



NAVY NEWS

MAY 2019

Grey steal



HMS Magpie powers her way through the Solent as the Royal Navy's newest commissioned warship surveys Portsmouth Harbour and its approaches to ensure the area is safe for carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth. (See Page 11)

Picture: LPhoto Dan Shepherd



Forth first

Patrol ship starts training



Duncans and Dragons

Destroyers reunited in the Med



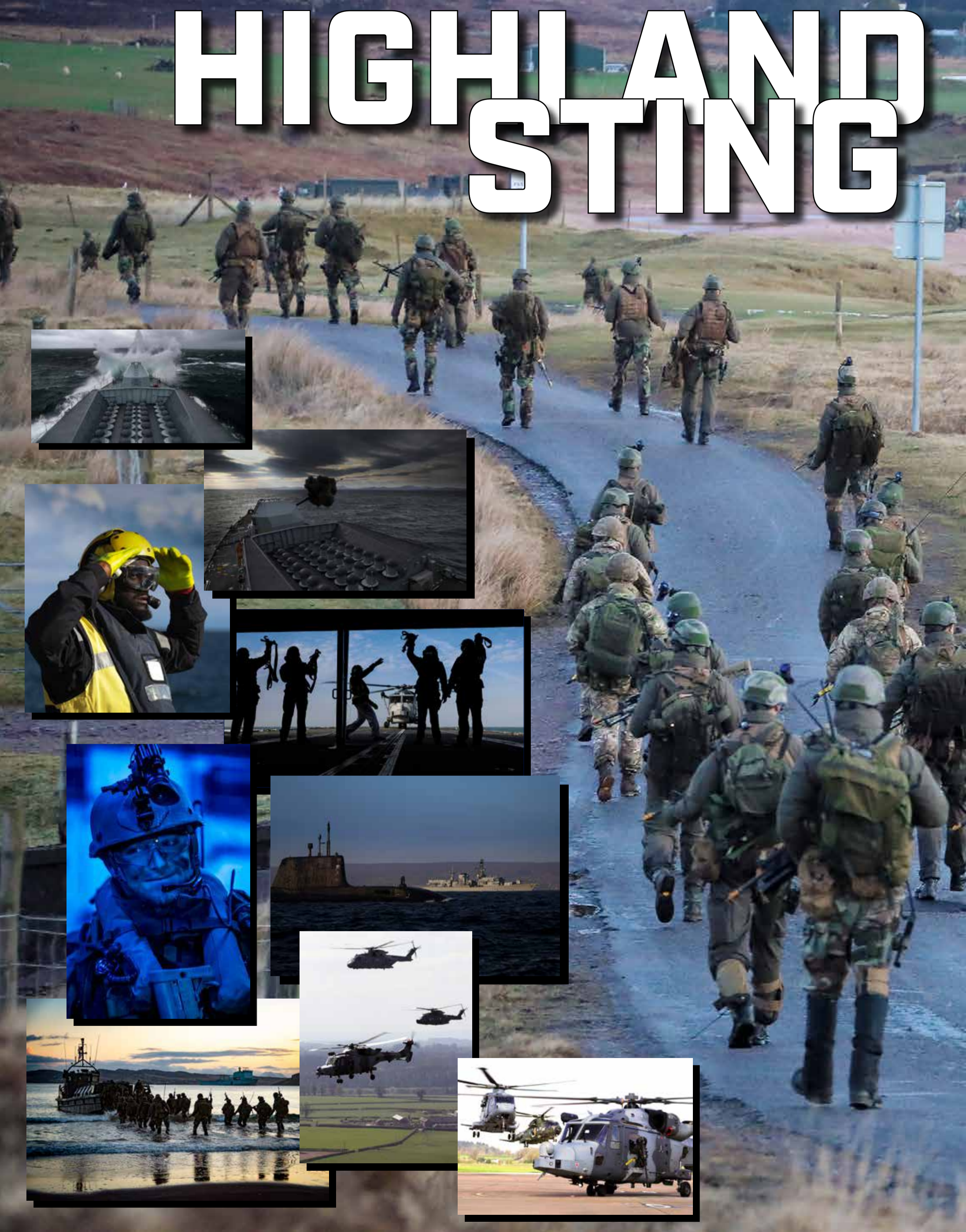
Role swap

RFA becomes minehunter

Plus: Joint Warrior, Commando Warrior and Exercise Northern Wind



HIGHLAND STING



SHORTLY after dawn early in April and Dutch marines file down both sides of a single-track road on the southern shore of Loch Ewe after a raid at first light.

The remote natural harbour near Ullapool (a mere five hours drive from Faslane...) is a regular playground for participants in the twice-yearly Joint Warrior war games: minehunters take shelter from storms raging through The Minches, amphibious ships practise putting troops ashore.

Fifty miles along the coast HMS Kent was laying down some lead, dropping high-explosive rounds on Cape Wrath and rocky Garvie Island just offshore as commando aviators in 847 NAS Wildcats guided the fall of shot... and then directed American F-15 Strike Eagles in to pummel ground targets.

Throw in a spot of anti-submarine warfare (HMS Ambush on the Perisher command course was among the enemies below), fast-attack craft and Hawks of 736 NAS swooping down on the three dozen international ships taking part and you have typical Joint Warrior fare.

But the days when Joint Warrior was confined to western Scotland and its immediate shoreline are long gone.

Exercise No.19-1 started in Faslane but ended in places as distant as Cumbria, the Castlemartin ranges in Pembrokeshire and Plymouth Sound. When we say it's the biggest war games in the UK this year, we're not just talking about participants (8,000 military personnel from 13 nations, nearly 40 ships and submarines – including two NATO task groups – and 60 aircraft) but also scope.

And while the first week of the fortnight-long-workout was indeed mostly focused in Scotland as the numerous participating forces got to know each other and learned how to operate as a team (despite gale force winds and heavy seas battering the exercise area stretching from the

Clyde estuary to Cape Wrath), week two was far less scripted, more free flowing and especially dispersed.

Britain's flagship HMS Albion led the Royal Navy involvement – ideal preparation for a major international deployment she'll lead into the Baltic later this month.

That will demand her taking charge of upwards of 20 warships (British and foreign) at times.

The Anglo-Dutch force mustered under the Plymouth-based assault ship for Joint Warrior was smaller: guardians HMS Defender (against air attack), HMS Kent (against submarines and 'enemy' ships), amphibious support ship Lyme Bay (with Albion carrying Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade – plus their kit) and tanker RFA Tiderace to keep everyone topped up with fuel.

The marines staged raids up and down the land with the men of Arbroath-based 45 Commando going ashore alongside their Dutch comrades from 21 Raiding Squadron Royal Netherlands Marine Corps, striking at 'targets' in Loch Ewe, Luce Bay near Stranraer and finally the ranges in south west Wales; the marines landed in the middle of the night to capture 'enemy' personnel and weapons caches along the UK's coastline.

"A task group like this keeps the enemy guessing," explained Brigadier Matt Jackson, 3 Commando Brigade's Commanding Officer. "You're never quite sure where we're going to land.

"That creates uncertainty in your opponent's mind – and we have a big punch as well if we decide to use it."

An amphibious task group is also big and lumbering, limited by the top speed of its slowest ships (Albion and Lyme Bay: 18kts). It may be strategically very manoeuvrable (moving over 400 nautical miles every 24 hours), but tactically... Albion and Lyme Bay are big, sluggish targets, especially in 'pinch points' (at their narrowest The Minches separating Skye from the mainland are just ten miles wide).

The ships were brought to their highest alert state, and faced a barrage of attacks from enemy ships, small craft, submarines and jets. Damage and fire parties rushed around the ship to counter simulated floods, fires and missile impacts.

"This is what I joined for," said seaman specialist AB Oliver Newborn from HMS Albion. "It's as close to the real thing as you can get and everyone's adrenaline is racing.

"Even lunch is on the move – we have 'action messing' which means we have just minutes to get down to the galley, eat and get back to work."

It's not all about the flagship, of course. Joint Warrior was also a major test for the 185 men and women of Portsmouth-based frigate HMS Kent, whose ship covered nearly 3,500 miles in ten days – the equivalent of a transatlantic crossing to New York.

Her sailors fired 27 (simulated) missiles to protect Albion, 30 live high-explosive rounds at the Cape Wrath range – the only place in the UK you can drop live 4.5in shells on land – and shielded the task group from underwater 'attack': five boats were lurking in the confined waters, led by hunter-killer HMS Ambush.

"For some of my ship's company, Joint Warrior was their first experience of operating in Scottish waters – it has been great to build our experience with the beautiful Scottish coastline as a backdrop," said Kent's Commanding Officer Commander Andrew Brown.

"Others have not been part of a task group before, so they found it very impressive seeing so many warships from different nations working in close proximity."

Ensuring that the multi-national force 'meshes together' was the goal of the at-sea commander, Commander Amphibious Task Group Commodore James Parkin and his staff, choreographing the many moving parts from a special planning/operations room aboard Albion.

"We are a 'break glass in case of

emergency' force. An exercise on this scale gets us integrated, learning how to fight and win alongside each other," he said.

"Joint Warrior tests us to the next level – it tests all parts of the force, in every way imaginable, and by the end of it everyone will feel ready for whatever comes next."

The Wildcats of 847 NAS certainly feel that way. They used Joint Warrior to 'tick off' the last major element of training – qualifying three fliers as aerial observers for naval gunfire support.

That's the final of three 'fire disciplines' 847 is expected to provide (the remaining two are acting as airborne forward air controllers to guide in friendly air power, and acting as air observation posts to direct land-based gunnery).

Together, they mean the squadron is an even more important player in the 21st Century 3D battlefield.

Hitherto, the Yeovilton-based fliers have either been used to scout the field of battle for potential foes or provide aerial cover for convoys and provide close air support – either directly with Royal Marines blasting away with M3M machine-guns, spewing up to 635.5in shells a minute at targets up to two kilometres, or indirectly by calling in bombing, missile and gunfire strikes.

Operating in pairs, the Wildcats directed rounds coming from the 4.5in main guns of Kent and Defender – capable of hitting targets up to 17 miles away – and the slightly smaller calibre 76mm guns of the Danish frigate RDB Peter Willemoes and Dutch patrol ship HNLMS Friesland as a hail of steel and high explosive rained down on Cape Wrath and Garvie Island.

In addition, the squadron also provided close air support at Tain range just north of Lossiemouth, strafing ground targets identified by the artillerymen of 29 Commando Regiment RA with the Wildcat's M3M guns, before directing raids by numerous different aircraft including

Typhoons from RAF Coningsby, US Navy NH-60 Seahawks and US Air Force F-15 Strike Eagles.

They closed Joint Warrior in and around RAF Spadeadam, near Hadrian's Wall on the Cumbria-Northumberland border, practising the rescue of aircrew shot down deep behind enemy lines.

It's a new role for the Commando Helicopter Force – known as Joint Personnel Recovery – introduced with the advent of the F-35 Lightning and return of carrier-strike operations.

The exercise saw 847 act as the rescue mission commanders, choreographing support from aircraft as varied as Apache gunships, the marines' own troop-carrying Merlins, RAF Rivet Joint intelligence gathering jets, RAF Typhoon fighters and RAF/Fleet Air Arm F-35s, all facing threats in the skies and on the ground.

"We have given a lot to the other players in Joint Warrior – and we have achieved a huge amount ourselves," said Major William Moore, 847's Commanding Officer. "We now have forward air controllers airborne, people who can control artillery and naval gunfire forward observers who can call for and direct naval support. So that's really good news for 847 Squadron and it's good news for all of 3 Commando Brigade."

And good news for the UK's expeditionary forces which this month head off on Operation Baltic Protector as the RN leads its largest task group in more than 15 years.

Albion will spearhead the deployment, involving nearly 2,000 British personnel from all three Services – but mostly Royal Navy and Royal Marines – alongside more than 1,000 comrades from allied nations.

Joining her will be Kent, several RFAs to provide amphibious, aviation, logistics and fuel support, more than half a dozen P2000 patrol boats, six helicopters, an elite dive team to search for mines, and Royal Marines from 3 Commando Brigade – including fast assault craft, field guns and combat engineers.

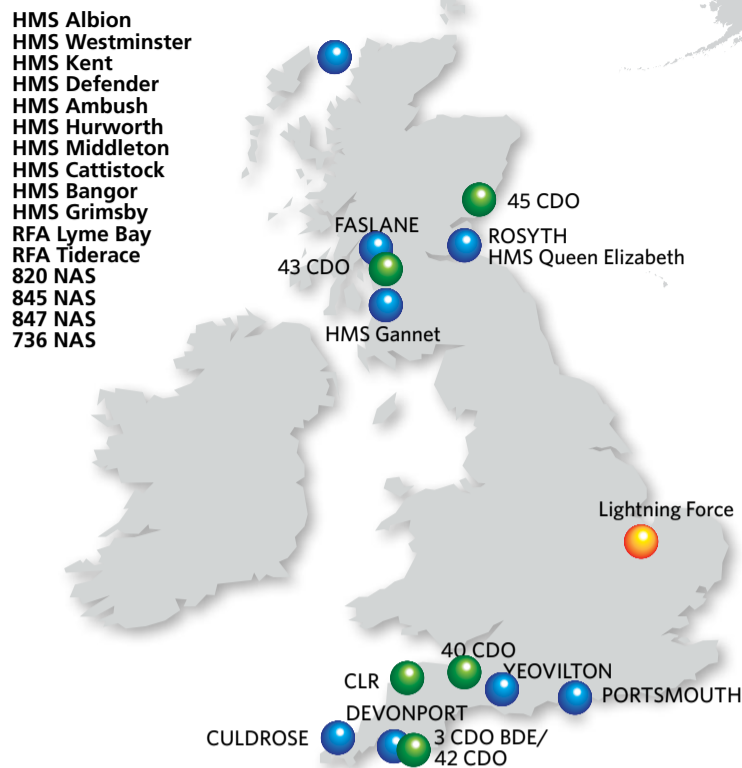


Pictures: PO(Photos) Jim Gibson, Dave Jenkins and Des Wade

Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Sutherland
HMS Northumberland
HMS St Albans
HMS Forth
HMS Magpie

RFA Tideforce
RFA Tidesurge
814 NAS



17(R) TES

HMS Express
HMS Exploit

RFA Mounts Bay

Gibraltar Squadron

HMS Echo

HMS Duncan

UKMCC
NSF Bahrain
COMUKMCMFOR
HMS Montrose
HMS Brocklesby
HMS Shoreham
HMS Ledbury
HMS Blyth
1700 NAS
RFA Cardigan Bay
Naval Party 1023
Forward Support Unit

Naval Party 1022

HMS Clyde
NEFI

HMS Protector

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

FLEET FOCUS
Protecting our nation's interests

THERE'S a strong technological theme to this edition with cutting-edge kit being trialled or introduced to front-line service.

Such as the **NavyX** initiative to exploit the white heat of 21st Century technology (see right) or the **Dare** programme which has delivered 'Pointer T', a 'Laser Quest-esque' targeting system being used by gunners undergoing **Operational Sea Training** off Plymouth to improve their marksmanship (see page 30).

Nearby, **1 Assault Group Royal Marines** tested various automated devices large and small at Tregantle Beach to see how the latest tech will give them the edge on the battlefield (see pages 14-15).

Whilst we're on the subject of shiny new things... **HMS Forth** has successfully completed her first trials under the White Ensign, while her sister **Tamar** has been formally named (roughly equivalent to a traditional launch). See page 19.

New coastal survey vessel **HMS Magpie** has the big task of surveying Portsmouth Harbour to ensure the extensive dredging work carried out in preparation for HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales has not been undone by Nature over the past couple of years (see page 11).

As for the two carriers, they're together for the first time. **HMS Queen Elizabeth** returned to Rosyth to undergo an inspection in the same dry dock where she was pieced together. She made for an impressive sight passing under the three Forth crossings (see the centre pages).

And **HMS Montrose** has arrived in Bahrain – where she'll be for the next three years – raising the curtain on a new era of RN operations in the Middle East (see page 19).

She takes over from **HMS Dragon**, which returned to Portsmouth after a record-breaking drug-busting patrol of the Indian Ocean (eight seizures, £145m of illegal narcotics). As she made her way back to Portsmouth she joined forces with her sister **HMS Duncan**, dispatched to the Med to work with France's flagship Charles de Gaulle and a NATO task group (see pages 6-7).

RFA Mounts Bay successfully proved she could be the floating home to a US Navy expeditionary mine warfare force following an exercise off the Eastern Seaboard (see page 9).

Royal Marines, led by **40 Commando**, closed their winter training in Scandinavia by fighting with Swedes, Finns and Norwegians on Exercise Northern Wind (see page 17).

And when they got back to Norton Manor they found a shiny new blade waiting for them: the **Firmin Sword of Peace** for its humanitarian efforts in the Caribbean after hurricanes in September 2017. No unit has won the coveted title more times (four). See page 19.

P2000 patrol boats **HMS Express** and **Exploit** took students across the Channel and around the Brittany peninsula to St Nazaire where they honoured the heroes of Operation Chariot who stormed the docks in 1942... and the victims of troopship HMT Lancastria sunk off the port in 1940 - the greatest maritime tragedy in British history. See page 13.

HMS Defender returned to the city of her birth (Glasgow) which is also her affiliate (see page 13)...

...and followed that up by taking part in the largest exercise in the UK this year, Joint Warrior, with flagship **HMS Albion**, frigate **HMS Kent**, **Commando Helicopter Force** and **3 Commando Brigade** among numerous RN, UK and international participants, flexing their collective muscles from the Moray Firth to Plymouth Sound (see pages 2 and 3).

With their ship going into refit, the crew of **HMS Monmouth** paraded through their affiliated Welsh town (see page 13)... while personnel of **Commando Logistics Regiment** marched through the heart of Barnstaple to celebrate their ties with the North Devon town (see page 34).

And finally, we're looking for you to pick the best naval image of the past 12 months as taken by RN photographers for the 'People's Choice' award in the **2019 Peregrine Trophy** (see page 11 or visit the RN Facebook page).

Navy's X factor

VIEW BRIDGE from the BRIDGE

ONE of the key challenges the Royal Navy faces today is our ability to keep up with the unrelenting pace of technological advance, adapting and evolving to the new and emergent technologies that may offer us significant operational advantages if properly harnessed.

And at the same time have the potential to pose a serious threat if left unchecked in the hands of our adversaries.

We have an unequalled history of technological military innovation to inspire us. The Royal Navy led the world in the transition from sail to steam, and from timber to ironclad and then steel. We became the first to do away with cannon lining the sides of our ships, instead introducing rifled guns in turrets – guns that were made accurate by the invention of the first fire control computers.

We were pioneers in the worlds of submarine warfare and maritime aviation. The Steam Catapult, Sonar, the Depth Charge and the Torpedo are just some of the British inventions that have kept us at the forefront of military capability in generations past.

Now, as we approach the era of fully digitized, machine-speed warfare, we're looking to lead the way again.

Part of our answer to this challenge comes in the form of Programme Nelson, one of our tech accelerators which featured in View from the Bridge in February's edition of *Navy News*. But our investment in tech accelerators doesn't stop there.

Last month at Portsmouth Technology Park, the Secretary of State for

Defence announced that £45m new funding would be provided from the MOD's transformation fund to create our new autonomy and lethality accelerator, called NavyX.

Bringing together the brightest minds from across the Service, science, engineering and our industrial partners in a new bespoke facility, NavyX will rapidly develop, test and trial cutting-edge equipment, with the aim of getting new technology off the drawing board and into the hands of our people on operations at a pace that has not been possible before.

A key area of focus for NavyX will be the introduction of autonomous vehicles to do dangerous and difficult work across all the maritime environments.

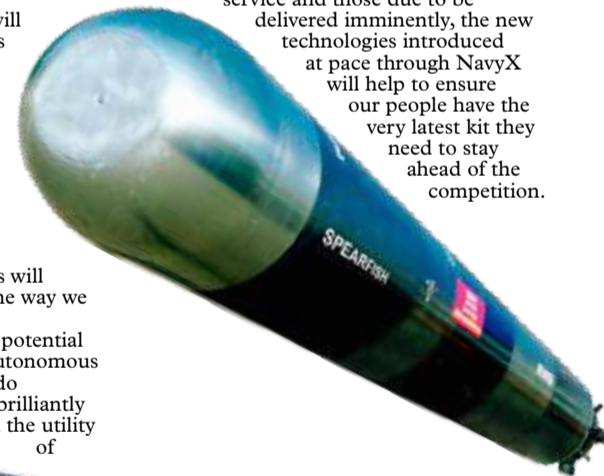
Whether hunting enemy submarines, finding mines in complex waters, conducting carrier or littoral strike, disaster relief, non-combatant evacuation operations and more, the use of sophisticated, unmanned and increasingly autonomous machines will rapidly become a routine part of the way we conduct operations in the future.

We've already had a taste of the potential benefits of these unmanned and autonomous machines. Last month's Commando Warrior exercise (see pages 14-15) brilliantly showcased the utility of

autonomous vehicles operating in the air, on the sea and on the land: new equipment that offered true competitive advantage to our Royal Marine Commandos being projected from the sea to deliver military effect ashore.

And now, with the additional impetus that NavyX will provide, there's a real opportunity to see unmanned and autonomous vehicles delivered at pace to provide that same game-changing effect across the full spectrum of naval operations.

When integrated with the impressive suite of capabilities we already have in service and those due to be delivered imminently, the new technologies introduced at pace through NavyX will help to ensure our people have the very latest kit they need to stay ahead of the competition.



• Royal Marines have trialled the Black Hornet nano drone





● **Top pictures, HMS Montrose arriving in Colombo; Right, LS Andrew Hammond and Sub Lt Simon Hall during a RAS with the USNS Guadalupe; Left, AB Dan 'Cherry' Breakwell**
Pictures: LPhot Joe Cater

New mission for Montrose

A NEW era in Royal Navy operations in the Middle East has begun with the arrival of HMS Montrose in Bahrain – ready to begin a three-year mission.

After an epic six-month, 47,000-mile journey from her home in Plymouth, the frigate sailed into the Navy's new support facility in the Gulf kingdom, the hub of Britain's naval operations east of Suez.

From there she will conduct regular patrols dealing with drug trafficking in the Indian Ocean, supporting counter-terrorism and counter-smuggling operations, and work with Middle East and allied navies to ensure the safety and security of the region.

Instead of returning home to the UK, Montrose is being stationed in Bahrain until 2022 to ensure a permanent presence and spare warships the lengthy passage to and from Britain, time which could be spent on patrol.

"Today marks a significant milestone for us – it is the end of our global voyage but the start of our period stationed in the Middle East," said Commander Conor O'Neill, Montrose's Commanding Officer.

"I am immensely proud of all that we have achieved during our voyage to Bahrain, from hosting royalty in Chile, deepening our relationships with allies, sharpening our war-fighting edge in exercises with the Japanese, to our success enforcing sanctions against North Korea.

"We now have the time to recuperate; making use of the excellent new facilities of the United Kingdom Naval Support Facility before handing over to our opposite numbers."

Montrose has enjoyed an adventurous six months reaching the Gulf, sailing the 'wrong way' around the world via the Pacific, visiting countries and islands not called at by Royal Navy warships in many years.

- She has:
- supported counter-drugs operations in the Caribbean;
 - represented the UK at the 200th anniversary of the Chilean Navy where the ship hosted the Princess Royal and the First Sea Lord;
 - visited Easter Island at Christmas and Pitcairn Island, last resting place of the Bounty;
 - helped the international fight against plastics in the oceans by surveying Pacific islands;
 - trained with the French Navy in Tahiti;
 - enjoyed visits to Auckland in New Zealand, Darwin in Australia, Singapore, Tokyo, and Colombo in Sri Lanka;
 - enforced UN sanctions against North Korea to prevent fuel smuggling;
 - worked side-by-side with the US and Japanese Navies on a combined anti-submarine exercise;

■ and finally carried out boardings of suspicious vessels in the Indian Ocean in preparation for her long-term mission in the region.

A military band serenaded HMS Montrose into the Sri Lankan capital Colombo – her penultimate stop before arriving in the Gulf.

A military escort and marching band were waiting on the jetty in Colombo's civilian port for the frigate – as were several groups of VIPs, Sri Lankan media and groups of school children, all keen to look around the 4,500-tonne warship – while the ship's company lined the upper decks in their finest tropical uniforms.

Once the gangway was across, the Brits proudly showed their guests around the frigate, talking about the deployment.

"It was great to share our story with such bright and engaging individuals, recounting stories of our deployment really brought home to me just how far we have travelled since leaving Plymouth at the end of October 2018," said Lieutenant Kate Pridham, deputy logistics officer.

The ship's company had time to explore the Commonwealth nation, trying out local cuisine and exploring several of the golden sandy beaches, courtesy of the famous 'tuk-tuk' trike taxis to get around.

On leaving Colombo, Montrose exercised with several Sri Lankan ships, before resuming her operational patrol in the Indian Ocean.

The men and women who brought the ship to Bahrain will shortly return to the UK, swapping places with another frigate crew from Plymouth who will take HMS Montrose back to sea after she's undergone a short period of maintenance.

The senior Royal Navy commander in the Middle East theatre, Commodore Steve Dainton, UK Maritime Component Commander, who directs naval operations from his headquarters in Bahrain said Montrose's long-term presence demonstrated "the UK's commitment to the whole Middle East region."

"HMS Montrose will fulfil a vital role along with our mine countermeasure vessels and the support ship Royal Fleet Auxiliary Cardigan Bay. It is clear we will have significantly enhanced the scope and capacity of our operations throughout the region."

Monmouth parade, see page 13

KEEP UP WITH THE SHIP

Follow @HMS_Montrose and @RoyalNavy on Twitter



● **HMS Montrose arrives at NSF in Bahrain**

Picture: Lt Cdr Ian Miller, UKMCC

WELFARE

Your WelComE account card...

A WelComE account card is assigned to you for your entire military career and can be used to access telephone and Internet services whilst deployed.

You should receive it after basic training. If you haven't been given it, speak to your admin officer. For more information visit: www.mywelcome.co.uk

Lost your account card? No worries! Speak to your admin officer who will be able to provide you with your WelComE account number and a password to reset your PIN.

WelComE Customer Contact Centre
customer.support@mywelcome.co.uk | www.mywelcome.co.uk

WelComE
 Welfare Conversations Everywhere

A Naval Charity providing personal help and advice for all serving and former members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, their Reserves and Families on;

Legal and Family Law Matters,
 Civilian Employment & Personal Finance
 Including - resettlement finances, pensions and commutation

For further information please contact:
whiteensign.co.uk
 0207 407 8658
office@whiteensign.co.uk

ROYAL NAVY



Fighting Clan tests weapons

WHO doesn't love a bit of gunnery funnery?

