



# NAVY NEWS

OCTOBER 2018

## Going Dutch

A Royal Marine of 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group runs through the smoke swirling around a replica town in the Netherlands as the guardians of our nuclear deterrent hone urban combat skills. See page 11.  
Picture: LPhoto Will Haigh

### Farewell to the King

*Veteran helicopter bows out after 49 years' service*



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# LANDING ST

IT'S all about the jets.

HMS Queen Elizabeth was welcoming her first F-35B Lightning strike fighters to her deck as *Navy News* went to press.

Until that historic moment it's all been about the helicopters as Britain's future flagship left her home in Portsmouth to cross the pond.

The journey enabled the new wings of the Royal Marines – the Merlin Mk4 battlefield helicopter – to get used to life aboard the carrier for the first time.

Three helicopters from 845 Naval Air Squadron, part of the Commando Helicopter Force from Yeovilton, joined HMS Queen Elizabeth for her autumn deployment to the USA.

The crux of the carrier's deployment, Westlant 18, is to land and launch F-35B Lightning jets for the first time, more about this in next month's *Navy News*.

But another key part of the mission is to test the ship's ability to launch a commando assault – fulfilling a role previously carried out by helicopter carrier HMS Ocean, but without the latter's additional landing craft.

The Junglies of 845 Squadron are in the process of upgrading from the green battlefield Merlins they inherited from the RAF to these grey Mk4s, specially adapted for operations at sea (such as folding rotor blades and a folding tail boom).

The ten-day Atlantic crossing gave the 845 pilots and aircrewman the chance to get

their sea legs back, conducting the basics of helicopter work at sea in the Fleet Air Arm: chiefly ferrying supplies and personnel between the carrier and her escort, HMS Monmouth.

Furious Flight is joined on the Portsmouth-based warship's flight deck by more grey Merlins, Mk2s from 820 Naval Air Squadron at Culdrose (the latter have a distinctive circular radar beneath the cockpit, the Junglies don't) who are on hand to ward off hostile submarines.

HMS Monmouth's Wildcat HMA2 attack helicopter also recorded a first when she landed on HMS Queen Elizabeth.

During her long transit across the Atlantic, the carrier was cleared to embark call sign 'Blackjack' from 213 Flight, 815 Naval Air Squadron, based out of RNAS Yeovilton.

It is another step in the incremental process to bring the carrier to full operational capability in 2020 and comes after Rotary Wing Trials conducted in January, which cleared Merlin and Chinook for landing on the 4.5-acre flight deck.

The Wildcat's primary role on Westlant 18 is protection of the carrier. To do so the crew will use the helicopter's long-range sensors to build and maintain the 'surface picture,' identify any aggressors and prosecute if necessary using the M3M machine gun, Stingray torpedoes or depth charges.

Fittingly, the first passenger to land on the carrier in the Wildcat was the Commander of the Carrier Strike Group, Commodore Andrew Betton.

The Wildcat's Flight Commander, Lieutenant Oliver Brooksbank RN said: "It was hugely exciting to conduct this historic first landing. I've been waiting for carrier operations to return to the Royal Navy for my entire frontline career, and I feel privileged to play a part in this new beginning."

"Of course we expect no trouble in the friendly waters of the West Atlantic, so in the meantime we'll be preparing ourselves for a generation of operations with HMS Queen Elizabeth, her sister ship HMS Prince of Wales and their air groups."

"To do this we'll be testing the helicopter to its tactical limits in the task group environment, and all the while standing by for search and rescue during the F-35 Lightning II flying trials."

HMS Queen Elizabeth's first port of call was Mayport in Florida and from there she headed to Norfolk in Virginia.

The carrier and Monmouth were forced to take evasive action to avoid the damaging winds of Hurricane Florence.

Instead of heading directly north from Mayport Naval Base, HMS Monmouth was dispatched to south of the Bahamas, which provided a natural windbreak and shelter from

the strong swell.

HMS Queen Elizabeth followed on, skirting south of the hurricane, but close enough for the effects to still be felt. The effects of a four metre swell, five metre wave height and winds gusting 40 knots have been felt throughout the carrier, as the 65,000-tonne ship rolled around the Atlantic.

Navigating Officer, Lieutenant Commander Sam Stephens, said: "It might sound counterintuitive to sail when you know there is bad weather inbound. But ships are designed to be at sea, it is better to not be tied up close to things that can cause damage, like jetties, or fenders."

"We skirted around the south of the hurricane, it's always better to be behind it and to be able to change direction if it decides to rather than be ahead of it and find yourself trapped."

Aside from the weather, another challenge has been operating in increasingly congested water space, with scores of US naval units having been dispersed from their bases to sea; including the US aircraft carriers USS Kearsarge and USS George HW Bush and their associated Task Group units.

During her time in Norfolk, the carrier embarked around 200 supporting staff – pilots, engineers, maintainers and data analysts – and two test F-35Bs from the Integrated Test Force at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland.

"For us, protecting the other ships in the



## Medics work seamlessly 'like a Formula 1 pit stop'

"NINE-LINER is in, casualty inbound, all Role 2 staff muster."

The order is barked by Lieutenant Mark Stent, ex-CPO MA and Ops Officer Role 2 Afloat, embarked in HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The 'casualty' is inbound following a crash on deck exercise on Westlant 18 escort, HMS Monmouth.

A silent, carefully choreographed flurry of activity ensues; blue rubber gloves snap on, scrubs and green disposable aprons are donned, and the facts so far are relayed to those gathered.

Medical machines click into life, puncturing the silent, sterile scented anticipation of the inbound task. All three departments within Role 2 are stood by – the emergency room, operating theatre and intensive care unit.

Up on deck, a Merlin Mk2 from 820 NAS lands; stretcher bearers from the Royal Marines Band Service Scotland, surge forwards, in their historic role as support to the medical services, bringing the patient through into the aft island.

Bandies have not been embarked in a carrier in a Role 2 Afloat role since HMS Invincible, around 15 years ago. These days they are more used to the PCRf Role 3, embarked in RFA Argus, currently in refit.

After being carefully lowered down a ladder chain, the 'patient' is carried almost the breadth of the ship along the vast 2L passageway, lined with more RM musicians, who have cleared the route and provide markers to direct the stretcher bearers towards the waiting medical lift. It sinks quickly to 5 deck where the adjacent double doors of the sprawling Medical Complex are open, medical team poised to receive.

Those present, reflecting almost identically the staff laydown of an NHS emergency room, perform a ritualistic routine – running

through well-practiced procedures to ascertain the extent of injuries and treatment. If the treatment can be contained on board, the 'patient' can be sustained on ship comfortably for 48-72 hours. But the carrier is mid-Atlantic. If the patient needs to be moved for a more advanced level of care, it will take the ship travelling at top speed and some pretty extreme flying to get them to land.

After cutting through the patient's overalls and conducting an initial check, a consultant's command huddle (consisting of an emergency medicine consultant, orthopaedic surgeon, general surgeon and anaesthetists) takes place, headed up by Surgeon Captain Christopher Streets, who can be found in his ashore role at the Bristol Royal Infirmary as an upper gastrointestinal surgeon. For the current trials in HMS Queen Elizabeth, he is the general surgeon and Role 2 Afloat Detachment Commander.

The trauma team will decide what happens next, but everyone on the team has a voice. Rank is almost immaterial; it's the specialist knowledge for each individual case that matters. While the emergency medicine consultant (Surg Cdr) is in overall charge, PO Naval Nurse Matt Hicks, drafted in to the team from Defence Medical Group South West (Derriford Hospital in Plymouth) is described as having the second most important role in the room – his notes will tell the story of treatment from start to finish, and could well end up as evidence if required.

The immediate search for life-threatening signs indicates promising news; nothing obvious is found. A more thorough examination ensues, involving an ultrasound, before the room is cleared of all personnel not wearing a lead apron.

Sentries are posted at the doors to prevent anyone entering and exposing themselves

to radiation as a mobile scanner is brought through and x-rays are taken.

Another command huddle, and the treatment plan is outlined – suspected spinal injury, a dislocated shoulder and broken leg will require a general anaesthetic, so through to the operating theatre the party swarms, as anaesthetist, Surg Cdr Rex Kinnear-Mellor explains the daunting procedure to the patient. Lead Nurse, Lt Cdr Tom Borroughs describes the emergency room as being "like a Formula 1 team pit stop".

He says: "Everyone has got their place and knows exactly what they need to do, like a well-oiled machine. We got so used to this in Afghanistan, it's no different to what we were doing in Bastion."

More used to the environment of Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth, Lt Cdr Borroughs is one of the 18 Role 2 Afloat personnel on board HMS Queen Elizabeth, working towards Full Operating Capability (FOC) during Westlant 18.

Their work on board is a vital part of the ship's trials.

Lt Stent explains that initial designs may look sensible, but it's when you are living and working in a space that you learn what works and what doesn't.

"The medical complex as a whole is exceptional", he says. "Space wise it's fantastic, but there are challenges. Some bits work, other parts need some work. For example, look at how low the theatre lights are", he points above the operating theatre bed.

Surg Capt Streets is over 6ft tall and would be doubled over for long periods of time under the current configuration, a head-torch providing the light he's missing. And there are ward beds directly facing the two fully equipped ICU beds. Probably not the best seat in the house when a trauma patient is

in residence. But this voyage of discovery is precisely that. It is what trials are for.

The patient is wheeled through to intensive care, where she will receive one-on-one care, under the head of department, ICU nurse, Lt Nicki Maskell.

Having spent seven years as a civilian ICU nurse, Lt Maskell transferred her specialist skills to the Royal Navy two years ago "to do that bit extra."

She explains: "I joined the Royal Navy because this has allowed me to take my role to the next level. The key challenge is that at sea, without an endless store cupboard or spare staff to dig into, you've got what you've got and you have to make it work."

Surg Capt Streets summarises the success of the team's integration into the ship: "This is not new activity for us, we have a lot of experience in the team from operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and even during Op Ruman for example."

"What is different is the platform. We've deployed the teams in 45s, the Bay class, and now this incredible new carrier, setting the scene for the next 50 years of UK Carrier Strike activity."

"For us the patient care pathway is the same, wherever we are based, it's just a case of learning whether to turn right, or left to get to where we need to be."

While the event served as a Medical Exercise, the Role 2 team is on board HMS Queen Elizabeth in an operational capacity. If something goes catastrophically wrong, a real possibility when you consider the inherent dangers associated with flying fast jets, they would be called upon to roll out their expertise for real, the perfect example of why the Royal Navy trains as it fights, stood by to respond to any eventuality.

Words: Lt Cdr Lindsey Waudby

# ATIONS

group is a challenging role – but an exciting one too as it's something we've not done for several years" said Commander Will King, Commanding Officer HMS Monmouth.

"Carrier operations with new jets are extremely complicated, and we must develop tactically to ensure we give them the best possible protection.

"Every time we go to sea is a learning opportunity and every member of my ship's company will learn from this deployment – and play a part in the overall team effort."

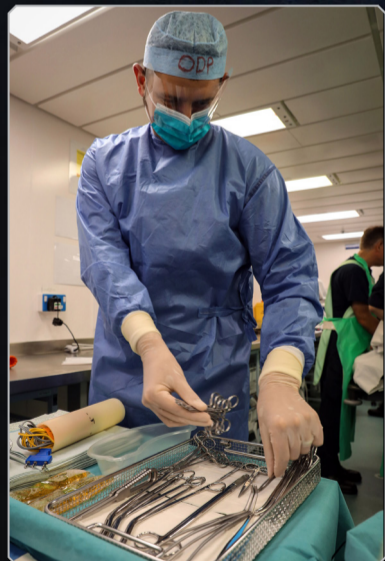
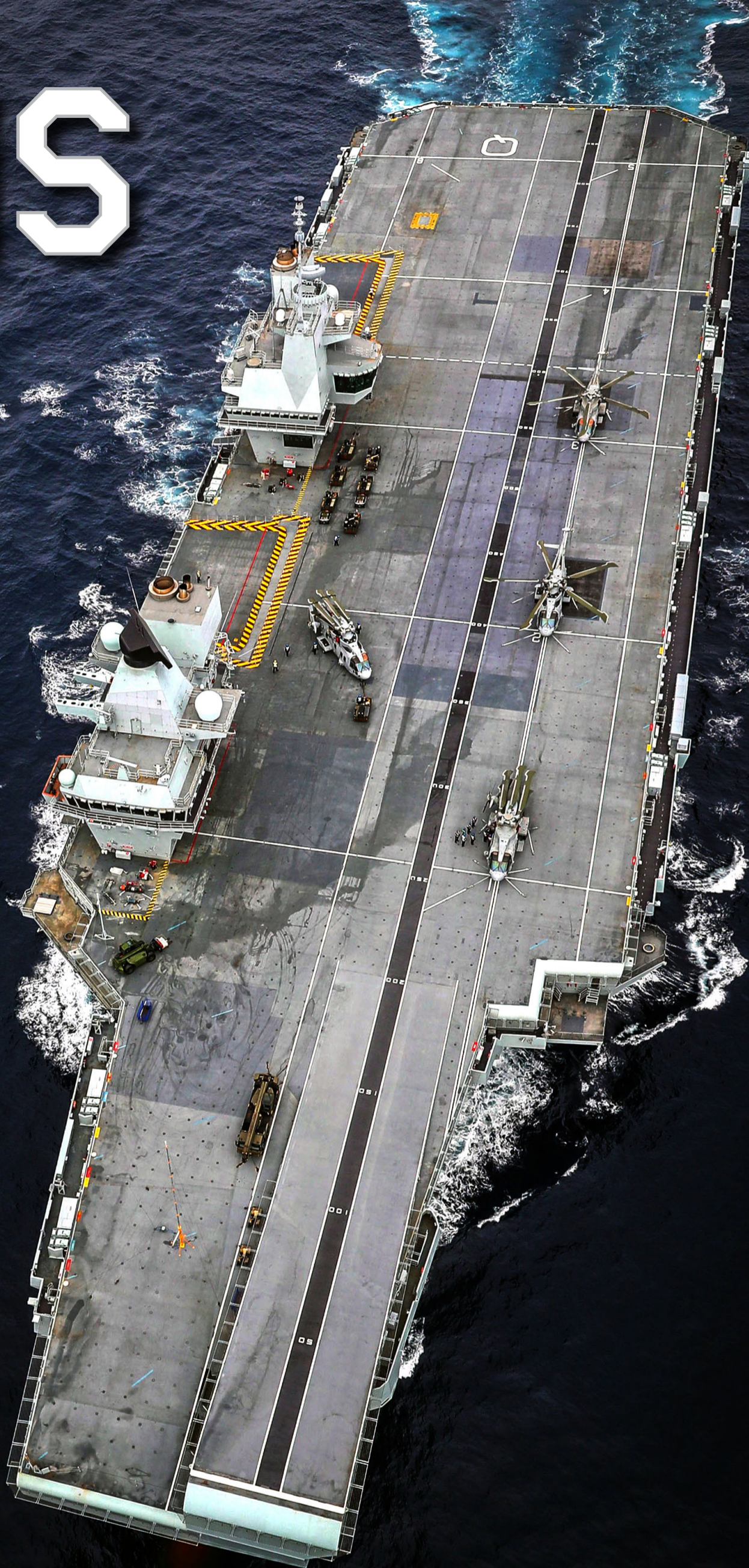
The carrier group will be in the USA until the late autumn, conducting two phases of trials with specially-modified F-35Bs from Patuxent River air base.

Numerous sensors will be fitted to both the aircraft and the carrier to record reams of data about how the F-35 handles landing and taking off in different weather conditions, sea states, temperatures and humidity.

Four test pilots – one RN, one RAF, one US Marine Corps and one civilian – will conduct upwards of 500 landings/take-offs, while crew will practise lashing down, refuelling, marshalling and maintaining the stealth fighters during the trials.

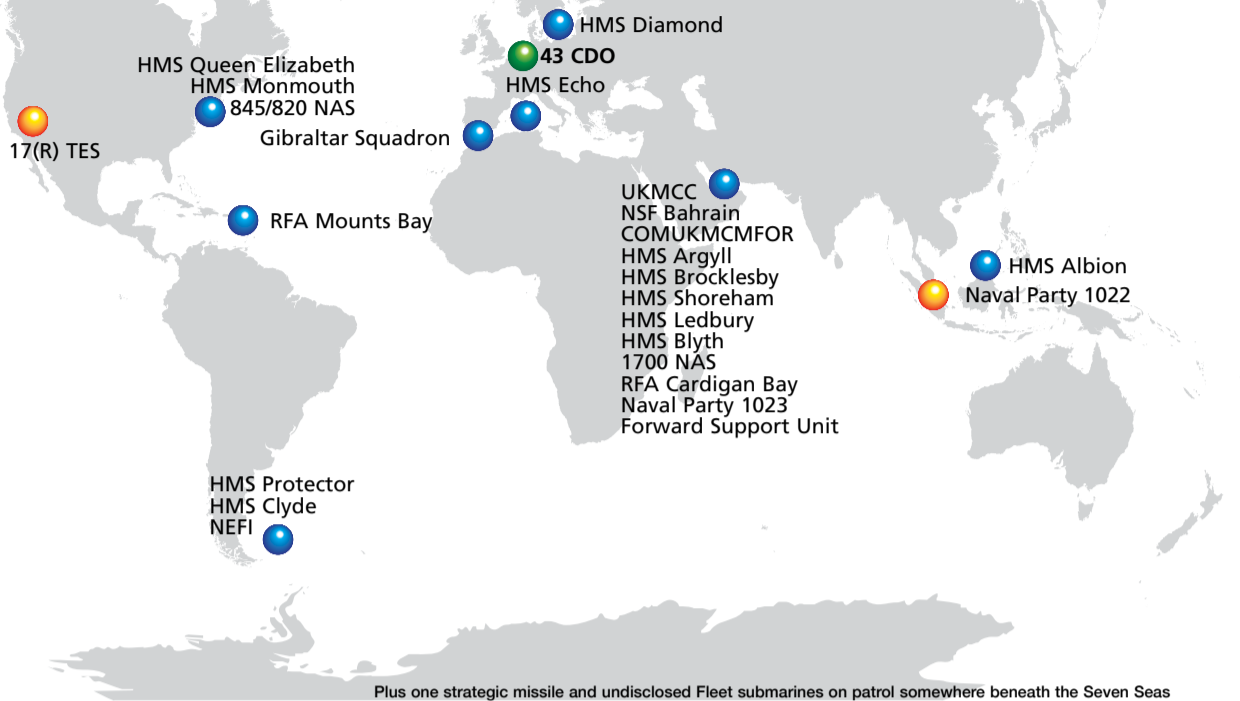
Those trials, spanning most of the autumn, will be broken by a mid-deployment break in New York.

Words: Thanks to Lt Cdr Lindsey Waudby  
Pictures: LPhot Kyle Heller



### Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Northumberland	HMS Cattistock
HMS Grimsby	HMS Westminster
HMS Mersey	HMS Magpie
HMS Defender	RFA Tidespring
HMS Hurworth	RFA Tiderace
HMS St Albans	RFA Tideforce
HMS Montrose	



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

## FLEET FOCUS

Protecting our nation's interests

ALL eyes remain on Britain's future flagship as **HMS Queen Elizabeth** operates off the Eastern Seaboard of the USA (see pages 2-3). The carrier marked milestones with the embarkation of Wildcat and Junglie Merlins ahead of the first F-35B deck landing, which will appear in next month's *Navy News*.

The new **Lightning** strike fighter is also the main topic on the **Year of Engineering** page (see page 19), as a **Lightning Force** engineer talks about the technical side of the new jets.

The **Fleet Air Arm** bade farewell to the veteran Sea King during a emotional flypast by **849 NAS** in the West Country (see centre pages) to mark the end of 49 years of active military operations.

The crew of **HMS Diamond** are looking back on a hectic summer, which involved monitoring Russian naval activity, port visits, hosting VIPs, working with NATO, and plenty of training (see page 7).

**HMS Bangor** and **Middleton** both received warm welcomes (see page 6) as they returned to Portsmouth and Faslane respectively following a 6,000-mile journey home from the Gulf, where they have been based for the past three years.

Going in the opposite direction were **HMS Brocklesby** and **Shoreham** and both took part in their first major test in Bahrain with a mine counter-measures exercise with their American counterparts (see page 5).

Heading to the Gulf is **HMS Dragon** (see page 6) as the Type 45 destroyer left Portsmouth for a seven-month mission.

Already operating in the Gulf and Far East is **HMS Argyll** (see page 6) and the Type 23 frigate took part in a high-profile visit to Pakistan.

High-profile visits have also been the order of the day for the current Fleet Flagship **HMS Albion** (see page 15) as she called in on Vietnam, Brunei and Singapore.

Much further south and **HMS Protector** is returning to the ice as summer returns to Antarctica (see page 17). The vessel, which has spent several months in the waters of South Africa, Madagascar and the central Indian Ocean, has already encountered her first iceberg of the season.

One year on from the devastating impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in the Caribbean, **RFA Mounts Bay** landed a team of UK military personnel ashore in Martinique to train in hurricane relief with their French counterparts (see page 9).

Over to Europe and the Royal Marines of **43 Commando Fleet Protection Group** swapped the lochs and glens of Scotland for the lowlands of Holland (see page 1 and 9). Exercise Gelderland Strike – the name is taken from the Netherlands region where the camp is located – saw the marines begin with a 'gentle' physical training session, moving up through the gears to conclude with an assault on the mock village of Oostdorp.

Back to the UK and URNU students enjoyed their first trip along the Thames as P2000s **HMS Example** and **Explorer** met up for their autumn deployment (see page 17), which culminated in a **1st Patrol Boat Squadron** meeting in Portsmouth (more next month).

At the other end of the country the Royal Marines of **45 Commando's Recce Troop** completed one of the toughest mountaineering challenges in the UK (see page 9) when they climbed Cuillin Ridge on the isle of Skye.

The Duke of Sussex visited the Royal Marines **Commando Training Centre** in Devon – his first visit as Captain General (see page 28).

*Navy News* relies heavily on the skills of the Royal Navy photographers and this month we showcase their work in the Royal Navy's annual photographic competition, the **Peregrine Trophy** (see pages 12-13).

Last but not least, Naval Service sport – including clay target shooting, gymnastics, paddlesports, sailing and showjumping – all feature on five pages of sport (see pages 36-40).

# Royals remain in class of their own

WITH all eyes turned towards the east coast of the United States and the renewal of our carrier strike capability, you could be forgiven for thinking that this giant leap to a new generation of carrier-borne fast-jet operations is our only focus.

But today's Royal Navy and tomorrow's will deliver effect in more ways than one, and the ability to mount amphibious operations remains at the heart of our offer to our own nation and to our partners, especially in NATO.

Our Royal Marines regularly train in the full spectrum of climates and most arduous of environments to maintain a broad suite of specialist skills, thereby ensuring they are always ready to deploy on operations anywhere in the world.

This year alone, Royal Marines have deployed on exercises that range from the arctic tundra of Norway to the humid jungles of Brunei, and the Lead Commando Group will soon be adding to these experiences by testing themselves in the arid deserts and jagged mountain terrain of Oman as part of the Joint Exercise Saif Sareea III.

These exercises are overlaid on ongoing operational commitments and defence engagement, including teams deployed to deliver training missions in Africa as our partners seek to learn from the range of skills that are synonymous with the world-famous green beret.

## VIEW BRIDGE

But impressive though their range of skills on the land remain, there is one characteristic that puts Royal Marine Commandos in a class of their own.

The Royal Marines remain the country's only very high readiness force capable of intervention from the sea to the land, anywhere in the world.

And after more than a decade supporting the land campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Corps has been reinvigorating its maritime roots... the change is particularly apparent at 42 Commando, which has reorganised to focus principally on maritime security operations – including a number of specialist roles previously the preserve of UK special forces.

Meanwhile, other elements of 3 Commando Brigade have begun to evolve towards the formation of future Littoral Strike Groups, adaptable, ready, forward-deployed formations which will provide transformed and highly relevant capability.

Away from the spotlight of her freedom of navigation operations in the South China Seas recently, HMS Albion and her embarked force of Royal Marines have been hard at work with our international partners in her core

amphibious role, completing a series of exercises to develop the Littoral Strike Group concept.

Littoral Strike Groups may be a new operational concept, but at their core is the familiar, tried-and-trusted figure of the Royal Marine Commando, launched, as throughout his (and soon to be her) history, as a uniquely trained, uniquely potent fighting instrument from globally-deployable amphibious shipping.

The Future Commando Force toward which the Naval Service is travelling will distil Royal's Commando pedigree for 21st-century, fifth-generation information-enabled warfare: integrating automated and autonomous capability; optimised to deliver less conventional, more innovative and asymmetric roles from new ships; and enabling Joint Force and cross-government objectives, while retaining the ability to fight and win in larger formations.

One final thought: as HMS Albion exercised in Brunei, HMS Queen Elizabeth declared her Initial Operating Capability as a "Landing Platform Helicopter" from the east coast of the US; these two capital ships were at that point closer 'as the crow flies' across the Pacific than they were via European waters.

Yet more proof if any were needed that ours is a truly global Navy.





● Two US Navy Sea Dragons patrol ahead of HMS Brocklesby, HMS Shoreham and USS Sentry

# Divers earn their stripes

TWO Royal Navy minehunters have begun their first major test in the Gulf after a 6,000-mile journey from Britain to Bahrain.

HMS Brocklesby and Shoreham – experts in hunting mines in shallow and deep waters respectively – have joined their American counterparts for the latest quarterly combined workout which keeps both navies at the top of their game.

MCMEX (Mine Counter-Measures EXercise) 18-3 is the latest iteration of a regular test of the two navies to find, identify and finally destroy mines and underwater devices potentially lying on or anchored to the Gulf seabed.

Both navies maintain sizeable mine warfare forces in Bahrain – the UK permanently stations four warships, plus a support vessel/floating headquarters to provide fuel and engineering assistance.

Likewise the Americans operate a flotilla of minehunters at the same base in the Gulf kingdom, as well as dive teams and specialist minehunting helicopters.

Elements of all were committed for the latest exercise: joining the two British warships were USS Sentry, US Coastguard cutters, giant Sea Dragon helicopters and UK specialists operating unmanned underwater vehicles from American MkVI Patrol Boats.

And for good measure the American Arleigh-Burke destroyer USS The Sullivans is on hand to provide wider protection for the force so the mine warfare teams can focus on their principal mission.

For the newly-arrived British ships, the exercise poses major physical and mental challenges.

The 80 or sailors on the two ships are grappling with temperatures in the high 30s/low 40s Celsius – more than twice the UK – which places a substantial physical strain on the men and women...

...and sea temperatures are in the low 30s Celsius which create water conditions and layers very different from the cool Atlantic and North Sea.

Working with the US Navy brings a different dimension to the exercise. The Americans use different techniques to find and clear mines, including using huge HM15 Sea Dragons (100ft long, 33 tonnes fully loaded, or one and a half times the length of a British Merlin helicopter and twice as heavy) which tow side-scanning sonar behind their matt-black airframes; it is an extremely rapid way to start clearing the way before the minehunters arrive on scene.

The helicopters' endurance is limited,

however, and minehunters/divers are also able to conduct far more detailed searches – at speed if they have their REMUS remote-controlled seabed scanners with them.

Fleet Diving Unit 3, whose job it is to fly around the globe to protect British warships in distant harbours joined HMS Brocklesby taking REMUS – which looks like a small torpedo – with them.

REMUS can be sent away on stealthy missions for hours at a time, before returning with high-resolution imagery of the seabed for the mine warfare experts to pore over.

Alternatively, the ship's mine warfare ratings locate a suspicious object using their sonar, then launch the small red Sea Fox remote-controlled submersible to investigate – beaming live pictures back to the operations room – and 'neutralise' the mine (a nice term for blowing it up) using an explosive charge.

Or you can do the same by hand, courtesy of the explosive ordnance clearance divers aboard every Royal Navy mine warfare vessel, who can identify a mine by sight or touch, and place a small detonation charge to trigger it.

