



NAVY NEWS

APRIL 2021



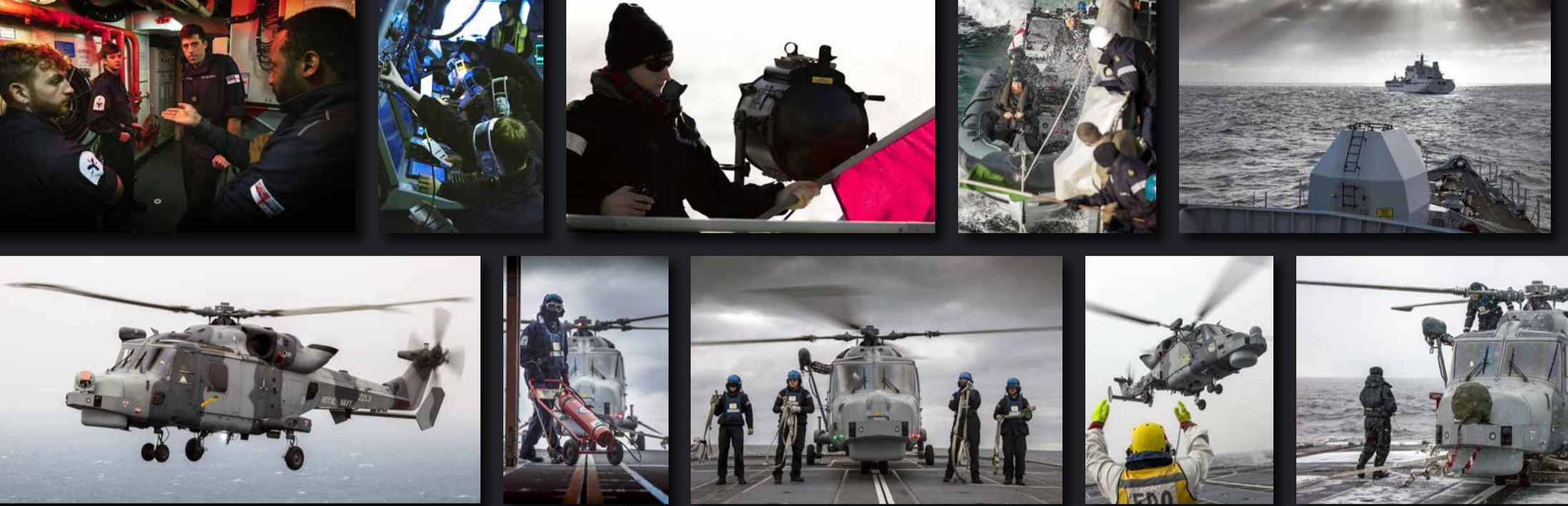
Cold steel

A Royal Marine from the Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron conducts discrete exercises in the freezing Arctic to ensure the team are able to operate in the most extreme of conditions (see pages 23 to 25)

PICTURE: LPhot James Clarke

Inside: Integrated Review; Navy's JEF test; Carrier strike





So, where's the Royal Navy's main effort been these past few weeks?

The Gulf, naturally, tops the list for the 627th month.

Home waters are, as ever, very active, from regular training (see page 15, for example) to keeping an eye on contacts of interest (page 7).

The Marines have been busy way up in the Arctic as usual at this time (see pages 23-25). But after that?

Maybe the South Atlantic. The Med.

Nope.

The Baltic.

The RN normally ventures in force into this narrow sea in the springtime for the annual international naval exercise run by the Americans, Baltops.

And it will be doing. But the UK has its own, relatively new Baltic naval group: JEF, the Joint Expeditionary Force, seven nations with Baltic shores, plus the Netherlands, joining Britain to form a military force committed to the region's safety, security and stability.

It's received just one run out so far (in 2019) and that was part of broader exercises with US/NATO allies.

So when HMS Lancaster led her sister Westminster and tanker Tiderace into the Kattegat for Baltic Dash, it was the first true test of JEF on its own.

But first... a spot of training.

The Brits underwent a week of 'full-throttle' individual and combined training in the North Sea on their way to join their Baltic allies.

The workout has covered firefighting, medical training, damage control, ships sailing in close formation, refuelling at sea, gunnery, air defence, and intensive training with helicopters – plus adjusting to sub-zero temperatures and snowstorms as the ships pushed deeper into the Baltic.

Gunnery expert Leading Seaman Michael Benbow – who recently tested Lancaster's newly-fitted heavy machine guns – transferred to Tiderace to train the tanker's gunnery team in marksmanship and the use of small arms to protect the 39,000-tonne support ship.

And the tanker honed her refuelling skills with a nighttime topping up of HMS Lancaster's fuel reserves – a demanding manoeuvre by day: "Safely conducting close proximity manoeuvres requires razor-sharp focus from the bridge team," said Officer of the Watch Lieutenant Rebecca Stanley.

Petty Officer Dan Hambling, overseeing the safe conduct of the refuelling, added: "Transferring fuel between ships, at night, in freezing conditions is a massive challenge but

with a professional team standing alongside me, we successfully and safely completed the evolution. Time for a warm brew afterwards!"

Some of Lancaster's 200 crew are relatively fresh out of training, such as marine engineer Gareth MacGilvray, experiencing his first deployment as he grapples with maintaining hi-tech machinery at sea.

"Training on a live warship is a lot harder than during basic training and there is little room for error so you definitely need to be on your 'A' game the whole time!" he said. "It was a hard week but I'm proud of what I achieved."

So with the collective training done, enter our allies: Estonian minelayer Wambola, Latvian patrol vessel Jelgava, and from Lithuania minelayer Jotvingis and patrol ship Selis.

The participating ships conducted joint manoeuvres in close company, tested their gunnery skills and practised maritime security operations – all in icy conditions and heavy seas.

"It is hugely exciting to be working with allied navies on live operations and a real privilege for me to experience," said HMS Lancaster warfare specialist Able Seaman James Hearn.

Among the most challenging evolutions in such weather was a night vertical replenishment – shifting supplies around the fleet by helicopter in the darkness.

HMS Westminster's Merlin was called on to move loads slung beneath it – secured by Petty Officer Richard Newsome and Air Engineering Technician James Wilde, normally responsible for maintaining the sub-hunting helicopter.

They battled not just the motion of the Baltic, darkness, cold and wind, but also the downwash from the helicopter's blades – the equivalent of winds of 70 knots over the flight deck.

"A night vertical replenishment is a great example of the professionalism required between ground crew and air crew to make a very dangerous evolution seem efficient and effortless," said Lt William Shenton, the helicopter's observer (navigator/weapons specialist).

HMS Lancaster launched her Wildcat – used in particular to identify and monitor shipping – for 14 hours of sorties by day and night, making use of its cutting-edge thermal imaging camera to refine identifying shipping in the Baltic, as well as practising secondary duties such as search and rescue and winching.

"The mission has proven the operational utility of the Wildcat aircraft in a cold Baltic

Sea environment," said Flight Commander Lieutenant James Burrows.

"Flying in challenging weather conditions after dark using our night-vision goggles whilst proving our ability to work with the task group is the cornerstone of our preparedness."

And Lancaster's main gun fired 28 4.5in shells (88lb apiece) on target practice against 'killer tomato' inflatables which added a dash of colour to an otherwise rather drab, wintry panorama.

Even though Baltic Dash was relatively short, it still demanded 2,850 meals prepared by the chefs on Lancaster alone (including 64kg of sausages devoured).

Bad weather brought the curtain down on the exercise slightly earlier than originally planned, with the Baltic States' vessels putting into harbour.

Before departing, the Lithuanian minelayer Jotvingis signalled the Brits: GRATITUDE FOR THE ABILITY TO TRAIN WITH YOUR UNITS TO DEMONSTRATE OUR ABILITY TO WORK TOGETHER.

"It was a real privilege to command the first task group of this type and I have been impressed by the capabilities on display from our partner nations," said Commander Will Blackett, Lancaster's Commanding Officer.

The larger Royal Navy vessels remained at sea and exploited the extra time to join NATO for a couple of days, slipping into its Northern Europe force Standing Group 1.

To link up the Royal Navy force had to battle the weather head-on, ploughing through rough seas with waves crashing over the fo'c'sle making the most basic activities such as eating and sleeping, to say nothing of running a warship, a lot more difficult.

Once linked up with the NATO group, the Brits knuckled down to some combined manoeuvres, practice refuelling drills, communications and an air defence exercise.

"Coordinating the air-defence capabilities of a multi-nation NATO maritime task group in response to a simulated air threat was a great training opportunity," said Principal Warfare Officer Lieutenant Daniel Crawford, on loan to HMS Lancaster from the Royal New Zealand Navy.

"The task group must be ready to react at a very short notice so practice makes perfect!"

The short but useful interaction with Canadian frigate HMCS Halifax and German tanker Spessart was, said the group's commander Commodore Bradley Peats USN, "a great display of NATO unity, readiness and commitment to the Baltic region's collective defence."

And if you think that's it from the Baltic for now... turn to page 13.

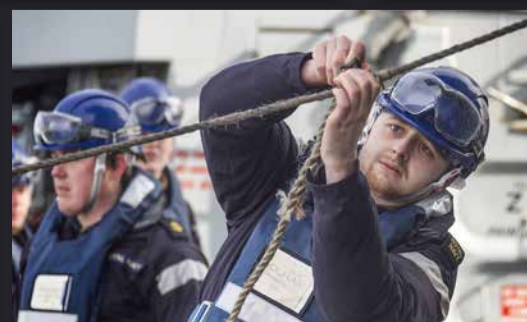
MOS

Pictures: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum, HMS Lancaster





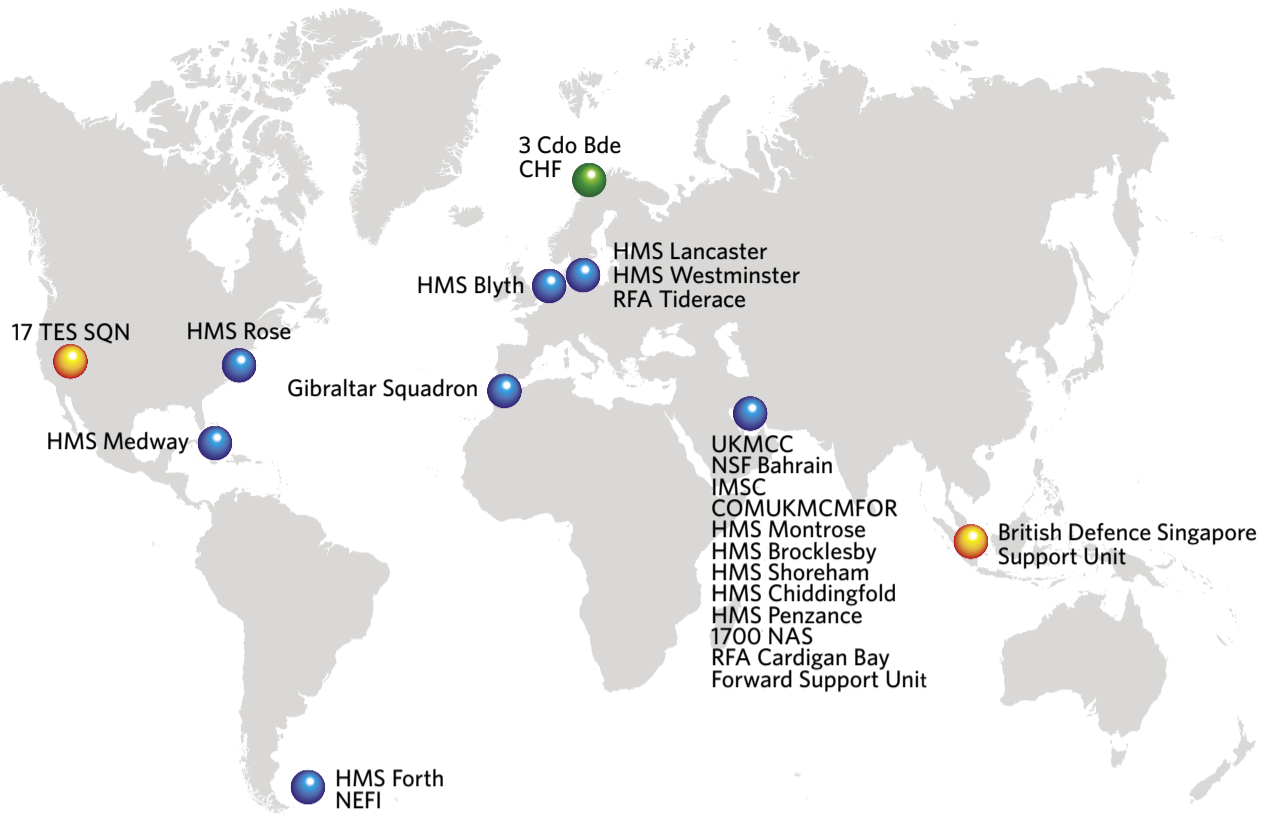
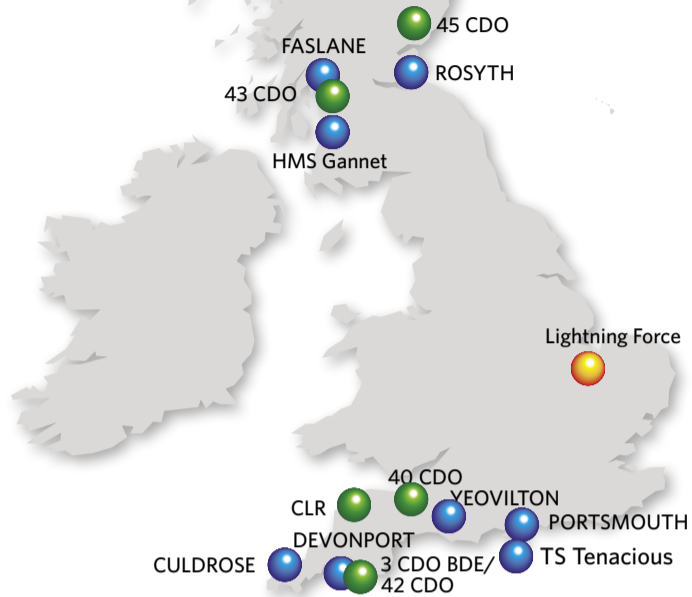
B A L T A I C C



Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Queen Elizabeth
HMS Northumberland
HMS Richmond
HMS Kent
HMS Tyne
HMS Severn
HMS Mersey
HMS Magpie
HMS Defender
HMS Diamond
HMS Tamar
HMS Spey

HMS Raider
HMS Exploit
Project Wilton
RFA Fort Victoria
RFA Tideforce
814 NAS
815 NAS
820 NAS
824 NAS
617 Sqn



On patrol somewhere beneath the Seven Seas is one Vanguard-class submarine and an undisclosed Trafalgar or Astute-class boat

GLOBAL NAVY

Protecting our nation's interests

ROYAL Marines are wrapping up their time in the Arctic (see pages 23-25) where a small team from the Surveillance Reconnaissance Squadron of 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group landed in small inflatable boats to conduct a technical reconnaissance mission on the shores of an Arctic fjord. Also in Norway are personnel from cold weather warfare specialists 45 Commando, who have been perfecting their skills to move rapidly across the deep snow and ice.

A Royal Marines stalwart who has been at the forefront of Arctic flying for 35 years has completed his final winter in the frozen north (see pages 16-17). Lieutenant Colonel Dave West is retiring, just as his son Marine Angus West, completes his first deployment to Norway.

Fleet Flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth made her debut in Loch Long (see page 6) as she prepared for her upcoming deployment. Two of her strike group escorts, HMS Defender and HMS Kent, also left Portsmouth for some final training.

Drugs worth more than £3m to terrorists have been seized by Royal Navy warship HMS Montrose – her third bust in little over a month (see page 5).

Royal Navy patrol ship HMS Mersey has tracked the movements of a surfaced Russian submarine as it sailed through waters close to the UK (see page 7).

Frigates HMS Lancaster and Westminster, tanker RFA Tiderace and vessels from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have joined forces for a concerted demonstration of Britain's commitment to the security and stability of the Baltic (see pages 2-3). The deployment is another test of elements of the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force – a partnership of nine northern European nations committed to working together on operations as varied as warfighting through to humanitarian assistance and defence engagement.

Men and women who will guide the Royal Navy's biggest ships through the most challenging waters have been tested aboard HMS Severn (see page 15). The Portsmouth-based warship took navigators hoping to serve aboard carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales – or pass on their valuable skills and experience to a new generation of sailors – through demanding training in the narrow waterways around Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Orkney Islands.

A first venture into the Solent marked the debut of HMS Spey under the White Ensign, as she started the journey to joining her sisters as fully-fledged members of the Overseas Patrol Squadron (see page 11).

Survey ship HMS Magpie has been testing specialist software to map the seabed by measuring wave height (see page 9).

Sailors on HMS Echo paid their respects to those lost when cruiser HMS Cassandra sank in the turbulent aftermath of the Great War (see page 19). The Devonport-based survey ship spent the beginning of the year on operations in the Baltic and took some time to investigate several wrecks in the region.

Also in the Baltic is HMS Blyth (see page 13) as she knuckles down to NATO duties.

For the first time in decades Royal Navy sailors are learning the art of seafaring on a traditional tall ship (see pages 20-21). Over four months junior sailors are crewing TS Tenacious – giving them a unique insight into the days of sail and the chance to pick up key leadership skills.

Royal Navy aircraft recovery specialists from the Joint Aircraft Recovery and Transportation Squadron – JARTS – helped to remove a Cold War-era bomber aircraft from RAF Marham in Norfolk (see page 39).

A Royal Navy officer serving with offshore patrol vessel HMS Trent, (see page 33), was inspired to join the service by his grandfathers, both of whom were veterans of the Battle of the Atlantic – but on opposing sides.

American soldiers may have accidentally found the remains of the British warship, HMS Rose, which was the scourge of their countrymen during the War of Independence (see page 9).

Iconic images of World War 2 bomb-damaged Plymouth and Devonport have been revisited by a trainee Royal Navy photographer (see page 41) ahead of him starting his Defence Photography Course.

A star from Game of Thrones has swapped wearing a crown to serving the Crown as he joined the Royal Navy Reservist unit HMS President (see page 43).

Royal Navy personnel are being urged to sign up to the Anthony Nolan bone marrow register and potentially save a life (see page 27).

Finally, a former Royal Navy aircraft engineer, who served with CHF, has constructed a new career – as a Lego modelmaker (see page 28).

Celebrating the Commonwealth

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

LAST month the Royal Navy joined nations around the world to celebrate Commonwealth Day.

The UK is part of the Commonwealth, a network of 54 nations that spans every continent on earth with a combined population of 2.4 billion. The modern Commonwealth was formed in 1949, bringing together nations to co-operate based on their shared values and interests.

Commonwealth citizens from other nations have long made significant contributions to the defence of the United Kingdom, including during the first and second world wars.

They continue to play an important role in the UK armed forces in operations worldwide. In recent years, the five-year residency requirement for Commonwealth personnel to qualify for recruitment has been removed, making it easier for Commonwealth Nationals to join the Armed Forces.

The Royal Navy has over 900 overseas Commonwealth nationals currently serving. A branch review in 2019 opened up new opportunities for the community, including Royal Marine and Logistic Officer roles that have driven an uptake in Commonwealth nationals commissioning.

Commonwealth nationals often make significant sacrifices to serve in the UK Armed Forces, and the Royal Navy recognises the need to better support its Commonwealth community and their families.

Last year Rear Admiral Mike Utley was appointed as an official advocate, supported by a full-time deputy to better understand the challenges faced by our Commonwealth men and women.

Royal Navy is also looking at new options to assist Commonwealth nationals from overseas to travel home to see their families, recognising that this often requires overseas travel at greater expense compared to those only travelling within in the UK.



● Brothers ET(ME) Shaquille Barbour and LET(ME) Stevan, from St Vincent and the Grenadines, were reunited while training at HMS Sultan

Alongside this, the well-established Royal Navy Commonwealth Network provides a collective voice for personnel to raise awareness of their unique lived experience through the chain of command. It offers peer support, signposting and help through mentoring and education.

After Covid-19 prevented the traditional Commonwealth Day service at Westminster Abbey, last month the Royal Navy Commonwealth Network set up an online celebration to ensure the Defence community marked the occasion.

Leading Hand Joseph led the event, bringing in performers and speakers from around the world. Hailing from Trinidad and Tobago, he has been serving as a Royal Navy Logistician since 2014.

"It's an honour and privilege to be serving as a Commonwealth National. The Royal Navy Commonwealth Network has allowed me to express my culture and inform others, and for this I am grateful. It was important to me to host the Commonwealth Day service this year despite Covid-19, because it's such a great opportunity to inform wider Defence about our cultures, skills and talents."

In his message during the event, the First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin said: "For Defence, the Commonwealth is a living, breathing thing – our people. It's a source of huge pride that you choose to serve with us, and I want to take this opportunity to thank you and for all that you do. Your experience, knowledge and talent makes Defence better place to be, stronger through its diversity."

Third strike and out



GOTCHA!

This is the moment HMS Montrose pounces on a suspect dhow – leading to her third drugs bust in little over a month.

The frigate struck in the northern Arabian Sea, recovering nearly three tonnes of hash and heroin, worth over £3m, in a ten-hour operation.

It comes on the back of two seizures in as many days in the same waters in mid-February when various illegal narcotics worth £11m were confiscated.

The third haul occurred after the Bahrain-based warship completed a major training workout off Oman – and on the final day in charge of the ship for Commanding Officer Commander Ollie Hucker after two years at the helm.

“Through their efforts and ability, once again, Montrose has made an impact on ensuring that these drugs do not reach their end source,” the 39-year-old said.

“Be it my first day or my last day, these results only happen because of the collective effort and skill of the incredibly professional, highly trained and dedicated people that the Royal Navy employ, and that I have the privilege to command.”

The latest success began thanks to the sharp-eyed crew of the frigate’s Wildcat helicopter who spotted the suspect vessel during a routine dawn patrol.

“When we radioed in what we’d found, the ship turned to steam towards us, and the chain had started, ultimately leading to today’s success,” said Lieutenant Commander Max Cosby, the Wildcat’s commander.

Once within close range, Montrose launched her commando boarding team in fast boats. The combined display of force – with the helicopter overhead providing cover – brought the drug runners to a halt.

The search of the dhow by sailors and marines resulted in 50kg hashish and 2,800kg heroin – with a wholesale value of £1m and £2.24m respectively.

“This was about seizing the moment and taking the opportunity,” said Lieutenant Sam Gorton, the Royal Marine in charge of seizing the dhow.

“My boarding team were slick, proficient and for their efforts they successfully stopped the vessel, safely embarked and discovered the drugs. It has been a good deployment and I am hugely proud of my team for their achievements.”

Lieutenant Commander Cosby added: “Hearing ‘Go’ on the radio when we made our approach to the dhow was exhilarating.”

“The satisfaction of landing back onboard knowing our crew and the Wildcat have delivered on operations when it mattered could not have been better.”

Montrose was attached to a Canadian-led task group at the time of her success, Combined Task Force 150 which is committed to disrupting criminal and terrorist activity and the illegal trade of drugs and weapons in the Indian Ocean.

■ *Montrose leads UK involvement in Omani exercise, page 38*



Next-gen bag enters service

THE last piece of the carrier strike ‘jigsaw’ is in place with the first of the Royal Navy’s new ‘eyes in the sky’ now in service.

Shortly after lunchtime on Friday March 19, the first specially-adapted Merlin ‘Crownsnest’ helicopter – which scours the heavens with its radar looking for potential foes – lifted off from its new home at Culdrose.

As with its Sea King predecessor the Airborne Surveillance and Control variant of the Merlin is a bagger, with a distinctive radar dome or ‘bag’ sticking out from the fuselage, lowered in flight, raised on the ground.

Training by aircrews to use the new system, which allows crews to conduct air and missile defence as well as strike command and control, has been underway since last autumn.

They now have a live machine to train with before they deploy with the Queen Elizabeth carrier group, first in home waters then, from the end of May, beyond as the flagship deploys.

“The delivery of this first aircraft at Culdrose represents an enormous amount of hard work, dedication and passion across the defence and industry enterprise,” said Captain Stuart Finn, Culdrose’s Commanding Officer.

“It marks a significant moment for the Royal Navy as we become a carrier task group navy capable of deploying around the world as a sovereign group or with our allies.

