



NAVY NEWS

FEBRUARY 2023

HMS Lancaster escorts the USS Chinook in the Strait of Hormuz during the Type 23 frigate's first patrol since taking over from HMS Montrose as the Royal Navy's forward deployed warship, see page 5

Picture: Lt Cdr Jason Jones

**Inside:
RN Fleet
Poster
2023**

STRAIT BACK TO BUSINESS



Inside: ■ HMS Tamar in Indian Ocean ■ HMS Medway's Caribbean rescue

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GOODBYE Pacific.
Hello Indian.

After more than a year in one ocean, HMS Tamar passed effortlessly into another as the focus of her five-year deployment shifts focus for the next few months.

The patrol 'patch' of the ship and her sister Spey extends from the eastern seaboard of Africa to the west coast of the Americas (North, Central and South).

Most of the effort in 2022 was focused on the western Pacific Rim: Japan, the Korean Peninsula, Philippines, Australasia and the South Pacific Islands.

But as the year drew to a close, HMS Tamar slipped her moorings in Yokohama and began the long journey west, destination the Bay of Bengal, via Brunei and Kuala Lumpur. A voyage of more than 4,500 miles (roughly the equivalent of Portsmouth to the West Indies if you're using an Atlantic yardstick).

It was the ship's second visit to Brunei – but the first chance to experience the small sultanate as Covid restrictions on her maiden visit meant none of the ship's 50 crew were able to get beyond the jetty.

Tamar was greeted off Brunei by the fast patrol boat KDP Syafaat

for some joint exercises and manoeuvres.

The ship's visit coincided with the Royal Brunei Navy's annual open day, when personnel allow their families to look around their vessels.

More than 850 guests were welcomed onboard HMS Tamar in just three hours, where they got the chance to tour the ship and talk to HMS Tamar ship's company about life in the Royal Navy.

Brunei is an important ally of the UK in the region, playing an extremely important role in support of British Forces providing a vital geographical outpost in the region.

There's a battalion of Gurkhas, small garrison troop and an Army Air Corps helicopter flight stationed in the country, whose jungle terrain is ideal for training soldiers and Royal Marines in one of the harshest fighting environments.

None of this was news to caterer Able Seaman Rana who works in Tamar's galley. He served in the Gurkhas – and in Brunei – before changing careers five years ago.

There were a number of defence engagement activities to carry out, including hosting British High Commissioner, John Virgoe, accompanied by his son and the

British Defence Attaché for an informal tour of the ship.

The ship's company dipped into the long history of seafaring in Brunei with a visit to the national maritime museum which hosts its counterpart of the Mary Rose, a wreck recovered off the coast which reveals trading links with China, Vietnam and Thailand in the late 15th and early 16th Centuries.

And in a match which mirrored the scoreline of the World Cup final (minus some of the star names), Tamar's footballers were within five minutes of an historic victory over the Royal Brunei Navy.

Christmas and New Year were celebrated in Malaysia and then it was on to the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, an Indian archipelago stretching along a north-south axis for several hundred miles some 600 miles East of the Indian mainland.

With this being the first foray so far west, Tamar's command team immediately sat down with the Indian regional commander, Lieutenant General Ajai Singh and the UK's Defence and Naval

advisers, as well as the local Indian Navy commanders to gain a greater understanding of the region and the challenges of operating in the vast Bay of Bengal, and discuss joint patrols, exercises and look at opportunities to work together.

Tamar's visit to Port Blair and patrol of the Indian Ocean builds on the visit of the UK's Carrier Strike Group to the country in 2021. It raises the curtain on further engagement later this year with frigate HMS Lancaster, based in Bahrain, and a Royal Marines amphibious task group – as well as a ceremonial evening reception/sunset ceremony for local VIPs and residents, attended by a good 80 people all eager to learn more both about the ship and her mission in the region.

As well as the usual ceremonial formalities, the five-day visit to Port Blair allowed for some more unusual activities, including a yoga session led by Padmini Jog – one of the country's most respected teachers and revered by the Indian Armed Forces. Among her followers are the Indian and UK prime ministers. Tamar's Indian hosts had activities

lined up from the moment the British warship arrived – from the 'big picture' and operational matters for the command team, through to sport and visits for the ship's company who probably would never drop in

“I loved the vibrancy: the islands were beautiful and the kindness of our hosts was striking.”

– MIDSHIPMAN ALICE RAY



A PASSAGE TO IN



(whom the sailors got to feed) than humans.

Today the entire chain serves as a strategically important base for India in the middle of the Bay of Bengal... and a holiday destination for Indians on the 'mainland'.

Snorkelling and scuba diving is among the best in the world, but since the 2004 tsunami, caution has to be exercised as the wave carried saltwater crocodiles from Thailand and Indonesia into Andaman waters – the creatures have settled in the islands.

The islands are famous as home of the Sentinelese, regarded as the most isolated tribe in the world.

They live on their own small, forested island called North Sentinel (roughly the size of Manhattan), resist all contact with outsiders and attacking anyone who comes near – it's forbidden to even make contact with them. Team Tamar were advised... and heeded the warnings.

The visitors were heading for a famous away victory against local sailors but a bone-dry football pitch and searing heat saw Tamar's 2-0 lead pegged back to 2-2 with ten minutes on the clock, and then a British collapse leading to three goals conceded before the ref blew

the whistle.

Commander Teilo Elliot-Smith, Tamar's Commanding Officer, said that throughout his ship's stay, he and his sailors were warmly received, with widespread interest shown by the Andaman populace, Indian Armed Forces and the Indian media; the latter gave the patrol vessel extensive coverage.

"Tamar was the first Royal Navy warship to visit the islands since HMS Montrose – 16 years ago," he said.

"The Indian military were very open and keen to receive and discuss shared security challenges."

Cdr Elliot-Smith continued: "Through coming here we have garnered a much better sense of

the regional security challenges and how the UK can complement regional strategy in delivering security in the maritime domain.

"At the same time this is a destination combining tropical wonder and Indian colour, ensuring the ship's company have had a spectacular experience they will never forget."

Chef Gourav Pandey – who hails from India originally – said: "I took a road trip and could understand the cultural differences from mainland India by chatting

in Hindi and Bengali. The clean beaches, birdlife and plants were really interesting and the food in the region was good."

Midshipman Alice Ray added: "I loved the vibrancy; the islands were beautiful and the kindness of our hosts was striking."

Throughout her stay Tamar was

hosted by the Indian corvette INS Karmuk and upon sailing from Port Blair for the next leg of her Indian Ocean patrol, the two warships conducted various combined training in company with a Dornier maritime patrol aircraft.

Next stop; Chittagong, Bangladesh.

**Pictures:
LPhoto Chris Sellars**

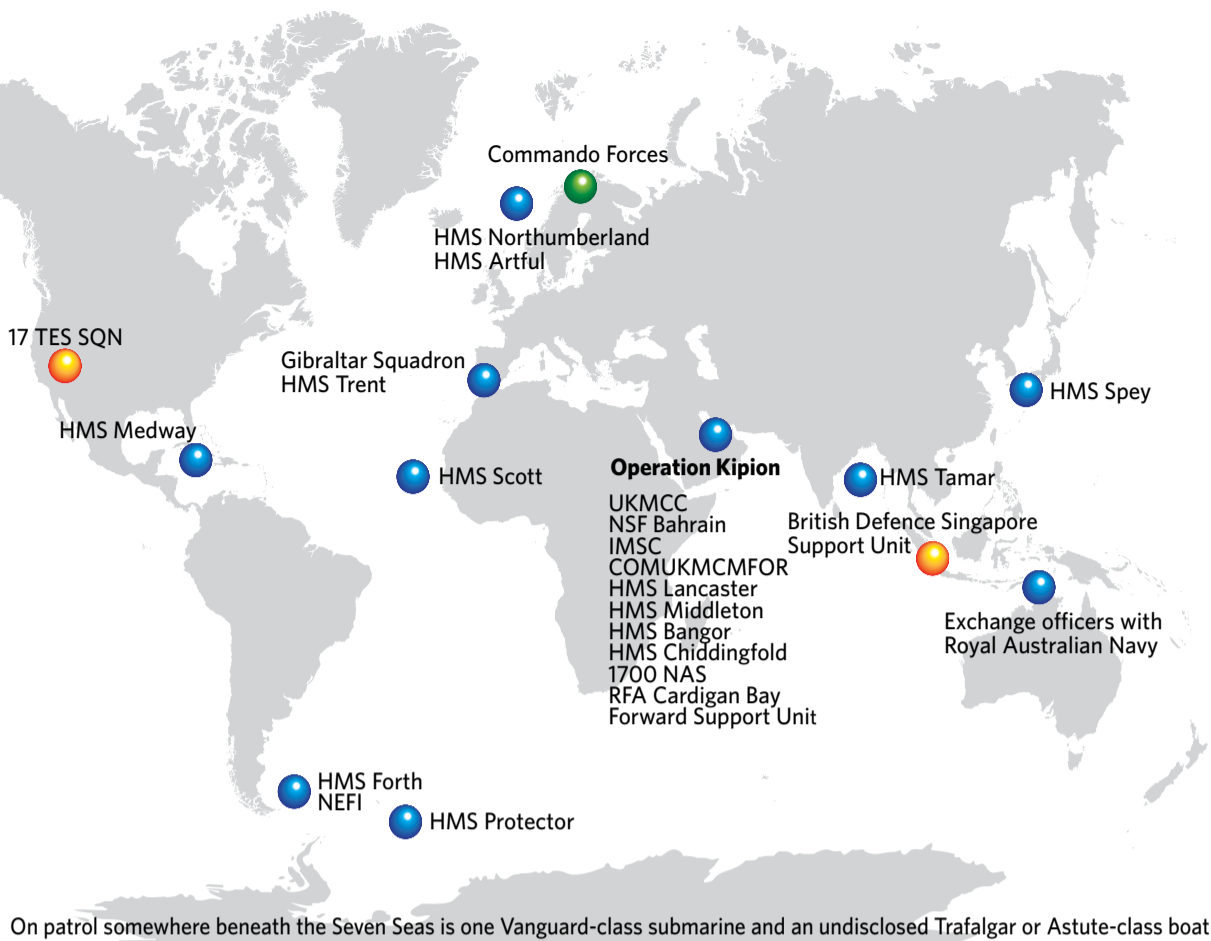
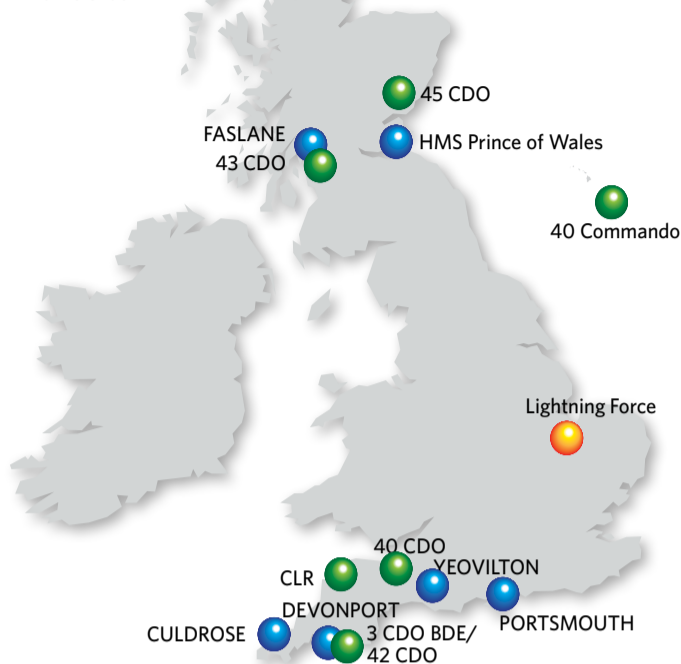
DIA



Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Somerset
HMS Hurworth
HMS Tyne
HMS Mersey
HMS Severn
HMS Montrose
HMS Portland
HMS Dauntless
HMS Duncan
HMS Defender

Coastal Forces Squadron
XV Patrick Blackett
Project Wilton
814 NAS
815 NAS
824 NAS
825 NAS
RFA Tiderace
RFA Fort Victoria



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



GLOBAL | MODERN | READY

TYPE 23 frigate **HMS Lancaster** has completed her first deployment in the Gulf (see pages 1 and 5) since taking over as the Royal Navy's forward deployed warship from HMS Montrose.

HMS Tamar sailed to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as her first port of call in the Indian Ocean (see pages 2-3). The visit followed a week-long visit to Brunei.

The Royal Navy is helping scientists warn of potentially devastating tsunamis by researching huge underwater volcanoes on the fringe of Antarctica (see pages 16-17). **HMS Protector** used her state-of-the-art sensors to scan a series of peaks in the South Sandwich Islands, one of the most remote British territories on the planet.

A thousand **Royal Marines** are heading back to the Arctic (see pages 14-15) for their annual workout in Norway. Marines from 40 and 47 **Commando** completed five weeks' of exercises in the jungle of Oahu in Hawaii (see right).

A Royal Navy warship has tracked the movements of a Russian warship in the North Sea (see page 6). **HMS Portland** kept watch as guided missile frigate, Admiral Gorshkov, and accompanying tanker, Kama, sailed close to the UK.

The crew of **HMS Medway** rescued all five crew of an ocean-going tug in the Caribbean when the vessel started to sink in choppy seas (see page 13). The offshore patrol vessel – the Royal Navy's permanent presence in the region, conducting her first patrol of the year – plucked the tug crew off the large barge of sand they had been towing when their tug began to flood.

Royal Marines are getting new amphibious vehicles after a £140m international agreement (see page 7). The UK's **Commando Forces** will receive 60 of the **Future All-Terrain Vehicles** to replace the current fleet of Vikings and the older Bv 206.

The Royal Navy's drone squadron have taken their expertise in uncrewed systems one step further by building their own quadcopter (see pages 18 and 23). Personnel from **700X Naval Air Squadron** built their first remotely-piloted air system in a milestone moment for the Culdrose-based team.

Attack submarine **HMS Artful** and frigate **HMS Northumberland** joined Norway's annual naval workout to test submarine commanders of tomorrow and safeguard NATO's northern flank (see page 11). The fortnight-long **Flotex22** involved most of the Norwegian fleet, plus Danish warships, F-35 stealth fighters, long-range maritime patrol aircraft. **HMS Northumberland's** flight, **Tungsten**, from **814 NAS** also took part, marking the end of a busy year for the squadron.

Fleet Air Arm legend **Commander Ian Tidball** has flown his final flight for the Royal Navy (see page 9). His 32-year career as a pilot has seen him spend more than 171 days in the skies in 35 different types of aircraft.

Three Royal Navy sailors joined the Australians' biggest deployment of the winter, spending a month with a task group roaming Asia (see page 35). They seized the opportunity presented by the well-established **Long Look** programme.

The Countess of Wessex praised 200 future naval leaders at the most prestigious passing-out parade of the year at **Britannia Royal Naval College** (see page 27). She took the salute at Lord High Admiral's Divisions as 170 Royal Navy cadets, 30 officers from international navies and 17 cadets from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary completed months of intensive training.

Twenty-seven sailors, Royal Marines and Reservists from across the spectrum of command, leadership and branches were singled out in the King's first **New Year's Honours** list (see page 29).

The first defenders of the Falklands have finally been honoured for their efforts (see page 31). A memorial plinth to the **Royal Marines** of Naval Party 8901 was unveiled in the grounds of Government House – the building the commandos defended in April 1982... and liberated two months later.

The Eagle Owl has landed at Loch Lomond Bird of Prey Centre after being relocated from the Home of the UK Submarine Service – **HM Naval Base Clyde** (see page 39). The 19-year-old bird of prey, dubbed **Miranda**, was first spotted at the Argyll and Bute defence site two years ago.

Captain Caroline (Caz) Palmer, a former sea cadet and long-time volunteer with the youth charity, has been appointed as Hebridean Island Cruises' first ever permanent female Master (see page 32).

Finally, this edition includes your pullout and keep **Royal Navy Fleet poster**, (see centre pages).

LIFE OF MAGNUM PI FOR ROYAL MARINES

UNDER the cover of darkness Royal Marines carried out ambushes in the rainforests of Hawaiian paradise island Oahu during intensive jungle exercises with the US Marine Corps.

Marines from 40 and 47 **Commando** have spent five weeks more than 7,000 miles from home operating in the Pacific island's dense wilderness – patrolling, covertly carrying out reconnaissance missions and ambushing the 'enemy' as they refined and refreshed techniques for jungle warfare.

The jungle – like the Arctic or desert – is an environment the Royal Marines have come to master, with generations of commandos learning how to survive and fight in one of the world's most hostile climates during training that often takes place in Brunei or Belize.

With 40 **Commando** increasingly geared to operating across the Pacific, they have branched out and carried out exercises in Guam last year with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and now Oahu – famously the location of American crime drama television series, *Magnum PI*, starring Tom Selleck – with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

At the same time jungle training was taking place, the small boat raiding experts from Plymouth-based 47 **Commando** carried out amphibious training, including familiarising themselves with the USMC's small raiding craft and conducting day and night beach reconnaissance training in Kaneohe Bay.

The jungle mission started at Camp Pendleton – the major USMC base in California – where lectures took place before flying west to Oahu.

Techniques and experiences were shared between the marines before shooting and movement drills – plus demonstrations on abseiling – prepared troops further for their foray into the wilderness.

The first few days in the jungle involved patrolling, navigation, break contact drills and ambush exercises – for some 40 **Commando** marines this was the first time they had operated in this environment.

"The new environment took a bit of getting used to, as the standard skills and drills we're all so familiar with were made much more challenging in the jungle," said Marine Luke Ruston.

Two teams of seven commandos were given orders to move to two observation posts, patrolling through the jungle and observing their target overnight.

Once information was gathered, the teams combined to ambush their 'enemy' along the track they'd been observing.



ALOHA: Royal Marines operate across Oahu with their US Marines Corps counterparts

Nighttime covert reconnaissance tasking followed as they gathered information on a route for a larger force to move through.

Mne Ruston added: "We moved quickly over the difficult terrain and fought through thick jungle."

"After 48 hours on target, we covertly patrolled from the target area, linked again with the other team under the cover of darkness and made it to our pickup point for first light."

After a short break to explore Oahu, with trips to the famous north shore, Waikiki beaches and a visit to the Pearl Harbor Museum and USS Arizona memorial, the commandos headed back into the jungle for their

final exercise.

The commandos were given free reign of a mock Middle Eastern villages at the USMC's training area in Bellows, located on the south eastern side of the island, complete with a marketplace and props, actors playing civilians and 'enemies' including high-value targets.

"We practiced close-quarters battle techniques, room entries and building up eventually to compound clearing with the full team, before being given several different scenarios that we had to deal with, including linking up with local elders, building assaults and high value target recovery," said Mne Ruston.



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NEW COP ON THE BEAT

A ROYAL Marine of 42 Commando's Lima Company provides cover for a comrade as they practise board-and-search techniques on HMS Lancaster's first patrol of many as the Royal Navy's new 'guardian of the Gulf'.

After the Operation Kipion 'truncheon' was passed over by HMS Montrose, her sister has accepted the challenge – to ensure lawful seafarers enjoy safe passage and clamp down on illicit activities, notably drugs smuggling – for the next three years.

It's a task made slightly easier by the depth of knowledge of operations and the patterns of life in the region among the ship's company... because until last summer, they were aboard Montrose.

"Although on paper Lancaster and Montrose are the same class of ship, there are many subtle differences between the two," explained Commander Paul Irving, Commanding Officer of Port Crew who took charge of Lancaster in December from the Starboard team .

"Lancaster has some new and unfamiliar equipment to us, and even some of the light switches are in different places."

One 200-strong team (including the Wildcat flight from 815 NAS and the RM boarding party) spend four months on operations, while a second crew back in the UK enjoys leave and undertakes training which intensifies as the date of return to Bahrain nears.

In theatre, there's a two-week package of live training led by FOST to ensure that the incoming crew remains ready to conduct any operation.

"Throughout these challenges, the crew displayed a brilliant attitude, living up to HMS Lancaster's motto: 'Difficulties Be Damned', to keep going and keep winning despite the lack of sleep," said Lieutenant Commander Jason 'Jonah' Jones, Weapons Engineer Officer.

And then it was down to business. Side-by-side with US Navy patrol ships, Lancaster operated in the Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Gulf, working with the International Maritime Security Construct's Sentinel Task Force to ensure the safe passage of merchant traffic.

Once away from the entry to/exit from the Gulf, Lancaster swapped task forces and joined CTF150, dedicated to deterring and stopping criminal/terrorist activity.

Lancaster intercepted one suspect dhow, but a concerted search by her Royal Marines and sailors did not result in a 'find'.

Commander Irving said despite the lack of a haul, HMS Lancaster nevertheless "made a visible contribution to the coalition effort to prevent smuggling throughout the region" through her presence and actions.

He continued: "We've made a great start to our first deployment in Lancaster. Over the coming months we will continue getting to grips with our new ship, ensuring that the ship stands ready to reassure and protect our allies and partners, and to deter illicit activity at sea throughout the region."

The hard work by the crew to bring Lancaster up to speed and her first operations was rewarded with hands to bathe in the Arabian Sea where, even in December, the water temperature is at least 20 Celsius. A depth of more than 3,000 metres didn't deter the ship's company from leaping, flipping or flopping into the sea.

Having been at sea for Christmas Day – a festive workout on the flight deck, turkey dinner served by the officers, phone calls home to loved ones and Yuletide fare on the TV in the mess decks – New Year was enjoyed alongside in Dubai.

Thanks to her berth, Lancaster's flight deck offered some of the best seats in the house for watching the emirate's spectacular firework displays to welcome 2023, while the frigate joined other ships in harbour in blasting their sirens on the stroke of midnight in celebration.

With the new year came a new team directing Lancaster's activities with CTF 150.

For the 11th time command of the task group is led by the Royal Navy as Captain Jim Byron took the helm from Rear Admiral Abdullah Al-Mutairi of the Royal Saudi Navy and his staff after six months in charge.

Under Saudi leadership, the international force scored six drug busts, capturing more than 11 tonnes of hashish, three tonnes of heroin, two tonnes of methamphetamines and three tonnes of opium – taking over £150m drugs off the streets (Montrose accounted for one tenth of that total thanks to her success before departing theatre).

Capt Byron is determined to build upon the "huge success" of his predecessor.

