



NAVY NEWS

DECEMBER 2019



Princely presence

HMS Prince of Wales makes her way through the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour for the first time. The second of the biggest aircraft carriers ever built for the Royal Navy was welcomed into her homeport by thousands of wellwishers. (see pages 16-17)

Picture: PO (Phot) Nicola Harper

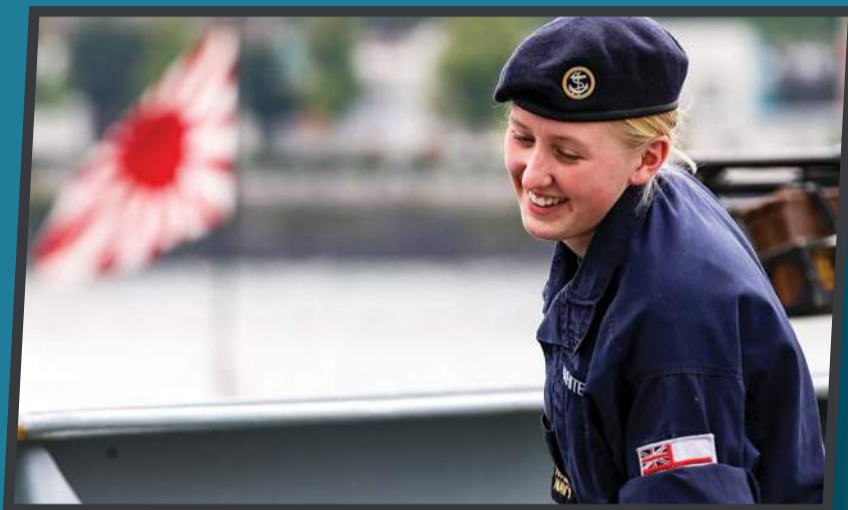
ENTERPRISE IN JAPAN • MINEHUNTERS IN FOCUS • MARINES LOOK TO THE FUTURE



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Tokyo's top 'Prise



FROM chasing typhoons to hosting a Royal, a fortnight in Japan was full of first experiences for sailors on board HMS Enterprise.

The Royal Navy ship spent time in the southern seas of the island nation, in a trip many of the crew described as "once in a lifetime".

Not only was it the first time in Japan for most of the ship's company but they were also making a debut in the tasks they had to complete. These varied from hosting the Prince of Wales to tracking and chasing a super-typhoon up the coast.

But the sailors also got to perfect their skills in man-overboard and gunnery exercises – once the seas had finally calmed down.

HMS Enterprise has spent the last few weeks in the Asia-Pacific region, making a pit stop in Singapore before heading to Japan to celebrate the official enthronement of the new emperor Naruhito.

As part of her trip to coastal waters off Tokyo, the ship also linked up with Japanese navy destroyer JS Teruzuki. The two vessels carried out manoeuvres close together to test both ships' crews and understand how each other work, increasing the ability of the two navies to work in tandem.

Lieutenant Commander Jim Chapman, Enterprise's First Lieutenant, said: "This was a clear demonstration of joined-up working between the two nations."

"It is important the Royal Navy continues to show her commitment to being a global navy. It was a good experience for Enterprise's sailors to sail so close to another ship as it is not something we do often. Working alongside the Japanese is something we have been looking forward to during our time here."

Prior to work with the Teruzuki, Enterprise followed Super Typhoon Hagibis as it battered its way north.

Lieutenant Darren Petty, Meteorological Officer, tracked every movement of the storm as it caused devastation in Japan.

"We were behind the storm as it headed north towards Tokyo. The edge of the cloud was just in front of us the whole time so did create some stormy conditions," he said.

"Because of the way a typhoon spins, the eye of the storm was always going away from us so we were safe being behind it."

Following the typhoon, calmer seas allowed Enterprise to carry out some crucial training. They spent time running man overboard exercises and firing her guns.

With a ten-week watch rotation, it is important the ship's company are up to scratch in what can be their second or third roles on board.

Able Seaman Aiden Younger, from Hertfordshire, was the coxswain on the rescue boat during the man-overboard exercise. The 25-year-old seaman specialist normally spends his time on HMS Enterprise's upper deck.

But when the alarm sounded for man overboard, it was his job to get the rescue boat team ready and into the water – something they did in a few minutes.

AB Younger said: "Being in charge of the boat means the second I hear that alarm I get into my gear and check the team are ready. We then have to make sure the boat is ready and can get into



“““

It is important to do these exercises so

- AB Aiden Younger

the water in as short a time as possible."

Meanwhile, swimmer of the watch AB Jack Larkman is getting ready to enter the water. In some sea states, the boat cannot be used so a swimmer is the best and safest way to rescue someone.

"You go into autopilot," said AB Larkman.

"It isn't something you can really practise for back in the UK. The first time you do it off the back of the ship is during an exercise. As the swimmer, you have to be ready."

With the casualty safely back on board the boat, feedback is given to all those involved.

AB Younger said: "Because of the way rotation works with man-overboard rescues, I might not always be the coxswain. Therefore, it is important we do these exercises so everyone is refreshed. It is an important skillset we have to retain."

The same can be said for the gunnery exercise which HMS Enterprise also conducted while in the Pacific Ocean. Her weapons, a GPMG and mini-gun, were fired to ensure they are being maintained well and the gunners can be relied upon if needed.

AB Jacob Horner, from Milton Keynes, is a hydrographics surveyor on board HMS Enterprise but one of his other roles is manning the guns.

The 20-year-old said: "For this exercise we got to shoot 200 rounds at a target into the water. With the choppy seas and a relatively small target, it makes for difficult shooting but I managed to get some rounds off."

"It is always exciting doing an exercise like this but it's important too to make sure we can fix any problems like a jam. Safety is key in everything we do so the more we can practise, the more confident we can be in using the guns safely."

Back alongside at Harumi Pier in Tokyo, the ship had to be prepped and cleaned for a visit by Prince Charles – who praised the crew for their hard work.

He congratulated the ship for their efforts and the UK's on-going collaboration with the Japanese, before joining them in a toast to Emperor Naruhito.

Addressing the sailors on Enterprise, he said: "I hope you have great success with your on-going work here. Thank you for doing what you do in your remarkable work. We can always rely on the Royal Navy to carry out their tasks."

As part of his visit, Prince Charles awarded Able Seaman Emily Dixon the Hambone Trophy for getting the best overall marks in her Phase 2 surveyors course.

The hydrographics surveyor, from Coventry, said: "Normally I would have been given this award at a ceremony in the UK. So to have it awarded on HMS Enterprise, by Prince Charles, is really great. I wasn't expecting it."

"He was very friendly and quite talkative."

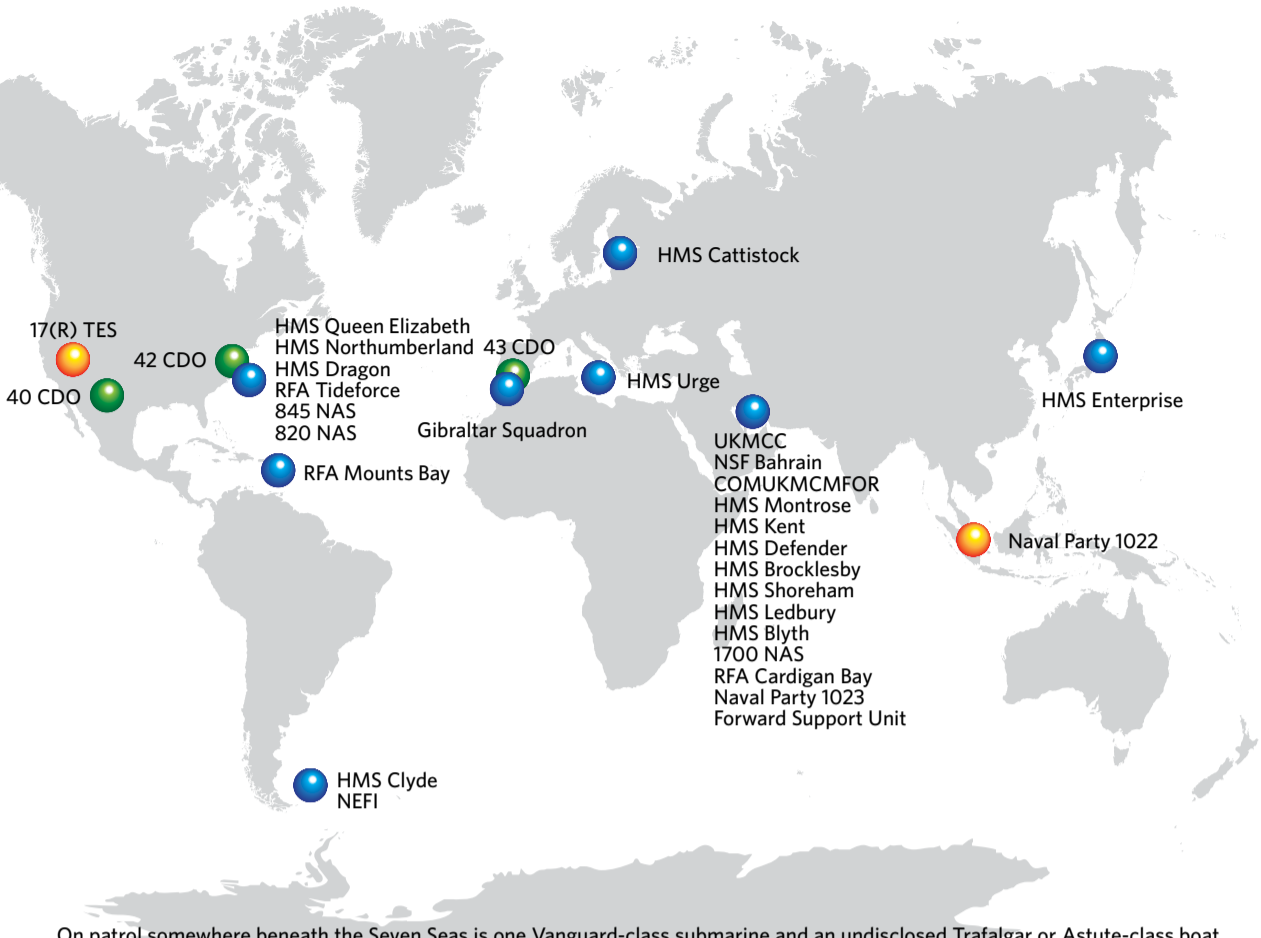




Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Medway
HMS Mersey
HMS Tyne
HMS Magpie
HMS Hurworth

RFA Tidesurge
RFA Argus
824 NAS



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

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Protecting our nation's interests

SO THAT'S 2019 done, then.

It ends with the RN operating two big-deck carriers – the first time since January 1972 – frigates and destroyer providing escort duties for millions of tonnes of shipping in the Gulf and the Royal Marines in a state of major transition to create the Future Commando Force.

Which is why **1AGRM** is no more... and **47 Commando Raiding Group** takes its place, a name (and mindset) change announced by Commandant General Major General Matt Holmes at one of the Corps' key anniversaries, Walcheren (see page 31).

Beyond regular training, the re-born 47 have yet to make their mark unlike four of the remaining five other numbered commando units – all in action simultaneously.

42 and 40 Commandos are both Stateside, 40 making use of the USMC's extensive ranges at Twentynine Palms in the Mojave Desert, their Bickleigh counterparts getting stuck in to more training rescuing downed air crew on another major USMC base, Quantico (see centre pages and page 13 respectively).

43 Commando hit the Rock by night, stalking its famous underground tunnel network to practise close-quarters battle training (see page 9)

45 got the short end of the straw: a slog around the Highlands in sub-zero temperatures as an icy taster for the impending major Arctic deployment to Norway/NATO's latest Cold Response exercise (see right).

OK, about those two big-deck carriers then. After two months of extremely successful trials in the North Sea, **HMS Prince of Wales** was welcomed into Portsmouth for the first time by huge crowds lining the seafront and a couple of Hawks buzzing the carrier as she entered harbour (see pages 16-17).

And on the other side of the Atlantic, her older sister **HMS Queen Elizabeth** has continued her training with UK F-35 Lightnings and the rest of her carrier battlegroup (**HM Ships Northumberland, Dragon and RFA Tideforce**) (see page 6).

Fundamental to the success of the carrier group is its ability to protect itself against submarines (one frigate, plus 820 NAS – see next month's paper) and rescue downed aircrew/ferry personnel and equipment and weapons around a battlefield (**845 NAS** and its Merlin Mk3/4s, see page 7).

From the biggest to the smallest ship in the RN inventory. **Gib** patrol boat **HMS Sabre** is back in the water after her annual revamp (see page 11).

Moving up the size scale to minehunter **HMS Pembroke** which has returned to Faslane after an extensive refit in Rosyth (see page 34)

Slightly larger now and Hunt-class minehunter **HMS Cattistock** has enjoyed a lightning-quick stint with NATO in the Baltic, mostly dealing with WW1 and WW2 ordnance (see page 11).

Her sisters **Brocklesby** and **Ledbury**, plus **RFA Cardigan Bay** and the divers of **Fleet Diving Unit 3** have been heavily engaged in the largest counter-mine warfare exercise in the Middle East, **IMX19** (see pages 18-19).

New River-class patrol ship **HMS Trent** is on the cusp of entering Portsmouth as her crew have moved onboard ready to sail her south from the Clyde (see page 5).

RFA Tidesurge became (we think) the first ship in her class to refuel an Arleigh Burke destroyer, **USS Donald Cook** (see page 35).

And **RFA Argus'** hospital facilities were tested extensively with a casualty exercise in Scotland (see page 35).

As ever the Royal Navy paused with the nation to remember those on **Eternal Patrol** during the **November 11 ceremonies** (see pages 14-15).

And fittingly, in the month of reflection, the wreck of **HMS Urge** was discovered off Malta, solving a 77-year mystery surrounding the fate of the WW2 submarine which disappeared with all hands in 1942 (see page 26).

View from the ridge

ROYAL Marines are preparing for their next foray into the Arctic freezer with extensive mountain training in -15°C conditions in Scotland's Highlands on Exercise Green Claymore.

Arbroath-based **45 Commando** are preparing to step off to the high north in January to continue the Royal Marines' work in the extreme cold hundreds of miles inside the Arctic Circle.

The commandos are the UK's experts in cold weather warfare and are next year heading on the largest deployment to Norway in recent years.

It's all part of the renewed commitment to put the high north at the forefront of UK security with Royal Marines at the very heart of it.

To get ready for the northern freeze, **45 Cdo** underwent unit mountain training, with extensive exercises focussing on navigation and conditioning for the Arctic in the Highlands, where temperatures have plummeted to a cool -15°C.

It was all staged out of Cameron

Barracks in Inverness and consisted of vertical assault techniques, traversing ridges using fixed lines, winter skill training (using ice axes and crampons), obstacle crossing, river cross skills (including wading).

It didn't end there, with cold weather warfare survival, first aid, casualty evacuation, and specialist cold weather equipment training also built into the programme to form the building blocks for a successful winter deployment.

All of this training was delivered by **45 Cdo's Recce Troop** and saw the commandos carry out a tactical crossing of An Teallach mountain, nicknamed the great wilderness, and navigation routes on the Fannichs range.

"We've had some fantastic days on the hill with Yankee Coy. We've experienced the first proper snow of the winter and conditions have definitely been testing – with wind gusting up to 50mph and the wind

chill taking temperatures down to -15 degrees. It's excellent preparation for the conditions we'll experience in Norway," said Marine Michael Christie, a Mountain Leader Third Class in **45 Commando Recce Troop**.

"Training will push people out of their comfort zone. It's particularly challenging operating on ridge lines during these conditions – with steep drops either side and a strong wind blowing, it can be pretty daunting for some people. It's this sort of training that will make the team more resilient when we're in Norway."

Units from across **3 Commando Brigade** will deploy for NATO's Exercise Cold Response in Norway early next year and all this is done so that commandos can deploy safely and undertake the cold weather warfare course training.

Yankee Company were the lucky ones, getting the first of this winter's snow during their winter training package, facing gusts of wind of 50mph and a wind chill of -15°C.



View from the bridge will return in next month's Navy News



Start of the Poseidon adventure

THE Poseidon adventure has begun – and with it the nation's nuclear deterrent is much safer.

In the 50th anniversary year of the Continuous at Sea Deterrent, the first Poseidon P8 maritime patrol aircraft has been handed over to the UK's armed forces.

Although operated by the RAF, the Lossiemouth-based aircraft will be crucial to the security of the UK's submarine flotilla, and especially the Vanguard (and later Dreadnought) class boats conducting deterrent patrols.

In addition, there will be Royal Navy personnel serving on each of the nine Poseidons acquired as part of a £3m investment, which includes nearly £500m revamping their future home in Moray.

The jets – Boeing 737-800s on the outside, and what amounts to an airborne Type 23 frigate (and more) on the inside – is designed to carry out extended surveillance missions at both high and low altitudes with the fuselage crammed with cutting-edge sensors which use high-resolution area mapping to find threats on or below the surface of the oceans.

In addition, each Poseidon carries 129 sonobuoy listening devices – dropped across the potential path of a hostile submarine to locate and track it – and Harpoon anti-ship missiles and Mk54 torpedoes should it need to attack enemy warships or a hunter in the deep.

After being handed over to the RAF in Seattle, the first British Poseidon – it's already in service with Australia, Norway, New Zealand and the USA – was flown to Jacksonville in Florida, where British crews are being trained to operate the new eyes-in-the-sky.

The first P8, Pride of Moray, will arrive in the UK early next year, with all nine aircraft delivered to 120 and 201 Squadrons by the end of 2021.

Their advent plugs a decade-long gap left by the retirement of the veteran Nimrod.

"Poseidon marks a superb upgrade in the UK's ability to conduct anti-submarine operations, maintaining the operational freedom of our own submarines – and applying pressure on those of our potential foes," First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin said.



Trent treat

DUE to debut in Portsmouth this month is the third of the UK's new patrol ships: HMS Trent.

The ship's company, engineers and technicians from BAE are carrying out the final tweaks, before a period of training and assessment for the sailors so they can bring the second-generation River-class vessel into her future home this month.

Trent completed a successful spell of sea trials in the waters of western Scotland earlier in the year, since when she's been back at BAE's yard at Govan on the Clyde to complete fitting out, ready for transferring to Portsmouth and ultimately commissioning the ship into the Royal Navy.

More than 30 sailors moved on board at the end of October to bring her mess decks and cabins to life.

It also meant they took over responsibility for the ship's care and protection from her builders, hoisted the fouled Blue Ensign to signify a vessel in government service – and could begin giving Trent her unique 'character'.

The ship's company have also used the autumn to give BAE employees tours of Trent so they can see the fruits of their labours over the past four years.

"Moving aboard was an important milestone in converting Trent into a warship and, for the ship's company, it marked the start of making our house into

a home.

"But it also represented the culmination of a huge amount of work by the ship's company, by BAE Systems, and by the MOD – a moment everyone was rightly proud of achieving," said Trent's first Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander James Wallington-Smith.

"It sets us well on the way to getting the ship safely to sea in December."

Before that milestone, the sailors face an assessment by the Royal Navy's key training organisation FOST, who will determine whether the ship's company is up to the demands of taking a warship to sea, testing their response to possible fires, floods, safe navigation and handling of Trent by the bridge team, equipment breaking down and shipmates falling overboard among others.

After a festive period alongside in Portsmouth, 2020 begins with trials operating helicopters from the ship's flight deck.

And later in the year, FOST will be back for further training and inspections to determine that Trent's crew are ready to deploy on front-line operations like HMS Forth and Medway before them.

Talking of Forth, she sailed from the Solent to begin her new mission: guardian of the Falkland Islands and Britain's South

Atlantic territories.

The skirl of bagpipes – from the Royal Navy Pipe Band Association's Pipe Major Tom Smith, standing proudly on Forth's bow – accompanied the River-class warship as she glided out of Portsmouth Harbour on a gunmetal November day.

As well as the 40-strong ship's company and the sole piper, a number of soldiers from affiliated regiments joined Forth for her departure.

She will replace HMS Clyde – one of four first-generation River-class ships in service – which has provided a reassuring presence to islanders in the Falklands and nearby South Georgia for the past dozen years.

She's currently on a 'farewell tour' of her stomping grounds in the Southern Hemisphere before making the 9,000-mile voyage back to Portsmouth, where she was built.

"Today is a momentous day for the River-class," said Forth's proud Commanding Officer Commander Bob Laverty.

"I am extremely proud of my ship's company for their efforts over the past two years in getting us to this point and grateful to the entire enterprise for their support and perseverance throughout our generation as a first of class warship."

Bidding farewell to Forth was the head of the Fishery Protection Squadron,



Commander Simon Pressdee.

"Forth continues to pave the way for the class," he said. "We fully expect her to spend most of her time at sea on operations with only a fraction of the time spent in maintenance, while her crew will rotate to and from the UK."



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ON THE STRAIT AND NARROW

IN the heat of the Carrier Strike Group work on Westlant 19, the focus typically lands at the front door of the F-35 Lightning jets and the centrepiece HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Those are vital areas to talk about – as *Navy News* has covered in the last few months – but we've also tried to shine a light on the other pieces of the Strike Group, the ships, aircraft and marines that make it all tick.

Look on page seven and read about 845 Naval Air Squadron and their role on deployment and watch out for more in the next month's paper which will study 820 Naval Air Squadron's job.

It's easy to let this work slip by because there's new and shiny things that take the limelight, but the grandmother of the Strike Group ships, HMS Northumberland, the oldest of the vessels on the deployment, has been incredibly busy herself and gets a bit of TLC here.

Having tested her ability to protect aircraft carriers from submarines earlier on in Westlant, the Type 23 frigate has also been on the strait and narrow, working on how to safeguard merchant shipping during exercises an American taskforce.

Northumberland's training culminated in a simulated transit of The Beryl Strait – a fictitious chokepoint akin to the Strait of Hormuz, the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait or Strait of Gibraltar.

During the exercise, the destroyer USS Winston S Churchill acted as a harassing

enemy force and was intercepted by Northumberland with a daring manoeuvre, ordered by Executive Officer Lieutenant Commander Jeremy Brettell, in order to protect a merchant vessel in distress.

This was at the end of exercises with the 4th Amphibious Strike group, during which the frigate simulated the use of her cutting-edge Sea Ceptor missile system and deployed her Variable Depth Sonar in training countering threats above and beneath the waves.

"This is the first time Northumberland has operated alongside a US Navy Amphibious Task Group," said Lieutenant Commander Markus Adcock, the Weapons Engineering Officer on board.

"The ship's company have been at a high state of readiness, working hard in defence watches in order to ensure we are ready to respond to various above and below water threats.

"Northumberland simulated using her cutting-edge Sea Ceptor missile system and has deployed Variable Depth Sonar capability to tackle such threats, demonstrating the flexibility offered by a Type 23 frigate in a multi threat environment.

Seamlessly integrating with the US Navy Strike Group the Royal Navy warship, currently operating off the eastern seaboard of the United States, embarked a specialist United States Navy liaison officer to ensure that all the exercises were

conducted safely.

Head of the Amphibious Task Group was the USS Bataan, a 41,000 ton Wasp Class Amphibious Assault Ship, named after the World War Two battle fought in the Philippines against Japan.

She can carry a mixture of aircraft including F35B Lightnings and MV22 Ospreys as well as a number of landing craft and hovercraft.

The ship also has the capability to deploy more than 1,600 Marines ashore if needed. The USS New York and USS Oak Hill also formed part of the impressive US Strike Group.

Northumberland returned to the side for HMS Queen Elizabeth before heading into Boston for a week-long visit.

