



NAVY NEWS

JUNE 2018

Mine the gap

HMS Brocklesby follows HMS Shoreham as the two minehunters complete seven weeks of intensive training off the Scottish west coast ahead of an impending three-year stint in the Gulf (see pages 2-3).

Picture: LPhot Will Haigh, FRPU North



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Aloha, Doha

THE lights of mother ship RFA Cardigan Bay and minehunters HMS Blyth (outboard) and Ledbury (inboard) shine brightly on a fine night in Doha harbour as the bulk of the UK's Gulf mine warfare force spend a few days in Qatar.

The Bahrain-based force made the 120-mile journey from the kingdom to the emirate and were granted a plum berth bang in the heart of the Qatari capital – the newly-opened cruise liner jetty.

Barely were the gangways across to dry land than the ships were overrun with youngsters and teachers from Doha English School who were given tours of the three vessels as they learned what life is like for sailors on board.

And on a more practical level, British sailors discussed joint operations with their Qatari counterparts, in particular mine warfare.

The Qatari Emiri Navy operates well over 70 vessels – mostly patrol craft, although it is investing in a helicopter assault ship and several corvettes – to safeguard its 350-mile coastline and territorial waters, but doesn't possess any minehunters, a branch of warfare in which the RN is widely-regarded as a world leader.

Visit over, Blyth and Ledbury sailed with Qatari ship Al Ghariyah to carry out a short exercise to prove their ability to work with each other and help develop common understanding and skills.

The crews of Blyth and Ledbury are drawing to the end of their time in the Gulf, preparing to return to Faslane and Portsmouth respectively after nearly six months on operations. The visit was designed to advertise the significant mine warfare skills and equipment they bring to bear.

"It's always a pleasure to open our ships up to visitors, and our time in Doha proved an ideal opportunity," said Lt Cdr Louise Ray, Blyth's Commanding Officer.

"We hosted and provided in-depth tours for MCM experts from the Qatar Emiri Navy – we're proud to work with our Qatari friends to help provide security at sea."



Lochs, Brock and a f

WITH the westerly wind driving low cloud over the imposing 1,100ft lump of granite that is Ailsa Craig, HMS Brocklesby makes her way back to Faslane, her training complete for a mammoth mission which looms.

In a few weeks, she will slip the bonds which bind her with the mother country and strike out for the Middle East in company with HMS Shoreham, where both ships will be challenged by minehunting in temperatures of 40-50°C and sand clogging hi-tech machinery.

And as both face a 6,000-mile odyssey from Blyth to Bahrain, followed by several months together hunting mines, working with Allied navies and generally promoting peaceful seafaring, it made perfect sense that they went through the rigours of training for that mission hand-in-hand.

Minehunters – whether Hunts like Brocklesby or Sandown-class ships like Shoreham – receive a bespoke, five-week Operational Sea Training package around western Scotland courtesy of the folk at FOST North (compared with

a couple of months for frigates and destroyers off Plymouth).

And with one eye firmly on the international mission in the Gulf – where, pretty much on a daily basis, the duo will be working with the US Navy's Bahrain-based mine warfare flotilla – straight after OST the two ships were pitchforked into the biggest naval exercise of the year in home waters to see how they fared working in a multi-national task group.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

First sailors must demonstrate they can deal with the 'billy basics' of life at sea: routine navigation, seamanship and emergencies at sea or in harbour.

Once they can, then the focus switches to warfighting, including two weeks dedicated solely to mine warfare.

Both ships carry a remote-controlled mini-submarine, Seafox, and a specialist team of divers to identify mines and render them useless, normally by blowing them up from a safe distance.

That meant an extended period in defence watches – a heightened state of alert – finding, plotting and disposing of mines around the clock using the ship's sonars, Seafox and the divers.

For many of Brocklesby's ship's company, this was their first experience of OST.

"This has been a great opportunity for me to put my skills into practice and learn lots of new things too. I've learnt things about my trade that I did not know even existed!" said communications specialist ET(CIS) 'Smudge' Smith.

At the other end of the scale, Brocklesby's Executive Officer Lt Tom Forbes has gone through the travails of OST several times.

"Having served in Hunts my whole career, it still surprises me how many different scenarios the staff can produce to consistently create new and challenging incidents for the ship's company to deal with," he said.

For team Shoreham, the highlights of the five weeks were: taking each other in tow (known as a salvage exercise); dealing with a mock riot in a port as the two ships' gunnery teams fended off fast-attack craft on the water and civilians trying to storm the vessels from the land side; two weeks of continuous minehunting operations, involving frequent 'bangs' as the dive team detonated charges; and LD Diver John Robinson making himself indispensable to almost everything the ship did – "if he



Mersey returns cup from Jersey

LIT up at night alongside in St Helier, this is HMS Mersey as you've probably never seen her before.

The overhead photograph of the patrol ship was captured as she attended this year's Jersey Boat Show.

She drew in more than 1,000 visitors during her attendance at the three-day event which is used by the RN to re-affirm its connections with the Channel Islands.

Among those ties: the Jersey Cup, a magnificent £20,000 solid silver trophy donated to the namesake wartime destroyer by islanders.

It survived the warship's sinking in the Med and eventually ended up on the next HMS Jersey, a fishery patrol boat.

When she was sold to Pakistan in the mid-90s, a role was found for the cup: awarded to the most effective vessel in the fishery protection squad.

Sadly, Mersey wasn't the winner. But her crew were asked to bring the trophy back on behalf of their cod squad colleagues in HMS Tyne.

Over the weekend, the ship hosted various VIPs, led by the Lieutenant Governor of Jersey, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton, and laid on a capability demonstration.

In return, Mersey's sailors were invited to a formal reception at the Royal Channel Islands Yacht Club to engage with the local community and reaffirm the Royal Navy's commitment to the Channel Islands.

"Notwithstanding the rich history between the Royal Navy and Jersey, I have been overwhelmed by the warmth of the reception Mersey has received whilst alongside in St Helier," said Lt Cdr Ben Power, Mersey's CO.

AB Daniel Witt added: "It was great to show people what it is we do – normally I talk to friends about my work and they don't really get it, but during this kind of event we get to show and meet people."

After three days in the spotlight, the ship resumed her fishery protection patrol around the UK.





French time for Tyne

THE French ship Cormoran edges ahead of HMS Tyne just north of Dover as the two 'cousins' share the tricks of the trade.

The Cormoran is attached to the French Naval Action Force (ALFAN) based in Cherbourg, one of three Flamant-class patrol ships assigned to fishery protection and general duties between the Cotentin Peninsula and the Pas de Calais.

She's currently on a tour of UK ports – hence the departure from her normal operating area to the North Sea... which comes under the eastern patrol area for RN fishery protection ships like Tyne.

As they rendezvoused, personnel from both vessels were transferred across by sea boat in order to witness manoeuvres from the other ship and gain an insight into how their colleagues operate.

There were some officer of the watch manoeuvres with the two ships moving around close to each other, testing the handling of the bridge teams and the skills of their tactical communicators.

Observing proceedings from the Cormoran was Tyne's gunnery officer, Sub Lt Aidan Hetherington, one of the Brits who swapped places with the French.

"The exercise was rewarding, it was a great opportunity to visit our French colleagues who operate as we do but on the other side of the English Channel. They were very accommodating and I hope that we will be able to work with them again soon."

His CO Lt Cdr Hugh Harris added: "It is always a great opportunity to exercise with the French and build further ties with our nearest neighbours."

"Exercises like this test and prove our ability to work closely with vessels from other nations. I look forward to working with FS Cormoran and the ALFAN Cherbourg more closely in the future."

Tyne will join HMS Severn at lower readiness as the first-generation River-class ships are replaced by the second generation, led by HMS Forth.

ew smoking barrels

wasn't diving, he was driving."

"Operational Sea Training isn't something you expect to enjoy – and that's certainly true when you're tired – but when the team get it right that's when you enjoy it," said Shoreham's navigator Lt Charlotte Boak.

"I don't think anyone can say they don't get a buzz when they've been told they've done well at their job."

Marine engineer LET Johnny Sulton said sea training "always means the working days are long, but it really amplifies the cohesion of the team."

Sub Lt Rachel Humphrey – aboard as a trainee young officer – said all 40 sailors "just had to get on with whatever task you are given. We all endure the hardship and get stuck in to help each other out. Our team spirit was a strength throughout."

After five weeks of OST, the duo were joined by HMS Hurworth and Pembroke, as well as two French minehunters to form a specialist task group on the first Joint Warrior exercise of the year.

All six ships worked in company under Cdr Ash Spencer and the UK's Mine Warfare Battle Staff – the next team to take command of the permanent RN Gulf minehunting force, using RFA Cardigan Bay as their flagship.

For Joint Warrior, they set their Anglo-

French charges the task of clearing routes into the harbours of Pastonia (a fictitious country which closely resembles the northern UK) to enable trade to flow, despite Dragonian (a pesky nation which looks somewhat like another part of the UK) mining the waters.

On top of the challenge of not being blown up by said mines, there was the small matter of spring weather in Scotland (bad) and regular air and surface attacks to distract the minehunters from their main task.

"It was pretty tiring," said Lt Ben Hammick, Brocklesby's Navigating Officer.

"The scenario is designed to test your endurance and your ability to keep going despite the near-constant threat of attack."

"One of the highlights for me was when Brocklesby was given control of a Hawk jet to warn and ultimately sink two Dragonian patrol vessels at long range."

For Shoreham's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Adrian Visram, the seven weeks of intensive training and action were just what the doctor ordered.

"Mine warfare crews are unique –

each individual is a cog to the wheel of success," said Shoreham's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Adrian Visram.

"Without one component we wouldn't turn smoothly and the responsibilities given to junior members is much greater than on a frigate, destroyer or capital ship."

The two well-honed teams enjoyed a short break after their exertions before leaving the UK this month, taking six weeks to hop from port to port (the vessels need to stock up on fuel and food at least once a fortnight).

"Working with Brocklesby was useful for our journey out to the Gulf," Lt Boak added.

"Although it's not a competition to see which ship does best, it's in our nature for it to be competitive. This sets us up well for events like racing your opposite number up the Rock in Gibraltar."

Once at the RN's new support facility in Bahrain, Shoreham will replace HMS Bangor and Brocklesby will relieve HMS Middleton, who'll make the return journey to Faslane and Portsmouth respectively, their three-year tour of duty done.

Pictures: LPhot Will Haigh, FRPU North and HMS Brocklesby's ship's company



The Echo of praise

THE Prince of Wales shared "his and his nation's pride" with the men and women of HMS Echo when he thanked them for their mercy mission in the Med.

The heir to the throne dropped in on the survey ship in Athens' port of Piraeus as Echo took a break from Operation Sophia – the international naval effort to stop people trafficking from North Africa to Europe.

Aboard he learned of Echo's efforts since she was assigned to the mission – also known as Operation Litten by UK forces – at the tail end of 2015.

Two and a half years later and Echo's sailors have saved more than 8,000 lives, destroyed 66 boats used for trafficking and assisted in the arrest of 15 people involved in the illegal smuggling operation.

The Prince told Echo's Commanding Officer Cdr Andrew Norgate and his ship's company, gathered on the quarterdeck, of "his and his nation's pride" in the lifesaving work they are doing.

"The efforts of HMS Echo's ship's company on Operation Litten cannot be understated and this visit from His Royal Highness was a very well received reward following months of hard work on deployment," said Echo's Navigating Officer Lt Will Mills.

In addition to her rescue/counter-trafficking duties in the central Mediterranean, more recently the ship has resumed her traditional role of providing an accurate picture of the seabed by surveying the waters around Malta at the request of the Commonwealth nation's government.

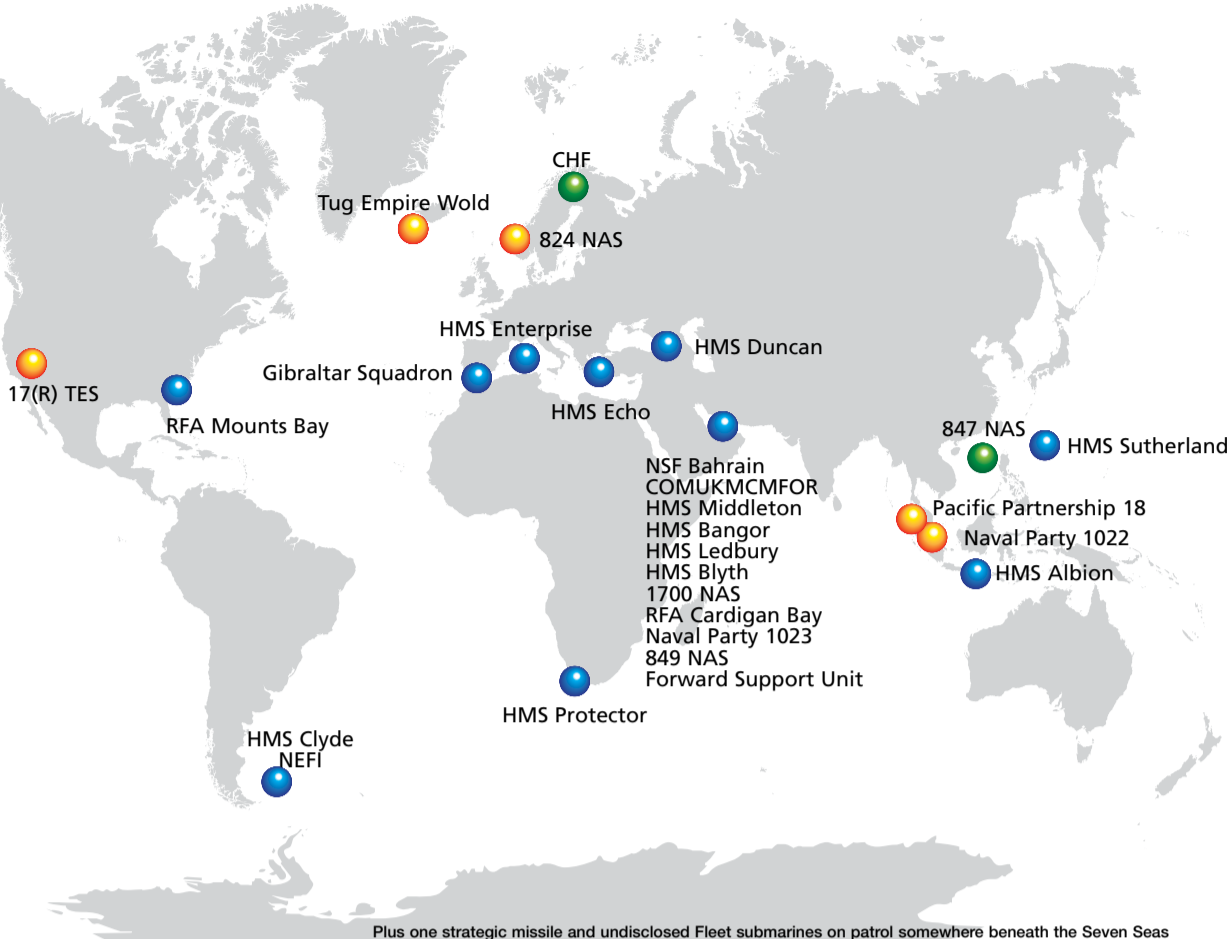
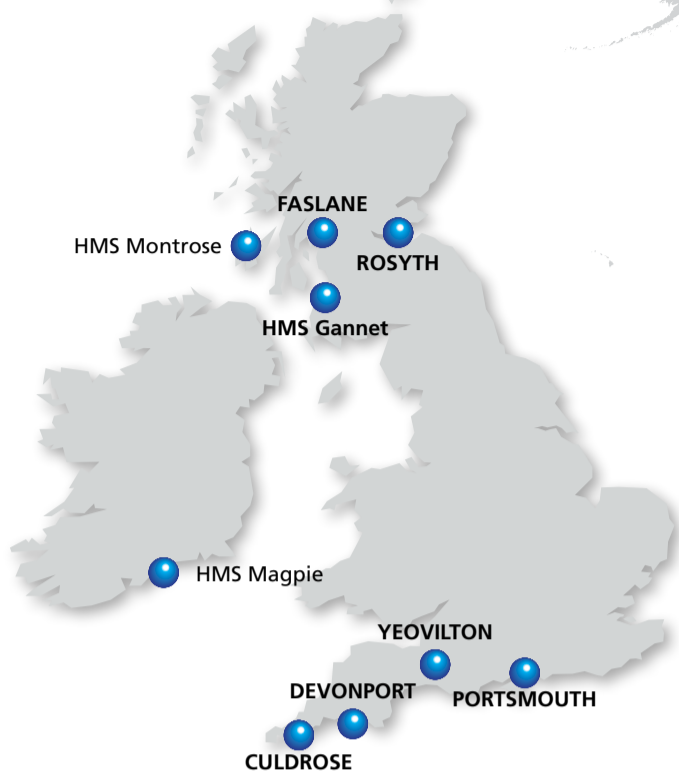
The results of that work were outlined for the prince by Cdr Norgate, assisted by some of the impressive and colourful 3D scans produced by Echo's sonar/hydrographic suite.

And two of the ship's company – PO(CS) Garry Warnes from Crownhill in Plymouth and WO1 Bryan Doody from Dunfermline – were presented with clasps to their Long Service and Good Conduct medal by Prince Charles, recognising the 67 combined years of service they have given to the Royal Navy so far.



Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Northumberland	HMS Diamond
HMS Mersey	HMS Hurworth
HMS Tyne	HMS St Albans
HMS Argyll	HMS Montrose
HMS Dragon	HMS Cattistock
HMS Defender	HMS Westminster



Plus one strategic missile and undisclosed Fleet submarines on patrol somewhere beneath the Seven Seas

FLEET FOCUS

Protecting our nation's interests

WE REACH the half-way point of 2018 (*tempus fugit...*) with the Fleet mostly spread across three regions of main effort: Southeast Asia, the Gulf and the Mediterranean-Black Sea.

Flagship **HMS Albion** put into Sasebo in Japan after visits to Indonesia and Borneo – the latter allowing her Royal Marines detachment to practise jungle training (see the centre pages).

Further east still and **HMS Sutherland's** Pacific deployment resumed after a maintenance break in Japan with an exercise with her host's navy (see page 7).

It has been reasonably quiet in the Gulf, save for some relationship building by **HMS Blyth** and **Ledbury** and **RFA Cardigan Bay**, who made the short trip from Bahrain to Qatar (see page 2).

Our cover stars **HMS Shoreham** and **Brocklesby** will soon be Gulf-bound, having completed training in tandem off Scotland (see pages 2-3).

Further west, **HMS Duncan** paid a rare visit by the RN to Georgia, the latest port of call for the NATO task group she leads (see right).

In cooler waters, **824 NAS** took its trainee air and groundcrew to Norway to hone their submarine-hunting skills in the challenging environment of the fjords around Bergen (see opposite).

HMS Mersey took part in the Jersey Boat Show, picking up the Jersey Cup (see page 2) on behalf of her sister **HMS Tyne** who conducted joint training with the French Navy near Dover before returning to Portsmouth (see page 3).

And talking of the *Marine Nationale*, Lt Helen Taylor gives us a comprehensive insight into life in our nearest neighbour's Fleet, courtesy of a long-term exchange programme, including time with the **FS Chevalier Paul**. (see page 11).

Royal Marines of **42 Commando** celebrated their new role as a major reshuffle of the Corps (Project Sykes) with a parade/families day at Bickleigh (see page 13)... while up the M5 in Taunton their colleagues in **40 Commando** were storming County Hall, part of a revamp of urban combat tactics in the Corps (see page 13).

HMS Queen Elizabeth's crew trained with local emergency services to see how both would cope with a major fire or incident aboard the carrier in Portsmouth Naval Base (see page 6).

She's gearing up to head to the states to host **F-35B** jets for the first time... while the first four British Lightning IIs of 617 Squadron (an RAF squadron, but manned jointly with the FAA) are due to fly over to their new home at RAF Marham early this month (see page 7).

The message of goodwill, lifesaving and good health spread by the US military's **Pacific Partnership 18** deployment – which includes half a dozen Britons, led by Capt Peter Olive RN – has reached Malaysia and it edges westwards (see pages 14-15).

A few days before the Royal Wedding, Prince Charles visited **HMS Echo** in Piraeus to thank crew for their efforts to prevent migrant trafficking and save lives (well over 8,000) in the central Mediterranean (see page 3).

The name of the seventh and last Astute-class submarine – long rumoured to be Ajax – was finally revealed to be **HMS Agincourt** as Whitehall committed to the £1.5bn boat (see page 13).

She'll be based at **HMS Neptune/Faslane**, which celebrated its 50th birthday... characteristically under a downpour (see page 9).

Bad weather evidently means little to new survey boat **HMS Magpie** which demonstrated her impressive sea handling abilities while undergoing trials off Cork (see page 6).

Iceland's Coastguard found the wreck of a Royal Navy tug lost in a storm in 1944; the **Empire Wold** foundered during a rescue mission to save sailors torpedoed by a U-boat (see page 6).

HMS Montrose took a break from her participation in the first of this year's Joint Warrior exercise to pay tribute to two WW1 tragedies off the Isle of Islay (see page 6).

And Royal Marines led the way by marking the centenary of what was arguably the first 'commando raid': **Zeebrugge**. Ceremonies took place in Liverpool, Deal, Dover and at the Belgian port, where frigate **HMS Somerset** was also in attendance (see page 29).

■ *View from the Bridge* will return next month

Never forgotten

Tribute to fallen as HMS Duncan visits Georgia

BENEATH the searing sun on the eastern shore of the Black Sea, Cdre Mike Utley salutes 68 Britons killed in a largely-forgotten military adventure 100 years ago.

The rare visit of a British warship to the eastern European nation of Georgia permitted today's generation of Servicemen and women to remember sailors and soldiers sent east to stem the red tide of Communism.

Just a month after the guns fell silent in France and Belgium in November 1918, a force of ships and troops was sent to Georgia to support anti-Communist forces trying to re-take Russia from the Bolsheviks and Red Army.

And as with all Allied intervention across Russia it failed. British forces were pulled out and Georgia spent 70 years under the rule of the hammer and sickle.

The graves of the 68 British military personnel – five of them RN – buried in Batumi British Military Cemetery could not be found when the Commonwealth War Graves Commission visited the city after the fall of the Soviet Union.

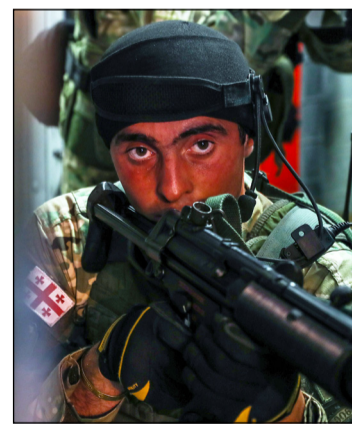
Instead, four years ago a memorial wall listing the fallen was erected.

HMS Duncan's visit to the port of Poti, 30 miles up the coast from Batumi, allowed Cdre Utley, commanding a NATO task group from the Type 45 destroyer, Duncan's CO Cdr Eleanor Stack and a number of their ship's company, plus Royal Marine Lt Col David Ethell, the UK's Defence Attaché in Georgia, to visit the memorial.

The visit to the country for NATO's Standing Maritime Group 2 – a force at present of four ships, currently drawn from the Black Sea region – comes on the back of participation in the Romanian Fleet's annual major workout, Sea Shield.

The exercise tested the impressive array of warships mustered off the Romanian coast across the full spectrum of naval warfare and missions: board-and-search duties, submarine hunting, amphibious operations and air attacks. The Romanian Air Force committed three veteran MiG-21 Lancers, while the RAF dispatched the same number of Typhoons all the way across Europe.

The British jets came under the control of Duncan and her ops room team, who used the Eurofighters as the shield against mock air-to-surface attacks, fending off incoming



● Left, Members of Georgia's Armed Forces were invited aboard HMS Duncan to exercise with Royal Marines; Above, Cdre Mike Utley pays his respects; Right, the *Passex* in the Aegean Sea
Pictures: LPhoto Paul Hall



air raids on the naval group.

Typhoon pilot Sqn Ldr Roger Cruickshank said: "HMS Duncan used her sophisticated systems to maintain full awareness of my position and simulated enemy aircraft trying to attack the ship."

"I was able to stop the advances of the oncoming aircraft trying to attack the friendly ships by HMS Duncan's excellent team who were ready to simulate launching her own weapons in protection."

The spirit of international co-operation and training continued in Georgia where

the Royal Marines boarding team aboard Duncan shared their experience and tactics with counterparts from Georgia's Coastguard and commandos, using the destroyer as their 'playground' while alongside in Poti.

Earlier in her deployment Duncan led a meeting of NATO vessels in the Aegean Sea.

The Type 45, in company with the Turkish frigate TCG Gemlik and Spanish frigate ESPS Victoria, met up with German frigate FGS Bayern and Greek naval vessels, destroyer HS Adrias, fast-attack craft HS Mykonios and gunboat HS Armatolos.



Fjord focus

TWO weeks of intensive submarine hunting in the cold, clear, confined waters of Norway have helped Navy fliers raise their game.

824 Naval Air Squadron took two of their Merlin Mk2 helicopters – regarded as the world-leader in submarine hunting – to Norway for the fortnight-long exercise Rogue Wizard, pitting their wits against a diesel boat.

Experienced and rookie aircrew – 824 is the Navy's Merlin training squadron and also provides helicopters, crews and engineers for RN frigates on operations around the world – made the 800-mile trip from Culdrose to western Norway, using the home of the Norwegian Navy at Haakonsværn, near Bergen, as their base.

Merlin crews conduct much of their anti-submarine training either in the Mounts Bay-Southwest exercise areas or the more open waters of the Western Approaches.

They're not used to the restrictions imposed by the nature of the fjords with their steep sides, deep, cold waters (the temperature and composition of sea water affects how effective the Merlin's sonar and sonobuoys are when the hunt is on).

With the proliferation of nations and navies operating and investing in submarines, and especially increased Russian Navy activity in recent years, every opportunity to practise hunting real boats is seized by the 'grey' Merlin force based at Helston. They've only recently returned from NATO's Mediterranean hunt, Dynamic Manta... and will be back in Norway shortly for another NATO test, Dynamic Mongoose.

Crews taking part in the exercise were not only responsible for operating the Merlin while hundreds of miles from home; they also planned and executed the complicated transit from Cornwall through Scotland and across the North Sea.

Once in Haakonsværn, the crews flew intensively to locate, track and attack the Norwegian submarine HNoMS Uthaug (193ft long, 1,000 tonnes, crew of just 21).

Starting in the open waters of the North Sea, the scenario quickly developed and

shifted inland to the deep fjords.

"The North Atlantic remains one of the most important theatres for the Royal Navy. Developing anti-submarine warfare skills to operate in the fjords and challenging conditions of Norway is critical," explained Lt Cdr Dan Waskett, in charge of the detachment.

"Techniques and experience are transferable across a range of environments however, and the excellent training opportunities afforded us, allow our crews to develop the deep specialist knowledge essential in maintaining our tactical edge."

Joining the Merlins in the skies of Hordaland were NH90 helicopters – the Norwegian counterpart of the Fleet Air Arm's airborne submarine killer.

For the student fliers – well on the way to earning their wings as qualified aircrew this summer – the stint in Norway was eye-opening and invaluable.

"So far in our careers we have only operated in the UK – it's the result of years of training that we have been able to deploy two aircraft across the North Sea," said trainee pilot Lt Nick Jackson-Spence.

"Operating against a foreign submarine in the deep Norwegian fjords was a real test of our skills and is certainly the highlight of my career so far."

Student observer Riley Handforth added: "To come here and operate against a foreign submarine in their own backyard is as much of a challenge as it is a privilege."

"The submarine crew know their waterways so well so it really does make it all the more satisfying when we are able to detect and attack them. We're extremely thankful to the Norwegians for the opportunity to further develop our skills."

Trainee aircrewman Andrew Smith – responsible for working with the observer in finding, tracking and ultimately destroying an enemy submarine – found the Bergen region a world away from the usual Helston hunting grounds.

"The deep fjords coupled with the fresh water running off the glaciers make for an extremely challenging anti-submarine environment. However, our previous training prepared us well."



Elmer thud, not dud



THIS chunky – and rather rusty – chappie was washed up on the beach at Elmer Sands, east of Bognor Regis: a 1,000kg German bomb. Locals toyed with throwing coins at the device before thinking better of it and calling the emergency services. The bomb was discovered sufficiently far from any homes to

warrant inhabitants being evacuated. Southern Diving Unit 2 from Portsmouth responded, carefully towed the bomb out to sea, lowered it to the seabed and then detonated it from a safe distance sending a water plume several hundred feet high into the sky off Bognor.



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Picture: LPhoto Kyle Heller

Queen of HART

HOW would we cope should a fire rage through the nation's future flagship or – worse – terrorists inflict mass casualties in an attack?

Naval personnel and Hampshire emergency services pooled resources to deal with a potential disaster while HMS Queen Elizabeth is berthed in her home port.

