



NAVY NEWS

MARCH 2023



RUNNING LIKE CLOCKWORK

A Royal Marine pilot, left, and a sailor with Commando Helicopter Force secure a landing site for a Merlin Mk4 from 845 NAS during cold weather survival training in Norway. The Joint Helicopter Command annual operation starts with personnel learning how to live and survive in the frozen Arctic.

See pages 16-17

Picture: PO Phot Kyle Heller

Inside: ■ Medway, Spey & Tamar ■ New RN ships ■ Flight controllers



BACK IN ACTION: HMS Spey operates with the US Navy during their visit to South Korea



SPEY HEADS FOR KOREA, VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA...

LAST month we underlined Indo in the Royal Navy's Indo-Asia-Pacific mission, spearheaded by HMS Tamar.

This month we're underscoring Asia as well as Spey has emerged from her winter maintenance in Japan and resumed patrol with a vengeance.

She's pushed west from the Land of the Rising Sun, leaving the Pacific behind: Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia.

Cambodia? It's not featured in these pages in a very long time. How long? Well, at least 30 years.

Back in 1992-93 sailors and Royal Marines served with a UN transitional peacekeeping mission towards the end of the People's Republic of Kampuchea regime under Operation Lecturer but they were flown in and out.

Rewind to March 1975 and helicopter cruiser HMS Blake and tanker RFA Olva were dispatched to the Gulf of Thailand on Operation Faldage, the proposed evacuation of British and entitled personnel from Phnom Penh as Communist forces attacked the Khmer Republic government. British evacuees were eventually air-lifted, so the requirement for shipping was stood down.

So you have to go all the way back to the beginning of February 1958 for the last formal visit by a Royal Navy warship, frigate HMS Alert, to Cambodia.

Spey sailed into Sihanoukville (100 miles southwest of the capital Phnom Penh) almost 65 years to the day that the White Ensign was last seen in a Cambodian harbour, heralding a five-day stay in Ream Naval Base and a series of goodwill events marking 70 years of diplomatic relations between the UK and Cambodia.

Local dignitaries and media were waiting on the jetty for Spey, whose 50-strong crew are spending the rest of week either hosting or attending a series of events to highlight the UK's renewed presence in Southeast Asia, promote Anglo-Cambodian cooperation and trumpet the message of an outward-facing Global Britain.

In particular, the two countries are looking to forge strong military ties, on the back of accrediting the first non-resident defence attaché since the 1970s and welcoming the first Cambodian student at Sandhurst.

On the naval front, Spey hosted capability demonstrations and briefings for senior Cambodian military figures, plus a formal reception and Ceremonial Sunset.

In addition, sailors took part in football and volleyball matches, and hosted Cambodia technology and cookery students.

Chefs Leading Seaman Steve Dallimore and Petty Officer Andy Copeland hosted young people from a charity which offers culinary training and experience in Spey's galley.

"We thoroughly enjoyed welcoming students from the M'Lo Tapang training restaurant into the galley, it was great to be able to encourage younger budding chefs and give them a taste of life on board," said Steve.

Dominic Williams, Britain's Ambassador to Cambodia, said the charity had been left with a memorable experience – and that the Royal Navy had been excellent hosts. "It was lovely to accompany the bright and enthusiastic young people on board. HMS Spey made them feel really welcome."

The visit to Cambodia by HMS Spey rode the coattails of a near-mirror-image stop in Ho Chi Minh City in neighbouring Vietnam – with almost identical aims.

Celebrations marking 50 years of diplomatic relations between the UK and Hanoi lay at the heart of Spey's visit.

Aside from naval talks and demonstrations, there were cultural exchanges and Spey hosted 18 pupils from Ho Chi Minh City's British International School, introducing them to the basics of navigating and highlighting the ship's environmental tech which makes her one of the greenest in the Fleet, while the ship's footballers took on the local Vietnamese Naval Brigade, losing out by the odd goal in 11.

"It was a fantastic opportunity to host – and to be hosted – in Ho Chi Minh City. We felt very welcomed and look forward

to visiting again in the future," said Lieutenant Bruce Clarke.

Weapons engineer Leading Engineer Technician Cian Conroy added: "What a great visit Ho Chi Minh City was, experiencing the culture and tasting the delicious food."

Spey also used the visit to advance gender equality by marking the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, led by the ship's doctor, Surgeon Lieutenant Ellen Moore and weapons engineer Petty Officer Hannah Chenery, who said: "It was a great opportunity to be in Vietnam and promote equality in Engineering and Medicine to all the students."

Unlike Cambodia, Vietnam has been visited on a regular basis for the last few decades; Spey's the fourth Royal Navy ship to call on the country in the past five years, making the UK among Vietnam's most persistent and reliable partners in maritime security.

"We had a wonderful time in Vietnam," said Commanding Officer Commander Michael Proudman.

"What an honour it was to host the first event of the year to celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations between our two countries.

"This visit does not only represent an opportunity for us to intensify our collaboration with our Vietnamese counterparts but also underline the UK's ongoing commitment to promoting global stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region."

It was hot and humid in both Vietnam and Cambodia... very welcome after temperatures as low as -17C (-25C with wind chill) in South Korea.

Spey was the first Royal Navy warship to visit Pyeongtaek - 40 miles south of Seoul - for a series of exercises with her Korean and US Navy counterparts.

It proved a rich visit - professionally and personally, from exercises testing the ship's company in operations they had not faced before to a sobering visit to the Demilitarised Zone which separates the two Koreas - and two ideologies.

Spey's first task was acting as a planning and operating base, the ship disembarked US and Korean personnel on to

two combatant boats to carry out infiltration and exfiltration training. This is the first time she has played this type of role for a raiding exercise, showing how the second-generation Offshore Patrol Vessels can be adapted for different uses.

"The work I did with the Republic of Korea and US Naval Forces was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I am very grateful to have been involved," said Lieutenant Chris Wykes, Spey's gunnery officer.

Next, the crew headed to the DMZ to learn more about the history of the Korean War and Cold War. It was the site of peace discussions during the Korean War and has since been the location of various conferences over issues involving North and South Korea, their allies, and the United Nations.

Away from the demilitarised strip separating the two Koreas, few places underline the ongoing tensions more than the museum to the Cheonan, sunk in 2010 by a North Korean torpedo. Sadly the lives of 46 sailors on board were lost along with a diver who died during the subsequent rescue efforts.

For cadet OC Huby, visiting the Demilitarised Zone was an important moment: "To see the DMZ was a privilege and an important reminder of why the RN is helping to strengthen ties, not just with the South Korea, but across other Indo Pacific countries."

Back in Pyeongtaek, Spey opened up for tours for Korean Navy, embassy staff and senior delegates. Her sailors were then given the chance to visit RoKN ship Geong-gi, being warmly welcomed on board.

In Jin Hae, officer cadets from Dartmouth and ship's company played a 3-3 draw against sailors from RoKN ship Jeon-Buk. IST cadet OC Jenkinson said: "Being a part of HMS Spey's ship's company during our time in South Korea has been an eye-opening experience."

"Both embracing the local culture and learning about the challenges in the region, it has been great to see how the Royal Navy presence in Indo-Asia Pacific is helping to forge positive relationships."

HMS Tamar's ship's company and sailors from the Bangladeshi Navy together as the patrol ship departed Chittagong
Pictures by LPhot Chris Sellars



TAMAR BANG ON THE MONEY

WHILE TAMAR VISITS BANGLADESH



WELD WELD WELD: A Welder dismantling part of a ship during HMS Tamar's trip to the Peace, Happiness and Prosperity Shipbreaking Yard



FORGING BONDS: Commander Teilo Elliot-Smith, the Commanding Officer of HMS Tamar, giving a speech during a culture evening in Bangladesh

To the west Tamar's Indian Ocean adventure – we left her last month departing the Andaman Islands – continued in Chittagong, picking up where HMS Kent left 16 months ago, fostering naval, political and economic ties.

Tamar made the same journey up the River Karnaphuli, as crews of Bangladeshi warships and Coast Guard vessels lined the sides of ships and cheered the Royal Navy vessel into port, where a band, 50-strong reception committee and a bouquet of flowers awaited Commander Teilo Elliot-Smith.

The welcome set the stage for a series of discussions, combined training and cultural exchanges with the emphasis on underlining the UK's commitment to Bangladesh.

Tamar hosted Bangladeshi civic and military leaders for a demonstration of what the ship – and her four sisters – can do, plus a traditional Ceremonial Sunset.

Divers from the Royal Navy's specialist Diving and Threat Exploitation Group flew out from the UK to conduct joint training with their Bangladeshi counterparts.

And Commander Elliot-Smith addressed 200 officers at the Maritime School of Warfare and Tactics about leadership in adversity, drawing on his experience from the grounding of HMS Nottingham off Australia 21 years ago. A concerted effort by the ship's company saved the destroyer off Wolf Rock in 2002.

"From the moment we arrived, we were hosted exceptionally," he said.

"The Bangladeshi Navy have been very eager to

exchange knowledge and understand the way we operate our Offshore Patrol Vessels.

"The visit has made clear the strategic importance of Bangladesh. Its Navy approaches interaction with the UK with a great sense of reverence, and they celebrate unanimously that their doctrine and policies are aligned to our own."

On a solemn note, both navies honoured victims of the 'forgotten war', the campaign in Burma in World War 2, who are buried in Chittagong Commonwealth War Cemetery.

"It must have been so difficult, for those here fighting and the loved ones at home," said logistician AB Sean Brown, who was moved by the number of deaths after May 1945 among the 731 graves – including over 200 from pre-independence India (which included Bangladesh).

"Whilst Europe celebrated victory, mothers worried sick for sons far away, and soldiers fought some of the hardest battles of the war."

Tamar's marine engineers conducted damage control training, and highlighted their ship's 'green' features which make the ship one of the greenest in the Fleet – of particular interest as Bangladesh is frequently the victim of the effects of climate change.

The country is renowned for its ability to recycle – demonstrated with a tour for some of Tamar's crew of the Peace, Happiness and Prosperity Shipbreaking Yard. Vessels of all shapes, sizes and roles end their lives at the PHP facility, work carried out to strict 'green' credentials and with an emphasis on the safety and welfare of the workforce.

"Everyone sees videos of these huge ships being

beached prior to breaking up, but walking around the yard really gives a sense of the scale of these great pieces of engineering," said junior Marine Engineer Officer Sub Lieutenant Laurence Wellesbury.

"It is also so impressive and reassuring to learn that 98 per cent of these old ships gets recycled and repurposed for use elsewhere."

Following an intense few days of engagement events, Tamar's crew were invited to relax at a cultural evening and dinner with Bangladeshi Navy.

Local naval families dressed up in costume and performed a mixture of Bangladeshi and British fusion, screened a multimedia presentation of Bangladeshi and Royal Navy collaboration across the past 50 years of independence and treated the Tamar crew to a banquet of native delicacies.

"The Bangladeshi food scene is huge in the UK, and an important part of our culture," said weapons Engineering Technician Tom Porritt. "But to eat these dishes cooked in their nation of origin was an absolute treat!"

The visit closed with a match against the Bangladesh Navy's football team. Several hundred spectators watched a close tie played on baked-hard pitch with the hosts running out 3-1 winners.

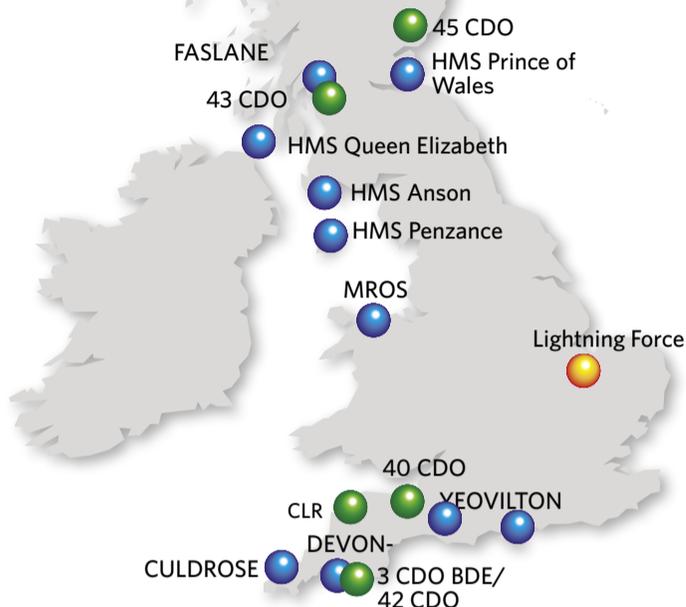
And that was Chittagong. The visit concluded with a combined sweep through the northern Bay of Bengal by Tamar and patrol craft BNS Durjoy and Nirmal.

Sailors traded places to experience life at sea with the two navies, as the three ships conducted a series of manoeuvres and exercises in close company before Tamar continued on the next leg of her Indian Ocean patrol.

Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Somerset
HMS Richmond
HMS Hurworth
HMS Tyne
HMS Mersey
HMS Severn
HMS Montrose
HMS Portland
HMS Dauntless
HMS Duncan

HMS Defender
Coastal Forces Squadron
XV Patrick Blackett
Project Wilton
814 NAS
824 NAS
825 NAS
RFA Tiderace
RFA Fort Victoria



GLOBAL | MODERN | READY

THE **Commando Helicopter Force** are on their regular as **Clockwork** winter deployment to the Arctic, learning or re-learning how to survive, move, operate and fight in an extreme cold weather environment (see pages 1, 16-17).

The job of protecting their state-of-the-art aircraft from the elements is now a little easier through the advent of special covers placed over the cabs and rotors which keep the worst of the cold (or heat in a desert) at bay.

Two new specialist ships bought to support Royal Navy mine-hunting operations have arrived in the UK (see centre pages). The ships, which will operate a range of uncrewed systems, will be manned by the **Royal Fleet Auxiliary**.

Yesterday's Royal Navy handed the torch to tomorrow's Fleet as work began on the Royal Navy's newest frigate, **HMS Active** (see page 19).

The first steel has also been cut on the third next-generation nuclear deterrent submarines – **HMS Warspite** (see page 19).

The latest of the Royal Navy's advanced nuclear-powered attack submarines, **HMS Anson**, has left the shipyard at Barrow-in-Furness where she was built ahead of sea trials (see page 13). The fifth Astute-class attack submarine sailed from BAE Systems' shipyard bound for her new home, His Majesty's Naval Base Clyde in Scotland.

Sailors who will be responsible for directing and co-ordinating F-35 jets have started their journey to becoming **Fighter Controllers** (see pages 14-15). The Royal Navy School of Fighter Control welcomes four students at a time to its 13-week course and the latest cohort are now being put through their paces.

HMS Tamar and **HMS Spey** continue their five-year mission to the Indo-Asia-Pacific (see pages 2-3). **Tamar** joined the Bangladeshi Navy for joint training in the Bay of Bengal during her week-long visit while **Spey** became the first Royal Navy warship to visit Pyeongtaek in the Republic of Korea.

Maritime Reservist **AB Kieran Nicholson**, from **HMS Dalriada**, spent several months onboard **HMS Tamar** in the Pacific and said it had been the best time of his life (see page 23).

HMS Medway has swapped the Caribbean for the Falklands as she temporarily takes over from **HMS Forth** while the latter undergoes a refit. (see page 6)

Survey ship **HMS Scott** called in on the Caribbean island of St Lucia (see page 9), the first visit by a Royal Navy vessel in eight years.

An uncrewed boat that can search for and detect underwater threats has arrived in the Gulf, as the Royal Navy takes an important step towards autonomous minehunting operations (see page 5). **HNMB Harrier** is part of the ten-year programme for replacing the navy's current fleet of mine counter measure vessels and her time in the Middle East will be the foundation for future autonomous kit.

It's back to business for Britain's flagship as **HMS Queen Elizabeth** limbers up for a busy 2023 on operations (see page 13). F-35 Lightning jets, Chinook and Merlin helicopters have all joined the Portsmouth-based carrier, which has resumed training after a few weeks' maintenance in Portsmouth over the winter.

Royal Navy icebreaker **HMS Protector** has completed her Antarctic scientific mission for this season safeguarding birdlife and laying the groundwork for further research next winter (see page 11).

Meanwhile some of the crew took to the ice to play the most southerly game of **Warhammer 40K** (see page 27).

The Royal Navy will have all new 'eye in the sky' uncrewed aerial technology to find and track threats as part of a £20m contract (see page 7). Powerful surveillance sensors from Thales will be fitted to an S-100 uncrewed air system called **Peregrine** and feed real-time images and radar data back to Royal Navy warships on the front line from 2024.

The crew of Type 23 frigate **HMS Kent** began the year getting their warship ready for the Royal Navy's trainers and assessors (see pages 28-29).

Royal Navy personnel from **HMS Hibernia** helped World War 2 veteran Henry Morrell Murphy mark his 100th birthday (see page 30).

The campaign to save **HMS Bronington** – once commanded by King Charles III – has received a boost (see page 31) by achieving charitable status.

Sea Cadets have reached almost 8,000 schoolgirls through its Marine Engineering Project (MEP) project in 2022, inspiring them to consider a career as engineers and scientists (see page 33).

Finally, around 800 Royal Navy personnel travelled to Les Deux Alpes in France for the **Royal Navy Snowsports Festival** (see pages 36-37).



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

RN-led task force seizes illicit drugs



Above: Drugs seized by the US Coast Guard cutter Emlen Tunnell, which was supporting CTF 150. Below: Saudi Navy Rear Adm Abdullah Al-Mutairi, Vice Adm Brad Cooper, Commander US 5th Fleet and new CTF 150 commander Captain Jim Byron RN



A **TASK** force led by the Royal Navy has made a huge drugs seizure in the Gulf of Oman.

US Coast Guard cutter the Emlen Tunnell was patrolling regional waters in support of Combined Task Force 150 when it seized 4,000 kg of hashish and 512 kg of methamphetamine from a fishing vessel.

The drugs have a total estimated UK wholesale value of £13.2 million.

CTF 150 is one of four task forces organised under the Combined Maritime Forces and the organisation's first drugs bust of 2023.

"This is just the beginning of our work in delivering maritime security operations in the region to stop illicit activities and drug smuggling," said Royal Navy Captain James Byron, the CTF 150 commander.

"This comes as a result of a valued partnership between CTF 150 and all partner nations in Combined Maritime Forces."

Captain Byron assumed command of the multinational task force on January 18 after Royal Saudi Navy Rear Adm. Abdullah Al-Mutairi led the unit for six months.

Captain Byron is supported by international staff made up of Officers and sailors from the Royal Navy, Royal New Zealand Navy and Marina Militare (Italy).

This is the 11th time the Royal Navy have taken command of the task force, tasking international warships and aircraft to patrol the Indian Ocean and waters of the Middle East to deter terrorism and illicit activities which support it, such as drugs smuggling.

Since 2021, CMF has interdicted \$1 billion worth of illicit narcotics during maritime patrols. CMF is the largest international naval partnership in the world consisting of 38 member-nations and partners.

HARRIER'S HOTTING UP



Picture: RNMB Harrier in the Gulf with RFA Cardigan Bay

AN UNCREWED boat that can search for and detect underwater threats has arrived in the Gulf, in an important step towards autonomous mine-hunting operations, and a demonstration of the UK's continued commitment to the Middle East.

Royal Navy Motor Boat Harrier is part of the ten-year programme for replacing the Navy's current fleet of mine counter measure vessels and her time in the region will lay the foundations for future autonomous kit.

While deployed for operations, the 11-metre boat will work with host ship RFA Cardigan Bay to conduct a series of demonstrations and trials that will prove her ability to operate in the harsh and demanding weather conditions of the Gulf.

Harrier is capable of operating both autonomously (pre-programmed to conduct a mission) or remotely from a ship or shore-based remote control centre. She tows a side-

scan sonar behind her to look for mines on the seabed, alerting units ashore or at sea of their whereabouts.

In the future, she will also work with remotely-operated underwater vehicles and a mine-sweeping system.

The tests will be key for seeing how the Atlas remote-controlled mine-sweeper boat deals with hot climates, having already proved her ability in UK waters.

She will face water temperatures of more than 30C in the summer, very different from her previous home of Faslane.

Harrier will be put through her paces on integrating with Royal Navy personnel and units in the region – mine counter measure battlestaff, the UK's Naval Support Facility in Bahrain and countries who work with the UK, protecting shipping and the freedom of navigation.

Harrier will provide another arrow in

the quiver of the mine countermeasures commander and her success will be stepping-stone for complimentary autonomous kit coming available in the near future.

Lieutenant Commander Mark Shaw, commanding officer of Mission System Team One in the Mine Threat Exploitation Group, said: "We are excited to be involved in the Mine Hunting Capability programme which will transition the Royal Navy from a ship-based mine counter measures (MCM) capability to maritime autonomous off-board systems.

"Our task is to prove this first iteration of the capability in an operational environment.

"This is a step change in the way the Royal Navy conducts MCM, and we are not just proving the equipment and operating procedures but setting the template on how we operate and integrate within the wider force.

