



NAVY NEWS

MAY 2021



Patrolling Paradise

Royal Navy offshore patrol vessel HMS Forth left her regular stomping ground around the Falkland Islands for a ten-day environmental mission in the wildlife paradise of South Georgia (see pages 23 to 25)

PICTURE:
Cdr Chris Hollingworth,
HMS Forth

Inside: Prince Philip, a lifetime of service



GUN SALUTE: Gun fire marks the start of a one-minute silence to remember The Duke of Edinburgh at Portsmouth dockyard. Picture by LPhot Rory Arnold



A FOND FAREWELL TO THE DUKE

SAILORS AND ROYAL MARINES AT FOREFRONT OF ROYAL FUNERAL



THE QUEEN'S FRIGATE: The crew of HMS Lancaster paying their respects. Picture by LPhot Rory Arnold



MARINES: The Royal Marines Bearer Party with the Duke of Edinburgh's coffin on the Steps of St George's Chapel, Windsor. Pictures by Dave Jenkins

WE knew this day would come. We prepared for it. Planned for it. But still we hoped to the contrary.

And when, at the age of 99 Britain's first sailor, its Lord High Admiral, its Captain General Royal Marines for 64 years, war veteran and hero, supporter and patron of many veterans' groups, associations and charities, husband, grandfather, great-grandfather finally crossed the bar, the Service which he loved so much paid him the respect his duty and service demanded.

Solemnly. Dutifully. With dignity. With precision. Never overblown or overbearing. Hopefully, just as he would have wanted.

Just as the Duke of Edinburgh planned his funeral down to the most minute detail, so the military operation, long planned and practised, swung into action within minutes of the announcement of his death.

Personnel across the land were recalled from Easter leave and ordered to report to establishments to begin training for Operation Forth Bridge, while flags across the Fleet and at Royal Marines establishments were lowered in respect.

The first major act of commemoration came at midday on Saturday April 10 – D+1 in the operational plan – and the thunder of cannon echoed around Portsmouth Harbour. And across the Hamoaze. And over the waters of the Solent. And the Arabian Sea.

Ceremonial 3lb guns established in front of the wardroom at Drake and on the foot of South Railway Jetty in Portsmouth belched fire and smoke once every minute between noon and 1240, while destroyer HMS Diamond paid her respects off the Isle of Wight and frigate HMS Montrose in Duqm, Oman.

In Portsmouth, 14 sailors from HMS Collingwood's Close Range Training team – who normally teach sailors how to defend their ships – were responsible for the 41-gun salute, something they practise each month.

The gunners had been scattered across the land 24 hours earlier, while the ammunition for their saluting cannon lay set aside specially for the occasion, delivered to the naval base under police escort.

The sound of cannon on a cold, gunmetal day by the Solent drew crowds on both sides of the harbour, while television crews ensured the footage merged from similar salutes across the UK and beyond.

"There is always a sense of occasion when you are firing the guns, today especially so. It is made more poignant when you remember that this is the jetty where the Royal Yacht Britannia was decommissioned," said Warrant Officer 1st Class Glynn Moffat, Officer in Charge of Close Range Training.

"For the team, we are doing our duty, something we train and practise for. It's always afterwards that you reflect on what you have done and what you have been a part of."

Even before the first round of the salute was fired, personnel from several ships and establishments had already arrived at Collingwood – home of the Navy's State Ceremonial Training – ready to begin one week of intensive drill practice.

Leading the Royal Navy contingent forming the Guard of Honour was Lieutenant Commander Hywel Morgan, Commanding Officer of HMS Magpie, 21st-Century namesake of the only vessel the Duke commanded during his 14-year naval career.

Prince Philip never had the opportunity to visit the new Magpie, which entered service in the summer of 2018, but he did receive regular updates from the ship's company on their work surveying harbours around the UK. One of his final acts was to approve the ship's motto earlier this year: *lux in tenebris lucet – shine light into darkness.*

"Our affiliation on HMS Magpie with the Duke of Edinburgh runs deep. It seemed right and proper to be Captain of the Royal Navy's Guard of Honour contingent as the nation bade him farewell," Lieutenant Commander Morgan said.

"With the Duke's links with the Navy through history, it was an absolute privilege and honour to be taking part."

Drilling him, his shipmates, and sailors from HMS Queen Elizabeth, Nelson, Sultan, RNAS Yeovilton, 1710 Naval Air Squadron, plus Royal Marines from 40 Commando and Lympstone – were the formidable pairing of Warrant Officers 1st Class Eddie Wearing – the Navy's State Ceremonial Training Officer – and Steve Payne, Royal Marines First Drill.

With the Duke's association with the Corps almost as long as with the Surface Fleet – 64 years as Captain General – Steve relished the opportunity to play his part.

"I've had a lot of high points of my career, but as a drill instructor there can be nothing better than helping to send off the former Captain General in the very best way possible," he said.

Most participating personnel were assigned to the Quadrangle at Windsor where they formed up on the grass in the mid-April sunshine alongside their Army and RAF counterparts, or lined the 430-metre route of the Duke's final journey by Land Rover, turned into a hearse of his design, to a methodical drumbeat and the mournful tones of Beethoven.

The vehicle came outside St George's Chapel where eight Royal Marines lifted the coffin and carried it up the steep steps – pausing half-way up for a minutes silence, a silence echoed around the country with gun salutes once more.

The Duke's final public duty in 2017 had been to host Royal Marines at Buckingham Palace – at the end of a typical Royal Marines' physical challenge, a 1,664-mile charity run – as well as veteran green berets and cadets.

Lieutenant Colonel Gary Green, then Corps Colonel, was present that day, describing Prince Philip as an "inspiration" to every member of the Corps.

He continued: "Part of his magic was to put young personnel at ease – they would then relax and talk about their experiences. He understood banter because he had been there himself. He enjoyed listening to the extraordinary things the Royal Marines had managed to do."

Among the many young Royal Marines put at ease by their Captain General on his countless encounters with the Corps, Sergeant Bugler Jamie Ritchie.

The 31-year-old from Dundee was decorated by the Duke – alongside fellow marines – on his return from Afghanistan in 2013.

"Even though he was a man of few words, the great thing about Prince Philip is how relatable he made you feel. He made you feel calm and welcome in his presence," said Jamie.

Eight years later – and having performed for the Duke on several occasions, most notably Beating Retreat on Horse Guards Parade – the Dundonian was selected to lead the four buglers sounding the *Last Post*.

