



NAVY NEWS

APRIL 2023

A Royal Marine from the Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron conducts ice-climbing training during the Commando Force's annual winter deployment to the frozen Arctic.
See pages 20-21

Picture: PO Phot Arron Hoare



ARCTIC ASCENT

Inside: ■ Duncan delivers ■ Lancaster's arms bust ■ Al-Faw remembered

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DUNCAN DELIVERS WITH FRENCH

ROYAL Navy warship HMS Duncan has put French aircraft carrier FS Charles de Gaulle through her paces as she played the "enemy" in a series of exercises in the Mediterranean.

The Type 45 destroyer was joined by ships from NATO nations to test the French carrier and her strike group's ability to handle a range of threats.

HMS Duncan and her embarked Wildcat helicopter from RNAS Yeovilton-based 815 Naval Air Squadron headed to the western Mediterranean for Exercise Orion with ships from France, Spain, the United States and Italy who acted as forces fighting against the Charles de Gaulle Carrier Strike Group and a French amphibious task group.

The French-led exercise saw 7,000 personnel, warships, submarines, fighter jets and land forces carry out scenarios they could one day face in conflict – below the waves, on the waves and above the waves, as well as on land.

HMS Duncan's participation in the exercise came as the UK and France committed to working closer together on carrier operations.

During a meeting between Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and French President Emmanuel Macron, it was agreed the two nations would explore opportunities to demonstrate the sequencing of more persistent European carrier strike group presence in the Indo-Pacific.

This will see the co-ordination of regular deployments between France's Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier and the Royal Navy's carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales.

During Exercise Orion, it was HMS Duncan's job as a specialist in air defence to disrupt the French task group operations, dealing with a challenging adversary and heavy seas in equal measure.

To add to the complexity, a team from the Royal Navy's Fleet Operational Standards and Training (FOST) was also embarked to deliver advanced warfare training.

It gave Duncan the chance to test her sensors and ability to create a picture of the surrounding area, covering hundreds of miles as she sought out the French task groups while remaining undetected.

"The scale of this exercise provided a real challenge for the team, requiring us to work effectively with our allies and react quickly to an elusive but highly-trained and capable opponent," said Lieutenant Commander Will Durbin, the ship's Senior Warfare Officer.

Preparation for the exercise started a few weeks ago, aided by Duncan's French Principal Warfare Officer Lieutenant de Vaisseau Mercury, who provided a crucial link with the task force command team in FS Chevalier Paul.

On arrival in Toulon, the ship met up with her task group team – French ship FS Chevalier Paul, Italian ship IS Luigi Rizzo and later US Navy ship USS Nitze.

Ships' tours allowed the crews to socialise with their opposite numbers then warfare drills at sea enabled the task force to understand its strengths and weaknesses. The ability to work together proved crucial to the mission,

with simulated attacks soon coming from the Rafales fighter jets of the Charles de Gaulle and the missiles of her escorts.

This is the first major exercise HMS Duncan has been involved in since a major refit and it made for a challenging and rewarding experience for many of the ship's company. They enjoyed putting their skills developed during Basic Operational Sea Training into a realistic scenario.

Engineer technician Tom Hughes said: "Doing defence watches for the first time was great preparation for if we had to do it for real when we deploy."

LSC Clarke added: "The past two weeks have afforded HMS Duncan a fantastic opportunity to prove our ability to operate and sustain at reach, integrate with our NATO allies and conduct logistics support from a task group perspective.

"Not only this but it has allowed us to strengthen our professional relationships that we will draw upon in the future and develop friendships with our French and Italian colleagues that will endure beyond the exercise."

Having proven her ability to work with a multinational task force and conduct sustained warfare operations, HMS Duncan headed back to the UK before preparing to deploy again soon.

Meanwhile, Royal Navy Logistics Officer (Submariner) Captain James Wright spent time working in the French Navy and joined them for Exercise Orion.

He was selected as one of four officers to attend the Ecole de Guerre - the French equivalent of the UK Advanced Command and Staff Course.

On completion, he joined the French Headquarters for Joint Operations in Paris. For Orion, he embarked on FS Tonnerre as the French Combined Joint Task Force Commander's liaison officer to the Maritime Component Commander.

Capt Wright said: "As an exchange officer, I am treated in exactly the same way as the French Commanders and Lieutenant Colonels, which is a mark of the regard in which exchange officers are held here, and which is equally the case for our French counterparts working in the UK.

"All of our work is done in French, which can be a challenge, but it allows you to really get to know your French comrades and friends.

"It has been a remarkable experience, both professionally and personally, as I am here with my wife, Cat, and our three children.

"I do not think the importance of our partnership with France can be overstated: they are our closest neighbours and we share a history, a global vision, and an equally capable full set of Armed Forces that can be deployed anywhere in the world.

"The value of these exchanges is that, in working so closely together, we contribute to improving common UK-France understanding, we enhance UK-France interoperability, and we demonstrate the strongest commitment to each other as bi-lateral and NATO partners."





A Sea King fires flares after dropping 40 Commando ashore at Al Faw

AL-FAW FORMALLY MARKED

TWENTY years after they stormed the sands of Iraq and captured Saddam Hussein's key oil region, Royal Marines can now formally add another illustrious date to their history.

The assault on the Al-Faw Peninsula in southern Iraq was a complex amphibious operation – launched from bases on land in Kuwait and from HMS Ark Royal and HMS Ocean in the northern Gulf. It led to the collapse of the Iraqi Army, the fall of the country's second city, and prevented an ecological catastrophe.

The Royal Marines have accrued so many battle honours in the three and a half centuries since they were first formed that only one, their capture of the Rock of Gibraltar in 1704, adorns their world-renowned regimental cap badge. The sheer number of additional honours won are symbolised by

the great globe itself, an honour bestowed on the Corps by King George IV in 1827.

But they also formally mark ten key 'memorable dates' – days which commemorate an event of significant importance in their history – from the birth of the Royal Marines on October 28 1664 through to the Battle of Trafalgar on October 21 1805, Gallipoli on April 28 1915, and the Normandy landings on June 6 1944.

The liberation of the Falkland Islands on June 14 1982 was the tenth and most recent significant date to be memorialised. His Majesty the King, the new Captain General of the Royal Marines, has been 'informed of the eleventh 'memorable date' – the Assault on the Al-Faw Peninsula, March 20 2003 – connecting the current generation of Royal Marines with a moment in history to which they can all relate.

The Commandant General of the Royal Marines, General Gwyn Jenkins, said: "The assault on the Al-Faw peninsula is an example of Royal Marine operations of the highest order. A true representation of the Commando mindset, it was executed with skill, precision, and utmost professionalism.

"Commandos once again demonstrated the importance of being ready to operate, fight and win in the face of complexity and uncertainty and it is absolutely fitting that on this, the 20th anniversary, it be marked in our Regimental history as a Corps memorable date."

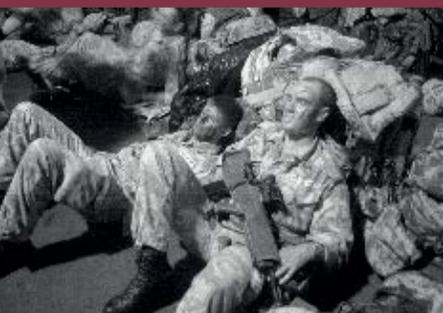
The Al-Faw peninsula – a flat, largely featureless area larger than Norfolk – was home to the bulk of Iraq's oil fields and infrastructure, as well as the country's only deep-water port, Umm Qasr.

The rapid capture of the peninsula – defended by the Iraqi Army – would deprive Saddam Hussein's regime of any oil

revenue and prevent a scorched earth policy, destroying the facilities and causing an ecological disaster, as occurred in Kuwait in 1991.

Led by Brigadier Jim Dutton, the assault by 3 Commando Brigade which began on the night of March 20-21, 2003, with the attack on Al-Faw, involved more than 2,000 personnel, 80 helicopters, and amphibious shipping and successfully culminated just over a fortnight later with the fall of Iraq's second city of Basra and Royal Marines occupying Saddam's Basra palace.

Executed with élan, determination and quiet professionalism the operation led to substantial losses being inflicted on the enemy, hundreds of prisoners taken – including senior officers – key oil installations seized, aid shipments being delivered to Umm Qasr port, and the demoralisation of the Iraqi Army in the south of the country.



From left to right: Men of 40 Commando wait in Ark Royal's hangar for the attack to begin; Marines of 40 Commando move out prisoners captured at Al Faw; 42 Commando patrol a road outside Umm Qasr; Smiles as 42 Commando capture the town of Umm Qasr; Sea Kings lift off from HMS Ark Royal carrying 40 Commando



Arc Royale

TWO sailors on French frigate La Fayette snap HMS Tamar as the patrol ship sails in close company in the Bay of Bengal.

Fresh from her visit to Diego Garcia (see pages 14-15) the RN patrol ship took her place with the Jeanne d'Arc task group – the French Navy's premier deployment of 2023 – plus ships, personnel and assets from Australia, Canada, Japan, India and the USA for a multinational workout, Exercise Laperouse.

Tamar joined the French frigate FS La Fayette and assault ship Dixmude off Sri Lanka for a series of combined manoeuvres (gunnery, close approaches, choreographed movements), ahead of the main exercise – named after French naval officer and explorer Jean-François de Galaup comte de Laperouse – with the remaining participants.

Laperouse tested both the individual and combined abilities of the seven warships taking part, sharpened the skills of

personnel and honed their ability to work side-by-side with colleagues of different nationalities often speaking a different language.

It saw participants split into three groups with Tamar taking her place alongside the Dixmude and Japanese destroyer JS Suzutsuki.

They practised RASing, gunnery and air defence before all seven ships combined for close, united manoeuvres, ending with participants forming up behind HMS Tamar for a group photoshoot to bring the exercise to a close.

"Since sailing 18 months ago on this five-year mission, we've operated with naval units from every one of the countries represented in this exercise before. It's great to work with them again and it feels very natural for us," said Commander Teilo Elliot-Smith, Tamar's Commanding Officer.

"I couldn't be more pleased with how it turned out."

Picture: LPhoto Chris Sellars

IT WAS a moment neither those on board HMS Spey or on luxury cruise liner Queen Mary 2 expected – to sail side-by-side in the Gulf of Thailand.

But that is what happened when offshore patrol ship Spey found herself sailing near the Cunard liner as the warship made her way from Cambodia (the first RN ship to visit in more than 60 years, as we reported last month) and the Kingdom of Thailand.

Commanding Officer Commander Mike Proudman saw an opportunity to say hello to the 345-metre luxury cruise ship.

At a mere 90m, the Royal Navy ship was dwarfed by Queen Mary 2 (she displaces 40 times Spey's 2,000-tonnes) but the warship's dazzle paint, White Ensign and ship's company were a welcome sight for the passengers.

There was also a chance for the two ships to exchange gifts of their crests.

Cdr Proudman said: "It was a great chance to show the flag next to this iconic cruise ship and I give the passengers something different to remember their cruise by."

Captain Andrew Hall, master of Queen Mary 2 and formerly of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, added: "I have never seen so many passengers get up early on a Sunday to see a Royal Navy ship."

After waving goodbye to the Cunard flagship, HMS Spey headed towards Thailand where she arrived in Sattahip for the latest leg of her Indo-Asia-Pacific adventure.

Picture: LPhoto Kev Walton, HMS Spey

Hail Mary, Full of grace



BRING ON THE BANSHEES

LINED up in a hangar at RNAS Culdrose, these are the first jet-powered drones delivered to the Fleet Air Arm.

Trialled on the aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales in 2021, Banshees have been delivered to the Fleet Air Arm's dedicated drone squadron 700X as the Royal Navy experiments with the potential of pilotless systems above, on and beneath the waves.

Developed by defence company QinetiQ, the Banshee Jet 80+ – capable of speeds up to 400mph – simulates aerial threats, helping RN air warfare experts remain at the leading edge of air defence.

"The introduction of Banshee signals a revolutionary step forward in terms of technology," said Lieutenant Commander Martin Howard, 700X's commanding officer.

"One important point to make is that we are not weaponising these systems. Instead this will be a vehicle that will allow the navy to test different types of sensors.

"The most important thing for me is that people are at the heart of this enterprise. In

700X NAS we are building the skills and knowledge of this technology which is key as we move forward."

Banshee measures roughly 10ft long with an 8ft wingspan (approx. 3m x 2.5m) and can fly in excess of 400mph with a range of more than 60 miles.

The drones are propelled into the air using a large 60-foot pneumatic launcher.

Using a ground station, the controller can operate the aircraft in various modes and potentially access onboard cameras or other sensors.

Once the flight is complete, the Banshee cuts its engine and deploys a parachute to gently float to the ground.

Lieutenant Tony Nairn was an air engineer and anti-submarine warfare helicopter aircrewman for 17 years before he commissioned as an officer. He is now the Royal Navy's first Banshee flight commander.

"One of the challenges is the rate at which the technology develops," he explained.

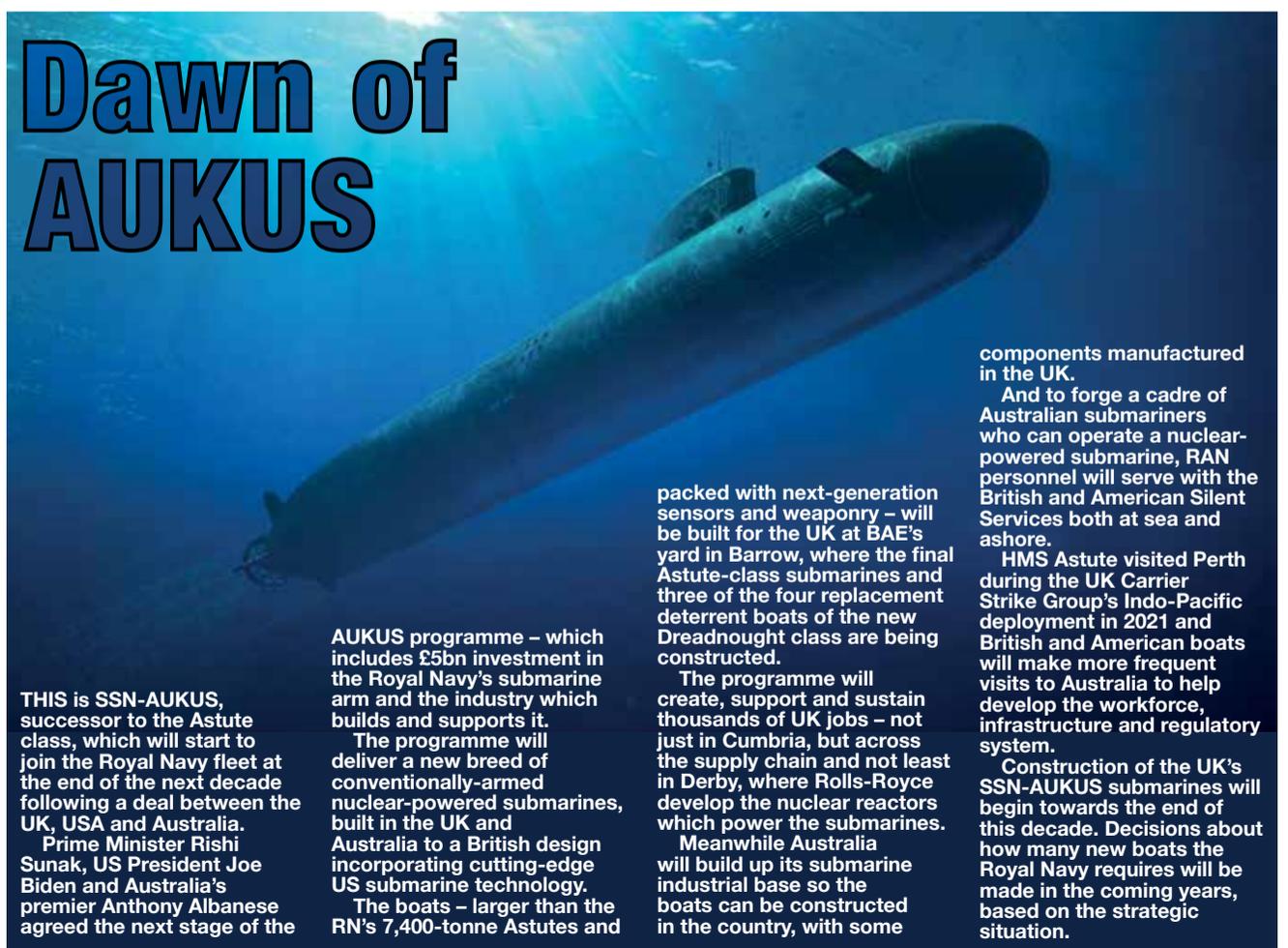
"It's therefore vital that we are able to change direction quickly, whilst maintaining core principles of operating safely. This is absolutely about adaptability and flexibility."

His team are now learning how to launch and fly the Banshee safely and then look at how it can be integrated into the same air space as other aircraft and operated at sea.

700X's first Banshee test flights are expected to take place at Predannack Airfield, Culdrose's satellite airfield further down the Lizard Peninsula.

Culdrose's Commanding Officer Captain Stuart Irwin said 700X – which also operates small Puma drone flights from Royal Navy warships – was "a pathfinder squadron, conducting experimentation of these air systems for defence.

"They are truly at the vanguard of our Future Maritime Aviation Force. It is enormously exciting to see the rapid progress they're making. The squadron is a great team working at the forefront of naval aviation's next big technological leap."



Dawn of AUKUS

THIS is SSN-AUKUS, successor to the Astute class, which will start to join the Royal Navy fleet at the end of the next decade following a deal between the UK, USA and Australia.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, US President Joe Biden and Australia's premier Anthony Albanese agreed the next stage of the

AUKUS programme – which includes £5bn investment in the Royal Navy's submarine arm and the industry which builds and supports it.

The programme will deliver a new breed of conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines, built in the UK and Australia to a British design incorporating cutting-edge US submarine technology.

The boats – larger than the RN's 7,400-tonne Astutes and

packed with next-generation sensors and weaponry – will be built for the UK at BAE's yard in Barrow, where the final Astute-class submarines and three of the four replacement deterrent boats of the new Dreadnought class are being constructed.

The programme will create, support and sustain thousands of UK jobs – not just in Cumbria, but across the supply chain and not least in Derby, where Rolls-Royce develop the nuclear reactors which power the submarines.

Meanwhile Australia will build up its submarine industrial base so the boats can be constructed in the country, with some

components manufactured in the UK.

And to forge a cadre of Australian submariners who can operate a nuclear-powered submarine, RAN personnel will serve with the British and American Silent Services both at sea and ashore.

HMS Astute visited Perth during the UK Carrier Strike Group's Indo-Pacific deployment in 2021 and British and American boats will make more frequent visits to Australia to help develop the workforce, infrastructure and regulatory system.

Construction of the UK's SSN-AUKUS submarines will begin towards the end of this decade. Decisions about how many new boats the Royal Navy requires will be made in the coming years, based on the strategic situation.

SEA TIME



THE Royal Navy's expert team in getting new technology and kit to the front line have reached yet another major milestone.

NavyX's unique trials ship, XV (eXperimental Vessel) Patrick Blackett, left Portsmouth Naval Base to undergo sea acceptance trials – ensuring the vessel and equipment onboard are fully functioning and ready to support innovative experimentation.

The start of the ship's operations with NavyX is an exciting moment for the innovation and autonomy team as it allows them to independently test and trial novel technologies, which in turn allows the warships of the Royal Navy to focus their time and efforts on their operational duties.

Reece Oliver, NavyX Experimentation Plans Team Lead,

said: "The hard work that we've all put into this project is all worth it to be able to see the ship doing the work she was intended for. Now we can look forward to planning her experimentation programme."

Colonel Tom Ryall, Head of NavyX, added: "I always said that the arrival of Patrick Blackett into Portsmouth was just the end of the beginning.

"We've started the next phase in her journey, as she went to sea under a Blue Ensign. She will have a busy programme ahead of her this summer."

The 270-tonne vessel, which bears the name of the former Royal Navy Officer and Nobel Prize Winner Patrick Blackett, is paving the way for advanced experimentation, innovation, and future capabilities within the Royal Navy, and ensuring that the UK stays at the leading edge of naval

warfare.

Leading Hand Aaron "Hammy" Hamling, who is part of NavyX's experiments team, said: "We get to do all the cool stuff!"

This was echoed by Chief Petty Officer David "Griff" Griffiths, another valued member of the team: "This is the best job I've done in my 26 years in the Navy. You get to work in a team unlike any other – it's diverse, and ranges in rank and experience, both military and civil servant. It's an exciting place to be as we have the opportunity to make significant changes to the future of the Royal Navy"

As the date for setting sail has drawn ever closer, more of the NavyX team have been involved in ensuring XV Patrick Blackett is prepared for testing and trialling innovative technology. NavyX also operate two of the Royal Navy's

autonomous vessels, MADFOX and APAC-24.

While the ship is operated by a very lean crew of five, there is also a team of 25 military personnel, civil servants and contractors behind the scenes who have made this possible. These individuals bring experience and expertise from various levels and sectors across the industry, from recent graduates to military veterans.

The NavyX team have worked tirelessly over recent years to ensure the Royal Navy's newest and most eye-catching vessel is ready for operations. The core NavyX team responsible for the initial procurement of XV Patrick Blackett and the ship's first Commanding Officer, Commander Sam Nightingale, have had their names engraved on the Ship's bell – a permanent reminder of the team who delivered the ship to Portsmouth in just nine months.

Picture: LPhot Matt Bradley

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PORTLAND TRACKS AND HUNTS

FRIGATE MONITORS **RUSSIAN TASK GROUP** IN THE CHANNEL AFTER **SUBMARINE HUNT IN NORWAY**

THE Royal Navy escorted a Russian task group in waters close to the UK.

