



NAVY NEWS

MARCH 2019

It's icers

MARINE Liam Weir, of Mortar Troop, 40 Commando, waits for permission to leave the water during ice-breaking drills in Norway. (See centrepages)

Picture: Corporal James Clarke, 40 Cdo

Inside: 45 Cdo are redders; HMS Argyll's odyssey; HMS Forth's ready to go





● PO(WTR) Chris Marson gives a thumbs up with sailors from the Royal Brunei Navy



● AB(SEA) Bradley Gulliver watches on from the breakwater as HMS Argyll arrives in Diego Garcia; The frigate pictured



Awesome, A

FOUR days on an idyllic island. What more could you want?

It was a perfect way for the 210-strong crew of HMS Argyll to wind down at the end of the frigate's nine-month deployment to the Far East.

The British Indian Ocean Territory of Diego Garcia, the only inhabited island in the Chagos chain, welcomed the Devonport ship as she made her way back to the UK.

The 44sq km island, part of the Chagos archipelago, lies 1,100 miles south of the tip of India, 1,950 miles from the Horn of Africa, 2,250 miles from Singapore and 800 miles from Male, capital of the Maldives.

These days, Diego Garcia is largely a staging post and supply base for the US military, but it remains British territory, with a mostly-Royal Navy garrison responsible for duties such as customs and policing.

Argyll's Commanding Officer, Commander Toby Shaughnessy, hosted a small reception for the British Military Representative of BIOT, Commander Karen Cahill as well as senior US Navy personnel stationed on

the island.

"The visit of HMS Argyll to Diego Garcia was a great opportunity to engage with the UK and US personnel stationed at the military facility there, as well as give my ship's company a rare opportunity to see somewhere very few people will ever have the privilege of seeing," said Cdr Shaughnessy.



The ship's crew got some well-deserved shore leave, were able to explore the wildlife and fascinating landscape of the island as well as utilise the great sports and recreation facilities available for military personnel stationed there.

The Type 23's own catering department laid on a beach barbecue instead of the usual meal served from the ship's galley.

Some of the UK military personnel stationed on the island volunteered to give tours of the old coconut plantation and other historical sites on the island.

The island's native turtles and large land-dwelling coconut crabs were a highlight as well as the 20,000 sharks that bathe in the islands natural shallows.

The crew were also able to see hundreds of different varieties of fish

that live among the coral reef.

The joint UK and US military facility on Diego Garcia contributes significantly towards global security, providing logistic support to operational forces forward deployed to the Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean and Gulf.

Argyll arrived from a visit to Kota Kinabalu in Malaysia, where the frigate welcomed children from Kinabalu International School.

Year 7 pupils enjoyed visiting the bridge, control centre, engine control room, the ship's helicopter and the gun placements.

Kota Kinabalu is the capital of Malaysia's Sabah state in the northern part of Borneo and is considered the gateway to numerous attractions, such as Mount Kinabalu.

Prior to that, Argyll visited Brunei Darussalam, where the ship worked with personnel from the Royal Brunei Navy.

As the two navies conducted drills, Cdr Shaughnessy said: "We've had a very close relationship with the RBN and we have a lot of commonality with training ... so it's good to keep the knowledge topped up and going as it is."

Before arriving in the sultanate, the





alongside; a kayaker enjoys the turquoise waters

Argyll

HMS Argyll joined her naval counterparts from the region in a multi-national exercise in the waters of Singapore, and before that, with the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force to test working together in various areas including communications, flying, and the exchange of personnel by sea boat and manoeuvres.

“By doing so, we are promoting peace, security and prosperity of this really important region to the UK, especially in terms of trade that goes back and forth between the UK and countries in this region,” added Cdr Shaughnessy.

HMS Argyll was making her way home to Devonport after her varied deployment which has seen her search the Indian Ocean for terrorists and smugglers, and work with warships from Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand and Australia for a regular test of Commonwealth navies off the Malay peninsula.

KEEP UP WITH THE SHIP

Follow @hms_argyll and @RoyalNavy on Twitter



● **AB(WS) Fraser McNie pipes the side as HMS Argyll supports a reception on board by the British High Commissioner during her visit to Brunei**

Pictures: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum, RNPTY





Winch a cinch for navy pair

TWO of the Royal Navy's anti-submarine heavyweights carried out training in the Atlantic.

Submarine HMS Astute and Type 23 frigate HMS St Albans faced tough weather conditions as they took advantage of working together on their anti-submarine warfare capabilities to do personnel transfer training.

St Albans' Merlin helicopter from 814 Naval Air Squadron – aka the Flying Tigers and normally based at Culdrose in Cornwall – flew between both vessels, winching submariners and sailors while battling wind and rain.

Lieutenant Commander Andrew Mitchell, flight commander on board the Portsmouth-based frigate, said: "The transfer was one of the most challenging and professionally rewarding experiences.

"We don't get to do this often and certainly not in such adverse weather conditions."

St Albans and Clyde-based Astute are two of the vessels that form the Royal Navy's anti-submarine capability.

The Astute-class are primarily responsible for safeguarding the nuclear deterrent, which this



year the Royal Navy is celebrating 50 years of unbroken patrols.

The Astute class are the largest and most advanced attack submarines ever operated by the Royal Navy while St Albans is equipped with with state-of-the-art sonar to find a threat lurking beneath the waves – and Sting Ray torpedoes either launched from tubes on the ship, or dropped by the Merlin, to take it out. Commander John Cromie, commanding officer of HMS St Albans, said: "As we continue to hone our anti-submarine warfare skills alongside HMS Astute, the synergy that can be achieved by operation a Merlin, Type 23 and Astute-class submarine together represents the pinnacle of all-arms anti-submarine warfare.



"It clearly demonstrates the Royal Navy's ability to project a potent capability into the wider Atlantic to protect UK interests."

HMS St Albans has returned to Portsmouth after being one of the navy's high-readiness warships working in UK waters.

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Pictures: Petty Officer Lee Blease



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Mounts' lucky find Magical milestone for Merlin

AROUND £150k worth of drugs will never reach the streets of the UK or USA thanks to the deterrent patrol of Royal Navy support ship RFA Mounts Bay.

The Bay-class ship embarked a Dolphin helicopter from the US Coast Guard's HITRON – Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron – and its counter-narcotics boarding team, the LEDET (Legal Enforcement DETachment) – as part of the international effort to prevent drug-running from South/Central to North America.

The Coast Guard were conducting a training exercise when the helicopter's crew spotted a bale bobbing in the water. The boarding team recovered the object, tested the contents and reported that the bale contained around 50lbs (22kg) of marijuana – worth upwards of £150,000 to dealers in the UK.

It's thought drug runners who use 'go fast' speedboats to carry their illegal cargoes across the Caribbean ditched the bale when spooked – possibly by the sight of the helicopter.

The bale subsequently handed over to a US Coast Guard cutter Isaac Mayo for destruction.

Mounts Bay is the UK's long-term naval presence in the Caribbean, dedicating her summers and autumns to disaster-relief operations in the wake of hurricanes which strike with devastating frequency, while the rest of her year is focused on counter drugs patrols.

NAVAL aviators say the best is yet to come from their principal heavy-duty helicopter after it clocked up 200,000 flying hours – safeguarding ships and submarines and ferrying troops into battle.

In four different versions – chiefly split between maritime patrol/submarine hunter and battlefield support – the Merlin fleet has flown the equivalent of 1,190 weeks or just shy of 23 years in the hands of the Fleet Air Arm and RAF.

The Fleet Air Arm got its hands on the first version of the helicopter in 1997, brought it into the service three years later and have been operating it ever since from frigates, carriers and assault ships, using the Merlin for everything from moving people and kit around and rescue missions to the painstaking task of submarine hunting – usually hand-in-hand with a Type 23 frigate.

And since 2014, naval air and ground crew have been turning the RAF's battlefield

Merlins into Commando Helicopter Force Merlins, replacing the trusty Sea King as the wings of the Royal Marines.

"The Commando Helicopter Force is back on the map with Commando Merlin. It's one of the finest helicopters in defence: versatile, incredible speed, endurance – at least five hours, which is high for a helicopter, but more with extra fuel tanks – and range," said Commander Bob Bond, 845 NAS' Commanding Officer, whose men, women and machines are currently honing Arctic warfare skills (see pages 19-21).

"It's the helicopter of choice for the Royal Marines. Commando aviation is back!"

The Maritime Merlin Force, based entirely at Culdrose, is about to get its hands on the new Crowsnest – a radar suite which can be fitted to the Mk2 to replace the Bagger Sea Kings as the Fleet's long-range 'eyes in the sky'.

It can not merely track incoming aircraft

which might threaten the Queen Elizabeth battle group, but also be used to direct the F-35 Lightnings to intercept... or track and guide the stealth fighters to targets on the ground.

Commander Jim Hall, in charge of the Maritime Merlin Force says the helicopter is "on the right path" to support Royal Navy operations into the next decade.

"Merlin has proven its reliability and flexibility in the journey to this 200,000 hours milestone," he added.

"It's played an integral role in the protection of the nation's strategic deterrent – and will continue to do so – and with Crowsnest will enhance the current anti-submarine warfare role in defending the nation's aircraft carriers."

At present the maritime Merlin fleet has at least a decade to run until retired, while the commando variant is planned to bow out in 2030.

G whizz for pilots

NAVY F-35 and Hawk pilots will be better prepared for extreme G forces thanks to a new £44m hi-tech trainer.

Every fast jet pilot in the Fleet Air Arm will use the High-G trainer – also known as a centrifuge – which simulates the effects of gravity on the human body and an aviator's reactions and responses.

Pilots wear special flying suits to limit the effects of gravity, but can still suffer from black outs – potentially fatal, even for a split second.

To prepare them for such forces, a centrifuge has been spinning pilots round and round at speed in Farnborough since the mid-50s, when second generation fighters such as the Scimitar were entering service with the Fleet Air Arm.

That centrifuge could do little more than subject pilots to extreme G forces. Its successor at RAF Cranwell in Lincolnshire incorporates a simulator as well to see how aviators respond to the pressure – and whether they can still safely fly a jet.

The sim – which replicates Hawk, Typhoon and F-35 cockpits – can be used to recreate anything a pilot might encounter, such as the strains of dogfighting and the extreme G forces likely to exert themselves while trying to evade an incoming missile (which is a bit Hollywood – see Behind Enemy Lines).

"We are really looking forward to using the new High-G training facility," said Lt Cdr Matt 'Deavers' Deavin, Commanding Officer of the RN's Hawk squadron, 736 NAS, which develops fast jet combat tactics and tests the responses of warships to mock air attacks.

"The new facility provides higher and more realistic G onset rates, features a Hawk cockpit and enables the trainee to instigate high G training serials via the use of the flying controls.

"Our Senior Pilot has already 'flown' it and declared it a fantastic upgrade to the G tolerance training suite our pilots benefit from.

Hawks can pull up to 8 Gs (a Formula 1 driver experiences 3 to 5G when racing) during routine sorties which can cause severe stress on the body and senses. That's why the ability to practice our G coping strategies and systems in a benign environment is vital."

Around 300 pilots will clamber into the centrifuge 'cockpit' with fast jet pilots expected to undergo testing at least once every five years.

They'll be spun around up to 34 times per minute – the centrifuge can accelerate to 9G (that's nine times the weight of gravity) pulling at or pressing down on the human body.

The device will also be used to trial and test new equipment to be used on fast jets and by the pilots.

Tsunami on the Thames

POWER lines down. Water pipes shattered. Buildings collapsed. Roads and pavements littered with crashed cars. Fires raging out of control. Stunned citizens in urgent need of medical assistance.

This was the devastating scenario facing sailors from HMS Kent as they joined the county's emergency services to see how the military could help civilian authorities in the event of a major disaster.

And if the scenes described above sound far-fetched... they're not. They're based on a very real danger, right on Kent's doorstep.

For more than 70 years the people of Sheerness have lived under the cloud of a 'timebomb' on their doorstep – the WW2 ammunition ship SS Richard Montgomery, sunk on a sandbank a couple of miles offshore.

Aboard the vessel, which went down in bad weather at the height of the Battle for France in 1944, are around 7,000 bombs of various sizes – 1,400 tonnes of high explosives in all.

If triggered, experts reckon the blast could shatter every window in Sheerness, throw bits of the ship 10,000 feet in the air and result in a tsunami anywhere between four and 15ft high, adding to the chaos and devastation ashore...

...some of which was replicated at the RN's 'disaster relief school' at Bull Point in Devonport Naval Base, Plymouth, where crews of all Royal Navy ships practise providing aid – though typically after a hurricane or earthquake, such as HMS Ocean and RFA Mounts Bay in the Caribbean after the hurricanes of 2017.

"A disaster exercise is primarily a test of ship's ability to firstly plan, then carry out dynamic command and control of its personnel and equipment," explained Lieutenant Commander Richard Talbot, overseeing the exercise for the RN's training organisation, FOST.

"It tests both flexibility and ability to put a basic plan into practice – then be able to react and adapt as the situation ashore develops. And if there's one thing that the military excels at it's planning – planning under pressure especially."

Increasingly, blue light services and local



authorities are invited to make use of the facilities at Bull Point so they are better able to cope with a major incident, such as the Manchester Arena bombing, the London Bridge terror attack or Lockerbie disaster.

But there are times when the civilian authorities at home are overwhelmed by a situation – such as the severe flooding in early 2014 or the Novichok attack in Salisbury last year – and require extra manpower, skills and kit, which is where the armed forces come in: officially Military Aid to Civil Agencies.

HMS Kent brings manpower, specialist engineers, trained firefighters, electricians, chefs, medics, cutting gear, emergency supplies, and fresh water to help on the ground, her boats can ferry casualties to the ship for longer-term treatment in the sickbay, and the Merlin helicopter can carry out rapid reconnaissance of a disaster zone and move people into and out of otherwise inaccessible areas.

"Working alongside the blue light services has been a steep learning curve for everyone," Lt Cdr Talbot added.

"In an operation such as this, military personnel have to adapt to the way the civilian authorities work and think. Kent has had to rapidly change her mindset from training for high-intensity warfare to providing humanitarian aid.

"Overall, the exercise was a huge success. It proved that military and civilian emergency services can work together."

Pictures: LPhoto Alex Ceolin



Changes at the top

THERE are major changes in the upper echelons of the RN in the coming weeks as a string of senior officers move on.

Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Ben Key becomes only the third sailor to hold the post of **Chief of Joint Operations at Northwood**, overseeing joint and combined operations involving Britain's armed forces beyond the shores of the mother country. He takes over from Vice Admiral Tim Fraser.

Stepping into the **Fleet Commander** vacancy at Leach Building is newly-promoted Vice Admiral Jerry Kyd, first CO of HMS Queen Elizabeth and currently **Commander Maritime Forces**... a post now filled by Rear Admiral Andrew Burns.

The top personnel position in the Senior Service, that of **Second Sea Lord**, will be occupied by Vice Admiral Nick Hine, succeeding Vice Admiral Tony Radakin who will become Britain's highest ranking naval officer later in the year when current **First Sea Lord** Admiral Sir Philip Jones retires.

The new head of the **Fleet Air Arm** will be Rear Admiral Martin Connell, filling the shoes of Vice Admiral Keith Blount who's overseen naval aviation for the past four years – including the re-birth of fast-jet carrier operations. He moves from Portsmouth to Northwood to take over from Vice Admiral Sir Clive Johnstone as **Commander of NATO Maritime Command** – the headquarters which directs all of the alliance's naval operations.

Vice Admiral Chris Gardner takes over as **Chief of Materiel (Ships)**.

Portsmouth Naval Base Commander Commodore Jim Higham becomes a rear admiral as **Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Ships)** as well as becoming the **Chief Naval Engineer Officer** in place of Rear Admiral Richard Thompson.

And Rear Admiral Paul Marshall will take over the teams **overseeing the design and construction** of the new Type 26 and 31 frigates and the replacement solid support ships for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Ledbury on target

WHO doesn't love a bit of gunnery funnery?

The crew of HMS Ledbury certainly do, as they ran through the gamut of the minehunter's capability during a spot of training in the Gulf (yes, despite the choppy waters and sullen skies in the photograph below, it really is the Middle East...).



With some major exercises looming this spring, the Hunt-class' crew were put through their paces to ensure they are ready for the challenges to come.

The mine warfare team put Seafox in the water to go hunting for underwater devices, while the force protection team practised their sharpshooting accuracy with Ledbury's main 30mm cannon, machine-guns and the six-barreled .50 calibre minigun which spews out lead at a ferocious rate of fire (about 2,000 rounds a minute).

And there was a big bang to finish things off with a diver-laid charge on a simulated mine.

"Doing the work-up was exciting but putting those skills to use in this environment is even better," said Able Seaman (Diver) Mac McMenemy.

"We're all looking forward to working with and learning from the other nations out here and building our operational experience."

Lieutenant Commander Mark Heward, Ledbury's Commanding Officer, said his crew had "always worked hard" in preparation for flying out to the Gulf to take charge of the ship as part of the regular rotation of mine warfare sailors, and were maintaining those efforts in theatre.

"I have some very young sailors for whom this is their first time properly away from home.

"But there are lots of exciting opportunities working in the Gulf and it is exactly the sort of challenge that our people enjoy to face."



Assault ship plan revealed

Investment in design phase for commando strike vessels

COMMANDOS of the future could be sent into battle from ships like this under plans being considered by the Naval Service.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson announced investment in a concept and development phase for a new class of assault vessels – called littoral strike ships.

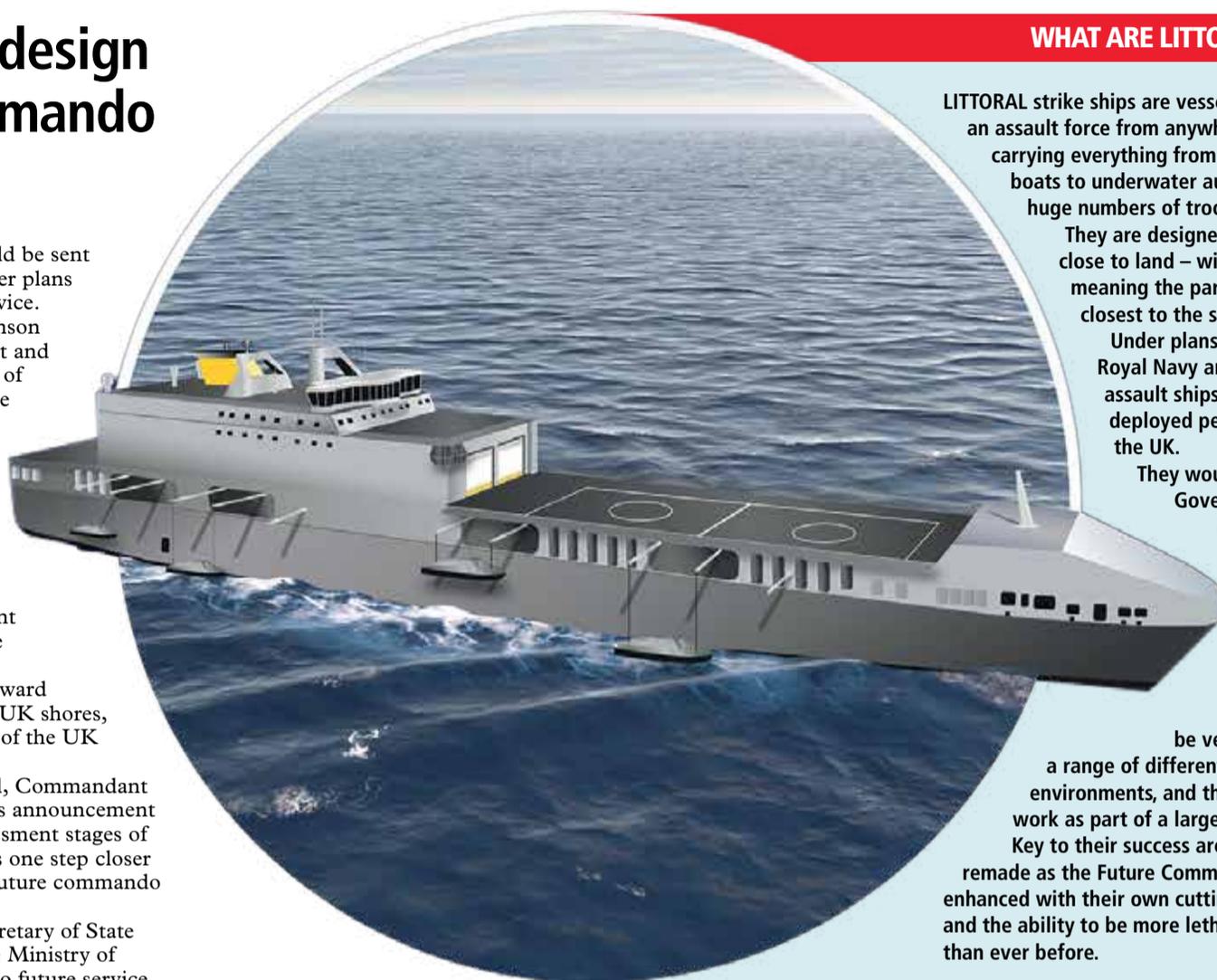
It represents part of the Navy's vision for the future of amphibious warfare, alongside plans for the future of the Royal Marines.

These ships would form the backbone of a littoral strike group, a scalable force made up of different elements of the fleet and the future commando force.

Crucially they would each be forward deployed, permanently away from UK shores, to exert global influence on behalf of the UK government.

Major General Charlie Stickland, Commandant General Royal Marines, said: "This announcement to accelerate the concept and assessment stages of future littoral strike ships brings us one step closer to realising our ambitions for the future commando force."

The work announced by the Secretary of State will now look at how and when the Ministry of Defence could deliver the ships into future service.



WHAT ARE LITTORAL STRIKE SHIPS?

LITTORAL strike ships are vessels which can command an assault force from anywhere in the world – carrying everything from helicopters and fast boats to underwater automated vehicles and huge numbers of troops.

They are designed to be able to get in close to land – with 'littoral' literally meaning the part of the sea which is closest to the shore.

Under plans being looked at by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, these assault ships would be forward deployed permanently away from the UK.

They would therefore give the UK Government greater options in terms of working with our allies around the world but also allow the flexibility to deal with a crisis anywhere in the world.

The ships would need to be versatile enough to handle a range of different missions in all types of environments, and they would also be able to work as part of a larger strike group.

Key to their success are the Royal Marines, remade as the Future Commando Force and enhanced with their own cutting-edge technology – and the ability to be more lethal, agile and far-reaching than ever before.

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TWELVE months ago HMS Forth arrived in the Solent to a fanfare – the first of a new breed of patrol ships ready to take their place in the Fleet, not just on the UK but the world stage.

After a year's hard work, dedication, preparation and training, the ship sails this month for the first time under the White Ensign.

When she does, her 58-strong ship's company say she'll surprise the rest of the Fleet by what she can do.

If there's one phrase to avoid aboard the first of the five second-generation River-class ships it's "they're just more modern versions of the first batch".

Bigger. Faster. Longer range. Flight deck. Crane. Air search radar. Space for 50 troops.

"These ships are coming and they bring with them a game-changing capability," Forth's Executive Officer Lt Sam Fields says emphatically.

Commanding Officer Commander Bob Laverty nods. "These ships will fly the White Ensign all over the globe. They are a real step up, capable of being deployed for several years at a time."

It's also worth stressing what Forth is not. She's not a frigate. Or a corvette. She is a patrol ship. Her speciality isn't hunting submarines. Or providing air defence.