The staple of military funerals and services of remembrance, the four musicians knew the haunting call "inside out". "It is a little different when four people play it," the sergeant bugler explained. "We made sure we were 'dialled in' to each other, right down to the millisecond."

And they were.

Equally pitch-perfect were the four State Trumpeters of the Band of The Household Cavalry with the *Reveille*, before the Royal Marines put bugles to lips once more.

For ten seconds – as requested by the Duke – the call to *Action Stations* reverberated around the 15th Century chapel, just as it had done during the naval officer's time on major warships eight decades ago.

This time it sent a sailor on his final journey. With the naval sword and cap presented by his father-in-law resting atop his standard, the Duke's coffin gradually lowered into the vault below. Resurgam.



SAILORS: Royal Navy sailors taking part in ceremonial duties at Windsor Castle. Picture by Dave Jenkins



With the Duke's links with the Navy through history, it was an absolute privilege and honour to be taking part.

Lieutenant Commander Hywel Morgan,
Commanding Officer of HMS Magpie



SAILORS: Royal Navy sailors taking part in ceremonial duties at Windsor Castle. Picture by Dave Jenkins



MARCHING: A Royal Marine on ceremonial duties at Windsor Castle during The Duke's funeral. Picture by Sgt Jimmy Wise



SMILES: The Duke shares a joke with navy families during a royal visit



THE DUKE AND THE ROYAL NAVY

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS' RICH HISTORY WITH THE SENIOR SERVICE



MARINE AND THE DUKE: The Duke inspects Royal Marines during an engagement in his role as Captain General



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:

The Duke meets Royal Marines during his final solo public engagement as part of the 1664 Global Challenge in 2017 at Buckingham Palace; The Duke takes the Royal Salute as The Lord High Admiral in Admiralty Square in 2011. Warrant Officer Terry Casey is to his left; The Duke visited Stonehouse Barracks to attend a dinner to celebrate Herrick 5 and Op Musketeer in 2016.



THE Royal Navy has been in the blood of the Duke of Edinburgh from his earliest days, through service in the Mediterranean and Pacific during World War 2, to post-war command and honorary roles with the Fleet and Royal Marines up to his retirement from public duties.

Aged just 18 months, he was evacuated with his family in cruiser HMS Calypso when the Greek royal family was forced to abdicate amid revolution in the country.

The prince's Royal Navy career began aged 17 when he attended Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, Devon, the spiritual home of the officer

corps. Two months later he famously escorted a then 13-year-old Princess Elizabeth and her younger sister Princess Margaret when their parents, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth visited Dartmouth.

The college was in the middle of a chicken-pox and mumps epidemic and it was necessary to keep the princesses away from the risk of infection.

Prince Philip was excused from training and given the job of hosting the princesses, which included a game of croquet in the Captain's garden.

While this was not the first time Philip and Elizabeth had met, popular consensus is that this was the first time that the princess had 'noticed' the prince.

Prince Philip passed out of Dartmouth at the beginning of 1940 after eight months' training. He enjoyed his time at the college – and excelled there, receiving the King's Dirk and the Eardley Howard Croquet prize for best Cadet of his entry.

From Dartmouth, the young midshipman was appointed to veteran battleship HMS Ramillies in the Indian Ocean, escorting troops from Australia to Egypt, before joining cruisers HMS Kent and Shropshire in the Asia-Pacific region.

At the end of 1940 he was appointed to the battleship HMS Valiant in the Mediterranean which saw action off North Africa but in particular in

Continues on next page

His Royal Highness, Prince Philip
10 June 1921 - 09 April 2021



THE QUEEN'S FRIGATE: The Duke and The Queen meet the ship's company of HMS Lancaster in 2017



SALUTE THE DUKE: The Duke meeting sailors during an engagement

THE DUKE AND THE NAVY | A TIMELINE

1922
Evacuated from Greece with his family in cruiser HMS Calypso.

1939
Royal Navy career began when he attended Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth.

July 1939
Escorted a then 13-year-old Princess Elizabeth and her younger sister Princess Margaret when their parents, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth visited Dartmouth.

1940
Passed out of Dartmouth at the beginning of 1940 after eight months' training.

1940
Appointed to veteran battleship HMS Ramillies in the Indian Ocean, before joining cruisers HMS Kent and Shropshire.

End of 1940
Appointed to the battleship HMS Valiant in the Mediterranean.

March 1941
Victory over the Italian Fleet at Cape Matapan with HMS Valiant.

1942
Joined HMS Wallace escorting coastal convoys.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The Duke attends the passing out parade of 970 King's Squad at the Commando Training Centre in his role at Captain General; Prince Philip, second from left, with the crew of HMS Whelp, the destroyer he was second in command of in 1945; The Duke surveys the view at the 2005 International Fleet Review in the Solent from HMS Endurance with HMS Invincible in the distance

From previous page

victory over the Italian Fleet at Cape Matapan in March 1941. Prince Philip was Mentioned in Despatches for "bravery and enterprise" in controlling the battleship's searchlights in the night action which "greatly contributed to the devastating results achieved" by the guns. At the beginning of 1942 he joined destroyer HMS Wallace and spent most of the year escorting coastal convoys off the east coast of the UK before the ship dispatched to the Mediterranean to support the invasion of Sicily in July 1943, where she helped cover the Canadian landings and was damaged during air raids. Contemporary reports from his commanding officers praise Prince Philip's practical seamanship skills, high intellect, good judgement, strong character, zeal, and great charm. He was described as an "officer of unusual promise" and it was predicted he would "make his mark in the Service". His next seagoing appointment was as First Lieutenant – second in command – of new destroyer HMS Whelp which sailed to the Far East for the final year of the war with Japan as part of the escort for the capital ships. Aboard Whelp, Prince Philip was present in Tokyo Bay in September 1945 for the formal Japanese surrender – the last act of World War 2. The

destroyer finally returned to the UK in January 1946 having helped with the repatriation of Allied servicemen. He spent the next 3½ years ashore at various Naval establishments helping to train new sailors joining from civvy street and petty officers as well as studies at the Naval Staff College in Greenwich – interspersed with his marriage to Princess Elizabeth in November 1947. In October 1949, Prince Philip returned to sea as First Lieutenant of destroyer HMS Chequers in the Mediterranean and the royal couple lived in Malta between 1949 and 1951. After being promoted to Lieutenant Commander in July 1950, Prince Philip was given his first sea-going command, 11 years after joining the Royal Navy. He commanded anti-submarine frigate HMS Magpie from September 1950 until July 1951, taking her to ports around the Mediterranean including Izmir, Livorno, Tripoli, Athens (Princess Elizabeth joined the ship for the passage through the Corinth Canal), Monaco, and Gibraltar. The Duke of Edinburgh's active naval career ended as a commander in January 1953, after almost 14 years.