Both organisations maintain specialist teams to cope with a major incident – the ERT (Emergency Response team) in the naval base, while Hampshire's fire and ambulance services combine to provide HART (Hazardous Area Response Team).

Both were tested for the first time in the wide passageways and numerous compartments – there are 3,300 compartments across more than a dozen decks.

Given the size of the two carriers and a typical crew of just 700 to 740 sailors, traditional fire-fighting/damage control and casualty treatment plans have to be altered.

HMS Queen Elizabeth's crew went through intensive training to deal with emergencies before they took the ship to Gibraltar in February (it was a precondition of the 65,000-tonne warship leaving UK waters).

They're also put through their paces on a weekly basis by the ship's own CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear defence) instructors, like CPO Shaun Gibbs.

In the event of a serious fire beyond the powers of the naval base/ship's company teams to contain, the local fire and rescue service would dispatch seven appliances and 30 firefighters, irrespective of whether a 65,000-tonne leviathan like the new carrier, or a 750-tonne minnow like HMS Hurworth were ablaze.

"We hold weekly exercises to train our ship's company to deal with a fire on board, but we rarely get the chance to train like this with external agencies. This is a first for the ship," he said.

"It's a great opportunity to ensure a combined element of training with the ERT, the fire and ambulance services."

The ship laid on a realistic harbour fire exercise with 'training smoke' and mock casualties to test the response of medics and fire teams – and to test the civilian emergency services, including fire crews from Southsea and Cosham, in working in an extremely unfamiliar, claustrophobic environment.

A conflagration demanding outside assistance is unlikely, says Rob Jenks, station manager with Hampshire Fire and Rescue, as "Navy and dockyard crews are very well-drilled, equipped and capable.

"But by preparing ourselves with exercises like this it ensures we are as ready and well prepared as we can be."

Wartime wreck found off Iceland

THIS is the haunting sight of a Royal Navy support boat, sitting upright on the seabed off the Icelandic coast.

Nearly 75 years after she mysteriously disappeared on a rescue mission, the wreck of naval tug Empire Wold has been discovered – and the tragic fate of her 16 crew revealed.

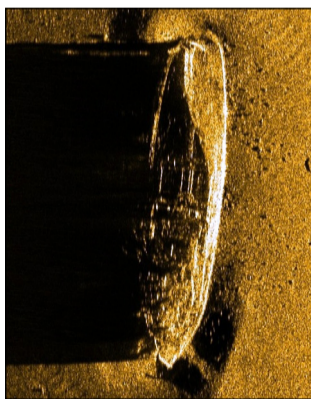
Crewed by a mix of Royal and Merchant Navy personnel, the Sunderland-built vessel was sent to Iceland to support Allied convoys crossing the Atlantic or sailing for the Soviet Union.

On November 10 1944, storm force winds lashed Iceland forcing an approaching convoy from Loch Ewe in Scotland to scatter. A lurking German submarine, U-300, picked off the tanker Shirvan. Survivors were picked up by an Icelandic vessel, the Godafoss, only for it too to fall victim to the U-boat. Torpedoed, the Godafoss sank in just four minutes.

Also heading for the Shirvan's last reported position was the military tug Empire Wold. She never got there.

Historians believed Empire Wold became another victim of the German submarine, although U-300's surviving crew were adamant they had not sunk the tug when their U-boat was lost off Gibraltar the following February.

Now the Icelandic Coastguard has discovered the wreck and



confirmed the U-boat's crew account.

They found no signs of any explosion and, having consulted contemporary weather reports from 1944, determined that the tug foundered in heavy seas and 40-knot winds.

Lost with her were seven Royal Navy personnel, led by 38-year-old reservist Lt David Morris, and nine Merchant Navy sailors, including the tug's 40-year-old Master, Henry Draper, from Gravesend, and Second Engineer Oswin 'Happy Harry' Green.

His widow Maria Elisabeth Frederiksen still lives in Iceland at the age of 94. She was left looking after the couple's daughter, Thórunn Elisabeth Green, just nine months old.

Picture: Safehaven Marine



'pie tide

ONE for sorrow, two for joy, H130 for thrills and spills.

This is your first sight of the Royal Navy's newest vessel in action, undergoing rough weather sea trials in the Celtic Sea less than a month after being launched.

From the way she cuts through or rides these choppy waters, you might expect HMS Magpie to be a warry gunboat, perhaps carrying Royal Marines towards hostile shores...

In fact, she's the newest addition to the RN's hydrographic survey launch Gleaner which paid off earlier this year after 35 years' under the White Ensign.

The RN turned to Cork shipbuilder Safehaven to deliver

a replacement, an 18-metre catamaran based on the firm's Wildcat 60 craft.

Magpie – named after the Duke of Edinburgh's only command – is bigger than Gleaner, can stay at sea much longer (she has two messes/accommodation compartments for up to 12 crew and a galley which can meet the sailors' needs for up to seven days), and is much more resilient in rough seas.

The RN expects Magpie to be able to maintain 20kts in a Sea State 4 with waves up to 2½ metres high.

After trials, Magpie was due to make the journey from

Cork to Portland for military/hydrographic equipment fitting out, equipment which is a marked improvement on what was installed on her predecessor,

such as the latest high-resolution shallow-water multi-beam echo sounder and side-scan sonar, ahead of being handed over to the RN and formal commissioning later this summer.

Magpie will also be able to launch remote-controlled underwater devices, such as Remus, to search wide areas of seabed for obstructions or mines.

Otherwise, Magpie's role is largely the same as Gleaner's: to ensure the approaches to the

UK's ports are safe by scanning the seabed, updating charts and generally acting as another pair of eyes and ears into goings on in home waters.

"Magpie will help lead the way in modernising the Royal Navy's survey and underwater surveillance capabilities," said her first Commanding Officer (and Gleaner's last) Lt Cdr William Alexander.

"Her primary role will be in maintaining the integrity of coastal waters, ensuring safety of navigation and resilience of key national infrastructure in UK ports.

"And with an enduring presence around the UK, she will also contribute to national security at sea."



WW1 tragedies recalled



A lone piper stands on an Islay clifftop as a highly-charged memorial service to two naval tragedies off the Scottish island a century ago reaches its climax.

Hundreds of sailors and American soldiers died in these waters at the beginning and end of 1918 when two troopships foundered – one at the hands of a U-boat, the other after colliding with a warship.

More than 200 men died when SS Tuscania was torpedoed off Islay, having ferried nearly 2,400 US troops across the Atlantic in February 1918 (the toll would have been far greater but for the efforts of HMS Mosquito and Pigeon, whose sailors saved most of the men aboard).

Nine months later, HMS Otranto ran aground on rocks off Islay having been fatally damaged following a collision with another troopship, the Kashmir. Again, a major rescue effort began, but in treacherous conditions, 470 men – most of them doughboys (the American equivalent of Tommies) – were killed. With Anglo-US-Franco-German participation

in this spring's Joint Warrior exercise and the ships operating close to Islay, it afforded a joint centennial commemoration ashore and at sea.

The Princess Royal led tributes on land, where a major memorial was erected shortly after the end of the war.

And at sea, wreaths were cast into the sea from FGS Lübeck, HMS Montrose, USS Ross, and FS Andromede (out of shot above).

The crews of all four vessels manned the upper decks and a short service was broadcast from HMS Raider over VHF radio.

"It was a cold afternoon and very quiet with just the wind in my ears. The sound of the saluting gun was eerie in the mist as the ship's company manned the upper deck," said Montrose's Std Tanya Moore.

"It's important to remember those that have gone before us and for those that lost their lives. I felt proud to be a part of the occasion."

At the service's end, the flotilla proceeded to the Oa Peninsula where Otranto's wreck lies.

Defender's comeback

AFTER 18 months in maintenance, HMS Defender successfully completed her first spell of sea trials in the Channel.

The fifth Type 45 destroyer went through a major refit in her home base after her deployment to the Gulf back in 2016.

Seven days at sea in the Southwest Exercise Areas shook off the cobwebs and tested some of the kit (in particular two new gas turbines) as well as the men and women operating it.

New signals intelligence equipment and electronic surveillance kit were also installed during the year and a half in the hands of BAE.

Defender's the first ship in the class of half a dozen air defence destroyers to go through a full refit and will conduct further tests and trials before formally being returned to the RN for the crew to train for renewed front-line duties.

Thumbs up for apprentices

OUTSTANDING – that is the verdict of government inspectors on the quality of apprenticeships provided by the RN.

In every category in which they assessed the way the Senior Service trains, nurtures, encourages and supports would-be engineers, chefs, logisticians, warfare specialists and Royal Marines, the team from Ofsted gave the Royal Navy the same high mark.

The RN has recruited some 50,000 apprentices over the past 15 years, with around one in ten personnel enrolled on an apprenticeship programme.

F-35s debut at Marham

THE Navy's 'jets of tomorrow' will become the jets of today as they fly into their new home on British soil.

Four F-35Bs are due to arrive in the first tranche of stealth fighters to transfer from the USA to the UK, flying into RAF Marham in East Anglia early this month (weather permitting).

The Norfolk air base will be the home of the Lightning Force (when the strike fighters are not embarked on HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales).

Two RN and two RAF pilots are due to be at the controls of the multi-million pound aircraft for the transatlantic flight; they are assigned to the newly-reformed – and legendary – 617 Squadron, the Dambusters.

The fliers have been practising for the 4,150-mile flight from the US Marine Corps air base at Beaufort in South Carolina, where British air and ground crews are trained to operate and maintain the state-of-the-art jet, to Marham, in particular conducting air-to-air refuelling with RAF tankers high above the Eastern Seaboard of the USA.

And similarly the joint RN-RAF team at RAF Marham have been readying for the F-35s' arrival with a new Lightning Force HQ, dedicated hangars, resurfaced runways, new canteen and gym and accommodation.

As for the jets' floating home, she's undergoing some maintenance and sensors/ weapons upgrades in her native Portsmouth before crossing the Atlantic for the first time to embark F-35s off the east coast of the USA this autumn for her first fast-jet trials.



A HEARTY wave from the crew of the Japanese destroyer Suzunami for the men and women of HMS Sutherland after a rare exercise between the Royal Navy and the force it originally inspired.

The Imperial Japanese Navy – today the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force – took many of its customs, ranks and tactics from the Royal Navy 150 years ago, even down to mimicking Nelson's 'England expects...' signal in its greatest victory, Tsushima in 1905.

And apart from the 15 or so years as potential and then actual adversaries in the 30s and '40s, relations have remained cordial through that century and a half – it's just that distance, especially now we no longer have a base in Hong Kong,

have ruled out regular interaction.

So Anglo-Japanese naval link-ups have largely been confined to joint operations in the Gulf regions (Japan is one of more than two dozen nations signed up to supporting the anti-piracy/smuggling/terrorism mission) or sporadic visits by Japanese ships to the UK... or vice versa... like Sutherland's.

Japan marked the half-way point of the Fighting Clan's Australasia-Pacific deployment; after her exertions Down Under flying the flag for the UK and the British defence industry, and edging up the islands of the Pacific Rim, the frigate had a month's maintenance/downtime in Yokosuka, just outside Tokyo, before sailing for some combined training.

The Japanese provided the Suzunami, the tanker Tokiwa and a submarine for a mix of sub hunting (Sutherland's raison d'être), board and search training, some refuelling on the move and a personnel swap, with crew from the Fighting Clan joining the Suzunami and Japanese sailors heading in the opposite direction for a two-day immersion in another navy.

"The Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force is a highly proficient and professional force," said Lt Cdr Matt Millyard, Sutherland's Principal Warfare Officer.

"My two days on board certainly demonstrated the many similarities in our approach to tactical exercises. Having now established a good working

rapport with the Japanese, I hope that follow-on units can build on the excellent relationship we have enjoyed during this invaluable period of training."

Used for the first time in an Anglo-Japanese naval exercise was the Fleet Air Arm's relatively new Wildcat helicopter, as its observer Lt Max Cosby explained:

"This exercise provided a good opportunity on many levels, not least with respect to operating the Royal Navy's Wildcat helicopter in the region for the first-time ever. In particular we gained some valuable experience in a complex anti-submarine exercise with Japanese maritime patrol aircraft ahead of the UK reacquiring this capability."

Pictures: LPhot Sammy Seeley, HMS Sutherland



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The rain was Relentless...

FIFTY years to the day that the Queen Mother sailed into Gareloch on the Royal Yacht, sailors, submariners and families celebrated Faslane's golden jubilee as a naval base.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones – eight years old when the base was opened on May 10 1968 – was guest of honour as sailors, submariners and Royal Marines formed up for Ceremonial Divisions, watched by friends and family.

Although the Clyde and Gareloch had been used by the RN since the Great War such as for trials of the ill-fated K-class submarines and, later, for shipbreaking, only in the 1960s were plans unveiled to locate the nation's new nuclear deterrent force – four R-class submarines carrying Polaris missiles – at Faslane.

Some £24m – around £1.3bn today – was invested in the area, carving a base out of nothing, as well as the armaments depot at

Coulport. Roads were diverted, the loch entrance widened, accommodation, homes, workshops and jetties to support 11 submarines and one frigate built – all inside four years.

Arriving in HMV Britannia, the Queen Mother formally commissioned the land-based side of the new base – the first in the UK since Rosyth was built at the turn of the 20th Century – known as HMS Neptune.

Around 1,000 personnel and the same number of spectators were on hand to witness the occasion.

The veteran Royal was given a tour of the first Polaris boat, HMS Resolution, already alongside at the base, and presented with a silver model of the submarine as a keepsake.

She was blessed with reasonable weather for her visit. Alas not so for Britain's most senior admiral for the birthday celebrations; the parade ground was lashed by rain as

Admiral Jones inspected

and chatted to personnel.

He told those mustered on the wet tarmac that it was important this "important milestone in the life of HMS Neptune" was properly marked.

"I'd like to thank all those who work at Her Majesty's Naval Base Clyde, whatever your role, for everything you have done – and continue to do – in support of this vital endeavour to ensure our nation's security."

That vital endeavour is Operation Relentless, providing the nation's nuclear deterrent.

Within a few weeks of the official opening in 1968, Resolution conducted the first operational patrol and, when joined by her three younger sisters, the RN's round-the-clock deterrent patrols began the following year.

Former submariner Cdr Charles Wylie was among the pioneers serving at Faslane in 1968 – and loved the experience, personally and professionally.

He went to sea on 34 different submarines during his time on the Clyde "so it was very fulfilling professionally."

"It was an absolutely delightful place to live in. It's nearly 50 years since I was here and what do I find? Nothing has changed – the weather hasn't changed, the people haven't changed, and the culture of the Royal Navy is still as wonderful as it was when I was serving."

Half a century on from the opening, the base has changed substantially, undergoing at least two major transformations: one in the 1980s to prepare for the new Vanguard-class/Trident, the second, more recently, in the form of the Valiant Jetty (at 44,000 tonnes the fourth largest object afloat in the Royal Navy) and 'Supermess' accommodation hub to support the new Astute-class hunter-killer submarines and live up to 21st Century expectations when it comes to quarters ashore.

Today it's the

MOD's principal establishment in Scotland, home to not just the bulk of the submarine flotilla (and all of it by 2020), but seven Sandown-class minehunters, and 6,800 sailors, Royal Marines and civilian personnel on a daily basis.

With the advent of the Dreadnought-class of next-generation deterrent submarines and preparations to support them, there will be well over 8,000 people on site every day early next decade.

"To achieve an unbroken chain of continuous deterrent patrols for almost 50 years is a testament to the hard work and determination of generations of submariners, base workers and their families," said Cdre Mark Gayfer, Naval Base Commander Clyde.

"It takes a tremendous amount of dedication and effort to sustain, not just our submarines through high-quality engineering support, but also those who serve in them and their families."

2018 Pictures: LPhot Will Haigh, FRPU North



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AFLAME midships and listing to port, these are the final moments of a banana boat turned mainstay of the Fleet during the Great War.

It wasn't the great battleships which delivered victory over Germany, but vessels like this one, the Patia, unsung and largely unacknowledged, but also indispensable.

There was nothing remotely glamorous about Patia – sluggish, cramped, lightly armed (6in and 3pdr guns), a poor seakeeper.

Built just before the war to ferry bananas from Senegal to the UK for Elders and Fyffes (better known today simply as Fyffes), the Patia was converted into an armed merchant cruiser to meet the sudden demands of war a year later.

Just three and a half months into the conflict, the now HMS Patia was ready to join the Tenth Cruiser Squadron (more than half the 60 armed merchant cruisers would be assigned to the formation).

The ships had the unenviable task of plugging the 'Iceland gap' – the stretch of water between southern Iceland and northwest Scotland – preventing merchant ships from reaching, or sailing from, Germany.

It was a relentless task. When Patia was declared operational early in 1915, she was at sea almost daily, intercepting and inspecting suspect craft – most of them under supposedly neutral flags. Such as the Henrik, sailing under the Norwegian flag in March 1915, bound for Bergen carrying vehicle parts, aluminium, flour, petrol, copper, "in fact most things Germany is believed to want". She was seized and dispatched to Kirkwall in the Orkneys with a prize crew aboard.

Today we celebrate the effectiveness of modern machinery and the diligence and energy of fishery protection crews who keep their vessels at sea for more than 300 days a year.

The vessels of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron averaged 250 days at sea in 1915, steaming 70,000 miles in all weathers patrolling an area of 220,000 square miles – 27 times the size of Wales.

They inspected more than 3,000 ships and found one in four to be



carrying contraband. There was little glory – these were not the actions to fill the pages of the newspapers – but there was attendant danger: in 1915 alone, the squadron lost five ships and well over 800 men to the enemy and to the weather.

"From November to March, the weather was gales about three weeks in each month – and often it was impossible to lower a boat to board ships," Patia's doctor, Surg Sub Lt Dennis Knight recalled.

"Patia once shipped a sea so heavy that it damaged her bridge, injured one officer, smashed fittings in the wheelhouse, bent the forward 6in gun platform and strained her hull so that the fresh water tanks were contaminated."

Under such circumstances, the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, Admiral Jellicoe, was quick to praise the squadron's men. "They deserve all that their country can do for them," he urged the Admiralty.

Jellicoe's biggest problem was that the blockade was not tight enough; were it enforced more rigorously, he predicted, it "would have reduced the enemy to very serious straits".

As it was it was the turn of 1916-17 – the so-called turnip winter, when the turnip replaced the potato as the mainstay of the German diet – that the blockade really began to bite.

German civilians were trying to survive on 1,000 calories a day. They were not enough. Figures vary, but between 400,000 and 750,000 German

civilians died of starvation while the 'Spanish flu' epidemic of 1918 inflicted more than 200,000 casualties on a weakened populace.

By then, the Germans had struck back, intending to do to Britain what it was trying to do to them: starve them into submission.

The unrestricted U-boat campaign unleashed in February 1917 caused widespread panic and, in the first few months, catastrophic shipping losses.

It also meant diverting many of the armed merchant cruisers from blockade and board-and-search duties to convoy protection.

That included Patia, which was chosen to shepherd shipping between West Africa and the Bristol Channel after conducting nearly 600 boardings

on blockade duties.

The decision to corral merchantmen in convoys – contentious at the time in some senior RN circles – proved to be the U-boats' downfall, depriving German submarine skippers of the rich pickings they'd enjoyed before shipping was controlled.

Worse, the U-boat arm was losing seven submarines a month. In short, losses were up, sinkings were down.

But the German submarine remained a danger – and one ignored at a mariner's peril.

UC-49 was one such boat which proved to be a thorn in the Allies' side. She'd already dispatched 21 ships from 91-tonne drifters to the 12,000-tonne armed merchant cruiser HMS Otway before *Oberleutnant zur See* Hans Kükenthal sailed from Flanders – still an operational U-boat flotilla, despite the much trumpeted raids by the Royal Navy against Zeebrugge and Ostend – in early June 1918 bound for the English and Bristol Channel.

Having torpedoed the steamer Mounby off the Lizard on June 10, Kükenthal came across the Patia two dozen miles west of Hartland Point three days later. Sixteen of the cruiser's crew were killed.

Kükenthal would score two more kills – notably the liner Warilda, ferrying troops to Le Havre from Southampton – but after damaging the steamer Portwood off Dartmouth on August 8, UC-49's luck ran out as she laid mines off Start Point.

Hydrophones – the RN's new weapon in the fight against the U-boat – picked up the sound of her engines and destroyer HMS Opossum closed in for the kill, raining depth charges on the submarine.

None crippled UC-49 evidently, for two and a half hours later, she surfaced, thinking her attackers had left the scene. They had not. Concerted gunfire and more depth charges sent the U-boat to the bottom. No-one aboard survived.

■ This photograph (HU 71021) is one of more than 12 million held by the Imperial War Museum. They can be viewed or purchased at www.iwm.org.uk/collections/photographs, or by calling 0207 416 5309.

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Jacques speak

Extolling virtues of RN exchange programme

CARRIER Strike Group 9, led by USS Theodore Roosevelt, is patrolling in the Gulf, escorted by the French navy's air destroyer Chevalier Paul.

As the sun rises, unknown aircraft approach the force and Chevalier Paul springs into action, ordering the fighters to scramble.

The accent barking out the orders in the Ops Room and over the frequencies, however, is definitely not French.

Lt Helen Taylor, the Royal Navy's PWO exchange officer on board Chevalier Paul, is on watch.

"To me, that was the defining moment of this exchange," she recalls.

"A British officer on a French ship, giving orders to American pilots to defend a multi-national task force: that was a good day."

Helen is one of over 20 RN officers posted to France on liaison or exchange jobs.

In Toulon, the largest naval base in France, the exchanges involve FRMARFOR, Officer of the Watch, helicopter pilot, fighter controller and submariner.

"We have a great community of British and other expat military here," Helen says, "and it means that any problem has been seen before and there's always someone who is happy to help. It's one of the best support networks I've seen."

Helen, who comes from a background of MCMVs and OPVs, took the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) in 2014, and within six weeks was selected to participate in the exchange.

After three months of language training at Shrivvenham she moved to Toulon in August 2015 to do a year of training at ESCAN (the French version of PWO course) and taking a post on Chevalier Paul.

Her French exchange partner Lt Florentin Dhellemmes did his PWO course in the UK and is currently on board HMS Duncan.

"I already had a conversational level of French, and regular inspections of French fishing vessels during my time in HMS Mersey helped.

"That didn't stop me having a headache for the first three months – living in a second language is exhausting!"

As it's the first time this exchange has happened in over a decade, Helen's role on board has varied; on watch, she has been OOW, PWO and has now taken the AWO role; off watch she is the ship's languages officer, CBRNDCQ and DWEQ – the Marine Nationale combine the Warfare and WE branches.

"You have to relearn everything that you already know: radar theory, the names of ranks and rates, even taking bearings (15 degrees off the port bow = Port 345).

"The reactions to a drill that you could do with your eyes shut in English suddenly become a whole new thing that you need to re-learn. It's even more complicated when you add in the 'Jacques-speak' – French naval slang. Matelots are still called matelots but a rack (bunk) is called *la caille*. It can also be very isolating on deployment as the sole non-French person on board a ship of 220."

The Frégate de Défense Aérienne (air destroyer) Chevalier Paul is one of two Horizon-class ships in the



Marine Nationale, and shares the same hull shape and missile systems as the Type 45 Daring class.

Equipped with Aster anti-air missiles, Exocet anti-ship missiles, MU90 torpedoes and capable of carrying the NH-90 Caïman helicopter, her main role is the escort and air defence of the aircraft carrier in a task force.

Since Helen joined the ship in 2016, the Chevalier Paul's deployments have included operations in the Levant and Black Sea, escort of the Tonnerre in a French-US amphibious deployment to the Indian Ocean, and escort of aircraft carriers Charles de Gaulle and USS Theodore Roosevelt in coalition operations against Daesh.

Her Commanding Officer, Capt Hugues Lainé, has been very supportive of the exchange programme.

"What better for our great navies to keep strong ties and prepare for the future than to serve and fight side by side on board the same ship?"

"That's exactly what this exchange programme provides by giving future leaders the challenging but great opportunity of getting technical, operational and even cultural experiences in one of our best allies' navy.

"Moreover, this exchange brings the 'other navy' point of view and expertise to the ship's company. This 'think outside the box' process can be very stimulating for officers and crew."

Helen will return to the UK this summer after three years in France.

"My experience in France has been unforgettable. I have been to places the RN doesn't deploy to. I have worked in operations that are planned and conducted from a totally different perspective to the RN.

"The biggest thing I have come to appreciate is how much we take English for granted; I have huge respect for NATO ships which have to work in a second language.

"I will certainly miss the sun when I go home... plus being on a ship that has a dedicated boulangerie that makes fresh baguettes three times a day is going to be very difficult to leave behind. But I am looking forward to my first full English after a morning watch in four years."

For anyone interested in participating in this or any of the foreign exchange programmes in the Royal Navy, the first step is book yourself onto an MLAT through your Education Officer.

Make sure your JPA preferences say that you would like to take part in a foreign exchange and finally, contact your career manager to discuss your options.



Friends reunited

ROYAL Navy minehunter HMS Bangor delivered vital training to members of the Qatar Emiri Navy.

Twelve officers and ratings were put through their paces in both force protection and damage-control aboard the Sandown-class ship.

The training, which took place as the ship visited Doha, resulted in a reunion between former Britannia Royal Naval College students, including Bangor's Navigating Officer Sub Lt Henry Kilby, *pictured above right*.

"It has been an honour to work with such a professional Navy both alongside and at sea as well as catch up with some old Dartmouth training colleagues," he said.

During the visit a number of crew from Bangor attended the Royal Navy Association Qatar St George's Day and RAF100 ball.

Bangor's bridge team conducted a number of Officer of the Watch manoeuvres, with their counterparts from the Qatar Emiri Navy ship Huwar, *pictured below*, as they departed Doha.

This involved a series of close-quarter manoeuvres testing the ship-handling and communications of the two vessels.

Bangor's CO, Lt Cdr Ben Evans RN, said: "We were delighted to be directed to conduct training with Qatar Maritime Forces.

"We greatly value the bi-lateral relationship and thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Doha. Friendships were forged and lasting memories made and we look forward to returning again."

HMS Bangor now continues with her operational tasking in the Gulf as part of Operation Kipion. MCM1 Crew 2 in HMS Bangor deployed at the start of January 2018 and has spent this year conducting national tasking and enhancing relationships with friends and allies within the Middle East.



● Lt Helen Taylor served in the FS Chevalier Paul; The ship is pictured alongside the USNS John Lenthall as it carries out a RAS with the USS Theodore Roosevelt

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Hall of duty

40 Cdo 'storm' civic centre in county town

WHAT would happen if terrorists or an invading army took over Somerset's seat of government?

Royal Marines from 40 Commando provided the answer as they stormed County Hall in Taunton town centre to hone their 'vertical assault' skills.

The seven-storey building served as an ideal training ground for the green berets, based just up the road at Norton Manor Camp.

They are the nation's Lead Commando Group – the elite force on immediate notice to respond to a major crisis at home or abroad.

Under a new study, Project Urban Dagger, the Royal Marines are looking at how they fight in built-up areas – something 40's Commanding Officer Lt Col Paul Maynard predicts the Corps is likely to find itself involved the next time it goes to war.

"Increasingly the battlefields are urban, because of the growth of urbanisation across the world, and that is where our adversaries are trying to drag us," he said.

"We need to adapt, improvise and develop our skills to fight and win in that environment."

So equipped with special ladders, ropes and scaling devices, which allow them to enter buildings from the top down, the Norton Manor commandos began their County Hall take-down.

"We've tested some new kit today, using something which is basically a motor – it moves you up the rope," said Marine Edward Haskett-Smith.

"It's much easier than having people at the top to pull you up or obviously climbing it yourself."

Project Urban Dagger involved elements from across 3 Commando Brigade and studied a range of topics including Close Quarters Battle training, moving around a cityscape (urban mobility) and the use of drones to give troops the edge in combat.

The drones, supplied by SteelRock Technologies, gave the marines an insight into the most recent unmanned aerial vehicle technology – as well as some of the tech which can bring the drones down.

40 Commando tested several drones – some for reconnaissance, one for resupply, delivering kit weighing up to 50kg to troops on the battlefield.

Picture: L/Cpl James Clarke



Historic moniker for seventh Astute

ONCE more unto the breach, dear friends, once more.

For the first time in more than four decades, the name Agincourt can be found in the RN's order of battle with the seventh Astute-class submarine formally named.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson committed £1.5bn to boat number seven, and named it after Henry V's legendary victory over the French in 1415 – the sixth RN vessel to bear the battle's name.

On a visit to BAE's submarine facility at Barrow, Mr Williamson also committed just short of £1bn to the future Dreadnought class of ballistic missile submarines which are to replace the existing V-boat force based at Faslane.

A sign of the commitment to the future bombers was the official opening of a new £100m building erected specifically for the four Dreadnoughts.