They are good for constabulary work – policing sovereign waters, keeping an eye on smuggling/drug runners (the air search radar has an impressive range), and conducting disaster relief; the new Rivers can accommodate a couple of containers – and lift the supplies off easily with their 16-tonne cranes (the one fitted to HMS Protector has proved particularly useful in Antarctica).

Throw in a couple of Pacific 24 sea boats, a flight deck which can take a Merlin, a 30mm gun and you have five ships far more capable than their predecessors.

The first-generation Rivers have largely been used for fishery protection duties in home waters, occasionally being deployed to the Med or Caribbean.

Their successors will operate almost exclusively around the globe; Whitehall intends to 'forward deploy' the new Rivers around the globe: the Falklands (Forth sails south this autumn to replace HMS Clyde), the Caribbean, Singapore and so on, rotating one third of the crew every two months to sustain permanent operations.

"Forth is actually a brand-new ship, a massive upgrade on the first batch," says Deputy Marine Engineer Officer WO1 Selwyn Brown who's spent 35 years in the RN, mainly in Type 23s.

The technology powering Forth isn't too much different from the last small ship he served in, HMS Sandpiper.

Where it does differ is the automation involved. No one mans the main control room except in an emergency. Everything is monitored from the bridge, while a couple of on-call engineers conduct the regular rounds. And then there's power.

"Just look at the speed: 21 knots on one shaft – most ships in the Navy can't do that," he says proudly.

Forth's speed will surprise. So will her TARDIS-like size once on board.

"People think these ships are tiny. They're not," says Lt Fields.

In fact, a whole additional deck has been

inserted in the second-generation Rivers but outwardly you wouldn't know it; they sit much lower in the water than their predecessors.

To underline Forth's size, we go past the engine room into the section set aside for up to 51 marines or soldiers as the ship's embarked force.

First the bunk spaces (spread over three compartments).

Keep going.

Then the embarked forces' galley, heads/showers.

Keep going.

Then the mess/dining hall. Not much smaller than that for junior rates on a Type 23.

Accommodation elsewhere is in keeping with 21st-Century warships: six-berth en-suite messes for junior ratings, two and single-berth cabins for senior rates and officers. All decorated with a unique HMS Forth tartan (designed by the ship's sponsor Lady Johnstone-Burt), while passageways bear the names of streets in the affiliated city of Stirling.

The period alongside has allowed Forth to forge her ties with the historic Scottish city over the past 12 months, although many of the original crew have moved on since the ship arrived in Portsmouth.

Among the longest serving members of the ship's company is Leading Engineering Technician Luke 'Jack' Frost from Chester-le-Street who joined Forth in April 2017 – and like most shipmates is eager to take her to sea after a demanding past 12 months.

"Some people did find it difficult, but you pull each other through, you keep each other going, you have a laugh and you get on with it," says the 27-year-old.

"Going to sea will bring a sense of relief. Everything will fall into place and we can get back into our routine."

"There's a really good mix of people on board, a great bunch and people really love their jobs."

Like Chef Natasha Crawley, who's enjoying working in a much larger galley than the original Rivers – and one fitted with the latest equipment like a touch-screen auto-cooking oven.

Want a medium-rare steak? A couple of stabs with the finger, put the meat on the tray and job's a good 'un. Steamed veg? No problem.

Oh, it also cleans itself afterwards. No need to spend hours scrubbing out.

Professional pride means the 25-year-old from Chesterfield keeps the cooking settings on manual.

Like Forth herself, Natasha's spent the past year alongside and is "itching to get back to sea".

She continues: "I definitely prefer these ships to the first batch. But above all, there's a great little family aboard. Everyone knows everyone else and gets along."

And that mentality and attitude have helped Cdr Laverty "steel a new ship's company to get her ready for sea again."

"We're fully focused on taking her to sea before the end of March," he says. "We have our belief and faith in the ship. Now it is time to test her at sea."

Or, as the ship's motto puts it, time to go forth and conquer.

Pictures: LPhotos Louise George and Will Haigh
Report: Richard Hargreaves



Time to go, Forth

NEW VETERAN HOUSING IN SOUTH LONDON

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Housing the ex-Service Community

Haig Housing Trust is launching a new development of 68 one to four-bedroomed houses for Veterans, opening on its south London estate in Morden in April 2019.

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THE JOURNEY DOES NOT HAVE TO END!

navygraphics 18/1058 updated



From Auckland to Singapore via Darwin, the men and women of HMS Montrose have built up

A 'wealth of memories

A NEW Zealand P3 maritime patrol aircraft makes a low pass of HMS Montrose – keeping the ship's company on their toes on one of the longest passages yet on her 20,000-mile journey to the Gulf.

The leg between Auckland and Australia accounted for roughly one quarter of that epic total as the Plymouth-based frigate shifted from the Pacific to Asia.

The journey from New Zealand was punctuated with exercises; with the P3 to practise submarine-hunting skills; a French Navy Guardian patrol aircraft was used to train Montrose's operations room team and upper deck gunners in the art of air defence off **New Caledonia**; and there was some combined training with the RAN in the form of patrol boat HMAS Pirie as Montrose approached her interim destination, **Darwin**.

Australia's northernmost – and most remote – city, capital of the Northern Territory, served as a pitstop for Montrose on her way from Auckland to Singapore.

Aside from military exercises there was an old school sports day featuring egg-and-spoon, sack and three-legged races, plus bucketball with the team from the 39-man-mess triumphing.

Ashore in Darwin, Montrose's footballers took on local side Mindil Aces and lost 2-1 in the very humid conditions of the monsoon season, while their shipmates took the opportunity to explore a city rebuilt four times in the past 120 years (three times after cyclones, once after a Japanese air raid – famously depicted in the Hugh Jackman/Nicole Kidman epic *Australia*).

"I enjoyed every second of our time in Darwin – despite losing in the football. The local hosting and opportunity to visit Darwin is one of the highlights of the deployment so far," said comms rating Leading Engineering Technician Jake Sykes.

The **Java Sea** between Borneo and the eponymous island is a couple of days' sail from Darwin.

Montrose passed through on the blackest of Indonesian nights – providing a particular sombre backdrop to an act of remembrance for two of the most battle-hardened ships in the Royal Navy in WW2.

Heavy cruiser HMS Exeter and destroyer HMS Encounter were sunk while trying to escape from Japan's clutches as the Rising Sun ran rampant through Southeast Asia in the late winter of 1942.

Fate caught up with the two British warships on March 1 while making a break for present-day Sri Lanka when they ran into a larger and more powerful Japanese force.

Sixty-two British sailors were killed, 54 on the Exeter, while 799 men were picked up by the Japanese and sent to prison camps. One in four would die in captivity.

A service of remembrance was conducted on the flight deck led by Executive Warrant Officer Stephen Witty, with the words of the chairman of the HMS Exeter Association, Alan Leslie, read out:

As HMS Montrose lays upon the sea poppies, in remembrance of all

who served aboard HMS Exeter on March 1 1942, those poppies carry with it, the love of families and the deep respect and gratitude, of us all. We will remember them. *Semper fidelis* – always faithful.

Then one of Montrose's youngest sailors, Engineering Technician Guto Thomas joined his Commanding Officer Commander Conor O'Neill in casting poppies into the sea.

And then it was on to **Singapore**, where a ten-day break beckoned (allowing some maintenance on the ship and some down-/family-time).

The excitement of visiting one of the world's great city states was tempered by the first task alongside at Sembawang: out all gash...

Despite the 'withdrawal from east of Suez' half a century ago, there's still a permanent RN presence.

Naval Party 1022 (also known as British Defence Singapore Support Unit) maintains a permanent presence at Sembawang (the old RN Naval Base/HMS Terror), making sure fuel and other support is available to visiting British and Commonwealth warships – chiefly those of Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand (who with Britain and Singapore are committed

to the Five Powers Defence Agreement to safeguard the Far East against aggression).

The small unit of just eight RN personnel – assisted by US, Kiwi and Australian colleagues – provides support to approximately 150 Allied vessels every year (more movements than Portsmouth Naval Base) and delivered more fuel than all the home naval bases put together last year.

To maintain the strong links between Singapore and the UK, a number of tours were given to youth groups including the National Cadet Corps, Scouts, Guides and the Nexus International School.

Tours for grown-ups too, such as British Deputy High Commissioner Alexandra McKenzie who was hosted on board by the Type 23's CO.

He also met New Zealand, Australian and American naval officers to discuss work at Sembawang and the wider military-political situation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Aside from the wharves where great names from Royal Navy history such as HMS

Prince of Wales and Repulse once berthed, much of the old RN base has been developed since the UK pulled out.

One reminder of the old HMS Terror remains – the Terror Club. Refurbished, the all-ranks/all-rates club proved popular with crew looking to chill out... without the hassle of heading downtown and downtown prices.

Those who didn't mind relaxed with a Singapore Sling at Raffles, tried out the Marina Bay leisure complex (a self-contained Las Vegas-style resort), or took their families to the world-famous zoo.

Operations Officer Lt Cdr Matt Bray visited the haunts his granddad frequented while serving in Singapore with the 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment in 1958.

The barracks – Selarang – still stand but these days are occupied by the Singapore

Infantry.

"It was great to visit the barracks where my grandad served and retrace his steps 60 years later," said Matt.

"He was over the moon to hear about it, in particular how much it has grown and developed compared to his memory of the camp and Singapore itself."

Montrose has now covered around 16,000 of the 20,000 miles she needs to sail to reach her ultimate destination, Bahrain, where she'll spend the next three years constantly patrolling the Gulf and northern Indian Ocean.

Pictures: LPhoto Joe Cater



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● Cdr Harper, centre, receives his chartership from Adm Radakin, watched by Capt Rob Booth, Master of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners

First RN officer to receive top honour

A MEMBER of HMS Queen Elizabeth's ship's company has become the first Royal Navy officer to be awarded the prestigious status of Chartered Master Mariner.

Commander Philip Harper received his chartership from Second Sea Lord Vice-Admiral Tony Radakin at a ceremony onboard HQS Wellington, home of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners.

The award, which last year was bestowed on Commodore Duncan Lamb, head of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, serves to recognise Master Mariners who have not only benefited the industry but have also improved their own professional capability and demonstrated a willingness to help others.

Maritime Chartership has only been available since 2013. Previously, under international law, the highest qualification available to any seafarer was the Class 1 (Unlimited) Certificate – known as 'Master Mariner'.

Speaking at the awards ceremony, Master Mariner Captain Robert Booth said: "Chartership sets a new and higher goal for senior mariners by recognising individual achievement and honouring the efforts of those who have not

only benefited the maritime industry but have also improved their own professional capability and demonstrated a willingness to help others."

Cdr Harper commanded the Hydrographic Survey ship HMS Enterprise from November 2016 until November 2018. HMS Enterprise was the flagship of NATO's standing mine countermeasure group and, as such, Cdr Harper was the Flag Captain for the group of six mine-countermeasure ships. Cdr Harper is now the Commander Navigation for HMS Queen Elizabeth. Heavily involved in naval training, he is recognised as something of a specialist in naval technical and ship warfare disciplines.

Admiral Radakin said: "Candidates have satisfied the demanding criteria for chartered status and it is a privilege, both personally and professionally for the Royal Navy, to be asked to present the certificates for this most prestigious award."

Under his own initiative Cdr Harper has striven to align RN qualifications with the Merchant Navy. His capacity for developing and implementing commercially-sensible policies is having an impact on naval thinking and development.

Fifth drugs seizure for Dragon in the Gulf

HMS Dragon seized 49kg of heroin – her fifth drugs bust in three months in the Gulf.

The Type 45 destroyer made the seizure as she returned to maritime security operations on the notorious drug smuggling route known as the 'Hash Highway.'

The Class-A drugs, which have been destroyed, would have had a street value of £9m.

The bust began with an early-morning sortie for Dragon's Wildcat helicopter, looking out for suspicious vessels likely to be involved in the narcotics trade.

Pilot Lieutenant Scott Sunderland said: "We spotted a contact at range using our radar and, on closing, the flight observer was able to use the electro-optical device on the aircraft to provide high-quality images of the suspect dhow."

Dragon immediately launched her sea boats and, following a search of the dhow by the

Royal Navy and Royal Marines boarding team, the drugs were found hidden in the vessel.

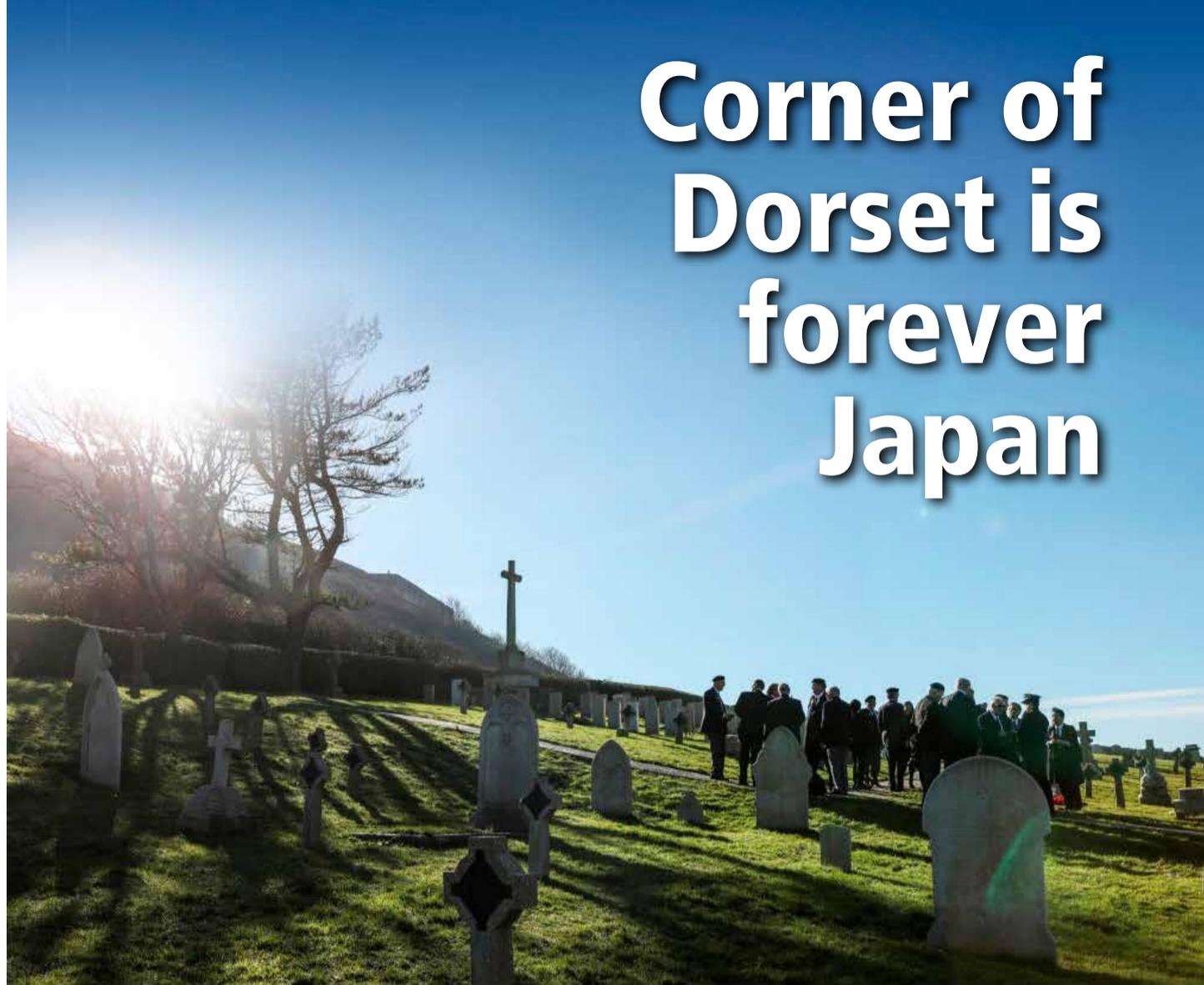
Boarding officer Lt Laurie Williams said: "While the weather conditions were much more conducive to the search activity, the team worked hard over long hours to ensure that any concealed narcotics were found."

"The inventiveness of the drug runners necessitates a detailed search to ensure that we do not miss any potential hiding places."

"My team have gained significant experience and skills over the last four seizures and the success today is a reward for the hours of training that have been invested by all."

Lt Sunderland added: "This seizure has again highlighted the fantastic capability of the Wildcat."

Dragon will continue supporting the efforts of CTF-150.



BRIGHT blue sunshine bathed a late winter's afternoon as personnel past and present paid their respects to a forgotten ally.

The Royal Naval Cemetery at Portland has been the final resting place of a sailor from the Imperial Japanese Navy, who died in 1919.

One hundred years on and the Japanese Defence attaché to the UK travelled to Dorset to lay a wreath at the sailor's grave.

The grave, a thin column of stone shaped to appear as a bamboo cane, the traditional Japanese grave marker, stands out among other Royal Navy Commonwealth War Graves Commission stones, with its Japanese inscription naming Petty Officer Asayoshi Harada and the date of his death, February 15, 1919.

The stone had always intrigued Portland resident Jed Grant, who had walked along the footpaths nearby and often visited the Royal Naval Cemetery near the former Portland Naval Base with his father.

"It was maybe the Japanese inscription or the shape of the stone which stood out to me. I wanted to know more," said Jed.

"Then, years later I decided to see what I could discover, so I got in touch with the Japanese Embassy in London."

The Defence Attaché in London, Captain Toshihide Noma of the Japan Maritime Defence Force, answered his enquiry and got in touch with the naval records office in Tokyo.

"I asked if any relatives could be traced of Petty Officer Harada, and to be honest I thought it would be too difficult after over 100 years. However, they came back with the information that his grandson was still alive."

"He was very pleased that Jed and the people of this country had been thinking about his grandfather and appreciated their kind thoughts, he thanked everyone."

PO Harada's Ship, the IJNS Izumo was part of the 2nd Special Task Fleet deployed to the Mediterranean as part of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance fighting the German and Ottoman Navies.



● Clockwise from above, PO Harada; Capt Noma with Jed Grant; Capt Noma salutes after laying a wreath at the grave of PO Harada

They helped the British in the offensive against the U-boats and Axis warships that were attacking troopships and cargo vessels on the southern flank of Europe and the Middle East.

After the war, the Japanese Navy received seven German Submarines as spoils of war and the Izumo was part of the fleet sent to Britain to take delivery.

It was the second time the Japanese had anchored off Portland Harbour and its believed either PO Harada died of Spanish Influenza, which had reached epidemic proportions after WW1 across the world, or he fell overboard and drowned.

PO Harada's body was laid to rest with full Royal Navy military honours alongside the people of Portland among other seafarers from that era.

Capt Toshihide, who was welcomed by

Commander Jon Holroyd of Naval Staff, took time to thank the dedicated efforts of Jed Grant and those from the Portland Royal Naval Association who attended the small service at the graveside.

"I have been very touched by the sincere thoughts of the people of Portland, 100 years after PO Harada's death. On behalf of Japan, the Japanese Navy and the people of Japan, I would like to thank everyone for their very kind thoughts to our lost serviceman."

Mr Grant added, "After my many visits to this site, I thought it would be a kind gesture to lay a small token of remembrance to this serviceman on this far distant shore. Therefore, I lay this tribute as a token of thanks for your service and wish you god speed."

Pictures: LPhoto Sam Seeley
Words: Peter Wooldridge



Sailors and marines support Football v Homophobia

THE Naval Service backed football's efforts to kick homophobia off the pitch during a visit to Portsmouth FC's Fratton Park.

Fratton Fever, Pompey's LGBT supporters' group, invited the Naval Service to an event at the club's grounds in support of Football v Homophobia month.

Portsmouth has backed the campaign for the past five seasons and more than 30 fans were invited to a behind the scenes tour, including representatives from the Royal Navy's sexual orientation and gender identity network Compass, as well as Hampshire

Police, the University of Portsmouth and Victory Hants.

Petty Officer Carol Morton, from Compass, said: "We were thrilled to be invited to Fratton Park to show the Royal Navy's support for Football v Homophobia."

"In the Royal Navy we welcome all talent regardless of sexual orientation and it was great to see that Portsmouth Football Club shares our values too."

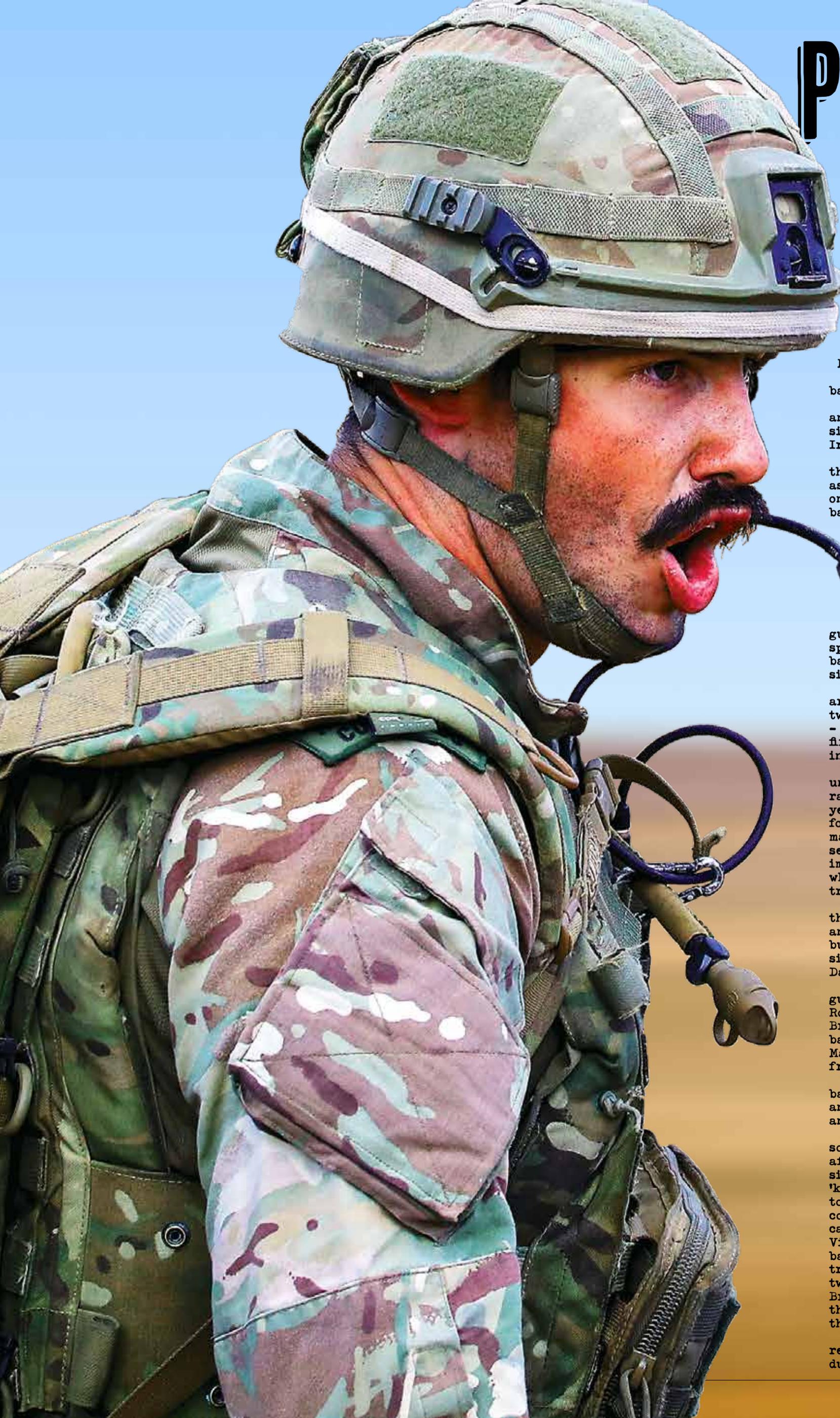
Every February Football v Homophobia works with clubs to celebrate the contribution the LGBT community makes to the game.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines were this year again named as one of the top 100 employers for the LGBT community in the UK.

