



NAVY NEWS

MARCH 2021



ROYAL Marines take part in an insertion yomp during their cold weather survival course in Norway (see pages 2-3)

PICTURE: PO Phot Si Ethell

Survival of the fittest

Inside: HMS MONTROSE SCORES DOUBLE DRUGS BUST

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SURVIVALIST

THE FIRST ENEMY IS THE COLD

A SNOW storm rages in the Arctic darkness as a Royal Marines Commando hauls himself from the clutches of freezing water during the infamous ice breaking drill as he completes the first brutal stage of the survival phase of the winter deployment in northern Norway.

Each commando must answer a question and report their service number and name to their instructors before they can finally drag themselves out the water and pass this phase of the course.

This brutal part of the training is designed to help Royal Marines recognise and reduce the risks of cold shock: a physical response to being immersed in cold water that can rapidly incapacitate and even kill.

These green berets had the added challenge of jumping into the ice as a snow storm swirled around. Believe it or not, this photograph was taken at midday...

Cold Weather Warfare specialists 45 Commando have returned to the Arctic once more to ensure they are ready for combat in one of the most inhospitable places on earth, where during the early phases of training the sun barely rises and temperatures can plummet to -30°C.

45 Commando are currently the high-readiness Lead Commando Group and must be ready to launch in to front line action at a moment's notice and know exactly how to deal with any extreme of environment.

That is why the next generation of winter warriors are being put through their paces on the cold weather course.

This all-encompassing and demanding training programme refreshes important Arctic skills in survival, moving and fighting.

The first enemy is the cold.

Commandos must learn to manage the climate to be capable of defeating their enemies in it.

The mountainous backdrop is stunning – breath-taking in fact – and the stars and Northern Lights combine to create an almost enchanting place at times.

But, do not be fooled, this is an environment that is brutal and can easily kill if you are not prepared.

That is why, for years, commandos have learned to master the Arctic, so it does not defeat them while they attempt to defeat an adversary.

The canopy of stars may be just merely a stunning spectacle to many, but to these Royal Marines they are a tool in their Arctic toolbox.

The commandos are taught to navigate by the stars on yomps into the wilderness.

It is all part of living off your surroundings, with training also including the construction of snow shelters and even how to trap animals for food.

One of the rites of passage for training Norway is the infamous ice breaking drills. Falling through ice is an ever-present danger and therefore it's vital that individuals can climb out unassisted.

The marines are taught how to recognise and counter cold shock as they are plunged into the icy water. Crossing frozen water can bring a huge tactical advantage but also come with a huge risk, so ensuring the green berets know what to expect when worst comes to worse is a big step along the Arctic road.

Once ice breaking is complete, the commandos head out into the wilds to learn how to survive using the skills they've learnt, before they train to move on the snow and ice, including cross-country ski marches, covering up to 20km a day, alpine skiing and skijoring; where commandos are towed behind a BV all-terrain vehicle for rapid movement across the battlefield.

Marine Stuart Bryant said: "I learnt a lot this week and am actually surprised by how much I enjoyed it. It takes a while to get used to the cold, but keeping busy and active takes your mind off it."

Colour Sergeant Ian Freeman added: "All personnel operating in this environment must complete the Cold Weather Survival Course (CWSC). It represents the bare minimum skill set required to stay alive in a very aggressive environment. The CWSC will form the foundation for everything we do in Norway."

45 have deployed alongside other elements of 3 Commando Brigade, including 29 Commando Royal Artillery, 24 Commando Royal Engineers and 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group, plus aircraft from Joint Helicopter Command (read more of that on page 23)

45 Commando's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Innes Catton, said: "45 Commando is currently deployed in Norway conducting essential training as the Lead Commando Unit."

"As Cold Weather Warfare specialists held at very high readiness, this training is vital to retaining capability to deploy anywhere in the world in the event of crisis and to support our NATO allies in the region."

"Stringent control measures and quarantine procedures are in place to protect the local population and our people in Norway, as well as our families upon return to the UK."



BRANCHING OUT: A Royal Marine constructs a shelter during the survival phases of the deployment in Norway



WINTER WARRIOR: A marine from 45 Commando readies a meal in a recently constructed snow shelter

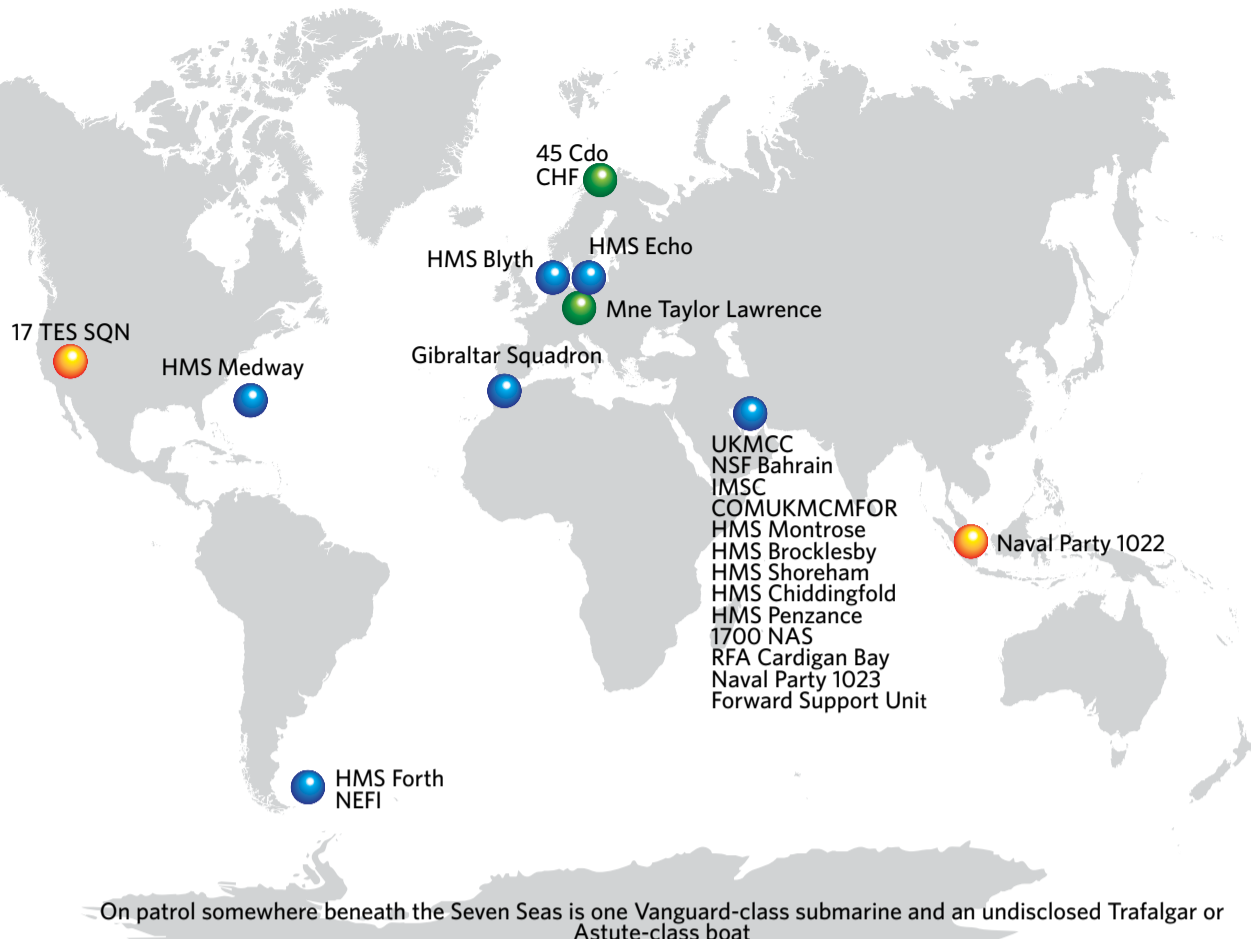
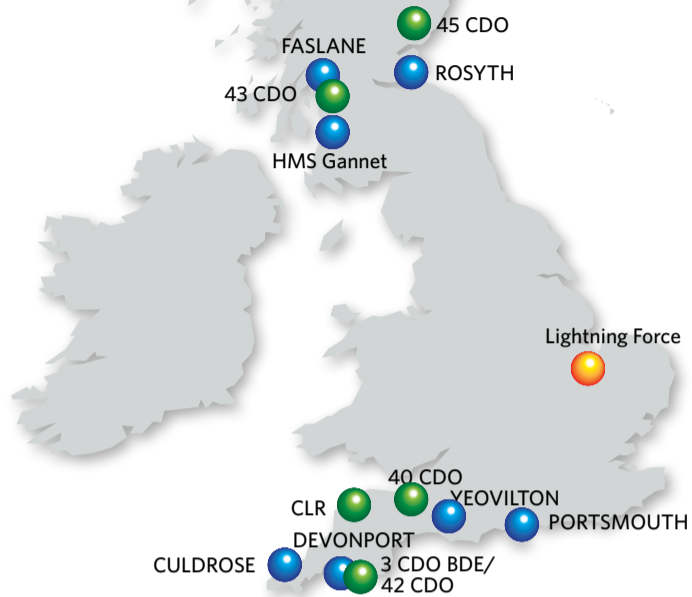


IN TENTS: Royal Navy Padre, Rev Russel Fralick, from 45 Commando gazes at the Northern Lights standing next to a ten man tent



Training or on patrol around the UK

- HMS Talent
- HMS Northumberland
- HMS Lancaster
- HMS Severn
- HMS Mersey
- HMS Tyne
- HMS Defender
- HMS Diamond
- HMS Protector
- HMS Kent
- HMS Scott
- HMS Tamar
- HMS Trent
- HMS Spey
- 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

AS we look forward to the start of spring, spare a thought for those Royal Marines deployed to the Arctic (see pages 1, 2, 3, and 23). Nearly 700 green berets, mainly from 45 Commando, but also from a range of specialist units in 3 Commando Brigade, are being put through their paces during their winter deployment (see pages 2-3). Royal Marines Mountain Leaders are also putting helicopter pilots and aircrew through their paces on demanding training in the Arctic wilderness. Helicopters from Joint Helicopter Command fly to Norway every year to carry out Exercise Clockwork (see page 23), which is now in its 52nd year. In contrast, personnel aboard HMS Montrose are celebrating after swooping on drug traffickers twice in two days in the Middle East (see page 11). The frigate's Royal Marines boarding team found sacks of heroin, worth around £5.3m in the first bust and hundreds of bags of narcotics, worth around £5.6m. Sister frigate HMS Lancaster has an extra layer of defence after being fitted with heavy machine guns (see page 19) as she resumes her place in the Fleet. And the Fleet has a new Flagship as HMS Queen Elizabeth took over the role from HMS Albion (see page 5). The carrier's crew and battle staff were also put through their paces in a series of virtual scenarios as she and her strike group prepare for her maiden deployment. Albion led the Fleet for three years and we look at how she represented the UK across the seven seas (see centre pages). Survey vessel HMS Echo investigated shipwrecks from World War 2 (see pages 14-15) during operations in the Baltic Sea with the Lithuanian navy. New offshore patrol vessel HMS Tamar (see page 19) made extensive use of small Puma aircraft during trials with the Royal Marines and the Metropolitan Police. Two of the UK's Antarctic research ships 'broke the ice' when HMS Protector and Sir David Attenborough met up at sea for the first time (see page 7). After the heat of the Gulf, it's the cool waters of northern Europe for the next few months for HMS Blyth (see page 19), as she joins a NATO task group. Also leaving the Gulf is Commodore Dean Bassett as he ends his two years in charge of the UK Maritime Component Command, the RN's operational headquarters in the region (see page 24). Submarine HMS Talent has put the world's most advanced torpedo through its final trials – including firing the lethal weapon at itself. The Trafalgar-class boat fired the upgraded Spearfish on the ranges near the Isle of Skye to test its potency before it enters services. (see page 13). NavyX officially welcomed the new autonomous vessel MADFOX into service and the RN is set to receive three world-class autonomous minesweepers (see pages 16-17). A new digital remote air-traffic control tower is due to be installed at RNAS Culdrose's satellite airfield at Predannack (see pages 16-17). Royal Navy personnel have been working throughout the UK supporting the NHS as they deliver vaccinations against Covid-19 (see page 6). Musicians from the Royal Marines Band are supporting front-line staff in the south west, and held impromptu musical sessions at the same time. The new head of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Commodore David Eagles, reflects on his first 100 days in office and the challenges ahead (see page 25). A sculptor has been chosen to create the design of a new national Submariner Memorial (see page 22), following a contest won by a Royal Navy family. Defence firm QinetiQ shows the support it offers to the UK's Continuous at Sea Deterrent through its test and evaluation programme (see page 9). The Volunteer Cadet Corps has marked its 120th anniversary (see page 33) and continues to provide opportunities for young people while employing the traditions of the Royal Navy. Historians need help reuniting relatives with a unique piece of wartime Royal Navy history spanning the Atlantic (see page 36). A rare set of ten maps charting the defeat of the Spanish Armada have been saved from being sold overseas (see page 35) after the National Museum of the Royal Navy raised £600,000 in just eight weeks. Finally, the Royal Naval Association has announced a free for all (see page 39) as it switches from a subscription model to voluntary donations.

It's all change

Proud of the pace of transformation

THIS month we want to give an update on the Royal Navy Transformation programme and what it means for you.

Many readers will already have either been involved in it or seen the impact of Transformation. Fundamentally, its purpose is to create a Royal Navy fit for the 2030's.

In the next two decades the challenges we face as a nation and a navy will change significantly. The world is becoming more competitive, and our adversaries more assertive. Transformation is about delivering the change necessary to remain global, modern and ready in this new era.

There are three areas Transformation focuses on to achieve this. The first is increasing the availability and global presence of our units.

We need our fleet available and in the right place at the right time to gain the initiative in regions of UK national interest. To achieve this we are forward basing more vessels, maintaining them in theatre to project UK influence and stop the need for a long transit back home.

In January HMS Montrose underwent a maintenance period in Oman to prove we can repair complex warships in the Middle East.

We have started forward basing our Batch 2 Offshore Patrol Vessels long term, starting with HMS Forth in the Falklands, pictured, and now HMS Medway in the Caribbean.

Alongside this we are thinking differently about how we crew vessels on long term deployments. We have introduced four-monthly crew rotations on HMS Montrose, and three watch crewing on our Offshore Patrol Vessels.

In June of last year the first dual-crew MCM deployed to the Gulf. These models support more operational days in theatre and improve the stability and predictability of people's lives. They make it easier to take planned leave, complete career development and undertake training while the ship is on

VIEW BRIDGE from the BRIDGE

station.

The second area is sustainability. Transformation is removing bureaucracy and improving the experience of a career in the Royal Navy.

Through Programme HECATE we have streamlined our HQ, releasing people to fill crewing gaps in the front line and shore establishments.

We have started a review of branches and specialisations that will simplify structures and provide more choice over career direction.

We introduced the MyNavy App that has made it easier than ever for our people to submit leave, check pay and take greater ownership of their own career decisions. And this year we are going further than ever in making sure you have a voice in Transformation. 5,600 people have already been engaged with the Divisional and Regimental review, and their views will shape how we modernise this system for the first time in 16 years.

Over 4,000 were involved in the discussion over our future People Vision, identifying hundreds of 'sailor pain points' to be addressed. All this is designed to empower our people to take opportunities that benefit them and the Royal Navy as a modern employer.

The third area is lethality. Where UK national and global interests are challenged, we need to be able to maintain and enhance our

operational advantage, ready to respond to emerging threats.

Transformation is achieving this through new ways of operating and by putting new technology into the hands of our people.

The most visible example is restoration of our Carrier Strike capability, which is a step change in warfighting capability for the UK.

Though the Future Commando Force project we have continued to take the Royal Marines closer to their commando roots, leading the way in developing new ways of operating and harnessing innovative technology.

In November they deployed in HMS Albion as part of an experimental Littoral Strike Group, testing out a host of new technology including autonomous resupply drones and state-of-the-art communications technology providing live imagery to those on the ground.

In the North Atlantic, we have been less predictable and more assertive in meeting an increasingly capable Russian threat at its highest activity level for 30 years.

In the last year we have operated in the Arctic Circle, leading a multinational fleet into the Barents Sea for the first time in 20 years.

We are accelerating the rate at which we adopt new technology too, investing in a new autonomous minehunting system, the world's largest uncrewed submersible and innovative new anti-submarine systems.

This is just a snapshot of a much wider and more ambitious programme of change. We have done all this while operating at near full capacity through a global pandemic, proving our ability to go further and faster under tough circumstances.

We have more to do. We have to push these changes down to have real impact for every sailor and every marine. But we should be pleased with the programme so far and proud of the ambition and pace we are setting.



Another tick in the box



THE crew and battle staff of HMS Queen Elizabeth played out a simulated crisis as the nation's new Fleet Flagship prepares for her debut deployment.

The two-week Virtual Warrior was one of two final assessments the ship and command staff had to pass before the 65,000-tonne warship leads her task force on deployment.

The digital workout picks up where the Carrier Strike Group disbanded last autumn at the end of exercises off Scotland. It will be followed by a live-action assessment during this spring's Joint Warrior war game, 'Strike Warrior', after which the force can head to Mediterranean, Middle East and Asia-Pacific region on its Carrier Strike Group 21 mission.

Making use of an impressive combined computer training suite at HMS Collingwood in Fareham, Virtual Warrior allows various scenarios to be played out – testing the ability of the Carrier Strike Group staff to respond to multiple incidents and issues, across a vast area.

At its largest the task group will comprise more than a dozen warships, support vessels and squadrons, including three dozen F-35B jets and helicopters – around 3,700 military personnel in all.

But there will be times when some

vessels and aircraft break away from the force for specific missions – so the team on HMS Queen Elizabeth must be able to direct and advise their actions, as well as the core carrier group.

"Virtual Warrior is about command and control – it may not be as exciting as being at sea, but it's just as important," explained Lieutenant Commander Jeremy Olver of the Carrier Strike Group staff.

"The carrier group will consist of numerous ships and squadrons, some operating at considerable range. It's crucial that they are all thinking and operating in the same way and information is shared around them."

"Each one of the 'warrior' exercises is more sophisticated and demanding with Strike Warrior the final 'tick in the box' before we sail."

Commodore Steve Moorhouse, who will lead the impending deployment with his staff, says such tests are vital to "master the complex art of strike group operations".

He continued: "The success of our deployment rests on our ability to harness and direct different capabilities in the strike group for military, political

and diplomatic effect. Virtual Warrior helps ensure we think, act and operate as a cohesive and focused force."

A specialist team has been established to advise and gauge how the strike group personnel perform collectively.

"Exercise Virtual Warrior exemplifies how the Royal Navy, and the British armed forces, are adapting to an increasingly contested battlespace," said Commodore Andrew Stacey, Commander Fleet Operational Sea Training, the organisation which prepares British and Allied warships for front-line missions.

"By combing the latest developments in information warfare and synthetic training with complex, large-scale scenarios, FOST continues to represent the gold standard in training and assurance, both for the Royal Navy and for the UK's international partners."

Prior to the exercise, Fleet Commander Vice-Admiral Jerry Kyd was received on HMS Queen Elizabeth to mark the transfer of the Fleet Flagship role from HMS Albion.

First Sea Lord, Admiral Tony Radakin, said: "The position of Fleet Flagship is a symbol of HMS Queen Elizabeth's importance to the nation, not just in

restoring our carrier strike capability, but as a rolling statement of British commitment to global security, prosperity and trade.

"It's right that we bestow such a historic title now. In the coming months HMS Queen Elizabeth will lead the most ambitious Royal Navy deployment in decades. She will be a focal point as we look forward to an extraordinary year."

Commanding Officer, Captain Angus Essenhigh, said: "It is a fantastic privilege for Queen Elizabeth to be made the Fleet Flagship as we prepare to sail at the heart of UK's very high readiness Carrier Strike Group. We look forward to doing the nation proud as we deploy on operations for the first time."

Last year, the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, confirmed that HMS Queen Elizabeth will be at the centre of a Carrier Strike Group deployment to the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean and East Asia.

She will embark F-35B from 617 Squadron (the "Dambusters"), Royal Navy Merlin helicopters, and be escorted and supported by Royal Navy Type 45 destroyers, Type 23 frigates and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries.

Assault ship HMS Albion had been

flagship since March 2018, deploying to the Indo-Pacific for ten months; to the Baltic for major multi-national exercises; and latterly to the Mediterranean leading NATO security patrols and experimental warfare trials. Her sister, HMS Bulwark, previously led the Fleet for four years.

Commanding Officer of HMS Albion, Captain Simon Kelly, said: "While it is with some sadness that we hand over the responsibility to HMS Queen Elizabeth, we are proud to be part of the transfer which marks a new era for the Royal Navy and the nation."

Currently earmarked for the carrier group are frigates HMS Richmond and Kent, destroyers HMS Diamond and Defender, supply ship RFA Fort Victoria and a Tide-class tanker, with the US Navy assigning its destroyer USS The Sullivans.

A squadron of USMC F-35s will join The Dambusters of RAF 617 Squadron (jointly crewed by RN and air force personnel) on Queen Elizabeth's flight deck, plus maritime Merlins from 820 Naval Air Squadron and battlefield Merlins from 845 Naval Air Squadron. Additional maritime Merlins from 814 Naval Air Squadron will operate with some of the other escorts, as will Wildcat helicopters of 815 Naval Air Squadron.



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LIFE AS THE FLEET FLAGSHIP

See centre pages

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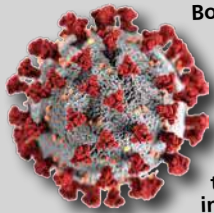
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TAUNTON. South West. Gibraltar. Trafford. Bournemouth. Bath.

Okay. So they're not as glamorous as Tokyo. South America. Australia. France. Germany and Africa which got David Bowie and Mick Jagger *Dancing in the Street*.

But these towns, cities, boroughs and regions have Royal Navy personnel to thank for assisting civilian authorities in the UK's sternest test since World War 2, activated under Operation Rescript – the military response to the pandemic.



NORMALLY found bolstering the numbers on an RFA ship to support helicopter operations, sailors from 1700 NAS are supporting the Covid fightback in Somerset.

Some 28 sailors from the Culdrose-based squadron, typically used to supply additional personnel to deployed ships and units, have been mobilised to work side-by-side with the NHS.

Eight men and women from the squadron are helping in Bristol, while 20 others are lending a hand at Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton.

The teams – some of whom have recently returned from serving on operations, including in the Gulf and Caribbean – are drawn from across the service: weapon specialists, helicopter engineers, aircraft handlers and even a steward and a chef.

Their efforts are freeing up medical staff so they can deal directly with patients rather than worry about non-medical tasks.

"From helping with meal times and cleaning on the ward, to collecting things from the pharmacy – we are happy to help and delighted to be here," said Leading Engineering Technician Carl Turnbull.

"Everyone has been so welcoming and appreciative. It's a nice to come away at the end of the day and know we've been able to help in some way."

Warrant Officer 1st Class Lee Schofield said his team had been "overwhelmed by the reception and the gratitude of everyone at Musgrove Park, and continue to be motivated to help in whatever way possible to get the nation through these trying times."

"It's a privilege to lead this team in offering as much assistance as possible to the NHS during the pandemic. It feels good to do our bit in the fight against Covid."

A spokeswoman for Somerset NHS Foundation Trust said that the help provided by 1700 NAS personnel with routine tasks had been invaluable.

"It means our nursing and allied health professional colleagues can have more time to focus on caring for our patients."

"Thank you to everyone who is working with us – we're really grateful for your help and support."



A DOZEN reservist sailors and Royal Marines have completed helping nearly a quarter of a million people in Manchester fight Covid.

More than 80 reserve personnel from across the three Services were committed across the metropolitan area, which includes major towns such as Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport, and Wigan, plus the cities of Manchester and Salford – a population of 2.8 million in all.

The reservists worked side-by-side with regular British Army units – in the maritime reservists' case, in the borough of Trafford in southwest Manchester, home to nearly 240,000 people across communities including Stretford, Old Trafford, Sale, and Altrincham.

The sailors and commandos were integrated into Waterloo Company, 4th Battalion Royal Regiment of Scotland, testing at-risk members of the community.

The military teams are carrying out asymptomatic testing – for people who are not displaying signs of the virus – and training each borough's own workforce to develop testing capability for the longer-term.

"I was fortunate last year to be part of the mobilisation to help with this and to be able to do it again has been very rewarding," said Marine Ross Cooney from Doncaster. He owns a performance and consultancy business – and volunteers with Royal Marines Merseyside.

