



# NAVY NEWS

APRIL 2020

ROYAL Marines from 30 Commando took part in the multi-national Cold Response exercise in Norway, where the Green Berets are honing the Future Commando Force as part of Royal Navy Transformation.  
*(see pages 19, 20&21)*

Picture: PO Phot Si Ethell



# Heat's on

INSIDE: INNOVATION, CARRIER STRIKE, FORWARD PRESENCE







# Carrier shows she's after week-long trip



**I** *magine all the people... lining Liverpool's waterfront to watch HMS Prince of Wales arrive in her affiliated city for the first time. Hundreds had Come Together despite freezing rain and gale-force winds to give the ship a warm welcome at the start of her week-long stay on the River Mersey. And never mind a *Hard Day's Night* – the week brought eight days of solid work for the ship's company who were flat out delivering tours, civic functions, flying serials and other events. (Sorry – we'll stop with the Beatles jokes now.) Because there is a serious element to the aircraft carrier's inaugural visit to Merseyside. It was a chance for HMS Prince of Wales to meet her affiliated city for the first time and an opportunity to educate their new friends in the north about the role of the ship.*

The Royal Navy is transforming into a force centred around carrier strike – supporting the ships as they conduct strike missions, enforce no-fly zones, deploy Royal Marine Commandos, deliver humanitarian aid, and build partnerships with our allies. HMS Prince of Wales is at the heart of the fleet as one of the most powerful surface warships ever constructed in the UK. She was also the centre of a packed military village set up on the waterside around Liverpool's cruise liner terminal. Static helicopters, Royal Marines display teams and big screens were just part of the efforts to show visitors what the Navy does. And with more than 100,000 people passing through the area over two days, they could hardly have missed the message. Brendan Taylor, 19, from Wirral, was one of thousands who toured the ship. He said: "I know something about these ships but never really appreciated what they

were for until now. I definitely understand the navy better as a result of being here. "I'm really impressed by what the navy has done here with the ship's visit – it's so cool." More than 20,000 people visited the carrier over two days, with many more passing through the cruise terminal area each day just to get a glimpse of her. Petty Officer Joe Hornby, 36, from Kirby in Liverpool, said: "I joined up in the careers office in Liverpool, and it seems like a long time ago. If someone told me then I would be coming back into the city on one of the aircraft carriers, I wouldn't have believed them. "It was the first time my family had seen the aircraft carrier and it makes it even more special that it is in Liverpool. The whole city was so excited." Of the many events which took place in the ship's hangar during the visit, one of the largest was a gathering of 2,000 engineering

students. HMS Prince of Wales hosted a 'Celebration of UK Engineering Excellence' – bringing industry partners together with engineers of the future. Meanwhile, the ship's rugby team rallied in support of a young player forced to have life-changing surgery for meningitis. The team travelled from Liverpool to Skipton in Yorkshire to play a charity match against the town's club to raise money for the family of seven-year-old Luke Mortimer who lost both hands and legs after contracting the disease just before Christmas. On the pitch it was a closely fought contest played in the truest sense of sportsmanship, ultimately drawing 24-24 and contributing to the £115,000 raised for Luke and his family. Captain Darren Houston, the Commanding Officer of HMS Prince of Wales, said: "The ship's company and I have been genuinely overwhelmed by the incredibly warm Merseyside welcome that we experienced.



trials to demonstrate carrier strike navy to the north of England

# no *Day Tripper* to affiliated city



"This visit to Liverpool has reinforced HMS Prince of Wales' proud links to the city, where parts of the ship were built.

"With 95 per cent of the nation's trade relying on the sea, a strong, capable and flexible Royal Navy is vital to our continued economic prosperity.

"HMS Prince of Wales and her sister ship, HMS Queen Elizabeth, lie at the heart of the Royal Navy's transformation into a carrier task group navy, delivering a revolution in capability that will ensure the UK's influence and access to the seas for the next 50 years."

At the end of the week it was time for HMS Prince of Wales to *Get Back to sea (sorry)* and continue her trials ahead of plans to embark F35 Lightning jets for the first time next year.

Words: Sam Bannister.

Additional reporting: Lt Gregory Richards, SLt Clive Bull

## Birthday surprise for 18-year-old sailor Rhys

ABLE Seaman Rhys Zanetti got a big surprise for his 18th birthday in Liverpool – when his family snuck on board to present him with a birthday cake.

With the giant aircraft carrier alongside in Liverpool, Rhys' family spotted an opportunity to make his birthday unforgettable.

As thousands of members of the public packed the ship's hangar for a glimpse inside the new ship, Rhys' mum, dad, stepdad and grandfather secretly joined them.

Rhys, a Seaman Specialist, was distracted showing members of the public seamanship skills while his family crept across the hangar carrying balloons and a birthday cake.

And when he finally spotted them, the hangar erupted into song as everyone wished him a happy birthday.

Rhys, from Yorkshire, said: "It was a complete shock, I was not expecting it at all. I can't believe they managed to get the whole hangar singing happy birthday."

Rhys' mum Natalie Holdsworth said: "The whole time we were waiting to get on board I was just thinking 'he's going to kill me!'"

"It was so nice that everyone helped us make this happen. I haven't seen him in about a month and seeing him here on his ship is such a proud moment for us as his family."



**VIDEO:** Watch the moment Rhys' family surprised him on board by visiting the Royal Navy Facebook page



Main image, HMS Prince of Wales alongside in Liverpool. Left, a statue of Cilla Black wears the ship's cap tally on Liverpool's legendary Mathew Street. From top, the ship arrives at the Liverpool Cruise Terminal, one of the ship's company visits the birthplace of The Beatles at the Cavern Club, an RAF Chinook takes off from the carrier while alongside, and some of the ship's company pose at the top of the famous Liver Building. Pictures: Stratus Imagery, PO Phot Jay Allen, LPhot Rory Arnold and LPhot May Luke

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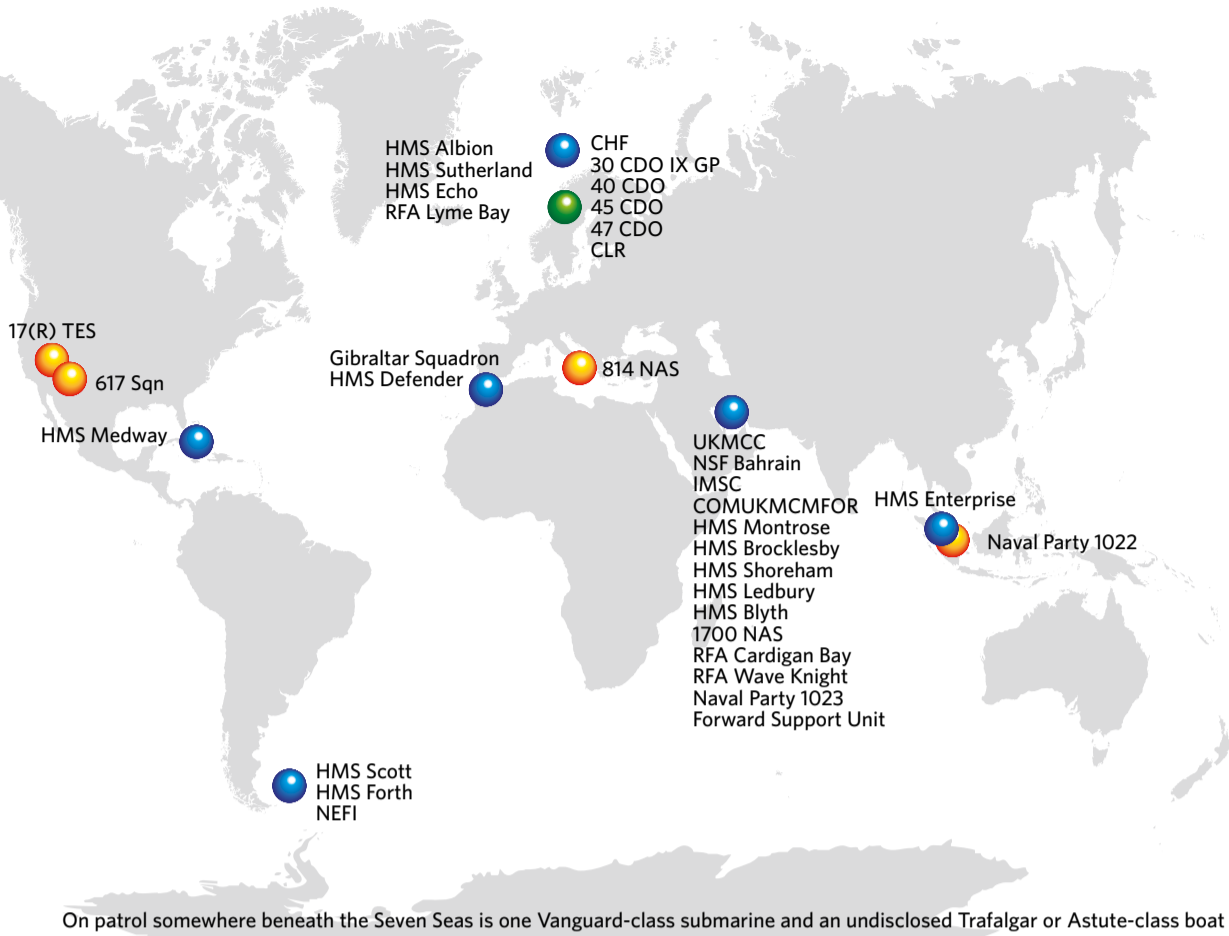
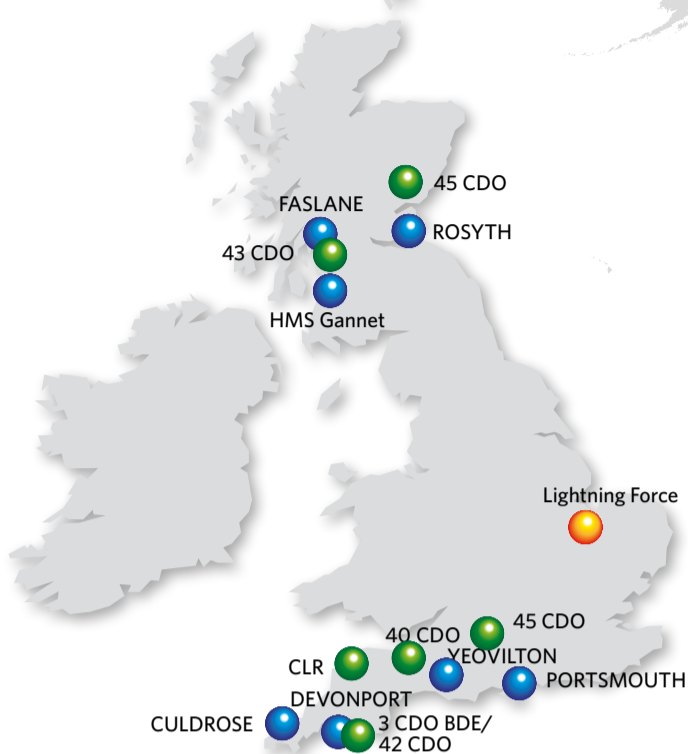
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**Training or on patrol around the UK**

HMS Trent  
HMS Mersey  
HMS Tyne  
HMS Magpie  
HMS Chiddingfold  
RFA Tidesurge

820 NAS  
HMS Westminster  
RFA Tideforce  
HMS Prince of Wales  
HMS Queen Elizabeth



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

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

TRANSFORMATION continues to be at the forefront for the Royal Navy – and will remain so for the foreseeable future. We start with the Royal Marines as they hone their **Future Commando Force skills** (see pages 19-21).

Ships, helicopters, armoured vehicles, commando units, medics, and specialist raiding craft were all committed to the Norwegian-led Exercise Cold Response, designed to test the abilities of allied nations to fight in one of the most hostile environments on earth.

The navy sent flagship **HMS Albion**, plus Type 23 frigate **HMS Sutherland**, survey ship **HMS Echo**, **RFA Lyme Bay** and Merlin and Wildcat helicopters of **Commando Helicopter Force**.

They were joined by Lead Commando Group **45 Commando**, small boat raiding specialists **47 Commando**, and **30 Commando** Information Exploitation Group.

While in Norway **47 Commando**, the Royal Navy's autonomous accelerator **NavyX** and the **Office for the Chief Technology Officer**, trialled the unmanned boat Mast 13, (see page 13).

Exercise Autonomous Advance Force 2.5 saw the Mast boat, a heavy lift drone from Malloy and remote-piloted air system Puma trialed by 700X Naval Air Squadron, put through their paces in the harsh conditions of the Arctic.

The Future Commando Force was also acknowledged by the **Royal Marines Band Service** at the annual Mountbatten Festival of Music (see page 14).

**HMS Prince of Wales** (see pages 2-3) spent eight action-packed days in Liverpool, the first time the carrier had visited her affiliated city. More than 20,000 visitors flocked to the ship, with thousands more viewing her from Princes Parade.

**HMS Defender** was returning to Portsmouth as *Navy News* went to press (see page 5) after a successful deployment to the Middle East. The Type 45 operated in support of Combined Task Force 150 and notched up two major drug busts.

Also in the Gulf as part of the Royal Navy's Forward Presence vision is Type 23 frigate **HMS Montrose**, currently operating with her Starboard Crew. The Port Crew will soon replace them and are currently undergoing their final training and assessment (see page 27).

Also part of the Forward Presence vision are the new offshore patrol ships, starting with first of the class, **HMS Forth** (see page 15), as she hosted Grenadier Guards for embarkation drills in the Falklands.

Her younger sister **HMS Medway** has taken over the baton in the Caribbean (see page 11) where she is beginning her Atlantic Patrol Task (North), a role carried out for the previous three years by **RFA Mounts Bay**, which has returned home (see page 7).

The fourth of the new offshore patrol boats, **HMS Tamar**, (see page 7) has welcomed her first Royal Navy personnel. She's the greenest ship in the Fleet – fitted with 'catalytic converters' which reduce nitrogen-based emissions from her engine exhausts by up to 95 per cent.

Minehunter **HMS Grimsby** joined a NATO force during an operation to hunt for World War 2 bombs in the fjord leading to Norway's capital Oslo (see page 15).

The Royal Navy's smallest survey vessel, **HMS Magpie**, is ready to start gathering information again after a two-month overhaul (see page 6).

The Navy's No.1 submarine hunters, the Flying Tigers of **814 NAS** scored several 'kills' when they joined NATO's biggest exercise in the Mediterranean, Dynamic Manta (see page 17).

The Royal Navy's new anti-ship missile, Sea Venom, which will be operated by the Wildcat helicopters of **815** and **825 NAS**, successfully struck a target during trials in the Mediterranean (see page 6).

The Royal Navy joined French and US naval forces (see page 9) for the annual Omani-led exercise Khunjar Hadd. **RFA Cardigan Bay** was joined by three minehunters, **HMS Brocklesby**, **Ledbury** and **Shoreham**.

The Ministry of Defence has placed a £330m contract with defence firm Thales (see page 6) for combat mast and sonar systems for the Royal Navy's **Dreadnought**-class nuclear deterrent submarines.

Finally, **First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin** revealed that the Royal Navy has bought its largest unmanned submarine (see page 26) which may revolutionise underwater warfare. The 100ft craft will have a range of up to 3,000 nautical miles.

# We are levelling the playing field

## VIEW BRIDGE from the BRIDGE

MARCH 8 was international Women's Day, helping nations worldwide eliminate discrimination against women.

There were events across the Royal Navy to mark the contribution of women to our service, now and throughout history.

At the heart of the celebrations was the Naval Servicewomen's Network Conference, which attracted nearly 250 people to RNAS Yeovilton, including the Princess Royal, Admiral and Chief Commandant of Women in the Royal Navy, see page 28 and the award winners are pictured below.

Speaking there, the First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin remarked that it was an unusual experience for him to address a room where women outnumbered men, and to have to call the senior person present "ma'am."

And the fact that this is so unusual is something that the Royal Navy is working hard to correct.

There has been huge progress since women first went to sea in 1990. All

branches of the Royal Navy are now open to women. There is a rapidly growing number of women serving in submarines, and the first women are currently undertaking Royal Marines training at Lympstone.

Chief Writer Janine Potts, pictured below first left, was enthusiastic about the opportunities available.

"Women continue to directly support operational capability all round the world," she said. "From my perspective, the support and encouragement that I have had throughout my career from both male and female colleagues has allowed me to expand my horizons and fulfil potential I didn't realise I had when I joined up."

The First Sea Lord announced at the conference that he is targeting 30 per cent of the Royal Navy to be female by 2030, as a step towards becoming properly representative of the society we serve.

There are many things we are doing to create a more inclusive service, from using gender-neutral language to creating better childcare facilities.

And following on from the broad Naval Servicewomen's events, there will be a series of events to mark Lesbian Visibility Week from April 20.

CPO Potts supported these initiatives.

"Seeing how important the conversation is about re-defining the 'cultural norms' on gender and its support from the very top of the Royal Navy leadership, I am confident that every woman has the opportunity to fulfil their potential whilst continuing to add real value and feel a true sense of belonging," she said.

One of the most important elements of improving the experience of women within the Royal Navy is the role of male allies. Captain Steve Prest said: "I'm proud to be a #HeForShe ally – it's not about special treatment, it's simply about levelling the playing field so that our Servicewomen can bring the best of themselves to the fight as part of the team."

People are at the heart of the Royal Navy's Transformation journey, and the better we represent all sections of society, the better we will make everyone's lives.

But it is about more than this – more inclusive teams perform better, and that means on the front line as well as at home.

Captain Prest was passionate about this. "Make sure the women in your team feel just as much a part of it as everyone else. It is not only the right thing to do, but your life and the fight may depend on it."

*Inspirational women, see page 16*



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## COMLSG... almost all at sea

DID you hear the one about the task group that was in four places at once?

True story. That's the Littoral Strike Group. In Norway. Off Norway. In Plymouth. In Bahrain. Simultaneously. Well, the staff were. Keen to prove the effectiveness and adaptability of the newly-renamed group (previous known as the Amphibious Task Group), Commodore James Parkin cast his staff evenly around the globe.

He is directing Operation Sentinel, the relatively-new security mission in the Middle focused on the safe passage of maritime trade in and out of the Gulf – a mission established under the banner of the International Maritime Security Construct in response to a number of incidents last summer which threatened the freedom of navigation and free flow of commerce.

Meanwhile in Norway, the seafaring element of Cold Response saw Cdre Parkin's deputy Captain Phil Dennis and staff aboard the Dutch assault ship Johan de Witt in the first roll-out of the Anglo-Dutch amphibious force for six years.

Ashore more staff were in the Norwegian Joint HQ in the Arctic port of Bodø overseeing the overall running of the NATO exercise... which was cut short by the coronavirus pandemic.

And back at the strike group's home in RMB Stonehouse, the remaining staff continue to plan for the main task group deployment of the year, Operation Gunnr, to the Mediterranean and involving exercises with NATO nations and other allies to test the individual and collective responses to a global crisis.

"Although we are meant to deploy as a forward unit, we are in very unusual times," said Commodore Parkin.

"As the very-high-readiness battlestaff, we have to be adaptable by our very nature.

"The fact that my staff are deployed thousands of miles apart shows the adaptability and resolve of the men and women who make up the nation's 'break glass' command and control capability."

# Def shepherd

OVER £13m of illegal drugs seized. Thirty-eight tankers and containerships – 1.6 million tonnes of cargo – safely accompanied. Two hundred and twenty-two days away from home.

These are just some of the statistics which only scratch the surface of the achievements by HMS Defender on a seven-and-a-half month deployment – almost all of it in the Gulf.

Instead of a six-month patrol of the Far East, the destroyer was diverted to the Middle East last summer amid rising tensions and joined other Royal Navy vessels – HMS Montrose, Kent and Dragon – accompanying British merchant shipping into and out of the Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz.

The Type 45 destroyer passed through the narrow waters at the gateway to the Gulf 28 times, accompanying 38 merchant vessels whose cargo totalled 1.6m tonnes – cargo vital to UK trade and economy (pictured below left).

Defender also supported international security missions: Operation Sentinel, the global response to the threat to shipping in the Gulf/Gulf of Oman and Combined Task Force 150 which attempts to curb terrorist activities in the Indian Ocean.

Her crew scored the biggest crystal meth seizure on record in the region: 131kg worth over £3m on the streets of the UK. That bust in December was followed in January by 2,500kg of hash worth £10m seized.

The Royal Marines boarding team from 42 Commando were instrumental in both busts; they spent more than 700 hours – over four entire weeks – at immediate notice to respond to incidents, and conducted at least 100 practice boardings of Defender from her Wildcat helicopter to remain at the top of their game.

In quieter times, the destroyer worked with the Indian Navies – initially in the Channel for annual Anglo-Indian exercise Konkan with INS Tarkash, then with a visit to Goa, a tour of the air station INS Hansa, hosting Indian sailors onboard (pictured below right) and an industry day allowing UK firms to show off their tech and highlight existing defence links between the two Commonwealth nations.

In all, of her 222 days away from her home base, Defender spent 184 in the Gulf and her 270-strong ship's company had just a fortnight's break.



All of which demanded supreme efforts from all aboard. Wildcat engineers toiled in hot, sweaty conditions for 3,300 hours to ensure the helicopter was ready for 220 hours of flying by the aircrew, who flew the equivalent of around the world while deployed.

The chefs and stewards produced up to four meals daily in Defender's galley, serving up 17,180 sausages for breakfast (laid end-to-end they'd stretch for more than a mile), 18 tonnes of meat, 26 tonnes of potatoes and 30,000 eggs.

The ship's office issued almost £425,000 in cash to shipmates ahead of numerous port visits, and sorted out more than 250 flights to and from the destroyer wherever she was.

And the fuel tanks took in more than eight million litres of oil (enough for 150,000 family cars) to sustain operations – including 11 'top-ups' from allied tankers on the move.

To sustain morale youngsters Daisy and Poppy Hamlyn – daughters of Defender's former Sea Viper missile system maintainer – set up Daisypop Parcels, collecting gifts and raising money to send presents to the ship's company, especially over the Christmas period, which was appreciated by all on board.

"At the end of the day we've been doing what we were sent here to do – and the atmosphere onboard rose based on our successes," said Leading Seaman Rico Macaspac, an operations room supervisor.

His shipmate Leading Engineering Technician Danny Holmes added: "Doing something like a drugs bust was a tangible result which gave the whole ship's company a real – and measurable – sense of achievement. "It really highlights the important work that we've been doing."

For the final leg of the destroyer's journey home, 39 relatives joined in Gibraltar, and 17 more in Plymouth, for the experience of life aboard with loved ones.

"This has been an ever-changing, dynamic, operational deployment for Defender," said her Commanding Officer Commander Richard Hewitt.

"The successes we've achieved are testament to our training and the mental resilience of the crew which allowed us to reinforce the Royal Navy's commitment to maintain a global maritime presence, 365 days a year."



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## Venom strikes in heart of Riviera

ABOUT to strike its target at just under the speed of sound is the Navy's new anti-ship missile, Sea Venom.

The Anglo-French weapon – which replaces the retired Sea Skua as the punch of Wildcat helicopters of 815 and 825 Naval Air Squadrons – successfully struck a target container on a trials ship in the Mediterranean.

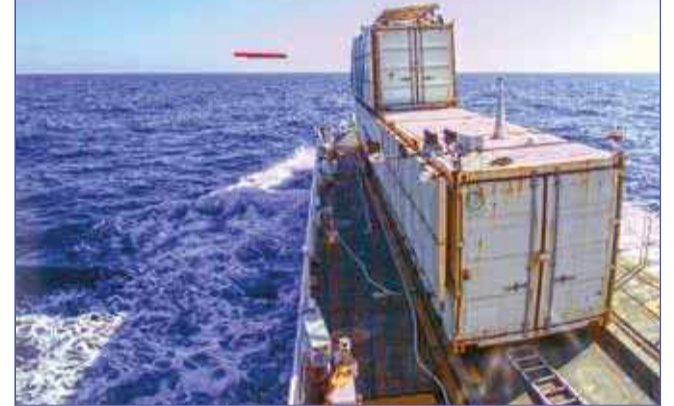
It's the latest 'hit' for Sea Venom which has been launched several times over the past three years off the Île du Levant, which is part French military missile range... and part naturist colony.

The latest firing – from a Dauphin helicopter – saw Sea Venom dropped at close to its minimum release altitude, then skim the Mediterranean on its way to its target.

As the missile neared its objective, the aircrew used infra-red imagery – fed through a live datalink – to tweak the location of the 'bullseye' for maximum effect. Sea Venom then manoeuvred at high subsonic speed and struck its objective.

Previous tests of the missile – known by the French as the Anti-Navire Léger – have focused on its ability to lock on to its target either while in flight or while still on its pylon aboard the trials helicopter.

It is one of two missile systems being acquired for the Navy for Wildcat. Fitted with a 30kg (66lb) warhead, it's intended to knock out patrol craft and seriously damage larger vessels, while the smaller Martlet is intended for use against lighter targets, such as fast inshore attack craft.