It comes after 2018 saw Royal Marines officially take part in Pride in London for the first time.

The Compass network is open to new members, including straight allies, to join its team to help educate and inform people inside and outside of the service.

For more details email compass@royalnavymail.mod.uk.



PEER PR

BROTHERS. They love each other really.

But they're always scrapping. Sometimes it's a bit of fun. And sometimes the feud lasts for years.

But no-one knows your strengths - or weaknesses - better than your brother.

And that triggered an idea in the mind of one Robert B Neller. General Robert B Neller to be precise, Commandant of the US Marine Corps.

Who better to train his men for battle than their brothers?

For the past two decades US and Royal Marines have fought side-by-side in the sands of Iraq and Afghanistan.

So why stop there? Why not the sands of the Mojave Desert as well, this time peer against peer on one of the world's largest mock battlefields?

After 20 years mostly focusing on combating insurgency, both Corps are re-evaluating their tactics as more conventional threats have begun to re-emerge.

The men of 45 Commando from Arbroath are the guinea pigs for the initiative, spearheading an 800-strong UK battle group 'fighting' a similar-sized US 'foe'.

The 998 square miles of exercise area at Twentynine Palms is roughly twice the size of Greater Manchester - allowing troops to unleash live firepower on a scale impossible in the UK.

The US Marines send their units through the combat range at least once every two years, while all Royal Marines formations about to take on the mantle of Lead Commando Group - sent into action around the globe at immediate notice by the government when needed - pass through the training ground.

45 Commando are about to take on that role for the next two years and the Arbroath marines form the bulk of the Brits taking part in the six-week workout, Exercise Green Dagger.

But they been joined by the gunners of 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, Bravo Company from 40 Commando based near Taunton, and the Royal Marines' Viking armoured vehicles from Chivenor in North Devon.

The US Marines have thrown two battalions, plus Harrier jets, Huey and Cobra battlefield helicopters and drones into the 'battles'.

Artillery and mortars "dropped some lead" on the expansive ranges after first making use of hi-tech simulators; infantry moved through 'kill houses' to practise house-to-house/close quarters battle; commando and Army engineers carried out demolitions and breaches; Vikings carried mortar units into battle for live shoots to support troops attacking on the ground; and two five-day urban battles, with British search and attack dogs from the Royal Veterinary Corps, helping the commandos clear out houses.

Twentynine Palms' pièce de résistance is Range 220, a mock town, dubbed Hidalgo by the troops. Part of



PRESSURE

the town is built on a grid - like most US cities - while another 'district' mirrors the winding, narrow lanes and confused streets of European and Middle Eastern towns.

It features grocery stores, shops, petrol stations, even a hospital. Upwards of 100 civilians bring the town to life - making the training more realistic, but also more challenging, as does

simunition - similar to paint balling - or live arms.

What both Corps learned from the desert fighting was that both would make formidable foes on the battlefield.

"The Brits had a lot of capabilities that were near peer," said Lieutenant Jason Hunter, a 23-year-old USMC platoon leader. "They used air power, indirect fire and vehicles well - it really was a difficult problem they posed for us."

Marine Fergus Donaldson, a 26-year-old serving with 45 Commando's Yankee Company, added: "It's been great working alongside the US Marines - the change of pace when it comes to the climate has been a welcome change considering the weather at home."

"The environment is challenging, especially terrain, but it's been a great experience for the lads."

His colleague Lance Corporal 'Millie' Milner added: "To become the best soldier you can be, you need to train against the best adversary there is."

"It's actually nice to have someone fighting back rather than some mock enemy."

Their commander, Major Don Rogers, in charge of Yankee, said the six weeks in the desert had tightened a bond between two bands of brothers going back two decades.

He continued: "3 Commando Brigade and the US Marine Corps have a very close working relationship having conducted operations together over the past 15 to 20 years in Iraq and Afghanistan. We'll continue to work very closely around the world."



Pictures: LPhot Barry Wheeler



KEEP UP WITH THE CORPS

From desert to jungle... See next month's edition for training in Belize



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Diamond deliver to help children

PERSONNEL from HMS Diamond helped with renovation work at Alverstone Church of England Junior School at Gosport.

Sailors from the Type 45 destroyer helped fit out the school's new swimming pool and changing facilities.

The £30,000 refurbishment was funded by the Friends of Alverstone but the Royal Navy provided expertise and manpower.

Headteacher Graham Cutter said: "There's been a pool at the school for 40 years but it was at the end of its life and we were having to consider whether to close it down."

"The money raised has been used to re-lay the pool surface, install a new air source heat pump and to renovate and decorate the changing rooms."

With the new heating system enabling the pool to be reopened after the Easter holidays, the children are excited about seeing their work come to fruition.

Abigail Keith, ten, whose father Ben Keith is Commander of HMS Diamond, said: "I am really looking forward to being able to use the pool again and I think it is great the navy are volunteering to help. I've been helping with some of the painting."

Young governor, Tabitha Richardson, 11, who was involved in the planning, added: "We decided to decorate the toilets in a bright white colour as the old ones were dull and not very nice."

The crew members had lunch with the children and talked to them about their experiences in the forces.

Jack Jefferies, ten, whose mother and father are also in the navy, said: "It has been really exciting having the crew here and I have been asking them lots of questions. I have been helping to drill holes for the new benches."

Sub Lieutenant Ben Cunningham said: "It is nice for the crew to get involved in something different and for the navy to be seen working in the community. As well as working on the refurbishment we have also been chatting to children and enjoyed a game of football. They seem very interested in naval life and have been asking lots of questions."

About 20 per cent of the school's children are from service families.

Chief Petty Officer Lee Woods added: "The school look after our children when we are away at sea and so today is about putting something back. It's massively important the children and community see a strong relationship with the navy."



● Personnel from HMS Diamond with pupils from Alverstone Church of England Junior School

Picture: LPhoto Barry Swainsbury

Inspiration for a generation

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines worked tirelessly with government and industry to show young people from all kinds of backgrounds what they can achieve through a career in engineering.

Last year was heralded the Year of Engineering and the Naval Service reached out to millions of people with news stories about engineers and the amazing work they do.

The Royal Navy's contribution to the national initiative reached more than seven million people who saw the variety of employment that exists as a naval engineer; 4.5 million of those were reached through RN social media channels alone, as well as across a range of internet and print articles in magazines and journals across the country.

With a proud engineering heritage, the Royal Navy engineering branch celebrated its 181st birthday during the year, while also showcasing the diversity of our engineers who are drawn from all corners of society.

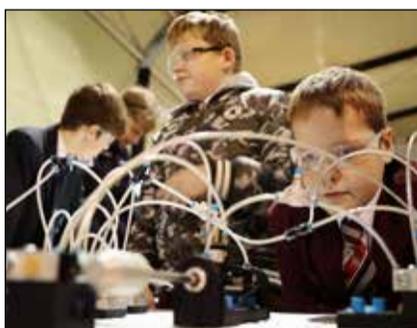
Celebrating this diversity, activity focused on national events such as International Women in Engineering Day, International Women's Day as well as Tomorrow's Engineer Week.

Looking to change the perceptions that exist around engineering, outreach to schoolchildren was especially important and events up and down the country in schools, at fairs and other similar events saw hundreds of thousands of people engaged with our science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activity looking to inspire the engineers of the future.

The launch of the RN-UKNEST Naval Engineering Competition at the Houses of Parliament also furthered this cause and saw over 200 entries from across the country with more than 1,200 children directly involved.

The competition challenged schoolchildren to design a vessel capable of rescuing up to 1000 people from the sea, reflecting the significant humanitarian role of the Royal Navy.

In judging the entries, Captain Matt Bolton said: "The standard of entries was particularly high making the competition extremely difficult to judge. It was fascinating to see the attention to detail and how the



children came up with innovative solutions to this difficult problem."

With a key focus on providing inspiring experiences and encouraging families to 'take a closer look' which was the campaign strapline, naval engineers were front and centre at events such as the Formula One Singaporean Grand Prix, multiple Big Bang STEM events up and down the country as well as the Race for the Line challenge finals in which school children had to design a

rocket-propelled car to race over a fixed distance and achieve the fastest time possible.

With the Countess of Wessex present to judge the final heats at RAF Wittering in Peterborough, it was only fitting that a school coached and mentored by a team of Royal Navy STEM ambassadors would triumph.

The Year 7 team from Littlehampton Academy powered home ahead of 78,000 other students to take the prize with a car that reached 66.1 miles per hour in just over a second.

In summarising the year-long campaign, Nusrat Ghani, the Member of Parliament leading the campaign across government said: "Through competitions, challenges and projects, partners like the Royal Navy have helped young people discover the enormous impact engineers have on the world around us and we have shared myth-busting stories of engineers from all backgrounds and every corner of the UK."

As the YOE18 campaign transitions to the 'Era of Engineering', momentum is now building behind engineering initiatives as the attractiveness of engineering careers increases and placing engineers as 'the beating heart of operational capability'.



Explorer's grave found near Euston station

WORKERS building the new London-Birmingham high-speed railway line have unearthed the grave of the sailor who gave Australia its name.

For 180 years the last resting place of explorer and navigator Captain Matthew Flinders has been lost among 40,000 other bodies in graves near Euston station.

But archaeologists excavating St James' burial ground to pave the way for the new HS2 terminus have identified the officer's grave out of the thousands at the site.

The lead depositum plate - breast plate - put on top of Flinders' coffin when he was buried in July 1814 meant his remains could be formally identified.

As commanding officer of HMS Investigator, Flinders sailed from Portsmouth in 1801 to conduct the first circumnavigation of Australia - confirming it was a continent. Although he wasn't the first man to use the term, his account of the voyage - *A Voyage to Terra Australis* - gave the new land its popular name.

His grave disappeared in the 1840s when the original Euston station was expanded into part of the cemetery. The headstone was removed and it was feared Flinders' remains were lost; for a long time a myth persisted that he was buried under Platform 15.

Historians will now study his skeleton to whether life at sea left its mark - and anything else it may reveal about life in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries - before Capt Flinders is re-

interred with the rest of the dead from St James' at a location to be determined.

"Matthew Flinders is one of those iconic characters from the golden age of the Royal Navy. He's a household name in Australia but far less so here in his native land. He's very much a forgotten hero of discovery," said Matthew Sheldon, Head of the Curatorial Department at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth.

"Hopefully, thanks to his grave being rediscovered after nearly two centuries of being lost, people will also rediscover Matthew Flinders the explorer and he can take his place alongside many legendary Royal Navy explorers such as Cook, Franklin and Scott. We're glad his journey is now over."

Flinders' name is well known across Australia: There's a mountain range, railway station and town all named after him, while in the UK there's a statue of the naval officer at Euston Station.

"The discovery of Captain Matthew Flinders' remains is an incredible opportunity for us to learn more about the life and remarkable achievements of this British navigator, hydrographer and scientist. Captain Flinders put Australia on the map," said Helen Wass, HS2's Head of Heritage.

"Given the number of human remains at St James's, we weren't confident that we were going to find him. We were very lucky that he had a breastplate made of lead meaning it would not have corroded."



OUR WOMAN IN BRAZIL

SUB Lieutenant Grace Wilkie has spent time on the Brazilian training ship NE Brasil, travelling from Europe, across the Atlantic and up and down the west coast of the Americas.

A member of a multinational naval community that contributed to a mutual development of their maritime skills as well as their cultural understanding, SLt Wilkie, pictured right with service personnel from Brazil, USA, Mexico and Paraguay, talks about her great adventure.



WHILE the days were short and dark in the UK, I had the privilege of spending two months on board NE Brasil, the Brazilian training ship, seeing how midshipmen put what they have learned into practice before they commission, with the added perk of some winter sun.

I joined the ship in Lisbon for the last few legs of her six-month annual voyage, which is in its 32nd year.

For the 209 midshipmen on board this is the culmination of four years of naval training before they commission.

There were three different officer branches in training on board: *armada* (warfare), *fuzileiros navais* (marines) and *intendentes* (logistics). The warfare branch is further split into three: weapons, engines and electronics, which meant that every officer of the watch had another role within the engineering departments on board, as well as divisional work, and any classes which they taught on board.

As with all the guest officers, I gave a presentation about my country and navy. Day to day, I attended the warfare weapons classes and got to see how the midshipmen used the onboard simulators, of which there are four, set up like small operations rooms, with sonar, surface and air consoles.

I also spent time on the bridge, studying longhand celestial navigation and got to fire one of the 40mm cannons. Daily physical training took place on the flight deck and there was a small gym.

From Baltimore, we sailed to Jacksonville, Florida, then down to Cartagena in Columbia, followed by the Brazilian ports of Belem, Fortaleza and finally Rio de Janeiro. At each port the ship hosted various members of the local military. Awards were handed out and tours were given of the ship.

From Lisbon to Baltimore, it was a 13-day Atlantic crossing, during which the students had classes before the last of their exams.

Unlike naval training in the UK, each student is placed in order of their academic success and it is in this order that they are allocated their jobs, so the better the grade, the more choice they have. Likewise the officers and ratings on board are chosen in a similar fashion, so the voyage for them is a reward for being the best in their branch or trade.

At the time of joining I did not speak a word of Portuguese, so this was a good opportunity to learn a language in addition to seeing how another navy trains their officers.

I was reassured that there would be a spread of English-speaking ability on board and this was indeed the case, as the more senior officers spoke English well and many of the midshipmen were fairly fluent, mostly due to the influence of American and English media.

Fortunately for me, each guest had a sponsor, one of the midshipmen on board who was a point of contact before joining and was a host during my time there, translating timetables and presentations as required. As I was learning Portuguese I was also able to help others with their English.

Guests from different navies joined the ship at different times, but overall there were representatives from the UK, USA, Chile, Portugal, Mexico, France, Argentina, Paraguay and Bolivia, as well as one from the Brazilian army and one for their air force. Much like

BRNC, the *Escola Naval*, the Brazilian Naval academy takes international students on their course, and there were three from Lebanon, and individuals from Nigeria, Senegal, Angola and Namibia. With such diversity on board, it was great to hear how training and life in the navy varied around the world.

This was a landmark year for the NE Brasil as it was the first time that female midshipman had been onboard. There were 12 and they will be the first intake to commission. At present women can only join the logistics officer branch through the naval academy, however this is set to change.

There were three female officers on board, a doctor, a hydrographer (classed as an engineering role rather than warfare) and one of the logistics training officers, all of whom had joined from civilian roles.

I feel incredibly fortunate to have been able to have this opportunity to spend time sharing my experiences, learning from the others and to have been part of the journey with the young officers who got their commission the day before we came into Rio. It has given me an understanding of the

differences between navies of different nationalities and was altogether an unforgettable experience.



● SLt Wilkie conducts some astro-navigation; Far left, the NE Brasil alongside in Baltimore



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ROYAL MARINES ARE OPERATING ALL OVER THE WORLD



FOR SOME IT'S THE ICE OF THE ARCTIC CIRCLE WHERE... ALL ROADS LEAD NORTH

IT is a stunning but brutal region. It will make your jaw drop and then take your life away in the blink of an eye.

This is the Arctic Circle and hundreds of miles inside this wilderness, where temperatures can plummet to -30°C, Royal Marines and their relating arms are honing their ability to survive and fight in the ice on the cold weather warfare course.

Before the commandos begin combat training – turning the heat up in the deep freezer – survival takes priority.

The green berets learn to live and ski in the unforgiving conditions. They learn how to deal with the dangers of the extreme environment – avalanches, cold weather injuries and survival situations to name a few.

Being able to sustain yourself is half the battle. "The temperature is something you're fighting against all the time, but we have all the best kit, equipment and attitude to deal with it," said Lance Corporal Sean Johns of 40 Commando.

The Royal Marines are the UK's cold weather experts. They can trace their work in this area back to World War 2.

It started with 14 Commando's raids along the coast of Nazi-occupied Norway. They specialised in small boat operations and cross-country skiing, disrupting the German activity in the strategically important region.

Those skills learned in the fight against the Nazis are still highly relevant today but have, of course, evolved drastically since that era.

And, on top of that, there are always new

reasons to be ready to fight in the high north.

"Here we are maintaining and developing our warfighting skills in one of the world's most extreme environments," said Lieutenant Colonel Paul Maynard, Officer Commanding of 40 Commando.

"Working closely with our NATO allies, we are directly supporting the UK MOD's new Arctic Strategy to provide regional reassurance and deter against aggression."

The new Arctic Strategy, laid out by Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson in September last year, clearly puts this region at the forefront of UK security.

The presence of the commandos in Norway this winter has underlined that commitment to Europe's northern flank.





*Pictures by Cpl James Clarke and PO (Phot) Des Wade.
Words by Peter Howard and Lt Simon Williams.*



Royal Marines, considering their specialism, are at the front and centre of all of this.

Out in the cold this year are Charlie Company of 40 Commando.

In the mountains and tundra around Royal Norwegian Air Station Bardufoss, they have been building snow shelters, travelling huge distances on skis and navigating by the stars alone.

Their first week ended with the infamous 'ice-breaking' drill; the Royal Marines drop into the bracing water through a hole cut in ice on a frozen lake, then scramble out with their ski poles.

The huge wealth of expertise the Royal Marines possess in this area isn't just imparted to the next generation of green berets but also to NATO allies.

Hundreds of US Marines Corps troops will benefit from going through the Cold Weather Warfare Course this winter, learning from the Royal Marines' Mountain Leader cadre.

As *Navy News* went to press the commandos of Charlie Company were turning their attentions to the tactical parts of the exercises as they warm-up for war games with NATO allies, the US and Norwegian Army, against partner nations, Sweden and Finland.

It isn't just in the mountain areas that the commandos are testing themselves in, though.

At the side of the fjord at Hellarbogen, around 50 miles south of Bardufoss, 539 Assault Squadron of Plymouth-based 1 Assault Group Royal Marines, have been readying for seaborne raids.

The amphibious assault specialists have recently taken delivery of upgraded Offshore Raiding Craft (ORC) and have been practising their tight formation skills in the ice-filled fjord.

As part of preparations, they tore through the water at close proximity at speeds of up to 50mph, refining their ability to spearhead

amphibious attacks in freezing conditions.

This is vital training in their fast craft, ensuring coxswains are acclimatised to the unique surroundings of the fjords before taking Royal Marines into the heart of combat.

It is no easy task piloting the ORCs through an area of surface ice – especially at high speed, making these run outs essential.

"It's great getting myself and the rest of the lads used to a completely new environment," said Corporal Ryan Joslin, ORC Section Commander.

"We're typically used to operating the craft in milder climates, which presents different challenges for the craft and coxswains.

"Since being upgraded, this is the first time we've had a chance to use the new engines in extreme cold weather and they've handled it perfectly so far.

"This, mixed with the incredible scenery is making every trip out in the water, as cold as it is, pretty special.

"Floating ice can be hard to spot and poses risks to the craft. It's the first time I've personally manoeuvred a boat section through an area of surface ice and had to overcome the challenges it presents."

The craft are a rapid means of manoeuvring personnel into combat and are key in bringing the fire and fury of the Royal Marines to the frontline.

In total, 16 craft have arrived in the high north – six Offshore Raiding Craft, eight Inshore Raiding Craft and two Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel – having been loaded up in the UK and transported by Sealift Ro-Ro, MV Hurst Point, to Scandinavia.

Of course, through the water is a powerful method of getting Royal Marines into the thick of the action, but not the only way.

Up in the skies, Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) – the wings of the Corps – are on their annual trip to the high north, Exercise Clockwork.

This year marks 50 years of the exercise, which tests CHF's mettle in the Arctic, and to celebrate the anniversary there was a royal visit.

The Duke of Sussex appeared for the first time in Royal

Marines fatigues on his debut overseas visit in his role as Captain General of the Royal Marines.

The Duke learned about Clockwork at the Joint Helicopter Command facility and met commandos and Royal Navy sailors.

"This is the first time His Royal Highness has visited Joint Helicopter Command since becoming Captain General and it is great that he is doing the visit while we're in Norway," said Warrant Officer 1st Class Adrian Shepherd, who has served with CHF for 27 years.

"He was able to get a good look at what we do and how we operate in these harsh conditions. He saw the amount of training that goes into it and why it is so important that we do this exercise every year.

"It is good for the people out here to see their hard work recognised during a significant year for the exercise."

The Duke gained insight into how working in the extreme weather helps expand their capabilities, as well as viewing CHF's specialist Commando Merlin and Commando Wildcat helicopters of 845 and 847 NAS.

Prince Harry also watched personnel complete outdoor ground training and was shown field tents and a Quincey shelter.

Colour Sergeant Gary Bell is an aircrewman for the Merlin and the chief air crewman of Clockwork.

The 40-year-old has operated in Norway nine times – four times in the iconic and now retired Sea King and five times with the Merlin. He said there have been many changes to Clockwork during his time but the focus has always been the same.

"If you can operate in Norway and in these conditions, you can operate anywhere in the world," he said.

"Clockwork is about ensuring our people have the skillset they need to support 3 Commando Brigade and defend NATO's northern flank. This is the harshest and toughest place to look after yourself and operate an aircraft so it really does make you ready for anything.

"During the Duke's visit we were able to show we have those capabilities and the team were able to speak to him about how we achieve it."



Princess pops in to mark milestone for charity

Princess Alexandra spoke to residents at the Royal Star & Garter Home in Surbiton and viewed some of the state-of-the-art equipment available there during a visit.

She was at the home as part of the Founders' Day celebrations, marking the charity's 103rd anniversary.

Princess Alexandra has been President of the charity, which cares for ex-servicemen and women and their partners living with disability or dementia, since 1964.

Her cousin, the Queen, became The Royal Star & Garter Homes' Patron in 1953.

The visit was one of two events held at

the Surbiton home to mark Founders' Day, and followed a tea party earlier this year to celebrate the special day.

The Princess met long-serving charity volunteer John Parvin, who was awarded the British Empire Medal in this year's Queen's New Year's Honours list.

Activities and volunteers manager Raquel Pena Aristizabal demonstrated with residents the new Omivista Mobii magic table, an interactive projector which keeps residents physically and mentally active by stimulating movement, memory, reasoning and recall. It was purchased by the charity following a

successful fundraising drive.

The Princess then chatted to residents in the café-bar area who were flower arranging, before going upstairs to see a weekly exercise programme held at the home's physiotherapy room.

Before leaving, Princess Alexandra also spoke to long-serving staff – some of who have worked more than 30 years for the charity.

The Royal Star & Garter Homes was set up to care for severely injured young men returning from the battlefields of the First World War, opening its doors to residents on January 14, 1916.

Fliers pay respects to greatest pilot

TODAY'S Fleet Air Arm fliers paid their respects to the Navy – and nation's – greatest pilot on the 100th anniversary of his birth.

Sailors from HMS Prince of Wales, led by the new carrier's senior flying officer, gathered at the statue to Capt Eric Brown at Edinburgh Airport to pay tribute to an airman whose accomplishments are unlikely to be surpassed.

The fighter-turned-test pilot died three years ago at the age of 97, leaving behind a remarkable legacy of flying accomplishments.