"Through persistent military presence, we will do all we can to maintain maritime security across the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman," he said.

"We will ensure the legitimate use of the global maritime sea routes and disrupting the illicit activity of terrorist organisations and narcotics traffickers."

He draws upon a staff made largely of RN personnel, but supported by officers and ranks from the New Zealand and Italian Navy to direct the operation, typically carried out by half a dozen warships from the 38w nations in the Combined Maritime Forces. .

They cover the Red Sea, the Arabian Gulf, the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and the wider Indian Ocean and include three of the world's busiest maritime chokepoints – the Suez Canal, the Bab el-Mandeb and Strait of Hormuz.





PORT ON CALL: HMS Portland tracks the movements of Russian frigate Admiral Gorshkov and accompanying tanker, Kama, in the North Sea

PORTLAND AND THE RUSSIANS

TYPE 23 TRACKS ADMIRAL GORSHKOV IN THE NORTH SEA

A ROYAL Navy frigate tracked the movements of a Russian warship in the North Sea in January.

HMS Portland monitored the Russian guided missile frigate, Admiral Gorshkov, and accompanying tanker, Kama, as they sailed in international waters close to the UK.

The Type 23 frigate initially joined the Norwegian Coast Guard vessel Bergen, as the Russian ships transited south through the Norwegian Sea.

Portland and her Merlin helicopter embarked – both equipped with cutting-edge sonars, sensors and torpedoes for specialist operations – then tracked and reported on the movements of the Russian ships through the North Sea.

Commanding Officer Commander Ed Moss-Ward said: “Escorting warships in UK territorial waters and the adjacent sea areas is routine activity for the Royal Navy.

“By maintaining a visible and persistent presence,

the Royal Navy ensures compliance with maritime law and deters malign activity to protect our nation’s interests.

“Escorting the Russian task group alongside forces from our NATO allies has demonstrated the UK’s commitment to the alliance and to maintaining maritime security.”

HMS Portland departed her home port of Plymouth on Saturday January 7 on her latest patrol, attaching to Standing NATO Maritime Task Group 1 – the alliance’s premier naval security force protecting and patrolling northern Europe’s waterways.

The frigate – which underwent a major refit in 2021 – is adept at surface warfare operations as well as hunting submarines.

She comes off a busy 2022, which saw her regularly patrolling waters close to the UK as well as visits to Norway and Sweden, and operating with NATO allies on the alliance’s submarine hunting exercise – Dynamic Mongoose – in the North Atlantic.



CHOPPY: HMS Portland on duty monitoring the Russian ships



RUSSIAN: A Norwegian P-3 Orion maritime surveillance aircraft captures Admiral Gorshkov on camera in the Norwegian Sea
Picture by Norwegian Armed Forces

UPGRADED VIKINGS FOR ROYAL MARINES



ROYAL Marines are getting new amphibious vehicles for combat across the Arctic, desert and mountains after a £140m international agreement was made.

The UK's Commando Forces will receive 60 of the Future All-Terrain Vehicles (FATVs) from 2025 to replace its current fleet of Vikings and the older Bv 206 – which has been an icon of Arctic deployments for years.

These new vehicles are an evolution of the current Vikings with better amphibious swimming capability and lift capacity with models for troop transport, logistics (which can carry six tonnes of equipment), medical evacuation, recovery, and command and control.

Their on-board systems mean they can manoeuvre across snow, ice, rock, sand, mud or swamps, as well as steep mountain areas, while their amphibious technology enables them to swim flooded areas or coastal waters.

The updated Vikings – which will be in service until 2058 – are capable of operating in the harshest climates like the Arctic or desert where the Royal Marines regularly operate as the UK's experts in warfare in the most extreme environments.

This is all part of an international project – known as the Collaborative All-Vehicle (CATV) programme – which involves Sweden and Germany who will get 236 and 140 vehicles respectively.

Brigadier Mark Totten, Navy Deputy Director Acquisition, said: "The signing of the CATV contract is great news for UK Defence and for Commando Forces.

"This is a unique capability – fundamental for Commando Forces that are expert in operating in the extreme cold weather and across the littoral.

"The vehicles boast a number of characteristics that make it perfect for the Future Commando Force: it is adept over snow, has amphibious swimming capability and protects its occupants from several threats.

"Progressing to contract is a clear statement of the UK's strong commitment to High North and to working alongside our NATO and Joint Expeditionary Force partners."

The deal will see a total of 463 of the vehicles delivered by BAE Systems across the three European partners, with the engines for all FATVs produced by Cummins in Darlington.

The FATV has a front cabin to accommodate the driver with three fully-equipped marines, and a rear cabin which can carry eight fully-equipped marines or be fitted for a variety of different purposes including short-range air defence.

The new Vikings will most often see action as part of the Royal Navy's amphibious task groups – known as Littoral Response Groups – which deploy to areas of strategic importance ready to react to security or humanitarian crises.

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By now, you will be aware of the McCloud case and the resulting Remedy. This affects all those serving on or before 31st March 2012 and on or after 1st April 2015 (including service leavers). You will have to choose between the benefits of your legacy scheme and AFPS15 for the remedy period. And the choice will be available to service leavers from this October onwards.

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EARNING THEIR WINGS...



Lieutenants Samuel Burton, Guy Warry, Katherine Butler, Charles Skeet, and David Guest, from 825 NAS, after graduating from their course.

Picture: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum

FIVE trainee pilots and flight observers will now conduct front-line operations with the Royal Navy after earning their coveted 'Wings'.

The personnel from 825 Naval Air Squadron have spent the past 40 weeks learning about the Wildcat and what it takes to embark the cutting-edge helicopter on Royal Navy warships and Royal Fleet Auxiliary support ships.

And in a milestone moment for 825 NAS, the cohort of three pilots and two observers –



who act as navigators, sensors and weapons specialists – will be the first to go straight from training to learning how to operate the new Martlet anti-ship missile.

The lightweight multi-role missile has been used by Wildcats for the past two years. But those who received their Wings last month will be the first trainees to learn about it immediately after their initial training as part of their time in 825.

A pass-out parade was held at the squadron's RNAS Yeovilton home in Somerset to mark their graduation and highlight their hard work.

Lieutenant Dave Guest, a trainee pilot, said he was thrilled to have reached the end of his training and graduate.

"I am delighted to have finished as there's been lots of challenges but we have dealt with and overcome them," he said.

"We were pushed to our limit on mental resilience, skillset and intellect. I am looking forward to getting on the frontline and start deploying on frigates and destroyers."

For their course, the squadron embarked on HMS Queen Elizabeth during the aircraft carrier's deployment to the High North. Operation Achillean saw the flagship and her task group carry out fast jet trials with allies and partners in icy Norwegian fjords.

They also joined frigate HMS Westminster on her patrols around UK waters.

Lieutenant Guy Warry, also a pilot, added: "Embarking on HMS Queen Elizabeth was definitely a highlight."

"There was an F-35 landing vertically right next to me on my second day flying on the carrier. You realise in that moment you are part of something quite amazing."

Around 80 families, friends, distinguished guests and senior navy leaders attended the ceremony at RNAS Yeovilton, including Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm and Royal Navy Director Force Generation, Rear Admiral Steve Moorhouse.

As well as seeing the trainees receive their wings and other awards, there was also a show of helicopter aerobatics by the Navy's Black Cats display team.

The demonstration showed the skills and knowledge of flying the pilots and observers have learnt during their 40 weeks of training.

Commander Hugh Saltonstall, Commanding Officer of 825 NAS, said:

"This parade marks the end of a long journey for the students."

"It is a challenging course and we want everyone to pass it. We go through the highs and lows with them and it's a long time they are with us – we get to know them and their families well."

"I am really proud of them and now they are ready to deploy on the frontline in our Wildcat helicopters."

He added: "The Martlet aspect of their training starts now, in a first for 825 NAS and a special moment for the squadron."

"It's the first time they have delivered Martlet to trainees like this and it's a key change in terms of bringing back the strike capability so we can call ourselves a maritime attack helicopter squadron."



...WHILE LEGEND PILOT CALLS TIMES ON HIS

FLEET Air Arm legend Commander Ian Tidball has flown his final flight for the Royal Navy.

His 32-year career as a pilot has seen him spend 4,111 hours – more than 171 days – in the skies in 35 different types of aircraft.

But it's his work with the F-35 programme for which 'Tidders' is best known and it was appropriate that his last flight was in the Lightning as he made the short hop from MCAS Miramar to Edwards Air Force Base in California.

He was welcomed back by colleagues from 17 Test and Evaluation Squadron, as well as personnel from the US Navy's VX-9 squadron, his family – and a couple of fire extinguishers.

"Never let anyone tell you you can't achieve something until you have exhausted every avenue," said Cdr Tidball.

"I was told at 16 I would never be a pilot; I think I proved that wrong."

From Somerset, Cdr Tidball joined the Royal Navy in 1991 and earned his Wings – the coveted emblem of a qualified pilot – on

helicopters, spending the early days of his career flying Commando 'Jungle' Sea Kings.

After completing more than 1,000 hours as a helicopter pilot, he made the move to fast jets, starting with the Sea Harrier.

Holding positions such as XO, Operations Officer, and Air Warfare Instructor whilst on 800, 801, and 899 NAS, he also had the unique experience of deploying on all three of the UK carriers in service at the time (HMS Invincible, Illustrious and Ark Royal).

He said his time on the Sea Harrier was a particular highlight: "I enjoyed the huge camaraderie in the Sea Harrier force and flying off the carrier around the world was amazing."

After notching up more than 1,300 hours on the Harrier, Cdr Tidball moved to the USA and flew FA-18s with the US Navy's VX-9.

During his time with the "Vampires" he executed flight tests across the full array of FA-18 warfighter effectiveness capabilities and fulfilled his Topgun-inspired childhood dream of achieving day and night carrier qualifications in

the Super Hornet.

Remaining in the US, he began his pioneering time on the F-35 program as the UK Deputy Lead National Representative within the US led F-35 Operational Test Team in 2011 – 2012.

He then became an Instructor Pilot with the US Marines at VMFAT-501, based at Eglin in Florida as the first Royal Navy pilot on the jet.

"The Marines enthusiasm and can-do attitude and professionalism never failed to impress me; I hope we continue to work with them closely," he said.

The pinnacle of his career came in 2014 to 2018 when he was chosen to command 17 TES at Edwards, following a turn as XO.

This period saw him lead the initial Operational Testing (OT) of the F-35B for the UK as the first UK F-35 squadron.

He became the first UK pilot to deploy with the USMC onboard USS America for OT, and the first UK pilot to qualify as an F-35 LSO.

Rounding off his career and staying with the F-35 program at Edwards AFB, he led the UK

F-35 Integrated Test Team and was the Senior Operator F-35 Test & Evaluation (T&E).

This saw him as the lead T&E supervisor of the first embarked UK F-35 Operational Test (OT-1) aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Flying regularly with 17 TES as the Senior UK F-35 Test Pilot and LSO, Tidball completed more than 550 hours in a real F-35 and over 500 hours on simulated sorties in before his final flight back from MCAS Miramar.

"I will miss working with the immensely professional friends I have made but when I look back on all the amazing things I have been able to do, I'm comfortable that I've now been there and done it and am really looking forward to my next flying adventure and getting to spend more quality time with my family," he added.

Cdr Tidball may be leaving the Royal Navy and the military as a whole, however he will remain flying – this time at the controls of multi-engine transport aircraft for parcel firm UPS.



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ON THE HUNT FOR FUTURE SUBMARINE COMMANDERS

THE Royal Navy joined Norway's annual naval workout to test submarine commanders of tomorrow and safeguard NATO's northern flank.

Attack submarine HMS Artful and frigate HMS Northumberland joined the bulk of the Norwegian fleet, plus Danish warships, F-35 stealth fighters and long-range maritime patrol aircraft during the fortnight-long Flotex22.

Artful has been hosting would-be submarine executive/commanding officers undertaking the live-action phase of the legendary Submarine Command Course (aka Perisher), which determines whether someone has the 'right stuff' to be in charge of a submarine... or not.

Flotex22 meant there were both plenty of 'targets' for the Perisher students... as well as plenty of opponents to try to hunt them down, led by HMS Northumberland which was designed and built to track the enemy below.

The near-zero waters of the Norwegian Sea and Arctic, not to mention the many inlets/fjords, make for particularly challenging conditions for hunter and hunted alike (water temperature is just one important factor affecting the effectiveness of sonar).

Northumberland operated and trained in the High North frequently in 2022 and has grown use to the environment, but relished the chance to test herself against the second youngest hunter-killer in the Royal Navy's flotilla.

"This training tested the ship's company and helped to ensure that they remained at the highest standard of war-fighting ahead of future deployments and patrols," said

Underwater Staff Warfare Officer Lieutenant Commander Aaron Goodwin, Staff Warfare Officer.

The hunt was assisted by the frigate's Merlin helicopter – like the ship designed and built to find hostile submarines.

"The opportunity to train with and against HMS Artful is a definite highlight of my career," said Lieutenant Michael Moxom who, as flight observer, leads the Merlin in the hunt.

"I and the rest of the team feel much better prepared for future operations because of it."

Commodore Trond Gimmingsrud, the Head of the Norwegian Navy, said he was delighted both Northumberland and Artful could join his navy's premier exercise.

"We have a long history with close collaboration with the Royal Navy, and its participation in Flotex is valuable to us.

"It makes them familiar with operating in our waters, and strengthen our abilities to operate together," he added.

"We are able to offer challenging conditions in our waters, and are happy to welcome the Royal Navy to train and use our waters to certify new commanders for their submarine crews."

Commander Will Edwards-Bannon, Northumberland's Commanding Officer, said the Flotex22 was the icing on the cake of a year when his ship benefitted hugely from Norwegian support and hospitality – and he plans to build on those relations this year.

"HMS Northumberland has been very fortunate to spend much of 2022 training in Norwegian waters and operating with our Sjøforsvaret friends," he said.

"The challenging conditions – both above and below the waves – have been the perfect environment for my crew to hone their skills and assure our ability to defend NATO's Northern Flank."

The Flotex saw aviators from 814 NAS complete a year to remember – as the squadron deployed throughout the globe.

A large detachment from RNAS Culdrose travelled to Maristaeli Air Base in Sicily to take part in submarine-hunting exercise Dynamic Manta 22.

At the same time, both Tungsten and Mohawk Flights were deployed with their respective Type 23 frigates, HMS Northumberland and HMS Portland. The former conducted patrols around the UK and the North Atlantic, while the latter visited the USA for anti-submarine warfare exercises.

Three pilots achieved their 1,000 hours in the air, members of the Flying Tigers were involved in providing two aircraft for the Platinum Jubilee flypast and helped HMS Seahawk to victory in the Brickwoods Field Gun competition.

Some personnel were members of Her Majesty the Queen's funeral cortege.

The squadron also picked up two Fleet Air Arm awards – the Breitling Trophy, for best overall assessment by Naval Flying Standards Flight (NFSF), and the Rolls Royce Engineering Efficiency Trophy.



Clockwise from top, the icy flight deck of HMS Northumberland; A Merlin Observer and Aircrewman from 814 NAS conduct the hunt for HMS Artful; The view from the cockpit of the Merlin as it takes off from HMS Northumberland; HMS Northumberland off Norway; The Northern lights above HMS Northumberland's flight deck





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MEDWAY MAYDAY



IF ONLY all rescues could be effected so quickly, relatively routinely and, most importantly, casualty-free.

This one was done and dusted in little more than an hour, with all five souls saved thanks to a combination of good luck (after the initial bad luck of needing rescuing...) and efficiency from the men and women of His Majesty's Ship Medway who were definitely in the right place at the right time.

The RN's constant Caribbean patrol ship was on her first sortie of 2023, not far from the British Overseas Territory of Anguilla, when she picked up an SOS on Friday January 6.

The crew of an ocean-going tug sent out the Mayday as the vessel – towing a large barge of sand – began to take on water in choppy seas.

When the vessel's engines failed, they took refuge on the barge, signalling for help some 20 miles west of the island of Sint Maarten.

Medway with her 50 crew was little more than a dozen miles away and picked up the distress signal straight away.

After consulting with the regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Martinique, the ship altered course and increased speed, reaching the stricken tug and barge in little more than 20 minutes.

Despite warm temperatures – 26 Celsius – the weather was squally with gusts of 30 knots, heavy showers and waves of up to 5ft, which put the rescue at the limits of Medway's sea boat.

With lives at stake, the boat was launched with Medway's boatswain Petty Officer (Seaman Specialist) Sarah Griffiths in charge and the first person to reach the stricken vessel.

"Whilst we were cautious as we made our approach to the barge and tug we were able to reassure the crew and transfer them clear of the barge safely. They were hugely grateful," she said.

The five tug crew were not injured, but shaken and relieved to be rescued. They were carried back to HMS Medway and have now been handed over to a Search and Rescue boat from Anguilla which arrived as the rescue ended.

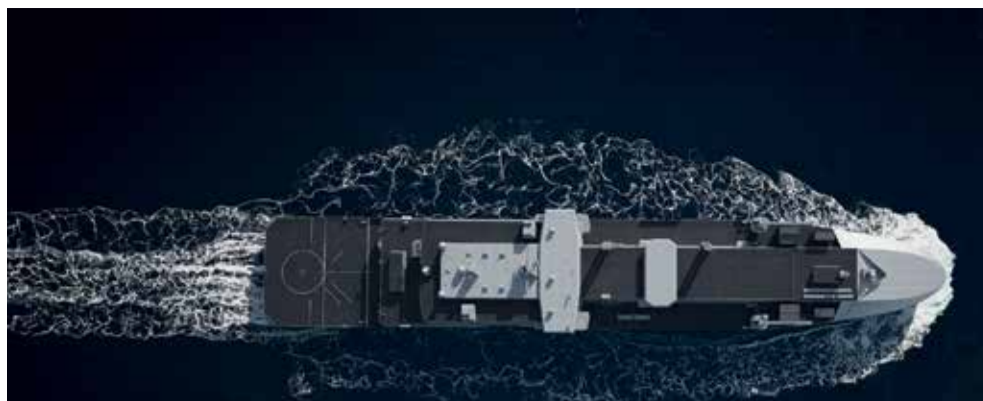
"The whole ship's company leapt into action as soon as we made the decision to respond," said Lieutenant Commander Carla Higgins, Medway's Executive Officer in temporary command of the 2,000-tonne patrol ship.

"The swift thinking and actions of the team were fantastic and we were thankful to be conducting routine maritime security operations in the area to become the on-scene commander working with the local authorities and assist the crew to safety."

Though low in the water, the tug had not sunk when Medway left the area to resume her security patrol.

The ship operates across the Caribbean/Gulf of Mexico and into the Atlantic all year round, supporting British Overseas Territories in the region, providing assistance in the wake of natural disasters (especially during the Atlantic hurricane season), and working with regional authorities to tackle the illegal narcotics trade.

Pictures: AB(Sea) Mitchell 'Jack' Macguire



Solid steps forward

WORK will begin in two years' time on a trio of ships to support Royal Navy carrier and amphibious task groups around the globe after a £1.6bn contract was signed with a British-led consortium.

The order for the Fleet Solid Support ships will deliver three ships to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary by 2032, providing ammunition, spare parts, replacement jet engines, food and provisions to sustain large-scale naval operations hundreds or thousands of miles from the UK.

The role is currently performed by a solitary ship, RFA Fort Victoria, which accompanied HMS Queen Elizabeth and her carrier strike group on her maiden deployment in 2021.

She's over 30 years old and despite receiving a major overhaul once again, ultimately needs replacing – and needs sisters to spread the workload.

Beyond a reinvigoration of the RFA, the as-yet unnamed ships/class remark a major investment in UK shipbuilding, with millions pumped into improving facilities at two yards and the creation of 1,200 jobs, three quarters of them in Belfast, plus an anticipated 800 further jobs across the UK supply chain.

As part of the contract signed with Team Resolute – comprising BMT, Harland and Wolff and Navantia UK – £77 million will be invested in infrastructure at the former's Belfast and Appledore shipyards, and a further £21 million in skills and technology transfer from Navantia.

The deal also brings naval shipbuilding back to Belfast after a break of nearly a quarter of a century.

Visiting the Harland and Wolff yard to announce the contract's signing, Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "This contract is a significant boost to the UK's historic shipbuilding industry, balancing shipbuilding across the Union."

"Creating jobs and prosperity, Team Resolute is bringing shipbuilding back to Belfast, developing a modern, resilient and thriving shipbuilding industry that will support naval and commercial shipbuilding into the future."

Built to a design by Bath-based BMT, with

many common systems, equipment and features as the Tide-class tankers already in service, at 216 metres, the new support ships will be second only to the UK's two aircraft carriers in length.

The majority of the blocks and modules for the ships will be constructed at Harland & Wolff's facilities in Belfast and Appledore, some construction work will take place at Navantia's Cadiz yard, with the three vessels assembled in Belfast.

Harland and Wolff chief executive John Wood praised the government's investment and faith in his firm, hailing it as the "last chance to capture the excellent shipbuilding skills that remain in Belfast and Appledore before they are lost and pass them on to the next generation of UK shipbuilders."

"The UK Government has seized this opportunity and in doing so ensured the long-term survival of our shipyards and significantly bolstered sovereign shipbuilding capability."

Work to revamp the two yards and training/upskilling workers will begin immediately. Production is due to start in 2025, with all three support ships expected to be operational by 2032.

But don't write off RFA Fort Victoria just yet.

With no carrier group deployment last year, Fort Vic headed into the Cammell Laird shipyard in Birkenhead for extensive repairs and upgrades, especially on her engines, to ready her for extensive work on the front line with the carriers this year.

Captain Martin Jones, Commanding Officer of Fort Victoria, said: "It's pleasing to get Fort Victoria back to sea after a lengthy period in the shipyard and allow her to stretch her legs."

"We are very much looking forward to returning to the fold of Carrier Strike and supporting Carrier Strike Group 23."

Upon departing Cammell Laird, the crew took the ship up to the Forth to take on supplies, followed by trials, then training observed and guided by Fleet Operational Sea Training, ready to support HMS Queen Elizabeth when she deploys again.

Graphic courtesy of Team Resolute



Less scrubbing, more subbing

THIS is a 'scrubmarine' – and it could save the Navy time and money when it comes to keeping the fleet free of marine growth.

