



NAVY NEWS

March 2017

Jungle book

● ROYAL Marines from Delta Company, 40 Cdo, make their way through the rainforest in Belize as part of their training. The Jungle Warfare Specialists learned how to survive in the wilderness. (See pages 20 and 29)
Picture: LPhot Will Haigh



Leader of the pack

HMS Ocean takes charge of task group

Good sports

Five pages of sporting action

INSIDE: Farewell to the Lynx – special supplement



pictures: lphot ben shread, hms ocean

After three months

Can

DID someone say 'action'?

The sea is a perfect calm. No clouds scar the sky. There's little breeze.

There are Sea Kings and Merlins lashed to a largely empty deck of Britain's biggest warship, their tails folded. They're not going to be flying anywhere soon.

In the vehicle deck, Pinzgauers, Land Rovers and Jackals are all neatly parked. The men who would be using it, Lima Company, 42 Commando, are sitting this one out; they're pounding the running machines and lifting weights in the helicopter carrier's cavernous hangar.

A few hundred yards ahead, HMS Chiddingfold and the USS Gladiator lead the way. At two to three knots. You might notice movement aboard them. You don't aboard Britain's biggest warship.

If someone did say 'action', it's hard to tell.

Actually, they did. This is a 'minefield transit'. Very slow. Very methodical. Not a great spectacle. Essential.

It's one of the curtain-raising serials in Exercise Unified Trident, the biggest workout for HMS Ocean as flagship of Combined Task Force 50, the pre-eminent naval group in the Middle East.

Typically led by a US carrier, for three months it's in the hands of the RN – for the first time – and the staff of the Commander Amphibious Task Group, Cdre Andrew Burns, aboard the UK flagship.

The scenario is tried and tested. A fictional nation is stirring things up. There have been reports of mines laid. An explosion near an oil platform. Send in a naval show of force. Nineteen ships from four navies, ten helicopters, a good couple of thousand military personnel.

Minehunting, air attacks, submarine hunting (courtesy of the EMATT – a torpedo-like drone which pretends to be a boat, RASing, officer of the watch manoeuvres. About the only thing missing is the involvement of the 'special force task group' (Lima Company plus army green berets – engineers and artillery) after a succession of exercises (Lion this, Dagger that...).

But it does make use of pretty much every task force inside the Gulf (they go way beyond 11, all the way up to 57: 52, for example, is the Anglo-American minehunting force, 53 is replenishment in the form of the USNS Alan Shepard).

And it was all put together in a couple of months when the team on Ocean spied an opportunity to exploit the presence of numerous warships and task groups in the Gulf for a three-day co-ordinated, combined test, the 'capstone' of Ocean's period in charge of CTF50.

The RN steppedw into the gap



heading a US carrier task group in the Gulf, HMS Ocean answers the all-important question facing tomorrow's Navy

Can we lead? Yes we can

left by the departure of the Eisenhower, whose jets gave Daesh forces in the region a daily hammering, in November and the arrival of the USS George H W Bush.

As a helicopter assault ship, Ocean cannot plug the jet/ carrier strike gap, but she can plug the command gap, taking charge of the US escorts, practise using helicopters to protect the force from threats above, on and below the waves. All of which helps pave the way for the RN's new carriers which will be coming this way in four years' time.

The infrastructure is in place for them: the upcoming Jufair support/accommodation facilities in Bahrain open this autumn (see page 19) and, while they can't berth in the kingdom due to their draught, they can drop anchor here as US flat-tops do. And the new Omani port at Duqm most certainly can host the ships.

So much for tomorrow. Today?

"Don't underestimate the presence of the UK's largest warship, the flagship, in the region," says her CO Capt Rob Pedre. "We are the UK's ultimate insurance policy here."

He refers to his ship, on her penultimate deployment, as a 'Swiss Army knife' (a tag which has also been applied to Albion and Bulwark): they can do anything the RN asks of them on the world stage, from large-scale evacuations and delivery of humanitarian aid, up to full-scale war (such as Telic in 2003 when Ocean was one of the springboards for the assault on Al Faw).

His RM task group has been an outstanding ambassador for the UK, training with the forces of every friendly Gulf state, fitting in neatly with the deployment's motto: project, protect, promote.

His flight deck has been used by every helicopter type in the region.

And while Ocean is slow compared with the Invincible-class, she can sail 8,000 miles on a single tank of fuel. You couldn't do that with the now-scraped gas-guzzling Harrier carriers.

"We have pushed the boundaries of what we can operate," says Capt Pedre. "This deployment will stand us in good stead with the Queen Elizabeth."

Which is confirmed to some degree by the first day of Unified Trident – Ocean's CO calls it a 'capstone exercise' – the last and most important piece of the deployment and the Mighty O's time as Task Force flagship.

Though there are Brits, French, Americans and Aus-

tralian involved, destroyers, frigates, minehunters, patrol boats, and auxiliaries, staff officer Lt Cdr Adam Simeoni cheerfully reports that "we're all reading from the same sheet of paper".

And then the weather came along and blew it out of everyone's hands.

Before the shamal closed in and cut short Unified Trident, 15 of the participating ships formed up, no more than 250 yards apart, for a photex (pronounced *Foh-tex*, if you're American, *Fot-ex* if you're British), a photographic exercise; those jolly nice images of warships neatly marshalled in formation... as in our main image.

Flanked by Lyme Bay and USNS Alan Shepard, each leading a Sandown-class minehunter and a Cyclone-class fast patrol boat, Australian frigate HMAS Arunta – named after an Aboriginal tribe and with a tubthumping motto, Conquer or Die – follows the wake of HMS Ocean.

Besides making a nice picture for a captain's cabin, the close formation sailing tests the ability of bridge teams to manoeuvre very closely in company and respond almost instantaneously to directions from the flagship. If not, crrruunnnccccchhhhh...

Such manoeuvres are markedly different from the bulk of the frigate's deployment, operating on her own – like the Type 23s we dispatch to the region frequently – but working for the greater good.

The Aussies call it Operation Manitou – an almost carbon copy of the RN's Kipion, now into its 64th incarnation.

The mission is the same: maritime security, flying the flag, working with foreign navies. But with an Antipodean twist.

Step aboard Arunta and it's a strange mix of RN and RAN. The layout for a start is very much reminiscent of a Type 42 destroyer: steep ladders, narrow passageways, not entirely logical layout. Except that most things are a cream colour, not grey.

The ranks are mostly the same, as are the insignia. But the working uniform is not the RN's blue overalls but grey, green and black mottled shirt and trousers.

There's Jackspeak, but not as you know it.

WAFUs are birdies. You don't clamber out of your pit when the Call the Hands sounds. It's wakey, wakey.

You struggle to get through the guts – middle – watch.

Accident-prone Oscar, not Fred, is always falling in the ocean and needing rescuing.

When he's not, sailors might be allowed a Swimex – hands

to bathe.

Firefighting drills are identical... but you suffer a machinery 'casualty' rather than 'breakdown'.

Junior rates eat in the cafeteria, not the dining hall.

There are portholes in the wardroom – not any old portholes, but engraved with the ship's crest. Officers sit down to 'tucker' washed down (thankfully) with a goffer... but it's non-alcoholic. Australian warships are dry, except for very special occasions.

You have to try an Aussie delicacy, the Tim-Tam slam. It goes far beyond dunking a Rich Tea or Hobnob in your brew. You suck your coffee or tea through the biscuit (which is a bit like a Penguin), biting off the corners and turning it into a straw... before it disintegrates and turns into a chocolate sludge at the bottom of your mug.

Oh, and the men like their beards – matching the trend in the RN over the past few years. But here they're allowed hipster beards. Yes, you can look like the fourth member of ZZ Top if you like...

Getting used to all this is PO(Marine Technician) Adam 'Nutty' Hazael, who did 22 years in the RN and decided to extend his seagoing career by joining the RAN when his time was up under the White Ensign.

It took two and a half years from leaving the RN to becoming an Australian citizen and joining its Navy – which included going through medicals, taking a citizenship test and going through RAN training (where among other skills, the 51-year-old learned cutlass drills).

He can serve at sea to the age of 65 – that's the age limit. You don't sign on for 22 years. You sign an open-ended contract. He has, however, had to drop a rank between the two navies.

"We run our ships in a very similar manner," Nutty says. "The two navies are a little different, but nothing major. Perhaps the greatest difference is that the Australian is not a 'cold water' navy."

He keeps in touch with former shipmates from HMS Ambuscade and Northumberland (he served in her first crew and later in her career off Somalia; "searching for pirates for months – nothing. Ross Kemp came aboard and there we were catching pirates.")

Arunta is based in Fremantle. The Hazael's live in nearby Perth. "Perth in winter is cold," Nutty says. "It's the first time in my life I've used an electric blanket. Aussie houses are built for the summer. Ours is the only one in the street with double glazing..."

He's not the only Arunta with RN experience. Executive Officer Lt Cdr Duncan MacRae served with HMS Dragon in these very waters just a couple of years ago.

"Working with the Brits is great," he says. "We do things very similarly, we have the same interests in the region as you – it's just as important to our trade and energy supplies, and like the British Navy we feel an international obligation to protect shipping."

A couple of miles away on Ocean one of two Baggers from 849 Naval Air Squadron's Palembang Flight is about to touch down on the deck after a surveillance sortie over the watchful eye of larger-than-life handler CPO Paddy Ashe.

The Falklands veteran (one of fewer than 100 thought to be still serving) has spent 39 years in the RN as an aircraft handler (his first vessel was the Hermes...), survived the sinking of the Atlantic Conveyor in 1982 and is on his second draft to the Mighty O.

In days of yore, you could fit (at a very tight squeeze) 22 green Sea Kings in the hangar. Today, perhaps a dozen Merlins. In reality, Ocean's large gym takes up a sizeable chunk because there's not a purpose-built compartment for workouts.

As it is, just a couple of Merlin Mk2s and a pair of Baggers to practise 'layered defence' – keeping an eye out for threats to the task group above, on and below the waves.

That's allowed a veritable potpourri of whirlybirds to make their 'nest' on Ocean for a few days at a time: Osprey tilt-rotors, Desert and Seahawk helicopters, Apache gunships, Chinooks – aircraft and units the deck handlers rarely, if ever, get to play with.

Like the 77th Aviation Brigade – better known as the 77th Air Cavalry (or 'Air Cav') who made use of HMS Ocean's flight deck to practise landing/ taking off at sea.

The 77th are deployed to the Middle East performing heavy transport (courtesy of the Chinooks) and casualty evacuation (courtesy of the Blackhawk Pedro) duties... duties which sporadically require them to operate over the Gulf and call in on coalition vessels deployed to the region.

"They were delighted to take the chance to come to 'bash the deck'," said Lt Cdr Simon Wood, Ocean's Lt Cdr Flying. "It will also allow them to provide casualty evacuation from other ships equipped with flight decks in the future."

"It was actually great training for both of us and our American cousins – and it showed the flexibility and usefulness of Ocean."

"With all the visitors, plus our own helicopters, the flight deck has been a hectic environment, with aircraft in and out of the hangar, the aircraft handlers who support operations on the deck have a lot to be aware of."

For the deck teams, the busier the better, not least as it keeps them on their toes for the advent of HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales.

"Working on a busy flight deck requires 100 per cent concentration and good all-round situational awareness," said LAET(M) Stephen Baynham, one of the maintainers looking after the Merlin Mk2s of 820 NAS.

It's bread and butter business, but very easy to forget if you don't do it regularly, or even if you do, slip into fatal complacency.

"Every person needs to know their role inside out, but must also be aware of everyone else's – danger lurks everywhere: spinning rotors, lowered lifts, rough seas and the darkness of night to name a few."

Observing the work of Stephen and Ocean's numerous naval airmen Paddy Ashe likes what he sees.

"I'm old, my time's almost up in the Navy, but for the youngsters, you name it, we've had it on the deck this deployment. And that's a really good experience for the lads," he says.

Paddy is as passionate about the RN and its people as he was in 1978. As his career comes to a close, he's convinced the men and women around him are as good as those who sailed with him to the South Atlantic 35 years ago.

"I've done it, I've been to war. I see the young lads and lasses on the deck and we are cut from the same cloth. We can produce the goods when the hour strikes."

There is, as far as we know, no war looming on the horizon. A humanitarian mission is more likely though, again, not in the offing.

Ocean's medics – one doctor, five medical assistants running the sick bay and two more medics looking after the emergency facilities/wards – stand ready for both. Or neither.

They've taken on board all the recent lessons of medical care provided by their counterparts in evacuating Libya and the ongoing migrant problem in the central Mediterranean.

But on a day-to-day basis, they run what is effectively a floating GP's surgery – which in 24 hours can be turned into a casualty treatment centre to patch up the most critically wounded and fly them ashore to hospital.

Mostly, however, it's routine ailments. Bugs especially. They get picked up at one port, circulate the ship and largely die out... just in time for the next run ashore.

"We are your GP, your paramedic, your nurse. We provide gold standard care as a rule," says CPO(MA) Tim Johnston. "It has to be. You need the men and women to have confidence in our ability to provide them with the very best care – they deserve that."

Interoperability is so yesterday. We've gone beyond that. Integration is the new interoperability (which, if you hadn't realised is the NN team's least favourite 'word' in the RN vocabulary due to its clunkiness).

Why? Because in three months in charge of a US task group, the staff embarked on HMS Ocean have learned not merely that they can work with the Americans, but that they can seamlessly take the place of a 100,000 tonne US super-carrier and co-ordinate the actions of a sizeable American naval force.

"We have learned that the Royal Navy can operate such a task group and integrate into the US Fifth Fleet," said Commander Amphibious Task Group Cdre Andrew Burns. "And it's not just me saying that – this comes from the feedback we receive from US ships and their sailors."

"We've not tried to emulate the US – we have done things the British, the RN way. We have to work hard at these things – and we are doing so. And it's reassuring that the quality of people is still extremely high."

He says that because the RN has not led a carrier strike group since 2010 (Ark Royal on the Auriga deployment to the USA). Yes, there have been Cougar amphibious deployments since. And yes, Ocean cannot replicate the striking power of a Nimitz-class carrier.

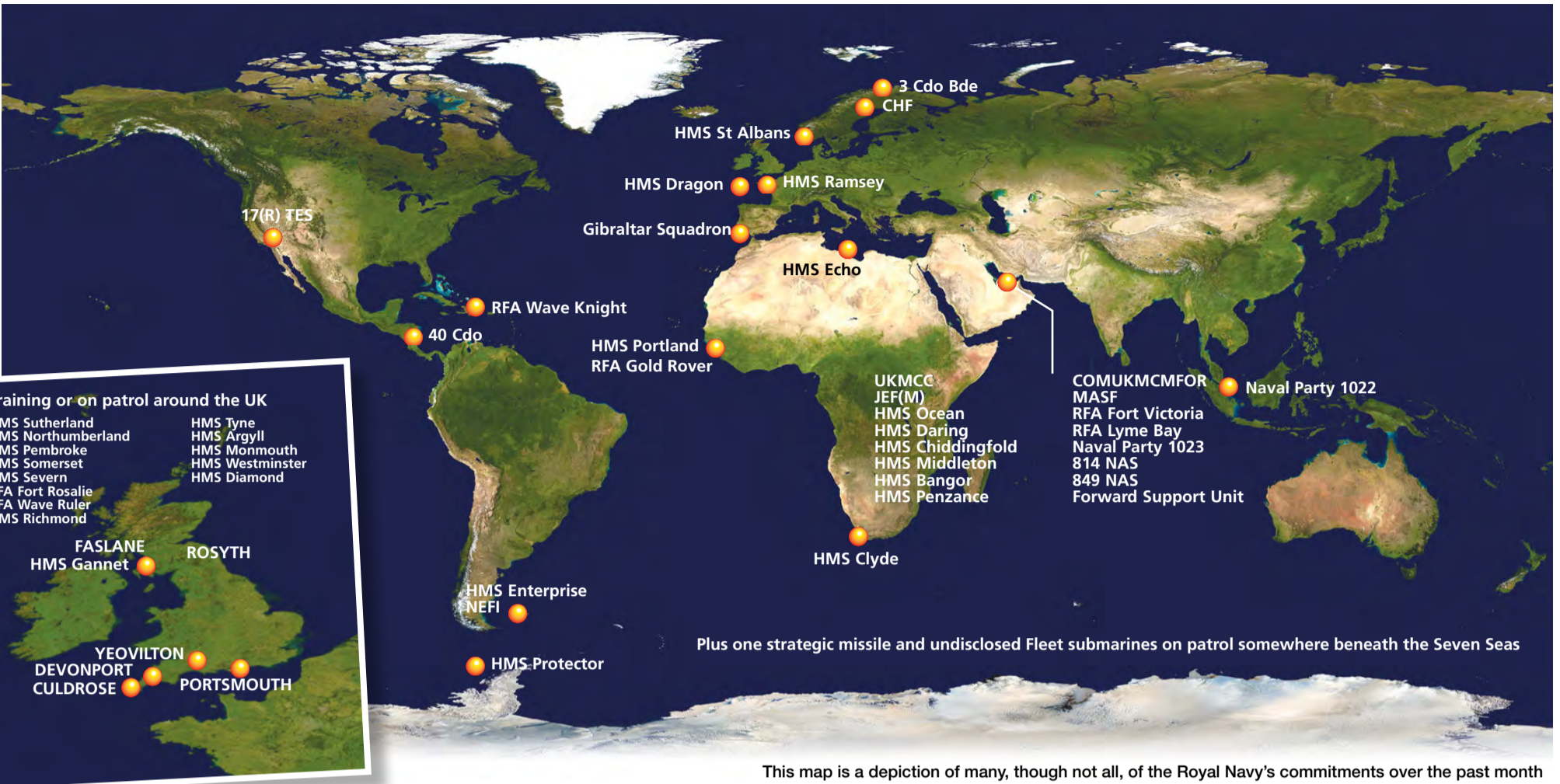
But for running half a dozen warships and auxiliaries (including HMS Daring, providing air defence) – the principles of choreographing and overseeing a carrier task group – the three months in charge in the Gulf in an operational theatre have proved invaluable, says the commodore.

"Above all, this deployment is a great insight into the future. Can we bring HMS Queen Elizabeth to the Gulf? Yes we can."

"We have shown that we can bring a carrier strike group into this part of the world and operate it really effectively."

■ Ocean hosts medical exercise, page 15, and German cadets experience life on the carrier, page 31





This map is a depiction of many, though not all, of the Royal Navy's commitments over the past month

FLEET FOCUS
Protecting our nation's interests

FEELING the heat – at long last – this month were Royal Marines from **40 Commando** as the jungle warfare specialists of Delta Company got up to speed in the sweltering rainforests of Belize (see pages 20 and 29).

Royal Navy personnel have also 'enjoyed' warmer climates, particularly those embarked in Fleet Flagship **HMS Ocean** (see pages 2-3) as she led Exercise Unified Trident in the Middle East.

Ocean was also involved in medical exercise **Azraq Serpent** (see page 15) which saw battlefield medics work with their colleagues from the USA.

Feeling much colder were Royal Marines from **Commando Helicopter Force** (see page 11) in Norway for their annual cold weather training. Some personnel were lucky enough to witness the spectacular Northern Lights while out training in deep snow.

RFA Gold Rover, which leaves Service this month after 43 years, carried out her last replenishment at sea (see page 6) as she fuelled up **HMS Portland** off the west coast of Africa. Portland also called in on Freetown in Sierra Leone, where sailors worked to improve life at two orphanages in the capital (see page 13).

This month sees the final **Lynx** helicopter in Naval Service, the Mk8, bow out. We look back at the aircraft's near-54 years of Service in an eight-page pull-out supplement.

The replacement for the Lynx is the **Wildcat** and four of them took to the air over RNAS Yeovilton to mark the 75th anniversary of the Channel Dash (see page 15).

Preparing to return to Service following an extensive refit is **HMS Albion** (see page 6) as she welcomed aboard nearly 350 sailors and Royal Marines.

And back at sea for the first time since 2015 are Type 23 frigates **HMS Argyll** and **Westminster** (see page 5). Both of the ships have received a major overhaul in Devonport and Portsmouth respectively.

The Royal Navy continues to scope warfare of the future and next month will host **Information Warrior** (see page 5), which will concentrate on how data and information can be used offensively and defensively.

The RN could also be the first of the UK Armed Forces to use **laser weapons** if current trials prove successful (see page 9).

HMS Dragon made a 500-mile emergency dash to save all 14 sailors aboard the 60ft racing yacht **Clyde Challenger** (see page 5). The yacht was struck by a rogue wave about 600 miles west of Land's End while on her way to the Azores, causing her mast to snap.

There were tears of joy as loved ones welcomed home the crew of **HMS Mersey** (see page 7) after the patrol boat's marathon 13-month deployment.

Royal Marines Reserves joined a recruit troop for one of the biggest challenges of their lives – the 30-mile march across Dartmoor to complete their Commando Course and earn a coveted Green Beret (see page 17).

To mark the centenary of the formation of the **Women's Royal Naval Service** a new exhibition (see page 19) charting the work of pioneering sea-going women has opened. A stonemason is currently working on a bespoke monument to mark the centenary and the ongoing service of women in the RN (see page 35).

Finally, sportsmen and women from across the Naval Service have been in action, with five bumper pages of sporting achievements (see pages 44-back page).



Return of Task Group

IN the second of our features on the future of the Royal Navy, we explore how the Fleet will be reshaped to form a dedicated Carrier Strike Group.

A **CENTURY** ago Jacky Fisher, the greatest naval innovator of his age, declared that "the whole principle of naval warfare is to go anywhere with every damned thing the Navy possess."

Admiral Fisher understood the power of being able to assemble, train, deploy and employ a fleet that encompassed every facet of maritime power.

Today, submarines, aircraft, surface ships and Royal Marines combine with speed to offer flexible military and political choice to the government.

With the impending arrival of the two largest aircraft carriers in our history, the Royal Navy is re-defining Fisher's principle for the 21st Century.

The task appears simple – to bring together a cohesive fighting force centred on carrier aviation – but the reality is nothing short of transformational.

The investment required to deploy and sustain an integrated Carrier Strike Group for global operations is one of the most demanding tests for any military-industrial power.

The modern Carrier Strike Group must seamlessly integrate the technology required to fight and win in the air, but also on and beneath the waves, over the land and in cyberspace; it must do so while retaining the ability to move, act and fight as a single entity.

VIEW BRIDGE from the BRIDGE

This is challenging enough at a national level, as we learn to operate aircraft from all three Services from a single flight deck; add in our international partners and a whole new dimension is apparent.

The UK's Carrier Strike Group will incorporate ships and aircraft from other nations in the exact same way that Royal Navy destroyers and frigates serve with US and French carrier groups in the Gulf today.

Preparations for the return of Task Group operations have already begun.

Commander UK Carrier Strike Group, Cdre Andrew Betton, is leading his team through a rigorous programme of development, training and certification, which will include a period embarked on the USS George HW Bush during Exercise Saxon Warrior in the summer.

To foster the Task Group mindset right from the outset, it is also our intention that a 1* Battle Staff and an escorting frigate or destroyer accompany HMS Queen Elizabeth when she undertakes flying trials off the United States in 2018 and again in 2019.

Failure is not an option. The Secretary of State has declared 2017 the 'Year of the Navy' and the government has decided that carriers will form the core of our future national expeditionary capabilities.

The Royal Navy must now lead the delivery of carrier-based air power

supported by a strong Task Group.

This requirement – alongside the Strategic Nuclear Deterrent – must take priority, and will change how we deliver some of our other tasks.

We already draw upon the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and our Offshore Patrol Vessels to fulfil certain overseas commitments, and we are looking at how we may expand the use of the new Batch 2 OPVs in this way.

In the longer term, the introduction of the Type 31e General Purpose Frigate from the early 2020s provides a great opportunity to sustain, strengthen and potentially expand our global presence by making greater use of forward deployed ships in places like the Mediterranean and the Gulf, or in areas of the world where the Royal Navy has been spread thin in recent years, such as Asia-Pacific.

So, in sum, if you think the arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth this year is just a matter for her ship's company or the team in Portsmouth, then think again.

The implications will be felt across each of our Fighting Arms, from the Submarine Service to the Royal Marines.

There's a lot of hard work to come, but we should unhesitatingly embrace the responsibility that rests on our shoulders.

Through the return to Task Group operations, our future Carrier Strike Group will sit at the heart of the UK's expeditionary capability, and will be a lynchpin for coalition operations.

Together, we will project UK power and influence around the world at a scale and sophistication worthy of a global maritime power.

Culdrose air day called off

THERE will be no Culdrose Air Day this year sadly as neither personnel nor machines can be spared from training or operational duties.

The end-of-July event usually attracts between 15,000 and 20,000 people – mostly tourists, for it's specifically held mid-week to catch holidaymakers.

But the air show, which is often dogged by bad weather – last year it prevented all aerial displays – also demands stopping all other activity at Culdrose for some time either side of the event itself.

With increasing demands on squadrons and training facilities such as the flight deck school at the Helston air station, especially to support the arrival of the nation's two new carriers, Culdrose's CO Capt Dan Stembridge said the decision had been reluctantly taken to call off this summer's show.

Four out of five personnel under his wing are either deployed, training to deploy or at very short notice to deploy.

"We have had to make the regrettable decision to not hold an air day this year to focus on our primary roles; to protect the nuclear deterrent, support counter-terrorism and be ready to defend the Navy's carrier task groups," said Capt Stembridge.

"The air day decision has involved much deliberation and we appreciate that many will be disappointed, however operations must come first.

"There is a lot of work to be done to deliver air power from our nation's new carriers – and we must be ready."

Yeovilton Air Day – which usually draws crowds twice the size of those of Culdrose – will go ahead as planned on July 8.

Dragonboat drama



DISMASTED and alone in the Atlantic for more than 36 hours, this is the moment of salvation for the crew of the Clyde Challenger – salvation in the form of a sea boat from HMS Dragon which dashed 500 miles to the rescue.

The destroyer saved all 14 souls aboard the 60ft racing yacht Clyde Challenger, located about 600 miles west of Land's End in a joint RN-RAF rescue mission.

The yacht had been heading for the UK from the Azores when she was struck by a rogue wave, causing the vessel to turn turtle, her mast to snap, then break off, leaving her and her crew at the mercy of the elements.

An RAF Hercules located the stricken craft around 12 hours after the accident, but all attempts by merchantmen in the vicinity to offer assistance proved unsuccessful.

Instead, the decision was taken to divert Dragon – bound for Lisbon – which promptly raced at up to 30kts for 20 hours through turbulent seas to reach the yacht.

Even then, the rough waters made the rescue tricky as PO Max Grosse, Dragon's buffer, oversaw putting the destroyer's two sea boats in the water to get all the yacht's crew off safely.

"When we arrived on scene it was clear the yacht had lost its mast and looked in a pretty desperate state after nearly 48 hours drifting in the challenging conditions," said Max.

"We were however hugely relieved to see all 14 crew alive and well. Despite racing through the night we only had three hours of daylight remaining in which to safely remove them.

"We were able to use both boats to transfer the crew as quickly as possible. The prevailing weather conditions and notorious Atlantic swell made it enormously challenging though and really tested the skills of my experienced sea boat coxswains."

Once aboard the Portsmouth-based warship, the relieved yachtsmen received medical attention, hot food and the opportunity to call loved ones at home.

"We got hit with a rogue wave coming in the opposite direction," explained the yacht's skipper,

66-year-old Roy Graham, from Prestwick.

"It hit us and knocked us over and dragged the crossrees into the water, which dragged the mast into the water and snapped it at deck level.

"There were maybe a few doubts in my mind but when I knew HMS Dragon was coming for us, I knew it was going to be a positive outcome. We are really pleased the Navy took up the challenge to come and rescue us."

Among the rescued was Elisabeth Ligethy from Glasgow, who said the hospitality shown by Dragon "just beggars belief". She's the mother of 23-year-old trainee weapon engineer officer Grant Ligethy, an officer cadet at BRNC; he's penned a 'thank-you' letter to the team aboard Dragon.

Once all 14 of the yacht's crew were safely off the vessel, the decision was taken to scuttle the Clyde Challenger by opening the seacocks and leaving the engine hatch open so the hulk didn't pose a danger to other shipping.

Rescue complete, Dragon turned around to head for Lisbon, where the yachtsmen were landed.

Information overlords

AFTER robots and drones, get ready for data and the first 'information war games'.

Following last autumn's Unmanned Warrior, when the RN encouraged firms to showcase automated systems which might shape the future of all dimensions of naval warfare, it's leading the way again with next month's Information Warrior, which will concentrate on how data and information can be used – offensively and defensively – to give the UK military the edge over its foes.

Royal Marines will test smaller, more agile and user-friendly secure communications in a realistic scenario.

A system using artificial intelligence-based reasoning to help operators analyse air movements and identify potential threats in seconds will be rolled out.

Other kit being tested includes software which will improve the analysis of imagery fed back from drones assessing potential landing sites.

And experts from the government's military science labs, Dstl, will demonstrate the efforts undertaken to protect the Navy from cyber threats.

And to prevent information overload – much of the data gathered by a ship's sensors is simply not used by the ops room team – a system, EPAS, has been designed to grab useful data, such as ship tracks, from every available source and record it so that it can be analysed in real time, or at a later date.

"Information has transformed the face of conflict," said Dstl Chief Executive Jonathan Lyle. "Our scientists will be demonstrating and testing some of the latest innovations in cyber, information systems, 'big data' and AI research."

23s back at sea

YOU wait 18 months for a Type 23 to emerge from a massive late-life revamp and then two appear at once... 180 miles apart admittedly.

Back at sea for the first time since 2015 conducting initial trials are HM Ships Westminster and Argyll, two of three Duke-class ships to receive the major overhaul pretty much simultaneously (Montrose completes the trio).

In the case of Westminster, more than 800 engineers, technicians and shipwrights from BAE Systems toiled over the ship in Portsmouth Naval Base to prepare her for the final decade of her life.

When the 'capital ship' last sailed she had a different radar (996) and a different air defence system (Seawolf).

They have been ripped out and replaced respectively by 997 (better known as Artisan 3D) and Sea Ceptor, which has twice the interception range of the old missile system.

The hull was cleaned and repainted – with anti-fouling paint to prevent marine life attaching itself to the ship – the main 4.5in gun serviced, the engines and machinery overhauled, mess and communal areas given a fresh look and the bridge revamped.

CPO Andrew Buckley joined a brand-new Westminster back in 1994 and, two decades later, was with her throughout the overhaul.

"Having taken Westminster out of build, I am proud to be taking her back out to sea after this extensive refit," said the senior rating who serves in the operations room as an underwater warfare specialist – the frigate's raison d'être.

"Although many things have changed about the ship materially, the ship's company are just as proud to be serving on her as they were at Day 1."

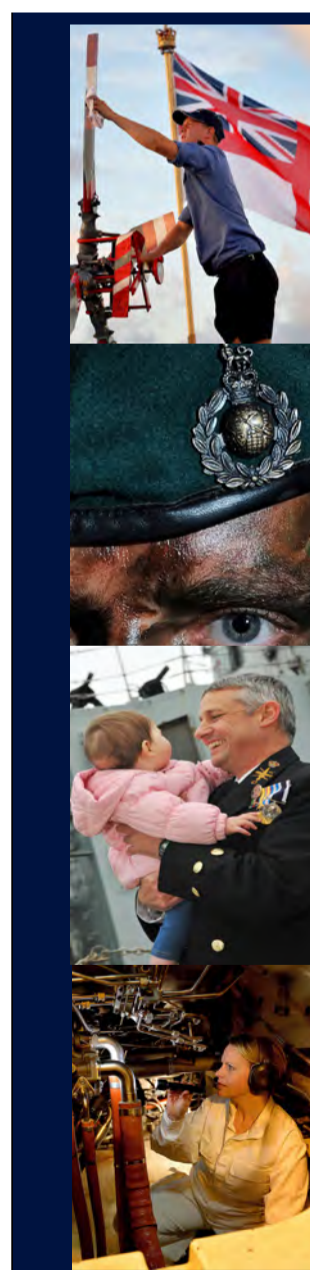
Like CPO Buckley, some of HMS Westminster's 180-plus crew have been with her throughout the refit, whilst many others have come straight from training and this will be their first time at sea as they regenerate the ship for operations later this year.

"Despite having worked onboard HMS Westminster for the past two years, life at sea is a completely different experience," said deputy logistics officer Sub Lieutenant Harriet Delbridge.

"Once the ship returns to sea, she becomes a living entity, the noise of the engines, the smells from the galley and pitch and roll as she ploughs through the waves."

For Argyll, exchange Portsmouth for Plymouth and BAE for Babcock, but otherwise it's an almost identical story: 20 months of toil and effort – 600,000 man hours in all – to revamp Britain's oldest frigate (launched when Mrs T was in No.10...).

But while Montrose and Westminster are working up for front-line duties over the coming months, Argyll's focus is on her new air defence system. She'll be the test vessel for Sea Ceptor, culminating (hopefully) in a successful firing of the new missile later this year.



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An historical Example

GLIDING beneath one of the nation's iconic bridges, patrol boat HMS Example returns to her berth at HMS Calliope after giving crew and VIPs an historical tour of the Tyne.

The P2000, which gives students from Northumbria universities an insight into the work of the Royal Navy, sailed down river, then up again as experts from the Port of Tyne shared their knowledge of the great river's history.

Crew and students from the University Royal Naval Unit were joined by the master and deputy harbourmaster of the Port of Tyne, the Deputy Master of Trinity House, the Chairman of Derwenthaugh Marina and a good smattering of reservists from Calliope – all squeezed aboard the 68ft vessel.

Example took them first to Tynemouth Pier Lighthouse, where everyone on board jumped

off for a tour of the structure – including a clamber up numerous steps to the top for the more athletic – and talk about the history of the building, which has been saving lives since 1908.

Then it was up river to the Swing Bridge, sandwiched between the Tyne and High Level Bridges. A Blue Badge Tour Guide was on hand to show the sailors and guests around the workings of the 1878 crossing which still relies on the original Victorian machinery to open and close.

“The day was a great way to re-build our relations with HMS Example’s affiliates including Trinity House and Port of Tyne,” said Example’s CO Lt Thomas Stapley-Bunten.

