



NAVY NEWS

AUGUST 2020

Friends in the north

THE view from HMS Kent as the Type 23 frigate conducts a sailpast with fellow NATO warships from Norway, Canada and the US during Exercise Dynamic Mongoose off the coast of Iceland.

(see pages 2-3)

Picture: LPhoto Dan Rosenbaum

AIR ESCAPE
SEE PLIPED MAN

Inside – Future Commando Force; Forward Presence; Carrier Strike and Innovation



A WAVE from the crew of Norwegian submarine Utsira as she rises above the waters of the Denmark Strait.

This is as easy as hunting submarines get.

But moments later, the Atlantic closed over the Utsira and she joined four other boats beneath the surface determined to wreak havoc... while five warships, anti-submarine helicopters and long-range maritime patrol aircraft were equally determined to keep the boats at bay.

More than 2,000 NATO personnel - over one quarter of them British - joined battle for two weeks last month in the alliance's premier cold-water anti-submarine exercise: Dynamic Mongoose.

The annual Mongoose alternates between Icelandic and Norwegian waters and mirrors the warm water sub hunt NATO runs off Sicily each year, Dynamic Manta.

With water temperature a key factor in the effectiveness of sonar (alongside the Atlantic's many other properties such as temperature layers and salinity), it's vital the RN can find hostile boats in these key strategic waters.

In both World War 2 and the Cold War the Greenland-Iceland-UK gap was a key strategic 'choke point'.

It was here that the Bismarck tried to slip out into broad Atlantic - and was engaged by HMS Hood with fatal consequences for the battle-cruiser.

It was here - the so-called mid-Atlantic gap - where some of the most bitter convoy battles were fought with U-boats, beyond the range of Allied air power... until the gap was closed by escort carriers and very-long range Liberator bombers.

And it was here that NATO lifelines between the New World and the Old may well have been tested to the limit had the Cold War turned hot.

The waters of the Denmark Strait are just 9°C - between three and six degrees colder than the sea around the UK in July.

It is for these very waters that HMS Kent and Westminster and their Merlin helicopters (Mohawk and Tungsten Flights respectively, provided by 814 Naval Air Squadron), were designed and built.

Joining them above the waves was the RAF's new P8 Poseidon - making its debut in Dynamic Mongoose - while lurking below, hunter-killer HMS Trenchant, making this the largest input from Britain in an anti-submarine exercise in many years.

Why? Well, there's been increased submarine activity in the Atlantic over the past few years, for one.

And secondly, our anti-submarine forces need to be at the top of the game to defend our new carrier strike groups; Kent is earmarked to accompany HMS Queen Elizabeth on her maiden deployment early next year.

The other big draw of NATO exercises: allies to work with and a spread of live assets to play with.

"There are few opportunities where ships, submarines and aircraft all train together to collectively improve our anti-submarine warfare skills," said Lieutenant Commander Chris Luke, Flight Commander on Westminster.

"The sea state and winds when operating in the High North can make flying conditions difficult.

"Being able to hunt submarines while working with our latest P8 and those of our allies demonstrates the ability of maritime patrol aircraft and helicopters to work together, which has not been done for around ten years."

The maritime patrol aircraft fly long-range reconnaissance aircraft use their suite of sensors plus sonobuoys peppering the exercise area - 5,300 square miles of the Atlantic (which is roughly the size of Northern Ireland).

The Merlins also lay an aural trap along a submarine's suspected path by dropping sonobuoys, then dip their sonar in the hover to close in for the kill.

And the frigates run out their towed arrays - a long tube-like sonar which either actively searches for submarines by sending sound waves through the water, or simply listens for a boat's tell-tale noise, in addition to using their hull-mounted sonar.

The full panoply of anti-submarine warfare in action made for a "formidable sight" according to Kent's Commanding Officer Commander Matt Sykes.

And just for good measure, the exercise threw in some surface action: choreographing submarines and warships in close proximity on the surface, down to more 'warry' training such as swarm attacks by fast surface craft (known as 'quickdraw' as it demands an immediate and accurate response from the ships' gunnery teams).

Hunting submarines is painstaking and methodical. Not for nothing is it dubbed 'awfully slow warfare'.

Merlin patrols can last several hours - and for a sustained hunt several helicopters operate in rotation around the clock to never give the underwater threat a breather.

In-flight refuelling allows the Merlin to top up without the rigmarole (and time) of landing on deck and shutting down.

The helicopter uses around 800 kilogrammes of fuel every hour it's airborne - but that can rise to one tonne of fuel for 60 minutes in the hover, when the helicopter has its dipping sonar lowered in the ocean as it closes in on its foe.

Here comes the science bit: in the hover it's purely engine power keeping the weight of the aircraft in the air; forward flight creates aerodynamic lift which lowers the rate of fuel consumption.

Refuelling isn't quick - it depends on how good the ship's pump pressure is; ideally, 1 to 1.2 tonnes should enter the Merlin's tanks every hour (it can be as low as 800kg if the fuel pressure's low).

It's also exposed to the elements, the hose is heavy and above all there's an almighty downwash from the helicopter; the refuelling team can be battered by wind speeds in excess of 200mph generated by a hovering Merlin.

When back on board Kent and Westminster, the helicopters are immediately prepared for their next sortie by the Flight's engineers and technicians.

“

It's a complex game of cat and mouse which everyone prides themselves in winning.

LT CDR SID SHAW, 814 NAS

At times they contended with choppy seas of four to five metres while carrying out maintenance in the cramped conditions of the frigates' hangars - about as far removed from the space they enjoy at 814's home in Culdrose.

"It's been great to see a different side of the Navy compared to the day-to-day living on an air station," said Air Engineering Technician Alex Thomas on HMS Kent.



"Integrating with the ship's company and learning what they do has changed my outlook on working and living at sea."

Their work is often overlooked and invariably unsung, but Lieutenant Commander Sid Shaw, Flight Commander on Kent, never plays down the efforts of his 14-strong team.

"Preparation involves every member of the Flight," he stresses. "The team are experienced operating from a small flight deck and hangar. It's a harsh environment but one Mohawk Flight pride themselves in operating safely in."

In fact, anti-submarine warfare demands vigilance from everyone on board - not just those in the ops room or in the Merlin.

It demands near total silence. No music. No loud talking or TV blaring away. No tools clattering. No slamming of hatches. No clank of boots on ladders. Boots off - socks only. Anyone not required on duty should retire to their bunks if possible.

The submarines - three nuclear,

two diesel - weren't just here to be picked off at will by the surface and air forces mustered against them. They too were developing their tactics, trying to evade the hunters and get their strikes in first.

"It's a complex game of cat and mouse which everyone prides themselves in winning," Lt Cdr Shaw said.

Which makes Dynamic Mongoose "one of the most challenging exercises" in the NATO arsenal, according to Rear Admiral Andrew Burcher, Commander NATO Submarines.

And so, after two weeks of exercises - including three entire days of solid hunting - Kent and Westminster returned home to Portsmouth much better prepared to shield any shipping requiring protection against submarines.

"Dynamic Mongoose provides

Westminster with the ideal opportunity to practise anti-submarine warfare against challenging targets in company with NATO allies.

"It is opportunities like this that allow Westminster to maintain a fighting edge - anti-submarine warfare is a particularly perishable skill - so that we remain ready should we be called on for real," said Commander Will Paston, Westminster's Commanding Officer. For Merlin pilot Phil Fordham it's underlined the potency of a Type 23 frigate and Merlin Mk2

"We've proven the unparalleled

capability of the ship and aircraft operating together to deliver an extremely potent anti-submarine warfare capability," he said.

"Operating from Kent over the past two months has given us a great opportunity to play cat and mouse against some of the finest hunter-killer submarines in the world," said Merlin pilot Lieutenant Phil Fordham.

For now the hunt is over. It

resumes in the autumn when Kent joins HMS Queen Elizabeth on her final pre-deployment exercise off the Scottish coast.

Pictures: LPhoto Dan Rosenbaum, HMS Kent



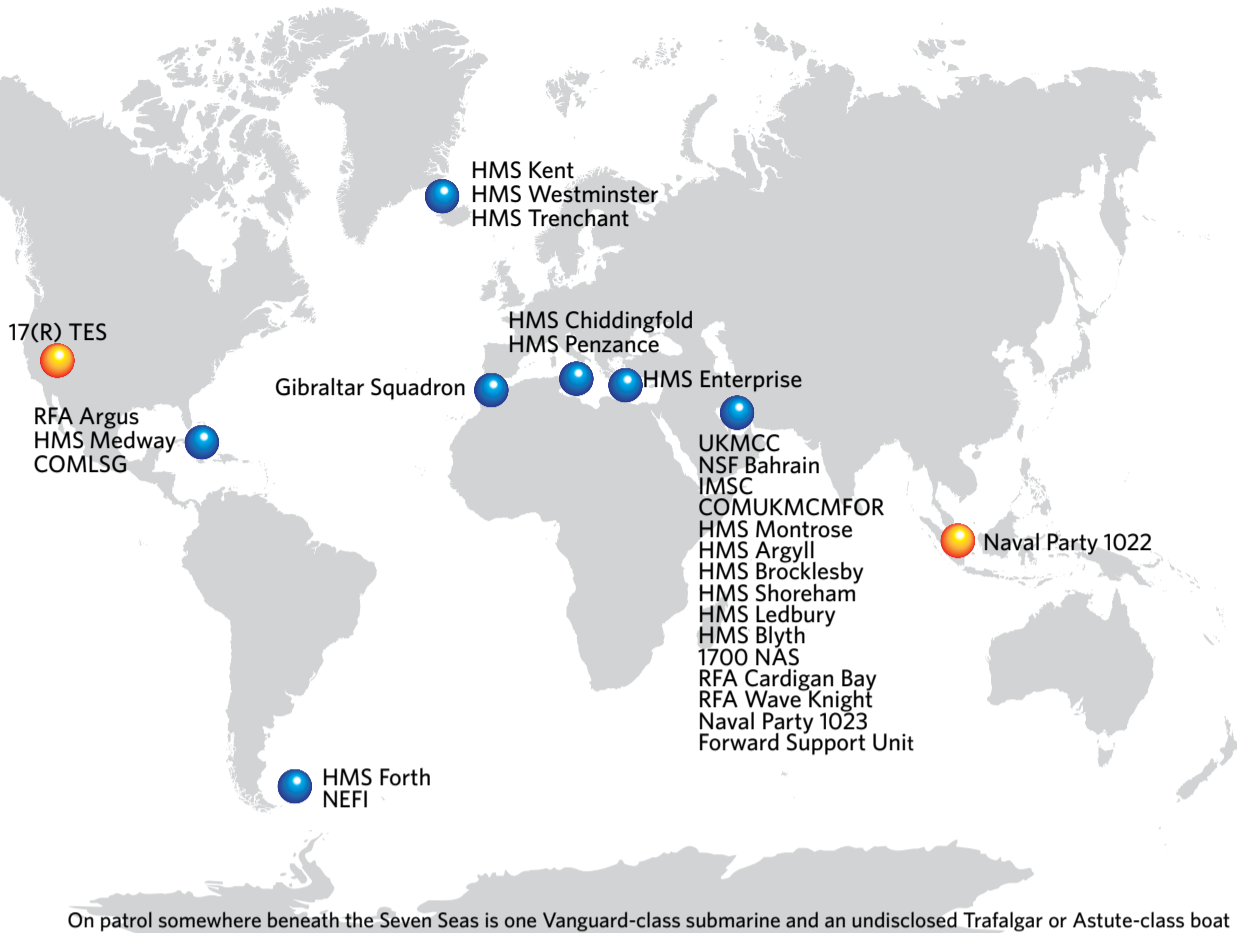
DYNAMIC FORCES



Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Trent
HMS Tamar
HMS Mersey
HMS Tyne
HMS Severn
HMS Magpie
HMS Lancaster
HMS Richmond
HMS Defender

HMS Middleton
RFA Tidespring
RFA Tidesurge
RFA Tideforce
814 NAS
815 NAS
820 NAS
824 NAS



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

GLOBAL NAVY
Protecting our nation's interests

ROYAL Navy submarine hunters have been honing their skills to protect their carrier groups after an intensive exercise in the Atlantic, see pages 2-3.

NATO's two-week **Dynamic Mongoose** featured **HMS Kent**, on the front page, and **Westminster**, along with Merlins from **814 NAS**, submarine **HMS Trenchant**, and the RAF's new P8 Poseidon maritime aircraft, all working off the coast of Iceland.

Also heading north, but not as far, are seven P2000s from the **Coastal Forces Squadron**, see page 5, as they undergo their annual summer deployment. Due to the pandemic, the seven are minus their normal students from the University Royal Navy Units, with the crews adapting to engagement via social media for the duration.

Enjoying much warmer weather are Royal Navy personnel in the Caribbean, see pages 16-17. Their recent activity includes security patrols over Turks and Caicos islands by a Wildcat from **815 NAS**, and a rescue at sea by aviators from **845 NAS**. The navy fliers are in the Caribbean as part of a larger task group, which revolves around **RFA Argus** and Offshore Patrol Vessel **HMS Medway**.

Back in the UK and **Commando Helicopter Force** prepared for short-notice deployment to the Caribbean in the event of a major natural disaster with their major annual exercise **Merlin Storm**, see centre pages. Royal Marines Merlin and Wildcat helicopters operated with RAF Chinooks in the skies over Monmouthshire as the crews honed their skills.

Also in Wales were **40 Commando**, see page 13, as they joined comrades from **45 Commando** and **29 Commando Royal Artillery** at the Sennybridge Training Area for live-firing training.

Snipers from **3 Commando Brigade** gathered on Dartmoor, see page 29, to test their world-class marksmanship.

An elite team of Royal Marines has been formed to shape how commandos of tomorrow will operate, see page 29. As part of the Future Commando Force programme, a team of more than 170 have formed **Vanguard Strike Company** and will act as trailblazers.

Also blazing a trail are **NavyX** and **DARE** as they work on the development of crewless air vehicles with the purpose of moving supplies onto ships, see page 25.

The first sailorless boat for general duties, a modified **Pacific 24**, has been launched, ready for trials, see page 25.

At sea and the Royal Navy's newest ship **HMS Tamar** continued her Fleet Operational Officer Sea Training, see pages 14-15, with a series of exercises designed to show the crew are ready for anything.

Type 45 destroyer **HMS Defender's** regeneration for future deployments is well underway, while veteran Type 23 frigate **HMS Lancaster** is also preparing to deploy again, after she passes her Operational Sea Training this autumn, see page 11.

Royal Navy warships **HMS Westminster**, **Tyne** and **Severn** all shadowed a four-strong Russian task group in the English Channel over the last month (see page 9). For **Severn** it marked a return to front-line operations.

On the verge of front-line operations is **HMS Queen Elizabeth**, see page 6, as the carrier successfully completed her OST as preparation for her maiden deployment next year.

Veteran nuclear submarine **HMS Talent** has returned home after completing a patrol, see page 7, during which she marked her 30th anniversary with, you've guessed it, a cake.

HMS Montrose's Starboard Crew have been put through their paces, see page 35, as they prepare to rejoin the Type 23 frigate in Bahrain.

Finally, junior sailors made history by training at **Britannia Royal Naval College** in Dartmouth, the spiritual home of naval officers, amid a rise in demand to join the Royal Navy during the pandemic, see page 19.

First-team role for reservists

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

ONE of the Royal Navy's most important enablers is the Maritime Reserve, and their activity at the forefront of the UK's response to the Covid pandemic has shown just how important they are, not only to the Royal Navy but also to the nation.

As soon as it became clear that Covid-19 would have a significant impact on our way of life, some 900 Maritime Reservists – a third of our Trained Strength – volunteered to support our Nation in its time of need.

Of those 900 volunteers, a first tranche of 150 were mobilised into the Regular Service – as planners, liaison officers, medics and logisticians.

Although many are now preparing to demobilise, 43 of them have extended and a further 26 are about to mobilise to join them.

And of course, Maritime Reservists have other roles as well.

Alongside those who mobilised, Maritime Reservists have also been delivering vital services in their civilian roles, as doctors, nurses and other key support functions in the NHS, and as Key Workers in other critical industries.

Many have benefited from the transferable skills gained from their Maritime Reserve service.

One of these is Leading Medical Technician Adam Smith, pictured right and below, from HMS King Alfred in Portsmouth,

who is an Operating Department Practitioner in the Intensive Care Unit at Southampton General Hospital.

"Covid-19 has given me

the opportunity to use my leadership skills and management skills gained from my Leadership Course within an ever-changing department," said Adam.

"This is a transferable skillset being utilised to enhance and transform a service the NHS provides on a daily basis."

Of course, we have not been solely focused on Covid and Maritime Reservists have continued to deliver direct support to the Royal Navy on operations around the globe throughout the pandemic. In June there were over 150 reservists deployed on operations overseas, both at sea and ashore.

In the past three months, Maritime Reservists have deployed to sea onboard HMS Queen Elizabeth, see page 6, various Offshore Patrol Vessels, and attached to the Lead Commando Group. We have also continued to deploy reservists to our standing commitments at UKMCC Bahrain and the Maritime Trade Organisation in Abu Dhabi.

Commodore Mel Robinson, pictured far left, Commander Maritime Reserves, said how proud she was of how Maritime Reservists have responded to the pandemic; they have proven how they can be relied upon to step up, at speed, in unprecedented numbers, to provide direct support to the Royal Navy, Defence and the Nation when needed.

With a unique blend of military and civilian skills and experience, this means that the Royal Navy can rely on the Maritime Reserves to place the right person with the right skills into the right job at the right time.

■ Keys to new-look HMS Cambria, see page 31





WISH YOU WERE HERE

BONNIE Scotland beckons as the Royal Navy's own Magnificent Seven ride north for the summer.

Seven Archer Class P2000 Patrol Boats were spending a fortnight sailing around Scotland's coastline, providing an opportunity for important Operational Training for their crews.

The seven ships – HMS Biter, Charger, Express, Trumpeter, Archer, Explorer and Example – all support University Royal Naval Units (URNU) and can reach the parts that other navy ships can't reach. At just over 20 metres long they are some of the smallest vessels in the fleet, giving them the ability to sail to some of the smaller Scottish harbours.

Captain Chris Smith, Naval Regional Commander for Scotland and Northern Ireland said: "It is great to be able to bring the Royal Navy near to some of our smaller communities which, because of harbour size, don't usually get a visit from our ships. "Usually we would be hosting



visits from local groups and organisations while alongside but, with the current situation, this is unfortunately not possible.

"We hope to engage with local organisations across social media and using new technologies, and if people spot them in their area do give them a wave!"

The summer deployment will provide the crews of the seven vessels, all ships of the Royal Navy's Coastal Forces Squadron, with a unique opportunity to practice seamanship and navigation skills.

Each has a core crew of full-time Royal Navy sailors which, in normal times, would be augmented by members of the URNUs.

This is not possible this time, due to the current restrictions, each vessel will use new technologies to have a weekly virtual drill night with their associated URNU.

Four of the ships – Trumpeter, Archer, Explorer and Example – were sailing up the East Coast of Scotland, taking in Leith



Peterhead, Wick and Kirkwall in Orkney, while Biter, Charger and Express followed the West Coast route – taking in Bangor in County Down, Port Ellen in Islay, Oban and Fort William.

The crews made the most of virtual training opportunities.

While alongside Peterhead in Aberdeen the crew of HMS Archer used their mobile phones to give Peterhead Sea Cadets a virtual tour of the ship as well as answer some of their questions.

The Commanding Officer of Archer, Lieutenant Alastair Pittaway, also ensured he grabbed a photo of one of the few remaining red telephone boxes in the UK during the ship's stop in Orkney.

Meanwhile, on the West Coast, the crew of HMS Biter did the same for Oban Sea Cadets during their visit to the harbour in Argyll and Bute.

KEEP UP WITH THE SHIPS

All of the P2000s are on Twitter, and @RoyalNavy



Puncher to the rescue

HMS Puncher went to the rescue of a stricken fishing boat while carrying out training off Plymouth.

Without power and unable to radio for help, the fishermen had to use their mobile phones to alert the Coastguard, as they drifted towards the coast.

The Coastguard then requested other vessels in the vicinity to assist.

HMS Puncher, a P2000 of the Coastal Forces Squadron, was conducting routine navigation training for Young Officers around the Devon and Cornish coasts. Puncher responded to the call and immediately proceeded to the fishing boat's last known location.

But without any power, the fishing boat could not give an accurate location of where they were as they continued to drift towards the rocky shore. After several searches of incorrect locations, a map screenshot from the fisherman's mobile phone aided in finding their boat.

HMS Puncher's crew set about assessing the situation and carrying out repairs. Her engineers got to work on the engine, the inventive seamanship skills of the Navigator's Yeoman secured the boat and the Young Officers onboard dealt with the welfare of the fishing boat's crew.

A repair to the engine of the fishing boat was attempted, however, within 100 metres she broke down again so HMS Puncher towed the fishing vessel safely into Plymouth. The whole rescue lasted more than five hours.

"My crew put in an outstanding effort over the long duration of the rescue operation," said Lieutenant Phil Hack, Commanding Officer of HMS Puncher. "There was a lot of thinking on our feet and I was impressed by all their hard work. We were 700 metres off the shore by the time we got them underway and we recovered them all safely in the scorching summer heat."



Pair on Gibraltar duty

THERE are new, temporary guardians of the Rock: P2000s HMS Dasher and Pursuer.

The patrol craft will take over from Her Majesty's Ships Scimitar and Sabre which have been the mainstay of the Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron for the past 17 years.

Scimitar and Sabre are being replaced after nearly 30 years' service – they spent a decade in Northern Ireland before being transferred to Gibraltar in 2003 – under the wide-ranging programme to upgrade the RN's small boat flotilla, which has already seen HMS Maggie and new work boats at HMS Raleigh delivered.