With a floor space of 26,700 square metres the new hall can accommodate the Wembley pitch more than three times over, and at 45 metres tall (just shy of 150ft) it's the height of a 15-storey building... and six metres shorter than the imposing Devonshire Dock Hall which retains its crown as Cumbria's tallest building.

The new hall will be used to fit out and then test each section of the Dreadnought boats, with £900m of the investment announced today allowing work to begin on the unnamed second boat in the class, while £60m goes to Rolls-Royce in Derby to work on the nuclear propulsion system.

Agincourt is due to join the Silent Service in the middle of the next decade, while the Dreadnoughts are due to replace the V-boats at the end of the 2020s.

Saint monitors Russians

THE eternal vigilance of the RN in home waters saw HMS St Albans follow a Russian frigate through the Strait of Dover and into the Channel.

Britain's Fleet Ready Escort – the ship 'scrambled' to respond to incidents and major events in and around the UK – met the Yaroslav Mudry ('Yaroslav the Wise') in glorious weather in the North Sea... then monitored the Russian vessel's progress into the broader Channel.

The frigate launched her Merlin Mk2 helicopter from Culdrose's 814 NAS to watch the two ships, which at times were sailing side-by-side only a matter of yards apart.

Cdr John Cromie, the Saint's CO, said the interaction between the two ships as they passed through the Channel had been "cordial" as you would expect from professional sailors from two of the world's foremost navies.

"We are the first responders to any potential incursion into UK waters and are highly trained in this role," he added. "We are always standing ready, as is the rest of the fleet, to defend UK waters and UK sovereignty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."

HMS Sutherland kept an eye on the Neustrashimy-class warship as she returned to Kaliningrad, at the end of 2016.

Grave task for Rosalie

AN ill wind for Fort Rosalie was a blessing for Britain's war dead in North Africa when RFA Fort Rosalie paid a rare visit to Tangier.

Strong gusts meant the supply ship was stuck in the Moroccan port an extra day... allowing the ship's company to tackle a small community project.

A team of volunteers headed to the graveyard at St Andrew's Church in Rue de l'Angleterre, where 13 British Service personnel from WW2 are laid to rest (12 RAF, 1 Gibraltar Service policeman).

The Rosalies found the grounds in a reasonable state of repair – but the sailors did find spring vegetation was beginning to encroach on the cemetery.

The stores/supply ship's visit to Tangier was the first by the RFA in more than two years; Rosalie is returning to the UK from the Gulf.

Shipsshape day for new carrier

THE Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines provided the music and spectacle and Isambard Kingdom Brunel the engineering backdrop as Britain's newest carrier was formally bound with Bristol.

Sailors from HMS Prince of Wales made the 370-mile trip from Rosyth to SS Great Britain to inaugurate the affiliation between the second of the nation's future flagships and one of its great seafaring cities.

Both carriers are affiliated with two cities: London and Edinburgh for HMS Queen Elizabeth, Bristol and Liverpool for her sister.

The new carrier will have a series of rooms named the Bristol suite which will serve as diplomatic quarters.



Parade heralds a new start

ROYAL Marines marked the end of one of the biggest reshuffles in the Corps' recent history by parading for the nation's second highest ranking sailor.

Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Ben Key was invited to 42 Commando at Bickleigh in Plymouth to celebrate the unit's new, enhanced role as the 'go-to unit' when it comes to board-and-search, force protection, training our allies around the globe and rescuing downed aircrew.

Until a couple of years ago, with the exception of 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group, 40, 42 and 45 were all pretty much interchangeable, taking it in turns once every three years to act as Lead Commando Group, ready to respond to global events at immediate notice.

Under Project Sykes, intended to make the Corps more efficient and effective, that all changed.

43 Commando relinquished its squadron of board-and-search specialists – the teams which join RN ships to conduct boarding operations, chiefly east of Suez; they are now Juliet Company, 42 Commando.

42's Kilo Company are the SALT experts – small, highly-specialised teams who Support, Augment,

Liaise and Train either other UK units, Allied Forces, or front-line operations.

Lima Company are now responsible for Joint Personnel Recovery – rescuing aircrew or fellow marines/soldiers who are isolated, missing, detained or captured in an operational environment – in particular fliers aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth.

And finally 42's Mike Company provide force protection teams to RN and RFA ships passing through high threat areas around the globe.

With these new roles now in place, all serving members of 42 who were not deployed, plus families and friends, turned out for the parade, followed by a families day.

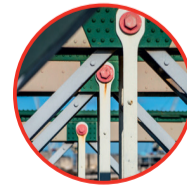
Admiral Key took the salute with 3 Commando Brigade's Commanding Officer Brig Gwyn Jenkins also present.

Formalities over, the fun day/open afternoon began as the gates of the base were opened to locals, veterans and families.

Youngsters – and adults – were let loose on a range of fun activities from NERF toy gun ranges and bouncy castles, to a fun fair, mini Land Rovers, and an inter-company tug-of-war contest (won by Mike Coy).

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Medics touch thousands of lives in Pacific



A MALAYSIAN Armed Forces Sea King helicopter lifts a casualty from the water during a training exercise in support of Pacific Partnership 2018.

The US-led deployment, which began in Micronesia and Indonesia, is now in its 13th iteration and is the first time a Royal Navy officer has held a command role.

As reported in last month's *Navy News*, great work is being done across the Indo-Pacific region by Royal Navy Capt Peter Olive and a team of UK Defence medics.

The partnership evolved from the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, which killed more than 200,000 people and left millions homeless.

Since then medics on the deployments have treated more than 300,000 patients, working with local responders to increase capacity.

Engineers have completed over 200 projects to increase the resilience of local community buildings, many of which double as emergency shelters.

Alongside these two important activities there is a specific focus on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR) training.

Community relations with the local population, through school visits, sports and band performances, complete the package.

This year's PP centres on the hospital ship USNS *Mercy* and the fast military transporter USNS *Brunswick*, commanded by Capt Olive.

Their programme has taken them across the

Western Pacific (Federated States of Micronesia, Palau), throughout South East Asia (Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand), out to Sri Lanka and up to Japan.

More than 800 military personnel from the US, UK, Japan, Australia, Canada, France, Chile, Singapore, South Korea, the Philippines and Peru have taken part.

Capt Olive, who works for US Cdre David Bretz, the Mission Commander, said: "It has been a huge honour to serve as the first UK Deputy Commander on Pacific Partnership. Between Commodore Bretz's team and mine, we have been able to cover huge tracts of the Indo-Pacific region."

"While Pacific Partnership is a maritime deployment, the work we are doing is very much joint, combined and inter-agency, we just get around on ships."

That ethos is reflected in the make-up of the team the UK sent to participate in this year's mission, which has been drawn from the Army and RAF as well as the Navy.

Army Cpl Darren Phillips, who is part of the Brunswick team, working as part of the HADR mission as well as in his core medical role, said: "Working in this part of the world has been hugely rewarding, both to support the needs of regional countries but also help increase their resilience to natural disasters."

Fellow Brunswick medic PO(MA) Dave Nicholl added: "I'm struck by how much some of our core naval and medical skills in training and

mentoring can make a big difference here.

"In Malaysia I was leading medical training for a major maritime disaster response exercise we conducted with their Armed Forces and civilian responders. We bring a UK approach to this activity, which partners here in the region seem to respond well to."

Both medics have had some amazing experiences so far. PO Nicholl was part of a multinational team that paid their respects at Peleliu, site of a major Pacific war battle and the greatest single loss in an amphibious assault in US history.

"To see our Japanese and US Marine Corp colleagues laying a wreath together, side-by-side, at this important WW2 memorial says so much about what this deployment is about," he said.

Cpl Phillips became something of a local hero when he worked with a Japanese surgeon to help save a man who had been admitted with life-threatening injuries in Yap.

"It has been amazing to work with other medical professionals as well as the wider team from other countries," said the modest medic.

For the three UK officers serving in *Mercy*, the deployment has seen them taking on important roles organising different events.

Lt Cdr Mark Middleton, who leads the UK Medical Detachment, has had his own unique experiences, becoming the first Royal Navy officer to visit the Pacific atoll of Ulithi since it was used as a base by the US and Royal Navies

during WW2.

Lt Cdr Middleton has become a key member of *Mercy*'s operational planning team, as well as the lead for all international partners embarked in the ship.

"This has been an amazing opportunity" he said. "The integration of international partners into this mission is unique. It is quite something that the first face partners see when they join this US ship is a Brit! We are all enjoying learning from each other, which is what this mission is ultimately about."

Flt Lt Stu Lowry RAF has been using his aeromedical evacuation skills, working with colleagues from the US Navy and Army. He led delivery of a major aeromedical conference while *Mercy* was in Port Kelang, Malaysia.

"Malaysia is striving to develop its national aeromedical capabilities, and this was an extraordinary opportunity to interact with their military teams to help develop flexible air care pathways," he said.

Army Capt Oliver Britland RAMC, meanwhile, supported medical activity in Indonesia and has also been part of a team lead by the US Army 83rd Civil Affairs Battalion focusing on the HADR mission.

Said Capt Britland: "This has been an amazing opportunity to work with this elite US unit, supporting one of the core purposes of Pacific Partnership in terms of HADR."

While in Sri Lanka he helped map and develop collective understanding of the different HADR systems and actors in the country. This work





● Cpl Darren Phillips yells for assistance during a training exercise; Lt Cdr Mark Middleton joins the Pacific Partnership team speaking to locals in one of the Caroline Islands in the Federated States of Micronesia



● Personnel prepare a simulated casualty for transportation to receive medical care during a disaster response training exercise at Tawau Naval Base; Rear Admiral Donald Gabrielson, and Capt Peter Olive observe the exercise



● Capt Peter Olive enjoys a game with students at the SK Merotai Besar school in Tawau and dances with PP18 personnel and students at SK Muhibbahraya Primary School in Malaysia

Pictures: Petty Officer 1st Class Byron Linder, Petty Officer 2nd Class Joshua Fulton and MC3 Cameron Pinske, USN



is being done with all host countries, to help increase speed of response in any future crisis.

"It's too late once the emergency happens to begin finding out who you need to work with," said Capt Britland "You need to know that in advance."

Community engagement has also been an important part of the mission, as it helps foster closer relationships in the different countries visited.

All the UK team have participated in these events, from cricket in Sri Lanka, attending Buddhist festivals, soccer with children in Palau and Indonesia, or helping out at a Special Olympics in Malaysia.

PO Nicholl said: "It has been humbling and uplifting to have met the kids, families and staff taking part in the Special Olympics."

Capt Olive added: "I never thought my duty to Queen and Country would include doing the Cupid Shuffle."

During a stopover in Singapore, Capt Olive met up with Col Chris Luckham, Chief of Staff of the newly-formed British Defence Staff Asia-Pacific(BDS AP).

Staff from the British High Commission (BHC) in Singapore also toured Brunswick and held discussions with the team from US CTF 73, who has overall planning lead for PP.

Capt Olive has also had opportunity to reflect on one of the unexpected benefits participation in the mission has brought.

"With HMS Queen Elizabeth set to deploy on operations within the next few years, now is

the time to reinforce our reputation as a global navy and support the UK's national ambitions.

"To be able to better understand this theatre by being part of Pacific Partnership has therefore been a real boon, and something we should seek to build on in the future."

Since leaving the UK in early January, Capt Olive has travelled 44,000 miles, back and forth across the Pacific for briefings and meetings with key US commands in San Diego, Hawaii, Singapore and Guam, including with US Commander Seventh Fleet, Vice Admiral Phil Sawyer.

"It is important to understand what a big deal this mission is to the region," said Capt Olive.

"We have touched the lives of thousands of people across nine countries. Over two million have now accessed our online presence and the media interest across the region, including China, Japan, South East Asia and back in the US, has been incredible.

"More importantly, serving with a US-led multinational team has been a phenomenal experience. We have visited countries and places far out of the norm for any UK deployment. And we have had chance to participate in an important mission which is about multinational co-operation, partnership and a shared belief in the future.

"Whoever gets to fill the 2019 Deputy Commander slot is going to be a very lucky officer indeed."

Pacific Partnership 2018 itinerary



Yellow and red denotes USNS Mercy; Green denotes USNS Brunswick; Blue denotes both ships

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● From left, Paying their respects at Lyness; Working with the North Berwick inshore lifeboat; Remembrance over the wreck of Royal Oak; Visiting Trincomalee

Tributes paid on tour

Many highlights during HMS Example's Scottish odyssey

SUNSET over Arbroath was one of the spectacular views enjoyed by the crew of HMS Example during a deployment by the 1st Patrol Boat Squadron.

Between them, HMS Example and four sister vessels literally covered the length – north to Orkney Islands – and breadth – the Caledonian Canal – during their three-week Scottish odyssey.

Example sailed 765 nautical miles, visited ten different ports, and hosted around 50 sea cadets.

There were also numerous interactions with the RNLI, with visits to Arbroath and Stromness Lifeboat stations.

However the highlight was meeting the North Berwick inshore lifeboat, where man overboard – MOBEX – serials were practised, and then the crew popped on board for a wet and a debrief.

While transiting the stunning coastline of Scotland, Example, which acts as a training ship for Northumbria University Royal Naval Unit, stopped off at Wick.

Her ship's company and the NURNU students had the privilege of presenting a Royal Navy beret to a 96-year-old WW2 veteran, one of the last surviving sailors involved in the sinking of the Bismarck.

On completion of this honour, the ship proceeded north to reach the furthest north of her deployment, the Orkney Islands.

This was also an opportunity for all to step ashore at Lyness, site of the old naval establishment, and to pay their respects at Commonwealth War

Graves. At the cemetery there are 453 souls laid to rest, including 13 German sailors.

After Lyness, the ship sailed into the mighty waters of Scapa Flow, former residence of the British Grand Fleet during WW1.

Enroute the CO, Lt Duncan Napier, laid a wreath over the wreck of HMS Royal Oak, which was sunk on October 14 1939 with the loss of 833 men and boys.

It was poignant for the CO as his great-great uncle Capt William Benn was in command of Royal Oak at that time.

The crew changeover took place in Inverness, from there the passage south included hosting around 50 Sea Cadets at various ports as well as other visits and events.

The deployment culminated with the only visit 'South of the Wall', to Hartlepool.

Here the students and ship's company visited the National Museum of the Royal Navy and HMS Trincomalee.

The frigate, which was built in 1812 and launched in 1817, is the oldest British warship still afloat.

The crew of the Archer-class patrol and training vessel visited the museum and met with staff, while the students and crew on board HMS Example were given a tour of the museum.

Lt Napier said: "The visit was an invaluable opportunity for us to look back at our past and appreciate part of our rich heritage."

Roslyn Adamson, general manager at the National Museum of the Royal Navy Hartlepool, said: "We were delighted to welcome the crews of HMS Example and HMS Explorer, as we continue

to strengthen our relationship with the Royal Navy and its vessels operating across the UK.

"They provide crucial services defending our waters, as well as educating students up and down the country.

"It was another fantastic opportunity to catch up with the crews and discuss the calendar of events and work at our historic museum's site, while learning more about their duties.

"We look forward to welcoming the staff and students again in the near future."

Mid Bethan Davies said: "This was a great opportunity for us to experience a tangible representation of Royal Navy history, and a window in time to look back at the days of wooden hulled ships."

Overall the deployment to Scotland, alongside the other four 1PBS ships was a great success, taking in a wide range of ports and coastlines, from the border up to the Orkney Islands. It allowed the students to put into practise everything they have learnt so far during their time in the URNU.

Lt Napier added: "Whilst the main aim of the deployment was to conduct at-sea training with the URNU cadets, it also offered a great opportunity for building good relations with ports, organisations and communities that do not often see a White Ensign around and about."

HMS Example acts as a training ship for students at Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Teesside and Sunderland universities.

You can follow the ship and her work on Twitter @HMSEXAMPLE

■ More URNU news on Page 28.



Nice to see Ewe, to see Ewe, nice!

THERE was a (Robert the) Brucie bonus for LS Jonathan Murray as HMS Montrose took part in the first Joint Warrior exercise of the year in Loch Ewe.

From the bridge of the Type 23 the seaman specialist pointed out an idyllic sheep farm on the Highlands coastline – and, with a lull in the action, there was a chance for a lightning visit via the frigate's Pacific 24 RIB.

The first person he saw was his Auntie Anne, who had been given the heads up that he was coming via a quick Highlands 'jungle telegraph' message and took him from the pier to the farm where Grandma Wiseman had a fresh batch of pancakes, scones and cream cakes waiting.

The family have been farming in the area for more than a century, but Jonathan signed up to the RN seven years ago to experience the wider world.

He had just an hour with his family before returning to Montrose.

"It was a surreal experience being able to mix work with home life," he said. "I live onboard and still commute back to the Highlands in my leave."



Nigel set to stay at sea

RFA Captain Nigel Budd has retired after 45 years at sea.

He has spent the last 40 years in the RFA, serving as a captain for ten of them.

To mark his retirement, he dined in the Officers' Lounge of RFA Wave Knight.

Master of Ceremonies, Chief Engineering Officer, Capt Maurice Ambrose, who has served with Nigel several times over the years, made a presentation on behalf of the Officers' Mess of a barometer and thermometer.

"I have enjoyed every moment of my sea going career and would do it all again," said Capt Budd.

"I joined my first Royal Fleet Auxiliary at Portland, which was RFA Gold Rover carrying out the duties as the FOST tanker and I thought I had gone to heaven after working on VLCCs in the commercial world."

He intends to remain associated with the sea with the purchase of a yacht next year.





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Rescue mission for creative children



2018. YEAR OF ENGINEERING

THE ROYAL Navy has launched a national competition aimed at all 11-18 year olds in full-time education by asking them to come up with an innovative design for a ship capable of rescuing up to 1,000 people.

As one of the flagship initiatives in support of the Year of Engineering, the ship design competition has been launched so that schools can inspire their students to take a closer look at how rewarding a career in engineering can be through a challenge that deliberately encourages creativity and allows students to come up with designs which haven't been influenced by pre-conceptions.

The Royal Navy is often involved in delivering humanitarian assistance, including rescuing large numbers of people from the sea, so as part of the Year of Engineering 2018, the Royal Navy has teamed up with UK Naval Engineering Science & Technology (UKNEST) to look for young aspiring Naval Engineers who can develop an innovative way of achieving such rescues.

In launching the competition, Capt Matt Bolton said: "The sea can be a very hostile environment so the ability to rescue large numbers of people and transport them to safety is a huge challenge.

"In launching this competition, both the Royal Navy and UKNEST are keen to galvanise schoolchildren up and down the country into producing a creative and innovative design whilst applying their understanding of science, technology, engineering and mathematics to solve this real-world problem."



● Cdr Neil Benstead talks to Stephen Metcalfe MP at the House of Commons

The competition will run throughout the year and will end on December 1 2018 where the entries will be judged by a team of industry professionals allowing for the varying levels of detail expected across the age ranges.

Upon entry to the competition, students will be given one month to complete the challenge and will be required to submit an A3 poster with their annotated design and description.

There will be three age categories for children to enter ranging from Years 1-6, 7-11 and 11-12. The best three designs from each age category will be eligible to win prizes and the winning entrants will also be invited to a prizegiving event hosted by the Royal Navy.

Government Envoy for the Year of Engineering, Stephen Metcalfe MP, said; "Engineering careers are creative, innovative and a chance to make a real difference – but not enough young people realise the opportunities on offer, and the profession faces a major lack of diversity in its workforce.

"The Year of Engineering is a chance to show

young people from all backgrounds how they could make a real difference as an engineer, whether that's through developing pioneering cancer treatment, coming up with ways to protect our environment or helping deliver humanitarian aid in our Armed Forces."

The Year of Engineering 2018 is a national government-backed campaign which seeks to raise the profile of engineering in society by highlighting the way engineers are involved across our everyday lives; encouraging young people to take a closer look.

As partners of the wider national campaign, the Royal Navy and UKNEST are looking to demonstrate that its engineers are integral to every aspect of Naval business and form the 'beating heart' of operational capability, ensuring that every unit is prepared and maintained for and sustained on worldwide operations.

Further details are available at <http://www.uknest.org/>

Carrier strike focus of annual engineer forum

AROUND 350 Engineering and Warrant Officers from across the Naval Service joined representatives from industry for the Chief Naval Engineering Officer's annual conference at HMS Collingwood.

The focus of the conference was *Generating and Sustaining a Maritime Task Group – Stocktake and Ambition* and featured update briefs and presentations, followed by a dinner.

It was an opportunity to explore the engineering challenge of generating, training and sustaining a carrier strike task group and the inspiring technology that is enabling it, through to a stocktake of progress against the numerous initiatives affecting and improving the engineering branch.

Fleet Commander Vice-Admiral Ben Key provided an inspirational keynote speech, where he discussed his vision for Naval operations based on the Service's responsibilities for homeland defence, forward presence and maritime task groups for carrier strike and littoral strike.

He also revealed his personal engineering heritage, which included sharing a section of a journal written in 1922 by his maternal grandfather, himself a lieutenant engineer.

The day was divided into three sessions:

- the engineering challenge surrounding the generation of multiple ships, submarines and aircraft simultaneously for a carrier strike group, sustaining task group operations and the related training and programming implications.
- the application of novel



● Fleet Commander reads from his grandfather's journal

enabling technologies, for example the use of artificial intelligence, developments in submarine design and technology, the highly-mechanised weapons handling system and heavy replenishment-at-sea system for HMS Queen Elizabeth and developments in laser weapons technology.

■ updates on various subjects which affect everyone across the engineering branch.

The final part of the day featured a question-and-answer session with the Naval Engineering Board and the newly-appointed heads of engineering sub-specialisations.

The day concluded with the judging of the CNEO's Design Challenge Trophy, followed by the annual engineers' dinner, which was attended by over 300 engineers and guests, with Air Marshal Julian Young, the Defence Engineering Champion, as the guest of honour.



● Cdr Sophie Shaughnessy with pupils Maisie and Tia

Wooing the women

REPRESENTATIVES from HMS Sultan were part of a strong Royal Navy presence at one of the South Coast's biggest career events promoting Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to young people, The Big Bang @ Solent.

The event, which was held at the Hilton Ageas Bowl, offered 750 youngsters aged 11-16 the opportunity to explore many of the different career options that are available across the industry.

Guests were greeted upon arrival by a variety of interactive outdoor displays, which included a Lynx helicopter from Sultan.

Inside the exhibition students got to explore many STEM activities, with the Royal Navy's own Year of Engineering-themed stalls proving particularly popular.

Junior Marine Engineering Officers, who are about to start the Systems Engineering Management Course for Marine Engineers at Sultan, manned an aircraft carrier coding challenge involving spherical robots about the size of cricket balls that contained motors, a gyro and led lights which were coded using iPads to communicate with them via Bluetooth, to simulate take off and landings of Merlin Helicopters and F-35s.

Royal Naval Engineering Officer Career Manager Cdr Sophie Shaughnessy demonstrated a model of a gas turbine engine.

"Events like this are particularly important, not just for a career within the Royal Navy, but for getting young people to become enthused by STEM and to see the whole range of opportunities that are open to them," said Cdr Shaughnessy. "The Royal Navy is powered by a tremendous array of technology and we need all of our future generation of engineers to be inspired. For me, inspiring the girls is really what I'm here for. The boys will gravitate towards technology and machines, but getting the girls to engage with these sorts of subjects and careers is so important as we're going to need tremendously talented women."



Pocket rockets race for the line

RNAS Yeovilton and HMS Bulwark hosted regional finals of Race for the Line, a rocket car challenge designed to engage with Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths subjects in schools.

Students were hosted by 825 NAS at the Somerset base and worked together to make a foam rocket car powered by a small solid fuel rocket motor and pit against rival teams.

A micro bit device is fitted to the car to capture real-time data from the vehicles that allow them, during trials, to tweak their designs and make their car go as fast as possible.

It is inspired by The Bloodhound Project, a global engineering adventure using the land speed record attempt to inspire the next generation to enjoy, explore and get involved in science, Technology, engineering and mathematics. The competition involves around 70,000 Year 7/51 students in England, Scotland and Wales.

Students from Shaftsbury Southern Academy Trust, Ansford Academy, Bridgewater College, Ferndown Middle School and Park Community School have a great day. Shaftsbury School emerged victors and will now go on to join the winners of other regional heats in the National Final.

Bulwark hosted 131 pupils from 11 schools. Lt Paul Youngman the Devonport 'Chief Rockateer' said: "The Royal Navy is responsible for the safety of our nation – making sure that your country is protected and it remains one of the world's leading forces. Engineering is at the heart of this. We take our work very seriously and when we do our jobs correctly, things go whoosh, warships move and aircraft fly."

Half-way there but plenty more to do

WE ARE now halfway through the Year of Engineering 2018 and much has been achieved already.

Thousands of young people have visited the various Year of Engineering 2018 events where STEM Ambassadors are helping to demonstrate how rewarding engineering can be as a career.

As volunteers from across the Naval Service, STEM Ambassadors are key to inspiring the nation's future engineers to take a closer look at a career in engineering. There are hundreds of events for STEM Ambassadors to be involved in, both through the Royal Navy or through our STEM partners (STEM Learning, Primary Engineer and Tomorrow's Engineer), and not all STEM activity involves going to an exhibition – much STEM work is conducted in face to face activities in schools with classes conducting experiments, giving presentations or judging competitions.

Already this year we have seen the RN's involvement in a range of events – from STEM fairs, the FAA Innovation Day at RNAS Yeovilton, the Engineering Challenge Exercise Clean Sweep at HMS Sultan, Race For The Line events, and Big Bang Fairs (including in Birmingham with 80,000 attendees and Big Bang @ Solent).

More recently we have also launched the collaborative RN-UKNEST Naval Engineering Competition.

This month's theme is Diversity in Engineering; there are so many aspects of the lives of engineers that can be celebrated, maybe there is an aspect of this in your unit that could be highlighted.

The themes for July and August are 'The Summer of Engineering' and 'Back to School' in September. There are numerous ways for all naval engineers and technicians to get involved, and you can find out more by visiting the 'RNYOE18' defence intranet page, where you can now download material to assist you promoting an event and now also a 'YOE18 Defence Connect' page, building a community of engineers online. You can also get more information from RNTM 07-064/17, or by contacting Cdr Neil Benstead RN,YOE18 SO1.

The thing to do now is to get yourself involved...it doesn't just have to be your CO or head of department promoting engineering. All PROs are aware of the YOE18 Campaign, so you can submit a press article or tweet your own story, just add [#inspireanengineer](https://twitter.com/inspireanengineer), [#takeacloserlook](https://twitter.com/takeacloserlook) and [#yoe](https://twitter.com/yoe), linking in to [@RoyalNavy](https://twitter.com/RoyalNavy) and [@YoEgovuk](https://twitter.com/YoEgovuk).



HALF a world from their respective homes, British and French amphibious assault ships meet up off the coast of Indonesia.

Britain's flagship HMS Albion and France's FS Dixmude, plus her escorting frigate Surcouf, joined forces in the Java Sea – a good 7,000 miles from their respective homes of Plymouth and Toulon.

It's a rarish sight for now – especially in the Far East – but in a couple of years' time, the Anglo-French Combined Joint Expeditionary Force will be at the heart of defence policy and operations on both sides of the Channel, creating a combined force which can be sent around the world to respond to events at short notice.

For now, Albion and Dixmude contented themselves with some combined manoeuvres, including transfers of supplies, and a photoshoot, captured by PO(Phot) Dave Jenkins in the back of a Royal Marines' Wildcat.

Two of the British helicopters are embarked on the Dixmude throughout her Asia-Pacific deployment, codenamed Jeanne d'Arc. After more than two months embracing all things

French, the fliers – normally based at Yeovilton in Somerset – relished the chance to hop across to Albion.

And just for good measure, French helicopters did likewise to keep the small aviation department on board on their toes.

In addition, sailors and marines from both vessels traded places for the day to gain experience of life aboard a foreign warship.

Lieutenant de vaisseau François-Xavier De Saint-Sernin was among the officers and ratings from Dixmude who spent the day visiting HMS Albion.

"We were able to mix with our counterparts throughout our time onboard, and what really strikes me from what we've seen and heard is how similar many of our procedures are and how much we share in common," he said.

"It was brilliant to see the easy rapport between Albion's sailors and marines and their French counterparts," added Albion's CO Capt Tim Neild.

"The longer they spent

together, the more they found they had in common. Ultimately, it's this warmth and respect we have for one another as individuals that makes the cooperation between our navies possible."

None of which was a surprise to Lt Mike Wells, detachment commander from 847 NAS, whose 34 men and women have enjoyed French hospitality since February.

"We have been warmly welcomed by the French and have been able to achieve far more in terms of training and operational tasking during the deployment than we anticipated, including the opportunity to work with HMS Albion," he added.

"Naval cooperation between Britain and France is standard practice throughout Europe and the Middle East, but it is significant to see the White Ensign and Tricolour flying together in South East Asia," Capt Neild said.