"This exercise has been a superb opportunity for my young divers to earn their stripes," said Petty Officer (Diver) Simon Smyth, HMS Brocklesby's coxswain.

"They have been operating around the clock, to max depth, and with live demolitions – this is what we joined the Navy for."

Typically these quarterly exercises are directed by the Commander UK Mine Counter Measures Force and his staff aboard the mother ship – currently RFA Cardigan Bay – but MCMEX18-3 was directed from the Royal Navy's new shore-based headquarters in Bahrain.

Commander Ash Spencer, heading the British mine warfare force in the Gulf, is delighted with the results of the exercise to date.

"Manned and unmanned teaming provides me the best of both worlds. As the Royal Navy continues to invest in maintaining a technological edge in mine warfare, the resilience of my sailors in all conditions is a stark reminder that the future is not entirely unmanned," he said.

"HMS Brocklesby and Shoreham have quickly established themselves as resilient mine warriors who can find and finish."

Lieutenant Commander Paul Irving, Brocklesby's Commanding Officer, said the combined workout "underlines the friendship between the Royal and the US Navies – and their ability to work side-by-side."

"Together we're a formidable force that can be deployed anywhere in the world."

Pictures: Petty Officer 2nd Class Samantha P Montenegro, USN



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## Momentous time for PoW

THE countdown is running to Britain's second new carrier debut at sea as the new HMS Prince of Wales received her first commanding officer.

Captain Steve Moorhouse (pictured in front of his ship by LPhoto Pepe Hogan) has around 12 months to ready his ship and ship's company for the rigours of sea trials as the 65,000-tonne leviathan – sister of HMS Queen Elizabeth – completes fitting out in Rosyth.

He takes over at the helm of the future flagship 27 years to the week that he passed through the gates of Britannia Royal Naval College to begin his career as an officer.

Stepping down as the carrier's ranking officer is engineer Capt Ian Groom, who has guided HMS Prince of Wales and her ever-growing number of sailors since May 2016.

"I have enjoyed my tenure as Senior Naval Officer immensely and I am hugely proud of everything we have achieved," he said.

"My handover of command to Capt Moorhouse marks the start of a new phase that will see him working with the Aircraft Carrier Alliance to take HMS Prince of Wales to sea and subsequently into service."

Capt Moorhouse takes charge of the new carrier as her operations room was 'flashed up' for the first time – two months earlier than planned.

There are no fewer than 27 consoles for warfare specialists to compile a 'picture' of the battle across the warfare spectrum (land/sea/air, above, on and below the waves): 18 can be found in the main ops room, and nine in the Carrier Air Traffic Control Centre (CATCC) which, though part of the ops room, is used for controlling the landing and taking off of all aircraft.

Chief Petty Officer Greg Connor, the Ops Room manager, said allowing his team to move in to the complex was "a momentous occasion".

He continued: "This milestone represents the heart of the warfare fighting elements of the ship coming to fruition. The warfare department now has its sights firmly set on preparing the ship and team as more and more systems are brought online."

# Home – at the double

SUNSHINE and joy in Faslane.

Sunshine and joy in Portsmouth.

At exactly the same time. After a 6,000-mile journey home in company, it was only right that HM Ships Bangor and Middleton timed their homecomings to coincide, bringing a three-year Gulf mission for each vessel to an end.

Bangor received a traditional naval welcome (tugs with jets of water from fire hoses) and a traditional Scottish welcome (a piper) on her return to Faslane.

Like all the Bahrain-based mine warfare force – four ships, one RFA support vessel – the crew rotate regularly with their colleagues back home in the UK; the latest 'owners' of HMS Bangor have been on board for about eight months.

That was sufficient time for the crew to add 11,900 nautical miles to the odometer and enjoy 18 port visits in 14 different countries (much of the latter on the way home from the Gulf).

Much of the time in the Middle East is spent exercising: regular workouts with the US Navy, which also maintains a sizeable mine warfare force in Bahrain, as well as major international exercises with friendly navies east of Suez, such as Oman and Kuwait, conducting seabed surveys and looking out for mines (real or dummy ones during exercises).

"It's been a long but very enjoyable deployment and I am extremely proud of my crew," said Bangor's CO Lieutenant Commander Ben Evans.

"In the past eight months they have done everything I have asked of them with enthusiasm and style.

"They faced many challenges, including the weather and conditions, but they always got the job done. They have always given their best."

No fewer than nine members of 22-year-old AB(Sea) William Brenton's family travelled from Shropshire to witness him step back on dry land.

"I have missed having him around so much as he is such good fun. We're having a big family meal on Sunday to celebrate his birthday which was on August 24 – and which he spent in the Bay of Biscay," said his mum Jaque William.

Middleton changed ship's companies five times during her tour-of-duty in the Gulf, although it fell to 2nd MCM Squadron's Crew 2 to take her out in 2015... and bring her back in 2018.

Petty Officer (MW) Lewis Gordon is among those who sailed to and from Bahrain in the 35-year-old warship – Middleton's bosun on the outward journey and her ops room supervisor on the return voyage (his seventh deployment



## Once you pop, you can't stop

IT'S like waiting for a bus. We've not had a proposal at a homecoming for some time... and then two in a day (400 miles apart admittedly).

But both Bangor's AB(MW) Josh Bertman (bottom) and Middleton's POET(WE) Andy Clark (top) got down on one knee quayside and popped the question... in front of shipmates, families, strangers and the media.

So no pressure then on Josh's girlfriend Hazel Staunton, who'd travelled from Doncaster to Faslane, and Kayleigh Stollery, waiting on the jetty in Portsmouth for her beloved senior rate, who's the minehunter's deputy weapons engineer officer.

To the relief of those watching, not least their men, both women said 'yes'.

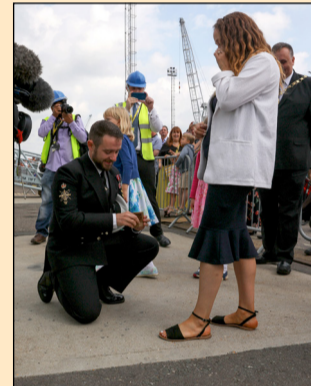
"I had no idea that was coming," said Kayleigh. "I was so looking forward to seeing him and then he proposed – it's just been amazing."

As for 21-year-old Hazel – nine months pregnant – the proposal by her 22-year-old partner took her completely by surprise.

"I couldn't wait to see Josh as I was so excited for him to see the bump," said Hazel. "He's missed the scans while he's been away but I have sent him the pictures. The nursery is almost ready, but his first job when he gets home is to build the cot."

And just for good measure, ET(ME) Matthew Stewart was reunited with his wife Maree. The couple tied the knot on April 28 and seven days later, the sailor was off to join Bangor.

"We had a fantastic time at the wedding but it was very emotional saying goodbye to Matthew afterwards," said Maree. "I'm so looking forward to seeing him and finding out what married life is really like."



to the Gulf).

"I'm exceptionally lucky to be a part of such a hard-working crew. I really feel like we've done our bit and helped represent the Royal Navy and United Kingdom in the Gulf," he said.

While away, Middleton has covered over 40,000 nautical miles of sea, conducted over 4,000 hours of mine counter measure operations and carried out countless dives in aid of the hunt for mines, using the Seafox remotely operated vehicle and Royal Navy divers.

Like Bangor, the Hunt-class ship has taken part in numerous exercise with local and visiting navies in the Gulf region, and, more recently, hosted numerous VIPs including the Prince of Wales and Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson.

"Eight months is a long time to spend away on a minehunter, and my crew have been mature and reliable throughout," said Middleton's CO Lt Cdr Daniel Morris, who served as the ship's operations officer 12 years ago.

"I am immensely proud of

Crew 2, who have conducted everything I have asked of them to a high standard that has stood them apart as a 'go-to crew', with a no-fuss attitude.

"They should reflect positively on their team work and individual performances, having delivered a truly world-class mine countermeasures capability which is envied by other navies."

HMS Shoreham has taken over from Bangor, while Brocklesby is fulfilling Middleton's role.

Pictures: LPhotos Ben Corbett and Ben Shread

## Dragon off on Middle East mission

DRAGON be gone. For the rest of the year and into 2019.

There was a good turnout at Portsmouth's historic harbour mouth to bid farewell to the Type 45 destroyer as she slipped out, Gulf-bound, on a glorious late summer's evening.

Once she reaches the Middle East she'll provide an aerial shield for British and friendly navies, providing them with an unparalleled picture of what's happening in the skies of the Gulf region.

In addition, she'll support the long-running mission involving more than 30 nations to tackle terrorism, smuggling, drug-running and arms trafficking across the Indian Ocean.

The 200 sailors and Royal Marines aboard went through seven weeks of Operational Sea Training in the Channel to ready themselves for the demanding seven-month mission.

"Through the seven weeks you are challenged through the multiple training scenarios to make sure individually and collectively we are able to respond to anything thrown at us. It's hard work but the sense of achievement at the end was great," said communications rating Leading Engineering Technician Benjamin Miller.

His Commanding Officer Commander Michael Carter-Quinn said Benjamin and his shipmates had all worked hard, supported by families and dockyard workers, to ensure HMS Dragon was "materially and mentally ready to meet any of the challenges that we may face over the coming months."

"We look forward to the opportunities that will present themselves over this deployment to promote the United Kingdom's commitment to regional security."

## For YAD now read RNIAD

YEOVILTON Air Day is being rebranded from next year as the Royal Navy International Air Day, with the smaller show put on at Culdrose currently on hold due to operational commitments.

The name change is intended to draw in even more overseas aircraft – which already attend the existing show in large numbers – rather like the RAF's RIAT.

Organisers have earmarked Saturday July 13 for the 2019 new-look air day at Yeovilton, with upwards of 40,000 people expected to attend.

Details on tickets will be announced in due course.

# Argyll back on parade with Ambuscade

HMS Argyll rolled back the years off Pakistan when she joined forces with a former British warship – bookending a high-profile visit to the Commonwealth nation.

Still going strong 45 years after she was launched – and a quarter of a century after she was sold to Pakistan – is Falklands veteran, frigate HMS Ambuscade, one of the backbone warships of the Asian state's fleet as PNS Tariq.

The two vessels (pictured here by LPhoto Dan Rosenbaum, RNPOY) linked up off Karachi having already conducted training alongside in the port city – training which should pave the way for more interaction between the two navies.

While in Karachi, HMS Argyll – three months into a nine-month deployment to the Gulf and Far East – hosted 150 VIPs at an official reception and capability demonstration, bringing together senior



British and Pakistan government officials from Islamabad, naval officers, members of the British High Commission staff and local dignitaries from in and around Karachi.

British High Commissioner Thomas Drew attended several events on board along with the Commander of the Pakistani Fleet, Rear Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi.

Mr Drew led an act of remembrance at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in Karachi, flanked by ceremonial guards from the UK and Pakistan Navies.

Wreaths were laid by the High Commissioner, Argyll's CO Commander Toby Shaughnessy, and a delegation from the Pakistan Navy in memory of the 642 souls – just four of them sailors – buried in the graveyard during WW2.

"It was an honour to be able to show our respects to those members of the Commonwealth that have given their lives in service before us," said AB(Warfare Specialist) Zac Jones in the ceremonial guard.

And the UK Department for International Trade made use Argyll's visit to promote closer ties between Pakistani and UK industry.

Away from formal business, Argyll's Pakistan Naval Academy hosts laid on

cricket and football matches against the visitors and triumphed in both games which were doggedly contested despite the summer heat.

"Pakistan has made every effort to provide a fantastic welcome to HMS Argyll," said Cdr Shaughnessy.

"Throughout the many activities we have conducted together during this visit, the Pakistanis have matched the aspiration for our two navies to share ideas and come together to enhance our relations."

"The Pakistanis have been gracious hosts and the fondness with which they maintain their connections with the UK Royal Navy was continuously evident."

"And our visit also demonstrates that Britain values its commitment to our relationship with Pakistan and that the UK wants to continue to make it stronger."

HMS Argyll continues eastwards through the Asia-Pacific region.

# From Bournemouth to the Baltic – and back

## Clyde relishes her season in the sun

WHILE many of you enjoyed a summer break, the crew of HMS Diamond spent three months dashing to and fro from the mid-Atlantic to the central Baltic.

The destroyer barely took a breather as she monitored Russian naval activity (twice), visited four ports, helped train warfare officers and RAF air crew, hosted two ambassadors, represented the Fleet in front of a million people at Bournemouth Air Festival, joined NATO ships in the Baltic and impressed Poles on a rare visit to their country.

The Portsmouth-based warship's hectic summer began in Ringaskiddy, near Cork where visitors included the Irish Naval College, Britain's Ambassador to Ireland Robin Barnett and Deputy PM Simon Coveney.

Dashing back to the UK to pick up Principal Warfare Officer trainees for a fortnight of non-stop action testing the students' command of air defence, gunnery, flying, anti-submarine and surface warfare exercises, reaching its climax in the North Sea with RAF Typhoon fighters switching between attacking Diamond or being controlled by her.

A lot of the destroyer's time has been spent as one of the Royal Navy's high readiness escort units.

She was activated to monitor Russian destroyer Severomorsk and cruiser Marshal Ustinov past the UK, then became the first ship in her class to take on fuel from one of the new Tide-class tankers, RFA Tidespring.

Then it was back to the North Sea and a first visit to her affiliated city of Aberdeen in three years.

The breakwater and harbour were

lined with Granite City residents holding welcome messages – including local sea cadets who had prepared a visual signal for the ship to decode and respond to.

The ship hosted a capability demonstration for local charity workers, teachers, councillors and RNLI volunteers and some crew visited one of the destroyer's favoured charities: Friends of ANCHOR (Aberdeen and North Centre for Haematology, Oncology and Radiotherapy), where the sailors "lifted the patients spirits and brought lots of smiles and laughter."

Loved ones were also given an insight into life aboard a cutting-edge warship with a short 'parents and children at sea' experience – but long enough for the guests to see Diamond sail from Devonport, witness a small arms shoot, enjoy a guided tour of the machinery spaces and watch a fire-fighting demo.

Next up: Bournemouth Air Festival, with Diamond acting as guard ship off shore – giving her sailors a front-row view of Royal Marines storming the beach in Vikings, simulated dogfights, parachuting, vintage aircraft such as Spitfires, plus perennial crowdpleasers the Red Arrows. The ship also managed to squeeze in an affiliates day with many organisations 'twinned' with Diamond coming on board.

The curtain came down on Diamond's summer with a 2,600-mile round trip to Gdynia in Poland, passing under the Øresund Bridge – linking Denmark and Sweden – training with HDMS Esben Snare, the Danish command vessel currently in charge of NATO's Baltic 'big ship'



task group.

In Gdynia (pictured above by LPhoto Louise George) there was no let up with VIP visits, tours by the Polish public and press conferences with local and national media; one reporter described Diamond as "the jewel in the crown of Britain's Navy".

The highlight was a reception and demonstration for the UK Ambassador to Poland, Jonathan Knott, accompanied by countless Polish politicians, industry representatives, Polish military and even soldiers from 1st Queen's Dragoon Guards, 150 of whom are based in Poland as part of

a US battle group contributing to the security of the Baltic region.

"I'm really proud of my ship's company and all that they have achieved – over the past month or so they have shown their flexibility, adaptability and complete professionalism," said Commander Ben Keith, Diamond's Commanding Officer.

"We have delivered on operations, we have flown the flag for the Royal Navy around the UK – and most recently the Baltic – and demonstrated our continued commitment to NATO and European Defence."

SPRING is in the air... for HMS Clyde as the Falklands emerge from the harshest winter in living memory, according to islanders.

The Royal Navy's permanent presence in the South Atlantic has endured temperatures regularly below zero and patrols when gusts peaked at 70kts.

It has not curtailed day-to-day operations in the Falklands, however, which entail a mix of reassurance visits to the remote communities and combined training with the RAF and Army units stationed 8,000 miles from the UK.

One shelter was offered by the narrow bay at Port Howard, largest settlement on West Falkland (human population 20, sheep 40,000).

The hamlet is surrounded by rocky mountains with only a small channel allowing access from the sea that only opens in the last few metres of the approach – the gap reveals a lake surrounded by snow-capped mountains.

Clyde is too large to berth at the ferry 'port', so anchored while the ship's company went ashore to visit locals. As they did they were treated to the sight of an RAF A400 transporter conducting a routine of its own banking over the warship.

Another break in the weather allowed Clyde to cross Falkland Sound to visit San Carlos Water, scene of the landings in 1982.

Clyde anchored near to the wreck of HMS Antelope, destroyed when an unexploded Argentine bomb was triggered during the act of defusing it – causing a series of catastrophic explosions which tore the frigate apart.

In confined waters which became known as 'bomb alley' in 1982, the ship's company had time to reflect on the fight the amphibious task group had on their hands.

And Lt Cdr George Storton, Clyde's CO, plus a small number of crew, conducted a ceremonial changing of the Union Jack flying over the graves at San Carlos Military Cemetery.

Throughout the winter patrols, Clyde has hosted personnel from other services, including RAF chefs and troops of the Roulement Infantry Company.

"The joint nature of the South Atlantic is very rare in the modern and busy world we so often operate it. From practising air defence with RAF Typhoons through to deploying with a section of 2 Para, it has been a great experience for the whole team," Lt Cdr Storton said of Clyde's winter.

And the harsh weather didn't stop regular five-mile runs by the ship's company to Bertha's Beach where the local Gentoo penguin colony resides.

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● Mne Ben Sykes wades through water during Exercise Waterloo Sunset in Martinique

Pictures: LPhot Stevie Burke

# Testing time for RFA Mounts Bay



**ONE** year on from the devastating impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in the Caribbean, RFA Mounts Bay landed a team of UK military personnel ashore in Martinique to train in hurricane relief with their French counterparts.

Currently midway through her three-year deployment to the region, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship has been playing host to the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Troop who have been sent out to the region to cover the six months of core hurricane season.

Mounts Bay has since sailed to Montserrat where a team from the ship went ashore and, among other things, checked on turtles in a sanctuary.

The team of 19 Royal Engineers from the British Army and Royal Marines joined up with Noir 30 Platoon from 1 Company, 13eme Régiment du Génie (Engineer Regiment) to be put through their paces in a wide-ranging training package, Exercise Waterloo Sunset.

The time onshore saw both nation's troops get involved with jungle-tracker training, share experience in a range package using both French and British weapons, culminating in an earthquake scenario exercise on the north coast of the Caribbean island.

Missions included an infrastructure recon, assessing the buildings and facilities available post-disaster, evacuating and treating casualties, reopening key routes blocked by debris, providing security to reassure civilians and deter looters, and the appropriate handling of refugees.

"It's been interesting to learn the differences between French and British standard operating procedures in infantry and engineer tasks as well as learning their jungle tactics," said Cpl Jason Probert RM. "There are a lot of similarities which is reassuring for next time we're working together."

Spr Josh Barnes RE, the troop's only fluent French speaker, described the experience as "incredibly rewarding, especially when trying to break down the language barrier to reach a common goal."

Capt Jon Cooke RE, the officer commanding HADR Troop, said: "The final disaster relief exercise really put us through our paces; we were faced with a realistic threat in a challenging environment alongside our French colleagues."

"Given the UK and French presence in the Caribbean, it is important that we understand each other's capabilities so that we can work together in any future HADR operations."

Both French and UK teams relished the chance to work together throughout this period, and the personnel from the UK HADR team shared their lessons learnt working from a variety of locations across the Caribbean in the aftermath of last year's Hurricanes Irma and Maria.



## Hoofin' on Cuillin

ALMOST lost against the jagged grey boulders and ominous slabs of rock are the Royal Marines of 45 Commando's Recce Troop, celebrating reaching Inaccessible Pinnacle.

Nine out of ten people who attempt this climb fail.

But then nine out of ten people aren't Royal Marines – who not only completed the toughest mountaineering challenge in the UK, but shaved nearly one third off the time it normally takes expert climbers.

The men of 45 Commando's Recce Troop are the elite of the elite when it comes to fighting at altitude – experts in Arctic and mountain warfare, reconnaissance and surveillance – bolstered by a team of snipers.

It's the troop's task to scout ahead of the main body of Royal Marines operating unseen and unsupported, far in advance of their comrades.

It took three weeks of training in the Highlands for the Arbroath-based green berets to get ready for the



assault on Cuillin Ridge which runs for 12 kilometres down the spine of western Skye.

Handbooks for climbers warn it's "the most challenging mountaineering expedition in the British Isles", akin to tackling parts of the Alps: 30 gnarled peaks (like Inaccessible Pinnacle or Sgùrr Alasdair – pictured inset – at 992 metres the highest point on the ridge) twisting and turning, rising and falling some 4,000 metres

along their length.

Those same guidebooks reckon it takes most experienced climbers – this is not a route for walkers – around 30 hours to finish... although ninety percent of civilians fail to complete the full 12-kilometre route

So Recce Troop are understandably proud with their 21h 45m time. They're also the only unit to have completed the entire ridge in decades.

Not that it was easy. And it was all completed in military fatigues using military kit.

"The way is exposed and gruelling with continuous climbing, abseiling, challenging route finding and all the logistical hassles of a real expedition, including a mountain-top encampment," explained mountain leader and Officer Commanding Recce Troop Capt Arron Broughton.

"There is no other force that can deliver this – 45 Commando Recce Troop remains at the forefront of expeditionary capability."



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SEEN here before she was daubed in dazzle paint and fitted with a 3in gun in an attempt to fend off U-boats, is the Royal Mail Steamer Leinster, mainstay of the Dublin-Holyhead run for two decades at the beginning of the 20th Century.

In the closing weeks of the Great War she would become a tomb for more than 500 souls – many of them military personnel, including the first Wren to die on active service.

Clerk Josephine Carr, pictured inset, a shorthand typist from Cork – listed as 19, but actually aged 21 – was one of three members of the Women's Royal Naval Service to file aboard the steamer in Kingstown (today Dún Laoghaire) via two gangways for the three-hour crossing to Anglesey.

Of the 771 souls aboard the Leinster, almost 500 were military personnel – Britons, Irish, Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians, Americans.

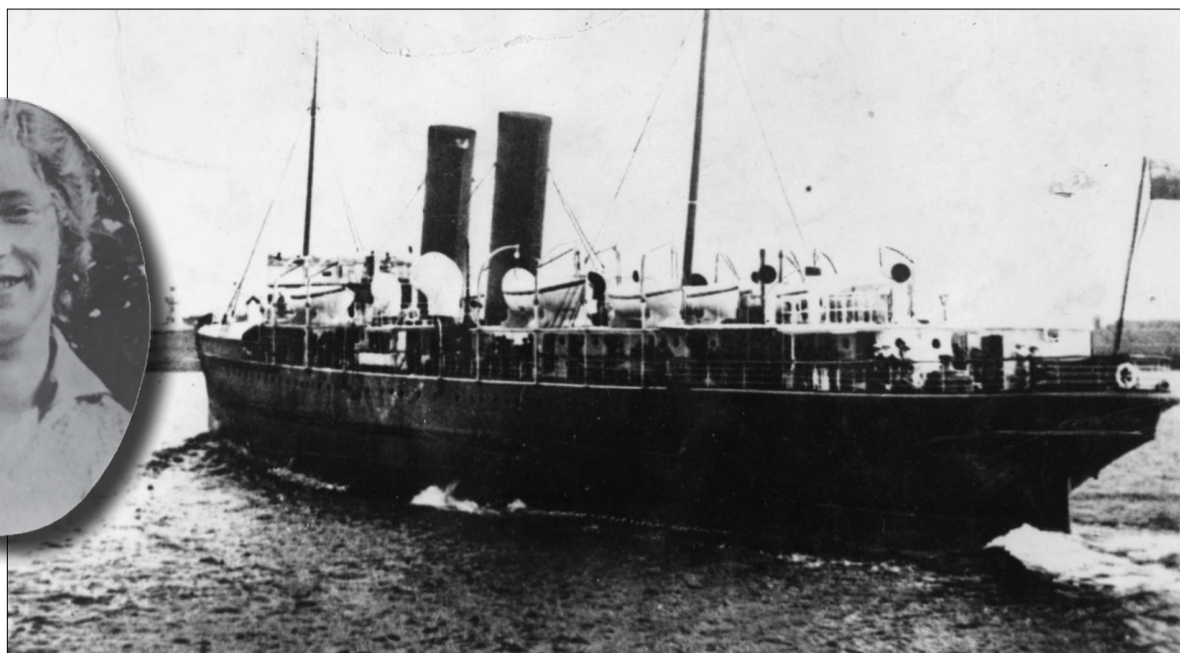
While postal workers filled the hold with 250 sacks of mail bound for the mainland, passengers thumbed the daily newspapers reporting the latest successes on the Western Front, the crumbling of the Central Powers and especially the impending surrender of Germany – Berlin had telegraphed US President Woodrow Wilson five days earlier seeking an armistice under the banner of his '14 points' for peace.

Until the warring parties agreed terms, however, the war went on a-outrance – to the death.

Among those Germans willing to fight to the bitter end was Oberleutnant Robert Ramm in command of coastal submarine UB123 on his second patrol.

Ramm, a classmate of future head of the U-boatwaffe Karl Dönitz, had dispatched 3,500 tonnes of Allied shipping in his boat's first outing.

The second had so far proved fruitless. Dispatched to the Irish



west coast, to date Ramm had sunk nothing.

The morning of Thursday October 10 1918 found him a few miles off Kingstown, loitering near the shallows of the Kish bank, hoping for rich pickings.

The shrill sound of Leinster's whistle ten minutes before 9am sounded her departure. Her master 61-year-old William Birch had conferred with naval intelligence before sailing – a U-boat's periscope had been spotted that very morning off the Kish Bank.

With the hull of his ship marked by irregular shapes in grey, black and white, a Royal Navy crew manning a rear gun and by zig-zagging his course, Birch intended to run the gauntlet. Plus the Irish Sea was decidedly choppy. Far from ideal U-boat conditions.

Through his periscope, Ramm watched Leinster's sister Ulster cross his boat's path – but beyond his grasp – as she returned to Ireland

from Holyhead.

But then the Leinster appeared. In the galley, the stewards had just finished serving breakfast. Some passengers retired to the smoking room, some headed out on deck including one American sailor, Chief Special Mechanic James Mason. He was enjoying the fresh air on the Leinster's starboard side when a cry shattered the otherwise routine crossing: *Torpedo!*

Ramm's first torpedo whistled past Leinster's bow. His second, however, plunged into the steamer's port side.

The torpedo exploded in the middle of the post office. The stairway – the sole means of escape – disintegrated. The floor collapsed. Several postal workers were killed instantly by the blast. Others were crushed as the ship caved in around them. And others still were drowned as the Irish Sea rushed in.

On the bridge Captain Birch ordered the ship turned around: he would try to make for Kingstown – but

he held out little hope. Leinster, he told an army officer, would sink in less than ten minutes.

She would not last that long. Ramm sent a third 'fish' into the side of the crippled steamer.

"The whole centre portion," postal worker John Joseph Higgins recalled was "blown sky-high". The two funnels were blown into the air and a swirl of pungent black smoke surrounded the steamer. Pieces of metal and wood turned into lethal shards, striking passengers as they waited impatiently to take to the boats.

What semblance of order there had been before evaporated. There was a mad rush for the boats and life rafts as the Leinster began to heel to port and sink rapidly by the bow.

Only a handful of boats were launched in time – and most of those capsized – while the dozen life rafts which floated clear of the wreck rose and sank viciously with the heavy sea. Perhaps as many as 565 people

went down with the Leinster, making it the greatest maritime disaster in the Irish Sea.

Capt Birch and all but one of the 22 postal workers – John Joseph Higgins – were lost. So too Josephine Carr, a Wren for just nine days. She was last seen by her two colleagues in the ship's reading room.

They survived – but only just. Maureen Waters, also from Cork, and one Miss Barry both made it into a lifeboat and endured a perilous time as the small craft was tossed around in the heavy sea.

As salvation neared in the form of a Royal Navy destroyer, Miss Barry was thrown out of the boat. "For God's sake, save me!" she screamed as she drifted away. A crewman aboard HMS Lively dived in, grabbed her and the pair were then hauled aboard the warship by rope.