Dasher and Pursuer are considerably larger and more complex vessels to maintain and operate than Sabre or Scimitar, so the latter's crew can get used to the new craft (among

the differences, there are cabins, mess, galley and bunks on the P2000s as well as a rarely-used enclosed bridge).

"The Scimitar-class craft have provided a superb service to Gibraltar and to the Royal Navy over the past 17 years, and I have absolutely no doubt that Dasher and Pursuer will provide the same," said Lieutenant Commander Kyle Walkley, the Gibraltar Squadron's Commanding Officer.

The programme to replace his veteran boats – which remain operational – is well under way, but in the meantime military transporter MV Hurst Point delivered the Archer-class vessels to the Gibraltar Squadron from Marchwood Military Port.

Days later Lt Cdr Walkley handed over the squadron baton to Lt Cdr Lloyd Cardy, former CO of Sabre.



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FRONTLINE READY

HMS Queen Elizabeth all set for first operational deployment



ALL we need to do now is bring on the Americans.

Just a few weeks shy of the third anniversary of her maiden entry to Portsmouth and Britain's biggest warship is on the cusp of front-line operations.

Now a fully-trained aircraft carrier, she just needs to complete a final package of training this year – including embarking both British and American F-35 jets while working alongside NATO and US allies – to confirm her ability to lead a potent carrier strike force on front-line operations anywhere in the world.

The 65,000-tonne carrier returned to Portsmouth last month having come through Operational Sea Training for the first time – the tick in the box from the navy's premier assessors who determine whether a ship and her ship's company are ready to deploy.

In view of the size and complexity of the carrier, she received a dedicated training package, initially off the south coast, to test the ability of all 1,100 men and women on board to deal with everything they might expect to face in peace and war.

The training package reached its climax with 18 fire and flood incidents raging simultaneously – with the ship expected to continue flying operations while damage control teams toiled to protect her.

Comms and information specialist Jack Alexander, aged 23, from Fleet in Hampshire, joined the carrier on the day crew moved aboard for the first time in 2017.

He will leave the carrier at the end of the year – on the eve of her first deployment – which is a bit of a downer... but

he'll leave having laid the groundwork for his successors.

"It's been hard graft, but also very good," he said. "There's a massive amount of progress that's been made – especially when it comes to confidence. You can really see people grow."



Having passed the first stage of her assessment, the carrier shifted to the North Sea to welcome F-35 Lightnings from 617 Squadron, better known as The Dambusters.

It's the first time operational UK F-35s have worked with Queen Elizabeth and they faced a punishing schedule once aboard, completing a record number of landings on the flight deck.

"I'm so proud to be a part of the team on the flight deck that works directly with the aircraft," said Naval Airman Aaron Rees.

"Witnessing, and working with, the jets and helicopters for the first time has given me so much experience to take forward into the future – a career highlight so far."



The RAF Marham-based squadron – comprising both Royal Air Force and Royal Navy personnel – progressed from qualifying pilots in the art of landing on and taking off from a moving warship by day and night all the way up to the first 'four-ship package': launching four F-35s on a combat sortie in rapid succession.

The F-35s were also called upon to fend off attacks from 'enemy' jets – played by the US jets from Lakenheath and RAF Typhoons from Cottesmore. They flew traditional 'combat air patrols' to safeguard the carrier or else were scrambled, with pilots launching to intercept incoming attacks and North Sea skies were filled with dogfighting jets 80 years after the RAF grappled with the Luftwaffe.

The stealth fighters shared the flight deck with submarine-hunting Merlin helicopters of 820 Naval Air Squadron from RNAS Culdrose. In all the fast jets and helicopters touched down on Queen Elizabeth 830 times in all weathers, at all times of day.

The collective training ended with a five-day test of the ship to defend against threats in the air, on the sea and beneath the waves, herself using F-35s, Merlins, frigate HMS Kent and, for the first time, an attack submarine, played by HMS Talent.

The ten-week workout left the ship's company tired – all say the schedule has been demanding – but delighted at what's been accomplished.

"This is a serious capability," says Commander Richard Harris, Head of Weapon Engineering. "The F-35 fifth-generation stealth fighters are the real deal. Fighting together with the ship's company, the command staff and 820 Naval Air Squadron underlines the success of one team."

"Our allies and partners should feel warmed and reassured. Our adversaries should feel deterred and think twice."

Stretching that capability, HMS Talent tapped into the command team aboard the carrier – which, for the first time, had a dedicated Submarine Advisory Team embarked.

The hunter-killer sailed far ahead not merely as Queen Elizabeth's guardian, but also avenger as she fired simulated Tomahawk cruise missile attacks in coordination with F-35 missions: the embodiment of carrier strike.

SUBMARINE EXPERTISE

FOR the first time a team of submarine specialist naval reservists mobilised to join HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The ever-present threat of a hostile submarine demands the presence of a specialist team on the carrier staff.

"This marks an important milestone – the beginning of a 50-year partnership," explained Commander Ben Horner from the Maritime Reserves' submarine operations capability.

"Today's Submarine Advisory Team watchkeepers are leading the way for those who will support the carrier for decades to come, supported by our specialist communicators."

Among the team dispatched to Queen Elizabeth is Lieutenant Commander Mark Driscoll, whose job involves controlling both British and NATO submarines.

"This tasking could range from protecting the Strike Group and defending the aircraft carrier to land attack missile operations or gathering intelligence," he said.

With more than two decades' service under his belt as both a full-time sailor and reservist, the submarine operations specialist from HMS Eaglet in Liverpool juggles his reservist role with a day job in the nuclear industry, community volunteering, flying as a private pilot, and not to mention family life.

"Life is very busy," said the 39-year-old from Warrington. "It is not for everyone but it certainly can be done."

"The Reserves bring an additional challenge to the everyday and the opportunity to serve with some of life's real characters. It has opened up so many varied opportunities. And, just like in the regular Royal Navy, I am still serving with amazing people."

Serving alongside him on the future flagship is 22-year-old Sub Lieutenant Ross Ewing from Muthill in Perthshire.

He's also a Submarine Operations specialist attached to HMS Scotia in Rosyth. Ross joined the Royal Naval Reserve while studying at university in St Andrews.

"It gave me the opportunity to travel, train, stay fit, acquire valuable skills and earn money all in one go," he said.

Words: Richard Hargreaves // Pictures: L'Phot Unaisi Luke & L'Phot Daniel Shepherd

Talent spotters



HUNTER-KILLER submarine HMS Talent has returned home to the UK after completing her latest patrol.

The veteran nuclear boat – which celebrated its 30th birthday on this latest patrol – was away for more than 100 days, including sailing a record 68 days between port visits to take on fresh supplies.

The Trafalgar-class boat – designed to protect the nation's nuclear deterrent – left her home base in March, just as the country was going into pandemic lockdown.

She helped train the submarine commanders of tomorrow by hosting trainees on the Silent Service's infamous command course, Perisher – widely regarded as the most mentally-challenging military selection course in the world.

After months of instruction ashore, students join a front-line submarine and are tested in real-world scenarios against British and allied warships.

One of the most challenging manoeuvres is transferring crew or supplies at sea. Talent linked up with The Flying Tigers of 814 Naval Air Squadron for the winching exercise, with a Merlin helicopter hovering just metres above the T-boat.

Equally challenging for Talent was her first chance to work with the RAF's new P8 Poseidon patrol aircraft.



Operating from Prestwick the Poseidon was charged with hunting Talent in the relatively-shallow waters of the Irish Sea.

The boat notched up her 30th birthday on patrol – an occasion marked with a fine meal aboard, plus celebratory cake, and a chance for Commanding Officer Commander Paul Jamieson to reflect on the boat's achievements and more than 600,000 nautical miles steamed.

While Talent's patrol kept her away from the pandemic at home, her crew were acutely aware of the impact.

Inspired by the efforts of frontline NHS workers CPO 'Digger' Gardner wanted to show his appreciation by raising money for the NHS Charity by completing 12 hours of burpees.

He found a compartment that was (just) big enough, his fellow engineers rigged up a temporary ventilation system to provide adequate airflow to ensure he kept cool.

He completed 3,547 burpees, his crewmates collectively just shy of 5,000, and together they raised more than £4,300.

The final act of the patrol was as the first submarine to work with HMS Queen Elizabeth, testing the new carrier strike group concept ahead of the future flagship's first deployment in 2021.

"It was fitting that Talent spent her 30th birthday at sea, away from home, where she's spent much of her life," said Cdr Jamieson of his boat's achievements.

"HMS Talent can proudly say that age is no barrier to delivering excellence."

Report: Lt G J C Hughes

United Kingdom Special Forces



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ROYAL Navy warships shadowed the progress of a four-strong Russian task group as it sailed up the Channel and into the North Sea.

Just a fortnight after HMS Westminster kept close watch on destroyer Vice Admiral Kulakov sailing through the Dover Strait, patrol ships HMS Tyne and Severn were on hand to constantly observe the same warship, plus corvette Vasily Bykov and two support vessels, *pictured above*, as they headed in the opposite direction.



The Portsmouth-based ships intercepted the Russian ships on the edge of UK's area of responsibility and remained in company with the quartet through the English Channel, through the busy Dover Straits and into the North Sea, handing over to the Belgian Navy when the force entered their area.

The submarine-hunting Kulakov is based with the Russian Northern Fleet on the Kola Peninsula, while the Bykov had sailed all the way from the home of the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol, Crimea.

The monitoring mission came on the back of a circumnavigation of the UK by Tyne, training Royal Navy navigators, in particular in the confined waters of the Western Isles, passing under the Skye Bridge and through the turbulent waters of the Gulf of Corryvreckan and its infamous whirlpools, ending around the Isles of Scilly.

"Once again River-class Offshore Patrol Vessels have demonstrated their versatility," said Tyne's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Richard Skelton.



"We have quickly transitioned from Maritime Security Operations to internal navigation training and then to shadowing Russian warships – all of which is designed to ensure our nation's security.

"This pace and level of activity is common for Tyne; during our last patrol the ship intercepted Russian warships soon after completing an exercise with our Irish counterparts."

Commander Will Paston, the Commanding Officer of HMS Westminster, said: "The Royal Navy routinely monitors the passage of warships through the UK's area of interest as part of its ongoing mission to support the defence of the UK.

"The Vice Admiral Kulakov conducted itself in a safe and professional manner throughout its transit."

Royal Navy sailors and aircrew monitored every movement of the Russian warship using state-of-the-art radar, surveillance cameras and sensors, allowing them to track the ship's course and speed as it passed the British Isles.

HMS Westminster, a Type 23 frigate, is supported by her embarked Merlin helicopter from Culdrose-based 814 Naval Air Squadron.

KEEP UP WITH THE SHIPS

Follow @HMS_Westminster, @HMS_Tyne, @HMSSevern and @RoyalNavy on Twitter

Team's eyes on the Bear



● HMS Westminister also monitored the Russian destroyer Vice Admiral Kulakov



Middleton to the rescue

HMS Middleton responded to a fishing boat's Mayday call after it had become tangled with a line and was drifting in the Solent.

The Royal Navy ship heard the emergency call as she was passing St Catherine's Point, south of the Isle of Wight.

The boat got into trouble when its propeller became wrapped up in a line and, despite untangling some of it, the prop would not turn.

Middleton was near the fishing vessel so co-ordinated with Solent Coastguard to see how they could help.

After spotting the boat, which was drifting close to shore and in too shallow waters for Middleton to get alongside, the minehunter launched her seaboard with divers and marine engineers on board, *pictured top*.

With the vessel at anchor, Middleton's crew took a look at the problem.

Lieutenant George Walker, navigating officer, said: "Upon coming alongside the vessel, our divers cleared the rest of the line that was caught around the propeller and the marine engineers attempted to fix it.

"Unfortunately they didn't have the parts required to fix it. After ensuring the vessel was in no immediate danger, the seaboard returned and collected some food and water from Middleton."

Yarmouth Lifeboat was launched to tow the boat and Middleton carried on to Weymouth.

Speedy rebirth for Severn

THE rebirth of HMS Severn was completed in June when she finished Operational Sea Training, making her ready for front-line operations... 32 months after leaving the Fleet.

With a new generation of River-class vessels being built, the original quartet of Tyne, Mersey, Severn and Clyde were no longer needed.

Severn was the first to pay off, in 2017. However, she was later deemed too important to UK defence to be disposed of; the Secretary of State for Defence at the time, Gavin Williamson, announced that she would be returned to the Fleet.



Severn's rebirth began last May when refit work began. The first sailors moved aboard again in late January and the ship sailed from Portsmouth again for the first time on April 1.

Since then, the vessel has clocked up around 4,000 miles on trials and training from the Scillies and Cornish Coast to the Isle of Wight and Dover Strait (where you may have seen her participating in VE Day 75th commemorations with vintage Spitfires and a piper on the White Cliffs, *pictured right*).

Commander Phil Harper, Severn's Commanding Officer, said the team had faced "a long hard slog", facing – and overcoming – numerous challenges and obstacles.

"We have completed the regeneration of Severn and are taking her into three weeks of



basic operational sea training. This is the first time in living memory that we have re-commissioned a ship, and it's been a challenge. We've achieved all of this during a global pandemic," he said.

He and his team have been helped throughout by reservists from HMS King Alfred (Portsmouth), Forward (Birmingham) and Vivid (Plymouth) who comprise between ten and 15 per cent of the ship's company (and half the swimmers of the watch), and by the team at BAE Systems who are responsible for making sure Severn is fit for duty 320 days of the year.

"They have been absolutely brilliant – the ship is in first-class condition and they have addressed every single issue, with the same challenges of Covid-19, rapidly and efficiently. I can't overstate how good they are, or how impressive the value for money is," said Cdr Harper.

"Our ship manager Dave Tilley is an ex-RN marine engineering artificer, and he has put his heart and soul into this ship."

Specialists back in training

THE first seamanship specialists trained since the pandemic have joined the Fleet after instruction resumed.

Sixteen sailors were just a fortnight into their specialist training at HMS Raleigh when lockdown began and their course was put on hiatus.

Although basic entry training has continued as normal throughout the pandemic to feed the RN with more than 700 new ratings, some Phase 2 instruction – teaching the fundamentals of the branches sailors will eventually join – halted.

In the two months the seamanship course was on hold, it was adapted in line with Public Health England guidance and to incorporate social distancing where possible, before the sailors returned on May 18 to complete their training.

Over the next six weeks, they were taught a wide range of skills from Morse Code and tactical signalling to small boat driving and taking on stores and fuel from a Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel while under way courtesy of the dedicated training rigs at Raleigh.

"This group of new seaman specialists have adapted well to the disruption to their training and have worked hard to complete their course," said Lieutenant Commander John Barry, Officer Commanding the Royal Navy School of Seamanship.

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Defender's buzzing...

AFTER 222 days in the Gulf escorting merchant shipping and safeguarding UK interests in the Middle East it's back to basics for the crew of HMS Defender.

The destroyer and her 190 crew reached the end of a six-week OST assessment last month, in preparation for future deployments.

Defender returned to her home base in the spring – the pandemic denied her ship's company the proper homecoming their efforts deserved.

Since then the ship has undergone maintenance and the crew leave, before beginning the regeneration of the second-youngest Type 45 destroyer ready for future tours of duty – chiefly as part of a carrier battle group led by HMS Queen Elizabeth or Prince of Wales.

Even before FOST staff embarked for the six weeks of training off Plymouth, the ship's company ran through many of the same scenarios in the Portsmouth exercise areas: machinery break downs, fire-fighting, sea boat drills, air defence exercise and fired nearly all the vessel's weapons.

"The focus for us has now shifted to preparing for our next deployment and the new challenges and opportunities that will present us," said Commanding



● Above, A smiling LS Samuel Cummings; Right, Lt Charles Dodson-Wells



Officer Commander Vince Owen. "OST is the next step on this exciting journey starts – this training will provide the perfect opportunity to integrate new crew members into our team and enhance our maritime skills before we focus on carrier task group training later this year."

Among the new crew members is Leading Engineering Technician Stephen Bates.

"It's exciting to finally be onboard and apply the training that I have

undergone so far. I am now ready for a new set of challenges in the build up to the deployment," he said.

Fellow leading hand and weapon engineer Danny Holmes added: "As tough as basic operational sea training can be, I am excited to refresh myself and help to train the more junior members of the ship's company so we can deploy in 2021 as a competent fighting unit."

Pictures: LPhot Barry Swainsbury

KEEP UP WITH THE SHIPS

Follow @HMSDefender, @HMSLancaster and @RoyalNavy on Twitter

...as is veteran Lancaster

(NEW) life begins at 30.

The Queen's Frigate is set for the final years of her lengthy career after being accepted back into the bosom of the front-line Fleet.

There's just the 'small' hurdle of Operational Sea Training to overcome now this autumn, before HMS Lancaster can deploy again on active service for the first time in nearly five years.

The Portsmouth exercise areas, Solent and waters off the Isle of Wight became the 'battleground' as Lancaster flexed her military muscles.

She received improved radar (Artisan 3D and navigational), upgraded command system and Sea Ceptor missiles installed as well as a bow-stern overhaul of mess decks and living spaces, machinery, and strengthening the hull.

The ship emerged from her revamp at the end of last year. She completed sea trials earlier in 2020 to prove the marine and engineering systems were in full working order.

And she returned to sea in the spring to test her weapon systems, sensors and firepower allowing her to be formally accepted back into the Fleet, one month after her 30th birthday.



● Personnel during a flood exercise; AB Lenroy 'Lenny' Pemberton



Pictures: PO Phot Paul A'Barrow

The 4.5in gun was calibrated over several successful shoots, the upper deck gunnery team had to fend off patrol boats HMS Ranger and Exploit attempting to attack the frigate by bringing Miniguns and machine-guns to bear, and there were the usual tests of any ship's company at sea: a mock galley fire, floods, breakdowns, sailor overboard.

All of which – and more – will be thrown at the 185-strong ship's company when they return to the Portsmouth-based warship after summer leave and put the frigate through six weeks of OST off Plymouth.

Lancaster's Commanding Officer Commander Will Blackett believes they – and their ship – are ready for the challenges to come.

"Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic we've been maintaining our focus on bringing Lancaster back to readiness so that we can play our part in Royal Navy operations again.

"My crew have done brilliantly well getting us to this point but there is still a lot of hard work to get through.

"HMS Lancaster has been a fabulous asset to the nation across three decades and our goal is to make these final years of her service the finest of all."



US honour for Royal's Afghanistan mission

ROYAL Marine Major James Fuller received the rare honour of an American decoration for his service in Afghanistan.

The commando was presented with the Bronze Star – typically awarded to US military personnel for heroism on the battlefield or meritorious service on the front line – for his 12-month tour-of-duty while on exchange with the US Marine Corps.

The green beret served as assistant operations officer with the US Task Force Southwest in Afghanistan as it carried out the US military's Operation Freedom's Sentinel and NATO's Resolute Support Mission – both aimed at fostering peace and stability in the war-torn country, as well as tackling terrorist activity.

Between June 1 2018 and the end of May last year, the Royal Marine helped plan numerous missions with the Afghan National Defence Security Forces and US Special Operation Forces.

"Without Major Fuller we couldn't have done what we did in Afghanistan," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael Presley, the regimental gunner with 2nd Marine Regiment USMC. "He was instrumental in us trying to achieve our objective with Task Force Southwest."

Major Fuller received the

Bronze Star in front of his US comrades during a short ceremony at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

"This means a lot to me – I'm truly humbled. There wasn't anything which I did differently from my US Marine colleagues. The colour of your uniform or the flag on your arm didn't matter – we all worked together for one goal. It was a team effort."

He is serving as part of the Marine Corps Foreign Personnel Exchange Program which gives non-American officers the opportunity to serve with their 'Semper Paratus' brethren – bringing fresh ideas from a Royal Marines' perspective, and taking home ideas and lessons from his time with the US Marine Corps.

"To live and breathe as a US Marine for two years has been pretty incredible – I've made some life-long friends," Major Fuller added.

"We're really lucky – between the Royal and US Marines because we have common training together over the years.

"I like to think that we bring a sense of humour. Royal Marines are renowned for their cheerfulness in the face of adversity – it's important to smile in difficult situations."

Picture: L/Cpl Jacqueline Parsons, 2nd Marine Division, USMC

Safe in 820's hands

THE helicopter guardians of the nation's biggest warship have been named the safest of the safe for their work over the past 12 months.

All Fleet Air Arm squadrons pride themselves on exemplary safety records in peace and war, but naval aviation's senior officers decided 820 Naval Air Squadron stood out especially.

The squadron is permanently assigned to carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, acting as her shield against submarine attack as well as scouting threats on the surface and performing general duties.

Home is not just the biggest flight deck in the navy, but also the busiest; the squadron shares it (and the hangar and surrounding airspace) with F-35 Lightning jets, troop-carrying Merlins and, frequently, RAF Chinooks, and Navy Wildcat helicopters... plus visiting aircraft from allied nations.

That they have done so seamlessly earned the Culdrose-based squadron the Bambara Flight Safety Shield, awarded for developing "a robust safety management system and good relationship with command during the numerous embarkations on HMS Queen Elizabeth, whilst never losing sight of the hazards inherent in aviation."

The shield was presented on board in the middle of Exercise Crimson Ocean, a five-day operational test of Queen Elizabeth, HMS Kent, a hunter-killer submarine and the carrier

air group in the North Sea.

"I really enjoyed the variety of flying we were tasked with while onboard," said newly-qualified Merlin pilot Lieutenant Andy Miller. "Operating from a busy flight deck with other helicopters and the F-35 is exciting and I'm looking forward to learning more as we further increase the complexity for Groupex later this year."

Groupex this autumn builds on what participants learned during Crimzon with half a dozen Merlins embarking on the carrier for an exercise designed to fully integrate the entire strike group ahead of HMS Queen Elizabeth's maiden deployment in the new year.