“What better way to bring together these three maritime organisations than an historical maritime tour of the River we all share.”

DURNU is new URNU

A NEW RN unit has been launched for university students in Devon – the cunningly titled Devon University Royal Naval Unit, based at HMS Vivid, Plymouth’s RNR base.

Post and undergraduates from Plymouth and Exeter answered the call to the Colours and attended the formal opening, performed by the RN’s head of training, FOST Rear Admiral John Clink.

“I am very proud of my students. They have made a major transformation since enrolling in September in typical student civilian clothes and are now a credit to the unit and to themselves,” said DURNU’s first CO Lt Cdr Martin Hibbert.

“It’s been an intensive few months working up to this launch and being confident enough to present themselves to an admiral for inspection.”

Mid James Green, 21, studying engineering at Exeter, said: “The unit is already gelling fast and there’s a great bunch of people here.”

Following the bear (again)

WE counted them all out... and we counted them all back.

Three months after the Royal Navy ‘man marked’ the Russian Navy’s flagship Admiral Kuznetsov and her task group past the UK, it did so again as the vessel the Defence Secretary branded ‘the ship of shame’ returned from bombing Syria.

HMS St Albans, a Merlin Mk2 from 829 Naval Air Squadron in Culdrose, and RAF Typhoons from Coningsby were the greeting party for the Russian carrier group as it headed up the Channel bound for home waters.

Already tracked by NATO warships on its passage through the Mediterranean and into the Atlantic, the Kuznetsov, nuclear-powered guided missile cruiser Petr Velikiy (Peter the Great) and a salvage tug were met by St Albans as they sailed close to UK territorial waters.

The Saint picked up where her sister Richmond left off in October when she too was alerted to keep a close eye on the passing Russian ships.

Last year saw the liveliest Russian Navy activity around the UK since the end of the Cold War more than a quarter of a century ago according to senior Royal Navy officers.

Picture: LPhot Dave Jenkins



It’s nearly all Rover

THIS is the sight you will never see again.

Off the west coast of Africa frigate HMS Portland takes on fuel from tanker RFA Gold Rover – the very last time the oldest vessel in the Naval Service provided ‘black gold’ to fuel front-line operations.



The 11,000-tonne support vessel is due to decommission in the UK this month – 43 years after first pumping oil into the tanks of a Royal Navy warship.

How much oil? 1.238 billion litres in an astonishing 8,256 replenishments under way (that’s 192 every year)... or enough fuel to fill nearly 500 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

Portland alone has accounted for 1,788 ‘cubes’ (cubic metres) of F76 ‘dieso’ (diesel oil) since October, when the frigate has been almost constantly accompanied by Gold Rover as she visited South America, the

Falklands, South Georgia, the remote island of Tristan da Cunha and finally West Africa.

Nearly 1.8m litres (enough to fill your car’s tank more than 20,000 times) have been transferred from tanker to frigate at around 66p per litre...or a total of £1.2m.

Gold is the last of five Rover-class ships built for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary in the late 1960s/early 1970s.

Her career began in 1974 accompanying HMS Hermes’ carrier task group to Cyprus.

In recent times, the Rovers have spent the bulk of their time south of the Equator, providing fuel for RN vessels on patrol in the South Atlantic; their long range and small size made the class ideal for covering the vast distances in the Southern Hemisphere and call in at most ports and harbours.

“Wherever she’s been during this last

deployment, from Valparaiso in Chile to South Africa to the South Atlantic Islands or Rio de Janeiro, she has been warmly welcomed,” said the tanker’s final Commanding Officer Capt Jonathan Huxley RFA.

“People identified with her and remembered her fondly, whether it be a humanitarian act or simply regular visits to their port. She has without a doubt been a force for good in the world and served the UK well.”

Thanks to a crew of just 50, ‘straight-forward’ (ie old school) engineering, general reliability the tanker has also proven relatively cheap to run.

But her age – and changing maritime legislation – means she’ll be retired upon her return in favour of the first of the giant new Fleet tankers, RFA Tidespring, which has just begun her 16,000-mile journey from South Korea to the UK.

■ Portland in Sierra Leone, page 13



Picture: LPhot Ken Gaunt, FRPU West

And after a six-year hiatus, life on HMS Albion is finally Ready to start all over again

THE mess decks, compartments and passageways of HMS Albion resound to the banter and sounds of Jackspeak for the first time in nearly six years after nearly 350 sailors and Royal Marines moved on board.

Three days earlier than planned, the ship’s company filed up the gangway carrying kitbags, supplies and even the assault ship’s bell as Albion’s regeneration reached a key milestone.

Waiting for them once they’d settled in was a fish and chip lunch courtesy of the chefs – the first meal for a ship’s company since Albion was mothballed

following the 2010 Defence Review.

Breathing fresh life into the ship has been a Herculean task; it took two years to reach a point where crew could move back on board.

To date, 1.3 million man hours have been devoured by 4,000 sailors, Babcock engineers and contractors who’ve revamped Albion from tip to toe. At the busiest, 500 people a day were swarming to fit 1½ million items – everything from the tiniest grub screw to an 18-metre-long shaft. Some

20,000 square metres of steel – enough to cover three football pitches – in 34 ballast tanks have been preserved; 3,500 metres of new pipework fitted; more than 1,500 valves and 100 pumps overhauled.

Indeed more than 1,500 pieces of machinery have been revamped, from 65mm ball valves up to a flight deck crane.

In the ops room, a new combat computer system will make sense of the masses of data it receives from the ship’s sensors, while extra cooling has been fitted in the engine room to

make Albion better able to cope in warmer climes – all part of 130 improvements and enhancements carried out.

Since November, the ship’s company have chipped in with preparing for the move aboard, carrying nearly 10,000 stores items up the gangway (weighing 15 tonnes in all), while 500 tonnes of fuel has been pumped into the tanks.

The next key milestone is the arrival of her new Commanding Officer Capt Tim Neild in the middle of March, with the ship earmarked to move to a tidal berth shortly ahead of sea trials this summer.

Hip hip hip hooray

HER son has got her hat on... five-year-old Ethan Binns cuddles mum Std Amy as she returns home on HMS Mersey after a marathon 13-month deployment.

The steward, who lives at Gosport, was the only mum serving in the patrol ship which on that epic deployment (though to make life easier, most of the crew rotate every few weeks with shipmates back home in the UK).

"It feels really good to be home," said Amy. "This is my first homecoming and we don't get to Skype very often so to be able to see my son is just amazing. It's brilliant."

Ethan was given the day off school for the reunion... as was dad CPO Ross Binns, a warfare instructor at HMS Collingwood.

The Binns family was one of many waiting eagerly on a very cold, grey winter's day in Portsmouth, some with home-made banners, some with Leicester City flags, and all entertained by the Band of HM Royal Marines before the ship came alongside.

Since last seeing Pompey in January 2016, Mersey has clocked up 48,000 miles visiting 32 ports in 19 countries across three continents in a deployment which mixed drug-busting and flag-flying for the UK in the Caribbean with clamping down on people trafficking in the Aegean alongside NATO allies and UK Border Force.

Her CO Lt Cdr George Storton described the tour of duty as "epic", spanning the Caribbean and Turkey and "driven by the spirit, commitment and courage of the ship's company."

"With a crew of less than 50 on board at any one time, everybody is involved in every task from hosting presidents to working with NATO allies and developing lifesaving procedures in the Mediterranean. The team has done an amazing job and this deployment really highlights the capability and flexibility of the offshore patrol vessel."

He had a date at a birthday party immediately after stepping off his ship, for his son Toby is celebrating his fifth birthday today.

Rear Admiral Alex Burton, Rear Admiral of Surface Ships, joined Mersey in the Solent to thank crew for their efforts and present the coveted 'Fleet Efficiency Award', singling out Mersey as the best small ship in the Navy.

Thanks to the concerted effort by Mersey and the other vessels committed in the Aegean over the past 12 months the number of migrants trying to reach Greece and Turkey has dropped by 80 per cent.

"Being deployed to the Med has been my first time abroad with the Royal Navy and I can't wait to tell my family about all my experiences," said 21-year-old Bradley Alderton from Littlehampton.

"I'm really happy to see my family again and to have been able to show them around my first ship."

The ship will now receive some extensive TLC following her extended exertions, before resuming her more regular duties around the UK, enforcing fishing legislation.



From Helston to Highlands

THE Merlins of 820 NAS swapped Mounts Bay for the lochs and peaks of western Scotland as they conducted anti-submarine and mountain flying training.

Two helicopters from the Flying Fish – one of two Merlin squadrons which typically deploy en masse with aircraft carriers to provide protection against submarine attack, in 820's case the new HMS Queen Elizabeth – swapped Helston for Prestwick.

Contrary to popular perception, HMS Gannet – the Fleet Air Arm's only foothold north of the border – didn't close with the ending of RN Search and Rescue duties at the beginning of last year.

It remains open as a forward station for any Fleet Air Arm unit wishing/needing to operate or train in western Scotland.

820 wanted to conduct some submarine hunting training in and around the Scottish Isles, as well as some rare mountain flying through the wintry glens and past snow-capped peaks around Loch Lomond, performing winching drills and practising rescue techniques with tugs, lowering a winchman down on to tiny clear spaces.

"Flying in Scotland offers us the ability to keep our crews and engineers familiar with diverse and challenging environments away from our home in Cornwall," explained observer Lt Dominic Rotherham.

"Although our focus is on being the first operationally capable aircraft of the future Carrier Air Wing, we must remain reactive to any task, anywhere in the world."

The squadron is likely to be back at Gannet later in the year as its Merlins are earmarked to be the first to operate from the deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth when she sails for the first time from Rosyth.



pictures: lphot iggy roberts

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Charlie Neve, FPS Member



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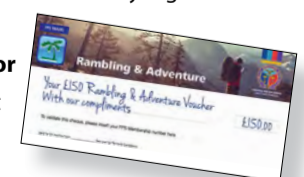
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Hole in 1 — enter the new world of laser weapons

FROM zero to 1,000°C in one second.

That's how long it took for a 10kw laser weapon to pierce this panel of aircraft-grade aluminium.

Laser weapons could be helping to protect the HMS Queen Elizabeth taskforce by the mid 2020s.

Type 45 destroyers, responsible for defending the Fleet from air attack, could fire lasers at less than £1 a shot – compared to the £1 million to fire a Sea Viper missile.

In January the Ministry of Defence awarded a £30m contract to a consortium, UK Dragonfire, to produce a prototype – to be demonstrated in 2019 – to see if directed energy technology could benefit the Armed Forces.

If successful the Royal Navy would be the first of the UK Armed Forces to trial the system as warships have the space and produce the power needed for the lasers.

A low-tech shipping container on a hill at DSTL's site at Porton Down in Wiltshire is where the high-tech experiments are taking place.

As well as most metals, mortar shells and composite materials have all been 'blasted' by a 10kw laser housed a few metres away.

The high-power fibre laser is in a one-tonne large grey box and produces a beam 25mm in diameter.

It works via a 200mm lens in a hermetically-sealed tube, which resembles a telescope. The beam from the high power laser is reflected off to mirrors to accurately align the beam onto the test target. The mirrors are 99.9 percent reflective, compared to the average bathroom mirror which is only 30 percent reflective.

"This is all based on the telecommunications industry," said senior scientist Dr Tim Kendall.

"The advantage of fibre lasers is the large surface area of the fibre,

which allows better heat dissipation in comparison to other solid state lasers.

LDEW trials manager Dr Lee Hill added: "Fibre lasers are incredibly efficient in terms of converting electrical power to optical power. Most high-end fibre laser systems operate at around 30 per cent efficiency and this high conversion efficiency means that warships, with their power-generating capability, could use such systems very effectively."

The US Navy has been testing its own laser weapon system called Laws on the USS Ponce since 2014.

For a warship the laser system would offer a bottomless magazine – able to be fired all the time the ship is producing energy.

One of the challenges for the team is to produce a laser weapon small enough to be used by land troops and in aircraft.

Directed energy weapons could potentially be used to destroy drone aircraft, missiles, mortars, roadside bombs and a host of other threats.

The tests are conducted from 'mission control' in a nearby building; the doors are locked to keep everyone in and a red 'Danger Laser On' sign lights up on the wall above a bank of computer monitors.

A panel of painted 1.5mm-thick aircraft-grade aluminium has been placed in the shipping container. Dr Kendall presses the red button and a 10kw laser beam is fired – in one second the 1,000°C flame melts the aluminium. In two seconds the temperature has doubled.

"We have tested most metals, as well as breezeblocks and composite materials," said Dr Kendall.

"One important side of the research is to future-proof equipment. We've had industry pop along and say 'bet you can't burn this.'

"We hand it back with a hole in it and tell them to try again."

Dr Hill added: "The laser research could also help to change the materials used to

build aircraft and ships. It is natural for us to take the findings of the research to investigate how to protect against high-power lasers."

Lt Cdr Geraint Davies, one of the military advisors on the Dragonfire project, said: "I don't see lasers replacing conventional missiles but in a world of layered air defence it can be a vital addition."

"It's fantastically exciting as it's got a massive capability. Why use a missile which costs millions to shoot down a drone for example, particularly when an insurgent can order another drone off Amazon?"

"Lasers would allow warships to stay on station for longer as you can fire them until the day is long. Commanders can then keep their ships' missiles for more potent threats."

Peter Cooper of DSTL said the laser programme would help MOD to understand the full potential of laser directed energy and look at the costs to ensure it was affordable.

"Currently all of our testing is static, we will need to test from a moving platform, such as a ship, to a moving threat such as an armed drone," he said.

"Missiles are increasingly expensive whereas the cost of firing lasers is currently less than £1 a shot."

"By 2019 I want to know that we can have a relevant system that works and can track a target."

Lt Cdr Davies added: "We are not building star destroyers but laser weapons are not stupidly unrealistic anymore."

If the demonstration is successful, the first laser weapons could come into service in the mid-2020s.

The UK Dragonfire consortium comprises MBDA, Qinetiq, Leonardo-Finmeccanica GKN, Arke, BAE Systems and Marshall ADG.

Picture: LPhoto Louise George

Lightning II dominates war games

THE new Lightning II strike fighter jet ran rings around the F-16 in the United States Air Force's premier air combat exercise.

After eight days at 'war' the F-35A conventional aircraft achieved a 15:1 kill ratio against the F-16s.

The 'jump jet' B version of the fifth-generation strike fighter will fly from HMS Queen Elizabeth and her sister Prince of Wales.

Lt Col George Watkins, an F-35 pilot and 34th Fighter Squadron commander, said: "I've had four of my (F-35A) pilots come back from missions, guys who have flown the F-15 and F-16 at Red Flag for years, and tell me 'This is amazing. I've never had this much situational awareness while I'm in the air. I know who's who, I know who's being threatened, and I know where I need to go next.' You just don't have all of that information at once in fourth-generation aircraft."

Red Flag, held annually at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada, involved pilots and maintainers from 388th and 419th Fighter Wings at Hill AFB, Utah.

Hill's airmen generated 110 sorties, including their first ten jet F-35A sortie.

They have not lost a single sortie to a maintenance issue and have a 92 percent mission-capable rate, said 1st Lt Devin Ferguson, assistant officer in charge of the 34th Aircraft Maintenance Unit. Legacy aircraft averaged 70 to 85 per cent mission-capable.

Red Flag is designed to

provide airmen with realistic combat scenarios and increase survivability in real combat. The three-week exercise pitted "Blue Air" (friendly) against "Red Air" (enemy) in an all-out air war featuring air-to-air, air-to-ground, search and rescue, and special forces elements.

Flying alongside F-22 Raptors, as well as a variety of US and coalition fourth-generation aircraft from Australia and Typhoons from the RAF, the capabilities of the F-35A were put to the test with robust combat scenarios that focus on the jet's core capabilities.

"The first day we were here, we flew defensive counter-air and we didn't lose a single friendly aircraft," Watkins said. "That's unheard of."

Facing surface-to-air threats is a challenge for fourth-generation aircraft. With the F-35, pilots can gather and fuse data from a multitude of sources and use the jet's advanced sensors to precisely pinpoint a threat. Then they can take it out with one 2,000lb bomb. It would be impossible for a fourth-generation aircraft to survive such a mission, said Lt Col Dave DeAngelis, F-35 pilot and commander of the 419 Operations Group.

Last month the UK signed an initial release to service which sets out safe operating limits.

Pilots and engineers from the Royal Navy are currently based in the US working on bringing the F-35B into service with HMS Queen Elizabeth due to embark her first jets in 2018.

Reserves get new home in Rochester

THE Royal Navy has announced plans to build a new Royal Naval Reserve training unit in the centre of the Medway town of Rochester.

The building will be at the Army Reserve Centre in Fort Clarence Barracks and will house Royal Navy reservists from the Medway Tender, part of London-based HMS President, and who currently lodge with the Royal Engineers in Brompton.

Cdre Martin Quinn, Commander Maritime Reserves, said: "The Royal Navy has a strong connection to the Medway region and the move to a prime city centre location in Rochester reflects the value we place on our Reserves Forces."

"It is also a reflection of the strong support we receive from the local community and our

commitment to invest in our reserves across the region."

Capt Mark Wyatt, head of the RNR Infrastructure Programme Team, said: "This new unit will be a great opportunity for Navy reservists located in the Medway region."

"It will provide them with a modern fit-for-purpose training establishment with shared facilities with our Army Reserve colleagues."

"They have been very welcoming and we are already holding one drill night a month in Fort Clarence until the build is complete to encourage recruiting and integration."

Planning permission has been granted and work on the new build will commence in the spring. The new unit should open at the end of this year.

Milestone for sub hub

WORK is due to start later this year on a new submarine school at HMNB Clyde in Scotland.

The complex will enable the Silent Service to be sited in one base.

The new school will provide academic and technical training for all Royal Naval personnel entering the submarine service from 2022.

It means all submariners' careers, whether afloat or ashore, will be principally conducted from Faslane as part of a £1.3 billion investment in making the Clyde Britain's submarine hub.

All 11 Royal Navy submarines will be based at HMNB Clyde from 2020, seeing the number of people employed at the base rise from 6,800 to 8,200.

The school will support the Astute hunter-killer submarines, as well as the delivery of training for the new Dreadnought nuclear deterrent boats.

Head of the Submarine Service, Rear Admiral John Weale said: "Our new single integrated operating base will make significant improvements to the work-life balance of our 5,000 submariners."

"By putting our boats and training in one place,

our submariners can put down roots in Scotland knowing that they are no longer required to commute from one end of the country to another."

The re-location of submarine training from HMS Sultan in Hampshire and HMS Raleigh in Cornwall follows the publication of the Better Defence Estate Strategy, which set out the department's plans to achieve a more efficient, modern and capability-focused defence estate and bring greater harmony to Service families.

The Treasury has approved the Initial Gate Business Case for the new school. Final design approval is expected soon, which will allow work to begin later this year.

As well as the Astutes, the last two Trafalgar-class boats, Talent and Triumph, will move to Scotland from Devonport in 2019 and 2020.

The Submarine Escape Rescue Abandonment and Survivability Training capability will also move from Hampshire to the Clyde by 2019.

The four Dreadnought nuclear deterrent submarines will start to arrive at Faslane in the early 2030s.



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Mother nature shines her light



ROYAL Marines from Commando Helicopter Force were treated to a spectacular display of the Northern Lights during a deployment to Norway.

Personnel were out in deep snow with one of their all-terrain tracked vehicles, known as BVs, when the Aurora Borealis put in an appearance. CHF's Cpl Adam Lock and L/Cpl Tyler Barrass, pictured right, enjoyed the spectacle while out on their Cold Weather Survival Course.

The light show is the result of gaseous particles in the Earth's atmosphere colliding with charged particles released from the sun's atmosphere.

Not that there is much sun where CHF are – 200 miles inside the Arctic Circle at Bardufoss, where temperatures regularly plunge to -31°C during the winter.

The image was captured by Royal Navy photographer PO Si Ethell, who said: "We were out night training when with absolutely no warning the sky became alive with moving and pulsating colour."

"I pointed the camera on a 30-second exposure and got this one bang on; how lucky was that?"

As well as night training, elements from CHF, based at RNAS Yeovilton, have been carrying out snow landings

and under-slung load training with Merlin Mk3s from 845 NAS and RAF Chinooks from 27 Sqn at RAF Odiham.

Both aircraft have carried out load-lifting exercises. The larger and heavier Chinook was fitted with four skis to protect the helicopter's wheels from being damaged should the aircraft run-on in deep snow and hit hidden obstructions. It also allows the Chinook to taxi at up to 20kts in deep snow and taxi normally on normal taxiways.

"Operating the Merlin Mk3 under the environmental pressure of extreme temperatures is challenging for both the engineers and aircrew, but the training is invaluable," said 845 NAS pilot Lt David Houghton.

"The temperatures in Bardufoss can regularly drop below -30°C and this creates difficulties in maintaining and flying the aircraft. Everything seems to take a little bit longer; whether that is starting the aircraft or preparing the additional kit essential to survive in the unlikely event of a 'down bird'.

"On top of this, the mountainous terrain creates its own microclimate which can change rapidly, so you have to make sure you're ready."

Aircrews carry out a multitude of training sorties, beginning with



daytime snow landings to practice landing the helicopters in reduced visibility as the downdraught creates a 'snow storm'.

This is followed by night flying, navigation and mountain flying in a region where low temperatures and quick-changing weather make it the perfect area for training.

"This is my first time in Norway and I'm really looking forward to seeing

journey from Somerset with crews and engineers from B-Flight, along with headquarters personnel from 845 NAS, spending six weeks in Norway before returning home, at which point the remaining half of the flight will move out to Bardufoss.

Three green Merlins were flown from Yeovilton to Bardufoss, via Holland and Denmark.

CHF, the wings of the Royal Marines, has been running winter survival training – known as Clockwork – at Bardufoss – roughly halfway between Tromsø and Narvik for the past 40 years.

The force's training, administration, support and engineering teams deploy to the base each winter to deliver training packages to aircrews and personnel from Joint Helicopter Command.

Aircrews – Junglie Merlins have two pilots and two aircrew – receive an environmental qualification once they have completed the snow training.

CHF consists of three squadrons, 845, 846 and 847, the latter operating Wildcats.

As Navy News went to press, Royal Marines in Norway were delivering a winter-survival training package to trainers from the United States Marine Corps.

Pictures: PO(Phot) Si Ethell, CHF





OR RATHER canvas memories this month.

For like most naval engagements of the Great War photographs of the action are either scarce or non-existent.

The demise of the raider Leopard at the hands of HMS Achilles (depicted here in the foreground) and the armed trawler in March 1917 was one such clash. It took the skilled hand of the greatest maritime artist of his day, William L. Wyllie, to bring the unequal battle to life three years later when he put brush to canvas.

By the spring of 1917, any euphoria over Germany's 'victory' over the Royal Navy at Jutland the previous May had long since evaporated, for the 'victory' had failed to break the British blockade which was now beginning to strangle the Reich.

From the very first day of the Great War, RN strategy had been slow and deliberate: preserve the battleships, cut Germany off from her overseas trade.

It wasn't dashing, but by 1916-17 it was working. Food imports had fallen by more than half. The harvest had

been poor. The humble turnip became the mainstay of the German diet, hence people branded it *Steckrübenwinter* – the turnip winter.

The might of the High Seas Fleet had failed to break the blockade, but individual ships had succeeded in slipping through the cordon drawn across the entrance/exit to the North Sea.

It was not an impervious barrier. Occasionally, armed merchant ships – disguised to look like harmless steamers – slipped through the dragnet and struck at Britain's sea lanes.

No merchant raider was more successful than the *Möwe* (Seagull), which repeatedly pounced on unsuspecting steamers. On two lengthy forays in the Atlantic, she accounted for more than 40 enemy vessels – almost every one sent to the bottom with its cargo, while mines laid by the ship even sank an aged battleship, HMS King Edward VII.

Part way through his second 'cruise', *Möwe's* aristocratic skipper Nikolaus zu Dohna-Schlodien encountered the *Yarrowdale*. Rather than sink her, zu Dohna-Schlodien saw potential in the

British transporter.

Having emptied the holds of cargo, the German now crammed them with the prisoners taken from the seven vessels he'd dispatched so far on his sortie, and ordered the captive ship to make for Germany.

She succeeded in running the blockade, whereupon she was hastily converted; 15cm and 8.8cm guns, torpedo tubes and minelaying devices were installed and on March 7 1917, with a crew of 318 officers and men, she set out to emulate the deeds of the *Möwe*.

Renamed the *Leopard*, but pretending to be the Norwegian steamer *Rena*, she'd got as far as a position roughly 300 miles north of the Shetlands and 300 miles west of Trondheim by the cold, grey morning of March 16.

Patrolling this gloomy patch of the Norwegian Sea was the obsolete armoured cruiser HMS *Achilles* and the 'armed boarding steamer' HMS *Dundee*, a small cargo ship converted to conduct board and search operations – rather like those conducted today by RN and RM teams

in the Indian Ocean, but without the benefit of modern communications.

After observing the 'Rena' for nearly three hours, *Dundee's* captain decided there was something not quite right about her – and ordered a six-man boarding team to take a look.

As the boarders rowed across, the Aldis lamp on *Dundee's* bridge wing flashed a series of questions. The answers were terse – if they came at all.

This went on for nearly an hour until the *Leopard* revealed her spots, starting her engines and attempting to manoeuvre into a position to torpedo *Dundee*.

Two 'tin fish' passed no more than 20ft astern of the British vessel, whose aim with her guns was considerably better. Nearly 70 shells raked the raider from bridge to stern. Steam. Smoke. Flames. All conspired to mask the *Leopard* from view.

The heavier guns of the *Achilles* joined in and after barely 20 minutes, the German raider was a blazing hulk.

A second burst of fire from the Royal Navy when safely out of torpedo range sealed the *Leopard's* fate. "The raider

was a mass of flame, and obviously a doomed ship, although she continued to fight with apparently but one gun," *Dundee's* Cdr Selwyn Day reported.

By the time she listed to port at almost 90° *Leopard* was nothing but a mass of flames – so hot that the metal glowed red. She went down with all hands – including the six Britons of the boarding party – after an action lasting about 50 minutes.

With the *Möwe* safely back in Germany – and the Kaiser unwilling to send her forth a third time for fear of losing her and the resulting blow to morale – the loss of the *Leopard* marked the end of German Navy's raider war... until a second global conflict.

A few weeks later a bottle washed up on the Norwegian coast. Inside was a note scribbled by one of *Leopard's* crew: *In action with British cruiser. Fighting for the glory and honour of Germany. A last greeting to our relatives.*

■ This painting (ART 15814) is one of more than 20,000 items of art held by the Imperial War Museum. They can be viewed at www.iwm.org.uk/collections.

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DRIVING THE ROYAL NAVY COMMUNITY
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With four days in Sierra Leone, Portland's sailors make good use of their Freetime in Freetown



● Warfare officer Lt Cdr Gemma Britton cuddles a young orphan and (below) a kick-about on the orphanage 'pitch'



AFTER two days' hard toil, sailors from AHMS Portland take a break outside St George's Orphanage – one of two children's homes given a fresh lease of life during the frigate's short visit to the Commonwealth country.

The frigate's crew volunteered for two days at the Heaven Home and Saint George's Foundation to help make life a little better for the youngsters in the homes' care as the ship visited the capital Freetown.

Engineers completely re-wired one of the orphanages and got its generator to run without 'tripping' (cutting out) for the first time in more than 12 months, as well as carrying out some basic plumbing jobs and fixing the showers.

Their shipmates got stuck in with labour-intensive tasks of painting and gardening, before joining children in various activities from story-telling and colouring-in through to a kick-about on the football 'pitch'.

"I was nervous before we arrived that there wouldn't be much for us to do but I was wrong and it has been a really worthwhile couple of days," said Portland's 30-year-old Flight Commander Lt Laura Cambrook, normally in charge of the frigate's Lynx helicopter.

"Despite having already been through so much in their short lives the children are full of joy and were so much fun to be around – I don't think anyone escaped without having a cuddle and reading a story.

"It is easy to forget how lucky we are in the UK; these children have nothing

but they are just so happy. Much of this happiness is because of the fantastic work of the staff at the orphanages, many of whom are volunteers."

Volunteering at the homes was the highlight of the four-day visit to the African country, which focused on forging ties with Sierra Leonians at every level.

Some 40 ambassadors and diplomats, led by the country's Foreign Minister Samura Kamara, received a presentation on Portland's mission and especially the importance of maritime security operations off Africa, followed by a question and answer session with the frigate's Commanding Officer Capt Paul Stroude.

The ship's seamanship specialists spent a day on the waterways around Freetown sharing boat handling and navigational techniques with Sierra Leone's police and 'navy' (actually the Maritime Wing of the Armed Forces); many of the African personnel had already been trained by the Royal Navy in the UK.

No visit on Portland's mammoth deployment – now in its eighth of nine months – has been complete without a run out for the frigate's footballers.

A village outside Freetown was the venue for the international clash against the Sierra Leone Military team.

Portland's team coach was greeted by more than 50 children. The hosts rocked up shortly afterwards riding on a safari truck, blasting out an invite for the entire village to attend.

By kick-off a crowd more than 200 strong

had gathered and despite taking an early lead, the Brits eventually went down to a heavy 8-2 defeat. Despite the drubbing, team captain and ship's health and fitness guru LPT Fraser Bricknell said it was "the highlight of the deployment".

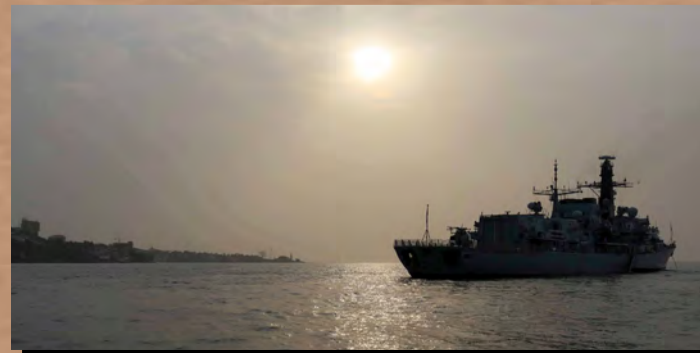
The 26-year-old continued: "The whole village, and our opposition, made us feel very welcome – I've never seen such happy, friendly people before.

"Although not the conditions we are used to back home, and unfortunately ending in a heavy defeat, we'll take away many happy memories and an experience we won't forget."

Portland, which last visited Sierra Leone in 2014, is due back in Plymouth next month, by which time she'll have clocked up more than 37,000 miles sailing through the North and South Atlantic, Mediterranean Sea, Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean.

"Our short stay in Freetown has been another successful visit," said Capt Stroude. "I know that volunteering at the orphanages is a memory that will stick with many of my ship's company for the rest of their lives.

"I was honoured to host so many distinguished diplomats aboard Portland; I hope that our experiences of delivering maritime security, and the challenges we highlighted, struck a chord with them."





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Emergency ward L12

ROUNDS rip through the air, explosions all around in the Gulf sand and three critically-wounded Royal Marines need immediate evacuation by helicopter and landing craft.

Off the coast of the United Arab Emirates, British and American battlefield medics practised their ability to work side-by-side in wartime, using the UK flagship HMS Ocean and her impressive sick bay.

A specialist US medical team joined the helicopter assault group for the casualty drill – one of the tests of the Plymouth-based warship in her role as flagship of the Task Force 50, the premier naval group in the Gulf.

Ocean has been in charge of the group – typically headed by an American carrier – since November, directing the day-to-day efforts of at least half a dozen warships and auxiliaries, and as many as 20 vessels during major exercises.

Azraq Serpent was among the smaller work-outs conducted under Ocean's banner as TF50 flagship – but a crucial one.

Most of the time Ocean's sick bay provides a 'role 1' service – similar to your GP.

In times of conflict and tension, and with the regular team of eight bolstered by the arrival of extra surgeons, medics and experts from the UK, the medical complex becomes a 'role 2' facility – providing life-saving treatment and surgery to casualties before they can be flown off to permanent hospital facilities ashore.

Five days before the exercise began, the US Air Force Special Operations Command Mobile Forward Surgical Team (MFST) were flown aboard the Mighty O by US Navy Seahawk helicopters – a test of the Americans' ability to deploy rapidly anywhere in the world.

"The scenario may be an exercise, and the casualties may be volunteers, but the responses and reactions have to be perfect," explained task force medical advisor Lt Spike Hughes.

Among the challenges to overcome: different terminology, different techniques, different equipment – but a common aim, saving lives.

As the exercise progressed, the wounds, injuries and conditions worsened, from cardiac arrests to multiple burns victims onboard and finally getting three wounded marines (one in danger of losing his limbs, another rapidly losing blood and a third with a gunshot wound to the chest) from a beach to the operating theatre in 60 minutes – the 'golden hour'.

For Ocean's permanent medical team, the exercise was a welcome change from dealing with everyday ailments, coughs and colds – and a chance to show the depth of expertise and experience of the sick bay personnel.

"We are your GP, your paramedic, your nurse. We provide gold-standard care as a rule," said Chief Petty Officer Medical Assistant Tim Johnston.

"It has to be gold-standard. You need the men and women to have confidence in our ability to provide them with the very best care – they deserve that."

The Americans were delighted with their hosts – and the medical equipment aboard, although they did find adjusting to life at sea a bit tricky.

"It was challenging working on board a ship," said surgeon Lt Col Sirikanya Sastri. "It is a huge vessel, and has several levels and stairwells. We had to learn to navigate patients to the ship's medical ward, all the while dealing with ladders and stairwells."

Welcome to our world...

Once they'd grown accustomed to the confined spaces, easily-tripoverable bulkhead doors, rocking, rolling and corkscrewing motion of the ship and got to know their British counterparts, they could concentrate on the exercise: "receive patients, triage them, and treat them", in Lt Col Sastri's words.

"In a real world situation, a patient's condition can change in seconds, so our teams needed to be able to adapt at a second's notice."

The MFST's commander, Lt Col Neva Vanderschaegen, said she had set out to prove that her team could fly out to a ship and care for casualties with the medical facilities to hand. "This I am pleased to say was very successful."