No man flew more aircraft (486), took off from a carrier flight deck on more occasions (2,407) and landed back safely on a carrier (2,271) than the quiet Scotsman, who also met Luftwaffe leader Hermann Göring and, as a fluent German speaker, helped interpret for British troops who liberated Bergen-Belsen concentration camp at the end of World War 2.

He was the first man to land a jet aircraft on an aircraft carrier shortly after the war's end and, despite long being retired from the Fleet Air Arm and having reluctantly given up flying, Capt Brown was nevertheless consulted on the design of the Navy's two new aircraft carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales.

With the latter fitting out



● Capt Brown gave a speech at RNAS Yeovilton two years before his death

just across the water in Rosyth, the ship's Commander Air (aka 'Wings'), Commander Phil Richardson, helicopter pilot Lieutenant Commander Rudi Lorenz, and two junior ratings joined Edinburgh's Lord Provost, Frank Ross, Capt Brown's son Glen, pupils from the flier's former school, and airport officials at the statue erected in the pilot's honour outside the terminal.

It was at Edinburgh – then RAF Turnhouse – that a young Eric Brown learned to fly with the city's university air squadron.

Picture: Lesley Martin



Sutherland's sailors raise county flag

SAILORS from HMS Sutherland made a round-trip of nearly 1,400 miles to help natives of their namesake Scottish county unveiling the region's new flag.

The leaders of Sutherland decided the huge county – which stretches from Cape Wrath, whose rocky ranges are regularly pummelled by the Fighting Clan's 4.5in gun, to the Dornoch Firth on the east coast – needed a new banner.

There was a public backlash against the original design (a weeping eagle on a yellow background with three stars) prompting a rethink and a public vote.

Three out of ten of the 3,000 people who took part in the vote plumped for the design held aloft by CPO(UW) Paul Underdown and LS(UW) Connor Borland: a white flag with a black Nordic Cross (to mark the region's Viking heritage), crossed with a black Scottish Saltire and a yellow sun.

The flag was presented for the first time at the Highland Council offices in Drummuie by Phillip Tibbits an Honorary Vexillologist (flag expert) of the Court of Lord Lyon, veteran matelots, and Sutherland's political representatives.

"This flag literally says: this is a unique place in Scotland; the place being where Vikings and the ancient people of Scotland met and fought," Mr Tibbits explained.

It was raised outside the building by a ceremonial party comprising HMS Sutherland sailors and RNA members.

"I'm sure our captain and the ship's company will be proud to fly the flag when we conduct a Replenishment at Sea. It's a fantastic design with a bright vibrant colours," said CPO Underdown.

In addition to the flag ceremony, the sailors took the opportunity to visit Dunrobin Castle, the historic seat of the Duke of Sutherland.

Hot or cold, it has to be Blyth

AT THE beginning of this year, Paul Dixon was enjoying temperatures of 25 Celsius in Blyth.

Today, the 37-year-old is struggling to adjust to temperatures barely above zero – in Blyth.

The former Cramlington High School pupil has swapped one Blyth for another – HMS Blyth, based in Bahrain, for his hometown on the northeast coast after completing a demanding six-month tour of duty in the Middle East.

Paul – known by his 45 shipmates as Dixie – served as the minehunter's marine engineer officer, in overall charge of engines, generators, air conditioning and water supply aboard the hi-tech warship.

It's the ship's job to keep the sea lanes of the Gulf and Middle East free of any obstructions and mines – especially those laid in deep water – in times of strife and conflict.

She's one of four British minehunters, plus a mother ship, permanently stationed at the new Royal Navy facility in Bahrain.

Sailors like Paul spend six months at a time crewing the vessels in the Gulf before returning to the UK for leave, then join one of Blyth's sister ships based at Faslane Naval Base on the Clyde for another 12 to 18 months – and then head back to Bahrain.

As a result after serving in aircraft carriers HMS Illustrious and Ark Royal and aboard small patrol boat HMS Example, based in Gateshead, the warrant officer has served in five minehunters of which his hometown ship is the latest.

His just-completed stint aboard her was among the most challenging he's spent in the Middle East.

"It was the hottest Gulf summer in recent years with temperatures often reaching 50 Celsius, but despite that the engineering team kept HMS Blyth on task," Paul says.

"Blyth was the 'ship of choice' for hosting high-profile visitors as well as spending 76 days

under way at sea, including the longest period since she was commissioned – during the hottest time of the year."

After growing up in South Beach, Paul joined the Royal Navy 20 years ago aged 17. "I always wanted to work on engines, at the heart of the ship, keeping everything ticking over and re-enacting wartime images of the oily engine room mechanic," he says.

Despite mostly being based on the Clyde or in Portsmouth during his career, Paul has been a regular visitor to his native Northeast with the Royal Navy. Beyond introducing university students to the world of the Royal Navy as the marine engineer of HMS Example, he was one of the crew of HMS Ark Royal when she paid her final visit to the Tyne before decommissioning in 2010; the carrier was built at the Swan Hunter yard in the late 70s and early 80s.

"The visit made me proud to be serving in the Fleet flagship," says Paul. "Thousands of people visited the ship and thousands more came to bid farewell as we sailed out of Tynemouth one last time. My family were on the banks of the Tyne that day

and I felt myself bursting with pride to be part of such an historic occasion."

Now he's back in Blyth ("I love the area and the people"), Paul is gearing up for a fresh challenge – climbing Mount Fuji in Japan. A keen sportsman, he became increasingly involved in charity activities aboard HMS Blyth, chiefly organising events to raise money for MacMillan Cancer Support.

For this year's Far East challenge, Paul is raising money for the Amelia Mae Foundation which helps children struck down by neuroblastoma, a rare but particularly savage form of cancer which mainly affects the under fives. He can be supported via: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/paul-dixon25>

After two decades in the navy, Paul reckons he has reached his goals and can look back with pride of what he has achieved.

"When I look back at where I've come from and what I've been through, I feel proud of my achievements," he adds.

"I'm proud to be able to pass on my knowledge, skills and mindset to the next generation of naval engineers.

"I believe in myself, push my limits, have reached my goals and I'm extremely happy with the success I've achieved in the Royal Navy."



Teen with cancer takes P2000 helm

HMS Charger fulfil Laura's Royal Navy dream of joining a ship



● Laura Nuttall, 19, spent the day on P2000 HMS Charger. Pictured: (left) Laura and HMS Charger Commanding Officer Lieutenant Paul Harsent. (Right) Laura with her family including parents Nicola and Mark, younger sister Gracie and grandad David Anson

Pictures: LPhot Robert Oates

WHEN teenager Laura Nuttall was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer, the Royal Navy reservist hopeful thought her chance of piloting a ship was impossible.

The 19-year-old had hoped to join the Kings College University Royal Navy Unit (URNU) when she was told the devastating news of her condition.

With treatment needing to start immediately Laura had to leave university and with it, the chance of joining the unit.

But when her mum Nicola contacted the Royal Navy and explained her story, Naval Regional Headquarters Northern England (NRCNE) at HMS Eaglet stepped up and arranged for Laura and her family to spend the day on board HMS Charger.

Before leaving, Laura was given a full Royal Navy uniform, beret included, to help her look the part as she boarded the ship in Liverpool with her parents Nicola and Mark, younger sister Gracie and grandad David Anson.

They spent the day on board as the ship travelled down the River Mersey with the sun shining brightly. Fellow P2000 HMS Biter joined Charger out of the docks and on the river before giving a salute as the ships went their separate ways.

Charger's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Paul Harsent demonstrated how the P2000 works, the different equipment on board and how to navigate it.

Afterwards, he gave Laura the wheel and let her helm the P2000 on the river.

Once through the locks to join the Manchester

shipping canals, Laura took over again with Gracie and grandad David also having a try at piloting the ship.

Laura, from Barrowford in Lancashire, said: "It has been an amazing day. It has allowed me to do the things I would have got to do had I joined the URNU."

"I never got as far as to getting out on a ship so to spend the day on HMS Charger has been amazing."

"It is something I never thought I'd get the opportunity to do."

"I had to drop out of university when I got diagnosed so never got the chance. Now I have been able to share it with my family which has made the while experience even better."

"It was nice my grandad and Gracie got the chance to pilot the ship too."

"Everyone has been really lovely and really helpful. Learning how to the pilot the ship and navigate was so much fun – it was definitely the highlight of the day."

Warrant Officer 1 Rob Lockyer, regional engagement team leader for NRCNE, said the day was one to remember for everyone involved.

"Every so often the NRC comes across an unexpected event that we feel compelled to do our best in order to help an exceptional individual," he said.

"In Laura's case, once the shout went out everyone in the service we approached simply made it happen. The credit is due to the flexibility and co-operation of 1 PBS, HMS Eaglet, the URNU and the can-do attitude of HMS Charger."

"All the elements came together seamlessly and showcased the professionalism of the senior service. It was a truly memorable event for all involved and a

genuine delight to host Laura and her family."

Laura was diagnosed with Glioblastoma Multiforme, aggressive stage-four brain cancer, last year after a routine medical to join Kings College URNU showed abnormalities behind her eyes.

She was referred to an eye hospital, and then a neurologist who discovered six brain tumours. Pathology results revealed the tumours were cancerous and inoperable.

Since then, Laura has undergone chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

While going through her treatment she drew up a bucket list and has so far been invited to watch Everton play and meet club and England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford, saw Sir Paul McCartney perform at the Echo Arena and now, crewed a Royal Navy ship.

Lt Harsent said: "It was great to invite Laura and her family on board and help her tick something off her bucket list."

"We wanted her to experience what it's like on a P2000 and part of that is piloting the ship. She did a really good job and seemed interested in what it takes and the way to do it. Hopefully she enjoyed the day and small taste of Royal Navy life."

Before the family left HMS Charger, Lt Harsent presented Laura with the ship's crest and a HMS Charger cap tally.

Nicola added: "The Royal Navy team who helped organise the day were brilliant. To experience this as a family was incredible."

HMS Charger has been the URNU for Liverpool University since 1990.

Are we there yet?

CHILDREN from Grange Infant School were given an extra special treat as they visited HMS Sultan.

A group of 90 children from year one spent the morning learning about helicopters within the Royal Naval Air Engineering & Survival Equipment School as part of their topic for the term 'are we there yet?'

Under the guidance of air engineers, the children had the opportunity to enjoy an interactive tour of Stephenson Hangar, learning about helicopters and survival equipment within the Royal Navy.

In addition, the visit gave the children the opportunity to try items of kit on for themselves and to climb aboard many different airframes.

The children have spent time in the classroom, learning about the different aspects involved with transport, including its many different modes, how it continues to evolve and how geography and map reading contribute towards a journey.

Jacqui Simpson, Year one Leader, Grange Infant School said: "I think the children were quite overawed coming into the hangar, it's probably the quietest that I've seen them. The sheer size and scale is something they haven't experienced."

"In the past we've done a transport trip on a train, a car, ferry and bus, but they can go on one of these anytime. To see and sit within a helicopter is a once in a lifetime experience and it's helped even the quietest of our children to find their voice, which is wonderful."

"When we go back to school, we will be writing a report and recount of what they did and what they saw and learnt, with the children writing back to the establishment to say thank you."

Tickets for RM band concerts

AFTER many years of rousing performances at their home base, The Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Collingwood are playing at Fareham's Ferneham Hall.

Upcoming engagements include The Mountbatten Festival of Music in the Royal Albert Hall in March and the Army v Navy Rugby Match at Twickenham in May.

They will play matinee concerts (2.30pm) at Ferneham Hall on June 16, September 15 and December 1.

Tickets for individual concerts are priced at £17.50 for an adult with £15 for concessions (under 16s, over 60s and serving MOD and civilian MOD personnel). Tickets and further information from the box office on 01329 231942 or www.fernehamhall.co.uk.

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RN photographer shares his skills

HMNB Clyde-based Leading Photographer Ben Shread has given up his free time to help vulnerable adults at the Glasgow City Mission charity

For two months Ben, pictured right advising one of his students, went along to the Glasgow City Mission and worked with the staff and guests in the Urban Café.

This service specialises in working with guests who have experienced difficulties in the past and are now trying to bring some stability back into their lives.

One of the aims is to stimulate the guests back into hobbies, pastimes or vocations and Ben was keen to pass on his photography skills to the group in the hope that he could inspire at least one member, which could lead to a new hobby or potentially even a new career.

During his time at the mission, Ben delivered a series of basic photography classes, including some targeted one-to-one sessions with some of the students.

The course of lessons culminated in an outing to Strathblane Parish Church where the guests were given the chance to put their newly-acquired skills into practice.

"I was really glad to be able to add to the fantastic work they do at the Glasgow City Mission. It was great to work with the staff and guests, said Ben.

"Everyone was really receptive to the lessons and enjoyed getting out to take the pictures. They all showed interest and enthusiasm and the result was some really nice photographs."

Staff and volunteers at the Glasgow City Mission work with adults and children who are vulnerable and disadvantaged in Glasgow, people who are often leading chaotic or difficult lives, they help them to break free from their oppressive situations.

That situation may involve, homelessness, addiction, poverty, family breakdown, prostitution, emotional issues, fleeing persecution overseas and now seeking asylum or maybe all of these.



Urban is the internet café space which also includes a gym and a music production studio. It aims to provide opportunities to those who are alcohol and drug free and looking to move on in life in a positive way

Clare O'Sullivan, who is the manager of Urban at Glasgow City Mission said: "One of the aims of Urban is to foster creativity in our members.

"Activities such as art, creative writing, pottery, and now photography provide an outlet, as well as sometimes being the spark needed for someone to realise their potential.

Ben was able to spend targeted one-to-one time with some of our members and lead them through the process of composing and shooting a beautiful photo."



Flying milestone for Merlin engineer

ONE hundred' flying hours? Pah, most pilots or aviators clock those up in basic training.

But Petty Officer Ben Borman is not an aviator, he's a naval engineer. And unless they're passengers in the back of the cab or heading off on holiday, engineers don't fly.

Unless, like the 34-year-old from St Austell, they're flight test engineers – the people responsible for ensuring that helicopters are safe to fly once more when they come out of 'deep maintenance'...just as ships undergo sea trials after major revamps and refits.

He takes the place of the second pilot in the cockpit of a Merlin – the left-hand seat – for test flights, not merely analysing data and observing how the helicopter and its avionics systems responds but assisting the pilot in flying the machine.

To be allowed to sit in the left-hand seat, an engineer must not only be medically fit, but also pass the aviation medicine course to spot the symptoms of hypoxia (lack of oxygen). They have to show they can escape from a ditched helicopter ('dunker' training), then go through pool and sea drills awaiting rescue in life rafts.

And they must learn airmanship procedures so they are able to perform many of the key functions of fully-fledged aircrew, such as radio communications and emergency

procedures.

And then there's all the flight test knowledge a qualified 'flight test recorder' has to master: a vibration course to analyse and record the data from each flight and look at trends through all the aircraft they fly in; and a zonal surveyor's course to identify areas of the helicopter that may need attention.

It takes a lot of hard work – on top of already being an avionics expert in Ben's case – demanding a good deal of studying, but the senior rating says the results are well worth it.

He is qualified to provide expert analysis on the performance of three variants of Merlins currently in service with the Fleet Air Arm: the Mk2 submarine-hunter, and the Mk3/Mk3A commando carriers

"It's such a privilege not only to see the aircraft actually flying from an operator's point of view, but also to know that the testing work that we do is so vital in ensuring they stay safe," says Ben, who's recently become a dad for the first time.

"Being the first to fly in an aircraft that has been stripped down and rebuilt over many months could be a daunting prospect, but it's the weather that is the most alarming.

"I really didn't like it the first time we went into a cloud – it was a bit bumpy and I didn't like not being able to see where I was going!"

Fund marks 20 years of supporting armed forces

OVER the course of a 20-year partnership with SSAFA, the armed forces charity, Lloyd's Patriotic Fund has donated more than £1.4 million through welfare grants.

SSAFA works with forces personnel past and present, and their families, to ensure that all challenges faced by the community are not faced alone.

Through welfare grants, Lloyd's Patriotic Fund has helped an average of 200 veterans per year.

Over 20 years funds have helped to buy essential household items, assisted with home adaptations for veterans with disabilities, and supported those recovering from injury.

Alex Findlay, Director at Aon and trustee of Lloyd's Patriotic Fund, said: "With a military background myself, the partnership with SSAFA is an

obvious fit and we are proud of the support the fund has been able to give.

"We are passionate about giving back to those that have served our country and it seemed natural to team up with the oldest tri-force charity to deliver this. We look forward to many more years of making a difference together"

Jonathan Sandall, Director of Fundraising at SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity said: "We are honoured and privileged to work with the fund in delivering the ongoing mission we share. Our long-term partnership has enabled us to support many serving personnel and veterans – to whom we owe so much."

Every year, SSAFA help more than 73,000 people from the forces family get on their feet; those currently serving, reserves, veterans and their families.

Chair gift will change lives

BARELY six months after being told he would never walk properly again following a serious accident, a young Lichfield businessman has donated his £3,000 electric wheelchair to a Royal Navy rehabilitation centre.

Samuel Leeds, 27, shattered his kneecap on rocks after being thrown down a waterfall while water-rafting last July in Uganda. The incident happened during a trip to check on the progress of his charity project to bring fresh water to a remote village.

After undergoing emergency surgery Samuel was flown back to the UK ten days later where he received the grim prognosis from doctors. But while still in plaster he showed his determination to recover by hobbling up The Wrekin without walking aids.

He has only used the wheelchair a few times and decided to give it to a worthy cause. Two members of Hasler Company – a specialist Royal Marine unit which supports sick and injured personnel – travelled to Lichfield from their base at HMS Drake in Plymouth to collect the chair.

Warrant Officer 1 Miles Hall and Sergeant Paul Rickard, who both served in Iraq and Afghanistan with 3 Commando Brigade, said their 450-mile roundtrip was well worth the effort because of what it would mean to struggling servicemen.

"This is a lasting legacy as we will keep ownership of the chair," said WO1 Hall.

"Samuel has gifted us something which we call a 'force enabler'. It will be a great asset to very seriously injured, or ill, assigned ranks and will help



● Samuel Leeds sits in his electric wheelchair for the final time, flanked by WO1 Miles Hall, left, and Sgt Paul Rickard

Picture: Nick Mobley

make life a lot simpler for them and their families.

"Over time the wheelchair will help many individuals. In the first instance it will be used by a young helicopter pilot who has been diagnosed with cancer. He is in his mid 30s and is married with children."

Samuel is chairman of Property Investors UK, one of the country's leading training companies. He left school at 16 and is now a multi-millionaire with his YouTube channel recently attracting its one millionth visitor.

The link with Hasler company was down to one of his students who attended the Property Investors Crash Course and is now a member of the firm's academy.

"Joe Lane came to us to learn how to invest in property after recovering from a horrendous head injury he sustained while skiing," said Samuel.

"Joe was a troop commander in an elite Marines fighting force in Iraq and Afghanistan, but after the accident had to learn how to talk and walk again. He told me how Hasler Company had aided his recovery with its expertise and facilities. At one time there were fears he would remain in a vegetative state, but he is now a member of our academy and is doing brilliantly.

"He has been investing in property and already has enough profit coming in through rents to cover his bills. He is only in his 30s and has a wife and young child. My accident made me realise

how important the right support can help recovery. After hearing Joe talk about Hasler Company I decided they were the best people to have my wheelchair."

Hasler Naval Service Recovery Centre was opened in 2009 at a cost of £23m. It is known for its expert care and first-class facilities.

The unit takes its name from Lieutenant Colonel Herbert George 'Blondie' Hasler, one of the WW2 Cockleshell Heroes. The heroics of Blondie Hasler and his colleagues led to the formation of the Special Boat Service, the Navy's equivalent of the SAS.

As a thank you for his gift, Samuel has been invited to a regimental dinner later this year. Report: Phil Shanahan



Warmest of welcomes on Welsh wander

COMMANDER Jane Allen, the Victory Walker set off from HMS Victory on October 21 2017, to walk anti-clockwise round the coast of mainland UK raising money for two naval charities, the WRNS BT and RNRMC. In her last update she had just crossed from England into North Wales and started her journey on the Wales Coast Path wearing a different sized boot on each foot.

Following the difficulties and injury suffered before Christmas, the 'one for the price of two' boot idea appears to have worked. After returning from my Christmas break I've walked over 350 trouble-free miles on the Wales Coast Path thanks to a size nine on my right foot and a nine-and-a-half on my left!

Although called the Wales Coast Path, it is in fact seven long distance paths linked together. I began with the North Wales path, moved on to the Llyn Peninsula path at Bangor, followed by the Ceredigion path, and am now on the Pembrokeshire coastal path where I've recently rounded St David's Head.

During my Welsh wanderings I've already experienced a varied landscape with the country's heritage of coal, metals, slate and granite quarrying all clearly visible.

The North coast was, to me, a static caravan park city – I walked by thousands of statics as I trudged through places such as Prestatyn, Rhyl, Pensarn, and Colwyn Bay.

I preferred the more traditional seaside towns of Llandudno with the longest pier in Wales, and

Aberystwyth. Both have retained a Victorian dignity with their elegant seafront architecture.

Another repeating theme is castles, for which Wales is renowned. I marvelled at the sheer size and construction of those at Conwy, Caernarfon and Harlech. Alongside Conwy's castle I admired Conwy's suspension bridge; it was designed by Scotland's famous civil engineer Thomas Telford and built in the same style as the Menai bridge.

I stopped to look at the Menai bridge spanning the Strait from the mainland to Anglesey. Thankfully this was one I didn't have to cross: the Victory Walk excludes islands, which saved my feet 125 miles in this case!

After the flat walking of North Wales, there have been numerous climbs and drops. Fittingly, my 'bootometer' clicked 4,000 miles just after a 1,000-foot climb over Yr Eifl, from where I descended to visit the Welsh Language and Heritage Centre.

Further on, I walked in the footsteps of Pilgrims as I tramped up some stiff gradients to look across at Bawdsey Island. This area of the Llyn Peninsula is known as the 'Land's End of Wales' and I rather wished I was eating a cream tea at Cornwall's Land's End instead!

Food has certainly been another feature since entering Wales. We've had cakes and a casserole delivered to the door (and I don't recall dialling a home delivery service).

Bara Brith has also been enjoyed and I feel I'll soon resemble a Welsh Cake if I enter any more bakeries! Perhaps my best find was a sweet shop in Cardigan with well over 600 jars of sweets and

allegedly the longest chocolate counter in the whole of Wales. It was an easy shop to walk into, but a difficult one to leave.

Other highlights have included an overnight stop where TE Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) was born; visiting Port Meirion, a Mediterranean lookalike village above the Dwyryd estuary; seeing the Snowdonia mountain range and Cader Idris covered in snow; and meeting more lively Sea Cadets. I've also enjoyed meeting women naval veterans from across the generations: these have included a chef, switchboard operators, a writer, communicator and Master at Arms.

Meanwhile, one day while being lashed by freezing sleet in a gale, I had to find shelter to turn my map and replace it in its waterproof cover. For the first time since leaving Portsmouth, I'd no choice but to knock on a remote farmhouse door to ask if I could huddle in their barn for five minutes. I was immediately invited in, given a steaming mug of coffee and asked to make myself at home next to a roaring wood-burner.

Such spontaneous acts of kindness have become a regular feature of my walk and I am immensely grateful for each and every one.

■ The Victory Walk is raising money for two Naval charities, WRNS BT and RNRMC. To donate go to www.Virginmoneygiving.com/victorywalk-17-18.