HMS Albion then went on to renew the bonds of friendship with one of UK's closest defence partners, while her embarked Royal Marines ventured deep into the jungles of Borneo.

Albion paid a four-day visit to Brunei – the first by a Royal Navy warship since 2011.

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

It's a part of the world full of historical resonance for the Fleet Flagship.

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

Although Brunei achieved full independence in 1984, the relationship between the two countries remains close. The oil-rich Sultanate enjoys some of the most pristine areas of jungle in the region, and is home to a permanent British training facility.

"What the jungle offers is Commando training at its most raw, combining basic infantry skills with the need to survive in a place where everything is

designed to defeat you – toxic tree sap to venenate snakes and, above all, the humidity," said Lt Col Fuller, HMS Albion's Amphibious Operations Officer.

For many of Albion's Marines, Brunei represents their first experience of jungle training. The week-long Exercise Commando began by taking the troops back to basics of survival – food and shelter – before moving on to the elements required for fighting at close quarters, including riverine operations.

"This is the first time a Purpose Task Group has been sent to the Far East which we wanted to exploit the training we could in the rest of the world. Brunei is 80 per cent of my guy's first opportunity to work in the jungle," said 45 Cdo's Maj Trafford.

"The jungle is probably the best possible environment for honing Commando skills. The Arctic elements will be your biggest enemy, but in the jungle once you learn to manage the heat and humidity you can actually focus on soldiering."



Flagship of friends

Albion makes new connections while renewing deep bonds

A Special Purpose Task Group (SPTG) is a high-readiness force of Royal Marines that can be forward deployed on a variety of ships – from auxiliaries to aircraft carriers – to fulfil a range of missions, including disaster relief and maritime security through to classic amphibious operations.

Albion's SPTG consists of some 160 officers and men, predominantly from 45 Cdo's Y Company but with engineer, logistics, signals and fire support elements drawn from various other Royal Marine and British Army Commando units.

Joining them in the jungle were Albion's own landing craft specialists from 4 Assault Group Royal Marines.

One of them was Mne Jack Cameron, who said: "The humidity hit me as soon as we were on the vehicle deck, even before we boarded the landing craft, and I didn't stop sweating throughout."

"Once we got under the tree canopy it was cooler, but we had to do things differently. There was no crashing through the jungle. We had to slow right down and stay hydrated."

The first few days in the jungle focused on the core skills needed to operate in the unique environment, building basic competence from which to progress.

The latter part of the week saw the Royal Marines conducting break contact drills, close target reconnaissance, patrol and navigation training and riverine exercises.

"It's difficult to spot people in dense vegetation so you quickly become reliant on sound instead. But the more time you spend in the jungle the more attuned you become to the environment around you. Before long, you start to see the clues that people leave behind", said Lt Smith, adding: "When the terrain becomes too tough, the Royal Marines naturally take to the water. Our Zodiac craft enabled us to move quickly and covertly in a way that would be impossible on foot or by road."

The Royal Marines were joined by a small group of officers and ratings from HMS Albion's ship's company, who were specially selected to gain an insight into

how Commando Forces operate ashore.

HMS Albion's 'Bish', Chaplain Eddie Wills, was one of them.

"I've spent quite a bit of time in the woodlands of the UK and so I felt entirely comfortable living among the trees but entirely uncomfortable in the heat and humidity. Nevertheless, it was a hugely memorable experience. You can count on the Royal Marines to put their heart and soul into any challenge, and that was absolutely true for the jungles of Brunei."

Maj Trafford added: "We crammed in a lot over six days, but it meant we had to move on quickly. This time we focused on section level drills rather than troop or company level exercises, so it would be great to go back and do it all again in more depth and on a larger scale."

Away from the jungle, HMS Albion's chefs and stewards had the opportunity to flex their renowned hospitality skills in support of a succession of visits from senior government officials and military representatives.

The enduring relationship between the UK and Brunei was in evidence at a reception hosted by HMS Albion for more than 40 serving and retired officers from the Royal Brunei Navy who trained at Britannia Royal Naval College between 1972 and today.

Among those present was Captain Haji Yusuf bin Masron, Chief of Staff to Brunei's Joint Force Headquarters, who was at Dartmouth in 1991 in the same class as HMS Albion's commanding officer, Capt Neild.

"It's 27 years since we walked through the gates of Britannia Royal Naval College together. We both played in the college rock band at the Summer Ball, and that was the last we saw of each other" recalled Capt Neild.

"The fact that after all this time we can pick up where we left off is wonderful. It just goes to highlight the value of the Royal Navy's international training programmes."

"Here in Brunei, and all around the world, the United Kingdom is extremely fortunate to be able to draw on friendships between people who share the same formative experiences, who understand one another and who

can bring our countries closer together."

As well as renewing old friendships, HMS Albion's ship's company set about forging new ones too, as they welcomed 80 year 6 pupils from the International School Brunei, including the son of Brunei's Crown Prince, to tour the ship.

Sub Lt Simon Elmore said: "It was a pleasure to have them onboard – they absolutely loved getting hands on with the fire-fighting gear, night vision goggles and other interactive displays around the ship."

Meanwhile, a group of officers and ratings from HMS Albion were invited to visit the Royal Brunei Navy's offshore patrol vessel KDB Darussalam.

Sub Lt Henry Prior said: "The scope of the Brunei Navy and its concept of operations is very different to a globally deployed Navy like our own, but it was interesting to understand how Brunei's geographical outlook shapes their security."

"They have a great deal of experience of operating among the islands of South East Asia which the Royal Navy can learn from, particularly if we start to visit this region more regularly in the future."

Former Liverpool FC footballer John Barnes popped along to visit Albion while she was in Brunei.

He was welcomed onboard by Capt Neild and 'club swinger' POPT James Buttle. After touring the ship, he headed up to the bridge to meet some of the ship's company and answer their questions.

Many of those who attended were Liverpool FC supporters; others played for HMS Albion's own football team, which has been in action against local sides in Singapore, Jakarta and Brunei.

Mr Barnes said: "Great to meet so many Servicemen and women on my tour of HMS Albion while in Brunei. The Armed Forces are one of the best examples of teamwork and camaraderie and it was an honour to share my own experiences of playing in great teams."

Lt Cdr Craig Guest added: "John Barnes is a footballing legend with a warm and engaging personality. I enjoyed hearing his thoughts about the camaraderie

that was fostered at Liverpool during the Shankly-era – I think that same ethos is alive in HMS Albion today."

The Fleet Flagship's departure from Brunei presented the opportunity to turn warm words about partnership into practice, as she joined KDB Darussalam for exercises, together with a Black Hawk from the Royal Brunei Air Force – the fourth type of helicopter to land on the assault ship since it left Plymouth.

However, despite the busy programme of defence engagements, there was time for members of the ship's company to step ashore. Many chose to tread beyond the usual shopping malls and hotels and instead explore the water village of Kampong Ayer – described by explorer Magellan as the 'Venice of the East' – while others headed to the mangroves in search of Proboscis monkeys and saltwater crocodiles.

LAET Joseph Fisher said: "Brunei wasn't at all like I expected, and there were surprises at every turn, particularly the mangrove swamps and the water village. Brunei isn't really on the tourist trail, so it's only because of the Navy that I'd get to see these kinds of places."

Earlier it was children who dominated Albion's visit to Jakarta in Indonesia.

Youngsters waving British and Indonesian flags greeted the assault ship as she arrived in the port of Tanjung Priok, to the north of the city.

Dancers, musicians and TV cameras also flocked onto the quayside to mark the first visit by the Royal Navy to the country in nearly seven years.

A group of sailors and marines were given a very special insight into life in Jakarta when they were invited to visit Nuruz Zahroh Orphanage.

Chaplain Wills, who led the visit, said: "We would normally send a working party to help with painting or maintenance. This time, however, we were invited to experience a traditional Indonesian meal."

"As a Royal Navy Chaplain, my role in HMS Albion is to be a friend and advisor to all onboard, and to support those of all faiths and of none. I was aware that

charitable giving is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, so somewhat profound to be receiving end."

"Despite the fact the community was comparatively poor, they still wanted to know what little they had with generosity with which we were welcomed was very humbling."

"Some of the older children tried out a few words of English but even for the younger children language was no barrier. They overcame their shyness, there was much laughter and excitement."

"I think the experience was quite an impression on some of our younger sailors and ratings too, and many had even bought sweets, T-shirts, teddy bears and other gifts from the NAAAF with their own money to give as a thank you."

"Having visited Nuruz Orphanage in 2011 and now again in 2018, the Royal Navy has established a link with a particular orphanage."

"It's my sincere hope that this can continue in the future, particularly if deployment to South East Asia becomes frequent in the years ahead."

LtStd Amy-Jane Rose said: "Visiting the orphanage was a chance to glimpse the lives of Jakarta that tourists would usually see. I'm so glad to see the children were so happy because they have a fond memory of the visit as I do."

Albion's three-day visit to the ship host a succession of diplomats, military and industry representatives for talks, while her embarked Royal Marines challenged Indonesian counterparts on the flight deck Crossfit competition. The arrival and departure from Jakarta also offered an opportunity to exercise alongside the Indonesian Navy.

Consisting of more than 17,000 islands, Indonesia is one of the world's most populous democracies, and the second largest economy in South East Asia.

After Brunei, Albion visited Sasebo, the second largest city in Nagasaki. In the weeks the assault ship spent in Japan, she undertakes amphibious exercises with the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force.

Report: Lt Cdr Jeremy

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Pictures: PO(Phot) Dave Jenkins and LPhot Pepe Hogan



Recipe for chef success

ROYAL NAVY chefs swapped the high seas for the Tees and treated hungry Middlesbrough College students to a careers day with a difference.

AB Jack Thompson, 26, and Chef Millie Francis, 22, delivered interactive *Ready Steady Cook*-style demonstrations, as well as sharing their stories with Middlesbrough College's catering students.

It was familiar ground for Jack, who studied sports science at the college before joining the Royal Navy.

"I was working in the oil and gas industry but became bored of my 9 to 5 – and the constant worry about job security," said Jack. "Joining the Royal Navy has opened up so many opportunities that I wouldn't get in civilian life."

"It's great to be able to come back to the college and share my experiences and career journey with the students."

Millie, who is from Middlesbrough, joined the Royal Navy on a Level 2 apprenticeship before qualifying as a chef.

She said: "My day-to-day role includes preparing meals for the ship's company – as well as visiting dignitaries and royalty."

"It's been a fantastic experience for me. I've made so many friends and have a real sense of pride in my job that I don't think I'd have elsewhere."

Middlesbrough College offers a range of catering and hospitality courses and students have the opportunity to work in its on-site restaurant, Waterside Brasserie, which is open to the public.

Curriculum team leader Molly Shaher said: "The Royal Navy visited as part of our ongoing programme to show our students the types of careers on offer in the catering and hospitality industry."

"Inviting organisations to the college gives them an opportunity to learn about different routes and options they wouldn't otherwise consider."

Navy career adviser PO Dennis Harrison said: "The message is out there that the Navy is a great employer but many people don't realise the different entry routes and working environments available."

"Middlesbrough and the surrounding areas have a long history with the Royal Navy – from Captain Cook to the present day. It's fantastic to see this tradition continuing into the next generation."



● Catering lecturer Stephen Hardy, catering and hospitality students Sam Holmes and Brianne McTurk, Royal Navy Chef Millie Francis and AB Jack Thomson

Dino-sore feet from 100km run

ELEVEN-year-old Archie Bolsover chases the family pet along the slope of a sun-baked hill – a perfect image of childhood fun and Britain in the summertime.

Except that young Archie suffers from Type 1 diabetes – a severe condition which will remain with him for the rest of his life, forcing him to take insulin before every meal and checking his blood around ten times a day.

Since being diagnosed three years ago, Archie and his family have been helped by many experts – such as doctors and nurses at Plymouth's Derriford Hospital and especially Diabetes UK.

As a thank-you submariner dad Ross and his wife Sakina are running nearly 2½ marathons over two days – 100 kilometres (62 miles) of the Jurassic Coast Challenge along the world-famous coastline between Poole and Bridport.

The 34-year-old petty officer, who's served in the Silent Service for more than 15 years, mostly with nuclear deterrent boats, enjoys physical fitness like most matelots, but in the gym rather than long-distance running.

"It was my wife who found the Jurassic Coast Challenge and asked me if I wanted to take part with her," said Ross (pictured inset with Archie enjoying the great outdoors).

"We've both been keen on raising funds for Diabetes UK for a while. This seemed like the perfect opportunity to get people to sponsor us."

The charity has provided information, advice and support to help the family manage Archie's diabetes effectively and confidently. It also funds pioneering research into care, cure and prevention for all types of diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes was a condition the family knew very little about.

It's an autoimmune condition – your immune system attacks healthy body tissue by mistake; in this case, it attacks cells in your pancreas which is unable to produce insulin as a result and glucose cannot be moved from your bloodstream into your cells.

"Once Archie was diagnosed he spent the weekend in hospital. I can remember at the time I was devastated – it wasn't a nice sight seeing him having blood taken and being in so much distress," Ross added.

Ross is now in training around Faslane – "ideal terrain for what I'll be confronted with on the Dorset course. I do enjoy running, but have never attempted this distance."

You can support the Bolsovers' efforts – they've set a collective target of £2,000 – either via www.justgiving.com/Ross-Bolsover and www.justgiving.com/Sakina-Bolsover1 or by texting BOLS68 or KINA86 £? (£1.£2,£5,£10 etc) to 70070



Military skills have served Paul well

THE skills Royal Navy personnel get from Service are more than simply transferable to Civvy Street, they're incredibly attractive to prospective employers.

Skills learned during his career in the Royal Marines helped former C/Sgt Paul Dunkley, 54, make the transition to Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.

Swayed by the '99.9% need not apply' advert, Dunkley joined the Royal Marines aged 21 and served for 22 years.

During this time he:

- toured Northern Ireland and Afghanistan;
- served in HMS Endurance;
- demonstrated combat skills with the Royal Marines Display Team;
- threw some punches in the Navy Boxing Squad;
- played football for the Marines and rugby league for the Navy;
- travelled to Norway, Germany, America, the Caribbean, Jordan, Brazil and Antarctica;
- starred in the 2006/7 Royal Navy recruitment advert in *Navy News*.

When family commitments drew Dunkley to civilian life, he left with a wealth of experience.

He did a couple of temporary jobs, but after seeing a prison officer job advert, he used the skills he developed in the military to start a new career.

"Being in the prison service does have similarities to the



● Paul Dunkley discovered his time in the Royal Marines stood him in good stead for his new career

military; you are in a team who work together, but also you are accountable to work as an individual," he said.

"Being in the Forces and going into a prison officer role means you can deal with difficult situations in a calm and respectful manner. You can be firm but fair."

During his seven-year career in the prison service Dunkley has advanced through the ranks.

He is now a Supervising Officer performing an incredibly important public service, which includes rehabilitating offenders,

overseeing a prison wing and managing other officers.

"My previous experience means I can think on my feet."

"The military taught me how to manage, give instructions and carry them out, all skills I use now in my role as a supervising officer."

Dunkley shares his top tip for those interested in a career in the prison service when they leave the military.

"You will succeed if you be your own person to staff and prisoners," he said.

"Every day is different as a

prison officer, you never know what the day ahead has and that's why I enjoy it."

If you're looking to take on a new challenge at the end of your Royal Navy career, the prison service offers a rewarding career.

The role comes with a range of benefits, including a starting salary of £22k-£31k for a 39-hour week, Civil Service pension; 25 days holiday; retail discounts and childcare vouchers.

Find out more at prisonandprobationjobs.gov.uk

Fast learners dive in at Collingwood

AN eager group of trainees recruited under the Royal Navy Undergraduate Apprenticeship Scheme (UGAS) enjoyed a taste of Naval life at HMS Collingwood.

The recruits spent time at the Royal Naval Leadership Academy as part of their accelerated training programme which should see them serving as Petty Officer Engineering Technicians on board HM Submarines within four years. The trainees all joined the Royal Navy in September 2017.

Upon completion of Leading Engineering Technician Qualifying Course, the graduates will be as qualified as recruits who have

completed training in the traditional time-frame but will then spend seven to eight months at sea as LETs to obtain practical experience, before returning to complete Petty Officer professional training.

At the RNLA, the group tackled exercises designed to test and encourage leadership abilities and boost team-building, skills essential for their future in the Royal Navy.

LET Owen Guy said: "I'm going on LET course soon but I'd had no leadership experience within the Royal Navy. This helps you dive straight in without too much pressure but it takes you out of your comfort zone."



● Students do press-ups in the driving rain



Hats off to air engineers

Servicemen and women celebrate end of their training



● AET Elliott Uzeta with Arabella

SERVICEMEN and women celebrate the completion of their 55 weeks of training to become competent Royal Navy Air Engineering Technicians and Naval Airman at RNAS Yeovilton. Cdr Al Tracy, Commanding Officer of the Air Engineering Department, congratulated those qualifying and welcomed their friends and families to the parade.

He said: "It's a real privilege and honour to be stood here today as you become part of the trained strength of the Royal Navy the most professional air arm in the world."

"You have undergone the finest air engineering training system in the world; we deliver first-class engineers, second to none and you are 100 per cent ready."

During the Phase 2b 55-week course trainees undergo eight weeks of classroom instruction on mechanical and avionics systems, common practices and documentation processes for helicopters.

The remaining time is spent on a training squadron where they are introduced to helicopter operations and maintenance practices.

Guest of Honour Rear Admiral Keith Blount passed them for duty and presented certificates.

He told them "On the 4th of July 1986 I received my pilot Wings and today is your equivalent."

"The sense of what you have achieved today will be reflected with pride in your hearts. With it comes significant responsibility and I have climbed into aircraft based on trust that you have earned; our aviators place their lives in your hands every day."

"Your timing has been perfect as you start on the cusp of an exciting time in Naval activity with our two aircraft carriers at the centre of which you will be part."

"An exciting journey lies ahead and we are part of something special, I am very proud well done. To your families I say thank you for your role in supporting them and your love, you too are part of the Fleet Air Arm family now and I welcome you."

On completion of the parade and awards, which comes in the Year of Engineering, the newly-qualified AETs joined their families, instructors and industry guests to celebrate their success with a role demonstration from a Merlin Mk3i helicopter with Commando Helicopter Force, followed by a celebration of their achievements with family over lunch.

Aces pie

WE'VE heard of pork pie hats, but a cream one?

Dripping from the pasting he received from comrades is 847 NAS' Lt Matt Clark.

He was covered with plates of the white stuff by fellow members of the Wildcat detachment aboard French assault Dixmude somewhere off the Indonesian coast after achieving a milestone 1,000 hours in the cockpit.

"Achieving my thousand hours was a great milestone and to have done so in the Java Sea, recovering to a French Ship made it all the more memorable," said Matt (pictured below, still dripping...).

After being properly pied, his squadron colleagues helped him clean up by blasting him with fresh water.

And at the other end of the flying spectrum, new pilot Lt Oliver Leisk successfully touched down on the Dixmude's deck – his maiden landing on a ship at sea (847 NAS are more at home over land, receiving for the Royal Marines).

"After what has been almost five years of flying, it's very satisfying to finally be doing real naval aviation," he said.



● Students with PO LeClerc and LAET Hoddy and the team from the Jon Egging Trust

Inspiring future leaders

A GROUP of young leaders from Ferndown Upper School visited HMS Sultan with the Jon Egging Trust, in order to develop their leadership skills.

A total of 15 pupils spent a day on leadership tasks, including learning the basics of how to march and instruct parade training with the base's Ceremonial Staff and leadership and engineering activities.

The Jon Egging Trust was established in memory of Flight Lieutenant Jon Egging, who lost his life while completing an air display with the Red Arrows at the Bournemouth Air Festival in 2011.

The youngsters were all on the trust's Blue Skies 2 programme which runs over ten days across a six-month period, and as well as visiting military establishments they will also do further STEM activities within industry.

Trust Youth Liaison Officer, Kaye Jackson, said: "The Blue Skies students in this group are selected by the schools and have become just a little

disenchanted with education for a variety of reasons which are not their fault. The program brings them to places like HMS Sultan and HMS Victory which kind of opens their eyes to all the different jobs that are out there and we hope that they will be inspired to think 'I can do that', and that they go back to school with a little bit of renewed interest."

Student Max Blewitt, 14, said: "I've enjoyed going inside all the helicopters and learning about how they work. I definitely feel more confident now about standing up and speaking to people."

Lt Barry 'Tiny' Richardson said: "This morning they were on the drill square, getting used to taking control of other people and projecting their voices, which is very outside of their normal comfort zone and they're far more involved now than when they arrived."

"They've all come out of their shells and are engaged really well and asking lots of intelligent questions about the aircraft."

Warmer welcome at Mess

CDRE Martin Quinn opened the refurbished Combined Senior and Junior Rates Mess at HMS Hibernia.

The Combined Mess is the centre point for the social life of HMS Hibernia as well as being used for family and unit events and when hosting formal visitors.

The refurbishment project was primarily supported by the financial assistance given by the RNRMC.

The project also received donations from both the Combined Mess fund and the Wardroom.

The financial support provided allowed a small team from the Permanent Staff to undertake the main aspects of the refurbishment which included:

the re-decoration of the mess; the upgrade of the furnishings and bar area; the fitting of a television and games console; and the provision of a new dartboard and oche. The mess also had a new carpet fitted.

Following the formal opening, Cdre Quinn, a previous Commanding Officer of HMS Hibernia, enjoyed the hospitality of the Combined Mess.

Cdr Neil Downing, HMS Hibernia's Commanding Officer, said: "The work undertaken to improve the Combined Mess has provided another opportunity to demonstrate the pride that the ship's company have in HMS Hibernia and we are especially grateful for the financial assistance from the RNRMC."



The only charity dedicated to supporting children whose parents serve, or have served, in the Naval Service.

Originally set up as an orphanage, we now assist children with a wide range of needs and at times of family crisis. Applications can be made at any time and those seeking assistance can contact the office directly for an application form, or download it from our website.

311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth PO2 8RN • t 023 9263 9534 e caseworkers@rnmchildrensfund.org.uk
www.rnmchildrensfund.org.uk

RNRMCF Registered charity number: 1160182 • Patron: HRH The Duke of York, KG, GCVO, CD



● AB Kent Merritt with brother-in-law POMA Gareth George

Following in family footsteps

AB Kent Merritt has passed out of Initial Naval Training, following in many of his descendants' footsteps.

The AET's sisters and brother-in-law all completed their training at HMS Raleigh and his family has a history of either serving in the RN or the police.

Both of Kent's parents served in the British South African Police (BSAP) from 1962-1980. The BSAP was disbanded in 1980.

During the recruits' inspection by Raleigh's CO Capt Ellie Ablett, the Royal Marines Band paid tribute by playing the BSAP march *Kum-A-Kye*.

Kent's father had requested if the band could play the 18-instrument piece written by Sgt Max Sparks in 1939 as this would mean a great deal to them.

The parade was streamed live online and watched by many BSAP Association members.

An end to loneliness

THE Star & Garter Club, a new day care service for veterans, is helping to tackle loneliness in the Solihull area.

The service is provided by Royal Star & Garter Homes, a charity which provides specialist residential care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia.

Norma, who has been attending since the service started, said: "It's fantastic here. Where I live I don't get to talk to many people, so it really makes a difference coming here and having lots of people to chat with."

Fellow guest Joy added: "Good conversation is so important, for everyone. It doesn't matter how old you are, you always need to have someone to engage with."

"The Star & Garter Club hasn't disappointed - everyone I've met is so friendly. I've chatted to club guests, residents and staff and everyone is so warm and welcoming. It's lovely."

Ride for heroes

FORMER Royal Navy sailor Chris Ball is cycling 50 miles in aid of Help for Heroes and the Northants and Warwick Air Ambulance Service.

Chris, who served for ten years and was diagnosed with Bipolar, is undertaking his cycle ride on June 6.

Anyone wishing to donate to his fundraising should visit <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/christopher-ball43>



Crown Prince returns to take salute

THE Crown Prince of Bahrain took the passing out parade salute at Britannia Royal Naval College.

Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, Kingdom of Bahrain, made a return visit to BRNC to inspect the 152 young officers on parade, marking the successful completion of their Royal Navy Initial Naval Training course.

On parade were 152 officers destined for a career in the Naval Service, including 17 officers promoted from Senior Rate and ten new officers for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

The parade also had 11 international students from other nations, including Fiji, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Ghana, Malta, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Guyana and the Bahamas.

The Crown Prince of Bahrain previously attended the Lord High Admiral's Parade in 2015 to witness his son, His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, commission as a Naval officer.

The Commanding Officer of BRNC, Capt Jolyon Woodard, said: "It is a privilege to welcome His Royal Highness back to BRNC to inspect those passing out."

"All have completed the demanding 29-

week Initial Naval Training (Officers) course. What they have learnt at BRNC will remain with them throughout their careers.

"This is a very proud moment for them and their families, and I am equally proud of my staff at BRNC who have facilitated that training."

Also taking part in the parade were Officer Cadets half way through their training who will pass out in August.

The musical accompaniment was provided by the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines, Plymouth. Dignitaries from other navies and organisations were among the VIP guests.

Picture: Craig Keating

Meeting Queen tops great year for Sam

A VOLUNTEER recognised in the New Year's Honours List received another unexpected surprise as he was presented with his medal by the Queen.

HMS Sultan Marine Engineering Museum Curator Derek 'Sam' Weaver received an MBE for his dedication and determination in preserving decades of Naval history and was presented with the award at a ceremony at Windsor Castle.

Sam has been at the helm of the museum since 1992.

He took on the voluntary role towards the end of his 32-year career in the Royal Navy as a mechanic in HMS Cook and Wakeful, and as a mechanic in HMS Hermes and submarines, including Tiptoe, Finwhale, Renown, Repulse and Revenge.

Since leaving the RN, as a retired officer, Sam also took charge of the Artificer's Management Group which taught specialist trade skills within HMS Sultan from 1993 until his retirement in 2007.

The museum is mainly made up of artefacts and memorabilia donated by families of past serving members and from those who would like their artefacts preserved for posterity and displayed for others to see.

It also holds records of artificer and mechanics training going back as far as 1923 from both HMS Fisgard, Fisgard Squadron (formerly based at HMS Raleigh)



● Derek Weaver with his MBE presented to him by the Queen

and HMS Caledonia, along with records from HMS Sultan.

Sam and his team of volunteers regularly welcome visits by groups of veterans and trainees and the museum is also open to the general public every September during Gosport Heritage Open Days.

Sam said: "Our main business is the records we keep. We continually get asked for records by those tracing their ancestors."

"We also receive requests for visits from classes coming

together on reunions and we're always happy to help.

"My three daughters were with me when I received news of my MBE and I was completely over the moon."

"I knew nothing about it and I was just so grateful to have been nominated. When I received the medal from the Queen it was a wonderful surprise for us all."

During his association with the Royal Navy, which nearly spans six decades, Sam describes the two years he spent on his first ship



HMS Cook in Fiji and around the South Pacific as his best draft which also led, in a strange twist of fate, to him meeting his wife.

Sam said "There was an article in *The News of The World*, pictured above, headlined HMS Wedding Bells as there had been 16 lads from the ship who had got married to local South Pacific girls out in Fiji and New Zealand during the deployment in the Far East.

"As a result a lady wrote a letter to the Stokers' Mess onboard HMS Cook saying that there are plenty of beauties back home."

"One of my friends who picked up the letter noticed that it came from Kent and suggested that as I also came from there I should get in touch, so I wrote to her and arranged to meet."

"Through her I met my wife Stella and we were married just ten months later and were happily married for 50 years until she passed away four years ago."



Health focus earns Scott top honour

BATTLING against the very best caterers from the Army and RAF, HMS Duncan's PO(CS) Scott Furber has won the prestigious Armed Forces Caterers Award for 2018.

Sponsored by Essential Cuisine, the trophy was presented at a gala dinner in London.

The judges were impressed with Scott's initiative to drive forward Navyfit menus on board.

Through a partnership with the Institute of Naval Medicine, Scott is pioneering menus that focus on delivering a healthier diet to the ship's company. Once fully developed, the concept is planned to be rolled-out Fleet-wide.

Scott's CO, Cdr Eleanor Stack, said: "PO Furber is an ambassador for the Royal Navy and an exceptional caterer. This is an award which he richly deserves, not only as a result of his personal dedication, passion, and hard work, but also for the way he instils these virtues into his team."

His colleague LCh Matty Tew added: "PO Furber has inspired us all. The whole team is delighted for him and he thoroughly deserves the award. We share his vision for delivering excellence and he works selflessly, passing on techniques and improving our standards."

Duncan's Logistics Officer Lt Cdr Ellen Laird further praised PO Furber for his tireless efforts on behalf of the wider Naval Service.

She noted that while HMS Duncan is at the centre of an operational period as flagship to SNMG2, great food is helping to maintain morale and the wider ship's logistic team has impressed a myriad of guests from across the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions.

Clare is the new Monique

THERE'S a new woman at the top of the Royal Navy Royal Marines Children's Fund (RNRMCF).