HMS Portland deployed from Plymouth to track the Russian Gorshkov-class guided missile frigate, Admiral Kasatonov, and support tanker, Akademik Pashin.

The British Type 23 frigate shadowed the Russians through the English Channel as they headed towards the North Sea – after watching every move they made as they sailed north through the Bay of Biscay.

The Admiral Kasatonov of Russia's Northern Fleet has been operating in the eastern Mediterranean since early 2022, amid Russia's illegal invasion in Ukraine, while Akademik Pashin was in the region later in the year.

Portland with her specialist Merlin helicopter embarked – both equipped with cutting-edge sonars, sensors and torpedoes for specialist operations – reported on the movements of the Russian ships.

The ship's Commanding Officer, Commander Ed Moss-Ward said: "The Royal Navy routinely responds to escort warships in our territorial waters and the adjacent sea areas to ensure compliance with maritime law and to deter malign activity.

"Escorting the Russian task group alongside allied partners demonstrates the commitment of the Royal Navy and the NATO alliance to maintaining maritime security which is crucial to our national interests."

The Russians passed through the Strait of Gibraltar, with NATO warships escorting them as they made their journey.

The Channel operation came hot on the heels of multi-national anti-submarine warfare training in Norwegian waters, with Portland (plus an RAF P-8A Orion maritime patrol aircraft) throwing their respective hats in the (chilly) ring on behalf of the UK.

In doing so, they reciprocated Norwegian assistance and hospitality just before Christmas.

Then our Scandinavian allies helped train Royal Navy submarine commanders of tomorrow with a thorough workout among the fjords for students undertaking the 'Perisher' course aboard HMS Artful.

This time around, it was Norway's prospective submarine skippers being tested in the waters around Bergen on Exercise Arctic Dolphin.

Dedicated sub-hunter Portland joined ships from Poland, Germany and the host nation, providing an opposing force for the participating submarines with the task of making life as difficult as possible for the would-be captains.

Each day included two phases of activity. By day, the ships operated in close proximity



HMS Portland deployed from Plymouth to track the Russian Gorshkov-class guided missile frigate, Admiral Kasatonov

to the submarines, opening and closing their position at different speeds and on different courses to challenge the student captain's ability to maintain the safety of the submarine under the supervision of the lead examiner/assessor, known in the Royal Norwegian Navy as in the RN as 'teacher'.

By night, in open water, the student captains faced the stern test of attempting to avoid detection and evade a combined force of ships and specialist anti-submarine aircraft, from Portland's own Merlin Mk2 from 814 Naval Air Squadron, to the long-range RAF Orion.

"Anti-submarine warfare is an area of long-

standing co-operation with our allies," added Commander Moss-Ward.

"Arctic Dolphin has demonstrated the ability of UK forces to work seamlessly with our NATO partners – and our collective capability to maintain our operational advantage in the North Atlantic and the High North."

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AFTER NEARLY HALF A CENTURY'S DEDICATED SERVICE BETWEEN THEM HMS MONTROSE AND HMS ENTERPRISE PAID FINAL VISITS TO 'THEIR' TOWNS

FAREWELL, DEAR FRIENDS



IF EVER there were proof of how much the people of Montrose are proud of their very own warship, it came on Sunday March 12.

Somehow, 5,000 townsfolk – just shy of half the entire populace of the small port – filed through the ship in just a few hours to learn how 200 sailors and Royal Marines live, work and carry the Montrose name around the world.

After 29 years in commission, the very last port of call for the Type 23 frigate before she pays off in Portsmouth this month was her namesake town on the Scottish coast.

Having been deployed non-stop for the past four years, most of them in the Gulf in the vanguard of the Royal Navy's forward presence/deployment programme, opportunities to visit Scotland have been limited to ship's company attending events minus the frigate herself.

Hence the interest in the farewell visit – from civic leaders, affiliates and the general public – and a final chance to look back in Angus.

"I can't think that there could have been a better final port visit for our ship," said Commander Claire Thompson, Montrose's final Commanding Officer.

"HMS Montrose has been part of the Royal Navy for over 30 years and for her to end her time here at Montrose has been amazing.

"From the ship open to visitors, which sold out, through to sports fixtures, additional tours, and receptions, we have been spoiled by the affection we received from the town of Montrose. I am incredibly grateful for the support."

Few people were keener to show off the ship than Montrose native Leading Seaman (Above Water Tactical) Paul Linford.

Among the 5,000 visitors were his his sister, Sarah, brother-in-law, Lewis, and nephew, Ruairidh, on board.

"Ruairidh asks quite a lot what it's like on HMS Montrose," said Paul, "so it is fantastic to be able to show him first-hand where I work.

"It was also great to catch-up with some of my friends in Montrose and introduce them to those friends I have made in the Royal Navy.

"I've wanted to be in the Navy since I was in first year at High School – around 12 years old – so to be able to return to Montrose onboard HMS Montrose has been a privilege. The support which the town has given us has been really quite special."

As well as the 5,000 members of the public enjoying a final tour, the ship's company also hosted the Lord Lieutenant and Provost of Angus, as well as members of



local Sea Cadet units. Sailors also played against local football (Police Scotland) and golf teams.

Before departing Montrose for good, the ship's company paid their respects to a wartime naval hero.

Bamse the St Bernard dog became a symbol of Norwegian freedom and a popular character around the town... when not serving aboard coastal patrol ship Thorodd, which was based in the small town.

Cdr Thompson joined the Naval Regional Commander in laying a wreath on the statue/memorial to the canine which died of heart failure in 1944 having saved the life of at least one officer and guiding many a drunken or lost sailor back to the base.

For those unable to see Montrose during her four days in Angus, there was her final entry to a Royal Navy base a few days later – Portsmouth, rather than Devonport which has been her home for the bulk of her career – flying a rather long decommissioning pennant (determined by the length of the ship and its length of service) and accompanied by a 'carnival of water' (tugs firing jets of water in a traditional salute) and a smattering of well-wishers who braved the cold and rain to wave the frigate past Round Tower.

This month affiliates have one last opportunity to look around while alongside in Portsmouth, there's a fun farewell for loved ones for their ongoing support with a families day, before closing the chapter on the story of only the second HMS Montrose with the formal act of decommissioning on April 17.



THE people of Tiverton bade farewell to their ship – Royal Navy survey vessel HMS Enterprise – as crew paraded through the Devon town for the last time.

Led by the Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines Lympstone and joined by 30 Sea Cadets from the town's unit TS Hermes, all 42 members of the ship's company took part in the final Freedom parade, exercising an honour the Plymouth-based vessel has enjoyed for most of her 20-year career.

For 90 minutes, they brought military pomp and ceremony to the small Devonshire market town on a late winter's afternoon, marching to and from the town's Pannier market hall.

Enterprise has been bound with Tiverton since she was still under construction at the Appledore yard in north Devon in 2002 and awarded the town council's highest civic honour in 2005.

Returning the Freedom scroll to Tiverton's leaders, an emotional Commanding Officer Commander Malcolm McCallum said: "Tiverton is effectively our home. This is our final opportunity to pay back the support which the town has given us over the years.

"It is a poignant time in the ship's history as we move nearer to our decommissioning later this month, but it's worth remembering that it's the people on the ship now – and all those who have served on HMS Enterprise – who enjoy this special bond with the town as well."

Petty Officer Craig Dearie who carried the Colours through Tiverton added: "We are a small community of sailors on our ship. Tiverton is a similar small community in Devon, and we grow and get along in our own ways."

"For me, this was a very proud moment and playing such an important role made it even more special. It was a great chance for the town to see us and for us to get to know the people of Tiverton."

Tiverton's Mayor Councillor Sue Griggs – who was among affiliates hosted by HMS Enterprise for a final day at sea off Plymouth – said townsfolk had been proud to share the ship's journey and adventures over the past two decades.

"Everyone in Tiverton thinks it's wonderful to have a Royal Navy warship affiliated with the town – we are quite proud of that fact," she added.

"A lot of people talk about HMS Enterprise and it's surprising how many people are proud to have this association."

Commissioned in 2003, the current Enterprise is the tenth in the Royal Navy to bear the name going back to 1705.

Her role as a survey vessel has taken her to the four corners of the globe – to Japan and the Pacific Rim, in the heat of the Gulf and Middle east, the icy waters of Norway and the High North, as far south as the Falklands, and especially in the Mediterranean and European waters.

Aside from her regular hydrographic duties – which included surveying Beirut harbour in the wake of the explosion which devastated their docks in August 2020 – Enterprise evacuated civilians from Libya amid civil unrest in 2014 and spent extensive periods supporting the international operation to rescue migrants in the Mediterranean, which earned the ship the military's highest peace prize, the Firmin Sword.

Enterprise was to be decommissioned in Portsmouth as Navy News went to press.

She and her sister HMS Echo are being replaced by the Navy's Future Military Data Gathering Programme being introduced over the next 18 months, deploying specialist teams with state-of-the-art equipment, including drones and autonomous systems, on other vessels – including commercial ships – to gather the relevant information.

Pictures: LPhotos Gareth Smith, Unaisi Luke and Juliet Ritsma



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THE Royal Navy's top navigators of tomorrow have been tested in the Highlands and Islands as HMS Mersey manoeuvred at speed amid lochs and inlets.

The Portsmouth-based patrol ship completed a fortnight of testing experienced navigators in all weathers and scenarios by day and night to prove they are ready to guide Royal Navy capital ships around the globe, or pass on their knowledge and expertise to the next generation of young navigators as instructors.

Students on the Spec N (Specialist Navigator) course spend eight weeks in the classroom/on simulators then two weeks at sea for the real-world environment.

Typically that's on HMS Severn, the Fleet's dedicated navigational training ship. But with Severn otherwise engaged, her sister Mersey stepped in.

The 14 trainees/instructors brought a purpose-built navigation classroom inside a container, loaded on to Mersey's flight deck, before heading for the Irish Sea and western Scotland for the hands-on training.

Students are expected to employ a host of specialised

navigation techniques as they safely navigate a ship through a series of challenging environments at speeds of up to 20 knots.

Such techniques include horizontal sextant angles and fixing the ship's position using depth soundings, but most importantly students are encouraged to be creative and "think outside the box".

Instructors rule out the use of equipment usually considered essential for navigation (such as the bridge centraline pelorus), or that their plans will have to change at a few minutes' notice. As the course goes on, more of these additional challenges are injected.

"Few on board Mersey knew exactly what to expect – except that the ship would ultimately be coming alongside somewhere along the West Coast of Scotland and that for much of the time the crew would be closed up at Special Sea Dutymen due to the risks involved with navigating so close to shore, placing a greater strain on the ship's company than normal running," said Sub Lieutenant Owen Moore, a Young Officer undergoing general training on Mersey.



"As it turned out, Spec-N running proved to be hugely rewarding for everyone on board. After traversing some rough seas, personnel were rewarded with spectacular scenery including the entire perimeter of the Isle of Man, the coast of Northern Ireland, the Isle of Skye, the Western Isles and the Isle of Lewis."

The patrol ship was blessed with surprisingly clement weather off Scotland's West Coast for much of the training, permitting breathtaking views of towering cliffs, pristine lochs and picturesque villages as well as countless birds and other wildlife – and one evening a particularly clear view of the Northern Lights, pictured left.

To demonstrate their capacity to excel, the students are expected to intersperse their navigation briefings to the captain with anecdotes, interesting facts, local histories or indeed almost anything, provided it had some tenuous relation to what Mersey's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander James Mitchell, was looking at out of the window.

"The most important factor is that the "dits" are delivered with confidence and panache – and entertaining for the bridge team," said Owen.

"After perhaps a few false starts on the earlier runs the students delivered in spades, with material including funny hotel reviews, in-depth descriptions of local whiskies, and personalised haikus; often complemented with off-the-cuff witticisms in response to follow-up questions."

The seagoing training for the navigators provided a welcome change from Mersey's more regular patrols around the UK.

"Once again HMS Mersey and her crew have proved themselves to be up to the challenge," Lt Cdr Mitchell said.

"There is no doubt that the course will be the source of several great Navy memories for many on board, and if there were a requirement for the ship to take on this tasking again in the future, she would surely be glad to do so."

Pictures: Andrew Brown



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Photographer Chris reflects on an iconic WW2 moment

WHEN not beachcombing or preserving rare fishery stocks, Tamar's crew were enjoying a break in the sun... just as their predecessors did 80 years ago.

Away from the main base area, Diego Garcia has changed little since WW2 when it served as a base for RAF seaplanes scouring the Indian Ocean for Japanese warships and submarines.

Twenty-four hours before the conflict ended – August 14 1945 – a photographer for the *Daily Mirror* snapped RAF personnel relaxing between duties (above).

Eight decades later, Tamar's 'man behind the lens' Leading Photographer Chris Sellars (who also captured the other images gracing these pages) was researching ahead of the visit and came across the historic photograph, deciding to recreate it.

Four shipmates donned the Royal Navy's iconic 'tropical white' uniform, headed to idyllic Cannon Corner, found a suitably sturdy branch – though sadly not the same one as in 1945 – and Chris clicked away...



NATURE at her finest.

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The tropical waters are as clean as anywhere on the planet, the coral islands and the rare bird and amphibian life which rely on left to thrive.

Yet even here – in the outlying islands of the British Indian Ocean Territory – the baleful impact humans can have on the planet are felt if you look a little more closely.

The otherwise pristine shores are littered with the detritus of human activity: plastic bottles, shipping floats, fishermen's nets, empty drink cans, glass bottles, polystyrene, flip flops.

Aside from the rubbish the waves carry before depositing them on the beaches of BIOT, the waters should be rich with marine life.

They are not. Despite the efforts of the territory's authorities – their patrol vessel

can be seen here, a small blob of red and white amid a sea of blue, enforcing fishing regulations – stocks have been denuded by illegal trawling over the past couple of years, activity which is starting to impact on the delicate eco-system.

It would be over egging the pudding to say the arrival of HMS Tamar in the territory and its central island, Diego Garcia, saved the day.

But it did make a difference.

Crew of the patrol ship dedicated their two weeks in and around the archipelago to helping authorities ensure its environment does not suffer more at the hands of mankind.

The BIOT chain of nearly 60 islands lies more than 1,100 miles from the southern tip of India and over 2,000 miles from Africa's Eastern Seaboard.

Its isolation does not offer it protection.

So Tamar – on a five-year mission to the Indo-Asia-Pacific with her sister ship HMS Spey to work with allies and partners,

fly the flag for the UK and underscore Britain's commitment to the region – worked with island authorities to clear the most recent rubbish and grapple with illegal fishing.

The islands' patrol vessel Grampain Endurance seized a trawler operating illegally in the fish-rich zone during Tamar's visit.

BIOT's waters – roughly the size of Texas – are a protected zone, home to a critical marine ecosystem, and is the largest of its kind anywhere in the world, containing the world's largest coral atoll and serve as a refuge for a number of marine species including sharks, rays, and turtles.

The warship's sailors helped unload, count and weigh a huge haul of now-dead fish in grim conditions – hot, slimy, smelly.

Among other protected species, the team found mobula, sting rays, sharks in the trawl. Authorities imposed a heavy fine on the fishermen.



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PRESERVING PARADISE



“Over the past two years there has been a major increase in illegal fishing, explained George Balcombe, Strategic Environmental Officer for the BIOT Administration. “Researchers who have been working in the territory for years have observed a significant decline in several keystone species, notably sharks.



“The levels of fishing are unprecedented and the support of Royal Navy vessels like HMS Tamar is invaluable in combating this ecologically disastrous activity. The presence of the Royal Navy sends a clear message to the fishing communities about our commitment to protecting the Marine Protected Area.”

There is nothing the Navy or authorities can do to stop waste carried by the oceans being dumped on the shores of Diego Garcia, scarring its otherwise pristine beaches, polluting some of the cleanest waters in the Indian Ocean, harming wildlife from birds caught in netting to disturbing the nesting grounds of endangered hawksbill turtles.

So the ship’s company hit the beaches... armed with huge refuse sacks.

The rubbish collected by the sailors was subsequently separated and either sent for recycling or disposed of if it couldn’t be reused.

“The beach clean was a really important job for us,” said Sub-Lieutenant Laurie Wellesbury, a trainee Marine Engineer Officer. “I think we’re all more conscious about how much waste we’re producing, particularly plastic, and the impact it has on the environment. It was good to be able to make a small contribution to cleaning up our beaches.”

Royal Navy Reservist and marine scientist, Dr Imogen Napper, who specialises in water-borne plastic pollution, added: “The beaches of Diego Garcia are globally important for turtle nesting, with endangered green turtle and critically endangered hawksbill turtle populations of the Western Indian Ocean nesting here annually. By removing marine litter from these remote beaches, HMS Tamar has helped to support turtle conservation within the area.”

With few places in the islands more than a

couple of metres above sea level, those who live there are acutely aware of climate change in particular. “Science carried out in the Territory is of global importance,” George said. “Over 30 articles were published in major journals in 2022 alone.”

Tamar is, with Spey, the greenest ships in the Navy, thanks to adaptations to her diesel exhaust that reduce emissions by 90 per cent, and a ballast water management system, allowing her to patrol the world’s most sensitive areas subjected to the strictest emission restrictions.

“Tamar’s green credentials are particularly pertinent given that the archipelago sits within the world’s largest marine protected area. We very much enjoyed working closely with our BIOT colleagues, to understand enforcement practices which help preserve and protect this remarkable ocean ecosystem,” said Commander Teilo Elliot-Smith, Tamar’s CO.

His ship’s company had the time to enjoy paradise, especially its sporting activities: wakeboarding, stand-up paddle boarding and kayaking, as well as golf and cycling, the football

team triumphed 3-0 over a ‘rest of the world’ side put together by their hosts and the ship’s chefs cooked up a beach barbecue.

“Visiting Diego Garcia on my first deployment was fantastic. It’s a place not many people get to go to so I was really looking forward to it. I joined the Navy to travel and see the world – this deployment is definitely a tick in that box,” said Communications Technician Cameron Leigh, currently on his first deployment, having passed out of basic training only seven months ago.

The main island is home to a Joint UK/US Defence Facility featuring the second longest military runway in the world, while the naval base can accommodate complete UK or US Carrier Strike Groups.

“This is a unique and beautiful piece of British territory where we work shoulder to shoulder with our US partners to support strategic objectives in the Indo-Pacific region,” said Commander Colvin Osborn, Commander British Forces BIOT.

“HMS Tamar’s visit demonstrates that we are well and truly open for business.”



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ON A fine late winter's day Indian frigate INS Trikand and US Coast Guard cutter USCGC Robert Goldman follow HMS Lancaster - a rare moment of relative calm amid 18 days of action in the second-largest naval exercise.

All the UK's Gulf-based ships, supported by expert dive/bomb disposal teams flown out from the UK, Royal Marines boarding and search specialists, drone operators and medics, were committed to the huge International Maritime Exercise.

In size and scale, IMX - which spanned the Red Sea, Indian Ocean and the Gulf - was billed as second only to the huge, long-standing, naval exercise run by the Americans in the Pacific.

More than 7,000 personnel from 50 nations with two dozen ships and a similar board and search teams committed to IMX and, although the focus was principally on naval warfare, the RAF also provided aerial support from Cyprus.

Participants tackled potential threats as varied as terrorism, smuggling, sea mines and aerial drone attacks.

There was also a strong emphasis on remote and autonomous systems and how they will be integrated.

The exercise explored the envelope of existing kit, with 700X Naval Air Squadron operating the Royal Navy's dedicated crewless Puma drone as a flying 'spotter'.

Some 30 different autonomous systems were in action during IMX. In the Gulf of Aqaba, Jordan, a dummy 'casualty' was transferred from a ship to medics ashore using a MARTAC T-38 Devil Ray unmanned surface vessel - the first time a drone has been used in a medical evacuation training scenario.

For the first time in the Middle East, the world's longest-range electric aircraft, the K1000ULE surveillance drone - capable of missions lasting more than one day - was given a run out.

For the Royal Navy, support ship RFA Cardigan Bay served as the floating testbed for a string of technology trials, lead by the Royal Navy's new Mine Hunting Capability (MHC) which is a remote/autonomous system capable of conducting many roles currently performed by existing Hunt and Sandown-class minehunters.

The idea is to keep personnel safely at arm's length from any mine danger area, allowing them to search, locate and finally neutralise mines from a safe distance.

In the Gulf, the trials are spearheaded by Royal Navy Motor Boat Harrier, delivered just a few weeks ago as part of MHC, and operated by the Mine Threat Exploitation Group, including Able Seaman Jack Clarke.

Jack both helps with the maintenance and husbandry of Harrier, operates her sonar when onboard and

helps with post-mission analysis of the data.

"This is my first draft and it's been really good. I'm working with a good team and getting involved. We have a good social life as well as a good work life," he said.

Cardigan Bay also directed mine-hunting exercises involving HMS Chiddingfold, Bangor and Middleton, assisted by the regular briefings given by intelligence manager Chief Petty Officer Nicola Thomas to the Mine Warfare Battle Staff.

"IMX is an interesting experience," said Nicola, on what could be her last deployment after two decades' service.

"I think that it's important to work with our strategic partners to promote understanding of our respective working practices and to boost our ability to work together."

South Korean mine warfare expert Lieutenant Jeong Won Kim also joined Cardigan Bay for the duration of IMX, to see how the UK and other partner nations hunt underwater explosive devices - especially the growing exploitation of drones and crewless systems.

"The exercise has been interesting," he said. "The objective of operations is similar to the Korean Navy but different ways are used to achieve the objective. It's been good to learn about the different ways.