HMS Sutherland can't get enough of it, laying down the lead on the ranges at Lulworth Cove as she trained the team responsible for the 4.5in main gun and checked the efficiency and accuracy of the weapon.

Whereas some of the mechanics behind the gun haven't changed much down the years, the targeting system has improved markedly. These days, the gun relies on a computer system for pinpoint accuracy.

It can only be that accurate, however, if the data fed into it is bang on. Hence the shoot at Lulworth for muzzle velocity calibration (measuring the speed of the shell as it leaves the barrel – it should be travelling somewhere around 2,274 feet or 693 metres every second... that's 1,550 miles per hour... or more than twice the speed of sound).

Having calibrated the barrel it was time for a concerted shoot. Experts from 148 Meiktila Commando Battery Royal Artillery – a mixed Army-Navy unit – advised on the 'fall of shot' (or accuracy) of each round as it crashed down on the Dorset soil.

And in the bowels of the Plymouth-based frigate, assessors from the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation were seeing how the Captain of the Turret (the weapon engineer in overall charge of the 4.5in's performance) and the Captain of the Gunbay (overseeing the safe transfer and loading of the 80lb/34kg shells) handled things.

In all 45 rounds rained down on Dorset with no stoppages or problems – and with the gunbay team validated by their overseers.

"You can't beat being on the 'gunline'," said Weapon Engineer Officer Lieutenant Commander George Blakeman.

"It's always pleasing to have the smell of cordite through the ship and see 'brass on deck' – referring to the pile of empty shell cases accumulated on the Fighting Clan's forecastle.

New ties for Tidesurge

RFA Tidesurge visited Portsmouth for the first time since being formally accepted into service.

Following an ongoing and extensive trials programme, Tidesurge visited to establish ties with the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

The 39,000-tonne fleet replenishment tanker is the third of class of the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability (MARS) Tankers, which includes in service sister ships, RFA's Tidespring, Tiderace and, the final piece in the MARS jigsaw, Tideforce, which will become operational later this year.

RFA Tidesurge Commanding Officer, Captain Miles Lewis, said: "It's great to bring RFA Tidesurge back to my home port.

"I am delighted to have an opportunity to showcase the fantastic capability of Tidesurge and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary as a whole, with a view to bringing RFA history to the NWRN and presenting the support the RFA has provided to the Naval Service since 1905 and continues to provide to the present day."



Main image: Charles Wassiloff, Marine Nationale. Pictures left: Photos Stevie Burke and Ben Corbett



Praise

HMS DUNCAN teamed up with a French Carrier Strike Group to provide air defence and escort duties to the French flagship FS Charles de Gaulle in the eastern Med.

The destroyer, which left her Portsmouth home in March, was put through her paces as she supported a coalition mission against Daesh in Iraq and Syria as part of a task group led by the French navy.

Frequent air sorties also meant that Duncan's fighter controllers were able to exercise their abilities as battle managers, providing tactical control and safety services to the carrier's Rafale M fighter jets during Operation Clemenceau.

Duncan's sensors are optimised for air defence and as such this type of operation is one in which she excels. Her cache of Sea Viper missiles, radars and communication suites provide excellent area defence for both surface and air assets in the task group.

Captain of HMS Duncan, Commander Tom Trent, said: "What a brilliant chance for Duncan to demonstrate her ability as a Type 45 destroyer operating in exactly the way she was designed to, in support of carrier strike. My team and I have loved every minute."

As well as proving advanced warfare skills, operating in Combined Task Force 473 afforded HMS Duncan's crew the opportunity to host a number of visitors, including the Commander Task Group, Rear Admiral Oliver Lebas French Navy.

Mine out, it's below you

THE dive team from HMS Ledbury bob up and down on their small boat as they contemplate how to deal with their first mine during a major Anglo-French-American workout in the Gulf.

Two of the UK's four Bahrain-based minehunters, plus their mother ship, joined two Marine Nationale counterparts and half a dozen US warships and patrol craft for Artemis Trident.

The US and UK both maintain a permanent mine warfare force in the Middle East.

French minehunters are a less frequent sight in this part of the world, so the presence of FS L'Aigle and Sagittaire allowed three of the globe's leading navies to flex their combined muscles and train together.

As for the 'Fighting Aces' – 2nd Mine Countermeasures Squadron Crew 1, currently in charge of Ledbury for six months as part of the rotation of sailors in the Gulf – they ran out their dive team and remote-controlled mine disposal system Seafox to deal with the dummy mines peppering the sea for the exercise.

They started at the easy end – a buoyant mine (big, round, floaty, basically your traditional mine, but without the detonator spike). They are cheap,

easy to produce and lay, lurking just below the surface waiting for unsuspecting shipping traffic.

Ledbury's divers had two options: to send the mine to kingdom come by placing a small detonation charge on it...

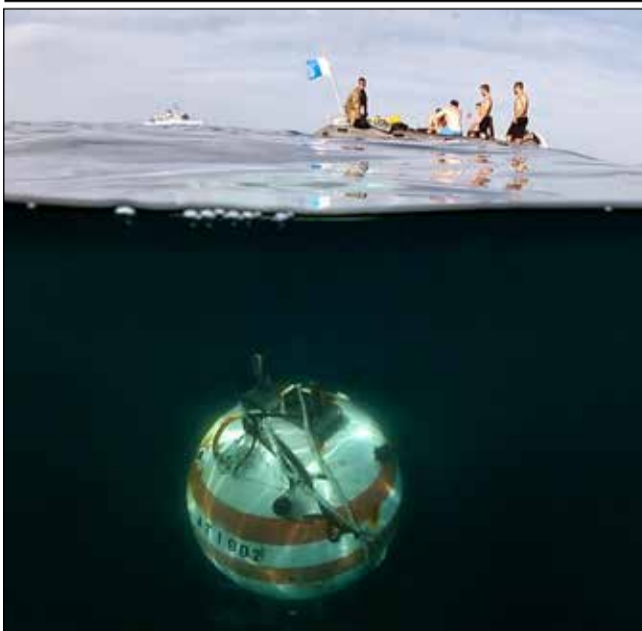
... or render the device safe then bring it back on board for analysis, to find out what makes it tick and pass on the information to anyone else who might come across a similar mine.

In this instance, the divers – plunging into pleasant 23°C waters (it's a mere 10°C in Ledbury's home base of Portsmouth) – chose recovery.

"Usually these munitions would simply be destroyed at range using our remote mine disposal system – Seafox – but there are occasions where getting up close and personal to around 400kg of explosive is necessary," explained Able Seaman (Diver) Ryan 'Mac' McMenemy.

Ledbury was joined by HMS Shoreham and RFA Cardigan Bay, which acts as the floating command centre for the four Royal Navy minehunters in the Gulf.

Earlier Brocklesby and Shoreham made the short hop from Bahrain to Doha to train with the Emiri Navy.



MERCI, DUNCAN

for two Type 45s as one starts mission and one returns home

As part of the NATO exchange programme, Duncan's principal warfare officer is Lieutenant Francois-Xavier Morel, while Lieutenant Luke Thompson is embarked in the Charles De Gaulle.

Lt Morel, who joined Duncan in October last year, said: "This exchange has been an education and I have enjoyed being a link between our two navies in the build up to working with my own navy's flagship."

Fighter controller Lt Thompson said: "Providing control on behalf of the French is interesting and highlights how aligned our nations are."

The CTF 473 exercise also featured RAF Typhoons based at RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus.

Sub Lieutenant Jack Mercer, who joined the French carrier for a week to help with operational planning, said: "It was a fantastic insight into carrier operations and an invaluable opportunity to experience life on board another nation's warship."

Duncan fighter controller Lt Jo Peacock said: "Despite having only a relatively small planning window these exercises provided an ideal opportunity to conduct force integration training with NATO partners."

"We proved the ability to form good communications, establish and maintain a clear air picture, integrate new players and exercise command and control. All of these elements would be vital should a short-notice conflict arise whilst we are deployed."

Duncan has now left the task group, which also featured Danish and US vessels, to support NATO operations in the Med.

The destroyer linked up with sister ship **HMS Dragon** for security patrols in the eastern Med. Dragon, on her way

home after a record drug-busting deployment, spent three days in Beirut before calling in on Barcelona on her way back to Portsmouth.

"It was a great moment seeing the familiar shape of a fellow Type 45 steaming over the horizon and then receiving such a warm welcome from the entire ship's company of HMS Duncan," said Commander Mike Carter Quinn, Dragon's Commanding Officer.

"It is superb to see her back out on operations in the eastern Mediterranean. For the Royal Navy to have two destroyers hard at work on operations – in addition all the other British ships and units deployed around the world – it sends a powerful message about our commitment to maintaining maritime security and stability around the globe."

In return, his opposite number aboard Duncan Cdr Trent said: "It was great to see HMS Dragon as she returns after a hugely success period of operations in the Middle East and thanks to the French-led task force for providing us the opportunity to close and pay respects to one of our sister ships."

First home was 212 Flight as the air and ground crew were reunited with loved ones at RNAS Yeovilton.

There were balloons, homemade placards, Union Jacks and smiles waiting for the fliers who helped the Royal Navy bag its biggest collective drugs haul in the Middle East.

Dragon scored eight drugs busts – a record number for the Royal Navy, with a record haul of hash, heroin and crystal meth worth an estimated £145m and weighing 18,250kg (three times the weight of a fully-loaded Wildcat).

The Wildcat was involved in seven of Dragon's eight busts and the Flight clocked up 200 flying hours while away – not just drugs busting, but also supporting numerous exercises

Dragon took part in: Konkan with the Indian Navy, Aman with the Pakistanis, and Saif Sareea 3 (the largest Anglo-Omani joint training in nearly two decades).

The following day up to 1,000 friends and family members lined the jetty in Portsmouth as the ship arrived home.

ET(WE) William Roe, 19, said: "The most challenging thing about my first deployment was getting used to the environment of being at sea. It was great to be back home, although I was lucky to only be away for four months. The best thing about the deployment was the number of things we did as a team, like various charity nights and things that bring the ship together."

Dragon will now undergo planned maintenance and is expected to deploy again later this year in support of carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth.

KEEP UP WITH THE SHIPS

Follow @HMSDuncan,
@HMSDragon and
@RoyalNavy on
Twitter



Home-coming pictures: Photos Sam Seeley and Unaisi 'May' Luke and Lt Frank Sulzer, 815 NAS

HMS COLLINGWOOD OPEN DAY



Saturday
1st June
2019

0930-1700

Featuring **Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity Field Gun Competition**

www.royalnavy.mod.uk/Collingwood-Openday

Atkins & Co.
Chartered Accountants



CASH FOR YOU

Do you drive from home to work?
Do you own your own car?
Have you worked in different locations?

You could be entitled to thousands of pounds in TAX REFUNDS. Millions have already been received by your colleagues.

- Over 10 years experience
- Family connections with RN and RM, so you know you are in safe hands
- Bootneck and Matelot friendly
- We'll square the admin away!
- Specialist areas:- Maritime security, Overseas and UK security sector, Diving, Pilots and Rental Property

**GET YOUR TAX REFUND NOW!
CONTACT US TODAY**

**FIXED FEE OF £100 PER YEAR
NO REFUND – NO FEE**

E: info@atkinsandco.com

T: 01934 527888

W: www.atkinsandco.com

Atkins & Co. Chartered Accountants are fully regulated by ICAEW (Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales)



A Bay-class minehunter?

US NAVY explosive ordnance technicians bob around in a RIB launched from the well deck of a Royal Fleet Auxiliary as they go on the hunt for mines.

You're thinking RFA Cardigan Bay in the Gulf, aren't you? The well-honed mother ship for British minehunting forces in the Gulf.

Wrong. This is RFA *Mounts Bay* and the sea is not the warm water of the Gulf but the much cooler western Atlantic off the coast of Virginia, where the US Navy tested its ability to deploy a mobile minehunting force – with full kit and caboodle – at short notice on any suitable vessel, American or not.

The amphibious support ship was used as the test bed for hosting the expeditionary force – including helicopters, divers, remote-controlled boats and robot surveying machines – at short notice.

The workout off the coast of Virginia was intended to see whether a task force without a minehunter assigned to it could hunt mines by sending out a mobile team with all their kit – and to see whether it could be done on a British ship.

Around 120 US Navy sailors, civilians and contractors formed the 'mine countermeasures mission module' assigned to *Mounts Bay*, which has spent the winter hunting drug runners in the Caribbean.

In just three days at the US Navy's main Atlantic base in Norfolk, Virginia, the support ship – designed to land Royal Marines and their equipment during amphibious operations – was turned into a makeshift hub of minehunting.

Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 2 – HSC-2, better known as the Fleet Angels – flew Seahawk helicopters equipped with a laser system to detect mines below the surface of the ocean... and the air-launched Archerfish device to neutralise them (similar to Seafox used by RN minehunters to destroy mines, but dropped from a helicopter).

The core of the mine-hunting force was drawn from the US Navy's Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit Two (EODMU2) who used *Mounts Bay* as the launchpad for raiding boats carrying torpedo-shaped robots, sent out to

scan the seabed; if they found anything, divers went into the water to inspect the objects.

The US unit also took charge of the various mine warfare forces and units embarked on *Mounts Bay*, demonstrating how the US Navy and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary can work seamlessly together on a complex minehunting operation.

In addition, the Textron Unmanned Surface Vehicle was loaded aboard; it can be sent off on missions lasting hundreds of miles, searching for mines or submarines. This was one of the first times it has been successfully operated from a ship at sea.

"There is an increased sense of realism and urgency with operating real systems off RFA *Mounts Bay* against simulated real-world threats," said Commander John Haase, Commanding Officer of the US detachment aboard the British ship.

"We had helicopters operating above the water, ships on the water, and unmanned vessels below the water.

"I have nothing but high regard for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary – they have been superb at assisting all aspects of this experiment; no request was regarded as too difficult."

The ten-day exercise was eight months in the planning and organisers say it confirmed that 'mobile minehunting' is feasible – and that ships like the Bay class are well suited for such missions.

Captain Jed Macanley RFA, *Mounts Bay's* Commanding Officer, said his ship was often described as a 'Swiss army knife' due to its versatility and the experimental exercise off the Virginian coast merely underlined that tag.

"I've seen elements of the unmanned systems in the Gulf, but I've not seen the experimental elements here. I've not seen as much all in one place," he said.

"I am very proud of the agility and flexibility that my ship's company has shown in being able to successfully tackle these very diverse challenges. And I have also been very impressed at the speed at which 120 American personnel have integrated themselves into the ship to operate as one team."

Pictures: MC3 (SW) Danny Ray Nuñez, USN

Frigate's flare for action

HMS St Albans lit up the Atlantic with a stunning 'firework' display as gunners practised their marksmanship by night.

The Portsmouth-based frigate – the Royal Navy's Fleet Ready Escort, charged with protecting UK waters – took time during her patrol to hone her 'quickdraw' skills: the response of gunners to protect the warship from incoming fast-attack craft.

They use a combination of Miniguns – six-barrelled Gatling guns which spew out up to 2,000 rounds a minute – machine-guns and rifles as the last line of defence against incoming threats.

With the sun setting, the gun crews lit up the sky with flares, as they used night vision goggles to shoot a series of targets at sea.

By day, the 190 sailors on board have been kept on their toes by practising winching people aboard from her helicopter.

The Saint – as the frigate is affectionately known by her crew – has a Merlin Mk2 helicopter embarked to support her patrol.



The helicopter – from 814 NAS (aka the Flying Tigers) and normally based at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall – carried out a series of personnel transfers from the bridge wing.

Instead of winching up people from the flight deck as normal, the aviators – more at home hunting submarines – made use of the narrow, rather cluttered space on both sides of the bridge, standing in for similar confined spaces on yachts and fishing boats should St Albans be called upon to rescue seafarers from vessels in distress.

Commander John Cromie, the ship's Commanding Officer, said: "As the UK's Fleet Ready Escort, HMS St Albans spends a significant proportion of her time on patrol far out in the Atlantic.



"While on patrol it is essential we continue our training in order to prepare ourselves for any eventuality.

"These activities undertaken in quick succession demonstrate the versatility of a modern warship and its ability to deliver violence to the enemy in one moment and provide essential life-saving

assistance the next."

As the UK's very-high-readiness warship, St Albans regularly spends long periods on patrol in the Atlantic, Western Approaches and North Sea. Last year, the frigate spent nearly 250 days away from her base port of Portsmouth.

Pictures: PO Lee Blease

Lightning forecast for Cyprus

THE first overseas deployment by Royal Navy jet pilots in a decade will be to Cyprus – when UK F-35s leave home skies for the first time.

Two months of training in the eastern Mediterranean is lined up for the men and women of the Lightning Force and their state-of-the-art stealth fighters – preparation for their first spell of training aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth this autumn.

Not since September 2010 and the final weeks of the Harrier's service have naval aviators taken a front-line fast jet overseas – also to the RAF's air base at Akrotiri in southern Cyprus.

The Lightnings arrived in the UK last year, flying across the Atlantic to their new permanent home with 617 'Dambusters' Squadron at RAF Marham.

Two in every five personnel on the squadron are Royal Navy, gradually developing the individual and collective skills and tactics which will allow the UK's only fifth-generation fighter to deploy around the world on combat operations either from the decks of HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales (from 2021), or from allied air bases such as Akrotiri.

"I'm extremely proud to see the squadron ready to deploy for the first time, particularly given the efforts that led to declaring initial operating

capability earlier this year," said Lieutenant Commander Adam Hogg, 617's Executive Officer. "None of this would be possible without the dedication and achievements of every rank and rate on the squadron.

"The hard work will have been worth it when the first aircraft touches down in Akrotiri, marking a new era of fixed-wing aviation for the RN and following in the footsteps of 800 NAS' final Harrier deployment to Cyprus almost a decade ago.

"Lightning brings a world-leading capability to the RN, RAF and wider defence, and we're looking forward to deploying with Queen Elizabeth in the very near future."

The spell in Cyprus is not solely about testing the air crews and their cutting-edge jets in clear, less-cluttered skies. Testing will also include some live firing. The deployment will also train and test all aspects of moving the F-35 aircraft to a new location – including all the logistic support, maintenance, and personnel required to get the Lightning off the ground.

Once finished in Cyprus, the F-35s will return to Norfolk to gear up to sail with HMS Queen Elizabeth to the Eastern Seaboard of the USA in the late summer/early autumn.



because you're there for us

Our team of lawyers have many years of experience providing specialist legal advice to forces personnel. Our military law experts will not only advise you on issues arising from the line of duty but with your home life as well.

There for you supporting the forces

wilkin chapman llp
inc. gilbert blades
solicitors



Contact: 01522 512345 or visit wilkinchapman.co.uk
Out of hours for Military Discipline Matters only, contact Gordon Holt on 07973 667869

Teen engineer's taste of RN life

WORK experience.

Often (unfortunately) it means plonking a teenager at a machine in a corner and then forgetting them for five days. Or perhaps a week of tea duties.

Not aboard HMS Albion.

When Portsmouth teenager and budding weapon engineer Charlie South asked to sample life in the RN, the nation's flagship obliged with a packed five-day programme to allow the youngster to see not merely what his prospective career might be like, but also the day-to-day bustle of a 21st-Century warship.

The week began with a rare opportunity to accompany Albion's weapons group to the Babcock works where Phalanx automatic Gatling and 4.5in gun (the latter isn't fitted to the assault ship) are built and refurbished.

Charlie saw weapon systems in various states of assembly and watched a demonstration from an operational Phalanx engaging a target.

Day two saw the teenager embrace Albion's core role: amphibious operations with the ship's permanently-assigned Royal Marines 6th Assault Squadron.

He watched the elite unit at work in the Tamar and was even allowed behind the wheel of the large LCU Mk10 landing craft.

After lunch with Captain Peter Laughton, Charlie headed into Albion's bowels to experience the other side of RN engineering: marine.

The sights, sounds and smells are the department weren't enough for the student... who was treated to a customary bilge dive.

The next day of activities consisted of magazine rounds – the scale of the ammo complex impressed the visitor, as did a walk around Albion's weapon engineering sections and a whistle-stop tour of HMS Northumberland.

Charlie's penultimate day aboard saw him working alongside the men and women in the WE department for a practical insight into his likely career choice: a spot of soldering, fault-fixing and an invite into the mess for the stand easy break.

Life at sea isn't all about work, however. Out of hours, the youngster was introduced to the many adventurous training opportunities on offer in the RN and tackled the nearby bouldering wall with senior WE personnel.

On his final day on board Charlie watched a 'fast cruise' as the ship's company pretended Albion was at sea, not alongside, and practised entering and leaving harbour, hands to flying stations and fire-fighting exercise – and there was still enough time for the teenager to catch the train back to Portsmouth.



Cadets' tribute as last Laforey survivor dies

THE last living link with a wartime tragedy has gone with the passing of Stanley Brow – 75 years to the day his ship HMS Laforey was sunk.

Family members say the veteran gunner, who emigrated to Australia after World War 2, died on March 30, the very date the destroyer, pictured below, was lost hunting a U-boat off Sicily.

As a young seaman gunner, Stanley was one of only 69 men rescued out of 258 aboard the L-class destroyer which had spent most of the war in the Mediterranean and endured some of its fiercest battles, including convoys to Malta and the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, Salerno and Anzio; she was helping to protect ongoing operations at the later at the end of March 1944 when she was sunk.

Attempting to track down a German submarine off Palermo, Laforey forced the boat to the surface and opened fire on it... but the U-boat commander sent three torpedoes into the destroyer at a range of just 1,500 yards.

Laforey sank in minutes with Able Gunner Stanley 'Stan' Brow, pictured right, able to fight his way through the canvas cover behind his gun as the destroyer's list grew worse and eventually scrambled into a Carley float life raft. Shortly afterwards U223 was itself sunk with some of the survivors of both vessels being picked up by the same rescuers.

His nephew Philip Brow said: "March 30 was a significant date through his life and he will now be with his shipmates."

Laforey's sinking also hit the people of Northampton in particular; they raised £750,000 – more than £37m today – towards the £4m cost of building the Laforey and her loss is still marked each year with a memorial service/parade on the Sunday closest to the anniversary of the sinking as veterans' groups and especially Northampton's Sea Cadet unit TS Laforey honour the destroyer – with Stanley often joining them, having made the epic journey from Adelaide to remember his shipmates.

News of the veterans' passing reached the unit just after they'd taken part in the 2019 parade and a tribute from the cadets was read out at Stanley's funeral the following week.

TS Laforey's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Chris Read said the veteran kept in touch with the cadets. His most recent missive came at Christmas with season's greetings from his care home in Lightsview, a suburb of Adelaide, where he regularly gave his account of the sinking to fellow residents and followed the activities of the Sea Cadet unit avidly; the sight of the youngsters smartly dressed in their uniforms reminded him of his training before joining the Laforey.

"The passing of Stan as the last survivor of the Laforey is a sad day for us all, but I know that Stan was always proud to see our young people on parade and honouring the efforts of his shipmates," he said. "I was personally honoured to meet Stan and I am saddened by his passing. Now his duty is done he can rest in peace with his shipmates."

"Every year since the sad events 75 years ago, in Northampton we have held an annual parade of Sea Cadets. We do this to teach our young people that often freedom comes at a price and as members of Sea Cadet Unit Training Ship Laforey, this name represents morale courage, teamwork and commitment. The Sea Cadets will continue to remember Laforey's ships company in future years and we are thankful for their sacrifice for our future."



Folk enjoy Example trip on water of Tyne

ARCHER-class Patrol Boat HMS Example, based at HMS Calliope in Newcastle, took the chance to host local Sea Cadets, affiliated Combined Cadet Forces and the Royal British Legion's Northern Area team, with a trip up the River Tyne.

Guests experienced sailing under the picturesque Gateshead Millennium Bridge and had the opportunity to helm the ship on the river and on its approaches in the North Sea.

"These kinds of event are really important to us" said Example's Commanding Officer, Lt Simon Priestley.

"It's great for us to be able to welcome our affiliates and organisations from the local community onboard and give them a glimpse of what we do.

"As a standing presence in an area of the country which is hundreds of miles from any of the Royal Navy's base ports, it's really valuable to engage with local partners such as the British Legion, fly the White Ensign and potentially inspire the Naval Officers and Ratings of the future from the Sea Cadets and CCF."

Example was next deploying from Newcastle on her Easter Deployment, visiting ports across the British Isles while providing support and training to the students of the Northumbrian Universities Royal Naval Unit.



PROJECT FIREFLY MARITIME RESERVE & FTRS RECRUITMENT FAIR

(FOR RN & RM SERVICE LEAVERS)

Thur 18th July 2019



1000 – 1300

**HMS KING ALFRED, WHALE ISLAND,
PORTSMOUTH, PO2 8ER**

This is a unique opportunity for the NAVAL SERVICE LEAVER to get a comprehensive insight into the benefits offered under the Project FIREFLY and FTRS schemes. Options that may prove to be a most welcome addition to your resettlement plans.

Ex-regular RN & RM Personnel are also welcome to attend.

- Information stands offering 1:1 Advice
- Pension Advice
- Complimentary Refreshments
- Free Gizzets

Numbers are restricted so to book your place or for more information e-mail:
navypcap-cmwffmailbox@mod.gov.uk

We look forward to seeing you



THERE'S something slightly reassuring that the largest ship in the Royal Navy is reliant on the second smallest.

But it's not merely HMS Queen Elizabeth which relies on HMS Magpie (the carrier's displacement is 1,757 times that of the new survey ship).

So too the rest of Portsmouth Harbour's users. And Plymouth (when she gets there). And every major port in the UK.

No other vessel methodically charts the seabed and shoreline of the nation's strategic ports and harbours than Magpie, currently at work scouring every inch of Portsmouth Harbour.

The RN's newest commissioned warship is spending more than three months scanning the harbour and its approaches to make sure they remain safe for use by the two new aircraft carriers.

More than three and a half million cubic metres of clay, sand and gravel were excavated as part of £100m improvements to the harbour's infrastructure to accommodate the 65,000-tonne warships – each one with a draught of 11 metres (36ft).

Now harbour and naval chiefs want to ensure that the sands and mud on the seabed hasn't shifted – posing a danger chiefly to the carriers (HMS Prince of Wales is due to join her older sister in the base later this year) but also other harbour users.

It's only the second mission carried out by Plymouth-based Magpie, which joined the Royal Navy last year.

