



# NAVY NEWS

JANUARY 2019

## Stormy arrival

**Merlin magic**

*CHF pilots put to the test*

**Dragon roars**

*Type 45's huge drugs seizures*

A Gentoo penguin braves an Antarctic blizzard as HMS Protector arrives in Port Lockroy. See pages 20-21

Picture: LPhot Rory Arnold, HMS Protector



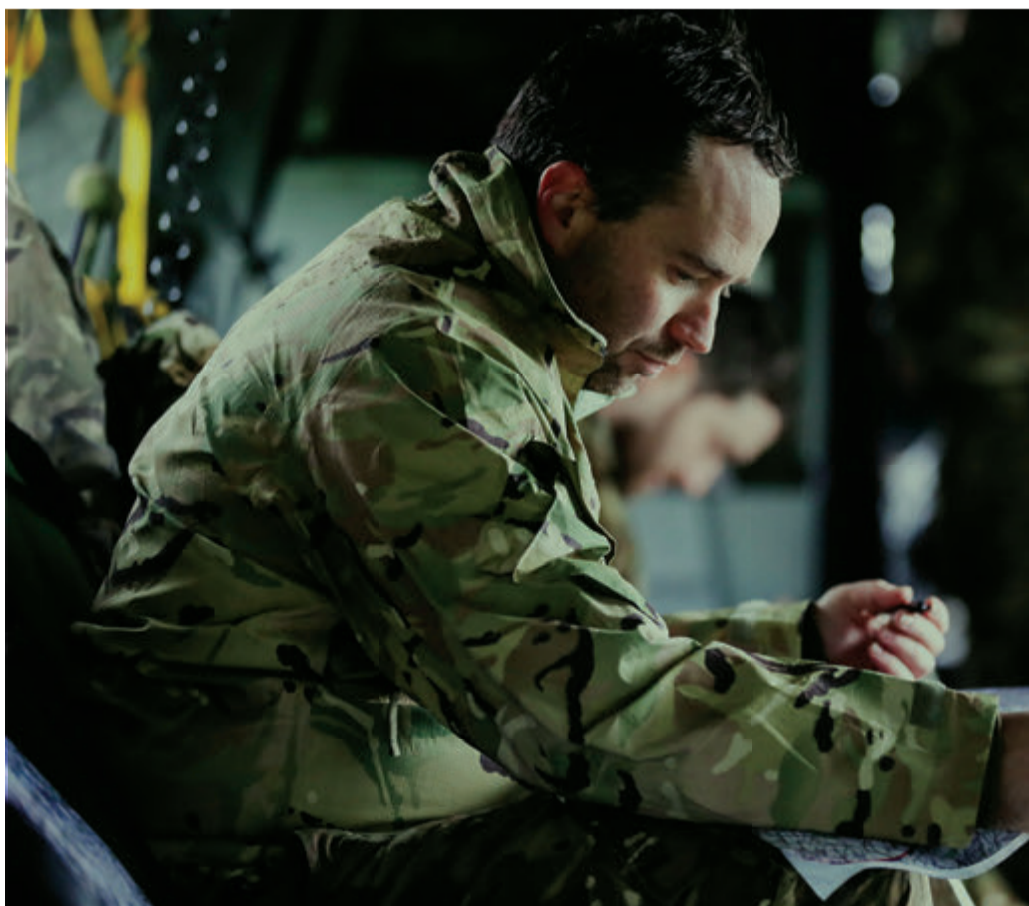
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**“ It can be daunting, but it’s important to be decisive. The worst decision is no decision, so get a plan and go from there. ”**

***Lieutenant Andy Duffield —***

# EYE OF THE STORM



A FRESH batch of budding Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) pilots are in the final throes of one – if not *the* – most intense weeks in their emerging Royal Navy aviation careers.

Living out of tents and up to their unmentionables in mud and rain on the southern extreme of north Devon’s exposed Royal Marines Barracks at former airbase Chivenor, these future Naval aviators have trained for five years to get to this point, writes Peter Howard.

This is Exercise Merlin Storm. The final stop in training for CHF’s future helicopter pilots. Pass this week-long examination in the Merlin Mk3, testing the warbird to its limits on tricky sorties around the south of England, and the six student pilots will finally earn their wings.

The continuous flurry of flights over the week are all assessed without exception. It’s pass or fail. It’s relentless and pressure-filled but necessary to get them ready for frontline action.

“It’s like doing your driving test every day for a week,” says Lieutenant Rhod Leyshon, as *Navy News* visits CHF’s Forward Operating Base – a group of tents surrounding the wooden huts of Chivenor Watersports Centre – at a sodden-through RMB Chivenor, the home of the Commando Logistics Regiment.

These pilots, if they pass their final examinations, will soon enter the fray with

the Commando Helicopter Force, the wings of the Royal Marines.

RNAS Yeovilton-based CHF deal in getting the Green Berets to the frontline, keeping them replenished with vital kit and they also specialise in medical evacuations. Wherever they need to be, CHF will deliver them or pick them up.

They are a powerful tool in bringing the fire and fury of the Royal Marines to the battlefield or behind enemy lines, and keeping them fuelled for the fight.

That means these would-be pilots need to be tested in exactly what they’d expect to find when flying into the heart of the action anywhere in the world – at sea or over land.

Lt Leyshon adds: “It’s been a steep learning curve. We haven’t done a lot of this. You do your field stuff going through training and then flying and they’re pretty much separate things and then this brings it together.

“In terms of learning curve it was steep at first but we’ve learned a lot, balancing safety considerations and how you plan a flight but then living in, not massively adverse, but rough conditions.”

Commando Helicopter Force prides itself on its willingness to operate in any conditions, whether it’s from a ship’s deck, a desert or the icy climes of the Arctic Circle.

It’s a mentality that these new pilots must buy into. They must be versatile and ▶



ready for anything to be thrown in their direction. Merlin Storm gets the trainees at the coal face.

"We don't do anything like this in training prior to this. We've never had the opportunity to use the aircraft to its limits – it's always been simulated," said Lieutenant Andy Duffield.

"Yesterday, we were picking up 30 troops and when we got there there's 36 guys and they've all got stuff – there's a mortar team too and so on – and they're trying to bring it onto the aircraft.

"All those situations that were simulated are real now and that's what this week culminates in and this is actual tasking and you have the job to deliver the product to the frontline to where they need to be.

"It's interesting because your instinct is to look to your left-hand seat (where generally the pilot's instructor sits) as you've done throughout your training but when they're staring blankly back at you realise 'this is all down to you'.

"It can be daunting, but it's important

to be decisive. The worst decision is no decision, so get a plan and go from there."

This exercise challenges the pilots in different scenarios, testing landings and lifts in the unforgiving surroundings of Exmoor and also the Devon coastline.

During one phase of the exercise, the enormous Saunton Sands beach, a surfer's paradise and rammed full of holiday goers in the summer months, was descended on by elements of the Commando Logistics Regiment.

A Hercules from 47 Squadron RAF dropped stores on the vast swathe of sand – which stretches three and a half miles from just south of Croyde Bay to the north to the mouth of the River Taw Estuary to the south – and it's CLR's Logistic Support Squadron's job to secure the drop zone and the freshly-dropped equipment.

The CLR personnel emerge from the dunes to the rear of the beach and ready the stores for collection.

Soon, the CHF pilots will turn their

attentions to this area and collect the essential kit, which is destined for Chivenor to keep Merlin Storm's momentum up.

CLR is made up of many and varied units and this was a chance for them to hone their skills as they ramp up ahead of tasking in Norway at the start of this year.

Royal Marines Sergeant Major, Warrant Officer 2 Nick Walmsley, said: "This is to refresh the guys that have just come off courses. It's to keep the skills up to date. They could be doing this anywhere in the world and need to be ready.

"It's CLR's job to keep the main fighting force going, keeping them supplied with everything they need."

The changeable December weather is one of the biggest challenges during the aptly named Merlin Storm.

Chivenor is exposed to the elements on the coast and it means those on the exercise are constantly wrestling with the unpredictable weather. ▼



"From a weather forecasting side of things this has been challenging. We don't have the luxury of the land around Yeovilton to lessen the impact of the weather. We are on the coast exposed to whatever comes our way," said Chief Petty Officer (Hydrographic and Meteorological) Chris Edmonds.

"It's testing me to my limits. We are at the coast exposed to the weather fronts. It's pretty raw and harsh. It's been quite challenging to forecast conditions here."

For the pilots, this represents the end of a five-year slog, from classrooms to simulators, to be sat at the controls of the Merlin.

Most started on small fixed wing planes at RAF Cranwell, an RAF Station in the heart of Lincolnshire, where new

officers and aircrew are trained.

Following that, they move onto the Defence Helicopter Flying School at RAF Shawbury in Shropshire, where they start to use the Merlin while with 60 Squadron. From there they are taken under CHF's wing.

But why this particular specialism?

Lt Leyshon said: "I think CHF was what we were always attracted to. It's a funny old package you go through. It's the fixed wing aircraft training and everyone goes towards jets and that's everyone's main desire but when we joined it was post-Iraq/Afghanistan and you could see what CHF were up to and that's where I wanted to come.

"With the path that's just been described you have to do well through

most aspects of training and most people go to jets but through rotary training it's quite competitive.

"The one I went through everyone wanted it and that's down to performance and certain attributes. Navigation was a big one – there was an emphasis there.

"You go forward to a board and if you get selected you come this way. I just wanted to it because it's a varied job. Some of the Navy stuff you've got more specialist roles. Here you just do whatever you can to get troops on the ground."

#### KEEP UP WITH CHF

Like @ComHelicopterForce on Facebook and follow @RNASYeovilton on Twitter



Pictures by Ian Harding, Kevin Willis and Lphot Alex Ceolin

**Training or on patrol around the UK**

HMS Mersey  
HMS Tyne  
HMS Medway  
HMS Defender

RFA Tiderace  
RFA Tideforce  
CHF



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

**FLEET FOCUS**  
Protecting our nation's interests

WELCOME to 2019 and our now-traditional winter feature on the work of ice patrol ship **HMS Protector** (see pages 1, 20 and 21) as she carries out vital tasking in Antarctica.

The Devonport-based ship was one of many Naval Service units on duty over Christmas and the New Year in UK waters and across the globe.

Type 45 destroyer **HMS Dragon** spent the festive period in the Gulf. She ended 2018 dealing a major blow to the funding of terrorism as she made two significant drugs seizures (see page 5).

**HMS Montrose** was also away as she continues her epic global journey (see page 7). The Type 23 frigate called in on Chile to help mark the bicentenary of the South American country's navy.

A number of ships returned home in time for Christmas, including **HMS Albion** (see page 6). The Fleet Flagship spent ten months deployed to the Far East, taking in Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Borneo and Oman, among others.

Future Fleet Flagship **HMS Queen Elizabeth** returned to Portsmouth from her Westlant18 deployment (see page 7). During her time away she achieved numerous firsts in the work towards F-35/carrier operations (see page 30).

Her guardians of the skies, Merlins from **820 NAS** were first home as they left the carrier off Cornwall for the short hop to RNAS Culdrose (see page 7).

Before heading home, a team of medics aboard the aircraft carrier led a task group-sized emergency exercise (see page 15) to see how personnel could cope with a crash on the flight deck. Medics from **RFA Tidespring, Mounts Bay** and **HMS Monmouth** took part in **Exercise Poseidon**.

Type 45 **HMS Diamond** also returned to the UK following her two months away operating in the Mediterranean (see page 6).

In the UK and **HMS Westminster** reflected on a challenging but rewarding Year of Engineering (see page 19) as the Type 23 frigate spent much of 2018 operating in the North Atlantic.

Further south to Scotland and frigate **HMS St Albans** and hunter-killer submarine **HMS Astute** pitted their wits against each other to hone their anti-submarine warfare skills (see page 10).

Also in Scotland was **HMS Medway**, the second of the Royal Navy's next-generation patrol ships, as she successfully completed her maiden sea trials (see page 15).

A fresh batch of budding **Commando Helicopter Force** pilots are in the final throes of one – if not the – most intense weeks in their emerging Royal Navy aviation careers as they take part in **Exercise Merlin Storm** (see pages 2-3).

A team of Royal Navy medics joined an American humanitarian mission aboard the **USNS Comfort** to South America (see page 15) in the wake of the Venezuela migrant crisis.

The end of 2018 saw Royal Marines from **40 Commando** pass on their skills to Bahraini and Qatari personnel (see page 13).

It's not all about work, there is also time for adventurous training, as shown by personnel from **HMNB Portsmouth** and **RNAS Yeovilton** (see pages 15-17), who took part in **Exercise Atlas** in Morocco.

Eight Royal Navy personnel were singled out for their efforts in the latest **Operational Honours** (see page 9).

As well as announcing the final names for the **Type 26** frigates (see page 11), the government revealed the second Dreadnought-class ballistic missile submarine will be called **HMS Valiant** (see page 15). Three shipbuilding teams have been awarded contracts to go ahead with plans to build five new **Type 31e** warships (see page 7). A British consortium and four international firms are bidding to build the next generation of support vessels for the **Royal Fleet Auxiliary** (see page 15) which will replace the three Forts, Austin, Rosalie and Victoria.

And finally, *Navy News* has a new website address, [Royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews](http://Royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews). Bookmark us to ensure you renew your subscription and keep up with all the latest news from across the Naval Service.

# Navy delivers global influence

LOOKING back on 2018, there can be no doubt that the Naval Service lived up to its plans for a year of 'Expanding Maritime Horizons'.

There is no such thing as a quiet time for the Fleet given our routine commitments – above, on, and below the waves – that have continually spanned from home waters to the Far East to the Mediterranean and the Gulf, or west to the Caribbean and South Atlantic.

Nevertheless, the scale and reach of operational activity achieved in 2018 was unquestionably a step up on previous years.

Working alongside our international partners, we achieved real, tangible effect in every part of the globe and every ocean, both in our contribution to maritime security and in promoting our national prosperity agenda. It was a hugely successful year, and as we look forward to 2019 there's plenty more to be excited about too.

Our success on operations continues to be the most important measure of our value to Defence and the nation, so it should come as no surprise that this will remain our priority, as we look to build on the momentum achieved in 2018 in every part of the world.

Of particular note, one of our operations is due to hit a notable milestone in 2019, as we look forward to officially marking 50 years of unbroken Continuous At Sea Deterrence, the longest continuous operation ever mounted by Defence

## VIEW BRIDGE from the BRIDGE

and by anyone's standards an enormous undertaking in which all aspects of the service should take no small measure of pride.

As we maintain our focus on operational activity across the globe, so too will we continue our progress towards the realisation of the future vision, both through the significant deployment of the Joint Expeditionary Force (Maritime) and the next phase of F35B flying trials for HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Meanwhile, a key component of our ability to deliver carrier strike on a continuous basis will also take an important step next year as HMS Prince of Wales sails from Rosyth in the autumn and joins her sister ship in the Fleet.

There can be no doubt though that maintaining this level of operational activity around the globe, while at the same time transforming how we do business, will continue to place huge demands on our people and our equipment; resilience is therefore essential to underpin everything we do.

To safeguard our plans for the future and grow the resilience

we need we're embarking on a period of transformation across the service.

Part of this transformation will come about through our modernisation programme – for example increasing our use of innovation, information and automation to allow our people to focus on those things that only a person can do.

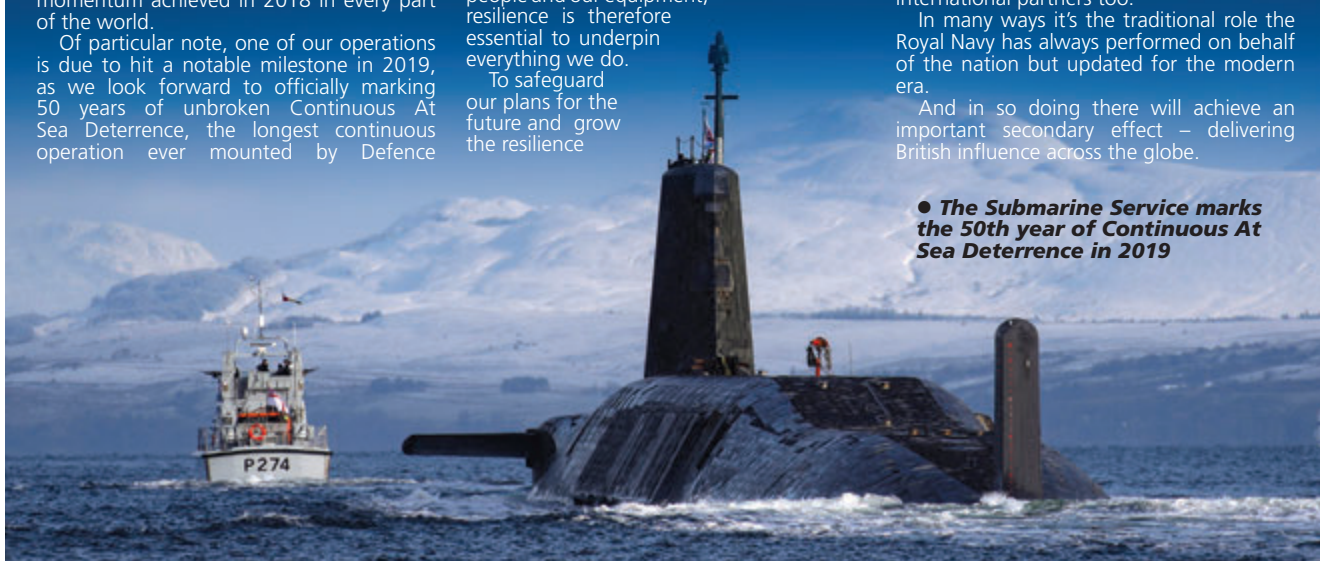
So too will we be looking at the way we crew and operate the Fleet.

In this sense, in addition to achieving a persistent presence in the region, the arrival of HMS Montrose to operate from the Naval Support Facility in Bahrain offers a pathfinder model that may be employed more widely across areas of strategic importance in the future.

And perhaps most importantly, it will require a change in mindsets across the service, shifting from our recent history of single-ship deployments to thinking and acting like a carrier Navy – deploying high-readiness carrier strike and littoral strike task groups around the globe and working even more closely with our sister services and other government departments to safeguard British interests, and those of our international partners too.

In many ways it's the traditional role the Royal Navy has always performed on behalf of the nation but updated for the modern era.

And in so doing there will achieve an important secondary effect – delivering British influence across the globe.



• The Submarine Service marks the 50th year of Continuous At Sea Deterrence in 2019

# Dragon's drug busts



## HMS Dragon seized three tonnes of hashish in one of the most significant drug busts in the Gulf in 2018, dealing a major blow to the funding of terrorism.

The Portsmouth-based Type 45 destroyer was on patrol in the Middle East when they came across a suspicious dhow – a type of vessel common the region – in a notorious drug smuggling route known as the ‘Hash Highway’.

Swooping into action, sailors and Royal Marines launched their fast boats to intercept and board the vessel, before conducting a painstaking search of its compartments.

They ultimately found 148 bags of hashish, weighing around 3,048kg.

Dragon then completed a second drugs bust, finding and destroying more than 500kg – including nearly 200kg of heroin and 9kg of crystal meth – from a dhow.

Officer of the Watch and boarding officer Lieutenant Jonathan Bennett said: “I had just taken over the watch when I spotted this dhow, and whilst a common sight within the Middle East and the Indian Ocean, this was in an unusual area for the size of vessel.

“It looked suspicious, and so we sent the boarding teams in the sea boats to talk to the crew of the dhow.

“Their answers raised our suspicions further, and so we commenced the boarding.

“Following a search by our trained teams we were able to locate and recover these narcotics, stopping their onward likely travel into Europe and the United Kingdom, as well as disrupting

the funding of illicit activity.”

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said: “Alongside keeping key shipping channels safe, countering piracy and providing disaster relief, the Royal Navy makes a significant contribution to global security by tackling the illicit drugs trade.”

The ‘Hash Highway’ runs from Afghanistan, a major drugs producer, by land through Iran or Pakistan, and then across the sea to countries in east Africa and the Middle East. Profits from drug smuggling are a known source funding for terrorist organisations and criminal networks.

Lieutenant Laurie Williams, HMS Dragon’s deputy marine engineer officer and boarding officer, said: “This success validates... the significant hard work of all on board to ensure we were in the right place, with the right training and equipment and intelligence to achieve this result.”

The haul comes after HMS Dragon became the first Royal Navy destroyer to work alongside F35 Lightning jets on operations.

The ship had been working in the Gulf as part of the US Commander Task Force 51/5 – providing air defence to USS Essex.

Commander Mike Carter-Quinn, Commanding Officer, said: “Having trained as a fighter controller, and controlled Harrier jump jets while serving on board HMS Invincible, it has been a great honour to command HMS Dragon to provide air-defence duties to our US Navy colleagues.”

**Additional reporting by Lt Cdr Stuart Ker**



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# Welcome back

## THE A TEAM



THE A-TEAM theme echoed around Devonport's 16 Wharf – the signature tune of Britain's flagship to greet HMS Albion home after a ten-month deployment.

The assault ship received a tumultuous welcome from family and friends as they stood in their hundreds on the jetty waiting to be reunited with loved ones some had not seen since February.

They heard the assault ship was coming before they saw her enter the Hamoaze, courtesy of an 11-gun salute as Albion sailed past The Hoe, before the RM Band Plymouth struck up the 1980s TV show theme.

"We couldn't have asked for a better welcome back for the A-Team. We've had an absolutely fabulous ten months but now we can focus on home," said the flagship's Commanding Officer Captain Tim Neild, who leaves Albion this month for pastures new.

This was Albion's first deployment since a two-year extensive modernisation programme and began with the flagship earmarked to lead a NATO task group in the Mediterranean.

Instead, she was dispatched to the Far East for a wide-ranging tour of duty which took her to Japan



● LH Jason Hammond is greeted by his family; PO James Cox with Natalie and their daughter Gracie; Sam and Kane Grant with their father Ian



Pictures: CPO(Phot) Matt Ellison and LPhot Belinda Alker

(for two months), South Korea, Singapore, Borneo and Oman among other places.

The last port of call was Gibraltar, where family members of some of the ship's company joined for a week-long experience of life at sea.

Aircraft Handler Kane Grant was reunited with his brother Sam, who serves in the RAF, and dad Ian who made the pilgrimage from South Shields to the Rock to hop aboard Albion for the passage to Devonport – the final 1,000 or so miles of a

33,000-mile journey for the ship.

Albion is Kane's first ship, so this has been his first taste of an operational deployment. "It has been daunting but exciting being away for so long," said the 27-year-old.

"When I saw where we would be stopping it was, wow – Singapore, Japan, Borneo, Vietnam, South Korea – it's an opportunity of a lifetime."

His 30-year-old brother, a Flight Lieutenant based at RAF High Wycombe, added: "I thought it would be great to spend the week with

Kane – it's quite rare that we see each other because of our jobs. Our work has brought us together and what's great is that we've also been able to bring along our dad."

Highlights of Albion's ten-month deployment have included a period of two months operating in and around Japan.

The Japanese consider the RN to be the "The Mother Navy". On departure from Japan their assault ship Shimokita ploughed through the heavy seas alongside Albion saying

goodbye with salutes of respect before breaking away, while Albion continued on her way to Vietnam.

The ship demonstrated her amphibious skills alongside His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei's Forces in Exercise Setia Kawan.

That exercise proved to be the warm-up for the flagship's participation in the largest military exercise staged in Oman in 17 years, Exercise Saif Sareea 3, involving 65,000 Omani and more than 5,000 British military personnel, including Royal Marines from 40 Commando.

As Albion entered her home port again, she received a message of gratitude from Britain's senior sailor, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones, praising the ship's "key role in demonstrating global Britain to our international partners in the Asia-Pacific region", her sailors and marines for being "a credit to the naval service" and the support of families back home who "endured the strain of uncertainty" caused by the flagship's changing programme.

And Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson also sent a personal message to the 500 sailors and Royal Marines and said their deployment epitomised "Britain's global reach" as the UK looks to a world outside the EU.

## Diamond delivers during her Med deployment



● Crew members wave to their loved ones

Pictures: LPhot Daniel Shepherd

ROYAL Navy warship HMS Diamond has returned home to Portsmouth with a bang after two months operating in the Mediterranean.

The Type 45 destroyer fired a 17-gun salute as she sailed back into her home port.

Her deployment was part of the ongoing counter-ISIS NATO operations where she used her state-of-the-art technology to gather intelligence on the air battlespace, sharing this with the RAF and international allies in the region.

She is one of just several Royal Navy warships to operate in the Eastern Med in 2017.

As well as the counter-terrorism operations, HMS Diamond also held port visits to Crete, Cyprus, Malta and Gibraltar to reinforce the Royal Navy's long-standing links with those countries.

Commanding Officer of HMS Diamond Commander Ben Keith said: "This has been a challenging, but extremely rewarding and

successful deployment. I'm proud of all that my ship's company has achieved while we've been away and I'm incredibly grateful to Diamond's extended family for all their support."

HMS Diamond also proved her ability to integrate with the UK Air Component Commander (UKACC) by working with the RAF assets based in Cyprus.

Training with E3s, Voyagers, Tornados, Typhoons and F-16s, Diamond practiced controlling a congested environment, observing and directing a variety of aircraft while operating with other UK Forces.

During her time in the Med, Diamond also spent a week on weapons and sensors training.

She held live firing exercises with the 4.5" Gun, the 30mm, Phalanx and small arms, using her embarked Wildcat Helicopter from 815 Squadron at RNAS Yeovilton – call sign Roughcut – to observe and direct the firings onto the targets with impressive accuracy.