"As a visiting officer, it's allowed me to see the bigger picture and approach



FOR THOSE INTENT ON CRIME AND UN



A ROYAL Marine sniper keeps his rifle aimed at the prize - a substantial haul of the latest weaponry - including anti-tank weapons and ballistic missile components - being smuggled in the Gulf of Oman.

Below, his comrades recover the arms cache from a go-fast which tried - and failed - to outrun the Wildcat helicopter, allowing HMS Lancaster to pounce.

The smugglers tried to evade the helicopter and ignored every radio call demanding them to stop - instead steering their craft towards Iranian territorial waters.

They were intercepted by the British frigate before they could do so.

The Royal Marines boarding team found a number of packages.

Royal Navy bomb disposal and ordnance specialists checked the weapons to ensure they were safe to bring



them back onboard Lancaster for inspection.

The haul included Iranian versions of Russian 9M133 Kornet anti-tank guided missiles - known in Iran as 'Dehlavieh' - and medium-range ballistic missile components.

The chase was sparked when an American drone spotted the skiff moving at speed through international waters in the darkness.

The United Nations have been informed about the

seizure and invited to conduct its own inspection of the materiel in accordance with Security Council resolutions 2216 and 2231.

"It was a great buzz when we were given the green light by the captain to intercept the vessel," said Leading Seaman Pawley, one of the advanced tactical coxswains charged with manoeuvring Lancaster's Pacific 24s into position for the commandos to board.

Fellow coxswain Able Seaman MacLeod added:



things with an independent mind. It also gave me lots of time to share my experiences and learn from others.”

He wasn't sure whether he'd enjoy non-Korean food (he did as it turned out), but above all was struck by the professionalism and determination of all aboard the British ship.

“I have been very impressed with the pride that people have to be part of the navy,” he said of the men and women aboard Cardigan Bay.

“There is a good mindset amongst RN sailors. Quality equipment is important, but the mindset of the people is the most important thing for operations.”

After Cardigan Bay, the largest UK participant of the exercise was frigate HMS Lancaster which served as a training ground for other international participants to board and search her for suspicious individuals and illegal cargo.

“IMX has been an exciting prospect,” said Leading Caterer Phillip Mitchell who orders and accounts for Lancaster's food supply – but also serves as deputy boarding officer, involved with searching suspect craft with his team.

“I have never had the opportunity to work directly alongside foreign nations within a multinational exercise before.”

Chief Petty Officer (Above-Water Tactical) Lee Andrew has extensive experience of the RN and Gulf, but is always keen to learn more as it benefits not just him, but his team in Lancaster's ops room.

“Working with multiple nations not only provides me with a better understanding of working in a task

group, but also gives the warfare department wider experience of how other nations work.

“The exercise has provided less-experienced members of the department a broader understanding of such warfare exercises.”

“Safeguarding merchant shipping as well as stopping arms/ drugs and people smuggling not only makes the world a safe place but it shows we are here to do a job.”

CPO LEE ANDREW, HMS LANCASTER

Lee can call upon more than 20 years' service in the Royal Navy and a clutch of destroyers, frigates and carriers, including a previous stint on Lancaster back in 2009, and her predecessor HMS Montrose.

“Being deployed away from family and friends is always hard no matter where you are in the world,” he continued.

“Having over 20 years of experience helps significantly – this is my seventh Gulf deployment so I know now how to

deal with being away, which also helps me as a Divisional Officer to guide the more junior members of my division.

“Safeguarding merchant shipping as well as stopping arms/drugs and people smuggling not only makes the world a safe place but it shows we are here to do a job and provide security, whilst building partnerships with Gulf nations.”

Lancaster's Executive Officer Lieutenant Commander Max Wilmot said seeing the different number of international participants coming together, working side-by-side to a common aim made for both an impressive sight at times and an extremely useful test.

“We exercised and shared knowledge, procedures proving seamless interaction between us all,” he said.

“Units escorted civilian shipping transiting the area supporting the free flow of commerce whilst building stronger ties with the merchant community.

“It was great to see the relationships grow between nations and I am proud we were part of such a diverse group of people who can operate in such a professional way.”

That's echoed by the senior Royal Navy officer in the Middle East, UK Maritime Component Commander Commodore Phil Dennis.

“Regularly exercising, sharing knowledge and increasing operational integration with our allies is essential if we are to contribute to the maintenance of maritime security across the region,” he said.

INTEREST IN THE GULF... THE HEAT IS ON



“The best part of the boarding operation was chasing down the vessel and getting eyes on the packages that were strapped down in the skiff.”

Marine Si from 42 Commando was one of the team who boarded the skiff and recovered the arms haul.

“We suspected that it was going to be a successful op when we spotted all the packages on the vessel of interest,” he said.

“It was a great feeling to secure the vessel and we soon

realised the importance of the interdiction as we uncovered more and more weapons – a great day to be a Royal Marine!”

Lancaster's Commanding Officer Commander Paul Irving said his 200 crew were buzzing as a result of their success.

He added: “This boarding was a fantastic team effort, and I'm really proud of the way the whole ship's company worked together to achieve such a brilliant result.”

It's the third weapons cache

seized by the Royal Navy in the region inside 13 months. Early in 2022, HMS Lancaster's predecessor operating in the same waters, sister frigate HMS Montrose, struck twice inside a month, interdicting multiple rocket engines for land-attack cruise missile and a batch of surface-to-air missiles.

And Lancaster's success is the seventh major interdiction by Combined Maritime Forces ships inside three months. Collectively, they've

seized more than 5,000 weapons, 1.6 million rounds of ammunition, 7,000 proximity fuses for rockets, more than two tonnes of propellant for rocket-propelled grenades, 30 anti-tank guided missiles, medium-range ballistic missile components and £67m worth of illegal drugs.

Indeed just days before Lancaster's success, a Royal Navy-led task force dealt its second multi-million-pound blow to drug traffickers in the Middle East this year.

Not four weeks after Combined Task Force 150, under Captain Jim Byron, seized 4½ tonnes of illegal narcotics in the Gulf of Oman, a ship under the group's command struck again.

This time, more than 1.6 tonnes of drugs were intercepted – a combination of hashish, methamphetamine and pills worth more £6.4m in the UK.

Crew of the US Coast Guard Cutter John Scheuerman discovered 1,350 kilograms

of hashish, 276 kilograms of methamphetamine and 23 kilograms of amphetamine pills aboard a four-crew dhow during a routine patrol for the maritime security task force.

As a result of last year's arms seizures, the UK presented evidence of violations of United Nations Security Council Resolutions – concerning weapons transfers to Houthi rebels and controls on the proliferation of Iranian missile technology respectively.

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HMS Albion during her mission in Northern Norway



DUTCH CONNECTION



Pictures by LPhoto Bill Spurr

FJORD LANDINGS AND FAST JETS ON NORDIC MISSION

EUROPE'S oldest joint force has shown it's as potent as ever across the stunning fjords and mountains of Northern Norway on its 50th anniversary year.

The UK and Netherlands Amphibious Force was formed in 1973 and, ever since, through shared values, equipment and training, it has operated for the prosperity and security of the two nations, and of allies and partners in NATO and the Joint Expeditionary Force.

Perhaps like an old married couple, the UK and Netherlands' deep bond isn't always obvious on the surface, it continues so often out of the limelight, so on this special anniversary year the two navies and marine forces are ensuring they celebrate their combined strength through exercises and ceremonial events.

While Royal Marines – *see page 20-21* – parachuted onto a frozen lake with their Dutch brethren, at sea the ships, so crucial to the Amphibious Force, have been plying their trade together at heart of the Joint Expeditionary Force and NATO during Norwegian-led Exercise Joint Viking.

The task group is led by Dutch navy amphibious ship HNLMS Rotterdam and includes HNLMS Karel Doorman, the UK's amphibious flagship HMS Albion, RFA Mounts Bay and escort frigate HMS Somerset.

Together, they are 'answering the call' to defend Norway

from an 'aggressor'. Joint Viking is training for Norway and its allies to defend its frontiers and NATO's northern flank in the face of a modern threat.

That means sharpening skills in operating across the Norwegian Arctic's rugged coastlines and mountains.

UNBELIEVABLE JEF

The task group is operating as part of the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) – a collection of ten like-minded nations, including Norway, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Sweden, who together react to events in northern Europe's waterways, remaining on standby to respond to crises and world events.

"What JEF does, in this in environment, means we can act quickly," said Captain Marcus Hember, commanding officer of HMS Albion.

"We take our security seriously, and so when it matters, we will turn up."

He added: "Alongside our Partner Nations, NATO and more broadly our allies and partners, the JEF will continue to deliver as a collective of 10 like-minded north European Nations."

"[JEF is] dedicated to delivering coordinated exercises, operations, and activities that continue to contribute to the stability and prosperity of northern Europe and the wider

region."

In Vågsfjorden – located between Norway's two largest islands, Hinnøya to the south and Senja to the north – ships, submarines, fast jets and patrol craft of JEF nations converged in a show of power.

Two F-35A jets from the Norwegian Air Force roared overhead as a Norwegian submarine Uredd appeared from the depths in Albion's wake.

Buzzing around the amphibious ships were the P2000s of the Royal Navy's Coastal Forces Squadron – HMS Archer, Puncher, Pursuer and Smiter, along with the stealth missile corvette HNoMS Skjold.

In these uncertain times, JEF's purpose it sharper focus than ever.

"JEF is an important tool that can react quickly if something happens here, and before it eventually has NATO's full attention," says Chief of the Royal Norwegian Navy, Rear Admiral Rune Andersen.

"It is therefore important to train together here in the north, so that everyone gets the skills they should have. But it is also an important signal that we stand together and can operate together."

FJORD LANDINGS

Once the efforts in Vågsfjorden were complete, HMS Albion and RFA Mounts Bay headed north to another

fjord, Sorreisa, to practice the complex art of amphibious landings on WADER (Wet and Dry Exercise Rehearsals).

Day and night in freezing conditions, the specialists in beach landings, 4 Assault Squadron Royal Marines (4ASRM) – Albion's in-house landing craft experts – carefully moved vehicles, 105mm guns from 29 Commando, and ISO containers carrying equipment from the fjord beaches to RFA Mounts Bay using their large landing craft (the LCU).

Drivers of all-terrain vehicles – the iconic BVS206 and Vikings – got to grips with manoeuvring on and off landing craft, while Yankee Company of 45 Commando practised moving rapidly to deploy through the ships and onto landing craft, before landing ashore.

All of this may sound like bread and butter for one of the world's leading amphibious forces, but it's essential training to keep things as slick as possible.

Once the WADER was ticked off, the UK and Dutch ships began the tactical phase of Exercise Joint Viking together.

Using night vision devices to assist their fjord navigation, 4ASRM and Yankee Company headed out to live and operate from their landing craft as Forward Operating Bases.

From there they carried out reconnaissance of potential beach landing points, before the officer in command of Yankee Company gave the order to land commando strike teams and Viking vehicles.

Pictures by PO Phot Kyle Heller
and PO Phot Arron Hoare

FLYING COMMANDOS



ROYAL Marines parachuted onto a frozen lake alongside Dutch counterparts as part of large-scale exercises alongside NATO allies in the Arctic Circle.

The elite Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron (SRS) of 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group have been honing their specialist commando skills during intensive allied training involving 20,000 troops in Northern Norway.

The SRS commandos – known as the eyes and ears of the UK's Commando Force – jumped from a Dutch C-130 Hercules alongside Dutch Marines to mark the 50th anniversary year of the UK and Netherlands Amphibious Force.

The elite force were tasked with 'attacking positions behind enemy lines', providing a foothold for NATO troops involved in Exercise Joint Viking.

SRS are the sharpest point of the commando spear who are at the forefront of the UK's expertise in Arctic warfare. They are highly trained to forge ahead of the main force to carry out covert missions or pave the way for larger forces to enter the area.

Captain Lansley, officer in command of Recce Troop, 24 Commando Royal Engineers, said: "As Commando Sappers we bring our specialist engineer capabilities to SRS.

"There are fewer activities that require more mutual trust than parachuting, so this is a great test of our interoperability with NATO partners.

"It is a privilege to work with the Dutch, parachuting with them has special



significance for me as my grandfather participated in Operation Market Garden during the Second World War."

Another of the commandos' unique abilities is taking the enemy by surprise by navigating, climbing or swimming to places perceived as impassable by an adversary.

That is why SRS also undertook intensive ice climbing training in Norway, honing an unorthodox approach that would catch an adversary off-guard.

SRS 1 Troop, Team Leader, said: "Ice climbing is a unique capability which is retained by the Royal Marines.

"It allows reconnaissance teams, complete with full operational kit to overcome hazards, for example ascend frozen waterfalls, which they may encounter while transiting to targets, exploiting unpredictable approach routes and maximising surprise."

SRS is primarily made up of Royal Marines Mountain Leaders who are at the epicentre of the UK's Arctic and cold weather warfare expertise. They are also the instructors who teach new generations to survive, move and fight across this unforgiving terrain.

They are deployed alongside a thousand fellow Royal Marines, British Army soldiers and the Commando Helicopter Force on Exercise Joint Viking.

Joint Viking is a Norwegian-led large-scale training exercise, the largest allied exercise in the Arctic this year and designed to test NATO's ability to defend its northern flank.



The parachute jump alongside Dutch forces was part of a year of exercises and ceremonial events marking 50 years of close cooperation as part of the UK and Netherlands Amphibious Force.

The force is the oldest joint force in Europe and has seen the two nations' navies and marines share equipment, tactics and training since 1973. As commandos began their work on Exercise Joint Viking, Commandant General Royal Marines, General Gwyn Jenkins, paid a visit to Camp Viking and the air station at Bardufoss to speak to deployed personnel.

Gen Jenkins, alongside Corps Regimental Sergeant Major, Warrant Officer First Class Nick Ollive, briefed troops as they headed onto the tactical phase of their Cold Weather Warfare Course, and went cross country skiing with members of the Commando Logistic Regiment and Camp Viking.

"I came to Norway for the first time 30 years ago as part of the Commando Logistic Regiment," said Gen Jenkins.

"To come back and see the contemporary marines, commandos, sailors and soldiers operating in such an exciting, challenging environment as Norway, is a real personal thrill for me."

Gen Jenkins also met with King Harald V of Norway – who is an honorary Royal Marines officer – and gave an update of the Corps' activity in the country.





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AIR RAID SIRENS THE OPERA HOUSE AND THE LONG ROAD TO ODESA

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE ROYAL NAVY'S NAVAL ATTACHÉ IN KYIV

ON 24 February 2022 Lieutenant Commander Serena Scott was planning to attend her regular Ukrainian language lessons.

But then her tutor called to cancel. Her Ukrainian teacher's hometown in Kharkiv was being bombed by the Russians, her homeland invaded as conflict returned to Europe. It was the day much was to change. The unthinkable was happening. The start of horrific bloodshed in Ukraine.

At that moment Serena's language lessons paled into insignificance as people's lives were blown apart by war. But Putin's three-day war is now more than a year old, Ukraine is strong and Serena's studies in the Ukrainian and Russian language are used as a force for good as Ukraine fights back...

Six weeks after the full-scale invasion Serena began her job as British Naval Attaché to Ukraine, becoming the Royal Navy's representative in the country – forging links, arranging training, courses, visits and working with Defence Attachés, among other duties, to the benefit of Ukraine.

But her planned move to Kyiv, with her husband and three sons, didn't materialise, as war raged and as Russia's assault on Kyiv faltered and eventually failed, she started the post with the embassy in exile.

By the end of May she finally moved to Kyiv – going into a country, ravaged by war, but still heroically fighting for its sovereignty.

"Families are not allowed to come. Mine are too young to fully understand what's happening, but they'd still like to come here. They were looking forward to coming to school in Ukraine," she says of her children, from the embassy in Kyiv.

"We protect the children from much of the news – they're now eight, nine and 11 – but I think the first time I missed their call, I inadvertently told them it was because the air raid sirens had been going off."

"This job has had its moments," Serena adds. "Power, water and heating became less of a given for a while."

Serena's family had previously accompanied her abroad for her role as the Royal Navy's Exchange Officer in Germany, at the German equivalent of Britannia Royal Naval College, the 'Marineschule Mürwik'. Her young family knew and loved living abroad with her... "We anticipated that Kyiv would be a great experience for them, but it has turned out very differently," she says.

Her journey to Kyiv started in January 2020 when she was selected to become the next Naval Attaché to Ukraine – followed by a compressed 15-month language course and three months Defence Attaché training in the UK.

There, she set about learning Ukrainian and Russian – 30 per cent of Ukrainians speak Russian as their first language, so being equipped with both languages is crucial. So too is to learn about the country's culture, which is all part of the training.

She strikes a cheerful tone as we discuss life in Kyiv, on the one-year anniversary of the beginning of the war. If all remained well, that evening, she was heading to the opera house to support a gala concert for the anniversary. She talks about the success of finally being granted permission to travel to Odesa – the southern port city, temporary home to the Ukrainian Navy (most still claim Sevastopol, Crimea, as their real home) – which she was told was in a terrible state and in complete blackout.

Russian missiles have regularly hit energy infrastructure, but the Ukrainians have bounced back remarkably – quickly repairing and restoring.

"The hotel where we stayed in Odesa was actually too hot – the heating was at 28°C, so we all had the windows open to cool down," Serena said. "They are getting hit, but normally electricity is restored pretty



Visit by the Ukraine Commander of the Navy, Vice Admiral Oleksiy Neizhpapa, to the Ministry of Defence in London



SERENA'S ESCAPE: The opera house in Kyiv



Kyiv Monastery of the Caves



Ukrainian troops train in the UK



Inside the opera house



quickly. Ukraine is even back exporting electricity again."

Odesa is where a lot of the remaining Ukrainian Navy personnel are based, but travel has been severely restricted meaning Serena only recently made it to the south, to the shores of the Black Sea, for the first time to meet up with her Ukrainian Navy counterparts.

"Beside the fact that getting the journey approved was important, I found that I have a lot I need to do there to support the Navy, oh and an immediate love for Odesa. It's a beautiful city," she said.

Serena has also fallen in love with the capital Kyiv and feels a huge connection to the Ukrainian people.

"I have not met a Ukrainian I haven't liked," she said. "The optimism and will to get over challenges are inspiring. The Russians try to break their will. The Ukrainians buy generators, and dance in the street."

Since arriving in Kyiv, she has seen the city stir and rouse as Putin's vile war machine was pushed away from the capital's outskirts – leaving behind its bloody legacy in places like Bucha – and as the focal point of the conflict lurched to Ukraine's south and south-eastern regions.

"Life goes on," said Serena. "When I arrived in the city in May 22, the streets were pretty empty, and there were not the usual traffic jams. As people have

returned, so has the traffic. It's bustling.

"Children play on swings. Children go to school. The Opera House, restaurants, cafes and bars are all open and doing reasonable trade. After brunch one Sunday, the bartender thanked us for supporting Ukraine – 'In what way?' I asked – 'your brunch is money into our economy,' he replied."

Serena's escape is the Opera House, where they put on three different performances a week – an amazing feat, of itself. Aside from interruptions from the occasional air raid siren, performances continue.

"I love music, so the Opera House is my happy place," she said. "Although we are still restricted in some ways, there is a group of Defence Attachés who are enthusiastic to go. So, we enjoy the performances – network together – and feel we are supporting Ukraine in some small way."

"The air raid siren went off in the middle of the Lacrimosa (Mozart's Requiem) and the orchestra kept playing until they were forced off and people were encouraged to take cover in the basement. The performance started again, 20 minutes later, when the 'all clear' had sounded."

Of course, there is hard work to be done as Naval Attaché – and it's something Serena is proud of.

"It has been the most amazing honour to help the Armed Forces of Ukraine, during their time of need,"

she said.

"It has been a very unusual Attaché role. As much as I hope to be in a normal one, sometime – if such a thing exists – I also want to be able to come back to Ukraine."

Serena has worked with the Ukrainian Marines to get training – announced by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak recently – off the ground, has supported inbound and outbound visits for senior military staff and two Secretary of State visits.

Upholding Naval tradition, Trafalgar Night was well attended, with 15 people from seven countries involved – including the most senior Ukrainian Naval Officer, now Inspector General of the Armed Forces and a young volunteer Marine. More recently she hosted representatives from six nations at a Gala Concert for International Women's Day.

Serena describes her relationship with the Ukrainian Navy as 'fantastic' – "every little thing I can do to support them is much appreciated," she said. "They too have their own version of 'Jackspeak' – but instructively the only dictionary of it is in Russian."

"It's been especially challenging, with Odesa, 475km away, and safety concerns restricting travel, but when I do see my counterparts, the relationship is always excellent."

Words: Peter Howard

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Vital work to support leavers

The long way home...

4,006 miles. That's the exact distance between the UK Naval Support Facility in Bahrain – hub of the RN's operations in the Gulf region – and Portsmouth Naval Base.

How do we know? Because the team from the Forward Support Unit have just covered the distance on foot, rowing machine or bicycle to raise money for the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity.

The team set off on New Year's Day, aiming to walk/run/row/cycle 67 miles a day collectively, 'arriving' home on March 1 – as well as completing the demanding day job of providing engineering support to four Royal Navy warships and one Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel operating out of the base at Mina Salman.

The challenge was the brainchild of the base's clubz, Petty Officer Physical Trainer Ian 'Smokey' Cole who wanted to keep morale and fitness at a peak as 2023 kicked off.

"The team continued to work hard driving down the mileage and their commitment to this challenge was fantastic," said Ian.

"They've had to fit this challenge around busy work packages with many of them driving down the mileage early mornings before work or late evenings after a shift."

They managed to raise the daily tempo by more than ten miles, which meant the challenge ended a good nine days earlier than planned.

