Swindon, Impact from Heathrow Aviation Engineering (HAE) UTC and Eaton by a Shark from Eaton Aerospace Systems overall winners in the respective categories.

UTC Portsmouth, which opened in September, entered six teams in the competition for the first time.

Year 10 student Parys Reid said: "Every other time trial that we have done we have kind of just sank and our design has changed a lot since we started."

"We have kind of ended up with a double decker of a boat with our electrics at the bottom and our crane on top."

"We only opened in September and this has been the first opportunity that we have had to see what the other UTCs are like

and it's been really interesting.

"I hope we can get to take part again next year."

Freya Long, Design and Tech Engineering Teacher at UTC Portsmouth said: "I think they've enjoyed what they've done. There's lots of problem solving that's been going on and they've tried to do quite a lot and might have benefited from doing more testing, but most teams have stayed afloat."

"I'm so proud of them and it's given us a lot to work on for next year and looking to see what lots of other teams have been able to produce has been really useful."

Award winners were:

**Best presentation:** Aquaholics – HAE UTC



**Most innovative:** Impact – HAE UTC

**Best manufacture:** Eaton by a Shark – Eaton Aerospace Systems

**Resilience prize:** HMS The Claw – The Leigh UTC

**Best newcomer:** Eaton by a Shark – Eaton Aerospace Systems

**Best in age group**

**K54 Winners:** Extracting Compass – UTC Swindon; Runners up: HMS Cheesknife – Scarborough UTC

**K55 Winners:** Impact – HAE UTC; Runners up: HMS Harley – The Leigh UTC

**Apprentices**

**Winners:** Eaton by a Shark – Eaton Aerospace Systems; Runners up: Intrepid

– BAE Systems

## WISE membership

THE CHIEF Executive of Women in Science and Engineering (WISE), Helen Wollaston FRSA, presented the Royal Navy with their certificate of annual membership during the Year of Engineering.

At the Royal Navy Engineering Challenge at HMS Sultan in Gosport, Cdre Andrew Cree accepted the certificate on behalf of the Royal Navy and celebrated the event with female engineers of all ranks and rates as well as members of the WISE campaign team.

Seeking to enable and energise people in business, industry and education, the WISE campaign is looking to increase the participation, contribution and success of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

In presenting the award, Helen said: "It was a real pleasure to meet so many people; men as well as women, offering their personal commitment to the campaign. I look forward to harnessing the energy and enthusiasm of Royal Navy personnel to help WISE achieve our goal of a million women in the UK working in science, engineering and technology by 2020."

Cdre Cree said: "The Royal Navy is an energetic advocate of gender equality across all areas and is proud that our work to promote women in science and engineering has been strengthened further through membership of the WISE campaign."



## Frigates and pasties

HMS Richmond towers over a group of Officer Cadets from Oxford URNU during an engineering visit.

The students visited the Type 23 in refit and sister ship HMS Argyll at HMNB Devonport.

They also visited the decommissioned submarine HMS Courageous.

Shortly after arriving on board HMS Argyll the group were taken on a tour of the engine spaces by the AMEO who gave an in depth explanation of how the ship's propulsion systems function.

They were then taken on a tour of the bridge by two Officers of the Watch before stand easy in the Wardroom with the rest of the ship's officers.

Seeing HMS Argyll as a fully functioning warship perfectly set the context for the next stage of the visit as the group saw HMS Richmond in refit at the Frigate Support Centre.

Babcock Engineer Chris Harrison took the group on a detailed and fascinating dock bottom tour prior to walking them through the many compartments on board the ship.

After some dockyard 'oggies' – pasties – the group then headed over to HMS Courageous for a tour led by Jim McDonald, a former Oxford URNU Coxswain.

## Campaign gathering momentum

WE are now already over a third of the way through the Year of Engineering 2018 and the Royal Navy continues to be at the forefront of the campaign, supporting the wider national effort to promote engineering throughout society.

The number of media articles and social media posts are clear evidence that our engineers are involved and ready to tell their stories to the nation.

So far this year we have seen numerous successful STEM events, such as Race for the Line, the FAA Innovation Day at RNAS Yeovilton and the UTC Engineering Challenge (Exercise Clean Sweep) at HMS Sultan.

This in addition to supporting National Apprenticeship Week, International Women's Day and the Big Bang Fair in Birmingham, the UK's largest STEM event.

Numerous STEM Ambassadors are also busy visiting organisations to assist in teaching, demonstrating equipment and assisting in the judging of competitions.

In the coming months 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 2018.

Engagement across the nation by RN STEM Ambassadors is exceptional, demonstrating how worthwhile a career in engineering can be.

Furthermore, every engineer has an individual story to tell, of how they have been directly involved in the maintenance, preparation and sustainment of their units, whether they are ships, submarines or aircraft for, and on, worldwide operations. Every engineer can explain why they form the 'beating heart' of operational capability.

There's still plenty of time for you to contribute to the RN's Year of Engineering 2018 campaign; read [RNTM 07-064/17](#) or share your experiences on Instagram or Twitter, using #yoe, #inspireanengineer and #takeacloserlook, and link into @RoyalNavy and @YoEGovUK.

If you're not a fan of social media, then you can still keep up to date with what's going on as part of the Year of Engineering 2018 campaign by joining the YO18 Defence Connect group, visiting the Year of Engineering 2018 page on the Defence Intranet, or by visiting the DfT's own website at [www.yearofengineering.gov.uk](http://www.yearofengineering.gov.uk).

## Snapshot of life in RFA

RFA Tiderace hosted a visit of five students from Falmouth Marine School along with their lecturer Martin Peart.

The students are undertaking a Marine Engineering course and there is interest from them in pursuing a career in the RFA.

They were shown and briefed on the ship's layout and capabilities and given an overview of the type of operations the RFA is engaged in while providing global support to the Royal Navy.

Following the ship's tour they were given an informal question-and-answer session by Chief Engineering Officer, Capt Paul Jenkins, and his engineering staff on the lifestyle, career opportunities, and strategic future of the RFA.

Capt Jenkins said: "This has been a valuable opportunity to raise awareness of RFA careers with both the students and staff of the Falmouth Marine School."





I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT

# MANTA'S MANTRA



With apologies to Liam Neeson... but his much-quoted line from *Taken* sums up the mantra of submarine and submarine hunter in NATO's biggest underwater exercise of the year. 814 and 829 Naval Air Squadrons provided the hunters, HMS Duncan provided fuel, a flight deck and ops room support, and half a dozen navies provided nuclear and conventionally-powered submarines for a fortnight of cat-and-mouse games off Sicily. Merlin Mk2 observer **Lt Luke Maciejewski** gives us a flier's-eye view of Dynamic Manta 2018.



ANTI-submarine warfare has changed a lot since the first world war with advancements in technology – notably during the Cold War – but the *raison d'être* of the submarine has changed little.

As silent hunters, subs intend to close in on a target, remaining undetected like an assassin stalking its victim before mercilessly sinking their prey.

Ships have, over time, learned to operate in convoys and fleets in order to protect their high value units using specialised anti-submarine warfare ships and aircraft to deter, locate and if necessary attack at range from the main force. The 'sport of kings,' anti-submarine warfare is the ultimate game of cat and mouse, where the submarine hides and tries to attack the task force while the aircraft hunts.

"I don't know who you are. I don't know what you want... what I do have are a very particular set of skills, skills I have acquired over a very long career. Skills that make me a nightmare for people like you... I will look for you, I will find you and I will kill you." The words of Liam Neeson's character Bryan Mills in *Taken* are the submarine hunter's psyche.

For two weeks, RNAS Culdrose's submarine hunters operated from from Italian Naval Air Station Mistrali in Sicily, flying training missions alongside NATO air, surface and sub-surface forces.

Operating in all conditions, day and night, the airborne anti-submarine warriors of the sky in their two Merlin Mk2 helicopters flew 50 hours in eight days, searching, detecting, tracking and simulating attacks on the NATO submarines who were playing the enemy.

Providing the opposition were HMCS Windsor (formerly HMS Unicorn, Canada), HS Matrozos (Greece), ESPS Mistral (Spain), TCG Prevez (Turkey), USS John Warner (USA) and ITS Romeo Romei (Italy).

Each silent hunter was markedly different, providing the airborne hunters with a very diverse challenge – nuclear, diesel electric and state-of-the-art 'AIP'-powered subs were represented, all of which require different tactical considerations from the aircraft.

Surface units, operating out of the Sicilian port of Catania, included the BNS Louise Marie (Belgium), FS Languedoc (France), HS Elli (Greece), ESPS Victoria (Spain), ESPS Cristobal Colon (Spain), TCG Gaziantep (Turkey), USS Laboon (USA), ITS Carabiniere (Italy) and NATO task group flagship HMS Duncan (pictured in our main image in through the periscope of one of the participating boats).

And a short distance inland from Catania, Commander Task Force 67 assumed its NATO role as Maritime Air Controlling Authority (MACA). Based at US Naval Air Station Sigonella, it

directed the actions of a wide range of air power: maritime patrol aircraft such as P-235s (Turkey), Atlantique-11s (France), CP-140s (Canada), P-3Ms (Spain), P-3Cs (Germany) P-8A Poseidons, Italian and British Merlins, not to mention the helicopters embarked on the warships.

All told there were 11 fixed-wing, ten helicopters, nine ships and six submarines from ten allied nations contributing to this year's Dynamic Manta (NATO workouts are prefixed Dynamic, words beginning with 'm' signify a maritime exercise).

The Royal Navy's Merlin Mk2 is arguably the world's premier anti-submarine helicopter due to its complex array of sensors integrated into an advanced mission system operated by highly-trained crews.

This is partly due to its multiple acoustic sensors (better known as sonar) for detecting, tracking and providing the sub's position, course and speed for an attack. Active sonar sends sound through the ocean with the purpose of it bouncing back from a submerged object this is known as 'pinging.' Alternatively, passive sonar listens covertly for sub machinery or movement through the water.

In crews of four (two pilots, one observer and one aircrewman), the Merlin flyers endured a demanding battle rhythm for the duration of Dynamic Manta. Each crew member has a role to play – without one of the team, the others would be unable to complete their mission.

A typical mission requires one pilot on the controls, the other sharing the flying whilst taking the lead on air traffic radio comms and fuel checks. The observer, as the mission commander, directs the aircraft and other units on tactical radios, and the aircrewman as the highly-trained sonar operator has the key job determining what is – and what is not – a submarine.

The primary acoustic sensor is the active dipping sonar (ADS), the most powerful sonar in the aircraft. This provides the greatest possible range to the operator. The ADS is deployed by lowering it into the sea whilst the helicopter is in the hover, referred to as 'dipping'. The ADS proved highly effective during the search phases of most of the missions as its range is extremely good in Mediterranean waters – making it very hard for the subs to evade.

Merlin's alternative acoustic sensors are sonobuoys – small electronic devices of which there are multiple types with different capabilities. Dropped through a hole in the bottom of the aircraft from a rotating carousel controlled by the observer, once in the sea, the aircrewman can wirelessly monitor the buoys and interpret what is and what isn't a submarine.

This has the tactical benefit of being able to deploy multiple sensors in the water, covering a large amount of ocean while being able to manoeuvre the

aircraft into an attack position.

Working with the rest of the task group, the Merlin Mk2 has a sharing network – Datalink 11, also known as 'alligator' – which is similar to WhatsApp. All Royal Navy ships, most aircraft and NATO allies have Datalink, so a net could have a variety of units operating together. Once the submarine is being tracked, the observer uses Datalink to 'release' (share) the position of the enemy submarine to the rest of the task group; this information is replicated on mission screens in operations rooms across all units within the net. The observer will continually manage and update the symbology known as a 'track' to ensure live information is available to the rest of the force.

Ultimately, it's the observer's job to put the aircraft in the right place to fight the battle, the aircrewman's to operate and monitor the sonar and the pilots to keep the aircraft safe. A good nautical analogy is the pilots are the bridge and ship's control centre whereas the observer and aircrewman are the operations room.

None of this mission success however would be possible without the detachment's highly-trained engineers who worked around the clock to ensure the helicopters were able to fly when called upon.

"Dynamic Manta provided us with some fantastic ASW training opportunities for all the aircrew, both the old and the new," said Lt Cdr 'Whisky' Walker, the detachment commander.

"With the exercise taking an unpredicted change in ASW focus, it gave the Merlin operators the chance to witness some very exciting cat-and-mouse-style submarine hunting."

And Whisky should know as he has been conducting anti-submarine warfare for 24 years – the reason for why he was the prime candidate to lead the detachment.

"Not a single sortie was lost during the exercise, which highlights the great efforts of the engineers who helped showcase Merlin's prowess in what can only be described as some of the best anti-submarine warfare action ever seen."

It was also the swansong of 829 NAS who formally merged with the Flying Tigers a few days after Dynamic Manta ended to form a new Merlin 'super squadron' (see page 6).

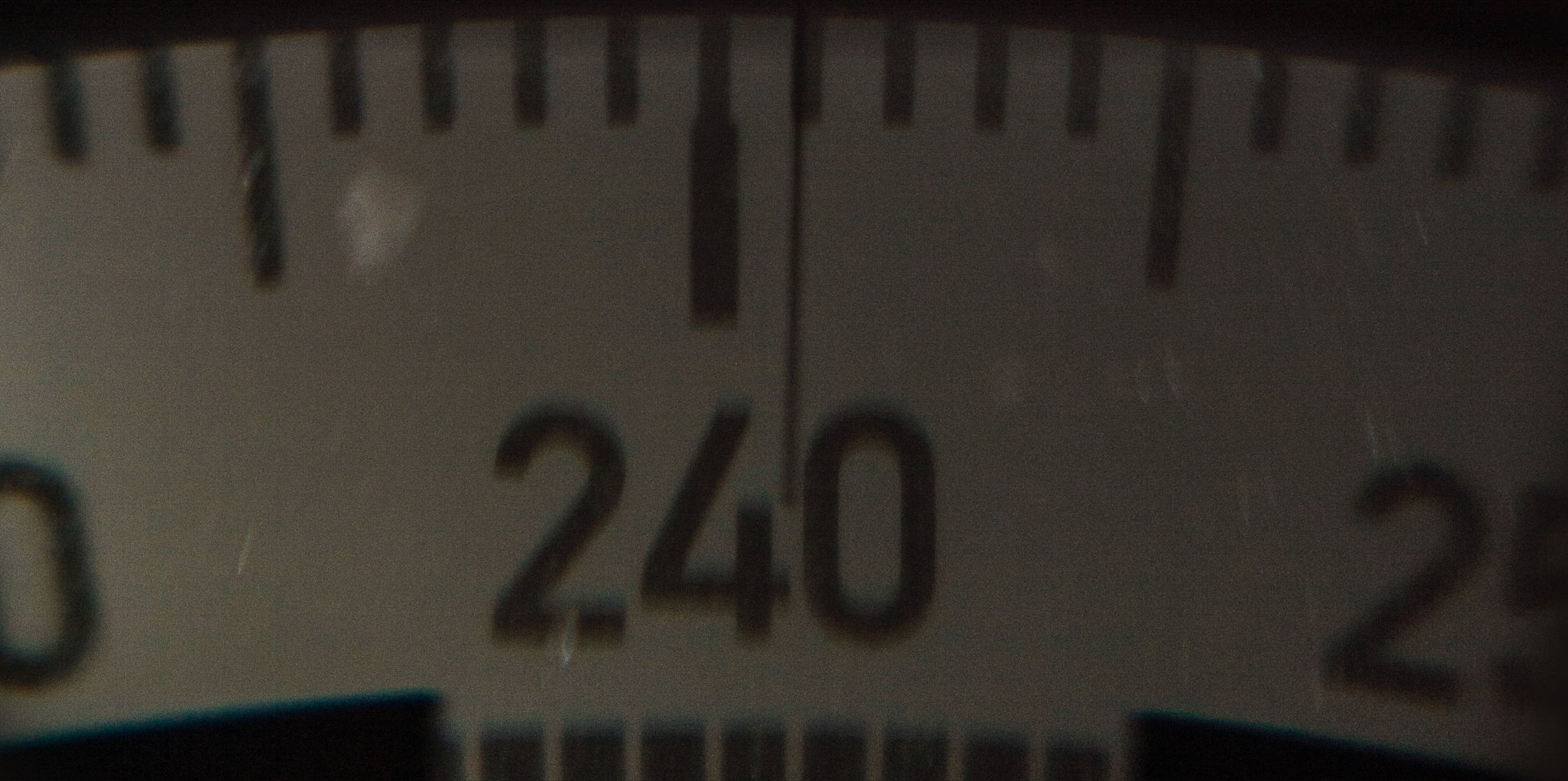
There is no respite for the new, enlarged 814 NAS as the UK's premier anti-submarine warfare squadron continues to provide Maritime Counter Terrorism, military search and rescue support, flights for Type 23 frigates and any ship or unit deployed around the world in need of a grey Merlin.

The Tigers are off again on exercise this month (Polecat in Poland), followed by the second of NATO's major anti-submarine exercises, Dynamic Mongoose in June, this time testing the ability of hunters to find boats in the cooler waters of Norway.





IF YOU WANT. I WILL LOOK FOR YOU, I WILL FIND YOU AND I WILL KILL YOU...







## Sail centre relaunch

THE Joint Services Adventurous Sail Training Centre (JSASTC) in Gosport held an open day to mark the return to full training.

Attended by representatives of all three Services' Adventure Training departments and the wider serving and veteran sailing communities, the return to full operations was marked by Lt Gen Bashall, General Officer Commanding Army Home Command, responsible for Army Adventure Training, Chairman of the Association of Service Yacht Clubs, and a keen sailor himself, unveiling the new centre logo at the entrance to JSASTC.

The occasion was also celebrated with a presentation of the Imperial Service Medal to Eric Skinner, a recently retired shipwright.

JSASTC staff – a mix of Civil Servants and serving Army personnel – had the opportunity to show off their new branded work clothing.

The 52 staff provide site management, exercise and course operational support and planning, instructors and yacht skippers, and yacht maintenance from the Haslar site in Gosport, shared by Hornet Services Sailing

Club and other sailing users.

The centre enables members of HM Forces to progress from novice sailor to Royal Yachting Association Yachtmaster Offshore or Yachtmaster Ocean, allowing them to act as skipper on large yachts.