Observing Azraq Serpent was Task Force 50 commander Commodore Andrew Burns. He said it was "an excellent step forward in establishing confidence in our ability to support real world emergencies or crisis."



Cats' dash

THIS is the impressive sight of four Wildcats in formation over Yeovilton – captured by aviation historian/photographer Lee Howard during 75th anniversary commemorations of the Channel Dash.

The flight by the four new helicopters of 825 Naval Air Squadron – both are 21st-Century successors to the aircraft/squadron involved in 1942 – brought the curtain down on events honouring sailors and naval aviators who faced overwhelming odds trying to prevent the kernel of Hitler's Navy making the break from Brest to Germany.

The climax of the breakout came when six Swordfish torpedo bombers of 825 NAS were dispatched to attack the German cruisers and battle-cruisers.

As escorting Spitfires grappled with German fighters, the Swordfish pressed home their attack. Each one was shot down, killing 13 of the 18 crew, including squadron CO Lt Cdr Eugene Esmonde who was awarded the posthumous Victoria Cross.

Three quarters of a century on and the Fleet Air Arm's very own 'Charge of the Light Brigade' continues to both fascinate and inspire, with descendants of the Swordfish crew gathering at the Memorial Church to remember their ancestors' deeds.

"Royal Navy history is rich in stories of actions that have been taken in the full knowledge that the 'ultimate sacrifice' was inevitable," Admiral of the Fleet the Lord Boyce – patron of the Channel Dash Association – told his audience.

"There can be no better example of this than that Lt Cdr Eugene Esmonde, who knew as he closed the enemy that their annihilation was certain.

"We rightly honour his name and those of the other seventeen Swordfish aircrew, only five of whom survived, with humility and awe."

The Swordfish of the RN Historic Flight is currently grounded for winter maintenance, so it fell to the present-day 825 NAS to oblige with a fly-past.

"I am delighted that we were able to mark this significant anniversary in such a fitting manner, remembering the bravery and sacrifice of our forebears in 825 Squadron," said CO Cdr Simon Collins.

"Not only is it an opportunity for us to remember but also to share our current Squadron experiences with such a wide and varied range of guests – 825 is at the forefront of the future of the Fleet Air Arm, providing front-line flights for operations and training all Wildcat aircrew and engineers; this will be our legacy."

Havana the time of our lives

WHILE fishermen cast their lines on Havana's historic waterfront, tanker RFA Wave Knight glides serenely past on a rare visit to Cuba.

The capital of the Communist republic was the latest stop on a Caribbean odyssey which has seen the support ship weigh into the war on drug running (with some success), fly the flag for Britain in its overseas territories (ditto), be on stand-by to help out in the event of a natural disaster (ditto again) and generally promote UK plc in foreign ports (ditto a third time).

The last two roles were evident in Havana, where the tanker found a Cuban military band waiting on the quay to serenade the 31,000-tonne naval vessel as she berthed.

Once alongside, the ship's company knuckled down to working with the Foreign Office in fostering closer ties between the UK and Cuba, discussing how the tanker, her helicopter, and her team of RFA/RN sailors might help out in the event of a hurricane, and hosting Cuban



military and government figures at a flight deck reception.

The Brits also paid their respects at the monument to Cuba's national hero, José Martí, poet and nationalist who died in the 1898 war to liberate the island from Spanish rule. And they did likewise at the three

Commonwealth war graves in the city's Colon cemetery, where British and Canadian personnel who died while serving in Cuba are laid to rest.

In return, Wave Knight's Cuban hosts arranged numerous tours for their visitors: a rum factory, a cigar factory and Morro

Sea Fury set to soar again

THE glorious sound of the RN's last piston-engined fighter will return to the skies this summer – for the first time in three years.

Not since a near-catastrophic crash at Culdrose Air Day in the summer of 2014 has the Sea Fury of the RN Historic Flight – the Fleet Air Arm's counterpart of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight – flown, let alone performed for the crowds.

But the team responsible for keeping it – and the other icons of Naval aviation, such as the legendary Swordfish bomber – airworthy say the huge repair and restoration job on the 69-year-old aircraft is nearing completion.

The Sea Fury suffered engine failure mid-display at Culdrose in July 2014. It skidded to a halt on the grass after the undercarriage collapsed as pilot Lt Cdr Chris 'Goaty' Götke made an emergency landing.

He clambered out of the two-seat trainer unscathed, but the landing gear, airframe and especially the Bristol Centaurus engine needed fixing.

More than 2,500 of the powerplants were built in the 1940s and '50s for civilian and military aircraft including the enormous Bristol Brabazon airliner and the late-WW2 fighter, the Hawker Tempest.

But six decades later, few survive. One was located in the USA by specialist restorers Weald Aviation, who've carried out the Sea Fury's repairs.

They finished work on the airframe last summer and turned to the engine, stripping it, completely overhauling the components, before piecing it all back together.

Titter ye lots

THE Admirals' Players bring the Frankie Howerd classic *Up Pompeii* to the Fisher Hall stage for three nights this month to mark the 25th anniversary of the comedian's death.

Miles Tredinnick's adaptation draws upon characters created by Talbot Rothwell (who also penned 20 *Carry On* films) and Sid Colin (nearly 50 years ago, with first-time director Nick Tavender overseeing proceedings).

The players comprise military and civilian personnel based at HMS Excellent, Portsmouth Naval Base and Southwick Park.

Up Pompeii runs on Whale Island, from March 28-30.

Tickets are £7 for adults and £5 for concessions and can be bought via www.admiralsplayers.co.uk.

Castle to see the ceremonial cannon firing which takes place every night at 9pm.

"The Cuban cigar factory tour was great – learning about the process of how the cigars are made," said 3/O(E) Ben Millward.

"It was really positive to meet and chat to Cubans working at the factory and find out about their jobs and lives."

Sailors were also able to get ashore on their own and explore old Havana – providing a welcome break after an extensive period of counter-narcotics operations working with the US authorities throughout January.

"In 27 years of working for the MOD, I found Havana one of the warmest, friendliest and interesting places I have visited," said Med Technician John Harris.

Steward Andy Sayer added: "Cuba is a truly unique island – different from anywhere else we have been on deployment."

"It feels on the cusp of change but still lives up to the cliché of being full of character, classic cars, and historic buildings."

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Reservists complete 30-miler to earn green lid

How was your weekend?

IT'S an hour before dawn, high on Dartmoor.

Two groups of men wait quietly in the sub-zero temperatures.

They are about to take on the biggest challenge of their lives and are about to make the extraordinary look routine.

During the next eight hours they will run and march the entire length of Dartmoor – whatever the weather conditions.

One of the groups is 225 Recruit Troop who are in week 31 of training.

The other group are Royal Marines Reserves recruits. They all have other jobs: one works for British Aerospace on the Typhoon aircraft, one is an engineering student, one a finance manager, one a stonemason, another is a doctor, and another is in his sixth year at Cambridge studying medicine.

Twelve days earlier 37 reservists had arrived at the Royal Marines Commando Training Centre at Lympstone near Exmouth. Now 17 are left. They know that if they pass this test the Green Berets they have trained for 15 months to gain will be presented at the end.

"It finally hit me I'm here now, on the start line ready to go for the biggest challenge in my life," said 25-year-old Tim Barker from Preston.

After 90 minutes they reach their first checkpoint high on the moor. They eat bananas and drink water before heading off into the wildest part of the moor. Here there are no tracks, no buildings,

nothing but bogs and tors and rugged windswept landscape.

"Walking through the sunrise was beautiful. You had time to really appreciate the ground around you," said Toby Webb, 22, a manager at a global logistics company from Loughborough.

The reservists are on a two-week Commando Course package. The first six days were spent on a tactical exercise on the moor. Once the exercise was finished they started the Commando tests. The 30 miler is the final test. It is one of the most famous military selection tests in the world.

"I've always had it in my head that I could do the 30 miler," said Jack Ardagh, 29, a financial consultant from Greenwich.

"That's at the end of the course, adrenalin will get me through that no problem. Five miles in I was 'Oh my God this is serious stuff' considering the last 12 days I've had."

Three-and-a-half hours in and the recruits reach a few scattered houses where they take on food and water.

Royal Marines undergoing physical tests are controlled by physical training instructors but for this test the recruits are in the hands of Commando Training Wing at Lympstone. They surround the trainees with a safety bubble throughout the march.

The recruits carry about 40lbs of equipment. Everything they need to deal with any conditions on the moor. Satellite phones, GPS, gortex



clothing, survival rations, medical packs, collapsible stretchers and of course rifles.

"At half way I felt I'd achieved something – we've done 15 miles but then three miles later I was exhausted," says Jack, a member of RMR London.

"My brain was saying I haven't really achieved anything because I have 13 miles to go. I can't do this. I had to push myself and go into a different mode then. It's mind over body. Mind over pain."

Tim agrees: "I thought this is really tough and I looked around at the guys and some of them were really struggling."

Checkpoint four is five-and-a-half

hours in. Here the speed march is descending off the moor and Cornwall stretches out into the distance.

"The roads and the downhill running was the hardest part for me," said Toby, who is at RMR Merseyside's Nottingham detachment. "At the end when you're really pushing to get that last bit of time in it was definitely mentally: 'right, grit your teeth now'."

Speed marching is a skill that dates back to Commando training at the Achnacarry in the Highlands of Scotland during WW2. The idea dates back even further to the 19th Century when the British soldiers in South Africa were impressed that a Zulu warrior could run 40 miles and still fight a battle

at the end.

Finally the recruits descend off the moor. They are almost in Plymouth and have marched half way across the second biggest county in England.

At the end they are clapped in by a few well wishers and some Marines veterans who mentor the regular recruits through training.

Then after more pasties, water and some hugging the reservists who have passed all the tests are presented with the coveted Green Beret.

Lt Col Ed Moorhouse, the CO of RMR London, tells them: "In 2010 I commanded a fighting company in Sangin for six months. I had ten percent reservists out of a 180 men. They were outstanding. Today you join a family who's lineage goes from the beret you wear to the cap comforter you've just taken off to the hills around Spean Bridge and Achnacarry."

For the recruits of 225 Troop the future is nine days of drill training and then a pass-out parade in front of their parents.

For the reservists it is back to work on Monday. They can tell their workmates what they did and how hard it was but the reality is most people will never be able to comprehend the magnitude of what they have actually achieved.

For more information visit <http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers/royal-marines/what-can-i-do/royal-marines-reserves>

Words and pictures: WO2 Richard White



● RMR London with the Royal Marines band Portsmouth, veterans and cadets at Wandsworth town hall

Picture: LPhoto Louise George

Wonderful Wandsworth welcome

MEMBERS of the Royal Marines Reserve (City of London) have been awarded the Freedom of the Borough of Wandsworth in South West London.

At a ceremony attended by Community leaders from Wandsworth and the Commandant General Royal Marines Major General Robert Magowan, over 160 Reservists, RM Cadets and RM Veterans exercised their right to march through the Borough, accompanied by the Band of the Royal Marines With drums beating, Colours flying and Bayonets fixed.

During the special parade, citizens and well-wishers lined the route of the

usually busy town centre – brought to a complete standstill for the afternoon.

The Mayor of Wandsworth Councillor Richard Field formally offered the Freedom of the Borough to the Royal Marines, presenting them with a Freedom Scroll.

"This award pays tribute to the bravery and dedication of these volunteers who have served their nation with great distinction, as part of this famous and historic Royal Naval force. We are immensely proud to be associated with them," he said.

Lieutenant Colonel Ed Moorhouse RM, who commands RMR City of

London, said: "It is a great privilege that has been bestowed upon the Royal Marines Reserve City of London by the granting and exercising of the Freedom of the Borough of Wandsworth.

"Since arriving in the borough in 2011, we have had unfaltering support from the borough council and its local residents. We are hugely proud of being part of Wandsworth.

"Over the last five years members of RMR City of London have deployed to the Middle East and in support of the Fleet on operations as well as trained around the world from the jungles of Central America to the Arctic Circle."

● From left, Alun Read, Mark Baines and Gordon Cook take their first and last flight together for the Royal Navy



Veterans united

THREE of the Royal Navy Reserve's most experienced aircrew instructors went airborne together for the first and last time.

With more than 25,000 flying hours between them, Lt Cdrs Mark Baines, Gordon Cook and Alun Read took XZ689 on a low-level navigation exercise to Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth and then on to Dartmoor before conducting a few final autorotations and wingovers at Merryfield to fulfil the monthly requirements of the Lynx Training Directive.

Although the age of the crew totalled 168 years they still managed to get into and out of the aircraft unaided. The aircraft herself was also a veteran, being the oldest Lynx still flying.

For Mark, a Boeing 747 pilot with Virgin Atlantic, this was to be his last flight in an RN aircraft, with Gordon and Alun continuing to fly until the Lynx is retired from the Senior Service at the end of the month.

"It was a brilliant day and a nostalgic end to my RN flying career as my very first Royal Navy flight was from BRNC

to Dartmoor in a Wessex V. For the last 16 years the RNR has been a great way to maintain my Service ties in a mutually beneficial way," said Mark.

He has notched up 12,000 flying hours, including 3,800 for the Royal Navy, and flown Chipmunk, Bulldog, Grob, Gazelle, Sea King 4, Lynx 3/8, Airbus 320/321/330/340-300/340-600 and Boeing 747-400.

His Naval career has seen him serve with 845 NAS in the Arctic and Far East, two Antarctic deployments in HMS Endurance, and HMS Brilliant and Cornwall. He was also the CO of 848 NAS.

Gordon has achieved 6,600 flying hours, including 6,400 hours in the Lynx, Jetstream, Lynx 2/3/8 and Super Lynx 95/100. He has served in HMS Argonaut, Cardiff and Manchester.

Alun has notched up 7,250 flying hours, including 4,000 hours in the Lynx, Chipmunk, Bulldog, Sea King 2/3/4/5/6, Gazelle 1/2/3, Lynx 3/8, Griffin and Squirrel.

His highlights include serving in HMS Amazon and Minerva and surviving a mid-air collision.

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● WRNS pictured at West Mount House in Dover in May 1919. Two of the officers in the front row are wearing coat frocks, which were phased out as after October 1918 new officers were issued suit jackets

Pioneering women who made history

Exhibition marks centenary of females in RN

UNIFORMS, a regulation handbag (complete with sewing needles, a bottle opener and a sink plug), photographs and a ceramic model of a wren – the feathered variety.

All are used to tell the story of women working in the Naval Service.

An exhibition *Pioneers to Professionals: Women and the Royal Navy* has opened at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth to mark the centenary year of the Women's Royal Naval Service.

But it is the personal stories which bring to life how women contributed to British Naval history, right back from the age of sail when many women were unofficially on warships, some disguised as men.

"Historically the work of Naval women was rarely recorded and often overlooked, yet thousands have actively contributed to worldwide Naval operations over centuries," said Curator Victoria Ingles.

"During this time, women have undertaken a huge range of jobs and have often confounded expectations about what they could do and this exhibition seeks to bring some of these inspirational stories to attention."

A section of the exhibition highlights the early pioneers from the 18th and 19th Centuries, during which time a number of women disguised themselves as men, while others openly lived with their husbands on board.

Hannah Snell famously lived as Royal Marine James Grey for more than four years in the 1700s, while HMS Queen Charlotte's 1815 muster book records a William Brown as enlisting in May but is dismissed a month later 'for being female.'

A photograph taken in 1862 of 93-year-old Ann (Nancy) Perriam is included. She worked as a powder monkey and tended the wounded aboard HMS Orient at the Battle of the Nile in 1798.

The formation of the WRNS in 1917 was seen as an important milestone as it allowed women to work in an official capacity in shore-based roles as cooks, stewards, dispatch riders, sail makers and in intelligence – the WRNS motto was *Never at Sea*.

Initially the Service – around 7,000

Wrens served during WW1 – was heavily influenced by the Volunteer Aid Detachment – an organisation trained in first aid.

Former VAD Commandant General Dame Katherine Furse was the first Director WRNS. The exhibition features a ceramic wren which sat on Dame Katherine's desk. She bought a number of her key staff to the WRNS.

The outbreak of WW2 brought a huge recruiting drive – one of the slogans proclaimed: *Join the Wrens – free a man for the Fleet*.

By 1944 more than 74,000 Wrens were working in 90 different roles – and many of them did go to sea.

Among the items on display is the Atlantic Star awarded to Constance Hale, who had a sea-going role with the Royal Navy during the Battle of the Atlantic.

In 1943 she was drafted as a shorthand typist aboard the Philante helping train new crews in the Irish Sea to learn anti-submarine techniques.

For her time in the WRNS, PO Hale received several medals but she is one of a few women to have received the Atlantic Star.

Naval personnel on board ships who served for six months or more in the Atlantic or Home Waters between September 1939 and May 1945 received the medal.

A large wooden key covered in signatures hangs in one of the WW2 display cases.

This marked the 21st birthday of Margaret Hodgson as she sailed to Singapore to work on decoding Japanese signals.

She had to get written permission from her father to join the WRNS. She, along with her fellow WRNS, were evacuated from Singapore shortly before it fell in February 1942.

A brass plaque records the loss of 21 Wrens who embarked the SS *Aguila* in Liverpool bound for Gibraltar in August 1941.

The convoy was attacked by U-boats and the *Aguila* was hit by a torpedo and sank in less than two minutes, taking with her 152 souls.

Six surviving Wrens were picked up by the steam tug *Empire Oak* but she suffered

the same fate three days later. None of the Wrens survived.

Following D-Day, a number of Wrens sailed to France to work with headquarters staff in France and Belgium.

"It is important to recognise that the Wrens were not sat in office jobs but were putting themselves in danger," added Victoria.

"The attraction for many women was the chance to do something different and travel the world. It changed people's perspective and also gave them skills and confidence, which helped them in life outside of the Service."

"From talking to former Wrens who have visited it is clear that it was something special to be in the WRNS."

Members of the WRNS also heavily influenced the introduction of women into the navies of Australia, Canada, India and the Netherlands.

It wasn't until 1949 that a long-term Royal Navy career for women became possible and it was as late as 1990 before women were able to serve in ships at sea. Three years later the WRNS was disbanded and women were fully integrated into the Royal Navy.

Today females in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines make up 9.3 percent of the force in the UK Regular Forces and Future Reserves. The percentage of officers who are female in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, in the UK Regular Forces, stands at 10.6 percent.

The final part of the exhibition looks at the Naval Service today and includes a photograph of Kate Nesbitt – the first female member of the Royal Navy to be awarded the Military Cross as a result of her actions in Afghanistan in March 2009.

Now Royal Navy women serve under and on the waves, in the air and on land – and are also eligible to apply to become a Royal Marine Commando.

The Princess Royal, Admiral Chief Commandant for Women in the Royal Navy, was officially launching the exhibition, which runs until the end of the year, on March 8, International Women's Day.

For more details on WRNS100 events see www.wrns100.co.uk



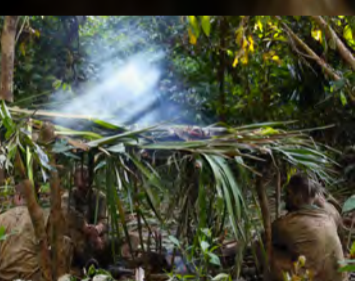
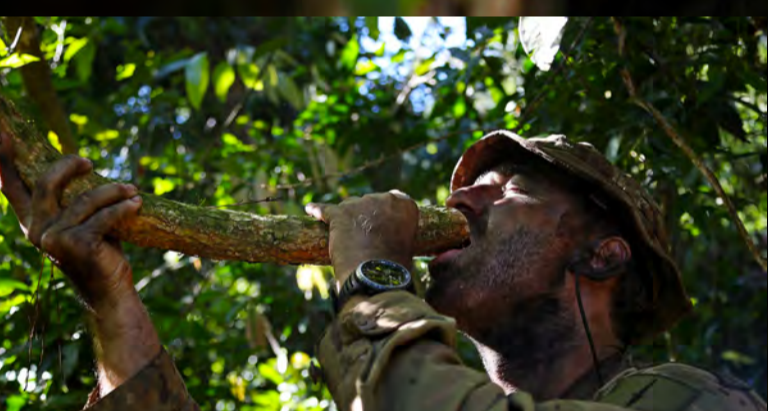
● Wrens pictured cleaning depth charges during WW1



● Wrens pass messages as signallers during WW2



● Members of the WRNS were demobbed at the end of WW1





Nine lives The Lynx Story



picture: lee howard

THOSE living through it at the time probably didn't realise it but October 1963 marked a world on the cusp of a new age.

The official report into the Profumo scandal by Lord Denning had just been published; coupled with failing health, it prompted PM Harold McMillan to stand down, dealing another blow to the old-world Establishment, increasingly mocked by a new generation of comedians and satirists, embodied by *That Was The Week That Was*.

Across the Pond, JFK ordered all American troops to begin withdrawing from Vietnam (a decision reversed after his assassination in just one month's time).

The Soviet Union remained the West's principal adversary – cinemagoers were reminded by the second outing of James Bond on the big screen, *From Russia With Love*.

Matt Monro put his voice to the 007 title track, but the era of clean-cut crooners ruling the charts was just about over.

The Fab Four's *She Loves You* was No.1 as the month opened... and Gerry and the Pacemakers' cover version of *You'll Never Walk Alone* held the top spot as October closed.

So dominant was the Merseybeat sound that the *Daily Mail* coined the phrase 'Beatlemania' that very month.

Commercial ITV ruled the roost over the stuffy BBC. Not a single top-ten show was produced by the Beeb. Brits much preferred to tune into *Coronation Street*, *Emergency Ward 10* or *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*.

The car was overtaking the railway as the principal method of transport – Dr Beeching's swingeing cuts were beginning to take effect, while the fledgling motorway network was starting to take shape with the tentacles of the M1, M4, M5 and M6 extending along their planned routes, ready to carry Britain's best-selling car (the Austin 1100) among others.

In the Fleet Air Arm, the helicopter was increasingly the aircraft of choice in the Cold War.

The Westland Whirlwind and the more substantial Wessex were the backbone of its helicopter force.

But the Admiralty was increasingly persuaded by the idea of operating individual helicopters from frigates and destroyers, such as the new Leanders and County-class.

It looked like it had the perfect nimble aircraft for performing this new role, the Westland Wasp, currently undergoing evaluation; armed with two Mk44 torpedoes, or even a nuclear depth charge, it would take the fight to Soviet submarines for the next decade and more – as well as performing a myriad other duties as required by the ships it operated from.

But while the Fleet Air Arm evaluated its new toy, the Army Air Corps was thinking slightly bigger. In October 1963 they turned to Westland and asked the Yeovil firm to design a small battlefield helicopter which could fit in the back of Hercules and ferry up to ten troops around at speed. So good was the design Westland came up with that the Fleet Air Arm jumped on board.

The manufacturers designated it the WG13 (Westland Group No.13). In time they renamed it: Lynx.

It was a revelation. Fast. Nimble. Powerful. Easy to fly. And it packed a much stronger punch than the flimsy Wasp.

Nearly 54 years on from the Army laying down an initial requirement and the very final Lynx in Naval service – the HMA (Helicopter Maritime Attack) Mk8 bows out of service at the end of this month. It's not as sleek as its progenitor thanks to sensors, defensive aid suites, radar domes, but you can easily trace its heritage back to the draughtsmen of the 1960s who toiled with pencil and slide ruler.

In all 91 maritime Lynx were delivered to the Fleet Air Arm from nearby Westland (later AgustaWestland and now Leonardo): 61 Mk2s, 30 Mk3s (the Mk8 is a converted Mk3).

It's not our job here to recount the ins and outs of the Lynx through its numerous incarnations over the past five decades – that's been well documented by aviation authors.

No, here in our commemorative supplement, with the help of authors Larry Jeram-Croft and Lee Howard (more about them and their works later on), plus the *Navy News* archive, we've dug out some Lynx 'dits' and classic Lynx tales to bring the aircraft to life.

After a stint as a Sea King pilot, at the beginning of the '80s Larry Jeram-Croft was drafted to Yeovilton to join the newly-formed 702 Naval Air Squadron to convert to Lynx. Though only a decade old, he found the Sea King "relatively lumbering and old fashioned". Now he was in "aviation heaven".

My first flight in a Lynx was a revelation. With a rotor head made of solid titanium, the aircraft literally handled like a fast jet. In fact, the Lynx was one of the world's first truly aerobatic helicopters. Not that we were allowed to exploit the fact (at least not officially). It was designed from the outset to cope with small ship operations. The undercarriage was so strong it hurt my back when my instructor dropped it onto the tarmac from ten feet. The hydraulic deck harpoon system meant that as soon as we were on deck we were secure; that, and the fact that you could actually reverse the pitch on the main rotor and push the thing down on to the deck with over half the power of the engines.

Tactical operations were another eye-opener; flying at 50 feet over the sea, flat out, at 150 knots, in close formation with another Lynx and then splitting off and pulling 2G to ensure that when we fired, we could put eight Sea Skua missiles, at four different skim heights, into a target from 90 degrees apart. Wow.

He is as passionate about the Lynx today as he was then. It's still the fastest helicopter in the world... and the world is still its playground. Wherever the RN has been since 1978, Lynx has been. Stopping drug traffickers in the Caribbean or pirates off Somalia. Helping in the aftermath of natural disasters such as typhoons in the Philippines, hurricanes in the West Indies, even volcanic eruptions on Montserrat. Though 18 were deployed to the Falklands (and some damaged, like Broadsword's, struck by a bomb during the wave of attacks which sank HMS Coventry), not one Lynx was shot down. In its next war in the Gulf in 1990-91 it was the scourge of the Iraqi Navy. Its Sea Skua missiles effectively reduced Saddam Hussain's fleet to a negligible foe when Desert Storm was unleashed. The combination of Lynx plus missile makes it, Larry argues, "the most successful weapon system deployed by the Royal Navy since 1945". There have been tragedies as well as triumphs along the way – HMS Brilliant, HMS Richmond and HMS Portland all lost their Lynx and most of the men and women aboard them. In a career spanning nearly 50 years, such accidents are, thankfully, rare – testament to the skill of the men who designed and built the helicopter and the crews who've flown and maintained them.



● The first prototype Lynx takes flight at Yeovil in March 1971 and (above) 700L NAS receive the first Naval Lynx at Yeovilton

As the 1970s drew to a close, the Lynx HAS – Helicopter Anti-Submarine – 2 began to filter through to the front line, increasingly taking over from the spindly Wasp. It could fly for more than two and a half hours – four hours if an internal fuel tank was fitted. Attached to external pylons were a couple of Mk46 torpedoes, or possibly the newer Stingray, or the brand-new Sea Skua missile. Small, light and lethal, Sea Skua gave the Lynx what it had been lacking: the ability to knock out small enemy ships, though no-one expected to fire it in anger – certainly not in a matter of months, and certainly not against an unexpected foe.

When Britain sent a task force to the South Atlantic in the austral autumn of 1982, 18 Lynx went with it – mostly with the escorts and pickets. It meant they were away from the media (on Hermes and Invincible), away from the Sea Harriers (which grabbed much of the media attention, especially in the early days of the campaign), and away from the Sea Kings which performed many of the search and rescue operations.

The Lynx performed pretty much every other military task: sneaking troops ashore; observing fall of shot – just as gunnery observers had done in both world wars; ferrying bags of mail around – vital for morale in the pre-email/internet era; and, in the absence of airborne early warning (ditched with the demise of the Gannet and the old Ark Royal), its 'Orange Crop' sensor suite was used to scan the airwaves for Argentine radar searching out British ships. It meant they were constantly in the line of fire – whether they were airborne or not.

On the morning of the San Carlos landings, May 21 1982, HMS Argonaut was patrolling the northern end of Falkland Sound to prevent Argentine submarines slipping in and harrying the invasion force – a task which didn't require her helicopter 'Jason', which was off conducting a surface search with the Flight's second pilot at the controls.

Left on board was Flight Commander Lt Cdr Alan Walker who found the constant criss-crossing of Falkland Sound "a bit boring". He remembered:

I was strolling idly around the flight deck – as my second pilot was flying the aircraft on a surface search – when I spotted an aircraft which I recognised as an Aeromacchi and I knew we did not have any so I shouted, "enemy aircraft to starboard" as loud as I could. At that point I could see what appeared to be flashes coming from the aircraft and shouted, "Take cover" to the rest of the Flight and anyone else who could hear. I also started to run towards the hangar since I was at the rear end of the flight deck.

Just as I got to the hangar, I heard a sound that I can only describe as sounding like a despairing shriek which slowly got louder and louder and culminated in a series of extremely loud explosions and thumping noises. We had been rocketed and machine gunned. I looked at those members of the Flight who were in the hangar with me and we all realised that someone had just tried very hard to kill us. This very definitely was not a game or an exercise.

Though dominated by East and West Falkland, the archipelago comprises nearly 800 islands spread over 14,000 square miles of the South Atlantic – nearly twice the size of Wales. Lt Chris Mervik, Flight Commander of HMS Penelope was asked to insert a small Royal Marines team on Carcass Island, an almost-deserted outcrop off West Falkland.

A Harrier reconnaissance mission produced detailed photographs of the island and they were then flown to Penelope by Sea King helicopter. The RM team studied the images and maps spread across the dining table of our wardroom and a suitable landing site was selected on the coast where we would drop the team. They would then make their way to a vantage point overlooking the settlement where it was suspected Argentine Forces might be located.

As a 'Junglie' I had operated with the marines on several occasions, but would never claim to have had any special insight into their methods or thinking. They were secretive, highly-professional and impressively skilled, and seemed to me to balance their delight in their role with an intense seriousness about their purpose.

Though today, a great deal of their story has been exposed in paperback and the media, back then they were shadowy figures. But for all that, they were only flesh and blood and it was that vulnerability that brought home the weight of responsibility on Nick [Last, the observer] and me to get them on to Carcass Island without compromising their operation or their safety.

We discussed their chosen landing site on the south coast some distance from their objective – as I recall, it was right at the water's edge, with sand dunes or rising ground ahead that would shield us from sight and be a barrier to the sound of our arrival and we were readily drawn into their determination to achieve the task.

An hour after midnight, with both the ship and the Lynx darkened, we lifted from the flight deck and made the short hop to the landing site. That night, with the four-man team in the back we were either the best protected aircrew in the Falklands or the most at risk.

Despite the planning, or because of it, the insertion took place during the astrological event of the month – a full moon!

It was our job to make the run in towards the island without being silhouetted by its brilliant loom. As we came to a very low hover on the shore – all lights off – I was immediately grateful for the light of the moon as it picked out the most suitable patch for Nick to disembark the heavily laden troops on to the otherwise treacherously uneven, rock-strewn surface. So swift was their

exit that Nick's commentary from the back went along the lines of, "one out... all out!"

The whole sortie took just five minutes, to this day the shortest 'Duty Carried Out' flight recorded in either of our flying logbooks.

On the penultimate day of the conflict, HMS Penelope's Lynx was ordered to 'bomb up' after an Argentinian patrol boat was sighted in Choiseul Sound, three dozen miles southwest of Stanley.

The boat was soon sighted and the Lynx crew flashed up Sea Skua to make the attack run, as pilot and flight commander Lt Chris Mervik describes:

We climbed swiftly to the minimum launch height and Nick [Last, the flight observer] set about locking on to the radar echo that was clearly discernible against the radar picture of the shoreline. Surprisingly quickly, and without hesitation, the system locked on to the target and was ready to fire.

With one small stab of my finger the aircraft lifted slightly as the missile fell away, shortly reappearing ahead of the aircraft with a thin trail of white rocket efflux as it stepped down in stages on its way to the target. Then, a small, explosive plume of white smoke signalled that the missile had hit.

Descending to low-level, we closed the target sufficiently to make a damage assessment. The patrol craft appeared to be heeled over to starboard and slightly down by the stern and certainly out of action.

The helicopter returned to the frigate, its crew delighted with the performance of their new weapon. "The warm bubble burst when news of our action was reported back to Fearless," Chris recalled. The patrol boat had already been disabled by a Sea Harrier three weeks earlier. "It might even have been repairable and put to use by British forces had we not done further irreparable damage with our missile. So tea and sympathy, but no medals!"

Eight Sea Skuas were fired during the Falklands conflict, all but one hitting its target. The missiles damaged or destroyed three vessels. Another tin-pot dictator's navy would fare even worse at the decade's end...

After the capitulation of Argentine forces on June 14, HMS Avenger's Lynx was dispatched to Fox Bay, 'capital' of West Falkland, to oversee the surrender. Flight Observer Lt Neil Sibbet describes events

The next morning we flew in to the settlement to collect the local garrison commander, an Argentinian colonel. The Argentinian forces in Fox Bay had been unaware of the surrender when we overflew the settlement the previous night.

The colonel appeared in full dress uniform complete with sword and pistol. We did remove any of these weapons, but popped him in the back of the Lynx and returned to the ship where Captain Hugo White received



October 1963

Army asks industry to design a small, fast, agile helicopter capable of operating on the battlefield and ferrying ten troops around and able to fit in a Hercules transporter
Westland respond with the WG3 [Westland Group 3] which is quickly rejected as being too big and complex

1964

WG3 becomes the smaller WG13, again aimed at the Army

June 1966

Royal Navy and the French join the project, requesting naval and battlefield variants

February 1967

Formal agreement between Britain and France to build three helicopters which will become the Lynx, Puma and Gazelle

September 1969

Rolls-Royce Gem engine is bench tested for first time



● HMS Ambuscade's Flight toil against the elements off the Falklands in 1982 and (right) 'Elwood', one of two Lynx on HMS Brilliant, sets down on the Karama Maersk after she was attacked by Iranian gunboats in March 1988



● Sea King from 846 NAS (RFA Argus) and HMS Brilliant's Lynx help to assess the damage to Kuwait's oilfields in March 1991

him and took the formal surrender.

The villagers were extremely pleased to see us and we flew several sorties to and from the ship with supplies – in particular fresh bread. Our landing party numbered 18, to disarm and organise 989 Argentine soldiers! The Argentine officers, though subdued, were unkind to their conscripts and on occasion had to be restrained from kicking and hitting them as Avenger's team went through the searches.

The conscripts were living in awful conditions, some in the settlement chicken hutches and many were just kids. They seemed relieved it was all over. One of our tasks was to recover items that had been looted from the settlement, generally small things like radios, but again the locals were most grateful.