To find out more about Jane's Victory Walk go to www.victorywalk.uk



Cycle ride tribute for D-Day anniversary

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and BAE Systems have launched the Heroes Challenge 2019, an extraordinary cycling adventure to honour the memory of the heroes of the D-Day landings.

Beginning on September 18 2019, the Heroes Challenge will set off from London and will then conclude five days later in the iconic city of Paris.

The challenge will raise money for the RNRMC while honouring the heroes of D-Day during the 75th anniversary of the landings.

Passing through English countryside, the cyclists will cross the Channel at Portsmouth and continue through small villages and medieval market towns in Northern France while making time to take in some of the Normandy landing beaches.

The trip will feature a ride to Juno, the Gold beaches and a visit to the historic Pegasus Bridge where the first house to be liberated from the Germans in June 1944 still stands.

After long days in the saddle and some arduous hill-climbs, the Heroes Cycle Challenge 2019 will draw to a close under the famous Eiffel Tower. Following successful completion of the cycle, riders and their crews will be invited to a prize giving and celebration meal at the British

Ambassador's residence in Paris.

The RNRMC and BAE Systems are inviting keen cyclists to sign up for the Heroes Challenge, which will bring together service personnel, members of military families, employees, partners, suppliers and supporters.

Anyone can sign up for the event, which is priced at £140 with a fundraising target of £1,600 set for each individual. All money raised will be donated to the RNRMC.

Chief Executive at the RNRMC, Adrian Bell, said: "The Heroes Cycle Challenge is a fantastic opportunity to not only take part in a great adventure but to raise money for an incredibly important cause while honouring the memory of the heroes of D-Day.

"This cycle challenge event is the first of its kind for the RNRMC and we're expecting a lot of interest in a challenge of this nature.

"All the money raised will go back to the RNRMC, who in turn will use the money to ensure that sailors, marines, veterans and their families are given the very best support."

To find out how to take part, visit rnrmc.org.uk/support-us/fundraise-and-events/take-part-event/heroes-cycle-challenge



● Clockwise from above, at the Otter Monument in Cardigan Bay; Ahead of the ascent of Yr Eifl; Fun on the pier at Llandudno; At Penllech Bay on the Llyn Coast Path; Leaving Caernarfon Castle; Receiving a donation from Wren veterans at Aberporth; More images with Sea Cadets on Page 28



Counselling support for Naval Service families

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and Relate have launched a free relationship counselling portal for Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel and their partners.

The RNRMC Building Stronger Families portal is a self-directed online learning programme supporting naval couple and family relationships.

This project is a joint venture between the RNRMC and the UK's leading relationships charity, Relate, and builds on the successful relationship and family counselling introduced in 2016.

Both serving and former RN and RM personnel and their partners can sign up to the service for free, where they will then have access to seven different modules.

The courses are intended to support RNRMC relationships with topics ranging from military life, sexual communication and intimacy, to family life and parenting.

The ongoing partnership between the RNRMC and Relate aims to support RNRMC families with their relationships, which often come under strain due to lifestyle pressures.

Deployment and separation can present particular issues for relationships as families adjust to time apart.

RNRMC's Chief Executive, Adrian Bell, said: "The RNRMC is delighted to launch the Building Stronger Families online learning portal. This website will provide discreet and easily-accessible advice to help families overcome the challenges associated with service life.

"We value our ongoing relationship with Relate to provide first-rate counselling services to serving and former personnel and their families."

Ben Collins, Director of Services at Relate, said: "Healthy relationships are so important in all our daily lives, which is why we're delighted to be launching this new online platform with RNRMC. The platform provides a range of advice, information and self-help tools which can be accessed at any time and is designed to improve communication and strengthen relationships."

The Building Stronger Families portal can be accessed at rnrmc.learnupon.com. Or for more information visit rnrmc.org.uk/relationship-support



Wartime Wrens honoured

TWO former Wrens who were part of the enormous machinery of the D-Day landings were belatedly recognised for their wartime efforts 75 years later.

Retired Petty Officer Kathleen Blower should have received her 1939-1945 War Medal – one of the official campaign decorations issued by the British Government in the aftermath of WW2 – in the late 1940s... but didn't.

So enter the white knights of HMS Diamond who dropped in on the now 96-year-old in her Portsmouth care home to formally present the medal (pictured above by LPhot Barry Swainsbury with the Type 45's CO Commander Ben Keith performing the honours) on behalf of Mrs Blower's granddaughter Lisa Davidson, who'd investigated rectifying the 70-year omission.

In uniform, Mrs Blower served at HMS Vernon (today the site of the Gunwharf Quays leisure/shopping complex) as part of the huge support network for minewarfer forces, firstly operating in home waters and, as D-Day approached, shielding the invasion fleet from the mine threat.

Aside from several members of the destroyer's ship's company, local schoolchildren attended the presentation – which came as a total surprise to the nonagenarian – singing for Mrs Blower and fellow care home residents.

Sixty miles away and the French were paying their respects to veteran Wren Marie Scott, a member of Kingston-on-Thames Branch of the Association of Wrens.

Trained by the Post Office and assigned to HMS Mercury, in June 1944, Marie was at the very heart of the invasion effort – part of the combined WRNS, WAAF



and ATS switchboard team at Fort Southwick on Portsdown Hill overlooking Portsmouth.

The underground chambers beneath the old fortification served as the communications hub for Operation Overlord, dealing with thousands of reports, messages, calls, and orders every day.

Having seen much of the invasion fleet massed in Portsmouth in the lead-up to June 6 – an "awe-inspiring sight" she recalls – on the day of the landings themselves she was operating a comms machine directly linked to the front; she could hear the boom and rattle of guns in Normandy coming down the wire.

Her work maintaining the link between the headquarters and the front-line has been recognised by Paris with the award of the *Legion d'Honneur* – presented to all those who had a hand in what General Eisenhower called 'the great crusade'.

Time running out for D-Day cruise

D-DAY veterans and their families have just days to book their place on a cruise ship for a unique return to Normandy for the 75th anniversary of the 1944 landings.

The Royal British Legion plans to take up to 300 British veterans of Operation Neptune/Overlord on a South Coast/Channel cruise over several days in the MV Boudicca.

The Fred Olsen liner will take centre stage in events in Portsmouth on June 5 when veterans depart for the shore of Normandy with a full send-off from today's armed forces.

The ship will arrive in France in time for the survivors of 1944 to take their place in national and international commemorations ashore.

The trip has been arranged by the RBL to spare veterans and their families the difficulties of sorting out accommodation, passes and transport of getting around Normandy during the 75th anniversary commemorations.

Veterans interested in travelling on the ship are invited to contact the Legion for an application form, which can also be downloaded from the Legion's website which must be returned completed by Monday March 4.

Each veteran will be entitled to door-to-door travel for themselves and one guest or carer, at no cost; the journey is being funded by a LIBOR grant from the fine imposed on banks.

See www.britishlegion.org.uk/community/d-day-75/ for details and send completed forms to Arena Travel, Explorer House, 2 Betts Avenue, Martlesham Heath, Ipswich, Suffolk IP5 3RH.

Pioneer boat crews' dinner

ONE hundred 'bomber' crew past and present were invited to Faslane to share memories and celebrate 50 years of unbroken deterrent patrols.

The Continuous at Sea Deterrent (CASD) Dinner at HMS Neptune's Wardroom is the first event marking the 50th anniversary of around-the-clock patrols by submarines carrying the nation's nuclear deterrent: Polaris missiles until the early 90s, then the present-day Tridents.

It's the early years of Operation Relentless are particularly fascinating to today's deeps.

The Polaris programme and the four R boats – Resolution, Renown, Repulse and Revenge – proved to be one of the most ambitious and successful projects the Royal Navy has ever committed to.

Starting from scratch at the end of 1962, four boats, a new naval base (Faslane) and armaments depot (Coulport) to support them, and trained crew were delivered. On time. Under budget.

The first boat, HMS Resolution, was ready to conduct the first patrol in June 1968. Guiding her safely beneath the waves was her navigator Ray Hunter.

He joined the Royal Navy in 1957 and switched to the Silent Service in 1961, undergoing submarine training at HMS Dolphin in Gosport. Before joining Resolution in-build at Vickers in Barrow, he was sent to Virginia in the United States for specialist navigational training.



● Ray Hunter, navigator of HMS Resolution on her first patrol, with Rear Admiral John Weale, head of the Submarine Service

Picture: LPhot Ben Shread

Her maiden patrol was conducted in the strictest secrecy, the men carrying it out bore in the words of then Defence Secretary Denis Healey an "awesome responsibility". With the Cold War at its height, those submariners understood the stakes, Mr Hunter recalled.

"There was a high degree of motivation among the crew. We knew we were doing a job that was hugely important and we worked hard to meet the patrol objectives," he said.

"There was also a number of 'pressed men' on board that first patrol – senior rates who

had never previously served on submarines but who had skills that were needed. A lot of them became volunteers afterwards because they could see the value of the task and the obvious need for it.

"Many of us who sailed on that first deterrent patrol had come from smaller, conventional, submarines so the conditions on board HMS Resolution were positively luxurious in comparison."

Now 79, Mr Hunter went on to complete four deterrent patrols – two as a navigating officer and another two later in

his career as second-in-command of HMS Resolution, after passing the dreaded Perisher Submarine Command Course.

Resolution harnessed what then premier Harold Wilson embraced as the 'white heat of technology'. In 1968 it appeared state of the art; today it looks more state of the ark.

"I have had the opportunity to visit one of the Vanguard-class submarines which maintain deterrent patrols today," Mr Hunter continued.

"One of the things that surprised me is that the navigation centre on board seems empty in comparison to the Resolution-class boats.

"When I served with Resolution the space was crammed with stacked, three-drawer, filing cabinets. We had 43 kilobytes of storage space available to us."

To put that in perspective, your average smartphone is 700 times more powerful...

Which makes the achievements of the pioneers all the more impressive.

"As the world changes and technology moves on, it is important to remember that this significant achievement would not be possible without the unwavering dedication and commitment of our submariners and their families," said Rear Admiral John Weale, head of the Submarine Service.

"Their dedication and commitment to the ongoing task of the continuous at sea deterrent has kept this country safe for 50 years."

Appeal for statue to WW2 naval hero

HISTORIANS in Cheshire hope to raise £60,000 for a statue of their town's greatest naval hero.

Acting Lieutenant Thomas Wilkinson earned Britain's highest military decoration for his bravery more than 75 years ago.

His birthplace in Widnes is marked by a blue plaque and there's a joint 'grave' in the civic park for the 43-year-old with the town's two other Victoria Cross heroes.

But local historians believe a more prominent memorial in a more prominent location in the town – Spike Island's west bank, close to the mariner's birthplace – would be far more fitting.

Tony Miller has already spearheaded fundraising drives to site statues to Todger Jones, who won the VC on the Somme, in nearby Runcorn and Widnes aviator Tom Mottershead, awarded the Victoria Cross for saving the life of his observer in a blazing aircraft.

Tom Wilkinson spent the bulk of his career at sea as a merchant mariner.

He was in charge of the Li Wo, a ferry on the Yangtse when war with

Japan broke out in December 1941.

The Li Wo was commandeered and her skipper made an acting lieutenant in the Royal Naval Reserve – although he eschewed most RN customs, never saluted, called his crew by their first names and dressed in a T-shirt, shorts and slippers.

Hastily armed with a 4in gun and a couple of machine-guns and painted grey and green, HMS Li Wo acted as a patrol ship.

By mid-February 1942 she was in Singapore where she was ordered to take evacuees to Batavia in the Dutch East Indies (today Jakarta in Indonesia).

Most of the passengers were survivors of the Repulse and Prince of Wales, sunk on December 10.

HMS Li Wo evaded the Japanese for two days until she ran into a convoy. Wilkinson, determined the ship would go down fighting, headed straight for the enemy and opened fire – despite possessing just 13 shells for the main gun.



Nevertheless, Li Wo sank one transporter – bound for Sumatra – and damaged another before the guns of a light cruiser and two destroyers tore the steamer apart.

Just seven of the 84 souls aboard survived, and all of those were taken prisoner.

Their testimony three and a half years later when liberated after Japan's surrender helped to earn Wilkinson Britain's highest military honour, awarded posthumously in 1946.

The goal is to erect the monument in 2022 in time for the 80th anniversary of HMS Li Wo's sinking.

"He gave his life for our country, let's give him a statue," said Mr Miller.

"Tom Wilkinson served in both World Wars. Without the likes of Tom – and millions of others – we would not enjoy the freedoms we have today.

"The Li Wo was the most decorated small ship in the Royal Navy, so Tom Wilkinson and his crew need to be recognised for their actions."

You can find out more about the appeal via en-gb.facebook.com/The-Tom-Wilkinson-statue-appeal-1334822039949830/ and www.thetomwilkinsonvcstatueappeal.co.uk.





Ryde's loss is Medway's gain

THIS is all that is left of one of the dwindling number of ships once mustered for the greatest invasion in history.

Enthusiasts say the former HMS Ryde is now beyond saving – and the only way to keep her alive is through memories, photographs and ephemera, so her story can be recorded in book form.

The ship acted as a floating gun battery for anti-aircraft guns designed to shield the Normandy invasion fleet from Luftwaffe attack. She had served as the Portsmouth-Ryde ferry briefly before the war, until she was pressed into service with the RN, initially as a minesweeper until her conversion.

She returned to ferry duties post-war, then ended her active life as a floating night club before slowly decaying for the past 30 years.

The team behind restoration plans for the paddle steamer finally abandoned their bid to bring Ryde back to life in January – and pump monies raised into another, more successful attempt to resurrect a vintage ship, Medway Queen... whose restorers have promised to keep the Ryde flame alight by compiling a history of the vessel.

As for the task of returning Medway Queen to running order, the renovation of a key part of the Dunkirk veteran should be finished by the summer.

For more than 40 years, maritime buffs have toiled to return her to running order – a goal which will grow closer if they finish restoration work on her main aft compartments: the saloon (pictured inset), galley and captain's cabin.

They believe that completing those compartments can be achieved by the summer – with a final push from fundraisers, volunteers and donors.

Although built to carry day trippers on cruises of the Thames and Medway, the ship was converted to minesweeper HMS Medway Queen in 1939, patrolling the Dover Strait.

The following spring she was sent across the Channel to Dunkirk seven times, rescuing 7,000 troops and reportedly downing three German aircraft.

The rest of her RN career was less eventful and she returned to her pre-war role in 1946, offering pleasure cruises for another 20 years.

She was then converted into a night club in the Isle of Wight before falling into disuse, even sinking on two occasions.



She hasn't sailed under her own steam since the mid-60s, yet the goal of the Medway Queen Preservation Society is to return the ship to working order, supporting local people and local skills in the process.

With the help of lottery money her hull was rebuilt in Bristol, before the Medway Queen was returned to her namesake river six years ago.

Since then her preservation society has worked to restore the paddle steamers innards to their pre-war decor – a task made all the harder by the lack of documentation and numerous alterations made to convert her into a warship and night club... and by much more thorough food and health and safety regulations.

The team has drawn up a 'wish list' of items needed to finish fitting out the ship's aft compartments: Electrical fittings, lights, plug sockets which look vintage but meet modern standards – a complete set of bulkhead lights alone will cost nearly £2,500, while all electrical work is estimated at £50,000 – kitchen implements, bench cushions and stainless steel fittings.

Anyone who can help the society should visit: www.medwayqueen.co.uk/wish_list

And you can see the progress being made on the paddle steamer each Saturday between 11am and 4pm as Medway Queen is open to the public at her mooring, Gillingham Pier in Gillingham.

Anyone with material – photographs, memories, tickets, posters, perhaps cutlery or fittings – relating to either paddle steamer Richard Halton on richardhalton1502@gmail.com or 01793 851096.



Many miles for WW2 Fairmile

STAYING with the theme of vintage RN vessels in need of some TLC, a motor launch has completed a 480-mile journey from Portsmouth to Hartlepool ready to begin a £1m revamp.

Rescue Motor Launch 497 saw extensive action in the war with Germany, rescuing downed aircrew in the Channel, towing targets for anti-submarine vessels training in Scotland and carried commandos into action for a raid on the Channel Islands after D-Day.

When the war ended the 112ft wooden craft – one of a few survivors of 650 launches built or designed by the Fairmile company – was sold to civilian owners and spent the next 70 years as a pleasure cruiser and ferry carrying passengers around Torbay, Brixham and Dartmouth.

The National Museum of the Royal Navy bought her for around £100,000 in 2015 with the aim of restoring her as a tribute to the men who served in the Coastal Forces in WW2.

That goal – at a cost of £1.1m, assisted by the National Lottery and Tees Valley Combined Authority – will be realised in Hartlepool.

The launch was carried by barge to the North East, then craned ashore and put in a temporary building watched by veterans, civic leaders and museum bosses.

Conservators and shipwrights will now assess the state of the boat before starting RML 497's restoration.

Once they've finished the 80-year-old craft will be the centrepiece of an exhibition telling the story of the North Sea and the key role of the RN's much-neglected small craft in WW2.

At its peak around 1944, Coastal Forces counted around 2,000 boats crewed by 25,000 officers and men. One in nine boats was lost in action – they fought some 900 actions between 1940 and 1945, sinking 400 enemy vessels in the process.

"RML 497 is an amazing survivor, full of original features, which is incredible for a wooden warship built for service during World War 2," said Roslyn Adamson, general manager of the NMRN's Hartlepool branch.

"We are thrilled to have her here and are formulating exciting plans to get her conserved and put on display. There is a really strong story about Coastal Forces in the Northeast that can be told through her."



Memories of Lossie sought

DID you serve at Lossiemouth under the White Ensign or RAF roundel?

If you did the folks at the Scottish air base want to hear from you as part of the station's 80th anniversary commemorations.

From 1946 to 1972, the base – near Elgin on the east shore of the Moray Firth – was a Royal Naval Air Station as HMS Fulmar.

It began with Seafires (the naval variant of the Spitfire) and ended with FAA fighters taken to the skies in Buccaneer bombers.

Even in RAF hands, the RN maintained a presence at Lossiemouth until the late 70s in the form of Search-and-Rescue helicopters and Gannet

airborne early warning aircraft until the latter retired with the passing of HMS Ark Royal IV in 1978.

A commemorative magazine featuring accounts of life at the station throughout its career and key moments in its history is being produced – which is where you come in.

Accounts and imagery should be sent to Sgt John Baxter – and whatever doesn't make the cut for the magazine will be handed over to the station's heritage archive for future generations to study. Any items which require returning will be sent back.

Sgt Baxter can be contacted at los-heritagefacility@mod.gov.uk or write to him at: SHQ, RAF Lossiemouth, IV31 6SD.

Blackpool bagpipes for Brian

Blackpool Submariners Association made 80th birthday celebrations for fellow deep and former cook Brian Robinson an occasion to remember.

Brian spent a decade in the Silent Service (1969-79) in hunter-killers Valiant and Sceptre, and also served at HMS Dolphin and the escape tank (SETT), leaving the RN as a petty officer.

The senior rate never married and is now living in a care home on the Fylde coast, where he especially enjoys musical activities and anything on TV relating to the RN and especially submariners.

His niece Beverly Cove contacted the branch to see if they could add a bit of Silent Service fun to his milestone birthday.

They did, inviting Malcolm Smith a Scottish bagpiper from Chorley to provide a 90-minute musical compilation of tunes and provide a short history of the instrument to remind Brian of his piping days.

Birthday guests say Brian enjoyed the experience, tapping along to the tunes and was pleased to see his former colleagues from the Blackpool branch.

K13 tragedy remembered

MEMBERS of the **Submariners Association** led tributes in Govan and Faslane at the 102nd anniversary of the loss of Great War submarine HMS K13.

The boat sank on trials in Gareloch, killing 32 crew, shipwrights and the captain of sister boat HMS K14, who tried to escape to raise the alarm.

Monuments were erected in Elder Park in Govan, near the Fairfields yard where K13 was built, as well in Faslane cemetery.

Veteran deeps were joined by the present generation of submariners, Sea Cadets, members of the public and local dignitaries.

The ship's bell from K13 tolled 32 times for each man lost.

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Three have given 120 years to help young people

THREE sea cadet volunteers have been rewarded for their service with Second Sea Lord commendations.

Lieutenant (SCC) D Atkins RNR has an outstanding record of over 30 years' voluntary service with the Sea Cadet Corps in London generally and to Feltham and Hounslow Sea Cadet Unit in particular.

Despite living in Milton Keynes, she has for the past 16 years been the Commanding Officer in Feltham Middlesex, making a round trip of 112 miles, at her own cost, several times each week.

Her success in enthusing her small team of volunteers to give hundreds of young people within the local community life-changing opportunities was recognised in 2006 when she was the recipient of the Captain Roddie Casement Sword, a national sea cadet Award for the best commanding officer out of 400 units nationally.

In addition to running a very successful unit, since 2009 she has volunteered yet more of her free time to lead catering and stewarding training for all London Area Sea Cadet units, during which time she has increased the number of young people and adults gaining qualifications in the subject by 20 per cent.

Lt Atkins has recently decided to step down from her role as commanding officer and focus on her wider role in training cadets to improve their catering skills.

Lt Cdr (SCC) A Loveridge, RNR has shown extraordinary dedication over 50 years as a volunteer with London Area Sea Cadets and has been a key senior volunteer for a quarter of a century.

At the end of 2018 he completed ten years as London Area Recreation Officer. He took the role on at the point he was considering stepping down from volunteering to make room for other commitments but when he heard London Area Sea Cadets were in desperate need of someone with a high level of organisational skill and experience he stepped forward to volunteer his skills.

As Area Recreation Officer, he has been key to the organisation of competitive events for the young people of London, including sporting events such as five-a-side football, athletics, swimming, sailing and other water sports.

He has ensured that cadets are able to go on to represent London at national level competitions. This work has been a vital component in the development of young people in London; over 4000 young people have directly benefitted from his volunteering and will have gained the best possible head start in life.

He started volunteering in 1966, intending to give something back to an organisation that had given so much to him as a former sea cadet.

He was awarded the Captain Sea Cadets Medal for 50 years of service to young people in the sea cadets.

Away from sea cadets, he remains a qualified football referee and recently received a Surrey County Football Association 45-year award for services to refereeing in Surrey.

He has also for many years, served on the committees of both the Surrey Football Association and the Woking Referees' Association.

Lt Cdr (SCC) R Mitchell, RNR has dedicated over 40 years to voluntary service in the Sea Cadet Corps in addition to maintaining family life and a career as a paramedic.

He became Southern Area Recreation Officer in 2012, a volunteer role that is pivotal to the planning and execution of sea cadet competitions and activities at both area and national level.

His leadership and outstanding tenacity to drive participation and performance has resulted in the Southern Area being the highest performing area overall for the last three consecutive years.

In 2016 Southern Area cadets competed in all 31 classes of national level competition, gaining 27 team medal places, 14 at gold level. In 2014, in addition to his main role, he spent a year supporting Wessex District by providing much needed and essential mentoring to 11 sea cadet units.

In 2016, he was also instrumental in establishing defibrillator support at all sea cadet competitions and events for the welfare and safety of cadets and adult volunteers alike.

His expertise and commitment was recognised by his appointment as the national Deputy Staff Recreation Officer, in direct support to the corps' most senior volunteer position.

Cheers to trio of champions

A SEA Cadet has been honoured for his contribution to his community by one of the oldest merchant guilds in the country.

Cadet Angus joined Officer Cadet Ben Farrar and Leading Physical Trainer James Johnson in receiving a specially-engraved tankard at a ceremony in York's Merchant Adventurers' historic guildhall in Fossgate.

