



# NAVY NEWS

JULY 2021



## STRIKE A LIGHT

### Inside:

- Task force in Baltic
- Formidable Shield
- Caribbean mission
- HMS Prince of Wales
- HMS Trent in Black Sea

AN Astute-class submarine accompanies HMS Queen Elizabeth as the Carrier Strike Group 21 deployment continues at a hectic pace (see pages 2-4 and 20-21)

PICTURE: PO Phot Jay Allen



Off-sale date: JUL 31, 2021  
£3.20



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# ACT ONE: The sisters

**M**ore than 120,000 tonnes of Royal Navy might. That is what was on display when the UK's two aircraft carriers met up at sea for the first time.

HMS Queen Elizabeth and her sister ship HMS Prince of Wales found time in their busy schedules to sail together off the south coast of the UK.

The former had just completed her final preparations for her maiden operational deployment while the latter was on sea trials ahead of becoming ready for front-line operations (see page 6 for more updates on HMS Prince of Wales).

Before setting off for the Atlantic with her task group, HMS Queen Elizabeth and her full Carrier Air Group, including F-35s from joint RAF/Royal Navy 617 Squadron the Dambusters (pictured on the ship's four-acre flight deck) rendezvoused with Prince of Wales in the bright sunshine of the English coast.

It was the perfect moment for the ship's company of both carriers to get up on the deck and take some pictures of their counterparts.

Commodore Steve Moorhouse, Commander UK Carrier Strike Group said: "Having previously commanded both HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales, it was hugely exciting to be present as the two met at sea for the first time.

"I know that sense of pride and accomplishment is shared by thousands of others, military and civilian, who have contributed to the Royal Navy's carrier renaissance over the past decade or more.

"The strategic significance is profound. Building one aircraft carrier is a sign of national ambition. But building two – and operating them simultaneously – is a sign of

serious national intent.

"It means Britain has a continuous carrier strike capability, with one vessel always ready to respond to global events at short notice. Few other navies can do that. Britain is back in the front rank of maritime powers."

And there was one more thing to do for HMS Queen Elizabeth before she got down to the nitty-gritty of deployment – welcome Her Majesty the Queen on board.

She was greeted by Commanding Officer, Captain Angus Essenhigh, and Cdre Moorhouse before meeting embarked personnel, British and American, who represent the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and United States Marine Corps.

The Queen wished them well for their seven months at sea.



# ACT TWO: The Allies



• (above) The UK's Carrier Strike Group meets up with NATO's Standing Maritime Groups One and Two during Exercise Steadfast Defender in the Atlantic. Picture: LPhot Unaisi Luke; (left) Italian destroyer Andrea Doria leads the task group through the Strait of Messina. Picture: Italian Navy; (below) HMS Queen Elizabeth exercises with French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle. Picture: LPhot Unaisi Luke

In the first few weeks of their maiden operational deployment, the UK's Carrier Strike Group has met up with ships and units from 11 nations, completed numerous exercises and conducted operations across the Mediterranean.

There has been little rest for the task group since it sailed from the UK in May with Phase One now completed and Phase Two drawing to a close.

As *Navy News* went to print, HMS Kent was working with NATO, HMS Defender and HNLMS Evertsen were heading to the Black Sea (see pages 20-21) while HMS Queen Elizabeth and the rest of her 'ring of steel' were continuing to follow the Mediterranean Sea east towards Cyprus.

Their busy operational/training period started when the carrier group met up with allies in an exercise that saw 19 ships and more than 5,000 personnel come together. Ships and units from 11 countries joined up off the coast of Portugal for phase one of Exercise Steadfast Defender.

The training saw the UK's Carrier

Strike Group rendezvous with ships from NATO Standing Maritime Groups One and Two for the large-scale defensive exercise designed to test the alliance's ability to rapidly deploy forces to meet possible future threats.

Off the back of the exercise, Italian destroyer Andrea Doria joined HMS Queen Elizabeth, escorting the UK's flagship and the task group through the Strait of Messina.

The 7,000-tonne destroyer is fitted with a similar air defence system to the Royal Navy's Type 45 destroyers, centred around Aster missiles. Her addition was welcomed by Commodore Steve Moorhouse, Commander United Kingdom Carrier Strike Group.

He added: "The Mediterranean phase of CSG21 highlights once again the convening power of the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers.

"With warships from Britain, the United States, the Netherlands and then Italy, the UK

Carrier Strike group is a truly multinational force.

"It is testament to the strength of the United Kingdom's partnerships within NATO allies and our continuing commitment to European security."

This commitment was highlighted again when HMS Queen Elizabeth and FS Charles de Gaulle laid on an impressive display of Anglo-French naval and air power as the two nations' flagships worked side-by-side for the first time.

The UK's 65,000-tonne carrier and her embarked F-35 stealth fighter jets spent a few days training with the French carrier and French Rafale aircraft in Exercise Gallic Strike.

The two ships and their respective task groups showcased how the navies could work together on future operations.

The rendezvous also gave the Royal Navy's First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, US Navy's Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Michael Gilday and the French Navy's Chef d'état-major Admiral Pierre Vandier the chance to visit

both ships and discuss future partnerships.

The First Sea Lord said: "The Royal Navy's Carrier Strike Group 21 deployment is a clear demonstration of this: a Royal Navy carrier, which will become the NATO carrier, supported by allied fighter jets, frigates and destroyers, working as one."

The first phase of Exercise Gallic Strike saw Queen Elizabeth and Charles de Gaulle take part in 'cat-and-mouse' style war game, with both task groups testing the others' abilities to protect and defend against threats.

Next, it was the turn of the jets with UK F-35s of 617 Squadron RAF, 'the Dambusters', and US Marine Corps VMFA-211 conducting simulated strike missions with the French's Rafale twin-jet combat aircraft.

Commander Edward Phillips, Queen Elizabeth's Commander Air ('Wings'), served on exchange with the French Navy to develop his carrier strike skills.

"The pride, skill and camaraderie I experienced while serving with the French are mirrored here in the UK Carrier Strike Group," he added.

"By working together we have enhanced the potency of our respective carrier forces and, for the UK, it marks another important step in the renaissance of our carrier strike capability."

The Royal Navy's Lieutenant Commander Duncan Abbott is currently on exchange with France's equivalent of the Maritime Battlestaffs – and has been on board Charles De Gaulle for the past month.

He said: "I served in HMS Duncan when she was operating with Charles De Gaulle in 2019, so it's fascinating to now

see how operations are conducted from the other perspective.

"The significance of HMS Queen Elizabeth's maiden deployment is certainly appreciated by the French and they are extremely enthusiastic about operating together and refining the tactics of dual carrier operations."

A successful few days training with FS Charles De Gaulle complete, the UK Carrier Strike Group headed to waters off Italy where her embarked F-35s got another chance to show their abilities. The stealth fighter jets exercised with other F-35 aircraft from three other nations in Italian-led Exercise Falcon Strike.

The cutting-edge capabilities of the jets demanded detailed and thorough planning to generate the complex air operations.

But the jets, their pilots and handlers were successfully put through their paces and proved their abilities. They were able to show they could defend against a range of current and future threats.

Each day of the exercise saw different tests for the four nations including protection/attack, air support with strategic and tactical multi surface-to-air missile threats, digital close-air support, dynamic targeting and escorted convoy attack.

A pilot from 617 Squadron said: "Since leaving Portsmouth the level of training the squadron has received, both in terms of quality and tempo, is quite remarkable.

"The intense work up training we received in the lead up to CSG21 is paying dividends, enabling us to now hone our tactics, techniques and procedures to enhance the already phenomenal capabilities of this jet and of UK carrier strike."



“ THE MEDITERRANEAN PHASE OF CSG21 HIGHLIGHTS ONCE AGAIN THE CONVENING POWER OF THE QUEEN ELIZABETH-CLASS CARRIERS. ”



TURN OVER FOR COMMANDOS ON THE CARRIER



**Royal Marines have been perfecting specialist boarding skills and practising saving downed aircrew as they operate at the heart of the UK Carrier Strike Group.**

Submarines, frigates, destroyers and aircraft are the more prominent members of HMS Queen Elizabeth's list of protectors – the ring of steel around the aircraft carrier, capable of preventing attacks above, below and on the waves with an array of cutting-edge weapons and equipment.

But often unsighted – by choice mainly – are the small teams of Royal Marines of 42 Commando who are dotted around the UK Carrier Strike Group's ships, providing the task force with the ability to intercept drugs smugglers, pirates and terrorists (known as Maritime Interdiction Operations) on their long mission to Japan and back. Not only that, but the commandos are trained in recovering aviators isolated behind enemy lines (known as Joint Personnel Recovery), with the principle focus being on bringing F-35B pilots who have ejected from their aircraft back to safety.

One of the boarding teams – from Lima Company of Plymouth-based 42 Commando – is deployed on HMS Kent, as the Type 23 frigate operates close to the carrier but also peels off on her own missions, such as most recently working with NATO's Standing Maritime Task Group 2 in the Mediterranean.

For the commandos on board, there have been ample opportunities to stay sharp for potential missions and hone some of their specialist skills set as boarding operators, but also work closely with NATO allies.

The highlight of which was a boarding exercise with French and Spanish vessels, which saw Royal Marines and Spanish counterparts board a French oil tanker – which played the role of a vessel transporting illegal cargo and personnel.

"The size and complexity of the vessel made for an excellent training serial in which all members of the team performed to a high professional standard," Lieutenant J Weaver of Lima Company.

"Not only were the Royal Marines Boarding Team involved in this training, a Maritime Sniper Team 'intercepted' the vessel and provided the boarding team with constant overwatch (from a Wildcat helicopter) as they 'cleared' a French tanker and its crew.

"The vessel was seized and all members of the crew secured by the Royal Marines Boarding team, with an in-depth search and exploitation conducted by the Royal Navy Boarding team from HMS Kent.

"This was a great opportunity for the team to gain a greater understanding of how other nations conduct boarding operations, share our tactics, techniques, and procedures with other forces, whilst enhancing our own capability."

The training scenario progressed to HMS Kent, with the boarding team tasked to fast rope 30ft onto the deck of the frigate in order to secure the ship, clearing through its narrow and confined spaces.

"In addition to fast roping, the team then sharpened its close-quarter marksmanship skills with a live fire shoot from the back of HMS Kent," added Lt Weaver.

"The shoot tested the team's reactions in close quarters and their transitional drills between primary and secondary weapon systems."

During Kent's stop in Alicante, Spain, the commandos – on top of some adventurous training – laid on a showcase to the UK ambassador to Spain and other guests.

"The demonstrations were a huge success, with members of the team displaying the specific skillsets which a Royal Marine Boarding Team can provide to the Royal Navy and wider defence," said Lt Weaver.

"Stances including close-quarter battle, method of entry and low and high vertical access gave an insight into how boarding operations take place and the training required to take someone from a Royal Marines Commando to a Boarding Operator at 42 Commando."

The team tasked with Joint Personnel Recovery are trained to integrate seamlessly with any ship in the Carrier Strike Group, so they can work quickly if they were called on to head behind enemy lines and recover an isolated pilot/aircrew.

These commandos are ready to deploy at short notice, day or night and in any conditions, should the need arise.

To make sure they are sharp for their potential missions, the team have carried out mock rescues – dropping in via helicopters to save an isolated person from an urban environment and conducting a covert rescue while under pressure from a 'rapidly advancing adversary' during Exercise Strike Warrior in Scotland.



**WATCHING:** A Royal Marines Maritime Sniper Team from 42 Commando provides constant over watch as a Royal Marines Boarding Team 'clears' through a French oil tanker during a training mission alongside counterparts from Spain

# THE CARRIER AND THE COMMANDOS



**ALIVE AND KICKING:** The commandos carry out live firing drills on HMS KENT



**BOARDING TEAM:** A Royal Marines Boarding Team heading into action during exercises with French and Spanish forces



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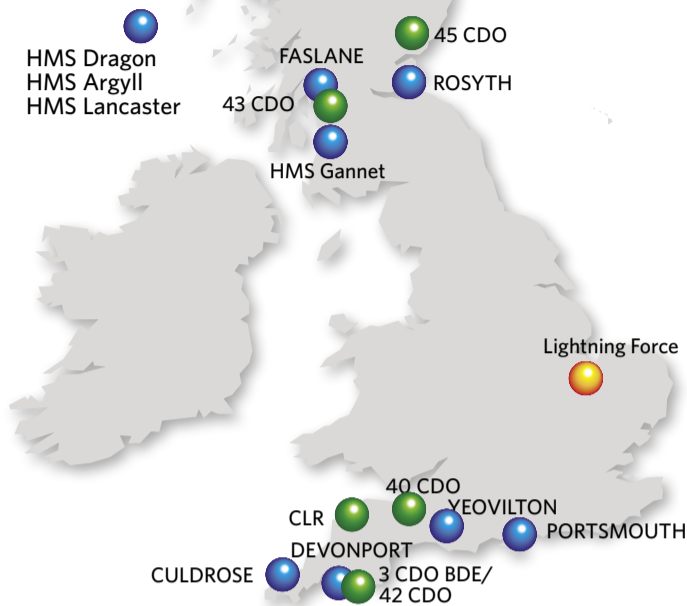
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## Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Prince of Wales  
HMS Northumberland  
HMS Portland  
HMS Tyne  
HMS Severn  
HMS Mersey  
HMS Magpie  
HMS Tamar

HMS Spey  
HMS Protector  
Project Wilton  
RFA Mounts Bay  
814 NAS  
815 NAS  
824 NAS



17 TES SQN

Gibraltar Squadron  
HMS Scott

HMS Medway  
RFA Wave Knight

LRG(N)  
HMS Albion  
RFA Mounts Bay  
3 Cdo Bde

HMS Trent

## Carrier Strike Group 21

HMS Queen Elizabeth  
HMS Diamond  
HMS Defender  
HMS Kent  
HMS Richmond  
RFA Fort Victoria  
RFA Tidespring

42 Commando  
815 NAS  
820 NAS  
845 NAS  
617 Sqn  
USS The Sullivans

## Operation Kipion

UKMCC  
NSF Bahrain  
IMSC  
COMUKMCMFOR  
HMS Montrose  
HMS Brocklesby

HMS Shoreham  
HMS Chiddingfold  
HMS Penzance  
1700 NAS  
RFA Cardigan Bay  
Forward Support Unit

British Defence Singapore  
Support Unit

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



## GLOBAL NAVY

Protecting our nation's interests

**CARRIER Strike Group 21** takes the front page honours in this month's edition as the deployment gets off to a hectic start.

In the first few weeks, **HMS Queen Elizabeth** and her task group has joined forces with ships and units from 11 nations, completed numerous exercises and conducted operations across the Mediterranean (see pages 2-3).

Royal Marines from **42 Cdo** have been perfecting their specialist boarding skills (see page 4), while supporting ships – **Richmond, Kent, Defender, Diamond, RFA Tidespring** and **Fort Victoria** – have also enjoyed a busy beginning to CSG21 (see pages 20-21).

**HMS Queen Elizabeth** also met up with her younger sister **HMS Prince of Wales** (see page 2), which welcomed aboard the Army's Apache helicopter and saw her first F-35 deck landings (see page 6) during her work-up around the UK.

**Littoral Response Group (North)** – with assault ship **HMS Albion** at its heart alongside **RFA Mounts Bay** and Royal Marines from **45 Commando** – has been to Helsinki and back, completing the task group's first operational deployment (see pages 24-25).

**RFA Wave Knight** delivered 75 tonnes of crucial aid to Commonwealth citizens whose lives have been thrown into turmoil by a volcano (see pages 14-15). The support ship, which is joining forces with **HMS Medway**, offloaded 135 pallets of emergency assistance in St Vincent – the Caribbean island badly affected by the violent eruptions of La Soufriere in April.

The Royal Navy used artificial intelligence for the first time at sea in a bid to defeat missile attacks (see pages 16-17). Involving more than 3,000 military personnel, **Formidable Shield**, which featured **HMS Dragon, Lancaster** and **Argyll**, tested the ability of NATO warships to detect, track and defeat incoming missiles, from sea-skimming weapons travelling at twice the speed of sound just above the waterline, to ballistic missiles.

A four-year tour of duty for a Royal Navy support ship in the Gulf ended as **RFA Cardigan Bay** arrived back in a rainy UK (see page 13).

A whistle-stop attachment to NATO's mine warfare force is over for **HMS Pembroke** (see page 9), who spent a few weeks attached to the alliance's Mine Countermeasures Group 1 in the Baltic.

Submarine hunters on **HMS Northumberland** honed their skills during a four-day 'battle' with the Norwegian Navy (see page 11) in Norway's fjords.

**HMS Trent** has completed her first ever mission to the Black Sea as she settles into life as one of the Royal Navy's forward deployed patrol ships (see page 7).

Would-be submarine commanders were put through their paces aboard **HMS Arful** (see page 43) as the final phase of the latest demanding **Perisher** course concluded.

The third and final autonomous minehunting boat has been delivered to Clyde Naval Base (see page 19). **RNMB Hebe** has now joined sister vessels **Harrier** and **Hazard** as part of the Royal Navy's crewless minehunting programme **Project Wilton**.

The Royal Navy's Antarctic survey ship **HMS Protector** is ready to head back to the ice after completing trials and training following the most comprehensive revamp in her career (see page 23).

Britain's longest-serving frigate, **HMS Argyll**, marked her 30th birthday at sea (see page 31), where the ship's company celebrated with cake.

**Commando Logistic Regiment** tested new ways of operating during **Exercise Green Dragon** (see pages 34-35) in Cornwall and Wales, where they worked with **40 Cdo, 29 Cdo, 24 Cdo RE** and helicopters from **Commando Helicopter Force** and the RAF.

For the first time the Royal Navy has driven a fast stealth boat, controlling it remotely from land (see page 19). Commanded by a laptop, tablet and two sailors in a tent, the **MADFOX** autonomous boat was used to test the theory – and practice – of operating a boat from ashore.

Seven of the Royal Navy's smaller vessels took centre stage for once when they combined for a workout off the Dorset coast (see page 41). Three P2000 patrol boats – **Blazer, Ranger** and **Smiter**, and small, fast gunboat **HMS Scimitar** – all from the Coastal Forces Squadron joined up with **HMS Mersey, Severn** and **Tyne** of the Offshore Patrol Squadron.

For the first time in the centuries-long history of the Royal Navy, a woman officer will be appointed to the rank of admiral (see page 29) as **Commodore Jude Terry** has been selected for promotion.

Finally, a Royal Navy couple have a date at the Palace after both receiving honours in the Queen's Birthday Honours list (see page 29).

# The indelible bond

**A RAIN-soaked Royal Marines Cadet from the Volunteer Cadet Corps prepares to hoist the Armed Forces Week flag with fellow young people in uniform to begin the nationwide celebration of the military and its bonds with the British public.**

The formal ceremony at Plymouth Guildhall was one of many at public buildings from Edinburgh to Exeter, Dundee to Dover and Carrickfergus to Cardiff where the standard – a fouled Union Flag – was raised between June 21 and 26 (the latter Armed Forces Day itself).

The pandemic forced the postponement of the national event in Scarborough for the second year running, as well as many smaller regional events organised by veterans and community groups... but not all.

But the Armed Forces Week flag was raised on public buildings local and national. Two sailors and a Royal Marines musician helped to raise the flag in Palace Yard at the Palace of Westminster.

And 30 RN/RM personnel were due to attend an event at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire on Armed Forces Day after a week of virtual and physical activities.

The socially-distanced opening ceremony in Plymouth was attended by military and civic leaders, and representatives from the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force, reservists, military medics from Derriford hospital and local cadets.

A bugler, from the Devonport Royal Navy Volunteer Band played as the flag was raised in front of the those attending.

"Plymouth is a proud military city with a rich history," said Lord Mayor Cllr Terri Beer.

We're delighted to be fly the Armed Forces flag all week in celebration of our brave serving military, reservists, veterans, cadets and their families.

"Although there is sadly no live Armed Forces Day event again this year, we continue to show our appreciation for the military and all the great work they do."

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Armed Forces Covenant – the formal agreement between the government and some 7,000 organisations/employers/councils to ensure that no-one is placed at a disadvantage as a result of serving in the Forces, past or present.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said Armed Forces Week gave the British people a chance to come together and military personnel, who defend our way of life, protect British citizens around the world, and strengthen our relationships with our allies and partners.

"As we kick off events to mark this year's Armed Forces Day, I'm delighted that the House of Commons is showing their support for our Service personnel by raising the flag and signing the Armed Forces Covenant. This week is an annual opportunity for all of us to recognise the work our Armed Forces do, at home and abroad, to keep us safe."

Picture: PO(Phot) Alex Ceolin, FRPU West  
■ We'll have more coverage from Armed Forces Week in next month's edition.



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# DAWN OF ACES



**SUNRISE** in the English Channel on a flawless summer's day and the crew of an Apache gunship conduct pre-flight checks overseen by one of HMS Prince of Wales' aircraft handlers.

The Army Air Corp's tankbuster is one of two aircraft to debut on the leviathan and start putting the 'strike' into the second of the nation's strike carriers over the past month.

The Apaches spent a good fortnight embarked on the carrier, the F-35 dropped in for only 24 hours, long enough, however, to test the air department and get folks excited. For the first time since the era of the Harrier carrier (at least 2010) there were fast jets landing and taking off from two Royal Navy aircraft carriers.

Performing the honours were two pilots from the RAF's 207 Squadron. First to land on, Squadron Leader Will (for security reasons F-35 pilot's surnames are redacted)... followed a few minutes later by the first launch up the ski-jump ramp by the RN's Lieutenant Commander Ben (like all Lightning squadrons, Marham-based 207 is a joint air force/Fleet Air Arm affair).

The 24-hour embarkation was long enough for the stealth fighter and carrier to lay the groundwork for Sea Acceptance Trials, which test the ship's ability to not only receive and launch the jets but also maintain

near-continuous air operations. Overseeing both maiden landing and take-off was Captain Darren Houston, the Portsmouth-based warship's Commanding Officer, who hailed "a significant milestone in the Royal Navy's re-birth of carrier strike group operations.

"It is a tangible reflection of the enormous collective effort from the aircraft carrier enterprise to deliver the Royal Navy's second aircraft carrier. I am particularly proud of the contribution made by my ship's company in developing this world-leading, sovereign capability and we look forward in earnest to rapidly growing our experience operating the F-35B through further trials and training later this year."

The news was passed on to Commodore Steve Moorhouse, commanding the UK's carrier strike group from on board HMS Queen Elizabeth in the Mediterranean.

He said that the "strategic significance" of the F-35 operating from Prince of Wales as well as the flagship was "profound".

He continued: "Building one aircraft carrier is a sign of national ambition. But building two – and operating them simultaneously – is a sign of serious national intent."

"It means Britain has a continuous carrier strike capability, with one vessel always ready to respond to global events at short notice. Few other navies can do that. Britain is back in the front rank of maritime powers."

The F-35's debut was really a taster or trailer of far more extensive trials to come. The Apaches, on the other hand, managed to get in some good sea time to qualify/re-qualify crews for operations over the waves.