## More progress made on HMS Glasgow

WHAT a difference one month makes.

This is the progress made by shipwrights on the Clyde building the first of eight new Type 26 frigates since the end of January.

Two more sections have been completed, ready to be added to the already-joined forward segment of HMS Glasgow at BAE Systems' yard in Govan, while the RN's traditional paint scheme has been applied to units pieced together in what will eventually be an 8,000-tonne jigsaw.

The fore and aft sections are being constructed in two giant halls at Govan, where the various sections are transferred after work on them is complete in the fabrication facility.

In the block and outfit hall it's the task of engineers to join

the numerous sections together – including connecting all the cabling and pipework which runs through Glasgow.

Last month, the finished aft section of Glasgow was hidden beneath swathes of tarpaulin. Not so this month, where the canvas has been removed to allow you your first sight of the stern section as it stands, again with a fresh section waiting to be attached.

Once fore and aft are finished, they will be moved out of the sheds on huge transporters, joined, the remaining superstructure will be craned into place (such as Glasgow's bridge and her main mast), ready for the outwardly-complete warship to be lowered into the Clyde and towed downstream to BAE's other yard on the river at Scotstoun, where fitting out will take place.

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# 'Pie charts new routes

HMS MAGPIE is ready to start gathering gleaming nuggets of information again following a two-month overhaul.

After a hectic first 18 months of port survey work – notably around Barrow, where the nation's nuclear submarines are built, and Portsmouth Harbour to ensure the specially-created channel for the two new aircraft carriers hadn't silted up – the 37-tonne craft crossed the Tamar and was handed over to UK Docks Marine Services – Mashfords in Cremyll (within sight of Devonport's South Yard) for her annual service and repair.

The time out of the water on the slipway has allowed shipwrights and Magpie's dozen crew access to her hull to give it a thorough clean.

This most comprehensive maintenance period since commissioning allowed a number of updates to be carried out to her systems

and modifications to her endurance and living/working conditions.

"She conducted a series of checks and a basin trial before we got underway and headed back across the Tamar into our base port at Devonport," said Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Mark White.

"The next few weeks are busy for us, we've got a whole programme full of tasks and after a period of re-generation, we'll be back into the business we are task to do."

Magpie is the Navy's newest, and smallest, survey vessel, permanently assigned to inshore work – gathering data for the UK Hydrographic Office in Taunton on key civilian and military ports around Britain to ensure the safety of all mariners.



She replaced HMS Gleaner and is named after the Duke of Edinburgh's only command.

She can stay at sea much longer (she has two messes/accommodation compartments for up to 12 crew and a galley which can meet the sailors' needs for up to seven days), and is much more resilient in rough seas.

Magpie is also able to launch remote-controlled underwater devices to search wide areas of seabed for obstructions or mines.

Once post-revamp training is complete, HMS Magpie will spend the bulk of the spring and summer working along England's south coast, hopefully fitting in a visit to her affiliated town of Salcombe in Devon along the way.

Pictures: LPhot Alex Ceolin



## £330m contract for subs' eyes and ears

WHEN is a periscope not a periscope?

When it's a combat system mast. That is what will be fitted to all four Dreadnought-class nuclear deterrent submarines, ordered by the MOD under a £330m contract with defence firm Thales to give the boats their underwater 'eyes and ears'.

The outlay – part of a £31bn investment by Whitehall in the nation's ultimate weapon – will also see the latest Sonar 2076 suite (which encompasses bow, flank and towed array systems and is used by Trafalgar and Astute-class boats) fitted to HM Submarines Dreadnought,

Valiant, Warspite and King George VI.

The Royal Navy went digital with its periscopes with the Astute class of hunter-killer submarines. The Dreadnoughts will be equipped with second-generation optronic periscopes, combining electronic warfare technology with cameras.

The scopes will be fitted with many of the same features (night vision, the ability to record hi-resolution imagery) but inside a smaller, less obtrusive mast to make it even harder to locate the boat.

The same firm which has been providing the

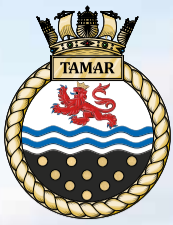
Submarine Service with all its periscopes since 1917 – Barr and Stroud, which is now part of the Thales group – will design and build the mast at its Govan site, assisted by experts in Crawley.

The sonar system will be developed at Thales' sites in Templecombe, Somerset, and Stockport.

The double contract will create 170 jobs and secure 350 more across the UK.

Work on Dreadnought and Valiant is well under way with the former due to take over from the first Vanguard-class submarine to retire in the early 2030s.





# Sailors breathe life into the Royal Navy's greenest ship

THE mess decks, passages and compartments of Britain's newest – and greenest – warship echo with Jackspeak as 40 sailors take charge of HMS Tamar.

Just one day after the fourth of five second-generation River-class ships was formally transferred to the Royal Navy by builders BAE Systems, 40 men and women filed up the gangway to begin turning Tamar into a living, breathing warship.

They started with a first meal for everyone – plus some of the BAE engineers and shipwrights who've built her – the Royal Navy favourite: cheesy, hammy, egg (also known as a cheesy wham bam, or cheese, ham and egg on toast).

Tamar was formally 'named' (rather than launched) in March last year in the presence of her

sponsor, Lady Brigitte Peach.

The ship regards herself as a 'Batch 2 Batch 2 River-class offshore patrol vessel' with some marked changes/improvements over her older sisters Forth, Medway and Trent.

Although the fundamentals are the same – 2,000 tonnes, 6,000-mile range, Merlin-capable flight deck, 30mm main gun, accommodation for up to 50 Royal Marines – the internal layout has been altered.

Perhaps most interestingly, she's the 'greenest' ship in the Fleet – fitted with 'catalytic converters' which reduce nitrogen-based emissions from her engine exhausts by up to 95 per cent.

The first crew joined in November – when Tamar also conducted her sea trials – but the bulk of the

ship's company only arrived on the Clyde at the beginning of February – raising the curtain on a hectic few weeks.

"The ship's company moving on board is a considerable achievement considering the bulk of them only joined three weeks ago," said Lieutenant Commander Michael Hutchinson, Tamar's first commanding officer.

"The team have worked extremely hard to ensure that they have achieved the necessary level of training to move onboard safely and complete this really important milestone in our generation."

Weather allowing, they'll take Tamar to sea for the first time as a Royal Navy warship this month, conduct a short period of safety and engineering

training and trials, then make their maiden entry into Portsmouth.

The rest of the year will be spent conducting trials and training to prepare Tamar for her inaugural deployment.

Like her sisters Forth and Medway (and, in the autumn, HMS Trent), will be dispatched long-term under the banner of Forward Presence, operating ships out of ports around the globe, rotating the crew every few weeks to keep the vessels on patrol longer. The final ship in the class, HMS Spey, is undergoing fitting out before she too is handed over.

Picture:s BAE Systems

# Well done Mounts Bay

## 'Bay Team' welcomed home after Caribbean success

RFA Mounts Bay has returned to the UK after her successful three-year Caribbean deployment.

The ship received a warm welcome as she arrived in Portland, Dorset.

She's been away for more than 1,000 days – over half of them at sea – having clocked up nearly 90,000 miles and visited 32 different ports.

The ship first arrived in the region in the autumn of 2017 as part of Operation Ruman, the UK's military response to the devastation wrought by hurricanes Irma and Maria.

During a 33-day period, Mounts Bay and her team of sailors, soldiers and airmen from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Army Royal Logistics Corp was responsible for providing life-saving aid and support to thousands.

The start of September 2019 again witnessed Mounts Bay teams being called upon to provide essential

Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief at Grand Bahama following the destruction left by hurricane Dorian.

The Category 5 hurricane ripped through the islands with winds of 185mph, the worst natural disaster in the country's history.

Mounts Bay delivered and distributed more than 200 tonnes of water, food, medical supplies, shelter kits and hygiene kits to the worst affected areas of Great and Little Abaco islands.

During six days, personnel from 24 Commando Royal Engineers cleared 70km of roads to help isolated communities receive aid.

Her last success in theatre was a £40m drugs bust with the US Coast Guard at the beginning of February – is now making her way back across the Atlantic for the first time since 2017.

Commanding Officer, Captain Kevin Rimell RFA, said: "It has been an honour and a privilege to have been the Commanding Officer of Mounts Bay over the last few months of her deployment to the Caribbean.

"The impact she has had on the region over the last three years has been immense, from the hurricane relief efforts of 2017 and 2019 to the significant drugs interdiction in 2020."

He added: "I know Mounts Bay will be sorely missed by many. The many varied personnel from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Logistics Corps who have embarked over the period have displayed true professionalism, compassion and hard work in everything they have been asked to do, ably assisted by our counterparts in the US Coastguard – this has been a truly joint effort.

"However, the UK's enduring presence in support of the UK's Overseas Territories in the region will continue with the arrival of the very capable HMS Medway and, later in the year, RFAs Argus and Tiderace."

RFA Mounts Bay was unloading stores at Portland before heading for Falmouth for a planned refit.



● Capt Rimell is interviewed by BFBS upon Mounts Bay's return and (below) the ship basks under Caribbean-esque skies in Portland



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Pictures: LPhoto Alex Ceolin

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# Drugs haul for Montrose

SAILORS and Royal Marines bagged more than a tonne of cannabis when they intercepted drug smugglers on the infamous Hashish Highway.

The team from HMS Montrose recovered bales of hash from the waters of the Gulf of Oman – then found a secret narcotics cache hidden aboard a dhow during a two-day operation which resulted in a haul worth more than £6m on the streets of the UK being seized by the Royal Navy frigate.

It's the second haul of hashish seized by the Royal Navy in three weeks; HMS Defender captured two and a half tonnes of the drug. And it's the second success for HMS Montrose, which intercepted a cargo of crystal meth and heroin in October worth around £1m.

The latest success began when the frigate's Wildcat helicopter – capable of tracking more than 200 vessels simultaneously – came across a dhow moving through waters known to be used by traffickers.

By sunrise the next day, the warship had arrived close to the dhow's location, ready to pounce.

"As the sun rose over the Arabian Sea,



several packages could be seen floating in the water near the dhow," said Lieutenant Commander Charli Martin, Montrose's Weapon Engineer Officer.

"The packages were recovered and determined to be hashish. Royal Marine Commandos then boarded the dhow, securing it for search by a Royal Navy boarding team."

The master of the dhow admitted that the packages in the water came from his vessel, and after a thorough search of the dhow, the team found another cache of hashish.

Combined with the drugs recovered from the sea, Montrose total seizure of hashish was 1,045kg – worth an estimated regional wholesale value of US \$538,860, or £6m if distributed in Britain.

Commander Charles Collins, Montrose's Commanding Officer, said: "It was a proper team effort and just shows how HMS Montrose is like a Swiss Army knife of capability, able to react at a moment's notice to anything we are tasked to do."

Montrose, which is based long-term in Bahrain as part of the Royal Navy's Forward Presence vision to deploy warships around the globe for several years at a time, is currently working for an Australian-led international task group, focused on maritime security operations in Middle Eastern waters.

"Fantastic work by the crew of HMS Montrose in tracking this smuggler, stopping them from ditching their cargo, and keeping these drugs from reaching their destination," said Commodore Ray Leggatt RAN, Commander of Combined Task Force 150.

*New crew get ready, see page 27*

FOUR ships and more than 200 sailors led Britain's involvement in an international test of allied sea power in the Middle East.



The Royal Navy joined French and US naval forces who accepted the invite from the Omanis for their annual workout – Khunjar Hadd (Arabic for 'Sharp Dagger').

2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the exercise which this year focused on the ability of the four nations to keep sea lanes open – with the added spice of some board-and-search training.

Britain dispatched support vessel RFA Cardigan Bay and three hunters (HMS Brocklesby, Ledbury and Shoreham) to the Gulf of Oman – two fifths of the warships mustered for Khunjar Hadd.

The goal was to hone the collective

skills of four participating nations should they ever have to operate – or fight – side-by-side and to practise long-standing and potential future minehunting techniques.

Cardigan Bay embodies both present and future. For the present, she acts as mother to all four Royal Navy minehunters operating out of Bahrain, providing them with fuel, food, fresh water, ammunition, stores and, if needed, engineering support.

As for the future, for Khunjar Hadd she was home to a specialist US autonomous boat – as she was at the end of last year during the major International mine warfare exercise.

Run from an air-conditioned shipping container on Cardigan Bay's flight deck, the MHU (Mine Hunting Unmanned) system trails a sonar through suspected mined waters, beaming the picture back to the controllers to analyse... in the same way British mine warfare experts peer at sonar feeds in an operations room.

At present, the MHU can only locate mines. It cannot identify them. And it

certainly cannot destroy them.

So there were plenty of opportunities for dive teams to enter the water and counter-mine explosive devices sonars had located.

Sister ships Ledbury and Brocklesby led the way, methodically clearing a path through 40 miles of ocean. They found four dummy mines laid by exercise directors.

"Without doubt, Khunjar Hadd has been a huge success," said Commander Neil Griffiths, Commander of the United Kingdom Mine Counter Measures Force directing the actions of the British participants from Cardigan Bay.

"It proved – once again – that while we are individually strong, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

"It's a great opportunity to prove our ability to work together, to share ideas and best ways of working, as well as demonstrating

our commitment as a valued partner of Oman"

"I particularly enjoyed meeting my fellow officers from the Omani, US and French Navies and exchanging ideas."

Two sailors chalked up personal milestones mid-way through the exercise: Lt Fai Lee, on Commander Griffiths' staff, received the Volunteer Reserve Service Medal for ten years' service while Shoreham's ET(WE) Conor Hopwood was named his ship's 'sailor of the month'.

And as well as a chance for participants to work together, there was a chance to play together too as the Omani Navy hosted a day's sporting Olympiad for sailors to get to know each other.



Pictures: LPhot Rory Arnold

# Ships at the sharp end



Reference code: NAVY

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# Medway takes charge

## Jamaica first port of call as patrol ship handed tasking

THE baton in the struggle against drug runners and ravages of nature in the Caribbean has been passed to new patrol ship HMS Medway.

And she formally began that mission with a visit to Jamaica.

Since leaving Portsmouth in January, the second-generation River-class ship has been getting to know her vast patrol area: around 1½ million square miles of ocean – or about six times the size of the North Sea – roughly from Bermuda to Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados to the Cayman Islands.

With Bermuda, Martinique – where she worked with the French Navy and hosted local commander Rear Admiral Jean Hausermann – and Curacao behind them, the 40-strong crew took the 2,000-tonne patrol vessel to Kingston for an extremely varied visit.

Medway is stationed in the Caribbean for up to five years under the Forward Presence programme, spending more time on patrol in a region which is key to UK interests and security.

The ship has a three-pronged mission in the region: provide reassurance to British and Commonwealth citizens and promote UK interests; provide assistance in the wake of natural disasters (chiefly the summer/autumn hurricanes); and work with our allies in the region to stop the flow of illegal drugs from South and Central America to the USA/Canada and Europe.

So a meeting with Jamaican Coast Guard officials to discuss regional maritime security and joint training opportunities ticked all three of those objectives.

As did a defence engagement day to demonstrate the RN/UK commitment to the



● Main image, HMS Medway in Kingston; Left, Rear Admiral Jean Hausermann is welcomed to Medway; above left, personnel attended the 3rd Annual Jamaica-UK Fair; above right, stores are transferred to Medway from Mounts Bay

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ship's company that their "permanent presence in the Caribbean is a great reassurance".

And talking of great... Medway's sailors threw their weight behind the Government's long-standing 'Britain is Great' campaign to encourage people around the world to visit the UK/buy British goods.

The ship's company were guests at the 3rd Annual Jamaica-UK Fair held on the lawns of

King's House, official residence of the governor general.

The grounds were turned into 'little Britain' with red telephone boxes, a miniature Big Ben, an F-Type Jaguar, Mini Cooper, Scotsmen in kilts and Beatles and Spice Girls tribute acts.

Before leaving Kingston there was time for some of the sailors to head across to the Royal Jamaican Yacht Club.

And after completing a survey of the capital's harbour, Medway's navigator Lieutenant Rob Hutchinson was told by his Commanding Officer that he'd been selected to command one of the Royal Navy's small vessels: P2000 patrol craft or the fast boats of the Gibraltar Squadron.

HMS Medway took on responsibility for the mission – Atlantic Patrol Task (North) – from RFA Mounts Bay, who has been operating in the region for three years, see page 7.

The two British ships met up on the Dutch island of Curacao, where Mounts Bay offloaded some of the humanitarian aid supplies left over from last year's hurricane season – when she helped Bahamians affected by Hurricane Dorian – and transferred it to Medway.

To sustain her on her long-term mission, Medway has three crew – red, white and blue – who rotate through the ship every few weeks.

The first rotation – White going home, Blue coming out to join Red already aboard – was successfully completed in Curacao, and there was still time for the sailors to relax and enjoy the tropical idyll.

"After a hot and sweaty store ship with more humanitarian aid and disaster relief supplies, a team visited Mounts Bay for the handover and to learn about their experiences of the past three years operating in the area," said Commander Power.

"We've been inspired by Mounts Bay's success."



region attended by Britain's High Commissioner to Jamaica, Asif Ahmad, and defence attachés from the USA and Canada, keen to learn what the new ship can bring to broader operations in the Caribbean: Merlin-capable flight deck, 51-strong Royal Marines/Army detachment, raiding craft, 6,000 mile range, 30mm main gun, containers of humanitarian aid.

Mr Ahmad told Commander Ben Power and his





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# FIRST ENTRY



● Above top: Mast 13 enters HMS Albion's dock; above (left to right) 700X Naval Air Squadron launch Puma, Malloy heavy lift drone, HMS Albion in Norway, Private from Commando Logistic Regiment programmes Malloy drone

**As the Royal Navy and Royal Marines look to enhance future operations with the latest technology, unmanned equipment was put through its paces in the harsh conditions of the Arctic Circle** »

BOBBING around in a Norwegian fjord, MAST 13 waits for the expansive dock door of HMS Albion to lower.

The *James Bond*-esque boat has whipped across the icy waters to the Royal Navy amphibious ship to take part in a series of 'ground-breaking' trials.

Unlike other vessels and landing craft that have over the years entered the dock to deliver Royal Marines, equipment and various vehicles, MAST had one job – to sail through the door.

As simple as that may sound, the L3 Harris boat's every move is being controlled not on board but in the depths of HMS Albion. It is the latest unmanned technology being tested by 47 Commando and the team running the trials are relying on cameras and critical data and information being fed into the control centre.

Its first entry, and numerous others that followed over the next couple of days, were the culmination of a year's worth of trials run by the Royal Marines small boat specialists 47 Commando, the Royal Navy's autonomous accelerator NavyX, the Office for the Chief Technology Officer and main industry partner QinetiQ.

Exercise Autonomous Advance Force 2.5 saw the MAST boat, a heavy lift drone from Malloy and remote-piloted air system Puma trailed by 700X Naval Air Squadron, put through their paces in the harsh conditions of the Arctic (see more operations from the Arctic on pages 19-21).

It was the first time the collection of unmanned equipment had been tested in an operational setting, recording a number of milestones for the naval service's autonomous future. The trial supports the Royal Navy and Royal Marines' commitment to develop and take advantage of the latest technology while investing in future capabilities to enhance operations.

An artificial intelligence system to control all of this tech was integrated in HMS Albion, with industry partners welcomed on board to implement and oversee the system trials.

Along with MAST's debut in Albion's dock, the four-day exercise also saw the first time Culdrose-based 700X NAS have flown Puma from a Royal Marines landing craft.

Colonel Chris Haw, commanding officer of Plymouth-based 47 Cdo, said: "We wanted to operationalise the technology and trial it as part of a NATO deployment. This exercise also enabled us to also integrate technology as far as possible into a Royal Navy warship."

"Integration of autonomy equipment is a key strand in the development of Future Commando Force and the Littoral Strike concept. The future vision is of this type of system

being used to control multiple assets in different domains. This technology has the potential to be revolutionary within the naval service."

Albion's Commanding Officer Captain Peter Laughton agreed. He said: "This ground-breaking trial demonstrated how autonomous equipment will improve the capabilities of HMS Albion and the Future Commando Force concept."

"With only a short time scale to achieve the trial, I am proud of how my ship's company have worked with many stakeholders to ensure success."

Meanwhile the team of Royal Marines from 700X NAS were busy working with 47 Cdo on the first flight of Puma off the back of a landing craft. In the small confines of the vessel, they were able to set up the IT for Puma's trials and, with a soft breeze, launched the drone.

Its potential use in the naval service and its benefits are still being tested. But the commandos were happy with how the trials went, and how Puma dealt with the freezing environment.

Away from the water, on land in a snow-covered quarry, engineers and technicians from company Malloy were testing their heavy lift drone.

With a range of possible uses, from resupply of stores to unloading surveying equipment, the drone showed it could overcome the difficult conditions of northern Norway. For this round of Autonomous Advance Force trials, it was proving its capability in dropping underwater drones. It took on the challenge and saw, for the first time, a Private from Commando Logistic Regiment programme its flight.

The Autonomous Advance Force trials started last year in Cornwall and have since progressed to include more of the latest technology and more naval service units. The hope is to see commandos and sailors at the very centre of the AI control system, operating the equipment during live operations.

Col Haw added: "This series of trials has been ground-breaking. It is at the leading edge of technology and integrating multiple systems in the uniquely challenging physical environment that Norway presents, is a significant step forward."

"In November, after the second in the series of the trials, we were challenged to make this work in Norway in an operational environment and, in a relatively short amount of time we have made that happen. The speed with which we have managed to develop this system in conjunction with industry and multiple stakeholders involved has been impressive."



“ ”

**This technology has the potential to be revolutionary within the naval service.**

**Colonel Chris Haw,  
Commanding Officer of 47  
Commando**





● **Commandant General Royal Marines, Major General Matt Holmes, welcomed the Duke and Duchess of Sussex to the Mountbatten Festival of Music**  
 Pictures: LPhoto Barry Swainsbury

# Musical nod to past and future commando force

THE Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines performed to the Duke and Duchess of Sussex at a packed Royal Albert Hall at the 2020 Mountbatten Festival of Music.

The Duke of Sussex, who is Captain General Royal Marines and the ceremonial head of the Royal Marines, attended the prestigious event in full dress uniform.

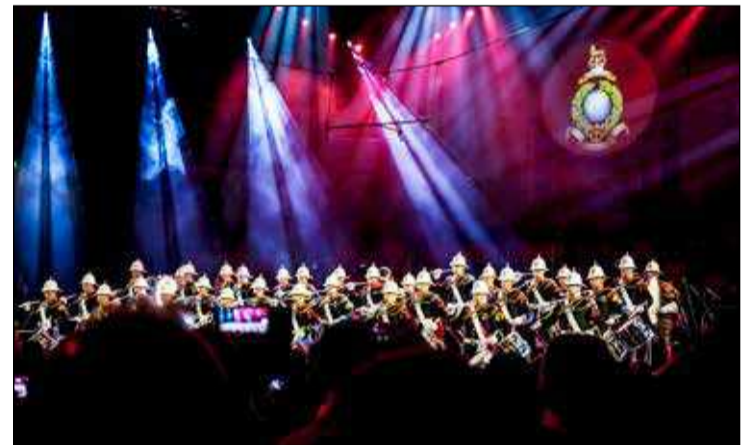
The Royal Marines Band Service (RMBS) performed a varied programme of music which had a Royal Marines Commando theme running through the evening in recognition of the Commandos' 80th anniversary.

Four of the five bands which make up the RMBS performed, showcasing a wide range of musical styles and instruments – from Latin pop and drumming routines to vocals and even ukulele.

RMBS Principal Director of Music Lieutenant Colonel Jason Burcham said: "It is a delight to play for the Duke and Duchess of Sussex on a special night marking 75 years since our forebears helped liberate Europe from the Nazis and 80 since we gained the commando units we support today."

Comping by John Suchet and videos played during pieces helped paint a picture for the audience of life in the RMBS, and also highlighted the story behind the choice of music being performed.

Several green-themed pieces were included – among them *Greensleeves*, *Evergreen*, and *Green Green Grass of Home* by Tom Jones – as an allusion to the world-renowned green berets worn by the Royal Marine Commandos. Music from the film *Gladiator* by Hans Zimmer had an obvious combat connection, while there was a more subtle link to Tom Jones's song *Delilah*, in that writer Barry Mason was a Royal Marine.



Wartime songs also featured in the programme, appropriate to this year being the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day.

The programme included songs from the days of the Entertainments National Service Association, an organisation set up in World War 2 to provide entertainment to armed forces personnel.

A rendition of *The Sound of Silence*, originally by Simon and Garfunkel, also gave pause for thought on the theme of mental health.

The RMBS represents the Royal Navy at around 1,5000 engagements each year, visiting countries such as Chile, Mexico, Romania, South Korea and across Africa.

Alongside their ceremonial role, two RMBS Bands are always at five days' notice to support operations.