Amid the euphoria of victory in the South Atlantic, the RN took stock of the lessons of the Falklands, replaced lost ships, installed new kit such as Phalanx, invested in airborne early warning and decided that the Lynx Mk2 was underpowered and needed souping-up – especially as a new theatre of war was emerging: the Gulf.

The Iran-Iraq conflict spread from land to sea as the two warring sides struck at each other's sea lanes and tanker traffic. As the 1980s progressed, the attacks became increasingly indiscriminate. In all, more than 500 ships would be attacked with over 400 merchantmen losing their lives.

It fell to the Royal Navy to 'accompany' British-flagged ships through the Strait of Hormuz – not merely threatened by Iranian Silkworm missile batteries, but also Boghammer armed speedboats and mines.

The environment was – and remains – no less hostile. In July the average temperature in the Gulf reached 38°C in the shade, 48°C on the flight deck. The Mk2 simply couldn't cope. Its engine wasn't powerful enough. The Mk3 equipped with the Gem 42 engine – generating 100 horsepower more than its predecessor – could, but even it struggled, suffering from overheating.

The Middle East temperatures didn't merely take their toll of the engines, however. Windscreens

cracked. Avionics and sensors didn't work properly. It was particularly bad if the helicopter was left out on the flight deck ready to scramble. Flights came up with a simple solution – a giant white sheet (nicknamed the 'condom') covering the front half of the Lynx.

It reduced the temperature inside the cockpit by up to ten degrees Celsius. There was little respite in the hangar – it was outside a ship's air conditioning boundary, effectively turning it into a hot metal box. Sand got – and still gets – everywhere. Aircrew reckoned the strain of a one-hour sortie in the Gulf equated to two or three hours in the cab around the UK – and they were clocking up four or five hours a day airborne on patrol.

In March 1988, HMS Boxer, carrying Lynx XZ724 and XZ239 (callsigns 'Jake' and 'Elwood', after the Blues Brothers; Boxer's bish, the Rev Richard Thomas formally 'christened' the two helicopters), was on patrol off the United Arab Emirates when she picked up a Mayday from the Danish-registered merchantman Karama Maersk after she came under attack by Iranian Revolutionary Guard gunboats. The tanker was ablaze in places and leaking oil, but still first Jake and then Elwood set down on her upper deck. Flight Observer Sub Lt Mark Graham continues the story:

She had suffered penetration of her cargo hold and the burning oil was leaving a trail in the water for about a mile and a half... It is thought our appearance caused the Iranians to move back into their own territorial waters.

The Karama Maersk was well prepared for the gun and rocket propelled grenade attack and no further assistance was required. Amusingly, the doctor rushed to the bridge (quite a distance from where the aircraft had landed) with his first-aid bag, to be told "everyone is quite all right, would you like a cup of tea?" The press helicopters from Dubai had arrived by the time Elwood landed on to recover the out of breath doctor and footage was shown on the BBC News that evening.

In fact, Boxer's doctor, Surg Lt Mark Parrish, did provide some medical assistance while aboard; three wives of the crew were in a state of severe shock.

Boxer escorted some five

million tonnes of merchant shipping through Hormuz over the winter of 1987-88. Jake and Elwood were instrumental. The Type 22 frigate clocked up 16,000 miles during the first three months of her deployment to the Gulf – 4,000 fewer miles than those flown by the Lynx pair in the same period.

The Armilla Patrol – as Gulf duties were known at the time – exposed the Lynx Mk3 to new threats and a harsh environment in which it had never been intended to operate, certainly not on a permanent basis.

The Yellow Veil jammer was fitted to deal with the threat of Exocet and Silkworm missiles, but increasingly infra-red missiles were the danger. As the Fleet Air Arm's in-house magazine *Cockpit* warned: "The 'throw the chaff out of the window, fly towards the missile and pray' tactic was not good enough." The boffins came up with Challenger, an infra-red jammer.

Then there was the growing threat of heavily-armed Iranian Boghammer boats. Extra firepower was added to what the Naval aviation community was calling the 'Arabian Lynx' in the form of a heavy machine-gun pod...with a gunsight almost identical to those used by Spitfires 50 years before.

Indeed, by the time of Gulf War 1 in 1990-91, the 'Gulf Modified' Lynx carried:

- Improved cooling system
- Improved secure radio
- Yellow Veil jammer
- Challenger infra-red jammer
- M130 chaff and flare
- Sandpiper thermal imager, used to identify targets in poor visibility – even mines
- Machine-gun pod
- GPS

The various modifications and additions made the Lynx Mk3 GM a very potent helicopter indeed – but they also rather deformed what was once a slender beauty, turning it into a "snarling warthog".

TO those who were not there, the 1990-91 Gulf War is something of an anti-climax, its outcome a foregone conclusion, the battle over in just four days. But for five weeks before the final ground assault routing the occupying Iraqi forces and liberating Kuwait, a fierce fight was waged by sea and sky.

The air war was beamed live into people's homes daily as the world was mesmerised by new smart bombs accurately smashing bunkers and military installations – all recorded for posterity by video cameras.

The mauling of the Iraqi Navy by the combination of Lynx and

Sea Skua missiles was a key part of this 'smart war'... but it was largely played out away from the media.

Yet over several nights in late January, Saddam's naval forces were largely wiped out – not just for this war, but the one fought 12 years later; the Iraqi Navy never recovered under the dictator's rule.

The decimation of Saddam's fleet reached its climax off the island of Bubiyan, a sandy wasteland separated from the mainland by two narrow waterways: the Khawr Abd Allah (leading to the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr) and Khawr az-Zubayr (splitting Bubiyan from Kuwait). And the phrase "Bruiser loose" – code signal for 'missile away' – crackled repeatedly over the airwaves.

On the evening of January 29, HMS Cardiff's Lynx was carrying out a dusk patrol along the Kuwaiti border, flying at an altitude of just 25ft, when it came under fire from Iraqi flak over the naval base at Ras Al Qulayah – about 40 miles down the coast from Kuwait City. Flight Commander Lt Phil Needham takes up the story:

There is only one thing to do in a helicopter when this happens – run away. Guy [pilot Lt Guy Haywood] turned, banked hard, and commenced a weaving manoeuvre away from the coast.

As I peered left and right over my shoulder, I saw what looked like a missile's plume of smoke coming towards us and instinctively fired the M130 chaff and flare dispenser. For the next few seconds things became "interesting".

The surface of the sea was covered in oil (deliberately released on the orders of Saddam Hussein). The flares fire outwards and downwards and for obvious reasons are quite bright. As the ambient light had almost faded and we were very low, the glare from the flares against the oily surface illuminated the cabin in a sudden bright glow. I suppose we should have expected it, but when you are under fire, a sudden bright light could mean several things. Guy didn't let it affect his flying and we quickly realised what it was, even if it took a while for heart rates to reduce.

The Lynx set down on the

deck of American frigate USS Nicholas to refuel and receive fresh tasking – an Iraqi warship had been detected exactly where Cardiff's helicopter had come under fire.

The target was identified on radar and we were given weapons free.

However, because of communication problems, we had to conduct three attack runs before we acquired a good firing solution at four and a half miles.

Once ready, we fired one Skua and were rewarded with a large explosion. Because of the closeness of the coast and the likelihood that we would come under fire again, we weren't able to close and do a full damage assessment, but it was later confirmed that we had sunk a Spasilac minelayer and had achieved the first Royal Navy sinking of the war.

It would be the first of five Iraqi warships knocked out by HMS Cardiff's Lynx.

Harking back nearly 50 years to the destruction of the Japanese Naval Air Force in the Philippine Sea, some media branded the Battle of Bubiyan 'the great turkey shoot'.

It was not an entirely one-sided affair, however. During a 'search and destroy' mission, HMS Brazen's Lynx was subjected to heavy flak. "I saw three of four bursts sending plumes of water into the air," Flight Commander Lt Cdr Mike Pearey recalled.

Over the noise of the helicopter we couldn't hear anything and it was only when I saw the splashes that I realised

someone was shooting at us.

They were a couple of hundred yards short of us and I looked up and I could see the traces of fire coming from the shore. Jon [pilot Lt Jon Reid] remained very cool and banked away sharply, taking us out of the firing line.

And the strain of constant sorties took both a physical and mental toll of crews, as HMS Gloucester's Flight Commander Lt Cdr David Livingstone – who conceded the following day that "fatigue is making me jittery and jumpy" – recorded in his diary on January 30 1991.

I suppose I killed someone today; some wife is a widow, some child fatherless. But I feel no emotion, they are the enemy and they would kill me if they had a chance. They would make a widow of my wife, and my children would not have a father.

After a frustrating morning, Cardiff already having hit two contacts overnight, we launched at 9.20am and flew to the north of the Mina Al Bakr terminal.

There we ID'd one TNC-45 at three and a half miles and turned away to engage at six miles. As we fired I saw the missile fly to the right and it was going for another target. The first hit the target just below the bridge. We turned and re-attacked the second, a T43. That was hit midships.

Returned to Gloucester and refuelled and

Continued on page 26



● A beached Iraqi Type 43 patrol craft knocked out by a Sea Skua from HMS Gloucester, seen here from a US Navy Seahawk



Autumn 1969
French Army cancels its order for the 'gunship' WG13

December 1969
Westland begin marketing the WG13

Summer 1970
The name Lynx is chosen by Westland employees

March 21 1971
First test flight at Yeovil

September 1971
Cost of the Naval variant rises to £275,000 per aircraft, £55,000 more than the Army version

May 25 1972
First Naval prototype, XX469, takes off

At Yeovilton a dwindling band of air and ground crew maintain the Last Lynx

THIS is a sight which will belong to the ages by the end of this month.

In four weeks' time, the Lynx will enter the pantheon of historic British aircraft, taking its place alongside the Spitfire, Lancaster, Harrier.

And, unlike most helicopters flown by naval aviators over the past seven decades, we can call it 'British'. Many which have gone before are based on American designs; Merlin is Anglo-Italian.

And though Lynx eventually emerged from an Anglo-Franco deal more than four decades ago, it took shape in the heart of Somerset, was built there and almost all the principal parts were manufactured in the UK. Of the three helicopters – Gazelle and Puma complete the trio – built as part of the agreement with our neighbours across the Channel, Lynx is by far the most British.

"It fits like a glove, a real piece of history for the British aircraft industry," says Lynx/Wildcat Force Commander Cdr Gus Carnie, responsible for 500 men and women who fly and maintain the two helicopter types.

"Lynx is our proven weapon for the past 40 years."

Indeed. Not guns. Not torpedoes. Not Harpoon or Exocet. Not Sea Dart or Seawolf. Not even the Harrier. No weapon system in the Royal Navy has proved more effective in battle since World War 2 than a Lynx armed with Sea Skua.

But beyond the Lynx community, you probably wouldn't know it.

Its role in the war with Saddam Hussein is largely ignored. Think of the Falklands and you think of Harriers. Vietnam has the Huey. The Second Gulf War had its 'shock and awe'. Its predecessor is probably remembered for Stormin' Norman, video footage of smart bombs hitting their targets, and a swift ground campaign routing Iraqi forces in Kuwait.

But on the wall of the crew room of the last Lynx squadron, 815, you'll find a red, white and black Iraqi Navy flag, pockmarked with bullet holes and framed. It was presented by HMS Brilliant's Flight 25 years ago.

That the Iraqi Navy was knocked out of not one, but two wars (it was a negligible quantity in the 2003 conflict), is mostly down to the efforts of Lynx crews over a few winters' nights in early 1991, among them Lt Cdr Nick Last, observer with HMS Manchester's Lynx Mk3.

The Gulf was his second experience of firing Sea Skua; he'd used the missile against an Argentine vessel in the Falklands when the weapon was in its infancy.

"In the Falklands, many in the Navy simply viewed the Lynx as a souped-up Wasp. We showed them it was much more potent than that," said Nick.

A decade on, and the Fleet Air Arm knew exactly what it possessed – and how to use it to maximum effect.

The Busy Bee arrived in the Gulf with much of Iraq's Navy already largely eliminated by its predecessors.

Certainly Lt Cdr Last wasn't expecting too much 'business'. But when his helicopter set down on the deck of a US warship, its First Lieutenant told the observer to "head north and take out an Iraqi patrol boat which had fired on an American helicopter."

The Americans had no helicopters capable of taking out a surface ship – they generally used theirs to reconnoitre for the fast jets. Lynx armed with Sea Skua turned out to be a revelation.

The missile doesn't look particularly

lethal. It's not large – 2.5m long, nor is its warhead – 28kg.

But in the right hands against the right target...

At ten miles from the boat's last reported position, the observer flashed up the radar and found the enemy craft – a Kuwaiti vessel commandeered by the occupying Iraqis, exactly where it should be.

Nick Last set the missile to skim the waters of the Gulf and hit the craft close to the waterline; the weapon would punch through the craft's thin skin, before the warhead detonated inside to cause maximum damage.

At 8.2 miles out – Sea Skua's maximum range – the missile was launched.

"The target was totally destroyed; an American helicopter reported survivors in the water," he recalled.

"You train to do these things, but there's a feeling of relief that the system works. Not every Sea Skua was successful.

"When we landed back on Manchester, the CO was waiting for us with a glass of champagne for both the crew."

No Allied warship was damaged by the Iraqi Navy's surface fleet in the 1990-91 conflict. But a couple of US vessels were hit by mines – perceived to be the biggest threat.

Lt Cdr Last's second 'kill' of the campaign was a Spasilac minelayer, knocked out on one night by a single Skua hit, sunk the next by two more missiles.

"One missile hit and exploded. It was followed by an absolutely enormous explosion, probably caused by one of the mines going off."

Manchester was dispatched to the Far East after the Gulf, so she returned to the UK long after the rest of the Fleet, and certainly long after any 'Gulf euphoria' had died down.

Then again, it wasn't a war crews had trained for.

"The majority of our training was anti-submarine warfare – as it was for the ships going through training at Portland," Lt Cdr Last recalls. "We practised using Sea Skua against small Russian ships, but no-one thought that we would use it for real, although we thought one day we might have to drop a torpedo."

A quarter of a century later and the AMk3 has morphed into its final iteration the Mk8 SATURN (easily distinguishable from its predecessors by all the knobby bits on the previously-smooth nose...), a multi-purpose strike/reconnaissance/anti-submarine/counter-terrorism/troop-carrying helicopter at home in pretty much any environment.

"The Lynx is such a stalwart. It's still fast, it's still agile, it's still responsive," says Cdr Phil Richardson, the last Lynx CO of 815 NAS (it turns into Wildcat front-line squadron from April 1).

"It's ideally suited to operating at sea. It's where it loves to work."

"Ten people can take it anywhere in the world and do pretty much anything with it. It does so many things and yet it has such a small footprint."

That ten-strong team comprises: one pilot, one observer, one senior maintenance rating overseeing three mechanical and three avionics engineers, and finally one aircraft controller, the link between the Lynx and the ship in the operations room.

"Lynx is like an old friend," says Lt Cdr Kirsty Marlor, 815's air engineering officer. "You know what to expect because there's so much experience

among the engineering team. Much like with the Sea King, you know what the problem is. There's very little that causes us to scratch our heads."

But at one time in its lengthy life, helicopter was branded the 'widowmaker' in one documentary – unfairly in the eyes of 815's commanding officer. In nearly 40 years' service with the Fleet Air Arm the maritime versions (first painted Oxford blue, now battleship grey) have suffered only four fatal accidents.

That's not to be blasé about losses, says Cdr Richardson, "but see the environment we operate in and what we do, operations right on the edge."

"I remember sitting on the flight deck of a 42 with the rotors turning and waves coming over, with water hitting the windscreen."

He is a member of the Goldfish Club, a select group of military aviators who ended up in the ocean when he was forced to ditch his Lynx in the Gulf operating from HMS Nottingham. After the gunner and observer had jumped out, it fell to the pilot to put the aircraft down on the surface and clamber out.

It's an escape practised frequently in the dunker at Yeovilton. The reality, at dusk, on a moving ocean, is very different.

"Sea King floats, Lynx floats like a brick," Cdr Richardson says succinctly. The pilot's door is small (it's been enlarged on the Wildcat). And it's easy to snag your flying overalls clambering out.

It took him between 90 and 100 seconds to get out of his cockpit. By that time the aircraft was 70ft under water.

A dozen years later, the near-death experience has not diminished his love for the helicopter or his desire to fly it.

"There's a very strong Lynx camaraderie," he says.

"People who built it, flew it, looked after it, they all want to say goodbye. That's one thing we really learned from the end of the Sea King 12 months ago."

So as well as a formation flight



June 20 1972
Army prototype Lynx breaks helicopter speed world record reaching 200mph

November 21 1972
First Naval prototype crashes due to tail rotor failure and is written off

September 1 1976
700L NAS forms at Yeovilton

February 1977
First Lynx deck landing trials on a warship, HMS Birmingham

June 1984
Work begins converting the first Lynx HAS Mk3

1986
First Antarctic-adapted Lynx – HAS Mk3 ICE, with grey body and red nose – enters service



... and lost Lynx



LYNX APOTHEOSIS: MK8 SATURN

Aircraft: Westland Lynx HMA8
Engines: 2 x 900hp Rolls-Royce GEM turbines
Endurance: 320 nautical miles
Rotor Span: 12.8m (42ft)
Length: 13.4m (44ft)
Weight: 3.3 tonnes (7,275lbs)
Speed: 180kt
Crew: one pilot; one observer; one aircrewman
Endurance: 320 nautical miles
Sensors: SATURN (Second-generation Anti-jam Tactical UHF Radio for NATO) Radio; Successor to IFF); Sea Owl Passive Identification Device (PID); 360° radar
Weapons: 4 x Sea Skua missiles; 2 x Sting Ray torpedoes or Mk 11 Mod 3 depth charge; 2 x 12.7mm machine-gun pods; 1 x M3M heavy-machine gun
Defensive Aids Suite

The Mk8 features improved targeting systems and computer displays. The large electro-optical sensor on the nose is used for target identification, using infrared to discriminate differences in temperature of targets at significant ranges. It is controlled by a joystick in the cockpit and the picture can be displayed on the tactical display or radar screen.

The various additions and enhancements make the Mk8 450kg (1,000lbs) heavier than its predecessor, six knots slower and not quite as manoeuvrable.

May 21 1982
 XZ251 HAS Mk2 of 815 NAS assigned to HMS Ardent. Destroyed during bombing raids in Falklands; went down with the ship

May 25 1982
 XZ242 HAS Mk2 of 815 NAS assigned to HMS Coventry. Lost with the ship.

XZ700 HAS Mk2 of 815 NAS transported by Atlantic Conveyor. Lost when ship was hit by Exocet

September 30 1982
 XZ247 HAS Mk2 of 815 NAS assigned to HMS Ambuscade. Ditched and sank 80 miles northwest of Lewis after a fire in the cabin roof. All three crew were rescued.

May 4 1983
 XZ249 HAS2 Mk3 of 815 NAS assigned to HMS Avenger. Ditched in the Gulf of Oman after tail rotor failure. All crew rescued.

March 10 1983
 XZ243 HAS Mk3 of 702 NAS. Crashed into the sea off Portugal during a night approach to RFA Engadine killing both crew.

May 14 1989
 XZ244 HAS Mk3 of 829 NAS assigned to HMS Brilliant. Crashed into the bush 18 miles outside Mombasa, Kenya, when the port cabin door detached, hit the tail rotor and caused the tail rotor pylon to break off. All nine aboard died.

March 26 1994
 ZD567 HAS Mk3 of 815 NAS assigned to HMS Argyll. Crashed off Andros Island in the Bahamas while practising for an air display. Crew survived but the helicopter sank in 5,000ft of water.

February 18 1997
 XZ728 HAS Mk3 of 815 NAS assigned to HMS Monmouth. Broke free on the flight deck in rough sea and washed over the side 15 miles south of Eddystone. Both crew rescued. Helicopter recovered and now serves as a gate guardian at Yeovilton.

September 23 1998
 ZD256 HAS Mk3 of 815 NAS assigned to HMS Grafton. Crashed into the South China Sea during a night exercise. Pilot survived, but the observer was killed.

November 2 1998
 XZ230 HAS Mk3 of 815 NAS assigned to HMS Newcastle. Engulfed in heavy swell with engine running on flight deck. Waves shattered the tail rotor drive shaft.

October 27 2001
 ZD253 HAS Mk3 of 815 NAS assigned to HMS Marlborough. Crashed into the Arabian Sea when an Omani warship ran into it from behind during exercises, entangling the rotor blades in the rigging. All crew survived.

July 12 2002
 XZ256 HMA Mk8 of 815 NAS assigned to HMS Richmond. Double engine failure 190 miles off Norfolk, Virginia, caused the helicopter to crash and sink in 4,000 metres of water. Two of the three crew were killed.

December 8 2004
 XZ724 HAS Mk3 of 815 NAS assigned to HMS Portland. Crashed into the sea west of Portland during a night-time search for people reported in the water. All four aboard killed.

March 3 2005
 XZ695 HMA Mk8 of 815 NAS assigned to HMS Nottingham. Ran out of fuel while returning to ship in the Indian Ocean and forced to ditch. All crew rescued, but the helicopter sank.



August 11 1986
 A specially-modified Lynx with souped-up engines sets the helicopter world speed record (which still stands) of 249.06 knots. The speed of the tips of the rotor blades was just shy of supersonic – Mach 0.97.

January 1991
 Lynx Mk3 armed with Sea Skua eliminate the bulk of the Iraqi Navy at the Battle of Bubiyan

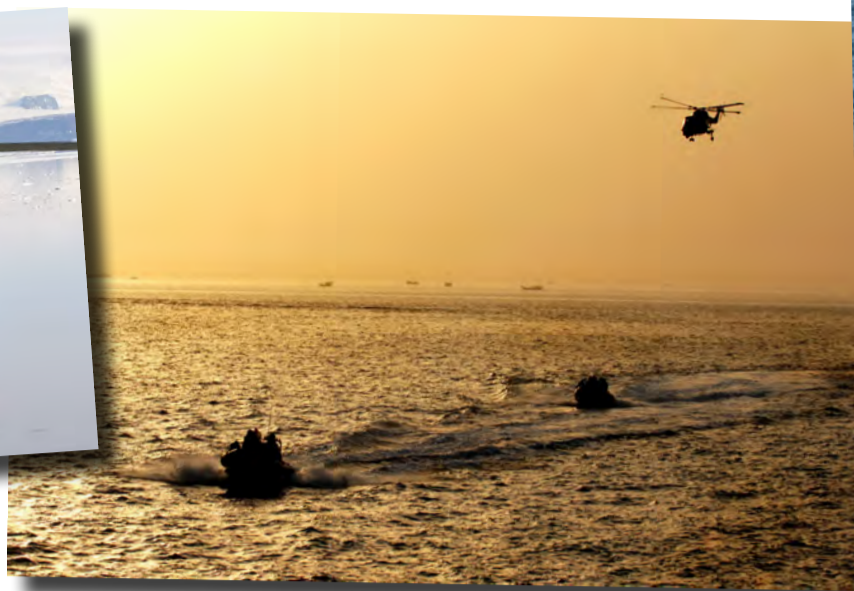
June 1992
 Orders placed for the first Lynx Mk8

2002
 Final Lynx Mk8 are delivered

March 2006
 Government commits £1bn to 'Future Lynx' programme for the Army and Navy



● Two of HMS Endurance's red-nosed Lynx Mk3 return to the icebreaker after a visit to the Antarctic research station at Rothera in 2007



● Busted: six suspected Somali pirates surrender to HMS Montrose's Lynx Mk8 carrying commando snipers and (left) HMS Chatham's Lynx provides overwatch for RIBs conducting a patrol of Iraq's oil platforms in 2005

Continued from page 23
rearmed, went north again and found another TNC-45. Attacked with two missiles on look-shoot-look-shoot. Two hits, one below the bridge and one midships. Contact on fire.

Revisited the area 90 minutes later, and one contact had sunk and one was well on fire. Considered another bruiser attack but decided that the war was over for that contact. After a brief encounter with an SA-2 radar went home.

I am very tired, but the adrenalin will not go away.

The Lynx/Sea Skua double act accounted for sinking or knocking out 14 enemy vessels (three minesweepers, one minelayer, three fast-attack craft, two Zhuk-class patrol boats, two Polnocny-class landing ships, a couple of salvage vessels, a minelayer and one other craft). American Cdre Tom Forbes, in charge of forces dealing with Saddam's surface threat, praised Lynx crews for the "fun and zest" with which they stuck to their task. His signal continued:

They were there when we needed them most. One lesson made perfectly clear to us was that an armed helo is a deadly weapon that the US Navy needs desperately. Score another for the Brits.

Despite the destruction of Iraqi Navy and the subsequent rapid liberation of Kuwait, the Gulf continued to remain a key theatre for the Royal Navy as it sought to enforce UN sanctions imposed on Saddam to prevent any further warmongering, chiefly board and search operations looking for oil smuggled out of Iraq.

By now, Lynx had a new launchpad: the Type 23 frigate, increasingly the ship of choice dispatched to the northern Gulf. Yet even with a good 15 years' experience of operating the helicopter in the Middle East, and with a wealth of improvements to the Lynx, flying and maintained it remained a tremendous physical and mental challenge. Or, as HMS Argyll's Flight described it with typical understatement, "a little unpleasant".

The atmosphere in the hangar was insufferable... The engineering team had to endure long hours in the hangar conducting maintenance with only the sweetener of extra pay for work in unpleasant conditions to ease the burden.

The risk of dehydration was very real and every member of the Flight was issued with a Camelbak water carrier to help combat this problem. Drinking little and often was the order of the day, with regular breaks within the ship's air-conditioning boundary. Careful monitoring of individual performance by the senior maintenance rating was needed to offset the perils of lethargy, poor decision making and technical mistakes. On average each job was given a time budget of two to three times the duration one would expect in the UK.

IN more than four decades of flight, with thousands of hours clocked up by hundreds of aircraft, serious accidents have been few and far between.

There is no darker day in the history of the Lynx than May 14 1989. A day away from putting into Mombasa for a spot of R&R after a Gulf patrol, HMS Brilliant sent her Lynx from 829 NAS ahead of her to the Kenyan city's international airport, where friends and family were waiting for some of the crew, eager for a well-deserved holiday together. As a result, the helicopter carried not just her crew, but half a dozen passengers – nine souls aboard in all.

The helicopter was just 18 miles from its destination when, probably on account of the heat and humidity, the port cabin door was opened – a perfectly sensible, and routine, act. It set off a catastrophic chain of events no-one aboard could have predicted.

Two ball bearings were missing from the upper rail. As the door opened, it fell out, striking the tail rotor on its way to the ground. The impact first caused the tail rotor shaft to shear off, followed by the tail rotor pylon. The helicopter plunged into the Kenyan bush and exploded, killing Lt Cdr Chris Fessey, Lt Jon Williams, CPOs Simon Banks-Popple, Paul James, Colin Simpson and Mark Potter, LS Colin Roy, LReg Philip Stevenson and AB John Savage.

A memorial to the nine men killed was originally erected at the crash site, but with the ground subsequently put up for sale and the monument at risk of being vandalised, it was moved to the chapel at Mombasa's Mission for Seafarers. The dead are remembered every time a Royal Navy vessel visits Mombasa to this day.

Most Lynx losses have, thankfully, not resulted in loss of life – through a mixture of luck and the skill of the crew.

On June 1 1990, Lynx 475

was preparing to launch from the deck of HMS Hermione off Gibraltar when the ship was hit by a freak wave at the very moment she was conducting a sharp turn to port. The combination caused the harpoon fixing the helicopter to the deck to break and it toppled over the side of the ship. The report into the loss gives a second-by-second account:

The aircraft first rolled on to the starboard side of its nose, which caused the pilot's windscreen and door to implode, peppering his helmet and right arm with fragments. Immediately prior to this, the main rotor blades struck the starboard nets and it is thought that they were all effectively shed after one revolution.

The aircraft, now under the influence of gravity and with the deck still at an angle of twenty-three degrees, fell into the sea, but not before rotating a further ninety degrees and entering the water inverted. During the fall, the rotor head punctured a hole in the ship's side providing the sick bay with a great deal of extra ventilation.

Disorientation for the crew was immediate. Catapulted from a familiar and secure position in the aircraft to a position upside down underwater and a rough sea, gave rise to a rather classic "now get out of that" situation. The aircraft floated for an estimated three minutes lying nose down with initially the bottom of the cargo door visible, but sinking slowly throughout.

First clear was the pilot. His helmet had been removed by the inrush of water. Being temporarily confused by the turbulence, he quickly realised that his cockpit door had been swept away, so he undid his harness, his quick release and swam clear of his seat, his egress unhindered. The observer was slightly disadvantaged because he experienced the widest turning arc during the roll. He initially watched as the blades struck the nets, but then closed his eyes as the windscreen shattered. He suffered the same disorientation and severe underwater turbulence. Still with his eyes closed, he searched for the

door jettison handle but could not locate it. He remembers feeling a kick, which he later realised was the pilot making his escape, this caused him to open his eyes, which confirmed his orientation and he realised that the door was missing. Instinctively locating the grab handle, he released his quick release and swam clear, again unhindered.

The Flight Commander, who had previously been seated comfortably in the four-man inflatable seat secured by a lap strap, was perhaps even more disadvantaged. The visual references from the back seat are poor, particularly when facing outboard, so disorientation underwater was immediate. He had been slightly winded by the lap strap, but was able to recognise a patch of light assumed to be the cabin door window. The visibility underwater was severely restricted, probably because of the turbulence. This made recognition very difficult with familiar and expected things being featureless. Black and yellow stripes could not be seen underwater. Unable to reach any method of escape while strapped in, he had to release his strap and right himself in the aircraft. A quick look and feel for the window jettison handle was unsuccessful before the need for air forced him to raise his head and, rather thankfully, locate a small air pocket.

Following a quick gulp of air, which was mainly water, the hunt for the jettison handle continued. Then a large rush of bubbles and increased turbulence pushed him close enough to see the back of the pilot's seat. Holding on to the inertia reel he immediately located the main cabin door handle, although he could not see it. "Time at last to get out of here," he thought, "running short of breath now." Especially after an attempt to relocate the air pocket failed the final hurdle in what he thought to be a sinking aircraft, was the need to hold the door handle with two hands, then rest both feet on the forward door frame to

give enough leverage to open a previously normal door a couple of feet, just enough to swim through. The aircraft had in fact not sunk, but only the tail boom and aft equipment bay door were visible. Thirty seconds after he arrived on the surface, Lynx 475 sank in 650 metres of the Atlantic.

All three aircrew and all nine personnel on the flight deck survived with only a couple of minor injuries.

AS with the Falklands conflict a decade earlier, the first Gulf war, the constant operations in the Middle East, and the huge leaps in technology in the 80s and early 90s meant the Mk3 was increasingly becoming redundant (although it would remain in service well into the Millennium).

The solution? Super Lynx, better known as the Mk8 (if you're wondering about the missing numbers, the Mk4 was specifically for the French, 5, 6 and 7 were all Army Air Corps/Royal Marines variants).

Particularly in light of the Battle of Bubiyan, the Lynx was redesignated: Helicopter Anti-Submarine became Helicopter Maritime Attack.

In fact the Mk8 (with all the clunky bells and whistles on the nose...) with the SATURN radio fit has proved to be a very useful all-rounder in all manner of missions in all parts of the globe.

In the autumn of 2011, with piracy in the Gulf of Aden at its peak, supply ship RFA Fort Victoria was dispatched to the region with the specific mission of catching Pirate Action Groups in the act. Aboard, was one Lynx Mk8 helicopter, commando snipers and teams of Royal Marines trained in the art of board and search.

By late 2011, the international response to the problem was forcing the pirates to change their tactics. 'Pirate Alley' between Somali and Yemen no longer offered rich pickings. Instead, they turned to the open ocean.

The Italian bulk carrier MV Montecristo was brand new and built with the piracy threat in mind. It did not stop her being seized in the small hours of October 10 2011 more than 600 miles off the Somali coast. The crew withdrew to their 'citadel', an impregnable refuge where they were safe from attack, leaving the pirates to roam freely around the rest of the ship. Fort Victoria was the closest military vessel and sent her Lynx aloft to inspect the cargo ship. Pilot Lt 'AJ' Thompson and observer Lt Andrew Henderson reported signs of struggle – damage to the bridge from grenade launchers

– and returned to the RFA to refuel, while the counter-piracy staff and Royal Marines drew up a plan of action.

The next morning, Fort Victoria launched her sea boats carrying boarding teams while the Lynx flew overhead, its sniper rifle aimed at the pirates. Lt Henderson takes up the story:

From our lofty vantage point we had by far the best view of the action on board. As we watched, the Royal Marines sped across the ocean to the Montecristo and quickly made their boarding. Having seen the overwhelming Royal Navy force heading towards them and realising that the Royal Marines would quickly get the better of them, the pirates had, rather sensibly, lost their appetite for a further fight for the vessel and quickly gave themselves up without a single shot being fired.

Eleven Somali pirates were found on board and taken into custody. The crew of the vessel were freed unharmed from inside their safe room and the now-secured vessel was escorted to Italy for minor repairs to the bridge before continuing on its passage.

The pirates were handed over to the Italian Navy (as the Montecristo fell under Italian jurisdiction), and were eventually prosecuted for piracy on the high seas.

Counter-piracy operations were probably never in the minds of the Lynx' designers half a century ago. Search and Rescue missions, however, have been a mainstay of helicopters' duties for more than 60 years – the 1953 floods highlighted their utility.

Lynx has traditionally taken a back seat to Wessex and, more recently, Sea Kings on SAR duties. But it can 'walk the walk' when required, as HMS Chatham found in the middle of Cyclone Bandu in June 2010 when the frigate picked up a mayday from the car carrier MV Dubai Moon.

It took the ship 24 hours to be in a position to launch her helicopter – at the very edge of safe operating limits – by which time Dubai Moon was in danger of capsizing, taking her 23 crew with her.

On top of the challenging weather conditions, the Flights' winchman, AET Richard Wilmot, was a rookie who'd only been aboard Chatham ten days.