● Owen Ellaway dressed up to welcome back his dad aboard HMS Diamond



● Left, LStd Daz Mawdsley with daughter Macey; Above, Ryan Morris is reunited with wife Kaylee and son Noah at Culdrose; Right, Rik Wolliscroft with wife Raedi and children Harry, Tom and Amelia

Pictures: PO(Phots) Dave Jenkins and Dave Gallagher and L(Phot) Mark Johnson

# Glorious return for task group

**HMS QUEEN Elizabeth has returned to Portsmouth following the successful completion of fast-jet trials in the USA.**

The 65,000-tonne carrier's first transatlantic deployment, Westlant18, which began in August, saw her embark two F-35 Lightning test aircraft, from the Integrated Test Force based out of Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland (see page 30).

Commander Air, Commander James Blackmore, who oversaw the flight trials, said: "Since the ship sailed from build only 17 months ago we have operated fixed wing – most notably the F-35B – rotary wing and the tilt MV-22 Osprey – nine different aircraft types in all.

"We have proved the incredible design of the Queen Elizabeth-class of ship and the partnership with the F-35. In that combination, we have something very special that will provide significant operational capability for decades to come, strategic choice for our government and a task group focus for the Royal Navy; we are truly back in the super carrier era."

The day before the carrier arrived home, 820 NAS disembarked as she passed Cornwall.

Four of the squadron's Merlin Mk2 helicopters flew into their home of Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose, Helston, with over 100 of the squadron's personnel delivered by helicopter and into the arms of their loved ones.

It's the squadron's task to shield the carrier from the prying eyes and ears of any hostile submarine courtesy of their 'dipping' sonar and, ultimately, Sting Ray torpedoes – working in conjunction with a Type 23 frigate (HMS Monmouth).

To help them hone their skills, two of the helicopters left Queen Elizabeth for several weeks to test sensors and the like against robot submarines lurking in the world's largest anti-submarine warfare training ground, the US

AUTEC ranges in the Bahamas.

In addition, the four Merlins were also called upon to carry out general duties aboard the carrier: transferring personnel and loads and providing search-and-rescue and 'plane guard' duties – hovering off the carrier during fast jet operations to respond should an F-35 end up in the drink (none did).

"It's been truly remarkable to be part of this historic first deployment for HMS Queen Elizabeth," said Commander Chris Knowles, 820's Commanding Officer.

"As the carrier's dedicated squadron we have been there from the very first landing off Scotland right up to the highlights which all of us will take home from this deployment: seeing the flight deck full of Merlins, F-35 jets and US visitors including V-22s has shown just what a potent capability we have.

"It's fantastic to be getting home but we are already looking forward to next year, taking our capability further again and delivering even more for Queen Elizabeth."

His team will now enjoy an extended Christmas break before returning to Culdrose in the New Year... some with particularly busy festive periods like engineer AET Adam Workman.

He was getting married and moving house before December 25... and welcoming a baby into the family just after.

"The deployment has been an amazing experience to be one of the first to work on the Queen Elizabeth," he said. "Difficult at times, and it's never nice being away from home, but I think it might have been easier at sea compared to my next few weeks!"

Also departing on the journey to Portsmouth were three Merlin Mk4s from 845 NAS as they flew back to RNAS Yeovilton.

The carrier's escort, HMS Monmouth, was enjoying her homecoming in Plymouth as Navy News went to press. Commanding Officer Cdr Will King said: "HMS Monmouth has pioneered the way as the first unit to escort the carrier on her historic first deployment.

It marks a significant stride forward for the wider Royal Navy fleet in generating the UK's Carrier Strike capability."

Westlant18 saw the Black Duke travel 20,000 miles, celebrate her 25th birthday and narrowly avoid two hurricanes. The ship's Wildcat, Black Jack, was the first to land on the carrier.

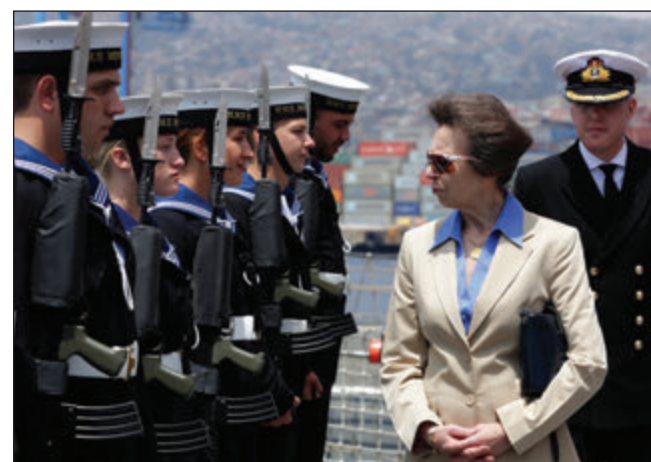
During the deployment Monmouth represented the UK at Maryland Fleet Week in Baltimore, welcoming thousands of visitors. The embarked Royal Marines Band of Scotland, borrowed from HMS Queen Elizabeth, put on a spectacular show as they marched through the streets of the 'Charm City'.

Baltimore's close proximity to the capital of the United States proved too good an opportunity to miss and 65 lucky members of the ship's company were treated to a tour of Washington DC organised by the British Embassy.

Monmouth also visited Charleston, South Carolina where she conducted a service of remembrance at the HMS Seraph memorial. HMS Seraph was a submarine which played a pivotal role in Operations Torch and Mincemeat during World War 2 and is the only location in mainland USA permitted to fly the White Ensign.

Next year Monmouth will undergo operational training off the south coast prior to deploying to the Gulf as the relief crew for HMS Montrose.

The task group's tanker RFA Tidespring accompanied HMS Queen Elizabeth to Portsmouth before departing for further tasking around the UK.



● The Princess Royal, accompanied by Montrose's CO Cdr Conor O'Neill, inspects the ship's guard of honour

## Princess visits Montrose in Chile

THE Princess Royal visited HMS Montrose during her trip to Chile to mark the 200th anniversary of the South American country's navy.

The Type 23 frigate called in to Valparaiso to help the Chilean Navy celebrate their milestone.

The Princess, who was welcomed aboard by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones and the ship's commanding officer Commander Conor O'Neill, was accompanied by her husband Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence.

The royal visitor then went to see members of the ship's company as they renovated classrooms at the Escuela Gran Bretana primary school.

Ahead of the visit, Montrose navigated the narrow locks and lakes of the Panama Canal to get to the Pacific Ocean and start the next phase of her deployment.

The frigate spent seven hours crossing the waterways which join the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, saving the ship a 3,000-mile journey around Cape Horn in South America.

It was a busy day for the navigation teams and seamanship which started at the entrance of the canal, the port of Colón, and continued into the series of locks and lakes. At its narrowest, the Panama Canal stretches just 30m making it a tight fit for the 16m-wide Montrose.

Once carefully driven into the first lock, the Plymouth-based ship was connected to a series of small trains, known as mules, and pulled through into the open water of manmade Gatun Lake.

On the other side of the lake, she started her final leg

through the humid Las Cumbres surrounded by lush jungle flora, visible from the upper deck.

Seven hours after setting off, HMS Montrose passed into the Miraflores lock and entered the Pacific.

Cdr O'Neill said: "Transiting the Panama Canal is another significant milestone on our global deployment and it was a great experience for all of us.

"Thanks to the hard work of all on board, the transit went very smoothly."

For crew not directly involved in the journey through the canal, there was a chance to learn a vital, life-saving skill and raise money for charity.

Surgeon Lieutenant Adam Sales, Montrose's medical officer, organised a sponsored CPR-athon with the aim of training the entire ship's company. At times while crossing the Pacific, the ship will be more than 2,000 nautical miles from land and their training could be crucial.

Starting at 3.24pm, Medical Assistant Emma Southall kicked off the fundraiser by doing chest compressions on a dummy patient. Leading Medical Assistant George Turnbull took over and, for the next seven hours, every member of the ship's company carried out at least four minutes of CPR.

So far, the crew has raised more than £700 for the British Heart Foundation and Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

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## Three bids for new Type 31e warships

THREE shipbuilding teams have been awarded multi-million-pound contracts to push ahead with plans to build five new Type 31e warships in the UK for the Royal Navy.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew revealed during a visit to Portsmouth that teams led by BAE Systems, Babcock and Atlas Elektronik UK have been shortlisted for the competition to build the five frigates for £1.25 billion.

Each group has been awarded a contract worth up to £5 million to fund the next stage of their plans, with the preferred bidder for the design and manufacture of the ships due to be announced by the end of 2019. The MOD want the first ship delivered in 2023.

The minister said: "This is the first frigate competition the UK has run in a generation, and we are funding three shipbuilding teams with extremely exciting concepts to continue developing their plans.

"One of these designs will go on to bolster our future fleet with five new ships, creating UK jobs

and ensuring our Royal Navy maintains a truly global presence in an increasingly uncertain world."

The awarding of the contracts is a key milestone in the National Shipbuilding Strategy, which was launched in September 2017.

The strategy met the challenges set by an independent report written by Sir John Parker, a figure with a wealth of leadership and boardroom experience in shipbuilding, and was underpinned by the commitment to build the new Type 31e ships.

The programme will move through procurement at an unprecedented pace: the vessel will commence production within three years of the launch, far quicker than similar programmes.

The ships will make up the next generation of the Royal Navy fleet, along with eight Type 26 warships which will start being delivered from the mid-2020s.

The decision on where the Type 31e frigates will be based is still to be made.

The Minister made the announcement on-board HMS Diamond.



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EIGHT ROYAL NAVY PERSONNEL SINGLED OUT FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN LATEST OPERATIONAL HONOURS. ALL ARE

# UNASSUMING HEROES

**D**IVERS, aviators and Royal Marines who went above and beyond the normal call of duty in the UK and abroad were decorated in the latest series of Operational Honours announced by the Ministry of Defence.

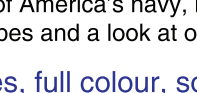
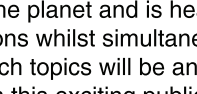
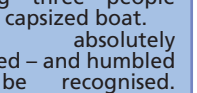
THIRTY-six-year-old Leading Diver Simon Wharton, and Diver Joseph Smith, 27, are the first of four Clearance Divers from across the Fleet Diving Squadron to be honoured.

They put their lives on the line to enter the upturned hull of a fishing vessel being driven towards rocks at Rame Head near Plymouth at the end of September last year.

Two crew of the MV Solstice had been rescued by the RNLI, but a third was missing. Despite conditions far beyond what divers might be expected to work in normally, the two divers volunteered to enter the water, led by LD Wharton who searched the capsized vessel.

He finally located the missing crewman, sadly dead. Rather than leave the body entombed in the wreck, however, he succeeded in recovering the fisherman in pitch-black darkness, fully aware that the MV Solstice could sink at any moment.

His colleague Smith entered the capsized boat on several occasions to help guide LD Wharton, then led him to safety through the tangle of lines and nets hanging from the upturned boat. Wharton demonstrated "unwavering nerve" throughout to earn the Queen's Gallantry Medal; Smith demonstrated "calmness of nerve" to be awarded the Queen's Commendation for Bravery. MV Solstice sank just 40 minutes after both men emerged from the wreck. Their actions went above and beyond what is expected of divers in peacetime – and provided Plymouth's fishing community with a sense of closure by recovering the body.



THE Queen's Gallantry Medal is awarded to Chief Petty Officer Kris Fenwick who oversaw the safe disposal of a WW2 bomb which caused the closure of Portsmouth Harbour one morning rush hour in February last year.

Work to pave the way for the arrival of new aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth caused several pieces of wartime ordnance to be unearthed, but the 250lb German SC250 bomb picked up by the dredger Stemat was among the most difficult – and dangerous.

Still live, and capable of causing damage up to a mile away, the bomb was trapped in the dredger's claw next to the Wightlink ferry terminal. CPO Fenwick succeeded in removing the bomb from the claw, before it was carefully towed out into the Solent in the face of Storm Doris – where the waves threatened to sink the dive boat until a police launch came to help.

The divers were then finally able to safely blow up the bomb after a demanding eight-hour operation played out "under some of the worst conditions possible" and with "considerable media attention and the public". The resulting huge blast showed how devastating the bomb could have been had it detonated in the harbour.

In all the divers cleared five tonnes of unexploded or old ordnance from Portsmouth Harbour – including a large German parachute mine, one 1,000lb bomb and two 500lb SC500s – during 34 call-outs throughout the dredging operation, a collective effort which earned the team of around 30 divers the 'Heroes at Home' award at last



year's Sun Military Awards, plus a commendation from Britain's second most senior sailor, Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Ben Key.

CPO Fenwick, who hails from the Whitley Bay area, has been a Navy diver for 16 years. He said the award of the QGM was "flattering because it's really a team effort".

The 41-year-old (pictured below, second right with his team during the operation which earned him the QGM) continued: "We dealt with many challenging incidents during the dredging and it was a real team success. I'm only successful if I have a successful team behind me – and bravery ran right through the ranks.

"Every time you go in the water as a diver it's dangerous – it's the able seaman divers and leading divers who do the hard work. I'm in awe of them. They're the ones who are incredibly brave. So although the award is to me, it's for all of them."

Commander Al Nekreus, in charge of the Fleet Diving Squadron and a holder of the QGM for his bravery dealing with improvised explosive devices in Afghanistan, said the clutch of awards was "fantastic news – both for the individuals and for the Clearance Diving Branch. I am utterly proud of our people being recognised for their courage."

Picture: LPhoto Paul Hall

**LEADING Diver Matthew O'Brien**, currently serving aboard Portsmouth-based minehunter HMS Brocklesby in the Gulf, receives the Queen's Commendation for Bravery for his courage and leadership during one of the most unusual ordnance disposal operations in the UK in recent years.

After canisters containing mustard gas – which killed or maimed thousands of troops in World War 1 – were found by the public, he volunteered to be the first man to enter Stixwold Lake near Lincoln – despite concerns the waters might be contaminated – putting himself in harm's way to search for other canisters which had been illegally dumped there.

He donned a special suit, had zero visibility and had to feel his way around the lake to locate possibly-damaged toxic shells, safely bag them and return to the surface to hand them over to his colleagues for disposal.

In all the team from Southern Diving Unit 2 recovered ten 6lb chemical bombs during a week-long operation, but it was LD O'Brien's bravery and leadership which particularly stood out, drawing praise from the military and civilian authorities involved in the operation and setting an example "of a selfless individual and model leader".

The 34-year-old, originally from Birmingham, said: "I remember how unusual it was on this job to be in my diving equipment while the lads around me were in full chemical warfare outfits and a full decontamination kit surrounding the site.

"I am honoured to have been recognised, but as with all diving tasks, it was truly a team effort and I could not have achieved it all on my own."



**LIEUTENANT Commander Amy Gilmore's** unstinting efforts to help British citizens whose lives had been turned upside down by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017 earn her the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS).

The flight commander/observer (navigator/weapons and sensors specialists) was in charge of a dozen-strong team of air and ground crew maintaining and operating the state-of-the-art Wildcat helicopter aboard support ship RFA Mounts Bay.

The helicopter flew 90 hours of missions during Operation Ruman – codename for the UK armed forces' response to the storms; it was often

first on the scene in the aftermath of the storms, delivering 37 tonnes of aid to inaccessible areas, evacuating medical emergencies, flying in water and food, and rescuing three people from a capsized boat.

"I'm absolutely delighted – and humbled – to be recognised.

Operation Ruman was extremely challenging, heart-breaking and exhausting for all involved and it's down to the professionalism and determination of the guys and girls from the Flights – and our shipmates from RFA Mounts Bay – that we were able to help so many people. This was an outstanding team effort for which I will always be extremely grateful and proud.

I often think about our friends in the British Overseas Territories affected and I'm so relieved that this year's hurricane season was kind to them."

Also recognised for their exemplary leadership and efforts on the ground in the British Virgin Islands, Anguilla and the Turks and Caicos Islands during the same relief mission are Royal Marines Major Tom Quinn and Sergeants William MacFarlane and James Oldale, all from 40 Commando based at Norton Manor near Taunton. Each receives the QCVS.



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# DOUBLE TROUBLE



TWO of the Royal Navy's heavyweight anti-submarine weapons have pitted their wits against each other.

Type 23 frigate HMS St Albans and hunter-killer sub HMS Astute have been operating alongside each other, honing their Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) skills.

But it was also an opportunity for them to go up against each other, testing their ability to deal with the threat one another brings to the battlefield.

"To be the best at what we do, it is essential that we train both against and alongside the very best," Commander John Cromie, Commanding Officer of HMS St Albans, said.

"HMS Astute provides that partner with whom we

can polish our skills to the highest level."

This latest training exercise took place in a Scottish loch and was a chance to sharpen and refine procedures necessary to coordinate activity when dealing with a potential submarine threat.

St Albans and Astute are two of the vessels that form the Royal Navy's anti-submarine capability.

The Astute class – of which Clyde-based HMS Astute was the first in the line – is the largest, most advanced and most powerful attack submarines ever operated by the Royal Navy.

Equipped with Spearfish torpedoes and Tomahawk cruise missiles, it is a powerful and versatile craft capable of dealing with surface and sub-surface

threats.

Coming up against Astute is an excellent challenge for the ship's company of St Albans.

The Type 23 is equipped with specialist sonar and torpedoes designed to counter submarines and that makes her a challenging adversary for Astute.

For two days Astute and St Albans were joined on their exercises by a Mk2 Merlin and crew from 814 Naval Air Squadron.

Pilot, Lieutenant James Still, said: "It was a very enjoyable and productive time working with HMS Astute and everyone got a lot of benefit from the training. Flying in this part of Scotland is also very visually impressive."

814 NAS is a world leader in anti-submarine operations and are able to operate from any deck that can hold a Merlin.

The crews of 814 are equipped to react at a moment's notice to respond to a submarine threat and this was a great chance to further hone their warfighting skills.

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# Bleeding dummies on carrier



NO, WE'RE not disparaging the men and women of the nation's future flagship, but marvelling at the special mannequins used to test the medical teams of the carrier strike group during an ultra-realistic test staged in Norfolk.

Before heading for home (see page 7), the medics led a task group-sized emergency exercise to see how they might cope with casualties suffering from severe burns and missing limbs – results of a crash on HMS Queen Elizabeth's flight deck.

On a day-to-day basis, the carrier's medics are expected to provide 'Role 1' care for the ship's company: first aid, a GP's surgery and immediate life-saving assistance.

When the ship deploys from Portsmouth, she's bolstered by a Role 2 medical team to run the hospital and carry out life-saving surgery so that casualties can be flown ashore for treatment in a fully-equipped hospital (Role 3 care).

To add realism to Exercise Poseidon, life-like dummies were employed; the mannequins bled and groaned as they were treated, while even their 'skin' could be cut and stitched.

The scenario also tested the response of rescue parties to dealing

with a crash and all the problems resulting from it – fuel spillage, fire, casualty extraction – before the medics stepped in to assess, treat and carefully move the injured aircrew to the hospital in the carrier's bowels.

"The exercise felt very real very quickly," said anaesthetist Surgeon Commander Rex Kinnear-Mellor.

"It really allowed us to practise and practise hard life-saving trauma skills. It was invaluable."

Steward Mark Bell from HMS Queen Elizabeth, whose secondary duties aboard include first-aid, added: "This was incredible having the chance to develop my skills using amazing kit."

The carrier's medical operations officer Lt Mark Stent said the exercise was an extremely valuable workout for the entire carrier group.

"To get medical teams from RFA Tidespring, Mounts Bay and HMS Monmouth really allowed us to expand and practise our collective knowledge," he explained.

"The simulation kit was incredible and the whole thing felt so real. It allowed us to really test our skills in damage control surgery."

Pictures: PO(Phot) Dave Jenkins



## Final 26s named and Rivers to remain

THE names of all eight Type 26 frigates are now set in stone with the last three vessels in the class receiving titles.

HM Ships Newcastle, Sheffield and Edinburgh will complete the octet, joining Glasgow (in build), Cardiff and Belfast (ordered) and London and Birmingham (Batch 2).

The announcements came as Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson revealed that the first generation of River-class fishery patrol ships would continue to serve in home waters.

Tyne, Mersey and Severn are being retained by the Royal Navy for at least two more years – alongside their five second-generation cousins which are beginning to enter service.

The Royal Navy currently provide around 200 days of fisher protection a year.

The announcement will give the RN the capacity to deliver up to 600 days a year.

Mr Williamson said each ship would now be 'forward based' on its namesake river (using Portsmouth as their long-term homes), helping to perform fishery protection duties.

In addition, the Rivers act as the eyes and ears of the RN around the UK, gathering intelligence, monitoring possible illegal activity such as people trafficking or drug running, and keep an eye on foreign vessels passing Britain, notably Russian warships in the North Sea and Channel.

## Second to be First

SECOND Sea Lord Vice Admiral Tony Radakin is to be promoted and appointed First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, in succession to Admiral Sir Philip Jones.

The announcement was one of several senior appointments confirmed by Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson.

Vice Admiral Timothy Fraser is to be promoted Admiral and appointed Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, in succession to General Gordon Messenger.

Air Marshal Michael Wigston is to be promoted Air Chief Marshal and appointed as Chief of the Air Staff, in succession to Air Chief Marshal Sir Steven Hillier.

Lieutenant General Patrick Sanders is to be promoted General and appointed Commander Joint Forces Command, in succession to General Sir Christopher Deverell.

They will take up their new posts during 2019.

## Fruitful visit to Raleigh for Kiwis

ROYAL New Zealand Navy sailors used HMS Raleigh's RAS training facilities to prepare for their navy's new arrival.

Auckland is investing around £270m in new tanker Aotearoa, the largest ship ever to fly the country's ensign when it enters service in 2020.

A 19-strong Kiwi navy team spent two weeks using the replenishment-at-sea training rig at Torpoint to practise transferring stores, fuel and other items from ship-to-ship at sea.

The rig – designed for ships which will replenish HMS Queen Elizabeth – uses the same system as the new tanker, which carries the Maori name for the islands: the land of the long white cloud.

# SOUTHERN COMFORT

A TEAM of Royal Navy medics have joined an American humanitarian mission to South America, in the wake of the Venezuela migrant crisis, providing health care to those most in need.

Three medics – (l-r in the group shot) Medical Assistant Chelsea Smith Lieutenant Commander Mark Beswick and Chief Petty Officer (Naval Nurse) Stephen Brazier – are working side-by-side with the hundreds of American personnel embarked on the huge hospital ship USNS Comfort throughout Enduring Promise 18.

It's the second time this year, British military medics have served with an American hospital ship; an RN team joined USNS Mercy in the summer as part of her Pacific Partnership goodwill tour of the Asia-Pacific region, offering basic medical assistance to remote island communities.

The goals of Enduring Promise are similar – to offer medical aid to stretched communities, in this case in Central and South America, where hospitals and doctors' surgeries are struggling to cope with high numbers of patients, due in part to large numbers of migrants crossing their borders.

2018 marks the sixth incarnation of the Americas relief mission by the giant hospital ship which has offered some form of healthcare to nearly 400,000 people in the Americas on previous deployments.

For Enduring Promise 18, more than 200 military doctors, nurses and technicians have embarked from a plethora of nations including Honduras, Portugal, Mexico, Costa Rica, Chile and Canada. As well as the military contingent a number of medical and dental professional volunteers from non-governmental organisations have also participated.

Comfort (pictured below) is as big as HMS Queen Elizabeth, features 50 emergency department beds, a dozen operating theatres, as well as an 80-bed intensive care unit. Overall she has 1,000 beds – as many as Derriford Hospital in Plymouth, while the 'outreach teams' sent ashore to hold community clinics at each port of call during the deployment can cope with up to 750 patients daily.

The RN team joined the ship in Panama and transited through the Panama Canal en route to their first mission stop in Turbo, Columbia.

Lt Cdr Beswick a Medical Services Officer at Naval Headquarters in Portsmouth, was responsible for building relationships with the Ministry of Health, military and volunteer organisations ashore at medical site locations.

On treatment days, his primary function is to control the flow of patients coming through the site, maximising patient numbers without overwhelming the system.

CPO(NN) Brazier, an emergency department specialist from Defence Medical Group (South), was given a number of clinical and leadership roles. One of the most important was assisting during surgical screening – determining who would benefit most from having surgery onboard and de-screening those that would have limited benefit or who were too unwell to undergo surgery safely. In the eight days spent in Turbo, 131 patients were transferred to the ship for life-changing surgeries.

MA Smith (pictured top left) from Defence Medical Group (South West) used her clinical skills both onboard and ashore. Ashore she manned the triage section, taking vital signs of all medical patients prior to them seeing one of the many clinicians; and onboard she has helped to prepare patients for surgery, taking bloods and running a number of tests to ensure that they are safe to go under the knife.

Along with the 131 surgeries a total of 5,450 patients were seen over a five-day period in Turbo. One of the highlights was meeting ten-year-old Juan Sebastian who was so grateful for the care being provided that he built a cardboard replica of the ship (pictured far left) and presented it as a thank-you. The command were so touched by this gift they invited him onboard as a VIP; he received a tour of the ship and dinner in the wardroom.

On the way to Riohacha in Columbia, the team celebrated Thanksgiving with their American colleagues.

The day started with the 'Turkey Chase' – a six-lap five-kilometre run, each lap consisted of a loop of the flight deck followed by ten ramps down to the bottom of the ship... and ten ramps back to the flight deck. Once the run was completed everyone was ready for the traditional Thanksgiving feast.

"The deployment so far has been incredibly rewarding where we are witnessing first-hand the incredible differences we are making to people's lives as well as relieving pressure on local health services," said Lt Cdr Beswick.

After a final stop in Honduras, the Comfort has now returned to Norfolk.



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// **Every marine in the company has benefited from the live firing.** //

# URBAN

# RAID



ROYAL Marines passed on their world-famous knowledge to Bahraini and Qatari personnel.