This combination of ceremonial musicianship and mandated operational capability is unique to the RMBS. The RMBS

have been involved in every major operation since the Second World War, including the Falklands, Iraq, Kosovo, Afghanistan and the Ebola Crisis in Sierra Leone.

As well as looking back to the creation of the first commando unit, the evening provided a chance to consider the future of the Royal Marine Commandos.

The commandos' future focus is moving back towards a greater presence at sea and operating as small units focussed on special operations using cutting-edge technology.

This model has much in common with the first commando units set up to launch daring raids during World War 2, albeit that the equipment and technology involved now would have barely been conceivable 80 years ago.

You can watch the complete concert, hosted by former Royal Marine Cassidy Little, on Facebook and YouTube on April 18 and Forces TV will broadcast a highlights show on May 8.



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# It's Grim(sby) up north...

HMS GRIMSBY lines up as part of a NATO minehunting force during an operation to hunt for World War 2 bombs.

Ships from five nations scoured stretches of the 60-mile fjord leading to Norway's capital Oslo in the latest mission to ensure the waters are safe, 75 years after the war's end.

The two-week hunt saw HMS Grimsby find 18 bombs and mines in the approaches to the city.

During the German occupation of Norway, the inlet was heavily mined – and bombers also dumped their payloads into the fjord.

NATO's Standing Minecountermeasures Group 1 – charged with safeguarding northern European waters and ensuring they are mine-free – regularly conducts concerted 'historic ordnance disposal' operations, both in Oslofjord and off the coast of the Baltic States whose waters were similarly heavily mined and peppered with bombs during the conflicts of the 20th Century.

In the fortnight-long effort in Oslofjord, the NATO force – flagship FGS Donau, BNS Bellis, HNLMS Willemstad, HNoMS Otra plus Grimsby – located 38 pieces of ordnance, 18 alone by Grimsby (whose speciality is hunting in deep waters... and the fjord is up to 164 metres deep in places): 15 British air-dropped mines, plus three British bombs.

Despite near-freezing temperatures above and below the waves, the Faslane-based ship's divers still plunged into the water to inspect and identify objects located by Grimsby's sonar and its expert operators.

Unfortunately for them there was no boom accompanying the location of the old ordnance – the locations in which they were found meant detonating them, even in controlled explosions, wasn't safe; instead their locations were pinpointed and passed on to the Norwegian authorities who will update their charts and issue warnings accordingly.

"It is fantastic to work with our NATO allies and friends – it feels like we are a band of brothers," said Lieutenant Jim Marsh, HMS Grimsby's Operations Officer.

"Oslofjord is absolutely beautiful and it is great to know that we have helped to clear the left over remnants of World War 2 using the art of mine warfare.



Minehunters our always first in and last out."

The group met up last month in the English Channel and made its way into the Baltic via the Kiel Canal.

The first task was to practise together and fully integrate – serials such as rafting together with flagship tanker FGS Donau, refuelling on the move, force protection and joint manoeuvres – before heading into Oslo for a visit (the force is led by Norwegian Commander Henning Knudsen-Hauge Quick) and then focus on the detritus of war.

"MCM1 Crew One in HMS Grimsby have made a strong start to their Baltic deployment," said the ship's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Tom Gell.

"The group is a really good example of NATO nations working together to help

secure sea lines of communication and keeping the high seas safe."

That was reinforced by the group's commander.

"If the political situation between two parts becomes tense, and we need to move allied reinforcement to, for instance Norway, we know that most of these reinforcements will come by ships," said Commander Knudsen-Hauge Quick.

"Our task would be to make sure that the sea-lines of communications are safe for both merchant shipping, and allied reinforcements. If this is not done, you will also not receive allied reinforcements or civilian merchant goods."

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● Left, NATO minehunters and their supporting tanker, from left, HNoMS Willemstad, BNS Bellis, FGS Donau, HMS Grimsby and HMNoS Otra; Below, clockwise from left, Grimsby's CO, Lt Cdr Tom Gell, overseas a RAS with the Donau; Waves break over Grimsby as she works with the Willemstad; PO (Diver) Dale Magnus, AB(Diver) Mark Cheater and AB(D) Gavin Hughan off Oslo



## Soldiers practise raiding tactics with Forth in the Falklands



Picture: Cpl Andy Ferguson RAF

SOLDIERS were given a taste of the amphibious and raiding abilities of the Falkland Islands' new guardship as they zipped around in HMS Forth's fast boats.

One of the key tasks of the offshore patrol vessel – the first in her class of five second-generation River-class ships to deploy long-term overseas – is to move troops stationed in the South Atlantic territory around at short notice either for exercises, or in extremis, in defence of the islands.

She's been built with accommodation for up to 51 embarked forces – Royal Marines or soldiers, with all their kit – to support boarding, raiding and maritime security operations.

Forth is also equipped with Pacific 24 boats – the standard sea boat across the Royal Navy – plus a smaller Rigid Raider, favoured by small commando parties, giving her command team numerous options to deposit – or extract – personnel from beachheads, pontoons and other craft.

And it was in those boats that troops from Nijmegen Company, the Grenadier Guards – the Falklands' current Roulement Infantry Company – raced around Mare Harbour, the Royal Navy's base in the islands, to practise embarkation/disembarkation drills as part of a wider capability demonstration by Forth.

It's the second time in a little over a month that the ship has worked with the guardsmen. The soldiers filed aboard during Cape Bayonet, the regular exercise involving all three Services, and were deposited ashore courtesy of Forth's small boats.

After her 9,000-mile journey from Portsmouth

at the turn of the year, followed by her first patrols around the Falkland chain, the ship has spent most of the past month alongside at Mare Harbour undergoing maintenance to ready her for the onset of the austral autumn and winter.

"This small demonstration containing land, sea and air force elements was a perfect way to show how we can seamlessly integrate with our Army and Air Force partners in support of a wider objective," explained Lieutenant Commander Sam Fields, Forth's Executive Officer.

"It also allowed our ship's company to refine their skills in picking up soldiers from a beachhead and transporting them safely and swiftly back to Forth."

Forth also hosted personnel from British Forces South Atlantic Islands for a wreath-laying ceremony honouring those who lost their lives aboard SMS Scharnhorst in 1914.

The service took place at the site of the newly-discovered wreck of the German armoured cruiser, 92 nautical miles off the coast of the capital, Stanley. German Admiral Maximilian Graf Von Spee, perished with his 800 men when the ship was lost during WW1 on December 8 1914.

As *Navy News* went to press, Forth was making her first visit to South Georgia.

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# Inspirational women

A GROUP of schoolgirls make the equals sign to symbolise equality during an inspiring visit to RNAS Culdrose.

The Cornwall base opened its hangar doors to 50 female pupils from Mullion and Helston schools so they could meet inspirational women working in the Royal Navy.

The event took place in the hangar of 814 Naval Air Squadron to coincide as closely as possible with International Women's Day.

They met women from across the air station, including a fast jet pilot, helicopter pilots and observers, aircraft engineers, a survival equipment specialist, medics, firefighter and aircraft handler, physical trainer, writers and a weather forecaster.

The pupils were engaged, talkative and had plenty of time to chat to the women about a career in science and the military.

Helston pupil Katie Collins, 13, said: "It's been really interesting. I didn't know there were lots of jobs you could do."

While Grace Hirst, also 13, said: "I didn't know there were that many women who worked here," and Zara Taylor, 14, added: "Yes, you only think about pilots and engineers."

Also joining the groups was two girls who were keen to

hear more about possible jobs in the navy.

Kim Hennessy, 16, from Falmouth School, said: "I wasn't too sure what to expect before I came here and looked around the stalls. I found the survival technicians really interesting. I had an idea of coming into the navy but I want to go to college first. It's been good to come here and get more information."

Meanwhile, Maddie Stanfield, 15 and from Penryn College, added: "This all just confirms what I want to do in the navy – which is be a physical trainer. I've been able to see something from all the navy branches here today."

Lieutenant Tori Rose, who led the event, said: "We are trying to encourage young women to consider a career in the Royal Navy. At the end of the day, we've got more than 100 roles so I'd like to think there's something out there for everyone to consider."

"I think people sometimes perceive barriers to joining the armed forces, be that educational, family reasons or the fact that it is a male-dominated environment – but I would say from my experience that the navy has come a long way. I've been in the navy for 15 years now and they've introduced the Naval Service Women's Network in 2012. The purpose of that group is to improve the lived-experience of naval service women."



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Pictures: LPhot Kyle Heller  
Report: Graeme Wilkinson



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# Flying Tigers join NATO 'dip gang'

THE Navy's No.1 submarine hunters scored several 'kills' when they joined NATO's biggest exercise in the Mediterranean.

The Flying Tigers of 814 Naval Air Squadron spent a fortnight looking for five submarines lurking in the Ionian Sea off Sicily in a concerted hunt by for the 'enemy below' by allied air and sea power.

Nine nations – Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Spain, Turkey, Britain, the USA plus hosts Italy – threw their hats into the ring for the two-week-long Exercise Dynamic Manta.

The workout is one of two NATO runs each year to test hunters and hunted to the max – Manta staged in the warmer waters of the Mediterranean, Mongoose in cooler Norwegian waters later in the year, as the temperature of the ocean (as well as salinity and other characteristics) affects the performance and effectiveness of sonar.

A 20-strong team of aircrew – two pilots, one observer and one aircrewman for each sortie – supported by 40 engineers, technical staff, weather forecasters, safety and logistics experts, supported the Merlin Mk2 from Culdrose.

It shared Sicilian skies with five long-range maritime patrol aircraft, plus anti-submarine helicopters including the Italian version of the Merlin.

The aircraft all peppered the Ionian Sea with sonobuoys (listening devices placed along the route a suspected submarine might take).

If they picked up any suspicious underwater movements, the helicopters were directed in for the kill, first lowering their dipping sonar into the water to both pinpoint a submarine's location and its identity, then 'destroy' it – in the case of the Culdrose Merlin using Sting Ray torpedoes or depth charges.

The submarines were not taking part merely to be 'killed'; they practised evading the ring of steel drawn around the eight surface ships to score kills of their own.

For some of 814's team, this was all new – they were enjoying their first taste of Dynamic Manta, operating from Sigonella air base in the shadow of Mount Etna.

For others the exercise was an opportunity to hone skills on a scale rarely practised in home waters off the Lizard.

After each sortie hunter and hunted alike studied their tactics and methods to determine how successful they would have been in the real world – and improve them where necessary.

The squadron's Commanding Officer Commander Sarah Birchett believes her team returns to Cornwall "at the top of their game".

"We enjoyed some great interaction with our NATO partners, achieving successful 'kills' against our subsurface 'friends', operating as a 'dip gang' with our Italian EH101 colleagues," she added.

"My more experienced operators welcomed the thrill of the chase again and my junior aircrew enjoyed their first front-line NATO exercise with submarines, surface ships, helicopters and Maritime Patrol Aircraft in deep waters environment."

Rear Admiral Andrew Burcher, in charge of NATO submarine operations, said Dynamic Manta remained "one of the most challenging exercises" the alliance ran, and was vital as the advantage was constantly switching between hunter and hunted.

"With each iteration of a submarine that is developed, they improve the quiet aspect of the submarine," he explained.

"As countries continue to develop and build submarines, they become quieter. So it's important that that we improve our ability to find those quiet submarines."



● 814 NAS's Merlin Mk2 at Sigonella in the shadow of Mount Etna



● Left, the view from the cockpit; above, LACMN Carl Woolnough loads sonarbuoys ahead of a sortie; below, an Italian Todaro-class submarine in the Ionian Sea during Dynamic Manta



## Junglies make new friends in north

CLOSING in on the stern of the Spirit of Northumberland is a Merlin Mk4 of 845 Naval Air Squadron as the Junglies teamed up with the RNLI for some rescue training.

The battlefield helicopter left its native Somerset behind and swapped RNAS Yeovilton for Newcastle City Heliport for a few days to work with lifeboat crews from Tynemouth and Cullercoats.

The naval air squadron is charged with providing the search-and-rescue capability of the nation's two new aircraft carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales, everything from helping fellow mariners in distress to plucking downed fliers from the drink and – with the aid of a Royal Marines detachment in the back of the cab – rescuing F-35 Lightning strike fighter pilots from behind enemy lines.

The crews of the Tynemouth boat (a 42-tonne, 17m-long Severn-class vessel) and Cullercoats (who save lives in a large Atlantic RIB) also needed to get some winning practice in off the North-east coast.

On the ground, the aircrew invited students of Northumbria University Royal Naval Unit to look around the Mk4 Merlin – the principal battlewagon for ferrying Royal Marines into action with the Commando Helicopter Force.

And the fliers also conducted training with the local police close protection unit, looking at VIP transport using the heliport.

"The RNLI are consummate professionals and do an excellent job," said a Flight pilot Lieutenant Harry Saunders. "The weather was stunning and the training we managed to achieve helped keep some of our search-and-rescue skills sharp."

"All in all, a successful couple of days that allowed us to practise some key parts of our skill-set and work with some agencies that don't normally see Fleet Air Arm assets."



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## Portland milestone

THE waters lap around the hull of HMS Portland once again as shipwrights and engineers reach a milestone in her major overhaul.

The second youngest frigate in the Fleet has been 'flooded up' in her home base of Devonport and moved out of the huge shed where she's been for the past two years.

Having completed external work on her hull and superstructure – including the addition of the Artisan 3D radar on top of the main mast – the team at Babcock opened the sluices to the dry dock inside the Frigate Refit Complex and, once Portland was afloat, edged her out into the neighbouring basin for the final stages of the revamp.

The Type 23 is the latest vessel in the 13-strong flotilla to undergo the LIFEX (Life Extension) upgrade which will help see the class through to the end of their active careers (in Portland's case, the mid-2030s).

Aside from installation of Artisan, the improvements include new engines, ripping out the obsolete SeaWolf air defence missile, installing its successor Sea Ceptor, and generally overhauling machinery, computer and IT systems onboard, as well as refurbishing mess decks designed in the 1980s to meet the needs and expectations of Millennial/Generation Z sailors.

Once the refit is finished and sea trials/training are complete, the Devonport-based warship will resume her duties as one of the UK's dedicated anti-submarine frigate.



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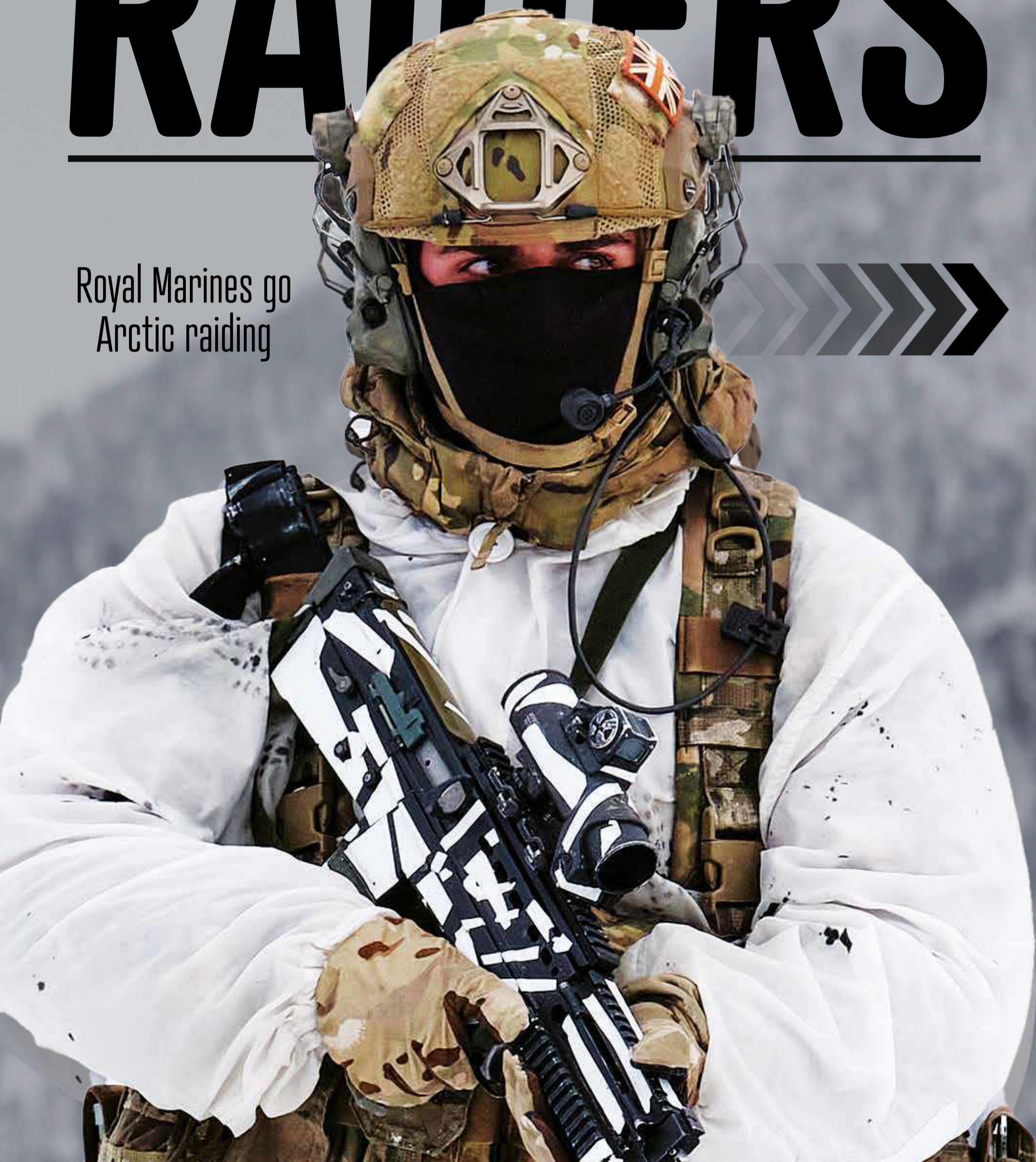
**THE JOURNEY DOES NOT HAVE TO END!**



Everybody needs good...

# RAIDERS

Royal Marines go  
Arctic raiding





# FROM THE SEA

**F**AR above the Arctic Circle on the spectacular and untamed coast of Senja Island, Norway's second biggest, one of the world's most potent amphibious forces is preparing to attack inland.

The island, in Troms County, 685 miles north of Oslo, is the stunning setting for 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines' largest-scale assault on Arctic turf in nearly a decade.

At first light, the first hammer blow hits into the nail as the multinational amphibious task group springs into their winter action.

The first hammer blow is the most vital. The raid. Those in the vanguard who must surprise the enemy and get a foothold on the terrain in one of the most inhospitable environments on earth.

Nearly three months of cold weather warfare training has led to this point. It has shaped the Royal Marines of 45 Commando's Battle Group into winter warriors who now have the knowledge and understanding of what it takes to survive, fight and move across the Arctic terrain.

Attacking from UK flagship HMS Albion, RFA Lyme Bay and Dutch amphibious warfare ship the HNLMS Johan de Witt, the marines' first mission is to cause havoc amongst their adversaries.

Embarked on Royal Norwegian Navy's CB90-class fast assault craft and Skjold-class corvette, a commando team covertly infiltrated the enemy positions set along the Senja fjords.

After being manoeuvred into position by the Norwegians, the commandos silently land on the shoreline using the small fast raiding craft of 47 Commando.

Once ashore, the Green Berets adopt the developing tactics of the Future Commando Force. Teams of 12 operate together, with each commando bringing their own specialisation to the group having been individually chose for the mission at hand.

On this mission, 45 Commando's Recce Troop, Royal Engineers from 54 Commando plus Joint Terminal Attack Controllers and gunners from 29 Commando Royal Artillery are drawn together.

After, hitting enemy positions the commandos coordinated a salvo of artillery fire and air support onto the enemy targets, quickly destroying their position and allowing the larger amphibious task group to gain a foothold on mainland Norway.

Shortly after, artillery strikes hit more enemy positions along the coast, enabling commando troops in Commando Helicopter Force Merlins to land and support the fight.

Viking armoured vehicles from Commando Logistic Regiment's Armoured Support Group were then moved ashore with 45 Commando force elements creating a beachhead which allowed for various logistical elements of Commando Logistic Regiment and 45 Commando to land onto the coast.

The larger amphibious movement ashore was backed by 47 Commando and Albion-based 4 Assault Squadron Royal Marines.

"Amphibious raids are the commando forces' bread and butter. As the UK's elite amphibious troops, we're one of the few nations in the world that has a genuine ship-to-shore capability," Warrant Officer First Class Nicholas Ollive Royal Marines said.

"Although conducting these sorts of missions may be second nature to some of our people, that's no reason to rest on our laurels; regular training in difficult conditions ensures that we remain at the top of our game.

"This is even more important in the Arctic where the consequences of a mistake can be even more serious and the meaning of the phrase 'train hard fight easy' becomes self-evident."



# THE AIR

**M**ARINES don't only come from the sea, by the way. They also fly.

While 45 Commando's Battle Group landed in northern Norway, to the south east Royal Marines of the elite Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron of 30 Commando Information Exploitation group were parachuting 'behind enemy lines' into Sweden alongside forces from the United States Airforce.

The elite SRS commandos and airmen from the United States Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) boarded an American C-130J Super Hercules from the 37th Airlift Wing at Bardufoss Air Station in northern Norway.

The crack force were then dropped into Kiruna Airfield, where they were tasked with seizing the area from an enemy force.

Following that the Super Hercules returned to Bardufoss to pick up the next wave of commando forces along with kit and equipment to support the mission in Sweden.

After the initial phase of the exercises, the Royal Marines of Plymouth-based 30 Commando and American forces underwent battle preparation in readiness for the next stage of the combined exercise.

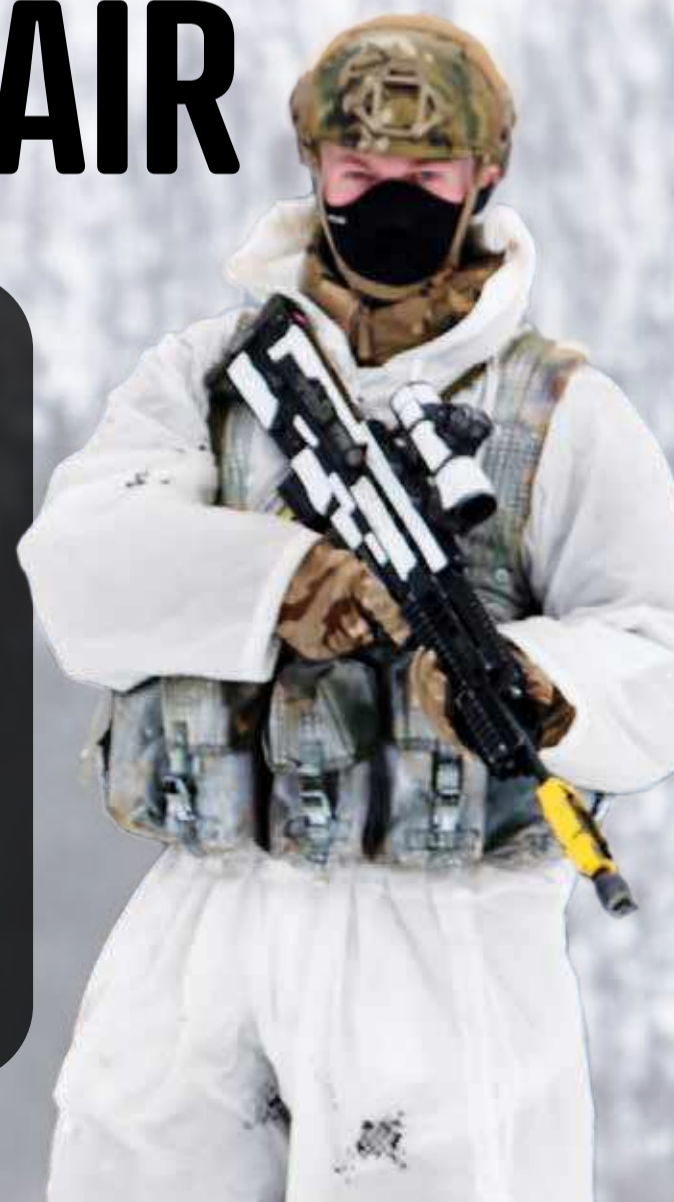
It saw the joint force travel 150km on skidoo back to Bardufoss. On the way they were tasked with taking key strategic enemy positions, giving the larger forces on these demanding winter exercise the upper hand.

This training was all designed to demonstrate the capability of SRS as an elite advance force, capable of wreaking havoc and forging the way for much larger forces to enter into a disputed territory.

The Royal Marines Assault Engineers have also been having a blast in the Arctic.

The engineers of 45 Commando have been on advanced demolitions training – working on how best to sabotage the enemy in the Arctic – and testing their close-quarters battle skills in one of Norway's state-of-the-art facilities that includes a train and 150ft ship to battle through.