There are exciting new sail training opportunities this year – a five-yacht Flotilla Exercise operating from Gosport to the Isles of Scilly, the Channel Islands and along the south coast, and a four yacht exercise operating from the west coast of Scotland.

The centre's Challenge 72s will be busy with expeditions to the Arctic and the Caribbean. The remaining NIC 55 yacht will be taking part in Army-led Tall Ships Races and the Comfortina 42 yacht will be deployed to the Canaries over Winter 2018/2019.

The centre is also planning another TRANSGLOBE expedition in 2020.

For more information about training opportunities, call 02392 765971, or visit the ATGA Site for Fast Access to Course Applications <https://www.atga.mod.uk/>

Picture: Kevin Diamond Photography



## Jockey jumps aboard to support crew

HORSE-RACING legend Frankie Dettori paid a visit to the crew of a Royal Navy minehunter currently on operations in the Gulf.

The champion jockey stopped by HMS Ledbury over the Bahrain Grand Prix weekend while the ship was berthed at the new UK Naval Support Facility in Bahrain.

Frankie embarked for a tour of HMS Ledbury, met the crew and learned about Royal Navy operations in the Gulf.

Lt Cdr Charles Collins, the Commanding

Officer of HMS Ledbury, said: "Frankie was very relaxed meeting my team and asked lots of questions about how our equipment and the ship works."

"He enjoyed the tour of the bridge and donning a Royal Navy beret in my captain's chair."

Frankie met with sailors from all parts of the ship, from junior and senior rates to the officers on board – stopping for selfies with many of the crew.

Lt Sam Jones said: "Frankie was a real

entertainer, and he loved taking a good photo with us."

HMS Ledbury left her home port of Portsmouth in June last year to make the 6,000-mile journey to Bahrain.

She is part of the Royal Navy's minehunting force which is permanently stationed in the Middle East.

Their primary role is to ensure vital shipping lanes in the Middle East are kept open, protecting Britain's economy and keeping trade routes flowing.



## Laying the groundworks

TRAINEES from HMS Collingwood helped out at Le-on-the-Solent Infants School.

Ten trainees from the MWS Electronic Warfare and Underwater Warfare courses joined forces to clear overgrown sections of the school's grounds and prepare an area for a new greenhouse in time for the growing season.

Maintenance of such extensive grounds can prove challenging for staff. For example, outside the main entrance to the school, there was a tangle of overgrown bushes and shrubs which meant that children especially had trouble seeing over them as they approached the doors.

It also blocked light, raising health and safety issues for teachers working late.

Now, thanks to the trainees'

tireless efforts to cut down and clear the shrubbery, the area is flatter so children can view the entrance as they approach and the hope is ultimately to landscape the area and plant low-growing shrubs and bulbs.

Headteacher Julie Roche said: "I am extremely grateful to the Navy cadets for all their hard work. The school grounds look so much better now and the front entrance is clearly visible."

"The cadets were amazing working in freezing cold conditions and achieving so much."

Pictured are: ABs Thomas Skelhorn, Joseph Sprigg, Ben Clark, Hollie Parker, Michael Larkin and Claire George with pupils Aiden, Edie, Elizabeth, Farrah, James and Jaxon.

Picture: Keith Woodland

## Tracking down chocolates

PERSONNEL across HMS Collingwood mustered in the base's sports centre prior to tackling a challenging course all in pursuit of a chocolate treat.

Teams were set off in a staggered start, tasked with traversing to 13 different points across the base, seeking out questions and undertaking challenges to lead them onto the next stage of the event.

The event proved extremely popular with competitors who were undaunted by the steady rain and the winners in both the morning and afternoon sessions were rewarded with chocolate prizes.

# Mum puts spotlight on special needs



● LWtr Rebecca Fyans with her son Sebby

Picture: LPhot Joe Cater

A ROYAL Navy leading writer has held awareness events in Portsmouth's Guildhall and Navy Command Headquarters to increase understanding of Down Syndrome.

LWtr Rebecca Fyans is mum to five-year-old Sebby, who has Down Syndrome, and is a trustee and new parent liaison for the Portsmouth Down Syndrome Association support group.

As part of World Down Syndrome Day she held a coffee morning at the Guildhall, raising £4,000, and a similar event at Navy Command in Whale Island where the proceeds are yet to be counted.

World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD) is a global awareness day which has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012. Having a set calendar date ensures that local organisations can choose their own activities and events on WDSD to help raise awareness of what Down syndrome is, what it means to have Down syndrome, and how people with Down syndrome play a vital role in our lives and communities.

Rebecca said: "We were so excited to be able to host these coffee sessions to be able to celebrate the day and help people to understand a bit more about Down Syndrome."

"We had an amazing time at the Guildhall where we raised a significant amount of money and made some key contacts at the council to be able to help with support for our group in the future."

"We also held a special screening of a film called *The Sanctuary* at The Vue which further helped with fundraising and building awareness and I have been so pleased with all the support everyone has given me throughout."

"I am proof that you can have a child with special needs while serving in the military and still be able to work full time – the Royal Navy has been incredibly supportive to me."

If you would like to make a donation to support the work of Portsmouth Down Syndrome Association, please visit their Virgin Money Giving page or set up a regular donation: <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1005248>

There is also a text donate number: text PDSA21 plus amount to 70070, for example, PDSA21 £5.

If you would like to help raise funds on behalf of Portsmouth DSA and need more information, or if you are a business and would like to work in charity partnership, contact the group at [www.portsmouthdsa.org](http://www.portsmouthdsa.org)



# Following in heroes' steps



**A TEAM** of Royal Marine Commandos have relived an extraordinary story of survival and escape which took place in Norway, 75 years ago.

Beginning in Rebbenesøya, a remote island in Northern Norway, and traversing the mountainous region of the Lyngen Alps, the team have covered 80 miles, following in the footsteps of a brave Special Operations Executive (SOE).

21 Royal Marines of Recce Troop, 40 Commando, embarked on Exercise Commando Fotspor, meaning footprint in Norwegian, to pay homage to the courageous efforts of their predecessors within the arduous conditions of the Arctic Circle.

Operation Martin was launched on March 29 1943 by 12 Norwegian SOEs, in an attempt to infiltrate and undermine the Nazi occupation



of Northern Norway.

They intended to set up a resistance network and render the Bardufoss airbase out of action, however, they were betrayed just short of H-Hour.

The mission altered from one of sabotage to survival; 11 men were killed, leaving one man,

Jan Baalsrud, fighting to reach the neutral Swedish border in harsh, cold weather conditions.

C/Sgt Simon Jones, second-in-command of Recce Troop said: "As a Royal Marines Commando, I relish the opportunity to train and fight in the most challenging environments."

The exercise also offered them the opportunity to train alongside the Norwegian Coastal Ranger Commandos and visit monuments to the team of World War 2 SOEs throughout their journey, including the grave of Jan Baalsrud.

The team have also used this exercise to conduct cold weather warfare training in the most demanding of conditions.

They will be maintaining their expertise in the intricacies of surviving in cold weather, including hygiene, movement and even avalanche survival in temperatures as low as -15°C.

The 40 Commando Recce Troop has been heavily involved with cold weather warfare training during recent months.

They have been deployed to Estonia over this time to provide training to the Army as a part of Operation Cabrit and NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence.

## Dinner drama for Martin

FORT Rosalie apprentice comms rating Martin Metcalfe received a commendation on behalf of the RFA's most senior officer for saving the life of a shipmate over dinner.

Martin, 29, from Sunderland, was enjoying scrum with other members of the support ship's comms team on patrol in the Indian Ocean when he noticed the distressed look on the face of a colleague who was attempting to cough.

After offering her a glass of water – which didn't have any effect apparently – Martin started slapping the sailor on the back.

When this didn't work and his shipmate was starting to panic, Martin resorted to the Heimlich manoeuvre – dislodging the piece of meat which was choking his shipmate.

After making sure she was OK, both were able to continue with their meals.

The choking victim was subsequently given the all-clear by Rosalie's medical technician.

Martin has only basic first aid training, completed during his Basic Sea Survival Course (BSSC), and further training aboard carried out under the direction of the med tech.



Cdre Duncan Lamb, the head of the RFA, said the young apprentice's actions were "potentially life-saving" and demonstrated quick thinking, leadership and initiative, "stepping up to the plate" when help was needed.

Martin was presented with his commendation by CO, Capt Gerry Patterson.



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

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





## Smiles ahead of the pain

ALL smiles... AB Natalie Ashman prepares to set off on a 13-mile slog around the capital for charity.

The junior rating was one of 10,000 runners pounding the city's streets for the London Landmarks Half Marathon – in her case to raise money for the Royal Marines Charity.

Joining Natalie, who serves at the headquarters of the EU Naval Force, on the start line for a spot of moral support was PO(PT) 'Ronnie' Barker, also based at Northwood (and seen in the selfie in the bright yellow top).

The run, which begins in Whitehall and ends at Downing Street, takes in some of the city's greatest sights – Trafalgar Square, the Royal Courts of Justice, St Paul's, the Bank of England, the Houses of Parliament and the London Eye.

More importantly, Natalie smashed her personal best by 15 minutes, crossing the finishing line in 2h 17m 14s... and hit her £515 target for the charity... aided by a donation from the head of the Corps (and CO of the EUNAVFOR mission) Maj Gen Charlie Stickland.

Natalie chose the RMC as her cause after the charity helped her while serving with 45 Commando... where she was also introduced to the world of RM 'phys'.

"I wanted to give back to a great charity that really does make a difference, I have seen it with my own eyes," she said.

"Working with Royal Marines changed my outlook and mindset towards life and I will never be able to thank them enough.

"They have always been the first to understand, first to adapt and respond and the first to overcome – that's the Commando mindset but today Royal Marines and their families are fighting battles they cannot win alone."

## Eggcellent efforts

PERSONNEL at HMS Collingwood channelled their inner Easter bunny to bring smiles to the faces of children across Fareham and Gosport.

Lt Cdr Andrew Ware and his wife, Katy, co-owner of Ruby Funerals, together with her business partner Michelle Peskett, decided to collect Easter eggs both at HMS Collingwood and at their local funeral homes.

These eggs were donated to the Rainbow Centre in Fareham which runs services and activities for children and adults with Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Strokes and Parkinsons Disease.

They collected 291 eggs and raised £115, £80 of which came solely from the sale of bacon butties within HMS Collingwood.

The head of donations for the Rainbow Centre, Lucy Rummung, received a cheque for £115 and the majority of the Easter Eggs, while a large amount of the remaining eggs was delivered to the Rowans Hospice to boost their Meercat project, and more eggs were delivered to the Gosport Food Bank.

# Sailors' tidy task to purge plastic

SAILORS from HMS Raleigh joined with the local community to play their part in removing plastic from a Cornish beach.

The group of sailors, led by Commanding Officer, Captain Ellie Ablett, spent a morning at Tregantle beach working with members of the Rame Peninsula Beach Care and Neil Hembrow of the Keep Britain Tidy Beachcare project.

While some used traditional pickers to clear the debris, others painstakingly swept the beach with hand-brushes to remove the tiny bits of micro-plastic, known as nurdles. These small pellets are about the size of a lentil and are melted down to form the plastic items in everyday use.

Claire Wallerstein, who formed Rame Peninsula Beach Care about five years ago, said that Tregantle is one of a few beaches in Cornwall that has a particular

problem with the micro-plastics, most likely due to the fine sand and local currents.

Claire, pictured with CPO Craig Brook-Hewitt, explained: "Because the nurdles are so tiny, you can imagine how easily these are lost during shipping or transport or production.

"It's estimated that around 53 billion of these are lost down the drains of plastic factories just in the UK every year. All drains lead to the sea and that's why these things keep washing up."

Rob Arnold, of the Rame Peninsula Beach Care, has developed a machine from many recycled parts to separate the sand and heavy material from the plastic.

Most of the sailors taking part completed their initial naval training at HMS Raleigh and are waiting for the next phase of their training to begin.

Capt Ablett said: "As the Commanding Officer of HMS Raleigh I've always been very keen to maintain the very close ties that we have with the local community and help in any way we can in environmental projects particularly. It's great to be out here with so many of the young men and women from HMS Raleigh, clearing the beaches, especially as this is MOD owned land."

As well as the firing ranges, the beach itself is regularly used by the Royal Marines to practice amphibious operations and beach assaults. When the area is not in use by the military it is open for the public to enjoy.

Regular cleans of Tregantle beach in particular are organised by CPO Brook-Hewitt, who works at HMS Raleigh. A Facebook page, [Tregantle Beach Clean](#), has been set-up to give details.

Picture: Dave Sherfield



# Veterans asked to try yacht racing

AN expanding sailing charity for injured veterans has unveiled its plan to move into the world of competitive racing.

In partnership with Help for Heroes and The Endeavour Fund, Turn to Starboard will launch a new racing division in May from a new office at Haslar Marina in Gosport.

The Cornwall-based charity was set up three years ago and believes sailing has a therapeutic effect on those affected by military operations.

It recently reached a major milestone after providing 1,000 sailing opportunities to veterans and has helped many gain sailing qualifications to help start new careers in the marine industry.

According to Chief Executive and founder Shaun Pascoe, the new venture will help to increase the number of sailing opportunities for veterans while honing skills for aspiring yachtmasters on the charity's training course.

"We are honoured to enter into the world of competitive racing which is a natural progression of what we offer and provides a great way for those affected by operations to learn new skills, rebuild confidence and connect with other veterans," he said.

"Thanks to the incredible support from Help for Heroes and The Endeavour Fund, this new venture will help show that suffering from physical or mental injuries doesn't have to mean aspiring to less, while serving as a gateway to future opportunities in the sport."

Over the summer months, the charity is planning to enter a series of local races and regattas including the annual Round the Island Race. The one-day yacht race around the Isle of Wight regularly attracts over 1,700 boats and around 16,000 sailors, making it one of the largest yacht races in the world.

To celebrate the launch, Turn to Starboard is holding a fun three-day sailing event from May 24 to 26. Up to 60 veterans from all over the UK are invited to apply to sail on board ten racing yachts especially chartered for the event.



● Staff and beneficiaries from Turn to Starboard get ready to race

"On day one, crew members can learn the basics of sailing in a relaxed environment with instruction from a professional skipper," said Shaun.

"The second day is some basic racing rules, tactics and general knowledge to help on the race course the following day, when each boat competes against each other in a fun regatta. The grand finale will be a party in the evening with prizes for the winners.

"Whether you're new to the sport or a seasoned sailor, come along and join some

like-minded individuals and enjoy some time on the water. You can choose to pull on a few ropes or just sit back and enjoy the ride, it's totally up to you. The event is about experiencing life on the water with other veterans affected by operations and having some fun, as well as maybe winning a trophy or two!"

To book your place, contact Turn to Starboard Operations manager Tamsin Mulcahy on 01326 314262 or email [tamsin@turntostarboard.co.uk](mailto:tamsin@turntostarboard.co.uk).



## Top reward for Oonagh

ROYAL Navy Master At Arms Oonagh Maguire has won the National award at the British Association of Women in Policing for Excellence in Performance.

Oonagh, who joined the service in 1995, will now be entered into the International Women in Policing awards.

She transferred to the Regulating Branch in July 2002, where she was employed at RN Provost (Western) before joining HMS Albion.

On promotion to Regulating Petty Officer she spent her career serving at HMS Raleigh, where she was awarded the Commodore's Award for her service in the Regulating Branch dealing with cases involving vulnerable trainees.

Oonagh went on to serve in HMS Somerset, Bulwark and Op Kipion.

She was then drafted to RNAS Yeovilton for two years in support of JHC and all CHF Squadrons afloat, deploying to Jordan with 845 NAS.

Upon promotion to Master At Arms, she returned to RNPHQW for a short period before joining HMS Ocean for Op Cougar.

Returning to RNPHQW in 2016 as the Regional Intelligence Officer for the South West, she then became the Criminal Intelligence Manager for the Royal Navy Police.



## Naval links running deep

A 19-year-old from Market Deeping is one step closer to achieving his aim of becoming the third generation of his family to serve as a Royal Navy submariner.

Recruit Connor Barnes arrived at the gates of HMS Raleigh to begin his training in November, following in the footsteps of his grandfather, Desmond Barnes, father, Mark and uncle, Neil Ranson.

Connor said: "My dad served on the old diesel-class submarines and my grandad was based out in Singapore so I've grown up listening to the amazing times they've had."

The teenager was among the latest group of trainees who marked the successful completion of their ten-week initial naval training course on parade at the Royal Navy training establishment in Cornwall.

Connor added: "My family love the fact that I'm in the Royal Navy. They always said they'd be proud of me whatever I do, but there were a few tears shed at my passing-out-parade. It was a proud day, especially because it's in the blood now and they're proud to see me doing something that I love, that they loved too."



# Funding NEMOs

SEVEN (well six and a half) of the medical officers taking part in a day-long 100km ride around the Isle of Wight pose for a quick selfie on the road to raising more than £800 for the RNRMC.

Doctors undertaking the New Entry Medical Officers (NEMOs) course at the Institute of Naval Medicine in Alverstoke put their studies on hold briefly to support one of the charity's key fundraising campaigns.

It asks sailors, soldier and marines to organise various events in the 100 days leading up to the Army-Navy clash at Twickenham.

The young doctors organised two events: a pizza-fuelled quiz night at the INM organised by Surg Lt Eilidh Parry – rounds included 'whose feet are these?' and popcorn tasting.

The presence of a contingent of army doctors, visiting for a course, helped to bolster the coffers.

Time to work off all that pizza and popcorn with a leisurely cycle ride with eight NEMOs climbing on the saddle.

By the time they climbed off again, their efforts (with gift aid) had raised £825.



## Grant ensures we continue to care

THE RNRMC has confirmed that it will award military care home provider Erskine Homes a grant of £40,000 to ensure the continued care and support of Naval veterans.

As an established provider of care, Erskine looks after around 800 elderly and disabled ex-Servicemen and women, their spouses and widows/widowers each year. It offers residents long-term residential and respite nursing, dementia and palliative care.

Erskine's request for funding from the RNRMC will help them to maintain the care of their 30 Royal Navy and Royal Marine veterans currently residing at the 180-bed home in Bishopton, Scotland.

Continued care of residents at the home amounts to an average of £1,163 per resident per week while Local Authority funding amounts to an average of £764 per week.