While the exercises in Bahrain are now a regular thing – the training programme there has taken place annually since 2014 – the trip to Qatar marks the beginning on a new mission for the green berets.

In the first of a six-year training mission, Commandos visited Qatar as the Gulf nation lay down plans to create their own marine brigade.

The Qataris turned to the UK for help on the matter and Taunton-based 40 Commando held a Q&A session with potential marines at Doha College, explaining life in the Corps and the duties expected of them.

For that they were joined by 539 Assault Squadron, Royal Marines raiding craft specialists from Plymouth, Merlin helicopters of 845 Naval Air Squadron, and troops of 17 Port and Maritime Regiment Royal Logistic Corps, responsible for the mexeflote-powered barges RFA Lyme Bay uses to move kit from ship to shore.

The spread of training offered during the exercise covered close-quarters combat/fighting in urban areas, advanced soldiering skills and boat handling during amphibious landings.

"The Qataris took to the training with tremendous energy and effort," said an impressed Major Rob Garside, in charge of Bravo Company, 40 Commando.

"There's considerable passion here to develop Qatari amphibious capabilities."

40 Commando were back at it again in Bahrain. This time sharpening their urban fighting skills alongside Bahraini personnel for Exercise Pearl Dagger.

As well as laying down some lead at the ranges, the green berets have been developing their tactics in raiding in built up areas.

It was also a chance for commandos to share knowledge and experience with allied Bahraini Marines.

"In terms of individual training, every marine in the company has benefited from the live firing," Major Chris Burr, Officer Commanding of Alpha Company said.

"We are not often lucky enough to have two weeks, back-to-back, on the ranges in the UK as there is such a great demand.

"This has given us a chance to return to basics and then build up to advanced application on all weapon systems including, pistol, SA80 and sharpshooter.

"From a collective training point of view, the Urban Training Facility here is world class."

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## Valiant is No.2 Dreadnought

NOT content with finishing the names for the Type 26s (see page 11), the government has given a title to the second new ballistic missile submarine: HMS Valiant.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson revealed the name on a visit to Barrow to announce a £400m injection into the Dreadnought class – successors to the current V-boats – and the unveiling of a £25m academy at BAE System's yard which will give workers the skills needed to build/maintain/upgrade nuclear boats until the end of the 2030s.

The £400m will safeguard more than 8,000 jobs in Barrow and across the UK as part of the wider £31bn programme to replace the four Vanguard-class boats with four Dreadnoughts from the late 2020s onwards.

In plumping for Valiant, the Ships' Names and Badges Committee are resurrecting a title going back to 1759, most recently held by a WW1/WW2 Queen Elizabeth-class battleship and the second nuclear submarine ever built for the RN; the hunter-killer served from a fortnight before England won the World Cup in 1966 until 1994.

She helped keep the bulk of the Argentine Navy away from the Falkland Islands during the 1982 conflict.

## Five go bidding for Forts

A BRITISH consortium and four international firms are bidding to build the next generation of support vessels for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Whitehall has given the quintet a little over a year to design and come up with a price for the ships which will replace the three Forts: Austin, Rosalie and Victoria.

The trio provide food, ammunition, fresh water and spare parts for Royal Navy warships – and Allied vessels when requested – on the high seas. Fort Vic can also provide fuel. And all three can serve as command vessels for front-line operations, such as counter-piracy and intelligence-gathering missions in the Middle East.

Rosalie and Austin are 40 years old, Victoria 25 and the demands upon them will increase substantially with the arrival of the Royal Navy's new carrier strike groups; a special replenishment rig at HMS Raleigh has already been built to pave the way for the next-generation ships.

A British consortium of Babcock, BAE Systems, Cammell Laird and Rolls-Royce, plus Italy's Fincantieri, Navantia from Spain, Japan Marine United Corporation, and Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering from South Korea have been selected from the initial eight firms who expressed interest in building the replacements to come up with firm proposals.

Whitehall will name the winning bidder in 2020 and, even if a foreign firm is selected, a sizeable proportion of the work will be carried out in the UK as specialist/classified military kit will have to be installed here – as it was with the South Korean-built Tide-class of tankers.

The first vessel is due to enter service in 2026.



# Dawn over Medway

**MEET the Medway - the second of the Royal Navy's next-generation patrol ships which has successfully completed her maiden sea trials.**

Over 15 days, mostly conducted in the relatively sheltered waters of the Firth of Clyde – and especially the strait between Great Cumbrae and the mainland, the River-class 2.0 vessel blew away the builder's cobwebs.

A mixture of civilian and military personnel crewed the 2,000-tonne vessel under Admiralty Trials Master Capt Graham Baxter as Medway left BAE's yard at Scotstoun, where she spent more than a year being fitted out.

The initial RN contingent aboard comprised key personnel to support Contractor Sea Trials, including incoming Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Ben Power, marine and weapon engineer officers (Lt Greg Callis and WO1 Fraser Brown respectively), various Section Heads and the Chief Boatswain's Mate (aka buffer) PO Luke Hallis to ensure safe boat transfers and the like.

Throughout the trials period there was a rotation of personnel onboard to ensure maximum training benefit was achieved and to grant most of the 34 ship's company some much-desired sea time.

As soon as Medway left the river and entered the Firth of Clyde, the busy trials programme commenced with the successful completion of the magnetic compass swing.

From then until Medway's return to Scotstoun 15 days later, the programme remained at a consistently high tempo.

Throughout the trials package all onboard systems were put through their paces including the Integrated



● Are you having a laugh? RN personnel embarked for the sea trials pose on the port waist (l-r) CPO Lisa McMahon, PO Gordon Donald, Lt Greg Callis, WO Fraser Brown, PO Will Davies, LET Simon Watson, LET Chris Brettell, PO Luke Hallis, Lt Cdr Ben Power and WO Lee Clemens.

Platform Management System, which controls and monitors most of the ship's systems, and the Combat Management System which is used to collate sensor information and assist the command team in the decisions they make when in action.

The Automated Small Calibre Gun, the 30mm cannon on the forecastle, fired rounds at a 'killer tomato' inflatable target with impressive accuracy and the off-ship fire monitors tested correctly.

Ship handling trials such as manoeuvrability, speed and range trials generated a lot of interest onboard as Medway was taken to the upper limits of performance.

"It was great to finally get to sea on Medway," said marine engineer CPOET (ME) Will Davies.

"The small RN team benefited from the experience and had a lot of opportunities to improve their ship and systems knowledge. The whole trials package was

really positive."

Weapon engineer CPO Luke Travell added: "Achieving so much during our trials period really shows how much effort we have all put in. BAE, ship's staff and all the contractors should be really proud."

Lieutenant Commander Ben Power - Medway's first sea-going Commanding Officer, said the small ship made a superb sight as she manoeuvred deftly in the Firth of Clyde.

"She is a hugely-capable ship which will add flexibility and strength to the offshore patrol vessel force," he added.

Medway is now back in Scotstoun undergoing a final period of planned maintenance and tweaks, as well as processing and analysing results from the trials to meet criteria which will allow her to be accepted by the RN before she sails down to her future home of Portsmouth in 2019.

## Arran wetter for RM officers' test

MEN who will lead the Royal Marines of tomorrow into battle were flown into action for their final assessment as 'war' came to an idyllic Scottish island.

Arran in the Firth of Clyde was turned into a battleground for Young Officers as the 'in the field' element of their 60 weeks of training – nearly twice as long as that the ranks go through – delivered by CTCRM in Lymstone drew to a close.

To make the assessment as realistic as possible a Merlin Mk3 troop carrier/beast of burden, and two battlefield reconnaissance Wildcats Mk1s – all from the Commando Helicopter Force – joined them in Scotland.

They decamped from their base at Yeovilton to Prestwick in Ayrshire, home of the Fleet Air Arm's sole station north of the border, HMS Gannet.

They did so in the face of what was left of Hurricane Oscar – wind, rain, clouds – which were ideal training conditions for both the officers and the fliers/ground crew as they tested their ability to support and operate helicopters with minimal equipment a long way from home.

From Prestwick it's just 25

miles – five minutes' flying time – for the Wildcats and Merlins to Arran, an island the size of Sheffield, but home to only a fraction of the steel city's population: a little over 4,600 inhabitants.

The Wildcats used their sensors to pass on key intelligence to the Young Officers on the ground so they could plan attacks and manoeuvres around the hills and valleys of Arran.

The exercise reached its climax with an insertion of trainee officers on to a rain-soaked mountain a few kilometres from 'enemy' positions.

The Merlin ferried in the officers, the Wildcats flanking it armed with machine-guns as protection, before providing 'cover' as the troops were dropped off at a landing zone.

"As the ramp of the Merlin hit the deck, its cargo of heavily-laden, well-drilled Royal Marines were out and ready to fight," said Wildcat pilot Lieutenant Rowan Duncan.

"No sooner were they done than the Commando Helicopter Force helicopters were disappearing into the drizzle, another job well done."

## Lightning strikes Eagles and Hawks

THERE'S an American, a Briton and a Frenchman.

What a cracking example of aerial interoperability.

Side by side several thousand feet above eastern England three warbirds fly in close formation as UK F-35s take part in their first combat exercise in home skies: playing out a mock 21st-Century Battle of Britain.

Two Lightnings – one flown by an RAF pilot, the second with a Fleet Air Arm aviator in the cockpit – joined 40 British, American and French jets over East Anglia and the North Sea for Exercise Point Blank.

For the past three years, the US and RAF have been staging regular air defence exercises, testing their abilities to jointly prevent hostile aircraft penetrating Britain's airspace.

In around 20 incarnations since 2016, Point Blank has collectively put more than 400 aircraft to the test...

...But never an F-35 (which arrived in the UK during the summer) and never French Rafale interceptors...until Pointblank 18-3.

They jostled for position with the famous Strike Eagles, Hawk trainers, Typhoons, plus tankers and Voyager intelligence-gathering aircraft.

With a resurgent Russian threat, Air Commodore Jez Attridge, RAF Joint Force Air Component Commander, said exercises like Point Blank was vital for keeping everyone involved with the aerial defence of the UK at the top of their game.

"The first point of an air force is to be able to defend the country so you have to recognise the threats out there," he added.

"We can see the environment is changing, we can see the challenge that Russia is giving to the international rules-based order so we are the insurance policy. It really is a case of us staying ready so that we can be used if we're needed."

For the pilots of the F-35s the exercise gave them an opportunity to continue to develop tactics and procedures for operating side-by-side with less-advanced interceptors (Rafales, Hawks, F15s and even Typhoons are classed as fourth-generation fighters, the Lightning is fifth).

As well as air-to-air combat, participants practised their ground-attack skills and also evading the RAF's ground defences.

"This particular exercise is different from any that we've done previously because of the threats that are out there," explained Wing Commander John 'Butch' Butcher. "It's the first time we've done a 'peer' exercise, working alongside French and US partners.

Nine Lightnings from the RAF's legendary 617 Squadron – flown and maintained jointly by RAF and RN personnel – are now based at Marham in Norfolk with the stealth fighters due to be declared 'operational' by the end of 2018, making them deployable from airbases on land.

Picture: SAC Will Drumme RAF





# Morocco's magical mountains Altitude wi

## All aboard the Canary Express

ROYAL Marines and sailors joined personnel from the Army for a water-based expedition.

Exercise Canary Express saw the yacht Osprey leave her home at Gosport and head 1,740 miles to the Canary Islands.

The yacht, which is based at the Joint Services Adventurous Sail Training Centre, took five weeks to reach the islands, navigating past the coasts of France, Spain and Portugal before arriving in Lanzarote.

"This trip was a real adventure, we faced mechanical problems, rough weather and the infamous Bay of Biscay along the way," said Royal Marines Corporal Will Allenby, 42.

The first three legs of the 20-leg expedition were coxswained by Royal Marines from the Royal Navy Royal Marines Sail Training Centre.

Yacht Osprey will be based out of Puerto Calero in Lanzarote until April 2019 to conduct adventurous training for up to eight tri-service ranks each week, who will have the opportunity to explore the Canary Islands.

The yacht was joined by a pod of dolphins off Nazare and the sailors enjoyed a feast thanks to Corporal Sam Mortimer, who caught a large fish during the journey – and showed off his culinary skills when he cooked it.

Once in Lanzarote, with a fresh crew on board, Osprey embarked on a five day 700-mile leg where they found themselves up to 150 nautical miles from land, on an intense three-on-four-off watch routine.

However, this was all made worthwhile by multiple whale and dolphin sightings, shooting stars and a little rest and recuperation in the form of a secluded hands to bathe in 3,000m of water 150 miles from the coast of Africa.

The exercise acted as a recce

for Exercise Green Season 19, a Royal Marines-led package which will utilise the Corps yacht to run a similar expedition between September and April 2020.

ROYAL Navy personnel pose for celebratory photographs in the Atlas Mountains.

Two teams – one representing HMNB Portsmouth and one RNAS Yeovilton – took part in Exercise Atlas in Morocco.

The teams were required to spend six days trekking around 90km and climbing to a height of more than 5,000 metres to achieve a sunrise summit of Mount Toubkal.

At 4,167 metres, it is the highest peak in not only the Atlas range, but also in North Africa.

Entirely self-sufficient, carrying all their own equipment and supplies, the 14-strong Portsmouth team embarked on the high-altitude trek to experience a new environment, accomplish a major adventurous expedition and challenge themselves personally in ways unbeknownst to them.

The team from RNAS Yeovilton headed to Morocco less than two weeks afterwards, with very comparable aims in mind.

In line with their shipmates from HMNB Portsmouth, the Yeovilton team were entirely self-sufficient and would trek close to 90km, climb over 5,000m and summit Mount Toubkal.

However, as is often the way, plans do not always happen as hoped.

With one team member suffering with injuries to both legs, the plan was changed to cut a portion out of the trek, thus shortening the duration by one day.

Despite the disappointment, it was great to see the camaraderie in the team shine when it came to working together and completing the expedition as one.

With Mount Toubkal yet to be conquered, a hostel was found, where the injured could recover, while the revised expedition could proceed.

It provided the team with an excellent opportunity to experience high altitudes and challenging terrains.

It was both physically and mentally demanding, but everyone always showed strong determination.

While picking up an injury was unexpected, it presented a whole new element to the expedition, one that would have not been experienced otherwise.

In addition to the trek, both teams headed to the coast to take part in a surf camp in Essaouira, receiving expert tuition from local instructors.

Despite the poor surf conditions, everyone could paddle, pop-up and stand on the boards before the end of the camp!

Aside from the mountaineering and surfing





# ns cast their spell over two Royal Navy trekking groups th attitude

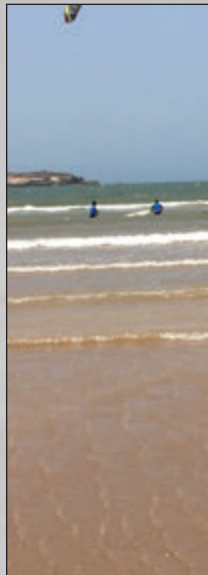
elements of the expedition, both teams were able to use the rest and recovery time in between to explore the wonders of Marrakech, *pictured right*, try out some of the local cuisine and meet the locals to gain an appreciation, for many of the team members, of what is an entirely different culture from anything they have experienced before.

There are plenty of opportunities to organise your own major expedition using the support available through RN Adventurous Training and Adventurous Training Group (Army) (ATG(A)) – just start exploring the art of the possible by visiting the ATG(A) page on Defence Gateway for lots of guidance on expedition planning, adventurous training courses and paths to becoming an instructor.

Nevertheless, if you are planning on organising your own trekking expedition, you should always remember the three rules of mountaineering...

“It’s always further than it looks, it’s always taller than it looks and it’s definitely always harder than it looks.”

**Report: Sub Lieutenant Tom Ringham and Air Engineering Technician Chris Leaf**



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# Building on our great campaign

SO...that's it! The Year of Engineering 2018 (YOE18) may be complete, but in some respects the work has only just begun.

People have a better understanding of how fundamental engineers really are to society and how they contribute to the RN's outputs; every month throughout 2018 we saw how engineers form the 'beating heart' of operational capability, keeping our aircraft, ships, submarines and vehicles operating, maintained and sustained on operations, in a range of environments across the globe.

RN engineers, more so those who have become STEM Ambassadors, can be very proud of what has been achieved through the RNYOE18 campaign.

Statistics will follow once analysis is complete in early 2019, however initial figures indicate the RNYOE18 campaign has reached more than three million people on social media and achieved an engagement rate of 5.5 per cent (the average across other RN Channels is 2.5 per cent). Across the RN more than 280 events were organised and over 350,000 schoolchildren have interacted and discussed STEM careers with our engineers, and an additional 210 STEM Ambassadors have volunteered.

Expressions of interest in naval careers have increased and more visitors are going to the RN Engineering Careers websites than ever before. Internally, reward and recognition of naval engineers has been revitalised and our engineers are now much more valued across the service.

It is anticipated that from January, the YOE18 will transition to a sustained campaign, building on the excellent work completed so far and ensuring that the promotion of engineering skills in UK society is maintained to close the skills gap – the UK requires 20,000 more engineering graduates and 64,000 more apprentices per year.

The RN will continue to play a key role in the 'Era of Engineering' and will remain at the forefront of promoting engineering as an exciting career by showing what RN engineers do day in day out.



# Engineers rose to the challenge



## Heart beats for first time on PoW

THE heart of the UK's second new carrier now gently beats after her engines were fired up for the first time.

Engineers aboard HMS Prince of Wales turned on the diesel generators – a key milestone on the road to sending the 65,000-tonne warship to sea in the second half of 2019.

In the bowels of the carrier – in the later stages of fitting out at Rosyth dockyard near Edinburgh – there are four Wärtsilä diesel generators, each capable of producing more than 11 Megawatts of power... enough to support a town of 25,000 people.

Collectively, these four diesels generate 40 per cent of the total power produced by the carrier; the Rolls-Royce MT30 main engines which drive the ship through the water account for the rest, but they have yet to be switched on. When they are, each can produce enough power to meet the electricity needs of Burnley or Guildford.

Firing up the Wärtsiläs marked the culmination of years of planning, installation, wiring, testing and finally commissioning. A 40-strong team of navy and civilian engineers were thoroughly briefed and an announcement made throughout the ship before, with the press of a button, the first of four diesels roared into life.

"With the first run of HMS Prince of Wales' diesel generators now complete, the ship is truly coming to life on its own systems," said Lieutenant James Sheridan-Browne, the carrier's power and propulsion engineering officer.

"The running of diesel generators will now continue to provide a steady drumbeat to sailing the ship to Portsmouth in 2019."

Simon Lister, managing director of the Aircraft Carrier Alliance – the unique collaboration of industry, Royal Navy and MOD which has designed and built Prince of Wales and her older sister HMS Queen Elizabeth – added: "To all involved – and that is a large proportion of the entire workforce – my thanks and congratulations on achieving the first diesel start.

"This has seen focused effort, great innovation, real perseverance in the face of setbacks, and a commitment to quality that has been truly impressive."

THE crew of HMS Westminister are reflecting on the Year of Engineering with much pride.

The Type 23 frigate spent much of 2018 operating in the North Atlantic, travelling the equivalent of 1.5 times around the world.

The ship also spent five weeks at sea without sight of land.

Engineering teams were kept on their toes and ensured Westminister did not lose one single day of operations.

"It is down to the hard work, determination and good training of all the engineers onboard and the support they get from shoreside organisations that we have been able to maintain such consistent equipment availability in such a harsh operating environment," said the ship's Commanding Officer, Commander Will Paston.

During the year Westminister achieved some impressive engineering statistics:

- Travelling more than 6,000 nautical miles in one journey.

- Firing more than 73,000 rounds of

ammunition.

- Conducting more than 1,000 hours of sonar operations.

The ship's embarked Merlin Mk2 from 814 Naval Air Squadron flew for 135 hours, amassing 133 deck landings.

When equipment failings have emerged, the engineers onboard have aggressively diagnosed and repaired the defects, with a combined total in excess of 80 fixes by the engineering teams.

The team spirit which forms a core component of Royal Navy ethos has also been apparent throughout the year, with all engineers onboard working together to problem-solve.

At one stage both Weapon Engineers and Marine Engineers were working together to repair their Low Frequency Active Sonar in the high North.

Combined teams also repaired an electrical isolation panel to restore helicopter servicing supplies essential to Westminister's mission.

During the year the engineering teams found solutions organically due to contact and advice with the UK not being possible.

Westminister also produced innovative methods of protecting equipment from freezing in extreme cold conditions, including the continued rotation of navigation radars while retaining a covert posture.

The Marine Engineers were not to be out-done in the innovation stakes when, during Exercise Trident Juncture 18 a major electrical distribution issue occurred. They delivered a novel procedure to ensure that Westminister maintained her station to effectively continue her role within the exercise.

The new year begins with Westminister and her crew back in Portsmouth for a maintenance package before joining Standing NATO Maritime Group One.

**KEEP UP WITH HMS WESTMINSTER**

Follow @HMS\_Westminster and @RoyalNavy on Twitter



## Taste of RN careers for students

MORE than 70 students from the west of England have visited HMNB Devonport to learn about science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) in the Royal Navy.

During the busy day students were shown practical solutions and examples of engineering in the maritime world.

"The problem they have to solve is build a bridge using what is essentially grown-up meccano, allowing a tall warship to pass underneath," said Petty Officer Gemma Flowers.

"It's about teamwork and finding the best solution, considering the size of the ship and making sure the structure is stable, it means working together."

The students met sailors and marines who studied engineering and use these skills

in their work place. They looked around a Royal Marines hovercraft and some of the raiding boats they use around the world on operations.

Naval Base Commander, Commodore Peter Coulson, said, "No one person can do it all and as a team, you can really build and deliver great things, and that is what we do inside the dockyard."

Student Jay Simmons, from Marine Academy Plymouth, said: "I've learnt a lot about how submarines work, I didn't know there was so much to it. It's been a fabulous day."

The RN was also represented at the Solent Festival of Engineering, held at Fareham Leisure Centre, and World Skills UK at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham.

The Royal Navy's stand showcased the wide scope of activities, including catering, air engineering using demonstration pneumatics systems and a hands-on chance to change rotor blades on a Sea King tail rotor.

The Royal Marines Band Service drew in the crowds with a series of excellent sets.

Attending the event, Cdre Andy Cree, Assistant Chief of Staff (Training), said: "As an Ofsted Outstanding Apprenticeship provider, the Royal Navy is proud to be associated with World Skills UK, the national showcase for the best skills and careers available to young people.

"We enjoyed a fantastic response at this year's event and look forward to being part of it in future."





# HOT STUFF, PROTECTOR





Pictures: LPhot Rory Arnold, HMS Protector



THE remains of a wooden whaler lie on the black ash beach of Deception Island as HMS Protector sails into the active volcano.

The caldera, which is below sea level, is the only active volcano in the world which can be sailed into.

The horseshoe-shaped island opens to the sea through a narrow channel at Neptunes Bellows, forming a natural sheltered harbour.

The ice patrol ship spent two days visiting the Antarctic bases of Deception Station, which are run by Argentina, and Spain, who run Gabriel Castilla Station.

The visit to the island, part of the South Shetland Islands archipelago, gave some members of Protector's ship's company the first opportunity to step onto Antarctic soil.

Army officer Captain Marc Rodrigues-Bernet, who's acting as Protector's linguist/interpreter, said: "It's a truly breathtaking location – and a unique location for those on board. We spent two days encircled by a halo of volcanic rock."

A few of the ship's company went ashore for a walk on the black earth as hydrographic experts took numerous readings and Protector's dive team braved the cold to perform a practice plunge in near-sub-zero waters.

Deception is uninhabited bar the research bases (only occupied in high summer), but it is extremely popular with the local seal population – Antarctic fur seals, Weddell seals, crabeater seals, southern elephant seals and leopard seals.

The island, which was previously home to a whaling station, is now a tourist destination.

"This is the furthest I have ever travelled from home and the snow and animals are extremely pretty," said Sub Lieutenant Hannah Crowson, of the Protector experience.

Remains of previous structures at Whalers Bay include rusting boilers and tanks and the British scientific station house (Biscoe House), with the middle torn out by mudflows from a volcanic eruption in February 1969.

The building was named after John Biscoe, Master, Royal Navy, who discovered Graham Land in Antarctica in 1832.

The pristine spot is just one sight enjoyed by sailors and Royal Marines as they begin their season supporting scientists studying the frozen continent.

The Devonport-based icebreaker is three years into an epic five-year mission to coldly go to distant bases and un- or poorly-charted waters to make it safer for ships to navigate the potentially-treacherous seas and to help our understanding of the unique icy environment.

Protector rotates one third of her crew every few weeks to sustain the five-year mission. She currently has two Uruguayan Navy Lieutenants embarked, Alvaro Picon Rodriguez and Mario Rodriguez Torres, who both quickly settled into the ship's routine.

The austral winters are too harsh for the crew and the ice too thick for the ship, so she retreats to the warmer waters of Southern Africa to conduct surveying/scientific work there.

But come late October/early November – the equivalent of late April/early May in the Northern Hemisphere – the distinctive red-and-white icebreaker heads south again to conduct the first of several 'work periods', each around a month long, in various parts of Antarctica.

She had to smash her way through ice to reach the frozen wastes of the British Antarctic Survey base at Port Lockroy, located on an island off the Antarctic peninsula around 900 miles from the Falklands.

The isolated base is home to the southernmost post office in the world (who offer passport stamps for passing

tourists) and an enormous colony of Gentoo penguins, noisy, lively spectators to Protector's work as crew offloaded more than two-and-a-half tonnes of supplies.

The offload had to be carried out without disturbing the colony – the birds enjoy right of way at Port Lockroy.

Mission complete, Protector sailed just 50 miles to the Melchior Island chain to survey waters on the approaches to the Argentine research base – only occupied at the height of summer.