He was promoted Honorary Admiral of the Fleet and added the title of Captain General of the Royal Marines in June of the same year – a position he held until December 2017. Other titles bestowed upon him during the period of transition from Service to royal life included Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps, Colonel-in-Chief of the Army Cadet Force and Air Commodore-in-Chief of the Air Training Corps. Despite his retirement from active service, Prince Philip remained both interested and involved in the Naval Service through official visits, patronage of, and association with, naval charities and clubs, time spent in the Royal Yacht Britannia and in instances where his overseas visits were escorted by Royal Navy ships. His long-standing connection with the Senior Service was recognised in June 2011 when The Queen conferred the title and office of Lord High Admiral to him upon his 90th birthday. For more than eight decades, Prince Philip's generous spirit and genuine understanding of the Royal Navy, its values, and traditions have been an asset to the Service.



MAGPIE: The Duke is saluted as he comes aboard HMS Magpie in Malta in 1952



ON TOUR: On his World Commonwealth tour, The Duke is transferred by jackstay from the Royal Yacht Britannia to the Royal New Zealand Frigate Rotoiti



PETTY OFFICERS: Prince Philip, fifth from left in the front row, at the Petty Officers School in Wiltshire in 1947

TIMELINE CONTINUED | 1943-2011

- 1943**
Supported invasion of Sicily with HMS Wallace.
- 1945**
Second in command – of new destroyer HMS Whelp and was in Tokyo Bay in September 1945 for the formal Japanese surrender.
- 1946**
Returned to the UK having helped with the repatriation of Allied servicemen.
- 1946-49**
Trained new sailors and petty officers as well as studies at the Naval Staff College in Greenwich.
- 1949**
First Lieutenant of destroyer HMS Chequers.
- 1950-51**
Promoted to Lieutenant Commander and first command of frigate HMS Magpie.
- 1953**
Active naval career ended as a commander in January 1953, after almost 14 years.
- 1953-2017**
Made Honorary Admiral of the Fleet and gained the title of Captain General of the Royal Marines.
- 2011**
The Queen conferred the title and office of Lord High Admiral to him upon his 90th birthday.

Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Northumberland
HMS Richmond
HMS Kent
HMS Tyne
HMS Severn
HMS Mersey
HMS Magpie
HMS Defender
HMS Diamond
HMS Dragon
HMS Tamar

HMS Spey
HMS Protector
Project Wilton
RFA Fort Victoria
RFA Tideforce
RFA Mounts Bay
814 NAS
815 NAS
820 NAS
824 NAS
617 Sqn



17 TES SQN

HMS Medway

HMS Lancaster

HMS Trent

Gibraltar Squadron

UKMCC
NSF Bahrain
IMSC
COMUKMCMFOR
HMS Montrose
HMS Brocklesby
HMS Shoreham
HMS Chiddingfold
HMS Penzance
1700 NAS
RFA Cardigan Bay
Forward Support Unit

British Defence Singapore Support Unit

NEFI

HMS Forth

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

Wonderful legacy

1SL reflects on Duke's bond with RN

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

AS we in the Royal Navy community mourn the passing of His Majesty The Prince Philip, the past weeks have been an opportunity to reflect upon the extraordinary bond he had with our service.

The tributes paid by generations of sailors and marines speak of a deeply personal connection that went beyond his official roles as Admiral of the Fleet, Lord High Admiral and Captain General of the Royal Marines. It was a bond of mutual admiration, understanding and respect. He was proud of the Royal Navy, and we were proud of him.

Despite the extraordinary life he lived as part of the Royal Family, when he spoke it was hard to escape the feeling that he remained at his core a sailor.

He spoke plainly, often with a dry wit, and while this occasionally landed him in hot water, more often it resonated. It was a language that the countless sailors and marines who he met each year recognised.

But more than this, the principles he stood for and lived by resonated with the Armed Forces.

Like many of the generation who fought for this country during World War 2, he knew the importance of just getting on with things in the face of adversity.

Among the remarkable stories of his wartime bravery in battle are more mundane examples that demonstrate his stoicism.

Short of crew on a journey back to Britain, he shovelled coal on a troop ship until his hands blistered so badly he couldn't hold a fork.

When interviewed on this later in life he simply responded "what else was there to do".

His life changed dramatically upon his marriage to the future Queen, but he continued to embody this principle of understated service.

Through all the challenges faced by the Royal Family over seven decades, so far as possible he eschewed the spotlight and



● The Duke of Edinburgh pictured talking to members of 1 Assault Group Royal Marines in the new Tandy building at HMNB Devonport in 2015

instead sought to be a source of strength to those around him.

While he was rightly regarded as a pillar of strength as part of the Royal Family, he was far from being staid. His Royal Highness was open to new ideas and an early champion of many causes we now regard as crucial for our future as a nation.

He set up and chaired the Royal Academy of Engineering to remedy for what he foresaw as a future lack of national science and technology skills, and had an electric car made to his own specifications half a century ago. He was passionate about conservation and was an outspoken Chairman of the Worldwide Fund for Nature.

We may reflect that we were fortunate as the Royal Navy to have a true friend and supporter who not only delighted in his affinity with our service but embodied so much of our values and ethos. The same qualities that saw him serve the Royal Navy with such distinction during the war endured throughout his life.

His humour and generosity of spirit will be sorely missed, but his legacy will remain as an example to all who aspire to serve this country.

GLOBAL NAVY

Protecting our nation's interests

THE Royal Navy joined the rest of the nation in mourning the death of the Duke of Edinburgh. Service personnel were on duty at his funeral (see pages 2-3), while, for more than eight decades, Prince Philip's generous spirit and genuine understanding of the Royal Navy, its values, and traditions have been an asset to the Service (see pages 4-6).

On the other side of the world HMS Forth paid her third visit to the wildlife paradise of South Georgia (see pages 23-25) to help preserve its unique environment.