“It is especially poignant that these aircraft are based here at Culdrose, the home of ‘the eyes of the fleet’, and we are proud of our association with airborne surveillance and control and before that, airborne early warning.

“These aircraft will work side by side with the rest of the Merlin Mk2 force to provide a world-class line of defence for our global navy, adding above water expertise to our already renowned submarine-hunting skills.”

The Merlins have been kitted out with new mission systems and radars from Thales Group by aerospace company Leonardo in Yeovil, overseen by Lockheed Martin.

Each helicopter has a crew of three: two observers (mission and tactical specialists) and one pilot. High

above the fleet with their sophisticated sensors, they enable the carrier strike group commander to see, understand and react well beyond the horizon for any air or surface threats. They can also act as a control centre for strike operations between the carrier and the ship’s F-35 Lightning jets.

Commodore Steve Moorhouse, Commander UK Carrier Strike Group, who will direct HMS Queen Elizabeth’s first deployment with the help of his staff, said the new Merlins were the final pieces in the group’s large, complex jigsaw.

“It’s hugely encouraging to see the progress of the Crownsnest trials. Already one of the most advanced submarine hunters, the Merlin Crownsnest will offer long-range intelligence and surveillance against surface and airborne threats, and the ability to command and control strike missions,” he said.

“Coupled with the Wildcat attack helicopter, the UK Carrier Strike Group will soon operate one of the most capable and versatile helicopter air groups.”

Commander Ian Varley, the Commanding Officer of 820 Naval Air Squadron, which is dedicated to protecting the carriers, their escorts and support ships, said his air and ground crew had been working tirelessly to prepare for the carrier mission; almost his entire squadron will be deploying with HMS Queen Elizabeth.

“The addition of the ASaC helicopters alongside our anti-submarine aircraft is a huge boost in our capabilities,” he added.

“I know the men and women on the squadron are looking forward to working alongside the rest of the fleet to continue the Royal Navy’s long tradition of air power at and from the sea.”

Bonnie sight, see page 6

Pictures: LPhot Kyle Heller, RNPOTY



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Bonnie sight

THE Royal Navy's Fleet Flagship, HMS Queen Elizabeth, makes her way to Glen Mallan in Scotland, as part of final preparations before her first operational deployment.

Sailing in along the Firth of Clyde, the 65,000-tonne aircraft carrier spent two weeks at sea testing and trialling her latest equipment, before berthing at the new Northern Ammunition Jetty for a routine on-load of operational stores.

HMS Queen Elizabeth is the first of the Royal Navy's fleet to visit the new £64 million facility, built by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO).

It was the first time HMS Queen Elizabeth visited Western Scotland, after she initially became a familiar sight on the River Forth where she was assembled.

Captain Angus Essenhigh, HMS Queen Elizabeth's Commanding Officer, said: "We are very proud of the close connection our ship has with Scotland, especially with our

affiliated city of Edinburgh.

"HMS Queen Elizabeth embodies the best of British engineering and craftsmanship, including Scottish shipbuilding, and it is a privilege to return to her birthplace of Scotland."

DIO project works undertaken include: the installation of four new navigational aids to ensure safe passage through the confined waterway in Loch Long, two new modular fender spacer units that move with the tide to prevent the aircraft carrier flight deck from coming into contact with the jetty and the installation of dolphin mooring points to ensure the carrier can be securely berthed.

The ship will deploy to the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean and East Asia later this year, leading the UK's Carrier Strike Group.

Meanwhile, HMS Defender and HMS

Kent both left Portsmouth for intensive training ahead of joining landmark deployment.

The Type 45 destroyer is earmarked to provide air defence and Kent to ward off submarine threats among other roles and duties in the task group.

Commanding Officer of HMS Defender, Commander Vince Owen, said: "It is a great feeling to be able to take HMS Defender back to sea after this period alongside for maintenance."

Engineering Technician (CIS) Tom Longley said: "Having been alongside since October it's great to go to sea and get back into the swing of things. I'm really looking forward to deploying later this year."

Kent's Commanding Officer,



Commander Matt Sykes, said: "The last three months in Portsmouth have been vital to make sure Kent is ready to deploy with the Carrier Strike Group in the spring.

"Achieving this during the ongoing pandemic has not been easy and I am extremely grateful to HM Naval Base Portsmouth, the waterfront support organisations and service providers for all their hard work to get us back to sea on time."

In addition to routine maintenance, various new equipment has been fitted, including infrastructure to support embarkation of the Royal Navy's new Martlet missile carried by the ship's Wildcat helicopter.

Defender worked closely with HMS Queen Elizabeth late last year on the Carrier Strike Group workout in the North Sea in preparation for operations.

Alongside sister ship HMS Diamond, plus Type 23 frigates and warships

from NATO allies, Defender formed the ring of steel around the aircraft carrier that is designed to protect the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers from enemy ships, submarines, aircraft and missiles, but are also capable of conducting a range of supporting missions, from maritime security to disaster relief.

The Type 45 then headed for extensive top-to-bottom maintenance ahead of a busy 2021, including capability upgrades being fitted, a fresh coat of paint and routine upkeep on the exterior of the state-of-the-art multifunction radar, which required a massive 80 tonnes of scaffolding to access it.

Personnel from both Defender and Kent took part in the digital Exercise Virtual Warrior alongside sailors from the carrier, plus battle staff, playing out a simulated crisis at HMS Collingwood to test their collective abilities and responses.

Picture: CPO (Phot) Nick Tryon



British pilot paves way for Italian F-35 carrier ops

FLEET Air Arm aviator Barry 'Baz' Pilkington became only the second person to land the world's most advanced naval fighter on the deck of Italian carrier Cavour.

The Brit is flying F-35s on and off the Italian flagship, helping to lay the foundations for our NATO ally to join the elite club of navies operating the stealth fighter from aircraft carriers.

The Cavour, which has been in service with the Marina Militare for more than a decade, is

swapping veteran Harrier jets for the Lightning – and the same short take-off/vertical landing variant (the 'B' model) as used by the US Marine Corps, Fleet Air Arm and RAF.

The Italian carrier underwent extensive conversion to operate the fifth-generation F-35 jets. Ultimately she'll be able to host ten of the jets in her hangar and six on the flight deck.

Like HMS Queen Elizabeth before her, the Cavour has sailed to the Eastern Seaboard of

the USA for her initial trials with two F-35s from the US Marine Corps squadron, one flown by Major Brad Leeman, the second by Lt Cdr Pilkington.

After completing his F-35 training with the US Marine Corps a couple of years ago, the lieutenant commander remained Stateside, joining the marines' Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX 23) based at 'Pax' River air base in Maryland.

There the Brit was assigned to the F-35

Integrated Test Force – the world's most experienced unit when it comes to operating the jet.

As with Queen Elizabeth's first visit to the same waters in the autumn of 2018, the debut of the jets aboard ITS Cavour helps write the Italians' 'operator's manual' for using the state-of-the-art Lightnings: deck handling, refuelling, launch and recovery by day and night, safe movement of the aircraft around the deck.

MERSEY'S WATCHING

HMS Mersey has tracked the movements of a surfaced Russian submarine as it sailed through waters close to the UK.

The River-class offshore patrol vessel was on watch as the Kilo-class diesel powered attack submarine RFS Rostov Na Donu sailed through wintry seas in the North Sea and English Channel on its journey from the Baltic to the Mediterranean.

Mersey reported on the movements of the Russian Black Sea Fleet submarine, so that NATO Allies could track her progress as she continued her onward journey.

Commanding Officer of HMS Mersey, Lieutenant Commander Will Edwards-Bannon, said: "All of us in Mersey are very proud of the part we play, here in our home waters, in fulfilling the Royal Navy's role of protecting our nation's interests.

"No patrol is ever the same as the last and we have conducted a particularly varied range of missions recently, culminating with the tracking of this Russian submarine as it passes the UK."

Mersey was also on duty when the Kilo-class submarine made the reverse journey in October last year, as she returned from operations in the Mediterranean back to the



RUSSIAN KILO-CLASS SUBMARINE PASSES THROUGH WATERS CLOSE TO THE UK TRACKED BY HMS MERSEY

Baltic.

This latest operation comes amid a busy time for the Royal Navy's patrol ships, with Mersey and her sister ships HMS Tyne and HMS Severn all on maritime security patrols in the seas around the UK.

Royal Navy patrol ships are involved in a range of missions, including fishery protection, which has been their responsibility for many years, but also coordinating with the Joint Maritime Security Centre to share information relating

to suspicious or dangerous activity at sea alongside the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and National Crime Agency.

"You never know what's around the corner when serving in these ships, but you can always rely on Mersey and her fantastic ship's company, made-up of both regulars and reservists, to get the job done," added Lt Cdr Edwards-Bannon.

Sub Lieutenant Andrew Davidson, one of Mersey's Officers of the Watch, said: "I only

joined Mersey last month and she is my first ship as a qualified Bridge watch-keeper.

"I've been impressed by the range of missions that we have already been involved with over such a short period of time.

"It feels good to have the opportunity to be out here doing something worthwhile for the UK, especially when you know how much good is being done at home by our NHS, key-workers and all those involved with the Covid-19 vaccine roll-out."



HMS Mersey during an operation tracking a surfaced Russian submarine

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Wave goodbye to lengthy surveys

THIS is Plymouth Harbour, Sound, and environs as you have never seen them before.

This is not a satellite image. It was produced by a standard Royal Navy navigational radar and specialist software, tested for the first time by HMS Magpie.

In fact this composite image of the Plymouth/Rame Head coastline is a 'by-product'; the real trick of what scientists call radar bathymetry is to map the seabed close to shore in hours – not days or weeks – by measuring wave height (a radar image of waves around the breakwater is pictured inset).

Using that data and information about currents, the software can produce a detailed profile of the seabed in a matter of hours – without the ship or boat having to physically sail over the area being surveyed.

All the system needs is wind and a swell to generate waves – plus computing power.

It is not as detailed as the scans Magpie or other Royal Navy survey vessels can produce with their hi-tech sonar suites – and it only works close to shore.

But the method – developed by scientists from the National Oceanography Centre in Liverpool and MOD experts from Defence Science and Technology Laboratory – could be vital in times of peace or war when time is critical.

"By analysing the sea clutter images of waves visible on standard marine radars a bathymetric profile (that's the depth) and surface current assessment is created," explained the lead project scientist at the National Oceanography Centre, Paul Bell.

"This technique could allow the remote charting of both shallow water and currents from a standoff

distance of several nautical miles and could be employed by all Royal Navy Ships using the navigation radars that are already fitted with."

Given her size, Magpie doesn't carry the standard navigational radar used by the rest of the Fleet, so one was temporarily installed on a roof rack. It would take the ship perhaps a fortnight to map the ocean floor on the approaches to Plymouth naval base and the Sound with her sonar. It took the software just hours to do the same.

Time could be the difference between life and death in the aftermath of a natural disaster with a possible shifting seabed preventing the usual access to harbours or beaches or an amphibious landing on or evacuation from poorly/uncharted shores.

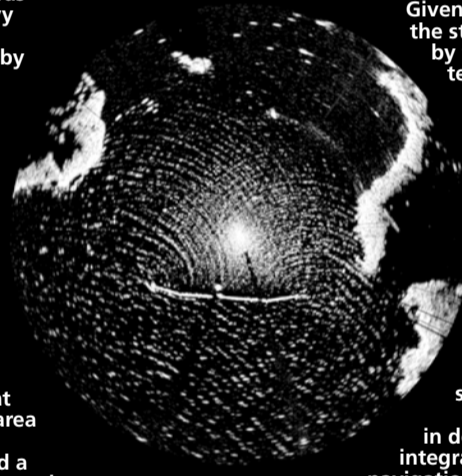
At present the software is still in development, but the goal is to integrate it with the Royal Navy's existing navigational radar and systems – no new equipment would be required in most cases, just upgraded software – to provide accurate, real-time seabed maps.

"The Royal Navy is continually looking to employ new up-to-date technologies," said Lieutenant Commander Mark White, HMS Magpie's Commanding Officer.

"The beauty of this concept is that it uses the existing radars already fitted to our ships.

"It was excellent to work alongside the National Oceanography Centre to trial and develop these new and exciting techniques that could have a wide range of use in the Royal Navy."

More regular duties are in store for Magpie shortly. Having just emerged from her annual winter overhaul, the ship is due to head up the East Coast to conduct traditional survey work of ports and harbours.



• One of the recovered cannon is lowered into a tank for preservation
Picture: US Army Corps of Pioneers

'Rose' found in mud

AMERICAN soldiers may have accidentally found the remains of a British warship which was the scourge of their countrymen during the War of Independence.

Cannon, an anchor and other objects – thought to belong to HMS Rose – were dredged from the bed of the Savannah River, nearly 250 years after the ship was scuttled at the height of the conflict.

The artefacts have yet to be positively identified, but given their location and the fact they pre-date the American Civil War by a century, Royal Navy historians believe they are likely to date to the siege of Savannah in 1779.

HMS Rose was sunk in the river to deny the French naval access to the Georgian capital – held by British forces – in support of American troops besieging it.

The ship – a sixth rate armed with 20 cannon – had been active in the Americas throughout the 1770s. Her success in intercepting smugglers to Rhode Island prompted the Americans to commission their first armed ship in response, the sloop Providence, and form the Continental Navy – forerunner of today's US Navy.

The British vessel also frequently conducted forays up the Hudson River, which helped to drive George Washington out of New York when war broke out and continued to patrol the Eastern Seaboard until the decision to use her as a blockship off Savannah.

The British abandoned the city in 1782 and the wreck was largely cleared away to allow free navigation of the river to resume.

And there it remained until the US Army Corps of Engineers was conducting dredging operations in the river when it found the objects, put a halt to further dredging and recovered the historic items.

Archaeologists and naval historians on both sides of the Atlantic are trying to identify the wreck definitively.

"It is exciting when artefacts from naval history are found," said Commander Jim Morley, the UK's assistant naval attaché in Washington.

"The discovery of an anchor, cannons, and ship timbers gives us a great opportunity to work with our US colleagues and allies to help identify them.

"The possibility that they may, in fact, be from HMS Rose, a Royal Navy vessel that was part of our fleet operations during the American Revolutionary war is fascinating."

Contemporary records show that Rose was one of two ships sunk on the bar at the mouth of the Savannah River in September 1779 and prevented the French fleet from getting close to the namesake city, thus providing support American soldiers attacking it.

All the crew survived the sinking and subsequently joined the defence of Savannah.

They played a key role in lifting the siege, though Rose's Captain Philip Browne was killed.

A near-replica of the ship was built in 1970 in Canada and subsequently was turned into HMS Surprise 'captained' by Oscar winner Russell Crowe in *Master and Commander*. She's now a museum ship in San Diego.

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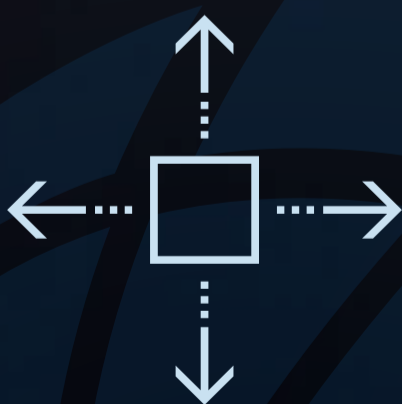


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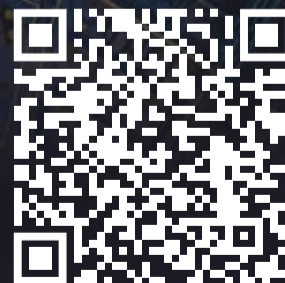
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Last but not least

A FIRST venture into the Solent marked the debut of HMS Spey under the White Ensign, as she began the journey to joining her sisters as fully-fledged members of the Overseas Patrol Squadron.

Her Ready for Sea Date inspection was passed, allowing Commanding Officer Ben Evans to take the 90-metre patrol vessel out for the start of the next phase of tests, trials and training.

He said: "The ship's company and I have been enjoying a succession of firsts with HMS Spey, and there will be more to come as we build towards the excitement of our first operational deployment."



deployment will be announced at the appropriate time, but Fleet Operational Sea Training will need to be successfully negotiated later this year after the ship's company have grown accustomed to their new home.

The fifth and final of the second-generation of River-class ships built for the Royal Navy, Spey arrived in Portsmouth in October under the Blue Ensign as a ship in public service but was yet to enter the Royal Navy. That changed in early January when the White Ensign replaced Blue.

After receiving a ship's company of around 60 men and women, who will rotate off and on-watch to maintain a crew of about 45 on board at any time, the road to operational status can begin.

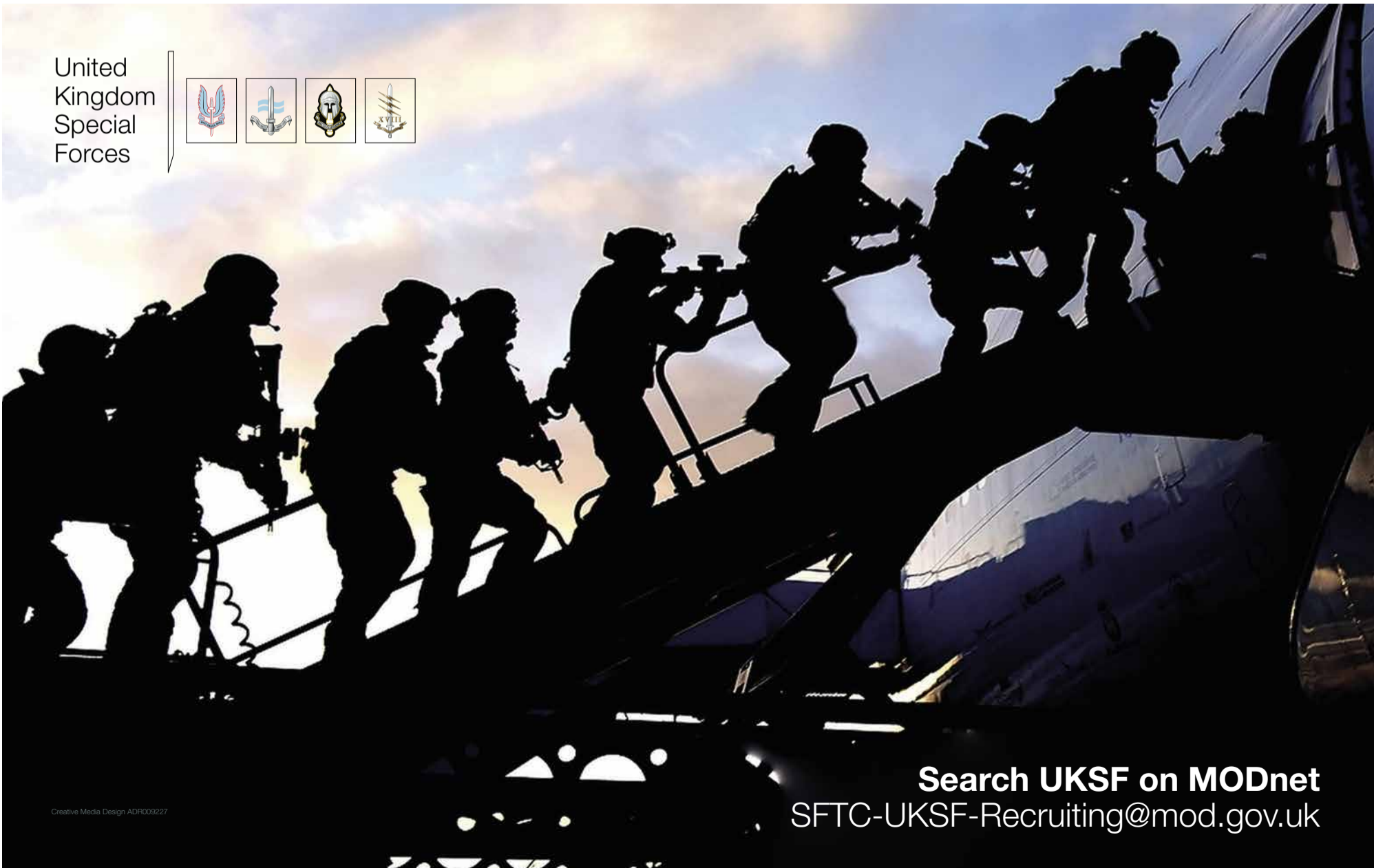
Designed for work in UK waters or overseas, she has a mess deck for 50 embarked troops and a helipad capable of receiving the Fleet Air Arm's Wildcat or Merlin.

When she becomes operationally active she will be the eighth River class vessel in Royal Navy service with HMS Forth, Medway currently on operations in the South and North Atlantic and Mediterranean respectively. The other patrol vessels are active in UK waters.

Picture: LPhot Unaisi Luke



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Blyth's Baltic blast



THE Baltic has become a major focal point of Royal Navy effort in the opening months of 2021, behind only the Gulf and home waters with the concentration/deployment of British warships.

While Lancaster, Westminster and Tiderace were JEFFing in the eastern Baltic, HMS Blyth has been NATOing off the western shores in Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1 – with the same ultimate goal of safety and security... though by different means.

The UK-led JEF is the new kid on the Baltic block, established as recently as 2018. The NATO mine group traces its history back nearly 50 years as, first, Standing Naval Force Channel, then Mine Countermeasures Force North Western Europe in 2001, before assuming its present form in 2005.

For Blyth and her partners Public Enemy No.1 is the mine in all its forms.

And there are still plenty of them out there. The Baltic is among the most heavily-mined waterways thanks to two world wars, compounded by bombers dumping their payloads, training or mis-fired torpedoes, depth charges which failed to detonate and so on.

Passage of time with layers of silt accumulating on the old explosives, water temperatures of 3°C (it's a balmy 6°C in Blyth's home base of Faslane), strong currents and poor visibility make neutralising old (or present-day, for that matter) ordnance something of a challenge.

But plunge into the waters of the Kattegat (separating Jutland from Scandinavia) Blyth's dive team did as the group conducted a concerted period of historic ordnance disposal off the Danish coast.

The Danes are not formally part of the NATO group in its current iteration (it's led by the Dutch, commanding from a German support ship, and directing the actions of minehunters Godetia from Belgium and Ugandi from Estonia, plus Blyth), giving them free rein in their main exercise area.

The MULTEX range off the Sjaelland Odde peninsula – about 50 miles northwest of the Danish capital – is run by the Danish Navy, who operate aerial drones and automated boats as realistic moving targets, as well as more traditional floating targets for ships to aim at.

To stop an attacker in his tracks, Blyth alone can call upon a 30mm main gun, .50 calibre heavy machine-guns, Minigun Gatling guns, standard machine-guns and finally small arms in the hands of the ship's Standing Sea Response Force.

Although Blyth is highly manoeuvrable, like all minehunters she's not fast; the NATO group

relies on safety in numbers, good communications, collective firepower and, not least, good marksmanship.

And while the gunners were throwing up walls of lead above decks, below the responses of firefighting and damage-control teams and medics were also being tested.

As a result, the time spent on the Danish range was hailed as "great training for all units".

"The opportunity to train force protection against a realistic and moving threat within a formation is rare. Therefore the MULTEX range was excellent training for the group," said the NATO force commander, Commander Jan Wijchers.

With Blyth the newest arrival to his force, he spent a day aboard the ship getting to know the ship, the kit, the 40-plus sailors aboard and some of their foibles.

Like uckers. Blyth's CO ran through the wardroom/mess deck favourite, baffling his guest with talk of blobs, mixi-blobs, eight piecers and eight pieces in harbour.

The Dutchman was at least familiar with the outline and abilities of Blyth, for Estonia's representative in the force, ENS Ugandi, is the British vessel's sister.

Ugandi is one of three Sandown-class ships snapped up by the small Baltic state in the mid-00s when the Royal Navy decided they were no longer required.

Mine warfare experts Able Seamen Ewan Wigham and Jason Kelbie spent an afternoon aboard the Estonian ship to see how the Baltic navy operates a Sandown-class vessel while she conducted manoeuvres with Blyth.

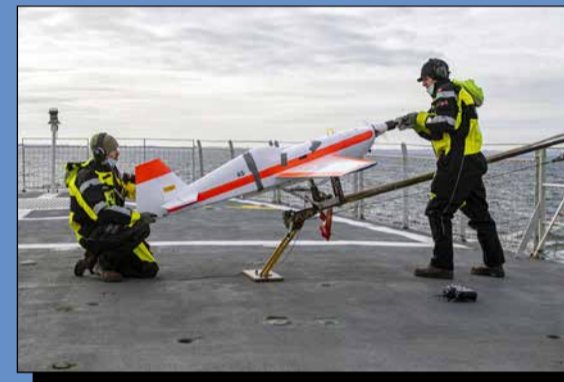
"It is great to be in a NATO Group which includes another Sandown-class ship and we are thoroughly enjoying working closely with our Estonian allies," said Blyth's navigator Lieutenant Conor Smith.