Although the team reached one objective, they're a couple of hundred quid short of their £1k fundraising target for the charity, so if you wish to support their efforts, visit <https://www.justgiving.com/page/ian-cole-1670306291863>



GREENWICH Hospital and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) are working in partnership to deliver transitional services to those leaving the Royal Navy, and their dependents.

Thanks to funding from Greenwich Hospital, the RNRMC's Transition Support Service, which was set up in 2021, is set to continue.

The service offers training, support and advice to assist former serving personnel who have been involuntarily discharged from the Navy, often at little or no notice, and return to civilian life.

Transition from uniform to civilian life can be a difficult and daunting experience for a Service leaver and their family - even more challenging if they only have a short period of time to prepare. The RNRMC's Transition Support Guides provide non-judgmental, impartial and confidential support to all who need it, regardless of the reason for leaving the Service.

They work with the serving individual and their families to ensure they understand and have access to the services and support they are entitled to.

Mike Burningham, Director of Research and Development, said: "We would like to thank

Greenwich Hospital for supporting our Transition Support Service with this funding.

"It is a vital service that ensures those that have to leave the Royal Navy involuntarily are able to access the right advice and support to allow them to thrive in civilian life.

"Since we set up the service in 2021, we have supported more than 200 service leavers and their families.

"I'm delighted to see Greenwich Hospital and RNRMC working together for the people of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, past and present."

Deirdre Mills, the new Director of Greenwich Hospital, said: "It is important to ensure that support is in place at a time of vulnerability.

"This service provides an opportunity for individuals to plan their move into civilian life in terms of housing, employment, and community integration.

"This is an essential service, and we are delighted to work with RNRMC to put this support in place."

If you think the Transition Support Service can help, visit rnrmc.org.uk/need-help-now/transition-support-service, email support@rnrmc.org.uk or call 023 9387 1568.

Always by his side

EXERCISE is crucial for keeping our service personnel fighting fit, mentally as well as physically, and supporting sport in the Royal Navy has always been an important part of the RNRMC's remit.

RNRMC grants have contributed towards gym refurbishments, deployment downtime activities and opportunities for the Royal Navy's elite athletes to achieve their very best.

The RNRMC have been by the side of submariner and powerlifter, PO Wes McGuinness, for several years and last year provided funding for a piece of state-of-the-art equipment to help Wes along his journey, competing among the world's best. 2022 proved to be a big year for Wes.

"The financial backing from the RNRMC has helped contribute towards travel, accommodation, memberships, drug testing and entry fees and to purchase the powerlifting apparel I required.

"I can proudly say that 2022 was my best year since my powerlifting journey began back in 2011. After successfully achieving a silver medal and a spot on the podium at the British nationals in February, I found myself selected for not one, but four major International Powerlifting Federation this year. Receiving my first invitation to join Team GB at the IPF World Bench Press Championships in Almaty, Kazakhstan in June. Currently now ranked 6th in the world at my weight category, we have made great progress moving up on from 7th in 2021.

"The Team GB Head coach was extremely impressed by the way I conducted myself throughout the whole event, my attitude towards other lifters, offering my assistance to help them be in the best position possible for their competitions. As a result, he gave me the opportunity to represent Team GB at the IPF European Championships held in Budapest, Hungary (August).

"Thinking that was the year done for international events, in September I received invitations to represent my country at the IPF Commonwealth Championships held in Auckland, New Zealand. First up was the Bench Championships, where I managed to achieve my first podium finish securing a bronze medal with a personal best lift of 190kg, marginally missing gold by 7.5kg. Four days later I competed at the Full Power event, hitting another personal best squat of 255kg, bench press 185kg and a deadlift of 255kg, unfortunately rupturing my distal bicep tendon, which meant I wasn't able to make a third attempt."



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Sleeping rough to raise vital funds

OFFICER Cadets from URNU Northumbria swapped their beds for the car park of HMS Calliope, a sleeping bag and the unit gazebo on the banks of the Tyne, with just the hum of the Saturday night revellers on the quayside and the stars above for company.

They submitted their phones and electronic devices, so they had no distractions to help them understand the hardships and feelings of homelessness.

The night luckily was dry; however, the temperatures were hovering just above zero.

First Year Officer Cadet Nicholas Chartres said: "Although the temperature outside was cold, as we were huddled up, this cold was

offset by our combined body temperatures. Sadly the homeless don't have the luxury of sharing 11 people's body heat. Even though it was uncomfortable we are happy to have raised money for this great cause."

The students have so far raised £680 to provide vital funds and awareness for more than 6,000 veterans that are experiencing homelessness in the UK right now.

With every penny raised, Royal British Legion Industries can provide safe, warm housing and ensure everyone has a fair opportunity to gain employment, regardless of health conditions or disability.

LEARNING TO BE LIFE-SAVERS

STUDENTS were given a taste of saving comrades on the battlefield by medics and nurses versed in the latest casualty treatment.

Solent University Royal Naval Unit – which serves institutions of higher learning in the Southampton-Portsmouth area – hosted a Military Emergency Medicine Seminar at HMS King Alfred... from theory to (near) practical.

Surgeon Sub-Lieutenant Christopher Storer kicked off proceedings with an introduction to the basics of first responder medicine, covering the evolution from standard DR.ABC primary surveys – danger, response, airway, breathing, circulation) – to DR.CABCDE (danger, response, catastrophic bleed, airway, breathing, circulation, disability, exposure) which is more relevant to combat/operations when it comes to determining the priority of injuries to treat.

After the theory, three practical breakout sessions for the officer cadets: Surgeon Lieutenant Daniel Fleming covered the principles of the trauma triage and how to stop severe bleeding with the use of tourniquets and pelvic binders; Sub-Lieutenant Mollie O'Neill, an A&E-trained nurse with a station on maintaining airways, giving CPR and how to ventilate a patient with bag valve masks; and Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Nathaniel Wilson instructed the students on using head blocks for immobilising spinal injuries with cadets working in teams to 'log roll' and place the volunteer 'patients' on to spinal scoops, stretchers, and vacuum mattresses for patient transfer to sick bay.

The OCs all seemed to very much enjoy getting 'hands on' with the medical equipment – courtesy of the clinical skills team at Brighton and Sussex Medical School and University Hospitals Sussex – and putting their new skills to the test.

The evening rounded off with a plenary lecture from Surgeon Sub-Lieutenant Storer to consolidate the skills that the cadets had covered throughout the evening. He explained how medical guidelines produced in the armed forces and lessons learned on the battlefield had benefited the NHS and led to new trauma treatments and procedures routinely used in emergency medicine and surgical theatres.



We aim to inspire

THE University Royal Naval Units or URNUs as they are known exist to inspire individuals through leadership and maritime training, whilst facilitating a career in the Royal Navy for those who choose.

We have a total of 16 physical units located in all four nations of the United Kingdom. There is also a virtual unit run out of Belfast to enable the URNU experience for students who are at universities that are more than one hour's travelling time from the nearest physical unit.

Though 11 of the units are collocated with Maritime Reserve establishments, the URNUs are an entirely separate part of the organisation led by the Captain of Britannia Royal Naval College, the Royal Navy's initial officer training establishment in Dartmouth.

Students join the URNU for up to three years, occasionally longer, whilst at University and follow a programme of training and activities in four areas.

These are known as 'militarisation', a grounding in being a members of a disciplined service, 'marinisation', developing sea sense and introducing students to life at sea, 'command, leadership and management', and 'sport and adventurous training'.

Students are given the honorary rank of Acting Officer Cadet on joining and can progress through to Acting Midshipman. As members of the URNU, students also have the opportunity to earn while they learn. There is no obligation whatsoever for former cadets to join the RN when they graduate though many do.

Former URNU cadets also join the Maritime Reserves, the Commando Training Centre as Royal Marines, as Naval Ratings at HMS Raleigh, and in to a wide range of roles within the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service.

Recent changes to the URNU organisation have seen the consolidation of training on the South Coast through the merger of the former units in Brighton and Southampton as URNU Solent based in Semaphore Tower in Portsmouth Dockyard.

New units have been set up in Nottingham as URNU East Midlands, and in Belfast as well as the new virtual unit collocated with URNU Belfast.

The map shows where the units are located, the vast majority within an hour of most of the nation's 160-plus universities (apologies to the University of Wales at Aberystwyth).

The URNUs are what is known as a University Service Unit and are student societies rather than components of the Armed Forces and members know that their University studies come first. But that doesn't prevent them from offering a wide range of exciting and interesting activities, a few of which are illustrated here on this page which it is hoped will become a regular feature of Navy News.

Commander Andrew Loring,
Commander (Universities) at BRNC Dartmouth

Duo rave over time aboard carrier



FIVE Officer Cadets from URNU East Scotland embarked on HMS Queen Elizabeth as the Fleet Flagship made her way from Portsmouth to Glen Mallan.

They got involved in a variety of training serials, including firefighting and damage control, navigation training, and sea boat drills. They also spent a good portion of their time in FLYCO and on the flight deck witnessing flying operations.

Acting Midshipman Calvin Sunley, a second year student at Abertay University in Dundee, said: "I am very grateful for my time onboard. By experiencing day-to-day life and learning about the command processes in each department and role it has helped me make an informed decision on what role I wish to join up as once my university studies are completed."

Acting Officer Cadet Emily Squire, a first year student at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, added: "I joined the URNU so that I could gain valuable experience of sea time."

"Life as an officer on a ship and being on board HMS Queen Elizabeth provided such a fascinating insight into a career in the Navy."

"We got to live amongst the officers on board and heard about their own experiences both at Dartmouth and on ship."

"We toured each department of the ship, even being able to get involved in man overboard drills, and stand on the flight deck to watch the aircraft take off."

"It has definitely helped me think about a possible career in the Royal Navy and allowed me to experience even just a little of how much the Service has to offer."

Registered charity number: Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund 1850182

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Supporting children whose parents serve or have served in the Naval Service.

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- Stay connected on the move. Some features can now be accessed offline (with more being added) so no matter where you are in the world, onshore or on board, you can stay ahead with the latest Navy announcements and training material to read, watch and explore on your own terms.



Tallinn show for top coders

ROYAL Navy and Ukrainian cyber warfare experts fended off virtual attacks to 'national infrastructure' during a large-scale cyber battle exercise in Estonia.

Thirty-four teams from 11 nations tested their cyber defence skills during the British Army-organised Defence Cyber Marvel 2 in Tallinn, which included personnel from across the globe, including Ukraine, United States, Japan, Singapore, Kenya and Oman.

The Royal Navy's cyber operations specialists based in Portsmouth are usually on the virtual frontlines worldwide, protecting ships and RN bases from threats round the clock but headed to a cyber-range in Estonia's capital to join forces with a Ukrainian cyber unit.

As part of a 900-strong UK contingent also from the British Army and RAF, the combined RN/Ukrainian team were tasked with responding to simulated cyber threats, including attacks to networks, industry control systems and unmanned robotic systems – simulating some of the tactics Russia used to disrupt Ukrainian cyberspace in the early days of the invasion one year ago.

It was a test of guile and mental agility designed to stretch the most experienced cyber specialists, allowing allies and partners to learn and sharpen skills together.

The Royal Navy and Ukraine team were judged to be the most improved at the end of the week-long exercises, which were run as a competition with participants judged on their effectiveness and speed.

"Hosting and supporting the Ukrainian cyber team has been an experience not to be forgotten," said Chief Petty Officer Roger Brand, Royal Navy

Maritime C5ISR Support Unit (MCSU) Cyber Protection Team Leader.

"Leading a bi-national team of cyber experts was a challenge but through the common language of 'geek', collaborative working became a norm.

"Although both nations have different strategic and tactical procedures, through continued communication these boundaries were moulded into an advanced cyber capability.

"Talking with my Ukrainian counterpart we discovered this exercise was based very, very closely on the real world events a year ago.

"Tradecraft, ideas and knowledge were freely shared, friendships developed and will no doubt continue in what has been an excellent exercise. I look forward to DCM3 with an Indo-Pacific focus next year."

He added: "I really had a good time learning from our Ukrainian counterparts and I hope they learned something from us. We will stay in touch and hopefully they can reach out to us in the future if they ever need technical advice."

Royal Naval Reservists were tasked with simulating the cyberspace attacks, breaking into networks for their colleagues to fight off – allowing the teams to sharpen their ability to fend off adversaries.

Many teams were based in their home countries but were connected virtually to a 'cyber range' controlled in Tallinn, where the Royal Navy Cyber Protection Team from the Maritime C5ISR Support Unit (MCSU) from Portsmouth were based throughout the exercises.

The unit delivers 24/7 defensive monitoring of networks from the RN Cyber Security Operating Centre on Portsdown Hill.

The shape of things to come

THE largest survey of body shapes and sizes in the UK will help designers of tomorrow's kit for the Forces.

DE&S has commissioned experts to collect the first anthropometric data of Navy, Army and RAF personnel in more than 15 years.

In particular it's keen to plug gaps in knowledge about personnel from non-white ethnic backgrounds, as well as a broader representative sample of the 21,000 women across the three Services.

The last data was collected for the army, navy and air force in 2007, with women and those from ethnic groups currently under-represented.

Laird Evans, Human Factors Specialist at DE&S, said the work was important.

"There are approximately 13,000 people from BAME communities and over 21,000 women serving in the UK armed forces so it's important that equipment designers have access to the latest data," he said.

"Although body shapes and sizes may not have changed substantially in the past 15 years, they will have changed to some extent and even small changes may prove significant when designing military equipment."

Defence science firm QinetiQ has been contracted to measure more than 2,750 personnel from across all services and to collect over 180 measurements from each volunteer.

Around 160 of those measurements will be captured by two state-of-the-art 3D body scanners; the remaining 20 or so stats will be recorded by hand.

It's looking for volunteers at four Royal Navy and Royal Marines sites: Lympstone, Portsmouth, Raleigh and Yeovilton.

Participation is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time, while all data collected will remain anonymous, is protected, and can be removed from the database upon request from the participant.

The survey will run until the end of the year.

Healthcare symposium

WORTHY Down in Hampshire will host this year's RN Healthcare and Medical Profession Symposium on July 6-7, with an awards dinner on the Thursday evening.

All members of the profession and associated civil servants can attend the event which will focus on future cover and support with topics as wide-ranging as life on

the front line and preparing for your first assignment; integrating medical capabilities within one team.

Anyone wishing to attend (£12 for the symposium, £23-£43 for the dinner depending on rank) will have to register in advance (accommodation and food is available) with details in RNTM 01-027/23.

Winning Formula

We love the smell of octane in the morning. Smells like victory...

And it was... for Max Verstappen, whose triumph in the Middle East was watched by personnel from the UKNSF in Bahrain and some of the ships based there, including frigate HMS Lancaster.

Thanks to Tickets for Troops, they enjoyed a weekend of high-octane action as the 2023 Formula 1 season got under way.

Although the focus is on the likes of Lewis Hamilton, Fernando Alonso, and Verstappen, the sailors' tickets allowed them access to gigs by DJ Snake and Craig David, practice/qualifying sessions, Formula 2 and Porsche races.

Petty Officer Physical Trainer Alex Stocker said the experience had been a boost for morale – and one

none of those who attended the circuit would forget.

"We took full advantages of the tickets over the weekend and enjoyed an experience I would never have attended personally," said Alex.

"We thoroughly enjoyed the weekend and it gave us the perfect opportunity to relax and enjoy the company of fellow Servicemen and women while also embracing the true experience of F1 in Bahrain.

"It was a truly great experience and without the donation from Tickets for Troops this would not have happened."



Thank you to pilots' tutor, Steve

VETERAN naval aviator Lieutenant Commander Steve McArdell brought the curtain down on a 40-year career with the Senior Service by taking to Somerset skies with his first student.

In 1998, Anthony Rimington was the first person to benefit from Steve's knowledge, experience and tutelage as a student undergoing Elementary Flying Training.

Then the two men shared the cockpit of a Slingsby Firefly trainer over Lincolnshire. A quarter of a century later, the pair were reunited at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset, with Steve clambering into the cockpit of a vintage de Havilland Chipmunk (pictured right taxiing back at base) and Anthony now a rear admiral (he's been the Royal Navy's Director of Strategy and Policy and Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff since November) at the controls of a Stinson Reliant.

The two aircraft, both provided for the occasion by Navy Wings, staged an impressive flying display before touching down, whereupon Rear Admiral Rimington and Lieutenant Commander Jason Flintham, Commanding Officer of 727 Naval Air Squadron, presented Steve with leaving gifts.

Steve joined the Royal Navy as a Weapons Electrical Artificer in 1983 before being selected for officer training and changing branches to become a pilot.

He flew Sea Kings extensively with 819 Naval Air Squadron at Prestwick, the Flying Tigers of 814 Squadron in Culdrose, and with 826 NAS at Boscombe Down in Wiltshire.

He also helped introduce the successor to the Sea King, the Merlin, into service and



rounded out his time in helicopters as a test pilot for aircraft emerging from maintenance.

Towards the end of his career in the Royal Navy, he became a Qualified Flying Instructor teaching on the Slingsby Firefly at the Joint Elementary Flying Training School, RAF Barkston Heath, Lincolnshire.

Steve left the regular Royal Navy in 2001 to become an airline pilot with British Airways, flying the BAE 146/Avro RJ, Boeing 777 and 787 Dreamliner.

In 2005 he also joined the Royal Naval Reserve Air Branch – renamed HMS Pegasus

last year – to share his flying experience with future generation of naval aviators courtesy of the Grob Tutor trainer with 727 Naval Air Squadron, first at Plymouth and, since 2007, at Yeovilton.

"Joining the Royal Naval Reserves gave me the opportunity to pursue a second career in civilian aviation whilst maintaining my links with the Fleet Air Arm," Steve said.

"It has been a joy to fly with young people considering a career in the Fleet Air Arm and to pass on my experience to those just starting theirs."



Student power

OBSERVER Lieutenant Tobias Williams outlines the anti-submarine of his 820 Naval Air Squadron's Merlin helicopters (against the backdrop of a Wildcat...) to military leaders of tomorrow aboard the UK's flagship.

Some 267 military officers and civil servants from 53 nations converged on Portsmouth for hands-on experience of the RN.

The Maritime Combat Power Visit (older readers may remember them in a previous incarnation as Staff College Sea Days) is part of the Advanced Command and Staff Course, giving students a better understanding of naval warfare, equipment and capabilities.

The students toured HMS

Queen Elizabeth from her ops room and hangar to the crew's quarters.

HMS Diamond offered an interactive display of staple and novel kit, and NavyX demonstrated the RN's experimentation with uncrewed systems and vessels via XV Patrick Blackett and the fully-autonomous boat Madfox.

The Diving and Threat and Mine Threat Exploitation Groups showcased their latest kit and explained their operations supporting the Fleet around the world, as well as the partnership between the UK and France, exhibiting their latest autonomous systems which will eventually replace conventional minehunters.

Michaels mount as son follows dad into RN

THERE are now not one but two Michael Eltons serving His Majesty, as father watched son complete his conversion from civvy to sailor.

Chief Petty Officer Michael was one of hundreds of proud parents and relatives watching loved ones complete their ten-week basic training at HMS Raleigh.

"It is a very proud day and one I and my family will never forget," said senior rating dad, who works at the Armed Forces Careers Office in Bristol.

"To watch the standard of discipline and professionalism on display is humbling, and it is good to see that the same standards are being applied today as when I joined up."

His 20-year-old son was appointed Class-leader during his training with Raleigh's Gould Division, received a PT-Superior assessment, and was awarded the Captain's Prize at the parade by Reviewing Officer Brigadier Jock Fraser RM, the Naval Regional Commander Wales and Western England.

"I enjoyed my time at HMS Raleigh and all the challenges that came with it. I'm now looking forward to starting at my next unit and seeing what my career holds," said Michael junior, from Southway, Plymouth.

He's now moved on HMS Sultan in Gosport to undergo his professional training as an engineer.



Harry's living life to the full

THE outstanding efforts of Commando Helicopter Force engineer Harry McMillan at work, at home and in the sporting arena have seen him singled out.

The leading air engineering technician received the Live Your Life Award from the Fleet Air Arm for his dedication to his job, his community and his sport.

The awards are presented each 'term' by naval aviation charity Navy Wings and hospitality/entertainment chain Beds and Bars to the junior rating whose contribution to the RN and beyond has stood out.

The 30-year-old from Plymouth, who serves at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset, has been a helicopter engineer for over a decade and is currently responsible for overseeing maintenance of Merlin Mk4 helicopters.

As a mechanical supervisor, he leads small teams of engineers responsible for looking after the high-tech aircraft in all environments to the highest professional standards, to ensure the Merlins are available for operations.

In doing so, he inspires both peers and subordinates not least thanks to coming up with innovative problem-solving methods, setting an example to all fellow Fleet Air Arm engineers in the process.

Away from engineering Harry is a passionate athlete. He came first in his weight category in the Navy's 2022 Powerlifting Championships, runs with HMS Heron's Field Gun team (helping them to second place in last year's competition) and joined a Forces' mountaineering expedition to Pakistan.

There he stepped to the fore, playing a leading role – setting aside fatigue and illness – when two colleagues were injured by a rockfall crossing the Gondogora La at an altitude of 5,600 metres.



He made use of nothing more than tarpaulin to improvise a stretcher in an extremely remote and dangerous location, helping the injured to safety.

And when not fixing Merlins or engaged in sport, he somehow finds time to organise a community project in his home village in Devon. Walky-Talkies was set up to get people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds out of the house and chatting with fellow villagers – improving both their fitness and their mental wellbeing.

"I'm taken away and over

the moon with the recognition of what has been a tough – but great – year for me," said Harry. "Without the opportunity given by others I wouldn't be where I am and for that I thank my family, friends and work colleagues."

In the words of his citation, Harry displays "the utmost dedication to his work and has consistently pushed himself and his team above and beyond."