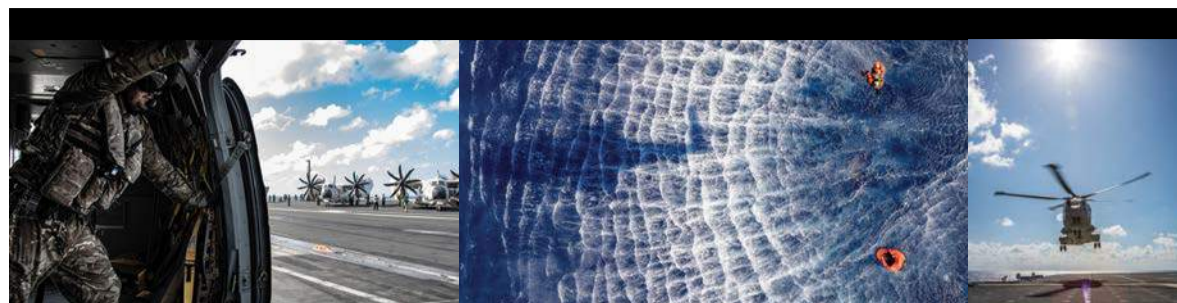
During her stay, she was open to visitors while berthed alongside USS Constitution in the Charlestown Navy Yard.

Commanding Officer, Commander Ally Pollard, said: "This has been a particularly intense period of work for HMS Northumberland. It is always a privilege for us in the Royal Navy to come in to a US port, particularly one with such a rich maritime history as Boston, which will undoubtedly provide us such a warm welcome. The ship has had an extremely busy few months at sea and it is testament to the fantastic crew and all their hard work that our deployment so far has been a real success."

Pictures by LPhoto Kyle Heller



NOT THE SHOW STOPPERS



BUT THERE IS NO SHOW WITHOUT THEM...

F-35 Lightning jets are without doubt the headline-grabbers on HMS Queen Elizabeth's Westlant deployment – but less conspicuous are the navy fliers who are central to the Carrier Strike Group's work.

Aviators of RNAS Yeovilton-based 845 Naval Air Squadron have one of the most varied roles within the Strike Group and their latest deployment with Queen Elizabeth is getting them razor sharp for full carrier operations in 2021.

During Westlant, off the east coast of the United States, the Commando Merlin pilots and aircrew's day-to-day work involves them flying stores around the Carrier Strike Group's (CSG) warships and ashore, keeping everything ticking over on the mammoth operation.

But the Commando Helicopter Force fliers of 845 NAS are also on standby for search-and-rescue missions at sea and over land, while also carrying the punch of the embarked Royal Marines of Lima Company, 42 Commando.

It means the F-35 Lightning jets flying from HMS Queen Elizabeth can work to their full potential knowing that 845 NAS and Lima Company are on hand, prepared to drop in behind enemy lines to rescue 'downed' pilots.

This time around, B-Flight or 'Furious Flight' – so named after HMS Furious, the first British warship on which a deck landing was carried out at sea – are on Westlant, replacing their A-Flight kin who were on last year's deployment, and have taken three of their Commando Merlin Mk4s onto HMS Queen Elizabeth.

When they're needed, 845 are a high-trained, specialist, helicopter force, able to infiltrate enemy airspace and, with Lima Company, rescue any pilots isolated on the ground.

"I'm exceptionally proud to be part of a team of air and ground crew who are consistently delivering in a varied, complex and challenging environment," said Lieutenant Tom Lennon, Commando Merlin pilot.

"Operating from a ship as awesome as HMS Queen Elizabeth is a true career highlight and represents a realisation of a childhood ambition of becoming a naval aviator.

"Being able to utilise both our 'green' Commando aviation and 'grey' blue-water maritime skills has been highly satisfying. Working very closely with the Royal Marines of 42 Commando and the F-35s is demanding, dynamic and exciting.

"845's hard work in the run up to this deployment has paid dividends; our embarked flight's aircrew are comprehensively trained and well drilled in the extreme demands of operating battlefield rotary wing aircraft at sea.

"The training we conducted in the UK prior to embarkation, including operating from a variety of RN and RFA vessels, has been rapidly consolidated during our first few weeks on board."

The main priorities for 845 during their Westlant deployment is to get new aircrew up to scratch and refreshing more experienced fliers in day and night deck landings, not only on Queen Elizabeth but fellow CSG warships HMS Dragon and HMS Northumberland.

Furious Flight have also been testing their search-and-rescue capability as well as training to operate aircraft from ship to shore into potentially hostile enemy territory to rescue personnel from downed aircrew to Special Forces teams. This element of the training is called Joint Personnel Recovery and is a vital skill for the CSG.

Of course, with such a busy schedule of flying missions, this has been a challenge for the engineers dedicated to working on the Commando Merlin.

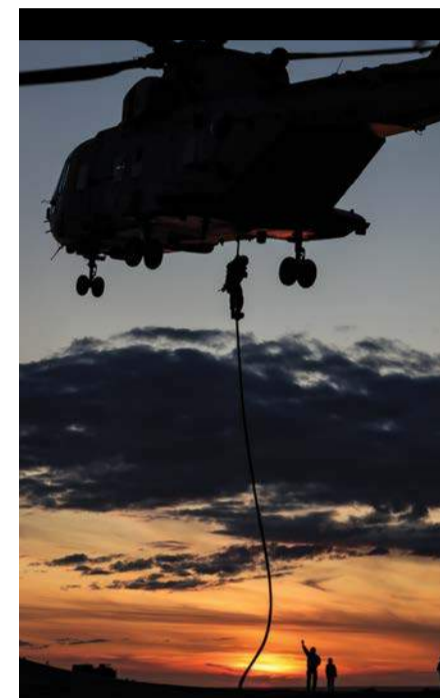
"This has been an invaluable period of time at sea for the engineers of 845 NAS," said Leading Air Engineer Technician Tim Fagg.

"Despite a portion of us embarking in HMS Queen Elizabeth for ten days of sea trials a few weeks prior to the main deployment, the flight still arrived with the vast majority of the Junior Rates having never been to sea.

"For all of us and for those individuals in particular, the transit across the Atlantic was straight in at the deep end.

"The routines for launching, recovering, and moving aircraft on deck (all considerably more complex, arduous and time consuming than the same procedures ashore) had to be learnt in driving horizontal rain on a heavily rolling deck.

"Work ramped up to such a tempo that considerable gains were made in knowledge and experience levels before we hit our first stop in Halifax; the whole flight was working smoothly as one entity. Despite the workload, morale has remained high throughout our time at sea, with many organised sporting and social events eagerly attended."



Pictures by LPhot Kyle Heller



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From loch to the Rock



THE men charged with the round-the-clock protection of the UK's ultimate weapon found themselves well out of their comfort zone in the wartime tunnels of Gibraltar.

Normally confined to the ammunition depot at Coulport on Loch Long or the berths at nearby Clyde Naval Base used by the Royal Navy's Vanguard-class submarines when not on deterrent patrol or training, 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines are the last line of defence protecting the nation's Trident missiles and the machines which carry them.

The unit trains daily, but also conducts extended exercises, playing out various scenarios to keep them on their toes – usually in their native Scotland.

This year, however, the marines of O and P Squadrons swapped Gareloch for Gibraltar to master close-quarters battle – and to expose them to a fresh, challenging and unfamiliar environment.

The Rock presents the Royal Marines with physical challenges in the form of arid, rugged terrain – it's still mostly dry and dusty with temperatures reaching the low 20s at this time of year – as well as its numerous caves and wartime tunnels.

All of which takes the commandos out of their 'comfort zone' and allows them to hone close-quarter battle skills and practice securing critical infrastructure in a fresh, challenging and unfamiliar environment.

Weather and terrain aside, Gibraltar surprisingly closely mirrors the complex environment in which the marines work at their Clyde base.

Both are comprised of jetties set in a busy industrial and maritime setting with complex infrastructure.

The main phase of the Rock training – Exercise Serpent Rock 19 – involved moving at night through a series of underground tunnels before emerging in the empty streets of Gibraltar and towards their first objectives around the jetties.

With complete surprise achieved – and the rest of Gibraltar still asleep – the marines overcame strong



resistance from a well-trained enemy and reached their goal before the first rays of light touched the Rock.

They didn't stop there, however. With little time to rest the 43 men moved quickly on to their next task: securing a mock village with its array of complex tunnels.

When the 'fighting' was over, the Clyde-based Commandos were reminded of their Corps' illustrious history with a tour of Gibraltar – the Rock is the only battle honour to be named on the Corps heraldic crest, the Globe and Laurel. They also learned about the key role the tunnels and secret complexes hidden in the mountain played during World War 2.

And no visit to Gibraltar would be complete without a 'Rock Run' – from the naval base to the top of the 1,300ft mountain which dominates the small territory.

"Gibraltar is one of a number of overseas training areas that 43 Commando uses to keep its marines at a high level of readiness for its role back in Scotland," said Major Dan Sawyers, Officer Commanding P Squadron.

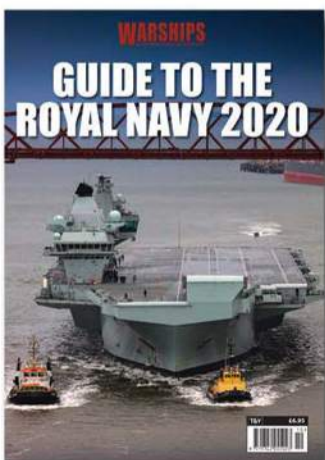
"Making use of Gibraltar's training facilities – in particular its working dockyard and tunnel system, which require marines to adopt a whole variety of traditional and novel approaches – allows us to put our personnel under considerable psychological and physical stress in an unfamiliar environment.

"In the maritime-industrial environment, where in the space of just a 100 metres you can encounter a constantly changing landscape, marines were continuously forced to identify and quickly change their tactics to deal with any threats they face."

Major Sawyers believes not just the safety and security of the nuclear deterrent will benefit from the skills, tactics and experience of the stint in Gibraltar, but the wider corps.

"And for many of our marines this was their first time experiencing the Rock and learning about its place in our history. Gibraltar holds a significant place in our corps' heritage," he added.

Pictures: LPhot Unasi Luke



SPECIAL PUBLICATION ON SALE FROM OCTOBER 25TH 2019

The Essential Guide to the UK's Naval Forces

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Defender's milestone

SAILORS on HMS Defender took a short break from safeguarding shipping in the Gulf to celebrate the destroyer's tenth birthday.

The cutting-edge Type 45 destroyer was launched in 2009 and since entering front-line service in 2013 has been on operations across the globe.

Currently, the Portsmouth-based warship is in the Gulf accompanying British-flagged shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

Over the past decade, among other operations, Defender has carried out drug busts in the Middle East; supported

US Navy aircraft carrier USS George H W Bush; escorted cruise liner Queen Mary II through the Gulf of Oman; and this year tested her Sea Viper missile off the coast of Scotland.

The fifth Daring-class destroyer, construction on Defender started in 2006 on the River Clyde before she was launched three years later.

Sea trials started in 2011 and she entered her home port of Portsmouth for the first time the following year.

Operations have put her equipment, including her ferocious Sea Viper anti-air missile system and long-range radars, through its paces.

The ship's company gathered on the flight deck to mark the anniversary and have some cake, baked on board by the chefs.

Weapons systems specialist Engineering Technician Michael Moody said: "It is amazing to think the ship is ten years old but still at the forefront of technology."

Since deploying to the Middle East joining Portsmouth-based frigate HMS Kent, plus HMS Montrose, she has acted as a 'good shepherd', helping merchant shipping through the narrow gateway to the Gulf. Defender alone has successfully accompanied more than one million tonnes of merchant vessel traffic.

Commander Richard Hewitt, the ship's Commanding Officer, said: "HMS Defender has had an incredible journey so far with many achievements over the past decade."



Six of the best as new Deeps celebrate

SIX newly-qualified submariners from HMS Audacious, currently completing in the BAE Shipyard in Barrow, were awarded their Submarine Dolphins in a ceremony in Barrow.

The Commanding Officer, Cdr Louis Bull, and members of his crew were hosted by the Barrow-in-Furness branch of the Submariners' Association.

Following the branch meeting Cdr Bull made a speech in which he congratulated the six new submariners and explained that they had now joined a very select team, with a long and proud tradition to live up to.

The newly-qualified submariners were then each presented with their Qualification Certificates by Cdr Bull before they celebrated with a tot of rum.

Those receiving their Dolphins were Lieutenant J. Riley, Engineering Technician (MESM) Danny Cargill and Engineering Technicians (WESM) S Brown, G Adams, B Mason, and A Garner.



Having a blast

Cattistock deals with historic ordnance

A GERMAN mine from World War 2 explodes in the Baltic, thanks to HMS Cattistock.

Her autumn deployment with NATO saw the ship cram half a dozen Baltic ports into as many weeks – with plenty of bangs between stops.

After brief stops in Copenhagen and Turku in Finland (where the minehunter's upper deck was left with a dusting of snow), the Portsmouth-based warship joined the alliance's mine warfare Group 1 in Tallinn, Estonia ahead of some intensive activity at sea.

The group roams the waters of northern Europe practising the latest methods of dealing with underwater devices, disarming and destroying wartime ordnance, and promoting security, peace and prosperity under the NATO banner.

In its autumn composition the group comprised ships from Denmark (including the flagship Thetis), Germany, Latvia, Norway, Netherlands, plus a team of Portuguese divers.

After Tallinn, the group moved to Turku in Finland and then onto Liepaja (Lithuania's principal port) and Latvian waters for a concerted spell of hunting.

HODOPS – Historic Ordnance Disposal Operations – is one of a series of specific hunts in Baltic waters for the leftovers of 20th Century conflict.

The eastern Baltic was heavily mined by both the Germans and Russians/Soviets in World Wars 1 and 2 and despite extensive clearance activity in the immediate aftermath of the conflicts, plus regular clearance operations since the end of the Cold War, the Baltic remains far from mine free.

HODOPS underlined that. The task group scoured around 20 square miles of waters in the Irbe Strait – gateway to the Gulf of Riga – located 322 objects, destroyed 43 mines and neutralised another 13.

Cattistock accounted for six historic mines – Russian WW1 devices and German explosives from WW2 – which



made for a busy period for her mine warfare operators and divers.

"I've been caught off guard with how busy it is in this area – it really hits home how much was laid in wartime and how important these positions were to certain countries, and we're still dealing with it," said Petty Officer (Diver) James Shell from Portsmouth.

"I think it gives the people in the region reassurance – it gives them confidence in the seaways and the ability to keep vessels transiting through, be that fishing vessels, merchant vessels or ferries."

For many of Cattistock's crew, an autumn in the Baltic (the water temperature is half that of the ship's home base at this time of year) working with allied divers and sailors has been a new experience.

"Once we joined the Task Group in Tallinn it was nice to see all of the other nations we'd be working with, I'd never worked with other nations before and I

had a good first impression of what I had to look forward to," said Leading Diver Ashley Lishman, 31, from Oldham.

"Visiting different places and working with different units is what I joined up to do. And working with live ordnance is our bread and butter."

He continued: "We visited somewhere new almost every week – it's pretty exciting because you tend to know nothing about where you're visiting."

"NATO deployments are known for good port visits and we've done well so far. It's great being able to do all of this with other NATO ships who want to have just as much fun as you."

Diver Sam Alexander, 23, from Exeter, added: "Going through the archipelago to Finland was really scenic and some of the wildlife was incredible."

"Tallinn was my favourite visit – I enjoyed the medieval vibe of the city and had a great time socialising with the guys from other NATO ships."



Sabre back in action

HMS SABRE is back in action with the Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron after a month of extensive maintenance conducting work both inside and outside the vessel.

With her engines completely serviced and a fresh lick of paint, the 16-metre long Lifespan Patrol Vessel (LPV) has been returned to operations within British Gibraltar Territorial Waters following a four-week annual survey and repair period.

This involved lifting HMS Sabre out of the water, conducting a deep-clean of the vessel both inside and out, including inside the various tanks onboard and conducting an external survey to assess the integrity of the hull.

The biggest change to Sabre was the extensive re-upholstering of the wheelhouse which allows the vessel to remain cool in the summer and provides insulation to keep the sailors warm in the winter.

Sabre's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Lloyd Cardy said: "The Scimitar-class vessels have been in service since 1993, having been based in Northern Ireland operating inland before being retro-fitted and commissioned into the Royal Navy in 2003."

"Since then they have been based in Gibraltar as part of the Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron, providing a constant presence in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters."

He added: "The annual maintenance period is essential in order to ensure that the vessels remain in fighting shape, ready to continue the sovereignty mission assigned to us around the Rock."



RN media stars named in annual awards ceremony

SAILORS and Royal Marines who have made the biggest contribution to the Royal Navy's reputation have been recognised at an annual awards bash.

The Desmond Wettern Royal Navy Media Award is given every year to the ship, submarine, Naval Air Squadron, or Royal Marines unit that is judged to have done the most to project a positive image of the Naval Service.

This year 40 Commando took the top prize, for their support to the RN's HQ Media team across a range of operations and exercises.

Type 23 frigate HMS Montrose was named the runner-up, the following units also earning recognition:

- Best FFDD: HMS Dragon
- Best MFPV: HMS Forth
- Best submarine: HMS Talent
- Best RFA: RFA Mounts Bay
- Best RM unit: 47 Commando
- Best NAS: 845 Naval Air Squadron
- Best shore unit: Future Support and Engineering Team, NCHQ
- Best reserve unit: RMR Merseyside

The Desmond Wettern Award is named for the distinguished naval writer and last naval correspondent in Fleet Street.



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LIMA COMPANY

42 COMMANDO

Pictures by LPhot Paul Hall

Royal Marines turned Virginia creepers, stalking woodland outside Washington to practise rescuing downed aircrew from behind enemy lines.

The men of Lima Company, 42 Commando, fought their way through a replica developing world village, progressing the tactics they would use to locate, if necessary liberate and finally escort or carry injured or trapped personnel back to either of Britain's two new aircraft carriers.

The marines, based at Bickleigh outside Plymouth, are the men the Navy will turn to should an F-35 go down behind enemy lines and the pilot need rescuing.

But the mission – known as Joint Personnel Recovery and Combat Search and Rescue in military terminology – isn't purely limited to picking up individual aircrew trapped in hostile territory.

It's expanded to embrace all 'isolated personnel' – yes, downed pilots, but also trapped British citizens, or troops cut off from the rest of their comrades – in a 'non-permissive environment'... which means the locals (military or civilian) are less than friendly.

While HMS Queen Elizabeth is continuing her fast-jet trials and training off the Florida coast, Lima Company decamped ashore for several weeks training in and around Quantico, Virginia – one of the US Marine Corps' principal bases.

The facilities and size of the ranges at the huge American base, about 30 miles outside Washington DC, gives them the space and opportunity to run through most possible scenarios.

Exercise Lightning Angel 19 opened with the commandos practising unarmed combat and navigation through the Virginia undergrowth, before moving on to two weeks of live firing to turn realism levels all the way up to 11.

"Lightning Angel has been great for Lima Company," said 39-year-old Major John Whiteman, Officer Commanding Lima Company.

It's given us the opportunity to practise working from the Queen Elizabeth in the Joint Personnel Recovery role as well as enhancing our skills at a company level."

It's the second time Lima – the company permanently assigned to HMS Queen Elizabeth (and soon HMS Prince of Wales) to recover any downed aircrew or their passengers (the ships operate Merlin, Wildcat and Chinook helicopters alongside the F-35s, plus Allied airpower that the US Marine Corps' Osprey tiltrotors) – have made use of the facilities at Quantico.

"It's great to be back in Quantico to further our skills – the training facilities and terrain here provide a great environment for doing just that," said Warrant Officer 2nd Class Neil Smith.

As well as practising rescue missions they will conduct joint training with their American counterparts and renew a long-standing friendly sporting rivalry.

The US Marines invite Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel to take part in the Marine Corps Marathon. The Brits posted a faster combined time for the 26.2 mile 'jaunt' around Virginia in torrential conditions, lifting the Challenge Cup for the 28th time.

Four marines, Lance Corporal Jamie Smith, Lieutenant Cameron Struben, Corporal Lee Evans and Marine Zubair Lewis, speed marched the marathon, carrying 35lbs of kit throughout to raise money for the Royal Marines Charity and Project Regain. They are still raising money at: uk.gofundme.com/f/bear039s-campaign-for-the-royal-marines-charity.

LCpl Smith said: "It was a good challenge to take on and a great chance to raise money for these causes."

At the same time as Lima Company's training, the Information Advantage Cell of Plymouth-based 30 Commando were training in the evacuation of vulnerable civilians at Quantico.

Marines specialise in warfare in extreme environments as well as covert commando raids but they also must be equipped to deliver humanitarian aid and be able to help civilians in need.

The cell were there to work and share knowledge with US, Australian, Dutch, Canadian and Colombian counterparts.

Their first task was to produce detailed plans for a Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO), the withdrawal of people in danger to a safe haven.

That could be British citizens or nationals who are also at risk, or non-essential military personnel.

A fictional scenario challenged the multi-national group to aid a made-up Southeast Asian country, called Cyan.

The 30 Commando IA cell were joined by Royal Navy Reserve subject matter experts along with Defence Scientist Technology Lab (DSTL) analysts specialising in behavioural science.

After a week of planning, the task force carried out the NEO in a life-like scenario created by the Urban Training Complex and a host of highly-skilled role players, which allowed the teams to gain the maximum training benefit from each phase.

"It's great to be in Quantico to further develop our IO skills, the training facilities and terrain here provide a great environment to develop the IA cells skills," said Warrant Officer Second Class, Lee Douglas.

"It has also been a great opportunity to share knowledge with and learn from other nations in a challenging training environment."

The 30 Commando contingent and participants from the Dutch Marines and USMC also took the opportunity to further develop the long standing Tri-Marine relationship.

"Combined Unit Exercise 19.2 has been great for the IA Cell and given us the opportunity to practise working alongside our marine counterparts from the Dutch and US marines, which is an already strong relationship we are always keen to further improve," Major Anthony Hill, Officer Commanding, 30 Commando IA Cell, said.

The exercise was designed to provide Information Operations and information-related capabilities and give trained personnel the opportunity to exercise integration into an operational planning team and focus on tactical skills.

It provided 30 Commando with the opportunity to refine Information Operations skills, ensuring they are suitably qualified to undertake missions during the winter deployment in the Arctic and beyond, for both the Royal Marines and wider defence.



VIRGINIA

CREEPERS

Tributes to the fallen



THE weak winter sunshine glints over the shoulder of a sailor as Royal Navy personnel took part in the annual Remembrance Service at Portsmouth Naval Memorial on the seafront.

From the national commemoration at the Cenotaph in London, attended by the Royal family, to services all over the globe – from the deserts of California to the Gulf and the Caribbean – naval service people were at the forefront of Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day events.

In London, Royal Navy divers marched at the Cenotaph for the first time. Fifty members of the Royal Navy Clearance Divers Association attended the national service of remembrance.

WO1 (Diver) John "Yoyo" Ravenhall MID, QCVS; Chairman of the RNCDA, said: "It's been an absolute honour to organise the first attendance of the Association at the Cenotaph."

Every year members of the RNCDA gather at their

Memorial Garden in Portsmouth to sound 'Five Bells' for fallen clearance divers.

'Five Bells' is a diving signal meaning "I have Found, Started or Completed my work"; and over the years has been adopted as the salute to a fallen diver.

"Five Bells my friend, stand down, your work is done."

The Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland and the Royal Navy Guard, provided by HMS Scotia, led the service in Edinburgh at the Stone of Remembrance at the City Chambers.

Personnel from HMS Enterprise attended a service at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in Kranji, Singapore, while sailors from the Gibraltar Squadron held a service at the Commonwealth War Graves cemetery in Tangier.

HMS Queen Elizabeth held a service on her flight deck off the USA, while HMS Prince of Wales paused on her sea trials to enable personnel to pay their respects.

In the Gulf, HMS Montrose organised a sunrise service on its flight deck. The blast of a Bosun's call sounded in homage to the trench whistles used in the Great War, and a minute's silence was held.

In America, Royal Marines from 40 Commando paused during Exercise Green Dagger to pay their respects.

The weekend before saw hundreds of submariners, serving and veterans, gather in London for the annual Submariner Remembrance events.