"Being tested can be intimidating and daunting for some people. We settle them down, break the ice a little bit, a bit of Bootneck humour – people love it. We also reassure people – they are happy when they leave."

Former full-time warfare officer Lieutenant Kevin Cabra-Netherton now runs an award-winning travel business for backpackers as well as volunteers with Leeds RNR unit HMS Ceres.

"On an operation like this, it doesn't matter what background you are from, we are all doing the same job and working towards the same goal. We're all in it together," he said.

"We've had a really positive reaction from the public – I think they are reassured and it's nice to get that sort of a reaction."

They've found working alongside fellow reservists and regular personnel has gone well – "with a bit of banter," said Ross.

"The great thing about the Reserves is that we are able to manage our time really well and bring our experiences outside of the military. It's also great working alongside the regulars."



NAVY medics helped elderly residents in Gibraltar – and eased the burden on the Rock's civilian health service in dealing with the pandemic.

A six-strong team from British Forces Gibraltar has been working alongside staff from the Elderly Residential Services at Mount Alvernia – the largest residential care home complex in the overseas territory.

After conducting some training at the Princess Royal Medical Centre and from Gib's health authority, medical personnel from all three Services entered the home.

They were mostly employed in low-grade medical but high-grade humanitarian roles, helping in the day-to-day care of residents, giving the permanent staff the chance for some much needed downtime and allowing for the relocation of some of their essential clinical staff to other parts of Gibraltar's medical services.

"Our team members were fresh, enthusiastic, capable and cheerful and were very well received and enormously valued by the residents and staff alike," said Lieutenant Commander Mark Chambers, HQBF Gibraltar's Medical Staff Officer.

"Hopefully we have made a genuine difference and it's good to know the team has been able to play a small part in the amazing efforts in the elderly residential services which has seen the numbers of residents with Covid drop significantly."

Perfect pRESCRIPTION



ROYAL Marines Musicians are caring for body and soul in hospitals in the South West.

Some 42 musicians from the Collingwood and Portsmouth bands have been mobilised to help the NHS at its most testing hour, supporting front-line NHS staff at hospitals in Bournemouth and Bath, as well as the NHS Nightingale Hospital Exeter.

"Despite the unfamiliar roles that we have been tasked to support, the team have thrown themselves at every task and supported our brave NHS staff in every way they can," explained team leader Warrant Officer 2nd Class Trev Naughton. "I couldn't be prouder of the selfless attitude of our people, taking on a huge variety of roles which has freed up the NHS staff to concentrate on their primary clinical roles. This has not only improved the care that's given to the patients but also boosted the morale of our NHS staff."



Not content with simply tending to the patient's medical needs, the musicians have also responded in a way only they can, by demonstrating their talents during impromptu musical performances.

"Music delivers in a way only music can, lifting the spirits of both patients and staff alike. We are using our skills to provide some positive therapy amidst some very difficult times – and its impact has been immense," said Trev.

The musicians have also sourced TVs and the like to allow patients to watch films, sporting events and their trademark event, the annual Mountbatten Festival of Music.

"From the moment we walked into the training room we knew this was a team to be reckoned with, but one clearly at ease with each other, with an evidently calm and caring nature," said Chantal Baker, Assistant Director of Nursing at NHS Nightingale Hospital Exeter.



"Everything we have asked of them has been delivered. They know all the patients by name – when they're not supporting clinical duties or taking on family liaison roles, they can be found with our patients reading to them, playing games with them, or just simply chatting away together. It is incredibly touching to see."

"Their beautiful music has filled our corridors, pouring out from the wards for the patients"

The musicians also volunteered to carry out tests on NHS staff looking after patients in Exeter Nightingale's high dependency unit.

"In just three days they successfully tested 90 members of staff – an incredible feat and something we would have never achieved without them," Chantal added.

"I know that I am speaking on behalf of my colleagues when I say that the arrival of the military personnel has been timely and simply wonderful."

"They have lifted spirits in our team, brought another dynamic to the hospitals, and most of all, have an incredibly positive, can do attitude. We cannot thank them enough."

Wise words for Magpie

ONE of the Royal Navy's smallest ships has returned to action with a new motto – words given the seal of approval by the Duke of Edinburgh.

Hi-tech survey launch HMS Magpie will 'shine light into darkness' – *lux in tenebris lucet* – apt as she hoovers up data and information about the waters and coastline of the nation's key harbours.

The 18-metre-long catamaran traces her history back more than two centuries and has several battle honours under her belt, but has never had a rallying cry unlike many ships and submarines in the Fleet.

"The motto is aimed at complementing the ship's crest with the black annulet symbolising the darkness and the light within," explained Lieutenant Commander Mark White, Magpie's CO.

"I hope that adopting a motto will further embellish the already splendid ship's crest and act to inspire those who serve in her."

His ship is the ninth Magpie and has been specifically named after the wartime sloop/post-war frigate, which was commanded by Prince Philip between 1950 and 1952.

That ship added battle honours in the Atlantic, Normandy and Arctic to Benin in 1897 and Baltic in 1855 by her predecessors.

Her motto is unique across the Fleet and has been selected to be non-specific to the survey vessel, so future Magpies can rise to it, whatever their mission or role.

The ship has completed her annual maintenance period/overhaul in the hands of Mashfords, across the water from her home base of Devonport in Cremyll and is currently conducting trials with new sensors fitted by the National Oceanographic Centre (more about that next month).

TWO of the UK's Antarctic research ships 'broke the ice' when HMS Protector and Sir David Attenborough met up at sea for the first time.

The icebreakers – operated by the Royal Navy and the British Antarctic Survey – sailed in company in the English Channel off Start Point in Devon as both gear up for missions around the frozen continent.

Protector has just emerged from the most extensive overhaul in her decade's service with the Royal Navy.

And the Royal Research Ship (RRS) Sir David Attenborough – which the public famously wanted to call Boaty McBoatface in a national poll to pick her name – is undergoing extensive sea trials around the UK before she debuts in the Southern Hemisphere in time for the austral summer at the end of 2021.

Despite heavy February showers and less-than-ideal conditions, the two distinctive icebreakers – both feature striking red, white and gold paint schemes – manoeuvred in close proximity (the Sir David Attenborough is seen preparing to cross Protector's bow in the main image, while, inset, the

RN vessel conducts a sail past to port – captured by BAS' Rich Turner).

It allowed the ship's companies to take a close look at the respective ships for the first time.

"It was great to see Captain Will Whatley and his fabulous ship Sir David Attenborough at sea off Start Point. We are looking forward to joining them in the Antarctic soon," said Captain Michael Wood, Protector's Commanding Officer, who chatted with his opposite number over the radio.

Both ships are expected to work together extensively in Antarctic waters. Protector maps the ocean to update Admiralty Charts for fellow seagoers, delivers supplies to remote BAS bases and supports international research, chiefly around the Antarctic Peninsula.

RRS Sir David Attenborough carries 60 scientists in addition to 30 crew and performs many of similar roles, including logistics support. She also carries numerous autonomous craft to gather data from Antarctic waters, including one named Boaty McBoatface.

Logistics expert Leading Seaman Kasey Easson

said it was "brilliant to see Sir David Attenborough up close for the first time! I can't wait until we are working with them in the Antarctic and would love to meet the ship's namesake one day!"

Gunnery officer Lieutenant Alastair Newton added: "It was fantastic to see RRS Sir David Attenborough in all of her glory carrying out sea trials. It will be great to see her – and Boaty McBoatface – in the coming Antarctic season."

Protector is now in her native Devonport after sailing down from Teesport, Middlesbrough, where she's been since last spring.

This month her crew tackle Operational Sea Training which will determine whether they are ready to deploy.

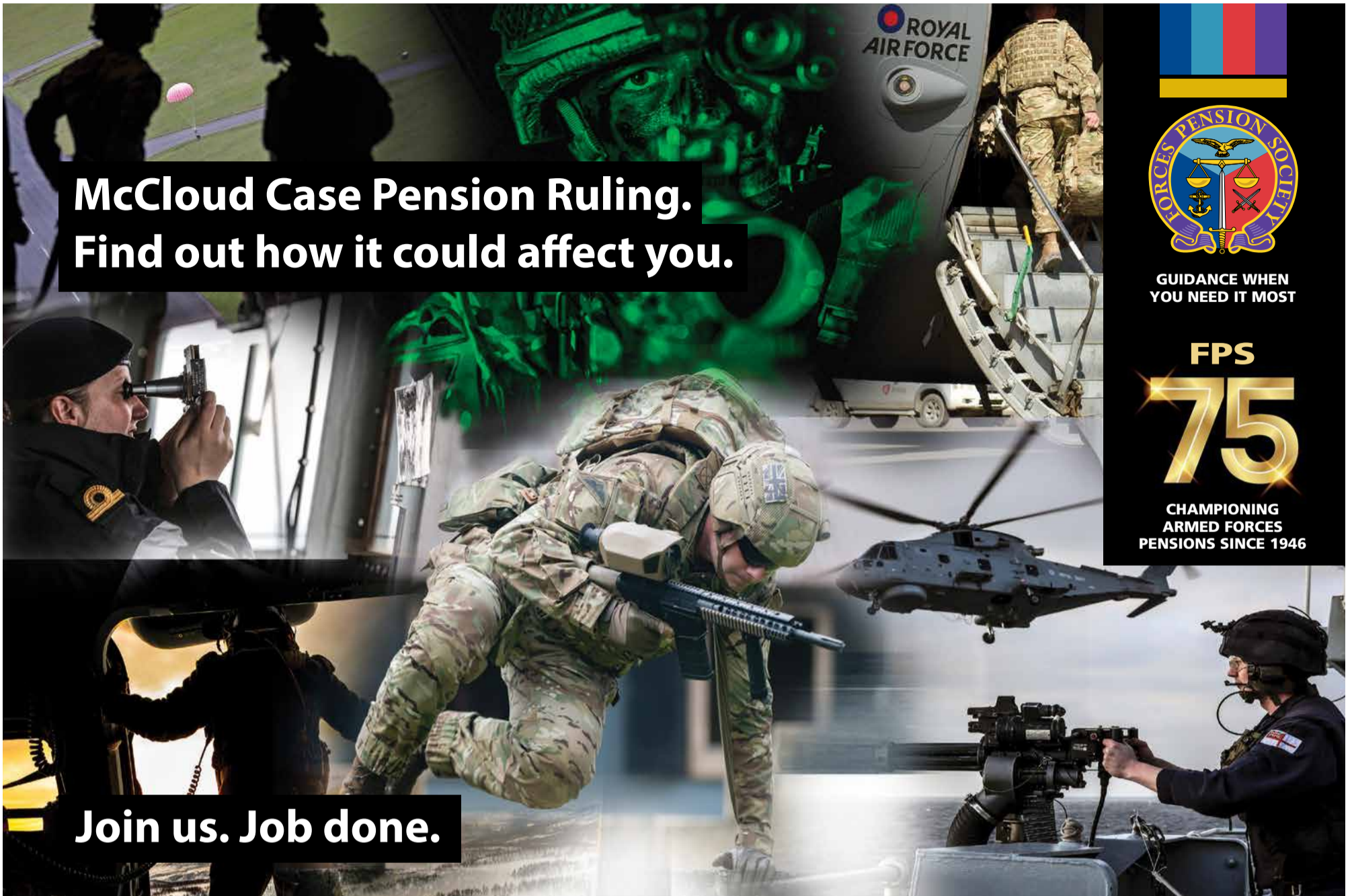
After spending the summer around the UK, Protector is earmarked to deploy to Antarctica in the autumn, ready to work through the austral summer.

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The McCloud case relates to an age discrimination ruling in 2019 against the Public Sector Pension Schemes introduced in 2015. Since then, the Government has been looking at two options for how to remedy the problem. That decision has now been made and it affects all personnel in service before 31st March 2012 and on or after 1st April 2015 (including service leavers). So there's a good chance it will affect your and your family's future income.

The decision has been taken in favour of "Deferred Choice Underpin". This was the option we at the Forces Pension Society supported and for which we lobbied hard. It means you will be able to make an informed decision based on the actual pension benefits earned, calculated toward the end of your service. And your right to do this will be underpinned by legislation. You need not take any immediate action, though as always, the Society will be on hand to advise and support our Members.

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Support runs deep

Stuart Hider, the Maritime Programme Director at QinetiQ, writes about supporting the UK's Continuous At Sea Deterrent through the defence firm's test and evaluation programme.

For over 50 years the Royal Navy has deployed submarines to deliver a Continuous At Sea Deterrent (CASD). At the 50th anniversary service of recognition, the then First Sea Lord, praised the dedication, professionalism and courage of submariners in delivering such a strategically important deterrent.

He also drew attention to the "extraordinary feat of engineering and logistics that has underpinned our ability to keep inherently complex vessels and the myriad of on-board systems at the peak of operational readiness across the last five decades."

CASD is the longest ongoing military operation ever delivered by UK forces. It has become the cornerstone of the United Kingdom's defence policy.

The current Vanguard-class submarines continuously patrol the world's oceans. A key enabler to maintaining this mission-critical capability at sea safely and effectively is test and evaluation (T&E).

To ensure operational advantage at all times and to capitalise on the latest material innovations and new technologies, submarine T&E capability must evolve to keep pace with, or arguably, keep ahead of the military capability.

Apart from the strategic weapon system itself, the majority of these T&E capabilities are delivered by QinetiQ through the Long Term Partnering Agreement (LTPA) and Maritime Strategic Capability Agreement (MSCA).

The requirements for submarine T&E are wide-ranging and enduring, covering design, quality of

manufacture and performance.

The LTPA and MSCA provide the Royal Navy with a diverse range of services that help ensure a rapid response to operational challenges, maximise fleet availability, capability, safety, and survivability, whilst delivering operational efficiencies and performance. In addition to supporting today's submarines, QinetiQ is also supporting the Royal Navy in preparing for future generations of deterrent and "hunter killer" platforms.

The submarines currently in-service with the Royal Navy are subject to periods of safety sea trials throughout their operational lives. These trials ensure the boats deliver the demanding levels of safety necessary to keep our crews as safe as possible. The services include gathering and presenting evidence for safety cases and forensic investigations – enabling Duty Holders to undertake key activities with confidence. These services are delivered through a number of world-class ranges and facilities, the most unique of which are at Haslar in Gosport and at the British Underwater Test & Evaluation Centre (MOD BUTEC) in Scotland.

Haslar Technology Park is home to industry-leading hydrodynamics facilities and the UK's only ocean basin, *pictured above*. The basin is one of the largest and most advanced testing tanks in the world with a volume of 40,000 tonnes of clear water. Since the early 1960s, this essential facility has been pivotal in optimising the safe design of both our surface and submarine fleets.

Managed through the LTPA, MOD BUTEC is located across sites in North-West Scotland. Facilities at the sites have the ability to monitor submarines, dived targets and heavyweight torpedoes to support platform and weapon

acceptance trials activities and submarine crew 'weapon certification'.

The expert team at the range are also able to maintain, prepare, deploy and recover autonomous targets that simulate various aspects of submarine operations as well as conduct production testing of air-dropped sonobuoys with data collection to enable testing and measurement during operations.

Increasingly, QinetiQ teams delivering T&E projects are combining physical activity with advanced computational capabilities. Across all sites high-specification data capture systems are used to inform the ever-increasing 'Digital Thread'. This includes new generation laser-measuring systems and novel experimental techniques.

This digitally-integrated approach to T&E is augmenting many of the essential physical trials that are undertaken, at both model scale and full scale – including those around safety and system development.

In some areas of capability, where sufficient validation data exists or risk is low, QinetiQ relies wholly on computational techniques. In other areas, a considered balance of computational and physical techniques remains relevant.

Breakthroughs in digital engineering have opened up the opportunity to more closely link the management and capture of data, to creating information, knowledge and evidence with the system development lifecycle.

T&E is critical to ensuring modern, stealthy, complex, high-performing vessel designs are operationally effective, efficient and safe in the world's oceans. The result from this combined digital and physical T&E approach enables faster access to data and information with potential for accelerated decision making.

This means swifter operational decisions can be made without compromising safe, assured

designs – for both platform and personnel safety.

QinetiQ's enduring support to the submarine service is delivered through a complex mix of unique facilities, some owned by MOD and some owned by QinetiQ.

However, none of these services would be deliverable without the experience and specialist skills of more than 700 maritime engineers and scientists, who ensure that the challenges presented by operating submarines and especially the strategically significant deterrent platforms are met.

Working across physics to physiology, acoustics to atmospheres and structures to survivability, it is these individuals working in partnership with the Royal Navy and key industrial players that enable the UK to retain its warfighting edge and comparative advantage on a global stage.

The encouragement and development of future generations to maintain these capabilities is key.

STEM-focussed events such as QinetiQ's Annual Schools Powerboat Race and the biennial International Human Powered Submarine races at Haslar along with the UK Subs in Schools programme help to inspire and develop these interests.

Over the past 50 years, T&E activity for CASD and other submarine programmes has continually evolved as new technology has enabled a broader range of trials to take place. Whilst technology and the skill of experts has expanded capabilities, the primary goals for T&E remain unchanged.

These include ensuring informed decision-making from design concept through to the development, operation and maintenance of the Royal Navy's submarine fleet, helping to minimise risks, increase safety, improve cost-effectiveness, optimise capabilities and maintain an operational advantage.



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We strike at dawn

WITH the sun rising over the Northern Arabian Sea, one of HMS Montrose's sea boats races towards a dhow.

And thus begins a dramatic two days which will result in a double-blow to terrorists and criminals...

...and a double triumph for the frigate's crew who bagged £11m of illegal narcotics.

The frigate – which is based in Bahrain on a three-year security mission – was on patrol as part of an international task force focused on policing Middle Eastern waters to stop criminal, and especially terrorist, activity.

In hot, dirty and particularly uncomfortable sea conditions, her Royal Marines boarding team scoured the two craft for hours on end to recover the illegal cargoes.

"Having secured the vessel with my Royal Marines, we discovered the drugs in large bundled sacks, all containing individually wrapped packages. As soon as we opened the bags we were pretty confident it was an illicit substance," boarding team leader Lieutenant Gorton RM said of the first bust.

The scores of red sacks his commandos located in a 12-hour operation turned out to be packed with pure heroin – 275kg in all, worth around £5.3m.

Just 36 hours later, his team was racing through the Northern Arabian Sea again in Montrose's Pacific 24 fast boat to inspect another dhow.

The marines found an 'Aladdin's cave' of illegal narcotics: hundreds of bags and sacks of hashish, heroin, and methamphetamine. It took them more than ten hours to recover them all.

The volume was so much that at one point the search had to be paused so that the already-located narcotics could be returned to HMS Montrose to free up space on the deck of the dhow so the search could continue – and yet more drugs were recovered.

"Everywhere we looked onboard there were suspicious packages," said Lieutenant Gorton. "We soon realised how much we had interdicted."

The tally was 2,145kg of illegal

narcotics in all with a street value of £5.6m.

During both operations, Montrose's Wildcat helicopter provided 'overwatch' – keeping an eye on the searches, ensuring nothing untoward happened.

Flight Deck Officer Petty Officer Darren Scurr – normally maintaining Montrose's sonar and underwater weaponry – was directing the safe operation of the helicopter on and off the frigate's stern.

"I am very proud to have contributed to the success of the operation, possibly keeping millions of pounds worth of drugs from reaching UK streets," said the 33-year-old from Staffordshire.

// Everywhere we looked onboard there were suspicious packages. We soon realised how much we had interdicted. //

LIEUTENANT GORTON RM

"Success in an operation such as this is very satisfying, especially in these challenging times.

"The fact that the Royal Navy is able to continue conducting these operations during a global pandemic is testament to the professionalism of all my shipmates in Montrose."

The frigate's Commanding Officer Commander Ollie Hucker echoed Darren's praise of the collective effort.

"Once again, Montrose and her ship's company have proven their capability in the battle against illegal and illicit activity in the region. Their continuing efforts to deliver on global operations is something they should be rightly proud of," he said.

"Operations such as these are a whole-ship endeavour. I am extremely proud of my team for their efforts in impacting the global drugs trade in preventing this illegal activity to continue.

"They have prevented significant amounts of illicit substances being sold on

the streets, while also denying criminal groups an income source often associated with the funding of terrorism."

It's the third triumph of the winter for Montrose which seized 450kg/£18m of methamphetamine – the largest seizure of crystal meth by the Royal Navy in the Gulf – in October last year.

"The Royal Navy and Royal Marines have once again proven their professionalism and operational capability in seizing illicit substances in transit," said Armed Forces Minister James Heapey.

"The Armed Forces are committed to tackling organised crime around the world. The Royal Navy works with our allies in the Coalition Task Force to protect our people and our interests.

"As a result of these operations, Britain's streets are safer and a possible source of terrorist financing has been choked off."

The two hauls came on Montrose's first week attached to the Canadian-led Combined Task Force 150, charged with patrolling more than three million square miles of ocean (14 times the size of the North Sea), encompassing some of the world's most important shipping lanes.

"This interdiction was a direct result of the collaborative effort between Task Force staff and HMS Montrose, to whose crew I send my personal thanks for their skill, determination and professionalism in a challenging environment," said Commodore Dan Charlebois, Royal Canadian Navy, the task force's commander.

"I look forward to future successes as we continue to work together as close partners towards our common goals."

Montrose is crewed by sailors from her UK home base of Plymouth, plus her specialist Royal Marines team, with the entire ship's company of around 200 men and women changing entirely every four months so the frigate can spend more time on patrol in the Gulf region.

She's spent the bulk of her time since arriving in the Middle East in early 2019 providing protection, security and reassurance for merchant shipping passing through 'choke points' – narrow waters such as the Strait of Hormuz or Bab al Mandeb Strait at the foot of the Red Sea.



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TIP OF THE SPEAR

The Spearfish Torpedo is put through its final trials ... as HMS Talent turns on herself

SUBMARINE HMS Talent has put the world's most advanced torpedo through its final trials – including firing the lethal weapon at itself.

The Trafalgar-class boat – whose mission is to hunt and, if necessary, kill hostile submarines – fired the upgraded Spearfish on the ranges near the Isle of Skye to rigorously test it before it enters service.

During the three-day trial, the cutting-edge Spearfish was fired at Talent three times – and was programmed to safely pass the submarine to ensure there was no risk of the boat torpedoing herself.

The trials provided valuable data in the final stages of the upgraded torpedo's development ahead of its impending entry into service.

Commander Paul Jamieson, Commanding Officer of HMS Talent, said: "Talent has been the host platform on two occasions for this trial and my team are proud to have had a role in this important programme.

"The Spearfish upgrade will ensure the submarine service continues to possess a very credible weapon system, capable of dealing with potential future threats."

Captain John Aitken, the Spearfish Programme

Director, and a former commanding officer of Talent, said: "This trial marks the culmination of a tremendous amount of hard work from the Spearfish team and our partners in industry.

"The 'Mod 1' weapon is at the very cutting edge of torpedo technology and underscores Britain's position as one of the global leaders in underwater capability.

"That Talent continues her proud tradition of delivering exactly what is required of her makes this all the more pleasing for me."

Spearfish has been the Royal Navy's heavyweight torpedo for nearly 30 years and can break the back of frigates, destroyers and similar-sized warships, as well as take out any underwater threats.

The enhanced torpedo features a new warhead, new, safer fuel system, a smarter electronic 'brain' and a fibre-optic guidance link with its parent submarine to improve its accuracy and lethality.

The operational version of the weapon will be introduced to all front-line Royal Navy submarines by 2025.

It was the second time Talent, the second oldest boat in the RN's flotilla, was selected for Spearfish trials, with a Royal Navy, Defence Equipment & Support and BAE team heading aboard.

A dummy run saw the first of four torpedoes launched into a target vessel, before three successful firings pitched Talent against herself, avoiding striking her using 'geographical depth separation'.

The torpedoes were then recovered and work is now ongoing to study the data from the trial to support decisions made in the next phases of the programme as the torpedo moves towards Initial Operating Capability.

Amid the trials for the upgraded torpedo has come news of a £230m contract to ensure the RN is able to keep running not only the heavy Spearfish but the lightweight Sting Ray weapon, too.

The Sting Ray is loaded onto Type 23 frigates and Merlin and Wildcat helicopters and is the primary anti-submarine weapon of the RN.

Combined with the Spearfish, it makes up a lethal torpedo arsenal for the Royal Navy and the £230m contract is designed to keep these weapons running at full steam.