The Apache has been in service for nearly two decades and has operated sporadically at sea, notably on HMS Ocean from where they conducted strikes against military targets in Libya during that country's civil war a decade ago.

**// The Apache's ability to be almost invisible in the dark makes marshalling and ground movement particularly difficult at night.**

– LA(AH) JAMES BATLEY

It's spent some time conducting trials on Queen Elizabeth, but the three helicopters from the Army Air Corps' dedicated maritime unit 656 Squadron, 4 Regiment AAC, wanted some concerted time on Prince of Wales to get their sea legs.

Supported by 100 personnel from Wattisham Airfield in Suffolk, the Apaches conducted extensive drills and sorties to ensure not just the fliers, but also ground crew from both the Army Air Corps and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers can perform their aircraft handling and maintenance roles at sea.

Aside from the operational focus,

the soldiers had to rapidly learn the labyrinth of passageways in the huge carrier as well as Jackspeak and the nuances of daily life at sea with the Royal Navy.

The Army Air Corps fliers landed and took off 161 times, qualified one new pilot for maritime operations by day/night, while eight more regained or maintained their currency.

Instructing the aircrews was veteran Apache pilot Major Tony Thompson with 19 years in the cockpit. This was his seventh embarkation in a ship in five years and he says the Queen Elizabeth class is a challenge for pilots – despite a flight deck large enough to accommodate three football pitches.

"HMS Prince of Wales is a much larger ship to land on – but she's also much darker," Major Thompson added.

"It's quite intimidating – it's not until you are right next to the ship they you can make out enough detail on her to land."

And if it's tough for the aircrew...

"The Apache presents a unique set of challenges for us to operate on the flight deck, but despite its menacing look the Apache actually has a smaller downdraft than Merlin and Wildcat," explained Leading Airman (Aircraft Handler) James Batley.

"For me, as a flight deck director, the Apache's ability to be almost invisible in the dark makes marshalling and ground movement particularly difficult at night."

For the carrier, Apache is another arrow to her quiver, joining anti-

submarine/troop-carrying Merlins and anti-ship Wildcat maritime attack helicopters, as well as the F-35s.

It's armed with a chain gun capable of spewing out a hail of 30mm lead at 600 rounds a minute, CRV rockets to knock out buildings and tank-busting Hellfire missiles.

The embarkation also served as a test for the weapons and aircraft handlers and Flyco to integrate in an air group more used to operating at sea than the Army aviators.

"The embarkation of 656 AAC offers excellent opportunities for both the ship and the squadron to gain essential experience, refine our ability to work together, and develop our expertise of operating strike aircraft from sea," said Lieutenant Commander Patrick Holmes, Prince of Wales' Lieutenant Commander Flying, known simply as 'F'.

All of this aviation training was conducted simultaneously with the FOST team putting the ship through the mangle, throwing every conceivable mishap, accident, breakdown and emergency at them: widespread fires, air attacks, refuelling with RFA Tiderace, crashes on deck, gunnery serials.

Oh, and there was the small matter of providing security at the G7 summit in Cornwall. The unmistakable outline of the carrier could be seen in Carbis Bay as Prime Minister Boris Johnson and US President Joe Biden chatted on the sands – and on numerous international news bulletins during the international conference.



Pictures: LPhotos Finn Hutchins and Mark Johnson

# BLACK SEA DEBUT



HMS Trent sails with Ukrainian Navy warships during exercises in the Black Sea  
Picture: Lt Cdr Andy Bailey

## HMS TRENT COMPLETES WORK WITH UKRAINIAN NAVY IN THE BLACK SEA

**H**MS Trent has completed her first ever mission to the Black Sea as she settles into life as one of the Royal Navy's forward deployed patrol ships.

Trent is on an enduring mission to the Mediterranean, having left the UK at the end of March to begin operations that will continually see her be a presence across the Med and south into the tropical waters of the Atlantic in the Gulf of Guinea.

As part of that, Trent headed for the Black Sea to work closely with the Ukrainian Navy and for a visit to Odesa, a port city in southern Ukraine and home to the headquarters of their navy.

In Odesa, Trent hosted British ambassador Melinda Simmons, the head of the Ukrainian Navy, Admiral Oleksiy Neizhpapa, Defence Attaché to Ukraine, Commodore Tim Woods, along with many other high-ranking military and civilian guests. A memorandum of understanding was signed while Trent was in port and was presented at the event the ship hosted.

"We are very proud to be a part of this momentous occasion between Ukraine and Great Britain – a great example of Global Britain in action," said HMS Trent's First Lieutenant, Lieutenant Nicola Hall.

"We are looking forward to returning to Odesa again and hopefully meeting up with our Ukrainian counterparts in the future."

While alongside in the Black Sea port, Trent laid on some training for the Ukrainian Navy.

Although unable to do this training aboard the ship because of Covid-19 restrictions, the sailors were able to work together on a wide range of skills.

Once this intensive phase of training was complete, Trent headed to sea to work with Starobilsk, an Island-class patrol boat, and degaussing ship, Balta.

"The 48 hours at sea were action-packed, with Trent taking the lead on a number of serials," said Able Seaman (Above Water Warfare Weapons) 'Stan' Matthews.

It was the first time Trent had sailed in the Black Sea and the same can be said for many of the sailors on board.

The unique experience of sailing through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles – two narrows which divide Europe and Asia – was a highlight for the crew.

"We navigated through the Bosphorus strait and the Dardanelles in glorious sunshine, and it was amazing to see Europe out to port, and Asia to starboard – not many people can say they have seen this part of the world in the manner that we did," said Engineering Technician (Marine Engineering) Taff McMullan.

"On arrival into the Black Sea we were greeted by a Turkish ship; they were welcoming and wished us a safe transit and passage."

After entering the Black Sea, Trent worked closely with Commandant Birot, a French Navy corvette, before the two parted ways on their respective missions.

The River-class Batch 2 is one of five built for the Royal Navy to be a forward presence in areas of strategic importance to the UK, joining her sister ships dotted around the world in locations from the South Atlantic, the Caribbean and, in the near future, the regions east of the Suez Canal.

Trent has now continued her patrol to Albania for Defence Engagement activity and will return to the Eastern Mediterranean via the Messina Strait.

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# Baltic brief

A WHISTLE-STOP attachment to NATO's mine warfare force is over for HMS Pembroke, who's back in her native Scotland after spring in the Baltic.

The ship spent a few weeks attached to the alliance's Mine Countermeasures Group 1 – responsible for keeping the waters of northern Europe mine free.

Although the Sandown-class ship's time with the force was relatively short, during which she crammed in four port visits, one major international exercise, combined gunnery training and, rarely for minehunter, fended off fast jets and helicopters,

Pembroke joined the NATO group in Klaipeda, Lithuania's principal port, and upon sailing into the open Baltic in formation, directed their guns to starboard and concentrated on a killer tomato – six vessels firing simultaneously.

After a brief port of call in Warnemunde, eastern Germany, the group made the 180-mile journey east to Szczecin, Poland, to prepare for the crux of this particular NATO deployment.

The ships were invited to join their hosts in one of the Polish Navy's largest war games, Solidarna Bellona, played out off the Pomeranian coast.

The force was given a plum berth in the shadow of Szczecin's famous Chrobry Embankment – imposing early 20th Century buildings which dominate the waterfront below.

Szczecin is located about 30 miles inland and it took the minehunters six hours to complete the passage from the open Baltic through the natural and man-made waterways to reach its destination, whereupon

each ship was treated to the river pilots playing each vessel's national anthem in salute.

Briefed and stocked up, the group joined 14 Polish vessels for a concerted hunt for practice mines laid on the Baltic sea bed.

For a spot of variety – and excitement – the 20 vessels were buzzed by Polish Air Force Sukhoi-22 and MiG-29 jets. With no air defence radar and equipped with nothing more than a 30mm main gun and small arms, Pembroke had to rely on the skill of the bridge team and gunners to sight, evade and target the fighters roaring low over the Baltic.

For good measure a search and rescue element was thrown into Solidarna Bellona to make for a comprehensive workout for the participants.

Exercise concluded, the NATO force put into Świnoujście, the port at the gateway of the channels leading to Szczecin to replenish supplies and give crews a rest after an intensive week of combined training.

Covid restrictions prevented the crew from the usual runs ashore, but the NATO ships formed their own bubble to socialise and enjoy sports and other activities together.

"It has been great fun to meet up and party with the other navies in the task group, we have had a great laugh," said mine warfare specialist Able Seaman James Tattersall.

Trainee junior officer Sub Lieutenant Kieran McBride added: "While not being able to go ashore properly has been a shame, some of bases have been great to visit and organising our own socials, such as the whole force BBQ has made up for it."

And that was Pembroke's NATO mission done.

A quick trip through the Kiel Canal and across the North Sea, the ship arrived in Rosyth for a logistics stop.

And if you're struggling with those Polish tongue-twisters... try Shtech-een and Swina-ohs-che...



**Pictured, clockwise from top, Pembroke, second right, alongside the Chrobry Embankment in Szczecin; The NATO group in formation; Pembroke leaves Warnemunde; Pembroke's crew during a rafting up; Pembroke in Świnoujście, Poland; Gunnery training in the Baltic**



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# Catch me if you can..



Submarine hunters on HMS Northumberland honed their skills during a four-day 'fight' in the fjords.

The Plymouth-based frigate tested her mettle against the Norwegian Navy – in waters its submariners know like the back of their hands.

Northumberland was invited to join the hosts for Exercise Grøner Aal, played out in the confined waters around Bergen.

The war games provide a key training environment for the Norwegian Navy to practise live firing of torpedoes at various depths against realistic manoeuvring targets... and for surface vessels to practise their counter-measures.

The pandemic limited participation this year from international vessels, but Northumberland was able to join the host's support ship Magnus Lagabøte, tug HS4 Mjølner.

Doing its best to get Northumberland in its sights was the diesel-electric submarine HMNoS Uredd.

She's tiny by comparison with Britain's hunter-killer boats – but operating in home waters with a highly-skilled crew of only 21, being a small and very quiet submarine, she was an elusive target.

To find something which is small, quiet, submerged and doesn't wish to be found, Northumberland sent sound waves through the depths as she tested both her hull-mounted and towed-array sonar systems – and also switched to silent running to passively listen for the ultra-quiet submarine.

That tests not just the skills of the sonar operators in the operations room, but the entire ship's company, who have to minimise all noise aboard – even down to removing shoes.

And the frigate pulled out the ace up her sleeve in the form of her Merlin Mk2 helicopter.

Mohawk Flight from 814 Naval Air Squadron at Culdrose used her sonobuoys (listening devices dropped in the ocean) and her 'dipping' sonar, lowered beneath the Merlin, to locate and successfully track the Uredd's movements throughout the exercise – and conducted simulated attacks to defend Northumberland.

With the exercise done, Uredd showed herself on the surface and Mohawk Flight was launched again – this time taking shots as pilot **Lieutenant Matt Le Feuvre** captured hunter and hunted on camera.

Captain Bård Hess, in charge of the Norwegian Navy's 1st Submarine Squadron, said Northumberland and Uredd were well-matched foes with the Britons demonstrating a "high level of training" while their ship proved hard to locate due to how quiet the dedicated submarine hunter is.

"Uredd benefited greatly from training with HMS Northumberland," he said. "An exercise at such a level raises the competence both for the individual, but also for the entire organisation which must deal with a possible threat."

"Norwegian submarines are sought-after partners for foreign warships. The Ula class is quiet and difficult for frigates to locate."

Northumberland was later positioned off the coast of Cornwall as a number of naval assets supported security measures for the G7 Leaders' Summit.

Hundreds of Armed Forces personnel supported Devon and Cornwall Police in a variety of roles, including drivers and wider logistical support.

The Royal Navy also deployed the aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales, and patrol ships HMS Tyne and HMS Tamar.

Air traffic controllers at RNAS Culdrose managed all the aircraft using the restricted airspace and the air station at Helston also hosted Wildcat helicopters from 815 NAS.

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# Poseidon kicks off the Spey adventure

THIS is an impressive bird's eye view of a ship formally joining the Royal Navy family.

If you're thinking this was captured by a drone – de rigueur for a lot of aerial views these days – you'd be incorrect.

This photograph was taken from a Poseidon P8 maritime patrol aircraft, making a low-pass in honour of the commissioning ceremony of its Royal Navy affiliate: HMS Spey.

On a fine June day she joined her four older sisters in the Overseas Patrol Squadron as a fully-fledged member of the Navy, commissioned in the Ross-shire town of Invergordon.

The river which gives the ship her name may be perfect for salmon, fly-fishermen and distilleries, but its not navigable for a major warship, nor is there a port at its mouth.

Instead, Invergordon on the Cromarty Firth, 40 miles to the west, is the patrol ship's affiliate. North Sea oil rigs, pipes and giant fuel tanks served as the backdrop to proceedings.

Dozens of invited guests led by Spey's sponsor, Lady Alison Johnstone, were treated to the full pomp and ceremony the occasion demanded, such as the Band of HM Royal Marines Scotland – all transported to the impressive setting of a finger jetty jutting out a kilometre into the Cromarty Firth.

Spey's first Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Ben Evans read the formal commissioning document from Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Jerry Kyd, then addressed all present.

"What a fantastic privilege to be able to conduct our commissioning ceremony in Scotland. This is a Scottish ship,

built in Scotland with close links to this part of the country, and which will soon fly the White Ensign around the globe," he said.

"For many here today this is the first time they would have seen the newest ship in the Royal Navy, and we are ensuring that the day is celebrated as safely as possible. I am proud to be here today with my amazing ship's company. They have achieved so much and worked so hard to get us to this important milestone."

He continued: "I would like to say thank you to all those who have supported this event today and made it a memorable experience, especially our friends in the Greenwich Hospital and BAE Systems. Finally, to our families I say a massive thank-you for your support and understanding in these challenging times, and I look forward to welcoming you all on board very soon."

The 45-strong ship's company made excellent use of their time to bond with other affiliates – perhaps for the last time in person for a few years with Spey due to deploy next month to the Far East until at least the middle of the decade.

They called on Moray Council, Spey Single Malt boutique craft distillery in Kingussie and Windswept Brewing in Lossiemouth.

The commissioning came at the end of a busy period for the overseas patrol ship which completed maintenance in Falmouth – where she was treated to the same dazzle livery as her sister Tamar – then a dash across the Channel to take part in D-Day commemorations (see page 37) before back into Portsmouth, and up to Scotland.

Pictures: PO(Phot) JJ Massey and SAC Aeris Finney RAF



Home at last for one long-standing presence in the Gulf, while another is fighting fit after revamp

# Come in L3009, your time is up

THIS is definitely cardigan weather. Foulies too.

One a murky, wet, windy and chilly midsummer day in Portland, a four-year tour of duty for RFA Cardigan Bay came to an end.

Built to support amphibious operations involving Royal Marines, Cardigan Bay instead proved to be a very useful 'mother ship' for not just British minehunters operating in the Middle East, but also those of our allies and partners.

The vessel acted as command ship and hub for the UK's four Bahrain-based minehunters, but also served as a floating base for specialist dive teams and experts testing automated mine warfare systems, helicopters moving personnel and supplies around the region, and as a 'petrol station' and supermarket for the minehunters.

Her ability to hold enough fuel to fill up multiple ships at a time, as well as approximately 200 tonnes of provisions, meant that minehunters – which typically have a fairly limited range and endurance due to their size – can remain on operations for extended periods.

As a result, she was heavily in demand since arriving in theatre in 2017 – the second time in the past decade Cardigan Bay was deployed to the Gulf to support minehunters.

She took part in numerous regular MINEXs (combined Anglo-American workouts for their mine warfare forces based in the Gulf), large International Maritime Exercises focused on wider security in Middle East waters, and four Khunjar Haad exercises – the principal annual test of Oman's armed forces to which her allies are invited.

Most recently, Cardigan Bay was at the hub of the Anglo-French-US Artemis Trident, run every two years. Beyond the usual minehunting element, exercise directors threw in a series of self-defence tests against air and surface threats, maritime security, force protection and diving operations.

RFA Cardigan Bay was critical to the success of the large-scale exercise, transferring fresh water, fuel and stores for Royal Navy and coalition ships as they 'rafted up' – berthed – alongside the ship in the middle of the Gulf.

"Cardigan Bay has been a critical component of the mine counter-measures force. She provided sustainment at sea for Royal Navy minehunters, as well as coalition partners in the region," said Lieutenant Commander Max Wilmot, chief-of-staff of the mine warfare battle staff.

"With the battle staff embarked, she afforded us the ability to conduct command and control from the sea and allowed the minehunters to remain on task for longer."

Commodore Ed Ahlgren, the senior RN officer in the Middle East as UK Maritime Component Commander in Bahrain, said Cardigan Bay had provided "an exceptional service during her four years in theatre."

"The Bay Class has demonstrated her versatility in working closely with our Royal Navy units and those of our coalition partners. Her recent contribution to Exercise Artemis Trident 21, where she took on the role of flagship, underlined her impressive capability and stalwart support to the mine counter-measures community."

Cardigan Bay has now traded places with RFA Lyme Bay – the second time she's relieved her sister ship on what is "a well-trodden path of maintaining that continuous presence in theatre" in the words of Cardigan Bay's outgoing Commanding Officer Captain Sam Shattock RFA.

After offloading supplies and stores in Portland, Cardigan Bay will undergo extensive maintenance and refurbishment in Falmouth.

Picture: Lt Joe Howell



## Diesel work nicely

FRIGATE HMS Montrose takes on fuel in a double replenishment at sea with American supply ship USNS Patuxent and French frigate Languedoc.

The complex manoeuvre shows the Royal Navy's permanent patrol ship in the Gulf is back in business after her spring overhaul – and that a new dockyard in the region can carry out major work on a hi-tech warship.

Montrose has been operating out of the RN's Middle East headquarters in Bahrain, trailblazer of a growing programme of 'forward basing' which sees UK warships deployed for extended periods in key parts of the world.

Basing a frigate long-term in the Gulf spares the vessels the 6,000-mile journey each way from and back to the UK, making it available more frequently for operations in the Middle East.

It also exposes the vessel to extended periods for the punishing heat and sandy, dusty conditions, and means any maintenance work is carried out in yards in the region.

The port at Duqm proved earlier this year it can support a complex, modern warship having completed Montrose's winter overhaul.

Duqm benefits from enjoying the newest facilities in the Middle East – it's a port/town which has been created from nothing over the past decade and is becoming a key hub for Royal Navy operations in the region.

The frigate's spring revamp following four months of patrols – including three large drugs busts and a major exercise with the Omani Navy – was a far more complex affair.

The biggest challenge was to remove two diesel generators – each providing the ship with 1.3 Megawatts of power – and replace them with new ones... alongside regular maintenance from re-painting the hull, relaying the flight deck and forecandle, checking all the weapons systems and sensors, work on the masts

and propellers, and anything else which might need overhauling.

Throw in the added complications of Covid (Oman is on the 'red' list for travellers, requiring any contractors from the UK to quarantine at both ends) and Middle East heat (typically at least 31C every day, and over 38C on occasions), and the fact that such a demanding work package hadn't been carried out at Duqm before, language barriers and some of the work taking place during the holy month of Ramadan, the result was a substantial engineering challenge.

The challenge was accepted – and met – with all the work completed by the ship's company, local workers and experts from Babcock, responsible for maintaining Type 23 frigates when at home in Devonport.

"A double diesel generator exchange is a complicated task when in UK waters, to achieve this whilst deployed has proven to be a challenging experience," said marine engineer Warrant Officer Ewan McLaughlin.

"Montrose sailed on time having conducted a successful double change and trials were conducted successfully enabling her to maintain her high levels of readiness which she's operated at since becoming the first forward-deployed frigate."

Commander Charles Collins, Commanding Officer of the frigate's Starboard Crew currently in charge of the ship, added: "The maintenance period has seen HMS Montrose return back to full strength as she continues to protect the UK's interests worldwide."

Not content with 'just' overhauling Montrose, sailors used the time in Duqm to raise £3,000 for good causes – one third for the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity, the rest for individual charities the ship backs. Crew offered to lift 60kg of weights for every 10p donated, which means 300,000 10ps were offered... and crew had to lift 18 tonnes... or one and a half London buses.

Picture: Logs(CS) Henry Parkes



# KNIGHT IN SHINING

## ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY SHIP DELIVERS EMERGENCY AID TO VOLCANO-HIT ISLANDS FORCES WITH PATROL VESSEL HMS MEDWAY FOR ANNUAL CARIBBEAN HURRICANE

THE Royal Navy has delivered 75 tonnes of crucial aid to Commonwealth citizens whose lives have been thrown into turmoil by a volcano.

Support ship RFA Wave Knight offloaded 135 pallets of emergency assistance in St Vincent – the Caribbean island badly affected by the unexpected and violent eruptions of La Soufrière in April.

The intense volcanic activity has forced the evacuation of the northern half of St Vincent – the main island of the Commonwealth nation of St Vincent and the Grenadines – displacing around 14,000 islanders.



The eruptions – the first major activity in 40 years – dumped a thick layer of ash over homes and public buildings, and islanders seeking shelter away from the danger zone in temporary camps, where many of the basics of life are in short supply.

Tanker Wave Knight – which carries a Royal Navy Wildcat helicopter, disaster relief supplies and thousands of tonnes of fuel – collected an assortment of aid from the people of Barbados and the World Health Organisation during a lightning stop in Bridgetown.

RFA and Royal Navy sailors and Royal Marines loaded toiletries, sanitary items, cleaning products, dried/tinned food, bottled water and other essential goods before making the 100-mile journey west to St Vincent.

Just hours later, despite it being well into the night, that aid was being offloaded in Kingstown, the St Vincent capital. It's a mission with added poignancy for the Royal Navy – more than 500 people from St Vincent serve under the White Ensign and have been deeply affected by what has happened in their homeland, prompting various fundraising and relief efforts on ships and in naval bases in the UK.



Among those affected, the family of Able Seaman Rickal Grant, a Royal Navy logistics expert serving with Wave Knight.

"I have children that have been displaced by the eruption," he said.

"The people displaced, including my family will benefit from this humanitarian aid given by the people of Barbados. I am happy to be a part of the ship's company delivering this aid."

Wave Knight's Commanding Officer Captain Simon Herbert RFA added: "My ship's company are keen to demonstrate the UK's commitment to the security and stability of the region and to alleviate the humanitarian threat caused by the volcano crisis in St Vincent."

Wave Knight left Scotland a fortnight ago



to join the Royal Navy's permanent presence in the Caribbean/North Atlantic, patrol ship HMS Medway.

Individually and together, the pair provide support and reassurance to Britain's Overseas Territories in the region, as well as Commonwealth states, on hand to deliver aid in the event of natural disasters – the Atlantic hurricane season has just begun – and work with local authorities to prevent drug trafficking between South and North America.

Sailors and disaster relief specialists on HMS Medway ran through how they would help a devastated community – using the US Naval Base in Mayport, Florida, as their testing ground in a day-long exercise.

Medway has an embarked 'crisis response troop' on board from 24 Commando Royal Engineers.