The ship launched her survey motor launch to update maps used by seafarers to navigate these waters.

Those waters were last mapped in 1954, without access to any of the sonar and state of the art sensors with which HMS Protector bristles.

The information the launch gathered determined that the sea around the Melchior Islands is far safer than previously thought; the waters are actually 80 metres deep, not 20 as recorded.

Once official charts are updated, it should open the natural harbour for eco-tourists on Antarctic cruises to visit the Palmer Archipelago for the first time.

From Deception, the ship headed north via Esther Harbour in the South Sandwich Islands to Elephant Island, where legendary explorer Ernest Shackleton and his men sheltered after their ship Endeavour was crushed in the ice in 1916.

Today's sailors and marines held probably the most southerly act of remembrance for those killed in the Great War, in particular the three members of Shackleton's party who survived their ordeal on the ice only to be killed serving King and Country.

"Every one of the ship's company is aware of how fortunate they are to be on this ship, carrying out exhilarating work in otherwise-unreachable areas, but that pales in comparison with the gratitude we owe the World War 1 generation," said Capt Rodrigues-Bernet.

After a long transit, Protector was welcomed warmly into Buenos Aires before sailing for her second work package of the season.

Signy Island saw the ship disembark one BAS scientist and embark another, as well as transfer stores from one end of the island to the other.

Signy Station conducts research, based largely on the indigenous wildlife.

Groups of friendly Gentoo penguins waddled around the shore party, while elephant seals lazed on nearby rocks and Brown Skewers wheeled above personnel.

Protector's Royal Marines yomped over Signy Island and the McLeod glacier to act as beachmasters for the ship's offload.

The shore party quickly found itself at the other end of the island, pushing small icebergs out of the way of the store laden-zodiac to complete the drop-off in time.

Protector is designed to break 1.2 metre-thick ice sheets, but this requires real care and the skill of experienced Officer's of the Watch.

Any of the ship's company not involved in essential work crowd around the bow to watch the ship sail into surface ice floes, feel the impact, and look on as the ice gives way, calving apart to let the ship through.

Protector now heads north through the Patagonian canals to Punta Arenas in Chile, where the ship's company can prepare for her next work package, which will take the ship the furthest south she has been for years.

Report: Capt Marc Rodrigues-Bernet



**KEEP UP WITH THE SHIP**

Follow @HMSPROTECTOR and @RoyalNavy on Twitter



## Hard graft leads to tranquil result

BRITISH Forces Gibraltar personnel completed an environmental project of transforming waste ground at the Cancer Relief Centre into a Garden of Tranquillity.

The conservation project was conceived a number of years ago during volunteer work by HQBF personnel to support the opening of a four-bedroom hospice on the top floor of the centre.

During the summer of 2018 this dream was realised when Chief Petty Officer Paul Reed and other members of HQBF commenced work to prepare the waste ground to the rear of the Cancer Research Centre, under the direction of James Attwood of Creative Gardens.

After the clearance of the ground was completed, CPO Dave May took over the reins as the lead for the British Forces Gibraltar contingent on the project, working closely with Creative Gardens to advance the work on the Garden of Tranquillity.

For the rest of the summer and into the autumn months CPO

May and his fellow volunteers worked in all weathers in order to complete the project which now has decking, flower beds and a water feature.

The project involved hundreds of man hours to clear ground, remove dead trees, rocks and lay the foundations for a path leading to the raised deck. More than 12 metric tonnes of top soil was brought in for the flower beds.

This project has developed a unique community link between British Forces Gibraltar and the Gibraltar community.

The Cancer Relief Centre provides support to people living with cancer in the community and has done so for more than 30 years.

All their services are free and aimed at helping the individual and their family to live life to the full.

If you would like to use the centre's services or would like more information about what they can offer, email: [info@cancerrelief.gi](mailto:info@cancerrelief.gi) or visit [www.cancerrelief.gi](http://www.cancerrelief.gi)



# Helping to keep memories alive

## PERSONNEL based in the British Indian Ocean Territory of Diego Garcia have been helping to maintain a coconut plantation.

The conservation effort helps preserve East Point plantation, which is open for heritage visits for people who previously worked on the plantations of Diego Garcia and the outlying islands of the Chagos Archipelago.

The small groups of former plantation workers (often referred to as Ilois – Islanders – or Chagossians) look forward to visiting the location of their former homes and places of work.

The visits are often charged with emotion and recollections of a way of life that no longer exists.

On Diego Garcia – the only island that remains inhabited – the UK and US military personnel and the contractors who support the military mission are keen, as far as possible, to protect and preserve the history of the plantation.

Maintaining the plantation as it was in the 1960s is an impossible task; weather and humid conditions support exceptionally quick plant growth, likewise wood and metal deteriorates at an amazing rate.

East Point plantation is located within a restricted area and, as such, on a day to day basis, the flora and fauna thrives in this remote and undisturbed location.

Earlier, in support of the heritage visit, the on-island community gathered together at East Point plantation to conduct preventative maintenance.

This included stripping plants back and away from the buildings, repairing the road, removing invasive and aggressive juvenile coconut trees, cleaning the church and gardening in the graveyard.

Approximately 150 volunteers attended the Sunday community project and braved the typical tropical torrential rain.

Logistics officer Lieutenant Kieran Tamayo said: "It was a fulfilling and rewarding day out with colleagues and friends doing something worthwhile to maintain the history and



heritage of the island – the weather has done little to dampen our spirits."

The British contingent sponsored a barbecue and, on completion of the work, the volunteers were able to sit back, enjoy the food and admire the results of their toil.

The joint UK and US military facility on Diego Garcia contributes significantly towards global security, providing logistic support to operational forces forward deployed to the Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean and the Gulf.

The base has supported counter-narcotic, anti-human trafficking, and efforts to counter illegal fishing.

Additionally, the base has provided a platform for response to environmental

disasters, such as the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, and the 2013 response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

The base also supported the search and rescue missions in support of missing Malaysian Flight 370.

The territory is one of the UK's 14 Overseas Territories, which is sometimes referred to by its geographical name, the Chagos Archipelago, and covers some 640,000km<sup>2</sup> of ocean.

The territory has 58 islands spread across five coral atolls. The islands cover around 60km<sup>2</sup> – the largest island being Diego Garcia – with a total of 698km of coastline.

## Running for mum

A SAILOR is raising funds for Motor Neurone Disease after her mother was diagnosed with it.

ET(WE) Jessica King found out about her mum's diagnosis while undertaking her phase 2 training at HMS Collingwood.

"I feel the RN have given me nothing but continuous support while having to deal with this life-changing condition as my father sadly passed away two weeks prior to my mother's diagnosis," said Jessica.

Apart from completing a Tough Mudder challenge and a cycle ride from London to Paris, Jessica has also won a spot in this year's London Marathon.

You can support Jessica at [uk.virginmoneygiving.com/JessicaKing23](http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/JessicaKing23)



## Navy greeting for Jane

A Royal Navy Commander who is more than a year into a round Britain charity walk was greeted by BAE employees, RN submariners and representatives from the local Sea Cadet unit on her arrival in Barrow.

Commander Jane Allen set off from HMS Victory in Portsmouth on October 21 2017, to walk anticlockwise around the coast of mainland UK for two naval charities, the Women's Royal Naval Service Benevolent Trust and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

On hand to meet her at BAE Systems' Barrow site were crew

members from the fourth and fifth Astute class submarines – Audacious and Anson – and representatives from Training Ship Sovereign, Barrow's Sea Cadet unit.

Cdr Allen, who is more than 3,600 miles into her 'Victory Walk', said: "It is fantastic to get to Barrow, where I know BAE Systems provides so much local employment. There is a real partnership between the Royal Navy and BAE Systems.

"The submarines being built here are tomorrow's Royal Navy."

Visit [www.victorywalk.uk](http://www.victorywalk.uk) for details on how to donate.

## Tattoo artist showcases body artwork



THERE was a double first at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard with live tattooing by a female artist on board HMS Warrior.

Tattoo: *British Tattoo Art Revealed* exhibition curator Alice Roberts-Pratt went the extra mile when she was tattooed live in front of visitors.

Alice is an aficionado of tattoos and had three swallows up her arm, graduating in size. Swallow tattoos have a strong naval tradition, indicating 5,000 nautical miles travelled.

Visitors had the chance to watch, up close and personal, while Alice was tattooed. Other clients of tattoo artist Sara Pengelly from Portsmouth's Furious Weasel tattoo studio were also pre-booked to be tattooed onboard the Victorian warship.

Sara is the first female to tattoo on Warrior and follows in the footsteps of Portsmouth pioneer Jessie Knight, who is featured in the exhibition and was the first recorded female tattooist. All of Sara's designs are nautically themed.

Alice Roberts-Pratt, curator of The National Museum of the Royal Navy, said: "We have had a real buzz around our tattoo exhibition and we wanted to inspire our visitors to see and hear the atmosphere around getting a tattoo."

"HMS Warrior has a proud association with tattooing, although we think this is the first time it's been done live on the ship. We have a wonderful log book from the ship that records the details of every crew member from 1861-1864. There are two sections 'Marks on Person' and 'Wounds or Scars, etc.' and both of these reveal that many of the sailors suffered with small pox scars but also include description of the crew's tattoos."

Tattoo artist Sara Pengelly said: "This is probably the most unique location I have ever tattooed in and I can't wait to showcase my art to visitors."

The majority of the crew's tattoos recorded in the log book appear on the arms, wrist and hands. The most popular designs were crucifixes and images of a man and a woman. Others include: hearts, anchors, ships, mermaid, and cannon balls.

According to his memoirs, George Burchett, who features prominently in the exhibition, was stationed for a short while on board HMS Victory. He would most certainly have been "inking" his fellow sailors, before he went on to be styled "The King of Tattoos."

*The Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed* closes on January 6 2019

# Runners take on 13-mile challenge



MILITARY personnel challenged themselves to run up to 13 miles to raise money for the Royal British Legion.

The ten runners based at UK Naval Support Facility (UKNSF), in Bahrain, took on the half marathon one evening to avoid the blazing heat of the day.

Five of the group managed to complete the full route with the others pushing themselves to run as far as they could.

The fundraiser, which passed the main gate to UKNSF on three occasions, was organised by RAF Warrant Officer (WO) Mick Parkinson.

He said: "It's a personal challenge as I've never run further than ten miles before."

"It seemed a perfect opportunity that while challenging myself I would raise money for a worthy cause."

"What better than the Royal British Legion as we did the run during the centenary of the end of WW1."

The group of Royal Navy, Royal Marine and RAF personnel enjoyed the team spirit of running as a group.

WO Parkinson was glad of the company. He added: "I normally run on my own

but on this occasion having fellow service personnel to keep me going made it easier."

"We kept together as a group and that was a definite advantage."

Not content with just running the course, the former Base Warrant Officer Mick Stanion, of the Royal Marines, completed the challenge in full military kit and carrying a 25kg rucksack.

He said: "I had to have a quiet word with myself towards the end to make sure I completed the half marathon. I felt good when I had finished and a real sense of achievement."



• John Yorke was reunited with his son Richard, while brothers Jacob and Joshua Copsey were also reunited

# Double reunion as ships link up

**FATHER and son John and Richard Yorke were reunited (ish) when the two biggest ships in the naval service linked up in the North Atlantic.**

Aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth was taking fuel from RFA Tidespring during fast-jet trials off the east coast of the USA when helicopter engineer Richard thought he recognised a familiar face on the tanker.

"I saw what looked like my dad on the other ship," said Richard, a leading seaman responsible for Merlin Mk2 helicopters, normally based at Culdrose Air Station in Cornwall.

"I looked him up on the internal e-mail and found out it was him. It was a great surprise."

John was supposed to be aboard Tidespring's sister Tiderace as her helicopter controller, guiding aircraft safely on and off the tanker's flight deck.

She is supporting Royal Navy operations in home waters.

John, better known as 'Yorkie', said:

"When I was moved on to RFA Tidespring and discovered I was coming over to join the carrier I kept it a secret to give Richard a bit of surprise."

The pair were formally reunited a couple of weeks later when both ships sailed into the US Naval Base at Norfolk, Virginia, once the carrier had completed her debut trials with the F-35 Lightning jets.

The stop in Norfolk allowed both Yorkes to show the other around their respective ships.

John said the Queen Elizabeth-Tide-class pairing makes for an awesome sight.

"Having been in the Royal Navy for 25 years and now the RFA for ten years this is such a massive step ahead," he said.

"It is just what we needed."

Richard added: "It is great both to see him out here and to serve alongside for the first time."

Also reunited in Norfolk were the Copsey brothers - Able Seaman Jacob, a warfare specialist on the carrier, and Third Officer

Joshua, a deck officer on the tanker.

Jacob said: "During the first refuelling, I was madly emailing him to find out where he would be so we could wave at each other."

Joshua added: "It was great to have a chance to join him and the carrier."

"I made sure that one of the packages transferred by line across to HMS Queen Elizabeth had a present of an RFA T-shirt for him."

His brother got his own back in Norfolk, showing off his ship which is nearly twice the size of the tanker. Joshua said: "I am used to some pretty big ships in the RFA but nothing compares to this."

Once the carrier finished offloading the equipment and personnel she carried for the Lightning trials, which ended just before Thanksgiving, she and her task group including frigate HMS Monmouth headed for the UK, returning home in time for Christmas.



# Former RM cyclists visit care home

FORMER Royal Marines cycled 52 miles to visit a care home run by the RNBT and meet its residents.

The group gathered at the Bandstand in Deal to start their journey with a short commemorative service for the people killed and injured in the Deal bombing on September 22, 1989.

Dressed in Royal Marines Association Cycle Club colours, the 20 cyclists then took to the Kent roads led by the ride leader and chairman of the RMA CC Chris Falcke.

The 52-mile route saw some of the cyclists suffer punctures and other mechanical issues but eventually they arrived at Pembroke House.

Councillor Habib Tejan, deputy Lord Mayor of Medway, Tarnia Harrison, the care home's manager, and other staff greeted the group on their arrival and welcomed them into the site.

The former marines, many of which had never been to Pembroke House, were impressed by the facilities on offer which included a nautical theme, a lounge overlooking the Medway and a large park next door.

After the tour, the cyclists were offered a drink in the bar - a welcome relief following their long ride. It wasn't long before everyone had either a glass of wine or port and a tray of sandwiches to hand.

Once the care home residents

had enjoyed their lunch, they joined the group and a number of animated conversations were enjoyed with numerous stories being exchanged.

One lady who joined in was Annie who had recently enjoyed her 105th birthday.

The president of the cycle club took the opportunity to call for a toast to the Queen and the Royal Marines.

After 90 minutes of flowing conversations, the cyclists decided to get back into their lycra for the return journey to Deal.

They thanked everyone at Pembroke House for their hospitality and for opening their eyes of what the home does for its residents and the facilities on offer for former Royal Navy ratings and Royal Marine ranks.

The RNBT exists for the benefit of serving and ex-serving Royal Navy ratings and Royal Marine other ranks, and their family, in need.

It provides funds to members of the RNBT family for medical treatment and disability aids, household goods and repairs, food, clothing and fuel and childcare.

The trust also runs a care home for those no longer able to live independently.

The RNBT depends on donations and legacies to balance its income and welcomes financial contributions.

Visit [www.rnbt.org.uk](http://www.rnbt.org.uk).

# Cadets experience life at sea

OFFICER Cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College have been finding out about life at sea on board HMS Northumberland.

Ten cadets joined the Type 23 frigate in Plymouth for their initial sea time just as the ship was coming towards the end of her six-week Operational Sea Training.

OST tests the ship's capabilities from firefighting and firstaid to responding to attacks from the air and from submarines.

The cadets took part by playing casualties for the medics and assisting when required. Officer Cadet William Brook said: "This has proved to be an excellent time to be on board as we've had the chance to witness first-hand how the Royal Navy's training is put into action on a warship."

Initial sea time is a six-week programme designed to show the cadets the fundamentals of living and working at sea. While on board, they spend time with the various departments to gain an understanding of how each one contributes to the operational capability of the ship.

They live alongside the Junior Ratings to experience the role of the men and women they will lead in the future.



Officer Cadet Stephen Swindley said: "One of the biggest lessons I've taken so far is that experience is everything. You might be a newly commissioned officer and feel on top of the world, but when push comes to shove the able rate of five years seems to glide along effortlessly in comparison."

With HMS Northumberland successfully passing OST, the ship was given the all-clear to start her operational programme.

The Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund

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 BRN • t 023 9263 9534 • caseworkers@rnmchildrensfund.org.uk  
www.rnmchildrensfund.org.uk

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



## Helo tail takes centre stage at exhibition

SAY 'Helston' and what do you think of?

Terry Wogan and the Floral Dance.

Flora Day.  
The Furry Dance.  
Pasties.

Flambards amusement park.  
Anyway, eventually you'll get to RNAS Culdrose.

And nothing says 'Culdrose' better than a Sea King... part of which now takes centre stage in Helston's Museum of Cornish Life.

A full-size tail section of a Sea King HAS 1 – the first variant to enter service with the Fleet Air Arm back in 1969 – has been donated to the free museum as part of its new exhibition celebrating Culdrose and the role of naval aviation over the past 70 years.

The helicopter tail (from 706 NAS, a now defunct training squadron based at Culdrose) joins a nose wheel from a Merlin, a Rolls-Royce Gnome engine, Sea King tail rotor gearbox, and historical uniforms to name but a few objects loaned to the Market Place museum (which is two years younger than the air station).

The temporary exhibition, which is expected to run until at least the spring of 2019, was formally opened by Culdrose's second in command, Commander Jason Phillips who ran through its history from 1947 through to its present-day mission chiefly supporting the new carriers, jet fighter tactical development and training and cutting-edge anti-submarine warfare training/operations.

## The force is with them

**TWO members of the Gibraltar Defence Police were successful at their sergeants' promotion board.**

Christian Hermida, who joined the force in 2001, and Dina Laoudy, who joined in 2007, were subsequently promoted.

Sgt Hermida has attained instructor qualifications in first aid, personal safety, public order, sea survival equipment maintainer and recently qualified as a gym instructor. He is currently responsible for Blue Section as Operational Shift Sergeant.

Sgt Laoudy has undertaken various roles, including qualified firearms and marine officer.

Currently responsible for training and procurement department, she will soon be assigned to Operational Shift Sergeant for Red Section.



## Stalwart Dave 'sails' away

HOW do you say farewell to a Royal Navy officer based at an RAF site?

Well, you 'build' a ship of course.

That's the innovative way colleagues at RAF Waddington saw Commander Dave Hewitt retire after 42 years of service.

Cdr Hewitt, who worked at the Air Warfare Centre, joined the RN as a Junior Second Seaman Second Class in June 1977.

His first posting was HMS Berwick, followed by several destroyer draftings, along with a stint with the Fleet Electronic Warfare Support Group.

Awarded the South Atlantic Medal for his deployment on HMS Glasgow during the Falklands conflict, Cdr Hewitt features in the book *One Hundred Days* by Admiral Sandy Woodward.

The book recounts how Leading Seaman Hewitt reacted

to being targeted by Argentinian Super Etendards by 'sprinting up the steep ladders from the operations room to help re-load the ships decoy system with chaff.' He is quoted as saying 'I had never moved at that speed in my entire life.'

Cdr Hewitt was selected for officer training and was commissioned in December 1998. Throughout, he continued his work in Electronic Warfare as a Warfare Officer, becoming a deep specialist, and for his last eight years working in the Joint Electronic Warfare Operational Support Centre at RAF Waddington as OC Executive Wing and Senior Naval Officer for Lincolnshire.

He was awarded a Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service following his deployment to Kosovo and received an MBE for services to Defence Electronic Warfare in 2015.



## Training the commando way

HMNB Clyde-based Royal Marines put players from the Fosroc Scottish Rugby Academy through their paces at a Commando training day.

A total of 27 of the academy's male and female players and six staff joined 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines at the event in Garelochhead Training Camp.

The players came from across the Academy's regions, including The Borders & East Lothian, Caledonia, Glasgow & The West and Edinburgh.

The session was the latest in the ongoing partnership between the Royal Marines and Scottish Rugby; now in its third year.

The collaboration is aimed at developing the players' leadership qualities and high-performance behaviours, by learning from the 'Commando Mindset' and their world-renowned values and standards.

The day's action started on water with the players being transported into the training area by Offshore Raiding Craft. Despite a few feet getting wet, the group were then speed-marched uphill by 43 Commando's Physical Training Instructor Sergeant 'Benny' Benson – where the day's real challenges started.

Split into groups, the players had three team challenges to complete. Firstly, to test their resourcefulness, they were tasked by 43 Commando's Mountain Leader Sergeant 'Bruce' Willis – with building a shelter, along with learning

core 'green skills' such as maintaining a fire.

Next up was a troop attack against an enemy, using Airsoft training weapons. The techniques taught by the Commandos were strikingly similar to those needed on the rugby pitch; the emphasis of this evolution was on communication and coordination of movement across the line.

The final stance involved blending both physical and mental challenges. A 'field-gun' was assembled after sprinting shuttles with the individual components. The team then had to carry one of their players on a one-mile stretcher run; intentionally longer than they were initially briefed to test their mental resilience.

Finally, a practical leadership puzzle had to be completed, testing their mental agility despite being fatigued and under time pressure.

In the middle of all the action, there was a brief chance to take on some energy and learn about operational nutrition in the form of a 12-hour ration pack.

Grant McKelvey, Scottish Rugby's Talent ID Manager, said: "The players took a lot out of the experience and it was a good way for them to meet their peers."

The one-day training event served as an introductory session for the players, who will go on to attend a multi-day event at 45 Commando in Arbroath early this year.

Picture: LPhot Stevie Burke

# Welcome to the Corps son

**A PROUD dad from Lancaster has presented his son with the Green Beret after he completed the gruelling Reserve Forces Commando Course.**

Forty-one potential recruits began training in August 2017, each hoping to earn the right to wear the coveted Green Beret and serve with Royal Marine Reserves (RMR) Merseyside.

Only 17 made it to the first day of the Reserve Forces Commando Course with just nine successfully completing the training.

One of the successful trainees was 26-year-old Lancastrian Luke Croasdale, who was presented with his coveted Green Beret by his dad, Royal Marine Mark Croasdale, 53, as he completed his final 30-mile march across Dartmoor.

"I'm extremely proud to be part of this one-off moment for Luke," said Mark, who is a Corporal at RMR Merseyside. "It was great to be there and be such a big part of it."

Luke, who works in ground maintenance during his day job, said: "As I crossed the finish line dad said to take my cap comforter off and handed me my Green Beret. He said to put it on as I've worked hard and deserved it."

"I'm proud and happy to have finally passed and I'm looking forward to what the future brings and what else I can achieve in the Royal Marines Reserve."

Luke's father, as a junior Marine, previously served in the



regular marines, joining in 1981 and serving in the Falklands, Northern Ireland and Iraq. After leaving the regulars he continued his service with RMR Merseyside.

Mark won the United States Marine Corps Marathon in 1999 and was a GB Olympic Skier in 1992.

The Reserve Forces Commando Course is a two-week test, the culmination of 15 months of hard work and dedication to earn the Green Beret in the reserve forces.

The longest and hardest of all the UK reserve forces training, the fortnight consists of a five-day field exercise, a 12-mile 'Yomp' or weighted march with 70lbs, followed by the same four

Commando tests endured by their regular counterparts.

The Commando tests are:

- An endurance course consisting of two-miles cross country with obstacles, followed by a four-mile run back to camp with a marksmanship test at the end – all to be completed in 73 minutes.

- The nine-mile speed march where trainees run as a body of men and carry 21lbs and a rifle – to be completed in 90 minutes.

- The Tarzan assault course which is a mixture of the high-rope assault course and bottom field assault course – to be completed in 13 minutes.

- The infamous 30-mile march across Dartmoor in eight hours carrying all their kit.

## Charity briefs

- HMS Sultan held its annual Affiliates Day for representatives from livery companies and professional institutes.

HMS Sultan enjoys close working relationships with the Worshipful Companies of Fuellers, Founders, Plumbers, Shipwrights, Blacksmiths, Turners and Engineers.

The invitation was extended to include the professional organisations that offer accreditation to HMS Sultan courses: IMarEST, IMechE, The IET, RAeS and Nuclear Institute, and WISE.

- Tickets are now on sale for Battle Proms, a summertime picnic concert in aid of SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity

Concert dates for 2019 are:  
July 6, Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire; July 13, Hatfield House, Hertfordshire; July 20, Burghley House, Lincolnshire; August 3, Highclere Castle, Hampshire; August 10, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire.

To buy tickets visit [www.battleproms.com](http://www.battleproms.com)

- A whopping £30,000 was given away to Service and local charities and good causes at a special reception at HMS Sultan.

A total of 46 recipients were presented with donations from funds raised at establishment events, by Captain Peter Towell, the Commanding Officer of HMS Sultan.

Donations were made to a wide spectrum of beneficiaries, ranging from The Mayor of Gosport's Charity Appeal and youth organisations including scout groups and cadet units, right through to charities aimed specifically at supporting the infirmed or elderly.

- Sailors and staff throughout HMS Collingwood said a fond farewell to Commander David Johnston, Executive Officer at the Base since January 2016.

Navy and civilian colleagues lined Collingwood's Royal Sovereign Avenue to wish Commander Johnston well as he marched to the Main Gate where he ceremonially handed over the cane to his successor Commander Mark Walker.

- A logistics firm director has reached new heights after climbing Africa's highest mountain for charity.

Mark Elward, who lives in Worcester, scaled Mount Kilimanjaro in aid of Turn to Starboard, a sailing charity helping Armed Forces personnel affected by military operations.

The challenge saw Mark and two friends climb almost 6,000m high to reach the top of the mountain at Kilimanjaro National Park in Tanzania. He was inspired to trek to the summit in aid of the charity as part of his ongoing support to help injured veterans.