Governor of the Company of Merchant Adventurers Timothy Marks said: "I am delighted to pay tribute to the contribution made to communities across Yorkshire and The Humber by these outstanding cadets and members of the armed forces."

"They have been nominated for the award because they have all shown commitment and service above and beyond what is expected of them and are deserving of special recognition."

"It is important that organisations like ours demonstrate support for the work and values of both the cadet and armed forces and express our gratitude for what they do on our behalf."

The Tankard Awards recognises all three services – the Royal Navy, the British Army and the Royal Air Force – as well as cadet forces from the region.

Award winners were given a tour of the 660-year-old home of York's entrepreneurs which is one of the finest medieval guild halls in the world.

Chief executive of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Yorkshire and The Humber, which supports cadets and reservists in the region, Jason Wright, said: "We are delighted that the Company of Merchant Adventurers have chosen to honour our cadets and members of the region's armed forces in this way tonight."

"It recognises the exceptional service that these individuals provide to their communities, our region and our nation."



● From left, OC Farrar, LPT Johnson and Cdt Angus with their tankards

Angus, 17 and a pupil of All Saints RC Sixth Form, York, is an Able Sea Cadet with York Sea Cadets.

Since he joined in 2011, he has gained qualifications in engineering, first aid, rowing and sailing as well as helping to raise funds for Martin House Hospice as well as other local charities.

He was nominated by Commodore Paul Sutermeister, who said: "Angus has a good sense of humour and is always willing to help his peers. His commitment to whatever he does is one hundred per cent and makes him more than worthy candidate for this award."

OC Farrar, 20, a third-year politics

and international relations student at the University of Hull, is from Keighley, West Yorkshire and an Officer Cadet at Yorkshire Universities Royal Naval Unit.

He has been a senior watch leader on HMS Explorer and organised a range of charity fund-raising events.

He was nominated by Lieutenant Penny Thackray, who said: "He is a very dedicated member of the unit and always gives his time to helping new members learn the ropes. It's people like him who make the unit the success it is."

LPT Johnson is currently a member of HMS Dragon's ship's company.



Meet class of 2019

THE First Sea Lord Cadets for 2019 were invested aboard HMS Victory.

The day began with a 5.15am start as the cadets spent the morning on Victory, where they received their certificates and badges of honour from Admiral Sir Philip Jones.

Following the investiture, the cadets enjoyed a harbour tour before a fish-and-chip lunch aboard HMS Diamond.



Cadets turn out to back Victory Walker

● **Victory Walker** Commander Jane Allen called in on two sea cadet units on the latest leg of her walk around the mainland UK, see page 25 for full report. Here she is pictured with cadets from TS Cardigan Bay in Aberystwyth, right, and cadets from TS Skirmisher at Fishguard





Accolades dished out by former First

LEADING Cadet Daniel reports to former First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas.

The Admiral, along with his wife, were guests of honour at Weymouth Sea Cadet unit's annual presentation evening.

Adm Zambellas inspected the ceremonial guard and cadets on parade before awarding numerous prizes and achievement awards.

He also took the opportunity to chat to adult volunteers, staff members and parents.

There are 85 cadets on Weymouth's books and there is a waiting list for youngsters to join. The unit has a strong cadre of dinghy

sailors, windsurfers, rowers, kayakers and most other things that float.

Training and qualifications achieved are being put to great effect, not only for the sheer fun of it but in competition, where Weymouth cadets have done well across the board in district, area and national boating events. The unit also provided a Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for Dorset.

For two consecutive years cadets have embarked in the offshore training vessel Sea Cadet Training Ship Jerwood, for deep water experience, some going offshore for the first time.

The number of Weymouth cadets enrolled in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme at all three levels, is far above the national average.

Cadets have enrolled on two of the educational programmes that are available through the Marine Society & Sea Cadets, namely **Learn@Sea** which takes learning to foundation level for GCSE and BTEC courses in teamwork and management.

The cadets, staff and volunteers were delighted to hear that the unit won a Sea Cadet Burgee for its performance and achievements during 2018.



● Dauntsey's Lower Sixth pupils at Saplings Forest Pre-School

Classy lesson for design students

A GROUP of Lower Sixth Design Technology pupils at Dauntsey's have selected Saplings Forest School in Rushall as the site where they will identify problems that could be solved by the design and development of a new product.

The initiative simulates their non-exam assessment coursework, where they are required to identify a real problem or need and develop a marketable product to solve it.

The coursework also requires 'real time' evidence of their investigations and interactions with stakeholders.

Pete Guille, design technology teacher at Dauntsey's said: "We are very grateful to the staff at Saplings Forest School for welcoming us and explaining to our budding designers the challenges faced by offering early years education in the great outdoors, all year round."

"I am excited to see the results of the pupils' investigations and ideas to help create an even better experience for the pre-school children who use this site."

For further details about Dauntsey's, go to www.dauntseys.org

KEEP UP WITH THE SCHOOL

Follow @DauntseysSchool on Twitter

Reward for son in car accident

A Whitehaven Sea Cadet has been given a special award and commendation for the way in which he dealt with a car accident in which his mother was injured.

Cadet First Class Connor, aged 15, was travelling home with his mother when their car was hit from behind on the Carlisle bypass by a van travelling at speed.

Connor acted calmly and quickly to establish his location using Google Maps, then contacted the emergency services before speaking with the driver of the other vehicle.

Connor's mother, Kath said she believed that attending Sea Cadets gave Connor some of the skills he used, including the self-confidence needed to deal with the situation.

"I cannot believe how calm Connor stayed, even managing to make little jokes to keep my spirits up" said Kath.

"He really took control and managed the situation and I am convinced that the Sea Cadets gave him the confidence to do so."

When asked about the incident, Connor was typically modest, saying "I didn't think it was that big a deal to be honest. I just did what I had to do to look after my mum."

Presenting Connor with a certificate of Merit and an engraved plaque, County Councillor Emma Williamson, who sits on the Council's Scrutiny and Advisory Board for Young People and is an Armed Forces Champion, said that she was honoured to present Connor with his award.

"I'm very proud to be an Armed Forces Champion and even more proud to know people like Connor are looking for a career in the Navy. We need more people like Connor with bravery and integrity."

Whitehaven also has a junior cadet section for children between ten and 12 years.

For further information, contact David Abbott on 07890 291213 or 019467 27350 (home), or email chair@tsbee.org.uk.



● Councillor Emma Williamson presents the award and medal to Connor

It's all about Alfie



OFFICER Cadet Alfie was awarded second spot in the Trafalgar Way Writing Competition.

Alfie, a member of Milford Haven unit, entered the 12-16 age category and was the only Sea Cadet in the top three.

Danielle, of Dundee Sea Cadets was highly commended in the same category of the competition.

For full results visit thetrafalgarway.org/competition-results



Choir sing at new memorial

The Royal Hospital School Chamber Choir travelled to Leros Barracks in Canterbury, Kent, to sing at the dedication, blessing and unveiling of a new memorial wall.

The invitation came from Capt Daniel Laundry, a former pupil of the Royal Hospital School, who is the adjutant of the 3rd Battalion, The Princess

of Wales's Royal Regiment (PWRR) based at Leros Barracks.

The wall was built to commemorate 29 soldiers who have died in service since the formation of the regiment in 1992. The official dedication and blessing was on 19 January and 'Tigers' past and present were invited to remember and reflect.

Dark blue turns green

BOSSSES in Portsmouth Naval Base are reaping the benefits of an environmental drive across the huge establishment.

Solar panels, LED lighting, electric vehicles and special fans are all driving costs down, cutting pollution or generating electricity.

Since photovoltaic (solar) panels were introduced in 2015 at a cost of £922,000, they've generated 1,064,392 kilowatt hours of energy – enough to power your iron for 121 years... and enough to offset the cost of the panels' installation by 2028. After that, they will generate free energy for the base.

LED lights are increasingly replacing traditional bulbs and fluorescent tubes, significantly cutting running costs. They're also longer lasting, less of a fire hazard and easier to dispose of.

De-stratification fans have been installed in buildings with high ceilings. With heat rising, a lot of energy was wasted in the past, but the fans recirculate the air so that the warmer air is redistributed.

A fleet of 48 all-electric vans – which account for two third of the base's fleet – have reduced CO2 emissions by 40 per cent compared with their petrol counterparts and will save the MOD £360,000.

And 30 'NAVYfit' bikes are available for free, encouraging sailors and workers to use two wheels instead of four to get around the sprawling establishment.

New chapel dedicated at Sultan

TOP Bish – aka Chaplain of the Fleet The Venerable Martyn Gough – was the guest of honour as HMS Sultan's new chapel was dedicated.

The chapel, located in the main chaplaincy building on the technical side of the Gosport, will now be used on specific Sundays during term time as well as some mid-week services.

The service of dedication also allowed those present to congratulate organist Irene Harman on the BEM she received in the New Year's Honours, recognising her 50 years' voluntary service playing the instrument at Dolphin, Haslar and Sultan.

Beach reccees made easier

IF YOU can dodge a wrench, you can dodge a ball.

And if you can find a fish, you can find an obstacle which could hamper your amphibious landing.

Royal Marines are harnessing technology used to find fish in shallow waters to perfect beach reconnaissance for their landing craft to move in safely and put troops and their kit ashore without mishaps.

They are testing the Hummingbird 10 system – the latest technological leap taken by the Corps since it held an 'innovation day' last year to showcase off-the-shelf tech which could improve the lot of commandos in the field under the RN's DARE initiative to stimulate ideas and exploit cutting-edge kit.

Last month we featured enhancements for sniper rifles and alterations to ORCs to carry smaller inflatable raiding craft – all the result of DARE; this month, the 'black magic' as 1AGRM's C/Sgt John McDonald calls it, of recce'ing a beach.

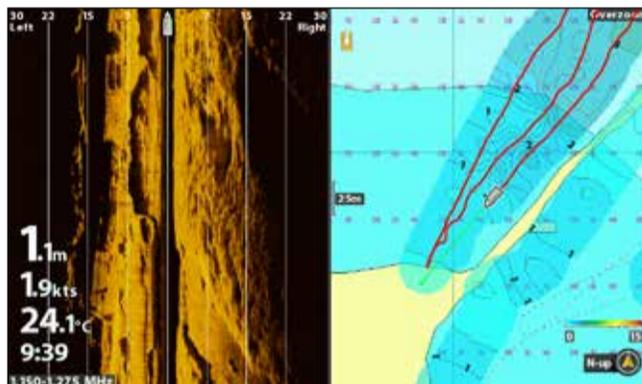
"Sometimes you get it right and everything lands first time and sometimes you do it right, but things still go wrong – and vehicles and craft get stuck," he explains.

That's not the fault of the reconnaissance teams, but the kit and techniques used – both go back to before WW1 when the method was developed using lead lines.

"In anything other than a millpond, this technique is unreliable at best and the recce swimmers spend more time untangling themselves from the line than measuring depths," C/Sgt McDonald adds.

A decade ago, the commandos moved into the digital age with the Rapid Beach Profile System – a single beam sonar to measure depths which meant beach reconnaissance could be carried out from a zodiac and without the need for a swimmer... but it still left huge gaps for potential mishaps.

Hummingbird 10 – known in the Corps as simply HB10 – could well plug that gap,



HB10 is used in waters three metres deep or shallower; the sonar can 'see' about 30 metres either side of a boat.

With a Zodiac moving along at just 2kts, the sonar can scan 36,000 square metres of seabed in 40 minutes – eight times the size of the area surveyed with the previous equipment, and the results are far more comprehensive.

"The great thing about this kit is that you can see the obstacles

in real time and therefore don't waste valuable time on beaches that are unworkable," C/Sgt McDonald said.

The data gathered was beamed back to Lyme Bay for analysis, so commanders could select safe lanes into the beach dependent on the height of tide – ensuring the shortest wade for the troops and vehicles.

Trials are continuing and HB10 has some limitations – it cannot be used in conjunction with a tactical recce swimmer, for example but, says C/Sgt McDonald, if Hummingbird (or similar) is "embraced thoroughly" by the Corps it will "enable the Royal Marines to be ready for future warfare".

Punch and duty for bros from 'boro

MIDDLESBROUGH brothers Jake and Joel Murray took to the ring to help HMS Sultan to victory when their career paths crossed.

The two marine engineers found themselves at the Gosport establishment at the same time – 23-year-old Jake (pictured left) making the step up to become a leading hand, his younger brother (right) has just finished learning the fundamentals of the job so he can join new carrier HMS Prince of Wales in Scotland.

Both donned gloves for a combined Sultan-Collingwood squad taking on REME.

Their wins helped propel the combined RN side to victory on the night.

Jake said: "We both boxed and trained together before I joined up, but the first show I had was here in Sultan and now Joel is back here too.

"It was incredible that two years later we were both able to stand in the ring together celebrating our victories."

Jake claimed victory in his boxing debut at the HMS Sultan Boxing Show in 2016 while undergoing his Phase 2 Marine Engineering training at HMS Sultan. After serving at sea on HMS Iron Duke and Westminster, he recently returned to the ring after re-joining the establishment for Phase 3 training to become a qualified Leading Engineering Technician.

His 17-year-old brother Joel added: "Sultan Boxing Show was one of the main reasons that I joined.

"Coming down to see it actually made me want to join the Royal Navy as I wanted to be in the ring. It's been great to get to fight, and to know what it actually feels like to win for myself.

"It was tough settling in at the beginning, living away from home, but now I've started to get used to it. It's really helped having my brother here during all my training. Now I can't wait to join Prince of Wales and get out to sea. The ship even has its own boxing squad!"

Big brother Jake is delighted – and proud – that his younger sibling is making rapid progress. "I know he will be great."

The 23-year-old continued: "The Navy has enabled me to start a stable family life with my own family in Portsmouth, especially going on to the killicks course now. That was a massive wage rise and it's setting me up for my future as well with all of the qualifications I'm earning now at Sultan."

Picture: PO(Phot) Nicola Harper, HMS Sultan



You're hired – apprentice naval chefs fired up by chocolate masterclass

WHO doesn't love chocolate?

No-one, right? And while we enjoy chomping or sucking confectionery, only a skilled few can make it.

Chief Petty Officer (Catering Services) Joseph Murray wanted to expand the culinary skills of the young chefs under his charge aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth by hosting a masterclass in the arts of chocolate making and patisserie.

He took advantage of apprenticeship funds first to have new moulds designed for and produced by the engineers of 1710 Naval Air Squadron (who normally design modifications for helicopters...), then purchased the equipment and ingredients so chefs could learn how to temper chocolate, using the new moulds, and make macarons – skills which would not be out of place at a prestigious restaurant.

Indeed, as befits the carrier's status of future flagship, the newly-learned skills have already been used to impress First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson and numerous foreign VIP guests visiting HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Tapping into the funds made available by the Naval Service Apprenticeship headquarters isn't the only way the HQ can nurture talent. Other investments include:



repairing ship models at the Seamanship School in HMS Raleigh which allows apprentices to see the impact of weather conditions or tides on seamanship evolutions; and the Royal Marines have benefited from the development of a Close Urban Combat Centre to enhance the realism of the training.

This month sees National Apprenticeship Week (beginning March 5). Apprenticeships underpin the Naval Service Learning and Development offer with every recruit enrolled on an apprenticeship programme when they enter their branch or trade specific career training (Phase 2); this provides our men and women with the essential skills required to



embark on their careers. There are 23 apprenticeships across a variety of sectors and levels and embracing the RN, RM and RFA, ensuring that personnel are awarded the appropriate accreditation.

The Senior Service is regarded as an 'outstanding' apprenticeship provider, focusing on progressing and challenging apprentices through their careers, identifying where the RN can invest to provide greater opportunity and stretch individuals.

"The apprentice is at the heart of our modern navy and we continually invest in making sure that the apprenticeship programme remains at the cutting edge and supports the needs of the apprentice through career," said Karen Grinyer, Training Delivery Apprenticeship Contract Manager.

"The development of our Catering Service's chef specialist skills base is a great example of how extra investment in apprenticeships can enhance standards."

For more information see www.royalnavy/careers/apprenticeships.

Where to Look

DIBs

2019DIB/01 In Year increase to the Daily Food Charge

2019DIB/02 Recording external knowledge, skills and experience on JPA

DINs

01 Personnel

2019DIN01-003 Amendments to the Armed Forces Pension Scheme and Early Departure Scheme for the Introduction of Flexible Service

2019DIN01-005 Flexible Service

2019DIN01-006 2019 Pilgrimages by the Armed Forces Region of HCPT-Hosanna House and Children's Pilgrimage Trust

2019DIN01-007 61st International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes (IMP)

2019DIN01-008 Regular Flexible Service – Pay Policy

2019DIN01-010 Healthcare Provision in British Forces Gibraltar – Directory of Local Health Services and Medical Screening Advice

2019DIN01-018 Armed Forces Pension Factor Changes

04 Defence Equipment and Support to the Defence Estate

2019DIN04-008 MOD St Athan – Change of Post Code to CF62 4LZ

05 Defence Management, Organisation and Business Practice

2019DIN05-002 Records Management – The 20 Year Rule

2019DIN05-003 Safety and Environmental Management Governance for HMS Prince of Wales

2019DIN05-004 Change of Location The Defence Fire Safety Regulator (DFSR)

06 Safety, Health, Environment and Fire

2019DIN06-001 Guidance on Bringing a Common Law claim for compensation against the MOD

07 Training and Education

2019DIN07-005 Defence Foreign Language training courses 2019/2020

2019DIN07-007 The Ulysses Trust

2019DIN07-010 Adventurous Training Offshore Sailing – Planning Expeditions to Cyprus in TY 2019 / 2020

2019DIN07-013 USAF Advanced Course in Engineering (ACE) Cyber Internship

2019DIN07-014 Core Recovery Events for Wounded, Injured and Sick Service

2019DIN07-021 Joint Service Adventurous Training (JSAT) Parachuting – Planning Expeditions to Cyprus 2019/20

08 Finance, Accounting and Budgeting

2019DIN08-002 Revised Daily Food Charge, Core Meal Charges, Entitled and Non-Entitled Cash Casual Meal Charge for 2019/20

10 Sports and Social Events

2019DIN10-005 Military Participation in the 2019 Team UK Trials for the Invictus Games: The Hague 2020

2019DIN10-006 Basic Gliding Courses 2019

RNTMs

01 Personnel

RNTM 01-004/19 RN ratings intelligence specialisation vesting day

RNTM 01-008/19 Revised qualification criteria for Recruitment and Retention Pay for Weapon Engineer Submarines

RNTM 01-009/19 Cessation of recruitment for stewards and commencement of recruitment for Catering Services junior rates

RNTM 01-011/19 Introduction of flexible service

02 Security and Intelligence

RNTM 02-001/19 Provision of Virtual Private Network software for personal devices for deployed RN, RM and RFA personnel

03 Defence Policy and Operations

RNTM 03-003/19 Royal Navy SSBN Deterrent Patrol Pin

04 Equipment, Support and Estate

RNTM 04-003/19 New Mine Warfare Branch badge roll out

07 Training and Education

RNTM 07-008/19 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion advisor and assistant advisor course booking for naval personnel

RNTM 07-009/19 Physical Training specialisation qualifying/PDev officer courses 19/20

RNTM 07-010/19 Joining instructions for Landing Craft vocational courses

RNTM 07-011/19 Maritime Human Factors Facilitator Course (MARHFFC) dates 2019/20

RNTM 07-012/19 Submission of Articles for 'Safe To Fight' magazine

RNTM 07-014/19 Royal Navy Education and Resettlement Officers' (ERO) brief

10 Sports and Social

RNTM 10-003/19 Submarine Escape Training Tank (SETT) decommissioning dinner 11 May 2019

RNTM 10-006/19 Annual Pussers' supper – March 21

RNTM 10-008/19 Royal Navy Water Activity Centres' programmes 2019

RNTM 10-010/19 Annual Marine Engineer branch mess dinner – March 21

RNTM 10-012/19 The Ian Molyneux WESM dinner (August 28): celebrating excellence in the Weapons Engineering Submarine branch

RNTM 10-013/19 Faslane Gambit Dinner March 20 Commemorating 50th Anniversary of Continuous At Sea Deterrent



WHEN you've chased down the world's most notorious pirate, given one of the Navy's greatest admirals his first taste of command and helped stopped nuclear Armageddon, you can be proud of your ship's history.

But despite a name going back to 1718, crew of HMS Ranger were surprised to learn the Portsmouth-based patrol ship had no stirring cry to carry her into action.

Until now, 'Range far to seek the foe' is the first motto in Ranger's long, proud naval career after the current ship's company decided to rectify an omission going back more than three centuries.

Crew of the P2000 vessel – used to give students of Brighton and Sussex Universities an insight into the Royal Navy – were prompted by a visit to Ocracoke in North Carolina last year to mark the 300th anniversary of the capture of Blackbeard by the first vessel in the Ranger story.

That sparked renewed interest in the history of Ranger's past and present and a spot of digging in the archives.

The sailors found a memorial in the Portsmouth's dockyard church, St Ann's, to a previous captain who served in the Sudan conflict of 1884 and was killed in the Third Anglo-Burmese War (21 days in 1885 for the uninitiated).

And in 1897, the new torpedo boat destroyer HMS Ranger was placed in the hands of 26-year-old Lieutenant David Beatty. He would lead the battle-cruisers at Jutland, take the German Fleet's surrender in 1918 and serve as

First Sea Lord after the Great War.

With all this in mind, the Commanding Officer of today's Ranger – the 13th to bear the name (the sloop whose crew hunted down Blackbeard wasn't granted the honour of being made a commissioned warship... and the one featured in the Bond film *The Spy Who Loved Me* was a fictional nuclear submarine) – Lieutenant Roddy Hartridge, asked the RN's official historians to look into the question of a motto.

Every ship, submarine and squadron in the Royal Navy has a badge. Most, but not all, have a motto as well. There's the classic *si vis pacem, para bellum* – let those who desire peace prepare – (HMS Excellent, home of the RN's headquarters); the stirring *zeal does not rest* (HMS Ark Royal); the Royal *semper eadem* – always the same (HMS Queen Elizabeth, taken from the Tudor monarch); and the slightly odd *audax splendide* – finely daring (HMS Daring).

The team at the Naval Historical Branch in Portsmouth – who advise naval leaders on how yesterday's tactics, strategy and thinking can influence the present-day – could find none, so Ranger's team put their thinking caps on.

"Most other P2000 have a motto so we thought the best ship in the squadron ought to have on as well," said Lieutenant Hartridge.

"We played around with some Latin mottos including *duc exercitum* but the historical branch said it meant 'lead

the army' which wasn't quite appropriate!"

It was his dad, the Rev James Hartridge, who came up with 'Range far to seek the foe' – a suggestions which got the thumbs up from both the ship's company and historical branch, not least because the words could equally apply to any future ships to bear the name.

As one of the smallest vessels in the Royal Navy order of battle, the ship can actually only 'range' for about 550 nautical miles – about 36 hours' sailing at 15 knots.

More typically, the boat hops from port to port every 24 hours when on deployment, such as in May when she'll lead a force of seven patrol craft to the Baltic for a major international exercise.



Burny goes from king to wizard...

SEVEN whole months in the skies of Europe, the Middle East and Afghanistan were recognised by 846 Naval Air Squadron when veteran aircrewman 'Burny' Byrne completed his 5,000th hour after a training sortie at Yeovilton.

Squadron comrades were waiting with the usual celebrations – cheesy banner, grub, fizz – to mark a milestone passed by relatively few in the aircrewman branch.