In the event of a disaster (storm/volcanic eruption), Medway would be expected first to set up a mobile command post in an affected area, then send out reconnaissance teams to find where assistance is needed most, before deploying the rest of the crisis response troop with the tools and supplies needed to help out: from restoring communications and fresh water pipes, to putting public buildings and homes

back in order and reopening roads.

Which is exactly what was tested at Mayport. As stores and equipment were readied aboard the ship, the recce team, led by the ship's Executive Officer Lieutenant Commander

Andrew Rowlands, was landed in a small Zodiac boat.

Once there, they were able to gain a better appraisal of the disaster, establishing a beach head and calling for the stores required to save lives and rebuild key infrastructure to be brought up - testing communications and the supply chain and mobilising the ship's company.

"It was encouraging to rehearse resupply with the naval logistics chain and prove that not only will key equipment be able to be landed ashore, but we are able to be sustained throughout the period of our operations," said Staff Sergeant Jack Hester of 24 Commando.

His comrades set up a helicopter landing site and practised evacuating casualties back to Medway's sickbay for treatment by the ship's doctor, Surgeon Lieutenant Kathryn Richardson.

With the helicopter still mid-Atlantic, the team used a trailer hauled by a quad bike to the water's edge, ready for the Zodiac to ferry the casualty to the ship.

"It was impressive and reassuring to see the

first aid and casualty evacuation capability in the Crisis Response Troop, allowing my staff and me to provide quality – and timely – further medical care," Surgeon Lieutenant Richardson said.

Soldiers and sailors said they both benefited from the day's combined training.

"From my perspective it was interesting to see the whole exercise, especially to see how the Army Commandos operated as it was my first time working with another service. After the day's training I feel prepared for the season ahead," said Able Seaman (Sea) Daniel Crewdson, bowman on the Zodiac.

Captain Jake Lott RE, Officer in Charge of the Crisis Response Troop, said the exercise had provided a "timely opportunity to iron out any inter-service differences prior to deploying and allowed a better understanding of how to operate under a Royal Navy command structure."

Medway's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander James Blythe added: "The additional capability provided by the Crisis Response Troop will ensure Medway is available to provide disaster relief for sustained periods."

"Their seamless integration into the ship's company is a testament to both the troop and my crew. It was evident from this training exercise that we are ready in all respects should the need arise for the upcoming hurricane season."



The people displaced, including my family, will benefit from this humanitarian aid

AB Rickal Grant

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# ARMOUR

## LANDERS AHEAD OF JOINING HURRICANE DEPLOYMENT



Humanitarian aid was loaded aboard RFA Wave Knight in Barbados and quickly taken to St Vincent, which saw the La Soufrière volcano erupt earlier this year



### KEEP UP WITH THE SHIPS

Follow @HMS\_Medway, @RFAWaveKnight, @RFAHeadquarters and @RoyalNavy on Twitter



From left, ET(WE) Harry Awome calls in a report amid the palm trees; HMS Medway's CO Lt Cdr James Blythe discusses the plan of action; the casualty is loaded aboard Medway's Zodiac; the casualty is taken away in the Zodiac

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## BIRD away!

With a searing flash of fire a Sea Viper missile erupts from its slumber in the silo of HMS Dragon.

Seconds later it struck an inbound threat at a combined impact speed of something like five times the speed of sound.

And thus did the destroyer prove her premier weapons system...and ensure that the largest naval missile/air defence exercise in the Western Hemisphere ended with a bang (well, whoosh).

The hardware provided the eye-catching imagery and footage from Formidable Shield.

But it was the software, the machine code, the binary and hexes in the sensors and command systems driving decisions in tense operations rooms of warships dotted across a patch of the Atlantic off the Outer Hebrides.

And for first time artificial intelligence was helping to guide those decisions on Royal Navy warships.

Experts from the Government's defence laboratory Dstl and industry partners from Roke, CGI and BAE Systems used the three-week war games to test their 'Startle' and 'Sycoia' systems.

Startle is designed to help ease the load on sailors monitoring the 'air picture' in the operations room by providing real-time recommendations and alerts.

Sycoia builds upon this and is at the forefront of automated Platform and Force Threat Evaluation Weapon assignment, effectively allowing operations room teams to identify incoming missiles and advise on the best weapon to deal with them more quickly than even the most experienced operator.

Above Water Tactician Leading Seaman Sean Brooks aboard HMS Lancaster is among those who was impressed by the software.

"I was able identify missile threats more quickly than usual and even outwit the operations room!" he said.

Although experiments with AI have been conducted before, this was the first time it had been tested against live missiles, said Lancaster's Weapon Engineer Officer Lieutenant Commander Adam Leveridge.

"Observing Startle and Sycoia augment the human warfighter in real time against a live supersonic missile threat was truly impressive – a glimpse into our highly-autonomous future."

Alasdair Gilchrist, programme manager for Dstl said it was "imperative" that Britain continued to invest in the combat systems installed on Royal Navy warships to ensure they meet present and future challenges.

"Being able to bring get the AI onto the ships is a massive achievement, and while we can prove the AI works in the labs, actually getting Navy personnel hands on is brilliant," he said.

Lancaster's Commanding Officer Will Blackett said the scale of Formidable Shield and the assets and technology involved – the latest drones, leading-edge missile systems and sensors – coupled with the best-trained sailors, scientists and technicians made the

exercise a hugely-beneficial experience for all.

"The scale of this endeavour is remarkable – NATO can bring some serious firepower to bear when it needs to and it is exciting to be part of the development of future tactics and equipment," he added.

While Lancaster and Dragon trialled technologies brand new to the Fleet, Argyll (the first ship in the Navy to be fitted with the Sea Ceptor air defence missile) developed tactics to push the limits of her Artisan Radar and Sea Ceptor as part of a task group – with one eye firmly on its successor Type 26/31 frigates.

"The sheer weight of hardware bought together in this exercise, and the chance to test the teams and systems against real-speed supersonic sea skimming and ballistic targets cannot be underestimated," said Lieutenant Commander Richard Dobson, HMS Argyll's Principal Warfare Officer.

"It has built the confidence of the team, pushed the boundaries of what these highly-capable systems can do, and will help develop our future tactics in missile defence."

**"... a glimpse into our highly-autonomous future..."**

**– LT CDR ADAM LEVERIDGE,  
HMS LANCASTER**

Sea Ceptor remained firmly in its silo ('the mushroom farm') on both Lancaster and Argyll; Dragon was the only Royal Navy participant to launch an active missile.

But other international vessels did press the shiny red 'fire' button – in some instances courtesy of data shared with them by the RN vessels tracking incoming threats.

And what threats there were, everything from ballistic missiles plunging towards Earth from space to supersonic targets heading towards the ships at nearly three times the speed of sound.

More than a dozen warships were peppered around the exercise area for the 2021 iteration of Formidable Shield, staged by NATO and its partners every two years to test the collective ability of nations to deal with the latest threats in the skies.

In all, ten nations – Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, the UK and USA – committed over 3,000 personnel plus hardware to the war games.

The range at Benbecula (pop. 1,283) became the UK's Cape Canaveral for a few days as various target drones and missiles were launched against the NATO fleet.

Boosted by the software upgrades, Dragon picked up those threats within seconds of launch in many cases and provided her operations room team with key info faster than

the destroyer's regular computer 'brain'.

Formidable Shield proved that Dragon can track long-range ballistic missiles into space – and crucially on their return trajectory – at speeds of over Mach 8, as well as shorter range variants which arced up to the edge of the atmosphere before returning to Earth.

The destroyer was also able to track supersonic sea-skimming Coyote targets hurtling over the Atlantic at more than 2,100 miles per hour – and share that information with ships from Norway, Netherlands, Spain, Italy and France so they could take out the drone.

But could she deal with a threat fired directly at her?

Enter a Firejet target: 10ft long, wingspan of just 7ft, racing towards Dragon at low altitude at speeds in excess of 400mph.

In the operations room, the air warfare team tracked the missile, then Sea Viper locked on to its target.

*Bird affirm.*

In an instant, the 'lid' of one of 48 missile silos on Dragon's forecandle flipped open, followed by a searing flash of orange-yellow flame and smoke which largely hid a Sea Viper launching to intercept.

*Bird away.*

Sea Viper is more than four metres high, weighs as much as a grand piano, yet is travelling at four times the speed of sound inside two and a half seconds.

As it closes in for the kill on its target, it manoeuvres at forces no human being could withstand – up to 50G – then... impact...

The whole engagement lasted a matter of seconds – with the specially-modified Sea Viper feeding Dragon data about its actions throughout its short flight until striking the Firejet.

*Target destroyed.*

"I was left speechless after the firing; it was something I had never experienced before. The build-up all week really added to the anticipation!" said Engineering Technician Jamie King, one of Dragon's junior weapon engineers.

Sub Lieutenant Ben Craddock observed the firing from Dragon's bridge: "I cannot believe how lucky I am to be part of this; the flames were massive!"

And that was Formidable Shield, an exercise which underlined the potency of the Type 45 destroyer to fend off air/missile attacks both on its own – or working with allies.

"Dragon has done what dragons do best: breathe fire," said Commander Giles Palin, the ship's Commanding Officer. "It's been a successful Formidable Shield, a successful missile firing for Dragon and a great time to contribute to our enduring partnerships within NATO."

"The Sea Viper system is a world class anti-air weapons system. Throughout Formidable Shield the radar was put through its paces, showing it can track targets that are highly manoeuvrable sea skimming to hypersonic ballistic missiles."

Pictures: PO(Phot) Jim Gibson







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# HUNTER HEBE DELIVERED

## FINAL AUTONOMOUS MINEHUNTER JOINS SISTERS FOR CLYDE DEBUT

THE third and final Royal Navy autonomous minehunting boat has been delivered to Clyde Naval Base.

RNMB Hebe, named after the Greek goddess of youth, has now joined sister vessels Harrier and Hazard as part of the Royal Navy's crewless minehunting programme Project Wilton.

Hebe, four metres longer than her sisters and with more technology on board, is able to work in isolation on operations but also integrated with existing equipment.

Together, the three vessels are key components in the future of minehunting operations for the navy.

The boats are capable of working in different configurations (manually, remotely or autonomously) to detect and classify mines and other ordnance.

The Project Wilton team

are currently undertaking comprehensive trials and a capability programme to ensure they are ready to deliver route survey operations.

Lieutenant Commander Ross Balfour, Officer-in-Charge of Project Wilton, said: "RNMB Hebe is the final piece in the jigsaw of Project Wilton's maritime capability.

"The vessel is a 15-metre Vahana boat, four-metres longer than the other Project Wilton vessels.

"AtlasElektronikUK have made significant upgrades resulting in Hebe having an organic command, control and communications capability which allows the autonomous control of

her sister vessel Harrier.

"She also has the ability to operate towed sidescan sonar to map the seabed.

"Hebe has fantastic potential and we are working diligently to integrate her impressive capabilities with our existing equipment."

From the relative comfort of Hebe, mine

countermeasures experts can coordinate and control the boats or monitor autonomous offboard sensors.

They also have the option of controlling the vessels from a land-based remote-control centre.

The entire system is highly

flexible and rapidly deployable, capable of being loaded onto trucks and transported to wherever it is required to conduct survey and mine-hunting operations.

"The Wilton team are excited and enthused by the challenge this new capability represents," Lt Cdr Balfour added.

"We are operating at the forefront of technological development and paving the way for follow-on autonomous mine countermeasures capabilities currently in development.

"Riding this bow wave of change means the pace of development is high, requiring us to 'learn by doing' and constantly questioning the accepted norms.

"I am certain that my team of highly-trained mine-warfare experts can meet these challenges and deliver cutting-edge operational capability from this equipment."



● Autonomous minehunters RNMB Hebe with sister vessel on the Clyde (main image; above). Picture: AtlasElektronikUK; RNMB Hebe on the Clyde (right). Picture: LPhot Barry Wheeler.

## Sailors take control of autonomous boat in trials

FOR the first time the Royal Navy has driven a fast stealth boat, controlling it remotely from land.

Commanded by a laptop, tablet and two sailors in a tent overlooking the water at Browndown Beach in Gosport, the MADFOX autonomous boat was used to test the theory – and practice – of operating a boat from ashore, using it to monitor Solent shipping from afar.

Up to now, MADFOX (MARitime Demonstrator For Operational eXperimentation) has been controlled by manufacturers L3Harris. But in a harbinger of future missions, sailors have now operated the vessel from range, taking on new skills and challenges.

The sailors were taught how to interpret the live feed from the vessel's sensors and cameras – including a high-resolution zoom which can identify people on ships at a distance.

As a safety measure personnel were aboard MADFOX, but the boat's movements, speed and heading were controlled by personnel ashore.

The command node on land afforded an over-watch of the experimentation area. The simple set-up is itself a link to the

future, where the node will be integrated into ships like the next-generation Type 26 and Type 31 frigates.

It is hoped the vessel, and other systems like it, could deploy with Royal Navy ships in future operations, carrying out tasks from force protection to surveillance.

Commander Antony Crabb, in charge of NavyX – the specialist team charged with harnessing the latest tech for use by the Fleet – said: "It might seem like remote-controlled boats on a park lake, however, this is a significant milestone as navy personnel gain confidence in operating at speed and dislocated from the vessel.

"It's not what we are used to after years standing watch on board ships of the current Fleet. Lessons from these recent serials will be used to build ever more complex serials ahead of integration into Operational Experimentation activity where the project will add tactical value, helping to shape the blended Fleet of tomorrow."

The investment in MADFOX comes as the Royal Navy and Royal Marines look to expand their use of crewless and autonomous equipment.

## Heavy-lift drones put through paces in man overboard drills

THE use of drones in man overboard scenarios on warships has been trialled.

Members of the Royal Navy's Discovery, Assessment and Rapid Exploitation (DARE) team have been working to see how heavy-lift Minerva uncrewed aerial systems could deliver potentially life-saving equipment if someone falls overboard.

The testing at the Royal Navy's Diving School at Horsea Island, Portsmouth, saw DARE work with Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) and companies Malloy Aeronautics and Planck Aerosystems.

For this latest round of testing, the Minerva was successful in locating the dummy in the water, deploying a test

package that could one day contain a life raft and hovering above the dummy to signpost their location.

Sailors on board navy ships do extensive man overboard drills, ensuring they can quickly and effectively rescue anyone at sea.

The introduction of a drone means it could be used to fly out to where the person is and hover – making it easier for the ship and seaboard to identify where the casualty is.

With its ability to drop objects, extensively tested with Royal Marines last year in Norway and Cyprus, the drone could also deliver a life buoy and other survival equipment.

Sea trials have now started on civilian boats off the coast of the UK.



# ‘RING OF STEEL’ AT THE REAR

**K**eeping watch above, on and below the waves are the UK Carrier Strike Group’s dedicated group of frigates and destroyers.

With their embarked Wildcat helicopters and Royal Marines, the warships are at the ready to protect UK flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth and the rest of the task group.

It has been a busy start to the deployment for Type 23s HMS Richmond (*main picture*) and HMS Kent and Type 45s HMS Defender and HMS Diamond. Meanwhile RFA support ships RFA Tidespring and RFA Fort Victoria have had an equally hectic schedule.

Shortly after leaving the UK, the ships joined NATO for a series of exercises in the Atlantic (*see pages 2-3*), giving Kent the chance to get used to working with allies – something she would do for the next few weeks after joining Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2).

The Portsmouth-based warship spent June playing a critical role in delivering security in the Atlantic with the NATO task group. Commanding Officer Commander Matt Sykes said: “During exercise Steadfast Defender the crew operated in a heightened posture to deal with multiple threat scenarios and have integrated quickly with our allied NATO nations, while continuing to demonstrate the capability of the UK Carrier Strike Group.”

“In an unpredictable world, it is more important than ever that we demonstrate our commitment to the NATO alliance to defend ourselves and other European nations against ever more complex threats.”

HMS Kent visited the Spanish port of Alicante to give respite to the crew, as well as providing the backdrop for a demonstration of the ship’s capabilities to a number of distinguished guests.

Sister ship HMS Richmond spent her time in the Mediterranean putting her ship’s company through their paces with a busy training schedule among her NATO exercises.

Heading east, sailors tested the frigate’s weaponry with live firing exercises while her embarked 202 Flight Wildcat from Yeovilton-based 815 Naval Air Squadron also got in some crucial training.

The helo is Richmond’s eyes and ears in the sky and is indispensable to the ship’s day-to-day operations. It ran daily sorties to not only keep watch for possible threats but also pick up and deliver stores.

And for one of her sailors, the ship’s period in the region have him a reunion with his brother – who he had not seen in more than three years.

Petty Officer (Catering Services) Andrew Woodley and his brother RAF Sergeant James Woodley, have been kept separated by both military deployments and the

Covid-19 pandemic.

But taking advantage of Richmond’s Wildcat and a need for stores, Andrew visited his brother who has been based at Cyprus’ RAF Akrotiri for the past four years with his wife Clare (also in the RAF), and their children Oliver and Emily.

Andrew was excited and emotional to see his family members after so long apart. He said: “I’m so grateful for the opportunity to spend time with my brother and his family after not seeing them for over three years.”

“It will be an amazing memory to share as a family and I look forward to seeing them all again back in the UK and hopefully spending Christmas together when I return from the CSG21 deployment.”

Next up for Richmond was a visit to Montenegro where the ship hosted a range of distinguished guests – strengthening the UK’s relationship with the Balkans country. With stunning blue skies and seas, the ship headed to the port town of Bar allowing her sailors time to recuperate and take on supplies. It also gave Montenegro’s prime minister Zdravko Krivokapic and defence minister Minister Olivera Injac the opportunity to visit the ship.

With most of the Carrier Strike Group remaining in and around the Mediterranean, HMS Defender headed to the Black Sea with Dutch ship HNLMS Evertsen. The Portsmouth-based destroyer peeled away from the task group temporarily to carry out her own set of missions after a brief stop in Istanbul.

For the first few weeks of her deployment, Defender completed intensive training and worked on Operation Sea Guardian, NATO’s mission in the Mediterranean to deter and counter terrorism.

Commanding Officer, Commander Vincent Owen said: “After over 12 months of preparations with the added challenges of COVID-19, it is fantastic to have sailed and started deployment as part of the UK Carrier Strike Group.”

“These first weeks as we have worked with NATO on Operation Sea Guardian in the Mediterranean has shown what a superb asset the Type 45 destroyer is and in particular the ability of the highly-trained men and women we have on board to be able to achieve a range of tasks at short notice.

“We are all very proud to be part of this milestone deployment showcasing Global Britain and the UK Carrier Strike capability, we are ready for whatever tasking we are called to deliver.”

Defender then sailed through the Messina Strait – between Sicily and the Italian mainland – before the embarked 815 Naval Air Squadron Wildcat helicopter simulated a crash on deck.

Overseen by the Flight Commander, Lieutenant

Mark Finnie, sailors helped in firefighting, first aid, treatment and casualty extraction as the mock crash unfolded.

He said: “Safety critical exercises like this prove the ship’s efficiency to work as a coherent team in difficult situations and find solutions to sometimes taxing problems. The scenario here which was a simulated helicopter crash, takes everyone on board to assist.”

After a month at sea, Defender then stopped off in Crete, heading for NATO’s Forces Sensor and Weapon Accuracy Check Site, which is used for calibration of sensors, weapons, communications and navigation systems.

Sailors and Royal Marines of HMS Defender’s boarding team also headed for the NATO Maritime Interdiction Operations Training Centre at Souda Bay Naval Base, where they refreshed some key skills.

Both HMS Kent and HMS Defender will rejoin HMS Queen Elizabeth and her task group as she continues to head east over the next few months.

Pictures: LPhot Unaisi Luke; LPhot Dan Rosenbaum;



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# Just add ice

## It's a long way to the top...

One of HMS Protector's sailors clambers up the side of the Royal Navy's distinctive icebreaker during small boat operations – all part of the ship's five-month journey back to the front line.

The Devonport-based research ship should be among the ice by now, having completed the transition from refit to return to action this winter and spring.

The road which began in January with the survey/scientific/research ship emerge from the biggest overhaul in her RN career, ended off Plymouth with a thumbs up from those nice folk at FOST at the end of May when they declared Protector ready for cooler climes for the first time in more than two years.

The ten-month £14m overhaul on Teesside left her needing to brush off cobwebs, test the kit and systems refurbished, enhanced or added during the refit, and bond her sailors and Royal Marines into a single team capable of living and working together in the harshest environment on Earth.

The five-week operational sea training package allowed the first full test of some of the improved systems aboard – vital communications equipment, engines and generators, and the new permanent storage facility, which allows the ship to carry more supplies for herself and other agencies and organisations who live and work around the frozen continent, such as the British Antarctic Survey.

The training reached its climax with a complex salvage, disaster relief and collision and grounding exercise – it's entirely possible Protector may need to rescue a stranded or stricken vessel/crew.

Indeed, once she's at work around the Antarctic Peninsula, she's largely on her own should anything untoward happen – fire, flood, breakdowns, coping with casualties – so there was rigorous damage-control training.

Chief Petty Officer Karl O'Rourke, in charge of the ship's company's response to such emergencies, has spent the past 12 months preparing his shipmates to deal with such crisis, building up to several incidents occurring simultaneously to compound the pressure.

"There are no emergency services when you are at sea – we have to train to deal with those emergencies ourselves," he explained.

"Everyone on board plays their part – from searching compartments for leaks to keeping record of the incident, delivering first aid and fire-fighting.

"Competent damage control and fire-fighting ability is the litmus test by which the ability of Protector's ship's company to operate safely at sea is measured."

As well as helping themselves, the crew may be expected to help others should disaster hit a community or research station ashore.

They made use of the specialist 'disaster village' set up at Bull Point in Devonport to show they can help locals if needed restore power, water supplies, clear debris and provide hot food.

Other assessments over the five weeks included fending off attacks from fast craft, safe sea boat operations, safely towing broken down craft, and provide first aid.

It's the first time the ship has gone through a full training package in five years - before returning to the UK in 2019 Protector was on a long-term deployment to the southern polar region and her crew underwent frequent 'top-up' training.

So the ice ship's Commanding Officer Captain Michael Wood was delighted with the way his men and women rose to the challenge as a "hard-working, close-knit team".

He continued: "This was the first full operational sea training package since 2015, and for a small ship's company who have beaten many challenges coming out of refit, and with little sea time together. I had no doubt they would smash training given their utter determination to get Protector back to the ice."

His ship has not been in among the ice and snowy/sub-zero conditions since the beginning of 2019, so headed to Norway as Navy News went to press to prepare herself for the cold to come with some tests, checks and training – including a bollard pull which assesses the power of the ship and allows the ship's company to calculate the thickness of ice Protector can break through.

Pictures: LPhot Belinda Alker, HMS Protector



COMMANDOS MOVE OUT: A small team from 45 Commando land ashore by inflatable raiding craft from 47 Commando before moving to a target location in Lithuania. Picture by PO Phot Si Ethell



# INTO THE BALTICS

**N**ORTH, south, east, west, wherever you look right now there's a Royal Navy ship, there's a Royal Marine, there's a British sailor.

It's impressive just how busy the RN is and the breadth and variety of the operations in all regions of the globe.