"We are extremely grateful to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity for their ongoing support. It means a great deal to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines veterans in our care to maintain this connection and to know how much their service is valued," said Sara Bannerman, Head of External Relations at Erskine.

Director of Relationships and Funding, Mandy Lindley said: "For the RNRMC, supporting the naval veteran community is one of the most important things we can do. Those who have served their country deserve the very best care in later life.

"Erskine Care Homes are one of the foremost providers of care to the elderly veteran community. We are very proud to be able to work alongside them and provide vital support to our Royal Navy and Royal Marines community."

# Conquering rocky road

## Victory Walker reflects on her first 1,000 miles

AFTER stepping out from Portsmouth, and having now walked 1,000 miles, readers will realise the Victory Walker, **Cdr Jane Allen**, means business. Here is her second instalment as she undertakes a 5,500-mile quest.

So far, my journey through six counties into Lincolnshire has been one of complete contrasts – brash seaside resorts hibernating for winter, the frenetic pace of London, remote marshes, graffiti-daubed industrial estates and quiet villages.

As expected, there has been a lot of solitary walking, but I'm never truly alone. When away from humans, I've still had flocks of geese, sea birds, grey seals, wild ponies, grazing sheep or cattle to keep me company.

Leaving Essex became something of an endurance test. Perhaps I shouldn't have been surprised because, at 350 miles, Essex has the longest coastline of any of England's counties.

Suffolk followed, where I discovered that this county wasn't short of rivers to be bridged!

I tramped down the banks of the Stour, and up and down all or most of the rivers Orwell, Deben, Butley, Ore, Alde and Blyth.

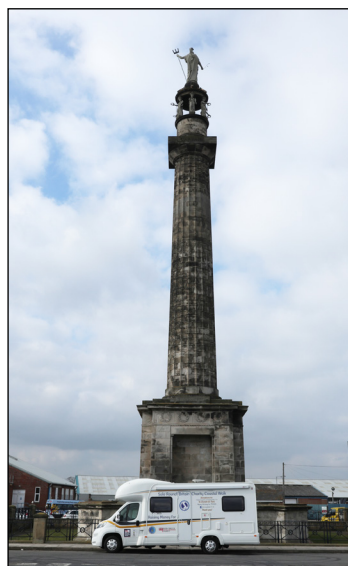
Suffolk's highlight was reaching the most easterly point of the British Isles at Lowestoft, where the sun shone as bitter winds brought breakers frothing up and over Ness Point.

It took me 11 days to reach Norfolk where, in Great Yarmouth, it became immediately evident the county is incredibly proud of its links with its famous Naval hero, Admiral Lord Nelson.

Approaching Yarmouth I spied a lofty monument, known as the Nelson Memorial. Just feet shorter than Nelson's Column in London, Norfolk defiantly



● Cdr Jane Allen had plenty of reminders of Norfolk's links to Admiral Lord Nelson



constructed its monument ahead of London's in a select area of the town.

Sadly, it now presides over an industrial estate, close to the brightly-lit Pleasure Beach and Golden Mile.

Later, I made time to visit Burnham Thorpe, birthplace of Nelson. Although the parsonage where he lived has been demolished, the church of All Saints where Nelson's father was rector still stands.

There has also been some frivolity. I've now walked 19 seaside piers, each with its own style and tale to tell.

The grandeur of Eastbourne, the uncluttered simplicity of Hastings, the charming eccentricities of Southwold and the world record length of Southend have

all been conquered.

I have had some tempting proposals too. With no winter ferries, I've resisted several offers of private water taxis, opting to walk the full route instead.

On other occasions the going has been tough. Plodding endless miles of monotonous terrain can dampen the spirit: the grassy sea banks of Essex win this prize, with Lincolnshire being a close second.

In these instances, the walk becomes a route march to the end-of-day marker, with the brain switching to automatic pilot.

And what if my spirits need lifting? I've not been shy in sampling the wares of beach kiosks and little cafes, becoming an expert in spotting a scrumptious

homemade Rocky Road.

I've steeled myself for some difficult road walking too: hugging a white line, walking in the drainage channel or trying not to twist an ankle on rutted verges with ground brambles waiting to snare my unsuspecting boot. Crossing the Orwell Bridge on the hectic A14 could have been more enjoyable if I'd not been caught in a hail shower.

Picking my way, 43m above the river on a narrow footpath within a few feet of dual carriageway traffic, separated only by a knee-high barrier, required some nerve.

Living in the confined space of a motorhome, conserving water and battery power, trying to keep warm, finding the motivation to step out into a howling gale, attempting to dry wet clothes, doing route planning on a tiny table, are all daily difficulties.

It has also taken personal courage to acknowledge sickness or atrocious weather, and pull myself off the walk for a few days.

Without doubt, the Victory Walk is proving to be a personal challenge, but it's more than that. It's a long-distance charity walk to raise money for two naval charities, the WRNS BT and RNRMC.

I've walked hard for the charities and am determined to push on for my second thousand – up the east coast, into Scotland. There's still a long way to go!

I will continue to walk and work hard for the two charities. In return, I would ask everyone to make the effort to share **Victorywalk17-18** on Facebook, passing the word to family and friends. To 'Like' the Victory Walk is not enough. Admiral Nelson would have expected many more smiley emojis to be converted into smiley £ signs for the charities' coffers via [www.Virginmoneygiving.com/victorywalk17-18](http://www.Virginmoneygiving.com/victorywalk17-18). Thank you.



## Book your place for top race

SPACES are available to compete in the Great South Run on behalf of the RNRMC.

The ten-mile course, around Portsmouth, takes place on October 21 2018.

Previous athletes who have won the fast and flat course include Sonia O'Sullivan, Paula Radcliffe and Mo Farah.

Part of a festival of sport in Portsmouth, nearly 30,000 people take part in four events across two days, including the Junior and Mini Great South Run and the Great South Run 5K, staged the day before the ten-mile event.

To receive a space and a free running vest we ask you to pay a registration fee of just £25 and pledge to raise a minimum of £200 in sponsorship.

Visit <https://www.rnrmc.org.uk/Event/great-south-run> or contact the fundraising team at [fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk) or by telephone at 023 9387 1520.





## The Navy gave Peace a chance

MEET CPOET(WE(CIS)) Hannah Louise Peace.

Senior rating. More than two decades in the RN. Responsible for IT kit for military medics. Enjoys her career. Embraces life.

She's also one of around half a dozen personnel in the Naval Service who is openly transgender.

On the International Transgender Day of Visibility at the end of March, she and the nation's second most senior admiral championed the rights of transgender personnel – and stressed the inclusive nature of the RN of 2018.

The day of visibility has been running for the past decade with the aim of confronting transphobia and cissexism (prejudice against transgender people), raising awareness of transgender personnel in all sections of society and celebrating their deeds.

Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Ben Key is keen to underline that today's RN both supports and recognises its transgender personnel.

"I am proud that the Naval Service promotes a diverse and inclusive environment where our transgender Service people are valued and respected," he said.

For Hannah, who joined the RN as a man, the Senior Service has played a fundamental role not just in her career but also in her transition.

Today she works for the Defence Medical Information Capability Program (Deployed) at DMS Whittington, near Tamworth, where she's responsible for a small team who manage and support all the medical IT systems within the MOD which are currently deployed. This is her story:

**"I knew from a very early age that I was different but, coming from a small mining village it was difficult for me to actually be me. I had a happy childhood even though my feelings were somewhat skewed as I didn't look how I felt. My saving grace was having a younger sister which allowed me the freedom to play with dolls and girls games without being judged.**

**I joined the RN in the early 90s and decided a spell in the military could change me and make me the man I wasn't. As time rolled on I became increasingly unhappy until, one morning, I woke and decided enough was enough: I needed to do something about it and made an appointment to see the doctor. The doctor understood what I was saying and set the wheels in motion to enable me to be me. I haven't looked back or been unhappy again – I embrace life and the challenges it brings and have never been as happy.**

**I was told about the Royal Navy's LGBT Forum (now called the Compass Network) not long after 'coming out' as trans and asked if I would be interested in attending a meeting.**

**I thought: "why not, let's see what it's all about" and to my surprise it was fantastic. The network was so welcoming and so forward thinking – a force for good, I thought. I decided to become part of it. I wanted to try and give something back as I had received so much care and understanding.**

**I have attended lots of events around the country representing Compass Network and the RN in general, such as the Stonewall role models' programme. A highlight has been marching in uniform at London Pride, which I found exhilarating and felt a massive sense of pride in myself and my Service.**

**I feel I owe so much to the RN as they enabled me to be me and that's something money cannot buy. I also think it's very important that people see that the RN does include trans people and that they are valued and needed. I know that if someone has a sense of belonging they will be a much happier individual and their work will improve. Nobody should be afraid to be themselves and if me being out and public about who I am encourages and gives someone the strength to be themselves then I feel that it cannot be a bad thing.**

**I owe my gratitude to my family and the RN because without their support and understanding I may well not be the person I am today.**



compass

# Hello, me Ansons

THE crew of Britain's next hunter-killer submarine pose ahead of their inaugural mess dinner in Barrow – which opened catering students' eyes to a career in the Royal Navy.

Although she's still a year away from being formally named – the equivalent in the Silent Service of being launched – HMS Anson already has more than a dozen crew.

To start work on forging the boat's spirit and soul, they decided to leave the imposing Devonshire Dock Hall behind for an evening and enjoy a traditional mess occasion, hosted half a mile away at Furness College on its Channelside campus.

More than 20 catering and hospitality students were invited to look after the dining submariners – and did them proud.

They cooked and served ham hock terrine with malted bread and apple chutney, followed by pork fillet with a red wine jus and a trio of mouth-watering mini



desserts for the submariners, including Anson's Senior Naval Officer Lt Cdr Mark Moulding and guest of honour, Capt Nigel Bower, the senior RN officer in Barrow.

Anson's WO and senior rates' mess president CPO(Wtr) David Ramsey said the event – partly funded by the RNRMC – had been "a huge success".

He continued: "As well as providing an opportunity for

Anson's crew to socialise and reflect on the important role of a submariner, the event also gave catering and hospitality students the opportunity to gain some practical work experience.

"The Submarine Service's ethos of absolute professionalism embraces a culture of high and constant learning, following five key themes: unity, adaptability, responsibility, humour and heritage.

"The Navy is actively recruiting chefs and stewards for ships and submarines, so we were able to give the students an insight into some of the career opportunities available to them once they successfully complete their course."

Over the course of two evenings, the crews of Anson and her older sister Audacious – who also chose the college as the venue for their mess dinner – raised £171.76 for the RNRMC.

The students' tutor Clare Moncrief said her trainees truly benefited from laying on a significant function.

"The dinner has given our students the chance to experience a large event and use their skills to provide high standards of catering and service," she added.

Anson the fifth of seven Astute-class boats being built by BAE in Barrow for the Navy, while Boat No.4 Audacious completed her maiden test dive at the beginning of 2018 and is due to begin sea trials ahead of joining her three operational sisters Astute, Ambush and Artful at Faslane.

## Scott's doctor inspires again

NAVAL surgeons need a hero figure – and now they have one to remember with a new award presented in memory of a remarkable explorer and lifesaver.

Edward Leicester Atkinson was one of the key figures in the team assembled by Capt Scott in his ill-fated attempt to be first to the South Pole.

The then 30-year-old naval doctor commanded the base camp while Scott and his party made for the foot of the earth and, in the Antarctic spring of 1912 found the tent where Scott and two comrades died.

He also recovered the expedition leader's diary and read out passages to shed light on the polar party's fate and inspire his men.

On returning to the UK, Atkinson resumed his naval surgeon duties and was thrust into the front line in WW1, treating sailors at Gallipoli and on the Somme, and survived horrific injuries when monitor HMS Glatton blew up in Dover Harbour.

He remained in the RN for another decade, retiring as a surgeon captain and dying barely a year into civilian life aged just 47.

Nearly a century later and Surgeon Vice Admiral Alasdair Walker was looking to inspirational RN medical figures to inspire future generations of naval surgeons.

With historian Mike Tarver, the name of Atkinson was hit upon... and so was born the Edward Leicester Atkinson Award for the new-entry surgeon who performed the best of the new intake at Dartmouth and the Institute of Naval Medicine.

As Atkinson's biographer, Mr Tarver believes the polar surgeon is a very worthy name to follow.

"He was an example who inspired leadership and moral courage," he says.

The first recipient of the new title is Surg Lt Andrew Loftus, now assigned to 42 Commando as its medical officer, chosen



● Edward Atkinson at work in his laboratory at base camp during the ill-fated race to the Pole in 1911 and (below) the first winner of the award named after the naval officer, 42 Cdo's Surg Lt Andrew Loftus

ahead of 16 other naval medics in his BRNC intake.

"When I arrived at BRNC I committed myself to prove that doctors can and will succeed at officer training equally well as any other group," Andrew said.

"I gave absolute effort to every task without knowledge that the award was being considered for the first time. To be nominated was both a surprise and a delight."

The award has both inspired the young surgeon lieutenant in his day job, and prompted him to delve into Atkinson's history.

"Edward Atkinson is an inspiring individual I am proud to be associated with and who has set an example I will gladly follow," he said.

"The effect of being recognised is to drive me to further improve my capability as a Naval doctor and officer by applying maximum effort and determination to all things whether assessed or not.

"Determination is an incredibly powerful tool which in most cases, in my experience, can compensate and overcome ones weaknesses."

■ We have a special offer for Navy



News readers. Surgeon Captain Edward Leicester Atkinson: Antarctic Explorer and War Hero (ISBN 978-0955-220814) is available directly from the author in hardback for just £10. Details from [miketarver@gmail.com](mailto:miketarver@gmail.com).

## Are you watching TV lawfully?

TV Licensing have launched a new campaign to encourage Service personnel to check whether they need a licence to watch telly.

A licence is generally not included when living in Service accommodation – it's your responsibility to check whether you need a licence and what it covers.

You need to be covered by a licence if you are watching or recording live TV (cable, satellite or freeview) or downloading or watching BBC programmes on iPlayer – regardless of what device you are using.

A licence costs £150.50 per year – payment can be made in full or in instalments.

If you're found to be breaking the law, you risk you risk prosecution, a fine of up to £1,000 plus legal costs and/or compensation you may be ordered to pay. (North of the border, Scottish criminal law applies; a report will be sent to the Procurator Fiscal who will decide on prosecution.)

For more information, visit [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk).

## Do you yearn to learn?

LEARNING at Work Week 2018 comes to the three principal naval bases this month (May 14-20) with a series of roadshows highlighting what's available to you with a learning/development advisor on hand.

■ Faslane: Clyde Learning and Development Hub, Building 1320, May 15-17;

■ Portsmouth: Learning and Development Open Day, 10am-2pm, May 16, NCHQ Atrium, HMS Excellent. More than 20 exhibitors will be present, providing advice and guidance on funding, education for promotion, coaching, degrees and post-graduate study;

■ Devonport: Roadshows and drop-in clinics across the site all week long, including the official opening of the hub on May 24. The latter will take the form of an open day with local and national providers of further and higher education delivering presentations and offering guidance.





# Five of the best

**FIVE** men and women who epitomise the finest qualities of the human spirit – and the Royal Navy – have been rewarded by Britain's senior sailor.

Lt Cdr David Pollitt, PO(PT) Stu O'Connor, Std Janine Mayoll on the left of Admiral Sir Philip Jones and WOET(WESM) David Wynne and WO1 Adrian Piner on the right are this year's winners of the First Sea Lord's Greenwich Hospital Prize (the hospital is represented by director Hugh Player to the admiral's left).

The awards were introduced in 2015 to recognise up to eight sailors or Royal Marines who had best embodied the ethos of the Senior Service.

The winners and their families were invited aboard HMS Victory to receive framed certificates from Admiral Jones on a day none will forget.

Steward **Janine** suffered a string of personal tragedies in a matter of months, losing her husband, father, and parents-in-law – all while receiving treatment for a particular aggressive form of cancer.

Despite these body blows, she continued to perform her RN duties and rebuild her life with enthusiasm, professionalism and above all courage which impressed all she served with. Her dedication to continue her naval career has now resulted in a draft to the nation's flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Few sailors on the Seven Seas are more experienced navigators than Lt Cdr **David Pollitt** who has been instrumental over the past few years in the revolution which has seen the Fleet switch from paper to electronic charts.

Lt Cdr Pollitt's encyclopaedic understanding of navigation above and below the waves has been called upon repeatedly in ensuring the Navy receives the equipment and charts to safely negotiate the oceans in time of peace or war.

The final RN vessels 'go digital' this year – a lasting testimony to the veteran navigator's dedication to the cause.

For most of the past decade **Stu O'Connor** has been the RN's 'Mr Boxing' as a passionate coach

of Navy fighters. At the same time he's also set up the Poseidon Community Boxing Gym in Eastleigh.

Council bosses set Stu the target of taking 25 junior boxers a week under his wing. Instead, 60 fighters walk through the gym doors every day – 14,000 users in a year. On top of that, the gym is now a hub for the England Boxing Association's disability training initiative, helps former offenders to reintegrate in the community and above all "has sacrificed personal ambitions to support others".

WO1 **Adrian Piner** has been the Corps Bugle Major – the most senior non-commissioned officer bugler in the Royal Marine – for the past four and a half years.

As well as being responsible for the buglers and all major performances by the Corps of Drums, he's embraced social media, successfully led a world record attempt and broadened the audience beyond traditional fans of the RM band.

As a result of all these efforts, the Royal Marine are now consulted by organisers planning events such as the Festival of Remembrance, national-level commemorations and international military tattoos. Put simply, WO1 Piner provides a service which sets the "gold standard across military music".

And besides being highly respected thanks to years of experience as a weapon engineer, WO1 **David Wynne** is dedicated to the wider 'submarine/Faslane family'.

He's been instrumental in setting up a support group for naval families who have children with special needs, encouraged Faslane-based folk to buy presents for youngsters at Glasgow Royal Hospital for Children and helps edit the 'Storybook Waves' initiative (recording of parents' bedtime stories to be played back to children while the former are deployed).

In getting involved in all these projects – and many more – David daily places the needs of the Service – and families – ahead of his own, demonstrating "an unfailing drive to do the right thing" and an "indefatigable ability to make things happen".