2007
First Lynx Mk8 SATURN converted

November 12 2009
First Wildcat prototype flies

March 2010
Final Lynx Mk8 SATURN delivered

October 2014
825 NAS is formed as parent squadron for maritime Wildcats

March 2015
First Wildcat HMA2 deploys with HMS Lancaster

August 2016
First Wildcat HMA2 deploys with a Type 45, HMS Daring



● Suite Anglo-Française... HMS Richmond's Lynx Mk8 cascades flares over the frigate in the Indian Ocean as the helicopter tests its Defensive Aids Suite

● Some of the rescued crew of the MV Dubai Moon crammed in the back of HMS Chatham's Lynx in 2010

Flight Commander and pilot Lt Pete Higgins takes up the story of the rescue:

After a recce, it was clear that there was only one area in which we would be able to put the winchman on deck. Hovering over the transfer point was fairly tricky – the ship was rolling from vertical to 30-40 degrees of roll to starboard, but she was lying with the wind on her port side, which helped.

We put AET Wilnot onto the deck, and he instantly discovered that the deck was like an ice rink. There was a mixture of oil and seawater covering the deck, probably from the engines of all the smashed up vehicles on the deck. There was no way he could stand up, but after a while he eventually managed to make his way to the windward rail.

He started to brief one of the crewmembers, but he slipped, lost hold of the rail and started to slide down the deck at speed towards the leeward side and straight towards the sea! After he had slid about half to two thirds of the way down the deck he was held up by the winch wire, and we recovered him into the aircraft.

We discussed options, but due to the movement of the ship, there really was no other winching point that was suitable, so we decided to have another go. The crew on board had worked out what to do, and laid a rope on deck which was secured to the windward rail, so we lowered AET Wilnot on to the deck. He was unable to stand up, but could pull himself hand over hand up the rope until he got to the windward rail. He managed to get the first crewmember into the double lift strop, and after moving back down the rope we lifted them up into the aircraft.

The exertion was taking its toll on the 21-year-old, who'd been ill for the previous 36 hours and was violently sick when hauled back into the Lynx.

At this moment, veteran Lynx flier Lt Cdr Graham Chesterman – aboard Chatham with an inspection/assessment team – volunteered to act as winchman... at the age of 48.

The first lift was interesting as I realised just how slippery the

deck was and how sporty it was going to be but I soon got into the routine of landing on my bottom or back, depending on how the ship was rolling.

Some of those we were rescuing were easier to lift than others, with one or two so scared that lifting them was difficult as they tried to climb up my body instead of resting in the strop.

"I wasn't scared for myself as I was always attached to the wire. I was scared that one of the crew would let go of the rope before I got them into the strop as I doubt I would have been able to prevent them from sliding away from me.

"If they had slid away, the next stop for them would have been the water. Rescuing them from the water would have been almost impossible.

I had a huge sense of relief that we had done it – we had got all 23 off the ship without losing anyone. Sitting in the back of the aircraft with the guys we had just lifted and seeing their relieved smiling faces made it so worthwhile.

MV Dubai Moon sank shortly after the last man was saved.

In November 2000, a Lynx was assigned to Fleet Ready Escort HMS Montrose to escort HMS Fearless back to the UK after the assault ship suffered a major fire. By dusk on November 13 the two ships were nearing the English Channel in rough weather – which had prevented any flying from the frigate during the day. Suddenly, a distress call was received from the trawler Pena Rebollara, 50 miles from Montrose, reporting a critically-ill crew member. No French Search and Rescue helicopters were available. It fell to Montrose's Lynx to carry out the rescue:

The trawler was located without incident. Only 20 metres in length, it was rolling violently between 20 and 30 degrees, and pitching erratically.

The prevailing conditions, coupled with the size and layout of the vessel, presented the crew with a considerable challenge. Not only would any transfer be extremely demanding in itself but, once commenced, would involve the full commitment of the aircraft to the task, at range from mother ship support and in potentially worsening conditions.

The situation was further exacerbated in that the trawler crew, who were suffering from exhaustion due to the rough weather and shock of their sick colleague's condition, were very little help and required firm direction from the aircraft concerning course, speed and deck lighting to allow the transfer to commence. Having assessed the many factors, the crew decided to commit to the rescue of the man.

In the rear of the aircraft Lt Clarke took charge of the winching operation, initially lowering the medical officer to the deck to assess the casualty whilst continually giving the pilot conning orders to assist in the positioning of the aircraft.

Once the casualty had been assessed AEM Daniel Ruszczyk was skilfully lowered to the deck, again avoiding the myriad of fouling hazards, to carry out a double lift procedure recovery of the casualty. Once inside the aircraft, and whilst the observer concentrated on recovering the medical officer, the winchman was required to subdue the casualty, who was clearly in need of further medical attention and whose behaviour was confused and unpredictable.

In extremely challenging weather conditions the crew of HMS Montrose's Lynx managed to carry out a textbook rescue to a tiny vessel that was being tossed around dramatically by the heavy sea whipped up by the storms of the previous two days.

Operating at night, in most demanding conditions, at range from their mother ship, in an aircraft not optimised for search and rescue, the crew displayed exemplary teamwork and cool professionalism to effect the recovery of the casualty.

Our final Lynx Mk8 'dit' takes us half way around the world to the Philippines in November 2013.

HMS Daring was about to participate in the regular five-powers exercise off Malaya and Singapore when she was diverted 1,500 miles to the Philippines which were reeling after being hit by the most powerful storm on record, Typhoon Haiyan.

As the destroyer approached

the battered islands, she sent her Lynx aloft on half a dozen reconnaissance missions to find the communities most in need of help.

During those six flights, 'Daring Darling' scoured more than 42,000 square miles of land and sea, including four dozen islands and 1,200 nautical miles of coastline – in all an area more than five times the size of Wales.

And once the most needy areas of the archipelago had been identified, the Lynx again proved crucial in delivering that aid. During a hectic five days of flying, the helicopter carried more than eight tonnes of aid, ferried 150 people about and got to villages far beyond the reach of the destroyer's sailors working on the shoreline.

The 32 hours flying on Operation Patwin – the codename for the UK military's response to the typhoon – in just five days is a far higher tempo than the Lynx would normally be expected (aircrew must clock up at least 15 hours in the skies every month to remain current).

Such a high tempo demanded 128 'man hours' in Daring's hangar and on the flight deck as the helicopter engineers and maintainers toiled to ready the Lynx for the next day's missions.

The efforts earned the Flight the Sopwith Pup Trophy as the Fleet Air Arm's most effective ship's flight of the year.

"This was a high-tempo operation and my first time flying into a real disaster area," said pilot Lt Hamish Walker.

"We worked from sunrise to sunset and then the ground crew worked tirelessly overnight to prepare the aircraft for the next day."

His Flight Commander, Lt Cdr Joe Harper added: "In my 38 years service there have been only two other occasions that have felt as satisfying and rewarding as this humanitarian aid operation.

"The first was the Falklands campaign when I was doing exactly what we are trained for, and the second was in the Caribbean on counter-piracy operations."

Thirty years after hanging up his Lynx boots and gloves, Larry Jeram-Croft returned to Yeovilton to re-acquaint himself with the helicopter, clambering into the cockpit of the Mk8 simulator, used to train pilots and observers in day and night sorties.

At the observer's station I recognised the radar and orange crop, but not much else. The instruments in front of the pilot have hardly changed, although the engine gauges are in a slightly different position and the rotor speed indicator has moved, but apart from that everything else was where I remembered.

● 'Daring's Darling' delivers vital aid to the village of Hagden in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan in late 2013

For the 'sortie' we launched from a Type 45 destroyer. I managed to take off without hitting anything and we settled down in the cruise at a couple of hundred feet.

Within five minutes I had already almost flown into the sea. The distractions for the pilot are significant.

The temptation for the pilot to get suckered into watching what is going

on on the tactical display unit, rather than what the aircraft is doing, is extremely strong.

To me, all this new equipment did not seem to make the observer's job much easier.

What it actually seemed to do, was allow him to do much more, for the same sort of frantic workload he always had.

It was a fascinating experience.

Read! Win! Do both!

This supplement has been compiled with the help of 815 NAS, Cdr Phil Richardson and the team at RNAS Yeovilton; aviation historian/photographer Lee Howard; and former Lynx pilot Larry Jeram-Croft.

Larry flew Lynx for six years and went on to become a best-selling novelist, using his experiences as the basis for some of the exploits of his character Jon Hunt.

You can discover them – and learn about the author at his website: sites.google.com/site/larryjeramcroft/books

To mark the helicopter's passing, he's turned to non-fiction, however, gathering first-hand accounts to create the definitive account of the Lynx in RN service and has kindly allowed for extracts to be reproduced here.

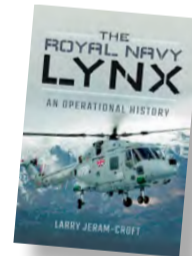
The Lynx – An Operational History (*Pen and Sword Aviation*, £25 ISBN 978-1473862517) is due to be published at the end of this month. Fifty per cent of the proceeds will go to the Fly Navy Heritage Trust, which maintains the FAA's small fleet of vintage aircraft.

Larry's book focuses on the men and women) as much as the machine. Lee's Haynes guidebook **Westland Lynx Manual: 1976 Onwards** (very favourably reviewed in our October 2016 edition) shows you all the ins and outs of the helicopter so you could clamber in the cockpit and fly off if you were so inclined.

And thanks to the nice folk at Haynes, we have five copies of the book to give away.

All you have to do is tell us the name of the supersonic airliner which was the result of Anglo-French collaboration in the 1960s and 1970s.

Send your answer to: Haynes Competition, Navy News, Mail Point 1-4, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Whale Island, Portsmouth, PO2 8BY. Or email your answer and address to haynes@navynews.co.uk. Entries must be received by mid-day on April 12 2017.



March 2017
Final Lynx Mk8 flight returns from HMS Portland
Final flypast around southern Enland of maritime Lynx
Decommissioning of all remaining Lynx Mk8
Conversion of 815 NAS to front-line Wildcat Flight squadron
Conversion of 825 NAS to Wildcat training squadron

YOU CAN'T VOTE.

In the local elections on 4 May 2017.
Unless you've registered by the deadline.

The deadline for registering to vote in England and Wales is 13 April.
The deadline for Scotland is 17 April.

It only takes a few minutes. Go to gov.uk/register-to-vote-armed-forces



YOUR VOTE MATTERS

DON'T LOSE IT



Call of the wild

ANTS – leaf-cutter and bullet – the latter of which can deliver excruciatingly painful stings.

Spiders – tarantulas, black widow and brown recluse – all venomous.

Snakes – coral, viper, dart frog, Fer-de-lance and rattle.

Not forgetting the Caiman alligator, jaguar big cat and the, very noisy, howler monkey.

Not species you want to come across.

But Royal Marines from 40 Commando needed to identify all of the 'threats' from the wild during their latest training exercise.

Delta Company are the unit's Jungle Warfare Specialists. But many of them hadn't been to the jungle.

So a long flight to Belize was in order for Exercise Curry Trail – Belizean cuisine includes Caribbean-style curries – in the Central American country.

The men from Taunton were instructed in all things jungle by Trackers from the British Army Training Support Unit Belize (BATSUB), as well as by Royal Marines directing staff.

The deployment kicked off with survival lectures at Price Barracks, main base of the Belize Defence Force, some eight miles to the north west of Belize City.

Lessons continued once the Marines moved to the jungle with the first phase of training involving break contact drills, close target reconnaissance, survival, patrol and navigation training in the depths of Sibun Gorge in Cayo.

"It is soldiering in its purest form," said Maj James Knight, officer in charge of Delta Coy.

"It's really back to basics for a lot of us. There's no technology out here in the jungle whatsoever, so no GPS or anything like that for your navigational aid. So it's been really refreshing training but as I say it's an environment that many of us have never experienced before."

The Trackers have been teaching the elite Commandos all about operating in the jungle; providing instruction on survival, building shelters and animal traps, creating fire, and understanding what plants are edible, inedible and which are medicinal, as well as what insects and wildlife to avoid in this environment.

Belize's rain forests have literally



thousands of trees, plants, fruits, and vines, hundreds of which have been traditionally used for medicinal purposes.

"Bush medicine," in Belize goes back thousands of years to the time of the ancient Maya, who relied on the rain forests both to survive and to cure their ailments.

Today, Belizeans continue to use these plants for medicinal purposes in the same way the Maya did, and most grow up learning about the benefits, as well as the dangers, of the rain forest.

Termites are apparently a valuable source of protein, fat and essential amino acids.

"They are fairly pleasant," said LPhot Joel Rouse "We stuck our fingers in, let them crawl on and then ate them. A large handful provides around 2,000 calories."

Not so tasty were the leaves of an anti-malaria plant. "It was horrendous," said LPhot Rouse.

One of the more useful plants is the Silk Cotton or Ceiba Tree, known as the tree of life, providing water, wood for fuel and an edible nut.

The second phase of the exercise involved live fire tactical training, during which personnel moved from individual close-quarters battle to four and eight-man team assaults in a training area known as Manatee.

During this phase the troops were using the SA80 A3 rifle, Light Machine Gun, General Purpose Machine Gun and grenades. They also learned how to carry out demolition work in the jungle.

Delta Coy marked the end of their jungle training by posing for a photograph in the river, *pictured above*.

When the eight Trackers, who are locals of Belize, aren't teaching Royal Marines, the British Army or the United States Marine Corps, they are maintaining the training area for the next group of troops.



Pictures: LPhotos Will Haigh, left, and Joel Rouse, right, who also wrote the article





Katherine given access all arias

SHE'S living a dream. They're living the dream.

Best-selling opera singer and champion of the Forces Katherine Jenkins joins 96 members of HMS Iron Duke's ship's company for a snapshot in the frigate's hangar.

The Welsh songstress brought colour and culture to HMS Iron Duke on a cold, sullen afternoon in Portsmouth, part of a day-long visit to the Home of the Navy, dropping in on the command building on Whale Island, where she performed for some of the 1,000 staff, before making the short trip to the city's naval base to meet the crew of the frigate.

About half the ship's company gathered in the hangar for a quick snap, before they ran through their experiences on the recent six-month stint with NATO around northern Europe.

The singer enjoyed access all arias (sorry), watching a combat demonstration in the operations room, chatting with engineers in the engine control room and chefs in the galley.

She also chatted with crew in the mess decks to learn about the strains long periods away place on Forces families and the sacrifices they make.

The 36-year-old's visit was organised by the British Forces Foundation, a charity which aims to boost and maintain the morale of Service personnel – with the presence of big names like the singer, who's sold more than four million CDs (among them the 2005 album *Living a Dream*), helping to raise the profile of the military and what it does.

"It was a pleasure and a delight to be able to host Katherine Jenkins onboard Iron Duke," said the frigate's Commanding Officer Commander Steve Banfield.

"My team really enjoyed the visit and she took the time to speak to as many people as possible. Her visit will be remembered long into the future."

Just for good measure, the frigate also found herself hosting Caroline Nokes, MP for Romsey and Southampton North, who dropped in on the ship with the director of the Naval Families Federation, Anna Wright.

The politician was on a fact-finding mission to learn more about Royal Navy operations and the effects they have on sailors, their families and friends, plus the welfare support personnel receive during periods at sea.



Guides love Daring

GIRL Guides and Brownies jumped at the chance to tour HMS Daring during a visit to Bahrain.

Thirty eight members of the 1st Bahrain Brownies, 2nd Bahrain Brownies and 1st Bahrain Guides toured the Type 45 destroyer, visiting the bridge, ship's hangar, operations room and witnessing a fire exercise.

The ship's Executive Warrant Officer, WO1 Paula Price, herself a Brownie leader back in the UK,

said: "It's wonderful to be able to give these children a chance to tour a state-of-the-art warship and get an understanding of what it means to be part of the Royal Navy."

Sub Lt Gunter Batten, the ship's Communications and Information System's Officer, added: "The girls were all really enthusiastic and excited about being here."

"They were asking questions about everything."

Beverley Babes' plea

PEOPLE who were born at Beverley House in Wickham, Hampshire, during WW2 are being urged to attend a reunion this summer.

It is hoped a number of Beverley Babes will be able to attend the Wickham Church fete.

In 1940, at the start of Portsmouth blitz, the RN Maternity Hospital in Southsea was relocated to Beverley, a

private house on the Southwick Road, in Wickham.

During the next five years, some 2,000 babies were born at Beverley to mothers whose husbands were serving sailors or Royal Marines.

At the 2006 fete, some 20 'babes' managed to attend.

For details about this year's fete please email wickhambb17@gmail.com

Accolades for apprentices

TWO BAE Systems' apprentices in Portsmouth have won top awards.

Ben Icke and Cameron Kirkland have been named Craft Mechanical Apprentice of the Year and Technical Engineering Apprentice of the Year respectively at the BAE Systems UK Apprenticeship Awards ceremony held in Manchester.

Ben and Cameron were selected from 2,036 apprentices currently in training with the company's UK businesses.

Ben, 22, who works for the company's Maritime Services business, impressed the judges with his continued progression and professionalism which included taking part in BAE Systems' Apprentice Innovation Challenge last year.

Cameron, 23, who works for BAE Systems Naval Ships, was praised for his outstanding work ethic and his support for the company's work with schools.

The annual awards celebrate the talent and potential of BAE Systems' apprentices and this year's awards were presented at a ceremony in Manchester.

Charles Woodburn, BAE Systems' Chief Operating Officer who presented the awards, said: "These are the first Apprentice Awards I have attended at BAE Systems and I was hugely



● Ben Icke and Cameron Kirkland with their awards

impressed.

"The talent, commitment and hard work of all BAE Systems apprentices helps to make our company what it is. Very well done to all those involved."

Receiving his award for Craft Mechanical Apprentice of the Year, Ben said: "I am very grateful for all the help and support I have received from everyone involved with the apprenticeship scheme."

"I have thoroughly enjoyed the apprenticeship to date and am looking forward to my future career with the company."

Cameron added: "My

apprenticeship has taken me straight from sixth form and given me a skill set which has enabled me to join an advanced engineering team.

"The opportunities are out there, it's just a matter of grabbing them with both hands and seeing where you end up."

This month marks the tenth anniversary of National Apprenticeship Week.

BAE Systems is recruiting an additional 47 apprentices to work at Portsmouth Naval Base.

Visit www.baesystems.com/en/careers/careers-in-the-uk/apprenticeships



Brocklesby boxes clever

SAILOR Daniel Craig (that's his name, honest...) gets boxed in as colleagues from his ship go ashore to help out at Haslar Memorial Gardens.

Members of HMS Brocklesby's ship's company regularly help out at the charity – and learn some new skills in the process.

The arrangement was sorted out by Sub Lt Joe Pollard, who said: "The Navy has an enormous presence in Hampshire and the link with Portsmouth and the surrounding area in particular is one that goes a long way to defining the identity of both Service personnel based here and the cities and towns they live and work in."

"It's important to engage with neighbouring organisations and individuals and this is a fantastic opportunity."

AB Rory Hinchliffe said. "The gardens are really nice and it was a great way to spend a morning."

Royal Hospital Haslar shut its doors in 2009 following over 250 years of service to military and, latterly, civilian patients.

In 2011 the gardens were acquired by the Shore Leave Haslar community project which uses them to provide horticulture as a means of rehabilitation for veterans of all three Services.

Brocklesby is approaching the end of an extensive refit package that had her out of the water with all-new engines being installed.

She was afloat again towards the end of last year and, with the date for the crew moving back on board imminent, the pace of work for both military and civilian personnel involved is intensifying.

She will be undergoing trials through the summer to ensure that she is ready to conduct operational training packages in the autumn, before her crew fly out to the Gulf in 2018.



Sailors in the sandpit

CHILDREN from Rowner Infant School watched on with great anticipation as a group of volunteer Air Engineering Technicians from HMS Sultan set about the task of upgrading outdoor facilities at the school.

Armed with shovels and spades, the AETs set about a number of tasks, including building mud and sand pits for the reception class children to use.

Class teacher Caroline Phillips said: "We had an idea that we would like a mud pit and a sand pit building as it helps with the children's motor skills used within handwriting."

"By digging, raking and building in there it helps with their muscular development and also their social and communication skills. We had the idea, but not the muscular ability to do it and so we thought perhaps the Navy could help us and very kindly they came."

In addition to building sand and mud pits, the AETs tidied up a woodland area, renovated a tool bench and took down an old mud hut and replaced it with a mud construction area.

CPO Neil 'Soups' Campbell, who supervised the AETs, said: "When we arrived the area was looking a bit old and dilapidated, but the trainees have loved being out here and have really bonded in doing the tasks, it's been really fantastic."

"All of the volunteers have commented on how good it is to be out making a positive contribution toward the local community. We've had a lot of input throughout the day from all of the children who can't wait to get in there, asking when it will be finished."

Among the children watching on, who seemed impressed by the sailors was four-year-old Aiden, who said: "They've been making a mud pit and sand pit. I can't wait to make a sand castle. The outfits they wear are really, really good."

Cash for families

FAMILIES of Service personnel serving at HM Naval Base Clyde are set to benefit after a donation from charitable organisation We Remember Submariners.

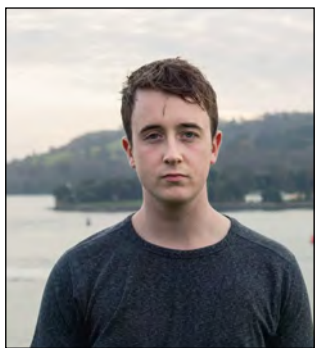
WO1 David Wynne, who volunteers for the organisation, presented Royal Navy and Royal Marines Welfare with a cheque for £1,000.

Anne Burns, RNRMW Team Manager for Scotland, said: "Some of the money will be used for an upcoming Dad's Day for the children of fathers who will deploy on duty."

The £1,000 was raised largely through the sale of submariner memorial pins. For the past three-years WO1 Wynne has sold them with a donation going to a different cause each year.

"The donation on the first year helped to establish the Neptune Special Needs Support Group and last year monies went towards purchasing a Remembrance bench in Helensburgh's Kidston Park," he said.

To learn more about the organisation visit: <http://we-remember-submariners.org.uk/>



Musical maestros calling on RN writer

A ROYAL Navy sailor's second career in songwriting continues to go from strength to strength.

AB(Wtr) Chris Linton, currently based with HMS Flying Fox in Bristol, has now branched into writing and producing vocals for various dance and electronic tracks.

His first major label release, with Nocopyrightsounds, *Superhero*, launched at the end of last year and has more than three million plays on YouTube



and is nearing the one million play mark on Spotify. It also reached No 4 in the German Spotify Viral Chart.

Chris said: "I get sent music from the producer who will ask me to create a lyric, a vocal melody and a vocal and this particular track took me about 40 minutes to complete. I have to set up my own studio equipment and record at home."

"The track is a collaboration between myself and producer Unknown Brain, who is a big up and coming producer from Germany."

"The popularity of the track continues to grow and it continues to help my name become one that is recognised in this scene."

Chris has also released two new tracks with NCS, one of which *Saviour* has around 800,000 plays so far.

A third track, *Stones*, is a collaboration with Indian producer Heuse and American singer-songwriter Emma Sameth.

"I've been keeping myself busy with the music over the past 18 months, working with a lot of acoustic music as well as releasing a single with my band Lanky & the Beard called *The Element* that BBC Introducing called one of the best tracks of 2016," said Chris.

You can listen to Chris's music on YouTube and Spotify.

Amputee's plan to thank RNBT

THE Royal Navy Benevolent Trust is to benefit from an unusual form of fundraising.

Former Royal Navy writer Janet Riddell is to have a leg amputated after years of pain.

She plans to raise funds for the RNBT, along with Blesma and SAFFA, by inviting people to 'guess the weight of the leg'.

Janet, who was injured in a US Black Hawk helicopter crash in Iraq in 2007, received a wheelchair from the RNBT. She has had two knee replacements but has decided to have her leg amputated.

■ TWO long-time residents of the RNBT's Pembroke House shared a celebratory cake.

Bill Sowden has been a resident of the Kent home for 15 years and Stan Hoare

has lived there for 12 years. ■ The RNBT was among the charities to welcome CGRM Maj Gen Rob Magowan and WO1(RSM) Phil Gilby as they visited Naval charities at Castaway House in Portsmouth.

The visit was to promote the profile of the RNBT and Castaway House among the serving community of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

■ Following the success of installing solar panels at Pembroke House, the benefits have been further extended to Castaway House, improving the charity's footprint.

With a legacy from Sydney Walter Smith, today the panels are generating about 1.2kw with a further significant saving expected in the summer.



● RNBT Chief Executive Stephen Farrington, former engineer, inspects the roof

Chefs deliver medals

CATERING and support company Compass Group UK & Ireland is celebrating after a number of its chefs won a haul of medals at the Great Hospitality Show.

Thirty-five chefs from across the Compass business, who work across UK defence, won 42 awards between them, having competed at the Salon Culinare at the Great Hospitality Show, held at the Birmingham NEC.

The event comprised of four competition categories including; Salon Display; Live Theatre; Skills Theatre; and La Parade des Chefs.

The Compass team, headed by Nick Vadis, Culinary Director at Compass Group UK & Ireland, won seven gold, four silver, 14 bronze, six merit and seven best in class awards.

Three Compass chefs were also recognised with four awards at the end of the show that celebrated their overall work during the event.

"I am extremely proud of all of our chefs that took part in the competition," said Mr Vadis.

"It is excellent to see our chefs come away with an array of awards at one of the most prestigious chef competition programmes in the country, congratulations to all winners."

'Allo Allo,' cafe open

"LISTEN very carefully, I shall say this only once" – HMS Sultan's Theatre Group present their spring production *'Allo 'Allo*.

The show is based on the British television series and is a comedy relating to the adventures of a hapless cafe owner, René, in occupied France.

René's Café is open for business March 23 to 28 with performances beginning at 7.30pm.

All guests are encouraged to dress as French peasants to help create the ambience of wartime France.

Tickets cost £8, which includes a glass of wine or non-alcoholic beverage and the French delicacy of bread and cheese all served to you by the Artois Family, Yvette and Mimi.

Tickets can be booked online at www.sultantheatre.org.uk or call 02392 542448 (phone monitored twice a week).

Performances will be held at HMS Sultan's Waves Club, Military Road, Gosport, Hants, PO12 3BY. Please note, the theatre is located on the second floor and there are no lifts.

Ocean plugs the gap for German cadets

All Hans on deck. And Kurts and Franzes.

The messes, passageways and compartments of Britain's biggest warship echo to the sound of *Ja, Nein, genau* and *Achtung* as HMS Ocean gives Germany's naval leaders of tomorrow their first true taste of life at sea on a warship.

Typically, German officer cadets – Offizieranwärter – go to sea with the Deutsche Marine's sail training ship, Gorch Fock.

She's currently out of action, but thanks to a liaison between the home of Royal Navy officer training in Dartmouth and its German equivalent at Mürwik – a similarly imposing college building dominating the skyline in a small town – the 19 cadets have been able to plug the gap by joining Ocean in the Gulf.

Accompanied by counterparts from Britannia Royal Naval College, they arrived on Britain's flagship as she led the most important naval force in the region over the winter, Combined Task Force 50, typically commanded by a US

Navy aircraft carrier. As with British officer cadets, the month-long spell on the helicopter carrier was used to introduce the Germans to all aspects of life at sea in a warship, spending three or four days at a time shadowing the ship's company in each of the various departments: warfare, air, marine and weapon engineering, logistics and the Royal Marines' amphibious assault squadron, 9 ASRM.

And just for good measure the German guests were also invited to join in 'whole ship' events, demanding the actions of most of the ship's company, such as storing ship and getting rid of rubbish ('out all gash').

The Mürwik cadets were surprised by the size of the hoses used to wash down the Royal Marines' boats, but impressed by the ability of vacuum cleaners to dry wet decks.

They were introduced to bucketball – basketball with a bucket – put senior officers on the spot about maintaining morale during sustained periods at sea and generally impressed the 700-

plus sailors, soldiers, airmen and Royal Marines aboard Ocean with their attitude and command of the English language.

Britannia trains upwards of 450 officers for the Royal and international navies every year, while around 250 would-be German naval leaders pass through Marineschule Mürwik (Mürwik Naval College). German cadets have mostly come straight from school, with the Deutsche Marine sponsoring them through university before they resume their seafaring careers.

Helping the German cadets throughout has been Lt Serena Scott, their divisional officer, who's currently on exchange at Mürwik, near Flensburg, a couple of hours' drive north of Hamburg.

"It has not all been smooth sailing, with a few cultural differences appearing or messages lost in translation, but the training value has been incalculable," he said.

Following their four-week spell on Ocean, the cadets will return to their respective colleges to complete their training.



Mark just kept on running

ROYAL Navy officer Lt Mark Paton from HM Naval Base Clyde ran five kilometres every day throughout December to raise cash for Alzheimer Scotland.

Lt Paton, pictured right, ran a total of 155 kilometres, even running on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Hogmanay and after Christmas nights out.

The challenge is called Marcothon – named after founder Maro Consani – and when Mark heard about it from a colleague he thought he would do it for charity as he would be more motivated to complete the 31-day challenge.

"I chose to raise the cash for Alzheimer Scotland, as I have personally witnessed the challenges that individuals and their families face when dealing with Alzheimer's," said Mark.

"My grandfather had it before



he passed away in 2015 so it was the charity that was closest to my heart."

Mark ran most days in the West End of Glasgow, with a few sprints taking place round the Naval Base during lunch times. He continued to run over Christmas, which he spent with his family in Aberdeenshire. Mark presented a cheque

for £1,160.52 to Anne-Marie King of Alzheimer Scotland in the Alzheimer Scotland Office in West Princes Street, Helensburgh.

Bronwyn O'Riordan, Community Fundraiser, Alzheimer Scotland, said: "It is Alzheimer Scotland's mission to challenge dementia once and for all by working with our supporters and partners to increase awareness of the condition and raise vital funds to support our services. All funds raised will help us make sure that nobody has to face dementia on their own."

"Alzheimer Scotland believes that nobody should go through dementia on their own."

For more information call Alzheimer Scotland's 24-hour helpline on 0808 808 3000 or visit www.alzscot.org

Store coup for drinks firm

A SOCIAL enterprise, which supports the armed forces, has secured the largest ever listing of its kind with a national supermarket.

Heroes Drinks Company is now stocking its British wheat grain vodka in selected Asda stores.

The company is pledging to donate a minimum of 20 per cent of all profits to UK Armed Forces' causes.

In 2015, Heroes Drinks Company became the first non-profit organisation in the alcohol sector and is founded on the mission of supporting

the UK Armed Forces family and providing work placement programmes for former Servicemen and women who have struggled with the transition to civilian life.

Heroes Vodka, which is distilled a minimum of seven times, scored 7.65 out of ten at the World Vodka Awards in 2014.

For details visit: <http://www.heroesvodka.co.uk>



Princess heralds start of the party

A DINNER attended by the Princess Royal has officially marked the launch of a year-long 10th birthday celebration for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

The dinner, held on HMS Victory in Portsmouth, was hosted by Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock, who spoke of the special relationship between the Royal Navy and its charity.

Guests at the event, which included trustees, vice-patrons and friends of the RNRMC, such as Nigel Atkinson, Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire; Lance Batchelor and Sir Michael Hintze, both vice patrons of the charity, gathered in Nelson's Cabin to hear about the charity's legacy of work – and the imperative to support the Naval Service into the next decade.

RNRMC Chairman Bill Thomas said: "The Royal Navy has been central to Britain's past and is critical to our future. In war and in peace, the remarkable men and women of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines work tirelessly to protect us and the freedom we enjoy.



● Princess Anne at the anniversary dinner Picture: LPhot Paul Hall

"We know that longer nine-month deployments place additional strain on family life. Social isolation and the need for residential care in old age affect almost 50 per cent of veterans, compared to 28 per cent a decade ago; a growing number of all ages are being assessed for mental health problems.

"We enter our tenth year

with a greater understanding of the need and with renewed determination to raise the funds – £10 million over the next three years – to ensure that every member of our extended family knows that we value their service and that we are there for them to provide practical support."

The launch marks a year of events and fundraising

campaigns by the charity, which can be found on the charity's website (rnrmc.org.uk).

Since its formation the charity has distributed over £45 million to those in uniform, to their families and to Service veterans.

The charity estimates it has approximately 700,000 members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines family in its beneficiary pool.

Some of the charity's recent grantmaking projects include funding a family accommodation block of flats at HMNB Portsmouth for families to enable time together; nationwide funding for relationship counselling for families through Relate Counselling; subsidising Kings Camp activity holidays for children at naval bases; and support for veterans and families transitioning from Service to civilian life.

We're asking the entire Naval Service to submit 30-60 second clips wishing the RNRMC a happy tenth birthday, via email or file transfer to mystory@rnrmc.org.uk

If you would like to support us – through the RNRMC – this year, text 'TENNER' to 70500.



● Capt Paul Quinn

Veteran ties are stronger

THE National Council of the RNA has made another strong move in their strategic intent to work as closely with the RNRMC as possible.

The RNA's investment portfolio has now moved into the RNRMC's Custodian Arrangement Scheme with about £1.5m of assets.

The RNA hopes to get better income and lower fees with the move – but most importantly to take advantage of the expertise of the RNRMC's trustees and advisors.

Capt Paul Quinn will join the RNRMC's investment committee as a non-voting member, representing the RNA.

Capt Quinn was a founder trustee and director of the RNRMC in 2007, so is coming home.

Supporter tours new Navy Mews



● Lance Batchelor receives the photo from Robert Robson during his visit to the RNRMC

STAFF at the RNRMC were delighted to spend time with their Vice Patron and major donor, Honorary Commander Lance Batchelor.

Lance, who toured the charity's premises accompanied by his wife Wendy, is the CEO of Saga plc, the FTSE-listed provider of Insurance, Travel, Financial Services and Homecare to the over 50s.

As a former RN submariner, Lance and his family have a strong affiliation with the work of the charity and the projects, families and veterans it supports.

During their visit, he and Wendy were taken on tour of one of the charity's latest projects: Navy Mews, a group of flats that serve as emergency accommodation for serving personnel to see their families.

Later they met with teams across the various groups and departments that make up the RNRMC, including its finance, fundraising, operations, marketing and communications, and grants teams.