It has been a busy month of firsts for the Royal Navy's newest patrol ship and Forth's youngest sister. HMS Spey has spent the past few weeks at sea preparing for Basic Operational Sea Training and during that time, the vessel has ticked off milestone moments (see page 35).

The Royal Navy has completed its first deployment into the Arctic in 2021 after a joint operation with the Norwegians (see page 13). Frigate HMS Lancaster linked up with HNoMS Thor Heyerdahl and F-16 jets for a patrol of the Norwegian Sea and combined training in Norway's fjords.

Ten Royal Navy personnel are at the heart of an international peacekeeping mission in Bahrain (see page 29). They are helping to run Coalition Task Force Sentinel, the military arm of the International Maritime Security Construct.

Patrol ships HMS Tyne and Mersey have both been called on to monitor the Russian Federation Navy ships – in groups of three and four – as they sailed past the British Isles (see page 27).

Devonport Naval Base welcomed home HMS Trenchant for the final time ahead of her decommissioning after 35 years (see page 14).

And as the Royal Navy bade farewell to the veteran submarine, the service prepares to welcome the new Dreadnought class (see page 15), which will see fly-by-wire technology from aircraft introduced into the boats.

A Royal Marines expert in cold weather and mountain warfare shared valuable expertise with troops in Serbia on a unique mission (see page 21). Colour Sergeant James Keenan is part of the specialist Royal Marines Mountain Leaders and led a small group from the UK to teach officers from the Serbian Military Academy.

The US military's unique aircraft-cum-helicopter has been training with amphibious ship RFA Mounts Bay – ready for further interaction in the Baltic this spring (see page 20). The US Air Force's 7th Special Operations Squadron dropped in on the support vessel off Portland with their MV-22 Osprey, the 'tiltrotor' which takes off and lands like a helicopter, then rotates its propellers to fly like a conventional aircraft.

HMS Portland returned to sea after a major overhaul (see page 11). The frigate sailed from Devonport for sea trials as the latest Type 23 warship to complete the 'life extension' programme for the class – a massive undertaking which is now drawing to a close.

A new Cutlass and Dagger will protect the people of Gibraltar and UK interests in the Rock's territorial waters (see page 20). The Queen has approved the names of two new £9.9m fast patrol which will form the backbone of the Royal Navy's Gibraltar Squadron.

Two months of NATO duties in the Baltic are up for minehunter HMS Blyth, which returned home to Scotland (see page 9). The Faslane-based warship has spent the late winter/early spring attached to NATO's dedicated mine warfare force patrolling northern European waters, Standing Group 1, carrying out combined training, dealing with wartime ordnance still blighting the Baltic, and generally flying the flag for the alliance.

HMS Dragon has been put through her paces with weeks of intense training as she builds up to operations (see page 20).

We joined sailors on Exercise Hidden Dragon, the second of three outdoor exercises included in the ten-week course converting civilians into sailors (see page 33).

The Royal Navy's Senior Command Warrant Officers give their views on the future of the senior service as it continues to deliver on operations around the world (see page 30).

Supply chain experts in Portsmouth have transformed their facilities (see page 31), benefitting the branch and the service the city's warships receive.

Finally, this month the Royal British Legion marks its centenary (see pages 14-15) with the work it does today as vital as when it began in 1921.



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NATO mission complete

TWO months of NATO duties in the Baltic are up for minehunter HMS Blyth, which returned home to Scotland.

The Faslane-based warship spent the late winter/early spring attached to NATO's dedicated mine warfare force patrolling northern European waters, Standing Group 1, carrying out combined training, dealing with wartime ordnance still blighting the Baltic, and generally flying the flag for the alliance.

During her two months with the NATO group, Blyth sailed more than 4,000 miles, taken part in four multinational exercises, visited the Netherlands, Norway, Germany and Sweden and conducted training in Danish Waters.

The ship and Mine Counter Measures 1(MCM1) Crew 2 were welcomed back to the Naval Base by Captain of the Base, Captain Nick Gibbons and Captain Submarines, Captain Irvine Lindsay.

"As well as the Submarine Flotilla, HMNB Clyde is home to the Sandown

Class Mine Counter Measure Vessels. These highly capable units continue to punch significantly above their weight," said Captain Nick Gibbons.

"Over the last two months, HMS Blyth has delivered cutting-edge mine hunting, historic WW2 ordnance disposal, maritime security, and international engagement alongside our NATO allies in the challenging waters of the North.

"As a family, we are delighted to welcome her crew back after a most successful deployment and send them off for a period of well-deserved leave"

The group comprised flagship BNS Godetia (Belgium) and minehunters FGS Datteln (Germany) ENS Ugandi (formerly HMS Bridport now owned by Estonia) and Blyth.

All in one Covid-safe bubble, the group was able to train, socialise and play sport together during port visits – although sailors weren't able to explore

After being deployed for nearly

11 of the past 15 months in varying degrees of isolation, this was a welcome change for the crew and allowed them to welcome NATO friends onboard to show off their skills and drills and the specialist mine-hunting equipment available on a Sandown-class warship.



As well as live gunnery exercises off the Danish coast, the group conducted a hunt for historic ordnance and found two WW2-era mines partially buried in the seabed off Denmark, both of which were neutralised.

In Kiel, the minehunter forces rendezvoused with a large force of 14 warships including vessels from Germany, Denmark, Latvia and Lithuania for several days of navigation training and seamanship exercises. Kiel also allowed Blyth's sailors to stretch their legs in the Covid-safe environment created in the naval base.

Throughout the deployment, engineers have worked around

the clock to keep the thousands of working parts and machinery running, including carrying out a generator change and full overhaul of the freshwater plant in addition to day-to-day business.

The small Swedish port of Karlskrona was as far east as the NATO group ventured with their hosts laying on complex seamanship/force protection exercises with the Swedish Navy.

"Both the NATO group and the Swedish Navy worked well together and demonstrated their capabilities," said Blyth's navigator Lieutenant Conor Smith.

"It was great to be hosted by Sweden in Karlskrona but also to operate with the Swedish Navy in a challenging exercise scenario."

That was Blyth's last act as she bade farewell to her NATO chums and headed west for the Kiel Canal – the 60-mile-long artificial waterway cuts the better part of a day's sailing around the Jutland peninsula, but does demand total concentration

given it's the world's busiest seagoing canal and vessels are limited to a steady 8 knots for the eight-hour transit.