"He represents the highest standards and ethos of the Royal Navy: selflessness, courage, exceptional leadership, and humility."

Welcome to submarine family

THERE are 32 new young men and women proudly wearing caps bearing the words 'HM Submarines' having completed the first phase of their training.

The Silent Service welcomed two classes of submariner trainees to complete the first 'dry' phase of their Submarine Qualifying Course at HM Naval Base Clyde.

The two groups of students – being trained for service on board Vanguard and Astute Class submarines – reached the culmination of the classroom element of the course, receiving cap tallies and certificates to mark the milestone in their training from Naval Base Commander Commodore Sharon Malkin in Neptune's Supermess.

Nineteen students completed the Vanguard-class course, the remaining 13 will go on to serve in Astute-class hunter killers.

The course instils the absolute professionalism demanded by the Submarine Service with trainees required to demonstrate an intimate understanding of more than 30 complex engineering systems.

The second or 'wet' phase of training moves to sea aboard an operational submarine putting the classroom knowledge into practice and building on it until students demonstrate they know their boat and its systems like the back of their hand.

Only once they do are they worthy of wearing the coveted "dolphins" badge – the mark of a qualified submariner.

One of the youngest students, Engineering Technician (Marine Engineering) Bailey said: "I found the Submarine Qualifying Course very challenging but also very enjoyable. Today was a great achievement for me and I am happy to have passed the course."

"I am now looking forward to starting the next part of my career and qualifying as a submariner and receiving my dolphins."

Cdre Malkin added: "This is an important first step for them on their road to becoming fully fledged Submariners and each should be proud of their achievements to date."

She also presented instructor Leading Logistician Lockyear with his Long Service and Good Conduct medal in recognition of 15 years of unblemished, dedicated service.

And a deep dive into submarine support

THE first Submarine Support Conference will take place at the home of the Silent Service between May 30 and June 1.

It's been set up to give submarine crews an opportunity to voice their lived experiences on the waterfront directly to the wider support effort.

It will also provide an opportunity for industrial partners to offer feedback and offer possible solutions, as well as discuss new innovations designed to ease the burden on crews when alongside.

This three-day conference is unique as it's aimed at all areas of the submarine support community: logistics, engineering, warfare, planning and technical support.

For more information, contact any of the support offices in SUBFLOT or go directly to WO1 McDonald 93255 7142 stephen.mcdonald217@mod.gov.uk or Lt Cdr Clark 93255 3260 allan.clark786@mod.gov.uk.

Give your FAM feedback

THE Future Accommodation Model trial around Faslane has come to an end – but lessons and feedback from it will shape how the MOD provides a home for all Service personnel in future.

During the three-year pilot, which ended on March 31, more than 1,600 personnel, their families and partners based at HMNB Clyde, have benefitted from the widening of accommodation entitlement under the scheme.

Above all it's offered greater choice for those who are married, in civil partnerships, in a LTR(E) (Long Term Relationship (Established)), or who have a child/children residing with them for more than 80 nights per calendar year.

It's allowed them to apply for subsidised Service Family Accommodation (SFA) and receive support towards the private rental sector or buying their own home.

The financial Core Payment (Maintaining Own Home) supported many first-time buyers like Leading Hand Liam with owning their first home.

"I have benefited from the FAM Core Payment since the start and I am extremely grateful to receive the support especially as my family has expanded," he said.

Lessons from the Clyde trial will be fed into the Defence Accommodation Strategy which began looking at a raft of issues

last October, including:

- The introduction of a minimum standard for Single Living Accommodation improving the quality provided to Service personnel to bring it in line with modern living standards.
- Needs-based allocation: This will guarantee that future allocation of homes is based on the needs of Serving personnel and their families rather than the rank held by the Service personnel.
- Further support for those in long-term relationships, recognising and treating them in the same way as marriage and civil partnerships.
- Reductions in excess housing and planning where future homes are needed.
- Committing to more efficient and sustainable housing through improvements to properties while serving personnel will be encouraged to use their homes in sustainable way.

Underpinning the strategy is the acknowledgment that the accommodation offer made by Defence should reflect a modern Whole Force, and personnel,

their families and partners should be supported in their mobile lifestyle – and findings gathered from the FAM pilot in Clyde will play a key role.

"There is little doubt that the majority of serving naval personnel that were accommodated through FAM enjoyed the wider benefits offered within the pilot," said Brian, the FAM Cell Implementation Lead in Faslane.

"The data and lessons learned from the pilot will be crucial in shaping future accommodation policy and in developing our understanding of Service personnel needs and aspirations."

Captain of the Base, Captain Nicholas Gibbons, added: "As the first FAM pilot site, the period since launch in 2019 has delivered a number of positives for Clyde personnel – additional support to maintaining your own home and far greater assistance in accessing the private rental sector and Forces Help to Buy schemes."

"Importantly, the Clyde FAM team has also identified where policy needs addressing and mitigating, particularly where there was a lack of regional options in both the rental market and specific type Service Family Accommodation."

FAM feedback is still being gathered by the team at Faslane: People-FAMCELL-CLY@mod.gov.uk.



Once a marine... always a marine... Veteran green berets share their dits with retired RM Capt Ronald 'Ron' Moyse

Korean veteran Ron now an 'ambassador'

MORE than 70 years after he and his comrades helped keep the Communist tide at bay and ensured democracy would survive on the southern half of the Korean Peninsula, green beret Ron Moyse was recognised.

The retired Royal Marines captain was formally presented with a medal on behalf of the people of the Republic of Korea.

At the age of 94, Ron, who lives in Canford Chase care home in Branksome Park, Bournemouth, is now officially an 'ambassador for peace'.

The award was originally presented to Korean veterans who made the pilgrimage back to the country as part of its 'revisit programme'; it has subsequently been expanded to all those who served in the 1950-53 conflict but are unable to make the lengthy journey to Korea.

The Royal Navy was committed throughout the

Korean War, with Ron's 41 Independent Commando serving in the country from late 1950 until the end of 1951, from fighting alongside US Marines as far north as Lake Chosin, to amphibious raids behind North Korean lines.

Major General Andrew Keeling, who served the Corps for 34 years – including in 41 Cdo and later in charge of 3 Commando Brigade – presented Ron with his medal in a ceremony with friends, family, RM veterans and care home staff.

He also presented a certificate on behalf of the government in Seoul in which its "everlasting gratitude" was expressed for "restoring and preserving our freedom and democracy."

"We cherish in our hearts the memory of your boundless sacrifices in helping us re-establish our free nation."

Picture: Ian Simpson



HMS Diamond's Sub Lt George, Writer Beth Hawkins and ET Shola Jeffers join female Chelsea Pensioners, and Army and RAF personnel on the stairs of the RAF Club Picture: Robin Savage

WW2 women share stories with Diamond

FEMALE sailors from destroyer HMS Diamond were invited to the capital to celebrate the role of women in wartime.

Veterans from all three Services were invited to the RAF Club in London by the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans, to share their experiences with today's generation of Servicewomen.

Representing the Type 45 destroyer were marine engineer ET Shola Jeffers, Writer Beth Hawkins and assistant logistics officer Sub Lieutenant Louise George... plus the warship's sponsor, Lady Suzie Johns.

A former Wren, Lady Suzie launched the third Type 45 back in 2007 and is a patron of and champion for the taxi charity.

In all around 90 people – veterans, Chelsea Pensioners, serving personnel and charity volunteers – converged on the London club for a spot of afternoon tea and a Q&A session

with two of the veterans, Mildred Schutz, who served with the Special Operations Executive (which dropped agents behind enemy lines) and former Wren Marie Scott who transmitted messages to and from the beaches on D-Day.

Their stories had the Diamond team enthralled.

"These formidable women paved the way women today to be able to serve," said Louise.

The event was arranged to coincide with International Women's Day.

The charity which organised the event traces its history back to Fulham in 1948 when London cabbies got together to help WW2 veterans, offering trips to France, Belgium and Holland as well as trips to concerts of museums.

Seventy-five years later its remit has expanded to provide whatever support it can to all military veterans.



Captain Kellett's sledge parties set off from HMS Resolute in search of Franklin's 'lost expedition' as depicted by François Musin

Sledge fund to save flag?

HOPEFULLY by the time you read this the unique flag (right) flown (above) has been snapped up by the Royal Navy's premier museum after a last-ditch fundraising drive to raise £30k.

170 years ago the standard was flown by a team of sailors who set out across the Canadian snow and ice in a failed attempt to find the Navy's lost expedition: Sir John Franklin and the 129 men of HMS Terror and Erebus.

They were lost in the late 1840s when they tried – and failed – to find a navigable route from the Atlantic to Pacific via Canada's Northwest Passage.

Their disappearance prompted both widespread grief in Victorian Britain – and concerted efforts to find them, including the one led by Kellett in the 1850s.

His search parties flew a flag from their sledge – popular among British polar explorers and akin to a unit insignia or ship's crest.

Measuring 595mm by 885mm and bearing the inscription auxilium ab alto – 'help from on high' – the flag was deemed such an important piece of British history that the government imposed an 'export bar' last September when it appeared on the market to allow UK museums, galleries or institutions to find time to raise the £120,000 asking price.

With just a fortnight to go before the embargo expired the National Museum of the Royal Navy stepped forward in a last-ditch attempt to save the flag – and put it on display in Portsmouth.

Despite grants, donations and dipping into its own fund for purchasing new exhibits, it was still £30k short – hence the plea for help.



The fundraising drive has the backing of ex-Python and TV travelogue presenter Michael Palin, who's written a bestseller on the Erebus, and historian Dan Snow who says Kellett's flag "is a part of our national story and it should be here for us all to learn from and be inspired by."

Prof Dominic Tweddle, Director General of The National Museum of the Royal Navy, said few such flags had survived and fewer still were on public display.

"The Kellett sledge flag takes on a greater significance, and will complement the objects we will soon be receiving from the wrecks of HMS Erebus and HMS Terror, from Parks Canada," he added.

Kellett did not find Franklin's expedition – or even traces of it – but he did see and map places no European had ever visited before. The wrecks of the two lost ships were only found in the past decade.



Ashford's proud to the 'core

KENT folk raised a specially-designed flag to celebrate their association with HMS Albacore, 81 years to the week that Ashford raised funds for the minesweeper.

The Algerine-class minesweeper was in the final throes of construction at the Harland and Wolff yard in Belfast when she was embraced by the people of Ashford following their Warship Week in February 1942.

Over seven days they raised £10,100 – around £375,000 today – through a series of events and activities including dances, exhibitions, auctions and a cooking contest.

The ship they took under their wings served extensively in the Mediterranean, supporting landings in North Africa (Operation Torch), Sicily (Husky), Salerno (Avalanche) and Anzio (Shingle).

She continued to clear European waters of mines long after the end of WW2, finally paying off after clearance work off Germany's North Sea coast in October 1947. Albacore spent another 15 years in reserve before she was sold for breaking up in 1963.

In post-war Ashford, the town's association with the warship gradually faded... until it was reinvigorated after 80 years.

Last year, to mark the milestone anniversary a new memorial garden to the ship and the town's Sea Cadet unit – formed in the summer of 1942 directly as a result of adopting Albacore – plus interpretation panels were unveiled.

And it was at those same gardens during the anniversary of Warship Week in 2023 that veterans, Ashford RNA, the Royal British Legion, civic leaders, Sea Cadets and borough employees gathered for a service of thanksgiving for the minesweeper – and the raising of the new specially-designed Albacore Ensign (demonstrated by S/M Alan Brind).

Figures looking very healthy for Torrevieja

NUMBERS at the Royal Naval Association Torrevieja Branch have swelled by 40 over the past 12 months.

The annual general meeting of the branch – on the southeast coast of Spain between Cartagena and Alicante – heard that membership now stood at 116, with a mix of civilians, former Wrens and matelots making up the influx of new faces.

Although many shipmates divide their time between the UK and Spain, an impressive 57 were able to attend to vote in vice chairman,

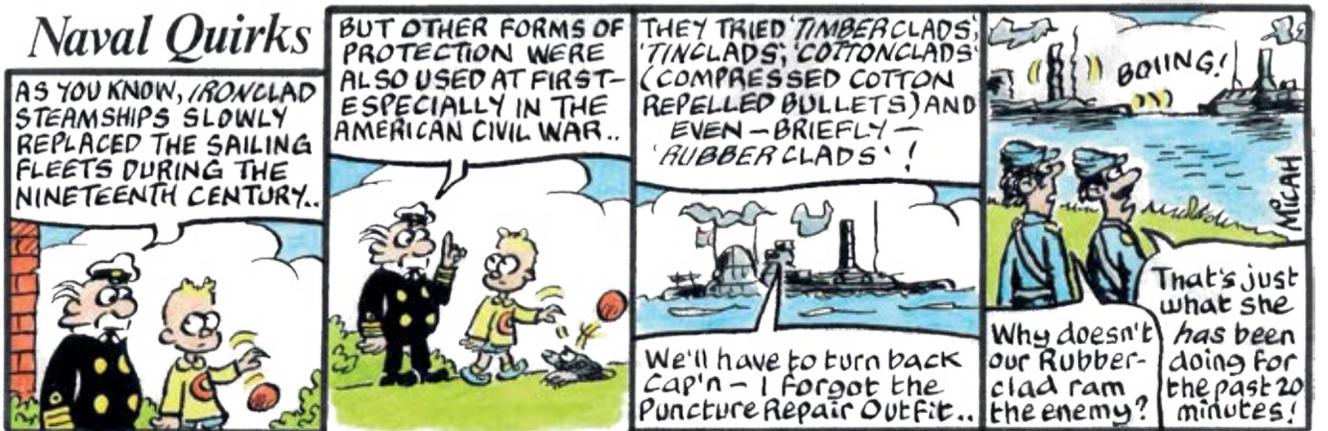
S/M Dusty Miller, branch secretary, S/M Steve Hemingfield and social secretary, S/M Sally Miller for a two-year cycle and maintain the committee strength of five.

The branch's support team or 'facilitators' – including welfare volunteers – is now a healthy 14 strong, while finances are healthy the meeting was told.

And members decided the Lakeview Bar and Restaurante at Calle Toledo 16 in Ciudad Quesada would remain the venue for the branch's monthly meeting.

Activities and events already lined up this year include a murder mystery dinner, a cava reception and high tea to celebrate the coronation of King's Charles III, alongside more regular fare such as raffles and Trafalgar Night.

The branch meets on the first Wednesday of each month at the restaurant, beginning at 5pm. If you are interested in joining contact Steve Hemingfield at SecretaryRNATB@Mail.com or on Mob/What's App: 0034 7110 11373.





The last salute

“SOMEBODY gave their lives so you can be what you are today...”

Battle of the Atlantic veteran John Dennett reminds Sea Cadets of TS Starling that the freedoms of 2023 are built on the sacrifices of men and women who rose to the nation's greatest test.

At 98, the former anti-aircraft gunner is one of the last remaining witnesses of the U-boat menace – a menace finally defeated, after tremendous losses, technological leaps and an international effort at the end of May 1943.

Eighty years later and the anniversary of the Royal Navy's greatest victory will be marked with a weekend of formal and personal commemorations in Liverpool in May.

Royal Navy – and allied NATO – warships are due to converge in the Mersey for three days of events marking the Battle of the Atlantic.

Two new memorials, not just to those lost, but those who survived the six-year struggle against German U-boats will be unveiled.

Today's sailors will honour their predecessors with a drumhead service and parade – which will also involve descendants of Atlantic veterans (see the inset story) – and highlight their present-day activities.

With 80 days to go until the memorial weekend, organisers announced their plans with the help of veterans Denis Rose and Mr Dennett, the RM Corps of Drums, civic leaders, representatives of the Royal, Royal Canadian and Merchant Navies, the RAF and youth organisations.

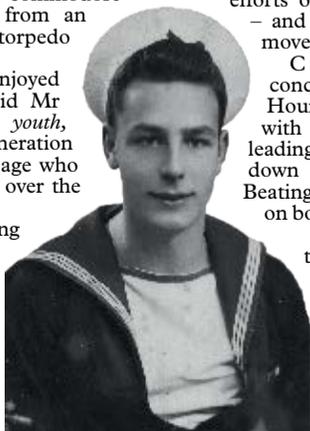
Denis volunteered with the RNVR and served on Atlantic and Arctic Convoys while former able seaman John lied about his age to join up at 1941. Aside from convoy duties he served on amphibious landings in the Med and Normandy.

Only in later life did Mr Rose, who served in the Merchant Navy on the convoy staff, grasp the danger he repeatedly faced. “In those days, you took no notice of it. When you're 18, 19, 20, it's a bit of an adventure.

“Now you think Good God.” Sometimes the commodore commanded the convoy from an oiler. “Now imagine a torpedo hitting a tanker...”

“I am very lucky – I've enjoyed 70 years of freedom,” said Mr Dennett (pictured in his youth, right). “I hope today's generation remember the lads of my age who are lying in cemeteries all over the world.”

Two new features being unveiled on Friday May 26 should help with that: following a service of thanksgiving in St Nicholas', Liverpool's seafarers' church, a new, expanded 'garden of reflection' memorial in its grounds.



Don grandparents' medals

DID your ancestors run the gauntlet of U-boats? Record key messages or reports at the headquarters Western Approaches? Repair or build the ships which kept the sea lanes open? Or scour the endless grey wastes in a Catalina or Liberator looking for enemy submarines?

If they did – and you still possess their medals – you're urged to wear those medals for the Battle of the Atlantic 80 parade, lining the route taken by today's Royal Navy, veterans and cadets through the heart of Liverpool, proudly wearing those decorations for a very personal tribute to the greatest generation.

Taking the salute on the city's famous seafront will be a handful of veterans who delivered that victory.

With numbers of the wartime generation sadly dwindling with the passage of time and the potential strain of marching a few hundred yards too great, a parade with a medal-lined rout on Sunday May 28 is a way of both involving the small group of Battle of Atlantic veterans and the broader public in the 80th anniversary commemorations.

After a flypast by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and vintage Fleet Air Arm aircraft, attention shifts to the switch on of the 'Atlantic Lights' at Exchange Flags – the imposing building whose basement houses the former headquarters of Western Approaches from where much of the Battle of the Atlantic was directed, now a museum.

Described as a 'Menin Gate for the Battle of the Atlantic', the lights will be switched on nightly, beaming the names of ships and seafarers involved in the battle on to the facade of the building.

On Saturday and Sunday, May 27-May 28, attention switches to the waterfront around the Mersey ferry terminal and displays and exhibitions by the three Services, military and seafaring charities, and attending ships will be open to visitors.

Events reach their peak on the Sunday with a drumhead service on the seafront, followed by a march by serving personnel, cadets and veterans' groups.

Other events over the weekend will see performances by the Band of HM Royal Marines Scotland and Danish and German military bands, a Battle of the Atlantic-themed play ('Blowing a Raspberry at Hitler') and across the water in Birkenhead, Cammell Laird plan to open their yard to celebrate the efforts of shipbuilders in WW2 – and show how things have moved on.

Commemorations conclude at precisely 19.43 Hours on Sunday May 28 with the attending warships leading a parade of shipping down the Mersey, while Beating Retreats are performed on both shores of the Mersey.

Every ten years, the three Services mark what they regard as the key action or campaign of WW2: Battle of Britain for RAF, Alamein for the Army and the Atlantic ('the longest battle') for the RN.

It's the biggest military event Liverpool has hosted since HMS Prince of Wales drew more than 120,000 visitors to the city on the cusp of lockdown in March 2020. Several hundred thousand people are again expected to descend on Merseyside this May.

Regional Commander Commodore Phil Waterhouse is keen that the event entertains and educates people – and not merely about the struggle between U-boat and Allied air and naval power.

“The theme is very much compare and contrast. Compare the conditions, the equipment, the men and women then with those of today because there are so many similarities between what we did in the war – and what we continue to do today,” he said.

“The Battle of the Atlantic is not merely a proud moment in our history – it is still relevant today. The Atlantic is still our backyard and Britain still relies on the sea as its lifeline and though threats and technologies change, it still demands a concerted effort by international navies, led by the Royal Navy, to safeguard that.”

Waged from the first day of war in Europe to the very last, the Battle of the Atlantic was a struggle unlike any other as the Axis powers – chiefly packs of U-boats – sought to strangle the UK's lanes.

They failed – at a cost of three out of every four German submarines lost. But the toll they inflicted was terrible: at least 111,000 sailors and military personnel from around the globe died, including 26,500 British merchant and 23,000 Royal Navy sailors.

Some 3,500 merchantmen vessels and 175 warships – 15 million tons of allied shipping in all – were lost.

The battle reached its peak between March and May 1943. In the final month, the Germans recalled their U-boats from the Atlantic after they suffered unsustainable losses: 43 boats sunk, 37 damaged. They continued to fight to the end – but the sea lanes were never as gravely threatened again.

Follow battleoftheatlantic.org/boam-events/ for details.



Area 4 raises Standards

AFTER an absence of two years, Standard Bearers training again took place at Bridgewater's Sea Cadet headquarters.

The first three Sundays in February were taken up with training sessions, with the last Sunday set aside for the No.4 Area Competition.

S/M Malcolm Day, the No.4 Area's ceremonial advisor, took the Standard Bearers through their paces, with several going on to parade their banners at the annual Area 4 Reunion at Bideford in St. Margarets of Antioch, Newham.

Despite just three entrants taking part, the competition was fiercely contested with S/M Ben Cartwright of

Portland Branch, the runner up was S/M Mike Morton (Street) and third place went to S/M Lisa Lambert of St. Austell Branch.

S/M Lisa, a complete novice, was full of enthusiasm to learn, and her effort was very commendable.

S/M Mike Glendenning acted as adjudicator, while S/M Jan Morton provided the much-needed refreshments.