On these pages we're asking you to look north, across the North Sea, through the Danish Straits and into the Baltic Sea, where sailors and Royal Marines at the heart of a task group led by HMS Albion are on their own unique mission.

When we left them last month, they had just wrapped up preparations for their deployment and now we catch up with them as they begin to look homewards after completing a very busy and fruitful mission.

The task group – with assault ship Albion at its heart alongside RFA Mounts Bay and Royal Marines from 45 Commando – have been to Helsinki and back, completing the first operational deployment as a Littoral Response Group.

This new brand of task groups are designed to put the UK's commando forces in forward positions, close to the action to respond to world events quickly.

Eventually there will be an LRG South – centred around 40 Commando – to go with this LRG North, which will have a different area of responsibility to the task group we're talking about here.

While placing commandos nearer to the action it also puts them closer to allies for work in firming up friendships and forging better ways of operating together.

The UK involvement in the annual Baltops exercises – the biggest combined exercise in the region – was led by the Littoral Response Group.

It saw 18 militaries from 16 NATO allies and two partner countries join forces in a mighty demonstration of military power.

HMS Albion, RFA Mounts Bay and 45 Commando led the way at the front of Baltops' amphibious warfare spearhead.

## ON LAND

In Lithuania, 45 Commando – Yankee Company and X-Ray Company – joined the Lithuanians and forces from the USA and Portugal on Exercise Strong Griffin, which saw the allied troops work closely together on a set of intensive training scenarios.



# HMS ALBION LEADS UK TASK GROUP INTO THE HEART OF THE BALTIC...

Kicking things off in style, team four of 45 Commando's X-Ray Company carried out a landing on the southern edge of Klaipeda with raiding craft from 47 Commando, before moving inland on targets in training areas around Kairiai, in northern Lithuania.

The commandos were hit by a simulated mortar attack as part of the training and they were tasked to react quickly to evacuate a casualty, giving them life-saving treatment before moving them to aid posts.

Within 50 minutes, the casualty was being treated by a Royal Navy doctor and combat medics, stabilising them before a helicopter took them off the front line.

This was essential training to test the commandos' ability to adapt quickly. Captain Hugh Mackenzie, second in command of X-Ray Company, said: "We exercised the Strike Team's ability to conduct a raid on a target, neutralise the enemy and effectively treat and evacuate a casualty."

"The extraction time and transfer to the Pre-Hospital Treatment Team was examined, which allowed us to train past the initial casualty response in detail."

X-Ray Company began work in Lithuania with training alongside troops from the Griffin Brigade and National Defence Volunteer Force, sharing valuable expertise between the two NATO nations.

A team from X-Ray Company spent a day on close-quarters combat exercises with Griffin Brigade working in mixed teams.

To add another level to the training, the marines got their hands on some of the Lithuanian kit, including using training versions of the Heckler & Koch G36 Assault Rifles, which fire plastic balls as rounds.

Colour Sergeant Kristian Foster, said: "This has been an amazing experience so far; working, teaching and learning from the Griffin Brigade. It was great to work mixed teams and use their rifles, the Royal Marines don't use BBs to train with, and so it was awesome to get some hands-on experience."

As part of the raids, medics were able to test ways of supporting and treating the small teams of Royal Marines as they carried out missions.

A major part of the developing way in which commandos will work is based on teams of up to 12 green berets working separately from one another to complete operational objectives.

These tactics pose problems to medical teams who are responsible for providing care to the commandos as they operate around the world, in all extreme of environments.

The pre-hospital treatment team (PHTT) from 45 Commando have used the unit's deployment to the Baltic as an opportunity to hone how they support amphibious operations and high-readiness forces.

The PHTT is deployed close to the front line to reduce transportation times from the moment someone is wounded to getting higher level care and can provide medical support on the move or set up a more permanent facility when time allows.

Surgeon Lieutenant Ben Smith, Medical Officer within PHTT, said: "Commando Force operations create regular challenges for the medical team."

"We have been testing novel concepts to overcome the obstacles posed by supporting small team operations."

One of the trials saw the team provide Battlefield Advanced Trauma Life Support from a landing craft from HMS Albion, focusing on how treatment could be delivered quickly and effectively during an amphibious assault, close to the front line.

This is fairly regular training for the medics, as they constantly look at better ways of working to provide high quality care on the battlefield.

Medical Assistant Dylan McDermott, a PHTT team member, said: "Regular training is crucial for me to be able to perform high-level enhanced field care. Drilling the basics ensures we can provide medical cover no matter what environment."

The PHTT comprises Royal Marines and Royal Navy personnel, including a medical officer, medics, drivers, signallers and tactical specialists, allowing them to move quickly and attend to casualties.

## AT SEA

Prior to the start of Baltops, Albion tested her air-defence skills against a Spanish jet.

Albion came under simulated attack from two Spanish Typhoons of NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission, which fired mock anti-ship missiles at them.



**SWEDISH HOVERCRAFT: HMS Albion works closely with a Swedish Amphibious Corps hovercraft during exercises in the Stockholm archipelago. Picture by LPhot Barry Swainsbury**

The assault ship sprang into action as the jets were detected and the operations room coordinated their defence to thwart the inbound fighters.

Upper deck weapons crews and Phalanx operators were called on to report inbound aircraft or missiles and engage under the direction of the Principal Warfare Officer, Lieutenant Commander Natalie Burns.

She said: "The aircraft flew simulated missile profiles against the ship in order to test our reactions and defensive procedures before conducting Combat Air Support (CAS) training with the Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) team from 29 Commando. During an air defence exercise the Operations Room will be at the fullest state of readiness to enable us to fight the ship and protect the people within it."

"Personnel will be closed up to report incoming threats to the Principle Warfare Officer and Command, and the Electronic Warfare team will advise on how best to employ the ship's decoys in order to protect the ship."

"Training with live assets is really beneficial as it adds a crucial element of realism, especially for the upper deck weapons crew and Bridge team who are able to practice calling in 'real threats'."

"The ability to train with NATO partner nations also provides excellent opportunities for embarked staff to hone their skills in the maritime environment, ensuring that the ship and her staff, are continually prepared for deployed operations."

The Spanish jet are currently on a four-month operation working with Italy and Turkey on NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission, which has seen them guard the skies over the region since May.

The jets are kept on quick reaction alert 24/7 to fly security sorties in the Baltic skies.

Before fending off the jets, Albion had been working with the Finnish military and



**UNDER ATTACK: A Spanish jet 'attacks' Albion during air-defence exercises in the Baltic**

visited the capital Helsinki.

Royal Marines trained with the Finnish Navy and two Jahu-class landing craft used Albion's spacious dock for the first time.

The exercises also include navigational manoeuvres and UK and Finnish landing craft working closely together.

Lieutenant Emily Witcher, Deputy Navigator on HMS Albion, said: "During our recent patrol to the Baltic Sea, we had the pleasure of working with the Finnish Navy."

"It was a great opportunity to work together and demonstrate the flexibility of our capabilities by embarking their landing craft into our well dock whilst they conducted training with our landing craft. It is important to maintain and progress these international relationships whenever we get the opportunity to."

While in Helsinki, Albion hosted the Finnish Chief of Defence, UK Ambassador, Defence Attaché and Naval Academy Commandant.

Sailors and Royal Marines also demonstrated some of the capabilities of the Littoral Response Group, including new tactics being adopted.

Albion and RFA Mounts Bay also linked up with the 1st Marine Regiment of the Swedish Amphibious Corps.

The UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force Maritime Task Group – consisting of Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, and the UK – is poised to respond to crises whenever and wherever they unfold, so training like this is important to keep personnel ready for any missions.

The ships worked with Swedish CB90-class fast assault craft and amphibious hovercraft (LCAC(M)), the largest such craft to embark on Albion, on docking operations in Mysingen fjord (in the southern part of the Stockholm Archipelago).

Royal Marines landing craft and Offshore Raiding Craft joined the CB90s on navigation exercises through the complex archipelago – which is a cluster of some 30,000 islands, skerries and rocks and the second-largest archipelago in the Baltic Sea – refreshing their ability to work together.

Lieutenant Commander Matthew Irwin, Principal Warfare Officer in HMS Albion and UK lead for the exercise, said: "Our Swedish Amphibious Corps counterparts are highly skilled and professional - it was a delight working with them."

"Docking operations with CB90s is a well-practiced evolution by both sides, so the process was straight forward."

"The first ever embarkation of the LCAC(M) was a particular highlight of the day, with the hovercraft conducting several entries to the dock."

"I can see this adding real value to future exercises and operations with the Swedish Amphibious Corps."

"This ability to operate seamlessly with our Joint Expeditionary Force partners is a real force multiplier. The ability to integrate quickly and effectively is key to success in combined operations."

To finish off their training, the two forces conducted a passing exercise (PASSEX), which involved a series of complex manoeuvres with all ships and craft working in tandem, all in the confines of the fjords.

Lieutenant Colonel Andreas Holmberg, Commanding Officer of the 5th Amphibious Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, said: "I'm very grateful for what we've achieved today. Thanks to a very professional reception and a well-orchestrated exercise we've been able to enhance our relationship and ability to work alongside each other even further."

"I'm confident that the exchange of experiences and expertise between our personnel contributes to the security of the Baltic Sea region."



**HAVING A BLAST: A Royal Marines Commando Assault Engineer from 45 Commando initiates the charge while Lithuanian troops prepare to move in and secure a building. Picture by LPhot Joe Cater**



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# LEVEL PEAKS



# RAF duo land on RN carrier

TWO air force officers joined Britain's biggest warship to pave the way for 50 years of joint Royal Navy-Royal Air Force operations on the UK's aircraft carriers.

Flight Lieutenants Hayden Rose and Chris Smith are spending three months aboard HMS Prince of Wales to look at the best way for air force personnel to integrate seamlessly with the hundreds of sailors aboard.

Although the carriers fly the White Ensign, both are regarded as national assets and will always sail with an RAF contingent embarked – either to support F-35 fast jet operations, or working alongside RAF Chinooks.

Big sister HMS Queen Elizabeth has air force pilots and ground crew embarked from the mixed RAF/Fleet Air Arm 617 Squadron (The Dambusters) for her maiden deployment.

And Prince of Wales' has been carrying out training off the South Coast with RAF Chinook helicopters as part of her lengthy work-up to become the nation's second operational aircraft carrier.

Both flight lieutenants are logistics officers and are keen to understand how the Royal Navy operates, and how the Royal Air Force can integrate – both to support front-line operations and day-to-day as part of a ship's company of up to 1,600 men and women.

"The Queen Elizabeth class carriers are going to be used, part-manned and supported by the RAF – the next 50 years will see the Navy and RAF working side-by-side," said 28-year-old Hayden from Wiltshire.

"We're embedded for three months to show that this is possible and to prove the concept."

His RAF shipmate is a former physical training instructor who was commissioned as a logistics expert three years ago.

The 36-year-old from Monmouthshire joined Prince of Wales having deployed to Lithuania supporting NATO's aerial policing mission in the Baltic, and commanded the Mobility and Medical Supply Flight, supporting the RAF's global operations from Brize Norton, including evacuating casualties where necessary.

The airmen say that the lived experience of their time aboard HMS Prince of Wales has proved to be more enjoyable than expected as the ship's company have embraced their air force comrades – with a bit of light ribbing on both sides.

"While there are obvious differences between the Royal Navy and RAF, there is far more that unites us than divides us: Unwavering support for our colleagues and deep pride to serve and close-to-the-cuff humour," said Chris.

Hayden added: "I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on board. It is a completely different working environment to get used to and understand. Once I got past the plethora of whistles and pipes and began to understand the routine it was easy to adapt and get used to ship's life."

"I have particularly enjoyed experiencing each of the sections and understanding the vast amount of roles and responsibilities that each of the ships company hold in order to keep the ship at sea and running effectively and safely."

He says the food on board is "fantastic", a Saturday night at sea is "an experience I won't forget" and a trip around Torbay in one of the carrier's Pacific 24s gave a full insight into the size and scale of the nation's two new carriers.

Both have found the working day in the RAF is much less structured – the Navy rigidly follows Daily Orders.

The airmen say the easiest way to compare life in the two services, is for the air force to consider



time at sea as a deployment... whether the ship is training or on exercise. Because when 4-4.30pm comes around, there's no going home.

"You're at work 24/7," said Chris. "Unable to just get in the car at the end of the day for a change of scenery, for down time, you're limited by your shipmates, resources to hand and imagination."

He's found it strange to wake up to a whistle, has found it challenging navigating the 65,000-tonne leviathan with her myriad compartments and passageways, and enjoys Navy acronyms and Jackspeak (Royal Navy slang)... even if he is baffled by some of it (such as CUMDAFFER – Clear Up Mess Decks And Flats For Evening Rounds).

Hayden added: "It has been a pleasant surprise to be a part of the wardroom and also to meet the rest of the ship's company. Matelots aren't as weird as I thought they were going to be!"

Pictures: LPhot Mark Johnson and LPhot Finn Hutchins

# In at the deep end in Gib



A NEW joiner to Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron, Able Seaman Jake Carpenter conducted pacing drills in the squadron's Pacific Rigid Inflatable Boat.

AB Carpenter was aboard HMS Pursuer and under the supervision of the Chief Bosun's Mate.

Pacing drills are critical as they provide key training for the coxswains to gain the necessary skills in close proximity manoeuvres, sustaining the squadron at sea by transferring provisions, persons and stores without the need to return alongside.

This enables the Squadron to provide security to British Gibraltar Territorial Waters over a prolonged period whilst maintaining UK sovereignty.

Registered charity number: Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund 1160182

Naval Children's Charity

Supporting children whose parents serve or have served in the Naval Service.



Naval Children's Charity,  
311 Twyford Avenue, Stamshaw,  
Portsmouth, PO2 8RN

www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk  
023 9263 9534  
caseworkers@navalchildrenscharity.org.uk

# Navy veteran and cadets leader dies

COMMANDING Officer Combined Cadet Force Royal Navy and Royal Marines, Commander Jonathan Hodgkins Royal Navy, has died at the age of 59, following a short battle with cancer.

He joined the Royal Navy as a warfare officer at Britannia Royal Naval College in September 1980 and completed his fleet training in HMS Intrepid, Wasperton, and Active before his first appointment to HMS Yarmouth in 1983.

Between 1985 and 1991 he completed flying appointments as a Lynx Flight Observer with 702, 815 and 829 Naval Air Squadron's serving in the Lynx flights of HMS Broadsword, Nottingham and Amazon, the latter as Flight Commander.

In 1992 he qualified as a Principal Warfare Officer specialising in above water warfare (gunnery) and joined the destroyer HMS Nottingham as Operations Officer.

He then joined HM Yacht Britannia in 1995 as the First Lieutenant. This appointment included the first State visit by The Queen to South Africa and the first visit of the yacht to Northern Ireland since 1966 with the Prince of Wales.

Jonathan commanded the Island Class fishery protection ship HMS Anglesey in 1997-1998 and graduated from the Advanced Command and Staff Course in 1999.

He lived in Pretoria, South Africa, between 2001 and 2003, where he was Chief of Staff to a small UK Advisory Transformation Team to the South African National Defence Force HQ.

Jonathan served on two occasions in the Ministry of Defence Strategic HQ (1999-2001 and 2005-2007), and on three Higher Headquarters staffs – Commander UK Amphibious Battle Staff, Commander Task Force (CTF) 150 (Counter-piracy ops in the Red Sea/ Indian Ocean) and CTF Iraqi Maritime (IM).

He was the Executive Officer of HMS Sultan (2007-2010) and saw operational service in the Falkland Islands (1983 and 1988), the Gulf (Armillia Patrol, 1987), the Adriatic (Operation Sharp Guard, 1993-1994), Bahrain (Operation Veritas, 2004) and in Iraq and the extreme Northern Gulf for CTF Iraqi-Maritime (2010).

He retired from the Royal Navy in 2014 and worked in the railway industry, before returning to the RN as a Full Time Reserve Officer in 2019.

Jonathan lived with his wife Jane in Southsea. He also leaves a son, Barnaby, who is a serving Royal Marine.



## Milestone moments great for morale



ROYAL Navy aircraft engineers who have reached significant milestones in their careers were recognised at a parade at RNAS Culdrose.

They included 15 air engineering technicians who have completed their training on how to maintain and move Merlin Mk2 helicopters and three leading hands and four chief petty officers who have reached their next training ambition.

The event also recognised seven officers who have achieved their certificates of competency on completion of their training. There was also an opportunity to present awards to engineers for long service and good conduct.

Guest of honour at the parade, which was held in a socially-distanced way in one of the air station's hangars, was engineering officer Captain Jo Deakin.

She praised the industry and enthusiasm of air station engineers and said how pleased she was to be back meeting people on the frontline.

She said: "Coming to Culdrose really is a shot in the arm for morale. These moments that bring us together to celebrate achievement are really good, not only to say 'well done', but to reinvigorate these connections and friendships."

Pictures: LPhot Phil Bloor



## Cyprus cycle in Amelia's memory

ROYAL Navy medical personnel got on their bikes for a 5,650-mile cycle for charity.

Staff at HMS Raleigh's Medical Centre rode the distance – the equivalent of cycling to the eastern Mediterranean island of Cyprus and back – in memory of a young girl called Amelia Crowton, who died aged 16.

Amelia, pictured above, who was born in Cyprus, had severe brain damage, cerebral palsy, four limb quadriplegia, blindness and very severe epilepsy.

She was cared for at Naomi House and Jackspace, hospices for children and young adults. The charity is close to the heart of one of the medical centre's nurses, who is leaving this year.

Mum Debbie said: "We spent the first two years of Amelia's life in and out of hospital, it was such a difficult time for us. Then there was a little chink of light that was Naomi House.

"All of the time you're facing the future, you see other children in their wheelchairs and you're thinking this is what it is going to be like; it was really upsetting. But talking to the nurse at the Naomi House admission meeting, she really understood. They knew how bad it could be.

"Amelia loved Naomi House. I always used to sing songs to her and make up songs about Naomi House. When we were going there in the car, even though she didn't like journeys, when she knew she was coming to Naomi House, she was alright. I would always stay with her, even though I knew you can go away, but actually, I liked staying there. It was a break for me and someone cooked your dinner!

"I used to dress her beautifully and she always had lovely dresses and tights and everything matched.

"Every time we got there, all the nurses used to come in and say 'let's see you unpack and see what you've brought today.' That was so nice."

For further details visit [naomihouse.org.uk](http://naomihouse.org.uk)

## Officer's second LSGC Bar after 38 years



## Doc's ride of thanks

A ROYAL Navy officer has received his 2nd Long Service and Good Conduct Bar after 38½ years' service.

And Lieutenant Commander Michael 'Doc' Cox isn't finished yet – he is cycling from Scotland to London to raise funds for NHS charities and armed forces charity SSAFA.

Lt Cdr Cox, who joined the RN on June 19 1984, received his 2nd Bar from former First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band in the great cabin aboard HMS Victory.

It was Sir Jonathon who presented Lt Cdr Cox with his first Navy rugby cap against the RAF in 2001. Lt Cdr Cox is now the UKAF Director of Rugby.

"It was a huge honour for Sir Jonathon to

award me my second badge for my LSGC," said Lt Cdr Cox. "Without his occasional sage advice over the years I most definitely wouldn't still be serving, so I feel really humbled."

Earlier in the day Lt Cdr Cox launched his UKAF Director of Rugby's Nightingale Challenge with support driver PO Pony Moore and BFBS's Jon Knighton, at the Grave of Florence Nightingale in East Wellow, Hampshire.

He was undertaking the Nightingale Challenge as Navy News went to press. It will see him cycle from Glasgow, arriving in London on July 5, visiting five of the Nightingale hospitals – Glasgow, Sunderland, Harrogate, Birmingham, and London.

The Nightingales were built with the help of

service personnel to provide capacity for the NHS during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The trip will cover approximately 840km in ten days to raise donations for the NHS charities and SSAFA, whilst carrying a Nightingale 'flame of remembrance' lantern.

The inspiration for the challenge was due to the care and compassion shown by the NHS staff during the loss of Lt Cdr Cox's stepmother last year and his own journey dealing with the removal of a 'man lump' earlier this year.

The challenge can be followed daily with a podcast on the UKAF Rugby's Facebook page and any donations can be made at: [uk.virginmoneygiving.com/DoRNightingaleChallenge](http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/DoRNightingaleChallenge)

Next summer the first woman admiral in the centuries-long history of the RN will take up her post. Jude Terry says her appointment is

# 'Just the beginning...'

"I ONLY joined for eight years," says Jude Terry as an opening gambit.

Which means it should be 2005 and she should be a lieutenant.

Except it's 2021. The lieutenant is actually a commodore. And in a year's time, she'll be an admiral.

So something went wrong. Or rather very right. The announcement that the logistics officer had been selected for promotion to rear admiral last month thrust the 47-year-old into the national media spotlight: never before has a woman in the Royal Navy held such high rank.

Of making history she says simply "someone has to be first" – it's a natural progression of 30 years of change and evolution in the Senior Service and the decision to allow women to serve at sea.

Even so when a 23-year-old graduate from Jersey arrived at Britannia Royal Navy College in 1997 to begin her conversion from civilian to Royal Navy officer – albeit "just for eight years" – there were relatively few role models.

No female officer had commanded a warship. There were few role models, and fewer still with seagoing experience.

A quarter of a century later, the pool of female talent and experience is much richer, holding positions of command at every rank from lieutenant upwards, not to mention the similarly rich vein of senior ratings. At the top end right now, there are six women of commodore rank, and 19 female captains.

"I have always thought of myself as a naval officer first, then a logistics officer, then Jude and finally as a female," she says.

"The Navy genuinely doesn't look at your gender and is an equal opportunities employer – it wants you to be part of a team and deliver."

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Tony Radakin says the commodore "is part of a cohort of trailblazers in the Royal Navy who have seized the opportunities on offer, and risen to the top."

She sees her appointment as "the beginning, not the end."

She continues: "We've made massive strides during my 24 years in the Service. One of the biggest challenges facing women in the Navy is that balance between a woman's life choices and her career."

"I'm not married, I don't have a partner, I don't



● Then Commander Terry as Commander Logistics on HMS Ocean in the Gulf with Commodore (now Rear Admiral) Andy Burns

have children. So that's the next step – to allow people to make life choices and manage their career."

And that, among many other responsibilities, will be her bailiwick as Director of People and Training:

- Recruiting then putting personnel through the three phases of training.
- Sport and welfare
- Career management
- Resettlement

Her maxim is simple: Join well, train well, live well, leave well.

The decisions being taken now and in the coming months will help shape the Royal Navy to 2040 and beyond.

That's a Fleet led by two 65,000-tonne carriers, with Dreadnought and Astute-class submarines, Type 26, 31 and 32 frigates, the first Type 83 destroyers.

Almost certainly it will be a more automated, technical navy requiring ever more skilled personnel.

"There will be increased automation – more uncrewed vessels: submarines and underwater vehicles, survey craft, minehunters," she predicts. "But it's also clear you will still need a Royal Navy

with ships crewed by sailors."

It will also be a much more simplified Navy. Current thinking in the upper echelons of the Senior Service is to streamline the current 19 branches and 150 specialisations into a core of just seven professions with specialist disciplines.