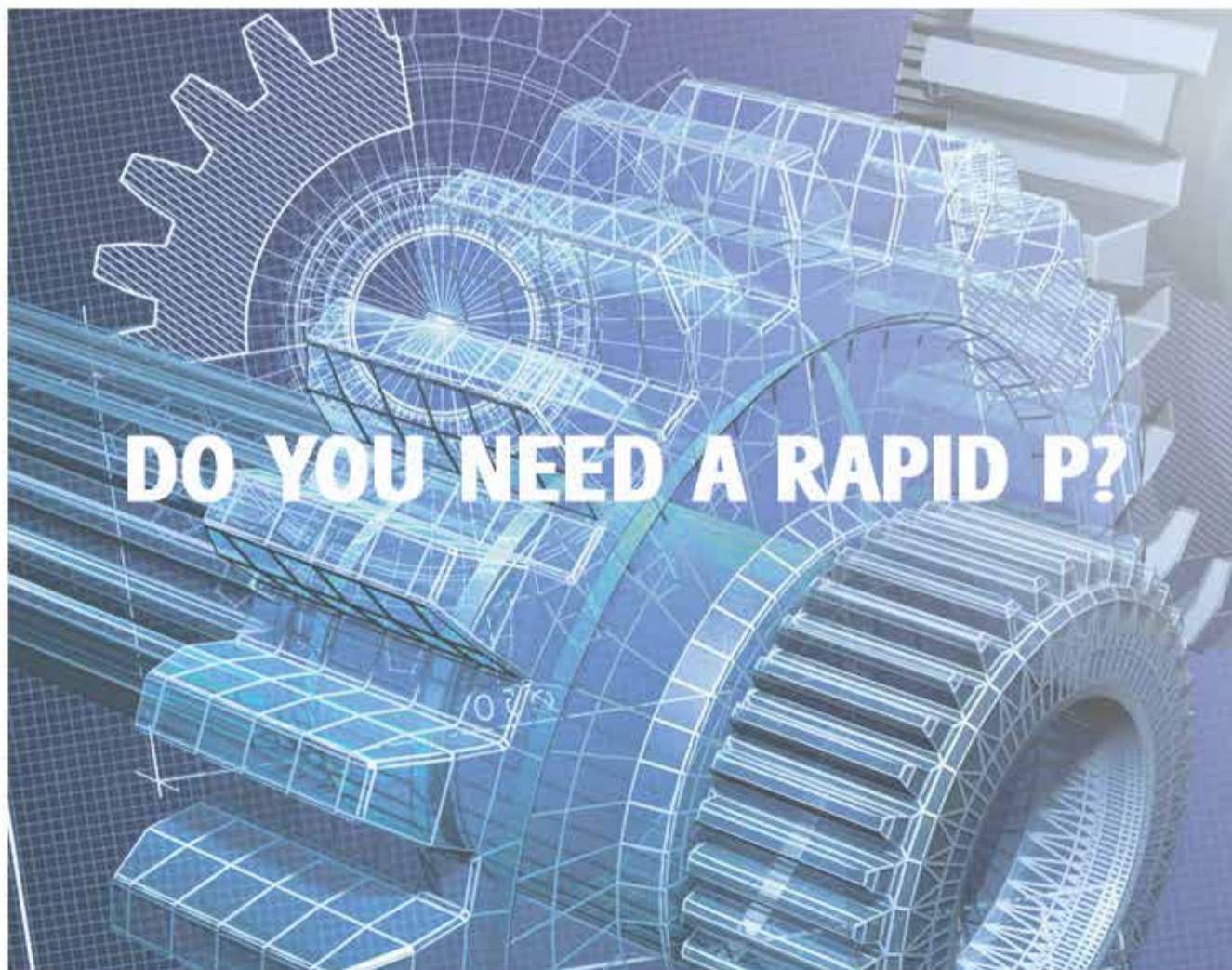
The contract will ensure maintenance of the torpedoes, plus stock management, logistics, repairs and support on trials.

It will support more than 100 jobs at the BAE Systems Broad Oak facility in Portsmouth and will run for six years.

///
The 'Mod 1' weapon is at the very cutting edge of torpedo technology and underscores Britain's position as one of the global leaders in underwater capability.



Pictures from inside HMS Talent during the Spearfish Torpedo trials off the north west coast of Scotland



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ECHOES FROM THE DEEP

While in the Baltic, HMS Echo maps shipwrecked German vessels and works with the Lithuanian Navy to hunt historic ordnance

SURVEY ship HMS Echo has investigated shipwrecks at the heart of two of the greatest losses of life at sea in history.

Devonport-based Echo has been on operations in the Baltic and recently studied the wrecks of World War 2 vessels Wilhelm Gustloff and Goya.

More than 16,000 people perished when the ships were sunk in Germany's Operation Hannibal in 1945, the evacuation of German soldiers and civilians from East Prussia as the Red

Army closed in.

Using her specialised multibeam echo sounder, a device used to map the sea floor, Echo was able to show the destruction caused by Russian submarine torpedoes that struck the German ships.

In the images captured by Echo, Nazi cruise ship Wilhelm Gustloff – which was repurposed during the war as a hospital ship and barracks for U-boat trainees – can be seen split in three parts while the Norwegian merchant

vessel Goya, commandeered by the Germans to support the Baltic U-boat flotilla in 1940, is broken towards the bow.

Lieutenant Phil Boak, HMS Echo's Operations Officer, said: "While the wrecks were fascinating to explore and image using the echo sounder, it was sobering to think that they were the final resting place for so many people caught up in the ravages of war."

In 1945 the Germans were in full retreat across Eastern Europe pursued by the Red Army. In early January, the 3rd Belarussian Front launched the East Prussian Offensive, cutting off East Prussia from the rest of Germany.

Hundreds of thousands of Germans were now trapped in the enclave; soldiers and civilians alike. Gross Admiral Doenitz ordered the commencement of Operation Hannibal to evacuate those trapped.

Over the next 15 weeks, around 900,000 German civilians and 350,000 soldiers were evacuated west across the Baltic to Germany and occupied Denmark (huge numbers

compared to Dunkirk which saw 338,226 British and French troops evacuated across the English Channel).

Both Wilhelm Gustloff and Goya were pressed into service for this vast undertaking.

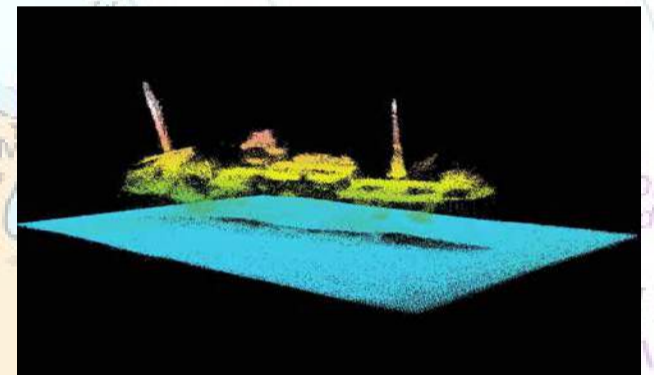
On January 30, Wilhelm Gustloff left Danzig (now Gdansk), packed with around 10,000 civilians and military personnel.

Built in 1937 as a leisure cruise ship for German works, she could host around 1,900 people including 400 crew so space for the thousands of evacuees in 1945 would have been tight.

On that fatal night, she was spotted by the Russian submarine S-13 which successfully launched three torpedoes at the liner, sinking her within the hour.

It is thought up to 9,500 people perished in the freezing cold waters of the Baltic, making the event the single greatest loss of life in a maritime incident.

The submarine S-13 would strike again, sinking the ship Steuben on February 9, with only 650 survivors from the 3,000 to 4,000 onboard.



● Imagery from HMS Echo's sensors show the shipwrecks of Goya (above) and Wilhelm Gustloff (bottom left)

Then, just months later on April 16, Goya left the port of Gotenhafen (now Gdynia), with around 6,700 passengers and crew.

The ship, and the small armada she was sailing with, was spotted by the Soviet submarine L-3 and close to midnight, the submarine fired four torpedoes, two of which struck Goya.

The damage was devastating and the ship sunk in less than four minutes. There were only 183 survivors.

Such was the crowding and chaos during the evacuation, that the exact numbers of personnel on many of these

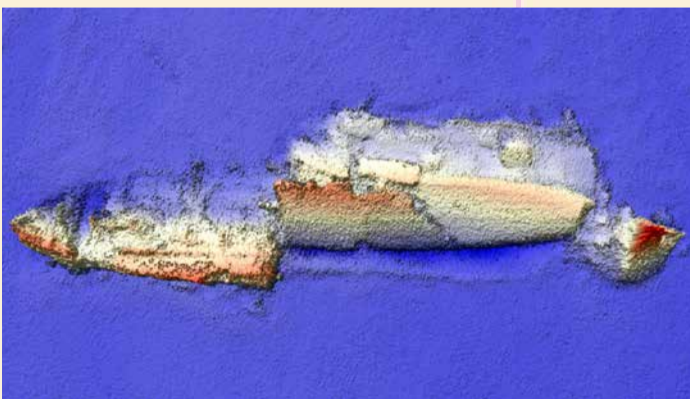
ships will never be known.

For one member of HMS Echo's company, Operation Hannibal and the wrecks of Wilhelm Gustloff and Goya are of great significance.

His grandmother, a 14-year-old orphan at the time, was evacuated from Danzig in the early months of 1945.

He said: "If the events of 1945 had panned out differently, I may well not be here serving in the Royal Navy today."

"It just goes to show how large-scale evacuations such as Operation Hannibal can send ripples through time affecting generations of families."



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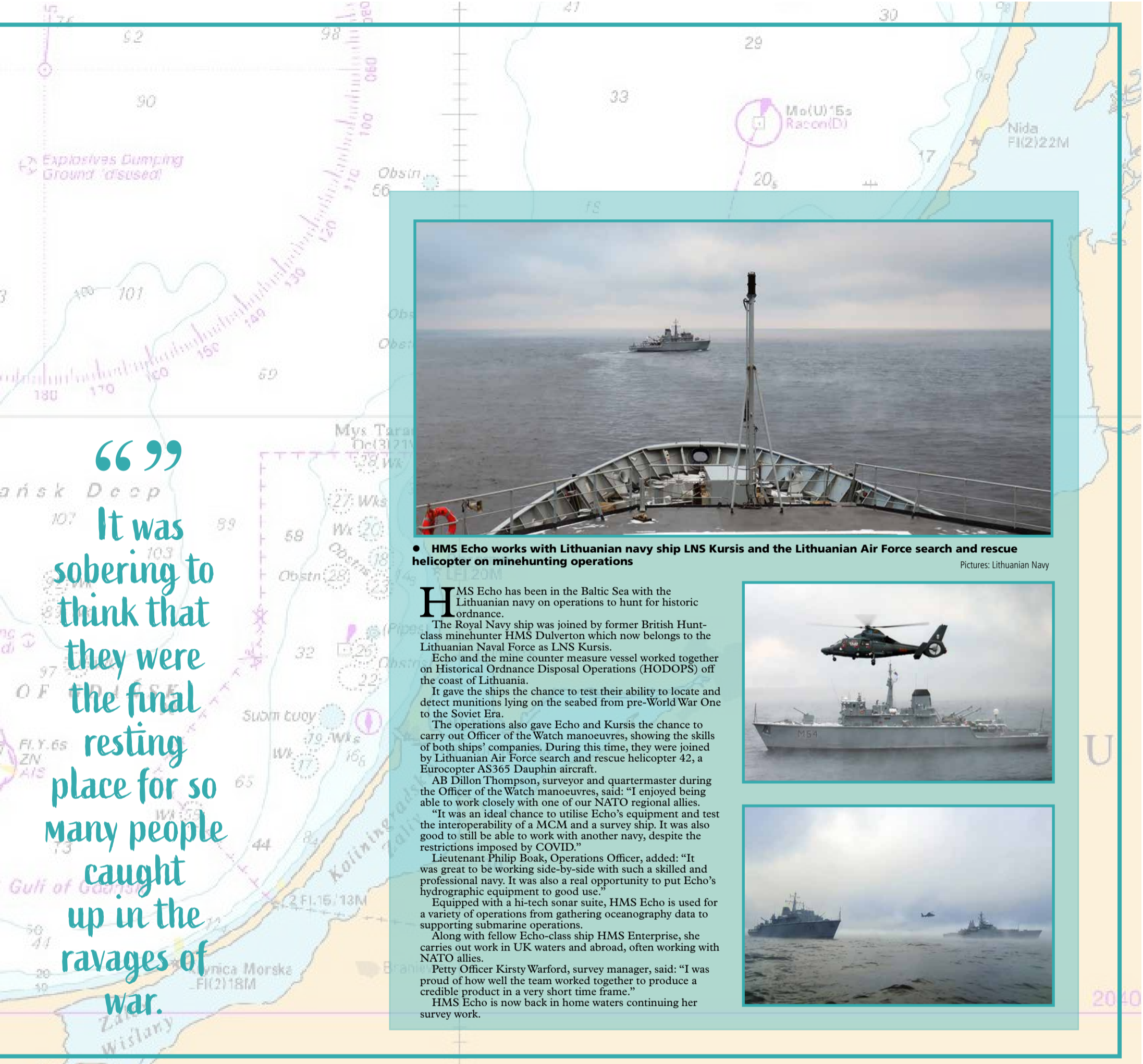
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“It was sobering to think that they were the final resting place for so many people caught up in the ravages of war.”



● HMS Echo works with Lithuanian navy ship LNS Kursis and the Lithuanian Air Force search and rescue helicopter on minehunting operations

Pictures: Lithuanian Navy

HMS Echo has been in the Baltic Sea with the Lithuanian navy on operations to hunt for historic ordnance.

The Royal Navy ship was joined by former British Hunt-class minehunter HMS Dulverton which now belongs to the Lithuanian Naval Force as LNS Kursis.

Echo and the mine counter measure vessel worked together on Historical Ordnance Disposal Operations (HODOPS) off the coast of Lithuania.

It gave the ships the chance to test their ability to locate and detect munitions lying on the seabed from pre-World War One to the Soviet Era.

The operations also gave Echo and Kursis the chance to carry out Officer of the Watch manoeuvres, showing the skills of both ships' companies. During this time, they were joined by Lithuanian Air Force search and rescue helicopter 42, a Eurocopter AS365 Dauphin aircraft.

AB Dillon Thompson, surveyor and quartermaster during the Officer of the Watch manoeuvres, said: "I enjoyed being able to work closely with one of our NATO regional allies.

"It was an ideal chance to utilise Echo's equipment and test the interoperability of a MCM and a survey ship. It was also good to still be able to work with another navy, despite the restrictions imposed by COVID."

Lieutenant Philip Boak, Operations Officer, added: "It was great to be working side-by-side with such a skilled and professional navy. It was also a real opportunity to put Echo's hydrographic equipment to good use."

Equipped with a hi-tech sonar suite, HMS Echo is used for a variety of operations from gathering oceanography data to supporting submarine operations.

Along with fellow Echo-class ship HMS Enterprise, she carries out work in UK waters and abroad, often working with NATO allies.

Petty Officer Kirsty Warford, survey manager, said: "I was proud of how well the team worked together to produce a credible product in a very short time frame."

HMS Echo is now back in home waters continuing her survey work.



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READY FOR

Navy to welcome autonomous minesweeping system, autonomous vessel and remote air traffic control towers into service



● An example of how the tower will look (above) and how the remote module could be set up (right)

HIGH-resolution cameras, data feeds and sensors will enable Royal Navy air traffic controllers to manage the skies above Cornwall from a remote location.

A new digital remote air traffic control tower is due to be installed for use by Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose's satellite airfield at Predannack and will enable air traffic services to be conducted offsite.

The technology will also enhance the controllers' situational awareness, through video, automatic tracking, graphic overlays, environmental data and radar labels.

Built in partnership with Saab, the tower will be the first of its kind to be introduced to UK Armed Forces and is expected to go live later this year.

Currently, air traffic services at Predannack are provided by personnel physically located at the Aerodrome tower overlooking the airfield. Thanks to the new state-of-the-art tower and its technology, personnel will have access to "out of the window" views displayed via the cameras and other sensors onto a curved screen wall in a Air Traffic Controller Module, based remotely within the ATC Tower back at RNAS Culdrose.

Navy air traffic controllers will have the ability to use the new system to provide all-round horizon scanning and automatically detect potential conflicts. From a practical point of view, it also removes the delays from travelling to the Aerodrome tower at Predannack from Culdrose.

Lt Paul Hollyoake, from the Royal Navy, said: "The use of this innovative technology will enable the control of aircraft at remote satellite locations from a central hub, therefore streamlining the operational effectiveness and cost efficiency of support to defence aviation."

The funding for the project was provided by the Royal Navy's Discovery, Assessment and Rapid Exploitation (DARE) Team. It is their role to exploit the latest technology and get it to the frontline, creating a more sustainable and innovative method of operations across the navy. DARE received funding for the tower from the Defence Innovation Fund.



Magnus Lewis-Olsson, Chairman of Saab UK, said: "Saab's leading air traffic management technologies have a beneficial role to play for both British civilian and military customers. The Royal Navy's adoption of digital towers is an advanced forward-leaning step for the British Armed Forces."

It is the first step towards a larger air traffic management digitisation plan that includes evaluating the scope for more remote towers at other Royal Navy air stations.

Cdr Mick Gladwin from the Royal Navy added: "This is an important step in the Royal Navy's continued development and exploitation of remote system technology to enhance the way air traffic services are delivered, improving controller efficiency and providing a safe operating environment for air systems."

THE Royal Navy is set to receive three world-class autonomous minesweepers to work on mine disposal operations and reduce the risk to sailors on these dangerous missions.

The crewless system is the first of its kind in the navy and will allow personnel to neutralise mines at range while on operations around the globe.

Thanks to its cutting-edge technology, the system, known as a Combined Influence Sweep (Sweep), can defeat modern digital sea mines which can pose risks by detecting and targeting passing ships and submarines.

A new autonomous vessel is at the heart of each of the three systems. It can neutralise many types of sea mines using equipment towed behind the boat that can generate a variety of simulated magnetic, acoustic and electric ship signatures to initiate the mine.

The whole system can be controlled remotely, either based at sea or on land, and can be deployed quickly when needed.

A contract of around £25m has been awarded to Atlas Elektronik UK to deliver the Sweep system and will support more than 25 jobs at the Dorset-based company. Additional jobs will also be supported in the supply chain.

Commander Mark Atkinson, part of the project team for the Royal Navy, said: "Combined Influence

Minesweeping is a critical component of the Mine Countermeasures capability.

"These autonomous systems will restore the Royal Navy's sweep capability, enabling it to tackle modern digital mines that may not otherwise be located in challenging minehunting conditions.

"The autonomous sweep system represents a fundamental step in the Navy's transition to autonomous offboard systems to counter the threat posed to international shipping by the sea mine."

The latest investment in the Royal Navy's minehunting operations comes just weeks after the navy announced it would be investing in three autonomous maritime mine countermeasures (MMCM) systems.

Both Sweep and the MMCM can work together to defeat the threat posed by sea mines to make international waters safer.

The first Sweep system will be delivered in late 2022, after which they will enter operational evaluation before entering service at a date to be determined.

Sir Simon Bollom, DE&S chief executive, said: "This cutting-edge Sweep technology follows hot on the heels of the contract negotiated for equally innovative autonomous minehunters and provides the Royal Navy with the increased capability they need to deal with modern mine threats."



NEXT STEPS



The Royal Navy's experimentation innovator NavyX has officially welcomed a new autonomous vessel into its service.

Named Madfox (Maritime Demonstrator For Operational eXperimentation), it is derived from technology firm L3Harris' Mast-13 vessel, which for the past 18 months has been operated by Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) on a series of trials with the Royal Navy.

Since being delivered, NavyX

has been working hard to get Madfox (*main picture*) to sea and ready to begin a demanding year of testing.

Over the next few months, NavyX will carry on its work with the Uncrewed Surface Vessel (USV), while also examining how these vessels can deliver across the range of military operations including surveillance and force protection.

Commander Antony Crabb, NavyX team leader, said: "With Madfox now directly in the

hands of NavyX, the team will be able to explore a multitude of issues such as safety, regulatory compliance, new missions, new payloads and the role that a USV can play in complex operations and within the future fleet.

"Later this year NavyX will also accept an autonomous Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB) into the inventory.

"This exciting work will help inform how systems are deployed, and employed, from future vessels of the Type 26 and Type

31 classes."

The investment in Madfox comes as the Royal Navy and Royal Marines look to expand their use of crewless and autonomous equipment.

Mast-13, proved the value of USVs during experimentation in Norway last year when it was successfully integrated with HMS Albion for Autonomous Advance Force 3.0.

There it was controlled remotely, including for the transit in and out of the ship's dock.

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● Left, AB Liam Madden with the Puma drone during trials aboard HMS Tamar

● Right, Tamar's seaboot during the trials

Pictures: LPhoto Alex Ceolin



Eyes in the skies

DRONES could play a key role in tracking drug runners and smugglers after successful trials with the Navy's newest class of ships in the Channel.

HMS Tamar made extensive use of small Puma aircraft during trials with the Royal Marines and the Met Police as the ship practices for 'constabulary duties' when she deploys for the first time this summer.

Although Tamar has a flight deck, she doesn't carry a helicopter on a regular basis – there's no hangar, so Merlin and Wildcat helicopters only use the ship for refueling, collecting supplies or making a short stop.

The Puma could fulfil some of the helicopter's intelligence-gathering role – with its 50-times zoom camera it feeds live footage back to a mother ship at ranges up to a dozen miles.

Building on their experiences aboard HMS Albion in the Mediterranean last year, a team from 700X Naval Air Squadron – the Fleet Air Arm's only pilotless squadron – brought their drone to Tamar.

Just over 4½ft long, with a wingspan of 9ft and weighing as much as six bags of sugar, Puma can survey an area of up to 270 square miles of ocean – that's larger than Greater Manchester – looking for suspicious activity during sorties lasting up to 2½ hours.

"We were under pressure to perform,"

said Lieutenant Ash Loftus, Puma flight commander. "There are many additional challenges in preparing and launching safety from a ship. While it's a relatively small aircraft, it is large wing and requires some skill from the operator launching it from the ship.

"We completed 100 per cent of the tasks required of us by the ship. We were often flying out of line of sight to approach vessels, using the system's cameras for identification purposes.

"We'd be in close communications with the officer of the watch and we were able to report back successfully on the identification of vessels."

Puma is relatively cheap – certainly much cheaper than sending a helicopter up – easy to launch and recover, is difficult for foes to spot and keeps the ship out of harm's way. In short, Puma gave Tamar 'eyes in the sky'.

"It was of great use for investigating nearby vessels of interest," said Lieutenant Commander Michael Hutchinson.

"We could easily see just how useful such a system could be for any future anti-piracy or counter-smuggling operations. It's a significant enhancement of the ship's capabilities and bodes well for the future."

Tamar and her four sisters are being

deployed around the world on long-term missions, operating from overseas ports and bases, patrolling regions of key strategic interest and importance to the UK.

Constabulary duties – counter piracy/terrorism/smuggling – are a key role of the new River-class ships.

Typically the vessels will work with Royal Marines boarding teams – a 50-man mess has been built into the ships to accommodate them.

But there may be occasions when Tamar may be called on to work with local law enforcement agencies (such as her sister HMS Medway has been doing in the Caribbean, striking at drug-runners with the US Coast Guard).

The combined training with the Metropolitan Police in the Channel proved extremely useful for both the Navy and UK's largest police force.

The Met used Tamar as their 'floating headquarters', turning her into a command and control vessel to marshal their RIB speed boats.

The latter are used to the sheltered waters of the Thames – their normal domain ends at Dartford Creek – and they found operating in the choppy

Channel rather difficult.

"Working with the police proved to be a new experience for all parties concerned – the main fruit was a much greater understanding of each other's capabilities and how to most effectively make use of these depending on the operational context," Lieutenant Commander Hutchinson added.