These commando specialists provide engineering support to all >







# AND BY SKIDOO TOO <<<



> Royal Marines units and their skillset is key to the way the Green Berets are evolving into the Future Commando Force (FCF).

As part of FCF tactics, small, lethal teams will carry out destructive raids on enemy infrastructure. Central to that is the ability to incapacitate and disrupt adversaries but also gain access to wreak havoc. That is where Assault Engineers come into their own and bring a unique ability to the battlefield.

"We provide close combat engineering support to 45 Commando's fighting companies and provide the ability to speedily conduct sabotage and denial of enemy assets (weapon systems, equipment, vehicles and vessels), infrastructure and routes," said Colour Sergeant Ryan Selbie, of 45 Commando.

"Combat Assault Breachers operating within the Future Commando Force will be a key enabler to mission success.

"As the corps' method of entry, demolition (sabotage and denial) and counter-explosive ordnance specialists, we bring a unique and invaluable skillset to the FCF small-man team construct.

"Not only are we able to shape the battlefield by denying the enemy freedom of movement, but as we've learnt from recent conflicts, we are operating more frequently in the urban environment and this is where Assault Engineers come into their own."

Specialists in demolition, part of these engineers' remit is to deny the enemy freedom of movement around the battlefield.

During their Arctic outings, they have been practicing how best to deny ice bridges and roads, sabotage enemy rail networks and create obstacles such as abates, the felling and interlacing of trees across a route using explosives, in a cold weather environment.

Following that, it was onto the close-quarter combat training.

"One of our jobs is to ensure the Close Combat Companies can gain entry into buildings occupied by the enemy, getting our guys inside quickly means that they can do their jobs and complete the mission," added Colour Sergeant Selbie.

"The facilities and ranges in Norway have allowed for great training for 45 Commando's Assault Engineer team.

"The Norwegian's excellent facility has ensured that newer members of the unit are bought up to scratch and the more experienced people are put through their paces.

"Out on the ranges, training in Norway allows us to do some unique training, such as denying ice bridges."

Of course, such large amphibious exercises rely on a formidable presence at sea.

HMS Albion, HMS Echo, HMS Sutherland and RFA Lyme Bay were at the forefront of the multinational taskforce in the Norwegian Sea.

For flagship Albion it testing her versatility in the harsh Arctic environment, supporting commando operations with Lyme Bay and testing new unmanned kit (see page 13).

Type 23 Frigate Sutherland, meanwhile, was busy shielding ships from threats beneath the icy waves. Sutherland was the lead anti-submarine warship on the Norwegian-led winter exercise, which involved 15,000 troops from ten nations, including 2,000 from the UK, before Norway cut the exercises short to cope with the coronavirus outbreaks.

While Royal Marines raided inland via fast raiding craft and helicopters of Commando Helicopter Force, Devonport-based Sutherland was ready to pounce to protect the amphibious forces from subsurface attacks.

The 'Fighting Clan' remained on call to respond to events and incidents around the UK, but headed to the high north for a demanding programme of air defence, gunnery and joint anti-submarine exercises.

Sutherland most recently worked alongside the Royal Norwegian Navy's frigate HNoMS Thor Heyerdahl and completed a successful mission to locate and deter submarines in a Norwegian fjord.

Anti-submarine warfare in the freeze of the north poses many challenges in itself – the temperature of the sea (as well as salinity and various temperature layers) play a key role in how effective sonar is – making this essential training for the Cold Response hunters.

"Operating in the Norwegian fjords going up against a well-trained and worked-up Norwegian submarine who is operating in her own backyard has given us a fresh challenge and allowed us an opportunity to test our thought processes to make sure we're up to the task," Principle Warfare Officer (Underwater), Lieutenant Commander James Mitchell said.

"Our recent exercises have included operations with Norwegian frigates and a number of units from the Norwegian Corvette and Mine Countermeasure Squadrons."

Pictures by PO Phot Si Ethell, LPhot Stevie Burke. Report by Peter Howard.





# SNOW PATROL



PERSONNEL from two Royal Navy minehunting crews swapped the heat of the Gulf for the snow-covered Bavarian Alps for a spot of Adventurous Training.

Six sailors from MCM2 Crew 8 (HMS Middleton) and personnel from MCM1 Crew 7 (HMS Bangor) headed to the Naval Outdoor Centre Germany (NOCG) for Exercise Bavaria Surprise.

Navigator Lt George Walker, who helped arrange the trip, said: "This has been one of the best weeks skiing that I have ever done with challenges that I did not expect but enjoyed overcoming."

ET(WE) Cameron Murdoch said: "Brilliant opportunities like this are one of the many reasons that I truly appreciate my career in the Royal Navy."

He was lucky enough to attend a similar course a few years ago held in NOCG, and swiftly demonstrated that he had lost none of his knowledge of skiing, quickly advancing from the novice group to join Lt Walker on the harder slopes. This led to some friendly competition and high-speed racing.

For the remainder of the group the first few days were designed to teach them how to control their skis in such a way that they would be able to keep themselves and those around them safe.

Once grasped, these skills were quickly put in to practice. Meaning that by the end of the second day they were skiing comfortably round a blue run, which whilst not a difficult route can feel very steep and daunting to a novice.

The final few days were used to hone the skills gained, whilst also learning new techniques, with the slopes growing in height and steepness.

By the end of the week all those who had never skied before were flying down red

routes next to the Olympic skiing track.

Able Seaman Sally Halsall said: "Exercise Bavaria Surprise was a fun-filled week to help us wind down from a busy operational period in 2019. It also gave me the chance to learn some new skills and I definitely want to return."

Meanwhile the advanced group travelled to Austria and went 'off piste', meaning that they were no longer constrained to the commercial slopes.

This would have taken the group far from their comfort zone and made them think more about the other aspects of skiing such as looking out for potential avalanche areas or other dangers.

While skiing was the main activity on offer, the group also tried their hand at rock climbing, which allowed them to push themselves in another new environment.

Adventurous activities expose individuals to risk and push them outside their comfort zone in a controlled environment, in doing so this prepares our sailors for the real-life challenges faced by members of the Naval Service in the ever-changing maritime environment.

Lieutenant Ryan Bartlett, Crew 7's Gunnery Officer, said: "The expert tuition from the Naval Service Adventurous Training Team ensured that all were challenged whilst having genuine fun on Ex Bavaria Surprise. For MCM1 crew 7 who made up most of the group it provided an opportunity to bond as a crew following a busy 2019 which included a deployment conducting maritime security operation in the Arabian Gulf."

The week would not have been possible without the amazing support given by the NOCG staff who, with meticulous planning, ensured all preparations were in place for the crew, from accommodation and food, to supplying all the kit and training needed.

This amazing facility is open to all those serving in the Royal Navy allowing every sailor and marine to experience skiing in the stunning scenery of the Alps.

**Report: Sub Lt Ellis Green and Sub Lt Edmund Dymott**





## The Naval Children's Charity dedicated to supporting children whose parents serve or have served in the Naval Service

We help children with a wide range of needs and at times of a family crisis. Applications can be made at any time either directly by contacting the office or visiting our website and downloading an application form, or through RNRM Welfare, SSAFA.

Our book, *Zoe and the Time Rabbit*, to help younger children understand the long separations that can be a part of Naval Service, is free – just email: [book@rnrchildrensfund.org.uk](mailto:book@rnrchildrensfund.org.uk) with your name and address and we can send you a copy.



311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth PO2 8RN t: 023 9263 9534 e: [caseworkers@rnrchildrensfund.org.uk](mailto:caseworkers@rnrchildrensfund.org.uk)  
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## Put your money on the RN

YOU can now carry the Royal Navy around in your purse or wallet courtesy of the new £20 note.

Now issued is the latest polymer note from the Bank of England – replacing the traditional cotton-based notes – featuring J M W Turner and his most popular painting: *The Fighting Temeraire*.

A detail of the iconic 1839 image – depicting a steam tug hauling the Trafalgar veteran to the breaker's yard – plus a portrait of Turner himself feature on the reverse side of the new note, supplanting 18th Century economist Adam Smith who has featured for the past 13 years.

As with the polymer £5 and £10 notes, the new £20 features a hologram which alternates between 'twenty' and 'pounds' depending on the angle the note is tilted – one of numerous security features incorporated in the new-generation notes... useful as not only is a twenty the most common English banknote in circulation, it's also the most counterfeited.



## Reservists take keys to new Cambria

ROYAL Navy and Royal Marine Reservists in Wales can start turning their £11m new base into a home after construction was completed.

The new HMS Cambria in Cardiff Bay has been formally handed over to the military to begin the fitting-out process of the Royal Navy's sole reservist base in Wales.

The complex – which will also be used by Royal Marines Reserves, Wales University Royal Navy Unit and Cadet Forces – replaces a 40-year-old facility at Penarth in Barry, which has been Cambria's hometown for nearly 75 years.

Its successor is barely a mile from Cardiff city centre and its location at Roath Lock, on the northern edge of Cardiff Bay, makes it much better for supporting visiting warships.

Final checks will be carried out and tarmac laid, before furniture and office equipment is delivered to equip rooms and training spaces.

Among facilities in the new Cambria are classrooms, a fitness suite, changing rooms, administrative facilities and accommodation for up to 50 people.

Captain Mark Wyatt, the Royal Navy's Infra Capability Manager (Reserves), accepted the keys to the building with Colonel Nick Beard of the Reserve Forces Cadet Association, from constructors Morgan Sindall.

"I'd like to say a big thank to everyone involved for all their hard work, this building will make a huge difference for the Royal Navy in Wales," Captain Wyatt said.

"It has been a team effort from Associated British Ports, Morgan Sindall, the Royal Navy and Wales RFCA. The next challenge is to get the building ready for the Royal Navy move in early summer, and it certainly will be one of the crown jewels in the Defence estate."

The numerous units using the Penarth site are due to move into the new Cambria by the end of May.

## BRNC head to Annapolis

A DELEGATION from Britannia Royal Naval College attended the 2020 annual US Naval Academy Leadership Conference in Annapolis, Maryland.

The conference aimed to look at the part mentorship plays within a leadership role. More than 400 participants from over 45 military and civilian colleges attended. The BRNC delegation comprised a mix of staff and cadets.

Commander Training at BRNC, said: "The conference was as a great opportunity to learn about the US Naval Academies approach to teaching leadership, both through practical applications in the field, and in a theoretical sense in the classroom. These engagement activities between the Royal Navy and the US are always a great way to share experiences and learn from one another."

## Cakes for wildlife

PERSONNEL from Babcock's Quality Control Team at HMS Collingwood baked cakes to raise funds for the World Wildlife Fund's Australian Bushfire Appeal.

In just three hours the bake sale raised £242.79.

# Magnificent seven's epic 680-mile trek

A TEAM of sailors are this month walking the 680-mile length of the Western Front to raise funds for charities.

The men from MCM2 Crew 4 are setting off from Pletterhouse in the French Alps and aim to arrive in Nieuwpoort in Belgium 30 days later.

The idea came about after team leader LS(MW) Stephen Richardson was researching his family history and learned of a family member who fought and was captured at the Battle of Loos in 1915, which led to the discovery of the Western Front Way charity ([www.thewesternfrontway.com](http://www.thewesternfrontway.com)).

This organisation was established after Sir Anthony Sheldon discovered a long lost letter, sent by a young 2nd Lieutenant, Alexander Douglass Gillespie from the Argyll and Southern Highlanders. In this letter, he reflected on the horrid realities of war and suggested the possibility a sacred road which would span the length of the Western Front and give walkers the opportunity to reflect on the atrocities of the times.

Unfortunately Gillespie was killed shortly after writing his letter, and it was lost for a century but on discovery of his letter in 2015, the Western Front Way was created, and they have worked to map a route, for all to explore, and make the sacred road a reality.

LS Richardson is being joined by AB(MW) Jake Haynes, Lt Thomas Adlam, AB (Diver) Euan Wallace, AB (Steward) Darren Harris, LS (Diver) David Pearce and AB (MW) George McFarlane.

The crew will be first team to walk the full length of the route and will raise funds for Winston's Wish, who help children with bereavement, Pancreatic Cancer UK and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

You can follow the team's progress at: [https://www.instagram.com/western\\_front\\_600](https://www.instagram.com/western_front_600)

You can sponsor them by visiting: <https://www.sponsorme.co.uk/stephenrichardson/western-front-way-600-royal-navy-expedition.aspx>



● Training for the Western Front trek, the brainchild of LS(MW) Stephen Richardson, right



● From left, Lt Adlam, AB Harris, AB Haynes, AB McFarlane, LH Pearce and AB Wallace, who are all taking part in the Western Front trek





● Lt Lapenotière looks at one of the paintings

Picture: Paul Clarke Photography

## Historic messenger back in Trafalgar Square

THE man who brought home news of Nelson's death at the Battle of Trafalgar 'returned' to London to launch an art contest.

Lieutenant John Richards Lapenotière rode down Cockspur Street, as he did in 1805, to launch Postcards from Trafalgar Way.

The re-enactment was organised by The Trafalgar Way, Britain's first heritage coaching route, marking the journey that the messenger took overland from Falmouth to London, with a series of plaques at numerous coaching inn sites along the route.

This year, The Trafalgar Way launched their first national competition, to raise awareness throughout the UK of the historic journey, by inviting entrants to create an image of a feature anywhere along the 271-mile route which traverses eight counties.

Artists and photographers from age seven upwards can

enter and win prizes worth a total of £10,000. There are almost 40 chances to win, with top prizes including up to £1,000, plus special trophies and lots of runner-up prizes.

The Peter Warwick Memorial Trophy will be awarded to the best entry by a current or past serving member of the Royal Navy or Royal Marines. RNA and Sea Cadet members are eligible to enter.

Award winners will be invited to London on October 22 for a ceremony and concert which will feature winning entries.

Competition judges include Geoff Hunt, who is best known for creating the covers for the Patrick O'Brian novels, Jane Sherwood of Getty Images and WO1 Rob Harding, the Royal Navy's most senior photographer.

All information about the competition can be found by visiting [thetrafalgarway.org/postcards-competition](http://thetrafalgarway.org/postcards-competition)

## Digging deep to help staff at special school

ROYAL Navy officers took time out from their System Engineering and Management Course at HMS Collingwood, Fareham to help Baycroft School in Stubbington, a special educational needs school for secondary students with learning difficulties and autism.

Event organiser Lieutenant Chris Travers said: "I was particularly interested in helping this school because they are limited with the number of able-bodied students and I have a son who has a mild form of cerebral palsy, so it's a subject close to my heart. I wanted us to make a difference for the community and represent the Royal Navy."

The team was asked to complete two tasks. The first was to paint a dilapidated office so that it could be reused. Lt Travers and colleague Sub Lt Anna Wheeler carried out this work, giving the office two coats of emulsion and glossing all the woodwork.

The second task was to clear an area in the garden so that the students could use it for a farm project for potential livestock and arable farming.

Sub Lt Ricky Marriott, pictured, Sub Lt Vicky Cox and Sub Lt Alex Gibby completed this work in the rain.

Headteacher Marijke Miles



thanked the team for their hard work saying: "We just can't thank you enough for the simply amazing job. The staff and the students are abuzz with excitement. You have no idea what a boost this has been for our project."

Lt Travers added: "I was extremely proud of what we as a small group achieved in one day. We were all hugely proud and thrilled to have been able to make a difference to the school."

"I believe that we showed the RN to be an extremely professional and caring organisation who are extremely passionate about helping in the community."



● From left, LAETs Cresswell, Sayers and Anning, who have graduated from HMS Sultan

Picture: PO (Phot) Nicola Harper

# History makers on the fast track

**THE first air engineers on the accelerated apprentice scheme have successfully graduated from their Leading Air Engineering Technician qualifying course.**

The group, who joined the Royal Navy in November 2017 as Probationary Leading Hands, spent ten weeks at HMS Raleigh before heading to HMS Sultan.

The first 14 weeks were spent at 764 Initial Training Squadron, where they learned the basics of aircraft maintenance in order to enable them to qualify as a technician.

Following this intensive course, they proceeded to RNAS Yeovilton where they completed training on their aircraft type (Merlin Mk4 and Wildcat HMA Mk2).

As well as learning how to safely maintain the aircraft, ensuring they can take off whenever they are needed, this six-month period was also an opportunity to shadow qualified Leading Air Engineering Technicians in order to help them understand their future roles and responsibilities as aircraft maintenance supervisors.

The trainees returned to RNAESS in January 2019 to commence their Leading Air Engineering Technician Qualifying Course. This course provides deeper academic and technical training as well as preparing future LAETs with the skills necessary to act as an aircraft maintenance supervisor.

As part of their training all the apprentices have completed a Level 4 Certificate of Higher Education in Aeronautical Engineering.

As they progress in their career, they will obtain further qualifications, including a Foundation Degree in Aeronautical Engineering when they are promoted to Petty Officer.

Having graduated they will now undertake their Leading Rates' Leadership Course (LRLC) at the Royal Navy Leadership Academy, before they rejoin their air stations for completion of their Certificate of Competency and their first complement role on a Naval Air Squadron.

The end of the Air Engineering course now marks the successful completion of accelerated apprenticeships across all three engineering branch specialisations, with Marine Engineers also trained at HMS Sultan and Weapons Engineering from HMS Collingwood already serving in a variety of roles at the heart of operations all over the globe.

LAET Sam Cresswell said: "I wanted to go to university but didn't want to be sat in the classroom all the time. When I saw this come up, with a good career, offering good money, working in something I wanted to do, I knew

it was for me.

"I'd done a BTEC level 3 in general engineering and didn't really know aircraft, so it was quite scary to start with, but with the training pipeline and instructors we have it's not been too difficult to learn everything needed to carry out my job, so I'm not that worried anymore."

LAET Max Anning said: "I studied a BTEC Level 3 Diploma in Aeronautical Engineering at Farnborough College and then worked in the industry as an engineering technician. There are a lot of benefits to working with the RN, it's a great environment to be in and you also get to travel the world. The training has been great and I'm really looking forward to getting out there and working with the aircraft."

The ceremony also saw the first full class of Air Engineering Technicians pass out of RNAESS to proceed directly to the Lightning Force at RAF Marham.

The RN delivers 23 apprenticeship schemes across six sectors, with RN ratings joining a level 2 apprenticeship programme on completion of Initial Naval Training. At any one time ten per cent of RN personnel are on apprenticeship schemes.

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## Inspiring next generation

AN air engineer from HMS Sultan spoke to children about his life in the Royal Navy as part of 'Aspirations Week' at Beacon View Primary Academy in Paulsgrove.

Lieutenant Steve Cass, pictured above, talked to the children about his current role as staff officer within the Royal Naval Air Engineering and Survival Equipment School, his aspirations as a young man and his experiences since joining the Royal Navy.

In addition to answering lots of questions, he taught the children about the many diverse roles carried out by colleagues across the Naval Service and about flight safety.

The week was designed to teach the children about different types of careers and encourage them to consider their own ambitions and how the school can help them get there.

Other guests included a banker, a beautician a paramedic and a police officer. Former British sprinter Jason Gardener also made an appearance to share his memories of being an Olympic gold medalist.



## Take care of 'our' trophy

PORTSMOUTH Naval Base Field Gun champions from the Royal Navy have handed the official trophy over to the Field Gun team from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. (REME).

History was made during the 2019 Field Gun competition where the first and last ever joint winners, HMNB Portsmouth and REME tied on points.

REME came first, but with several penalties, whereas Portsmouth finished in third place with none. After an agonising wait, a joint win was announced.

REME field gun officer Major Ben Thomas and REME Staff Sergeant Louie Munton, travelled down to Portsmouth to be handed the trophy by Portsmouth Team members, AB (Diver) Tom Milner the crew captain, LH (MW) Dan Moseley and the Naval Base Commander Portsmouth, Commodore Jeremy Bailey.

Team REME will keep hold of the Brickwood's Trophy until this year's competition.





## Steve helps others on road to recovery

AFTER serving a full 23 years in the Royal Navy, Steve enjoyed a successful career in the NHS until drinking, depression and debt took their toll. With support from The Poppy Factory, in partnership with the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, Steve was able to find a new job close to home in Portsmouth, helping others who face their struggles with mental health.

"I joined the Royal Navy in 1985, when I was 18, and I served for 23 years. The Iran-Iraq war was one of the hairiest conflicts to be involved with because our destroyer was supporting tankers in the Gulf while missiles were going over.

"I served until 2008 as a chief writer, working in logistics and personnel. Towards the end of my service I did an online degree in business and management and although I didn't find transition to the civilian world easy, I was able to get a job with the NHS in London as an HR business partner. I worked for the NHS for seven years.

"In 2018 I had quite a few mental health issues. I split with my wife and I moved into a flat with my brother.

"I was drinking extremely heavily and I had depression from the pressure of work and the marriage break-up. In the end I'd had enough, and I resigned that summer.

"Over the next six months things really went downhill and I went through outpatient detox at a local hospital. I was £25,000 in debt with no job, and I was in deep trouble. I had no choice but to go bankrupt.

"I thought to myself, what are you doing? You've got no job and no life, now get your act together. After a year of sorting myself out, I wanted to get back into work because I've still got years ahead of me.

"I went to SSAFA for help and they put me in touch with The Poppy Factory. Katy, my adviser, sat me down and asked me what I wanted to do.

"I knew I wanted something local and not too stressful.

"We looked at jobs in the area and companies that worked with ex-Forces personnel, and Katy helped me with my CV and a couple of applications. She was a rock. It's about someone taking your side and pointing you in the right direction.

With Katy's support I was able to get a job as a veterans wellbeing adviser at Solent MIND, the mental health charity.

"When people come into the office I sit down with them, do an assessment and give them advice about where they can go for help with different issues.

"The job is a ten-minute walk from my home and I'm doing something that's close to my heart.

"I'm not in debt any more and I've been dry since June 2019, so at the moment I'm quite happy with the way things are going."

## Get your tickets now for base open day

ADVANCE tickets are now on sale for the HMS Collingwood Open Day featuring the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity Field Gun Competition on Saturday June 6 2020.

Tickets can be purchased online at [www.ticketzone.co.uk](http://www.ticketzone.co.uk)

During the open day there will be attractions, entertainment and displays designed to capture the imagination of everyone.

There will be an interactive zone including hands-on activities, while attractions for younger guests can be found in the toddler zone.

Older children can enjoy the free fun fair, while parts of the base are open to visitors, allowing them to see the Royal Navy's training equipment and experience some training first hand, including navigating a ship into harbour on the warship bridge simulator.

The gates will open at 9.30am and a free bus service will run twice per hour from Fareham and Gosport and back. Once the entrance fee is paid all entertainment and attractions are free of charge.

## Surprise visit to carrier for milestone

A 102-year-old World War II Royal Navy veteran was given a special surprise birthday visit to the aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales and HMNB Portsmouth.

Roy Harland, one of the UK's oldest surviving servicemen, was given a VIP tour of the naval base to celebrate his 102nd birthday.

The trip was facilitated by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and members of the Royal Navy.

Roy, who lives in Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex, arrived with his two carers before being met by PO Wright from HMS Prince of Wales.

From there, he was taken to visit the second

Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carrier and meet some of the ship's company.

"It's a lot bigger than I was expecting," said Roy as he saw the carrier.

The day continued with a look around Admiralty House and lunch at Spithead House with the Naval Base Commander, Cdre Jeremy Bailey.

This was followed by a driving tour around the dockyard and a stop-off at the Warrant Officers and Senior Rates' Mess.

Bob Field, Engagement Manager at the RNRMC, said: "This was a great example of partnership between the charity and the navy.

"By working closely together, we were able to facilitate this special visit at short notice. We hope Roy had a wonderful day and we wish him a happy birthday."

Roy served in the Royal Navy's Radar Branch during the war.

He is one of the few surviving personnel from HMS King George V and was on board during the Bismarck chase.

He also served on HMS Malaya and was on board when Ark Royal was hit. He has been awarded the following medals: 39-45 Star, Atlantic Star, War Medal 39-45, Arctic Star and Defence Medal.

# More support for naval families

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) is delighted to announce the launch of 'Strengthening Families – By Your Side', a new offer of support for all naval families.

This project is supported by funding from the RNRMC, as well as funds awarded by the Armed Forces Covenant.

Strengthening Families – By Your Side has been developed by the RNRMC and Naval Families Federation, in partnership with the Royal Navy, Kings Active Foundation, Home-Start UK and Relate.

Initial funding of project activities, provided by the RNRMC and the Armed Forces Covenant, is to be rolled out over the next three years.

The offer aims to provide comprehensive support to naval families whenever and wherever they need it.

This groundbreaking partnership will work collaboratively to address some of the key issues underlined



in the RNRMC's *Understanding of Need* report, primarily looking at the gap between the support available for dispersed families nationwide compared to support

available for those living in or near base ports.

The report highlighted that dispersed naval families, ie families distributed throughout the country,

are less likely than those who live close to base ports to be aware of available help and support and far more likely to have difficulties accessing the support available.

The project also seeks to tackle problems reported by naval personnel and their families to the Naval Families Federation and the Royal Navy Chaplaincy.