In just six weeks, a team of five young engineers on an innovative academy programme designed a remotely-controlled device to remove 'biofouling' from the hulls of submarines and ships.

Despite measures such as anti-fouling paint, all ships and submarines are dogged by marine growth below the waterline which adds to a vessel's drag... hence slowing it down... hence requiring more fuel usage... to say nothing of potential damage to the hull.

At present, that growth – such as barnacles – has to be painstakingly removed by experts, be it in dry dock for ships, or using specialist divers on submarines.

The latter cover the entire hull of an A, T or V boat with what is effectively a giant underwater 'tooth polisher'; the bristles on the brushes are strong enough to sweep away marine life but not too firmly that the black tiles which cover the hull and are key to a submarine's stealth are not damaged or dislodged.

The MOD's Defence And Security Accelerator programme – which looks to harness the best of tech and innovation in the civilian world for use in the military – challenged the newly-created Co-Lab Engineering



Academy to design a device which could clean hulls without the need for divers entering the water.

The academy, based in Cumbria, brings together young engineers from across industry to work collaboratively to solve a real-life challenge.

The result: the ScrubMarine, a remotely-operated submersible featuring specialist cleaning nozzles which induce cavitation (bubbles) to remove the biofouling.

Not only would it limit the need for divers to carry out cleaning work, it should prove cheaper, easier to use/deploy and not as restricted by factors such as weather/sea conditions.

"I was sceptical at first that we could pull off such an ambitious project within the timeframe, but

the way that five strangers were pulled together and given the guidance required to produce something has been amazing, and we're all incredibly proud of what we have achieved," said Dylan Brennan, a nuclear graduate with global technical/engineering firm Jacobs, who served as the Scrubmarine's team leader.

Thomas Clayton, a mechanical design degree apprentice at Sellafield, was the mechanical lead on the project:

"It's been an enjoyable experience and one I would recommend to all engineers, whether just starting out in their careers or even with decades of experience in industry, because the mentoring, hands-on approach and freedom to experiment has been so valuable to adapt into our line of work."

A THOUSAND Royal Marines are heading back to the Arctic for their annual workout in the frozen climes of northern Norway. The methods and training are the same, the impetus is slightly different.

With the return of conflict in Europe, brought about by Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the bonds of NATO allies and partners has grown stronger, their cause in sharper focus.

Across all NATO's flanks there is a galvanised effort – training, innovating and operating – and the UK's Commando Force hasn't flinched in coming to the fore.

2022 was rammed full of work across the globe, finishing with the Royal Navy's premier European security mission, Operation Achillean, which saw Royal Marines operate across the Mediterranean working closely with allies across the region in the name of peace and prosperity.

Some of their exercises in the mountains of Montenegro acted as preparation for their next mission.

The Arctic Circle – a place hostile and cold but one of the globe's strategic hot points and of great importance to the UK and fellow NATO nations.

This isn't new business for the commandos. A short history lesson would tell you they've been operating here since World War Two.

Starting with raids on the Nazis along occupied Norway's coastline it continued and grew throughout the Cold War and training has taken place ever since.

2023 is no different.

The war in Ukraine only underscores the importance of excellent training, the right equipment and good logistics – the ability to survive, move and fight across any terrain. Crucially, it also emphasises the need to defend NATO's flanks and the values of its likeminded nations. In this case, heading to the Arctic makes the UK and NATO better prepared for any situation in the high north.

Drawing on decades of experience and knowhow passed down through generations, the commandos are back in the Arctic working, refreshing, refining and pushing the boundaries of warfare in one of the world's harshest environments.

While the the wings of the Royal Marines, the Commando Helicopter Force, return to their traditional base at Bardufoss Air Station with their Merlin and Wildcat helicopters, the Green Berets will operate out of the newly-established Camp Viking.

About 40 minutes drive east from Bardufoss, Camp Viking is an upgraded on the facilities the marines were using at Bardufoss and are able to hold all of the staff and personnel associated with the Littoral Response Group North – the task group responsible for reacting to world events in the high north and Baltic.

Camp Viking is located in the small village of Øverbygd near to the Norwegian's Skjold army camp, which is part of the Northern Brigade of the Norwegian Army and is home to the 2nd Battalion Mechanized

THE MISSION NORTH

Infantry and Combat and Construction Engineers.

Major Kirk Allen, Officer Commanding of the Winter Deployment, said: "As the UK Commando Forces' 'home' in the High North for the next decade, 'Camp Viking' at Skjold Leir is the focal point for delivery of Mountain and Cold Weather Warfare training and, strategically placed as a Forward Operating Base to support NATO operations.

"Its use supports Littoral Response Group regional persistent engagement with key allies and as a collective conventional deterrent to adversaries.

"Capable of logistically sustaining an LRG of Royal Marines, sailors and soldiers, the location has great local training areas, is close to Sorreisa port for amphibious operations and can support the personnel, vehicles and equipment with its first-class facilities.

"Impressively, Norway continue to invest in the site and the capability will only increase in its potential to support Commando Forces and wider UK Defence."

At the heart of the Winter Deployment is the Royal Marines Mountain Leader Cadre – expert Arctic operators responsible for teaching and guiding and keeping fellow commandos ready for action no matter the terrain.

Mountain Leader Colour Sergeant Evan, the Winter Deployment's Environmental Courses Chief Instructor, said: "As Commando Logistic Regiment's Unit Mountain Leader, I'm deployed to the High North as part of the Norway Enabling Group.

"We arrived in theatre in mid-October to train Cold Weather instructors and the logistic enablers ready to prepare the main Commando Force in early January 2023.

"The focus for Winter Deployment 23 is to train Commando Forces to operate in the High North.

"In turn this complements wider Royal Navy and Joint operational effects in the North Atlantic with forward deployed forces providing reassurance to NATO and JEF allies through a bolstered presence between the UK, Norway, US Marines Corps, Slovenia and RNLMC.

"This year's force generation will achieve the integration of the next Littoral Response Group North which culminates in the multi-national NATO exercise, Joint Viking."

First the focus for the commandos on the Cold Weather Warfare Course is survival. The right equipment and how to use it. The ability to live off their surroundings, build shelters from snow and wood, but also how to navigate by the stars when technology fails in temperatures that can plummet to -50c.

This phase also includes the infamous ice breaking drill, which involves plunging through a hole in the ice into freezing water to test responses to cold shock. Manoeuvring across a frozen lake can bring great tactical advantage but comes at a risk and commandos must know what to do if the worst were to happen.

This shapes up each commandos to progress to the mobility phase.

Getting from A to B in this environment is gruelling but techniques, equipment and, of course, vehicles can overcome the ice and snow... to an extent.

Of note, it was just announced the Royal Marines will be getting 60 upgraded Viking all-terrain vehicles as part of a £140m agreement (more on that on page 7).

These will eventually replace the current fleet of Vikings and the older Bv 206 – an icon of Arctic deployments.

This investment will keep Royal Marines rolling across not only Arctic terrain but along coastlines and demanding environments around the world for years to come.

The Vikings will be action in the Arctic as Armoured Support Group continue to refresh their tactics for operations in the extreme cold – keeping their vehicles in the fight by honing logistics techniques but manoeuvring across the snow and ice.

The training is not limited to armoured vehicles, though, commando drivers also need to know how to tackle the ice and snow in Land Rovers and Oversnow Reconnaissance Vehicles – the military name for snowmobiles – which are used for patrols deep into the mountains.

Commandos also need to be able to move on skis efficiently while carrying kit weighing up to 75 pounds – no mean feat in undulating terrain.

Basic skiing techniques are refreshed and challenging journeys across the snow are undertaken during this phase of the winter deployment to refine techniques and make sure each commando can move with weight safely.

Training becomes increasingly more challenging – from skiing on slopes you might find on an alpine holiday, to more demanding terrain untouched by skis.

Skijoring is also a skill used by Royal Marines for rapid movement across the Arctic battlefield. It involves being towed behind Vikings on skis... hitching a lift across the snow to the next position, avoiding a journey that would take hours on in snow shoes.

Weeks of work culminate in the tactical 'fight' phase. This is when combat skills are honed. It is designed to be arduous and to instil discipline and skills required to overcome the environment and a determined adversary.

Things will ramp up further to Exercise Joint Viking – which will see commandos participate in Norwegian exercises alongside NATO allies and partners.

At its heart Joint Viking is designed to demonstrate how Norway would defend itself in harsh winter conditions and its ability to operate efficiently with allies.

Joint Viking is part of the regular cycle of exercises in Norway, which takes place in the between years when the large-scale Exercise Cold Response doesn't.

It keeps allies and partners continually sharp for Arctic combat and the UK, through its Commando Force, ready for whatever happens in the high north.

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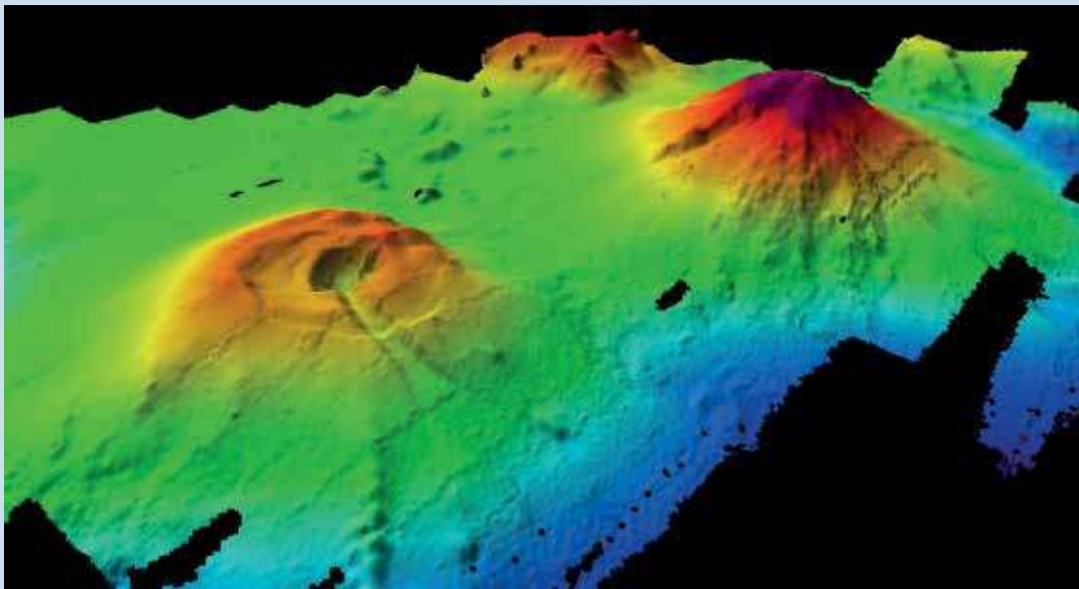
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UNDERWATER VOLCANOES, WILDLIFE AND FOOTBALL ON THE 'WORST' PITCH IN THE WORLD...



THE Royal Navy is helping scientists warn of potentially devastating tsunamis by researching huge underwater volcanoes on the fringe of Antarctica.

HMS Protector used her state-of-the-art sensors to scan a series of peaks in the South Sandwich Islands, one of the most remote British territories on the planet.

The chain of volcanoes off Zavodovski Island rise hundreds of metres above the seabed. They are active with numerous seismic events every year.

A major underwater eruption could trigger a landslide and, in turn, a tsunami, with potentially devastating consequences. One such wave in August 2021 led to the evacuation of the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) research station on South Georgia – 375 miles away.

The volcanic chain was last surveyed by BAS, with whom the Plymouth-based Royal Navy icebreaker regularly works.

Scientists asked the ship to return to the area, known as the Protector Seamounts, named after a previous Royal Navy ship which operated in the polar region more than 50 years ago.

The data Protector gathered will be used by scientists from the British Antarctic Survey and University of Plymouth to assess the stability of the volcanoes' flanks and look for evidence of 'mass wasting': huge volumes of sediment shifting, potentially triggering tsunamis which could impact people across the southern hemisphere.

"We need to understand the origin and wider significance of mass wasting in the South Sandwich Islands," explained the project's lead scientist Dr Jenny Gales, Lecturer in Hydrography and Ocean Exploration at the University of Plymouth.

"This is important because mass wasting events on volcanic islands represent some of the largest sediment flux events on Earth.

"The levels of past activity in this particular region show they are a significant geohazard, with the potential to trigger tsunamis."

Lieutenant Commander James Winsor, HMS Protector's senior survey officer, was impressed by the detailed scans of the underwater mountains or seamounts the ship's sonars and software produced.

"The undersea peaks of these volcanoes rise up from depths of 2,000 metres to 90 metres in waters scarcely charted to modern standards," he added.

Beyond helping the BAS team, the data gathered by Protector will also allow seafaring charts to be updated to the latest standards: the survey mission found a caldera (a volcano with collapsed walls following a major eruption) and one summit coming within 90 metres (295ft) of the surface – still well below the keel of any surface ship,

but well within the operating depth of submarines.

Having completed her work in the South Sandwich Islands, Protector switched efforts to Christmas in South Georgia, home to a small staff running the island's museum, post office, administration and a BAS base.

Protector's crew were given several days to explore the island – a wildlife paradise, last resting place of fabled explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton and abandoned whaling stations, notably the one in the island's capital Grytviken, abandoned nearly 60 years ago.

Sailors and marines raised a toast to Shackleton, buried in the pristine graveyard, headed off on hikes to explore the rugged island, take a dip in Grytviken reservoir, (water temperature 3 Celsius, despite it being high summer), meet the seal and penguin populace, visit the museum which offers insights into the island's history and whaling, post cards and letters and home from what is Britain's southernmost post office.

Protector's chaplain Father Charles Miller led the ship's company and islanders in a Christmas service at the 'whaler's church'.

"It was great to worship together in such a special place," he said. "The service gave us the chance to continue our Christmas celebration, sharing it with others on the island and to reflect amidst the history and beauty surrounding us. A very memorable experience."

To thank islanders for their hospitality Protector's crew hosted a reception on the bridge that evening which offered stunning views of the sun setting over South Georgia.

Before Protector departed the island, the ship's football team challenged a select South Georgia XI (drawn from government and BAS staff) organised by the ship's Leading Physical Trainer 'Ray' Houghton.

The pitch is billed as the most southerly in the world. It's also among the worst – uneven, unmown, boggy, strewn with thick tufts of grass and with a goalmouth of gravel at one end.

Despite sideways rain, snow and gale-force winds, the sailors went down to the home side who were better suited to the conditions.

"It was fantastic to get the opportunity to play on the most southerly football pitch in the world," said Ray.

"Regardless of the score, it was about getting our people off the ship, enjoying themselves and creating an experience they can look back on with fond memories.

"We are very grateful to South Georgia's government for being such good hosts."



Pictured from top: Volcanoes off Zavodovski Island; Wildlife keep watch on HMS Protector at St Andrews Bay in South Georgia; HMS Protector's crew took part in a football match on the most southerly pitch in the world; Below, a Gentoo Penguin at St Andrews Bay in South Georgia;



Follow the ship on Twitter at @HMSprotector and @royalnavy

Pictures: LPhot Lee Blease

JUST ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE FOR THE CREW OF RN'S ICE-BREAKER HMS PROTECTOR



REFLECTING ON PARADISE



Clockwise from above: Lt Royle carries out a survey on the refuge hut at St Andrew's Bay in South Georgia; A member of HMS Protector's ship's company signs the visitors book in the Refuge Hut; HMS Protector at King Edward Point in South Georgia; Sunset over South Georgia viewed from the flight deck of HMS Protector.



Left: Crew members as HMS Protector prepares to enter South Georgia.

THE Royal Navy's drone squadron have taken their expertise in uncrewed systems one step further by building their own quadcopter.

Personnel from 700X Naval Air Squadron have built their first remotely-piloted air system in a milestone moment for the Culdrose-based team.

Once thoroughly put through its paces, the drone could be used as a testbed for sensors and delivering other payloads.

In an empty aircraft hangar, the sleek four-legged system is ready to be turned on and put through a series of ground tests.

"Clear. Arming," calls Chief Petty Officer Phil Wood, as he lifts the control unit. "Live," he adds and an angry high-pitched noise swells and fills the hangar as the tethered drone roars into life.

The 20kg octo-quadcopter is named Walrus after the flying boats pioneered by 700 Naval Air Squadron and flown from cruisers and battleships during the Second World War.

"This is the first time the navy has built its own air system using basic components," said Lieutenant Kristian Lilley, who is overseeing the tests.

"It's an important step in our recognition of endorsed manufacturer status with the Military Aviation Authority.

"Built to high, aviation standards, the Walrus will be used specifically as a testbed for sensors and other sensitive payloads. It will be our independent test and evaluation platform. As we've built it, we know the system and exactly what it's capable of.

"We're now testing it using a rigorous regime here in a controlled environment. When we're confident it's operating correctly and safely, we'll conduct our first flying tests, probably later this year."

Lt Lilley added: "I have a background in engineering and in aviation as a fast jet pilot so I find it an interesting subject.

"This technology has been around for a few years but we've really seen it expand recently, particularly in scale. There's no doubt that it's here to stay and will increasingly play a role in all our lives."

700X Naval Air Station is the Royal Navy's expert unit in the research, training and deployment of remotely piloted air systems.

The squadron is a mix of Royal Navy personnel of various branches, Royal Marines, civil servants and contractors, and is based at RNAS Culdrose. It uses nearby Predannack Airfield as a centre of expertise for flights and training.

Lieutenant Commander Martin Howard, the squadron's commanding officer, said: "This project is just one strand of our work in researching, evaluating and deploying RPAS technology at the forefront of Royal Navy operations.

"It's an important step in gathering knowledge and expertise in this ever-evolving field. As a squadron, we already train personnel across defence in the use of RPAS. We have flights which deploy the Puma air system to warships around the world and we are constantly testing and evaluating new systems from industry.

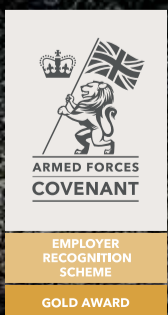
"This work will serve to strengthen all our outputs and is an important step forward for the Royal Navy."

Today's announcement is another example of the importance being placed on emerging drone technology. It follows the MOD's announcement of 250 more high-tech drones for the British military, under a £129 million contract with Lockheed Martin announced in December.

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LEVEL PEAKS

PORTSMOUTH



AIRCRAFT CARRIER

QUEEN ELIZABETH R08
 Displ. 70,600 tonnes Length 280m Beam 70m
 Phalanx gun systems.
 Carrier Air Wing of F-35B fighters and helicopters.

PRINCE OF WALES R09
 Displ. 71,600 tonnes Length 281m Beam 74m
 Phalanx gun systems.
 Carrier Air Wing of F-35B fighters and helicopters.



TYPE 45 DESTROYER

| | | | |
|------------------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| DARING | D32 | DRAGON | D35 |
| DAUNTLESS | D33 | DEFENDER | D36 |
| DIAMOND | D34 | DUNCAN | D37 |

Displ. 7,350 tonnes Length 152.4m Beam 21.2m
 4.5" gun, Sea Viper missiles, Harpoon missiles, Phalanx gun systems,
 30mm close-range guns, torpedo defence system, Wildcat or Merlin helicopter.



TYPE 23 FRIGATE

| | | | |
|------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| KENT | F78 | IRON DUKE | F234 |
| LANCASTER | F229 | WESTMINSTER | F237 |

Displ. 4,900 tonnes Length 133m Beam 16.1m
 4.5" gun, Harpoon missiles, Sea Ceptor missiles, anti-submarine torpedoes,
 30mm close-range guns, Wildcat or Merlin helicopter.



RIVER II CLASS OFFSHORE PATROL VESSEL

| | | | |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| FORTH | P222 | TAMAR | P225 |
| MEDWAY | P223 | SPEY | P226 |
| TRENT | P224 | | |

Displ. 2,200 tonnes Length 90m Beam 13.5m
 30mm close-range gun.



RIVER CLASS OFFSHORE PATROL VESSEL

| | | | |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| TYNE | P281 | MERSEY | P283 |
| SEVERN | P282 | | |

Displ. 1,700 tonnes Length 79.8m Beam 13.6m
 20mm close-range gun.



HUNT CLASS MCMV

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|
| LEDBURY | M30 | MIDDLETON | M34 |
| CATTISTOCK | M31 | CHIDDINGFOLD | M37 |
| BROCKLESBY | M33 | HURWORTH | M39 |

Displ. 750 tonnes Length 60m Beam 10m
 30mm close-range gun, remote-control mine disposal system.



ARCHER CLASS PATROL BOAT

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| EXPRESS | P163 | BITER | P270 | PUNCHER | P291 |
| EXPLORER | P164 | SMITER | P272 | CHARGER | P292 |
| EXAMPLE | P165 | PURSUER | P273 | RANGER | P293 |
| EXPLOIT | P167 | BLAZER | P279 | TRUMPETER | P294 |
| ARCHER | P264 | DASHER | P280 | | |

Displ. 54 tonnes Length 20.8m Beam 5.8m



GIBRALTAR PATROL BOAT

| | | | |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| CUTLASS | P295 | DAGGER | P296 |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|

Displ. 37 tonnes Length 19m Beam 5.3m
 Machine guns.

DEVONPORT



LANDING PLATFORM DOCK ASSAULT SHIP

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| ALBION | L14 | BULWARK | L15 |
|---------------|------------|----------------|------------|

Displ. 18,500 tonnes Length 176m Beam 28.9m
 Phalanx gun systems, close-range guns, landing craft, embarked military force.



TYPE 26 FRIGATE

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| GLASGOW (build) | SHEFFIELD (ordered) |
| CARDIFF (build) | NEWCASTLE (ordered) |
| BELFAST (build) | EDINBURGH (ordered) |
| BIRMINGHAM (ordered) | LONDON (ordered) |

Displ. 6,900 tonnes Length 149.9m Beam 20.8m
 5" gun, Sea Ceptor missiles, Phalanx gun systems,
 30mm close-range guns, torpedo defence system, Wildcat or Merlin helicopter.



TYPE 31 FRIGATE

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ACTIVE (build) | FORMIDABLE (planned) |
| BULLDOG (build) | VENTURER (build) |
| CAMPBELTOWN (planned) | |

Displ. 5,700 tonnes Length 138.7m Beam 19.75m
 57mm gun, Sea Ceptor missiles,
 40mm close-range guns, Wildcat or Merlin helicopter.