The names of the following personnel who died in

the past year were read out at the main Royal Navy services:

Mne Benjamin McQueen, 26; WO1 Robert McTurk, 56; Lt Steven Clark, 30; AB Edward Nderitu, 34; WO1 Catherine Wojcik, 45; LH(AWW) Simon Jeffers, 44; LA Kyle Mason, 33; Lt Daley Simpson, 34; SG1A Bernard Gray, RFA, 61; Surg Cdr Edward Madgwick, 45; AET Benjamin Timlin, 28; Capt David Turner, 44; CPO Christopher Whyte, 39; Std Donald Berry, RFA, 59; PO (E) Gary Hudson, RFA, 51.



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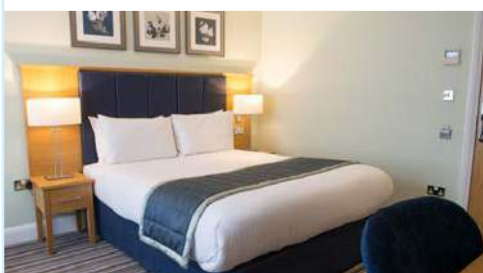
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A WILDCAT hovers as HMS Prince of Wales makes her debut in Portsmouth, marking the latest milestone for the Royal Navy.

Sailors stood atop the flight deck of the enormous carrier – the second of the largest warships ever built for the Royal Navy – as she sailed into Portsmouth Harbour with two Hawk jets marking the moment with a flyby overhead.

It is the second time in two years the city has welcomed one of the UK's new carriers, following HMS Queen Elizabeth's arrival in August 2017.

Captain Darren Houston, the Commanding Officer of HMS Prince of Wales, said: "Our first entry to Portsmouth represents the successful culmination of the build and sea trials period in which my ship's company and industry partners have worked so closely together to bring HMS Prince of Wales into service with the fleet."

"I am extremely proud of them and their families for their perseverance, patience, and extraordinary efforts."

Air Engineering Technician Ben Daniels said: "I feel immensely proud to be a member of HMS Prince of Wales' ship's company while the ship is heading into its home port for the first time. It is a historic moment for the Royal Navy and

I am looking forward to many years of service on this incredible ship."

The carrier sailed from Rosyth, where she was assembled, in late September with a mixed ship's company of Royal Navy sailors (600-plus) and around 300 civilian contractors on board to take her through an autumn of trials in the North Sea.

"It's been a unique experience watching the ship transition from its initial build to an operational warship," said Air Engineering Technician Anthony Greatorex.

"It's a proud moment to be a member of the first ship's company and an opportunity that I am unlikely to get again."

For Portsmouth native, Chef James Bascran, it is a proud moment in his naval career and for the city he was born and raised in.

He said: "I am really excited for the ship coming into Portsmouth for the first time. My family are watching and I am looking forward to showing them this incredible ship."

There was considerable fanfare as the newest of Britain's carriers was greeted by thousands of people lining Portsmouth's seafront.

Lily Jacobs, 54, and her husband Richard



Jacobs, 56, travelled from Bognor to see HMS Prince of Wales.

"She is a very impressive ship," said Lily. "We missed HMS Queen Elizabeth's first entry so were really keen to see HMS Prince of Wales. She is an amazing addition to the Royal Navy and something we should be proud of."

"My father was in the navy so I always loved seeing the ships. It is great to be a part of this moment in history."

Jerry Taylor, 68, from Southsea, said: "I can't believe how big she is. I have seen HMS Queen Elizabeth but every time you see these ships up close, their size is just incredible."

"It is a great day and I am so pleased to see people coming to Portsmouth to watch."

"For Portsmouth and the navy having two aircraft carriers is a landmark moment."

Mary Hatton, from Aldershot, watched the ship come in with her sons Billy, ten, and Michael, seven.

Billy said: "It's so big. I was excited to see the helicopter flying too."

"I liked seeing the sailors and waving to them."

Mary, 36, added: "My grandad fought in the

war and I always wanted my sons to know about the armed forces."

"When we saw she was due in, I thought it would be a great chance to see the Royal Navy at its best. HMS Prince of Wales is an awesome ship."

HMS Prince of Wales' arrival means Portsmouth Naval Base is now home to two aircraft carriers and represents the culmination of 16 years of work by the ACA – a unique alliance between BAE Systems, Babcock, Thales, and the UK Ministry of Defence.

Charles Woodburn, Chief Executive of BAE Systems, said: "I'm incredibly proud of the role that BAE Systems has played in this national endeavour. The arrival of HMS Prince of Wales into Portsmouth is an important moment for everyone at BAE Systems, our industrial partners and the thousands of people in the supply chain across the country who have worked so hard to deliver the two Queen Elizabeth-class carriers which will protect our national interests for decades to come."

More than £100m has been spent updating and enhancing the facilities at HMNB Portsmouth, including an upgrade to the Princess Royal Jetty which will be home to



feel so proud

both carriers. A new combined heat and power facility has also been established to deliver power to the carriers, increase energy resilience and reduce the carbon footprint of the base. Made up of three natural gas generators, at full load, the facility can produce enough energy to power 28,000 homes.

Prior to her arrival in Portsmouth, the warship carried out trials in the North Sea.

To make sure aviation experts are qualified to host aircraft, a Merlin helicopter from Culdrose-based 820 Naval Air Squadron landed on board and was used in a series of tests over a 36-hour period.

The communications systems linking aircraft and the ship was also rigorously tested and so too the ability to run electrical power to helicopters or planes.

These procedures will take place thousands of times during Prince of Wales' operations but it is a vital step forward for the warship.

"This trial is an incredibly important phase of the sea trials that truly needs whole-ship drive and ethos to achieve," Flight Deck Officer, Lieutenant Michael McMahon, said.

"In order for it to be completed in such fashion and well ahead of time required input

from many departments in conjunction with the ACA and 820 NAS.

"It is testament to the organisational talents of those involved that this historic and vital achievement in the life of our newest carrier passed with remarkable ease."

This was a notable rite of passage for the warship during nine weeks of trials, during which her crew worked alongside around 400 civilian counterparts to bring the engineering systems, radars and communications equipment to the peak of their capability before she is handed over to the Royal Navy this month.

Once each of the flight deck's service points were assessed as serviceable, the Merlin was moved the lift and transferred to the hangar to repeat the test points and qualify hanger personnel as directors and drivers of the mechanical aircraft movers.

During her trials, engineers tested a green waste disposal system, reducing rubbish on board one hundred fold.

Sailors tested her state-of-the-art pyrolysis plants – already fitted to the ship's older sister HMS Queen Elizabeth – to keep the tonnes of rubbish generated by the 600 sailors and 300 industry engineers and experts on board to a

minimum.

During her first two visits to Invergordon, the ship offloaded several tonnes of rubbish – 'gash' in Royal Navy parlance – a manual, labour-intensive process given that the 1,000 souls aboard produce upwards of nine tonnes of waste every day, stored in shiny metal drums.

Enter the two pyrolysis plants – which cause material to decompose under extreme temperatures.

Most waste – including food, sewage and waste oils, including those from the galley, but not metals or glass – can be processed by the plants, which can deal with 150kg of rubbish every hour.

The only flame comes from a burner which initially heats the 'oven' to 1,100°C – as hot as a large bonfire. The waste then becomes the fuel; the burner switches off and the plant becomes self-sustaining using minimum fuel.

"The plant should see us processing all waste with the exception of metals and glass – they will both be crushed to enable us to store them without taking up too much space," explained Petty Officer Graeme Coventry, who's getting his first experience of operating a pyrolysis plant. "This is a fantastic new piece of machinery. It

will produce a minimum amount of waste and allow us to reduce our waste by almost 100:1."

So 150kg of waste becomes 1½kg – or one and a half standard bags of sugar. At the end of the process you're left with some grey-blackish ash, known as char, which is stored in drums until the ship puts into harbour again and the gash can be offloaded.

As part of the carrier's trials, the first of the ship's two pyrolysis plants was fired up to test seals and the operating temperature.

"I'm excited to start working with the pyrolysis plant which is something I have never seen before," said Marine Engineering Technician Niall Kelleher, one of the carrier's junior sailors responsible for operating the rubbish machines.

"I am hoping to gain more knowledge on such equipment which will be extremely useful to me over my career in the RN."

KEEP UP WITH THE SHIP

Follow @HMSPWLS and @RoyalNavy on Twitter

Pictures: LPhot Rory Arnold, LPhot Dan Rosenbaum, LPhot Joe Cater and LPhot Ben Corbett





Pictures: LPhot Rory Arnold, FRPU(E) and US Navy
Words: Richard Hargreaves

SEATED at desks with national flags and tags bearing their nation's names are each country's representative.

South Africa. Japan. United Arab Emirates. Pakistan. Australia. The United States. Italy. The United Kingdom. Bahrain. But this is not the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York. This is a very cramped conference room aboard RFA Cardigan Bay, the delegates divers. Not so much United Nations as nations united, united in the fight against the mine.

For the next ten days, the auxiliary will be their home, a gigantic dive boat for clearance divers and mine warfare experts from ten nations, each one with something slightly different to offer in the never-ending struggle to stay one step ahead of those who would sow their deadly seeds in the world's oceans.

This is the third iteration of what began life as the International Mine Counter-Measures EXercise (IMCMEX), now retitled International Maritime Exercise... although mine

hunting remains very much at its core.

Over 5,000 personnel, 30 ships and more than 50 nations committed to the two-week exercise, spread across a vast area from the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean and Gulf.

Royal Navy minehunters threw their hats in the ring, as did the mine warfare battle staff, elite divers and support ship RFA Cardigan Bay.

The latter normally acts as a mother ship to Brocklesby, Ledbury et al, providing them with fuel, food and ammo to sustain operations for extended periods.

But for IMX19, the hunters have been dispatched, operating with other vessels in the Gulf, leaving Cardigan Bay to focus on diving and small boat ops.

And no small boat at IMX19 is more impressive than the US Navy's MHU, an 11-metre RIB piloted remotely from an ops centre (actually an air-conditioned shipping container...).

Similar to the MAST system being tested by the Royal Navy in Portsmouth, MHU (Mine Hunting Unmanned) operates up to eight miles (horizon distance) from the command centre.

The boat trails a sonar which feeds real-time imagery back

to the controllers, who scan the display in the hope of locating a mine – just as sailors do in the operations room of a minehunter. It's easy to drive – you can pick it up in a couple of hours – and works at twice the rate of a ship doing the same job... but does need refuelling more regularly.

And whilst MHU (or rather its operators) can find a mine, it cannot neutralise it.

Which is where the numerous dive teams aboard Cardigan Bay come in, led by the RN's Fleet Diving Unit 3.

Normally based at Horsea Island in Portsmouth, it maintains a permanent three-strong team in support of RN operations in the Gulf.

The unit doesn't just neutralise mines, it 'exploits' them, safely recovering the devices for investigation to help colleagues cope should they encounter them in the future.

The unit deployed in numbers to join IMX, bringing with it a portable recompression chamber – squeezed in a shipping container – to practise recovering and treating any diver brought to the surface suffering from the bends.

After an assessment of their injuries in Cardigan Bay's sick bay, the casualty enters the

chamber where they are taken down to 18 metres depth and gradually 'brought to the surface' according to a strict timetable; depending on how well the patient progresses, it can take as long as four-and-a-half hours.

A doctor or fellow diver can join them in the chamber, while food, reading material and other items can be passed through an airlock. The only contact with the outside world: an intercom.

*Outside, inside:
Something's coming the
service hatch...
Inside, outside: Roger.*

"It's rarely used, but when you need it, you need it. It can be the difference between life and death," explains Diver Aaron Brebner, 29, from Lincoln.

"We're diving at depths down to 60 metres. You need to have something like this chamber for the worst-case scenario."

He and his colleagues have among some of the very best diving equipment available – rebreathing sets which recirculates breath and removes carbon monoxide, meaning no tell-tale bubbles.

The sets weigh 65kg on the surface, a weight that is barely noticeable when they plunge into the Gulf. Each one is noiseless and possesses a low magnetic signature to prevent triggering some of the sensors



DIVE TALKIN'



fitted to mines.

"It may look big and cumbersome – and it is heavy when you are out of the water," Aaron adds. "But once you're in, it's actually pretty comfortable."

A small display screen gives him precise information on depth, how long he's been down, how much oxygen he has left and so on, while an LED light on his mask flashes if there is anything wrong.

"The computer does a lot of the thinking for you," says Diver 'Leno' Leonard. "You just have to do the job."

Which makes mine disposal sound simple.

It isn't. In November the water temperature (30C) is higher than the air temperature (28C) – the heat poses the biggest challenge to both the divers and their equipment.

"Anywhere we go is a challenge," said CPO(Diver) Les Cockerton. "In Iceland we have beautiful clear waters – in Norway you can almost see the mine the moment you enter the water, but the environment is harsh on you and your equipment."

"Out here, it's the heat. But see it as another challenge to overcome. We always find a way to make it work – and it makes our job exciting."

"Diving is a great job, there's incredible camaraderie. Whatever lies ahead, we get on with it, and we get to travel

“““

It's rarely used, but when you need it, you need it. It can be the difference between life and death. We're diving at depths down to 60 metres. You need to have something like this chamber for the worst-case scenario

DIVER AARON BREBNER ON THE PORTABLE DECOMPRESSION CHAMBER



the world doing it."

The geography of the Gulf doesn't entirely work against hunters of mines. The seabed is "an underwater desert" – largely shallow, flat and relatively featureless, making any addition or anomaly stand out.

The trick is spotting it. "It can be very intense at times, especially when you're looking for something specific," said Petty Officer (Mine Warfare) Sam Dixon.

The 32-year-old from Plymouth is on her sixth tour of duty in the Gulf and is one of four people on watch in

HMS Shoreham's ops room, a quiet, cool (almost cold) dark place.

She oversees two junior sonar operators who monitor sonar readouts and displays for six hours at a time – tiring on the eyes and when the sonar can locate something as small as a can of beans, there can be as many disappointments as Eureka! moments.

But when you get the latter, either you'll send down the SeaFox submersible to investigate – on Shoreham it's piloted by Sam when she's on watch in the ops room, feeding her a live TV picture – to blow

the mine to kingdom come, or send in the divers.

"If you're diving to deal with ordnance, you only put one man in the water. That minimises the risk," explains Diver Jack McClarence, who only qualified in the summer.

"I love it. Every day I'm learning from experienced colleagues and I get to do the job for real on operations."

It's the shared learning experience which is at the heart of IMX. Each country has slightly different ways of dealing with mines, each dive team slightly different kit, slightly different methods and mannerisms.

Lieutenant Koji Oda's team of divers from Yokohama in Japan operates much of the same equipment as his British counterparts, such as the REMUS automated sonar scanner; the French Navy have brought impressive hand-held sonars which give divers a real-time scan of the seabed in front of them; and the US Navy deployed divers, their automated boats and minehunters.

"It's great having 130 different military personnel from ten different nations on my ship, all working together. It's a fantastic opportunity to build on old partnerships, forge

new ones, make new friends," said RFA Cardigan Bay's Commanding Officer Captain Karl Woodfield.

"I like to think of my ship as the UK armed forces' secret weapon – she's incredibly versatile, whether she's supporting the minehunters or hosting divers and their equipment from ten different nations."

The first week of IMX 19 was largely devoted to getting the many different participants to work together seamlessly, stepping up a gear in the second week, using a fictional scenario – including clearing a mine-free route into a blockaded port – to help focus minds.

"When you have all the plates spinning together, it makes it pretty exciting," says Commander Simon Cox, in charge of the British battle staff aboard Cardigan Bay directing the dive teams element of the exercise.

"This exercise has grown enormously since those held in 2014 and 2016. This has been 18 months in the planning

with more nations taking part than before."

This year also marks the tenth anniversary of the UK's mine warfare battle staff being established in the Gulf.

There is now an unprecedented wealth of experience of hunting mines in the Middle East to call upon in the RN. Sailors with six or seven tours of duty on Hunts and Sandowns or with dive teams are commonplace.

On top of that, the kit they use – the rebreathing sets, improved sonar, revamped ships – is much better.

But so are the mines.

"Mines remain a threat. A mine costing relatively little can inflict damage far beyond its cost," Commander Cox adds.

"The Royal Navy has been operating in the Gulf for decades. I like to think we know our onions out here. But you never stop learning. Equipment changes all the time. And having the international element of the exercise adds so many dimensions."



MAKING TRACKS

Royal Marines have been developing the Future Commando Force concept as the lethal tip of the spear on war games in the California desert alongside the United States Marine Corps.

The marines are evolving for the battlefield of the future, focusing on the way they take on their adversaries and developing equipment that will give them the cutting edge in combat.

As part of that, the Green Berets are putting their commando skillset at the forefront of what they do, rather than centring on conventional warfighting.

Now it's about being a commando first and foremost in small elite teams and that is exactly what the 40 Commando Battle Group in the heat of Mojave Desert have been testing.

In the vast training areas of the Marine Air Ground Combat Training Centre at Twentynine Palms, near the border with Mexico in California, the commandos partnered the 7th Marine Regiment.

The commandos disrupted the enemy, for this war games the 2nd Marine Division, before the larger conventional USMC forces attack the contested area.

"The new multirole teams shape the environment, taking out forward enemy positions and assets, enabling the larger conventional USMC forces access into a contested area," said Lieutenant Simon Williams of 40 Commando.

"The USMC facilities offer an excellent opportunity for every commando to train to their full potential. The huge range complex is large enough for Vikings and Jackals to tear around at full speed.

"Operating in the desert itself has its own difficulties. Usually synonymous with being dry and hot, the temperature in October can fluctuate between 30°C degrees at daytime, to below freezing at night. Twentynine Palms tests every commando."

A fake city within the complex offers tight realistic streets for urban operations, with a feel of



a real war-torn Mosul or Aleppo. The USMC even employ 150 actors to play civilians in the urban areas, giving the exercising troops the opportunity to deliver humanitarian assistance – or even the headache of civil unrest and rioting should the situation not unfold in their favour.

This regular training, named Exercise Green Dagger, gives the marines the opportunity to refine their desert warfare skills – continuing their specialism as warriors in the most extreme of climes – but also to affirm bonds with the USMC.

The Royal Marines were invited by the Commandant General of the USMC, General David H. Berger, to the exercise, bringing the advantage of knowing how each other work in battle.

He said: "We must train the way we intend to fight. Training must reflect how we would fight a thinking adversary who can compete in all domains."

On Green Dagger, 40 Commando's Alpha and Bravo Companies are joined by marines from across 3 Commando Brigade to form a Battle Group that also includes ranks from 24 Commando, 29 Commando, Armoured Support Group, 30 Commando (Air Defence Troop) and 42 Commando.

The tough terrain is the perfect environment to push kit and the commandos. The elevation allows Recce Troop to yomp to high features to observation posts, while 29 Commando are able to call in air support and provide artillery for advancing forces.

"This deployment demonstrates the Royal Marines' ability to rapidly integrate and operate in support of a variety of global partners," added Lt Williams.

"The regular two-pronged training with the USMC continues after 40 Commando deployed C Coy to Indiana to conduct Dense Urban Ops training."

During the training, the commandos have also been working with technology and how it can provide an advantage.

"Most notably, has been the excellent use of drones for surveillance and reconnaissance, adding a real winning perspective of the battlefield," Lt Williams said.

"A small 'off-the-shelf' drone is used in the section providing overwatch of enemy positions, particularly useful in urban scenarios.

"A larger model is used by a team situated away from the battle, giving sight many kilometres away, enhancing the targeting of artillery and mortars."

Each commander is also enabled by a chest-mounted tablet which provides a constant overview of battle as it unfolds.





Where there's a will...

AFTER 19 years in the Royal Navy, Natasha Mason was medically discharged due to permanent back and knee injuries. She is now a Trainee Solicitor at Wolferstans Solicitors and Chair of the Forces Law Network, working full time thanks to regular physiotherapy and hydrotherapy sessions provided by Help for Heroes. She explains why those in the armed forces should write a will – and why including a charitable legacy can really make a difference.

We all know we should write a will but, according to research carried out by YouGov, from September 2018 to August 2019, only 45 per cent of us have got around to it.

As people in the armed forces have such variable roles and are often deployed at short notice, it's important for anyone serving to have an up-to-date will.

In the unlikely event that the worst happens, this means that your loved ones will be taken care of and have one less thing to worry about.

Writing a will is your chance to put down what you want to happen to your money and assets; and who you want to provide for. You also get to appoint people you trust (your executors) to carry out your wishes.

Without a will your estate passes according to intestacy rules, which means you have no say over who benefits. For example, there will be no provision for an unmarried partner or stepchildren. Even if you're married this doesn't guarantee that all your assets go to your spouse.

Writing a will gives you the opportunity to think about the legacy that you leave behind.

Family and friends come first but leaving a gift to charity in your will, however big or small, can save or change lives after you have gone.

It doesn't cost anything to include a charitable gift but it can help reduce the inheritance tax payable on your estate.

For many of us, it's also a chance to make a bigger contribution than we can afford to during our lifetime.

Legacies are hugely important for charities. For instance, they fund a third of Help for Heroes' work, supporting its recovery centres, outreach programme and psychological wellbeing services.



● **RN veteran Natasha Mason is now a trainee solicitor**

Without legacies, the charity wouldn't be able to help as many people as it does or promise life-long support – and I know first-hand how much this help can turn a veteran's life around.

Writing a will doesn't need to be costly or complicated but, as it's one of the most important documents you'll ever sign, I'd recommend using a qualified professional – such as a solicitor. They know the law and can help you consider every eventuality. Without proper guidance you could make a mistake that might invalidate your will and cause complications for those you leave behind.

You can find a local solicitor with wills, trusts and probate law expertise by visiting the Law Society website, <https://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk/>, and entering your town or postcode.

There may also be opportunities available to help you write your will for free or at a reduced rate – you can find out more at helpforheroes.org.uk/legacies or by calling the Help for Heroes Legacy Team on 01725 514965.

Hopefully your will won't be needed for a very long time but, once it's written, it can give you great peace of mind.



Engineering success for fast-trackers

The first accelerated apprentices have successfully passed out from their Leading Engineering Technician (Weapon Engineering) qualifying course at HMS Collingwood.

Having joined the Royal Navy in November 2017 the students spent the first ten weeks at HMS Raleigh where they were 'transformed' into sailors.

From there they joined HMS Collingwood to complete their Phase 2 training.

During this period they also grasped the opportunity to display their spare capacity by taking part in and submitting an entry into the Royal Navy Engineering Challenge 2018.

Following their graduation from Phase 2, the Apprentices embarked on HMS Queen Elizabeth for their initial sea training.

The first group of apprentices began their Phase 3 training course in January 2019. During this

nine-month course they began to learn the bedrock of the skills and knowledge required to prepare them to join the fleet as future section heads.

LET Callum Groom, 20, from Glasgow, who will join HMS Defender, said: "It was full on from day one, but it tested us, and pushed us to a higher level."

LET Vincent Marshall, 20, from Derby said "Learning new skills and knowledge that is relevant to the job we are going to do, was fast paced but rewarding. I'm now looking forward to joining HMS Prince of Wales."

LET Jacob Barlow, also 20, from Manchester, who is joining HMS Somerset, said "It's been well structured, and rewarding, we always had our targets to reach and set subjects we were working towards. It'll be good to get onboard as an LET and begin to carry out what we've learnt."



Teenagers inspired by life in RN

SIXTY young people with a leaning towards technical careers spent a week of adventure and engineering with the Royal Navy in Portsmouth.

Students from seven University Technical Colleges affiliated to the Senior Service were given the opportunity to learn more about the duties they might perform if they were to decide on a life in the navy.

The students – aged between 14 and 18 – travelled from colleges in Aston, Bristol, Derby, Greater Peterborough, Reading, South Devon and South Wiltshire to spend time at the navy's two principal schools of engineering, tackle part of an assault course to learn about leadership, and dipped into naval history by touring HMS Victory and Warrior and learned how technology and engineering has repeatedly given the edge in the war at sea.