One potential future career structure could see sailors spending several years in industry, before returning to the Service. It would infuse firms with a better understanding of the Navy and its needs... and in return give the Navy increased knowledge of the civilian world coupled with technological expertise.

That's for the future. For now, there's the small matter of delivering current wide-ranging plans and projects in her post as Deputy Director Personnel and Training.

And what about the original eight-year plan?

"If you enjoy your job, keep on doing it," she says.

That's meant time at sea aboard survey vessel HMS Scott and two spells with helicopter carrier HMS Ocean, the latter as Commander Logistics during operations in the Baltic and Gulf... which featured on the Channel 4 documentary *Warship* and for which she was an adviser and guide.

Shore-side postings have been just as varied. Jude helped plan the withdrawal of UK fighting forces from Afghanistan (that involved some 9,500 personnel).

And as military assistant to the Chief of Joint Operations she was one of the first personnel on the ground in Sierra Leone during the successful operation to stop the spread of Ebola in 2014, visited Afghanistan and Somalia.

"I have been really lucky throughout my career," she adds. "I've enjoyed great jobs, wonderful support from my family, worked with great people, seized the opportunity to see the world and contribute to a number of operations which have made a difference to people's lives."



## Couple with the Nielsen touch honoured

A DOUBLE date at Buckingham Palace beckons for Suzi and Erik Nielsen (pictured) – a married Naval couple both recognised by the Queen in her Birthday Honours.

Captain Suzi, who is Commanding Officer of HMS Raleigh in Torpoint, has been awarded the OBE while her Royal Marine husband Major Erik Nielsen, based at the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone, near Exeter, is made an MBE.

Captain Suzi is decorated for rising to the major challenge of moving the Royal Navy's logistics training – over 60 staff and personnel plus kit and caboodle – from Torpoint to a new purpose-built combined Services complex at Worthy Down near Winchester. She learned of her award 24 hours after her husband excitedly phoned with good news of his own.

Major Erik is made an MBE for similarly rising to the challenge posed by Covid as the second-in-command of the Commando Training Wing, responsible for providing the Royal Marines with freshly-trained green berets.

He devised a four-week pre-joining course to help prepare would-be Royal Marines for the rigours of the 32-week course which ends with successful candidates receiving the coveted green beret to become fully-fledged commandos.

In addition, he's ensured feeding the Royal Marines' front-line units with those fresh green berets has persisted throughout the pandemic by devising a safe plan for instructors and recruits to allow training to continue.

Capt Suzi joined the Navy in 1999 as a warfare specialist, decided it wasn't for her, but



returned in 2004 as a logistics officer.

She's been in command of Raleigh – which trains most of the Royal Navy raw recruits – since September last year, having previously been in charge of the Navy's logistics training school on the same site... until its transfer to Hampshire, the biggest change since the 1970s.

"I feel incredibly humble and proud – it's recognition for all the

work by a great team. For me, it's a total surprise and I couldn't be more delighted," said the 45-year-old.

"It's been a bit of a surreal week – it doesn't really get much better than this. The fact that Erik is an MBE as well is the icing on the cake. I could not be more proud of him."

Her husband, 53, added: "It's a real honour and privilege to be awarded the MBE but you don't

get these accolades from being an individual. This award is as much for the team, as it is for me, as without their support we would not have achieved the successes we have".

The couple from Devon are two of 24 Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel honoured by Her Majesty in these latest honours.

First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin becomes a Sir for his relentless drive and clear vision, shaping every aspect of the Royal Navy. His citation for his Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (KCB) also refers to the seismic impact his improvements and innovations are having on the senior service.

Rear Admiral Andy Burns and Rear Admiral Phil Hally are both made Companions of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (CB) for their work leading the Navy's transformation agenda.

Commodore Rob Bellfield is made a CBE for his work as Commander of the Devonport Flotilla and then as Commander of the Coalition Task Force Sentinel in the Gulf.

Also made Commanders of the Order of the British Empire are Rear Admiral Matt Briers for his work as Programme Director, Carrier Enabled Power Projection and Surgeon Captain John Sharpley, who has driven several strategic programmes which have had a significant and positive impact within the mental health sphere.

The commanding officer of 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group, Lieutenant Colonel Rich Alston, is made an OBE for "delivering game-changing results" following a redesign of the unit's capability.

OBEs also go to Commander Andrew Horlock, for his achievements during the COVID-19 crisis as project officer for the Defence Healthcare Delivery and Optimisation Programme; Lieutenant Colonel Jim Lewis, for his contribution to UK Maritime Operations; Commander Mac McAllister, the Commanding Officer of HMS Artful; Commander Chris Moorey, Naval and Air Attache at the British Embassy in Ankara, Turkey, for promoting UK defence and trade; Commander Al Nekrews, Commander Fleet Diving Squadron, for his inspiration and extensive global experience.

Lieutenant Commander Karen Barnicoat, the military assistant to the Assistant Chief of Defence (Personnel Capability) is made an MBE, as is Lieutenant Commander Simon Hawthorn, the Squadron Engineering Officer of the Overseas Patrol Squadron, and Shrivenham-based Lieutenant Commander Bryan McCavour.

And Lieutenant Colonel Scott Wallace from the Portsmouth-based staff of the UK Strike Force is made an MBE for his efforts developing wheelchair basketball in the Armed Forces in his own time; the sport has proved vital in helping injured personnel recover from their injuries.

MBEs also go to Lieutenant Oli Mulcahy for his work as a combat system engineer for Fleet Operational Sea Training; Warrant Officer 1 Kieran Roe, of 40 Commando, for his work tackling health issues and as a diversity and inclusion race advocate; Lieutenant Commander Karen Shortland, for her work in ensuring supplies of PPE at Clyde Naval Base. Chief Petty Officer

Logistician (Supply Chain) Matthew Tallentyre is made an MBE for streamlining the Naval Stores Process at Portsmouth Naval Base, while Major Sharky Ward is made an MBE for delivering numerous recruitment initiatives for Royal Marines at CTCRM, and Lieutenant Andrew Witts is made an MBE for co-ordinating the planning for Tomahawk missiles and submarine firing units.

The following personnel are awarded the Meritorious Service Medal:

WO1 KCD Bristow (CLR); WO1(D) SF Crew (FDS); WO1ET(ME) RE Cunningham (NAVSEC); WO1ET(ME) IR Howe (HMS Dauntless); CPOAC SJ Hughes (MAA DSA); WO1 G Luke (CTCRM); WO1 AJ Marshall (RNAS Yeovilton); WO1 CS McMillan (NBC Clyde); WO1 N Ollive (CTCRM); Lt JW Shelverton (RAF St Mawgan); WO2 A Soper (30 Cdo IX GP); WO1LOG(SC) SR Thomson (Fasflot)

■ Meanwhile the latest recipients of the Senior Command Warrant Officers' Respite, Reward and Recognition Breaks have been announced:

Union Jack Club: AET Downs (1710 NAS) and AB Tebb (HMS Collingwood)  
Park Dean: PO Kiltie (820 NAS)

Long Service Recognition Awards

CPO Ashworth (CNR Reading); Lt Cdr Bennett (HMS Vivid)LSA5K Award

WO1 Rogers (DRSO)

Herbert Lott Awards

PO Elston, LET Castelli, ETs Kilty-Eyre and Castrey, (all HMS Middleton); CPO Roberts, (HMS Astute); Lt Broberg and AB Hawkins (both HMS Brocklesby).



## Goodbye, Donald, Greetings, Bob...

A HEARTY wave from Faslane's outgoing commander as Commodore Donald Doull bids farewell to Scotland's largest military establishment.

Commanding Officer of HM Naval Base Clyde since June 2018, he's handed over the reins to his successor Commodore Bob Anstey, who joined him for the 'farewell tour' aboard patrol boat HMS Raider, which helps safeguard the submarines and minehunters which call Faslane home.

Also embarked was the Silent Service's head, Commodore Jim Perks.

Commodore Doull, who now moves on to work with the Defence Nuclear Organisation as a rear admiral, has seen Clyde cement its position as the home of the Submarine Service – such as the opening of the new emergency/rescue training facility, and the addition of HMS Audacious to the hunter-killer flotilla.

His successor is a familiar face already around the base, having most recently served as Deputy Director Submarines and Senior Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland.

He's delighted to pick up the baton from his predecessor – and continue running with it.

"We have seen significant, positive changes in the base during the last few years and, despite the challenges of the last 18 months, the team on the Clyde have maintained the momentum and drive to keep improving as we go forward," Cdre Anstey said.

He's responsible for more than 6,700 civilians and Service personnel – including the Royal Marines of 43 Commando – employed on site, a figure set to increase as the base becomes the home of all submarines from next year.

Among the projects completed on Cdre Anstey's watch will be the £80m new Submarine Training Facility which is due to be finished in early 2023.

The complex, built next to the new escape/rescue facility, replaces the current submarine school at Raleigh (whose impressive features include a mock-up weapons bay for practising handling torpedoes and Tomahawk missiles) as well as marine/nuclear engineering training provided at HMS Sultan in Gosport.

The steel frames for the new structure are now in place, meaning Faslane-based personnel can now see the progress being made.

Picture: LPhot Baz Wheeler, FRPU North

## Robotic training complex created

THE Navy will be involved in Europe's first maritime operations and training centre for robotic vehicles.

Joined by Seabot XR and the UK National Oceanography Centre (NOC), the three have agreed to establish the National Centre for Operational Excellence in Marine Robotics.

The centre will deliver new standards of training using the world-renowned facilities at the NOC and other satellite facilities in Southampton and on Loch Ness.

Requirements for marine robotics training are very different from existing training.

To plug this gap, a curriculum is being created specifically for autonomous and remote vessel surface and sub-surface operations to ensure a workforce, like the Royal Navy's, has the necessary skills and knowledge to operate such craft.

A combined training and testing site will be established where companies can try out their autonomous/remote-controlled vessels as well as tap into pioneering training designed for military and civil marine operations.

## Wind powers Pompey

THE first wind turbines have been installed in Portsmouth Naval Base in its continuing drive towards renewable energy sources to power critical activities.

Three have been added to the roof of buildings overlooking C and D Locks, located to make best use of the prevailing south westerly wind and able to track it should it change direction.

They will silently provide round-the-clock electricity for the block, generating power when wind speed is as low

as 3mph. Every hour these turbines are generating they are producing enough power to drive an electric car 50 miles.

Data from this trial will determine how many more turbines might be used on the base, working alongside solar arrays and other low-carbon solutions needed to meet the energy demands.

The goal is to eliminate carbon emissions on the base by 2040, reducing the amount of power generated by fossil fuels.



● All smiles from LET(CIS) Jack Feltham as he and his HMS Lancaster shipmates prepare for a 'triple RAS' with RFA Tiderace in the Baltic this spring

Picture: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum

# Historic changes are under way

### AN HISTORIC review of the way Royal Navy's people functions is under way.

This will modernise processes, ensure that the needs of Royal Navy personnel and their families are met and that the lived experience of everyone serving in the Royal Navy is the best it can be: from the day they look to join, through their time in the service to the day they leave – and beyond.

Under the direction of Rear Admiral Phil Hally, the People and Training Directorate is conducting a review of branch and specialisation structures, modernising the Divisional and Regimental Systems, refreshing the approach to training and empowering people to make the most of their talent.

"We are committed to putting people at the heart of everything we do," says the admiral.

"Becoming a more people-centred organisation, with routine, two-way engagement to sustain a culture of collaboration and transparency and give everyone across the Whole Force the opportunity to feed into Royal Navy transformation."

To help people understand the changes, the Navy has a dedicated team which will provide information and opportunities to engage through regular communications and engagement activity, as well as the People Liaison Team (PLT) who will visit ships and Establishments.

In the coming months and years, personnel will experience improvements to how they train and are promoted, with more emphasis on making the most of existing skills across the Navy and providing opportunities for them to manage their career in a more flexible and rewarding way.

Diversity and Inclusion will remain a cornerstone of the Service to ensure it reflects the people it serves, and there will be more initiatives to broaden the range of people recruited and promoted within the Royal Navy.

Training will become more tailored to individual needs and personal circumstances, and will provide future, transferrable skills such as cyber-awareness, to help give people a richer experience and opportunity to map their career to the areas they want.

Traditional 'stove-pipe' employment in a specialisation will be removed to create a more coordinated and flexible structure – evolving into employment through skills within professions and disciplines.

This means that someone with a traditional skill such as gunnery will be able to cross train to fill another warfare role rather than remain in the same area 'for life'.

Pathways to promotion and the ability to move between roles as people's careers progress or circumstances change, will become simpler, more transparent and more accessible than ever before.

"Concepts now exist on how the warfare,

engineering and logistics professions may look in the future," explains Warrant Officer 1st Class Speedy Steedman, Warrant Officer of the Royal Navy.

"These changes are not intended to remove historical pride attributed to individual specialisations but are designed to create an agile workforce that gives more flexibility of employment across the Royal Navy in ways not currently possible."

The introduction of the MyNavy App is giving people the ability to conduct day-to-day administration tasks such as accessing and updating personal information at any time, minimising the effort and paperwork it takes to do routine activity.

A fundamental aspect of the transformation is a Whole Force review of the number of roles on the front line.

The RN is evaluating where best to place people, for example moving more Service personnel to operational roles to improve the lived experience of those at sea and increasing the civilianisation of some positions ashore.

This activity will ensure that the Royal Navy has the right people in the right places, at the right time to deliver its needs.

The ultimate goal is to make sure that everyone who wants to have a healthy, successful and fulfilling career in the Royal Navy can do so, with the support, opportunity and flexibility of more modern and people-centric structures.

## More follicles on the fo'c's'le in hair rule revamp

THERE is a new hair policy better reflecting the diverse workforce and current trends and fashions – while maintaining the standards expected of a uniformed service.

The new policy, already trialled at sea, is being extended to include women ashore as well; existing rules have often been regarded as outdated and open to interpretation.

All hairstyles should be kept well-groomed and secured or styled back from the face. Braids,

twists, corn rows, locks or an afro can be worn. All styles must not extend below the lower edge of the shirt collar when worn down, or long enough to be worn in a bun or ponytail.

In working rig, longer hair may be worn in a bun, single ponytail, single braid or corn braids/corn rows secured with conservative bands/ties/scrunchies, grips, hairpins, and nets of natural hair colour.

Sailors will not be permitted to wear accessories and must think

about possible dangers when in working rig, notably when running machinery, involved in aircraft safety and performing seamanship evolutions.

This policy does not override the need to meet ceremonial standards, whole ship duties or branch-specific working practices (food handling/hygiene) or safety (working with machinery).

Hair colour must be even and natural, such as tones of blonde, brunette, brown, auburn, grey or black, and not detract from a

professional appearance. Purple, blue, pink, green, orange, bright red, and fluorescent or neon colours are not allowed.

When wearing No.1 uniform, hair shall be well-groomed and secured or styled back from the face. Long hair should be worn up in a bun and properly secured in a neat and tidy fashion using conservative bands/ties/scrunchies, grips, hairpins, and nets of natural hair colour.

Full details and examples can be found in RNTM 01-035/21.



# Konnichiwa Collingwood

MEET the first Japanese sailor to enrol on the Royal Navy's premier mine warfare course.

Beginning his advanced mine warfare instruction at HMS Collingwood is Lieutenant Commander Noriaki Mukaigawa of the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force, Mine Warfare Headquarters, who has just commenced the Advanced Mine Warfare (AMW) Course – the RN's premier Mine Warfare Course, at HMS Collingwood.

He and seven fellow students – officers and senior ratings from the Royal and Royal New Zealand Navies – will learn about a subject in which Britain leads the world.

Thanks to its flotilla of Hunt and Sandown-class minehunters, use of autonomous vehicles, dive teams and decades of experience around the globe, the Royal Navy is widely admired in the field.

The course Lt Cdr Mukaigawa has embarked on will considerably enhance his already considerably experience of the subject – he was the Japanese Navy's youngest commanding officer when put in charge of minesweeper MSC 690 Miyajima (slightly smaller than RN Hunt-class vessels) in 2017.

He and fellow enrollees will learn about how to design a mine, how they are laid out to create a minefield, forming and supporting a mine warfare task group and planning and carrying out sustained mine countermeasures operations.

Before embarking on his studies, Lt Cdr Mukaigawa called on Collingwood's Captain Catherine Jordan and presented her with a letter and plaque on behalf of the Commander of the Japanese Mine Warfare Force, Rear Admiral Fukuda (pictured above by Keith Woodland).

## More to life on the Rock

PERSONNEL on the Rock got behind Wellbeing Week with a range of activities arranged to help improve the mental health of Gibraltar's Forces community.

Sergeant Nathan Victory from the Defence Police led guided treks of the Med Steps, offering some history of the area amid local wildlife and taking in some of the best views on the peninsula. Cpl Chris O'Mahoney and

"I am so proud that I am able to participate in the course as the first Japanese Naval officer and I believe this will enhance our ability to work together and mutual understanding," Lt Cdr Mukaigawa said.

"I understood that this course was originally opened just for Five Eyes [the alliance between the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand].

"I and JMSDF believe that the shift is evidence that the United Kingdom will be committed to the Indo-Pacific region more and more. Additionally, mine warfare, especially mine countermeasures, directly contributes to the free and open Indo-Pacific region."

Capt Jordan said the presence of a Japanese officer on the course would benefit both navies. "It is a great opportunity for other students and the RN to learn from his experiences and career," she added.

As well as increased RN presence in the region – underscored by HMS Queen Elizabeth's deployment to the Pacific Rim and new patrol ships Tamar and Spey being based in those waters for an extended period – the Royal Navy has signed agreements with the US and Japanese Navies to work together ever more closely to promote global security and safeguard sea lanes.

In a 16-year career, Lt Cdr Mukaigawa has served extensively at sea around his homeland, as well as in the Gulf where he worked alongside the Royal Navy and other allies to curb piracy emanating from Somalia. He delivered aid and assistance to fellow countrymen when Japan was ravaged by an earthquake in 2011.

LS Chelsea Smith organised a taster session at the Joint Physical Development Unit at Gun Wharf in the Naval Base with activities included wakeboarding, stand up paddleboarding and powerboating, followed by a barbecue.

Regular wellbeing events such as the Bump and Baby gatherings and SSFAA coffee mornings also took place during the week.

# Argyll's still going strong

THIRTY years – and 32 times around the globe – were celebrated as Britain's longest-serving frigate marked a milestone birthday at sea.

The Plymouth-based warship, which has just completed involvement in the largest anti-missile/air exercise at sea in the Western Hemisphere, enjoyed an afternoon of flight-deck celebrations in the Atlantic.

The frigate's 18th Commanding Officer Commander Charlie Wheen gathered the bulk of his 200-strong ship's company for a spot of cake and athletics.

And although his frigate is enjoying her autumn years, he says she remains at the forefront of naval technology and capability.

When HMS Argyll was commissioned into the Fleet in the spring of 1991:

- Cher was No.1 with *The Shoop Shoop Song*;
- Helen Mirren was winning plaudits for her performance in seminal detective series *Prime Suspect*;
- John Major was Prime Minister;
- The Berlin Wall had fallen but the Soviet Union still had seven months to live;
- Arsenal and Rangers were respective football champions in England and Scotland;
- And 105 members of Argyll's current ship's company – more than half the crew – hadn't been born.

Over a long and successful career at sea, Argyll has, to date, steamed more 685,000 nautical miles – enough to go around the world 32 times, under the command of 18 commanding officers (including one future First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir George Zambellas).

She has deployed operationally to the Asia-Pacific, the USA, Caribbean, Gulf (five times),

West Africa and Sierra Leone. On the way back from a nine-month deployment in 2019 she rescued 27 sailors from the burning MV Grande America, at night in the Bay of Biscay leading to Operational Honours for two of her team, and the award of a Sun Military award for 'Hero Unit Overseas'.

Despite being designed and laid down in the 1980s and 30 years old outwardly, the tech inside the frigate remains cutting-edge – as demonstrated during NATO's Formidable Shield exercise with Argyll tracking supersonic ballistic targets and developing future tactics for the Sea Ceptor missile system which protects not just her sisters, but also the new generation of Type 26 frigates.

She was also the first Royal Navy warship to control an autonomous RIB through a live Command System.

Her chefs provided an impressive cake, cut by Cdr Wheen along with the youngest member of the crew ET(ME) Hayden Jenkins.

The calories were then burned off with an 'Olympiad' with various physical challenges. The officers in the wardroom took the trophy, but the highlight was an impressive personal best from ET(WE) Matt Scott from Plymouth who lifted 230kg in the deadlift.

After Formidable Shield, Argyll is spending the rest of the UK on operations around the UK before entering a period of maintenance next year.

"Argyll is a special ship, with a fantastic team and a well-deserved reputation for operational success," said Cdr Wheen, who served as the frigate's operations officer between 2013 and 2015.

"She is hugely capable and has a great deal still to offer. I very much look forward to meeting whatever challenges the future brings."



## Tamar ties up with historic club

LIEUTENANT Commander Michael Hutchinson cements ties old and new with the China Fleet Country Club in Saltash as his ship is formally affiliated.

Beyond presenting mementoes from the Portsmouth-based overseas patrol ship to China Fleet Trust Chairman, Rear Admiral Mike Wood, Tamar's CO was invited to open the club's new heritage area fresh from security duties in Carbis Bay, where his ship was part of the protective ring around the G7 summit.

Tamar was the name of the Royal Navy base in Hong Kong until it closed in the 1990s ahead of the colony being handed back to China.

Sailors and Royal Marines who served there enjoyed rest and recreation in the China Fleet Club.

It relocated to the UK in 1991 as a country club/spa/hotel facility overlooking the River Tamar on the northern outskirts of Saltash.

Although also heavily used by civilians, the complex remains true to its origins with all serving RN/RFA sailors and Royal Marines automatic club members enjoying access to its extensive facilities, discounts and special offers.

"This affiliation means a great deal for Team Tamar and I am incredibly grateful for everything the club has done for the ship, her sailors and their families," said Lt Cdr Hutchinson.

"The historical links between HMS Tamar and the China Fleet Club are deep-rooted and I am delighted that we can continue this special affiliation."

Tamar is due to deploy later this year with her sister HMS Spey – both painted in striking WW2-era dazzle camouflage – to the Asia-Pacific region, giving the Royal Navy a permanent presence in the region for the first time since Hong Kong was returned to China.

## Who will be top of the blobs?

FANCY eight-piecing one of the Royal Navy's senior officers?

Well now's your chance as the Royal Naval Association hosts the world pairs championships of the ever-popular Senior Service board game uckers.

Spread out over nearly three months – from Black Tot Day on July 31 until the finals in Portsmouth on October 23, the association hopes to tap into the long-standing affection for blobs, mixi-blobs, eight pieces in harbour and the like.

Finals day will see 32 pairs in four groups – the Navy Board, serving personnel, RNA members and general public – compete for titles.

Pairs should submit their details by July 8 to the following addresses depending on the category: [admin@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:admin@royalnavalassoc.com) (serving personnel); [Andy@royalnavalassoc.com](mailto:Andy@royalnavalassoc.com) (RNA members) and for non-RNA folk [uckersworldchamp2021@gmail.com](mailto:uckersworldchamp2021@gmail.com).