Finance officer Francine Thompson said: "We normally work behind the scenes so don't often get the opportunity to interact with our trustees and supporters.

"It was a lovely afternoon learning more about why the Batchelors care about the work of the charity."

At the end of the visit, RNRMC CEO Robert Robson presented Lance with a framed photograph of himself and the charity's Patron, The Princess Royal, from the dinner on board HMS Victory.

Alasdair Akass, director of marketing and communications, said: "It has been a great opportunity to give them a real insight into what we do in more detail, the challenges we face, and learn more about us."

FUNDRAISER OF THE MONTH HMS IRON DUKE



SAILORS from HMS Iron Duke ran and waded through mud to raise funds for the RNRMC.

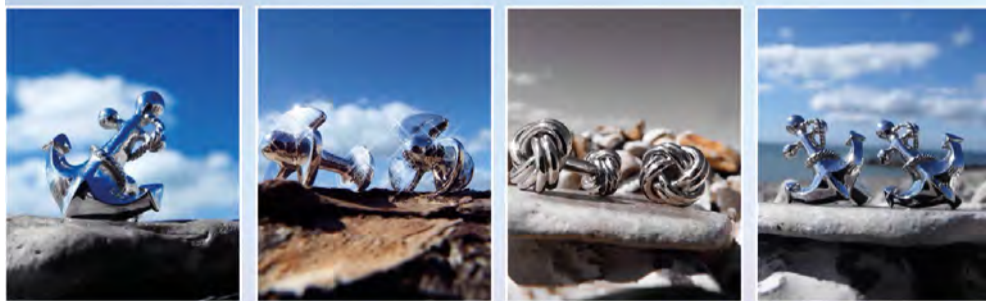
The Hellrunner – Hell Down South extreme trail race saw ten personnel from the Type 23's weapon engineering and warfare departments raise £415.

Organised by the ship's deputy WEO Lt Paul Proctor, the ten-mile run took place across Longmoor Military Training Camp, featuring frozen mud puddles and snow.

Around 2,000 runners took part in what is known as one of the toughest races in the UK. The course also included sand dunes, mud hills, two river crossings and the 'bog of doom' – a 50m pond.

Despite the freezing temperatures and the post-race aches and pains, most of the team have vowed to re-compete in Hell Runner next year and look forward to entering a larger team in early 2018.

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● Phil Eaglesham

Ex-Royal to show off new chair

PARALYMPIAN Phil Eaglesham has smashed his fundraising challenge to raise enough money to build a revolutionary new wheelchair which could be unveiled at the Invictus Games this year.

The former Royal Marine, who was disabled by catching Q fever when on duties in Afghanistan, pledged to create the new device after facing challenges posed by being in a wheelchair.

The new device, named 'Victor', aims to make life easier and less challenging for users, with Cpl Eaglesham saying it will make people feel 'abled, not disabled.'

"It means that we can change other peoples' lives as well as my own," he explained.

"I know the level of independence this will give me and other people. It will be a real life changer for me, my family and other people and I will be personally testing the prototype."

Cpl Eaglesham, who served with 40 Cdo, was backed in his bid to raise an initial £600,000 by businessman Brian Meaden, father of *Dragons Den's* Deborah Meaden.

Cpl Eaglesham represented Ireland in the Paralympic Games in Rio in Air Rifle Shooting.

Two prototype wheelchairs will now be built and he is planning to take at least one to the Invictus Games for disabled Service personnel in Toronto in September.

India calling for bikers

TWO Royal Navy airmen are embarking on a trip of a lifetime – a motorbike ride through India.

Lt Max White, of 814 NAS, and Lt Bob Andrews, from 820 NAS, are making the trip on classic Royal Enfield Bullet motorbikes.

Prior to starting their trek the pair visited the British High Commission in New Delhi to meet Capt Stuart Borland, who made a similar expedition to the Himalayas last year.

"Words really cannot do justice in explaining how excited we both are looking ahead to this challenge," said Lt White.

The three-week journey will take the duo west to Rajasthan before heading south through Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Ahmedabad, Mumbai and then onto Goa and Kerala.

Ideal partnership

CORPORAL Robert Jones and Lt Stu Moss completed a 24-hour indoor tandem row to raise funds for charity.

The duo, based at HMS Sultan, rowed one hour on and one hour off, covering a combined distance of 327km, the equivalent of rowing from Gosport to Paris.

Both men are members of Sub 7, a civilian indoor rowing club.

The pair's efforts raised more than £330 for the RNLI and Centrepoint.

Bishop tries out life as a cadet

THE Bishop of Exeter, the Right Reverend Robert Atwell, paid his first visit to Britannia Royal Naval College to bestow the Sacrament of Baptism and Confirmation on three Officer Cadets under training.

The Bishop spent two days at the college where he met with the Commanding Officer, Capt Jol Woodard.

He was also given an insight into the role the college plays in preparing young officers for their future careers and was able to see at first-hand some of the training taking place.

Having prepared for their confirmation over the past six weeks, the three Officer Cadets received the sacrament during a service held in the College Chapel, alongside six candidates from three local parishes.

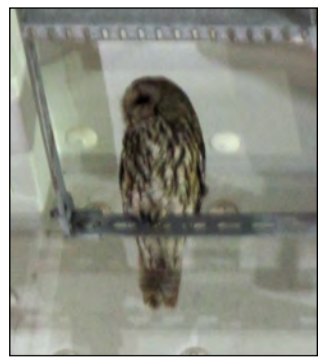
Other highlights of Bishop Robert's visit included a chance to view some of the facilities at the college. He took to the water, enduring the cold weather with new entry cadets, learning to drive motor whalers from Sandquay. He was shown the bridge simulator used primarily for navigation training.

"I had a wonderful 24 hours at the Royal Naval College, and was so impressed by the commitment and enthusiasm of the staff and cadets," he said.



● Bishop Robert watches cadets plot a course during navigation training

Picture: Craig Keating



Hooting star joins carrier

MAKING its home on girders in the roof of Britain's biggest warship is the 101st member of her crew: Lightning the owl.

The tawny owl is making its home amid the clanking and clanging of workers toiling to finish HMS Prince of Wales ahead of her formal naming ceremony – roughly the equivalent of a launch, but without the dynamic sight of the ship dashing down a slipway – later this year in Rosyth.

The bird, dubbed Lightning by sailors and workmen after the jets that will fly off the future flagship, is seen arriving in the rafters of the hangar – so wide you could fit the hulls of two Type 23 frigates side by side – nestles down in a quiet spot and observes the day's work.

At dusk, he swoops over the dockyard workers who are filing off the ship and flies through the openings left by the two enormous lifts which will ferry F-35 jets and Merlin helicopters between the hangar and flight decks.

"The hangar likely resembles a large airy barn away from the Scottish elements, but quite a lot busier than owls are used to," explained Lieutenant Penny Thackray, the carrier's education officer. "The RSPB have been to see Lightning and are content he can come and go as he pleases."

The owl 'joined' the carrier's crew just hours after Prince of Wales welcomed sailor No.100, marine engineer PO Will Horsepool.

The senior rating from South Normanton in Derbyshire was a little surprised to be greeted by the carrier's senior officer, Capt Ian Groom, in front of the impressive bow.

"I had no idea until I arrived that I was the 100th joiner," the startled petty officer said. "I'm looking forward to getting started in my role on board."

Which is? Workshop manager carrying out fitting and tuning of bespoke parts when required for the ship systems, when going down the shops isn't an option.

That's at sea. Ashore in Rosyth, it's the marine engineer's task to help with the testing and commissioning of key systems on board.

He arrived on the Forth straight from a three-year draft to assault ship HMS Bulwark where he worked as the steering gear and workshop maintainer – earning a commendation from the Fleet Commander, now First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones, for his hard work and dedication.

Will took part in the migrant rescue operations during the Mediterranean refugee crisis in 2015, represented his Navy and nation at two Great War centenary commemorations: Gallipoli and Jutland. And he was involved in three autumn amphibious exercises with the Plymouth-based warship in the Mediterranean and Middle East.

He joined Prince of Wales 364 days after the first 12 members of the ship's company rocked up in Rosyth. He hopes to play an active role in the ship's football and cycling team, as well as getting in some Scottish hill walking on days off.

When not in Scotland, he lives in South Normanton, Derbyshire with his wife, three children, dog and chickens.

Interopérabilité – you can't beat it

TRAINEE Officers from Britannia Royal Naval College have been given a valuable insight into their future role at sea training alongside Officer Cadets from the French Navy.

Eight Young Officers sailed with the French Marine Nationale's training squadron following the ships' weekend visit to Dartmouth.

Accompanied by two staff officers from the college, the Royal Navy YOs were fully integrated with the bridge teams on their respective ships.

They were given the opportunity to take control as officer of the watch as the ships conducted various manoeuvres, including man overboard recovery drills and replenishment at sea approaches. The exercises on the second day had the added challenge of patchy fog.

Sub Lt Reece Grigg said: "It was really interesting to see and experience the French Navy's way of doing things, and see how similar it was to ours as well as some of the differences."

"As the French Cadets were at a slightly more advanced stage of training to us, it was great to be able to observe the skills we are just starting to learn being practised at the required standard."

The YOs are part-way through their Initial



Warfare Officers (Foundation) (IWO(F)) course at BRNC. The 24 hours at sea gave them the chance to get to know their French counterparts and discuss their respective careers and training pipelines.

French cadets spend successive periods on board the vessels practising navigation and ship handling prior to their final stage of training on board the helicopter carrier Mistral later this year.

On completion of their IWO(F) course Royal Navy YOs spend three months on an operational warship. They return to sea for seven or eight months specialist fleet time further into their training.

As part of the Royal Navy's co-operation

with the French Navy, 845 NAS based at Yeovilton, will be embarking two Merlin helicopters on the FS Mistral for a five-month training mission.

The Léopard class training vessels are based in Brest and belong to the Naval Action Force. They are used by the French Navy to teach practical navigation and manoeuvring to students at the Naval Academy and the Brest Naval Instruction Centre, mainly operating in coastal waters.

The ships have specific facilities on board dedicated to training, such as a lecture room and a second bridge, directly below the main one, which is used as an operations room and practical teaching room.

'Mad Bish' returns to Raleigh for parade

FORMER Royal Navy Chaplain the Reverend Mike Brotherton made a surprise return visit to HMS Raleigh and resumed his old role on parade.

Mike, who was one of the Royal Navy's more colourful characters, retired from the Service in 2011 following a 27-year career, most of which he spent at sea serving on board around 25 ships.

Nicknamed the 'Mad Bish', Mike served at Raleigh on two occasions, firstly as an Assistant Chaplain in 1989 and then as the Church of England Chaplain leaving the establishment in 2003.

Now a volunteer for the RNLI in Milford Haven, close to his Pembrokeshire home, Mike returned to HMS Raleigh for the passing-out-parade to see one of

his RNLI colleagues, pass out of initial Naval training.

"This is the first time I've been back to Raleigh, certainly since I've been retired and it's still such a happy place," he said.

"I enjoyed my time here. I found it was one of the most rewarding Chaplains' appointments in the Fleet."

Mike, who was awarded the MBE in 1993 for his pastoral work to all ranks, explained how he earned his nickname: "I bombed around on my scooter and I was renowned for doing crazy things."

"The highlight of my career was when I landed on HMS Ark Royal dressed as Charlie Chaplin in the Adriatic when the ship was in a war zone. I did that to boost the morale."

Donation will aid update of website

THE Royal Navy Officers' Charity (RNOC) is celebrating after receiving a £2,500 gift from The Patron's Fund.

Around £750,000 is available to distribute between nearly 300 charities and other organisations in the UK and the Commonwealth.

The Fund received donations from a range of supporters; including individual donors, businesses, schools, community groups and the proceeds from The Patron's Lunch, the event on the Mall last June, to mark the Queen's 90th birthday.

Established in 1739 the RNOC fulfils its objectives primarily through a variety of grants: regular, one-off or special to serving and retired Royal Navy and Royal Marine Officers and their dependants.

RNOC CEO Cdr Mike Goldthorpe said: "This money will help us to update our regularly visited website and therefore raise further awareness of the RNOC and the charity's objectives."

For further information on The Royal Navy Officers' Charity (Registered Charity No. 207405 email rnoc@arno.org.uk or visit www.arno.org.uk

For further information on The Patron's Fund (Registered Charity No. 1164171), email info@thepatronsfund.org.uk or visit www.thepatronsfund.org.uk



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THE JOURNEY DOES NOT HAVE TO END!

Protect the carrier!

THE story of how the aircraft carrier became and remained the capital ship of the surface navies of the world is a significant one and it is good that that doyen of naval authors, Dr Norman Friedman, has turned his attention to it to supplement his existing work on naval anti-aircraft guns and gunnery.

The keys were fighters and, even more so, fighter control, especially after the advent of radar and the development of procedures to use the electronically gathered information to direct aircraft to their targets, writes Prof Eric Grove.

In **Fighters Over the Fleet: Naval Air Defence From Biplanes to the Cold War** (Seaforth, £45 ISBN 978-1-84832-404-6) Dr Friedman concentrates on the three major carrier navies: the USN (which, understandably gets the lion's share of the coverage), the Royal Navy and the Imperial Japanese Navy.

In his opening chapter, the author gives a fair assessment for the reasons the British, having led the way with carriers, began to lag behind the other two navies especially in aircraft performance. Oddly, he does not mention the formal creation of the Fleet Air Arm in 1924, but his diagnosis of the continued problems caused by dual control is sound enough.

The shortage of air expertise within the Naval officer corps led to problems in formulating air policy, with naval requirements "which might or might not

THE GROVE REVIEW

be realistic" (some were not) being dealt with by an Air Staff containing little contemporary naval experience "to suggest that changes in the Staff Requirements, however feasible, could offer greater capability."

The main negative result of this was the Admiralty's acceptance that aircraft built to operate over the sea from ships were inevitably of lower performance than land based aircraft.

Also a Fleet Air Arm dominated by observers rather than pilots inevitably thought aircraft ought to have at least two seats. Hence the Skua and the Fulmar rather than the Zero and Wildcat.

Until radar, however, fighters of any performance were labouring under fundamental disadvantages and it made sense to see the gun as the primary instrument of air defence, at least against land-based air threats. Fighters were only useful against reconnaissance 'snoopers' and gunnery spotters. Interestingly, American doctrine seems not to have been that different. Indeed, the author comments that "it is not at all clear how important defensive fighters were for the pre war US Fleet." Even the Japanese saw their Zero as primarily a long-range bomber escort.

Dr Friedman's chapter on 'Fighters Under Radar Control' describes the real revolution that was wrought by this and is a useful addition and amplification to a paper I gave in Australia

on the subject some years ago. Curiously, the author does not cite this source although he attended the conference. He does, however, add to it by pointing out the important differences between American and British practice as their techniques developed.

He is, perhaps, a little over-enthusiastic about the British achievements in the Pedestal operation, during which British fighters were eventually overwhelmed, but his emphasis on American success in the battle of the Philippine Sea (the 'Marianas Turkey Shoot') is well made. Japan's lack of development in this area is also emphasised.

Another important feature of this book is the chapter on 'The Collapse of Radar Control' in the battles off Okinawa. The changing threat, from mass attacks to individual manned Kamikaze missiles over stressed by saturation the previously highly-successful American defences.

As Dr Friedman puts it, "Combat Information Centers were slow and information display was complicated and inadequate making it difficult as supervisor to grasp the full situation either rapidly or correctly. He could handle only a few raids at a time. Communication both within ships and between ships seemed weak."

The book next moves on to



Two 'Kate' Japanese bombers fly through heavy flak after evading American fighters to torpedo the USS Yorktown at Midway, the seminal carrier battle in the Pacific in June 1942. Picture: US Navy

the development of jet aircraft in both Britain and the USA. The discussion of the latter subject is especially detailed.

There is enlightening material on the interaction of the expected-but-cancelled USS United States-class nuclear strike carriers and their proposed command ship supposed to deal with fighter control, the completed USS Northampton and the cancelled USS Hawaii.

The book also provides interesting detail on the American adoption of the UK-invented steam catapult, angled deck and mirror landing sight.

The impact of the Korean War in a move away from bomber interception to air superiority operations against enemy fighters is next discussed with the eventual evolution of the F-8 Crusader and the F-4 Phantom.

The impact of the growing threat of missile-armed Soviet bombers is rightly emphasised

in Chapter 8 with its renewed emphasis on airborne early warning.

What Dr Friedman calls 'A Crisis in Fleet Air Defence' was only really solved by the introduction of computerised combat data systems. The book also gives some interesting information on the 'Missileer' designed to deal with the Soviet bomber threat concept that eventually was cancelled along with its Eagle air-to-air missile. It was news to this reviewer there was the possibility of the Vigilante supersonic strategic bomber being converted into a fleet fighter.

The chapter on the computer age is important and interesting but it does contain some important errors. The pioneering and important British CDS system was not 'Combat Data System' but 'Comprehensive Display System'. When the account moves on the aircraft

development in the 1950s the NATO programme for a STOVL fighter was NBMR (that made an acceptable acronym) not NMBR. I was also a little surprised to find no mention of the Royal Navy's sleight of hand in accepting the single-seat P1154 to obtain initial approval of CVA 01, knowing that the supersonic STOVL project was almost certainly doomed.

There is a brief chapter on the Falklands War that would have been enhanced by use of a broader range of sources. John Nott did not call for the abolition of the CVS force; two were to be retained for 'Out of Area' operations upon which the government as a whole placed some emphasis.

It would also have added to the limited discussion of the subject to tell the true reason for the RN not pressing for helicopter Airborne Early Warning, namely the desire not to provoke RAF opposition to a new ASW helicopter (as is made clear in Sir Edward Ashmore's memoirs.). More secure is the concluding section on the F-14/Phoenix based Outer Air Battle that lay at the heart of the Maritime Strategy of the 1980s.

As often in this expert author's recent books the analytical wood can sometimes get lost in the detailed trees, and the editing is sometimes a little weak, but the handsome 460-page volume is a mine of information and highly intelligent and perceptive policy and technical analysis. It is beautifully produced and illustrated and can be obtained for less than £30 on the internet, a great bargain. It is essential reading for all interested in 20th Century naval warfare.

Commemorative stone takes shape



TINY silver shards fly into the air as skilled stonemason Robyn Golden-Hann carefully hand chisels the close detail on a bespoke monument commissioned by the WRNS100 Project Group to mark both the centenary of the formation of the Women's Royal Naval Service and the ongoing service of women in the Royal Navy.

Navy News enjoyed a preview of Robyn's creative process, visiting her workshop last month.

The rhythmic tapping of her chisel accompanies the classical music playing on a radio as she chips at the desk-sized block of silver-grey Portland stone dominating her compact workshop.

On November 4 the completed commemorative stone will be revealed during a Service of Thanksgiving to be held at Portsmouth's Cathedral Church of St Thomas.

Around 1,000 former members of the WRNS and their guests have secured places at the stone's dedication ceremony and Guildhall reception that follows.

Many have donated funds to mark the Centenary following the launch of the WRNS100 Pounds for the Stone Appeal last June.

Emerging steadily from the solid block are four readily identifiable Naval uniform caps, featuring the broad tricorn hat worn by the female WRNS officers during World War1, the neater version of the tricorn worn by officers and senior ratings today, and traditional sailor's caps worn by junior ratings over the past century.

Shaping the stone requires considerable focus over long



Picture: LPhoto Louise George

periods, so Robyn takes care to vary her routine every day, switching between smaller private commissions but always returning regularly to progress this major WRNS100 commission.

"Being an artist can be a solitary profession," Robyn readily admitted, welcoming clients into her studio.

"I do understand and value my contribution to communities, taking care to understand the significance and symbolism of all my pieces."

"I am delighted to be connected with this vibrant community of women in the Navy and I am already closely involved with the life at Portsmouth Cathedral.

"It really is a great privilege to play a significant part in the WRNS100 celebration.

"The commemorative stone will endure, acting as a collective memory for all Naval Servicewomen.

"I hope it will become a

touchstone and a special place to reflect on memories of Service life, whenever and wherever they served over the past century."

A traditionally trained stonemason and carver, Robyn studied letter-carving at Weymouth College before working for ecclesiastical and architectural masonry firms.

She further honed her craft in rural Czechoslovakia, near Prague on an architectural restoration project.

She refined her precise hand-carved lettering skills when she studied and worked with a renowned master of the trade, the late David Kindersley, at his Cambridge studio in the early 90s.

After ten years of cathedral work, culminating in the design and carving of Sir Edward Heath's memorial at Salisbury Cathedral, Robyn set up her own lettering and carving studio in 2006.

Robyn has gained immense satisfaction and pleasure through her work on privately commissioned pieces for both Salisbury and Portsmouth cathedrals and is widely sought after for her original bespoke plaques, headstones and hand-carved relief lettering skills.

This commemorative stone is Robyn's fifth commission for Portsmouth Cathedral. She anticipates that the carving, along with the inscription, will be completed by late spring.

The stone will remain in the studio until it is installed in the cathedral grounds in Portsmouth.

For more details on WRNS100 commemorative events see www.wrns100.co.uk

Robyn's website is www.bespoke-memorials.co.uk



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Proving to be good citizens

YOUNG people helped rough sleepers, disadvantaged teenagers and children with hearing loss and sight loss as part of a series of NCS pilots launched by Sea Cadets.

Sea Cadets ran pilots for the National Citizen Service programme between September and December, with 51 people aged between 15 and 17 completing the project.

Cadets attended a graduation ceremony at the end of January, where they reported back on their experiences and the impact the project had on their lives.

The cadets were split into five groups across England and had to complete three 'phases', culminating in social action projects.

In London, ten cadets handed out food, Christmas cards and information leaflets to homeless people in Haringey, Liverpool Street, London Bridge, Charing Cross, Waterloo and Strand.

Rolls in the bags were baked at the college that one of the cadets attends, and supermarkets and businesses were approached for donations.

Leftover bags were donated to the Memorial Church homeless shelter in Plaistow.

Meanwhile, cadets in Tameside, Greater Manchester, bought Christmas gifts for disadvantaged teenagers and donated them to young people's charity Tameside 4 Good, which distributed the presents – cadets raised the money for presents by holding a coffee morning.

Elsewhere in the North-West, a fundraising evening with a quiz, games and raffle at the City of Liverpool unit raised money for veterinary charity PDSA.

The South-West group hosted an all-day fundraiser in aid of Forest Pulse, including a cake sale and tombola, at the Forest of Dean unit in Gloucestershire, raising £482 to fund apps for children with hearing loss and sight loss, while in the North-East, two stalls at a Christmas fair in Hebburn raised £479 for Turn To Starboard and GOAL for the Gambia.

Turn To Starboard helps Armed Forces personnel and their families return to civilian life, while GOAL for the Gambia will send poor children in the African country to the seaside.

The charities were chosen because of their connection to water.

OC Chloe, 17, from the Haringey unit, was involved in the London area pilot.

She said: "I think it went well, and we met some nice people – I think they were grateful, and they had the extra pieces of information in the leaflets."

"I liked the interview exercise that we did in phase two, because it gave me confidence."

"I was nervous before, and didn't really speak much, but I had good feedback."

AC Jamie, 16, of Cheltenham unit, who was in the South-West pilot, said: "The project was great as it gave us the opportunity to try some amazing activities such as tree surfing and coastering."

"You also really felt part of a team, and I made many great friendships and connections."

Martin Coles, Chief Executive of Sea Cadets, said: "We are extremely pleased with how our NCS pilots went."

"The cadets really made a difference in their communities and raised a significant amount for charity, while learning valuable skills that will serve them well now and in later life."



● Ant Middleton talks to cadets and staff at Portsmouth Volunteer Cadet Corps

Picture: Derek Pether

'Who Dares Wins' TV star visits VCC unit

MORE than 100 RN and RM cadets and staff of the Portsmouth Volunteer Cadet Corps (VCC) were delighted to welcome TV star Ant Middleton to their unit on Whale Island in Portsmouth.

Ant is the Chief Instructor on Channel 4's *SAS: Who Dares Wins* and is lined up for more prime-time shows this year.

He spoke about his life and career in the military, which the cadets found both interesting and inspirational.

After taking questions from staff and cadets he presented rucksacks to three cadets to recognise recent achievements in the unit.

At the final parade he inspected the Recruit Company and took the opportunity to have photographs taken with all of the cadets – and quite a few staff and parents as well.

For Ant it was not unfamiliar territory – he was born in Portsmouth, though he grew up in rural France.

According to his biography, Ant joined the Special Boat Service in 2008, spending four years with the elite group.

He is one of the few people who have achieved the Elite Forces 'Holy Trinity', having successfully completed the RM Commando Course, P Company with the Parachute Regiment (serving with 9 Parachute Squadron Royal) and Special Forces selection.

Of his meeting with the

Portsmouth VCC team, Ant said: "What stood out to me about the cadets was how knowledgeable and keen these young individuals are."

"I tried to help them focus this knowledge in the right direction and I feel absolutely honoured to have been a part of that."

"I loved the visit, and I really hope I can influence the future of

your youth, whether that be in the Armed Forces or other careers."

"I've been fortunate enough to learn so much through my life experiences, and I'm hoping to pass this on to the younger generation, to arm them with the life skills to strengthen their futures."

After two hugely successful series of the reality TV show

fronted by Ant, a third series of *SAS: Who Dares Wins* has already been commissioned.

The Volunteer Cadet Corps is open to boys and girls between the ages of nine and 17 who can join as a Royal Naval or Royal Marines Cadet.

For more information see the website www.volunteercadetcops.org

Exercise goes down a storm

CADETS from Portsmouth have been putting their skills to the test in a field exercise.

A dozen members of Portsmouth Volunteer Cadet Corps (VCC) took part in Exercise Green Thunder on the Hankley Common training area, close to the border between Hampshire and Surrey.

The aim of the exercise was to develop leadership, teamwork and tactical skills in the field, led by Capt Chris Spratt RMC, who has been with the VCC as a cadet and instructor for 30 years.

Lead training officer was WO2 Gaz Langworthy RM, who works in Navy Command HQ in his 'day job'.

This was a 'Joint' exercise with the Training Team, a mix of serving, ex-Service and civilian staff, drawn from both the Plymouth and Portsmouth Divisions of the RMVCC.

The 12 cadets, aged between 11 and 17, under the command of Cdt Sgt Jamie Stephen, deployed into the field for the two-day exercise, sleeping under 'bivvies' in torrential rain – more than living up to the trainer's mantra "It's not training if it's not raining!"

The cadets each had to carry their 'fighting order' – a bergen with their overnight kit and warm clothing, the cadet version of the SA80 rifle and radios.

Having made a rendezvous with a friendly 'agent' they were given intelligence on a nearby enemy rocket site.

They had to close and covertly observe the position, reporting back to the agent at regular intervals, receiving more intelligence as the day progressed.

This meant that the cadets had to collate, assess and react to each new piece of information as they received it.

A vehicle check point (VCP) was set up to flush out the enemy and after a number of 'routine' stops a rogue vehicle stopped a short distance from the VCP.

A brief stand-off was followed by a number of enemy bursting from the van to attack the cadets.

During their final meeting with the agent they were ambushed and had to rapidly relocate to a new safe area.

However, an enemy patrol 'stumbled' across their new position at night forcing them to repel the attackers.

The exercise concluded with the cadets conducting a dawn attack on the enemy rocket position.

After successfully suppressing the enemy and destroying the rocket it was a quick march back to camp for a well-deserved 'warriors breakfast'!



● Cadet Jasmine features on Bear Grylls Survival School

Jasmine learns art of survival

A MEMBER of Richmond unit has featured on a popular children's television show.

Cadet 1st Class Jasmine appeared on CITV's *Bear Grylls Survival School*.

And as part of the Saturday morning show, there were elements filmed back at Richmond unit with Jasmine out on the water.

The 12-week series follows a group of ten 12- to 15-year-olds as they learn crucial survival techniques on a challenging expedition.

Jasmine, 13, spoke about Sea Cadets in an episode last month.

She said: "The cadets are a really big part of me, because I have been doing it since I was ten."

"When I started I was scared – I didn't know if I would be able to do it, but when I got into it, I was like, 'this is fun'."

Jasmine was also praised in the episode for her caring attitude towards a fellow participant, Callum, with Bear himself calling her a born leader.

Busy start to 2017

NORTHAMPTON unit cadets began the year celebrating the appointment of two new senior cadets – Julian was advanced to Corporal (only the second cadet from Northampton unit to achieve this) while Alex advanced to the highest Sea Cadet rank of Petty Officer Cadet.

The unit has experimented with a new block training programme offering new activities to cadets such as the semaphore proficiency, marine engineering and adventurous training.

During the month members of the unit also competed at the Eastern Area Drill and Piping competitions, with some success – once again they will represent Eastern Area in the Armed Guard competition, to be held at HMS Raleigh on the weekend of April 28-30.

Slightly further afield, a group of 23 Northampton Laforey cadets and five Brackley Tidespring cadets made a weekend visit to Portsmouth Naval Base alongside the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, staying on board HMS Bristol.

Social action brings award

NEWHAM Cornwell VC unit's efforts in helping homeless people have been recognised at the Youth United Social Action Awards at Buckingham Palace, where the Prince of Wales was guest of honour.

Cadets and volunteers from the unit won the Teamwork Award for their tireless volunteer work to help homeless people in East London over Christmas.

Junior Cadets from Newham Unit collected toiletries and warm clothing to donate to Bonny Downs temporary shelter

for homeless people in East Ham.

It has been estimated that 5,000 young people are living in temporary accommodation or sleeping rough in the area.

The cadets didn't stop there with their festive goodwill – they also performed a well-received carol service for the elderly residents of Manor Farm Care Home.

The Junior Cadets were closely supported by a team of their senior colleagues – teamwork which went a long way towards

enabling the project to succeed as the older cadets provided guidance and advice.

The initiative was featured in the local newspaper, raising the profile of social issues in East London and the cadets' appetite for social action.

Captain Sea Cadets Capt Phil Russell said: "Congratulations to Newham Cornwell VC Sea Cadets, who are fully deserving of their win."

"They are a credit to their unit and to Sea Cadets, and should be really proud of their efforts."



● Cadets and staff from Newham Cornwell VC unit with Marine Society & Sea Cadets Chief Executive Officer Martin Coles (left) at Buckingham Palace



RN career for Whitley Bay cadet

WHITLEY Bay Sea Cadet Taliarose Whitelock (above) has embarked on the start of her Royal Navy career after a successful two-year recruitment process.

The 18-year-old has been chosen to become one of the few hydrographical, meteorological and oceanic specialists recruited by the Royal Navy every year.

After a period of training in Plymouth and Portsmouth, Taliarose could be posted on a ship anywhere in the world.

She said: "I joined Whitley Bay Sea Cadets when I was 11 because I was looking for something different to do.

"I went along on one of their meeting nights and everyone was so friendly, and I've since made friends for life, not just in the North-East, but all over the world.

"I particularly enjoyed visiting Croatia on the Sea Cadets International Exchange Programme, sailing to Inverness on Sea Cadets' flagship TS Royalist, sailing from Spain to Ireland, and presenting a wreath to the Duke of Lancaster on behalf of Sea Cadets at Trafalgar Day in London.

"Before I became a Sea Cadet, I was so quiet and had barely any confidence, but it has helped me grow and develop, and I have extra qualifications, too."

Whitley Bay unit's Commanding Officer, Lt (SCC) Jane Fox RNR, said: "We are so proud of Taliarose - she is a credit to our unit.

"This is yet another great example of how Whitley Bay Sea Cadets can benefit young people and make the difference to their future academic aspirations and employment prospects.

"We strive to give young people from our region a head start in life and support them in their career choices, whatever they are.

"All the activities we offer, whether on land or on water, often come with an accredited qualification and we make them accessible to everyone, regardless of their financial circumstances.

"This helps cadets to develop their skills and boosts their self-belief and confidence, which stays with them for life."

Ruislip win title - again

RUISLIP unit's 75th anniversary year got off to a successful start when the Junior Section (Under 12s) won the London Area five-a-side football competition for their age group at the Play On Sports London indoor arena in Whitechapel.

In doing so the team retained their title, having also won the area event last year.

Just the previous week the Junior Sea Cadet team had won the Western District (London Area) competition held at the Goals five-a-side football centre in South Ruislip.

Ruislip Senior Boys team (under 18s), who also won through to the Area competition, were runners up to Bexley unit from Southern District.

The winning Ruislip Junior Sea Cadet team was Josh, Finlay, Ben, Younes, Jack and Byron.

Be prepared for the next three years

THE Royal Navy has a long-standing relationship with the Scout Association dating back to 1919, which continues to be a relationship built on mutual trust, comradeship, pride and partnership.

Last November, Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock and Tim Kidd, the UK Chief Commissioner for the Scout Association, signed the Memorandum of Agreement which renews the Royal Navy Sea Scout Partnership for another three years.

2019 marks the centenary of the partnership and planning is already under way to mark this prestigious milestone.

Mr Kidd said: "I am extremely pleased and proud to be able to renew this partnership for another three years.

"Coupled with planning to mark the centenary of this partnership already under way, we are able to look forward to lots of excitement and continued close collaboration with the Royal Navy."

Vice Admiral Woodcock said: "Our long-standing partnership is testament to close relationship we [the RN] have with the Scout Association, and so it gives me great pleasure to sign this agreement, cementing the relationship further.

"I am excited by the prospect of even greater interaction with the Scout Association as we look forward to the RN sponsorship of the 'Time on the Water' Stage Badge this year."

There are currently 103 Sea Scout units across the UK who are members of the scheme, which entitles members of that unit to wear the Royal Navy recognition badge on their Scout uniform, and benefit from a close association with the Royal Navy, including visits to ships and establishments, as well as Scouting competitions and camps hosted by the Royal Navy.

New man in charge

THERE is a new Commanding Officer at the helm of City of London unit following a ceremony on board museum ship HMS Belfast.

Acting Sub Lt (SCC) Andy Unger RNR took up the post in a change-of-command ceremony overseen by London Area Manager Cdr James Nesbit RNR.

The whole unit were on parade to mark the occasion as CPO Paul Townsend - who completed an outstanding 11 years in charge - handed over to newly-promoted Sub Lt Unger.