- A group of students from Fareham College visited HMS Collingwood to undertake some navy-style fitness tests.

The group were all studying for the college's Extended Diploma in Uniformed Public Services, which gives a flavour of life in the armed forces and police. As part of this course, the students were put through their paces by HMS Collingwood's Physical Training Instructors.

- A Royal Navy Reservist has hosted 'The Big Brew Up' in aid of SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, at the Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron.

Leading Seaman Nick Hickman, of the Royal Navy Reserve unit HMS Vivid, organised and ran the tea and cake sale to raise over £160 for the charity.

The event was attended by personnel from across the British Forces Gibraltar community and included His Excellency the Governor and his wife, the Squadron's Lady Sponsor, Mrs Lorraine Davis and Commander British Forces, Cdre Tim Henry.



# Triumphant trek brings in grand amount of funds

A TEAM of 15 personnel from HMS Triumph successfully completed a 267-mile 'Run to Remembrance' to raise funds for the RNRMC.

The relay event saw them leave HMNB Devonport and run for five days, arriving in London at the Victory Services Club ahead of the Submariners' Remembrance event at Middle Temple.

Thirteen runners split into six teams to ensure they all ran the same distance and they were accompanied by two support crew.

Glorious autumn sunshine heralded day one with everyone in good spirits and up for the challenge. Members of the public donated throughout the route to CTCRM Lympstone, with several only too happy to provide the 'wets' at the changover points.

A very frosty chilly start to the day saw WO1 Richard Burton and ET(MESM) Aaron Vout set off from CTCRM to RNAS Yeovilton. There was considerable elevation to contend with but again everyone was in good spirits and POET(WESM) Steve Hillman's relentless banter was keeping everyone amused.

The team overnights at 40 Commando's Norton Manor Camp at Taunton and enjoyed a recovery session in the unit's swimming pool, led by Sgt John Jackson.

Day three was tough, with 66 miles to cover, 11 miles per team. Some were now achieving personal bests along the way and the drive and determination



possessed by the team was beginning to show.

English Heritage were kind enough to grant free entry to Stonehenge.

On arrival at Larkhill Garrison at Andover, the team enjoyed excellent accommodation, with en suite showers.

Day four was the big one. Each team had to complete around 12 miles each with the last team CPOET(WESM) Adam Grigg and LT Sam Jacques having 13.4 miles to cover.

Slowly the team entered the London area.

Through Hampton Court Park, Richmond Park and then through Putney to Putney Bridge.

The final day saw the entire team run together to Victory Services Club, where they were met by the head of the Submarine Service, Rear Admiral John Wheale and Command Warrant Officer Submarines Andy Knox.

The effort has so far raised £2,854.96. The submariners who took part are: CPOET(WESM) Adam Grigg, LT Sam Jacques, WO1(MESM) Burton, POET(WESM) Steve Hillman,



PO(SSM) Steve Dawkes, PO(SC) Tom Whiteside, POET(WESM) Jonnie Baines, LCS Jack Dudley, LS Ben Webb, LET(MESM) Summers, LET Charlie Butterwick, LET Owain Williams, ET(MESM) Aaron Vout, ET(WESM) Adam Owens and ET(WESM) Mike Snell.

Report: CPOET(WESM) Adam Grigg

# Injured sailor's brighter future

A SAILOR who suffered a horrific injury that has jeopardised his career in the Royal Navy, has been given hope of recovery following support from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Johnathon Bulleyment, a Leading Hand with the Royal Navy, was playing rugby for his ship HMS Westminster when an opposition tackle left him with a life-changing injury to his arm.

"I was running down the wing and got picked up and dumped on my neck. It caused me to have a severe dead arm, but it wasn't until a few days later I realised something was wrong."

The ache in Johnathon's arm persisted as he went about his duties on board HMS Westminster. It became so uncomfortable that he had to visit the sickbay, where they suspected he may have torn his bicep.

Following a more in-depth consultation with doctors, the extent of the damage to Johnathon's arm was discovered.



"I've got a tear in the labrum of my right shoulder and potential nerve damage to the root nerves. I was devastated when the doctor told me."

The injury has severely limited movement to his right arm and he can now no longer lift it above his waist. This has meant that Johnathon has been unable to deploy on active duty and has been confined to desk work, potentially facing medical discharge. He also been unable to properly exercise since his injury.

After being encouraged by his physio to find a way to participate in exercise, Johnathon started to make enquiries about obtaining a specialist recumbent trike that he can use to aid his recovery and keep fit.

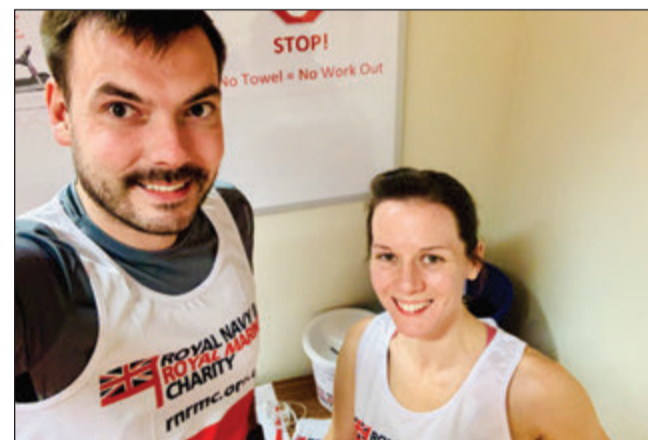
A recumbent trike is an easy-to-ride bicycle that enables riders to sit in a reclined position and control the direction of bike from controls at waist level. Through collaboration between the RNRMC and Help for Heroes, Johnathon was able to secure funding for a customised trike.

"I've had the trike two weeks. I absolutely love it," he said.

"I cycle to work every day now. It was very easy to reach out to the RNRMC, from having the form sent to me, to the constant contact over the phone – it was just brilliant."

With RNRMC assistance, Johnathon is now able to exercise frequently with his recovery ongoing.

He plans a 24-hour charity cycle along Southsea Esplanade to raise funds for the RNRMC.



## Team go Dutch at 24-hour run

TWO leading hands organised a 24-hour charity run in aid of the RNRMC at their base in the Netherlands.

LH Cullen and Kearney, pictured above, both work at NATO HQ Allied Joint Force Brunssum and involved RAF, Army and international NATO civilian colleagues in the event.

The challenge took place within the JFC Gym utilising the treadmills and, due to the extra participants, the organisers quickly realised they would exceed the 100-mile target.

The 24-hour event saw competitors run 277 miles, more than twice the distance than the organisers had hoped for.

The distance equates to the length of the Grand Canyon or 4.170 times the length of the English Channel or 5.10 times the length of the Panama Canal.

The event has so far raised £927.50.

## Ripples of success as families given support

THE support network, the Ripple Pond, has seen families from a naval background thrive after funding from the RNRMC.

Following an RNRMC grant of £5,000 last year, the Ripple Pond has reported that the 'self-help support network' offered to families from the Naval Service, has had an overwhelmingly positive impact.

The Ripple Pond was created by the mothers of two seriously wounded servicemen who recognised that there wasn't enough support for family members following the injury of a loved one and recognised the difficulty of coping.

The organisation gives members a safe space, both physically and mentally, by offering services that include; group meetings, a unique 'buddy system', an online forum, accessible support and confidentiality.

Although a tri-services charity, it is with RNRMC funding that the Ripple Pond provided support to 90 naval families in need of help.

One user, who wished to remain anonymous, said: "Exactly two years ago today, I sat and cried my eyes out as my husband left for six weeks to start a journey on recovery with his mental health at Combat Stress."

"I was scared, nervous, confused and lost without my sidekick. I didn't know where our future stood and tortured myself thinking about every single possibility but we beat the odds and he came back a whole different man. We have spent the last two years falling in love with each other again and making so many memories."

"We've made new friends for life."

Visit [www.theripplepond.org](http://www.theripplepond.org) or call 01252 913021



## Ann helps diversity team win

CPO Ann Miller-McCaffrey collected an award alongside her Army and RAF colleagues as collectively they were named Diversity Team of the Year.

For the past two years the Armed Forces Diversity Engagement Team has been spreading the word about the Services, with the goal of raising awareness about what the UK military does and the opportunities it offers, especially working with communities that don't traditionally engage with the forces.

The team 'myth bust' a wide range of subjects such as perceived barriers and inclusion, and they develop relationships with faith/community leaders and influential people across society.

That work saw the team singled out at the European Diversity Awards in London's Natural History Museum.

"There's always a buzz when you are recognised for your work," said Anne.

"We know that we are doing some great engagement work and this recognition reaffirms that. It also demonstrates to other organisations and sectors that the armed forces are truly inclusive."

## Help-to-buy extended to year's end

THE initiative to help military personnel get on the housing ladder has been extended until the end of 2019.

The Forces Help to Buy scheme has loaned more than £242 million to 16,000 armed forces applicants since its introduction in 2014.

The scheme allows military personnel to borrow a deposit of up to half of their annual salary – interest free – up to £25,000 to contribute towards buying a home, building an extension on their current one or moving to another property.

The loan can be used towards a deposit and other costs such as solicitor and estate agents' fees, and can be repaid over a period of up to ten years. It can also be used to pay for an extension to someone's existing home.

## FOST hosts Brunei trainers

ON THE back of recent Anglo-Brunei amphibious exercises in the Far East with HMS Albion and the Royal Marines, a delegation of three Brunei officers spent a week in the UK to look at the training RN sailors receive.

Led by Cdr Kharil RBN (Commandant Naval Training) and accompanied by WO1 Daz Longley (assistant weapon engineer liaison officer to the Royal Brunei Navy), the trio spent five days with the team from FOST South.

They witnessed numerous OST serials as well as receiving briefings on the workings of the FOST organisation.

The team also took the opportunity to visit the firefighting and damage control simulators at HMS Raleigh across the Tamar in Torpoint.

It's your 2-6 – so contact Sophie Dennis ([sophie.dennis100@mod.gov.uk](mailto:sophie.dennis100@mod.gov.uk)/93832 5500) to include items.



# It takes a Co

YOU'LL have read about HMS Dragon's Indian Ocean drugs busts by now (page 5 if you haven't...).

What you might not know is that the sailors and Royal Marines aboard the Type 45 destroyer weren't the sole Brits involved in the operation.

Fifteen hundred miles from the scene of the action, the take-down of the smugglers was being directed by the Combined Maritime Force, the coalition of 33 nations committed to security at sea in the Middle East region.

It runs three task forces – 150, 151 and 152 – responsible for dealing with piracy, smuggling, trafficking and criminal activity from the tip of the Gulf to the central Indian Ocean.

The actions of all three are choreographed from headquarters in Bahrain and, like the international naval groups prowling those 3.2 million square miles of sea, the HQ staff is a multi-national affair... with a fair smattering of Britons among them.

Leading Writer Sophie Bennett works in the outer office of Commodore Steve Dainton – the RN's senior officer

in the Middle East as UK Maritime Component Commander. He's also deputy commander of the Combined Maritime Forces.

Her primary role is to manage the commodore's diary, ensuring that his day runs smoothly, and to be the first point of contact between the commodore and the 33 nations in the Bahrain HQ.

"The best part of my job is the variety – no two days are ever the same, and I enjoy the responsibility of being the commodore's personal secretary," she said.

"I also appreciate what a great opportunity it is to work with personnel from the 33 nations, as well as in the tri-service environment with people from the Army and RAF."

When not being Cdre Dainton's secretary, she's quite often his driver – and driving in Bahrain isn't like motoring around Portsmouth or Plymouth.

"It's not something I ever thought I would do and to say I've needed to learn fast would be an understatement," adds Sophie (pictured right in the golf buggy which serves as a regular method of transport across the sprawling US-UK base in Bahrain).

"It is an opportunity

that I have enjoyed and is a prime example of the variety that comes in this role. I'd like to now think that if I can drive here I can drive anywhere."

As with all Bahrain-based RN personnel, she lives in the new Naval Support Facility which opened early last year; before the en suite accommodation was made available, Brits serving in the kingdom could be scattered across Bahrain.

The new facilities are more secure, cut down substantially on the costs of renting apartments, and help foster mess deck spirit perhaps lacking before.

Sophie continues: "We have been provided with a fantastic place to live and work, with such amenities as state-of-the-art gyms, opportunities to play sports against different nations and take part in regular adventure training and a newly installed coffee shop. In my opinion, utilising these services has meant that the team cohesion has, and will continue to grow."

Lt Persephone Hagan (pictured centre) is CMF's information operations officer, ensuring CMF influences the right people with the right effect, be they supporters of what the military are doing... or

## FOST commends his innovators

THE RN's head of training rewarded eight military and civilian personnel for their innovative efforts to improve/modernise the way we instruct sailors and marines.

Rear Admiral Will Warrender, Flag Officer Sea Training, presented 2 Star commendations at Admiralty House in Devonport to men and women in his huge organisation who have made an outstanding contribution, demonstrated innovation in their place of work, had a significant impact on FOST as a whole, or had a positive impact on recruitment and training operates.

Lt Peter Jonstrup (Royal Danish Navy) was commended for his innovative work with FOST South; SLt Amy Lockyer for her work in Commander Core Training's (COMCORE)

area; WO1 Kevan Stoddard for his work during disaster-relief exercises staged at Bull Point in Plymouth; and WO2 David Mallinson RM for his work as head of group equipment support workshops for 1 Assault Group Royal Marines.

"This is all about recognising what you have achieved over the last 12 months. You are all good examples of people in the Navy who go above and beyond what is expected of them. I am very proud of you," Admiral Warrender told recipients.

Unable to attend proceedings were Jamie Smith, a swimming pool lifeguard at HMS Raleigh; reservist Lt Cdr Martin Hibbert for his work setting up Devon University Royal Navy Unit; and CPO Duncan Tillyard for his innovative work in firefighting training.

## RFA head meets US counterpart

THE head of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary showed off the pride of his fleet, new tanker RFA Tidespring, when the latter took a break from refilling carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The 39,000-tonne tanker hosted Rear Admiral Dee Mewbourne and other senior figures from US Military Sealift Command when she paid her maiden visit to Norfolk, Virginia.

Every two years, the Commodore RFA – presently Cdre Duncan Lamb – crosses the Pond to discuss the latest developments and challenges facing naval logistics and support.

Military Sealift Command is half the RFA's age (formed in 1949, compared with 1905) but, given the US Navy's size, considerably larger. It regularly provides sustenance to RN vessels around the world... just as the RFA does for the American fleet.

An evening reception, hosted by Commanding Officer Captain Richard Davies RFA, aboard Tidespring formally kicked off the visit. Tidespring arrived in Norfolk with HMS Queen Elizabeth – the ship she's designed to support, and has been filling up during her fast jet trials off the Virginia coast.

Cdre Lamb and his US MSC counterpart Rear Admiral Dee Mewbourne toured both British vessels and discussed carrier strike group support with the RN task force commander, Cdre Mike Utley... a discussion which continued with a visit to the nuclear powered USS George HW Bush which dropped in on the Solent earlier in the year.

## How Flexible Service could affect you

NOW live is the 'Discover Flexible Service'... where you can learn about, er, flexible service and what it means for you.

The virtual help centre provides details on new flexible working options, including working part-time and limiting separation from home base for agreed periods.

It also helps you to understand what Flexible Service will mean to you and shows the impact of the selected option(s) on pay, leave and X-Factor.

For sailors and Royal Marines looking for flexibility for shorter or longer periods than Flexible Service allows, the tool signposts to information about other flexible working options and Reserve

service.

The impact that Flexible Service will have on pensions is not included in this tool - that information will be incorporated in the pensions calculator which is due to go live in mid-2019.

In the interim, from early this year, you will be able to request a Flexible Service pension forecast which shows the impact of a range of Flexible Service options.

Discover Flexible Service has been developed as part of Discover My Benefits which will be released in 2019.

To find out more, click <https://flexibleservice.mod.gov.uk>.

### Where to look

#### GALAXY BRIEFS

13-2018 – Offshore Patrol Vessel Batch One (OPVB1) Retention In Service

#### DIBs

2018DIB/16 Forces Help To Buy: Pilot Home Purchase Loan Scheme Extension

#### DINs

##### 01 Personnel

DIN 2018DIN01-140: Welsh Rates of Income Tax

DIN 2018DIN01-142: Naval Service Medical Board of Survey (NSMBOS) Dates for 2019

DIN 2018DIN01-143: Royal Ascot Race Meeting Armed Forces Charities Day – 21 June 2019

##### 03 Defence Policy and Operations

DIN 2018DIN03-028: Military Aid to the Civil Authorities – Immediate Assistance

DIN 2018DIN04-199: Direct Supply of Nurses Badges and Police Shoulder Slides

##### 07 Training and Education

DIN 2018DIN07-123: Adventurous Training Expeditions Morocco 2019

DIN 2018DIN07-125: Expedition Slots at the Joint Service Sub Aqua Diving Centre in 2019

DIN 2018DIN07-128: Biathlon

Rifle Security, Administration and Training

##### RNTMs

###### 01 Personnel

RNTM 01-070/18 Diversity and inclusion objective – further guidance

RNTM 01-072/18 Removal of the warfare senior upper yardman taskbook

RNTM 01-073/18 Colour perception standards for entry to the air engineering technician and accelerated apprentice (air engineering) branches

RNTM 01-074/18 BRd3(1) Naval Personnel Management – publication of October 2018 edition

RNTM 01-075/18 Offer of self-assessed body mass index during Royal Navy fitness test

RNTM 01-078/18 Redesign of current exit procedure across all naval services

RNTM 01-079/18 Changes to the Air Engineering Fast Track scheme

###### 03 Defence Policy and Operations

RNTM 03-048/18 Paper charting in P2000

###### 05 Management, Organisation and Business Practice

RNTM 05-022/18 Corporate gifting policy

RNTM 05-024/18 Income Generation guidance

RNTM 05-026/18 Guidance for Commanding Officers with

personnel wishing to appear on TV programmes

###### 06 Safety, Health, Environment and Fire

RNTM 06-014/18 Safety of clubs, associations and Adventurous Training activities across the naval service

###### 07 Training and Education

RNTM 07-074/18 Course block bookings – timeline and process

RNTM 07-075/18 Equality, diversity and inclusion advisor and assistant advisor course booking for naval personnel

RNTM 07-077/18 Able rates leadership course (ARLC)

RNTM 07-079/18 Seaman Specialist seminar and evening function 28 Feb 19

###### 09 Honours, Awards, Royal and Ceremonial Events

RNTM 09-017/18 Volunteering for RN ceremonial events 2019

###### 10 Sports and Social

RNTM 10-026/18 Narrowboats Emma, Andrew and Trafalgar availability 2019

RNTM 10-027/18 New Forest lodge Shorefields holiday park

RNTM 10-028/18 Continuous at Sea Deterrent (CASD) 50 dinner

RNTM 10-029/18 1st Patrol Boat Squadron Fourth Annual P2000 Commanding Officers Alumni mess dinner HMS Nelson March 14 2019

# Combined effort



officer for Combined Task Force 152, responsible for maritime security operations inside the Gulf.

His job encompasses anything from assisting with operational planning to delivering training on American computer systems. He is also an informal liaison between the RN in Bahrain and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) navies.

"The best part of the job has been seeing the wider picture and broadening my knowledge of the area," Lt Nash explains. "It has also been interesting working as part of a senior staff at early stage in my career. I have relished working with all the different countries and often having to speak to four or five different nationalities in process of getting things done. Working with countries as far flung as Brazil and Canada, it shows the global reach of CMF."

Beyond the day job, Lt Nash enjoys the many distractions which keep sloth and boredom at bay.

"When not at work, there are plenty of opportunities to do 'phys' – much more than there would be at sea," he says.

"The weather is also great. NSF is a great place to live and there's a constant throughput of people with ships coming and going which keeps it interesting."

opponents. Working with people from every inhabited continent brings its challenges. Each country has its own way of doing things, so cultural sensitivities and political relationships between the member states need to be considered – but it is that variety which makes a posting to CMF interesting for the reservist.

"The best parts of the job are working with the other nations. They all bring different ideas. I also really enjoy developing new info-ops initiatives. This is a great

job for thinking about how we can get our message across to those people that really matter," she said.

When things are quiet, there is the opportunity to get to know Bahrain. Lt Hagan enjoys exploring the island and understanding how the locals think:

"I enjoy visiting culturally-significant places. It is interesting and helps me understand the way people from this area live and how they view the wider world," Lt Hagan adds.

Lt Tom Nash (main picture) is training and development

# Royal Marines share polar skills in Poland

DEEP in the forests and lakes of eastern Poland, Royal Marines are teaching troops from four nations the art of surviving – and fighting – in winter.

Commandos – the UK's experts in Arctic warfare – were dispatched to Bemowo Piskie, 130 miles north of Warsaw, to share their expertise with Battle Group Poland – a multinational force of around 1,200 motorised/mechanised troops whose composition changes every six months: currently Americans, the Queen's Dragoon Guards, and soldiers from Croatia and Romania.

The battle group is part of NATO's increased presence in eastern Europe to provide reassurance and military support to Poland and the Baltic states to meet the rising challenge posed by Russia.

In winter, Masuria is one of the coldest parts of Poland, blanketed by snow, temperatures fall below zero, and an icy blast from the east adds an evil wind chill.

Even in late November, the Battle Group troops had to contend with temperatures down to -5°C and freezing rain... which is where the Royal Marines come in.

They have decades of experience of training in Norway, living and fighting in temperatures as low as -30°C, experience they shared with the rest of the battle.

"Preparation is key – I brief the soldiers on what to expect, which breeds confidence," explained Colour Sergeant Ron Taylor, a RM instructor at the Land Warfare Centre.

"It was a great idea for the Army to cross train with the Royal Marines to share our



● Winner, winner, chicken dinner... A Royal Marine instructor demonstrates the art of living off the land

Picture: Sgt Sarah Kirby, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment

knowledge and skills to be able to tackle cold weather climates.

"After spending so much time in warm weather environments, it's good for soldiers to learn how to adapt and use this equipment to be able to go harder and longer in this cold weather. It's important to make sure soldiers are properly equipped and professionally prepared."

He and his comrades ran through the gamut of tests 'winter soldiers' face: living off the land, building shelters, navigation by day and night, spotting the signs of hypothermia and treating it, and the dreaded ice-breaking drill – falling through ice into a lake, then clambering out again with the aid of your skis.

"I had some reservations at the beginning of the course, because of the unfriendly weather," said Romanian 1st Lt Catalin Staret, Deputy Commander of the Black Bats, Battle Group

Poland's Romanian Air Defence Detachment.

"But now I have to say that it was really great. It was a unique and demanding experience for me. In Romania, this kind of course takes place, but I have never had the opportunity to participate.

"It was very interesting, informative, and I learned many hands-on survival skills and tips. Working with the British was like working with my colleagues.

"They have been really professional, and have shown devotion and commitment in everything they do. I am glad that I have participated in this course and whenever I get the chance to work with them, I will do it."

The training concluded not in the field, but the classroom: a written test, which covered cold weather medical care, principles of survival and navigation techniques.

# Kelly zeroes in on RN skills

OLYMPIC heptathlete Kelly Sotherton learned about the broad range of apprenticeships on offer in the RN when personnel showcased their talents at the World Skills Show.

The 42-year-old, who took bronze at the 2004 and 2008 Games in Athens and Beijing, is now a motivational speaker and champion of young people and dropped in on the show at Birmingham's NEC to learn more about the Navy's role.

Engineering, logistics and submarine apprentices showed her how to fix a helicopter tail rotor, prepare chocolate galleons and remotely control a rollerball designed to simulated a search and rescue exercise.

And she joined Leading Steward Katie Stone in preparing a mocktail for a formal reception.

"The Navy has allowed me to work, train and travel at the same time. I am also looking forward to getting new skills – the Steward and Catering branches are joining together, so I'm excited that I will be able to do some more training and get some chef skills," explained Katie, who worked in pubs and restaurants before joining the RN. She now has a NVQ Level 2 in Hospitality and a Level 3 in Business Administration.

Leading Aircraft Engineering Technician Katherine Jennings, who represented the Royal Navy in an aero engineering contest, used to fix equipment in McDonalds. "Then I saw the TV advert that said 'if you can fix a bike you can fix things in the Royal Navy', and I thought that's me!"

"It is worth going through all the training as you come out with so many qualifications – there are so many opportunities to learn



with the Royal Navy."

And Petty Officer David Smee, a Merlinterturnednuclearsubmarine engineer outlined the long list of qualifications he's earned/completed during his career.

"I started as an aeronautical NVQ apprentice and my subsequent training has given me points towards an aeronautical foundation degree," he said.

"I was offered the opportunity

to transfer to the Submarine Service and I now use my engineering knowledge on a nuclear submarine.

"Now I am studying for a BEng Mechanical Engineering Degree with the University of Highlands and Islands – they have developed a distance learning course which makes it easier for submariners to study when we are on patrol."

Picture: LPhot Ben Corbett

## 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 WOs, 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.anneda513@mod.gov.uk



## Gunners' VC tribute

GUNNERS paid their respects to one of the doyens of their branch when they made a pilgrimage to Portland.

Jack Mantle received a posthumous VC for attempting to defend HMS Foylebank from ferocious Luftwaffe attack on the eve of the Battle of Britain.

He manned the starboard pom-pom gun, continuing to shoot at waves of Stuka dive bombers even after his left leg was shattered by one of 22 bombs to hit the anti-aircraft ship.

He continued to fire too when the power failed, remaining at his post until he succumbed to his injuries.

Today's successors to the leading hand are the Above Water Warfare (AWW) specialists who receive some of their training at HMS Collingwood's Mantle Hall, where there's a selection of close-range gunnery simulators.