Clare Scherer has been appointed director of the charity.

Clare, who has served as Assistant Director of the RNRMCF since 2014 and has a wealth of experience in the charity sector, will take over from Monique Bateman, who retires having served the charity for more than 36 years.

The RNRMCF supports children whose parents serve, or have served, in the Naval Service.

Monique said: "It has been an immense pleasure to have been a part of the RNRMCF for the past 36 years and to have helped thousands of Service families in their time of need."

"I can think of no better person to take over as director than Clare and I am certain that the RNRMCF will go from strength to strength."

For details about the RNRMCF visit www.rnrchildrensfund.org.uk

We aim to help as many as possible

EACH year the RNRMC distribute thousands of pounds across Naval ships and establishments, ensuring top-quality facilities for Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel and their families.

Since the start of the year, the RNRMC has awarded grants to multiple ships and establishments to assist with renovation and construction projects.

From large refurbishments that provide families with much needed support centres, to smaller Mess improvements that boost morale on board ships – the RNRMC works hard to ensure that no-one is forgotten.

Britain's flagship aircraft carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth, will be a leading maritime force for the next 50 years. It is vital that those who serve on board for up to nine

months at a time are able to unwind after busy periods of high tempo operations.

An operational grant by the RNRMC will enhance the facilities of the Warrant Officers and Senior Rates Mess so that the area can be enjoyed for many years to come.

From the very big to the small; this year the RNRMC assisted HMS Neptune with the cost of a new static caravan at the site in Aultbea. Situated on the West Coast of Scotland, HMS Neptune is the Fleet Accommodation Centre for HMNB Clyde and is home to some 3,500 Service personnel.

The static caravans on site are often hired by serving personnel and their families and are booked throughout the year.

In providing close to £15,000 for a

replacement unit, the RNRMC has helped ensure that those who need somewhere to stay in Scotland will continue to have access to the excellent facilities on offer at Aultbea.

Additional grants that have improved the quality of life for sailors and marines includes the Junior Rates Dining Hall refurbishment on HMS Excellent and Mess improvements on board the mine hunter HMS Grimsby.

The charity has also provided funding for the extensive renovation of the Officers' Mess in Lympstone, creating a warm and welcoming space for the Officers at the Royal Marines Commando Training Centre.

For more information on how to apply for a Quality of Life grant from the RNRMC, visit <https://www.rnrmc.org.uk/forms/>



Team's grand ride in memory of Jack

SERVING members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines from HMS Raleigh undertook an arduous 1,000-mile cycle to honour the memory of Jack 'Boy' Cornwell, who died aged 16 during the Battle of Jutland.

A group of nine sailors and marines set off on the VC 1000 Mile Challenge from HMS Vivid in Plymouth, cycled around the UK and arrived at HMS Raleigh 12 days later.

The challenging 1,000 mile route honoured the memory of the WWI naval hero Jack 'Boy' Cornwell, while raising money for three British charities.

Born in the East End of London, Jack Cornwell signed up to the Royal Navy at 15 years-old

and joined as a Boy Seaman First Class.

During the 72-hour barrage at the Battle of Jutland, he stayed at his gun post despite being critically injured. He later died at a hospital in Grimsby. His bravery earned him the Victoria Cross – the youngest recipient of the award throughout WWI.

Money raised throughout the journey will be partially donated to the principal charity of the Royal Navy – the RNRMC.

The group visited key locations associated with Jack, such as; Beachley Barracks in Chepstow, Somme Barracks in Sheffield, RAF Wittering in Peterborough and Permanent Joint Headquarters in London.

Sgt James Hyde said: "I would like to use this opportunity to thank all of our friends and family who have shared the Just

Giving page and to those who have generously donated so far. Without your kind donations our saddle sores were all for nothing!"

Director of Fundraising and Marketing at the RNRMC, Alasdair Akass, said: "This fantastic challenge is not only raising money for sailors, marines and their families, but also raising awareness of the bravery demonstrated by Boy Cornwell – one of our greatest naval heroes."

This year marks the 100 year centenary since the end of World War I – a conflict which saw the death of over 18 million worldwide.

To donate to VC 1000 Cycle Challenge visit <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=CVC1000&isTeam=true>



● Jack Cornwell



Ten out of ten for marathon Marine

A SENIOR Royal Marine has completed a tough challenge – running ten marathon distances in ten days – culminating in the London Marathon.

Col Simon Chapman, Captain of the Base, at Devonport Naval Base, Plymouth, finished his tenth 26-mile run in London (the only race in his programme) in 3 hours and 16 minutes – the fastest of his charity fund-raising challenge.

He said: "What a way to finish a gruelling week. My fastest time and all the more special, given an epic longer than planned trek of 29 miles up the Thames the day before, not the ideal preparation for a marathon race today. But all my training came together when it mattered."

He said he could not have done it without his support team of Royal Naval personnel Jason Jay, Kriss Young and Rhys Tanner.

He thanked all other supporters: "I am very grateful to the support from friends, family and colleagues across the Navy and Devonport Naval Base and the well-wishers who supported me en-route or online."

"It was a huge boon to know so many people were backing me. They have also helped me raise a lot of money for two great causes."

He is raising funds for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and The Brain Tumour Charity – in memory of a family member who died from a brain tumour.

Staff at HMS Drake, Devonport, boosted his fundraising to over £6,000 and he is on course to raise £10,000.

Col Chapman, 49, explained:

"I was looking for a personal challenge, something that would test me as well as perhaps encouraging others to get involved and help me raise some money for charity at the same time."

"I have a strong personal motive – my sister-in-law died from a brain tumour aged 33 and I thought raising some funds for brain tumour research would be a fitting tribute."

Personal military fitness training and Royal Marines ethos got him through the gruelling challenge.

He said: "Being a Marine certainly helps with the mental and physical extremes. I've been training since September last year and I've needed to draw on some of my military training to help me get through the wettest winter for years. I've seen Dartmoor, where I train, at its worst, particularly during the snow in March."

"In some ways running the actual challenge was easier – most of the ground was new to me (rather than the monotony of running the same old training routes) and the landscape and some of the views in Devon and Dorset were glorious."

He trained over 30 weeks, building up the distances and the intensity.

From Christmas onwards he sustained 60-70 miles/week, regularly completing 20+ miles training runs and culminating with ten half marathons over ten days at the end of March.

Donations can be made to <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=SimonChapman10&pageUrl=3>

Centre revamp will benefit families of Royal Marines

A GRANT of over £30,000 has been awarded for the Royal Marines Families and Welfare Centre in Taunton by the RNRMC.

The grant, which has been distributed by the national charity of the Royal Navy, will enable the centre to complete the interior with comfortable furnishings and equipment.

Set to be officially opened later this year, the Norton Manor Camp Families Centre will provide a high-quality facility for Royal Marines' Service families within the Taunton area.

Originally built in 1939, the quality of the current centre has deteriorated significantly and has now been deemed 'beyond economic repair'.

The proposed site for the new centre is a disused medical centre that will be structurally repaired and appropriately modified and open

this month.

Funding for the centre's major structural repair is to be provided by both the Royal Marines Charity and the Chancellor using LIBOR funds. Additional financial support for the interior is being provided by the RNRMC.

Over 1,000 serving personnel and their families will benefit from the new family and welfare facilities at the centre.

Users of the centre will enjoy access to; a chaplaincy support worker, a Families Liaison Officer, Community Beat Officer and HIVE.

The space at the centre will also play host to children's activity clubs, exercise classes and educational or creative classes.

Most importantly, the centre will be a vital line of support that families and dependants can use

when their loved one is away on deployments.

Equally, those who serve will now know that the families that they leave behind have a dedicated support network.

RNRMC Specialist Case Worker, WO2 Darren Joyce, said: "The new centre at Norton Manor Camp will combine welfare support, community development and provide short-term families accommodation under one roof."

"This will enhance community spirit, lifelong friendship opportunities and build resilience, all of which are vital ingredients to both new and established Service personnel and their families."

"The RNRMC funding will significantly improve the quality of support for all serving personnel within 40 Cdo RM and the Taunton Service Community and will provide a much

wider and long-term affect than the building itself."

For over ten years, the RNRMC has recognised that while one person joins, the whole family serves. The charity has distributed in excess of £55 million to help ensure that all sailors, marines, veterans and families remain as well supported as possible.

Director of Relationships and Funding at the RNRMC, Mandy Lindley, said: "The centre will become a vital hub for the whole Royal Marines family. We're delighted that the grant awarded will help make the facilities at the centre as warm and welcoming as it needs to be for families to fully enjoy it. This centre will become an integral part of the Marines community for many years to come."



New heights for safety training

HMS Monmouth's PO Jonathan Hinchliffe ascends the training tower at RAF Digby to enjoy a bird's-eye view of the Lincolnshire countryside.

Well, not really....the PO was one of the students on the Royal Navy Working at Height Rescue Practitioner Safety Course – or WaHRP.

Introduced in 2017 for the Royal Navy, there are seven specific courses every year. Lasting five days, for up to eight students, the course teaches the basics of safe climbing techniques and rescue climber methods.

The training site has purpose-built 25-metre towers and 30-metre masts to train on, incorporating all the latest equipment.

Aimed at AB1 with the Defence Workplace Trainer (DWT) qualification, Leading Hands and above, from any branch, the popular course aims to generate two WaH Specialist Rescue Climbers for every ship to promote the importance of safety culture and deliver, should it be ever needed, rescue climber support.

During a visit, Capt Tim Green, from Navy Command DACOS Ships and the Surface Fleet Senior Operator for Safety,

emphasised the importance of safely working at height in the Royal Navy.

"Working safely at height is everyone's responsibility – not just those few who have done this course. The trips and falls that do occasionally happen are often from very low heights."

It's worth noting that you are officially working at height when working at any place above, at or below ground level where you could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury.

Course Instructor PO(AWT) Rob Robertson said: "We give you the training and skills needed; no previous climbing experience is necessary. It helps if you are comfortable with heights, noting the 25m training tower is as high as we go."

"The students especially enjoy the rescue phase when we train individuals to rescue people trapped at height with the Shark and Gotcha Rescue Systems."

If you are interested in attending the WaHRP course at RAF Digby ask your line management to book a Course (number CN3517) through the course booking Cell on 93825 4069. If you require further information, you can speak to the school on 95712 7634.

Forces' Wight knights

FERRY firm Red Funnel is offering a range of discounts to military personnel using its services between the mainland and the Isle of Wight.

The offers, which are valid year-round, are available for anyone with an MOD 90 card or a valid Defence Discount Service card.

Serving members of the Armed Forces, veterans, Reservists and MOD civil servants are all eligible to sign up to the Defence Discount Service, as are spouses/partners of serving personnel.

The discounts available include:

- 15 per cent off vehicle travel from Southampton to East Cowes;
- 15 per cent off foot passenger travel from Southampton to East or West Cowes;
- 20 per cent off vehicle travel from East Cowes to Southampton;
- 20 per cent off foot passenger travel from East or West Cowes to Southampton;
- 10 per cent off food and drink purchases from outlets on-board and at Red Funnel terminals.

For more information to book vehicle travel visit www.redfunnel.co.uk/military or log in to the Defence Discount Service website.

Rewards for frontline duty

A ROOKIE rescuer who plucked a sailor from raging seas, an intelligence expert behind a £9m drugs bust and a diver who saved a shipmate from being gassed in a partly-flooded compartment have been decorated for their skill and bravery.

The trio are among 14 Royal Navy sailors and Royal Marines to be recognised in the latest Operational Honours which acknowledges bravery and commitment by the men and women of the Armed Forces on the front line.

Winchman AET Stu Rogers (pictured) was engulfed by waves as he was lowered from HMS Monmouth's Wildcat helicopter to pick up the last survivor of sunken tanker Rama 2.

Stu – who had recently qualified as the winchman, never conducted a real rescue and never trained in such bad weather – faced 30ft waves and 40-knot gusts, while the helicopter was low on fuel and close to its operating limits.

As soon as he entered the water he became tangled in the winch cable, fought to free himself, struggled to swim to the survivor in oily water, then spent upwards of half an hour trying to hook on to the man and winch him to safety.

With the Wildcat about to abandon the rescue, the stricken sailor finally got into the rescue strop and was lifted into the helicopter, helped by an exhausted Stu.

"That was a difficult sortie – we were close to the wire on that one but it was great that we were able to get him on board," said Stu, whose day job was to serve as one of the Wildcat's engineers.

"A 30-minute attempt to get him hooked up was one of the hardest things I've had to do since joining the Fleet Air Arm."

Eleven months on from the rescue, he receives the Queen's Gallantry Medal for his "selfless and gallant reaction in such a highly-charged and unpredictable situation".

His shipmate PO James Hick was the frigate's electronic warfare expert and intelligence manager.

He and his team ensured Monmouth's decoy systems could meet the increased threat of missile attack in the Gulf region.

The success of those efforts has been fed into the rest of the Fleet to allow it to deal with similar and future threats.

On top of that, the senior rating pieced together information from scraps of paper carried by dhow crews as the ship hunted down drug runners; that led to the discovery of secret compartments containing hashish and heroin worth an estimated £9m. He receives the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service.

PO(D) Toby Jones was woken by the jarring sound of the alarm going off aboard HMS Tyne and the bang of a water pipe bursting, spewing water into the patrol ship's baggage store when the fishery patrol ship's fire-fighting system was accidentally set off during a visit to Faslane in May last year.



Having worked with engineers to try to locate the source of the water, Toby returned to the damaged compartment, where two colleagues were recovering a shipmate who was passing in and out of consciousness.

The diver realised nitrogen gas had also been released into the baggage store, ordered the area evacuated and doors closed, then entered the compartment in a breathing mask where he found a shipmate lying in four inches of water unconscious. He hauled him to safety and provided the casualty with oxygen; the affected sailor soon resumed breathing.

The diver showed "calm and measured leadership" throughout, as well as personal courage and receives the Queen's Commendation for Bravery.

And finally, the Naval officer who directed the Royal Navy's mission in the Middle East for two years, Cdre Will Warrender, has been named a Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

As UK Maritime Component Commander, he was responsible for all Royal Navy personnel in the Middle East theatre – well over 1,000 men and women on a daily basis on ships and Naval helicopters, plus Britain's hub of operations in Bahrain.

In addition he was also deputy to the senior US naval officer in the region, ran a Coalition of 31 nations committed to policing the Indian Ocean, and ensured the safe passage of shipping to the UK carrying essential fuel and supplies, all against the backdrop of a heightened threat from terrorists and rebels, particularly in the Yemen.

Also recognised were:

Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE): Capt P Halford RM; Col Sgt M Roughsedge.
 Military Cross (MC): Cpl H B Wilton.
 Queen's Gallantry Medal (QGM): AET S M Rogers.
 Mention in Despatches (MID): Capt T J Limb RM; Lance Cpl R P Neill.
 Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS): Col Sgt O Acid; Col D Blanchford; PO Warfare Specialist (Electronic Warfare) J A Hick; Sgt P Richards; Cpl A D Stovell; Col Sgt M R Waker.
 Queen's Commendation for Bravery (QCB): PO (D) T S Jones.

Branching out into intelligence

THE Ratings Intelligence Specialisation Vision – outlined in RNTM 01-071/17, issued in November last year – described the creation of an intelligence sub-specialisation for ratings in the warfare branch.

It will comprise existing positions in the electronic warfare, communication technician and hydrographic/meteorological sub-specs and new positions funded by JFC.

Known as Project Blinker Hall – after the legendary head of RN intelligence during the Great War – the initiative aims to deliver an intelligence specialisation at AB through to WO1 to work alongside the equivalent RM Combat Intelligence, Army Intelligence Corps and RAF Intelligence Analyst Trade practitioners.

ACOS Information Warfare Cdre Ian Annett underlined that "this sub-specialisation will play a vital role in the RN's ability to achieve an Information Advantage over potential adversaries and the delivery of the RN Information Warfare Vision."

Initial Operating Capability is planned for December 2020 and is closely tied to significant enhancements in RN operational capability over the next decade.

The call has gone out for volunteers to transfer – details in RNTM 01-16/18. Subject to the number and experience of volunteers, a Vesting Day in April next year is being considered. For personnel wishing to transfer and who are already employed in, or have significant experience of Naval or Joint Intelligence roles, options will be explored to determine what training will be required to ensure employability across the entire sub-specialisation.

"This offers the chance to work alongside some of the brightest individuals across government with a unique opportunity to input into decision making at all levels of Defence," said Capt Barry Doig, DACOS Naval Intelligence; those ratings who have the aptitude and motivation would have a new and exciting career working in both the Naval and Joint environments.

Transfer of existing positions will be done incrementally to avoid subsequent manning issues in donor specialisations. In around five years' time there is an expectation of direct entry recruitment like other warfare specialisations.

Intelligence ratings sub-specialisation roadshows have taken place in the three main Naval bases and further roadshows may be planned in due course.

For more details contact Lt Cdr Baz Basketfield: NAVY IW-INT RATINGS PROJ OFFR/wayne.basketfield756@mod.gov.uk or call 93832 5014.

Make sure you p-p-p-pick

THE Armed Forces automatically switched to Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015 on April 1 2015, which affects over 900 Naval Service personnel – and is worth between £100k and £150k to each person on average.

All of those serving who are not entitled to remain on their previous pension schemes will have been automatically placed into this scheme, while retaining their pension 'pot' and rights from their previous scheme(s).

The old '75 scheme' required other ranks to serve 22 years and officers 16 to achieve their full pension, while the 05 scheme required everybody to do 18 years' service or reach the age of 40, whichever is later, to get their 'early departure' lump sum and Payments (EDP – sometimes known as the 'half pension') which pays until state pension age. The 15 scheme requires everybody to do 20 years' service or reach 40, whichever is later,

to claim the EDP. Therefore, if you don't have at least 20 years' service and have reached at least age 40 by TX, you might get your pension/EDP from your legacy scheme, but not from the 15 scheme! See the worked examples below to see how this could affect you.

Many other ranks are unaffected as they joined on 22 year engagements that take them past age 40 anyway, while officers who have since gone on to Career or Full Commission Stage should have been given sufficient service. Those who did not fall into these groups were sent an 'Offer to Extend' letter, inviting them to take the extra service required to be eligible for their AFPS 15 EDP by the time they leave.

If this is so important, why have so many people not heard of it, or have not signed to extend their service?

In many cases, the Offer To Extend letters did not reach the individuals due to operational tasking, out of date JPA records, poor lines of

communication, or were poorly explained and consequently disregarded as a potential 'seeing off', in the same way that most of those on the AFPS 75 did not transition to the 05 scheme for fear of being disadvantaged.

Is this a sneaky 'seeing off'?

Be clear: this is not a seeing off, but an attempt to ensure that all those who are considering serving a full engagement get all of the money that they have worked for under their current and previous pension schemes. Yes, you may have to sign up for anything from a few days extra service to the maximum two years (max of 4 for OFs) to ensure that you leave with your full EDP entitlement, but when you consider that this may be worth around £150,000 to you (between your EDP tax free lump sum and subsequent monthly payments until State Pension Age), and that all the work that you are currently doing might not be contributing to the AFPS 15 part of your EDP, you may want to consider changing

your minds!

Is anybody unaffected?

Those who were in AFPS 75, 05 or FTFS 97 (FC) and were aged over 45 on April 1 2012 will have remained on their original schemes and will be unaffected. Those who joined from April 1 2015 onwards (and are therefore on AFPS 15 from the start) will be given sufficient service (if eligible for ES2 or CCS) and should not be affected. Those who joined on the 75 scheme and were given 16 (officers) or 22 (other ranks) years' service will need to serve those years to get their AFPS 75 immediate pension. If they joined young, however, they might still not leave aged 40 though so might not get their AFPS 15 entitlement! Check!

My service history isn't straightforward...

Those who have breaks in service or have completed broken periods of service in one or more pension schemes are advised to contact the White Ensign

Pope speaks at women's network

INSPIRATIONAL individuals from across Defence enthused attendees at this year's Innovation and Diversity Conference sponsored by the Naval Servicewomen's Network.

It was a day of motivational talks, life experiences and workshops – for both women and men – exploring current topics on professional development, career guidance and gender issues.

Opening proceedings at HMS Collingwood was the DARE team with discussions on innovation and empowering more women to share their ideas and bring their initiatives to life, all to enhance their workplace.

Next up was a series of question and answer sessions where the audience were able to discuss a variety of issues with experienced panel members ranging from female recruitment, network support, trainee experiences and women joining the Royal Marines.

Throughout the day, attendees took part in a series of professional-interest workshops which examined and explored issues which would be useful to themselves or supported their role as a line manager. Discussions included coaching, learning and career management, understanding gender identity, maternity support and understanding the impact of sexual violence.

Angela Pope, Head of Navy People Strategy at Navy Headquarters delighted the audience with a keynote address and gave an inspirational, humorous and frank account of her rise from an administration assistant to the Senior Civil Service.

Representatives from a variety of wellbeing organisations were also on hand to provide interactive advice on charity, sports and financial issues and personal branding including a photographer to take the perfect professional portrait.

"It was a highly-professional and hugely-educational event," said CPO Sue Emery from the RN's Diversity and Inclusion team. "I have spoken to so many different people and learned so much. It's also been a great networking opportunity and good fun."



● A Merlin Mk2 is guided down on the deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth at dusk as the new carrier conducts trials off the east coast of Scotland

Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones, HMS Queen Elizabeth

Lights – a bright idea

WE ALL know that it's dark on a flight deck at night.

Imagine working in that environment on a pitching deck with the sea crashing over the sides while trying to lash a rotors running helicopter down.

If you've ever tried to keep track of all the personnel on a flight deck or a dispersal at night then you will have found at some point that you lose at least one body even though you know where they last were, even when they are wearing hi-vis jackets you still need a light source to illuminate the reflective strips.

The Royal Navy Innovation Team, Dare, decided it was time to shine some light on the problem, literally.

The team approached a manufacturer to provide some lights that could be mounted on personnel so that they can be seen and if possible identified from a distance.



DARE bought a trial batch of lights and gave them to 846 Naval Air Squadron Operational Conversion Flight onboard RFA Argus.

They were able to provide the ideal testing ground in very dark conditions.

At £12 a light, they cost as much as a box of Cyalumes (glow sticks) yet last about four times longer than the entire box of Cyalumes.

The instant they started operating with the lights the benefits were obvious, both ship's company in Flyco; on the flight deck and line personnel working the deck found it a lot easier to track and identify personnel on

the deck at night.

With the different colours used different roles could be easily identified.

This made the CFD's and Flyco's job a lot easier as they could rapidly identify people going the wrong way or going towards danger.

The RN has now purchased 70 lights to supply both 845 and 846 NAS for use at home, in the field and on-board ships, and connected the correct departments to try and make this a Fleet-wide device.

Free breakfast, lunch or tea

TO MARK Armed Forces Day on June 30, Toby Carvery is offering a free meal for the third year running.

Service personnel, veterans and cadets can all enjoy either a free breakfast or main course on Armed Forces Day at any of its 167 restaurants across the country.

All you need to do is download a voucher from the website, or use the Toby Carvery app, and bring your relevant service ID.

The offer is open to everyone who is serving – or has served: so that's full-time personnel, reservists, veterans and cadets

See www.tobycarvery.co.uk/armed-forces for details.

up pension advice

Association and UK Veterans to ensure that their period of service guarantees eligibility for all parts of their EDP/ pension.

I'm confused. Can I have some examples?

a. LS Smith joined aged 23 in 2007. He therefore joined on AFPS 05, which requires him to do 18 years or reach age 40, whichever is later, to get his EDP. At the age of 40, he would have served for 17 years, so 18 years' service will be later – his TX will therefore give him 18 years' service to 2025. He did not see the offer to extend letter in 2013, so is still on 18 years' service when forced onto AFPS 15 on April 1 2015. If he leaves after 18 years' service (in 2025), he will get his AFPS 05 EDP accumulated between 2007-2015, but no EDP from the pension pot accumulated between 2015 and 2025 – the lion's share, probably worth in excess of £100,000 between 2025 and State Pension Age! He needs to extend his TX two years to 2027, in order to get

both his AFPS 05 and AFPS 15 EDPs.

b. LS Smith's oppo, AB Jones, joined at the same time as him in 2007, but aged 19. As before, AFPS 05 will give her sufficient time to reach 18 years' service or the age of 40, whichever is later. For her, she will be 37 after 18 years' service, so she'll have been given a TX of her 40th birthday in 2028 to reach the age 40. She will therefore also satisfy AFPS 15's conditions, as she will leave aged 40 after 21 years' service. She does not need to do anything.

c. Another of their 2007 intake, PO Johnson, joined with them but aged 21. Under AFPS 2005, 18 years' service would take her to 39, so she would be given a TX of her 40th birthday in 2026, as this is later, as for AB Jones.

What do I need to do?

Check JPA's Service and Personal Details Summary if you are in the vulnerable categories and ensure you have at least 20 years' service and are aged 40 by TX.

I've identified that I'm affected – what do I do now?

A standing system is in place to allow individuals to extend their TX dates by the period required to claim their EDP from AFPS 15.

Contact Esther Bellingham by email esther.davies987@mod.gov.uk and 93832 3564 or 02392 623564 for confirmation and access to the requisite forms to extend.

It probably doesn't affect me, I'll leave it.

If you fall within the vulnerable categories, take five minutes to check your LoS on JPA. Completing an extension form takes just another 5 minutes; probably the most valuable 10 minutes you have ever invested if you are affected.

Where to look

DIBs
03/2018 Changes to civilian statutory pay
04/2018 The Data Protection Act 2018 is coming into force

DINs
01 Personnel
DIN 2018DIN01-063 Medical Preparation for Reservists Deploying Overseas
DIN 2018DIN01-065 The Operations Welfare Fund (OWF)
DIN 2018DIN01-071 Service of Prayer for the Armed Forces – Thursday 8 November 2018
DIN 2018DIN01-072 Change of Security Policy to Permit Service Leavers to retain a Modified MOD Form 90 ID Card on leaving the Armed Forces

04 Defence Equipment and Support
DIN 2018DIN04-047 Deployed Physical Training Equipment (DPTÉ)
DIN 2018DIN04-085 Sword and Scabbard Refurbishment

06 Safety, Health, Environment and Fire
DIN 2018DIN06-019 Claims and Insurance Provisions for the use of MOD Vehicles in the UK and Overseas and Confirmation of Motor Liability Cover

07 Training and Education
DIN 2018DIN07-054 Adventurous Training - Planning Expeditions to Nepal (2019)
DIN 2018DIN07-058 Individual Pre-Deployment Training Policy
DIN 2018DIN07-063 Exercise Macaronesia Express 2018-19 – Expression of Interest
DIN 2018DIN07-050 Spouse/Partner Language Training for Overseas Postings
DIN 2018DIN07-051 Defence Foreign Language Training Courses for Training Year 2018/2019

10 Sports and Social Events
DIN 2018DIN10-018 Inter-Services Twenty20 Cricket 2018

RNTMs
01 Personnel
RNTM 01-021/18 RN/RM officers uniform tax relief 18/19
RNTM 01-022/18 Changes to Upper Yardmen and senior Upper Yardmen selection
RNTM 01-023/18 Introduction of Engineering General Service CIS Specialist Fast Track

RNTM 01-024/18 Engineering Branch Upper Yardmen Routes to Officer
RNTM 01-025/18 EGS Branch Management Roadshow Schedule Summer 2018
RNTM 01-026/18 Upper Yardmen, Senior Upper Yardmen and Senior Corp Commissioning Seniority Offer
RNTM 01-027/18 Engineer Officer Study - Project Keyham Study Phase Deliverables

03 Policy and Operations
RNTM 03-017/18 Maritime lessons process

04 Equipment, Support and Estate
RNTM 04-023/18 Submission of Articles for Seamanship Newsletter

07 Training and Education
RNTM 07-029/18 Submarine Qualification Course North (SMQ (N)) Joining Instructions - HMNB Clyde - updated 02 May 18
RNTM 07-032/18 Lt Cdr Hooper Essay Competition 2018
RNTM 07-033/18 Moodle mobile - offline access to the Defence Learning Environment
RNTM 07-034/18 The Royal Navy Endurance Training Royal (ETL) Adqual Course
RNTM 07-035/18 2018 Maritime Engineering Conference
RNTM 07-036/18 Training Management Officers' Conference and Dinner – 30 Oct 18
RNTM 07-037/18 Naval Service Learning and Development Organisation – Learning and Development Provision
RNTM 07-038/18 Formation of the Naval Service Learning and Development Organisation
RNTM 07-039/17 Refund of Engineering Professional Body Fees for the Naval Service
RNTM 07-040/18 Warrant Officer staff course (WOSC)

10 Sports and Social
RNTM 10-013/18 Maritime Logistics Officers' and Warrant Officers' Biennial Conference and Dinner – Thu 19 Jul 18
RNTM 10-014/18 Royal Navy Northern Region Golf Club Championship 2018
RNTM 10-015/18 Royal Navy Perisher Dinner 5 September 2018
RNTM 10-016/18 The Inaugural Ian Molyneux Dinner (29 Aug 18): Celebrating Excellence in the Weapons Engineering Submarine Branch

ASK YOURSELF:

- Were you made in the Royal Navy?
- Do you want to give others the opportunity to make it in the Royal Navy?
- Are you seeking a rewarding Second Career?