"ENS Ugandi is clearly in capable hands, and two Sandowns working together pack a serious mine-hunting punch."

With the relatively limited endurance of minehunters (fuel/food), and the force's mission of flying the flag for NATO (when not hunting mines), it means spells at sea are fairly short and port visits frequent.

Kristiansand in southern Norway was cold, snowy, but a welcome haven after a very lumpy crossing of the North Sea, while Kiel in Germany has become a 'second home' for the group... although to date Covid restrictions have prevented the sailors exploring their overseas destinations.

They have, however, been permitted a leg stretch ashore and a spot of sport while their ships topped up on food and fuel.





Apprentices for autonomy

THE Royal Navy is joining a partnership to provide apprenticeships in autonomous and crewless vessel operations.

Maritime training specialist SeaBot XR is collaborating with the navy and other industry partners to identify the skills needed for the maritime autonomous surface ship (MASS) sector.

The scheme will create a working group to develop the use of apprentices for remote and autonomous operations both above and below the surface.

Initially, the group will identify the basic skills and knowledge an individual will need to safely navigate, control and manage small to medium-sized vessels, and provide them with suitable certification.

It will also analyse emerging requirements and define various occupational and training standards.

As the industry grows, the group will then use this training to build upon basic skills, with more advanced knowledge routes and specialisms that will be required for the operation of maritime autonomous surface ships.

Autonomy and crewless technology has been a focus of the Royal Navy's for the past two years with several exercises putting different boats (pictured) and drones through their paces. This includes on operations with the Royal Marines and HMS Albion.

Commodore Andy Cree Royal Navy

said: "The Royal Navy through its lead of the Solent Maritime Enterprise Zone, has a sharp focus on identifying and addressing the future skills gaps associated with new and emergent maritime technologies.

"We are therefore delighted to be part of this Apprenticeship Trailblazer Group developing employer-led apprenticeship standards in autonomous and remote vessel operations which will pave the way for a skilled maritime workforce of the future."

The Apprenticeship Trailblazer Group is chaired by SeaBot XR. As well as the Royal Navy, the list of employers includes geo-data specialist Fugro, the United Kingdom National Oceanography Centre and marine robotics company Ocean Infinity. The insurer Shipowners P&I Club and the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) will also participate in the group.

It is being supported through the development process by the regulator for apprenticeship quality, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

Gordon Meadow, chief executive of SeaBot XR, said: "A new apprenticeship in autonomous and remote vessel operations will provide new talent and even greater, multidisciplinary, highly-trained workforce, with the know-how to safely monitor, control and deal with situations remotely."

Fellowship returns

FORTY-SIX personnel from the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force have become the second cohort to take part in the Percy Hobart Fellowship.

Launched last year, the course encourages serving men and women to think about new technologies and how they could enhance the military.

For this year, people from the navy are being joined by the RAF. It will give them a unique learning environment to understand the powers and practicalities of new technology to help champion innovation within the Defence sector.

The fellowship is a one-of-a-kind 12-week course, focused on digital transformation, business principles and agile thinking.

Through secondments into civilian-led start-ups, those taking part will have the opportunity to learn first-hand what it's like

to conceive new ideas, develop products and translate these principles into tangible benefits that drive innovation in the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

Following the success of the inaugural cohort last year, the Ministry of Defence has awarded PUBLIC the contract to deliver the second fellowship.

First Sea Lord, Admiral Tony Radakin said: "This fellowship empowers our people to think differently about technology and innovation."

"Last year's fellowship was a great success, and I'm delighted more of our talented people have the opportunity to bring the skills they will learn from industry back to defence."

Fellows will return to the navy and air Force later this year with an experienced understanding of the fundamentals in business and technology.

Wren calls time after 43 years in service

BARBARA McGregor only joined the Royal Navy for four years to enjoy a bit of sport and adventure.

She has just left the Service as possibly the longest-serving female member of Britain's Armed Forces (World record experts Guinness are checking the statistics): 43-and-a-half years, retiring as a Warrant Officer 1st Class.

Barbara joined the Women's Royal Naval Service (better known as the Wrens) on July 26 1977 – when Donna Summer's *I Feel Love* was filling dance floors, Roger Moore's *James Bond* was putting backsides on cinema seats in *The Spy Who Loved Me* and the UK was celebrating the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

She transformed from civilian to Wren at the (now-closed) HMS Dauntless, near Reading before completing her specialist training as a communicator at HMS Mercury (also now closed) near Petersfield where she and her fellow trainees were inspected by Lord Mountbatten on the day before Barbara's 18th birthday.

"He wasn't what I expected – much less formal and quite a slight figure. He got everyone to gather around him where he told us stories of his naval experiences," Barbara recalled.

"A couple of years later I was on duty at HMS Dryad when the signal came through that he'd been killed. It broke my heart."

As a communicator it was Barbara's job to pass that news on – and other important signals, instructions and messages – to ships, submarines and units scattered around the globe: a painstaking and laborious job largely replaced today by email which can be dispatched and read in a matter of seconds.

It was while serving in the communications centre in Gibraltar that Barbara decided on a change of career. "We worked inside the Rock on 12-hour watches and rarely saw daylight. I thought: this isn't what I want to do and decided to become a regulator [the Royal Navy's police]."

Despite 43-and-a-half years in the Navy, almost none of it has been spent at sea; Barbara joined 16 years before women went to sea and chose

to remain as a non-seagoer – although that did include three overseas postings, including time in Diego Garcia, the tiny British territory in the Indian Ocean, as well as Gibraltar.

"I did spend a day at sea while I was serving in Gibraltar – and I didn't like it

much. But it's a different world now. If I was 18 years old again I would probably leap at the chance to go to sea."

Instead, much of Barbara's later career has involved passing on her knowledge and experience to new generations of sailors while serving at HMS Raleigh in Torpoint, which turns civilians into Royal Navy personnel.

And for the past 21 years she has been a member of the Royal Naval Careers Service – from running the office in Cardiff, through to being in charge of the Midlands, Wales and South West regions to finally acting as the First Warrant Officer of the Careers Service, which took her to all 49 careers offices from Inverness to Redruth, advising the Navy's senior officers on recruitment.

It's a role which she found hugely rewarding. "The job was to raise the profile of recruiting and we've done that. We've also changed the way we recruit. Whichever careers office someone attends they will be treated the same way – the process is identical.

"I feel so fortunate to have achieved what I have achieved – especially for someone who only joined up for four years. I've been very lucky with my postings and had some fantastic experiences."

Married to Stuart – also a naval regulator, though long retired – among her proudest moments for the 61-year-old from Bridgend in South Wales was helping to organise the NATO summit hosted in Cardiff attended by the world's political and military leaders.

A trustee of the Association of Wrens, Barbara led its contingent at the annual Remembrance parade in Whitehall and was due to represent them at the Cenotaph again last November – marking the association's 100th anniversary – only for the pandemic to scupper plans.

Her work with the Association continues in retirement, how-ever. With fellow female sailors past and present around the world in lockdown she's organised the 'Wrens Out Walking' project to keep more than 260 women fit and healthy during lockdown.

Collectively, they are running, cycling, walking or rowing the distance of the longest continuous walk on the planet: from Magadan in far eastern Russia to Cape Town in South Africa: 14,211 miles.

"It would take someone on their own walking eight hours a day for 365 days to cover. We have just 'passed' Khartoum already in two months. We're going to have to find a new challenge for the rest of the year." Barbara added.



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TOUGH TEST

Future navigators tested to the limit on HMS Severn in the waterways around Scotland, Northern Island and the Orkney Islands.

SAILORS who will guide the Royal Navy's biggest ships through the most challenging waters have been tested aboard HMS Severn.

The Portsmouth-based warship took navigators hoping to serve aboard carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales – or pass on their valuable skills and experience to a new generation of sailors – through challenging training in the narrow waterways around Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Orkney Islands.

Students on the Specialist Navigator Course spend eight weeks in the classroom and two weeks at sea with HMS Severn.

Routinely deprived of technology to assist them – like GPS, gyro and radar – the students were tasked with guiding patrol ship Severn and a mock task group through dangerous waters.

The course trains navigators to the highest degree the Royal Navy can. It pushes students' mental capacity and situational awareness to the extreme, making sure they can easily handle the most difficult waters around the world.

"Training the very highest standards of navigation for the Royal Navy's premier navigation course isn't easy, but it gives the service a battle-winning edge," said Commander Phil Harper, Commanding Officer of HMS Severn, who has previously completed the course and passed on some sound advice to the student during their training.

"This has been a stunning professional highlight for the ship and for me personally."

Severn steamed at high speed throughout the highlands and islands of Scotland, the Orkneys and off the coast of Northern Ireland.

At times the weather encountered was appalling, with the wind over the deck reaching as high as 78 knots and turbulent seas to match.

This added to the challenge for the student navigators who had to plan and execute some highly complex navigation for a ghost task group consisting of Severn and up to three imaginary consorts.

The weather calmed for the second week and the highland scenery could be fully appreciated, although not for the students, who were being tested relentlessly.

During the course, Severn charted a course around the isles of Mull, Bute, Arran and Skye.

In the Orkney Islands, home of the Grand Fleet in the Great War and the Home Fleet in the Second World War, Severn paid her respects to HMS Royal Oak – the battleship torpedoed at anchor in Scapa Flow by a German submarine in 1939, killing 835 people – all while conducting high-speed runs.

In the Kyle of Lochalsh and Kyle Rhea she encountered treacherous tidal streams when surrounded by imposing mountains and in Loch Fyne she exchanged waves with some friendly otters.

As soon as the specialist navigators had completed their time aboard Severn took more students aboard, this time for the general Fleet Navigating Officers' course.



NAVS: HMS Severn's Navigating Officer Lieutenant Roddy Hartridge shows students how to take a horizontal sextant angle



BUTE DAY: Looking back down Inchmarnock Sound off the Isle of Bute in Scotland



GETTING STUCK IN: Student navigators learn techniques on Severn's Flying Bridge

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END OF AN ERA

JUNGLIE LEGEND WEST BIDS FAREWELL TO THE ARCTIC AFTER 35 YEARS



■ ROYAL ARRIVAL: Lt Col Dave West, right, welcomes Prince Harry to Norway during the 50th anniversary celebrations of Clockwork

A ROYAL Marine stalwart who has been at the forefront of Arctic flying for three-and-a-half decades has completed his final winter in the frozen north – just as his son finishes his very first.

Falklands War veteran and Commando Helicopter Force legend Lieutenant Colonel Dave West is retiring after 43 years and does so as his son, Marine Angus West, completes his first Arctic deployment.

Dave is wrapping up his 35th winter mission and a 43-year career that has seen him fly countless sorties over the highest north, help modernise Arctic flying training and herald a new era of Royal Navy rotary aviation in the transition from Sea King to Merlin aircraft.

In a moment he will 'treasure forever' Dave – who has spent up to six months most years in the Arctic since 1984 – was able to watch his son go through a commando's rite of passage on the infamous ice-breaking drill to test responses to cold shock on his final outing in Norway.

This Arctic baptism of ice – that every Norway newbie must go through – marked a passing

of the mantle from one West to another after three-and-a-half decades.

"Completing the ice-breaker drills with my dad there was a really proud moment for me," said Angus, who is a Royal Marine currently with 29 Commando Royal Artillery as a signaller for the Tactical Air Control Party, which coordinates aircraft with ground forces.

"He's been a massive support throughout my career, offering advice wherever it was needed. "For him to be at this milestone was a huge privilege for me, just as it was when he was the one to hand me my green beret at the end of my '30 miler' – something I will never forget.

"Being able to come out here to Norway before my dad's retirement has been quite fitting because my first trip to Norway is my dad's last.

"I am immensely proud of his career and everything he has achieved. To listen to people that have worked with dad hold so much respect for him is genuinely heart-warming.

"Although I am proud to follow in his footsteps it is hard to fully grasp the full extent of his achievements within his career.

"Anyone who knows him will agree he is very modest and, of course, a well-respected member of the Royal Marines."

Dave has been at the helm of Exercise Clockwork – the cold weather flying training organised and run by Commando Helicopter Force (who are known as the Junglies) for squadrons across Joint Helicopter Command – since 2016.

He has overseen significant changes in the facilities at the base at Bardufoss Air Station, 200 miles inside the Arctic Circle in northern Norway, developing amenities, kit and the breadth of world-class training available to aviators from across the services.

That has included bringing the British Army's Apache attack helicopters to Norway and facilitating the first Hellfire missile firing in the Arctic.

Dave's time in charge crossed over with the 50th anniversary of Clockwork, which was marked with a royal visit from Prince Harry and the installation of the gate guardian, a Sea King MK4 – one of Dave's favourite aircraft – at Bardufoss.

The Norwegian winter is as stunning as it is brutally cold and it is a place Dave has a great affinity for after all these years, having flown Lynx and Gazelles and finally the iconic Sea King MK4 with 845 Naval Air Squadron over the icy landscape.

But while he has a great personal connection to the mountains and fjords, it was the opportunity to bring Clockwork to the world's stage during the 50th anniversary celebrations in 2018 that goes down as his top highlight.

"I have been very fortunate to be able to fly over large parts of Norway," said Dave.

"It is a truly beautiful country. Flying and operating in this harsh Arctic environment is I believe the most challenging environment for aircrew, engineers and ground troops to operate anywhere in the world.

"I think that the highlight of my time as Officer Commanding Clockwork has to be the 50th Anniversary celebration of Clockwork in 2018.

"We had the honour to have His Royal Highness Prince Harry attend as the VVIP in his role as the Captain General and also through a lot of work by both Clockwork and other agencies, we managed to transport a Sea King airframe from the UK, so we could present the aircraft to the air station as a gate guard in recognition of the support the base has given to Clockwork over 50 years.

"The event has raised the profile of Clockwork, Commando Helicopter Force, Joint Helicopter Command and UK involvement in the high north to the world stage with press coverage going around the world."

Dave started out with 42 Commando in 1978 and was with the unit during the Falklands War in 1982.

Prior to the Falklands, he came to the Arctic for the first time in 1980, completing the Cold Weather Warfare Course that new generations of marines still go through today.

Four years on, in 1984, he qualified as an aircrewman, flying Wessex MK5s and Sea King MK4s and was back in the frozen north regularly from then on.

He was subsequently a pilot and then helicopter instructor, passing on valuable knowledge and experience to the next generation of Junglies.

"I have deployed most years since 84, firstly as an aircrewman and then as a pilot with 3 Commando Brigade Air Squadron, flying Lynx and Gazelles and finally flying the Sea



CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK: Lt Col Dave West and his son, Marine Angus West, right, at Bardufoss Air Station in northern Norway



FATHER AND SON SALUTE: Dave is saluted by his son, Angus, after the latter completed the infamous ice breaking

THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY TIME AS OFFICER COMMANDING CLOCKWORK HAS TO BE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF CLOCKWORK IN 2018.

“ ”



YOUNGER YEARS: Lt Col Dave West during an early deployment to the Arctic

King MK4 with 845 NAS and Naval Flying Standards Flight.

"Clockwork has changed considerably since my first deployment. It was originally designed to accommodate one Junglie Sea King Squadron.

"After the redevelopment of the facility in 2016, we now aim to put through four aviation detachments every winter to support 3 Commando Brigade in the cold weather environment.

"This is a real challenge for the Clockwork team to deliver with limited infrastructure and within tight financial constraints.

"It does not always run 'like Clockwork' and needs a lot of work to deliver the training safely in this very hazardous environment."

Dave came through the ranks and became a Warrant Officer 1, before being commissioned in 2002.

He became an instructor after completing the Qualified Helicopter Instructor Course in 1995 and held roles across Commando Helicopter Force, including training officer for 847 NAS, Flight Commander for 845 NAS and was the conversion officer for the now disbanded Sea King squadron 848 NAS.

He was also second in command of the Merlin Transition Team, as the Junglies moved on from the Sea King to the Merlins they fly now.

As recognition for his work, he was made an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in October last year.

"There are too many highs and lows over 43 years of service to mention," said Dave.

"I have been very lucky during my career to be in the right place and at the right time to exploit the opportunities the Corps has to offer. I just hope my son has the same opportunities that I have had."

As Dave looks to retirement, Angus is looking to his next step. While he has no ambitions to be a pilot like his dad currently, he is looking to eventually go into the Combat Intelligence branch.

For Dave he is just enormously proud he was able to see his son training in the place he's called his second home for decades, before retirement.

"This was an emotional moment to see my son conduct his first winter in Norway as I finish my last deployment," he said.

"Not many fathers have had this opportunity which I will treasure for ever."

Dave is well placed to pass on some pearls of wisdom to anyone new to the Arctic, his son no exception.

"I inevitably had various questions about my first winter deployment to Norway," said Angus.

"Dad answered and advised as much as he could but like anyone who has done it before would probably tell you, you have to just get stuck in and do it.

"The advice he did give me which can be used by any Royal Marine in any place or situation is that you can't really do much wrong by being in the right place, at the right time, with the right equipment.

"Dad being dad of course had to throw in a funny by saying 'don't eat yellow snow...'"

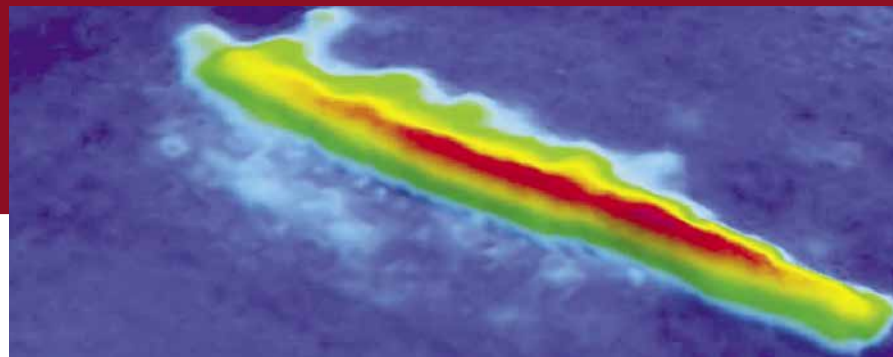
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CASSANDRA REMEMBERED



SAILORS on HMS Echo paid their respects to those lost when cruiser HMS Cassandra sank in the turbulent aftermath of the Great War.

The Devonport-based survey ship spent the beginning of the year on operations in the Baltic and took some time to investigate several wrecks in the region.

One of those was C-Class cruiser HMS Cassandra (pictured top left) which was lost on December 5 1918. Using Echo's multibeam echo sounder, her sailors were able to get imagery of Cassandra lying on her starboard side with approximately 20 metres of her bow section missing.

Conditions meant the sensor's imagery (top right) were not as clear as usual but they show the violent demise of the cruiser which sank when she struck a mine. Eleven of her crew died.

Surveyor Petty Officer Kirsty Warford said: "Of all the wrecks in the Baltic, I was most interested in HMS Cassandra. It was very sombre to see the images of the wreck appear as Echo sailed over the site where she sunk, with the ship's company pausing to think of those who perished."

HMS Cassandra was launched in 1916 and commissioned into the Royal Navy in June 1917, seeing active service in the last two years of World

War 1.

Following the end of the war, the cruiser was part of a British force dispatched to the Baltic as part of the Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War.

A key aim of the intervention was to support the independence of the newly founded Baltic states of Latvia and Estonia against the Bolsheviks.

On December 5 1918, the British force was on passage to Tallinn, when Cassandra struck a mine near the Estonian island of Saaremaa. The ship sunk quickly, with 10 of her 400 crew killed during the initial explosion and one falling overboard in the rescue attempt.

The wreck of HMS Cassandra is close to the wrecks of two other Royal Navy ships, minesweepers HMS Myrtle and HMS Gention which also struck mines, both sinking within moments of each other on July 15 1919.

They were attempting to clear a passage to supply the Estonian Government with vital supplies to

continue the fight for independence.

The ships were part of a large squadron deployed in the period from November 1918 to February 1920. In addition to Cassandra, Gention and Myrtle, losses included two V-class destroyers and several coastal gun and torpedo boats, while the submarine L55 was lost with all hands.

Total British losses in the campaign were 107 Royal Navy personnel and five from the Royal Air Force. Their deaths are commemorated on a memorial plaque at Portsmouth Cathedral.

The discovery of the wreck sites was announced in August 2010 by the Estonian Navy and Estonian Maritime Museum.





FOR the first time in decades Royal Navy sailors are learning the art of seafaring on a traditional tall ship.

Over the past couple of months junior Royal Navy sailors and trainees have been clambering the rigging, hauling in the lines and giving a hearty "Two-Six, heave..." aboard the Tenacious in fair weather and foul around the Solent.

It's given them a unique insight into the age of sail, performing classic tasks and duties that Nelson would recognise, as well as the chance to pick up key leadership skills.

For the past couple of months, the square-rigger has been running in and out of Portsmouth – with Royal Navy sailors: from heaving and hauling lines to set the sails, to watchkeeping and steering the ship safely.

The Jubilee Sailing Trust's TS Tenacious gives people of all abilities the chance to sail in a tall ship and is normally used by businesses and civilian groups for leadership training and teambuilding, but hadn't taken anyone to sea since the first Covid lockdown 12 months ago.

Meanwhile, the RN's command and leadership school in the Brecon Beacons has been closed by pandemic restrictions, while opportunities to send trainee officers and ratings to sea have also been limited by closed gangways and isolation policies across the Fleet.

The solution: Tenacious, running out of Portsmouth Naval Base, crewed by full-time Jubilee Sailing Trust employees, guiding Royal Navy sailors through their duties.

"In a difficult period for Royal Navy training due to the pandemic, the use of the Jubilee Sailing Trust has allowed us to continue to provide top quality core leadership and team training in a maritime

context," said Commander Adrian Coulthard from the Navy's training organisation.

"It has also meant we have been able to maintain our training pipeline throughflow, while providing our trainees with early and very valuable experience – from maintaining watches to living and working in the challenging maritime domain."

For some, time on Tenacious has been their first experience of living and working with fellow sailors on a ship at sea. The sailors get involved in everything which happens aboard, with hands-on work continuing whatever the weather.

Tenacious has over 1,200 square metres of sail... which counted for little when Sub Lieutenant Emily Herbert joined the ship for an unseasonably calm week.

One benefit, however, was that it made exploring Tenacious somewhat easier as the trainees donned harnesses and tackled the rigging... which meant "up the ratlines and then out on to the yard arms, most were glad of the lack of wind when hanging over to untie the gaskets."

Back on deck physical strength was tested with hauling the lines, getting an appreciation for the weight of each sail and how much strength would be required if the sails were full.

Though modern safety and navigation technologies are taught and used, ropework is still the driving technology to control most of the sailing. This is beautifully simple – but it does require physical work from teams of sailors.

Ropes or lines are operated in careful coordination between different groups to position the large square 'yards' which attach sails to the mast. Similarly, any sail setting requires strenuous hauling from one team, while another team slowly releases an easing line. Teamwork is essential for success.

Sailors must challenge themselves too, as putting sails away requires "climbing aloft", using harnesses to go up the mast and 'hand the sails' as they manually tie them in. This must be done even in the wind and rain, so a chance to warm up again with a hot drink down in the communal mess deck is always welcome afterwards.

Choppy February conditions threw wind, waves and icy showers at the trainees, meaning these lessons had to be learnt quickly.

Luckily, Tenacious' permanent crew provided seasickness tablets and some bright yellow weatherproof clothing to help the trainees manage the conditions.

Without this some would be left questioning whether a life at sea had been the right career choice.

In addition to the teamwork required just to sail the ship, as the week unfolds there are a series of planning and practical leadership tasks. For ratings, this first chance to lead is part of their leadership course; taking a principal role in tasks is an important stepping stone to future promotion. They faced various tasks from passing signals and searching for IEDs on board to recovering casualties - particularly challenging in the ship's cramped confines.

In the evening, any off-watch sailors socialise together in a traditional mess-deck, playing at cards, board games, and ending the week with a talent-show featuring some raucous home-spun sea shanties and sketches.