Sub Lt Unger, from Beckenham, proudly wears the dolphins marking him out as an ex-Royal Navy submariner, and has been in the Sea Cadets since 2000 upon leaving the Royal Navy.

He visited units throughout his time in the RN and saw the great work the Sea Cadet Corps does in several countries, ranging from Bermuda to the Falkland Islands and up and down the United

Kingdom.

He started volunteering at Helensburgh unit for 18 months whilst being based at Faslane, serving as the Small Ships Unit LMA.

When he left the Royal Navy he transferred to Bexley unit where he served as Executive Officer (XO) for three years.

He then became XO at the City of London unit, where he enjoyed serving under CPO Townsend.

In June last year, Sub Lt Unger successfully picked up his commission and said goodbye to his petty officer's uniform.

He is lucky to have had a long handover period with CPO Townsend - and even luckier to have him to call upon as he will remain at the unit in an instructor role as Courses Officer.

Since becoming an officer in the Sea Cadet Corps Sub Lt Unger has taken on more district responsibility and has qualified as a rowing instructor.

He has also taken part in the national Trafalgar Day Parade at Trafalgar Square and in the Lord



● City of London cadets line up on parade on board HMS Belfast

Picture: PO Phot Owen Cooban

Mayor's show.

He has enjoyed passing on his knowledge of first aid to Sea Cadets over the years, and has made the most of all leadership developments whilst in the Corps.

"I'm really proud to take charge of a Unit that has a long

history of meeting the needs of young people in London," said Sub Lt Unger.

"The previous CO, CPO Townsend, has faithfully given his time and the unit is very successful, and I am keen to carry on that success."

RN team visit Grimsby academy

STUDENTS at a Lincolnshire school were given an opportunity to discover more about the Royal Navy when a Youth Engagement Team paid them a visit.

Designed to showcase what the Royal Navy is all about and where it operates, the one-day event brought together 60 pupils from Ormiston Maritime Academy in Grimsby.

Together school staff and the Naval team put the students through their paces with teamwork exercises and briefings, highlighting the Royal Navy's global footprint.

"Leading a Youth Engagement Team is very rewarding," said CPO Jo Redfern.

"It's a big region to cover and we spend about 19 weeks a year on the road supporting careers offices - schools mostly, but it could be a college or a big youth engagement event.

"It's never dull and pretty busy. I've learnt a lot, but working with kids can be fun. They are all very different, and personally I relate to the stropky teenage girls - I've been there when I was that age."

Jo brings to the job more than 20 years' experience in the Royal Navy, and she's assisted by ET Sam Maddocks, who in his early 20s can relate to the youngsters and some of their questions.

"We get asked all sorts," continued Jo.

"One recently asked about the cost of fuel for a warship.

"This led to us to explain the different types of tasks a Royal Navy ship can get involved with - it opened up a lot of doors we hadn't imagined."

With them for the day and taking a look at Jo's team was Naval Regional Commander for the East of England (NRCEE) Cdre David Elford, who is responsible



● CPO Jo Redfern keeps a close eye on students undertaking a teamwork exercise at Ormiston Maritime Academy

for Royal Naval engagement in an area from the Humber south to Dover in the east and west as far as Portsmouth.

"My remit is to make sure the Naval Service is understood, respected and valued by the society we serve," said David.

"We need to make and take opportunities as they present themselves, and luckily for me I've got a great team who go around my region presenting to schools.

"It's important to say what the Royal Navy is, why it exists and what it does as well as what it's like to work in and the openings it can offer.

"Coming to Ormiston Maritime Academy has been wonderful, and although I was here as an observer, I couldn't help but get stuck in

and I've really enjoyed working with the team."

Organiser at the school is Assistant Principal, Jo Fieldsend, who said: "Today's been all about student engagement.

"The Royal Navy has been really good at showing the students there are huge horizons to aim for, as well as putting their real-life work experiences behind what they say.

"They've really communicated well and the students have responded with enthusiasm."

Many of the students who took part came away with a better understanding of what the Royal Navy does and an insight into life at sea.

"I really enjoyed the presentation," said Stuart, 15. "I

Chance to return to URNU

AFTER completing four years as a student with Liverpool University Royal Naval Unit (URNU), Sub Lt Sophie Dennis RNR said she jumped at the chance to return as a Training Officer (TO).

"Initially coming back to the unit in a different position was quite challenging, but I soon got back into the swing of things.

"TOs with the URNU carry out the position in their spare time, and become Royal Navy Reservists during this time (non-deployable).

"Starting as an acting Sub Lieutenant, there is a career path which allows promotion to Lieutenant.

"TOs are attached to each of the 15 URNUs, with each having a Senior TO (usually a Lt) and three other TOs.

"The role of a TO is to provide training in line with the URNU mission statement: 'to broaden Naval understanding and develop undergraduates who show the potential to become the leaders of tomorrow, through maritime experience and exposure to the values and ethos of the Royal Navy.

"Training takes place in a variety of environments and on drill nights once a week.

"During this time, TOs teach anything from navigation and leadership to drill and seamanship.

"This training is put into practice during sea weekends and deployments, where students and TOs sail on board the affiliated P2000.

"In addition to training we carry out a pastoral role within the unit, providing both academic and personal support for the students.

"For some students it may be their first time away from home so this is an integral part of our role.

"This has been great for my personal development and opens up some great opportunities - last year I visited some of the Baltic states with the ship, and have had the opportunity to use the Hawk flight simulator.

"TOs also take part in the Adventurous Training and social side of the unit.

"I have been lucky enough to ski in France, where I spent more time falling down the slopes than actually skiing!

"I also joined a sailing trip to the Channel Islands and France, obtaining my Competent Crew qualification.

"Carrying out this role alongside a full-time job can often be challenging; however most TOs do this because they enjoy the training aspect of the role.

"This is made more appealing by the amazing opportunities for travel and adventure.

"We have the chance to obtain new skills and qualifications which are transferable to our full-time professions.

"For me, the most rewarding part is seeing the change and progression of each of the students as they move through the unit.

"It's a proud moment seeing them pass out of the unit as they graduate university.

"As an added bonus though, I get paid £80 per day!

"If you're a former RN officer or NCO with relevant experience, or like me were once a part of the URNU, this is a great way to get involved with the Royal Navy again.

"Search online for your nearest unit to see if you can get involved.

"Liverpool, Edinburgh, Manchester and Birmingham are actively recruiting TOs."

From Naval ships to vans offering fish 'n' chips

MOBILE fish and chip firm Flipping and Frying is offering former sailors and marines exclusive access to its franchise network.

The firm – which has a five-star award from the National Federation of Fish Friers – offers Britain's favourite traditional take-away in rural areas where there's not a permanent chippy and is looking to expand its operation beyond its native Lincolnshire.

The 'Salt and Veterans' initiative offers ex-Service personnel the benefit of the company's experiences, access to the country's premier manufacturer of mobile fish and chip equipment alongside tailor-made financing options to get their business off to a frying start (sorry) under their brand.

They will be coached how to operate a mobile fish and chip franchise by an award-winning operator alongside undertaking an accredited Level 2 NVQ in fish frying.

The initiative is the brainchild of former naval officer Stuart Fawcett, who is focusing on encouraging fellow ex-Forces personnel because of their general reliability, honesty and determination... and says franchise operators should earn around £40,000 a year.

If you live close to Lincoln, Stuart runs self-employment/franchise seminars regularly on Wednesday evenings at Skellingthorpe village hall. For details, call 07581 038857 or see www.saltandveterans.co.uk.

New approach will be more accommodating

THE future of military accommodation is starting to take shape as analysts study the results of a survey.

The 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review included a commitment to overhaul the accommodation offer, and to underpin a new model.

FAM – the Future Accommodation Model – offers the flexibility to live with who you want, where you want; if implemented, every soldier, sailor and airman would receive a core accommodation allowance to pay for their own accommodation, including options to rent a home or buy a home.

They can switch between options as circumstances change, and the accommodation allowance will be provided based on need, regardless of age, rank or relationship status.

Now a survey to gauge opinion on options under FAM has attracted over 24,000 responses.

More than half the respondents – 55 per cent – found the new options attractive; 24 per cent found them unattractive.

The survey also showed a strong preference for owning a home (44 per cent), while just over a third (37 per cent) would choose the Service Families Accommodation (SFA) option if it was offered at the same cost as renting.

That, said Chief of Defence People Lt Gen Richard Nugee, was broadly expected.

"I think it is not a surprise to us that a number of people

believe that SFA is the right answer, that the current model is the right answer," Lt Gen Nugee told *Navy News*.

"I would be, in a sense, slightly worried if nobody thought it was the right answer and we were forcing everybody to do it."

He continued: "I also think that, broadly speaking, it is entirely logical that a large proportion wanted to own their own homes. I think that is a very good thing, and that is the sort of quality of individuals we have in the Armed Forces, that they can see that getting onto the property ladder as early as possible is the right thing to do."

Lt Gen Nugee said the proposed new model offers people more choice, though elements of the current model may well continue.

"There will be instances across the Defence Estate where married patches are still the most logical solution, for example," he said.

"I am particularly thinking of areas which are miles away from anywhere, where living in private rented accommodation or people living in their own houses would force them many, many miles away because it doesn't exist locally.

"What we want is choice – what we want is people to live more in the society so that the society understands them and they understand society more.

"It gives them resilience, it gives them independence, and it gives them a sense, I think, of freedom which perhaps the

married patch and single living accommodation doesn't give."

The survey indicated that the main reasons people liked SFA did not include living in a military community.

"It's all about proximity to the job, it's about the ease with which you can go from quarter to quarter, it's about the support mechanisms," said Lt Gen Nugee. "Well, I think we can replicate all of that outside the patch, and so I think that's good."

Detailed analysis of single Service needs has not yet been produced – further details are expected shortly.

But Lt Gen Nugee said that differences between the Services would be taken into account.

"One of the things that the chiefs – including the First Sea Lord – have been really clear about is that there must be what they call 'tolerable variations' between the Services," he said.

"We need to work out what that means in reality, because we haven't got the survey results by Service yet, but we are absolutely of the view that if the Navy has a particular requirement and we can accommodate that, then we should."

The consultation process is still at an early stage, but Lt Gen Nugee said FAM would offer an affordable system which provides more choice for individuals.

"What we have said is that the pot that we use to subsidise the accommodation will not change. How much individuals pay will be the same, so there is a positive there.

"There is a lot of detail yet to work out, but I think the majority of people – and they told us that the majority of people want this – will see benefit.

"I see huge benefit. I see social benefit, I see benefit to the individual in terms of resilience, for the Ministry of Defence in terms of it will cost us less and we will be able to offer more choice, and for the single Services by

having a better retention aspect because accommodation is better.

"Now I am not naive – I absolutely understand that this won't suit everybody, and I absolutely understand that there is a cohort out there who are nervous about what we are doing for all sorts of reasons, and we need to pay attention to that anxiety.

"But overall I think that, particularly for those who are about to join us and those who haven't spent long with us, we ought to be offering a model that is attractive enough to keep them.

"We are trying to do things that are frankly pretty much unheard of in this country.

"We are trying to provide support – we are looking at an allowance for those who live in their own houses.

"That is unprecedented in this country, but it shows that we are prepared to live by the fact that we believe those in the Armed Forces should have subsidised accommodation."

The results of this survey will be used to further explore the new model, and feedback is still vital.

"No decisions have been made yet, and therefore it is still open to people's suggestions, ideas, comments and views, but I think the important thing is that we have started a process.

"That process will come to a conclusion – we have got a pilot, probably towards the end of 2018, where we will test some of the ideas that we've got.

"I think it's important that people understand it isn't going to happen tomorrow, that this is going to be tested, and that actually what we are genuinely trying to do is provide a better option for our people. While some will not like it, we hope the vast majority will."

For more information on the survey see www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mod-future-accommodation-model-survey-2016 or speak to your Divisional Officer.

Are you Pension Ready?

MOD's Veterans UK organisation, part of Defence Business Services (DBS), has launched a campaign to encourage Service personnel, veterans and their families to get 'Pension Ready'.

The Service to Civvy campaign aims to promote the Armed Forces Pension Schemes, administered by Veterans UK, and motivate the military to start thinking about their pension throughout their career, not just at the end of it.

Veterans UK provide several tools for personnel including a yearly Pension Benefit Information Statement (BIS), one free pension forecast per year and the online Armed Forces Pension Scheme calculator.

Personnel are also encouraged to keep their Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) record up-to-date so when it's time to apply for their pension there will be no delays.

It's also vital for veterans to let Veterans UK know about any change of circumstances after they've left Service, and to remember to apply for their pension at the right time – veterans are failing to claim £320 million in pensions they have built up during their Service.

For full details see www.gov.uk/government/news/service-to-civvy--2

No officer woe for WO1s

THE most experienced and qualified non-officers in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines can now more easily join the officer corps as lieutenants thanks to a new commissioning scheme.

Warrant officers across the entire Naval Service will be eligible for the Warrant Officer 1 Commissioning Route – also known as the Senior Upper Yardman (Warrant Officer) initiative or SUY(WO) – which will bring the Senior Service in line with the RAF and Army.

Over the past five years just 45 warrant officers have appeared before the Admiralty Interview Board – the people who decided if someone has what it takes to be a Royal Navy officer, be they straight from civvy street or ratings identified with potential by their seniors.

Instead, many WO1s who would make ideal officers are lost to the Service, either because they choose to leave or because they reach the end of their careers.

The Naval Board has approved the new initiative to hold on to this talent and experience and help with a shortfall of lieutenants in a number of branches.

WOs eligible for the new scheme will

- have successfully completed the WO Staff Course;
- have successfully passed the AIB;
- have achieved three years' seniority as a WO1 prior to starting Phase 1 Officer training;
- have at least one positive recommendation in the latest SJAR report;
- have at least five years to serve on transfer to the officer corps;
- be in date for the RN Fitness Test.

Those who meet these criteria will go through Dartmouth or Lymington with the rank of lieutenant/1st lieutenant, with one year's seniority. With four years under their belt they will be eligible for promotion to lieutenant commander/major.

See RNTM 01009/17 for more details.

Time to get startin' with new tartan

FOR decades there's been a tartan army north of the border. Now there's a navy as well.

The Silent Service has unveiled its very own woven cloth, here modelled by WO1 Stephen Thomson, who donned the very first Submarine Service kilt.

This is Scottish Registered Tartan No: 11,556, a blend of dark green, navy blue, red, white and a bit of gold, designed and produced in conjunction with the House of Edgar in Perth.

The tartan was commissioned to celebrate more than a century of links between the Silent Service and Scotland, especially pertinent Faslane becoming the home of all boats by 2020 when all remaining T-boats will have relocated from Devonport.

"The colour scheme of the new tartan has been designed to represent submarines' environment: the dark green represents the sea; navy blue, red and white to represent the colours of the Royal Navy; and yellow to represent the golden 'Dolphins' badge worn with pride by all qualified submariners," explained Stephen, who works in submarine logistics at Clyde Naval Base.

To be worn at formal functions such as mess dinners, the tartan is available to all deeps past and present from the House of Edgar (houseofedgar.com / 01738 609060).



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Overhaul for sports hall

A ROYAL Marine of 43 Commando grapples with the new climbing wall as a 14-month revamp of Faslane's gym facilities is completed.

Nine months after a new £250,000 weight room/cardiovascular suite was opened, work on upgrading the remainder of the facility – better known as the Sportsdrome – is done, with sailors and commandos invited in.

Trainee submariners and Royal Marines from 43 Commando were the first groups to be put through their paces by Clyde's clubz in the new-look main multi-games activity gym and swimming pool.

Among the improvements carried out at the gym: a new wooden floor has been laid, better lighting, and a climbing wall installed.

The pool was completely drained, retiled and grouted, along with a make-over in the form of some inspirational prints surrounding the side.

"The entire team are delighted with the results," said Faslane's senior PTI WO Leona Young.

The Sportsdrome facilities are available to serving personnel, civilians and their families at Faslane, with the base also hosting a number of community groups throughout the year.

Physical Trainers also run regular lifeguard courses for personnel – accredited by the Royal Life Saving Society – and use the pool facilities for hydrotherapy sessions and diving training.

Picture: LPhoto Stevie Burke, FRPU North

A WiFi on the Ocean waves

OVER the past 20 years we've grown used to sailors rushing to the upper decks when their vessels are within sight of land: check the phone signal.

But in the mess decks and passageways down in the bowels of a ship?

Well, it's going to become the norm as WiFi becomes standard in the Surface Fleet – allowing sailors and marines to tap into personal emails and social media apps from their phones and tablets when off duty.

Although personnel have access to email and the internet via the MOD's DII computer system, social media sites such as Facebook and WhatsApp are blocked, as are some web-based mail services like Yahoo and Hotmail.

Maritime technology firm NSSL Global fitted a secure WiFi network to HMS Iron Duke in late 2015 in the frigate's main recreational areas and messes, a service which was used extensively by the 200 crew on their NATO deployment to the Baltic last year.

Now WiFi has been installed in the aft section of the Fleet flagship as part of the welfare package – chiefly around the junior/senior rates' dining rooms and wardroom – to allow the 750 souls aboard access to news, social media, and personal banking.

There were a few misgivings ahead of Ocean's deployment – it might prove a distraction and perhaps a security risk. So far, Team Mighty O say it's had a good impact on morale and, touch wood, no one has posted anything silly about future movements/operations.

And before you have ideas of streaming Netflix or downloading huge files, with scores of people trying to use the system, it's slow – at times slower than dial up (the pre-broadband method of hooking up to the internet).

So far, it's gone down well with the Facebook generation – unsurprisingly. "It's ideal," said AB(WS) Josh Karlinski, who is on this first draft after completing training. "I can stay in touch with my friends and family on Facebook and WhatsApp and it's free and instant."

But AB(EW) Leanne Talbot who's joined Ocean after three drafts to Type 23s, has found the introduction of internet has had mixed results. "It is nice to have as a luxury but it has changed the atmosphere in the mess," she said. "People break out of the team to go to log on and this reduces the camaraderie in the mess deck a bit."

No one on the helicopter carrier has seen more revolutions in communication than PO John Wicking, the Royal Navy's record holder for days at sea – more than 6,000 days at sea (16 years and five months) since he joined up in 1979.

The first 26 years of his career were spent in boats – including the first-generation bombers. "We had 20 words a week in the form of a 'family gram' – and it was tough because it was one way traffic for up to 15 weeks while on patrol," he said.

When he joined the Surface Fleet in 2005 he was introduced to the Paradigm card and the ability to phone home... provided the phone was available.

"We had to book our ten-minute slots on the ship's one and only phone. There was always someone who needed longer and often you would find yourself in a queue outside the comms shack," the senior rating said.

So is he embracing the technological revolution sweeping through Ocean's communal areas?

"As a dinosaur it is not surprising I don't do Facebook but many of my team do and I have seen them struggle at times, especially getting over the home sickness hurdle we all experience when off on a long deployment," he said.

Naval Families F E D E R A T I O N

HERE are some of the issues which have been keeping the team occupied on your behalf this past month:

Future of Accommodation (FAM): The FAM survey results have now been published. These will be used as part of the ongoing policy development for the FAM, which will combine the survey with other results (e.g. the single Service Families Federations' surveys) and Focus Group findings to refine the accommodation offer based on your feedback.

If the FAM gains MOD approval in autumn 2017 to proceed, it will be implemented gradually with an initial pilot commencing in late 2018. No final decisions have yet been made and there is still a lengthy consultation process ahead.

E-bluey Cessation: The MOD has announced that the e-bluey service will be ending on March 31, due to the rapid decline in usage. All funds will be re-invested in the improvement of deployed welfare packages.

We've had confirmation that there will remain a way for all personnel and their loved ones to stay in touch with each other and we'll keep you updated on the improvements that will be put in place once the e-blueys end.

Supporting Service children moving schools: Service children are subject to mobility as a result of their parents' service and there is good evidence to show that this mobility can have an impact on their education.

With this in mind, the Directorate Children and Young People (DCYP) have put together a downloadable resource aimed at Service families, welfare staff as well as professionals within schools and local authorities. The aim is to share good practice and open people's eyes to the opportunities and challenges that exist around Service children. You can download it at www.nff.org.uk.

Deployment Support for Children: We know that deployments can be an emotional experience for all the family and understanding the stages and feelings involved can help parents, carers and schools to support children and young people.

We've considered how the Emotional Cycle of Deployment might help us to understand children's behaviour and some strategies that can help children at different stages, in our downloadable resource for parents, carers and schools, which you can view online at

www.nff.org.uk.

Recruit For Spouses: Our Regional Liaison Officer for Scotland and Northern Ireland was delighted to attend the opening of Recruit for Spouses' West of Scotland office in Helensburgh last month.

Over the next year Recruit for Spouses will be making use of expert support to expand its services throughout Scotland by becoming more visible, creating more opportunities for military spouses, hosting career-based workshops and rolling out further nation-wide recruitment drives.

Help make transition better for families: If you are leaving the Royal Navy or Royal Marines and you have at least nine months left until your final day of service, we want to hear from you.

We're running a two-year project to gain a better understanding of the transition process and the challenges that surround it. To say 'thank you', you'll receive a gift from ESS.

Call 023 9265 4374 or email Lucy Heaver at Transition@nff.org.uk.

As always, continue to contact us with feedback and questions via contactus@nff.org.uk, social media or call 023 9265 4374. We are your federation.

Where to look

RNTMs
01 – Personnel
RNTM 01-013/17 Personal ownership of the recording of leave and authorised absence on JFA by March 31
RNTM 01-012/17 General Service WO1 Engineering Technician employment pattern
RNTM 01-009/17 Warrant Officer 1 Commissioning Route - Senior Upper Yardman (Warrant Officer) Scheme
RNTM 01-008/17 Update to the Policy for Wearing and Exchange of Royal Navy Personal Clothing System (RNPCS)
10 – Sports and Social
RNTM 10-009/17 Pussers' Supper, March 30 2017

RNTM 10-008/17 Nelson Family Facilities ('Navy Mews')
DIBS
03/17: Publication of the 2016 Future Accommodation Model (FAM) survey results
DINS
DIN 2017DIN01-021: Pension Tax - Lifetime Allowance, Annual Allowance, and Pensions Earning Cap [Supersedes DIN 2015DIN01-082]
DIN 2017DIN01-023: Service Personnel Leave - Change in Return of Service for Maternity and Adoption Leave
DIN 2017DIN04-030: Provision of Red

Cross Emblem Blanking Plate for Personal Clothing System
DIN 2017DIN07-014: Joint Intelligence Training Group (JITG) Training Courses for Training Year 2017 to 2018 (1 Apr 17 to 31 Mar 18) [Supersedes DIN 2016DIN07-023]
DIN 2017DIN07-015: Exercise ARCTIC EXPRESS 2017
DIN 2017DIN07-016: 2017/18 Defence Cyber Education and Training
DIN 2017DIN07-029: Chief Naval Engineer Officer's Conference and RN Engineer Officers' Dinner 16 May 17, and DE&S Maritime Engineering Conference 17 May 17
DIN 2017DIN10-011: Combined Services' Chess Championship
DIN 2017DIN10-015: Royal Navy Golf Championships 2017



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For more information contact:
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A female perspective on frigate

HMS Trincomalee is planning to kick-start its bicentenary celebrations with the launch of a new display on board the historic ship.

The world's oldest warship still afloat, part of the National Museum of the Royal Navy family, is fundraising to create a unique display in honour of the first female passenger to travel on her.

The HMS Trincomalee Trust is hoping to raise £500 through crowdfunding for its Eliza Bunt display.

Eliza travelled from Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon, to Portsmouth in 1818-1819 after her husband died and the Navy took responsibility for her journey home.

Eliza recorded her journey while on board the frigate, and the display will include items mentioned in her diary.

The HMS Trincomalee Trust has started a fundraising campaign to help preserve the ship.

For more details on fundraising of the Eliza Bunt display, see www.justgiving.com/fundraising/NMRN-National-Museum-of-the-Royal-Navy

Road tribute

A ROAD in a housing development on a former US base is to be named after a Royal Navy hero.

Kennedy Avenue on the Pine Trees estate, formerly RAF Daws Hill, in High Wycombe, is named after Capt Edward Kennedy – father of late broadcaster Ludovic – who at the age of 60 captained converted P&O steamship HMS Rawalpindi.

The armed merchant cruiser was sunk on November 23 1939 off Iceland by two German cruisers; Kennedy opted to signal his position and fight rather than surrender, and in the one-sided battle 275 of the British crew of 312 died, including Capt Kennedy.

All in good causes

MEMBERS of St Neots and District branch gathered at the end of last year for their annual cheque presentation evening for local good causes.

Receiving cheques for £600 each were Sue Ryder's St Johns Hospice, Moggerhanger, New Saints Amateur Boxing Club, St Neots, St Neots Volunteer Bureau and Samantha Smith, the mother of Zachery Smith, who suffers from cerebral palsy.

Honour for Roy

QUEENSLAND branch S/M Roy Cox received the Légion d'honneur from the French Ambassador in Australia at one of the leading hotels in Brisbane.

S/M Roy was 18 when he took part in the liberation of France on June 6 1944, when he was an anti-aircraft gunner in HMS Cottessmore, escorting G Force Minesweeper Flotilla in clearing mines off Gold Beach prior to the main invasion force arriving.

Patience rewarded at medal ceremony

A ROYAL Navy veteran who worked with the Bletchley Park code-breaking organisation in World War 2 has been awarded the Service Medal – at the age of 91.

Pug (Patience) Whitwill was presented with the medal by Cdre Jamie Miller, the Royal Naval Regional Commander (Wales and Western England) at a ceremony at her Devon nursing home, surrounded by friends, family and staff.

The award came long after she left the Women's Royal Naval Service because she was put off applying for it decades earlier by perceived bureaucracy.

Cdre Miller said: "This was a very special occasion and makes everything worthwhile."

"Pug was very engaging and a joy to be with, telling lots of very interesting stories."

"We are very much looking forward to hosting her on Bristol's affiliated aircraft carrier, HMS Prince of Wales."

Dave and Phyl Wynn, friends of Pug, said: "We very much appreciate what everyone did at the presentation, with such jollity and humour too."

"I am glad to say that Pug enjoyed it so much, as you know from her verbal ripostes, and it brought that twinkle again to the Wren's eye."

Pug served in HMS Spartiate at Glasgow, Pembroke V at Eastcote – an out-station for Bletchley Park – Westfield College, a training establishment in Hampstead, London, HMS Beaver in Hull and HMS Godwit.

When she joined the Wrens after school she soon became one of the Bletchley Park teams at Eastcote, working on German Enigma codes.

She actually wanted to be a driver, but was not tall enough, even on tiptoes. Eventually she was allowed behind the wheel because of the lack of drivers.

Commemorations for battle

THE Battle of the Atlantic Commemorations will be held over the weekend of May 6 and 7 in Londonderry/Derry.

The programme is as follows: Saturday May 6: 1900 for 1930 dinner in the City Hotel; Sunday May 7: 1015 Parade musters at the RBL Club Waterside, 1030 parade marches off, 1040 parade arrives at All Saints Church, 1100 church service, 1210 parade marches to the RBL Club where light refreshments will be served.

Should any shipmate wish to attend the dinner the cost will be £30 per head; the cut-off date will be April 14. Please forward a cheque to cover the cost of



● Patience 'Pug' Whitwill is presented with her Service Medal by Cdre Jamie Miller and WO1 Barbara McGregor. (Right) Barbara McGregor pictured during her time in the Wrens

She said she was "absolutely delighted" to be given the chance to drive, although she said "the vehicles were terrible – always breaking down, but up came the hood and I would fix it."

WO1 Barbara McGregor said: "Our meeting with Pug was a resounding success. What a gracious and fun-loving lady she is."

The pair talked about their experiences in the Wrens, and Barbara discovered that on discharge she kept her uniform, but unfortunately it was destroyed in a house fire.

Pug said she earned 30 shillings, and in the past they both remembered attending what was then known as a 'pay parade', once a fortnight, where WRNS had to put out their left hand and salute with the other to receive their pay.

WO McGregor said: "It was a real treat for me to meet with Pug, although she kept insisting the delight was all hers. Her story and life is fascinating."

Pug, was keen on sports, was educated at Cheltenham Ladies College, where she loved hockey and horse riding, pursuing show jumping and hunting into her 70s.

She was involved in all traditional rural life, ran a small farm, worked with vets in Cullompton for many years and trained flatcoat retrievers and their owners, ran dog shows, took part in local shoots with her dogs, doing so well into her 80s.

Pug always carried a camera, was a good photographer and an avid and knowledgeable birdwatcher.

She moved to North Devon later in life and enjoyed fly-fishing, travelling far and wide to do so.



Wigston shipmates are recognised for service

FIVE members of Wigston and District branch have been presented with medals during a ceremony at the offices of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council.

More than 100 relatives, friends and council officials were present to watch as the five received Légion d'honneur awards from M Jean-Claude Lafontaine, of the French Consulate.

The medals were awarded for the shipmates' action on D-Day

during the Allied invasion of France in June 1944.

The five recipients were:

S/M Jack Coughlin, who served as a Gunner aboard Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships (DEMS) for most of his Service career – indeed, other than MTBs, S/M Jack never served aboard any Royal Navy ships...

Jack was serving in Empire Liberty Ship SS Slave Fort on D-Day, which for long periods was stationed off the British beaches disembarking troops onto landing craft.

The 7,100-ton vessel also ferried ammunition and supplies across the Channel.

S/M Frank Evans was a stoker who went ashore as part of Naval Beach Party 1528, part of the Special Service Brigade within Combined Ops.

Frank worked with Naval workshops, transport and supplies back-up, following the Allied advance to Caen, through France and into Belgium.

S/M Richard Laland was serving aboard battleship HMS Nelson, which supported the D-Day landings.

Richard, who was a Petty

New roles for Bob and Nobby

FOLLOWING the death of Worthing branch president S/M Bob Adams, S/M Bob Scott was elected as the new president.

As Bob was also chairman he decided to stand down, and on October 6 – coincidentally his birthday – S/M Nobby Hall was unanimously elected to the post.

Bob Scott has been a member of Worthing since 1989 and chairman from 2002. A Life Member, he is also chairman of No 3 Area and a member of the National Council.

Bob's last role as chairman was to host the Trafalgar Night Dinner, when Cdre Graeme Little, Deputy Chief Naval Engineer, gave the toast to the Immortal Memory.

Bob was presented with a commemorative glass plate, and a bouquet of flowers was given to Betty, his supportive wife.

S/M Nobby is no stranger to the RNA having been, along with his wife Helen, a founder member of Cyprus branch and subsequently its chairman for six years.

He joined Worthing in 2011 after returning to the UK from his role as Assistant Commissioner Maritime in the Turks & Caicos Islands.

Currently he is serving full time in the Navy as Staff Officer Information/Cyber Security.

Worthing branch is expanding and is keen to continue to recruit, so if you live in West Sussex and are interested, see www.RNA-worthing.org

Patron's Fund gift

The RNA has received a £2,500 gift from the Patron's Fund, the charitable fund set up to acknowledge the work of the charitable organisations for which the Queen acts as a Patron, on the occasion of her 90th birthday.

Around £750,000 is available to distribute between nearly 300 charities and other organisations.

Capt Paul Quinn, RNA General Secretary, said: "We are delighted and honoured to have Her Majesty the Queen as our Patron."

"This money will help fund the RNA minibus in Portsmouth dockyard, which is used to pick up visitors to Central Office and to help members with mobility issues during Open Days."

Naval Quirks

IN JUNE 1340 ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF ONE OF THE ENGLISH ARMY'S HEAVIEST DEFEATS AT BANNOCKBURN..

..THE ENGLISH NAVY WON ONE OF ITS MOST CRUSHING VICTORIES AT SLUYS!

FOR THE LOSS OF JUST TWO SHIPS, THE ENGLISH SANK BETWEEN 170 AND 190 FRENCH SHIPS—ACCOUNTS DIFFER..

..153.. 154.. No I think I've already counted that one.. Ah well, 1.. 2.. 3..

JUST THINK, IF WE WERE PAINTED BLUE MEL GIBSON MAY HAVE FILMED IT..

I'M NOT SURPRISED..

MICAH

French award for Fred

A TRAFFORD branch founder member has been presented with his Légion d'honneur by the local mayor, watched by family, friends and shipmates.

S/M Fred Garner, aged 94, was also supported by members of the Greater Manchester FAAA – of which he was also a founder member – as he received his medal from Cllr Judith Lloyd, Mayor of Trafford, at Trafford Town Hall.

Cllr Lloyd said it was "a delight and an honour" to meet Fred and present the French medal.

S/M Fred told the mayor: "I was a veteran of the D-Day campaign, patrolling the English Channel in HMS Pursuer to stop any U-boat attacks and providing air cover for our invading troops."

"I feel honoured to receive the insignia of the Legion d'honneur for my involvement with the liberation of France in the Second World War."

Fred joined the Royal Navy in 1941, training as an engineer and transferring to the Fleet Air Arm.

He served in HMS Pursuer as part of 896 NAS, and his service saw him take part in the attack on the Tirpitz in northern Norway, in the invasion of Sicily and the D-Day landings.

On parade

THE Biennial Parade on 10 September 10 at the Cenotaph will be an ideal opportunity to meet with shipmates.

If you need to book accommodation, CONA Travel can help you out.

It is hoped the Irish and Belgian Naval Associations will join in on the day, and the Civil Service Club is booked for the post-parade gathering.

Men of K13 honoured

CEREMONIES to mark the centenary of the sinking of Royal Navy submarine HMS K13 have been held on both sides of the world.

The main ceremony, held at Faslane Cemetery in Garelochhead, was attended by veterans, serving submariners from nearby Clyde Naval Base, representatives from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) and local Sea Cadets.

Also attending were relatives of the 32 men who died in the disaster and who are buried at the cemetery.

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, fourteen employees of Govan shipbuilder Fairfields, five Admiralty officials, a pilot, and the captain and engineer from sister submarine K14.

Each year the Submariner's Association holds memorial events to mark the anniversary.

This year the special commemorations were in three parts – a service at the memorial in Govan's Elder Park on Saturday January 28, the main service at Faslane Cemetery the following day, and – for the first time – a wreath-laying ceremony on the water at the position where the submarine went down.