OCEAN SURVEY SHIP

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| SCOTT | H131 |
|--------------|-------------|

Displ. 13,500 tonnes Length 131m Beam 21.5m



ECHO CLASS SURVEY SHIP

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| ENTERPRISE | H88 |
|-------------------|------------|

Displ. 3,470 tonnes Length 90m Beam 16.8m
 20mm close-range guns.



TYPE 23 FRIGATE

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| PORTLAND | F79 | ARGYLL | F231 |
| SUTHERLAND | F81 | MONTROSE | F236 |
| SOMERSET | F82 | NORTHUMBERLAND | F238 |
| ST ALBANS | F83 | RICHMOND | F239 |

Displ. 4,900 tonnes Length 133m Beam 16.1m
 4.5" gun, Harpoon missiles, Sea Ceptor missiles, anti-submarine torpedoes,
 30mm close-range guns, Wildcat or Merlin helicopter.



COASTAL SURVEY SHIP

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| MAGPIE | H130 |
|---------------|-------------|

Displ. 37 tonnes Length 18m Beam 6.2m



ICE PATROL SHIP

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| PROTECTOR | A173 |
|------------------|-------------|

Displ. 6,400 tonnes Length 89.7m Beam 18.0m
 Machine guns.



Royal Navy Fleet

FLEET AIR ARM



MERLIN HM2

Length 22.8m Speed 167kts
 Weapons Anti-submarine torpedoes,
 machine guns.



MERLIN HC4/4a

Length 22.8m Speed 149kts
 Weapons Machine guns, 24 troops.



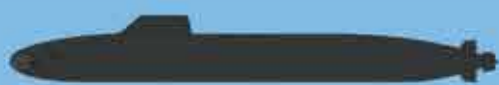
WILDCAT HMA2

Length 15.2m Speed 157kts
 Weapons Anti-submarine torpedoes,
 anti-ship missiles, machine guns.



WILDCAT Mk2

Length 15.2m Speed 157kts
 Weapons Machine guns, 8 troops.



DREADNOUGHT CLASS BALLISTIC MISSILE SUBMARINE

DREADNOUGHT (built) WARSPITE (built)
 VALIANT (built) KING GEORGE VI (planned)
 Displ. 17,200 tonnes Length 152.9m
 12 x tubes for no more than 8 Trident D5 ballistic missiles, torpedoes.



ASTUTE CLASS FLEET SUBMARINE

ASTUTE S94 ANSON S98
 AMBUSH S96 AGAMEMNON S99 (built)
 ARTFUL S95 AGINCOURT S100 (built)
 AUDACIOUS S97
 Displ. 7,400 tonnes Length 97m Beam 11.3m
 Torpedoes, Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles.



SANDOWN CLASS MCMV

PENZANCE M106 BANGOR M109
 PEMBROKE M107
 Displ. 484 tonnes Length 52.5m Beam 10.5m
 30mm close-range gun, remote-control mine disposal system.



ISLAND CLASS PATROL BOAT

RONA MULL
 EORSA
 Displ. 19.9 tonnes Length 14.9m Beam 4.1m
 Machine guns.



VANGUARD CLASS BALLISTIC MISSILE SUBMARINE

VANGUARD S28 VIGILANT S30
 VICTORIOUS S29 VENGEANCE S31
 Displ. 15,985 tonnes Length 149.9m Beam 12.8m
 16 x tubes for no more than 8 Trident D5 ballistic missiles, torpedoes.



TRAFALGAR CLASS FLEET SUBMARINES

TRIUMPH S93 (Base ported in Devonport)
 Displ. 5,208 tonnes Length 85.4m Beam 9.8m
 Torpedoes, Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles.



ARCHER CLASS PATROL BOAT

TRACKER P274 RAIDER P275
 Displ. 54 tonnes Length 20.8m Beam 5.8m
 Machine guns.



15m AUTONOMOUS MCMV

HERE
 Displ. 15 tonnes Length 15.0m Beam 4.4m



11m AUTONOMOUS MCMV

HALCYON HARRIER
 Displ. 11 tonnes Length 11.2m Beam 3.2m



UK COMMANDO FORCES

HQ 3 Cdo Bde - the UK's Commando Force (Plymouth)

- 24 Cdo Royal Engineers (Chivenor)
- 40 Cdo RM (Taunton)
- 45 Cdo RM (Arbroath)
- 29 Cdo Royal Artillery (Plymouth)
- 42 Maritime Operations Cdo (Plymouth)
- 47 Cdo Raiding Group (Plymouth)
- 30 Cdo Information Exploitation Group (Plymouth)
- 43 Cdo Fleet Protection group (Faslane)
- Cdo Logistics Regiment (Chivenor)



LANDING CRAFT

LCU Mk10 9 vessels
 Displ. 240 tonnes Length 29.8m Beam 17.4m
 1 x 65 tonne Main Battle Tank, 4 x vehicles, or 120 troops.



LANDING CRAFT

LCVP Mk5B 8 vessels
 Displ. 8.2 tonnes Length 15.7m Beam 4.3m
 6 tonnes of stores, or 35 troops.



INSHORE RAIDING CRAFT

IRC Mk3 50 craft
 Displ. 2.25 tonnes Length 6.5m Beam 1.9m
 1 x 1.5 tonnes of stores or 8 troops.



OFFSHORE RAIDING CRAFT

TROOP CARRYING VARIANT 27 craft
 Displ. 5.0 tonnes Length 9.1m
 8 troops.

FIRE SUPPORT VARIANT 8 craft
 Beam 2.9m
 4 troops, 3 x Machine guns, 40mm GMG.



F-35B LIGHTNING II

Length 15.7m Speed 1,060kts
 Weapons 7,000kg of bombs, missiles, 25mm cannon pod.



KING AIR 350ER

Length 14.2m Speed 312kts



TEXAN T Mk1

Length 10.16m Speed 316kts



AUXILIARY OILER & REPLENISHMENT SHIP

FORT VICTORIA A387
 Displ. 35,500 tonnes Length 203.5m Beam 30.4m
 Phalanx gun systems, 30mm close-range guns, Wildcat or Merlin helicopter.



FLEET TANKER

TIDESPRING A136 TIDESURGE A138
 TIDERACE A137 TIDEFORCE A139
 Displ. 37,000 tonnes Length 200.9m Beam 26.4m
 Phalanx gun systems, 30mm close-range guns, Wildcat or Merlin helicopter.



FLEET TANKER

WAVE KNIGHT A389 WAVE RULER A390
 Displ. 31,500 tonnes Length 196m Beam 27.8m
 Phalanx gun systems, 30mm close-range guns, Wildcat or Merlin helicopter.



PRIMARY CASUALTY RECEIVING SHIP & AVIATION TRAINING

ARGUS A135
 Displ. 26,421 tonnes Length 175.1m Beam 30.4m
 20mm close-range guns, helicopters.



LANDING SHIP DOCK (AUXILIARY)

LYME BAY L3007 CARDIGAN BAY L3009
 MOUNTS BAY L3008
 Displ. 16,160 tonnes Length 176m Beam 26.4m
 Phalanx gun systems, 30mm close-range guns.



POINT CLASS STRATEGIC SEALIFT RO-RO

HURST POINT ANVIL POINT
 HARTLAND POINT EDDYSTONE
 Displ. 23,235 tonnes Length 193m Beam 26m
 8,000 tonnes of vehicles, 668 containers, and up to four Chinook, Wildcat or Merlin helicopters.



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Veterans' poignant return

LAST year was a significant year for many Royal Navy and Royal Marines veterans, as it marked the 40th anniversary of the Falklands Conflict.

To recognise this milestone, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) established a new fund to support the participation of veterans and their families in commemorative activities and events.

Over £100,000 was distributed by the RNRMC to more than 30 organisations and associations, reuniting Royal Navy and Royal Marines veterans, many of whom have not seen each other for many years. For some, it was their first reunion since the Falklands Conflict, 40 years ago.

However, there is one group of veterans for whom recognition holds particular importance.

Unfairly and incorrectly dismissed as 'cowards' by sections of the British Press at the time, the Royal Marines of Naval Party 8901 have, in recent years, been vindicated and recognised for their heroic actions as they attempted to defend the Falklands

against an Argentine attack force that outnumbered them by more than 40 to 1.

As 2022 ended, a final grant from the Falklands 40 Fund saw the RNRMC cover the travel costs for several NP8901 veterans as they joined their comrades in returning to the islands to lay a plaque, commemorating their bravery and contribution to the conflict.

For the veterans supported by this grant, the chance to return to the Falklands and cement their true place in history with a plaque was a highly emotional experience, one describing it as, "difficult to put into words".

For many, the opportunity for reunion was crucial, not only from a social perspective but also to provide closure to long-standing questions.

One veteran explained that the most valuable part of the experience was, "meeting old comrades for the first time in 40 years and filling in the blanks about what had happened. I have a greater understanding of the events that occurred around me."

However, most overwhelming is the pride that many NP8901 veterans expressed as a result of the gratitude they received from the Islanders themselves.

St Major Bill Muir, who was among the veterans supported by the RNRMC, said that a phrase heard more than once from the locals was, "the Marines of NP8901 are our Marines", while another veteran reported that, "the appreciation of the Falkland Islanders was overwhelming and how proud they were of us."

Commodore Jonathan Lett RN, Commander British Forces South Atlantic Islands, said: "Having been met upon return by newspaper headlines of Surrender in the UK the men of NP8901 have been left with years of guilt that they let down the islanders and the Corps.

"Once aware of this injustice MLA Leona Roberts was determined to right this wrong and plans were hatched for the unveiling of a plaque at Government House Stanley.

"RNRMC funding allowed six members of NP 8901 to attend this event making a total

of 21 members in attendance.

"This was clearly a healing event for all that were involved, sadly not all NP8901 members were able to attend but the fact that, with RNRMC support we maximised numbers is fantastic.

"From personal contact with all the visitors and e-mail contact with their OC, Maj Mike Norman RM, I know what a difference attendance at this event has made to them.

"I would like to thank RNRMC for supporting funding requests in the 40th Anniversary year.

"Events were veteran focused and had a considerable impact on both the attending veterans and those who serve today who they interacted with.

"Personally, I cannot think of a more fitting way to end the 40th Anniversary year than with the men of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines who defended the Falklands against the Argentine invasion on the night of 1st/2nd April 1982."

"Help I received has given me back my life"

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC), work with a wide range of partners to support individuals in the Royal Navy community. Sometimes this support can be lifesaving.

The RNRMC has worked closely with Veterans Aid for several years, and a recent grant of £60,000 from the RNRMC and Greenwich Hospital has enabled Veterans Aid to continue its lifesaving work with former sailors and Marines in distress, such as Mary*.

After eight years' service in the Royal Navy, Mary returned to civilian life. Outside of the military, aspects of her life began to unravel, and she became dependent on drugs to cope.

Mary said: "I contacted Veterans Aid at the very lowest point of my life. Social services had intervened and removed my daughter from my care. At this point I overdosed deliberately and ended up in hospital. At the time I quite honestly wanted my life to end."

Before Veterans Aid became involved in Mary's life, it was miserable and out of control.

"My life was a cycle of lies and desperation I was always trying to get money for my drugs which left me financially struggling, I was full of shame at what I was doing to myself and my family and my relationships with them were at an all-time low.

"My mother and I were constantly fighting, my daughter was miserable, unhappy and struggling at school.

"I could see things were getting worse and even though there had been some really awful and often dangerous experiences, I was unable to stop."

Recalling an argument with her mother Mary described climbing onto the roof of the house while high on drugs. She fell off, fracturing her leg and skull.

"But even that wasn't enough to make me stop, I was literally killing myself."

After Mary contacted Veterans Aid, the team stepped in quickly to set a help strategy in motion and support her through it.

"My time in treatment, in one word, was

lifesaving. I learned so much about why I had struggled with addictive behaviors my whole adult life.

"The most valuable thing I took from it was that addiction is not a quick 'fix'. Recovery takes ongoing work and is something I do have to work on every day. There is so much more to it than putting down drugs; it's about learning to cope with everyday life and being honest with myself.

"The help I have received from Veterans Aid has quite simply given me back my life! I wake up every single day free from guilt and shame.

"My daughter is living with me again and our relationship is better than it has been for years and years! For the first time in years my family can trust me and rely on me. There is laughter and happiness in our house again. I now work a programme daily, and it has impacted all areas of my life in such a positive way."

Veterans Aid exists to help people like Mary; men and women who are in crisis and at great risk. However, the charity's unique ability to act swiftly and make practical interventions at point of need depends on access to funding that can be deployed to deal with emergencies.

"Situations like Mary's fall into the emergency category, which is why grants such as that provided by the RNRMC are so important," explains Dr Hugh Milroy, CEO of Veterans Aid.

"Detox/rehab is expensive but the longer it is deferred, the worse the individual's problems become."

"This grant from the RNRMC is a lifeline for those who come to us in crisis. The seafaring veterans who seek our help are men and women with urgent and frequently life-threatening problems.

Often their issues are so acute that they have been turned away by other agencies and become estranged from their families. With this vital support from the RNRMC we can make the swift and critical interventions that sometimes, quite literally, save lives."

*a pseudonym has been used to protect privacy

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THE Countess of Wessex praised 200 future naval leaders at the most prestigious passing-out parade of the year at Britannia Royal Naval College.

Representing His Majesty the King at Lord High Admiral's Divisions, the Countess took the salute as 170 Royal Navy cadets, 30 officers from international navies and 17 cadets from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary completed months of intensive training at the Dartmouth establishment.

Paying her first visit to the spiritual home of the Navy's officer corps, the Countess – who is also the sponsor of Type 45 destroyer HMS Daring – told those mustered on the parade ground: "This is a big moment in your lives – the moment when you become serving officers in His Majesty's Navy, the moment when you leave all the hard training behind you and take up the mantle of responsibility.

"Until now you have been looking to others to guide you and show you the way. From now on, it is you who will be leading others. Leading – and leading well – takes skill. Officers who stand out are those who put the men and women with whom they serve first and in doing so seem to foster bonds of loyalty, credibility and respect.

"A new generation of naval officers is born today. I hope you will be proud of what you have achieved and

what you will go on to achieve."

The parade, the most prestigious event in the college's calendar, takes its name from the historic title of Lord High Admiral, typically the ruling monarch – although held by the Duke of Edinburgh from his 90th birthday until his death.

The Countess was accompanied by the head of the Royal Navy, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key, and hosted by Britannia's Commanding Officer, Captain Sarah Oakley.

"Today is a significant milestone in the lives of all the Officer Cadets on parade," said Capt Oakley.

"It marks the culmination of their successful journey through Britannia Royal Naval College. For some it is the start of their careers in the Royal Navy, and for others it is just the next exciting step in their already-successful careers.

"Everyone has memories to share about their experiences during training, which they will cherish as they move forward in their journeys."

Of the 170 Royal Navy Officer Cadets on parade, 27 had served previously in the ranks. Some 30 international cadets will return to their native navies around the world, while 17 Officer Cadets from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary will go on to complete their training to serve with the Royal Navy's vital support arm.

Two of those who passed out were Officer Cadet Ryan Parker from Bracknell in Berkshire and Sub Lieutenant Jannell Adams from St Vincent in the Caribbean. They are both looking forward to the next phase of their training in the Royal Navy.

"My proudest moment at the college was at the end of the final leadership assessment followed by running the 'run off', where we were all digging out for each other," said Ryan.

"This is something I will remember forever, in particular the exhilaration of crossing the finishing line in front of the whole college that had come to support us."

"I am aspiring to become a Warfare Officer. My next two years are mapped out and I'm excited to be joining my first ship within the coming weeks, before coming back to the College to start my professional training phase, when I start the Initial Warfare Officers Foundation course."

Jannell served as a rating before joining the Officer Corps and is proud of her time at BRNC.

"I joined the Royal Navy as a Writer and waited two years before starting my officer training to become a Logistics

Officer," she explained.

"I enjoyed the sea training onboard a warship, where we worked along the sailors in the Fleet and had the same experiences, they have day to day.

"Today I'm overwhelmed with mixed feelings, more feelings of joy, proud and happy feelings that I've finished and passed out, made some great friends, as well as made a difference for my island back in the Caribbean, putting St Vincent on the map."

PICTURES:
LPhot Barry Swainsbury



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Commons honour for Jimmy

AIR Engineering instructor James 'Jimmy' Callaghan from HMS Sultan was awarded the Kevin Large Award in a ceremony at the House of Commons after the apprentice he trained picked up Gold and the highest score for the WorldSkills UK squad in the WorldSkills 2022 international competition.

Under Jimmy's tutelage, RAF apprentice Senior Aircraftman Ewan Payne achieved the score in the Aircraft Maintenance section of the competition, beating the world's top apprentices at The ICAT (International Centre for Aerospace Training), Cardiff and Vale College.

Jimmy has been involved with the UK squad since an apprenticeship visit to Sultan in 2014.

He's supported numerous events throughout the UK, including helping apprentices prepare for WorldSkills international competition, with RAF apprentice Senior Aircraftman, Shayne Hadland awarded Silver in Aircraft Maintenance in Sao Paulo, 2015.

Since 2021 he's been WorldSkills UK expert and spent the past 18 months honing Ewan's skills in the hope of achieving a podium place for the WorldSkills UK squad in the finals through training at Sultan, RAF Benson, Loughborough University and Cardiff and Vale College.

Jimmy said: "I'm so proud of everything we've achieved, Ewan is so talented, he has worked tirelessly to get where he is today, consistently going the extra mile and really deserves the success."

"I don't think we would be where we are without my predecessor Martin's passion for excellence, which was so infectious, his drive, encouragement and attention to detail really set the bar and helped me appreciate the important role we play in inspiring the next generation. To go one better than Shayne achieved in 2015, claiming Gold with both Haydn and Ewan is really beyond anything we could have hoped for. We have a lot to thank industry for, apprentices gain so much from the experience, receiving training from some of the UK's leading providers."

Sharon takes Bob's baton

FASLANE – the largest military establishment in Scotland – has new commander with Commodore Bob Anstey handing over to Commodore Sharon Malkin.

After 18 months in charge of the home of the Silent Service – and 36 in the RN – he's putting on his civvies.

Accompanied by his wife Caroline aboard HMS Tracker, he was waved off by military and civilian personnel, to the skirl of bagpipes and jets of water from tugs.

Cdre Malkin – an air engineer by trade – has served around the globe since joining the RN in 1994.

Engineers bag coveted RNR trophy

THERE may be fog on the Tyne at times. There's certainly silver for the next 12 months in the form of a top award presented to naval reservists.

The magnificent silver replica of minehunter HMS Waveney is the Richards Trophy – presented annually to the team, branch or arm of the Reserves organisation which has contributed most to operations at home and overseas.

And in 2022 that was the RNR Engineer Branch – represented here by a delighted Commander Sarah Royston (pictured right).

She received the award on behalf of the men and women she leads at Calliope in Gateshead, presented by Commander Maritime Reserves, Commodore Mel Robinson.

"I am absolutely delighted that our Reservist engineers have been recognised for their contribution to operational engineering support," said Commander Royston, a former regular RN engineer who now works in consultancy by day, and for the RNR in her spare time.

"The skills and experience they offer, both from their experience in the Royal Navy and their civilian careers, is unique and highly valuable. They are a real asset to Defence."

Reservist engineers support Royal Navy ships on operations all around the globe, including Type 23 frigates, Offshore Patrol Vessels and even deployed submarines, as well as providing enduring in-depth expertise here in the UK to other MOD and Royal Navy organisations such as Fleet Operational Sea Training,



the Maritime Capability Trials and Assessment agency, and Defence Equipment and Support.

Captain Camilla Meek – the Royal Navy's senior operational engineer – was one of the judges.

"As part of the Royal Navy's transformation programme, we have been able to integrate the Reserve Engineering Branch wholly and seamlessly into our Forward Support Units, where they have delivered alongside their Regular counterparts across the full range of base ports and deployed support, both individually and as small teams."

"That approach not only brings in a wealth of experience to support our junior engineers ashore and at sea, but also adds new niche capabilities to the Royal Navy's toolkit."

Capt Meek said it was clear that the RNR engineers had "made their mark across the Fleet, improving availability, sustainability and capability in all platforms, at home and overseas, and are fully deserving of this honour."

Commodore Robinson praised Cdr Royston and her engineers for their "unwavering operational support", citing two key, recent examples.

In October two Reservist engineers deployed to the Falkland Islands to provide pre-planned maintenance support to the islands' permanent RN presence, HMS Forth, the Royal Navy's Offshore Patrol Vessel providing a permanent presence in the South Atlantic.

And in November a Reservist, Lt Cdr John Bullock, joined HMS Duncan as the destroyer's marine engineering officer to ensure she could continue with her operational training package, thus ultimately guaranteeing she could deploy where needed.

"These are just two examples of Reservist engineers demonstrating the value and utility of the Reserve Engineering Branch," Cdre Robinson said.

"For them, and their colleagues, I very much hope the award of this trophy will be a tangible reminder that their contribution has been noticed and recognised."



Fleet's top units raise the flag

HOPEFULLY there's space in the rigging, because HMS Albion has not one, not two but three new flags to hoist over the next 12 months.

The UK's amphibious flagship – which led the RN's key autumn deployment to the Mediterranean last year – has been awarded three pennants for rising above the rest of the Fleet in three key areas in the annual Efficiency Awards.

Each year the Surface Flotilla analyses the effect, impact and work of the entire front-line fleet, issuing trophies to those it believes have delivered the most or performed the best. In the case of ships, that means the right to fly a blue-white pennant fouled with hippocampi (seahorses).

Albion shone in three distinct fields: best of three active capital ships; best contribution to electronic warfare; and the highest standards of seamanship.

Albion and her ship's company of sailors and Royal Marines was tested in waters cold (Arctic) and warm (Med, North Africa, Adriatic) in 2022, but has also found time to support the training of next-generation officers, engineers and reservists, welcomed her sponsor Princess Anne and affiliates/families, and flew the flag for the UK and its armed forces throughout the Mediterranean.

Her work in the electronic warfare sphere provided key intelligence for the UK and its closest allies and as for the seamen specialists, they rose to the challenges of busy and demanding operations in the harshest of environments. Albion spent nearly half of 2022 at sea, conducted 22 entries/exits to overseas ports (some known, some not), frequently taken the ship to buoys, helped choreograph photoshoots involving to 20 international warships, and safely overseen numerous replenishments at sea, all carried out "with alacrity and professionalism".