"This is the future of Royal Navy MCM and we

are proud to be at the leading edge of its delivery. The deployment of this cutting-edge technology to the Gulf signals the UK's commitment to the region and to freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce.

A move towards autonomous mine-hunting will enable the Royal Navy to counter the rapidly evolving threat of modern sea mines while reducing the risk to sailors.

Commodore Steve Prest, Director Navy Acquisition, said: "It is thrilling to see the first unit of mine-hunting capability (MHC) equipment deployed on operations to undertake its operational evaluation phase.

"This activity marks the start of a period of new learning and discovery for the Royal Navy's MHC programme, all while delivering meaningful operational output, and brings to reality this transformational approach to mine warfare in the Royal Navy."



Final support boat delivered to divers

THE last of six new boats to improve support to Royal Navy divers has been delivered.

Replacing outdated vessels, the 15m Vahana boats provide improved speed, operational range and navigation equipment – all vital to diving operations.

The £51m project has seen the boats delivered over five years and the sixth and final one has now been handed over.

Two of the vessels are based at the Defence Dive School in Portsmouth, with the others operated by the Fleet Diving Units in Portsmouth, Plymouth and Scotland. One of the boats is also working in Gibraltar.

Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S), the procurement arm for the Ministry of Defence, awarded the contract to Dorset firm Atlas Elektronik in 2017.

James Melia, project manager for DE&S Boats Team, said: "It is great news to see the six dive support boats delivered to the Royal Navy and reach full operating capability.

"The vessels offer a significantly updated and upgraded maritime

platform from which Royal Navy personnel can conduct their duties. They enable movement from analogue to digital capability with a major update to the command, control and navigation system."

The new vessels are replacing boats which were originally introduced into service in the early 1990s, and are therefore reaching the end of their lives despite upgrades.

Their introduction is part of the wider Vahana Workboat programme, which is delivering 35 vessels to the Royal Navy.

The contract has sustained 15 jobs at Atlas Elektronik, plus a further 45 across the supply chain.

Wesley Galliver, head of surface ship systems division at the company, said: "We are immensely proud to support the Royal Navy and to be part of the One Defence approach.

"The capability provided by the dive boat variant of our SEA-class vessel will significantly enhance the Royal Navy's military diving capability. They flexible, modular design of the SEA-class vessels along with common systems will help rationalise training, spares and support across the flotilla."

Duncan set for the life of Orion



HMS Duncan is heading for NATO exercises after proving her ability to operate to the highest level following a major overhaul.

The Portsmouth-based ship waved goodbye to the UK for the first time in three years having completed five weeks of Basic Operational Sea Training (BOST) off the south coast.

The Type 45 destroyer is off to Toulon to take part in a French-led exercise alongside NATO allies.

Having been put through their paces by the teams at Fleet Operational Standards and Training (FOST) – recently renamed to acknowledge it assuming the functions of MCTA and elements of the Surface Flotilla – the crew are now readying the ship to step it up another gear.

Where FOST developed the ability for Duncan to fight as a ship, Exercise Orion in the Mediterranean will test her ability to operate with allies as part of a large task group.

Five weeks at FOST saw a gradual increase in training tempo with Duncan moving from basic safety at sea to air defence exercises, collisions, disaster relief missions and Thursday Wars of increasingly scale and complexity until the assessors were satisfied the 200 crew were at the top of their game.

Now those skills will be put into practice with the added challenge of operating in consort with ships of multiple nations,

including Germany, Spain, Italy and the USA.

Commander Ben Martin, Duncan's Commanding Officer, said: "This is a really important step in Duncan's journey towards becoming fully operational this year; it will challenge the team but we will prove our ability to operate with NATO partners in high-intensity operations."



Having completed a major refit, involving the installation of new sensors, propulsion machinery overhauls and many gallons of paint applied to her hull, Duncan has reached the end of the regeneration process and is ready for the challenges of Ex Orion.

Billed as France's "biggest ever war game", the exercise will involve 7,000 sailors and aircrew with naval manoeuvres in the Mediterranean and an amphibious operation in southern France.

Duncan's sailors are looking forward to taking part and to hone the skills learned at FOST.

For many of the sailors on Duncan, this will be the first time operating outside UK waters.

Engineer Technician Davis Fowler the youngest and newest member of the team. His first day on board was a Thursday War.

"It's a steep learning curve but I couldn't have asked for more from my first time at sea," he said.

Pictures: LPhoto Unaisi Luke

'cause you're hot then you're cold...

PEERLESS, clear endless blue skies, azure waters, a smart new jetty, HMS Medway. Must be another day in Caribbean paradise...

Wrong. This is East Cove Military Port which is (1) the definition of bleak (2) the definition of windswept (3) rarely blessed by a clear-blue sky.

But somehow, for a day at least, Medway dragged the weather with her on a 6,000-plus-mile journey from her well-trodden stomping ground, to her temporary home for the next few months.

The whites and tropical clothes are packed away as the Offshore Patrol Ship fills her sister's shoes for the bulk of 2023, acting as the islands' persistent Royal Navy presence.

The Offshore Patrol Ship is temporarily standing in for HMS Forth whilst the latter undergoes refit in Gibraltar – her first major overhaul since leaving the UK over three years ago.

Medway's task is identical: to reassure British citizens that the Navy is permanently on hand to provide support and assistance.

To date, Medway has spent her entire operational career in and around the Caribbean, reassuring the overseas

territories, as well as providing disaster relief/humanitarian aid in the wake of natural disaster (most recently in the aftermath of Hurricanes Ian and Fiona) and supporting the fight against the illegal narcotics trade (£24m illegal Class A narcotics seized in tandem with the US Coast Guard).

The long journey south was not without incident; last month Medway's crew saved all five sailors on an ocean-going tug when it started sinking.

"Travelling the length of the Atlantic from Florida to the Falklands has been another impressive achievement for Medway and her ship's company," said Commanding Officer Commander Chris Hollingworth.

"In the space of a month the ship has covered more than 6,500 nautical miles, saved five lives at sea and seamlessly integrated into a new theatre.

"The opportunity to cover the responsibilities of the South Atlantic Patrol Vessel gives my ship's company the chance to see a new part of the world and they can't wait to explore the Falkland Islands and witness first-hand the breath-taking scenery and stunning wildlife prevalent in the region."

The ship's new domain embraces not just the main Falklands Islands archipelago but also the wildlife paradise of South Georgia and the even more distant, and uninhabited, South Sandwich Isles.

The climate, environment, seas, wildlife and human inhabitants are all very different from those in the Tropic of Cancer.

All but a few of the ship's company passed over the Equator for the first time on the voyage south – prompting a traditional seafaring ceremony 'crossing the line', featuring lots of dressing up, dunkings in water and good humour... and a certificate from Neptune, ruler of the deep, to mark the occasion.

Having recently joined as Young Officer, Sub Lieutenant Sid James relished the opportunity to join in.

"I'd only travelled as far as France before joining the Royal Navy. In just four months I have already visited four countries spanning two continents. It's been incredible."

Medway will begin her first patrol shortly. She is due to remain in the South Atlantic until Forth returns later in the year.



Handlers with care

POSING for a group selfie with their 19 coursemates are Naval Airmen Eva Alcock and Owen Giles – all celebrating completing 12 months of intensive training at HMS Raleigh and RNAS Culdrose.

They are ready to ensure the safe operation of F-35s, Merlins, Wildcats, Chinooks and any other aircraft to drop in on the flight decks of Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships.

Having gone through their civvy to sailor conversion at Raleigh, the 21 would-be aircraft handlers rocked up at Culdrose for their branch training with the RN School of Flight Deck Operations at RNAS Culdrose.

Eighteen-year-old Eva from Taunton, Somerset, was awarded a trophy by the Aircraft Handlers' Association as the best student in her class, presented by Falklands' veteran aircraft handler Nick Martin, accompanied by the school's commanding officer Lieutenant Commander Phill Yates.

She said: "I always knew I wanted to join the navy since I was six. I knew I didn't want an 'ordinary' job – I wanted a job that is going to push me."

As aircraft handlers, they have learnt how to move and marshal aircraft on the flight deck and how to deal with emergency incidents, such as crashes or fires.

"During the training, I've done lots of things that I am really proud about," NA Alcock added. "With the firefighting, I didn't think I would be able to do that – like being in confined spaces. I imagined I couldn't do it, but I have."

She will now join aircraft carrier HMS Prince Of Wales and said: "I am really looking forward to going to sea. When we joined, we were told everything that we had to do, and, little by little, we've got to know more. Now we're expected to know what to do and we're going to be put in situations where you're not told and you're going to have to use your training and do it yourself."

Also completing his training was 21-year-old Owen from Sittingbourne in Kent.

He said: "We've done lots of firefighting using breathing apparatus, cutting up cars and putting out aircraft fires. We've also learnt how to manoeuvre aircraft. Now is the time to put all that training into practice."

He now joins 1700 Naval Air Squadron, which provides small teams of specialist sailors to allow flying operations on warships and support ships across the Fleet, especially RFA vessels.

Picture: LPhoto Baz Swainsbury, RNAS Culdrose

THE RN'S NEW EYE IN THE SKY



THE Royal Navy will have all new 'eye in the sky' uncrewed aerial technology to find and track threats as part of a c£20m contract.

Powerful surveillance sensors from Thales will be fitted to an S-100 uncrewed air system provided by Schiebel and feed real-time images and radar data back to Royal Navy warships on the front line from 2024.

This new flexible and tactical uncrewed air system will be known as 'Peregrine' – a name with strong historic links to the Fleet Air Arm.

Alongside the Navy's Wildcat patrol helicopters, Peregrine will enable round-the-clock surveillance of targets over Gulf waters, and will be available for a spectrum of operational tasks to support allies and partners in the region – including during missions countering pirates, terrorists and smugglers.

Peregrine can be launched in challenging conditions, day and night, and will be deployed to protect warships, greatly extending detection range and fidelity, for enhanced intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance gathering.

Rear Admiral James Parkin, the Royal Navy's Director Develop, said: "I am delighted that we are at the stage where this excellent capability is about to be introduced into the front line.

"As a system both deployed onto, and integrated into, warships and auxiliaries operating in congested and complex areas of the world, the Peregrine aircraft offers what the Royal Navy needs in order to respond to the wide variety of threats that we are facing today.

"Today is also a key milestone in the Fleet Air Arm's evolution to a mixed crewed

and uncrewed fighting arm of the Fleet, and we are anticipating learning many lessons as such technologies continue to develop and offer new opportunities for the current and future Navy."

The air system – which takes off from the ship's flight deck like a helicopter would – will be the first uncrewed rotary wing aircraft to operate alongside a Wildcat helicopter, allowing for round-the-clock aerial surveillance in a timely boost to the Royal Navy's operational capability.

The high-definition imagery and radar data from Peregrine will be fed directly into the ship's Combat Management System, allowing the command team to have good situational awareness and make rapid operational decisions.

Peregrine will be deployed directly into an operational theatre from mid-2024, initially for two years, with the option to extend. This foundation based on operational lessons will give the Royal Navy valuable experience and understanding of the use of uncrewed systems in this role ahead of further decisions and investments through the Future Maritime Aviation Force programme.

The S-100 has rapid launch ability and superior mission endurance of several hours. It will be fitted with the Thales I-Master radar, which will find, track and identify targets using its proven and modern, technology.

The name Peregrine is inspired by the former HMS Peregrine, the Royal Naval Air Station in Ford, West Sussex, that was used after the Second World War as the Fleet Air Arm's dedicated test and development centre in the early years of carrier-borne jet aircraft.

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Sun shines on Scott



Clockwise from left: HMS Scott's ship's company in Fortaleza; Cdr Tom Harrison with Brazilian naval officers; Scott's footballers took on their Brazilian hosts; the halo phenomena



WISH you were here?

Temperatures in the high 20s... dropping to a 'chilly' 24/25 at night. This is Castries, capital of St Lucia and the latest port of call for HMS Scott.

Scott may be the largest ship in the Royal Navy's survey flotilla (and fifth largest vessel under the White Ensign) but she's dwarfed here by one of Royal Caribbean's Quantum-class cruise ships (168,000 tonnes... a dozen times' the RN vessel's displacement).

It's the first time the Royal Navy has called on St Lucia in eight years (the last ship to visit was patrol vessel HMS Severn) so there was considerable interest in Scott's presence during her six-day stop – from cruise passengers photographing their smaller grey neighbour to a series of engagement events fostering UK/RN/West Indies ties.

Crew laid on a capability demonstration for island leaders, Commanding Officer Commander Tom Harrison discussed some of the security challenges facing St Lucia with Acting Governor General, His Excellency Cyril Errol Charles, and also opportunities the island is seizing as the world shakes off the shackles of Covid lockdowns.

The visit was a welcome break after another month at sea data gathering in the mid-Atlantic, conducting deep ocean survey work to support Royal Navy operations.

Survey work is often repetitive, but with Scott operating in the mid-ocean, often far from other seagoing traffic and certainly any light pollution – which plagues stargazing around the UK – it's allowed the 50-strong crew to enjoy Nature unbound at times.

"Operating mid-Atlantic, Scott is

often treated to fantastic astronomic and atmospheric phenomena, including this lunar halo," explained Lieutenant Commander Phil Boak, the ship's operations officer.

"The halo is produced by refraction or reflection of light by ice crystals suspended in the atmosphere and is a magnificent sight."

HMS Scott left the UK at the beginning of July last year and isn't due to return home until this autumn.

By the beginning of December Scott had already surveyed a greater area of ocean/seabed than on any previous deployment (a swathe of the Atlantic the size of Germany).

To sustain her, she takes on supplies and rotates a segment of her crew roughly once a month.

Before the Christmas/New Year stint in the central Atlantic, Scott took a short break in Fortaleza, Brazil – the first RN vessel to visit since long-decommissioned destroyer HMS Gloucester back in 2009.

Scott hosted some Brazilian officers for the entry into the north coast port – they were struck by the similar training, procedures, and equipment used by both navies.

Once his ship was alongside, Cdr Harrison called on the local Brazilian Navy headquarters, where Capitao-de-fregata Oliveira underlined the strength of the partnership between the two navies, outlined the challenges his navy faces policing Brazil's long Atlantic coastline, tackling pollution and drug smuggling.

Scott's sailors took on local sailors on the football pitch, shared damage control skills with their Brazilian counterparts and donate various gifts to a monastery for distribution among the city's homeless population.



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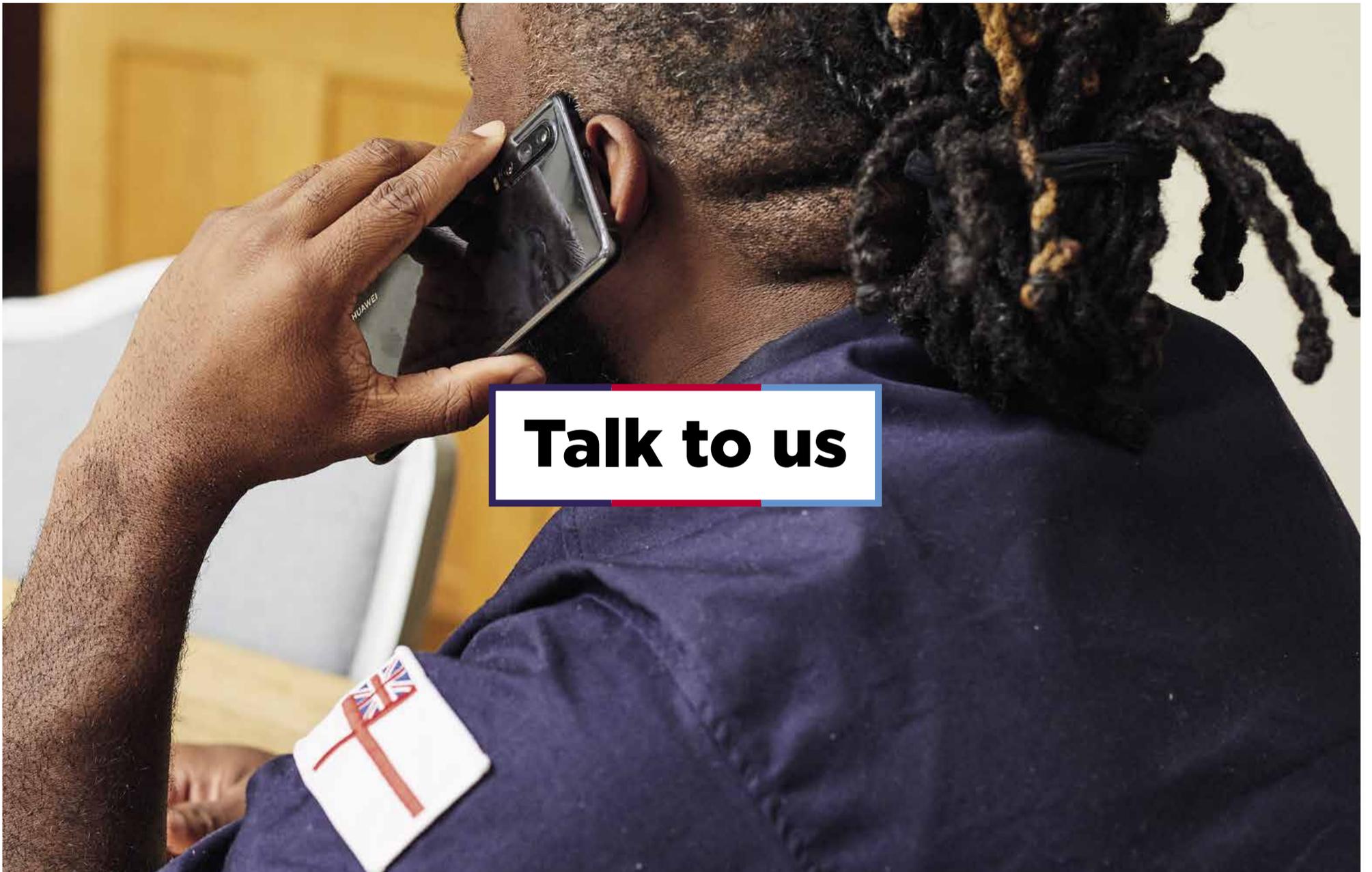


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01
Swoopy, the Southern giant petrel

02
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03
Gobby the kelp gull

04
Adelie penguins



05
Eddie the Elephant Seal

Birdspotting

BECAUSE with a name like Avian Island, you're going to have to know your feathered friends.

Imperial shags, south polar skuas, brown skuas, southern giant petrels, kelp gulls and Wilson's storm petrels.

All use the tiny island – not a mile long, rising 130ft out of the Southern Ocean on the western fringe of the Antarctic Peninsula, it's a breeding ground for seven species of birds. Not least 77,515 breeding pairs of adélie penguins.

That was down to the 2013 census. A decade later, eight sailors from the Royal Navy's icebreaker headed ashore to help scientists with the latest count. They mostly encountered petrels and adélies, but also came across a solitary chinstrap penguin, plus Weddell and elephant seals.

The unique island is protected by international law, but that doesn't protect it from either the elements or the impact of humanity. The team collected rubbish (broken glass, foam, small plastic islands) – thankfully in relatively small quantities.

Avian Island was the limit of Protector's third and final work period of the 2022-23 austral summer, supporting scientific research, conducting surveys, laying the groundwork for further research next

winter and making vital deliveries.

Such as carrying supplies and aviation fuel to the British Antarctic Survey base at Rothera, not only a hub for the scientists' work in the region but also a key link with the South Pole, 1,565 miles away.

The route to Rothera took Protector through the Lemaire Channel, a strait between the Peninsula's Graham Land and Booth Island. Thanks to its beauty, width and towering mountains on either side it's known as 'Kodak Alley' for providing photographers with stunning imagery.

The journey also took the icebreaker through the Gullet for the first time – a narrow channel between the eastern extremity of Adelaide Island and the west coast of Graham Land.

Having delivered her cargo, Protector enjoyed a brief break at the remote base. Two officers decided to wage the most southerly battle of Warhammer on the planet in the snow and ice (*see page 27*).

And having played on what is possibly the most southerly football pitch on the planet, Protector's footballers trotted out again on the airfield apron at Rothera, which served as a makeshift 'pitch' for a 6-1 drubbing at the hands of the BAS team, more accustomed to the unconventional surface.

"The opportunity to play a football match against such a spectacular backdrop was truly a once in a lifetime experience, despite the disappointing scoreline," said Protector's Assistant Logistics Officer, Sub Lieutenant 'Otto' Ottewill. "The scenery and landscape

“Hopefully, this is our small contribution to the future sustainability of our planet.”

– CPO STEF MERLO

that we've been able to view whilst operating in the Antarctic has been breathtaking and it is something I'll never forget."

Elsewhere, Protector used her final work period to pave the way for future work.

Hydrographers established a 'geodetic point' on Goudier Island, a marker which will serve as an accurate location reference point when surveyors return.