These can include a sense of isolation, relationship and parenting issues or mental health difficulties.

Mandy Lindley, Director of Relationships and Funding at the RNRMC said:

"By working together, we can deliver the improvement in quality of life needed by our service families.

"Strengthening Families – By Your Side is about early intervention and prevention, providing a range of services leading to improved family cohesion, conflict resolution, health and well-being, and increased levels of happiness."

More information about Strengthening Families – By Your Side will be coming soon to the RNRMC website.

## How you can join festivities for VE and VJ Days

CELEBRATE 75 years since the end of World War 2 and help the RNRMC continue to support sailors, marines and their families for life.

To mark both VE and VJ Day, we are asking for communities to come together to remember and honour the sacrifices of elder generations who secured our freedom.

Join us as we celebrate and commemorate this poignant anniversary with a range of special events and activities as part of our summer-long campaign: Victory 75.

**You can get involved by:**

**Hosting your own street party.** Request a 1940s themed fundraising pack from the RNRMC to help you step back in time and recreate the celebrations of VE and VJ Day in your home, pub, school or workplace and raise money to support our Naval community.

**Normandy Beaches Trek, September 16-20:** Discover the sites and scenery of the D-Day landings on this unforgettable five-day trip along the Normandy coastline. With a dedicated historian

joining us for the whole trip, you'll be fully immersed in the surroundings of the Normandy beaches which played a vital part of the WW2 Allied invasion of Normandy.

**Wartime Memories Archive:** Submit your family's stories, photos and anecdotes of VE and VJ Day on our interactive website and discover the real-life stories and photos from those who took part.

For more information visit [rnm.org.uk/victory75](http://rnm.org.uk/victory75)





## Digital directorate established

THERE is now a Digital and IT Directorate – aka Navy Digital – established to keep pace with both threats and technology in the 21st Century.

Navy Digital will provide the digital, data and information enablers for both front-line operations and the Senior Service's business support functions.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Nick Hine said the directorate would be the "driving force behind digital transformation across the service and ensure that we are on the front foot in meeting head-on the challenges and opportunities that the future will present".

With the future of warfare increasingly defined by dominance in data processing and the relentless pursuit and exploitation of digital capabilities, the Royal Navy must keep pace with rapid changes in threats and technology.

It will also be the task of the new organisation to work with the rest of the MOD to digitise the business and battle spaces, protect our data, deliver more effective and efficient IT systems and grow a more digitally-aware workforce.

Stood up on March 1, the directorate is due to be fully operational in April next year.

Admiral Hine added: "Our vision for Navy Digital is a function that puts information exploitation and digital delivery at the heart of capability development for the new Navy – built on a culture of collaboration, innovation and technical excellence."

Full details of Navy Digital can be found in Galaxy 02-2020.

## Volunteers here please

EVERY year more than 1,000 Naval Service personnel are engaged to support events in the UK and abroad, providing ceremonial guards of honour, marching platoons, street liners, firing and bearer parties, liaison officers and supporting staff to a variety of diverse and interesting events.

A busy programme of events is planned this year: the 75th anniversaries of VE/VJ Days in London, National Armed Forces Day in Scarborough, the naming of the Armed Forces Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum, the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, then November Ceremonies/RBL Festival of Remembrance, Lord Mayor's Parade and, finally, Public Duties guarding the Royal palaces.

Positions are available for most ranks and rates (usually AB/Mne to Lt Cdr/Maj) depending on the requirements of the events themselves.

Last year, LNN Dominic Giles of CTCRM took part in the RBL commemoration in the Royal Albert Hall then was on parade at the Cenotaph the next day.

"This was the most humbling experiences of my life. It made me feel proud of my service, my country and the public," he said.

WO1 Dean Waller RM, who works for Pers Ops Augmentation, said taking part in such iconic events offered "once-in-a-lifetime experiences for Naval Service personnel. The sense of pride and achievement felt by many of those who take part cannot be adequately conveyed."

For more details contact WO1 Waller on 93832 3533 or NAVY PCAP-PLANS EX WO.



# First Sea Lord uses tech conference to announce RN's 1st XL UUV

**THIS is a prototype of the largest unmanned submarine ever bought for the Royal Navy, a 30-metre-long submersible which may revolutionise underwater warfare.**

First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin used the Underwater Defence and Security Conference to reveal that a contract has been placed with a UK firm for the Senior Service's first 'extra large' autonomous underwater vehicle.

Plymouth-based MSubs Ltd are to provide the senior service with the 100ft-long underwater vehicle, which has a range of up to 3,000 nautical miles.

"I am really excited by the possibilities that this offers to increase our reach and lethality, improve our efficiency and reduce the number of people we have to put in harm's way," said Admiral Radakin.

Acquired through the Defence and Securities Accelerator – the collaboration between the MOD, industry and academia to quicken procurement and develop new tech – the XLUUV (Extra Large Unmanned Underwater Vehicle), has been designed and built in just 14 months.

The scale version of the submarine is a nine-tonne submersible which can operate at depths up to 305 metres (about 1,000ft) for up to 48 hours, moving beneath the waves at speeds up to 12 knots.

Developing such technology is vital for a better understanding of the underwater environment which has always been



“““

**On the land, in the air, increasingly even at sea, there is nowhere left to hide. But underwater remains impenetrable.**

ADMIRAL TONY RADAKIN

defence's greatest challenge, Admiral Radakin told the Southampton conference.

"For my entire career we have been talking about oceans becoming transparent," the First Sea Lord said. "And yet they remain opaque. We continually horizon scan, analyse new developments, look at the capabilities that we and our adversaries possess – and there is nothing.

"On the land, in the air, increasingly even at sea, there is nowhere left to hide. But underwater remains impenetrable.

"This is good for us. The Royal Navy has the huge responsibility of delivering the nuclear deterrent on behalf of the nation, and still the cheapest, most secure and most effective means of doing this is by submarine.

"Last year, we celebrated 50 years of continuous at sea deterrence. That is a remarkable achievement. And I am delighted that this will continue, with the Dreadnought replacement for the Vanguard-class

The admiral told delegates he was happy with the future of the Royal Navy.

"We are growing for the first time in 70 years. And between 2015 and 2025 our tonnage will increase by nearly 30 per cent.

"The world is changing at a startling rate, and technology and innovation are moving faster than they ever have before.

"We need to remain ahead of our adversaries. This is why the Royal Navy is currently undergoing a period of transformation.

"We are focusing on five main areas: increasing our operational advantage in the North Atlantic; becoming a Carrier Strike Navy; increasing our Forward Presence; modernising our Royal Marines into a Future Commando Force; and embracing Technology and Innovation in a much better way. And you will recognise that two of these – the North Atlantic, and Technology and Innovation – are closely linked

with the underwater domain."

Admiral Radakin also spoke about defence's investment in new equipment, including the Dreadnought-class submarines, the Type 26 and 31 frigates, the P8 Poseidon aircraft, upgrades to infrastructure, including a new submarine training school.

"There is a great deal going on here. But I am confident that we are heading in the right direction, pursuing modern solutions, modern ways of working, delivering solutions to traditional problems in a modern way. And we will continue to evolve, both nationally and in company with our allies," he added.

submarines already under construction.

"In 2019 we saw the highest Russian activity in the North Atlantic for over 30 years. Submarines are getting quieter, more capable and harder to detect."

## Brum visit cements ties

ONE week before announcing the RN's largest unmanned submarine, Britain's first sailor was in its second city to forge closer links with its diverse community.

Admiral Radakin attended Birmingham's Central Mosque, met some of the young men and women hoping to join the Royal Navy via the city's Armed Forces Recruiting Office, and promoted one of the Service's strongest advocates.

Before the decade is out, the city will have a namesake warship for the first time in three decades with the advent of Type 26 frigate HMS Birmingham (taking over as the city's affiliate from destroyer HMS Daring).

At the mosque, which has served Birmingham's Muslim population since the early 1970s, and welcomes around 4,000 worshippers every Friday, Admiral Radakin met the Imam, mosque elders and senior community leaders officials from across the West Midlands, and learned about the support given to the Royal Navy through some of their outreach events.

"It has been a great honour, privilege and a pleasure to have such a gentleman as the admiral take the trouble to visit our mosque," said Ahmed Maqbool, chairman of the mosque's board of trustees.

"We very much appreciate that he cares and is concerned about the Muslim population and it has given such encouragement to the community. We want to help and serve in any way we can."

At the Armed Forces Careers Office in the city centre, Lieutenant Sarah Bligh, Area Recruiting Officer Wales and West of England, outlined the work her team carries out to encourage and help young men and women join the Royal Navy and Royal Marines – and the admiral chatted with some of the (slightly shell-shocked) candidates who were attending interviews... and found the head of the Navy present.

"I really enjoyed visiting Birmingham and meeting so many people from across the city," said Admiral Radakin.

"The relationship that the Royal Navy has with the UK's second city remains really strong and it was a pleasure to see the enthusiasm of the whole team in the Recruiting Office.

"It was also a particular honour to visit the Central Mosque and to be hosted so warmly by the senior leaders, and discuss how we can go even further in integrating diverse communities within the Royal Navy and the city."

Earlier in the day, the admiral promoted businessman, pharmacist, community leader and Royal Navy champion Raj Aggarwal from Honorary Commander to Captain.

"During my 18 months in the service I have had some wonderful experiences meeting the most committed and wonderful servicemen and women," said Capt Raj, who lives in South Wales and also serves as India's Honorary Consul in Wales.

"I want to use my position to create greater diversity in the Navy, to show the community that the Navy are supportive and there are amazing careers on offer, with first rate skills training and opportunities to see the world."

Admiral Radakin said the businessman – who emigrated to Wales from Kenya in 1967, ran a chain of pharmacies in the Cardiff area and successfully campaigned for organ donation rules to be changes – had been a "tireless advocate" for the Service in his time as an honorary officer.

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This month, the 212 men and women of HMS Montrose's Port Crew return to the Gulf to take charge of the frigate in the latest rotation of sailors and Royal Marines to sustain the ship's long-term mission in the Middle East. RICHARD HARGREAVES joined them as they underwent their final training and assessment aboard sister ship HMS Monmouth in Devonport.



# 'The best ship in the Fleet to be on...'

Pictures: L'Phot Mark Johnson

## FORWARD Presence.

To naval and political leaders it means permanent presence: a Royal Navy warship almost constantly available for operations in the Gulf.

To the men and women who crew that ship it means birthday presence. And Christmas presence. Wedding presence. Christening presence. Holiday presence. Hen or stag-do presence. Parents' evening presence. Sunday morning football in the park presence. Weekly shop presence. Concert and festival presence. And much more.

Nearly a year into the pilot project to put HMS Montrose in Bahrain long-term and her Port Crew are preparing to re-join the frigate.

Some of those 212 sailors brought her out to the Bahrain last spring. Some joined in time for the first rotation (August-December). Some are about to serve aboard for the first time.

The golden thread which links them all – and their Starboard counterparts gearing up to fly back to Blighty – is certainty.

The certainty of knowing they'll be working flat-out in theatre... and the certainty of knowing their lives are pretty much set-in-stone back in the UK: post-deployment leave, training, bespoke Operational Sea Training, post-deployment leave – without the responsibilities (and challenges) of operating a working warship.

All of which, according to Port Crew, makes the frigate a highly sought-after draft because her programme – and hence the lives of the ship's company – is plotted months, years in advance.

Petty Officer Chris Heywood has spent three-and-a-half years on Montrose, responsible for maintaining her Sea Ceptor and Harpoon missile systems.

"It works really well – everything has been planned thoroughly. You know when

you're flying out, when you're flying back.

"If you're on the Fleet Ready Escort or duty towed array ship, you can be called upon at any time."

And even if you're not, there's always something needing fixing or tweaking, invariably eating into evenings, weekends, leave. It's one of a matelot's biggest bugbears.

With no ship for four months, there's no prospect of being 'jobbed off' with duties.

With no ship for four months, there are other problems with which to contend. Skills fade. The cohesion of a ship's company. Morale.

Some of the crew visited the ship's namesake town on Scotland's east coast, dropped in on local Sea Cadets and care homes for elderly people, called in on the affiliated Army unit, 3 Scots in Fort George, and renewed acquaintances with the Worshipful Company of Distillers.

Marine engineers have been training at Sultan, the weapon engineers at Collingwood, the ops room team in the simulators in Devonport.

But collective training ready for the rigours of the Gulf – it is an operational theatre – requires a warship, ideally a Type 23.

Before Port Crew's first rotation last summer there was none to 'play with'; sailors made use of whatever warship was to hand on any given day. It was far from ideal.

This time around, HMS Monmouth – awaiting refit – has been made available to prepare the Port Crew. She's proved "absolutely pivotal" to getting the sailors to gel as a team once more as the staff from FOST determine whether the ship's company have the mettle for a four-month stint in the Middle East.

The scenarios played out aren't the usual Brownia versus Ginger so beloved by FOST for decades, but real-life incidents



**It's made it possible for people to plan their lives. And professionally we can go back into theatre and deliver on operations and continue in the same vein of success.**

CDR OLLIE HUCKER



(or variations thereon) from recent patrols in the Gulf.

*Surface threat, warning red. Hostile threat closing 20 miles to starboard. On anti-flash. On anti-flash.*

"There's a bit of a perception that we're 'off watch' when we're back in the UK. Far from it," says Port Crew's Commanding Officer Commander Ollie Hucker.

"We're here today, the whole ship's company in anti-flash, being put through our paces."

*Several fast inshore attack craft are inbound to probe us.*

"Out in the Gulf, you hit the ground running," says 23-year-old Writer Becci Young from St Ives in Cornwall.

"So you want to be ready. It's why during our regeneration there's a lot of training. It's pretty full-on both out there and back here in the UK. And your head

is in the game from the training."

*The fast inshore attack craft are not responding to our warnings and are closing.*

You'll hear similar sentiments from everyone aboard. There have been a few jibes from other ship's companies. *Montrose has it easy...*

"A lot of people think it's down time, a bit of a jolly. It's not. There's a lot of training," says officer of the watch Lieutenant Craig Wadley.

*RPGs have been sighted in the fast inshore attack craft.*

Becci adds: "There's a bit of a misconception that we get a lot of time off, sitting around, doing nothing. We're just as busy as every other ship."

*Just as busy... with the bonus of that much more fixed calendar.*

"It's really good to be able to plan my life a bit more. It's a good balance. In fact, I think this

is the best ship in the Fleet to be on."

*FIRE! FIRE! FIRE! Fire in One Charlie dry store.*

Cue the usual FOST shenanigans. Smoke. Flashing lights. Hammering away with wooden blocks, planks and supports. Lots of shouting. A few raised voices – "I cannot meet the command aim. We cannot make 28 knots" – and clipped remarks. The jarring buzz of alarms. Damage control boards peppered with Post-it Notes and comments written using chinagraph pencil.

Today is a 'state one scenario' – saving the ship and keeping her in the battle take precedence over saving lives.

That means (right now):

1. Putting out the fire.
2. Restoring speed.
3. Getting the 4.5in gun working again.

Recovering any trapped/injured ship's company comes later...

*Aircraft inbound. Time on top: three minutes.*

Today's exercise is both intense – it's taken every bit as seriously as a traditional Thursday War with the frigate being thrashed around – and slightly surreal.

Because the Black Duke is largely a dead ship (most of the systems are switched off, there's no running water, no engines turning, no working heads), when aboard, the Port Crew can focus entirely on how they will respond to whatever chaos the FOST staff cause.

Petty Officer Heidi Tait, for example, doesn't have to worry about the gas turbines, whether the osmosis plant is working, whether the heads are flushing (they don't... there's the joy of chemical toilets on the jetty...).

"We can focus entirely on training aboard Monmouth – and that means the training is really good."

"That's crucial. We know it's going to be 200 per cent when we're out in the Gulf, doing what

we joined and trained to do."

Having missed Christmas 2018 taking Montrose out to the Gulf, she was at home for last year's festive period (while Starboard Crew will be home for Christmas this year as part of the work-life balance).

It's why Heidi believes "Montrose is an attractive ship to be on. We know when our deployment starts and finishes. When you're on leave, you're on leave, which means you can plan your life uninterrupted."

*Time on top: 30 seconds. BRACE! BRACE! BRACE!*

The first time the entire ship's company – crew, plus Royal Marines boarding team from Juliet Company 42 Commando and the Wildcat helicopter flight from 815 Naval Air Squadron – meet is on the tarmac at Brize Norton as they fly out to Bahrain.

Once back in the Gulf they get a couple of days of acclimatise – it's already in the 30s Celsius in April – conduct a handover with their Starboard counterparts, before receiving the keys to the ship.

Thereafter there are a couple of weeks of blowing off the cobwebs, plus further assessment from the FOST staff – this time at sea – and then the patrols resume.

It is, says Lt Wadley, "like riding a bike. It's amazing how quickly it comes back to you."

*Sea Ceptor, engage!*

Montrose's three-year mission remains a pilot project. "It's too early yet to say whether it's the future model," says Cdr Hucker. "There are things which we could change and lessons to be learned."

"But at the tactical level and personally, it's certainly a success. "Personally, it's made it possible for people to plan their lives with some degree of certainty."

"Professionally, we can go back into theatre and deliver on operations and continue in the same vein of success."

*All splashed. Stand to. Stand to.*





## Saturdayz meanz dadz time at Raleigh

IF YOU want something doing, do it yourself?

Spinal Tap needed a louder amp and made one to go all the way up to 11.

And senior rating Chris 'Crash' Evans couldn't find a self-help group for military fathers to get together, chew over problems and have a few hours of fun with their children.

The result, held once a month in HMS Raleigh's senior rates/warrant officers' mess, is Dadz on Watch: a Saturday morning of coffee, a spot of football or pool, maybe enjoy the cinema, or leave the youngsters to their own devices for a few hours (and give mums a break too...).

Dadz on Watch – dubbed 'Dad's club' by Chris' daughters – opened its doors in September and has been steadily growing as word has spread around Raleigh... and beyond.

"If the club helps just one person, I'll regard it as a success," said the petty officer. "There's one dad who was struggling. Now he relies on the group and is here every time we open our doors."

Of his 17-year career as a seaman specialist, Chris has spent 16 at sea and been present at the birth of only one of his three daughters Millie (nine), Lola (seven) and three-year-old Daisy (pictured above with dad at a club meeting).

It was after two back-to-back nine-month deployments that the father-of-three found himself in difficulty.

"I struggled to reconnect with my kids – it's clear now that I was suffering from PTSD," the 34-year-old said.

"Mums have coffee mornings, social get-togethers, generally a really strong support network. There was nothing in the area – especially at weekends – for dads.

"I needed one where people would appreciate what it's like to be in the forces."

On offer on the first Saturday of each month between 9.30am and 11.30am: hot drinks on tap, snooker, video games, pool, big-screen TV, darts, and toys aplenty, even the use of Raleigh's cinema and swimming pool – all for a £1 donation from attending adults (kids go free).

"The club is about making friends, a spot of male and some family bonding," Chris continues. "It's built a really relationship with my kids – it's really worked. For other families, there aren't many places you can have a blinding time on a Saturday morning for just a quid."

Dadz on Watch (mums are also welcome if they want to come along...) is open to all with a valid military ID/pass for Raleigh. Find out more at: [www.facebook.com/groups/783143225457114/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/783143225457114/)



## FAM helps Faslane's families

THE pilot of the Future Accommodation Model – which revolutionises the way personnel choose where they live – is receiving the thumbs up from sailors at Faslane.

Scotland's largest military establishment is running a three-year trial to see whether the model is the way ahead for all three Services when it comes to finding them somewhere to live.

FAM provides financial support to Service personnel who want to rent or buy a home, giving more choice over where and with whom you live. The choice to live onsite in single living accommodation or service families' accommodation continues.

To be part of the FAM pilot you must have four years' service, at least 12 months left on your posting to Clyde and be part of an eligible unit and is intended to better fit your needs and your lifestyle.

For POPT Peter Oswald and his wife, a move to Scotland made them think about buying their own home. Peter was told about FAM for home buyers: £125 per month towards his mortgage, money covering legal fees because he is a first-time buyer, disturbance allowance, plus the chance to use Forces Help to Buy.

"We couldn't have timed it any better," the senior rating said. "With FAM our dream house can become a reality. To be able to buy a house within 50 miles of your workplace and have the costs covered is such a good way to help personnel develop a good home life. We've bought a forever home, and that's massively thanks to FAM."

MA Damien Duffey (pictured above) was ready to have his own space after five years of living in a single room. He was keen to have more separation between work and home, and a break from camp. With Damien's fiancée moving up to join him, FAM has opened up a new way of living and they have chosen to rent in the local area.

"My other half's a nurse, and has recently got a job in Glasgow. With FAM support, we've found, agreed and signed for our own place where we can be a family, with Sandy our dog. Our flat is in a great location for us – it's partway between both our places of work."

To find out more about your accommodation choices search FAM on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk), or talk to the dedicated FAM cell at Faslane via [people-famcell-cly@mod.gov.uk](mailto:people-famcell-cly@mod.gov.uk).

## First Naval Servicewoman of the year

MEDICAL Services Officer Commander Kay Hallsworth became the first Naval Servicewoman of the Year, recognised in front of her peers at RNAS Yeovilton.

President of the Association Wrens Captain Alison Towler – a former senior RN legal and logistics expert – presented Cdr Hallsworth with the new award at the end of the day-long Naval Servicewomen's Conference, attended by 200 RN personnel and BAE employees.

"I was so surprised at winning – I don't think I realised how much I do and how that was seen by other people until the citation

was read out," said Cdr Hallsworth who's served for 28 years.

"I always try and do the best I can for the people I work with across the armed forces as a whole and reflect those core values that we live by."

The conference consisted of keynote speakers, discussion panels, workshops and networking opportunities. The Princess Royal attended part of the proceedings and the First Sea Lord, Admiral Tony Radakin and Rear Admiral Andrew Burns (Naval Service Gender Advocate) addressed the audience.

The event closed with the awards dinner, introduced to recognise Servicewomen who have contributed significantly to the Naval Service through their professionalism, commitment and enthusiasm, and their male allies who have impacted positively on the lived experience of women in the Royal Navy. Other winners were: Inspires Me Award: WO1 Lynn Faulkner; Collaborative Working Award: CPO Janine Potts; Outstanding Contribution Award: LPT Elise Broughton; Promoting Gender Balance Award: Lt Francesca Allen; Innovation Award: Lt Cdr Rebecca Fry-Harris; Emerging Talent Award: Sub Lt Toni Harding and AB Wtr Lauren Kyte; Unsung Heroines Award: Lt Cdr Helen Johnson; Inclusive Teamwork Award: HMS Artful.

## Free family breaks in Devon this autumn...

HOW about an activity-packed week in Devon with the kids. For free? Four-night breaks for military families with children who have additional needs are being offered on Exmoor this autumn by SSAFA and the Annington Trust.

Running from Monday October 26 until Friday 30 at the Calvert Trust Centre, there are 60 spaces on a first-come, first-served basis.

The complex is a fully-accessible centre which allows people with physical, learning, behaviour and sensory disabilities to experience exciting, challenging and enjoyable outdoor activities.

The aim is to give military families the opportunity to spend quality time together while challenging themselves through outdoor activities such as horse riding, kayaking, cycling, sailing and abseiling.

To be eligible, all children must be between three and 18, one must have an additional need or disability, and at least one parent – full-time or reservist – must attend the break.

To apply contact Frances Robinson via [ANDA@ssafa.org.uk](mailto:ANDA@ssafa.org.uk) or 0207 463 9315.

## ...Or rent Raleigh's luxury holiday home

AND if you don't fancy the Devon countryside... what about a few days on the coast in a luxury holiday home?

Sadly, we can't offer it for free, but we can offer you at a bargain price – courtesy of HMS Raleigh.

The Torpoint establishment owns an upmarket static caravan near Bigbury-on-Sea and wants to see it heavily utilised with the 2020 season almost open us.

The home at Challaborough Bay Holiday Park was bought with proceeds from the sale of an under-used yacht owned by Raleigh.

It can be rented for three-night breaks (Fri-Mon), four-night breaks (Mon-Fri) or for the week (Mon-Mon or Fri-Fri) by RN personnel or civil servants.

It can sleep up to eight people, is equipped with all the usual mod cons and is available between March 20 and November 9.

Prices start at £220 – an extra £45 if you wish to take your pets – with proceeds pumped back into Raleigh's amenity fund.

To book the home or for more information, contact Amanda Bell at HMS Raleigh on 9375 41202 or

[NAVYTRGRALEIGH-CENTRALFUND@MOD.GOV.UK](mailto:NAVYTRGRALEIGH-CENTRALFUND@MOD.GOV.UK).



## 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 WO's, 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 [navycnr-rnsrtrainingassist@mod.gov.uk](mailto:navycnr-rnsrtrainingassist@mod.gov.uk)







## PTI stalwart rewarded at Palace

ONE of the doyens of the physical training branch enjoyed a date at the Palace to receive the MBE for her long-standing dedication.