Once registered, you will be sent details of the rules, your first opponents and the date in which you need to have completed your fixture by.

The registration team will consider geographical location in the draw to try and cut down on travel wherever possible.

Once the results are received, the registration secretary will hold the draw for the next round and inform teams of their next opponent and so on until they are down to the 32 pairs/teams for the grand final.

## Map guide to give you power

DID you know there's a Whole Force Royal Navy Empowerment Roadmap?

Creating an empowered working environment is a collective responsibility – we all have a part to play in ensuring the RN's empowerment principles become everyone's lived experience. Empowerment means sailors, Royal Marines and civilians are trusted to do their job, have the freedom to test new ideas and challenge the status quo.

Various initiatives, schemes, restructuring of organisations and the like are being involved in the empowerment with benefits including: a more motivated workforce thanks to improved job satisfaction and an enhanced culture of continuous learning and personal accountability.

Among the efforts to put power in your hands are:

- developing skilled leaders to inspire and lead a re-imagined workforce;
- giving you the digital tools to work together seamlessly;
- redesigning structures, workplaces, and processes to reflect and embed new ways of working;
- empowering you wherever we can to choose how, when and where to work.

The roadmap details how you can get involved and explains your role to help build the Navy of tomorrow and is available at: <https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/defnet/Navy/Documents/Royal-Navy-Empowerment-attachment.pdf>.

And you can become a champion of empowerment through the Change Advocate Network at <https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/teams/59582>.

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**SAAB**



# Charity champion is a man on a mission

A FUNDRAISER for almost ten years, Andy ‘Gibbo’ Gibbs has raised over half a million pounds for the Armed Forces community.

CPO Gibbs joined the Royal Navy in 1987 and has been in the Service for over 30 years serving in HMS London, Exeter, Southampton, Edinburgh, St Albans, Somerset and the “Geordie Gunboat” HMS Newcastle in which he was lucky to take part in a global deployment in 2000.

He’s also had numerous roles at HMS Collingwood and two tours on the staff of COMUKSTRKFOR at Whale Island.

After joining the RNRMC in 2017, Gibbo and his dedicated team of volunteers have raised over £75,000 for the charity.

As well as raising funds, Gibbo has a new role – as the serving ‘Charity Champion’ he is actively encouraging others to become involved and ‘champion’ the Navy’s principal charity in their ship or unit.

To Gibbo, being part of the RNRMC as a Charity Champion is being able to give back and “spread the love”.

“It doesn’t matter if you raise £50 or £5,000 as long as you’re out there, spreading the word about the charity and the many wonderful things it achieves for all the Naval community, the serving, their families and our veterans – the more people know about it, the more they are likely to volunteer to help, to spread the word or donate, and that becomes a benefit for the people who need it.”

If you are interested in becoming an RNRMC volunteer or your ship or unit’s Charity Champion, please visit <https://www.rnrmc.org.uk/support-us/volunteer> or contact [andrew.gibbs563@mod.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.gibbs563@mod.gov.uk).



## Helping disabled veterans and carers

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity have awarded respite care charity, Revitalise, with a grant of £11,540, enabling them to provide breaks for disabled ex-Royal Navy personnel and their carers, many of whom are in desperate need of a break following lockdown.

For 57 years, Revitalise has provided respite care breaks to a huge range of people. These are a vital lifeline to many unpaid home carers and their disabled family members. The RNRMC have worked with Revitalise for a number of years to provide funded breaks for disabled Royal Navy and Royal Marines veterans, as well as their carers.

After months of lockdown it has never been more crucial to support disabled veterans and their carers. This RNRMC grant will enable Revitalise to provide up to 20 vital respite breaks in a safe, social and accessible environment for those Royal Navy beneficiaries who are most vulnerable and most in need.

According to the ONS, 52 per cent of disabled people have been self-isolating during the pandemic, and 70 per cent of carers have been providing more care than usual, without any hope of a break. This has alleviated feelings of isolation and loneliness, negatively affecting the physical and mental health of disabled people and carers.

A break at Revitalise will aim to provide disabled Royal Navy veterans and their carers with crucial respite, helping to combat the heightened stress, loneliness and anxiety for those who have been shielding and for those who care for them.

Revitalise CEO Jan Tregelles said: “We are thrilled to have benefitted from another year of support with the RNRMC and grateful for their grant, allowing Revitalise to welcome many ex-service personnel to enjoy a break with us. The grant is already enabling us to provide support to members of the Royal Navy community and their loved ones, after a particularly difficult year with the pandemic.”

“Revitalise would like everyone who feels they are struggling to know that help is available and we are here to give you a warm welcome at our Sandpipers centre, should you need a break or change of scenery.”

One recent Royal Navy guest described their time at the Revitalise:

“Revitalise has a wonderful family feel of togetherness and a positive community atmosphere. It has given me the confidence to connect and meet new people. I have some very precious memories now. I am thankful that Revitalise exists in this country.”

If you would like to find out more about Revitalise respite breaks, please get in touch with their bookings team on 0303 303 0145 or email them at [bookings@revitalise.org.uk](mailto:bookings@revitalise.org.uk).

## Cash support for mentoring service

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity has awarded SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity £25,875 to support the charity’s Mentoring service.

The grant will help SSAFA support Royal Naval and Royal Marine beneficiaries, and their families, as they leave the forces and adapt to civilian life.

SSAFA’s Mentoring service helps motivate, support, build resilience and empower service leavers to fulfil their potential in their new lives outside the military. Individuals are matched with a mentor who provides long-term, one-to-one, face-to-face support during their transition and for up to two years post discharge.

In 2019 alone, SSAFA witnessed a 78 per cent increase in Naval mentees and a 150 per cent increase in military spouses, and other family members engaging with the service.

Last year, SSAFA witnessed a further 128 per cent increase in the number of tri-service individuals and families supported compared to 2019, including a 32 per cent increase from the Naval family.

Sir Andrew Gregory, Controller at SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, said: “While most members of the Armed Forces make the transition from military service to ‘civvy street’ easily and go on to successful subsequent careers and lives, some find that change more difficult.

“We are therefore extremely grateful to the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity for their generous donation towards our mentoring work; it will enable SSAFA to continue to support Service leavers, including those from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, in the process hopefully preventing the need for them to seek subsequent welfare support.”

If you would like to find out more about SSAFA and their Mentoring Service, please visit [ssafa.org.uk](http://ssafa.org.uk)

# Jim’s journey out of the darkness

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity has worked in partnership with Combat Stress for many years to support Royal Navy veterans with complex mental health conditions.

In 2020 the RNRMC began a three-year funding agreement with Combat Stress as part of the RNRMC’s Health and Wellbeing Support Programme. This partnership ensures that Royal Navy veterans, like Jim, will continue to receive vital support.

Jim had wanted to join the Royal Navy since he was nine years old. When he was 18 that dream came true, but unfortunately his time in the services was not what he imagined.

After joining the Navy, Jim was quickly identified as a promising rugby player and spent much of his time on the rugby pitch. Playing rugby took him to several ships and shore bases over the course of 18 months, but Jim’s life was about to change forever.

“In March 1992, after joining the HMS Illustrious, my life was totally changed when I was the victim of a random unprovoked attack shortly after going ashore,” he said.

“My attacker, who pushed me through a plate glass window, was later charged with attempted murder. I sustained life-changing physical and mental injuries.

“Due to the nature of my injuries, I had to remain awake, un-anesthetised during surgery and I watched as the medical staff brought a priest in to administer the last rites as they didn’t think I would make it.

“But I did, and once my physical injuries were stabilised, I was moved by the Royal Navy to a mental health ward where in June of 1992 I was diagnosed with PTSD.

“I spent four weeks undertaking a PTSD awareness course. One element of the course was art therapy and I found painting helped me – in fact, I was encouraged to continue painting and remain busy in order to keep my PTSD at bay. I was also told not to think or talk about my trauma.

“For over 25 years I continued to paint as a way of coping and never spoke about the attack.

“After the course, I was sent back to HMS Dryad, and despite all I had been through, was encouraged to get back to rugby; however, when it came to my first match back, I was convinced I would sustain further injuries and didn’t play.

“Shortly afterwards, I was offered a medical discharge which could take several months to arrange, or I could take an honorable discharge based on the exceptional circumstances which would take just 24 hours. I took the second option allowing me to leave as quickly as I could.

“I left and got on with life, often travelling extensively with work in order to remain busy. I followed the instruction to keep busy, but I know now this was the wrong choice and wasn’t working.

“I used to relive seeing the priest at the end of my bed at night – just like during surgery. I also used to feel like the blood was pumping out of the scar on my head, just as it did after I’d been attacked.

“It was when I was confronted by my daughter, telling me she’d come into my bedroom one night to tell me to turn the telly off that I knew I had to do something. The television wasn’t on – it was me shouting and screaming in my sleep. I knew I used to do this – I had to move into a mess of my own in the Navy because of it – but when I knew it was affecting my family, I decided to do something.”

Jim went to his GP initially and explained that he had been diagnosed with PTSD. However, he didn’t receive the support that he needed. Then in 2017 he reached out to Combat Stress. Finally, Jim started his journey towards recovery.

“It wasn’t easy. I was embarrassed to call the helpline. I thought I’d been dealing with my problems but really, I’d just been told to keep busy and push everything to the back of my mind. I felt like a failure.

By working with the specialist team at Combat Stress Jim began to learn management techniques and coping strategies for his mental health issues such as hyperarousal and flashbacks.

“I learnt about grounding, mindfulness and did much more art therapy. I received CBT & EMDR treatment which has significantly helped with the reliving. I no longer see the priest. Thanks to CBT/EMDR and the art therapists, I understand why I have these memories and have begun to process them.

“I also found the education sessions invaluable – learning about how memories work and how the brain processes them really helped me. The peer support has also played important part of my recovery too, supporting me as I returned back to a Royal Navy shore base and the place of trauma.

“Combat Stress also encouraged me to re-engage with the veteran community. I hadn’t engaged in anything military since leaving the Navy.

“In 2019 I was selected to attend the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. Since leaving Combat Stress, I had further medical support and discovered through a brain scan that I sustained brain injuries as a result of my attack. This injury was contributing to the sensation of blood pumping, but with medication, this is manageable.

“What I learnt at Combat Stress has made a massive difference to me. I know now I needed to process my memories, not just bury them or push them away. I owe my life to the team who were on duty at the Royal Naval Hospital Stonehouse – thank you! Also, a huge thanks to Combat Stress for improving my health and knowledge, enabling me to look forward to a better future.”

If you would like to find out more about Combat Stress or how to access their support, please visit their website, or call their 24 hour helpline on 0800 138 1619.



A world in which our sailors, marines, and their families are valued and supported, for life.

See our impact [impact.rnrmc.org.uk](http://impact.rnrmc.org.uk) T 023 9387 1520 E [theteam@rnrmc.org.uk](mailto:theteam@rnrmc.org.uk)

Royal Marines from 40 Commando prepare for a night of raids across the Sennybridge training areas in Wales after being dropped into position by a Royal Air Force Chinook

Picture by: PO Phot Si Ethell

# SUPPLIES



**L**ogistics experts have been testing ways to keep supplies flowing to Royal Marines as they operate deep in enemy territory on future missions.

Chivenor-based Commando Logistic Regiment (CLR) are tasked with getting ammunition and rations to 3 Commando Brigade wherever they are operating, no matter how extreme the climate or remote the location.

With the arrival of new tactics that will see commandos start to operate in small dispersed teams, CLR are adapting to guarantee the supplies do not dry up when it matters most.

The shift in tactics will see commandos return to being raiders from the sea, disrupting an adversary using new kit to help them on their missions deep behind enemy lines.

It is a shift that poses many questions to CLR who spent a few weeks on Exercise Green Dragon in Cornwall and Wales working with 40 Commando Royal Marines, 29 Commando Royal Artillery, 24 Commando Royal Engineers and helicopters from Commando Helicopter Force and the Royal Air Force on how they support these commando teams.

Lieutenant Colonel Rob Jones RM, Commanding Officer of CLR, said: "Exercise Green Dragon has really tested how we are going to deliver logistics to the Future Commando Force, which is of course very different.

"What we are trying to do is to sustain a force that is isolated by design. It has to be deep inside enemy territory and has to be dispersed to survive, because if you mass force on a battlefield you'll get wiped off the face of

## LOGISTICIANS LOOK AT NEW WAYS OF KEEPING COMMANDOS SUPPLIED IN A NEW ERA

the earth.

"So it's a very difficult type of force to try and sustain and the real challenge for us, over the course of this exercise, is working through the details and understanding of what sustainment looks like in the future, and how we support a dispersed force with what is fundamentally a really big logistical organisation."

Exercise Green Dragon began just north of Bodmin Moor, Cornwall, at former air station RAF Davidstow Moor where the logisticians refreshed some of their essential skills before things ramped up across the Sennybridge training area and Pembrey Sands in Wales.

At Pembrey, CLR set up a forward arming and refuelling point for missions on Sennybridge.

Teams from 40 Commando were dispersed across various locations in two waves by Chinooks from RAF Odiham, carrying full kit and taking with them quad bikes to move rapidly across the battlefield.

Charlie Company's Officer Commanding, Major Richard Mackie, said: "We're trying new communication techniques and equipment and also experimenting by giving teams more mission command; giving people more difficult tasks at longer range and really seeing how far we can push the boundaries."

40 Commando's teams were linked up via new communications technology to the Commando Tactical Operations Centre operating round the clock at the unit's base, Norton Manor Camp in Taunton.

It was then up to CLR to keep their missions supplied, looking at altering their usual ways of working to adapt.

"We are exercising changes, from basic pieces of equipment to how we operate in the field," said Lt Col Jones.

"Some of these were rolled out in Bodmin on the first phase of the exercise. It's all about making these changes, it can be from how we supply food to the troops, to how we provide medical cover to the brigade.

"For instance we are halving the weight of rations, taking seven days' worth, from 14 kilogrammes down to seven. It sounds small but when you multiply that to a whole task group it's massive. We are also changing how we deliver medical support.

"We have a really clever bit of technology that allows surgeons on the battlefield, to reach back to consultants in the UK with an artificial intelligence overlay, allowing them to operate with support from experienced medical specialists remotely. It's a really combat-enhancing capability." All of this was valuable experience for 40 Commando as they planning Exercise Green Dagger in California later this year.

ON DEMAND

Belfast back in business

# From beaches to beeches

YOU can now book your place to join HMS Belfast – as Britain's last major warship of WW2 reawakens from enforced 'slumber' in London.

The wartime/post-war cruiser – veteran of the Arctic Convoys, Normandy landings, Pacific and Korean conflicts – has not welcomed a single visitor since the first lockdown in March last year.

She's due to reopen on July 8 – 16 months since the last tourists came aboard.

Custodians from the Imperial War Museum have used the hiatus to 'refit' both the ship and the riverside facilities.

Beyond repainting and smartening up the hull, repairing the deck and maintaining the 4in guns after 83 years' exposure to the elements, the Belfast team have revamped 2 Deck with particular emphasis on the Korean War and the work of the sick bay team.

Surgeon Lieutenant Robert Anthony Rowan and his team saved many lives off Korea, though sadly not Lau Sau, a Leading Steward from Hong Kong and the only member of Belfast's crew ever to be killed onboard – fatally wounded by a North Korean shell.

As with museums under the Royal Navy's umbrella (HMS Victory, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Submarine Museum, Fleet Air Museum etc), there is no turning up on spec.

Visitors must book tickets in advance to tour Belfast via [iwm.org.uk/visits/hms-belfast](http://iwm.org.uk/visits/hms-belfast).

THE lush green of Staffordshire in the springtime stands in for the sands of Normandy for Paddy Crawley (on the left) and Ken Benbow.

The two former sailors were among around 100 veterans of Operation Neptune/Overlord invited to the National Memorial Arboretum, where a special event was laid on 77 years after the beaches were stormed.

With Covid restrictions still in place, a return to Normandy was pretty much ruled out for the dwindling number of veterans from the 1944 campaign.

Which was particularly disappointing as in France, the magnificent new British Normandy Memorial was being formally opened and dedicated – a £30m tribute to the 22,442 men and women who gave their lives in June-August 1944 to liberate the region, marking the beginning of the end of Nazi tyranny in western Europe.

Instead of attending in person, veterans were invited to watch proceedings beamed live to the arboretum, as well as take part – at a distance – in the Royal British Legion's service of remembrance from Bayeux Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery and remember fallen comrades during a two-minute silence.

Both Ken and Paddy were part of the enormous ring of steel thrown around the invasion fleet, ensuring no German forces – especially U-boats – penetrated the protective screen to run amok.

Ken from Kirkham in Lancashire served in HMS Crane, a corvette assigned to the



7th Escort Group, first hunting U-boats in the North Atlantic, then shielding the invasion force.

Crane was subsequently sent to the Far East in support of landings at Okinawa amid the threat of kamikaze attack and went on to witness the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay in September 1945.

You might recognise Ken's face (and smile) as he hit the headlines last year as one of the unexpected 'stars' of lockdown – thanks to his emotional reaction to receiving a pillow featuring a picture of his late wife Ada; after

her passing he took a photo of her to bed with him at night.

Irishman Paddy came to England in 1940 to become a Christian brother, changed his mind and signed up for the Royal Navy as a wireless operator instead.

On D-Day he was serving aboard HMS Dominica, a Lend-Lease frigate originally built for the US Navy, with the ship patrolling the length of the Channel.

Paddy was demobbed in 1946, served briefly in the newly-formed Palestinian Police Force

before returning to the UK and eventually settled in Preston.

While Paddy and Ken were unable to attend proceedings in Normandy in person, HMS Spey was present as guardship and naval backdrop to the memorial's inauguration.

Freshly painted, like her sister Tamar, in a wartime dazzle camouflage scheme, Spey sailed from the Solent following the same route as Force G – the landing force for Gold Beach which left UK shores 77 years earlier.

Among the men delivering

victory on June 6 1944 was Lt Cdr William Francis Jeune, a gunnery officer aboard battleship HMS Rodney whose 16in guns hammered German defences.

Following in his footsteps, Sub Lieutenant Leo Jeune, a Young Officer and warfare specialist undergoing training on Spey.

"I was first inspired to join the Royal Navy after hearing stories about my grandfather," he said.

"To be in the same waters today as he was 77 years ago and to remember the lives lost in the liberation of Europe makes me feel immensely proud of his service.

"Although I was never able to meet him, the opportunity of being here today has brought me closer to his story."

He joined shipmates on the upper deck to pay their respects, observing a minute's silence and also observing a flypast by the Red Arrows.

"The opportunity to be present off Gold Beach on the 77th Anniversary of the D-Day landings was an honour and a privilege for the ship's company," said Spey's CO Lieutenant Commander Ben Evans.

"As we approached the shoreline of Normandy from the United Kingdom, it was humbling to be following the same route over the English Channel our forebears followed almost eight decades ago.

"It really brought it home to us all what those brave sailors, soldiers, marines and airmen faced as Operation Neptune got underway. We will remember them."

Picture: SAC Tomas Barnard, RAF Cosford

# Divers solve Great War U-boat

A SPOTLIGHT pierces the gloom 70 metres below the surface of the Channel off the Lizard Point.

This is the crumpled hull of a Great War U-boat, sunk in 1918, discovered in 2004, and now finally identified, thanks to divers from Devonport Naval Base.

Since it was found 17 years ago, many U-boat historians have labelled the wreck U-93 – according to official records, fatally rammed by merchant ship SS Braeneil in January 1918.

Except that U-93 was assigned to operate off Brittany and subsequently sank two ships.

Meanwhile another, near identical wreck was found off Hadelot on the Pas-de-Calais and estimated by some experts to be the boat's sister U-95.

US-based submarine historian Michael Lowrey, a WW1 expert behind the world-renowned [Uboat.net](http://Uboat.net) website and database, asked local divers to solve the mystery.

The divers – including members of the Joint Service Sub Aqua Diving Centre – plunged 70 metres into the Channel to positively identify the wreck as that of U-95.

The team scrubbed more than a century's worth of marine life and growth off the propeller of the sunken boat, compared the information on it with official records, and confirmed the identity.

Mr Lowrey said that four large ocean-going U-boats had been lost in January 1918, posing historians trying to ascertain their fates and locations with "a big mess – easily the most confusing of World War I".

He continued: "Three were sister ships: U-93, U-95, and U-110. The wrecks of two of those three have been found: one off Hadelot with her stern blown off and the one off the Lizard."

All other U-boats of the U-93 to U-98 type either surrendered at the end of the Great War or their location is known

– helping historians to narrow down the identity to two craft.

Using the dive boat Moonshadow, a team organised by diver Steve Mortimer overcame the challenges posed by the wreck's depth and strong currents off the Lizard to conclusively prove the German submarine's identity.

Among the divers, Dr Fran Hockley, Babcock diver Will Schwarz and retired Army Air Corps Lieutenant Colonel Dom Robinson, civil servants employed at the Joint Service Sub Aqua Diving Centre in Devonport Dockyard.

Photographs and video from the dives are still being analysed to try to confirm the cause of sinking. The original ramming claim remains a real possibility – although there was also a deep minefield laid not far from where U-93 was destroyed.

"Although there is damage to the port side it wasn't particularly conclusive but we did find open hatches in the conning tower and engine room," said Dom.

"We think this confirms that it was sunk by ramming which destroyed the submarine's buoyancy system while concurrently pushing it under.

"Bitterly-cold January sea water flooding into the open hatches must have been unimaginably horrendous for the crew and even those who managed to escape wouldn't have lasted long in the water.

"Reports from the steamer told of foreign voices in the darkness but in a period of unrestricted submarine warfare I can't imagine there was much sympathy for them."

All crew on both sunken U-boats were lost when the craft went down.

When not helping to identify U-boat wrecks, JSSADC delivers recreational and technical diver training to members of the Armed Forces as part of the Joint Service Adventurous Training (JSAT) scheme. Course spaces can be booked through the Online Booking System on the Defence Gateway.

# Medal surprise on Jacqueline's big day



## Stalwart Phil mourned

LT CDR Phil Dickinson, who spent 48 years in the RN and left as its longest-serving commissioned officer, died just days short of his 70th birthday.

A veteran of the Falklands conflict, Phil saw active service flying with 826 NAS, serving in a variety of ships including HMS Hermes and RFA Fort Austin in a career which stretched from 1969 to 2017.

He was actively involved in the helicopter evacuation of 14 survivors from HMS Coventry across to HMS Broadsword.

He joined BRNC as a Cadet in September 1969. After sea time in home waters, the Mediterranean and the Far East in the minesweeper HMS Highburton and the aircraft carrier HMS Eagle, he studied for a politics degree at Lancaster University, where he met his American wife Susan, before returning to Dartmouth to complete his training.

His early career was as a General List warfare officer. He began observer training in 1976 and accumulated over 2,000 flying hours. His early aviation time was spent flying in ASW Sea Kings in the helicopter cruiser HMS Blake, including a six-month deployment to the west coast of the USA.