"I have had the opportunity to experience different types of surveys including establishing a geodetic mark to collate positional data as

well as operating on the survey motor boat, surveying the seabed for depth and safe transit for the ship," said Able Seaman Abi Potter, a specialist hydrographer.

"It has been a great experience and I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in the Antarctic."

Among the more memorable visits of the year was Horseshoe Island, home of a BAS research station until the 1960s. Abandoned, it now acts as a museum. While some sailors and Royal Marines recorded the state of the hut, hydrographers carried out a tidal survey – again providing data which can be used as reference point for future survey work in the area.

"As we sailed north we were treated to the sight of orca whales hunting seals by creating waves to sweep them off the ice into the water," said Lieutenant Commander Dave Pitt, Protector's logistics officer. "It was a nail-biting watch – the ship's company rooted for the seals, all of whom got away on this occasion."

The final survey work was conducted in Bigourdan Fjord using the ship's survey motor boat, James Caird IV. It swept a safe channel through a narrow passage ahead of Protector herself, leading her through a previously-inaccessible area between Pourquoi Pas Island and Blaiklock Island.

"The opportunity to conduct our operations in areas never before

surveyed is very rewarding and a privilege, particularly in regions as special as Antarctica," said coxswain Chief Petty Officer Stef Merlo. "What we produce will directly influence tourism and access to the areas to enhance scientific research. Hopefully, this is our small contribution to the future sustainability of our planet."

With autumn in the Southern Hemisphere approaching, temperatures and ice conditions rule out safe operations around Antarctica so Protector will now begin shifting her focus to work further north for much of the remainder of 2023.

"I am really proud of the work that the team have done this season, whether digging Port Lockroy out of the snow, keeping us fed and supplied with stores, maintaining equipment to keep us at sea or surveying the seabed and collecting vital scientific data," said Commanding Officer Captain Milly Ingham.

"Everyone onboard has had a part to play in our work, which alongside our partner organisations, continues to advance our understanding of this unique environment and thus helps to safeguard it for future generations.

"After a season of the sun never setting, it will be good to see the stars again."

Pictures: LPhoto Lee Blease, HMS Protector



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Aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth sails down Loch Long
Picture by LPhoto Belinda Alker



THINGS ARE

RAMPING UP



Texan T1 jets fly overhead with Chinook helicopters on the deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth



An F-35B Lightning jet from 207 Squadron takes off from HMS Queen Elizabeth's flight deck

IT'S back to business for Britain's flagship as HMS Queen Elizabeth limbers up for a busy 2023 on operations.

F-35 Lightning jets, Chinook and Merlin helicopters have all joined the Portsmouth-based carrier, which has resumed training after a few weeks' maintenance in Portsmouth over the winter.

The flagship is gearing up for a series of exercises and operations in European waters this year. To ready both her ship's company and the RAF and Fleet Air Arm squadrons which will be operating from her vast flight deck, she sailed from her home port for Scotland to take ammunition on board.

She used the journey up to the munitions jetty at Glen Mallan – rebuilt especially to accommodate the ship and her sister HMS Prince of Wales – to train with RAF Chinooks and Royal Navy Merlins (the latter are permanently assigned to the ship to provide defence against submarines, scan the skies for aerial threats, and rescue downed aircrew in an emergency).

Passing through the Irish Sea, some sailors went ashore on Anglesey to spend a day with RAF Valley, where fast-jet pilots who go on to fly the F-35 stealth fighter are trained; the trainees acknowledged the visit with a fly-past of HMS Queen Elizabeth in their Texan aircraft.

While the carrier was 'bombing up' in Loch Long, sailors not involved in the week-long process 'bomb burst' around Scotland.

A substantial contingent enjoyed adventurous training from skiing in Glencoe to mountain biking, hillwalking and paddle boarding closer to home.

On a more formal note, a detachment of personnel headed to the carrier's affiliated city of Edinburgh (the ship is bound with both London and the Scottish capital).

Air engineer Chief Petty Officer George Bowhill and weapons

engineer Engineering Technician Neill Wallace were singled out by the flagship's affiliated Royal Company of Merchants who presented citations (respectively) for their Enterprise and Initiative Awards.

"It was a real privilege and honour to have a tour of the Royal Company of Merchant's Hall," George said. "I was proud to have my work recognised and I will always have the wonderful memories of a very special day."

Four members of the ship's company visited East Scotland University Royal Naval Unit to support its work with undergraduates from places of higher learning in the area – and explain the role and work of the 65,000-tonne warship.

Some URNU personnel didn't need any explanation as they sailed from Portsmouth to Glen Mallan with the carrier – for many it was their first experience of life at sea with the Royal Navy.

Acting Midshipman Calvin Sunley, Officer Cadets Anthony Lavell, Patrick Hartley, and Acting Officer Cadets Emily Squire and Cara Browning were involved in firefighting and damage-control drills, navigation training and sea-boat activity, as well as touring the huge carrier, and observing Merlin and Chinook operations on the flight deck.

"I am very grateful for my time onboard as, by experiencing day to day life and learning about the command processes in each department, it has helped me decide on what type of role I wish to pursue once my university studies are complete," said acting Midshipman Sunley.

With the ship's magazines stocked up, HMS Queen Elizabeth left Loch Long to begin fast-jet training, welcoming air and ground crews of RAF 207 Squadron and the first F-35 activity since November.

Once the jets have honed their carrier operations skills, HMS Queen Elizabeth returns to Portsmouth for a spot of maintenance, followed by further aircrew training all in preparation for operations later in the year.

THE NEWEST GUARDIAN BENEATH THE WAVES

THE latest of the Royal Navy's advanced nuclear-powered attack submarines, HMS Anson, has left the shipyard at Barrow-in-Furness where she was built ahead of sea trials.

The fifth Astute-class attack submarine sailed from BAE Systems' shipyard bound for her new home, His Majesty's Naval Base Clyde in Scotland, where she will undergo trials before taking on front-line duties.

The first four Astute-class submarines – HMS Astute, HMS Ambush, HMS Artful and HMS Audacious – are already in service with the Royal Navy. HMS Anson was formally commissioned at a ceremony last August, marking her entry into the Royal Navy's fleet.

Steve Timms, Managing Director of BAE Systems' Submarines business, said: "It's with enormous pride that we bid farewell to HMS Anson as she departs our site to take up her vital role helping to protect the UK's national security.

"This is a truly national endeavour, so delivering the most capable attack submarine ever built for the Royal Navy is a tremendous moment for our company, our employees, the Barrow community and the whole of the submarine enterprise,

not least our vast and crucially important UK wide supply chain."

The submarine is the eighth Royal Navy vessel to bear the Anson name, after Admiral George Anson.

The Astute class – the first nuclear-powered submarines to be designed entirely in a three-dimensional, computer-aided environment – represent the cutting edge of the UK's military capabilities.

They are the most advanced boats ever operated by the Royal Navy, providing the capability needed to defend the UK and its allies' interests at home and overseas.

They are armed with the long-range Tomahawk land attack missiles and Spearfish heavyweight torpedoes.

Ben Wallace, Secretary of State for Defence, said: "HMS Anson will play a vital role in defending the UK, providing a competitive edge for decades to come, and I am proud to see her make her journey up to her permanent home on the Clyde.

"Supporting tens of thousands of jobs across the UK, our Astute-Class submarines are a leading example of our commitment to defence manufacturing, continuing to boost British industry for decades to come."

The nuclear reactors that power the Astute class never need

to be refuelled during their 25-year service period, while the ability to purify water and air means their range is only limited by the amount of food on board.

As a result, like her sister boats, HMS Anson will be capable of circumnavigating the globe without resurfacing. Weighing 7,800 tonnes, she is 97m long – just short of two Olympic swimming pools.

Commander David 'Bing' Crosby, Commanding Officer of HMS Anson, said: "My team and I are grateful to all across the build enterprise and Submarine Delivery Agency who have made HMS Anson such a formidable submarine.

"We are eagerly looking forward to putting the boat through her paces on sea trials, realising her full potential and joining our colleagues on the Clyde – the home of the Royal Navy Submarine Service."

The final two submarines in the class – Agamemnon and Agincourt – are in various stages of construction at Barrow.

The submarine manufacturing industry supports thousands of UK jobs. BAE Systems' submarine programmes employ nearly 10,000, while thousands more are employed across the supply chain.



HMS Anson sails from the shipyard in Barrow bound for Faslane and sea trials



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SAILORS who will be responsible for directing and co-ordinating F-35 jets have started their journey to becoming Fighter Controllers.

The Royal Navy School of Fighter Control welcomes four students at a time to its rigorous 13-week course and the latest cohort are now being put through their paces.

Three times a year, the sailors learn the fundamentals of aircraft control at Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton before moving to HMS Collingwood, in Hampshire, for a further 12 weeks to learn how to control the aircraft in complex battlespace.

The 'Freddie' course, as it and its controllers are affectionately known, will teach the students all they need to know to deploy on the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers and Type 45 destroyers to work alongside the F-35 fighter jets.

For those on the latest course, they have spent two weeks learning Air Traffic Control (ATC) theory, setting the foundations for the safe and efficient control of live sorties in the south west.

Having mastered how to provide safety services to aircraft in the UK, the students then move on to close collision intercepts, designed to test capacity and calculate relative velocity at closing speeds in excess of 600 knots – all while providing ATC services up to 24,000 feet.

Next, the students learn NATO communication techniques and how to communicate threats and discuss tactics with pilots. If they can prove their abilities in UK airspace, they then head to Collingwood for the tactical phase of training.

While at Yeovilton, they start working with Draken Aviation and FA-20 aircraft. Originally designed as a commercial transport plane, many have been converted to train RN and RAF units on the frontline.

The sorties are varied and with many of the pilots having military fast-jet backgrounds, the training is invaluable to future frontline controllers. Routinely flying up to 30,000ft the jet simulates real frontline fighter jets and introduces the Freddie to real world speeds and reactions, high up in the air, in close proximity to real civilian airliners.

There are currently 27 Freddies in the Royal Navy, with 2021 and the Carrier Strike Group deployment marking a busy year for the unit. Often on Type 45s, they are the sole experts on the employment of aircraft in the battlespace and can be the single point of contact for fast-jet aircrew and other air warfare practitioners.

As well as embarking on ships, they can go into a variety of roles, from instructional duties, exchanges with the RAF and British Army as well as credible candidates for early PWO selection.

Lieutenant Dave Bowen is a fighter controller on HMS Defender. Having qualified a year ago, he gained a great deal of experience working closely with NATO during the CSG deployment.

He said: "Deploying to the Mediterranean last year, I was fortunate enough to control jets from Greece and Italy as well as embed closely with the RAF in the Eastern Mediterranean.

"Working alongside these partner nations is critical when operating the CSG in different parts of the world."

Lieutenant Bowen and his fellow fighter controllers feed into the wider air battlespace when embarked on warships and contribute to air defence within a task group. This means speaking to the pilot in the cockpit, directing them where to go, who to target and what missions need to be carried out.

Working for the Air Warfare Officer, they liaise with partners (Combined Air Operations Centres and Command and Control agencies) to provide up-to-date tactical pictures – being a crucial link between the ships and the jets.

Often the first line of defence in a task group, the jets are scrambled, controlled and directed by Freddie.

The most recent Fighter Control course graduated in January this year. Sub Lieutenant Rory McMillan and Flight Lieutenant Jordan Smith passed out at Collingwood having successfully proved their ability to control and direct aircraft in a hostile environment.

SLt McMillan will now join HMS Prince of Wales and said: "It has been a tough six months learning to control, firstly in benign airspace above the south west to then employing counter air tactics in a hostile area.

"I am looking forward to joining the carrier and learning further how this plays out in the CSG construct."

Experienced Freddies may also be chosen to attend the Weapons course, commonly known in the USA as Top Gun. Qualified Weapons Instructors (QWIs) are experts in air warfare and expand their knowledge through a nine-month course at RAF Boulmer.

Lieutenant Sam Lawrence is a Staff Warfare Officer Fighter Controller to Fleet Operational Standards and Training (FOST) and completed the QWI course last year. Having achieved best student on course, he said: "The weapons course develops deep specialists to become master tactical instructors.

"The course is intense and delivers the best air warfare training in the UK through large complex exercises on the east coast with a variety of aircraft."

Three times a year, the Royal Navy School of Fighter Control hosts a symposium aimed at enhancing professional warfare knowledge and exchanging lessons from previous tours. Normally held at Collingwood, they also look ahead to upcoming deployments.

Competition for places on the Fighter Control course is high and potential candidates need to pass an aptitude test beforehand. Anyone interested in applying should contact Lt Cdr Daniel Simpson (Chief Instructor RNSFC) for further details.

I was fortunate enough to control jets from Greece and Italy as well as embed closely with the RAF in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Lieutenant Dave Bowen, fighter controller on HMS Defender



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A Merlin MK4 helicopter from 845 Naval Air Squadron flies over a fjord in Northern Norway during Arctic training.

Picture by Lieutenant Andy 'Duffy' Duffield



BEFORE THE

TO MASTER THE ARCTIC THE JUNGLIES MUST FIRST LEARN TO

ROYAL Navy chefs, helicopter engineers, logistics experts and ground and air crew have learned how to survive and fight in the Arctic – just like the Royal Marines they serve alongside.

Regardless of their rank or role, personnel from the Commando Helicopter Force have endured sub-zero temperatures, sleeping in tents and living off the land to ensure they can support, maintain and operate the force's aircraft.

Like the Royal Marines, the force's three squadrons of helicopters – two operating the larger Merlin, one the smaller, agile Wildcat – are expected to fight in any environment: the Arctic north, the jungles of Belize or Borneo, or the temperate zones of north-west Europe.

No environment is more challenging than the Arctic. The Norwegian base at Bardufoss is a couple of hundred miles inside the Arctic Circle and has served the commando fliers well for decades.

They return every winter for Operation Clockwork to either learn or re-learn the art of living and fighting in a world in white, courtesy of the intensive, eight-day Cold Weather Aviation Operators Course.

It differs from the training undertaken by Royal Marines as it focuses on aircrew, engineers, pilots and enabling staff, so there's less emphasis on fighting and manoeuvre.

CHF personnel spend two days in the classroom or receiving practical lessons –

covering everything from clothing layer systems, kit and pulk packing, ration and cooking systems, tent building, hjelper sled construction (a very simple sled made using skis and poles) and navigation in snow-covered terrain.

Then trainees move into the field(s) around the small Norwegian town for five nights/six days:

Days 1 and 2: March up 'Radar Hill', a four-kilometre trek with fully-laden bergen rucksacks. At the top, they are expected to set up ten-man tents, exploiting the snow and terrain to ensure their makeshift camp is as invisible as possible.

For the next 24 hours, the students are trained in avalanche survival and recovery, astro navigation and complete several exercises including hjelper races and navigation tests. With the order 'Pull pole' the students break camp, pack their tents and equipment and start yomping to their next site to erect in four-person tents.

Day 3: After breaking camp, students return to Clockwork camp where they remain in a basic hangar for the tactical phase of training.

Issued weapons, they receive tactical lessons and prepare their kit to deploy back out into the field that evening. Once in area they secure a harbour and set up sentry routines. The harbour plan includes a Helicopter Landing Site (HLS) which gives the most relevant training for aviation operators.

Day 4: A full day of tactical instruction and practical exercises which include sentry duties, trip flares, break contact drills and patrolling. Remaining there

overnight again in four-person tents, keeping alert during this phase is a must as they never know when they will be engaged by the 'enemy'.

Day 5 focuses on survival: building snow and brushwood shelters, creating and sustaining fires and surviving the night without rations, living off the land.

The final day is the dreaded ice-breaking drill, demonstrating they can haul themselves and their bergens out of the ice should they fall through – and also know how to warm themselves up afterwards to prevent hypothermia.

"This is the first time I had done the specific cold weather course for the aviation world – I completed the basic survival training eight years ago," said Merlin engineer Petty Officer Rich Miszewski-Hall.

"This time around I found it a lot more challenging – mentally and physically – especially having to just crack on through the sleep deprivation. The camaraderie was great throughout, which did help a lot.

"Finishing with the ice breaking drills was a treat. It was a little colder than I remember but refreshing after five nights of living in the field."

Having passed, he and his comrades returned to base to conduct regular Commando Helicopter Force duties.

Three Merlins of 845 Naval Air Squadron form the kernel of this year's Clockwork deployment, having 'hopped' from their home at Yeovilton via airfields and refuelling points in the UK and Norway to reach Bardufoss. (The smaller Wildcats of 847 Squadron which also support Royal Marines on the battlefield are



Members of Commando Helicopter Force master the Arctic environment

Pictures by POPhot Kyle Heller

SKY

SURVIVE AND FIGHT

flown out in giant RAF transport aircraft.)

All face near identical challenges once in Norway.

"Aircrew fly everywhere in the Arctic circle with a bergen packed full of cold weather survival kit," explained Merlin pilot Lieutenant Andy Duffield.

"After briefing their sortie the pilots and aircrewmembers walk to the flight line, stop at the duty kettle, and fill their thermal flasks to the brim."

At the same time, aircraft handlers carefully drag the 15-tonne Merlin to the line, navigating Bardufoss's icy taxiways.

Wherever possible, the helicopters are kept in the heated hangar which not only protects the multi-million-pound machines, but also the engineers who work on them.

"Just like ourselves, time spent outside for our Merlins is also kept to a minimum," said Lt Duffield. "Keeping the aircraft in the hangar until as late as possible means a much better viscosity for the various fluids and oils inside, making for a safer, quicker, and more assured start sequence."

The Merlin is moved on to three metal grids – one under each wheel – which prevents the aircraft from slipping on the ice as the engines spin up and the rotors begin turning. Ten minutes later, the blades are turning and the ground crew are cleared to return back inside to warm up while the helicopter departs into a snow-filled sky. "Would we have it any other way?" Lt Duffield said. "If it ain't snowin', we ain't goin'!"



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LEVEL PEAKS

It'll be alright on the 'spite

ARGUABLY the greatest warship name in Royal Navy history has been resurrected with work started on the third next-generation nuclear deterrent submarines: HMS Warspite.

Fresh from setting the cutters to work in Rosyth, Defence Minister Alex Chalk headed to BAE Systems' works in Barrow-in-Furness to do the same for the new Dreadnought-class strategic missile submarine.

Rear Admiral Donald Doull, in charge of the Dreadnought programme said beginning work on Warspite was "an important step" along the road to replacing Britain's V-force.

"Successful delivery of the Dreadnought programme is a challenge which will take the determined effort of everybody with a responsibility for supporting it – getting to this milestone is a huge achievement, which reflects the personal and collective commitment of all concerned."

In tandem with the Astute-class submarine programme – built in the same BAE yard – the work on Dreadnought will sustain and support around 11,000 jobs in Barrow alone, with 1,500 firms nationwide involved in the supply chain, making this one of the largest defence projects in the UK.

Longer and heavier than the Vanguard class boats they succeed, the Dreadnoughts are at the leading edge of submarine technology, their 153-metre-long hulls crammed with over 215 miles of cabling and enough pipework to cover the distance of a marathon.

Few ships resonate through Royal Navy history more than Warspite, a title His and Her Majesty's Ships have

carried on seven previous vessels dating back to the reign of Elizabeth I.

The name was well established – with ten battle honours – by the time of the advent of the sixth Warspite, a Queen Elizabeth-class super-dreadnought battleship joined the Fleet in early 1915.

She hit – and was hit by – the German Fleet at Jutland, her only major action of the Great War, before adding 14 more honours to her battle board when the world went to war a generation later.

Warspite annihilated German destroyers at Narvik, grappled with the Italian Fleet at Matapan, was mauled by the Luftwaffe off Crete, survived a guided bomb which punched a hole through her hull off Italy, and pounded enemy positions in Sicily, Salerno, Normandy and Walcheren before being paid off in February 1945.

The name reappeared two decades later as one of the first generation of nuclear-powered hunter-killer submarines, serving until 1991.

The new Warspite will take shape alongside the first two boats – HMS Dreadnought, under construction now for more than six years, and HMS Valiant, laid down in 2019 – and, in time, HMS King George VI which will complete the quartet of new deterrent submarines.

All four will replace the current Vanguard-class flotilla which have been in service since the 1990s and will begin retiring in the early 2030s.

The third generation of deterrent boats continue a mission – Operation Relentless – the Royal Navy has conducted around the clock since 1969.



FROM 21 TO 31



YESTERDAY'S Royal Navy handed the torch to tomorrow's Fleet as work began on our newest frigate, HMS Active.

Veterans from the last ship to bear the name were invited to Rosyth to help Defence Minister Alex Chalk, Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell and shipwrights start work on the second of five Type 31 frigates which will become the backbone of the Fleet's global operations by the decade's end.

They set the cutters running on the first plates of steel for the 5,700-tonne warship which, with her four Inspiration-class sisters, will perform general duties alongside submarine-hunting Type 26 frigates, collectively replacing the existing Type 23s flotilla.