She is the first tangible product of Project Vahana overseen by defence and technology firm Atlas which will see upwards of 30 generic workboats delivered to the RN for duties as varied as ferrying the crew of HMS Prince of Wales from ship to shore, to supporting diving operations and survey operations by HMS Enterprise and Echo.

She's also a one-off – the largest at 18 metres long and also uniquely equipped.

There's definitely nothing like her in the Fleet. Even on a P2000 you find traditional hatches and doors with clips.

Not on Magpie. About the only doors (apart from the one on to the quarterdeck and the outside world) are on the shower and heads (quite rightly) and the engine room.

Otherwise, she's open plan: a large main cabin for the surveyors to work, leading up to the bridge and down to the (very small) living quarters.

Magpie is designed for day running, but in theory she can operate for three days up to 60 miles offshore.

Accommodation is pretty austere: around ten bunks, a tiny galley and a washing machine built into the stairwell. There's no ward room, no mess (but there are a couple of large tables to sit at in the main cabin).

Such limited but vital amenities are why second-in-command Lieutenant Hilary O'Connell calls Magpie "a survey motor home".

And then there's the bridge – closer to a Wildcat or Merlin cockpit than an RN warship: apart from a compass and barometer, it's fully digital.

That's not the only thing which makes Magpie unique. Commanding officers talk about 'driving' ships. Magpie's does. Lieutenant Commander Will Alexander steers his command. And navigates her. And runs comms.

The catamaran is typically crewed by just four people on a survey patrol (the CO/XO, a duty mechanic, and two junior rate hydrographers), while

the remaining half a dozen crew occupy offices ashore for processing and analysing the reams of data collected. Magpie's sonars alone are expected to gather half a terabyte of information – in very shallow waters the sensors can collect perhaps 800 readings per second.

One day's scanning at sea amounts to around three days' work processing the data back in the office.

This is the first visit to Portsmouth by Magpie, which replaces long-standing survey motor launch HMS Gleaner, retired last year after 35 years' service.

The mission remains the same: to make sure that mariners using bases and dockyards, plus strategic ports – and not just obvious ones like Southampton, Liverpool, and Felixstowe, but places such as Milford Haven (liquid natural gas) and Immingham (oil, coal, petrochemicals) – are precisely charted.

Magpie's built-in and towed sonar systems will scan every inch of the working part of the harbour to provide 3D imagery and an understanding of the seabed like never before.

She surveyed the channels around Barrow to ensure they are safe for the latest A-boats and future Dreadnought-class ballistic missile submarines to emerge safely from the Devonshire Dock Hall and neighbouring basin and head out into the Irish Sea.

Once work inside the harbour and main approaches is finished, Magpie will shift focus to the wreck site of the Mary Rose to see if there's anything of significance left on the seabed from Henry VIII's flagship.

And then she'll investigate the wreck of a French galley, lost around the same time as the famous British flagship off the northeast coast of the Isle of Wight.

"One of the biggest challenges is how busy the harbour is," explained Lt Cdr Alexander.

"There are around 230,000 movements every year, and it's especially busy in the summer with pleasure craft.

"Being in command of Magpie is a hugely rewarding job. She's a great boat to drive, there's a degree of autonomy as a small ship, and wreck surveying is really interesting.

"But most importantly, what we do has a direct impact on the ships and submarines of the Fleet, surveying waters so that they can use them safely."

Before beginning her Portsmouth mission, the ship was presented with a battle honours board by Atlas marking the achievements of the previous eight vessels to bear the name, most famously the WW2 sloop/frigate which successfully hunted U-boats alongside legendary sub hunter Johnny Walker and later became the Duke of Edinburgh's sole command between 1950 and 51.

Once done in Portsmouth, Magpie will cross the Channel. The waters around Jersey and Guernsey are beloved by RN warfare officers, so much so that they are regularly used to train the navigators of tomorrow. So regular readers may be surprised to discover that the Channel Island coastline is rather poorly mapped – and certainly not to Magpie's standards.

Picture: LPhot Dan Shepherd, FRPU East



Vote for your favourite pic

WE are giving you the opportunity to vote for one of the winners of the prestigious Peregrine Trophy awards.

We have shortlisted six photographs for the Navy News People's Choice Award, sponsored by Greenwich Hospital, which recognises images which have had a major impact on the publication over the past year.

The shortlisted photographs can be previewed below.

To vote click like on your favourite image on the Royal Navy Facebook page. Voting closes at 11.59pm on Thursday May 16 2019.



LPhot Dan Rosenbaum captured this night-time gunnery firing exercise during HMS Argyll's deployment to the Far East.



Personnel from CHF's 847 NAS were photographed by PO(Phot) Des Wade as they carried out underslung load training in Norway.



PO(Phot) Si Ethell photographed HMS Albion during the warship's visit to Tokyo in Japan.



LPhot Rory Arnold captured this image of a penguin in front of HMS Protector.



The Royal Navy's newest commissioned warship, HMS Magpie, was photographed by LPhot Dan Shepherd.



LPhot Dean Nixon photographed Royal Marines Assault Engineers using a thermal lance to cut through a door during training.

Harbouring ambition

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BATTLE ON YOUR OWN

**Debt, family, health or addiction
problems - don't keep quiet, talk to us.**

Forcesline, a free, independent helpline,
outside the chain of command for the
Armed Forces and their families.

0800 731 4880

Open weekdays, 09:00 to 17:30

Or get in touch online at

ssafa.org.uk/forcesline





Croeso Monmouth

Warmest of welcomes in namesake town

TO the applause of locals, Lieutenant Vyrnwy Rainbird leads the Guard of Honour through the colourful heart of Monmouth as its namesake ship celebrates the freedom of the Welsh town.

One hundred and twenty-two members of the ship's company made the pilgrimage from HMS Monmouth's base in Devonport to the border town to celebrate the ancient right – their last opportunity before the Type 23 is prepared for a refit.

Led by the Band of the Royal Marines, sailors began their march from the iconic Monnow Bridge – famously replicated on the ship's badge – with 'drums beating, flags flying and bayonets fixed'.

Hundreds of well-wishers lined the streets, clapping and cheering as the crew proudly marched through the small town towards the castle.

The marchers stopped en route to be inspected by the Lord Lieutenant of Gwent, Brigadier Robert Aitken, the Mayor, Councillor Terry Christopher, and other dignitaries.

"We bestowed the freedom of the town upon HMS Monmouth in 2003 and since then our ties have gone from strength to strength, and I am sure over the coming years the ties will become even stronger," Cllr Christopher told the sailors formed up before him.

Commander William King, Monmouth's Commanding Officer, bristled with pride at the sight of his men and women proudly representing their ship, their navy and nation on the streets of Monmouth.

"Standing on parade today reminds me of why we do our job: to defend and protect the UK's interest and to defend us all from those that wish to harm us and our way of life. Days like today make it thoroughly worthwhile," he told townsfolk.



"I take great pride in my ship and the name it bears. But what is more important to me are the men and women that serve in it with me. I admire them as they go about their daily business onboard; they put the heart and soul into HMS Monmouth. They are professional, highly-valued and highly-motivated. Looking at them assembled today, in their best uniforms, I respectfully thank them for all

they have done."

While their ship is handed over to prepare for refit in her home base, her ship's company will be heading out to Bahrain to take charge of HMS Montrose as the Starboard Crew for the first of their four-month watch rotations as part of the latter's three-year deployment to the Middle East.

Pictures: LPhoto Paul Hall

Defenders seen at Ibrox

HMS Defender returned to the river of her birth to catch up with old friends during a four-day visit to Glasgow.

Launched on the Clyde a decade ago, the Type 45 headed back up the river and under the Erskine Bridge before berthing at King George V Dock, Glasgow's largest – and still used by merchant traffic.

Crammed into the long weekend was a ticketed ship-open-to-visitors event, which saw all 4,000 places snapped up for a tour of some of the compartments and departments of the Portsmouth-based warship.

A team from BAE Systems, who built Defender at the firm's Govan and Scotstoun yards a decade ago, returned to see how their ship was standing the test of time, while students from Glasgow Universities and Colleges were invited aboard to learn a little more about the Royal Navy.

Young people studying professional

cooking at City of Glasgow College's Faculty of Hospitality and Catering brought along a chocolate replica of Defender's crest for the crew to enjoy.

And exploring the high-tech capabilities of the vessel, were students from the College's Faculty of Nautical and Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

Defender also hosted the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Right Reverend Susan Brown, and Deputy Lord Provost of Glasgow, Philip Braat.

And with Scottish footballers on international duties in Kazakhstan, Defender's sports fans were given a behind-the-scenes tour of Rangers' impressive Ibrox Stadium.

"It was a fantastic few days," said Commander Richard Hewitt, Defender's Commanding Officer. "We met so many people and renewed so many friendships."



P2000s pay tribute to the 'greatest raid of all'

THE Royal Navy's greatest raid – and its greatest tragedy – have been marked by two of its smallest ships on a visit to Saint Nazaire.

Patrol boats HMS Exploit and Express crossed the Channel to remember the hundreds of sailors and Royal Marines who stormed the French port in March 1942 – and the thousands of soldiers, sailors killed when an overcrowded passenger liner was sunk offshore two years earlier.

Operation Chariot, led by veteran destroyer HMS Campbeltown, pictured bottom of page, sought to knock out the dock and facilities used by the German Navy to maintain and repair their capital ships such as the fearsome battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau and the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen.

The resulting attack succeeded – but at huge cost, for not half the 600-plus men who left Falmouth to take part in the raid returned.

Ceremonies were held in the Cornish port last month by today's Royal Navy and Royal Marines as well as veterans group.

Services also take place in Brittany, led by the Saint Nazaire Society – originally formed by survivors of the raid but now, with all the veterans gone (the last died just a few weeks

ago), comprising their descendants and relatives, as well as historians.

They hosted the crew of both P2000 patrol ships during their visit to the port, guiding the sailors around the sites of the action in 1942 and put the raid into context.

Two memorial services were held – at Escoubac cemetery where many of the Chariot dead are buried – and at the Commando Monument in Saint Nazaire itself during two days of commemorations.

"To follow in the footsteps of our Coastal Forces forebears was truly humbling. To attend the two days of commemoration events and to speak to the members of the Saint Nazaire Society who



knew, and were related to, the Charioteers was an honour," said Lieutenant Ryan Greig, HMS Exploit's Commanding Officer.

"The tour was incredible. We ended at the Normandie Dock where HMS Campbeltown impacted and a group of commandos fought ashore. It was a staggering history brought to life by walking the sights."

His counterpart on HMS Express, Lt Thomas Sellen, added: "Following in the path of HMS Campbeltown and the Charioteers into the docks of Saint Nazaire was a humbling experience. Bravery beyond belief."

Both vessels are on a pre-Easter deployment giving an extended taster of life in the 21st Century Royal Navy to students from universities in Wales (Express) and Birmingham (Exploit).

After two days in Saint Nazaire, the two small vessels sailed to a spot four and a half miles off the French coast in the middle of the Loire estuary

where 79 years ago the worst disaster in British maritime history took place.

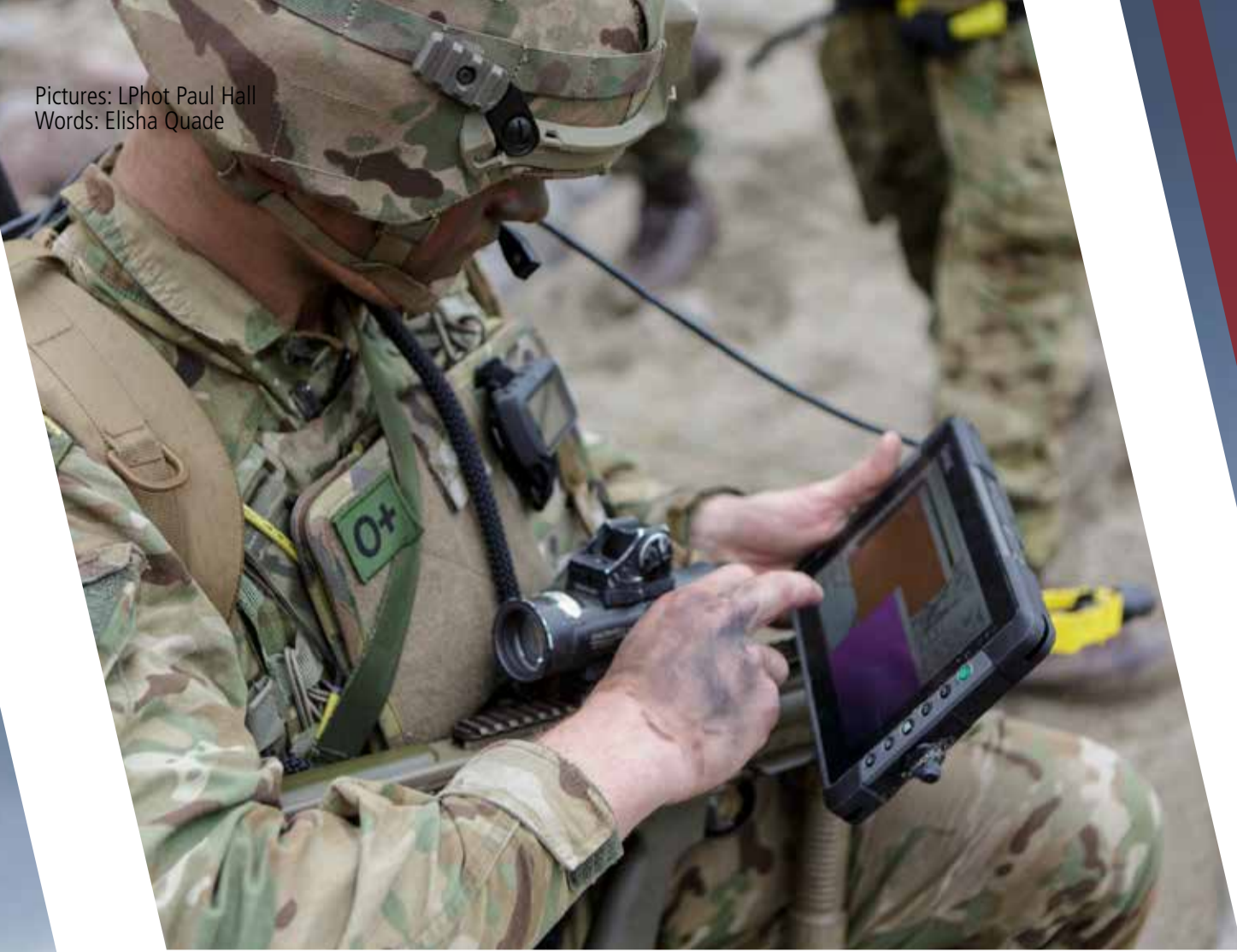
In June 1940 – two weeks after the evacuation of Dunkirk ended – the former Cunard liner turned troopship HMT Lancastria, pictured above, was carrying British troops still stuck in France back to the UK.

Severely overcrowded, she was pounced upon by German bombers and hit by two 500lb bombs.

She capsized and sank in 20 minutes. Around 2,500 men were saved, but anywhere between 3,000 and 6,000 Britons died – as many as four times those lost in the Titanic. The crew of both 2000s laid wreaths over the wreck.



Pictures: LPhoto Paul Hall
Words: Elisha Quade



REINVENTING

New technology is shaping how Royal Marines operate.



FOUR raiding craft carrying Royal Marines tear through the sea towards Tregantle Beach in Cornwall as a ground-breaking exercise bursts into life.

The commandos drop into the bracing water, battling crashing waves to make it to land where a hidden 'enemy' awaits.

They run across the wet sand towards nearby rocks to give them cover as they ready their equipment for the assault.

This is Exercise Commando Warrior and this is no ordinary beach raid because the Royal Marines are supported by unmanned vehicles for the first time in tactical action.

As they left the boats from 1 Assault Group Royal Marines (1AGRM), marines from Alpha Company 40 Commando were backed by an unmanned boat cruising the coastline looking for enemy forces both on land and sea, using its on board cameras and sensors.

Meanwhile, a small Unmanned Air System, similar to a drone, was looking down from the skies for any signs of danger and two Unmanned Ground Vehicles were providing overwatch and fire support if necessary.

This exercise focused on linking up all this unmanned kit to provide commanders with information to help their tactical decision-making. It was also passed to a separate command and control facility at the 3 Commando Brigade headquarters.

With the autonomous vehicles looking on, the Royal Marines ditched their drysuits on the beach and prepared to climb the steep, rain-soaked, cliffs. One-by-one they move themselves up to higher ground.

From there, they made their way to a radar station at the very top of the cliff where an 'enemy' was patrolling.

Once in sight of the station, the sound of gunfire rattled across the beach as the marines stormed the area, backed by autonomous vehicles for the first time.

The technology, designed and built by QinetiQ, is part of the Autonomous Advance Force and is the first step on how autonomy can benefit Royal Marines and support the Future Commando Force.

"This is very early steps in the capacity of the Future Commando Force and reinventing ourselves back to the original definition of what commandos are," explained Corporal Scott Shaw.

"It is about reinventing the force with new technology that's available."

Corporal Ashley Hill agrees. "Trialling this new kit, and new formations, is about pushing us away from just being an infantry force that gets off the boats and moving us back towards our commando roots.

"There is a space to be filled in defence and we are trying to fill it thanks to this new technology.

"Although we are at early stages and far away from a finished product, it is good to see the kit integrated with the lads. Industry partners are taking our feedback which will hopefully see us go in the right direction and be the right step forward for our future."

Teams behind the unmanned vehicles were at Tregantle Beach to watch how the equipment performed in a live-action situation. Images and information

“It is about reinventing the force with new technology”

were fed back to them to be analysed while simultaneously routed to a hand-held tablet operated by the marines on the ground.

The tablet displays everything the equipment is seeing and can help the units make tactical decisions. The latest technology can also see the same information wired to RM Stonehouse Joint Operations Centre in Plymouth where those in command can see what is happening.

Commando Warrior saw 40 Commando, 1AGRM led by the Royal Marines' Trials Unit (11 Amphibious Trials and Training Squadron) and the QinetiQ Autonomous Advance Force work together in a tactical scenario under the new Maritime Autonomous Platform Exploitation (MAPLE) programme.

Colonel Chris Haw, commanding officer of 1AGRM and Commando Warrior exercise director, said: "This is the first of a series of Commando Warrior exercises which is the early stages of the integration of technology with the Future Commando Force.

"This is a really exciting start and although it is only the first step, it is a milestone in Future Commando Force and Littoral Strike development. This has been a ground-breaking exercise."

The equipment used in the exercise was funded by Navy Tech Bets after a bid was approved by the Navy Board for the 2018/19 financial year.

Col Haw added: "There is considerable support for us to get on the front foot for innovation and technology. This is about how we can do things differently, not just the same but with new technology."

On the importance of innovation for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, he said: "As part of the defence secretary's transformation agenda, the Commando Force has set about integrating as much technology as possible into the high-end operations we do.

"Because we are a relatively small and agile force that has high-calibre individuals, we want to see how we can exploit the technology and integrate it into the way we operate to give ourselves tactical advantage.

"In future we will be able to do things with more precision and less risk."

ON



FIESTA ST

Ford

TOGETHER WE GO FURTHER



SIERRA. ALPHA. VICTOR. ECHO.

We're proud to offer current and former military personnel savings on selected vehicles.[†]

Search: Ford Military Sales



[†]Selected vehicles only. Eligibility criteria applies. See ford.co.uk/militarysales for more information.

Model shown is a Fiesta ST-3 3-Door 1.5 200PS Manual Petrol with optional Full LED Headlamps.
Fuel economy mpg (l/100km): Combined 40.4 (7.0). *CO₂ emissions 136g/km.

Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO₂ figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

*There is a new test used for fuel consumption and CO₂ figures. The CO₂ figures shown, however, are based on the outgoing test cycle and will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration.

NORSE CODE

ROYAL Marines stared down Swedish and Finnish armour, battling waist deep in snow in the frozen high north, as winter training ended with a bang.

Marines from 40 Commando have been out in the Arctic for the last three months and the intensive training for Britain's winter warfare specialists reached its explosive end fighting alongside Norway's Brigade Nord and the United States Marine Corps in the sub-Arctic.

The contingent of 350 Royal Marines were at the front of the week-long mock battle, which saw Sweden and Finland attempt to defend the northern reaches of Swedish territory against an onslaught from a NATO trident made up of US, UK and Norwegian forces.

This was all played out by upwards of 10,000 troops near the Baltic coast, around the town of Haparanda at the head of the Gulf of Bothnia.

First they learned how to survive, then fight and then work together alongside their NATO allies – a 5,000-strong force was shipped 300 miles from Bardufoss in Norway to the exercise

area on the Swedish-Finnish border. It took 17 trains, 59 vehicle convoys and 75 buses to transport all the troops and equipment to the front on the 'Battle of Eastern Norrbotten'.

The exercise was intended to enhance the Swedish Army's ability to defend the country from an attack in the high north. Swedes stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Finnish troops, using armour and motorised infantry to fend off the attacking Norwegian-led battle group in sub-zero temperatures.

"The forces were 'fighting' in some of the most challenging conditions in the world," explained Lieutenant Simon Williams of 40 Commando, based at Norton Manor near Taunton.

"The snow was waist deep, conditions were freezing and the alpine forests dense. So movement was tough – but the Royal Marines are trained to exploit this environment."

On skis or in their Viking armoured vehicles, they tried to outflank their foes, 'fighting' alongside Norwegian reconnaissance specialists.

The commandos have also spent much of this winter passing on their Arctic knowledge and experience to the US Marine Corps – something which paid off as the two marines corps 'fought' side-by-side in the Swedish snow.

"I think it is extremely important training out here in these harsh conditions; you see the United States Marine Corps and your first thought of them is as hot weather specialists," said Corporal Brandon Burrows of the United States Marine Corps.

"Our transition towards working in cold weather is vital. It has also been great to learn from our allied forces."

Lt Williams said the 350 marines would return to Somerset at the very top of their game after their extensive – and intensive – Arctic workout.

"Northern Wind tested everything we have learned over the winter and added some new challenges. It also gave us the opportunity to see how other militaries survive and fight in such a harsh environment," he added.

"Above all, Royal Marines have demonstrated their ability to fight side-by-side with NATO and European allies in the high north. This will reinforce the fact that the UK and its partners are committed to deter any military aggression in the region."



Pictures: LCpl James Clarke



NORTHERN WIND 2019

✚ NORWAY ✚ UNITED STATES ✚ UK

4,500 from Norway's Brigade North
450 from US Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa
350 Royal Marines from 40 Commando Charlie Company and Recce Troop, 30 Commando IX's SRS, CLR's Logistic Task Group
= 5,300 troops

- VERSUS -

✚ SWEDEN ✚ FINLAND

1,500 from Finnish Army from the Jaeger Brigade, Kainuu Brigade, Pori Brigade and Armoured Brigade
3,000 from Sweden's Norrbotten Regiment, Logistic Regiment, Artillery Regiment, Skaraborg Regiment, Life Regiment Hussars, Armed Forces Command and Control Regiment
= 4,500 troops





Cheeky Barrow trip

THREE officer cadets from the Oxford URNU were joined by three officer cadets from the Liverpool URNU to visit the BAE Systems Maritime Submarines Facility in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria.

After a safety presentation and test the group went onto the site led by Lt Waliter, the Correspondence Officer, from HMS Audacious to the building occupied by the ship's company.

Next Lt Waliter talked about his experiences in training, the Submarine Service and the RN in general.

The group then had a fireside chat from the XO and Lt Cdr Matt Main, the MEO, of HMS Audacious.

The group were fascinated to hear the experiences, opinions and the inside knowledge from each of the fireside chat hosts who each gave a very different insight into their world.

Additionally the chat made it obvious that no two RN officers have the same career with Lt Cdr Main mentioning that he had earned the US Navy's Dolphins in addition to his RN Dolphins during an exchange.

Lt Waliter then took the group

on board HMS Audacious for some greatly-appreciated scran with the choice of cottage pie or pizza in the wardroom.

Next the group were given a tour inside the awe-inspiring factory where Lt Waliter explained the complex and thorough process that is undertaken to build the three Astute-class submarines currently under construction.

One of the most amazing aspects of the tour was the ability to see three boats in different stages of development which helped show the process taken to build each boat.

Furthermore the tour gave an insight to the unbelievable size of a submarine and its iceberg like characteristics when in the water.

Finally the visit concluded with a tour of HMS Audacious led by Lt Waliter.

The level of detail was greatly appreciated by everyone as it gave the cadets an appreciation of how sophisticated an Astute submarine is.

CPO Gary Maskell, Commanding Officer of the Oxford URNU said: "The visit was awe inspiring and showcased the construction of an amazing Royal Navy capability."



Can you tell what it is yet?

OFFICER Cadets from Oxford URNU gather round an engine during a visit to see the Royal Navy's new F-35 Lightning jets.

Four cadets, along with members of staff, travelled to RAF Marham in Norfolk for a special air day.

The group, who were hosted by Lieutenant Commander Neil 'Shiner' Wright, started their visit with lunch in the officers' mess.

They then saw two Tornado jets take off for the aircraft's final flight before a tour of the new facilities for F-35 engineers and pilots.

Briefs on the engine were given by the resident Pratt and Whitney engineer and a former fast jet pilot gave an overview brief of the aircraft from its history right through to its impressive capability.

The visitors were then given the rare privilege of seeing a live F-35 aircraft up close complete with an engineering tour.

CPO Gary Maskell, Commanding Officer of the Oxford URNU said: "The F35 is a truly amazing aircraft which will give the RN an incredible capability."

"It was fantastic for the Officer Cadets to have the opportunity to gain an insight into this exciting part of the RN."



Oxford is one of 15 URNUs located across the UK offering opportunities to 750 undergraduates from the country's leading universities.

The URNU's mission is: "To develop an understanding of the Naval Service in undergraduates, so that those who go into civilian employment are positive advocates thereof and to facilitate a Naval Career for those who choose one."

The URNU is a chance to experience military life without commitment and gain new skills applicable to all walks of life.

All up for the university challenge

ALL 15 University Royal Naval Units travelled to Portsmouth for their annual sports weekend at HMS Temeraire.

Events included swimming, hockey, touch rugby, buckball, netball and an 8x200 metre relay.

The weather was fair but slightly cold on day one; luckily proceedings began in the swimming pool with events in every stroke, the overall winner of the swimming being Oxford.

Proceedings then moved outdoors, the competition was tough, and units really got stuck into each other.

Competition this was all forgotten during a social on Saturday evening at the Victory Club, where the students wore fancy dress representing the region their URNU is based in.