Burny – real name WO1(ACMN) Richard Byrne – has spent 35 years in the RN, all but six of them as an aircrewman. After switching from the world of a surface fleet operator mechanic to aircrew in 1990 with the first four years as a flier in the ping world with 814, 750, 705 and 771 Squadrons.

In 1994 he decided the Jungle world was for him and re-trained

with the forerunner of today's Commando Helicopter Force. He completed four tours of duty supporting UN peacekeeping operations in Bosnia; during one he was mentioned in dispatches for rescuing three casualties from a minefield.

Other war zones he flew over in a Sea King Mk4 include Iraq and Afghanistan, plus there was a deployment to Northern Ireland and amphibious training with old assault ship HMS Fearless.

As with the rest of CHF, he's now embraced the digital age in the form of the Merlin Mk3/4, helping to introduce the replacement for the Sea King into service over the past five years.

It's your 2-6 – so contact Sophie Dennis (sophie.dennis100@mod.gov.uk/93832 5500) to include items on these pages.

The last 42

NOT Type however, but years.

Forty-two years and seven months to be precise.

Cutting a cake aboard HMS Victory with his wife Dorothy is the RN's longest-serving weapon engineer rating finally calling it a day.

WO1 George Boardman received a valedictory certificate from his branch's most senior officer Cdre Jim Higham, Portsmouth Naval Base's CO, gratitude for duty and service spanning an era when computers have gone from the size of a house to the size of your hand.

George joined the RN in September 1976 – the end of the driest summer in recent memory. The much-loved documentary *Sailor* was enjoying its first airing on TV... as were the Muppet, while in Dublin a group of schoolboys formed a rock band called U2.

Since then, the weapon engineer has served at a string of establishments and across the Fleet: HM Ships Juno, Bristol, Bicester, Brecon and Ledbury, assault ship Fearless, destroyer HMS Newcastle and Type 23s Sutherland and Richmond.

His CO on the Fighting Clan was Captain Roger Readwin, who's just stood down as Captain Minewarfare, Fishery Protection and Small Ships.

"George was instrumental in delivering the operational capability of that ship. In live operations off Libya, his calm demeanor was exactly what we needed," he said at the senior rating's farewell on Nelson's flagship.

"What an absolute privilege to be here today at his retirement ceremony. It's lovely to see the family tradition continuing in his son Liam and I'd like to thank



them all for their support and dedication during his 43-year career."

Liam is a clearance diver serving with FDU1 in Portsmouth. "I'm proud of dad's achievement," he said. "It's good to see the commitment he's given and what the Royal Navy has given back to him."

For the guest of honour, the RN has offered everything the recruiters promised back in the 70s.

"When I joined the Royal Navy they said they that I was joining a family... the naval family goes on. I am leaving the service, but I will never ever leave that naval family," said George.

Index success

The RN has been named one of the country's top employer for its commitment to lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender personnel.

LGBT campaign group Stonewall placed the Senior Service 15th in its annual 'workplace equality index'.

Nearly 450 firms and organisations make a case to be included on the list, with Stonewall using the evidence submitted, plus anonymous feedback from employees, to draw up the top 100.

ASK YOURSELF:

- Were you made in the Royal Navy?
- Do you want to give others the opportunity to make it in the Royal Navy?
- Are you seeking a rewarding Second Career?

If the answer to any is yes then...

APPLY TO BECOME A CAREERS ADVISER.

Flag Officer Sea Training is currently seeking RN and RM WO's, Senior Rates and SNCO Service Leavers and former Service (those that left Service under 3 years), to work in Armed Forces Careers Offices which are listed on the map.

Positions are nationwide, employed on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) (NCS) Limited Commitment.

Salary starts from £30k with promotion opportunities to rise to £43k.

FTRS rates of pay apply (Reviewed annually and pensionable).

For more information contact:

PSTN- 01929 403172

Mil- 94374 3172

E-mail- Jane.anneda513@mod.gov.uk



Deaths

Cliff 'Rab' Butler. Served 1963 to 1975 in HMS Eskimo, Juno, Grenville, Sheffield and Cachalot. Died January 9, aged 72.

LRO(T) Terry 'Duffel' Coates. Served 1956-1968 in HMS Ganges (twice) Hardy, Puma, Leander, Pitreavie (CONCEN), Tiger (during Aberfan and Tiger talks), SNONI staff. Died November 25, aged 77.

Keith Hill Chadbourn, MRAeS, RN Rtd. Joined in 1954 as pilot. Underwent initial training on Provost and Vampire, selected to fly Fairey Gannet, served with 719, 737, 796 and 815 NAS, he also served aboard HMS Ark Royal. Joined Fairey Aviation in 1979 as chief flying instructor. Left Westland to train as an air traffic controller but then rejoined and converted to helicopters. Last pilot to be employed by Westland, specifically to fly fixed-wing aircraft. Awarded a Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air, in the 1989 New Year Honours. Accumulated 6,162 flying hours.

John Edney, Telegraphist. Served HMS Liverpool 1943 and also HMS Loch Shin. A member of the HMS Liverpool Association. Died December 2, aged 93.

George Philpott, Royal Marine. Joined 1955 and served in the Suez Campaign, receiving the Naval General Service Medal. Also served in Egypt, Cyprus and Malta. Regularly attended reunions in Malta and was a staunch supporter of the Lincoln Branch of the RNA. Died December 17, aged 83.

Derick Morey Collins, WO. Royal Hospital School, Ipswich from 1948-52. Served in RN from 1953-1981 in HMS Collingwood, Boxer, Messina (nuclear tests), Acute, Lion, Tiger, Devonshire, Hermes, Rothesay and Bristol. Died January 2019.

Danny 'Fergie' Ferguson CY. Served October 1953 to May 1976 in Indefatigable, Implacable, Mercury, Drake, Venus, Duncan, Llandaff and Terror. Died in Torpoint, Cornwall on February 4, aged 82.

Captain Jeremy Stewart. Joined RNBC January 1948 aged 13. Midshipman during Korean War. Sub Lt on HMS Chaplet, followed by 1st Lt on HMS Fenton on Cyprus Patrols. Qualified as TAS Officer 1959/60; 1961-1964 served on HMS Devonshire. Took command of HMS Flockton. Staff course Greenwick 1966 HMS Dido followed by HMS Danae as XO. Promoted Commander 1971 then XO of HMS Norfolk. Promoted Captain 1980. Captain MCM at Rosyth. Co-ordinated preparations

for minesweeping components of the Falklands Campaign. Retired 1983. Founder chairman of the Ton Class Association. Died January 21.

Submariners' Association James Pardoe OBE Cdr. Served September 1943 to December 1969 in HM Submarines Ursula, Vulpine, Turpin, Aurochs XE9(CO), Sea Devil(CO), Thermopylae(CO), and Artemis(CO). Dolphin Branch. Died January 2, aged 94.

Peter Runham WO2 MEA. Served 1971 to 2007 in HM Submarines Revenge (71-76), Renown (77-78), (94-00) Repulse (78-83), Resolution (84-88), Valiant (00-02), Splendid (03-06), and Spartan (06-07). Gosport Branch. Died January 12, aged 70.

Richard S. Bell Sto.Mech. Served September 1946 to January 1948 in HM Submarines Tabard, Scotsman, and Scythian. West Of Scotland Branch. Died January 13, aged 91.

Frank Pretty CPO WEA. Served 1975 to 1990 in HM Submarines Courageous, Churchill and Repulse (P). Barrow In Furness Branch. Died January 15, aged 61.

Keith Milner CPO ME. Served 1953 to 1979 in HM Submarines Seneschal (53-54), Seacout (54-56), Aeneas (56), (61-65), Seadevil (56-57), Sentinel (57), Totem (57-58), Trenchant (58), Tudor (58-61), Olympus (68-72), and Opossum (75-77). Scottish Branch. Died January 19, aged 84.

Len Reeks AB. Served May 1946 to March 1948 in HM Submarines Satyr, Seneschal, Springer, Sanguine, Sleuth, and Salene. Exeter Branch. Died January 23, aged 91.

Cdr John G Dinnage. HMS Triumph, Kent, Eagle, London, Dolphin, Hartland Point, Blake, Ceylon, Centurion, Sultan. DG Ships. Died January 4, aged 86.

Surg Cdr Kennedy H McCraith. Naval Hosp Plymouth, HMS Caledonia, Jufair, Loch Fyne, President, Blake, Neptune. Admiralty Medical Board. CTCRM. Died December 23.

Lt Cdr Peter R Dallosso. HMS Albatross, Falcon, Daedalus, 821 NAS. Died January 10, aged 93.

Lt Cdr Thomas J Heppell. HMS Grafton, Osprey, Vernon, Argonaut, Hermione, Miner III, Torquay, Caprice. Died January 10, aged 88.

Lt Cdr Maurice F King. HMS Pembroke, Loch Lomond, Ranpura, Sea Eagle, Fulmar, Maria, Diadem. Died December 21, aged 95.

Lt RNVR Roy R French. 816, 836 NAS. Died December 21, aged 94.

Lt RNVR Owen C B Smith. 848 NAS. HMS Formidable. Died December 28.

Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC Rear Admiral Christopher J Howard. Chief Naval Instructor Officer. HMS President, Collingwood, Daedalus, Neptune, Nelson, Urchin, Resolution, Peregrine. RNEC Manadon. MOD Nav Sec. CoS to CINCNAVHOME. Died January 18, aged 86.

Major General Roderick J Ephraums CB OBE CSU DL RM. CGRM. Maj Gen Cdo Forces RM. 42 and 45 Cdo RM. RM Plymouth. RM Eastney. HMS Mauritius. RMFVR Merseyside. ITCRM. HQ 3 Cdo RM. Died January 6, aged 81.

Cdr James R Pardoe OBE RN. Dir Naval Admin Planning. Staff College. HMS Dolphin, President, Adamant, Hogue, Artemis, Sea Devil, Turpin. NATO. Died January 2, aged 94.

Lt Cdr William Holdridge. HMS Gannet, Seahawk, Ocean, Hornbill. 809 NAS. Died January 4.

Lt Cdr M B H Kersey. HMS Forth, Lochinvar, Vernon, Shoalhaven, Rushcutter, Belfast, Tocogay. Died January 21, aged 93.

Lt Cdr Christopher L L Parry. HMS Liverpool, Tamar, Jaguar, Ganges, Bulwark, Blake, Stalker, Damerham, Corunna, Modeste, Liverpool. Died January 27, aged 86.

Third Officer WRNS G C Morrison. Died January 30, aged 97.

William 'Bill' Roper. Served from 1939 to 1954. HMS Nelson, Belfast, Hood, Broadway, USA Destroyer, Ledbury, Royalist, Vectis, London, LST3014 Landing Craft, Vengeance, Caprice, Sirius and Diadem. Also warden in HMS Belfast. Died December 6, aged 97.

Swap Draft

POET WE(S) Nelson. POET Nelson currently drafted to W2S on HMS Richmond, Plymouth, is seeking a like draft swap with an similarly drafted POET WE(S), or other sensor's billet in a Portsmouth-based T23 or T45. Contact me for further details, Neil.

Reunions

HMS Decoy Association: Our 32nd reunion takes place at the Imperial Hotel, Eastbourne, from April 12-15. Contact Malcolm 'Dobbo' Dobson on 01502 677395 or: email dobbo.exrn@btinternet.com.

HMS Hermes 4th Commission Cooks 1968 - 1970: Our annual get together will be held in the Scarborough over the weekend of Saturday April 27. For details contact scouseenright@hotmail.co.uk or 07884040041.

Fleet Air Arm Association: A reunion and annual general meeting takes place at the Best Western Royale Hotel in Bournemouth from April 5 to 8. For details and bookings contact IOW Tours Ltd at 3 New Road, Lake, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO36 9JH.

HMS Surprise Association: Our annual reunion will be held at the Hadleigh Hotel, Burlington Place, Eastbourne Sussex BN21 4HR. From April 5 to 8. For information contact Geoff Prentice (Chairman). Telephone 01394 274813 or e-mail geoff.prentice@virginmedia.com

Algerines Association: Our annual meeting and spring holiday will take place at Mill Rythe Holiday Village, Hayling Island, from Friday April 26 to Friday May 3.

HMS Phoebe: A reunion will be held at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, from May 3 to 6. Further details can be obtained from secretary Dave Newson hmsphoebeassociation@outlook.com or Robert.hobbs1949@sky.com

HMS Bulwark, Albion and Centaur Association. Our annual reunion takes place at the Royal Beach Hotel in Southsea over the weekend of May 10-13. Contact association secretary Denis Askham on 01772 322910 or askhamd3@gmail.com

Veteran fieldgunners: We are once again meeting at Tiffanys Hotel, Blackpool, from May 17-20. Contact Colin Burley on 01543 572212 or email barbaraburley@hotmail.co.uk

HMS Iveston: A reunion to mark the 28th year since the Mediterranean deployment of January to May 1991, takes place on June 15 in the Portsmouth area. If you served during this time, please contact Shaunmckeever@yahoo.com or telephone 07547 934424.

HMS Liverpool Association: A reunion will be held on Saturday 22nd June 22 at the GI's Association Whale Island Portsmouth, mustering at 1200. Our association is made up of those who have served on the cruiser and the Type 42 destroyer and new members are always welcome. For further membership information and reunion details contact secretary John Parker at infor@hmsliverpoolassociation.org.uk or call 02392521222.

HMS Ulster. A reunion will be held in Torquay from September 20-23. For details contact Norrie Millen at ulster@candoo.com

HMS Eagle: The Friends of HMS Eagle reunion weekend will be held at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, Portsmouth, from September 27-29. Contact the main organiser, Danny du Feu. Email: ddf.photography@gmail.com or phone 07711 083465.

HMS Troubridge Final Commission Association: Our annual reunion takes place at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool from October 4 to 7. Contact Bryan Pace at Romft1@gmail.com or via hmstroubridge.com

The Survey Ships Association: Our 25th reunion takes place at the Mercure Chester North Hotel. Woodhey House Hotel Cheshire, from Friday October 25 to Monday, October 28. For information on membership and reunions please send a SAE to: The Secretary, SSA, 16 Quay Ostend Cliff Park Great Yarmouth Norfolk NR31 6TP. Or phone 07974156996

HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans' Association. Our 2019 reunion takes place at the Coniston Hotel in Sittingbourne, from October 4 to 7. For further details please contact enquiries@iowtours.com.

HMS Undaunted, Eagle and Yarmouth Association. Our reunion takes place at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, from October 18 to 21. For details contact Alan 'Whiskey' Walker on 01268 548041 or email whiskey666@outlook.com.

HMS Lowestoft Association. Our reunion takes place at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, from October 4 to 7. For details call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or contact: ian@hmslowestoft.co.uk. Tel: 07778 546861

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the January edition of Navy News (right) was fast patrol boat HMS Brave Swordsman, which was sold to the Wensley Haydon-Baillie museum.



RM Daniels, of North End, Portsmouth wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.
This month's mystery ship (above) is a Leander-class frigate. Launched in October 1970, she was commissioned in May 1972 and named after a figure of mythology.
1. What was her name, and 2. Where and when did she first see action?
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 March 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 April edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 289

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to - The Editor, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in March's Noticeboard must be received by

MARCH 14, 2019

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Scaling new heights

Team settle for a Corbett climb in Highlands

THIRTEEN officer cadets from Edinburgh URNU ventured up to Glenshee in Scotland for some adventurous training.

Sadly the lack of snowfall precluded planned skiing, so as an alternative hiking, archery, shooting and high-rope climbing took place.

The had an early start for a brisk walk up Ben Gulabin, a Corbett – a Scottish Hill over 2,500ft.

The early start enabled the team to take view sunrise in the valley adjacent to SAS memorial plaques on the hillside.

The air was crisp and cold; Jack Frost had paid a visit overnight for the heather was sprinkled with frost. The

views along the way were spectacular and the team saw mountain hares and deer.

Deteriorating weather meant that the team were unable to bag the Munro (a mountain over 3,000ft) of Carn a Gheoidh.

Upon arriving back at the base, the officer cadets enjoyed yet another evening of camaraderie before settling into their bunks to prepare for the next day.

The morning was especially challenging on the high-ropes course, *pictured inset*.

The chilly Scottish air meant everyone was alert and able to make the most of the views. Gentle

competition ensued by racing each other up and down the obstacles.

After lunch, the team were taught how to shoot with both bow and arrow and air rifles. Everyone picked this up very quickly and, despite not having his contact lenses in, OC Bennett hit several bullseyes.

First year OC Doulton added: "I really relished the opportunity to engage with the team completing challenging exercises.

"I was nervous of heights at first, but I found my fellow officer cadets very supportive, and I thoroughly enjoyed it."



Tribute to the men at siege

OXFORD URNU hosted The Siege of Ladysmith Dinner with WO1 Glenn Houghton (Grenadier Guards), the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chiefs of Staff, as guest of honour.

The Siege of Ladysmith is the origin story behind the modern-day field gun competition which lies in 1899, the Second Boer War, and the epic 119-day Siege of Ladysmith.

As the British Army was besieged by Boer fighters in the garrison town of Ladysmith the Royal Navy landed guns from HMS Terrible and Powerful to assist in the relief of the siege.

The Naval Brigade manhandled six field guns, each weighing nearly half a metric tonne, over rough terrain to assist their opposite numbers of the British Army.

The defenders were helped by the arrival at the last minute, of Captain the Hon Hedworth Lambton of the Naval Brigade with his 280 Blue-Jackets, four 12 pounders and two 4.7 inch guns.

After the siege was finally lifted on February 28, 1900, Queen Victoria sent a telegram: 'Pray express to the Naval Brigade my deep appreciation of the valuable services they have rendered with their guns'.

Each year since 1907, this teamwork, leadership, moral and physical courage has been commemorated in the form of annual field gun competitions which take place to this day.

Between dinner courses descriptions of the battle were read out by the midshipmen and officer cadets to set the scene for the attendees and build the picture of events that eventually led to victory.

During his very engaging guest of honour speech, WO1 Houghton spoke of the importance of joint operations between the Royal Navy and British Army that have consistently taken place of hundreds of years and praised the Senior Midshipman Emily Herbert for running the evening.

Vital support for the homeless

EDINBURGH URNU officer cadets volunteered with Caring for Christmas Trees, a project run by the unit's chosen charity, the Bethany Christian Trust.

Christmas trees are brought in by the trust and when, all the profits go to helping the work Bethany does with the homeless community.

The money generated from this scheme has so far managed to support , people with homelessness and housing in Scotland.

The scheme works by enabling customers to order trees online and then collect at one of the assigned collection points in either Edinburgh, Glasgow or Fife.

The officer cadets mustered at Cameron Toll shopping centre and got stuck in straight away, often battling with the netting machine to get the trees wrapped neatly.

Archer arrows in on training weekend



OFFICER cadets from the Edinburgh Universities' Royal Naval Unit spent a weekend on board HMS Archer transiting to the border town of Eyemouth to undertake sea training.

After evening chart preparations on the Friday, the officer cadets joined the ship's company in HMS Archer and sailed to and from Eyemouth – passing Bass Rock, *pictured below right* – over the course of the weekend.

This allowed them the opportunity to get involved in the safe navigation of the ship, by taking the helm, as well as working on the charts and the radar.

For many officer cadets it was their first time in the ship and so it gave them the perfect opportunity to put into practice the skills they have learned at the unit.

It also allowed them to develop the skills to live and work in close proximity for a weekend, working as a collective to operate safely and take on the daunting task of cooking for 15 people in a tiny galley.

The highlight of the trip for many was practicing damage-control scenarios while at sea.

After receiving practical demonstrations by the damage control experts in the ship's company, the officer cadets were set loose to practice routines for fighting fires and floods.

The weekend was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone, all of the officer cadets were able to learn so much and gain valuable experience on board as well as enjoying a visit to the town of Eyemouth.

OC Giselle Chicot said: "My first sea weekend was a fantastic experience.

"The ship's company were so helpful and I feel like I learned a lot. It was great to go on the sea weekend with the good friends I have made at the unit."



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Milestone for HMS Cambria

THE contract to build an £8m head office and training bases for HMS Cambria has been awarded.

The site at Cardiff Bay will be home to the Royal Navy Reserve unit in Wales.

The project is being delivered by Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (RFCA) for Wales, in partnership with port owner and operator Associated British Ports, South Wales (ABP South Wales).

Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure won a competitive tender process to transform the existing industrial site, located at Roath Dock in Cardiff Bay, for its client, ABP South Wales.

The main contractor will build a 3,755 sq ft four-storey steel-framed facility, primarily for HMS Cambria. Plans for the headquarters include living accommodation for up to 50 people, training and classroom suites, dining hall, armoury room and an external rope training area and parade square.

In addition, the building will feature other amenities, such as social and fitness facilities for use by the Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve and University Royal Naval Units.

The facility will provide work space for up to 80 personnel, replacing the existing HMS Cambria office in Sully to serve as headquarters for maritime reservists across the region.

The main construction work started in January and it is expected to be complete at the



● An artist's impression of the new HMS Cambria building

beginning of 2020.

The project is being delivered as part of the Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) programme.

Rob Williams, area director at Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure said: "That the Royal Navy has committed to training and developing its forces here for at least the next half a century is a massive vote of confidence in Cardiff."

"The port supports thousands of jobs and this investment can provide the catalyst for further development."

"The building itself will be a striking addition to the waterfront

and we look forward to handing it over to Associated British Ports and Royal Navy in 2020."

Rhys Morgan, Head of Property, ABP South Wales, said: "We are pleased to be working with Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure to deliver this exciting project for the RFCA in Wales. Their expertise in construction will help turn a non-operational piece of land into a thriving facility."

"The Port of Cardiff has a long association with the Royal Navy and we are pleased to be welcoming HMS Cambria back to the capital."

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● AB(Diver) Ash Hall takes part in the contest

Picture: Keith Woodland

Cheerful start to crossfit campaign

COMPETITORS from across HMS Collingwood and elsewhere battled for honour in the base's inaugural **crossfit** contest.

The competition offered six workouts, including swimming, running, barbells cycling and gymnastics to celebrate a new affiliation at Collingwood called Crossfit Carnall.

It is named after William Carnall, who served with the Collingwood Battalion of the Royal Naval Division during World War One.

He served at Gallipoli and, when the officers were killed during an amphibious landing he took charge of the men and led them to safety, subsequently being awarded the DSM.

Leading Physical Trainer Matt James, from HMS Sultan, who was one of the judges, said: "Crossfitters are able to deliver any test regardless of what it is, to the best of their ability. They're quicker, faster and stronger than someone that just lifts weights, for example."

"It's an all-encompassing challenge. This event marks the opening of Crossfit Carnall, here at Collingwood, which starts this year with two classes per week, open to everyone, civilian or military, who holds an amenities pass."

The teams consisted of same-sex pairs and the Midlife Crisis Crew team comprised Katie Pond and Amanda Holloway, who won the female title.

Katie said: "The good thing about crossfit is it levels the field because no-one is equally good at every discipline. The Crossfit community is also very supportive, despite being quite competitive."

LPT Jordan and AB Mills won the male category. All winners were awarded crossfit gift vouchers.

Anyone interested in joining the classes should contact LPT Jack Basher or LPT Tom Monday.

Navigating to close gap

ROYAL Navy and Royal Marines orienteers closed the gap on the RAF at the Inter-Service **Orienteering Championships**.

The Army team showed their class and were well clear of their nearest rivals.

The event took place in the New Forest and saw runners navigating a 10.3Km course.

While team success remains elusive, fantastic individual performances from Lieutenant Commander Olly Nokes, Staff Sergeant Alex Heath and Lt Cdr

Megan Ashton were rewarded with selection to represent the UK Armed Forces against the British Universities & Colleges Sport team in Edinburgh at the end of the month.