Picture: LPhot Barry Swainsbury, FRPU East

## Where to look

- Galaxy Briefs
- 02-2018: Pay Protection
- DINs
- 01 Personnel
- DIN 2018DIN01-044: Defence Humanists Network Conference and AGM 2018
- DIN 2018DIN01-045: Opportunities for Defence Medical Services (DMS) Personnel to serve with the UK Special Forces Medical Group
- DIN 2018DIN01-046: Professional Membership in the information profession
- DIN 2018DIN01-048: TV Licensing – COs' responsibilities and the requirements for Service Personnel, visiting Forces, MOD establishments, messes and clubs.
- DIN 2018DIN01-054: Armed Forces Buddhist (Spiritual and Moral Leadership) Conference June 20-22
- DIN 2018DIN01-057: MOD (and MOD sponsored) civilian visits to operational locations
- 03 Policy and Operations
- DIN 2018DIN03-005: Continued support to WIS SP and Veterans during private home adaptations
- DIN 2018DIN03-006: 1700 Naval Air Squadron – operational support request process
- 05 Management, Organisation and Business Practice
- DIN 2018DIN05-013: Mine Warfare Drills and Procedures Committee (MWDP)
- 06 Safety, Health, Environment and Fire
- DIN 2018DIN06-017 Publication of

- 'Dangerous Goods Manual'
- DIN 2018DIN06-018: Patient Data and the National Data Opt Out Programme
- 07 Training and Education
- DIN 2018DIN07-045: Cessation of Accountancy Bounties.
- DIN 2018DIN07-046: Nurse and Allied Health Professionals Clinical Placements
- DIN 2018DIN07-047: Training Requirements for MOD(and23ee MOD sponsored) Civilian Visits and Deployments
- DIN 2018DIN07-050: Spouse/Partner Language Training for overseas postings
- DIN 2018DIN07-051: Defence Foreign Language Training Courses for 2018/2019
- 09 Honours, Awards, Royal and Ceremonial Events
- DIN 2018DIN09-004: The George Beeching Prize for Compassion
- DIN 2018DIN09-005: The Alan Hirst Memorial Prize
- DIN 2018DIN09-006: Medical Director General (Naval) Prize MDG(N) Prize 2018
- DIN 2018DIN09-007: The Oliver Sword 1Q2018
- DIN 2018DIN09-008: Sick Berth Petty Officers' Efficiency Medal
- DIN 2018DIN09-009: The Ruth Carter Prize for Nurses and the Eliza Mackenzie Prize for Student Nurses
- DIN 2018DIN09-010: The Royal Navy Medical Technician award for Innovation
- DIN 2018DIN09-011: Minister(DP) Acquisition Awards 2018 – Calling notice for nominations
- 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 01-012/18: Requirements for Medical Examination on Application to Re-Enter or Transfer into the Naval Service
- RNTM 01-014/18: Direct Entry Technician (DET)
- RNTM 01-016/18: RN Ratings Intelligence Specialisation Request for Volunteers
- RNTM 01-017/18: RN Ratings Intelligence Specialisation Request for Volunteers Roadshow
- RNTM 01-018/18: Rebalancing lives fund grant applications
- 03 Policy and Operations
- RNTM 03-010/18: Small Arms Maintenance Policy in Surface Ships and RFAs
- 04 Equipment, Support and Estate
- RNTM 04-017/18: Submission of Articles for 'Logistics Matters' Magazine
- RNTM 04-018/18: HMS Tyne decommissioning and disposal (supersedes RNTM 04-001/18)
- RNTM 04-019/18: Direction for managing steward strength shortages in ships
- 05 Management, Organisation and Business Practice
- RNTM 05-005/18: WESM (TWS, CIS and SWS) Forum – 5 Jun 18, HMNB Clyde

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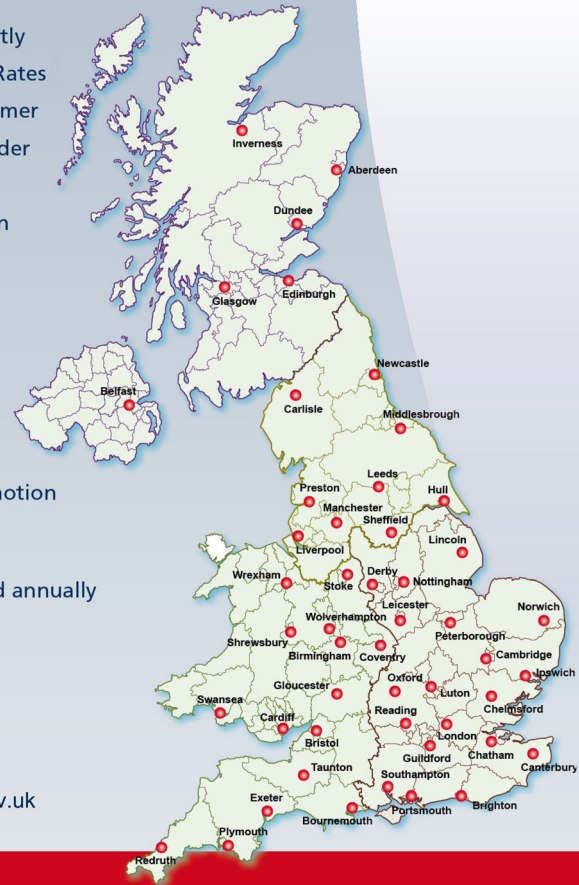
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## Minding their PMQs

WHEN the Coxswain of Oxford URNU first spoke to OC Ben Fernando about his studies, he didn't expect him to talk about Parliament and future aspirations of becoming a minister.

However, the more the talk veered towards the Houses of Parliament, the more CPO Maskell was intrigued.

He was then offered the chance to go to Prime Minister's Questions at the House of Commons by OC Fernando. It was a simple plan, firstly asking the local MP to attend as their representative and once authorised, collecting the tickets to enter. The opportunity was too good to refuse.

On a very chilly, windy and snowy morning, CPO Maskell ventured up to London to meet OC Fernando at the House of Commons.

Searched on entry into Parliament, they took the long walk through the main hall passing ministers and tourists alike.

Once at the doors to the House of Commons they were led up to the viewing gallery above the politicians, more searches were conducted and they were led to their seats. Within minutes the Prime Minister came out and was presented with ministerial statements and varying questions from representatives of varying constituencies.

OC Fernando said: "It was a



really good few hours and I was delighted when the Chief took such an interest in all areas I showed him."

CPO Maskell said: "This is a unique experience that is well worth attending at least once. It gave me a new perspective of the environment of the politicians. I did get some strange looks as I walked through the main hall in my No1 uniform though."

After a brief tour of Parliament and refreshments in one of the many cafes in Westminster, the pair walked out into a winter wonderland and an anchor-faced stroll to see Nelson's column and the ships of the line down Pall Mall to round off a good day out.

## Inspirational speaker

A NAVAL nurse who served during the Falklands conflict was guest speaker at Cambridge URNU.

The event, which coincided with International Women's Day, saw Nicci Pugh talk about working in a hospital ship in the South Atlantic in 1982.

Nicci served in the British steamship SS Uganda as a Senior Nursing Officer in Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service.

Nicci showed the students many original and previously unseen images of life on board the Uganda.

CO of CURNU Lt Peter Hesse said: "Hosting Nicci at the unit presented a fantastic opportunity for the students to meet a very inspiring woman, who served her country during an important conflict for the Royal Navy and



for Great Britain."

The presentation was followed by a question-and-answer session with Nicci, who then signed copies of her book *White Ships, Red Crosses: A Nursing Memoir of the Falklands War*.

The students then had a more informal fireside chat in the Wardroom which was particularly beneficial to the students applying to join the RN as medics.

# Setting fine Example



### THE SUN sets on HMS Example as the P2000 berths at Berwick Quay.

The vessel, affiliated to Northumbria URNU, hosted a contingent of Royal Naval Reserves from HMS Calliope for three days.

The exercise gave the reservists from the Newcastle unit a chance to conduct practical seamanship training, and to offer a glimpse of life onboard a ship.

The first day was spent utilising the River Tyne for training, due to the residual swell left over from the Beast from the East. This allowed numerous berthing evolutions, anchorages and internal training to take place.

The next day was markedly calmer and brighter, with clear blue skies over the Toon as Example, part of the 1st Patrol Boat Squadron, departed her berth.

More training was conducted on the transit down the river. Once out of the breakwater it was bows north and 'pedal to the metal' as the transit to Berwick began.

For the journey north, the embarked personnel took over the bridge duties, as QM and OOW, supervised by the five-strong ship's company, once again allowing the RNR personnel to enhance their experiences and work towards completion of their seamanship taskbooks.

The passage took in some of the most breath-

taking scenery coastal Northumberland has to offer, including views of Bamburgh Castle and the Farne Islands.

The ship then entered the waters of the River Tweed, to berth in the heart of Berwick-upon-Tweed, a historic town surrounded by Elizabethan walls.

It also happens to be the hometown of the Commanding Officer, Lt Duncan Napier, who said: "It was an honour to be able to bring my ship alongside in my hometown, and see the town from a completely new perspective."

"This is also a fantastic opportunity to visit a small town that no other class of RN ship (standfast the Scimitar class) can safely enter, whilst providing invaluable practical training to RNR personnel."

After hosting a few visitors on-board, including members of the local police force, Example spent the night alongside picturesque Berwick Quay.

The next morning saw the ship depart bright and early, once again conducting more seamanship evolutions on the passage back to Newcastle.

The focus of the final day was to allow the RNR to take over most of the evolutions fully, putting into practice all they had learned over the last few days.

The final evolution was a man overboard exercise – MOBEX – where the CO had 'fallen overboard.'

This allowed the RNR to fill in positions and provided a twist for the ship's company, with each person stepping in to a different position, putting into practice training from the last couple of months.

Finally HMS Example berthed at the Northumbria Police Marine Unit berth in Jarrow, bringing to an end an epic three days of drills and training.

Midshipman Ryan Porteous-Ford said: "It's not often we get the opportunity to sail from our home unit. For some it was their first time at sea, the three days training was a great opportunity for HMS Calliope personnel to go to sea as a unit."

"It presented a valuable opportunity to train alongside our regular counterparts. As with any role, it's important to gain practical experience."

"HMS Example is the ideal training platform to develop new skills and put them into practise. It is critical as reservists we keep our skills up to date and this trip certainly did that. Confidence levels were through the roof as we came back home to Calliope."

Keep up to date with the work of the P2000 on Twitter @HMSEXAMPLE.



## Punching above her weight

THE Navs Yeoman of HMS Puncher, AB(Sea) Michael Winks, talks to visitors about life on the P2000.

Puncher is affiliated to London URNU and hosted a families and friends day.

Tours of HMS Puncher were given by the ship's company, and cries of astonishment and disbelief rang out from the audiences as they were shown around the ship.

"What a tiny kitchen," said one. "Can you really have a shower in there," said another guest as he viewed the 'heads'.

Guests were also treated to an excursion sailing down the river towards Greenwich. All guests disembarked with a newfound appreciation of life on board a Royal Navy ship.

## 2,500 reasons to be proud

MEMBERS of Bristol URNU raised £2,500 for charities last year. The money was split between the RNRMC, Children's Hospice South West and the Royal British Legion.

Fundraising events included auctions, cake and pizza sales and poppy selling for the RBL.

Bristol URNU's poppy selling took place in the week prior to Remembrance Sunday. Cadets, who volunteered their time, enjoying greeting and interacting with the local community, raised over £500 for the fund.

## Thrown in at the deep end

OFFICER Cadets battle to seal a flooded compartment on a ship.

Eleven OCs from Oxford URNU were given a taste of the realistic training offered at the RN's Phoenix Damage Repair Instruction Unit – DRIU, pronounced 'drew'.

The DRIU, at HMS Excellent, provides essential training to all members of the Naval Service before they embark on a ship.

The first part of the morning was spent learning about the Royal Navy's primary damage control equipment; everything from hammering wooden wedges into place to stem and stop leaks through to how to move a large prop around and between moving decks safely securing a hole in the deck. The idea of all this being to slow, stop and then secure any hole in the ship to save a compartment.

From here, the cadets faced their first challenge of donning dry suits to protect them from the cold water.

With a mixture of nerves and excitement the group took up station in the Fire and Repair Party Post where they listened to a simulated missile strike over the pipe system.

Battling through high power water, they discovered a flooded



compartment. The group split into four teams to deal with a variety of water ingress points.

After initially stemming holes in the bulkhead, a hole in the deck required one OC to dive under the water held down by another to get a wedge in place and securing a bowing and leaking hatch the call was piped to signal a second missile strike.

Again, the Officer Cadets split into teams to carry out repairs. Once it was judged that flooding in the Mess Deck had been stopped and the areas of damage

had been secured, the DRIU then drained its near 5ft of water in matter of seconds.

The debrief for the Officer Cadets praised their teamwork and resilience throughout the morning.

OC Tom Murphy said: "Even after the adrenaline had worn off the Officer Cadets continued to comment on the fun and excitement as well as a little bit of the stress of the experience."

"They are all raring for a second go, either with the URNU or in future Naval careers."



## Sam has key to success

LONDON URNU Officer Cadet Sam Pettengell enjoyed a winning day out at the Tower of London.

Sam is pictured with his mouse mat featuring the Yeoman Warders' seal, which he won during an auction.

He and fellow members of LonURNU visited the tower to witness the Ceremony of the Keys.

Before the ceremony the visitors were treated to a private tour and invited into the Yeoman Warders' Club.

The Ceremony of the Keys is one of the oldest regular military ceremonies in the world.





**MEMBERS** of a Royal Navy scuba diving club escaped the snow of the UK for the sun of Gibraltar, *writes LAET James Rogers.*

Exercise Diving Hawk saw a team of 12, comprising personnel from RNAS Cudrose and one from HMS Raleigh, spend two weeks of adventurous training.

Despite allowing plenty of time for the poor weather, the team only just made it to Gatwick Airport on time and had to rush through bag drop and security to catch the flight to Gibraltar.

Once there we were picked up from the airport by a bus and taken to Devils Tower Camp, our home for the next two weeks.

We also collected the transport for the expedition as our equipment and RHIBs were at JPDU – the Joint Service AT centre – and we would have to travel there daily to undertake diving activities.

Once we had the transport we immediately departed to ensure all the kit and the RHIBs were ready for us to use and everyone made sure they had what they needed to go diving for two weeks.

After a good sleep we started early on our first day of diving. We collected what we needed from JPDU and headed to Rosia Bay for training and skills reviews.

It was a good introduction to what Gibraltar had to offer us. Nice sandy bay with a few rocky reefs, lots of fish in schools and little bottom-feeders.

A highlight was an octopus which, as the expedition progressed, became a regular occurrence. Also a few of the group encountered a large cuttlefish on one side of the bay.

With a successful first day's diving complete, we took the two RHIBs out for our next phase of diving. We did our first dive boat on a site called the Inkwells, finding artefacts from Nelson's era as the old wooden warships used to anchor there and ditch old bottles and ceramic pots overboard.

The second dive was on the SS Rosslyn, a nice wreck with the bow and stern still intact and still rising from the sea floor by up to ten metres in places. These dives allowed us to qualify two of our group as BSAC Ocean Divers – their first diving qualification.

With everyone now happy with boat diving, we used the RHIBs the next day to develop skills of the newly-qualified divers as well as those of our more experienced members.

We dived the SS Excellent, a wreck that is upside down but still fairly intact. Unfortunately, it was too deep at 29 metres for our junior members so they dived the Detached Mole which was next to the Excellent.

The second dive that day was on a site called the Seven Sisters, which are rock pillars

rising from the sea floor to above sea level that the old galleons used to tie off to instead of anchoring. This site became a firm favourite with its abundance of marine life, including some massive lobster and rays which we had not seen before. There were also some massive gullies that everyone was able to swim through and really enjoy – it was like being in an aquarium.

Even though we planned to boat dive on our fourth day of diving, poor weather forced us to dive in Rosia Bay.

Our sixth day in Gibraltar was planned as a non-diving day to give us the chance to look around.

Many of us went up the Gibraltar Rock and had a go on the new skywalk recently opened by Luke Skywalker, AKA Star Wars actor Mark Hamill.

We also had a few encounters with the somewhat mischievous Barbary apes.

The team all made use of the cheap shopping to buy gifts for friends and family before ending the day with a barbecue.

The next morning the weather turned very nasty and our day off turned into two non-diving days which gave everyone plenty of time to have second a look around Gibraltar.

After two days off we managed to get diving again and over the next three days we did seven great boat dives.

First a dive on the Seven Sisters, now a firm favourite, and the Arch of Jesus Christ – two amazing small wrecks, the Seamaster, with a resident octopus and small funnel, and the Arc.

The latter was truly spectacular; it sat in about 19 metres of water with all the ribs and frames exposed and covered in a hard coral. Between all of this was a huge number of small silvery fish which made it even prettier swimming through.

The following day we dived the SS Rosslyn again but now everyone was able to get longer on the site as they had gained more experience.

In the afternoon we did Europa Drift, or as it is locally known, Octopus Garden; as the name suggests quite a lot of octopus were sighted and some of the team even got the octopus to play with them.

We managed to get back alongside with enough time to have a guided tour of the Gibraltar Rock Tunnels and get an idea of what they must have been like during the two world wars.

For the final day of diving we dived SS Excellent again and this time we managed to find the propeller.

We also dived the Arc again and the Seven Sisters to give us a last good dive in Gibraltar.

Once all the diving was done, we cleaned all of the kit and returned to the centre for a final barbecue.



● From top, WO1 Jay O'Donnell leans over the RHIB to help NA(SE) John Young out of the water; images of the wreck Arc; members of the team in the RHIBs; the obligatory Barbary macaque photo. Top middle of page, the divers encountered cuttlefish and octopus.