The 31s will be longer and larger than their predecessors, equipped with a 57mm and two 40mm Bofors guns, the Sea Ceptor air defence system, a 4D radar, a large flight deck and hangar, and mission bays to fit equipment – such as diving, mine-hunting kit, drones or disaster relief supplies – to perform a variety of missions: maritime security operations, humanitarian aid, air defence, gunfire support, board and search.

"It is truly a pleasure to be invited, not only to speak and engage with those involved with HMS Active's past and future, but to witness the outcomes of this world-class frigate programme that will be at the heart of the Royal Navy for generations to come," Vice Admiral Connell said.

Work began on HMS Active 16 months after Defence Secretary Ben Wallace started steel cutting HMS Venturer.

No veterans from her predecessor – a WW2 submarine which left service in 1946 – attended that ceremony.

But with Active serving until 1994, former crew are aplenty and five who served in the ship in the Falklands were invited to the steel cut.

There they presented a plaque – featuring their Type 21 frigate 'meeting' her successor (pictured inset) – for the crew of the new Active to display on board in due course.

The artwork was commissioned from Plymouth-based artist Melanie Wright by former Leading Radio Operator Mark 'Joe' Davis.

He and his fellow shipmates were surprised when Active's name was resurrected – especially as the names of her sisters lost in the Falklands, Ardent and Antelope, are arguably more famous.

Guests at the cutting ceremony in Babcock's



yard learned about the deeds of the previous Active courtesy of a multimedia presentation.

"As soon as we heard that a new ship was to be named Active, we thought it would be great to be involved," said Mr Davis, from Plymouth.

"It's not very often that a ship you served on is given to a future ship in your lifetime.

"We are so proud that Active's name lives on and hope that her crew will add to the history. And we cannot wait to one day spend a day at sea on her."

Commissioned into the Royal Navy in 1977, the Type 21 frigate served extensively around the globe during her 17 years under the White Ensign but is probably best remembered for her efforts in the Falklands.

She provided cover for the landings at San Carlos – during which two of her sister ships HMS Ardent and Antelope – were lost to Argentine bombs.

And, as British ground forces bore down on the capital Stanley, Active's 4.5in gun hammered enemy positions, notably on Mount Tumbledown.

Active was decommissioned from Royal Navy service on September 23 1994 and the very same day commissioned into the Pakistani Navy as the Shah Jahan.

She served for more than a quarter of a century, and frequently worked with Royal Navy vessels deployed to the Gulf or Indian Ocean until being retired at the beginning of 2021.

She was sunk as a target later that year.



Belfast enjoys a 'surge in interest

PICTURESQUE jetties of the world's great cities No.177... Still at least the Belfast logo is colourful... and the fouled Blue Ensign is riding proud in the stiff breeze.

This is the first time it's flown in the Northern Ireland capital on RFA Tidesurge, as the tanker paid her maiden visit to the port (and province for that matter).

'Surge' – one of four Tides built to meet the fuel requirements of HMS Queen Elizabeth/Prince of Wales and their carrier strike groups – took a break from supporting RN operations to spend six days in Belfast.

She was given a plum berth in Belfast Lough, one normally occupied by cruise ships.

She hosted several visits for local industry and maritime leaders – Harland and Wolff, for example, will carry out the bulk of the work on the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's three next-generation solid support ships, successors to the ageing Fort Victoria – plus visits from local Reservists, University students and Sea Cadets.

Comprehensive tours were arranged for Brigadier James Senior

CBE (Commander 38 (Irish) Brigade), Commander Rob Milligan (Senior Naval Officer Northern Ireland), Professor Alastair Adair (a Royal Navy Reserve Honorary Captain), Ian Lang of Belfast Harbour and members of 38 Brigade Irish Regiment.

Historians from HMS Caroline, a WW1 cruiser which survived the Battle of Jutland and is now a floating museum in the Titanic Quarter, took a break from preparing to reopen the ship on April 1 now the pandemic has passed... and reciprocated RFA hospitality by offering a free look around the WW1 veteran.

"This visit was an excellent opportunity for the ship's company to enjoy the delights of such a modern and vibrant maritime city and also an opportunity for the Northern Ireland business community to see a modern RFA ship up close and personable," said Captain Karl Woodfield, Tidesurge's Commanding Officer.

"The RFA has close historical ties with Belfast with RFA Fort Victoria being built and registered in Belfast and RFA Argus converted here."



AN hour before dawn on Merseyside one day in mid-January.

The natural darkness and bright lights of the Mersey waterfront plus the ship herself give the Topaz Tangaroa an 'industrial beauty' denied her by daylight.

When she sails back down the Mersey from the Cammell Laird yard this spring she'll be painted battleship grey, rather blue and white (not that you can see in this image captured by Leading Photographer Bill Spurr) with the RFA Blue Ensign flying, under a new name (as yet to be determined).

She's the first addition to the flotilla in four years and one of two new vessels with entirely new roles entrusted to the Royal Navy's crucial supporting arm.

New ships bring new challenges, challenges which will be met, in part, by introducing a new culture. That sums up the Royal Fleet

Auxiliary as the service (roughly) reaches the half-way point of Commodore David Eagles' tenure at the helm.

With two years still to go as its head, the commodore is more than pleased with the state – and status – of his service, although there remain challenges to overcome.

2023 is a busy year for the RFA: the arrival of two new ships, orders placed for three new solid support vessels (much-needed replacements for Fort Victoria), a commitment to extend aviation support/casualty treatment ship RFA Argus ("the answer to everything given her versatility") into the 2030s, and this autumn seven out of nine of the RFA's ships will be deployed.

We'll begin with the new ships. The Topaz Tangaroa has been selected as the first of two new Multi-Role Ocean Surveillance (MROS) vessels, the Island Crown, which arrived in Devonport a few

days later for her 'militaryfication', will become the mother ship for autonomous minehunting operations in home waters.

The Topaz Tangaroa will become the UK's first ship dedicated to safeguarding vital seabed infrastructure, beginning operations in just six months' time.

Military equipment is being installed and the ship painted grey before the ship – the first of two planned Multi-Role Oceanographic Survey (MROS) vessels – begins training with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ready for its first front-line operations this summer.

Announced by Defence Secretary Ben Wallace in November 2022, he says MROS is critically needed – especially in view of Russia's invasion of Ukraine – hence the investment in "capabilities that will protect our critical national infrastructure."

The Royal Navy scoured the

world for a vessel which would meet its requirements and selected the Topaz Tangaroa.

She was built in Norway four years ago to support a mix of underwater operations such as work on oil/gas rigs, construction, maintenance and inspection work, as well as survey and remotely-operated vehicle/autonomous submarine operations, making her ideal for underwater surveillance and seabed warfare.

The 6,000-tonne vessel, which is equipped with a helipad, crane, and expansive working deck – 1,000 square metres, or the size of five tennis courts – has most recently been operating in the Pacific on underwater construction projects.

The ship also features a 'moon pool' – a large hole in the bottom of the hull through which robot submersibles can be launched.

The vessel will be crewed by around two dozen RFA sailors,

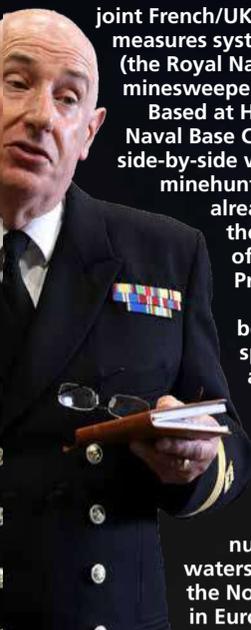
while up to 60 Royal Navy specialists will operate the undersea surveillance systems and other survey and warfare systems when embarked.

The second new vessel added to the RFA inventory, the MV Island Crown (she too is awaiting her new military moniker) is not entirely different outwardly, but heralds a marked change in the way we hunt mines.

For that reason, the ship, pictured below right, has been classified as the UK's first Mine Hunting Capability (MHC) ship, she'll begin safeguarding the nation's waters, operating a range of crewless systems including underwater autonomous vehicles; a



REINVIGORATED FLEET



joint French/UK mine counter measures system; and Sweep (the Royal Navy's first crewless minesweeper).

Based at Her Majesty's Naval Base Clyde, it will work side-by-side with autonomous minehunting systems already operated by the Royal Navy out of Faslane under Project Wilton.

The ship will be operated by specialist teams and will allow the Royal Navy to ensure freedom of access for UK ships and submarines (including the nuclear deterrent) in waters around the UK, in the North Atlantic and in European waters if

required. Both MROS and MHC are new missions for the RFA. Both will see the ships working in and around the UK extensively. Both demand a new crewing model.

To this end, Cdre Eagles is copying the successful 'double crew' routine which supports the Royal Navy's minehunters and Type 23 frigate in the Gulf.

Typically RFA personnel spend four months assigned to a ship, then spend three months ashore.

But for the two new vessels, the entire RFA crews (around 24 sailors per ship) will spend 35 days at sea, then 35 days on land. It's proved popular in the RN – and ensured ships are available more frequently for front-line operations.

"There are huge benefits for these shorter appointments, not least an improved life-work balance for personnel, especially those who wish to be based in and around the

UK," Cdre Eagles said. Some additional training will be required for sailors joining the MROS ship chiefly to operate the complex dynamic positioning system which ensures the vessel 'hovers' precisely on a spot, vital when conducting operations with submarines.

"The Royal Fleet Auxiliary has been selected to lead two key operations vital to the nation's security – and in home waters where there is the possibility of being seen. That fills me – and the entire service – with pride and presents exciting opportunities," the commodore added.

"With the extension of RFA Argus' service into the 2030s and the order for three new solid support ships which will serve for another 30 or 40 years, it means the future of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary is secure and remains a key part of the Royal Navy's future as well."

Alongside new ships and new ways of working, Cdre Eagles is keen to introduce new ways of thinking to the service and mirror the Navy's current drive to eradicate unacceptable behaviours.

For the first time a fitness test – attuned to a sailor's gender/age – will be introduced, with all 1,800 personnel expected to pass.

The assessment is based on the test firefighters face – known as the 'Chester step' – which effectively assesses someone's ability to conduct strenuous activity while wearing a fire suit/breathing apparatus, probably the most stressful, demanding work an RFA sailor would be expected to carry out.

"It is nothing to be frightened of, but sailors will need to engage to pass," said Cdre Eagles.

"We have set four hours of the working week aside for gym and physical training/activities."

"The test itself will be rolled out gradually and there will be remedial support for those who do not pass."

The other key change the commodore is pushing is to broaden and diversify the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's personnel base.

At present, one in four recruits is female, but it will take time for this to be reflected among senior ratings and officers.

Last year, the RFA introduced its Diversity and Inclusion network, Herald. The push now is to continue the culture change.

"Calling someone 'darling' or 'love' – it's unacceptable and there's no place for it in the RFA," the commodore said.

"Call people by their names, by their rank, they've earned your respect."

"I am confident that giving everyone the chance to change the culture will make us a better service."

Pictures: LPhot Bill Spurr
LPhot Juliet Ritsma



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Clockwise from above: AB Nicholson, left, during a Ceremonial Sunset; AB Nicholson, third from left, with colleagues in Japan; Working alongside US Navy Ordnance Disposal teams during the deployment; AB Nicholson, back row, fourth from left, represented the Royal Navy at Rugby during the Pacific trip;



Living my best life

Reservist reflects on deployment to Asia-Pacific

A MARITIME RESERVIST from Ayr has described a recent deployment to the Far East as one of the “best experiences of my life”.

Able Seaman Kieran Nicholson (20), a reservist with Glasgow’s Royal Naval Reserve unit HMS Dalriada, spent several months on board the Royal Navy Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) HMS Tamar as she operated in the Pacific Ocean.

During his time onboard he had the opportunity to visit Australia, the Philippines, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, and Brunei, even taking part in Japan’s International Fleet Review in front of 30,000 spectators.

Kieran, who was previously employed as a bartender at the Tree House Restaurant in Ayr, joined the Maritime Reserves in 2019. Following basic training, he mobilised in March 2022, heading to Portsmouth for two-months of preparation and training to join HMS Tamar.

“My mobilisation with the Reserves on HMS Tamar was one of the best experiences of my life,” said Kieran.

“I wouldn’t have seen the countries and cultures that I did without mobilisation and that alone made it worthwhile.”

While at sea Kieran worked as a bowman for the ship’s sea boat and worked extensively on parts of the ship involved in seamanship.

He also supported operations with the Japanese, Australian, US, and Brunei armed forces.

“One of my highlights was working with the American Explosive Ordnance Disposal team,” continued Kieran.



“I was also privileged to represent the navy in local rugby competitions during port visits.”

But one of the standout experiences was when the patrol vessel stopped at Japan. Berthing at Yokohama, HMS Tamar’s ship’s company headed to Yokosuka – about 30 miles south of Tokyo – to participate in the country’s celebrations marking the 70th anniversary of the Maritime Defence Force.

Kieran and the other members of the ship’s company marched through the streets of Yokosuka.

Some 30,000 people applauded them on their route, along with representatives from other nations’ navies.

“I would definitely encourage all reservists to mobilise,” continued Kieran. “The Offshore Patrol Vessels are perfect for reservists to expand the skills they

have acquired through basic training.”

“The advice I’d give other reservists is to give it one hundred percent and be part of the team. There’s no room for passengers on an OPV!”

Commanding Officer of HMS Dalriada, Commander Mike Howarth, said: “I am proud of AB Nicholson’s performance in HMS Tamar.”

“His experiences will stay with him for life and his up-to-date knowledge of Royal Navy Operations will inspire others to follow in his stead and enjoy all that the Maritime Reserves has to offer.”

HMS Dalriada is the Royal Naval Reserve Unit serving the West of Scotland.

Located in Govan, the unit has a long and established history and currently has 117 reservists living in and around the West Coast.



AB helps uncover secrets from Waterloo

A SAILOR from RNAS Culdrose joined a ground-breaking archaeological dig on the battlefield of Waterloo.

Able Rating Lauren Batey travelled to the historic site in Belgium last year with the charity Waterloo Uncovered.

The 21-year-old helped uncover the remains of horses and discarded military kit as part of a dig which also revealed an incredibly rare complete human skeleton from the epic battle in 1815.

Around 20,000 men died during a single day’s fighting between the armies of Britain, Prussia and other allies against those of Napoleonic France.

AB Batey, from Kelso in Scotland, said: “I didn’t know that much about Waterloo before. You can make that joke about the Abba song, but, seriously, I thought this was something I could learn about and get some new skills. So, I decided to put my name forward and see if I could get a place.”

When she heard about the programme, AB Batey was part of the team in the Survival Equipment Section at RNAS Culdrose. She is now transferring into the Logistics Branch.

She signed up with charity Waterloo Uncovered, which helps veterans and serving military personnel with wellbeing programmes. It also included online evening classes on a battlefield history course with Utrecht University, which AB Batey has now



finished.

“There were all different kinds of people there, veterans and serving personnel – lots of Army,” she added. “I’d never get to do something like this normally, so I thought I’d just give it a go. I like learning about history and it was a really great experience.”

During the two-week dig, the charity worked at Mont Saint-Jean, just north of the position held by the British during the battle. In 1815 this was a farmhouse and used as the main field hospital. Earlier excavations at the

site, in what was once the farm’s orchard, had revealed amputated limbs.

AB Batey said her team uncovered three horse skeletons including one which had a musket ball lodged in its skull. They also discovered much discarded military kit which had eroded and decayed over the years. She said she spent time cleaning, cataloguing, and bagging up finds for later research.

The dig made headlines when the rare remains of a complete human skeleton were discovered at the site. It is only the second complete skeleton ever found at Waterloo.

AB Batey said she found it hard to relate to the human remains discovered in the unmarked grave, which after the long passage of more than two hundred years had lost all signs of identity.

“We couldn’t tell who that person was or even how they died,” she said. “They did a lot of work later on uncovering the remains, but it took a time and we had to come back.”

“At the weekend we went down to see the [First World War] battlefields of Ypres,” she added. “It was interesting because you could read their names and it made it much more personal. Waterloo seemed more remote and distant. I suppose I thought of it more in the sense of history.”

You can read more about the dig at waterloouncovered.com/wu22/skeleton-update/

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Lifetime of devoted service

Charity mourns champion fundraiser Dean Rogers



IT IS with the deepest sadness that in February, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) announced the sad passing of a much-loved colleague and friend, Dean Rogers, after a long and courageous battle with cancer, news which has rocked the entire charity.

Dean was one of the longest serving members of staff at the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity who gave tirelessly for his colleagues and for all those that the charity supported.

Always positive, no matter his personal struggle through this illness, his warmth, friendship and good humour were all hallmarks of who he was.

Warrant Officer Dean Rogers MBE joined the Royal Navy in 1976 and went on to enjoy a distinguished 35-year career as a submariner.

During his time as a Warrant Officer 1, he was able to exploit his gift for imparting knowledge, teaching business and management and setting up the Royal Navy's Chartered Management programme.

As a member of the divisional and regimental support team he discovered his niche for coaching and mentoring others, something of a running thread throughout and beyond his naval career.

On a draft exchange to the Royal Australian Navy's Submarine escape tank, Dean and his family developed a lifelong love of the Antipodes, and Australia is the country where Dean's daughter Abigail now calls home.

Dean joined the RNRMC as its first professionally employed fundraiser in March 2011, though his last two years in the Royal Navy had been as Payroll Giving Manager (under Seafarer's UK).

Dean singlehandedly set up and administered the Royal Navy's multi award-winning Payroll Giving scheme, growing contributions to the RNRMC from £160,000 per year to in excess of £1.1 million today, making it by far the charity's single largest source of voluntary income and during his time at the RNRMC raising £12,053,780 in total.

As a result of his efforts, presently over 14,000 men and women across the Royal Navy and Royal Marines are regular donors to the charity.

The millions of pounds that have been raised under his assiduous stewardship have been distributed for the benefit of tens of thousands of serving, resettling or retired sailors, marines and their families.

In March 2019, Dean received an MBE in recognition of his services to charitable fundraising from Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth at Windsor Castle, something which he was enormously proud of.

Dean also worked tirelessly to spread the RNRMC message in Scotland. He initiated and developed

relationships with Rangers Charity Foundation, the Royal Scots Club and others and raised both income and profile through connections made with the Edinburgh Tattoo and Riding of the Marches.

On more than one occasion Dean was caught out by inclement weather north of the border and prevented from returning south. There was a bit of a standing joke in the office not to travel when Dean did if you didn't want to be snowed in!

He famously had a seemingly endless supply of dits and dusted off some of the corniest jokes in his vast repertoire to keep up staff morale on Teams over lockdown.

Away from the work he did for the RNRMC, Dean also dedicated time with Wiltshire College as a visiting lecturer helping students by passing on his wealth of knowledge and experience as a coach, mentor, assessor and verifier for leadership, business and management studies, becoming affectionately known as the 'CMI Yoda'.

Dean was married to Karen for 34 years, and leaves a son Dominic, daughter Abigail and much longed-for baby grand-daughter Maisie-Jane, who lives in Australia.

He was always a great traveler and bon viveur, as many of his friends at the RNRMC will testify to, huddled around the chiminea in Dean's garden and invariably sampling his hospitality which typically centered on red wine, plain chocolate and cheese of all varieties!

Although he left the Royal Navy a dozen years ago, Dean espoused the key tenets of leadership, teamwork, morale, humility and respect for others for which it has a worldwide reputation.

He will remain unparalleled in the history of the RNRMC in dedicating himself wholeheartedly to supporting the Naval family from the newest recruits to the oldest veterans as a tremendously accomplished and talented fundraiser who led by example and was instrumental in growing the charity's capability to fundraise exponentially for the benefit of all those it exists to support.

Dean has touched the lives of so, so many people. Through his incredible efforts in fundraising, there are many, many people today who will have benefited from those funds but who will also never be aware of just how much their support was engineered by Dean.

The thoughts and prayers of all the staff, Trustees and volunteers of the RNRMC are with Karen, Abigail, Dominic and Maisie-Jane as they contend with the loss of a devoted husband, father and grandfather.

RIP Dean – a great friend who will be sorely missed by us all.

Dean Rogers MBE, 1958-2023

Oardacious team make Atlantic rowing history

A ROYAL Navy team became the fastest military group in history to row across the Atlantic: 35 days, 17 hours and 19 minutes.

HMS Oardacious – Lt Cdr Callum Fraser, Petty Officer Jon Norfolk, Lt Cdr Hugo Mitchell-Heggs and Lt Cdr Tom Hutchinson – beat their own previous record of 37 days for the 3,000-mile crossing.

Two of the crew – Lt Cdrs Fraser and Mitchell-Heggs, also became part of a very small number of people in history to have now rowed an ocean twice. Lt Cdr Mitchell-Heggs, who was born in France, also broke the French record during the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge.

The team, who finished their challenge in Antigua, raised more than £50,000 for the RNRMC, meaning they are well on target to raise £1m by 2025.