Other trophies awarded by Commander Surface Flotilla, Commodore Tim Nield, and his staff were the Naval Capability, presented to frigate HMS Northumberland, heavily engaged throughout the year on anti-submarine warfare duties and security patrols from the Arctic to the Atlantic and Mediterranean, with the minehunting sailors of MCM1 Crew 2 runners-up.

HMS Defender was named the best of the six Type 45 destroyers ahead of her sister Diamond (and also took the 'best communications' title, nudging 45 Commando Royal Marines into the runners-up spot).

HMS Montrose is No.1 frigate for her consistent, persistent efforts in the Gulf region, ahead of HMS Northumberland.

The Jersey Cup for the best Offshore Patrol Vessel goes to HMS Mersey, which has largely been operating in home waters, with HMS Spey – deployed with HMS Tamar on a five-year mission to the Indo-Pacific region – taking second place.

And the Jim Acton Trophy for mine warfare – named after an officer killed in an earthquake in Turkey – goes to MCM1 Crew 6 (not currently assigned to any ship), ahead of MCM2 Crew 1 (HMS Brocklesby).

The record-breaking work of veteran survey ship HMS Scott – the fifth largest vessel under the White Ensign – in the mid-Atlantic makes her the Hydrographic ship of the year, with tiny coastal survey craft HMS Magpie the runner-up.

Staying with smaller vessels, P2000 HMS Exploit receives the Inshore Patrol Vessel Trophy and pennant, narrowly proving more effective than her sister HMS Charger.

The Grytviken Cup for demonstrating exceptional prowess in above-water warfare goes to HMS Diamond, with her sister Defender as runner-up.

And for hunting 'the enemy below' HMS Portland takes the title and pennant for anti-submarine warfare, followed by HMS Northumberland.

Delta Diving Unit 2 take the Fleet Diving Trophy ahead of their colleagues in Alpha Diving Unit 2.

HMS Protector's marine engineers took their specialisation's trophy for keeping the ice ship running in the polar extremes, thousands of miles from home in Devonport. HMS Lancaster and Defender were joint runners-up.

Destroyer HMS Dauntless will raise the 'rulers of the road' pennant when she returns to sea on training in the new year for her knowledge of navigation and seafaring, scoring 98 per cent in a FOST exam... 0.2 per cent better than runner-up HMS Severn, the RN's dedicated navigational training vessel.

Beyond ships and squadrons, there are also group and individual awards, such as the Fleet Intelligence Trophy won (collectively) by the MIFC 'Rest of the World' team and (individually) by Lt Stewart of PJHQ/J2.

Headspace help extended

ROYAL Navy Health and Wellbeing team are pleased to announce the continued contract with Headspace.

This means that, with immediate effect, the Royal Navy will continue to provide access to the Headspace application for another 12 months.

It is free of charge to all Royal Navy personnel (Regulars and active reservists in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, RNR and RMR, as well as the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, RN TLB Civil Servants and 3,000 RN/RM families).

Headspace tools and resources can be downloaded to personal devices which will enable access to deployed units.

If you have an existing Headspace licence from the past 12 months, via this project you can continue to use it and there will be no break in the service.

The benefits of Headspace are far-reaching, with the potential to not only improve mental wellbeing, but also improve your work-life balance. It offers guidance and support tools in mindfulness and meditation to help with stress, anxiety, sleep, focus, fitness, and more.

"After a successful first year I am delighted that we are able to continue to provide access to wellbeing support for our people across the RN Whole Force



and, importantly, their family members who support them, through the Headspace App. Furthermore, I encourage those who haven't yet tried Headspace to give it a go," Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell said.

Rear Admiral Jude Terry, Director People and Training added: "The Royal Navy is committed to supporting the mental and physical wellbeing of our people. I am pleased that we are able to continue our partnership with Headspace which many of you are finding useful."

See RNTM 07-003/23 on Defnet or Defence Connect.

Local hub added to MyNavy app

COMING soon to your MyNavy app is the Local Hub which will help you settle in at your new assignment at a new base or location, supporting you at each step of your journey as you move from your current establishment to your next one, helping you prepare so that you are ready for your first day.

When it goes live, the feature

will provide you with the following info:

- A new assignment checklist shows you the steps and tasks you need to complete before your start date.
- Accommodation contact information to help you get your accommodation booked conveniently.

- Base maps enable you to find useful information about your new establishment.

Additional features will be provided in due course, including:

- Electronic Arrival Forms
- Medical eRegistration
- Dental eRegistration
- Travel Booking

Dedication earns safety accreditation

King's first honours

YEARS of hard work and effort by the RN's Safety Centre mean there's now official accreditation for a key course.

Back in 2017, staff at the centre – based at Naval HQ in Portsmouth – introduced the Maritime Human Factors Facilitators Course to ensure a better understanding of human conditions/decision-making.

WO2 Wayne Kilby RM subsequently launched a Human Factors system strategy which has contributed to an improved safety culture across the Royal Navy, reduction in harm to our people and ultimately improving overall Operational Capability.

Since 2020, the course has been bolstered by the input of Dr Anthea Ashford from the Human Factors Group at the Institute of Naval Medicine. She has expanded the course to encompass a wider range of human factors. This revised course was introduced in 2022 and feedback from participants has been extremely positive.

Human Factors has been officially recognised in the Fleet Commander's Mandate for the Navy Safety and Environment Improvement Programme which ultimately lead to improved performance of RN personnel, improved occupational health and safety.

Now the course has received accreditation from the Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors, bringing the team behind the course into the chartered institute's broader family will give them access to a library of academic white papers, working groups which share good practice across many industries and the option to advance their own professional development supported by their employer.

Are you due a Welbeck refund?

THE Defence Academy is trying to reach students who attended Welbeck DSFC between 2005 and 2019 but who left without joining the Forces.

Their parents or guardians who incurred the Default Event Recovery charge may have been overcharged and are thus due a refund.

Email enquiries to the Defence Academy on DEFAC-DTOEES-HQ@mod.gov.uk.

TWENTY-seven sailors, Royal Marines and Reservists from across the spectrum of command, leadership and branches were singled out in the King's first New Year's Honours list.

They have been rewarded for efforts and contributions above the regular call of duty in the Service, from playing key roles in major international deployments, to championing diversity and the work of Caribbean personnel and continuing to keep Covid in check.

In addition, 23 senior ratings/non-commissioned officers with at least 20 years' service and of "irreproachable character" have also been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.

Captain (now Commodore) Don Crosbie (pictured right) is awarded the OBE for his work pushing the boundaries of Anglo-American minehunting operations in the Gulf.

As deputy commander of Task Force 52 – the US Navy's permanent mine warfare force deployed in Bahrain – Captain Crosbie's inspirational leadership, dedication and energy drove ever closer relations between British and US minehunters, dive teams and especially tech as both navies look to make use of autonomous systems, drones and crewless craft to hunt down and neutralise underwater devices.

The calmness and professionalism of Lieutenant Henry Mainstone when he was navigator of HMS Forth in the Falklands earns him an MBE.

Assisted by his shipmates, he assumed command of the patrol ship when the commanding officer became medically unfit while Forth was at sea; the patient received the care needed, Lt Mainstone rallied the crew and brought the ship safely into port in challenging conditions, demonstrating "leadership and moral courage in the face of extreme adversity" throughout in the words of his citation.

"I am incredibly honoured to receive an MBE, I did not expect such an outcome," said the 27-year-old, originally from



Dorset but now living with his wife in Scotland.

He says the actions "of every single member of the ship's company" were crucial during some difficult hours.

"Leading in such challenging circumstances and the following months was difficult, and those few weeks were perhaps the hardest of my career thus far.

"To be recognised with a state award is a huge honour and my family are very proud."

Chief Petty Officer Janine Potts (pictured below left), based at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth is a champion of Commonwealth personnel serving in the Royal Navy and determined to make the Service a more inclusive place for all. She's been at the forefront of driving policy to improve the experience of personnel from overseas/Commonwealth, addressing the unique challenges they face, establishing the Royal Navy Commonwealth Network and supporting the Navy's newly-formed Race and Diversity Network. She is made an MBE.

As is CPO (Logs) Miriam Charlton of HMS Drake for her work in improving life for Plymouth-based personnel.

As the Parent Support Information Manager in the Personnel Support Group (Devonport), the senior rating has made a sustained and tangible improvement in the lived experience of Service Personnel with parental responsibilities. She's played

Promotions in and appointments to the Military Division of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath

As Knight Commander (KCB)
Vice Admiral Keith Blount CB OBE
Vice Admiral Nicholas Hine CB

As Companions (CB)
Vice Admiral Paul Marshall CBE
Major General James Andrew John Morris RM DSO
Vice Admiral Guy Antony Robinson OBE

As Commanders (CBE)
Commodore Peter Coulson
Captain John Lewis Rutland Foreman
Commodore Stuart Philip Henderson

As Officers (OBE)
Commodore Donald Ernest Frederick Crosbie
Commander John Michael George Dineen
Captain Glyn Owen
Commander Andrew Maurice Pariser
Captain Peter Michael Viney
Captain Thomas Henry Weaver

As Members (MBE)

Major Angus Edward Berger RM
Lieutenant Commander Oliver Gary Brown
Chief Petty Officer Logistician (Writer) Miriam Charlton
Lieutenant Commander Jennifer Floyd
Chief Petty Officer Engineering Technician (Communications and Information Systems) Philip Geoffrey Richard Hodgson
Leading Logistician (Writer) Tommy Andrew Russell Horrell
Lieutenant Henry Theodore Mainstone
Chief Petty Officer Logistician (Writer) Janine Candide Potts
Chief Petty Officer Aircrewman Mark Steven Alan Spencer RNR
Chief Petty Officer Engineering Technician (Communications and Information Systems) Nicola Wade

As an Ordinary Associate of the Royal Red Cross, Second Class (ARRC)

Chief Petty Officer Robert Chambers QARNNS
Lieutenant Commander Sarah Elizabeth Dewey QARNNS

King's Volunteer Reserves Medals (KVRM)

Warrant Officer 2 Andrew Charles Carmichael RMR

Meritorious Service Medal

Lt S E Ashdown RNAS Yeovilton CPOCOXN(SM) T J Clifton SFM Faslane
WO1AET N Copeland SDA
WO1WS(SSM) J A Crawford RNSMS
Lt M Evans HQBF Gibraltar
WO1(COXN SM) M Farr MBE HMS Richmond
WO1(D) N Frost FGen Ships NCHQ
WO1 S A Hall 30 Cdo IX Group
WO1ET(WE) D B Hamp ComSurFlot
WO1WS (AWW) L B Hendrickson c/o Office of Protocol
WO1 (Police) J A Houghton HMS Defender
CPOWS(WESM) G Hunter HMS Ambush
WO2 J B Kemp MBE RM Poole
WO1ET(ME) B Martin 47 Cdo (RG) RM
WO1ET(ME) L Paterson ComSurFlot
WO1 S Payne RNAS Yeovilton
WO1LOG(SC) J Preece Logs Policy NCHQ
WO1 RSM W Rees 42 Cdo RM
CPOET(MESM) M Shepley HMS VICTORIOUS
POLOG(CS) M Trotter ComSubFlot
WO1ET(ME) C Wheeler MBE ComSurFlot
CPOAET L Wrightson HQ JHC
WO1WS(WESM) S Yeates (HMS Victorious (Starboard))

a central role in developing and implementing parental policies and support structures, dealing with many sensitive and complex cases included fertility treatment, adoption and infant bereavement – making "a significant and lasting impact on the personal lives of a great many service people and has transformed the support given during pregnancy which has improved retention".

"The nomination and the award have come as a complete surprise to me, and I am immensely proud that my efforts within the Personnel Support Group (Devonport) have been given recognition – all whilst doing a job that I love," said Miriam (pictured right).

Also awarded the MBE is Lieutenant Commander Oli Brown who has done more than any other individual in the Navy to dispel the stigma and myths surrounding those living with HIV. His efforts have had a profound impact on recruiting, retention and on the understanding of a key societal issue.

It's thanks in large part to Reservist aircrewman Chief Petty Officer Mark Spencer that the Commando Helicopter Force have better trained crew in the Merlin Mk4 helicopter, which carries Royal Marines into battle.

Mark, who serves at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset, has been instrumental in the Rear Crew Trainer simulator – the first of its kind which will revolutionise the way in which aircrew train.

It's the task of the rear crew to ensure the safety of up to two dozen commandos and their kit, as well as support the pilots, operate the machine-guns in a combat zone, land/take-off in tight spots and secure loads safely beneath the helicopter.

Mark has pulled out all the stops to ensure the software/simulator not only works but improves the training delivered to aircrewmen, to the benefit of front-line operations. He receives the MBE for his outstanding efforts.

Nearly three years on since it

first struck, Covid continues to have an impact on life both in the Royal Navy and the UK – and nursing staff continue to rise to the challenge.

Chief Petty Officer Robert Chambers and Lieutenant Commander Sarah Dewey each receive the Ordinary Associate of the Royal Red Cross, Second Class. CPO Chambers is the RN's nursing specialist in infection prevention and controls.

At the height of the pandemic he identified the urgent need for PPE and was instrumental in organising and providing testing for ships. His advice guidance and policymaking proved vital in ensuring the Royal Navy's continued to operate through a challenging period.

Lieutenant Commander Dewey coordinated and responded to numerous requests from the NHS for military medic and nursing support, and her input was vital when it came to making the best use of finite resources during the vaccination process. She also oversaw the safe deployment of specialist medical personnel.

Her dedication and professionalism ensured the right support was safely delivered on time and that Defence was able to make a significant contribution during a national emergency.



'...being a Commando has never felt more important...'

GENERAL Gwyn Jenkins assumed the highest post in the Royal Marines – Commandant General – in November, taking over from Lt Gen Rob McGowan.

Here he outlines his vision for the Corps under his tutelage.

THIS is a big moment for me, as I write to you all to introduce myself as the next Commandant General Royal Marines.

Taking over from Rob is a somewhat daunting task given the devotion of time and energy he has given to the role over not one but two outstanding tenures.

An individual who I have the greatest personal and professional respect for, the whole Corps family owe him a great deal of gratitude for his service. Lucky for me I will be able to continue to work closely with him in our day jobs.

Having now reached my 32nd year in the Royal Marines, being a Commando has never felt more important and our mandate never so clear.

I am deeply committed to the Royal Marines and the unique offer we provide Defence across our regular, reserve and band service component parts.

This has been on full display throughout 2022, from our short-notice operational contribution following Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, to countless high-profile maritime interdictions, to the flawless ceremonial and musical performances when paying tribute to Her Late Majesty The Queen. There is far too much to list it all. But the consistent thread is that every activity demonstrates the high performance, discipline, and humility that our Corps values and standards underpin in our people from their very first day of training.



Coupled with our unrivalled mindset, there is no obstacle or challenge we cannot see through.

The unprecedented nature of the global security situation and increasing geopolitical turmoil mean that the purpose of UK Defence has come sharply back into focus; we protect the nation and help it prosper.

As Brigade Commander I was lucky enough to play a key role in the new Commando Force vision. Change is never easy, but the early lessons identified from the brutal conflict in Ukraine show that many of the assumptions we made about how to fight and win on the current and future battlefield were correct.

In bringing the Commando Force from vision to reality, we lived up to our ethos of being the first to understand and adapt. As a result, whispers in Whitehall a few years ago about an uncertain future for the Royal Marines in the Armed Forces are now long gone. As an integral arm of the Royal Navy, we are proud of our role within the service. We have earned that credibility through embracing the challenge of transformation.

Now is the time to press on and double down, to be the Commandos our nation needs us to be, with our trademark positivity, imagination, and tenacity.

The Royal Marines is a unique family and the bond between our past, present, and future is as strong as ever. Every time we don our berets, we are standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before us, and we must always be mindful of that.

As we return to our Commando roots in a more forward deployed and responsive posture than ever, tempo will test us. That is where our judgement must hold true. That most underrated of qualities, we must know when to push hard, but also when to take a knee. We cannot sprint indefinitely, and the leader who can hold a sustainable pace and bring everyone with them is worth more than one who gets to the finishing line alone.

High morale is essential for high performance, and I am determined to demonstrate the value of new ways of working for increasing balance, efficiency, and productivity.

So it is with great optimism that I approach my small part in this next stage of the Royal Marines' story. I want this to be the start of a two-way conversation, and every voice in the Corps family is as important as mine. I have a fantastic team with the CRSM, and my Deputy and Assistant network of one stars, so please do engage with us!



Colonel Sean Brady salutes the men of the Royal Marines Boom Patrol Detachment on the 80th anniversary of Operation Frankton
Picture: LPhot Kev Walton

Canoe heroes remembered

ROYAL Marines past and present paid their respects to the legendary 'Cockleshell Heroes' on both sides of the Channel – 80 years after the legendary raid.

Commemorations were held in Portsmouth and Bordeaux to remember the ten Royal Marines who set out to strike a blow against the Nazis in the darkest days of WW2 by paddling 60 miles up the Gironde in kayaks (codenamed 'cockles') to destroy enemy shipping.

Officially known as Operation Frankton, the raid has become the epitome of commando resolve, spirit and ethos – stealthily striking at the enemy from the sea.

And the bravery of the volunteers of the Royal Marines Boom Patrol Detachment – based at Lumps Fort in Southsea – has also been acknowledged in France, with the escape route taken after the raid becoming a memorial/tourist trail.

In Bordeaux, a combined Anglo-French ceremony was held at the Frankton Memorial on the waterfront, with Colonel Stephen Tamlyn representing the Corps, and veteran green berets completing a recreation of the paddle up the Gironde – 'Cockleshell 22', raising money for the Royal Marines Charity among others.

In Portsmouth, services were held first at the Royal Marines Memorial Garden at the former barracks in Eastney, then at Lumps Fort along the seafront, where wreaths were laid on the 'cockle statue' and a new interpretation/display board installed by Portsmouth City Council, which explains the role of the fort in the raid, was unveiled by Colonel Sean Brady.

It was off Lumps Fort that the men of the Boom Patrol Detachment trained for their mission in the autumn of 1942, before they joined submarine HMS Tuna in Holy Loch to sail on the mission at the end of November.

Tuna reached the mouth of the Gironde on December 7 and launched five cockles, each crewed by two men.

Of the ten Royal Marines who embarked on the raid, two died of hypothermia during the first night of the raid, two more were captured the next morning, and two became separated from the rest of the party so decided to abandon the mission and attempt to reach neutral Spain... only to be subsequently betrayed and handed over to the Germans.

As a result only two cockles reached the harbour. They succeeded in damaging six merchant ships using limpet mines.

All six men captured by the Germans were executed under Hitler's notorious Commando Order – despite each one wearing military uniform.

Only two of the canoeists survived: mission leader Major Blondie Hasler and Marine Bill Sparks, who reached Spain with the help of the French resistance after two and a half months, eventually reaching the UK via Gibraltar.

Unlike other famous raids of WW2 such as the Dambusters or the attack on the docks at St Nazaire, Frankton wasn't widely known or celebrated until a decade later with the book (and film rather loosely based on it), *Cockleshell Heroes* – a name Hasler personally hated.

Following the services in Portsmouth, attendees and the public were invited into the historic dockyard to see many of Hasler's possessions held by the National Museum of the Royal Navy – but not on general display.

Tim's no chicken dipper

VETERAN Royal Marine and four-times cancer survivor Tim Crossin braved the chilly weather for a series of 'cold-water dips' to raise money for three charities.

The 59-year-old from Poole has beaten three Lymphoma cancers in the last four years. Diagnosed for a fourth time in December, Tim determined to raise money for three good causes – The Royal Marines Charity, Lymphoma Action and Rock 2 Recovery.

His consultant vetoed anything more physically strenuous than a quick dip in the sea due to his ongoing recovery programme.

On each day last month, Tim's camper van arrived in a different location in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – starting and finishing in Poole.

And at each, irrespective of temperature, weather or sea state, he took a quick dip/swim – often joined by 50-100 well-wishers.

"As a former Royal Marine, I'd like to be running up a mountain, naked, with a fridge on my



back or swimming the Channel dragging a piano or something else mad and extreme, but all the chemotherapy has severely damaged my lungs limiting my physical capability.

"Although I couldn't swim for long I thought I could raise some money and awareness by doing short swims around the country every day in January."

If you missed Tim but still wish to support him, visit www.colddipcommando.com

Recalling Edinburgh's Reserve unit

FORMER Naval Reservists gathered in Edinburgh to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the city's long-retired RNR unit, HMS Claverhouse.

To mark the centenary of the formal naming of the unit, the members of the Claverhouse Association of Former Officers (CAFO) invited the Claverhouse Association and other guests to a reception at the former Forth Division RNR training centre in the Scottish capital's Granton Square.

The unit, which closed nearly 30 years ago, took its name from John Graham of Claverhouse, 1st Viscount of Dundee, who lost his life leading the Highland clans loyal to the Jacobite cause to victory at the Battle of Killecrankie in 1689.

Guest of Honour at the centennial get-together was the Duke of Montrose whose grandfather, Commodore the Marquess of Graham (later the sixth duke), was one of the founders of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve – forerunner of today's Maritime Reserve – in 1903, while his grandmother named the first floating HMS Claverhouse in 1922.

A century later, the Duke talked about the enthusiasm of his grandfather in raising the RNVR in Scotland and the foresight in procuring the drill ship in Edinburgh.

The Duke brought his Grandfather's scrap book to the event, and Cdr Mike Simpson, the last Commanding Officer of HMS Claverhouse turned up with the original guest book with signatures of those present at the 1922 naming and King Charles sent his



Remembering Claverhouse: Brig Andy Muddiman, the RN's regional commander, Lord Provost Robert Aldridge, the Duke of Montrose, Lt Cdr Thomas McPhail, John and Helga McPhail (organisers), Andrew Kerr (booklet author) and, sitting, David Carpenter (Chairman CAFO)

warmest good wishes to all concerned for a most enjoyable event, and it was exactly that.

A commemorative booklet has been produced to mark the centenary.

It includes the story of the RNVR/RNR in Edinburgh and descriptions of the many

sea tenders – most of which were named Killiecrankie – on which training was conducted throughout the years.

HMS Scotia, across the Forth in Rosyth, serves as the present-day home of Maritime Reserves in south-east Scotland.