Throughout their visits the youngsters lived aboard destroyer HMS Bristol to give them an idea of life aboard a warship (although living conditions have markedly improved in the 50 years since she was built), learn the basics of rope work and negotiating the often-confusing passageways and compartments, and see what a career in the 21st Century Royal Navy offers.

At HMS Sultan in Gosport – home of the navy's air and marine engineering training – students got their hands on survival equipment, diesel engines, gas turbines and air frames.

Just up the road at HMS Collingwood in Fareham, warfare and weapon engineering are the focus of

training. The teenagers were shown the bridge simulator, Harpoon anti-ship missile system and Phalanx Gatling gun, saw how sailors deal with damage repair, strip down weapons such as rifles and machine guns and use the gun simulator.

And after a day immersed in warfare, the students returned to Collingwood to spend half a day with the RN's Leadership Academy which teaches the art of leading men and women in war and peace. It includes an assault course to bolster moral fibre, courage and encouragement; the students attempted to complete the 'low ropes' course.

"I've always been interested in the Armed Forces and took part in the Junior Leaders Field Gun, so when I heard about this, I thought I would come along and see what it's like and it's really convinced me that it's something that I want to do," said 17-year-old Millie Thomas, 17, from Newton Abbot, who is studying for a Level 3 Diploma at South Devon UTC.

"Taking apart the pistons of an engine with the marine engineers was good, as we got to see how all the different equipment was used."

Elijah Johnson, 16, from Birmingham, is also studying for a Level 3 Diploma – but at Aston University Engineering Academy.

"It's been really good. I'm interested in joining the Navy but didn't really know what as, I have a much better idea of what's available now," he said.

Kieran Stanley, also studying at Aston, was impressed by Sultan and found the diesel engines used for

instruction 'very hands on – they helped to develop big engine skills'.

His Aston colleague Shafqat Ali, went on to say that another highlight was the low ropes course as "it brought the team together and allowed them to meet other students, and that helped to overcome social anxiety."

Meanwhile students from the UTC Plymouth were challenged to invent a vehicle to remove marine growth from the hulls of Royal Navy warships.

The Royal Navy, in conjunction with Babcock, is sponsoring the team in this year's Engineering Education Scheme. The group of year 12s has six months to come up with a design for a remotely operated vehicle which can be used to carry out the task.

Tasks were revealed at the regional launch day of the scheme, held at HMS Raleigh, when the teams taking part were introduced to their sponsors.

Around 65 students from schools across Devon attended the launch day. The scheme links groups and their teachers with local companies to work on real, scientific, engineering and technological problems. It ends with a graduation ceremony when each team must display their project and answer questions posed by the assessors.

The Royal Navy is also sponsoring the team from South Devon UTC.

Team member, Marshall Tozer, said: "At first I was a bit anxious about being chosen to take part in this, but now I'm actually really getting into it."

"I want to be an electrical engineer. After I'm done at UTC, I'm probably going to go to university to study more into electronics."



The Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund

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

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

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

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



Proud to be home

RN supports anniversary of independence

A TEAM of Royal Navy sailors march proudly in their homeland of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Twenty personnel participated in a parade through the capital Kingstown, ending in Victoria Park, to mark the 40th anniversary of the island's independence.

The trip was made possible thanks to funding from the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity.

Wearing their Royal Navy tropical uniforms, the team, who all volunteered to take part in the event, lined up to be inspected by the Governor of St Vincent and the Grenadines, Susan Dougan, before parading past the prime minister Ralph Gonsalves.

"Today we have seen a dream come true," said Captain David Wilkinson, of the Naval Service Commonwealth Network.

"Ratings from St Vincent wanted to march through the streets of St Vincent

in uniform celebrating their country's independence, showing their community and families how they proud they are to be in the Royal Navy and how we, as a service, are equally proud of our relationship with this wonderful island."

Among the team was Leading Medical Assistant Assistant Gideon Crichton and his cousin, AB Rory Crichton.

"Growing up I was never involved in the independence parade," said Gideon. "I sailed past St Vincent once, when I was on Mounts Bay. I was less than 15 miles from home and I could see the lights of my house in the distance. It's so good to be back home in uniform."

Leading Hand Highwell King-John said: "This means a lot to me.

"I hope to inspire other Vincentians, as we are affectionately known, to pursue their dreams and aspire to be the best they can be."

AB Bitha Dopwell said: "My father always said that he hoped one day to see me in my Royal Navy uniform on parade. When this opportunity arose, I immediately applied as I knew that this would fill my dad with so much pride and joy."

"The trip complements the establishment of the new office of a new resident British Commissioner to St Vincent and the Grenadines, which is a sign of renewed UK focus in the east Caribbean."

During their visit to the islands, the RN team carried out a number of engagements with schools and colleges, as well as spending precious time with their families.

The former British colony, which comprises 32 islands, was the last of the Caribbean's Windward Islands to gain independence.

Pictures: LPhot Paul Halliwell



Five go on a hiking adventure

FIVE serving and former Royal Navy personnel are planning to hike 192 miles for charity.

PO(EW) Chris 'Chevy' Levy, WO(EW) Wayne 'Doc' Holliday, PO(EW) Steven 'Jacko' Jackson, Simon "Bill" Cranfield (retired PO(EW)), and Gary Wiles (retired Leading Steward) are planning to cover the route across the south coast of the UK over ten days next summer.

Funds raised will be divided between the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and the Grand Appeal – Bristol Children's Charity. So far the team has raised £1,800.

The charity Hike will start from the WO&SR mess in HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, on June 8 2020, and end at the WO&SR mess at HMS Drake in Plymouth on June 17.

The hike will take the team south to the Isle of Wight, across to Yarmouth and back onto the UK mainland at Lymington then follow the coastal trail to Plymouth. They aim to walk around 20 miles each day.

"There are several reasons why I have chosen to organise and conduct this charity hike, firstly to give back to the charities which helped my family and I during a dreadful period in our lives, both the RNRMC and The Grand Appeal were there for us and supported us when we needed it most," said PO Levy.

"They give so much to people in need and through personal experience I have chosen these two charities to be the beneficiaries of any donations made.

"Secondly this would be a great personal achievement to all members of the team as the task is not for the faint hearted.

"Thirdly and lastly, it is for inspiration; hopefully this provides the inspiration to all those involved, be it conducting the hike, supporting or donating, to reach out and conduct their own charitable events."

You can support the team at uk.virginmoneygiving.com/ChristopherLevy or visit them on Facebook at [facebook.com/groups/762828574161295/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/762828574161295/) or on Twitter, at Nelson2Drake charity Hike @charity_hike



● Cdr Jason Phillips's Sea King is recovered from the sea off Norfolk in 1998

Exclusive group of lucky fliers

A SENIOR Royal Navy officer has spoken of how he nearly paid with his life for membership to an exclusive club – granted only to those who have ditched at sea.

Commander Jason Phillips, the former commander of Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose, survived to tell the tale after he was engulfed in a fire which caused his Sea King helicopter to splash down in the North Sea.

The 55-year-old of Helston, Cornwall, said he genuinely thought his last day had come when he became trapped in the submerged aircraft.

His remarkable escape meant he was granted membership of the Goldfish Club, a fraternity of military and civilian men and women who have all survived aircraft crashes at sea.

"Looking back, I think I was very lucky," he said. "All that training absolutely kicked in and it all worked as advertised. I was lucky because, well, I survived, and it introduced me to group of fantastic people in the Goldfish Club."

Cdr Phillips spoke of the incident, back in 1998, as he retires from the navy after 30 years.

He trained as an observer, the aircrew member in charge of tactics, navigation and weapons, in Sea King helicopters. In September 1998, the then Lieutenant Phillips was flying with Culdrose's 820 Naval Air Squadron.

His four-man Sea King crew were flying back from Holland, having taken part in an exercise, when they were asked to locate a Jaguar jet which had crashed in The Wash off the coast of Norfolk the previous day.

They brought their helicopter down into a hover and lowered their sonar into the water, to locate the aircraft's emergency beacon.

It was then that a hydraulic leak caused a fire on board their Sea King – which at first Cdr Phillips admitted he thought was a practical joke by his pilots.

"Flames just started to appear all around my radar screen," he said. "I remember thinking: 'that's a really neat trick by the guys up front – how have they done that?' Then the flames spread everywhere and I looked round to see the aircrewman covered in flames."

"The fire extinguisher was in the back of the



aircraft beyond my reach, so I tried to put the flames out with my hands. Now, the flames were caused by burning hydraulic fluid sparking on the electronics – so I was never going to put it out with my hands. That just meant both my hands were now on fire.

"By this point, the fireball entered the cockpit and pilots decided the only option was to go for a positive water landing – that means to ditch. We were only at about 40 feet and we soon hit the water. The back door buckled and water started to come in. The pilot in control then decided to roll the aircraft to put the fire out."

As the helicopter flooded with water, Commander Phillips pulled himself through one of the windows frames, used as an emergency exit, but then he became stuck.

"It was then I realised I was going to die," he added. "You know, I was very relaxed about it all and I felt completely at peace. It absolutely felt like I was there for ages. Then I felt that jolting thought of my wife and my children – I had three children at the time."

He realised he was still strapped to his emergency

seat pack, containing his inflatable life raft, which had become jammed in the frame behind him. Reaching behind to free the pack, he was able to pull himself free of the aircraft and break to the surface.

"Three of us came up but one of the pilots was missing," he added. "Then he came up, all four of us were safe. I thought the aircrewman must have been badly hurt but he didn't have a scratch on him. In fact, I was the one who was most badly burned."

The Goldfish Club suddenly found itself with four new members. It's a club that Cdr Phillips has now embraced, having joined the committee and writing the club's newsletter.

"In the club, it's all about how long you were in the water for. I remember on my first meeting saying, oh about 40 to 50 minutes, and this old boy saying he'd been an air engineer in Lancasters (bombers) and had been in the sea for three days, five miles from the Dutch coast with the Germans shelling him. That made me think."

The club meets each year for a formal reunion weekend. There are around 400 people in the club and, as many are elderly, there are about 250 active members.

After his ordeal, Cdr Phillips returned to flying and was soon posted for three years to Australia. He returned to Culdrose and converted to the Merlin helicopter before promotion and command of his old 820 NAS. He led the squadron for three years, becoming the longest serving front-line squadron commanding officer in Fleet Air Arm history.

His interest in history and the battle honours of the squadrons at Culdrose, most notably with his own 820 squadron, led Cdr Phillips to begin promoting heritage displays. It is now common for each squadron to proudly display on their walls pictures and stories of past glories, reprising the role of the helicopter force within the Fleet Air Arm.

He was appointed an OBE in 2012, in recognition for his leadership, and returned to Culdrose in 2014 to take responsibility for all flying and training at Culdrose, in a role known as 'Wings'. His last position was as the executive officer, second-in-command of the station.

He added: "I've loved my time in the Royal Navy and would do it all again if I could. I could not have done any of this without my wife Fiona, who has raised our six children virtually single-handedly and has been an absolute rock."

Report: Graeme Wilkinson



Calliope pair attend national ceremony

TWO Royal Naval Reservists from HMS Calliope in Gateshead took part in the annual National Service for Seafarers at St Paul's Cathedral.

Midshipman Ellie Coleman and ABYvonne Golightly made the journey from the North East to London to attend the service and pay respects to current seafarers and veterans, as well as learn about the diversity of seafaring services around the UK.

After the ceremony, the pair were introduced to the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, to talk about the future of the Maritime Reserves and the importance of Reserves within the wider Royal Navy.

Ellie said "Attendance at the service gave us the opportunity to appreciate the diversity of maritime activities in the UK and meet RN, RFA and merchant colleagues we may well get a chance to work alongside in the future. Hearing about future plans for the Maritime Reserves from the First Sea Lord, has helped me to plan own reserve career."

Next year's service will be held on October 14.

Aggie's continues to bring home the pastoral bacon

A LONG-HELD tradition at HMS Drake in Plymouth took a new twist when Aggie's, one of the oldest charities serving the Royal Navy, decided to commemorate the 101st Anniversary of the death of their founder, Dame Agnes Weston.

A normal 'stand-easy' treat for sailors and Royal Marines at the Chaplaincy Centre's in HMS Drake is the bacon butty, served up by pastoral workers from Aggie's and

the Chaplaincy staff. But on this occasion the challenge was to serve over 300 of their sublime handcrafted sandwiches, with either brown or red sauce as an option.

Simon Thomas, from Aggie's said: "When Dame Agnes set up her first home, it was intended to be a home from home, and we are trying to recreate the same on base."

The Reverend Raphael Duckett, one of the Naval Chaplains at the base, said: "The

Naval Chaplaincy are delighted to collaborate with this long-standing charity which provides exceptional pastoral care to service personnel and their families fostering genuine community and strengthening relationships."

Aggie's offers pastoral support to serving personnel through listening, encouraging, supporting and signposting, and also help with practical projects amongst personnel and their families.

Think of us as 'your charity'

THE long queues outside Helensburgh's new-look Drumfork Centre (*right*) speak volumes for the importance of the facility to the Churchill Square community.

A 'taster day' at the end of October gave locals a sneak preview of the building – off limits to the people it serves for the past couple of years as it underwent a two-year transformation.

When it formally reopens early in 2020, the overhauled centre will offer, among other things, a nursery and childcare provision and a place for local groups and organisations to meet – not just naval families but the broader Helensburgh community, part of a concerted effort to bond military and civilian families in the town.

Among the main investors in the revamp is the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity; renovating Drumfork has been the biggest capital project in the 13-year history of the Senior Service's principal charity.

But it is just one project among scores backed by the Whale Island-based organisation which handed out £8m last year to support sailors, Royal Marines and their families from cradle to grave.

Each month these pages are filled with stories of people giving up their time and energy to raise hundreds, perhaps thousands of pounds for the RNRMC, anything from a horse racing night or cycle ride, to the epic walk around the coast of mainland Britain by Commander Jane Allen, which she finished just a few weeks ago (it's brought in more than £30k to date).

What we haven't done is explain how those donations help, dispel a few myths and provide the bigger picture – perhaps particularly pertinent at present because military charities have been in the media spotlight through the Remembrance period, but also for sitting on a proverbial pot of gold: £277m in reserves held by the ten wealthiest/largest funds, more than £3.5bn by all the good causes dedicated to helping Service families and individuals.

Cue uproar. When there are veterans on the streets... homes needing adapting to meet the needs of those with life-changing injuries... war heroes living longer than ever requiring assistance in old age.

But there's a good reason for holding reserves. For starters, every £1m held boosts the charity's coffers by £30,000 a year in interest.

More importantly, as the RNRMC's chief executive Adrian Bell (*pictured inset*), a retired commodore and former commander of British forces in Gibraltar, explains: "If the Navy ceased to exist tomorrow, the charity would have to run on for another 80 years until the very last sailor and Royal Marine had passed on."

And while the Senior Service is only about 40,000 strong (including reserves and RFA), the wider service family of naval veterans and families is estimated to number at least 750,000 people.

Supporting them today and tomorrow is both the charity's *raison d'être* – and a growing challenge, says Adrian.

"We want sailors and Royal Marines to think of us not as a group of letters but as 'their charity,'" he continues.

"They are incredibly generous with their time, their money, their support and they deserve our heartfelt gratitude.

"We are competing with the full range of charities – and it is a crowded market. It's our job to show why people who serve their nation need your support."

While his charity is well known in naval circles, it's a relatively new kid



Picture: LPhoto Stevie Burke



on the block, established just 12 years ago (the Army Benevolent Fund dates back to 1944, the RAF's to 1919).

It's just one of around 20 principal charities supporting the RN/RM family amid some 1,500 organisations in total involved with all three services.

And with the RNRMC only existing since 2007, many of the older generation don't even know about it; instead, they often look to King George V Fund for Sailors (since 2005 rebranded Seafarers UK), which actually concentrates its support efforts on the merchant and fishing fleets.

Thousands more members of the naval family are aware of the RNRMC, however. Ten years ago the charity was awarding upwards of £2m a year. Last year its outlay topped £8m.

The public is every bit as generous as it was ten or 15 years ago, but there are far fewer regular donations.

Thankfully there is, it seems, no shortage of serving sailors and Royal Marines willing to don lycra, bake cakes, row, shave their head, put on fancy dress.

Such selflessness by serving personnel, coupled with monthly donations direct from wage packets (three out of five sailors/marines contribute), collectively brought in more than £3.3m last year (investments, legacies, Greenwich Hospital and the Nuffield Trust account for the remainder of the £7.5m coming in).

And going out of the door was more than £8m. For every pound spent, 83p goes to serving personnel, their families, the remainder on the business of raising money (speculate to accumulate...) and administration (the charity is run from Whale Island in Portsmouth by a 40-strong staff).

For the most part, the RNRMC does not give that 83p directly to those in need (it's an umbrella organisation, providing money to the charities on the front line dealing with personnel, families, veterans).

But there are instances where the charity and its volunteers can be found making a direct – and simple,

Where we focus our support

- **Fit for life:** sponsoring and supporting a lot of RN/RM sporting activities, training camps and adventurous training expeditions.
- **Quality of life:** anything from a flight deck barbecue to organising a visit to Easter Island for the crew of HMS Montrose, school holiday activities for naval service youngsters like the Kings Camps run at seven sites, the family flats (sometimes dubbed 'Navy Mews') in Portsmouth Culdrose and Yeovilton which allow sailors to spend time with their children without resorting to expensive hotels or inappropriate temporary accommodation, and the newly-refurbished Drumfork Centre to meet the needs of submariners' families – and the wider Helensburgh community.
- **Through life:** working with other charities and organisations such as Relate to provide support and counselling for those struggling with the pressures of service life, coping with PTSD, or making the transition from the military to civilian world. And for veterans, there's support to help them enjoy unique visits – from tours of Ibrox to returning to Normandy with old comrades one last time to remember the D-Day landings.
- **End of life:** £15,000 is paid within 48 hours to the next of kin of any member of the Royal Navy or Royal Marines who dies in service to help with the cost of funerals, sorting out estates and other costs associated with the death of a loved one.

but very effective difference – we've noticed is the charity's involvement in homecomings.

For years, families stood on a wet, windswept jetty, unfurled home-made banners and cheered wildly when their loved ones re-appeared after months away.

But beyond the presence of the RM Band – when available – and maybe a festively-decorated tug at Christmas, there wasn't a great deal laid on for people as they waited – often for a couple of hours or more – for the vessels to arrive, gangways to be put in place and sons/daughters/husbands/wives/brothers/sisters to dash down them for that emotional reunion.

These days the RNRMC lays on free food and drinks, provides banners for youngsters to colour in to welcome mum or dad, organises activities such as face painting, balloon contortionists.

Providing a few 'creature comforts' comes under the banner of the charity's 'quality of life' initiative – one of its four pillars of support (see

the box, inset) which underpin all its efforts.

"There is plenty of support for people if something goes wrong in their lives. But would it not be better if we could stop something going wrong in the first place? That's the focus of our work," Adrian explains.

One growing – and perhaps surprising – 'prevention rather than cure' issue the RNRMC is looking at currently is loneliness and the feeling of isolation among young sailors on establishments.

When they return to their single living accommodation on bases after a day's work, there can be a tendency for people to shut themselves in their rooms rather than mixing; the only experience of mess deck life is when they go to sea.

"If we deal with the causes of problems, we can act earlier, put support in place and mitigate some of the effects of service life, because the Navy is the busiest and hardest working of the three services.

"And if we can do that, ultimately people may stay in the service longer."



Submariners set for toughest of tests

MORE people have been into space or climbed Everest than have rowed across the Atlantic...

This month will see four serving Royal Navy submariners face the remarkable mental and physical challenge of rowing unsupported in a race across the Atlantic Ocean.

The team, HMS Oardacious, will be the first ever official Royal Navy team to take part in the world's toughest rowing race, the 3,000-mile Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge.

The team will depart from La Gomera in the Canary Islands and are aiming to reach Nelson's Dockyard in Antigua just over a month later.

The HMS Oardacious crew will face the challenge of battling 30 foot waves, sleep deprivation, salt sores, torrential rain and every submariner's nightmare – blistering sunshine.

The crew will operate a shift pattern, rowing two at a time for two hours and resting for two hours, 24 hours a day for over a month. They will consume ten litres of water and over 7,000 calories each every day to sustain themselves in this ultra-endurance activity, over which they are expected to row more than 1.5 million oar strokes.

The team's participation in this herculean voyage will help to mark 50 years of unbroken service in maintaining the Continuous At Sea Deterrent – paying tribute to the human endeavour and commitment necessary to sustain this vital operation.

The platform has also given the team a voice and a platform for some fantastic charity work; working with the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity to provide mental health support to the submarine community, targeting serving personnel, veterans and their families, with the aim of leaving a lasting legacy of wellbeing. The team have now raised just over

£90,000 for charity and are well on track to meet their £100,000 target.

Marine Engineering Officer and expedition leader Lieutenant Hugo Mitchell-Heggs said: "Our culture as submariners seems like the perfect preparation for the challenge – whether it is knowing everything there is to know about our boat, looking out for our team mates or managing watch systems; all while contending with sleep deprivation and dealing with the emotions of leaving our loved ones... we are focused on the task ahead, and we are incredibly proud to represent the Royal Navy for the first time in this epic challenge in support of a fantastic charity and a project we truly believe in."

The year has been a roller coaster of milestones for the team; their campaign has been funded by a 52 sponsors from the defence sector and other

affiliates.

Weapons Engineering Officer and expedition 21/C Lt Callum Fraser said: "We have been shown that sponsorship is more than just advertising, it is an alignment of values and the belief in a common goal. We are incredibly grateful for all the support our sponsors have shown us over the past 12 months, not only helping fund the campaign but also the help in to promote our story and buy in with charity fundraising has been great."

The boat Oardacious is a 28ft fibreglass, self-righting Rannoch-45 Ocean rowing boat. Weighing just over one tonne when empty, it has two six-foot cabins (one at each end) where the crew will rest in their off watch.

The team will row unsupported, meaning they need to carry everything required to get across safely.

The kit list includes a vast array of technical gear for navigation, satellite communications and water production. They have three solar panels to charge their Lithium Ion batteries allowing them to produce over 50 Litres of potable water each day and also power the various navigation and safety equipment fitted. They have packed over 1.5 million calories of food.

"The average ocean rower loses 12kg during a crossing," says Nuclear Systems specialist, Petty Officer (ETMESM) Dylan Woods. "We have worked with the Institute of Naval Medicine to develop a calorie plan that allows us to keep our energy levels up through the day, minimise weight loss and provide boosts of moral where necessary when things get tricky. Our daily rations include about 4,000 calories of dehydrated freeze dried meals and 3,000 calories of biltong, cereal bars, meal replacement shakes, malt loaf, nuts and 'filth' (chocolate, sweets and snacks)."

Communications Specialist and Leading Engineering Technician Matty Harvey said: "We rowed from HMNB Clyde, the home of the submarine service, around the familiar submarine sites of Loch Long and Loch Goil where we immediately adapted to our new home and routine before heading out into the Irish sea.

"Regardless of the weather, we managed to cover some significant mileage and experienced a range of weather fronts and sea conditions, preparing us well for what might come."

You can follow their progress or donate to their charity via their website www.hmsoardacious.com or on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) @hmsoardacious. You can also text NAVY OAR to 70500 to donate £5 automatically to the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity.





Trip down memory lane

FORMER Fleet Chief Petty Officer Francis Jefferson returned to HMS Collingwood to see some of the advances in radio and other communications since he left the service 40 years ago.

Now 85 and living in the Western Isles, Mr Jefferson arrived at the Fareham establishment back in 1951 to spend two years training as a Radio Electrical Mechanic (REM) before joining HMS Scorpion, Highflyer and London to name but a few, completing his 28 years' service as the Officer in Charge of the Wireless Stations Rinella and Zeebug, Malta.

CPO Phil Alton introduced Mr Jefferson to the 21st Century comms kit used on HMS Queen Elizabeth and Collingwood's museum curator Ken Sutton reintroduced the veteran to some of systems used by the RN in the 50s, 60s and 70s.