Lt Cdr Hutchinson said: "You're humbled by the sheer size of the wave and that you're very insignificant, if it wants to it can just crash down on the boat and throw you across the ocean and there's nothing you can do about it."

"We had that for the best part of a week at one point, the weather was like that all day and all night – and there were very strong winds."

When the team arrived in English Harbour in Antigua, Lt Cdr Hutchinson was so tired that he says he "didn't feel that emotional" when the lights of Antigua started twinkling in the distance but that all changed when the team arrived on dry land to see their families for the first time in 2023.

He added: "As soon as you turn the corner to enter English Harbour there's a fort on the

headland where all family and friends gather, and you can just hear them all screaming as they see the lights of the boat.

"There's this overwhelming rush of emotion through your body thinking 'I am finally here!'"

Originally undertaken by a team of Royal Navy submariners in 2019, it was intended as a one-off event to raise money for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

However, after the Covid pandemic highlighted isolation and mental health challenges, a different team of four submariners will take part in the challenge each year.

Dawn Ingram, RNRMC Director of Fundraising, said: "What HMS Oardacious have achieved is incredible."

"The RNRMC are so grateful and proud; their continued efforts in fundraising for the wellbeing and mental health of the submarine community is making a real difference."

"A heartfelt thank you to all those who are part of the team and journey."

Team Oardacious are now preparing to row across the Atlantic again in December 2023 in their new state of the art Eco boat – made of recycled materials and using the campaign to become positive ambassadors for ocean sustainability (lots of plastic waste/polystyrene seen on the ocean).

There is also an all women's team booked into row across the Atlantic in December 2024 – they include submariners and one of the only RN Women to ever get her All Arms green lid.

Picture: AtlanticCampaigns_PennyBird-1991



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BATTLESTATIONS

SAILORS TURN TO WARHAMMER 40K IN THE ICE

DON'T you know that war is banned in Antarctica?

That mattered not to the Rift Stalkers and Imperial Guard who slugged it out in the snow and ice of Rothera Base on the Antarctic Peninsula in possibly the most southerly game of Warhammer 40K ever fought.

Directing the battle were Lieutenant Jonny Talbot, one of the specialist hydrographic and meteorological officers on HMS Protector and shipmate Lieutenant Max Friswell from the executive department.

With eight-hour spells of watchkeeping the day job keeps both junior officers busy at sea, they only have time for one game a week on Protector's conference room table – hence the desire to play on the ice.

"The wind and snow can make games difficult, blowing models over and making charges more and more challenging," said Jonny. "But in general, with a little bit of additional effort, the reward of playing in such a scenic environment is definitely worth it."

He's been collecting and playing Warhammer since 2015, especially in competitive formats, attending tournaments and even co-forming one of the UK's top-ten teams, the 'Savvy Submariners.'

His opponent drew on nearly two



decades' experience, although he is relatively new to this particular format/edition of the game.

The way Jonny's Arctic-themed Rift Stalkers were set up and deployed in the Rothera snow proved too much for their foe and despite inflicting heavy 'casualties' ('damage output') the Imperial Guard were beaten on points.

All of which probably means nothing to the uninitiated... but Warhammer 40K is the world's most popular miniature war game in the world.

To assemble either army costs several hundred pounds – and patience and skill, for the figures and equipment have to be pieced together and painted.

As for the battles, it takes up to 20 minutes to 'deploy' the forces... and once the dice start rolling, the clashes themselves can be over inside half an hour... or rumble on for three and more.

Jonny says there's a thriving community of fans/players in the Services and their game on the ice drew considerable attention.

"Warhammer is a really great way for us to unwind and decompress," Jonny added. "Connectivity can be a major issue, so having a game which requires no internet is a real advantage to us."



Lt Jonny Talbot and Lt Max Friswell playing Warhammer 40K in Antarctica



Daisy delivers to scoop Trainee of the Year award

A ROYAL Fleet Auxiliary deck officer with a passion for saving lives at sea has been recognised for her selfless work.

Daisy Jarvis, a third officer in the RFA, has been given the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's Officer Trainee of the Year award.

She was nominated for the award by her nautical college the Warsash Maritime School (Solent University Southampton) and the RFA.

The judging panel made particular note of her exceptional leadership qualities when providing support for her peers.

Daisy put in time and effort to help overseas students adjust to the UK education system, stepping in when needed, and developing her own problem-solving skills.

The judges were unanimous in agreeing that she would make an excellent ambassador for the profession and will make an excellent officer.

She said: "I have been a volunteer crew member with the RNLI for over a decade and have previously worked as a commercial skipper, so applying for a cadetship and joining the RFA felt like natural progression for me."

"I have always enjoyed being challenged. A nine-to-five job has never appealed to me and, although being in the Merchant Navy involves long periods away from home, there are also many benefits such as continuous career progression and opportunities to travel."

She added: "I feel honoured to have received such a prestigious award. I knew I had been nominated but I never thought I would actually win. Cadetships are not easy, but I always work hard and complete any task to the best of my ability; I'm grateful that my efforts didn't go unnoticed."

"I couldn't have succeeded without the continuous support from my friends, family, fellow students and lecturers."

"I would like to say a huge thank you to anyone who helped me along the way, either at sea or college."

Officer Trainee of the Year is an annual award presented by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency which aims to raise the profile of officer training.



Nautical colleges such as Daisy's in Warsash liaise with shipping companies and are asked to submit nominations for recently qualified officers who have achieved academic progress, professional progress and outstanding contributions to their class. Leadership and personal qualities are considered as important as technical competency.

Damien Oliver, interim MCA chief executive who presented the award on the night, said: "Daisy's perseverance and welcoming attitude to tackling challenges was behind this expert panel of industry judges choosing her as the 2022 winner."

"I am honoured to have met her and had the chance to present such a prestigious award to such a deserving winner. It demonstrates the level of cadets we have coming through our academies and the abundance of talent we have training for the future."

Exeter's tribute to HMS Defender

THE Royal Navy brought pomp, ceremony and military precision to the heart of Devon's County town as Exeter's own warship celebrated its Freedom.

Led by the Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines from the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone, over 180 sailors from destroyer HMS Defender, along with veterans and Naval cadets from Exeter, marched from St James Park along Sidwell Street to Cathedral Green.

Leading the marching platoons of sailors from the Portsmouth-based warship was the Colours Party, carrying both the Royal Navy's Standard and the Scroll which was presented to Defender when the state-of-the-art air defence destroyer was granted the highest civic honour, Freedom of Exeter, in 2014.

Launched in 2009, HMS Defender is the fifth of six Type 45 warships built for the Royal Navy.

Defender's busy operational programme – last year she followed up the Pacific mission with missions in the Arctic, Baltic and Mediterranean, sailing more than 27,000 nautical miles – has meant opportunities to celebrate her affiliation with Exeter have been limited since 2014.

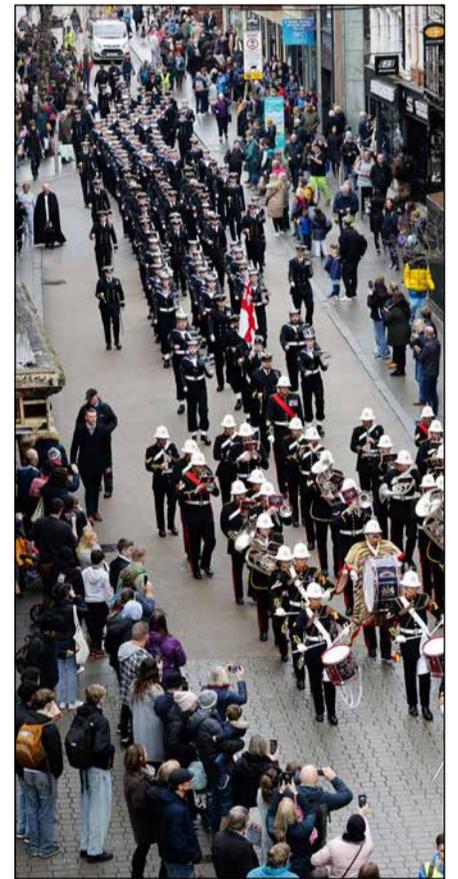
And the occasion was particularly poignant for Petty Officer Craig Black, a weapons engineering specialist onboard, proudly marching through his hometown.

"It's been a great day for me and my family," said Craig. "Serving at sea in the Royal Navy they don't normally get an opportunity to see what I do, but parading through Exeter has been very exciting, and was extra special as well for my one-year-old daughter Lily and fiancé Sofia to be here."

"Today has been a true honour; not only to witness my ship's company marching smartly through the fine city of Exeter, but also to be welcomed so warmly by everyone as they marched past," said Commander Peter Evans, CO HMS Defender.

"These opportunities are few and far between for naval ships and it was great to see over 180 of my sailors be celebrated in our affiliated city; I couldn't be prouder of the professionalism of HMS Defender today."

"We are currently in a support period getting ready to again return to sea for exercises, training and operations, to deliver as the best Destroyer in the Royal Navy and make our Exeter affiliation as proud of us as we have been welcomed into their city."



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Type 26 trailblazer recognised

ONE of the stalwarts of the Navy's next-generation warships has been recognised for his efforts in paving the way for the Type 26 frigate.

Currently the Executive Warrant Officer of HMS Glasgow – the first ship in the class of anti-submarine warships which will begin replacing the trusty Type 23s towards the end of the decade – Warrant Officer 1 Darran Sullivan has been involved with the Type 26 programme for six years.

And more recently as EWO he's the vital link between the command team and all senior and junior rates aboard the ship.

Given Glasgow's ship's company is only 19 strong presently, that role during construction has evolved into helping to devise, develop and record the working and operating procedures which will serve not just his ship but the entire class... as well as imbuing Glasgow herself with her unique ethos and spirit.

That includes fostering relations with affiliates – from RAF maritime patrol aircraft and Glasgow schools to the Worshipful Company of Merchant Taylors, one of the 12 great livery companies of the City of London.

It invited sailors from Glasgow to attend its annual affiliates' dinner in London's Threadneedle Street (which is also home to the Bank of England).

And there, to Darran was presented with a Merchant Taylors' award by Harry Parshall, Master of the Merchant Taylors, for his exemplary contribution to the Type 26 Global Combat Ship project over the past six years.

In addition, Clerk of the Merchant Taylors, Rear Admiral John Clink also presented Darren with a citation for his Long Service and Good Conduct second bar – marking 35 years of service – while the warrant officer's wife Lisa (pictured above by Kris Piotrowski with her husband and also Mr Parshall) received a bouquet of flowers in recognition of the important role that families play in supporting military personnel.

"It has been a privilege to attend the annual Military Affiliates' dinner," said Darran. "It was also a great surprise to my wife, Lisa, when they presented her with flowers. I thought it was a great gesture to acknowledge how vital families are in supporting us and the sacrifices that they undertake when we are away."

His ship is currently being fitted out at BAE's Scotstoun yard while ships two and three in the class of eight, HMS Cardiff and Belfast, are continuing construction just along the Clyde in the firm's Govan facility.

Chill at Sultan

PERSONNEL at HMS Sultan are being encouraged to take advantage of a new 'wellbeing garden' to relieve the stress of training.

Created by volunteers from the Learning Development Organisation and Medical Centre, it's been funded by the RNRMC with help from Alver Valley Garden Centre and Flo Landscaping.



Suite sensation

SAILORS at HMS Collingwood try out the facilities in their new high-performance suite, fitted out with the very latest gym kit... as well as space for mental wellbeing and reflection.

Located next to the boxing area, it's the brainchild of clubz POPT Lee 'Jesse' Owens aided by a £40k donation from long-term supporters Greenwich Hospital.

The high-performance suite can be used by teams and individuals specifically for performance, strength and conditioning.

Although it's Jesse's brainchild, much of the work to transform a section of the Sports and Recreation Centre was carried out by three trainees all assigned to Collingwood while waiting for their divers' courses to start.

AB2s Lewis Eglese, Kane Philpott and James Hall worked tirelessly to rip out the heavy wooden shelving beams and the old mats prior to repainting and recovering the floor with modern impact-absorbing material and installing all the equipment.

"We love fitness and going to the gym so while we were posted here waiting for our course to start we were really pleased to be seconded to the PTI department," said Kane.

"It was a real privilege to be able to create this brilliant facility for everyone to enjoy."

Collingwood's Commanding Officer Captain Tim Davey performed the honours to formally open the facility, which will soon be available to personnel at the Fareham establishment 24/7/365.

Picture: Keith Woodland, HMS Collingwood



Five head off diving

READY to perform one of the hardest, most challenging – but also most exhilarating and rewarding – jobs on the front line are five of six sailors standing up here: the newest qualified divers in the Royal Navy. (The sixth, on the far right, is one of the course staff, AB(D) Luxton...)

They passed out of the Defence Diving School on Horsea Island at the end of January, bringing to an end 18 weeks of intensive training stretching back to last July (and extended by ceremonial duties for the Queen's funeral, bad weather and summer/Christmas leave).

Would-be Royal Navy divers can now join the Service directly from civvy street (traditionally they've served first as able rates in other branches, then transferred upon promotion).

The Professional Qualifying Course is among the most arduous 'basic' courses in the Senior Service. Of the nine divers who rocked up on Horsea Island in Portsmouth last July for PQC 22/04, only five possessed the

attributes needed to make the grade.

They've studied extensively, learned the science, mastered operating their kit and, most importantly, spent a lot of time in cold, often filthy, waters from Horsea Lake, to neighbouring Portsmouth Harbour, then Portland and finally Kyle of Lochalsh in northwest Scotland.

All five are now qualified in the use of self-contained, surface supplied and mixed gas rebreathers (*demonstrated below*) with an operational capability down to 60 metres (nearly 200 feet).

The best student on the course both in the water, and showing practical/theoretical knowledge was AB(Diver) Harry Thomas, awarded the title 'Top Fin'.

He and his four fellow newly-qualified divers will now be assigned to a Hunt or Sandown-class minchunter for front-line experience and will undertake their explosives training this summer as they become fully-fledged RN clearance divers.



A BRIDGE TO FAR-FLUNG

THE Royal Navy is embracing Virtual Reality to train sailors of tomorrow in cutting-edge new navigation simulators.

Sailors will don headsets to take them into a naval 'metaverse' immersing them in key – and sometimes dangerous – manoeuvres, all from the safety of a naval base.

The VR headsets will be just one facet of new state-of-the-art replica ship's bridges, with software capable of recreating the entire fleet, harbours and waters around the globe, and challenging weather conditions by day and night.

HMS Collingwood in Fareham, home of warfare training, Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, spiritual home of naval officers, and the home of the Submarine Service in Faslane will all receive the new trainers.

The investment is part of the modernisation of Royal Navy training by Project Selborne – a 12-year programme overseen

by Capita to update and deliver a raft of training across many naval disciplines and branches.

The Navy's existing simulators have trained thousands of navigators, officers of the watch and bridge teams for two decades.

They've received regular updates and undergone enhancements to keep pace with seafaring and technological changes in that period – such as the Fleet's switch from paper to digital charts to navigate the Seven Seas.

Three full mission bridge simulators and two smaller ones will be installed at Collingwood and Lieutenant Commander Mark Raeburn, who's in charge of Navigation Training there, said the advent of the new facilities meant more sailors could be trained and earn more practical experience rather than spend time in the classroom.

"Nothing beats practical experience and our Fleet Navigators and Specialist

Navigators will continue to be assessed at Sea on the Navigation Training Ship HMS Severn but the new simulators should markedly increase the preparedness of the students," he explained.

"As the suite of simulation will also be increased at Dartmouth and Faslane this will allow cohesive training on the same software – before we have had to rely on disparate software systems with no commonality of training."

It's not merely the same software which will be powering the simulators. In the future they will link up allowing students across the three sites to train together simultaneously.

The new bridge trainers can recreate single warships or auxiliaries sailing from one port to another, to complex task group manoeuvres or a replenishment at sea – the challenging transfer of supplies between ships on the move (chiefly fuel, but also food, ammunition and general stores) – all minus the costs

Kent's winning

READY for the Royal Navy's ultimate trainers and assessors are the crew of HMS Kent who've spent the past two months getting their frigate shipshape.

The Portsmouth-based warship has been in action extensively over the past two years, from supporting the UK Carrier Strike Group deployment to the Indo-Pacific in 2021 to extensive operations in home waters in 2022.

All of which took its toll on both the hull and the machinery within.

With Kent due to undertake Operational Sea Training this month, over 2,000 hours of work have been put in to get the 23-year-old ship into the best shape within and without.

Divers spent more than 100 hours in cold, dark, less-than-pleasant waters to survey the hull, check the ship's sensors below the waterline, check for marine growth – which might limit the frigate's top speed (in excess of 28 knots/32mph) or simply demand more fuel to sustain lower speeds – and keep the hull fully protected from salt-water corrosion which is a constant, and ever demanding, battle for members of the ship's company.

Meanwhile in the engine rooms, all four of the ship's diesel motors – among the most used pieces of equipment aboard – were stripped down and enjoyed a complete overhaul courtesy of the engineering technicians.

At least two are running at any one time at sea, with all four Paxman Valenta 12CM engines clocking up a total of 3,600 hours in 2022 – that's like running your car non-stop for five months!

One of the larger jobs completed during the engineering support period was to provide a little TLC to one of Kent's main electric motors, capable of producing approximately 4,000 Horse Power.

Experts from the motor's manufacturer visited the ship to carry out a 'commutator skim' to allow the motor to run effectively and much more efficiently, saving a good amount of fuel. Once the

skim had been completed, complete with a final polish, the motor was tested with flying colours and won't need another skim for a couple of years.

"It has been a thoroughly productive engineering support period which puts the ship in the best position to deliver on forthcoming operations," said Commander Jez Brettell, Kent's Commanding Officer.

And if you're wondering what the warfare department was doing while the engineers toiled... they were honing their anti-submarine warfare skills (the ship's raison d'être) with combined virtual training.

Reward for all this effort for the petrolheads among the ship's company was a unique behind-the-scenes tour of one of the world's greatest Grand Prix teams.

Sailors of all ranks and branches were invited to Grove in Oxfordshire, home of the Formula 1 Williams Team Facility. The visit began with a tour of the team's heritage collection, including recently retired cars, making up the largest private collection of Grand Prix cars in the world.

With over 40 vehicles on display, the collection showcased the incredible racing history of the team spanning 60 years.

Some of the greatest names in F1 – Nigel Mansell, Alain Prost, Ayrton Senna, Damon Hill and Nelson Piquet – have raced for Williams down the years, driving to 114 victories (as of mid-February 2023).

Six Williams drivers have lifted the championship title, while the team itself holds nine constructors championships.

Not a bad pedigree. And thanks to their superb hosts, the nautical visitors were given an informative tour which revealed many interesting stories behind some of the iconic vehicles on show.

The team were also shown the Esports simulators and the giant four-lane Scalextric setup in addition to the hugely impressive trophy room.

"The superb visit enabled my team to gain a rare insight into the pinnacle of motor sport which was genuinely fascinating," said Commander Brettell.

Family gather on Victory to rec

PROUDLY collecting the certificate he was not able to receive are the family of Chief Petty Officer Graham 'Sid' Street.

CPO Street sadly passed away from cancer in 2022 before he could collect his Gold Valedictory Certificate, awarded for hard work and dedication to the RN throughout his 35 years of service.

In his day job, Graham was an underwater warfare specialist, but his love of rugby, and support to the Royal Navy Rugby Union, played a huge part in his career and life. He devoted much of his spare time to raising money for various charities, including Rugby Against Cancer.

Graham was diagnosed with bowel cancer in 2017, but he didn't let that get in the way of his dedication and hard work. In 2020 he raised over £250,000 for Charlie's Beach Hut, a charity providing children experiencing life-limiting illnesses with the opportunity to enjoy a holiday with their family. For this astounding effort, Graham received the British Empire Medal.

Initially from Little Clacton in Essex, CPO Street joined the Royal Navy in 1987 and since served in many Portsmouth based units, eventually calling Portsmouth 'home'. Graham earned nine service medals throughout his Royal Navy Career, including the Meritorious Service Medal.

An inspiration and role model to so many, Graham was a huge character with a passion for coaching others, whether that be on the rugby field or inspiring new generations of sailors at HMS Collingwood.

"Throughout his battle with cancer, he demonstrated fortitude and immense resilience in abundance, never allowing his trademark sense of humour and wit to wane" said Major Steve Cox RM, in charge of the Hasler rehabilitation centre at HMS Drake, where CPO Street spent his final serving months.

Mrs Street and family collected the award on behalf of CPO Street from Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell aboard HMS Victory.

3 PLACES

and potential dangers of the real thing.

Advanced engineering and hydrodynamic vessel modelling in the simulators ensure vessels, objects and equipment behave realistically, while Virtual Reality headsets will be used to provide an immersive training experience for evolutions such as ship handling and Replenishment at Sea.