"It was a lot of fun working hard in the rain in a team of people I had only met the day before," said trainee aircraft controller, Able Seaman Joe Uzeta. "It was easy to get on with everyone and fall comfortably into a strong team."

"I feel it helped to develop my leadership skills massively and would definitely recommend anyone who gets the opportunity." Sub Lieutenant Rory McMillan

from new aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales is training to be a warfare officer. He was given an extra opportunity to take charge of the whole ship when it anchored off Bembridge on the Isle of Wight. He gave instructions for steering a correct course and liaised with the team monitoring the anchor chain to bring the ship safely to rest overnight.

He said the week on the Tenacious "brought home how challenging life would have been in the age of sail. It's a great environment to develop leadership, as strong teamwork is needed for almost all activity on board."

His shipmate Sub Lieutenant Tom Hoskins is also training to be a warfare officer and was active keeping a look out in the week as an officer of the watch. He also volunteered for extra turns climbing the mast to pack away sails. He said: "Sailing on the Tenacious was a great opportunity alongside the wealth of training it offered. Hats off to the crew for delivering the exercise in a safe and enjoyable environment."

Patrick Fleming, Chief Executive of the Jubilee Sailing Trust, said his organisation was delighted to be working with the Royal Navy to provide a unique blend of training opportunities.

He continued: "This is a pioneering collaboration with the Royal Navy, providing a transformative tall ship training experience to naval trainees with officers and recruits aboard Tenacious, becoming a key part of the ship's crew."

"We've seen first-hand how training aboard the Tenacious has an enormous impact our trainees, building confidence and resilience – as well as an important, specialist skill set for a future in the Royal Navy."

Words: Lieutenant Joseph Howell and Sub Lieutenant Emily Herbert; Pictures Lt Howell and the Jubilee Sailing Trust



'Up the ratlines then out on to the yard arms...'





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SAAB

FORGED BY ICE

The journey of the
Arctic commando.

"EVERY moment you're in the Arctic, it is trying to hurt or kill you."

Those are the stark words of 45 Commando's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Innes Catton as his Royal Marines reach the end of three months of demanding training in northern Norway.

Training in the Arctic is about preparing commandos for battle in the snow and ice, but it also readies each green beret for operations all over the world, no matter how extreme the environment.

The arduous exercises are to such a degree that, actually, other climates can be mastered more easily. The skills taught in Norway, learning to keep going even when the conditions are at their worst, sticks with every commando no matter where they are.

It lays a foundation and, at its core, Norway training every year keeps Royal Marines, and especially 45 Commando, at the forefront of UK defence as experts in fighting in the extreme cold and across mountains.



Continued from page 23

If worst came to worst, 3 Commando Brigade would lead the way for the UK if an adversary were to take ground in the highest north, paving the way for larger forces to enter the region.

Small self-sufficient teams of commandos would be deployed across the brutal surroundings and that's when this Arctic training will come into its own.

Every commando will have all the skills needed to survive, move and ultimately fight, all of which they have learned from the experts in all things Arctic, the Royal Marines Mountain Leader Cadre.

The Mountain Leaders are the UK's specialists in Arctic and mountain warfare. They have a deep understanding of how to conduct amphibious missions, cliff assaults and reconnaissance across the snow and ice.

Their secondary role is to train the rest of 3 Commando Brigade in those skills, passing that knowledge to new generations.

All the skills and techniques are drawn from a century of experience, knowledge and lessons learned, the bedrock of training today and as important as ever.

"We have a long history with Norway in terms of the formation of the commandos," said Lt Col Catton. "Some of the very first operations in World War Two were conducted up and along the Norwegian coastline.

"We've been meaningfully training in Norway for over half a century. It's that collective experience, which we see distilled down into our Mountain Leaders and it's one of the reasons we can take people relatively unfamiliar with the Arctic and very quickly train them up to a good standard."

In last month's *Navy News* we looked at the survival skills commandos had been refreshing in shelter building, dealing with cold weather injuries, dealing with cold shock, and living from the land.

This is about sustaining the commandos, helping them know how to carry on when the going gets tough.



///
*For Royal Marines
Commandos, Norway
is in our blood.*

LIGHT IT UP: Royal Marines from 45 Commando X-Ray Company's Fire Support Group and members of Armoured Support Group fire heavy weapons during a night live firing exercise



45 Commando have now completed the next phases in moving and fighting, shaping them into Arctic commandos ready for anything.

"For Royal Marines Commandos, Norway is in our blood," added Lt Col Catton. "It has always been one of those rites of passage, rightly or wrongly.

"There are some instances where you might not feel like a real Bootneck until you've done Norway."

A large chunk of training is geared towards being able to move across the terrain, avoiding being bogged down by it. Being able to stay on the move in this place can win wars.

That means commandos need to be able to move on skis efficiently while carrying kit weighing up to 75 pounds – no mean feat in undulating terrain.

Basic skiing techniques are refreshed and challenging journeys across the snow are undertaken during this phase of the winter deployment – which shapes each commando into a complete winter warrior – to refine techniques and make sure each commando can move with weight safely.

Training becomes increasingly more challenging – from skiing on slopes you might find on an alpine holiday, to more demanding terrain untouched by skis.

Corporal John Thornton, Mountain Leader 2, said: "The skills that were developed during the week are vital for being able to operate as a credible fighting force in this unforgiving environment.

"Even comparatively benign routes can prove to be a considerable obstacle when the balance is thrown off with a heavy bergen – this is why we spent many hours on the slopes before venturing into more realistic off-piste routes."

Marine Jonathan Griffin, X-Ray Company, added: "There was a mix of abilities in the group but everyone was challenged at some point and I think a lot of us were surprised by how much our skiing ability improved over the course of the week."

While many are learning skills, other specialists are fine tuning theirs. The Norwegian coastline is quite unique. There a lot of hidden places that are perfect for secret access, but by their nature they are hard to find.

Once found, though, these access points can bring a huge tactical advantage,

allowing forces to land quickly and safely and hit enemy positions with huge impact.

Finding these places is the task of 30 Commando's Shore Reconnaissance Teams.

These experts sit within the Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron – the eyes and ears of 3 Commando Brigade and the pointiest end of the commando forces – and carry out beach reces before anyone else arrives.

These experts have gone through tough training and must have years of experience before they can do this unique job.

Their training in Norway this year saw them work on the shores of Norwegian fjords, carrying out reconnaissance missions, studying their surroundings to establish a beachhead for amphibious forces to crash ashore and attack enemy positions.

The training ensures the specialist teams are razor sharp for operations, no matter how extreme the environment.

Their role is to ensure that amphibious forces are able to access coastlines, establishing the best points of access and feeding back vital information on the terrain.

Sergeant Alan Billot, said: "The conditions we face in the Arctic are challenging, so training here gives us confidence that we can operate anywhere in the world.

"Our equipment and capability improves as technology advances. We are constantly testing and adjusting to ensure that we are able to maintain pace with technological change. The latest kit that we have just procured has transformed the level of information that we can provide."

The team also worked on daylight missions as well as under the cover of darkness using night vision equipment.

Their task was to accurately move in to engage 'enemy' positions discretely without showing any light, using paddles on their small boats to come ashore silently.

The inshore raiding craft – which can carry up to six commandos (or four with full bergens) – are powered by an outboard motor but they are also fitted with paddles for silent approaches for covert tasks when engine noise would compromise the mission.

The team also practiced withdrawing from a beach under fierce contact from enemy positions and other emergency procedures.

While the Shore Reconnaissance Team carried out their covert missions, 45 Commando were being less than discrete on the combat phase of their Arctic training.

This puts tactical abilities and techniques to the test, incorporating that into the survival and movement skills.

45 Commando were tasked with ambushing and pursuing a mock enemy across the mountainous terrain, testing each marine's guile and tactical skill.

The week-long 'fight phase' was also a chance for further development of small-team tactics that are a key part of Future Commando Force modernisation, which is seeing Royal Marines embrace new technology and return to being raiders from the sea.

Sergeant Taylor, Mountain Leader Class 1, said: "The aim of the week, and the course, is to produce marines who are comfortable with operating in a mountainous and Arctic environment, and we achieved that.

"The fight phase is deliberately arduous, as it successfully instils the discipline and skills required to overcome both the environment and a determined adversary.

"The final week of the course was a significant step-up from the mobility phase. The weather became a lot more challenging as well, but the marines relished the opportunity to be tested in this environment, and demonstrate that they can still be lethal."

45 Commando used the opportunity to test new tactics, looking at how they can be used to disrupt and destroy the enemy in the Arctic.

Lt Col Catton said: "So the idea in a future conflict of small agile commando team at reach causing absolute mayhem, will force them (an adversary) to deal with the problem one way or another.

"These smaller teams will be able to blend into the background, cause the damage and evaporate again.

"For me, as a commando, that is a genuinely exciting prospect."

Invested in Training

We are looking forward to working with the Royal Navy to help transform its training and learning solutions. Our expertise and extensive experience will help provide them with tailored, digitally enabled, agile training that is fit for the future.

Trainee deeps complete dry training



THERE are 23 new bomber crew this month, having passed the 'dry' phase of their training.

Captain FOST (North) Captain Ian Breckenridge presented certificates to the trainees as they completed the first Submarine Qualifying Course class of 2021.

Ten weeks are spent laying the foundations of becoming a submariner (they've all gone through the civvy-sailor conversion at Raleigh) in the classroom and on simulators in Faslane.

After successfully completing a final exam, oral board and walk-rounds of a nuclear submarine, they pass-out, eventually joining a nuclear submarine – in this case all will be moving on to one of the UK's four Vanguard-class nuclear deterrent - for the 'wet' phase dolphins for the coveted gold one, the mark of a qualified submariner.

The best student award was presented to Engineering Technician (Mechanical Engineer Submarines) McCarthy – awarded not only based on the trainee's academic

achievements but also on their attitude, commitment and, most importantly, their teamwork and support of their peers whilst on course.

Warrant Officer 1, Ian Brown, SMQ Training Officer said: "It is always a proud moment for the students to pass out."

"The course is designed to be intense and to prepare the students for the next phase of their submarine training, prior to achieving their 'dolphins' and becoming qualified submariners."



Anson crew helps at Barrow's foodbank

IT is a busy time for the Anson ship's company as the countdown to launch gathers pace.

But as well as preparing for this major milestone for the fifth Astute boat, kind-hearted crew members have been immersing themselves in the Barrow community by helping out at the town's foodbank.

The idea to support Barrow Foodbank came from Anson Commanding Officer David 'Bing' Crosby, who sees the benefits as two-fold – building team spirit within the crew and contributing to what is a vital service for deprived families.

"On joining Anson I set my teams the leadership task of working in small groups to

support the local community," said CO Crosby.

"The aim being to generate a team ethos within Anson personnel, many of whom have not worked together before, while also looking to support our host town."

As a result, members of the Anson team have been sorting, lifting and packaging donations in groups of six every Friday in recent weeks, under the guidance of PO PTI Dizzy Dawson.

He added: "Judging by the comments on the Barrow Foodbank social media page our support has been very favourably received and we will continue the effort for the next few weeks at least."

Sign up and you may save a life

ROYAL Navy personnel are being urged to sign up to the Anthony Nolan bone marrow register and potentially save lives.

The charity has seen a drop in donations during the pandemic but one Royal Navy medic has told how he donated stem cells to the register.

Surgeon Lieutenant David Ochiltree was working in a Birmingham hospital when he received a call from the Anthony Nolan charity.

"Several years before, I added myself to the register by a quick mouth swab test and in doing so provided a saliva sample which added me to the bone marrow register," he said.

"My registration had matched someone, a stranger, undergoing chemotherapy for cancer. A few weeks later and after a couple small blood tests I found myself on a train to London to donate my stem cells."

Blood cancer is a relatively common cancer and it can

affect anyone at any age and at any time and in some cases, conditions can be treated by chemotherapy.

The chemotherapy destroys the cancerous cells but also destroys the patient's bone marrow in the process. But this bone marrow can be replaced by donated stem cells.

Surgeon Lieutenant Ochiltree added: "I spent a morning watching the world go by from their Marylebone clinic in London as the stem cell bag slowly filled. Transport, accommodation and food are all arranged by the charity and I left only a few hours later."

"The bag then made its way to be given to its recipient the next day. The identity of both recipient and donor remains anonymous to each other for two years after the donation."

"All I knew at the time was the stem cells were going to female undergoing chemotherapy."

"After this two-year period, both you and you can donor

can choose to lift the anonymity. I have been in contact with my recipient and have had the opportunity to hear about her story.

"Unfortunately, we haven't yet been able to meet in person, but hope to do so when the current restrictions are lifted."

Currently, people aged 16 to 30 years old can sign up, but once on the register you can donate up until you're 61. If you are a match, you will need to get permission from your Commanding Officer before donating.

To join the register and potentially save a life visit www.anthonynolan.org/

If you are eligible, a mouth swab test will be sent to you in the post, which you will then need to send back. From then on, you'll be on the register.

The NHS also has further information about the Bone Marrow British Registry, please visit: www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/british-bone-marrow-registry/



Bristol Pete signs off after second stint

A ROYAL Fleet Auxiliary communications rating has retired after his second 15-year stint with the Royal Navy.

CIS Pete Burnett served in the Royal Navy for 15 years as a Leading Radio Operator (General) before leaving and joining the Post Office as a postman in Bristol.

Fifteen years later 'Bristol Pete' returned to sea, this time with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Fifteen years after that, he retired, receiving a send-off from his last ship, RFA Lyme Bay, and her Commanding Officer, Captain Martin Jones.

Pete said: "As I come to the end of my career in 'communications' I can reflect with fondness on forming some great friendships and making life-long memories. I have been proud to serve my country in both the Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary."

During his sea-going career Pete served in: HMS Aurora, Sabre, Scimitar, Tamar, Brilliant, Glamorgan, Bossington, and Bicester.

He also served at HMS Raleigh, Mercury, Commcen Whitehall, Commcen Northwood, Commcen Gibraltar and the reserve unit HMS Flying Fox. Three of his naval years were spent living in Devil's Tower Camp in Gibraltar.

His postal career began in the Cattle Market Road sorting office in Bristol and his rounds and deliveries were all in the BS5 area – covering Easton, Whitehall, St George's, Speedwell, and Barton Hill.

Ship supports veterans' charity



RFA Lyme Bay's personnel have presented a ship's crest to the Veterans Hub.

SGIA Andrew Peasegood received the crest on behalf of the charity from Commanding Officer Captain Martin Jones.

The award was made in recognition of the importance of the community project, set up by Andy Price in 2017.

The hub provides a safe and secure location for veterans and their families in Weymouth, allowing them to support each other.

Capt Jones said: "The Veterans Hub and Community Café is an invaluable lifeline for Service Personnel, both active and veterans alike, along with their families."

"The hub aims to provide support, advice and guidance on a multitude of situations that affect many personnel in, and retired from, military service."

"Throughout its time in existence the Veterans Hub has provided that support to a number of RFA personnel and it was with great pleasure that RFA Lyme Bay was able to recognise that support with the presentation of a ship's plaque."

SGIA Peasegood added: "The charity was over the moon about the response from the ship and are having the captain's letter framed and put up in the café, alongside the plaque."

For more details of the project visit theveteranshub.org.uk

Registered charity number: Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund 1160182

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● From left, The USS Constitution in battle with HMS Guerriere; Mutineers on the Bounty hurl breadfruit at William Bligh and his supporters; The detailed work completed by Paul Derrick

BUILDING A NEW CAREER

World of Lego brings rewards for ex-air engineer

A FORMER Royal Navy aircraft engineer has constructed a new career – as a Lego model maker. Paul Derrick, who served for eight years as an Air Engineering Mechanic, rediscovered his passion for the bricks as a hobby – but that all changed when he posted models of his creations on the internet.

"Within a year I was undertaking commission builds and supplying models for exhibitions throughout Europe," said Paul, 46.

Originally from Winchester in Hampshire, Paul comes from Royal Navy family with his father serving as a Chief Medical Technician and his mother was in Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service. His grandfather served as a Petty Officer Air Engineering Mechanic, and his uncle was a Chief Petty Officer Marine Engineering Artificer aboard HMS Coventry during the Falklands conflict.

Paul joined the Royal Navy in 1992 as an AEM undertaking training at HMS Raleigh, HMS Daedalus, and HMS Seahawk. In 1994 he was drafted to 845 NAS, Commando Helicopter Force, after volunteering for service with the United Nations in Bosnia.

He undertook three tours of duty with both the UN and NATO before leaving the service in 1999 and joining Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service.

"Sometimes it is a challenge



to balance work, family life and undertake building projects as a semi-professional Lego builder," said Paul.

"I am very interested in historical events, particularly from the Royal Navy during Admiral Nelson's era and have depicted many of these in Lego. Naturally I am a regular visitor to the fantastic Royal Naval museums in Hampshire."

Paul created the epic 1812 duel between the USS Constitution and HMS Guerriere and was due to exhibit his work in Boston, Massachusetts last year but this was put on hold because of the pandemic.

He has also worked on the mutiny aboard HMS Bounty, which

happened in 1789, depicting the crew having unlawfully seized the ship and taunting Captain William Bligh by throwing breadfruit plants at him.

His creations include the crew from HMS Bounty building a settlement, Fort George, on the Polynesian island of Tubuai and Royal Marines searching for the mutineers in the Southern Pacific.

Paul added: "I have an interest in the role the Royal Navy played during the Boer and Zulu wars and have created a display involving the landing and use of the guns from HMS Powerful in 1899. Who could have guessed this event would lead to the creation of a legend, the inter-command field gun competition?"

"It wasn't until I had built the Lego models of the ships, that are to scale and historically accurate that I realised just how complicated the real ships were.

"The sailors from this period were incredibly talented, it took a huge amount of skill to keep the ships serviceable, building them from Lego was challenging enough.

"Presently further exhibitions are on hold and I have had to resort to displaying on YouTube. The building continues behind the scenes, for anyone who is a lover of the Senior Service's epic history you won't be disappointed with the wait."

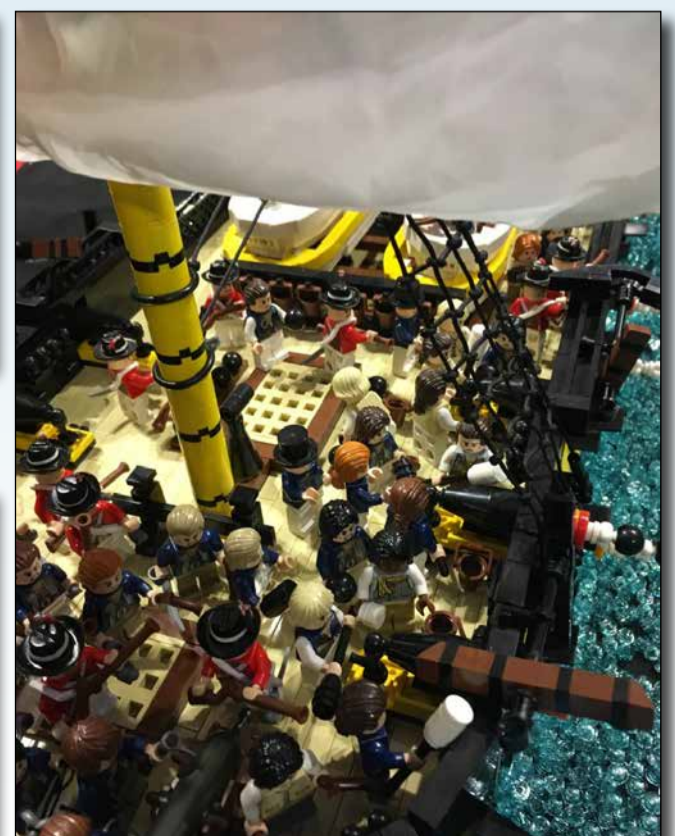
Paul's creations can be viewed on YouTube at [Oileys Bricks](#)



● Paul Derrick pictured in his Lego workshop and inset, Paul pictured with 845 NAS in 1994



● Clockwise from left, Royal Marines search for the mutineers from the Bounty; The Fort George settlement on Tubuai; A close-up view of the USS Constitution; The guns from HMS Powerful



Education continues through pandemic

DESPITE the pandemic, learning centres have continued to work tirelessly to support personal and professional development. Portsmouth's two Learning and Development hubs provide support to all Service personnel studying for GCSEs and A Levels.

With all new entrants joining the RN/RM on an apprenticeship scheme, the expectation is for all personnel to have reached Levels 1 and 2 Functional Skills in maths and English on completion of Phase 2 training.

GCSEs play a pivotal role in the Armed Forces, ensuring personnel are educationally qualified for promotion and better prepared to undertake assignments throughout their career. In addition, GCSEs are recognised as a baseline educational standard by all civilian employers and will help Service leavers transition into future employment when leaving the Service.

Learning and Development hubs offer personnel a host of opportunities to gain the requisite qualifications – and for free.

Those wishing to study Maths and English GCSEs can benefit from free tutorials, either face-to-face or remotely from tutors provided by Chichester College. Courses are provided either as full-time (eight weeks) or part-time (16 weeks) to fit around your current role and preferences.

Twenty-five students passed GCSEs in English and Maths within six month period.

"Lenny was everything a teacher should be," said Chief Petty Officer (Physical Training) Helen Richardson, from HMS Temeraire.

"Understanding, knowledgeable, a good listener and was always happy to drop the speed of which he taught to make sure that everyone in the class understood."

"He has so many ways of working out formulas it's unreal – and at times the four of us were working different ways, but he was always happy to continue the class this way. A great teacher and I was so happy that he took the time to teach us, especially during these trying times."

Sailors and marines can also opt to study A-levels through supported self-study, with exams funded by the Service. The Portsmouth hubs recently supported two students who earned an A in English and B in Geography.

Rewards and recognition

THIS month's recipients of Respite, Reward and Recognition from the Senior Command Warrant Officers are: Breaks at Park Dean

WO1 Hannah (Devonport); CPO Gardner (MCM2); CPO Gladden (PCAP); LWtr Fox (Worthy Down); WO2 Matthews (30 Cdo IX); LH Elliott (Albion); CPO Stevenson (Devonport); Col Sgt Grey (CLR); Sgt Ralph (30 Cdo IX Gp)

LSA5K Awards

PO Hemming (BFSAI0); CPO Bottomley (47 Cdo)

LSRA

CPO Gibson (HMS Scotia); WO1 Wright (HMS President)



• A computer graphic showing three Type 31 frigates at sea in company in a decade's time

The blueprint for tomorrow's Navy

AN EXPANDING Navy, armed with the latest weaponry, equipped with the latest tech, deployed more around the world to meet the UK's expanding horizons.

That is what the 2021 Integrated Review – Defence in a Competitive Age – means to the Royal Navy.

New ships. More ships. New weapons. New technologies. New missions.

The review – a key element of the wide-ranging study into Britain's place in the world announced by Prime Minister Boris Johnson – lays down how the UK will respond to the opportunities and threats of the new world order.

The document, published as *Navy News* went to press, is the most comprehensive in a generation, with far-reaching consequences for Defence and will result in a Royal Navy which will grow in both size and reach.

In broad brushstrokes the review means:

- Huge investment in the **Submarine Service** spearheaded by the £31bn Dreadnought programme and nuclear warheads – as well as the defensive ring protecting the boats from Type 26 frigates to the introduction of a new lightweight torpedo to replace Stingray.
- Both **aircraft carriers** will be operated simultaneously. More F-35 jets will be bought to deliver carrier strike. And new support ships will be built to accompany the task groups on their global deployments.
- The **Royal Marines'** transformation into the Future Commando Force will see green berets permanently deployed overseas more often in two new 'Littoral Response Groups', one in northern Europe, a second in the

Indian Ocean.

They will receive an extra £200m to complete their transformation, plus £50m will be spent converting a Bay-class vessel before new ships are built specifically for littoral strike missions.

■ There will be a huge **national shipbuilding programme** to expand the heart of the Surface Fleet.

Over the next decade there will be seven new classes of ships being built in British yards, including three classes of frigates: the Type 26, 31 and the new Type 32s.

It means by the start of the 2030s, the Royal Navy will have more than 20 frigates and destroyers, aiming to grow to 24 with the introduction of the Type 32s.

■ A new **'multi-role ocean surveillance ship'**, crewed by just 15 sailors, will be in service in just three years' time to protect key underwater communications cables. Equipped with advanced sensors it will carry a number of remotely-operated and autonomous undersea drones to gather information on potential threats lurking in the water and is also intended to support front-line operations, such as in the Arctic.