As well as acting as the carrier's eyes and ears against submarine threats ("pingers"), 820 will take on the additional responsibility of her eyes in the sky too, merging with 849 Squadron to take on Airborne Surveillance and Control, watching for airborne threats and helping to direct carrier air power on to targets.

"Combining warfare expertise in anti-submarine and airborne surveillance and control under one single squadron badge will give the Fleet Air Arm the best possible deploying unit to take carrier strike forward into the next generation," said Commander Ian 'Reg' Varley, 820's Commanding Officer.

"I look forward to seeing waves of Pingers and Baggers launching together from the deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth under the single identity of 820."

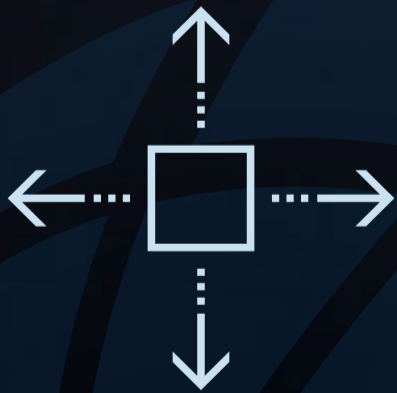


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LIGHT THE BEACONS

ROYAL Marines practised taking down enemy positions on challenging combat exercises in the Brecon Beacons.

Marines from Taunton-based 40 Commando were joined by comrades from 45 Commando and 29 Commando Royal Artillery at the Sennybridge Training Area in Wales, stretching their legs on live firing training.

With machine guns laying down fire support, Charlie Company of 40 Commando advanced quickly on the enemy during day and night troop attacks across the vast Sennybridge area – the third largest range in the UK spanning an area the size of Bristol.

While Charlie moved forward, mortar troops of 40 Commando and 45 Commando rained down a hail of steel

and fire throughout the valley from their Viking armoured vehicles, while 29 Commando used their 105mm light guns to pummel nearby targets.

“The vast expanses of Sennybridge Training Area are perfect for live firing,” said Lieutenant Simon Williams of 40 Commando.

“Live-fire packages are important for maintaining the important skills associated with all Royal Marines’ specialisations.


“The undulating terrain of the Brecon Beacons added a physical challenge to the commandos as they operated.

“As would be expected in South Wales; the weather was typically varied, too – with days of hot summer sun followed by autumnal downpours, neither of which fazed the Royal Marines.”

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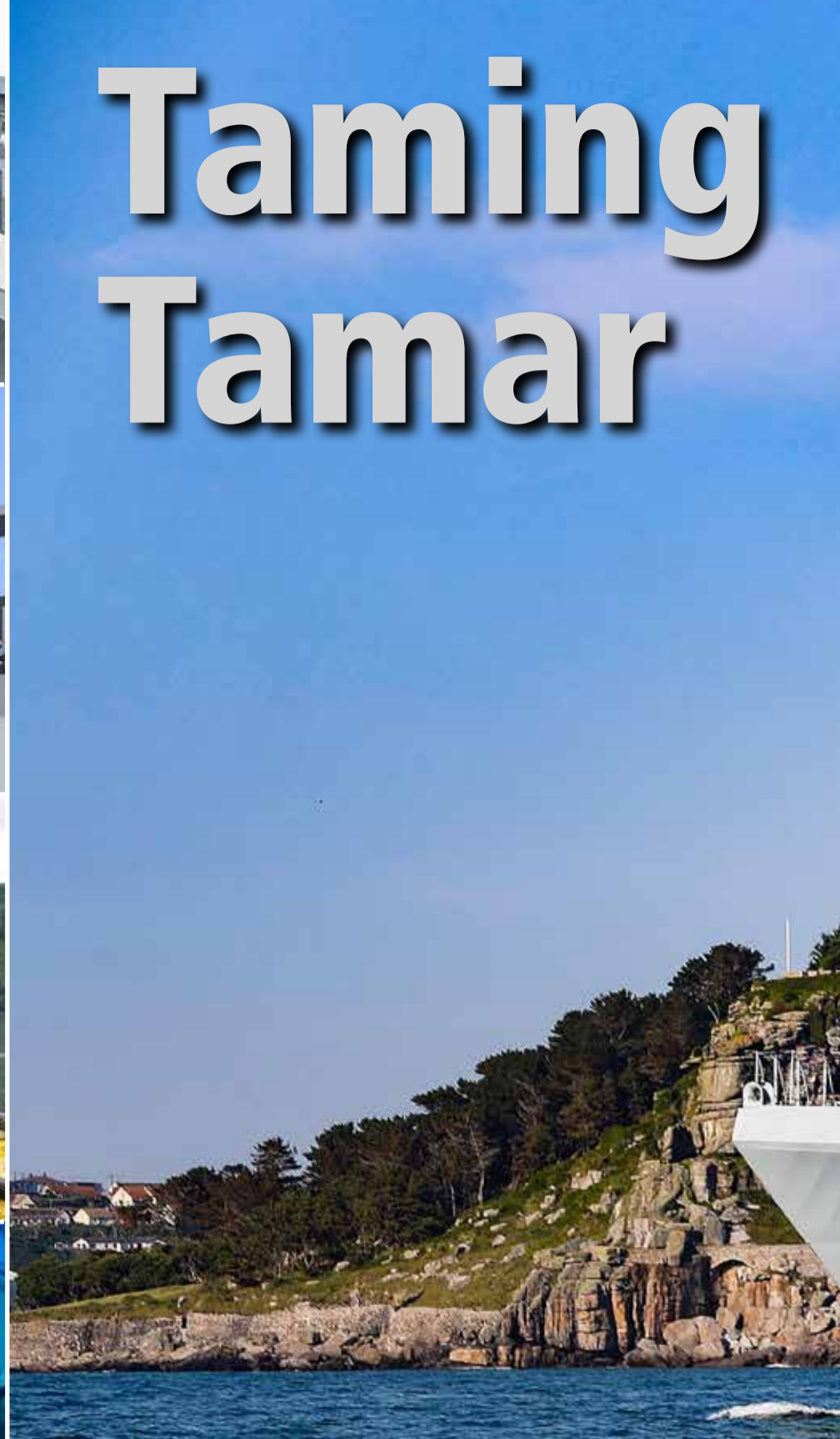
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It takes a lot to get a Royal Navy warship ready for the frontline, as shown by the newest addition to the fleet, HMS Tamar.

Last month *Navy News* reported on how the Batch 2 River-class vessel had been accepted into the Fleet during a commissioning ceremony on the River Tamar.

Following the ceremony, personnel continued with a number of exercises designed to show they are ready for anything.

These included dealing with a man overboard, fire-fighting scenarios and a 30mm gunnery night exercise.

The ship also welcomed aboard the Captain of BRNC, Capt Roger Readwin, to meet the Initial Sea Time cadets who were on board.

With her rampant red lion motifs – three metres by two – the fourth of the Royal Navy's second-generation patrol vessels will be hard to miss.

The creature – which features on the ship's badge – dates back to Richard, Earl of Cornwall, in the 13th Century and appears on the crests of the two counties separated by the warship's namesake river.

During the past couple of months Tamar operated around Plymouth Sound, south west training areas and inlets of the Clyde estuary as she began her first Operational Sea Training in late June, underlining the remarkably rapid generation of the ship.

Tamar's 40-strong ship's company – assisted by builders BAE – brought Tamar to life in just four weeks – a pace unseen in peacetime.

Her work-up to operational warship has been all the more remarkable as most of it has taken place during the pandemic: acceptance trials, a succession of firsts – her first gunnery exercises, boat drills and emergency responses,

and, the highlight, the first helicopter, a Wildcat from 815 Naval Air Squadron as the ship undertook aviation trials.

As the fourth ship in her class, Tamar (and No.5, Spey) feature some differences from their predecessors, notably a special filter which reduces her diesel exhaust emissions by 90 per cent, allowing her to patrol seas which are subject to strict emission controls.

She and her second-generation sisters are larger, faster and able to stay at sea for longer than the original River class (Tyne, Severn and Mersey) which remain in service, largely on fishery protection duties in home waters.

Tamar carries a 30mm main cannon, can conduct helicopter operations and can embark up to 50 personnel, in addition

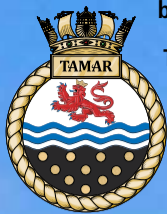
to her regular crew, half of whom will trade places with their shipmates who'll fly out from the UK every few months to sustain Tamar on an extended patrol far from the UK.

Tamar is earmarked for long-term duties around the globe under the Royal Navy's growing Forward Presence programme.

Older sisters HMS Forth and Medway are currently in the Falklands and Caribbean respectively.

Trent, Tamar and Spey's patrol regions are to be announced.

Pictures: LPhot Alex Ceolin



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WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

A Zoom call with the Queen. Bit of gardening. A sea rescue. Wildcats on land and the small boats with a big punch. This is the latest instalment of the Royal Navy in the Caribbean.

THE Royal Navy's task group in the Caribbean has continued to be a reassuring presence around the British Overseas Territories as hurricane season steadily builds, showing their faces to island communities and contributing to security and many other things, including the preservation of a botanical garden.

Their work of late has entailed a great range of things – from helping in the botanical gardens on the Cayman Islands, patrolling the skies over the Turks and Caicos Islands and aiding the Cayman Islands authorities in finding kayakers after a distress call.

Like everyone else during Covid-19 times, there was also a Zoom call or two... and one of particular note, as Naval Airman Sophie Levy chatted on video call to the Queen, who was talking to military personnel on the front lines.

The monarch was connected with forces personnel around the globe – as she was keen to speak to deployed men and women amid the pandemic.

Support ship RFA Argus deployed at the height of the crisis in April to provide assistance to British territories in the Caribbean in the event of a hurricane – and extra help should coronavirus hit those communities hard.

Sophie, aged 22 from Windsor, deployed with Argus with 1700 Naval Air Squadron, normally based at Culdrose, to ensure safe operations by Merlin and Wildcat helicopters on the flight deck.

Six years ago, the former Sea Cadet met the Queen, chosen to escort the monarch as the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet when she opened Holyport College near Windsor – a subject raised when the two chatted over the video call.

"It was really exciting, a bit nerve-racking for the build-up," said Sophie who 'virtually invited' the Queen into her cabin on Argus.

"Overall it was a great experience and lovely to speak to Her Majesty."

She continued: "Back in 2014 at the college's opening I met the Queen's car, opened the door and saluted. As a cadet I was the only person from the military there. I remember The Queen gave me such a big smile and told me I looked very smart."

The Queen found the video link experience fascinating.

"It is very interesting to hear how far spread everybody is in different places. Everybody has been doing a wonderful job and I am very glad to have been able to meet you – and the best of luck."

Sophie used the conversation to explain her work on board as an airman: moving the helicopters around on deck using a tractor and as a member of the fire party, donning the heavy and hot firesuit, pictured right, under the relentless Caribbean sun ready to deal with any emergencies.

Sophie is on her first deployment – "it's been absolutely incredible seeing all these different places" she told the Queen of her Caribbean experience, although Covid restrictions have limited her opportunities to explore the region more fully.

"Even though we cannot go ashore, I have never had the chance to visit anywhere like the Caribbean before and to sail past and see so many islands, to see the sunsets at sea," Sophie added.

"I even got to go up in a Merlin Helicopter when we flew over Montserrat, and that was an amazing experience. On board we also are able to go to the gym, and we have film nights, so morale is good."

Joining the eight-minute video call were Britain's leading military figure, Chief of Defence Staff General Sir Nick Carter, Army Lieutenant Colonel Barrie Terry deployed with a UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, and Lance Corporal Shanwayne Stephens of the RAF Queen's Colour Squadron currently isolating at home in Peterborough while he trains full-time as a Olympic-level bobsleigh competitor for Jamaica.

In her day job, Sophie helps keep the air group on Argus ticking over as they continue to be busy in the skies over the Caribbean.

The on-board Wildcat patrol helicopter – from 815 Naval Air Squadron – has been the eyes in the skies over the Turks and Caicos during this past month.

The helicopter left the mothership, Argus, to work on maritime security patrols alongside the Royal Turks and Caicos Island Police Service (RTCIPS).

203 Flight, which has already had a jam-packed deployment in the region since arriving, has gone ashore for a few weeks for scheduled maintenance ahead of potential hurricane season missions, but also to complement the local police's operations.

The Wildcat is equipped with cutting-edge sensors and radars, making it a world-class aircraft for reconnaissance and patrol sorties.

The 203 Flight Commander and pilot of the Wildcat helicopter, Lieutenant Jim Carver, said: "We will be disembarking the aircraft into the Turks and Caicos Islands to conduct routine maintenance prior to the hurricane season while also conducting scheduled flying and mandated flying currencies (staying up-to-date on training and flying hours) in direct support to maritime security operations for the RTCIPS."

"We're here in the Caribbean to support British Overseas Territories as part of the enduring Atlantic Patrol Tasking (North), which is supporting UK



Overseas Territories during the core hurricane season and other nations with maritime security."

The Wildcat is part of a larger air group, which also includes three Commando Merlins from 845 Naval Air Squadron.

The helicopters are embarked on Argus and form a formidable team that also includes 3 Commando Brigade's Crisis Response Troop from 24 Commando Royal Engineers and fast boat operators from 47 Commando Raiding Group.

There is also a land-based element of the task group – along with patrol ship HMS Medway – with Security Assistance Teams from 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group working from the Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos.

The Commando Merlins of 845 NAS have also been toppers. On the way back after a long day of sorties in their Commando Merlin Mk4 helicopter they responded to reports of a capsized kayak and missing people off the south coast of Grand Cayman.

The aircrew acted rapidly, making contact with the local port authority and the nearby Royal Cayman Islands Police Service air base who directed the helicopter to the location near Spotts Beach.

Within minutes they had found the stricken kayakers and their craft near a reef and called in rescue boats to move in on the location.

The Merlin stayed on the scene until the boat teams had picked up the three kayakers and safely returned them to shore.

Petty Officer Air Crewman Lee Niall said: "We were the first on the scene and working together with the local police we were ready to help if there was danger. We were able to get there quickly and help the local boat find the kayakers right away."

"Search and rescue is something we can assist with, even though we were on other tasking. We can react fast, so we are ready to help with rescues if needed."

This included support to the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service, who are currently performing scheduled maintenance on their helicopter, meaning Royal Navy helicopters have been involved routine patrols and monitoring any illicit drug-trafficking activity in the region.

Lieutenant Commander Gaz Wardle, the air group commander, said: "This was an excellent opportunity to showcase the flexibility of the Commando Merlin, demonstrating one of the many key roles in which it is capable of operating."

They are ready to respond again at any time, be it for rescues, or more broadly in their support to British Overseas Territories and other Caribbean nations following any crisis during the hurricane season.

On the ground, the troops of 24 Commando Royal Engineers went ashore to help protect the Queen Elizabeth II Botanical Park on the Caymans.

They camped for five days in the botanical gardens to practise their field skills and to conduct combat engineering in the challenging, and sweltering, environment.

The botanical gardens present a difficult environment in which to live and work, and importantly it allows an opportunity for the troop to practice clearance techniques. Using kit like generators and chainsaws lets them prepare for the future, while having the benefit of providing the local community and some much-needed maintenance work in the park.

The work has helped to clear an invasive species of Logwood from parts of the botanical gardens' fence line, which in turn prevents an invasive species of lizard, the green iguana, from entering the gardens. The green iguana present competition to the endangered species of blue lizard that are protected in the park, and so the labour-intensive clearance work has the positive effect of helping with conservation. Conditions are hard, with the troop working long hours in the heat, but they were glad of the chance to hone their skills.

Sapper Kieran McMann, said: "This is good practice for chainsaw operators who may need to clear routes and landing sites in future. We look after quad bikes, generators and chainsaws and this keeps us working on the ground and ready for when we provide disaster relief."

Their commando comrades, the Royal Marines raiding experts of 47 Commando have been testing themselves on fast boat exercises with HMS Medway.

It is the first time the 47 Commando Raiding Group marines have worked with the Offshore Patrol Vessel and was another chance to polish their fast boat coxswain skills ahead of operations in the region.

These raiding specialists bring a distinct advantage to the Royal Navy task group in the Caribbean on their main missions in counter-drugs trafficking and disaster relief operations.

The Plymouth-based marines are the green berets' experts in handling fast raiding boats and landing craft, and are aboard Argus for the hurricane season deployment.

Their presence on the support ship means when it comes to getting crucial aid ashore or hunting down a suspicious craft on counter-narcotics ops, the Royal Navy can do it with tremendous speed and precision.

These hardy coxswains are trained in operating their boats in the most extreme of conditions, having just completed months of training in the icy fjords of Norway and previously worked in the extreme desert heat in Oman.

Continuing their preparations for Caribbean missions, the commandos worked with Medway on high-speed pacing drills, which saw them quickly and carefully maneuvering their boats next to the warship. A key skill when carrying out board and search operations.

Corporal Thomas Thornton, said: "Having been through exercises in really tough places like Norway, we can trust ourselves to operate in the harshest conditions. We have learnt to treat our kit well, so we can push it to the limit to achieve tasks."

In the event of a natural disaster, the squadron will be tasked with quickly landing supplies and emergency aid, along with landing the 24 Commando from the Crisis Response Troop.

Already the marines have been training hard with the task group, testing the Humanitarian and Disaster Relief capability on demanding exercises in British Overseas Territories across the Caribbean.

On counter-narcotics operations, the squadron are able to land boarding parties onto suspicious crafts, supporting local police forces and the US Coastguard to interdict suspicious craft.

Sometimes this will need to be done covertly, so delicate maneuvering of the craft is just as important as working quickly, something they tested while working with Medway.

Through similar efforts in the last five years, Royal Navy ships in the region were responsible for seizing circa £750 million worth of cocaine and cannabis.

More emphasis will be placed on these boarding and raiding skills as Royal Marines forge ahead with Future Commando Force development.

The development programme puts commando skills like these right at the front of what the corps does, along with the ability to conduct covert landing of forces for reconnaissance missions.

Cpl Thornton said: "In the marines we have been used to kit that is meant for fighting land campaigns. With Future Commando Force, as well as some higher-level projects, we are starting to hear about scope for kit that can help us."

CHF train for Caribbean – in Wales, see pages 20-21.



1 47 Commando Royal Marines on their fast boat during exercises with HMS Medway.



Commando Merlins on the deck of RFA Argus 2



3 47 Commando and US Coastguard train together



Left to right: PO Aircrew Lee Niall, Lt Steve Doughty, Lt Cdr Gaz Wardle, Sgt Tom Goy RM. The Merlin crew who responded to a distress call. 4



5 A commando tests his quad bike on the deck of RFA Argus



Troops on Argus have been doing judo on the ship's deck 6



8 815 Naval Air Squadron Wildcat throws up dirt as it comes into land during exercises



7 Commandos get to work on the botanical gardens on the Cayman Islands



9 A commando from the Royal Engineers during work on Cayman Islands

Pictures by Lphot Joe Cater and Lphot Roy Arnold

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Junior rates make naval history at

H.M.S. DARTMOUTH

Extra classes at BRNC to meet sudden surge in demand to join the Royal Navy

Junior sailors are making history by training at the spiritual home of naval officers amid a rise in demand to join the Royal Navy during the COVID-19 outbreak.

To meet the sudden spike in interest among those wishing to serve their country, sailors are being inducted into the Royal Navy at the iconic Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) in Dartmouth for the first time in history.

A group of 47 new recruits have started their nine-week basic training course at the college. BRNC has been the home of Royal Navy officer training for more than 100 years while new entry training for ratings is done at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall.

But with an increased interest in careers in the service, the Royal Navy has increased training capacity for ratings with an additional intake of sailors at BRNC.

The Royal Navy has continued to train new sailors throughout the coronavirus outbreak to support the country in times of need and ensure key Defence outputs are

maintained.

Captain Roger Readwin, the Captain of BRNC, said: "It is an absolute privilege to support the training of ratings at Dartmouth and to play our part in growing the Royal Navy."

"This will also be a historical first with officer cadets and ratings training together, celebrated with a combined passing-out parade at the end.

"The planning and preparation to deliver this training has been developed in close partnership with the team at HMS Raleigh."

The course at BRNC is based on the tried and tested programme developed by HMS Raleigh. It will be primarily delivered by instructors with experience of the course, while calling on the expertise of BRNC staff for specialist areas such as physical training, seamanship and navigation.

Captain Richard Harris, the Commanding Officer of HMS

Raleigh, said: "Since March, around 600 sailors have completed their basic training here at HMS Raleigh and we've continued to take in approximately 60 recruits every week."

"This is an exciting opportunity for some of our recruits to experience training at Dartmouth and gain an insight into how the officers train. I look forward to seeing them on the parade ground for their passing-out-parade in August."

During training recruits are placed in divisions, and to recognise the unique nature of their course the first ratings at BRNC have formed a new group named the Whittall Division.

It has been named in honour of Petty Officer Wren Ellen Whittall who was the only fatality when the college was bombed in September 1942.

Among the new recruits training at BRNC is Kieran Warren, 22, from Witham in Essex. He said: "I've always wanted to work in the

public sector. My dad and my brother are in the Army and I wanted to do something different.

"When I found out I was joining Dartmouth, I did some research into the college. I felt it would be a real opportunity to see how the officers train, interact with them and then maybe meet them later during our careers."