"A number of naval academies world-wide are today heavily using our simulator systems for education and training purposes," said Andreas Jagtøyen, Executive Vice President of Digital Ocean, Kongsberg Digital.

"The Royal Navy contract is a recognition of our technology and will further strengthen our position within the naval simulator training domain."

The first students are due to use the simulators in September.

Picture: Kongsberg Digital



g formula

'Backroom staff' step into the limelight

EIGHT Royal Navy personnel, teams and civil servants have been singled out for their outstanding behind-the-scenes support to ensure the smooth operation of the Forces.

Around 60,000 serving personnel and civilians work within the 'support function' of Defence – focused on the delivery of logistics, engineering and equipment support with the focus on front-line effectiveness and efficiency.

Of those 60,000 the Chief of Defence Logistics and Support Lieutenant General Richard Wardlaw singles out a small number who are worthy of a personal commendation.

Among them, **Commander Steve Gilmore**, currently serving in HMS Albion, but commended for his time working for UKStratCom where he displayed "unwavering focus in seeking to improve support for the Navy", notably Project Renown (the ambitious initiative to dramatically raise ship availability) and also support for the incoming class of eight Type 26 frigates and above all making sure that the support promised with new kit was delivered as promised: support typically accounts for more than 70 percent of through-life costs.

"When under pressure to make a shiny new project appear affordable, it is all too tempting to 'tailor out' support investment," Steve said.

"As all too many serving personnel and bad news stories will tell you, this just results in headaches on the front line through issues such as a lack of stores, technical documentation or becoming obsolete without a replacement plan."

Commander Gareth Coleman was recognised for his efforts on the Agile Stance Campaign Plan, one of the most complex and high-profile programmes in UK Defence, testing the ability, agility and resilience of the Armed Forces to mobilise its forces quickly and on a large scale – a plan re-drawn after the pandemic to also include protection of the homeland and the expanded use of reserves.

"I suddenly found myself writing, and re-writing, proposals for how we would evaluate Maritime, Land and Air Force elements over a five-year campaign 'window'," he explained.

"It was an extremely testing period, but highlights the variety of challenges a RN logistics officer can face within their career."

Other members of the Royal Navy 'family' who have also been commended are:

Captain John Bonnar (Navy, Support & Infrastructure Capability Sponsor): in recognition for his work to develop the strategy of Project Lighthouse;

Joanne Friels (Submarine Delivery Agency, Supply Operations): For her outstanding contribution to HMS Vengeance's Base Maintenance Period which allowed Operation Relentless to continue;

The Future Maritime Support Programme (Navy): For ensuring improved availability of ships and submarines for the Royal Navy whilst delivering £600m of savings;

Richard Hutchings (Navy, Future Support Programmes): For outstanding and sustained contributions to Support across the Maritime Enterprise;

Commander Sarah Parker (Navy, Support Transformation): For contribution to Support Advantage through increased ship availability;

Type 26 Support Team: For outstanding work to create an in-service support solution which delivers high availability of the T26's advanced submarine hunting capability.

Lt Gen Wardlaw said it was important that the essential role the support function in the UK's Defence was acknowledged. "The work that they do is incredibly important; supporting our Armed Forces today, reacting to challenges and demands as they arise, as well as making improvements to support our Armed Forces better tomorrow."



CPO Matt Heath, one of Kent's ME stalwarts, at work on one of the diesel generators

ceive Sid's certificate



Thank you, Mark

THIRTY-NINE years' service as an officer - the last eight of them in Saudi Arabia working side-by-side with our Middle East allies - were recognised when Commodore Mark Durkin was honoured by his contemporaries.

Joined by his family, the senior RN officer received his Valedictory Certificate from Air Vice-Marshal Chris Snaith RAF, Director MOD Saudi Armed Forces Projects (MODSAP), marking the end of an illustrious - and incredibly varied - career in the Royal Navy.

Cdre Durkin joined BRNC Dartmouth in January 1984 and has had a successful career as a warfare officer.

Beyond staple warfare roles and posts such as Principal Warfare Officer and two commands (minehunter HMS Atherstone and Type 42 destroyer HMS Exeter), his career has involved mine clearance diver, career manager, public relations officer, and head of RN Sport.

He completed operational tours in Afghanistan, supported the military response to the firefighters' strike in 2002/03 (Operation Fresco) and also served as Captain Mine Warfare, Diving and Fishery Protection.

"It has been a great privilege to serve for 39 years in the Royal Navy," said Cdre Durkin, who was accompanied by his wife, Karen, and his two adult children, for the valedictory presentation in London.

"A hugely-demanding yet rewarding career has given me the opportunity to live in Hong Kong, Australia and Saudi Arabia, undertake many deployments at sea and operational tours in Afghanistan and USA. "Highlights will always be command of HM Ships Atherstone and Exeter and the extraordinary and talented people that I have worked with. "Given the chance I would certainly do it all again."

The commodore leaves the service this month after serving the past eight years in Saudi Arabia, as Commodore Naval Programmes within MODSAP.

This role has allowed him to foster extremely strong RN relations with a key UK ally and partner in the Gulf region, particularly in terms of mine warfare capability; the Saudi Navy operates Sandown-class hunters like the RN and regularly trains/exercises with the UK's vessels permanently stationed in the Gulf.

"Cdre Mark is a Royal Navy officer who has served in nearly all areas of defence and has contributed much over many years," said Air Vice Marshal Snaith.

"We wish him an equally fulfilled and happy life out of uniform."



Submariners pay tribute to K13 crew

ROYAL Navy submariners past and present gathered to remember those who lost their lives when Royal Navy submarine, K13, sank in the Gareloch in 1917.

It has been three years since there was a proper and deserved memorial weekend, with only small ceremonies taking place each year that Covid restrictions were in place.

This year's memorial service held at Faslane Cemetery in Garelochhead saw things return to normal and was attended by serving members of the Royal Navy, West of Scotland Submariners Association and Helensburgh Sea Cadets.

Reverend Rob Church, Chaplain of the Submarine Flotilla led the service at Faslane Cemetery, which was attended by Commodore (Cdre) Paul Dunn, Commodore of the Submarine Flotilla and Commander (Cdr) Peter Noblett, Naval Base Executive Officer.

During the poignant service Cdre Dunn and Cdr Noblett laid wreaths on behalf of the Royal Navy. In addition, the K13 ship's bell was rung 32 times – once for each person who lost their lives in 1917.

Cdre Dunn said: "This weekend is a poignant reminder of the sacrifice previous generations of submariners made and how we must ensure their legacy is never forgotten."

"As we commemorate the loss of K13, it is with real pride that I represent the serving submariners who owe a deep gratitude to those who came before us and helped shape the modern submarine force of today."

There was also a gathering at Elder Gardens in Govan where K13 was built and launched on 11 November, 1916.

A member of the Royal Marine Band Scotland played the bugle while wreaths were laid at the K13 memorial by members of the West of Scotland Submariners Association and representatives from HMNB Clyde.

The steam-propelled submarine K13 sank in the Gareloch on January 29, 1917, during sea trials. On board at the time were 53 Royal Navy submariners, 14 employees of Govan shipbuilder Fairfield's, five Admiralty officials, a pilot, and the captain and



engineer from sister submarine K14.

Andy Knox, former Submarine Service Warrant officer and Chair of the West of Scotland Submariners Association said: "The K13 memorial weekend is the biggest event held by the West of Scotland Submariners Association and is of great importance to not only veteran submariners but serving as well."

"It remains imperative that as a community we continue to remember those that gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country. This year's event was by far the best attended by, not only the submarine community, but the local people of Helensburgh and Garelochhead. The event was supported by the newly formed Submarine Family who kindly awarded a generous grant to assist with the weekends' events."

The crew of K13 were trapped beneath the icy waters of the Gareloch for some 57 hours before help arrived.

Captain of the vessel, Lieutenant Commander Godfrey Herbert, and K14's captain, Commander Francis Goodhart, made a desperate attempt to escape the stricken submarine in order to get help.

The pair used the space between the inner and outer hatches as an airlock, but only Herbert made it to the surface alive, Goodhart sadly dying after striking his head during the escape.

An airline was attached to the vessel allowing the submarine to bring her bow to the surface where a hole was cut allowing the survivors to be rescued. Unfortunately, by that time 32 submariners had already perished. The submarine was later raised from the Gareloch and returned to service as HMS K22.

Time trip for tiffs

FORMER 'tiffies' stepped back in time nearly 70 years to relieve their apprenticeships in the post-WW2 Navy.

A group of eight ex-sailors from the Figsard Association were treated to tours of their museum – and the broader exhibition on marine/air engineering training which is delivered today at the Gosport establishment.

The veterans joined the RN as artificer apprentices between 1954 and 1964. After a year's training at the now-long-decommissioned HMS Figsard, trainees were offered the choice of becoming an artificer ('tiffy') in one of five categories: engineering, ordnance, electrical, air and shipwright.

Although Figsard closed in 1983, artificers continued to be trained until the final class passed out of Sultan in 2010, while the establishment's museum incorporates Figsard's artefacts and history.

Among the group of visitors was John Rochester who served for 24 years in the RN, having joined at the age of 15. He said, "I never even knew this museum existed but it's a seriously great place to visit."

Ken Ridley agreed. He had joined up with John, serving a total of 37 years in the Royal Navy. He said, "This is all bringing back such great memories."

Colin Robertson travelled from East Sussex to visit the museum for the first time. He said, "This is really fascinating, every time I go round, I see something else that interests me or stirs some memories!"

The Figsard Association is open to all artificers – see www.thefigsardassociation.org. If you're interested in Sultan's museum, visit marine-engineering-museum.org.uk/index.html.

'I was blasted clear of the deck'

Sailors join WW2 veteran at his 100th birthday

SAILORS from HMS Hibernia joined the centenary celebrations of Royal Navy veteran Henry Morrell Murphy in Bangor, County Down.

Accompanied by the Royal Navy's Senior Naval Officer Northern Ireland, Commander Rob Milligan, the party was a surprise for Morrell – until a band from his local church, Boys Brigade Old Boys, plus a few pipers, buglers and drummers from the Royal Irish Regiment turned up on his doorstep.

He was escorted to the party by police, family members and a World War 2 Willis jeep.

Upon arrival he was piped aboard by buglers from the Royal Irish Regiment, cadets from TS Decoy, and welcomed by the Vice Lieutenant for County Down, Catherine Champion.

Morrell enlisted in the Royal Navy in Belfast, on St Patrick's Day 1942, aged 19. As today, initial training was conducted at HMS Raleigh, at Torpoint in Plymouth.

On achieving his Ordinary Seaman qualification in August 1942, he moved to HMS Pembroke in Chatham before joining the escort destroyer HMS Haydon, which took part in patrols in the Mediterranean and Operation Husky, the allied invasion of Sicily.

As the campaign progressed, Morrell witnessed the blockade of Tripoli, and the landings at both Salerno and Anzio.

Morrell then enlisted on the submarine detection course at HMS Osprey in Scotland and then to HMS Nimrod at Campbeltown.

By October 1944, having passed numerous theory and practical exams, Able Seaman Murphy was a qualified Submarine Detector and ready for action.

Drafted initially to HMS Caroline in Belfast, as she served as the fixed depot ship for all the escort ships, Morrell joined HMS Capel in December 1944.

The ship joined the hunt for U-boat 486, which sank the SS Leopoldville on Christmas Eve with the loss of 55 crew and 753 soldiers.

On Boxing Day Morrell came off watch and was on the quarter deck when a torpedo struck his ship, detonating the magazine.

"I was blasted clear of the deck with my clothes ripped to pieces and my boots blown off," he said.

"When I hit the sea and came to my senses, I managed to swim to a life raft and climb aboard to join another six or seven survivors."

"After a long two hours, I was picked up by an American Motor Torpedo Boat and taken to Cherbourg Harbour and then on to the American Field Hospital about three miles away."

"Nobody registered my name, rank or ship. After a cursory examination for hypothermia and some food, I was discharged the next morning."

"No fresh clothes were offered, and I walked barefoot back to the harbour wearing



Personnel from HMS Hibernia help veteran Morrell Murphy mark his centenary at a hotel in Bangor, County Down; Below, Morrell with Cdr Rob Milligan, the Royal Navy's Senior Naval Officer Northern Ireland and Morrell's celebration cake



an oil-stained jersey."

The Capel had been sunk but he managed to get aboard another ship from the escort group and returned to Belfast.

"Unknown to me, a priority telegram dated 30th December 1944 had been sent to my mother in Lisburn but was opened by my father."

It read: 'Deeply regret to inform you that your son H M Murphy has been reported missing presumed killed on war service. Letter follows shortly.'

Morrell's father didn't pass that news on to his wife until the letter arrived – and later Morrell turned up at his parents' house.



The U486 met its end while returning to Bergen on April 12 1945, with the loss of all crew, some 50 men.

Morrell finished his war at Chatham Barracks and HMS Wildfire, a shore establishment in Sheerness and was discharged on June 5 1946, returning to Northern Ireland.

Morrell also received a letter from First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key, in which he said: "You and all of your generation are an inspiration to today's sailors and marines, and I am delighted to be able to send you the Service's best wishes on all their behalf."

Stark warning to shipmates to step up to plate

MEMBERS of the Royal Naval Association in the south west were urged to step up or step out.

The stark warning came from National Council member Warwick Belfitt at the Area 4 annual meeting at the China Fleet Club, hosted by the Plymouth branch.

His words, which came after no-one put themselves forward for vital committee posts, had the desired affect with various vacant

roles soon filled.

Mr Belfitt celebrated by devouring the last pasty left at the buffet.

Mark Bardsley, of St Austell Branch, volunteered to take on the role of treasurer and it meant that the region had a full committee for the first time in more than 20 years.

Various issues as to membership fees, current membership numbers – currently

standing at 16,000 and the fact that younger members are not attending or volunteering at branches were discussed.

The Area 4 Reunion, due to take place at Durrant House Hotel in Bideford over the weekend of March 3 was also promoted – with over 160 hipmates attending it promises to be a great weekend.

The next Area 4 meeting will take place in Bodmin on May 20 at 1.30pm.





Cheshire town renews links with destroyer

A NEW memorial display honours an ill-fated wartime destroyer – and a Cheshire community's long-forgotten association with it.

Civic dignitaries, serving and veteran sailors and descendants of those lost aboard HMS Vimiera gathered in Sandbach to witness a memorial unveiled in the town hall, 81 years to the day she was lost in the Thames Estuary.

During a propaganda drive at the end of 1941, villages, towns and cities across the country were set a fundraising target for 'Warship Week'.

If they achieved their goal, they were assigned an 'adopted' ship.

Set £120,000 – the cost of a corvette at the time – the people of Sandbach actually coughed up over £163,000. Their prize was an affiliation with HMS Vimiera.

Vimiera was one of more than 60 V and W class destroyers built in late WW1 but which continued to prove their worth throughout WW2, largely on unglamorous but vital convoy escort duties.

It lasted barely a month. On January 9th 1942 the destroyer struck a mine off Sheerness and sank. Just 34 men were rescued.

With the passage of time, Sandbach's association with the destroyer began to fade from memory.

That was until town hall caretaker Steve Hyland came across the ship's badge while sorting out the storeroom last year.

That prompted a dig around in the archives and councillors agreeing not merely to restore the crest, but also to create a permanent tribute to the destroyer.

The result just a few months later is the memorial display in the town hall foyer featuring the restored badge, a bell, roll of honour and several photographs.

Alongside councillors, council officials and veterans organisations, witnessing the unveiling of the memorial was David Adderley from Birmingham who made the short trip up the M6 to remember his uncle.

Aged just 22, Able Seaman Norman Tudor was one of the 93 men who went down with the Vimiera.

"I hope other families will now come and see this as it's a wonderful thing to remember these men by," Mr Adderley said.

Representing today's Royal Navy, Lieutenant Antonio Valente (pictured above) from HMS Eagle, the regional headquarters for Northern England and the Isle of Man in Liverpool, told those present: "It was a tragic loss. These men made the ultimate sacrifice and I am so proud of them."

Sandbach's Mayor Councillor Kathryn Flavell praised all involved in restoring the badge and "its true prominence" after many years out of the limelight, and for creating a display which reflected "the great efforts of Sandbach Town during the war".



Boost for Bronington

THE campaign to save the 'King's ship' has been boosted with the trust looking to restore HMS Bronington receiving charitable status.

That opens the door to accessing funding, grants and handouts previously unavailable.

The HMS Bronington Preservation Trust – since December, registered charity No. 1201325 – is hoping to replicate the success of restoring D-Day landing craft LCT7074, part of the same collection of warships as the veteran minesweeper, which was salvaged, revamped and now enjoys pride of place at the D-Day Museum in Southsea, Portsmouth.

Vital to restoring the WW2 ship was £4.7m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, supported by fundraising efforts of the team dedicated to restoring the landing craft.

The Bronington team were prompted to act last year as the state of the Ton-class vessel continued to deteriorate.

The wooden-hulled ship has been partially submerged in a basin in Birkenhead since 2016.

Crowdfunding and local veterans raised enough money to both conduct a comprehensive dive survey of the vessel – which determined Bronington can be saved – and support the successful application for charitable status.

The goal for 2023 – the 70th anniversary of the ship's launch and the Coronation year of her most famous commanding officer – is to get her refloated, then out of the water and on to a slipway, after which the restoration, and fund-raising effort to support it, can begin in earnest.

The trust has been offered free use of a crane/salvage equipment and a major UK shipbuilder has offered the free services of a naval architect to assist the salvage and restoration process.

In time, depending on the state of Bronington and cost of the restoration, the aim is to turn her into a museum ship – a static display or potentially working ship again.

The ship's association with the king dates back to his ten-month tenure as her commanding officer as a then Lieutenant Wales in 1976, during which he dealt with WW2 ordnance, kept an eye on a Soviet submarine in home waters, and welcomed most of his family aboard during a visit to London.

Throughout his time in charge of Bronington, royal duties were also performed constantly; every three days a large blue dispatch bag containing correspondence and documents was delivered to the ship.

The king says he has "many fond memories" of his time in the ship – keeping in touch with former shipmates and occasionally hosting reunions. He has told the trust he finds their efforts to save Bronington "truly humbling".

The charity is now pressing on with fundraising – www.gofundme.com/f/help-restore-hms-bronington – with any money donated going to Forces charities if the restoration attempt ultimately fail.

Visit is just the trick for Mick

FORTY years after he last disappeared beneath the waves as a Royal Navy diver, Michael 'Mick' Kester caught up with today's counterparts in Plymouth.

The former frogman was royally hosted by HMS Drake's diving team – Bravo Squadron of the new Diving Threat Exploitation Group – who are called upon to perform a myriad diving/bomb disposal tasks across the South West.

The team laid out the kit used by today's generation of divers and ran Mick through both the equipment and how it's used.

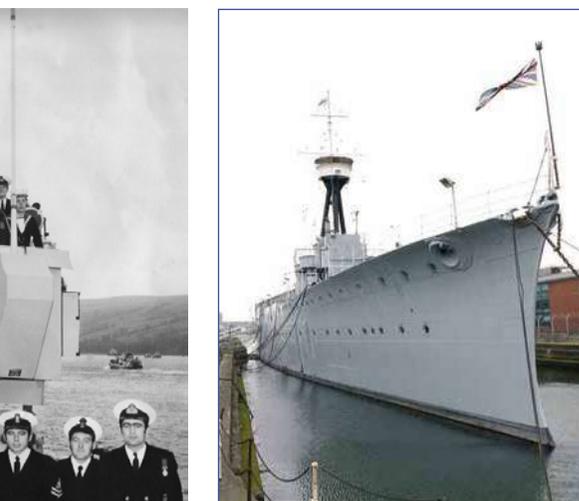
Bravo – successors to the longstanding Southern Diving Unit – are on call 24/7 to respond to bomb disposal tasks across the South West, as well as supporting the activities of the Surface Flotilla in the region.

"Whilst the kit and technology has developed significantly since Mick was last in the unit it was clear the esprit de corps has remained the same," said Petty Officer (Diver) Paul Cartwright.

"It was a pleasure to host Mick and share stories about the branch and hear about the places he had been and the ships he served on."

Mick served in the Royal Navy for 24 years, having joined in February 1958, as a Junior Seaman at HMS Ganges in Suffolk. His first ship was the destroyer HMS Craysfort with the Far East Fleet based in Singapore.

He qualified as a diver at HMS Drake Diving School in 1962, remaining with them as part of the training staff as well as serving in the Middle East carrying out Diving duties with a shore-based unit.



Jutland survivor to reopen after three years

FIRST World War light cruiser HMS Caroline is to reopen this month after nearly three years.

The sole survivor from the Battle of Jutland, the Belfast-based ship's future has been secured following a new operating agreement.

The ship will reopen with a fanfare in time for the Easter holidays, although a handful of lucky visitors will have the chance to preview the ship during special weekend-only openings in March.

The ship, which was fully restored and opened to the public on May 31 2016, has received £14,240,000 support from National Heritage Lottery Fund and £4,518,000 from Tourism NI.