"Looking back I must thank the Royal Navy – and Collingwood in particular – for the training and experience that it gave me with the ability to use that in a further career," Mr Jefferson said.

"For my visit to Collingwood to revive memories, I admit that although knowing that it would have changed, I was very pleased and grateful for the welcome and guidance given by Phil and the memory jog in the museum."

■ If, like Francis Jefferson, you served at HMS Collingwood bosses want to hear from you



to mark its impending 80th birthday.

The base is planning various events and exhibitions throughout 2020 to celebrate the milestone and mark its many changes.

Collingwood was originally built purely to meet the demands of the WW2 Navy, opening its gates on January 10 1940 to men assigned to the seaman branch, with training starting the following week using a condemned whaler hung from davits next to the parade ground.

It soon became the home to telegraphy, then radar training and evolved into the RN's school of electrical and radio equipment in the post-war years

– specialisations today embraced by the weapon engineering branch.

And since the mid-2000s, it has become the RN's school of warfare, teaching navigation, gunnery, use of missiles and tactics with state-of-the-art simulators, replica operations rooms and mock-up bridges.

If you have any memories, photographs or information about your time at Collingwood during any era, the 'Collingwood 80' research team want to hear from you. Email NAVYOPTRG-CWD80@mod.gov.uk or write to CWD80, Room F31 Atlantic Building, HMS Collingwood, Newgate Lane, Fareham, Hampshire. PO14 1AS.

Sea King crew memorial restored

A MEMORIAL to four airmen killed in a Sea King crash 45 years ago has been restored – and enhanced – by personnel from RNAS Culdrose.

Captain Kenneth McDonald, 25, on exchange from the Canadian Navy, Sub Lieutenants Robert Johnson, 24, from Edinburgh, and Edward Wild, 22 from London, and Leading Seaman Brian Sharpe, 27, from Peterborough, were all killed when their helicopter crashed into cliffs near Coverack on the Lizard peninsula during an anti-submarine exercise in March 1974.

A monument to the aviators was subsequently erected at Beagle Point, near Black Head. And there it remained as a tribute until recently when it was somehow uprooted it and cast down the slope.

The wooden cross was retrieved from the cliffside, restored and now complemented by a memorial plaque, listing the four crew of Sea King XV720 killed in the fireball which engulfed the helicopter – which was just feet from the top of the cliff when it struck the rockface.

The idea of restoring the memorial to the men of 824 NAS – a name which persists today as the Merlin Mk2 training unit – was one of the last brainchilds of Chief Petty Officer John 'Soups' Campbell, who lives in Coverack, shortly before he retired from Culdrose.

"It's really important to me that this cross is put back in place," he said. "This is a piece of Culdrose history and we should remember those who died."

He praised the actions of Ian Millar from the National Trust, who managed to retrieve the cross from the steep cliff, and thanked veteran Andy Bevan, Culdrose's engraver John Smith and carpenter Phil McGuinness.

Trafalgar tradition upheld in Europe

Three Trafalgar Night dinners took place in the German-speaking world this year.

The first was hosted by Capt Andy Ewen, Naval Attaché Berlin, to senior officers of the German Navy and from across the attaché community in Berlin.

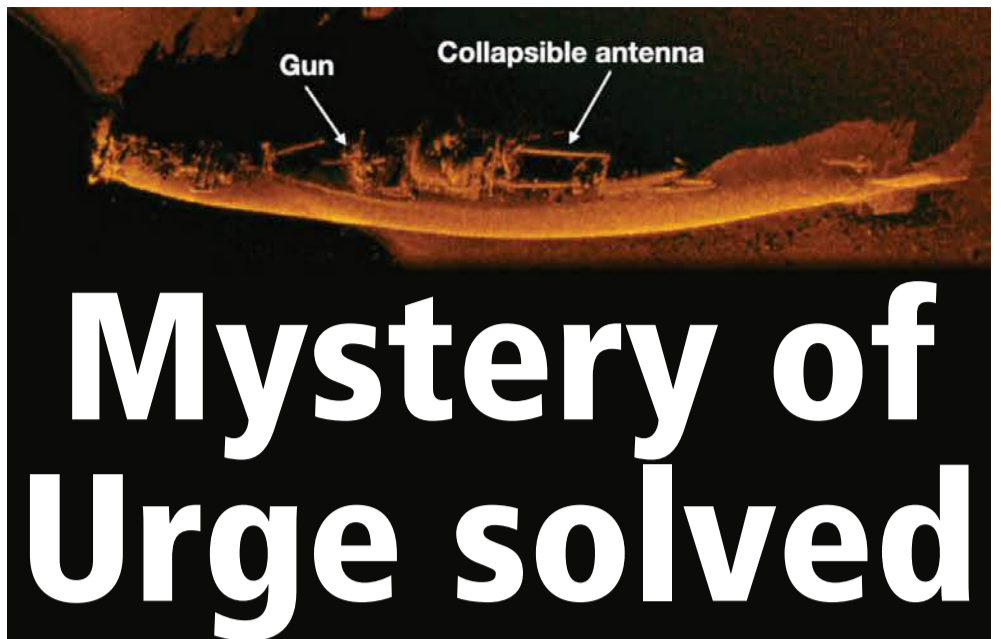
The second took place at the British Embassy in Vienna, where 50 guests from the Austrian Armed Forces and the attaché community joined the guest of honour, the Austrian Defence Minister, Thomas Starlinger, for a traditional Trafalgar dinner with Lt Cdr Thomas McPhail, the RN Liaison Officer in the newly-created German Maritime Force HQ, taking the guests through the evening with an explanation of its historical importance as well as naval traditions.

The third, which has become a tradition in itself, took place at the German Naval College (Marineschule Mürwik) in Flensburg, with a mixture of officers and officer cadets attending, some of whom took off the next morning to take part in the Basic Leadership Development at BRNC.

At each event the beef was paraded, chocolate ships were brought out with sparklers, and traditional music was provided.

In Flensburg, sea shanties and nautical songs were sung both in English and in German. Lt Ed Read, the RN Liaison Officer at the German Naval College, led the events that evening.

These events presented the first chance for many officers and civilians to experience the rich heritage of the Royal Navy, the enduring lessons to be learned from our greatest maritime leader, along with some of the intricacies of RN traditions.



Mystery of Urge solved

THIS is the wreck of wartime submarine HMS Urge – conclusively located and identified by marine archaeologists off Malta, solving a 77-year-long mystery.

Sitting defiantly upright on the seabed of the Mediterranean more than 400 feet down, her bow buried in the ocean floor, her deck gun facing forward, her hull encrusted with marine life, this is the last resting place of 44 souls.

The distinctive features of the U-class submarine have been compared with contemporary photographs and the undisclosed location of the wreck compared with official records to identify Urge.

HMS Urge, which was adopted by the people of Bridgend, is one of 19 U-class boats lost in World War 2, 13 of them in the Mediterranean. The submarines were small and originally meant to be used purely for training.

They proved highly capable with Urge, under Lieutenant Commander Edward Tomkinson, regarded among the best in the 10th Submarine Flotilla, its crew and captain highly decorated for a string of successes, dispatching a German tanker supporting U-boat operations in the Atlantic, crippling the Italian battleship Vittorio Veneto at a time when the Royal Navy was sorely stretched in the Mediterranean, and sank the Italian cruiser Bande Nere during 20 patrols.

Contemporaries thought Tomkinson worthy of the Victoria Cross, while senior officers, led by the then head of the Silent Service, Admiral Sir Max Horton, reckoned he was as good a submariner as any who served in either world war.

Urge left the island on her final mission on April 27 1942 bound for Alexandria in Egypt as the 10th Submarine Flotilla moved its base to escape the Axis Powers' constant bombing of Malta. Aboard were not just her 32 crew, but 11 other naval personnel and a war correspondent.

She never reached North Africa. The Admiralty concluded she ran into an enemy minefield shortly leaving the island, but the wreck was never found.

That official assessment of her loss was put into question by one shipwreck hunter, who claimed to have found the Urge off the Libyan coast near Tobruk – far from her intended route – and supposedly sunk by Italian aircraft two days after



● **Faces of the fallen:** Six of the men lost with HMS Urge (clockwise from top left) Lt Cdr Edward Tomkinson, Stoker Cyril Brown, Signalman Ronald Leeke, CPO C J Jackman, Leading Seaman Herbert Osborn and Stoker William Ashford and (below) a rare image of Urge on the surface. Pictures: University of Malta and the National Museum of the Royal Navy



departing Malta.

That fate – and location – has now been definitively ruled out thanks to the combined efforts of Canadian naval researcher Platon Alexiades, Francis Dickinson – grandson of Urge's commanding officer – and Professor Timmy Gambin of the University of Malta's Classics and Archaeology Department and a team of students, plus the Royal Navy's official historians.

Their deep sea research confirms the original Admiralty estimate – the boat did indeed succumb to a mine laid by a German E-boat; the impact caused catastrophic damage and led to Urge plunging out of control to the seabed.

"My family have always wanted to know where HMS Urge and her gallant crew's resting place is," said Mr Dickinson.

"Thanks to this project, we now know where and how the submarine was lost after achieving so much."

Families of the crew, led by Lt Cdr Tomkinson's daughter Bridget, are now hoping to erect a memorial on the island and attend a commemorative service next year to mark the tragedy and Urge's rediscovery.

"Many of the crew of HMS Urge formed bonds with the people of Malta – one crew member married a Maltese bride," said Professor Gambin.

"The powerful image of this seemingly-undaunted wreck reflects the courage of those who sailed in her, as well as the enduring alliance of HMS Urge with the island of Malta. It will forever be a part of the history of the Royal Navy and Malta."

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We wish all our members a very Merry Christmas and a very happy and peaceful New Year



March date for mine memorial

IF YOU are a Royal Navy diver or mine warfare specialist, keep March 25 free in your 2020 diary.

This is the evocative memorial which will be dedicated in your name and memory at the spiritual home of the two branches – bringing to an end 12 years of campaigning and fundraising by the diving/mine warfare community.

More than £250,000 has been raised to fund the one-and-a-quarter life size monument, created by sculptor Mark Richards.

The memorial will rise out of one of the pools at Gunwharf Quays in Portsmouth, formerly the site of HMS Vernon.

Vernon started life in 1876 as a training establishment accommodated on board ships afloat in Portsmouth Harbour. In 1923, it moved ashore to the site that is now a leisure/shopping and residential development.

As Vernon, it became a centre for training and trials of many forms of undersea warfare, including mine warfare and diving until its closure in 1986.

Despite the heroics of RN personnel in both world wars – continuing to the present day with divers called upon to deal with unexploded ordnance and minehunters keeping global sea lanes open (see pages 18-19), no single memorial honours them or remembers the role Vernon played... until now.

The bronze monument of a contact sea mine and two divers is expected to be seen by eight million visitors every year.

For details about the memorial, the campaign and the planned unveiling see www.vernon-monument.org or www.facebook.com/groups/vernonmonument.

Taranto heroes never forgotten

ROYAL NAVY Sailors remembered the courage of the aircrews at the battle of Taranto – one of most daring raids in the history of the Fleet Air Arm and the inspiration for the attack on Pearl Harbour.

Britain won vital breathing-room during the dark days of the Second World War when it attacked the Italian battleships at anchor at the port of Taranto.

Twenty one Fairey Swordfish biplanes from naval air squadrons 815, 819, 813 and 824 took part in the attack from HMS Illustrious on November 11, 1940.

Two of those naval air squadrons (NAS) still exists today – 815 NAS is based at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset while 824 NAS is based at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall.

Using bombs and torpedoes, they sank one of the battleships and severely damaged two others, knocking them out of the war for several months and significantly altering the balance of power in the Mediterranean.

It had previously been thought that such an attack was impossible but the Royal Navy pioneered new technology and tactics for the courageous raid. It was so successful that the Japanese developed the idea for their more substantial attack against the Americans at Pearl Harbour.

Commander Martin Russell, the commanding officer of 824 NAS, said: "The attack by Royal Navy aircraft at Taranto in 1940 was a huge success for the Allies."

"It has often been portrayed as a one-sided battle where a handful of obsolete biplanes made with canvas and wood overcame the



latest armoured battleships. I think this underplays the courage of those aircrews who flew into such extreme danger.

"Flying at sea holds inherent risk – that is something we know very well today and our aircrews go through demanding training – but the risks faced by the men of Taranto were considerable.

"It was also widely believed that such an attack in shallow water and in an enclosed harbour was impossible.

"The navy had to innovate and use new technology and techniques to deploy torpedoes at the correct height. They also used the latest torpedoes with magnetic warheads, which were designed to cause more damage.

"By far the most significant element to the victory was the new tactic of using air power so successfully against capital ships. In a way, it marked the beginning of the new age of carrier warfare.

"It is no coincidence that today at 824 NAS we train the Merlin helicopter crews who will work on the Royal Navy's latest flagship – which is an aircraft carrier.

"The Battle of Taranto proved that air power, combined with the ability to strike from a carrier anywhere in the world, would be vital for the future.

"That is still very much the case and the Royal Navy is leading the way with the latest generation of carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales."

Boost from Type 21s

VETERANS of Type 21 frigates handed over £1,000 to help Falklanders build a museum commemorating the 1982 war for the islands.

Locals intend to erect a new gallery at the islands' main museum in Stanley, focused on the Argentine invasion and subsequent liberation – telling the comprehensive story of the dramatic 12 weeks for the first time.

With tourists increasingly visiting the islands – the Falklands are a popular stop-off for cruise liners plying their trade in the South Atlantic – and veterans also returning in ever-growing numbers, the island's leaders unveiled a £1.5m plan to bring 1982 back to life in exhibition form in time for the 40th anniversary in 2022.

It's an initiative supported by the Type 21 Club, many of whose members have already donated artefacts and objects, including diaries, ship's logs and photographs.

Seven 21s were assigned to the Operation Corporate task force, but only five returned; Ardent sank after heavy bombing during the opening hours of the landings at San Carlos, while Antelope was torn in two by the triggering of an unexploded bomb and a cataclysmic series of fires and explosions which followed.

Commander Les Smith handed over £1,000 to Richard Cockwell, chairman of the museum's trustees... and whose roof was holed by a shell from Type 21 HMS Avenger back in 82.

HMS Aldenham remembered

HMS Aldenham Association will be joining the congregation at St John the Baptist Church, Aldenham, on December 15 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of loss of HMS Aldenham during World War 2.

Aldenham (L22), a Type III Hunt class, was the last destroyer lost in WW 2. She hit a mine in the Adriatic Sea on December 14 1944, resulting in the loss of five officers and 116 ratings. The ship is now a declared war grave.

The service begins at 10.30am and all are welcome.



WW2 hero Max honoured in hometown

EVEN an Atlantic storm couldn't dampen the spirits of the Royal Navy, as sailors and naval leaders joined villagers in Rhosneigr on Anglesey to remember one of its most famous sons and one of the greatest unsung naval heroes of WW2.

With heavy rain and high winds lashing their faces, members of the Senior Service gathered with personnel from RAF Valley to recognise the life of Admiral Sir Max Horton, a Great War submariner who led the fight against the U-boat a generation later.

From November 1942 until the end of World War 2, Sir Max served as Commander-in-Chief Western Approaches, directing the Allied response to the German submarine menace from his headquarters in Liverpool.

That threat was as its peak in the autumn and winter of 1942-43 but some of the tactical changes made by the admiral, notably forming dedicated units of U-boat hunters (support groups) to accompany convoys and hound enemy boats to destruction.

Those groups were to play key roles in March, April and May 1943 as the tide turned and the U-boats suffered losses from which they would never recover. On May 24, the commander of



the German Navy, Karl Dönitz, called off the battle.

The German submarine threat never went away until the war's end, but the UK's lifeline was never severely threatened again.

Sir Max remained at the helm of Western Approaches until it was dissolved in the summer of 1945, overseeing the surrender of more than

150 German submarines.

He died six years later aged 67 and while other WW2 leaders became household names such as Montgomery, 'Bomber' Harris, and Cunningham, Max Horton was largely forgotten by the public – including his native Anglesey.

Sir Max spent his formative years in Rhosneigr – his parents owned the Maelog Lake Hotel which still stands

today but as the Oyster Catcher restaurant.

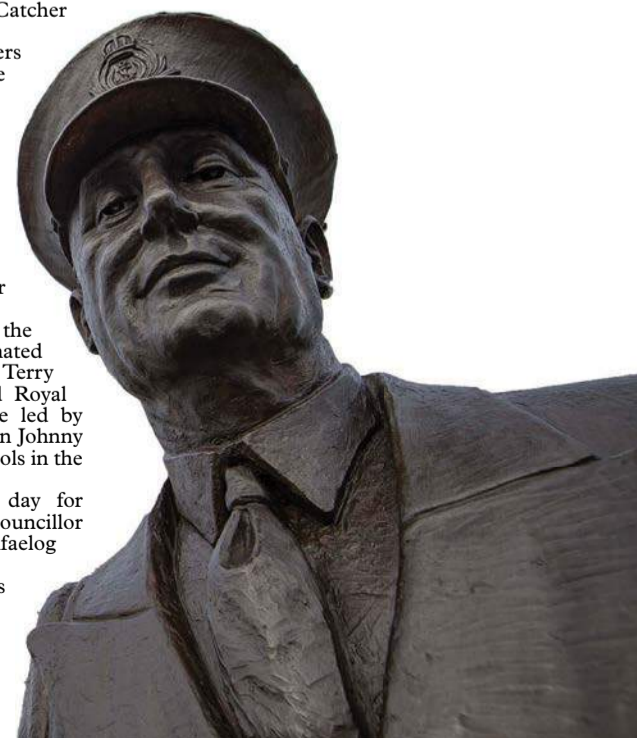
Over the past decade, villagers have made an effort to revive his name, firstly with a memorial plaque, and now with the garden/statue overlooking the Irish Sea on the site of the pumping station – spearheaded by local councillor Gwyneth Parry, who was given a set of submariner's dolphins as thank-you for championing Sir Max's achievements.

The 7ft bronze likeness of the admiral was crafted – and donated – by Liverpoolian sculptor Terry McDonald who had watched Royal Navy warships, such as those led by legendary U-boat killer Captain Johnny Walker, depart on hunting patrols in the dark days of WW2.

"This really is a special day for Rhosneigr and me," said Councillor Parry, chairwoman of Llanfaellog Community Council.

"It's been two and half years of hard work, I've been so determined to bring him here, I feel I've known him all my life, I know so much about him."

Pictures: SAC Nathan Edwards, RAF Valley





Diamond toast to the memory of Nelson

TS DIAMOND Sea Cadets based in Rushden, Northamptonshire, held a Trafalgar night dinner.

Dressed in their No. 1 uniform, the cadets enjoyed a formal three-course meal, cooked and served by some of the volunteers who support the unit.

Between each course they learnt about the battle and the men that fought in it.

As is traditional, after toasting 'The Immortal Memory' of Lord Nelson and those that fell during the battle, the meal concluded with the parading of a ship of the line – a chocolate galleon that the cadets enjoyed smashing to pieces and eating.

The Battle of Trafalgar took place on October 21 1805, during the Napoleonic Wars, and is undoubtedly one of the most famous naval battles of all time.

Twenty-seven Royal Navy ships, led by Admiral Lord Nelson aboard HMS Victory, defeated 33 French and Spanish ships, under the command of French Admiral Villeneuve.



Nelson was shot by a French musketeer during the heat of the battle and died shortly before the battle ended.

HMS Pickle was despatched back to Britain with the news of Nelson's victory at Trafalgar, together with news of his death.

Nelson was instantly pronounced a national hero and is immortalised to this day on top of Nelson's Column, in London's Trafalgar Square.

The battle is commemorated annually.



Royal treat for Dukies

THE Duke of Kent presented berets to new students of the Duke of York's Royal Military School, Dover, at a special beret parade service.

The Duke has been president and then patron of DOYRMS for some 44 years.

The annual tradition takes place once Year 7 students have completed a period of parade training after joining the school in September.

While regular school uniform is worn most of the time, the beret is an essential part of each student's ceremonial No.1 dress (blues) for parades and special occasions.

Due to inclement weather, the berets were presented in the school chapel, and Prince Edward was assisted by Principal Alex Foreman.

Good conduct medals were also given to senior under officer Alfred Perkins, head boy Ashiph Rai, chief school prefect Sophie O'Smotherly and head girl Jordanna Ramsey. Alfred Perkins presented the Duke with the school tie in appreciation of his visit.

Receiving the beret is the start of a student's career as a Dukie. Students can also wear the cap badge of a family member who has served in the armed forces on their dress Blues. It is called their 'heart badge' and is a poignant recognition of their family's military heritage.

For more information, visit www.doyrms.com.

MSSC sign AF covenant

THE Marine Society & Sea Cadets marked 100 years of a close association between Sea Cadets and the Royal Navy at the National Trafalgar Day Parade by signing the Armed Forces Covenant.

Attended by the Lord Mayor of the City of Westminster, the Covenant was signed by Martin Coles, CEO of the MSSC, and Major General Matt Holmes, Commandant General Royal Marines.

Mr Coles said: "Signing the covenant is reaffirmation of our support across the charity of the value of the armed forces family and in all that we do to launch young people for life through Sea Cadets."

Marines inspire teens in London



ROYAL Marines showed 150 young people in London how they can avoid knife crime by channelling energy and aggression into sport.

Commandos from Royal Marines Reserve City of London unit linked up with Harlequins rugby team, the Met Police, London Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service among others to deliver the second Challenge Wandsworth.

The event, first run in February and expanded to two days in its second run out, comprised six challenges delivered by the Wandsworth-based Royal Marines reservists, aimed at inspiring young people struggling in life to be inspired through sports, martial arts, outdoor pursuits and physical fitness training.

One aim was to divert young people away from anti-social behaviour and on a more positive path, encouraging those on the edge of violence not to carry such weapons.

Another goal was nurturing respect for uniformed services among young people by showcasing the support the military and public services provide them and their communities.

Challenges covered topics such as: nutrition, self-defence, endurance, mental strength and self-esteem, embodying Royal Marines' character and ethos.

Information on potential careers in the Forces and emergency services was given to students from several schools as well as military cadets.

"I would probably join the Royal Marines or the fire service," enthused 14-year-old Subhan Khan. "It interests me because they go into dangerous stuff and save people's lives."

Army Cadet Sergeant Jodie Judge, aged 17, added: "It's good that we girls have the opportunity to join the marines – it's great for inclusivity."

RMR City of London Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Jason Durup said that one of the goals of the event was to support the Metropolitan Police's 'Divert' Programme "trying to give young people the confidence through different skills that they can evade and avoid edge weapon threats and not become a statistic".

Southfields Academy deputy head Larry Davis added: "It's really important to give young people the opportunity to get together and work with youngsters from other schools."

Cadets have first aid well and truly wrapped up



THE Army Cadet Force hosted the annual Cadet Inter-Service First Aid Competition at the Defence Training Establishment Swynnerton near Stoke.

For the first time in the competition's history the sea cadets fielded a team from each of the six SCC areas of the country with cadets from Sutton, Telford, Scarborough, Gravesend, Musselburgh, Queensferry, Fleetwood, Blackpool and Blackburn taking part.

The Saturday of the competition was for each individual cadet organisation. These were the SCC National Comp, the Combined Cadet Force National Comp and the Army Cadet Force National Comp, where they all competed against teams from their own organisation.

The top two teams in each of the competitions then went forward to the Inter-Service competition on the Sunday morning. Scenarios that the cadets had to deal with over the weekend ranged from minor soft tissue injuries to car

and rail crashes and even a small mass casualty riot.

Results of the SCC Competition were: 1st, North West Area Team, pictured left, – Blackpool, Fleetwood and Blackburn Units; 2nd, Northern Area Team – Musselburgh and Queensferry Units; 3rd Southern Area Team – Maidstone Unit.