If the answer to any is yes then...

APPLY TO BECOME A CAREERS ADVISER.

Flag Officer Sea Training is currently seeking RN and RM WO's, Senior Rates and SNCO Service Leavers and former Service (those that left Service under 3 years), to work in Armed Forces Careers Offices which are listed on the map.

Positions are nationwide, employed on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) (NCS) Limited Commitment.

Salary starts from £30k with promotion opportunities to rise to £43k.

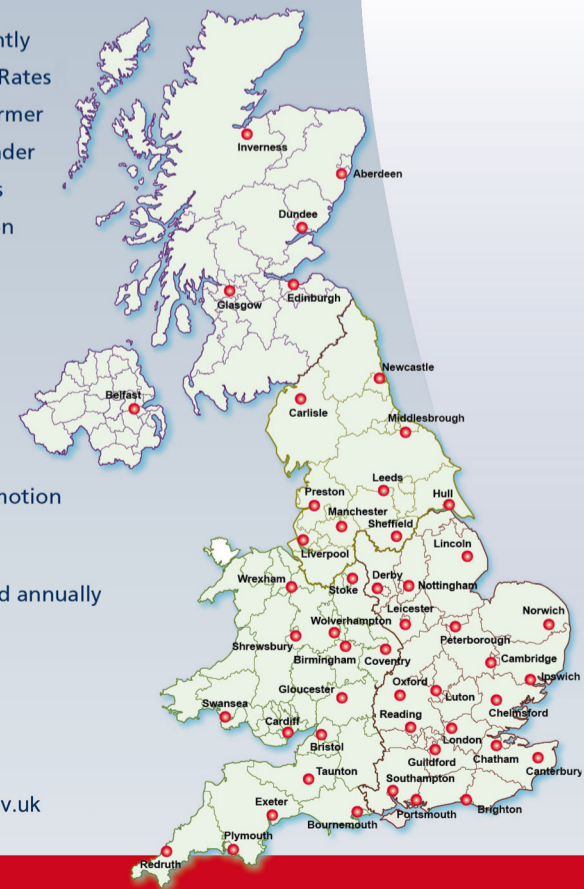
FTRS rates of pay apply (Reviewed annually and pensionable).

For more information contact:

PSTN- 01929 403172

Mil- 94374 3172

E-mail- Jane.annedda513@mod.gov.uk





Smiter's hectic time on tour

THE first phase of Oxford URNU's Easter deployment onboard HMS Smiter proved a varied, worthwhile and enjoyable time for all Officer Cadets (OC) involved.

This was also a chance for inter-unit socialising, as Mid Whiteside of Glasgow URNU and Mid Roberts of Yorkshire URNU both embarked.

The deployment took Smiter across much of the North-Western European coast, including Boulogne, Zeebrugge and Scheveningen, and with multiple harbour days in Antwerp and Amsterdam.

Here, the OCs took advantage of their time ashore, be it through visiting the impressive Antwerp Zoo and cathedral, or sightseeing in Amsterdam.

The deployment was also a fantastic opportunity to implement and build on seamanship training conducted at drill nights, with OCs taking part in all aspects of the ship, be it as Officer of the Watch, helmsman, through chartwork (which OC Tobin loved so much that he requested greater involvement in), or carrying out linework with the Navigator's Yeoman Jay.

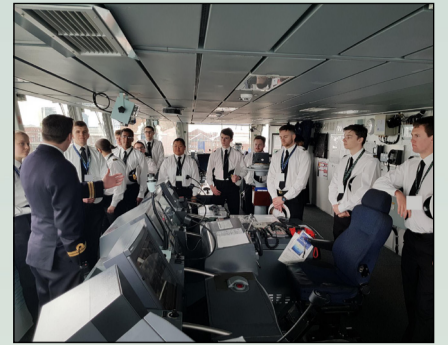
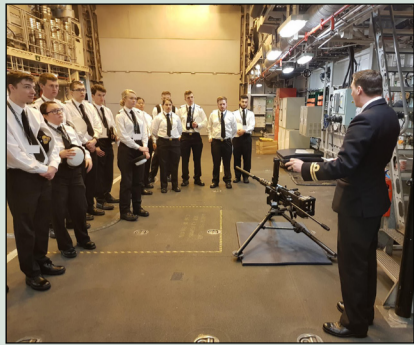
Other opportunities included working with the MEO and DMEO, Neil and Adam, to get a better understanding (and sometimes even to get hands-on) with the engineering side of the ship.

The ship's company were particularly helpful regarding taskbooks, giving all students plenty of opportunities to progress – this included dedicated time with the Training Officer, Sub Lt Tony McLarin, XO Terry Stewart, and CO Lt Brereton.

Additionally, AMids Herbert, Murphy and Hawke were given the rare opportunity to 'con' the ship while conducting man overboard exercises (MOBEX).

There were even some impromptu serials when HM Coastguard requested to use HMS Smiter as a platform for winch training, which was interesting to see – even for OC Warrender, who miraculously recovered from a short burst of illness when there was something exciting going on.

Overall, Easter Phase One was a fantastic opportunity to train, socialise and visit various different locations in Europe.



Opportunities knock for the WE Branch



2018. YEAR OF ENGINEERING

TEN URNUs were represented at the launch of the URNU Weapon Engineer Officer Insight Day at HMS Collingwood.

Twenty three students attended the event at the home of the WE Branch, hearing from a number of speakers before visiting warships in Portsmouth.

The opening remarks for the Insight Day were given by Fleet Weapon Engineer Officer, Cdr Gavin Edward, who formally welcomed the attendees to HMS Collingwood and urged them to be inquisitive in order to make the most of the day.

A brief by Lt Ben Slater, from Captain Naval Recruiting followed, which highlighted the variety of roles available to Weapon Engineer Officers.

Sub Lt Will Hill then gave a very engaging presentation on his experiences of training and his current role as Combat Systems Officer in HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Lt Cdr Paul Maddison gave a brief on his role as the Weapon Engineering General Service Branch Manager, a detailed breakdown of a Weapon Engineer Officer's role at sea, the training pipeline and the employment pattern up



to becoming a WEO.

He also covered the numerous benefits to the students by becoming graduate Weapon Engineer Officers, including the £27,000 joining bonus, the route to Chartered Engineer status, MSc opportunities, City and Guilds accreditation and the huge number of opportunities that are on the horizon with new ships due to enter service with the Royal Navy in future years.

Mid Nick Chrumka, Oxford URNU, then briefed the attendees on his recent acquaint with the Maritime Capability Trials and Assessments organisation which directly ties into the benefits of the Insight Scheme.

Lt Will Jones, creator of the Insight Scheme, issued the attendees with Insight Scheme packs that included the history of the Branch since 1946, an explanation of the WE colours, a detailed breakdown of the training pipeline and a breakdown of the career path up to

WEO. He then formally presented them with Weapon Engineering lanyards.

After a short lunch at HMS Collingwood Wardroom the group headed over to HMS Queen Elizabeth in HMNB Portsmouth for a WE tour led by Sub Lt Hill.

They were shown a large amount of the ship, including the very impressive hangar, flight deck and Wardroom. It was clear throughout that the students were in awe at the scale of the ship and her capabilities.

The students then headed over to the Type 45 Destroyer HMS Diamond for a tour of WE compartments and equipment on board led by the Communications and Information Systems Officer Lt James Dudley.

This covered the hangar, including a brief on the M3M 0.50 Cal machine gun, the Air Weapons Magazine, the Ops Room, the Bridge, Harpoon, the 4.5 gun including drill round handling, the gun bay, a Phalanx, a brief on the Multi-Function Radar and a brief on the Sea Viper missile system. The tour was then wrapped up with a question-and-answer session in the Wardroom.

Lt Jones, Commanding Officer Oxford URNU, said: "The Insight Day was hugely successful with tremendously positive feedback and to echo the words of the Branch Manager – there has never been a better time to join the Weapon Engineering Branch as an officer."



Bristol revel in the mud

AFTER a stressful exam season for many in Bristol URNU, an action-packed weekend of AT was a great way to relax with friends, enjoy some fresh air and get some exercise.

The weekend in the Forest of Dean was organised by AT representative OC James Hawkins RNR, who did a fantastic job in organising a full weekend of activities and accommodation.

The weekend started with an early rock climbing session on Symonds Yat Rock, with two groups both climbing on the 30-40 metre rock face, and caving through the cliff face itself.

The afternoon session saw good use made of all that the URNU offers. A paintballing session, with games of 'capture the flag' and 'rescue the hostage'.

With multiple abandoned vehicles, a handful of shipping containers, and even a military half-track vehicle the course was made even more challenging in the wet and muddy conditions.

Sunday was mountain biking. With tuition in some basic technique on the intermediate track for those who were more inexperienced, the second group set off on the Verderers – a 7km blue graded loop with long technical climbs and tight, flowing descents.

The groups joined each other at the end of the day to finesse their newly-learned skills on some jumps sections.



Events on both sides of Channel mark centenary of first 'commando raid' – Zeebrugge in April 1918

The deed immortal

THEY remembered in Deal and Dover. In Bruges and Zeebrugge. Blackburn, Birkenhead and Bishop's Auckland.

Wherever the bravest of men came from, fought and died, they were remembered over several days of international commemorations marking the centenary of the action which restored Britain's faith in her Navy.

One word changed the public's perception: Zeebrugge.

And it was in the Belgian port that the principal acts of commemoration began 100 years later.

The rather simple monument at the foot of the mole – the much rebuilt and redeveloped breakwater which arches out from the beach into the North Sea – was the focal point for a tri-national service of thanksgiving.

"This is not just a memorial day," Flemish Prime Minister Geert Bourgeois said. "It is also a day of reconciliation, a day on which we celebrate peace in Europe, which is why I am so glad that our German partners are here – so that together we can honour and commemorate the fallen from both sides."

With sailors from HMS Somerset, FGS Brandenburg and the Belgium Navy providing guards and the Royal Marines Band Scotland and a German Navy band providing the martial music, Princess Anne placed a wreath on behalf of Queen and country in memory of the 227 men killed during Operation ZO on April 23 1918.

The plaque at the foot of the memorial bears the words: St George for England – the rallying cry flown by the architect of the raid, Admiral Roger Keyes, as he led his men into battle in 1918.

A man of brawn more than brain, Keyes yearned for action rather than the monotony of keeping the U-boats in check with the Dover Patrol.

He sought to bottle up the German Flanders submarine flotilla in its pens, blocking their exits to the North Sea via canals at Zeebrugge and Ostend.

It wasn't just what the Navy needed in April in 1918; it was what the nation needed after four wearying years of war.

Expecting Nelsonian dash and verve from the outset, they'd been sorely disappointed by the Royal Navy. Clashes between the Royal and Imperial Navies were few and the largest, Jutland, was regarded by the ordinary Briton as a defeat. Coupled with the U-boat campaign which in 1917 threatened to reduce Britain to her knees, and the fighting arm which had begun the Great War as the pride of the nation was held in pretty low regard in the spring of 1918 – especially as the army was fighting with its back to the wall in France.

Even before the ships returned to Dover on the morning of St George's Day, the raid was hailed a success; dockyard workers cheered the vessels back into harbour. Newspaper headlines talked of 'immortal deeds'. Marines were applauded through the streets of Deal as they returned to barracks. And there were gallantry decorations aplenty.

Eight men – two of them posthumously – were awarded the Victoria Cross.

For the first time, all eight medals, plus

three more VCs presented in the wake of the attack at Ostend the following month, were gathered in the same place – Bruges' magnificent Provincial Hof (Regional Palace) – for an exhibition about the 1914-18 war in the North Sea.

Despite being a dozen miles inland, the extensive canal network of Flanders allowed the Germans to build concrete 'pens' for their U-boats where they were safe from British guns and bombs.

One of the two posthumous recipients was Lt Cdr George Bradford, whose body was washed up a couple of miles west of Zeebrugge in the suburb of Blankenberge; he was laid to rest, with full honours, with four other sailors lost when HMS North Star was sunk.

Officials joined Bradford's great nephew Andrew Creamer in the graveyard for a wreathlaying.

George was one of four Bradford brothers decorated for bravery in WW1... and one of two to earn the VC (Roland Bradford won his on the Somme but died the following year at Cambrai).

"Uncle Georgie was a volunteer – as they all were – and he was in charge of the raiding party of the Blue Jackets in HMS Iris," Mr Creamer said.

"He was the welterweight champion of the Royal Navy and was athletic enough to climb up and leap over the gap on to the Mole. From there he tried to fix the anchor – and I believe he was successful, before he attracted machine gun fire and fell into the water. Uncle Georgie was killed on his 31st birthday."

The raiding parties so heavily used at Zeebrugge would grow into the commandos of WW2 – the attack is arguably 'the first commando raid'. It remains an inspirational deed to the Corps a century on.

Which is why today's Royal Marines chose the anniversary to march through Deal – an important RM barracks for more than a century and home of the 4th Battalion which fought with distinction at Zeebrugge – thus officially opening the Royal Marines Heritage Trails which link historical sites in Walmer and Deal with the Corps.

Along with the RM Band Collingwood, the Guard from 42 Commando and Cadets, Royal Marines Association veterans and former Wrens paraded on Deal Castle Green before exercising their right to march through the town – an honour marines have enjoyed since the end of WW2.

As in 1918, so in 2018; the people of Kent turned out in force to cheer the marines through the streets.

"The Royal Marines' connection with Deal, Walmer and the surrounding area is so strong," said Major General Charlie Stickland, Commandant General Royal Marines.

"Back to February 1665 when the Duke of York and Albany's Maritime Regiment of Foot, the forebearers of the Royal Marines, took up duties in the Castle at Deal to protect the Fleet.

"I'm delighted and honoured to be here to launch the heritage trails and I can only marvel at the hard work and efforts which have gone into this wonderful community

project."

Beyond memorials – including the bow of cruiser HMS Vindictive installed as a monument in Ostend – there are few tangible reminders of the Zeebrugge raid 100 years on.

Except on the Mersey. There a brightly-liveried ferry ploughs the famous river, mirroring the garish, jarring paint scheme employed in WW1 to try to confuse enemy sailors peering through binoculars and periscopes.

It's an echo of all later-war Allied shipping (warships and merchantmen), but especially two vessels plucked from the Mersey and dispatched to the hell of Zeebrugge.

Iris and Daffodil were selected for their passenger-carrying abilities and manoeuvrability. They would be ideal for carrying those raiding parties of sailors and marines on to the mole and harbour wall at Zeebrugge.

They survived the maelstrom and were granted the prefix 'Royal' by George V. Once repaired, the ferries returned to resume their normal trade between Liverpool and Wallasey into the 20s and 30s.

Their role – and that of 4th Battalion RM – were remembered with a Zeebrugge dinner in Liverpool's town hall, hosted by Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Malcolm Kennedy.

Guests were treated to a fantastic display by the Corps of Drums, as veterans and serving Royal Marines, both regular and reserve, chatted with civic leaders from across the Northwest about the work of the Corps past and present, before Brig Haydn White, Deputy Commandant General Royal Marines, underlined the importance of the Mersey ferries in the April 1918 attack.

That was followed by a service on the Wirral side of the river at the 4th Battalion's monument next to the Seacombe Ferry Terminal and a march along the banks of the Mersey in glorious sunshine to a reception at Wallasey Town Hall, accompanied by The Royal Band, veterans, cadets, personnel from HMS Eaglet and the RMA & RBL Riders Branches.

"The Zeebrugge Centenary weekend in Merseyside proved to be a fitting tribute to those that fell at Zeebrugge one-hundred years ago," said Lt Col Matt Churchward, CO of RMR Merseyside.

"It saw members across the wider Corps family bond together, whilst reinforcing the important linkages between the Royal Marines and Merseyside."

In 1918, the important linkage between Navy and people was restored. Newspapers talked of the "rebirth of the spirit of Nelson and Drake". Churchill thought Zeebrugge was probably "the finest feat of arms" in the entire war. And to the poet and naval historian Sir Henry Newbolt the raid was a reminder "that our seamen are what they have always been – the greatest fighting men alive."

It took Jack to bring the tubthumpers down a peg or two. A stoker from the battered Vindictive was buttonholed by a reporter on his return from the action. "You reporters ask sometimes what the Navy is doing? Where is the Navy?" he snapped. "Take it from me, the Navy is always doing."

With thanks to Peter Wooldridge



Pictures: LPhotos Louise George and Kyle Heller



Morrison's and megatons

MEMBERS of City of Glasgow branch headed to Auchinlea in the eastern suburbs to raise awareness – and a tidy sum.

Shipmates Kenn McKinnon, Brian MacKenzie, Anne McKinnon and Anne Cox volunteered to spend the day at Morrison's, talking to shoppers about the branch's work, and encouraging some to donate to help veterans, raising £416.06.

The team also made contact with some veterans who displayed an interest in the RNA – hopefully they will follow up.

From full public gaze to top secret and a couple of weeks later, the branch was invited to tour the former nuclear command and control bunker near Anstruther.

Shipmates had a guide who explained the different sections and departments of the bunker, which was set up during the Cold War with Russia.

Encased in concrete a couple of metres thick and located about 100ft below ground, it was built to withstand a nuclear strike of at least a five megaton war head.

It was closed with the end of the Cold War and has been one of Scotland's top visitor attractions for the past 20 years.

MP opens up to Bude

THE May meeting of Bude branch was enhanced by the attendance of North Cornwall MP Scott Dann.

He has some serious ambitions for the residents of this area and also hopes to be influential in the naming of a future frigate HMS Cornwall.

Scott was invited to speak before the meeting to get back home and have supper – not before, however, he toasted the Queen and the Duke of Cornwall with a free tot.

A new full member signed up, boosting branch strength to 49.

Coming up: a psychic evening on July 13; a meeting/recruiting drive at Morrison's in August; and, of course, Trafalgar Night dinner in October.

June 6 vets honoured

FORMER Officers' Steward John Aiken RN, along with Army comrades Eric Robertson and Kenneth Wilson, have been presented with the Legion d'Honneur by French Consular General Emmanuel Cocher for their part in the D-Day Landings on June 6 1944.

John served onboard HMS Enterprise, which led the American forces to Omaha Beach.

He also served in HMS Stine and Manxman, and in the Far East.

All the recipients are members of the RBL at Knightswood, Glasgow.



Bus turns up after 73 years

NEARLY 200 Norwegians crossed the North Sea to celebrate the 75th anniversary of a turning point in World War 2.

Veterans and descendants of those who used and crewed the 'Shetland bus' – a secret lifeline run by the Royal and Royal Norwegian navies to move people and weapons between Britain and Nazi-occupied Norway – gathered with islanders and RN representatives in the tiny port of Scalloway to remember the heroism of the wartime generation.

The Norwegian guests arrived in Shetland in a veteran tall ship Statsraad Lemkuhl and the restored sub-chaser Hitra (pictured above), which played a key role in the operation in the later stages of the war.

1943 was a pivotal year for the 'bus service', particularly after one of the ships running the gauntlet of weather and German authorities, the Brattholm, was intercepted while carrying explosives and commandos intending to blow up the air base at Bardufoss (today used by the Fleet Air Arm for Arctic training each winter).

Only one man survived the interception, prompting the Allies to re-think the Shetland bus; the Americans donated three fast sub-chasers to the Norwegians, including the Hitra. For the rest of the war the operation continued without further losses.

Three quarters of a century later and serving personnel plus a smattering of people who were involved in the Shetland Bus, including 92-year-old August Rathke (pictured right), who crossed from Bergen in January 1945 to train as a commando and made the journey again 73 years later.

Numerous events were staged to celebrate Anglo-Norwegian and Shetland-Norwegian friendship, including a talk on the significance of the wartime operation and a concert celebrating the heroism of the only survivor of the Brattholm tragedy.

Commemorations reached their peak with a church service and wreath laying at the Shetland Bus monument – a fishing boat riding the waves atop a plinth of Shetland and Norwegian rock – on the front in Scalloway.

Lt Matthew O'Brien, Deputy Naval Liaison Officer for Scotland and Northern Ireland, laid a wreath on behalf of the RN alongside the Mayor of Bergen, Marte Persen, and representatives of the Royal Norwegian Navy

and Capt Åsmund Andersen, heading the Royal Norwegian Navy's presence at the anniversary.

He told those gathered on a blustery seafront that Shetland "means so much to many" of his fellow countrymen – "a home away from home".

"The Shetland bus was one of the most successful operations during the war. It was a lifeline between occupied Norway and the free world."

Lt O'Brien added: "It was both an honour and privilege to be part of the weekend, not only to support and facilitate the Norwegian ship visit but to be part of the important commemoration events organised by the people of Scalloway in Shetland."

"Listening to the many fascinating – and often tragic – stories of the 'Shetland Bus operations' by both the people of Shetland and Norwegian veterans really brought home to me the incredible bravery and heroism of so many which must never be forgotten."

"It is also important we remember the Royal Navy's contribution inasmuch that Lt David Howarth (RNVR), who at the time was a member of the Special Operations Executive – or SOE – along with an Army major, helped set up the Shetland Bus operation and was later honoured by King Haakon VII of Norway."



Cabbies hail WW2 heroes

THE standard of London and the Home Counties' Arctic convoy veterans is at rest in the Royal Navy's holiest site as WW2 survivors laid up their flag for good.

A convoy of taxis brought around 100 veterans from the three Services to Portsmouth for a three-day break as a 'thank-you' for their sacrifices during Britain's most testing hours.

The most solemn side of that visit was a service at St Ann's Church, presided over by chaplain Adam Gay and attended by former Second Sea Lord and Governor of Gibraltar, Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns.

The Rev Gay thanked the Arctic sailors for choosing the 18th Century church – "no more fitting place could be found wherein to deposit the emblem of duty and service than in St Ann's, the premier church of the Royal Navy."

Russian Convoy Club president Stan Ballard presented the clergyman with the standard "for safe lodging in the House of God, until such time as it shall pass to dust like those whose courage and devotion are enshrined in its history".

The three-day visit was organised by the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans to mark its 70th anniversary and to remember the centenary of the end of the Great War.

Since 1948, the London-based charity has run an annual trip to Worthing for veterans, but it also spreads its wings further afield to the battlefields of Normandy, Belgium and the Netherlands.

A convoy of 47 cabs brought a mix of soldiers, sailors and airmen, festooned with medals and a myriad of caps and berets to denote their service – red for the paras, white for

Arctic convoy veterans, green for commandos – as well as a good smattering of Chelsea pensioners in their famous red coats down to the South Coast for three days of reminiscing, remembrance and relaxing.

The charity funds such trips through collections at major stations and the like, plus donations, and the free time and good will of cabbies.

As well as the church service, the taxi men and women organised a day in the historic dockyard, harbour tours, a special look around WW1 monitor HMS M33, and a visit to the newly reopened D-Day museum on Southsea seafront.

"This is fantastic – you really feel you are giving something back. Listening to the guys, their stories, all they went through, the sacrifices they made. It was a totally different way of life for them," said Gary Mankelov, charity treasurer.

"They get out and about, socialise, meet old friends – it's especially good for those who lost limbs as they can feel quite isolated."

It was certainly appreciated by former torpedoman Freddie Faulkner, 96, from Walton on the Hill, who spent much of his WW2 career aboard HMS Argonaut.

The light cruiser had a lively – and, at times, charmed – life: one return trip to Murmansk, extensive duties in the Mediterranean (losing her bow and stern to an Italian torpedo attack), supported the Allied invasions of Normandy and the South of France, and was dispatched to the Pacific for the defeat of Japan.

"It's great to meet up with old friends – and make new ones. We're really grateful to the drivers for bringing us. We all get on so well," the veteran said.



● Raising a tot to the immortal memory of a Trafalgar hero are the members of Marlborough branch, led by chairman David Hicks, on their annual pilgrimage to the grave of Mne John Chivers. The marine survived the battle – he lived a fruitful life in Wiltshire until 1850 (the original gravestone has gone due to the church at West Overton being rebuilt in the 1870s). Shipmates, who were this year joined by US Navy Chief, Tim Hughes, also tidied up the area around the grave.

Naval Quirks





Pat's a model veteran

A MODEL of WW2 cruiser HMS Exeter has been presented to Lincoln RNA.

The ship was one of three British cruisers which fought the German 'pocket battleship' Admiral Graf Spee on the Battle of the River Plate in 1939.

The model was constructed by Pat Constance in 1938 when he was aged 15. He saw the plans in a magazine and had to source all the materials to complete the model – none of your Airfix or Revel kits back then.

Pat painstakingly created each and every part for the vessel from whatever bits of wood and metal he could gather.

When he was old enough, Pat endeavoured to join the Royal Navy but ended up joining the Royal Corps of Signals. He fought in several theatres and, last year, received the Legion d'honneur for his presence on the beaches of Normandy during the D-Day landings.

The handover of the model was attended by Pat's wife, Hazel, members of the Royal Navy and Royal Corps of Signals elements from the Joint EW Operational Support Centre (JEWOSC), RAF Waddington, as well as members of the Lincoln branches of the RNA and Royal Signals Association.

Cdr David Hewitt, from Waddington, accepted the model from Pat on behalf of the Lincoln branch (pictured above). Cdr Hewitt served as the 1st Lt of the Type 42 destroyer HMS Exeter.

Along with the Cdr, there were three other former crew of the last Exeter in attendance.

On handing over the model, Pat said that he had been looking at the Exeter for the last 80 years and he felt it was time that, at the age of 95, others could appreciate her and keep her safe for future generations to view.

Christchurch AGM

S/M Rick Squibb agreed to serve as chairman of Christchurch branch for another year, with Cliff Espin as vice chairman.

Also agreed at the branch's AGM: Tricia Lee will remain as secretary and Anne Theaker is the treasurer.

The branch meets on the third Thursday of the month at 11am in the town's Portfield Hall.

Paths of Glory

Memorial paving stones dedicated in capital to three WW1 VC heroes

AMID the hustle and bustle of Chelsea's lively Sloane Square on a fine spring weekday, Chelsea Pensioner James Little is pictured by PO(Phot) Owen Cooban admiring a new paving stone to a naval hero – one of three unveiled in the capital to Naval VC winners.

Lts Roland Bourke, Victor Crutchley and Geoffrey Drummond were all honoured with memorial slabs in their home boroughs a century after the raid in which their deeds earned the nation's highest decoration.

In May 1918, the three officers played key roles in a mission to bottle up German submarines in their base at Bruges by blocking their outlet to the North Sea through the port of Ostend – having already partially sealed off Zeebrugge three weeks earlier with the famous attack on the port of Zeebrugge.

At Ostend, Lt Crutchley took charge of flagship HMS Vindictive when her captain was killed and scuttled her as planned under ferocious enemy fire. He then scoured the ship for survivors, took command of a motor launch which was crammed with his wounded shipmates and guided them to safety.

On that same motor launch was Lt Geoffrey Drummond who was wounded three times yet remained at his post and ensured the rescue of 40 men from Vindictive.

Lt Bourke commanded another motor launch which returned to the harbour entrance to pick up three injured sailors clinging to an overturned boat when the rest of the attacking force had withdrawn – bringing the full wrath of the defenders down upon his small craft, which was hit 55 times but survived.

As with all Victoria Cross winners between 1914-18 the three men have been remembered with memorial slabs; eight were dedicated last month for heroes of the Zeebrugge raid.

Descendants, sailors from HMS Westminster, the Royal Canadian Navy – Roland Burke was born in London but emigrated to Canada in 1902 – civic leaders and Chelsea Pensioners gathered for ceremonies in Sloane Square honouring Lts Burke and Crutchley and Victoria Gardens for Lt Drummond.

"It was very moving and spellbinding to listen to him relive the winning of the Victoria Cross," said Victor Crutchley, grandson of the namesake hero.

"I will never forget it – he described the action down to

every detail and he got emotional when he talked about the recovery to HMS Warwick and getting everyone off the boat."

Julia McNeill, Crutchley's granddaughter, remembered him recounting the story of the attack "with great colour and enormous humour. He would have loved to be here today, alongside the serving Royal Navy and the veterans.

"He always had a great respect for the servicemen and women of today's Royal Navy whom he knew were just as courageous and brave as he and his men were during the famous raids at Zeebrugge and Ostend."

Rear Admiral Simon Williams, the senior representative from today's RN, said the courage and valour of the men of Ostend "meant a lot to the sailors of their generations – as it does today to the Royal Navy of the 21st Century.

"These deeds of bravery are still relevant today as they were 100 years ago. The young men of the World War 1 Royal Navy showed tremendous valour and volunteered to fight and we're proud of their courage and commitment."