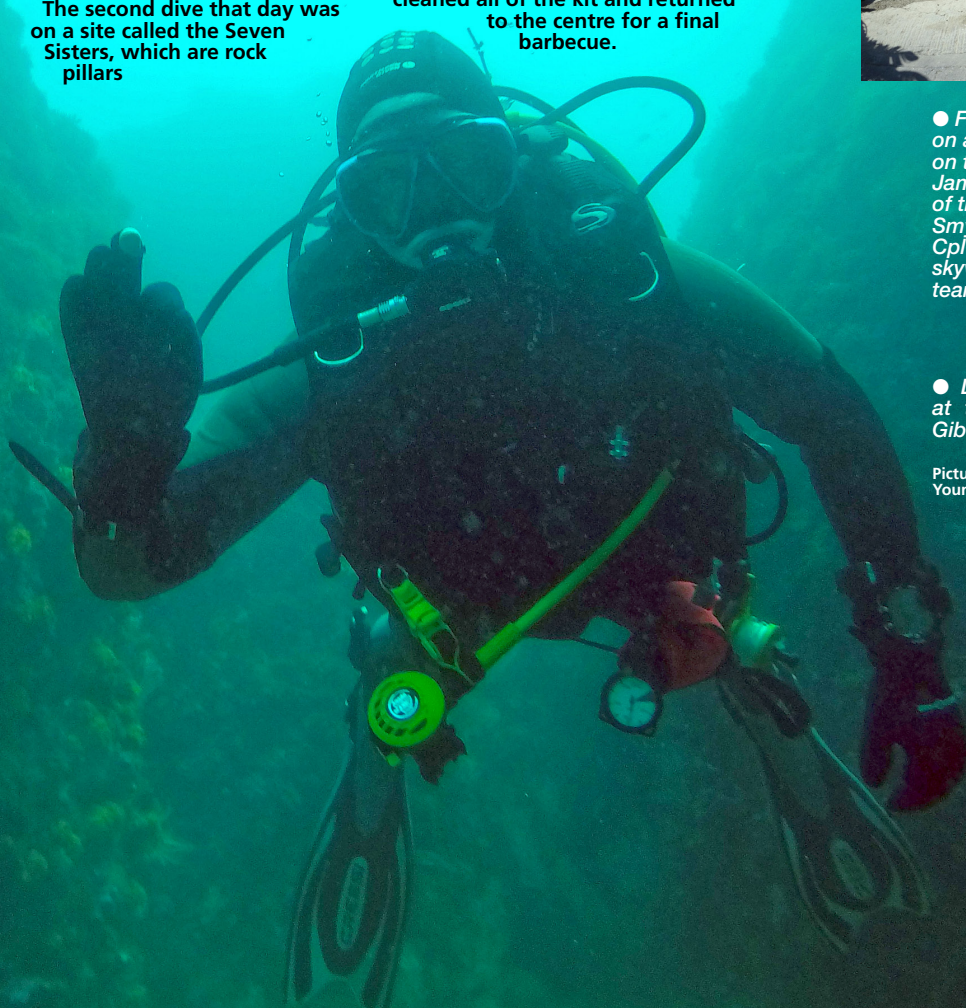
● From top, Lt Cdr Mal Smye on an ascent; M Evans dives on the Seamaster; LAET James Rogers by the propeller of the SS Excellent; Lt Cdr Smye, PO Lynn Reed and Cpl Mark Wiley on the new skywalk; members of the dive team in Gibraltar.

● Left, Cpl Mark Wiley dives at the Seven Sisters site off Gibraltar

Pictures: LAET James Rogers, NA(SE) John Young and Mr Peter Hawkins

# Rock bottom

Divers delve into Gibraltar's underwater world





## All welcome at annual service

THE annual church service for the Combined Services takes place at St George's Church, St George's Square (next to the railway line/bridge leading to Portsmouth Harbour Station) on Sunday May 13.

Known locally as the 'Shipwrights' Church', in honour of the men who originally built it, it's been the venue for Solent Division's annual service and, more recently, all serving personnel and veterans.

The half-hour-long simple naval-themed service will be followed by light refreshments, a tot, and inter-Service banter.

If you wish your association, group or division to be included on the order of service with a specific hymn or perhaps a prayer, it will be considered by organisers.

Contact Bob Campbell 023 8073 4915 / gangesbob@hotmail.co.uk.

## Honneur honour

FORMER Officers' Steward John Aiken RN, along with Army comrades Eric Robertson and Kenneth Wilson, have been presented with the Legion D'Honneur by French Consular General Emmanuel Cocher for their part in the D-Day Landings on June 6 1944.

John served onboard HMS Enterprise, which led the American forces to Omaha beach.

He also served on HMS Stine and Manxman, and in the Far East.

All the recipients are members of the RBLs at Knightswood, Glasgow.

## Mystery solved

LOOKING for our mystery ship competition? You'll find it at its new home on the Noticeboard page, p34.

# Pole leads by Example

TRYING out the helmsman's chair on board patrol boat HMS Example is former sailor Richard Polanski – one of the last men still alive to see Hitler's flagship Bismarck in its death throes.

The 96-year-old was guest of honour when the Northumbria Universities boat visited the tiny Scottish port of Wick during her Easter deployment.

The nonagenarian was accompanied by four generations of his family plus a substantial number of veterans from the town's RBL branch – all enthralled by the remarkable life and naval career of Mr Polanski.

He was born in Poland but fled his homeland when the Germans and Soviets invaded, eventually reaching Britain.

Determined to fight for his country's freedom, he joined the Free Polish Navy as a gunner, helping to evacuate troops from Dunkirk in the spring of 1940 aboard the destroyer ORP Burza.

By the following spring he had transferred to the new destroyer ORP Piorun which became the first vessel to encounter the Bismarck during its final battle on the morning of May 26 1941 (the battleship had been crippled the previous evening by a torpedo strike from Swordfish bombers).

Closed up in the forward turret with its 4.7in guns, Mr Polanski engaged the mighty German flagship – armed with 15in guns – as the Piorun charged at Bismarck.

The two ships traded shells for a good hour – without either side scoring a hit. When Bismarck's shells landed just 20 yards away, the destroyer's captain wisely decided to break off the action.

Mr Polanski was subsequently assigned to destroyer ORP Kukawiak on Malta convoy duties, running the gauntlet of Axis air and sea attacks. Her luck ran out in June 1942 when she hit a mine near Malta and sank with the loss of 13 crew.

He would have been drafted to the destroyer Orkan but bad weather prevented him joining



her by transfer. A few days later she was torpedoed on convoy duties in the Atlantic; three quarters of her crew were killed.

At the war's end, the Pole found he could not safely return home; his birthplace Lvov was now in the Ukraine while Communists had taken charge of Poland – relatives warned Richard that he would be shot if he set foot back in the country.

Instead, he met Joyce Burns Rosie in Glasgow, and settled down with her in Scotland.

Seventy years later, and the Polish-born Scot is a very active member of the RBL – so active that he was due to fly to Australia to take part in the country's ANZAC Day commemorations at the end of April.

Example's crew decided the veteran needed some appropriate headgear, so before leaving Mr Polanski was presented with a beret and cap badge.

"The words 'Thank you' just don't seem to do justice to how much we owe Richard and all other veterans who have fought for this country and their own,"

said Example's CO Lt Duncan Napier.

"His story is a unique one, demonstrating the bravery and sacrifice he and many others made during the dark days of the 1940s.

"I'm glad we could put a smile on his face by presenting him with a small token of appreciation from the Royal Navy."

OC Emma added: "The importance of recognising Mr Polanski's service cannot be overstated and we were honoured to be a part of the events recognising his service during the war."

After the presentation on the ship, a reception was held ashore in honour of Richard and his family, organised by the RBL and the local council, to which Example's crew and students were invited.

From Wick, Example made the 30-mile trip north to Orkney and a pilgrimage to the wreck of battleship HMS Royal Oak – sunk at Scapa Flow in 1939 – and the Naval cemetery at Lyness, where sailors from Britain and Germany are buried,

to teach students about the sacrifices made at sea in the two world wars.

O/C Jack Perry said: "All the students involved came away from Lyness with renewed respect for the bravery and sacrifice of those who fought and we are glad that we have been able to show that respect by laying a wreath at the cemetery."

Wreathlaying over the wreck of Royal Oak was especially poignant for Lt Napier for his great great uncle commanded the battleship at the time of her loss: Capt William Benn.

"It was a particularly sobering experience to lay a wreath over the grave of 834 sailors, more so brought home knowing that my relative was in command at the time," said Lt Napier.

"The day was a change of pace, and whilst sobering in many regards, it provided all the students on board with a taste of another side of life in the Royal Navy – a chance to pay respects to the sacrifice of sailors of the past, and an opportunity to interact with a part of Naval history that none of them would have probably seen without the opportunity that the URNU provided."



## Q&A makes Bude's day

FOLLOWING last year's extremely successful format when the branch raised £835 for RNRMC, Bude decided to have stage a second 'fun quiz'.

Again hosted at The Falcon Hotel (regular meeting venue) this year's event of 100 questions filled 21 tables of competitors, wracking their grey cells over a variety of subjects.

Members shared the evening's nett receipts with the Falcon Hotel's charity for 2018 (Cornwall Palliative Care).

With strong support for the raffle, table fees and an auction for a very limited bottle of commemorative celebration HMS Queen Elizabeth Gin, the branch and hotel hit the magical target of £1,000 (minus the winners and runners-up prizes).

Everyone present was also invited to make an additional donation to Cornwall Palliative Care via envelope.

This quiz night is now firmly in the Bude branch calendar, next up: April 2019.

Also on the social agenda are the first 'Sunday Luncheon'; a 'psychic evening'; a race night supported by bookie 'Honest Jack'; a branch 'meet, greet and recruit' at Morrison's on August 4 and a Trafalgar Night dinner on October 20.

More details: [bobgelder1@gmail.com](mailto:bobgelder1@gmail.com).

## Bill is the new Paul

THERE'LL be a new General Secretary of the RNA before the year is out with Capt Bill Oliphant succeeding Capt Paul Quinn.

S/m Bill has had a long, distinguished career in the Royal Navy as a logistics officer.

He's currently in the last few months of his final appointment as a serving officer: Captain of the Base at HM Naval Base Portsmouth.

The handover date has yet to be decided but will depend on the exigencies of the Service – hopefully during the autumn term.

# Take de boat to Dublin for debate

BUSINESS at this year's National Conference in Dublin looks set to be a mixed bag, covering matters as diverse as civilian mariners, sports and social groups, Conference 2020 and centralised membership.

Four National Council motions will be put to delegates at the Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, on Saturday June 9.

The first proposes that "Article 2 of the Supplementary Royal Charter be amended by adding 'Former members of the Merchant Navy who have been awarded the Veterans Badge' at number (11)."

The reasoning behind the

motion as that the National Council proposes that Merchant Navy sailors who have served in operational areas under Royal Navy orders should be recognised by the granting of full membership of the RNA.

Linked to this proposal is National Council motion 2, which requests delegates to consider that "Rule 2 (a) of the Supplementary Royal Charter be amended by adding after the second entry of the word 'Commonwealth' the words 'and holders of the Merchant Navy Veterans Badge.'"

The third National Council motion seeks to introduce a new rule to advance the objectives of the Association through the

formation of sports and social groups.

The wording of the motion is that "the following new Rule be added: Rule 11 Sports and Social Groups:

"(a) Members of the Association may advance its objects through sports and social groups (SSGs).

"(b) A S&S Group shall work within the Association and in accordance with the Association's Supplementary Charter, Rules, Bye Laws and a Terms of Reference (TOR).

"(c) The TOR, which must be agreed with the National Council, shall be placed as an appendage to the Supplementary Charter, Rules and Bye Laws.

"Advance numbering of subsequent Rules by 1."

The final motion put forward by the National Council proposes a new Rule 12 (which would become Rule 13 if NC Motion 3 is accepted – see above) which would regularise the payment of expenses to members and staff following guidance from the Charity Commission.

All four National Council motions would be "subject to such change as may be required by the Privy Council and is agreed by the President of the Royal Naval Association."

Two branch motions have made it on to the 2018 agenda.

Branch Motion 1 is proposed by Crosby, seconded by

Plymouth, and would see a return of the National Conference to Merseyside in 2020.

Crosby envisage the event being staged at the Adelphi Hotel in central Liverpool at a date and price to be confirmed.

By way of explanation, the branch points out that the hotel is easily accessible by public transport, and has "significant disabled access".

Crosby adds that the venue for the conference itself, the accommodation and social events are all under one roof, and the hotel proved itself capable of hosting members by staging the Conference in 2013 – an event which came in under budget and was deemed a success.

The second branch motion is put forward by Lee-on-the-Solent and Stubbington, backed by Portsmouth, and is concerned with managing membership centrally rather than at branch level.

The wording of Branch Motion 2 is "that the National Council set up a study group to investigate the feasibility and implications to the Association of managing membership centrally rather than at Branch level.

"The Study Group shall report its conclusions and recommendations and if appropriate, submit a further motion or motions to the 2019 Conference."

Lee-on-the-Solent and

Stubbington shipmates believe that many branches struggle to manage administrative tasks, and that managing membership centrally would:

- remove an onerous task from the branch and ageing membership;
- allow Central Office to collect subscriptions by direct debit;
- allow the creation of a central membership record which would allow information to be passed directly to members if they so wished.

All data would have to be compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), but it would result in a significant simplification of annual returns and provide more accurate and readily-accessible management information for the Association's Year Book, Trustee Report and the like.



↓ RNA Central Office, Room 209, Semaphore Tower (PP70), HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.  
 ↓ [admin@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:admin@royalnavalassoc.com)  
 ↓ 023 9272 3747  
 ↓ [www.royal-naval-association.co.uk](http://www.royal-naval-association.co.uk)



# A remarkable life

**THE Navy has lost one of the last links with its darkest hour in World War 2 with the death of HMS Prince of Wales veteran Christopher Peacey.**

The 94-year-old from Alverstoke, near Gosport, was one of only a handful of men still with us from the loss of the battleship and her accompanying battle-cruiser HMS Repulse in December 1941.

The former boy sailor and torpedoman was one of the guests of honour at the naming ceremony for the new HMS Prince of Wales, which was unveiled at Rosyth last year by the Duchess of Rothesay.

The new carrier's growing ship's company formed a bond with the dwindling band of survivors of the earlier vessel and will be represented at the veteran's funeral later this month.

Born in 1924, Christopher Peacey spent his early years on his family's farm in Bulley, Gloucestershire, before joining the Royal Navy as a 14-year-old 'boy sailor' via HMS Ganges; he was inspired to join while serving as a choir boy when he saw a sailor in uniform receiving lots of attention from the village's female population.

Upon completing his training he joined then brand-new battleship Prince of Wales and served throughout her brief, but memorable, active life. He was aboard for her clash with the Bismarck when HMS Hood blew up – and his own ship was badly damaged – and, once repaired, for the mid-Atlantic meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt in the summer of 1941.

It was the ship's role as flagship of Force Z, dispatched to the Far East in a bid to deter Japanese aggression, which remained fixed in Mr Peacey's memories for the next 76 years.

When the presence of two capital ships failed to stop Japanese attacks, Prince of Wales and battle-cruiser Repulse were ordered to sail from Singapore and intervene.

Instead, the duo were pounced upon by Japanese bomber on December 10 1941. Mr Peacey remembered that very early in the battle his anti-aircraft gun's power was knocked out and he was plunged into pitch black.

He and his fellow sailors continued to do their job as best they could but as the ship took on more water, her list increased and they decided to check with the turret commander if they were still required to stay at their station.

Much to Mr Peacey's surprise, when he opened the hatch to the upper level of the turret he discovered the commander and gunners had already left – a signal for the remaining men to abandon ship.

The 17-year-old was subsequently rescued from the South China Sea by one of the escorting destroyers, and was landed safely in Singapore a few days later.

He met his future wife Beryl, also from rural Gloucestershire, on 'survivors' leave, and spent the rest of the war in assault ship LST 163, taking part in the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, Italy, Normandy and Malaysia, responsible for the bow ramp.

As a trained mechanic, he ensured the ramp never failed once – allowing the ship to land its tanks safely on hostile shores.

Hoping for a quieter life post-war, he was instead drafted to submarines for eight years, serving in HMS Tactician and the ill-fated HMS Affray – the last RN boat to be lost.

He joined the latter on Friday April 13 1951, broke his arm in a motorcycle accident that weekend, and missed her sailing on Monday April 16. She disappeared that day, lost with all hands – and with Mr Peacey's kit bag and hammock aboard.

He often subsequently referred to himself as the "luckiest sailor in the Royal Navy" (and is pictured below at the Affray memorial in Gosport).

He left the Navy as a chief petty officer in the mid-60s and spent the next 25 years working as a civilian responsible for pensions at HMS Centurion in Gosport.

In retirement, he was an active member of his local Royal Naval Association Branch and played squash into his late 80s.

He recorded some of his naval experiences for the Imperial War Museum in the 1980s and, at the end of his life, revisited them with ex-submariner and author Bob Clarke who was compiling Mr Peacey's memoirs – *War and Peacey* – published last month.

"He was a lovely man, excellent sailor and although HMS Prince of Wales came to define his life, he loved his time in landing ships and was extremely proud of his accomplishments.

"He was always a very spritely character, absolutely immaculately turned out and he maintained a great sense of humour. And like any good sailor, he enjoyed a tot."

Lt Peter Gow from today's HMS Prince of Wales said the veteran had been "particularly thrilled to be able to attend the naming ceremony in Rosyth last year.

"He was a quiet but charming man who was well liked by those that met him."



Picture: LPhoto Stevie Burke, FRPU North

# Submariners host the last X-men

VETERANS of the most daring underwater operations of World War 2 were invited to dine with today's submariners to mark the Service's 117th birthday.

The Gambit Dinner is, with the annual service of remembrance in November, one of the highlights in any submariner's diary.

More than 180 deeps of all ranks past and present converged on Clyde Naval Base – soon to be the home of the entire submarine flotilla – to celebrate the achievements and sacrifices of the Service since the first boat, Holland 1, was laid down in 1901.

The dinner takes its name from Operation Gambit, the mission to guide ships and landing craft in to Sword and Juno beaches on D-Day using midget submarines.

Beyond the Silent Service, it's not a story well known – it doesn't feature in *The Longest Day*, the classic big-screen account of June 6 (although it does in the original book).

But Gambit was immortalised by *Commando*, the world-famous comic book series which brings military deeds to life in cartoon form.

Publisher DC Thomson donated dozens of copies of the Gambit issue of (No.4,207) to attendees.

The Dundee-based firm also ran off special fliers, featuring

artwork from the same issue.

"It was a great touch, having individual fliers of the comic depicting the event at each person's place at the table," said WO1 Andy Knox, the Submarine Service's Command Warrant Officer.

"It was particularly poignant because some of our invited guests were involved in Operations Gambit and in Operation Source, which is also covered in the comic."