The SCC teams from North West Area and Northern Area performed well on the Sunday morning but the more experienced teams from the CCF and ACF took the honours with Dollar Academy Combined Cadet Force winning for the sixth year in succession, closely followed by Durham ACF.

The Sea Cadets are indebted to the ACF First Aid Development Manager Lt Col Melanie Prangnell and her team for organising the event, also the ACF First Aid Advisor Col Chris Young and Captain Sea Cadets Phil Russell for presenting the awards.





Proud day for cadets

MORE than 80 Northampton Sea Cadets attended the annual Remembrance Parade in the town.

They proudly marched through the town before laying wreaths on behalf of the fallen at the Northampton memorial.

We said goodbye during the month to Leading Cadet Alex Smith as she turned 18 years after seven years of cadet service.

On her last night on board as a cadet she was presented with a photo frame recording her cadet experiences.

Alex has been with the ship's company since joining as a junior in July 2013.

Alex was always a big part in the competition teams and in particular the rowing teams winning bronze at nationals this year with the open girls team.

One of Alex's highlights was getting the opportunity to go on the international exchange this year to Hong Kong.

Alex has been a valuable member of the ships company and we look forward to hopefully welcoming her back as a volunteer soon.

Also during the month Midshipman Hearn and Petty Officer Cadet Collins, *pictured inset*, represented the Eastern Area at the National Cadet Conference held at SCTC Weymouth. They were instrumental in sharing their experiences which will shape the future direction of the Sea Cadets.

Also during the month the Sea Cadets had the misfortune to mark the passing of Robin Arthur Guinness, who had been a long-standing member of the Civilian Management Committee at the Northampton Sea Cadet Unit, Training Ship Laforey.

The earliest record of Robin on the committee was in 1958 where he would have been 33.

Robin drew upon his experiences as a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy Voluntary Reserve; he was a Fleet Arm Officer, and a flight observer.

It was this link that drew him to the Sea Cadets and it was evident that he had an interest in developing and providing opportunities for young people.

Robin possessed a sharp sense of humour and enthusiasm for fun, which was obvious in his annual pub games.

Over many years Robin organised his annual fundraising event at his home at Ivy Farm Hardinstone, where he invited the local community into his home for a series of fun pub games.

This was popular with the unit as both cadets and adults enjoyed watching, and at times, joining in with some of the games, particularly 'splat the rat'!

He would always insist that the adult volunteers and cadets stayed after the event and were fed; he was always so attentive and kind.

This event, over the years has raised many thousands of pounds for the local Sea Cadets; keeping the local training ship afloat for the young people it serves.

Robin volunteered to lead the unit taking the Chairmanship three times, between 1970-79, 1980 to 1986 and 1993 to 2002, where upon he came a honorary Vice President.

Robin was always generous and giving and in January 2004 he donated a decorative ropework display to the Sea Cadet unit. Robin was never slow to use his local contacts and influence to help others and in 2006 Robin hosted the annual Sea cadets fundraising mess dinner at the Northampton County Club.



Class act from RM aviators

TWO Royal Marines aviators won trophies as they graduated from the Defence Helicopter Flying School at RAF Shawbury.

Pilot Captain Dave Lewis was presented with the Peter Adams Trophy for achieving the best performance during the tactical training phase.

Sergeant Bren Feeney received the Creighton Trophy, which is awarded to the student crewman who achieves the highest marks in the tactical phase of training.

The RNAS Yeovilton pair were among 20 aviators – 13 pilots, one aircrewman and six weapon system operators – to pass out at the tri-service parade.

The rotary wing element of the UK Military Flight Training System sees students use 29 Juno and three Jupiter helicopters, which are fitted with glass cockpit technology and an advanced touchscreen aviation suite.

Group Captain Chris Mullen, Station Commander and Commandant of the Defence Helicopter Flying School, said: "I would like to congratulate all the graduates and award winners today as they move on to the next stage of their career with their respective services, flying the Apache, Wildcat, Chinook, Merlin, Puma and Griffin helicopters."

The changes at Shawbury include an operational support building housing advanced Flying Training Devices, where the trainees learn many of their skills before getting airborne.

■ A ROYAL Navy air traffic controller has won two trophies for his performance at the Defence College of Air and Space Operations at RAF Shawbury.

Sub Lieutenant Conor Green was awarded the Bunting Trophy, which is awarded to the trainee on No 433 Joint Air Traffic Control Course who produces the best practical performance in the assessment phase. He also won the Alenia Marconi Systems Trophy for producing the best academic

performance through the course.

SLt Green was one of 33 personnel from the Royal Navy and RAF to graduate from the Shrewsbury station.

The quadruple parade celebrated the graduation of personnel from No 433 Joint Air Traffic Control Course, No 1 Aerodrome & Precision Approach Course, No 2 Flight Operations Specialist Course and No 19-2 Aerospace Systems Specialist Course.

This was the first combined Defence College of Air and Space Operations graduation, following the move of the School of Aerospace Battle Management from RAF Boulmer this year.





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MCM sims' milestones

AT A time when the men and women who used them are heavily engaged in the Gulf (see pages 18-19), mine warfare simulators at HMS Collingwood both celebrated passing major milestones.

The Hunt and Sandown-class trainers have clocked up 50,000 and 25,000 hours of authentic training for mine warfare operators – that's eight-and-a-half years of instruction collectively.

Arcturus – named after a wartime Canadian-built Algerine-class minesweeper – and Ursa were built to mimic both the sonar systems and ops room displays and systems on the Hunts and Sandowns respectively, used not merely by budding mine warfare specialists straight out of basic training, but also leading hands and petty officers, plus mine warfare officers.

Each simulator blends the class' principal sonar (shallow depth on the Hunts, variable depth on the Sandowns) with the NAUTIS command system.

Arcturus was originally installed at HMS Vernon (now the site of the Gunwharf Quays complex) back in 1982, then moved to HMS Dryad in the mid-90s and finally to its current location ten years later. It's been used by at least 2,200 personnel.

Its Sandown-class counterpart was inaugurated at Dryad in 1996 before shifting to Fareham in 2005. An estimated 1,000 students have passed through it.

As both sims mirror the kit aboard real-life ships, they are also frequently used by ops rooms teams when their own vessels are undergoing refits and maintenance.

Specific reward for Pacific role

FOUR inspiring months delivering a message of peace, goodwill and prosperity around Pacific earned Lieutenant Andrew 'Les' Dennis a magnificent sword.

The junior officer was presented with the Reed Sword for leadership in operational support for his outstanding performance as the senior British medical planner for the US-led Exercise Pacific Partnership.

The deployment sees sailors from around the world – and the Pacific Rim especially – join US Navy vessels for a tour of remote islands and communities in that ocean, providing medical care, grappling with engineering projects, supporting educational projects, helping locals prepare for the many natural disasters (chiefly typhoons and earthquakes) which affect the region, and generally promoting a message of goodwill and assistance.

Four Britons (Capt Paddy Allen RN, in charge of the fast transporter USNS Brunswick, disaster relief planner Capt Tom Magee RAMC, aero-medical adviser Flt Lt John Carillion-Curry, plus Lt Dennis) took part in the 2019 deployment – the 14th iteration of Pacific Partnership, which was established in the



● Lt Dennis talks with school children in Micronesia as they tour the USNS Brunswick during Pacific Partnership 19

Picture: MCS1 Tyrell K Morris, USN

wake of the devastating 2004 Boxing Day tsunami.

According to his citation, during the four months he was assigned to Pacific Partnership 19, Lt Dennis "accomplished what was expected of him – and much more".

It wasn't easy: there were more than 40 medical specialists aboard the Brunswick from various nations, all with different skills and levels of experience.

On top of that much of the

widespread damage and destruction to the Mortlock Islands and North West Islands of Chuuk.

Lt Dennis led medical teams to offer both treatment to islanders and resupply dispensaries with medicines and equipment.

Throughout, says his citation, Lt Dennis demonstrated a "strong work ethic, reliability and determined nature".

And as a former PTI, the Brit used his experience to run daily flight deck circuits when the ship's programme allowed, keeping all nationalities aboard the Brunswick in peak fitness – and keeping morale up.

For his efforts, the Commander Western Pacific Task Force 73, Rear Admiral Tynch, presented Lt Dennis with a letter of commendation for his leadership.

And when considering medical services officers across the specialisation for the strongest operational contribution over the past 12 months, Lt Dennis' superiors said his "contribution clearly stands out above the rest" to make him a worthy winner of the prize blade... presented by Capt Allen, now Captain Devonport Flotilla.

RFA officer's training commitment honoured

AN RFA commodore has received a top service award from the Princess Royal for services to maritime training and the careers of young seafarers.

Cdre David Smith, who currently works in the commercially-supported shipping division of Defence Equipment and Support, received the Merchant Navy Medal for Meritorious Service at a ceremony at Trinity House.

The award is bestowed on individuals with a minimum of 20 years' service who show exceptional devotion to duty, exemplary service and act as an outstanding example to others.

Cdre Smith, who joined the RFA in 1980, has seen sea-going service in the Falklands, Gulf and Adriatic.

The marine engineer was subsequently appointed as the RFA Recruitment and Training Officer.

Promoted commodore this year, he is a chartered engineer, a Fellow of the Institute of Marine Engineering Science and Technology and a member of the



He is active on the university lecture circuit, promoting engineering as a career at schools, colleges and universities.

"I am delighted and totally surprised by the award and deeply honoured by the recognition I have received from my peers within the professional seafaring community," he said.

Are you qualified for promotion?

IF YOU'RE in contention for promotion, it's definitely worth doing. Making sure you are educationally qualified for promotion could make the difference between bitter disappointment and picking up your next rate.

For the majority of rating/other ranks (OR) roles, there are no minimum educational qualification requirements to join the RN.

But for promotion to leading hand/corporal you need Functional Skills Level 1 in Maths and English, and to Petty Officer/Sergeant upwards Functional Skills Level 2 in both subjects.

The Naval Service's Learning & Development Organisation (LDO) seeks to ensure that all Naval Service personnel, wherever they are serving, can access learning, development and resettlement support. A core aim of the LDO is to support those looking to progress academically and professionally; becoming educationally qualified for promotion is part of that.

Many will have joined the RN having already achieved the required educational standard; anyone joining with GCSE A*-C (grades 9-4

post-2017) in Maths and English Language at school are educationally qualified for promotion to Warrant Officer, whilst those with GCSE D - G (3-1) are eligible for promotion to Leading Hand/Corporal. Equivalent foreign and Commonwealth qualifications may also be recognised.

Functional Skills Level 1 Maths and English is also a prerequisite for completing the Level 2 Apprenticeship which all Phase 2 ratings and other ranks undertake, with the achievement of Functional Skills Level 2 being the target. Leading hand/corporal promotion courses are accredited to a Level 3 Apprenticeship or RQF qualification.

The RN's 18 Learning and Development Hubs and operations team offer bespoke support at sea and ashore to personnel wishing to become educationally qualified for promotion.

Various study methods exist, including free study books, one-on-one tutoring, full or part-time courses, online resources and coaching.

For details about any of the above visit one of the hubs, speak to an ERO if serving at sea, or visit royalnavy.mod.uk/navylearn.

EVERYWHERE ANYWHERE EVERYONE ANYONE



Diversity dedication recognised

LIEUTENANT Commander Gary Farmer from the Royal Navy's Special Engagement Team Scotland and Northern Ireland has been recognised for his major contributions to Glasgow's Black/ethnic minority communities.

For more than four years, Gary and his team have been supporting events run by the Scottish Ethnic Minority Sports Association, such as helping out with badminton tournaments, 5k and 10k fun runs, youth summer camps and hosting the UK Asian Football Championships (now in its 21st year).

The lifelong Rangers fan also works closely with the Ibrox premiership giants to promote diversity and help drive all forms of racism out of football via its Everyone Anyone campaign (as pictured above).

They also hosted SEMSA committee members for a weekend of teamwork, water sports and leadership activities at Rothiemurchus Adventure Training Lodge in the Cairngorms.

Such initiatives earned Gary 'The President's Special Recognition Award 2019' – presented to the organisation or individual who has been significantly involved with local communities.

"We work with diverse youth and community groups, facilitating a range of growth and learning opportunities to develop teambuilding, leadership, interpersonal and communication skills," Gary said. "Receiving this recognition and award has taken me completely by surprise."

ASK YOURSELF:

- Were you made in the Royal Navy?
- Do you want to give others the opportunity to make it in the Royal Navy?
- Are you seeking a rewarding Second Career?

If the answer to any is yes then...

APPLY TO BECOME A CAREERS ADVISER.

Flag Officer Sea Training is currently seeking RN and RM WOs, Senior Rates and SNCO Service Leavers and former Service (those that left Service under 3 years), to work in Armed Forces Careers Offices which are listed on the map.

Positions are nationwide, employed on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) (NCS) Limited Commitment.

Salary starts from £30k with promotion opportunities to rise to £43k.

FTRS rates of pay apply (Reviewed annually and pensionable).

For more information contact:

PSTN- 01929 403172

Mil- 94374 3172

E-mail- Jane.anneda513@mod.gov.uk





From the Senior to Sunday Service

MEET Justin Montague. Green beret. Afghan veteran. Marathon runner. Man of God.

Three years after leaving the Corps, he is now a Church of England priest after being ordained at St Paul's Church in Tiverton, Devon.

Justin (*on the left of the picture*) spent 11 years in the Corps before leaving in 2016 to begin the transition from commando to chaplain, assisted by Royal Navy Reverend Ralph Barber (*pictured with Justin*) who also swapped military uniform for a dog collar.

After training at theological college, the ex-commando was ordained deacon last year and then fully-fledged priest this year.

"What a journey it has been to this point," said the former lance corporal from Oxford. "Twelve years ago I was in Afghanistan. Ten years ago I was running my first marathon for the Royal Navy/Royal Marines team in the US."

Serious health issues forced him to consider his career as a Royal Marine and his existence – and ultimately led to his decision to re-train as a priest. "It has been the most humbling and exciting journey, and I look forward to where I am called to in the future."

Helping him on that journey has been Rev Barber who spent nine years as a Royal Navy sailor before heading to theological college, served in a parish in Newquay, then returned to the Senior Service.

Today he's the 'bish' (as clergy are affectionately known in the Navy) to personnel serving on Whale Island in Portsmouth and the former HMS Dryad site at Southwick Park.

He also acts as the RN's Diocesan Director of Ordinands, helping and advising sailors and Royal Marines seeking ordination through the Church of England's discernment and selection process.

"There are a variety of training models including both full-time residential and part-time non-residential options followed by three years in a parish as a curate learning from an experienced parish priest," he explained.

"Afterwards you can continue as a parish priest or consider joining the Navy as a chaplain."

Justin says without the guidance of the Navy's chaplaincy team, his fellow commandos and the specialist unit in Plymouth dedicated to helping personnel recover from major illness and injury, Hasler Company.

"Without them, I would not be where I am, realizing my dreams and for that I will always be grateful," he added.

He's remaining in the civilian world for now.

If you would like to discuss the possibility of ordination in the Church of England contact him on ralph.barber509@mod.gov.uk.

Royal approval for RN apprenticeships

PRINCESS Anne rewarded the Royal Navy for its efforts to nurture sailors and Royal Marines for the good of the Service and society.

She welcomed the Senior Service into a select 'family' of businesses and organisations large and small recognised for their outstanding training and development regimes. The Learning and Development Organisation and the Naval Service Apprenticeship programme have earned the Senior Service a Princess Royal Training Award.

Presented for the past three years, it acknowledges efforts made to support staff, improve their personal skills, knowledge and professional development for the benefit of the individual, organisation and society as a whole.

To join previous winners – including household names such as car/bike firm Halfords, Lloyds Bank, and insurance giant Legal and General – the Royal Navy's Learning and Development Organisation and the Naval Service Apprenticeship programme had to demonstrate:

- that training and development was integral to the work and success of the organisation;
- it delivers training and nurtures its personnel efficiently and effectively;
- that training and personal development have an impact both on the individual and the organisation.

There are around 3,700 personnel in some form of apprenticeship programme across the Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Auxiliary – that's one

in every ten men and women in the service, among them HMS Duncan's LET Gavin Maidment, winner of the advanced apprenticeship title at this year's Naval Service Apprenticeship Awards.

"As an apprentice engineer, I 'earn as I learn' to maintain high-tech equipment essential in keeping the warship operational," he said.

The Royal Navy was one of 48 groups, firms and organisations added to the select list, singled out as "an exemplar of training" at the 2019 awards ceremony.

Historic 47 Cdo name is revived

AN HISTORIC unit name synonymous with the commando heroics and bravery of WW2 has been revived for a new era of the Royal Marines.

1 Assault Group Royal Marines – the marines' amphibious warfare experts – will now be known as 47 Commando Raiding Group, reinvigorating a unit name that not only gives a nod to the past but also to the future of 3 Commando Brigade.

The renaming was announced following 75th anniversary commemorations of one of 47 Commando's greatest battles WW2 actions: Walcheren in the Netherlands.

The battle for the island was vital in freeing the approaches to Antwerp, an important supply port, and 47 Commando played a key role in victory alongside their fellow commandos.

Around 48 hours after landing on Gold Beach on D-Day, 47 Commando were also in action in Port-en-Bessin, carrying out a daring tactical raid, approaching from the rear and claiming a vital victory to open up supply lines for the advancing allied forces.

It is that action at Port-en-Bessin that partly inspired the name change, with the Royal Marines now refocusing on tactical raiding and putting their seaborne warfare expertise back at the forefront of the way they fight after concentrating on more conventional warfighting in the recent past.

It puts their small raiding craft at the centre of what they do along with the development of cutting-edge weapons, tactics and strategy for battle. This is all part of the Future Commando Force concept and is why the 'Raiding Group' part of the new name hold considerable significance.

Commandant General Royal Marines, Major General Matt Holmes said: "It is with enormous pride that I have been able to announce the renaming of 1 Assault Group Royal Marines to 47 Commando (Raiding Group) Royal Marines.

"This change better captures the future role of this specialist 3 Commando Brigade unit, whilst reflecting the esteem in which we hold the forebears given their audacious commando operations of the past.

"The commando ethos is incredibly strong and remains the golden thread that runs through the Royal Marines as we accelerate into the future as the Royal Navy's Commando force."

47 Commando was disbanded in 1946 but is now revived as 1AGRM is now under the command of 3 Commando Brigade. The new name is more in keeping with the traditions of the brigade.

1AGRM have always maintained strong links with 47 Commando Association and was formed in 2001 to look after the landing craft specialisation and assault squadrons.

As part of this move, 539 Assault Squadron will now be called 539 Raiding Squadron, adding further emphasis on the raiding future of the Royal Marines.

Words: Lt Cdr Lindsey Waudby

QE welfare trial reaps dividends

AS WELL as trials with her UK F-35s, HMS Queen Elizabeth is also the testbed for a welfare initiative. The carrier has embarked a Royal Navy social worker for the duration of her Westlant 19 deployment: CPO Vic Glassey providing support to personnel across the carrier strike group.

And in a separate, but complimentary trial, also onboard is a mental health nurse, PONN(MH) Fay Latter embarked.

The aim is to provide support and reassurance to personnel when they need it the most, in cases such as bereavement and loss, or other personal or domestic difficulties. In doing so, the aim is to ensure that personnel can remain at sea, reducing the impact on operational capability and retention rates.

Both trials are due to end when the task group returns this month, but evidence so far shows they are proving invaluable.

MOST naval service personnel who have deployed to sea have experienced the frustration – or isolation – of having to cope with difficult personal or family events back at home.

The former Royal Navy Royal Marines Welfare organisation – recently renamed Naval Service Family and People



● RN social worker CPO Vic Glassey listens to the issues facing a shipmate aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth
Pictures: LPhot Kyle Heller

Support is hoping to do exactly what it says on the tin: provide support to personnel at sea, rather than just at home.

CPO Glassey and PONN (MH) Latter (*pictured left*) have been embarked since August, and saw their caseloads reach maximum capacity within the first month, demonstrating, they say, just why their support is so valuable.

"We have traditionally had the chaplain onboard for people to speak to, and that's still very valuable," explains CPO Glassey, a former medic, now qualified as a registered social worker.

"But we need to be more modern in our approach to caring for our people.

"When people deploy it can be a really tough time. Their problems don't go away; they can become worse because they aren't at home with their support network. They can become isolated and that will of course affect their mental wellbeing, their work, relationships and operational capability."

The senior rating believes

it is "ludicrous" that the support provided to service families and personnel at home has not been replicated at sea.

"There is not the volume of personnel to warrant us being permanently embarked in small ships, but we absolutely need this fixed within the carrier strike group because of the sheer numbers of personnel we are dealing with," CPO Glassey adds.

While the carrier group may not always deploy with a mental health nurse assigned, PO Latter believes it to be an area that needs investment.

She provides cognitive behavioral therapy to patients who would normally be sent ashore and assigned to a Personnel Support Group – which many see as detrimental to their careers; there is also a longer lead time for treatment ashore.

Providing treatment *in situ* keeps personnel at sea – which is where they indicate they would rather be.

"Last year there was an audit of medical cases on onboard and we discovered that a lot of the medical officers' time was taken up with mental health cases, justifying my presence here during Westlant 19," PO Latter explains.

"I have been busy since day one; that's partially a good thing, because I can treat people who can then stay and do their job, instead of being downgraded and removed from the ship.

Deaths

John Creswell. Former member of Wansbeck & District No.11 Area RNA. Died on October 21, aged 85.
Lt Cdr Stewart Hett MBE, RN (Retd) died peacefully at home with family on October 9, aged 93 years. Husband to Eve, brother to Sandy and Father, Grandfather and Great-Grandfather; a navigator from HMS Amethyst, brave, much loved and very missed.
George Arthur Hayes, CPO. Joined 1960, served in HMS Ganges, Cleopatra and Astute, as well as others. Member of HMS Ganges Association. Died October 24, aged 84.
Matthew John Innes, Lt, Rtd. Nuclear Submarine Engineering Officer. Died at Kirkwood Hospice, Huddersfield on November 4, aged 40. Husband to Helen, daddy to Phoebe, Lottie and James. Donations can be made in Matthew's memory to Kirkwood Hospice.

Jack Owen Rowlands. Served from 1941-45. Took part in initial landings on Sword Beach in a LCT2. Ferried light tanks to the beaches on D-Day. Died aged 96.
David A. Cook. The David Cook referred to in November's edition was a different David Cook and not a member of the Submariners' Association. We have no further details on the David Cook who has sadly Crossed the Bar. The Submariners' Association wholeheartedly apologises for this error and any distress it may have caused the David Cook listed in November's Noticeboard.
The Ven Archdeacon Raymond H Roberts CB QHC. Chaplain of the Fleet. HMS Ark Royal, Bulwark, Urchin, Pembroke, Terror. CTC RM, RNEC Manadon, 45 Cdo RM, Britannia RN College. Died September 25, aged 88.
Lt Cdr Geoffrey L Bond MBE.

HMS Ark Royal, President, St Angelo, Centurion, Raleigh, Drake. Inst of Army Education. Dir Naval Education. RM Deal. Died September 20, aged 91.
Cdr Ian MacDonald OBE. HMS Cochrane, Victory RNB, Dryad, Temeraire, Dolphin, Victorious, Hermes, Centaur. RN Coll Greenwich. FO Submarines. Died October 9, aged 93.
Cdr Brian C Thomas. HMS Terror, Victory RNB, Sultan, Hampshire, Osprey, Blackpool, President, Rooke, Swiftsure. BRNC Dartmouth. Died October 6, aged 87.
Sub Lt RNVr Eric Holmes. 1830 and 1843 NAS. Died August 4.
Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNO
Adm Arthur D (Sir Desmond) Cassidi GCB. CINCNAVHOME. Second Sea Lord. FONAC. DGNMT.