At the service in Victoria Gardens, Cllr Rachael Robathan, Westminster Council's Armed Forces Champion, told those gathered to remember Lt Drummond: "Our experience of commemorating the Victoria Cross recipients born in this city is that their acts of bravery and leadership have the power to resonate across the generations, and bring us closer to them and the events of 100 years ago."

■ In Portsmouth, a 'forgotten' memorial to the men of Ostend was rededicated on the anniversary in St Ann's Church.

The monument to the Unknown Stoker was inspired by the death of an engineer from HMS Vindictive, used as a blockship at Ostend. He was buried with full military honours by Ostend's German defenders alongside other Britons killed in the raid, which sought to bottle up enemy U-boats in their Flanders base.

Thirteen years later it inspired a memorial wooden cross embedded in the floor of the church.

And there it has remained ever since – except that for the past 20 or so years it's been hidden beneath carpet laid during a renovation of the 18th Century church in the 1980s or '90s.

It was rediscovered during the latest refurbishment of St Ann's – and this time it will remain unhidden.

Just as it was unveiled, experts



● ET(ME) Samuel Marx pulls back the Union Flag to reveal the Cross to the Unknown Stoker (above) in St Ann's Church

Picture: LPhoto Louise George

at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission officially put a name to that unknown stoker: 38-year-old PO Charles McDonald from Leith.

A ceremony was held at the

cemetery in Ostend where the senior rating's grave had been marked for the past 100 years by the words 'A sailor of the Great War', but now bears McDonald's name.

Branch delve into history

ALRESFORD branch marked their silver jubilee with a two-week exhibition reminding locals of the small Hampshire town's long, proud ties with the RNA.

Anyone passing the civic library in the last two weeks of April would have seen a comprehensive window display featuring naval memorabilia.

The town was home to and is the last resting place of Admiral George Rodney; it had a Hunt-class minesweeper named after it in 1918 (it served into WW2 and was used at Dunkirk and Dieppe) – possibly the result of the local vicar being the brother of former First Sea Lord Admiral Jellicoe.

Between the wars Alresford served as a training ship; Prince Philip was among the junior officers who cut their navigational teeth aboard her.

The branch is now looking forward to the next quarter century. It meets in the Swan Hotel at 7.30pm on the second Tuesday of each month. For details contact secretary Mike Edwards-Labelle: 01489 877162 or drakkarcowes@aol.com.

WRNS stone cleaned up

THE new memorial to the Wrens has enjoyed its first spring clean – appropriately at the hands of members of the Portsmouth branch of the Association of Wrens.

The monument outside Portsmouth's Anglican Cathedral was dedicated last year to mark 100 years of women serving in the RN.

After consulting sculptor Robyn Golden-Hann, cleaners Valerie Pennycook, Bronwen McCaughey plus some serving 'volunteers' rounded up by RPO Carol Morton set to work.

The stone base had been quite green, but a spot of elbow grease soon had the stone shipshape and sparkling.

Branch members will continue to tend to the monument each April and October. They ask those who place flowers/wreaths at the stone to lay them on the grass rather than the base stone to help keep it clean.

↓ RNA Central Office, Room 209, Semaphore Tower (PP70), HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.

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High time on Tide

AIR Cadets Sebastian and Rebecca try on fire-fighting gear during a visit to RFA Tidespring.

Students and staff from 2391 Parkstone Squadron ATC called in on the new tanker at Portland.

Tidespring's Officer-of-the-Watch 3/O Jack Scoble is a former cadet from the squadron and volunteers as an instructor during his leave periods.

During the visit, the cadets learned about the RFA, and how it conducts its operations worldwide.

The cadets and staff were particularly impressed by the size of the vessel and the excellent living conditions onboard, as well as the many functions that she can provide to the wider fleet.

Of course, being air cadets, particular interest was taken in the flight capabilities of Tidespring and the equipment she carries to support Fleet Air Arm aircraft.

This included learning how the Helicopter Controller, Officer of the Watch and Flight Deck Officer work as a team to

safely launch and recover many types of helicopter while at sea, as well as some of the technology Tidespring uses to aid the recovery of aircraft trying to land on her deck.

Another highlight was the opportunity to try on some of the fire-fighting clothing and equipment, and to learn how the ship is always prepared to deal with many types of emergency. Later on in the tour, cadets were shown how the vessel is designed to be able to refuel the new Queen Elizabeth-class of aircraft carriers, using its complex and state-of-the-art cargo system and replenishment rigs.

3/O Scoble said: "It has been fantastic to be able to host the unit that provided me with the footing to pursue a career in the RFA."

"In my continuing work with the ATC I have been able to promote the work that the RFA does and utilise my own specialist training to deliver training to the cadets in their own subjects."

Pictures: Matthew Bromage



Remembering Ganges

PRESIDENT of HMS Ganges Old Comrades Association, Admiral James Burnell-Nugent, was guest of honour at a reunion at Hayling Island.

Sea Cadets from Warsash unit provided a ceremonial honour guard and flag-lowering party for the traditional Sunset ceremony.

Fresh from qualifying as a ceremonial drill instructor course, PO Cdt Adam, 17, took charge of the ceremonial parade routine created specially for the occasion.

HMS Ganges was the Naval training establishment dedicated to training boys from the age of 15 for Service in the Royal Navy.

Commissioned in 1865 and later moved to Shotley, Suffolk, approximately 160,000 boys passed through its gates before it was closed in 1976.

Warm welcome for intrepid walker

SEA Cadet unit TS Ajax hosted Victory Walker Cdr Jane Allen as she notched up 1,500 miles on her 5,500-mile quest around the coast of Britain.

The unit is based in Methil, Fife, from where Cdr Allen sent her latest report.

Today, Methil might be regarded as a small town but during WW1 it was a prominent convoy assembly point, while in WW2 it was the UK's second largest coal port.

It sent coal supplies to London and other cities, as well as vast coal cargoes up to Scapa Flow to keep the Royal Navy's ships moving.

Keeping moving has been my theme too, particularly over notable rivers. I've now crossed the mighty Humber, been transported over the Tees, walked over the Wear, ferried across the Tyne and walked into Berwick over the Tweed – my last big UK crossing before heading into Scotland.

Looking across the Humber mouth, watching the tidal race and seeing Spurn Point on the opposite side was a stirring sight. The Humber bridge didn't disappoint either, but wet weather and poor visibility certainly dampened my excitement.

Jinxing key moments seems to be a repeating theme: in Yorkshire, on Flamborough's



famous headland and cliffs, I found myself completely fogged-out, just hearing the eerie cry of sea birds.

At other times the route has been just as expected. I spent a very depressing afternoon walking through Middlesbrough's industrial heartland, much of it decaying. Another sobering moment was reading about the number of shipbuilding yards that used to jostle for position on the rivers Wear and Tyne.

The sight of HMS Trincomalee's masts rising above Hartlepool's preserved dockyard buildings was definitely an 'up spirits' moment. It was Hartlepool's role as a key naval shipbuilding yard in WW1 that led to it being the first UK target of Germany's Imperial Navy in December 1914.

On the afternoon I visited, it

was good to see that the Royal Navy was back in charge, with HMS Example paying a port visit. Shipbuilding may have ended, but Hartlepool's regeneration has injected new life.

Regeneration was also the theme along County Durham's coastline – once full of collieries, railway tracks and mining waste. It has been transformed, but with constant reminders of how it used to look. In acknowledgement of another big industry, steel, various steel sculptures have been erected along the coastal path: these range from a colossal charm bracelet and fisherman's statue, to the famous 'Tommy' sculpture at Seaham.

County Durham led me into Northumberland with its stunning coastline, golf courses and castles – all giving me a taste of what to expect in Scotland.

Crossing that border was probably the highlight of my last 500 miles, although, crossing the Firth of Forth and being greeted by some of the Naval Regional Commander's team was a joint equal. It was here I joined the Five coastal path and felt this was where my walk around Scotland really began.

The evening before the crossing we'd parked on the former site of HMS Lochinvar, once the home of minesweeping expertise, later joined by fishery protection. The Queensferry Sea Cadet unit proudly retains the name, TS Lochinvar, and it has unrivalled views of all the Forth's bridges. In the distance it was possible to see the second carrier, Prince of Wales, under construction.

Planning is a constant theme, but sometimes things haven't gone to plan, or the totally unexpected takes me by surprise.

One afternoon in the middle of absolutely nowhere, on a riverbank, I came across a vacuum cleaner, complete with cable sitting on the grass. Had there been a 13amp socket nearby I could have done some housework!

Cdr Allen is raising money for WRNS BT and RNRMC. To donate visit www.virginmoneygiving.com/victorywalk17-18. To find out more about Jane's Victory Walk go to www.victorywalk.uk

Cadets show they are well grounded



● Cdt Ben receives his prizes from Lt Marc Pether at RNAS Yeovilton

STUDENTS celebrate at the new Cadet Naval Aviation Course held at RNAS Yeovilton.

Nineteen cadets attended the course, the first time it had been opened up to students from both the Combined Cadet Force and the Volunteer Cadet Corps.

Instructors welcomed former Sea King observer Lt Cdr (CCF) Trevor Buckley RNR to the team as the navigation instructor.

Three hard days of ground school at SCTC Weymouth covered a variety of subjects that included principles of flight, human factors, air law and meteorology, before the cadets went on to the second phase of the course with 727 NAS at RNAS Yeovilton for air experience flights in the squadron's Grob 115.

Unfortunately the first day had to be cancelled due to heavy rain so a visit was arranged to the Fleet Air Arm Museum which went down well with

the students.

The following days saw perfect weather and the squadron's Operations Officer Lt Jon Duke and the pilots had their work cut out getting the students airborne.

Unfortunately time ran out by midday Friday and as trains had to be caught, a few students missed out.

However, they have all been offered the chance to return and complete their flights with the squadron later this year.

After sitting a final ground school examination all students were pleased to find out they had passed the basic course and were presented with their 'Bronze Wings' by Cadet Naval Aviation Course Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Marc Pether RNR.

Top student this year was Cadet Ben, from Woking, whose hard work during the week paid off when he was presented with the Daedalus Trophy and a pilot's watch.





Pipe marks historic first CCF for Wales

IT'S A shame we can't bring you audio because the sound of the still piped here marked a momentous moment at Fitzalan High School in Cardiff.

It became the latest seat of learning to open a Royal Navy Combined Cadet Force unit – and the first in all Wales (and one of only a select few in the UK) to benefit from the Cadet Expansion Programme which aims to create 500 new units at state-run schools by 2020.

The cadet force scheme gives young people an opportunity to develop self-discipline and resilience, improve their team-working, problem solving, leadership and social skills. Cadets can also gain nationally-recognised qualifications and lifeskills which will help them find jobs in civvy street.

“Being a cadet is great – it’s also good for my future career prospects, learning about leadership and teamwork and we’ve been to sea already on HMS Express, that was really special and wonderful,” said 14-year-old Ieyla Roab who’s been a cadet at Fitzalan since September last year.

Sixteen-year-old Cdt Farif Malik, who led the parade, added: “The Cadets has given me a lot – some really good experiences and I want a career in Law enforcement.

“It felt unique being out front and responsible for the unit and the fact that my parents were there to see me made it all the more special – I feel very, very proud.”

Cdre Jonathan Fry, Head of Youth and Cadets at the Ministry of Defence, performed the honours at the formal opening and told youngsters that their time in the CCF could change their lives, “motivate you to do well and broaden your horizons. Wherever you go, whatever you do in life, the skills you learn here will help you be the best you can be, help you be a better person.”

Contingent Commander for Fitzalan High is the school’s sports teacher Ben Jones, who visited the home of the Royal Navy officer corps in Dartmouth to learn about being head of the Cadet unit.

“I have no military background, but it’s something I’ve a keen interest in,” he said.

“Dartmouth was one of the best weeks I’ve had. It’s been brilliant so far, it’s really taken

off in the school and we’ve gone from strength to strength.

“Our main focus is to get the cadets to develop as young leaders, so we’re encouraging them to take charge.

“The enthusiasm in the school is tremendous. Every parade day we allow them to wear uniform throughout the school and this is creating a real buzz around the place.”

■ The Secretary of State for Defence Gavin Williamson visited Phoenix Collegiate School in West Bromwich to announce the latest round of approvals, as part of the Cadet Expansion Programme.

While at the West Midlands school the Defence Secretary also took the chance to see the Royal Navy Combined Cadet Force unit of Phoenix Collegiate.

Phoenix Collegiate School is in a high area of deprivation and receives additional pupil premium funding. The CCF Royal Navy unit recently paraded and it is strongly supported by staff and is developing its unit. Current Cadet strength is 36 with eight Cadet Force Adult Volunteers.



MP quizzed during visit to Rhondda

RHONDDA Unit welcomed their local MP Chris Bryant.

Commanding Officer CPO (SCC) Jeremy Williams said, it was a pleasure to host Mr Bryant as he is a very keen supporter of the unit and the Sea Cadets as a whole and quite often raises questions in parliament about the Cadets using Rhondda as an example.

On the night Mr Bryant had a tour of the unit, stopping to talk to the cadets who were under instruction and finishing with a question-and-answer session with the unit’s able cadets.

The Commanding Officer arranges for prominent people from the community to visit and talk to the senior cadets about their roles in the area.

A previous visitor was Councillor Andrew Morgan, leader of Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council.

Mr Bryant said: It is always wonderful to visit the Rhondda Sea Cadets.

“The Sea Cadets is different from school. There’s a lot of learning – but it’s done through different fun activities. It’s also different from home, a break from screens and being cooped up inside.

“It is great to support organisations that are supporting our young people in the Rhondda, encouraging them to succeed and reach their goals.”



Honours for Rugby

LEADING Cadet Zeta has been invested as the Lord Lieutenant’s Cadet for Warwickshire.

Zeta, pictured third from left, joined fellow Rugby unit cadets OC Megan, pictured second left, and OC Ellie May, pictured right.

Completing the line up is Sub Lt (SCC) Gareth Head RNR, CO of Rugby Sea Cadets and Royal Marine Cadets.

The past year also saw the unit’s LC Drusilla carry out duties as the Mayor of Rugby’s Cadet.



We’re having a Jolie time

PUPILS from Dauntsey’s pose for a photograph on board the Jolie Brise.

A group of pupils from the Fourth Form and Lower Sixth took part in two five-day cruises to earn their RYA Competent Crew Certificate.

The cruises set off from the Hamble and took in the seas around France and the Channel Islands.

Toby Maris, Head of Sailing at the school, said: “The Competent Crew Certificate is all about getting to know the boat and having hands-on experience of living on board.

“By the end of the course the pupils had learnt to steer, handle sails, keep a lookout, row a dinghy and assist in all the day-to-day duties on board. There was some great teamwork during the cruises and everyone also had a lot of fun.”

The Jolie Brise is owned, maintained and sailed by the pupils of Dauntsey’s. In 2013, she celebrated the centenary anniversary of her construction by the Paumelle yard in Le Havre. The world famous, gaff-rigged pilot cutter was the last boat to carry the Royal Mail under sail and has won the Fastnet Race three times, including the inaugural race in 1925.



● Cdre Jonathan Fry formally opened the Royal Navy Combined Cadet Force at Fitzalan High School in Cardiff Pictures: LPhoto Ken Gaunt

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the April edition of *Navy News* (right) was, Coastal Forces steam gunboat HMS Grey Goose, whose wartime CO was Sir Peter Scott.

Michael Green, of Wallsend, Tyne & Wear, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery boat (above) was ordered on October 21 1965, and was laid down at Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Limited (VSEL)'s Barrow-in-Furness shipyard on June 30 1967.

The boat was chosen to trial the first full-size submarine pump jet propulsion.

1) What was her name, and 2) what was the name of the person who launched her?

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 July 13.

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 August edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 280

Name

Address

My answers: (1).....

(2).....

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in July's Noticeboard must be received by **June 15 2018**

Deaths

Adm Sir John D Treacher KCB. Admiralty Board, C-in-C Fleet, VCNS, HMS Victory, Heron, Eagle, Lowestoft, Nelson, Protector, Daedalus, Victorious, Triumph, Mermaid and 849 NAS. Apr 30. Aged 93.

Sir Edward Ducann KBE, PC. Served in Coastal Forces during WW2. He was Navigating Officer of MTB 758, part of the naval force liberating Norway in May 1945 and spent time at the Coastal Forces base HMS Midge (Great Yarmouth). He maintained strong association with the post war Coastal Forces Officers Association. Aug 31. Aged 94.

Sir Derrick Holden-Brown. Joined the RNRV 1941 and after initial service was appointed to Coastal Forces serving in D boats commonly referred to as 'Dog Boats'. Serving exclusively in the Adriatic he was 1st Lieutenant of MGB 663 until her loss by mines off Maestra Point in the Adriatic 1944 and for which he was Mentioned in Dispatches Jan 1945. He then commanded MTB 655 which was also struck by a mine in the Quarnero Gulf he survived and was rescued with a broken leg. Past chairman of the White Ensign Association a Founding Trustee of the Coastal Forces Heritage Trust in 1994 and subsequently its long-time chairman. March 6. Aged 95.

Cdre Ian S MacGillivray. NATO, DNOR & Dir Nav and Tactical Control, HM Royal Yacht Britannia, HMS Neptune, Terror, Dryad, Centaur, Rifleman, Delight, Mounts Bay and BRNC. Apr 18. Aged 90.

Cdr Malcolm Scadding. FONAC, Nav Sec, Dir Gen Aircraft, HMS Saker, Daedalus, Seahawk, Goldcrest, Condor, Fulmar and Nuthatch. Apr 30.

Cdr Donald W 'Bushy' Shrubbs. Def Studies Latimer, Dir Naval Admin Planning, NATO Turkey, 819, 824, 826 737, 819 & 848 NAS, HMS Heron, Gannet, Seahawk, Bulwark and Rampart. Mar 5.

Lt Cdr Robert E F De Pass. HMS St Angelo, Crossbow and Hawke. Apr 17. Aged 96.

Lt Cdr Brian Nicholas. Loan Oman, INM Alverstoke, RNH Haslar and Plymouth, HMS Victory RNB and RN Med Sch. Apr 6.

Lt Cdr Norman L Scott. FONAC, HMS Drake, Daedalus, Heron, Ganges, Sultan, Protector, Vengeance and RNAY Belfast. Mar 29. Aged 87.

Lt Cdr Sir Bernard H I Halley PC RD RNR. (Lord Stewartby). Mar 1. Aged 82.

Lt Cdr Gerry Prince. 848, 1833 & 893 NAS, HMS Birmingham, Vanguard, Centaur, Centurion, Victorious. Apr

Ask Jack

HEADLEY COURT CHARITY: The Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre moves from Surrey to the East Midlands this year.

To mark the significant role the centre has played since 1947, the Royal British Legion has agreed the charity can parade a contingent of 70 veterans at this year's Remembrance Parade in London.

Former patients and staff who wish to take part are invited to register their interest by writing to: Toby Elliott, 38 Opulus Way, Monmouth NP25 5UW.

Please send a self-addressed stamped envelope which will be used to forward your ticket.

Also, please indicate whether you are a former patient or former member of staff, specifying the year that you were at Headley Court and in the case of former staff members, the appointment held.

Applications to be received by September 13. Tickets for carers can also be provided.

Reunions

September

HMS Arethusa F38. Reunion for all crews to be held at the Best Western Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, PO4 0NR from Fri Sept 28 – Mon Oct 1 and includes a shuttle coach to visit Portsmouth and Chichester. Book now as places are limited: Darby Allen 01903 505918, johnrallen883@btinternet.com or Isle of Wight Tours Ltd., 3 New Road, Lake, Sandown Isle of Wight, PO36 9JN on 01983 405584, enquiries@iowtours.com

October

Neptune Association Memorial. A Service of Remembrance will take place at the Neptune Association's memorial, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire on Sat Oct 13 at noon to remember the 836 men lost from HM Ships Neptune and Kandahar on Dec 19 1941. A private AGM for members will follow in the Rose Room at 13.45. Further information from Graham Davies on 01256 474641 or 07941 440113.

14. **Cdr John A N Neilson DSC.** HMS President, Drake, Osprey, Fulmar, Centaur, Peregrine and 815 NAS. Apr 12. Aged 90.

Lt John A Darby RNRV. 825 NAS, Observer Sch HMS Goshawk and Trinidad. March. Aged 95.

Sub Lt Sir Erskine W Gladstone Bt KG RNRV. Mar 29. Aged 92.

Derek J Dixon, POMEM. Served 1954-78 HMS Raleigh, Victory, Newfoundland, Zest, Newcastle, Ausonia, Murray (Osprey), Sultan, Victorious, Pellew, Lochinvar, Albion, Mohawk, Fife, Caledonia, Longmoor and Cochrane. Jan 17. Aged 79.

Peter 'Kid' Currie, L/Seaman (TSM). Served HMS Raleigh, Dryad, Norfolk, Fife, Falkland Islands, Osiris, Opportune, Dolphin, Osiris, Gulf War and HMS Dolphin (Boat crew Cox'n) Feb 25. Aged 60.

Theodore Anthony 'Tony' Gresham, Elec Artificer 1. Joined HMS Figgard Artificer Apprentice Entry Series 7 1949 and served HMS Illustrious (53-55), Crane (55-56), Reserve Fleet Plymouth (57-58), Kepple (59), Loch Killisport (59-60) and Ulster (61-63). Member of The Magnificent 7. April 4. Aged 84.

Osborne J 'Fred' Raybould, AB. Served 1948-60 in HMS Hart and Cardigan Bay and in Malta during the 1950s. April 22. Aged 87.

Bob Galley, AB. Served HMS Concord (55-56), Implacable, Dieppe, Solebay, Barrosa and Vanguard. HMS Concord Association. April 24. Aged 81.

Peter Cutler AB. Served HMS Ganges, Royal Arthur, Victory, Bulwark, Murray, Cumberland, Rhyll, Albion also Concord (55-56) and a member of Concord Association. April 26. Aged 78.

Brian G 'Pancho' Mills, LEM. Served 1950-57 HMS Collingwood, Maidstone, Kenya and Vanguard. Treasurer HMS Kenya Association. April 3. Aged 85.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Cdr Bryan Smalley RD, DL. Joined as a Boy Seaman 1947. Selected as Upper Yardman, he commissioned

as a sub lieutenant in 1954. Served aboard HMS Wakeful, Troubridge, Pelican, Forth, Triumph and in HM Submarines Scotsman, Acheron, Porpoise, Tabard, Seraph, Valiant and as CO of Aurochs. Following retirement he joined the Reserves and served at the NATO & Maritime HQ, Northwood and later appointed as Naval Officer in charge, Great Yarmouth, in the rank of Commander. President Hertfordshire RNA and president HMS Bruce Association. April 17. Aged 86.

Trevor A Bunce, CEA FAA. Served HMS Figgard, Collingwood, Ariel, Heron, Gannet, Goldcrest, Albion, Ark Royal (824 Sqn), Bulwark, Sea Hawk (824 Sqn) and Daedalus. Post RN he served Burton-Upon-Trent Sea Cadets (TS Modwena) including a period as CO. RNA (Life Member), National Malaya & Borneo Veterans Association and Figgard Association. April 15. Aged 82.

William Clodd, Stoker 1st Class. Served the RN 1943-44 HMS Gosling, Duke, Drake, Boscawen and Blackwood then the Army (Royal Armoured Corp) from 1944 with Duke of Wellington in India, Dutch East Indies and Sumatra; and with the 25th Dragoons in Calcutta. Norwich RNA and Branch Chairman 1988. May 2. Aged 95.

Raymond Clingan LMEM. Served 1957-68 at HMS Ganges and the training ship Paladin also HMS Vanguard (played the part of a German medic as an extra in the 1960 movie Sink the Bismarck), Carysfort, Undaunted (Malaysian conflict), Ursa (Cuban crisis), Yarmouth and Daring (Malaysian conflict in Borneo) and received the Pinjat Jasa Malaysia Medal (only awarded to 156 Irish men). He was part of the guard of honour at Sir Winston Churchill's funeral. 1971-81 he served the Police and Prison Service in Northern Ireland and worked in Saudi Arabia as an engineering lecturer 1981-2000. Banbridge RNA. May 4. Aged 76.

Muriel Sharp. Associate Member Cheshunt branch. April 27. Aged 92.

ASSOCIATION OF RN OFFICERS AND RNO

Rear Adm Sir Peter Anson Bt CB. ACDS, DGW(N), HMS Jufair, Mercury, Naiad, Broadsword, Alert, Obedient, Eagle, Agincourt, St Angelo, Aisne and RNC Greenwich. April 17. Aged 93.

Capt Richard M Duffield. HMS Cavendish, Aisne, Mercury, Collingwood, President, Jupiter, Hermes, Centurion. Def Intel Staff, NDC, Dir Op Requirements, NATO Brussels and Service Attaché Brazil. Apr 2. Aged 82.

Capt Roy Harding. HMS Tenby, Centurion, Scylla, Apollo, Cochrane, Bristol, Neptune, BRNC Dartmouth, Dir Nav Manpower Requirements, Captain Fishery Protection, Cdre Minor War Vessels and NATO. Apr 6. Aged 76.

Cdr Mike J Jenkins. HMS Devonshire, St Angelo, Sultan, Centurion, Tamar, Penelope, Coventry, Victory RNB, Proj Oasis, Nav Sec and Dir Gen Naval Pers Services. Mar 28. Aged 85.

Lt Cdr Robert J Keyworth. HMS Ganges, Dryad, St Vincent, Harrier, Pembroke, St Angelo, Ocean, St George, Mauritius, Dauntless, Bellerophon and Collingwood. Feb 9. Aged 101.

Cdr Jonathan H A Mason. HMS Eagle, Osprey, Heron, Saker, Ariel, Fulmar, Daedalus, Sanderling, President, FONAC, RAE Farnborough, MoD Proc Exec. Dir Gen Aircraft and Min of Aviation. April. Aged 85.

Cdr Bryan G Smalley. HMS Dolphin, Valiant and Royal Canadian Navy. Apr 18. Aged 86.

Lt Cdr Fred J Waite. HMS Victory RNB, Euryalus, Antrim, Osprey, Dryad and FO Sea Trg. March. Aged 78.

ALGERIENS ASSOCIATION

Roy E Gomes, Shipwright. Served aboard HMS Stormcloud. 2017.

John C Price, Tel. Served aboard HMS Romola.

Frederick G Laws, APO SM. Served aboard HMS Mariner.

John S Russell, AB ASS. Served aboard Fort York – Bangor.

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Warriors' tale of two trials

MOST of us are familiar with the Invictus Games and the huge leap forward the UK has taken in the provision of Adaptive Sports and Adaptive Adventurous Training (AS & ApAT) to our Wounded, Injured or Sick (WIS) Service Personnel and Veterans.

The Naval Service Recovery Centre (NSRC) Hasler is now the Navy lead for AS & ApAT and one of their primary roles is to broaden access to opportunity across the RN/RM, achieve parity of opportunity across the Service and ensure those who participate get the recognition they deserve.

A lesser known but the fore runner to the Invictus Games is the US Department of Defence's own Adaptive Sports competition the **Wounded Warrior Games**.

Much like it's big cousin, the Warrior Games run a tough selection process for their athletes which is coordinated by the US Wounded Warrior Program who have representation within each single service; for example the US Marine Corps' Wounded Warrior Regiment who run their own Marine Corps' Wounded Warrior Trials.

These trials are a mixed games event held over seven days where USMC WIS athletes, both serving and veteran, compete against each other to be crowned USMC champion while also vying for selection to the main Warrior Games event.

Hasler ranks past and present have competed at the US Marine Corps' Trials for the last nine years and have always fared extremely well.

In fact feeling competitive again not only kick-started the recovery pathway of many who struggled, in some cases attendance represented the start of a truly international sporting career.

Former Marine Joe Townsend, now the 2018 Commonwealth triathlon champion and Cpl Eaglesham shot at the 2016 Paralympics in Rio.

For most though, the opportunity just to discover (or rediscover) sporting ability and show themselves and the world what they can still achieve despite living with disability is a game changer.

But for the 2018 season; securing an invite and then competing at the US Navy and Marine Corps Trails respectively was a first step.

So earlier this year, the first wave of UK 'Wounded Warrior' athletes deployed to Mayport Naval Air Station in Florida for ten days of competition and adventure.

This was the first time a full RN team competed against their US counterparts, but despite this the pan-RN team gave a stellar performance, with the likes of PO Taff Howells setting a blistering time

coming away as champion at the indoor rowing.

AB Aaron Bartlett achieved a highly respectable third place ranking against a peloton of seasoned US hand bike competitors.

The 2018 USN Trials were a huge success for the entire RN team, with many of whom just the participation in the games marked a significant milestone in their recovery processes.

While the USN trials are in the process of being grown by the Wounded Warrior Program, in comparison the USMC Trials have been running for over a decade and this year the USMC Wounded Warrior Regiment hosted the second wave of UK 'Wounded Warrior' athletes at the 2018 Marine Corps' Trials in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

The 2018 UK team, *pictured below*, comprised 13 RM ranks, again from across the NSRP, which included Royal Marines from 30 Cdo, 42 Cdo, 45 Cdo, Devonport PSG and NSRC Hasler.