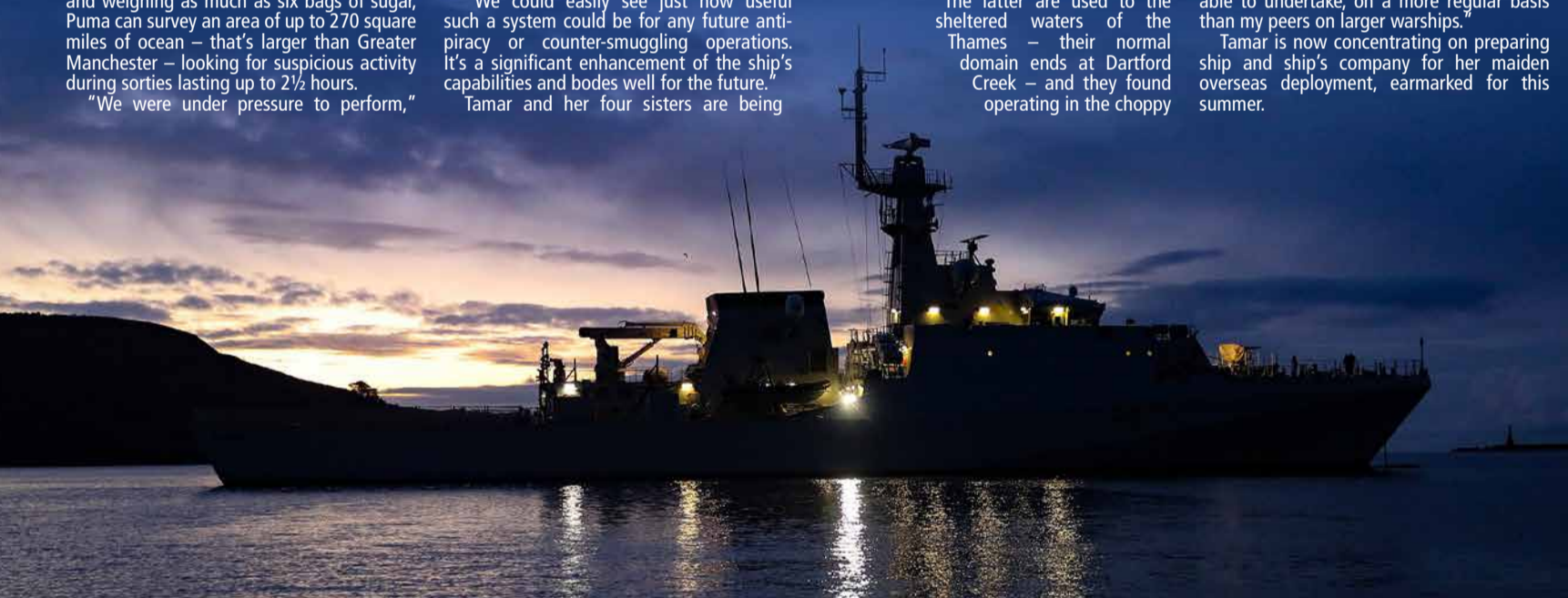
As well as helping to expand the River class 'operators' manual', Tamar's extensive training off the south coast over the autumn and winter has also benefited junior sailors.

The ship has hosted Young Officers learning the basics of their trade on a front-line warship, such as Sub Lieutenant John Patterson, a trainee warfare officer.

"Launching and recovering boats, operating aerial assets, conducting close passes, intelligence gathering of vessels of interest and enabling the boarding operations by teams of Royal Marines are all serials which I've gained a great deal of exposure to," he said.

"That's not mentioning the large number of pilotages and coastal navigation I've been able to undertake, on a more regular basis than my peers on larger warships."

Tamar is now concentrating on preparing ship and ship's company for her maiden overseas deployment, earmarked for this summer.



Queen's Frigate tests her new heavy machine gun



THERE'S an extra layer of defence around HMS Lancaster and her 200 crew to keep her foes at bay.

The Portsmouth-based warship has been fitted with heavy machine-guns to fend off small, fast-attack craft – guns tested for the first time off the South Coast as the 'Queen's Frigate' shakes off winter cobwebs.

After a hectic 2020, the ship began this year undergoing maintenance before resuming her place in the Fleet.

The .50 calibre gun has long been a favourite of the Royal Marines (on WMK Land Rovers, for example) and aircrew – it's fitted to the Fleet Air Arm's Wildcat and Merlin helicopters when they are providing air cover or hunting down smugglers.

But for close-protection ships mostly rely on the lighter general purpose machine gun (GPMG), sometimes the Minigun (a manually-operated Gatling gun) and, as a last resort, standard-issue SA80 rifles.

As the name suggests the .50 heavy machine-gun – generally known as the '50 cal' or HMG (heavy machine gun) – spews out half inch/12.7mm diameter shells at 500-600 rounds per minute.

Effective at ranges up to about 2,000 metres, its bullets can penetrate light armour and will tear through plastics such as RIB speed boats.

It fell to Leading Seaman Mikey Benbow, Lancaster's close-range weapons instructor, who attended a training course with his team on the use of the gun

last year... and then had to wait nearly 12 months for it to be installed.

"I was eager to get on the mount as nobody on the ship had ever fired it before and although it's within the confines of my job on board, it's a new weapon to me and has given me another challenge and weapon to train with," said Mikey.

"When it actually came to firing, to be honest it didn't have as much of a kick as I thought it would, but it really came into its own with the sound of each round leaving the gun.

"I can imagine it would be more intimidating than our current weapons for someone to hear if they were attacking the ship."

Multiple rounds were fired at various angles and in various directions from the bridge wing mountings to ensure the weapon was safe and the gunnery team can handle it – and can use it in anger if necessary.

Further shoots to hone accuracy and test efficacy are lined up, including against the Royal Navy's 'killer tomato' large inflatable target, allowing comparisons with Lancaster's existing machine and Miniguns.

In addition, the gunners also ran out the GPMGs and the ceremonial saluting gun.

As well as gunnery, Lancaster's trials included working with Wildcats from Yeovilton by day and night to ensure they can operate the helicopter safely in all conditions, and testing her engines.

Tests complete, the ship is patrolling around the UK.



HATS OFF TO ALBION

TALES OF THE OUTGOING FLAGSHIP

AS THE A-TEAM WRAP UP



KOREA VISIT: Albion arrives in South Korea

JOINT WARRIOR AND THE

After an eleven-week maintenance period, Albion was back at sea in a two-week exercise off the Cornish and Devon coast in early 2019.

This was all valuable mission-specific training ahead of NATO and Joint Expeditionary Force operations later in the year, which would take Albion to the Baltic.

Albion spearhead the two-month-long Baltic Protector mission, involving nearly 2,000 British personnel from all three services – but mostly Royal Navy and Royal Marines – alongside more than 1,000 comrades from allied nations.

The deployment was the first large-scale run out of the new UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force, set up in 2015 with eight like-minded nations – Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden – to forge a force of more than 10,000 military personnel in the air, at sea and on land if required to respond to world events.

The aim was to demonstrate the ability of participants to mobilise forces at short notice, deploy them and fight side-by-side to protect Europe at a time of increased threat.

Before heading to the Baltic, Albion headed a task group including her guardians (HMS Defender against air attack, HMS Kent against submarines and 'enemy' ships), amphibious ship RFA Lyme Bay, tanker RFA Tiderace and hundreds of Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade – plus their kit.

Marines carried out raids up and down the land with the men of Arbroath-based 45 Commando going ashore with their Dutch comrades from 21 Raiding Squadron Royal Netherlands Marine Corps, striking at 'targets' in Loch Ewe near Ullapool, Luce Bay near Stranraer and ranges in south-west Wales; the marines landed in the middle of the

night to capture 'enemy' per coastline.

The ship was brought to of attacks from enemy ships and fire parties rushed around and missile impacts.

Next it was on to the Baltic Expeditionary Force (JEF) Mission highly successful – that demonstrated in the Baltic and their continuing

Commodore James Parkin aboard Albion, said: "Baltic expectations and I am immensely achieved."

"Together with the Netherlands, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and purpose in this region, and all of the partner nations."

Albion finished the year up City in Chester.

The Princess Royal watched out in inclement weather to war

With bayonets fixed, flags w Royal Marines pounded the rain

first time they'd had the opportunity

Princess Anne launched the followed the assault ship's deed



DEEP PURPLE: Albion during Baltic operations in 2019

NORWAY,

In 2020, her final year as flagship, shaping of commando forces of the Arctic Circle to the Mediterranean.

Albion sailed for the highest northern Exercise Cold Response and also De Witt led the amphibious side of

Helicopters, warships and commando in southern Norway, before heading biggest UK training in the region for

In all, 15,000 troops from the Response to test their ability to work in unforgiving environments on earth.

The Covid-19 pandemic cut short Norway, Albion was at the heart of s

It saw a collection of unmanned operational setting for the first time.

Royal Marines small boat specifications alongside Albion, the Royal Navy's and the Office for the Chief Technology could work during operations.

Exercise Autonomous Advance Force

■ Captain Angus Essenhigh, the Commanding Officer of new fleet flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth, takes his hat off to HMS Albion, the outgoing flagship, as the two ships sail past each other

Picture by: LPhoto Belinda Alker

ALBION...

UP THEIR TIME FLYING THE FLAG



in 2018

E BALTIC

personnel and weapons caches along the UK's

their highest alert state, and faced a barrage of small craft, submarines and jets. Damage to the ship to counter simulated floods, fires

ic, where the ship completed her first Joint Maritime Task Group mission – regarded as a demonstration of the co-operation between nations in a commitment to regional security.

, who commanded the task group from HMS Protector has delivered beyond all my expectations. I am immensely proud of what we have collectively

lands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and we have shown that the JEF has real utility for us. I have hugely enjoyed working alongside

exercising her right of the Freedom of the

on as hundreds of well-wishers turned out to meet HMS Albion ship's company.

driving and drums beating, the sailors and the soaked streets of the historic city – the first opportunity to visit in nearly eight years. HMS Albion was the first RN ship to visit the ship in Barrow back in 2001 and has not returned since.

AFRICA AND SHAPING THE COMMANDO FORCES

ship, Albion was at the centre of the development of the future, from experiments in the

to be involved in the Norwegian-led exercise alongside Dutch ship HNLMS Johan van Galen in the naval task group.

Commandos gathered in Stavanger, heading north for the beginning of the new decade.

in nations descended on Cold Bay to work together in one of the most

rt Cold Response, but while in the Arctic some ground-breaking trials.

ned equipment tested in an

analysts 47 Commando worked alongside autonomous accelerator NavyX to see how the kit

put unmanned boat Mast 13,

heavy lift drone from Malloy, remotely-piloted air system Puma and the Remus unmanned sub-surface drone through their paces in the harsh conditions of the Arctic.

An artificial intelligence system to control all of this tech was integrated in amphibious ship Albion, with industry partners welcomed on board to implement and oversee the system trials.

The successful four-day exercise saw these technologies make their debut in an operational setting.

That was a vein Albion continued on in the rest of 2020, as she deployed to the Mediterranean in September, heading a force which visited numerous partner nations across the Mediterranean and Black Sea as the UK's Armed Forces nurtured new friendships and cemented traditional alliances.

The assault ship led the Littoral Response Group (Experimentation) (LRG(X)) on a series of exercises which helped shape the Royal Navy and Royal Marines of tomorrow.

Working together with HMS Dragon and RFA Lyme Bay, the task group focused on developing the tactics and technology which will drive the Future Navy and Royal Marine's Future Commando Force.

They tested new equipment, such as drones, which could be used for resupplying equipment to commandos on the ground, miniature

aerial helicopters for surveillance and underwater autonomous sonars to help map beaches for landings.

In all 40 experimental concepts have been tested in nine major exercises, largely focused around Cyprus in October and November.

In addition to experimentation, the task group worked with NATO allies and regional partners to promote stability and security in the Mediterranean.

The ships, helicopters and Royal Marines trained alongside forces from Cyprus, France, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Turkey and Ukraine.

Albion and Lyme Bay, which is home in Portland next week, also took part in NATO's Operation Sea Guardian, where they investigated over 200 cargo vessels, tankers and container ships, operating on a vital commercial transit route between Asia, Africa and Europe.

Commander Jason Eacock Albion's Executive Officer, said: "I am extremely proud of what has been achieved from our sailors and Royal Marines during this three-month deployment, especially with the added pressures and complications from Covid. We now look forward to reuniting with our family and friends for the Christmas holidays, and we thank them for supporting us during our time away."

AS HMS Albion passed over the role of fleet flagship to HMS Queen Elizabeth it began a new era for the Royal Navy but also put the seal on the assault ship's time in the prestigious role, in which she sailed in the world flying the flag.

Commanding Officer of HMS Albion, Captain Simon Kelly, said: "While it is with some sadness that we hand over the responsibility to HMS Queen Elizabeth, we are proud to be part of the transfer which marks a new era for the Royal Navy and the nation."

Albion held the role since 2018 and handed over the responsibility to HMS Queen Elizabeth ahead of her first operational deployment later this year and at the restart of UK carrier operations. Albion

first took the mantle from carrier HMS Ark Royal as she was decommissioned in December 2010, but after little more than a year sister ship HMS Bulwark had taken the role as Albion headed for six years – and a £90m refit – off the front line.

Bulwark passed the baton onto HMS Ocean, before Albion retook the title in 2018 as the big O was sold to the Brazilian Navy.

From there, Albion flew the flag around the world, representing the UK across the seven seas, deploying to the Indo-Pacific for ten months; to the Baltic for major multi-national exercises; and latterly to the Mediterranean leading NATO security patrols and experimental warfare trials. Here, we look back on the achievements of Albion and all who sailed in her during her spell as the nation's flagship.

NATO, MEDITERRANEAN AND WAY OUT EAST OF SUEZ

After spending 2017 regenerating from refit and training for missions around the globe, Albion deployed as NATO's flagship, relieving HMS Duncan at the helm of an international task group in the Mediterranean.

By April, Albion was turning her attentions to beyond the Suez Canal, with then Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson announcing L14 would be heading to the Asia-Pacific to safeguard free trade and take part in joint training and exercises with allies to strengthen ties in the region.

Albion joined HMS Sutherland who was already there on deployment, with HMS Argyll joining later, as the UK looked to show its commitment to security in the Asia-Pacific and to monitor illegal trade into North Korea.

Her first stop was in Jakarta in Indonesia, becoming the first Royal Navy ship in seven years to visit. She was greeted with some fanfare, with dancers, musicians and TV cameras flocking to the quayside.

Albion exercised alongside the Indonesian Navy, but also strengthened ties in Indonesia by hosting diplomats, military officials and industry representatives for talks.

The mission of goodwill to South East Asia continued in Brunei, where Albion renewed bonds of friendship with one of the UK's closest defence partners.

Again a rare sight, Albion was the first RN ship to visit in seven years and again this was to strengthen the UK's

economic and defence interests in a region that was growing in strategic significance.

Officially known as Brunei Darussalam – which means 'abode of peace' – the tiny nation is located in the northern coast of Borneo, an island which it shares with Malaysia and Indonesia.

It's a part of the world full of historical resonance for the Fleet Flagship. With much of South East Asia gripped by political turbulence in the 1960s, the Royal Marines fought an intense counter-insurgency campaign ashore and the previous HMS Albion, a commando carrier, became a familiar presence in the region and was dubbed 'The Old Grey Ghost of the Borneo Coast'.

Albion sailed for South Korea and there paid tribute to countrymen who saved the republic from communist rule at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan at the south-eastern tip of the country.

Sailors and Royal Marines paid their respects to nearly 900 Britons who made the ultimate sacrifice and who now are at peace in the free soil of South Korea.

Around 2,300 servicemen from 11 countries are commemorated at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan.

It was at the city's gates in the late summer of 1950 that the Communist invasion from the north was halted – North

Korean forces were stopped just 30 miles from Pusan, as it was known at the time.

Japan followed Albion's visit to South Korea and following maintenance in the US Seventh Fleet's base just south of Tokyo, it was onto the capital for a high-profile visit.

Despite language barriers and the building work dominating Harumi Pier, an open weekend was heavily subscribed, with long queues along the jetty in 30-degree heat.

The Land of the Rising Sun was the last stop eastward before Albion started her journey home.

In Oman, on the way back home, she spearheaded the naval element of the largest combined military exercise for UK forces since 2002, Exercise Saif Sareea 3.

The Plymouth-based warship was the hub of an Amphibious Task Group which will comprise destroyer HMS Dragon, minehunters HMS Blyth and Ledbury, plus their support/command ship RFA Cardigan Bay, amphibious support vessel RFA Lyme Bay and the military ferry MV Anvil Point.

More than 4,000 British personnel were tested in the punishing sands of the desert alongside their Omani comrades in temperatures nudging 40°C.

That was the finale of Albion's nine-month deployment and wrapped a jam-packed 2018.



MED MISSION: Albion during deployment in the Med

Fitting tribute

Remembering their father

BRITISH sculptor Paul Day has been chosen to create a national Submariner Memorial inspired by a Royal Navy family.

The memorial will be unveiled next year at the National Memorial Arboretum at a ceremony attended by Prince William, Commodore-in-Chief Submarines.

Known for creations like the Battle of Britain Memorial on Embankment and the Meeting Place sculpture at St Pancras, Paul's design for the submariner community takes its inspiration from the winning entry of a national competition.

Chris Groves, on behalf of the Groves Family, whose design won the public national competition to inspire the final design, said: "Three generations of our family have been submariners – my father Adrian, me, my son Nick and his girlfriend Emma, and family friend Si Ellis.

"We are really passionate about the Submarine Service and we wanted to create a design that would fittingly be a memorial for all the submarine family. We will be hugely proud of the eventual memorial."

The memorial will be 4m long and 3.5m high, cast in bronze, with a quote by Sir Winston Churchill: "Of all the branches of men in the forces there is none which shows more devotion and faces grimmer perils than the submariner."

The Submariner Memorial Appeal is currently raising £375,000 to fund and maintain the memorial, which will replace the existing small plaque.

Actor Colin Firth is supporting the appeal after starring in *Kursk: The Last Mission* about the loss of the namesake Russian submarine off the North Cape in 2000.

He is also due to play naval intelligence officer Ewen Montagu in upcoming film *Operation Mincemeat*, the story of the 'man who never was' which tricked the Germans over the invasion of Sicily.

Mr Day said: "Mirroring the winning design, I imagine visitors walking through a somewhat confined space to suggest the constraints upon movement that dictate life onboard a submarine.

"The conning tower shape has that advantage of being instantly recognisable, a beacon that could be easily spotted and identified within the plethora of monuments at the arboretum.

"In order to honour the sacrifice of families who bear the brunt of separation and worry, I decorate one side of the conning tower with a low relief depicting spouses, children and parents waiting for their loved ones to return. They are present in the hearts and minds of those onboard. Their subtle presence in relief would signify this and the very real part they play in keeping submarines working at sea."

Mr Firth said: "Filming *Kursk: The Last Mission* gave me a vivid insight into the lives of our submariners.

"The service and their loved ones have made huge sacrifices over the past century – and continue to do so today as they carry out their secret work far from public gaze.

"As so many of our lost submariners have no graves, a fitting memorial at the National Arboretum will give those left behind a place to gather and grieve.

"I can't wait to see this appeal reach its goal."

For details about the appeal visit www.submariner-memorial.uk

SISTERS Ann Matthews, 81, and Gill House, 79, have no memory of their submariner father.

AB James Shanahan, pictured, was lost with WW2 submarine HMS Utmost in the Mediterranean in November 1942, aged just 30.

Four months earlier the gun layer had been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal at Buckingham Palace by George VI.

The medal's citation spoke of AB Shanahan's "efficiency as a helmsman at diving stations, his keenness as night lookout and excellent hearing during depth charge attacks, contributing to HMS Utmost's success".

The U-class submarine is thought to have been lost in a minefield while returning to Malta at the end of her 24th war patrol.

Following AB Shanahan's death, his wife Bridget worked to support Ann and Gill, who were sent to live with their grandmother Annie Scanlon in Country Cork for safety.

In 1947, Bridget was able to have her daughters back home in England but, until then, Gill's granny was the only mother she knew.

The sisters still have the letters their father sent home from Malta but have only looked at them once because his loss remains so raw.

"The last time my father left the house he said 'it won't be long before Ann's 21'."

"When I went into the kitchen on my 21st birthday, there was a present on the table and my mum was crying her eyes out," said Ann.

The sisters have made a significant contribution to the Submariner Memorial Appeal, which plans to replace the current, small remembrance plaque at the National Arboretum.

For them, a new memorial will be "a recognition of just how many submariners died".

"When you look at all the other memorials and you look at that one, it's just so sad.

"Many of our submariners died in a terrible way," they added.



An early concept of the the memorial, not to scale






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BEFORE THEY FLY THEY MUST LEARN TO SURVIVE

IN amongst the forests in the training areas surrounding the base at Bardufoss in Northern Norway are aviators attached to Joint Helicopter Command.

The woodland floor is covered in thick ice and snow and the trees shoot up out of the ice to a sparse canopy above, offering scarce shelter from the snow floating down from above.

The fliers – from across the three services – are here as part of Commando Helicopter Force's Exercise Clockwork.

As the name suggests – and it will be more than familiar to many of you – the training runs, well, like Clockwork.

Every year, for 52 years now, Clockwork, for many years under the stewardship of Officer Commanding Lieutenant Colonel Dave West – who is now in his final year at the helm of the exercises – generations of pilots, aircrew, engineers and logisticians from across Joint Helicopter Command are put through demanding Arctic training.

Commando Helicopter Force leads the way, as the owners of Clockwork. As the wings of the Royal Marines they have a duty to ensure they can provide aerial support to the green berets, who also come to northern Norway every year to keep razor sharp for combat in this inhospitable environment (*more on that on pages 2-3*).

But before any of these fliers can jump into the cabs of their aircraft and patrol the icy skies over the mountainous region, they must know what to do if they find themselves on the ground and needing to survive.

Royal Marines Mountain Leaders take them through an intensive period of training on what is known as the cold weather survival course.

It includes jumping into icy water to cope with cold shock and living out of survival shelters, plus moving on skis and snowshoes on long-distance marches.

Once completed, the fliers are ready to take to the skies and carry out their own specialist training in Arctic flying, engineering and refuelling and providing aerial support to Royal Marines on the ground – and hunting and destroying enemy targets over the mountainous terrain.

Naval Airman Matt Vickers, an aircraft handler from 845 Naval Air Squadron of the Commando Helicopter Force, is living out of a brushwood shelter in the Arctic wilderness during the cold weather survival course.

"We've just completed a shelter build using brushwood and larger chunks of wood for the structure. We've also built a fire pit to cook our food in and another to keep us warm," he said.

"It's taken us four to five hours. It's important for that safety and warmth and the benefit of having something to cover you in conditions like this.

"It's been an experience. There are more highs than lows. This will be our fifth night out surviving.

"We're learning how to survive and fight out here and the basic combat skills the Royal Marines have shown us."

Once he's finished the course, Matt will be refuelling helicopters on the flight line at the base in Bardufoss.

This time, Army Apaches from 656 Squadron have headed for the frozen high north to carry out exercises.

Training and flying in such extreme conditions is vital in ensuring that Joint Helicopter Command aircraft and people are ready to operate anywhere in the world at any time.

All deployed personnel have been through a rigorous quarantine period, with UK troops to conduct training in a bubble and in line with the Covid-19 guidelines of host nation, Norway.

NAVAL AIRMAN VICKERS –

IT'S BEEN AN EXPERIENCE.

THERE ARE MORE HIGHS THAN

LOWS. THIS WILL BE OUR FIFTH

NIGHT OUT SURVIVING.



Pictures by PO Phot Si Ethell



TARGET PRACTICE: Personnel from Joint Helicopter Command test their marksmanship during Arctic live firing with the SA80



EVERYTHING IS FINE: A rank from Joint Helicopter Command takes on the infamous ice-breaking drill in Norway



WARMING UP: A matelot enjoys the fruits of his labours, as he sits by the fire he and his coursemates made



ARCTIC BATH: Aviators are put through the infamous ice breaking drill

Helping veterans to find work

RFEA – The Forces Employment Charity has managed to help 19,005 veterans work towards new careers in the last year, despite lockdown slowing job vacancies during the year.

RFEA is the only charity to provide life-long, life-changing support, job opportunities, and training to service leavers, reservists, veterans and their families, irrespective of circumstances, rank, length of service, or reason for leaving.

The charity's work has received vital ongoing support thanks to a generous donation of £91,800 from The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) and its funding partner, Greenwich Hospital.

The funding is part of a successful multi-year partnership which continues essential employment support for Royal Marine and Royal Navy Veterans across the country, with services encompassing all elements needed to be successful in an employment search.

This includes CV advice and interview skills, through to support with finding suitable employment opportunities, as well as motivation and workplace social skills. This funding is especially important as unemployment is rising in 2021 and the numbers registering for support in January 2021 is at an all-time high.

RFEA also works with clients to identify any other underlying issues, such as housing, debt, substance or alcohol misuse, or health problems, such as PTSD, which may act as a barrier to securing meaningful employment.