Gambit veteran Jim Booth, now 95, was unable to attend the dinner, but was toasted by everyone.

Jim was a Royal Navy diver on board one of the boats, landing on Normandy beaches under cover of darkness to assess Nazi gun emplacements.

One X-man who was able to attend Cdr John Lorimer. Aged 95, he's the last living survivor of the X-craft mission to sink German battleship Tirpitz in the Norwegian fjords.

Operation Source has been celebrated on celluloid, in print and by a *Commando* strip. More importantly the attack knocked the battleship out of the war for six months, resulting in two VCs for the attack's leaders and the DSO for Cdr Lorimer (pictured above with paralympic skier Millie Knight, her guide and submariner Std Brett Wild and Rear Admiral John Weale,

head of the *Silent Service*).

"Commander John was thrilled to be at the event and that his missions had been immortalised in a *Commando* Comic," said Andy.

"Our Royal Marine guests from 43 *Commando* were also delighted as we made sure we had issues dealing with the Marine's exploits at their table."

Another veteran attendee was 92-year-old Harry Melling from Wigan who served in HMS Osiris during the Allied invasion of Sicily.

He was the victim of a robbery last year when an attacker barged into his home, pushing the pensioner to the ground and stealing his wallet.

The submariner community rallied round, raising money to take him and family members to London to attend the Submariners' Remembrance Service and Parade.

"It was humbling to hear about the adventures and exploits of these wartime submariners," said Rear Admiral Weale.

"They truly are heroes, and their bravery and commitment to the defence of our country is something which deserves to be celebrated. The modern Submarine Service shares their values and commitment and operates around the globe in the same spirit even today."



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● Reviewing Officer, Cdr Trevor Price, chats to Cadet Theo

## Show of skills

PORTSMOUTH Sea Cadets Unit hosted its bi-annual Royal Naval Parade in style, with an evening of presentations showcasing the abilities and skills of their cadets.

Led by 17-year-old Petty Officer Cadet Emily, the 80-strong unit parade took place in front of Royal Navy officers and 187 guests, and celebrated the achievements of the unit and cadets over the past year. Portsmouth Unit are currently the holders of the Stephenson Trophy, which recognizes the top Sea Cadet unit in the Southern Area.

The Commanding Officer, Sub Lieutenant (SCC) Lisa Grinter said: "I am extremely proud of the achievements of all the Portsmouth cadets and volunteers. The unit has grown substantially in strength and numbers and it's been a privilege to oversee such a dedicated and

passionate group of individuals."

Portsmouth Unit, which is part of national charity Sea Cadets, gives young people a new perspective.

"We broaden horizons and create possibilities. Working across the UK with 14,000 young people between ten and 18, we help them see the world with confidence, gained through the challenge of nautical adventure and a Royal Navy ethos.

"Our aim is to help more young people to see the future that they want – and make that future happen."

The unit is open Monday/Thursday for 12 to 18-year-olds and Wednesdays for 10 to 12-year-olds, from 7pm to 9pm, and meets at HMS Excellent, Whale Island, Portsmouth.

Visit: [www.sea-cadets.org/portsmouth](http://www.sea-cadets.org/portsmouth) to find out how you can join.

## Duo rewarded for being role models



● From left: The Commanding Officer of Milford Haven unit, Lt (SCC) William Elliott RNR, LC Duncan, the Lord Lieutenant of Dyfed Miss Sara Edwards, and former Cdt Cpl Niall Hooper

TWO cadets from Milford Haven unit were in the spotlight at the Lord Lieutenant of Dyfed's annual award ceremony. LC Duncan was presented with his badge of office as he prepared to take on the role of Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for 2018.

Duncan's citation referred to his support of the Sea Cadets, in particular the Milford Haven unit.

Also at the ceremony, held at the Army Reserve Centre, Picton Barracks, in Carmarthen, was former Cdt Cpl Niall Hooper, who recently turned 18.

Niall was presented with his certificate of service as the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for 2017.

To become one of her cadets, you have to prove yourself worthy of being able to hold the badge of office; being a Senior Cadet, working within the community, gaining qualifications and acting as a role model for young people.

This is carried out through a citation and nomination system, starting with the Commanding Officer of the cadet's unit.

Lt (SCC) William Elliott RNR, the Commanding Officer of Milford Haven, said: "Duncan is a great example and role model of what being in a cadet force can do for you and what you can achieve from it.

"It was a pleasure and privilege to be able to witness, along with Duncan's family, him being appointed as one of the Lord Lieutenant's cadets – a very proud moment for him.

"I was delighted along with Niall's family to see his successful year come to an end and celebrate having another Milford Haven cadet represent the Sea Cadets at the Lord Lieutenant level."

## 'A fantastic way to widen horizons'

### Rhondda you look so fine

**RHONDDA** Unit has been awarded the Best Youth Organisation that engages Young People In Formal Education in Rhondda Cynon Taff.

The unit was shortlisted from a large group of other youth organisations to make the final two at the awards ceremony.

The award criteria was all about engaging young people in activities and educational activities that then leads to the young people improving or re-engaging in formal education.

This year was the first time that non-statutory sector youth organisations could be nominated.

Rhondda cadets ensured they were noticed at the awards night, with some 36 cadets plus six staff officers – and a number of parents – cramming the stage.



## Dedicated leader

**HUYTON WITH ROBY** Sea Cadets are celebrating success following their Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) M Farrell RNR receiving a national award for the best commanding officer in the country.

Lt Farrell was awarded the Captain Roddie Casement (Royal Navy) award, which is given annually to the Commanding Officer who has demonstrated dedication and commitment to the values of the sea cadet organisation.

Lt Farrell was selected from the 400 units around the UK and presented the award by Cdr Michael Casement, son of the late Captain Roddie Casement.

The presentation took place at

the sea cadet unit headquarters in Huyton where Lt Farrell was commended for his demonstration of commitment, strong leadership and youth training; achieving many successes and overcoming a great number of challenges.

During his tenure in command he has led the unit to be awarded best sea cadet unit in the country, he has ensured the young people have had access to a wide variety of opportunities, and experiences. Lt Farrell acknowledged that, "teamwork has been the essence of the success which would not have been achieved without the engagement of young people, adult volunteers and management committee".

**A NEW** Royal Navy Combined Cadet Force (CCF) section has been opened at **St Antony's Catholic College** in Urmston, Greater Manchester.

There to officially sanction the occasion and celebrate the establishment of the RN Section was Cdr Bernard Thompson, Naval Regional Command North of England, Chief of Staff.

After the opening ceremony the 17 St Antony's cadets, who have already voluntarily signed up, travelled to Portsmouth Naval Base, where they went out in power boats and yachts on the Solent, toured Nelson's flagship HMS Victory and minehunter HMS Chiddingfold, as well as visiting Action Stations for an interactive experience of what life has been like in the Royal Navy.

Cdr Thompson said: "As we always say in the Navy, it's not just about learning to lead but about learning to be led as well – and becoming a responsible citizen, who can see the bigger picture and being prepared to give of themselves for a worthwhile cause."

He added: "The St Antony's Royal Navy CCF is part of a nationwide expansion programme using the fines arising from LIBOR banking funds and designated by government for the Armed Services and there is no better investment than our youth, not just for recruitment in the future, but to give our young people, their families, their friends and all those they associate with a sense of the ethos of the Navy and the common values we share."

The opening ceremony saw the Royal Navy Cadets take centre stage during a parade led by Contingent Commander Lt (CCF) Gavin Parker RNR, who has worked at St Antony's Catholic College for nine years as a teacher of science and head of year.

In his time away from school Lt Parker also works with the



● Cdr Bernard Thompson takes the salute at the official opening ceremony for St Antony's Catholic College CCF Royal Naval section

Picture: LPhoto Stevie Burke

Royal Navy in his role as Senior Training Officer at Manchester and Salford Universities Royal Naval Unit.

Lt Parker said: "Every teacher recognises the need to develop the whole child; however, it can be difficult, in the current climate, to find mechanisms with which to offer good character development.

"Partnership with the Royal Navy through the establishment of a Combined Cadet Force unit offers a fantastic way to widen the horizons of our students and to make them think about themselves, their peers and their surroundings in ways that only a few might without the help of the CCF.

"At this early stage I have already taken my cadets to visit Britannia Royal Naval College and MOD Caledonia.

"They have also been to sea numerous times on HMS Biter and HMS Charger and have spent a weekend camping in the

Lake District."

Head teacher Fiona Wright said: "These young people will increasingly be working in a world of automation where robots do many of the tasks done by their parents' generation.

"We want to imbue them with those human characteristics of resilience, initiative, leadership, team work and loyalty that will be invaluable in whatever they do in the future, and are synonymous with the Royal Navy."

The new Royal Navy section joins other units across the country 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 that will help them get the most out of their lives, and contribute to their communities across the country.

Pupils are given the opportunity to 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.

Natasha, 13, one of the RN cadets, said: "I feel immensely proud to wear the uniform of the Royal Navy and hope I can represent my family, my school and my country with honour.

"It's been great fun so far. We've done assault courses, learned to sail, studied some of the history of the Royal Navy and even been to the ultimate Ninja experience as part of our training.

"All the cadets see us as a team who support each other and look forward to the next of our training."



# Behind the scenes on new carrier



● Cadets from Whitgift School on the flight deck

**CADETS and staff from a number of Combined Cadet Force units enjoyed a visit to the nation's future flagship.**

The visit, which involved around 100 people, toured HMS Queen Elizabeth as she was berthed at Princess Royal Jetty in Portsmouth.

Starting with a welcome from the Commanding Officer, Capt Jerry Kyd, the cadets and staff from Harrow School, St Dunstan's College, Gresham's School, Radley College, Charterhouse School, St John's School, Leatherhead, King's College School, Wimbledon, and Whitgift School, Croydon, were then given an overview of the vessel and her role by Lt Col Mark Searight (the AOO) and Cdr James Blackmore (Cdr Air), before tours of the vessel and lunch onboard.

With the ship undergoing a Capability Insertion Package as part of her ongoing readiness to receive the F-35B Lightning II aircraft later this year, the visitors got

an insight into the operation and role of the vessel, the modern technologies incorporated in the build from the all-electric propulsion to the Ops Room suite and modern navigational aids on the bridge.

They also got an understanding of how busy life can be onboard a warship, even when alongside.

The tour took them to compartments across ten decks and almost stem to stern, which included the Ops room, SCC, FLYCO, sick bay, bridge, hangar, flight deck, Wardroom, EMF accommodation and much more in between.

Many thanks go to Lt Col Searight for organising the day and to the ship's company team who had given up their leave to manage what was an outstanding cadet experience.

The affiliated contingents look forward to a long and enjoyable association with the ship and hopefully an opportunity for some sea time in the future.



## Waitrose cash for Rushden

THE Commanding Officer of **Rushden** unit, PO (CC) John Blackadder, receives a cheque for £260 from Helen Rust, the duty manager of the Rushden branch of Waitrose.

The Northamptonshire unit had participated in the supermarket's Community Matters scheme, in which shoppers place tokens in one of three boxes representing local good causes, and £1,000 is distributed to the causes at the end of each month depending on how the tokens have been allocated.

Since the scheme was launched in 2008, Waitrose has donated over £14 million to local charities.

## Hello dad, thanks for dropping in

THE officer in charge of the air group on HMS Queen Elizabeth flew in to inspect cadets at **Taunton School**.

Col Phil Kelly arrived by Wildcat helicopter for the annual Combined Cadet Force Inspection Day.

And waiting to greet him was his daughter Mary, pictured right with her dad.

Col Kelly saw the cadets demonstrating many of the skills they had learned whilst in the CCF, including camping and cooking, life-saving, casualty treatment and evacuation, and field guns.

Mary Kelly, who is a lower sixth student, said: "This year's CCF inspection day was a great success, with everything running smoothly and everyone enjoying themselves."

"I was delighted to have my dad there as the inspecting officer, as it meant he could see the exciting and educational things we do here within the CCF at Taunton School."

Col Kelly praised pupils for their enthusiasm and pointed out that skills like teamwork, leadership and self-discipline are "life skills" which will be valuable in whichever career they choose.

Taunton School has the largest CCF contingent in the South West.



## Focus on life in the cadets

THE Royal Navy are looking for a photo that portrays the Sea Cadets experience for this year's Peregrine Trophy.

The photo can be of anything Sea Cadets-related, so get your creative hats on.

The photo must have been taken by the cadet submitting it (so not a picture of you!) between the period of April 28 2017 to May 16 2018 and portray the Sea Cadets experience with a high level of technical ability.

You must be a cadet aged 13-18 to enter and the picture must have been taken by you, with a maximum of three entries per person.

Email your entries into [SCmag@ms-sc.org](mailto:SCmag@ms-sc.org).

The winner, chosen by the Royal Navy's panel of judges, will receive an all-expenses paid trip to the award ceremony in London and an offshore voyage.

The unit with the most entries will win £100 in Sea Cadet Shop vouchers!

Get snapping

## Plea after bell theft



BURGLARS stole two ship's bells during a break in at the home of **Newport** Sea Cadets.

A bell, donated to the unit, from the PS Graf Spee was taken, along with a second bell of similar size but without an engraving.

The bells were donated to the unit following the theft several years ago of the SS Pentland ship's bell.

The Pentland sank in Newport in December 1896 and the bell was donated by Lt Cdr W Thompson, one time Harbour Master at Newport.

Newport Sea Cadet unit would like the bell returned but if it isn't they are appealing for a replacement bell.



THE offshore season is well and truly under way, with the inaugural voyage of 2018.

This year, the Marine Society and Sea Cadets' new yachts – TS City of London and TS Sir Stelios – will be out on the water, alongside flag ship, TS Royalist, and power vessels, TS Jack Petchey and TS John Jerwood.

An offshore trip is a fantastic opportunity for young people to travel, explore new places, meet new people and earn qualifications. They are heavily subsidised, and there are also bursaries available.



## Class act for Weston

CADETS at **Weston-Super-Mare** received awards at a ceremony to mark the opening of the unit's new classroom.

Town Mayor Jos Holder and Mayoress Roz Willis attended the cadets' headquarters, in Sunnyside Road, to congratulate them on their successes during 2017.

Two classrooms have been installed to help run cadet training programmes, while youngsters also received compasses to help with their practice.

Cdt Ethan was awarded best male junior and Cdt Grace was named best female junior. L/Cpl Harry received the best guard award, while Officer Liam was named best Royal Marines Cadet.

Spokeswoman Davinia Tippett said: "It was a huge honour to have the mayor and mayoress here and give our youngsters some words of wisdom. Our new classrooms will enable us to make 2018 a great year for the cadets."



**£50 PRIZE PUZZLE**



THE mystery ship in the March edition of *Navy News* (right) was Centaur-class carrier HMS Bulwark, and J Allen, of Staffordshire, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (above) was a frigate, launched on the Clyde in 1955.

Her varied career saw her undertake wide-ranging duties, from major deployments – including the Far East – to fishery protection work.

The latter part of her service saw her back in Asia on guardship duties.

She was sent for breaking up in Kent in 1981.

1) What was her name, and 2) what class of ship was she?

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 June 13.

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 July edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

**MYSTERY PICTURE 279**

Name .....

Address .....

My answers: (1).....

(2).....

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- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in June's Noticeboard must be received by **May 15 2018**

**Deaths**

**Vice Adm Sir James L Weatherall KCVO KBE.** HMS Ark Royal, Andromeda, Tartar, Ulster, London, Vernon, Soberton, Dryad, Eastbourne, Houghton, Wizard, Lagos and NATO. Mar 18. Aged 82.

**Cdre Peter J Grindal.** FOF3, HMS Raleigh, Ariadne, Hermes, Zulu, Sheffield, Excellent, Dundas, Norfolk, Brave Swordsman, Relentless, Ashton, MOD DN Warfare and BRNC Dartmouth. Feb 26. Aged 74.

**Capt Christopher J Ward.** MOD Def Int 13, ACDS, Cdre Naval Ship Acceptance, NA Moscow, HMS Centurion, Conqueror, Neptune, Churchill, Anchorite, Maidstone, Acheron and Narwhal. Mar 10. Aged 82.

**Lt Cdr Peter W Edwards.** HMS Raleigh, Dido, Bristol, Protector, Tiger, FOST and RNEC Manadon. Mar 18. Aged 85.

**Lt Cyril S Drake.** HMS Daedalus, Fulmar, Ariel, Victorious, Peregrine, 897 NAS and Dir Gen Aircraft. Mar 10.

**Lt John A Kemm.** Mar 14. Aged 85. **Kenneth R Sings** Chief Shipwright. Served 1952-85 in HMS Dalrymple, Glamorgan and Centaur; also HMS Tamar, Hong Kong (67-69). March 16. Aged 90.

**CPO William 'Bill' Dunlop.** Nuclear Sub Eng. Served 1959 HMS Hermes. Drafted to submarines 1962; Totem, Dreadnought, Courageous (Falklands), Tireless, Valiant, Repulse and Warspite. Left subs 1984 and joined Rolls Royce Nuclear. Died February 16, aged 75.

**David Peacey LME.** Served 1954-64 in HMS Diana, Venus, Roebuck, Vigilant, Bulwark, Decoy, Orion and Drake Barracks. RN Engineer Association. March 17. Aged 81.

**John L Evans.** Joined HMS Ganges 1943 and served HMS Pembroke, Nairana (43-46) in the Atlantic and several Russian convoys. October 18. Aged 92.

**CPOM(E) Michael (Mike) Arthur Hollamby.** Served April 19 1948 to April 18 1971. Served in HMS Cleopatra, Crossbow, Birmingham, Savage, Zest, Cavalier, Vigo, Ursa, Victorious, Murray and Albion.

**Harry Cedric Smith.** Served 1943-47. HMS Glendower, Eskimo, Ceylon. Died April 1, aged 93.

**Michael "Mick" Paige CPO TASI.** Served 1958-78 HMS Loch Fada, St Vincent, Ark Royal, Adament, Bellerophon, Caesar, Vernon x 5, Andromeda, Ariadne, Royal Engineers BMD Unit. Died March 8, aged 74.