Marking milestones

MANY happy returns to two WW2 stalwarts who survived the travails of the Arctic, Med and Normandy to enjoy long, rich lives in peace.

Former stoker Francis 'Frank' Witton celebrated his 100th birthday at home in Devizes, Wiltshire, with cards from both The King and the First Sea Lord.

And further west in Falmouth, ex-RN Commando Ivor Pascoe, who crewed landing craft during amphibious assaults in the Med and then Normandy, marked his milestone with the

Frank – pictured here holding a tampion from HMS Woolston, the ship he spent most of her career aboard – served from 1941 until he was demobbed at the end of WW2, mostly in the Arctic and Mediterranean.

He's believed to be the last 'Woolston' left (the veteran destroyer was scrapped shortly after the conflict ended) and one of the last sailors to witness the surrender of the German U-boat force in Bergen, Norway, in May 1945.

But for fate, however, Frank may never have seen his 20th birthday in 1942. Originally from St Albans, Frank was released from his reserved occupation working for aircraft manufacturer Handley Page to join the Navy.

Having completed his stoker training he was drafted to V&W-class destroyer HMS Woolston at Rosyth in February 1942.

Woolston was at sea so the rookie stokers were assigned to her sister HMS Vortigern, before belatedly joining Woolston when she returned from patrol. Vortigern was lost on her next convoy escort mission, torpedoed by an E-boat off the Norfolk coast. Just 12 men of 159 aboard



were rescued.

HMS Woolston was dispatched to the Arctic to escort convoy PQ12 to northern Russia. The ship was neither designed for the mission – nor prepared for the horrendous weather conditions endured. Frank complained he and his shipmates lacked clothing suitable for the Arctic, while his ship "was almost going 45 degrees" as she pitched and rolled in mountainous seas. There was no opportunity to experience Archangel when the convoy reached its destination as the convoy was turned around and sent back to Scapa Flow immediately.

In the months which followed, Woolston was assigned more regular convoy duties, shepherding merchant shipping down the East Coast – a mission halted briefly in the summer of 1943 when the destroyer was sent to support the landings in Sicily.

The European war ended for Frank and his ship in Bergen, where Woolston accepted the surrender of the German commander, Admiral Otto von Schrader, and his U-boats.

Woolston's crew were royally welcomed by the Norwegian



populace, fraternised with freed Soviet PoWs who were invited aboard the destroyer, and took part in a parade celebrating Norway's National Day.

That was the end of Frank's time; he was due to join HMS Suffolk for the defeat of Japan, only for the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to prompt Tokyo's surrender.

Instead, he married a headmaster's daughter, Catherine, with whom he enjoyed 75 happy years, and, once demobbed, settled back in St Albans where he used his naval knowledge to work as a boiler man at Rose's Lime Juice which had relocated to Hertfordshire when its London factory was destroyed in the Blitz.

It was only decades later that Frank's Arctic service was recognised by the British and Russian governments with decorations of thanks, while the Norwegian Government awarded the ex-sailor their Medal of Honour in 2019 for his part in the liberation of Norway.

Ivor Pascoe joined the Royal Navy after a family tragedy: his mother and several relatives were killed when the Luftwaffe

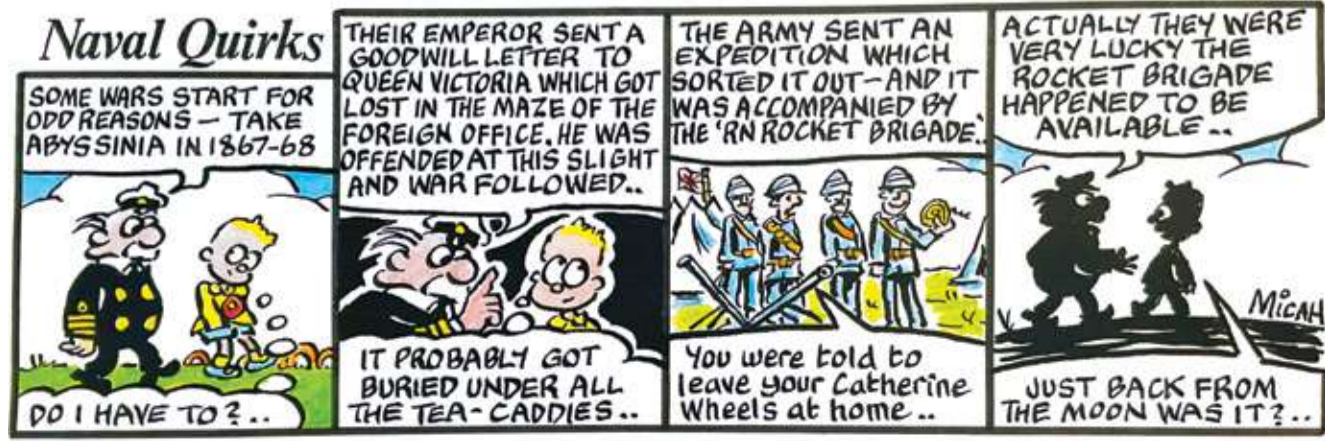
bombed Penryn in 1941 – a tragic episode he recounted to local schoolchildren after the war so that the sacrifices would never be forgotten.

Assigned to landing craft, Ivor and his shipmates ran the gauntlet of enemy defences during several operations: firstly Sicily and then mainland Italy, then Normandy.

Under fire off Sword Beach on D-Day, one of his crew was killed as they deployed smoke ahead of the initial assault.

In the years peace which followed, Mr Pascoe returned to the beaches on numerous occasions to keep the memory of his comrades alive and, in 2015, he was recognised for his efforts in helping to liberate France when he was awarded the republic's highest military decoration, the Légion d'Honneur.

He was joined at his home in King Charles Court in Falmouth by WO Robbie Buglass RM, base warrant officer at RNAS Culdrose (pictured above with the centenarian), just up the road in Helston for a celebration surrounded by Ivor's friends and family had also gathered for a celebration.





The last salute: Serving submariners and Royal Marines salute as Jim Booth's coffin is carried into the Church of St John the Evangelist, Staplegrave, Taunton

First to defend, last honoured

THE last commemorative event of the 40th anniversary year of the Falklands conflict paid homage to the first men to see action in 1982.

The 70 Royal Marines and sailors of Naval Party 8901 – the islands' first line of defence – fought an unequal battle with overwhelming Argentine forces during the first hours of the invasion in 1982.

They were reluctantly ordered to lay down their arms by the islands' governor, before being taken prisoner. Repatriated a few days later, the men returned to the islands two months later to raise the Falklands flag outside Government House – the seat of British power – when Argentine forces surrendered.

Four decades later and veteran commandos were in Stanley again, joining today's garrison and Falkland Islands Defence Force personnel marching through the streets of the capital to the imposing war memorial on the sea front.

It commemorates the 1914 naval

clash off the islands – and Falkland leaders decided Battle Day 2022 was the perfect occasion to simultaneously honour NP8901.

Bill Muir, in 1982 a sergeant major who had begun his year-long tour-of-duty just days before the invasion, was invited to unveil the memorial plinth in the grounds of Government House which praises him and his comrades for offering a "courageous and gallant defence" despite being "outnumbered, outgunned and outmanoeuvred".

He fought back tears as he performed the honours, filled with pride and appreciation, not least as this is the first official recognition the Naval Party – which included sailors, including hydrographers from ice patrol ship HMS Endurance – has received.

"I know the people of the Falklands continue to thank us," he said. "But after the war, it is us who really, really thank them."

Stanley's councillor, MLA Leona Roberts – who experienced the war as a child – told the Royal Marines it was hard for the islanders to express their gratitude for the men.

"You have a place in our hearts," she said. "And you have earned a place of special honour in the history of the Falklands."

The ceremony – and Battle Day commemorations at the monument – were played out in glorious weather, with all three Services represented and the Royal Marines Corps of Drums adding pomp and rhythm to the occasion.

Battle Day honours the Royal Navy sailors who hunted down and all but wiped out the squadron of German admiral Graf von Spee who had hitherto proved to be a thorn in Britain's side.

He had routed an inferior Royal Navy force off Coronel in the Pacific in November 1914, prompting the Admiralty to dispatch two battle-cruisers – faster and more powerful than anything von Spee commanded – to destroy the German group.

They succeeded. Four of the five German warships in von Spee's squadron, including the flagship with the admiral aboard, were sunk with the loss of nearly 1,900 souls while the Royal Navy suffered just ten dead.

Ken mourned by Newport

NEWPORT City RNA are mourning the passing of hugely-popular shipmate Ken Perryman who died on Christmas Eve.

A branch regular, Ken – a stalwart of the annual Remembrance Day parade and raising money for the RBL selling poppies in Sainsbury's every year – loved swapping stories with anyone who had a connection with the military.

Ken began his naval career in 1959, as a 15-year-old Junior Seaman at St Vincent, and over the years he amused family and friends with his colourful accounts of his time on the various ships he'd served on. A favourite story was when, as ship's writer on the Messina, he mistyped the Daily Orders, advising the gunnery team to ensure they clear their bowels instead of their barrels. His happiest times were on HMS Eastbourne (1961-62) and Carysfort (1966-69) and his proudest time was on the Royal Yacht Britannia (1969-70).

When he returned to civvy street, Ken worked in Newport's Llanwrn Steelworks and raised three boys with his wife Lynda in Bettws, Malpas.

He was struck down by Covid during the early days of the pandemic in February 2020 and never recovered.

Goodbye, weatherman Bernie

ANOTHER centenarian and WW2 veteran being mourned is Bernard 'Bernie' Beckett who died in late December... just a couple of months after enjoying a memorable return to his 'alma mater'.

The former meteorological rating served King and Country for five years in the Mediterranean and East African/Indian Ocean theatres, gathering the data forecasters needed.

In later life, Bernie was a member of – and fundraiser for – the Royal British Legion, hitting the streets of Eastleigh and Southampton to collect hundreds, sometimes thousands, of pounds for the charity's annual poppy appeal.

In return, the charity helped Bernie replace his fridge and freezer, install new carpets in his Hampshire home and arranged two welfare breaks in Weston-Super-Mare.

In October last year, they also organised an emotional return to HMS Collingwood where Bernie's career began as an 18-year-old junior rating back in December 1941.

Collingwood staff treated the veteran to a tour of the establishment – there's little of the original base from the early 40s left on the site near Fareham – and treated him to a belated birthday lunch in the SNCO's Mess.

On qualifying from Collingwood originally 80 years ago, Bernie was sent first to the Mediterranean, where he was



wounded in action, and then Kenya. Based near Nairobi, every morning when he was on duty he took to the sky in a Tiger Moth biplane/trainer to collect meteorological readings.

He was demobbed in March 1946 he returned to the UK and settled in Southampton.

"I was lucky to only suffer shrapnel wounds during the war where I was treated in Gibraltar, but so many weren't as fortunate as me," he told Collingwood personnel on his return in 2022 to launch the regional Poppy Appeal drive. "Wearing your poppy shows that the service and sacrifice of the chaps we lost will never be forgotten."

Farewell to the last COPP on patrol

THERE are now no more living links with the brave men who paved the way for the D-Day landings with the passing of submariner Jim Booth aged 101.

In 1944, Jim served with a small, elite unit sent to clear a path for invading forces ahead of amphibious landings.

As a member of the COPP – Combined Operations Pilotage Parties – he spent 48 hours in a midget submarine off the Normandy shoreline, making sure the invasion armada landed at the right spot.

The centenarian was the last known surviving member of COPP, whose units served all around the globe in support of amphibious operations and raids.

In the small hours of June 6 1944, tiny HMS X-23 lay just one mile off what was designated Sword Beach on the eastern flank of the invasion front.

A couple of hours before the landings began, the craft surfaced and started 'flashing', acting as a lightship or beacon for the invasion force to aim for.

Though aware of the importance of the mission, none of the crew was prepared for the scale of the armada approaching the Normandy coast. "The world was alive with ships – our ships by the thousand, just unbelievable," Mr Booth recalled more than 75 years later.

Jim Booth joined the Royal Navy aged 18 as a seaman and served throughout World War 2. Within a year he'd been promoted to an officer and spent the first half of the conflict on regular duties in the Atlantic and Mediterranean.

But aged 23 he transferred to the Submarine Service and became a submarine pilot on X-craft mini submarines, employed on a range of specialist missions such as attacking Hitler's flagship Tirpitz in the Norwegian fjords.

When it came to the invasion of Normandy, accuracy was vital to the success – or failure – of the landings.

Conventional submarines were too large, obtrusive and unwieldy to guide the way in; X-craft were the obvious solution.

Although D-Day was COPP's most famous hour, the unit served extensively in the Far East in the final year of WW2 as the Allied powers closed in on Japan.

Jim Booth's COPP 9 was committed heavily along the coast of Arakan, Burma, testing possible landing sites, assessing – and, where necessary cutting – defences.

He continued to serve in the post-war Navy, notably in the Mediterranean, then turned to farming in the West Country.

Upon retirement was instrumental in the campaign to see his 200 fellow COPPists honoured with a permanent memorial – a goal he witnessed accomplished when a monument was erected on Hayling Island, the unit's wartime home.

At the age of 96 he suffered serious injuries when he was attacked with a hammer as jobs raided his Somerset home.

His 100th birthday was celebrated with full pomp and ceremony with a surprise appearance at his party by the



Jim Booth enjoying his 100th birthday with Brig Jock Fraser, Naval Regional Commander Wales and Western England and (below) as a Sub Lieutenant in the first half of WW2



Royal Marines Corps of Drums.

And, fittingly, his funeral in Taunton last month was attended by a good smattering of veterans/veterans groups, plus serving submariners, a Royal Marines Bugler and the RN's Regional Commander, Brig Jock Fraser RM, paying their respects alongside family and friends.

Among the many tributes, one from Commandant General Royal Marines General Gwyn Jenkins: "Jim was one of WWII's unsung heroes. As a member of the elite Combined Operations Command and long-time friend to the Royal Marines, his extraordinary story is truly inspiring and humbling in equal measure. We owe Jim and his fellow veterans so much."



Blue plaque for South Shields

SOUTH Shields Sea Cadets Unit will have a new commemorative blue plaque outside its headquarters in recognition of its historical significance.

The South Shields Sea Cadets premises on Comical Corner, was formerly the shore base of Royal Navy Volunteer Reserves and the site of the drill ship, HMS Satellite (1936-1959). The building, which has been the home of the local Sea Cadets since 1936, is also the location of the historical penny ferry crossing.

The plaque will be one of three new commemorative blue plaques being established in South Tyneside. The other two plaques are in honour of Shuley Alam, founder and CEO of Compact for Race Equality South Tyneside (Crest) and businessman, racing car driver and founder of the Williams Formula One team, Sir Frank Williams.

Councillor Joan Atkinson, Deputy Leader of South Tyneside Council with responsibility for Culture, Leisure and the Visitor Economy, said: "These special blue plaques honour significant people and places that have added real cultural or civic value to South Tyneside. In raising more blue plaques across the Borough this year, we also give rightful recognition to ... the huge importance of the Sea Cadets building to the Borough's rich and proud maritime heritage."

Jodie, 13, a Royal Marines cadet at South Shields said: "I think getting the blue plaque is really cool. It means people will want to know more about what we do. We are on the Coast to Coast walk but people just walk past. Now they might stop."

South Shields is a seafaring town with a history going back to Roman times, with their garrison fort, Arbeia, which guarded the Tyne entrance and supplied Hadrian's Wall, overlooking the unit's current premises. The town is also famous as the place that opened the first marine school in the world and as the home of the inventor of the lifeboat, William Wouldhave.



Cash boost for Greenock

GREENOCK and District Sea Cadets have received a £1,000 donation from Amazon, which they will use to buy new equipment for their cadets.

Jim Tormey, an employee at Amazon in Gourock who nominated the charity for support, said: "My children attend Greenock Sea Cadets and they love it. We think so highly of their work and it's great that Amazon can help with this donation."

Lorna Sharples, site leader at Amazon in Gourock, added: "It is a pleasure to make this donation from Amazon on behalf of Jim Tormey. We are pleased to support the Greenock Sea Cadets, as the charity makes a big impact on children in our community."

Commanding Officer of Greenock Unit, Jim Hearl, said: "We can't thank Lorna and the Amazon team enough for their donation and we are grateful for their support. Donations like this really help us to continue providing important development opportunities for the young people in our community."

Greenock Unit, whose headquarters are located on Baker Street, has been busy over the past months, with their cadets taking part in the Clyde South Swimming Gala and many of them going on to achieve medals at the event. The unit have recently introduced mountain biking courses and qualifications. Greenock Unit currently has new openings in their Junior Section and are inviting boys and girls aged between 10-12 years old to come and join in on the fun.

Caz still cruising

Long-time volunteer achieves a female first with shipping firm

CAPTAIN Caroline (Caz) Palmer, a former sea cadet and long-time volunteer with the youth charity, has been appointed as Hebridean Island Cruises' first ever permanent female Master.

Caz joined Hebridean Princess in 2014 as First Officer and achieved her Master's Ticket in 2016. She has since worked as Chief Officer on board Hebridean Princess and took temporary command of the vessel in 2021. Most recently, she was seconded to the role of Fleet Safety and Compliance Officer. She will be working opposite Captain Richard Heaton.

Caz joined Tunbridge Wells Sea Cadets Unit when she was 13 years old, reaching the rank of Petty Officer Cadet.

"I joined because I wanted a life at sea – it's the only career I can ever remember wanting," says Caz. "One of my instructors was ex-Merchant Navy and she changed the whole course of my life by opening my eyes to different possibilities. After leaving school, I ended up applying for the Merchant Navy."

Among the many achievements under her Sea Cadet belt, Caz was awarded the Wilkins Trophy for Seamanship as well as gaining her Offshore Watch Leader.

One of her proudest moments as a cadet was attending and wearing the badge for Frimley Park Tri Service Leadership Course, a course attended by more than 200 cadets from across the cadet forces.

"I was one of only eight sea cadets accepted and I was lucky to be in the platoon awarded best on course," described Caz. "I still treasure the memories and the trophy."

At the age of 18, Caz started volunteering for Westerham Sea Cadets Unit (TS Gallant), where she's been volunteering for 17 years now, currently as First Lieutenant.



She has also instructed at numerous District and Area courses.

Caz began her Merchant Navy cadetship with Carnival UK in 2006 (aged 19) and qualified as Officer of the Watch (OOW) in 2009. She then moved full time to Princess Cruises. In 2012, she completed her Chief Officer exam before moving to Windstar Cruises. In 2014, a job opening came up on the luxury cruise company Hebridean Island Cruises.

Since then, she has passed the Master (Unlimited) exam and was promoted to Chief Officer and Fleet Safety Officer before her appointment as the first female Master of the flagship MV Hebridean Princess.

Managing Director of Hebridean Island Cruises, Ken Charleson said: "We are delighted to announce the appointment

of Caroline Palmer as our first permanent female captain. Caz has proven herself as a loyal and proficient officer who is very popular with guests and colleagues alike. Caz brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the position of Master and we wish her every success in her new role."

Reflecting on her time at Sea Cadets, Caz said: "I would not be who I am today without the experience, knowledge and friendships that I have gained at Sea Cadets."

"As Master, I unconsciously draw daily from my Sea Cadets experience. Sea Cadets has taught me how to listen, plan, shoulder responsibility and reflect so I'm able to continue my own development.

"I may have achieved my dream, but I am not done. Wherever the journey takes me, I know that Sea Cadets will be a part of it."

Adventure on the water thanks to the RNRV

THOUSANDS of sea cadets around the country are benefitting from new boats and equipment, following a generous donation from the Naval Club and Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Officers' Association (RNVR).

The funding has made it possible for Sea Cadets to purchase four new RS21 training keelboats, whose sleek design is particularly suited for cadets' team-sailing activities and competitions. These boats have now launched and are already delivering new experiences and qualifications for cadets across the UK.

"The RS21s provides the opportunity for sea cadets who have reached advanced levels of sailing to strive for something more, the experience and exhilaration of performance keel boating," said Head of Inshore Boating for Sea Cadets, Tony Elgar. "It allows young people to take part in external events, competitions and regattas and learn new skills in yacht skippering and sailing."

Last summer, cadets were able to use the brand new boats in the RS21 National Championship 2022 in Weymouth, with plans to enter more of these types of events in the near future.

"The welcome and interest the other sailors showed in our cadets as a result was outstanding – this really helps us to build relationships with other organisations in the maritime and watersports sectors as well, putting Sea Cadets firmly on the map," Tony said.

"I had the fantastic opportunity to race the RS21s against not only other Sea Cadets but also against members of the public," said Lachlan (14) from Dunbar Sea Cadets Unit. "The experience gave me the chance to sail a new type of boat and expand on my sailing abilities."

Lachlan's twin sister, also from Dunbar Unit, added: "The RS21 National Championship not only helped me improve my sailing on a new boat it also gave me the chance to make friendships with other cadets from all across the UK. The RS21 Nationals is one of the highlights of my Sea Cadets career so far!"

Lotti (16) from Gosport Unit said: "The RS21 National Championship opened my eyes to a new level of sailing and possibilities. I have such good memories of a week filled with laughs and the racing was so much fun it was impossible to come off the water without a smile on my face."



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Musselburgh CO honoured for his commitment to cadets

THE Commanding Officer of Musselburgh Sea Cadets has received a top accolade for his "outstanding commitment" to the Corps.

Chief Petty Officer (SCC) Chris Gay was one of ten Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) from across the Lowlands of Scotland who were presented with a Cadet Adult Recognition Award (CARA).

The awards recognise the "dedication and selflessness" of CFAVs who help young people aged 12 to 18 develop new skills, prepare for adult life

and make lasting friendships. All nominations are submitted by members of the Army Cadet Force, Sea Cadet Corps and Air Training Corps.

Chris was nominated by cadets who wanted to thank him for his service. "Being a former cadet, it's great to see the cadets appreciating the work that the CFAVs do, not only here at Musselburgh, but in the wider organisation," he said.

The awards, run by Lowland Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (RFCA) have been held for the

past three years. Lowland Head of Communications Kate Johnston said: "The vast proportion of those who deliver the cadet programme are volunteers.

"Many of these individuals have a lot to balance, with busy day jobs and families. This makes it all the more incredible that they freely give up hundreds of hours a year to assist young people in so many valuable ways. It's utterly inspiring and we believe these fantastic volunteers deserve a big public thank you."