Employment and wellbeing support are going to be a critical need for recovery from the impacts of Covid-19 and thanks to the backing of RNRMC, RFEA will be able to offer help to the increasing numbers of veterans seeking its support since the pandemic.

In the last year alone, RFEA has helped change the lives of 739 ex-Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel, by improving their social stability, health and wellbeing and their basic skills, leading to 71 percent securing meaningful job roles during this time.

Nicki Bradley from Plymouth, a former Leading Naval Nurse in the Royal Navy, served from 1992 to 2006.

After leaving the Service she struggled to transfer her valuable

experience into skills that were recognised by civilian employers.

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.

Nicki says: "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."

"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."

Commodore Alistair Halliday, RFEA's Chief Executive, added: "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 said: "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."

If you are a Royal Navy or Royal Marines veteran and would like help finding work, please register with RFEA via their website. You can also get in touch on 0121 262 3058 or email info@rfea.org.uk



Quay personnel

THREE is the magic number.

42 is the meaning of life.

And 403 is the key figure in the Gulf.

There are 403 men and women here – the first time since the Royal Navy's Naval Support Facility in Bahrain opened in 2018 that all its assets were all in one place together for a group photograph.

They mustered to mark the departure of Commodore Dean Bassett (he's standing to the right of the peribouy in the foreground...and pictured inset) after two years in charge of the UK Maritime Component Command, the RN's operational headquarters east of Suez.

Some of his staff are lined up behind him (plus the various commanding officers of the warships), but the bulk are to his right (the left of the photograph): 57 men and women who work in the UKMCC HQ building (which is about half a mile away from the NSF) as well as the NSF itself and the US base (over a bridge) where they serve at international naval headquarters directing the Combined Maritime Forces and Operation Sentinel.

And to the commodore's left (the right of the photograph) 51 personnel from RFA Cardigan Bay (berthed at the 'finger jetty' in the background), mother ship to the four minehunters (due to be replaced later this year by her sister Lyme Bay), and 89 members of HMS Montrose's Port Crew (which is about half the frigate's complement – the rest are aboard the Type 23, berthed on the right of the image).

The minehunters are represented by: Her Majesty's Ships Chiddingfold and her sister Brocklesby (berthed outboard) with 36 and 32 crew appearing in the photograph and Shoreham and, outboard, Penzance (33 and 32 sailors on parade).

They rely on the Mine Countermeasures Battle Staff (18 personnel lined up in front of Chiddingfold's stern) and all the vessels need maintenance support and assistance. Step forward 23 engineers of the Forward Support Unit (in front of Shoreham's bow).



Although principally a Royal Navy hub, the base is also home to a detachment of soldiers for force protection (nine are lined up here, the rest are on duty guarding the facility), and eight RAF personnel who live on the base but operate the small, but crucial, air hub for moving personnel in and out of Bahrain as well as crucial supplies for the fleet.

(And the two ships top left? They're US Avenger-class minehunters with whom RN vessels train frequently.)

With personnel on duty both in the ships, on the base, and in the UK/US headquarters the actual number of personnel – military and civilian – supporting the RN's peacekeeping and security operation in the region is well over 403, closer to 600.

Commanding them for the past two years, said Cdre Bassett, had been "an honour": "the professionalism, sense of duty, commitment and humour has been quite extraordinary, particularly during the past 12 months when the global pandemic has made life much more demanding."

During his time in charge, Montrose has made her mark as the RN's permanent major presence east of Suez – both safeguarding shipping and, with other British and allied warships, keeping millions of pounds of illegal narcotics off the streets of the UK and Europe thanks to a series of major busts.

Cdre Bassett has handed over the reins to Commodore Ed Ahlgren. The role also involves serving as deputy commander of the Combined Maritime Forces, the coalition of more than 30 nations and navies committed to the safe passage of shipping from Suez to the shores of Pakistan and as far south as the Seychelles.

Cdre Ahlgren takes over having previously commanded one of the coalition's major task groups, CTF 150, which is focused on maritime security across more than two million square miles of ocean and has been operating since the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the US in 2001.

Picture: Lt Nick Stevenson, UKMCC



Supporting unpaid carers

CARING for a loved one who is ill, disabled or older can be valuable and rewarding, but without the right support caring can have an impact on your health, your job, your finances and your social life.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity have teamed up with Carers UK to support unpaid carers in the Royal Navy community.

A new digital portal has been developed that brings together Carers UK's digital products and online resources with RNRMC funded support for carers.

To create an account and get free access to all the products and support resources click on the link carersdigital.org and create a new account by using your free access code DGTC4836

The Digital Resource for Carers includes e-Learning modules, factsheets, interactive guides, personalised support, and information from covering the following areas:

- Health and wellbeing; including resources around

nutrition and breaks

- Support for Caring: including 5 'About Me' e-Learning courses on building emotional resilience and finding support, and an upfront guide to caring which gives tailored advice to carers depending on their situation

- Technology and Caring: includes guides on how to use technology in care

- Financial Planning: includes a resource made with the Money Advice Service called 'Thinking Ahead'; a questionnaire style tool to help people think about the costs of caring

- Working and Caring: includes guides to rights at work and seeking support at work

- Access to all to care co-ordination App, Jointly.

- Young Adult Carers; an e-Learning resource for young adult carers now in adult services including, for example, advice and information for making choices about caring, and support in and about education and work

- RNRMC support for carers

Five, Six, Pick up sticks...

COME in numbers five and six, your time is up...

Continuing the numerical theme – and departures from the Gulf – Crew 5 of 1st Mine Countermeasures Squadron and Crew 6 from 2nd Mine Countermeasures Squadron have completed their six-month tours of duty in their ships and returned home (respectively HMS Shoreham and Brocklesby and Faslane and Portsmouth).

Both arrived in Bahrain at the height of summer (and with it temperatures regularly topping 45°C and high humidity, making for exhausting conditions on deck, and testing air conditioning and cooling systems aboard to the limit).

And by the time they'd completed their six months, temperatures were a pleasant high teens/low 20s.

In between, came the challenge of a double engine change and dry docking for work on the hull, regular patrols as part of the international effort to keep trade moving freely in the region, and exercises to ensure the mine warfare team remained at the top of their game.

The largest of the latter took place just before Christmas when Shoreham joined an Anglo-American force to head up the

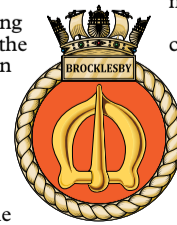
coast for the first naval operation alongside the Kuwaiti Navy since the beginning of the pandemic.

Christmas was spent alongside at the UK's Naval Support Facility in Bahrain and a few days to enjoy adventurous training in the kingdom, but otherwise the tempo for Shoreham has rarely slackened.

Her last major test was working alongside frigate HMS Montrose as part of a test of the Royal Navy's Bahrain-based force to work together to protect UK interests from any threats above or below the waves.

Crew 5's Marine Engineering Department was recognised by the Senior Naval Engineering Officer in his annual commendations. And the senior US Navy officer in the Middle East, Fifth Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Samuel J. Paparo, and the UK's Chief of Defence Staff General Sir Nick Carter have both visited the ship to learn about the work of the RN's Gulf-based minehunting force.

"This has been my first deployment and I have thoroughly enjoyed every moment of it," said Sub Lieutenant Samuel Charleston, assistant to Shoreham's Executive Officer.



Life in the RAS lane

AS CHALLENGES go, those facing **Commodore David Eagles** in his first 100 days at the helm of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary would daunt many.

You'll be expected to prepare to deploy more than half your fleet from the Sea of Japan to the shores of the Gulf and islands of the Caribbean, including providing the backbone of the UK's most important peacetime deployment in decades.

You'll still have to change crews every four months despite a global health emergency which severely curbs international travel, severely restricts personal freedoms, and limits the fun activities in exotic locations which have drawn men and, more recently, women to a life at sea for decades.

You'll be expected to support Royal Navy ships called in home waters to an extent not seen since the Cold War.

And that's just some of the key points. Enough to overwhelm many, but not the man who took charge of the Service (13 ships, 1,859 men and women) at the end of October from Duncan Lamb. "I'm loving it," he says.

One of his predecessor's most notable achievements was bringing the huge Tide-class tankers into service ready for the UK's new carriers.

It falls to Commodore Eagles to build on that and support HMS Queen Elizabeth's first deployment which begins this spring.

Two auxiliaries will accompany the carrier strike group – Tidespring to provide the bulk of the fuel the ships, F-35 jets and helicopters require, Fort Victoria to provide additional ammunition, fuel, food, supplies and spare parts.

The bulk of the deployment will be spent between the Near and Far East. Indeed for much of 2021, the RFA will have four of its vessels deployed east of Suez (with two in the Gulf region itself, supporting the RN and regional allies).

This year is likely to be the RFA's busiest since the mid-2000s:

- Tanker Wave Knight will join new patrol ship HMS Medway in the Caribbean to provide security against drug trafficking and support in the event of natural disasters during the hurricane season;
- Lyme and Cardigan Bays will trade places as the command ship for minehunters based in Bahrain; the latter is coming home for a much-needed refit after her three-year deployment in the Gulf;
- Mounts Bay is lined up to join HMS Albion for exercises in the Baltic;
- On top of these commitments, the RFA is expected to support operations and training in home waters.

"It's hard to remember when such a large percentage of the RFA flotilla has deployed on operations, but it ties in with the general drive by the Navy to get ships and sailors to sea," says Commodore Eagles.

"That's something the Royal Fleet Auxiliary prides itself in. Ninety-four per cent of our personnel are in sea-going billets with only six per cent in posts ashore."

That does pose some issues for the RFA's female sailors – roughly ten per cent of the service's 1,859 personnel (a fairly similar ratio to the Royal Navy).

"Recruiting of women is making good progress – but retaining them is harder. We need to do more for seafaring mums. Our sea focus means there are fewer opportunities for them ashore so one of my goals is to find a solution which works for everyone. Being a mum should not be a career-stopper."

Women going to sea full-stop was still being chewed over by top brass when he began his RFA service in 1988 after 11 years in the Merchant Navy with BP.

The progress made in the past three decades was underlined last month when the RFA appointed its first female commanding officer in its 116-year history, Captain Susan Cloggie-Holden (see page 26).

The flotilla too has changed considerably. Gone are the steam-driven ships of 1960s vintage which were still prevalent in the late 80s. Though numerically smaller, the flotilla of 2021, says the commodore, possesses "a fantastic mix of ships, all incredibly capable".

The carriers will be the centre of attention

on their deployments with the RFA in key supporting roles. For RFA crews, the concept of seeing the world through a career at sea remains a key draw to joining up, says the commodore.

"Recruitment presently is strong. Before Christmas we had the largest class of RFA officers to pass out at Dartmouth and we're hitting about 83 per cent of our targets for recruiting ratings," he adds.

"Our work/leave model – four months on, three months off – is an attractive lifestyle choice for some people and the job is more sea-focused than the Royal Navy, although you get the same excitement and adventure, plus the satisfaction of supporting the nation, keeping it and its ideals safe."

The pandemic has, of course, had an impact on the RFA just as the Royal Navy.

It's demanded head-scratching and work-around solutions from those at the top to ensure ships meet their commitments – and forbearance and flexibility from sailors and their families.

As with Royal Navy ships and submarines, the pandemic has led to 'closed gangways' allowing only essential personnel on or off ships, with sailors flying out to join deployed ships spending time in quarantine, inevitably increasing personnel margins for the Service, resulting in less time with families for our seafarers.

"Everything in my first 100 days has been framed by the pandemic, protecting RFA personnel and their families, all the while ensuring that our ships remain available for operations."

"Our sailors have been fantastic throughout – so supportive, particularly over Christmas when there were significant restrictions on leave."

Just a few days into his tenure, Cdre Eagles' deputy, the vastly-experienced and highly-regarded Captain Rob Anders was diagnosed with a terminal illness, passing away suddenly before Christmas aged just 49.

"To me it was a huge personal loss, and a huge professional loss to the service. Rob was one of four RFA comrades who very sadly died in service during my first 100 days – you feel each one because we're a close-knit family."

"It's a huge honour to be the head of that family. They are doing a great job. I wish I could get out there, visit the ships in person and thank everyone – and I will when circumstances allow. That aside, I'm enjoying every minute. It's a great job."



KEEP UP WITH THE RFA

Follow @RFAHeadquarters and @RoyalNavy on Twitter



Tubas and YouTubers

WITH public performances all but postponed due to the pandemic, the world's finest military musicians have turned to YouTube to showcase their talent.

The new Royal Marines Band Service channel features more than 160 films, including previous Mountbatten Festivals of Music at the Royal Albert Hall and music videos produced by the RMBS.

In addition to some of these trademark appearance, the musicians have also created a playlist, the 'RMBS Academy' to support music education and encourage the next generation of musicians.

The playlist already contains 44 videos including masterclasses and introductory videos to musical instruments, with the musicians expanding on these videos to provide an easily-accessible resource for instrumentalists, band leaders, instructors and teachers worldwide.

"YouTube allows us to carry on engaging with our audience, while also supporting musical education and encouraging the next generation through our new Digital Academy," said Warrant Officer 1st Class Nev Dednum RM.

The free channel can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/3IAfDvX> – or search 'The Bands of HM Royal Marines' on YouTube and subscribe.

And if you like what you see and fancy becoming a full-time musician with the service, email careers@royalmarinesbands.co.uk.

Don't get stressed

IF YOU'RE finding working from home and isolation tough going, the Army's Sgt Paris Wilson-Johnson and RN physical training instructor Petty Officer Tim Scrivener based at Whitehall have come up with hints, tips and ideas to help improve your mental health while working from home.

In a nutshell: don't let that stress bucket overflow, release the tap!

So consider breaks, exercise, hobbies, your diet – and reaching out to others.

"Even 30 minutes of 'me time' a day can make a difference," says Tim. "Even though sometimes it feels like you are alone, we are all in this together. There is support available if it becomes too much."

And to help your team, think about morning 'check-ins' with your colleagues, hold 'virtual tea breaks' for a natter, and consider a team debrief at the day's end as well as fortnightly video calls.

Tim's uploaded several workout routines to try – ranging from 20 to 40 minutes and not requiring equipment so you can do them easily in your own home. Visit his YouTube channel at <http://bit.ly/TimScrivener>. You can also find advice on the free Headspace app for civilian and uniformed staff: <https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/defnet/JFC/Pages/Headspace-is-here.aspx>.

And there is also a breathing app, which works on MoDNET, to help you take a 'moment' during the working day: <https://xhalr.com>.



Susan turns the Tide of history

SIGNING her way into Royal Fleet Auxiliary history is Captain Susan Cloggie-Holden – formally taking charge of tanker RFA Tiderace by recording the fact in the ship's log.

In doing so, she became the first woman in 116 years of the RFA to command one of its ships.

After serving as the 39,000-tonne ship's First Officer, the 38-year-old formally took command from her predecessor Capt Angus Bissell during a short spell alongside in Devonport.

Among her first acts as the Tide-class ship's tanker was to lower flags to half mast in honour of Captain Sir Tom Moore, the remarkable 100-year-old fundraiser, father and WW2 veteran who died the previous day.

His place in history is assured, as is Susan's – one for the compilers of the *Royal Navy Day by Day*, *inter alia*.

It's taken her just over 20 years for the Glaswegian to rise to the pinnacle of command.

Originally from Drumchapel, Susan's Royal Fleet Auxiliary career began in September 2000 after studying at Glasgow College of Nautical Studies.

Since then she has travelled the world and taken part in military and peacekeeping operations pretty much from Day 1.

Those have included the initial campaign against the Taliban in 2001-02 (Operation Veritas), supporting the post-Saddam Iraqi Navy in 2006-07, conducting counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden at the height of the scourge in 2008-09, and navigating supply ship RFA Fort Rosalie providing support to RN vessels involved in operations off Libya in 2011.

"I feel very privileged to have the opportunity of taking command of a vessel of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary – it is a pivotal moment," said Susan who today lives in Ayrshire.

"When I commenced my career as a Cadet there hadn't been any female Senior Officers, therefore I feel honoured to be the first female Captain in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

"I hope that this will provide all women within the organisation to aspire to achieve whatever they put their minds to."

Married to Captain Peter Holden, who retired from the RFA in 2019 after commanding helicopter training ship Argus, Susan is a long-standing advocate for women at sea.

She was the first Royal Fleet Auxiliary Female Champion, chairs the RFA Women's Network, has set up a female-to-female mentoring scheme across the RFA, and was a founding member of the Maritime UK Women in Maritime Taskforce.

And last year, she was named the Global Seafarer of the Year Award at the Lloyd's List Europe Awards.

Picture: LPhot Kyle Heller, RNPOTY

Covid kiboshes RN's two premier public events

FOR the second year running two of the Navy's premier public showcases have fallen victim to the pandemic.

Restrictions and health/safety rules have forced the cancellation of Beating Retreat at Horse Guards in June by the Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines.

The same goes for International Air Day at Yeovilton – earmarked for Saturday July 10.

Organisers of both say current government policy on large outdoor gatherings and the risks associated with hosting a large-scale international event are too great and have forced the flagship shows' cancellation again.

In the case of the Band, many of its personnel are currently mobilised to assist with the Covid response (see page 6).

Their absence and the logistics of practising/staging the central London event meant, said the Band's Principal Director of

Music, Lieutenant Colonel Jason Burcham, that the world-famous musicians could not put on their best performance, and would prefer to put on a showstopper in 2022.

In the meantime, his musicians will endeavour to use social media (such as the YouTube channel, top left) to keep the public entertained.

Similarly, last year a 'virtual air show' took place online in the place of Yeovilton featuring footage of some of the best displays from previous events.

The airshow typically draws more than 35,000 visitors.

Although it's hosted by the Royal Navy, air day pulls in military and civilian aircraft from around the globe, performing in Somerset skies or displayed on the ground for visitors to inspect and chat to crews – none of which can be guaranteed yet this summer. Organisers hope the live display will return in 2022.

Helping RN families is so fulfilling

WARRANT Officer 1st Class Fiona Campbell (pictured) works for Royal Navy Family and People Support (RN FPS) and is leading its recruitment campaign this year.

Regular RN and RM OR4 – OR7 ranks and rates are welcome to apply to transfer. RN FPS is a professional dedicated support service offering bespoke information, family engagement and specialist welfare services to service personnel and their families while also providing guidance to the chain of command.

"I have worked for RN FPS since 2009 having transferred from being a leading writer with sea service on HMS Exeter, Invincible and Westminster."

"I always knew I had a side to me where I quite enjoyed supporting and assisting others; I found it satisfying. Even in the writer role I could see the benefits to others' lives when I went the extra mile to sort out fiddly pay issues and the like for them."

"I applied to branch transfer without hesitation when I saw the RNTM for 'NPFS' as the organisation was called back then. Looking back, it was the wisest decision I've made in respect of my career and for achieving personal levels of job satisfaction."

"I would say that the specialisation offers much in the way of professional development and I've grown a range of skills along the way. I now have proficiency in couples' work, direct work with children plus active listening skills to support those with low mood."

"Additionally, I'm professionally trained to risk assess victims of domestic abuse using the DASH model which informs which important steps ought to be taken following an incident; the list of skills I have gained is extensive and ongoing."

"Learning to balance the needs of families and service personnel with the requirements of the chain of command has been a key area for me to grasp. This has involved a need to develop a thorough, but at the same time realistic understanding of which compassionate interventions are appropriate."

"At times I've needed to use other resources, professionals and agencies to support families so that manpower for the Royal Navy stays in the best possible shape that it can."

"Covid has, of course, impacted the ability to introduce other

ideas, agencies and resources requiring new innovative ways of working. The pandemic has created another set of pressures for RN families with the likes of home schooling, which can take its toll on the family unit."

"I'm pleased to observe that modern practices of shining a light on mental health as a valid issue – and an area worthy of attention – has been embraced by Royal Navy personnel and families. I see a range of presenting issues in my role and it seems to me that the stigma of decades gone by around accepting professional support services seems to be disappearing."

"The most significant challenge on my RN FPS journey has been supporting families in the Visiting Officer (VO) role. The 'VO' support service is provided to the families of service personnel who die in paid service."

"The responsibility of providing practical and emotional support to families at a time like this initially felt huge to me, but I knew I had the inner resolve to do the job. A robust package of training and supervisory support helped me to succeed as a VO. Ultimately, I've felt a sense of privilege to have supported bereaved families at what must undoubtedly be one of the most difficult periods they will ever experience."

"Today I work as my team's senior military lead and as a supervisor of casework. Key staff in HMNB Clyde will call upon me for my guidance and direction on welfare-orientated complex situations when they come across them in the course of their divisional work."

"I would not hesitate to recommend working for RN FPS to anyone who sees themselves as having a natural ability or a vocational aspiration to support and assist others at times of difficulty."

"You will need to develop an inner resilience for this most demanding of careers but the sense of job satisfaction brings its own rewards. See RNTM 071008/21 for more information on RN FPS recruiting and branch transfer."



Pension scheme decision following court ruling

PUBLIC consultation on the McCloud/Sergeant case and options to remove discrimination identified by the courts in the Armed Forces pension scheme has resulted in the government selecting the Deferred Choice Underpin option.

This means that pension scheme members who moved to the reformed schemes on April 1 2015 will be placed back into their legacy pension scheme for the remedy period (April 2015 1 to March 31 2022), removing the discrimination.

At the point at which someone leaves the service with benefits in payment, they will have the choice of taking the legacy pension scheme benefits or reformed scheme benefits over the remedy period. Full information will be provided by scheme administrators to inform that choice.

From April 1 next year, all those who continue in service will do so as members of the reformed schemes, regardless of age, meaning all members will be treated equally and there will be no further discrimination.

This ruling affects the majority of public service pension schemes, including those for Armed Forces and Civil Service personnel (including those in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary).

While there will be inevitable questions, personnel need do nothing at present. Legislation will be required and the process for implementing the remedy needs to be worked through, including updating the pension calculator.

The Directorate People and Training remuneration team will keep you informed as more information becomes available and will, in due course, ensure that you have all the information available to make the best possible decision to meet your circumstances.

For more details see Galaxy 01-2021 or visit www.gov.uk/guidance/pensions-and-compensation-for-veterans and jive.defencegateway.mod.uk/groups/rn-remuneration.

Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015 videos are now on MOD YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn6ABorZdsA>).

The Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) team have produced eight videos explaining the most technical parts of the AFPS 2015 in simple and clear terms. They go into detail about the value of the most recent scheme, how it accrues over time, and explains a series of benefits such as an early departure payment (EDP), and resettlement grant.



● Capt Lynn and his wife Tina enjoy India's Army Day Parade – the last major public event before the country went into lockdown 24 hours later

Aye of the tiger

ROYAL Navy officer Captain Ian Lynn is the first Briton to be honoured by India's premier seat of military learning. The long-serving warfare officer received the Colonel Pyara Lal Medal from India's National Defence College for his study into maritime security in the region – the culmination of months of learning and hard work.

The college in New Delhi takes on 100 students each January for its senior officers' course – both military and senior civil servants, including 20 international students. It's regarded as the pinnacle of learning, with competition for places fierce, so merely to be accepted is an honour.

Nine out of ten students also choose to complete a Master of Philosophy degree underwritten by Madras University at the same time – which demands they submit a thesis.

And the best paper submitted earns the college's sole award: the Colonel Pyara Lal Medal, presented this year to Captain Lynn, only the fifth international student to win in 60 years, and the first Briton.

"It was a huge surprise and honour to have been given the award, I knew that I had made the final ten, but given the stiff competition, I was certainly not expecting to be conferred as top-student."

The college aims not only to impart training in national and international security related fields, but gives military and civilian services the chance to meet, exchange ideas and gain a better understanding of each other's worlds – and challenges – both in peace and in war.

The pandemic threw a spanner in the works of many of those plans, but before lockdown students were able to complete the 'economics module' of the course; Ian was in a party of ten which visited the state of Sikkim on the border with China.

India's initial lockdown was strict – and guillotined six other planned trips, although studies continued in isolation.

Ian's wife Tina returned to the UK to be with the couple's children and it was three more months before he was able to meet up with a few Indian officers or fellow international students in a small 'social bubble'.

"It was a very strange time for everyone. I was fortunate to be surrounded by a very supportive crowd; the comradeship I had from my peers and newfound friends was superb.

Having previously commanded patrol ships HMS Mersey and Dumbarton Castle and the Royal Navy's Fishery Protection Squadron, plus National Maritime Information Centre, and been on the writing team for the UK's National Strategy for Maritime Security, Ian decided to draw on his skills and knowledge.