Petty Officer Jonathan Hinchcliffe took his team to Portland for the day to pay their respects, with the Fareham base's Rev Roland Wort leading a short service of remembrance, followed by a wreath laying and the *Kohima Epitaph* read by WO1 Lee Hendrickson, the Officer in Charge of the section.

## Hermione line up Hull

HMS Hermione's 2018 reunion went down well with a couple of new members Steve White (still serving) and Chaz Calver welcomed into the association fold.

Several former crew of the Leander-class frigate were also invited to Buckingham Palace for Prince Charles' 70th birthday bash.

The Hermione Facebook page is growing rapidly; new members are added weekly.

And the 2019 reunion is already planned for the Village Hotel, Henry Boot Way, Priory Park, Hull, from May 17-19, with rooms at £50 per night (single) and £60 (double).

To get the discount, contact association honorary secretary: [stevebrotherton@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stevebrotherton@yahoo.co.uk) / 01482 427 110.



# Tents for when life is too tense

**LOOSE tweets sink Fleets – so an updated version of a WW2 public information campaign warns.**

But a well-placed, well-timed one can save lives.

Former soldier Gary Weaving wrote just ten words when he sent his first tweet three years ago: I have never felt so alone since leaving the army.

Out of that single message grew a veterans' charity – Forgotten Veterans UK – and now a retreat for men and women from all three services to relax, clear their heads and get some help if life outside the Forces becomes too much for them.

The 'basha retreat' in the grounds of Portsmouth's historic Fort Cumberland has been set up to allow veterans to 'pitch camp': throw up a tent or just some tarpaulin over a couple of branches (a basha in army parlance) where they can re-live life in the field alongside fellow veterans, and get help and support on a range of issues and problems.

Each 'basha bay' is named after ordinary men and women – "VC winners have enough plaques," says Gary – who've either been

killed in the line of duty or have taken their own lives as a result; "it's their service that killed them," Gary stresses.

So there's a bay dedicated to eight Royal Marines killed when the fort was bombed at the height of the Battle of Britain. And another to army medic Cpl Channing Day, killed serving with 40 Commando in Afghanistan in 2012.

One might have been named after him, for back in 2015 he had considered taking his own life – until he saw TV presenter/actor/personality Stephen Fry talking about his mental health issues and how Twitter helped him.

That sparked the self-confessed luddite to take to social media. Within six weeks of his first tweet, he had 7,000 followers and realised "there were many Gary Weavings out there".

He was invited to Westminster to talk about veterans' issues as a result and before long had set up a charity – "run from under my stairs" with the help of around 30 volunteers.

It endeavours to provide whatever a veteran in need requires: help with food, school

uniforms for kids, pay some bills, access to counselling, job-finding assistance such as CV writing, or just a sympathetic ear.

The retreat is very much a personal crusade for the charity's founder; he's racked up over £17,000 debts setting up the site.

"If I can save one life, it's worth every penny," Gary says. "I don't want any family to go through what I went through."

And a lot do. In the 11 months to the end of November, at least 61 veterans took their own lives last year.

"Britons are very good at remembering their war dead, We need to remember to help the living," he points out.

Hence the retreat, which you can book at [www.forgottenveteransuk.com](http://www.forgottenveteransuk.com).

"It doesn't matter where you have served, or when, or what service. There's a natural bond when you get together. Veterans helping fellow veterans are a very powerful force," Gary says.

"Anyone is welcome. Just bring your washkit and clothes. We'll provide the rest. If in doubt, come down here and get your basha out."

## RNA £30k help for Drumfork

THE Royal Naval Association has made a major contribution to revamp a families' centre in Helensburgh.

It's pumping £30,000 into the Drumfork Club, which is undergoing a £3m revamp to serve the needs of the growing submarine community on the Clyde.

The Churchill Square club has served service families for many years, but had fallen into disrepair.

When welfare and naval base leaders sought to breathe fresh life into the centre, families told them they wanted childcare facilities and somewhere for groups and associations to meet.

The result is one of the largest projects ever undertaken by the RNRMC.

When Drumfork reopens later this year, it will feature a registered day nursery, coffee shop, chapel and multi-activity spaces for groups.

The centre will be a lifeline for families relying on each other for emotional and practical support while loved ones are away – and will help reassure deployed personnel that their families have the best possible support in their absence.

"As an ex-Faslane submariner, I am very aware that ways to support and bring naval families is vitally important – when loved ones are dived on operations and out of contact," said Paul Quinn, RNA General Secretary.

"We all know that it is way past time that the club is modernised and we look forward to seeing it in full swing before too long."

## Axminster prepare to bow out

AND after a two-year struggle to find new members to inject fresh blood into the branch, Axminster will be calling it a day later this month.

After many active years, the branch has been reduced to just three members – making it no longer sustainable.

Hon Secretary Bill Sheppard and shipmates have reluctantly taken the decision to lay up the branch standard at the regular Sunday Service at St John Baptist Church in Membury.

Any branch members past and present or veterans are welcome to attend/support the three remaining members on the day should contact [billesheppard@outlook.com](mailto:billesheppard@outlook.com) or 01404 881338.

## Engineroom Association calls it a day

AFTER 44 years of celebrating the work of stokers past and present, the Royal Naval Engineroom Association has sadly laid up its standard for good.

Declining numbers, age and ill health has forced the closure of the association.

Its remaining funds have been distributed among the Acorns Children's Hospice in the West Midlands, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, and the Sea Cadets.

The standard was laid up during a service at St Anne's Church, Moseley, Birmingham, alongside the old one.

## Old geezers in the boozer

MEET the self-proclaimed **RM Old Geezers**, enjoying a pre-Christmas get-together in Chichester to remember the good old days at nearby RAF Tangmere.

The famous Battle of Britain airfield was also home to a Royal Navy Special Communications Unit – in fact, they were the last occupants of the base, long after the RAF and Army had left the West Sussex site. They finally left in 1978 to move to a specially-built unit at HMS Mercury (also now defunct) near Petersfield.

With Wetherspoon's closed, the

Foundry in South Street served as the new venue for the reunion of the comms experts, many of whom still live in the West Sussex area.

Many a tale of derring do was shared; every man served extensively on ships, submarines and at foreign stations and all were Royal Naval intelligence collectors in various ways.

The group gets together twice a year, with a summer reunion planned for the Isle of Wight – meaning a spot of sea time on the ferry...



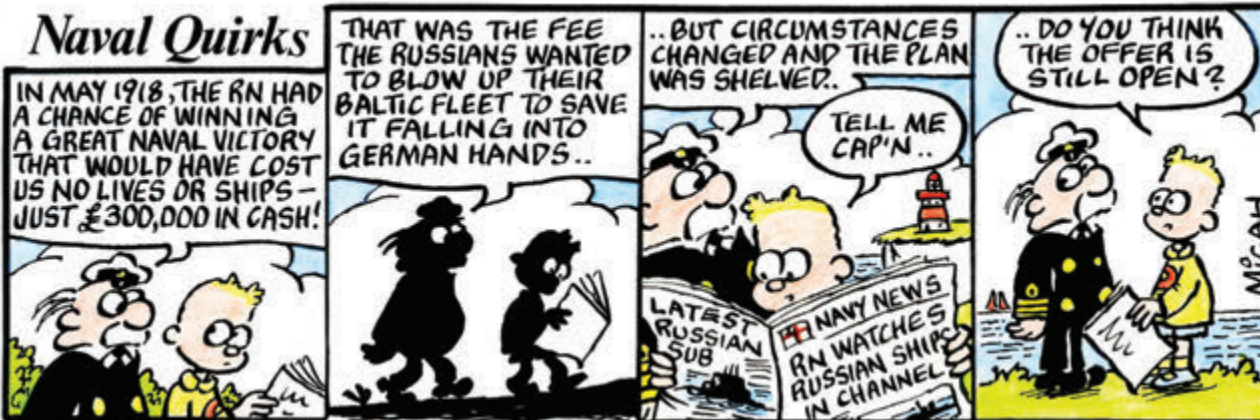
## Lost medal?

DID you leave behind a medal at Tyne Cot cemetery during Armistice commemorations in November?

The British War Medal, 1914-18 was found by gardeners after November 11 ceremonies in the graveyard outside Passchendaele.

The medal was awarded to AB William Andrew Murphy and it's thought one of his descendants was at the Belgian cemetery to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War.

Anyone who knows the owner should contact the Commonwealth War Graves Commission on [media@cwgc.org](mailto:media@cwgc.org).





## WW1 relic returned to German Navy

A PROPELLER from a U-boat – once the scourge of the Royal Navy – has been donated to the Germans as a mark of friendship, 100 years after WW1 ended.

UC-75 was lost in the North Sea in May 1918, bringing to an end a 14-month rampage during which she sank or damaged more than 65 merchant vessels and warships.

The boat was finally sunk off Flamborough Head in May 1918, rammed by destroyer HMS Fairy as it tried to attack a coastal convoy. Fairy was so badly damaged in the collision that she too sank shortly afterwards.

The propellers were subsequently illegally salvaged from the wreck and were probably going to be melted down as valuable scrap – but were recovered by police in North Wales.

One is now in the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth; the second was returned to the German Navy for display at its memorial/museum in Laboe, near Kiel.

The 280ft red-brick structure – a tower in the form of a sail – is to German sailors what the three Royal Navy monuments in Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham are: national memorials to those lost at sea in the two world wars.

Beneath the tower is a hall of remembrance, where the propeller was rededicated in the presence of senior German and British naval officers, serving Matrosen (the German equivalent of matelot), politicians and naval historians.

“These propellers – one here in Laboe and the other in Portsmouth – mark a further deepening in the relationship between the UK and Germany,” said Vice Admiral Rainer Brinkmann, Deputy Inspector of the German Navy. “They also serve as a reminder to the youth in both nations of our combined history, loss and most importantly future partnership”.

“I am delighted to play my part in returning this propeller to its home in Laboe,” said Captain Andy Ewen, the Royal Navy’s attaché in Berlin.

“The story of UC-75 continues here with a clear message of reconciliation between our nations. Let this propeller be a symbol for those who committed their hopes for tomorrow to protect our freedoms today.”

The memorial service was accompanied by the chime of the ship’s bell of the battle-cruiser Seydlitz, seriously damaged at the Battle of Jutland (Skagerrakschlacht to Germans) and the laying of 23 wreaths.

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association.co.uk



## Island gathering to remember WW1 cruiser loss

LIEUTENANT Commander Steven Carroll and Air Vice Marshal David Niven prepare to cast a wreath into Church Bay, just off Northern Ireland’s Rathlin Island.

In the waters below lie the upturned wreck of cruiser HMS Drake, sunk 101 years ago by a German submarine at the height of the first Battle of the Atlantic.

Members and family from RNA Limavady branch and RBL Ballycastle made the ferry crossing to Rathlin Island to remember the 18 men lost when the cruiser was torpedoed.

They were killed by the blast, but the rest of the ship’s company managed to transfer to other vessels before Drake capsized and sank just offshore.

One hundred and one years later, veterans groups and dignitaries gathered in Rathlin Island’s parish church, St Thomas’, to remember those lost and hear an address by The Very Rev Victor Dobbin, retired Chaplain General to the Forces.

Afterwards, wreaths were placed on the naval war graves in the church graveyard, before everyone joined two ferries for the crossing back to the mainland – a journey interrupted by pausing over the wreck for a further act of remembrance and casting of an environmentally-friendly wreath into the waters of Rathlin Sound.



## Life’s still heaven for the men of D87

THE Geordie Gunboat is back... Just as Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson was announcing a ninth HMS Newcastle – the sixth ship in the future class of Type 26 frigates – the men who brought ship No.8 to life, the ever-popular Type 42 destroyer, held their first reunion.

Former stokers Steve Green and Ian Evans decided the time was right to hold a get together of matelots from D87’s first commission (1977-83).

A spot of help from former AB Alan Bateson and the power of social media and hey presto, 37 former crew mates and their

wives gathered in Jesmond’s RBL club to celebrate the old girl (the destroyer paid off in 2005 and was broken up three years later).

With almost 40 years passing since many of the former matelots had last seen one another it was an evening of rekindling old friendships and of making new ones too.

Delighted with the success of the inaugural get-together, Steve and Ian are now planning another reunion for 2019 – you can keep in touch via Facebook: search for ‘HMS Newcastle’ and ‘HMS Newcastle Old Crew’ to find the veterans’ pages.



# Home fires burning

A DAY of stunning public events – including a fiery beacon lighting up the Scottish night – ensured Rosyth and West Fife marked the centenary of the end of the Great War in style.

Even before November 11 ceremonies, shipmates were active attending services in Dunfermline (November 9) and Douglas Bank Cemetery in Limekilns, home to the annual remembrance service led by HMS Scotia (November 10).

Armistice Day began at 6am with a Beacons of Light Ceremony at Inverkeithing Garden of Remembrance where 11-year-old Brooklyn Morris piped the lament *The Battle’s O’er*.

Five hours later all were back for the traditional service of remembrance, led by Inverkeithing Pipe Band and with standards paraded by Rosyth & West Fife Branch RNA, SCC Rosyth, RCT Association, Royal Signals Association, Boy Scouts and Inverkeithing Masonic Lodge.

There was a huge turnout for the event and the salute was taken by Commander Gary Mills, Senior Naval Officer MOD Rosyth, and branch president Lt Cdr Alan Bayliss.

At dusk, six coaches arrived carrying participants in the evening’s main event: school children from ten local primary schools, a brass band from Glenrothes, a pipe band from Burntisland, Boy Scouts, two squadrons from the Air Training Corps, a Company of Inverkeithing Boys Brigade and a troop of Fife Girl Guides. They were joined by 40 Rosyth Sea Cadets, a platoon from Rosyth and West Fife branch with their standard and the banner of Stirling branch on parade.

A large screen was used to display WW1

imagery, a 30-strong choir of youngsters performed a medley of contemporary songs – *It’s A Long Way To Tipperary*, *Pack Up Your Troubles* and *White Cliffs Of Dover* – and primary school children recited articles and poems they had written to mark the occasion. Their understanding of the occasion and the emotion they put into the pieces they recited were exceptionally moving.

Five Sea Cadets constructed a drum head for the Rev Mary Ann Rennie, Minister of Dunfermline Abbey, to lead a service which was followed by the *Last Post*, *Lament*, two-minute silence, *Reveille* and finally *Kohima Epitaph*.

The day ended as it began with schoolboy and piper leading the way, lighting the beacon to a huge cheer from the 500-strong crowd which included Fife’s Provost Jim Leishman, Clyde Naval Base Commander Donald Doull, representatives from the French and German Consulates, local councillors and a number of Senior Naval Officers attended proceedings. As the beacon blazed, guests were treated to a 20-minute fireworks which drew gasps of ‘wow’ from spectators.

That brought to an end 18 months of planning by the branch and one of the busiest weekends it has experienced in its history, thanks to help and support from local/national government organisations, the RN and scores of individuals who devoted time and money to ensure the anniversary of the end of WW1 was marked in style.

The branch has already embarked on the next stage of our Beacons of Light project: planting more than 100 trees in the grounds of participating primary schools.





Pictures: PO(Phot) Dave Jenkins and LPhot Kyle Heller

WITH its wingtip vortices trailing across a flawless Virginia sky, an F-35 Lightning bids farewell to HMS Queen Elizabeth at the end of two months of intensive fast-jet trials.

The first chapter in the complex 'operator's manual' for F-35/carrier operations can be written thanks to the success of the eight weeks of trials which, say those involved, 'eclipsed aspirations'.

The test variant stealth fighters returned to their base at Naval Air Station Patuxent River in Maryland after 200 short take-offs, 54 dummy bombing runs, 187 vertical landings, and 15 'rolling' landings – a technique unique to the UK allowing a Lightning to return to the carrier with a heavier payload.

The training package said RAF Squadron Leader Andy Edgell, chief test pilot, had laid the foundations for operations "for years to come".

He added: "This has been one of the most comprehensive flight trials at sea ever conducted."

He was one of four test pilots – three Brits (one FAA, one ex-FAA, one RAF) and one American – conducting the trials with the Integrated Test Force, backed up by team of 200 air engineers, scientists and aviation experts.

Weapons experts loaded various configurations of bombs and missiles on to the Lightnings, making use of HMS Queen Elizabeth's unique automated munitions magazine.

ITF scientists recorded masses of data from the ship and the jets; that data will determine the limits (weather, humidity, pitch and roll of the ship, aircraft weight) at which the Lightnings can safely launch from and land back on HMS Queen Elizabeth and her sister Prince of Wales; Andrew Maack, ITF chief test engineer, said the trials had been "phenomenally successful".

For naval aviator Commander Nathan Gray – the first person to land a jet on the new carrier – the two months off the Eastern Seaboard have underlined the decade-long effort by the RN to keep the flame of fast-jet operations alive since the Harrier was grounded.

"It has been phenomenal to get through a high-profile trial with such success," he said. "This is due to the skills of the designers of both the F-35 and the ship herself."

"It is beyond question that without the vision of the Royal Navy and the unfailing support of the ship's company we would not have achieved what we have done."

Captain Nick Cooke Priest, Queen Elizabeth's new Commanding Officer, who was in command for the



second phase of trials, said this autumn's trials had marked "a significant milestone on the Royal Navy's journey back to big deck carrier operations."

"The schedule has been busy and challenging and the results have eclipsed the aspiration, but this deployment has delivered far more than the initial integration of fixed-wing aircraft with the ship."

"It has re-introduced the true value that carrier capabilities bring to the UK and her allies, it has deepened our relationship with our closest ally, demonstrated our nation's engineering prowess and cemented our commitment to the future as a global navy."

Those words were echoed by Carrier Strike Group Commander Commodore Mike Utley: "This is positive time to be a Royal Navy sailor, a positive time to be Royal Navy aircrew and a positive time for the UK-US partnership in providing a greater depth of security across the globe."

Now back in Portsmouth (see the homecoming on page 7), the carrier is undergoing a lengthy period of maintenance and upgrades which will keep her in port until the spring.



WESTLANT 18 hasn't been a one-trick pony.

It's not solely revolved around the Lightnings.

Last month we featured the Jungle Merlins decamped to Quantico to practise rescuing downed aircrew from behind enemy lines.

This month, it's the turn of their submarine-hunting Cornish cousins who left the carrier to spend three weeks at the world's leading underwater warfare range. 820 Naval Air Squadron are charged with shielding the UK's aircraft carrier from unwanted underwater attention.



Nowhere better prepares them for that mission than a vast range in the Bahamas, AUTEK: the Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Centre.

It exploits a natural wonder – the Tongue of the Ocean, a gigantic deep-water bowl (20 miles wide, 150 miles long, some 6,000ft deep in places) carved out of coral.

It resembles the Rolling Stones' famous tongue logo – and sucks all the data it can out of those waters, courtesy of scores of sensors and hydrophones to determine how well a submarine, torpedo or sonar is performing.

Merlins last used AUTEK in 2008, since when the helicopter has been substantially upgraded, making it a much more potent submarine hunter.

That said, the team at the Royal Navy's Maritime Warfare Centre at HMS Collingwood, want to develop new tactics and methods to ensure Merlin maintains its position as a world-leader in anti-submarine warfare.

A challenging programme of tests was laid on as aircrew tried to hunt down unmanned underwater targets –

mimicking the characteristics of real submarines.

Air and ground crew toiled in tropical heat – still in the 30s Celsius well into mid-November, with high levels of humidity – but were fortunately spared the usual end-of-season hurricanes (although there were bursts of monsoon-esque rain).

None of which prevented the helicopters getting airborne – they clocked up 60 hours of hunting and never missed one of the many tests laid on for them – especially not the combined hunt at the end of the exercise which drew in US Navy Seahawks, American aircraft, maritime patrol aircraft and real submarines.

"AUTEK was a fantastic opportunity to really put the aircraft through its paces," said 820's senior pilot Lieutenant Commander Steve Moseley.

"The excellent facilities are perfect for allowing the aircrew to really push the sensors to their limits and understand how best to operate the systems to detect, track and ultimately attack targets in a wide range of underwater conditions."

"The trials were invaluable in ensuring that the Merlin remains a world-beating anti-submarine aircraft and, in concert with the technical expertise of our colleagues from the Maritime Warfare Centre, we are able to ensure that it continues to be for many years to come."

It wasn't all work for the crews – small groups left the base to explore the island's famous blue holes – geological features perfectly designed for sailors to jump in, despite threats of a mythical 'Sharktopus' sea monster lurking in the depths – and show off the impressive mosquito bites for which Andros is infamous.

"The tactical trials have been a huge success. The Merlin Mk2 has proven it possesses a world-leading anti-submarine warfare capability," said Commander Russell Clark, senior carrier strike/aviation staff officer at the Maritime Warfare Centre.

"The first-class support from 820 Naval Air Squadron's aircrew and engineers resulted in a successful series of trials and period of tactical development."

# TRAIL BLAZERS



# Poignant end to our hectic year

**NORTHAMPTON** Sea Cadets are reflecting on a busy and successful year.

The highlight of their autumn work was a trip to Ypres in Belgium, where they paid their respects at Commonwealth War Cemeteries and the Menin Gate.

The moving trip included a visit to Zeebrugge where the cadets took time to remember the action by the Royal Marines and the sailors of HMS Vindictive, HM Submarine C3 and many other ships where Victoria Crosses were won on St Georges Day 1918.

Commanding Officer Lt Chris Read said: "It was humbling that we were able to visit many of the locations where soldiers and sailors fought side by side in tough circumstances.

"It was moving to undertake the *Last Post* ceremony at the Menin Gate and I was delighted at the turnout of the cadets."

During the trip Cadet Eleanor Shoebridge found the memorial to her great-great uncle, Earnest Shoebridge who fought in the First World War.

The unit's Royal Marines cadets also performed excellently at the annual CATSEA assessment receiving a "good" grading which was a tremendous achievement.

The cadets were put through their paces by the HQ Royal Marines and tested in a variety of challenging situations.

The cadets thoroughly enjoyed the experience which stretched their teamwork and leadership skills, this was followed up with the detachment attending a successful advancement weekend. The unit gained a further five cadets passing for Lance Corporal and three cadets gained further steps towards their Corporal assessments.

The unit has also been afloat over the period where 12 cadets experienced adventure offshore in the Sea Cadets' Offshore power vessel TS Jack Petchey.

The cadets worked on the ship undertaking all tasks onboard and navigating the ship along the south coast from Gosport to Poole.

The cadets thoroughly enjoyed their time afloat building teamwork skills. The adult instructor team has also been busy developing skills with PO Stuart Tipler qualifying as Power Instructor, and PO Alex Hearn is on the National Officer Selection board for assessment as a potential Midshipman.

The unit has held some fun events as part of the training programme. It had a successful Halloween Evening where the cadets dressed up as ghosts and ghouls which was great fun and the annual bonfire night, which saw over 200 people in the unit for the evening. The bonfire night raised £300 for unit funds.

There was an excellent turnout at the annual remembrance parade with 94 cadets attending the parade and proudly marching through the town.

The unit had three sisters on parade, one in each cadet force.

The unit also supported the Thrapston Parade with two instructors and six cadets attending and Brackley Sea Cadets parade. Also during the evening the unit attended the beacon lighting of peace at All Saints Church.

The unit said goodbye to Cadet Sergeant Maxwell as he turned 18 after seven years of cadet service.

Recently appointed as the first Royal Marines cadet for the Northampton Mayor's Cadet, he has become a role model for his peers and a great example to the Royal Marines detachment in Northampton and the wider community.

He would be welcomed back to the unit after a short break as a volunteer, as he continues to work towards his aspiration of being a regular Royal Marine.

Petty Officer Cadet James was appointed by David Laing, Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire as his Lord Lieutenant's Cadet. POC James took over the duties from Petty Officer Cadet Aaron, who during his year in post supported many local events including a visit to the county by Prince Harry.

First night back in the new year will be Friday January 4 with divisions and the next opportunity for new cadets to join the ships company.

The Sea Cadets are recruiting now for cadets and adult volunteers. Anyone interested in becoming part of the team should contact the unit.

Northampton Sea Cadets meet on Tuesday and Friday evening and Northampton Junior Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets meet on a Wednesday and Friday evening from 7pm to 9.15pm at their headquarters in Nunn Mills Road, Northampton.

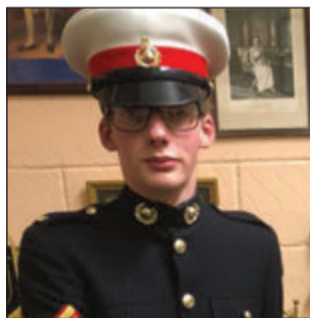
Northampton Sea Cadets can be found by visiting [www.northamptonseacadets.org.uk](http://www.northamptonseacadets.org.uk).



● Northampton cadets aboard the TS Jack Petchey



● Cadets in Zeebrugge, above, and at the Menin Gate, left, in Belgium



● Cadet Sergeant Maxwell; Lord Lieutenant cadets with David Laing



● Royal Marines cadets had a great time at their Advancement Board



● Lt Rees-Swindon owes her ascent to the Cadets

## Climb up the ranks down to Cadets

LIEUTENANT Mikaela Rees-Swindon joined the Royal Marines Volunteer Cadets (VCC) at the age of ten, and it's been part of her life ever since.

She credits her experiences as a cadet for granting her the opportunity to join the Royal Navy and ascend the ranks to become an established Commissioned Officer.

"Being a young Royal Marines Volunteer Cadet taught me many personal skills which I still use to this day," Lt Rees-Swindon said.

"As I could not join the Royal Marines originally, once leaving the Cadets, I chose the Royal Navy and joined as soon as I could as a Wren Writer.

"With more experience gained in the VCC, particularly leadership, I was able to really compete for Commission, which I received in 2011.

"I would recommend joining the cadets to all young people, but also to adults, serving or not. "The opportunities are endless and ultimately make you a better person."