Cadet's submarine dream comes true

TWELVE-year-old Jonathan's dreams came true when BBC's *The Designers* chose to turn his submarine-inspired den design into reality.

Jonathan, who is a cadet at Westerham Unit, submitted a design for his dream den to the popular makeover show, with a helping hand from mum and dad.

"We came up with ideas such as a periscope that you can open as a window so you can look out," explained Jonathan.

The young cadet has been fascinated with naval history from a very young age, thanks to his granddad. Being part of Sea Cadets also inspired his choice of a submarine-like design for his den, which was chosen among thousands of applicants.

The Designers is a DIY children's television series by the BBC aimed at young people aged 6 to 17. It features hosts Joe Tracini and Meryl Fernandes transforming spaces to create amazing and unique dens for children aged eight to 12, with the help of a team of experts.

Each episode is themed, with designs such as an old-fashioned railway station, a 1960s American diner and an Australian outback shack.

The episode was partially filmed at Westerham, where *The Designers* team filmed cadets taking part in regular activities before revealing the real reason they were there: to construct Jonathan's submarine den from scratch in his back garden.

"I thought they were just doing



some general filming to promote Sea Cadets so when they told me I was so surprised," said Jonathan. "I just didn't know what to say. I was shocked that my design had won. I felt amazed!"

Jonathan's mother, Anne said: "Jonathan applied on *The*

Designers at the end of 2021. It was his last chance, as can't apply when you are over 12. We didn't think for a second that he would get it. We had a series of interviews, the team came to visit us at our home. In February 2022, they told us Jonathan's

design had been successful. His dad and I had to keep it a secret from him, which was very difficult to do!"

His fellow cadets were equally thrilled for Jonathan. Cadet Louis (13) said: "I was very excited for Jonathan and happy for him. It was very cool to have a film crew over at our unit."

Cadet Matthew (16) said: "I think Jonathan was really surprised. I'm really happy for him, he deserves it, he's a good kid. It was interesting having a film crew over and see what happens behind the scenes - I've never taken part in anything like this before. I can't wait to see the episode!"

Jonathan joined Sea Cadets in 2020, during the coronavirus pandemic. "Sailing is one of my favourite activities and I've made lots of new friends being part of Sea Cadets," said Jonathan.

His mother added: "Jonathan absolutely loves Sea Cadets, he enjoys the camaraderie and learning new skills, like tying knots. He has loads more confidence now, definitely."

"Westerham is a close-knit unit with 48 cadets and juniors attending," said the then Commanding Officer of the unit, Lt (SCC) Jan Dean RNR. "It is a privilege to play a small part in their lives, watching them come in as shy ten-year-olds and leave having learnt skills that hopefully will help them progress on their journey through life."

You can watch the episode on BBC iPlayer at www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/b083mq2v/the-designers



Fishy tree helps raise vital funds for Filey

VOLUNTEERS and local fishermen in the seaside town of Filey in North Yorkshire showed off their creative flair by making a marine-themed Christmas tree - out of 140 lobster pots.

The 'Fishy Tree', which measures 35ft (10.5m) is draped in 1,700 LED lights and features a leaping salmon as the 'star' of the show-stopping structure. The official lighting ceremony took place at the beginning of December, amid cheers from the 500-strong crowd. It's the fifth time the enormous and eye-catching Christmas tree has been constructed on Coble landing slipway in aid of charity - including the youth charity, Sea Cadets.

The annual event has raised £20,000 since its inception to support local schools and Filey Sea Cadets. The decorations to the tree are provided by local school children and youth groups. Santa hats with a number inside were sold off, with the owner of the winning hat given the honour of switching on the tree's lights. This year's event also featured a fireworks display, a snow machine and carol singers.

Generations of fishermen have worked from the windswept town, chartering the often treacherous North Sea waters in search of catches.

Event Organiser Samantha Allen said: "So many volunteers and businesses are involved in creating this event for our community and visitors, working so hard to bring our small

Rudolph provides winning design for arty Franklin

A YOUNG cadet from Walton Sea Cadets got a chance to showcase his creative talents in a Christmas card competition - all while supporting a worthwhile cause.

Third prize went to Franklin aged ten, a junior cadet at Walton-on-the-Naze Unit for his red-nosed, 3D Rudolph with twisty antlers.

More than 60 participants submitted entries for competition was in support of its 'Be a Santa' campaign, which supports older people in the community who may feel lonely and isolated at Christmas time.

"I was so excited and ecstatic to get third place in the competition," said Franklin. "I thought a reindeer would be fun and Rudolph is my favourite Christmas character."

Franklin's mother, Sarah, said: "We were delighted to hear Franklin had won third place. Since joining the Sea Cadets in the summer we have seen him enjoy a much broader range of activities than he's previously been involved in - navigation, piping, weekend trips away on HMS Cavalier, town marches for Remembrance Sunday and carol services at local churches - and he has widened his circle of friends."

The competition was hosted by Home Instead Clacton, who donned costumes and distributed donated gifts to senior residents of ten care homes as part of the initiative to put a smile on the faces of its elderly community members.

A spokeswoman for Home Instead said: "Thanks to all those who entered, the judges were really impressed and grateful to the children for taking the time to think of our older generation at Christmas. We will be spreading the joy they brought by sharing the images with our 'Be a Santa' gift recipients. Congratulations to the winners, each one was awarded a book token as their prize. Thank you for helping us make our dream of bringing festive joy to the communities' older residents, come true."

First-prize winner Oakley's drawing of baby Jesus in the manger was made into a Christmas card. Elliot from a local primary school won second prize for his detailed drawing of a child gifting a present to a senior person at Christmas.

Over 60 gifts and £328 in donations were collected over the two days which benefitted more than 100 individuals across care homes, churches and other charitable organisations.



Braving the cold to support Tiger's Den

SOME 150 people braved sub-zero temperatures to attend the Rotary Club of Chippenham's Christmas Extravaganza - and so help raise £1,500 towards a Sea Cadets building project.

Held at St Andrew's Church, the concert featured the Dodington Parish Band and the Military Wives Choir of Colerne and Corsham.

Reverend David Gray said: "The audience were able to join in some well-known Christmas carols and songs. Over £1,500 was raised and profits from the concert will go to the Chippenham Sea Cadets Project Tiger's Den."

The Sea Cadets are looking to replace their old and dilapidated wooden building with a modern facility. The estimated cost for the new buildings is around £60,000.

Rotary Club of Chippenham President, Eric Sambell said: "Rotary is a great supporter of work with young people and when we learnt that the Sea Cadets needed help the club decided we would like to support this project. The Sea Cadets and Rotary have a long connection as the cadets often helped with the annual fireworks display. The proceeds from the concert are only a start. Profits from our annual charity golf day in April are earmarked and we are also providing help and advice through the skills of club members."

"We are very grateful to the Rotary Club for their help with this project," said Kelly Porter, Chair of Chippenham Sea Cadets. "Their experience and knowledge is invaluable and we are enjoying working together to give our cadets somewhere they can learn new skills in a safe and friendly environment. We are in desperate need of a new set of classrooms for our cadets. Our current wooden building dates from the 1950s and is no longer usable."

If you would like to help their unit achieve their dream of a new and functional building for its cadets in 2023, please visit www.justgiving.com/campaign/tigersden



Students rise to Phoenix challenge



PORTSMOUTH Grammar School's (PGS) Combined Cadet Force RN Cadets went off to HMS Phoenix to fight fires and learn how to repair holes in ships' hulls.

After a short talk on preventing and fighting fires, it was time for the practical – cadets practised putting out fires using both extinguishers and water hoses.

Apparently, the fires were only 20 percent of the maximum – but definitely large enough to be kept warm with.

Sadly, with an air temperature of 2 degrees C and a water temperature of 5 degrees C, it was too chilly for the cadets to actually get wet, but they were shown how to repair ships' hulls and what can happen when a Ship's Company get it right ... and what happens when they don't.

Hopefully it will be warmer when PGS next visit as the experience was amazing.



Paddy marks 50 endurance records

COMBINED Cadet Force Sergeant instructor Paddy Doyle kept up his relentless endurance challenges to complete 2022 with 50 fitness records.

He took his total to 750 over nine sporting categories and ended the year with five mountain bike cross-country distances carrying 32lb of kit.

Paddy, who instructs at Streetly Academy School CCF, served as a regular and reservist in the RN.

"It has been tough throughout 2022 pushing my body and mind through many brick walls to get to the finish lines. The support team were brilliant, without them I could not of reached my 750th career documented sporting feat. The blood sweat, bruises and cuts have been worth it," said Paddy, whose achievements featured in the December edition of *Navy News*.

Picture: David Hastings (Warwickshire UK)



RYDE School RN Combined Cadet Force (CCF) cadets were very fortunate to be invited to BRNC Dartmouth for its Passing Out Parade in mid-December.

The students arrived late one evening, a couple of days before the event, having travelled from the Isle of Wight.

They were greeted by Lt Sophie R, the Combined Cadet Force South-West Liaison Officer who has a base at BRNC Dartmouth, who showed the cadets and staff to their accommodation.

After unpacking and being given safety briefings, the students headed over to the Senior Gun Room Bar for a pint of cola, then went back to their block and prepared their kit for the next day, as they were to watch the passing-out parade rehearsal.

Wednesday morning started as any other on a Camp: Up, Shower, Dressed, Go!

After an early breakfast in the Senior Gun Room, they had a tour of the college, heard about RN Sponsorship Programmes and watched the rehearsal.

It was very, very cold weather

out on the Parade Ground and gave students a good idea as to how many thermal layers would be needed the following day!

They then had a session of 'bouldering' on the climbing wall, which they thoroughly enjoyed, and a session in the Bridge Simulator.

Students found this particularly exciting as they got to simulate navigating around the familiar coastline of the Isle of Wight!

Thursday morning dawned bright and early, with all kit in place for an inspection as they wanted to look our best for the event.

The passing-out parade was really special to witness and left a lasting impression on the students.

The Countess of Wessex gave an inspiring speech, and students feel very fortunate to have been invited to witness this prestigious Royal Navy event.

Special thanks go to all the staff at BRNC for making the students feel so welcome and to Lt Sophie R and 2/LT Terri W for looking after them.

Royal salute, see page 27.



THREE Royal Navy sailors joined the Australians' biggest deployment of the winter, spending a month with a task group roaming Asia.

They seized the opportunity presented by the long-running Long Look programme which gives RN and RAN personnel the chance to spend an extended period with... or take a 'long look' at their counterpart navies.

The aim is to share methods and ideas between the two Commonwealth navies while fostering understanding of the differences, thus making it easier for the two to work side-by-side, increasingly important with the Royal Navy's renewed interest and involvement in the Pacific; patrol ships HMS Spey and Tamar are both due to exercise with the RAN this year and make use of Australian bases to sustain their operations.

Task group commander Commodore Mal Wise invited three Brits to join his flagship HMAS Adelaide – an amphibious/helicopter assault ship: Lieutenant Neil Connell, Leading Caterer Carl Tester and weapons engineer Leading Engineering Technician Kyle Sangster.

They joined the Adelaide in Visakhapatnam, eastern India, as Adelaide prepared to depart for Port Klang in Malaysia and found there was a multinational flavour to the ship's company with Canadian, New Zealand and Malaysian sailors plus US Marines embarked.

Indo-Pacific Endeavour was the Royal Australian Navy's premier autumn deployment: five ships, 11 helicopters, 1,800 personnel visiting more than a dozen nations demonstrating the Commonwealth nation's commitment to regional security and prosperity.

In addition, the Australian Defence Force is keen to underline – much like the RN – its ability to respond to humanitarian disasters, especially as the risk of such disasters is much more in the forefront of a government's mind in the Indo-Pacific due to their frequency.

For the phase of the deployment which the Brits experienced, there was a lot of demonstrating Adelaide's capability – she's a sort of combination of HMS Albion and the late HMS Ocean. The Longlookers witnessed flight deck activity courtesy of the Australian Army and their Tiger gunships, as well as amphibious operations in the well dock.

The task group's visit to Port Klang was short – but allowed time for an

evening capability demonstration from the ship and a whistle-stop visit to Kuala Lumpur, just an hour away. It was close to midnight when the sailors arrived, but Malaysia's capital is a 24-hour city with restaurants, night markets and general nightlife until dawn.

Singapore is just a night's passage from Port Klang and an eight-day visit which mixed remembrance with exercises for the Singapore and Royal Australian Armies honing close quarter and urban combat skills.

The visit spanned Remembrance Sunday. This was an opportunity for the RN contingent to join other delegates at the Kranji War Memorial for the National Remembrance Service, followed by a tour of the cemetery provided by volunteers. LCS Tester laid a poppy on the grave of an Unknown Sailor of the Royal Navy.

For the rest of the Ship's Company, Singapore was an opportunity to visit all the sights. Some of the highlights include the Marina Bay Sands Hotel viewpoint, Universal Studios and the Gardens by the Bay.

One week later – and with all aboard significantly poorer – HMAS Adelaide sailed for a major amphibious exercise with the Indonesian Armed Forces.

This was one of the highlights of the deployment: a full staged assault on the beach of an Indonesian Island with the Australian Chief of Joint Operations and his Indonesian equivalent overseeing... followed, naturally, by a beach barbecue.

On completion of the exercise, the flagship made for Jakarta and a four-day visit – one of the more interesting ports throughout the exercise as it is not traditionally a tourist hotspot.

"This port visit also marked the end of Indo-Pacific Endeavour and is where the rest of the task group split. All that was left to do for Adelaide was to return to Australia," said Lieutenant Connell.

"After another few days, we arrived in Darwin, Australia, where the RN team disembarked. We were able to enjoy a couple of days in Darwin, including a crocodile tour, watching them jump out of the water whilst feeding.

"The whole exercise was unforgettable experience for all three of us.

"Indo-Pacific Endeavour is an annual exercise and the RAN are looking to repeat the exchange, therefore keep your eyes and ears open if you're interested!"

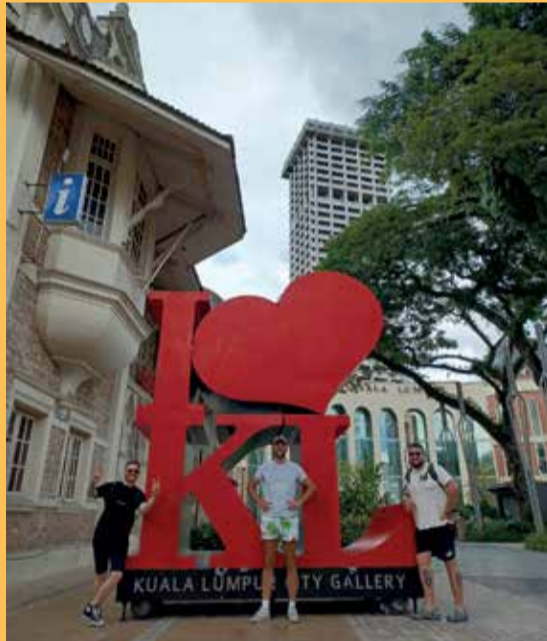


LONG LOOK AT AUSSIE NAVY

Pictured clockwise from top left, LCS Carl Tester, Lt Neil Connell and LET Kyle Sangster pay their respects at Kranji War Memorial in Singapore;

An Indian Navy UH-3H Sea King helicopter prepares to launch from HMAS Adelaide during Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2022;

Australian Defence Force members line the flight deck of HMAS Adelaide as the ship enters harbour in Jakarta; HMA Ships Adelaide and Anzac sail past Indian Navy Ship Jalashwa during the deployment; LET Sangster, Lt Connell and LCS Tester in Kuala Lumpur



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Left, Chelsea Baker was the female individual marathon champion at the USMC Marathon in the US last October; Right, the Royal Navy team pictured in the US ahead of the USMC Marathon



BORN TO RUN...

ROYAL NAVY TEAM TO BUILD ON SUPERB 2022

ROYAL NAVY running has made great advances in the last couple of years, challenging the dominance of the Army and RAF and proving RN athletes are a force to be reckoned with.

This has been particularly true for RN endurance running including cross-country, 10km, half-marathon and marathon disciplines.

A return to Inter-Services Cross Country saw 23 RN athletes venture to RAF Halton in February 2022, intending to challenge the best of the British Army and RAF. The majority of those RN athletes had recently attended the RN Athletics Endurance Training Camp in RMB Chivenor and this showed with some outstanding performances.

The U23 men were first off, covering the 10km course with some impressive times. A fantastic second to Will Fuller and third to Robbie Carson, ably backed up by the remaining team members resulted in the RN taking gold in the team event. This was only the second team Gold that the RN Men have won in the history of the Inter-Service Cross Country Championships.

The next historic 'first' involved the 10km road running team.

The 10km team last competitively raced at the Inter-Services at Leeds 10km in October 2019. Both the male and female teams took silver, out competing the RAF, but still a long way off from the Army times.

Unfortunately, Leeds 2019 was the last major race prior to two years of race cancellations and disruption due to COVID.

Fast forward two years to the Manchester Inter-service 10km in May 2022, where the Royal Navy men would take home the team gold for the first time, along with a host of other individual achievements.

In total, 15 runners competed at Manchester, including several representing the RN for the first time in an Inter-Service capacity.

Athletes came from across the ranks and rates with ABs and Marines mixing with Lieutenants and Commanders, all united by their passion for running.

Numerous organisations and units were represented, making the long journey from the south coast to Manchester to compete. The top-six male runners were to score in the men's team event, with their finishing times aggregated and compared to the other services, with the lowest overall time taking home the team trophy.

The results were close, but clear enough. The Navy achieved an aggregate time of 3:15:35, followed by the Army with 3:16:31 and RAF with 3:17:50.

Key to this achievement was strength-in-depth and team cohesion. Amongst the male runners, the U23 contingent took home a clean sweep of the individual medals, with gold, silver and bronze all being awarded to the Royal Navy.

Of the senior men, Callum O'Neil of the Royal Navy took home bronze; the third fastest 10km runner across the services. The women's team performed admirably, with several PBs but coming behind the Army and RAF in the team scores.

The Plymouth Half Marathon in July hosted the 'Warriors Across the Sea Challenge' versus the United States Marine Corps (USMC).

This annual challenge is steeped in a long history of competitive friendship with the USMC. The team performed superbly, narrowly beating the USMC for the first time in five years.

The men were also the team winners for the half marathon event, beating some high calibre civilian teams from across the South-west.

Of note Sub Lt Callum O'Neil crossed the line as the second male, with three further RN runners in the top ten (Will Fuller, Philip Boak and William Pannell). William Pannell would later do himself extremely proud, completing the London Marathon in 2:31:00, coming third in the Interservice marathon competition that took place during this event.

Later in the year it was the turn for the Royal Navy to venture across the Atlantic, to perform in the United States Marine Corp Marathon.

A team of six male runners and three female runners, supported by Team Manager Bryn Phillips and Coach Tony Dunn, took on the might of the USMC.

The team performed superbly. In particular, Chelsea Baker was the women's individual marathon champion, with a fantastic time of 02:42:37.

Chelsea was joined by Fleur Peoples and Eleanor Eastman, with the women's team outperforming the USMC and bringing home the team trophy for the first time in over a decade!

The men performed well, with three RN runners in the top 11 overall (Jack Chitty, Philip Boak, Mark Duffett) and a host of PB's and three first-time marathoners.

Despite this effort, the USMC men's team took back the team trophy (however, the RN still lead, having won the trophy 27 times to the USMC's 15, remarkable given the huge size disparity between the two forces!).

The 10km team ended the year in style at the Telford 10km with a team of six men competing against some of the fastest regional teams in the country.

From the Navy, there were two sub-32min finishers, as well as two sub-34min and two sub-35min finishers. Chelsea Baker was also on the female team for the UKAF, performing strongly with a time of 34:13 in one of the last races of the year.

Overall, 2022 was an historic year for the Royal Navy Athletics Association, in particular for the various Endurance Teams.

The runners were rewarded for their dedication, commitment and teamwork.

Despite often training onboard operational warships or whilst deployed to frontline units, they were still able to perform to the highest of levels in the sporting arena.

Anyone wishing to find out more and get involved in 2023, please contact Lt Cdr Tony Dunn at anthony.dunn93@mod.gov.uk



Above: The RN 10km Team at Manchester
Left: RN 10km team at Telford
Below: Callum O'Neil won the Inter-Service bronze at Manchester



A taste for triathlon

HMS Drake's Wyvern Centre Gym complex has hosted the Royal Navy Recovery Centre (RNRC) Hasler's Rehabilitation Triathlon Taster event.

Taking advantage of the chance to try out the event were teams from Personnel Support Groups (PSG), Recovery Troops (RT) and Casualty Management Cells (CMC) from across the Tri-service environment.

One of the organisers of the Rehab Triathlon, Leading Physical Trainer Yaroslav 'Tych' Tychyna, from RNRC Hasler, who said: "All the participants who entered are currently engaged in a recovery pathway and they thrived in this competitive environment and certainly pushed themselves to their limits."

The Tri-2 category was dominated by Commando Logistics Regiment (CLR) from

Chivenor, with Corporal Luke Green taking first place and Marine Adam Clarke a close second. Third place went to Mne Liam Sharley from Taunton based 40 Commando RM (40 CDO).

In the Tri-4 (Open) category the winner was Flying Officer Ben Holmes from RAF Brize Norton, second place was Marine Max Mortimore lonce of 40 Commando and third place to Marine Charlie Butler from CLR.

The Team Relay Category was once again dominated by CLR in first place with Bickleigh's 42 Cdo in second and Commando Training Centre Royal Marines in third place.

Tych added: "It was a pleasure to see the best effort levels from all competitors and RNRC Hasler looks forward to hosting





WELCOME TO THE CLUBZ



ACROBATICS, rope climbing, and pyrotechnics were just a few of the impressive displays at the Physical Training Instructors pass out parade at HMS Temeraire.

The 26-week Leading Physical Trainer Qualifying Course (LPTQC) produces well-trained, professional Physical Trainers and is a qualification recognised by the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity.

The sailors and Royal Marines who have completed the course are experts in health, well-being, and fitness, and support the entire Royal Navy and Royal Marines from new recruits to the First Sea Lord.

The performance showcased the hard work and skill of LPTQC 68 for family, friends, and Royal Navy VIPs, including Rear Admiral Paul Beattie, Director Naval Staff.

The routine included traditional methods that Royal Navy sailors have used throughout history to keep fit and increase morale including sea shanty songs, club swinging and the well-known hornpipe dance.