DN Plans. HMS Ark Royal, Undaunted, Warrior. President, Whitby, Blackcap, Merlin, Devonshire. NATO. 814 NAS. Died October 10, aged 94.
Cdr Arthur B (Dickie) Bird. HMS Daedalus, Seahawk, Ariel. Died October 18, aged 89.
Lt Cdr Stephen G Austin MBE. HMS Blake, Cochrane, Danae, Caledonia, Eagle, Figgard, Ark Royal, Troubridge. Died October 28, aged 82
Lt Cdr Stewart Hett MBE. HMS St Angelo, Victory RNB, Rooke, Warrior, Phoenixia, Bermuda, Harrier, Dryad, Manxman, Scorpion, Amethyst and Narvik. Husband to Eve, brother to Sandy and father, grandfather and great-grandfather; Died October 9, aged 93.
Lt Cdr Paul J Payne. HMS London, Osprey, Forth, St Angelo, Drake, Centurion, Dryad, Wizard, Troubridge, Barfleur. DPR(N). NATO. Died October 14.

Reunions

HMS Cheviot: Reunion in Torquay for three nights, starting March 5 2020. For details contact Victor Denham at vic742008@hotmail.co.uk or phone 0794995503.
Loch Class Frigates Association: Our annual reunion takes place at the Cardiff North Hotel, Cardiff, on April 17-20 2020. Membership is open to all who served on any of the Loch-class ships or their variants (Bay calss, Admirals yachts, survey ships and repair ships. For more details contact honorary secretary Andrew Nunn at Andrew.nunn@blueyonder.co.uk or call 0117 9505835
HMS Ganges Association: Our annual reunion will be held April 17-20 2020 at the Warners Gunton Hall Holiday Village near Lowestoft. Open to all those who served at HMS Ganges, wives & partners

also welcome. For booking details contact tony.willders@btinternet.com tel:07787106202. Or Isle of Wight Tours on (01983) 405116.
HMS Cadiz, Saintes and Wizard: A shared reunion takes place from Friday May 8 to Monday May 11 2020 at the Novotel Hotel in Nottingham. All three ships' associations will hold their own annual meetings and share all other activities. For details contact Isle of Wight Tours Ltd at 3 New Road, Lake, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO36 9IN. Tel 01252 405116, fax 01983 405504, email enquiries@iowtours.com or contact HMS Saintes Secretary Fred.Terry1@ntlworld.com, call 01252 625974.
HMS Broadsword Association: Biannual reunion and AGM takes place at the Best Western Royal

Beach Hotel, Southsea, on Saturday May 23, 2020. The reunion is open to anyone who has served on Broadsword. For details visit hmsbroadswordassociation.co.uk or contact Bill Skilliter wistheplumber@yahoo.co.uk
1710 Naval Air Squadron 10th Anniversary Dinner: For all serving/ex serving squadron members takes place at the WO, SRs & SNCOs mess in HMS Sultan on Friday June 5 2020. For information please contact Elaine Rogers at Elaine.Rogers683@mod.gov.uk or phone on 02392 722758.
HMS Isis. D-87 'That which Remains' 1936 to 1944. My father was an Army Officer attached to HMS Isis as BLO and was a survivor of her sinking on July 20 1944. I am seeking contact with former crew, survivors, families and or descendants. My hope

is to join for acts of remembrance in coming years. Please contact: Angus Beaton 07966166981 or angusbeaton@me.com
BRNC Spring Term 1979. The planned Reunion Dinner to celebrate 40+ years is set for May 30 at the college. Those interested please contact Cdr Steve Smith steve.smith329@mod.gov.uk or 02392212036
BRNC Entry Sept 1980 40th anniversary reunion dinner, BRNC Dartmouth, Saturday October 31 2020. Details from Cdr N J 'Nobby' Hall, neil.hall324@mod.gov.uk.
RMBS 1/70 and 2/70 Squad. 2020 will be the 50th anniversary for those joining the RMBS in 1970. A joint reunion of 1/70 and 2/70 squads is being planned for the last weekend in August 2020, in Deal. For further details and to get on the mailing list contact Nick Buckley on nickbuckley55@aol.com If you were not in either squad but know someone who was, please do pass this calling note on.
HMS Lincoln 68/69 Commission: Our reunion will take place at The Riverside Hotel, Branston, Burton on Trent. DE14 3EP, from June 12-14. Any other Lincoln shipmates from following commissions are welcome to join us. Contact Mike Sutcliffe 01282618751 for further details.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the October edition of *Navy News* (right) was the Dido-class light cruiser HMS Pheobe, who was scrapped in August 1956.
 Alan Campbell, of Fife, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.
 This month's mystery ship is a boom defence vessel, whose primary function was to lay and maintain steel anti-torpedo or anti-submarine nets.
 1) What class of ship is she and 2) which other navy operated them during World War 2?
 Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.



Entries must be received by January 14. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.
 The winner will be announced in our February edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 298

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

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Ask Jack

HMS ESKIMO: I am trying to obtain a copy of HMS Eskimo's Commissioning Book 1963-64. I served in her and have mislaid my copy. I wondered if any more copies were available to buy.
Mr MS Pearce
 01908 788548

Ian Robertson: I am trying to trace a former colleague. With both joined the Royal Marines together on May 6 1975 at Deal, Kent, as part of 211 Troop. We are planning our first 211 Kings Squad reunion in May 2020. I know Ian was from Cheltenham and would be aged 60.
David Martin
david.martin.689@gmail.com

Christopher Wheatley: I am trying to trace the sergeant, who served in the Royal Marines in the late 1960s to 1980s. He served with Sgt Peter Leonard Riley, who retired in May 1988. Peter, who died in August 2018, was bestman at Christopher's wedding. The last address I had is in Bristol. I think he had two children, who we would like to get in touch with.
Colin Riley
 63 Elsa Road, Welling, Kent DA16 1JZ

C/Sgt Keith Pittock RM. Keith was the DI for the Royal Marines Band Service New Entry Squad 2/70. There is a 50th reunion planned for August next year and we would dearly love to invite him. Anyone who knows his whereabouts is requested to pass on the following details please and ask Keith to make contact with Nick Buckley on nickbuckley55@aol.com or 07786 341084.

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Stylish return for Pembroke

FOR the first time in over a year minehunter HMS Pembroke has hit the water after a major overhaul.

The Faslane-based ship has been out of action throughout 2019 undergoing a refit in Rosyth – until now.

Renewed and refreshed, the hi-tech 600-tonne warship struck out across the North Sea for the 400-mile crossing to Stavanger.

As well as being the Norwegian counterpart to Aberdeen supporting the North Sea oil and gas industries, the city is also home to state-of-the-art NATO ranges.

On them, the ship was able to calibrate her upgraded sonar and mine-hunting equipment, including the SeaFox remote-controlled mine disposal system.

Supported by a team from the Royal Navy's Maritime Capability Trials and Assessment organisation, the new-look

Pembroke demonstrated her ability to hunt, classify and, if required, dispose of mines and other underwater ordnance, and rejoined the Fleet a day ahead of schedule.

Trials successful, the 45 crew were given the chance to explore Norway's fourth largest city – especially the fjords around it.

Most sailors took trips to Pulpit Rock – the flat-topped cliff which rises nearly 2,000 feet above one inlet – and posed for selfies on Kjeragbolten – a giant boulder wedged in a crevasse for the past 50,000 years and sitting on top of a 3,200ft drop.

"The walk up to Pulpit Rock was pretty tough and my legs were a bit stiff the next day, but it was worth it for the amazing views of the mountains and fjords. The locals here have been really friendly and we've been made welcome wherever we've gone," said Marine Engineering Technician Andrew McCabe.

Back in the city, the sporting minded watched local side Viking FK (Fotballklubb) riding high in the Norwegian Eliteserien (their counterpart to the Premier League) – especially after a late 2-1 win over Tromsø.

Stavanger was the first run out since the ship entered a 42-week £8m overhaul in the specialist minehunter facility at Babcock's Rosyth dockyard on the Forth.

A small team of 50 employees, plus contractors, spent the bulk of 2019 toiling on the Sandown-class ship from bow to stern and keel to masthead.

They improved Pembroke's sonar and communications systems, overhauled her engines and generators, and improved her fresh water tanks.

They left the 22-year-old warship in "great shape", said her Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Richard Kemp – an observation confirmed by his ship's first spell at sea.

"That we have managed to sail through all of our trials in such a short time and pass them all with flying colours really goes to show what great work has gone on over the past nine months," he added.

"We're now ready to start delivering on operations wherever we are needed."

Pembroke will resume operations later this year.

Picture: Lt Cdr Rich Kemp



Stuck up the chimney? We can help free it

A ROYAL Navy helicopter crew put their training to the test in the rescue of a crashed aircraft – which had become lodged on top of a Cornish mine chimney.

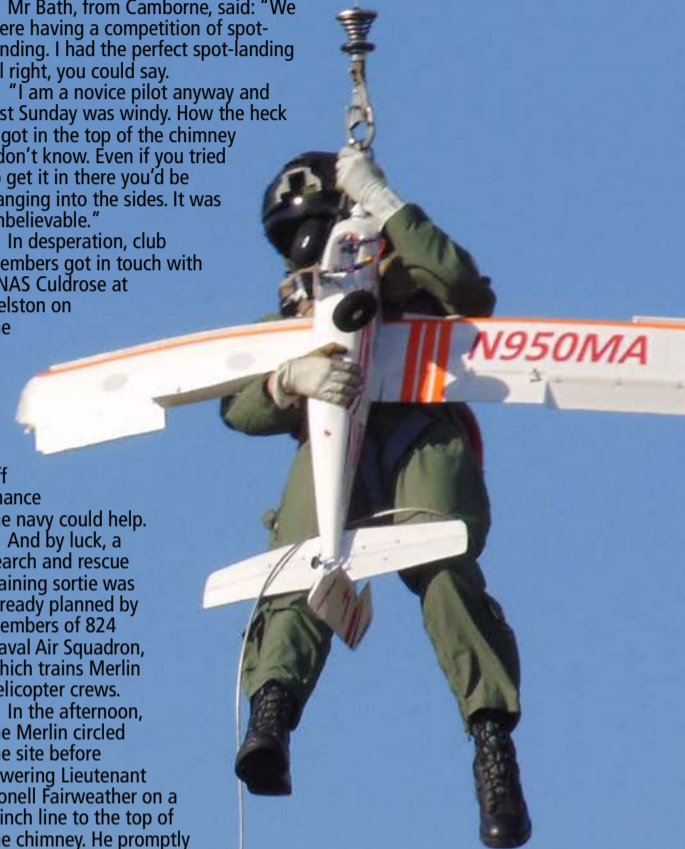
A few days before, the owner of the radio controlled aeroplane watched in disbelief as his model aircraft hit the prominent Victorian landmark – the only structure of any height anywhere nearby.

Roger Bath, a member of the model aeroplane club RC Cornwall Flyers, said he was dumbfounded when his plane became stuck on the chimney next to their flying zone near Nancegollen, not far from Helston.

Mr Bath, from Camborne, said: "We were having a competition of spot-landing. I had the perfect spot-landing all right, you could say."

"I am a novice pilot anyway and last Sunday was windy. How the heck it got in the top of the chimney I don't know. Even if you tried to get it in there you'd be banging into the sides. It was unbelievable."

In desperation, club members got in touch with RNAS Culdrose at Helston on the



off chance the navy could help.

And by luck, a search and rescue training sortie was already planned by members of 824 Naval Air Squadron, which trains Merlin helicopter crews.

In the afternoon, the Merlin circled the site before lowering Lieutenant Donell Fairweather on a winch line to the top of the chimney. He promptly grabbed the aircraft and was then lowered to the ground nearby, while the helicopter landed in a field next to the chimney.

Lieutenant Commander Steve Thomas, the senior pilot and instructor in command of the training flight, said the opportunity to adapt their sortie to take into account this extra test was too good to miss.

He said: "We had a three-and-half-hour training sortie booked for the afternoon and this was a genuinely valuable training opportunity for a student pilot who had been given an usual search and rescue scenario, and staff rear crew who had the task of conducting the rescue."

"The task was far from simple and we spent a great deal of time and effort planning and considering all possible options, plans and dangers. Everyone gets more out of doing something like this than they do just training at the airfield."

Thanks for your support

THE Royal Naval Leadership Academy welcomed a group of Employer Recognition Scheme holders to participate in a leadership workshop as a thank you for their commitment and valued support to the armed forces.

The 15 attendees came from a range of organisations, including BAE Systems, BT, Holts, HSBC, Kuehne+Nagel, PwC, Royal Mail and Travis Perkins. All these employers have signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant and given long-term support to military employees, including reservists and veterans.

The workshop consisted of leadership, teamwork and coaching techniques followed by a series of practical leadership tasks to put it into practice.

Cdr Rich Turley, who heads up Reserves Engagement for Wales and West of England, and coordinated the event, said: "The participants thoroughly enjoyed the day and were particularly impressed that a group of 15 people who hardly knew each other could be transformed into a personable and effective team."

"They all agreed that this training will directly benefit their employers and help them in their leadership roles within their companies."

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**Man,
that's
some
spider**

SAILORS at HMS Sultan have a giant robotic 'spider' to play with after they were loaned a two-tonne mechanical beast.

Inventor, engineer and animatronics expert Matt Denton has given marine and air technicians at the navy's school of engineering the chance to get to grips with Mantis – the world's largest rideable 'hexapod' (ok it has six legs like a beetle rather than eight, but robo-spider sounds funkier...).

Anyway... Mantis is now the centrepiece of the aptly-named Mantis Club, with members using the device to learn about robotics, hydraulics, engines, develop skills maintaining it, wow local youngsters as part of Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) events, and learn about Matt's fascinating work for the movies; he's developed animatronics for use in films such as the *Harry Potter* and *Star Wars* series.

Mantis stands 2.8m tall and weighs in at almost two tonnes. Using a combination of hydraulics, electronics and a Perkins turbo engine, its six legs can be operated from either its cockpit or via WiFi, allowing it to travel at speeds of just over one kilometre per hour... so

considerably slower than Doctor Octopus in *Spiderman*.

Sultan's Commander Training, Commander Antony Quinn, is delighted – and grateful – that Hampshire-based Matt has loaned his unique machine to the Gosport establishment.

"The Mantis hexapod is an excellent addition to our clubs and activities programme," he said. "As part of their training, apprentices within Sultan are taught about diesel engines, hydraulics and electronic control systems and the Mantis will offer an excellent opportunity for further exposure to engineering in a fun and innovative way."



Surge in demand as RFA fuels destroyer

ONE of the RFA's new tankers has replenished an Arleigh Burke destroyer in what is thought to be a first for the class.

RFA Tidesurge met up with the USS Donald Cook in the mid-Atlantic shortly after completing Exercise Joint Warrior 19-2.

The tanker is the third of her class with younger sister Tideforce currently deployed as part of the HMS Queen Elizabeth Carrier Strike Group off the Eastern Seaboard of the USA.

Tidesurge's operations officer, First Officer Duncan MacColl, said: "Over the past couple of months RFA Tidesurge has consistently displayed the advanced capability and flexibility of the Tide class in support of Flag Officer Sea Training on the south coast, before heading north as one of 14 ships participating in the multi-national Exercise Joint Warrior and Griffin Strike off the west coast of Scotland."

"Tidesurge was required to deal with air, surface and sub-surface attacks during the exercise."

The photographs were taken from a Merlin Mk2 from 814 NAS.

Flight Commander Lieutenant Tom Wallis said: "It is great to be able to show

the flexibility of the Tide-class with an embarked Merlin Mk2, and the significant operational capability that this combination provides.

"Over the past three weeks we have partaken in Exercise Joint Warrior 19-2, sharpening our warfighting teeth in anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare roles, switching quickly to transfer personnel and then back into operational tasking to support USS Donald Cook."

"This is only possible through the dedication of the crew of RFA Tidesurge, 814 NAS, 1700 NAS and the Fleet Hydrographic and Meteorology Unit, and our ability to exercise and operate efficiently and at very high readiness."

"It is always a pleasure to embark in such a capable, efficient and smooth-running unit."

In addition to their supply duties in support of the Royal Navy, the Tides also undertake a wide range of maritime operations, such as constabulary patrols policing shipping lanes, humanitarian relief, as well as providing support to NATO and coalition allies.

The guided missile destroyer, the 25th of the Arleigh Burke class, operates out of Naval Station Rota in Spain as part of a European defence scheme.



Medics put to test

Argus treats victims of mine blast exercise

TWO dozen bloody, burned, smoke-blackened casualties kept military medics on their toes as RFA Argus' hospital facilities were put to a warry test.

The veteran support ship spends most of her time hosting aviation training. But she is also home to a huge hospital facility – typically dormant, but activated in a crisis.

It stands ready to be brought to life 365 days a year if needed – the last time it was used on a military operation was in 2014-15 providing medical care for British personnel stemming the tide of the Ebola virus in Sierra Leone.

And once or twice a year, the complex is activity to test the whole process of dealing with casualties at sea – from the moment they are wounded to recovering after a life-saving operation.

A team of 138 medics, doctors, nurses, even plastic surgeons brought the dormant hospital facility to life ready to deal with the 'casualties', ferried from assault ship HMS Albion by RAF Chinook helicopter after the flagship 'hit' a mine.

Once they landed on Argus, medics assessed their wounds and injuries (known as triage) before swiftly moving the casualties in beds or on stretchers to the appropriate medical stations for treatment.

"I am privileged to have had the opportunity to see my team deliver what they do best," said Commander Matt Faye, Commanding Officer of the Maritime Deployed Hospital Group.

"Their ability to integrate into life at sea in a very short space of time and deliver the highest levels of medical care is humbling."

Although the new Queen Elizabeth-class carriers have an impressive sick bay (including operating theatre) and surgical team (as well as the equivalent of a GPs' surgery for day-to-day ailments), they are only designed to care for two seriously-ill patients for up to 72 hours.

The facilities on Argus – operating theatre, lab, CT scanner, intensive care unit and a ward – take treatment to the next level.

Despite her impressive facilities, Argus is not a hospital ship – there are strict definitions under international law – rather a primary casualty receiving ship; her medical team can treat serious battle injuries and stabilise them so they can be transferred to a hospital ashore to recuperate, recover and, if required, return to the front line.

Report: Lt Amy Blake



Light at end of the tunnel

STEPPING back to the past has brought financial windfalls for today thanks to the World War 2 tunnel guides in Gibraltar.

The guides recently handed over £1,800 to various charities on the Rock.

The Tunnel Guides, pictured above, have been providing tours to the general public since as far back as 1974 and over the years a wide range of charities have benefitted from these tours.

The latest donations were:

- Red Cross Disaster Relief – Climate Centre (in support of Hurricane Dorian) – £1,000
- Law Enforcement Torch Run – Special Olympics Gibraltar – £200
- Brain Tumour Research & Support Group (Ellie's Fund) – £200
- BLESMA (Limbless Veterans) – £200
- Spanish Stray Dogs UK – Rehoming dogs from the Campo de Gibraltar and surrounding area to forever homes in UK – £200

There are currently 15 volunteer guides who come from a range of backgrounds – military, MOD and civilian – and the team is led by Master Guide Pete Jackson.

Pete, an ex-Sergeant Major, is the font of all military knowledge in relation to the tunnels inside the Rock and is affectionately known as 'El Topo' – The Mole!!

Since 2015 over 4615 adults and hundreds of youths have booked themselves on to one of these tours and a total of £22,479 has been raised as a result.

View from France

Napoleon's best admirals remained loyal

THE GROVE REVIEW

AS we emerge from another Trafalgar season (I spoke at three commemorative dinners), it seems a good opportunity to see the view from the other side.

Established author Richard Humble has allowed us to do this in his new book *Napoleon's Admirals; Flag Officers of the Arc de Triomphe, 1789-1815*.

He uses the admirals' names inscribed on the Arc in Paris to give a very enlightened view of the French Navy's performance in the war of 1793 to 1815, 'the longest maritime conflict of modern history'.

It is too easy to argue for incompetence at all levels caused by the revolution, but this book counsels us to be careful about being too simplistic in our analysis.

It makes a convincing argument that the French Navy, 'be given more consideration than it has to date.'

He tries to undercut commonly held myths, that the 'revolution did not prompt a mass emigration of aristocratic naval officers, leaving an executive vacuum to be filled with inexperienced landsmen, and so making a string of French defeats at sea a foregone conclusion.

"The best of them stayed, and loyally tried to serve their country as the revolution followed its unpredictable course."

Humble demonstrates that only four admirals, including D'Estaing and Kersaint, were actually killed in the Terror, although many others had narrow escapes.

Nevertheless a significant number survived and 'while the Revolution squandered so much available naval talent with the one hand, it made abundant use of it with the other'.

One of the finest of these officers was Latouche-Treville, who was put in command of the invasion

flotilla that Napoleon was trying to use in 1800 to coerce Britain into a negotiated peace.

Nelson, the hero of the Nile, was put in command of a squadron to oppose this force. Typically, Nelson decided to attack but was decisively repulsed with heavy losses.

'Latouche-Treville had handed Bonaparte a victory out of all proportion to its modest scope. By the end of August 1801, the despondent British Government had entered peace negotiations, as cessation of hostilities being agreed on 31 October'.

It was a tragedy for Napoleon's cause that this very able officer, put in command of the Mediterranean Fleet, died prematurely as a result of illness first contracted on the abortive expedition to put down the slave rebellion in Saint-Domingue (modern Haiti).

With him in command rather than Villeneuve the outcome of the Trafalgar campaign might have been rather different.

1801 had seen other French naval success. In July at the Battle of Algeciras, Saumarez's attempt to copy Nelson at the Nile failed with the loss HMS Hannibal to a fleet commanded by Admiral Linois.

A few days later Captain (later Admiral) Troude under Linois' command outfought HMS Venerable and forced her ashore.

The most successful French tactical action of the war took place in 1810 at Grand Port, Mauritius. There Admiral Duperre assisted by Captain Bouvet completely defeated an overconfident British squadron of four frigates. The Royal Navy did not always win.

The greatest strategic French success of the entire period is, ironically, regarded as a great

British victory, 'The Glorious First of June'.

In fact Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse (under threat of the guillotine) did exactly what was required of him, holding off the British battlefleet from the vital convoy commanded by Admiral Vanstabel carrying grain to France from the United States upon whose arrival the survival of the French republic depended.

Equally vital was Admiral Vence's delivery of grain to France's Mediterranean coast, that quite literally saved the officer's head. These two admirals are not on the Arc but the author considers them of sufficient importance for special mention in an appendix.

One tends to forget some of the other achievements of the French Navy in this period notably Admiral Bruix's sortie from Brest to the Mediterranean and back in 1799.

The deteriorating situation for France following Nelson's crushing victory at the Nile forced drastic measures to retake some initiative.

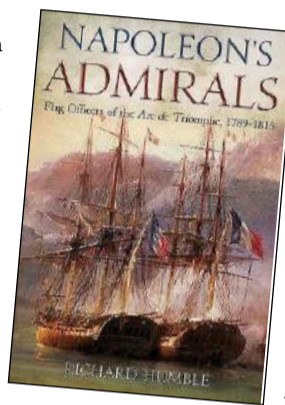
This led the Minister of Marine himself to take command himself to break the British blockade and take the Brest fleet of 25 of the line and six frigates to Toulon.

He then outwitted the British and united with 17 Spanish ships of the line, making the combined fleet a formidable force.

Bruix, however, did not consider it powerful enough to go on the offensive in the Mediterranean and returned to the Atlantic.

Results were not as great as they might have been but 'Bruix had handed the British Navy the biggest scare' it was to suffer before 1805, his 'cruise' also contributing to Napoleon's return from Egypt to France.

This original and enlightening work deserves a wide readership, especially among those about to speak about Trafalgar.



Veteran duo open WRNS exhibition

VETERANS from the Women's Royal Naval Service gathered at the Fleet Air Arm Museum to mark the launch of a new exhibition.

Guests of honour were WW2 veterans Mary Owens and Eve Warton as they formally opened the exhibition, *Pioneers to Professionals: Women and the Royal Navy*.

The two women, both in their 90s and living in Somerset and Wiltshire respectively, were surprised to find while reminiscing about their wartime experiences that they had served together at RNAS Machrihanish in Scotland in the 1940s.