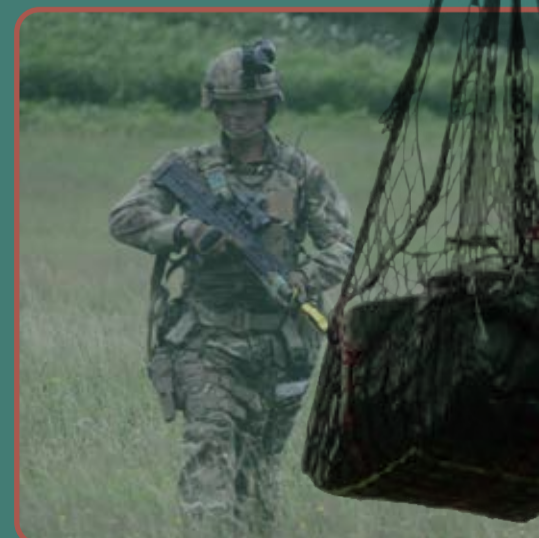
Sophie Loraine, aged 18 from Sunderland, said: "When I heard that I'd been selected to go forward for the course at Dartmouth I was really excited and glad that I'm going to be able to start my career early."

"Being in the Royal Navy is my dream job. Looking out of the window where I'm from I couldn't see anything that I wanted to do other than be in the Royal Navy because of all the career and travel opportunities."

"Training is going to be a challenge, particularly all the organisation, but I think I'm prepared."



They've operated in the Arctic and are now preparing to



KEEP UP WITH COMMANDO HELICOPTER FORCE

Follow @845NAS, @846NAS, @847NAS, @RoyalMarines, and @RoyalNavy on Twitter

Pictures: PO Phot Des Wade, CHF

go to the Caribbean for hurricane season so they can...

Bear the heavy load



FOR the Caribbean, read Caerwent.

For a tropical hurricane, read Merlin Storm as the wings of the Royal Marines tested their ability to deploy half-way around the world to help communities devastated by nature's wrath at short notice.

Commando Helicopter Force's major annual exercise saw an abandoned military site near Chepstow throb with activity as Royal Marine Merlin and Wildcat helicopters share Monmouthshire skies with RAF Chinooks.

Merlin Storm is typically used to qualify rookie crews as well as hone the skills and drills of long-standing personnel, allowing all elements of Commando Helicopter Force to test their abilities to work together.

This year's exercise focused entirely on the ability to deploy CHF en masse around the world at short notice – with its supporting constituent parts – be it pitchforked into full-scale combat, or sent into a disaster zone to provide humanitarian aid.

The UK military operates four helicopter groups for front-line operations. The Merlins and Wildcats of Yeovilton-based CHF form the nucleus of Aviation Task Force 2, with Chinooks, Apaches and Pumas 'bolted on' depending on the mission. On top of that there's a headquarters, logistics support and ground defence to ensure the force can operate safely and independently, anywhere in the world.

Including southeast Wales.

The former ammunition works/dump covers a vast site off the A48 outside Chepstow, providing scores of buildings, old railway lamps, blast pens, bunkers and open space for the military to make use of.

And in July 2020, it became a Caribbean island ravaged by Hurricane Dave, its people not just requiring immediate assistance, but also security.

The first week of Merlin Storm focused on the helicopters arriving and providing that aid across the 1,500-acre range, dropping recce teams with food, water and medical aid and setting up forward refuelling points at imaginary off-lying islands, to allow the helicopters to hop around quickly.

Exercise planners drew on the Royal Navy's experience helping out in the Philippines in 2013 (Operation Patwin) and, more recently, in the Caribbean after a succession of storms in the autumn of 2017 (Operation Ruman).

But for the second week of the exercise, they introduced something new: in the aftermath of Hurricane Dave, criminal groups moved into Caerwent and took control, filling the gap left by the decimated legal authorities. This led to fighting on the ground, helicopter assaults involving Royal Marines from 40 Commando, based near Taunton, and threats to the CHF outposts peppered around the range.

The helicopters swarming around southeast Wales may have caught the eye, but a key element of the fortnight-long exercise was to run out CHF's logistical arm. Fuel. Food. Medical support. Engineers.

In the event of a global incident, the aviation task force's supporting equipment – held in Yeovilton at short readiness to move – is shifted to an airbase (such as RAF Brize Norton) to be shipped to its destination... where an airhead or 'air point of entry' is established, in this case the range at Caerwent, from where the equipment and personnel are assigned to where they're needed.

Royal Navy chefs – normally found in a ship's galley – found themselves running field kitchens, living and working alongside ranks from all three Services.

Their combat service support squadron comrades provided water, medical supplies, and ammunition – and real-life medical support should anyone injure themselves.

If Caerwent was Cayman and this was a real humanitarian mission, the squadron would also be expected to provide the same support (minus ammo...) to the local populace.

Images of Royal Marines handing out bottles of water have become a mainstay of disaster relief missions, but it's a very immediate solution to a long-term problem: it's bulky, it's heavy and the bottles quickly run out.

Supply chain sailors used this iteration of Merlin Storm to test portable reverse osmosis/desalination plants to provide fresh water without having to ship it in.

Nothing in Merlin Storm is thirstier than the eponymous helicopter. It gets through around one tonne of fuel an hour ferrying two dozen Royal Marines around the battlefield, so fuel bowzers had to be on hand 24-hours a day ready to top up the tanks.

Put simply: without fuel, the helicopters can't fly, and if the helicopters can't fly, battles can't be won.

Aircraft handlers worked alongside their RAF Tactical Support Wing counterparts to refuel Chinooks, Merlin and Wildcat in the field – combat tankers for delivering fuel in bulk, or smaller, portable, forward refuelling points which can be slung beneath either a Chinook or Merlin.

The nature of those refuelling posts means they're remote, often exposed, and therefore, in a war zone, at

risk of being overrun.

Commandos from the Mobility Troop have the machines – tracked BV multi-terrain vehicles for cold climates, RWMIK Land Rovers and Jackals for more temperate regions – and the firepower to secure and defend those key outposts.

Up to six vehicles with three crew each: one driver, one top gunner and one vehicle commander, armed with machine-guns provide protection. Regardless of the environment, they live, work and fight from their vehicles for up to five days at a time in austere conditions.

Captain Paul Fleet RM, CHF's Mobility Troop Commander, said: "We can be expected to deploy anywhere in the world. Earlier this year we were working in the High North inside the Arctic Circle of Norway.

"We could be deploying to the Caribbean in the coming months, so we have to be prepared to operate for all eventualities and effectively in all environments."

Six vehicles and 18 Royal Marines cannot be everywhere. On Merlin Storm, tech helped to plug the gap.

The Flexnet system was established around the refuelling posts – the automated sensors (infrared, seismic, acoustic and intelligent motion cameras) report any movement to give the troops forewarning.

And joining the commandos in the field were the RN's dedicated drone squadron, 700X from Culdrose, testing out their latest airborne kit.

The drones linked up with the Flexnet sensors, scouted buildings for troops to pave the way for troops moving in – or to help them avoid ambushes – and, above all, gave the boots on the ground an unparalleled 360-degree view and understanding of the world around them. The results were hailed as "impressive".

As were the overall results of the two-week exercise. For the immediate future, it provided a very useful run-out for disaster relief plans with the core of the hurricane season upon us.

And in the longer term, it allowed CHF to test new kit, new ways of working, new people – such as 700X – to work with.

"Merlin Storm allowed the Mobility Troop to prepare for Op Caribbean and humanitarian/disaster relief operations, while also providing the opportunity to remain at the top of their game with 'green skills' soldiering," said Lieutenant Commander Chris Marsden, in charge of the Combat Service Support Squadron.

"A wide range of training activities and tactical scenarios were achieved - mounted and dismounted tactical operations, a number of heli-borne vehicle, equipment, and personnel insertions across the training area."



Here's to the next chapter

BRITISH forces in Gibraltar give a rousing send off to Commander Mike Maher and his wife Julie.

Cdr Maher, who has retired after 40 years in the Royal Navy, spent his last post as SO1 Operations in Gibraltar.

He leaves the Royal Navy after an illustrious 40-year career which has seen him serve on numerous warships, most notably HMS Cardiff during the 1982 Falkland Islands conflict.

He joined the Navy as a boy sailor in 1980 and rose through the ranks to Chief Petty Officer. In 1992 he commissioned as an officer, and various sea and shore assignments at home and abroad followed.

Firm favourites among these assignments for Mike and Julie were the Local Foreign Service assignments to the United States and to Turkey. During his time in Turkey, Mike was appointed as the Defence Attaché and promoted to Captain throughout this period.

Commodore Tim Henry, Commander British Forces Gibraltar, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Lindsay, Chief of Staff and members of the Command gathered in the Tower to say farewell to the couple during a short (socially distanced) ceremony.

Personnel then lined the main road from the Tower to the Naval Base gates to bid their own personal farewells to an extremely influential and charismatic member of the Gibraltar team.

Mike is not leaving the RN altogether though, he will now join the Civil Service and has secured a post at Portsmouth Naval Base.



Geoff plans to carry on camping

CIVIL Servant, Geoff Lange, 66, from Gosport, has formally retired following a long and dedicated career both serving in and supporting the Royal Navy.

Employed as a Specialist Instructor Officer within the Information Systems Training Unit (ISTU) at HMS Collingwood, Fareham, Geoff was presented with a leaving gift from his colleagues both Civil Servants and navy, at a special reception held in his honour, which adhered to social distancing, at the Fareham base.

Geoff joined the Navy in 1972 and served on a variety of HM Ships, including Jaguar, Blake and Illustrious.

On leaving the navy he joined the Civil Service in 1998 from when he has had various roles as an instructor, including Type 22 surveillance, Imaging systems and more recently ISTU. He was also a member of the PCS Union having a number of roles including health and safety, Branch Chair and Group Executive Committee Member.

While serving in the navy Geoff received the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal and a Gulf Campaign Medal.

Married to Alice, they have two children, Catherine and Andrew. They live in Gosport but Geoff was born and grew up in Kluang, Malaysia.

He is looking forward to spending time in his allotment on his retirement.

On presenting his leaving gift, Martin Shaw said "Geoff has a great career in the navy and an equally impressive career in the Civil Service. He has served PCS and provided support for the Civil Service workers and we wish him a happy and long retirement."

Geoff said "I'm sad to leave ISTU but I'm looking forward to retirement when lockdown is done and I can get out in my campervan."

Anne's a cut above

Steward opens hair salon aboard RFA Argus

WE are all desperate to get back to the hairdressers and barbers after lockdown – but one Royal Navy sailor used her hairdressing skills to raise funds for the NHS.

Apprentice Steward Anne Godfrey, 51, who joined the RFA at HMS Raleigh on her 50th birthday, is deployed with RFA Argus in the Caribbean.

Anne used to own a hairdressing salon and revisited her skills to tidy up the barnets of the crew of the support ship, raising £500.

The grandmother of three was allocated a vacant space aboard the ship to cut hair.

"For a bargain £10 donation to the NHS Nurses and Doctors Charity, I offered haircuts to everyone on board – even the captain and the bish signed up," said Anne.

"The reason I wanted to donate this money to the NHS is because I have seen the pressure that these guys work under and what they do for people for which I feel they do not get enough credit.

"They not only helped my husband when he was dying, but I also have a family member who contracted Coronavirus and my brother who is battling cancer. Therefore, I wanted to give something back to the NHS on behalf of the RFA and Team Argus."

"All the haircuts were carried out in my own time and I was assisted by my friend Assistant Cook Craig Walker. He generously lent me the use of his clippers so that, together with my hairdressing scissors, I could carry out different styles of cuts."



● Anne with Argus's CO, Captain Terry Barke and a cheque for £500 for the Cavell Nurses Trust and right, Anne cuts the hair of chaplain Olusegun Balogun

RN Chaplain Olusegun Balogun said: "It was my first haircut at sea by someone else as I usually just do my own with clippers. I enjoyed it!"

"It was good to get more of a salon experience and it was a nice chance to chat. Anne had never cut my Afro-pop style type of hair before which can be tricky, but she did a great job. I even took some pictures during and afterwards so I could show my children, and they were happy with it too."

Anne, who was widowed in 2017, comes from a strong military background, her late husband was a submariner, her father a stoker and

her grandfather served in the army.

"I always wanted to join the RN but unfortunately my mother wouldn't let me."

"When my husband passed away, I tried to join the Royal Navy Reserve, but I was too old. I then joined the Sea Cadets teaching the kids, but I did not feel that I got enough out of it."

"One of my husband's friends suggested that I join the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. I had never heard of them, so googled RFA and applied. I wanted to be a Deckhand, but it didn't quite work out, so I was



Memories of bands

PAST and present members of the Royal Navy volunteer bands are being asked to contribute to a new historical project.

The new Royal Naval Volunteer Band Association (RNVBA) was established in 2018 and saw a merger of nine bands.

The aims of the new band were:

- Extend the available support for ceremonial and other appropriate occasions (where no Service Band is available).
- Enhance the RN's image and standing through involvement with, and support to, the local community.
- Improve morale and welfare by providing a cultural and recreational outlet for the musical talents of Servicemen, MOD civilians, dependants, and civilian personnel in the local community.
- Foster Service ethos by promoting a practical interest in music in the RN.

Covid-19 has necessitated the cessation of face-to-face rehearsals. The membership have therefore turned to an alternative project to remain engaged: capturing the association's colourful past, with the aim of developing a historical pamphlet.

The band is seeking contributions which cover unforgettable volunteer band engagements, dates of tenure of uniformed VBIs, Volunteer bands of yesteryear, such as those in HMS Illustrious and Rooke, friendships and funny stories.

Anyone wishing to contribute should contact Northwood Volunteer Band Instructor: Simon Nicholls on simon.nicholls959@mod.gov.uk; or telephone 01923 957890



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Deeps raise cash for foodbank

KIND-HEARTED crewmembers from Royal Navy submarine HMS Ambush have raised £1,200 for Helensburgh and Lomond Foodbank.

The fund-raising was the brainchild of Chief Petty Officer Richie Mackie, Senior Rates' Mess President on board the Astute-class attack submarine, who wanted to do something to help families struggling during the pandemic.

"I was watching the news and thinking about what we could do to help," said Chief Mackie. "There are so many people experiencing hardship at the moment so I thought that HMS Ambush's ship's company could do something for those in need."

"In the end we raised half the money by selling branded cups and the other half through a '500 numbers' game."

Submariners at sea during Christmas patrol sometimes play a numbers game, with crewmembers paying £1 and the winning number paying out a cash prize.

HMS Ambush decided to do the same for the foodbank with 500 numbers going quickly among the crew, family members and friends raising £600 for the good cause.

The cheque for £1,200 was handed over to the Helensburgh and Lomond Foodbank at their headquarters at Red Cross Hall in Helensburgh.

Susan Davidson from Helensburgh and Lomond Foodbank said: "Our service has increased in use over the six years since starting, but in the last few months we have seen a much bigger increase in the bags we have given out."

"In the last quarter – March to May – we have issued 653 bags. Huge thanks to Ambush for the cheque and for the way so much money was collected by the submariners, family and friends."

For more information on the foodbank and how you can help or use the service please visit their website at: helensburghlomondfoodbank.org.



In from the cold

ROYAL NAVY minehunter HMS Ramsey returned to HM Naval Base Clyde after a successful deployment to the Baltic Sea.

Ramsey left her home on the Clyde in May this year, briefly stopping at Rosyth and Copenhagen, before joining-up with Standing NATO Mine Counter Measures Group 1 (SNMCMG1).

The group – consisting of vessels and personnel from the Danish, German, Estonian and Norwegian navies – worked together to clear historic ordnance off the coast of Estonia.

Afterwards the NATO allies sailed to Kiel, Germany, to take part in NATO's Exercise Baltops, where they joined colleagues from Finland, Lithuania and The Netherlands.

It was the second year in a row that Ramsey participated in the exercise, on this occasion relieving sister Sandown-class ship HMS Grimsby and joining frigate HMS Kent and around two-dozen other ships and aircraft for the biggest wargames of 2020 in the Baltic.

The exercise allowed the allies to test their ability to guarantee the freedom and security of nations with a Baltic coastline and saw the vessel tackle a variety of simulated seafaring and naval warfare challenges.

Lieutenant Commander Joel Roberts, Commanding Officer of HMS Ramsey, said: "This has been a short yet excellent deployment for HMS Ramsey and her ship's company. Maintaining a persistent and adaptable presence is extremely important in being able to react to the range of security threats against UK and NATO interests."

"We have worked with partners and allies from Norway, Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Estonia, the Netherlands and Finland. The training value permanently formed in a task group is unparalleled and the range of mine countermeasures tasking and exercises has allowed the continued development of our capability."

HMS Ramsey was operated by Crew 6 from the Faslane-based First Mine Counter Measures Squadron (MCM1).

The squadron operates eight crews which rotate between the seven Sandown-class minehunters, two of whom have been forward deployed in the Middle East since December 2006.

There to welcome HMS Ramsey back home were personnel from across the Clyde community, including the Submarine Flotilla and mine warfare specialists from MCM1.

Commander Steven White, Commanding Officer of the First Mine Counter Measures Squadron, said: "As well as operating in the Middle East in warm shallow water, we also have to operate in colder climes."

"The Baltic provides an excellent operational setting to ensure the personnel of our MCM community, and their equipment, can operate in a wide variety of environmental conditions."

"This is especially true for the Sandown-class with their variable depth sonar which provides a unique capability to UK Defence."

The crew of HMS Ramsey will now go on to a period of tasking around the UK.

Pictures: LPhot Pepe Hogan



Picture: Lee Howard



Good omens for veteran Damien

Hello Darkness, my old friend...

Veteran naval aviators celebrated the 50th birthday of one of the world's oldest airworthy Sea Kings: XV666, known in the world of flight as Damien.

Five decades after the helicopter was rolled out of the Westland works in Yeovil, the veteran Sea King returned on a golden anniversary tour of the South West.

Damien – the nickname was added in the mid-70s after the character in the *Omen* horror films – spent two decades as a sub hunter, then was converted into a Mk5 for search-and-rescue duties and repainted in red and grey, 771 Naval Air Squadron's trademark livery.

The helicopter clocked up more than 14,000 hours (more than 18 whole months) on sorties with the Fleet Air Arm, few more dramatic than the evening of July 7 2011 when Lt Cdr Mike Luscombe, Capt Martin Roskilly RM, Lt Tom Sawyer and Sgt Tony 'Russ' Russell RM responded to a mayday in a storm, 75 miles off the Isles of Scilly.

The team saved the lives of two crewmen from the stricken yacht *Andriette*; it was a rescue on the cusp of what was possible, so much so that Sgt Russell was awarded the George Medal for his outstanding bravery.

Damien retired from RN service in 2016, spent 12 months at HMS Sultan and then was resurrected by Portland-based HeliOperations.

They use the veteran helicopter to teach German Navy Sea King pilots maritime and search and rescue flying skills.

He flies on a regular basis thanks to the skill and dedication of HeliOperations' engineers – many of whom worked on Damien throughout his long and outstanding naval service.

He was spared those duties for one day to enjoy his birthday: a short hop from Portland to Yeovil and Leonardo helicopters, then on to Yeovilton, where one day he may become a permanent fixture with the Navy Wings collection of classic Fleet Air Arm aircraft, and back to Portland.

The day finished with a reception at the base for invited guests who toasted him – at a distance, of course – with a glass of champagne and a slice of birthday cake.

Damien is joined at HeliOperations (who've replaced the red of 771 NAS with a distinctive orange livery) by another vintage Sea King, ZA166 (a mere 38 years old), named Dara in honour of Irish search-and-rescue flier Captain Dara Fitzpatrick.



Clock the new look for Dock 14

DESPITE what your maths teacher may have taught you, 13 does go into 14.

The final part of a £40m revamp of support facilities in Portsmouth Naval Base for the carrier strike groups of tomorrow has been completed with No.14 Dock recommissioned – ready to bring destroyer HMS *Daring* back to life.

The Type 45 'christened' the refurbished dry dock at the end of June, ahead of work starting on the warship's refit – the first RN vessel it has hosted since survey ship HMS *Enterprise* back in 2003.

Some £13m has been spent on the dock, allowing it to accommodate ships fitted with hull-mounted domes courtesy of a new 'sonar pit'.

In addition, a new caisson has been fitted to hold back the waters of Portsmouth Harbour, more than three acres of surface have been cleaned and, most striking of all, a new gantry crane has been installed, towering 68 metres above 14 Dock – and also able to service No.15 as well.

The re-opening of the dock marks the end of an overhaul of the base's Deep Maintenance facility which including modernizing 15 Dock and the adjacent workshops.

"This project is the final major component of this programme, all delivered to plan, and we are ready now to support the first operational deployment by HMS *Queen Elizabeth* and her escorts next year," said Captain Iain Greenlees, in charge of the base's infrastructure.

"There is always more activity to come in refurbishing and optimising this complex site to meet the modern Navy's changing operational needs."

Personnel continue to support Covid battle

TWO Swansea University students have been working to support the emergency services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Medical student Robert Jones is now a health care assistant working at Morriston Hospital while Samuel Murkin, who is studying for a master's in mechanical engineering, is helping to share vital messages for Avon and Somerset Police.

Robert, whose family is originally from Carmarthenshire, is based at Morriston Hospital's children's emergency unit where he has been able to utilise skills he developed during his first year at Swansea University Medical School.

He said: "It has been a very positive and rewarding experience. I had never properly been out on the wards as the pandemic led to our first clinical placement being cancelled so the first few days on the ward were a real learning experience! But the staff have been amazing and couldn't do more to help."

Robert added that the best part of the role was seeing the change in children following their treatment. "I have been fortunate enough to be able to care for children and their families at often their most vulnerable times."

The pair have both been enthusiastic members of the Swansea contingent of the Wales University Royal Naval Unit – Samuel



● Robert Jones and Samuel Murkin; Right, RN personnel at the Eastleigh mobile testing site

was Senior Midshipman while completing his undergraduate degree this year and Robert is currently an Acting Officer Cadet.

Swansea University's military education representative Peter Neville said: "The endeavour and hard work of these two student cadets shows the ethos of the Royal Navy: high personal and professional standards, and willingness to serve. Their actions are a credit to themselves, their Swansea University training, and of course the Wales University Royal Naval Unit."