With Germany clearly pressing for peace, the Leinster tragedy merely underlined Berlin's 'beastliness' in the eyes of Allied leaders. "Brutes they were," British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour declared, "and brutes they remain."

The disaster provoked international outrage not seen since the sinking of the Lusitania three and a half years earlier – and hardened the resolve of politicians to deal firmly with the foe in any coming peace negotiations.

Ramm and his 35 shipmates never learned of the scorn their actions had earned them. After damaging the tanker Caloria off the north coast of Scotland on October 16, UB123 made a break for Germany – and almost certainly struck a mine. After October 19 1918 there has never been any trace of the boat or her crew.

Leinster's anchor would subsequently be salvaged and form the centrepiece of a memorial in Dún Laoghaire, next to what is today Ireland's National Maritime Museum.

These pictures (HU 66000 and WWC N3-1-1) are two of 11 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 call 0207 416 5309.

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# SOLDIERS OF ORANGE

THE men who safeguard Britain's ultimate weapon swapped lochs and glens for the lowlands of Holland and four days of fire and fury.

The Royal Marines of 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group are normally found patrolling either Faslane Naval Base or the nearby armaments depot at Coulport, ensuring no foe gets near our nuclear deterrent.

That mission demands they are (a) at the top of their game 24/7 (b) skilled in the use of a wider range of guns than most of their commando brethren and (c) experts in close-quarters battle.

Which makes the Dutch infantry school at Harskamp, near Arnhem, an ideal place to train.

Not only does the complex feature a series of ranges for pistols, rifles and machine-guns, but there's also a replica generic European village, a cluster of 20 houses and buildings, built specifically to train troops in the art of urban warfare.

Exercise Gelderland Strike – the name is taken from the Netherlands region where the camp is located – saw the marines begin with a 'gentle' physical

training session, moving up through the gears to conclude with an assault on the mock village of Oostdorp.

On the ranges, the marines practised their marksmanship with the C8 assault rifle, Glock pistol, Sharpshooter rifle and General-Purpose Machine-Gun.

Once the men of O and P Squadrons were happy with their individual accuracy, they were put to the test in a group competition culminating with teams battling it out against each other in a 'march and shoot' challenge: running uphill in hot and dusty conditions, followed by live firing down the range. A 'casualty' then had to receive first aid before evacuating him to a medical pickup point, several hundred metres away.

The return sprint to the range was made even more challenging by carrying an unexpected load of extra supplies. Further shots were then fired at targets – testing the marines' accuracy when tired and under stress. Bragging rights were claimed by the section achieving a combination of fastest time and best shot accuracy.

"The competitive nature of the scenario pushes you on to do better, as everyone wants to out-do the other teams", said Marine 'Mac' McDonald – a member of the winning team.

"As a troop, this makes everyone build each other up so that the team performs better collectively. The casualty evacuation

drills added some urgency and realism to the scenario."

The bangs and cracks of small arms fire at Harskamp contrasted sharply with the tranquillity of Oosterbeek Cemetery, last resting place for nearly 1,700 troops killed during the failed attempt to end World War 2 in the autumn of 1944 – eight months before the guns fell silent.

Oosterbeek and the bridge over the Lower Rhine about four miles upstream were the focal points of airborne landings during Operation Market Garden. The road crossing at Arnhem became immortalised as 'a bridge too far' in the book and film of the same name.

The bridge was never captured and eventually blown up by the Germans, with the houses surrounding it flattened – as the commandos found on a battlefield tour which included paying respects to the men of 1944 and marines explaining to their comrades what happened at key sites around the Arnhem area and outlining some of the lessons learned.

"My commandos were buzzing by the end of the high-energy training package and will build on the camaraderie and use their skills back at their home base around the Clyde, with the exercise helping maintain effectiveness in their core role of protecting the UK's fleet of Vanguard-class submarines," said 43 Commando's Commanding Officer Colonel Tony de Reya.



pictures: lphot will haigh, frpu north

## Lottery shortfall delays Royal Marines Museum move

THE new museum for the Royal Marines is in limbo after lottery chiefs pulled the plug on a £13m cash injection for the historic dockyard.

Bosses at the National Museum of the Royal Navy need to raise £5m if they are to complete the move – already under way – from the Corps' historic home in Eastney to a new hi-tech discovery centre which is better able to tell the 350-plus-year story of the Royal Marines in Portsmouth Naval Base... and attract ten times the visitors drawn to the old site.

It planned to spend £10m converting the boathouse currently occupied by the Action Stations attraction – which gives visitors an idea of the work of today's RN – into an interactive exhibition which would bring the Corps to life.

Key exhibits planned in the new RM galleries include a suspended Lynx helicopter; landing craft used by commandos in raids and a host of large audio-visual displays capturing iconic Royal

Marines actions around the globe.

Before the old Eastney site closed in preparation for the move to the dockyard, it was only pulling in around 25,000 visitors a year... whereas the naval base draws just short on one million tourists annually.

The £13m originally offered by the Heritage Lottery Fund was intended not merely to fund the new RM Museum, but also create new galleries behind the existing Royal Naval Museum for upwards of two million artefacts, documents, photographs, maps and films currently held in storage in buildings which are in urgent need of repair.

Unfortunately, lottery ticket sales have not matched predictions – so the fund has been forced to withdraw support for some heritage schemes.

Both projects, says the NMRN, are stalled not cancelled – and it will push ahead with the move of

the Royal Marines' collection into the dockyard... but it won't be ready by 2020 as originally planned.

Prof Dominic Tweddle, Director General of the NMRN, said overhauling the old museum at Eastney was not an option.

Instead, that historic building will still be sold – raising around £2m – with £3m already raised by the move to Action Stations... money he and his team intend to raise with the hope of the Corps' new museum opening around 2022.

The equally-ambitious 'Navy Uncovered' project, publicly airing those items in storage is now an estimated £10m out of pocket.

"This is bitterly disappointing to our team, the Corps family as well as our visitors and all the other people who use the museum," Prof Tweddle said.

"We sought to create a new Royal Marines Museum and bring together the entire RN

collection into an innovative 'Centre for Discovery' in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

"The Heritage Lottery Fund found themselves unable to follow through on their approval due to lack of funds – notwithstanding that we had been able to reduce how much we were asking for."

Prof Tweddle continued: "It is unthinkable that the Corps will not have a museum that is worthy of its 354-year, unique history and one that recalls the sacrifice and service of the countless thousands of Royal Marines who have supported the nation through the darkest times.

"Equally, all our collections should be protected and publicly accessible to all our visitors who wish to engage with the naval story: past, present and future."

If you have £5... or £5m to spare, you can support the NMRN's fundraising drive here: [www.nmrn.org.uk/get-involved/donate](http://www.nmrn.org.uk/get-involved/donate)

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# PICTURE PERFECT



**FROM submarine operations in the icy wastes of the North Pole to emotional homcomings scenes on windswept jettysides, our photographers capture all aspects of life in the Naval Service.**

Now the skilled photojournalists have been recognised for their perfect pictures in the Royal Navy's annual photographic competition – the Peregrine Trophy Awards.

Royal Navy photographers are charged with telling the stories of sailors and Royal Marines around the world through still imagery and video journalism, taking them on deployments with warships and commando units wherever they may go.

Their images often grace the front pages of national newspapers and their videos are broadcast to millions, ensuring the public understands what the Navy is up to on operations.

The Peregrine Trophy Awards are an opportunity to reward their dedication and creativity – and to acknowledge the effect they have in earning the Naval Service recognition for its work.

Warrant Officer Class 1 Nathan Dua, the Royal Navy's most senior photographer, said: "As technology and photographic practices get better every year, so too does the quality and commitment of our talented photographers improve."

"I am always blown away by the standard of imagery achieved by the men and women of the Royal Navy's photographic branch, and this year is no exception."

"The quality of their imagery and video content rivals that of the national media on a regular basis, proving they work hard to reach the top of their game. I am proud of every entry in this year's photographic competition."

This year the awards were judged by Jane Sherwood of Getty Images, Thomas Newton of Sky News, Lee Durant of the BBC, Stuart McKenzie of the BBC, Nicholas Horne of Great State, Defence Imagery picture editor Panay Triantafyllides, and freelance photographer Adam Sorenson.

Leading Photographer Dan Rosenbaum was named Royal Navy photographer of the year by the judges for his portfolio of imagery from operations all over the world.

He said: "To win an award in the Peregrine Trophy competition is a moment to be proud of in itself but to win photographer of the year, which effectively is the pinnacle of what all photographers aim for, is undoubtedly the proudest moment of my photographic career."

"Given the fierce competition within our branch and the high calibre of photography that my colleagues and friends produce, this award is definitely the hardest fought for."

LPhoto Rosenbaum is now deployed in HMS Argyll capturing all elements of her deployment to the Asia Pacific region.

Joining up as any other rating into a particular trade such as logistics, engineering or warfare specialists, RN photographers work hard to excel

at their chosen field before being accepted into the elite photographic branch.

If you are interested in transferring to the photographic branch, read **RNTM 026/16**.

See all of the winning images in high definition, plus others from the commended and highly commended categories, by visiting [royalnavy.mod.uk/peregrine](http://royalnavy.mod.uk/peregrine).

You can also watch the stunning entries from this year's video journalism categories.

To keep up to date with the work of the RN's elite photographers, follow the **Royal Navy** or **Royal Navy Photographers** on Facebook.



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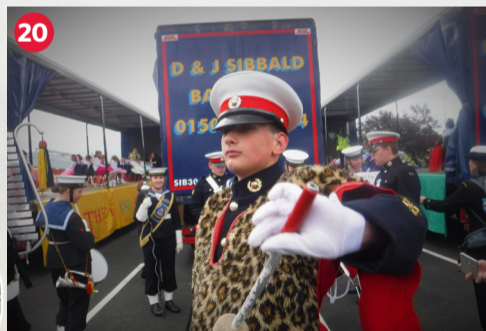
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23



## THE WINNERS IN FULL

### ■ The Peregrine Trophy

Mobile News Team  
Portsmouth (Images 1, 11, 16,  
19 & 24)

### ■ Photographer of the Year

LPhoto Dan Rosenbaum (6, 8  
& 13)

### ■ Commandant General

Royal Marines Photographic  
Unit North (10 & 23)

### ■ Best Maritime Image

LPhoto Ken Gaunt (5)

### ■ Maritime Air Prize

LPhoto Kyle Heller (17)

### ■ Global Operations

Category  
PO(Phot) Aaron Hoare (4)

### ■ Royal Navy and Royal

Marines Charity Family and

Friends Award

LPhoto Guy Pool (2)

### ■ Best Professional Image

PO(Phot) Aaron Hoare (12)

### ■ Navy News People's Choice

Award  
PO(Phot) Si Ethell (22)

### ■ Spirit of Diversity Award

PO(Phot) Owen Cooban (7)

### ■ Engineering Excellence

PO(Phot) Aaron Hoare (14)

### ■ Amateur Photographer of

the Year

AB Conor Culwick (3, 21)

### ■ Amateur Maritime Image

Award  
PO Lee Blease (9)

### ■ Amateur Open Category

Award  
Cpl James Clarke (18)

### ■ Sea Cadet Award

Able Cadet Shanna (20)

### ■ Best Student

LPhoto Alex Ceolin (15)

### ■ Short Form Digital

Storytelling Video Award

LPhoto Sam Seeley

### ■ RN Video Award

LPhoto Sam Seeley

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# I WAS IN NAM ...AND BRUNEI... AND SINGAPORE

YES, after two months in Japan, Britain's flagship is homeward bound. Ever so slowly though, as the men and women of HMS Albion soak up experiences of a lifetime in Southeast Asia – and the UK looks to a wider world.

The route from Tokyo to Devonport is far from straight – and all the better for it as the assault ship visited first Vietnam, then Brunei and finally Singapore this past month.

'Singers' isn't really off the beaten track for Royal Navy vessels deployed to the Asia-Pacific. The Sultanate of Brunei (164th smallest country in the world) and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (99 places higher on the same list) less so.

Save for a flying (no pun intended) visit by the Wildcats of 847 NAS, who dropped in on Vietnam during their deployment aboard France's FS Dixmude over the summer, we reckon it's four years since a Royal Navy warship last called on Vietnam.

So Albion negotiated some 30 miles of Saigon River – it retains its pre-revolutionary name – to berth in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City and the warmest of welcomes.

Britain never became embroiled in the conflict which ravaged Vietnam for three decades after WW2 and hence has enjoyed longer-standing relations with Hanoi than many other nations in the West.

Forty-five years exactly – an anniversary marked with a reception held in Albion's loading dock and attended by ex-pats, Vietnamese leaders and representatives of the People's Navy.

When ties between Hanoi and London were forged, Vietnam was split between Communist North and Capitalist South.

Two years later, the North's forces steamrollered those in the South, in part thanks to a massive tunnel complex just outside Saigon which was used extensively during the conflict to smuggle Viet Cong troops and weapons into hostile territory.

Charlie Company spent a day looking around the complex – today a tourist attraction and reminder of what Vietnamese call 'The American War' and where the Royal Marines were

reminded of a local proverb: *Learn from the past, be curious, read widely.*

Like Vietnam, Brunei was rocked by internal unrest in the 1960s. Unlike Vietnam, British forces did intervene – successfully, quashing a revolt at the end of 1962 which was part of the much broader Indonesia-Malaysia conflict as the former tried to occupy some of the latter's territory bringing all of the island of Borneo under Indonesian control.

British forces – including heavy involvement from the Royal Marines and the forerunner of the Commando Helicopter Force – ensured an Indonesia-dominated Borneo never came to pass, Brunei remained a separate state (and from 1984 independent from the UK), with the current sultan ascending the throne in 1967...

making him the second-longest-ruling monarch on the planet after our own Queen Elizabeth II).

Nearly a decade has passed since the country's tranquil sands have been churned up by the fire and fury of the Royal Marines as they stormed ashore alongside their host's elite forces.

Commandos from Albion demonstrated what they could do working side-by-side with the sultanate's forces should they ever be required in this part of the world.

With helicopters flying low overhead, landing craft from the UK flagship put commandos and Viking armoured vehicles on to the beach.

With speed and overwhelming firepower, the enemy position was rapidly secured (*pictured below*) in a demonstration of the close co-operation between the armed forces of Brunei and the United Kingdom.

This was the third in the Setia Kawan (Malay for 'Loyal Friend') series of exercises going back 21 years to veteran assault ship HMS Fearless, and again in 2009, with helicopter assault ship HMS Ocean.

"Engaging with key allies and partners in the region is exactly why the ship's company and Royal Marines of HMS Albion are operating in Asia and the Pacific," said Albion's Commanding Officer Captain Tim Neild.

"The UK remains committed to the peace,

security and prosperity of the region and we are very much looking forward to an opportunity to return in the future."

The joint exercise was played out in front of

His Majesty Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum – better known as the Sultan of Brunei – and Britain's second most senior naval officer, Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Ben Key.

The sultan enjoyed a comprehensive tour of assault ship Albion, including briefings from senior officers, and meeting the exercise's participants.

"What a fantastic experience – I got to shake hands with His Majesty The Sultan of Brunei. It has been a hoofing deployment," said Marine Sean Phipps, aged 26, from Aberdeen who is serving aboard Albion with 40 Commando.

After months away from the UK, Major Alex Nixon RM, in charge of Charlie Company, 40 Commando, said Setia Kawan demonstrated that his men remained the tip of the spear.

"Being held at contingency means being ready: ready for operations, globally," said the 34-year-old officer from Leicester.

"This exercise has proven the capabilities and versatility of the assets poised on HMS Albion – the ability to operate in a joint environment with a partner nation, and to deliver strategic and tactical effect."

His Company Sergeant Major, WO2 Anthony 'Uggs' Wilson, added: "This has been a great opportunity to demonstrate the ability of the Royal Marines to provide punch from the sea, on to the land."

Setia Kawan was also a crucial warm-up for Albion's key autumn exercise, Saif Sareea III, which begins in the Gulf this month. Kit – and the amphibious task group staff of Commodore James Parkin who'll be directing operations at sea and ashore – came aboard at Albion's next port of call, Singapore.

The flagship arrived in the city state just in time for petrolheads to enjoy the Formula 1 Grand Prix (won by Brit Lewis Hamilton) with some sailors being invited behind the scenes to join the teams in the pits and technical areas



pictures: po(phot) si ethell



H.S. PORTLAND

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● Sunrise at Newcastle; HMS Example heads out of Newcastle for her autumn deployment

● Lt Chris Granger, SLt Beth Humby and SLt Jack Nottley in front of the first iceberg of the season seen by HMS Protector

# Little ships unite for big Thames festival

A NUMBER of URNU students enjoyed their first trip along the Thames in London as two P2000s met up for their autumn deployment.

Shortly after sunrise HMS Example left her native Newcastle and, after meeting up with HMS Explorer, headed south.

Example is attached to the Northumbrian URNU based at HMS Calliope in Gateshead, while Explorer is assigned to the Yorkshire universities of Hull, Leeds and Sheffield.

The autumn deployment culminated this month in a Squadex and First Patrol Boat Squadron conference in Portsmouth for all 14 vessels.

The first port of call for both ships was a brief stopover in Great Yarmouth, and then through a very choppy sea to London.

Officer Cadet Lennon-Butler said: "It was an amazing opportunity to be able to see all of the famous landmarks from a completely different perspective, and is an opportunity I never thought I would have."

Once berthed next to the iconic Tower Bridge, both vessels undertook various tasking.

The first was a day with the Coastal Forces Heritage Trust, discussing the plans for a new museum which will be opened in Gosport.

This will document the fascinating history of the coastal forces in the Royal Navy, as well as featuring two vintage coastal force patrol boats – one from WW1 and the other from WW2.

The 1st Patrol Boat Squadron is a direct descendant of the WW2 coastal forces, and as such retains close ties to the trust.

In the afternoon, Example had the privilege of taking veterans of the trust to sea on a modern day inshore patrol boat, with the CO getting quite jealous when one of the veterans described his gas turbine powered fast patrol boat from many years ago.

Anyone who is interested in the Coastal Forces Heritage Trust and their work, can find further information on their website: [coastal-forces.org.uk/](http://coastal-forces.org.uk/)

The following day both ships participated in delivering the Navy Board to Greenwich Old Naval College, and



● Clockwise from above, HMS Explorer and HMS Belfast in the shadow of the Shard; Greenwich viewed from Explorer; Guests aboard HMS Example; Tower Bridge lit up



returning them to HMS President. During the day, Explorer, followed by Example became the senior ship afloat in the RN for a very short period, whilst embarking the First Sea Lord.

This was an outstanding opportunity for the crews and students to meet the guiding body of the Royal Navy, while demonstrating the versatility of 1PBS and the P2000 ships.

Both vessels also took small groups

up the river as part of the annual month-long Totally Thames cultural celebration of the river.

This was an opportunity for members of the public to interact with Royal Navy personnel and a chance for a waterside view of their home city. The XO of Example, CPO Stroud said: "It was good to be able to interact with the general public, and to be able to show off the ships, in such a prestigious environment."



● HMS Explorer photographed from Example passing under Tower Bridge in London



## First iceberg sighting of summer for crew

THE Navy's icebreaker and Antarctic research ship HMS Protector is returning to the ice as summer returns to the frozen continent.

The Plymouth-based scientific vessel – used to chart poorly-mapped Antarctic waters, conduct environment studies and work alongside British and international scientists – has spent several months in the warm waters of South Africa, Madagascar and the central Indian Ocean.

Protector is three years into an epic five-year mission to coldly go, spending the Antarctic summer in and around the ice, and retreating to South Africa for the austral winter to undergo maintenance, before heading either up the West African coast or into the Indian Ocean, using her state-of-the-art suite of sensors to produce accurate charts for use by seafarers.

Summer 2018 has been spent around the remote British territory of Diego Garcia. Lying roughly half way between Sri Lanka and Madagascar, Diego Garcia is a major UK/US military base. Despite that fact, its waters had not been accurately surveyed for 180 years, prompting a ten-day concerted effort to rectify that shortcoming.

The island is also famous for its wildlife. One group of Protector's sailors was lucky enough to watch a 'show' put on by a pod of more than 20 curious dolphins.

And on Diego Garcia itself sailors and Royal Marines supported scientists researching

green turtles, spending three consecutive nights assisting in capturing, satellite tagging and then releasing them.

The visitors were stunned by the strength of the turtles – which can live up to 80 years – as the creatures often needed four or five people to handle them.

On the way back to South Africa, the ship paid a short visit to the French island of La Réunion which gave crew the chance to see an active volcano, Piton de la Fournaise, link up with French sailors and tour the new French icebreaker, L'Astrolabe, designed to perform much the same mission as Protector.

After a spot of TLC in Cape Town, the distinctive red-white ship struck out across the South Atlantic for the Falklands, which serve as HMS Protector's forward base when operating around the Antarctic peninsula.

To ensure the crew are ready for the rigours of living and operating in the polar region, they face an inspection and assessment by the Royal Navy's principal training organisation, FOST, before leaving the Falklands for the ice.

"Protector is well and truly on the way back to her Antarctic home ground – we've already seen the first iceberg of the season," said Captain Matt Syrett, the ship's commanding officer.

"The memories of a summer spent in tropical paradise are fading fast. The team is in fine spirits and ready for our cold weather training."



## Devonport showcases engineering opportunities

ENGINEERING visits to warships at Devonport were the highlight for members of several URNUs.

Seven officer cadets, representing Liverpool, Manchester, Sussex and Devon, took part in the URNU Weapons Engineering Officer Insight Scheme.

During the visit the students visited HMS Bulwark, Montrose and Portland.

The latter is currently undergoing an extensive refit. The group were led on a dock bottom tour underneath the ship by Babcock engineer Chris Harrison and were also able to visit several engineering compartments on board for an in-depth brief on the engineering work that is being undertaken.

After lunch in the Wardroom at HMS Drake the group then saw the Type 23 Frigate HMS Montrose which is currently working towards deploying on operations.

The tour was given by the

DWEO, Sub Lieutenant Ben Carver, who showcased as many compartments and spaces on board the ship as possible including the 4.5in gun, the gun bay, the ops room, the bridge and the hangar.

The next day the Insight Scheme members were issued with the newly-created *The Engineering Branch of the Royal Navy* books, which detail the history of the branch, shortly before meeting Devonport Captain Engineering, Captain Nigel Fergusson, for a chat.

The students then visited the Landing Platform Dock HMS Bulwark for a tour.

Lt Will Jones, creator of the Insight Scheme and Commanding Officer Oxford URNU, said: "The visit gave the attendees a fantastic insight into the roles open to Weapon Engineering Officers as well as a close look at some exciting capabilities and equipment that they could be working with in the future."



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We've also been recognised for the fifth consecutive year in Gartner's 2017 Critical Capabilities for Network Services report, which said: "BT has proven that they have staying power in this market, can frequently innovate on their existing products and can be relied on for enterprise class needs. They have proved their technical competence and ability to deliver services to a wide range of customers. They address multiple use cases with standalone or integrated solutions."

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# Maintainers are often overlooked when it comes to new jets Let's hear it for engineers



2018. YEAR OF ENGINEERING

THE return of a carrier Royal Navy has put the focus firmly on HMS Queen Elizabeth and the Fleet Air Arm.

Lightning Force engineer Flt Lt Ed Turner, who worked in 17 Test and Evaluation Squadron, offers an insight into the engineering side of the new F35-B Lightning jets.

The existing contributions of Royal Navy engineering personnel towards delivering aircraft operational capability is an oft overlooked part of the Lightning programme.

The RN provides 42 per cent of over 200 UK F-35 engineering personnel spread across three main operation bases (and several other locations) in four time-zones on two continents.

Since 2013 RN engineering personnel have played key roles at all levels: from AETs on the shop floor of flying squadrons to the Type Airworthiness Authority (the most senior UK Air Engineer Officer in the programme, currently a Royal Navy Captain).

Three UK squadrons currently operate Lightning, 17 Sqn, based at Edwards US Air Force Base in California, provide operational test and evaluation for the UK; 207 Sqn are embedded within US Marine Corps 501 Sqn, based at US Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort in South Carolina, to allow RN and RAF technicians to gain on-type experience before returning to the UK in 2019.

Lastly, 617 Sqn based at RAF Marham is the first UK frontline squadron and the first to be based on UK soil.

Although badged as an RAF squadron, they contain the same ratio of RN personnel as the wider force with senior posts (WO and up) being rotational between the two services.

Currently a RN Lieutenant Commander is the Senior Engineer Officer (AEO) on 17 Sqn and 207 Sqn and the WO Engs on 207 Sqn and 617 Sqn are also RN.

The joint service nature of the Lightning Squadrons brings its own challenges. The RAF and RN have slightly different approaches to squadron organisation, with different balances of responsibility across the rank structure (generally the RAF gives more to Junior Ranks and the RN more to Senior Rates).

Many lessons have been learned

## It's coming home... Lightning pilot's view

IT'S 04.45 local time as we walk awkwardly from maintenance control out to the jets, wearing immersion suits, anti-G trousers, survival vest and helmet, while carrying several items for the long flight ahead.

Stepping out of the hangar the heat and humidity hits you. You instantly start to perspire. It's still pitch black.

We are about to launch five F-35B aircraft from MCAS Beaufort in South Carolina, on a transatlantic flight to RAF Marham in Norfolk.

We are just one element of that plan; there are three RAF Voyager aircraft ready to join us at different points on the route.

A few hundred metres away across the aircraft dispersal lies a C-17 Globemaster laden with spare parts, support equipment and a team of engineers and force protection personnel. This is the sweeper aircraft that will follow any jet into a diversion airfield if it is required to offer support.

After a pre-flight inspection, we climb the ladder into the dark cockpit.

Once strapped in and connected it is a race against the clock to start the engine and receive the much-needed air conditioning from the engine bleed system.

Once all five jets are complete with their checks we taxi in formation to the active duty runway.

It is now first light; the sun will rise shortly after we depart the airfield. One by one, each of the five jets conducts a MIL power take-off ahead into the dark blue sky towards the first tanker rendezvous near MCAS Cherry Point.

The tanker plan is relatively complex, with one launching from Cherry Point, another from Halifax and a third from Gander.

The formation will shuffle between the tankers at different stages on the route to maximise the offload available and ensure all jets are constantly within an un-refuelled range of a diversion airfield – if any jet suffers a malfunction that requires a landing, there will always be options available.

The route takes us up the

eastern seaboard of the US, south of Gander and St Johns, before heading south east towards the Azores, then heading north east past the west coast of Spain into the UK.

Some 8½ hours later, having conducted air-to-air refuelling across eight brackets, we cross into the UK.

We fly directly over RNAS Yeovilton as the sun is setting, before descending to Marham.

With all five jets safely on deck we taxi back to the 617 Sqn line and shut down. It is pitch black once again.

There is a great feeling of relief and pride in what has been achieved – and it couldn't have happened without the hard work from personnel in all branches and trades, the Lightning Force HQ, as well as the Marines of VFAT-501.

This was the second trail of Lightning to the UK, which now sees 617 Sqn with nine aircraft ready to embark upon the Initial Operating Capability work-up. It will be an extremely challenging but rewarding period ahead.

from Joint Force Harrier and RN best practice is incorporated. This includes the divisional system which, although not familiar to most of the RAF, is considered to provide a vital support role to personnel from both services.

As a next-generation air system, Lightning requires different ways of working from legacy platforms which is not always understood by the wider RN/RAF.

Firstly, there is the heavy dependency on ALIS, Lightning's unique computer system which encompasses all legacy engineering records and technical instructions.

The air

system is completely dependent on this to operate with access to the server a necessity to complete job cards and release the aircraft for flight and bespoke ALIS laptops required for accessing technical data and connecting to the aircraft to carry out many maintenance tasks.

Because of this more attention must be paid to the information systems side to ensure reliability of the system and integrity of the data is maintained.

In addition, further challenges come from the Low Observable nature of the jet. Although well understood by our US colleagues due to the F-22 and previous generations of stealth aircraft, this is an entirely new concept to the UK.