Particularly good costumes included: Welsh men dressing as Newport girls, Southampton personnel wore ecclesiastical attire to represent the Saints and Northumbria dressed as the Angel of the North.

Despite the cold weather and some rain, the units continued to battle it out on day two, with different units rising to the top in the various events.

Southampton won the rugby and hockey, Birmingham the bucketball and relay, and Wales the netball.

The overall winners were Wales with Birmingham a close second only two points behind and Southampton third.

Had a blast with DEMS

A MIDSHIPMAN, 2 Officer Cadets and the Staff of the Oxford URNU visited the Defence Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Munitions and Search Training Regiment where all Royal Navy Mine Clearance Divers are trained.

After a full brief on the organisation of the branch and the vast array of roles undertaken, the visitors were shown the world-class equipment Royal Navy divers use as well as the impressive training facilities.

Also on the tour was the extremely interesting warehouse of varied munitions that had been made safe over the years the branch has been operating.

CPO Gary Maskell, Commanding Officer of the Oxford URNU said: "The visit was a great insight into the role of RN divers, particularly for the officer cadets that attended who are interested in joining the branch."

One of the URNU visitors is pictured below wearing a mine clearance diver's suit.



Heart of democracy

FIVE Officer Cadets and Staff from the Oxford URNU were joined by five Officer Cadets from Bristol URNU to visit MOD Main Building in London and the Houses of Parliament.

The visit began with a chat with the Naval Regional Commander, Commodore David Elford, who talked to the Officer Cadets about his career and the vast array of opportunities the RN has afforded.

The visitors then met their host at MOD Main Building, Cdr Dan D'Silva, who took them on a tour of the impressive Henry VIII wine cellar beneath the building itself.

A fascinating tour of the Houses of Parliament, in particular the House of Lords, then followed with briefs from the Naval Staff on the function of MOD Main Building within the wider MOD.



Exploiting training time

ELEVEN Young Officers from BRNC Dartmouth embarked on HMS Exploit for an intense week of navigation training.

Navigating the P2000 on paper charts in the confined waters between the Needles and Sandown Bay proved ideal for their development.

The merchant traffic, pleasure vessels and numerous yachts conspired to provide a challenge for the students as they worked to manoeuvre safely between them.

At the same time, the paper charts were kept accurate by a combination of accurate fixing and solid teamwork.

Their time spent in the bridge simulator at BRNC helped them develop the theory of 'conning' a warship; the added real-world challenges helped solidify this training.

Midshipman Davis said: "Going to sea in HMS Exploit provided a fantastic opportunity to hone our skills outside the bridge simulator."

The cadets return to BRNC to complete their Initial Warfare Officers Foundation Course, following which they will join HMS Collingwood to continue their professional training.

Factory visit is a roaring success



A SURGEON Sub Lieutenant, an Officer Cadet and the staff of the Oxford URNU conducted an engineering visit to the Jaguar Factory in Castle Bromwich.

The visit began with the highly automated and impressive production factory which showcased the process from start to finish for creating such high-quality vehicles from sheets of aluminium.

One of the machines shown was the world's largest aluminium press located with the extremely large production facility.

The group then saw the high end sports car models which feature a much more handmade production method to produce truly outstanding sports cars.

CPO Gary Maskell, Commanding Officer of the Oxford URNU said: "The superb visit showcased world class engineering and it is amazing to think that the site also built 12,000 Spitfires during WW2."



● General Sir Gordon Messenger chats with a Royal Marine officer of 40 Commando holding one of the unit's three previously-awarded Swords of Peace

Ruman the cabinet for one more trophy...

THE month-long mercy mission by Royal Marines in the wake of fearful storms smashing the Caribbean in the autumn of 2017 earned them the military's highest humanitarian award – for an unprecedented fourth time.

The men and women of 40 Commando received the Firmin Sword of Peace – recognition for providing life-saving aid, assistance and security to communities across the Caribbean.

The commandos, based at Norton Manor near Taunton, were among the first people on the ground in Anguilla, the British Virgin and Turks and Caicos Islands in the wake of devastation caused by Hurricane Irma.

They delivered food and fresh water, set up makeshift medical centres, cleared roads, restored power supplies, helped local authorities maintain law and order – the prison in the Virgin Islands was damaged and 141 inmates escaped, while looters armed with machetes plundered stores – patched up homes, secured an airport so flights could resume, rescued stray dogs and cleaned schools of debris so classes could resume.

Colour Sergeant John Dixon led a team of assault engineers who were heavily in demand for clearing debris, rebuilding and restoring vital services.

"Every single man stood up to the mark when required – it was quite humbling. We had to get a result in such a pressure-geek situation – and we did," he said.

40 Commando's work was part of a major effort by all three of Britain's armed forces in response to the natural disaster – codenamed Operation Ruman – which also saw helicopter carrier HMS Ocean which dashed across the Atlantic.

It was 40 Commando's efforts which stood out above all others, however, according to those who award the coveted sword, presented to the military unit which has done the most to promote or sustain peace or provide humanitarian assistance.

Originally known as the Wilkinson Sword of Peace, it has been presented since 1966 – though only if a unit was deserving; if there's no suitable recipient, the sword is not awarded.

It fell to the country's most senior serving Royal Marine – General Sir Gordon Messenger, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff and Commanding Officer of 40 Commando during the invasion of Iraq in 2003 – to present the sword (a new one is produced for each winner) to Lieutenant Colonel Paul Maynard on his final day in charge of the Norton Manor unit.

General Messenger said he had followed the marines' mission in the Caribbean from his office in Whitehall with admiration.

"This is a huge achievement and this unit should be proud. Every new member of 40 Commando who sees the four swords in their display case should take enormous pride – it speaks of 40 Commando over the generations," he added.

Lieutenant Colonel Maynard said that the 34 days his men and women were committed on Operation Ruman had been "the best demonstration of commando spirit I have seen".

He continued: "What I witnessed in September 2017 was courage, unselfishness, determination and humour – 40 Commando at its best."

"Our presence alone and the amazing sight of the green beret had a calming effect on the widespread panic, the looting stopped, and help was delivered to those who needed it."

40 Commando was also the inaugural recipient of the sword back in 1966 when based in Singapore for its peacekeeping efforts in Borneo.

The award was presented again six years later after a difficult tour of duty in Northern Ireland at the height of the Troubles and in 1984 for a six-month stint in Cyprus helping to bridge the gap between the island's Greek and Turkish communities.

Pictures: LPhot Paul Hall, FRPU West



In full flow

IT'S been a good month for the small ship realm – none more so than HMS Forth, strutting her stuff for the first time under the White Ensign.

After a year alongside in Portsmouth, the first of Britain's second-generation River-class patrol ships is now firmly on the 'road' to the Falklands.

The extensive trials and training she's conducted for the past month along the entire south coast (including a first visit to Plymouth) as she works up towards relieving HMS Clyde as the South Atlantic islands' permanent naval guardian.

As Forth works up, the fourth ship in the class (Tamar) has been formally named (see below), and HMS Severn (the second of the first-generation Rivers) is being regenerated with a refit in Falmouth as the original trio are required for border security/fishery duties in a Britain post-Brexit.

Beyond being named after rivers in the UK, a White Ensign on the flagstaff and a crew of 40 men and women, there's not too much in common between the two generations.

They're bigger, faster, much more capable... and much less likely to be found in home waters on fishery duties; the intention is to station them around the globe to patrol the Caribbean, Med, perhaps the Gulf or Far East to broaden the RN's role and influence, renewing bonds with the Commonwealth... and forging fresh ones.

All of which is long way from the Isle of Wight, Solent and Hamoaze in April, where Forth conducted basic trials and safety drills: man overboard, fire-fighting, damage control, machinery breakdown drills.

Navy assessors were delighted with the performance of the ship's company, allowing Forth to move on more demanding training and trials.

"It has been a long road for my ship's company to get to this point and I am exceptionally proud of every single one of them," said Commander Bob Laverty, the patrol ship's first commanding officer.

"In many respects now is the beginning of the journey for Forth as we put her through her paces and get to know our ship inside and out."

To celebrate the return to sea, Lydia Fields, wife of Executive Officer Lieutenant Sam Fields, baked a large cake for the ship's company – coloured yellow, green, black and brown (!) like HMS Forth's bespoke tartan, and the chefs turned the galley into 'Papa Jack's', delivering pretty much every variety of pizza on the menu to shipmates.

If all that sounds a bit 'lardy'... there are circuits at 4pm daily to shed the pounds.

Forth will be a regular sight in the South Coast exercise areas over the next few months conducting further trials, not least aviation handling (helicopters up to Merlin size can land on the flight deck and take fuel from the Rivers but cannot operate permanently from them as there's no hangar).

A Wildcat from 815 Naval Air Squadron in Yeovilton buzzed the ship her trials off the Isle of Wight, during the fine spring weather... but only to record the first official images of Forth at sea.

Once all the first-of-class trials are completed, the focus shifts to western Scotland, where front-line training for smaller ships is conducted, then begin crew rotation (of the 58 sailors assigned to her, only two thirds are aboard at any one time), after which she'll be ready to deploy.

While Forth was being put through her paces, her younger sister HMS Tamar enjoyed a gentler introduction to the world.

She's the fourth River and the sixth RN vessel to carry the moniker (last borne by the naval base in Hong Kong from 1897 until 1997).

The new Tamar was named in the traditional manner as a bottle of Camel Valley Brut – from the ship's affiliated county, Cornwall – was smashed against the hull by the vessel's sponsor Lady Brigitte Peach, whose husband is Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach, former Chief of Defence Staff, now head of NATO's Military Committee.

All five new Rivers are or have been constructed in BAE System's Govan yard, before being moved to their Scotstoun site downstream on the Clyde to be fitted out with their systems ahead of trials.

Pictures: LPhot Louise George, FRPU East, and POET(WE) Lee Blease, HMS St Albans

Job done for the Wildcats in Oman



THE last Royal Navy helicopter to fly maritime security operations in Oman has returned to the UK after a ten-year mission.

Operation Chobdahar has seen Royal Navy helicopter crews support Oman's maritime security since 2001.

They were there as part of Kipion – the long-standing UK maritime presence which secures Britain's economic interests in the Gulf.

As part of the operation, UK aircraft including Nimrod, Merlin and most recently Wildcat helicopters from 815 Naval Air Squadron have flown more than 17,000 hours on joint operations.

815 NAS will now redeploy Wildcat to support other operational tasking as they are no longer needed in

Oman, having achieved huge successes against illicit smuggling and other criminal activity.

Chief of Joint Operations, Vice Admiral Ben Key, said: "I pay tribute to all those personnel who have contributed to the success of Operation Chobdahar."

"They have helped deliver security in the Gulf region, strengthened the UK-Oman relationship, and demonstrated the UK's ability to deploy and sustain effective capabilities overseas."

The Defence relationship between the UK and Oman dates back hundreds of years and is now strengthened further by the recent signing of a Joint Defence Agreement.

This will deliver new training, operational, and mutual security opportunities for years to come.

Lieutenant Commander Anthony Johnson, the 815 NAS Wildcat detachment commander overseeing the final helicopter deployment, said: "We have made a real difference flying these maritime security missions, helping tackle the scourge of illicit smuggling and other criminal activity."

"The hundreds of men and women who have supported these operations over the last ten years can be justifiably proud of their contribution to security in this vital part of the world."

The Royal Navy will continue to have a significant presence in the Middle East, ensuring the security of some of the world's most vital shipping lanes.

Warship HMS Montrose this month became the first Type 23 frigate to be stationed for three years at the UK's naval support facility in Bahrain. She joins four of the Royal Navy's fleet of minehunters to support peace and stability in the region.



● Top and above: A Wildcat helicopter of 815 NAS is loaded into the back of an RAF C17 aircraft in Oman



3 bridges, 2 queens and 1 prince...



• Tugs help turn HMS Queen Elizabeth around in the main basin at Rosyth Dockyard

WITH her tallest mast lowered to prevent clipping the iconic Forth crossings, HMS Queen Elizabeth returns to her birthplace for a spot of maintenance.

Nearly five years after waters first lapped around the hull of the 65,000-tonne future flagship, the aircraft carrier has gone back to Rosyth for a routine maintenance and inspection of workings below the waterline.

Sailing back into Scottish waters, her Commanding Officer, Captain Nick Cooke-Priest said: "A lot of water has already passed under our keel since we left Rosyth in 2017.

"Our return here is yet another first for HMS Queen Elizabeth and another important step on

her journey as Britain generates a big deck carrier strike capability."

The 65,000-tonne carrier was floated in July 2014 and sailed from Rosyth Dockyard for the first time in June 2017.

Since then she has crossed the Atlantic to conduct historic trials with test variant F35 Lightning stealth fighters off the Eastern Seaboard of the USA as she works up for her first operational deployment in two years' time.

The pole mast was lowered at a 60-degree angle to make it safely under the Forth Bridge rail crossing, then the 1960s road bridge and finally the new Queensferry Crossing which opened just weeks after the

carrier sailed from Rosyth on her maiden trials.

There were four-mile tailbacks on the approach to the Queensferry Crossing as drivers slowed down to see the ship.

Safely past the crossings, the carrier waited for two days for the right tidal and weather conditions to manoeuvre safely through the lock into Rosyth Dockyard.

Equipped with a specially designed roller-fender system, the dock offers just one metre clearance each side of the ship, and just over one metre separating the keel from the entrance sill.

Once through the entrance, she was taken through the inner

basin, back into the dry dock where she was pieced together, edging past her younger sister, HMS Prince of Wales which is scheduled to leave Rosyth for the first time later this year.

This dry-docking period is a mandatory requirement in accordance with Lloyds Register classification. An inspection will be carried out on her 920 foot-long hull, with any defects being rectified and marine growth removed.

The head of marine engineering onboard, Commander Mark Hamilton says it's a significant, but necessary job.

"This routine maintenance will include changing many of

the large underwater valves, inspecting the rudders, propellers and stabilisers, as well as cleaning and touching up the underwater paint scheme.

"Having completed this work, HMS Queen Elizabeth should not have to dry dock again for another six years."

When the docking period is complete HMS Queen Elizabeth will sail to conduct further sea trials and training ahead of deploying again later this year for exercise Westlant 19, returning to the same waters off the USA as last year – but this time embarking operational British F35s, following on from last year's successful tests.

Pictures: CPO (Phot) Nick Tryon



● HMS Queen Elizabeth, right, as viewed from the ski ramp of her younger sister HMS Prince of Wales



Currying favour with homeless

PORTSMOUTH Naval Base's Royal Navy Waterfront Logistics Support Group cooked a curry for homeless and vulnerable people.

The scheme was the brainchild of Commander Pete Vinney who tasked those in his command to find a suitable way for the team to offer support to the community.

The LifeHouse a support centre and soup kitchen in Albert Road, Southsea, was chosen.

They provide one breakfast and one evening meal every week, and feed between 20-40 people on average per meal.

The meals are provided solely from charitable donations and the kitchen is manned by volunteers.

Chief Petty Officer Duncan Knibbs, who organised the event, said: "After contacting Michael Morell, who heads up the charity, we arranged an initial meeting to see what we could provide and how best to offer support."

"We decided to provide a second weekday evening meal, comprising of a two-course dinner with soft drinks, tea, coffee and biscuits, which was kindly sponsored by the MOD food services contractor Vestey, who sourced all the ingredients."

The menu chosen was lamb rogan josh with braised basmati rice, bombay aloo, onion bhajis and naan bread.

The evening proved to be very popular; more than 50 people were fed and almost as many meals taken away.

CPO Knibbs added: "It was an uplifting experience, and a great feeling to be able to support the local community and those who are less fortunate than ourselves."

"Throughout the evening there was a lot of good humour and a healthy amount of banter; inevitable as amongst the crowd were a few ex-servicemen, which only added to the meaningfulness of the evening."

Gardening skills on show

BUDDING Officer Cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College have made use of some downtime in their busy schedule to get out into the community.

The team involved themselves with several outreach projects in the local area, helping to strengthen ties with the college, whilst also making a real contribution to a number of institutions and organisations.

One group of Young Officers spent some time at St Luke's Church in Milber, sharpening their gardening skills by helping to clear areas within the grounds, weed paths, help to rebuild damaged walkways and dig ditches ready for pipes to be laid.

A further group spent the day at Dartmouth Academy, again getting their hands dirty outside, helping to tidy up the grounds, contribute to local biodiversity by building habitats for natural wildlife, whilst also helping to dig a fire pit for the school to use.

The college has also been able to deepen its ties with the Forest and Beach social enterprise project at Beeson, which seeks to promote working in wildlife and nature for both children and adults.

Founded in 2013 and run by ex-teachers from a local primary school, the time spent with the organisation was of great benefit for both the Young Officers and Forest and Beach, as the cadets contributed to a wide range of tasks.

Reserves go behind the scenes on carrier

MEMBERS of HMS Sherwood's ship's company had the opportunity to visit the Royal Navy's newest aircraft carrier, HMS Prince Of Wales.

The ship, the second of the Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers, is currently under construction in Rosyth.

It took the group of Reservists quite a while to cover all the accessible areas, many of which are still having finishing touches added, hence the hard hats and safety glasses.

Sherwood's recruiting officer AB Rowlands, who organised the visit, thought it would be a great opportunity to get an insight of what life would be like onboard.

The tour included the enormous hangar space where the F35-B fast jets will be stored and the flight deck ramp.

Leading Hand King, an admin officer in his civilian job, said: "It was surprising to see how big the ship actually was and I was fascinated to learn about the specification and construction of what is an amazing ship."

The whole group agreed that it was well worth making the long journey from Nottingham to Rosyth, and to stay among the Prince Of Wales' ship's company at MOD Caledonia, where they live in self-contained pods while the ship is still in build.

For details about the reserves, visit royalnavy.mod.uk/RNR



● Pupils from The Avenue Primary, left, and Kings Academy, right, who both won the competition



Pupil power in aircraft quest

THEY were born in Middlesbrough, but they were made to design helicopters for the Royal Navy.

Pupils from schools across Middlesbrough have been taking part in a special competition to design and name an aircraft for the Royal Navy through an exclusive partnership with Middlesbrough Achievement Partnership (MAP).

At a special event at the Acklam Green Centre around 90 students from ten primary, secondary and special schools were rewarded with prizes for their efforts.

And as an extra special prize a Royal Navy helicopter will pay a visit to the four winning schools, Acklam Grange School, The Avenue Primary, Unity City Academy and the Kings Academy.

Petty Officer Dennis Harrison, a career adviser with the Royal Navy, said: "We were blown away by the standard of the designs submitted by the students – it was incredibly high and they are all fully deserving of their prizes."

"The students were also a credit to themselves and their schools. During the event we held



● Pupils from Acklam Grange Academy

a Q&A and the questions were very thoughtful and interesting – some even left six Royal Navy officers struggling to answer!"

The aim of the competition was to create engagement opportunity through art, STEM and imagination of staff and students in the Middlesbrough area.

"We hoped that this competition would bring out their creative skills and allow the students to learn more of what

the Royal Navy does on a day-to-day basis from the perspective of our flying capability," said PO Harrison.

"It would be brilliant if we can inspire future engineers to help us maintain our cutting-edge capabilities for future generations of pilots to deliver humanitarian aid whenever we are called upon to assist with natural disasters."

The partnership between the Royal Navy and Middlesbrough Achievement Partnership aims

to link schools to employers to raise awareness of careers opportunities in the area along with raising aspiration and the development of key employability skills needed to achieve the best life chances.

Clare Elliott, MAP manager, said: "We are very happy to be working with the Royal Navy to support our careers work with schools."

"The competition has been a fantastic opportunity for children and young people to develop a range of employability skills and find out more about a career opportunities in this area."

"The winning schools are very excited about the helicopter visits."

"The schools had a great time working on their designs and we will continue working with the Royal Navy and other employers to support this area of work."

The Royal Navy are also linked to schools through Globalbridge, an online digital platform to connect young people to employment opportunities.

If you are an employer interested in working with schools to support the work of MAP please contact map@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Mentors learn more about RN engineering



A GROUP of youngsters from the Military Mentors Training Academy visited HMS Sultan to learn about engineering in the Royal Navy.

Eighteen 16-19-year-olds were given a morning of hands-on activities within the Defence College of Technical Training's Defence School of Marine Engineering and the Royal Naval Air Engineering & Survival Equipment School.

Based at Bridgemarky School, Gosport, the Military Mentors Academy run a college course for students who aspire towards a career in the Services. Offering a Level 1 or Level 2 Diploma for entry into the uniformed services and qualifications in first aid and martial arts, the Academy also teaches students about core military values, the selection process and helps prepare them for the first phase of military training.

Retired Navy Commander, and former Provost Marshal Navy Tony West, who founded the academy, said: "The kids all turn up with aspirations of being within the services. Some of them don't know which one they are going to join, so we have lots

of visits like this and speakers from all three services who will come in and tell them all about what career choices are available."

"You will find that some of them will change their minds half way through the course because of some of the visits and presentations that they've had, so being able to come in to HMS Sultan is really useful for them."

Megan O'Leary, 18, said: "I want to be in the navy and a couple of my friends have already gone on to join the military."

"It's been really good to get to see everything, I didn't think being an engineer would interest me, but looking at today it's actually all right."

Warrant Officer Alexander 'Midge' Ure, who escorted the group throughout, said: "In my role as a STEM ambassador I've visited the group before, but this is the first time that they have visited HMS Sultan and seen our training first hand."

"There's been a lot of enthusiasm and they've interacted really well."

"Hopefully the visit will help excite them about the RN options available."



Ton-up for Neil as he moves on

A WARRANT Officer is moving on from HMS Raleigh after taking around 1,000 recruits through basic training.

WO1 Neil Foster joined the Royal Navy in 1989, at the age of 19, and completed the first term of his artificer apprenticeship at HMS Raleigh.

He returned to the Royal Navy training base, in Torpoint, in October 2016 and has spent the last 28 months as the divisional training officer for Nelson Division, taking recruits through their ten-week initial naval training course.

WO1 Foster, 48, has just been involved in the passing-out-parade for his 17th class.

"I've enjoyed seeing how the training has changed and how it changes some of the people coming through.

"You see mild, meek, withdrawn individuals turn up on day one and on the Friday of week ten they are passing-out happy, extrovert characters who are more confident and able to go forward and, hopefully, do what they want to do for the rest of their careers."

Now with 12 months left in the Royal Navy, WO1 Foster is moving on to join HMS Bulwark.

A former pupil of Estover Comprehensive School, he said: "My career has been varied. I've been lucky I had a three-year exchange posting with the Royal Netherlands Navy, which was really interesting for me and my family.

"The people I worked with and the attitudes and professionalism that they adopt is very similar to what we do. That was a big highlight for me."



Fab 40 for Lynne

WO1 calls it a day after four decades of service

FRESH-FACED teenager Lynne Joyce poses for her first formal photograph since joining the Royal Navy – and now 40 years later again faces the camera to mark the end of her illustrious career.

Lynne, now a highly-decorated Warrant Officer, was born in landlocked Staffordshire but always wanted to join the navy.

"As I was under 18, my mum had to sign my papers," said Lynne. "Mum had also wanted to join up but my nan didn't want her to."

"My younger brother was in the RAF and my older brother in the Merchant Navy; we used to say we had all angles covered as my mum worked for the Brownies."

And so in 1979, straight from school, Lynne turned up for her first day as a member of the Women's Royal Naval Service at HMS Dauntless in Berkshire at the tender age of 17 and two months – meaning she was entitled to the daily milk and biscuits ration for her first four months.

After completing her training at HMS Pembroke in Chatham and HMS Collingwood, she served at a number of shore establishments, including, *take a deep breath*, Portsmouth (six times), RNAS Culdrose (three times), HMS Raleigh (four times), and HMS Drake (four times).

She also enjoyed a couple of spells in Italy. "I really enjoyed that – and I got my Italian GCSE out of it as well," said Lynne.

She also appreciated the opportunities for adventurous training that the navy provided. "Not long after I joined HMS Collingwood I went skiing in Scotland, and I thought this is going to be all right," she said.

"Later, when I went to Culdrose, I went on ten days' Adventurous Training to Algonquin Provincial Park in Canada.

"We went across lakes in open canoes, carrying the canoes between the lakes – it is one of those things you do not get to do very often..."

She joined the supply branch, preferring to become a stores accountant than a writer as it meant she would meet more people in the course of her working day – and she has never looked back since.

Her proudest moments are taking part in the

November Remembrance ceremonies in Whitehall in 1980 and 1990.

"Because I was tall, the first time I was at the back as a junior rating, and I said to myself one day I want to be the senior rating at the front. About ten years later, I managed it. The ceremonies made me realise why I did the job."

Lynne, who initially signed up for nine years, saw the Wrens service disbanded in 1993 when women were fully integrated into the Royal Navy, but chose not to become sea-going.

"Earlier the RN introduced the gun-carrying element for females and we had the choice of whether to carry arms or not, I decided not to. When it came to the 'volunteer for sea' time, by default of being a 'nogunvol', I was a 'novolsea'."

"I was a chief by then and I really didn't think I had anything to prove, I had worked on ships alongside and I did get to spend five days at sea aboard HMS Ocean."

Among her notable achievements was receiving a NATO commendation for her two years working for COM STRIKEFORNATO in Naples, where she learned Italian and quickly adapted to "driving like you're on the dodgems."

Two years ago Lynne was awarded an MBE. As logistics information systems are upgraded and replaced, there is a need for experienced people to help bed in new systems and ways of working, and to help people learn new processes.

Lynne, who attended Walhouse Primary School and Cannock Grammar School, added: "As young Wrens in 1979 we were told we were there to support the ships and units on the front line."

"There have been so many changes during my career and I would describe myself as a dinosaur at the cutting edge."

"I went from hydraulic methods to computers and said 'If I can change, anyone can.'"

Lynne, who is now based in Hampshire, is planning a gap year before making any decisions on her future.

"What'll I'll miss the most are the people, but I gave 12-months notice and have got my head into retirement."



● Lynne is pictured back row, second left, in Victory Division in 1979

Remember May 1979?

Blondie were top of the UK singles charts with *Sunday Girl*



The movie *Alien* had just been released

Margaret Thatcher became the UK's first female prime minister



The average UK house price was £13,650

The Ford Cortina was the best-selling car in the UK in the 1970s



A gallon of petrol cost 79p

Adults were watching James Garner in the *Rockford Files* while children entranced with Noel Edmonds and his *Multi-Coloured Swap Shop*



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 8RN • t 023 9263 9534 • e caseworkers@rnmchildrensfund.org.uk
www.rnmchildrensfund.org.uk

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



Going back to her roots

AFTER passing on her wisdom to more than 600 rookie sailors, Warrant Officer Amanda Knight is braced for a new challenge in naval dentistry.