Robert said: "I joined the unit to see what Royal Navy life was really like and to enjoy the diverse variety of activities and learning opportunities the URNU provides.



As a result of the positive and enjoyable time I have had with the URNU, I am considering a career in the Royal Navy as a medical officer."

Like Robert, Samuel said he had been motivated to do something to help during the pandemic and was delighted to become a digital community ambassador for Avon and Somerset Police.

Samuel said: "My role involves passing on vital communication and key messages from the force to my local community, via groups that have been pre-established on social media."

"I am hoping to join the police force in the future, so the experience is very useful

for me personally, but I was also eager to do something to help my community and our police at such a difficult time."

Meanwhile, sailors from HMS *Prince of Wales* and SURFLOT assisted staff at a mobile Covid-19 testing centre in Eastleigh, Hampshire.

Specially-trained personnel collected swabs at the mobile sites, which are then forwarded to mega-labs for processing.

So far the military have staffed 1,053 MTU sites and have helped complete over 500,000 tests.

Personnel have also supported the Government's National Testing Strategy by delivery testing kits to care homes.



White Ensign 'visits' ocean's deepest trench

A ROYAL Navy honorary commander was part of an exclusive crew to travel to the deepest part of the ocean.

Hon Cdr Durdana Ansari travelled to the Mariana Trench, in the Pacific Ocean, after being invited along on the expedition by former US Navy Reserves Commander and adventurer Victor Vescovo and mountaineer Vanessa O'Brien.

Aboard the DSSV Pressure Drop, Hon Cdr Ansari presented the Royal Navy White Ensign which was then taken 11,000m below the seabed of Challenger Deep, also known as the Eastern Pool – the deepest part of the trench.

During her two-and-a-half weeks at sea, in waters north of Guam, Hon Cdr Ansari learned about the science behind the dives and said she was proud to be able to represent the Royal Navy.

"It was brilliant to be able to present the White Ensign and represent the navy on this expedition," Durdana, a former BBC producer and presenter, said.

"That was one of my finest moments since being made an honorary commander in 2017. I am grateful to lots of people in the Royal Navy for supporting me, especially the First Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin, Commodore Gary Sutton and Commodore David Elford."

Hon Cdr Ansari set off on the expedition at the end of May this year, flying to Holland, Japan and then to Guam to meet the rest of the team.

This included Victor, Dr Kathy Sullivan – a former US Navy Captain who was also the first US woman to walk in space, Vanessa – the first woman to be fastest on seven peaks, mountaineer and entrepreneur John Rost, expedition leader Rob McCallum and other hand-picked team members.

They sailed 200 miles from Guam and did three dives using a submersible with Kathy and Vanessa becoming the first and second women to reach the depths of Challenger Deep.

John was on board for the third dive of the trench – named after being discovered by HMS Challenger between 1872 and 1876.

It was during one of these dives, to collect samples, measure



water temperature and capture footage of species, that the White Ensign was taken down. Later this year Hon Cdr Ansari will be presenting the ensign to the First Sea Lord.

She added: "It was very exciting to be part of this expedition which had lots of firsts. It was the first time a woman had dived to the bottom of Challenger Deep, the first time the Royal Navy has been represented on a trip of this kind and the first time the White Ensign has been that deep."

"From showing my Royal Navy ID at the airports and ports to being in uniform on DSSV Pressure Drop, I received so much respect and I felt proud."

"Being on board and at the Mariana Trench, knowing you're above the deepest part of the ocean where conditions can get rough, can be intimidating but it was just beautiful, the ocean and myself embraced each other, we became friends."

"Everyone on board, from the scientists to the divers to the chefs sat together and interacted. It was great to see and I even got to cook in the kitchen which was great."

"It truly was an incredible trip. Another great moment was when the submersible touched down on the seabed during the first dive and Victor was speaking. The whole team on the boat could hear him so clearly giving readings of the depth through the wireless. Everyone cheered when he reached the bottom of the trench."

"I learnt so much from Kathy and everyone else. It was a great experience, not only to learn about oceans but also the incredible people I was with. Such people can only be found doing these amazing things like being from the heights of space or the depths of the sea."



New-look bar opens at Raleigh

A NEW-LOOK coffee lounge and Junior Rates bar has been opened at HMS Raleigh following a refurbishment funded by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

Known as Limers, the recreation space has been transformed into a new Naval-themed area, with booth seating and tables along with new carpet, lighting and heating.

Staff and trainees at HMS Raleigh are now able to make use of the facility, in restricted numbers, following the gradual lifting of restrictions implemented to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

Captain Richard Harris, the Commanding Officer of HMS Raleigh, said: "As soon as I arrived in Raleigh, I took the view that Raleigh is relatively isolated from the nearest town, and the facilities

were tired.

"We are grateful once again for the support of the RNRMC, which has allowed us to give this facility a new lease of life for our staff, trainees, and their families to enjoy when they are able to take some time-out."

The facility is run by ESS, a division of Compass Group. The company provides catering, cleaning and retail facilities within the Torpoint-based training establishment.

Admiral Tony Radakin, the First Sea Lord, pictured, cut the ribbon to formally open the facility during his recent visit to HMS Raleigh.

The RNRMC is the principal charity of the Royal Navy.

It exists to support sailors, marines and their families for life.



Gift boxes show we really care

A NUMBER of personnel from British Forces Gibraltar took receipt of care boxes from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

In response to the COVID-19 threat a Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA) request was made by Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar (HMGoG) for support to its Public Health efforts.

Following approval a Royal Navy medical team from British Forces Gibraltar was activated at short notice.

The team, using their training, experience and adaptability, provided support in a variety of roles; from provision of specialist advice and mentoring to develop crisis management systems, command and control; subject matter expertise in the design and development of a Nightingale temporary hospital facility, specialist manpower to undertake swabbing of COVID-19 patients at a mobile testing facility and additional resilience for the Gibraltar Ambulance Service.

Personnel were delighted to receive the RNRMC care boxes.

Warrant Officer 1 (WO1) Medical Assistant (MA) Hemmings stated: "I am personally very proud of the RN medical team who, in challenging circumstances, have used their collective military medical experience and training to support the population of Gibraltar."

"The RNRMC care box is a very welcome gesture of recognition for their efforts and deeply appreciated."



Proud to support work of RNRMC

FOUNDED by a military family, online shop Arabella Jones opened its virtual doors at the beginning of June with the aim of helping other military families separated by distance or deployments feel closer together.

Less than a month in, they announced that they were supporting the RNRMC, and released a "Proud to Support" range of jewellery ahead of Armed Forces Day. £2 of each item sold from this range will be donated to help the charity continue supporting sailors, marines, and their families for life.

Charlotte Saunders, founder and owner of Arabella Jones, said: "We wanted to create a shop for military personnel and their loved ones, full of sentimental pieces to help make

separation a little easier to endure. Some of the items we sell are branded but others are our own designs. All of them have been chosen for their relatability to military life."

"We chose the RNRMC as our charity not only because of the fantastic work they do, but because of our own military connection:

my partner started out as a Royal Marine Commando and is now a Naval Officer, so the military is a lived experience for us. We have two young boys too, so particularly



value the RNRMC for the support they offer families."

CEO of RNRMC, Adrian Bell, said: "It is tremendously heartening that the RNRMC has been chosen as Arabella Jones's charity of choice for the new 'Proud to Support' range. Acknowledging the sacrifices the men and women of the Armed Forces make means a great deal and this is a wonderful way for

people to show their affiliation and support."

The new jewellery line can be ordered from Arabella-Jones.com now, along with other accessories and gifts.



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FROM SEA



TO SKY

ROYAL NAVY TAKES NEXT STEPS IN UNMANNED TECHNOLOGY

THE use of unmanned technology on future operations has taken a step forward with a series of trials.

The Royal Navy's experts in getting new equipment to the frontline quickly have been putting a crewless Pacific 24 boat and a heavy-lift drone through their paces.

In separate trials, both pieces of kit showed how they could benefit the navy ahead of further, more extensive trials later this year.

These will see both the Malloy drone (pictured right) and BAE Systems boat (main picture) integrated with warships.

The PAC24 boat will be the first crewless boat for general duties with the Royal Navy and was launched in Portsmouth waters, ready for trials to see how it – and similar craft – might fit into the 'fleet of tomorrow'.

More than £3m is being invested in the crewless boat – and other autonomous small craft technology.

The boats could operate individually – or in groups – racing over the ocean at speeds of up to 38 knots (nearly 44mph).

The PAC24 has been the backbone of sea boat operations from Royal Navy warships for more than a quarter of a century, with the latest variant, the Mark 4, introduced four years ago. The crewless variety is sponsored by NavyX –

the specialist wing of the Royal Navy dedicated to rapidly developing, testing and trialling cutting-edge and new technologies for use on the front line.

The team has worked in partnership with BAE Systems to commission the new boat.

A prototype, controlled from frigate HMS Argyll, debuted at the DSEI defence/technology showcase in London last September, since when BAE and the navy have pressed ahead with a working model fit for the front line.

While the boat's hull and propulsion system remain the same, the control system and sensors have been changed/added to allow for autonomous movement – a sailor should be able to give the unmanned craft generic tasking, and the boat will decide for itself how it carries out that task.

Lieutenant Commander Rob Manson, from NavyX, said: "The autonomous Pacific 24 is not just a step change for the Royal Navy in unmanned operations, it also ensures the navy remains at the forefront of technological improvement and innovation.

"While initial tasks are likely to be familiar to those who already operate a Pacific 24, the autonomous nature of this craft adds huge capability and flexibility.

"Additionally, this capability can be

constantly improved, allowing continuous updates and capability upgrades, resulting in regular additions to the toolbox of operational planners."

Brooke Hoskins, Products and Training Services Director at BAE Systems said: "This milestone has been a goal since we first demonstrated the unmanned capabilities of our Pacific boats to them last year.

"It is a key step in supporting NavyX, turning what was originally an innovative research and development experiment into a fielded capability for the Royal Navy."

Meanwhile, NavyX have also been busy working with DARE (Discover, Analysis and Rapid Exploitation), drone firm Malloy Aeronautics and Planck Aerosystems in the development of unmanned air vehicles for the purpose of moving supplies onto ships.

The heavy-lift drone has already been put through its paces in the harsh environment of the Arctic Circle in the Royal Navy's Autonomous Advance Force exercise.

The latest round of trials were to prove the Malloy drone could land and launch on moving vessels, something it will be required to do if introduced into the navy.

But before taking it to sea, it was tested on land, tasking it with landing on a van's trailer



moving at different speeds and with the trailer swerving to reflect the range of conditions at sea.

Peter Whitehead, DARE project lead, said: "These trials with Malloy and Planck are the next evolution to making unmanned systems increasingly autonomous and of benefit to the navy. It increases their utility at sea and their use in future Royal Navy operations.

"Using this drone in this way reduces

the level of human involvement and interaction in logistics and shows how the Royal Navy wants to move forward in its use of the latest technologies.

"We cannot wait to prove its uses at sea in the near future."

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Fits much better



MODELLING the potential new working rig for sailors are Tom Milner and Izzy House (ignore the name tags...) – as only the second redesign in 80 years take place.

Last month we brought you news that the standard working uniform – No.4s, known as the PCS or Personal Clothing System, was undergoing an overhaul. The upgrade has two distinct strands: the fabric used to make the uniform (being tested in the Gulf right now) to see which one of three chosen performs best in hot weather.

And the fit, style, wearability and practicality of the new-look uniform.

Combined, the result should mean a more comfortable, durable uniform which better meets the needs of the wearer... and Royal Navy operations.

In June personnel were quizzed on their opinions on the new design.

Over 7,000 people from a wide range of ranks and rates gave their views in just ten days, and asked questions on subjects as varied as pockets, badge positions, rank slides, belt loops, fit and sizing, shirt buttons versus zips and chest pockets.

In addition two junior rates – AB (Diver) Tom Milner and Leading Writer Izzy House – donned the first version of the new design and provided feedback.

“When I first saw it I thought it looked a bit 1970s but when I actually put it on I was quite surprised by how comfortable it was,” said Tom.

“In terms of design it looks to me just like a redesign of the 4s so nothing particularly new but I know that they are looking at better fabric to keep everyone cooler in the heat so that’s probably more important.

“When I put the shirt on it was a thousand times better than the current jacket – it fitted better, was lighter and not as bulky because they’ve got rid of the pockets. I think this will make it cooler too.”

Izzy admits she “wasn’t sure about” the new uniform when she first saw it.

“When I put it on it just felt much better, it is much more fitted than the current PCS.

“The sleeves can be tapered round and if you roll them up it’s not then all bunched up around the top of your arm; it just looks a lot smarter.

“The shirt is also a better shape; it is longer and more fitted whereas the current one is quite short and boxy so if you sit down it falls out of the back of your trousers and just looks untidy.

“The trousers are also more comfortable, they aren’t so baggy and you can adjust the waist – it just all fits much better.”

Their feedback joined comments by 7,000 others, all considered by the project team, RN Clothing Committee and Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Nick Hine.

Personnel strongly supported keeping the trouser cargo pockets as a practical feature – these will be retained.

There was also a lot of support of Velcro-backed name tally, badges and insignia, belt loops and retaining the chest pockets. While the former are being retained, keeping chest pockets hindered the breathability of fabric so these are being dropped. Slightly more personnel wanted the rank slide to move to the shoulder – this will happen.

And while results showed a preference for zips not buttons on the shirt, zips are prone to wear, difficult to repair at sea and materials add to the material making it warmer. On balance the clothing committee felt the disadvantages of the zip outweighed its benefits, as a shirt rather than a jacket buttons are also more style appropriate.

We’ll provide further details on the new uniform following the conclusion of the fabric trial next month.



Will does good with his hood

NOT the latest in coronavirus protection, rather the latest in anti-flash hoods for those working in machinery spaces.

HMS Defender’s marine engineer CPOET Will Horsepool models the modified hood he designed which allows better communications than existing anti-flash headgear.

The hood idea was born while Will was serving aboard veteran destroyer HMS Liverpool, which retired in 2012 after playing a key role in operations off Libya.

He found communications were impeded while wearing the hood working as a member of the mobile party and machinery space action crew.

That prompted the senior rate to modify his hood by splitting it down the seams so his ears could be exposed. Then, taking the nose bags from two old hoods, he sewed them into the hood to fit around the ear defenders.

It worked – and meant he could hear much more clearly when wearing protective equipment when closed up in machinery spaces or whenever ear defenders were needed.

And it’s now becoming a standard piece of kit across the RN after Will submitted his modification to the Brain Wave Ideas Platform, the new name for the GEMS initiative, which has been rewarding military and civilian ideas for nearly a quarter of a century.

Approved by the relevant authorities, the improved hood has been passed to LEIDOS for design and production – and the senior rating has received a financial reward for his contribution toward improving the operational effectiveness of his machinery space colleagues.

If you have an invention or idea which you think may benefit the navy by saving money or improving operational effectiveness, contact WO1 Spike Hughes at spike.hughes700@mod.gov.uk.

Dolphins for boat fast trackers

SIX fast-track engineers earned their coveted dolphins to mark their qualification as submariners after a period of intensive training and learning in Devonport.

The fast-track scheme cuts about 30 months off the training. Instead, over six to eight months of compressed instruction, trainee engineering technicians – in both marine and weapon branches – familiarize themselves with engineering practices, safe methods of working, and the various safety measures, systems and layout of a boat to respond to any incident or accident aboard.

All six were mentored in engineering basics at Devonport which prepares them for their career courses.

Commander Steve Waller, Commanding Officer of the SUBFLOT Support Group in Devonport presented the dolphins in a social-distanced ceremony, upholding a tradition going back to 1972.

Five marine and one weapon engineer now wear their dolphins with pride; the sole WE in the group, ET Olii Sowden, was one of four from his branch who started the scheme and is the first to complete this route.

Though qualified as submariners, they’re not yet ready to serve on a boat; the sextet have now moved on to their specialist training, such as HMS Sultan in Gosport for the marine engineers.

WO executive branch stands up

THE next stage of changes to the Warrant Officer rank is the creation of the Executive Branch for WO1s.

Since the introduction of Executive Warrant Officers in 2005, the quality of the people who have served in this key post and the operational and moral value of embedding them in a unit’s command team has cemented the view that the executive function comprises a skill set of its own.

So from September 1, the Executive

Branch for Warrant Officers will be established, filled initially by selection from eligible WO1 volunteers via a Sideways Entry Selection Board which will sit in October and then annually to coincide with WO2 to WO1 promotion boards. Future WO2s will have choice over the branch (their own or executive) in which they would wish to compete for WO1 promotion; Royal Marine WO1s will retain the opportunity to be employed in executive branch roles.

Applications for the first board must be received by September 1. If approved, you will need to submit a 500-word personal summary that shows your motivation for pursuing an executive career. Those selected will be formally transferred into the Executive Branch on assignment and then be managed as a dedicated cadre.

Further details in RNTM 01-058/20 which includes a Q&A based on feedback from WO1s and senior ratings in the Fleet.



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It's social working

Cash bonus offered to RM ranks

A SECOND trial of putting a Royal Navy social worker on a serving warship has underlined their benefit – to shipmates and the ship.

Chief Petty Officer Vic Glassey (pictured, right, by LPhoto Dan Shepherd) is providing a listening ear and directing shipmates on aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales to much-needed support, helping sailors and their families in difficult times.

The former naval medic is a qualified social worker – her branch badge is Royal Navy Welfare – and sailed with HMS Queen Elizabeth when the carrier deployed to the USA last autumn for trials after the Naval Service Family and People Support team was asked to provide greater assistance to deployed ships and units to meet the changing needs of personnel on deployment.

Since February, she's been aboard the carrier's sister, spanning a mix of sea trials and several months alongside in Portsmouth undergoing maintenance.

Vic's presence on board both carriers allowed those personnel who needed it by tapping into the NS FPS's resources... which led to support given to families, and reassurance for loved ones at sea.

Issues spanned the gamut of human emotions and problems, but the majority focus on the mental health of personnel and dependents, physical health, relationship difficulties, and bereavement.

More than 70 personnel on the two carriers have received specialist welfare support, while numerous shipmates have been given advice and assistance at an early stage to hopefully prevent situations worsening.

The senior rating believes her time on HMS Queen Elizabeth busted a few myths and helped to erase the stigma surrounding welfare issues.

"I often hear people saying



that people go to welfare to try to get sent home," she said. "Only seven per cent of personnel who received specialist welfare support had to return home – and that was due to their presence at home being essential."

"Over 90 per cent of personnel who accessed support said they wanted assistance to allow them to remain operational."

The senior rating was given an office in a busy part of the carrier – ideal for shipmates to drop in.

"Confidentiality is paramount and I always offer to close my door, but I've noticed a change – people are saying it's ok to leave the door open, as they don't feel the need to hide the fact that they are accessing support," she added.

Feedback from both those helped and the command team on Prince of Wales has been extremely positive.

"I honestly believe that having RNW on board can save lives," said one of those helped. "If something like depression gets too much or other underlying issues then things could get out of hand."

Commander Joe Allfree, from the carrier strike group staff,

believes the presence of a social worker is to the benefit of the entire task force when it deploys.

"Just as HMS Prince of Wales will offer superior medical and engineering support to a task group by virtue of our facilities and more senior personnel, the ability to support a whole task group with a NS PFS worker is obvious," he said.

"If people really are a priority we must do something about it and not just talk about it."

From her experiences on the sister ships, Vic is convinced that there is a need for – and benefit of – deployable social workers.

"Serving personnel have expressed that they really benefited from a place to come to deal with problems at sea," the senior rating added.

"The support from HMS Prince of Wales' ship's company has been fantastic – they welcomed me and made me feel like one of their own."

"If you have a NS FPS worker deploy with you in the future please embrace and support them; they will be there for you and every member of the ship's company in their moment of need."



Feedback from Jack

"I felt comfortable speaking to CPO Glassey because I knew she was here, was available straight away and was trained to deal with my issues."

"I honestly believe that having RNW on board can save lives. If something like depression gets too much or other underlying issues then things could get out of hand."

"Sometimes all you need is someone to talk to in person. On the phone you cannot see who you are talking to."

"If you are depressed or have anxiety then you may not feel comfortable speaking to someone on the phone because you cannot see their reaction or if they're actually interested in what you have concerns about."

"Having someone on board is better even alongside. If I didn't have that moment on board where I just walked in and said 'Hello' I probably would have just kept quiet and who knows what would have happened."

"I had a problem that I didn't think anyone could help me with, but CPO RNW has prove me wrong. She took measures to get my problems resolved and has shown me the navy can – and will – help anyone who needs support."

Practice at sea for Royal Navy GPs



ROYAL Navy GPs can now undertake some of their practical training aboard the nation's two new aircraft carriers.

Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Ruth Guest (pictured) became the first doctor to train as a GP registrar – normally carried out in NHS surgeries – aboard HMS Prince of Wales for a trial period, paving the way for others to follow suit.

A large part of GP training is apprenticeship-style, on-the-job, starting in a hospital, followed by 18 to 20 months working as a GP registrar.

Many trainees complete this at NHS GP surgeries, which means many years away from military practice and also means a newly-qualified navy GP faces a steep learning curve when they return to the Service, facing military medicine issues – especially when deployed, when they may be working independently and running a sickbay of their own.

To help them – and to help the NHS at a time when it is stretched and has,

at times, struggled to find suitable placements for RN GP registrars, the carrier and her medical department received accreditation.

Prince of Wales' team underwent a thorough inspection, demonstrating a supportive learning environment, a varied patient population of 700 or more men and women, team working and efficient day to day operations to gain this civilian accreditation... which also applies to her sister ship Queen Elizabeth, so both carriers can prepare RN doctors for GP duties.