During her transit, a train crossed the Kiel Canal bridge which meant, in fine naval tradition, the officer of the watch had to buy a round of drinks for the crew.

The ship will undergo some maintenance, while her 45-strong crew spend time with loved ones.

"This deployment has helped to demonstrate the Royal Navy's enduring commitment to NATO," said the minehunter's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Peter Ellison. "It has been a great opportunity to work with friends and allies, to learn from each other, and to support maritime security activity in the North and Baltic Seas.

"We would also like to thank friends and families for their continued support and perseverance during these unprecedented times."

Main picture: PO (Phot) JJ Massey

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A TUG guides HMS Portland off her berth as the frigate returns to sea for the first time in four years after a major overhaul.

She sailed from Devonport for sea trials as the latest Type 23 warship to complete the 'life extension' programme for the class – a massive undertaking which is now drawing to a close.

The revamp of the flotilla, which began in 2014, sees a total bow-to-stern mast-to-keel overhaul of the backbone ships of the Fleet to ensure the 23s can serve into the middle of the next decade, keeping pace with the latest threats and tech.

The Royal Navy's second-youngest frigate has been busy since emerging from Devonport's Frigate Support Centre late last year, and working alongside



Babcock, completed her next phase before returning her to the Fleet, ready to deploy this year.

After completing her last deployment in 2017 – to the North and South Atlantic – the ship was handed over to Babcock in 2018 to start her refit in the frigate sheds on the Devonport waterfront.

In the three years which since passed, in the first for her class, two electric propulsion motors were removed, rewired and replaced, the Sea Wolf missile system has been ripped out and Sea Ceptor installed in its place, the 997 surveillance and 1084 navigational radars added, and the new to Royal Navy 2150 hull mounted sonar to sharpen her anti-submarine warfare teeth.

For good measure, machinery, computer and IT systems onboard have been overhauled, as have mess decks which were designed in the 1980s so they can meet the needs and expectations of 21st Century sailors.

"I cannot express, with justice, the pride I feel sailing in command of such an incredible team and in such a fine vessel," said Commander Tim Leeder, HMS Portland's Commanding Officer.

"There is no greater privilege than working with sailors as they develop and grow into their roles. Taking HMS

Portland back to sea after her refit gives me a front-row seat from which to follow their development as they generate Portland from engineering project into a front line operational asset.

"There have been many challenges, continuing to deliver to tight timelines despite the global pandemic is a credit to the tight working relationship with Babcock and to the resilience and hard work from the sailors."

Gary Simpson, Babcock's Managing Director (Warships) said Portland's departure marked another key milestone in the Type 23 programme.

"The last 12 months have seen our teams face very challenging measures, but we're incredibly proud to be able to continue to support and work collaboratively with the Royal Navy and celebrate the end of this important project following completion of the commissioning phases."

HMS Somerset will be the next frigate to complete her life extension, while HMS Iron Duke and St Albans are mid-overhauls and HMS Sutherland will be the last Type 23 to undergo the work.

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Portland back at sea



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WINTER THOR



THE last Royal Navy warship to venture into the Arctic in 2020... became the first to head there in 2021.

HMS Lancaster once again dipped her toe in the icy waters of the High North, joining the Norwegians for a patrol of the sea which bears their country's name.

The frigate linked up with HNoMS Thor Heyerdahl and F-16 jets for combined training both in open waters and then, as a late winter storm approached, the more sheltered waters of the fjords.

Lancaster led a multi-national task group into the Barents Sea in November.

This time around she did not venture quite so far north but did experience the challenges of operating in the sub-zero world.

On entering the Arctic Circle, Lancaster and Thor Heyerdahl worked together to improve the smooth operation of the two

allies across the full range of naval warfare in the High North: navigation, electronic warfare, communications and dealing with threats below, on and above the waves; two Norwegian Air Force F-16s provided the two ships with a realistic 'foe' in the Arctic skies.

This inhospitable territory, which in the winter months sees little sunshine and some fairly gnarly weather, brings with it a magical charm for newer members of the ship's company – especially the polar virgins.

As with crossing the Equator there's a long-standing nautical ceremony filled with dodgy acting, dubious costumes and much silliness to mark crossing the Arctic Circle. Unlike the Equator the temperature is Baltic, not balmy.

That did not prevent King Neptune (aka Chief Petty Officer

'Dutchy' Gooderham) holding court and inviting the newest members of the order of the Blue Nose to partake in an ice water shower, a tot of rum and a warm drink before heading back below.



"That was amazing," enthused marine engineer Joe Twyman, just turned 18 and the youngest member of Lancaster's ship's company. "It's definitely something I will remember for years to come."

Late winter storms caused the warships to seek the shelter of the fjords which afforded extra training for bridge teams in confined waters – and allowed the ship's company some rare Arctic sightseeing, although they had to remain on their guard for stray containers dislodged from a cargo ship caught in the rough seas and practise damage-control drills.

"Without an emergency service to call on at sea, it is down to the

professional training and teamwork of our sailors to carry out these safety critical evolutions such as damage control, firefighting and casualty handling. These exercises ensure we are ready for any incident that could occur day or night," explained Warrant Officer Si Hargreaves, Lancaster's Executive Warrant Officer.

Sub Lieutenant Olly Oglethorpe, who was on the bridge during the three-hour transit through the fjords, said: "It's not easy to visit these isolated parts of the world, so being able to witness this first-hand is an experience I will not forget in a hurry."

Once the storm had passed, the two ships parted company, with Lancaster returning to patrol UK waters over the Easter period. Both captains felt the Arctic patrol benefitted both navies.

"As two close neighbours and allies we share common interests

and security concerns in our area of responsibility," said Commander Lars Larsson, commanding HNoMS Thor Heyerdahl.

"During our recent training, we have enhanced our ability to effectively cooperate and safely conduct maritime operations in all domains. This is enhancing cohesion among allies and our common security in the North."

Lancaster's Commanding Officer Commander Will Blackett added: "This has been a busy but rewarding period, and once again I am proud of my team who have dealt with challenging conditions throughout.

"Our Norwegian friends have been a pleasure to work with and the ease with which we integrate proves the value of the NATO alliance – HNoMS Thor Heyerdahl is an impressive ship and I look forward to further operations together in the future."

Pictures: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum and Sjøforsvaret



Farewell to veteran and

DEVONPORT Naval Base welcomed home HMS Trenchant as she sailed into her home port for the last time; she is to be de-commissioned later this year.