The 45-year-old Royal Navy Dental Nurse, from Skelmersdale, has spent the past two years nurturing raw sailors through the ten-week course, which turns civilian into sailors.

She is the senior female and only female guard officer within the Initial Naval Training school at HMS Raleigh, in Cornwall.

WO1 Knight led her 11th and final class, which included three aspiring dental nurses, on the parade ground for their passing out parade.

The parade took place almost 25 years to the day since she completed her own basic training.

To mark her years of service WO1 Knight was also presented with the clasp to her Long Service and Good Conduct medal.

She said: "It's almost like it's been written that way, but back then I would never have believed it; 25 years almost to the day I was stood behind a guard officer myself. I was extremely proud to be there on the parade ground and I liked the fact the Dental Nurses were there for my last one."

She joined the Royal Navy in January 1994 as a Wren Dental Surgery Assistant (DSA). Already qualified as a dental nurse she joined RNAS Yeovilton for her first draft.

WO1 Knight has since served in Gibraltar and Portsmouth and has spent a large part of her career in training roles within the tri-Service Dental School.

WO1 Knight said: "I've loved my time at HMS Raleigh. It's been so rewarding. It's brilliant seeing the recruits on day one, week one and then seeing them on the parade ground at the end."

"The weeks go by so quickly and you can't remember everybody, but there are certain people I will remember and I'm sure they'll remember me too."

With her time at HMS Raleigh coming to end she'll shortly be returning to her roots as a dental nurse as the head of her specialisation at Defence Medical Services (Whittington), overseeing the lengthy training pathway of dental nurses.

Let's bake...

ONE area of HMS Collingwood was very popular when the on-site nursery children took over part of a building to hold a fundraising cake sale.

Passers-by were treated to rousing shouts and calls from the pre-school children inviting them to buy their cakes and most needed no further persuading.

With an array of cupcakes, buns and other goodies to tempt them, the children raised £186.

Lieutenant Jenny Kedge, who co-ordinated the sale, said, "The children really enjoyed themselves, making an awful lot of noise and getting quite bossy, making sure everyone knew where the cakes were."

Money raised goes straight into nursery funds, enabling the vital service to continue supporting serving parents and their children.



• Members of Reading UTC, Oliver Thornley, Oliver Hitchings and Gregor MacLeod with judge Michael Green

Bomber Buoys swoop on title

TEENAGERS from across the UK gathered at HMS Sultan, Gosport to compete in The Royal Navy Engineering Challenge – Exercise Downbird Recovery.

Held in partnership with University Technical Colleges (UTCs), Eaton Ltd, Babcock and BAE Systems, the challenge aimed to inspire young people to engage further with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

They were tasked with designing and building two remote-controlled vehicles, a land-based recovery vehicle capable of carrying a stranded helicopter and a ship that can transport it to safety.

More than 70 teams competed in the challenge, with several of the teams enjoying the opportunity to experience 24 hours of naval life, including a night on board HMS Bristol.

Prizes were awarded across ten different categories between groups aged 14-16, 16-18 and for apprentices from industry aged 18-24 with the RAF team from RAF Cosford, the Bomber Buoys declared overall winners for their design.

Key Stage 4 students from the WMG Academy, Coventry, scooped up three of the prizes on offer with their team HMS Brady and the academy also accomplished further success as their team HMS Greensock also claimed the winners' trophy in the Key Stage 5 competition.

HMS Brady team member Danny Sutton, 16, said: "It's been really good, very fun and the tanks have been great to play with."

"I even managed to do doughnuts with the boat earlier and it's great to see everyone coming to watch you."

"Loads of months of creation have all come down to one day. Some parts of the design were quite fun and other were quite stressful, but overall it's been ok and definitely taught me about using CAD and the importance of prototypes."

Chairman of the Baker Dearing Educational Trust, the Rt Hon Lord Baker



• The Bomber Buoys were declared overall winners

Pictures: PO(Phot) Nicola Harper

of Dorking, said: "I'm delighted to see so many students from University Technical Colleges taking part in this year's Royal Navy Engineering Challenge."

"Through this competition, the Royal Navy offer UTC students a unique experience and the opportunity to apply the technical knowledge and practical skills they learn every day at their UTC."

"The work the Royal Navy does to inspire young engineers has never been more important as this country's need for talent and skills has never been greater."

The navy's head of training and lead STEM co-ordinator, Commodore Andy Cree, said: "Today marked another hugely enjoyable milestone in the Royal Navy's annual challenge and my congratulations go to all those who completed it."

"Our most complex challenge to date brought together elements of additive manufacture and robotics in real-world conditions and it was fascinating to see over 70 teams across three age groups competing to solve the same problem, with shared learning all round."

Winners were: Best newcomer, Team Mia (London Design and Engineering UTC); Innovation, ACE (Portsmouth UTC); Best manufacture, HMS Brady (WMG Academy); Sustainability, Onshore Pirates (Reading UTC); Presentation Key Stage 4: HMS Brady; Key Stage 5, ORC Islanders (Scarborough UTC); Winner Key Stage 4, HMS Brady; Winner Key Stage 5, HMS Greensock (WGM Academy); Apprentices winner, Titchfield Troopers (Eaton Ltd). Overall winner, Bomber Buoys (RAF).



Bid to name new pup Raleigh

A WARRANT Officer based at HMS Raleigh is aiming to raise £5,000 to name a service dog after the establishment.

WO2 Sean Reeves and his wife Jacqui are supporting Hounds for Heroes; a charity providing specially-trained assistance dogs to injured or disabled men and women from the UK Armed Forces and UK civilian emergency services.

The couple are looking to raise the money to support a dog in memory of Jacqui's father, Brian Hall, who died suddenly in January.

Sean said: "Dogs have always been in my wife's family and we originally wanted to name the dog Brian. However with Hounds for Heroes providing assistance dogs for military personnel or members of the emergency services, Brian didn't fit, so we are now planning to sponsor a pup and call him or her Raleigh."

"My dad was a dog handler in the Army during his national service and a life-long dog owner. We have a long history of Police service and nursing within the family, so Hounds for Heroes is a perfect fit."

Jacqui added: "Dad was also a big fan of the Royal Navy and would sit on the Hoe looking at the ships and submarines. He was delighted to go to sea on HMS Torbay for a families day with Sean when he was serving on board." So far Sean and Jacqui have raised just over £1,700 through their just giving page – justgiving.com/fundraising/jacqueline-reeves4 – and through the generosity of families and friends attending HMS Raleigh's passing-out-parades.

Sean, pictured above with his late father-in-law's dog Doofa, said: "I give a presentation to the families about the charity each week. I tell them about Allen Parton, a Chief Petty Officer, who suffered a severe head injury during the 1991 Gulf War. Allen's life was changed completely."

"After five years in hospital he was partnered with Endal, a Labrador assistance dog, and his life was transformed."

Endal died in 2009 and now Allen is partnered with EJ, Endal Junior, who was the first dog to be trained under the auspices of Hounds for Heroes.

For details visit houndsforheroes.com

Nobby's 15 grand gesture

ROYAL Navy Commander Nobby Hall embarked on a fundraising campaign to thank a hospital where he was treated.

Cdr Hall was diagnosed with cancer in his nose in 2012. Following radical maxillofacial surgery by consultant John Tighe at Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead, he received a prosthetic nose and upper lip.

Following implant placement he today has a secure and lightweight magnetically retained prosthesis. In order to show his appreciation to the QVH, Cdr Hall, who is currently serving at United

States Central Command in Florida, embarked on a fundraising campaign.

Events included a dinner at the Naval & Military Club as well as a host of fundraising functions at HMS Nelson Wardroom, in Cyprus and his local pub.

Following his concerted efforts over two years, Cdr Hall presented a cheque for £15,000 to the QVH Headstart charity.

He is pictured presenting the cheque with his wife Helen and Mr Tighe as well as QVH maxillofacial laboratory staff.





● Jane tests her new backpack on Slip Hill

Walker is impatient patient

COMMANDER Jane Allen, the Victory Walker set off from HMS Victory on 21 October 2017, to walk anticlockwise round the coast of mainland UK raising money for two naval charities, the WRNS BT and RNRMC.

Following her release from A & E in Pembrokeshire, her last update saw her recovering in Milford Haven where she'd just learnt her sling could be removed. The plan had been to start physio...

The devastation of being halted for those first three weeks while my arm and shoulder remained immobilised in a sling was compounded by seeing some of the most superb walking weather of the entire Victory Walk.

More frustration was to follow on learning that another fracture had been found and, coupled with a vast amount of severe soft tissue damage, any physio strengthening exercises were ruled out for a further three weeks. Instead, all that was permitted were a couple of gentle mobilisation exercises, one of which was the shrugging shoulder roll. That just about summed-up my predicament, particularly as the sun continued to shine brightly!

Despite this major setback, I've managed to keep relatively busy and we've both caught up with a pile of personal admin: dental checks, haircuts, podiatrist visit, and a service for the Victory Van have all been achieved. With the intention that the Victory Walk will resume, my route has now been pencilled on the remaining OS maps that will ultimately lead me back to Pompey.

In my fifth week off the road I sensed cabin fever was about to hit the Victory Walk Team, so we took the opportunity to catch a train (well three to be precise) bound for Devon. It was an opportunity to attend some meetings and catch up with friends. With careful manoeuvring and not carrying any bags I survived the journey unscathed.

On my return it was time for another physio appointment where I was given seven further mobilisation exercises: these are religiously being done three times a day. In the hope I may soon be able to have a 'phased return to the walk', and with the physio's approval, I have acquired an adjustable shoulder brace and a one shoulder cross-body backpack. These have already been given a successful test run.

I've also done my best to keep my legs exercised by taking a daily walk around Milford Haven. The trouble is that any route I take from our apartment begins or ends with a walk either up or down a place called Slip Hill. Having made a steady recovery from the 'slip' which caused my dislocated shoulder all those weeks ago, an accidental slip on Slip Hill doesn't bear thinking about.

I had an appointment with the physio, who said I can walk for a maximum five miles for four days and then have to have two rest days.

The Victory Walk is raising money for two Naval charities, WRNS BT and RNRMC. To donate go to virginmoneygiving.com/victorywalk17-18. To find out more about Jane's Victory Walk go to victorywalk.uk



Hello, Alexis: Officially the best RN chef

OUT of hundreds of chefs in the Royal Navy, meet the very best.

Some claim, some title – but Leading Chef Alexis Jones is the Royal Navy's Senior Chef of the Year, as named by the historic livery company responsible for the trade, the Worshipful Company of Cooks.

A chef in the Royal Navy since 2002, last autumn Alexis was selected as one of the Senior Service's participants in the Forces' annual catering championship, Exercise Joint Caterer.

The leading hand, currently serving at NATO's SHAPE headquarters near Mons in Belgium, came back to the RN's chef school at HMS Raleigh to train with other naval culinary maestros for a fortnight ahead of the three-day contest hosted by the defence staff college at Shrivenham.

LCH Jones was just pipped to the title of overall Senior Chef of the Year, however his exceptional performance did catch the eye of the Worshipful Company who've now named him RN Senior Chef of the Year.

Celebrity chef Brian Turner and the company's Master Lieutenant Colonel Marcus Appleton presented LCH Jones with his trophy alongside civilian and military chefs rewarded for their culinary prowess, entrepreneurial skills running restaurants and charity work.

For LCH Jones, the award was a crowning moment in a year of outstanding performances not only in competitions, but also a toast to his clear passion, dedication, culinary knowledge and leadership qualities.

"My passion for cooking developed from watching my mum in the kitchen and, of

course, I enjoyed her tasty dishes," he said, paying tribute to her and his wife for their inspiration and support.

"The only requirements for success are hard work, dedication, motivation, support and love."

The leading hand is the first Commonwealth national to be named the RN's senior chef. As a youngster he was torn between food and music – he was a member of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Cadet Force band – as a career and decided to marry the two, creating meals to the sounds of a trumpet.

One day he intends to return to his home islands and share his experience and knowledge with young chefs, particularly those with learning difficulties or poor academic results, to help them realise their full potential.

Cadets put in the miles at Oxford

OVER the past four months the Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Will Jones, Coxswain CPO Gary Maskell and all the Officer Cadets of Oxford University Royal Naval Unit have committed their spare time, change and energy into raising money for the RNRMC.

It started just before Christmas when the Coxswain introduced the cadets to the naval tradition of horse racing – or reindeer racing. All the reindeer were named with appropriate descriptions, which matched the profiles of the cadets.

The evening started well with instructions on how to play and what to expect. As the evening went on, the money pot got bigger and the jumps and forfeits got more interesting – although Lt Cdr Jones has still not finished the dry cheese crackers he had to eat to continue a roll of the dice.

A lot of fun was had and the OURNU managed to raise £225.

The next event was the Siege of Ladysmith mess dinner. The evening's guest of honour was WO1 Glenn Haughton, who gave an excellent speech about his time in the Army, his current role and the Royal Navy.

Just prior to the CO leaving the URNU he held one last quiz night with an open the box on completion.

Open the box was won by OC Thomas Murphy who gave £75 of his winnings to RNRMC. The total raised was another £250.

Finally, CPO Maskell and OC Ollie Tobin suggested running the distance from Oxford URNU to their ship HMS Smiter in HMNB Portsmouth.

The 137km was split between all the volunteers. Everyone completed the total distance in less than seven hours on two running machines in Falklands House, Oxford. At time of print they had raised just under £1,200, which takes the total to over £1,700.

Heroes honoured

Busy itinerary for visiting WW2 veterans



THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity hosted a visit to Portsmouth of WW2 navy veterans.

They were driven down from London to Portsmouth by the Taxi Charity for Veterans in black cabs and stayed at the Maritime Club.

Arriving at midday at HMS Excellent, they were given a warm welcome by the new RNRMC mascots and the children from Whale Island nursery.

The veterans were treated to lunch in the wardroom, followed by a tot of rum courtesy of Pusser's.

The following day the veterans visited Southwick House, used as HQ for the Allied commanders finalising the plans for Operation Overlord.

The visitors received a VIP tour of the map room. Guest of honour was Marie Scott who earlier this year was awarded the *Légion d'Honneur*.

Marie, 92, was a switchboard operator based in Fort Southwick during the D-Day operations and relayed coded messages to and from the beaches.

Marie said she remembers the noise: "Suddenly it hits you, you realise, my god, there are men dying there."

After enjoying lunch at the Churchillian pub on Portsdown Hill with stunning views over Portsmouth, the veterans visited Portsmouth's iconic landmark, Spinnaker Tower where the Deputy Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Councillor David Fuller, hosted a cream tea reception.

Their final morning in Portsmouth was spent welcoming back Type 45 destroyer HMS Dragon.

All too soon their visit came to an end and the taxis took them back up to London in convoy.





Tankard and tots for George's big birthday

A SPECIALLY-engraved glass tankard, a tot or two, some cream cake and a visit from old shipmates. What more could someone hope for on their 100th birthday?

Members of **Peterborough and District Branch** helped s/m George Hockney celebrate his milestone, descending en masse on Park House nursing home for a second party (family and friends had already been for the first celebration).

Shipmates Paul Godfrey (Chairman), John Lallyette (Secretary), Chris Goode, Dave Clements (PRO) and John Fox – who is also the city's deputy mayor, and handed George the tankard, engraved with Peterborough's coat of arms – were delighted to help the centenarian enjoy his big day.

"As a life member, this significant milestone could not be ignored and members of the branch visited George to offer their congratulations and best wishes. Armed with the necessary birthday cake and an essential bottle of Pussers, we all celebrated the occasion with George and joined him for the inevitable tot, or two," said S/m Dave.

George joined the RN as a 20-year-old in October 1939, signing up for 12 years as an Engine Room Artificer.

He served in convoys in the North Sea, Malta and the Atlantic, the ill-fated campaign in Norway and U-boat hunting duties during time in Auckland (sloop), Caledon (cruiser) and Easton (destroyer) among others.

Later in the war George found himself in Benghazi as chief base engineer, a job which helped earn him the British Empire Medal (Military) "for zeal and wholehearted devotion to duty". During his time in North Africa he became involved with the salvage of the Liberty ship SS Samsylarna which was beached off Benghazi after being torpedoed.



Yule be able to help out

CAN you help naval enthusiast Simon Hart fill in the blanks with some Royal Navy Victoriana?

He snapped up a crest album of RN vessels from late 19th Century at an antiques fayre and his interest has been especially piqued by three Christmas-themed RN vessels. Firstly, HMS Cracker – probably relates to a



crew of a third gunboat, HMS Robin. This dates from slightly later; the boat served from 1897 until the mid-1920s in Hong Kong, having been built on the Clyde, shipped out and re-assembled. Mr Hart thinks it might be her crew's posing with sports trophies.

If anyone is able to provide details, Mr Hart can be contacted either on southsea2006@yahoo.co.uk or 07963312822.



Rather more official is the crest designed for gunboat HMS Mistletoe which served from 1884 until 1907, chiefly in and around the Channel Islands.

And finally there's a portrait of some of the

A monumental D-Day effort

MID-way down the third column on the 87th panel of 90 bronze tablets facing the green expanse of Southsea Common, you will find the name: **Sturmey F.E.**

Still legible, but somewhat stained by long exposure to the unforgiving elements, it is the sole tribute to a young man who volunteered to serve his country, yet never raised his rifle in anger.

On June 6 1944 the 21-year-old Royal Marine from Retford in Nottinghamshire was in a landing craft heading for the shore of Normandy with his 48 Commando comrades.

On the sluggish crossing from Portsmouth the men had been briefed on their objective: to knock out a huge German radar complex at Douvres, four miles inland.

At 8.45am on D-Day, their landing craft approached the sands near St Aubin-sur-Mer – labelled Juno Beach by invasion planners – and came under heavy German fire.

At least two craft hit obstacles and sank. Others were wrecked as they hit the beach. Perhaps Frank Sturmey set foot in France, killed by machine-gun fire and the blood-red waters carried his body out into the Seine Bay. Perhaps he went down with his craft. His body was never found.

Which is why his name is listed with nearly 25,000 other Portsmouth sailors and Royal Marines from both world wars whose only grave is the cruel sea on the naval memorial on the seafront.

The-then 20-year-old obelisk was among the last sights men like Frank Sturmey passed on June 5 1944.

Seventy-five years later it is being painstakingly restored in time for the last major commemoration of the Normandy landings.

All 122 panels – there are 32 for the Great War roll of honour – and every name upon them are undergoing a two-month-long clean.

A small team of experts from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission is cleaning, buffing and waxing the panels – each takes two days – after the elements took their toll and left names either difficult to read or the panels and stonework streaked with green stains caused by the copper in the bronze tablets reacting with the salty sea air and spray.

With the memorial and adjacent common a focal point for this summer's 75th anniversary commemorations of the Normandy landings, the commission decided the 95-year-old monument should receive



● **Writer Jamie Martin reads the roll of honour on plaques awaiting cleaning at Portsmouth Naval Memorial**
Pictures: LPhoto Barry Swainsbury

one of its regular facelifts.

"Portsmouth Naval Memorial is a constant reminder of more than 24,500 men and women who never returned home from the world wars – it symbolically brings them home," explained Max Dutton, the commission's assistant historian.

"This summer we're looking forward to seeing tens of thousands of visitors flock to the area to remember those involved in D-Day. We hope many will take the time to pay their respects at the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. "It is only fitting we can ensure it is in top condition for this historic anniversary."

Stonemasons and restorers have spent the past six weeks working on the panels – each one is steam cleaned at 155°C, bronzing powder is applied, the names are buffed up, a layer of cellulose lacquer applied to keep the elements at bay, before a final three coats of wax are added and a tablet which was a turquoise-green colour and marked with blotches is a sombre, smart and legible grey-black.

They are due to finish the restoration by mid-May, but visitors to the site have already thanked them for their efforts.

"People are always coming down to pay their respects, looking for their relatives, laying flowers – they are very grateful that we continue to remember



them," said stonemason Mike Witham (pictured at work, inset).

"You read the names as you go down the panels cleaning them, but meeting their descendants brings them to life."

Those words were echoed by Portsmouth-based sailors visiting the monument to see the work being carried out.

Leading Writer Lee Campbell, who works in HMS Nelson's Unit Personnel Office, has enjoyed free time on Southsea Common but never inspected the memorial close-up – until now.

"It never had the same emotional impact as Iraq and Afghanistan to me, because that affected people I knew," he said.

"But when you see the names, see the panels, the numbers killed. Just imagine those 15,000 people here on the common. That's when the scale of the sacrifice hits you."

Naval casualties on D-Day were relatively light – somewhere between 230 and 250 dead out of around 5,000 Allied service personnel killed.

No British warships were sunk on June 6; landing craft and marines like Frank bore the brunt of the casualties.

Around 40 men from Frank's unit were killed that first day – but most made it ashore. Their graves can be found at Bayeux military cemetery.

Naval Quirks





Accounts of WW2 recorded

HISTORIANS want to record the 'voices of liberation' to create a unique sound archive of the last WW2 veterans.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is collecting accounts from the dwindling number of Britain's 'greatest generation' – in particular those involved in the campaigns of liberation in 1944 to the war's end in August 1945.

And where loved ones are no longer with us – the battles of 1944 alone cost the Commonwealth nations more than 100,000 dead – their relatives are encouraged to record extracts from their diaries and letters or share memories – all of which can be recorded as podcasts and uploaded to a dedicated online archive, liberation. cwgc.org

The commission also wants to hear from relatives about visiting the graves of those lost in action and the importance of the hundreds of sites it maintains around the globe.

The digital archive also includes audio documentaries and extensive sections on some of the key moments of the final 18 or so months of the war, such as Normandy, Arnhem and the Great Escape.

Andrew Fetherston, the commission's chief archivist, said his team hoped to create "an archive of international importance – and a lasting legacy for those who died for our today."

"We want people to share their connections to the war and our cemeteries to ensure that as Commonwealth nations we have not forgotten their sacrifice."

Dine, dine, dine...

SEVENTY-eight years separate Harry Melling and Able Seaman Kaleb Chown.

But there's a common bond between the 99-year-old veteran and the young sonar operator – and everyone else seated at the tables above: the bond of the submariner.

The pair were (respectively) the oldest and youngest diners present at the Silent Service briefly trumpeted its achievements at its annual birthday party.

The Gambit Dinner commemorates the creation of the Royal Navy Submarine Service back in 1901 – with the 2019 incarnation of the event, held at the 21st-Century home of the V, A and some of the remaining T-boats in service.

Several hundred submariners past and present converged on Faslane

for the celebration, as did civilians involved in all aspects of submarine design, support, and front-line operations.

The emphasis of the 2019 dinner was applauding the achievements of Operation Relentless, marking its 50th anniversary this year: the provision of the UK's round-the-clock nuclear deterrent.

All of which is a world away from the boats Harry served in during WW2: HM Submarines Osiris and Tuna.

Born in 1920, Harry, from Wigan, was drafted to the Silent Service in 1941. Aboard Osiris he helped shield the invasion of Sicily from Italian submarines.

He came to the attention of today's generation of deeps when he was

burgled a couple of years ago, since when he's attended the submariners' remembrance event in London (and met the Duke of Cambridge, honorary head of the Submarine Service) and two Gambit dinners (assisted by his niece Elaine and his great nephew Matthew).

"I am delighted to be here again to celebrate the Submarine Service's birthday – and I am as proud today to call myself a submariner as I was when I first became one."

At the other end of the spectrum, and in keeping with tradition, the youngest submariner present, sonar operator AB Kaleb Chown joined his boss, Rear Admiral John Weale – in charge of the submarine flotilla and all who serve in

it – in plunging a knife into the boat-shaped 118th birthday cake.

Ending the evening guest speaker retired Commodore James Taylor shared his experiences of 30 years in the Silent Service aboard four different classes of boat.

"It is an honour once again to be among fellow submariners. In the year of the 50th anniversary of the continuous at-sea deterrence, it is important that no matter what class of submarine you are from or have served in, one thing unites us all and that is we are all submariners," he told guests.

"The support from the wider defence, industry partners and family are part of the thread that makes us who we are and allows us to carry out our operations so successfully."

Picture: LPhoto Stevie Burke, FRPU North



Dedication required

NOT content with helping s/m George Hockney celebrate his 100th birthday, Peterborough and District Branch have a key anniversary of their own to mark this year.

It's 40 years since the Cambridgeshire branch was established and shipmates decided the time had come to lay up their trusty old standard and inaugurate a bright new one.

All Saints Church in Park Road Peterborough was the venue with the service led by the Rev Greg Roberts.

The service (plus subsequent reception) was attended by the city's Mayor and Mayoress (Cllr Chris Ash and Doreen Roberts) plus their deputies (Cllr – and shipmate – John and Judy Fox), and the RNA's National Chairman, Keith Ridley, as well as many shipmates and members of other armed forces associations.

The Branch is in No.6 Area of the RNA structure and the Area Standard was also paraded as were the standards of other branches and associations.

The branch meets at 7pm on the first Tuesday of each month (except January) at Peterborough and District Indoor Bowls Club, Burton Street, Peterborough PE1 5HA.

■ Stourbridge and District will be following suit next month as they replace standards at St Thomas' Church in Market Street (due to its location, there will not be a marching parade).

Shipmates and standards should muster at the church by 11.30.

The neighbouring hall will be open from 10am for tea, coffee, ablutions and so on, as well as for standard bearers to prepare.

Following the service refreshments will be provided at Stourbridge Royal British Legion Club in Envile Street

Details of shipmates – especially those with standards – wishing to attend should be provided to branch secretary Angela Downing at Anfrando51@hotmail.com by Friday May 10 to help with seating arrangements in church and catering.



Thanks for Clyde guides

S/M Kenneth McKinnon presents a bottle of Pusser's rum to HMS Defender's Warrant Officers' mess – a thank-you for the hospitality shown by the Type 45 to a small group, including Scottish area chairman Brian MacKenzie and members of the City of Glasgow branch.

They were invited aboard for a tour of the Clyde-built destroyer when she spent four days in the city of her birth. After a good look around the 8,500-tonne man o'war, the guests were invited to join Defender's WOs for a spot of lunch and swinging the lantern over a few wets.

And there was the small matter of a capability demonstration to enjoy followed by a Ceremonial Sunset.



Back to Collingwood

LAST month it was HMS Hermes Association, this month HMS Collingwood welcomed three alumni to the Fareham establishment.