In the short term it will mean retiring some of the old to pay for the new. HMS Monmouth and, when her deployment in the Gulf is completed, HMS Montrose, will be retired as our oldest Type 23 frigates; the money saved will be pumped into their successor programmes.

■ The **forward basing programme** continues with HMS Trent operating from Gibraltar from where she will support NATO operations in the

Mediterranean, work with our African partners including counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Guinea, and the French Navy as part of the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force.

■ The Surface Fleet will be armed with the latest weaponry and harness the latest technology including **land attack and supersonic missiles**. Sea Viper air defence missiles will be upgraded and their stockpiles increased. And investment in Wildcat and Merlin helicopters will continue.

■ The greatest technological change will come with a £1bn investment in **mine warfare** with automated and autonomous mine hunting systems deployed around the world from next year. As a result, first the Sandown-class MCMVs and the Hunts will be replaced by the end of the 2020s.

First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin said the outcome of the review was reward for the hard work made to both transform the Navy over the past couple of years and the daily efforts made on the front line at home and abroad.

"The review is the most wide-ranging for a generation and it sets out the government's priorities for Defence," he added.

"The Secretary of State wants us to respond better to the threats we face. We will. The Prime Minister wants us to be the foremost Navy in Europe. We will be."

Admiral Radakin continued: "The White Ensign will fly in all the places where we are now, but also further afield and more persistently.

"Where we now find ourselves is a direct reflection of your hard work. Thank you for delivering on the frontline and delivering through Covid. Thank you for delivering change all across the Royal Navy.

"All of us now have a new responsibility: to deliver a Global Navy for Global Britain."



Tech offers 'thank you'

THE Defence Discount Service has teamed up with a string of top tech and communications firms to offer savings of up to 40 per cent – a 'thank you' for the military's efforts during the pandemic.

Discounts are available on kitchen appliances, phone contracts and gadgets to name a few, available to members of the scheme serving personnel and veteran discounts include:

- Garmin (up to 40 per cent)
- Apple (exclusive member discounts)
- Lenovo (save up to 20 per cent)
- Samsung (exclusive member discounts)
- EE (save 20 per cent on handset and sim only plans)
- Hotpoint (save 20 per cent on all products)
- Sky (save up to 25 per cent)
- O2 (save 25 per cent on O2 'Refresh Airtime' plans)
- Shark Clean (save 10 per cent on full-price and reduced items)
- Ninja (save 10 per cent on full-price and reduced items)

To register with the Defence Discount Service, the official MoD discount service for military personnel, veterans and the defence community visit www.defencediscountservice.co.uk.

You can also purchase a Defence Privilege Card for £4.99 for access to discounts on the high street in stores, restaurants and venues.

Get HeadFIT anytime now

ALL sailors and Royal Marines can improve their mental health and fitness even if they cannot access the HeadFIT app online.

A CD version of digital content is being distributed around the entire Service, available when the internet is not.

Designed specifically for the defence community, HeadFIT provides round-the-clock access to self-help tools which can enhance mood, drive and confidence while reducing stress levels.

The CD mirrors the app launched last year, helping personnel maintain good mental health using techniques such as breathing exercises, body posture and mental visualisation.

IF YOU have a story, innovative idea, forum, group or initiative you'd like to share with the rest of the Royal Navy, these are YOUR pages.
Drop us a line: news@royalnavy.mod.uk or navymediacomms-icmailbox@mod.gov.uk.

Gib Governor goes behind the scenes on the Rock

AS GRAND tours go, oil tanks, a pub and a convenience store might not necessarily be top of the tourist list.

But they're key to the smooth functioning – and welfare – of British personnel and their forces in Gibraltar, as Governor Vice Admiral Sir David Steel found when he was shown around the MOD estate by Commodore Steve Dainton, Commander British Forces.

The King's Lines Oil Fuel Depot – buried deep inside the Rock – served as the revelatory start of the tour for Admiral Steel, who met personnel responsible for the enormous oil storage tanks.

Back in the open, the admiral called on the Service Families Accommodation at Four Corners where he had the opportunity to visit the newly refurbished NAAFI facilities at Helm Point (pictured).

He chatted with the Families Housing Team and NAAFI staff, where he was not only impressed at the facilities available but also the care and dedication shown by staff, and in particular the Housing Team.

After lunch in the officers' mess it was on to the Single Living Accommodation at Devil's Tower Camp and the newly-refurbished Boyd's Bar – named after the late Royal Gibraltar Regiment Private

Matthew Boyd, who died whilst deployed in the UK on a training exercise.

"The few hours I spent visiting have deepened my understanding immensely," said the admiral, whose last post in the Royal Navy was as Second Sea Lord between 2012 and 2015.

"I never cease to be amazed at the quality of the people in our Armed Services. Coupled with investment both in Boyd's Bar and at Four Corners, I know these developments will be greatly appreciated, particularly by our men and women in uniform."

Picture: Cpl Connor Payne RAF



Brocklesby's breakdown is Peter's finest hour

WHEN HMS Brocklesby suffered a key system breakdown on patrol in the Gulf, Chief Petty Officer Peter Spayne stepped to the plate.

The weapon engineer's efforts and ingenuity fixed the minehunter's problem without outside help – and, 12 months later, earned him the most coveted trophy in his branch: the Rear Admiral Bateson award.

Sponsored by the Institution of Engineering and Technology, the annual award recognises the individual excellence in the weapon engineering branch.

The senior rating was singled out for his efforts in January 2020 – at a time of heightened tensions in the Gulf.

"We were out of comms range and there were quite a lot of defects that we had to deal with, and we couldn't use the normal maintenance routes," Peter explained.

With outside help/support ruled out, the engineering team had to rely on its skill and expertise.

"We had to make things work in weird and wonderful ways. We really got into the bones of the equipment in a way we wouldn't normally, all in 40-degree temperatures.

"I have never had so much job satisfaction like when you're against all odds and having to make things work."

Peter joined the RN aged 16 having decided sixth form wasn't for him.

Two years later as a gunner he was with his ship in Hong Kong "and none of my friends had ever done anything like that.

I have never really looked back since."

He switched to weapon engineering when the branches were reorganised and operator maintainers became either operators or maintainers, not both.

In Peter's case he "landed on his feet. I discovered a love for engineering."

His award is named after Rear Admiral Stuart Latham Bateson, who was charged in 1946 with forming the Electrical Branch – forerunner of today's Weapon Engineering Branch.

"It's an achievement I am really proud of. It's nice that people in the wider organisation have recognised and seen the work I have put in," Peter continued.

"There's a board in the main corridor at HMS Collingwood with award winners' names and mine has just been added to it.

"I'm proud of that because I never thought I would see that at any point."



Making friends and for

INTERNATIONAL Defence Training is a key element of the UK's Defence Engagement strategy, with the training provided widely recognised as being of the highest quality and, in many areas, world-leading.

The RN's International Defence Training oversees training by the Navy and Royal Marines to our international partners (via the Ministry of Defence and respective embassy Defence Sections around the world) with the goals of helping to prevent conflict, build stability and gain influence.

The geographical 'footprint' of International Defence Training extends from the European Union to North America, Africa, Asia and the South Pacific, upwards of 60 countries in all.

During the 2019-20 training year training was provided for personnel from 64 countries, and with training also comes the invaluable experiences of life in the UK that our international students are exposed to.

Through formal RN training, professional networking and relationship building and exposure to various extramural activity, effective defence engagement becomes a task that is holistic, practicable and rewarding.

Here's some of the feedback we've received from recent courses.

"The training offered a platform that allowed me to improve my knowledge in maritime warfare," said Major Raphael Mwei, Kenyan Navy, on the International Principal Warfare Officers' course

"Further, it created an opportunity to share experiences with officers from other parts of the world."

Lieutenant Mati Janes, Estonia Navy, on the same course, added: "I now understand better the full scale of naval warfare, the multitude of environments in it and how they affect each other, also what it takes regarding the crew,

International Defence Training is a pillar of the newly-introduced Training Management Group under the Director of People and Training and comprises the following key areas:

- **Government-to-Government Team:** five personnel who are responsible for the liaison between international defence sections and RN/RM training establishments.
- **South West Team:** based at Dartmouth, a team of three assist various levels of international training/education across the region, delivering training to and overseeing divisional care of international trainees alongside RN units and civilian contractors. They directly support Defence Engagement activity across the South West at RN establishments and universities.
- **Training Manager:** these assist with the direction and coordination of Royal Navy and Royal Marine training for members of uniformed forces of foreign and Commonwealth countries.
- **International Commonwealth Training Unit (ICTU):** ICTU is the only specialist school in the Royal Navy equipped to offer international navies and maritime organisations Warfare Officer training, delivered at HMS Collingwood.

weapons and sensors for a modern day warship to be effective."

Lieutenant Boru of the Kenyan Navy was full of praise for the International Lieutenants Course.

"The maritime security training is tailor-made to suit the current maritime threat faced by our navy, especially from the Gulf of Aden and Somali waters down to Kenya: pirates using skiffs and drug smuggling using small boats from mother ships avoiding main patrol areas or shipping lanes," he said.

"The navigation phase was very interesting; being introduced to different systems from the paper charts we use back home, and planning and executing navigation from a laptop computer using electronic charting software was quite interesting and would be a game changer in the future of our navy."

BRNC Dartmouth, CTCRM Lympstone, HMS Collingwood, Raleigh, RNAS Culdrose and Yeovilton and other UK locations are used to deliver the training, with around 100 international students under their wing at any one time.

The courses cover a broad spectrum

of naval warfare and operations such as maritime security operations or the theory and practice of board and search.

Bespoke naval courses can be linked to academic qualification such as BSc in Navigation and Maritime Science or Mechanical Engineering to meet all requirements.

From this month, the RN's International Defence Training comes under the banner of Project Selborne, the programme to transform and modernise the Royal Navy's shore-based training.

Team Fisher, the consortium selected to deliver Project Selborne, will work with the RN to modernise the service and help grow the number of ally nations supported.

As part of that modernisation, Team Fisher will establish a new international alumni scheme for participating students.

This will allow students to continue to nurture their relationships with the service from the moment they start initial training all the way through to ship command and beyond, thus embedding International Defence Training as a long-term, enduring capability and Centre of Excellence.



● International students tackle a basic leader

For an idea of the scope of training on offer visit www.royalnavy.mod.uk/international-defence-training.

The online catalogue offers an appreciation of the various types of specialisations the Royal Navy provides training in, and additional information covering general questions (e.g. the

Green gongs for naval base's carrier support

TWO huge projects in Portsmouth Naval Base supporting Britain's biggest warships have been singled out for the environmental care taken.

Princess Royal and Victory jetties were recognised by *Sanctuary* magazine judges for their harmonious construction, which made use of as much of the existing structures as possible

And the base's combined heat and power plant received an award for energy efficiency and helping the MOD meet its ambition of net-zero carbon emissions in the future.

The arrival of the Queen Elizabeth carriers has increased the site's peak electrical demand from 28MW to 56MW – exceeding the National Grid capacity on Portsea Island.

Delivered by BAE Systems, the 13MW Combined

Heat and Power plant, and 3MW large-scale battery for back-up, was the best solution for meeting their power demand and was switched on in October 2019, one month before second carrier HMS Prince of Wales was delivered.

While the technology is not ground-breaking, it was successfully integrated into a 60-year-old electrical and steam network at the base and also means a much cheaper source of power – about half the cost of the National Grid supply, saving about £4m already.

Sanctuary is produced by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and its awards for 2020 were delayed until this year by the pandemic.

The award judges were also impressed by the construction of the jetties the carriers occupy when they are in Portsmouth. The existing moorings were

incapable of supporting two 65,000-tonne warships, but there was considerable history and perfectly usable material already built into the structure. Parts of it were 90 years old and it also covers a Stuart-era basin.

The jetties project earned the Sustainable Business Award, presented to the best commercial project which delivers sustainable solutions to enable the Armed Forces to live, work or train effectively.

Some 97 per cent of Victory and 50 per cent of Princess Royal Jetty was retained, with the removed concrete and steel crushed and set for recycling on future projects.

Care was taken to protect the seabed and seawall, and the wider project included networks to deliver the power created half-way across the base in the new power plant.



Inspirational effo

MEET the Naval Servicewoman of the Year, Leading Writer Rebecca Fyans, a champion of support for families – inside the Services and in civvy street – with children with Down's Syndrome.

She was one of several stalwarts and trailblazers across the Service who have particularly stood out over the past 12 months when it comes to raising the profile of/promoting the cause of/making the experience of life in the Royal Navy better for women.

The second Naval Servicewomen's Network Awards were held virtually rather than 2020's glitzy dinner in Yeovilton.

Rebecca took the top title on the back of half a dozen years work and dedication.

From devising training for clinical neonatal staff through to ensuring all military families receive guidance and assistance – especially in the first days after diagnosis – and involvement in a worldwide Down's Syndrome initiative, Rebecca has been an inspirational figure, all alongside her day job in the Royal Navy and raising a young family. And over the past 12 months she's taken on a new role: helping to set up a network for military families living with/caring for someone with a long-term or

life-changing illness.

Leading Writer Bethany Barnes and Surgeon Captain Elizabeth Crowson (right) share the 'Inspires Me' award. LWtr Barnes has repeatedly gone above and beyond her core role at the Waterfront Logistics Support Group supporting the Submarine Flotilla making her one of the most valued members of the team. Surg Capt Crowson was nominated by more than 20 medical and dental officers and staff at the Institute of Naval Medicine who have been inspired and positively influenced by her leadership throughout her career.

The crew of nuclear deterrent submarine HMS Vigilant earn the collaborative working award for embracing women serving in all messes/departments of the boat, challenging the status quo and working tirelessly to improve life for the 12 female submariners.

The Outstanding Contribution award is shared by Commanders Jane Roe



gging navies



ship development challenge in the grounds of BRNC in Dartmouth

duration, location and overview of any given course).

Covid had (and continues to have) varying impacts on how international defence training is delivered. The opportunities and challenges which presented themselves during the pandemic meant that training

establishments and International Defence Training needed to become more agile and adaptable.

Through consistent and in-depth engagement with international partners, training establishments and key stakeholders the team is working through the various challenges.

Hurricane heroes honoured

TWO RFA officers are sharing a prestigious award for their outstanding work on disaster-relief operations in the Bahamas.

First Officer (LS) Mike Tyndell is jointly awarded the James Coull Memorial Award with colleague First Officer (E) Michael Hontoir for recognition of both their efforts while serving in RFA Mounts Bay during Operation Barytone, the disaster-relief operation following the devastation caused by Hurricane Dorian in 2019.

I/O Tyndell, who received the award aboard his current ship, RFA Lyme Bay, from Commanding Officer Captain Martin Jones, said: "Hurricane Dorian

devastated the area of Abaco-Bahamas and Mounts Bay was first on scene delivering much-needed disaster relief to the Island.

"I was tasked to head up the landing party on the second day of the operation. As we transited to the landing point it was clear the hurricane had wreaked havoc.

"In total we distributed 3,000 ration packs, nearly 100 tonnes of water, over 900 emergency shelter kits, and 1,000 hygiene kits.

"All on board went the extra mile to ensure the aid went ashore. We then had to reset the ship and organise a full replenishment of humanitarian aid,

Raleigh ready for upsurge

HMS Raleigh will be able to double its capacity to turn female civilians into sailors by refurbishing and shuffling the accommodation on base.

Before the pandemic, the base could host 120 female Phase 1 trainees at any one time.

But with the goal of increasing female personnel across the Service to 20 per cent by the beginning of the next decade – effectively doubling the current ratio – recruitment and training will have to adapt.

The Torpoint establishment has started by refurbishing and reopening Mountbatten Block.

It won't be used to house female recruits but the revamp does allow the Maritime Reserves to move in, freeing space in accommodation blocks currently occupied by women.

"This significant uplift in our ability to accommodate female new recruits for Initial Naval Training is clear evidence of the Royal Navy's level of ambition to increase the overall number of women within our workforce to 20 per cent by 2030," said Raleigh's Commanding Officer Captain Suzi Nielsen.

Faslane need FAM feedback

IF YOU are drafted to Faslane do you know your accommodation options?

Clyde is the RN's pilot site for the Future Accommodation Model (FAM) which means where you live and how you pay for it may well be different from other options and means in other establishments and bases.

To help you there's a dedicated FAM team – and they're also keen to hear your thoughts.

They hold an interactive FAM 'Virtual' Forum every month for Service personnel and their families for questions/concerns and feedback.

Email People-FAMCELL-CLY@mod.gov.uk to register your interest or call 07773953846/ 07813393966.



• Four of the carrier's award-winning fuels team (l-r) PO Matthew Dugard, LET Fabian Providence, LET Simon Tulakepa, PO Giuseppe Cerasuolo

Fuel's golden team spare carrier big engineering job

THE alertness, expertise and determination of a senior rating and his team spared Britain's biggest warship a major engineering job.

The fuels' section of the marine engineering department on HMS Prince of Wales have been singled out for their work fixing the carrier's secondary fuel separators – faults which the manufacturers didn't believe initially and which would have damaged the 68,000-tonne warship's mighty MT-30 main gas turbines.

Petty Officer Giuseppe Cerasuolo was carrying out rounds while on duty one weekend in Portsmouth when he encountered two faults with the carrier's secondary fuel separators.

He used all sources of information available to him to arrive at the correct diagnosis as to the cause of the fault... but his diagnosis was challenged remotely by the manufacturer.

Giuseppe stood firm and supported all of his findings – which were subsequently confirmed by a visit from the equipment's maker.

His succinct and accurate brief to the chain of command allowed the carrier's senior officers team to raise the appropriate signals and communicate the wider issue to the engineering community.

Having discovered the problem, Giuseppe set about resolving it, seeing it as an opportunity to mentor four junior members of his team, including the administration and logistical requirements, a vital step that is often overlooked.

He coached his team in the correct procedures, the importance of alignment checks all the while maintaining strict engineering standards and tool control – carried out against the backdrop of the difficulty of communicating in a noisy machinery compartment and Covid social distancing measures on board.

While this was taking place, the rest of the team maintained a high tempo of business as usual, including filling the tanks safely up to 95 per cent capacity.

Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Jerry Kyd presented the six-strong team with a Team Portsmouth Award for their collective efforts.

"This award recognises the often unsexy contribution that engineering departments make to the daily delivery of operational capability," said Commander Gary McCormack, Commander Marine Engineering on board.

"To have the Fleet Commander reflect those sentiments and present this award to the Prince of Wales' fuel team is a real honour and signifies the value and appreciation of the work engineers do."

arts, inspirational women

and Maryla Ingham. Cdr Roe's engineering experience has risen to the challenge of ensuring both veteran Hawk jets and Avenger turboprops are ready for training and ops. And Cdr Ingham has been an inspirational figure while in charge of the Coastal Forces Squadron, responsible for developing the careers of more than 40 lieutenants and through her energy and drive ensured the squadron succeeded in every endeavour, from taking Sea Cadets to sea to providing force protection to HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Surg Lt Cdr RN Louise McMenemy is the recipient of the Innovation Award. One of only three women out of 24 to be awarded a Percy Hobart Fellowship, working with medical comms



start-up Pando, providing WhatsApp style communication for healthcare. She developed her own project, allowing Service personnel to own the temporary medical downgrade process.

Sharing the Emerging Talent award are Sub Lieutenant Fleur Peoples (left) and Able Seaman Erin Follett (right). The former has been instrumental in several Future Commando Force projects at CTCRM in Lympstone. Thanks to her drive and direction projects which would normally take up to two years were completed in a few months.

AB Follett performed duties and took on responsibilities of a senior rating at the Maritime Intelligence Fusion Centre with many colleagues absent as a result of the pandemic. Not only did she step to the fore, but



the standard of her work impressed throughout her chain of command.

WO1 Rosemary Dodd is 2021's Unsung Heroine, recognition for her contribution to the RN Parenting Support and Information Team over several years. Using her vast knowledge and experience she has provided support, advice and guidance to a huge number of Servicewomen during maternity/adoption leave.

And Culdrose Naval Servicewomen's Network take the Inclusive Teamwork Award for the work within and without the Cornish air station, from organising the annual conference last March (attended by 200 people) to holding outreach events with local schools.



Plenty of cards as Roy marks 103rd birthday

ROYAL Navy veteran Roy Harland celebrated his 103rd birthday. Roy is one of the oldest surviving servicemen in the country and is a World War Two Royal Navy veteran.



In 2020 the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity was able to arrange a special visit to HMS Prince of Wales for Roy on his birthday, however lockdown restrictions made a repeat visit impossible in 2021.

Instead, the RNRMC called upon the naval community to send birthday cards and wishes to Roy.

The response was fantastic, with more than 40 cards received, including a personal message from the Second Sea Lord.

As an additional surprise, the RNRMC also arranged a special video message from the Royal Marines Band Service with a rendition of *Happy Birthday*.

Roy served in the Royal Navy's Radar Branch during WW2. He is one of the few surviving ship's company from HMS

King George V and was on board during the Bismark chase. He also served on HMS Malaya and was on board when the Ark Royal was hit. He has been awarded the following medals: 39-45 Star, Atlantic Star, War Medal 39-45, Arctic Star and Defence Medal.



Cyclists say thanks to RNRMC

PERSONNEL at the UK base in Bahrain braved wind and rain (*yes, really*) to complete a charity cycling challenge.

Three dozen soldiers, sailors and airmen (troops protect the naval facility while RAF personnel who run the aviation hub at nearby Manama airport live in the complex) climbed on to cycling machines to say 'thank you' to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

The charity has invested heavily in the Royal Navy's Middle East hub – home to six major warships plus command and support staff in the Naval Support Facility – to make life in the demanding Gulf conditions more bearable.

Its latest donation has allowed personnel to equip a new waterfront gym facility in addition to the existing workout suites in the base's central amenities block.

The base's clubz Petty Officer Andrew Davey wanted to thank the charity for its donation by

raising money – and picked a 177-mile (285km) cycling challenge.

The very specific distance is the length of Offa's Dyke Path – a long-distance walking trail which runs from the port of Liverpool along the England/Wales border down to the Severn Estuary, roughly following the route of the 8th Century rampart built by King Offa, to separate his kingdom of Mercia from rival kingdoms in modern-day Wales.

Six teams of six volunteers apiece took part in the challenge, with a range of different fitness abilities, ranks, rates and ages.

The fastest time was an impressive seven hours and 52 minutes, with all teams finishing in just under nine hours.

Despite hitting their biking target, they're a little short of the £1k they hoped to raise. If you fancy helping them out, donate via: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/andrew-davey9>

Supporting communities throughout the UK

WHEN many people think of Royal Navy in geographic terms, they think only of the clusters of sailors, marines, veterans and families around the main base ports of Portsmouth, Plymouth and Faslane.

However, naval communities can be found across the length and breadth of the UK (and indeed beyond), and it is critical that serving personnel, families and veterans have access to the right support, wherever they are.

In 2020 the RNRMC began working with Woody's Lodge to support the veteran community in South East Wales. A £44,000 grant from the RNRMC and its funding partner, Greenwich Hospital, allowed Woody's Lodge to actively engage with the Royal Navy and Royal Marines veterans' community through the appointment of a new dedicated RN/RM Project Officer, as well as enabling greater access to social, signposting and support facilities.

Woody's Lodge was founded in 2016 in memory of Paul "Woody" Woodland, a Royal Marine, who died in 2012.

Woody's Lodge is a social hub, which guides veterans to the help and support they need to re-engage with their families and communities. It also offers support with financial issues, housing and employment and healthcare referrals.

Royal Navy WW2 veteran, Gerald Owen, 97, is one of many

who have benefited from this service. Living alone and with no immediate family for support, Woody's Lodge transport has been a lifeline for Gerald, helping him get out of the house and socialise with other veterans.

During lockdown, Gerald's essential transport needs have been taken care of, and he has also received regular food parcels and twice weekly phone calls from the Woody's Lodge team.

Funding from the RNRMC has allowed Woody's Lodge to purchase electronic tablets, which have provided isolated veterans with the means of maintaining communication with friends, family and Woody's Lodge support.

Colin Williams served in the Royal Marines during the 1960s and 70s and used to be a regular at his local Royal Marines Association meetings in Swansea. COVID-19 brought this essential social interaction to an abrupt halt for Colin, leaving his ability to connect with other significantly reduced.

Last year, Colin became the first veteran to receive a tablet from Woody's Lodge, enabling him to stay connected through email and social media sites to friends, family, fellow veterans and his support network within the Royal Marines Association.