He went on to command 824 Naval Air Squadron in which he spent many flying hours trialling anti-submarine capability at the Atlantic Underwater Test and Evaluation Centre ranges in the Bahamas.

Following his flying career, Phil was appointed to the Maritime Warfare Centre to conduct operational analysis in support of the FAA and became known as 'Mr AUTEK' for the next ten years.

He left the RN (pictured being applauded out of Navy Command by shipmates) as Maritime Reserves Mobilisation Officer in 2017.

DESPITE serving the Navy and nation throughout World War 2, Wren Jacqueline Dyde never claimed the medals she deserved for her efforts.

But 75 years after she demobbed and returned to the civilian world, that omission was righted as Royal Navy officer Commander Andy Swain surprised Jacqueline on her 100th birthday at her home in Essex.

It was only a few weeks before the landmark birthday that Jacqueline's granddaughter Caroline Meaby learned she'd never received the medals back in the 1940s... and never applied for them subsequently due to a mix of modesty typical of the wartime generation and the possible cost of the decorations.

Caroline wanted to resolve that, arranged for the medals – the Defence and War Medals – and got in touch with the Naval Regional Command to see if a serving sailor might assist with the presentation.

"I'm absolutely thrilled! And to be given them by such an important personage is even more wonderful," she told Cdr Swain.

Jacqueline Murley as she was then from Lanreath near Looe had planned to train as a secretary, but instead volunteered for the Women's Royal Naval Service aged 18 when war broke out.

Weeks later she was serving aboard HMS Defiance in Plymouth Naval Base as an officers' steward – serving drinks and meals and keeping the wardroom looking spic and span.

There was little training beyond the helpful advice of a veteran Royal Marine: "If it moves, salute it, if it doesn't move, polish it."

Jacqueline – pictured back row centre on Defiance's quarterdeck with fellow Wren stewards in 1940 – was bombed out of her billet, an old hotel near the dockyard gates, at the height of the Plymouth Blitz which cost her not just a roof over her head but also all her clothes.

Among the temporary quarters the wrens were offered were Plymouth council's stables.

Jacqueline was subsequently commissioned and re-trained in coding signals at HMS Cabbala near Warrington before being dispatched to Egypt.

"I loved Egypt," Jacqueline recalls. "I managed to visit the Sphinx and Pyramids and made lots of new friends."

"We spent a pleasant time swimming in the Canal, going to dances (where we would be counted off and back on the truck like parcels) and visiting hospitals which was rather shattering."

Just as the wrens grew used to life in Africa, they were shipped



east to Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) to work at code and cipher school HMS Anderson.

The work was, Jacqueline concedes, "a bit boring". On one occasion Lord Mountbatten – C-in-C in the Far East – visited the base to give the Wrens a pep talk.

"He asked me how I found the work and I replied that it was a bit dull," she remembers. "He laughed and said we all had to do dull things sometimes. I got a stern talking to afterwards for not having the right attitude."

After war with Japan ended, Jacqueline returned to England and left the Wrens in 1946. She married Royal Marine Captain Richard Meaby, settled in Portsmouth and later, after the marriage broke down, moved to London where in 1958 she married Freddie Dyde. She spent nearly 50 happy years with Freddie, living in Ealing, and working as a secretary in the City of London.

Today she lives in a Woodland Grove nursing home in Loughton on the edge of Epping Forest.

Also celebrating his 100th birthday was City of Glasgow RNA branch member Vic Combes who was treated to a surprise party in his garden.

Originally from Sussex, Vic joined the Royal Navy in 1939 aged 18. He served in Malta during the siege and suffered serious injuries to his arm, legs and face.

He's an extremely active member and supporter of the Glasgow branch, and takes part



in the annual Armed Forces Day and Remembrance parades in the city.

Vic enjoyed celebrating his birthday with the chairman of the

Glasgow branch chairman Kenn McKinnon and Scottish Area Chairman Brian MacKenzie joined Vic, family and friends for his milestone birthday.

## t mystery



Pictures: Dom Robinson, JSSADC



## Naval Quirks

THE YOUNGEST NAVAL VC WINNER WAS BOY FIRST CLASS JACK CORNWELL, AGED JUST 16½, AT JUTLAND IN 1916...



AND THE OLDEST WAS LT. FREDERICK PARSLAW, RNR, AGED 59, WHO BY SKILL AND COURAGE EVADED A U-BOAT ATTACK AND SAVED HIS TRANSPORT IN 1915..



JUST THINK, CAP'N, IF A NEW WAR WAS DECLARED TODAY WE'D HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY BETWEEN US OF BREAKING BOTH THOSE RECORDS!



HELP! CREEPY-CRAWLY! GET HIM OFF!!





## Great fun in the Lakes

MARYPORT Solway Sea Cadets have been taking part in a Holiday Active programme that has been launched nationally by the youth charity.

Activities including paddleboarding, kayaking and sailing in Maryport Marina, in addition to sea cadets' usual parades and training courses.

Holiday activities were also open to young people from across West Cumbria.

The Holiday Active programme has seen cadets from the Whitehaven Unit join in the water activities at the marina.

The young people have been enjoying being back on the water again, making new friends, exercising and having fun.

Mary-Claire, PO for the Maryport Unit said: "After Covid-19 restrictions, we were the first unit in Cumbria to get the authority to reopen. We work really closely with neighbouring units. We look out for each other, it's just like a big family."

The Holiday Active programme, which aims to get cadets back out on the water this summer, has been up and running successfully.

More than 1,400 cadets have taken part in inshore water-based fun and adventure between March and June, who have welcomed the opportunity to take part in sailing, rowing, paddlesports, windsurfing and much more.

## Podcast adventures

MUSIC theatre organisation Made by Mortals have released the latest episode of their interactive adventure podcast for primary school children, created with the help of a group of armed forces veterans.

And in addition to this, the eighth and last episode of the first *Armchair Adventures* series is being celebrated with a huge live online show for primary schools across the North West.

The five veterans will join Made by Mortals and its over-65s theatre group Hearts & Minds, as well as professional musicians and actors for the performance on July 7.

The podcast was launched by the Audenshaw-based not-for-profit organisation during lockdown and has now had 20,000 listens. In addition to this, the group has run 35 'Armchair Adventures Live' workshops for more than 5,000 primary school children in the North West.

The group of veterans, who all served in the Army, the RAF or the Royal Navy, took part in nine weekly online sessions, to create the story with music and song, based on their own lived experiences.

The next event is July 7, 2pm to 2.45pm. For free tickets visit [bit.ly/RoyalArmchairAdventure](http://bit.ly/RoyalArmchairAdventure)

You can listen to the Armchair Adventures podcast at <https://www.podfollow.com/armchair-adventures>



## Whitehaven celebration

TWO members of Whitehaven Sea Cadets are celebrating after finding out their hard work has been recognised in the prestigious annual Lord-Lieutenants' Awards which are recognised as laudatory honours throughout the Ministry of Defence.

Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenants are the representatives of the Crown for each county in the UK and are appointed by the Queen, on the advice of the Prime Minister.

Able Cadet Jack Fleming is one of only four cadets recognised in the whole county and has been awarded a Lord Lieutenants Commendation for cadets in recognition of his work to make sure that young people's voices are heard at the highest levels within the sea cadets organisation.

He has served both as a cadet representative on the Whitehaven Unit Management Trustee Team and also as vice chair and then chair of the Lakeland District cadet forum which represents all of the cadets from Carlisle to Morecambe.

PO (SCC) Kerslie Luktung has been awarded a Lord Lieutenants Commendation for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers in recognition of combining his frontline work within the NHS during the Covid pandemic with supporting not only Whitehaven unit, but also units further afield across the whole of the North West in his voluntary role as Area Staff Officer for junior cadets.

The awards ceremony will take place at Carlisle Cathedral in September.

# Deep impact

## Study reveals why you should join cadets

A NEW study has measured the impact of joining Cadet Forces like Sea Cadets and found that it has massive benefits for young people's wellbeing and career prospects.

The four-year study, carried out by the University of Northampton, says that taking part in cadet programmes leads to much better communication and leadership skills.

Personal resilience, confidence and working more effectively with different people were some of the other benefits being taken up by the UK's 130,000 cadets and 30,000 volunteers.

Disadvantaged young people who join often go on to earn more and can see their lifetime earnings boosted by more than £200,000, the research found.

It comes as the Ministry of Defence and Department for Education are aiming to add a further 20,000 cadets across Britain's state

schools as part of the Government's Cadet Expansion Programme.

While cadet forces were once traditionally associated with private schools, they only account for 25,000 of the 130,000 cadets in Britain today.

The rest are either attending one of 500 state schools which currently offer membership, or local branches after school. Of those 105,000 state school cadets, around 13,000 are eligible for free school meals.

Sea cadet Arianna Perera, 14, said: "I joined two years ago because I was very shy. I felt that maybe it would boost my confidence."

"Now, I'm in first rank and lead a section of eight cadets. I can't wait for Wednesdays. I love being able to experience things I'd never experienced...things I would never do otherwise."

Lead author of the report, Professor Simon Denny, commented: "If the country

wants its youngsters, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, to have the best chances in life, joining the cadet forces is part of the answer. Our research shows this clearly.

"These youngsters have resilience. They don't give up when things get more difficult, but learn to find ways to surmount life's obstacles."

Professor Denny continued. "And it represents staggeringly good value for taxpayer's money. For £180m a year you get 130,000 young people and 30,000 adult volunteers – you can buy a single F-35 for this."

To read the full report, visit the University of Northampton's website: <https://www.northampton.ac.uk/research/research-institutes-and-centres/institute-for-social-innovation-and-impact/social-impact-resulting-from-expenditure-on-cadets/>



## TS Royalist a hit with Orkney

TEN Orkney Sea Cadets, aged between 12 and 15, were able to get a taste of life out at sea when the Sea Cadets' flagship TS Royalist called into Scapa Flow.

Highlights of the experience included trying out sail handling as well as learning all about the ship, its voyages and the opportunities available to them.

They enjoyed the experience so much that numerous cadets expressed their interest in applying for a residential trip on board, once these are able to resume again.

Royalist Commanding Officer Captain Roy Taylor said: "We can provide life skills, giving young people life-changing opportunities to help them prepare for their journey into adult life. During a six-day voyage the biggest benefit they will learn is teamwork – nothing happens on board without teamwork, discipline and structure – how to integrate and interact."

"We witness the change in the young people throughout the six days, gaining confidence through taking them out of their natural environment and comfort zone."

As the ship was only in Orkney for one night, an evening visit was offered to the local Sea Cadet unit.

Jim Buck, Orkney Islands Council Head of Marine Services, Transportation and Harbour Master said: "The TS Royalist was a welcome sight at Scapa pier and it's great to hear of the enthusiasm of some of our young sea cadets, who have the potential to become Orkney's next generation of seafarers."

## Tasty way to get back to sea

A NEW series of taster days are getting cadets back on board again.

Overnight offshore training has been postponed since March 2020 but the offshore team has been working hard to deliver Covid-safe taster sessions during weekends and school holidays, calling in at ports around the UK.

Cadets have a chance to learn skills and get some hands-on experience of being on a vessel at sea, on board 24-metre power vessels, TS Jack Petchey and TS John Jerwood, and square rig sailing ship, TS Royalist.

For many cadets, this is their first time back on the water in more than 18 months. Offshore activities include rope work, heaving lines, firefighting with long hoses, radio communication and getting to know their way around the engine room.

"It's the best way to learn, to put things into practice with a task or a game," said Commander Andy Phenna, Head of Offshore Training.

He added it's looking "pretty positive" that overnight stays will restart later in the year.

The training ship TS John Jerwood has been moored at Salford Quays, Greater Manchester, with

cadets coming aboard almost daily.

On the return leg of the journey back to Brunswick Lock, Liverpool, the vessel hosted some VIPs on board, including Naval Regional RN Commander Northern England and Isle of Man, Commodore Phil Waterhouse; Colonel Mark Underhill; Chief Executive of the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for the North West of England and the Isle of Man and Lieutenant Commander Ted Creighton, a senior Sea Cadet volunteer who is also Head of Early Careers at BAE Systems.

Guests were given a tour of the vessel and took turns in steering the ship.

"I very much enjoyed the transit which gave a great opportunity to see what one of the Sea Cadets vessels can do as well as meet a number of friends and supporters of the charity," said Cdre Waterhouse.

"TS John Jerwood certainly keeps the Sea Cadet flag flying around the country and, by association, keeps up the reputation of the Royal Navy too."

Sea Cadets training ship TS Jack Petchey is pictured arriving in Bangor. The ship, which has two Northern Ireland Sea Cadets aboard, is currently sailing around the British Isles

## Former sea cadet saves life of child choking in cafe

A FORMER sea cadet has saved the life of a young girl, thanks to the first aid training he received during his time with SCC.

Sixteen-year-old Jack Smithson was on his second day on the job as a waiter at the Jazz Café on Printing Office Street in Doncaster when he noticed a girl choking on her food.

He quickly sprang into action, standing behind her and pushing the bottom of her diaphragm to force the food out of her airway.

Jack said: "I heard screaming and I ran around the corner, the grandma had her fingers down the girl's throat."

"I was a sea cadet for five-and-a-half years

and I took part in multiple first aid courses, including one on choking, during my team with SCC."

"So, I knew that she shouldn't put fingers down her throat because it could push it further down and cause it to be even worse."

Jack continued. "I knew instantly I needed to get it out of her throat, so I just grabbed the little girl and started performing the Heimlich manoeuvre."

"Luckily on about the fourth attempt, she managed to cough it out."

Jack, who begins college in September and

hopes to become a forensic psychologist, said he was "extremely happy" that the girl, Scarlett, who is around seven years old, was OK.

He was later named employee of the month by the café, who rewarded with a £25 Amazon gift card.

Café owner Sarah Pinkerton said: "Thank goodness he was there."

"A few of us are first aid trained, but you just don't know how you will react in an emergency situation, but for him to act as calmly and coolly as he did, it was incredible."

"We are just so proud of him."



## Oar-some effort to raise vital funds

TWO students went on a three-day rowing expedition along the Thames, from Radley College in Oxfordshire to Radley College in London to raise funds for Sea Cadets' On The Water programme.

George Bell and Sebastien Codet rowed for over six hours a day to cover the distance of 97 miles, going through 35 locks

and experiencing "every type of weather imaginable".

They did the challenge unaided, only stopping to sleep in the evenings in a tent they had taken along with them.

George and Sebastien were aiming to raise £1,500 and exceeded their target by 167 per cent, raising a total of £2,505.

"We fundraised for Sea Cadets because we believe that the charity gives amazing opportunities to young people in the most deprived parts of the UK," said George.

"All funds raised will go towards the On The Water programme, which is being run this summer, as it's such a worthwhile cause."



## Field gun contest back

THE field gun competition is back and up and running within the Combined Cadet Forces.

Royal Navy and Royal Marine area instructors are delivering bespoke training to offer cadet forces sections to undertake their own version of the famous Royal Navy Field Gun contest.

The race originated more than 121 years ago during the relief of Ladysmith during the second Boer War.

As well as the history of the field gun, the RN and RM Area Instructors are all specially trained in delivering the cadet field gun syllabus, with an emphasis on teambuilding and leadership potential with the replica of lightweight 12 pounder field guns and limber.

Commander Duncan Raynor, CCF RNR at King Edward's School in Edgbaston, Birmingham, said: "For a Combined Cadet Force (Royal Navy) unit in the middle of landlocked Birmingham, it's not always easy accessing authentic Royal Naval training and experiences.

"We are a long way from the sea, and during Covid, Naval assets have been closed to us anyway.

"It couldn't be more Naval, it combines physical challenge, teamwork, initiative, problem-solving – and it's a great piece of kit and a lot of fun.

"Our partnership school Selly Oak Trust School, are also able to attend and are delighted with the chance to broaden their Royal Naval Cadet experience as well."



# Hello, we're back

ON THE WATER is back and bigger than ever this year, offering some 1,200 children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds the chance to experience the thrill of water-based adventures and earn qualifications this summer.

First held in London in 2019, SCC was unable to run the event last year due to the pandemic.

This year's programme will be giving young people aged nine to 14 a chance to try out sailing, rowing, paddle sports and other water-based activities, free of charge.

This summer's programme will be held in three locations: Royal Docks (London), Crosby (Merseyside) and the Edgbaston Reservoir (Birmingham) from July 26 to August 29.

Qualified instructors will deliver

all sessions on a wide range of water sports, from basic to intermediate level, to young people who might not normally be able to experience such activities.

Through this outreach project, Sea Cadets hopes to encourage young people to progress throughout the programme by gaining certificates and nationally-accredited qualifications as well as the chance to make new friends, boost their self-confidence and expand their horizons.

Young people who took part in our On The Water in 2019 survey reported that it was a highly-positive experience, with 78 per cent of them saying they really enjoyed themselves, 73 per cent saying the event allowed them to challenge themselves and 71 per cent saying the programme helped them to

be more confident to try out new things.

"Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to have limited access to leisure activities while Covid-19 and the prolonged lockdown has brought new challenges for young people," said On The Water coordinator Hugo Dell.

"We hope this project will boost young people's spirits and give them a chance to exercise, have fun and provide them with long-term benefits too."

The parent of a young person who took part in 2019 said: "Thank you for making the summer so memorable and enjoyable for my son.

"When he started he was hesitant to try new things, scared of sailing and terrified of capsizing. He fell in love with kayaking and sailing, is very proud of his paddle sports certificate and has now joined Sea Cadets."

## Litter cleared from river

CHESTER-LE-STREET Sea Cadets rolled up their sleeves and got busy picking up the litter in a popular spot along the River Wear.

Armed with bags and litter picks, the cadets travelled along the river on a giant stand-up paddleboard to clean up the rubbish that had been piling up owing to rising water levels and the popularity of the nearby Riverside Park.

Commanding Officer Carl Griffiths said: "While the cadets were out doing their normal kayaking and paddleboard training over the last few weeks, they noticed the large number of litter lining the banks, likely left over from high flood water.

"As our unit paddle instructor is a big advocate of education about clean and safe waterways, he proposed the excellent idea to combine the learning of paddleboard skills with a litter pick, using a huge 'mega SUP'.

"This promotes teamwork, paddle skills and provides a stable platform to carry a storage bin to put the litter in," he continues.

"The idea was put to the cadets that were boating that evening, and they were raring to go. Afterwards, the cadets were very proud of what they have achieved, and now more water-based litter picking sessions are planned."

Jo Davison, one of the cadet's parents, said: "Not only do they get to enjoy themselves paddling, they get to help the local environment as it reduces the risk of flooding in urban areas and improves the habitat for aquatic plants and animals."

## Roundabout recycling

MOST roundabouts are filled with flowers, but Exmouth Sea Cadets has contributed a small wrecked boat to the redesigned Strand roundabout in the town centre.

Other nautical elements were added by artist Anthony Doble, who brought the seaweed and fish sculptures to life and Harbour Master, Steve Hockings-Thompson, who donated marine-themed artefacts.

The work was part of Exmouth's bid to brighten up the town centre ahead of Britain in Bloom judging. Dignitaries, VIPs and local residents gathered in May to say a public thank you to everyone who has made the project possible.

The redesign project was a labour of love, taking 20 months to complete.

The town's volunteer-led group are hoping to retain their gold award in the South West championships and this year are also entering into the 'large towns' category of the national competition.

Judges are expected ahead of the South West and Britain in Bloom awards in July and August.

## Base in fight against Covid

The NHS is using the Canterbury Unit's headquarters as a Covid vaccination centre.

This follows the closure of the vaccination centre at Kent cricket ground last month, which administered more than 50,000 jabs to health workers, social care workers and other top priority groups.

Canterbury Sea Cadet building in Vauxhall Road will be used by Northgate Medical Practice, with GP practices across the city involved in its day-to-day operation.

It will administer vaccinations to people under 50 and is geared up to inoculate 2,500 people a week.

Dr Navin Kumta, clinical chair of NHS Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), said: "This centre will mean more eligible

people in the local area can be vaccinated and is another step closer to us reaching the target of offering the vaccine to all adults by summer."

The President of the Canterbury Sea Cadet Unit, former Conservative MP and Government Minister, Sir Julian Brazier said: "We are very excited about being part of the national vaccination programme and doing our bit for it by offering our facilities. And we believe we will be the first cadet centre in the country to do so.

"We were approached by the CCG and were only too happy to help.

"Importantly, it won't affect our parade nights on Tuesdays and Fridays because all their things will be packed away."

The building will also be deep cleaned before each parade night.

## Poole presented with DofE award



POOLE Unit welcomed Rear Admiral Nicholas Lambert to celebrate their success in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

Rear Admiral Lambert personally presented Sea Cadets with their awards, praising them for their "remarkable personal achievements".

The DofE is one of Prince Philip's greatest legacies – and poignantly, the cadets first heard of the Duke's death on the day of their qualifying expedition in the New Forest.

Prince Philip was the Sea Cadets Corps' High Admiral for 40 years (1952–1992). Even after he stepped down, the Duke of Edinburgh remained closely connected to, and actively interested in, the life of Sea Cadets. Since the DofE was introduced 65 years ago, it has helped millions of people in 145 countries around the world to be more confident, learn new skills and improve resilience – as well as their job prospects.



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SEVEN of the Royal Navy's smaller vessels took centre stage when they combined for a workout off the Dorset coast.

Needed for a myriad of duties around the UK – from ensuring fishermen stick to legal quotas to training major warships to fend off fast attack craft – the boats of the Coastal Forces Squadron and ships of the Offshore Patrol Squadron are among the busiest in the Fleet.

The high tempo of operations, plus the fact that they often dispersed around the UK, means chances of linking up for combined training is rare.

But a blustery spring day afforded three P2000 patrol boats and small, fast gunboat HMS Scimitar – all from the Coastal Forces Squadron – to sortie from Portsmouth, past the iconic white stacks and lighthouse of the Needles, fighting through increasing chop and swell to link up with a trio of patrol ships south of Bournemouth.

It's rare for all three of the first generation River-class ships – HMS Tyne,

Severn and Mersey – to share the same waters; they are heavily in demand on fishery protection duties, monitoring vessels of interest passing through the Channel, and training Royal Navy navigators.

What followed was a series of Officer of the Watch Manoeuvres to test the navigation and ship-handling of all seven participants.

"Practising working in close proximity with each other is core business for ships of the Overseas Patrol Squadron; it builds skills and confidence for the whole team," said Severn's Commanding Officer Commander Phil Harper.

Careful choreography allowed linear and diamond formations to flow into sailing abreast

and after several iterations, the formations ended in a "bomb burst" where all ships sailed off at different angles. It relied on careful communications and clever timing by each vessel.

HMS Blazer acted as guide boat for the coastal forces craft, commanded by Lieutenant Frances Howes.

"These were challenging conditions! It was good to run out my team in a Sea State 3 and to see them perform well, completing all the tasks smoothly," she said.

"Officer of the Watch manoeuvres are fun to do. It is not often we get all three patrol vessels together and so the chance to work closely with three larger ships was great."

Her boss, Commander Jamie Wells, Commanding Officer of the Coastal Forces Squadron, was aboard to watch his personnel in action.