**Ronald "Spike" Davis.** Served 1955-56. HMS Concord, HMS Concord Association. Died March 26, aged 84.

**Gilbert Edwin Cromwell (Gilly).** Served from July 16 1947 to September 3 1954. Stoker mechanic served in HMS Raleigh, Sea Eagle, Drake, Ulysses, Magicienne, Diadem, and Berry Head. Drafted to the Far East in 1950 patrolling the coast and islands of Malaya. On returning to the UK he took part as a member of HMS Alunna in HM the Queen's Spithead Review. Was employed primarily as a stoker mechanic working below deck but also had secondary role as Ships clearance diver in all ships. After leaving the RN he joined the TA where he served with 5th Battalion The Gloucester Regiment, the Wessex Yeomanry, the Royal Signals and the Royal Corps of Transport. Finishing

**Promotions**

**SELECTIONS FOR PROMOTION TO LIEUTENANT COL RM Effective June 30 2019:**  
 A/Lt Col R D Brading; Maj C E Breach; Maj O W Denning; Maj S J Dinsmore; A/Lt Col J W Hayward; A/Lt Col K G Johnston; A/Lt Col A S Kern; Maj S S MacCrimmon; Maj J A Mallows; Maj C Payne; Maj C E Renney; Maj M Sharpe; Maj A J Uprichard; Maj E Waldmeyer; Maj R Waller; Maj G Watson.

**Ask Jack**

**PO Ernest Charles Nicholls.** My father-in-law served aboard HMS Formidable 1940-1944. He passed away in 1950 leaving his daughter aged four. She is now my wife aged 71. I'm trying to find anyone still living who knew my late father-in-law and who may have a photo of him getting married in 1945. I'm trying to build a picture of my wife's father as a surprise for our Golden Wedding anniversary this September. He was mentioned in despatches in May 1944 and I think the ship's bugler lives in Australia. David Banks. [david464u@icloud.com](mailto:david464u@icloud.com)

**HMS ST Vincent.** February 10 2019, marks the 60th anniversary of my shipmates joining the Training Establishment at HMS ST Vincent Gosport. I am therefore looking for the rest of my classmates in Blake 202 that I served with. Mr Sid Anning [sidanning@virginmedia.com](mailto:sidanning@virginmedia.com)

his stint with the TA in 1974.

**ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION**  
**Brian Slater LMEch Eng.** Served 1954-62 in HMS St Kitts, Camperdown, Blackwood and Centaur. Wansbeck & District branch. Mar 11. Aged 80.

**Doug Hooper FCPO.** HMS Tiger, Diomedes, Cleopatra, Ajax, Leander. Died February 2.

**Gary Cox.** Maidstone branch, crossed the bar on Sunday, April 8. After being discharged from the Navy, due to a road accident in the West Indies, and suffering severe disabilities, he joined the Maidstone branch and took part in many functions and parades.

**ASSOCIATION OF RN OFFICERS AND RNOC**

**Lt Cdr Andrew 'Andy' J Moys METOC.** Served 1989-2018 RNAS Culdrose as (EDO) Education Officer (90-92); Met Forecaster (93); (SMETOCO) Senior Forecaster (98-99 & 2014-16); HMS Coventry & Beaver as METO (94-95); 820 NAS & Illustrious (95-97); Northwood (97-98); Ocean as SMETO (99-2000); HMS Drake as Training Officer at RNSOMO (01-02) and as SWO(HM) to FOST (05-08) also exchange USA – Monterey, California. A Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society and a member of the Fleet Air Arm Officer's Association. March 1. Aged 52. An online book to celebrate Andrew's life has been uploaded and it is requested that all those who remember him can leave messages, fond memories and stories to share with his family: <https://www.theonlinebookcompany.com/OnlineBooks/RememberingAndrew/Content/Continued>

**Lt Cdr Robin Gerard-Pearse.** Served 1950-70 HMS Defender, Pembroke, Victory, Euralysus, Newfoundland, Swiftsure, Diamond, Caledonia and Dir Gen Ships. March 9. Aged 90.

**Surg Capt Roger J Berry QHP RD RNR.** HMS Eaglet and President. Mar 21. Aged 82.

**Lt Cdr James E Collins.** HMS Dryad, Terror, Puma, Albatross, Lioness and Royal Arthur. Jan 16. Aged 95.

**Surg Cdr Hugh J Cox.** RH Haslar, Surg Cdre Naval Medicine and Training. Sussex Div RNR. Jun 17. Aged 61.

**Lt Cdr Ivan J Edwards.** HMS Heron, Daedalus, Seahawk, Bulwark, RNEC Manadon, 819 NAS and MoD Proc Exec. Mar 9. Aged 75.

**Lt Cdr Peter W Edwards.** HMS Bristol, Dido, Raleigh, Protector,

RNEC Manadon, FOST and Natl Gas Turbine Est Pyestock. Mar 18. Age 85.  
**Cdr Kenneth D Frewer.** HMS Resolution, Andrew, Dolphin, Tiger, Sea Eagle, Artful, Adamant, Sentinel, Anchorite, Alcide, Belfast, NATO and Def Intel Staff. Mar 23. Aged 87.

**Cdr Ian P Goodwin.** HMS Apollo, President, Triumph, Falcon, Dipper and NATO. Mar 4. Aged 98.

**Cdr John M Lee.** HMS Collingwood, Eskimo, Victory RNB, Victorious, Devonshire, Pellew, Leopard, Ganges, Chelsham, Skua, Vengeance, SDML3514, Nav Attaché Madrid, NATO Brussels and Adty Interview Bd. Feb 26. Aged 88.

**Lt Cdr SCC A F Prosser.** Mar 18. Aged 93.

**Lt Cdr Sir Michael Richardson-Bunbury Bt.** HMS Heron, Ark Royal, Leopard, Terror, St Angelo, Victory RNB, Sussex, Gambia and Implacable. Dec 17.

**Lt Cdr David R Seward.** HMS Raleigh, Cleopatra, Battleaxe, Andromeda, Neptune, Leander, Dryad, Euryalus, Sovereign, Lynx, Fearless, Excellent, Pellew, RN Hydrographic School and Exchange USA. Feb 9. Aged 69.

**SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION**

**Roger 'Yorky' Law CPO.** OPS(S) Served 1962-84 in HM Submarines Opossum, Narwhal, Astute, Renown (P), Courageous and Revenge (P&S). Submarine Association (Dolphin branch) and HMS Courageous Association. Mar 25. Aged 77.

**Jim Laing MEM1.** Served 1965-69 in HM Submarines Porpoise and Trump. North East branch. Mar 6. Aged 73.

**George Nobes CPO.** MEA. Served 1958-85 in HM Submarines Artful, Alderney, Finwhale, Trump and Narwhal. Gosport branch. Mar 15. Aged 92.

**Anthony J Brown PO.** REL. Served 1954-62 in HM Submarines Alliance (55-56), Thorough (56), Telemachus (57), Aurochs (58) and Tireless (60-62). Dolphin branch. Mar 7. Aged 86.

**Sports Lottery**

**March 10:** £5,000 – AET P Smith; £1,800 – AB C Hudson; £800 – Lt S Lawrence-Archer; £600 – LH J Segrove; £500 – Cdr A Rose; £400 – LH J Charles.

**March 17:** £5,000 – Mne S Cola; £1,800 – LH M Weatherall; £800 – AB J Baker; £600 – AB L Farrow; £500 – Mne W McKenna; £400 – Lt Cdr J Matthews.

**March 24:** £5,000 – S/Lt G Wilkie; £1,800 – PO D Vantomme; £800 – PO E Mooney; £600 – AB W Rokodinono; £500 – Mne C Teasdale; £400 – AB D Hardy.



# Time to halt the decline?

SINCE the end of the Cold War Europe's naval forces, not least our own Royal Navy, have significantly declined, writes Prof Eric Grove.

This is the subject of a new analysis published at the end of this month by the US Naval Institute Press of Annapolis: *The Decline of European Naval Forces – Challenges to Sea Power in an Age of Fiscal Austerity and Political Uncertainty* (ISBN 978-1-68247-308-5, £26.49).

The author is Jeremy Stohs, a former Austrian policeman who is now with the Centre for Maritime Strategy and Security at the Institute for Security Policy at Kiel University.

This German centre is emerging as a key global focus for the study of maritime strategy with annual conferences and workshops held in coordination with the American Center for Naval Analyses.

The story he tells is a sobering and disturbing one. His first case study covers the United Kingdom. The author argues that the RN “today can barely be considered Europe’s most capable naval power.”

He demonstrates that since the end of the Cold War the fleet has been reduced by 60 per cent, from three aircraft carriers to nil, 48 large surface combatants to 19, and 22 submarines to ten. Only the reduction in amphibious ships has been marginal from seven to six, although if reports of recent policy proposals are correct numbers could be halved, a disaster which it is hoped can be averted.

His argument is telling: “Although the RN continues to operate a balanced fleet, declining defence spending over the last two decades has caused a considerable reduction in platforms and personnel. Generally speaking, the RN is much smaller and less capable now than it was



● HMS Defender provides aerial defence for French flagship FS Charles de Gaulle in the Indian Ocean in 2015. But which Navy – if either – is the most powerful in Europe?

examine the navies of France (“stretched but willing – Europe’s most capable naval force?”), Italy, Spain, Germany with joint chapters on Denmark and the Netherlands and Sweden and Norway.

The author is critical of Germany’s ‘free riding’ on Allied capabilities. The shortcomings of the reduced German Navy – six submarines today (not all of which can be manned) compared with 24 in 1990 and a complete abandonment of strike aircraft – might be more acceptable if capabilities on land had been more protected. However, as the author makes clear in his introduction, only 176 of the 2,125 Leopard II tanks delivered to the Bundeswehr remain operational.

The book sympathetically examines Denmark’s move from a coastal defence to a more global navy with a greater emphasis on surface ships, although Stohs rightly wonders whether current circumstances might lead to regrets about abandoning submarines.

The Dutch come in for criticism, their dependence on the sea not “having struck a chord” with the Dutch population and political establishment. The Royal Dutch Navy’s “effort to enhance its capabilities (has) therefore largely remained unsuccessful.”

The Swedes and Norwegians emerge rather better from the book being judged to have retained a good balance of capabilities over the spectrum of naval roles.

The author concludes with a challenge. European nations need not “be relegated to the fringes of a world centred on the Asia-Pacific Region” but only if they make sufficient investment in a naval recovery. Politicians (and populations) please note!

This book deserves a wide readership. There are rather too many miss-spellings and one or two howlers (British warships do not fly the red ensign!) but these do not significantly detract from a work that is both an important wake-up call and a promising debut for a new naval analyst.



## Cool leadership shown in Wales

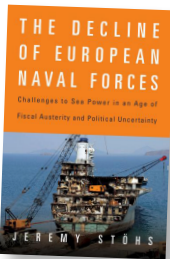
THIS is how the Navy’s junior leaders spent Easter 2018... standing in a frozen quarry in Wales (other holidays/pastimes are available...).

So cold has it been in the Brecon Beacons even this late in the year that the waterfall in Trefil Quarry turned into an impressive sight of icy ‘stalactites’.

More importantly, the unusually cold spell didn’t stop the work of the RN’s Outdoor Leadership Training Centre at Talybont-on-Usk, slap bang in the Beacons between Brecon itself and Abergavenny.

It’s the task of the centre, part of the RN Leadership Academy, to take sailors and Royal Marines out of their normal work environment and promote or encourage their leadership abilities courtesy of adventurous training activities where there’s a controlled degree of risk and where the weather is rarely clement.

On this occasion, LPT Chris ‘Quinny’ Quinn took a group of able ratings who were hoping to become leading hands on a ‘quality mountain day’, including negotiating the quarry grounds a few miles south of the outdoor centre.



## THE GROVE REVIEW

in 1990 when compared to other naval powers...This development is likely to undermine Britain’s role in world affairs ...and its ability to defend core national interests.”

Britain remains willing to spend more than the Western average on defence and has played a militantly active global role but, writes the author, “she has been unwilling to maintain her “military capabilities in relation to the armed forces of similarly-powerful states in the world... As a direct result of this strategic shortsightedness, the RN has lost much of its former might and no longer qualifies as the great naval power

it once was.”

During the Cold War only the US and Soviet Navies were greater than the RN in overall capability. Now as well as Russia, India, China and Japan are ahead. Rohl also argues that France, because of its possession of a carrier (when not, as at present, under refit), now possesses Europe’s most powerful fleet.

Although the resurrection of the British carrier force through the Queen Elizabeth class will see significant recovery, reasserting the UK’s European naval leadership, the author concludes his chapter by warning that the RN “still has a long way to go before it regains the status it enjoyed at the end of the Cold War.”

Subsequent chapters critically



Accommodation



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# Sophia's parkrun quest in memory of her gran

A ROYAL Navy Police officer has set herself the challenge of running a 5km parkrun every Saturday for a year. Leading Regulator Sophia Hurlo, who is based at HMS Collingwood, has taken on the challenge to raise money for Alzheimer's Research UK in memory of her grandmother.

The 39-year-old, who lives in Southampton, hopes by asking supporters to commit to sponsoring her for just a small amount a week – 50p per parkrun – she will be able to raise a significant amount. And after winning a place in this year's Virgin Money London Marathon

she is hoping to raise even more for the UK's leading dementia research charity. Sophia is a regular at the Whiteley parkrun with her three-year-old whippet Perry, both are pictured right.

She is also going to run at some of the other parkruns in Hampshire as well as others around the country.

She said: "My new year's resolution was to take part in a parkrun every Saturday and I wanted to support Alzheimer's Research UK as my nan had Alzheimer's. She died in 2010 from cancer, but she had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's the year before. Her final

year was a real struggle. The days that she didn't recognise her own family were the hardest. It was heartbreaking."

Sophia was delighted to have secured a place in the Virgin Money London Marathon, which was taking place as *Navy News* went to press.

She said: "I applied for the ballot but didn't get in. I was quite upset as I'd set myself the aim of running the London Marathon before I was 40 and this year is my last chance to do that."

"I entered a competition with Holiday Inn and mentioned my parkrun challenge in the application. I got an email saying

I'd won. I was delighted."

To sponsor Sophia for either her parkrun challenge or the London Marathon go to <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/SophiaHurlo>

Sophia has also signed up for Alzheimer's Research UK's Running Down Dementia campaign. The campaign, which launched at the beginning of April and is in its third year, challenges people to run 100km before August 31 and raise £100.

To sign up go to [www.runningdowndementia.org](http://www.runningdowndementia.org)



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# Gruelling gig

## BRNC rowers make season's debut in toughest of races

**SPORTSMEN** from Britannia Royal Naval College have begun their quest for victory in this year's **gig-racing** season.

First up was the Cornish Pilot Gig Association's first race of the year, the formidable Three Rivers Race.

The race starts under the Tamar Bridge between Plymouth and Saltash and sees the crews compete in a unique and gruelling five-mile figure of eight course taking in the Rivers Tamar, Lynher and Plym.

This year saw 156 crews compete in the men's and women's races. BRNC's men's crew of seven, *pictured right*, comprised staff and Young Officers undergoing their Initial Warfare Officer Foundation Course, racing in Bacchante. Female crew IWO(F) students competed successfully with Royal Marines Tamar for the women's race.

The timed race, started in heats, saw all 79 male crews on the water simultaneously. BRNC completed the distance in just over an hour finishing 67th overall.

Captain of the BRNC crew, Midshipman George Griffin, 20, said: "We are a relatively new team and we were pleased with our



performance. It was the fastest time that the college had recorded on three rivers with a predominantly student crew. It was quite a tough race because of the distance. We needed a lot of grit and determination to get us through."

Next up for the BRNC crew was the Dartmouth Town gig club regatta which leads into the World Pilot Gig Championships in the Isles of Scilly this month.

Organised by the Dartmouth Gig Club,

the regatta is a challenging course that takes rowers along the historic sea front and out between the castles before coming back to the finish line in the middle of town.

BRNC competed in the Men's C category and finished in ninth place ahead of the more experienced Brixham crew.

As well as entering their own crew, staff and students from the college also rowed with the RM Tamar Ladies C and Super Veteran's crews as well as the Dartmouth Men's C crew.

Chairman of BRNC Gig Club, Lt Cdr John Barry from Plymouth, said: "I am delighted with the crew's competitive performance."

The Cornish pilot gig is a six-oared rowing boat, built of Cornish narrow leaf elm, 32ft long with a beam of 4ft 10in.

It is recognised as one of the first shore-based lifeboats that went to vessels in distress, with recorded rescues going back as far as the late 17th Century.

The original purpose of the Cornish pilot gig was as a general work boat, and the craft was used for taking pilots out to incoming vessels off the Atlantic. At the time, the race would be the first gig to get their pilot on board a vessel to secure the job, and hence the payment.



## Engineering medal on world stage

**STANDING** proudly on the podium in Rome after taking silver in the International **Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Federation (IBJJF) European Competition** is 26-year-old Leah Budd – by day a young weapons engineer aboard HMS Somerset.

The blue belt represented her Navy and nation in the No Gi light featherweight division – competing without a 'gi' (a sort of specialised heavy cotton kimono traditionally worn by sparring martial artists).

She saw off competition from Brazilian Heidi Tiuro and Kazakhstan's Moldir Mekenbayeva, who took joint third place, but was beaten to gold by Chilean Jazmin Hamuy.

Originally from Pontypridd, Leah spent time with the RN's Engineering Training Squadron before joining her first ship, Somerset, at the beginning of the year.

Conducting patrols and

training in home waters, plus escorting HMS Queen Elizabeth to Gibraltar, the ship has had a busy schedule – one which continues into the spring with participation in high-profile Great War commemorations.

All that has kept Leah busy maintaining the ship's weapons and sensor systems, somehow finding the time and energy when not on duty to continue practising her jiu-jitsu skills and remain competition-fit.

"It is obviously more difficult to keep practising at sea, but I find the time and this is the result of that hard work," Leah said.

The sport encourages smaller, seemingly weaker fighters to defeat larger, stronger, heavier opponents by using the proper technique, leverage, and most notably, taking the fight to the ground and is proving increasingly popular around the globe.

## Spanish Arch delivers Vikki victory

**JOCKEY** Lt Cdr Vikki Sollitt is pictured on her way to her first victory at Lockinge.

Vikki, who is also owner and trainer of 12-year-old Spanish Arch, ran in by 25 lengths to win the PPORA Club Members Condition Race at the Cazenove Capital OBH Point-to-Point and family day at the Oxfordshire course.