The tablet also allowed Colin to download and read books in a bigger format, listen to music and watch films.



Helping veterans find new careers

A FORMER Royal Navy nurse has told how a charity helped her to find work in the last year, despite the lockdown slowing job vacancies.

Nicki Bradley, from Plymouth, served as a Leading Naval Nurse from 1992 to 2006.

After leaving the Service she struggled to transfer her valuable experience into skills that were recognised by civilian employers.

The Forces Employment Charity, RFEA, was able to help her recognise the value of her skills and translate them into suitable job opportunities.

With the support of her RFEA Regional Advisor, Nicki secured a job placement, which led to her being employed in her current role as a part-time administrator.

"After three years of unemployment after being made redundant, my new job means I am able to come off benefits and be proud to be earning my own money once more," said Nicki.

"I feel I have purpose again and can convey this feeling to my children. I can now improve on skills I already possess as well as acquire new ones through workplace development courses."

RFEA managed to help 19,005 veterans work towards new careers in the last year and the charity has received vital ongoing support thanks to a donation of £91,800 from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and its funding partner, Greenwich



● Above, Nicki Bradley and, left, during her career as a nurse in the Royal Navy

Commodore Alistair Halliday, RFEA's Chief Executive, said: "The qualities required for a career in the Services make ex-Forces personnel a fantastic addition to the civilian workforce, which is why RFEA's team are so passionate about helping veterans, and their families, to find meaningful employment."

"We provide an invaluable, tailored support service to ensure our clients are equipped with everything they need to demonstrate the value and relevance of their experience to civilian employers."

"By doing so, we bring about life changing transformations for thousands of veterans, and their families, every year. We are delighted to be able to continue to do this, thanks to the incredible support of RNRMC."

Mandy Lindley, Director of Relationships and Funding at RNRMC, added: "The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity is pleased to continue its partnership with RFEA, helping to provide vital employment support to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines veterans."

"The economic impact of COVID-19 means that it is now more critical than ever that our veterans receive the right care and this grant will allow RFEA to continue providing a fantastic standard of employment support for our joint beneficiaries."

For details visit rfea.org.uk



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From foes to family

IT'S not uncommon for grandad's war stories to inspire youngsters.

A good number of today's sailors can trace their roots back to wartime and the deeds of their forebears, including Sub Lieutenant Ben Hoffmeister (pictured right).

He was inspired by both grandparents, veterans of the Battle of the Atlantic.

Both faced the unremitting horrors of the struggle to keep Britain's sea lanes open between 1939 and 1945 and relentless battering of the cruel sea.

Except that one was trying to keep the lanes open, the other was decorated for his role in trying to strangle them.

Ernest Hoffmeister (pictured top left) and Erwin Menzel (centre) were mobilised by their respective governments for the longest naval campaign of the 20th Century.

Eighty years on, the wheel of history has turned and their grandson will soon be working side-by-side with the German Navy on NATO duties as his ship joins Operation Sea Guardian, the alliance's counter-terrorism mission in the Mediterranean.

Ben, aged 23 and from Oxford, is sailing with new patrol ship HMS Trent on her second deployment.

"It's an interesting story from the perspective of how far Europe has come, with Ben now serving in the Royal Navy on a ship that will work alongside the modern Deutsche Marine," said Lieutenant Commander David Webber, in charge of Trent's marine engineering department.

"His family history acutely tracks the human impact of the history of 20th Century Europe: World War 2, the division of Europe in the Cold War, reunification and co-operation."

Erwin Menzel was born in Steinau an der Oder in Lower Silesia in 1924 and was called up in 1940, joining the German Navy.

After completing training as a mechanical engineer, he was assigned to U-963 (the crew are pictured being inspected bottom left) and sailed on ten war patrols out of bases in Norway and France in the final two years of the war – including a failed attempt to attack the Normandy invasion armada in June 1944.

Although a stoker, Menzel manned one of the submarine's anti-aircraft guns and was awarded the coveted Iron Cross for his part in an action against an RAF Liberator bomber – frequently the scourge of U-boats.

At a stage of the war when the German submarine fleet suffered horrific losses – at least 20 boats were sunk every month – U-963 survived, though she did not sink a single Allied vessel.

Her war ended 12 days after VE Day when she was scuttled off the village of Nazare in Portugal.

Ben's grandfather was moved around numerous prison camps from Gibraltar to Aintree Race Track in Liverpool and finally Ross on Wye, where he trained as a blacksmith and worked on local farms.

He was released in 1948 and returned to Germany, but emigrated to the UK in 1949 with his hometown now Scinawa in Poland under the post-war re-drawing of the map of eastern Europe.

He ended up working on an apple farm in Ledbury, where he met his grandmother who also came over from Germany on the same scheme.

Ben knows rather less about his paternal grandfather Ernest; his grandmother got

rid of most of his wartime records and photographs when he died a few years ago.

He was probably called up early in the war and was assigned to the Royal Naval Patrol Service after completing his training as a coder, serving with a converted trawler HMT King Sol, in the Atlantic and Arctic before transferring to a destroyer based in Ceylon (today Sri Lanka) as the war against Japan reached its climax.

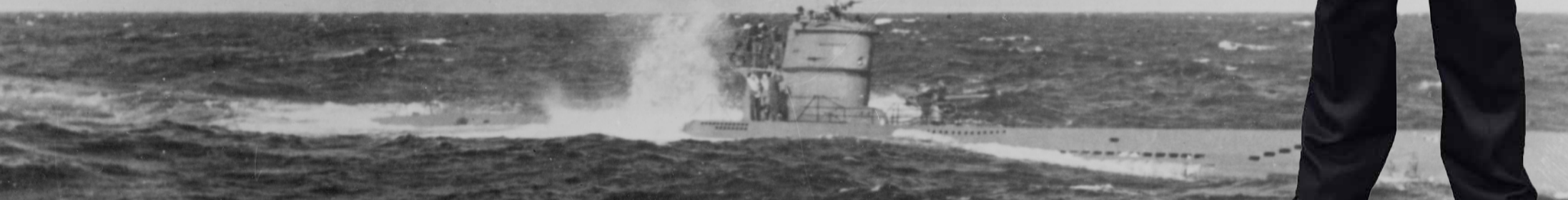
He died when Ben was just ten – with the future officer too young to have asked the questions he wished he could have about the war. "One of the few stories I remember him talking about was having to climb up the mainmast during the convoys to chip off ice that had accumulated and risked capsizing the vessel."

As for Grandad Erwin, he was, says Ben, "instrumental in raising my interest to join the navy. By the time he died, when I was 17, I had already decided I was going to join the Royal Navy."

It's unlikely given where their vessels served and when that Ben's grandfathers faced each other in the Atlantic or Arctic, but his parents were nevertheless somewhat nervous when they met for the first time.

"They got on incredibly well when they eventually met," he says. "It seemed the shared experience of the battle of the Atlantic was more important to them than which side of the war they had fought it on."

"That legacy is perhaps the most important aspect to take away from their story."



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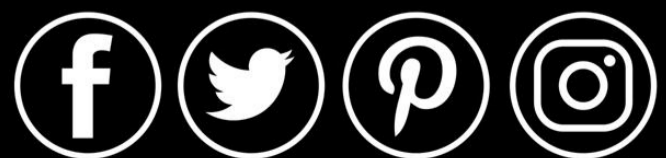
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THIS is the polar ice pack.

Desolate. Endless. Forbidding. But there is no land beyond the ice, no glaciers, no jagged mountains.

The bow in the foreground is not that of HMS Protector and this is not the Southern Ocean.

The bow belongs to the US Coast Guard cutter Polar Star. The waters are those of the Chukchi Sea, north of the Bering Strait.

This is as much light as you can expect at mid-day on the shortest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere at 72 degrees north.

In a few days' time, while people the world over are enjoying their Christmas dinners, Polar Star will get closer to the North Pole than any other vessel in winter: some 1,200 miles from the top of the world.

Aboard the cutter for the unique experience were Royal Navy Lieutenants Jacob Stein and Max Friswell.

The pair, who normally serve as warfare officers aboard Protector, spent the winter on exchange with their US counterpart.

Protector spent most of 2020 undergoing the most comprehensive refit in her naval career on Teesside. She's now completed trials and is in

her home base of Plymouth getting ready for training and a return to the freezer in time for the 2021-22 austral summer.

Lieutenants Stein (30) from Portsmouth and 25-year-old Friswell from Essex (pictured, respectively, on the far left and right of the group shot on Polar Star's flight deck, top right) made use of that lengthy lay-up to gain Arctic experience.

The Seattle-based Polar Star is classed as a 'heavy icebreaker', capable of cutting through sheets of ice up to 21ft thick.

Like Protector she heads south for summer in the Southern Hemisphere, cutting a channel through ice in the Ross Sea to allow supply ships to deliver supplies to McMurdo Station, the US's main operating base on the frozen continent; it's close to the spot from where Capt Scott set off on his fateful voyage to the Pole – and on the opposite side of Antarctica from Protector's regular stomping ground.

Due to the pandemic the annual mission south was cancelled by the US National Science Federation.

Instead, the Coast Guard sent Polar Star north on the first winter deployment to the Arctic since 1982.

That meant crossing the Bay of Alaska, navigating the Bering Sea –

separating the USA and Russia – and coping with waves of up to seven metres just to reach the polar ice.

The ship crossed the Arctic Circle on December 19. Despite minimal daylight, temperatures down to -22°C and wind speeds of 40 knots, the nearly 200 souls aboard conducted a 'blue nose' ceremony (like Crossing the Line at the Equator, only much colder).

The vessel did not stop there, crunching through ice up to two metres thick she continued north through the Chukchi Sea in near-total darkness to reach a record latitude: 72 degrees 11 minutes North on Christmas Day, the furthest north ever reached by a US surface vessel during the winter months – about 160 miles off the northern coast of Alaska... and 1,200 from the North Pole.

Carving through the ice by 'backing and ramming' gave the icebreaking an eerie soundtrack, described variously by crew as "a perpetual car crash", "a blaring elephant", "freight train", or "driving through concrete".

The ship also used the deployment to patrol the US-Russia Maritime Boundary Line which separates the two nations' waters, conducted scientific research, and carried out

training to ensure she remains ready to sail for Antarctica again next winter.

And her British guests? Lieutenants Stein and Friswell are both warfare officers and used their experience on the Coast Guard cutter to earn Officer of the Watch and Ice Pilot qualifications which will help them when they sail south with Protector.

As will their time understudying an ice analyst from the US National Ice Center, learning how to interpret visual and synthetic aperture radar imagery of sea ice. In layman's terms, it means they are better able to navigate Protector safely through these challenging conditions.

They also spent time learning how the US Coast Guard operates its ships, standing watch with the engineering department and qualifying in US firefighting and damage control techniques.

"The deployment to the Arctic on Polar Star has been a fantastic experience, especially as this is their first winter deployment to the region in nearly 30 years," said Jacob.

"The US Coast Guard are highly experienced in operating in the ice, and we have taken away a number of lessons that we will look to

implement when we return to HMS Protector.

"It has been great to get to know and work with the US Coast Guard, and we look forward to returning the courtesy when a member of Polar Star's crew joins HMS Protector for a reciprocal exchange later this summer."

And with the Arctic and High North assuming renewed importance for nations with interests in the region, Polar Star has returned with a greater understanding of what it takes to operate at such latitudes in the depths of winter.

The scientists aboard have returned with vast amounts of data to pore over about ice floes, water temperature, salinity, and natural life in Arctic waters.

"The Coast Guard is robustly proficient at summer-time Arctic operations, while winter presents an entirely new set of challenges," said Captain Bill Woityra, the Polar Star's Commanding Officer.

"The Arctic is cold, dark, and difficult to navigate in the winter. Polar Star's winter Arctic deployment has served to better understand and prepare for the challenges of operating in such a harsh and unforgiving environment."

Pictures: US Coast Guard

Highest North



Tigers remember US WW1 tragedies

SUBMARINE hunters laid a wreath to remember those lost when a US troop ship was torpedoed during the First World War.

Aviators from 814 Naval Air Squadron – the Flying Tigers – flew their Merlin to a monument on the Isle of Islay off Scotland's west coast.

The lighthouse-like memorial remembers two tragedies from 1918 when more than 600 people, mostly American soldiers, were killed.

On February 5, the troop ship *Tuscania*, a converted luxury liner, was carrying more than 2,000 American troops to Liverpool. In darkness, she was torpedoed by a U-boat around seven miles from the coast. The ship began to sink over the space of four hours and around 230 people died in the incident.

Eight months later on October 6, another converted liner, *HMS Otranto*, was carrying Doughboys from New York to Glasgow when she collided with another troop ship, *HMS Kashmir*, during a storm.

The *Otranto* was critically damaged and

lost all power. Despite heroic efforts to rescue those onboard, the stricken ship was blown ashore and ran aground off Islay. More than 400 people drowned.

The Merlin of 814's Barracuda Flight flew from its forward base at *HMS Gannet* to Islay and lowered a couple of crewmembers to lay a wreath at the memorial.

Lieutenant James Shrives, one of the helicopter's two pilots, said: "As an anti-submarine unit we felt it was pertinent to pay our respects and lay a wreath at the monument."

"The task was made more difficult by the soft ground. We had to abort the plan of landing-on, and instead go to our plan B, which was to winch the personnel down to the site using the rescue hoist."

"This memorial stands as a poignant reminder of the loss of life that can be caused by submarines and reminded all of us of the importance of our work in protecting the fleet from such a threat."



Farewell 'Wrenlin' Janet

TORREVIEJA Branch are mourning the loss of popular former 'Wrenlin' Janet Dalton who's died at the age of 75.

Born in Maltby, Yorkshire, as the eldest of four sisters, she joined *HMS Dauntless* in September 1963.

She completed her air mechanic training in *HMS Condor* and became a Fleet Air Arm Wren – aka 'Wrenlin'.

She worked on search-and-rescue helicopters and visiting aircraft at *HMS Fulmar* and then moved to 764 NAS to work on Hunter T8 jets. Her final job was at the engine repair section before she left the Royal Navy in December 1965.

She met her future husband Bryan during her Expedition Training Weekend in November 1964, where Bryan as the Expedition Leader 'took her under his wing' and consequently things 'took flight' from there.

He remained in the RN for another 18 years and the family moved around from Lee-on-the-Solent to Lissie, RAF Honington, and Yeovil.

Upon subsequent retirement from jobs in civvy street, Janet and Bryan settled in La Manga on Spain's Costa Calida.

There Janet joined the Association of Wrens and the couple became members of the RNA in Torrevieja, an hour's drive from La Manga, while still pursuing their passion for travelling through Spain and France to meet up with friends.

Janet leaves daughter Evonne, who lives in New Zealand, granddaughter Jade, a former Wren, from Taunton, and son Michael, who lives in Somerset.

Dits for download

THE Royal Naval Association has launched its first season of specially-commissioned podcasts looking at all aspects of the Naval community.

'Dit On', which is available through the RNA website, will feature guests with all manner of Royal Navy connections, from veterans, some of whom who took part in various Naval operations in recent years, through currently serving personnel, to family members and the occasional celebrity.

The podcasts are designed to allow veterans to stay connected with the Royal Navy, their peers and their successors despite the physical restrictions and isolation of Covid-19.

The podcasts are hosted by former sailor Jenna Brodie (pictured), who served for 12 years and has worked for Barclay's since 2018.

Jenna introduces herself, and her occasional co-host Jim (her dad), in the short first podcast of the series – she joined up aged 19 in 2006 as an Operator Maintainer (Comms), before transferring to the logistics branch.

Her career took her through the ranks and around the world, including the Middle East, the Far East and the Mediterranean. One memorable deployment was in survey ship *HMS Enterprise* during the migrant crisis, where she was part of a ship's company who rescued more than 9,000 migrants from the sea over a period of 18 months.

The first podcast proper features Jenna's mates Kerry and Julian Lee,

a couple with a combined 46 years of service in the Royal Navy.

They talk about highlights and lowlights in their careers, the challenges of a relationship when you're both in the military, the realities of leaving Forces for civvie street, and being locked down under the same roof after having spent years apart.

Episode 2 allows RNA General Secretary Bill Oliphant to spin dits – and as that is something at which Bill excels, it won't come as any surprise to hear that there was so much material, there will be a Part 2 on the list shortly.

Bill talks of his 37 years of service, from his numerous drafts, to a sticky situation in Naples...

And Jane Lancaster, one of the very first Wrens to go to sea, shares her experiences.

She was part of the first group which joined frigate *HMS Brilliant* in October 1990, though her seagoing experience was initially derailed by an accident before resuming with an exciting drafting to aircraft carrier *HMS Invincible*.

For both the older Naval generation (who are accustomed to listening to the radio) and the younger Naval generation (who listen to audio/podcasts most frequently, and are often isolated at sea), the RNA hopes these podcasts will bring comforting, informative and entertaining stories, as well as allowing a glimpse into the Senior Service for supporters and those with a common interest in the RN.

You can download the dits from royal-naval-association.co.uk/podcast/



Ken saw surrender

ONE of the last RN witnesses of the liberation of Singapore in 1945 has died aged 98.

Sick Berth Attendant Ken Tyack served as the ship's photographer aboard *HMS Bulolo*, a liner turned into a HQ ship for amphibious landings.

During his career he also met King George VI, Winston Churchill and General Montgomery, cared for the wounded on D-Day and helped liberate prisoners of war.

In 2016 Ken was awarded the Legion d'Honneur by the French for his service in Normandy (he's pictured after the ceremony with his daughter Tracey).

He left his job as a builder to join the Navy in 1941, joining *Bulolo* the following year.

"I had wanted to go into the Marines but they discovered I was colour blind, so that was ruled out," he said.

"I was told I could be a steward or medic in the Navy and I chose medic and I'm glad I did because it was a fascinating career."

His first taste of action came as he helped treat men from a hospital ship which had been sunk during the invasion of Sicily as part of Operation Husky.

In June 1944 his ship arrived off France and within an hour had been hit by a phosphorus mortar bomb.

"It killed four people, three from just horrible burns and one from the impact," said Ken.

The following year Ken was posted to the Far East and sailed to Singapore, where he witnessed the surrender of the Japanese to Lord Louis Mountbatten and helped liberate prisoners of war from Changi camp.

"We were then sent to Java (Indonesia) where we liberated about 500 women, mostly Dutch, from a prison camp there."

"I remember they looked like they were all expecting because their stomachs had swollen because of what they had been eating."

After the war Ken left the Royal Navy and returned to his home in Bristol, living happily with his wife Doris and their two children.

He returned to his work as a builder, retiring at the age of 58 to retrain as a chiropodist and practised for 12 years.

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Belfast will be back

BRITAIN'S last big-gun warship is due to re-open her gangway this summer with a new-look in time for her 50th anniversary as a floating museum.

HMS Belfast has been closed to the public since the first lockdown was announced in March last year.

Bosses at the Imperial War Museum, which owns the WW2 cruiser, have used the enforced closure to revamp the visitor experience as well as carry out some extensive TLC on the 83-year-old warship, not least repainting the hull.

The curatorial team have opened up new areas of the ship for visitors to explore when lockdown measures are lifted, updated existing displays with fresh interpretations and accounts

to explore the history of the ship, her crew, her actions and the wider role of the Royal Navy and the UK during Belfast's 25-year career as an active warship.

The focus is on the three key eras embraced by that career: World War 2, the end of Empire and Cold War, in particular the cruiser's role in the Korean War.

After decommissioning in 1963, Belfast spent several years in reserve and was due to be scrapped, but for a last-minute public campaign to save her.

That led to her being turned into a museum and she opened to visitors on the south bank of the Thames near Tower Bridge on Trafalgar Day in 1971.



Atlantic appeal

A LIGHT show casting the names of ships and men from the Battle of the Atlantic on to a Liverpool landmark will be the centrepiece of permanent 80th anniversary memorials.

Organisers are hoping to raise £750,000 to create four lasting reminders of the sacrifices made between 1939 and 1945 to keep Britain's sea lanes open and ultimately guarantee the defeat of Nazi Germany.

As headquarters of Western Approaches Command for most of World War 2, as well as being one of the UK's principal ports, Liverpool has become the focal point for remembering the battle down the decades.

The former Western Approaches HQ has long been a museum, legendary U-boat killer Captain 'Johnnie' Walker is immortalised in statue form and the city's parish church, St Nicholas', celebrates and commemorates Liverpool's association with the sea and the sacrifices it has demanded.

For the 80th anniversary in May 2023, the original plan was to unveil a £2.5m Battle of the Atlantic Memorial at Pier Head.

In view of the pandemic and the huge pressure on personal and public finances, the charity has replaced that with four smaller-scale projects, hopefully completed by May 2023.

- 'Atlantic lights' – a permanent light show each evening with the names of seafarers and ships involved beamed in Morse code on to the façade of Liverpool's

Cold War study begins

PLYMOUTH'S former naval base commander Commodore Ian Shipperley will report in July whether the city can host an ambitious Cold War museum.

He's carrying out a 16-week study into whether the likely multi-million pound project – which would feature veteran hunter-killer submarine HMS Courageous as its flagship exhibit – can find the funding and, crucially, keep the money coming in if it does.

A fundraising drive last year brought in £40,000 in nine weeks to fund the detailed study which will look at every aspect of the proposed 'Cold War Centre' in Plymouth.

The aim of the centre is to champion the role of the Royal Navy, the city of Plymouth and British engineering and technology in helping to stave off and ultimately eradicate the Communist threat between the late 1940s and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Cdre Shipperley will work with industry, museum and history specialists to compile his report which will form the basis for a business case should he decide that the centre could be a success.

The team behind the centre – including the former head of the Submarine Service, Rear Admiral John Weale, and Commander Ian Whitehouse, who skippered submarines HMS Onyx and Sovereign on patrols – believe the time is ripe not just for the museum, but the chance to snap up key Cold War artefacts with the MoD Submarine Disposal Programme running in Devonport.

As well as acting as a visitor attraction and highlighting a 'war' largely played out in the shadows and not recounted in many museums, one objective of the centre is to foster interest in science, technology and engineering – the fields which helped give Britain the edge over its Cold War foes.

iconic Exchange Flags office block complex (pictured), where Western Approaches Command was located from 1941-1945;

- A garden of remembrance at St Nicholas' Church;

- A heritage trail/audio tour across Merseyside taking in some of the key sites in the battle;

- A growing partnership with the Western Approaches Museum to preserve its unique collection and support educational projects.

Commodore Gary Doyle, who was the Royal Navy's regional commander in the North West and is now heading the memorial appeal, said the scaled-down plans were fitting given the austere circumstances – and he hoped would collectively "commemorate, educate and inspire".

He continued: "We feel we have to innovate and adapt to this new more challenging economic climate and we think the new concept is more

realistic.

"We particularly want to focus on how the Battle of the Atlantic was a great British and allied success story. We are a maritime nation and perhaps this battle was – with the support of many people from other nations – our greatest achievement. Without it we could not have fed or armed ourselves and there would have been no D-Day, no Bomber Command raids, no trans-Atlantic supplies to the Eastern Front or a North African campaign."

At least 111,000 sailors and military personnel from around the globe died in the six-year battle, including 26,500 British merchant and 23,000 Royal Navy sailors.

Some 3,500 merchantmen and 175 warships – 15 million tons of allied shipping in all – was lost, while three in every four U-boats was sunk.

The battle reached its peak between March and May 1943. In the final month, the Germans recalled their U-boats from the Atlantic after they suffered unsustainable losses: 43 boats sunk, 37 damaged.

They continued to menace shipping until the war's end, but never seriously threatened Britain's supply lines again.

For more information about the memorial, sponsorship packages and to make a donation visit: www.battleoftheatlantic.org or email: info@battleoftheatlantic.org.



How the West was built...

FASCINATING old photographs have been unearthed capturing the construction of Culdrose more than 70 years ago.

Lloyd Sluman found the tiny pictures, measuring just two inches square, among the papers of his late parents, who lived in nearby Porthleven.

His mother, Phyllis (pictured right), worked for construction company John Laing and Son Ltd, one of the main contractors responsible for building Culdrose in the mid-40s.

As well as showing workers clearing the land or building the first aircraft hangars, the photographs also capture more light-hearted moments, such as a company outing for families, and candid images of the staff at work.

Mr Sluman's mother worked in the site office in a secretarial role. Among the many documents which crossed her desk was the order for the firs which today stand by the entrance to the air station.