Having moved to Devon in September of 1988, a young Rees-Swindon found herself with little to do in her newfound home. She joined the local Cadet Corps simply as a way of forming new friendships in unknown surroundings.

Little did she know that the Royal Navy organisation would lead her to a life-long career in the Navy ranks.

Bounding out of the Corps at 17, entering the Navy forces as a young recruit, it wasn't long till her ascension up the ranks began.

Establishing herself as a Leading Hand early on, Lt Rees-Swindon assumed command of her unit at the age of 23, eventually receiving commission in 2011.

The Royal Navy has been with her most of her life – going from the burning ambition of a young cadet to the continued passion of an established Lieutenant officer.

Now calling the headquarters of Joint Forces Command home, the skills and experiences she received in the Cadets are still held in high regard by Lt Rees-

Swindon.

She still hugely credits those formative years as being responsible for shaping her as a member of the RN, and as a person.

To some extent, she never really left the VCC.

Now the Deputy Commander of the Ministry of Defence-sponsored organisation, assuming the role two years ago, Lt Rees-Swindon now leads in the development and training of today's wave of young and aspiring cadets.

She describes it as the greatest honour, to be able to give what the Corps gave her, to another child.

"They're more than just normal kids," said Lt Rees-Swindon.

She believes the Corps really impacts the development of the young people.

Imparting her knowledge and teaching them all a sense of discipline and respect, she believes that those in her groups really end up becoming a 'cut above the rest'.

With a sincere appreciation of the development, Lt Rees-Swindon waxes lyrical on the criteria of admission, or more appropriately, the lack of it. Everybody's welcome in the VCC, no matter their background.

Lt Rees-Swindon believes her experience in the VCC, both as a Cadet, and as now Deputy Commander, has really aided her in her day-to-day duties.

"Just spending time with my group, getting to know them as individuals, it really helped me develop this whole new level of understanding of the people around me," Lt Rees-Swindon said.

"You appreciate people's different experiences so much more, and it really helps you work well with others – understanding they're different to you, and have different perceptions of the people and environment around them.

"I just cannot describe how important it is to me, to pass on the Cadet experience to so many amazing young people, and encourage them to follow a career and a life in the Navy, much like I did."

## Returning from front

SEA Cadets from all over Severn District took part in a day of commemorations which culminated the end of acts of 100 years remembrance within the County of Gloucestershire.

Gloucestershire Sea Cadets and staff supported the event commencing with a 'return from the front' steam train from Toddington GWSR station arriving at the racecourse platform (CO and two cadets from Tewkesbury) joining the larger parade of 40 cadets and staff forming part of the tri-service contingents parading.

Outgoing Lord Lt Dame Janet Trotter and incoming Lord Lt Edward Gillespie were present, commending the smartness and thanking all concerned.

Organised by Lord Rupert DeMauley, the parade culminated with a marchpast for the Princess Royal.

First World War aircraft were on display, along with re-enactments, and the part horse played in the war.

Around 20,000 visitors looked over the act of remembrance and parade, not least the four million viewers on ITV and Channel 4 racing Live on Sunday.

Sea Cadets were also joined by contingents from the Rifles, Mounted Cavalry, Waterloo Band of the Rifles, The Glosters, ACF, CCF, and ATC.



ROYAL HOSPITAL SCHOOL

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Meoncross is a school that consistently achieves high academic results, including impressive value-added scores.

Headmaster Mark Cripps believes that this success is linked, not only to small class sizes and highly-trained and talented staff, but is also the result of the school's strong focus on personalised learning, which allows every student to realise their full potential.

Whilst academic excellence remains a top priority, the Meoncross ethos is that emotional wellbeing and happiness are crucial to educational success. The school

places a great deal of emphasis on providing a robust and rigorous pastoral programme which focuses on students' mental and emotional resilience, confidence and independence.

Mr Cripps recognises the critical role played by parents in children's education, and is therefore fully committed to building strong home-school partnerships, including ensuring effective communication at every stage of a child's educational journey.

Meoncross recently celebrated outstanding GCSE results that were significantly above the national averages across the board: 91 percent of students achieved grade 4 and above (including mathematics and English), and more than twice the number of the highest grades (7 to 9) were achieved compared to national

performance. 41 percent of all grades awarded were at 7+, which is double the national average. In addition, 12 percent of all grades awarded were the new, highly-demanding grade 9, which is three times the national average.

**LOCATED** in Portsmouth **St John's College**, a day and boarding school for boys and girls aged two to 18, has enjoyed a long and established history of educating students from service families.

Our aim is excellence for all our students. No matter what their particular strengths and starting points, we do everything we can to help them realise their full potential. This is why St John's College students thrive.

Lieutenant Commander Raeburn, who has two sons at

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# all our students

St John's, said: "After returning from a foreign posting we became increasingly aware that our children would need a much greater level of stability in their education."

"St John's College was most accommodating. They looked at my eldest son's academic performance and were exceptionally helpful in reassuring us that they could quickly pick up the slack where he had been disadvantaged in a foreign system."

"After returning to UK we have had an excellent relationship with the school and as a result my younger son also enrolled."

Situated in the heart of Southsea, the school has excellent communications to the rest of the country. As it is based in a naval town we were pleased that if the boys had any problems they were able to contact our friends in the service, based in Portsmouth, at short notice.

Visit us during our next open morning to learn more about why students thrive at St John's College: Saturday March 23, 9.30am – 12.30pm. To book telephone 023 9281 5118 or visit our website.

SET in 200 acres of Suffolk countryside overlooking the River Stour, the **Royal Hospital School** provides a full and broad education enriched by its naval heritage and fit for the modern world.

Headmaster Simon Lockyer said: "We inspire our pupils to have the courage and commitment to be ambitious for their futures, whichever path they choose."

"Everyone can achieve the most exceptional things but we are all different. That is why we focus on the individual, getting to know every one of our pupils and finding out what motivates them."

"By understanding a young person's strengths we can help them to make the right choices at the right time, navigating them

through their critical, formative years and ensuring that their education becomes the foundation for happiness and success."

As well as a balanced and enriched academic curriculum, the school has an established reputation for musical excellence, outstanding sports facilities, including an RYA sailing academy and the Graham Napier Cricket Academy, a large and committed Combined Cadet Force contingent and the opportunity to pursue a huge range of interests and activities.

With 450 boarders, there is a real sense of purpose and community where every child feels nurtured, supported and encouraged.

For more information about admissions, visiting and bursaries and discounts for naval families, please contact the registrar on 01473 326136 or [admissions@royalhospitalschool.org](mailto:admissions@royalhospitalschool.org)

**THE Duke of York's Royal Military School** offers full and weekly boarding with high quality continuity of education and pastoral care for boys and girls aged 11 to 18.

Set within 150 acres of Kentish countryside near Dover, the school is popular with parents serving in the armed forces and is supported by the MOD. It has academy status, which means boarding is offered at competitive rates as the education is state-funded.

Also, the parental contribution for those qualifying for the Continuity of Education Allowance drops to eight percent in September 2019, which only applies to state boarding schools such as DOYRMS.

As well as academic achievements, students enjoy an active lifestyle with sport, music, drama and over 70 clubs. The school has one of the largest Combined Cadet Forces and is a Duke of Edinburgh Awards centre.

This year's Ofsted report rates the school's leaders and managers as 'outstanding' and the school as 'good' overall.

Its military ethos and core values of courage, integrity, respect, commitment, loyalty and self-discipline touch all areas of school life enabling students to reach their full potential and develop a high level of maturity, resilience and social confidence. DOYRMS students 'look forward with confidence and look back with pride'.

WHEN you're preparing for a career in civvy street, it's important to know you're not on your own. The MoD is strongly committed to resettlement, and works closely with a number of organisations that can maximise your talents and help smooth the path into a job. One of the best known and most respected of those is the **Open University (OU)**.

You can choose from more than 400 OU modules across different subjects and levels. No matter what rank you've achieved, where you've served or what trade you're in, the OU can help you develop a career path for the future.

As you're in the Royal Navy, you may be eligible for financial support (whatever you choose to study). Our courses can be wholly or partly financed by Enhanced Learning Credits (ELCs).

You can adapt your study schedule around your military commitments, earning a valuable qualification wherever you're stationed, thanks to the OU's flexible, practical distance learning approach.

This includes 24/7 online learning you can do on a smartphone, tablet or laptop.

To find out how the OU could help you broaden your career horizons or become better equipped for civilian life, visit [openuniversity.co.uk/navynews](http://openuniversity.co.uk/navynews)

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- Continuity of education and popular with Armed Forces families
- Latest Ofsted rates school's leaders and managers as 'outstanding' and 'good' overall; strong GCSE and A Level results
- Applications open - weekday tours available by appointment only
- Active lifestyle with sport, music, drama, 70 clubs, one of the largest Combined Cadet Forces and Duke of Edinburgh Awards Centre



Parent contribution CEA drops to 8% from September 2019, only for state boarding, no education fees



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Looking forward with confidence, looking back with pride

**Deaths**

**PO REL (A) Norman J Leahy.** Served 1950 – 1973. Many Royal Naval Air Stations and carriers, including HMS Albion at Suez, HMS Ark Royal, detached service in HMAS Melbourne and 819 NAS based at RAF Ballykelly. Life Member of Limavady RNA since 1963. Died November 20, age 85.  
**Captain Keith Steele.** Served from 1948 to 1992. Joined as a cadet, trained at the RN Engineering College Manadon and undertook flight training with the USN in Texas and Florida. Served in Operation Musketeer (Suez, 1956) with 899 squadron, and then as a test pilot and AEO at RNAS Culdrose, RNAS Brawdy, and RNAS Lossiemouth through the 1960s. Between 1970 and 1975 he served in the Flag Officer Naval Air Command (FONAC) at RNAS Yeovilton, and then between 1975 and 1980 at the Naval Secretariat at the Admiralty, London. After working at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), Mons, Belgium, 1981-82, he completed his service as Senior Commander Flag Officer Plymouth at Mount Wise. Died September 2018.  
**John McKernan Scullion.** Served from 1945 to 1946 in HMS Mersey and HMS Trumpeter. Member of Norwich branch of RNA since September 1988. Died November 17, aged 91.  
**Nigel Weaver CPOMEA(L).** Served HMS Liverpool 1981 – 1985, HMS Victorious, Fife and Antelope. Member of the HMS Liverpool Association. Died November 18.  
**Patrick Nash AB UW.** Served

1944 – 1948 in HM Submarines Sirdar and Ambush. Member of Dolphin Branch. Died November 7, aged 95.  
**Alec Wood CPO. REL.** Served 02/55 – 03/63 in HM submarines Tally Ho (56) Trenchant (56-58); Sentinel (58-60) and Totem (60-63). Member of Dolphin Branch. Died November 12, aged 89.  
**William Seager CPO Coxn.** Served 01/55 – 01/73 in HM submarines Artemis, Excalibur, Tactician, Aeneas, Opportune, Warspite and Totem. Member of Gosport Branch. Died November 17, aged 85.  
**Eric Henshaw Sto.** Served 06/44 – 05/47 in HM submarines Tuna, Vox, Spiteful Torbay and Sanguine. Member of Manchester Branch. Died November 18, aged 93.  
**Cdr David J D James.** HMS Excellent, Collingwood, Warrior, and Sultan. RNEC Manadon. Admiral Commanding Reserves, C-in-C Naval Home Cd. Dir Naval Management and Organisation. Died November 2.  
**Cdr John Mankerty OBE.** HMS Diana, Osprey, Excellent, Jaguar, Lowestoft, Ark Royal, Warrior, and Excellent. RNC Greenwich. C-in-C Fleet. Died November 8, aged 83.  
**Cdr Maurice E (Edwin) White.** HMS Thermopylae, Oracle, Maidstone, Tapir, Tudor, Russell, Astute, President, Neptune, Resolution, Rooke, Swiftsure, Conqueror, and Splendid. Died November 24, aged 82.  
**Cdr David J L Wood.** HMS Shropshire, Sandwich, Pembroke, Excellent, Cleopatra, Mercury, and President, MOD Dir Naval Ordnance Div. MOD Dir Gen Weapons. Died October 26, aged 101.

**Lt Cdr RNR Richard D J Baker OBE RD.** (BBC Newsreader). Died November 17, aged 93.  
**Lt Cdr Sydney J Dean MBE.** HMS Eagle, Dryad, Bulwark, Glasserton, Hermes, Saker, Victorious, and Bulwark. ASWE, Capt Naval Operational Combat Systems Gp. Died November 15, aged 92.  
**Lt Cdr Peter L Rice.** HMS Zulu, Dryad, Achilles, Minerva, Plymouth, Raleigh, Lindisfarne, Neptune, and Centurion. FOSNI. HQ Baltic Approaches. NATO. C-in-C Fleet. Joint Planning Staff. Defence NBC Centre. Died November 10, aged 69.  
**1/O WRNS Rosemary N Ball.** HMS Pembroke, Collingwood, St Angelo, Dauntless, President, Nelson, Dir Naval Recruiting, RN Coll Greenwich. Died November 9.  
**Lt RM Francis X D Hull.** 3 PRO Coy RM, 117th Bde RM. Died November 4, aged 93.  
**Lt RM Ralph W Nye.** (Lt Col RAEC) HOC(Lt). Died November 19, aged 92.  
**Sub Lt RNVF Philip W Rich.** HMS Fulmar. Died November 6, aged 93.  
**Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC**  
**Cdr John D H B Howard.** HMS Fulmar, Lincoln, Heron, Excellent, Bulwark. 809 NAS. MOD Dir Naval Air Warfare, NATO, C-in-C Fleet, UK C-in-C Committee. Died November 16, aged 87.  
**Cdr Derek P Willan DSC.** HMS Gannet, President, Diomedea, Ilex, Shikara, Narvik, Princess Augusta. Died November 4, aged 101.  
**Lt Cdr Anthony E Johnson-**

**Newell.** HMS Sea Eagle, Pembroke, Lochinvar, Mull of Kintyre, Terror, Ambrose, Trespasser, Sidon. MOD Defence Intel Staff. Died November 21, aged 90.  
**Lt Robin B Taylor.** HMS Decoy, Albion, Alert. Died November 18, aged 87.  
**PO Raymond Harrison.** Served from 1951-1962. Served in HMS Loch Killisport (1955-57) and HMS Centuar (1960-62).

**Reunions**

**HMS Dunkirk Association:** Our reunion in 2019 will be held at the Hallmark Hotel in Chester from March 29-30. For further details please contact [jcarroll@jandecarroll.plus.com](mailto:jcarroll@jandecarroll.plus.com) or telephone 01692678721  
**HMS SURPRISE Association:** Our annual reunion will be held at the Hadleigh Hotel, Burlington Place, Eastbourne Sussex BN21 4HR From April 5 to 8. For information contact Geoff Prentice (Chairman). Telephone 01394 274813 or e-mail [geoff.prentice@virginmedia.com](mailto:geoff.prentice@virginmedia.com)  
**HMS Decoy Association:** Our 32nd reunion takes place at the Imperial Hotel, Eastbourne, from April 12-15. All former crew members of any commission are invited. Contact Malcolm 'Dobbo' Dobson on 01502 677395 or: email [dobbo.exrn@btinternet.com](mailto:dobbo.exrn@btinternet.com) for booking details.  
**HMS Hermes 4th Commission Cooks 1968 – 1970:** Our annual get together will be held in the Scarborough over the weekend of Saturday April 27. For further details contact [scouseenright@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:scouseenright@hotmail.co.uk) or 07884040041.

**BRNC 40th Reunion 1979 Spring Entry.** Planning is currently underway to hold a 40th anniversary reunion and dinner at BRNC for the 1979 Spring Entry, on Saturday May 25. Details of the event will be posted on the Britannia Association Website they develop. Additionally a closed group is established on LinkedIn. All former Officers Under Training who are interested in the event are invited to contact Steve Smith (Cunningham G1): via email [steve.smith329@mod.gov.uk](mailto:steve.smith329@mod.gov.uk)

**HMS Eagle:** The Friends of HMS Eagle reunion weekend will be held at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, Portsmouth, from Friday September 27 to Sunday September 29. All Commissions, plus wives/partners and guests welcome to help celebrate 47 years since HMS Eagle was decommissioned in Portsmouth. Meet and greet Friday evening; Saturday, visits and tours around Portsmouth, including the dockyard. Nautical gala dinner and traditional 'Up Spirits' enactment and nautical displays, followed by dancing and entertainment in the ballroom Saturday evening. Contact the main organiser, Danny du Feu. Email: [ddf.photography@gmail.com](mailto:ddf.photography@gmail.com) or phone 07711 083465

**Ask Jack**

**JOHN Pooley:** I am trying to contact my step-cousin, whom I haven't heard from for more than 40 years. We are both from South London and he joined the Royal Navy. He was the sailor behind the puppet AB Wilf, of HMS Ark Royal. Ruth Clements. [Ruthie.clements123@gmail.com](mailto:Ruthie.clements123@gmail.com)

**£50 PRIZE PUZZLE**



THE mystery ship in the November edition of *Navy News* (right) was HMS Loch Killisport, which was paid off in 1965.

HA Footitt, of Cambridge, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (above) is a fast patrol boat which was launched in May 1958. Only two of the class were built for the RN.

1) What was her name, and 2) who were the two vessels sold to? 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 February 14. 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 March edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

**MYSTERY PICTURE 287**

Name .....  
 Address .....  
 My answers: (1) .....  
 (2) .....

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**JAN 2019 No. 774: Founded 1954**

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in February's Noticeboard must be received by  
**JANUARY 14, 2019**

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## Crew learn the ropes for regatta

OXFORD URNU took part in the Dartmouth Regatta – their first time competing in this sort of race.

The crew, led by skipper Midshipman Miranda Bell-Davies, were accompanied by sailing instructor Chris Singer, who trains officer cadets at Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) to sail yachts and dingies.

The crew was able to get out onto the water on their yacht, a Contessa 32-class named Seahorse, to practise and hone their skills ready for the following day's racing.

Officer Cadet Hattie Sexton proved to be an invaluable asset to the team. She used her experience from previous years of yacht racing to help coach and guide other members of the team.

For four of the crew, it was their first time

on board a yacht and 'learning the ropes' had to be done quickly.

Setting off from Sandquay in BRNC, the fleet of four yachts from the college moved down the River Dart and out into the sea, along with many other teams competing in the regatta.

Officer Cadet Amy O'Regan said: "Seeing so many yachts in such a small space of water was terrifyingly exciting. It is a taste of what the rest of the regatta will be like."

Midshipman John Hawke used his skills as look out, relaying information of oncoming yachts back to the skipper – a job necessary for a precautionary time of the race.

The first day provided sufficient wind for three races to take place but the last was called off due to an increase in wind speed.

The crew of eight had a baptism of fire and worked well as a team.

The following days' races gave them the time to practise what they had learnt on the first two days.

All their hard work paid off when taking part in the Bay Race. Coming in to the last stretch of the race, Seahorse and her crew passed along the outside of both BRNC yachts and finished before them.

This unconventional tactic would prove worthy as it was later announced Seahorse came third in the race in their class. This was a huge achievement for the novice sailing team.

But their biggest achievement was coming second by half a point out of all the Contessa-class BRNC yachts.

Report by: Officer Cadet Ollie Tobin



## Behind the scenes with F1's Red Bull

MEMBERS of the Oxford University Royal Naval Unit had the opportunity to visit the Red Bull Team Formula 1 Factory in Milton Keynes, followed by an impromptu visit to Bletchley Park – the home of the UK's wartime code breakers.

The visit began with a welcome from the tour organiser, who then took the group to the car factory.

The tour covered a huge amount of detail for how components for the cars are developed, constructed, tested, monitored, repaired and enhanced.

The students were shown the modelling shop, where staff research and develop new car components including the use

of the team's wind tunnel, the machine shop, the electronics workshop, the paint shop, the operations room, the race bays, including a pit practice in progress, and the impressive Red Bull Hall of Fame.

Upon completion of the tour and during the transit back to the unit the coxswain, CPO Gary Maskell, noted that Bletchley Park, the home of the wartime code breakers, was nearby.

He then proceeded to arrange an impromptu and fascinating visit to the famous facility.

The Oxford URNU members that took part were: Lt Will Jones, CPO Gary Maskell, OCdt Hattie Sexton and OCdt Jackson Cooper-Driver.

# Air ambulance tour is success

STUDENTS were given the chance to look around an air ambulance base and learn about the different services they offer.

Wales URNU visited the Children's Wales Air Ambulance, Helimed 67, at Cardiff Heliport just a short distance from Cardiff Bay.

Naval aviator Lt Cdr Eifion Parry, commander of the unit, got in touch with the base's pilot Lt Cdr Alan Petch to organise the visit for some of his undergraduates.

The 28 students were allowed to tour the site, operated as a commercial enterprise by the Wales Air Ambulance Charity, which is 40ft above sea level and commands impressive views across the channel to the North Somerset coast.

URNUs provide undergraduates an experience of life in the naval service. In addition to spending weekends and vacation periods at sea in dedicated P2000 inshore training vessels, the students learn about the five fighting arms of the Royal Navy.

The visit to the Cardiff Heliport and Helimed 67 gave them a small insight into the Fleet Air Arm and they were able to compare the intricacies of Royal Navy aviation operations with civilian air ambulance services.

The visit began with an overview of the work of the four aircraft operated by Wales Air Ambulance from bases in Cardiff, Dafen, Welshpool and Caernarfon.

This was followed by a guided tour of the Cardiff base and an opportunity to look around the resident EC135 helicopter.

The students then had an opportunity to take to the skies, with a familiarisation flight in a visiting Merlin HC3 aircraft operated by 846 Naval Air Squadron (NAS).

The squadron is formally affiliated with Wales URNU.

After finishing their airborne tour of Cardiff and the Severn Bridges, the Merlin shut down at the heliport so the cadets could meet the crew - Lt Cdr Andy White, Lt Phil



Wray, PACMN James Macmillan and Sgt Joe Sladden.

The URNU personnel went on to receive a medical briefing from critical care practitioner and EMRTS Wales clinical team leader, Jason Hughes.

Jason explained the cutting-edge work done by the critical care practitioners, helicopter transfer practitioners and doctors who deliver medical care via the air ambulances; bringing events at the heliport to a poignant conclusion.

A busy day complete, Wales URNU left the heliport for their weekly drill night at nearby RNR base HMS Cambria.

This was then followed by a talk from Wales Air Ambulance's Catrin Hall, community co-ordinator in the fundraising department.

Catrin took the opportunity to present to the whole unit, including those unable to attend the heliport activities, all aspects of the charity's work.

The presentation was incredibly well received and a number of individuals



approached her afterwards to volunteer time to assist the charity.

Due to operational commitments, 846 NAS was unable to provide personnel to attend the drill night.

But in the best traditions of the RNR Air Branch, Lt Cdr Petch stepped up to deliver an overview of the Commando Helicopter Force (CHF).

Following the successful visit with Wales URNU, the crew of Helimed 67 look forward to further liaison with members of the naval service and opportunities to assist in raising the profile of the Wales Air Ambulance Charity.

Visiting Fleet Air Arm and other service and civilian aircraft are always very welcome at Cardiff Heliport. Full details of the service available are detailed in the RAF HLS Directory and/or Pooleys.

The Heliport offers BRd 767 and JHC FOB compliant secure parking and is just a short taxi ride from the bright lights of the Welsh capital.



## Guy Hudson remembered at annual dinner by Oxford unit

ENGINEERING was the theme of the annual Guy Hudson Dinner hosted by the Oxford URNU.

The unit's midshipmen and officer cadets invited senior Royal Navy officers and academic guests to the event in Exeter College, at Oxford University.

The theme for this year's dinner coincided with the Royal Navy's Year of Engineering and started with the Hudson Lecture, given by Commodore Jim Higham, Commander of Portsmouth Naval Base.

He spoke about engineering in the Royal Navy and emphasised the huge variety of roles available to engineering officers.

The lecture was well-received, drawing several engaging questions from the audience.

After a short reception in the Exeter College Chapel, the URNU members and guests had dinner in the main hall.

The dinner itself is co-hosted by the Oxford URNU and the Guy Hudson Memorial Trust. It follows the conventions and traditions of a Royal Navy mess dinner.

After the meal Cdre Higham, as the guest of honour, presented

the annual unit awards.

Midshipman Tom Murphy received the Coxswain's Prize while Officer Cadet Hattie Sexton got the Green Trophy. Midshipman John Hawke received the Hudson Trophy.

Jeremy Lee, a close friend of the late Guy Hudson, then gave a speech on the man himself and his legacy before guests retired to the wardroom at Falklands House.

The event is funded by the Guy Hudson Memorial Trust, with the Oxford URNU Commanding Officer's post serving as secretary and treasurer of trust's management board.

The trust was founded in 1997 and exists to "support the education, directly and indirectly, of Royal Navy and Royal Marines Officers at Oxford", through the use of a generous bequest from the late Lieutenant Guy Hudson.

In addition to supporting the unit, the trust provides funding for the Hudson Fellow, an annual appointment of a senior officer who spends a year in Oxford on an extended research project.

This year's Hudson Fellow is Commander Damian Exworthy.



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It is seven years since the fourth edition rolled off the presses – a gap which encompasses the end of operations in Afghanistan, the end of the Sea King and Lynx, the end of military SAR, HMS Queen Elizabeth's arrival on the world stage, the Type 45s all becoming operational, the Arab Spring and operations in Libya, the ongoing Mediterranean migrant problem and a resurgent Russian threat.

That's a sufficient amount of time, and a sufficient number of milestones and events to warrant a fifth edition. So here it is (£60, ISBN 978-0750982665).

*Royal Navy Day by Day* isn't a book you read, it's one you flick through, dip into and out of, frequently found opened at the relevant date in naval establishments across the land and beyond, or excerpts posted on daily orders to remind a ship's company what their forebears did.