His thesis examined the role of India's newly-formed International Maritime Fusion Centre's – which concentrates on security of shipping in the Indian Ocean region – in supporting the Commonwealth powers' national security.

Despite Covid restrictions blocking most physical access to experts and facilities, he was able to engage with a range of personnel around the globe to obtain information and relevant data.

And the pandemic prevented his attendance at the valedictory service at the course's end when the medal winner is announced; his wife tested positive for Covid, forcing him into quarantine.

"I only knew that my thesis had been chosen when a flurry of congratulatory messages came through on my phone," he said.

"Obviously, I was disappointed not to have been there in person, but then that kind of sums up 2020."

Roughly one third of international students take up diplomatic defence roles in India on completing the course, Captain Lynn included: he's now the UK's Naval and Air Advisor to India, travelling throughout the country from his base in the British High Commission in New Delhi.

"India is fabulous on so many levels. The next three years should be great from both professional and personal perspectives," he said. "I can't wait for the next stage of the adventure to unfold; that I will do much of it with Tina is a massive bonus – bring it on."



Belgian pin pals

EIGHT Royal Navy personnel serving with NATO in Belgium have been awarded Surface Warfare Badges.

The sailors, all serving at the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), received their awards from Commodore Tim Henry, the senior RN officer at the HQ.

Six officers received a gold pin – for those who've held positions of command or served as executive officers – with two Principal Warfare Officers meriting the silver pin.

RN staff at the base have commanded numerous Royal Navy ships, and have 16 years of sea command between them.

Among the officers to receive their gold pin was Captain Gordon Ruddock (pictured performing a 'elbow bump and grin' with Cdre Henry), who is currently leading work on designing NATO's response to the modern missile threat facing the alliance.

While all political decisions are made in the NATO Headquarters in Brussels, SHAPE is the alliance's sole military strategic

headquarters and is located in the southern Belgian city of Mons – 65 miles from the sea and just two miles from where British troops fought their first battle of the Great War.

The UK currently has 109 positions in the SHAPE HQ itself, plus other units based on the site, raising the UK military footprint to 230 personnel.

The Navy fills 55 of those billets, split almost exactly 50:50 between officers and ratings. This number is set to increase with UK's increasing commitment to NATO in the coming years.

The roles available to Royal Navy personnel at SHAPE are many and varied and offer a vital insight into operations away from the maritime, working with 29 other nationalities at the heart of Europe.

The jobs range from leading NATO's strategic planning and operations, through staff officers to logistics branch personnel in the support elements.

There is also a strong cohort of CIS personnel that support the NATO communications networks.

Families' input needed

THE Navy wants to hear from 9,500 families to help shape policies, initiatives and programmes across the service.

The RN/RM Families Survey (FAMCAS) provides spouses/civil partners with an opportunity to share their views on what Service family life is like.

The results are used to evaluate and develop Naval policies and initiatives. Last year's findings, for example, were used to help develop the Wraparound Childcare initiative and to inform new accommodation delivery contracts.

Feedback from Service spouses and civil partners will help the Navy to improve service support structures and better understand what being a Service family means to them.

This year's survey is entirely digital to save paper and your partner has until April 30 to contribute.

Your partner may have received an email invitation to participate in the survey 2021. If they have, encourage them to participate by following these two steps:

1. Click here and follow the instructions: www.tools.mod.uk/survey-front-end/index.html
2. Click here to complete the survey: surveys.mod.uk/index.php/891732?lang=en.

If you have any queries, contact the Navy P&T Research Team at: NAVYNPS-RSCHMAILBOX@mod.gov.uk.

Dementia help for civilians

THE Charity for Civil Servants have teamed up with Dementia UK to offer a new service.

Their combined new website (cfc.dementiauk.org) offers specialist advice, support and information to the Civil Service community 24/7.

It provides civilians with a

'one-stop shop' for resources to try to answer some of the questions they may have about the illness.

If you can't find what you need on the site, you can request to speak directly to a dementia specialist Admiral Nurse at a time and in a way that suits you.



Stop smoking but carry on vaping

ALL Phase 1 and 2 RN Training Establishments plus RNAS Culdrose will be 'tobacco free' from March 1.

That means smoking or the use of any tobacco product (including combustible and chewing tobacco products) is not permitted anywhere in the working environment. Vapes and e-cigarettes may be used in designated areas.

These rules affect not just military personnel, but civilians on military establishments, visitors and contractors.

The ban has been in effect on all Royal Navy ships since the beginning of the year

And it will be extended to all remaining RN Establishments (including Reserve units) and RFA vessels in June

Free stop smoking support is available through the medical centre for military personnel or the NHS via your GP or local health authority for civilian personnel.

There's also additional support and resources available on the RN Intranet, Defence Connect, the Health and Wellbeing sites, My Navy App and Defnet.

Don't get caught out on the web

WITH many of you – military and civilian personnel – working from home or working remotely during the pandemic, a gentle reminder on the importance of safety, security and good practice online.

For the latest guidance and advice – especially concerning the use of social media – visit the official MOD website: www.gov.uk/guidance/think-before-you-share.

The tips are part of the wider 'Cyber Confident' campaign dealing with use of the internet covering useful information on security (such as passwords), limiting personal information online that might be mined by scammers and criminals, and keeping system/anti-virus software up to date.

This month's rewards

RECIPIENTS of Herbert Lott Awards this month are:

Catering Services Department of HMS Queen Elizabeth PO Maddock (MCM1 Crew 4) PO Volaisaya (HMS Queen Elizabeth)

WO1 Nutbean, POs Curley and Hunn, LHs Griffin, Kelly and Smith, ABs Sayers, Coleman-Pratt and Barber (all HMS Montrose (Starboard) crew)

And Long Service Recognition Awards go to:

WO1 Hicks (CNR Nottingham), Cdr Brennan (HMNB Devonport), CPO Roberts (HMS Portland) and Lt Cdr Cooke (RNAS Yeovilton)

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Sleighed by injury

ROYAL Marine Taylor Lawrence's bid for international bobsleigh glory was scuppered by injury.

He was one of the four-man Great Britain team who thundered around the track at Altenberg in Germany at speeds of over 80mph, taking on more than 20 of the world's top bobsleigh teams over two days of intense racing for the World Championships.

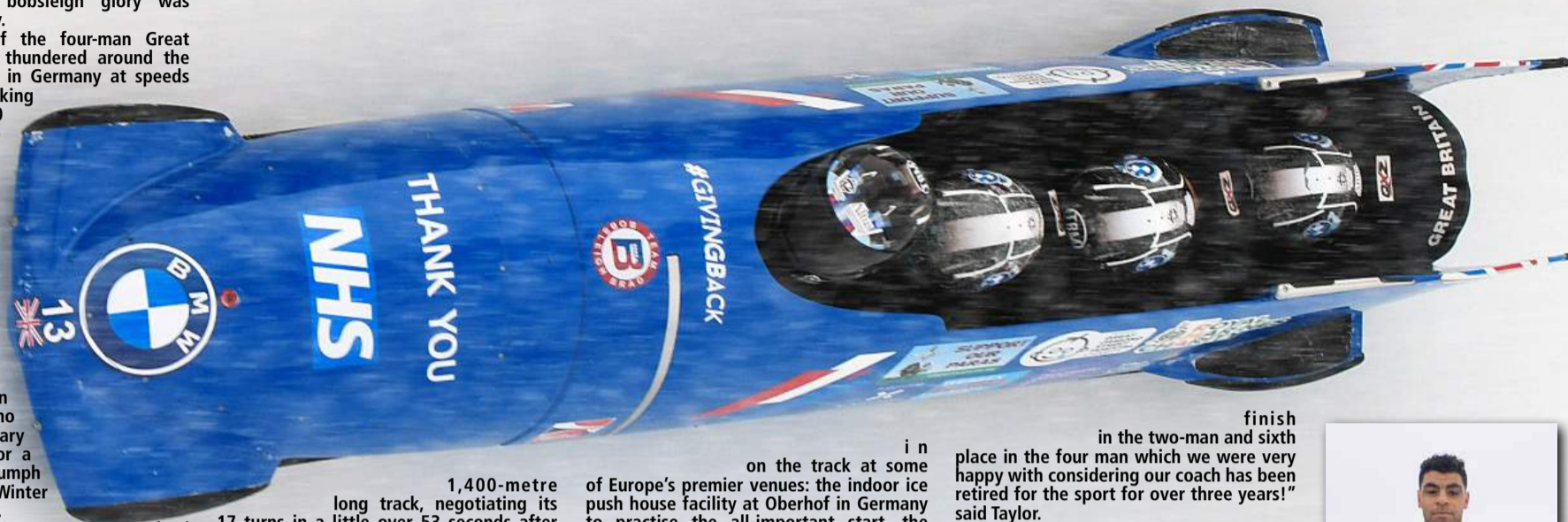
Injury forced the team to pull out of the second day of the contest.

Taylor, pictured right, is one of a handful of elite athletes in the Royal Navy who have put their military careers on hold for a shot at sporting triumph at the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing.

The 24-year-old commando is one of three military brakemen, joining Paras Luke Dawes and Nick Gleeson, plus the pilot Brad Hall in the four-man GB sled.

Despite the pandemic and associated travel restrictions, the 2020-21 bobsleigh season has continued, reaching its climax with the World Championships at Altenberg on the Czech-German border south of Dresden.

Teams faced four runs down the



1,400-metre long track, negotiating its 17 turns in a little over 53 seconds after reaching speeds in excess of 80mph. The fastest combined time takes the title. Last year on the same track the GB team were placed seventh.

"This year will be a bit different as it will be the first time in at least 15 years where the three brakemen on the GB No.1 sled will all be military personnel," said Taylor. Injuries and Covid restrictions have prevented some training and appearances at races over the 2020-21 season.

But the bobsleighters have still got time

in on the track at some of Europe's premier venues: the indoor ice push house facility at Oberhof in Germany to practise the all-important start, the legendary St Moritz run in Switzerland – the only completely natural ice track in the world – where injury prevented the four-man team competing, while a last-minute change of crew helped the two-man sled to tenth place, and Winterburg and Königssee in Germany.

At the latter, the team's coach stepped into the breach – and proved to be a star turn.

"This looked like the turning point for our season – we managed a fifth-place

finish in the two-man and sixth place in the four man which we were very happy with considering our coach has been retired for the sport for over three years!" said Taylor.

Throughout the season, Taylor, who joined in 2016, is using the sled to raise awareness of – and money for – the Royal Marines Charity.

The team's sled is emblazoned with the logos of various good causes the athletes are supporting – not least a large 'Thank You NHS' slogan on the front. Taylor's efforts alone have raised more than £500 for his chosen charity – and you can add to the total here: [justgiving.com/fundraising/taylor-lawrence](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/taylor-lawrence)



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Tommy hits his ton

HEARTY congratulations to shipmate Tommy McFarland, member of **Limavady Branch**, who celebrated his 100th birthday on January 17.

Tommy served in the RN between 1941 and 1946 as a signaller, aboard Motor Minesweeper 43 and HMS Ceto on convoys in the Atlantic and Arctic.

Upon demobilisation he returned home to Omagh Co. Tyrone and his pre-war job as a type setter for the local newspaper.

But he was recalled to duty in 1953, first with HMS Rooke in Gibraltar and then aboard destroyer HMS Sluys until he was stood down in 1954 to RFR status.

The Queen needs £45k this year

NAVAL enthusiasts need to raise £45,000 this year for the next stage of bringing a Dunkirk veteran back to life.

HMS Medway Queen hasn't sailed since the 1960s, but her preservation society is determined to restore her to running order as a living memorial to the 1940 evacuation.

The paddle steamer is credited with saving 7,000 souls from the French port during the ten-day evacuation, running the gauntlet of Stukas, U-boats and E-boats on seven Channel crossings.

Enthusiasts have spent more than 30 years painstakingly restoring the ship to her inter-war 'look' when she sailed the Thames and Medway carrying day trippers on pleasure cruises.

Although much of the work is carried out by volunteers, raw materials and specialist jobs require outside investment.

This year, the society intends to put the 97-year-old vessel on the slipway for work on her hull/repainting.

The ship's rails, mast and forward deck house also need work, while £10,000 is needed for hardwood for upper deck seating.

Aside from her Dunkirk heroics, the ship spent six years as a minesweeper before resuming her pre-war career in 1946.

Two decades later she was turned into a nightclub on the Isle of Wight before falling derelict and even sinking a couple of times, until enthusiasts stepped in to begin the enormous task of restoring the ship to her 20s and 30s glory days.

Donations can be made by cheque to: Medway Queen Preservation Society, Gillingham Pier, Pier Approach Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 1RX or via www.medwayqueen.co.uk.

If you live in the Medway area, the ship is also urgently in need of volunteers.

RNA subscriptions, see page 39

Kiwis rededicate grave anniversary

NINE sailors and Royal Marines have been honoured on a forgotten battlefield in New Zealand to mark the 175th anniversary of their deaths.

The country's premier Jacinda Ardern joined military leaders and the Maori populace at the remote site of a brief but landmark battle in New Zealand's history.

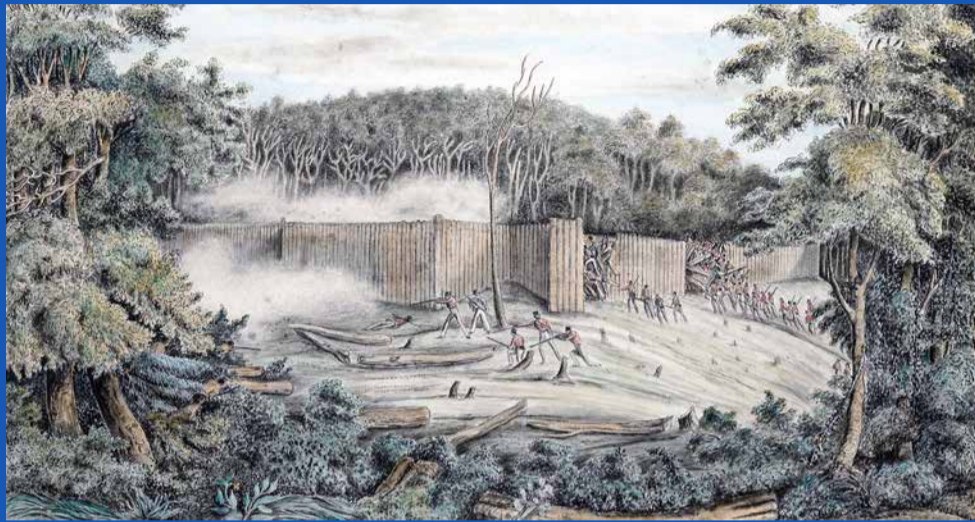
The brief clash at Te Ruapekapeka in January 1846 was the last act in the first of a series of wars and long-running uprisings by the indigenous population who felt New Zealand's colonial rulers had betrayed them and the treaty they had collectively signed.

As a result, it's become a milestone in the country's recent history, prompting national commemorations.

Those commemorations saw a new memorial erected to 12 British Servicemen killed in 1846 – nine of them sailors or Royal Marines – after their mass grave was discovered and a ceremony blending Maori and Western military traditions (pictured below).

Lieutenant Deri White, a Royal Navy officer on exchange with the Royal New Zealand Navy was invited to read out the names of the fallen with the UK's Defence Adviser, Wing Commander Andy Bryant.

The encounter at Te Ruapekapeka was the final action of the Northern Wars of 1845-46 – the first of a



● A contemporary sketch of British forces storming the Maori fortress

Picture: New Zealand Defence Force

series of conflicts involving New Zealand's British/Colonial rulers and its indigenous Maori population which stretched for more than 30 years in the middle of the 19th Century.

In this instance, the last Maori rebels held out in a pa – fortified village – 130 miles north of Auckland. Surrounded by a double palisade, it presented a formidable fortification with a network of trenches, tunnels, bomb-proof shelters and underground galleries. The defenders thought it looked like a bats' nest, or Te Ruapekapeka.

After softening up the 400-500 defenders with a bombardment lasting nearly a fortnight and bringing up forces – 1,300 Colonial troops, including sailors and marines

from four ships, plus 400 loyal Maoris – the fortress village was attacked on January 11 1846 after an overwhelming barrage which smashed holes in the ramparts.

The pa was overrun after bitter fighting with the surviving defenders retreating to the surrounding scrub and bush, from where they continued the fight – ambushing the Imperial troops, killing 12 Britons.

The remaining Maori forces subsequently dispersed and the battle convinced their leaders that the war could not be won; they sought peace, bringing ten months of conflict to an end – to the relief of both sides.

The battlefield at Te Ruapekapeka has largely

remained untouched since 1846, but over the past decade historians and archeologists have investigated the site extensively – which included locating the mass grave for the 12 Britons killed.

The fallen Royal Navy servicemen were: ABs Henry Colyer, Thomas Davidson, Frederick Gladding (aged 22 from Shoreditch), Edwin Hutchings, James McDonald (from Woolwich) William McDonald (from Devonport) and Thomas Millet (from Wilcove, Cornwall), all serving aboard HMS Castor; Royal Marine privates William Minifie (HMS Calliope) and Thomas Coglein (HMS North Star).



Naval Quirks



RIP D-Day vet Ray

HMS Middleton Association are mourning the loss of Raymond Smith, found member, veteran of (pictured above last year with his many medals and below in 1943) Arctic and Atlantic convoys plus Normandy, devoted father and reader of Navy News.

Mr Smith, who died on February 3 aged 95, joined the Navy as a 17-year-old because he'd always liked boats and water. That didn't stop him feeling seasick for his first two months at sea when he was assigned to destroyer HMS Middleton.

"Our ship used to rise up to a terrific height and then it would roll." The passageways were slippery and "your stomach would go up to your head and back down again, and then you'd run outside again."

In battle, he served on the number one gun – exposed to the Arctic conditions, with only a piece of canvas to keep out the elements.

"We were never issued with any proper clothing – all I had was sea boots and a duffle coat, which sadly wasn't much use. So we'd pile two or three jerseys on top of that, and we survived. We were always wet and cold, that was the worst thing about it."

He described the mess deck, where the men ate and slept, as being constantly covered in sea water. "We were getting water in our hammocks until we got back to shore."

Despite such hardships, he remained bound to the Middleton name for the rest of his life.

As well as helping to start the association of former ship's company he followed the modern-day namesake, the Hunt-class minehunter (still serving) and was one of the wartime crew who attended her commissioning in 1984.

In recent years, he joined numerous Royal British Legion-organised trips for veterans and found himself interviewed by BBC newscaster Sophie Raworth as part of the broadcaster's D-Day 75th anniversary coverage and again at a cover party hosted by the Radio Times last year.





Rock honours evacuee hero

THE people of Gibraltar are to honour a wartime naval leader who defied orders to save thousands of the Rock's inhabitants.

Commodore Kenelm Creighton brought more than 13,000 civilians back to Britain's Mediterranean fortress in July 1940 – when they were stranded in a hostile land, their fate was uncertain and the Admiralty forbade their evacuation.

Instead, the veteran officer ignored instructions from London and Gibraltar, loaded the evacuees aboard the convoy he commanded – and ferried them home.

Eight decades later, the Government of Gibraltar has deemed his actions worthy of posthumous recognition with the Gibraltar Medallion of Honour, to be presented to his descendants.

The long road to honouring the veteran naval officer began in May and June 1940 when the authorities evacuated over 13,000 women, children and elderly citizens from Gibraltar to French Morocco to bolster the Rock with extra service personnel and shore up the British Empire's position in the western Mediterranean.

In a matter of weeks, France was overrun, its colonies run by the Vichy regime, sympathetic to the Nazis, and the Royal Navy had attacked the French fleet at its North African base of Mers el Kebir to prevent major warships falling into the German hands and used against Britain in its showdown with Hitler.

All of which made the position of the Gibraltar evacuees in French Morocco untenable – as Kenelm Creighton found when he arrived in Casablanca with 15 battered freighters to repatriate 15,000 French soldiers, rescued from France before the country was overrun.

After the troops had disembarked, the senior French naval officer demanded Creighton take back the Gibraltar evacuees.

The Briton refused – his ships were in no fit state to take the Gibraltarians, especially the elderly and infirm.

The French admiral threatened to arrest Creighton and impound his convoy, and eventually forced the

evacuees aboard the 15 ships at gun – and bayonet – point.

Now the commodore faced orders from his superiors to sail directly to Britain. He ignored those and sailed for Gibraltar instead.

Even when the convoy arrived at the Rock, local authorities were reluctant to allow the evacuees ashore – fearing they would not be able to evacuate them a second time. Public demonstrations by Gibraltarians persuaded them otherwise.

In the coming weeks, the evacuees would be sent away again – this time to Britain, Madeira and Jamaica.

Had they been left in Casablanca, they would almost certainly have been interned in a prison camp in much worse conditions.

A memorial to Gibraltar's evacuees stands on the Rock's Waterport roundabout (pictured above). A plaque acknowledging the naval officer's role will be added to the monument, bearing the inscription: In gratitude – Rear Admiral Sir Kenelm Creighton KBE CVO (1883-1963) who in July 1940 assisted the people of Gibraltar in their hour of need.

Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia said it was the right time for Gibraltar to show the naval officer "the recognition that his actions deserve".

He continued: "He stood up for and sympathised with the plight of the people of Gibraltar to the degree that he had to be threatened with arrest by the French and he had no hesitation in defying orders when he judged that following them would have put our people at risk.

"It takes a brave man to stand up to authority in this way and there is no better time to mark his courageous actions for the benefit of our people."

The government had intended to honour Creighton, who served with distinction throughout World War 2, surviving the sinking of his ship on a convoy run to Gibraltar in September 1941 at the age of 58, last year to mark the 80th anniversary of the evacuation, but the pandemic delayed plans.



K13 remembered despite Covid

A REDUCED contingent of Clyde-based submariners honoured men killed 'on their doorstep' 104 years ago.

As the 21st Century home of the Silent Service – coupled with the fact that the boat sank in the waters they now use daily – the annual service for HMS K13 in Faslane Cemetery, Garelochhead, typically involves both a large number of participants and audience, including serving/veteran submariners and local Sea Cadets.

Reverend Mark Noakes, Chaplain of the Faslane Flotilla led the service; Captain Irvine Lindsay, Captain of the Submarine Flotilla laid a wreath and K13's bell was rung 32 times – once for each person lost in the disaster – by Andy Knox, the former Command Warrant Officer of the Submarine Service. "The K13 memorial is an important event in the submarine calendar, commemorating not only those lost in K13 but also as a reminder of the hazards faced

by members of the Submarine Service in peacetime and in war," said Captain Lindsay.

"It's also crucial, that despite the limitations imposed by Covid 19, we continue to remember those who have gone before us."

K13 sank on a test dive in Gareloch with 53 Royal Navy submariners, fourteen employees of Govan shipbuilder Fairfields, five Admiralty officials, a pilot, and the captain and engineer from sister submarine K14 aboard. Thirty-two men died.

Badge brought back to life for new care home



THIS is the crest of a battleship which never served – but will now adorn a home in Portsmouth for more than 60 naval veterans.

First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin has granted permission for the Sea Griffin badge designed for HMS Jellicoe to become the emblem of the complex named after the admiral due to open in spring 2022.

The badge was designed – and approved – by the Admiralty back in 1938 for fourth of five King George V battleships under construction, taking her name from the man who led the Grand Fleet into action at Jutland.

But in 1940, the ship was renamed HMS Anson – as was ship no.5, HMS Beatty, named after Jellicoe's successor, which became HMS Howe – and the original crest also replaced.

Eight decades later and the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust is building Jellicoe House in Milton, on the east side of Portsmouth.

Work started last month on the site on Locksway Road, between the cricket ground and park, with a specialist care development company brought in to put up the 66-bed home which will meet the needs of veterans, opening its doors to residents in time for the charity's 100th birthday.

Jellicoe, who went on to become First Sea Lord and later Governor General of New Zealand for four years, founded the trust in 1922.

His grandson and naval author/historian Nick is delighted that the admiral is being honoured in a way which befits his reputation among his men.

"I am thrilled that the Sea Griffin badge, taken from Admiral Jellicoe's Coat of Arms, will feature as the badge of the home," he said.

"I am touched that the First Sea Lord, Admiral Tony Radakin, is supporting this important project and has taken time from the business of running the Royal Navy to contribute to its success. I am very proud that RNBT has named the home 'Admiral Jellicoe House' after my grandfather, the trust's founder and first benefactor. It will be a lasting legacy to his humanity and his vision."