For Surg Lt Cdr Guest, the practical experience aboard the carrier shows considerable forward-thinking by the Navy. "Why should training be limited to the four walls of an NHS GP practice in the UK when we could train our GPs in the role we need them for?" she said.

That forward-thinking was borne out by her time aboard Prince of Wales.

"It has been six years since I last served at sea and this has been a fantastic opportunity to get 'back into uniform' and re-establish my role as a doctor in the RN," she added.

"The ship's company were incredibly

welcoming and helped me relocate myself when I looked lost – which was often! It has given a great insight into life on an aircraft carrier and I would love to come back in my future career."

And while coughs, cuts and sprains are all part of GP duties in your local surgery, or in a sickbay, the exercises aboard the carrier and 'casualty simulation', using props and make-up for added realism, make for a bespoke training experience.

"I really enjoyed being part of a medical team, bouncing ideas around and gaining knowledge from different members with vast amounts of experience in their field was invaluable," Surg Lt Cdr Guest added.

"Attending departmental meetings helped familiarise me with where medical sat in the bigger picture of the ship – and beyond."

She's convinced there's scope beyond GP training with this initiative. "Medics, nurses, dentists – we could all benefit from front-line educational experiences, and as the carriers embark aircraft there is even more scope to gain experience in the field of aviation medicine."

New jetty completes another piece of Gulf jigsaw

MAJOR Royal Navy vessels can now berth at the UK's base in Bahrain after waterfront facilities were revamped.

Although shallower draft ships such as Hunt and Sandown-class minehunters have been using the quayside at the UK Naval Support Facility in Bahrain since it opened two years ago – allowing them much easier access to engineering support and fresh supplies.

But larger RN vessels – notably Type 23 frigates and Type 45 destroyers – have either used the Flour Jetty, or the slightly more distant Finger Jetty as personnel were not sure their own quay could handle them safely.

It's been completely refurbished with

HMS Argyll – one of two Type 23s currently operating out of Bahrain, alongside her sister Montrose – christening the new facility.

Beyond easier access for frigates/destroyers to the maintenance and support facilities at the NSF, it also means crews only have walk a short distance in punishing Gulf temperatures to the welfare facilities in the UK establishment (galley, coffee shop, gym, shop, bar and TV/games room).

Commander Andrew Ainsley, who brought HMS Argyll alongside the jetty for the first time next to Brocklesby and Shoreham (right), said it marked "a key moment" in the development of the facility as the hub of RN

operations in the region.

"To be able not only to draw on the first-rate support available, but to also afford our people the creature comforts provided ashore, will allow the UK Maritime Component to enhance its operational edge in this important and demanding theatre," he added.

"Quite apart from that, it is great to have the genuine feel of a task group as we berth next to the mine-hunters and build our team."

Commander Suzy Conway, the support facility's Commanding Officer added: "This year we have succeeded in delivering a series of 'firsts' and the team should be very proud of their achievements."



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IN THE VANGUARD

A SELECT group of commandos will form a new Vanguard Strike Company to shape how the Royal Marines Commandos of the future will operate around the globe.

These trailblazers will have access to game-changing technology and weaponry as they head on their first deployment next year.

The Royal Marines are currently undergoing a bold modernisation project – known as the Future Commando Force programme – which will overhaul how the world-famous green berets operate.

As part of this restructuring, more than 150 Royal Marines and Army Commandos will come together this autumn to form the Vanguard Strike Company.

The company will head on its maiden deployment in mid-2021 after further trials later this year and ongoing equipment, structural and tactical experimentation associated with the Future Commando Force.

Commandant General Royal Marines, Major General Matt Holmes, said: “The Vanguard Strike Company will lead and inform how the Royal Marines and Army Commandos will operate and fight in a dynamic,

technological era of warfare.

“We envisage several of these networked sub-units persistently forward deployed around the globe, with an array of sophisticated enabling capabilities, to present dilemmas to adversaries whilst supporting partners. These will all be at high-readiness, as a capable forward contingency force at the core of the Royal Navy’s Littoral Response Groups.”

The deployment next year will see the first practical demonstration of kit, equipment, training and organisational change necessary to shape the concept further and bring it quickly to the forefront of the Royal Navy’s contribution to national security.

The elite commandos will work in small, versatile teams that will be tailored for the respective mission they will be facing – calling on areas of expertise and hone skills necessary to bring an advantage depending on the type of operation.

This will give the UK a more agile and lethal capability, ready for missions anywhere in the world at a moment’s notice, whether that’s for war-fighting, specific combat missions such as commando raids, or providing humanitarian assistance.

This is about returning commando forces to their roots: to operate at reach and in all theatres, including the arctic, as the spearhead of operations.

It has already been announced that Royal Marines Commandos will have a new uniform as part of the bold transformation.

Fit for a new era of warfare, it is in keeping with the maritime traditions of the Corps and honours their Commando forebears through insignia.

The NATO procured uniform – which is being procured from USA-based firm Crye Precision – is lighter-weight, has higher tear-strength, is faster-drying and is more breathable than typical 50/50 cotton/nylon clothing.

The Vanguard Strike Company will wear this uniform on their first deployment.

• Hidden in the undergrowth of Dartmoor, the sharpest shooters in the Royal Marines have competed against each other in a test of their world-class marksmanship.

Snipers from around 3 Commando Brigade gather annually to share tactics, techniques, procedures, plus discuss updates on kit,



equipment and weapons.

It’s also a chance for snipers to complete advanced training, using a range of the weapons in their arsenal to hit targets of various sizes and at different distances on the moor’s training area.

The crack shot with the most hits from the shoot is awarded the Hutton Trophy, an award named in honour of Royal Marines sniper Marine Jamie Hutton, nicknamed ‘The Colonel’, who died in 2008.

It is given to the top marksmen using pistol, SA80 and .338 and is one of the focal points of the training.

“The Brigade Sniper Concentration is essential in bringing together knowledge and understanding from across the scout sniper specialisation so that we can develop sniping in line with the rapid developments associated with Future Commando Force across the wider corps,” said the Officer Commanding of 42 Commando’s Sniper Troop.

“As a force multiplier, the role of the sniper has never been more relevant which is why it is so important that we raise our standards of marksmanship and skills through competition at the concentration.”

The expert commandos are among those to have completed the 13-week sniper course at Commando Training Centre Royal Marines – which is widely acknowledged as one of the hardest military training courses in the world – and deploy on missions around the world.

Snipers from 42 Commando are currently on board Royal Navy warships and as maritime snipers are trained to shoot from Wildcat helicopters at the engine blocks of drugs running go-fasts, helping prevent the smuggling of narcotics.

Fellow sharpshooters from allied nations were due to attend this year’s meet but were unable to because of Covid-19, so snipers from 42 Commando, 40 Commando and from Commando Training Centre were those who headed for Dartmoor this time around.

The live shoots included using the L129A1 Sharpshooter, SA80, L115A3 .338, and Glock 17, which all contributed to the Hutton Trophy totals.

The skills side of the training saw pairs working together on a live stalk – staying undetected and moving into a position unseen to take down a target – plus an observation test, live break contact and unknown distance shoot.



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WO2 Mike Rudall from RMR Cardiff is also a Police Inspector for South Wales Police.

He has been in the Reserves for 32 years and said: "I've found that working with the Marines has helped me to understand leadership, develop my character, it's given me opportunities to work overseas."

"I'm an Inspector now, recently promoted, and it's because of my experience as a Reservist, I feel, working overseas alongside my regular counterparts, that has enabled me to fulfil the demanding role of a leader within South Wales Police."



• The new HMS Cambria



AB Emily Boycott, is a SeaRes reservist from HMS Cambria, who also works in the "Firing Line" museum at Cardiff Castle.

She gives talks there and teaches the visitors about the weapons, their use and their history.

She finds this ties in nicely with learning how to use the modern-day SA80 rifles of the Royal Navy.

"I joined the Reserves two years ago and I've absolutely loved it, all my training. I've had opportunities to do really cool things, for example I was involved in the Royal Salute to mark the Queen's accession to the throne, which was very cool being able to fire the big guns compared to the SA80s we usually use."

"The new HMS Cambria is going to be really awesome when we move in. It's much bigger, it's much more modern and it's much more in the public eye."

"The Naval Reserves in Wales, at HMS Cambria, are really important because we are the only Naval presence in Wales, so all the events, Remembrance, Royal Salutes, everything that happens with the military in Wales, it's usually HMS Cambria supporting it."

"So it is important for us to be out in the public and when people ask 'Where is the Navy', we can say 'we're out in Cardiff Bay, you can see us now'."



Weather students rewarded

TODAY'S forecast... A TV presenter will appear by video link to virtually reward six new Royal Navy meteorologists.

ITV's breakfast weather forecaster and presenter Laura Tobin was the guest of honour at the graduation ceremony in Devonport as 19 weeks of intense instruction and learning ended.

Covid restrictions prevented Laura, who served for several years as an RAF meteorologist at Brize Norton before becoming a forecaster on the BBC and, now, ITV, from presenting certificates in person.

But she did give the six successful students a congratulatory talk and share some of her experiences with the fellow forecasters.

"It is no mean feat to have got this far with all the pandemic interruptions and knowing how much there is take in and learn," she told them. "You have all done remarkably well."

For the previous 19 weeks the half dozen sailors on the course studied global meteorological forecasting and practised delivering weather briefs to their instructors at the Hydrographic, Meteorological and Oceanographic School.

"All officers and senior rates in the specialisation do this course to become forecasters in the Royal Navy before moving on to an air station for consolidation," said Chief Petty Officer Ian 'Perry' Mason, one of the six graduates.

"After spending two months briefing and learning on the job, briefing aircrew and squadrons we can expect to go to sea on one of the two carriers."

Lieutenant Commander Gordon Jones, Officer in Charge of the Hydrographic, Meteorological and Oceanographic School, was the senior forecaster aboard HMS Ocean when the helicopter carrier was diverted to the Caribbean in 2017 to provide help in the wake of devastating storms, so he is acutely aware of the importance of accurate predictions.

"The ability to report a line of thunderstorms in the path of a mission and whether you have the flexibility to fly in the next ten minutes is important now as it was 50 or 60 years ago," he explained.

Put yourself in the picture

HAVE you taken a stunning picture of the sea – or life on it?

If you have, the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society want to see it as they launch their annual photographic competition.

Now in its eighth year, the contest celebrates the UK's connection with the sea, as well as those who live by it or ply their trade on it.

Entries, which must be submitted by the end of August, will be judged by some of Fleet Street's top picture editors, plus charity chief executive Captain Justin Osmond RN.

To submit a photograph – with the chance of winning £500 of photographic equipment vouchers – entrants must be aged 16 or over and complete a dedicated form at www.shipwreckedmariners.org.uk. Images can also be entered via email, post or the Society's Facebook or Twitter channels.

Anhygoel, Cambria

Reservists agree their new Welsh base is awesome

ROYAL Navy Reservists in Wales are looking forward to settling in at their new £11m home in Cardiff Bay.

The Senior Service was handed the keys to their new HMS Cambria base – the RN's sole reservist base in Wales – as *Navy News* went to press.

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.

Construction at the Cardiff Bay site began in January 2019 with the 4,000-square metre steel-framed building completed at the start of this year.

The new facilities will provide short-term accommodation for up to 50 people, alongside a modern office environment with 80 workspaces, several training and classroom suites, a fitness room and a large, multi-purpose dining room. Outside, there will be a Royal Marines rope training area, car park and an essential parade square.

Among those who will be using the site are reservists Gareth Davies, a steelworker at TaTa, Emily Boycott, who also works at Cardiff Castle, and Mike Rudall, a police inspector for South Wales Police.

Pictures: PO (Phot) Joel Rouse

RECRUIT Gareth Davis, from HMS Cambria, works in the TaTa steelworks – he takes molten iron from a huge furnace and refines it.

"I've been a Reservist for two years. Since I already have my career and a young family, I felt it was something I could do on the side and still give back."

"I've got family members who served in the military and you always hear about the good stories about the places they've been and the skills they've learnt."

"For me I feel that there are opportunities within the Reserves for some further training that I can transfer into the business, be that leadership, team-working skills, decision-making skills."

"A big part of working for TaTa in this area is

working with your colleagues and trusting your colleagues. We have to look out for each other always. I feel that the military has got a big focus on that as well."

"I'm currently a Phase 1 trainee hoping to go into the seamanship specialisation which will involve more weapons handling and boat handling and using the RHIBs."

"I'm personally looking forward to going to the new HMS Cambria. I think it's going to put the Royal Navy back in the heart of Cardiff Bay and at the forefront."

"There's always been an Army presence in Wales, and an RAF presence, but I think its going to be nice for people to see navy in the area, in uniform and doing their bit for the community."

KEEP UP WITH THE BASE

Follow @HMSCambria and @RoyalNavy on Twitter



The ageless wonders

Memorial to PoW hellship planned

NEIGHBOURS, shipmates from Mexborough branch and the local Royal British Legion joined Commodore David Hughes to mark the milestone in lockdown outside his home in Whiston, Rotherham.

The New Zealand-born veteran brought out his officer's sword for the occasion to cut a large birthday cake and then enjoyed a tot.

David (pictured, right, sitting down) was born the day before Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo, the trigger for World War 1.

He joined the Royal New Zealand Sea Scouts with his twin brother John aged 14 and then the Royal New Zealand Navy as midshipmen. After sea training with the Swedish Navy aboard the Prince Oregon, a three-mast sailing vessel, the brothers attended Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth for officer training, then on to Collingwood and Excellent for training as gunnery officers.

David was subsequently assigned to motor torpedo-boats and made three trips to Dunkirk during the evacuation as a sub lieutenant, while his twin brother navigated a Q ship – used to lure enemy submarines into a trap – which was sunk by the Japanese in the Indian Ocean.

David remained on the Dover Patrol, grappling with German



E-boats, supply vessels and coastal batteries and took part in the legendary St Nazaire raid in 1942, suffering a shrapnel wound to the stomach.

Recovered, he served in Normandy and was then assigned to the staff of Winston Churchill as a liaison officer, accompanying the premier to Yalta in 1945 where the British, American and Soviet leaders discussed the post-war fate of Europe.

After a spell on secondment with the US Navy and post-war service with the RN, he joined the MOD... but cannot disclose what he did.

At 106, he still reads *Navy*



London.

He joined the RN as a supply assistant in 1940 – a branch chosen “so that I had a peaked cap and did not have to wear bell bottoms”.

He was assigned to air stores on carrier HMS Argus, serving in the Mediterranean before joining the first Arctic convoy to deliver a cargo of 24 Hurricane fighters to the Soviet Air Force; they flew off when the ship was 50 miles from Murmansk.

Horace subsequently returned to the Med, witnessed the sinking of carrier Ark Royal – helping to rescue 600 of her crew – and spent the remainder of the war at RN air stations in Lancashire and Sierra Leone.

Post-war he remained in the RNR, while settling down and also enjoying a successful career with the London Brick Company until retiring in 1983.

Today he lives in Gillingham, still drives and only gave up drumming

News, plays the mouth organ, is learning to yodel, serves as Mexborough RNA's president and yearns to visit both the Imperial War Museum (where his medals are held) and HMS Queen Elizabeth after missing out on a visit last year.

Another centenary fête by friends and family was former Petty Officer Horace Erridge.

Horace (pictured inset) is one of the last, if not the last, survivors of Dervish, the first of 78 convoys to deliver vital war material to the Soviet Union to sustain its fight against the Nazis in World War 2.

The then Soviet government recognised his role aboard HMS Argus with a medal in 1978, with a second from the Russian government on the 70th anniversary of Dervish in 1941 and now a third from the embassy in



Engineering Technicians Dan Slamaker and Alex Bouleter from HMS Collingwood help Army and RAF comrades carry the coffin of 'Forces Sweetheart' Dame Vera Lynn on her final journey.

It was the 103-year-old entertainer's wish that members of today's Armed Forces take part in the last act of a life which dedicated so much to those on the front line.

Collingwood sailors also lined part of the funeral route through the East Sussex village of Ditchling, Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Spitfires made several passes overhead, and Royal Marine Bugler Corporal Kimberley Hare sounded *The Last Post* and *The Reveille* during the service in St Margaret's Church.

Picture: Sergeant Donald Todd (RLC)

Naval Quirks



Authentic touch or not, Miller, remove that pair of French knickers!

OH? IN WHAT WAYS WAS IT UNSUCCESSFUL?

..And I lost a pair of long johns and one of my favourite socks!

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- C: Rum
- D: 10 Gallon Rum Tub
- E: Rum Pump
- F: 40 Gallon Rum Tub
- G: Rum - 500mls or 250mls
- H: Rum - 60mls



BLACK TOT 31st JULY 1970



He gave him hell over the Dardanelles...

WORLD War 1 admiral 'Jacky' Fisher is the unlikely subject of a big-screen biopic by a British filmmaker.

Sea Lord intends to tell the story of the man who was architect – and leader, briefly – of the Royal Navy in the Great War.

Fisher revolutionised the Service as its First Sea Lord, focusing on technology and modernisation, axing aged vessels, and above all for his advocacy of all-big-gun battleships, beginning with HMS Dreadnought... which rendered every other warship afloat obsolete upon her launch in 1906.

And when his Prince Louis of Battenberg was forced to stand down amid a tidal wave of anti-German feeling just three months into WW1, Fisher was recalled from retirement.

It's this final period which is the focus of *Sea Lord* and the admiral's relationship with his political master, Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty (pictured above).

The two men clashed over Churchill's grand scheme to knock Ottoman Empire out of the war by seizing the Dardanelles and advancing on Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) while Fisher favoured a no-less-dangerous venture by the Royal Navy into the Baltic – the Germans' backyard.

The dispute came to a head in mid-May 1915 with Fisher resigning as the Dardanelles campaign – better known today as Gallipoli – bloodily faltered. He never returned to office.

Film producer – and the admiral's great-great granddaughter – Penelope Fisher believes this is a story ripe for the telling on the big screen.

A script has been written, but funding is now needed to bring the pages to life. To learn more about the planned movie, Admiral Fisher and funding, visit www.tridentfilms.co.uk.

Wanted: images of Dauntless

AN archival project is under way to bring the spiritual home of post-war Wrens back to life.

An estimated 30,000 women passed through HMS Dauntless in Burghfield, near Reading, between 1947 and 1981.

They went through the transition from civilian to member of the Women's Royal Naval Service or WRNS.

Dauntless is now long gone, replaced by a housing estate, but historians intend to bring the establishment back to life through photographs.

They are creating a searchable database of Divisional photos, plus a chance to comment on and add personal photos from training days in Dauntless.

Mandy Whitham, who's gathering and logging the imagery, wants former Wrens to join www.facebook.com/groups/562267424472895/ or email photographs directly on DauntlessDivphotos@gmail.com.

HMS Forth and veterans pay tribute to the crew of HMS Glamorgan in 1982 who set the

Finest example



FALKLANDS patrol ship HMS Forth used 'remembrance season' in the islands to retrace the steps of the men of 1982 – honouring them along the way.

It's also the duty of the 40 crew to visit, inspect and repair/renovate memorials to the conflict of 1982 as they conduct reassurance patrols.

Last month they were in San Carlos Water, scene of both the landings which led to the islands' liberation within four weeks, as well as furious Argentine air attacks against the naval forces clustered in the relatively-sheltered waters which saw frigates HMS Ardent and Argonaut sunk.

The latest phase of Forth's 'retracing liberation' work took the ship to the tiny settlement of Port Fitzroy, once she'd negotiated the narrow passage to the natural harbour.

Peaceful now and home to just a few farming families, in 1982 Fitzroy witnessed the worst day of the campaign for naval forces when RFA Sir Tristram and Sir Galahad and landing craft Foxtrot Four were attacked by Argentine aircraft. Only a badly-burned Sir Tristram survived the onslaught.

After a short passage from Fitzroy, the ship's company of Forth found themselves on the gunline occupied by HMS Glamorgan during the Battle of Two Sisters (see inset).

"Glamorgan's spirit to 'fight and win' is inspiring," said Forth's gunnery officer Sub Lieutenant Owen Long, 21, the newest member of the ship's company.

"In the Royal Navy we hold ourselves to an exacting standard when it comes to damage control and training as we fight and Glamorgan is among the finest examples of this. It was moving to be here nearly 40 years on to honour the bravery of her ship's company that day."

The final act of remembrance during HMS Forth's patrol was to come to anchor in Stanley Harbour for the first time in her career.

There, beneath the names of ships who protected the islands before her, spelled out in giant white boulders on the hillside overlooking Stanley, a memorial service was conducted on the flight deck.

"It is hugely important that we continue to pay tribute to those involved in the Falklands conflict 38 years ago," said Forth's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Edward Munns.

"It is my privilege to command the South Atlantic Patrol Vessel which is uniquely placed to provide a reassuring presence to the Islands and beyond."



AS HE has done almost every June 12 for the past 13 years, John Callaghan places a bouquet on the Falklands War Memorial in Cardiff's Cathays Park at the precise minute his ship was hit in 1982.

Back then, John was an LMEM(M) aboard County-class destroyer HMS Glamorgan, as her four 4.5in guns pounded Argentine positions around Two Sisters hill in support of 45 Commando.

That brought Glamorgan in range of a makeshift Exocet missile launcher on land - and at 7.37am (UK time) the enemy struck back.

The missile killed 13 of John's shipmates instantly when it hit; a 14th succumbed to his wounds in August that year.

After controlling the fires and repairing the damage, John and his shipmates had the destroyer back in action after only a matter of hours.

A member of HMS Glamorgan Falklands Association, the veteran has made a point of paying tribute on the anniversary of the attack where possible, this year accompanied by his friends Joshua Biundo, Alan Lewis, and Michael Dixon.

"This is always a difficult thing to do, but having friends around does make it a lot easier, and I know the Association members will appreciate it, too," said John. "It's just a pity that, due to the current lockdown, there's nowhere open for us to go and have a tot and properly remember the guys who didn't make it."