"The men who perished in K13 were, in many respects, pioneers who pushed the boundaries to gain an operational advantage over potential adversaries," said Rear Admiral John Weale, Head of the UK Submarine Service.

"Today's submariners recognise that the submarines they operate are not only safer, but also more effective, because we have learned from the



● Submariners past and present joined family members of the men lost with HMS K13 in January 1917 as the Royal Navy paid tribute in Faslane Cemetery

Picture: L(Phot) Stephen Burke

experience of our predecessors.

"In this respect, the special bravery, ethos and comradeship of submariners and the Submarine Service endures."

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

The CO of the vessel, Lt Cdr Godfrey Herbert, and K14's captain, Cdr Francis Goodhart, made a desperate attempt to escape the stricken boat to summon 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 dying after striking his head during the escape.

An air-line was eventually 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 died.

The submarine was later raised from the Gareloch and returned to service as HMS K22.

At the service were Shirley Thomas and her family, who travelled from Sheffield for the occasion.

Her great-grandfather, Fred Porter, was a 37-year-old submariner who died on board K13 after seawater entered the engine room during the trials.

"We've always wanted to come up and pay our respects and the 100th anniversary seemed like the ideal time," said Shirley.

"Fred was in the Navy on ships, then he went on the submarines – my grandmother told us he did this because it was better pay. We're all really proud of him."

Speaking after the ceremony at Faslane Cemetery, Colin Kerr, Director of External Relations for CWGC, said: "Every death of a Forces person is a huge loss, but for these 32 men to die during sea trials of the then-new K13 submarine is tragic."

Civic date for Exeter

ON Saturday March 4 people will come from all over the UK to take part in a civic reception and parade in Exeter to remember two significant anniversaries in the country's naval history.

2017 is the 75th anniversary of the sinking of the World War 2 cruiser HMS Exeter and the 35th anniversary of the Falklands Conflict, in which the Type 42 destroyer HMS Exeter saw active duty.

The wartime heavy cruiser was involved in one of the most significant sea battles of World War 2, the Battle of the River Plate.

Following that battle, HMS Exeter went on to further battles and met her end at the hands of the Japanese on March 1 1942, with the loss of 50 men.

During three years in Japanese PoW camps, a further 150 crew lost their lives.

Survivors clubbed together enough funds and on March 1 1948 the HMS Exeter Window of 'Christ Walking on Water' was placed in St Catherine's Chapel in Exeter Cathedral, dedicated in memory of the men of HMS Exeter who were lost in the Java Sea.

Every year since 1948 on the weekend closest to March 1 the survivors and their descendants have met to pay their respects to those who served during Exeter's final days or suffered during their time in the camps.

In 2015, former crews of the Type 42 destroyer HMS Exeter raised £1,000 in 48 hours via a social media campaign, to have a ship's standard made with all HMS Exeter's battle honours.

Following this, in 2016, the standard was dedicated at Exeter Cathedral.

This month will see the first gathering of the newly-formed HMS Exeter Association – a group of like minded people with a link to one of these great ships.

This year the association is being hosted by the Lord Mayor of Exeter at the Guildhall for a small formal civic reception. This will be followed at 11:00 by a parade through the city passing the Guildhall, where the Lord Mayor and a senior Naval officer will accept the salute.

The parade will finish on Cathedral Green, so that all may enter the cathedral ahead of the remembrance service, which will start at 11.30 with the ringing of the former HMS Exeter ship's bell.

For more information, please contact Jessica Davis, HMS Exeter Association Secretary, on hms_exeterassociation@hotmail.com, or for more information on the event see <http://hmsexeter.co.uk/Reunion-Event-2017.php>

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our January edition (right) was HMS Scimitar, which was powered by Bristol Siddeley (later Rolls-Royce) Proteus gas turbine engines.

The correct answers were provided by H Downey, of Gateshead, who wins £50.

This month's mystery ship (above) was built in Scotland and launched in August 1942.

The sloop proved to be an effective U-boat killer during World War 2, with the destruction of five submarines credited to her.

She was also a favourite of the Women's Royal Naval Service.

1) What was he name, and 2) what was the name of the yard in which she was built?

We have removed her pennant number from the picture.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News,



Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Entries must be received by 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. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.



● Veterans and relatives of survivor Charles Freestone mark the centenary of the loss of HMS K13 at a ceremony in Carlingford, Sydney

Picture: Dom Freestone, relative of K13 Survivor Charles Freestone

Bloxwich cheque

BLOXWICH branch raised £500 throughout 2016 through raffles, so branch chairman S/M Christine Mawhinney, S/M Alan Brown and president S/M Bill Platt went along to present Walsall Palliative Care with a cheque for that amount.

Each year, the branch nominates a local charity that has been used by members or their families. The 2017 charity is the Watermill, a facility for those suffering from dementia.

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RM museum to close for move to base

IF YOU'VE not sampled the long, proud history of the Royal Marines there are just weeks left before its museum closes for three years.

The contents of the site in Eastney are being moved as part of a £14m revamp of the galleries of the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

The Royal Marines Museum will re-materialise as a much more modern, interactive experience in 2020 in the boathouse occupied by Action Stations.

By moving the Royal Marines' story on to the same site as the National Museum of the RN, Mary Rose, and Victory, bosses reckon visitor numbers could increase twentyfold.

And it will also allow them to display up to 30 per cent more objects and artefacts than at the existing location.

The move means closing the galleries at Eastney from April 1. The museum will continue to host corporate events, weddings and functions until November 2018, and act as home to various organisations such as the Friends of the RM Museum, the RM Historical Society, the RM Association Concert Band, and the Fort Cumberland Guard.

The fate of the iconic yomper statue which dominates the seafront at the museum entrance is still undecided.

The move is part of a wider revamp of the National Museum; more than two million artefacts, currently kept in 30 separate stores at 14 buildings across nine sites, will be relocated and made accessible to visitors.

Civil Service Fast Stream helps shape new warship

TALENTED civil servants are playing important roles in the development of the Navy's new Global Combat Ship.

The Civil Service Fast Stream programme offers an accelerated career path to leadership and supported development with a graduate employer that consistently ranks in the top five of *The Times* Top 100.

The scheme, which has been operating in various forms for more than 65 years, provides them with the skills, experience and knowledge to become senior leaders within the Civil Service.

Participants in the Fast Stream programme come from a wide range of backgrounds, and are given a broad taste of work across government departments.

Abishai Thomas is a year one Generalist Fast Streamer and has been working on the Royal Nav's Type 26 GCS programme in her first posting, which is due to end this month.

"My role within the team is carrying out a study to scope the 'art of the possible' with respect to mission modules on the Type 26," said Abishai.

"These are essentially standard ISO containers which can be deployed from its mission bay and swapped on and off the ship, enabling Type 26 to have



● Abishai Thomas

the capability and flexibility to go on a number of additional missions, such as disaster relief, outside its primary role as an anti-submarine warfare frigate.

"Over the past six months I have been identifying and engaging with stakeholders across defence and wider government to discuss potential modules, such as the Department for International Development (DFID) for proposed disaster relief modules, as well as holding workshops to come up with previously unexplored possibilities for mission modules.

"I have also been benchmarking with modular systems from other nations, including Denmark and

the USA, to try to inform Type 26 modular concepts."

The Type 26 programme is Abishai's first posting on the Generalist Fast Stream, and she reports to Type 26 Programme Manager Cate Butler.

Cate helps Abishai to set objectives that enable the competencies, skills and knowledge opportunities outlined in the posting to be achieved.

She also arranges regular developmental conversations with Abishai to ensure that she is getting the most out of the short time that she is in the posting, as well as suggesting development

opportunities, challenges and support throughout her time in the department.

Generalist Fast Streamers rotate through four six-month postings during the first two years on the scheme, one of which will be spent on secondment to an external organisation in the private, wider public or charity sector, followed by two 12-month postings.

And Navy Command has set a high bar for other departments that follow.

"This has been an exciting opportunity to get insight into work being done in a front-line command outside of Whitehall,"

she said.

"I've also found Navy Command to be a wonderful place to work – everyone here is keen to give civilians an insight into military life.

"Earlier this year, we put on a day of activities – dockyard tour, wardroom lunch, ship visit, NCHQ question panel – to give other Fast Streamers based in other areas of the MOD an introduction to the Navy and work done at Navy Command, and had lots of enthusiasm and support from headquarters colleagues in organising this."

For further information, see www.faststream.gov.uk



● An artist's impression of the Type 26 Global Combat Ship

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NAVY LISTS 1827 to 2014. View online: www.NavyListResearch.co.uk

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Valiant Brothers out of Challenge

A VERY busy January for Royal Navy Rugby League ultimately ended in disappointment for the senior squad as they lost out in a 12-try thriller to NCL Premier side Myton Warriors 34-38 in the 2017 RL Challenge Cup.

The game started well for RNRL with early tries by ET(ME) Josh Coupland and ET(ME) Luke Cooper plus a conversion from AB(MW) Ryan Mathews, giving the Brothers a 10-0 lead after 20 minutes.

The visitors from Hull however made the second quarter of the match their own rattling in 26 unanswered points to give them a 10-26 half-time lead.

The second half proved to be a fantastic spectacle with RNRL straight out of the blocks posting converted tries for debutants Mne Jamie Birdsall and ET(SM) Danny Johnson to bring them back within four points of the Myton side.

The last quarter of the game saw the sides exchange scores with the experienced LS(W/S) Darren Bamford and prolific try scorer ET(ME) Mike Haldenby crossings.

Unfortunately Myton centre and eventual man of the match Ash James scored the crucial try which he converted to bring his own points tally to 16 points and give his side the win.

The fixture came hot on the heels of the player awards dinner for the 2016 season.

A full list of award winners can



● LAET Ben Taylor, right, will captain the UKAF tour party to Australia

be found at pitchero.com/clubs/royalnavyrugbyleague/ with the blue ribbon award Man Of Steel going to LET James Parry, ever present throughout the last season for RNRL as well as being selected for UKAF RL in the associations' cup campaign.

Parry was also named along with six other RN players for the forthcoming Defence Forces World Cup competition in Australia.

Joining him in the tour party are CPO Kev Botwood, ET Mike Haldenby, AET Luke Cooper, AB Ryan Mathews, ET(ME) Jack Basher and RNRL Skipper LAET Ben Taylor who has the honour of captaining the tour party.



● Back, from left, LAET Rogers, SAC(T) Stanway, Sgt Coale (USMC), Cpl Williamson, AET Fuller, Cpl Roberts, SAC(T) Smith, Cpl Canham and SAC(T) Jackson, SAC(T) Twining. Front, from left, AET Coad, Cpl Bravo (USMC), LAET Hulbert, SAC(T) Gardner, SAC(T) Miller, AET Lilley and SAC(T) Draycott

Lightning team floored in Florida

ARMED Forces personnel working on the F-35B Lightning II in the USA took part in the Florida State Classic football tournament.

Seventeen members of the Royal Navy, RAF and USMC working on VMFAT-501 at Beaufort in South Carolina made up the 617 Sqn team, with new kit thanks to funding from the RAF Charitable Trust.

Unknown to them they faced teams who play professionally or semi-professionally so, despite winning a trophy in a previous Beaufort tournament, they lost their games 13-0, 18-0 and 3-0.

The squad travelled to Auburndale in Polk County for the competition with their first match against North Florida FC. The squadron put up a good showing for the first 20 minutes before the goals flooded in. The man of the match award went to goalie Cpl David Roberts with team captain SAC(T) Matthew Gardner earning the donkey of the match award for entering the side into a professional tournament without realising.

Next up was the Kickers, AKA Fort Lauderdale FC, who lived up to their name by putting 18 goals past 617 Sqn, who were praised for their high morale.

Man of the match went to

AET Alex Lilley for his relentless effort. Donkey of the match was SAC(T) Jason Stanway for forgetting the offside rule.

The third and final match saw the team take on Lakeland Futbol Club, who were on the same level as 617 Sqn. Despite a closely-fought match it was Lakeland who emerged 3-0 victors.

AET Dean Coad was named man of the match for coming close to scoring. The Donkey title was not awarded.

"Every team member fully enjoyed the experience playing against such high-quality competition," said SAC(T) Jason Stanway. "The 617 Squadron football team showed great team work, morale and cohesion between the three Services that form VMFAT-501 which was again and again commented on by the competition staff, officials and opposing teams."

The players train every week at MCAS Beaufort and are looking to enter more tournaments and leagues this year.

Squad: Cpl Harry Canham, Cpl David Robertson, Cpl Michael Williamson, LAET Anthony Hulbert, LAET James Rogers, SAC(T) Jason Stanway, SAC(T) Daniel Draycott, SAC(T) Danny Miller, SAC(T) Dale Jackson, SAC(T) Darryl Twining, SAC(T) Andrew Smith, SAC(T) Matthew Gardner, AET Dean Coad, AET Jake Fuller, AET Alex Lilley, Sgt Alex Coale and Cpl Marcos Bravo.

Royals down airmen to retain trophy

ROYAL Marines Rugby Union successfully defended their Inverdale Challenge Trophy title with a 30-22 victory over the Fleet Air Arm.

The Royals were penalised twice in early exchanges, giving Horton an option for three easy points.

Horton then converted after a driving maul saw Lowe cross the line to give the FAA a 7-0 lead.

The tide turned towards the end of the first quarter as the Marines benefited from penalty decisions and Caddywould converted.

A quick show and go and sublime arcing run from Caddywould resulted in a try for the stand-off and an 8-7 lead for the men in green.

Regaining the lead following a penalty from Horton, (8-10) FAA centre Janes found space on the left touchline seizing 20 metres of territory.

Following some tenacious work at the break-down, the Royals were able to clear their lines after a well-executed out-plan.

Echoing rugby league, a cross-field kick from Caddywould, following some yards from Hayler and quick hands from Bridgen, saw the ball arrive in the outstretched arms of the diving Gobey. The try was disallowed by the officials. Caddywould clattered a penalty off the upright; Wood, like all good wingers, followed up, gathered the ball to score to the bemusement of the defenders. Converted by Caddywould, it was the RMs



● A Royal Marine evades players from the Fleet Air Arm

Picture: Keith Woodland

who started the second half in the lead 15-10.

Running well in open play, agile lock Morris sucked in the defenders for Caddywould to replicate his try in the first half to ghost through the defence. Duly converting, the RM lead was extended to 12 points.

Adding to another Caddywould penalty, (25-10) ten minutes into the second half, Hayler, now sporting a head band, stole 20 metres after a knock-on; attacking twice down the short side, spotting

the overlap, Bridgen switched play with the ball arriving with substitute Pilkington to score.

A sequence of scrums saw a number of penalties awarded against the RM pack. From the back, FAA No8 and Navy rugby stalwart, Thompson scored an easy try for Horton to convert from out wide to make it 30-17.

A penalty was awarded for FAA handling on the ground only to be reversed for back chat and a minor fracas.

RMs Hayler and Pilkington were both yellow carded before

the end and the two-man advantage saw the FAA score a try.

RM: Willman, Robinson, Jones; Mason, Morris; Cousins, Watt, Hayler; Bridgen, Caddywould; Gobey, Powell, Tabinavesi, Wood, Warrington. Replacements: Bonnick, Myburgh, Southgate, Pilkington, Lines, O'Grady, Warboys.

FAA: Reynolds, Lowe, Burton; Mortensen, Makepeace; Kava, Carver, Thompson; Cox, Horton; Chambers, Janes, Nortman, Saberton, Clarke. Replacements: Blackburn, Warner, Hunt, Tora, Holland, Campbell, Heard.

Words: J Campbell-Baldwin

Tiny walking tall with world medal

ROYAL Navy indoor rowers continued their most successful season to date with three medals among eight top-ten finishes at the World Indoor Rowing Championships in Boston, USA.

Leading the way was PO Sean Gaffney (RNAS Yeovilton), who powered to victory in the men's open adaptive 'legs, arms, trunk' 1,000m with a time of 3min 1.4sec.

WO1 Tiny Nash (HMS Termeraire) became the second-ever RN 2km medallist as he secured third place in the men's heavyweight 50-plus with a personal best of 6min 18.8sec. CPO Collin Leiba (FOST) was the RN's previous medallist in this category but had to settle for 12th spot with 6min 48.8sec.

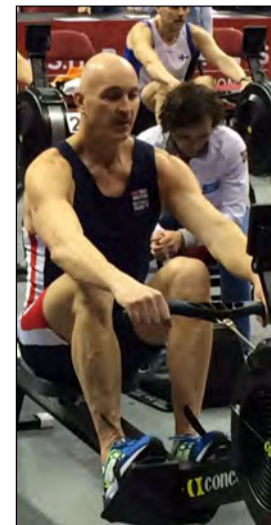
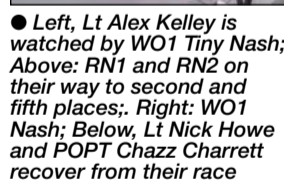
The team's women both recorded personal bests as they went close to medals. Lt Cdr Ruth Guest (INM Alverstoke) finished fourth in the women's lightweight 30-plus with a time of 7min 36.5sec while Lt Alex Kelley (BRNC Wales URNU) was fifth in the women's heavyweight 30-plus in 7min 21.6sec.

CPO Tim Cox (Collingwood) rowed a personal best 6min 39.5sec to finish sixth in the men's lightweight 40-plus, while the men's open lightweight saw POPT Chazz Charrett (Termeraire) finish within 0.2sec of his personal best with a time of 6min 47.2sec, just ahead of Lt Nick Howe (Nelson) in 6min 51.2sec.

Many of those competing for the Royal Navy had benefited from LPT Ollie Osborne's (RNAS Culdrose) guidance and coaching under the RNIR Performance Programme.

All within this structured and periodised training programme had achieved personal best 2k races over the past year, including Lt Cdr Jim Hyde (DES Bristol) who finished eighth in the men's heavyweight 40-plus in a time of 6min 23.7sec, just one place and one tenth of a second ahead of CPOPT Daz Hoare (HMS Excellent).

Lt Craig Guest (HM Collingwood) overcame a challenging travelling schedule to arrive in Boston less than 24 hours prior



● Left, Lt Alex Kelley is watched by WO1 Tiny Nash; Above: RN1 and RN2 on their way to second and fifth places; Right: WO1 Nash; Below, Lt Nick Howe and POPT Chazz Charrett recover from their race

to his race to finish 12th in the men's heavyweight 30-plus race in 6min 26.8sec, ahead of Sgt Sam Arnold (CTCRM), who finished 15th in 6min 30sec and PO Matt Parkinson (HMS Collingwood) with 6min 48.8sec.

In the very competitive men's open heavyweight, which featured Olympic medallists and world record holders, Cpl Dave Moody (40 Cdo) posted the second-fastest RN time of the day with a personal best of 6min 20.7sec.

Not far behind was the team's youngest member, AB Tom Walker (HMS Argyll) just 0.1sec shy of his personal best with a time of 6min 24.1sec.

The culmination of the day at the Agannis Arena, normally an ice hockey rink, was a four-man sprint team race for which the Royal Navy had two teams up against some very fit and strong opposition, including high class crossfitters and a team of select All Star Olympic rowers.

RN1, featuring Leiba, Gaffney, Hyde and

(Craig) Guest rowed a storming race to finish the total 2km aggregate distance in a time of 1min 23.5sec, just 0.1sec behind the All Stars and 0.2sec ahead of the top crossfit team. RN2 (Nash, Moody, Walker and Hoare) finished a close fifth in 1min 26.2sec.

Prior to the Boston trip, a RN team of 19 competed at the English Indoor Rowing Championships at the Manchester Velodrome.

The team came away with six medals and a range of personal and season's best times.

WO1 Nash won the men's heavyweight 50-plus 2km in 6min 20.8sec. Lt Stu Moss (HMS Sultan) won the men's heavyweight 40-plus 500m in 1min 23.1sec.

Silver medals were won in 2km races by Lt Cdr Jim Thomson (men's heavyweight 40-plus) in 6min 19.5sec, CPO Tim Cox (men's lightweight 40-plus) 6min 43sec, POPT Ian Robinson (men's lightweight 30-plus) 6min 59.9sec and Lt Nick Howe (Nelson) finished the men's open lightweight in 6min 56.0sec.

Kings reign at winter classic

A TREE in the middle of an ice rink is not a common sight but it is one that faced the Royal Navy Kings as they took to the ice in the UK's only outdoor Ice Hockey tournament.

The Royal Navy Ice Hockey team arrived in Nottingham City centre early on a cold December morning to compete in the UK Winter Classic, featuring seven sides including the RAF Cosford Stars.

The format of the competition meant that all teams would play each other once with the top four teams going on to the semi-finals.

The RN Kings took to the ice just as the sun began to rise over Nottingham's Old Market Square in the middle of the Christmas market. Their first test in the tournament would be against the Milton Keynes Storm. The RN Kings had very little trouble brushing aside the Storm in a fixture that they won 9-2.

The second match saw the Kings take on some old adversaries in the RAF Cosford Stars. These fixtures are notoriously close however this game was



a different story with the Kings romping home to a 10-0 victory.

The Kings continued to dominate in their third and fourth games, handing defeat to the Flintshire Phantoms by a score line of 4-1 and then beating Team Hockey Tutorial 7-1.

Despite securing themselves a spot in the semi-finals the Kings wanted to continue their winning ways as finishing

well in the league stages would mean an easier match up in the semi-finals. However the fifth game was between the only two undefeated teams left in the tournament.

Despite their best efforts, the Kings were beaten 3-2 by the Grimsby Ice Bears.

The final match of the day saw the Kings bounce back to beat Team Grey



Shield 6-3 to set up a semi-final clash with the RAF Cosford Stars.

The Royal Navy won the semi-final 6-4 to progress to the final and the reigning champions Grimsby Ice Bears, who beat the Phantoms in their semi-final encounter.

The final, which attracted plenty of spectators, including the Lord Mayor of Nottingham, who would present the

victors with the coveted UK Winter Classic Trophy.

The final was a very cagey affair with neither side wanting to give too much away, however when the Ice Bears managed to finally break the deadlock and take the lead the game opened up.

The teams took it in turns to score and with six minutes left to go it was all square at 4-4.

Two quick goals in two minutes by the RN Kings meant they took a commanding lead and only had four minutes to hold out and take the trophy home.

However the reigning champions managed to get two goals back – one of them coming with only 17 seconds left on the clock.

It was golden goal time and the breakthrough came with Mne Young sending a pass up the ice, where a backhand shot from AB(EW) Stennett sent the puck flying into the back of the net.

If you would like any information on Royal Navy Ice Hockey speak to your unit PTI or contact the RNIHA general secretary paul.shannon489@mod.uk



Riders learn from the best

ROYAL Marine rider George Humble makes his way along Ashdown Farm Motocross track during a training day.

Members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Motocross Team were firstly given an introduction to the course by British professional rider Alex Snow.

The morning was spent learning new racing lines and focusing on body positions on the bikes.

The afternoon saw the riders go to a new area of the established track – a 20ft wide,

6ft deep trench which winds through a wooded area.

Alex directed the riders, encouraging smooth rider in order to maintain racing lines, linking exiting lines with entry lines to both corners and jumping seamlessly.

The whole team took on a great deal of new knowledge, learning new skills and improving old ones.

The RNRMMXT is able to fund training days such as this thanks to money from The Royal Marines Charity.

Two out of three ain't bad

THREE members of the Royal Navy Masters Judo squad joined 650 players from across the world at the Eurometropole Masters competition in Lille, France.

WO John Thacker was unfortunately knocked out of medal contention having fought hard.

Cpl Colin Frances was fighting in the M1 age category and the open age category; he quickly dispatched his competition winning all five fights comfortably with maximum scores and securing himself two gold medals.

PO(SC) Ronda Crampton-Reid won three of her five fights giving her the silver in her F3 age category and a bronze in the open age category.

The Masters trio all fought well; their hard work and training paid off and they now look forward to the next big competition at the European Championships.



● Cpl Colin Frances, WO John Thacker and PO(SC) Ronda Crampton-Reid

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● Action from the Inter-Service Squash Championship

Six decades of hurt over for squash players

THE Royal Navy Men's Senior Team won the Inter-Service Squash competition for the first time in 62 years.

The team had a convincing 4-1 victory over the RAF on day one and a thrilling 3-2 victory over the Army on day two.

Having taken the U25 Championship result the previous year, RN Squash elevated two young players to the senior squad.

The Senior Service were cheered on by a home crowd at

HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth. Cheering loudly were John Peake, who won the Navy Championships in 1948, and Robin Bawtree, who was RN champion 15 times in his career.

Supported by Patron, Admiral of the Fleet the Lord Boyce and President, Rear Admiral Tony Radakin, RN Squash also hosted a large group of veterans.

■ Full report and pictures in next month's Navy News

Somerset's stars

MEMBERS of Plymouth-based warship HMS Somerset were invited to join Yeovil Town FC at Huish Park to enjoy the South West showdown against local League One opponents Plymouth Argyle FC.

It was a tense affair both on and off the pitch as there were supporters of both teams among the crew.

While lifelong Argyle fan LS Arthur Batchelor's team put up a good fight, it was the Executive Officer Lt Cdr Vince Owen's Yeovil Town that triumphed on the night.

At half time Somerset's crew were invited onto the pitch for a presentation between the club and ship.

Dave Linney, commercial manager of Yeovil FC said: "On

behalf of the club chairman John Fry and all at Yeovil Town Football Club, it was a pleasure to welcome the captain and some crew members of HMS Somerset.

"We hope to cement our association with HMS Somerset and hopefully be in a position to visit the ship on its return to British waters."

The Type 23's CO Cdr Tim Berry said: "It has been an absolute pleasure to strengthen our affiliation with Yeovil Town Football Club, especially at a local derby against Plymouth, our base port.

"Yeovil pulled out all the stops for our visit and it was a pleasure to represent the Navy at half time and meet some of the players."

Running for glory

HMS Sultan hosted some of the Royal Navy's top runners at the Eastern Region Cross Country.

A total of 60 runners from Sultan, HMNB Portsmouth, HMS Collingwood, HMS Excellent and the Royal Marines School of Music competed for a place in the top ten finishers in their category, to be part of the team who will compete at the Navy Championships.

Fastest female AET Emily Newton said: "The course was a little bit boggier than last time and I had a race on Sunday so I'm a bit tired but it was a really good race. It was really good

to have Sub Lieutenant Chelsea Baker to push me; it's a shame that more women haven't got involved."

Lt Cdr Ginge Gough, RN Sports Officer for RN and UK Combined Forces Athletics and the RN Elite Athletes programme, presented prizes to race winners and a top performer award for the team from HMS Sultan.

He said: "I know guys who have started here and gone on as far as the home international and Navy and UK Armed Forces level is certainly not too high a level to aim at."

Medal hopes in Oz

ROYAL Navy hockey veterans are preparing for the World Masters Games in New Zealand in April.

A squad of 18, comprising RN, Royal Marines and a civil servant, will compete against a number of countries, as well as taking on the New Zealand Navy team.

The team, which competes at over-35 level, will be playing a warm-up match against a Welsh international side at the start of April.

The masters, which is billed as the world's largest multi-sport event, will feature 25,000 sportsmen and women from 100 countries competing in 28 sports and 45 disciplines.

The RN team has received sponsorship from charities and the Sports Lottery. Anyone wishing to sponsor the side or help with funding towards kit can contact David Hammond on Twitter @hammyd23



● LNN Laura Davis, left, from MDHU Derriford and L/Cpl Stuart Downie, of 45 Cdo, compete in the Super G Premier race



● Mne Rob Griffiths, from 45 Cdo, and AB Kristan McNamara, of 825 NAS, take part in the second week of the beginners' night slalom race



● Left, Lt Oliver Crow takes part in week one of the Slalom 'B' race; Above: Midshipman Thomas Parsons from BRNC competes in the Super G Premier race



● Lt Cdr Robert Whitworth, left, and LH Tom Hurst, suffer tumbles on the snow



● Far left, Lt Alex Tuckwood from 825 NAS; left, Lt Marian-Taylor from HMS Nelson in the Super G; Below left, the boarder and ski cross race; below, members of the RNRM ski team in Tignes, France



Ski sundae

Navy skiers and boarders kick up a storm

BLUE Skies. A near-perfect snow base... What more do you need for the 2017 Alpine Championships?

Within France's Tarentaise Valley is the biggest concentration of world-class ski resorts. At 2,100m lies Tignes Le Lac which hosted the Royal Navy Winter Sports Association Alpine Championships.

With a record attendance of over 1,200 people it was set to be the best championships to date.

The two weeks are broken down into two phases. The first week comprises of ski and boarder training and a limited number of races. There is also an Adventurous Training package for beginners to progress Ski Foundation 1 standard. The first week ends with the beginners who have never set foot on skis or a snowboard taking part in a night race in the hamlet of Lavachet.

With record crowds gathered for the

spectacular night race, it was the turning point for the weather in the French Alps. After nearly nine weeks of cloudless skies and not a snowflake in sight, the storm front which had been battering the rest of Europe finally showed its wrath in Tignes. This did not stop the racers however. If anything it was ideal conditions giving a fluffy cushion of snow to fall onto.

The weather did not stop there either. The following day saw 60kph winds, driving snow and wind-chill temperature of -30°C, which caused the cancellation of a novice race.

Come the Sunday though the sun was back out and the second week of the Alpine Championships saw pristine snow conditions just in time for all the sponsors' arrivals and the arrival of VIPs, including the Second Sea Lord, Fleet Commander and Cdre Jon Pentreath, Chairman of the RNWSA.

The second week also saw a record turnout of Service Personnel from 825 Naval Air Squadron based at RNAS Yeovilton.

Cdr Simon Collins, CO of 825, said: "Against a backdrop of a busy frontline and training programme, I am delighted that we managed to get 41 personnel from 825 away to the RN Ski Champs in Tignes this year. Not only does it highlight the variety and opportunities available in the Royal Navy but also gives individuals the chance to develop themselves - 18 novices learning how to ski and snowboard. Thirteen medals alongside a lot of fun is testament to this."

AET Vicky Paull from 825 NAS, who had never skied before, said: "It has been a fantastic experience learning how to ski. Although at times it was challenging, it was thoroughly enjoyable."

Lt Cdr

Holly Henderson, captain of the women's Navy Ski team was set to see out her final captaincy before moving onto pastures new.

"We've had a great RN ski champs with incredible conditions," she said. "I'm extremely proud to be captaining such a strong squad in my final year."

Throughout the week, a variety of races took place including Giant Slalom, Parallel Giant Slalom, Ski and Boarder Cross, Slopestyle and the famed Premier Super G. Service Personnel from across the Senior Service took part in the racing, including a newly-formed team sporting bright pelican yellow jackets from HMS Prince of Wales.

The competition had added French flavour as a team of eight from the Marine Nationale also took part, led by their British exchange officer Lt Helen Taylor.

"I have been part of the RN ski team since 2010, and this was the first time I represented a different team," said Lt Taylor. "I received a fair few snowballs when I got onto the podium carrying a French flag! The team gave me luck though; this is the first time I have achieved a podium place."

Snowboarder QM Killien said: "We were made to feel very welcome. Even though it was really cold, -18°C one morning - the snow was excellent."

The Chevalier Paul team - named after the Horizon-class air defence destroyer - performed well overall; in the "A" slalom, MTS Jonathan finished third in the male Intermediate category and SM Audrey came first in the female Intermediate category, whilst the team won the Club Team category.

Lt Taylor came third in the slalom, third in the Super G, second in the Super-G Premier and first in the Giant Slalom, winning overall female champion.

Director of the RN Ski Championships Cdr Nick Howard said: "Against some really challenging (and some perfect) weather conditions we've had record numbers of racers taking part this year. I hope to see you all in Tignes in 2018"

● Mne Ben Hollis from 45 Commando competes in the Ski Giant Slalom 'A' race in Val Claret, Tignes

Words and pictures: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum

Turning up the heat

THE Royal Navy Royal Marines Nordic Ski Team saw the men's side produce its best performance in five years at the Inter-Services in Rupholding, Germany.

The men finished second in the Patrol Race, which involved a team of four carrying 40kg between them and four SA80 rifles on a 30km ski with various command tasks on the way.

The side also took fifth place out of 26 teams in the SAS Cup.

In its second season the Women's team caused some upset at the Divisionals in Serre Chevalier, France, by finishing second in the 4x5km cross-country relay.

The team, which was selected in May, benefitted from training sessions at RM Condor in Arbroath.

"The time spent on the new range made a huge difference to the team's ability once we arrived on snow, everyone was much quicker at handling the rifle which saves a lot of time in races and good shooting saves time on the penalty loop," said Women's captain Lt Ali Armstrong.

Two RNRM members, L/Cpl Neal Russell and Mne Brett Stevens, who last year were chosen to be part of the National Biathlon Development Squad, assisted team coach WO Billy Rogers in both classic technique and skating.

"As a runner I found the classic technique simpler to pick up than skating, it is much more akin to running and uses similar muscles," said AB Nicola Roder.

In January the team was invited to the Army Divisionals in Serre Chevalier, France. Due to lack of snow the Classic Racing occurred on the Col de Lotterate glacier, in temperatures as low as -35°C.

L/Cpl Russell won the Men's 15km race, with Mne Peacock as first novice. AB Roder was second novice in the Women's 10km race.

"The team performed really well in tough conditions," said team skipper Capt Rory Wells.

The culmination of the season was the Inter-Services in Rupholding. The team had some of its best results with L/Cpl Russell coming second in the 15km Classic Race. Mne Peacock continued to win all of the novice races and the women finished second to the Army.

If you are interested in joining the RNRM Nordic team for the 2017/18 season a selection week will be held in May. See your PTI for details or visit the RNWSA section at www.RoyalNavy.mod.uk



● Pictured right from top, are AB Nicola Roder in the cross-country race; Lt Ali Armstrong in the biathlon; Lt Elly Smillie and OC Fleur Peoples chasing down an Army skier; Lt Smillie takes aim at the targets; The RNRM men in the patrol race, from left, Capt Chris Huggett, Cpl Jon Smith, L/Cpl Russell and Mne Peacock; The RNRM Nordic Ski Team

● Left, Cpl Jon Smith takes aim during the individual biathlon discipline at the Army Divisionals in Serre Chevalier

Picture: Sgt Russ Nolan, RLC