It's not merely peppered with facts and dates, but also biographies of key figures or VC winners, precise accounts of actions (some major, some minor), and images culled from numerous sources, the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

Compiler Lt Cdr Lawrie Phillips builds on the research and knowledge of the book's original editor, Capt Tony Salisbury, who put the first edition together in 1979.

Lt Cdr Phillips came aboard to help with the second edition in the early 90s, then revised it again in 2005.

With Capt Sainsbury's passing in 2010, responsibility for the most recent editions has fallen to Lt Cdr Phillips... although the work is truly a naval family affair, for historians, professional and amateur, Royal Navy and civilians, have all had a hand in the tome (see the very lengthy list of acknowledgments).

The author takes as his starting point 1588 and the defeat of the Armada. In the 530 years since, there is not one of the 366 days in the calendar which is not etched in some annals of the RN: glory, tragedy, ceremony, bureaucracy.

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Feeling the (Tide) force

LADY Sarah Messenger, the Lady Sponsor of RFA Tideforce, has visited her ship in Falmouth Dockyard, ahead of the 39,000-tonne vessel entering service.

Having arrived at A&P Docks in Cornwall in August for customisation, the fourth and last Tide-class tanker is set to join the Fleet in 2019, where she will deliver fuel and water to warships on operational service around the globe, alongside her three sisters; Tidespring, Tiderace and Tidesurge.

Lady Sarah was shown around Tideforce by Captain Jonathan Huxley RFA, where she got a chance to chat with some of the crew and see the work currently being carried out on the vessel.

The customisation work at Falmouth has included the installation of communications equipment and defensive systems as well as bringing the ship into the wider RFA fleet.

Lady Sarah said: "It is great to be on board Tideforce in Cornwall.

"The ship is only a metal box with computers to make it work, what really makes it special is the beating heart of the people who work in it and the service you provide to the Royal Navy."

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## Hungry team Eger to improve

THE Royal Navy Table Tennis Team are eager to improve, so, naturally, went to Eger in Hungary to do just that.

As part of an effort to establish and develop a strong challenge at 2019's Tri-service Table Tennis competition, the Royal Naval Table Tennis Association, headed by Captain Tim Currass, have put together a training and development programme.

This started for five members of the hungry Royal Navy Table Tennis Team when Lieutenant Rich Galpin arranged for an intense week of high-quality coaching in Eger, Hungary.

The team consisted of Lt Galpin and Molyneux-O'Callaghan – AKA Richie and Lucy – along with CPO 'Pony' Moore and PO's Ade Ware and 'Medz' Meadows.

Rich said: "The training camp was over a five-day period with the day split into two three hour sessions. Session one was made up of intense technical drills focusing on improving forehand and backhand skills, with session two comprising of serving drills and match play."

After the training was over, the team had a couple of days to enjoy the local hospitality of Budapest.

PO Ware said: "It wasn't just about the table tennis it also allowed for the team to bond and socialise outside of the work environment."

On top of this, two Royal Navy teams are participating in the Gosport and Fareham Table Tennis League this season, for the first time in two decades.

The first match saw the Royal Navy A Team win, taking the match eight games to two.

Capt Currass took all three of his singles matches, with Lt Galpin and PO Ware winning two singles matches each.

Capt Currass and Lt Galpin then took the doubles match to secure maximum points with an 8-2 win.

The Royal Navy B team commenced their campaign managing to win three of ten matches and securing a point with Lt Molyneux-O'Callaghan completing her hat-trick.

This season's league campaign which is building on the recent Eger trip has seen great success.

League matches will continue weekly until April 2019 when the Royal Navy will take on the Royal Airforce and Army at the Inter Service Championships.

If you are interested in playing table tennis, at whatever level, please contact Lt Richie Galpin at [richard.galpin374@mod.gov.uk](mailto:richard.galpin374@mod.gov.uk).



● Vessels from Britannia Yacht Club, which has been relaunched, out on the water

## Hawaii Eight-0 fly wounded flag

INJURED Sailors and Royal Marines from Hasler Naval Service Recovery Centre, based at Plymouth's HMS Drake, have returned from a trip of a lifetime after taking on the challenge of the Na Koa Regatta, in Hawaii.

In total, eight sailors and Royal Marines were given the chance to compete with American Wounded Warriors and Australian Purple Warriors, in traditional Hawaiian Outrigger Canoes.

"We first heard about the plan to enter two teams at the regatta in May, at the daily brief," said Royal Marine Conor Newman.

"After being told it was in Hawaii, there were plenty of volunteers and we started training on Dragon Boats on the River Exe. Alongside this, we started strength and conditioning programmes from preparing us for the competition which we were all dying to win."

After a long flight out to the Pacific, they acclimatised and got to know their surroundings, before seeing the Outrigger Canoes for the first time and meeting retired Colonel Penny Kalua, who took them for a training session.

Both teams did well and were all feeling optimistic about the main event the very next day. The Hasler team also attended the social events held by the sponsors to bring together the competitors and servicemen from the events and get to know their counterparts from across the globe.

Conor continued: "The opening ceremony was a reminder of why this event takes place and an opportunity to remember those personnel that are no longer with us."

"Once out on the water both teams were successful in their individual heats, seeing both teams comfortably through to the semi-finals. Hasler 1 was in a very tough race, alongside the Australians, who finished third the year before and twice the Na Koa Regatta champions.

"However, despite these odds we won our semi with a good time, but this wasn't enough to get into the finals, and unfortunately Hasler 2's boat finished second in their semi-final."

"The day culminated with the awards ceremony and we had the opportunity to introduce the Americans and Australian to the history of 'The Baton'. Which is an actual handle taken from Afghanistan stretcher with a poem inside, written on parachute silk by an injured Royal Marine, reflecting on his battlefield injuries. The idea of passing The Baton is to share this message so it is never forgotten."

NSRC Hasler looks after patients in the armed forces with significant injuries or illness that needed rehabilitation and support. Part of that pathway involves partaking in recovery activities. Some are more mental stimulating; others are physical challenges.

"The Na Koa Regatta was a great opportunity to challenge the guys and meet up with others with similar injuries," said Leading Medical Assistant Gemma Yorke, part of the Hasler NSRC Staff.

● FORMER members of the Britannia Yacht Club (BYC) are being asked to get in touch as the club approaches its 60th anniversary.

The club, which was originally founded in 1959, has been re-launched at Britannia Royal Naval College with Captain Jol Woodard, the current Commanding Officer of BRNC, taking on the role of commodore.

The fleet of five Contessa Yachts based at the college and sailed by the BYC allow for training, skill development and team racing. The BYC Committee is keen to renew the annual dinners and have agreed to host the next dinner on Thursday June 20.

To get in touch former members should write or email the Secretary, BYC, BRNC, Dartmouth, [david.roberts173@mod.gov.uk](mailto:david.roberts173@mod.gov.uk).



● From left, Bryn Phillips, Katie Syngge, Philip Boak, Natalie Mayes, Andy Stay, Pete Belcher, and 'Smudger' Smith

## Magnificent seven put in superb run

SEVEN members of the Royal Navy/Royal Marine Running Team competed in the Marine Corps Marathon in Arlington, Virginia, and Washington DC.

The marathon itself is one of the largest in the world, popularly dubbed 'The Peoples Marathon'. It is also the setting for the 'Challenge Cup', an annual sporting competition between the RN/RM and their American Counterparts in the US Marine Corps.

The marathon kicked off at 0755 sharp, followed by 26.2 hard miles, taking in some of the key landmarks of the United States capital.

The top three male RN runners all put in a sub 2 hour 45 minute performance, achieving personal bests (PBs) and finishing in the top 35 out

of the 20,715 runners who took part. The female team did incredibly respectably, led by Katie Syngge, who finished as 5th female overall.

Despite these performances, the USMC emerged victorious, taking the Challenge Cup for 2018.

However, the RN/RM still retain the overall lead, with a resounding victory ratio from past events. The next benchmark for the team is the London Marathon, held on April 28 2019.

Anyone interested in competing for the Royal Navy at road, cross-country or on the track should contact WO2 Pete Belcher RM by emailing [peter.belcher216@mod.gov.uk](mailto:peter.belcher216@mod.gov.uk) or search RNRM running on Facebook and Navyfit websites.



● Culdrose Car Club's Ford Fiesta ST150 in action at Castle Combe

CULDROSE Car Club tested themselves on track at Castle Combe ahead of next season's Armed Forces Race Challenge (ARFC).

It was touch and go for a while – with some last-minute repairs to the club's Ford Fiesta ST150 made by LAET Chris Dowson (824 NAS) – but they managed to turn out on the tarmac.

The early track sessions are used as 'sighting' laps, so those who had not driven at Castle Combe before could take the opportunity to follow the safety car for a couple of laps without the pressure of being in the way of quicker cars. Quickly, that

progressed, and they were soon flying around the circuit, with confidence building all the time.

The afternoon was what you call, 'open pit', so the sessions are more flexible, allowing maximum numbers out on track. The guys continued to develop their skills through the afternoon, with the car performing excellently.

"We were often keeping up with other similar and tuned versions of our Fiesta," said POAET James Cantwell.

"A track day is not strictly competitive, but, is as close as you can get without big investment."

## Things are going downhill rapidly



● A member of the Royal Navy Winter Sports Association in action. Picture: LPhoto Joe Cater

THINGS went rapidly downhill for 200 Naval Service personnel recently as the Royal Navy Winter Sports Association hosted the Indoor Snowsports Festival at Milton Keynes' Snozone.

For skiers and snowboarders alike, it was the first time for some on the snow and a chance for others to blow out the cobwebs ahead of this month's Alpine Championships. There was also a competitive side to the festival.

Skiers and snowboarders raced against the clock down the 180m long and 100m-wide slope.

For the alpine disciplines the jumps of the slalom-style course proved a challenge with the blue and red banana gates getting the better of some.

The boarders riding on the same slope got to grips with the course with some good results and had the additional

challenge of the slope-style course to show off some of their tricks and turns while airborne over the jumps.

Association Chairman, Rear Admiral Jon Pentreath adding: "It had been an excellent day and thanked those that had found time in their busy schedules to attend and looked forward to meeting everybody at the forthcoming Alpine Championships in Tignes this month".

For all those that have never skied or boarded before, the Alpine Championships offers an excellent opportunity to be taught to a high standard by instructors and for those that have discovered the magic of the mountains and all they can offer, further details can be found in the **2018DIN10-036**.

## Volleyball team make flying start to season

The UKAF men's volleyball team kicked off their National Shield campaign with a comfortable win over Newcastle Staffs 2.

The NVL Division III side were serving and swinging hard throughout, but it was not enough and UKAF took them down three sets to one.

The two-day training camp prior to the fixture saw UKAF in good stead to deal with a well-drilled National League side.

The addition of Cpl Kev Colton RAF to the passing unit added some important

consistency to the UKAF service reception.

This allowed AET Josh Wainwright to cause chaos for the opposition through the middle, and for some powerful hitting from Cpl Alex Clare RAF on the wings throughout all four sets.

After taking their foot off the gas just enough to let the opposition claw back the third set, UKAF regained composure in the fourth and produced some strong serving of their own in front of a rowdy Staffs crowd.

UKAF took the set 25-19 to win the match.

## Farewell to a Royal Navy cricket legend

TONY Izzard, one of the all-time greats of Combined Services and Royal Navy cricket, died in November after a short illness, aged 70 years.

Portchester Crematorium was packed as cricket paid a lasting tribute to the Gosport-based sporting all-rounder, who spent 25 years in the Senior Service, having joined in 1967 and rose to the rank of Lt Cdr, *writes Mike Vimpany*.

In a tribute, Rear Admiral Roger Moylan-Jones RN, reflected: "Tony made a massive contribution to Navy and Services cricket whilst he was serving, which continued of course, thereafter both as a player for US Portsmouth and then as an umpire in senior recreational cricket circles.

"I was a great admirer of his dedication to the game, and of his considerable all round skills which he consistently strived to improve - he was an extremely accomplished performer in a game he loved

"I knew Tony since he was first breaking in to the Navy side, and over the years we played together in many Navy and Combined Services teams; we last played together in the mid 1980s for an HMS Daedalus side, when I was in Command, which won the Navy Cup."

Rear Admiral Roger Moylan-Jones was a long time Services team-mate of Tony Izzard and is now president of Devon CCC, for whom he played Minor Counties cricket.

Tony, pictured, who began service life aboard HMS St Vincent, the Gosport-based shore establishment in 1967, was a prolific player for the Royal Navy and Combined Services over a 16-year period from 1973 to 1989 before becoming a hugely respected umpire for both RN and CS, as well as across the Southern Premier League.

Promoted to Officer rank as a Lt Cdr in 1979,



he spent 25 years in the Senior Service, though little of it at sea!

An imposing all-rounder, he played 50 matches for CS, scoring almost 1,500 and recording a fine century against Oxford University on his 'home ground' of Burnaby Road in 1984.

He captained the Royal Navy on numerous occasions, helping them win the Inter-Services Championships several times.

Tony was a very clean striker of a cricket ball and opposition sides were always conscious any total or target was gettable while he remained at the crease.

In the field, he was a brilliant catcher at slip or in the outfield, and a very useful right-arm medium-pace bowler, who latterly turned to off-spin.

Alongside sibling brother Mike, he played his early club cricket for Hayling Island (as an 11-year old) before the Izzard family moved to South Yorkshire and a quickly emerging Tony played for Sheffield United CC.

Upon his return to the south coast, Tony played for South Hants Touring Club before joining United Services upon their entry to league cricket in 1979.

He became a stalwart of the United Services club, captaining the Burnaby Road club for eight seasons and playing in 121 matches in the Hampshire and then Southern Premier League before turning his attention to umpiring on and off the field, standing in many RN, CS and SPCL matches whilst also being a leading member of the Hampshire ACO where he contributed through officials education and training.

A fine and highly respected cricketer, Tony became an excellent umpire.

You could tell from the way he officiated that he had played the game at a high level and understood what was going on around him on the field. Captains always found him a pleasure to work with: just the right level of authority.

Most players would never dream of taking a liberty with him, but he was very human with it and never forgot what it was like to be on the players' side of the fence.

When not being involved 'in the middle' Tony managed the Burnaby Road catering for many years, always a cheerful face behind the bar ready to chat cricket at the first opportunity. He was one part of a remarkable double-act with his wife Sue, who produced arguably the finest cricket lunches and teas around.

# PARA-DISE



THE Royal Navy's **paragliding** team went out to Bassano in the Italian Dolomites mountain range to train with some of the UK's top paragliding pilots.

The Italian Alps delivered exactly what the team required – consistently good weather day after day and spectacular paragliding.

After a scoping out the best spots, practising safe landing techniques and sharing knowledge with local paragliders, they ran for the hills.

The first outing of the trip was an evening flight, the perfect time to get in the groove with smoother conditions with less thermal activity.

The paragliders soon stepped things up, launching from a steep matted area, where the gradient made take off challenging.

There were big names of the sport there too, Kelly Farina was spotted showing off his skills at the Bassano launch.

The area, in the north east of the country, offered some well-manicured take offs, some excellent thermal generators and even

consistently good conditions in the flat lands, allowing the team to find thermals to get high.

One of the moments of the week was taking off Panettone – which gets its name from the traditional Panettone cake which its shape represents – at Monte Grappa. At a daunting 1,500m up, the mountain take off is quite a challenge.

"I'm used to ridge soaring at Woolacombe dunes in North Devon which is just a three-minute 'top to bottom' to land on the beach, this flight was a 40 minutes top to bottom, straight down to the landing field at Garden Relais," said Lead instructor Alastair Andrews. "This was a refreshing change."

On the mountainside at Monte Grappa there is a World War One memorial, which the team visited on foot.

After a few days of training, the group were ready for more challenging conditions deep into the Dolomites.

"The Dolomites being far more touristy proved to be very busy and certainly ticked the 'flying with others' box for the pilot

competency. There were probably around 200 pilots in the air," added Alastair. "These sorts of conditions can be hugely challenging to avoid turbulence in the wake of others and most importantly avoid mid-air collisions."

Fraught with risks, the pilots also needed to be aware of cables from the mountain range's cable car – a dangerous obstacle for the light-weight frames of the paragliders.

However, the peaks in the area were simply awe inspiring and the team started with the small Campitello di Fassa, worked up to Sella Pass (2,218m), Col Dei Rossi (2,382m), Col Rodella (2,413m) and some pilots to the highest point in the Dolomites such as the Marmolada, which sits at 3,343m.

Dicky Bird achieved climbs of over 850 meters and got his first 42km cross-country flight. Buck Rogers demonstrated some early accuracy skills whilst flying some very challenging conditions in the Dolomites. Jerry Ovens made an excellent triangular route across to the Marmolada.

"Personally, I was very pleased to have over

three hours in the air on a couple of occasions and gain 959 meters above the take off," said Alastair.

Another highlight of the tour was 'gaggle flying'. Early on the final day the paragliders drove up high to an easterly take off.

This was far away from the landing site and required significant cross-country skills to negotiate across multiple ridges to make it.

"With the site to ourselves we all were able lay out our wings at the same time and so took off in quick succession," he said.

"The conditions were strong and we got some very high climbs. Working as a team, we used the radios and each others' wings as visual reference points to ensure our success.

"Flying and working as a team relying on each other is far more successful than flying alone. We also really enjoyed practicing the flat land cross-country thermalling on the return. This was done just out the front of Bassano which was particularly special. I hope this skill can be transferred back to UK conditions where we lack the large mountains."

CHIEF Petty Officer Tim Forth, from HMS Raleigh, led six Service Personnel on a grassroots-funded Introduction to Gliding Course at Upavon Airfield.

Each of the service personnel was directed on the fundamentals of flying, taking control of basic manoeuvres and flying the airframes through a landing circuit. The airfield operates a winch launch system, propelling gliders to a height of up to 1,300 feet. The course ran over a weekend, in which participants were accommodated at Larkhill Army Barracks.

Both days of flying started with early morning fog, which initially reduced visibility to less than 100 yards. However, the fog soon disappeared and the first flights were away by late morning. Both of Wyvern Gliding club's members welcomed HMS Raleigh's staff, eagerly teaching them all manner of ground work by mid-afternoon.

CPO Forth said: "The Introduction to Gliding Course was a very successful weekend in terms of showcasing the world of gliding to complete novices and getting them airborne. They all achieved two launches over the two days spent there, coming away from the field with a very definite passion for the sport, showing definite interest in continuing with gliding and are looking towards their next weekend."

The Royal Navy Gliding and Soaring Association (RNGSA) is seeking new members. CPO Forth added: "The RNGSA to date has maintained an active presence in the Tri-Service environment competing in the Inter-Services Cross Country Championships in addition to running various expeditions and Development Weeks each year."

The course was run in collaboration with both Army Gliding Club Wyvern (AGC(W)) and Portsmouth Naval Gliding Club (PNGC). Wyvern is the largest gliding club within the Army Gliding Association, recognising gliding as a sport and an approved Adventurous Training.

## Come glide with me



// The parade gives the PTIs a chance to show their strength and fitness. //

Pictures by LPhot Kyle Heller



IT WAS a spectacular show of strength, fitness and agility at the Passing Out Parade of the Royal Navy's latest batch of Physical Training Instructors (PTIs).

There were acrobatics, rope climbing, club swinging, the horn pipe and pyrotechnics as family, friends and navy VIPs gathered for the event at HMS Temeraire, in Portsmouth.

The impressive displays showcased how far the LPTQC 64 PTIs have come during the 26-week course and celebrated the traditional ways sailors used to keep fit.

A short comedy sketch also entertained the crowd with the parade ending with a presentation of certificates, PT badges and

prizes by special guest Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Ben Key.

Petty Officer Physical Trainer (POPT) Karl Thorpe, based at Temeraire, said: "This parade is the culmination of 26 weeks of hard work. It shows how sailors in the Royal Navy kept in top shape while on the ships with the rope climbing and ladder routine.

"There is also the horn pipe and the club swinging which is a traditional part of being a PTI.

"We spend about 23 weeks planning the parade as we do it all out-of-hours. It is a day everyone involved looks forward to."

Around 120 people attended the parade which started with a

short video clip showing what the PTIs did during their course.

POPT Thorpe, 32, added: "It is quite hard to explain what it is we do so the clip shows the friends and families what we get up to. The parade also gives the PTIs a chance to show their strength and fitness and what they have achieved over the past few months."

The ten PTIs have been assigned to different bases across the UK. Those to pass out were LPT Martin Brazier, LPT Holly Cole, LPT Patrick Coy, LPT Sam Dew, LPT Tyler Dunmow, LPT Matt James, LPT Luke Machon, LPT Eldon Myers, LPT Charlotte Pape and LPT Bart Thomas.

# OARSOME

## World-class times at indoor championships



● Above, CPOPT Helen Richardson won the women's heavyweight 40-plus event; Left, an exhausted Ady Cherrington, watched by SLt Sam Cass; Below, WO1 Tiny Nash receives his 2km medal from Col Bede Grossmith, secretary of the UKAF Sports Board



● Lt Cdr Thomson rows the remainder of his Nebulite team relay, watched by, from left, Lt Fraser, Lt Moss, Lt Cdr Hyde, and WO1 Nash

**LEADING** Hand Natalie Thorpe grimaces as she bids for glory at the Royal Navy Indoor Rowing Championships.

The HMS Collingwood-based senior rate celebrated the end of a leadership course with second place in the women's heavyweight 30-plus 2km race with a time of seven minutes and 50.5 seconds.

The championships, held at HMS Temeraire, saw Warrant Officer 1 Physical Trainer Paul 'Tiny' Nash, from HMS Nelson, row a world-class time of six minutes and 22 seconds to take the glory in the men's heavyweight 50-plus 2km race.

Ady Cherrington rowed close to a personal best with six minutes, 36.2 seconds to take second spot.

WOPT Nash received the Doug Wylie Memorial Award, made for courage and commitment. He has become a double world champion and multi-UK record holder. He set a lifetime and personal best at the Welsh Indoor Rowing Championships in the autumn as he won the men's heavyweight 50-plus event. He was joined in the record stakes by Lt Cdr Stu Moss as he finished third in the men's heavyweight 40-plus race.

Clare Valentine, of HMS Temeraire, took the glory in the women's heavyweight 50-plus 2km event

with a time of eight minutes and 9.1 seconds, while Chief Petty Officer Physical Trainer Helen Richardson, also of Temeraire, won the women's heavyweight 40-plus event in a time of eight minutes and 3.3 seconds. Emily Loftus completed the Temeraire trio with victory in the women's heavyweight 30-plus race with a time of seven minutes and 45.6 seconds.

Perhaps the best 2k performance of the day was from Lieutenant Commander Penny Freeman (NCHQ,) who won the lightweight 30-plus title in her debut race, with a time of eight minutes and 1.5 seconds.

These placings were repeated in the women's 500m races with times of: Valentine (1.57.4), Richardson (1.52.9), Loftus (1.43.3), Thorpe (1.45.5) and Freeman (1.57.6).

Lt Cdr Moss, of HMS Sultan, rowed a lifetime personal best of six minutes and 19 seconds to take victory in the men's heavyweight 40-plus 2km race and the crown of Royal Navy Men's Champion. He was followed by Lt Col Tom Blythe (PJHQ) in a time of six minutes and 23.8 seconds, Cdr Dan Vincent (HMS Nelson) in six minutes and 30.5 seconds and Col Matt Jackson (Shrivenham).

Shrivenham-based Maj Tom

Limb made his debut in the men's heavyweight 30-plus 2km, winning the event in a time of six minutes and 27.8 seconds, ahead of Lt Cdr Ben Kadinopoulos (DES Bristol) in six minutes and 31.3 seconds and another debut rower, Lt Paul Corby (MOD London), whose time was six minutes and 32.8 seconds.

The men's heavyweight 2km open contest saw SLt Sam Cass push Lt Cdr Moss for the top title with a personal best of six minutes and 19.6 seconds. Runner up was Lt Josh Terry (HMS Nelson) with a time of six minutes and 30.5 seconds, with LET(ME) Joe Marquis (HMS Prince of Wales) third in a time of six minutes and 32.2 seconds.

The men's lightweight 30-plus race was a close encounter between HMS Sultan pair POPT Rich Charrett, who rowed six minutes and 49.4 seconds, and Lt George Yeates, who rowed six minutes and 53.6 seconds. The two swapped places in the 500m race.

Winners of the men's heavyweight 500m categories were: Open, SLt Cass, 30-plus, Lt Cdr Kadinopoulos; 40-plus, Lt Cdr Jim Thomson and 50-plus, Ady Cherrington.

The final event, the ten-minute team race provided an opportunity for teams skilled in well-drilled

changeovers to challenge others who perhaps had more strength, power and aerobic capacity.

The race also featured a strong RAF guest team who pushed the winning RNIRPP team of Lt Cdr Thomson, Moss, Lt Cdr Jim Hyde (DES Bristol), Lt Callum Fraser (Sultan) all the way with Thomson's 'Nebulites' rowing a total of 3,677m against the RAF's 3,489m. They were closely followed by the Royal Marines team (Jackson, Blythe, Major Ben Jones (PJHQ) and Sgt Gaz Plowman (1AGRM)).

The Welsh championships saw SLt Gils Piggott, of HMS Sultan, return from injury to finish third in the men's open lightweight 2km. CPOPT Richardson set a personal best to take bronze in the women's heavyweight 40-plus 2km race, while Emily Loftus took silver in the women's heavyweight 30-plus 2km event.

Adaptive rower PO Sean Gaffney (RNAS Yeovilton) won the PR3 category in a time of three minutes and 1.9 seconds. Lt Col Blythe and Lt Cdr Hyde both finished just outside the 2km medals.

Report: Paul Winton  
Pictures: Andrew Parish