The competition was attended by 10 Shipmates who provided raffle prizes and victuals for a buffet lunch. £30 was raised from the raffle and duly passed on to Bridgewater Sea Cadets who were thanked for the use of their premises.

... and several toasts

ROYAL Naval Association Area 4 held its annual South West Flotilla reunion at Bideford's Durrant House Hotel, raising hundreds of pounds for Service charities.

The reunion, organised by shipmates Mike and Fay Lawton and their committee is the 46th to take place – having taken a forced break for the last two years.

Some 168 RNA members and guests from 18 branches across the region attended the three-day event with its packed programme, from a buffet evening to formal gala dinner attended by guest of honour – and National RNA President – Vice Admiral Duncan Potts.

He presented s/m Gill Essom (Portland Branch) with the Jacqui Ward Trophy as the associate female shipmate who had contributed most, selflessly within Branch during the last year.

Sunday morning saw Standards from 13 branches paraded at St Margaret's of Antioch with Area 4 Padre Martin

Kirkbride and Reverend Julie Harris – who was conducting her first service in the Parish, having received her licence only the week before.

Later in the day there was a fiercely-contested quiz won by Liskeard Branch and the funds raised from it, the Saturday night raffle and a raffle of specially made RN/RM/RNA rum (not available in shops) raised around £1,400.

The star prize was a crystal decanter, donated by Bodmin branch member Betty Tiller, now well into her nineties, but still wanting to share the camaraderie which is the backbone of the RNA. It raised £1,844, shared amongst Naval and Veterans charities.

“Covid 19 has prevented the event taking place for the last two years and much has changed for so many but the coming together and seeing everyone has been wonderful,” said s/m and organiser Mike Lawton.

Top of the world, ma

HALF a century after the first Royal Navy submarine punched through the Arctic ice and surfaced at the North Pole you can read about the adventure - for free.

HMS Dreadnought made history when she reached the top of the world on March 3 1971 - an episode now recounted by her former commanding officer, the late Commander Alan Kennedy, XO Robin Whiteside and navigator Christopher Napier.

Cdr Kennedy had been the navigator of the boat - the Royal Navy's first nuclear-powered submarine - when she entered service and, as her youthful skipper a few years later.

He had been fascinated by submarine operations beneath the polar ice cap by the US and Soviet navies since the advent of nuclear power and was determined to prove the Royal Navy could do the same.

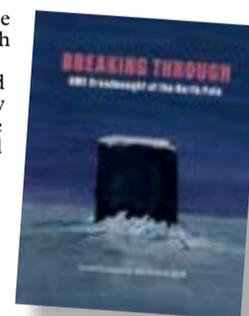
He did not meet instant approval from the corridors of power but eventually the mission was given the green light. Some 18 months of planning were required before Dreadnought departed Faslane in February 1971 and headed for the Arctic.

The 68-page booklet is built around the 'Captain's Narrative' - not a dull, acronym-laden official document but a lively account accessible to all which gives an insight not just into the polar mission, but also the workings of a nuclear submarine and the Silent Service in the early years of the nuclear era.

Cdr Kennedy is an excellent narrator - for a peacetime operation he conveys the excitement and anxiety of the command team as the manoeuvred beneath the ice cap, as well as the routine of life aboard a boat at the beginning of the 1970s (film afternoons, card games, uckers, a very antiquated-looking TV), victualling (fresh bread from Faslane ran out after a week, for example, although the evening meal no longer had to be eaten under red light for it was impossible to raise the periscope).

And then at 5.18pm on March 3, Dreadnought punched through ice 1ft thick about three miles from the North Pole. The boat spent eight hours on the surface in temperatures of -38°C as photographs were taken, reports written and sent and a game of football using a plastic bucket for a ball until it shattered in the intense cold. All the time a lookout on the bridge armed with a rifle watched for polar bears.

Thanks to the Friends of the RN Submarine Museum, this excellent, well-illustrated account - it's peppered with photographs, charts, diagrams and sketches - is a superb addition to the small canon of literature surrounding the Cold War, particularly first-hand accounts. It is available for free download as a pdf at www.rnsubmusfriends.org.uk/breaking-through-2/





Double delight for Accrington

ACCRINGTON Sea Cadets have relocated from the premises following a very difficult and prolonged fundraising campaign to raise more than a quarter of a million pounds to move into their new home.

The unit had no choice but to move out of their former HQ, where they had been based for 38 years when the green light was given for a multi-million pound plan to create more than 100 new waterside homes in Clayton-le-Moors, which involved redeveloping and building an access tunnel through the Sea Cadets' 200-year-old grade II listed premises.

The unit moved from Enfield Wharf in Clayton-le-Moors to Harvey Street in Oswaldtwistle. But just two weeks after signing the lease, Covid-19 struck. They reopened in February 2022 after the pandemic to their smart and refurbished new headquarters, which also operates as a youth and community centre for local groups needing somewhere to meet. Accrington Unit has worked hard to retain and retrain their cadets, getting them back to their face-to-face activities both on land and in the water.

Their achievements have been recognised by the wider charity: Accrington Unit was awarded the Stephenson Trophy for the best managed unit out of the 70 units across the North West Area. They also won the Ledger Trophy for the highest adult volunteer recruitment in the North West Area for 2022 as well as a Burgee for their consistently excellent performance throughout the year. The unit also boasts the highest points score in the North East Lancs District.

The Chairman of Accrington Sea Cadets, Stephen Hutchinson, said: "What a busy year and what a phenomenal reflection of the effort put in by all of our voluntary staff at all levels – and of course, our brilliant cadets with their individual achievements."

Plans are just Brilliant

SEA Cadets at Tunbridge Wells were told of plans to update the unit with an ambitious £300,000 fundraising project.

TS Brilliant president Commodore Barry Bryant, along with the town's MP Greg Clark, CEO of Tunbridge Wells borough council William Benson and unit Vice Presidents Lt Cdr Les Chapman RN Rtd and Mr Jim Hodge, revealed the plan during a visit to the unit.

The visitors spoke with cadets during an inspection and had a tour of the HQ.

The ship's company had a group photo and then all were briefed about the plans to update the 1850 unit in Albion Road.

The Sea Cadets and their supporters are hard at work fund raising and applying for grants.

The project has been given a boost of £5,000 from Kent County councillors Peter Oakford, Sarah Hamilton, Paul Barrington-King, Becki Bruneau, and James Mcinroy.

The evening ended with the presentation of badges to cadets.



Felixstowe sailors power to success



FELIXSTOWE Unit has won the Eastern Area SCC's Power Boat Shield in the face of fierce competition from over the whole Eastern Area, which stretches from North Yorkshire down to the London borders.

The award was presented to the unit by the Mayor of Felixstowe, Councillor Sharon Harkin, during the unit's awards and badges ceremony held in St John the Baptist Church, Felixstowe.

SCC's Deputy District Officer, Lt. Cdr (SCC) Graham Waylett RNR, Ass. D.O. Sub-Lieut (SCC) Heard RNR were also present.

The Mayor said: "It was a privilege to attend Felixstowe Sea Cadets' presentation ceremony. The cadets are an integral part of Felixstowe, something perhaps I had not fully appreciated prior to becoming Mayor."

"The award reflects TS Landguard's reputation as an 'afloat' unit, offering its cadets such activities as dinghy and offshore sailing, power boating, canoeing, paddle boarding, windsurfing, all conducted on local waters

centred on Felixstowe Ferry under the safety umbrella of RYA-qualified staff," said the Chairman of the Unit Management Committee, Captain Peter King FNI FSNR. "Felixstowe Unit has recently taken delivery of a replacement RIB safety boat in advance of the 2023 afloat season."

Six new entry cadets were also formally enrolled into the SCC by the unit's Chaplain, the Rev Andrew Dotchin.

The evening concluded with the presentation of proficiency and service badges to 18 cadets, clearing a backlog due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The unit's Chairman also outlined plans to redevelop the unit's current HQ site in Garrison Lane to incorporate a modern classroom, office, social facilities and a custom-designed boat storage area in the existing Drill Hall. Once planning permissions have been confirmed, the unit will launch a fundraising campaign to raise £1 million needed for the building works.

Honouring the adventurers

A 16-YEAR-OLD sea cadet from York Unit is one of the two cadets honoured by annual York's Merchant Adventurers awards.

Able Cadet Alex from Acomb, who is a pupil of York High School was presented with a tankard as a top-performing cadet, alongside Cable Sergeant Major Will Kelly (17) from Selby detachment, B Company, Yorkshire Army Cadet Force.

Each year, The Merchant Adventurers present tankards to top-performing cadets, reservists and regular service personnel in the Royal Navy, British Army, and the Royal Air Force, in York and across Yorkshire.

This year they held the first in-person event since the coronavirus pandemic in the Merchant Adventurers Hall in Fossgate.

Delma Tomlin, Governor of The Company of Merchant Adventurers of the City of York, said: "We are delighted to welcome back the cadets, reservists and members of the armed services to the Merchant Adventurers' Hall. The Tankards presentation is a long standing and important date in our company calendar and it's an honour to recognise the exceptional work and dedication of our recipients."

The Commanding Officer of York Sea Cadets and Deputy District Officer North & East Yorkshire District, Lieutenant Commander (SCC) RNR Jacqui Gorman said: "Alex is the best dressed in the unit and has one of the highest attendance scores. He is well-liked and respected by his peers and is a credit to Sea Cadets."

"It was an honour and a privilege to be commended by The Company of Merchant Adventurers, in such a historic setting," said Able Cadet Alex.

"I was incredibly grateful and surprised to receive the award. It was a truly amazing opportunity to be recognised alongside serving members of the armed forces and other cadets."

"It has filled me with an overwhelming sense of pride and I will treasure this tankard award for years to come."

Alex joined York Sea Cadets in 2017, when he was ten years old, going on to gain qualifications



in Marine Engineering, Seamanship, Catering, Navigation, Piping, Meteorology, Rowing, Powerboating and Offshore Sailing. He completed his Bronze DofE last year and is currently working towards the Silver award. He plans to study Marine Biology at University.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the UK, in southeast Wales, Able Cadet Alex of Newport Sea Cadet Corps was among the eleven cadets from across Gwent who have been recognised by the King's representative for the county.

Alex was appointed by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Gwent, Brigadier Robert Aitken CBE who appointed five young people as Lord-

Lieutenant cadets for Gwent for this year at an awards ceremony at Raglan Barracks, Newport.

Alex, who attends St Julian's School, is a keen musician and was selected to be a member of the Sea Cadets' Massed Band, leading the Trafalgar Parade in London. He has also played alongside musicians of the Royal Marines Band. The role – which lasts for a year – includes attendance with the Brigadier, who acts as the King's representative, at a number of official engagements such as Remembrance events, royal visits and parades. The awards ceremony, attended by around 100 people, was organised by the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (RFCA) for Wales.



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Meet the class of 2023

FIRST Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key lines up with his class of 2023 aboard HMS Victory.

Every year the First Sea Lord appoints a cadet from each area to represent Sea Cadets at official ceremonies and functions.

This is a prestigious role as it provides the chosen cadets a privileged insight into higher naval policy and work of very senior Royal Navy's serving officers.

This year's cadets are:



POC Callum Corbett, Stafford & Rugely Unit

Callum joined Sea Cadets in July 2018 and was his unit's Cadet of the Year for 2019. His passion for Sea Cadets and commitment to personal improvement has seen him work his way up through the ranks, being selected for promotion to Petty Officer Cadet in August 2022.

As a Cadet Drill Instructor, Callum sets an excellent example to other cadets by instilling the highest standards of respect and discipline and taking great pride in the way he wears his uniform. This attention to detail helped earn his selection to represent North West Area at the National Trafalgar Day Parade in 2022.

In 2022, he helped hundreds of junior cadets enjoy their first time away from home while volunteering as Senior Cadet Support at the National Junior Summer Camp. And as a recently qualified Advanced Peer Educator, Callum is always looking for ways to pass on his knowledge.

In order to maximise his own development on the water, Callum has taken every opportunity to improve his skills, gaining his RYA Stage 2 Sailing and achieving selection for a two-week voyage on TS Royalist in 2022. He is also a proficient rower and recently achieved his Coxswain award.

Callum has also gained a multitude of other SCC qualifications, including Marine Engineering, Intermediate PT and Intermediate Seamanship. In 2021, he completed his BTEC Level 2 in Teamwork and Personal Skills before earning his Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award in January 2022. While working towards his Gold DofE, Callum is studying for his A-Levels with the aim of joining the Royal Navy as an Officer.



LC Joshua Smith, Hull Unit

Joshua joined Sea Cadets in April 2017 and has become an amazing mentor to the younger members of his unit. His personal qualities shone through on his Leading Cadet board, where he achieved a very high standard, and he is due to attend the POC board in 2023.

He represents his unit at football and rowing, but his favourite activity is drill; he recently passed his Cadet Drill Instructor course (with a grade of 80 percent) and has been incredibly supportive in helping other cadets develop their own drill skills.

Joshua recently completed his Advanced Peer Educator and RYA Level 2 Powerboat Handling and attended three District MACT weekends in the past year. 2022 also saw Joshua take his second voyage on TS Jack Petchey, before he was selected to attend the National Trafalgar Day Parade.

Passionate about his local



community, Joshua served as the Lord Mayor of Kingston upon Hull's Cadet in 2021.

Working towards his Bronze Duke of Edinburgh, Joshua is also well on his way to achieving a BTEC Level 2 Diploma in Teamwork and Personal Development. He is currently studying towards his A-Levels at college and hopes to gain entrance to Cambridge University before entering the Royal Navy as a Warfare Officer.



POC Joseph Moir, Camberley Unit

Joseph joined Sea Cadets in June 2018 and on completion of New Entry Cadet training was encouraged to join the 2019 drill team – where his abilities led an impressed judge to highlight his potential as a future Cadet Drill Instructor.

In the same year, after promotions to Cadet First Class and Ordinary Cadet, Joseph and two fellow cadets organised and executed a 24-hour CPR Relay – raising over £2,000 for their unit. 2019 also saw him complete both SCC Rowing Coxswain qualifications and his Intermediate First Aid, before winning silver at the Southern Area First Aid Competition.

After completing the Basic Peer Educator course in January 2020, Joseph soon began to teach his fellow cadets. Adapting to Covid-19, he carried on this teaching online: assisting with the junior section on Zoom calls, participating in a virtual Remembrance Day, and keeping the ship's company engaged throughout the lockdowns. Joseph went on to help with the filming of covid safety videos and the preparation of boating equipment for the unit's return to normal activities.

Joseph achieved his ambition of becoming a Cadet Drill Instructor in 2021 and began to help teach and train his unit's drill team. He took part in several high-profile events in 2021 and 2022, including a Royal visit, and had the privilege of marching down The Mall on Trafalgar Day. He has continued to broaden his skillset, completing both his Advanced First Aid and Mental Health First Aid qualifications, and passing his Petty Officer Cadet Board in November 2022. Joseph was also recently appointed a Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet for Surrey.

Outside of his life at cadets, Joseph is currently studying A-Levels in Law, Politics and Modern History at the Sixth Form College Farnborough, with a view of going on to study Politics and International Relations. He hopes to join RMA Sandhurst on completion of his education and wishes to pursue a career as an officer in the Guards Division.



POC Erin Williams, Rickmansworth & Watford Unit

Erin joined Sea Cadets as a shy 11-year-old in 2017 but has become an impressively confident and mature individual, thanks to the support of her unit. Always prepared to help others in their time of need, and take responsibility for the team.

In her desire to acquire a variety of skills, Erin has taken full advantage of the opportunities that the Corps provides. In the spirit of taking on new challenges, she has represented Sea Cadets as part of her unit's affiliation to the Royal Society of St George, speaking to their members about her experiences as a cadet. Erin is also proud to serve her community

and has taken part in countless local events from litter picks to a Platinum Jubilee Tea Party.

Erin's recent achievements include gaining her Bronze Aviation Wings as part of the Sea Cadets Aviation programme; becoming a British Canoeing Paddlesport Instructor; coming third with the Continuity Drill Team at the National Drill and Piping Competition; and being part of the winning team in London Area's adventure training competition, the Chosin Cup.

Erin's drive and determination has also seen her pass her Advanced First Aid at Work, BC Foundation Safety and Rescue Training, RYA Powerboat Level 2 and the Master Coxswain Award.

She is currently working towards her Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award and BTEC Level 2 Diploma in Teamwork and Personal Development.

2022 saw Erin appointed as Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet for Greater London, a role in which she has been honoured to assist Lord-Lieutenant Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE with his duties – including the British Empire Medal investitures at the Tower of London. It is Erin's ambition to join the Royal Navy when she leaves school, and she is particularly interested in a career as a pilot with the Fleet Air Arm.



LC Maisie Millichip, Fishguard Unit

Maisie joined Sea Cadets in August 2016 and has developed both as an individual and as a leader. She continues to take full advantage of all that Sea Cadets has to offer, including a recent voyage from Holyhead to Milford Haven on TS Royalist.

Maisie has a keen interest in

shooting and competed for South West Area at Bisley in 2021. She also represented South West in the 2019 National 5-a-side Football Competition, where her team gained a silver medal.

As well as excelling in competitions Maisie has achieved many qualifications, including Advanced First Aid, BC Foundation Rescue Safety Training, RYA Powerboat Level 2, and Offshore Sail. She is currently progressing through her Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award and is aiming to become an instructor in Paddlesports and Rowing in 2023.

A confident Welsh speaker, Maisie has been a Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet for Dyfed since March 2022.

Whilst her main interest is Sea Cadets, Maisie also enjoys playing 18 holes of golf when time allows. She previously represented Milford Haven Golf Club, where she was chosen in a team of six to play in the finals of the Welsh Inter Junior Club Championships held at Bultih Wells. She was also regularly selected to represent Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire Ladies County Golf Association.

Maisie is currently in her first year of a two-year Level 3 Extended National Diploma in Uniformed Protective Services at Pembrokeshire College. She hopes this will assist her in achieving her career aim of becoming a Warfare Officer in The Royal Navy.



POC Wesley Morgan, Fraserburgh Unit

Wesley joined Sea Cadets in March 2016 and has made excellent progress through the Corps, being promoted to his current rank in December 2022.

He has gained instructors awards in Paddlesports, Drill and Rowing and was a Cadet Instructor at the Northern Area Summer Camp in 2022.

In the past year, Wesley has also passed a number of challenging modules including Advanced Peer Educator and Master Coxswain, while also achieving the British Canoeing Surf Kayak Award.

He is currently working towards his Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award and a BTEC Level 2 Diploma in Teamwork and Personal Development, and is proud to be an ambassador for the benefits of these schemes.

Wesley is the senior cadet within Fraserburgh Unit and was elected to be the unit representative at the District Cadet Voice forums in 2021. He has also received his unit's past two 'Cadet of the Year' awards, with over 120 boating hours completed in each year.

Wesley has flourished as a student at Mintlaw Academy and has already gained enough UCAS points to support his ambition of a future career in the Royal Navy.

He has also learned to speak fluent German and is involved with the school's Young Engineers Club and Code Club – which he represented at an event at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham.

As a prefect, and the Deputy House Head Pupil, Wesley is an excellent role model for others throughout the school.

At 15, Wesley secured a job in his village shop, which has helped him become a well-known face in the community.

At home, he helps to look after the family's horses and dogs, as well as finding time for running, hillwalking, camping and kayaking in his local countryside.

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Chief Petty Officer Cadet Archie Lauder, VCC

Archie is a hardworking and dedicated member of the unit, who regularly leads younger cadets in lessons across a wide range of activities.

This includes drill, building bivvies, river crossings and to how to survive a sinking ship. He is a supportive and admired figure to his fellow cadets, with one junior cadet recently saying: "Chief Lauder has really supported me with my drill and bearing – I even polish my own shoes now! He has inspired me to become as good as him one day."

He embodies the Royal Navy's core values in everything that he does, and always with a smile and positive attitude.

Whether it is a particularly wet and miserable field exercise or a hot day on the parade ground, Archie's enthusiasm and commitment carries the others through.

Staff from across the Portsmouth area units have commented on how they can be sure to rely on him.

Archie has a particular interest in drill and ceremonial, in which he takes a leading role in coaching and developing his fellow cadets.

His involvement varies from having a commanding presence at our summer divisions to training cadets on piping. He has an aspiration of completing his Cadet Drill Instructors course soon.

He is eager to encourage other young people to join the VCC RN/RM, so that they too can benefit from the varied experiences he has enjoyed.

He has often volunteered to participate in outreach and public-facing activities to spread awareness of the VCC RN/RM.

Outside of cadets, Archie enjoys a variety of outdoor activities. He is a keen football player who plays within his local community and enjoys hiking across the national parks and beaches of the south coast.

He is currently working with a local company to further develop his communication skills and his knowledge of business. However, Archie's aspiration is to join the Royal Navy warfare branch, with an ambition to serve as a Principal Warfare Officer, having been inspired by his recent visit to HMS Defender.

Cadet Lance Corporal Scott Beattie, VCC

Scott joined Gosport Division RMVCC in November 2019 and quickly settled in



From left, Chief Petty Officer Cadet Archie Lauder (VCC); Cadet Lance Corporal Scott Beattie (VCC); Warrant Officer 2 Cadet Raine Vickers (CCF); Cadet Sergeant Maya Beaton-Jaramillo (CCF); Cadet Sergeant Frederik Williams (CCF)
Pictures: LPhot Matt Bradley

while demonstrating a dedication to the unit and executing his duties with zeal.

He has excelled as a Royal Marines Cadet and delivers an incredibly polished performance to his peers and unit staff.

He has shown himself to be trustworthy and willing to take on additional responsibilities; for example, with the possibility of early promotion he took it upon himself to assist in the training of cadets by taking on a leadership role.

He undertook additional duties to support staff with field training and support Cadet Field Gun training after the interruptions of Covid lockdowns.