Following an opening address by Professor Dominic Tweddle, director general of The National Museum of the Royal Navy, and introduction by Matthew Sheldon, director of heritage, the two women cut the ceremonial ribbon to launch the exhibition, alongside representatives from the Association of WRNS Yeovil, Taunton and Dorset branches.

Beginning with the brave pioneers of the mid-17th century, *Pioneers to Professionals* reveals remarkable stories of naval women through the years, including the inception of the WRNS in the First World War and highlights their vital contributions to all areas of naval operations.

Professor Tweddle said: "This exhibition was first opened at our site in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard to mark the centenary of the WRNS and so it's fitting that it has been reconfigured to uncover the often unknown but vital contribution of women to the Fleet Air Arm."

Guests enjoyed a tour of the exhibition, which includes artefacts and photographs from the early years of the WRNS to the present day.

There are log-books, drawings and images showing the trailblazers of the early 20th century; testaments to the mechanics, code-breakers and despatch riders of World War 2; and a huge collage of images showing the variety of roles undertaken by women in the modern Royal Navy.

For more details and to book tickets, visit fleetairarm.com

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Courting success at Wimbledon

The Royal Navy's Tennis Team returned to the home of tennis to close out a stellar season with silverware.

Following a three-year period away from the SW19 postcode owing to the construction of Number 1 court's roof, armed forces tennis was invited back to the home of tennis to stage the annual Inter-Service A event.

More than 30 RN players across four teams battled against their rival services for glory over two days of competition.

The return to Wimbledon saw the Royal Navy Tennis team take their preparations to new heights with a one-week training camp based in Majorca (home of Rafael Nadal) in early May.

With conditions perfect for tennis, the awesome setting of Tennis Academy Mallorca allowed the squads to get the very best preparation for the forthcoming season.

The slow nature of the red clay courts forced players to battle out long rallies whilst showing grit to endure the exhausting conditions.

The intensive training week finished with a fixture against a team assembled by the tennis academies' head coach. Whilst the home team had the advantage of familiarity, the talent and desire displayed from the RN players ended the week with a superb victory. Sgt Chris Jones and Lt Dev Chowdhury swept aside two of Mallorca's rising stars as they sealed a hard-earned team victory.

On return to the UK the RN Lawn Tennis competition hosted its annual championships. The slightly cooler weather did not detract from the quality of the event and the tennis. LH Sunny Parker, who had clearly benefited from the training she had participated in all summer completed a clean sweep of silverware, taking home the Ladies Singles, Doubles and Mixed Doubles trophies.

With the return to Wimbledon looming the RN teams looked to prepare their players for grass-court tennis, a much faster



surface than most others. The Men's and Ladies team used the facilities at Southsea Tennis Club by Canoe Lake in Portsmouth, where their coach ex CPO PTI Steve Losh, drilled the players on match play tactics and doubles awareness.

Meanwhile the Men's Masters team travelled to the National Tennis Centre for specialist coaching organised by RNLTA member Nick Williams, whereas the ladies masters competed against Southsea Tennis Club in a hotly contested pre-tournament fixture.

On the first day of the Inter-Service Competition the return to the All England Club was postponed with the rain forcing the grass unplayable. The contingency plan of Aldershot Tennis Centre was put into action and the Army Lawn Tennis Association played temporary hosts to the competition. The home of the Army tennis benefitted the strong army team in the Ladies competition, but not to be deterred the RN ladies battled hard with Cdr Katharine Armstrong recording a solid victory against her opponent.

The home advantage did not prove a decisive factor in the Men's competition with the RN claiming five out of their six rubbers.

AET Ciaran Losh produced a fine display of tennis under immense pressure as he claimed

the third and decisive set against his Army opponent, whilst Dev Chowdhury finished the day unbeaten. The first day played host to the Men's Masters competition which the RN men showed grit and steal but could not overcome the RAF.

The weather abated on the second day of the competition and the luscious grass courts of the All England Club were readied for a final day of fierce competition.

With the quality of tennis at an all-time high, the circa 100 strong cadre of spectators were treated to a thrilling finish to all competitions. Although the final shots of the day saw the Men's A team narrowly miss out on the title, the RN Ladies' Masters overwhelmed their competition completing the navy's tennis season with silverware.

Following a wonderful day enjoying the world-class facilities at the All England Club, all RN teams closed the season on a high note. The Tennis Association now has its eyes set on 2020 and its centenary year, which will bring more training weekends for all abilities, a warm weather training camp, numerous fixtures and culminating in a return to the famous courts of SW19.

The Royal Navy Lawn Tennis Association is looking for new players. For more information please contact: Stephen.lemmon413@mod.gov.uk.



Ace's high at European champs

EUROHOUND Ace leads Lieutenant Commander Howard Clark through a muddy course at the European Canisport Championships.

The Officer in Charge of the International Defence Training Maritime Training Team at HMS Collingwood, and his hound, represented Team GB at canicross at the championships in Chevetogne, Belgium.

Canicross is cross-country running with a dog and is one of the fastest growing sports in the UK.

Lt Cdr Clark, who achieved a national ranking of third in the UK last season, said: "I've been participating in this sport for six years and it was my goal to represent Team GB in an International event."

The International Canicross Federation event consisted of canicross, bikejor (biking with a

dog) and scooter (mushing scooter with a dog) disciplines.

More than 800 competitors and their dogs competed over the 5.5km course both days with the combined times determining overall position within each category.

Lt Cdr Clark said: "The weather certainly made the testing course that much more challenging with the mud being ankle deep in most places, but it was still great fun and very rewarding to be competing at this level."

Lt Cdr Clark and Ace finished 21st in the vet male category and were 87th overall out of 354 canicross competitors.

Team GB won ten medals during the championships.

Super seven ready for Invictus Games

SEVEN serving and former sailors and Royal Marines are among the 65-strong UK team selected for the Invictus Games in The Hague next May.

The wounded, injured and sick personnel will compete in nine sports: athletics, archery, wheelchair basketball, cycling, powerlifting, indoor rowing, wheelchair rugby, swimming, and sitting volleyball.

As the team was announced, they posed for photographs with the Duke of Sussex, patron of the Invictus Games Foundation.

The team includes:
 ■ Royal Marines veteran Pete Dunning, 33, who lost both of his legs when the vehicle he was travelling in struck an IED in Afghanistan.

"Being a part of the UK Invictus games team would really help me with enhancing my confidence and would also allow me to feel good about myself again," said Pete, who will compete in athletics, indoor rowing and wheelchair rugby.
 ■ Lieutenant Richard Gray, who suffers from an ongoing shoulder injury as well as cancer, will take part in cycling and swimming events.

The 39-year-old said: "To have my children see me wearing the Invictus team colours with all that they represent will prove to them that daddy is the master of his destiny."



- Former Royal Marines Lance Corporal Paul Gray, who left the service after being diagnosed with the chronic rheumatic disease Ankylosing Spondylitis, is competing in the wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby.
 - Former Leading Hand Russell Hunt, 33, will compete in cycling, indoor rowing and wheelchair rugby.
 - Aircraft handler Stuart Padley, 30, who will compete in indoor rowing, suffered a stroke in 2018, which left him with mobility problems and language impairment.
 - Lieutenant Commander James Rogers, who suffers from a chronic form of arthritis, will compete in cycling, swimming and wheelchair basketball.
- The 33-year-old submariner says since starting his Invictus

training, he has seen progress in his overall health.

■ Leading Hand Nigel White, who suffers from Ankylosing Spondylitis, will take part in archery, athletics, cycling, indoor rowing and powerlifting.

RN veteran Jonathan Platt, 37, is among the non-travelling reserves for the Invictus Games, which have previously been held in London, Orlando, Toronto and Sydney.

More than 350 hopefuls trialed nine sports for one of the 65 places available on Team UK and 89 per cent of the selected team have never competed at an Invictus Games before.

Team UK will be skipped by its first female captain, RAF Veteran Rachel Williamson.

Invictus UK is delivered by a partnership between Help for Heroes, the Ministry of Defence and The Royal British Legion.

Junior rates show seniors how it's done

HMS KENT took a break from her current operational deployment in the Gulf to challenge military personnel in Port Rashid to a five-a-side football tournament at the Dubai International Seafarers' Centre.

The event was organised by the Type 23 frigate's resident club swinger LPT Snowden, and with 12 teams representing Australia, New Zealand, UK and the USA it made for a truly international sporting event.

The competition was a fast-tempo, cup and plate knockout style format with seven-minute fixtures.

Matches were refereed by volunteers from other teams, who worked hard to ensure everyone enjoyed a fair competition.

906 EAW team 1 won the cup after a penalty sudden death against HMS Kent Senior Rates and Officers, with the losing shot being Lt Todd after an unfortunate cross bar rebound.

HMS Kent's Junior Rates however went home with some silverware after winning against 906 EAW Team 2 in the plate final.

The Seafarers' Centre provided a BBQ, refreshments and leisure facilities for the competitors to enjoy after their matches.





Tributes to top RM and cricketer

ROYAL Navy and United Services cricket in the Portsmouth area has been saddened by the passing of Captain Derek Oakley RN MBE, aged 92 years.

Derek was an incredible man of many parts, mainly in his 42 years where he served with distinction with the Royal Marines. A batsman/wicketkeeper, he represented the Royal Navy and Combined Services and, alongside cricket at Burnaby Road, played for his home town club Hayling Island. He joined XL Club in 1969 and was chairman of the South District for some time and probably set a record of scoring a 50 every three matches. Remarkable consistency.

He produced an 180,000 word memoir about his career which included him being in command of the first landing craft which started the Suez invasion on November 6, 1956 which was aborted when the US failed to support the operation, being an aide de camp to Lord Mountbatten, a guard of honour at the funeral of Winston Churchill, an officer during the Malaysian Emergency in 1950-1, the Brunei revolt (1962) and Sarawak (1963-6). He wore six medals and one was the MBE. He wrote six books including two about the Royal Marines.

Rear Admiral Roger Moylan-Jones said: "He was known never to go anywhere without his whites and cricket bat in the back of his car and on business, it always seemed to coincide with cricket match somewhere. He played so much cricket, we used to joke that by early June, he'd scored 1,000 runs."

I've had the time of my life in Alps

I RECENTLY returned from Bavaria after completing the Paragliding Elementary Pilot Course with 14 personal from all 3 services, writes *POMEM(L) Tony Miskin*.

This ten-day course was delivered at the Alpine Training Centre, Oberstdorf in Germany's Allgäu Alps.

The facilities provided were perfect, the meals provided plentiful and nutritious. The breakfast and evening meals were both hot and the lunch being a self-made packed lunch. The accommodation was very comfortable with all rooms having en suite.

The transport to The Alpine Training Centre was provided by means of a coach from St Omer Barracks in Aldershot. This was an 18-hour journey, crossing the channel on the ferry from Dover. There was one stop in Luxembourg around 5am, which was an ideal time to grab a bite to eat, coffee and stretch the legs.

Once at the centre we were met by the duty officer, briefed and allocated our accommodation.

We were then free to relax and enjoy the local area. Oberstdorf, a small town at the base of the Nebelhorn mountain has a wide variety of restaurants and cafes, plenty of walking or running routes. There is a gym locally which the centre has passes for.

There are a series of cable cars that take you swiftly to the summit of the Nebelhorn mountain (2,224m) for awesome views. The film *Eddie the Eagle* was filmed in Oberstdorf using the amazing Schattberg ski jump.

The course commenced on Monday morning with a warm welcome from Major Brown RE, the centre OC.

We were informed that the centre was blessed with probably the best three paragliding instructors in the world.

As the course progressed this was evident with superb instruction and guidance given by all three instructors. Due to the weather, there were times when we were unable to use the training slopes, but this time was well utilised with the instructors delivering the theory aspects of the course.

Whenever there was a delay, or a reason training couldn't commence the instructors provided an explanation why and provided other suitable activities.

The theory side of the course covered the theory of flight, the weather, pre-flight checks, aerial collision avoidance regulations and airworthiness.



These subjects were covered in the course exam.

The practical element of the course took place on the training slopes near the small town of Hack.

This consisted of three slopes in a horseshoe layout, which provided ideal training in most wind directions.

Before progressing through the syllabus we were required to show a consistent ability in controlling the

glider during various manoeuvres.

Once the Elementary Course was passed this then offered the opportunity for a mountain launch.

The first mountain launch would have been from Buchenberg down to the landing site near the town of Buching, a descent of approximately 350 metres. Unfortunately, the weather during the second week was not favourable so this challenge was not

achievable.

Many on the course, including myself, intend to continue this exciting journey to become a paragliding pilot.

This course was certainly the most challenging adventurous training activity I have taken part in, pushing myself to the point where I was prepared to run and launch off a mountain and feel the exhilaration of free flight.

Leanne rewarded for spirited inter-service display



● LPT Alex Stocker gets a grip

THE Royal Navy Judo team had a fantastic day at the Inter-Service Judo Championships, hosted by the Army at the Army School of Physical Training in Aldershot.

Despite having the fewest competitors, the navy fighters fought excellently in the team events and the number of individual podium finishes ensured that they beat the RAF, who took bronze.

Whilst judo consists of individual contests, team events can be created by selecting groups of people to fight others of equal weight and comparing the overall results against each other.

The navy excelled fighting in teams, with the Dan Grade Men's team picking up silver and the Masters (aged 30 and over) team winning gold.

The Kyu grade team (brown belt and below) fought extremely well, however with one win already stacked against them due to a last-minute injury, picked up bronze overall.

A judoka of particular note was AB Leanne Black, who, despite weighing in 10kg less than the next lightest female in her category, produced some stunning judo and took silver. Her performance earned her the Spirit of Judo trophy,

presented to the athlete of the day who best embodies the values of the Sport.

Lt David Ferguson, OOW1 on HMS Richmond and Association Secretary, said: "Royal Navy Judo has really been invigorated over the last several years; having beaten the Army in 2018 we have proven we have the ability to beat both services and we look forward to carrying this momentum forward when we host the champs in 2020".

The RN team will now shift focus to attending the big civilian competitions across the UK, where they will fight in order to gain a ranking against all GB Judoka ahead of the international events next year.

On the same weekend Cpl Colin Francis won silver in a tough pool at the World Masters Championships held in Marrakech, Morocco. As one of the top lightweights in the UK, Francis has had a brilliant 2019, also winning silver at the European Masters and gold at the Commonwealth Championships earlier in the year.

If you are interested in judo and would like to find out more, please contact Lt David Ferguson at HMSRCMD-WAR-OOW1@mod.uk



● AB Leanne Black took silver at the championships



Toughest of tests for academy players

SCOTTISH Rugby benefited from its association with the Royal Marines with sessions for selected players from the Fosroc Scottish Rugby Academy and the Scottish Futures programme.

The unique relationship with the Royal Marines has been ongoing since 2015 and, along with the annual specialised sessions targeted at individual player improvement, players from within Scottish Rugby's programmes have all had the opportunity to benefit from similar sessions which took on a team focus.

This season's partnership has been targeted at a younger age group than previously to introduce the players to these learning opportunities earlier in

their performance pathway.

The players took part in two full days of learning which took place at 43 Commando in Faslane and 45 Cdo at Arbroath, with the programme focused on the individual.

A player was picked by the Royal Marines from each session to receive the Commando Medal for the player that portrayed best the Commando mindset, spirit and values through the day in each of the challenges.

These included amphibious assault course training at Faslane, beach based physical challenges at Lunan Bay, classroom presentations by Major Sam Hughes from 45 Cdo, Major Michael Bell and Sgt Marv

Thomas at 43 Commando and various leadership challenges.

These awards went to Scottish Futures U20 players Eve Thomson at 43 Cdo and Shona Campbell at 45 Cdo.

Major Hughes, OC X-Ray Company, said: "Having the Fosroc Scottish Rugby Academy and Scottish Futures players come to 45 Commando was a real privilege.

"We have built an excellent relationship with Scottish Rugby.

"It offers a great opportunity to share valuable lessons between two organisations who both pride themselves on strong ethos, values and leadership – essential building blocks for any elite team."



Crew go round in circles

THE ship's company of HMS Defender took part in a 24-hour circuitathon to raise funds for the RNRMC.

The circuits were led by the ship's Physical Trainer Instructor, LPT Luke Warrington, and supported by LET Lauren Parsons.

Over half of the ship's company took part in the circuits, raising £625 for the charity.

LPT Luke Warrington said: "The turnout and work ethic from the ship's company was great to see. I know the charity that we supported with this event is close to a lot of people's hearts on board, so everyone who participated was willing to push themselves physically to help raise money for a great cause."

Each circuit was themed in a particular way, from running, to strength training to yoga and stretching and lasted one hour.

ET(WE) James Benn said: "When you're at sea it's great to do events like these to break out of the routine on operations".

The Commanding Officer of HMS Defender Commander Richard Hewitt added: "It's important even while on operations to take the time to bring the ship's company together to participate in sport and fitness to ensure we are robust enough to face the challenges of being deployed.

"I was especially pleased we were able to support a service charity in the process."

Rowing to the max

Standards remain high at indoor rowing championships

THE Royal Navy Indoor Rowing Champs held at HMS Temeraire saw a wide range of competitors, with all committing to meet the demands of maximal effort racing.

The event concluded with a ten-minute team relay race, by which time there had been exactly 79 ergs used to race: 36x 2k, 38x 500m and five teams. Suffice to say the standard was high, but also diverse and inclusive.

The men's Hwt 50+ 2k saw a win for WOPT Tiny Nash (Nelson) rowing a world-class time of 6 mins 22.0 secs, the same time as 2018, albeit again the multi-UK record holder and triple World Championship medalist was not content with his time.

Runner up was CPO Collin 'Mr Plymouth 1992' Leiba (MCTA), also a high achiever multi World/UK record holder, albeit at shorter 1k and 500m distances.

The men's Hwt 40+ 2k was won by Lt Stu Moss (HMS Vanguard) in 6 mins 24.6 secs, also a World Championship age group silver medalist in 2019.

Runner up was newcomer to racing Major Alex Pickett (RMR) in a personal best 6 mins 34.1 secs.

The men's Hwt 30+ 2k saw the fastest time of the day as Lt Cdr Adrian Long (Sultan) returned to racing after a few fallow years, demonstrating the value of a smooth and fluent technique, to win in 6 mins 15.1 secs.

Runner up was Sgt Dave Moody (30Cdo) in 6 mins 28.3 secs with LA(AH) Alan Williams (RNAS Culdrose) 3rd in 6 mins 43.3 secs. Sub Lt Sam Cass (RNAS Culdrose) was the fastest men's Hwt 20+ 2k in 6 mins 23.3 secs.

Women's 2k Hwt races resulted in wins for Clare Valentine (Temeraire) 50+ in 8 mins 16.0 secs, CPO Claire Drew (JHG(S)) 40+ in 7 mins 34.3 secs (ahead of CPOPT Helen Richardson's (Temeraire) 7 mins 49.9 secs), Lt Cdr Ruth Guest (INM Alverstoke) 30+ in 7 mins 53.6 secs (with LWtr Kayley Turner (3CdoX) 2nd in 8 mins 11.6 secs).

POMT Roxane Long (JHG(S)) won the women's Lwt 30+ in 8 mins 27.1 secs in her debut race.

These placings were all repeated in the women's 500m races with times (mins:secs) of Valentine (1.53.6), Drew (1.44.6), Richardson (1.49.8), Turner (1.46.9), Guest (1.46.3) and Long (1.54.9).

The men's Lwt (<75 Kg) 2k categories all saw national standard performances. Cdr Dan Connor (JHG(S)) rowed a personal best to win the 50+ in 6 mins 49.9 secs ahead of WO Mark Branson (Sultan) in 7 mins 18.2 secs.

POPT Rich Charrett (Sultan) won the 30+ in 6 mins 51.5 secs and Sub Lt Giles Piggott (Sultan) rowed the fastest Lwt 2k of the day to win the 20+ in an outstanding 6 mins 28.3 secs.

Winners of the men's Hwt 500m (mins:secs) categories were: 40+ Hyde in 1.24.4 (from Pickett 1.25.2), 30+ Long in 1.21.4 (from Williams 1.23.0) with a special mention for Leiba's world class 50+ time of 1.22.4. Men's Lwt 500m positions were the same as for 2k: 50+ Connor 1.36.2 and Branson 1.37.1, 30+ Charrett 1.34.2 and 20+ Piggott 1.27.1

The ten-minute team race provided an



● Clockwise from top, CPO Jack Greenan and Lt Cdr Stu Moss mid race as 'CPO Collin Leiba coxes the latter; Medic medallists, CPOPT Claire Drew, POMT Roxane Long and Surg Cdr Dan Connor; Lt Cdr Moss

opportunity for teams skilled in well-drilled changeovers to challenge others who perhaps had more strength, power and aerobic capacity – an excellent combination of individual commitment and teamwork to deliver performance.

Five teams competed rowing between 2,888m (1 min 43.8/500m) and 3,323m (1 min 30.2/500m) with the hastily arranged 'Lastminute.com' team of Pickett, Piggott, Turner and Ady Cherrington (Temeraire) coxed to victory by Valentine.

Indoor rowing is diverse and inclusive, providing opportunities for a wide range of ergers to develop

fitness and performance in the pursuit of well-being. This was exemplified by POPT Charrett's Sultan training group of Branson, CPO Mark Gains, CPO Jack Greenan, Graham Brusby and PO Nicola Harper, who have all made significant progress with erg fitness and performance as demonstrated in their 2k and 500m races.

RN Indoor Rowing moves on to compete at National, European and World championships over the next four months.

For details contact RNIR Team Manager paul.winton177@mod.gov.uk

Free golf on offer

OULTON Hall has partnered with the armed forces charity Tickets For Troops to provide complimentary golf at its award-winning Leeds venue.

Director of golf Jon Pilkington has persuaded other resorts in the Almarose-managed group to donate fourball vouchers so recipients also have the opportunity to visit other venues, while Oulton Hall is also offering an overnight stay.

The charity provides members of the armed forces, those medically discharged post 2001, and the next of kin of those who have passed as a result of their service, with the opportunity to attend events with friends and family.

Visit ticketsfortroops.org.uk for details. For more information on Oulton Hall visit oultonhallhotel.co.uk



Eleanor cheered during great run

MORE than 20,000 runners took to the streets of Portsmouth to take part in the 30th Great South Run.

Within them, Surgeon Sub Lieutenant Eleanor Whittaker a member of Southampton URNU was running to raise funds for the RNRMC.

She finished the race in good time and raised £251.25 for the charity.

Eleanor was overwhelmed by the fantastic atmosphere and crowd support at the event as well as her family and boyfriend who also came to cheer her on.

Gold rush

ROYAL Navy boxer Luke Chapman celebrates as he wins gold.

The Able Seaman was part of the winning Royal Navy and Royal Marines Boxing Team in Cyprus.

AB Chapman was also named boxer of the tournament after stopping two opponents during the competition.

On finals night at the Molos Amphitheatre in Limassol, he won thanks to a knockout.

The team competed in the Lemesia Box Cup, a three-day tournament which saw

opposition against teams from Cyprus, Moldova, Russia, Greece and Scotland.

The contest served as preparation for next year's Inter-Services Boxing Championships, where the aim is for the RN to pick up the converted title of armed forces champions.

The team came away with three gold medallists in Able Seaman Kieran Desmond RNR – 64kg Elite, Able Seaman Sophie Colebourn – 64kg Elite and AB Chapman – 75kg Elite.

There was also a silver medallist in Marine Dom

Stephenson – 81kg Elite and two bronze medallists in Able Seaman Keaton Hill – 69kg Development Boxer and Marine Graham Rowley – 81kg Elite.

Interested in boxing? Want to get involved as a boxer, coach or official, then get in touch with the team and follow their journey on Instagram @rnrn_boxing_team

● **Top right, AB Sophie Colebourn and, right, AB Kieran Desmond, both won gold medals in Cyprus; Far right, Mne Dom Stephenson picked up a silver medal**