Warrant Officer Natasha Pulley from Camborne was singled out for recognition in last year's Queen's Birthday Honours.

The decoration, presented by the Prince of Wales, acknowledges WO Pulley's extensive voluntary work, plus her selfless determination, loyalty and drive during her career spanning five decades.

"I feel totally overwhelmed by the nomination and the experience at the Palace," said WO Pulley, who's head of the PT department at HMS Raleigh:

"I just try to do my job and to help those around me, whether Service or civilian personnel. It was amazing to be recognised amongst so many inspirational people."

A then Natasha Bassett joined the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) in 1987 as a radar operator. She passed her PT aptitude test two years later and completed her PT qualifying course at HMS Temeraire in 1990. Since then she has served all over the UK, including two postings to Culdrose and several to Raleigh.

She's also represented the RN at cross country and athletics and has also taken part in the Royal Navy's annual Field Gun competition; she became the first female member to run in the event in 1990.

And 25 years later she became the first female to take charge of a crew as 'number one' trainer, leading HMS Raleigh to success in 2015.

Throughout her career WO Pulley has raised money and supported numerous charities. She has generously given up her time to benefit Service children, local schools, the homeless and the elderly in the region.

WO Pulley was re-appointed to Raleigh last September and has also served at the Cornish training base as a leading hand, petty and chief petty officer.



## Navy's top apprentices recognised in Victory ceremony

# You're hired!

**THE achievements and accomplishments of Royal Navy apprentices – and their mentors – over the past 12 months were rewarded on Nelson's flagship.**

Men and women who have demonstrated commitment, excellence and achieved things in their departments which made them stand out from their peers were invited aboard HMS Victory in Portsmouth for the Royal Navy's 2020 Apprenticeship Awards.

Nominees represented a cross section of talents, roles and abilities, including the creation of new software, taking responsibility for a section and managing the installation of equipment. The leadership skills exhibited by apprentices was particularly impressive, especially considering their junior rank.

Apprenticeships remain at the heart of training across all branches; the training delivered and the accreditation being achieved, is providing essential foundation blocks for personnel to build successful careers and to reach their full potential.

In addition to individual achievement awards, this year a 'best unit' title was introduced to acknowledge efforts to mentor and support the apprentices in their charge.

Top of the apprentice tree in the aviation world these past 12 months was Leading Air Engineer Technician James McInnes, responsible for maintaining the Merlin Mk2s of 824 Naval Air Squadron at Culdrose.

The 29-year-old works the slip watch (overnight) at Culdrose, overseeing work on helicopters which are used daily for training.

"I've always enjoyed tinkering with things and this job appeals to me. It allows me to get stuck into fixing the aircraft and get my hands dirty," James said.

Lieutenant Commander Lee Rigby, 824's air engineer officer, said: "It gives me enormous pleasure to see LAET McInnes gain recognition for his achievements and he should be rightfully proud of receiving this award amongst a very competitive field."

The engineering award was presented to submarine weapon engineer Leading Engineer Technician Taylor-Jade Kelsey whose work helping to ready new Astute-class submarine HMS Audacious stood out.

LOGS(CS) Lisa Williams (HMS Dauntless) took the logistics awards; she was one of the first stewards to volunteer to train as a chef under Project Unify, since when she's impressed her shipmates and demonstrated abilities expected of more senior personnel.

Apprentice Engineer Reece Gresham is the Royal Fleet Auxiliary apprentice of the year, impressing tutors at Sultan both with his grasp of the subject and his work ethic, studying late into the night to get the best possible results.

Royal Marine apprentice of 2020 is 45 Commando's Marine William Piper – best rifle shot during training where he also excelled in the field and in leadership. He's continued in the same vein at RM Condor and has also been selected to represent the RN at karate.

The RN's advanced apprentice of 2020 is Leading Engineer Technician Timothy Colgate of HMS Montrose who's been both an impressive communications sections engineer aboard the frigate and a superb role model for junior WEs thanks to his "infectious enthusiasm" and "can-do attitude".

Leading Air Engineer Technician Ben Welsby of 825 Naval Air Squadron was singled out for the personal achievement award. The fast-tracker has learned his trade – and about the Fleet Air Arm – rapidly, passed every academic/professional challenge ahead of schedule and took gold in the national World Skills competition... beating the best apprentices in civvy street.

No apprentice can succeed without the support of dedicated, enthusiastic instructors – also recognised aboard HMS Victory. CPO Robert 'Si' Geldart of the Catering Services Shore Establishment Team based at HMS Collingwood stood out as the Champion of the Year, "an inspiration to junior rates" in the culinary world.

And the best unit when it comes to nurturing apprentices is HMS Albion which, *inter alia*, took 48 new LET(ME)s under its wing and gave them "unwavering support"... at the same time as promoting 18 ETs. The ship proved "pivotal" in the success of the accelerated apprentice programme – especially considering the operational demands placed upon the nation's flagship.

"Apprentices are at the heart of our Navy," said Rear Admiral Phil Hally, the RN's Director of Personnel and Training, who presented the winners with their awards.

"All the finalists should be proud of what they have achieved throughout their apprenticeship journey. They have inspired all of us here, but most importantly, they continue to inspire those around them, their colleagues and the next generation of apprentices."

Picture: LPhot Belinda Alker, FRPU East

## Nominations needed

YOU have until mid-day on April 17 to nominate the individuals and teams worthy of this year's Women in Defence Awards.

Last year judges had to choose from 470 nominations across the various categories.

Ten awards are up for grabs in the 2020 iteration of the event: inspirational award; outstanding contribution; most collaborative award; special award; promotion of gender balance; emerging talent; unsung heroines; innovation award; STEM in defence award; and the inclusive teamwork award.

"The only limits you have are those you accept from others or you place on yourself. This is the time to push boundaries, to ask why and to challenge old ways of thinking. It's important to not only ride the momentum of change but to maintain it for those coming after us," said Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Ruth Guest, who won the Inspirational Award in 2019 for her pilot project to improve the flow of medical information of serving women on maternity leave between military and civilian providers.

"Being nominated itself was a surprise and an honour. I've enjoyed every stage of the awards process, including the shortlisting event and the incredible awards dinner. I've had the opportunity to network with truly inspiring women and men, anyone of whom would have been worthy winners. It's all a bit surreal!"

For more information on how to nominate and who is eligible, go to [www.womenindefenceuk.com](http://www.womenindefenceuk.com).

## Mental health push rewarded

**TWO sailors from HMS Collingwood have been rewarded for their determination to establish a mental health first aid organisation at the Fareham base.**

Warrant Officer Dean Button and Chief Petty Officer Adam Buffery (*pictured right and left respectively below, with Collingwood's CO Captain Catherine Jordan in the centre*) each received a Herbert Lott Efficiency Award for the instrumental role they played in establishing the new support network.

Their initial aim was to raise awareness of mental health issues, the signs and symptoms to look out for in personnel across the establishment, as well as to develop positive mental health in an individual's area of responsibility... helping to foster a positive working environment and ultimately lead to increased performance and resilience.

Adam initially organised an adult Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) course for nine people. However, the benefits of the training spread and the pair began to be approached by personnel asking for more courses. Dean has now qualified as an Armed Forces MHFA trainer, which provides Collingwood with the ability to deliver 'in house' courses at a significantly reduced price compared to the industry standard.

Dean then co-delivered two courses alongside Nicole Sherriff-Vonk Royal Netherlands Navy, to Maritime Warfare School and through his contacts in MHFA England, he was able to train 20 personnel to work and act as the first line of support to their teams and colleagues. This network has now expanded and there are

now 42 trained MHFAs in the Portsmouth area.

And their initiative has also captured the attention of RAF personnel at Swanwick with the aim of rolling out the programme at HMS Temeraire and the Defence Diving School later this year.

Future projects that Dean and Adam are working on include the design of an MWS Mental Health Dashboard on the Defence Intranet which would provide all personnel with information on how to maintain positive mental health, how to identify signs and symptoms of mental ill health and how to respond accordingly.

"Our aim has always been to normalise the conversation about mental health, break the stigma and create an inclusive working environment," said Dean.

"It can be very difficult to see someone in your workplace become unwell, but you don't need to be an expert on mental health to offer support. Divisional Teams should look to equip themselves with the knowledge and awareness to better support our people. Often small, everyday actions can make the biggest difference."

Adam added: "Mental health will possibly affect us all at some point in our lives. Understanding Mental Health aids us in developing a culture of engagement and acceptance and should be a 'whole force' approach – mental health does not discriminate between Service and civilian."

"It is our responsibility as leaders to establish an environment where positive mental health is the norm, as it will allow our people to thrive rather than just survive."

Picture: Keith Woodland

## Meeting of minds to forge the future

THE RN is looking to work closer with industry partners and academia to ensure its future tech and kit needs are met.

The move is part of the MOD's Integrated Warrior initiative, which is encouraging defence to work closer with industry in order to develop the right equipment for the future operating environment.

Held at the Defence Academy in Shrivenham, the Navy, Army, RAF, Stratcom, Joint Warfare and DSTL used the day to meet industry experts and outline their future concepts and capabilities.

Lieutenant Colonel Iain

Sutherland from the Royal Navy's Maritime Capability (MARCAP) team said the event was about improving the 'long look' relationship with industry and academia, and testing our concepts to understand if and how they would best provide us with an operational advantage.

"Establishing a common understanding of the future, and our part within it will help us and those within the wider defence sector have a better understanding of what we want and need," he said.

"Integrated Warrior is a great opportunity for industry, academia and defence to share their ideas, understand requirements,

develop solutions and test them quickly to understand where we should be investing public money wisely.

"The Navy's technology accelerators such as NEMESIS, NavyX, MarWorks, DARE, Nelson and OCTO are already developing some great capabilities in support of our transformation priorities which include operational advantage in the North Atlantic, Future Commando Force and carrier strike."

The RN showcased various pieces of equipment including the unmanned underwater vessel Remus, tactical precision strike Hero missile system and Anduril's unmanned aerial vehicle.

Lt Col Sutherland added: "We don't hold all of the answers and will need to be more collaborative if we want to be able solve some of the challenges we face in the future development of the Royal Navy."

"Events such as Information Warrior, Advanced Autonomous Force 2.0, and Commando Warrior have already seen the Royal Navy and Royal Marines work alongside industry experts and partners, and similar experimental exercises are planned in the future – we need to keep up this momentum going in order to get after our future capability faster."







## Saltash Scouts feel the heat

SCOUTS from Saltash spent a day learning how to fight fires at HMS Raleigh.

The group of 16, who belong to the 2nd Saltash scout group were working towards their fire safety activity badge.

They were given some practical hands-on experience on the demonstration ground, where new recruits to the Royal Navy learn basic fire-fighting techniques.

Scout leader Keith Child said: "We've done a little bit towards the badge at scout outdoors and we've visited the local fire station, so this is the next part."

HMS Raleigh is the lead school for providing fire-fighting training to submariners. The school

can also provide training to members of the surface fleet.

Johan Carvell, 11, said: "I've learnt how they fight fires on ships and about the fire triangle and causes of fire."

"When I picked the extinguisher up it felt quite heavy, but the nozzle was lighter than I thought it would be. I think I've done quite a bit towards my badge."

Aged between ten and 14 years-old, the scouts were also given a brief on the different types of fire and the correct extinguisher to use.

Ben Goldsmith, 11, added: "We learned about all the hoses and what to put on different fires, for example on an oil fire you have to use foam."



# Cadets are Toppers with new dinghys

FOR more than 40 years the Bosun has been used as a training dinghy by the Cadet Forces and Service Personnel.

In the last 20 years numerous advances have been made in dinghy design, leaving the Bosun as a much loved, but dated and aging craft.

To continue supporting the cadet experience the Ministry of Defence is funding 78 new Topper Argos to replace the Combine Cadet Force Royal Navy's (CCF RN) existing Bosun dinghy fleet.

The Argo has been used in small numbers for the last five years as a training craft on CCF RN camps and courses with fantastic feedback from cadets and instructors.

With the new craft RN Sections based in schools around the country will be able to hold Topper Argos to enable regular afloat training to continue developing of cadets sailing skills, leadership ability and self-reliance.

The first of the new boats were delivered to sections in January, with positive feedback immediately being given.

"The MOD investment in new Argo dinghies for our cadets is hugely appreciated. With ever increasing numbers of cadets wishing to join the RN section this is a fantastic reflection of the opportunities on offer," said Elen Harris, of Sevenoaks School CCF RN.

"In the past we have often not been able to get all new cadets on the water at the same time due to the aging fleet."

"The new Argos are brilliant, larger, stable, dinghies which will enable us to get far more of the section on the water at once during the upcoming summer sailing season, allowing more students to benefit from learning to sail and, importantly, giving them the opportunity to sail more often and retain and develop their sailing knowledge."

As part of the relationship with Topper International, the designers and manufacturers of the Argo, CCF RN Cadets were on the Topper International Stand at the RYA Dinghy Show.

Topper International have been hugely supportive of CCF RN during the procurement and roll out of the Topper Argo nationally.

To have CCF RN Cadets on the Topper stand allowed the cadets to show the dinghy sailing community what the MoD offers cadets and the benefit the cadet experience has on young people.

With the Cadet Expansion Project reaching maturity there are more CCF RN Sections than ever before, and this new equipment will enable afloat training to continue and grow the opportunities available to cadets.



## Brilliant displays in Wiesbaden

TS Brilliant – Tunbridge Wells Sea Cadets – visited the twin town of Wiesbaden in Germany to take part in the Fasching carnivals.

The 48-strong group was hosted by the Red Heralds, a German band and dance group.

During the stay the cadets performed more than 20 times and marched over 25 miles and experienced the vibrant German carnival spirit.

The main carnival was attended by more than 350,000 people and featured in the Wiesbaden courier and regional TV.

The group fundraised for many months to provide the cadets with this opportunity, which

cost more than £10,000.

The cadets were supported in this task by the Holmsdale Lodge, Tunbridge Wells Rotary, five borough Kent County Council councillors and the Twinning Association.

The cadets provided outstanding musical performances that were well received by the German public.

The cadets explored Wiesbaden, the capital of the federal state of Hesse, and met with the Lord Mayor at a reception where the cadets were each presented with a Wiesbaden pin courtesy of the city council.

## Young rowers make mark on carrier

SEA Cadets enjoyed privileged access on board HMS Prince of Wales during her visit to Liverpool, see pages 2-3.

Cadets from North West area who were competing in a Row 3000 rowing challenge, were invited to row inside the carrier's hangar.

The test for Sea Cadets from here and other venues across the country was to match the 3,000 miles rowed across the Atlantic by Navy submariners HMS Oardacious, in their recent Atlantic Challenge.

In all, 46 units were entered and helped complete 5,628 miles, nearly double that target and all could monitor their progress on a live tracker matching the route of Oardacious.

Beccles from Suffolk were the unit to complete most miles (562), with Altrincham, Sale and Stretford (458) in second, narrowly ahead of Morecambe and Heysham (455) and Fishguard (424).

Captain Phil Russell RN, Captain of Sea Cadets who was present in Liverpool for the weekend, said: "This has been a unique event for many young people and it's been wonderful to see the friendship and co-operation between groups, plus a touch of friendly competition."

"Many thanks go to the Royal Navy and the Crew of HMS Prince of Wales for hosting us."

"Only being part of Sea Cadets can offer this sort of experience."



# Units battling the elements

SEA Cadet units across England and Wales have been keeping their heads above water and are looking forward to drier conditions this spring.

With three storms in quick succession – Ciara, Dennis and Jorge – units have been prepared and took extra precautions with severe weather and flood warnings in place. But others have just been unlucky.

Despite raising funds to update their building close to the River Wye, including six-foot stilts, water levels rose so high to flood out Hereford Sea Cadets with 15 centimetres of water making it inside.

A £10,000 emergency grant from Hereford City Council will go towards cleaning and replacing damaged facilities.

Physical help with the clean-up came from Hereford Rotary Club and nearby units, including Tewkesbury.

UMT Chair Steve Taylor said: “The building was built to cope with a one-in-100-year flood and we endured a one-in-200 year flood.”

Worcester and Ross and Monmouth units also suffered flooding.

Burton Sea Cadets, whose headquarters are pictured, were also flooded out for the second time in five months,



• Above, floods in Burton; Right, the height the floodwaters reached in Hereford



before insurance proceeds from damage in October's flood was paid out.

The unit are determined to raise money to build extra flood defences to the site near to the River Trent, which will not be covered by insurance. Wakefield Sea Cadets

are able to return to their building but have paraded at their local TA centre.

Cleaning up is still underway after damage from Storm Ciara.

Other units affected include York and Birmingham Sherborne.



## Capital time for award winners

LONDON Sea Cadets held their annual National Awards Dinner to celebrate those who received nationally-recognised awards in 2019.

Guest of honour at the event at the Royal College of Defence Studies was Rear Admiral John Kingwell, a former Sea Cadet himself.

Winners included Orpington Sea Cadets, who won the Vernon Award for developing Marine Engineering, Finchley Sea Cadets who were voted the most improved unit nationally in 2019 and three recipients of the British Citizens Award.

London Southern District won the Navy League District Trophy and Tooting & Balham Royal Marines Cadet Detachment won the SRMO Trophy for most improved detachment.

Among the cadet winners were Cdt Sgt Jake from Chelmsford who took the Halliday Trophy for achieving the best result in the Royal Marines Cadet Corporal to Sergeant examination and Leading Cadet Beth from Walton-on-the-Naze, who won the Leadership Trophy for achieving the highest marks on the national leadership course.

SLt (SCC) Tony Peers RNR also won the OSB Trophy having gained the highest marks on the national Officers' Selection Board.

## Port Edgar looking sharp



SEA Cadets' revamp of its boating station at Port Edgar, near Edinburgh is nearing completion.

The exterior of the new boathouse is now complete, with interior work being carried out ahead of a planned official opening in early May.

## Key role at Armed Forces Day

SCARBOROUGH Sea Cadets are set to play a leading role when Armed Forces Day comes to North Yorkshire in June.

The week-long event will culminate in appearances by the Red Arrows, the Royal Marines Marching Band and Sea Cadets, who will take part in the National Event on Saturday June 27.

Other events confirmed to take place include a children's parade involving 20 local schools, a gala dinner at Scarborough Spa, and a live music concert at the Scarborough Open Air Theatre.

## Cheers, Carol

A SEA Cadets volunteer has been nominated at a new awards scheme, to celebrate those connected with the armed forces in Devon.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Carol Rashleigh RNR has been nominated for Advocate of the Year at the Plymouth Armed Forces Awards, which will be held in June.

Carol has been connected with Sea Cadets for more than 25 years and is District Officer for Devon.

## Cashing in

CADETS at Marine Society and Sea Cadets are set to benefit after an award of £70,000 from the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve's Youth Sailing Trust.

The award will go toward bursaries which will help cadets realise their dreams of adventures and life-changing experiences while with Sea Cadets.

Sea Cadets run a series of voyages all summer long both offshore in its five-strong fleet and both inshore from its boating stations across the country.

## Exploiting a visit to P2000

THREE lucky Sea Cadet units from West Sussex were able to see at close quarters the work of the Royal Navy, making a visit to HMS Exploit.

Cadets from Bognor Regis, Littlehampton and Chichester got to experience the P2000 patrol vessel, on a specially-arranged visit.

Thanks go to Commanding Officer Lieutenant James Silcock and his staff.

HMS Exploit is primarily used for training undergraduate students in the skills and personal attributes required for a career in the RN.



## Deeps mark Suffolk links

BURY St Edmunds Sea Cadets and submariners from HMS Vengeance came together to mark the 20th year of their affiliation.

A service held at the town's war memorial was followed by a parade through the Suffolk market town.

The special link between the two was marked with a service and parade, led by Bury St Edmunds Sea Cadets band and staff from HMS Vengeance, including commanding officer, Commander Darren Mason.

HMS Vengeance's relationship with Bury St Edmunds began in the early 1980s, and in 2017 the submarine was awarded the Freedom of West Suffolk.

Pictures: Bury Free Press







## Plaque for VC hero

FAMILY, friends, veterans and serving submariners gathered at the 19th hole of a Wirral golf club to honour the last naval officer to receive his country's highest decoration.

Around 130 guests converged on the clubhouse at Leasowe for the unveiling of a blue plaque reminding players of the deeds of one of their forebears.

Lieutenant Ian Fraser commanded 'midget submarine' XE-3, leading a daring attack on a Japanese cruiser barely a fortnight before the end of World War 2.

He navigated through waters around the Strait of Johor between Singapore and Malaysia which were littered with mines before driving the boat along the seabed for 40 minutes to force the X-craft under the hull of cruiser Takao.

His diver James Magennis struggled to attach limpet mines to the warship's hull and, when he'd succeeded and returned to the boat, Lt Fraser struggled to manoeuvre XE-3 free of the Takao.

He did – in time for the charges to tear a huge hole in the Takao's hull, causing several compartments to flood and rendering her useless for the remainder of the war.

Both Magennis and Fraser were awarded the Victoria Cross for their exploits; XE-3's skipper had, in the words of his citation, possessed "relentless determination" to carry out the attack and that determination and courage was "beyond all praise".

After the war he settled in his wife Melba's native Wirral, ran a successful diving business, became a Justice of the Peace and, in his spare time, enjoyed golf at Leasowe, a club he also captained.

Ian Fraser died aged 87 in 2008, but a dozen years on the Submariners Association decided their 12th memorial plaque should be erected in his honour.

President of the Submariners Association, Rear Admiral Niall Kilgour, joined the Fraser family (pictured by James O'Hanlon), the mayor and leader of Wirral Council, Merseyside's Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff, Commodore Jim Perks, today's head of the Fighting Arm, plus a strong gathering of deeps from across the Liverpool and Manchester areas for the unveiling and a short service of commemoration, led by Father David Gamble.

Nickie Fraser, the VC winner's daughter, was presented with a copy of her father's citation, pictures of the plaque and a replica X-craft.

## Hood service postponed

A 100TH anniversary service to mark the centenary of the commissioning of the Mighty Hood has been postponed as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

St John the Baptist Church at Boldre, near Lymington in Hampshire, has been the venue for an annual act of commemoration on a Sunday close to the date of the battle-cruiser's sinking (May 24).

St John's was the family church of Vice Admiral Lancelot Holland, who commanded the

force sent to intercept Hitler's flagship Bismarck in May 1941 and lost his life alongside 1,414 shipmates when Hood blew up.

All are honoured in a memorial corner and book of remembrance in St John's.

A service for 2021 – the 80th anniversary of Hood's loss – is tentatively planned for Sunday May 16.

Details will be available in due course from the organiser, Nigel Henley on 01590 678323 or [nigel.henley@boldre.net](mailto:nigel.henley@boldre.net).

# Help exorcise the ghosts of

CAN you help find the families of three sailors killed in an horrific wartime explosion in Greece – so a 100-year-old veteran can put the ghosts of World War 2 to rest?

Three men were killed instantly when attempts to clear the wreck of a sunken German minelayer in the harbour at Samos triggered a cataclysmic explosion which was heard across the small Greek island in mid-January 1945.

Despite extensive efforts by Mr Newman and his son Tim to find a memorial to the men in Samos, or discover the identity of the third man killed, including a return to the island by the veteran 15 years ago, the research has so far mostly drawn a blank.

Back in 1945, His Majesty's Motor Launch 349, commanded by 25-year-old

Lieutenant Peter Newman (pictured inset), was assigned the task of transporting mine warfare expert Lieutenant Bernard 'Bertie' Cox around the recently-liberated Greek islands.

Cox, a New Zealand naval reservist, was charged with clearing harbours and rendering mines safe in the aftermath of the German occupation.

In January 1945, that mission took ML 349 to Vathi harbour in Samos, where the wreck of the German minelayer/transporter Drache needed clearing.

The Drache (Dragon) was subjected to several attempts by the RAF to sink her (see the main image) until Beaufighter bombers caught her at anchor in September 1944 – one month before Greek forces liberated the island.

Unaware of the Drache's cargo, Lt Cox probably lowered a plastic explosive

charge nearby to catch a few fish for tea – and instead set off the ammunition on board.

The explosion was heard by Lt Newman who was half a dozen miles away in the port of Pythagoreio with his launch – otherwise he would likely suffered the same fate – and thought his friend had gone about his work "in dramatic fashion".

It was only when he returned with ML 349 to Vathi the next day that he realised what had happened.

"I found Lt Cox buried under rubble on the quayside. His two ratings and their keep

were blown by the force of the blast up a side street and killed," he recalled.

"About 15 metres of the bow of the ship was blown out of the water, landing in some buildings and was suspended over the street with the anchor and cable hanging down."

Islanders thought German saboteurs were to blame for the explosion, but Lt Newman explained the most likely cause of the blast.

It seems only two bodies were ever identified: Lt Cox, aged 30, from Auckland, and 19-year-old Glaswegian Alexander Toner, one of M L 349's



# Our Lizzie busy again

EVEN in an era of increasing longevity, reaching 100 remains some achievement – frequently acknowledged in these pages.