Scott has a confident communicative style and, together with a relaxed but firm leadership approach, he easily encourages his fellow cadets to follow his excellent example.

Always open to new ideas, he embraces the cadet experience fully and enshrines the Commando Ethos.

Scott has made a significant positive impact on the unit's Cadet Field Gun crew, being a pivotal member of the gun detail. His physical fitness and mental resilience have helped to lead the team to competition success during the 2022 season despite him carrying an injury.

Keen at all sports and proud to represent his unit in the VCC RN/RM south region Inter-Unit Cross Country event he helped them gain overall 2nd place against some fierce competition from the other VCC units.

Outside of cadets he attends Fareham College Uniformed Services one year course. His other interests include playing the acoustic guitar, supporting his home-town football team, and improving his fitness through cross country runs.

Indeed, he has created his own fitness programme in preparation for joining His

Majesty's Armed Forces. He also enjoys listening to music to help him relax and have mindfulness time.

Warrant Officer 2 Cadet Raine Vickers, CCF

Raine is currently studying for her A-Levels in Maths, Physics and Biology at The Belvedere Academy in Liverpool.

She joined the RN CCF in September 2020 and involved herself in everything, from virtual sessions to Field Days as soon as The Academy was permitted to commence post-pandemic.

She is keen to attend camps and courses and has achieved RYA Dinghy Qualifications as a result of her attendance.

Raine has a thirst to learn and an unsurpassable enthusiasm which will drive her to achieve more in the future. This has seen her promoted rapidly within RN CCF at Belvedere Academy and she currently holds the rank of Warrant Officer 2nd Class.

Raine has represented Belvedere CCF RN on several occasions. She laid the wreath at the Cenotaph for Liverpool's Annual Service of Remembrance and relished the chance to engage with Veterans and serving military personnel. As WO2, Raine leads her Contingent by example, both with integrity and unfaltering respect for other.

Outside Cadets, Raine is a military majorette, enjoying practicing and competing as part of another successful team and putting the skills that she has perfected in Cadets when teaching the junior members of her group.

Raine would like a career in the Royal Navy going forwards.

Cadet Sergeant Maya Beaton-Jaramillo, CCF

Maya joined Bradfield College in 2019. She

thrives in the busy tempo of a senior boarding school and enjoys a wide range of school activities.

Maya is studying Art, English Literature and Physics at A-Level. She represents the college in football and athletics and is a member of the Engineering Society and Psychology Society.

Maya joined the CCF in April 2020 and quickly gained recognition for her commitment and mature attitude.

While serving in the RM Section she has worked exceptionally hard to develop her cadet skills. She has a well-developed leadership style, she is confident, considerate and a great role model to our junior female cadets.

She regularly leads training and is an accomplished cadet instructor. Maya is a regular participant in all our CCF RN/RM Field Days and has completed three weekend camps, plus a variety of other field days.

She has been a member of the Pringle Team at the last two events and relished the challenges this competition provides.

Aside from regular CCF activities she is an outstanding cadet shot and was part of the winning team in this year's Ashburton Competition at the Bisley Schools Meeting.

She attends regular shooting camps and in 2022 was Adjutant of the UK Cadet Rifle Team during their tour to Jersey.

Her level of commitment to shooting is exceptional and she has become an accomplished coach for the junior shots. She has been selected for the 2023 British Cadet Rifle Team 'The Athelings' and will be part of the team that tours Canada this summer.

After the completion of her A levels Maya wishing to study engineering at Manchester University, before pursuing a career in the Armed

Forces.

Cadet Sergeant Frederik Williams, CCF

Cadet Sergeant Frederik has been a committed and high performing member of Harrow School's Royal Marine Section since passing selection last year.

Frederik has completed a wide variety of training opportunities including two blank firing Field Days, ceremonial duties, and the school's NCO Leadership Cadre.

He has also represented the school at the annual Sir Steuart Pringle Competition winning two stances, namely, Leadership and Casualty Evacuation.

At every point during his training, Frederik has continually embodied the Royal Marines ethos and qualities.

Beyond the Harrow School Rifle Corps, Frederik is an active member of the school community contributing to all areas of life be it academic or co-curricular.

Frederik is a talented rugby player who has represented his year group since coming to Harrow School. He also contributes to action in the community, volunteering to support a range of social outreach programs connected to the school in his spare time.

As an aspiring engineer Cdt Sgt Frederik W is committed to his studies.

However, he has an eye for the practical and especially enjoys seeing how machines work, dismantling and rebuilding bikes and lawnmowers at home.

Frederik also shows a keen interest in current affairs and the role that the UK plays in securing and promoting global security. It is perhaps unsurprising then that he hopes to pursue a career in the military to contribute to this context.

Students inspired on International Women's Day

CADETS and pupils were told about life in the Royal Navy as a woman as part of International Women's Day.

The global day celebrates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women.

To mark this day, La Retraite Roman Catholic Girls' School hosted a workshop supported by the Royal Navy.

The aim was to inspire and raise awareness among La Retraite's pupils on the variety of careers for women exist in the navy.

Surg Cdre Fleur Marshall and CPO Janine Potts attended the school in Clapham Park to share their own first-hand experiences of life in the navy with the students, and talked about the opportunities available to anyone, no matter your gender.

As well as taking time to talk with the students in Year 8 and 10, Surg Cdre Marshall and CPO Potts, a diversity advocate within the RN, took time to meet with Cadets in the CCF RN Section at La Retraite.

The school has its own CCF unit, something the school chose to endorse in order to provide further opportunities to their pupils and give them a chance to be challenged, and understand the values and ethos of the navy delivered through an incredible cadet experience.

The visitors spoke about their roles and what career path they took to arrive at their current rank.

As a Surg Cdre, Fleur Marshall was able to demonstrate the wide range of opportunities available that vary from the typical roles often associated with the Royal Navy. They also walked through what a day in the life of a sailor looked like.

Maeve, aged 12, said: "They definitely made being in the navy sound way more exciting than I ever thought it would be and I think it opened up a new career path for me."

"I'm really glad we got to have this opportunity; I never probably would have considered it before."

Hemani, aged 14, added: "It's changed my perspective on the navy because I was so fixated on one thing but now I might want to explore and look at different branches."

"I knew you could be doctors but I didn't know you could be GPs, surgeons and all these different types."

Dominic Malins is the Headteacher of La Retraite, and is extremely supportive of the CCF RN Section at his school.

He said: "We believe that our young people deserve the best and with our excellent support, the young people at La Retraite achieve amazing results and go off to fantastic careers."

"The talks were really inspirational, they provided an insight to what might be achieved by young women with determination, aspiration and hard work."



Cadet aims to sail around Britain in electric boat

CADET Harry has set his eyes on becoming one of the first people to sail around Britain in an electric RIB.

Wellington School Combined Cadet Force's Contingent Commander Major Nigel is proud to support CCF (RN) Cadet Leading Hand Harry in his epic challenge.

The Round Britain eRIB Challenge is a not-for-profit event which aims to support the marine industry's transition to electric

propulsion for leisure and small commercial craft.

Harry will attempt to drive an electric boat around Britain this Summer. Setting off from Lyme Regis, in Dorset, the team will be using a unique combination of shoreside infrastructure and on-water charging.

The electric RIB being built specifically for the challenge will be used to showcase the capabilities of electric propulsion in UK

coastal waters.

A significant part of the project is to encourage the installation of charging infrastructure. Working with British Marine and the RYA, through their joint Green Blue initiative, the Challenge team will increase public knowledge and understanding, showcasing the potential of eBoats in UK Coastal Waters.

Visit roundbritain-erib.org

Fridge magnet for record breaker



A Royal Marine has smashed a world record for running with a 26kg fridge on his back as he prepares to take on the London Marathon. Corporal Sam Hammond beat the fastest time – for running with a fridge – at a half-marathon in Brighton. The 30-year-old weapons instructor is raising money for military charity SSAFA. He now has his sights fixed on the 26.2 miles in London on April 23. He said: "Brighton was crazy. The streets were lined with thousands of people and there were almost 8,000 runners in total. "Every person I ran past had the same look of shock on their face – closely followed by some words of motivation. I couldn't get round a corner without the crowd cheering me on." "This was a build up for London. That's the next big thing." He said crossing the half-marathon line (with a fridge) at 2 hours, 4 minutes, 13 seconds was a new world record. Corporal Hammond is based at RNAS Culdrose. He is raising money for SSAFA via his Instagram account Man_v_Fridge. **Picture: Gareth Unwin**



Friendly drubbing in Gulf

THE World Cup may be long over but it didn't stop international football in the Gulf. Personnel from UKNSF Bahrain seized the opportunity of a visit by Japanese destroyer Makinami ('rolling wave') to challenge them to a 90-minute friendly. The smaller, quicker and more agile Japanese team proved a handful early on as the match opened at a lightning pace. However, the experience of the older and not quite-so-agile Brits soon began to tell. After two rapid goals in succession the hosts knocked in four more before the break. The second half was end-to-end, but where the Japanese found the British keeper in outstanding form, the hosts continually breached the visitors' defences. Only with 15 minutes on the clock did the Japanese net, but their two goals were far too late to tip the balance in their favour and they trotted off the pitch on the wrong end of a 13-2 drubbing. "After breaking the language barrier it was great experience to share a pitch with our counterparts from Japan, a fantastic opportunity for both sides to integrate in a friendly but with a competitive fixture," said NSF clubz Petty Officer Physical Trainer Alex Stocker. "Overall it was a fantastic win but more importantly, a great opportunity for both sides to enjoy a morning of personal development, placing sport at the forefront whilst on operations."

Wowing at the worlds



Above: LWtr Aimee Blanchard achieved her fastest 2k of the season; Below, C/Sgt James Wade finished second in the men's heavyweight 40+ 2k at Miissauga in Canada



THE World Rowing Indoor Championships 2023 (WRIC23) were held over two days in sub-zero snowy Mississauga, near Toronto in Canada, as a hybrid in-person and virtual event.

The Royal Navy Rowing Association (RNRA) had 13 competitors racing live in person, with all doing individual 2k and 500m races on separate days.

There were also relay races with four rowers, each rowing two reps of 250m within the 2k race distance, with two men's teams and a mixed (two men and two women) team.

C/Sgt James Wade (3CDOX/RM Stonehouse) was the standout performer, finishing second in the men's heavyweight 40+ 2k in a time of 6 mins 06.4 secs.

This performance against world-class rowers with Olympic pedigrees cannot be overstated, as he vied for the lead over the whole race, with a trademark strong finish, just 0.2 secs behind the winner.

Royal Navy Indoor Rowing Performance Programme (RNIRPP) Coach (recent Ex Cdr) Jim Thomson took third in the Men's heavyweight 45+ 500m with a time of 1 min 21.9 secs, reinforcing his prowess at the shorter race distance.

Team Manager Paul Winton (MCTA) also took a third-place bronze in the men's heavyweight 65+ 2k in 7 mins 18.5 secs.

Individual races saw the RNRA with six top five, 11 top ten and 20 top 20 finishes. Other top five places were achieved by WO1 Mark Branson (Sultan), fourth in men's lightweight 60+ 500m in 1 min 34.5 secs, plus fifth places for Wade (1 min 20.5 secs) and Winton (1 min 35.3 secs) in their respective 500m categories.

While most of those racing live in person were rowing 2k times a few seconds slower than expectations, credit must go to Lt Col Peter Williams (Northwood) (men's heavyweight 40+ in 6 mins 36.6 secs) and LWtr Aimee Blanchard (Excellent) (women's heavyweight 23-39 in 7 mins 59.2 secs), for defying that trend with their fastest 2k times of the season.

The team relays resulted in the RNRA Men finishing in ninth and 13th positions, with times of 5 mins 40.2 secs and 5 mins 53.3 secs respectively, noting that the slower of these teams was much closer than expected to their notably stronger and faster colleagues, achieved through well practiced and slick teamwork for changeovers.

The Mixed Team Relay was the final event of the two days with the RNRA team of Wade, Thomson, Blanchard and CPO Claire Drew (JHGS) finishing seventh in 5 mins 58.2 secs, five places and 14 secs ahead of two closely-matched British Army teams themselves separated by just 0.1 sec.

RN Indoor Rowers have two rounds of the Indoor Rowers League (IRL) www.indoorrowers.org to complete, finishing in April.

Thereafter, a few months deep aerobic training precedes race season 23/24, with the ultimate aim of competing at WRIC24 in Prague (February 2024). Feel free to sign up to the IRL or contact paul.winton177@mod.gov.uk



Above: CPO Claire Drew in action at the championships; Below, the RN team for the event



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A WELCOME morale-booster in the form of an adventurous training package was delivered to 200 personnel deployed to the frozen Arctic.

Personnel from Commando Helicopter Force and Commando Logistic Regiment took part in Exercise Tromski II while deployed in northern Norway.

The Royal Navy Adventurous Training Team (RNATT) delivered skiing tuition to the deployed troops on Tromso and Malselv Fjellandsby ski slopes.

The exercise's main aim was to offer developmental skiing opportunities to all with the aim of improving individual skiing ability and enhancing the 'lived experience' of service personnel serving away from home during the annual winter deployment among the rugged and formidable geography of northern Norway.

Lt Lucas Hunt-Brown, from 24 Cdo RE, said: "Serving personnel conducting cold weather warfare training were given a fantastic opportunity to conduct AT.

"An excellent day of skiing for all abilities which allowed everyone to push their boundaries and engage in healthy competition. A massive thanks to the training staff for their incredible work."

Many of the novice skiers that took part felt that this had stretched their comfort zone and helped in increasing their mental robustness.

All participants honed existing skiing skills before being given the opportunity to test themselves during afternoon ski racing against the stunning backdrop of the fjords and mountains of Tromso.

Lt 'Larry' Lambert said: "As a recipient of the training I am incredibly grateful for the first-class package that was put together by the RNATT.

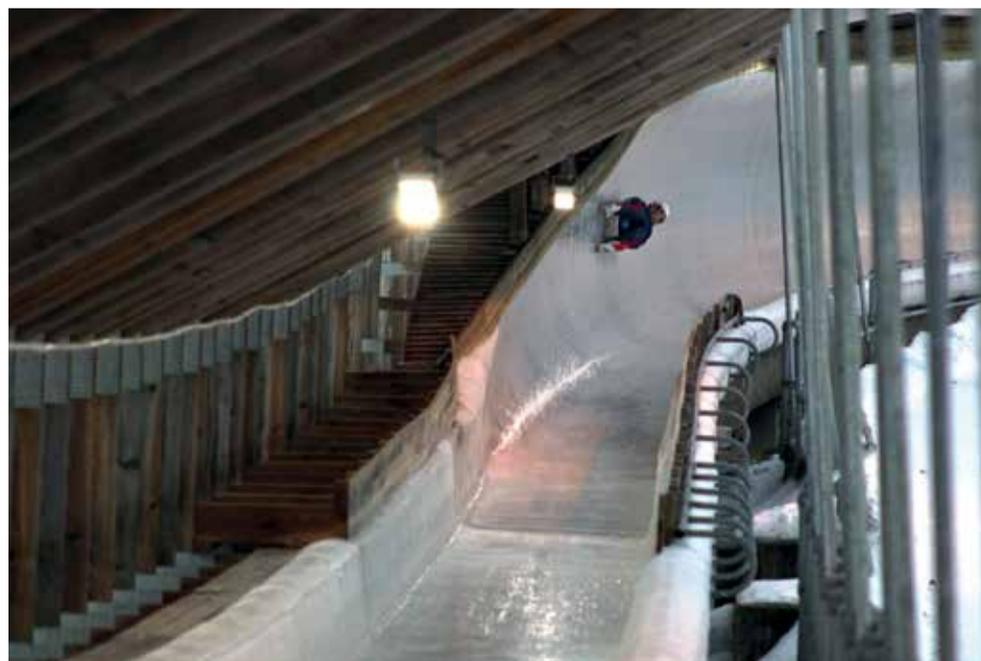
"The positive effect it has had on the morale and mental well-being of my team should not be underestimated and was ideally timed during what is, a long deployment."

RNATT can deliver AT in the UK and overseas and will design a bespoke package to suit the needs of a ship or unit.

A combination of physically and mentally challenging training activities aid in personal development, leadership, and team building.

Captain Al Hunter RM said: "Firstly I would like to thank you and the team for the exceptional package. The feedback received each day from all those who attended was overwhelmingly positive, reinforcing the significant effects participation in AT has towards morale and ultimately helping in the retention of service personnel."

The Royal Navy Adventurous Training Team is a deployable team of Royal Navy/Royal Marines instructors whose main aim is the front-line delivery of adventurous and challenging activities to aid retention, improve morale and increase operational capability.



Shining a light on

THIS year's Royal Navy Luge season kicked off in Igls, Austria.

As per the last few seasons it kicked off in the form of two one-week novice camps, held in collaboration with our Army counterparts.

The first of the novice camps saw two fresh faced RN sliders take to the ice, the second of which saw four more joining in on the fun.

We were very graciously accepted into the Army training camp, sharing their coaches and some kit, allowing us to get the best start possible for our luge careers.

Igls was a great track to learn on, with several starting points available, slowly increasing the difficulty and speed, allowing us the chance to progress nicely and learn the nuances of luge sled control.

Following on from our novice camp, it was time for team selection for the Service Championships and Inter-service Championships, this year held in Lillehammer, Norway.

The team was selected from a mix of personnel who performed well at the novice camps, as well as returning sliders.

We had personnel coming from various bases

throughout the UK, along with one making his way over from training in the USA, however, airport arrivals were timed nicely to get us all to Norway.

We arrived in Lillehammer late on a Sunday evening, with Monday morning being used to allow us time to acclimatise and get our kit squared away followed by a walk of the track.

The first week of training was a bit of a mixed bag, we would start each morning with a track walk, being led by our ex-Olympian civilian coach, Mike Howard.

This was time for us to walk down to each section of the track, analysing what we did the day before and looking at the optimum lines in and out of the corners, with steering points identified.

Following the track walk, we would head up to our starting position for that day. Early on it was fairly low, allowing us to get our luge legs back, progressing up a few corners a few days later.

There was definitely some nervous excitement prior to us all getting back on our sleds, but once we started, the nerves turned to determination to keep improving. We progressed well throughout the first week with an aim to move to the junior start the next week.

Week two started out strong with two of our remaining



THE Royal Navy Cresta Team had a successful season, training ten novices to ride the Cresta Run and bringing home a large slice of the silverware.

The Cresta Run, near St Moritz, Switzerland, is the steepest ice run in the world, three quarters of a mile of ice snaking down a mountainside from the hamlet of Cresta to the charming village of Celerina.

Riders lie face down on 40kg steel toboggans, travelling head first and negotiating ten bends at speeds up to 80mph.

The Run is designed to eject unwary riders at certain corners and the very real risk of physical injury is what generates the fear before and the elation after riding.

PONN Sarah Belcher, the Woman's Team Captain, ran a development week for ten novices of all ranks from all branches of the RN and RM. The outstanding novice was Sgt Lewys Phelps RM, who qualified for "Top" in record time with bold and fearless riding.

MAs Libby Bund and Faye Gardiner had excellent seasons after PO Belcher injured herself in a spectacular crash at Shuttlecock, the sharpest corner on the Run, while pushing hard from Top. They were pipped to first place in the Inter-Services race by an experienced RAF team.

In the Prince Philip Trophy, teams of the six fastest Top riders in each Service race over three courses with cumulative times aggregated.

After the first course, the RN team had their noses in front by 1.5 seconds with Surg Cdr Dave Potter, Lt Craig Birkby, Lt Cdr Andy Mills and Lt Col Jamie Summers riding their fastest times of the season.

After the second course, the Army team had levelled with the RAF dropping off the pace. The excitement going into the final course was palpable and the standings swung back and forth as riders from each team arrived at Finish. Agonisingly, the Royal Navy team were narrowly off the pace and had to settle for second place.

Surg Cdr Dave Potter had the consolation of winning the Lord Trenchard Trophy for the cumulative fastest three times as well as the Auty Speed Cup for the single fastest ride of the day.

In the Silver Spoon Race from Junction, novice Sub Lt Matt O'Brien came a commendable fourth and in the Harland Trophy, the Top race for those not selected in the First Six, Lt Cdr Richard Mendlesohn (Rtd) came an outstanding second.

While the RN team were disappointed to not have won the Inter-Services title, the season was a great success due to the number of novices that rode and whom will hopefully return next year to challenge for a place in the First Six.

If you are available in January 2024 and think that you have the mental determination and courage as well as the physical robustness and resilience to throw yourself down an icy mountainside at 80mph, please contact Surg Cdr Dave Potter on davidpotter1@nhs.net

CONQUERING CRESTA

the RN luge team

six sliders moving up to our competition start on the Monday morning, the rest getting their heads back in the game from a little lower down after a weekend of R&R.

After a successful day, we were all up to the competition start for the Tuesday morning, ready for our last day of training prior to the RN Championships on the Wednesday morning.

The championships consisted of two runs each, with a random order for run one, then run two being conducted with slowest time from run one going first, through to fastest last.

It was a closely-fought race with the podium consisting entirely of novices. Lt Jordan Moore claimed the gold, followed by AB Kaliska Clarke with silver, with Lt Tommy Brownlee taking the bronze.

Thursday, we returned to training, ahead of the big inter-services race on Friday, this was our last chance to work on any last minute tweaks and get our starts sorted out.

As race day arrived, the morale amongst the RN team was high, ready to take on our rival services.

The format would be the same as the RN Champs, with the exception of this being a team event, each team having five sliders, with the top four to count.

Unfortunately, our RN champ crashed out on his first run and was unable to regain control of his sled.

The remainder of us rallied together and completed our runs, with some spectacular regains from near bail out scenarios.