Construction of Culdrose began in 1944. The main contract was awarded to MacAlpine to level the ground and build the runways and accommodation blocks. The remaining work was awarded to international construction company John Laing and Son.

One of the first steps in building the air station was to divert the main Helston-Lizard away from the site to the south, where it remains today.

One of the photographs (below) shows a man standing beside a signpost on the junction of the Helston-Lizard road with the road to Gunwalloe and the old road to Gweek. In the background, looking south, is the site office of Laing and Son behind the air station's new perimeter fence.

This picture was taken near the main entrance to RNAS Culdrose where the bridge spans the road today. The road to Gweek was moved east to the end of the runways and later moved again outside the fence to its present location off the road to St Keverne.

"I think my mother might even have taken some of these photographs," says Mr Sluman, who lives near Liskeard. "They were always in an album and she'd look through them every so often. I found them among boxes of stuff belonging to my parents. I am not sure if they've ever been widely shared with the public before."

The tiny images are now held by Culdrose's archive. ■ Trainee photographer retraces Plymouth naval links on camera, p41.



Naval Quirks

ACCOMMODATION IN THE RN FOR THE LOWER DECK WASN'T ALWAYS AS SPACIOUS AS IT IS NOW..

UP TO WWI AND BEYOND CONDITIONS WERE STILL CRAMPED. AS A NOTE BY TOP RN WARSHIP DESIGNER, SIR EUSTACE TENNYSON & EYNCOURT, SHOWS :-

I wish I was 'Arris..

But he's in solitary confinement – oh, I see ...

THE BATTLESHIP "ORION" HAD 32.7 SQUARE FEET PER MAN. NOT MUCH – BUT THE CRUISER "BRISTOL" HAD ONLY 12.5 SQ FT PER MAN!

THAT'S A SPACE OF 4 FT BY 3 FT TO "LIVE, EAT AND SLEEPIN"!

Anyway, why so glum? I heard your transfer has come through..

Yes.. to a Midget sub! MICAH

Abu Dhabi days and knights for Penzance

HMS Penzance flew the flag for the navy, nation and British industry at one of the largest military events in the Middle East.

The Bahrain-based minehunter made the short journey to Abi Dhabi for the International Defence Exhibition (IDEX), leading five attending warships – UAE Shujaa, RBNS Al Muharrag, PNS Deshat, and PNS Rasadgar – into the show's jetty at the National Exhibition Centre.

Once alongside, Penzance was visited by the UK's Ambassador to the emirates, Patrick Moody, and the Defence Senior Advisor to the Middle East, Air Marshal Martin Sampson.

The exhibition was well-run; organisers had put in place a series of stringent Covid-protection measures to safeguard all attendees, including ship's companies.

While Penzance's sailors were not able to get ashore due to the pandemic, the visit was still very much a positive experience – especially the 'ringside seat' to air displays, such as the UAE Air Force's Al Fursan team ('The Knights') whose Aermacchi jets who trailed colours through the clear Gulf skies (pictured).

"It was good to be able to get alongside in the UAE," said Petty Officer Iain Moore.

"We were able to watch the air displays, look at all the new remotely-operated boats moored nearby and enjoy the UAE Army band, who were absolutely class. And we also were able to show off our ship and what she can do."

This is the 15th year that Royal Navy minehunters have been based continuously in the Gulf keeping shipping lanes open and working with our allies and partners in the region – something acknowledged by many of the attendees at IDEX.

"HMS Penzance was incredibly well-hosted by the UAE at this exhibition – it was a pleasure to attend and support," said the ship's commanding officer Lieutenant Commander Tom Gell.

"I am proud that we have maintained a continuous, 365-days-a-year Royal Navy mine countermeasures force in the Gulf for so long."



Knives out in the Gulf

A DOZEN warships – three of them British – mustered off the coast of Oman for the host's action-packed annual naval workout.

Khunjar Hadd – Arabic for sharp dagger – is the principal test of the Royal Navy of Oman and its ability to work with its allies in the region above, on and beneath the waves.

Britain, the USA and France accepted the invite for the 26th iteration of the exercise which featured most aspects of 21st Century naval warfare, from gunnery serials and formation sailing manoeuvres to pulse-raising exercises with French Air Force and Royal Air Force of Oman fast jets.

Flying the flag for the UK were frigate HMS Montrose, minehunter HMS Chiddingfold and support ship RFA Cardigan Bay – all based in Bahrain – working alongside ships from the host nation, plus US Navy and US Coast Guard.

For Montrose, the highlight of the eight days of Sharp Dagger was her participation in the air-defence exercise. The Type 23 frigate excelled in demonstrating her capability by providing air defence as part of the task group against fast jets – French Rafales, Omani Typhoons and Hawks. In a real-world scenario, the frigate's Sea Ceptor missile system provides cover over more than 750 square miles of ocean (roughly the size of Oxfordshire), the weapon striking incoming hostile threats at three times the speed of sound.

Other activity above the waves included extensive training with Omani and US Navy helicopters – Super Lynx and Seahawks (the naval version of the Blackhawk) – board-and-search exercises and some



● A US Navy Seahawk hovers off Montrose's flight deck and hangar while (top) the frigate's 30mm gun is brought into action

live gunnery, plus some impressive seamanship manoeuvring the 12 participating ships into formation.

Beneath the waves, HMS Chiddingfold and her mother ship Cardigan Bay focused on the mine 'threat' – bread and butter to both, but the presence of major warships such as Montrose and the US Navy cruiser USS Port Royal and fast jets added several extra, exciting dimensions to their regular training.

"The exercise was a fantastic show of highly-coordinated, collaborative force across a range of disciplines – many of which are rarely encountered on a mine countermeasures vessel and therefore we relish the chance to practise them," said Sub Lieutenant Andrew Bonham, Chiddingfold's navigator, 26, from Glasgow.

Lieutenant Daniel Fergusson from nearby Motherwell, who's completing his officer training aboard the minehunter, added. "Working with other ships it was great to see how other nationalities practise mine hunting and other disciplines, such as air defence which we don't normally

do. For a small ship, it shows us how capable we are when required."

The Royal Navy's minehunting force is celebrating 15 years continuously on operations in the Gulf, expanding from two ships initially to five today (four minehunters, one command ship).

Embarked on the latter, RFA Cardigan Bay, were the staff of the Commander UK Mine Countermeasures Force, who direct and support all British mine warfare exercises and operations in the Gulf region and regularly support our allies.

"We're here to improve our ability to work with the US, French, and Omani – and we've proven this capability," explained Lieutenant Commander Max Wilmot, chief-of-staff.

"These exercises also provide reassurance that the motorways of the sea are safe for personnel and merchant vessels to transit and allow us to conduct valuable defence engagement with our international partners."

HMS Chiddingfold searched ten miles of sea lanes for mines, found two dummy variants and dealt with. She also 'rafted up' with Cardigan Bay – came alongside at sea – to take on fuel and stores.

"The exercise was extremely useful for the mine warfare department," said Lieutenant Jason Rogers, Chiddingfold's 35-year-old Operations Officer from Southampton. "The crew worked hard to maintain their skills throughout the execution of the entire exercise."



● An Omani Super Lynx carries out rapid roping drills over Montrose's flight deck while a US Navy Seahawk hovers off the frigate's bow with cruiser USS Port Royal in the distance



In winch we serve

TWO of the Royal Navy's Coastal Forces Squadron patrol boats conducted training with a pair of Commando Wildcat helicopters.

The action-packed day saw HMS Ranger (pictured here with an aircrewman on her quarterdeck) and Exploit carry out transfers, wet winching and heli-casting with the aircraft from 847 Naval Air Squadron in Weymouth Bay.

The two P2000 provided Marine 11 and 12 with a challenging platform to enable essential training for the aircrew who are continually held at readiness to deploy.

And cruise liners laid up by the pandemic – including Cunard's mighty Queen Victoria (90,000 tonnes) and Tui's Marella Explorer 2 (a 'mere' 72,000 tonnes) – provided an impressive, if unusual backdrop to the training.

These exercises marked the beginning of the P2000 deployment period.

From winching with Wildcats and providing force protection to HMS Queen Elizabeth, to providing training support to FOST (North and South), Phase 1 trainees, warfare and navigation training, the P2000s of the Portsmouth-based Coastal Forces Squadron have also supported 'virtual' training events to not only University Royal Naval Units but a vast array of youth groups during the pandemic.

The 12 P2000 and two fast patrol craft Sabre and Scimitar are dispersed across nine ports around the UK, providing maritime security in collaboration with the Joint Maritime Security Centre.

The squadron is now preparing to support task group training as part of multi-national exercises Strike Warrior (off Scotland this month) and BALTOPS (later this spring in the Baltic).

Rock return for Dasher

BACK in the water and safeguarding Gibraltar is HMS Dasher after completing her winter maintenance.

The P2000 was cradled out of the harbour for the annual revamp of her machinery, hull inspection, paint job and the like – routine work made more challenging by strict adherence to Covid regulations.

With her sister Pursuer, she's plugging the gap between the retirement of HMS Sabre and Scimitar last summer from duties with the RN Gibraltar Squadron and the arrival of two new fast patrol craft as the backbone of the force next winter/spring 2022.

Since arriving last summer, Dasher alone has covered 543 nautical miles patrolling the Rock's territorial waters – enough to take her to Barcelona.

As well as the two P2000s, the squadron uses four RIBS to provide force protection and security within territorial waters alongside upholding UK sovereignty.

BREAKING UP A GOLD-WAR BEAST

THIS is a Handley Page Victor, still an imposing sight nearly seven decades after its debut in UK skies and a quarter of a century after it last flew.

And it fell to Royal Navy personnel to help dismantle the giant, its duty as gate guardian at the home of the UK's F-35 Lightning jets at RAF Marham done.

From the late 1950s until the early 1990s, the Victor was, firstly, the backbone of the UK's strategic bomber fleet as part of the triumvirate of V-bombers alongside the Vulcan and Valiant before the Submarine Service took over the full-time deterrence mission at the end of the 60s.

The Victor also served as in-flight refuelling tankers either following conversion or, in the case of XH673 here, straight from the assembly line.

Their finest hour came supporting Operation Black Buck during the Falklands War, when Victors from Marham provided fuel for the legendary long-range mission by a Vulcan to bomb Argentine forces at Port Stanley airport.

Potential purchasers had initially been invited to submit bids to take on the aircraft

but, due to the size of the Victor and the complexities in removing and maintaining her, along with the associated costs, no-one was able to take on the project.

Enter the team from the Joint Aircraft Recovery and Transportation Squadron – JARTS – to take down the former tanker, which was in a poor state.

JARTS, based at MOD Boscombe Down in Wiltshire, comprises personnel from the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, who are dedicated to the safe recovery and transportation of crashed aircraft in the UK and overseas.

JARTS enlisted the help of Recovery Mechanics from 7 Aviation Close Support Battalion REME, based at Wattisham Airfield in Suffolk.

They supported with the preparation of the ground and used their MAN SVR Recovery vehicles to pull the Victor from her position on a gravel area, on to the hardstanding of the station car park before dismantling could commence.

Following months of planning, made even more complicated with the additional Covid-19 precautions that had to be put in place, and after the

bird nesting season, the work to dismantle the aircraft was finally underway.

The whole removal process took approximately two weeks with the team working into the night on occasions to get the job done.

JARTS project manager, Chief Petty Officer Tim Burton, said: "When we were asked to assist with the disposal of the Victor Gate Guardian we jumped at the chance.

"We don't get tasked to deal with the recovery of a large aircraft such as this very often, so this was a fantastic training opportunity for the team.

"There were added challenges with the removal as we had to ensure that Covid-19 guidelines were adhered to and, with the proud history of the Victor, we had to dismantle her in a sensitive manner. I am really proud of the way the JARTS team and Recovery Mechanics from 7 Aviation Close Support Battalion REME worked together to achieve this."

Roger Haller, who was the last Victor Crew Chief, described it as "a bit of

a sad day".

"I have some fond memories of this [the aircraft], going around the world in that," the RAF veteran said.

RAF Marham Station Commander, Group Captain Jim Beck, said: "Whilst it was sad to see the Victor gate guardian go, the decision to remove her had to be made. Despite the fantastic efforts of a team of volunteers who tried to maintain her the aircraft was in very poor condition.

"We didn't have the time, funds or indeed the expertise to keep her in a safe condition. The Victor will not be forgotten though as there are plans to commemorate the V Force within the area where the Victor stood when the aircraft is replaced by a Tornado GR4."

Victor aircraft can still be seen at the Royal Air Force Museum and the Imperial War Museum collection at Duxford.

RAF Marham is home to the joint RAF/RN Lightning Force F-35B, with air and ground crew due to join HMS Queen Elizabeth's Carrier Strike Group this month for final pre-deployment training before the flagship heads off on her first operation to the Asia-Pacific region. Picture: SAC Craig Williams, RAF Marham



Commandos get in the headset mindset

ROYAL Marines have trialled the use of virtual reality technology to sharpen combat tactics and techniques.

Marines from 40 Commando's Alpha Company experimented with the SAF-TACVR training programme developed by SimCentric, which is able to take commandos into challenging virtual combat scenarios around the world at the press of a button.

The immersive software creates an artificial environment specifically for military simulation and training using virtual reality headsets.

It allows users to construct virtual scenarios for specific operations and gives feedback to analyse the success of each serial.

The use of the software is to support real-life training, not replace it.

It's all part of Future Commando Force development and allows marines to focus on important tactics and techniques as part of the bold modernisation, before using them in real-life training exercises.

Lieutenant Henry Dufosse said: "It's incredibly real, so real that you sort of lose all situational awareness of the outside and you're solely focused on the moment that you're in.

"It takes a bit of time to get used to but I suppose being part of the video game generation, we're fairly used to using screens and things like that. It may be a little bit nauseous towards the end but after a little bit of time it was absolutely fine.

"It's realistic and that's what we need to train for. It's that realism, that real world application."

The system supports close combat and vehicle training. It can be easily adapted to bring in new environments and situations to challenge the users, taking them across various terrains with different objectives.

SimCentric's Vice President Tom Constable, said: "This is not about replacing that real life training – real life training should always be the go-to option.

"However, as we've seen, and as we know, and I know, it's not always the case. You can't always go and do that live training.

"There's a lot of logistical and funding constraints associated with live training. What we're trying to do is provide the next best option and using feedback from the troops we can keep on refining this to assure that when they can't do the live training they've

got as good an option we can provide."

During the trials at 40 Commando's Norton Manor Camp, the marines used the VR to train in manoeuvring in small teams.

Lt Dufosse added: "We rolled out initially just doing basic skills and drills, shooting down a range of various weapons system, getting to know the system before rolling out into a more tactical scenario where we assaulted a house as a 12-man team. It's a chance for the lads to shakeout and do different tactics and exercise different elements of command and control.

"We're trialling new 12-man team concepts as part of the Future Commando Force concept for the Royal Marines and it's just about trialling new tactics on the ground, low-level tactics and how we manoeuvre as a 12-man team.

"If you get a mission set or a target pack, you can plug it into the system and go through a few drills before you go into target. It's great to use on camp as well, even sort of the allocation of training resource is in the military. If we can't get access to a range or a training area, then having it in our own back garden is pretty useful."



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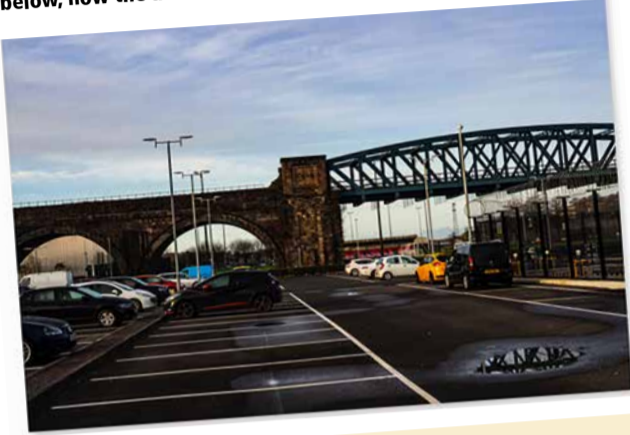
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Snapshots of change over the decades



Above, firefighters deal with a blaze in 1944, below, how the area looks now



Above, Norwegian sailors at HMNB Devonport, below, how the area looks now



ICONIC images of World War 2 bomb-damaged Plymouth and Devonport have been revisited by a trainee Royal Navy photographer.

The work was part of a collection of pictures for the Defence Photography Course, which began last month, at RAF Cosford in the Midlands.

Encouraged by the rich history surrounding HMNB Devonport and the barrack area of HMS Drake, Able Seaman Gareth Smith has meticulously researched where a series of 1940s pictures were taken during the war and placed them alongside what is there today.

"I took the inspiration from working day to day around the base and the city," said Gareth.

"I found I could identify some of the places and with a bit of leg work, research and looking around, certain landmarks in the background pointed me to the right place.

"Much of what was there has gone, redeveloped soon after the war, but it was amazing to get the right location, after all these years."

The Plymouth Blitz was a series of bombing raids launched during WW2 by the German Luftwaffe.

The Royal Dockyard at Devonport was the main target and in early 1941, five raids in particular reduced much of Plymouth to rubble. Nearly every civic building was destroyed.

More than two dozen schools suffered the same fate, as did 40 places of worship. Most were rebuilt but Charles Church was left in ruins as a memorial.

Despite this, and the high level of civilian casualties, the dockyard continued in operation.

Gareth added: "This personal project really brought a sense of perspective to the catastrophic damage caused to Plymouth during the Blitz.

"I sought to revise important historical moments captured during WW2 in Plymouth and Devonport, comparing them to the peaceful present day.

"For a relatively small city and with the extent of the damage Plymouth took it's truly remarkable how the city rebuilt itself after the war. 1,174 people were killed and 4,448 were injured in Plymouth over the course of the war and around 30,000 people were left homeless."



Above, firefighters deal with a blaze in 1944, below, how the area looks now



Then and now, St Andrew's Church on Royal Parade, Plymouth



Then and now, Charles Church in Plymouth



Above, Sailors dance to a band on Plymouth Hoe in 1941



Above, Wrens on parade and below, how the site looks today



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Toughest of training

PERSONNEL are pictured taking part in the Reserve Forces Commando Course.

The course is the culmination of nearly 18 months of Royal Marine Reserve Training, delivered by the four RMR Units - London, Bristol, Mersey and Scotland - in conjunction with Commando Training Centre Royal Marines.

Lt Col Olly Todd, Commanding Officer of RMR London, said: "The current RFCC includes many ranks whose training was significantly disrupted by Covid-19, some were unable to attend the same course run at CTCRM in December.

"This course started with 15 ranks and is now at 13, and it includes builders, business consultants, students, estate agents and even a commercial pilot. However they are indistinguishable from their regular counterparts in terms of the tests they complete and the standards they have to meet.

"Their training has largely been achieved through giving up almost every Wednesday night and at least one weekend every month for the last 18 months (during lockdown we delivered some training over Zoom), much of this conducted in a socially distanced, Covid-compliant manner. We anticipate after a well-deserved rest some of these individuals will choose to mobilise in support of 3 Commando Brigade."



Navy's Got talent

Actor joins reserves

A STAR of stage and screen has gone from wearing a crown to serving the Crown,

Toby Osmond is now building a successful career as a Royal Naval Reservist with HMS President in London.

He appeared in the final ever episode of hit TV show *Game of Thrones* as the last Dornish Prince, a role which has catapulted his career to new heights.

He also appeared in WW2 movie *Summerland* alongside Gemma Arterton, and has even been beheaded on screen as Thomas Cromwell in *Henry the VIII and His Six Wives*.

However, it was working with military veterans on the sci-fi film *Black Ops* that sparked his interest in life as a reservist.

Toby said: "Working with military veterans as stunt doubles on set was really inspiring and made me think about joining the forces.

"For me it had to be the Royal Navy as my grandfather served onboard a minehunter in WW2, and my great-



grandfather died serving in WW1.

"I've also been around boats my whole life and live on one now so I've always had a wanderlust for the sea.

"There are many similarities between going to HMS Raleigh and drama school.

"They really break you down, and strip out all the layers to reveal your core character and then build you back up again.

"You get to really know yourself and build your self-confidence, teamwork and communication skills.

"Being both an actor and a sailor you find yourself in the most peculiar situations that you would never get to experience in a nine to five city job. Many of the skills I learnt in acting are really useful for life as a reservist and I've made many new lifelong friends along the way with the people I've trained alongside at HMS Raleigh."

Toby, whose Navy nicknames include Donny and Wizard, has undergone training at HMS Raleigh and BRNC Dartmouth, and is now an able seaman.

He won the best new eEntry prize at his home unit HMS President at St Katharine Docks, near Tower Bridge.



Ho'way the new boats

ROYAL Navy reservists at HMS Calliope marked a milestone as the unit's new RHIBs took to the water for the first time.

The rigid hulled inflatable boats were lowered into Royal Quays Marina near the mouth of the River Tyne and taken eight miles (13km) upriver to Calliope's headquarters at Gateshead.

The new boats are part of the Maritime Reserves' transformation to better support the Royal Navy, with Calliope, Cambria in Cardiff and Eaglet in Liverpool each receiving two Gemini RHIBs.

The training will be based around the internationally-

recognised RYA Powerboat Scheme, which includes essential skills of seamanship, navigation and radio communications.

Calliope's Commanding Officer, Commander Chris Bovill, said: "This is a significant milestone in delivering maritime capability to the RNR.

"These RHIBs will play a significant part in shaping the future organisation and the future workforce of Maritime Reserves in the North East at HMS Calliope."

The RHIBs will be used to train reservists, enabling them to serve at sea with the Royal Navy fleet.





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Top of their game



● CPO Claire Drew linking up live online for her three-minute effort with the UKAF women's relay team at WRIC 21



● Above left, WO1 Mark Branson won bronze at the WRIC; Above right, Lt Cdr Stuart Moss finished fourth in the men's heavyweight and below, took third place in the CrashB championships, all from his garage, where he could see how he was doing on the screen, below, before 'crashing out' after his efforts, right

ANDREW BENKO	6	33	1:32
JOHN THOMSON	3	2m	37 1:33
STEWART MOSS	10	16m	35 1:34
DAVID DIX	1	17m	32 1:34
FREDERIC KOWAL	9	33m	31 1:36
LEIF GUNLEIFSEN	2	35m	35 1:35
KEVIN SPENCER	5	323m	35 1:43
MARK 2833m	NGPHANPHANEE	28	2:07
PHILIP HEALY	17	34	1:39
GERMAN RENDO	18	4m	32 1:40
NEALL O'TOOLE	15	35m	34 1:38
CARLOS REATEI	14	35m	36 1:40
DARIE HAMPHOS	20	35m	38 1:40
ZSOLT DARVA	19	43m	32 1:41



FIVE members of the Royal Navy Indoor Rowing team competed in the finals of the covid-compliant World Rowing Indoor Championships.

Tough qualification criteria saw RN ergers competing in 2k age group finals comprising just ten racers from around the globe.

Fastest RN 2k was set by C/Sgt James Wade (30Cdo) with his 6 mins 06.4 secs to finish fifth in the men's heavyweight 30+, with his normal strong finish bearing down on Olympic-class rowers.

Lt Cdr Stu Moss (HMS Vanguard) was 0.1 secs short of both a personal best (pb) and a medal as he finished fourth in the men's heavyweight 50+ in 6 mins 14.9 secs.

WO1 Mark Branson (Sultan) won bronze as he set an outstanding pb of 7 mins 03.0 secs in the men's lightweight 60+.

Sultan instructor Sam Young finished ninth in the women's lightweight 50+ in 8 mins 43.3 secs, not quite a pb.

C/Sgt Wade warmed up the day before his 2k with a storming performance over three mins to achieve 1,025m (1.27.8/500m avg pace) as the UKAF Men's Relay Team (4x 3mins) won a bronze behind the Finland and Egyptian national teams, just 4m short of a silver.

Completing the RN involvement was CPO Claire Drew (CNR), who competed for UKAF in both the women's and mixed (two women, two men) relay teams, finishing fourth and eighth respectively, pleased with her ability to go further (+4m) and faster (by 0.5secs/500m) in the latter event to achieve 847m at 1min 46.2 secs/500m avg pace).

The following weekend, a total of 21 RN indoor rowers were among 1,305 entrants contesting the CrashB Sprints Indoor Rowing Championships, incorporating the US Rowing Indoor Championships, hosted from Boston USA.