Vikki, who is based at Abbey Wood in Bristol, said: "I bought this horse out of Martin Keighley's yard to get around the military races at Sandown, he gave me two great spins round there and

this is my sixth ride and my first win. I am absolutely thrilled, especially with Spanish Arch."

The opening race went to Camilla Henderson riding Medieval Chapel. The combination were the only finishers, after the long-time leader Gizzit fell at the last fence and the other two runners pulled up.

Beat The Tide was the eventual winner of the third race, the mixed open, after a dramatic photo finish with Abricot De L'Oasis.

Looking like the easy winner



in the closing stages of the race, Abricot De L'Oasis hanged towards the paddock on the run in, losing valuable ground and handing the race to Beat The Tide and jockey Ben Roberts.

Owner-trainer Tim Underwood was all smiles after Tempelpirate recorded his 19th win in the fourth, the PPORA Club Members' Conditions Race for Veteran and Novice Riders.

Sam Lee rode Mistercobar to victory in the fifth race – the restricted, while Peter Mason rode Whin Park to first place in the Open Maiden race.

Picture: Olivia Pile



## Olympian calls time on his sporting career

**THREE-TIME** Olympic gold medallist Lt Pete Reed has announced his retirement from international rowing.

Reed has enjoyed a long and illustrious career, winning gold at three successive Olympic Games, at Beijing 2008, London 2012 and Rio 2016, as well as five World Rowing Championship titles, making him one of rowing's most decorated athletes.

"It has been a huge privilege to represent Great Britain through almost two decades in the sport of rowing," said Reed. "To be able to travel the world, competing in a sport that I love, alongside such hard-working and inspirational teammates has been incredible.

"I wish I could carry on in our wonderful sport forever but, looking back, I have absolutely no regrets. I am disappointed that I will not be able to go for a fourth consecutive gold medal at Tokyo 2020, but I have to be realistic; training and performance isn't improving fast enough.

"Despite my best efforts, and with all my experience,

I know I won't get back to my best and I don't want to be slowing down our great team as they work towards their dreams.

"I want to unreservedly thank the Royal Navy for their constant support from way back before my career began. They took a big chance with me as a young man with potential and I look forward to resuming my military career following my retirement from rowing.

"I would also like to thank my teammates. I've won major titles with 18 remarkable athletes and I want to thank them all for their help and support. To Jürgen [Grobler] and Hodgey [Andrew Triggs Hodge], there are no words.

"It is a relief to call time and it feels absolutely right to do so now. I don't know what comes next but I would like to wish the GB Rowing Team all the success on the road to Tokyo 2020 and beyond."

Reed was one of the first of a new generation of international rowers who have seen the sport break down barriers and challenge stereotypes, having come from a rural background and comprehensive school

education.

It was while operational in the Gulf onboard HMS Exeter that he first discovered rowing after setting the fastest time over 1,000m in a Fleet competition.

After being encouraged to take up competitive rowing by his CO, Reed duly took to the water at the University of the West of England (UWE) in September 2001.

Under the guidance of Olympic silver medallist Fred Smallbone, Reed had a meteoric rise through the ranks. UWE Boat Club President to Oxford Blue to world champion all within four years of picking up an oar.

Reed went on to row in two Boat Races for the University of Oxford and established himself at the top of British rowing by winning Senior Trials every year for two full Olympiads alongside partners Andrew Triggs Hodge and Alex Gregory.

Reed was awarded an MBE in the 2009 New Years Honours List and an OBE after the Rio 2016 Olympics.







## Soaring above the pineapples

ROYAL Marine paraglider Nigel Lane soars above fellow fliers in Colombia.

The WO2, who was the sole Naval Service representative on the UK Armed Forces Paragliding team for the visit, talks about the experience.

"I was soaring along steep jungle terrain when suddenly I lost the thermal and thought I was going to land out in the fields at the foot of the hills.

"Seeing some vultures thermaling to my left, I turned and reached them; soon I found I was surrounded by 40 other vultures and immediately we started climbing quickly.

"Shortly I found that I had reached the base of the clouds at 2,500m and the temperature happily was a lot cooler.

"That is what is known as a low save in paragliding circles.

"That was Colombia – it was like flying in different universe.

"I was on a UK Armed Forces Paragliding trip. The group consisted of four Army, three RAF and myself representing the RN/RM.

"Officially recognised as one of the top-ten friendliest countries in the world, Colombia's flying capital is Roldanillo, which is where we were based near.

"It has hosted a bevy of international comps, including the Paragliding World Cup Superfinal, and it's all down to the super-reliable conditions.

"During the trip we flew above flowers and birds of every colour, as well as fields of pineapples, sugarcane and papaya.

"The Colombian people were some of the friendliest people I have ever come across; many of the guys, after landing in some fields, got lifts back to our accommodation front door by farmers on motorbikes.

"It was flyable every day and all in all, a great craic.

"Many of the guys, including myself achieved personal bests – a 6hr and 114km flight for me.

"We had a great group of talented military XC pilots and we certainly soaked up the tropical flying.

"For me personally it was one of the most enjoyable trips I've had the pleasure to attend, which was gratefully supported by the RN Sports Lottery."

Pictures: S Miller and J Sanderson



## Battling the rain on their parade

NOW becoming a regular fixture in the Royal Navy Royal Marines Cycling Association's diary, this year's Cyclefest saw 78 novice and elite riders compete around RNAS Merryfield runways and perimeter tracks, battling the British weather, one another and even RAdm Paul Bennett.

Billed as an introduction to road racing for some and a pre-season warm up for others, Cyclefest was an opportunity to pound the pedals around a traffic-free venue.

The one-mile circuit, 30-minute criterium making up the development race for the

beginners and road race for experienced amateurs and elites, tested mental resolve, bike handling and physical fortitude to the limits, with civilian Paul Watkins winning in the amateur category and first place, while serving member Cpl Aled Jones CTC took third place in the experienced category.

A break in proceedings for a free lunch allowed members of the RNRMCA to speak to civilian riders and ex-Service personnel, creating a warm festival-like atmosphere to battle the rain and wind.

Time trialling involves setting off at timed

intervals individually, pairs or as a group; it is a race against the clock.

No drafting (slip streaming) may take place unless it is a member of the pair or the group.

Utilising the 3.1-mile perimeter track, the pairs lined up poised and ready to hack round with Cpl Lyness and Sgt Mcsevney second place behind a civilian pair with a time of 15 minutes 33 seconds.

The second year Cyclefest has been held, it will return in 2019 for what will be a bigger and hopefully dryer event.

Picture: @carbonfibregirl

## Navy down airmen to take Cassar Cup



● Mne Ryan Mckechnie scores against the RAF; Below, POPT Kerr receives the Cassar Cup from Greg Clarke of the FA



FOOTBALL Association Chairman Greg Clarke was the Royal Navy's guest of honour at the thrilling encounter between the RN and RAF that saw the Navy come out on top with an inspiring 4-2 victory.

Under the floodlights at Victory Stadium Portsmouth, the RN battled from behind to regain the Cassar Cup, in what was their first victory over the RAF since 2006.

Strikes from AET Danny Earl, Mne Ryan Mckechnie and a double from Sub Lt Todd capitalised a great result for the RN, which saw them finish in second position overall to the British Army in their 2018 Inter-Service campaign.

One of the major highlights of the evening saw Mr Clarke present the Cassar Cup to the RN captain, POPT Danny Kerr.

Just 24 hours prior to the men's fixture, the RN(W) were in action against the RAF(W), also at Victory Stadium Portsmouth, in a fierce and fiery fixture that saw both teams competing for the Linsey Miller trophy.

The RN quickly found themselves two goals behind to the RAF, however some great composure from the RN saw POPT Natalie Bavister and Sub Lt Annie Timoney bring the game back on level terms

going into half time.

The second half saw the RN dominate possession and if it wasn't for two fantastic one-on-one saves from the RAF goalkeeper, the game surely would have never stayed on level terms.

Unfortunately for the RN, they couldn't find the vital goal needed for victory in the 2-2 draw. Nevertheless there were lots of positives to take from arguably their best performance of the season which saw them finish joint second with the RAF in their 2018 Inter-Service campaign.

Finally, although results may not have gone the way the RN U23s would have hoped for in their 2018 Inter Services, there were lots of positives to take away from an overall successful season, both on and off the field.

A forthcoming overseas training camp in Cyprus later this year will provide the development squad with a fantastic opportunity to prepare for the 2019 season and regain the Inter-Service title that they won so dominantly in 2017.

If you would like to find out more about RN Football, then check the website [www.royalnavyfa.com](http://www.royalnavyfa.com), 'like' them on Facebook, or contact the RN Football Development Manager, Miss Kim Stenning by email; [kim.stenning@navyfa.com](mailto:kim.stenning@navyfa.com), or telephone 02392 573032.





# Lords of the ring

**THE Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force came to blows to raise money for charity.**

The HMS Neptune Charity **Boxing Show** took place in HM Naval Base Clyde's Warrant Officers' and Senior Rates' Mess and spectators were treated to a glittering evening of high-class boxing and excellent food while raising more than £2,000 for good causes.

Twelve of the Royal Navy and the RAF's best boxers took part in the event, fighting it out to determine which branch of the military would be lords of the ring.

Local fundraisers, Service personnel and boxing impresarios watched six exciting bouts with the RAF coming out on top 4-2.

The fights were very well matched by head coaches Leading Physical Trainer Andy O'Donnell and Staff Sergeant Tom Penny.

There was also an exhibition match on the night, which saw two airmen fight it out for a place on the RAF Boxing Team.

Alongside the boxing was a raffle, tote and silent auction with all money raised going towards the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) and the Helensburgh Branch of Enable.

Enable Helensburgh provides support to disabled adults, adults with learning difficulties and their families in and around the Helensburgh area and the money raised will make

a huge difference.

Tony Pearson, a representative for Enable Helensburgh spoke about why events such as these are so important.

"Enable Helensburgh have a very special relationship with HM Naval Base Clyde. I'd tell people to come to events like this because you've got to be caring, you've got to look after people – and then you'll get it back in masses yourself."

The aim for this annual boxing event is to offer personnel the chance to develop their boxing skills and the opportunity to fight at a higher level.

Boxing enhances so many of the Service's core values from self-discipline and dedication to courage. By exercising these abilities in the boxing ring, boxers can use the transferable skills learned and employ them in the military environment.

Petty Officer Physical Trainer "Dizzy" Dawson, who organised the event, said: "It was a fantastic night of boxing. There's always a healthy spirit of competition between the services and each and every fighter gave it one-hundred percent."

"It's great to bring the local community and the Naval Base together for an eventful, entertaining evening, developing relationships and networking. We have had a lot of positive feedback from the show."

Pictures: LPhoto Will Haigh



● AB (D) Curtis Ruddy forces a stoppage win over his opponent; Mne Graham Rowley of 43 Commando celebrates a knockout

## Players aim to endure hockey marathon

**HOCKEY** for Heroes women's team will play 28 matches over eight days at the end of this month to raise funds for the charity.

OpEndure will see the team start in Glasgow on May 26 and finish in Canterbury on June 2.

Throughout the tour the squad of 25 will start the day with a physical exercise set by a military instructor, including log races, assault courses, interval runs and other physical challenges that will push the women to their physical and mental limits.

Following the physical challenges the squad will play up to four games of hockey a day against teams from across the Armed Forces and local clubs.

To complete each club day the squad will hold an auction allowing

attendees to bid for a range of exclusive items before formally thanking the host club for being part of OpEndure.

Women's team captain Chloe Hobson said: "The people involved in this journey are inspirational. Everyone's reason for being a part of Hockey for Heroes may be different but our values, passion and sheer determination bring a force so positive and so mind-blowing it's infectious. Struggles develop your strength and when you're going through hardships we never surrender, that is our strength. OpEndure is our next adventure and I'm truly humbled to embark on it with an amazing bunch of people."

Further information about the charity and the tour is available at [www.hockeyforheroes.co.uk](http://www.hockeyforheroes.co.uk)



● Meghan Markle and Prince Harry talk with Invictus Games Competitor, former Royal Marine Mark Ormrod

## Harry drops in on Invictus hopefuls

**INVICTUS Games** Foundation Patron, Prince Harry, alongside Meghan Markle, met serving and veteran hopefuls at Bath University as they took part in the fourth Invictus Games in Sydney, Australia.

The games, which have previously been held in London, Orlando and Toronto, set out to harness the power of sport to inspire recovery, support rehabilitation and generate a wider understanding and respect for our wounded, injured and sick servicemen and women.

Hopefuls who have suffered a life-changing injury or illness trialled in nine different sports including athletics, archery, wheelchair basketball, road cycling, powerlifting, indoor rowing, wheelchair rugby, swimming and sitting volleyball. Ahead of the Bath trials, competitors also took part in sailing, a new sport for this year's games.

More hopefuls than ever before – 451 – applied to take part in the 2018 games and all hope to be selected as part of the 72-strong UK team that will head to Australia in October.

Continued training post-trials will take place across the country at recovery centres and other venues as part of Help for Heroes' Sports Recovery programme to train, select and develop the team.

The MOD is a partner in the Defence Recovery Capability, a programme that helps wounded, injured and sick Service personnel either return to duty from injury or transition back into civilian life.

The Royal British Legion will be supporting the friends and family of the UK Team as part of its work to recognise the vital and valuable contribution that family and friends make to the recovery of personnel and veterans.

This year is the first time that friends and family members have been invited to attend the trials.

Antony Baines, Director of Operations at the RBL, said: "Behind every hopeful trying out for a place on the UK team, there are friends and family members who have helped get them to the start line."

"A life-changing injury or illness has a huge impact on both the individual and those around them. Military families are there throughout the lowest points of injury, so it's only right that they are here supporting their loved ones through their recovery. The Invictus Games is about more than the athletes themselves, it's about the partners, parents, children and carers, who will be cheering them on every step of the way."

The Invictus Games Sydney 2018 will take place from October 20 – 27. To find out more, go to [www.invictusgames2018.org](http://www.invictusgames2018.org)



## Former Royal scoops gold

**FORMER** Royal Marine Joe Townsend scooped gold for England as **para triathlon** made its debut at the Commonwealth Games on Australia's Gold Coast.

Joe came from a long way behind in the swim leg to hit the front in the transition from bike to run, before crossing the line in 1:02:39.

"Everything I planned, I did, so I am really happy. I kept the gaps well in the swim and when I knew that worked, I knew the race was mine," he said.

"Swimming was always going to be my weakest discipline and I knew that I was strong in the cycling, so I just needed to keep my cool. As soon as I was into the second triathlon in the lead, I knew I was on target."

"If you look at the quality in the field, there's world champions

and top athletes, so you can't take away the intensity in a top venue, so yes I'm really happy."

Joe lost both legs in an explosion in Afghanistan in 2008. He got into triathlon when he completed the Ironman UK triathlon in Bolton in July 2011. He has since competed at the Ironman World Championships in Kona, Hawaii, where he finished second in the disability category and has established himself as one of the best PTWC para-triathletes in the world. He competed for ParalympicsGB in Rio in September 2016.

Joe carried the Paralympic Flame into the London 2012 stadium as part of the opening ceremony. He was suspended by wires and made a dramatic overhead entrance to the arena, even though he is actually scared of heights.



# Awesome foursome

## Historic victory for Navy boxers

A CONFIDENT-looking Robbie Matthews prepares to do his part by delivering a knockout blow for the Royal Navy.

The AB Diver delivered the goods to help the Senior Service boxing team beat the Army for the first time in 34 years.

Eight Royal Navy boxers competed in their respective weight categories against the RAF and Army at the UK Armed Forces Boxing Championships in Aldershot.

It was the first major competition of the season with the Navy team's sole aim to end the three decades of deadlock by Army fighters.

Matthews, who beat Gunner Ryan Fillingham from the Royal Artillery in the Light Welterweight division, said: "I feel really good, it was my third time fighting Ryan and it was 1-1 going into it so it was always going to be a close battle. I was confident though."

"Training has been really good this time around for us, we had a new coach come in and the training and nutrition packages meant that I got my weight down, which I always struggle with and that motivation made me want to train even harder."

"It was always going to be a hard fight and it was three rounds of really hard work but luckily I took it on the night."

"We came into this knowing we could win but then the RAF came in and got two wins which just tore up the script a little bit so it meant it was pretty tense towards the end."

Victories were recorded by ETME Luke Fisher, Mne Jack Stringer and Mne Kallum Radley. Chief Petty Officer Chris Smith, the Royal Navy Boxing Team's Head Coach, said: "I'm just overwhelmed."

"The last couple of months have been a long road, we've had our ups and downs with the squad but we've come through all of that and built confidence and a great training package."

"We knew it was going to be tough today by fighting the Army in their back yard but we did it and we are absolutely ecstatic."

"The RAF were also a class act, they don't get full-time training like we do but they came and performed and hopefully they will be back next year."

"It is just a massive thing for UK Armed Forces boxing as a whole. We're going to celebrate now and then it's back into training for the National Elite finals."

Having won this tournament, the team now qualify to attend the National Elite Championship in London where there is the opportunity of being selected for the national squad.

Within the Navy team are a number of boxers who hold English title belts as well as Southern Counties and Southern Area belts. Portsmouth's own Royal Marine Jack



● Royal Navy Boxing Captain Bradley Chapman goes in for the attack against his RAF opponent SAC Kieran Bailey

Stringer was crowned Armed Forces Champion in 2017 and is an English title belt holder at Middleweight, while Portsmouth-born Matthews is an England Amateur Boxing Association finalist.

- Results:
- 56kg Bantam - Winner: SAC Ricki Lyon (RAF)
  - 60kg Lightweight - Winner: SAC Keiran Bailey (RAF)
  - 64kg Light Welterweight - Winner: AB (Diver) Robbie Matthews
  - 69kg Welterweight - Winner: ETME Luke Fisher
  - 75kg Middleweight - Winner: Marine Jack Stringer
  - 81kg Light heavyweight - Winner: L/Cpl John Marvin
  - 86kg Cruiser - Winner: Marine Kallum Radley
  - 91+kg Super Heavy - Winner: L/Cpl Chez Nihell

The National Elite Championships semi-finals and finals were taking place in London as Navy News went to press.

Pictures: LPhoto Joe Cater  
Lord of the rings, see page 39

● Army fighter Ryan Fillingham tries to fend off punches from the Navy's Robbie Matthews