A team of specialist staff has remained onboard caring for the unique 4,000-tonne, 122-metre long light cruiser and she is in remarkably good condition having been closed for nearly three years.

Professor Dominic Tweddle, Director General of The National Museum of the Royal Navy said: "The announcement that, after a three-year hiatus, we are able to reopen HMS Caroline with her long-term future secured is monumental for the museum."

"Her story and place in Belfast's maritime history is so important and the strides we were making in offering a world-class welcome were justly acknowledged with her shortlisting as Museum of the Year."

"With the superb team we have onboard, we cannot wait to welcome visitors back and ensure that HMS Caroline is a key part of the tourism and cultural offer in Belfast for many years to come."

HMS Caroline is moored in Belfast's Alexandra Dock beside the Science Park in Titanic Quarter and is also part of the Maritime Mile, which stretches from Corporation Street to Donegall Quay, and on to HMS Caroline.

For more information about the ship and to buy tickets, visit www.hmscaroline.co.uk



Diver Lee Harris-Joce explains some of the 21st Century kit used by today's RN clearance divers to CPO 'Mick' Kester, who retired in 1982

Picture: LPhot Barry Swainsbury

Mick subsequently qualified as a clearance diver, assigned to inshore minesweepers and Patrol craft during in the Far East.

He joined the Plymouth Clearance Diving Team in 1967 and during his time back in his hometown took part in several tasks including search and recovery duties in the South West and the Channel Islands, Explosive Ordnance Disposal in Northern Ireland, deep diving and the salvage and disposal of recovered bombs and mines.

He ended his career as a Chief Petty Officer and chief of the Plymouth Clearance Team between 1979-82.



Cadets show caring side with food bank support

BOSTON Sea Cadets helped with collections for food items and toiletries for the less fortunate.

Their local Asda supermarket hosted the 'collections drive' with customers encouraged to donate essential items.

Sea cadets and volunteers were joined by Boston police cadets and Boston's Neighbourhood Policing Team to ask customers to pick up an extra item while shopping and donate it to the collection trolley.

Boston sea cadets also helped to raise vital cash for the food bank by offering to pack customers' bags in return for a donation.

Junior cadets at Boston Unit also did their bit in this heart-warming initiative, all helping to raise an impressive 30 crates (443.9 kilos) of food for the less fortunate this winter.

Junior Cadet First Class Isabel, ten, said: "I was asked to help at Asda with the mayor to ask people to donate to the foodbank.

"I have autism so talking to people for me is really scary, but after a while I started talking more and really enjoyed helping.

"While I was giving out leaflets this kind lady gave my junior friend and I some cookies because she thought it was great that we were helping people who are struggling with buying food. So many kind people were giving donations to the foodbank. We also got to sit in the police van before we filled it up with food – that was fun!"

The store's community champion, Stephen Bromby said: "We are extremely proud of the great work we do to help the community around our store and we're thankful to our generous customers whose help will make a real difference to people in the local area."

The initiative saw lots of extra donations being made to the food bank.

Ordinary Cadet Walker, 13, said: "The people of Boston were so kind and generous considering the cost of living crisis. The food bank was amazed with how much we had!"

Charlotte takes top gong

BRIDLINGTON Sea Cadets are thrilled that one of their cadets, new entry cadet Charlotte, has won the Cadet of the Year Award.

The unit was joined by David Stamford, Commodore for the Royal Yorkshire Yacht Club, to present the Cadet of the Year Award, with Charlotte being presented with The Stephen Phelps Memorial Shield.

The award recognises individuals who have shown commitment, advancement and outstanding conduct during the previous year.

According to the training staff, Charlotte has gone 'above and beyond' and thoroughly deserved the recognition.

Mr Stamford said: "It's an absolute pleasure to be invited along to present this award and I'm delighted to be here tonight, and award the trophy to NEC Charlotte, it is well deserved and I wish her well in her future with the Sea Cadets."

Charlotte said: "This is amazing, I won cadet of the month a few times and it inspired me to go further, I've learnt so much since joining Sea Cadets, I'd recommend it to anyone who wants to try something new."

The Stephen Phelps Memorial Shield which Charlotte received was created as a tribute to a former cadet who became a Royal Navy recruit.

Phelps died of cancer in January 2016 and since then the memorial shield has been given to cadets to honour his service.



Keeping Newfoundland memory alive

WOLVERHAMPTON Sea Cadets hosted veterans and families of the World War 2 ship HMS Newfoundland.

The event was to dedicate the book of remembrance for the unit's namesake ship and also coincided with the 80th anniversary of her commissioning.

HMS Newfoundland was paid for and adopted by the City of Wolverhampton during Warship Week in 1942 and as such Wolverhampton Sea Cadets have worn her name since forming on May 9 1942.

The event was hosted in St Peter's Church Wolverhampton and also included cadets and volunteers.

The book of remembrance was put together by Arthur Aston, a veteran of the Second World War

and one of the first 30 cadets to join the unit upon its formation.

After passing on the book of remembrance of the HMS Newfoundland Association to the safekeeping of the unit it is now displayed alongside the Number 2 Bell, ship's crest and battle honours.

The new book has now been laid to rest in the memorial chapel of St. Peter's on the HMS Newfoundland lectern and shall remain in the safe keeping of the church providing a quiet place for people to pay their respects to Wolverhampton's warship, a Fiji-class light cruiser.

Arthur himself believes he is the only member of the ship's company to be from Wolverhampton and put the book together to remember his shipmates.



Arthur is pictured with Petty Officer (SCC) Matthew White, officer in charge of TS Newfoundland

Up for the challenge Second place for Brentwood cadets

BRENTWOOD Unit is the first Sea Cadets team to enter the Raytheon Technologies Quadcopter Challenge – and their hard work paid off when they grabbed second place after a nail-biting final.

The competition, designed to encourage students to take up STEM, saw 92 teams compete nationwide for the coveted title. Brentwood sea cadets Ahmet, William, Jude, Max, Fynn and Cameron, came just four points behind winners St Louis Grammar School, Killeel.

The theme of the 2022 competition was sustainability and the young people were asked to use materials and create a design that would be environmentally responsible.

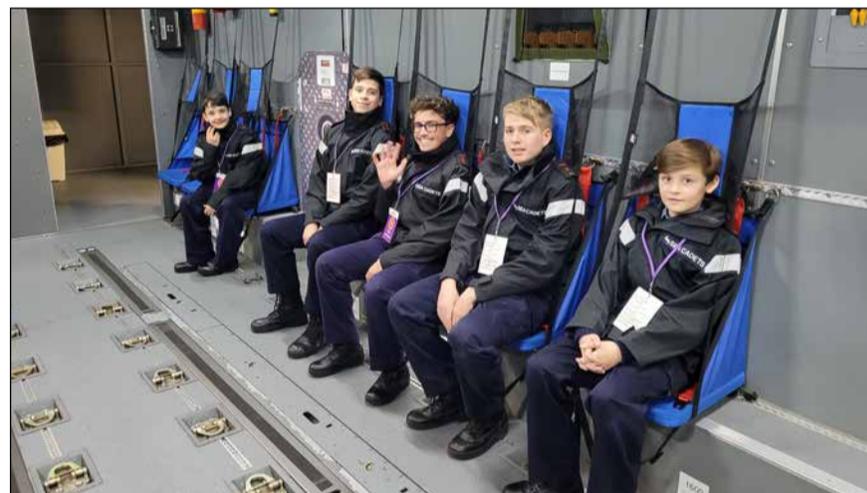
The Sea Cadets team – who chose the name Bowline 6 for the challenge – designed a remote soil moisture monitoring system to reduce overwatering of sports grounds, golf courses, parks and crops. Made from recycled materials and featuring a retractable probe underneath the drone and two camera 'eyes', the Sea Cadets design resembled a mosquito and was named Midge by the cadets.

"Just before we submitted the film and presentation in June 2022, we had a visit from the Raytheon ambassadors who wanted to see how our cadets were getting on and they were very impressed," explained the Commanding Officer of Brentwood Unit, S/Lt (SCC) Samantha Hayward RNR.

"They also spent some time inspiring our cadets with a Q&A session on possible careers and apprenticeships at Raytheon Technologies and how they work closely with the Royal Navy. It caused much excitement and even more so when a week later, we were told we had been shortlisted to go through to the Harlow Region Build & Fly day."

Although the Sea Cadets team faced some challenges – including not having access to resources like 3D printers and the fact that the cadets were at different schools so could only meet on parade nights at the unit – the cadets remained undeterred and worked hard to get 'Midge' ready for the Regional Finals.

"The Sea Cadets team were able to fly the



quadcopter over and under each obstacle with such precision and speed that they swiftly secured a place in the national final."

After months of preparation, the big day finally arrived. The Brentwood sea cadets (representing Harlow Region) arrived at the Royal Air Force College Cranwell in Sleaford as one of the 11 finalists from across the UK.

Among their supporters was Captain Sea Cadets, Captain Neil Downing RN – he had promised the cadets beforehand that if they made it to the finals, he would come along to cheer them on.

The final stage of the competition saw a thrilling series of timed flights around different biomes loaded with obstacles and tasks, from Arctic, desert and marine landscapes to the tropical jungle.

The Sea Cadets team skilfully tackled each task, coming just four seconds behind the winners and scooping a very impressive second place.

Cadet First Class Ahmet, 13, who was the Sea Cadets Team Leader, said: "I am so

grateful to everyone who have enabled us to be involved in the Quadcopter Challenge. It has been really exciting and we've had loads of fun designing Midge. It's amazing for us to have the opportunity to build and fly a quadcopter as we wouldn't normally get the chance to do anything like this."

Cadet Fynn, 14, Lead Designer, said: "We were really limited with our resources as Brentwood Sea Cadets are a small charity and we have to raise all of our own funds. But in a way, this made our design stronger as it kept to the sustainability theme. We had to really think about the materials we used and how they could be adapted. It was really good to see Midge flying around the course and we could all feel part of that because we'd all done our bit to create him."

Cadet Max, 12, Pilot, said: "It was really fun to be able to fly around the different zones. I really liked the marine zone, where I had to get the drone to pick up the plastic bottle with the magnet. It was really hard but really good!"



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Inspiration for future female engineers

SEA Cadets have reached almost 8,000 schoolgirls through its Marine Engineering Project (MEP) project in 2022, inspiring them to consider a career as engineers and scientists.

The project, offered free of charge by the youth charity to schools across the UK since 2016, aims to get pupils aged 9-14 more engaged in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects through fun challenges and practical experiments.

Covering many of the topics that link to the national curriculum – buoyancy, density, why things float, mass and weight – the focus is on interactive and hands-on exercises.

Students explore the concepts of buoyancy and density by predicting which similar-sized objects will and won't float, for example. By relating things to everyday life, young people are able to learn in a different way to the typical classroom environment.

Out of the schoolgirls surveyed after taking part in the workshop, 82 percent of them said they really enjoyed it, with over half of them (56 percent) stating they would now consider a career in marine engineering.

"I loved all the experiments," said ten-year-old Poppy, who has recently taken part in a MEP workshop.

"It's really important we think about becoming marine engineers so we can fix things."

Students also get to understand



the range of possible careers linked to engineering, from the more traditional mechanical and electrical engineering, through to aeronautical and environmental engineering. And since three of the five MEP workshop leaders are female, they also act as role models for female pupils interested in pursuing a career in engineering or science.

There's a strong focus on environmental awareness and sustainable marine engineering solutions in the MEP workshops, covering topics such as rising sea levels, pollution to oceans and rivers, and pollution from shipping – and how marine engineers can play a key role in changing things.

"The workshop was great," says Molly, aged nine. "I didn't know about all the environmental problems because of engineering. I would like to try and be one and help fix them and make the world better in the future."

One of the teachers commented: "Through the MEP workshops, students can see that there are lots of careers within that STEM idea. It gives them a lot of future thought."

Over 96 percent of the teachers surveyed said they would recommend Sea Cadets' MEP workshop to other schools.

"There's been a lot of media attention on fewer female pupils choosing STEM subjects and we're on a mission to change

this," says STEM Programme Manager for Sea Cadets, Sally Wilkinson.

"This could be because of a lack of understanding of what an engineer actually does. I feel passionately about changing any out-of-date preconceptions that young people, especially girls, might have about engineering. MEP showcases all that engineering has to offer and what a rewarding career choice it is."

The MEP workshops are made possible thanks to funding by the Merchant Navy Welfare Board and the Royal Navy.

For more information, visit <https://www.sea-cadets.org/get-started/stem-workshop> or email info@ms-sc.org



Donald's 108 not out

A WORLD War II veteran is 'overwhelmed' after being showered with birthday cards from total strangers for his 108th birthday following a Royal British Legion (RBL) appeal – and Long Eaton Sea Cadets jumped at the chance to help make his birthday extra special.

Donald Rose, a former Desert Rats trooper, celebrated his 108th birthday and the RBL launched an appeal to encourage people to send the widower birthday cards to celebrate the special occasion. Mr Rose ended up receiving 160 cards at his care home in Ilkeston, Derbyshire – including one from King Charles III.

"We became aware of WW2 Veteran Donald Rose's 108th birthday through Cadet Mason and his mother, who is a member of the Ilkeston Branch of the RBL, and quickly arranged for volunteers to attend his birthday celebrations," said PO Andrew Maltby (RNR), Executive Officer at Long Eaton Unit.

"In the meantime, all the cadets and staff signed a card to wish Mr Rose well on his birthday. Our unit also made a video of us singing happy birthday to him, which finished with a rousing three cheers for Mr Rose and a thank you for his service to the country during World War II."

The Commanding Officer of Long Eaton Unit and two cadets, Mason and Sarah-Ellen, also accompanied the Lord Mayor of Erewash, Councillor John Sewell, local Councillor James Dawson and Ilkeston and Eastwood RBL Members to the care home to personally wish Mr Rose many happy returns of the day.

"I am really proud to have been able to go and wish Mr Rose a happy birthday and thank him for all that he did in the name of freedom," said Cadet Mason. "It is important that we support our veterans and Mr Rose is a very special person," added Sarah-Ellen.

Surrey-born Mr Rose was born in 1914 and signed up to the British Army in 1939 when he was 25 years old, fighting on the frontline during World War II. During the conflict, Mr Rose joined the Eighth Army as a 'Desert Rat' under Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery in Africa and as part of the liberation of Italy and France.

He also trained to become a sniper and served in North Africa, Italy, France, Normandy, Belgium, Holland and Germany.

Aberdeen mourn Sarah Worcester mourn Paula

FLAGS have been lowered to half-mast to remember 33-year-old Sarah Livingstone, a volunteer and Petty Officer for Aberdeen Sea Cadets as well as a Sailing Instructor and Water Safety Advisor for the city's RNLI.

PPO (SCC) Sarah Livingstone died suddenly after a short illness. She had volunteered for Aberdeen Sea Cadets since 2020.

Aberdeen Unit sent out a statement soon afterwards saying: "We sadly lowered our Ensign to half-mast as the news broke that one of our volunteers had sadly passed away. PPO (SCC) Sarah Livingstone or as we knew her by, Scot, joined TS Scylla and became the unit's Boat Officer with her wealth of waterborne experience."

"Scot found a new passion since joining Sea Cadets and working with us at TS Scylla, and

as she found her feet, Scot started to branch out to district training, assisting with night supervision but ready to take on the next challenge. Scot always made time for others. With her cheeky and energetic personality, she will be sorely missed by all at the unit."

Through her work with schools and online water safety courses, Scot helped keep children and members of the public safe.

Many people who knew her filled social media channels with posts sending condolences to her family and loved ones and paying tribute to the popular volunteer by remembering her "bubbly personality".

Lt (SCC) Peter Ritchie, Commanding Officer of Aberdeen Unit, said: "We have been touched by the many messages of support from across the country. Thank you."

WORCESTER Sea Cadets are mourning the loss of their former Chair, Paula Dyde.

The mum-of-four dedicated 18 years as a volunteer for Worcester Unit and is remembered fondly for her "many selfless and worthy deeds".

Denise Harvey, the current Chair of Worcester Unit, said: "Paula made a huge impact in turning the unit around financially, increasing cadet numbers and raising awareness of the unit within the local community."

"Paula was never afraid to get 'stuck in' – she even gave the cadets a hand with sewing badges, driving the minibus and much more. Over the 13 years Paula and I volunteered together she became my mentor and role model as well as a very dear friend. She will be greatly missed

and fondly remembered."

Mrs Dyde, who died aged 65, first joined Sea Cadets in 2004 as parent to a newly-enrolled cadet, Jack. She worked alongside four different Commanding Officers during her time as volunteer for the unit, who paid tribute to her.

Rob Mountford, former CO of Worcester Unit, said: "Paula was the best Sea Cadet Unit Chairperson any unit could have. The time and effort she put into the Worcester Unit was amazing."

Paul Ormsby, another former CO of the unit, said: "They broke the mould after they made Paula chair. The most perfect lady: friendly, honest and loving."

Martin Griffiths, the current CO of Worcester Sea Cadets said: "Paula was an inspiration to us all, her enthusiasm, drive, energy and devotion to Worcester Sea Cadets was second to none."



Historic discovery

CADETS from Twickenham Unit made a special visit to Keogh Barracks and The Museum of Military Medicine near Camberley, Surrey.

As well as enjoying a guided tour of the museum, they were there to donate a historic item for display and share their newly-uncovered story of wartime courage.

Former CO of Twickenham Unit, Lt (SCC) Eddie Muggridge RNR, had left items for the unit in his will, including a Royal Red Cross Medal 1st Class identified by PPO (SCC) and DoFE Coordinator, Eugenie Brooks.

A keen historian, Eugenie used her research skills to discover the medal had been presented in 1917 to Eddie's aunt, Staff Nurse Luisa Lillian Muggridge by King George V at Buckingham Palace.

Queen Victoria had introduced the medal to recognise 'exceptional acts of bravery and devotion', after she heard about the courage of nurses during the Crimean War. Eugenie also discovered that Nurse Muggridge had served on several hospital ships during the Great War and had been awarded three other medals.

"With the help of a friend Bea Johnson, who is a retired Army and Naval Nurse and works at the The D-Day Story museum in Portsmouth, we were able to research the story of Nurse Luisa Muggridge," says Eugenie.

"When we found out she had served on board hospital ships during the Great War. I immediately felt a connection with the lady and it was fascinating to learn more about the role of nurses in the Great War." Eugenie is a battlefield guide and regularly takes junior soldiers of the British Army on tours to Ypres, Belgium, the Somme and Normandy.

Joined by friends of Eddie Muggridge and his late wife Jane, museum staff were delighted to be presented with the medal and pictures of Nurse Luisa, by Sub Lieutenant (SCC) RNR Roger Middleton, who is the acting Commanding Officer for Twickenham.

Dunbar duo reach for the stars

TWO cadets from Dunbar Sea Cadets Unit have reached for the stars – and have managed to achieve a prestigious honour after successfully completing their Leading Cadet Board.

While many young people would find this objective daunting, Able Cadet Ashley and Able Cadet Riordan took it in their stride, becoming the first cadets to achieve this recognition for Dunbar Sea Cadets in almost five years.

The two cadets, who are both students at Dunbar Grammar School, recently attended a promotion board run by the Northern Area Sea Cadets Training Team.

The board looks at several skills, including delivering a session on their chosen subject, completing leadership tasks, using their power of command to give drill orders as well



as taking part in an interview with the Board President.

Chief Petty Officer (SCC) Martin Galloway, Commanding Officer of Dunbar Unit, said: "I am extremely proud of Ashley and Riordan. They have both been in the sea cadets since 2017 and I have seen them

develop and grow over the years.

"They have been exceptionally great cadets, taking part in anything that is thrown towards them. They have both achieved ILM BTECs in Young Leaders Award as well as their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award.

"Being a leading cadet is not an easy promotion to pass but, with pure work and determination, it's achievable – and they have proved just that."

Leading Cadet Riordan said: "It feels good to be acknowledged for my work over the past six years."

"The anchor on my shoulder is a reminder of the commitment I have put in."

Leading Cadet Ashley said: "It feels great being a Leading Cadet and I'm very thankful for everyone who has helped me along the way. Finally, all my hard work has paid off!"



National qualifications make a real difference

A YOUNG Cadet from the Combined Cadet Force RN at Queen Victoria School who was on a recent CCF RN/RM National Pool Lifeguarding Qualification Course helped save a life while training at her local pool.

Lexine, pictured right, was on a normal training night at Grangemouth High School pool working on diving drills.

As she prepared to step on to the blocks she saw one of her fellow swimmers fall into the pool.

Initially she thought he had done this on purpose but quickly noticed that he was floating face down, convulsing in the pool with his torso under the water.

Lexine quickly reacted to this, assessed the situation and knew from her training that the safest way to help her friend was by conducting a poolside rescue.

Due to this being a deck level pool she managed to rescue the casualty without putting herself at undue risk.