The need to keep the

LO status maintained at an acceptable level requires a different mindset to legacy aircraft husbandry as it must constantly be maintained.

In addition, often complex and time consuming, LO restoration must be carried out when many panels are removed, which must be factored into any maintenance plan.

These require careful handling skills and subject matter knowledge that are currently spread amongst personnel from all trades.

617 Sqn have managed this by allocating a number of their personnel to a separate LO trade desk purely to carry out and manage this work.

RN air engineer officers and air engineering technicians provide a substantial and essential part of the complex engineering effort that ensures Lightning aircraft are able to carry out the many tasks required of them.

From vital test and evaluation missions in California to operational work up here in the UK, RN engineering personnel are core to Lightning's operational output.



## Defiance Squadron at the heart of waterfront support



PORFLOT and DEVFLOT Engineering Divisions are supporting the Naval Engineering Strategy 2017 intent to provide rewarding shore employment for RN engineers at the waterfront.

The Devonport waterfront, the Engineering Support Group (ESG) have handed over delivery of engineering to the recently-established Engineering Delivery Group (EDG), leaving the ESG to focus on policy compliance, engineering advice for force generation and the Engineering Training Squadron.

Devonport Flotilla's EDG is titled 'Defiance Squadron', retaining an important link with previous ships and establishment of that name.

Within the Defiance Squadron, the Refit Support Group works with Type 23 frigates in their unmanned upkeep periods.

Since 2016, Devonport has been the sole location for Type 23 frigate upkeep periods. It is the Refit Support Group, 89 marine engineering, weapons engineering, executive and logistics personnel, that delivers what would have traditionally been called the 'ship's staff' part of the upkeep package.

Defiance Squadron also employs naval engineering specialists in the Engineering Delivery Unit. The 78 engineers in this unit range from deep technical specialists such as diesels, sonar, Sea Wolf, Sea Ceptor and lifts and davits, those contracted into the waterfront service provider such as the Refrigeration Support Unit, walk-in workshop and the Lifting Plant Examination Unit, to those in the Ship Engineering Support Team, providing low-level maintenance to Devonport ships alongside in home port or overseas.

Defiance Squadron has grabbed the opportunity to provide an extra layer of advice for ship's staff in Devonport, especially in those early stages, say the first

four hours or so, of diagnosing defects and formulating repair options.

Contact details for SQEP advice and more detail on Defiance Squadron is in [RNTM 05-02/17](#).

Meanwhile at the Portsmouth Waterfront, ESG and EDG have also taken the opportunity to adjust their organisational structures to better support and deliver maintenance to PORFLOT ships.

ESG has much the same remit in Portsmouth as in Devonport, and EDG (albeit with the addition of the two deployable MCM Forward Support Units) provides a similar function to Devonport's Defiance Squadron.

With the first of the Type 45s now already a decade old, a series of year-long upkeeps are being programmed for each ship. These are delivered by a mixed team of both civilian (BAE) and uniformed staff (the Type 45 Refit Support Group), who together meet the challenges and constantly changing demands that maintenance on such modern and complex ships create.

The Type 45 RSG employs about 60 personnel drawn from all branches, but with an engineering bias.

The Engineering Division Maintenance Support Unit (MSU) is also in place to support the PORFLOT units in Fleet Time, and has recently expanded to a liability of over 200 RN engineers of all ranks and rates.

Over the past 12 months, support has ranged from destroyers and frigates to HMS Queen Elizabeth.

With the requirement to support older ships as they approach the end of their careers, maturing ships, the increasing demands to support newer warships as they enter service, and with a key role in training junior engineers, placing the maintainer at the heart of the support solution has never been more important.

## Honours for those making a difference

WE are now three quarters of the way through what has so far been an extremely successful Year of Engineering 2018 (YOE18) campaign for the Royal Navy.

There are still activities planned for the rest of the year, but attention is also starting to look ahead to what will follow to keep engineering in peoples' minds.

The theme for this month is 'Engineering: Shaping the Future'.

We cannot afford to revert to engineering to revert to something that just happens; engineers form the beating heart of operational capability and are key to everyday functions all around us. It is in everything we do.

One of the campaign's upcoming events is the Team Portsmouth Engineering Awards 2018, which launched last month and is designed to recognise engineers who have made a real difference to Team Portsmouth and its flotilla; the award nominations are open until October 12 with four categories: Safety First, Innovation and Technology, Inspiring Engineering and Trainee Engineer of the Year.

These awards are open to all engineering personnel within the Royal Navy, Maritime Services and DE&S across Portsmouth Naval Base and associated sites.

The prizes will be presented at a formal dinner in HMS Nelson next month. Entry forms can be downloaded from Team Portsmouth intranet sites.

The YOE18 campaign is seeking to reposition engineering in society, highlighting engineering as a valuable and rewarding career choice.

Every engineer plays a crucial role in delivering the Royal Navy's outputs around the globe, using their core skills in a range of testing environments, but there is one constant – the excellence of their training.

If you want to contribute to the RN's Year of Engineering 2018 campaign read [RNTM 07-064/17](#) or share your experiences on social media, using [#yoe](#), [#inspireanengineer](#) and [#takeacloserlook](#), and link into [@RoyalNavy](#) and [@YoEGovUK](#).

Pentewan Sands



Gribben Head



Plymouth Hoe



# LAST FLIGHT OF THE KING



Dartmouth



Padstow



Newquay



**AS I was going to St Ives, I saw two Baggers fill the skies...**

Yes, if you were somewhere near the Cornish resort around 1.30pm on Wednesday September 19 2018 you'll have caught ZE420 and ZA126 on the last leg of their farewell tour.

Or at 11.20am over Gribben Head. Or 11.40 over Plymouth Hoe. Dartmouth at 12.03. Teignmouth's Trinity College at 12.16. Padstow at 1.05pm. Land's End 35 minutes later. Back at Culdrose for 2.

For three hours the two veteran helicopters battled rain, winds – the tail of Storm Ali had already postponed the flight by 24 hours – on a ground tour of Cornwall and Devon, the last time most of these places will see a Sea King in flight.

Yes, you read that correctly. We've had flypasts by the search and rescue fliers to mark their demise.

And the Commando-carrying Junglies.

But, save a delivery flight from Culdrose to HMS Sultan (via Yeovil and Yeovilton) a few days later, this really was the final Sea King flight.

The last variant of the helicopter, the Mk7, is also the most distinctive thanks to that large black bag (crew actually call it a sack).

It's lasted two and a half years longer than the rescue Mk5 and Royal Marines Mk4 as there's nothing (yet) in the Fleet Air Arm inventory to replace the Mk7.

Indeed, the aircraft has been used on the front line to the very end of its career – retiring from duties in the Gulf just weeks ago.

Let's put that into context. While Bryan Adams was grappling with his first real six-string and playing it till his fingers bled, the summer of '69 at Culdrose was marked by the arrival of XV645 in its magnificent dark blue livery – the first of more than 140 Sea Kings built for the Royal Navy.

That same day – just three weeks after the first moon landing – 700S (S for Sea King) Naval Air Squadron was formed.

It's a helicopter designed in the late 1950s, built between 1969 and the late '80s and which, as an aircraft, hasn't changed fundamentally in that time.

Now imagine a Swordfish flying in the Falklands. A Lancaster being used in the first Gulf War.

It has been used for anti-submarine warfare, search-and-rescue missions, general duties,



carrying Royal Marines Commandos into action (which it did in the Falklands, Iraq (twice), the Balkans, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan), and provided airborne early warning and intelligence to the Fleet and ground forces.

It's in that last role – the Sea King Mk7 airborne surveillance and control – that the helicopter flew on (just) past its 49th birthday.

Born of the need to give a naval task group far-seeing eyes against threats in the air – a key lesson of the Falklands – the airborne early warning variant was introduced in 1982... and served for the next two decades.

Those original baggers had one major flaw – they couldn't track hostile aircraft over land, a problem rectified when the much-improved Mk7 entered service in 2001.

It proved to be a revelation. Crews found that they could not only detect aerial threats, but they could also track vehicle movements on the ground.

The Mk7 proved indispensable in helping Allied forces to evade and ultimately destroy Saddam Hussein's army around Basra and the Al Faw peninsula in 2003... and flew 2,000 operational sorties over Afghanistan – 9,000 hours of missions in temperatures ranging between 55°C and -15°C. The information they fed back to ground forces led to the arrest of 150 terrorist suspects, 40 tonnes of drugs and 172 tonnes of home-made explosives being seized.

It was tracking smugglers and drug runners in the Middle East up to late spring this year. And, just five days before the flypast, Bagger crews were 'vectoring' Hawk fast jet pilots on to 'targets' – just as their successors will do with Merlin Crowsnest (think: Merlin with a bag) and F-35B Lightning strike fighters.

At 49 it's still an airworthy machine – largely thanks to Herculean efforts by technicians and mechanics. But keeping it that way with a dwindling number of airframes, dwindling supply of spare parts and dwindling number of Sea King experts as the Fleet Air Arm focus its energies on Merlins and Wildcats, has reached the point where it's no longer economical.

"The sight and sound of the Sea King has been at the heart of the Fleet Air Arm for 50 years. It's a great aircraft supported by wonderful people," says Cdr Chris Hughes, the final Commanding Officer of a Fleet Air Arm Sea King squadron, 849.

"But the Sea King is an old girl now – she looks old. It's time to say goodbye." The pilots of 1969 will find little changed in the cockpit – it's still mostly analogue. The tech in the rear cabin however...

"The Mk7 is the 1950s meeting the 21st Century," says Cdr Hughes. "All dials and knobs in the cockpit – we still use maps and charts and traditional navigational techniques."

"And then the observer is using the latest radar technology. What this helicopter can do is almost unique – very few air forces can do what we do."

Which is why its successor is taking that radar and the software which interprets the many contacts it detects as the basis for the successor.

Ten Crowsnest 'sets' (radar+sack+computer/console) are being acquired; it should be possible to turn any Merlin Mk2, whatever its role – general duties, submarine hunting, force protection – into an 'eye-in-the-sky' variant in a couple of days aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth or Prince of Wales.

Crew are already in training to use Crowsnest, ahead of its debut at Culdrose next autumn, and on HMS Queen Elizabeth the following year.

All of which is a long way from a dank, gloomy West Country on a mid-September day and the rumble of ZE420 (a spring chicken at 32 years old), and ZA126 (a more mature 38) lumbering around Cornwall and Devon in the low cloud, mist and drizzle.

"We were really surprised by the number of people who turned out – and especially the number of schoolchildren who spelled out messages for us. One group lined up as 'BZ' – 'well done'," said Cdr Hughes.

"It was really heartwarming to see so many people wanting to say goodbye to the old girl, particularly in worsening conditions as the flight continued. The poor visibility and low cloud mean we were operating on the edge."

He flew in ZE420 alongside Lt Cdr 'Tank' Murray, Lt Cdr Richard Lewis and Lt Ben Selwood.

And guiding ZA126 safely around the region were Lt Cdr Ian Chudley, Lt Cdr Matt Round, Lt Dale Evers and Lt Martin Pittock.

They, their forebears and their trusty helicopter have done pretty much everything in naval aviation over the past 50 years. Bar one.

"The one thing I'm sad about is the chance to see a Sea King on HMS Queen Elizabeth," Cdr Hughes laments.

"But my people have laid the foundations,



Godrevy Beach



Godrevy Lighthouse



Land's End



Home



St Michael's Mount



## Taste of RN life for charity children

HMS Ledbury's deputy weapon engineering officer, Petty Officer Robert Knott, shows off the ship's 30mm cannon during a visit from students in Bahrain.

Eleven youngsters from Bahrain for All (BHR4All) charity enjoyed a real hands-on experience onboard followed by lunch ashore at the UK Naval Support Facility.

The minehunter's CO, Lieutenant Commander Claire Thompson, said: "It's really important for us to put these days on. HMS Ledbury has been out here for a number of years, although my crew has just arrived.

"We spend most of our time at sea as part of the Royal Navy's enduring presence in the Gulf. For the sailors alongside, this is a really good way of showing the local community what we do."

Among the activities enjoyed by the visitors were manning the ship's cannon and getting fully kitted out in diving equipment.

They particularly enjoyed working with the firefighting equipment, especially trying to spray HMS Ledbury's sister ship, HMS Blyth, with salt water from the fire hoses.

They were shown the nerve centre of the ship, the operations

room, and experienced naval communications by using the ship's internal radios.

The organiser and founder of BHR4All, Nivedita Dhadphale said: "Days like this are extremely important. These young adults are part of our society and they have every right to see what goes on out there.

"We have a mix of Down Syndrome, autistic, cerebral palsy and intellectual disability students. They enjoyed themselves so much, they will remember the experience. We're deeply grateful to all involved."

The UK armed forces located in the UK NSF are planning to support some of the charity's other ventures.

Warrant Officer Mick Parkinson RAF, who works at UK Maritime Component Command, the headquarters for Royal Navy operations in the Gulf, said: "We are looking at bringing down some local female young people to meet female members of HM forces here in Bahrain.

"There are also plans to do some other work helping out with the renovation of a women's refuge and putting on some entertainment at a senior citizen's home."



# 'Carrier' pigeons rescued from ship

**MEET F-35 and Lightning – two 'carrier' pigeons rescued by the crew of Britain's biggest warship, HMS Queen Elizabeth.**

The pair were found in a secret nest aboard Britain's biggest warship as the carrier sailed for the USA, looked after by crew and flown ashore safely to be handed over to the RSPCA.

The chicks were discovered – with no sign of their mother – shortly after the ship left Portsmouth.

The fluffy pair, estimated to be around ten days old, were found huddled together by a sailor who heard tweeting coming from a remote ledge high up on one of the ship's boat decks.

A careful rescue plan was put in place and the chicks were brought into the warmth by sailors from the ship's seamanship department.

After much research on 'what baby pigeons eat', they were fed at regular intervals over 24 hours, with a mix of porridge and warm water, administered from a syringe – with the tip of a latex glove attached – provided by the ship's Medical Centre.

The chicks' beaks eagerly popped through a hole in the tip, hungrily sucking the porridge out, emulating the way they feed from their parents.

Sailors watched on proudly as the stowaways flew for the very first time – albeit hitching a ride in a Royal Navy Merlin Mk4 helicopter, from 845 Naval Air Squadron, RNAS Yeovilton.

The chicks, christened 'F-35' and 'Lightning' by crew, were flown by a helicopter heading back to RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset, then handed over to the RSPCA at its rescue centre in West Hatch near Taunton.

"While our focus for the deployment is getting the new



jets onboard for the first time, we are also prepared to conduct humanitarian relief, should we be called upon to do so. We just didn't think that would be quite so soon," said Queen Elizabeth's Lieutenant Commander Lindsey Waudby.

Bel Deering, manager of the West Hatch centre, said: "This little pair of baby pigeons are the first in my memory to be rescued from a Royal Navy warship.

"While we cared for more than 4,500 wild animals last year, from seals and gulls to otters and more than 300 pigeons, these two definitely win the prize for the most adventurous back story."

**Clay target shooting, page 39**



● From left, NA(SE) Bethall, LA(SE) Doyle, Clarke, Dallamore and Picture: PO(Phot) Nicola Harper

## Opportunity knocks

A GROUP of trainees from HMS Sultan paid a special visit to Gosport Opportunity Group to help give the group's garden a much-needed make over.

The Naval Airmen, who all came from the Defence College of Technical Training's Royal Naval Air Engineering and Survival Equipment School, spent several days cleaning and redecorating the garden to improve the service users' experiences.

Formed in 1973, the Gosport Opportunity Group is a preschool which offers children with disabilities the opportunity to integrate with children from mainstream school. The group have been on the present Phoenix Way site for 25 years.

Naval Airman (Survival Equipment) Georgia Clarke, one of the trainees who volunteered to take part, said: "I haven't done much painting before, but it's really nice to see it all colourful.

"It's a really nice centre, the people here are really good with the children and it's got a real family feel about it all. Some of the children have come out to see what we're doing and it seems like we're making an impression."

Leading Airman (SE) Kadie Doyle said: "We're really excited to be here. Even after half a day we can see the difference that's been made already. The trainees were all super keen to get out and help and they can be really proud of what they've achieved."

## New boss at Raleigh

HMS Raleigh has a new leader as Captain Rich Harris became the base's 43rd Commanding Officer.

Capt Harris was welcomed to the Royal Navy training base in Torpoint by a guard of honour made up of recruits from the Hanson 08 class.

The 46-year-old is no stranger to HMS Raleigh. In 1993 he completed his Royal Naval Reserve confirmation course, as a rating specialising in mine warfare, at the base.

Capt Harris went on to join the Royal Navy full-time as an Officer and previously served at HMS Raleigh as the Commandant of the Defence Maritime Logistics School between October 2012 and April 2015.

Capt Harris said: "When I assumed command of the DMLS I said then that it was the pinnacle of my career. At the time, I had no idea that I would go one step further and command the whole establishment of officers, ratings, other ranks, civil servants and contractors, who work tirelessly to produce our sailors of such high quality, which delivers the best Navy in the world."

Born in Cardiff, Capt Harris joined the Royal Navy as a Short Career Supply Officer in 1995.

Capt Harris has served on three warships, including HMS Chatham, towards the end of the second Gulf War.

Ashore he undertook a spell as



a Divisional Officer at Britannia Royal Naval College and later became Training Execution Officer, responsible for the day-to-day delivery of initial officer training.

On promotion to Commander in 2008, Capt Harris was appointed to the Permanent Joint Headquarters at Northwood.

From Northwood, Capt Harris became the Group Logistics Commander for the Commander Amphibious Task Group based in Plymouth.

Following postings to Whitehall and the Navy Command Headquarters in Portsmouth, Capt Harris replaces Capt Ellie Ablett.



## Remarkable century for Ajax's Frank

A SURVIVOR of Britain's first naval triumph of WW2 was feted as he celebrated his 100th birthday.

Frank Burton is the oldest British sailor left to have fought at the River Plate in December 1939 – not that he remembers anything of the encounter.

The acting leading telegraphist was left concussed by the first shell from the German pocket battleship Graf Spee to strike cruiser HMS Ajax; shipmates said he continued to perform his duties despite the blow, fixing damaged aerials despite the tumult of battle.

A fellow veteran of the encounter, Basil Trott (a mere 98 and veteran of cruiser HMS Exeter), joined Frank at his Cambridge care home, as did Malcolm Collis of the River Plate Veterans Association (including the daughters of Admiral Sir Charles Woodhouse who was Ajax's captain in the battle) who presented the centenarian with a commemorative plaque (pictured above)... to join his card from the Queen, the Department of Works and Pensions, the Mayor of Ajax, Ontario (the town named after the ship in honour of the River Plate victory).

That victory saw Ajax, Exeter and HMS Achilles grapple with the Graf Spee which had roamed the Atlantic since the outbreak of war, sinking merchant shipping and evading all attempts by the Royal Navy to trap her.

The German warship was eventually located off Uruguay after more than three months' commerce raiding. Despite being outgunned, the British force engaged their foe, suffering heavy damage... but inflicting sufficient 'wounds' on the Graf Spee to force her to break off the battle and scurry to make repairs in Montevideo.

Unable to fix the ship in the three-day limit imposed in neutral Uruguay, the Germans famously scuttled the Graf Spee rather than face a fight to the death with the Royal Navy.

Frank's family were convinced he had succumbed to his wounds; when Ajax returned home in January 1940, the young sailor was not aboard.

It took a letter from Capt Woodhouse to explain that Frank had left the cruiser in the Falklands, volunteering to set up and run a wireless facility there; and so he did for the next four years.

Frank is the oldest of the River Plate Association's 18 surviving veterans, all of whom, bar one, are well in to their nineties.

He joined the RN in January 1935 as a Boy 2nd class and was drafted to HMS Queen Elizabeth the following year as his first ship. A young Princess Elizabeth – today's monarch – visited the ship at least twice during Frank's spell on board, so he particularly treasures the birthday card from Her Majesty.

He spent nearly two years with the battleship before joining Ajax in Portsmouth, deploying to the South Atlantic and South Pacific. He was one of hundred of sailors from his ship and HMS Exeter to help after an earthquake struck Concepción in Chile... although it was only in March 2017 that the telegraphist belatedly received a medal from the South American country's ambassador.



## Visitors dive into world of sub rescue

MEMBERS of the Indian Navy were welcomed to Faslane by Assistant Chief of Naval Staff Submarines, Rear Admiral John Weale.

Rear Admiral Mohit Gupta, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff Submarines and Rear Admiral Sreenivas Ratnam, Technical Manager together with staff from the Indian Navy Submarine Rescue Team, were visiting Scotland on a fact-finding mission on submarine rescue.

The group viewed the NATO Submarine Rescue System (NSRS) where they met with Commander Chris Coles of the Submarine Delivery Agency Emergency Response team.

NSRS staff showed the party around the

facilities and equipment, as well as share their knowledge and experience.

The NATO Submarine Rescue System is based at HM Naval Base Clyde but is jointly owned by the UK, France and Norway and is capable of deploying anywhere in the world, diving down to a submarine in distress, "mating" with escape hatches and carrying out an evacuation of the vessel.

The Indian Navy were keen to learn how the system is maintained, operated and deployed by the experienced team based at Faslane, as they themselves are in the process of procuring two new submarine rescue systems which are manufactured in Scotland by James Fisher Defence.

The purchase will hopefully lead to India joining the global submarine rescue community.

The ethos shared amongst submariners is such that the nearest submarine rescue system could be deployed to a submarine in distress, no matter which country it belongs to.

Commander Chris Coles said: "This was a great opportunity to meet the head of the Indian Submarine Service and his newly-formed rescue team.

"It will be a couple of years before India's rescue systems are fully operational but NSRS hopes to forge a close working relationship and establish mutual rescue arrangements with the Indian Navy."

# David thanked for lifetime of service

### THE year 1964.

The Beatles were topping the record and film charts with *A Hard Day's Night*.

Michael Caine was starring in *Zulu*, Sean Connery was putting bums on cinema seats in *Goldfinger*, while Dick van Dyke was struggling with 'cockerny' in *Mary Poppins*... unlike Audrey Hepburn who was refined by Rex Harrison in *My Fair Lady*.

Labour's Harold Wilson crowbarred the Tories out of No.10 after 13 years.

Across the Pond, Lyndon B Johnson romped to victory in the US Presidential election.

And shoe-banging Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev was toppled in favour of Leonard Brezhnev.

Television viewers were getting used to the idea of watching highlights of the weekend's best football on *Match of the Day*, and getting to know Likely Lads Bob and Terry for the first time.

And a teenage David Hilton signed on for a career at sea – a career he's still enjoying 54 years later.

To mark the veteran sailor's 70th birthday, he was singled out for a special presentation to mark his long and dedicated service to the navy and nation by Portsmouth Naval Base Commander Commodore Jim Higham.

As base services manager, it's the task of now Commander Hilton to ensure ships alongside receive all the facilities and support they can expect, make sure that daily goings-on across

the huge site are carried out safely and to take charge of the response in the event of a major emergency – among many other duties.

Although initially a radar rating, most of David's time in the RN has been associated with diving/bomb disposal/mine warfare – he switched to the branch after three years and spent the next decade plunging into home and Far Eastern waters.

Having reached the rank of chief petty officer, he was selected for promotion to officer – again, barring a spell as bosun of carrier HMS *Invincible* in the West Indies and Mediterranean, mostly in the world of small ships and diving.

So there was real mine clearance work to do as XO of HMS *Bicester* in the Gulf at the height of the tanker wars, followed by command of HMS *Iveston* and *Cottesmore* (he was relieved as CO of the latter after two years by the Duke of York).

Since then he's been the RN's inspector of diving, worked for the RN's chief training organisation FOST and headed the Fleet Diving Squadron for three years.

That brought the curtain down on his active RN career, but on leaving the service in August 2001 he remained in Portsmouth as a retired officer in the post he still holds today.

His 50 years in the RN were marked by an award of the MBE.

A keen DIY enthusiast, David spends his spare time on the Isle of Wight with his wife Marion tending to his home and garden and keeps fit by cycling.



● Cdre Jim Higham congratulates Cdr Dave Hilton as he hits 70



## Devotion is rewarded

SENIOR Lieutenant (SCC) David Derbyshire RNR was awarded the Golden Rose and the fourth Clasp for his Cadet Forces Medal at TS Tiger at Leicester.

The medal is awarded to adult volunteers for their devotion to the corps.

David was awarded his Golden Rose and Clasp by the District Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) David Nichol for his service of nearly 40 years to the Sea Cadets.

David said: "It has been a pleasure to be a volunteer through these many years, and passing on my knowledge to the youth of today, to see them getting their awards for the achievements they have made and their smiles, it makes my day."

He is serving still as an Assistant District Officer in Leicestershire as county liaison, and any other duties.

## Our new man in Gibraltar

BRITISH Forces Gibraltar has a new head at the helm with the appointment of Commodore Tim Henry.

He takes over from Commodore Mike Walliker, who has held the post since July 2016 and who is now returning to the UK at the end of his two-year appointment.

To mark the occasion, military and civilian personnel attended a formal Change of Command ceremony at HM Naval Base Gibraltar.

The Cdre and Mrs Charlotte Walliker left the Naval Base onboard HMS *Scimitar*, escorted by Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron RHIBs and vessels from the Gibraltar Defence Police maritime section.

After meeting his senior team and their families, Commodore Henry was invited to inspect a Saluting Battery of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and an 11-gun salute was fired in recognition of the assumption of office as Commander British Forces Gibraltar.

He is no stranger to Gibraltar, having served as the Commanding Officer of HMS *Trumpeter*, one of the then Gibraltar Squadron patrol boats.

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@rnmchildrensfund.org.uk  
www.rnmchildrensfund.org.uk

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



● POET Cyprone Barrett

## Time for the best prizes

REAR Admiral Paul Methven Director Submarine Acquisition visited HMS Sultan as the Reviewing Officer at the establishment's Ceremonial Divisions.

A total of 1,237 personnel gathered on the parade ground as the Admiral, who was accompanied by Captain Peter Towell, the Commanding Officer of HMS Sultan, inspected the Guard of Honour.

In addition to taking the salute from officers and ratings on parade, the Admiral presented a number of individual awards and prizes to recognise both exemplary service and academic achievement.

The Ceremonial Divisions was attended by representatives from a selection of organisations to which HMS Sultan is affiliated, including the Royal Naval Engineers' Benevolent Society, the Fleet Air Arm Association and the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

HMS Sultan Volunteer Band provided the musical accompaniment throughout the event.

The following presentations were made by Rear Admiral Paul Methven:

Long Service and Good Conduct medals: CPO G K Richardson and LET(ME) RG Waterhouse.

First Clasp: CPO M Dryhurst, CPO R J Chivers, CPO S McNirlan and CPO W L Taylor.

Institute of Mechanical Engineers Annual Prize for the highest overall course mark on POET(MESM): POET(SM) Michael Bevan (HM Submarines).

Institute of Mechanical Engineers Annual Prize for the highest overall course mark on POET(ME)(GS): POET Cyprone Barrett (HMS Defender).

The Michael Collins Sword Prize for the best overall SEMC student for both SEMC and C of C training, presented by Tim Collins, son of the late Lt Cdr Michael Collins, went to Sub Lt Jones.

The Royal Naval Engineers' Benevolent Society Award (RNEBS) for the student completing POAET (AV) QC achieving the highest grades, presented by Mark Stevens, went to POAET (AV) Hixson.

The Fleet Air Arm Association Award (FAAA) for the best all round LAET (AV) & (M) through the academic year, presented by Arnold Thompson: Avionics award made to LAET (AV) Bowden; Mechanical award made to LAET (M) Beasley.



● POET(SM) Michael Bevan



# Ex-Bootnecks help veterans recover

**TWO former Royal Marines, who both have first-hand experience of the benefits of 'adventure therapy' to help fight post-combat trauma, are setting off across Portugal with 12 other injured veterans, determined to prove their approach can help save lives.**

"Earlier this year it was all I could do to get myself off the sofa," said one of the founders of the new ex-Marine run charity VetRun180, Matt 'Bish' Bispham, who was medically discharged from the Royal Marines in December 2017 after being diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

"I had fought it for so long, and had extensive psychotherapy, but the flashbacks and nightmares were not going away. I was depressed and lonely and losing touch with who I was.