The charity operates one care home in Gillingham (Pembroke House), and a six-unit alms house in Hornchurch in Essex, but the Portsmouth facility will be its largest venture yet.

"It's really great news that work has now started on building Admiral Jellicoe House," said Captain Nick Fletcher, chairman of the RNBT's trustees. "I am so pleased that the pandemic has not stopped this important project, which is great news for naval veterans and for the City of Portsmouth. We are delighted that we can now start to plan for the opening of this wonderful care home."



HMS Hood anniversary goes online

THIS year's planned commemoration service for HMS Hood – the 80th anniversary of her sinking – has been cancelled with plans to hold an online service instead.

The service, scheduled for May 16, is held annually at St John's Church in Boldre, Hampshire.

Last year's service was also online and details will follow about the 2021 commemoration.

HMS Hood was sunk in battle with the German battleship Bismarck and cruiser Prinz Eugen on May 24 1941, with the loss of all but three of her ship's company of 1,418.

The officer in overall command, Vice Admiral Lancelot Holland, who also perished, used to worship at the Boldre church and after the war his widow arranged for the annual memorial service.

Zoom in on Conqueror's '82 patrol

IF YOU want to know what it's like to fire a torpedo in anger, then join the Friends of the RN Submarine Museum for a virtual talk.

Jonty Powis shares experiences of his time as navigator of HMS Conqueror in a Zoom talk on Friday March 12 at 6pm.

Conqueror became the first British boat since WW2 to fire a torpedo at a target: the Argentine cruiser General Belgrano.

Cdr Powis' talk on Conqueror's Falklands war patrol will help raise money for the new Submariners' Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum (see page 22)

Tickets are available via rnsbmsfriends.us9.list-manage.com/ and rnsbmsfriends.us9.list-manage.com/



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Zooming in on 1SL's cadets

ELEVEN cadets have taken over as the First Sea Lord's Cadets during an investiture ceremony, held for the first time on Zoom.

It is intended to organise a full 1SL Cadets Visit Programme, including engagement with Admiral Tony Radakin, once National Lockdown rules are lifted and full Cadet Force residential activity has resumed.

The principal aim of the appointment of the 1SL Cadets is to raise the profile of the Royal Navy Cadet Force community through exposure of a top-quality cadet to professional bodies and social contacts that deal with Navy Board Members and other high-ranking Royal Navy Officers.

The appointment offers 1SL Cadets a privileged insight into the higher echelons of the Royal Navy.

During their one-year tenure, they have exposure to Navy Board members, Trustees of parent Cadet organisation, organise and build area forums and provide feedback to their respective headquarters. They attend formal parades, ship visits, royal occasions, opening ceremonies, presentations and awards and receptions.

The new 1SL Cadets are:

Cadet Corporal Naomi joined Sheffield Sea Cadets as a Junior Sea Cadet aged ten and completed RYA Sailing Qualifications and earned her Commodore's Broad Pennant award.

Naomi has gone on to collect an astounding amount of qualifications on the various camps and courses she has attended all over the UK. These include RYA Windsurfing, St John Ambulance First Aid, British Canoeing to 3 Star level and achieved the SCC Rowing Coxswain qualification when she was just 12. Naomi also holds an Institute of Leadership and Management Level 2 Young Leaders Award and is currently working towards her silver Duke of Edinburgh award.

She was selected to represent the UK Sea Cadet Corps on the 2019 International Exchange Programme in the USA. She has also represented Eastern Area Sea Cadets with the rest of the detachment from Sheffield at the 2019 Gibraltar Cup competition at CTC Lymstone.

Naomi is currently completing her A-levels in physics, maths, economics and politics and hopes to pursue a career in the Fleet Air Arm or a career in Law.

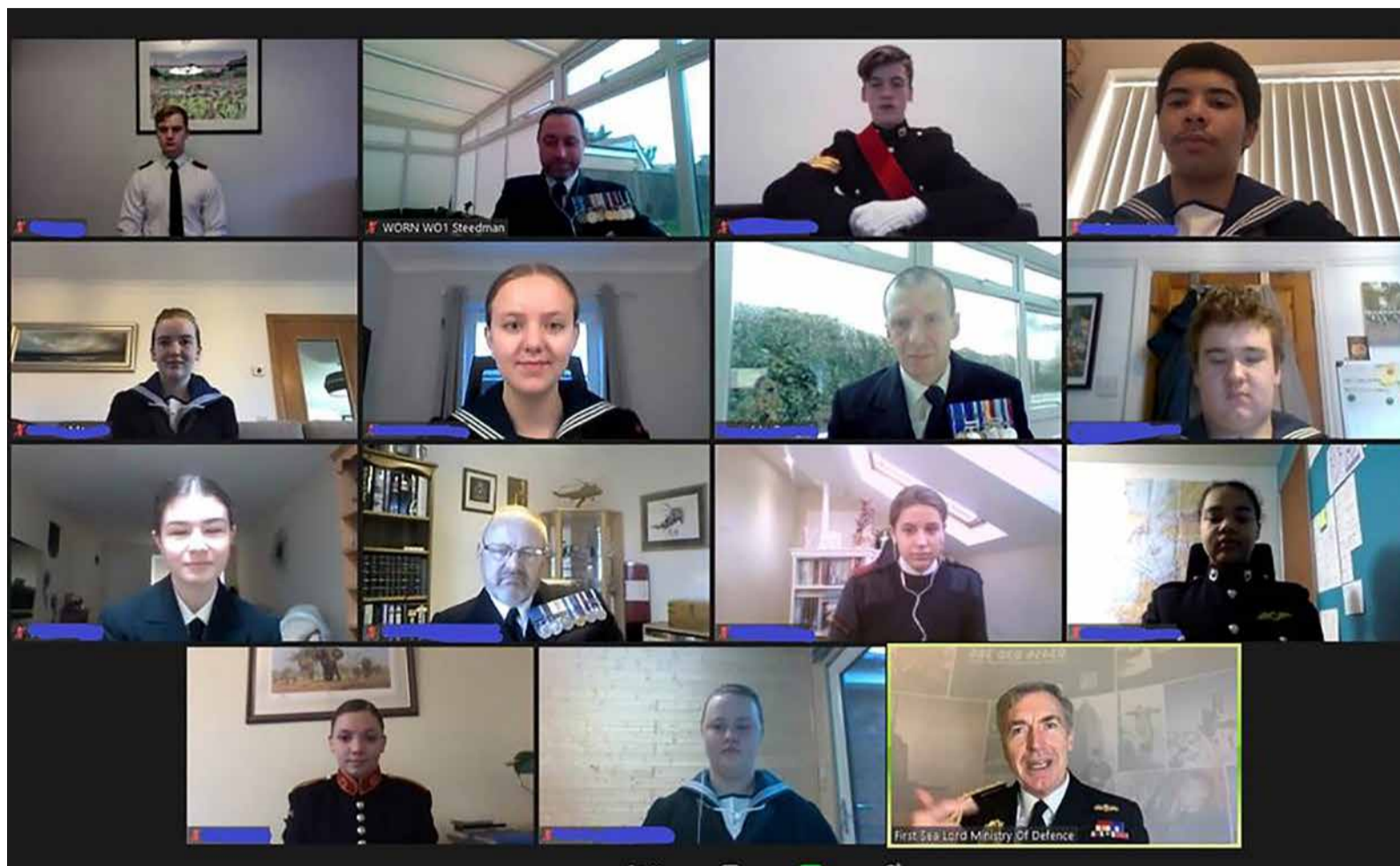
Leading Cadet Shaun joined Greenwich, Deptford and Rotherhithe unit in 2015 and from the start of his cadet career played an active part in both his unit and the district to which his unit belongs.

Shaun successfully took on the role of District Senior Cadet for the 2019 Easter Camp with responsibility for over 120 cadets.

He holds a large number of qualifications including 'First Class Communication Information Systems' in addition to qualifications for a range of afloat disciplines and has gained his Institute of Leadership and Management Level 2 Award for Young Leaders.

Shaun was selected as the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for Greenwich in 2020, he is an excellent ambassador for Sea Cadets.

He is at college studying towards



a BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Business Studies and he hopes to go on and take a Degree Apprenticeship in Business Management.

Leading Cadet Erin joined Salisbury Sea Cadets as a Junior Sea Cadet in 2015. She has been instrumental in keeping virtual activities going at Salisbury unit during lockdown.

Erin is a keen rower and has represented Southern Area Sea Cadets at the National Combined Regatta held at the Excel centre in London, winning silverware on numerous occasions.

When not rowing Leading Cadet Erin is also a keen sailor and holds her RYA Youth Sailing Scheme Stage 3. Erin also holds First Aid and Seamanship qualifications at Intermediate level.

She is currently studying towards her GCSE and hopes to go on to study Law at Cambridge after taking her A Levels.

Leading Cadet Charlotte joined Bridgwater unit as a Junior Sea Cadet. Her initial interest was sparked by her mother telling stories from her time with the Girls' Nautical Training Corps. Adamant to join Charlotte started on the very next night that her unit was open after her tenth birthday.

Since joining Charlotte has collected a vast array of qualifications including First Aid, Seamanship, Catering and Stewarding at Intermediate level.

Charlotte also excels on the water and holds a BCU 2 Star, Rowing Coxswain and the prestigious Offshore Watch Leader Sail qualification. The latter was gained over several voyages on the Sea Cadets' square rig tall ship TS Royalist.

At school Charlotte is a member of the young leadership team as head girl and is currently studying for her A Levels in Maths, Chemistry and Biology.

Leading Cadet Maren joined Peterhead unit in 2014 and has developed into an inspirational cadet, not just in her unit but across Northern

Area and the wider Corps.

She holds the highly-sought-after SCC Master Coxswain badge, holds RYA Powerboating Level 2 in addition to offshore sailing and rowing qualifications.

Maren chairs the Grampian District Cadet Forum. Maren also plays a key role in the Northern Area Forum and represented her fellow cadets at the recent virtual Cadet Conference. She continues to champion young people outside of Sea Cadets as a House Vice-Captain and member of the Pupil Council at her school, she also elected by her peers to represent the Peterhead Academy at the Aberdeenshire Pupil Participation Forum.

She has been accepted into a pre-university Art and Architecture course with Robert Gordons University and she hopes to go on to study architecture when she finishes her Advanced Highers.

Leading Cadet Brandon has been a cadet at Ellesmere Port Sea Cadets for over six years. He has worked hard to attend a wide range of camps and courses during his time with Sea Cadets, he holds an RYA Level 2 Power Boating qualification, a pre-Cadet Drill Instructor qualification and has also completed the CyberFirst Adventurers course.

In addition to this Brandon has also undertaken an offshore voyage on the south coast on-board the Sea Cadets' Rustler 42 yachts, gaining his RYA Start Yachting qualification.

Brandon is a keen musician, playing the glockenspiel and enjoys participating in Band events and competitions. He is also the vice-chair of the North West Area Cadet Forum.

Brandon is currently taking A-Levels in Spanish, psychology and religious education with the aim of going on to university to study law.

Petty Officer Cadet Jessica joined HMS Sultan RNVC in March 2014 at the age of nine.

She works extremely hard to keep her personal fitness at a level required to conduct cadet Field Gun activities as well as thriving in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, in which she was awarded her Bronze certificate this year.

Although COVID-19 has affected the VCC with little face-to-face training in 2020, Petty Officer Jessica has continued to work hard at her online training over recent months and been an inspiration and guiding influence to the younger cadets, always there to help and support as much as she can.

Cadet Corporal Zoe joined the Band of the RMVCC Gosport in November 2018 aged 15. An already accomplished flute player, she very quickly established herself as the principal musician within the band and clearly demonstrated her qualities as a potential leader.

Over the last several years she has taken part in the Hampshire County Swimming Championships, captaining the Gosport Dolphins Swimming Club. She enjoys sailing and is the Cadet Captain for Stokes Bay Sailing Club and holds a PADI Junior Open Water Diving qualification. At school she is a prefect and has completed her Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Most significantly however are Cdt Cpl Zoe's achievements in music, attaining grade 5 in music theory, grade 5 on both flute and piano, and grade 3 in singing.

Petty Officer Cadet Tom attends Epsom College and is the first RN cadet to promote to non-commissioned officer rank in year 11.

Presently, he is the youngest PO the RN Section has ever had and would have been promoted to the rank of Chief Petty Officer and Head of the RN Section in year 12 were it not a requirement of the contingent for a year 13 student to occupy this position.

Tom has fully immersed himself in all the CCF RN has to offer.

He attended the CCF RN Adventure Training Course in North Wales in August 2019, the CCF RN Britannia Royal Naval College Junior Leadership Camp in August 2019 and completed his Royal Yachting Association Powerboat Level 2 with the CCF RN at Jupiter Point in April 2019.

Cadet Sergeant Leo has achieved many accolades, including a school-based award for his services to the CCF. Setting his sights on a career with the Royal Marines his determination and commitment to work towards this goal have clear.

He has achieved marksmanship qualification on the L98A2 Cadet GP Rifle and was nominated as the best cadet in the contingent in Year 9, in 2018.

Petty Officer Cadet Esther has undertaken a variety of positions of responsibility within the CCF, including lead life and is now second in charge in the Corps of Drums, and leading training sessions for the RN section.

Esther has attended numerous field days, afloat training, the DRIU and summer camps (including Clyde Fleet Tender), gaining the RYA competent crew qualification, covering the content of the navigation and seamanship course.

Additionally, Esther has successfully completed our Methods of Instruction, Drill Instructor and Senior Leadership cadres. She has effectively applied the techniques learnt on these courses to enhance her leadership and teaching, resulting in her current ranks of Petty Officer within the RN section and Drum Sergeant (2ic) within the Corps of Drums, where she plays fife.

Esther has been involved with so much at Reigate Grammar School. She frequently demonstrates her natural leadership qualities, most notably within CCF but also supporting younger students within the school.

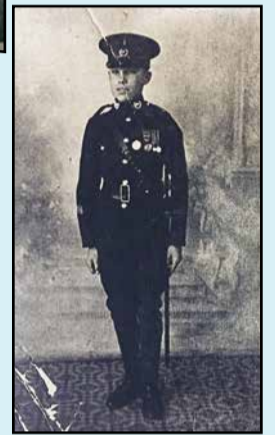


● Left, the RNVC Field Gun team pictured at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth in 1924



● Right: Portsmouth hosted the Queen in 1977 for her silver jubilee parade, attended by VCC

● Below right: Charles Bowden, a Portsmouth RMVCC cadet pictured in 1930



120 years on and the VCC still going strong

PROVIDING opportunities for young people while employing the traditions of the Royal Navy continues to be the mantra for the Volunteer Cadet Corps (VCC) which marked its 120th anniversary last month.

The VCC has units operating in Portsmouth, Gosport, Fareham, Plymouth, Lympstone, and Arbroath and have expanded with a new unit set to open in Chivenor, North Devon.

The aim of the VCC is to provide opportunities for young people to develop into responsible, dependable and useful members of society, employing the traditions and practices of the Royal Navy as the basis for their activities.

The VCC was 'stood up' with one unit at what was then the Royal Marines Artillery (RMA) barracks at Eastney in Portsmouth with the first night on February 14 a date that has played havoc with anniversary celebrations ever since thanks to St Valentine!

First known as the Royal Marines Artillery Cadet Corps, not only was it the first cadet unit in what was to become the VCC but it was the first cadet unit formally established and recognised by the Admiralty.

VCC 'legend' has it that children of Royal Marines Artillerymen (all of whom lived 'on board' in the barracks) had very little to gainfully occupy their spare time and were often to be found outside playing around throughout the barracks.

This included impromptu football games and sometimes the ball would be 'accidentally' kicked through a barrack room window. But on one occasion the ball was kicked through the Commanding Officer's office window and so he summoned the Adjutant to find a way to keep this from happening.

The VCC was subsequently born although only with the sons of serving Royal Marines Artillerymen; thankfully today we are much more diverse and accepting.

It was in 1904 that the first Royal Naval Cadet unit was established at the then HMS Victory Royal Naval Barracks (now HMS Nelson).

It was modelled on the RMA Cadets at Eastney and it was in this year that further RMA and Royal Marines Light Infantry (RMLI) cadets were stood up in Chatham and Plymouth.

Such was the success of these cadets' units, all sponsored and recognised by the Admiralty, more units were

set up at HMS Excellent, Forton Barracks in Gosport and Royal Marines Deal in Kent, and later on at all the Royal Navy 'stone frigates' located in the Portsmouth area.

It isn't known when the title Volunteer Cadet Corps was first used, but the earliest record is from a Navy List in 1913. The word 'volunteer' was used a lot at the time especially in territorial units and indicates that the instructors were drawn from volunteers in the respective barracks. Nevertheless, and indeed to this day, a service helper volunteer was often excused barracks duties.

Because of the way the VCC was set up back in the early 1900s the Cadet Corps has always been based within Royal Navy and Royal Marines establishments, unlike the majority of peer community cadet forces.

This remains the practice to this day, and while the VCC is now open to young people from civilian families, there are still a sizeable proportion of service children joining as cadets.

Unit COs are now cadet force adult volunteers (CFAVs) but there is always someone from the parent establishments appointed as our liaison officer, retaining the important link between the cadets and the base that supports them.

The 120th year of the VCC coincides with the appointment of a new Commanding Officer, Lt Col (VCC) Chris Spratt, Commander VCC

"Recently I was honoured and delighted to be appointed as Commander VCC, the senior adult volunteer in the VCC," he said.

"My time in the VCC also started at Royal Marines Eastney, some 38 years ago, and my passion for what we do to help young people develop and prepare for life has never diminished.

"At a critical time in our history, as we deal with the effects of Covid whilst also looking to expand our organisation, I'm looking forward to the challenge of steering the VCC into its 120th year.

"We may not be able to celebrate properly just yet, but we will still mark our 120th anniversary and give thanks to the cadets and volunteers who have contributed to our amazing history. Their legacy is the foundation of our future as we seek to 'Meet The Challenge' of modern times."

The VCC are always looking for more cadets and more adult volunteers to join this historic organisation, so visit www.volunteercadetcorps.org



● Left, Portsmouth RMVCC pictured at HMS Excellent prior to the pandemic; Right, Portsmouth RMVCC Cadet Band Outside RM Eastney Officers Mess in the 1960s; Far right, The VCC is far more diverse now



● The Prince of Wales inspecting Portsmouth VCC in 1979, below, HMS Excellent RNVC Girl Cadets pictured in the 1950s



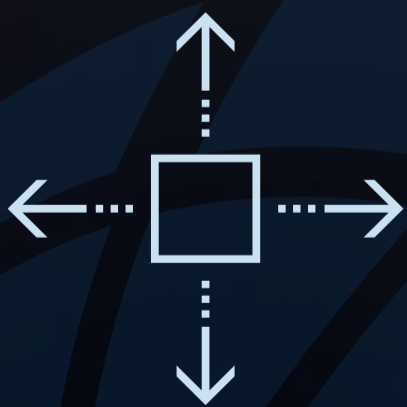


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Saved for the nation

Historic rare maps and medicine cabinet to remain in UK

A RARE set of maps charting the defeat of the Spanish Armada have been saved from being sold overseas after the National Museum of the Royal Navy raised £600,000 in just eight weeks.

The ten maps, a complete set, are thought to be the earliest surviving representations of the naval battles and have not left the United Kingdom since they were first drawn in 1589.

They were secured thanks to two grants from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Art Fund; and the generous support of the British public.

Professor Dominic Tweddle, Director General of the National Museum of the Royal Navy, said: "Like many cultural and heritage institutions 2020 was an exceptionally tough year but we rallied and I am incredibly proud that we have made sure that the Armada Maps have been saved for generations to come."

"I would take this opportunity to place on record my gratitude to all those who answered our call to help. It was an amazing response from our funding partners and the public, who dug deep in extremely difficult times, to save these treasures."

The ten ink and watercolour Armada Maps present a defining moment in England's national and naval history. They depict in real time a Navy defending England's shores against invasion by the 16th Century's imperial super-power of Spain, with each map detailing the position in the Channel of individual ships in the English and Spanish fleets.

An export bar was placed in July on the hand-drawn maps depicting the famous battle of 1589 and which were completed by an unknown draughtsman, possibly from the Netherlands.

In order to prevent their sale abroad, the Portsmouth-based museum raised £600,000 in just eight weeks through public donations and grants of £212,800 from the National Heritage



Memorial Fund and £200,000 from the Art Fund.

Culture Minister Caroline Dinenage said: "The Armada Maps, first drawn in 1589, are an important piece of British heritage serving to remind us of this pivotal naval battle."

"The export bar system exists so we can keep nationally important works in the country and I am delighted that, thanks to the tireless work of the National Museum of the Royal Navy, the Armada Maps will now go on display to educate and inspire future generations."

René Olivieri, Interim Chair of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, said: "We at the National Heritage Memorial Fund are delighted to support the acquisition of these rare and significant maps, which illustrate in incredible detail the defeat of the Spanish

Armada, a key moment in England's history."

Sarah Philp, Director of Programme and Policy for Art Fund added: "Art Fund is so pleased to help save these irreplaceable maps for the nation, which not only evoke an iconic event in the history of England, but prompt reflection on the influence that history has on the present day."

"I know they will enthral visitors when they go on public display for the first time at the National Museum of the Royal Navy."

"As a charity, Art Fund relies on the generosity of its 159,000 members, and we are especially grateful to them for continuing to support the vital work of developing

collections, during this very challenging time for museums."

To ensure that the maps can be viewed and enjoyed by members of the public for the first time a new phase of fundraising has now started. The National Museum of the Royal Navy wishes to place the maps on display during 2021 and has longer term plans for them to tour the country when current Covid restrictions permit.

Sponsors or partners wishing to support the campaign to support the display and tour are encouraged to contact fundraising@nmrn.org.uk

■ The medicine cabinet once used by Nelson's surgeon at Trafalgar – Sir William Beatty – is going on display to the public rather than ending up in private hands.

As we reported last month, medics turned to crowdfunding to help raise the £16,000 needed to acquire the artefact, pictured left.

Some 377 people chipped in, helping the medics to their target with 48 hours to spare.

"I have been blown away by the support from the RN Medical Service and the general public," said Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Jo Laird, the driving force behind saving the cabinet as a reminder of the sacrifices naval medics have made – and continue to make.

"It's been amazing to hear people's stories on the crowdfunder site as they've commented with their donations about their connection to the Royal Navy, to the RNMS or to Haslar itself."

The money will allow the Haslar Heritage Group to purchase the item from antique dealer Charles Wallrock, who offered to put the sale on hold to give RN medics time to find the required funds.

The goal ultimately is to display the cabinet – which contained various medicines used by Beatty at the beginning of the 19th Century – in a heritage centre planned for the Haslar site in Gosport.



The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust
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Men and women of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines serve their country, often at times of danger. Established in 1922, the RNBT helps non-commissioned Sailors, Marines and their families (The RNBT Family) throughout their lives.

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The family album which brings WW2 sailors back to life

HISTORIANS need help reuniting relatives with a unique piece of wartime Royal Navy history spanning the Atlantic.

They hope to trace the descendants and relatives of every sailor hosted by a New York family during World War 2.

The Caseys from Douglaston in Queens welcomed around 150 British personnel into their home, offering the men food, pastimes and a friendly family environment away from the horrors of war.

Seventy-five years later, the scrapbook the family kept chronicling their wartime visitors has been unearthed - prompting a global search for the men within.

Back in 1940 Britain signed a deal with the USA to acquire much-needed warships for its struggle with Germany.

That deal - Lend/Lease - led to an influx of Britons milling around Brooklyn Naval Yard waiting for ships or picking up vital supplies.

Many ended up in the Union Jack Club - also frequented by US sailor Fraser Casey, who invited some back to the family home.

Over the next seven or eight years, around 150 Britons - mostly Royal Navy, but also merchant sailors and RAF personnel - enjoyed the hospitality of Fraser, his wife Eleanor, and their three young children Pat, Peggy and Fraser.

Some men returned to New York - perhaps after



Eleanor Casey and one of her two daughters enjoy a rest in a New York park with four British sailors

completing an Atlantic convoy run or while waiting for the ship to be repaired in Brooklyn's shipyards following battle damage.

Mrs Casey kept a memento of each one - a sheet of paper with a short biography of each man, plus a photograph.

Men such as **Petty Officer Writer Peter Clipstone**, assigned to the escort carrier HMS Avenger, being built in Pennsylvania. Aged 21 and engaged to Eleanor from Nova Scotia, the young senior rating from Surrey was a keen



Young Jameson Park - Cornwall
 Navigator - about brother at home - love - appreciates good music

Peter Clipstone
 Clipstone
 widow Ubig done - Surrey - Eng.