Heroic Judy immortalised in memorial

THIS is Judy, a pure-bred, liver-and-white English Pointer.

And it will be her likeness which represents the Royal Navy's links with dogs in a memorial to animals which have played a key role in our darkest hours.

The National Military Working Dogs Memorial hope to build a £200,000 monument to canines which have saved lives or contributed to victory from the Great War to the recent conflict in Afghanistan.

Four dogs have been selected to be cast in bronze, one for each Service (two for the RAF), facing in the four directions of the compass around a central monument at North Wales Pet Cemetery, near Holywell.

Judy was picked by the committee due to her remarkable story – one which was turned into a bestselling book by author Damien Lewis, one of the memorial's patrons, who called her "a dog in a million".

Judy survived the sinking of gunboat HMS Grasshopper in 1942, kept survivors alive by finding a fresh-water spring and keeping snakes a bay.

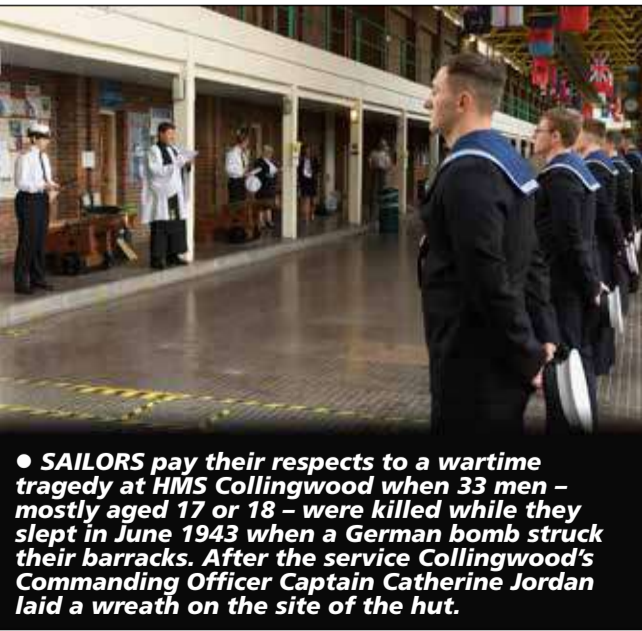
Captured, Judy spent the rest of the war in PoW camps, looked after by an RAF leading aircraftman. She was given the status of an officer PoW, kept snakes and scorpions at bay, brought food for inmates, survived a second sinking when the prisoners were shipped from Singapore... and torpedoed... and helped numerous men to survive in the water, earning the Dickin Medal – the animal VC.

Now, she will be memorialised if the remaining £150,000 can be raised via nmwdm.org.uk.

Club re-opens

NOW that lockdown restrictions across the land are lifting, Portsmouth's famous Royal Maritime Club is once again able to offer accommodation and host events.

The Queen Street establishment has been awarded 'Good to Go' accreditation from VisitEngland – which means it meets the Government and public health guidance on Covid-19 and has all the health and safety processes in place to ensure that guests have a healthy and safe stay.



● SAILORS pay their respects to a wartime tragedy at HMS Collingwood when 33 men – mostly aged 17 or 18 – were killed while they slept in June 1943 when a German bomb struck their barracks. After the service Collingwood's Commanding Officer Captain Catherine Jordan laid a wreath on the site of the hut.

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Cadets can design submariner tribute

THE Submariner Memorial Appeal has announced a partnership with the Sea Cadets in a competition to design a new memorial which will mark the role Royal Navy submariners have played over the past 119 years.

The competition's closing date has also been extended until the end of August 2020.

The memorial will be installed at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire next year.

It will be the first of its kind in commemorating the submariners, and their families, for the UK.

Sea Cadets takes pride in its links to the Royal Navy, and since the first incarnation of Sea Cadets was formed in 1856 it has given young people aged 10 to 18 the chance to experience a different kind of adventure.

As well as members of the

public of all ages, nearly 15,000 Sea Cadets from over 400 units around the country are being encouraged to draw up plans for the tribute and could win prizes, including £1,000 for the winning design.

The winner will also be invited, along with other cadets, to attend the opening of the memorial by the Duke of Cambridge, Commodore-in-Chief Submarines.

"We'd like to encourage Sea Cadets from across the country and overseas units to come up with ideas for a memorial to those who lost their lives while serving in submarines and to recognise the sacrifice of their families," said Commander Tom Herman, Submarine Flotilla Secretary.

To find out more and to enter the competition, visit www.submarinermemorial.uk/



Former cadet packs a punch

A FORMER Finchley Sea Cadet is set to launch a boxing career this summer, after turning professional and joining the same stable as Tyson Fury.

Jonathon Kumuteo has overcome a rare skin condition to turn professional and hopes to begin, once lockdown restrictions are eased.

The former Able Cadet spent more than four years earning two good conduct badges among other things, which will help out of the ring in later life but not necessarily in it...

Reverend's historic commission

THE Reverend David Eynon was commissioned by the Queen to the rank of Chaplain.

David is now chaplain for volunteers in the Sea Cadets, Army Cadets, RAF Cadets and the Combined Cadet Force.

The historic commission recognises the immense contribution made by volunteer staff as leaders of the national uniformed youth organisations sponsored by the Ministry of Defence.

David is the Chaplain for TS Queen Elizabeth in Clydebank and serves the Clyde North region and the City of Glasgow RNA.

This is the first Royal Commission of its kind created for 155 years.



Boost for the Bees in quest for home

WHITEHAVEN Sea Cadets are £1,000 closer to achieving their dream of a permanent home, thanks to housebuilder Persimmon Homes and their 'Building Futures' scheme.

Simon Ferguson, Chairman of Whitehaven Sea Cadets said: "Since losing our permanent home in the storms which hit Whitehaven at the end of 2013 we were given support from the county police and crime commissioner and, more recently, from a local businessman who has given us the use of a redundant building - but we really do want and need our own premises, to allow us to expand the unit and welcome more young people."

Currently, the Whitehaven unit has 25 cadets, aged between 10 and 18.

Through activities including sailing, windsurfing, climbing,

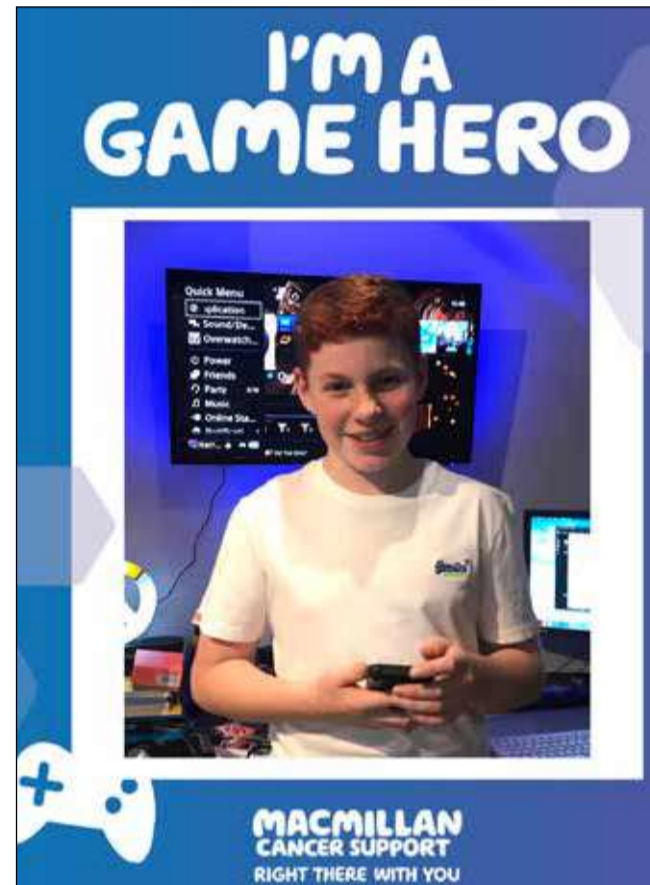
and community involvement the cadets learn teamwork, respect, loyalty, self-confidence, commitment, and self-discipline.

John Roocroft, Managing Director of Persimmon Homes Lancashire said: "We are so proud of the difference our Building Futures scheme can make to grassroots organisations such as Whitehaven Sea Cadets working every day within our local communities."

The scheme aims to support community groups working with under-18s.

In addition to hundreds of local donations of £1,000, 96 projects will go on to compete for a top prize of £100,000 through a national online vote. Winners will be announced in October.

Simon Ferguson is pictured with some of the cadets who will benefit from the award.



Duo stay up for marathon effort

DURING the current Covid-19 lockdown, and just a few weeks before their 13th birthdays, Cardiff Sea Cadets Harry and Finan watched a MacMillan Cancer Support TV advert.

Knowing that this particular charity had close links to Harry's family, the two boys decided they should do something special to raise money for such a worthy cause.

So, after much deliberation and some meticulous planning, instead of having their joint virtual birthday party, as was originally intended, they decided upon a non-stop 24-hour games marathon in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support, their ultimate objective being to raise around £100.

With consoles set to "play" mode and essentials such as pop, crisps and sweets at the ready, the boys started at 4pm, gaming through the evening and into the night, like Trojans on a mission.

As the sun rose over the horizon and high up into the sky, they found that their target had not only already been met, but exceeded three-fold; by mid-morning it was standing at over £300, a great achievement.

Gallantly, and with their parents' and families' support, they played on through lunchtime and into the afternoon.

With their 4pm deadline approaching, both Harry, pictured top right, and Finan, pictured top left, pushed on and finished the last game in style.

Although exhausted, at one minute past four, the two Sea Cadets downed their handsets and found that, after a staggering 24 hours of non-stop gaming, they had exceeded their wildest expectations and raised a staggering £815.

Their families and friends alike were immensely proud of their achievement,

particularly so when the total raised for MacMillan was checked and verified.

Lieutenant Trevor Harris, Commanding Officer of Cardiff Sea Cadets, expressed his admiration for the boys and the stamina shown by them to complete this momentous achievement.

Lt Harris said they deserved a big "Bravo-Zulu" (naval terminology for "exceptionally well done"), for all their efforts.

Cardiff Sea Cadets meet every Tuesday and Thursday from 7pm to 9.15pm at their Headquarters in Ty Llewellyn Morgan Street Cardiff.

All young people aged ten to 17 are eligible and welcome to join. So why not come along and see what the Sea Cadets can offer you?

New tech put to test



ROYAL Marines who guard the UK's nuclear deterrent have been testing drones and robots that could aid their crucial operations during closed-quarters combat training at Jackton Police College in East Kilbride.

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

These closed-quarters combat exercises – in the indoor and urban training facilities at Jackton – help keep the commandos razor sharp for their operations, but was also an opportunity to look at the new technology that could give a further edge to their missions.



As well as drones for battlefield analysis, the commandos used a 'Throwbot', which is a small remotely-operated robot that can be thrown in to a potentially dangerous area and quickly give a picture of what is happening on the other side, so marines can make a clear decision on how to tackle the threat.

"The facilities at Jackton Police College allowed us to develop a concept for the use of the Remotely Piloted Aerial System and figure out how we would integrate it within an urban environment," said Captain James Spencer RM, Second-in-Command of P-Squadron, 43 Commando.



"Such technology is a game changer in the face of a threat. It informs commanders and troops on the ground and allows them to make tactical actions swiftly and effectively."

On the 'Throwbot', Lieutenant Charles Roberts RM, Commander of Anzio Troop, P-Squadron, said: "It can give the marine and tactical commando on the ground that extra bit of initiative to make decisions quicker and better. It is all about making the marine as operationally effective as can be."

"As members of P-Squadron, 43 Commando, we conduct nuclear security missions. Part of these operations involves working in an urban, maritime and industrial environment. Close-quarters battle and close-quarters marksmanship are the tactics and techniques most suited to the mission."

The training allows 43 Commando to build on more advanced technological techniques as they move towards the Future Commando Force.

Future Commando Force is a bold modernisation programme that will overhaul the way world famous Green Berets operate around the globe.

Under the Future Commando Force programme more Royal Marines will operate from the sea, utilising new and innovative technology as high-readiness troops, forward deployed and ready to react, whether that's war-fighting, specific combat missions such as commando raids, or providing humanitarian assistance.

43 Commando Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines is a 550-strong unit based at HM Naval Base Clyde in Argyll and Bute.

From snipers who can disable a moving speedboat from a pursuit helicopter, through to close combat and cold-weather warfare specialists, 43 Commando are the elite warriors who protect the UK's strategic nuclear deterrent.

Pictures: LPhot Pepe Hogan



New face in charge of forces in Gibraltar

THERE'S a new name in charge of British forces in Gibraltar after Commodore Tim Henry handed over reigns on the Rock to his successor Commodore Steve Dainton.

The former Commanding Officer of HMS Ocean and Portland stood down after 22 months in the UK's Mediterranean site, to take up a senior post at NATO's headquarters in Belgium.

A socially-distanced supersession ceremony involving military and civilian personnel at Gibraltar's historic Tower headquarters as the new commander was welcomed and inspected the Royal Gibraltar Regiment's Guard of Honour.

Commodore Henry left The Tower aboard patrol boat HMS Sabre with his wife and daughter aboard, waved off by staff and escorted by Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron vessels HMS Scimitar, Pursuer and Dasher, plus boats from the Gibraltar Defence Police



maritime section.

Commodore Dainton arrives on the Rock after attending the Royal College of Defence Studies and, before that, commanding the RN's key operations in the Middle East as UK Maritime Component Commander for two years, dealing with terrorism, piracy and maritime security operations.

"I am delighted to have arrived in Gibraltar, taking over as Commander British Forces," he told his new staff. "It is an honour and a privilege to be here and I look forward to working with each and every one of you."

Pictures: LPhot Robert Oates

Starboard crew head back east

AFTER well-deserved leave following their exertions in the Gulf, HMS Montrose's Starboard crew are back on the road to the Middle East.

The 200 men and women have begun their training to take charge of the ship once more in the latest four-monthly rotation of the frigate's crew.

Normally based in Devonport, the Type 23 frigate is deployed to Bahrain – the hub of the Royal Navy's operations east of Suez – long term under the Forward Presence programme.

The initiative – which has now been expanded to include Gulf-based minehunters – crew will never miss two Christmases or summers in a row and with fixed dates set for departure/return, it means family life (such as weddings and holidays) shouldn't be disrupted.

Starboard Crew returned from their most recent stint in the Gulf in the spring while the ship's port crew are in charge; the four

months in the UK allows for leave, courses, training and, with no ship to look after, no duties.

Instead, the crew make use of simulators or, for more practical training, frigates alongside in the base to ensure key skills – fire-fighting, damage control, engineering – do not fade.

Working closely with the Fleet Operational Sea Training staff as well as the Babcock workforce in the dockyard, they got the chance to run through emergency procedures and drills aboard HMS Monmouth.

"The training is really important to get us as team on Montrose back up to the best skill level we can be at, especially after a break from the last deployment and seeing our families," said Able Seaman Connor Barker.

"Things can change quickly on operations and you need to be totally ready to respond. I'm really looking forward to getting back out there and seeing everyone working together."





Two is moor than enough for Ben

ROYAL Marines Corporal Ben Clough, from CLR RMB Chivenor, took on the monumental challenge of the Two Moors Way.

He finished the Devon coast-to-coast 117-mile trek in a total time of 28 hours 58 minutes and 19 seconds and by his own admission visited some dark dark places.

Here is his own account of the journey:

"The first 20 miles flew by and I was able to maintain a good consistent pace throughout.

"Until the darkness began to creep in and I stepped foot onto Dartmoor, where I faced multiple challenges from the static change in terrain and adverse weather conditions.

"Luckily, I had members of my support team escorting me through this stage of the challenge so morale renowned at a high state and smiles were still being given.

"It was probably much later when I began to face real problems with my body starting to deteriorate from the vast number of miles and time spent on my feet.

"Around the 80-mile mark I began to experience a sharp burning sensation in my right knee, which was making it difficult to maintain my ideal pace. But again, my support team

kept me going with painkillers and plenty of carbohydrate-filled snacks.

"As I pushed past the 100-mile mark, this was where things got tough for me and I feared that the task in hand was not possible to complete. The downhill sections and continuous rainfall began to have a drastic effect on the already steady pace. Both mine and the support team's morale was almost at rock bottom.

"The last five miles were the most arduous part of the whole challenge, as I began to hallucinate from the lack of sleep and not being able to consume as much calories as I was utilising. As I dropped down into Lynmouth Bay, I gave the biggest sigh of relief any person could give as I knew all the miles were now behind me and I had finished the challenge. No one could ever say to me that I did not give it my all."

- During his epic trek he:
- Completed 234,000 steps;
 - Used 13,601 calories (he had McDonalds for lunch and a Dominos chaser for tea);
 - 15,699 ft elevation gained;
 - Was awake for 45 hours;
 - Set a new 100-mile PB (24.08.46 - previous 24:33 Chester 100)
 - Total raised for charity: £3,228.05 (£3,791.06 Gift Aid) - 322 percent (Initial Target £1,000).



Park run on flight deck

A FLIGHT deck in the middle of the North Sea is not the usual location for popular running event Parkrun.

But that's what happened this weekend when HMS Queen Elizabeth hosted her first Parkrun - with 143 members of her crew signing up to take part on a windy day.

The ship has been at sea for weeks having completed Operational Sea Training and this weekend, instead of seeing F-35 Lightning jets taking off and landing, the 4.5 acre flight deck saw sailors clad in sports gear doing the five-kilometre run.

Organiser of the event, keen Parkrun regular and Officer-under-training Midshipman Katie Synge-Curtis sought permission from the run event's

chief executive Tom Williams to hold one on board.

She said: "After ten weeks at sea I thought introducing some friendly competition and fresh air would help people along before we begin the final stretch home.

"Hopefully it will inspire some of them to attend their local Parkrun when we get home and Covid-19 restrictions are lifted."

While some of the runners chose to enjoy just a gentle jog of 11 laps around the deck, others were sportier with the fastest time achieved by Officer Cadet Woody of 17 minutes 50 seconds.

Upon winning the race, he said: "It was a bit blustery on the flight deck. It turned out to be much more competitive than I had expected."

Suits you, sirs

WHAT a year it's been for the Royal Navy Wingsuit Team (RNWT), writes Royal Marine David Reed.

The pandemic has meant that for a lot of Naval sportswomen and men the ability to put our training into practice and compete (and win) against other branches of Her Majesty's Armed Forces has, for this summer, been postponed.

However, who wants to sit around and moan? Not I. Instead let's first take stock of what the RNWT has achieved in the past year, and then take a leap into the near future where I will explain how to get into this awesome sport.

The past year has been, by far, the most successful year for the RNWT to date.

The team won every wingsuit category at the 2019 Armed Forces Parachute Championships at Netheravon Airfield, Wiltshire.

In its simplest form, a wingsuit adds surface area to the human body which enables significant lift whilst in the air.

Wearing a wingsuit enables an experienced skydiver to glide for many kilometres in the sky, and gives the option to perform aerial acrobatics, such as barrel rolls and corkscrews.

Although there are a few different formats for wingsuit competitions, the Armed Forces Parachute Championship focuses solely on paired wingsuit acrobatics.

Competition rounds require two wingsuit pilots to work together to perform a number of increasingly challenging acrobatic moves (the



hardest of which is a paired front flip).

In between each move the pair need to meet up in the sky and dock by tapping each other's hands to gain a point, all the while keeping altitude aware and staying in the frame of the camera.

To do well in this format of competition, the RNWT had to train hard to hone individual skills such as glide rate, acrobatics and stability.

We spent time working in our pairs to learn one another's flying styles so that we could enhance our precision and deliver consistent and competitive results.

It's fair to say that all of the team's wingsuiters fought superbly and really showed the Army and RAF teams what the Navy is made of by taking away so much gold at the competition.

The 2019 team comprised Major Sharky Ward RM, Lt Jonny Danks RN, WO2 Jed Owens RM, AI Bradie RNR and myself, Mne David Reed RMR.

To add to the team's achievements, I am also very proud to have been selected to join the 2020 GB wingsuit

team to compete at the next Wingsuit World Championships.

For those of you who harbour a desire to fly I'm sure that wingsuiting may seem like a distant and almost unattainable reality.

I want to tell you unequivocally that your perception is unfounded. And, even better, if you're a serving sailor or marine I want to tell you which groups and adventure training opportunities exist to help you literally fly towards your surmountable goal.

Prior to doing your wingsuit course you will first need to rack up 200 skydives in 18 months, and although that sounds like a lot, it is very doable in the timeframe.

On an almost yearly basis the Royal Navy will run an expedition to the USA to train personnel with no prior skydiving experience.

It is a really efficient way to upskill quickly, and from personal experience serves as a great opportunity to socialise with new and interesting people.

Alternatively, with permission from your chain of command you can sign up to a basic parachuting course through the Adventurous Training Group which are run in the UK and Cyprus.

Doing these courses will break you into the sport and set you well on your way to becoming a wingsuit pilot.

In the meantime, if you want more information about all things skydiving and wingsuiting, please email: rnrmspa@gmail.com, or add: Royal Navy Skydiving on Facebook.





Steph ensures his skills remain current

THE Royal Navy Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association's Secretary and HMS Tyne's CPO 'Steph' Cahill enjoys some freedom, soaring above the South Downs as lockdown restrictions ease following the Covid-19 outbreak.

Quite rightly, sport has necessarily taken a back seat and many events have required to be cancelled to meet social distancing criteria.

Flying recreationally, like more professional forms of aviation requires 'currency' or continued practice to maintain the skills in order to stay safe.

The exceptional weather this spring has meant the association's members were keen to practice their passion

as soon as the easing of restrictions allowed.

Whilst the calendar of events for 2020 now looks petty sparse, preparations will soon commence for the organising of next years events both home and abroad.