"Then out of the blue I was offered the chance to drive across the Sahara in a crappy car with other injured veterans, and something happened. Somewhere in the middle of the desert, I got my mojo back."

'Bish', who was awarded the Military Cross for bravery during one of his tours

of Afghanistan, met his co-founder of VetRun180, fellow former Marine Matt Abbott, during that Sahara expedition, and the two men gelled straight away.

"I can ping a Marine from miles away. We have a certain look about us – a mix of arrogance, good looks and being bonkers," said 'Bish'.

"Matt and I spent nearly two weeks cooped up in a car together, bashing through sand, just talking about anything and everything, and it was the best thing we could have ever done." Before the epic trip was over the seed of a business plan had been sown.

"We knew that if just getting away from it all and pushing ourselves to our limits could do so much for our psyches, it could help improve the lives of others too.

"So many fellow veterans are still out there fighting their demons," said Abbott. "I was discharged with physical injuries, but as my wounds got better my state of mind worsened. When you don't think you are good enough for anything, that puts a huge stress on the mind and the body.

"VetRun180 is all about making people realise just how good they really are, despite all the challenges they have faced, and are still

facing."

Fast forward six months from the Sahara, and the scene is now set for the first ever VetRun180 adventure, but this time not in a 16 year-old Citroen Berlingo, but a fleet of 4 x 4 Land Rovers and support vehicles, complete with off-road camping equipment.

The veterans will spend ten days driving, rafting, kayaking and rock-climbing in some of the most remote areas of Portugal.

"Our sponsors have been stunningly generous," said Abbott. "With the support of our five trustees and a number of charity contributors, we are now equipped to take military veterans just about anywhere. Without their support VetRun180 wouldn't be anywhere near where it is today."

As well as the Portugal expedition, more trips are planned to the United States and the Middle East in the next 12 months. VetRun180 also intends to take amputees to the Sahara; PTSD sufferers to the base camp of Everest, and blind veterans to the Amazon.

"As everyone knows, a lot of what we do in the military is helping others," said 'Bish', "so this trip to Portugal will also be about doing that."

## Landowners thanked for their support

COMMANDO Helicopter Force welcomed farmers and their families to say thank you for their support.

Landowners' Day saw estate owners and farmers attend a capability demonstration at Merryfield Airfield at Ilminster.

Guests were able to talk to CHF personnel and to see some of the combat vehicles, communications equipment, weaponry and other components of the force, including a Wildcat helicopter from 847 Naval Air Squadron.

As a sincere gesture of thanks guests were also able to undertake a short familiarisation flight in one of 845 NAS's Commando Merlin helicopter.

The majority of remote helicopter landing sites within the Yeovilton air operating area belong to private landowners who, on a goodwill basis permit helicopters to land on or work and train at low level over their land.

These sites are vital to the training carried out by the Commando Helicopter Force to help it deliver its operational capability.

Any farmer or landowner who can offer helicopter access to parts of their land, even just once a year should contact Lieutenant Commander Bob Santrian on 01935 456843 or email [mark.santrian132@mod.gov.uk](mailto:mark.santrian132@mod.gov.uk)

Pictures: PO(Phot) Des Wade



● Left, NA(SE) Jack Willetts helps Daniel put on a flying helmet; above, LA(SE) Marley Rudland with James and Daniel in a life raft; right, Oliver with Lt Daniel Burnett in a Wildcat during the Landowners' Day at Merryfield Airfield in Somerset



## Top honour for weapons officer

FIRST Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones presents the Officers' Association Sword to Sub Lieutenant Edward Timpson at Britannia Royal Naval College.

The award of the sword from Britannia Royal Naval College is presented annually to the Officer Cadet who has demonstrated the strongest adherence to the Naval Service values and ethos during Initial Officer Training.

Edward, originally from Sandwich in Kent, joined the Royal Navy in 2009 and is currently based at HMS Collingwood as a weapons engineering officer.

He has previously served aboard HMS Turbulent, conducting anti-piracy and counter narcotic operations in the Arabian Gulf and was also involved in operations off the coast of Libya during the conflict

in 2011.

Thanks to his job with the Royal Navy, Edward has also visited India, Bahrain, UAE, Portugal and Greece.

Furthermore, as part of the Royal Navy Presentation Team Edward has worked hard visiting schools to inform the general public of what the Royal Navy does for them.

In his spare time, the ex-Sir Roger Manwoods School pupil enjoys hockey, rugby and cricket and spending time with his fiancée Natasha.

"Being recommended for this award is a great honour. The Royal Navy has given me an opportunity to develop an interest in engineering and achieve an electrical engineering degree after leaving school with just GCSEs."

Picture: Craig Keating

## Sporting success aids school

BATTLING the heat and humidity – as well as each other – a number of personnel based at the UKNSF in Bahrain competed in a charity football match to raise money for a school for disabled children.

Through the guidance of a local charity, Bahrain 4 All, a school in Hidd was chosen to be the beneficiary of the money raised.

Rather than just hand over the donation to the school, the charity committee from UKMCC wanted the children and young people to receive something special to mark their return to school.

A small group from UKMCC were able to attend a back to school party and present over 20 children with pencil cases, crayons, drawing pads and a lunch box.

Basma Saeleh Buradha, the director of the school and member of the Gulf Disability Society, said: "I want to thank everyone at UKMCC, because you made the first day back to school for our pupils very special. They will remember this day for the fun and love that has been shown to them."

LSC Matthew "Spender" Penny, said: "Taking part in the five-a-side competition was fun, but being at the school and seeing how the money which was raised is improving and impacting young lives is fantastic."

The team from UKMCC enjoyed learning some local Bahraini dance moves and ended the visit by eating a specially made 'back to school' cake.

## Chief bastion of support

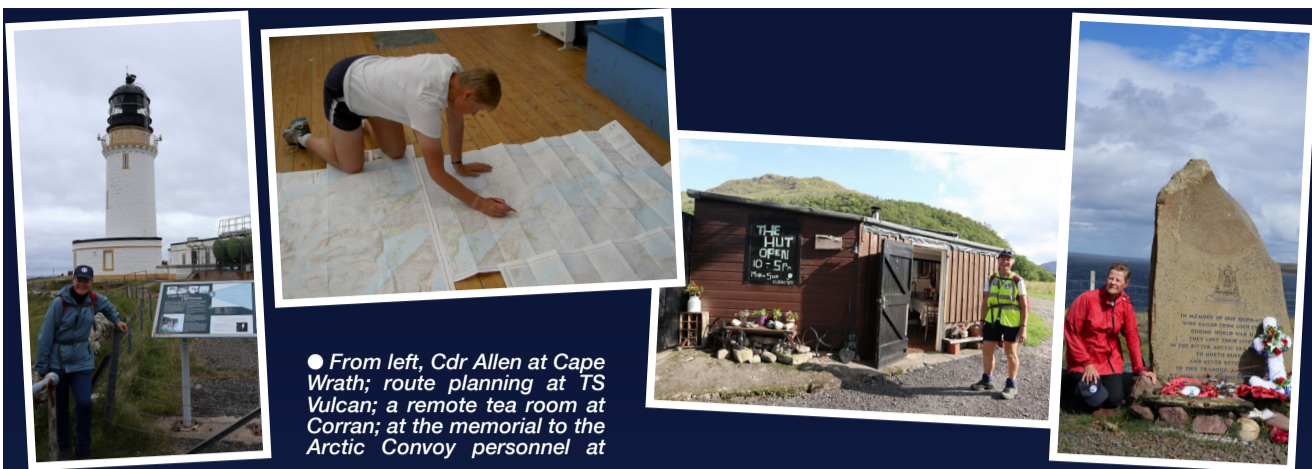
CHIEF Petty Officer Paul Bryant is one of the longest serving sailors at RNAS Culdrose after joining the Royal Navy on September 1 1980.

Having completed 34 years as a regular, he then joined the RNR Air Branch, fulfilling a role at the Royal Naval School of Flight Deck Operations.

After 38 years in the Senior Service, with four years as a reservist he still regularly deploys twice a year to Oman to assist in delivering flight deck officer training to the Royal Navy of Oman.

Lieutenant Commander Danny Gordon the CO of 1700 NAS, congratulated CPO Bryant for his service to the Royal Navy and thanked him for his dedication and hard work during his time on the squadron.





● From left, Cdr Allen at Cape Wrath; route planning at TS Vulcan; a remote tea room at Corran; at the memorial to the Arctic Convoy personnel at

# Victory walker's low points in Highlands

COMMANDER Jane Allen set off from HMS Victory on 21 October last year, to walk anti-clockwise round the coast of mainland UK for two naval charities. In the August edition of *Navy News* she had reached John o'Groats and began walking across the top of Scotland. Since then she has turned south and encountered a few ups and downs along the way.

Not long after leaving John o'Groats I reached mainland UK's most northerly point, Dunnet Head, and more recently tramped out to Ardnamurchan Point, the mainland's most westerly tip.

In between these significant markers I've had several interruptions.

Firstly, a family wedding in western Cornwall, involving outward and return train journeys from hell.

Secondly, an extended period of route planning at TS Vulcan, Thurso's Sea Cadet unit. Here we planned my 'Great Escape' from Scotland. An estimated 1,300 walking miles away, 46 Ordnance Survey maps are needed before reaching the border at Gretna Green – an ideal place to escape!

Finally, disaster struck at Durness where I suffered my first injury since leaving Portsmouth.

Just before my planned walk out to remote Cape Wrath at Scotland's top left tip, it could not have come at a worse time, marooning me for a week. I was desperate to get going again to avoid red flags waving at the Cape, indicating naval gunnery or aerial bombardment activity.

The 11-mile walk out to Cape Wrath was straightforward before I turned southwards. Whilst ignoring the thousands of miles ahead I felt liberated, telling myself I was at last walking 'home' to Portsmouth!

I bog-hopped, waded through high wet grass, and jumped or

splashed through streams as I made my way over untracked and rough moorland towards deserted Sandwood Bay. After injury time this was a truly great moment.

Since then I've seen mountains of every shape and size and passed or crossed water courses ranging from trickling streams to thundering rivers.

I've frequently clambered from sea level to dizzying heights. My highlight should have been the 2,054ft Applecross Pass, which I eventually crossed in atrocious conditions and nil visibility. I had to buy a postcard to see the views I'd missed!

With lochs being a key water feature in Scotland, I've spent much time walking up and down some lengthy shorelines, often shrouded by thick forests.

Parts of the coastline have been inaccessible, but I've made every effort to reach even the remotest peninsula communities. Sometimes there are more people in the local cemetery than there are living in these isolated hamlets!

Three lochs were of particular Naval interest. Loch Erribol (nicknamed Loch 'orrible by British sailors) is a deep-water anchorage to the east of Cape Wrath and was famous for the WWII German U-Boat surrender.

Further south, Kylesku on the shores of Loch Chairn Bhain, was used as a training ground for two-man chariots (human torpedoes) and four-man X-Boats (midget submarines). It was submariners from the 12th Flotilla who attacked the German battleship Tirpitz hiding in a Norwegian fiord.

Another sheltered deep-water sea loch familiar to sailors of both the Royal and Merchant Navies during WWII was Loch Ewe. It was an ideal location for the Home Fleet, enabling warships to make a quick departure to

either the nearby Atlantic or Arctic Oceans. Loch Ewe also served as a convoy anchorage and assembly point, where merchant ships joined their naval escorts. Among those that assembled there were convoys which braved the fearsome 2,500-mile Arctic Ocean route. Many crewmen perished. Today, that episode is recalled in the Russian Arctic Convoy Museum at Aultbea, and the Russian Arctic Convoy Memorial that stands at Cove on Loch Ewe's opposite shore. I visited both places and reflected on these momentous events.

The remoteness of the North West Highlands has brought its challenges to the support team member too.

Much of the way has been on the North Coast 500 Route, a scenic circular route that cars, motorcyclists and motorhomes follow. This has made single-track roads extremely busy and also highlighted just how many drivers are unable to reverse, even when a passing place is a few feet behind them. Because of this the Victory Van has done as many miles backwards as forwards in support!

In the Highlands we've come to rely on sporadic village stores which provide every conceivable service: postage, Calor gas, groceries, DIY essentials, bakery, logs and fuel from the community petrol pumps.

Meanwhile, communication with one another and to the outside world by phone or email is unreliable. There have been days when we've been forced into 'radio silence' which is frustrating, but it can have its advantages!

The Victory Walk is raising money for two naval charities, WRNS BT and RNRMC. To donate go to [www.Virginmoneygiving.com/victorywalk17-18](http://www.Virginmoneygiving.com/victorywalk17-18). To find out more about Jane's Victory Walk go to [www.victorywalk.uk](http://www.victorywalk.uk)

## Four new recruits to help raise profile

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity has enlisted four new Vice Presidents to help raise the charity's profile and champion its key messages.

**General Sir Gordon Messenger**, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, is the country's highest-ranking Royal Marine.

As VCDS, General Messenger plays a leading role in the future development of the armed forces, including the definition and delivery of future military capability requirements and for co-ordinating delivery of top-level decisions – making, implementation and monitoring progress.

He is the Defence Board lead for military personnel, training, cyber, risk and innovation.

**Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence** is Chairman of English Heritage Trust, having previously served for four years as a Commissioner for the organisation and is the Vice Chairman and naval representative on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

A career naval officer, his time in uniform ended after serving for three years as Chief Executive in charge of the Defence Estates Organisation. He is also a Trustee of both the RNLI and HMS

Victory Preservation Company.

**Sir Roger Carr** is Chairman of BAE Systems plc and the English National Ballet. He is also a senior advisor to KKR – the world's largest private equity company. He has previously held a number of senior appointments, including Chairman of Centrica plc, Chairman of Cadbury plc, Deputy Chairman of the Court of the Bank of England, Deputy Chairman of the BBC Trust and President of the Confederation of British Industry.

**Honorary Captain The Hon Stephen Watson RNR** has served as a trustee of the RNRMC from 2013-2018.

He is the Chief Executive and founder of the media and communications group, CTN. Stephen is a former BBC News and current affairs producer and has spent his career advising international companies, governments and leaders on communications strategy.

He is President of the British-German Association and Chairman of Tusk Trust, the African Wildlife Conservation Charity. He serves as an Honorary Captain in the RNR and as an advisor to the Royal Navy on its strategic communications and political engagement.

## Canoe challenge

TWO teams made up of Royal Navy personnel and French Navy personnel took to the Caledonian Canal in Scotland to compete in a 72-hour canoe race in order to raise money for two military charities, ADOSM and the RNRMC.

The race saw teams made up of sailors from both the Royal Navy and the French Navy as well as students and members of staff.

The Royal Navy team included personnel from Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth as well as personnel based in Scotland.

The teams competed against each other for their respective naval charities with over 35 people taking part over three days.

After a good night's sleep, the teams took to the canal in two-man canoes and started on their marathon challenge.

After three days of fierce competition, 12 teams crossed the finish line in Inverness, with the overall winners Team d'Estienne d'Orves taking the trophy.



## Frigate crew row the Suez

THE crew of HMS Argyll conducted a 'row the Suez' challenge to raise funds for the RNRMC.

In good naval tradition, the crew tested themselves to see if they could row the equivalent length of the canal on a rowing machine whilst the ship completed the actual transit through the canal.

The distance of the transit was 120 miles and the ship would cover that in over 15 hours.

Rowing was broken up into 20-minute slots and would require a minimum of 45 people to row an average of 4.3km each to cover both the distance and time.

First up to row was Leading Seaman Dominic Nott, who set the benchmark with a strong

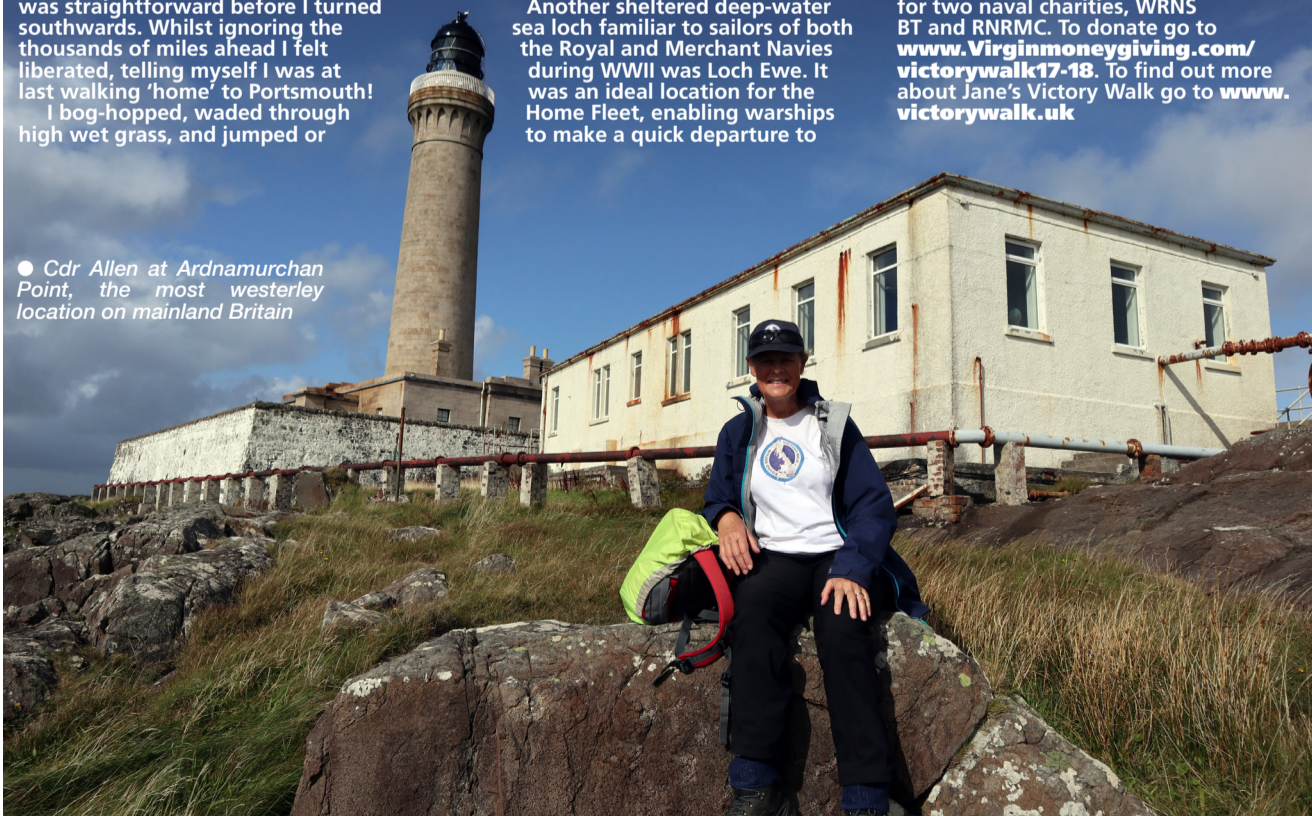
5,225 metres; over the course of the day this distance would only be broken twice, while others tried but came up short.

As the sun started to rise, the heat inside and outside the ship increased dramatically thus making the task harder.

As expected, there was a slight dip in distances covered; surprisingly enough though, during the midday heat, the record for the longest distance rowed was broken twice in quick succession first by Leading Physical Trainer Andy Lowes with 5,358 metres and then by Lt James Cain RM with 5,541 metres.

Final figures showed that the rowers covered 128 miles, around eight miles more than the ship had covered through the canal.

● Cdr Allen at Ardnamurchan Point, the most westerly location on mainland Britain





## Baristas in Bahrain

THE latest phase of new facilities added to the RN's home in the Middle East has seen (probably) the best coffee shop in Bahrain open. The KBR Coffee Shop – so named because it's run by contractors KBR and, er, serves coffee – is intended to be one of the social hubs of the UK Naval Support Facility, which opened in the kingdom earlier this year.

The waterfront complex is home to several hundred British personnel running/supporting naval operations east of Suez through the UK Maritime Component Command and the forces assigned to it (four minehunters and their RFA 'mother ship', plus any RN assets in the region such as frigate HMS Argyll).

As well as providing on-base *en suite* accommodation for sailors and marines, who were previously scattered around the kingdom in flats and apartments, at the heart of the new facility is a welfare complex featuring a gym, galley, cinema, function rooms, free WiFi, and spaces to chill out.

The complex opened earlier this year, with a shop recently being added to facilities and now the coffee shop – sparing personnel the trek to the US naval base and its PX. Although they're only half a mile away, that's not particularly pleasant when the mercury is in the 40s!

More than 100 UK personnel were on hand to test the coffee shop after Capt John Craig and SC Ben Onley-Williams cut the ribbon to officially mark the opening before sitting down to a cuppa (above).

"This is so much better than nearly any other café in Bahrain. It'll be a great place to hang out, but I'd be equally happy chilling here on my own," said Lieutenant Ben Hammick, HMS Brocklesby's navigator.

Commander Elaine Boyd, head of logistics at UKMCC, added: "This coffee shop is an excellent facility for the military contingent in Bahrain. And when the ships are alongside it offers a place for the minehunter crews to socialise and relax."



● Sub Lt Grace Allum, DKMS' Sarah Gray and Chief-of-Staff Aviation Cdr Cath Jordan begin selling cakes to fight cancer

## Donuts draw donors

THE plight of father-of-two Vaughn Scott has prompted a drive by the Fleet Air Arm to lead the Navy's fight against blood cancer.

It staged a morning-long awareness event at Navy Headquarters on Whale Island to encourage donors to come forward – and to spur the rest of the RN to join in.

The awareness event concluded with volunteers coming forward to register as donors – the requirements for acceptance merely being aged 17-55, in general good health, and able to complete a registration form.

Three mouth swabs later and you're sorted, joining a database of more than 400,000 donors in the UK alone.

Some 145 people registered – that's about one seventh of the workforce in the headquarters building – and a cake sale bolstered the funds of blood cancer charity DKMS by £216.13.

According to the charity, every 20 minutes someone in the UK is diagnosed with a blood cancer such as leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma – and blood stem cell donation is their best, or often only, chance of survival.

For 847 NAS personnel that stark fact hit home during the Jeanne d'Arc deployment this year with FS Dixmude to the Far East.

Logistician LSC Vaughn Scott was part of the 30-strong team supporting the battlefield Wildcats aboard the French assault ship.

He began to feel unwell mid-deployment and was flown back to the UK where the diagnosis was acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (also known as ALL) and he immediately began chemotherapy treatment.

A donor, sadly, will not save his life, but it will extend the little time he has left to marry the love of his life and spend some quality time with his children.

"This is not the first diagnosis of RN personnel. Luckily some have received the correct match and a willing donor," said Sub Lt Grace Allum. "Registering is very easy and it could save someone's life."

For more details about the disease and how you can help, see [www.dkms.org.uk/en](http://www.dkms.org.uk/en).

# Don't let dyslexia hit your career



THE RN is marking Dyslexia Awareness Week – October 1st-7th – by both highlighting the condition – and the help the service can provide to those who have difficulty with words.

One in ten people have some form of dyslexia, though symptoms vary from person to person – it's much more than just difficulties with spelling or reading.

The condition affects the way the brain processes, stores and retrieves information – it has nothing to do with an individual's intellectual ability.

It's regarded as a Specific Learning Disability (SpLD) – and the Royal Navy employs dedicated advisors to assist.

Their help can be life changing – not only improving your performance at work but it may also improve your confidence and open up fresh opportunities.

Among those to benefit from a local SpLD advisor is WO2 Richard Peake of 3 Commando Brigade (pictured). This is his story.



"I've struggled with dyslexia all my life, leaving school with no GCSEs and feeling like an educational failure. I have always been good at practical work but I needed a challenge and purpose, so I joined the military as a Royal Marines Commando. My dyslexia did not affect me during training as it was a practical learning environment which I enjoyed.

My dyslexia did not noticeably affect my career until I reached the rank of senior NCO, where the ability to produce written work is more important. I was expected to effectively manage, administer and communicate by email or by operational staff work and I found this tremendously difficult.

On one occasion, I was heavily criticised for my poor written work and told that I was illiterate and uneducated. This was the turning point for me and I knew that I needed to do something to prove the doubters wrong.

Initially I worked closely with the education department at CTC RM to complete my English and Maths GCSEs. On completion, I was educationally-qualified to put myself forward for Yeoman of Signals (YofS) specialisation

(Telecommunications Systems Manager).

Following a successful interview, I was selected to attend the one-year course at the Royal Signals Training Centre, Blandford. On that course, I struggled with academic writing and worked long hours to produce the same work as others.

I completed the course through hard work and determination, receiving a FdSc in Telecommunications Systems from Bournemouth University – but I vowed never to do an educational course again.

I decided to study again a year later but I knew my limitations and wanted to work more efficiently.

I contacted the Portsmouth SpLD advisor and was tested again for dyslexia, referred to an educational psychologist assessment and provided with recommendations, advice and coping strategies.

During the assessments, I was informed about a government scheme which supports individuals in education with SpLDs and received an educational grant.

I purchased a laptop, dictaphone, dictation and

reading software and 30 hours of specialist dyslexia tutoring. This new knowledge and approach along with the equipment, software and specialist tutoring changed my life. I went on to achieve a 2:1 BSc in Communications Management with Lincoln University.

The software systems and coping strategies I am using in my work environment have allowed me to create templates quickly, simplify processes, and improve efficiency.

I was promoted to WO2 in 2016 and have completed the WO1 board this year. I have continued my educational journey, working towards an MSc in Leadership and Management from Portsmouth University through distance learning.

I cannot recommend the Royal Navy SpLD advising team enough. Their help and support has allowed me to mitigate my shortfalls due to dyslexia and concentrate on my strengths to achieve my educational and work aspirations."

■ For an appointment with an SpLD advisor, contact your local Learning and Development Hub. Details at [www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navylearn](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navylearn)

## Westminster's 'bean busy

THE grey wastes of the Atlantic are a long way from the Caribbean – even at the height of summer.

But chefs in HMS Westminster's galley were determined to give their shipmates a tropical taste of home with a Caribbean-themed night as the frigate conducted a maritime security patrol in home waters.

Those patrols – straight off the back of summer leave – meant the 180 sailors aboard missed out on the searing temperatures which left the UK scorched through July and August.

Like many RN vessels the 'capital ship' draws a sizeable number of her ship's company from St Vincent and the Grenadines, a Commonwealth chain of islands just off the Venezuelan coast.

With reggae and soca tunes (think *Feeling Hot Hot Hot* or, if you have to, *Who Let the Dogs Out*), echoing around the passageways and compartments of the Type 23, sailors spent hours preparing the food and making the spices from scratch.

The meat was then cut and left to marinade in the homemade spices to add extra flavour – but toned down from their original strength as Caribbean sailors didn't think their shipmates could handle the strong spices.

Come mealtime, sailors sat down to barbecue or jerk-flavoured chicken or pork, lamb curry roti, macaroni pie, rice and peas, potato and vegetable salad and homemade coleslaw. If that didn't fill stomachs, banana bread and coconut slice for dessert did.

"It's a good opportunity for the Caribbean community to present traditional cuisine and express their culture for the ship's company to enjoy. What a fantastic way to spread the Caribbean spirit!" said welfare representative AB(Sea) Thomas Judd.

ET(CIS) Jake Volpe added: "All in all it was a brilliant spread, one that everyone appreciated. The ship's company welcomed the change of menu. The Caribbean-themed night has inspired the chefs to prepare meals from other parts of the world resulting in an American, Thai and Mexican-themed nights."

■ You can watch a short video on the RN YouTube channel celebrating the Commonwealth golden thread running through every department on HMS Queen Elizabeth. More than 15 states in the family of nations are represented by the ship's company.



● LStd Kelston Bute chops slabs of beef and (below) the Caribbean buffet awaits diners



AS YOU know there has been a great deal of change for CIS Specs and within WETG both training units – CTU and ISTU – have been working around the clock to ensure training packages which need updating are actioned and the areas that are missing are brought on line, writes WO1 Daniel Castle.