"This year has been busy for both squadrons delivering on operations as well as preparing for the Carrier Strike Group deployment. It is important to find opportunities

like today to train together and keep ourselves prepared."

Once the exercise was complete, the Coastal Forces Squadron turned back to Portsmouth – with the sea and weather behind them.

"Scimitar was flying back home – we clocked a top speed of 34 knots at one point!" said Commanding Officer Lieutenant Joshua Tyrie.

At just 52ft long, his boat generally remains close to shore on its patrols, but Able Seaman Harry Johnson – passing on signals between the various ships as the navigator's yeoman – relished the variety of the exercise.

"This role is a lot of responsibility for me and working under pressure with a team and communicating clearly helps build towards my promotion course to the next rate," he said.

"We get great opportunities in these smaller vessels, and we are often called upon to support other ships, we recently escorted the two carriers."

Words and pictures: Lt Joe Howell



● HMS Smiter leads HMS Ranger and HMS Scimitar; Below left, HMS Blazer heads out of Portsmouth Harbour; Below right, HMS Tyne manoeuvres to follow her sisters Severn and Mersey

# Small ships, BIG impact



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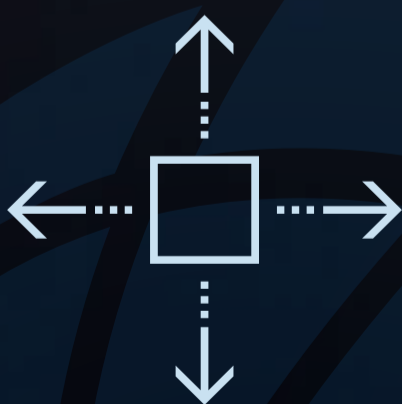


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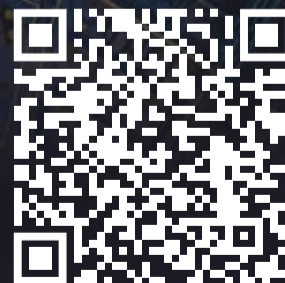
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# THE ULTIMATE TEST



## WOULD-BE SUBMARINE COMMANDERS COMPLETE DEMANDING TRAINING

It is the early hours of the morning, the sun just above the waves, and the control room of HMS Artful is silently expectant.

"Mark that bearing, Queen Elizabeth-class," breaks the calm as the optronics operator spots the fleet flagship.

The duty captain checks the optronics – the imagery collected by the optronics mast, the 21st-Century 'digital periscope' – then looks at the sonar screen to ensure that Queen Elizabeth is being tracked before ordering "Standby Spearfish attack, take QE as target".

And that marks another attack by the Perisher students undertaking the demanding course to determine whether prospective commanders have the 'right stuff'. Those who pass the course will go on to command submarines carrying the nation's nuclear deterrent – or the hunter-killer submarines which protect them from hostile threats.

Much of Perisher – officially the Submarine Command Course – takes place in classrooms and simulators ashore. A highly-experienced hand-picked former commanding officer, known as 'Teacher', and his staff rigorously test

the students over several months – if they are not good enough then they do not proceed to the sea phase.

For the final few weeks, the course shifts to a submarine with warships, a second submarine, helicopters and the UK's new P8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft posing as adversaries to give the students – and the hunters a thorough workout in shallow, confined waters and the open ocean.

Teacher is Commander Ben Haskins, who brought five students to Artful for the ultimate four-week test.

The students were put through a series of high-tempo scenarios, including gathering intelligence on shore installations and warships. Real 'eyes-only' training saw the students rely on nothing but the visual system and a stop watch to keep the submarine safe with warships operating in close proximity, including conducting 'charges' to test the students' ability to take the boat deep at the right time.

There were also interactions with other submarines requiring the students to demonstrate the skill, determination and cunning to achieve the aim. All

of this training happened around the clock further challenging the students' ability to properly manage their sleep to avoid fatigue and maintain focus to make the correct decisions.

One scenario saw Artful act as the submarine threat for HMS Queen Elizabeth during Exercise Strike Warrior with fellow Carrier Strike Group ships along with P8s and Merlin helicopters playing the air and surface threats.

Three students successfully completed the course and were informed of their success with the famous, "Congratulations Captain". At this point the stress and tension of the sea phase lifts but the skills and lessons learnt will follow them into their next assignment as submarine Executive Officers.

Once Teacher and the students departed, it was business as usual for Artful, whose commanding officer, Commander Murray Adam, said: "This has been a very busy few months for the ship's company of HMS Artful, who have excelled themselves in delivering whatever has been asked of them.

"We congratulate the successful Perishers and our focus now returns to the operations that lie ahead."



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# Sporting task groups

PERSONNEL on the Royal Navy's deployed task groups have ensured they are keeping fit with a range of sporting activities.

Sailors and Royal Marines aboard Fleet Flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth took part in a number of sports during a no-fly day, while personnel aboard HMS Albion, flagship of Littoral Response Group (North), donned their running shoes for a flight-deck run.

Boxing, cricket, football, hockey, judo, netball, rowing, rugby and volleyball were all on offer during the grassroots sports day event on the Fleet Flagship, as well as a small swimming pool and flight deck running.



The event, which took place between Exercise Gallic Strike with the French carrier Charles De Gaulle, and the Italian Exercise Falcon Strike, was organised by CPO(PTI) Darren Hoare.

The ship's club swinger said: "Back in October we held our first grassroots sports day at HMS Temeraire. The idea was to help naval sport get up and running again after the first lockdown as well as bring new people into the ship's teams ahead of our deployment.

"The next day people were back at work talking about it so it clearly made a big impression which is why we decided to roll it out again once we were at sea.

"The ship has been working and flying constantly since we left Portsmouth, so the sports day was an opportunity for a bit of morale.

"With such a large flight deck we were able to have nine different activities on offer, including the cricket nets, and we had a swimming pool. It was a chance to meet the team captains and managers and to get in a bit of practice ahead of the fixtures planned for our port visit to Sicily."

CPOMA "Ronnie" Corbett, captain of HMS Queen Elizabeth's cricket team, said: "It was an amazing experience to actually practice cricket on the flight deck of Queen Elizabeth. Normally, you'd lose several balls over the side but as we managed to acquire the nets from the RN cricket association, we were able to conduct a proper training session."

Personnel also had a chance to take part in the Mike Till 50 x 1 mile relay race.

Sixty-nine runners took part with the ship's very own CO Capt Angus Essenhigh taking the first leg, in very warm conditions.

The top male and female went to LH Paton 5:15 and AB Mclenaghan 6:00. The total time for the 50 x 1 mile was 5hr 2min 2secs.

Royal Navy and Royal Marine officers on board HMS Albion commemorated the 77th Anniversary of the D-Day landings by running 5km around the ship.

The run was completed on the eve of the 77th D-Day anniversary and the 50th Baltic Operations exercise; the premier maritime-focused exercise in the Baltic Region.

The run involved 16 laps of the upper deck, with the fastest time being 19 minutes 10 seconds, achieved by Lt Thomas Brophy, Assistant Marine Engineer in HMS Albion.

Lt Paddy Richardson, Aviation Task Force Staff Officer and co-lead of the event, said: "It was a great opportunity on the eve of Baltops 50, to commemorate the eve of D-Day on a vessel designed for amphibious operations and raise some money for worthwhile causes in the process."

The event included 43 sailors and marines signing up to take part in the event, and £460 was raised for both the ship's charity 'Claire House Children Hospice' and the RNRMC.

A 5 km run was decided, with each kilometre representing one of the five beaches from the D-Day landings. Speaking about this significance, Captain Simon Alcroft, Royal Marine Operations Officer Bravo for LRG(N) and co-lead of the event, remarked: "Amphibious Operations are inherently joint. The complexity surrounding projecting Commandos ashore in an operational construct requires a deep understanding of what your colleagues do and what they bring to the party. Events like this help to form those strong working relationships."



## Cutlass joins drive to get sailors out on the water

THE Royal Navy Sailing Association (RNSA) have commissioned a new yacht – Cutlass – as part of their drive to get sailors and marines out on the water.

The red Corby 29 yacht is race-ready and it represents a new way to promote grassroots sailing opportunities.

RNSA has a long history of ties to those serving in the Royal Navy so the launch of Cutlass was celebrated in traditional fashion with a commissioning ceremony.

This nod to official naval etiquette was also a golden chance to finally assemble a small number of volunteers who have spent time preparing the boat in lockdown.

Now that restrictions are fading away and with some warmer summer weather there is no better time to get out on the water. RNSA are keen to enable this and have started by offering free membership to all serving personnel for the rest of 2021.

Commodore Phil Warwick, the CEO of RNSA, said: "We are incredibly

excited to officially launch RNSA's newly acquired yacht Cutlass. In keeping with naval tradition we have commissioned this striking red Corby 29 in an official ceremony that included a blessing from RNSA's chaplain Fr Tom Pyke and the obligatory dousing of the bowsprit in bubbly by Deborah our membership secretary."

Officer Cadet Henry Wilson has led on maintenance work over the winter. He was involved in collecting the yacht and sailing it from Ramsgate on the East coast.

He said: "It was a race just to get the yacht back to Gosport before the November lockdown. It was great to see that even on this first sail the boat is pretty fast and we made it. Over the winter we pulled her out of the water to sand the bottom and apply coats of anti-foul and after some rigging jobs she is ready to get back in the water. It is great to have launched her and I am looking forward to racing her."

The event was attended by RNSA's

Vice Commodore, Captain Peter Laughton, the sailors who have helped prepare the boat over winter and by new partners at TeamO, who provided high-tech lifejackets.

Cdre Warwick said: "This new boat greatly increases the opportunities for our sailors and it is being launched at the perfect time. It is great to see how many people have worked to get it to this stage."

Cutlass is the latest in a quiver of yachts that are available to race. Jolly Jack Tar is a J109 race yacht that already races out of Hornet Services Sailing Club in Gosport and there is also Jackaroo, a J80 race yacht based in Plymouth.

Sailing takes place on Wednesday evenings and on weekends. In addition to yachting, there are also a host of dinghy sailing opportunities at local service sailing centres and new courses that are being offered. The season is free for those who sign up before the end of July. Visit [rnsa.org.uk](http://rnsa.org.uk) or call 023 9252 1100.





# Jack's all right, he's picked up top clubz trophy

HMS Protector's Leading Physical Trainer Jack Basher has won the PTI trophy of the year.

LPT Basher was awarded the Tony Tyrwhitt-Bettridge Trophy by the Commanding Officer of HMS Temeraire, Commander Gregor Birse.

The trophy was presented to the Royal Navy Physical Training specialisation by the

widow of former Chief Petty Officer Physical Trainer Tony Tyrwhitt-Bettridge, who died at the age of 43.

TB's widow asked that the cup be presented annually to the PTI who had made the most meritorious contribution to the furtherance of sport, recreation, physical and adventurous training within his or her unit.

LPT Basher was the unanimous winner for

2020 for showing commitment, enthusiasm and willingness that he gave to improve the unit's morale and operational capability.

His unselfish willingness in organising and managing whole-ship commitments above and beyond what is expected of him.

For enhancing sport, recreation, physical and adventurous training for the benefit of all in his unit and for his personal qualities

with a particular focus on his ability to inspire, dynamism and 'can-do' attitude.

As well as the trophy, LPT Basher received a framed citation and £200 from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Protector is currently undergoing Operational Sea Training ahead of her return to the ice following the most extensive refit/maintenance period in her history.



# Silver for Jade



AN Officer Cadet from HMS King Alfred secured a cup winner's medal as her side, Portsmouth FC Women, beat Southampton 3-2 on penalties in the Hampshire Cup final.

OC Jade Widdows, 26, is in her third season playing for Portsmouth and the team have had their season severely disrupted during the pandemic.

"Everything for us was suspended, no games or training so we have had very limited contact as a squad," said Jade, who is a college sports lecturer in her civilian life. We've demonstrated our resilience, we have high expectations, and have fought hard to ensure we take something positive from what has been a difficult season for many."

The match was hard fought, finishing 1-1 in normal time, but the Portsmouth side prevailed with a score of 3-2 after a tense penalty shoot-out.

Jade, who plays as a striker, added: "It brings a great sense of pride, to represent Pompey and keep the tradition going. This is the club's 12th consecutive Hampshire cup win so I would be disappointed if we were to end that long-standing record! These are the moments we live for, and I want to make the most of every single opportunity I get to experience them!"

Jade recently joined the RNR as an Officer Cadet and is preparing to complete the Accelerated Officer Programme this summer which will see her undertake Phase 1 training and Initial Sea Time in a compressed eight-week timescale.

"I want to be pushed to my full potential and I want the opportunities to grow and develop individually and professionally. I hate the thought of 'coasting' along through life and need a constant challenge."

Pictures: David Haines and Kieron Loulouis on behalf of Portsmouth FC

## Awesome activities for Duncan's crew

PERSONNEL from HMS Duncan got the opportunity to embark on a week of adventurous training in Cornwall.

The 12 junior sailors from the different departments took the chance to get to know each other better and bond while undertaking numerous activities including surfing, kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding and mountain biking.

LPT Mathew James, who organised the week, said: "It was a great way in which new members of the ship could integrate and develop a solid sense of togetherness."

"These are all important attributes in aiding the continued work to bring HMS Duncan out of her regeneration period."



## Jane takes charge

JANE WEST has taken over as the Director of Community Rugby for the Royal Navy Rugby Union.

She joins the union's executive team with a wealth of rugby experience, having been involved with the RNRU since the mid 90s as a player, team captain, manager and assistant director of rugby.

Jane's Royal Navy playing career began in 1996 against an Army development side.

She later went onto play in the inaugural Inter-services match against the Royal Air Force in 2001 and continued to play in every IS championship, only taking a break in 2005 due to her pregnancy.

In 2006, a neck injury forced an early retirement from playing but she continued to have influence on the Royal Navy Women's game.

In 2015 Jane became the team manager for the Women's Senior XV and Development Squads during which time she also undertook the demanding role as assistant director of Rugby(W). Her achievements include being the driving force for the introduction of the Royal Navy Women's Development Squad in 2016.

In addition to her roles within



the RNRU, Jane has also been the women's representative on the Army v Navy match day committee and was the women's team manager for UK Armed Forces Rugby before becoming a member of the UKAF Executive Committee.

Jane's commitments to rugby and developing the game, earned her the Value the Volunteer award in 2017.

"Community Rugby is the baseline from which our future representative players, coaches, officials and support staff are borne, it is the very first step of an individual's rugby journey and where the first of many rugby memories are made," she said.

To get involved in Royal Navy Community rugby contact [docr@navyrugbyunion.co.uk](mailto:docr@navyrugbyunion.co.uk)

Picture: Alligin Photography

## All change for AT sites

ROYAL Navy Adventurous Training has taken over command of two water sports centres in the West Country.

Falmouth Water Sports Activity Centre and the RN/RM Sail Training Centre at the Camber in Plymouth were run by RNAS Culdrose and 30 Cdo IX Group respectively.

The two sites were formally handed over to Commander Sean Winkle by Culdrose's Executive Officer, Cdr Ken Barlow and Commanding Officer of 30 Cdo IX Group, Lt Col Will Norcott and renamed the Royal Navy Water Activity Centre Falmouth and Camber.

Cdr Barlow said: "With Falmouth Docks now being increasingly used by SURFLOT and the RFA, we saw an opportunity to develop the facility and provide a more diverse offering to a wider range of users by handing over Command to Royal Navy Adventurous Training to offer improved and widely accessible facilities for the RN/RM."

For further details on AT/CA training opportunities and courses please contact the following: RNWAC Falmouth: Tel: 01326315501 Email: [NAVYCUATBOOKINGS@MOD.GOV.UK](mailto:NAVYCUATBOOKINGS@MOD.GOV.UK)

RNWAC Camber: Tel:017522836926 Email: [Bethany.chantrell104@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Bethany.chantrell104@mod.gov.uk)



# Mission possible for Scott



HMS Scott has left for her latest mission – to survey the North Atlantic and collect vital data.

Scott left the UK following a maintenance period in Falmouth and rigorous training off the South coast.

Her primary task is surveying the deep oceans, collecting bathymetric data and information for submarine navigation for the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO).

Scott is a world-leader in deep ocean surveys and often deploys alone to remote parts of the globe collecting enormous swathes of data that sometimes during a deployment can measure up to the size of Austria. HMS Scott alone has gathered data for 3.7 percent of the world's oceans during her lifetime.

This year it's been busy for the 87-strong crew, especially the Marine Engineers. HMS Scott is one of few ships in the Royal Navy that operate a ballast system, enabling her to increase or decrease her draught as required. Following a long, successful 2020 at sea, she returned home and began a complete overhaul in Falmouth.

One of the engineering challenges was renovating the ballast system that had been in operation since she was built in 1997. Working closely with industry partners, the engineering team set about conducting the

required work.

For their dedication to restoring the ship to her best material state in years, the Engineering Department were awarded a Herbert Lott Efficiency Award.

Leading Engineering Technician (LET) Leah Jones, who has served in the RN for six years, said: "Integrating new systems with old, can pose a real challenge. However, it's been rewarding to install major upgrades that's breathing life back into Scott in her 24th year, ready for another busy summer in the North Atlantic."

The deployment is the first time AB (Hydrography and Meteorology) Josh Kime has gone to sea since joining two years ago.

He said: "Since joining, the maintenance period, has provided ample opportunity to practice shore side survey techniques such as levelling and installing of tide gauges, I'm looking forward to going to sea. When deployed I monitor the quality of data being collected and ensure the correct environmental parameters are used throughout the survey. It'll be very rewarding putting my training into practice, helping HMS Scott to deliver on her tasking."

HMS Scott's Commanding Officer Commander Tom Harrison said: "Scott has been through a most challenging period in

her history.

"It is down to the hard work and determination of my crew that we are now ready to return to our vitally important role. We will conduct survey operations in the North Atlantic, collecting data with our high-tech, cutting-edge survey systems which will then go toward producing charts for submarine and surface navigation.

"I navigated HMS Scott in 2013, and it's fantastic coming back to the ship. I have an enthusiastic crew of highly-trained specialists, whether that be for collecting data or in the supporting functions of engineering, logistics or seamanship. It's a great privilege to be their Commanding Officer.

"The ship's unique role means that it can sometimes be the unsung hero of the Royal Navy. Operating thousands of miles from land, she does sometimes go a little under the radar, but her work is vital for our security and safety, and as such vital for our nation."

As well as her high-tech survey equipment, Scott sailed with 1,800 sausages, 3,000 eggs, 6,000 rashers of bacon, 500 litres of washing up liquid and 1,440 toilet rolls.

## KEEP UP WITH THE SHIP

Follow @HMSScottRN and @RoyalNavy on Twitter

## Shipbuilders sought to replace RFA vessels

THE challenge has been laid down to UK industry to build three support ships to accompany the Royal Navy on its global operations.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace has launched a competition to design three vessels capable of harnessing next-generation shipbuilding design and technology to deliver spare parts, food, ammunition and supplies to warships and task groups on active duty.

The trio of Fleet Solid Support ships are intended to replace three Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels: the aged Fort Rosalie and Fort Austin from the mid-1970s and the newer, larger,

more capable RFA Fort Victoria.

The latter – now over 30 years old – is accompanying HMS Queen Elizabeth's carrier group.

Their successors are similarly intended to be an integral part of any carrier strike/amphibious task group, as well as work with the rest of the Fleet, wherever they are needed.

"The Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service is very much looking forward to the competition process commencing that will deliver three new Fleet Solid Support ships," said Commodore David Eagles, Commodore RFA.

"When built, these modern cutting-edge RFA ships will continue to provide the necessary munitions, food, stores and provisions to support Carrier Strike Task Groups and the Royal Navy supporting Global Britain well into the future."

The MOD's Defence Equipment and Support organisation is inviting companies to throw their hat in the ring to tender for the design and build of the support ships.

Although the successful bidder can work in partnership with international companies, the ships themselves must be assembled in a British shipyard.



## Navy couple marry – at fourth attempt

AFTER three postponements over the past two years, a Royal Navy couple who met during their basic training tied the knot at HM Naval Base Portsmouth with a handful of family and friends at the military chapel.

While many people have only suffered delays to their marriage plans since March last year, Lance Corporal Jake Kennedy had to deploy with the Commando Logistic Regiment for winter training in Norway. This meant his planned March 2019 wedding to Petty Officer (Nurse) Jo Parke was pushed back.

Little did they know this would force it into the path of a global pandemic which would strike when Jake, 29, was training in Norway again last year.

An August 2020 plan to wed in Italy, to combine their marriage and mutual love of travel, and an attempt in January for special permission to use the naval base chapel during lockdown, also failed.

The tumult to their plans was compounded by a motorbike accident suffered by Jo's father, and her grandfather also being too ill to travel to Portsmouth.

Instead, the bride, who has moved cabins twice since buying her wedding dress, was given away by Naval Base Commander, Commodore JJ Bailey.

Jo, 30, said: "We didn't want to wait any longer and both of our families were keen for us to have it formalised.

"Jake and I are both so humbled that the Navy have really stepped up for the both of us, in the sense that we are far away from home, family members can't attend, but they have tried to make it really special and actually happen.

Armed with a special licence from the Archbishop of Canterbury to be married at St Ann's, the Royal Marine and Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nurse finally said "I do".

Navy Chaplain Rev Phillip

Amey led the ceremony.

Signaller Jake, who is based at RM Chivenor in Devon, said that there was never any intention of a grand lavish occasion.

"We've always been a fan of a small intimate things," he said. "We both take things in our stride; we're very grateful for the chance to have finally been married and are glad to have it made formal.

"The Naval Base Commander also very kindly opened his garden to us following the service, and we are both so grateful for him for agreeing to give Jo away."

Jake's mum saw her only child married to someone he met in a chance encounter at HMS Raleigh seven years ago.

Royal Marine recruits were spending a week of their basic training there, and hearing each other's familiar accent in the galley they carried on chatting.

Waiting until later this year to marry would have been difficult; Jo will deploy to HMS Queen Elizabeth for the latter part of the Carrier Strike Group deployment to Asia-Pacific, due to return to Portsmouth in December.

Indeed, many of the intended guests are on the deployment and missed the wedding.

Homecoming from CSG21 will mark the end of two busy years for Jo which has seen her assisting the NHS in critical care at the city's Queen Alexandra Hospital and the vaccine rollout across southern England.

A honeymoon will have to wait; a trip to New Zealand the aim. It was back to work for both two days after their wedding.

Commodore Bailey said: "I was humbled at being asked to give away the bride and seeing how the Royal Navy has ensured that two of its own are being made to feel so special on their wedding day. Jake and Jo are a credit to their families and the Armed Forces and I wish them well for their lives together."

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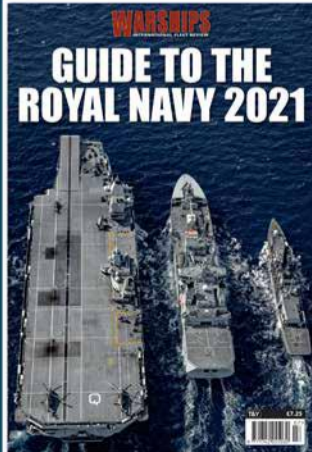
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