Stirling Simmons, Fred Pilgrim and John Arnold (pictured left to right above in front of Collingwood's RNA plaque) from Crosby branch made the 500-mile round-trip from Merseyside to see what had changed in the 50-plus years since they trained there.

Fred was drafted to Collingwood for his Phase 2 training in 1963 while John and Stirling both served as ships' company as medic and chef respectively. They both went on to become submariners whilst Fred became an electrical engineer.

The trio enjoyed a chat with today's Phase 2 trainees about the education they receive – comparing it with life on the base five decades ago.

John, Fred and Stirling were then introduced to the high-tech bridge simulator used by navigators and bridge teams across the fleet.

There was some gunnery funnery with some weapons simulators: the Phalanx self-defence Gatling gun, the 4.5in main gun and the automated 30mm (the loudest gun in theRN).

Clive Kidd, curator of Collingwood's heritage collection, showed off the impressive array of vintage wireless, sonar and navigation equipment held by the base.

"Coming here today is absolutely unbelievable, it's completely different and the only thing I recognise from my days here is the chapel," said Fred.

"I really enjoyed my time when I was here at Collingwood."

The visit was organised by Lieutenant Kev McAllister – who hails from Crosby.

"It was an absolute pleasure to host members from my local RNA branch and to show them how the site has grown and developed since their day," he said.

"The added bonus being we were able to give serving members a 'quick look' at the RNA and encourage new members to join us."



● Rob McBride shares a joke with Ordinary Cadet Jack

Lessons about life in the Army!

WHITEHAVEN Sea Cadets welcomed Rob McBride, director of OneAIM, a Cumbrian-based company which donated £1,000 to the unit.

Mr McBride, a former member of the Royal Horse Artillery, presented various awards and spoke to the cadets about his life in the army.

“It was a pleasure for me to accept the invitation to visit and learn more about the opportunities that Sea Cadets are able to offer our young people,” said Rob.

“I was hugely impressed by the dedication and enthusiasm of everyone I met, from the youngest cadet through to the longest-serving member of the staff team, and I am delighted that we, as a company, are able to support them.”

Speaking after Rob’s visit the unit Chairman, David Abbott expressed his thanks to OneAIM.

“The donation, which has been given to help with our running costs, is a huge boost for us and we would like to record our sincere thanks to everyone at OneAIM.”



Milestone for cadet scheme

Kyle’s the man for Loughborough



TRAINING Ship Venomous has now found a new Officer in Charge.

The temporary Commanding Officer, Lieutenant (SCC) David Derbyshire RNR, had to keep the flag flying for a while till a new Command could be found for the Loughborough unit.

The unit management committee has now found the right man.

The newly-appointed Officer in Charge is now Sub Lieutenant (SCC) Kyle Kean RNR.



Gregor wins top student award

THIS year’s Bronze Wing Cadet Naval Aviation Course took place at SCTC Weymouth and RNAS Yeovilton.

Nineteen cadets attended from the SCC, CCF and the NC.

After a very hard few days in the classroom and some exams out of the way all managed to get air experience flights with 727 Squadron at the end of the week.

Cadet Gregor from Rosyth was presented with the Daedalus trophy by Commanding Officer CNAC Lt (SCC) Marc Pether RNR as this year’s top student.

He was also presented with a Sekonda pilot’s watch donated by Time Products Ltd and a flight bag with training manuals donated by Pooleys Aviation Ltd.

Picture: CPO(SCC) Carl Mason

A PRESTIGIOUS academy school in Exeter has become the first in the West Country to open a Royal Marines Combined Cadet Force Unit, as part of a MOD Scheme.

ISCA Academy Exeter, has established the new cadet unit as part of the Cadet Expansion 500 programme which jointly between MOD and the Department for Education is seeking to increase the number of cadet units in state schools.

The government have committed £50m from LIBOR fines to support the cadet expansion programme, which provides a safe place for young people to develop through undertaking fun activities.

By underpinning the values and standards of the Armed Forces it recognises that cadet units in schools continue to change many young people’s lives for the better.

Commander Gavin MacDougall, Cadet and youth team leader from FOST Core Training, said: “It is an absolute honour and a real privilege to be here today and officially open this Royal Marine Combined Cadet Force section at ISCA Academy in Exeter.

“They have all done you very very proud, their turnout, their drill, their engagement

with me whilst I inspected them, they are all a credit to the school and you as parents.

“This is the first Royal Marines Unit to be opened under the scheme in the whole of the West Country and with the obvious links and proximity of the Commando Training centre at Lympstone, I am confident it will flourish.

“There are a lot of benefits to being in the cadets and apart from the life skills they will obviously learn, they are gaining communication and team skills for the future.”

Lance Corporal Beth, 15, pictured below left, was the cadet out front leading the troop and giving the orders. She was in the Sea Cadets before and was familiar with the drill and discipline.

“It went really well and I really enjoyed being in charge,” she said. “I’ve been in the cadets for two years. I joined when it first started in the school, but I did do sea cadets before so I’m used to the way things are done.

“The Royal Marines Cadets is a lot more fun involved and there are a lot more life skills involved. There’s a lot more variety in the activities.

“I haven’t thought much about joining the military, my ambition is to work in counselling

when I leave school.

“I’ve learned a lot about getting on with others and working together as a team, skills that are so important in my future.

“We’ve done plenty of outdoor activity, including assault courses and swim test; we’ve also been able to do sailing which is really enjoyable.”

The Royal Navy is committed to supporting the scheme and believes the exciting initiative will enables pupils and staff to experience benefits, where cadets can develop self-discipline, resilience and improve their team building, problem solving, leadership and social skills.

There are also opportunities to gain nationally recognised qualifications and the life skills gained as a cadet can develop a pupil’s employability.

Cadet units in schools can have a positive impact across the entire school as the improvement in leadership, confidence and discipline among cadets provide good examples to other pupils.

Teachers who become cadet force adult volunteers can also benefit and gain recognised qualifications, receiving training and enhance their career development.



● Cadet Chloe puts her boots on in her bivy

Teen engineer's taste of RN life

WORK experience.

Often (unfortunately) it means plonking a teenager at a machine in a corner and then forgetting them for five days. Or perhaps a week of tea duties.

Not aboard HMS Albion.

When Portsmouth teenager and budding weapon engineer Charlie South asked to sample life in the RN, the nation's flagship obliged with a packed five-day programme to allow the youngster to see not merely what his prospective career might be like, but also the day-to-day bustle of a 21st-Century warship.

The week began with a rare opportunity to accompany Albion's weapons group to the Babcock works where Phalanx automatic Gatling and 4.5in gun (the latter isn't fitted to the assault ship) are built and refurbished.

Charlie saw weapon systems in various states of assembly and watched a demonstration from an operational Phalanx engaging a target.

Day two saw the teenager embrace Albion's core role: amphibious operations with the ship's permanently-assigned Royal Marines 6th Assault Squadron.

He watched the elite unit at work in the Tamar and was even allowed behind the wheel of the large LCU Mk10 landing craft.

After lunch with Captain Peter Laughton, Charlie headed into Albion's bowels to experience the other side of RN engineering: marine.

The sights, sounds and smells are the department weren't enough for the student... who was treated to a customary bilge dive.

The next day of activities consisted of magazine rounds – the scale of the ammo complex impressed the visitor, as did a walk around Albion's weapon engineering sections and a whistle-stop tour of HMS Northumberland.

Charlie's penultimate day aboard saw him working alongside the men and women in the WE department for a practical insight into his likely career choice: a spot of soldering, fault-fixing and an invite into the mess for the stand easy break.

Life at sea isn't all about work, however. Out of hours, the youngster was introduced to the many adventurous training opportunities on offer in the RN and tackled the nearby bouldering wall with senior WE personnel.

On his final day on board Charlie watched a 'fast cruise' as the ship's company pretended Albion was at sea, not alongside, and practised entering and leaving harbour, hands to flying stations and fire-fighting exercise – and there was still enough time for the teenager to catch the train back to Portsmouth.



Cadets' tribute as last Laforey survivor dies

THE last living link with a wartime tragedy has gone with the passing of Stanley Brow – 75 years to the day his ship HMS Laforey was sunk.

Family members say the veteran gunner, who emigrated to Australia after World War 2, died on March 30, the very date the destroyer, pictured below, was lost hunting a U-boat off Sicily.

As a young seaman gunner, Stanley was one of only 69 men rescued out of 258 aboard the L-class destroyer which had spent most of the war in the Mediterranean and endured some of its fiercest battles, including convoys to Malta and the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, Salerno and Anzio; she was helping to protect ongoing operations at the later at the end of March 1944 when she was sunk.

Attempting to track down a German submarine off Palermo, Laforey forced the boat to the surface and opened fire on it... but the U-boat commander sent three torpedoes into the destroyer at a range of just 1,500 yards.

Laforey sank in minutes with Able Gunner Stanley 'Stan' Brow, pictured right, able to fight his way through the canvas cover behind his gun as the destroyer's list grew worse and eventually scrambled into a Carley float life raft. Shortly afterwards U223 was itself sunk with some of the survivors of both vessels being picked up by the same rescuers.

His nephew Philip Brow said: "March 30 was a significant date through his life and he will now be with his shipmates."

Laforey's sinking also hit the people of Northampton in particular; they raised £750,000 – more than £37m today – towards the £4m cost of building the Laforey and her loss is still marked each year with a memorial service/parade on the Sunday closest to the anniversary of the sinking as veterans' groups and especially Northampton's Sea Cadet unit TS Laforey honour the destroyer – with Stanley often joining them, having made the epic journey from Adelaide to remember his shipmates.

News of the veterans' passing reached the unit just after they'd taken part in the 2019 parade and a tribute from the cadets was read out at Stanley's funeral the following week.

TS Laforey's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Chris Read said the veteran kept in touch with the cadets. His most recent missive came at Christmas with season's greetings from his care home in Lightsview, a suburb of Adelaide, where he regularly gave his account of the sinking to fellow residents and followed the activities of the Sea Cadet unit avidly; the sight of the youngsters smartly dressed in their uniforms reminded him of his training before joining the Laforey.

"The passing of Stan as the last survivor of the Laforey is a sad day for us all, but I know that Stan was always proud to see our young people on parade and honouring the efforts of his shipmates," he said. "I was personally honoured to meet Stan and I am saddened by his passing. Now his duty is done he can rest in peace with his shipmates."

"Every year since the sad events 75 years ago, in Northampton we have held an annual parade of Sea Cadets. We do this to teach our young people that often freedom comes at a price and as members of Sea Cadet Unit Training Ship Laforey, this name represents morale courage, teamwork and commitment. The Sea Cadets will continue to remember Laforey's ships company in future years and we are thankful for their sacrifice for our future."



Folk enjoy Example trip on water of Tyne

ARCHER-class Patrol Boat HMS Example, based at HMS Calliope in Newcastle, took the chance to host local Sea Cadets, affiliated Combined Cadet Forces and the Royal British Legion's Northern Area team, with a trip up the River Tyne.

Guests experienced sailing under the picturesque Gateshead Millennium Bridge and had the opportunity to helm the ship on the river and on its approaches in the North Sea.

"These kinds of event are really important to us" said Example's Commanding Officer, Lt Simon Priestley.

"It's great for us to be able to welcome our affiliates and organisations from the local community onboard and give them a glimpse of what we do."

"As a standing presence in an area of the country which is hundreds of miles from any of the Royal Navy's base ports, it's really valuable to engage with local partners such as the British Legion, fly the White Ensign and potentially inspire the Naval Officers and Ratings of the future from the Sea Cadets and CCF."

Example was next deploying from Newcastle on her Easter Deployment, visiting ports across the British Isles while providing support and training to the students of the Northumbrian Universities Royal Naval Unit.



Nominate key RN women

YOU have until May 10 to single out someone in the Naval Service worthy of a Women in Defence award. Ten titles are up for grabs in the latest iteration of the event which celebrates not merely those in uniform but also women in the civil service and civilian posts.

No-one connected with the RN won outright in 2018, though we did have finalists, hence the push to nominate stand-out women for the fourth iteration of the contest (winners won't actually be announced until November 19).

Judges are looking for women of all ranks and positions who are making a difference – by inspiring, innovating, helping, trailblazing, leading, co-operating and collaborating.

Nominations should be made via www.womenindefenceuk.com. The shortlist will be announced in September, followed a month later by details of the finalists.

Categories are: inspirational award; outstanding contribution; most collaborative award; special award; emerging talent; innovation; unsung heroine(s); promotion of gender balance; inclusive teamwork award; and STEM in Defence award.

It's your 2-6 – so contact Sophie Dennis (sophie.dennis100@mod.gov.uk/93832 5500) to include items on these pages.

Op Relentless? Mike's covered it

TO MARK the 50th anniversary of the Continuous At-Sea Deterrent (aka Operation Relentless), Submarine Philatelic Commemorative Covers have been designed and produced by one of its veterans.

Mike Bravery from Winscombe in Somerset served for more than 15 years in the first generation of ballistic missile submarines (Resolution-class), latterly as a weapon engineer officer of a Polaris boat.

Over the five decades of Relentless, he's produced 23 commemorative covers to mark occasions such as the tenth anniversary of the Polaris Agreement in 1962, Polaris missile firings on the Eastern Atlantic Test Range in Florida, and the commissioning and decommissioning of Polaris boats.

Covers were produced and transferred as mail between HMS Repulse and HMS Odin using the Deep Sea Recovery Vessel Avalon in May 1979 – the first ever transfer of mail between two submerged submarines.

Cover No.24 – produced in co-operation with the MOD/Royal Navy – ties in with the main event in this anniversary year: the national service of recognition at Westminster Abbey attended by veterans, serving submariners and dignitaries.

It will be followed on July 5th by another cover marking the commemorative parade taking place at Faslane.

Priced £20, the new Submarine Series Covers can be viewed and purchased alongside older ones, directly from Mike at www.mrbsmcovers.com.



● A minigun equipped with the Pointer T targeting system fitted to a Type 23 frigate

Targeting down to a T

LASER technology is helping sailors fend off possible terrorist attacks by honing their gunnery skills.

A Laser Quest-like targeting system – using beams of light to assess the accuracy of sailors manning machine-guns – determines whether sailors have hit the target.

Since the fatal attack on the USS Cole – the American destroyer crippled by a suicide bomb while refuelling in Yemen in 2000 – the Royal Navy has taken a fresh look at how it protects its ships against what is known as the 'asymmetric threat' (irregular or unequal warfare): typically small boats and jet skis intent on inflicting maximum damage or casualties on a much larger warship or vessel.

Some ships – such as flagship HMS Albion, carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth or Type 45 destroyers – can turn to their automated Phalanx Gatling gun(s) to blow such attackers out of the water.

But in most, the last line of defence against speedboats crammed with explosives or armed terrorists is an array of machine-guns, Miniguns and SA80 rifles.

It's down to the skill of the bridge team to manoeuvre a ship out of harm's way and the upper deck gunners to stop the raiders in their tracks with their marksmanship.

Simulators, such as those at HMS Collingwood in Fareham replicate some of the scenarios gunners might face, but there is no substitute for working with real ships in real conditions, so major training exercises such as Joint Warrior test gunners' response to swarm



attacks as scores of jet skis or support vessels emerging from lochs and bays to try to take warships by surprise.

There are some gunnery exercises against unmanned targets fitted with specialist instruments, but otherwise its often impossible to assess the true effectiveness of gunnery teams at sea... until DARE, the navy's specialist innovation team, began testing the Pointer (T) targeting system.

"The device acts like Laser Quest for weapons teams," explains Lieutenant Commander Matthew Cox. "There's a holographic sight and a laser pointer simulates the weapon being fired, while a wireless system relays the position of the weapon on the mount. From that the system infers whether the gunner would have engaged the target correctly and what damage would have been done."

So successful were the initial trials that the laser system is being used by the Navy's senior trainers, FOST, to improve the accuracy and potency of individual gunners and entire gunnery teams... making ships better prepared for the dangers they might face from fast-attack craft charging at them in narrow waters.

Lt Cdr Cox added: "Pointer T is just another step in the navy's long standing ambition to deliver the most realistic war fighting training as possible."



'Start of something really special'

THE first 80-plus personnel in the RN's new Warfare Branch Intelligence Ratings Specialisation marked its formal creation with an insight into past successes.

Project Blinker Hall – named after the Great War head of naval intelligence – will provide the RN with a ratings intelligence specialisation to match the combat intelligence specialisation in the Royal Marines, the Army Intelligence Corps and RAF intelligence analyst trades.

It's been formed to address shortfalls in operational support over the past two decades.

The present-day home of naval intelligence, HMS Collingwood, was the setting for 'vesting day'.

Present at the event were 13 of the 29 ratings who changed trades officially on April 1.

Over the next 12 months they will be joined by another 60 personnel and, by 2027, the branch – charged with providing "insight and foresight to the Fleet today and beyond" – will be around 140 strong.

To mark the inauguration, the first RN intelligence badges were presented to personnel from AB to WO.

And naval historian Professor Andrew Lambert provided the new cadre with an insight into how intelligence played a role in the Royal Navy's 19th Century operations.

MA Nicola Albutt, due to transfer to specialisation later this year, said that "she had been eagerly awaiting this day since she first became aware of the opportunity to transfer".

WO WS(INT) Patton, the most senior rating in the new specialisation, added that he was "honoured to be present at the start of something really special". To round off proceedings LSWS(INT) Ella Knight joined Commodore Ian Annett, Assistant Chief-of-Staff Information Warfare, in cutting a cake.

"These are exciting times for our new cadre with lots of opportunities to be employed at sea and right across defence," said POWS(INT) Charlotte Khan, a lead instructor in the new MWS Intelligence Training Element.

Fit taster at Sultan

EASTERN Region's NavyFit event of 2019 was hosted by HMS Sultan with 39 sports and activities on offer.

Across four hours, around 400 personnel from across the Portsmouth area, but chiefly Phase 2/3 trainees from the host establishment and Phase 2 sailors from just up the road at HMS Collingwood, took advantage of the 'open afternoon' to chat with PTIs, sports buffs, fitness experts and sign up for activities as varied as motorbiking, skiing, golf, hockey, cricket, boxing, and table tennis.

Some stances ran small contests and challenges: the rowing and cycling representatives offered an RNRMC jersey for the fastest time for a 500m sprint on the Watt bike.

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



Where to Look

DIBs

2019DIB/04 Scottish Income Tax – Tax Year 2018/19 Mitigation Payments
2019DIB/05 Updating the Service Person's Joint Annual Report (SJAR)

DINs

01 Personnel

2019DIN01-034 International Driving Permits in EU27 Countries in the event of a No-Deal Brexit
2019DIN01-038 Overseas Based Volunteer Reservists
2019DIN01-040 Access to Rehabilitation for Reserve Personnel
2019DIN01-041 TV Licensing – COs' responsibilities and the requirements for Service Personnel, visiting Forces, MOD Establishments, Messes and Clubs
2019DIN01-042 Armed Forces Service Lists: Disclosure Policy
2019DIN01-044 Promotion – Royal Navy Air Engineer Senior Upper Yardman and Upper Yardman Promotion – Arrangements for 2019 Final Selection Board
2019DIN01-045 Recruitment and Management of Commonwealth Nationals in the Armed Forces
2019DIN01-050 Ramadan and Eid ul Fitr 2019

03 Defence Policy and Operations

2019DIN03-007 Protection of Information Relating to UK Special Forces – OS

04 Defence Equipment and Support to the Defence Estate

2019DIN04-038 Management of Nerve Agent Antidote Auto-injectors (L4A1, ComboPen)

05 Defence Management, Organisation and Business Practice

2019DIN05-008 Change of "Training Division" at the Institute of Naval Medicine to "Royal Navy Medical Service School"

06 Safety, Health, Environment and Fire

2019DIN06-004 Road Traffic Collision Reporting

07 Training and Education

2019DIN07-040 Exercise Norway Express 2019
2019DIN07-041 Introduction of the STEM Graduate Inflow Scheme (SGIS)
2019DIN07-044 RN Air Engineer Officers' Conference 2019
2019DIN07-045 Adventurous Training in Canada – Planning Expeditions to Trails End Camp during TY 19/20
2019DIN07-046 Unit Captured Persons (CPERS) Coordinator Course (UCCC) and ODME CPERS Coordinator Course (OCCC)

10 Sports and Social Events

2019DIN10-016 Royal Navy Golf Championships 2019

RNTMs

01 Personnel

RNTM 01-020/19 Submarine Service Golden Hello supersedes
RNTM 01-021/19 Rebalancing Lives Fund Grant Applications
RNTM 01-022/19 Project Unify – formal confirmation of individual intentions to transfer to catering services required by 15 May 19
RNTM 01-023/19 Warrant Officer 1 Seaman Specialist annual meeting 08 May 2019 – Calling notice

03 Defence Policy and Operations

RNTM 03-008/19 Naval Service Boat Operating Limitation

05 Management, organisation and business practice

RNTM 05-007/19 Establishment of the post of Commanding Officer UK Naval Support Facility (UKNSF) Bahrain
RNTM 05-008/19 Transitional RN Aircrew support arrangements to Navy Wings in support of RN Heritage following the closure of RN Historic Flight

06 Safety, Health, Environment and Fire

RNTM 06-003/19 Instructions for Surface Ships to demand Shark GOTCHA system – updated 08 Mar

07 Training and Education

RNTM 07-026/19 Joining Instructions for personnel attending Engineering Technician Qualifying Courses at the Defence School Of Marine Engineering (DSMarE)
RNTM 07-027/19 RNLA membership of The Leaders Club – programme of events

08 Finance, accounting and budgeting

RNTM 08-001/19 COs' Public Fund and Juniors' Fund

09 Honours, awards, Royal and ceremonial events

RNTM 09-004/19 Royal Navy CASD50 Service of Recognition
RNTM 09-005/19 The Rear Admiral Bateson award for Weapon Engineering Excellence 2019
RNTM 09-006/19 Reward and recognition in the RN Engineering Branch
RNTM 09-007/19 RN Photographic Competition 2019
RNTM 09-008/19 Annual Armourers and Brasiers Junior Weapon Engineering Officer prize
RNTM 09-009/19 – The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) Armed Forces Apprentice and Technician of the Year Awards 2019
RNTM 09-010/19 – The Worshipful Company of Engineers – RN Operational Engineering Award (Officers) 2019

10 Sports and Social

RNTM 10-019/RN Open Championship Golf Marshalling Team, Royal Port Rush 2019

Never too late to mediate

THERE are occasions in the Naval Service when disputes arise and team relationships can begin to break down – with an impact on morale and performance.

There are many ways to address this: understanding the source of disputes, listening to both sides and seeking solutions are all part of leadership.

Sometimes it can be better if issues are resolved by others in the Service who sit outside the immediate chain of command.

Mediation is one of the tools available to units and individuals to facilitate the early and effective resolution of disputes.

Formal mediation support can be provided on request, and is delivered by uniformed members

of the RN/RM Mediation Service, all of whom are trained mediators.

Experience shows that mediation is often an effective way of resolving issues before they reach the stage of a formal complaint, although it can be used at any stage in a dispute.

If mediation does not resolve the issues, individuals can still choose to proceed with a formal complaint.

Any information shared by individuals with a mediator is confidential – except in limited circumstances – and cannot be used subsequently in formal proceedings.

Mediation is entirely voluntary and individuals are free to

withdraw from the process at any time.

Because it is confidential, any information discussed within mediation sessions will not be disclosed to the chain of command or line management without the permission of all of the parties to the mediation.

The team will be taking part in diversity/inclusion briefings and training days at major bases during the summer term.

To access the service, contact your unit equality and diversity advocate – they'll request a mediator – or make direct contact on: (mil 93832 /civ 02392 54) 7808 /7097/7015/7034 or email NAVY_LEGAL-Mediation_Service@MULTIUSER.



Blyth's Grand (Prix) day out

THE Bahrain Grand Prix is now a firm fixture in the motor sport calendar – and in the diaries of Royal Navy personnel based in the kingdom; one perk of being stationed in the Gulf is interaction with teams and drivers, from access to the pits to F1 stars dropping in on warships.

This year MCM1 Crew 1 aboard HMS Blyth were the lucky recipients of Formula 1 interest and hospitality, as **AB(MW) Callum Harron-Jones** describes:

"I grew up watching F1 with my dad at weekends, hearing names like Michael Schumacher, Mark Webber and many others, not knowing specifically who was who, but developing a strong passion for them and the sport they competed in due to the simple fact that they drove fast cars for a living, and what eight-year-old doesn't enjoy fast cars?"

And here in 2019, while on deployment in the Gulf, the members of Crew 1 were presented with a great opportunity: being given chance to enjoy four days at the Formula 1 race weekend at Bahrain international circuit – a weekend of high-octane racing and great DJ acts presented by none other than Martin Garrix and Kygo.

Ahead of the race weekend, Blyth was visited by the engineering team of Williams Racing who were given a tour of the Sandown-class ship as sailors explained their key roles on board and their mission in the Gulf.

After a wet in the wardroom with their hosts, the F1 team were presented with a plaque by Blyth's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Lee Vessey.

That plaque was gratefully received by Williams, who hung it in their garage at the international race circuit when weekend came.

The racers repaid Blyth's hospitality by granting the sailors access to the pitlane and garage facilities on the eve of practice (LET(ME) Jack Summers is pictured below trying out a replacement wheel and, above, watching practice) and were given a detailed explanation of workstations, even allowing the Blyth team to have a go on the system.

The day finished with the two DJs, who lit up the main stage with their music and visual display – something people around the world would pay hand over fist to see.

Then we enjoyed a day of qualifying laps and finally, on the day of the race, we got to witness the second grand prix of the 2019 F1 season. We saw many close calls and exciting tyre blow-outs – all before the first corner – followed by amazing high-speed chases between team mates and rivals alike, and a great win for Lewis Hamilton at what was, for many of us, our first experience of a grand prix.

My favourite part of the weekend was without a doubt the moment Hamilton overtook Charles Leclerc on the final straight just before the corner on the 55th lap – right in front of the grand stand we were in – after being stuck behind him for the entire race. It resulted in a huge uproar of cheering from our stand which sounded deafening – the kind of sound that you feel vibrate through your chest.

Our commanding officer – who initially paid for all the tickets out of his own pocket as we couldn't acquire them because we were at sea at the time – also enjoyed the experience.

"I was truly fascinated by the similarities between an F1 team and a Royal Navy crew – especially when it comes to teamwork and leadership."



Attending CIOR is no chore

THERE are some Brits, Finns, Germans, Danes, Austrians, Swiss and a frozen lake.