Sadly, this year, the vast experience of both the Army and RAF teams overcame our team of four novices and one returning slider, with the RAF taking gold, Army taking silver and RN taking bronze.

Although we came third this year, it has been a very successful and rejuvenating year for RN Luge.

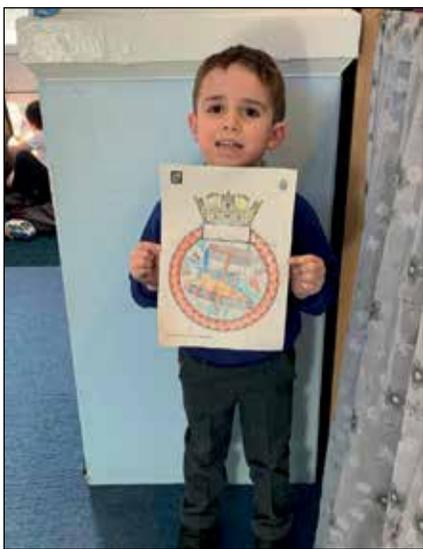
There has been a shakeup within the committee, a crop of new sliders coming through, and big plans for the new season.

There are already plans in the works for a grassroots camp in the summer, our own novice camp towards the end of the year, to then get a solid team together for the inter-services next year. We are always eager to recruit new personnel and introduce people to the delights of luge.

If you are interested, make sure to email us at RNluge@gmail.com.

Report: Lt Daniel Wrigglesworth





Isaac with his winning crest design

Inspirational school visit

ROYAL Navy rate LH Gurnell inspired children at a primary school to create their own ships' crests.

LH Gurnell (from the Candidate Preparation Course South, HMS Sultan) was invited to St Johns Primary School in Gosport, to talk to the children about the Royal Navy and her career to date.

She also explained what ship's crests are and took them through the various uniforms which are worn.

She also took epaulettes and badges along with other bits of uniform in to show them. This included her Platinum Jubilee Medal which they were very excited to see because they had all learnt about the jubilee last year.

The Year 1 students even got a chance to try on some of the different uniforms.

The students also had some great questions about the Royal Navy, some including; if Sailors had the internet on ship's, what food they ate, and what flags are onboard?

LH Gurnell said: "Speaking to this age group was a lovely change as I usually work with 16+, so this was a totally different dynamic and the classes all kept me on my toes. It was fun as you never knew what you were going to get asked next and it was pleasing to see how enthused and excited the children were."

Local Cllr Kirsty Cox said: "It's a great idea to have people from the military go in to the community and engage with the schools. Even though they are young, it could inspire them to join Cadets, Cubs, or Rainbows, where they will learn key values and lifelong skills."

LH Gurnell also ran a ship's crest design competition. Each child put a lot of thought and effort into their individual design and made it really difficult for the teachers to pick a winning crest.



BACK TO WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Engineer retires after 38 years in the RFA

FOUR decades after his curiosity was piqued by ships in a quiet Scottish loch, naval engineer Dave Smith stepped ashore in the same spot – his 38-year career in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary over.

The 55-year-old chief officer ended his service to the nation at a remote fuelling jetty near Knockdow on Loch Striven, about 30 miles west of Glasgow.

The jetty has long been used by ships of the RFA – the Royal Navy's vital support flotilla – to top up their tanks.

And thanks to his father's role as an MOD police officer, living just 500 yards from the anchorage, the Smiths were often invited aboard visiting vessels during Dave's formative years.

"That was my first introduction to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary," he says.

Always keen on mending, fixing and tinkering with engines, motors and the like, stripping down motorcycles, when his father's job brought the Smiths to Gosport, Dave enrolled at the seafaring college in Warsash, embarking on a career in nautical engineering.

His first ship upon completing his training in 1985 was RFA Resource – a floating magazine/ammunition vessel for British forces deployed to the Falklands in the aftermath of the 1982 conflict.

Steam-powered with steam turbines, engineering on Resource was what Dave calls "handmatic" – good old traditional engineering.

Steam was generally reliable but it was labour intensive and far from efficient. Four decades ago, a ship may use up 120 tonnes of fuel per day on her duties.

Today, Dave's last ship RFA Tidesurge (39,000 tonnes – only the Navy's aircraft carriers are bigger) doesn't use one third of that amount.

The engineering complement has shrunk too – it's just 20 men and women strong on Tidesurge, little more than half that on a comparable vessel in the 1980s.

No longer do RFA engineers have to stand watch all night either. At the end of the working day, the systems are switched on to automatic and alerts sound in the engineers' cabins if something needs urgent attention.

The computer/electronic revolution is to thank for this automation, but the old skills are not only taught – they're crucial. Engineers are still expected to strip down, clean and rebuild engines, motors and the like.

And automation only goes so far. Engineering



spaces are still expected to be as clean, safe and smart as they were in the 80s... but there are fewer sailors to do the grafting.

Dave's career has taken him all over the world in pretty much every class of ship in the RFA flotilla to serve over the past four decades on many and varied duties: Yugoslavia and the Balkans supporting an army field hospital with RFA Sir Bedivere, a round-the-world task force in 2000-01 – Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, the USA and Panama Canal – and much closer to home passing on his engineering knowledge to trainees at HMS Sultan in Gosport, or ships going through training off Plymouth.

"I have been to so many phenomenal places all over the world, met some wonderful people, got to know local characters and customs," he says.

"The same goes for the RFA. It's people who make a ship – the mood, the atmosphere on board. It's

people who get you through each day and I've worked with so many fantastic crew, people who give that bit extra to make things happen."

Originally from Kilwinning in Ayrshire, but now living with his wife Deborah in Gosport, the father of two grown-up children plans to continue his hobby in retirement: woodwork, in particular hand-crafted wooden pens with his lathe.

Stepping off Tidesurge on a late winter's afternoon, he believes he's leaving the RFA in safe hands.

"The skill level today is through the roof," he said. "The people I joined up with were skilled for the equipment of the era, but today they are much more qualified. The one piece of advice I'd offer is: know your systems – don't be afraid to ask questions."

"And the ships today – terrific. The new Tide-class boats have so many good things going for them, good concepts, very efficient, great for taking us forward."

Cadets join Royal Marine in miles for Myles

OFFICER Cadets at the spiritual home of the Naval officer corps helped Royal Marine Captain Martin Jones raise over £6k for charity inspired by a family tragedy.

The cadets of Drake 22-3 class joined their green beret tutor on a 24-hour yomp around the grounds of Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, all the time carrying a bergen rucksack filled with 25kg weight.

Last November, the Royal Marines' son Myles was born prematurely and sadly died aged two days – despite the efforts of medical staff in the neonatal intensive care unit.

Myles' memory and the Officer Cadets under Martin's tutelage spurred him on to turn the tragedy into something positive: fundraising for the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death (SANDs) charity.

"The idea to complete this event came from the Division that I have been training for the past 23 weeks," Martin said. "Raising both money for the SANDs charity but also awareness surrounding baby loss is something that I believe we have achieved,

and I am immensely proud of the entire team."

Merely carrying the rucksack for 24-hours non-stop would be a challenge in itself. Add to the fact that the grounds of the fabled college are (a) extensive and (b) very hilly and the event took on extra dimensions.

The 23-strong team collectively covered 622½ miles while the weighted bergen travelled 70 miles and thanks to the undulating terrain, the marchers climbed and dropped down around 12,000 feet – more than three times the height of Snowdon.

"I could not have done this without the Officer Cadets of Drake 22-3 Division. They have demonstrated the resolve to march on through pain and adversity, the exact qualities required of our Naval leaders of the future." With a smile, he added "Who is carrying the bergen back to the accommodation?"

Although the yomp smashed Martin's original £3.5k target he's still collecting for SANDs via <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/martin-jones108>



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Deaths

Gordon Michael Cosgrove. Known as Mick, LRO. Served from June 1961 to June 1970 in HMS Ganges, Exmouth, Mercury, Tiger, Defender, Flockton, Dolphin, St Angelo, and Scarborough. Member of the Ton-class Association. Died February 18, aged 79.

Lt Cdr Peter Greenhalgh. Joined in September 1960 and served in HMS Raleigh, Harrier, Victory, Londonderry, Lynx, Ganges, Argonaut, Diomedea, Nelson, Apollo, Dartmouth, Hermes, Southwick, and Operation Sentinel. Awarded Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. Member of RNSWO. After retiring he moved to Scotland and joined the RNR at Faslane. Died February 16, aged 80.

Reginald Fearn, PO Radio Mechanic. Served between 1944 and 1947 in HMS Duke, RNTU Aberdeen, HMS Scotia, Mercury, Odyssey, Golden Hind, Bermuda, Bonaventure, Indefatigable, and Drake. Reg was recently awarded RNA Certificate in appreciation of his service in WWII. Member of Norwich Branch of RNA. Died February, aged 96.

Cdr Jeffery A Bagg OBE. HMS Excellent, Scylla, Cambridge, Collingwood. ASWE, DNOR, MOD Portsdown. Died January 19, aged 88.

Cdr John A D Ford. HMS Leopard, Heron, Ark Royal. DNOT, RNC Greenwich. Died February 20.

Col RM David L Bailey OBE. CGRM. JSSC. 40 and 45 Cdo RM, CTCRM. IMS Brussels. HMS Centurion. Died February 5, aged 95.

Maj RM Roderick F Gray. HMS Sheba, Fearless. CGRM. DN Plans. HQ Trg Gp RM. RNC Greenwich. Died February 4, aged 93.

Cdr Trevor E M Kirby OBE. HMS President, Goldcrest, Fulmar, Rooke. CO 899 NAS. NATO. Died January 28, aged 95.

Lt Cdr Anthony Portal. HMS Cochrane, Stubbington, Albion. NATO. Died February 8, aged 90.

Cdr Donald B Stolworthy. HMS Ark Royal, Fulmar, President, Heron, Seahawk, Centurion. FONAC. Died January.

Lt Cdr Myles A Cullen. HMS Dryad, Heron,

Seahawk, Saker, Ark Royal, Goldcrest, Albion, SHAPE. FOF3. Died January.

CPO (WL) Mike Minter. Joined the FAA in 1959 at HMS Ganges. He completed his specialist training as an Armourer at HMS Condor in Arbroath. Mike re-trained as a Weapons Electrical Technician in the 1960s. He spent most of his Naval Career based at RNAS Yeovilton serving with the Commando Helicopter Force and went on deployments with 845 NAS to Northern Ireland, Norway, USA, Canada and fought in the Falkland's Conflict operating ashore out of Navy Point. He left the service as a CPO (WL) in 1984. Mike moved to live and work in France in 1989 where he died on March 2, aged 79.

PO AF (L) Harry "Max" Aitken, served from March 1942 to June 1946 in 1832 SQD, 832 SQD, 815 SQD, HMS Begum, Unicorn, Jackdaw, Daedalus, Gannet. Recalled to service May 1951 to January 1953. Died March 13, aged 101.

Ask Jack

HMS Plym: I would like to trace the River-class frigate's unofficial timber crest. She left Devonport reserve in 1951/2 and deployed on Operation Hurricane in the Monte Bello Islands of Western Australia, where she was destroyed in the UK's first nuclear weapon test.

The ship was stripped beforehand and I have discovered an auction house sold a badge said to be from the frigate (K271) in 2007 but I believe it to be unofficial, something confirmed to me by Chatham Dockyard Historical Society.

Geoff Robinson

3 Mountfield, Borough Green, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 8HX

David McIntyre. I am trying to find details about my birth father, who joined the Royal Navy in 1939 and lived in Southsea. He died in 1976. Priscilla Breakspear.

Priscillabreakspear0@gmail.com

FRADU: I would like to contact the following former Fleet Requirements and Air Direction Unit Hunter pilots who mounted detachments at RAF

Gibraltar from 1980 to 1983: Tommy Thompson, Godfrey Underwood, Simon Willoughby and Derek Morter.

Tony Fairburn, Sqn Ldr (Rtd)
tony.fairbairn@btinternet.com

Johnny Craig: We are trying to contact Johnny for our 40th secondary school reunion. We know he joined the Royal Navy and served in submarines. He left St Columba's College in Dublin in 1982, aged around 18.

William Simpson
Whpsimpson@gmail.com

Reunions

HMS Hermes Association: Our reunion takes place at the New Continental Hotel, Plymouth, from March 31 to April 3. Non members and guests welcome all booking via IOW Tours 01983 405116 or contact Secretary **hmshermes.association@gmail.com**

HMS Mohawk Association: Our next reunion will take place at Grand Atlantic Hotel, Weston-Super-Mare from Friday March 31 to Monday April 3 2023. For details call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or contact Bob Proud via e-mail **rob.proud@mypostoffice.co.uk**

HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association and HMS Tenby Association: The 2023 reunion is confirmed at the Queen's Hotel, Southsea, from May 12 to 15, 2023. Contact Secretary Denis Askham at 07773651213 or email **askhamd3@gmail.com** For HMS Tenby contact **David Macalister at dmac121dm@gmail.com** or call 07716 699308

HMS Carysfort: A reunion will be held at the Orida Hotel in Maidstone from May 19 to 22,

2023, in a joint venture with HMS Cavalier. The reunion is open to all who served in the ship throughout her seven commissions (1945-1969) and their wives/partners. Contact SF Events Ltd at The Withyholts, Paul Mead, Stroud Glous. GL6 6PG Tel: 01452 813173 or email **associationmembers@sarahfletcherevents.co.uk** Further details can also be found at **www.hmscarysfort.co.uk** or email **hmscarysfort@gmail.com**

HMS Troubridge: Final Commission Association 1966-69 2023 reunion will be at the North Euston Hotel, The Esplanade, Fleetwood FY7 6BN, September 25 to 29 2023. Contact Bryan Pace at **Romft1@GMail.com**

HMS Undaunted, Eagle and Yarmouth Association: The 2023 Reunion Dinner & Dance is confirmed at the Bournemouth Carlton Hotel, East Overcliff Drive, Bournemouth BH1 3DN from Friday 20 October to Monday 23 October 2023. Contact Whiskey Walker on 01268 58041 or email: **whiskey666@outlook.com** or **andyjmancini@gmail.com** for further details.

Royal Navy Photographic Branch: Our reunion takes place at The Liner Hotel, Liverpool from Friday September 29 to Monday October 2. All former and serving photos plus wives/partners and guests are very welcome to help celebrate 104 years since the branch was formed. Meet and greet on Friday evening. Saturday, visits and tours around Liverpool City & Royal Docks. Saturday evening consists of a Nautical Extravaganza experience, Gala Dinner & traditional 'Up Spirits' enactment, in the Britannic Suite followed by dancing & entertainment. For further details please contact Social Secretary: Danny du Feu. Email: **ddf.photography@gmail.com**; Tel: 07711 083465.

HMS Lowestoft Association: Our 2023 reunion will take place at the Alexandra House Hotel, Swindon SN4 0QJ on the weekend of September 29 to October 1. All who served in Lowestoft during her RN service (1961-1985) are welcome to attend (including wives/partners/guests). Book direct with SF Events on 01452 813173, for further details and a booking form please email: **admin@hmslowestoft.uk**

Top PWO accepts Bowen family sword

THE successes of Lieutenant Commander Abbi Reid were recognised when she was awarded the Bowen Sword by the family of the Commander who donated it.

Commander Geoff Bowen joined the Royal Navy in 1963 as an Artificer Apprentice but in 1979, keen to push himself towards a new challenge, he successfully applied for a commission as a Special Duties (SD) Gunnery Officer, following in his father's footsteps.

In September 1981, he was awarded Top Special Duties candidate following his warfare training at HMS Dryad and was subsequently presented with a sword.

Following his ultimate promotion to Commander, he introduced selective promotion for all ratings and created the title of Senior Upper Yardman (SUY), also raising the upper age limit for SUYs from 34 to 41 years of age.

Cdr Bowen, who was a keen member of HMS Collingwood's Officers' Association, passed away in May 2022 and his family donated his treasured sword to be awarded to the top Principal Weapon Officer (PWO) who in 2022 was Lieutenant Commander Abbi Reid.

Lt Cdr Abbi Reid joined HMS Raleigh in July 2004 as an Operator Mechanic and went on to specialise in Electronic Warfare.



Following three stints in the Gulf she completed PO(EW) course and, whilst serving in HMS Somerset she was awarded a 1* Joint Commanders Commendation.

She attended PWO course in July 2018 where

she earned the Top PWO student award before joining HMS Dragon.

Regrettably, Abbi was unable to attend HMS Collingwood's Ceremonial Divisions and Prize Giving last summer and so the Bowen sword was received on her behalf by Lt Cdr Hannah Lee.

However, the family were very keen to meet her and present her with Commander Bowen's sword in person. Abbi is pictured left with Mrs Mary Bowen.

Geoff's widow Mrs Mary Bowen said: "Presenting the sword today means a lot to me because this is what Geoff wanted."

"He also said he wanted it to be presented to the top Senior Upper Yardman from the PWO's course and he would have been delighted that the recipient is female."

His daughter, Laura Watson agreed, saying: "It was very important to him to be able to continue his legacy and, through the passing-on of his sword, it will carry on."

Abbi said: "From the stories I've heard about Geoff, I feel we would definitely have got on. It's a real honour and I'm very humbled to receive his sword, meet his family and hear more about Geoff."

"It's been a privilege to hear how my career has reflected his. It's a real pleasure to accept this and it will have pride of place above my mantelpiece."

Ex-bootneck up for Everest challenge

FORMER Royal Marine and adventurer Craig Hunter plans to scale the world's highest mountain this spring for the green beret family.

Craig, from Ayrshire, intends to raise £1 for every metre Everest rises above sea level – £8,848 in all for the Royal Marines Charity – by reaching the summit.

In 2006, Craig was part of a military team which completed a 1,450-mile kite-powered ski trek to the South Pole in 65 days.

He's been training in Scotland this winter in preparation for his trip to the Himalayas – though Everest is more than six times higher than the UK's tallest peak Ben Nevis.

"The training has certainly been tough, but I'm as prepared as I can be for what I am certain will be the toughest challenge

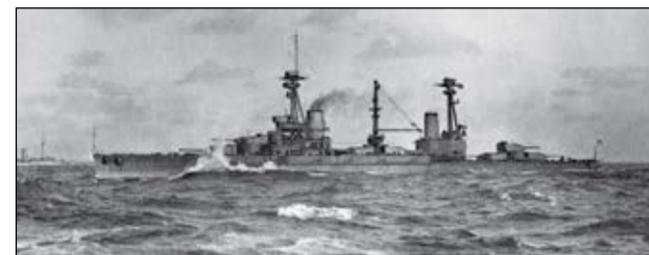
I've undertaken," Craig said. "Completing this challenge is my opportunity to help give something back to an organisation that supports so many men and women who sacrifice so much for their country."

After acclimatising at Everest Base Camp and getting used to the high altitude and lack of oxygen in the air, the former marine will wait for a suitable weather window to begin the assault on the mountain, assisted by Sherpa people, 70 years after the summit was first scaled.

You'll be able to follow his progress through regular video blogs and updates on his social media channels: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/craig-hunter-everest>.



£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the February edition of *Navy News* (right) was the Audacious-class aircraft carrier HMS Eagle, which served the RN from 1951 to 1972.

Michael Bird, from Portsmouth, wins £50 for sending us the correct answer. This month's mystery ship (above) is a dreadnought battleship built in the UK in the early 1910s. She had the distinction of having more heavy guns and turrets than any other dreadnought.

1. What was her name and
2. What was her nickname?
Please complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY.
We will also accept emailed entries to **subs@royalnavymail.mod.uk** with



April Mystery Ship in the header. Coupons and emails giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Entries must be received by May 12.

More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted.

Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned. The winner will be announced in our June edition.

MYSTERY PICTURE 337

Name _____

Address _____

My answers: (1) _____

(2) _____

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to - The Editor, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email: **news@royalnavymail.mod.uk** or editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk
- 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.
- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

ROYAL NAVY NAVY NEWS

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Ask Jack columns in next month's Noticeboard must be received by

APR 14 2023

ANNOUNCING The Commemorative King's Coronation Medal

AWARD, in support of SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, is proud to announce the striking of the Commemorative King's Coronation Medal to commemorate the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III on the 6th of May 2023, a truly historic occasion in British history.

Apply today and receive a FREE official King's Coronation Lapel Badge worth £7.95.



The Medal

Obverse: The obverse of the highly polished medal depicts the symbols of monarchy, the Crown, the Orb and the Sceptre surrounded by the wording THE CORONATION OF HIS MAJESTY CHARLES III and the date 6th MAY 2023.

Reverse: On the reverse the stylishly designed Charles III cypher is surrounded by the wording PROTECTOR OF ALL FAITHS to reflect the King's desire to protect the free practise of all faiths in this country and the date of the coronation.

Ribbon: The two broad rich purple stripes representing royalty are edged by two patriotic red stripes representing power, leadership and courage while the centre green stripe reflects the King's interest in the environment, sustainability and peace.

Medal Engraving: Your service number, rank, name & initials and service or regiment can be professionally engraved on the edge of the medal..

Individually Engraved Clasps: Specially engraved clasps (max of 20 characters) designed to match the finish of the medal highlight the details of your service.



Eligibility

Available to all veterans who served the crown to commemorate the King's Coronation and those who are currently serving members of the Armed Forces, Emergency Services personnel (paid, retained or voluntary), Prison Service, Police Community Support Officers, holders of the Victoria Cross and George Cross and members of the Royal Household. Next of kin and direct descendants may also apply. The miniature medal and all other items are available without restriction.

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KCMM	Miniature Medal	£17.50
KCRB	Ribbon Bar	£6.00
FMPP	Personalised Medal Presentation Case	£14.50
CMPSKC	Medal Presentation Set (SAVE £25.50)	£84.50

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