As you are all aware there are always some contract issues, but I can assure you that hasn't stopped your training school making the necessary amendments which will be online during 2019 – so here are just a few:

1. Due to the split streaming of our specs and techs, it has been identified that our CIS Tech's (GS and SM) are missing some IS elements and thanks to the work by ISTU that will be brought online in time, to ensure our CIS Techs get the training they need to meet the IS demand.
2. Both the LETs and POETs CIS specs qualifying courses have also commenced their upgrade. CTU teams supported by training design are hard at work reviewing and upgrading these courses to meet the requirements of our CIS spec sections leads and again the third quarter of 2019 will see this amount of work brought online.
3. Coupled with the upgrade of the LET and POET CIS spec qualifying course, the VQ Centre, lead by Mr Duncan, has begun a mapping exercise which will also allow your management to understand what accreditation is out there and what we can align with your new courses.
4. Branch management is nearing completion of new Career Development Journals (CDJs) for both LET and POET to align with training. These new journals will support our future section heads on their path to promotion.

I've had the pleasure of visiting both Faslane and MCSU over the past few weeks. You can all imagine some of the questions I was asked and I fully understand there is still some confusion out there and some lack of confidence of where the CIS branch is going.

I was told by one CIS spec that "He has heard this all before" – and, to be honest, he is right. However, I hope through these updates in *Navy News*, the blogs on Defence Connect, the launch of Project Mountbatten, the mountain of work by the previous BM and your training school's determination to continually improve training, not only sends a signal that we fully understand the issues, but more importantly we QSL and I would ask you to ZUJ because training changes are coming.

My last point is to wish WO1 Andy Stevenson every success as he leaves the Royal Navy after serving over 30 years: Andy, on behalf of CIS specs, we wish you all the best for the future and thank you for all you have done for the cadre.

Contact WO1 Castle: [Daniel.Castle304@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Daniel.Castle304@mod.gov.uk) or 93832 8811.

It's your 2-6 – so contact Sophie Dennis ([sophie.dennis100@mod.gov.uk](mailto:sophie.dennis100@mod.gov.uk)/93832 5532) to include





## Culdrose enjoys a diamond day

REGULAR business on Helston's Meneage Street is brought to a halt as personnel from RNAS Culdrose exercise their right to march through the streets of the Cornish town with 'swords drawn, bayonets fixed, drums beating, bands playing and colours flying'.

The men and women of the air station marked 60 years of enjoying the borough's highest civic honour, the freedom of the town, with the annual parade down the main streets.

The diamond anniversary parade was 'blessed' with Cornish drizzle and the final appearance by Sea King crews and mechanics, who'd completed a farewell flypast of Cornwall and Devon 24 hours earlier. They formed the lead platoon behind the Guard of Honour and Colours Party.

There was plenty of support from the local community; applause and cheers of encouragement could be heard as the sailors marched through the town.

Staff from businesses in the town stopped work and children from local schools lined the pavements of Coinagehall Street waving flags and shouting their support as the Naval personnel marched past, while Captain Anthony Rimington, the air station's Commanding Officer, took the salute.

Inspecting the marchers before they set off, Helston's Mayor Cllr John Martin said: "I am sure that all of you like me, have a great respect for the honour of this day. The air station plays an important part in the life and economy of Helston, not only for the employment of civilian workers, but also socially, and I hope this ceremony strengthens the ties between us. Long may this relationship remain." Capt Rimington added: "We at the air station do not underestimate the importance of this event and the trust and confidence that the town expresses in the men and women of the air station."

Picture: LS(SE) Brian Aitkenhead



## Magpie darts in for two debut port visits

LATE summer holidaymakers watch as the Royal Navy's newest vessel makes her way up the Kingsbridge Estuary on her maiden visit to her affiliate.

Catamaran HMS Magpie has spent three days at sea under the White Ensign for the first time as her crew get to know how the survey ship handles.

A replacement for HMS Gleaner, which retired earlier in 2018 after 35 years' service, Magpie was commissioned in June – the first of new small craft the RN is acquiring to replace aging work/support boats.

Among the craft to be exchanged, the familiar blue picket boats at Dartmouth, so cadets at Britannia Royal Navy College were eager to look around when Magpie debuted on the Dart.

Officer Cadet Jacob Gibson said: "We're 14 weeks from passing out and to see the opportunities that are provided with the new vessels that are coming into the Fleet, at one

end of the spectrum you've got Magpie and the other end you've got HMS Queen Elizabeth. The survey potential within the Royal Navy is really exciting."

Magpie spent two days on the Dart before calling in on the picture postcard resort of Salcombe – her affiliated town where Mayor Nikki Turton was waiting to greet Lt Cdr William Alexander and his ship's company, before being given a quick tour of the 18-metre catamaran.

It's Magpie's task to survey the places other parts of the RN Hydrographic Squadron cannot reach thanks to her size and shallow draft.

That chiefly means updating charts of UK ports, harbours and waterways – in the final months of her life, for example, Gleaner was used extensively to survey the exit from Rosyth... allowing Britain's biggest warship, HMS Queen Elizabeth, to safely leave to begin her sea trials in the summer of 2017.



## Spotlight on RM band at extravaganza

ROYAL Navy personnel took part in the pomp, pageantry and pizzazz of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

Taking centre stage at the world-renowned event were the Royal Marines Band Plymouth, the Senior Service's key participant in this year's show.

The Plymouth band were joined by musicians from all branches of the UK Armed Forces as well as international acts from as far afield as Mexico, the Czech Republic and Oman.

Corporal Bugler Jamie Ritchie said: "The best thing about being in the Royal Marines Band is the travelling and the experience you get in playing in different

countries at different events.

"My parents came along to our first performance at the Esplanade. Although they've seen me perform many times before, it's a very proud moment to play in front of them at the Edinburgh Tattoo."

At the same time as the show was being held on the Edinburgh Castle Esplanade, Royal Navy River-class Fishery Protection vessel HMS Mersey sailed into Leith Harbour for a visit.

The Portsmouth-based ship and her 30-strong crew were on-hand to welcome senior naval officers from Bahrain, France, Germany and the Kingdom of

Saudi Arabia before they travelled to the tattoo to take the salute as guests of honour.

More than 1,200 cast and crew were involved in this year's show, which was in support of the RAF's centenary.

Performers played to an estimated audience of 8,800 people each night with a further 100 million people from around the world watching the TV broadcasts.

International participants this year included the Royal Cavalry of the Sultanate of Oman's Pipers, the US Air Force Honour Guard Drill Team and The Banda Monumental de Mexico.

Picture: LPhot Will Haigh

# Harry goes behind the scenes at CTC

**THE Duke of Sussex, Captain General Royal Marines, visited the Royal Marines Commando Training Centre in Lympstone, in Devon.**

The Duke had the opportunity to explore the Royal Marines Base and meet new recruits undergoing training in order to learn more about the process of becoming a Royal Marine.

The Commando Training Centre at Lympstone selects and trains all Royal Marines officers, recruits and reserves. On average, 1,300 recruits, 2,000 potential recruits and 400 potential officers attend training courses and acquaint courses at the centre every year.

The Duke also met the Invictus Games Racing Team, which includes former Royal Marine Commandos Steve McCully and Paul Vice MC, who were at Lympstone for the day for a team-bonding exercise.

The Duke arrived at Lympstone in a Wildcat AH1 Helicopter flown by 847 Naval Air Squadron from Commando



Helicopter Force, based at Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton, who provide crucial aerial support to the Royal Marines.

Prince Harry received a ceremonial welcome at CTCRM before meeting recruits training in the gym and world-famous commando assault course.

The Duke also learned about

the support services on offer to Royal Marines, including the onsite rehabilitation centre, the Royal Marines charity and a regular family group called 'Who Let the Dads Out' at which Royal Marines families take time to chat, play and have a cup of tea once a week.

The Duke had the opportunity

to meet the Invictus Games Racing Team and their specially-adapted racing cars.

Formed in 2017, Invictus Games Racing is a collaborative project with the Invictus Games Foundation that sees injured ex-service personnel compete in two specially-commissioned Jaguar GT4 race cars in the British GT championships 2018 season.

The team comprises four ex-service personnel from the Royal Marines, RAF and the Parachute Regiment, in addition to two professional drivers.

The Duke concluded his day at CTCRM Lympstone with a ceremonial sword presentation on the steps of the centre and gifts from Commandant General Royal Marines, Major General Charlie Stickland.

The Duke of Sussex became Captain General Royal Marines in December 2017 and assumed the role in succession to his grandfather the Duke of Edinburgh, who was Captain General for 64 years.

## Mick's so proud of his 'mini matelot'

CHIEF Petty Office Aircraft Handler Mick Eley stands proudly with his cadet daughter Molly.

Molly, who is studying marine biology at Swansea University, joined the Cambria URNU last year.

With a day in the week learning drill and seamanship, and most weekends taken up with visits, adventurous activities including climbing, caving and water fall jumping, poppy selling in the Liberty Stadium and Brangwyn Hall in Swansea, Freedom of Cambria and Remembrance parades, weekends at sea and swimming tests at Dartmouth, she has been busy.

Molly even had a two-week deployment on HMS Express, with runs ashore in France, Southampton and the Isle of Wight.

She also became involved in recruiting students at Swansea.

Although she has no real aspirations to join the RN, she loves it, and has had an incredible experience in such a short period of time.

She has made her dad, who works at RNAS Culdrose, very proud.

Molly now has wets instead of cups of tea during her stand easy, instead of breaks, at university.



# Sailors with real power

**WHAT** have naval engineers ever done for us?

It's a question asked – and answered – by one of their number in a semi-official history of the branch to mark the Year of Engineering.

Senior marine engineer Commander Mark Barton has cast his eye over two centuries of naval history for a special 106-page coffee-table-size paperback, *The Engineering Branch of the Royal Navy*, distributed across the Service.

Since the first engineers joined the RN with the advent of steam in the 1820s, the branch has been something of a Cinderella when it comes to the pen of historians.

There are technical manuals aplenty but academic histories, general studies and memoirs of the role of the engineer are relatively few.

"We have a great heritage as a branch," says Cdr Barton. "We should be extremely proud, remember our past but also seek future innovations."

Cdr Barton's book doesn't delve into the mechanics of engineering in the RN; it's more interested in the men (and latterly women) than the machines and the impact they've had on the Senior Service.

He shows it's a branch which never struggled for identity – but has had to fight for recognition.

Indeed, it took 15 years after the first men were employed for a formal engineering branch to be created... and a decade more before the first engineer officers were permitted (much to the chagrin of the rest of the RN).

Indeed an 'us' and 'them' mentality seems to persist through much of the engineers' history.

Seamanship officers looked down on their engineering shipmates – they wouldn't be able to mix with the circles in which true naval officers moved, they argued.

Stokers silenced such put downs with deeds. William Johnstone became the first (and to date only) naval engineer to earn the VC in the Crimea; 31 engineers would earn the Albert Medal or equivalent for bravery not in the line of fire.

Before oil became the RN's fuel of choice, a stoker's life was hard – their levels of fitness were second only to Royal Marines. Life in an engine room was "rather like working in a coal mine that was on fire during an earthquake, with debilitating environmental conditions of heat, noise, dust and fumes compounded by physical considerations of ship's movement and darkness."

Which doesn't really sell life in the bowels of a dreadnought. Luckily, recompense was good – the most junior of stokers earned five pence per day more than an able seaman in 1914.

By the time the idea of the engineer had undergone a revolution: coal was slowly being phased out. The turbine was the engine of choice. There were electrical engineers. Submarine engineers. And, since 1911, air engineers to look after the fledgling Royal Naval Air Service.

All would be put to the test in the Great War but the biggest eye-opener for the author is the stokers' role in the trenches. They proved to be the backbone of the Royal Naval Division – "their language extremely fruity and their cunning inexhaustible. But they have great character."

The days of brawn and brute strength were coming to an end as ships and their systems became ever more technologically complex. What would grow into



2018. YEAR OF ENGINEERING

● The workshop of submarine depot ship HMS Tyne in 1942 and (bottom) the remarkably-clean boiler room of a Great War battleship

today's weapons engineering branch was established just after WW2. Submarines would require nuclear engineers, while increased computerisation which began in the early 60s has never stopped. Steam (nuclear boats aside) has given way to gas turbines and electric propulsion, training has become largely concentrated at Sultan and Collingwood, and fast-track schemes allow some to switch from civvy street to the Royal Navy directly as leading hands or petty officers.

And social change matched the white heat of 60s technology: the decade also brought the first women to the branch – or 'girls' as contemporary adverts described them. Today, they comprise a significant proportion of the marine and, especially, weapon engineering branches.

Despite the social and technological changes there's one constant in 180 years of RN engineering: the professionalism of the naval engineer, be they stoker or a 21st-Century comms rating (the CIS branch recently merged with weapon engineering).

And the 'stoker' (the term is still in use, though today's engineers have progressed far beyond merely stoking fires...) of 1982

or 2018 shares one thing in common with those at Jutland or the Bismarck chase: the engine room remains a dangerous place with limited chances of survival if a vessel is doomed.

Artificer 1st Class Ken Enticknap ran the aft fire/emergency survival post



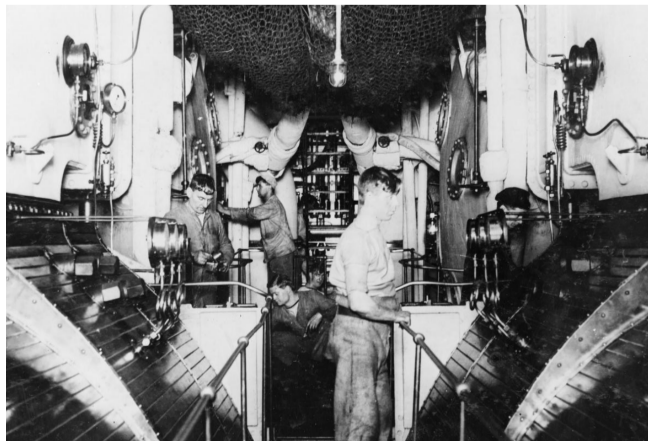
aboard HMS Ardent through a succession of Argentine air raids on May 21 1982, until that part of his frigate took a direct hit. All but two men in the emergency party were killed, the survivors – Enticknap and an AB Dillon – were surrounded by flames, with all their fire-fighting equipment wrecked.

When the wind shifted, Enticknap spied a possible way out, leading his shipmate under a winch, through a small space and across wreckage to reach the water.

Ken Enticknap received the Queen's Gallantry Medal for his actions, one of six bravery awards presented to naval engineers in the Falklands (two of them posthumously).

"The tales of heroism I've come across while researching the book and the accounts of some of the 31 Albert Medal winners are truly humbling," said Cdr Barton.

"I hope this will inspire those coming into the branch – and give them a common understanding of where we've come from."



● Carrier HMS Hermes succumbs to Japanese air attack off Ceylon/Sri Lanka in April 1942



## Flawed but never dull

UNLUCKY is the author who finds his work pre-empted by a book on the same subject that significantly changes the debate. This has happened to Angus Britts in his **Neglected Skies: The Demise of British Naval Power in the Far East** (Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, ISBN 9781682471586).

The book in question is Andrew Boyd's magisterial and revisionist study *The Royal Navy in Eastern Waters – Lynchpin of Victory* to which I gave a glowing review a few months ago, writes Prof Eric Grove.

Boyd made a convincing and well-supported argument that the Royal Navy's pre-war build up was not as weak as often portrayed and that, despite strategic overstretch, it developed a viable strategy to defend vital communications in the Indian Ocean. Mistakes were made at the end of 1941 in adopting a too aggressive strategy based at Singapore, a decision laid at the Admiralty's door, not Churchill's. After the loss of Prince and Wales and Repulse in December 1941, losses in the Java Sea and dangerous moments off Ceylon in April the Royal Navy remained in command of the vital Indian Ocean sea line of communication round the cape to and from the Middle East.

Angus Britts tells a very different story of the failure of a declining inter-war Royal Navy under pressure from financial restraint and a dysfunctional dual control system to develop a Fleet Air Arm that could take on the Japanese naval air arm in 1941-2. This led, the author argues, to no less than the Royal Navy decisively losing its command of the sea and its status as a global navy when Somerville's Eastern Fleet retreated from the Japanese Kido Butai carrier force off Ceylon after the raids on Colombo and Trincomalee.

This view reminds me of what I used to argue as a young and inexperienced historian. On the surface it looks convincing. Somerville's five old battleships and three carriers with numerically and qualitatively inferior air groups were no match for the Japanese air groups from five fleet carriers. Both Britts and Boyd criticise Somerville's risk taking although latter does give him more chance of a surprise night attack using Albacore aircraft and fast torpedo cruisers. The Japanese carriers did not have radar and, as would be shown at Midway, their defences, despite the quality of the Zero, lacked effective fighter control. Britts does not give this vital latter factor sufficient emphasis. This was an area where Britain was probably in the lead.

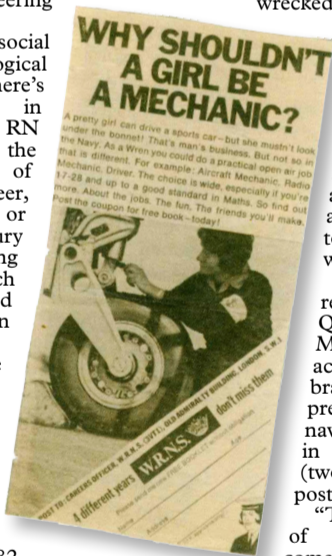
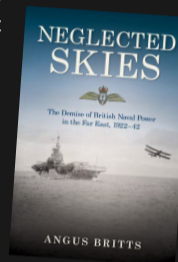
He also criticises the abandonment of the Skua dive bomber in 1941. There may be something in this but the Fulmar, for all its faults, had better performance and the Albacore had been designed as a dive as well as torpedo bomber. Reportedly, it was very well designed for the former role.

The book's analysis of inter-war policy is also rather limited. It is, perhaps, indicative that it misspells two important air ministers Philip Sassoon ('Phillip Sasson') and Lord Swinton ('Lord Swindon'). He does not really zero in on what was perhaps the major problem that needs more investigation: the lack of naval officers with sufficient pilot experience to help set staff requirements during the key period of rapid technological development in the late 1930s. With observers with more seniority it was only natural that designs should emphasise the need for a second seat in fleet fighters or the need for a three-seat spotter fighter to control the sky over a future fleet action. There is no mention either of the night shadower aircraft concept.

It is true, as the author argues, that these multi-role/multi seat concepts came from aircraft being put into a more traditional surface warfare context. But this was not so different from contemporary thinking and practice in the US and Japanese navies. The US Navy was still operating biplane fighters and dive bombers in 1939-40 and their pioneering monoplane torpedo bomber was a failure. Moreover the USN was still using its multi-role scout/dive bombers as defensive fighters in the early Pacific war battles. The Japanese were operating biplane attack aircraft until rather later than often thought – indeed the picture of the crippled Hiryu at Midway that illustrates the book was taken from one of these machines that still equipped the carrier Hosho.

The author shows his Australian provenance by some interesting material on Australian threat perceptions from the Japanese carrier force. Here, as elsewhere, the book rather overestimates the reach and logistical power of the Japanese Navy, even at the height of its power.

*Neglected Skies* has a list price of £33.95 although it can be purchased considerably cheaper on the internet. Potential readers are recommended to prioritise the Boyd book (whose list price is slightly less) so they can put Britts' rather over-stated assertions into a proper perspective.



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Former senior rate Peter finally recognised for course he passed in 1960

A Lott of waiting...

And a lot of waiting for Fergus too...

THE RN's senior officer in Northern England plus Sea Cadets from two units joined former naval officer Fergus McLellan as he was belatedly decorated for deeds 60 years ago.

Fergus joined the RNVR as an acting lieutenant, serving in the Near East/eastern Mediterranean in HM Ships Woodbridge Haven, Hexton and Shavington.

His time and tasks in the RN earned him the Naval General Service Medal (1915-62) as well as the Cyprus Clasp.

The medal ribbon turned up... but not the decoration itself and Fergus left the Royal Navy having never received the medal to which he was entitled.

Now in his 80s, the retired officer rarely speaks of his days in the Senior Service. But he confided in his close friend and carer Gillian Hopcraft that he never received his medal - and had given up hope of receiving it.

Gillian was not one to be beaten. She contacted the Naval Medal Office and confirmed Fergus' entitlement, but she wanted more than a mere parcel through the letterbox - she felt that Fergus should be presented with his medal.

With help from ex-matelots Jason Watkins and George Heron, a more formal presentation was organised, courtesy of Commodore Phil Waterhouse, RN Regional Commander for the North of England and Isle of Man, plus ten Sea Cadets from TS Kelly (Hebburn) and TS Kellington (Stockton).

They joined Fergus' friends and family at St Andrew's and St George's Church in Stockton-on-Tees, and a 60-year omission was finally put right.

"Fergus was delighted to receive his medal and a small tear developed in his eyes as he was handed the medal in front of his friends and family," said George.

Aboretum hall opens

A NEW £8.1m events building opens at the National Memorial Arboretum this month.

The Aspects complex can be configured to create up seven separate 'halls' depending on the needs of associations and veterans, plus lounge and bar facilities.

Up to 500 delegates can be accommodated for conferences using a theatre-style set up, at the same time as banquets for up to 300 people can be hosted.

RNA Central Office, Room 209, Semaphore Tower (PP70), HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT. admin@royalnavalassoc.com 023 9272 3747 www.royal-naval-

ON MAY 30 1960, Petty Officer Peter Williams was possibly the proudest man in Portsmouth.

After nearly a year of demanding learning he had completed the mentally-challenging course for naval gunnery instructors and could return home to South Africa, head held high. His three predecessors had all failed to pass it.

What he didn't know was that so good was his performance at HMS Excellent, the then school of gunnery in the Royal Navy, was that he'd been singled out for recognition.

Fifty-eight years later, he has finally received his citation thanks to the efforts of his family and today's Royal Navy.

Peter was born in Norfolk and grew up in Wales. Aged 14 he received a bursary to attend the Royal Hospital School... which led to joining the Royal Navy at the end of World War 2.

After several years' service - including a draft aboard Britain's last battleship, HMS Vanguard - his career took him to Cape Town where he met his future wife Sheila.

That prompted the senior rating to switch from the Royal to the South African Navy and a new life half a world away...

...only to be selected to attend a specialist course for gunnery instructors at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth not that long after settling in South Africa.

As Peter had not yet passed the 'Afrikaans Test' - demonstrating a basic knowledge of the language - his superiors were reluctant to let him attend, only for Hugo Biermann, one of the country's most senior naval officers to intervene and say 'yes'.

With international air travel still in its infancy, Peter Williams was sent to England by boat - a two-week journey - and arrived in Portsmouth half way through the six-week preliminary course; if he failed the exam at the end, he'd be back on the boat to South Africa.

He studied day and night to catch up with course mates, passed and went on to complete the full gunnery instructors' course - a course described by contemporaries as mentally challenging.

Not only did Peter pass the course, he was its outstanding student, setting a "standard well above that of his peers", and earning a Herbert Lott Award for efficiency as a result.

Lott was a London stockbroker, obsessed with naval gunnery - and its apparent poor showing in this art of war compared with the army - and set up a fund in 1928 to reward anyone who improved or exceeded in the subject, putting £250,000 in the pot (today worth more than £11m).

No one in the Royal or South African Navies told the sailor of his reward - it was only when his wife was later flicking through a military annual that she saw her husband's name and the award he should have received.

Her husband didn't pursue it - in the pre-internet days it would have been too long-winded and difficult - and he left the navy two years later.

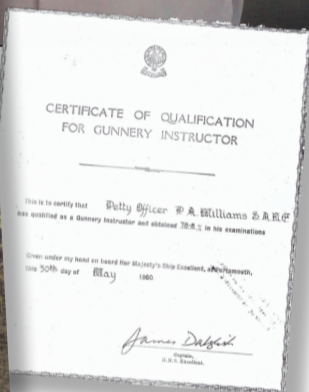
It was only when his wife passed away in April after 65 years of marriage that Peter told his family about the course - and about the award he never received.

That prompted his daughter Gayle Defranceski to investigate, eventually track down the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and Pat McCafferty who oversee the award in 2018... which in turn led to a belated citation signed by present-day Naval Secretary Rear Admiral Simon Williams.

Peter's family held a party for the now-90-year-old retired sailor at which the certificate was presented.

"I managed to get 25 people here without dad guessing anything. He was so surprised - and a little emotional. He's just over the moon," said Gayle.

"Even to this day my dad reads every naval book and has even painted a few of the ships that he was on."



Tug's death is a sad blow for Chatham

SHIPMATES in Chatham are mourning the passing of former branch chairman and clearance diver Frederick 'Tug' Wilson who died in August aged 77.

Tug joined the RN as a 15-year-old via Ganges and trained as a radar plotter before becoming, first, a ship's diver, and then qualifying as a clearance diver.

That job took him around the world - from shore-based appointments in Singapore with the Fleet Clearance Diving Team to sea-going time in HMS Bildeston (twice), Kirkliston and Maxton, and as an instructor at Cochrane, Vernon and Drake, plus the Defence Explosive Ordnance Disposal School at Chatham.

Upon leaving the RN in 1985, Tug ran a gun shop in Rochester until giving it up to return to DEODS for a fourth time, this time as a civilian responsible for the management of the school's stock of explosives.

When he finally retired he became an enthusiastic member of Chatham Branch, eventually becoming its chairman.. and chairman of RNA Area 2, a post he held until forced to step down due to failing health.

There was no funeral - Tug willed his body to medical research - but to give his family and many friends the opportunity to pay their last respects and celebrate a life well lived, a memorial service will be arranged at a future

Harry's D-Day role recalled

FRANCE'S efforts to honour all those who helped liberate her from the Nazi yoke seven decades ago took French Consul General Emmanuel Cocher to Faslane to recognise a D-Day veteran.

Ninety-five-year old Harry Johnson became the latest Briton to receive the Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur, presented on behalf of French President Macron.

In 1944, the then young lieutenant was an engineer aboard cruiser HMS Enterprise, part of the armada amassed for the invasion of Normandy.

Enterprise's guns fired more than 9,000 shells at German defences, especially around Cherbourg - so many rounds that she had to retire to Chatham to have her gun barrels replaced.

"I remember waking at dawn on D-Day and going on deck to find the sea completely covered with ships and crafts of every conceivable shape, size and purpose, for as far as the eye could see and mostly heading for the beaches," the veteran engineer recalled.

"The Enterprise was allocated to Utah beach in the American sector and her first task was to soften up the beach defences and then to lay down fire ahead of the Allied advance."



He continued: "It is an honour to be presented with this award, however I also think of all those who died during and since the war and feel that many of them deserve this far more than I do."

Mr Johnson, who left the RN in 1971, is one of around 5,000 Britons so far recognised by the French for what they did in the summer of 1944.

After retiring from the RN he spent ten years in Faslane, ending his time as Chief Services Engineer, and he still lives in Helensburgh.

WO1 Andy Knox, Command

Warrant Officer Submarines, joined in the thanks by handing the veteran HMS Neptune's crest and a bottle of whiskey.

"It was a truly humbling experience for all involved and a very proud moment for Harry," said Andy

"This was the second Légion d'Honneur presentation that I have had the honour of attending in recent weeks and reminds me of how proud we should all be of our true heroes."

Picture: LPhot Will Haigh, FRPU North

Moscow remembers murder of WW1 submarine hero

THE diplomatic community gathered at Britain's Embassy in Moscow to honour a submariner murdered in the chaos of revolution 100 years ago.

Captain Francis Cromie was murdered by Bolshevik secret police in the midst of Russia's bloody civil war.

Capt Cromie had come to Russia as commander of submarine HMS E19, earning a medal from Tsar Nicholas II for sinking five ships in a day during one patrol.

After the tsar was toppled in March 1917, Cromie eventually became naval attaché at the British Embassy in St Petersburg - a building regarded by the Bolsheviks as a focal point of anti-Communist resistance.