As is the tradition of a ship sailing into her home port for the last time, HMS Trenchant proudly flew her paying-off pennant.

As the submarine arrived at Plymouth Sound a number of her crew 'went up top' to line the casing.

Serco tugs Faithful and Adept sprayed a water salute over the submarine in recognition of her long and esteemed service in the Royal Navy.

Launched by Lady Hunt, wife of Admiral Sir Nicholas Hunt then Commander in Chief on November 3 1986 at the VSEL dockyard in Barrow-in-Furness, she was then commissioned in 1988 by war hero Vice Admiral Sir Arthur Hezlet, the Commander of the original HMS Trenchant submarine during the Second World War.

Her last Commanding Officer Steve Brian said: "It's a testament to generations of sailors who have all contributed to her traditions and upkeep, ensuring she remains as potent as the days she sailed in 1988."

Together with the Astute class, HMS Trenchant make up the RN's hunter-killer submarine force.

During her 35-years on patrol there have been many highlights of her service, two of which have been her ice-patrols.

In 2016 the boat punched through the ice and emerged on the surface of the Arctic Ocean.

This marked nearly a decade since a British boat had carried out this manoeuvre, re-generating the Submarine Service's under-ice capability.

In 2018 in the harsh environment of the North Pole HMS Trenchant broke

through the ice in an exercise with the US Navy, literally sitting on top of the world.

Outside this, she still maintains the longest ever SSN deployment at 335 days operating East of Suez in 2013.

Noticeable achievements include her around-the-world deployment and participation in Ocean Wave in 1997, demonstrating the UK's continued commitment to the Asia-Pacific region after the handover of Hong Kong.

As Trenchant was gently edged alongside to her jetty by her tugs she was welcomed by the Captain of the Submarine Flotilla and a previous Commanding Officer – farewell HMS Trenchant, the oldest submarine in the Royal Navy fleet.

The lowering of the White Ensign for the last time, although low key, epitomises her renowned stealth capability as a hunter-killer submarine who spent much of her time beneath the waves unknown to her adversaries.



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a look at the future



'FLY-BY-WIRE' technology in aircraft will be introduced to the Royal Navy's next-generation submarines.

The same thinking behind digital cockpits in 21st Century aircraft and helicopters will control key aspects of the Dreadnought class of submarines beneath the waves, including heading, pitch, depth and buoyancy.

Four of the boats are being built by BAE Systems to replace the existing quartet of nuclear deterrent submarines based at Faslane.



The Vanguard class are children of the 1980s, their movements controlled manually by 'planesmen' operating aircraft-like control sticks. It's a demanding job – particularly keeping a 16,000-tonne submarine level.

With decades of experience in flight controls, BAE believes it can adapt fly-by-wire technology – where computers replace the manual input from operators – to Dreadnought and her sisters.

The Active Vehicle Control Management system will oversee all major aspects of the Dreadnoughts' manoeuvring with added safety benefits.

More than 130 engineers, technicians and experts are already working on the system at BAE's Rochester site – the first major work for the Royal Navy conducted in the area since Chatham dockyard closed nearly 40 years ago.

"With over 50 years of avionics experience, we already have a great understanding of how to develop complex, control systems for hi-tech platforms," said Jon Tucker, Director for Maritime Controls at BAE Systems Controls and Avionics.

"However, taking our technology underwater brings exciting new



challenges and we are proud to support the Dreadnought programme and play an important part in our national security effort."

The cutting-edge work on the control system is one strand of a national effort supporting the £31bn Dreadnought programme.

BAE reckons the lengthy project to design, build and support the four submarines will support 30,000 jobs in around 1,500 companies large and small across the UK into the mid-2030s.

With two boats already under construction – Dreadnought (since 2016) and Valiant (since 2019) – £2.5bn has been spent with contractors and suppliers:

- North West – £400m, including power systems and sensors, supporting 13,500 jobs;
- Yorkshire and Humberside – £350m, including on gear boxes and steel, supporting 2,500 jobs;

■ South East – £235m on electrical systems, antenna systems and control panels, supporting 2,500 jobs;

■ Scotland – £215m, including periscopes, supporting 2,000 jobs.

Nearly half of the 30,000 jobs sustained are in the North West of England, perhaps understandable with the class being built in Barrow-in-Furness.

"Barrow may be the birthplace of the UK's submarines, but the programme is truly a national endeavour that we, the suppliers who help deliver the programme and the whole country, should be proud of," said Steve Timms, managing director of BAE Systems' submarine arm.

"It will sustain thousands of jobs and generate billions of pounds of investment into the middle of the next decade, benefitting every region of the UK."

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1915, August 21: First recorded Poppy Day in Britain.
1916, September 13: The National Association of Discharged Sailors and Soldiers is founded in Blackburn.
April 1917: A second body, the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers is founded in London.
1917, August 22: The Comrades of the Great War is launched in London by a group of Conservative MPs.
1918, August 4: First Remembrance Service (discontinued after two years).
1919, November 11: First Armistice Service (informal) and first use of the Two-Minute Silence.
1920, January: The Officers' Association is founded.
1920, November 11: Burial of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey and the unveiling of the Cenotaph on Whitehall.
1921, February: Earl Haig and Jan Smuts announce the formation of the British Empire Services League.
1921, May 15: The British Legion is formed by the amalgamation of four organisations (above) focused on delivering welfare to ex-Servicemen and their families after the First World War.

"The part that the British Legion will play in the nation will be decided by the Branches of the Legion. The Legion is a body which will give to the individual ex-Service man, without regard to his war rank, an opportunity of serving his country in order that the victory of 1918 may have been worth the sacrifice."

TF Lister, July 1921.