By the time Lexine had recovered the casualty and made them safe, other adults were in attendance and took over.

Happily, they made a swift recovery which is, without a doubt, due to Lexine's training and quick thinking.

Cadet Lexine is in her fifth year of CCF training with the QVS RN CCF and confidently leads the Section holding the rank Cadet WO2.

In addition to this Lexine swims at a high level, training nine times a week (around 22 hours) and competes at a national level.

She undertook her lifeguarding course at Caledonia in October last year.

QVS and the CCF RN are very proud of Lexine.

Through her endeavours she exemplified C2Dril.

QVS said: 'This speaks highly of the quality of training and the numerous opportunities for cadets to grow through CCF RN camps and courses.'



Sedbergh embrace green canopy

THE Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) Project was launched in March 2021.

The first tree was planted in the grounds of Windsor Castle in March 2021 to mark the launch of the QGC initiative.

During the tree planting season from October to March trees were added to The Queen's Green Canopy across the United Kingdom.

King Charles III is now the Patron of QGC, encouraging planting projects across the UK to mark both the Platinum Jubilee, giving everyone an opportunity to be part of this special legacy and to plant trees in memoriam to honour Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee.

The CCF Contingents UK-wide have been encouraged to take part in this exciting nationwide initiative and Sedbergh School CCF RN Section embraced this challenge with real enthusiasm. As part of the QGC Project, tree planting has been extended until the end this month.

Enterprising visit for cadets from Newcastle

MEMBERS of the CCF RN Section at Newcastle's Royal Grammar School had the brilliant opportunity to visit HMS Enterprise, which was docked on the shore of the Tyne, writes Junior Cadet Maria.

HMS Enterprise is an Echo-class multi-role survey vessel - hydrographic oceanographic (SVHO).

She is mainly used for the important task of surveying and mapping the ocean floor to make sailing charts which sailors everywhere use to navigate the waters that they are in.

This is not only important for the RN but for any vessel. HMS Enterprise also looks for shipwrecks or dangers which could be incredibly dangerous to large ships when they enter shallower areas of water or in the high seas.

We entered the ship and were kindly greeted by the Captain and some of the crew.

On the Bridge we learnt about how the ship is navigated and where the data for the charts is collected.

Next, we were taken down into the depths of the ship into the engine room.

We learnt the importance of always having a trained firefighting team on the ship in case of any small fires throughout the ship, especially in the engine room.

After that, we went to the data analysis room where the raw data from the Bridge is analysed and converted into the sailing charts.

We were allowed to see some of the famous wreckages uncovered by HMS Enterprise and the charts created from them.

Then we visited the galley and learnt the dangers of deep-frying at high sea and the importance of steak Monday for the crew's morale.

Then we went to the front of the ships and saw the lifeboats and learnt that it takes around eight minutes to save a person that falls overboard, from the call to getting into the water.

All in all, it was an incredible experience, everyone who went will remember forever.

Many thanks to Lt L and Lt W for making this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity possible!





Marine sleighs 'em



ROYAL Navy elite athlete Marine Taylor Lawrence helped Great Britain to their first four-man bobsleigh medal at the World Championships for 84 years.

Marine Lawrence, along with pilot Brad Hall, Arran Gulliver and Greg Cackett finished joint second with Latvia at the event in St Moritz.

The British sled finished with a combined time of 4min 20.3sec to go level with the Latvian pilot Emils Cipulis's team, both 0.69sec behind the German two-time Olympic champion Francesco Friedrich.

Taylor said: "Being so close to Friedrich for that gold medal just shows the class and calibre we have got on the team.

"It's been a rollercoaster of emotions over the weekend. If you had asked us in the summer if we would be happy with a silver medal in the World Championships, we would have absolutely bitten your arm off for it, so to go out and deliver that result is hard to put into words.

We're over the moon, and I hope we can carry this on for the rest of the season."

"It's an incredible achievement," said Hall, 32, who was fifth in the two-man.

"It's been a hell of a long time since a four-man crew has won a World Championship medal. To

be the ones who have bucked that trend is pretty special.

"We would have loved to win gold and we knew we had that in us but we have to be happy with silver – it's an historic result and not something many people would have given us a chance of doing a couple of years ago."

Britain's men last won a World Championship medal in any discipline in 1966, when Tony Nash and Robin Dixon took two-man bronze in Cortina.

The victory came after the team won their first-ever bobsleigh gold medal at the European Championships with victory in the four-man event in Altenberg, Germany.

Altenberg's last medal in the event was silver in 2014.

Just 24 hours after Hall and Lawrence secured bronze in the two-man event, Arran Gulliver and Greg Cackett joined the party to help cap a stunning weekend on the track.

It was the second time in three races that the team had topped the podium, making it the first time that a British four-man team has won two World Cup gold medals in a single season, and saw them lead after both runs, with their stunning start time of 5.06 seconds in Run 2 being the fastest of

the day.

The British team partly trains at facilities at the University of Bath, where there is an off-ice 140m push-start track, where they can practise their starts.

Taylor began his bobsleigh adventure in 2019 and it's fair to say he hit the ground running – by January 2020, he was making his World Cup bow in Brad Hall's four-man team.

The brakeman, who had never previously pushed the side handle prior to his debut in Winterberg, stayed on board for the remainder of the season and went on to claim three World Cup silvers in the 2021/22 World Cup campaign.

His exposure to the sport came via the military, where Taylor has served as a Royal Marine Commando since 2016 and enjoyed plenty of sporting success.

The Kent native has won the Navy Cup football competition as well as representing the Royal Marines rugby team against their American counterparts during their successful Virginia Gauntlet Trophy campaign in 2019.

Mne Lawrence's achievements last year earned him the Royal Navy's Sportsman of the Year trophy.

More winter sports, pages 36-37



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Main image: Able Seaman Ollie Drain from the Fleet Air Arm on his British Association Snowboarding and Skiing Instructors Course; Pictured left, from top, Royal Navy skier Sub Lt Brett Wild; Able Seaman Ella Bamford; Lieutenant Jack Danns

Pictures: LPhot Finn Stainer-Hutchins





AWESOME TIME IN THE ALPS

AROUND 800 Royal Navy personnel travelled to Les Deux Alpes in France for the Royal Navy's Snowsports Festival.

The festival introduced members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, safely and progressively, to the sports of alpine skiing and snowboarding from grass roots level upwards.

Over the two weeks, around 200 beginner and 100 novice skiers and snowboarders completed lesson packages and a race.

Pushing our people to individual physical and psychological limits within a controlled environment tests their determination, physical courage under pressure, ability to operate in harsh alpine and potentially dangerous environments and their leadership skills.

None of this would

be possible however without the support of the RNRMC and other sponsors, who help subsidise the festival to make it as accessible and inclusive as possible, from the most junior sailor and marine upwards.

The festival also promotes excellence in winter sports, developing regular and reserve personnel to an advanced level through alpine racing (slalom, giant slalom and super G) and snowboard competition (parallel slalom, slopestyle and boarder cross).

This facilitates the selection of individuals for the RN Alpine Ski and Snowboard teams to compete in inter-services events against the Army and Royal Air Force, and to represent Great Britain in civilian sporting competitions such as the GB National Telemark Championships.

Lastly, the festival also develops a pool of instructors, coaches and race officials, and this year were joined in resort by the Armed Forces Para Snowsport Team and members of the Royal Artillery ski team who participated in our races for some friendly rivalry.

The camaraderie at the festival is second to none and was absolutely essential to maintaining cheerfulness in the face of adversity through some tough conditions over the fortnight.

From arriving in 15 degrees and seeing grass

either side of the piste, to 10 days of snowy blizzards, white outs and extreme winds on the glacier, to ending at minus 30 degrees but with glorious blue skies and sunshine, everyone kept smiling throughout, making memories with friends old and new.

Among those taking part were a team from HMS Pegasus.

Lt Cdr Craig Trott, Lt Cdr Tilda Woodard, Lt Cdr James Priest, WO1 Tony Staples and CPO Lee Grunwell joined the Upper Intermediate skiers and Lt Cdr Stuart Pike and Lt Cdr Lee Evans joined the Upper Intermediate snowboarders.

Also in the snow this winter were 14 athletes at the RN Telemark Downhill Ski Championships at Pralognan-la-Vanoise, France.

From 2024 the RN Telemark Championships will be held at the RN Snow Sports Festival with the Alpine and Snowboard competitions.

The overall results were as follows:

1st: AET Matt Deane RN; 2nd: CSgt Steve

Farrant RM; 3rd: Lt Cdr Ramsay Shaw RN; 4th: Marine Jonny Stanley RM; 5th: Cpl Ryan Bailey RMR; 6th: Capt Ollie Frost RM

Overall winner AET Deane was also the top novice having only started telemarking this season, but coming from a strong alpine slalom racing background.

In the Mountain Race mountain leader Capt Ollie Frost RM stormed the field to win the race as the fastest individual, even beating all the three-man relay teams as well for good measure. The fastest RN Team came fourth.

UK Armed Forces are delighted to be able to host a women's telemark competition this year with female teams from all three services competing in Meribel for the first time.

It is intended to continue taster sessions throughout 2023 at indoor/dry ski slopes and Navy Snow Sports Indoor Festival (dates TBC). For anyone interested in next season the novice training camp, Ex White Dagger, will be held in Stubai Glacier from November 26 to December 10.

If anyone would like further details on telemark skiing please contact Lt Cdr Ramsay Shaw on ramsay.shaw771@mod.gov.uk or 07815 019270.



Charity's target for hockey challenge

HOCKEY for Heroes has announced its upcoming tour, 'Operation Last Post', that will see sportsmen and women playing 54 games of hockey and undergoing 457 kilometres of endurance challenges in nine days, between May 26 and June 3, 2023, to raise £100,000 for Help for Heroes.

The nine-day tour will see Hockey for Heroes men's and women's squads compete against hockey clubs in eight locations, starting in Ben Rhydding, Yorkshire, and finishing in Portsmouth, Hampshire.

The squads will also take on various endurance and military challenges over 457 kilometres, which will include rowing, swimming, running a half marathon, a weighted speed march and a stretcher-carry march.

The 457 figure has been chosen to recognise the 457 British service personnel killed during the war in Afghanistan, in acknowledgement of their ultimate sacrifice. The objective is to allocate each kilometre to every individual fallen hero from this conflict in remembrance.

Hockey for Heroes has set this challenge to raise vital funds and awareness of Help for Heroes, the charity that supports British military personnel and their families to live well after service.

Joel Forrester, Head of Hockey for Heroes, commented: "We are excited to embark on our next challenge, which is set to be bigger and bolder than ever before. This is the first time in our history that our two squads will combine for a tour, and it will be a special moment to see the whole organisation involved in such an occasion."

"The physical aspect of this event will test our squads to capacity, and the meaning of this tour is of even greater importance. Each day we will make a roll call of those we are remembering throughout that day, and this will be a truly humbling experience for many of our members and I am sure they can draw on this emotion and enable it to fuel them to success."

"We hope the hockey and wider community will support this event and help us to shed light on the true and rarely spoken-of sacrifice made by many to ensure our freedom today."

To donate, visit www.justgiving.com/team/OpLastPost

For the latest news on Operation Last Post, follow Hockey for Heroes on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, or follow the hashtag #OpLastPost.

WELL-EARNED FUN IN THE SUN



MOUNTAIN BIKING in the desert, paddleboarding, and sailing were among the activities on offer to the crew of HMS Lancaster during a scheduled maintenance period in Bahrain.

A Royal Navy Adventurous Training package also included wall climbing, road cycling and indoor sky diving and was also offered to personnel in the UK Naval Service Facility in Bahrain.

"The sky diving experience was breezy but a once in a lifetime experience," said ET Molly O'Neill.

The Type 23 frigate this year began her three-year security mission in the Gulf, taking over from HMS Montrose as the Royal Navy's forward-deployed warship.

Stand-up paddleboarding offered individuals the chance to learn about 'operating as equals' and will enable those trained (groups of three) to return to the same delivery location without RNATT oversight.

This model of delivery was also replicated with the RCT with personnel now qualified to safely lead this activity with the support of road bikes provided by UKNSF.

UKNSF has an excellent provision of AT equipment with brand new road bikes, SUPs and a fleet of well-maintained mountain bikes.

An excellent and very high artificial climbing wall (15m) enabled personnel to be exposed to 'operating at height' utilising an autobelay system consistent with what Naval Climbing Walls use in the UK.

The rugged and harsh desert terrain in Bahrain saw the mountain biking take place on a considered six-mile route which included some moderate technical terrain.

PO Stewart Fletcher said: "Whilst on operations AT opportunities offer a welcomed distraction from maintenance and daily workload. During our



regeneration AT has improved morale, maintained fighting spirit and most importantly has retained some of my personnel in the Royal Navy."

Sailing was delivered by RNATT's Graham Williams, who chartered a keel boat and was able to expose participants to moving under sail on the water and with the prevailing north westerly wind took full advantage of the conditions.

LH Matthew Brown of the Forward Support Unit said: "The experience was an exhilarating introduction to the keel boat discipline and one which I would love to do more."

Royal Navy personnel are reminded that ranks are entitled where operationally possible to five days of AT each year. If you have not planned AT for 2023, then start thinking about the opportunities available and speak to your Command to make it happen.

For further information, contact C/SGT Richie Hall – RNATT W IC and Corps AT Advisor on Richard.Hall396@mod.gov.uk (07977920358).

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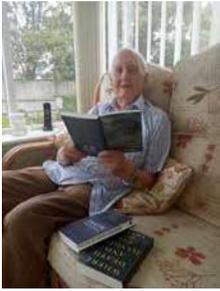
Deaths

Ron Champion, stoker. Served in the 1940s in HMS Raleigh and Arbella, a Combined Operations Landing Craft Training Establishment based in the old St John's Workhouse next to the docks in Boston, Lincolnshire. Prior to his RN service he was recruited into the GHQ Auxiliary Unit and was part of the Auxiliary Unit Patrol based in Midsomer Norton, Somerset from its formation in summer 1940 until about June 1942. Died aged 100.

Ken Baish, Leading Writer. Served between 1948 and 1955 in HMS Relentless, HMS Hornbill, HMS Cheviot, HMS Forth and HMS Glasgow. Ken joined the RNA in 2005 and was the Vice President of the Norwich branch. Died January 16, aged 92.

Horace 'Roy' Webb, CPO Mech1 and Maline Webb. Roy left the RN in 1980 and he and his wife Maline ran their own restaurants in Benalmadena in Spain before retiring to Cheltenham. Maline died one year and a week after the death of Roy.

Alan 'Dinger' Bell, Chief Communications Yeoman. Joined June 1952, left in February 1977. Served in HMS Ganges, Scorpion, Mercury, Bellerophon, Victory, Bulwark, Royal Arthur,



Londonderry, CND Haslemere, HMS Cleopatra, Charybdis, St Angelo, Bristol and Nelson. Supporter of the Deal Royal Marines Association Club and attended reunions of HMS Ganges Association and HMS Londonderry 1st Commission 1960-1962. Member of RNA. Died January 17, aged 85.

Brian 'Noel' Coward, Communications Yeoman. Served from March 1954 to March 1965 in HMS Ganges, Saintes, Armada, Neptune, Mercury, Tyne, Calliope, Londonderry, Warrior and Victory. Member of HMS Ganges Association. Died January 29, aged 84.

Warrant Officer Colin "Monty" Lamont. Joined RN in January 1951 and retired in the mid 1980s. Served in HMA Figgard, Sheffield, Glasgow, Chevron, Caledonia, Victory, Fearless, Pembroke, Rosyth, Gannet, Puma, Sultan, Leopard, Defender, Belfast, Mull of Kintyre and HMS Terror as Mess President. During his service he assisted in the withdrawal from Aden and his ship was holed by an Icelandic trawler during the Cod Wars. He played rugby for his ship on many occasions. Awarded GSM (Northern Ireland), Long Service and GC, and Meritorious Service Medal. Died December 24, 2022, aged 87.

Lt James C Booth BEM. Ex-RNVR WW2 Midget SMS. Died December 18, aged 101.

Lt Cdr Francis A M Hayes. HMS Monkton, Astute, Bossington, Vernon, Bristol, Sultan, Newcastle, Galatea, Cochrane, Nelson. Died December 31, aged 74.

Col Arthur J Jackson. Royal Corps of Signals, ex-RM. Died January 14, aged 94.

Surg Cdr Alex E Rampling. RNH Haslar, RNH Malta GC, Gibraltar. HMS President, St Angelo, Centurion. Died January 21.

Maj Gen RM Paul T Stevenson. HMS Mohawk, RM Deal, RM Eastney, HQ 3Cdo, 42 Cdo, 45 Cdo, BMAT Zimbabwe. NATO Defence Coll Rome. BFFI. Died January 28, aged 82.

Paul Richard Daysh, Lt. Served from 1952 to 1993. Attached to the Fleet Air Arm and served in RAF Lossiemouth, RNAS Culdrose, RNAS Yeovilton, RNAS Daedalus, RNAS Farnborough and RNAS Anthon, where he met his future wife Eileen. Died February 1, aged 86.

Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOO

Cdr Robert Wilson OBE. HMS Cumberland, Dunbarton Castle, Cardiff, Dryad, Montrose, Fearless, Collingwood, Ledbury, Somerset. Died January 18, aged 72.

Capt Colin D Farley-Sutton DL. HMS Forth, Neptune, Dolphin, Norfolk, Vulcan. NA Paris. Died January 5, aged 91.

Lt Cdr Clive T Aisbit. HMS Aurora, Pembroke, Dolphin, Sheffield, Tamar, Royal Arthur. Died January 14, aged 85.

Lt Cdr John S Stott. HMS Whirlwind, Dolphin, Vernon, Royal Arthur. Died January 10, aged 89.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the January edition of *Navy News* (right) was the Dido-class light cruiser HMS Sirius which took part in Operation Pedestal to deliver supplies to Malta in 1942.

Brian Willing, from Kent, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (above) is an Oberon-class boat which had a major design change compared to the rest of the class.

1. What was her name and
2. What material was her fin constructed of?

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



March 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 April 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 May edition.

Ask Jack

Exercise Purple Warrior 1987: I am currently researching this exercise which was unique in the annals of recent British military history being a huge tri-service, non-NATO affair, carried out in part of the UK mainland (SW Scotland) in order to test lessons learned during the Falklands War.

It involved 20,000 troops, 39 ships and 40 fixed wing aircraft yet there is precious little information on it.

I would appeal to any of your readers who were involved and would be willing to share their reminiscences to contact me at mbritton2@aol.com, particularly if they have any photos of the event.

My main interest is focussed on the associated air activity.

Mick Britton

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
7 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

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.

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](mailto:DavidMacalister@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 Withyholt, Paul Mead, Stroud Glous. GL6 6PG Tel: 01452 813173 or email associationmembers@sarahfletchervents.co.uk Further details can also be found at www.hmscarysfort.co.uk

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 NAVY NEWS

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Talking Navy News

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Ask Jack columns in next month's Noticeboard must be received by
MAR 14 2023

Clyde staff pay tribute to George

MILITARY and civilian personnel at HM Naval Base Clyde were saddened to hear of the death of friend and respected colleague George Goodings last month.

George, who was part of the site's Duty Naval Base Officer team since 2006, was also a well-known member of HMS Neptune Sailing Club, serving on the club's committee.

Joining the Royal Navy in 1966 at training establishment HMS Ganges, before becoming an Artificer Apprentice at HMS Figgard, George went on to serve on Oberon-class submarines, including HMS Ocelot, and was also seconded to MV Northella, a civilian vessel chartered to the MOD for use as a minesweeper, during the Falklands Conflict.

In 1982 he gained his commission, becoming an Engineering Officer and serving onboard Polaris missile submarines including HMS Repulse and HMS Renown. He eventually went on to become the Marine Engineering Officer of Renown.

George retired from the Royal Navy in 2006 and became a Duty Naval Base Officer at HM Naval Base Clyde, still in naval uniform but as a civil servant.

A sailing enthusiast, George took up the sport in the late 1980s and gained qualifications up to Yachtmaster

Instructor.

He was instrumental in acquiring the yacht HMASTC Gawaine for the Naval Base, running the vessel for several years.

He took part in multiple yachting exercises, helping to instigate Exercise Scotwest and organising skippers and crews for summer expeditions.

It would be no exaggeration to say that George taught hundreds of people how to sail.

Speaking on behalf of HM Naval Base Clyde, Captain Nick Gibbons, Captain of the Base, said: "George has been the absolute bedrock of the Naval Base's Duty Watch organisation for over 16 years.

"His dedication in ensuring the base was ready to respond to any type of incident was matched by his determination to give the highest possible level of support to our personnel.

"The reason George had continued to serve for over 56 years in Naval uniform, a long time after most people have retired, is because he cared; he cared very deeply about Naval Base Clyde and its people. Nearly everyone in the base knew George in some capacity; he will be greatly missed."

George is survived by his wife Joyce and their three sons - Greig, Nicholas and Scott.