The punchline? There isn't one. Unless you like international harmony and reservist junior officers from all over the world getting together for their annual seminar.

Which we do.

Eight Brits flew to Tuusula in Finland (next to Helsinki airport), with Sub Lieutenant Emma Smith, a Media Ops Specialist, the sole RN representative in the UK delegation attending the Interallied Confederation of Reserve Officers (more commonly known by its French acronym CIOR) represents and supports the interests of Young Officers across 36 countries from NATO and beyond.

CIOR works closely with UK Reserve Forces Association (UKRFA) to provide funding and opportunities to reservists from all three services in the UK.

"It was a fantastic opportunity to interact with different nations and to see how they do what we do," said Emma (pictured standing fourth from right above).

"The exposure to different armed forces and their cultures was invaluable to my personal and professional development."

The four-day seminar began with a presentation from each of the 11 attending countries, briefing the group on matters such as the geo-political nature of their homeland along with how the reserves integrate with their regular forces and their relationship with the public. Some countries were a little more fun than others; for example, Austria's tongue-in-cheek listing of Arnold Schwarzenegger as a national weapon!

Days two and three contained a mixture of theoretical discussion and practical exercises including practical leadership tasks and activities surrounding cultural diversity and intercultural leadership.

By the time the last day came around the group were very well integrated, aided by the fantastic Finnish hospitality and their culture of daily saunas after work.

A talk from Brigadier General Mauri Koskela (retired, Finnish Armed Forces) on challenges in missions and from the Finnish diplomat Kirsti Narinen on hybrid warfare finished the week in Finland with a wider view of working internationally on operations and potential threats in the future.

"I would highly recommend getting involved with CIOR and UKRFA to anyone," Emma added.

"Having to work through a task alongside a foreign counterpart gives you a completely different appreciation for how others may think."

CIOR holds a seminar and workshop each year in different member countries around Europe; search CIOR online and UKRFA on Defence Connect for more details.

40 launder cash for welfare hub

A LAUNDRY dating back to WW1 has been transformed into a new £750,000 welfare centre supporting 40 Commando personnel and their families.

Britain's most senior Royal Marine – Vice Chief of Defence Staff General Sir Gordon Messenger – performed the honours when he presented the Norton Manor unit with its fourth Sword of Peace (see page 19).

The building – now re-named 'Quantock House' – was built in 1915 as the laundry for the Manor Estate before the government took over the site in WW2. It served as the medical centre/sick bay until a new facility opened a decade ago.

Since then Quantock House has been derelict... until a £750,000 handout from the Labor bank fine fund helped pay for two years of renovation and conversion work to create the welfare hub with offices, interview rooms, an indoor and outdoor family spaces, and a high-spec flat for single parents or for use in emergencies.



"Quantock House is a one-stop facility within the grounds of Norton Manor Camp that incorporates the Royal Navy-Royal Marines Welfare Team, a families' centre and a contact flat," explained Warrant Officer Daz Joyce, 40's specialist welfare worker and driving force behind the project.

"The facilities here will enhance our specialist services, many community outreach activities and give information for families plus online support."

"We've created somewhere for people to come and get greater on-site support for their families as well as improved access to current information from both the unit and local authorities."

THE
CREW

I LOOK

AFTER

THE
SHIP

I LOOK

AFTER

THE
CREW

BORN IN KETTERING

MADE IN THE ROYAL NAVY

The Royal Navy is recruiting Writers now.
For an admin role with purpose
search **MADE IN THE ROYAL NAVY**
or call **0345 607 5555**.

LIFE
WITHOUT
LIMITS





£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the March edition of Navy News (right) was the Leander-class frigate HMS Apollo, which first saw action in the 1973 Cod War with Iceland.

AK Manning, of Sonning Common, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery boat (above) is an Amphion-class submarine on her way into Portsmouth for her decommissioning in 1967. She was launched in September 1945 and took part in the 1953 Fleet Review.

1. What was her name, and 2. which flotilla did she serve with in Singapore?

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 June 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 July edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 291

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

■ Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to - The Editor, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

■ Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.

■ Please send in reunions at least two months (preferably three) before the month of the event. There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

■ Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

■ The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

■ Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

NAVY NEWS

Mail Point 1-4, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY

MAY 2019 No. 778: Founded 1954

Editor: Lorraine Proudlock
Email: editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Tel: 023 9262 5282 or Mil: 93832 5282

Editorial

edit@navynews.co.uk
Sam.Bannister@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Richard.Hargreaves@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Peter.Howard@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Elisha.Quade@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Helen.Boswell@royalnavymail.mod.uk

Graphics
Andy.Brady@royalnavymail.mod.uk

General enquiries: 023 9262 3553
Business
Business manager: Lisa Taw: 023 9262 5235
bm@navynews.co.uk

Subscriptions: 023 9254 7118
subscriptions@navynews.co.uk

Advertising: 023 9262 5235
advertising@navynews.co.uk

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD

© Crown copyright

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated.

To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 Or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, Or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Published by Navy News, Navy Command HQ, Portsmouth and printed by Walsstead UK.

Talking Navy News

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 07770 088388 and leave a message, or email studio@patn.org.uk. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in June's Noticeboard must be received by **May 15, 2019**

Reunions

HMS Phoebe: A reunion will be held at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, from May 3 to 6. Further details can be obtained from secretary Dave Newson hmsphoebeassociation@outlook.com or Robert.hobbs1949@sky.com

HMS Tenby Association. Annual meeting and gathering takes place at the Collingwood Hotel, Bournemouth, from May 10 to 13. Contact secretary David Macalister at dmac121dm@gmail.com or phone 02392 252590.

HMS Bulwark, Albion and Centaur Association. Annual reunion takes place at the Royal Beach Hotel in Southsea from May 10 to 13. Contact Denis Askham on 01772 322910 or askhamd3@gmail.com

Veteran fieldgunners: Meeting at Tiffans Hotel, Blackpool, from May 17 to 20. Contact Colin Burley on 01543 572212 or email barbaraburley@hotmail.co.uk

HMS Iveston: A reunion to mark the 28th year since the Mediterranean deployment of January to May 1991, takes place on June 15 in the Portsmouth area. If you served during this time, please contact Shaanmckeever@yahoo.com or telephone 07547 934424.

HMS Manchester: The second reunion will be held in the WO, SR and SNCOs' Mess at HMS Nelson from June 7 to 9. For details visit: 2ma.org.uk or stvie27@hotmail.com or iantids@ntlworld.com

HMS Liverpool Association: A reunion will be held on Saturday June 22 at the GI's Association Whale Island Portsmouth, mustering at midday. For details contact secretary John Parker at infor@hmsliverpoolassociation.org.uk or call 02392521222.

Britannia Yacht Club's 60th anniversary dinner takes place at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, on Thursday June 20. Guest speaker is Captain Sir Robin Knox-Johnston. Tickets for the three-course dinner are £45pp. Mess undress/black tie. For further details contact Lt Cdr Tilda Woodward at tilda.woodward258@mod.gov.uk

TIFF151 Artificers reunion takes place at HMS Sultan's WO&SR Mess on Saturday June 29 from 7pm. Email Sultan2019@tiffs-reunion.org.uk to register your interest and purchase tickets. £20 per person, maximum of two tickets per application.

HMS Ark Royal Association. Our reunion dinner takes place at the Union Jack Club in London on September 7. For more information email enquiries@hmsarkroyalassociation.org or visit hmsarkroyalassociation.org

HMS Ulster. A reunion will be held in Torquay from September 20 to 23. For details contact Norrie Millen at ulster@candoo.com

HMS Eagle: The Friends of HMS Eagle reunion weekend will be held at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, Portsmouth, from September 27 to 29. Contact the main organiser, Danny du Feu. Email: ddf.photography@gmail.com or phone 07711 083465.

HMS Troubridge Final Commission Association: Annual reunion takes place at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool from October 4 to 7. Contact Bryan Pace at Romft1@gmail.com or via hmstroubridge.com

The Survey Ships Association: The 25th reunion takes place at the Mercure Chester North Hotel. Woodhey House Hotel Cheshire, from Friday October 25 to Monday, October 28. For information on membership and reunions please send a SAE to: The Secretary, SSA, 16 Quay Ostend Cliff Park Great Yarmouth Norfolk NR31 6TP. Or phone 07974156996

HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans' Association. The 2019 reunion takes place at the Coniston Hotel in Sittingbourne, from October 4 to 7. For further details please contact enquiries@iowtours.com.

HMS Superb (Cruiser) Association. The annual reunion and AGM takes place at the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham, Kent, on October 4 to 6. For details contact Robin Smith at 173 London Road, Rainham, Kent, phone 01634 362379 or email robinsmith173@yahoo.co.uk

HMS Undaunted, Eagle and Yarmouth Association. Reunion takes place at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, from October 18 to 21. For details contact Alan 'Whiskey' Walker on 01268 548041 or email whiskey666@outlook.com.

HMS Lowestoft Association. Reunion takes place at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, from October 4 to 7. For details call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or contact: ian@hmslowestoft.co.uk. Tel: 07778 546861

HMS Mohawk Association. Reunion takes place at the Kegworth Hotel, Packington Hill, Kegworth, from November 1 to 4. For details call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or email Bob Proud rob.proud@mypostoffice.co.uk

Deaths

Neil Ebbutt. Joined in 1943, trained in Portsmouth and Tobermory before joining HMS Aire and saw action in the Mediterranean. Also served in HMS Highlander. Member of RNA Dartford Branch and attended HMS Highlander reunions in the Sheffield Area. Died at Darenth Park Hospital, Dartford, on January 15, aged 73.

Charles Henry 'Shiner' Wright, Gunner. Served from November 1935 until May 1948. Served in HMS Impregnable, Ganges, Royal Sovereign, Hardy, Montrose, Prince of Wales, Dorsetshire, Drake, Polruan, Whelp and Nigeria. Founder member and president of Stroud RNA. Died April 7, aged 99.

Thomas Bartholomew. Joined in 1943 and served in HMS Westcott and Anson. Veteran of the Russian Convoys. Died February 20, age 93.

Admiral Sir Simon A C Cassels KCB CBE. Second Sea Lord. HMS Drake, President, Eskimo, Dryad, Fearless, Tiger, ACNS, Drake, Roebuck, Trafalgar, Sefton, Morecambe Bay, Liverpool, Glasgow. Died March 6, aged 91.

Capt Alan S H Kettle. HMS Cochrane, Drake, Pembroke, Terror, Centaur, Recruit, Wren, Implacable, Raleigh, Mauritius, RN Eng College. Dockyards Rosyth, Devonport and Singapore. Died March 15.

Cdr Peter J Everett. HMS President, Triumph, Warrior, Terror, Bermuda, Excellent, Cheviot, Gabbard, Cardigan Bay, Theseus, Queen Elizabeth. Adl Cg Reserves, C-in-C Naval Home Command. Died March 24, aged 92.

Surg Cdr (D) Edward C C Madgwick. HMS Drake, Collingwood, Nelson, Raleigh, DDS Scotland, CTCRM Lympstone. Died March 6, aged 45.

Cdr RNR Graham Melville-Mason. Forth Div RNR. CTC RNR. Adm Cg Reserves. Died February 2, aged 85.

Lt Cdr Michael J Gibson. HMS

Daedalus, Heron, Fulmar, Ariel, Collingwood, Tyne. RNAY Belfast. Min of Aviation. Died March 20, aged 93.

Lt Cdr Geoffrey E Hammond. HMS Daedalus, Ariel, Duchess, President, Loch Killisport, Starling, Raider, Neptune, Armada. Died March 3, aged 95.

Lt Cdr Alan T Kennedy. HMS Scarborough, Goldcrest, Seahawk, Hermes, Royal Arthur. 849 NAS. Died March 12, aged 80.

Lt Cdr Arthur J S Knocker. HMS Mercury, Belfast, Albion, Vanguard, Wild Goose, Newfoundland, Teazer, NATO, Dir Naval Signals. Died March 14, aged 91.

Lt Cdr Douglas R Taylor MBE. Ski jump inventor. HMS Seahawk, Victorious, President, Indomitable, Ocean. 831 NAS. Died March 19.

Capt RM Frederick C Darwall. RM Plymouth, RM Eastney. 41 Cdo RM. HQ 3 Cdo RM. Died March 12, aged 89.

Lt RM John L B Cohen. HMS Copra. Died January 30, aged 96.

Submariners' Association John Nott, Sto Mech. Served Jan 1951 to Jan 1952 in HM Submarine Sanguine. Member North Staffs Branch. Died March 6, aged 88.

Derek Anthony MBE R-Adml. Served Sept 1970 to Dec 1990 in HM Submarines Walrus, Opossum, Revenge(S), Andrew, Oxley, Oberon, Onslaught(CO), Sovereign(XO), and Warspite(CO). West Of Scotland Branch. Died March 20, aged 71.

Henry Sibbitt LEM. Served 1962 to 1969 in HM Submarines Walrus and Orpheus. Barrow In Furness Branch. Died March 22, aged 80.

Ian Watson-Smith ME (1). Served 1962 to 1970 in HM Submarines Astute (2) and Talent. Wales Branch. Died March 28, aged 75.

Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC
Lt Cdr David J L Arnold. HMS

Seahawk, Daedalus, Goldcrest, Raleigh, Ark Royal. Died March 28, aged 86.

Cdr RNR W H Child MBE VRD.** Sussex Div RNR. Died March 19, aged 93.

Rear Admiral Derek J Anthony MBE. HMS Intrepid, Wiston, Dolphin, Sealion, Sovereign, Onslaught, Warspite, Neptune, Cumberland. FOSNI. BDS Washington. FO Submarines. RAN. Def Intel Sch Ashford. Past Chairman of ARNO. Died March 19, aged 72.

Lt Cdr Hubert V G Hasler. HMS Neptune, Nelson, Raleigh, Drake, Daedalus, Albion. Died March 9, aged 94.

Lt Cdr Ewart B Bibby. HMS Rooke, Tyne, Dryad, Plucky, Protector, Ocean. Died February 28, aged 88.

Lt Cdr Kenneth T Nethercott MBE. HMS Excellent, Cochrane, Neptune, Victorious, Narvik, Dolphin, Dryad. Died March 19, aged 94.

Capt Peter G Howard. HMS Tamar, Phoebe, Eagle, Nelson, Saker, Caledonia, Sultan, Raleigh, Victorious, Liverpool, Modeste. Naval Ship Production Overseer. Dockyards and MCE Britannia RNC. Died March 10, aged 91.

Lt Cdr Peter T Bracelin. HMS Ark Royal, Fife, Terror, Ark Royal, Seahawk, Nelson, Drake, Centurion, Fetlar, Chichester, Heron, RNWT Mauritius. Died March 3, aged 84.

Lt Cdr Robert L Holt. HMS Forth, Dolphin, Neptune, Tiger, Collingwood, MOD Bath, Loan Oman. Died March 19, aged 81.

Lt Cdr David C Curtis. HMS Daedalus, Eagle, Heron, Blake. Died March 16, aged 91.

Lt Cdr RD RNR John R Styles. London and South Wales Division RNR. Died March 26, aged 94.

Lt Cdr Charles M G Bankart. HMS Narvik, LST 3044, Dolphin, Brocklesby, Tay Div RNR. Died March 27, aged 90.

The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust
Supporting The RNBT Family

Men and women of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines serve their country, often at times of danger. Established in 1922, the RNBT helps non-commissioned Sailors, Marines and their families (The RNBT Family) throughout their lives.

Your donation will help us to help them.

Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO2 8RN
T: 02392 690112 F: 02392 660852 E: rmbt@rmbt.org.uk www.rmbt.org.uk

WALL SHIELDS OF ROYAL NAVY SHIPS
 Hand painted on wooden base 6" x 7"
£58.60 including UK postage and packing
 REDUCED PRICES given for orders of 3 or more
 SPECIAL PRICES given for 10, 25, 50 and 100
 CRESTED TIES TO YOUR OWN SPECIAL DESIGN
 (minimum 50)
 Specialist experience over 100 years
C.H. MUNDAY LTD
 Rosemary Cottage, Churt Road, Headley,
 Bordon, Hants GU35 8SS
 Telephone: 01428 714971
 email: enquiries@chmunday.co.uk
 www.chmunday.co.uk

Worcestershire Medal Service
 01527 835375

Full Size and Miniature Medals supplied
 and mounted for wear or display.

From the Boer War to current operations
 we keep one of the most comprehensive
 stocks of Medals and Ribbon in the UK

Contact us for prices, help and advice or
 a free brochure.

56 Broad Street, Sidemoor, Bromsgrove, B61 8LL
 www.worcmedals.com wms@worcmedals.com

MILITARIA

REGIMENTAL TIES, blazer
 Badges, Cuff Links, Insignia,
 Medals, Cap Badges, Militaria.
 Cairncross (Dep. NN), 31, Belle
 Vue St., Filey, N. Yorks YO14 9HU.
 Tel: 01723 513287 george.
 cairnrxson@hotmail.co.uk

SWORD FOR SALE

ROYAL NAVY OFFICERS
SWORD by Wilkinson Sword
 Ltd, including belt and carry
 case. £500. Very good condition,
 located in Gloucestershire.
 Tel: 01531 890395 or email:
 chrisbelton@waitrose.com

Navy News Notice to Readers

The publishers of Navy News cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy of any advertisement
 or for any losses suffered by any readers as a result.

Readers are strongly recommended to make their own enquiries and seek appropriate
 commercial, legal and financial advice before sending any money or entering into any legally
 binding agreement.

CARRIER STRIKE
 Don't miss a moment of the UK's
 future flagship's journey to full capability

Subscribe to Navy News
 12 issues from just £30

Call 023 9254 7118 or email
 subscriptions@navynews.
 co.uk

**Help grow your
 business and
 advertise with us**

To advertise in Navy
 News please contact
 Lisa on:
 023 9262 5235
 or Email:
 bm@navynews.co.uk
 for a Media Pack.

NAVY LISTS

NAVY LISTS 1827 to 2014.
 Available to view online:
 www.NavyListResearch.co.uk



**ROYAL MARINES and sailors from the
 Commando's vital support arm pounded
 the shower-soaked streets of Barnstaple
 for the first time.**

Personnel from the Commando Logistic
 Regiment paraded for a little over a mile from
 the bank of the River Taw on the edge of the small
 market town to its centre... and back again in a
 loop.

The regiment provides all the rearward services
 the Royal Marines require: fuel, engineering
 support, medics and first-aid posts, ammunition,
 spare parts – basically anything 3 Commando
 Brigade needs to sustain itself in the field.

The regiment has been based four miles down
 the A361 at Chivenor since 1995 but it was only
 last summer that local politicians decided the
 moment had come to recognise the unit and all it
 did for the North Devon economy and community
 by granting their highest honour: Freedom of the
 Town.

The march, organised by RMB Chivenor and the
 town council, set off from Taw Vale and travelled
 along the High Street to Mermaid Cross.

They then headed down North Walk and Castle

Street to the Strand where the salute was taken.
 Afterwards they headed back to The Square and
 then on to Taw Vale.

The march was given added impetus by the
 announcement earlier this year that plans to close
 Chivenor had been shelved for at least five years as
 the base was still very much required by the armed
 forces.

And so there was a good turnout from townsfolk
 who applauded the green berets and sailors through
 the heart of Barnstaple.

"Of the units based at Chivenor, the Commando
 Logistic Regiment has the longest history with
 Barnstaple and all our Royal Marines, soldiers,
 sailors and civilian staff are truly grateful for the
 close relationship and support from the town and
 local area," Lieutenant Colonel Aldeiy Alderson,
 the regiment's Commanding Officer, told those
 gathered in Castle Street, where his marchers
 halted for an inspection and speeches from VIPs.

"Keeping the base open means our men,
 women and families from all over the UK and
 Commonwealth can continue to enjoy living here
 and serving the Crown on your behalf."

Picture: LPhot Jonno Johnson, FRPU West

**INTERNATIONAL
 AIR DAY**
 ROYAL NAVAL AIR STATION YEOVILTON
 SATURDAY 13 JULY 2019

JOIN US AT THE ROYAL NAVY'S AIRSHOW
 Featuring Spectacular Displays from UK & Foreign Military Aircraft!

SAVE WITH ADVANCE TICKETS:
 Adult £28, Child (5-15yrs) £5, Under 5s FREE
www.royalnavy.mod.uk/airday

Coming in from the Cold (War)

CLIVE and Sue Taylor are very able photographers. The hobby brought them together and since 1968 they have been taking pictures of warships.

They have provided many publications and navies with their work. Their extensive collection of views of Royal Navy ships of the period 1966-1991 – the second half of the Cold War – has allowed them to produce the handsome volume **Cold War Fleet: Ships of the Royal Navy 1966-91 – A Photographic Album**, writes Prof Eric Grove.

It has been very well produced by Osprey (£50, ISBN 978-1-4728-3371-6) with several large photographs per page across 296 pages, including an index and list of contemporary pennant numbers.

In their rather self-deprecating introduction the authors claim not to have provided a “serious reference book”, as they were not able to photograph every ship of the period. Nevertheless, most ships are covered, ranging from aircraft carriers through cruisers (Blake and Tiger only), destroyers, frigates, submarines, patrol craft, mine warfare vessels and amphibious warfare ships.

Of particular interest is the coverage of the often-neglected auxiliaries, survey ships, tankers and store ships, depot, experimental and other support ships, tugs and even harbour craft and tenders.

The only disappointing thing about the book are the captions. There are rather too many niggling errors. Ark Royal was hardly in her ‘final configuration’ in the mid-1960s; as the book makes clear she was heavily modified in her 1967-70 refit and it was in this 1970s configuration that she made her mark in the fondly remembered television series *Sailor*, not in the previous decade.

Hermes was not a ‘victim of the 1966 Defence White Paper. Indeed, she had a fourth commission as a strike carrier in 1968-70. It is true that the RAF often emphasised Hermes’ limited capacity in their anti-carrier arguments, but it was the much-rebuilt Victorious that was prematurely retired in 1967, Hermes taking many of her ship’s company.

It was the later decision to abandon carriers when East of Suez ended that led to Hermes’ conversion into an LPH to replace Albion.

In the cruiser section it is said that the lengthening of the funnels of Blake and Tiger was “mainly for cosmetic reasons”. In fact it was to keep the hangar and flight deck clear of smoke.

In the destroyer section Hampshire is shown being towed away. In 1978 it was not really a product of IMF cuts but primarily because she was badly built and always a trial to operate. Also the Seaslug 2s that equipped the Batch 2 Counties – although more capable of a surface to surface role than Seaslug 1 – did not carry a nuclear warhead; there was provision in all ships for two nuclear-

THE GROVE REVIEW

tipped missiles which were never carried. Neither am I at all sure that Bristol was continued primarily for ‘political reason’; she was indeed needed as a trials ship for her new systems.

The frigate Torquay was modified for CAAIS trials but not when a member of the Dartmouth Training Squadron, rather when she was converted to a navigational training ship which required the large classroom aft in 1971 when the DTS paid off.

Towed array frigates, while once intended for patrols in the Greenland-Iceland UK Gap were used as key assets of the British Anti-Submarine Striking Force that was to lead the NATO Striking Fleet through the gaps from the mid 1980s.

The great strength of the book is the eye for detail of its authors. In some ways it does for the ‘Cold War Navy’ what the Seaforth British Warship Recognition series has done for ships of earlier periods. One can see how ships changed their appearance and fittings as their careers progressed.

Type 42 destroyer HMS Exeter is a good example, photographed first when brand new in 1980 and then three views in 1986 showing increased short-range armament. Finally, there is a picture taken in 1987 with Phalanxes on each beam.

The various transformations of the Leander-class frigates can also be clearly followed. A good point that emerges is the varied number of Exocet missiles actually carried by the frigates of the late Cold War period.

Another strength is the coverage of less-spectacular craft operated by the associated British maritime services, the almost-forgotten LSLs chartered to replace Falklands losses Sir Lamorak and Sir Caradoc; the six coastal ammunition supply ships; the rather mysterious deep-sea research ship Challenger; the floating laboratories J Farley and Crystal; the Loyal-class tenders; MFVs and the two vintage-looking Fresh-class water carriers (the list is not exhaustive).

The price for this most attractive and useful volume is £50 but given the high standards of production that is a fair sum (and you can pick up copies for half the price online). Anyone interested in the post-war Royal Navy and its associated organisations should acquire it.

● **Kanin-class destroyer Boykiy shadows HMS Hermes during NATO’s exercise Swift Move in the Arctic in October 1973. A fire aboard the Soviet warship caused her to accidentally fire a torpedo at the carrier...**



● Sub Lieutenants ‘Jimmy’ Gardner and ‘Dickie’ Cork, both of whom flew alongside legendary RAF fighter pilot Douglas Bader. Both would survive the Battle of Britain, but only Gardner would survive the war.

A naval view of the Few

IN THE summer of 1940 Britain’s fate largely rested on the bravery and skill of just under 3,000 aviators.

Thanks to Churchill’s eloquence, they’ve gone down in history as the ‘Few’.

And while their deeds have been immortalised in print, statues, memorials and on celluloid – celebrating not just RAF fliers, but also foreign volunteers such as Czechs and Poles – the role of a small band of naval aviators who fought in the Battle of Britain is usually written out of post-war accounts, especially in big-screen depictions such as the all-star blockbuster *Battle of Britain*.

Aviation historian and former Apache pilot Paul Beaver hopes to redress that somewhat and give a voice to the navy men of 1940 in the 80-page paperback **The Forgotten Few** (£9.95, ISBN 978-0993554537).

It’s a biography of the 57 Fleet Air Arm men (including five petty officers and three Royal Marines) – subsequently dubbed ‘the few of the Few’ – who either fought with their own service or were seconded to the RAF to meet the desperate need for pilots in our darkest hour and were subsequently awarded the Battle of Britain clasp.

Nearly two dozen naval fliers were temporarily transferred to the air force in the summer of 1940, the remainder defended dockyards with the Fleet Air Arm’s own 804 and 808 Naval Air Squadrons.

And while those flying with the air force grappled with the Luftwaffe in Spitfires and Hurricanes, the Fleet Air Arm fighter pilots mostly flew in obsolete Gloster Sea Gladiator biplanes and the cumbersome Fairey Fulmar – though some got their hands on the rugged American-built Grumman Martlets mid-way through the battle.

Four of the 57 became ‘aces’ (downing at least five enemy aircraft). Londoner Sub Lieutenant Francis Dawson-Paul led the way with seven and a half ‘kills’ – in just 25 days: fighters, twin-engined fighters and bombers all fell victim to his Spitfire. He was shot down over the Channel and though rescued by the Germans, he died of his wounds aged 24 on July 30 1940 – not six weeks after becoming a fighter pilot.