WO1PT Lee Derbyshire, Training Officer at the Royal Navy School of Physical Training said: "We transform aspirant sailors from across the Royal Navy into Physical Training Instructors who will influence and inspire members of our Service throughout their careers, at sea and ashore."

"All 15 qualifiers from LPTQC 68 have proved time and time again that they have the necessary qualities that are needed to join this unique specialisation."

Friends, family, and guests attended the parade which also showed a short comedy sketch video created by the course members and ended with the presentation of certificate and PT badges.

The 15 PTIs have been assigned to different bases across the UK.

Pictures: Keith Woodland



Endurance pays off for victorious car-racing team

THE RNRM Car Racing Team head to Anglesey Circuit in North Wales for the Inter Services Endurance Racing Championship held as part of the Race of Remembrance.

This 12-hour endurance race begins on the Friday with day and night qualifying, with seven hours of racing into the night on the Saturday evening and five hours split by a pause for a Service of Remembrance in the pitlane.

This race was the final event for the team which fielded an experienced line up of drivers with Lt Cdr Keith Attwood RN (815 NAS), Lt Cdr Mike Wells RN (JHC), Mne Adam Dewis (RM Poole) and LAET Seb Unwin (RNAS Yeovilton) supported in the pits by Lt Simon Vernon RN (WSTR), LAET Daniel Blackett (HMS Sultan), LCpl Ben McLaughlin (RM Poole) and LAET Si McGee (815 NAS).

The team would be racing the endurance prepared BMW 116i as raced in the 116i championship throughout the year in a class of eight identical cars including three RAF entries and a team from the Royal Engineers as well as a mix of hatchbacks and sports cars in the 55 car grid.

After a brief warm up of the car on Saturday morning the race began with the first seven-hour session.

Mike began the race and started well gaining a number of places on the laps and pulling away from most of the BMW class with just the No 9 car run by VMS Racing in pursuit.

A tangle at the final hairpin saw Mike forced onto the grass and a number of Class rivals slipped through as Mike used all his skill to keep the car under control.

Mike would gain places as other rivals pitted later. With the team running a strategy to run the car as long as possible on each stint to limit pits stops to the mandated 6x 4-minute stops it was necessary to extend the fuel as long as possible between stops.

As darkness began to fall Mike brought the car in to refuel and hand over to Adam just ahead of car nine with nearly a lap on the nearest Forces competitor.

Adam set off for his session in close competition with car nine who had also stopped and now in total darkness continued to rack up the laps on the congested track.

With slower cars to overtake and quicker cars looking to lap there wasn't a moment for the drivers to relax in over 90 minute stints. With fuel running down Adam pitted under a safety car and Seb jumped in to continue the charge. Immediately up to a good pace Seb pulled away from the BMW field and was lapping well until 45 minutes into his shift, while attempting to lap a slower car saw contact at the hairpin.

The impact buckled the driver's front wheel and bent the steering arm forcing the car to limp to the pits and lose valuable time. The pit team sprang into action fuelling the car and replacing both front wheels however an issue with the front tyres caused further delay and by the time Seb headed back onto circuit the team had lost over seven mins on their closest rivals.

With a clear target ahead Seb set about recovering lost time and unlapped himself from the class leader and looked to gain further time. After a near three-hour stint Seb pitted to hand over to Keith to finish the final part of the first seven hours and close out the Saturday racing.

Running as the fastest car in class and with other cars pitting, Keith soon re-took the class lead and set about attempting to gain a lap on the field ahead of the restart the following morning. When the chequered flag fell at 2200 the team was in 18th overall and first in class a lap ahead of the nearest Forces challengers.

At 0900 on the Sunday the race recommenced with Keith back in the seat with a full tank of fuel looking to extend the lead before the race was paused for the Service. A quieter 90 mins saw Keith slowly extend his lead and when the intermission came the team was now three laps ahead of the next in class.

Keith immediately pitted for fuel and passed the car to Mike with a healthy gap to the rest of the BMW field.

With consistent pace and clean racing the team continued to grow their lead and after a final splash of fuel to hand the car to Seb the team could see the end of the race ahead.

When the chequered flag fell after 12 hours of racing, the team had covered 336 laps and 705 miles finishing in 16th overall and winning the BMW class by an astonishing five laps over car nine and seven laps ahead of the nearest Forces team.

The team will race again this year as defending Forces teams champions in the Armed Forces Race Challenge, defending Endurance Champions and a close second in the Inter-Services Championship. Highlights and a full race replay can be found on Youtube by searching 'Race of Remembrance 2022'.

Anyone wishing to get involved either racing or supporting, should contact Lt Cdr Keith Attwood; carracing@rnrmmmsa.co.uk or for more details visit www.rnrmmmsa.co.uk and www.armedforcesracechallenge.net



Knockout display at Sultan

THE HMS Sultan Boxing Dinner went down a storm as Royal Navy boxing made a return to the Gosport base.

The event, which last took place in 2019 due to Covid-19, saw amateur boxers from His Majesty's Ships Sultan, Collingwood, Heron and the Royal Navy Boxing Association appear alongside local fighters from Titchfield, Gosport and Southampton.

The competition was played out in a highly electric atmosphere, with the programme of events including a display by a Corps of Drums from the HMS Sultan Volunteer Band and a parade of the fighters.

The Boxing Dinner provides the perfect platform for novice boxers to take those first steps into a competitive boxing ring. In total six action-packed bouts were on the card, including youth and senior bouts, each consisting of three, three-minute rounds.

The fight of the night turned out to be the main event of the evening, which was a back and forth encounter between AB Thomson (HMS Collingwood) and ETME Harvey (HMS Sultan), a very technical bout which saw both fighters incorporating great head movement and slick footwork and counters.

AB Thomson, the orthodox fighter, landed hard right hands while ETME Harvey responded with hard straight lefts.

The fight was neck and neck going into the final round when ETME Harvey landed a series of combinations forcing the referee to call a standing eight count, the two boxers then went toe-to-toe exchanging hard punches until the final bell.

Both fighters received a standing ovation after their hard fought bout. ETME Harvey won following a split decision in this razor close bout and was awarded Best Boxer of the night for the

performance.

Presentations were made to winning fighters by VIPs including the Commanding Officer of HMS Sultan, Captain Jo Deakin, Commanding Officer of HMS Collingwood, Captain Tim Davey and by local dignitaries and Defence industry representatives, including the Mayor of Fareham, councillor Mike Ford.

Sultan Boxing Show Promoter, Leading Physical Training Instructor El-Leigh Neale said: "It was great to see the HMS Sultan Boxing Dinner Show return after three years out. It's always a fantastic advert for Royal Navy boxing and this year certainly didn't disappoint."

"For several of our fighters it was the first time they'd appeared in the ring competitively, but it was great to see the way they stepped up to the challenge."

"Hopefully this will be the platform for many of them to pursue the sport further, with the long-term goal of representing the full Royal Navy boxing squad."

ETME Harvey was named best boxer of the night, with HMS Sultan taking the Sultan v Collingwood Trophy.

Fight Card and Results - winners in bold:

1. Charlie Hawksey, Titchfield ABC (RED) vs **AET Betts, RNAS Yeovilton (BLUE)**
2. **Harvey Williamson, Llanedeyrn & Pentwyn ABC (RED)** vs ETWE Docherty, RNBA (BLUE)
3. **AB Macgillivray, HMS Collingwood, (RED)** vs Luke Rogers, Gosport ABC (BLUE)
4. LH Finch, HMS Collingwood (RED) vs **ETME Johns, HMS Sultan (BLUE)**
5. **AB Burbury, HMS Collingwood (RED)** vs AB Abbas, RNAS Yeovilton (BLUE)
6. AB Thomson, HMS Collingwood (RED) vs **ETME Harvey, HMS Sultan (BLUE)**



Above, AB Thomson (HMS Collingwood) and ETME Harvey (HMS Sultan) put on the fight of the night



Left: Charlie Hawksey (Titchfield ABC), red gloves, takes on AET Betts from RNAS Yeovilton

Pictures: PO Phot Pepe Hogan



Onwards and upwards for powerlifter

ROYAL Navy powerlifter PO Wesley McGuinness is looking to build on his international success this year.

He rounded off 2022 representing the UK at the IPF Commonwealth Powerlifting Championships while out in Auckland, New Zealand.

He competed in two championships - the bench press where he secured a bronze medal with a press of 190kg/419lbs.

A battle from start to finish, there was only 7.5kg dividing him from gold position, finally increasing his Royal Navy Bench Press record even more.

Wes then took part in to the -120kgs category, starting off the event squats, he completed 3/3 finishing on a personal best of 255kg squat, knowing he had more in the tank.

Putting full trust in his coach, CPO Foran, he decided to conserve energy for another chance for a podium finish on the next discipline.

This smart decision resulted in Wes standing proudly on

the podium again for a second time this week.

"To achieve a silver medal in a weight category I have never entered, makes me extremely proud, the guys I competed against are giants," said Wes.

"The lightest in the -120kg category, by a long shot-weighing in at 105.05kg."

Moving on to the final discipline "the deadlift", Wes opened up light with his opening lift, aiming to make bigger jumps for his third attempt.

Wes pulled 255kg on his second attempt, unfortunately damaging his bicep on the lockout, he then smartly deciding not to take a third attempt.

Wes is now focusing on utilising this opportunity to demonstrate to the new and upcoming lifters of the sport how to bounce back from injury.

He wants to show that by adopting the right mindset and having the same like minded people around you, that you can overcome anything and will be back on the platform this year.



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£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the December edition of *Navy News* (right) was THE Parthian-class submarine HMS Persius, named after the son of Zeus. Matt Enright, from Rimpton, Somerset, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.



This month's mystery ship (above) is an aircraft carrier which served in the Royal Navy from 1951 to 1972.

1. What was her name and
2. Which class of ship was she?
Please complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY.

We will also accept emailed entries to subs@royalnavymail.mod.uk with February Mystery Ship in the header.

Coupons and emails giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Entries must be received by March 12.

More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned. The winner will be announced in our April edition.

MYSTERY PICTURE 336

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Ask Jack columns in next month's Noticeboard must be received by **FEB 14 2023**

EAGLE HAS LANDED

THE EAGLE (Owl) has landed at Loch Lomond Bird of Prey Centre after being relocated from the Home of the UK Submarine Service – HM Naval Base Clyde.

The 19-year-old bird of prey, dubbed "Miranda", was first spotted at the Argyll and Bute defence site two years ago.

It's thought that she was abandoned by her owner, released on the nearby A817 haul road running between Faslane and Loch Lomond. She soon made her way to Faslane however where personnel working at the Submarine Service's HQ in Belmore House first got a glimpse.

"Despite being nearly two feet tall, she kept a relatively low profile," explained John Harkins, part of HM Naval Base Clyde's Environmental Health team. "News of the first sightings came to me from the area of Belmore House, but increasingly there were reports from other locations around the Naval Base."

"We went to lengths not to interfere with the Eagle Owl but we received reports that she was at the Northern end of the base acting strangely, so we had to investigate."

It soon became apparent that Miranda was sick and in need of help.

"She was quite lethargic and underweight," said John. "She didn't seem interested in food and was hopping across the roads, rather than flying. I was quite concerned for her health."

Enter Kevin Robinson from Loch Lomond Bird of Prey Centre.

"When John described Miranda's condition I knew it was an animal welfare issue," said Kevin. "When I came into the base and saw her I could see that she was malnourished. She had been trying to fend for herself, but I don't think she would have survived another winter."

Kevin took the Eagle Owl back to the Bird of Prey Centre at Loch Lomond Shores where she was examined thoroughly. Malnourished and suffering from a stomach infection, Miranda was given medicine and proper nutrition to help her recovery. They also found cable ties around the bird's legs, put there by her previous owner, which had to be removed.

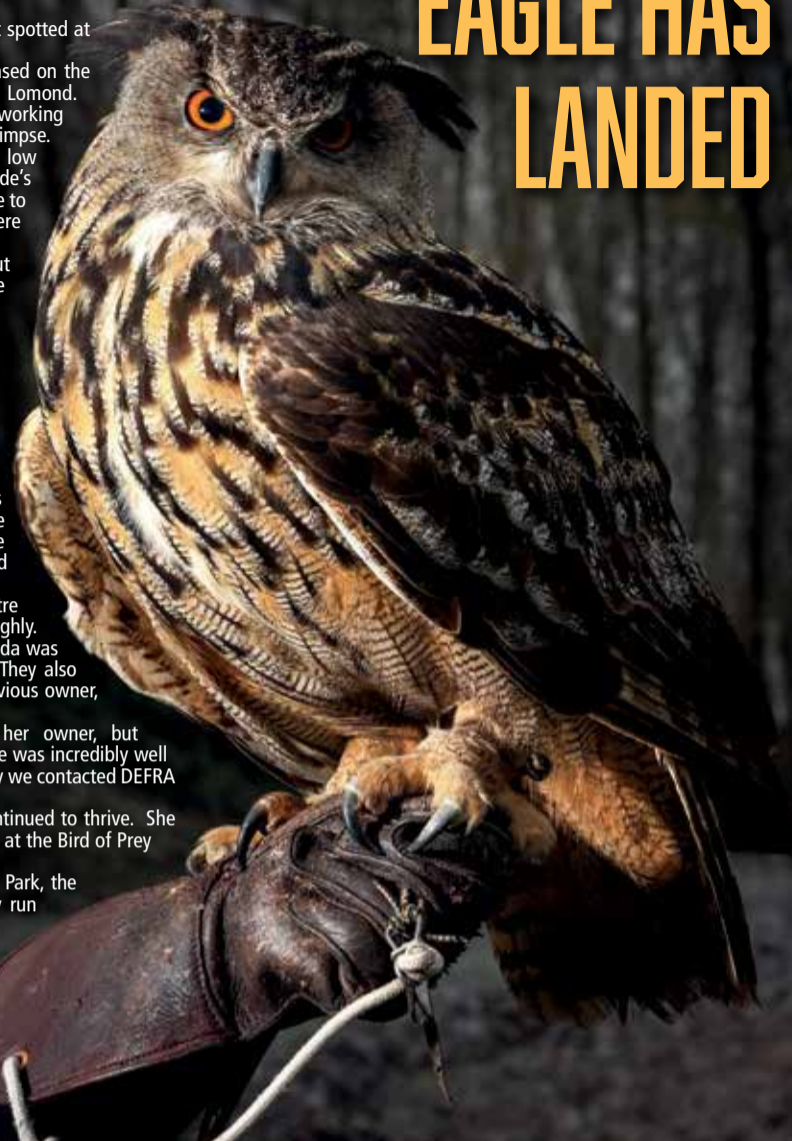
"Miranda was ringed and we attempted to trace her owner, but unfortunately she was not registered" continued Kevin. "She was incredibly well mannered and it wasn't long before she settled in. Eventually we contacted DEFRA and completed the paperwork to become her new owners."

After a few weeks of care, Miranda built-up muscle and continued to thrive. She now takes part in public shows as one of the star attractions at the Bird of Prey Centre.

Situated within Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, the Bird of Prey Centre, which reopens this month, is a family run business with three generations involved on a regular basis.

One of the premier Bird of Prey Centres in the country, it has a fantastic variety of buzzards, hawks, eagles, kestrels, falcons and owls of all sizes.

John Harkin said: "We are really grateful to Kevin and the team at Loch Lomond Bird of Prey Centre for rehoming Miranda. It's great that she is now back to full health, settled into her new home, and that she is nearby so we can pay her a visit!"



Deaths

Lt Cdr RNR Thomas Conway RD*. Mersey Div RNR. Died November 14.

Lt(A) RNVR Ivor C Faulconer. Died October 1, aged 101.

Vice Adm Sir Robert W F Gerken KCB CBE. HMS Devonshire, Yarmouth, Osprey, Andromeda, Raleigh, Warrior. FOF2. DGNMT. FO Plymouth. Died December 20, aged 90.

Cdr John W Hickman. HMS Albion, President, Victory, Achilles, Warrior, Antrim. CNJA. C-in-C Fleet. Died December 13, aged 84.

Lt Cdr Christopher T Parker-Jervis. HMS Fearless, Phoenix, Warrior, Drake. NATO. Malaysia. Died December 7, aged 92.

Capt RM James C Tappin. CTCRM. RM Arbroath. FO Portsmouth. Cdr Log Regt RM. Died December 14, aged 83.

Lt Cdr Michael H J Willcox. HMS Troubridge, Daedalus, Mercury, Dryad. RM Eastney. Died December 7, aged 81.

Lt Cdr David S Cooper (SD)(C). Joined the RN in 1953, commissioned in 1965 and retired in 1985. Served on many ships including HMS Surprise,

Bulwark, Brereton, Duncan, Llandaff and Ark Royal. Died December 30 in Heysham, aged 87.

CPO(MEM) Fred 'Bill' Bailey. Served 1961-85. Joined at 16 as a marine engineer, acting as a 'badger' (flight deck stoker) on HMS Hermes, operating Sea Vixen, Fairey Gannet and conducting flight trials with the then new Blackburn Buccaneer. Other ships included Charybdis, Brighton, Fearless and HMS Invincible which he brought out of build in Barrow, serving on her in the Falklands. Ran field gun three times for Devonport (1970, 73 and 79 when he was Battery Chief) and played rugby for Devonport. Died aged 77.

Joseph 'Joe' Frederick Clements, Petty Officer Electrician (LTO). Served May 1938-Sept 1953, HMS Ganges, Diomedea, Renown, Goodson, Ramehead, Eagle, Sparrow, Snipe. Vice President of Aylesbury and District No. 1 Branch, Royal Naval Association. Died December 25 2022, aged 100.

Cliff (Jock) Dalton, CPO MEA (ML). Served 1983-1996 amongst others, twice onboard HMS Beaver and Phoenix NBCD school. Died October 20, aged 58.

Lt Cdr JW Rawlins. Served from 1947 to 1987 in HMS Theseus, RNAS Lossiemouth, Malta, HMS Albion, HMS Centaur, RN Seaford Park, RNAS Daedalus, HMS ARK Royal, MOD Whitehall, RNAS Osprey, RNAS Heron. Awarded British Kore Medal, United Nations Korea Medal, Long Service award. Died January 3, 2023, aged 93.

Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC

Cdr Charles W Crichton OBE. HMS Manxman, Invermoriston, Shoulton, Abdiel, Decoy, Mercury, Scarborough, Raleigh, Blake, Warrior, Sheffield, Illustrious, Drake. RNEC, ASWE, DNOR, SACEUR. Died November 25, aged 80.

Lt Cdr Dennis Gell. HMS Ashanti, Dryad, Triumph, Mercury. Died December 20.

Rear Adm Peter Nicholas Marsden. HMS Fearless, Norfolk, Osprey, Drake. RNEC. Nav Sec. JSSC. CFS. DFD. FOAIB. RCDS. Died December 15, aged 90.

Rear Adm Anthony J Whetstone CB. HMS Kent, Repulse, Juno, Dolphin, Norfolk. DNW. RCDS. FOST. ACNS. Died December 23, aged 95.

Breakspears.

Priscillabreakspear0@gmail.com

FRADU: I would like to contact the following former Fleet Requirements and Air Direction Unit Hunter pilots who mounted detachments at RAF Gibraltar from 1980 to 1983: Tommy Thompson, Godfrey Underwood, Simon Willoughby and Derek Morter.

Tony Fairburn, Sqn Ldr (Rtd)
tony.fairburn@btinternet.com

Johnny Craig: We are trying to contact Johnny for our 40th secondary school reunion. We know he joined the Royal Navy and served in submarines. He left St Columba's College in Dublin in 1982, aged around 18.

William Simpson
Whpsimpson@gmail.com

Further details can also be found at www.hmsscarysfort.co.uk or email hmsscarysfort@gmail.com

HMS Undaunted, Eagle and Yarmouth Association: The 2023 Reunion Dinner & Dance is confirmed at the Bournemouth Carlton Hotel, East Overcliff Drive, Bournemouth BH1 3DN from Friday 20 October to Monday 23 October 2023. Contact Whiskey Walker on 01268 58041 or email: whiskey666@outlook.com or andyjmancini@gmail.com for further details.

Ask Jack

Exercise Purple Warrior 1987: I am currently researching this exercise which was unique in the annals of recent British military history being a huge tri-service, non-NATO affair, carried out in part of the UK mainland (SW Scotland) in order to test lessons learned during the Falklands Conflict.

It involved 20,000 troops, 39 ships and 40 fixed wing aircraft yet there is precious little information on it.

I would appeal to any of your readers who were involved and would be willing to share their reminiscences to contact me at mbritton2@aol.com, particularly if they have any photos of the event.

My main interest is focussed on the associated air activity.

Mick Britton

HMS Plym: I would like to trace the River-class frigate's unofficial timber crest. She left Devonport reserve in 1951/2 and deployed on Operation Hurricane in the Monte Bello Islands of Western Australia, where she was destroyed in the UK's first nuclear weapon test.

The ship was stripped beforehand and I have discovered an auction house sold a badge said to be from the frigate (K271) in 2007 but I believe it to be unofficial, something confirmed to me by Chatham Dockyard Historical Society.

Geoff Robinson
7 Mountfield, Borough Green, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 8HX

David McIntyre. I am trying to find details about my birth father, who joined the Royal Navy in 1939 and lived in Southsea. He died in 1976. Priscilla

Reunions

HMS Mohawk Association: Our next reunion will take place at Grand Atlantic Hotel, Weston-Super-Mare from Friday March 31 to Monday April 3 2023. For details call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or contact Bob Proud via e-mail rob.proud@mypostoffice.co.uk

HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association and HMS Tenby Association: The 2023 reunion is confirmed at the Queen's Hotel, Southsea, from May 12 to 15, 2023. Contact Secretary Denis Askham at 07773651213 or email askhamd3@gmail.com For HMS Tenby contact David

Macalister at dmac121dm@gmail.com or call 07716 699308

HMS Carysfort: A reunion will be held at the Orida Hotel in Maidstone from May 19 to 22, 2023, in a joint venture with HMS Cavalier. The reunion is open to all who served in the ship throughout her seven commissions (1945-1969) and their wives/partners. Contact SF Events Ltd at The Withyholts, Paul Mead, Stroud Glous. GL6 6PG Tel: 01452 813173 or email associationmembers@sarahfletcherevents.co.uk

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