Likewise grassroots training has been severely restricted and is temporarily suspended, however, aspirations are that courses will recommence in the autumn term.

Keep an eye out for Adventurous Training Courses on the Defence Gateway or contact the RNHPA Secretary for further details on how to get involved in this remarkable sport. secretary.rnhpa@gmail.com



Navy fitness challenge raises cash for NHS

ROYAL Navy personnel undertook the seven-day C19 Challenge to raise funds for the NHS.

The athletes' efforts saw Rear Admiral Paul Marshall, director of navy acquisitions, hand over a cheque for £6,600 to Dr Alastair Wilcockson at HMS Excellent.

The challenge was designed by Steve Penberthy RN Sports Development Officer at HMS Temeraire, LPT Jack Basher, of HMS Protector and LPT Luke Warrington, from HMS Defender, to allow RN personnel, veterans, service families, wheelchair users and civilians to raise funds for the NHS.

The aim was to participate in a seven-day competitive fitness challenge, which was categorised into intermediate, beginners, seniors (over 45) and wheelchair users.

A daily workout was published each day, allowing participants to attempt it and forward the result on the same day. This was then collated and placed on the leaders' board.

This brought together the navy community and promoted physical and mental wellbeing, at the same time using digital means to reach out to a much wider audience and showcasing the Royal Navy ethos, during a very difficult and unusual time for the country.

The professional approach and inclusive leadership were self-evident when the launch video posted on social media reached an estimated 88,495 people and entries came in from all parts of the globe at all levels of ability.

As well as raising thousands, the event gave an opportunity for RN personnel to thank NHS medical personnel working on the frontline during the Covid-19 pandemic.



ROYAL NAVY NETBALL ASSOCIATION



NAVY fit



Looking for enthusiastic and dedicated individuals to join the team!

Interested? Contact:
emily.loftus100@mod.gov.uk /
leanne.lewis2@hotmail.co.uk

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the June edition of *Navy News* (right) was HMS Codrington, the class leader for nine A-Class destroyers. She was sunk after being bombed in Dover in July 1940.

Mr Graham Kershaw of Staffordshire, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers. This month's mystery ship (above) is the last surface vessel and last oceanographic survey vessel to be built at Chatham Dockyard.

1) What was her name and 2) Who was she named after?

Please complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we will also accept emailed entries to bm@navynews.co.uk with **August Mystery Ship** in the email header.



Coupons and emails giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Entries must be received by September 14. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted.

Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our October edition.

The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 306

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

■ Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email: news@royalnavymail.mod.uk or editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk

■ If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

■ Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.

■ Please send in reunions at least two months (preferably three) before the month of the event. There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

■ Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

■ The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

ROYAL NAVY NAVY NEWS

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in September's Noticeboard must be received by **AUG 14, 2020**

Deaths

Rodney 'Ticker' Court. Lt(H).

Engineer. Joined as artificer apprentice at HMS Fisgard in September 1949, entry series 7. Completed training in 1953 at HMS Caledonia. Served in HMS Glory, 1953-54, artificer 5th class; Vernon, 1954, artificer diving course, SA A/4th class; Maidstone, 1954-56, SA 4th class; Swim, 1956-57, Suez Canal clearance; Forth, 1957-59, SA 3rd class; Lochinvar, 1959-62, SA 3rd class; Brighton, 1963-64, chief shipwright; Victorious, 1964-65, chief shipwright; RNC Manadon, 1965-66, acting engineer SLT(H); Kent, 1966-68, engineer SLT(H); Rooke, 1968-71, engineer Lt. Barrackmaster; Retired 1971. Member of the Magnificent Seven. Died June 14, aged 86.

Derrick (Robbie) Burns WOVEMN(ADC).

Served HMS Liverpool from Nov 1980 to September 1984. Member of HMS Liverpool Association. Died June 16, aged 76, at home in New South Wales Australia following a long battle with cancer.

David S. Lee EIMech1. Served 1953 to 1966. HMS Pembroke, Superb, Royal Prince (LCT404), Broadsword, Ausonia (Malta), Fearless, and Cavalier. Died June 23.

Robert Ryder, Royal Marine.

Served September 1938 to January 1953, in HMS Renown 1938-1943, Special

Services, Royal Marine Commandos 1943-1948, and HMS Theseus 1948-1953. Awarded Atlantic Star, Africa Star & North Africa Clasp, Italian Star, War Medal, Korean Medal, UN Medal (Korea) Arctic Star and Ushakov Medal (Russia). Was a Member of former Harrogate & District Branch RNA. Died in Ripon, July 1, aged 98.

David Leslie Hogg. Ex PO Cook.

Died June 20, aged 80. Former CPO Cook Anthony Kellett paid the following tribute: *Once in a lifetime you may meet an oppo. In 1967 I was fortunate enough to meet Dave and he quickly became the best oppo any matelot would wish to meet. We served together in two establishments and ships, Hermes twice and Dido. We shared some wonderful times together. Dave was the most generous mate you could wish for, he would give you anything, except maybe his tot. I served in the Falklands conflict in HMS Coventry and on our return, Dave was the first one to knock at the door with a bottle of bubbly, a smile and a few kind words. Our friendship continued after retirement. Dave lived in America and I in France. He died with his son at his side.*

John Richard Forshaw, MEA(P). Served from 1956 to 1995. Valued

member and Treasurer of RNA Torrevieja Branch and duly honoured on his internet Wall of Remembrance at <http://alifeshare.com/en/r/1947d-aa9cb0ee>. Died April 13 2020, aged 79.

Lt Cdr William T Griffiths. HMS Berwick, Goldcrest, Jufair, and Centurion. Project Oasis. Died May 24, aged 84.

Lt Cdr John M C Guild. HMS Bronington, Juno, and BRNC Dartmouth. Died June 18, aged 86.

Lt Cdr and Chaplain RNR Bertram W A Mitford. Severn Div RNR. Died June 16, aged 92.

Lt Cdr Kenneth J Waterfield. HMS Rothesay, Rorqual, Neptune, and Warrior. Died June 12, aged 87.

Eric Bird, OS. Served 1940-45 in HMS Folkstone. Member of Chesham & Amersham RNA. Died July 9, aged 94

Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC

Capt Guy P Brocklebank. HMS Londonderry, Dryad, Rhyl, Lowestoft, Glasgow, Beaver, Neptune, and Northwood. Died June 29, aged 65.

Lt Cdr Patrick I Normand AFC. RNEC Manadon. Min of Tech. HMS Saker and Heron. Died June 28, aged 92.

Cdr Stephen F Carter. HMS

Penelope, Excellent, Finwhale, Rame Head, St Angelo, Resolution, Lowestoft, Turbulent, and Birmingham. DFSD. C-in-C Nav Home, FOF2. RNC Greenwich. Died June 10, aged 70.

Cdr RNR M H Porter OBE RD* Sussex RNR. Solent RNR. HMS Essex, Sussex. Died June 23, aged 82.

Maj John R H Walter RM, DSC. HMS Terror. RM Portsmouth, Eastney, and Deal. 40 Cdo RM. HQ RMR. Died May 29, aged 91.

Lt Arthur W Ellis. HMS Daedalus and Goldcrest. Died May 5, aged 95.

Lt Christopher I Hulbert. CTC Whitehall. HMS Reclaim. Died May 3, aged 76.

Submariners' Association

David Robinson LSA. Served 1976 to 1989 in HM Submarines Otus, Otter, Olympus, Walrus, and Orpheus. Member of Shropshire Branch. Died June 18, aged 62.

Harry Southwood AB GL. Served Nov 1955 to Jun 1965 in HM Submarines, Telemachus, Andrew, Seascout, and Truncheon. Member of Merseyside Branch. Died June 23, aged 83.

Alan Mulvey MEM 1. Served 1954 to 1960 in HM Submarines Austute 56/58 and Ambush 58/60. Member of Nottingham Branch. Died June 29, aged 87.

Reunions

HMS Phoebe: Reunion will now take place on October 2-5 2020 at the Aztec Hotel, Bristol. Details from IOW Tours Ltd, 3 New Road, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO36 9IN. Tel 01983 405116, or email enquiries@iowtours.com.

HMS Liverpool Association: Reunion planned for Saturday June 13 has been cancelled. Next year's reunion will be held on June 12 2021. For membership details contact the secretary John Parker at info@hmsliverpoolassociation.org.uk or call 02392521222.

HMS Ocean Association: Annual Reunion R68 and L12 ship's crew invited along with partners, at tAztec Hotel, Bristol, From September 18 to 21. Food, gala and entertainment included. Contact IOW Tours on 01983 405116.

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

HMS Carysfort. A reunion will be held at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea from October 9 to 11 2020 and is open to all who served in the ship throughout her seven commissions (1945 – 1969) and their wives/partners. A one-, two- or three-night package is available or if you reside locally why not join us

for the Saturday night gala dinner only. Contact IOW Tours 3 New Road Lake Sandown Isle of Wight PO36 9IN / 01983 405116 / enquiries@iowtours.com.

Further details can be found at www.hmscarysfort.co.uk or hmscarysfort@gmail.com

RMBS 1/70 and 2/70 Squad. A joint 50th anniversary reunion of 1/70 and 2/70 squads is planned for August 2021 in Deal. Contact Nick Buckley on nickbuckley55@aol.com

HMS Troubridge Final Commission Association 1966-69 Royal Beach Hotel, Portsmouth October 2-5 2020. Contact Bryan Pace at Romft1@GMail.com or via 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. For details call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or contact ian@hmslowestoft.co.uk Tel: 07778 546861.

HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans Association: Our reunion due to be held on October 2-4 at Weymouth has now been cancelled.

Royal Marines Band Service Annual Reunion: The RMBS reunion will take place on October 10 at the

Warrant Officers, Senior Rates & Senior NCOs Mess, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. For further information and tickets contact the Blue Band Office: 023 9254 7563 or email: 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 Mechanicians Association: The 2020 annual reunion takes place at the Bear Hotel in Havant, on October 10. This will be the association's final reunion. Peter Andrews at 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 October 24. Contact Alan (Whiskey) Walker on 01268548041 or email whiskey666@outlook.com

BRNC Entry Sept 1980 40th anniversary reunion dinner, BRNC Dartmouth, October 31. Details from Cdr N J 'Nobby' Hall, neil.hall324@mod.gov.uk
HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association: Reunion will now take place on May 7-10 2021 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea. Contact Secretary Denis Askham at 07773651213 or email askhamd3@gmail.com

Ask Jack

HMS Leander: I have in my possession a frigate dress hat, which belonged to D. Kirk. The white-capped hat doesn't sit with my own Service collectibles but I'd like to return it to either to whom it was issued or his family. I was based at the Ordnance Depot Antwerp between January 1984 and April 1986 as the Orderly Room Corporal and I played rugby for the "Bulldogs RUFC" as part of British Forces Antwerp.

During 1985 (I believe) we played a friendly game of rugby between the ship and our combined Belgium-based Army units and myself and Mr Kirk obviously hit it off, exchanging hats at the end of the game.

Terry_sherwood@hotmail.com

Trincomalee: My stepfather Leslie Mears was a Royal Marine based at Eastney Barracks and was posted to Trincomalee in Old Ceylon during WW2. He served

at least three years there. To try to complete a large family tree, I would like to know exactly when he and his group returned to the UK after the war.

Roger.Myers,Rogermyers@btinternet.com

RNTT Kenya Navy Reunions. I would like to contact the person in charge of these reunions. Having moved to Spain 20 years ago, I have lost all contact.

John Dymond, ex-Chief Engineer of KNS Ndovu
Johndymond1936@icloud.com

Brian Boulton. I am trying to trace an old friend who was training to be a diver at HMS Ganges from 1958.

Pauline Mahon (nee White)
01677 988296 / 0791 0275290
pauline22@hotmail.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 CPOMEM at the time.

Terry Edson
Sallyann.edson@tiscali.co.uk

Anson 35s: I am trying to contact the Scribes who joined up with me in August 1976 (D161). Our WAFU classmates managed a meet up in 2016 and we want to get the whole class together, if we can, in 2021 on our 45th anniversary. Contact Guy Musgrove on Facebook or email guy_musgrove@hotmail.co.uk.

HMS Monmouth. I am trying to contact Commander Graham Ramsey, who commanded HMS Monmouth in 1993.

Charles Brown
Charles.brown@forces.gc.ca

Cheers to the 21s Success in bell quest

THE Type 21 Club Association has made a £1,000 donation to the Naval Children's Charity in recognition of their work.

The association, known as the Type 21 Club, was formed to unite Royal Navy personnel who served in the Type 21 frigates.

The eight ships served between 1975 and 1979 and were: Amazon, Antelope, Ambuscade, Arrow, Active, Alacrity, Ardent and Avenger. The ships formed the 4th Frigate Squadron based in Devonport. Seven of the vessels served in the Falklands in 1982, with Ardent and Antelope lost during the conflict.

The club numbers some 1,800 members and their generosity has allowed a Type 21 memorial and bench to be installed at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA), as well providing for charitable donations to worthy causes.

Previous donations have been made to Veterans Outreach Support, TS Ambuscade, RN&RM Riding School, NMA, Falkland Islands Museum development, RNBT and RN&RMC.

For details about the club visit type21club.org. For details about the charity visit navalchildrenscharity.org

AN appeal in *Navy News* as to whereabouts of the bell from HMS Kenya has come up trumps.

In the June editions, Bruce Trentham requested information as to the fate of the bell.

His father commanded HMS Kenya in 1952 and when she paid off, received her bell which he put on display at his home in Hampshire.

Mr Trentham then loaned the bell to the HMS Kenya Association but lost contact with them.

Terry Hall, honorary secretary and treasurer of Derbyshire Submariners, was able to tell Mr Trentham that the bell was

safe in the city of Derby – HMS Kenya was the city's adopted warship.

"It is in the trust of Derby City Council and has had pride of place at the ceremonial entrance to the council and also incorporates the 2013 HMS Kenya Memorial to all those who served on her," said Mr Hall.

Mr Trentham, who has been in Greece since March, said: "I am delighted that the bell is being so well looked after and that the Kenya name is still going strong."

"Thank you for your help. I shall have to head north one day and visit Derby City Council."

Focusing on Dunkirk

Museum to chart RN's Covid role

THE evacuation of defeated Allied ground forces from Dunkirk has just seen its 80th anniversary. It was, indeed, a remarkable and unexpected, achievement that was a great demonstration of British sea power and the ability of the Royal Navy to improvise a truly major operation.

Two new works have appeared on Dunkirk that in many ways complement each other, writes Prof Eric Grove.

The first is the latest in the series of 'Britannia Naval Histories of World War Two' to emerge from BRNC Dartmouth that reset originally-classified staff battle summaries to give a detailed account of significant engagements. The approach has its strengths – and weaknesses – both of which are apparent in this volume, **Dunkirk: Operation Dynamo, May 26-June 4 1940, An Epic of Gallantry**.

The basis of the book is a reset copy of BR 1736(32) written as a classified document in 1946. This is a highly-detailed account of the operation which ought to be the foundation of any study of the evacuation. There are extensive lists of ships and craft involved and which were lost, copies of relevant signals, analysis of what lifted whom from where and how quickly and efficiently the evacuation was carried out.

The BR is preceded in the 416-page book by a foreword by former C-in-C Fleet Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent, whose father's destroyer HMS Havant was sunk on the morning of June 1. The story in the preface seems to be a bit foreshortened when compared with the printed signals, but it remains an important personal connection, and Havant did distinguish herself, evacuating 2,412 troops.

Then there comes a 38-page introduction by BRNC historian Mike Pearce, a comprehensive and well-written account in itself, that adds significantly to the reprinted documents and also covers the subsequent – and often forgotten – evacuations from France, Operations Cycle and Ariel, the latter marred by the worst disaster in British maritime history, the sinking of the liner Lancastria.

He also points out the role of Fleet Air Arm Skua and



● Troops evacuated from Dunkirk arrive in Dover aboard Royal Navy destroyers, May 31 1940. Picture Imperial War Museum/H 1640

but over twice the men were evacuated from Dunkirk harbour than off the beaches. Only on one day, May 31, were more men taken off the beaches, 29,512, than from the harbour, 23,414.

The real heroes of the evacuation were the RN's destroyers that brought out 96,197 troops, 25,901 from the beaches and 70,296 from Dunkirk harbour. Next came the Personnel Vessels, mostly mercantile manned, passenger ferries taken from various runs, which evacuated almost 88,000 troops, all but 5,087 from the harbour. Isle of Man Steam Packet ships played a particularly important role – at considerable loss, three ships in one day, the worst day in the company's history.

The only problem with the book is its editing and proofreading. The footnoting is, frankly, very erratic and undermines the value of resetting. There are also contradictions. The destroyer Grafton is sunk by an E-boat on page 364 but, correctly, is torpedoed by a U-boat on page 176. This was the only loss to a submarine of the evacuation, given so much misleading emphasis in the recent very poor feature film. One hopes more care will be taken on editing and proofreading future volumes.

A useful supplement to this volume is a picture book in the Images of War series published by Frontline Books, (an imprint of Pen and Sword). Entitled **Dunkirk Evacuation: Operation Dynamo – Nine Days That Saved An Army** is edited and captioned by John Grehan and Alexander Nicoll.

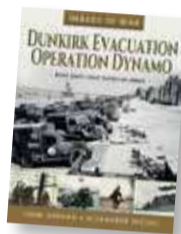
There is some overlap with the other book's illustrations but the many images add to the other account. Some choices are a little odd, the photograph of the cruiser Calcutta being taken earlier in her career before her conversion to the AA cruiser she was in 1940. There is also a picture of the destroyer Wolsey taken before her conversion to an AA ship that rather jarringly clashes with a picture of the ship on the previous page taken during the evacuation.

The book (ISBN 978-1-52677-035-6) is very reasonably priced retailing at £15.99 and makes a good pair with the Britannia History.

THE GROVE REVIEW

Roc fighters under RAF Coastal Command control in helping cover Dynamo, an aspect not covered in the main document. This is followed by more than 50 pages of well-chosen, produced and captioned pictures, illustrating the range of shipping used in the evacuation, as well as the evacuation itself and its aftermath.

Britannia Naval Histories are printed on demand and can be obtained via Amazon. Dunkirk (ISBN 978-1-8380107-0-6) retails in paperback for a very reasonable £14.99 and is a veritable mine of information on what went well and not so well. It clearly demonstrates that, contrary to legend, the British Expeditionary Force was not brought home by the 'little ships, off the beaches. The latter played a key role as time went on getting men out to the larger vessels,



Greyhound keeps the wolves at bay

IMAGINE the *Cruel Sea* in microcosm. Imagine the six years of war Monsarrat's magnificent novel/film depicts pintoed into a couple of days.

Such is the premise of the superb **Greyhound**, the first major big screen Battle of the Atlantic movie probably since U-571 20 years ago.

And unlike that fictional account of the capture of Enigma, this isn't a Hollywood takeover of a British story.

Greyhound is an adaptation of C S Forester's *The Good Shepherd*, the study of a man (Commander Krause – Tom Hanks) and his ship (here Greyhound replaces USS Keeling in the book) as they struggle to escort a convoy through the mid-Atlantic 'air gap' in February 1942 – and a wolfpack taunting them.

The result is 90 minutes of near-relentless action as Greyhound and her fictional fellow escorts HMCS Dicky and HMS Eagle try to keep the wolves at bay by day and night.

Greyhound was intended for a big-screen release, but the pandemic scuppered that – which is a shame, because some of the battle sequences would have looked superb 100ft wide

Instead, Apple TV stepped in (you'll



need a computer/iPad and an Apple account) to watch.

There's thankfully little obvious CGI unlike so many modern war films; producers used the USS Kidd, a WW2 Fletcher-class destroyer as their starting.

There's a touch of Hollywood about some of the battle scenes (the surface

duel between the escorts and a U-boat and a torpedo scraping along a hull stand out), but otherwise there is little glory or tub-thumping on show here.

When a gun mounting is destroyed and Krause's steward killed, little is left of the man – brutally demonstrated when his remains are buried at sea along with

two shipmates; a sack reluctantly drops into the Atlantic.

The action rarely strays from Greyhound's bridge giving the film something of a claustrophobic quality you'd normally find in a U-boat movie.

Although Hanks is present in almost every scene, this is no star vehicle/vanity project. It's the study of a man, much older than his contemporaries, plagued by misgivings at times, deeply religious, who's determined to see the convoy through.

It's also a reminder of the youth of the men who manned ships such as the Greyhound – mostly late teens and early 20s, the grim conditions they faced (especially in winter; the icing up of the destroyer is particularly well done), living with death daily (the tally of convoy losses is recorded matter-of-factly each morning).

It's not *Cruel Sea* – there are no lighter moments, no 'Snorkers? Good-o!', no homefront, except a brief prologue with Krause and his girlfriend.

But if you want an insight into an Atlantic convoy battle at the height of the U-boat war, *Greyhound* is pretty hard to beat.

"Historically museums have captured the experiences of our service personnel through letters, physical, photographs and written documents," said Nick Hewitt, the museum's Head of Collections and Research.

"We have excellent examples in our collection of the Royal Navy's effort throughout history to offer support in times of crisis.

"A twitter feed may be forgotten in 100 years' time – in a digital age we seek to capture new materials and maximise on the incredible content being created using digital tools.

"It is important that researchers can explore our collection and understand what the Royal Navy was doing in 2020. By retaining the content, we can preserve this memory and pay tribute to those who served."

The museum also wants the wider naval community to support the initiative by visiting their website and registering interest in the project at nmrn.org.uk/covid19-collection.

"Our ambition is to also collect materials from the forces families, charities and support services which represent the shared experience of the COVID-19 period," Nick explains.

"We know that beyond our service personnel, extraordinary support networks exist and we would love to be able to collect examples of family memorabilia, messages of support, care packages and so on, which reflects how important this support is."

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