The RNRMOC's next target are the major international JK relays which will be held in the Aldershot area.

All are welcome to try this inclusive yet challenging sport.

Lt Cdr Nokes is keen to hear from anyone who is interested. Email **Oliver.nokes466@mod.gov.uk**

Showing their mettle in steel city

THE first ever national games for wounded, injured and sick veterans and personnel has been launched in Sheffield by the UK partnership consisting of the Ministry of Defence, Help for Heroes and The Royal British Legion.

Building on the success of Sydney and maintaining the strong association with the Invictus Games, a series of events and sporting activities will take place at a multi-day event in Sheffield between July 22 and 26.

The games will provide opportunities for up to 500 individuals and their families to use the power of sport, teamwork and competition to significantly accelerate their recovery.

Participants will be able to take advantage of Sheffield's world-class sporting facilities and venues and take part in adaptive sports including

athletics, wheelchair basketball, powerlifting, swimming and sitting volleyball.

The event in Sheffield will also incorporate Team UK's Trials for the next Invictus Games in The Hague, Netherlands in May 2020.

Veterans and currently serving personnel who are wounded, injured or sick can register to compete at the games by contacting Help for Heroes at h4hweb.com/jointeamuk.

At Sydney Team UK won 72 medals and recorded 138 personal bests competing against 17 other nations with a team of 72 athletes. They were supported by over 200 friends and family and thousands of spectators.

The Invictus Games were created by Prince Harry. The first Invictus Games took place in London and has been followed by events in Orlando, Toronto, and Sydney.

TEAM Navy take to the cold skies of Wiltshire as they start training for the Royal Navy **Paragliding Sports Training Camp** in Spain this month.

The trip will serve as preparation for the Inter-Service Paragliding Championship in June in South Wales.

The team fully expect to be the Inter-Service champions for the third year on the trot.

If you are interested in qualifying as a paraglider Pilot you can train through the Joint Service Adventurous Training Scheme at the schools in South Wales or Bavaria.

For more details contact your PT office or Lt Cdr Tim Oatley on 07528 069052.

Up, up and away... hopes high for Navy to retain flight title



Brothers halted in trophy quest



● Royal Navy Rugby League skipper LAET Nathan Lee on the attack against West Hull

Picture: SBS Photography

ONCE again the Royal Navy **Rugby League** were given a home draw in the first round of this year's Coral Challenge Cup.

Unfortunately the draw gave the Brothers the toughest of tests against West Hull ARLFC.

With seven players and coaches in the RN ranks hailing from Hull there was almost a derby feel to the game with Marine Lennox Green and ET(SM) Danny Johnson having played at West Hull before joining the service.

The Humberiders are one of the top three clubs in the sport's amateur game and with the depletion of the RN squad due to operational reasons the test was going to be even harder.

On the day the visitors took the match 12-42 but, led by skipper LAET Nathan Lee the RNRL side gave a fantastic account of themselves shocking the visitors after barely five minutes with a superbly worked try finished off by Cpl Steve Riley RM.

That was to be it though for the first half as the West Hull side showed why they are so well regarded.

A flurry of points after the Brothers missed a couple of scoring chances saw them go in at the break 6-30.

Once again RNRL were quickest off the mark in the second half, LSC Marika Tuinabunawa scoring a trademark try from dummy half under the posts to give Mne Green a comfortable conversion.

That was it for the home side, the visitors ran in a further 12 points to take the game 12-42 ending the RN Challenge Cup dreams for another year.

Off the field however it was a very successful afternoon for the profile of the sport in the RN as the whole match was streamed live by BFTV on their Facebook page.

This month sees another home fixture for the Brothers, who welcome a rep side from championship side Gloucester All Golds on March 23.

The match will be followed by the annual players' awards dinner to celebrate the successes of the 2018 season.

More information can be found at [Royal Navy Rugby League.com](http://RoyalNavyRugbyLeague.com), including full match coverage of the Challenge Cup game as well as our new Facebook site, search [Royal Navy Rugby League](http://RoyalNavyRugbyLeague).

Veterans ruling Bahrain roost

A COMBINED Royal Navy and Royal Marines rugby team lost narrowly to the Bahrain over 30s.

The military team, comprising of sailors and marines from a number of Operation Kipion, showed great commitment and courage but came up short against the well-established locals by 32-24.

The Royal Navy captain for the first half was Lieutenant Commander Jim Bridge.

He said: "We had very little time training together. We all come from different units."

"Some of the lads are on the minehunters, others on RFA Cardigan Bay and a few of us from the UK Naval Support Facility or Combined Maritime Forces."

"What was good to see was that Royal Navy's and Royal Marines' spirit. Everyone gave it their all from start to finish."

Conditions were un-seasonably cold for Bahrain. With strong winds making expansive play tough, the home team playing with a very big pack had the better of the conditions in the first half.

It was the Royal Navy however who got off to the better start, getting points on the board with a well-worked try finished by Lt Cdr Bridge.

Playing in the second row, he forced his way over the line after just five minutes, supported in the build up with some strong carrying from Mnc Jenkins playing at Number 8.

The home side then scored twice in quick succession to make the score 12-5 after just 15 minutes.

Lt Dave Harrison RM then scored for the visitors following some quick hands in the back line and finishing with an excellent run under the posts.

However, the Golden Oldies rallied and made good use of their possession, crossing for a final converted score just before half time, making the score 19-10 at the break.

Both teams had large squads, and a number of changes were made at half time to allow everyone to get a run out.

Lt Chris Fenn, who played in the centre for the navy, said: "It is all about taking part,



showing our grit, determination, teamwork, resilience and leadership. All qualities the RN and RM show on the field of play and in our roles out here in the Gulf."

Team talk complete and changes made, the second half got underway with both sides sharing possession pretty evenly.

The visitors though, took their chances and converted time with the ball into points.

With only ten minutes left on the clock, the score was 32-10 to the Golden Oldies.

In the final stages of the match, the visitors crossed the line twice and converted once, leaving the visitors with a score of 22. The men to get the points were Marine Ed Tate and SLt Elliot Woodhead.

Team coach for the navy side, Lt Cdr 'Sammy' Seal, said: "The most impressive aspect of our performance today was the commitment shown from the first minute to the last by all of the guys."

"We were always going to struggle at the

set-piece against a highly-organised team who are well drilled at some of the 'darker arts', especially in the scrum.

"It was a tough, physical match with bodies put on the line by all and some really hard tackles going in."

"In open play and the tackle we certainly had the upper hand but failed to turn many opportunities within the red zone into points."

"Most of our team are embarked in the ships based here in Gulf. They spend a large amount of time at sea in an operation that is now into its 13th year, as you can imagine finding time to train as a team is at a premium."

"This is my fourth Op Kipion deployment and on every occasion I have been extremely grateful to the welcome and hospitality shown by Bahrain RFC to deployed service personnel. We have a very special relationship with the club and with occasions such as tonight long may it continue."

Out of sorts as winning run ends

THE UK's military football team's winning streak came to an end with defeat at the hands of a Combined Maritime Forces side.

In the nine-a-side league which started in January, the UK Naval Support Facility (UKNSF) team, All Sorts, had enjoyed a 100 per cent record.

This was abruptly ended by the CMF side, who have players from as far afield as Brazil and Korea in their team and included one Brit.

The match was played at a furious pace, with the All Sorts having much of the possession initially and many attempts on goal.

Unfortunately, time on the ball was not converted into goals, with many of the chances going wide or over the cross bar.

By contrast, the CMF side, soaked up the early pressure and used their pace to counter attack.

After nine minutes, after a quick break through the centre, CMF opened the scoring.

The multinational side knocked in a second after 14 minutes and again, this was the result of a quick break.

Despite going two goals down, the All Sorts kept their spirits high and continued to pepper the CMF penalty area with a number of chances.

But it was not until the stroke of half time that the British managed to find the back of the net.

The goal came courtesy of a powerful free kick by CPO Binns. From about 30 yards out, he rifled the ball into the top right hand corner of the goal; the shot was too powerful and too well placed for the CMF goal keeper to stop.

The second half was quite even. Both sides had periods of possession where chances were squandered.

It was in the 13th minute of the second half that CMF scored

a third.

The All Sorts continued to have chances, but none were successful. In a hard-fought match, where the referee showed yellow cards on three occasions and one red for the All Sorts, both teams gave it their all.

Although hard fought and very competitive, both teams left the field of play as friends; the CMF side pleased with their performance, the All Sorts regretting not converting their chances.

Earlier, the All Sorts won their second game of a tournament for military personnel based in Bahrain, beating the US Marines of Task Force 51/5, 3-1.

In what was a later than hoped kick off, the UK All Sorts made a relative sluggish and nervy start.

The first goal of the game came from a swift counter attack after 13 minutes, with the raw pace of the American striker leaving the UK defence all at sea.

The reaction to going a goal down was positive, and almost immediately the score was level.

An intelligent bit of wing play brought about a throw-in close to the corner and the long throw into the box was met by a glancing header from CPOSC Glen Clifton.

The second goal game after 16 minutes with a sterling solo effort from POPT Dave Berry, collecting the ball in his own half he dribbled his way past six defenders, before a cool finish made the score 2-1.

With direction given at half time to change the formation and with a renewed focus on possession football, the UK team looked streets ahead in the first ten minutes of the second half.

Numerous chances were created but the Task Force 51/5 goalkeeper was on fine form.

The final goal of the match came from CPO Ross Binns.



Stretching friendships

STRETCHER-running, shuttle runs, and a relay race were among the challenges faced by UK personnel based at UKMCC as they took on US Navy and US Marines in a military sporting competition.

The aim of the event was to build teamwork between the United States and British forces, with each team comprising a mixture of US and UK personnel.

After four tough disciplines, the overall winners were the joint US Marines and UK Naval Support Facility team.

For the first event of the Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade's monthly Directorate's Cup contest, the seven teams of eight had to complete four shuttle runs with a stretcher.

The second was three shuttle runs with four ammunition cans, before going straight into squad push ups.

The final event was a relay race, with competitors sprinting to the end of the softball pitch and running backwards to the start.

Major Gloria Luedtke, of the US Marine Corps said: "We wanted to get the UK military to take part in our military skills to enhance the already good camaraderie between us."

Out of the seven teams there were two teams with Royal Gibraltar Regiment, one team of UKNSF, three Royal Navy and one from the Royal Navy Facility Support Unit.

In order to have an outright winner, the two top teams took part in a tug of war. This was between the teams comprising of UK Naval Support Facility staff and Royal Gibraltar Regiment personnel.

After a close call the UKNSF team won the tug of war, pictured inset, and therefore the competition.

Major Paul Eaton, who was on the UKNSF team, said: "The competition was all about the integration with the UK and US, team-building between the two nations."



Brocklesby's bees deliver killer sting

PERSONNEL from HMS Brocklesby had a winning start to their football season with a victory over a Bahrain expat side.

The 6-3 victory to the Bees came as a shock to the hosts as they had beaten Royal Navy minehunter teams in their previous five matches.

The game was tight as Brocklesby conceded a goal in the first minute before hitting back.

Team coach Leading Engineering Technician Gary McKnight said: "I was very happy how quickly our team has gelled in such a short period of time."

"With this team we can go on to dominate the Bahrain football scene."

Centre back, Engineering Technician Daniel Bragger added: "We're not here to take part, we're here to take over."

Brocklesby's goalscorers were Able Seaman Mark Fish and Able Seaman Ross Johnson, each with a brace, Chief Petty Officer Simon Holland and ET Luke Thorne.



Cricket legend passes on some top tips

ROYAL Navy cricketer ETME 'Viv' Richards receives some expert advice from former Pakistan international Younis Ahmed.

The legendary batsman helped the Royal Navy Cricket Club prepare for the forthcoming season with a mentoring programme.

Younis, a middle-order batsman, played test cricket for Pakistan between 1969 and 1987 and first-class cricket for both Surrey and Worcestershire.

ETME Richards, of HMNB Nelson, and his colleagues, honed their cricket skills during net practice at the Rose Bowl, home of the Hampshire Cricket Club.

Drawing on his vast experience, Younis, through more visits, aims to inspire the players as well as imparting good salient advice on technical skills and mental preparation.

The RNCC has a full and varied programme, with the women's team soon to go on tour to the West Indies in March, and also the Inter-services T20 final at Lords on May 30. For details visit: interservices20.co.uk/

If you are interested in becoming involved in cricket, as a player, umpire, coach or official, or you just want to follow some of the games; further details on the RNCC can be found at the RNCA website: royalnavycricketassociation.com.

Hockey team take bike honours

HMS Collingwood's hockey players took the team honours at the 2019 Eastern Region Wattbike Championships.

The aim of the competition was to showcase the Wattbike suite to the Eastern Region and wider Royal Navy.

Three teams consisting of three members competed in four different challenges which tested everyone through various energy systems, ranging from short, sharp peak power intervals through to long endurance events.

Results were:

Men's and women's team overall winners, LPT Basher, LPT Brazier and CPL Ness; Men's and women's team runners up and winners of challenge four, POPT Cole, AB Hehir and LH Heads; Individual winner of challenge one, LPT Martin Brazier; Challenge two and three, POPT Ian Cole.

Toughest of tests for UK volleyball squad

THE UK Armed Forces volleyball squad gathered for what would be their toughest match of the season, against Warwick Riga.

Warwick caught the UKAF Ladies on the back foot and were ten points ahead by the second technical time-out.

A motivational timeout and a chance to reset saw the UKAF Women regain their composure and close the set with a more respectable score of 25-19 to Warwick Riga.

The UKAF Women began the second set stronger than they finished the first with a new ignited fire and with progression to the quarter finals on the line the teams began trading points.

Hard work and defensive play at the net by Pte Annie McIntyre (Army), leading her to win UKAF player of the match, saw the team prove what they are capable of.

Cpl Lucy Bolton and SAC Alex Stallworthy (both RAF) showed blistering prowess at the net and defensively ensuring Warwick Riga stayed within grasp.

Unfortunately Warwick Riga edged ahead on score board with them eventually winning the set 25-23.

The final and deciding set proved harder again with the UKAF Ladies digging deep to win the set and a chance at the game. Tip balls and clever shots enabled the team to challenge Warwick Riga again. The final set ultimately went to Warwick Riga and so the game 25-24.

This saw to the end of the UKAF Women's season for 2018/2019.

A great deal has been accomplished by the UKAF women, with the Royal Navy Women's Team contributing more players than the previous year. Musician Nadia Workman has shown commitment to the team, having never missed a training session this season.



● Lt Cdr Ramsay Shaw in action in Meribel

Pictures: SAC Emma Wade, RAF



● Clockwise from right, Lt Col Huan Davies races Major Danny Howells, RE; The RN team, from left, Lt James French, Capt Gordie McCrea, Maj Luke Davies, CIS Steve Farrant; LICpl McArthur; Lt Cdr Shaw and Lt Col Huan; Sgt Luke Stroud; Lt French; Capt Sam Moreton and Sgt Stroud



On the mark

Telemark team take title for third year in row

THE Royal Navy Telemark Team have successfully defended their title as Inter-Service Telemark Champions.

For the third consecutive year the Telemark Team were the Combined Team Champions, winning three of the four telemark events – giant slalom, sprint and classic – to convincingly win the Telemark Team Combined Title at the Inter-Service Ski and Snowsport Championships at Meribel in France.

Telemark was the only discipline at the Inter-Service Championships in which the Royal Navy were victorious.

The Telemark Team fought off strong competition from the Army and RAF, but were victorious due to the strength in depth within the team.

Lieutenant James French and four Royal Marines – Lieutenant Colonel Huan Davies, Major Luke Davies, Captain Gordie McCrae and

Sergeant Luke Stroud gained podium positions and the remainder of the team consistently finished within the top eight competitors in each race.

Despite a close competition this proved too much for the Army and RAF, who finished second and third respectively.

In the individual competition the Navy were also successful with Lt Col Davies and Capt McCrae finishing second and third respectively.

Sgt Stroud was the best-placed novice competitor. His first appearance at the Inter-Service Championships saw him quickly building upon his alpine racing background to finish fifth overall.

The Navy Telemark Team consisted of Capt McCrae (team captain), Lt Col Davies, Maj Davies, Colour Sergeant Steve Farrant RM, Lt French, Lance Corporal Connor McArthur RM, Capt Sam Moreton RM, Lt Cdr Ramsay Shaw and Sgt Stroud.

The team were selected from the Navy Telemark Championships held in January at Pralognan-la-Vanouise, where the final results were:

First, Capt McCrae; Second, Capt Moreton; Third, Maj Stroud; fourth, Sgt Stroud and fifth, C/Sgt Farrant.

L/Cpl McArthur was the best newcomer, having only started telemarking this season, making his selection for the Inter-Services team particularly significant.

He learned to telemark at the grassroots training camp Exercise White Dagger in December, a two-week exercise which introduces beginners and novices to telemark.

Connor then progressed to the Navy Telemark Championships, Exercise Telemark Titan, held in France.

This introduces telemarkers to racing and was invaluable in developing Connor's telemark and race technique.

After successful selection onto the RN Telemark team, Connor competed against the Army and RAF teams, which was a significant increase in the difficulty and complexity of the race piste, but Connor

rose to the challenge admirably.

Connor's progression from telemark beginner to RN Telemark race team has been a very steep learning curve, but an opportunity that is available to all ranks and rates.

Connor was awarded his RN Telemark Colours along with Sgt Stroud, who was also attending the Inter-Service Championships for the first time.

Telemark racing is a form of downhill racing on telemark bindings with a 'free heel' over a race course that includes a jump and a skating section.

The Navy telemark skiers aim to maintain their expertise through a summer training camp and pre-season novice and team training prior to next year's Navy Telemark and Inter-Service Championships.

A number of telemark festivals and race series will also be held later this year at the Indoor Ski Centres at Glasgow (May 12) and Manchester (June 29-30), as well as the RN Indoor Festival and Race at Milton Keynes (date TBC September).

A growing number of women are becoming involved and the aspiration is to enter a Woman's Team into the 2020 Inter-Service Championships. Although the majority of the Navy telemark skiers are Royal Marines, all events are open to all of the full-time and reserve services, with a novice training camp to be held in Stubai, Austria, from November 23 to December 7.

Anyone interested in trying telemark or attending any of the above events can find more information by contacting Lt Cdr Ramsay Shaw on ramsay.shaw771@mod.gov.uk or 9621 81532 / 020721 81532.

Details of the Navy Telemark Championships will be released via a DIN in September.

Further information on telemark skiing can also be found on the RNRM Telemark Facebook page at [facebook.com/RNRMTelemark/](https://www.facebook.com/RNRMTelemark/)

Report: Lt Cdr Ramsay Shaw



Katie sets fast pace to take running crown

THE Western region and the Royal Marines shared the honours at this year's Royal Navy Cross Country Championships held at HMS Raleigh.

In total 70 of the Royal Navy's best long-distance runners competed against each other, representing their region or fighting arm in various male and female categories; womens' and mens' under 23s, senior and vets.

Officer Cadet Dan Soltys, from Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC), became the U23 men's champion in a very quick time of 18.36. His win helped the Western region take the U23 team title.

In the women's race, Midshipman Katie Syngé (Royal Naval Reserve and Western region), pictured above, became female champion in a blistering time of 20.27.

Along with third place overall, the first lady veteran was Lieutenant Commander Tilda Woodard, of BRNC, pictured right. These two wins ensured that the Western region were strongly represented to take the ladies' team title.

Petty Officer Adam Barlow (Fleet Diving Unit South and Eastern region) retained his senior title in 30.32, and having turned 40-years-old, was also awarded the veteran individual championship.

Despite this win, the Royal Marines proved they had too much depth and quality in the seniors and veteran categories and took both team titles, pushed closely by a determined Western region team.

Of the four HMS Raleigh representatives, Leading Physical Trainer (LPT) Bart Thomas performed strongly finishing eight in the senior male category, while BRNC's stalwart Warrant Officer 1 Sean Childs finished 14th overall and 5th in the veteran's race. BRNC provided 10 athletes for the Western region team.

HMS Raleigh has become the home of Royal Navy endurance sports. The undulating grass course was superbly laid out with conditions ideally akin to tough close racing, as the rain finally gave way to some bright sunshine. The ladies and under 23 men completed one and a half laps (3.1 miles) and the senior and veteran men two and a half laps (5.1 Miles).

Those athletes who excelled, demonstrating determination, resilience and a will to win will be selected to represent the Royal Navy in the forthcoming Inter Service Cross Country Championships at RAF Halton, Aylesbury on Thu 14 Feb 14.

Finally, a big well done to the organiser LPT Pat Coy and the Raleigh PT department who organised and delivered a first-class competition that was favourably remarked upon by athletes and the Royal Navy Athletics Association representatives alike.



● The men's race gets underway

Pictures: Dave Sherfield



Suits them well

TWO Royal Navy skydivers successfully took part in a UK Skydiving Wingsuit record.

Sub Lieutenant Emma Reynolds, *pictured in the red and yellow suit*, and Able Seaman Al Bradie were selected to take part in five training jumps and the final official record attempt over Wiltshire.

For the uninitiated, wingsuiting is an advanced skydiving discipline and involves flying through the air in a suit which adds surface area to the human body, enabling a significant increase in lift.

AB Bradie, of HMS Flying Fox, *appropriately*, has 1,300 parachute jumps under his belt, including 600 in a wingsuit. A gold medalist at the 2015 British National Wingsuiting Championships, he was one of the most experienced wingsuiters present and was selected to act as an advisor and cameraman.

SLt Reynolds, of 703 NAS, was the least experienced flyer at the event, with 700 jumps and only ten in a wingsuit. She was invited to take part in the record attempt after winning a silver medal at the 2017 Wingsuiting National Championships, as well as picking up multiple medals in other disciplines.

"Building an official record wasn't as simple as jumping out of the aircraft and flying near to one another," said SLt Reynolds.

"There were several obstacles to overcome because each person had a set 'slot' in a formation which was at a specified distance away from each other.

"In order to make the formation valid, participants were required to fight through turbulence and maintain concentration in order to stay flying in close proximity to each other."

One of the key issues facing the wingsuiters was the variation in their weights, meaning they fall through the sky at different speeds.

Therefore, the skydivers had to adjust their body position and relative drag to try and adapt; this is known as adjusting fall rate.

Another limit is time – only one person can jump out of the aircraft at once, so the wingsuiters needed to adjust their fall rate in order to catch up with one another.

In total, participants had approximately 90 seconds to get into slot, retain proximity, and pull their parachute.

On the day of the record, five practice jumps were required to sort out these difficulties.

"My fears about lack of experience proved to be unnecessary, as I became one of the first to get into position on the jumps," said SLt Reynolds.

Flying on his back, AB Bradie impressively managed to keep everyone in shot and on the final official jump, took the key photo when the formation built which was used for the official record.

SLt Reynolds successfully made the cut; one of the 11 chosen wingsuiters who built the final record formation, recorded by AB Bradie.

They are looking to build on this in 2019 by increasing the numbers in the formation.

Both RN participants are members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Sports Parachute Association.

For more information on how to get involved in skydiving, email RNRMSPA@gmail.com.

Main picture: AB Al Bradie



● Clockwise from above, SLt Reynolds exiting the plane on a training dive; AB Bradie flexing his wingsuit; AB Bradie walking in after a jump; The perspective inside the wingsuit formation; Watching as wingsuiters exit the aircraft one by one

Pictures: AB Bradie, SLt Reynolds, Ash Horton, Oliver Ellis and Wingsuit Zach