For a ship to reach the milestone, it takes outstanding initial craftsmanship, plenty of TLC and a good smattering of luck.

Restored and rebuilt just in time to play a starring role alongside other 'little ships' at this spring's Dunkirk 80th commemorations is a remarkable former fishing boat turned yacht which not only rescued troops from the beaches in May and June 1940, but carried out spy missions, delivered mail to ships anchored in the Clyde and appeared a series of films and TV series.

After spending the past three-and-a-half years overseeing her restoration inside and out, Our Lizzie's current owners Peter and Geraldine Manning held a '100th birthday party' for the vessel in Gosport.

The Mannings call themselves "custodians" of the 46ft ketch given the boat's history and will be crossing with other seafaring veterans of the evacuation at what is likely to be the last major commemoration of Dunkirk.

Our Lizzie is one of only 200 'little ship's still with us (around 850 craft were commandeered to bring the British Army home from France) and records of the vessel's role is sketchy... but the Admiralty did refuse permission for the then owner's wife to crew her.

But ten months earlier Pleasance had been allowed to sail with her husband Francis Bevan on a secret mission along the German Baltic and North Sea coast. With a hand-picked crew they got as close to shore as possible recording what they encountered – and if they were captured, the Admiralty



1944



2020

warned them in true *Mission Impossible*-style that it would deny all knowledge.

Off one inlet, the yacht was boarded by the Germans, who ordered the Bevans to take their craft further out. The couple thought they'd stumbled on a Strength Through Joy camp – the Nazi version of Butlins. In fact, they'd found a secret German Army site where the V-2 rocket was being developed.

Impressed by the Bevans' intelligence gathering, the Admiralty tried to dispatch Our Lizzie on two more secret missions once war began: one scouting the Dutch coast for German submarines, another to sail around Iceland to see if there was a hidden U-boat base in an inlet. It took the intervention of First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Dudley Pound to stop both – he regarded them as suicidal.

After Dunkirk, a deck gun was fitted and the boat patrolled between Harwich and the Thames, then was handed over to the Army to ferry mail and supplies to ships, flak batteries and searchlight positions on the Clyde.

Our Lizzie had originally begun life as a fishing vessel, registered in February 1920 by James and John Penberthy from St Ives. They

named her after their baby sister, who died shortly before the boat was launched.

The boat survived one encounter with the Cornish rocks before being sold in the mid-30s and eventually converted to a yacht.

Post-war the Bevan family sold her to one Jack Crabtree who won a big payout on the 1950 Grand National courtesy of its 10-1 winner Freebooter... which gave the yacht her new name for the next 40 years.

She made frequent appearances in the popular 70s sailing drama *The Onedin Line*, and also starred on the big screen in the *French Lieutenant's Woman* and the 1979 adaptation of *Dracula*, passed through various owners, got her original name back, survived a fire, and took part in the 75th anniversary events of Dunkirk in 2015.

It was just after then that the Mannings got the chance to buy Our Lizzie and set about a major restoration work – new sails, rigging, engine, deck, superstructure and electrics among other improvements.

"She is," says Mr Manning, "now ready for her next centenary of adventure."

Pictures: David Collins, Lowestoft

# WW1 destroyer wreck found

THIS seemingly ordinary 'mound' on the otherwise flat seabed in Orkney is actually the last resting place of 15 sailors.

One hundred and three years to the day that they were killed when a mine blew the bow off a Royal Navy destroyer, the crumpled section has been located by shipwreck hunters.

No-one has seen this part of HMS Albacore since the small hours of March 9 1917 when the destroyer left her anchorage in Inganess Bay, just east of Orkney's capital Kirkwall, to intercept a suspected German submarine sighted patrolling off the island's east coast.

At the time, Orkney was home to the Royal Navy's principal wartime base, Scapa Flow. U-boats frequently mined the waters or waited to intercept vessels leaving or entering the huge natural harbour.

Albacore got no further than the entrance when she struck a mine



laid by UC55. The blast tore the bow section as far back as the bridge and killed 18 men – all ratings, mostly drafted through Chatham dockyard; five were working forward, tidying up after weighing anchor, the rest were asleep off watch below.

The mauled destroyer (pictured inset) was towed back to harbour and subsequently repaired, returning to duty four months later.

Only three bodies were recovered; they were laid to rest in the main naval cemetery at Lyness.

More than a century later and experts from Sula Diving set out to

locate the wreck of 17th Century prison ship Crown of London, dashed on rocks in nearby Deer Sound.

In the course of that search, they came across an unrecorded wreck which turned out to be the Albacore's wrecked bow.

Kevin Heath from Sula Diving said the fate of the destroyer and her 18 dead crew was little known, even in Orkney, probably the result of a combination of wartime censorship and the fact that the ship survived, rather than foundered.

What remains of Albacore lies around 100ft down, is about 60ft long and 40ft wide and may in time be protected by the government.

Philip Robertson, of Historic Environment Scotland, which has been working with Sula on the wreck project, said the remains were "sensitive as the last resting place of 15 of the crew" and the discovery of the bow section was "a poignant reminder of the loss of life on board the ship in 1917".



# f Samos

crew. Their bodies were exhumed after the war and re-interred in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery on Rhodes 150 miles away.

"Everything I've tried has had no response," said Lt Newman's son Tim, who's spent the past 15 years trying to track down descendants and discover the identity of the third victim.

"My father would have been the last person to see them alive having dropped them off in Vathi while he went to the south side of the island. We don't know how much of these events their families would know."

Anyone who might be able to help the Newmans should contact Tim at [cornishfauve@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:cornishfauve@hotmail.co.uk).



• Dougie opens the gift of a crest from Lt Cdr Gaunt

## Milestone for FAA vet Dougie

ONCE Navy, always Navy. And once Fleet Air Arm, always Fleet Air Arm.

Today's aviators helped former wartime Telegraphist Air Gunner Dougie Hudson celebrate his 100th birthday at his retirement home in Cosham, Portsmouth.

Command Warrant Officer Christopher Boucher and Merlin helicopter observer/executive assistant to the head of the Fleet Air Arm Lieutenant Commander Amy Gaunt made the short trip from HMS Excellent to recognise Dougie's milestone.

The centenarian was presented with a crest, coin and card on behalf of today's naval aviators and their head Rear Admiral Martin Connell.

They were joined by soldiers and airmen plus staff at Eliza Mackenzie Court where Dougie enjoys his retirement in a home



run by naval housing association Agamemnon.

Born in March 1920, Dougie joined HMS St Vincent in 1936 and went on to train as one of the 3,000 TAGs to serve in the branch during its 28-year lifespan.

They suffered heavy losses – one in six died either as a result of enemy action or flying accidents, while 69 fell into enemy hands as POWs between 1939 and 1945.

Not Dougie, who was assigned to a Walrus seaplane – launched via catapult on cruisers and battleships to act as reconnaissance and spotter planes – flying from HMS Birmingham (sister of HMS Belfast) which served in Norway, the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean.

Later in WW2, he switched to the surface fleet, spent a couple of years at Scapa Flow and then was sent to the USA to bring back Lend-Lease minesweeper HMS Pylades.

After crossing the Atlantic she was dispatched to Normandy as part of the armada supporting the liberation of France.

It was there she was sunk on July 8 1944 by German human torpedoes off Juno Beach.

Dougie was badly injured in the attack and subsequently invalided out of the Navy. After briefly working as a carpenter, the lifelong Pompey fan joined British Telecom and worked as a draughtsman until he retired in 1982.

"It was a great event to attend, attended by guests of every flavour – RAF, Army and Navy – and Dougie seemed to be delighted and pleased to see us all," said Lieutenant Commander Gaunt.



## Channel Dash stone unveiled

PERSONNEL from Wildcat training unit 825 Naval Air Squadron headed to Staffordshire to remember the greatest act of self-sacrifice in the formation's 85-year history.

All six of 825's outdated Swordfish torpedo bombers were shot out of the Channel skies when they were sent to intercept heavy German ships making a break from ports in France to bases in the Reich.

All but five of the 18 aircrew were killed; their leader, Lieutenant Commander Eugene Esmonde received a posthumous Victoria Cross.

Despite the failure to stop the German breakthrough and the loss of men and machines, The Channel Dash, as it became known, has entered Fleet Air Arm legend, commemorated each February both at 825's present-day home of Yeovilton and Ramsgate, close to Manston airfield from where the Swordfish flew in 1942.

This year, however, an extra act of commemoration took place at the National Memorial Arboretum near Lichfield, where a plaque was dedicated to those 18 brave aviators.

Before doing so, the 30 personnel crossed the airfield to visit one of the 'Stringbags' maintained by Navy Wings as a living tribute to the wartime Fleet Air Arm to get a greater appreciation of the challenge Esmonde and his men faced in their lumbering biplane bombers.

A coach trip later and the a short service conducted by stand-in chaplain, Lt Max Randles, with an address given by Lt Cdr Oliver Brooksbank.

The memorial stone is in good company, alongside many others as part of the Fleet Air Arm memorial.



# Roy is honneured

ONE of the country's oldest D-Day veterans has been honoured by France for his efforts to liberate their country.

Former minesweeper officer Dennis 'Roy' Cooper became the latest veteran of the 1944-45 campaign to receive the Legion d'Honneur.

The 102-year-old was assigned to escorting the Mulberry harbours – the artificial ports which were key to sustaining the Allied war effort in Northwest Europe once the liberating armies established a foothold in occupied France.

In addition, as part of the enormous armada gathered for Operation Neptune, he was engaged in sweeping operations to keep the waters between Sword Beach and Cotentin Peninsula.

The retired sailor was awarded the Legion d'Honneur back in December, but forces charity SSAFA organised an official ceremony at Blandford Camp, near Roy's home in Marnhull.

Colonel Cédric Franco of the French Army – and himself a Legion d'Honneur holder – presented the decoration in the presence of Commander Scott Simpson, CO of 815 Naval Air Squadron and Yeovilton's Base Warrant Officer WO1 Baz Firth, plus Admiral The Lord West, Lord Lieutenant of Dorset Angus Campbell, SSAFA case worker Nicholas Bate – the charity supported Roy when he was caring for his wife and needed help with his garden – and Service personnel from the Royal Navy and Royal Signals.

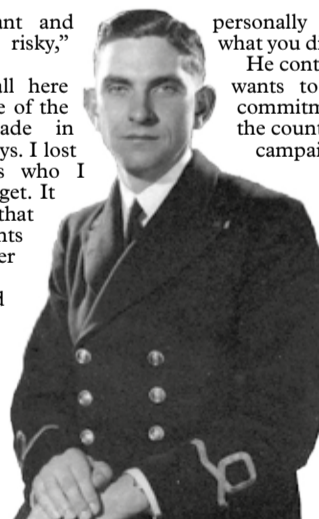
"It was initially a bit of a surprise when I found out about the award, but the job we did was



very important and incredibly risky," Roy said.

"We are all here today because of the sacrifices made in those dark days. I lost many friends who I will never forget. It is important that these events are never forgotten."

The Lord Lieutenant told the veteran the decision to honour him had been made by French President Macron



personally "in recognition of what you did in those dark days".

He continued: "Today France wants to thank you for the commitment you showed to the country during this terrible campaign in France."

Originally from Portsmouth, Roy was enlisted in October 1940 and spent three years serving in battleship HMS King George V, taking part in operations in the North Atlantic, North Africa and Italy.

Commissioned in 1943, Roy saw extensive action clearing minefields off the

invasion beaches and Cherbourg peninsula as well as waters around Guernsey.

Post-war he worked in the motor industry before retiring to Marnhull in Dorset, where he has lived for thirty-two years with his wife Mary, a retired headmistress.

"It was amazing to hear that Roy still drives his 4x4 everywhere and loves to draw and paint which keeps him active," said WO Firth. "He explained that his hearing isn't what it should be as when he was embarked aboard HMS King George V he snuck out onto the upper deck to use the heads when she fired her 14in guns which as you may imagine must have been deafening."

"He's a wonderful man and it was a privilege for RNAS Yeovilton to be a part of the ceremony."







# NAVY NEWS

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# Sliding into record book

**LEADING** Naval Nurse Sarah Belcher begins her descent of the famous Cresta Run – and made history as she became the first female competitor to qualify to ride from the Top in her first season.

LNN Belcher went on to help the Royal Navy Women's team win the first full Cresta Inter-Services competition.

The leading hand attained the qualifying times from the lower and slower "Junction" start to qualify her for Top Riding and held her nerve to complete the Cresta run from Top.

She is also only the fourth female to ever ride from Top in recent history.

Women were banned from riding the Cresta Run in 1929 after concerns were raised that the violent trauma to the chest would cause breast cancer.

For female service Cresta riding it was also a historic moment as LNN Belcher achieved what countless servicemen have failed to achieve over the years.

Had there been a little more time, her RN teammates MA Chloe Elcock and MA Faye Gardiner would have also qualified for Top and their time will no doubt come next season.

LNN Belcher became the first-ever female recipient of the highly-coveted RN Cresta jumper, awarded to all RN Top riders on the occasion of their first ride from Top.

In the male competition, outstanding novice Lt Matt Johnson came second in the Harland Trophy with some fearless riding on race day.

Surg Cdr Dave Potter came second in the Lord Trenchard Trophy with Army Team Captain, Capt Tom Wythe retaining his title.

The RNRM Team were narrowly beaten into third place in the Prince Philip Trophy.

Located in the winter sports town of St Moritz in Switzerland, the 1,212-metre run is one of the few in the world dedicated entirely to skeleton racing.

The run winds its way from above the 'Leaning Tower' in St Moritz, down a steep gully through ten testing corners, past the tiny hamlet of Cresta to the village of Celerina. The total drop is 514ft and the gradient varies from 1 in 2.8 to 1 in 87.

The first Cresta Run was completed in January 1885 and took nearly nine weeks to build. Since its inception it has been – and remains – the most thrilling ice run in the world. It is still built from scratch every year using the natural contours of the valley and earth banks to provide a framework on which to pile the snow.

The Royal Navy team would like to thank the RNWSA, the Sports Lottery and all of its private supporters for their generosity and support which allows sailors and marines the opportunity to compete in this most exhilarating of sports.

If you think you would enjoy the opportunity to race on the Cresta Run, and have the courage, resilience, determination and ability to learn, please contact Surg Cdr Dave Potter on [davidpotter1@nhs.net](mailto:davidpotter1@nhs.net)





# Hillman's an imp in the skies

PILOT Sub Lieutenant Ed Hillman soars through the air as he celebrates winning the progress of the year prize at Seahawk Gliding Club. The club, based at RNAS Cudrose in Cornwall, allowed SLt Hillman, who was on holdover prior to beginning his fixed-wing flying training at Barkston Heath, to pass his bronze test flights to qualify for his Gliding Pilot's Licence. Lawson Tickell won the flight of the year title for his Silver C 50km return flight to Bodmin. The club secretary also won the Chief Flying Instructor's

prize for his work in keeping the admin in order. Former Cudrose captain Tony Hogg won the first solo of the year award while Merlin pilot Rob Harris achieved the best height gain and pilot of the year awards. The winter months proved testing with flying restricted by the weather but all the pilots managed to stay current and complete most of the annual check flights.



## Keeping up the skills during close season

PETTY Officer Jen Cass practises in the nets as preparations are well underway for this year's cricket season.

Members of the Royal Navy's women and men's cricket squads conduct regular gatherings around the country during the close season.

The senior men's team met at Somerset County Cricket Ground and the women's team met at Hampshire County Cricket Ground to prepare for the forthcoming season.

The RNCA are taking an innovative approach to this season, in that there is going to be an intensive ten-day training period prior to the T20, 40 & 50-over competitions.

The senior men's team are playing the Army and RAF at T20 at Lords on May 26 (visit [interservices20.co.uk/](http://interservices20.co.uk/)) and 50-overs cricket at Burnaby Road on July 21-23.

The women's team are playing the inter-services T20 at Aldershot on June 25 and 40 overs cricket at Vine Lane on July 14-16.

Following on from last year's successful women's team tour of Barbados, the senior men's team are touring Australia in October and participating in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) cricket festival whilst there.

It promises to be a very exciting year for Navy Cricket. If you are interested in becoming involved in cricket, as a player, umpire, coach or official, or you just want to follow some of the games; further details on the Navy Cricket can be found at the Navy Cricket website: [royalnavycricketassociation.com](http://royalnavycricketassociation.com)

# What a racquet

## Haul of silverware for Raleigh duo

TWO members of staff from HMS Raleigh let their racquets do the talking at the Royal Navy and Royal Marine Badminton Championships

Surgeon Commander Lisa Stevens, HMS Raleigh's Principle Medical Officer, and Leading Physical Trainer Josh Llewellyn both returned with silverware from the competition.

Surg Cdr Stevens swept the board winning the open ladies singles, ladies doubles, mixed doubles and was runner-up in the veterans' doubles, while LPT Llewellyn was runner-up in the restricted men's doubles.

The three-day competition was held at HMS Sultan with the aim of promoting single service sport and identifying players for the Inter-Services Badminton team.

Day one saw LPT Llewellyn in action for the Restricted Open Championships, aimed at players who have not yet made the RNRM team and/or county standard or above.

LPT Llewellyn has been playing badminton for 15 years, starting at the tender age of five and is just returning to Navy badminton after a period away at sea.

He originally joined the Royal Navy in 2014 as a Warfare Specialist and transferred to the PT Branch last November.

He said: "The competition was really good. It was nice to blow the dust off my skills a little bit and get back into it."

"I felt it the next day though, I do a lot of functional fitness and put my body through a lot of strenuous exercise, but for badminton you use a complete different set of muscles."



"I played a little bit of Navy Badminton when I was going through my specialist training. Now I've now transferred to the PT branch I should have the opportunity to do it a bit more."

Surg Cdr Stevens has been playing badminton since she was six or seven years old and played national badminton during her teenage years.

She stopped playing while she was at university and then took the sport up again when she joined the Royal Navy.

Surg Cdr Stevens has been the Royal Navy's number one for the past ten years plus.

She is Chair of Royal Navy Badminton and Ladies team captain. She also plays for Devon.

Surg Cdr Stevens said: "Badminton has been my life since I was young. I spent my teenage years training. We have a very social group of people, so I enjoy playing."

"We have a real range of ranks and specialisations, so particularly for the younger guys coming through they meet people who do lots of different things. It takes the rank structure out of it and everyone comes together to play sport."

Around 40 or 50 people regularly play Royal Navy badminton. The full Royal Navy team consists of eight women and ten-12 men. Individual competitions are run at different Naval Bases and the Royal

Navy hosts the Inter-Services competition every three years, usually at the Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton.

Surg Cdr Stevens said: "We really need some more women in the Navy team, so if there are any women out there who like playing badminton, no matter what standard you are at, please come and play."

"We actually have people on the Navy team who we've taught to play badminton four or five years ago and they are now good enough to play Navy standard."

"The Royal Navy team toured Hong Kong two years ago and there is another tour planned for South Africa this autumn; our squad is still to be selected."

## Englishman reigns in Welsh match

ENGLAND and Wales versus the weather was the order of the day as Royal Navy golfers gathered for their first fixture of the year, writes *Writer Ian Ashenden, of PjHQ Northwood.*

Players headed to South Wales to battle over the championship links of Pyle and Kenfig, where all but a couple of holes were dry despite storms Ciara and Dennis.

Round one saw the two squads play a warm-up strokeplay event, despite 30mph winds battering the players.

Day two saw all players compete in a round-robin scratch matchplay over two rounds. Team captain POPT Mike Setterfield, of HMS Raleigh, was joined by first team players Lt Cdr Al Woodward (NCHQ), pictured teeing off, PO

Craig Merralls (846 NAS), and myself, along with captain of the seconds, CPO Bob Hoskins (1710 NAS), battling against PO Cody Harridge and AB Rhys Edkins (both HMS Collingwood) and Marine Sam Garner (CTCRM).

After a series of closely-fought matches, bragging rights at the end of the day went to me, as I fended off three Welsh opponents, and Welshman Edkins, who made his RN golf debut by sending his three English foes back over the Severn Bridge licking their wounds.

Golf is open to all levels in the RN, from friendly unit get-togethers right up to Combined Services level. Anyone interested in playing should contact their PT staff in the first instance, they can also put you in contact with your Regional Golf Manager.



## Learn to be in the middle

THE Royal Navy Football Association are delivering a basic FA Referee course at Commando Training Centre in June.

The course, which runs over two days from June 8 to 9, costs £120, of which 80 per cent can be claimed back from standard learning credits, making the cost £35.

There will be an additional course at HMS Temeraire in September.

The course includes: Free referee registration, complimentary whistle and red and yellow cards, FA referee learning journal and a certificate of qualification.

For further details and to book your place, email CPO David McNamara at [david.mcnamara310@mod.gov.uk](mailto:david.mcnamara310@mod.gov.uk)



Pictures: Marine Joe Burt,  
40 Commando and Cpl Nicholas Egan RAF

# Slope styles



ROYAL Marine Oliver Flint gets big air on a jump from his snowboard in Tignes.

The marine, from 40 Commando, was among more than 700 Naval Service personnel who descended on the Alpine resort to learn, develop, and compete across a range of ski and snowboard events.

This year's largest group on the slopes were junior rates, with 263 taking part, the highest number in the championships' history.

Boarders took part in the Snowboarders Jam contest which, after a week's worth of practice, they were invited to show off their new skills.

Marine Alfie Hopkinson, below left, took gold in the male ski category, while fellow 40 Cdo Marine Jack Goldsmith, below second left, won bronze in the male snowboard contest.

The Royal Navy Royal Marines Ski Team also consolidated their two week's practise with a race which saw 36 competitors speeding down the slope.

"The instructors at the ski champs are great, they really progressed my ability on the slopes throughout. An incredibly enjoyable week in all aspects," said skier, Marine Jim Kirton, of 40 Cdo.

Next up was Meribel in France as it hosted this year's Inter Service Ski and Snowsport Championships, featuring a nine-strong RN Telemark Team.

The Navy had recruited well and arrived in Meribel with a strong male and female team. The latter being the first time the Navy had achieved a women's Telemark team.

Spirits were high, Exercise White Dagger, (grassroot Telemark development) and Ex Telemark Titan GB and Navy championships had sourced a very promising athlete, Mne Max Carneige, of 45 Commando, who had qualified and then selected to forerun at GB championships.

"I am very excited to be representing the Navy at ISSSC, having started my Telemark journey five weeks before at Exercise White Dagger," said Mne Carneige.

Monday morning arrived, and, despite the rain, the Telemark Giant Slalom – 31 gates (lunges) a jump (distance of 9m to clear to avoid penalty seconds being added to your time) went head. It was about as predictable as Dartmoor's ecosystem, with Capt Gordy McCrae pirouetting out of the start

gate. The Navy team came out on top, securing first place (Lt James French) and third place (Mne Max Carnegie).

Sub Lieutenant Dominique 'Nix' Symons made history by winning the first women's Inter-Services' Telemark Giant Slalom final.

The keen ski-ing enthusiast, a reservist from HMS President, won the challenging event comprising four different races. As part of a combined trip she also won gold at the Navy Championships, and a bronze medal at the Great British championships.

SLt Symons, said: "It feel amazing to be part of it. I fell in love with the sport as soon as I did it and I just want there to be more people to love it like I do.

"As a sport, it has previously been owned by men and we can definitely take that back...it would be awesome to get more women here and I hope we can in the future."

Days later and the Telemark classic, one run over 36 gates, a jump loom and 200-250 metres of Nordic skating.

With strong performances by both the RN women's and men's teams, the Navy narrowly scored a second overall team win from the Army. The overall team title was now getting closer.

The Telemark Sprint, 21 gates, jump and 150-200m skate, was premiered under floodlights. #

This proved to be a real crowd pleaser, as the Navy with Lt French retaining his form, received a third first place, putting him clear of the competition for the overall individual title.

He backed this up the next day with the parallel Telemark sprint win.

The individual efforts of all the male and female Navy skiers had held off the challenge of the Army and the Navy Telemark ski team was crowned ISSSC champions for the fourth consecutive year.

Retirements were announced by Lt Col Huan Davies RM and Col Graeme Armour RM. Both have been stalwarts of the sport over the last 20 years. Also enjoying themselves at the Royal Navy Winter Sports Association's Alpine Championships were 18 URNU students.

For the first week of the championships, 11 personnel from Birmingham, Devon, Southampton and Wales URNUs attended with seven OCs from Wales and Southampton taking part in week two. Some of the team are pictured below, third from left.

There was a mix of skiing and snowboarding skills in both groups, ranging from complete beginners to advanced skiers and snowboarders.

During week one URNU managed some impressive results – claiming gold in the female novice race (OC Buck - Wales); gold (OC Gent – Devon) and bronze (OC Goacher-Birmingham) in the female Intermediate race and an impressive further gold medal in the female expert category race for OC Hansford (Birmingham).

Male participants all got down the course safely with OC Chelton (Birmingham) completing the fastest time of the group at 56 seconds.