The 'Charles River All Star Has Beens (CRASHB) was previously the World Indoor Rowing Champs for 35 years until 2018, when World Rowing formally established indoor rowing as a World Championships.

After the USA, the RN had the highest number of entries (equal to Mexico, more than Canada).

All RN 21 competed in 2k age group races live on-line, between 1900-2215 UK time, grateful that it was in US Eastern Time (+5hrs) and not Pacific Time (+8 hrs).

CPO Claire Drew in the women's 43-49 age group, pushed her personal best close with a time of 7 mins 32.6 secs to take bronze, as did Lt Cdr Stu Moss.

Those who have raced maximal effort 2k races will appreciate the extended timescale to recover fully.

There were no separate lightweight races, all raced within age categories, but with LWts designated accordingly. POPT Rich Charrett (Sultan) was the second lightweight finisher in the men's 27-32 age group with a time of 6 mins 50.1 secs.

WO1 Mark Branson matched his 3rd place WRIC finish in the men's 60-64 Age group, with a time of 7 mins 05.6 secs.

Many of the Royal Navy team continue to row at the top end of global rankings, reaping the benefits of long-term structured training to yield development of fitness and performance.

Many have set 2k personal bests over the past season, including at CRASHB, WO1 Jack Greenan (HMS Vigilant), 6 mins 49.4 secs, and CPO Mark Gains (Sultan), 7 mins 15.0 secs, both having achieved significant improvement within the Sultan Massive training group under POPT Charrett in the past two years.

It was good to see Lt Cdr Moss, Col Tom Blythe (MOD) and Brig Matt Jackson (3CDOX COMD) finishing third, fourth and fifth in the men's 50-54 age group, with much live-streaming publicity.

All three have benefited as disciples of Cdr Jim Thomson (Navy PCAP) within the RN Indoor Rowing Performance Programme (RNIRPP).

Another RNIRPP devotee, Lt Sam Cass (820 NAS) was the fastest RN racer of the day, with 6 mins 20.2 secs in the men's heavyweight 27-32 age group.

The 2020/21 indoor rowing season approaches a conclusion, having made the most of virtual opportunities and associated technology to train and race through the pandemic, but as with all sports looking forward to future group training and mass racing opportunities when the situation allows.

For more details about the sport, email paul.winton177@mod.gov.uk

Report: Paul Winton



Running in the freezer



ROYAL Marines braved sub-zero temperatures on the first-ever commando Arctic half marathon on their winter deployment in northern Norway.

The commandos are in the Arctic to refresh skills in surviving, moving and fighting in one of the world's most unforgiving environments.

More than 50 members of 3 Commando Brigade found time during the Cold Weather Warfare Course to run the 13.1 mile course.

This was the first time a half marathon had been organised as part of a winter deployment, but as it was so successful plans are in place to make it an annual fixture.

Temperatures dropped to -17C and hard-packed snow caused treacherously slippery conditions underfoot.

Despite some excellent competition, Surgeon Lieutenant Ben Smith of 45 Commando came out on top in 1 hour 24 minutes.

He said: "The conditions were challenging, but the pressure of not knowing what position I was in definitely kept me working hard right to the end."

Race organiser Corporal Scott Constable, added: "Being deployed 200 miles inside the Arctic Circle is a challenge for everyone, so it was fantastic to see so many turn out today to push themselves even further.

As the conditions were so extreme, every runner had to wear full-length clothing, a hat, gloves, plus a rucksack containing spare warm clothes. Medics were standing by at 5km intervals and more were patrolling the route in vehicles so they could react quickly in case of an injury.

Runners were set off at ten-second intervals to comply with Covid-19 regulations, meaning the overall winner couldn't be confirmed until after everyone finished.

Once all runners had finished and replaced their lost calories with a pasta lunch, prizes were awarded by Lieutenant Colonel Rob Jones, Commanding Officer Commando Logistic Regiment.

Pictures: PO (Phot) Si Ethell



£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the February edition of *Navy News* (right) was the C-class light cruiser HMS Colombo, which captured the German merchant ship Henning Oldendorff off Iceland.

Mr SG Smith, from Whitland, Wales, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (above) is an A-class destroyer, which was commissioned in 1930, served during WW2 before being written off in 1943.

1. What was her name and 2. How did she become severely damaged?

Please complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we will also accept emailed entries to bm@navynews.co.uk with April



Mystery Ship in the email header. Coupons and emails giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Entries must be received by May 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 June edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 314

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

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Talking Navy News

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in May's Noticeboard must be received by

April 15, 2021

Deaths

George Strachan, PO Chef. Served from 1948 to 1970 in Hartland Point (1949), Amethyst (1950), Orion (1954), Ocean (1955), LCT 4074 (1958), Eagle (1959), Bulwark (1961), Fife (1962), Fox (1964), and Minerva (1965). Also served at Corsham, Drake, Lymstone, Nuthatch, Carlisle, Raleigh, and Haybrook Bay. Died January 2, aged 90.

Ron Gumery. Served in HMS Tenby (F65) from 1969 to 1973 as EM1. Member of HMS Tenby Association. Died December 31, aged 73.

Brian 'Perry' Mason, CCY. Served for around 28 years, including in HMS Intrepid during the Falklands conflict. Died February 15.

John Coulston, LCK. Served in HMS Raleigh, HMS Tiger, and HMS Eagle. Died August 2020, aged 71.

Kenneth Simpson, Telegraphist. Served from 1943 to 1946 in Mercury, Adamant, Boscawen, Cyclops and HM Submarine Tapir. Was serving on Tapir when she sank U-486 off the coast of Norway.

U-486 sank the Leopoldville with the loss of 750 allied soldiers. Died February 12, aged 95.

Lt Cdr Richard L Benham. HMS Letterston, Dryad, Hermes, Tartar, Glamorgan, Heron, Osprey, Yarrnton, Ambuscade, Amazon, C-in-C Fleet, Illustrious, and Nelson. Died February 6, aged 73.

Lt Michael T Cooper. HMS Tiptoe. Died December 21, aged 83.

Lt Cdr Matthew French. HMS Protector, Excellent, Drake, Fawn, Hecla, Endurance, Pembroke, Enterprise, Herald, Vernon, and Bulldog. MOD Taunton. Died February 17, aged 75.

Lt Cdr John H Hardwick MBE. HMS Drake, Dryad, and Falmouth. Died February 16, aged 90.

Cdr Edgar M Horne AFC. HMS Osprey, President, Blake, Saker, Heron, and Centurion. Chief of Fleet Support, Boscombe Down, SHAPE. Died January 14.

Inst Lt Cdr Barry Jackson. HMS Ganges, and Collingwood. BRNC Dartmouth. Died January 1, aged 78.

Cdr Malcolm R Legg. HMS Fulmar, Osprey, Endurance, Hermes, and Ark Royal. RAF Staff College Bracknell. Died December 21.

Lt Cdr Neil O Macleay. HMS Penston, Dufton, Wilkieston, Naiad, Hardy, and Sultan. Died February 7.

Cdr Keith D Vicary MBE. HMS Saker, Osprey, and Nelson. NATO SACLANT. Died February 13, aged 96.

Captain Stephen Harwood. Younger son of Commodore Henry Harwood (later Admiral Sir Henry) who commanded the British Forces at the Battle of the River Plate. Served in HM Ships Ark Royal

(twice), NAIAD, ASWE, AUWE and BRNC Dartmouth. Retired in 1981. Key member of the team which commissioned a memorial at the NMA and arranged a dinner to mark the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of the River Plate in 2014. Died February 19, aged 89.

Ian Wright. Served as an LSA in HMS AJAX 1944-47. A period which included repatriation of German sailors from South America. Died January 28, aged 92.

Richard Llewellyn. Served in HMS AJAX as a Midshipman 1943-44. Served in AJAX on D-Day landings. Very involved in subsequent D-Day events. Died February 9, aged 95.

Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOc

Cdre Robert A S Irving. HMS Victory, Gurkha, Phoebe, NATO, Defence Intel Staff, Naval Attache Cairo. Died February 17.

Cdr Michael T Roberts OBE. HMS Osprey, Undaunted, Gurkha, Ariadne, Kent, Warrior, Cochrane, QHM Clyde, Muscat Armed Forces, Dir Naval Assistance Overseas. RAN. Died February 24, aged 86.

Submariners' Association

Leslie Hanks, PO Tel. Served 1942 to 1954 in HM Submarines

Thule, Thorough, Thermopylae, Aurochs, and Alderney. Member of Portsmouth Branch. Died February 3, aged 96.

Rupert Best, Cdr. Served 1966 to 1989 in HM Submarines Ocelot (2), Sealion, Trump, Opportune, Courageous (2), and Sceptre. Member of Dorset Branch. Died February 3, aged 77.

Robert G. Wright, L/S (TS)(SM). Served 1979 to May 1988 in HM Submarines Repulse (S) (80-82), and Renown (P) (83-88). Member of Northern Ireland Branch. Died February 12, aged 61.

James Axford, CPO Coxn. Served May 1956 to Dec 1966 in HM Submarines Scorcher (56), Thermopylae (56-58), Anchorite (58-60), Orpheus (60), Token (62-64), Cachalot (65), and Artful (66). Member of Manchester Branch. Died February 21, aged 87.

Richard Rothwell, CPO TASI. Served 1963 to 1984 in HM Submarines Oracle, Valiant, Repulse (x2), Revenge (x2), and Resolution. Member of Merseyside Branch. Died February 27, aged 77.

Fred Henley, PO TD2. Served April 1948 to Nov 1951 in HM Submarines Spiteful, Truculent, Scotsman, Selene, and Sidon. Member of Colchester Branch. Died February 27, aged 97.

Ask Jack

HMS Raleigh - Drake 25s - 21st June 1977: Looking to contact fellow shipmates of the infamous class of Drake 25s and planning to have a reunion, after the dreadful COVID-19 epidemic. Already in contact with a number of classmates. Any members out there, that wishes to connect, please contact me directly.

David Cannon
dcannon8bells@outlook.com

Mick Pearce: I am trying to contact Mick, who got in touch about four years ago. Unfortunately I mislaid the envelope with the letter and photos but they turned up late last year. I have tried without success to contact Mick.

Tony Freshwater
Wellington NZ.
Facetime or Whatsapp on +6421384205 or tony.fresh2o@gmail.com

HMS Norfolk: I am after information about the ship's first commission. I was in the Royal Navy for six years, then in the RFA for seven. I joined Norfolk while she was being built at Swan Hunter on the Tyne in 1970 until 1972. When we arrived in Portsmouth in January 1972 I am sure we stayed alongside for about six months or so. The only time I recall us going to sea was for Sea Slug trials and a visit to Malta. We have a friendly debate about port visits every year at the County Class destroyer reunion. I would love to

know where she did go.

Dennis Gilmore
dennisgilmore@live.co.uk

Ganges Class 283, January 2 1961: In January 2021 it was 60 years since we first met. I am in touch with a number of members and we are thinking of possibly meeting up in the Birmingham area. If there are any members who are interested in a class reunion, please contact me.

Alan Barry
Barryaj@virginmedia.com

Margaret Foster: She joined the Wrens in 1967 and I would like to get in contact with her.

Malcolm Henley
Malcolm73@msn.com or 07759818201

HMS Forest Moor - 1960 to 2003: I am researching HMS Forest Moor with a view to writing a book. I served there as the Engineer Officer from 1988 to 1991. I would greatly appreciate hearing from anybody who served there and for any information or photos.

Jerry Anderson
jerryanderson@btinternet.com

Portsmouth barges: In 1972 I was a Leading Marine Engineer (Stoker) looking after the Commander in Chief's two barges at Admiralty House, Portsmouth. On a later visit for Navy Days there was no sign of them. Does anyone know what happened to them?

One was a 45 footer and the other a 35 footer (old money) the engines were 2 Foden in the 45 and 2 Perkins in the 35.

John Pittock
Johngp46@yahoo.co.uk

Gerald Smith and James Murphy: I am trying to find out details about my grandfather who may have used two names, Gerald Horace Patrick Smith and James Michael Murphy. Gerald was born on August 4 1901 and died in February 1949. He served in the Royal Navy and when he died the doctor who certified his death said he was at least 20 years older than he claimed. Gerald, who was from Ireland, also said he had saved the life of a man called Fred Key while in service and they remained friends until he died. James was born May 5 1878 in Ireland but I cannot find a record of his death. I would appreciate any help in this search.

Kay Smith
Smith_kay@sky.com or 07887 872009.

HMS Valiant. My father Peter Berry served in the boat in the 1970s and 80s and I would like to have a copy of the original 'Skimmer Killer' drawing by Harry McGroarty, which features a shark jumping out of the water about to punch a frigate.

Juliet Berry
goolie40@hotmail.co.uk

Reunions

HMS Intrepid: A reunion takes place at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, on July 24, 2021. Contact Ian Richards at iansrich@outlook.com for booking form and itinerary.

738 Kings Squad, Royal Marines. Our reunion will take place from August 12 to 14 2021. I have contacted 18 members so far but are after details of the following: Andrewartha; Bateman; Cheney; Comper; Denver; Ellis; Graham; Lambert; Merry; McFarling; Plant; Saunders.

Roger 'Taff' Sheppard
01656 670224
shep9409@gmail.com

HMS Liverpool Association: Our reunion will be held on June 12. For membership details contact the secretary John Parker at info@hmsliverpoolassociation.org.uk or call 02392 521222.

HMS Cleopatra Old Shipmates Association: Our 36th AGM and reunion is planned at the Best 5-7 from November 5 to 7. Contact the Honorary Secretary Warwick Franklin at warwick_franklin@outlook.com or ring 01752 366611 for details.

RMBS 1/70 and 2/70 Squad. A joint 50th anniversary reunion of 1/70 and 2/70 squads is planned for August 2021 in Deal. Contact Nick Buckley on nickbuckley55@aol.com

BRNC Entry Sept 1980 40th anniversary reunion dinner, BRNC Dartmouth, planned for March 27, 2021, has been postponed. Details from Cdr N J 'Nobby' Hall, neil.hall324@mod.gov.uk

HMS Undaunted, Eagle and Yarmouth Associations: Annual reunion, Hallmark Hotel, Midland Road, Derby, October 28 to November 1, 2021. Contact Alan (Whiskey) Walker on 01268 548041, whiskey666@outlook.com

HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association: The 2021 annual reunion at the Royal Beach Hotel,

Southsea, has been moved from May to August 13 to 16. Contact Secretary Denis Askham at 07773651213 or email askhamd3@gmail.com

HMS Londonderry: The re-arranged reunion planned for June 2021 (announced in December's *Navy News*) is now cancelled due to the company organising the event ceasing trading. No further reunions are planned.

HMS Tartar: Our reunion will take place at the Royal Maritime Hotel, Portsmouth, from October 1 to 4, 2021. For details contact Andy Eason on roseandandy12@gmail.com, telephone 07812 600568, or Linda Powell on linpowe25@gmail.com, telephone 07513 413460

HMS Troubridge Final Commission Association 1966-69: Our reunion will be at the Royal Beach Hotel, Portsmouth, from October 8 to 10 2021. Contact Bryan Pace at Romft1@GMail.com or our website HMSTroubridge.com.

Reserves update rescue skills

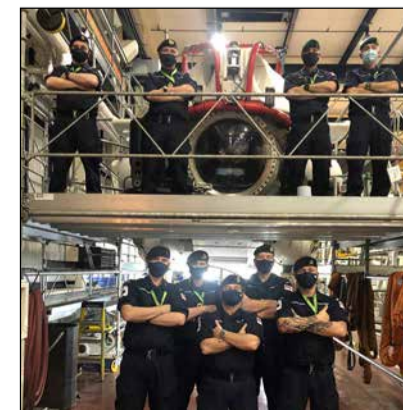


RESERVISTS updated their skills during a trip to the NATO Submarine Rescue System at HMNB Clyde. Members of the Reserve Diving Group provide support to the Fleet Diving Squadron.

Commander Richard 'Soapy' Watson said: "The unique selling point of Reserve Diving Group is that we are a group of specialists who operate the system over an extended period of time and therefore become very proficient in it's safe operation."

The team includes WO1(D) Steve Strange and CPO(D) Chris Betts, who both served as regulars before joining the Maritime Reserves. Other members of the team include serving police divers, firefighters, commercial divers and ex-Royal Engineer divers.

Pictures: Reserve Forces and Cadets' Association, SE



Sub standard literature

STANDING in front of a newly-acquired library of submarine books are Commander Ben Haskins (aka Teacher) and Warrant Officer 1 Marc Greggain.

The broad body of literature behind them is a comprehensive collection of submarine-themed books donated by a former boat commander so that tomorrow's submarine captains can benefit from their forebears' knowledge and experience.

David Parry has added considerably to the library of the Submarine Command Course (aka Perisher) by handing over his library to the Faslane-based team: more than 280 tomes.

During his Royal Navy career, David served with submarines HMS Amphion, Narwhal, Andrew, and Conqueror. It was following his time on HMS Conqueror that he was selected for Perisher and after successfully completing the course he took command of conventional submarine HMS Opportune in 1980. After a short spell with hunter-killer HMS Swiftsure he left the Navy due to an injury.

David went on to enjoy a career in the high-tech and space industries, but on retirement he rekindled his interest in the Submarine Service, choosing to research the history of the Perisher course as part of his PhD at King's College London in 2017, in line with the 100th Anniversary of the course.

Through his research, the former submarine skipper visited Faslane a couple of times and met two classes



of Perisher students. While he was immensely impressed by their maturity and professionalism, he thought that their knowledge of the history of the Submarine Service could be improved.

"I was extremely grateful to the staff and students for allowing me to visit and wanted to do something to show my thanks," he said.

David returned from his visits and began collecting submarine-related books to send to Faslane – the tally is now 282 titles.

The books are mainly (auto)biographical or technical, and while most are about the Royal Navy there are also several relating to the German, American and Russian submarine services as well.

The collection of books range from the very early days of submarines with autobiographies like Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon's *From 1900 Onward* – David describes Bacon as the first inspecting Captain Submarines and the midwife to the Submarine Service – through to recent studies like *The Silent Deep* by Peter Hennessy and James Jinks, which provides the history of the Submarine Service from 1945 to the present.

The collection also includes many titles covering WW2, from which Perisher students can gain an understanding of how submarine commanding officers coped with the pressures and stresses of operations in places like the Mediterranean and Far East.

So which books in his collection would the veteran submariner recommend to those wishing to follow in his footsteps?

Well, for a start, there's *Periscope View* an autobiography by George Simpson who was Captain Submarines in Malta during the heaviest of the fighting and whose work gives a valuable insight into both his leadership skills and those of his commanding officers. David suggests that it is best read in conjunction with John Wingate's *The Fighting Tenth*, telling the same story but biographically.

The former submarine commander has an extensive knowledge of the history of the Silent Service and is keen that others have the means to expand their own knowledge if they wish to.

"If Perisher students do not know their historical birthright there is little chance of other submariners of any rank or rate knowing the stories of those who have gone before," said David.

"I hope the books I have provided may go some way to improving that situation."

Staff at the Submarine Command Course at Fleet Operational Sea Training North are delighted with the library, which has come at just the right time as they've been striving to improve facilities to provide the students of this world-class leadership and command course with the appropriate study aids.

"Thanks to David's kind donation –

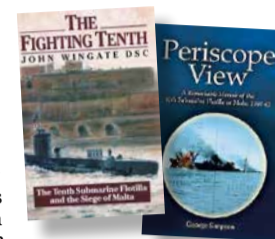
with more books to follow – we now have in the heart of the Clyde a remarkable collection of rare and fascinating titles to allow all submariners the opportunity to research, understand and appreciate their rich and often astonishing and humbling heritage," said Commander Haskins.

"Once Covid restrictions permit, the library will be open to all members of the Submarine Community – not just Perisher students – as it is such a valuable resource for everyone in our Service."

As well as David's donation of books, and a collection of titles which he sourced from the archives of the Royal Navy Submarine Museum, Perisher staff have also taken the opportunity to improve the IT and digital footprint of the course with a view to celebrating the history and ethos of the Submarine Service as well as providing better digital support to the students through the SMCC Defence Learning Environment site.

The site is open to all Service personnel and provides a resource of academic articles pertinent to the Submarine Service and aspiring leaders including sections on human factors, leadership, ethics and doctrine.

David is hopeful that his own work – *Perisher: the Making of a Submarine Commanding Officer* – will join the other titles already on the shelves of the Perisher library when it is published.



A global round-up, litorally

EVERY year *Seaforth*, the leading British naval publisher, issues a *World Naval Review* that surveys the global naval scene, examines certain significant vessels, naval aviation and some other important matters, writes Prof Eric Grove.

The editor is Conrad Waters, lawyer turned naval analyst and historian who is responsible for the introductory chapters, beginning with an introduction which covers the impact of Covid, defence budgets and plans and a comparison of major fleet strengths. He uses the authoritative SIPRI figures to show that in 2019 the USA spent \$732 billion dollars on defence – head and shoulders above China's 261 billion, India's 71.1 billion and Russia's 65.1 billion. The UK comes our eighth in this league behind both Germany and France. Its 48.7 billion is, despite claims to the contrary by creative accounting,



THE GROVE REVIEW

only 1.7 per cent of GDP.

The recent increased expenditure announced by the government should improve the situation a little.

The editor summarises the situation thus: "After more than a decade of reviewing maritime developments for *Seaforth World Naval Review* the editor finds it hard not to see last year as something of a watershed. The renewed era of great power rivalry heralded by China's economic rise and emphasised in recent US strategic documents is resulting in a new focus on naval force structures and priorities that will have consequences the world over."

The chapter on North and South America emphasises the US Navy's financial and bureaucratic problems. Although

impressive on paper with a 'battleforce' of 300 ships in June 2020, the deployed output is much less impressive as anyone who glances at the US Naval Institute's regularly-issued Maps of Carrier Strike and Amphibious Ready Groups clearly demonstrate. Sometimes only a single carrier group is at sea – out of a fleet of 11! One very welcome development is the final abandonment of the flawed Littoral Combat Ship and its replacement by a proper 7,400-ton frigate based on an Italian design.

The surveys of South American navies vary from the Mexican Navy which is developing a new war fighting capability to the stricken Argentines with a non-operational submarine force and surface ships beyond economic repair. An official report published in 2019 blamed lack

of maintenance and inefficient command performance for the loss of the submarine San Juan with all hands two years before.

The editor then moves to Asia and the Pacific. The main story here is conversion of the Chinese Peoples Liberation Army Navy into a 'blue water' power projection force, with a core of carriers and assault ships. The editor, however, considers the building of large surface combatants as the "most material Chinese naval development". Some 18 such ships are undergoing trials of fitting out: six 12,000-ton cruisers and a dozen 7,000-ton destroyers. Smaller ships are now receiving less emphasis, although there are almost a hundred frigates already in service. In reply Japan is improving her fleet with a reversion to a carrier capability, uniting the F-35B with the flat-topped 'helicopter destroyers'

As usual, the Indian Ocean and Africa chapter illustrates the continued problems India faces

in keeping up with the Chinese. There is a full chapter on the Nigerian Navy by M. Mazumdar which points out the challenges faced by this essentially constabulary navy that limit the capacity of a force that should be much stronger.

The survey of European navies examines the major regional powers, France, Italy, Spain and the UK. Perhaps the most interesting part of the British section is a revealing account of the problems faced by the nuclear submarine programme. After sections on the lesser European navies the chapter moves on to Russia with its recovering navy that is emphasising submarines and smaller missile armed surface combatants. The editor points to the interesting contrast with Chinese naval policy. There follows a chapter on the Swedish Navy and its reaction to rising tensions in the Baltic by Dieter Stockfisch.

There are three chapters on significant ships. George

Galdorisi and Scott Truver look at the America-class LHAs which are developing a new role as 'Lightning carriers' with F-35B air groups. Guy Toremans analyses the interesting and versatile new Singaporean Independence-class littoral mission vessels. Especially useful to British readers is an excellent chapter on the Type 23 frigates and their evolving roles and capabilities.

The book concludes with David Hobbs' excellent review of naval aviation, a most revealing analysis of seaborne stealth by Norman Friedman, a detailed description of standard missile development by Richard Scott and a highly-important chapter on distributed maritime operations by Kevin Eyer: inter-platform connectivity is the key to future naval operations.

World Naval Review 2021 (ISBN 978-1-5267-9074-3) is very well illustrated and excellent value at £35. It should be read by all interested in the current naval scene.

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