The Avenger. No photos - likes bad music, Peggy is his favorite "beaver" in Nova Scotia
 Reled Sept. 19



PO(Wtr) Peter Clipstone before he joined the ill-fated escort carrier HMS Avenger

badminton player and loved completing jigsaw puzzles. He died - along with most of his shipmates - when Avenger was torpedoed off North Africa in November 1942.

Able Seaman John Howard who sailed across the Atlantic on liner-turned-troopship Aquitania in November 1944 survived the war. Aged "about nineteen and a half" and from Crosby, Liverpool, John had worked in a bank before being called up and enjoyed swimming and ping-pong.

Such short pen portraits pepper the loose-leaf folder: "enjoys hot coffee and rolls", "very quiet", "plays ping pong would like to beat me", "cannot swim", "one of the best".

Mrs Casey kept in touch with some of the families after the war - and continued to host British personnel until around 1947. "She was an amazing woman who not only wrote to families telling them of their loved ones, but sent food and clothing parcels to those families with young children," says military researcher Gloria Winfield, who has taken on the challenge of tracking down the sailors' families.

The story of the Caseys' warmth and generosity was forgotten for nearly 70 years until the son of one of their guests found a Christmas card from the family among his father's possessions.

That eventually led to tracing the Caseys' youngest daughter, Pat, who recovered the file - about to be discarded as the parental

home was sorted out - and donated it to the sailor's son, Barrie Holden, in the hope of revealing a lost piece of history to the remaining men's relatives.

Mr Holden made substantial inroads into the 150 families before ill-health forced him to abandon the search - and Gloria, from Pershore in Worcestershire, offered to take it up with fellow historians/researchers.

"In the few months we have been carrying out this work we have located some 20 or so men or families: widows, brothers, nephews, daughters, sons and so on," she explained.

"Since this book was first started in 1940 no one has ever seen these photographs in the UK in 80 years."

The search has extended to New Zealand, Bermuda, Canada, Isle of Man, Australia, Norway and South Africa, but it's hindered by lack of details of many men, plus the cost of ancestry and family history checks.

* You can find the names of around 125 sailors whose families the team would like to trace at www.finderguru.co.uk/the-casey-project-ww2-photos/ and contact Gloria at historiangmw@hotmail.com or her colleague Nicola Girling at nicola@finderguru.co.uk



Sub Lt James Young-Jamieson who "appreciates good music". He was killed, aged 20, when his Barracuda from 785 NAS crashed in January 1945

almx66267 Tom Holdend Sgt. 4/wm 34

Fled - av - am
 20. Has younger brother - apprec



Fitness fanatics

Crew's huge efforts to help children's charity

ALL 42 sailors on veteran minehunter Chiddingfold were seized by the fitness bug to help a Hampshire charity.

Every single member of the crew of the Portsmouth warship – currently deployed on a three-year mission to the Gulf – committed to covering 37 kilometres in a sporting discipline inside seven days as part of a combined keep fit/fundraising drive.

The crew fell upon the unusual target of 37 because (1) it's the ship's pennant number and (2) it's the number of years since the minehunter was launched.

They could run, cycle, row or swim the 37 kilometres over one week, combine totals, cover the distance in one go... or surpass it – as many of them did.

"For people who maintain a high level of fitness, 37km in a week is an easy target; but as the entire ship's company were involved the idea was to allow each person to set their own goals," explained Marine Engineer Officer Warrant Officer 1st Class Lee 'Pat' Paterson.

Lieutenant Grant Milnes, Chid's Executive Officer, set the bar high by completing the 37km run in one go, cheered on and encouraged by the rest of the ship's company.

And the oldest Chid, Petty Officer (Mine Warfare) Jimmy Green cycled 37km in one hit. Three times over.

Some sailors chose to complete 37km

in every discipline – that's 1,480 lengths of a pool, before running the best part of a marathon, then rowing 5½ Oxford-Cambridge boat races and doing a good hour of cycling to round things off.

"From the start, every member of the ship's company stepped up to the challenge, updating their distances every day on the progress board – the 'small ship' close team spirit defined the week," Lee added.

By the time the challenge ended, the crew had covered 345.25km in the water (that's 13,081 pool lengths), ran 653.5km (roughly the distance between Portsmouth and Arbroath), cycled 2,005km (Portsmouth to the southern tip of Sicily) and rowed 185km (Portsmouth to Dartmouth).

On foot, bike, rowing machine and in the pool, collectively the crew clocked up an impressive 3,188.75km in seven days – an average of 75.9km by every single member of the ship's company.

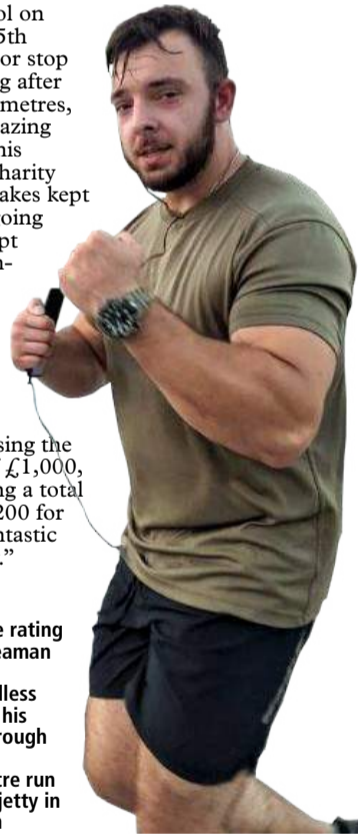
All of which not only benefits their health and fitness levels, but also Fareham-based charity The Rainbow Centre which helps children with cerebral palsy and adults with MS, Parkinson's and those recovering from strokes.

"In difficult times, it is important to remember those who are doing extraordinary work to improve the lives of others, which is why the whole of the crew dug extra deep," said Lee.

"When many wanted to get out of

the pool on the 215th length or stop running after 30 kilometres, the amazing work this great charity undertakes kept them going and kept the generous sponsorship funds rising, far surpassing the goal of £1,000, reaching a total of £3,200 for this fantastic charity."

● Mine warfare rating Able Seaman Taylor Mccandless sweats his way through the 37 kilometre run on the jetty in Bahrain



Ultra-smart fundraising

ROYAL Navy Police Officer James Routley is taking on an ultra-marathon this month to raise funds for a hospice.

James, who lives in West Sussex, will compete in a ten-hour running challenge, covering between 30 to 50 miles.

"On the day I will need to complete either a 3, 4, or 5 mile lap every hour, on the hour for 10 hours! I'm aiming for 50 miles but would be happy with anything over 35," he said.

"I'm looking forward to the event. I trained in gymnastics for about 19 years, I was even selected to represent Great Britain. So to train, I have been working on building my endurance, I have been doing a lot of swimming to increase my lung capacity, and at every opportunity I get I am out hitting the tarmac and running!"

He is raising funds for Chestnut Tree House, a children's hospice in Arundel. The hospice cares

for children with life-shortening conditions and their families in Sussex and South East Hampshire.

"Knowing a family that have been cared for by the hospice, I've seen first-hand the difference that Chestnut Tree House makes to children and families," explains James. "I wanted to raise funds for the children's hospice as I know that they help families spend precious time together and provide ongoing support for families after they have been bereaved. They are a lifeline for so many families."

"It's so motivating knowing that the money I will be raising will be making such a difference to children who need hospice care. Chestnut Tree House gives children with life-shortening conditions the chance to build memories with their family that they will treasure forever."

You can support James by visiting www.justgiving.com/fundraising/james-routley



Talent digs deep for hospice

GRAVELY-ILL children and their families in Shropshire will benefit from the deep pockets of HMS Talent's crew.

Despite a busy operational programme over the past two years, the submariners have found time to raise more than £3,300 for their affiliated charity, Hope House Hospice.

The Oswestry hospice is one year younger than the Faslane-based hunter killer, providing accommodation for five families and supporting more than 750 others either caring for a terminally-ill child, or whose child has died.

"Members of Talent's ship's company have been fortunate enough to visit Hope House in previous years, meeting their amazing staff and volunteers along with some of the inspirational young people they support, taking the opportunity

to deliver fundraising donations in person," said Logistics Officer Lieutenant Garreth Hughes.

Due to the boat's busy programme and the lockdown – which has severely impacted on the charity's fundraising efforts – crew have not been able to visit Hope House in person so, in time-honoured tradition, the cheque's in the post.

Submariners from HMS Ambush raised £1,200 for Dolphin Ward at Derbyshire Children's Hospice.

The team, all keen runners, ran the equivalent height of Mount Everest – 8,848 metres – all around their home base at HMNB Clyde.

All ten runners finished well under the allotted time of four hours, with Leading Hand Rowe crossing the finishing line first in two hours and 50 seconds.

Brothers join the family firm

IT was a family affair at HMS Collingwood as two brothers followed their cousin through the gates of the establishment near Fareham.

Max Wharrie, 19, and brother Oskar, 17, both joined the Royal Navy last October and have arrived at HMS Collingwood for the next phase of their training.

The former pupils of Woodchurch High School in Wirral are on an Underwater Warfare Training course, utilising Collingwood's state-of-the-art training facilities.

However, the brothers are following in some familiar footsteps as just as they arrived, their cousin Jacob Wharrie successfully completed his Weapon Engineering course at the same establishment.

Should the cousins need advice settling into Royal Navy routines, they have yet more family



support as Max and Oskar's father is currently serving as a Chief Petty Officer Submariner and their uncle is a Lieutenant Commander.

Max said: "It's good having my brother here as it's someone extra to know and it means I have my family just round the corner if I need help"

The brothers will be based at HMS Collingwood until completion of their six-month course, giving plenty of time for them to indulge their hobbies of football, boxing and mixed martial arts.

ET(WE) Jacob Wharrie is pictured graduating from HMS Collingwood, watched by his cousins, ABs Oskar and Max Wharrie.

Picture: Keith Woodland

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

Naval Children's Charity

Supporting children whose parents serve or have served in the Naval Service.

Naval Children's Charity
311 Twyford Avenue, Stamshaw,
Portsmouth, PO2 8RN

www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk
023 9263 9534
caseworkers@navalchildrenscharity.org.uk

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the January edition of *Navy News* (right) was the Insect-class gunboat HMS Bee, which became involved in the Panay Incident on the Yangtze in December 1937.

Alan Taylor, from London, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (*above*) is the lead ship of her class of light cruisers built for the Royal Navy in 1933-35.

1. What was her name and 2. Which city has a memorial to her crew lost in November 1942 when a torpedo struck the ship?

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 March



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 April 16. 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 May edition.

The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 313

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

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■ If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

■ Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.

■ Please send in reunions at least two months (preferably three) before the month of the event. There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

■ Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

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Editor: Lorraine Proudlock
Email: editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk

Editorial

News@royalnavymail.mod.uk

Sam.Bannister@royalnavymail.mod.uk

Richard.Hargreaves@royalnavymail.mod.uk

Peter.Howard@royalnavymail.mod.uk

Elisha.Quade@royalnavymail.mod.uk

Graphics

dtp@navynews.co.uk

General enquiries:

news@royalnavymail.mod.uk

Business

Business manager: Lisa Tav
Admin assistants: Georgina Skingsley and Mistrala Harries
bm@navynews.co.uk

Subscriptions:

www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews
subscriptions@navynews.co.uk

Telephone 07773 155321

Advertising:

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in April's Noticeboard must be received by

MAR 16, 2021

Deaths

Archer, Dan (John). LRO(G). Served from 1964 to 1976 in HMS Ganges, Rooke (Gib Comcen), 1972-1974, and Hydra (1976). Died January 30, aged 71.

Martin Lawrence Corbet Browning, Lt Cdr. Served from 1973 to 2005. Served in HMS Minerva, HM Submarines, range staff oversee for torpedo trials on Andros in the Bahamas, Deputy Quarter Master HM Naval Base Portland, and Chief of Staff to Senior Naval Officer Northern Ireland. Awarded Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal, Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, and General Service Northern Ireland Medal. Member of Belfast branch of RNA. Died December 23, 2020, aged 65.

Tom Geoghegan, LEM. Served from 1948 to 1958 in HMS Gambia and Highflyer. Died in Lake Illawara, New South Wales, January 25.

Capt John T W Bowen. HMS Eskimo, Centurion, Fearless, DG Ships, RNEC Manadon. Jan 10. Aged 88.

Sub Lt RNVR John F Brown. Died January 17, aged 98.

Lt Cdr RNR E J Franklin MBE RD*. Solent Div RNR, Severn Div RNR. Died January 5, aged 96.

Commodore Alister N A MacDonald. HMS Yarmouth, Cochrane, Hampshire, Neptune. HM Royal Yacht Britannia. NATO. C-in-C Eastlant. Died January 18, aged 86.

Lt Cdr Paul Murray-Jones. HMS Dolphin, Birmingham, Vernon, Forth, Died January 4, aged 99.

Rear Adm John G R Musson. HMS Cavalier, Forth, Daedalus, Kent, Nelson, RNC Greenwich, DFSD, VCDS, DNOA, RCDS. Died November 23, aged 81.

Ernest 'Andy' Anderson, AB. Served from 1952 to 1963 in HMS St Vincent, Implacable, Peacock, Concord, and Trafalgar. Died January 11.

John Alexander de Mussen Leathes, OBE, RN. Served in HMS Ocean, Kenya, Picton (Indonesia), MOD, Sirius, Dryad, RNXS, and AIB. Died December 19, aged 92.

Raymond Smith. Served in HMS Middleton (L74) from 1943 to end of WW2. Saw service on the Atlantic and Arctic Convoys, as well as on D-Day.

He was a founder member of the Middleton Association. Died February 3, aged 95, see page 30 for full obituary.

HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association

Gilbert Sloan. POEL(A). HMS Centaur 1956/58, HMS Albion 1964/66. Died 11 November 11, 2020, aged 86.

John Bateman. LME. HMS Centaur 1954/56. Died January 20, 2021.

Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC

Surg Capt Frederick W Pick. HMS Maidstone, President, St Angelo, HQ Baltic Approaches, RNH Haslar, Plymouth. Aged 85.

Cdr Mary J J MacColl BSC. HMS Daedalus, Nelson, Ark Royal, Collingwood, Heron, Fulmar, Seahawk, Daedalus. Dir Naval Oceanography and Met. DGNMT. FONAC. Aged 77.

Lt Cdr G Lancashire. HMS Encore, Contest, Minerva, Falcon.

Lt Cdr Henry E Over. HMS Dolphin, Sultan, Llandaff, Figgard. Dockyard Portsmouth. Died January 6, aged 92.

Lt Alexander H Tongue. HMS Raleigh, Sheba, Lofoten. Aged 91.

Lt Cdr John E Phillips. HMS Blake, St Vincent, Royal Malaysian Navy Ship Ledang. Aged 89.

Submariners' Association

Anthony Stanyer, MEM N(P). Served from 1961 to 1983 in HM Submarines Tudor, Thermopylae, Aurochs, Walrus, Porpoise, Orpheus, Anchorite, Onyx, Sealion(twice), Renown, and Finwhale. Member of Gosport Branch. Died January 2, aged 77.

Brian Heyd-Smith, LSGC Lt (ME&M). Served from 1972 to 2005 in HM Submarines Courageous, 1972 to 1976, and Courageous, 1982 to 1986. Member of Scottish Branch. Died January 8, aged 73.

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. Some of us are pictured (*right*) returning from the first Gulf War.

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

Reunions

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 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

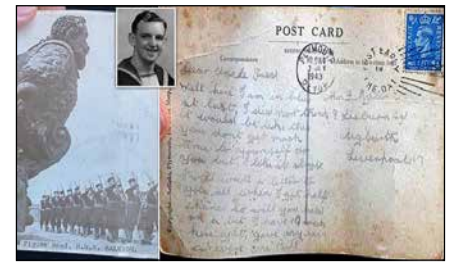
planned for August 2021 in Deal. Contact Nick Buckley on nickbuckley55@aol.com

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.



D-Day hero's card delivered – at last

A 'LOST' postcard from a Royal Navy D-Day hero to his family has been delivered – 78 years after he sent it.

Bill Caldwell, 18, sent the card to his uncle Fred in 1943 to tell him about his first week in naval training.

Both men have since passed away, but a relative now lives at Fred's former home in Liverpool and received the card, which arrived in good condition and features a photograph of sailors marching at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall, where Bill did his training.

Bill wrote: "Dear uncle Fred, well here I am in blue at last. I did not think it would be like this, you don't get much time for yourself do you but I like it alright. I will write a letter to you all when I get half a chance so will you hold on a bit. I have 19 weeks here yet. Give my love to everyone. Love Bill."

Bill's daughter Elizabeth, said: "My dad died over 20 years ago in 1996 and he loved to tell stories but he didn't write. To actually see his handwriting was beautiful."

Bill's navy career saw him serve in minesweepers ahead of D-Day and later in Japan, collecting PoWs to bring them back to the UK. He served as an AB and was awarded four medals.

Family friend Captain Dan Pawley said: "Bill is one of the reasons I joined the Navy and made the sea my life for the last 30-plus years."



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
jerryjanderson@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, pictured top right.

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

HMS Belfast Association: Our 2021 reunion and annual meeting will now take place on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, May 28-30 2021 at the Aztec Hotel, Bristol.

The hotel is offering a package for two nights, which includes the reunion dinner to be held on the Saturday evening. The package will cost £168pp. For Sunday night the cost is £65pp for dinner and bed and breakfast.

Bookings should be made direct to the hotel on 01454 201090 – mention HMSBA Reunion. A £20/ head deposit is required with the balance payable a fortnight before the event.

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

No more bills – says Bill

THE best things in life are free – and you can now add membership of the Royal Naval Association to that list.

The RNA hierarchy has decided to switch from a subscription model to voluntary donations, scrapping the £14 annual fee in the process.

It now means members, both full (generally those who serve or served in the Naval Service) and associate (family, friends, and anyone with an interest in the Navy), can enjoy a range of benefits.

Those include travel, retail and lifestyle brand discounts, free or discounted tickets to sports, theatre and music events, access to more than 250 branches across the UK and overseas, access to welfare advice and signposting, exclusive access to online 'Fireside Chats' with prominent serving and veteran spokespeople, and the chance to join in key RNA and Royal Navy events.

The association also has three minibuses that are free to loan out to members – getting to special events, socials or appointments (Covid-19

restrictions permitting!) has never been easier.

"Great things are happening at the RNA," says Chief Executive Bill Oliphant (pictured right).

"We are working in partnership with the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity to reach more of the Naval veteran community by making the RNA more accessible and more attractive to younger veterans as well as the retired.

"Equally, we are all about fun and comradeship, so we are open to the entire Naval family – serving, former serving and friends and family. We even welcome stokers!

"It's all about a bit of banter and sharing experiences, so pull up a bollard and spin us a dit."

You can join a local branch or become a member of the HQ Roll – a virtual branch run from RNA Central Office in Portsmouth which suits those deployed, frequently moving or less mobile.

The RNA is the biggest collective group of Royal Naval veterans and serving personnel.

"For those in ship's or arm associations we don't want you to leave those associations as I'm sure you enjoy the camaraderie of these tighter knit organisations, but have a look at joining the RNA as a complementary group, even if it's just to stay in touch across the wider Naval family," Bill adds.

Some individual branches may charge a small annual subscription, which will be payable on their request – check with your local branch for details.

Full membership is available to current and former Naval Service personnel, including RN, RM, WRNS, QARNNS, RNR, RMR, RFA, RNXS, also Merchant Navy veterans who hold a MNA Veterans badge.

Associate members enjoy the same benefits as full members but cannot vote on how branch is run or stand for National Council.

Corporate membership is also available.

For further details and joining instructions, see <https://royal-naval-association.co.uk/join-us/>



Apprentice Jack sets highest of standards

NA(AH) Jack Stephens, 25, from Falmouth, has achieved a distinction in his ground aviation operative apprenticeship and received his certificate from Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Jerry Kyd on board HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Jack is the first Royal Navy apprentice to make that grade in any discipline since new Apprenticeship Standards have been introduced across the country over the last few years by scoring 100 percent in the exams and completing his task book in two months – around six months in advance of when it needs to be done.

Jack's been with the Navy since 2016, having started as a Seaman Special but deciding a couple years later that working with the Merlin, Wildcat and F-35B of the new Queen Elizabeth-class carriers and the chance to be on aviation operations with the Carrier Strike Group deployment to Asia-Pacific later this year was better suited to his ambitions.

He said: "When I was on HMS Monmouth on the Westlant 18 deployment I got the opportunity to go on HMS Queen Elizabeth for about 10 days, the first time F-35 trials were happening on board and saw that first hand."

He transfer request was successful and the switch vindicated by the effort he's made and achievement gained. "The way I saw it I offered a bit more to the party," Jack said about being able to bring his Westlant, Baltops and Kipion experiences as a Sea Spec to bear when embarking on the level 2 apprenticeship.

It covered safe handling in taxi and dispersal areas, security, communications and, naturally, the fire-fighting and damage control procedures that all Royal Navy sailors are extensively trained in. This includes crash fire rescue in aviation emergencies should the aircrew need extracting.

The other key to his success was a determination to succeed.

"I've got a little boy so I need to get on with my career – my main motivation is my family," Jack added. "If you want something badly enough you can do it."

REVIEW

Kaiser's rogue navy

IN 2016 German Historian Hans Joachim Koerver published a fascinating and important book entitled *War By Numbers 1914-16; The Kaiser's Navy Gone Rogue* in which he argued, with excellent research support, that the Imperial German Navy operated essentially outside political control in 1915 and 1916.

Led by Admiral Tirpitz, the U-boats were, contrary to the wishes of Kaiser Wilhelm and Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, unleashed deliberately against liners such as the Lusitania and Arabic, as well as other ships in a campaign of deliberate terror.

Signals from the government to limit the activities of the U-boats were simply not sent.

This book and its rather sensational findings is now almost impossible to obtain.

It is especially welcome therefore that he and his latest publisher Pen and Sword of Barnsley have produced an extended edition that takes the story up to the U-boat campaign bringing the United States into the war.

This book is even more important than its predecessor in that it elucidates the exact dynamics that led to this epochal event.

Control of the U-boats verged on the chaotic. The larger boats based in Germany were part of the High Sea Fleet.

The small boats in Flanders came directly under Tirpitz and the latter continued an unrestricted U-boat campaign that created a very serious crisis with the USA in early 1916 that led to the resignation of Tirpitz as the government

belatedly took back control and reined in the submarines – for a while.

The summer of 1916 is an interesting period. The author is very critical of Scheer that he did not allow his U-boats to engage in a restricted U-boat campaign that might have been effective.

What he does not emphasise enough is that Scheer integrated his U-boats into a three-dimensional campaign with the High Sea Fleet that eventually in August 1916 did much to contain the Grand Fleet.

The other point is that he makes clear that Scheer's enthusiasm for unrestricted submarine warfare predated Jutland and was not a result of it, as often argued by those who claim that battle was some sort of victory leading to the eventual unrestricted campaign.

Then things changed. At the end of August 1916 Hindenburg became Chief of the General Staff with his assistant Ludendorff as Quartermaster General.

The Navy rejoiced as this made unrestricted U-boat warfare much more likely. The new leadership of the Army was backed by the powerful Pan German right wing press, the ancestors of the Nazis.

THE GROVE REVIEW

The German public was being indoctrinated that only an unrestricted U-boat campaign could assure German victory.

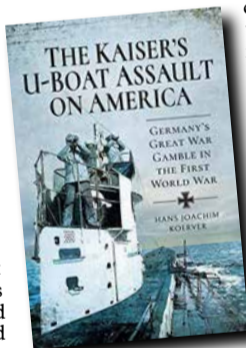
What power the Kaiser had disappeared in the face of what was effectively a popular based military dictatorship.

President Woodrow Wilson comes out of the book pretty well. He wanted to arrange a negotiated peace but was diverted by the 1916 Presidential election from replying to Bethmann Hollweg's encouraging feelers.

The sensible people in the German government saw the danger of war with America but the Navy took an opposite view, seeing unrestricted U-boat warfare as the only way of saving the Reich and its great power ambitions. This was, at best, a wild gamble, at worst, madness.

The book makes clear that Wilson tried to avoid war almost at all costs. The first sinking of an American ship under cruiser rules and the Zimmerman telegram did not provoke him to a declaration of war, only a break in diplomatic relations and a recognition of that one could make no agreement with the German government in good faith.

Yet Wilson, who had just won an election



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