The trials saw international representation from the UK, France, Germany, Georgia and Australia and, with a wide range of sporting disciplines available from track and field to swimming, cycling and archery.

Keeping Sgt Karl Anderson PT1 RM, the team Exercise and Rehabilitation Instructor (ERI), on his toes seemed to be a favourite past-time of the Bootneck team and holding the balance between 'Challenge' Vs 'Recovery' became a fine art.

Once again the 2018 USMC Trials were a resounding success and the RM team walked away with five gold, four silver and three bronze medals. The UK dominated the indoor rowing event with breath-taking performances from the likes of Cpl Jon Rainey and Marines Simon Coster and Connor Moore.

However if it were trophies the team were seeking they need look no further after a surprise and most deserved victory for Royal Marines Cpl Jordan Pring, *pictured top of page competing in the 400m relay*, who was crowned 2018 USMC Trials Ultimate Champion.

The US Navy and USMC Wounded Warrior Trials are hugely significant events in the recovery journey of our WIS, with the spirit of both games affirming the messages that they are not alone in their challenges and that their conditions or disabilities should not define them.

This year's 2018 Warrior Games take place in Colorado Springs this month.

Registrations of interest for future events should be directed to the Navy Lead for AS & ApAT at Hasler, NAVYNPS-HASLERFORTSNCO@mod.uk

Report: Capt Paul Fleet RM Operations Officer, NSRC Hasler



Winging it!

Paraglider conquers fears to learn new skill



● Lt Cdr Andy Claxton during a D-Bag manoeuvre in Turkey; Below, his view over Oludeniz



● Lt Cdr Claxton (left) with tandem pilot Chris White about to take off for the D-Bag flight

THREE, two, one, D-bag.

These were the last few words I heard over the radio from my Swedish paragliding instructor, Johan Eriksson, before I symmetrically pulled the release pins and dropped from the Tandem Paraglider towards the azure blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Turkey, writes Lt Cdr Andy Claxton.

The fall itself felt surreal almost like slow motion, as I watched, stomach in mouth, my lines and eventually my freestyle paraglider wing deploy from the Deployment Bag (otherwise known as a 'D-Bag').

A surge of adrenaline and sense of relief kicked in as the wing popped open and then it was time to focus as I began a routine of acrobatic manoeuvres, SATs, asymmetric spirals, loops and wingovers that marked the end of a hard week of Advanced Wing Control paragliding training.

The course was part of an RAF Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association-led overseas visit to Oludeniz, Turkey; a Mecca for paraglider pilots that want to undertake Advanced Wing Control training sometimes referred to as SIV that stands for Simulation d'Incidence en Vol (Simulation of Incidence in Flight).

The resort and landing zone, a popular tourist destination, is adjacent to Mount Babadag, a 1,900m peak that affords pilots the chance and, more importantly the height, to initiate and practice manoeuvres that would typically be unsafe to do over land.

The manoeuvres are undertaken over the sea (a comfortable 21°C) with lifejackets and radio communications to an instructor watching from below in a rescue/safety boat.

The Advanced Wing control course featured pilots from all three Services.

Joining me from the RN was Lt Cdr Barney Pollock, both of us using the course to hone our skills and improve our wing control ahead of this year's Inter-Service Paragliding Championships that take place in Wales on June 18.

Paragliding is both a recognised sport and Adventurous Training (AT) activity within the Royal Navy.

Unique experiences and new challenges are a constant feature of life in the Royal Navy and participating in AT helps to develop physical and mental robustness, while honing important leadership skills that are indispensable to a successful career.

So why D-Bag? I hate the sense of falling and similarly, in certain conditions I have a healthy dislike for heights so this, for me, was an opportunity to push myself beyond my normal limits, to try something new and test my resolve.

Let's not also forget ... it was also great fun!

If you are interested in taking up paragliding please contact the Royal Navy Paragliding Association secretary, Lt Cdr Tim Oatley (9214 807 4687).



Trio fly Navy flag in Florida ironman

POAET DAVID Roberts is pictured above on lap two of the running stage of the Ironman 70.3 at Haines City in Florida.

The event kicked off the triathlon season for David, along with fellow US-based Royal Navy athletes Lt Cdr Steve Ripley and LAET Thomas Avery.

The race is a popular early-season fixture in the US as it also hosts the North American Tri Club Championship; the 2018 event saw 1,658 competitors with over 70 nations represented.

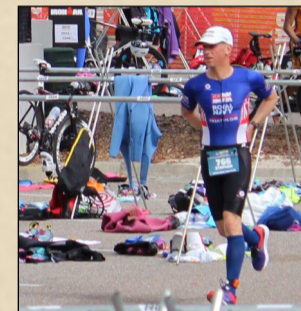
Lt Cdr Ripley travelled to Florida from Maryland, where he works with the US Army on collaborative chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence projects, while POAET Roberts and LAET Amery made their way from South Carolina where they are integrated with the USMC on the F-35B programme.

The race comprised of a 1.2 mile swim in Lake Eva (yes there are alligators known to swim in the lake), a 56-mile bike race in the rolling hills of Polk County and finally, a three-loop 13.1 mile hilly run around Lake Eva and its adjacent neighbourhoods.

Athletes received great support throughout the race with tri-club supporters, locals, volunteers and law enforcement all providing encouragement as the temperature rose to 27°C by the time the athletes got to run the course.

Lt Cdr Ripley was first over the line for the Royal Navy Triathlon Club in 4:48:05, finishing 27 out of 245 in the 45-49 age group; a fantastic early season result for him.

POAET Roberts came over next in 6:57:15; not his best result but, having spent



● Above, Lt Cdr Ripley in transition; Below, LAET Avery starts his run phase



most of 2017 on the side lines through injury, he was delighted to have completed the race.

LAET Amery, who completed Ironman Florida in November, was hoping for a personal best however, he suffered a ripped tyre just 16 miles into the bike leg which resulted in a two-hour wait for the mechanics to get him back on his way.

He worked hard to make the bike cut off time and was the last competitor to do so with three mins to spare.

LAET Amery then had to ensure he kept up the momentum to complete the race in the maximum allotted time of 8 hours 30 minutes.

His efforts saw him cross in 8:29:05 with 55 seconds to spare.

Report: POAET Roberts

● Below, from left, PO David Roberts, Lt Cdr Steve Ripley and LAET Thomas Amery



Lionesses begin hunt for victory



HMS Queen Elizabeth women's football team played their first match, taking on the women from Rushmoor Community FC.

Believed to be the first time an RN ship has fielded an 11-a-side women's football team, and with the Commanding Officer in attendance, this was a very proud occasion for the team and the ship's company that had turned out to support.

The team started well and created a few goal-scoring opportunities, however, Rushmoor quickly got into their stride and Lizzie's Lionesses found themselves 4-0 at half time.

However, it wasn't long after the restart that AB Emily Grindrod

scored the first goal for the Lionesses. With the momentum behind them, two more goals followed quickly turning this match into a great contest.

The last 30 minutes of the match were pretty even with both teams creating chances and scoring goals. The final score was 7-4 to Rushmoor.

This was a fantastic performance by every player, particularly as some had not played 11-a-side football before.

The future flagship is now looking forward to the time their women's team take on HMS Prince of Wales in the battle of the carriers.

Online league key to team success

WHILE Royal Navy Indoor Rowers' prime performances and focus is on national and world championships, predominantly in demanding 2,000m races, essential structured training development is enabled through committing to eight monthly rounds of the global online Indoor Rowers League (IRL).

This provides a range of challenges that keep those involved 'honest' over the season running from September to April, as they undertake sequential challenges for: 4mins, 1,609m (mile), 6,344m, 5k, 2k, 10k and 500m.

Thus 36 Royal Navy Indoor Rowers committed to complete the season's challenge, with scores categorised in a number of ways, including statistical normalisation that enables effective comparisons of results that consider: age, gender and weight (hwt or lwt).

There is also a league for teams, with the best eight scores from a team of ten counting each month.

The Royal Navy had four teams among the 49 that completed the season, with RN DP NavyFit, RNIRPP OO Power, RN Drill Power Plus and RN C2DRIL finishing third, sixth, seventh and 16th respectively.

Individually, the top performing Royal Navy ergers were WO 'Tiny' Nash and Emily Loftus (both Temeraire) who finished sixth and fourth respectively in men's and women's league for best performances before scores were normalised.

The latter was very close to third, her season's score of 632.75 was just 0.14 behind third place.

There were five other RN men in the top ten ranked ergers, with Nash followed by: Lt Cdr Jim Thomson (NCHQ) seventh, Lt Cdr Jim Hyde (DES Bristol) eighth, POPT Al Treacy (Sultan) ninth and Lt Col Tom Blythe (JSU Northwood) tenth.

There were five RN women in the top 20 overall performers, after Loftus were: Lt Cdr Ruth Guest (INM) seventh, CPOPT Helen Richardson (Temeraire) tenth, Clare Valentine (Temeraire) 16th and LH Natalie Thorpe (BDS US) 19th.

Once scores were normalised there were even greater RN successes with wins for Nash in the men's hwt 50+, Lt Nick Howe (RM Stonehouse) in the men's lwt 20+ and POPT Rich Charrett (Sultan) in the men's lwt 30+.

Runners up places were gained by: Treacy in the men's hwt 50+, Giles Piggott (HMS Albion) in the men's lwt 20+, CPO Tim 'Apples' Cox (Collingwood) in the men's lwt 40+ and Guest in the women's lwt 30+ (her score of 780.53 was just 0.23 behind winner).

Podium places were completed with third places for Thomson in the men's hwt 40+, Sgt Sam Arnold (Collingwood) in the men's hwt 30+, Cpl Dave Moody (40Cdo) in the men's hwt 20+ and Richardson in the women's hwt 40+.

These results obviously show the strength of performance for RN indoor rowers, further reinforced in the very competitive men's hwt 40+ category by Ady Cherrington (Temeraire) sixth, Cdr Dan Vincent (NAVY PCAP-HRTSG) eighth, Col Matt Jackson (3Cdo) tenth and Cdr Rory West (UKMCC) 12th.



Top night at Northwood

NORTHWOOD HQ held its first charity boxing dinner show in the WO and SR Mess.

As Northwood is a tri-Service establishment boxers were invited to compete from all three services in the London and Eastern Region.

Friendly rivalry meant that the bouts were of the highest standard.

The competition had boxers enter from the RNRMB, 1 Yorkshire Regiment, HMS Nelson, HMS Collingwood, RAF Halton and 47 Rgt RA.

Six bouts were matched for the evening and the RNRMB won the overall team trophy.

Spectators helped to raise £2413.62 for the RNRMC. Most of the money raised was due to the charity auction and the great performance as the auctioneer

from CPOPT Tony Newcombe.

Local businesses and sports clubs donated auction prizes to ensure maximum money was raised at the auction.

Top prizes included a signed Anthony Joshua boxing glove and a signed Arsenal FC shirt, both with authenticity certificates.

POPT Ronny Barker, who took the part of MC for the evening, had the vision for the event and with the help of all Northwood HQ PT staff, ensured a successful evening.

Northwood HQ PT staff are now hoping to make the dinner show an annual event to promote amateur boxing in the Armed Forces, raise money for charity while inviting all Services and civilian personnel from Northwood HQ to enjoy a night of sport.



Riders start bid for glory in cars and on bikes

Champ in a spin

ROYAL Navy motor-racing champion Lt Cdr Keith Attwood spins off the track as the Armed Forces Race Challenge kicked off at Oulton Park in Cheshire.

Keith managed to get his Mini back on the track and overtook a car before finishing in 13th place and third overall in Class C.

The RNRM team had worked hard over the winter to try and eradicate any early season reliability issues that blighted them at the start of the previous season.

Apart from Keith, the team included Cdr Rich Scott (PJHQ) and PO Jimmy Cantwell (814 NAS), who shared the RN Peugeot 206, and CPO Gareth 'Stirling' Moss (PORFLOT) and Mne Adam Dewis, both in Vauxhall Astras. Former RNRM team member, now veteran, Mark Inman was also back in action with his VX220.

Qualifying saw mixed fortunes for the team with Adam and Stirling, in the more powerful Class B cars, both having minor issues which meant they started further back than expected in 21st and 15th positions respectively.

Veteran Mark in the other Class B car qualified in fourth. In the lower-powered Class C cars Keith had a

storming session, finding himself in 13th place (and second in class) ahead of much more powerful vehicles, with Jimmy starting 23rd out of a total of 30 starters.

As the lights went out for race one, Keith hooked up the start perfectly, passing six cars by the end of the first corner elevating him up to seventh position.

However, the power differential between the Mini Cooper and some of the faster cars he had cleared was quickly apparent and over the next three laps he was passed by six cars, putting him back down in the same position he started the race.

Stirling and Jimmy both got away safely and settled into the race well. Mark had a great tussle at the front of the pack and came across the line in second place (first in Class B). Keith crossed the line in 13th (second in Class C), with Stirling 17th, Adam recovering to 19th and Jimmy in 21st.

Race two saw Jimmy hand over to Rich to take the wheel of the 206, but was forced to start at the back of the grid.

With another commanding drive, Mark saw off stiff competition from the Army to finish a mirror image of race one.

Adam's bad luck continued as he was a victim of another competitor running into the back of him on lap two; forcing his retirement. Stirling suffered gearbox issues but managed to nurse his car home in 15th place.

Driver of race two for the team had to be Rich, starting from the back of the grid, he had made up six places on the first lap and continued to scythe through the field throughout the race to finish 18th overall.

In the overall championship, Rich's drive in race two, combined with Jimmy's solid work in race one, saw them take home third place.

In the Class awards, Mark took home Class B honours, with Keith taking second place in Class C.

Anyone wishing to get involved, should contact Lt Cdr Keith Attwood.

There are opportunities to race in the RNRMSA-owned Peugeot 206 and most safety equipment can be provided.

The association is also on the lookout for supporters/sponsors that can assist at the Inter-Service championship at the Birkett six-hour race in October.

For more details on the Armed Forces Race Challenge visit www.armedforcesracechallenge.net

Picture: Steve Morris

Solid start to 2018 trophy challenge

AFTER a long winter off preparing the bikes, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Road Racing Team met at Donington Park ready to start the uphill battle to take back the Inter-Service trophy.

With the newest member of the team Sgt Luke Terry, coupled with Mne Jonathan Atkinson and L/Cpl Charlie White, the stage was set for close battles in the CB 500 class.

With a few missed gears, some hair-raising braking moments, Charlie taking a tumble towards the end and Jonny trying his hand at off roading, RN riders placed well among the more experienced riders.

The 600 cup race featured Lt Cemal Oram, starting from 11th on the grid, he managed to take third place.

He repeated his feat the following day but a crash in his third race put him out of the Inter-Service event.

Riders LA(AH) Alan Curtis and Lt Cdr Max Wilmot found themselves in the mix in the Golden Era Super Sports category, with more riders this year as the class gains popularity.

The first race saw Max power his way through into the top five, however he managed to outbrake himself and run wide into Redgate corner, allowing Alan to snatch his place from him.

After repairs by both riders the last race of the day was a close-fought affair between the pair, finishing 12th and 13th with less than half a second between them.

The following day's races saw the pair battling for position, with Max up to fourth until yet again he outraked



● C/Sgt Brian Fudge battles with Mne Callum Scott; Lt Cdr Max Wilmot leads the way



himself at the end of Dunlop straight, allowing Al to catch him.

However, so determined was Al to catch his rival that he overshot the run-off curb of the old hairpin and decided to go off roading at over 100mph.

Al managed to stay on his machine and rejoined the track to find himself in last position but mounted a strong comeback by making up ten places in less than five laps, while also avoiding being lapped.

To the Pre National 600 with Cpl Dan Greenwood, Mne Callum Scott and C/Sgt Brian Fudge.

With all three riders qualifying well within the pack, the first race was a close one. C/Sgt Fudge was able to pick his way through the grid with ease and set some good lap times. Scotty was hot on his heels as they exited copping bend, only to be hit side on by another rider, forcing him to crash into the gravel trap.

Dan spent the weekend concentrating

on lowering his lap times and aiming for his last signature which would see him able to race without his newcomer's bib. He put in a good consistent performance and built up his confidence.

The first GB Racing Inter-Service race for 2018 was the last race of the weekend.

Qualifying had been better than expected for the team with Al claiming his first pole position, Max starting in third and Bri, Scotty and Dan in the top ten. Scotty finished in sixth place, a personal best.

Bri was fast and smooth throughout but was held up by back markers and the Army managed seventh place. Al finished in fourth.

Overall a fantastic weekend's racing was had by all, with the RAF taking the top three places in the Inter-Service race.

Navy riders gained experience, set personal bests and added some much-needed points to the score board.



Artful victorious in competition

BRITISH and American submariners united to compete in the very first Astute-class five-a-side **football** tournament with teams from HMS Astute, HMS Artful and guests from the USS Newport News.

The tournament was split into two groups of three teams with the victors from either group competing in the final.

Group one, featuring Astute Wardroom, Artful Wardroom and Newport News were all close matches, Artful Wardroom gained an early lead with a 2-0 win against Newport News. A combination of excellent goalkeeping from Artful and an inability to finish from Astute resulted in another 2-0 victory for the Artful Wardroom team.

Astute Wardroom secured a last minute 1-0 victory over the US boat to achieve second.

Group two featuring Astute Junior Rates, Artful Fwd and Artful Aft, started with a tight game, where the Astute Junior Rates achieved a draw against Artful Aft.

However both teams were decisively beaten by a strong performance from Artful Aft, 1-0 against Artful Fwd and 2-0 against Astute JR's, who finished at the top of their group.

Teams from Astute and Newport News put up a valiant effort however the seasoned players from Artful secured victories in both groups resulting in a

final match featuring Artful Aft and Artful Wardroom. After a tense game looking to end in a draw, two goals in the last few minutes by the Artful Wardroom continued their 2-0 winning streak, securing the prestigious title of Astute Class five-a-side champions.

■ THE Defence Medical Inter-Service football competition takes place on June 11-15.

Teams from the Navy, Army and RAF will compete for a trophy at Defence Medical Services Whittington in Lichfield.

It is the first time all three medical services have had a representative team at the contest.

Try breakthrough for Navy women

ROYAL Navy Rugby Union Women put in a determined performance as the Army secured the 2018 Inter-Service Championship at Kneller Hall.

The final score of 72-3 suggests Army dominance, however the RN Women played with spirit and determination. With ball in hand the Navy frequently challenged the Army's defensive line but were unable to score a try.

The Army began the match with a strong attack. Sarah Jenkins, Billi Staite and newly-capped Rose Dixon, who has only been in the Royal Navy for 12 weeks, all made fantastic tackles to halt the early Army onslaught.

Following a scrum, Emily Howard began attacking the Army defence, but was knocked into touch.

The Army worked quickly to attack after the line out and 11 minutes into the game scored their first try. Six minutes later a second converted try followed and the score at the end of the first quarter was 12-0.

A handling error by the Army after the restart gave the Royal Navy Women a strong attacking position, however, the Army managed to turn over the ball and score once more.

The Army continued to mount powerful attacks, which despite a determined defence, meant they were able to score a further four tries to end the first half with a 38-0 advantage.

The second half began with the Army scoring two tries in quick succession. Head coach John Manners used the bench to make some changes and the Navy were able to prevent the Army from scoring for the remainder of the third quarter. Eventually the Army broke through again and at the stroke of midday the Army were leading 62-0.

The Army once again attacked from the restart, but Emma Swinton turned over the ball and the Royal Navy Women quickly ran into the Army 22.

The Royal Navy Women were awarded a penalty; Sam Alderson kicked for goal and put three points onto the board for the Royal



Navy Women.

For the Royal Navy Women this was a significant moment – they have not scored a point against the Army Women for four years.

The relentless attacking from the Army began to take its toll on the Royal Navy Women in the final ten minutes of the match.

Two players had to leave the field due to injury and with all replacements used, the Royal Navy Women finished the game with

only 13 players on the field.

For two women, the day will be forever etched in their memory as the day they won their first Royal Navy cap.

Rachel Carragher and Rose Dixon both had enormous smiles on their faces as they were presented their caps by Capt Ellie Ablett, Royal Navy Rugby Union Vice President, after the match.

RN veterans the **Mariners** were beaten 59-5 by the Army Masters in their Inter-Service final.

Joji Volaisaya was the try scorer for the RN. The scoreboard failed to represent what had appeared to many observers to be a much closer contest and a hard-fought battle with flourishes of brilliance from both teams

Matt Smith, James Melhuish and Andy Vance won their Mariners' caps, while Ollie James was awarded the Mike Connolly prize for the Mariners' player who has shown leadership, commitment and energy in the finest traditions of the over-35s game throughout the 2017/2018 season.

Terrific 12 selected for Sydney

TWELVE serving and former Royal Navy personnel will represent the Navy – and nation – in Sydney, part of a 72-strong UK team attending the fourth **Invictus Games**.

Premier Theresa May greeted the team of wounded, injured and sick serving military personnel and veterans – whittled down from 451 hopefuls – in Horse Guards Parade.

Two thirds of the team are Invictus newcomers having come through a lengthy selection and trials process, taking on soldiers, sailors and airmen from 16 other nations in late October across 11 sports.

The RN will be represented by a mix of sailors, commandos and musicians, among them green beret Alex Moulder who left the Corps in 2007 but has struggled with a number of mental health challenges since.

The 37-year-old from Bristol credits sport with filling a void – and giving him new goals in life.

"The Invictus Games has given me that empowerment and that hope," he said. "I have found a passion and a focus, and I am determined to succeed. I want to be the best I can and can now see a future ahead. I can finally start seeing me."

Joining him on the 10,500-mile flight to Australia will be Lt Cdr Emma McCormick from Navy Headquarters on Whale Island who's recovering from a freak horse riding accident.



Sport and the chance for Invictus glory have given her the opportunity, she says, to walk tall again.

"Gone is the woman who refused to take part in team sports for fear of someone touching her leg. Gone is the woman who couldn't look at or touch her own leg. I only managed to free myself of these shackles when I started to undertake sport," said the 36-year-old media officer from Clanfield in Hampshire. "I can see the light at the end of the tunnel, and with the help of Invictus I can complete this journey."

The team will compete in 11 sports: athletics; archery; wheelchair basketball; cycling; powerlifting; indoor rowing; wheelchair rugby; swimming; sitting volleyball; wheelchair tennis; and, new to the 2018 games, sailing.

The squad will continue to train from now until October as part of Help for Heroes' extensive Sports Recovery programme and role to train and develop the team, spurred on by captain Mark 'Dot' Perkins.

"There are few moments in one's life when an event occurs that truly transforms your life, the Invictus Games is it," said the former lance corporal.

"In the games our scars are like medals which we can proudly display rather than hide in shame or embarrassment. Invictus allows us to be judged on what we can achieve, rather than what we can't."

Pictures: Spidge Photography



Well done Sonny

ROYAL Navy rider Lt Cdr Jill Monnox and her steed Sonny won the inaugural dressage to music class at the UK Armed Forces **Equestrian Championships**.

More than 200 riders from all three Services, emergency services and military saddle clubs took part in the event, which fell on an uncharacteristically hot spring weekend.

Fifteen uniformed RN riders, including four associate RN Riding Club members on their own horses and hirelings, constituted the small but mighty Senior Service contingent.

Marianne Morffew on 'J' won both Elementary Dressage classes, while Lt Cdr Vicki Sollitt on Nelson won a preliminary – and the combination's first ever – dressage class.

Showjumping highlights saw second places for Lt Becca Brown on Gibson, pictured right, in the 1.10m, PO Amy Taylor on Zenna in the 1.05m and Marianne Morffew on 'J' in the 80cm class.

The results, along with other ribbons earned for top six placings by RN riders, all contributed to a very successful outing.

The icing on the cake saw the RN emerge as leaders over the RAF and Army in the first leg of the Inter-Service Loriners competition.

This was the first year that dressage was contested and the RN team (Cdr Bollen on Titus, Lt Cdr Monnox on Sonny, Lt Cdr Suzanne Clark on Rabbit and Lt Cdr Sollitt on Nelson) impressed the judge with their performances in long arena format dressage tests.

It was no mean feat considering only one of the riders (Lt Cdr Monnox) is a pure dressage rider, two others are more all-rounders and the final one is too young to specialise yet but clearly with a stable name of Nelson is destined for greater glory as he matures!

The championships this year was orchestrated by the RN's senior rider Lt Brown as Event Director. She found the energy and focus to compete successfully herself and earn crucial league points in the Olympia qualifying classes, which puts her a step closer to competing with the top eight military showjumpers at the London International Horse Show in December. Her performance was made all the more impressive considering it was her first competitive outing in uniform following an accident in February.

If you would like to get involved in horse riding in the RN please contact Cdr Jo Bollen royalnavydsje@gmail.com or you can find out more on NAVYfit.





Beaten but unbowed

ROYAL Navy **Rugby Union** player Jarrard Hayler is tackled to the ground at the annual battle for the Babcock Trophy.

The L/Cpl ended on the losing team despite a strong start to the match at an unseasonably hot Twickenham.

The 101st encounter between the two sides saw the men in red emerge 22-14 victors.

The game started brightly for the Royal Navy Rugby Union. Several probing attacks into Army territory, including a great run by scrum half Gareth Rees, were repelled.

But the team in the red shirts clearly felt under pressure conceding a penalty which the skilled kicking boot of full back Jon Humphrey slotted between the posts for the Royal Navy team to take the lead.

From the restart the dark blues, keen to capitalise on their early points, again pushed into the Army half. A speculative kick up the field was deflected into touch and the Navy team had worked their way inside the opposition 22 with the throw in at the lineout.

Disappointingly, the Army stole the ball but it wasn't long before the Navy regained possession.

Several pick and goes from the Navy upped the pressure on the Army who once again conceded a penalty which JHumphrey kicked to extend the Navy lead 6-0..

Now it was the Navy's turn to defend hard; which they did. However the resulting interaction between the forwards increased the aggression levels and the result

was some ill-discipline by both sides.

RFU referee Nigel Wrigglesworth took his time to review the action using the TMO and it was to the greatest disappointment of the Royal Navy when No6, Sam Matavesi, was shown a red card.

Unsurprisingly the Army were able to take advantage and, despite almost ten minutes of strong defence, the Army No13 Leatham went over on the left wing for the first try of the match.

Determined not to be dominated, the Royal Navy fought back, taking the game to the Army. Once again the Army conceded a penalty and Humphrey made it three from three in the 30th minute for the Royal Navy to push ahead 9-5.

Then the passage of play changed, going the way of the Army. Two tries in quick succession, scored by the right wing, Bulumakau, and No6 Miller, were both converted by team captain, fly half, Dixon, for the Army to take a commanding 19-9 lead at half time.

The team talk during the break clearly worked and the Royal Navy team returned to the pitch with a definite strategy on how to deal with being a player down.

Some fresh legs helped, with Greg Welling coming on for Humphrey, Scotsman Matt Harvey replacing Scott Makepeace and Sam Davies replacing Greg Loydall.

The third quarter was a dead heat, until the Navy conceded a penalty and Dixon added another three points to his team's score.

Cory Moore and Ratu Vakalutukali

came to the rescue, replacing Gareth Rees and David Fairbrother.

A flurry of Navy activity in the Army danger zone followed. A series of three no tries were awarded by the referee as both Hayler and Myers appeared to cross the line.

Finally replacement Vakalutukali thundered over for the Navy's first and only try of the game.

It was not converted and the Navy were still two tries short of the win.

It was hard to tell how much time there was left to play as a power failure throughout the stadium resulted in a frozen scoreboard and put the big screens out of action.

When the referee blew his whistle for the final time the Army had secured the win, but the Royal Navy players could all hold their heads up high, secure in the knowledge that they had upped their game and had managed to ensure a highly competitive and thrilling match of rugby.

The Royal Navy are already looking forward to the rematch on Saturday May 4 2019.

Team: C/Sgt Gareth Evans, LPT Ben Priddey (team captain), Mne Robert Wilson, Musn Edd Pascoe, AET Scott Makepeace, Logs(SC) Sam Matavesi, L/Cpl Jarrard Hayler, Cpl David Fairbrother, AB(MW) Gareth Rees, Mne Nathan Huntley, AB(D) Rhys Dimmock-Williams, AET Greg Loydall, Mne Seta Raumakita, ET(WE) Eldon Myers, AET Jon Humphrey. Replacements (*not used) L/Cpl Aaron Wilman*, AET Chris Warner*, AB(CIS) (SM) Matt Harvey, Cpl Ben Fox*, Mne Ratu Vakalutukali, NA(AH) Cory Moore, ET(ME) Sam Davies, Mne Greg Welling

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● Clockwise from above, RNRU players celebrate after Mne Vakalutukali's try; Musn Edd Pascoe wins the lineout; L/Cpl Hayler breaks away; the teams walk out

Pictures: LPhoto Rory Arnold