On the last day of August 1918, they stormed the embassy. Cromie challenged them with a revolver - and was gunned down. His lifeless body was then mutilated and ransacked, and finally buried, somewhere in Smolensky Cemetery.

With no known grave, the diplomatic team in Moscow chose the war memorial at their embassy as a fitting site to honour Cromie with a memorial service of the centenary of his death, led by Defence and Naval Attaché,



Capt Chris Connolly, and the Rev Canon Malcolm Rogers, Chaplain of St Ann's Church, Moscow, with the unveiling of a plaque.

Capt Connolly said Cromie was "a true hero, whose exploits at sea were matched by those on land."

"It's long been an aspiration to ensure that this forgotten hero is given the recognition he deserves. Our attempts to locate his grave have not succeeded, so we decided to place a brass plaque next to the war memorial in our current embassy in Moscow to mark this significant anniversary."



## Cemetery desecrated

THE guardians of the nation's war dead have promised to restore more than 30 graves desecrated by vandals in North Africa.

Grounds staff at Le Reunion Cemetery in Algeria found 31 headstones toppled – deliberately broken.

There are 211 Commonwealth service personnel buried in the cemetery, which lies around three miles outside the port of Béjaïa (known as Bougie at the time).

Of those 211 dead, 33 served in the Royal Navy – including one Wren, 19-year-old Diana Hartwell.

All were supporting the Allied invasion of North Africa to crush German-Italian forces and bring the desert war to an end.

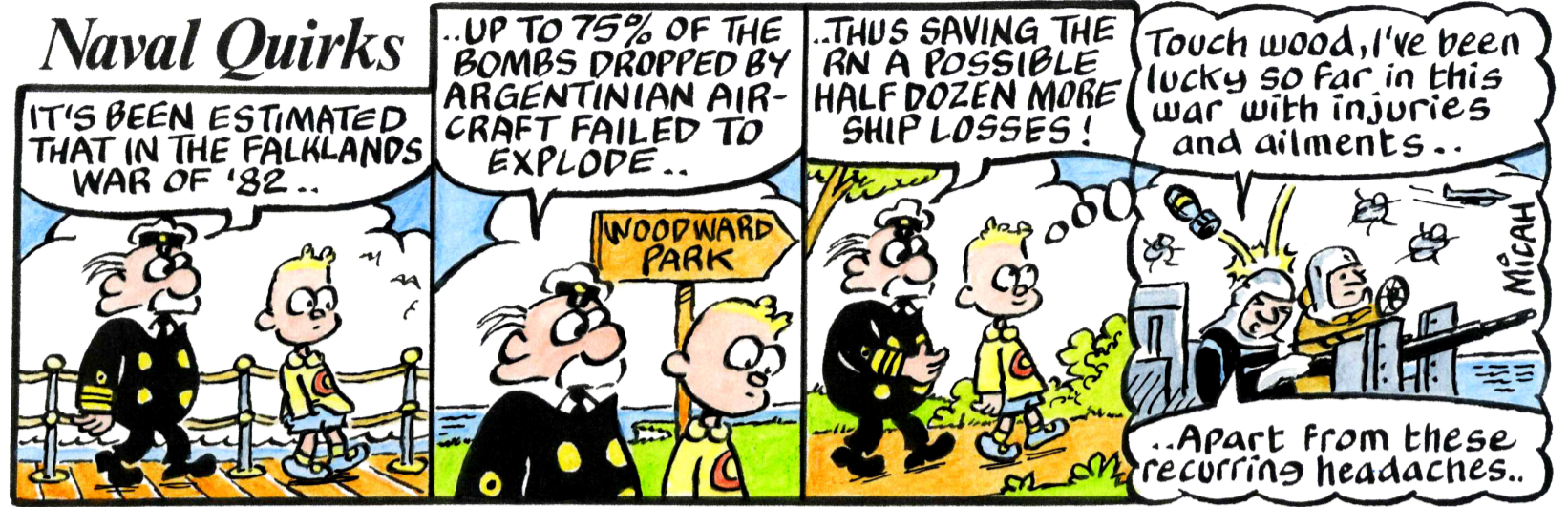
Once ashore in November 1942, Allied forces in Algeria pushed eastwards, while Monty's Eighth Army drove Axis troops back across Egypt, then Libya. The pincers finally met, leading to the enemy's total surrender in Tunisia in May 1943.

Béjaïa was the focal point for landings by the Royal West Kent Regiment, supported by Royal Marines, which prompted a ferocious response from the German Air Force who sank three transports and an anti-aircraft gunship, and damaged the monitor HMS Roberts.

As well as dead from the initial fighting for Béjaïa and the surrounding villages, the cemetery is the last resting place for personnel stationed in the area once liberated, such as Miss Hartwell, who died of illness while serving in the shore establishment HMS Bryce.

The CWGC is working with Algerian authorities in a bid to track down the culprits and promises to repair or replace the damaged headstones as quickly as possible.

"We are deeply saddened by the damage to graves at La Reunion War Cemetery and our sympathies go out to the descendants and comrades of the dead who will be so deeply affected by this news," said commission spokesman Peter Francis.



# A royal reunion? It's bread and butter...

AROUND 200 former sailors and Royal Marines of every rank joined the Prince of Wales for his annual get together of former shipmates.

The heir to the throne invited those he'd served with during his five years in the RN – plus their partners – to join him and the Duchess of Cornwall at their country retreat of Highgrove to reminisce on old times.

Though relatively short, Prince Charles' RN career was varied – BRNC Dartmouth, destroyer Norfolk, frigates Jupiter and Minerva, flew with 845 NAS from HMS Hermes and, for his final ten months in the Senior Service, famously commanded minehunter HMS Bronington.

All of which may be over 40 years ago now, but it's a part of the prince's life he cherishes – hence get together to recall old times.

After touring the extensive gardens of the Gloucestershire home, helped with the planting of a memorial tree, and joined the royal couple in the Orchard Room for the formal reception.

Music was provided by a quartet from the Royal Marines Band, plus Rebecca Nelson, a



classical singer and lead vocalist of the Royal New Zealand Navy's band (she serves as a reservist).

Among the 200 guests was former CPO James 'Mick' Adair (pictured above in the blue blazer), who made the trip from Cleethorpes, where he's an active member of the town's RNA branch. The reunion coincided with his 81st birthday.

Originally from Belfast and after a brief spell in the RAF, Mick spent 23 years in the RN as a cook – and in his spare time was an avid rugby player (he buried

his 'retirement' boots under the post in Singapore... then bought a new pair a few weeks later and resumed playing, such was his love of the game).

Towards the end of his career, a then PO Adair was drafted to HMS Jupiter for 18 months – a draft which coincided with the Prince of Wales' time aboard the Leander-class frigate (the two are pictured above right).

The two met when the royal was shown around the galley as part of his introduction to life on Jupiter.

Mick demonstrated the art of making bread and butter pudding... only for Prince Charles to intervene and offer some suggestions; at the Palace, they added a few extra ingredients: treacle, bananas and plenty of rum. It's a recipe which has been enjoyed in the Adair



household ever since.

"My dad has said what a fantastic character and sense of humour Prince of Wales had while aboard the ship – he always made the crew believe that he was one of the lads," said Mick's daughter Laura.

"My dad has talked of nothing since his time in the Navy and continues to be active within the Navy community. He constantly takes the time to talk to youngsters who have an interest in the Navy on why they should join and the camaraderie that they will always be part of."

Upon leaving the RN in 1980, Mick worked for a cable-laying firm and spent many years in Saudi Arabia as a cook and got caught up in the first Gulf War, providing food for British and American troops deployed on the Iraqi border and, later, serving



## An uncommon man – and RN career

THERE can be few more remarkable and varied careers in the post-war/Cold War RN than Cdr Paul Robert Palmer Madge who's died at the age of 81.

He spent 37 years in the Senior Service, joining as a boy in 1953, making PO inside four years and becoming a commissioned officer within six.

He spent 14 years as a naval aviator, flying Gannets, Buccaneers and Wessexes.

It was his actions in the latter in 1968 which earned him a Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct. When a Wessex HAS1 ditched heavily after an explosive engine failure, it was Lt Paul Madge who extricated the helicopter's American pilot.

His flying career came to an end in 1974 and his 'third life' in the Navy began, this time in intelligence, serving in London, Cyprus and Brussels, where he was Lord Carrington's intelligence officer at NATO.

He retired in 1990, having visited 165 country thanks in part to his time aboard HM Ships Lynx, Hermes and Ark Royal.

He was barely less energetic in retirement, setting himself up as his family's historian, connecting Madges all over the world, compiling three books on the subject and 36 family trees.

## Thanks for grave responsibility

DESCENDANTS gathered on a small Japanese island to say 'thank you' to locals for tending to the grave of a British sailor for 150 years.

Midshipman Frank Toovey Lake was laid to rest on Sanuki Hiroshima in Japan's Inland Sea in 1868 after the 19-year-old succumbed to cholera while serving aboard HMS Manilla.

And ever since, despite never knowing the man, and despite our two countries not always being on the friendliest terms in the intervening 15 decades, locals have continued to honour the trainee navigator.

That long-term devotion probably stems from the actions of a wealthy villager who felt the simple, weather-worn wooden cross which marked Lake's grave was unworthy of "a spirit in a strange land".

A formal headstone was erected and it fell to village leaders to ensure Lake's grave was maintained.

They didn't just clean the grave, but placed flowers, incense and even chocolates on

occasions – drawing national and international attention from the media and politicians down the years to this day.

So it was fitting that Britain's Ambassador to Tokyo, Paul Maddon, sent a message of friendship and gratitude to mark the 150th anniversary of the death of a man islanders know as 'Re-ki', but know little about.

Lake's grave was rebuilt about ten years ago. For the 150th anniversary, a new granite monument was installed and unveiled – "a fitting and handsome tribute both to Midshipman Lake, and to the enduring friendship that exists between Japan and the UK," Mr Maddon said.

Among attendees at the unveiling were the mayor of Marugame (the nearest city to the island), descendant Bridget Campbell Trueman, and Graham Thomas, an Englishman who lives in Japan who's researched both Lake and the tradition of his grave.

"My interest in Japan was initially sparked many many



years ago when an uncle showed me mementos he had collected from the time he spent in Japan immediately after World War 2 while serving on HMS Urania," he said.

"Eventually I ended up living here and discovering the grave. It truly is unique as the islanders have cared for the grave for 150 years."

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## Tigers have plenty in energy tanks

YOU may have spotted a convoy of rowing boats passing through your villages and locks recently.

In the summer, Sea Cadets and staff from **TS Tiger** took part in a sponsored row from Ross Walk in Leicester to Pillings Lock Marina – and back again.

The row took more than eight hours each day and all three rowing boats covered a total of 35km each.

The Waterside Inn in Mountsorrel provided rowers with a well-earned rest spot and a scenic place to eat their lunch.

Pillings Lock Marina rewarded cadets and supporters with a generous barbecue on the Saturday evening and a camping spot which enabled four cadets to complete their practiCe expedition for their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award.

It is estimated that the combined total from sponsorship forms and collection buckets exceeds £1,500.

TS Tiger would like to thank anyone who contributed to that total.

Money raised will help pay for improvements to facilities and provide cadets with new equipment to enhance training on and off the water.

## Pupils work together to tackle obstacle courses

STUDENTS from Gordon's School in Surrey visited HMS Collingwood to experience team-building, Royal Navy-style.

First, the group tackled the base's daunting assault course which is designed to test and challenge participants.

Obstacles include a 20ft A-frame covered in ropes and an 8ft wall, which all the students completed. Some, suffering from a fear of heights, were especially grateful for their team-mates' encouragement.

Crawling through a steep concrete tube also provided a challenge for at least one of the cadets who suffers from claustrophobia.

However, with determination and encouragement from the Collingwood instructors and the other students he completed this obstacle with confidence.

Cadet Kyle said: "This is fun. I've done obstacle courses before but this one's much different. I'd really like to tackle it as a time trial."

Cadet Lauren added: "I really want to join the Royal Navy as soon as I leave school."

"I went to a careers fair where the Royal Navy was represented and told them I'd like to be an air traffic controller. They said I could do that within the Navy and that there were loads of other opportunities open to me too."

After lunch the Cadets tackled the base's low ropes course. In



a similar way as the obstacle course, this tests teamwork and communication but includes more problem-solving challenges.

Successfully completing these gives cadets valuable life skills.

Gordon's School Head Teacher Andrew Moss said: "The Combined Cadet Force is a hugely rewarding and fulfilling part of life for students at Gordon's School and the visit to HMS Collingwood was eagerly anticipated."



# Look what I did on

## NORTHAMPTON Sea Cadets are looking back with pride at a jam-packed summer.

TS Laforey took advantage of the heatwave with cadets taking part in camps across the country, including HMS Excellent in Portsmouth, Doncaster and Scarborough.

TS Laforey had a total of 42 young people away on the various activities throughout the holiday period.

Highlights included sailing in Portsmouth Harbour during the camp at HMS Bristol, and visits to the life-boat station in Scarborough on a varied and fun-packed summer camp.

Even the unit's Petty Officer Alex Hearn got in on the action, completing his Duke of Edinburgh Gold Expedition on the North Yorkshire Moors.

Closer to home, the unit participated in a number of local events within the community, including Merchant Navy Day where they supported the raising of

the Red Ensign at both the Guildhall and County Hall.

During the ceremony on Sunday Petty Officer Cadet James Cassin used his drumming skills to "beat to quarters", leading the procession of local dignitaries to the Garden of Remembrance for a service to honour those who have served at sea in the past, serve at sea today and will serve at sea in the future.

As an island nation the Sea Cadets were proud to lead the celebration and recognition of the Merchant Service. The ceremony marked Britain's 'island nation' dependence on Merchant Navy seafarers past and present.

The event was part of Seafarers UK successful campaign for local councils to fly the Red Ensign – the British Merchant Navy's official flag – on civic centre flagpoles and in public places.

The charity's President, the Earl of Wessex, said: "I very much hope you will support this campaign to remember the sacrifices, salute the courage and support

the future of the often unsung personnel of our Merchant Navy."

Merchant Navy Day has been commemorated in the UK since 2000 and is actively promoted by Seafarers UK, with the support of the Merchant Navy Association and the Federation of Merchant Mariners and the local Sea Cadets are very proud to support this.

The Commanding Officer of the Sea Cadets, Lieutenant (SCC) Chris Read RNR, said 'that our young people recognise the role of the merchant service plays in every part of supporting our island nation, many of our young people have learnt skills that have supported a career at sea with the Merchant Navy which includes bulk container ships and cruise liners.'

In the final stage of the afloat competitions the unit had the honour of representing Eastern Area at the national finals.

Four of the unit's teams, the junior boys rowing team, the junior girls rowing







## Success in pool for Poole cadets

THE Mayor of Poole has congratulated **Lilliput** Sea Scouts swimming team who have been awarded prestigious first place in the 2018 Royal Navy national Sea Scouts swimming championships, held at HMS Raleigh Plymouth.

The annual event attracts more than 200 Royal Navy Sea Scouts, leaders and Explorer Sea Scouts from 25 groups around the UK.

Over a weekend, the teams compete in a variety of races including individual breaststroke, backstroke and freestyle races as well as team medley relays.

The Lilliput Sea Scout team came away with a horde of trophies, gold and silver awards after achieving the following successful results:

- Winners of the overall competition, the Sea Scout Otter Team Shield
- First place under-14 Silver Salver award
- Second place under-12 team award
- First place in the whole squadron relay
- Various individual stroke finalist and medley relay winners in the different swimming strokes.

The Lilliput Gulliver Explorer team also took part in the event and were successful in the following events:

- Third place in the Explorer Trophy

- Third place in the whole squadron relay
- Second place in the lifesaving team race

The team were invited to meet Poole's Mayor, Councillor Sean Gabriel, in his parlour where he spoke to team members about their triumph and congratulated them on their outstanding results.

Cllr Gabriel said: "It was a real pleasure to meet Lilliput Sea Scouts and congratulate them on their fantastic achievement at the Royal Navy national Sea Scouts swimming championships."

"They should feel very proud of their results and their well-earned success."

Simon Inge, Lilliput's Group Scout Leader, said: "We are so proud of the team and it's great that they represented the group from Poole at a very tough national swimming event."

"The Royal Navy wants to inspire youth to achieve and we saw plenty of achievement from the Lilliput Sea Scouts at the swimming gala. Their determination and commitment to the team overcame some very strong competition from teams from around the country."

Keith Redwood, Lilliput Group Chairman, said "It was an honour for the swimming team to be invited to meet the Mayor of Poole to celebrate their success."

# my holiday, mum

team and the senior boys rowing teams competed at the National Rowing Finals at London's Excel Centre and conducted themselves to achieve amazing results.

Pulling together as a team both the junior boys and junior girls teams achieved silver medals and the senior boys rowing team achieved a fourth placing

Also for the first time in the unit's history Petty officer Cadet Aaron Dixon and Marine Cadet Ami Pavitt competed in the powerboat-handling competition and won the Stephen Stacey Shield for the best National Performance and take the crown as the best power boaters in the Sea Cadet Corps.

Lt Read said: "To achieve such impressive results at the very top of the Sea Cadet competitions is a great testament to the skills of the cadets and the guidance of our instructors."

"For our cadets to beat the traditional naval units based on the southern coast through the quality of training on our local

river is very inspiring."

The cadets got the added honour to spend some time rowing the Queen's barge, *Gloriana* which was present at the competition.

Northampton cadets also attended a camp at Thetford and a junior cadet camp at Doncaster.

More than 6,000 cadet boating hours on the water have been clocked up this summer, showing the great opportunities the cadets have to get afloat.

The year has seen more diversity of the afloat activities offered with opportunities to train in a narrowboat and river cruiser added to the extensive afloat fleet.

The unit has extensive activities planned over the next phase of training which focuses on cadet advancement and promotion.

Many opportunities are available for cadets to participate in and the full unit calendar can be found on <http://calendar.northamptonseacadets.org.uk>, along

with further course and event details.

- Forthcoming events include:
- Monthly Divisions Evening – October 5.
  - Senior Cadets Weekend at HMS President – October 12-14.
  - CATSEA RM Cadets Field Assessment – 19-21 October.
  - Halloween Night – October 26.
  - Battlefields Tour – October 29-31.

The Sea Cadets are recruiting now for cadets and adult volunteers and cadets to join and anyone interested in becoming part of the team should contact the unit.

Northampton Sea Cadets meet on Tuesday and Friday evening and Northampton Junior Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets meet on a Wednesday and Friday evening from 7pm to 9.15pm at their headquarters in Nunn Mills Road, Northampton.

Northampton Sea Cadets can be found by visiting [www.northamptonseacadets.org.uk](http://www.northamptonseacadets.org.uk).



## Relay poses no problems

AYLESBURY Sea Cadet Unit took part in a Relay for Life at RAF Halton in Buckinghamshire.

This was a 24-hour walk around a small circuit raising money for Cancer Research and consisted of a number of cadets and adults who took part and at least one member of the team was required to be on the circuit for the entire event.

This event was organised by Cancer Research and the Sea Cadets raised £3,067.75. The unit was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation on the day, however since then the amount raised has risen to £3,376.50.

There were many teams represented by the local community who combined total raised more than £96k for Cancer Research UK.

The unit also received a cheque from the Chair of We Remember Submariners for the Keith Bishop Memorial Scholarship, which is to be used for an offshore voyage for one of the Aylesbury cadets.

## Deaths

**Platt, Les. CPO.** Born October 24 1948. Served 1967-1986. Full-time Reserve from 2001-2005. HMV Britannia, HMS Kent, Malabar, Nelson, London, Illustrious, Ark Royal and RNAS Yeovilton. Died August 17, aged 69.

**Whale, John Bruce. Lt RM.** Helicopter pilot, including 1967/68 commission of HMS Bulwark, within which he was also a key performer in the ship's musical group "This 'n' That" with gigs in Durban. He also helped organise the "Review" onboard HMS Albion in 1967/68. Member of Bude RNA. Died July 28, aged 71.

**Hearne, John. POM(E).** Served HMS Newfoundland 1956/58. Also served HMS Adamant, Hartland Point, Aisne, Wolverton and Pellew. Died August 12, aged 80.

**Fullerton, Maurice. CPO CA.** Served from 1949-1958 and 1962-1975. Served HMS Royal Arthur, Ceres, Sea Eagle, Drake, Daring, Acute, Pembroke, Victorious, Caroline, Berwick, Nubia, Victory, Dolphin and Gannet. Member of RNA Limavady. Died August 4, aged 88.

**Oldfield, Harry. AB.** Served during WW2 in V and W-class destroyer HMS Vesper. Member

of HMS Vesper Association. Died August, aged 95.

**Havis, Ernest. BEM.** Member of Cheshunt RNA. Died August, aged 86.

**Orr, Arthur SP. Capt. VRD.** Ulster Division RNR. Died August, aged 89.

**Clarke, Brian E. Lt Cdr.** HMS Invincible, Gannet, Hermes, Heron, Blake, Ark Royal, and Eagle. RAF Kinloss and RAF Brize Norton. NP1002 Diego Garcia. Died May 23.

**Elliott, Robert A. Lt Cdr.** HMS Highburton, Aeneas, Russell, Dolphin, Blackwood, Ark Royal, Mohawk, Invincible, Hermes, Intrepid, and Illustrious. 3 Cdo RM. Sea Cadet Corps. Died August 7.

**Pope, John M. Lt Cdr.** HMS Ajax, Hermes, Fife and Dryad. Died August, aged 81.

**Walker, Anthony JG. Lt Cdr.** HMS Excellent, Dryad, Juno, Osprey, Cuxton, Ark Royal, Hermes, and Invincible. Died July.

**Brewster, Anthony (Tony) TD. Lt.** HMS Ajax, Seahawk, Bulwark. 848, 829, 705, 845 and 706 NAS. Died August 19.

**Shearwood, Kenneth A. Lt RNRV.** HMS Copra, Dundonald. Died July 5, aged 96.

**Nicholas, Donald 'Nick'. CMEM.** Served on various

ships, including HMS Cavalier, Hermes and Fife. Died August, aged 82.

**Edgar, Derry Harold.** Served on HMS Anson. Died August 31, aged 90.

**Dunmore, Leon Sydney.** Tel gunner and chief aircrewman. Flew Barracuda, Swordfish and Firefly aircraft. Served in HMS Ocean in Korea in the 1950s. Died August, aged 92.

**Driver, Clifford William. AB.** Joined Royal Navy in 1955 and served for 15 years. Served in HMS Dainty, Wilkieston and Leopard. Member of D Boats Association. Died aged 78.

**Phillips, Basil. AB.** Served 1940 to 1947. HMS Maidstone and Cheviot. Member of Newbury RNA. Aged 94.

**Andrews Mike.** St Vincent Boy. Served from 1947-1974. HMS Wrangler, Mounts Bay, Berry Head, Alert, Cumberland and Exmouth. Life member of RNA Worthing. Died August 18, aged 86.

**Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC**

**Mackenzie, Robert RB. Capt.** LVO MBE, HMS Sultan, Trafalgar, President, Hood, Myngs, Cochrane, Indomitable, Implacable, Consort, Fulmar, Quality, and Aberdeen. HQ

Signal Division. Died August, aged 98.

**Feest, Frank H Commander.** DNEdS, RNC Greenwich, Royal Army Ed Corps, HMS Nelson, Fearless, Collingwood, Victory RNB, Scarborough, Dryad, Ganges. Died August, aged 84.

**Lund, Arthur DC. Cdr. OBE.** HMS Osiris, Neptune, Pulse, Warrior, Saker, Artemis, Tireless, Maidstone, Auriga, Teredo, and MFV189. MOD Central Staff. BRNC. RAN. Died August, aged 88.

**Ellison, Louis. Lt.** HMS Mercury, Forth, Gannet, Lion, Victory RNB. RANS Harman. NATO, DCSA Forest Moor, Sea Cadet Corps. Died August, aged 94.

**Algerines Association**

**Langford, George T. AB.** Served in HMS Speedy (Halcyon). Aged 97.

**Submariners Association**

**Riley, Dennis. PO.TD1.** Served April 1947 until July 1953. HM Submarines Trump, Seneschal, Thermopylae, Affray, Statesman, and Sturdy. Member of Sussex Branch. Died July, aged 95.

**Wright, George. L/Tel.** Served May 1940 until March 1946. HM Submarines Regent, Seadog, and Venturer. Member of Nottingham Branch. Died July, aged 97.

**McCord, James. CPO.TS.** Served from 1976. HM Submarines Warspite (76), Renown (77-82), Warspite (82-84), Upholder (86-89), Valiant (89-91). Member of Scottish Branch. Died August, aged 65.

**Butler, Denis. CPO.RP1.** Served March 1954 until 1974. HM Submarines Subtle, Tireless, Talent, Alcide, Alderney, Ambush, Totem, Sea Devil, Oberon, and Renown. Member of South Kent Branch. Died August, aged 84.

**Davies, Stephen H. LTO.** Served 1954 to 1961. HM Submarines Truncheon (54), Explorer (56), Anchorite (57), Telemachus (57), and Cachalot (61). Member of West of Scotland Branch. Died July, aged 81.

**Wigmore, Raymond. PO.UC1.** Served 1959 to 1967. HM Submarines Talent (59-64), Orpheus (64-66), and Finwhale (66-67). Member of Sussex Branch. Died July, aged 78.

**Bowen, Frank PO Tel.** Served February 1949 until February 1958. HM Submarines Auriga, Sirdar, Tireless, Tactician, Springer, Talent, and Thule. Member of Barrow In Furness Branch. Died August, aged 90.

## Ask Jack

**HMV Britannia.** I am currently researching the history of Adana (Printing Machines) Ltd ahead of the firm's centenary in 2022. Soon after the launch of HMV Britannia, an order was placed for a table-top printing press on which menus may be printed for onboard banquets and events. When I made enquiries at

the time HMV Britannia was withdrawn from service, no-one could recall such a press. I would be grateful if anyone could throw any light on the puzzle. Bob Richardson, British Printing Society. Email [inksprite@btinternet.com](mailto:inksprite@btinternet.com) or telephone 020 8841

1799. **EGYPTIAN NAVY.** I am trying to find my father. He was in the Egyptian navy and was ported in Portsmouth during 1977-78. I was hoping people will remember which Egyptian ships were in the city during that time. Nadia. [Francisnadia71@gmail.com](mailto:Francisnadia71@gmail.com)

## £50 PRIZE PUZZLE



The mystery ship in the August edition of *Navy News* (right) was the Rothesay-class frigate HMS Falmouth.

Mrs Stacy Clarke of Portsmouth wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (above) is a Battle-class destroyer commissioned during World War 2.

1) What was her name, and 2) which admiral's coat of arms inspired the ship's crest?

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 November 14.

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 November edition. The competition is not open to Navy

### MYSTERY PICTURE 284

Name .....

Address .....

My answers: (1) .....

(2) .....

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in November's Noticeboard must be received

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● The Royal Navy Women's Team, from left, Fleur Peoples,

## Giving them a run for their money

THE Royal Navy Running Team took on the athletic might of the Army and RAF at the Inter-Service Half Marathon Championships at Bedford.

The championships had been postponed from earlier in the year when the 'Beast from the East #2' led to the cancellation of Hampshire's Fleet Half.

Performing well at Bedford, the RN women's team finished in a highly-commendable second place, beating the RAF.

Despite a strong effort by the men's team, it is testament to the quality of the competition that they finished in third place.

Runner Lt Phil Boak remarked "on what was a relatively complex

and multi-terrain course, I was happy with a personal best of 01:15:17."

The next landmark for the team is the Marine Corps Marathon to be held in Washington USA, on October 24.

In this event, the RN will be pitted against the elite runners of the US Marine Corps as they run 26.2 miles in the nation's capital.

Anyone interested in competing for the Royal Navy at road, cross country or on the track should contact WO2 Pete Belcher RM.

Email [peter.belcher216@mod.gov.uk](mailto:peter.belcher216@mod.gov.uk) or search RNRM running on Facebook and Navyfit websites.