1921, July: First edition of the Legion's monthly magazine, the *Journal*, appears.
1921, July 24: The Women's Section of the British Legion is formed. The Duchess of York, later The Queen and subsequently the Queen Mother, becomes Patron of the Women's Section in 1924, a role she holds until her death in 2002. The Princess Royal, succeeds her as Patron.
1921, Summer: The Legion in Scotland votes to remain separate from the British Legion in England, Wales and the island of Ireland.
1921, September: Madame Anna Guérin arrives from Canada and persuades the Legion to adopt the Poppy as a symbol Remembrance.
1921, October 6: Earl Haig announces in *The Times* that 11 November shall from now on be known as Remembrance Day and will be marked by a service at the Cenotaph and a Poppy Day Appeal to raise money for the Legion's welfare activities.
1921, November 11: First Remembrance Day and first Poppy Day Appeal, which raises £106,000 (£5.25 million in 2021).
1921, December: National Chairman, Fred Lister, announces that 2,500 branches of the British Legion had been set up.
1921: Overseas branches are established including Tanganyika (Tanzania), Kenya, Hong Kong & China, Gibraltar, Paris and Cologne.
1922, August: Poppy Production moves from France to Britain. The Legion's Poppy Factory opens in the Old Kent Road, London. Forty disabled men manufacture 1,000 poppies a week. By 1923 the factory is solely responsible for the Legion's poppies. 30 million are required annually.
1923, November: King's Regulations change so members of the Armed Forces can wear poppies on uniforms.
1923, November 11: John Foulds War Requiem performed in the Royal Albert Hall on Armistice evening for four consecutive years
1923, November: Wreaths laid at the Cenotaph now predominantly made of poppies.
1925: A ceremony is held in the then Indian village of Dulmial. The people are presented with a cannon as a mark of gratitude for the village's response to appeals for men to fight in the British Army. A total of 460 men, over half the male population, signed up. Nine were never to return. Dulmial is known as the Village with the Gun.
1925: The Legion acquires Preston Hall in Kent, a farming and horticultural concern with industry for settlers. It turns the existing sanatorium into a TB Hospital and creates a village for the families of TB sufferers. The industries and farming increase. The industries eventually become RBLI.
1926: Birth of Princess Elizabeth
1927, November: First Festival of Remembrance held at the Royal Albert Hall.
1927: Businessman Arthur Beckwith gifts the Cambrian Woollen Factory to the Legion, which has been employing disabled men since 1918.
1927: Legion sets up first off-street carparking in Rochdale.
1927: Fred Lister retires as Chairman and is succeeded by Colonel Crosfield.
1928, January 29: Sudden death of Earl Haig, the Legion's President, sends shock waves of grief through the Legion and the country as a whole. His state funeral in February draws hundreds of thousands of people onto the streets.
1928: The Legion's Taxi School in London opens its doors. Over 5,000 London taxi drivers pass the school's training and testing until its closure in 1995.
1928: Southern Area Staff perform ceremonial duties at the annual Sandhurst parade for the first time.
1928, November: Women are represented at the Festival of Remembrance for the first time.
1928, November: First Field of Remembrance appears on the lawns outside St Margaret's Westminster in London.
1929, November: The Poppy Drop is introduced into the Festival of Remembrance. Today the poppies used in the drop are made of crepe paper which means they are light and fall more slowly than paper ones.
1932: The Legion purchases Haig House in Ypres to provide a base for pilgrims. It fulfils that function for 16 years.
1934, June: 350 South African veterans and widows make a pilgrimage to London and on to France in memory of the men from their country who died at Delville Wood and on other battlefields of the First World War.
1938, November: The Poppy Appeal raises £600,000 (£40 million in 2021).
1939, September 3: Outbreak of the Second World War. That summer Hon. Treasurer, Major Brunel Cohen, tells the Women's Section conference that £600,000 (£40 million) of the 1938 Poppy Day Appeal funds had been spent on welfare. Today that figure stands at over £100 million.
1944, February: The National Spinal Injuries Unit opens at Stoke Mandeville, run by Professor Guttmann. Four years later the Stoke Mandeville Games are launched to coincide with the London Olympics and in 1960 the Paralympics are born.
1944: Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 passed in Parliament. The Legion influences and plays a major part in achieving it.

1945, May 8: End of the Second World War in Europe. The Legion votes to include 'this-war' men and their families within the Legion's remit.
1945: The Legion buys three large houses to provide country home provision for the 'aged and incapacitated'. They are named after prominent Legion figures including Lister House in Ripon. A further house is purchased in 1950.
1945, October: The *Journal* cites the Legion's stand that men with mental health problems should be treated medically and that there should be no stigma attached to either them or their families. It estimates over 130,000 cases of 'war inspired neurosis' (now known as PTSD).
1945, November: Princess Elizabeth attends the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall for the first time. Since then, The Queen has only missed the Festival twice.
1946: The Legion removes Haig's portrait from the front cover of the *Journal* as public criticism of their first president grows.
1946: The Legion opens the first of its four convalescent homes in Southport, Lancashire.
1946: The Legion opens an office in Brussels to help those wishing to visit war graves. The Legion's representative worked closely with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.
1946, May: The Legion mark its first quarter century with a parade and service at the Cenotaph.
1946, May: Women's Section emerges from the Second World War 'with honours'. Their Patron HM The Queen (later the Queen Mother) speaks at the Women's conference and says: 'Let's rebuild our national life on a sure foundation.' She remains Patron of the Women's Section for another 51 years.
1946: The Legion takes over a 50-bed hospital at Arlesley, Bedfordshire, to treat patients with rheumatism and arthritis.