Beginners were not quite so fast, but all survived with OC Mumtaz (Wales) only narrowly missing out on a podium place.

Although not technically in the URNU team, credit should also go to Lt Hugh O'Driscoll (SUSO) who was on the BRNC team and managed to secure gold in the male novice category.

There was some more intense racing in the second week, with some snowpack skills for the competitions.

A bronze medal was won by OC Middleton (Southampton) in the beginner snowboarders race.



● Below, SLt Dominique 'Nix' Symons took gold in Meribel





**£50 PRIZE PUZZLE**



THE mystery ship in the February edition of *Navy News* (right) was the battle-class destroyer HMS Hogue commissioned during WW2. The ship's crest was based on the coat of arms of Admiral Sir George Rooke.

David Williams, of Maidstone, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (above) is a passenger and cargo ship which was requisitioned by the British Ministry of War Transport on behalf of the Royal Navy from Burns, Philp & Company Limited in 1942.

1) What was her name? and 2) which admiral used her as a flagship?

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 May 15. 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 June edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

**MYSTERY PICTURE 302**

Name .....

Address .....

My answers: (1) .....

(2) .....

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**Talking Navy News**

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in May's Noticeboard must be received by

**APRIL 15, 2020**

**Deaths**

**George White.** CPO Stoker and RFA Officer. Joined HMS Ganges as a boy in 1947. Member of HMS Phoebe Association, HMS Ganges Association, Engineers Association and RNA. Died January 12, aged 88.

**Bob Hawes.** CPO QR1. Served May 1938 to December 1962 in HMS Ganges, Curlew, Emerald, Royal Sovereign, Kent (Arctic Convoys), Annet, Swiftsure, Birmingham, Broadsword, and Pembroke. Died March 1, aged 97.

**Rear Adm William A Waddell CB CBE.** Chief Naval Inst Officer, HMS Narvik, Neptune. DN Education, NATO, RNEC Manadon, Nav Sec, FO Adty Int Board. Died February 4, aged 95.

**Capt Lewis W L Chelton.** Chief Naval Judge Adv. Dir Naval Admin Planning, HMS Fearless, Warrior,

Victory, Cochrane, Jufair, President, and Centurion. Died February 11, aged 85.

**Cdre RNR Muriel E Hocking RD\*** HMS Vivid, Greenock HQNR, Gibraltar HQ RNR, Plymouth HQ RNR, Rosyth RNR. Died February 26.

**Cdr Hugh N M Thompson.** HMS Dolphin, Andrew, Renown, Saker, and President. Assistant Controller Polaris. Died February 26.

**Maj RM Peter R Dawson.** 40, 41 Cdo RM. RM Portsmouth, Plymouth. DN Recruiting. Depot RM. CGRM. Died February 17, aged 90.

**Lt Cdr RN Joseph L Chapman RD.** List 1 RNR. Died February 3, aged 92.

**Lt Cdr Peter R Sheppard AFC.** HMS Ocean, Ark Royal, Heron, RAF Wyton. RAF Brawley. 807,891, 899, 892 NAS. Died February 6.

**Lt Cdr James R Drury.** HMS Ganges, Albion, Dryad, Vernon, and Mercury. Died February 2, aged 75.

**Surg Lt Cdr RNR John P Williams RD FRCS.** Unattached RNR. Died February 16, aged 94.

**Lt Cdr Matthew R Todd MBE.** HMS Dolphin. Died January 29, aged 95.

**Lt Cdr David T Heap.** HMS Victory RNB. Died February 24, aged 93.

**Lt Anthony R M Hayward.** HMS Heron, Hermes. 894, 890, 899, 801,892 NAS. Died February 14.

**Lt RNRV John F N Wedge.** Died January 7, aged 98.

**Ron D Fairs.** RO2. Joined HMS Ganges in January 1957 and served full time until 1968 and RNR until 1976. Ships included HMS Eagle, Redpole, Rothesay, Lion, and Hydra. Member of Shotley Division of HMS Ganges Association. After RN service

worked for Royal Mail in home town of Ipswich. Died February, aged 78.

**Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC**

**Cdr Douglas N T Murray.** HMS Tenby, Arethusa, Exmouth, RM Condor, DGNM, DNW. Died February 1, aged 87.

**Lt Cdr John M Hodgson.** HMS Collingwood, Battleaxe, Dryad. AMTE Teddington. C-in-C Fleet, DUWE Portland, C-in-C Iberlant. Died February 7.

**Submariners' Association**

**Dave Roper.** CEA1. Served in HM Submarines Renown and Revenge. West Of Scotland Branch. Died February 10, aged 82.

**Happy tenth birthday to 1710**

A DINNER to mark the tenth anniversary of the formation of 1710 NAS takes place in June.

The event will be held at HMS Sultan's WOs and SRs Mess on June 5.

The dinner is open to all former and serving members and one guest.

Additional guests will be permitted on a first-come, first-served basis if there are tickets available after all former and current members have applied.

Tickets will cost £50 per person for

former and current members and their first guest, every guest thereafter will be £55 per person.

A £10 deposit per person is required to secure tickets and all tickets must be paid for in full by May 1.

Tickets are going fast so act quickly to ensure you do not miss out on what is undoubtedly going to be a memorable event.

For further information or if you wish to attend please contact Elaine Rogers on [elaine.rogers683@mod.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.rogers683@mod.gov.uk)



[hmsbroadswordassociation.co.uk](http://hmsbroadswordassociation.co.uk) or contact Bill Skilliter [wistheplumber@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wistheplumber@yahoo.co.uk)

**1710 Naval Air Squadron tenth Anniversary Dinner:** WO, SRs & SNOs mess, HMS Sultan, Friday June 5 2020. Contact Elaine Rogers at [Elaine.Rogers683@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Elaine.Rogers683@mod.gov.uk) / 02392 722758.

**HMS Lincoln 68/69 Commission:** Riverside Hotel, Brantson, Burton-on-Trent, June 12-14 2020. Contact Mike Sutcliffe on 01282 618 751.

**HMS Liverpool Association:** Reunion will be held on Saturday June 13 at the GI's Association Whale Island mustering at 1200. Our association is made up of those who have served on the cruiser and the Type 42 destroyer and new members are always welcome. For membership information and reunion details contact secretary John Parker at [info@hmsliverpoolassociation.org.uk](mailto:info@hmsliverpoolassociation.org.uk) or call 02392521222.

**HMS Londonderry.** First Commission July 1960 to October 1962 are having a reunion from July 19 to 22 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea. Contact Brian Coward at [brianward39@btinternet.com](mailto:brianward39@btinternet.com) for details.

**RMBS 1/70 and 2/70 Squad.** A joint 50th anniversary reunion of 1/70 and 2/70 squads is planned for the last weekend in August 2020 in Deal. Contact Nick Buckley on [nickbuckley55@aol.com](mailto:nickbuckley55@aol.com)

**HMS Troubridge Final Commission Association 1966-69** Royal Beach Hotel, Portsmouth October 2-5 2020. Contact Brian Pace at [Romft1@GMail.com](mailto:Romft1@GMail.com) or via [HMSTroubridge.com](http://HMSTroubridge.com).

**HMS Lowestoft Association:** Our tenth reunion will take place at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea,

from October 2 to 5. All who served in Lowestoft during her RN service (1961-1986) are welcome, including wives/partners/guests). A 1, 2 or 3 night package is available or if you reside locally why not join us for the Saturday night gala dinner only. For further details and how to make a booking please call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or contact [ian@hmslowestoft.co.uk](mailto:ian@hmslowestoft.co.uk) Tel: 07778 546861.

**Royal Marines Band Service Annual Reunion:** The RMBS reunion will take place on the evening of October 10 at the Warrant Officers, Senior Rates & Senior NCOs Mess, HMS NELSON, Portsmouth.

For further information and tickets please contact the Blue Band Office: 023 9254 7563 or email: [sec@royalmarinesbands.co.uk](mailto:sec@royalmarinesbands.co.uk). The annual RMBS Memorial Service will take place at 11am the following day in St Thomas of Canterbury (Portsmouth Cathedral), Old Portsmouth.

**Weapon Mechanics Association:** The 2020 annual reunion takes place at the Bear Hotel in Havant, on October 10. This will be the Association's final reunion, wives and partners are welcome. For further details contact Peter Andrews at [weaponmechs50@btinternet.com](mailto:weaponmechs50@btinternet.com) or phone 07411 807552.

**HMS Undaunted, Eagle and Yarmouth Associations:** Annual reunion, Hallmark Hotel, Midland Road, Derby, October 23-26. Gala dinner on Saturday October 24. Contact Alan (Whiskey) Walker on 01268548041 or email [whiskey666@outlook.com](mailto:whiskey666@outlook.com)

**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](mailto:neil.hall324@mod.gov.uk)

**Reunions**

**Loch Class Frigates Association:** North Hotel, Cardiff, April 17-20 2020. Membership is open to all who served on any Loch-class ship or variant (Bay class, admiral's yachts, survey ships and repair ships. Contact honorary secretary Andrew Nunn at [Andrew.nunn@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:Andrew.nunn@blueyonder.co.uk) / 0117 9505835

**HMS Ganges Association:** Warners Gunton Hall Holiday Village near Lowestoft, April 17-20 2020 Contact [tony.willders@btinternet.com](mailto:tony.willders@btinternet.com) / 07787 106202 or Isle of Wight Tours on 01983 405116.

**The Algerines Reunion:** Away Resorts, Mill Rythe Village, Hayling Island, April 20-27. Contact G Patience, 97 Balmacaan Road, Drumnadrochit, Invernesshire IV63 6UY / 01456450659 / 07724633437 / 07917457960

**HMS Collingwood Association:** Next reunion and annual meeting will be held at the Hallmark Hotel, Derby from April 24 to 27. All ex-Collingwood personnel are welcome. For details and bookings contact IOW Tours Ltd, New Road Lake, Sandown, Isle of Wight. PO36 9JN. tel 01983 405116.

**HMS Aisne:** A reunion of the last commission, from 1966 to 1968, takes place at the Best Western Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, from Friday May 1 to May 4. Contact IOW tours on 01983 405116 or Nigel Jest 07531546185 or [nigeljest@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nigeljest@hotmail.co.uk)

**HMS Phoebe:** All shipmates welcome to our 2020 reunion at the Aztec Hotel, Bristol, from May 1-4 Details from IOW Tours Ltd, 3 New Road, Lake, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO36 9JN / 01983 405116 / [enquiries@iowtours.com](mailto:enquiries@iowtours.com)

**HMS Cadiz, Saintes and Wizard:** Novotel Hotel, Nottingham, May 8-11. All three ships' associations will hold their own annual meetings and share all other activities. Contact Isle of Wight Tours, 3 New Road, Lake, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO36 9JN. Tel 01252 405116, fax 01983 405504, email [enquiries@iowtours.com](mailto:enquiries@iowtours.com) or contact HMS Saintes secretary Fred. Terry1@ntlworld.com / 01252 625974.

**HMS Bulwark, Albion and Centaur Association.** Tillington Hall Hotel, Stafford, May 8-11. National Memorial Arboretum visit on Sunday. Contact Denis Askham at [askhamd3@gmail.com](mailto:askhamd3@gmail.com) / 07773651213.

**HMS Tenby Association.** Collingwood Hotel, Bournemouth, May 8-11. Contact secretary David Macalister at [dmac121dm@gmail.com](mailto:dmac121dm@gmail.com)

**Field gun veterans, all Commands:** Tiffany's, Blackpool, May 29. Call 01253 313414. For more info call Colin Burley on 01543 572212 / 07525179629 / [barbaraburley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:barbaraburley@hotmail.co.uk)

**HMS Broadsword Association:** Biannual reunion and AGM takes place at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, on May 23 2020. See

**Ask Jack**

**Alfred Cook.** Service number PJS 524322. Alf is 94 and partner to my mother-in-law. He served in the navy during the Second World War, during which he was wounded. He served in the Far East attached to aircraft carriers. He manned a small rescue vessel whose task was to rescue men and planes which had to ditch in the sea. He was there around 1943/1944. My wife and I would very much like to find anyone who may have known Alf during his time in the navy. He was born and bred in Bedfordshire but now lives in the West Midlands. [Stuartpugh@btinternet.com](mailto:Stuartpugh@btinternet.com)

**Brian Boulton.** I am trying to trace and old friend who was training to be a diver at HMS Ganges from 1958. I would appreciate any news anyone may have of him.

**Pauline Mahon (nee White)** 01677988296/07910275290 [pauline22@hotmail.com](mailto:pauline22@hotmail.com)

**Ian Robertson:** I am trying to trace a former colleague. We 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 60.

**David Martin** [david.martin.689@gmail.com](mailto:david.martin.689@gmail.com)

**Grapple Squadron:** May 15th marks 63 years since Grapple Squadron on HMS Narvik dropped Britain's first H-Bomb over Malden Island. I was 20 years old. I wonder if there are any of us still alive?

**Robert 'Bogey' Knights** [bobandwendy1937@gmail.com](mailto:bobandwendy1937@gmail.com)

**CPO John Terrett.** We are trying to trace my sister's brother-in-law. He served in HMS Ark Royal in either the 1970s, 80s or 90s. He was born in Middlesbrough and had a brother, Norman, and mother Milly.

**Alison and Nigel Bryden** [Invermill@talk21.com](mailto:Invermill@talk21.com)

**Michael Frampton.** My brother-in-law boxed extensively for the navy during his service in the 60s and was awarded his colours. He would love to get a Imperial Services/Combined Services cloth badge to sew on to his sweatshirt. He is now 75 and I would love to obtain one for him.

**Joe Joryeff** [joryeffj@gmail.com](mailto:joryeffj@gmail.com)

**HMS Isis. D-87 'That which Remains' 1936 to 1944.** My father

was an Army Officer attached to HMS Isis as BLO and survived 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.

**Angus Beaton** 07966166981 [angusbeaton@me.com](mailto:angusbeaton@me.com)

**CPSA Jim Asher.** I am trying to contact a former shipmate with whom I served in HMS Cardiff during the Falklands conflict. I served as a CHMEM at the time.

**Terry Edson** [Sallyann.edson@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:Sallyann.edson@tiscali.co.uk)

**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, with whom we would like to get in touch.

**Colin Riley** 63 Elsa Road, Welling, Kent DA16 1JZ

**Tribute to HMS Ashanti**

PLANS are progressing to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of HMS Ashanti's visit to Ghana with the opening of a new Anglo-Ashanti War Memorial Museum.

Following an earlier appeal on the *Navy News* Facebook page, organisers have been contacted by members of the tribal frigate's ship's company who were aboard F117 during her visit to Ghana in August 1970.

Organisers are now appealing for contact from the following personnel or members of their families:

Surg Lt John William Boak; Lt Cdr Jack Calam; Lt Brian Gentry; Lt Douglas Hamilton; Lt Brian Hoffman; Cdr Peter Leggett; Lt Cdr Gregor McGibbon; Lt Cdr Clive Pegden; Lt David Pilling; Lt Leslie Pollard; Cdr Philip Unwin; Lt Col Peter Whittaker; S/Lt Richard Wright; Lt Cdr David Templeman; Lt Cdr Peter Wyatt; Cdr Anthony Wyer; the late Cdre David Hebron. Contact Hope Golden-Rain on 0787 392 1296 or email [independenceandworldwar@tut-amail.com](mailto:independenceandworldwar@tut-amail.com). You can also visit their Facebook page **HMS Ashanti Ghana 50th anniversary**



# At forefront of transformation

## THE GROVE REVIEW

EVERY year Seaforth, the leading naval publisher, produces a *World Naval Review* that provides a comprehensive update on world naval developments.

Given the current innovation theme of the Royal Navy, it seems a good opportunity to use this book to highlight the most innovative developments of the last year, writes Prof Eric Grove.

The main transformative theme is the revolution being wrought by information technology with its improved connectivity both within and between platforms.

Perhaps the most significant section of the book is David Hobbs' analysis of the revolution being wrought by the F-35 Lightning aircraft.

I had been a little worried that Commander Hobbs, expert on naval aviation that he undoubtedly is, did not fully appreciate the potential of this aircraft.

No more, and I cannot do better than quote his insightful analysis (pp169-70).

The aircraft's systems 'give both pilots and their network enabled command and control partners, three dimensional situational awareness of the battle space....'

An F-35 operating from a carrier using only its passive sensors can provide high-quality data-to-air-and-surface-platforms, allowing any one of a number of surface or airborne platforms to engage airborne targets or fire missiles over-the-horizon against surface targets. The F-35 can, thus, be considered to have unlimited magazine capability.

Linked with airborne early-warning assets a target could be destroyed without any indication it was being detected. As Commander Hobbs rightly argues: "It is wrong to think of the F-35 simply as a new fighter. It really is a potential game changer."

With 36 F-35Bs a Queen Elizabeth-class carrier has 80 per cent of the capability of a US carrier at a fraction of the cost.

Another major aspect of innovation is the greater use on autonomous vehicles, above, on and below the waves. A range of such

aerial vehicles, ranging from rotary winged machines to both land-based and carrier-based fixed-wing aircraft, are becoming available in increasing quantities.

The procurement of the carrier-based M-25 Stingray has been expedited by new procurement practices and the use of this airframe to provide tanker support promises to relieve a third of the F-18s currently used as tankers to revert to their primary fighting roles.

Moving beneath the waves Dr Norman Friedman, that doyen of naval analysts, shows how new technology is transforming submarine warfare.

The combination of electro-optical periscopes and new software-controlled sonars with improved signal processing is transforming the situational awareness of submarines, even in the most challenging of tactical environments.

There is also potential for submarines using electro-optical sensors on free floating bodies connected by wire to the submarine.

Modern submarines, such as the American 'Virginias', are controlled by computer in what Dr Friedman calls 'swim by wire' mode. As he explains: "As in a fly-by-wire aircraft, the computer interposed between the controls and the control surfaces can move the latter in a coordinated way, for example ....to take evasive action, in conjunction with the launch of decoys."

There are also possibilities for better three-dimensional situational awareness using ever-increasing computing power.

Nuclear still remains the key propulsion system for submarines, with quieter electric transmissions becoming more used, eg in the next generation American SSBNs, air independent propulsion systems, sterling engines or fuel cells, give enhanced underwater endurance for non-nuclear

boats, but are not panaceas, given fuel limitations.

One new way to increase the underwater potential of 'conventional' boats is to use lithium batteries, a technology that has much potential given the development of this electrical technology for land transport. One can imagine boats with lithium batteries charged at base with a month or more's endurance at up to 20 knots. Dr Friedman demonstrates both the limitations as well as the potential of unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs).

They can spread intelligence-gathering potential but there are problems with retrieving them. Unless this problem is solved the author argues 'there must be a question as to how reliably data from an unmanned system can be fed back into the parent submarine, presumably using some form of acoustic modem.'

In its 2020 budgetary request the US Navy published an ambitious programme for unmanned systems, large and medium unmanned surface vessels; extra large, large diameter and small/medium unmanned undersea vehicles; and three types of unmanned aerial vehicle, Triton, Stingray and Reaper. In total 98 such systems were planned.

Other aspects of innovation are the improvements in integrated air defence. Despite the Indian Navy's manifold and chronic problems in its procurement programmes, it is interesting that it has developed a cooperative engagement capability that allows ships to fire on another ship's fire control solution. As the book argues, this gives the Indian Navy 'an operational edge possessed by few fleets.'

This book provides a most useful update on contemporary naval innovation. **Seaforth World Naval Review 2020** edited by Conrad Waters (ISBN978-1-5267-6062-3) is, as usual, very well illustrated and good value at £35.



## When the Harrier ruled the skies

WHEN it comes to books about modern/recent air power, few writers have cornered the market like Rowland White.

The author has already paid homage to the legendary Vulcan, trumpeted a long-forgotten episode in the history of naval aviation (saving British Honduras – today Belize – from invasion thanks to a long-range Buccaneer mission launched from HMS Ark Royal) and revealed the hidden story behind the first Space Shuttle mission.

It's less the machines that fascinates the author than those who fly them, and those who designed, built and maintained them.

That's certainly the case with **Harrier 809** (Penguin, £20 ISBN 978-1787631588, released March 17) which is a mix of naval and aviation history/spy story/modern-day Battle of Britain.

White writes narrative history like a novelist, putting you in the cockpit or briefing room.

But *Harrier 809* is far more than the story of the jump jet and its dogfights over the Falklands in May 1982, or the hastily-formed 809 Naval Air Squadron (its pilots are pictured above), stood up especially for the conflict by scraping together every last qualified Sea Harrier pilot and available jet.

This is a story of politics, invention, determination, courage, of brave aviators on both sides and not a little luck: the Argentine carrier 25 de Mayo was all set to unleash its Skyhawks against the British task force on May 2... but there wasn't the wind over the deck to launch the jets.

There would be no 'Battle of Midway' in the South Atlantic; later that day the Belgrano was sunk; the Argentine carrier was ordered to return to home waters.

It's also a story of engineers and technicians working against the clock to fix problems and adapt to a war few had anticipated.

Argentine ground crews struggled with the absence of guidance from French teams on the use of Exocets (thanks to British pressure exerted on France's President Mitterand). They eventually made sense of the instructions (in French) and the loss of HMS Sheffield was the result.

The sinking of the destroyer underlined the importance of airborne early warning – which the Royal Navy did not have; experts back in the UK hurriedly engineered a solution... but it wouldn't be ready for several weeks. By then the South Atlantic war would be over.

And there was a lot of manoeuvring behind the scenes. Chile clearly offered a lot of assistance to Britain at the expense of her South American neighbour.

As for the Harrier, well with the axing of the traditional carriers in the 1970s, it was evidently seen as a weapon of last resort – particularly by former Phantom and Buccaneer pilots. They were not enamoured of the smaller, slower Harrier.

When chief test pilot John Farley briefed aviators on their new steed, the reception was sceptical at best, hostile at worst. Farley tried to silence them: "You may be quite surprised at how useful it will be."

Nor was Whitehall hopeful as the task force sailed south. It reckoned half the Harriers would be shot out of the sky in the first few days of battle.

The high point of the book is a thrilling and especially-detailed account of the aerial battles in the last ten days of May, beginning with May 21 when the Argentinian forces made an all-out effort to stop the landings at San Carlos... and Harrier pilots made an all-

out effort to stop them... and the battles of May 25, Argentina's national day.

That Tuesday cost the South Atlantic task force HMS Coventry and the merchantman Atlantic Conveyor which had ferried 809 Squadron to the Falklands; like HMS Sheffield, she fell victim to an Exocet, and the author paints a particularly vivid description of her loss.

The last hurrah of Argentine air forces came on May 30 and a third Exocet attack, this time decoyed by the chaff thrown up by the Fleet.

The skirmishes above the Falklands which pepper the second half of the book are in-the-cockpit seat-of-the-pants stuff – they give a real sense of the speed of jet combat and the immediacy with which aircrew and sailors had to react to warnings and sensors, which were often contradictory, or intermittent, or both.

Harriers and Sea Harriers flew 1,700 sorties during the Falklands campaign. In air-to-air combat it enjoyed the edge over its foes: it accounted for a quarter of Argentina's front-line fast jet strength. Not one jump jet was lost in a dogfight.

Just 34 naval and RAF Harriers fought in Falkland skies in 1982. Ten were lost to accidents and ground fire. Such was the margin of success and failure in the South Atlantic.

809 Squadron remained in the Falklands until the end of 1982 when it was disbanded. The Phoenix Squadron will soon rise again as the Fleet Air Arm's operational F-35 formation.



## Restored figureheads unveiled in Plymouth

A COLLECTION of 19th-Century Royal Navy figureheads has been unveiled at Plymouth's new Box museum and gallery following two years of careful restoration.

The 14 figureheads – collectively weighing more than 20 tonnes – have been returned to their former glory after years of water damage led to rot and decay.

Two specialist conservation teams spent more than two years working on the figureheads, which are being suspended from the ceiling of the main atrium of the new arts complex, due to open next month.

A technique called sonic tomography scanning, which was designed for measuring decay cavities in living trees, allowed conservators to assess the internal condition of the timber of each figurehead.

In most cases, the figureheads showed such severe degradation through rot that they had to be carefully deconstructed. Each section underwent controlled drying in purpose-built humidity chambers to minimise warping and shrinking of timber.

A female bust carved for HMS Topaz in 1858 had wood rot throughout 90 per cent of her structure but conservators saved her carved outer shell before replacing the rotting

wood and repainting her.

Tudor Evans, leader of Plymouth City Council, said: "The figureheads are more than just wooden sculptures, they're iconic symbols of the history of the city of Plymouth and the Royal Navy."

"They're also fantastic representations of the craftsmanship and skill of the sculptors who made them over 200 years ago."

The conservation team also tracked down a set of 1912 full-colour cigarette cards featuring the Navy's most famous figureheads from the previous century. They included one from HMS Calcutta, which is one of the figureheads being restored for The Box. A palette of colours inspired by the cigarette cards was used to restore each figurehead – all on loan from the National Museum of the Royal Navy – when it came to repainting.



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