Other flames burned brightly briefly, then were snuffed out.

Fellow Spitfire ace Sub Lt Arthur Blake was dubbed ‘sailor’ or ‘admiral’ by his 19 Squadron comrades. He was 23 when he was shot down over Essex two days before the official end of the battle.

Sub Lt ‘Dickie’ Cork flew with the legendary ‘tin-legged’ Douglas Bader and his 242 Squadron.

Cork was Bader’s wingman during the battle, a popular character who remained proud of his naval heritage despite his RAF comrade’s constant ribbing and efforts to draw him over to the ‘dark side’.

Bader nominated ‘Corkie’, as he called him, for the DFC and George VI approved the award... much to the chagrin of the Admiralty who demanded their man return the air force decoration in favour of the DSC. He refused.

Dickie Cork was one of three naval fliers in Bader’s squadron and features frequently in the air force officer’s biography... but not in the biographical film *Reach for the Sky*.

After the battle he returned to his naval roots and became the Fleet Air Arm’s fifth highest-scoring ace of the war. His luck ran out in April 1944, killed in a flying accident while landing in Ceylon.

In all, seven naval pilots were killed and two wounded between July 10 and October 31 1940 – the official dates of the battle. Their names – and the 48 other Fleet Air Arm men who fought in Britain’s skies that fateful summer are listed on the Battle of Britain memorial in London.

The Forgotten Few is produced in conjunction with the charity Navy Wings which fundraises to restore and maintain vintage FAA aircraft. It’s available from www.navywingsflightstore.org.



When musicians went to war

TODAY, beyond military circles, it’s probably little known that the musicians of the Royal Marines have a key frontline role to perform in time of war.

The Band Service or elements thereof – has been mobilised to provide medical assistance in Iraq and Afghanistan: first-aiders, stretcher bearers, ambulance drivers.

But in researching the band’s role in the Great War as part of centenary commemorations of the 1914-1918 conflict, author and historian John Ambler realised their role in WW1 was at best underplayed and, at worst, unknown.

Like most people he had assumed the musicians had largely performed a ceremonial/morale-supporting role in

the conflict.

But as he dug deeper in the archives he found a much richer story of men and boys who did indeed perform ceremonial duties and entertain the troops, but also fought – and died – on the front line: on land and at sea.

The result is John’s third book on the Band Service: **World War 1 Remembered – Royal Marine Buglers and Musicians at War** (*RM Historical Society*, £18 inc. P&P) which looks at the pre-war role of the Corps and its musicians and buglers, including gunnery fire control in the Grand Fleet.

Given the prevalence of ship’s bands and the size of the Royal Navy in 1914, it’s hardly surprising that musicians fought in every theatre: at Coronel

and the Falklands, Dogger Bank and especially at Jutland.

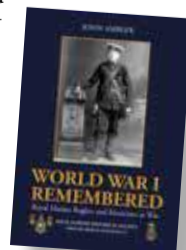
Brothers Band Corporal Arthur Wood and Musician Frederick Wood – aged 23 and 26 respectively – were two of lives wiped out in an instant when battle-cruiser HMS Queen Mary blew up on May 31 1916, a day the author regards as the ‘Blackest Day in the history of Royal Marines Bands’.

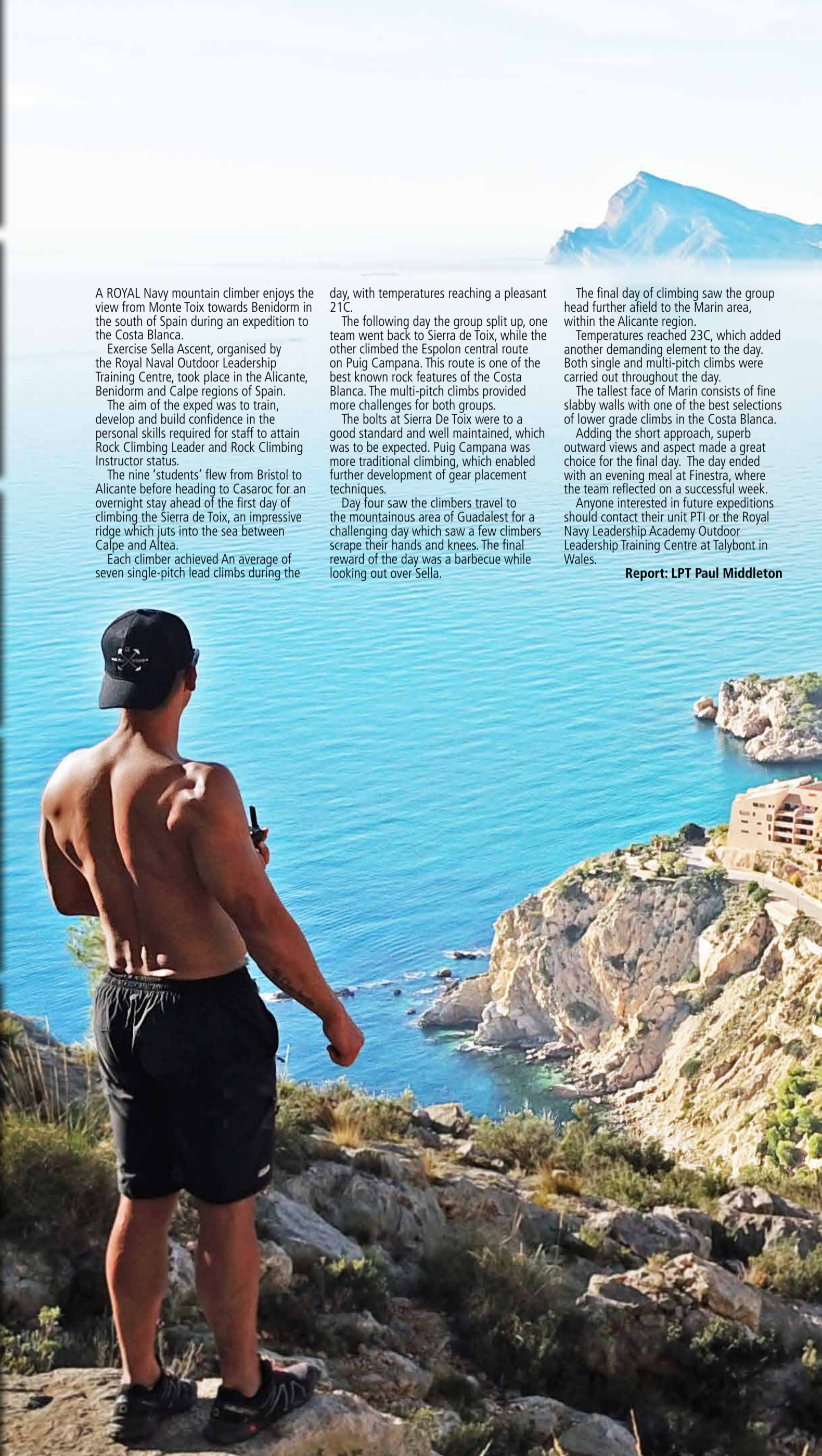
There were dangers when not facing the guns of the German High Seas Fleet; the entire band and two buglers – 17 souls in all – were killed when battleship HMS Vanguard blew up at Scapa Flow when her magazines

accidentally detonated.

The band provided constant support for the Royal Naval Division on land from Antwerp in 1914 until the end of the war in France, as well as in Gallipoli during the ill-planned Dardanelles campaign in 1915. Many buglers switched to the ordinary ranks to fight as privates or sailors.

Lance Corporal Charles Heffernan was a senior bugler – and a brave man; decorated for his relief work following the Messina earthquake in Sicily ten years earlier, he died while carrying ammunition off HMS Iris as fire raged during the Zeebrugge raid





A ROYAL Navy mountain climber enjoys the view from Monte Toix towards Benidorm in the south of Spain during an expedition to the Costa Blanca.

Exercise Sella Ascent, organised by the Royal Naval Outdoor Leadership Training Centre, took place in the Alicante, Benidorm and Calpe regions of Spain.

The aim of the exped was to train, develop and build confidence in the personal skills required for staff to attain Rock Climbing Leader and Rock Climbing Instructor status.

The nine 'students' flew from Bristol to Alicante before heading to Casaroc for an overnight stay ahead of the first day of climbing the Sierra de Toix, an impressive ridge which juts into the sea between Calpe and Altea.

Each climber achieved An average of seven single-pitch lead climbs during the

day, with temperatures reaching a pleasant 21C.

The following day the group split up, one team went back to Sierra de Toix, while the other climbed the Espolon central route on Puig Campana. This route is one of the best known rock features of the Costa Blanca. The multi-pitch climbs provided more challenges for both groups.

The bolts at Sierra De Toix were to a good standard and well maintained, which was to be expected. Puig Campana was more traditional climbing, which enabled further development of gear placement techniques.

Day four saw the climbers travel to the mountainous area of Guadales for a challenging day which saw a few climbers scrape their hands and knees. The final reward of the day was a barbecue while looking out over Sella.

The final day of climbing saw the group head further afield to the Marin area, within the Alicante region.

Temperatures reached 23C, which added another demanding element to the day. Both single and multi-pitch climbs were carried out throughout the day.

The tallest face of Marin consists of fine slabby walls with one of the best selections of lower grade climbs in the Costa Blanca.

Adding the short approach, superb outward views and aspect made a great choice for the final day. The day ended with an evening meal at Finestra, where the team reflected on a successful week.

Anyone interested in future expeditions should contact their unit PTI or the Royal Navy Leadership Academy Outdoor Leadership Training Centre at Talybont in Wales.

Report: LPT Paul Middleton

Rocking the view



Royal Marines run the gauntlet

MORE than 200 Royal Marines are taking on the United States Marine Corps in seven sporting events.

Exercise Virginia Gauntlet 2, which was taking place as Navy News went to press, involves 259 green berets.

The Royal Marines will be taking a total of 19 sports teams, seven of which will count towards the coveted Virginia Gauntlet Trophy.

Sports include football, basketball, rugby, golf, clay shooting and triathlon. The competition culminates with the blue-ribbon boxing event.

Major Scotty Mills RM said: "We won the first Virginia Gauntlet and brought home the trophy. We have taken the trophy out of the cabinet and dusted it off, we are going to take it over there, let them have a quick look at it and then bring it back."

The first Virginia Gauntlet took place in 2012, when 250 serving Royal Marines representing 17 sports went head to head with the USMC. This time there are two additional sports, including for the first time a female field hockey team from the Royal Marines Band.

The Commandos have been training for months and will compete and train all along the Eastern sea board from

Baltimore to Boston and everywhere in between.

The teams who are not competing against the USMC as part of VGII will be testing themselves against top civilian teams.

The UK team are confident in their ability to retain the trophy, however the USMC will not be going down without a fight and have been in training for months in an effort to rip the title away from the British marines.

USMC Staff Sergeant Joe Mecham said: "The US Marines will be ready, the basketball is ours and we have some really good boxers and soccer players in the Corps now, so it will be close."

The Royal Marines and the USMC have a long history of working together during exercises and operations.

The exercise has been organised by Maj Mills along with WO1 Scott Ferguson and is funded by the Royal Marines Charity, Royal Navy and Royal Marines Sports Lottery and the Royal British Legion, along with personal contributions from the sportsmen and women.

For more information go to royalnavy.mod.uk/corpswars or search @royalmarines on Instagram, Twitter or Facebook.

A full report on the games will appear in next month's *Navy News*.



Wait is over

Medal victory – five years on

A ROYAL Marines Sergeant has been awarded an Olympic medal – after a five-year battle.

Team GB fought Russian doping cheats to get the bobsleigh team a medal from the Sochi Olympics.

RM Sgt John Jackson, Bruce Tasker, Joel Fearon and Stuart Benson finished fifth in Sochi behind two Russian crews. "Finally we have the result we have waited so long for," said Sgt Jackson.

"Disappointingly, it is a medal we should have received on an Olympic podium in 2014."

Jackson piloted the four-man bobsleigh team made up of Welshman Tasker, England's Fearon and Benson of Scotland. Athletes from both Russia 1 (gold medallists) and Russia 2 (fourth) were found to have committed doping violations following thorough re-analysis of samples taken at the Games.

The bronze brings Team GB's medal tally from Sochi 2014 to five.

Clean sweep in dinghy

OFFICER Cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) have been crowned the winners of the Royal Naval Sailing Association's Holt Cup dinghy team racing event.

Team BRNC, led by Midshipman John Beardon, was undefeated in the gold fleet event in the closely-contested competition, taking three victories from three on day two of the competition.

A total of 36 sailors took part in the competition racing in nine teams during a two-day intense competition run from the Royal Navy Sailing Centre.

The first day saw the teams

split into two leagues. There was close competition in both leagues with only BRNC taking a clean sweep. After 16 races, the gold and silver fleets were established for the next day.

On day two, despite the light winds and strong tides, the race committee pushed through the 16-race programme only having to abandon one for lack of wind.

The silver fleet was a closely-fought affair with West 2 and the Fleet Air Arm each taking three victories. West 2 emerged victorious based on the head-to-head between these teams.

Further information is available online at rnsa.org.uk

Allsorts are champs

FOOTBALLERS from UKMCC have been crowned NSA soccer champions in Bahrain.

The team, led by Sqn Ldr Dave Alderman, won the play-off final 2-0 against a Combined Maritime Forces side, led by Lt Cdr Jang Hyundo, of the Republic of Korea navy.

The sturdy UK defence held strong throughout the 40 minutes and prevented the CMF team from scoring.

On winning the trophy Sqn Ldr Alderman said: "Full credit goes to all the players in the UK

squad who participated over the last seven weeks.

"The UK team was a mix of Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force personnel and aptly named the 'UK Allsorts'."

"It was great to see the players from all three UK services come together and produce a winning performance."

The only defeat for UKMCC was against CMF earlier in the tournament, so the final game was an ideal opportunity for UKMCC to exact revenge and take the trophy.

THE Royal Navy men's rugby union team ended a five-year wait for victory over their French counterparts.

The Band of the Royal Marines stepped out onto the Plymouth Albion's Brickfields ground before the evening fixture, with the Royal Navy hoping it be another step towards their march to inter-services glory.

They started well against the Marine Nationale in what was to be an epic encounter, scoring an early penalty to steady any pre-match nerves.

This was followed by a second from the boot of scrum half AB Gareth Rees to put them in the driving seat.

But the French came back with their own kicker putting the ball between the sticks, in what was to be the only French points of the night.

From here though the RN team pushed on with two quick tries before the whistle put them 18-3 to the better and a half time lead.

The Royal Navy's supremacy continued in the second half and RNAS Culdrose's and Cornish Pirate's AB Sam Matavsei went on a determined run which brought about his



second try of the evening.

From then on, it was all about the blue team racking up the points ahead of the Inter-Service competition with the Royal Navy Men sending a strong message to their rivals.

The final Royal Navy try of the night came from HMS Sultan's Air Engineer Technician Gregg Loydall, taking the score to an impressive 47-3 and wild celebrations in the Royal Navy ranks.

Earlier in the day the Royal Navy women's XV took on their French Navy equals at HMS Drake and although losing the opening rubber of the day, played well.

The final score of 3 – 25 was no way an indication of the effort and determination of the Royal Navy.

Despite the unflattering score line, the French had to work hard to break down a spirited defence and solid formation, which reflected a good team for the future.

Reflecting on a successful season



● Drew Powell

The Royal Navy Rugby League Association celebrated the 2018 season in style at the annual awards dinner.

Organized by PO(PT) Chris Reeves and held this year at the Royal Beach Hotel in Southsea, the event included the inaugural presentation of the Women's Player of Steel award.

The trophy went to NA(SE) Drew Powell, following a great season of hard graft and determination on the field. The men's Player Of Steel went to LPT Jack Basher on the back of his Player of the Tournament performance in last Autumn's Armistice Challenge Cup whitewash of the Royal Australian Navy.

The full list of the award winners on the night can be found at the RNRL website royalnavyrugbyleague.com

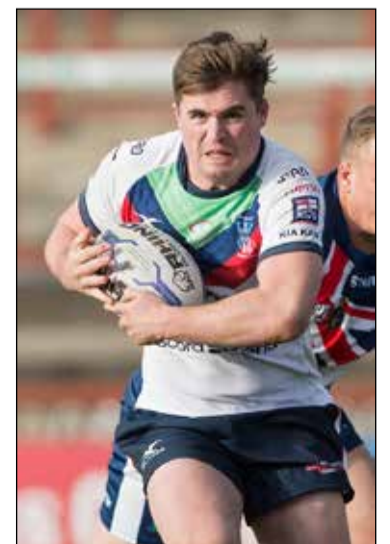
Preparations for this year's Inter-Services series continue throughout the next month or so with the association being very busy across all teams.

One standout fixture will be the return to Portsmouth of the RNRL Origin fixture between the Eastern Commands and Western Commands.

The fixture has been 'on the road' since 2009 however this year the match will be played on June 12 at HMS Temeraire.

It is also hoped to stage the first ever Womens' Origin fixture as a fantastic curtain-raiser to the men's fixture.

All details will be posted, once confirmed to the website as well as Twitter @RoyalNavyRL and on Facebook.



● Jack Basher



Riders get in SHAPE in Spain...

Warriors inspire injured sailors



FIVE sailors competed at the US Navy Wounded Warrior Games trials in San Diego.

WO1 Clint Wheeler, *pictured above in the pool*, MAA Jules Browning, PO Victoria Hobby, LNN Laura Martin and ET WESM(CIS) Lewis Pearce-Evered were supported by Lt Cdr Rebecca French, from Devonport Personnel Support Group, and POWtr Charlotte Linnett, of Hasler Company, for the event at Naval Air Station Coronado.

Royal Navy Wounded, Injured and Sick personnel were invited to train and compete alongside members of the US Wounded Warrior athletes as they picked their team for the games next month.

Every sport was adaptable for all levels of injury, sickness and disability with experienced coaches available to find solutions so that all personnel were able to participate.

WO1 Wheeler, who took part in the cycling, swimming, and powerlifting, said: "I made some lifelong friends and gained experience that I can take forward to the UK Invictus trials."

Currently based with the Portsmouth Flotilla, he added: "Through these trials I regained a sense of belonging and my confidence is strong. I will use this experience to go on and achieve greater challenges."

HMS Sultan-based MAA Jules Browning, who took part in the cycling, swimming, and track, said: The WWGT was an incredible event of heart, determination and camaraderie. Every day, every competitor dug deep and gave their all, despite whatever disability they had to overcome.

"For me personally it was a chance to see if I could put myself forward to compete in next year's Warrior or Invictus Games in events I had not participated in before."

PO Hobby, who is with the Portsmouth Recovery Cell and who took part in the cycling, swimming, powerlifting, said: "The US Navy made us feel so welcome and at home, with

someone there to support encourage and inspire me every step of the way.

"The athletes and coaches have inspired me to start doing competitive sport again and to apply for the 2020 Warrior Games."

Devonport PSG member LNN Martin, who took part in the cycling, swimming, and indoor rowing, said: "Having the opportunity to take part in the USN WW Trials 19 has really helped me find enjoyment in sport again, after having so many restrictions during my recovery programme.

"I was injured during a competitive sporting event, so the build up to the event made me a little nervous however the welcoming we were shown and the enthusiasm from the coaches and fellow competitors was humbling."

ET Pearce-Evered, of the Portsmouth PSG, who took part in the sitting volleyball, wheelchair tennis and field events, said: "I went to the games with no expectations. I was injured while competing in fieldgun so I was quite conscious that I didn't want to do activities that would aggravate my injury.

"From the moment we arrived, I knew my injury wouldn't hold me back. The coaches, management and other team members were caring and understanding and always on hand to help find adaptations to allow me to be able to join in.

"I especially enjoyed the wheelchair tennis, a sport which I had played before as a child but not in a wheelchair, I will definitely be carrying this sport on.

"The trials have inspired me to find a competitive sport which I can participate in within my current restrictions."

The Warrior Games take place in Tampa, Florida from June 21-30.

If you are currently under a WIS caveat and wish to get involved in any recovery activities speak to your DO or alternatively contact CPO Angie Cheal who is the WIS Manager at Devonport PSG.

MILITARY personnel working for NATO got the opportunity of a training camp in Majorca to hone their cycling skills.

Staff at the Joint European Support Unit based at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe - SHAPE - can join the SHAPE Internal Cycling Club.

During the summer months the club offers four rides a week, catering for all levels.

Over the year the club has members riding in the classic races, Liege - bastion - Liege, tour of Flanders, Paris De Roubaix, as well as the legendary Mount Ventoux, as well as numerous ride in Belgium and through Europe, including the Prudent ride London.

The club also subsidises rides in a number of events through the year, as well as taking part in fundraising and charity events as well as remembrance / memorial rides.

Some 49 club members attended a pre-season training camp in Majorca.

Six were serving members

of the British armed forces, two from the RN, and a further five former RN personnel now working in civilian roles.

PO Graham Window, *pictured above*, said: "This was an excellent time for training and learning more about ourselves as well.

"We also had a chance to experience the thrills of a velodrome on our so called rest day which for most of us, including myself, was the first time I have rode a velodrome."

During the camp an average of 109km a day was covered by the riders, who included: Capt G Smith RN; Col S Cunniff Army; RAF personnel Wg Cdr M Senescall, Wg Cdr S Andrews, Wg Cdr T Brown, and Sqd Ldr R Brunning.

The team stayed at the same hotel as the Royal Navy Cycling Team, *see below*.

If anyone wishes to join the club please contact the member ship secretary on shapecycling@gmail.com

... the destination of choice for RN cyclists

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Cycling Association escaped the bleak storms of the UK for sunnier Balearic climes during their annual warm weather training camp.

Thirty riders, ranging in rank from AB to Lt Col, travelled to Ca'n Picafort, Mallorca, for ten days of focussed training.

The aim of the training camp was to prepare for the Inter-Service events and for the first time there was the addition of development places, giving 15 budding cyclists the unrivalled opportunity to push their capabilities and experience training alongside the established RNRMC riders.

The island of Mallorca provided an ideal location for the camp, offering a variety of terrain, favourable weather and smooth roads populated with more cyclists than vehicles.

The riders tackled iconic climbs such as Sa Calobra and Puig Major as well as climbs to various monasteries in the local area.

Halfway through the camp they took the bus to the far side of the island to embark on the epic "Big Daddy" challenge; a 162km route from Andratx to Port Pollenca taking in 4300m of climbing.

For three of the racers, however, this was just a warm-up, as on the very next day they challenged themselves to an unsupported 316km lap of the island, conquering a further 5287m of ascents.



During the camp the arrival of training jerseys, made possible by RNRMC, marked the exciting announcement of a new principal kit supplier for the association, the Devonshire based Nopinz.

The very successful warm weather training camp, supported by the RN Sports Lottery and sponsors BAE Systems Maritime Services, catered for a broad range of experience and enabled all riders to push themselves building a solid block of training into their season before forthcoming events.

For those interested in Royal Navy Royal Marines Cycling, find us on Facebook or go to navycycling.co.uk.



● Clockwise from top, PO Hobby in the powerlifting; ET Pearce-Evered; the team in San Diego; LNN Martin in the archery





Slipper Run

Novice takes top honours – as do RN women on debut

WHERE there's a Will, there's a way...

And so it proved as novice tobogganer Will Vinnell, *main picture*, picked up a trophy for the Royal Navy at the legendary Cresta Run.

The Sub Lieutenant, from Commando Helicopter Force at RNAS Yeovilton, made three consistent runs – including the fastest speed of the contest – down the track in St Moritz, Switzerland, to take the Harland Trophy, a competition for past and present members of HM Forces not taking part in an Inter-Services Championship.

Royal Navy women were also gathering silverware as they took the top honours at the inaugural Inter-Service women's contest, beating the RAF by 0.76 seconds.

Sub Lt Tosca Barnes, based

in Bedfordshire, and AB Nat Ashman, of Devonport, both rode consistently and fast over the three runs to secure victory with just 0.01 seconds separating the two Royal Navy riders.

Women were banned from the event in 1929 and last year was the first year since then that women serving in the military were permitted to take part.

Their victory capped two weeks of intense riding on the Cresta Run, the steepest ice track in the world.

The run is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile and winds its way from above the 'Leaning Tower' in St Moritz, down a steep gully through ten testing corners, past the tiny hamlet of Cresta to the village of Celerina. The total drop is 514ft and the gradient varies from 1 in 2.8 to 1 in 87.

Cresta remains one of the most physically and mentally demanding of sports, requiring considerable courage, bravery, resilience and skill to ride faster and faster every day for two weeks.

Mistakes are rewarded with falls at 70mph and no part of the body is immune from the incessant battering.

Despite this, it remains one of the most exhilarating of sports, with millimetres and milliseconds separating success from failure.

Surgeon Lieutenant Alex Ward returned from a broken leg last season to determinedly raise the bar every time he rode, exactly the attitude needed to succeed on the run.

Against this backdrop, members of the three services, male and female, began their

campaign to gain the Prince Phillip Trophy for the fastest service team.

Marine Ed Hill, based at Devonport, proved to be the fastest male RNRM rider, inspiring others with his aggressive death or glory approach and breath-taking lines.

Fellow Devonport Marine Matt Harding, in only his second season, was close behind, beating service riders with considerably more experience, including five sixths of the RAF team.

RN stalwart, Lt Cdr Andrew Mills, based in Portsmouth, proved as reliable, fast and cool headed as ever and Lt George Alldridge, based at Devonport, raised his game when it mattered most, proving himself to be absolutely invaluable

as the RN's fourth man. This dynamic foursome secured a very respectable second place after some early falls had left the RN on a shaky footing.

Lt Emma Yearling, based at Northwood, became the first RN female to compete in the Silver Spoon race.

The first Cresta Run was completed in January 1885 and took nearly nine weeks to build. The run is still built from scratch every year using the natural contours of the valley and earth banks to provide a framework on which to pile snow.

The Run from Junction is built first, the upper banks second. Cresta usually opens just before Christmas and continues for nine weeks, with more than 30 competitive races and riding every day.



● Left, Mne Ed Hill; above and right, Mne Matt Harding; Far right, the team, back row from left, Surg Lt Alex Ward, Lt George Alldridge, Sub Lt Tosca Barnes, Sub Lt Will Vinnell, Surg Cdr Dave Potter, Mne Ed Hill, Lt Emma Yearling, Mne Matt Harding and AB Nat Ashman. Front, WO1 Craig Birkby and Lt Cdr Andrew Mills