● Members of the RN men's team, from left Phil Boak, Bryn

## Victory for Argyll

ON a hot and muggy evening at the Bahrain Rugby Club, the newly-formed UKNSF team played their first game of football against a side from HMS Argyll.

More than 80 personnel from both the NSF and the ship attended the fixture, emphasising the camaraderie of both organisations and the Rugby Club.

UKNSF took the lead twice, but HMS Argyll were resilient and fought back on both occasions.

However, due to some dubious timekeeping by the volunteer referee, who had clearly been gifted with a watch from Sir Alex Ferguson, Argyll snatched the winner in the 99th minute with the last kick of the game, making the final score 3-2 to the Type 23 frigate.

## Anyone for real tennis?

THE Royal Navy Real Tennis & Rackets Association is looking for new players to join and take part in a growing number of fixtures throughout the year.

With annual matches at The Queen's Club, Marylebone Cricket Club and at the few remaining unique Real Tennis and Rackets courts across the UK, players from the RN regularly play alongside members of the Army and RAF in this 'sport of kings.'

If you are an experienced player or would be keen to take part and have a go, please contact Lt Cdr Dave Mason at [david.mason901@mod.gov.uk](mailto:david.mason901@mod.gov.uk)

**Royal Navy Cricket round-up of the season**  
**Royal Navy Sailing round-up of the season**  
 – both in November's Navy News  
**Submissions deadline is October 14**

# Greece is the word



## Windsurfers exploit ideal conditions at training camp

AN idyllic Greek island proved the perfect destination for the annual Royal Navy Windsurfing training and development camp.

Twenty windsurfers from the RN, RNR and RFA travelled to Lefkada in the Ionian Sea to exploit the benign conditions and build up their skills.

Seven members of the team gained their RYA Start qualification and six obtained their Intermediate Non-Planning Certificate. The seven experienced team members took advantage of the conditions at Vassilika to hone their racing skills.

Thanks to the local wind phenomenon named Eric, day one began with benign conditions, allowing the start group to get to grips with safety basics, such as the neutral position and self-rescue.

For the intermediate group, it provided an opportunity to re-familiarise themselves with the equipment. As is the norm for Vassilika, the wind built steadily over the day, giving every single member a chance to push their limits – physically and mentally – and try a variety of kit.

By the end of the day, the wind was so strong that it was only the advanced team left on the water, although Lt Cdr Si Williamson (Windsurfer of the Week) and AET Ben Timlin seemed to be using it as an extra phys session, with limited results. For the rest of the team, it was a chance to catch our breath and watch the seasoned surfers – always good to know that they fall off too!

By day two, all intermediates were in the harness, happily tacking and gybing and content to remain out on the water in the slightly stronger wind conditions.

After four or five hours windsurfing and a few inadvertent trips downwind to the local village and some long walks back, most people could call it a day, satisfied in the knowledge they'd achieved a good day of windsurfing.

Again, Si and Ben seemed to be having a competition of who could stay out the longest.

Day three had no formal instruction but that didn't stop the teams from going out on the water. The team organised windsurfing races – Lt Cdr Matt Reynolds won – and were able to talk through the tactics needed when taking part in RNWA events later in the year.

There was also a chance to work on physical fitness, with the multiple gym classes and bikes provided by the centre. The advanced teams used the time to work on their speed, achieving around 32kn on average, but due to the gusty conditions remained unable to surpass any personal bests.

Day four saw some of the start group tackle the harness, which is progress beyond that which anyone could have imagined at the start of the week.

Whilst in part this was down to the excellent standard of instructors at the site, Sub Lt Gav Nicholson certainly took the time outside of formal instruction to take everyone through their paces, teaching them skills and drills to assist with development.

By the end of the week, everyone from start and intermediate had learned to beach start – all thanks to Gav and the advanced guys who were more than willing to help us outside of lesson time.

Wtr Becky Young summed it up so perfectly when she said: "It's amazing that you can just ask a senior officer anything in a non-formal environment; whether it's a question about gybing or the RN in general."

Cdr Rob Dunn described day five as: "Particularly strong winds on this day meant that the advanced team could make the most of the excellent conditions and top-quality kit to facilitate race and speed training prior to the inter-service competition this year."

However, it did also mean a few more unplanned adventures down the coastline for those of us not yet possessing Rob's immense skills on a board. What surprised Wtr McKayla Gullis about Vassilika was how safe she felt in even the challenging afternoon conditions.

"I felt like this was the safest place to learn the basics, but I also think I improved more than I ever could in the UK because of how much I could push myself in such a controlled environment."

With countless safety boats onhand and particularly vigilant beach crews (or WO Dave Strudwick on a SUP), nobody is ever stuck for too long.

On days six and seven, the teams were certainly starting to feel the strains of a week packed with windsurfing and sport – not that it stopped anyone from getting back out onto the water and using the time to consolidate all they'd learned throughout the week; gybing, tacking and beach starts for the start team and helitacks and 360s for the intermediates.

Cdr Nick Foster and Gav were also keen to get a hold of the tandem windsurfer and took out some of the other team members – an amazing chance to get planning and have one-to-one tuition with a couple of excellent windsurfers and coaches. It was the highlight of the week for most.

Cdr Trish Kohn said: "The opportunity to use a site like Vassilika which is geared up to all standards of windsurfing is a real bonus and demonstrates the aims of service AT perfectly."

"We brought together a range of abilities from all ranks and rates, and gave them access to great instruction from the RYA in ideal conditions which, when combined, lent themselves perfectly to everyone progressing beyond the expected level."

Report: Lieutenant Nicola Hall





## Summer proves successful for association sides

THE Royal Navy Rugby League season reached the summer break with success across all areas of the Association.

Due to the redevelopment of the Headingley Stadium in Leeds, home to the competition for six years, the annual State Of Origin fixture was held at Petersfield Rugby Club.

The Petersfield club proved to be fantastic hosts with a lunch raising £1,000 for service and local charities.

This year also saw the first-ever Origin Masters fixture featuring teams made up of players from Origin Clashes of past years coming together to relive the glory days as well as settle a few old scores.

The Masters match was a close-run game until well into the second half when the Maroons took command of the game, running out 40-12 winners.

The main match once again proved to be a thriller with the baking hot dry conditions testing the stamina of both sides to the limit.

An entertaining first half ended with the Maroons of the Western Commands leading by 16-6, however the Blues from the east struck early on in the second half to tie the game at 16 all after 60 minutes.

It was however to be another success for the Maroons as they bossed the last quarter with some great play to retain

the Origin trophy by 34-16.

RNRL also said goodbye to Logs(SC) Sili Buinimasi as far as playing is concerned as the Fijian announced his retirement and was given a guard of honour on leaving the pitch with the Origin Trophy.

The Royal Marines played their annual fixture against the Parachute Regiment for the Trafalgar Cup at Exeter RFC and regained the trophy after last year's defeat.

Arguably the most fiercely contested competition in services' sport the match was a tight affair for the first half with the RM just ahead by 20-18 at the break.

The second half was a different story, the Royals cut loose against the old foe, running in 34 unanswered points to give them a win by 54-18 to record their tenth victory of the 16 stagings of the fixture.

The RN Ladies, the Wrenegades, broke new ground by competing in this year's London 9s Rugby and Music Festival.

Coach CPO Matt Bowen was very pleased with the commitment of his charges as he watched them get to third place in the competition, won eventually by top Ladies' Super League club Castleford Tigers.

The RN Academy also rounded off

the regular season with a great win over Southern Area GB Teachers on the 4G pitch at Temeraire.

Whilst a relatively new representative side the Teachers are a very experienced squad with many of their player's regulars in the London League.

This did not deter PO(ET)Wata Robanakadavu's men who took a well-deserved 18-6 lead into the half-time break.

The second half, whilst a tough encounter, saw the RN Academy Brothers play some great rugby to win the match 38-18.

Picture: John Williams

# Ups and downs of Enduro

## Riders take part in British championships while newcomers enjoy track time

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Enduro Team competed in rounds six and seven of the British championships in the Isle of Man.

Team manager Bill Callister, along with team riders Ollie Harcombe, and Michael Blewett faced a 3am start from Plymouth to catch the ferry over from Liverpool on Friday morning to go and compete in the two-day time card enduro.

The race started on both days from the famous TT Grandstand, with over 200 riders ranging from first timers through to world-class professionals gridded in the pit lane, before embarking on the six-hour-plus race through a mixture of green lanes, private woodland, and open mountain tops, with road stages included throughout.

Michael set off for round six, down the pit lane, showing off for the cameras as he cruised past on his rear wheel.

This marked the start of the first transition stage for the day. A transition stage gives riders a set time to make it from A to B, with time penalties for arriving early or late.

Unfortunately for Mike no level of preparation could have prevented the gear box issues he suffered only minutes into the first transition.

Stuck in first gear for the remaining 20 miles he managed to get to the end of the transition, arriving at Carnegie in the south where he was able to pull into the pits to assess the issue.

Met by Bill, along with Bri and Al from the Road Race Team (who were competing in the Southern 100 road race), they worked hard to try and get the bike back up and running. Defeated by an internal breakage Mike was forced to retire early from day one.

Meanwhile Ollie was out on course and taking no prisoners as he fought his way through the first of five special tests that day.

With a mixture of fast grass fields, tight turns through the pine forests, large vertical tyres, stream crossings, steep drops and testing climbs, test one was there to push even the best of riders. Choosing to take on all bar one of

THE first ever RN Grassroots Motorcycle track training day took place at a very windy and overcast Anglesey race circuit in North Wales.

The event was sponsored by the RN RM Sports Lottery and the Eastern Region Sports fund and ran alongside the RM Grassroots Track Training day.

Coaching and expert tuition was available all day, provided by members of the Royal Navy Royal Marines Road Racing Team (RNRMRRT) who were there for the whole weekend participating in the final round of the RN/RM Championships.

The racers were on hand to offer advice and guidance to the most inexperienced novice rider, and the more experienced track-day riders in a safe and controlled environment.

They enjoyed the benefit of no speed limits, no oncoming traffic, no

the hard line options throughout the 4.5 mile off-road special test, he set the second fastest time of his category.

Minutes after timing in at the end of test one, he clocked into the start of the second transition.

With one hour 22 minutes to make it to the start of the second test it was time to think about how to take on the lengthy transition. With miles of off-road mountain passes, woodland and streams to negotiate, Ollie wanted to conserve as much energy as possible but still make it in on time.

Fortunately he hit the time spot on, and continued to ride a successful race throughout the day. Not picking up any time penalties he had set a perfect time card, now it rested on his timings from the remaining four tests.

The second test was very different to the first with a completely natural track and large wood section the track was for ever changing. Corners became faster as the loose forest floor burned up nicely, and with ruts deepening and tree roots being exposed, there were some rather interesting line choices evolving as the roots persistently tried to send the bike



Sunday drivers, no lamp posts and most importantly, no fear of getting pulled by traffic police.

It was also a great opportunity to meet members of the RNRMRRT team, find out exactly what they do and the commitment required and maybe set a target to join the team

in the future.

The 26 RN and RM personnel had the sole use of two pit garages to set up their bikes and kit, with power available for tyre warmers and the all-important kettle to have a wet, there was even a BBQ.

All participants enjoyed about

seven 20-minute sessions, allowing them to improve their riding skills.

For the majority of riders this was their first ever track experience and will definitely not be their last... especially one young sailor who had the biggest smile on his face all day long.

off in different directions.

Stepping up his game after the first test Ollie sent his Yamaha over every hard line and around each corner as fast as he could, setting the fastest lap times of his category for the rest of the day.

Battling hard throughout the six hours and taking on the blistering heat which was relentless throughout the whole weekend, Ollie secured himself a first-place finish for day one, with a seven-minute gap on second place.

Meanwhile the team had been hard at work with Mike's KTM back at the pits.

After locating the broken shaft within the gear box, they were able to weld it back together with the help from one of the sidecar teams at the Southern 100.

All for the price of a few drinks Mike had his KTM back ready to race.

The following day Mike and Ollie embarked on day two and round seven of the British Enduro Championship.

Fortunately Mike made it to test one with no issues. However having not ridden the track Saturday, he was at a massive disadvantage with the rest of his field knowing the track.

He was left riding blind for the first

time. He knew he had his work cut out and would have to push hard throughout the day to secure himself a good result. Riding strong throughout the first couple of transitions and test stages he was looking good, and the bike was performing for him.

The start of transition three was the only "tight check" of the day. Due to the open road stages in previous transitions, safety dictates that riders must not be pushed for time, however the tight check between Cringle Plantation and South Barrule quarry was the exception to this; with no road sections it was the only transition where riders were given as little as 18 minutes to complete it.

This section started in Cringle plantation and consisted of several miles of weaving through trees, hopping over stone walls and ripping down dusty stone lanes.

Exiting the plantation riders had to negotiate arguably the most technical section of the weekend.

A somewhat short but intense rock section through South Barrule quarry. With jagged rocks scattered everywhere and a few gnarly climbs and off cambered

descents riders were testing their trials skills as they pushed on to the end of the 25 minute transition.

Ollie made into the time zone with only three seconds to spare and therefore keeping his clean time card record going.

Unfortunately Mike suffered a few issues, pushing hard through the tight check he high sided himself whilst cornering on one of the dusty stone track. Slightly sore he cracked on to complete the transition slightly out of time, but in one piece.

After another long day of arduous racing both riders finished on a high. Unfortunately Mike's time penalty did cost him a few places, however with only two riders completing the stage in the time given it was nothing to be shy of.

He had worked hard throughout, and secured himself a respectable ninth-place finish.

In the meantime Ollie had kept up the fast pace he set on Saturday to claim first place, and taking the overall weekend win for the team in his category.

The team is always looking for new members, find us on Facebook - Royal Navy Royal Marines Enduro Team.



## Dan pilots way to world cup final

ROYAL Navy pilot Lieutenant Dan Raper raises his arm to signal a hit at the V2 World Championships in India.

Dan, who won the first VX Tri-Services Championship, was bidding to become the first VX player to win the title in both youth and senior categories.

As a seeded player Dan navigated the group stage without any dramas, beating all of his day one opponents with relative ease – however on day two he came up against Uganda's Businge Didus, a highly-experienced Ugandan international.

A fast and furious first half ended with Didus two points ahead at 30-28.

Stung by this, Dan redoubled his efforts in the second half and tore into Didus but his opponent still matched him, fighting back hard.

The breakthrough was when Dan took a catch to draw slightly ahead, a position he then held to the end of the match, winning a narrow hard-fought victory 73-71.

That result left Dan at the top of the group and he and Didus in second place both went through to the quarter-finals where Dan found the experienced Sahil Tiwari waiting for him.

Sahil was winner of the Craig Buttery Cup in 2016 and has improved further since then but Dan was taking no chances after his match against Didus and didn't allow Sahil to settle to his game. Dan went into the break with a ten-point lead and then maintained the momentum to run out winner 42-28.

Day three was semi-final and finals day and Dan found himself facing India's top player Pawan Kumar.

The first half proved to be a real battle as the two contrasting styles clashed and with Pawan taking a



couple of catches off Dan, however Dan managed to stay marginally ahead to go into the break leading 32-29. Sensing a place in the final Dan called upon all his reserves of energy and experience in the second half, increasing his lead and running out winner by 81-67.

The Senior World Cup Final saw Dan meet old adversary and England team-mate Tom Hildreth, pictured top.

Dan and Tom served up a match worthy of a World Cup final as they went it at hammer and tongs but it was Tom who built up a first half lead 46-31.

Dan pushed hard in the second half, taking three catches and winning the half but it wasn't quite enough to overturn the deficit and Tom hung on to win 77-68. Dan said: "What an amazing experience. I came so close to turning that round in the second half – but no complaints. This has been a wonderful tournament."

VX, formerly Rock-It-ball, is a fast, new and rapidly spreading ball sport which was designed and developed in North Yorkshire during 2005.

For more information contact the England VX Association at [www.vxengland.org](http://www.vxengland.org)



# Paddle power

## Team skills soar at French training camp

A DOZEN members of the freestyle section of the Royal Navy Paddlesport Association travelled to Lyon in France for a five-day training camp.

The team of ten RN and two RM personnel were under the instruction of current UK and European freestyle champion Lowri Davies and RN freestyle coach Lieutenant Ollie Taylor-Wood.

The aim was not only to build the squad's overall performance at Inter-Service level, but gain nationally-recognised qualifications from British Canoeing.

During the week, all members achieved their White-Water Safety and Rescue qualification, designed to ensure safety in the white-water environment and five passed their BC 3\* freestyle assessment, the second highest personal performance award in the BC freestyle system.

Freestyle is a growing discipline within the RNPA and combines skill, athleticism and a good amount of courage to perform 'tricks' on white water.

Unlike normal white-water paddling, freestyle competitors actively seek to upturn and manoeuvre their boats within or on the water in search of more complex ways to achieve this to gain higher points.

This means a solid kayak roll is absolutely required, something many of the team got a lot of practice in during the week.

Most of the training took place on a man-made course at Sault Brenez on the River Rhône, about 45 minutes to the south west of Lyon.

The course is a friendly grade two (three) facility which gives the ideal environment for training those new to the sport.

The team were also able to camp onsite and therefore able to maximise time on the water.

Whilst intimidating at first, the biggest feature on the course is a 5-7ft drop with a wave that can



be surfed at the bottom.

The relaxed nature of the course, combined with 35°C temperatures meant progression was fast.

During the week the team was invited to enter a competition at another local course organised by a Belgium paddling group.

This gave everyone an opportunity to compete against some of the best in the world with various other French and Belgium national team members present, including current junior men's world champion Tom Dolle.

The course at Sait-Pierre-de-Boeuf is more challenging than the team's base camp, although with fundamental skills in place it proved a good opportunity to test

skill learned earlier in the week.

The team competed exceptionally with members pulling cartwheels, loops, spins and surfs accumulating impressive scores.

The overall standard was very high, with many competitors being full-time kayakers using carbon competition boats, so medalling was never a realistic possibility.

It was however an ideal opportunity to gain exposure to competition level paddling and the fantastic culture of freestyle kayaking.

The following day the team took a break from training by switching focus to the second annual inflatable race.

The participants certainly

upped the ante from last year with glorious steeds on show, all of which remained intact with riders, by the finish line.

After a mass start and some suspect behaviour and potential illegal overtaking manoeuvres unsurprisingly the two Royal Marines took first and second places.

Five new freestyle boats and associated equipment was used, thanks to grants from RNRMC and Sports Lottery.

If you would like to try out freestyle, or participate in any other paddlesports disciplines, then please get in contact with the RNPA Membership secretary Alex Riddell at [RNPA@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:RNPA@royalnavymail.mod.uk) or ask your PTI for more information.

## Twelve Royal Navy gymnasts scoop record 42 medals at national championships

# Best of British

**ROYAL Navy gymnasts left the British Adult Gymnastics Championships with a clutch of medals and national titles.**

The dozen athletes won 42 medals, three national team titles and five individual national titles, making it the most successful team in the contest to date.

The Royal Navy Gymnastics team were the first club in the competition's history to have individuals and teams competing in every single discipline.

Lieutenant Commander Jamie Weller was also the first person to win an individual medal and team medal in every discipline, leaving the competition with a staggering ten medals.

The championships, held at Lilleshall National Sports Centre, attracted more than 300 participants.

The Naval Service have to compete in civilian competitions as the RAF and Army do not have any formal status for the sport of gymnastics, which means the team has to compete outside the armed forces.

Lt Cdr Weller said: "The performance delivered by each and every one of the team members was extremely impressive and they did not only do themselves but the service proud."

"The Royal Navy Gymnastic team dominated the national competition, breaking numerous records on the way. We have now become the team to beat."

Officer Cadet Bethany Chambers took the bronze medal in the over-18 women's novice trampolining category, with Midshipman Rachel Cox coming fifth.

Corporal Joanna Barnes took eighth



place in the over 30s, Lt Cdr Weller and Marine Daniel Bennett took the gold and silver medals in the over 30s and finally Lt Cdr Kevin Westbrook took the silver in the pro category. The team's efforts won them the silver medal in the overall team championships.

The combination of Cpl Barnes and Lt Cdr Weller took the gold medal in the mixed pairs acrobatic gymnastics competition after an extremely closely-fought competition against last year's National Champions from Bristol.

Mne Bennett and Lt Cdr Weller stormed the men's pairs category to also claim the national title, however the entire competition came to a stand

still when the men's group came to the floor and delivered two show-stopping performance with outstanding balances and intricate routines. The team of Leading Writer Glen Parsonage, Aiden Sartin, Mne Bennett and Lt Cdr Weller became national champions for 2018.

The combined team score saw the Royal Navy win the national tumbling title against stiff competition, including last year's national champions.

LWtr Parsonage said: "I have had the time of my life this weekend, I was so nervous about competing in such a big event as I have only been training seriously for eight months."

"The cheers from the crowd after our

men's group routine is something I won't forget, I would recommend anyone interested in having a go at gymnastics to do it, the team are so friendly and supportive of each other, I wish I had joined sooner."

The RN men's artistic team also took the national title for the third consecutive year. Lt Cdr Westbrook, who took the men's over-30 novice category, was joined by LWtr Parsonage and Mne Bennett both in equal sixth place, Lloyd White came in in ninth place just in front of Colour Sergeant Tom Miller, who finished tenth overall but ensured that all of the RN team finished in the top ten nationally.

In the under-30 novice section Aiden Sartin took fifth place and Lt Cdr Weller took the bronze medal in the pro over-30s category.

The RN team put a team in the women's artistic contest for the first time. Able Seaman Louise Dorset took the bronze medal in the newbie category, Mid Cox took the 25th spot in the under-30 novice section and Cpl Barnes's nearly-flawless performance across beam, vault and bars saw her take seventh place individually and the combined score left the female team in seventh place.

This year's team comprised:

- Lieutenant Commander Jamie Weller, Standing Joint Force HQ, (seven gold, one silver, two bronze)
- Lieutenant Commander Kevin Westbrook, Fleet AV, (two gold, two silver)
- Sub Lieutenant Aaron Wilding, DMS Wittington, (one gold)
- Sub Lieutenant Lloyd White, HMS Scott, (one gold)

■ Midshipman Rachel Cox, BRNC, (one gold, one silver)

■ Officer Cadet Bethany Chamber, Devon URNU, (one silver, one bronze)

■ Colour Sergeant Tom Miller, 42 Cdo, (one gold)

■ Leading Writer Glen Parsonage, CNLS, (three gold, one silver)

■ Corporal Joanna Barnes, Portsmouth Band (3 Gold, 1 Silver)

■ Mne Daniel Bennett – Portsmouth Band, (five gold, three silver)

■ Able Seaman Louise Dorset, HMS Diamond, (one bronze)

Lt Cdr Westbrook said: "After winning silver in the men's artistic last year, I was hungry for the gold medal. The competition didn't start well for me, going into the last rotation I was in fourth place but I pulled off one of the best vaults I've ever done all year to secure the overall gold medal."

Mid Cox added: "It was a privilege to be asked to join the team after only being in the Navy for a matter of weeks. I have learnt so much from such a talented and friendly team, and I actually impressed myself with my performance as I was so nervous competing in a national event."

C/Sgt Miller said: "This was my first year competing for the Royal Navy Gymnastics team so I was quite nervous, given the standards of the team already; however I was made to feel more than welcome and huge amounts of advice and knowledge were passed down to me by various members."

"This has given me great inspiration to continue and I am already looking ahead to plan the new routines for next year as training starts straight away."

Follow the team on Facebook at [Royal Navy Gymnastics](#).



● Capt Jerry Kyd opens the clay-pigeon shooting on the flight deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth

Pictures: LPhoto Kyle Heller

## Competition under way to find carrier's top gun

FROM rescued pigeons, to clay pigeons. HMS Queen Elizabeth's **Clay Target Shooting Association** has conducted its first flight deck shoot during a welcome Saturday routine on WESTLANT 18.

The club has been set up to promote clay target shooting on board to all ranks and rates and to facilitate an unusual sporting activity during any down time the crew has.

The club committee have been assisted by the Royal Navy Royal Marine Clay Pigeon Shooting Association via Majors Hugh Jones and Simon Lucas RM who are both clay pigeon shooting association (CPSA) coaches.

The CPSA is the National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport in the UK and their courses are accessed by the UK armed forces through the Army Rifle Association (ARA)

The shooting was opened by the ships commanding officer, Captain Jerry Kyd, who is a keen shooter himself, with 15 club members then forming the rest of the shoot card.

The club currently has around 35 members from commanders to able seamen, who have all conducted a CPSA shotgun skills and safety course as well as having members who have completed the CPSA Range Safety Officer's course.

Lieutenant Matt Williams, the club's founder, said: "I remember shooting clays from the stern of HMS Invincible in the mid 90s and when I joined this ship I was keen to see if it was still possible to achieve."

"It has taken a lot of time and effort to understand the legislation and obtain equipment but we are now in a great place to be able to offer this activity."

"I shoot at my local club in Cornwall and think it's a fantastic way to learn and improve new skills whilst also being in the outdoors."

"Clay shooting may not be accessible to all but through this club, we hope to be able to make it so. We certainly have a unique backdrop and plenty of space to make an enjoyable experience."

The club has been donated equipment by RNAS Culdrose Sporting Gun Club, Robert Brightman of [Shootingproducts.co.uk](#) who provided all the required protective equipment and Mr Charlie Harris of Chris Potter Country Sports in Royal Tunbridge Wells who provided the shotguns, cartridges, clay targets and all the other accessories required to conduct a shoot, free of charge.

The club hopes that now the shoots have been seen onboard, more crew members will be interested in participating and achieving the required qualifications.

"We hope to be able to get some club members to progress through to coaching qualification standard which will allow us to open up shoots to the entire ship's company at a grass-roots level whilst also qualifying new members to shoot in the meantime," added Lt Williams.

As the ship continues on her deployment, the club hopes to be able hold more events with an end of year competition to see who really is top gun.

Rescued pigeons, see page 22



# Navy team all smiles

Pictures: Showgroundphotography.com



**SMILER** lives up to his name as he displays his toothy grin as he and rider Petty Officer Sophie Fuller won a **showjumping** title.

The duo were crowned individual Combined Training winner of the Royal Navy Leg of the Loriners Inter-Service team contest.

The Royal Navy Dressage Showjumping and Eventing Team hosted the other Services at their Showjumping (SJ) Championships at the David Broome Event Centre.

The RN leg of the Loriners Inter-Services Team competition saw four riders from each service complete a challenging dressage test and a round of showjumping.

The Royal Navy team of Commander Jo Bollen, Lieutenant Sarah Taborda – whose horse was injured so bravely rode another that she had only sat on once before –, PO Sophie Fuller and PO Amy Taylor accredited themselves well over both phases to hold onto second place – both in the RN leg and the overall Loriners League with only the Eventing leg to go.

Meanwhile over a long but enjoyable weekend of competition, service personnel battled it out in mixed military and civilian classes and there was a very healthy spread of uniformed competitors in most line ups.

Of particular note were Lt Cdr Suzanne Clark, Lt Cdr

Vicki Sollitt, Mid Emily Hoare and RN Riding Club affiliate member, Marianne Morffew, all who took home well-earned rosettes – particularly special achievements because this group included two veteran horses, one youngster (at his inaugural showjumping competition) and one horse just coming back after injury.

The final class of the competition was fiercely fought with lots of military riders vying for ribbons.

PO Amy Taylor jumped a great round on Zenna and led for most of the class, but she was pipped at the post into third by Army riders Maj Nicola Rush and Sgt Lauren Potts.

However PO Taylor still won the overall RN Showjumping Champion title and was presented with the trophy by James Broome.

This meant she retained the award she had won in 2017.

It was fitting that both POs Fuller and Taylor had their names in lights as shortly thereafter they were invited to represent the UK Armed Forces Equestrian Squad at the prestigious Hickstead all England Jumping Championship, where they acquitted themselves well and 'Smiler' again had a reason to smile when he and PO Fuller took home a ribbon after some solid performances.



● Left, PO Amy Taylor and Zenna receive their RN Showjumping Champion trophy from James Broome; Above, the UK Armed Forces Showjumping