1946: The Women's Section sets up a children's home in Richmond, South London, for boys and girls of the ex-Service community who had lost both parents or who could not be brought up by their families. A second home is opened in 1949 for children with special needs.
1947: Glenthorne House overlooking Portland Harbour opens offering 220 women a fortnight a year of relaxation and good food. By 1950 there are three homes offering 800 women a year convalescent facility.
1948: The Health Service Act is introduced and with that the Legion's TB enterprise is dismembered. Preston Hall Hospital, Nayland and Douglas House are each transferred to their local regional hospital board. The Legion remains involved in the management board of Preston Hall hospital into the 1960s to ensure preference for ex-Service personnel suffering from TB and other chest complaints.
1948: The Legion organises 4,000 visits to graves in France, The Netherlands and Denmark. 85 per cent of the cost is born by the government, the Legion pays the remaining 15 per cent.
1949, November: Poppy stakes in the Field of Remembrance are ordered in tidy rows for the first time, though battlefield grave markers remain.
1949: The number of graves' visits rises to 7,000.
1949: The War Pensions Act passes in Parliament. The Legion had been active in lobbying for it.
1950: Five years after the end of the war the Legion has made over 4,000 loans and helped men to set up enterprises as chimney sweeps, steeple jacks, dentists, cosmetic manufacturers and rug makers. Former ATS are given loans to start boarding houses by the seaside.
1950: Peak number of branches totalling almost 5,500; the Legion's *Journal* had a circulation of 120,000, almost double that of pre-war.
1950: By 1950 the Legion has four 'country home's and four 'convalescent homes'.
1951: Operation KK – Knitting for Korea – produces 1,500 woollen garments at short notice.
1951: Netherlands hosts and pays for pilgrimages to Nijmegen. This lasts for 21 years.
1952 – present: reign of Queen Elizabeth II
1953: Women's Section branches deal with flooding on the East Coast. Leigh on Sea members take in over 350 evacuees.
1953, Summer: Legion balls and galas staged all over the world, from Arras to Istanbul to mark the coronation of The Queen.
November 1953: The Festival of Remembrance is televised for the first time on the BBC.
1955: The Women's Section records almost 3,300 branches and 16,000 new members.
1957, October: Poppy Sellers become Poppy Collectors.
1959: The Poppy leaf is dropped as being too expensive (reintroduced 1987).
1961: The Legion's first chairman is knighted and becomes Sir Frederick Lister to mark the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Legion.
1961, July 29: Women are admitted to the Legion's National Executive for the first time.
1961: 'Looking to the Future' is the theme of the Duke of Edinburgh's speech at the 40th anniversary conference. The Legion responds by holding week-long national leadership forums for men and women under 50.
1962: The Queen visits the Poppy Factory and meets the youngest employee, a National Serviceman disabled having been shot in Cyprus.
1963: Galanos House is opened thanks to a legacy from Christos Galanos, a Greek businessman, who much admired the British. For the first time Legion homes have single bed sitting rooms rather than wards.
1965: Operation Supercharge launches to increase membership and help to

add political weight to the Legion's campaigning.
1966: Death of Sir Frederick Lister marks the end of an era as all those who had helped form the British Legion in 1921 are now dead.
1966: 50th anniversary pilgrimage to the Somme.
1966: First pilgrimage entirely on German soil. 95 pilgrims visited graves of airmen shot down in raids on Bremen.
1967: Closure of the Legion's children's homes.
1967: The black bitumen centre and wire stems of the poppy are replaced by green and black plastic. Poppy is reduced to a single style.
1967: A Legion member travels to Aden to visit his 18-year-old son's grave. There would not be a Legion pilgrimage there for another 30 years.
1968: The carpark Attendants Company celebrates its silver jubilee with over 900 disabled ex-Servicemen on the payroll.
1969: Car poppy replaced with sticker.
1969: Dennis Cadman becomes the first Second World War man to lead the Legion.
June 1969: 25th anniversary pilgrimage to Normandy to mark D-Day and to Anzio to mark the landings in Italy.
May 1971: The Legion marks its 50th anniversary and is given the title Royal. The Queen's crown is added to the badge. Rededication ceremony at Westminster Abbey.
1971: BBC decides not to send the Festival of Remembrance out live but edited. Legion concerns are misplaced and audience numbers are high.
1971: The Legion joins the WVF (World Veterans Association).
October 1972: Chairman of the Belfast Branch of the Legion killed by a bomb explosion.
1973: The Legion's Annual Conference resolves that the wording for the Cenotaph service should change from remembering 'the dead of two world wars' to 'all who had died in the service of their country'. The government does not accept the change until 1979.
1975: Charles Busby became the first Chairman who is not from the Army. He had flown with the RAF during the Second World War.
1977: The Queen's silver jubilee. The Legion parades at Windsor Castle.
1982: The Falklands War encourages a new generation to support the Armed Forces and the Legion.
1983, November: First Legion youth band performs at the Festival of Remembrance.
1983: Mrs Sara Jones, widow of Falklands VC Lt Col 'H' Jones, launches the Poppy Appeal to bring home the reality of the sacrifice that war involves.
1987: The Annual Conference votes for poppies with leaves. This causes an issue as two hands are required. By 1995 the Poppy Factory can supply 10 million poppies with leaves made through an automated process. That year the HF (Haig Fund) in the centre of the poppy disappears.
1990: Legion wants public to pay £1 for poppies. It launches the appeal with images of Nazi troops in London with the phrase: 'Give Thanks – It could have happened – It very nearly did.' It is highly controversial, but takings are up by £1 million.
1991: The Legion organises parcels for each man and woman in the British Forces in the Gulf for Christmas. It is so popular it continues the following year and also to Bosnia, Belize and other countries with British Forces.
1991: The *Kohima Epitaph* is included in the service of Remembrance for the first time.
1995, May 8: 50th Anniversary of VE Day marked by parade of Legion Standards in London. The Queen as President of the Legion lights a beacon in Hyde Park, the signal for a chain of a thousand beacons throughout the UK.
1995: First Pedal to Paris.
1995: Conference passes a motion to reintroduce the Two-Minute Silence at 11am on 11 November.
1996, October 30: Cross-party support in the House of Commons for the marking of the Two Minute Silence.
1996, November 11: The Prime Minister officially marks the Two Minutes Silence for the first time since the Second World War.
1997: The Spice Girls join Vera Lynn to launch the Poppy Appeal. That year takings are up by over £1 million.
2000: The National Memorial Arboretum is formally unveiled.
2002: The Queen unveils the Memorial Gates on Constitution Hill in London.
2004: The Legion takes over responsibility for the National Memorial Arboretum.
2005: First responders are included in the Festival of Remembrance for the first time in acknowledgement of their role in the 7/7 bomb attacks on London.
2007: The Queen unveils the Armed Forces Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum.
2009: The Legion moves its HQ from Pall Mall to Haig House on Borough High Street. Haig House is unveiled by The Queen.
2009: Establishment of the Battle Back Centre at the Sports England site near Telford.
2011: PoppyScotland merges with the Royal British Legion.
2011: The Armed Forces Covenant is placed in legislation, following the Legion's successful Honour the Covenant campaign.
2011: The Legion funds the establishment of the RBL Centre for Blast Injuries Studies at Imperial College London, using pioneering science to prevent blast injuries and care for the after effects of those with blast injuries.
2014: Centenary of the First World War is marked by Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red at the Tower of London. 888,246 poppies each represent the life of a member of the British Armed Forces lost in the First World War.
2016: The launch of Branch Community Support which has played such a vital role over the period of the Covid-19 pandemic.
2016: The Invictus Games are launched by Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex.
2017: The Khadi Poppy is launched at Lords by Indian and England cricket captains Virat Kohli and Joe Root.
2018: GP 90, the Grand Pilgrimage, marks the 90th anniversary of the Great Pilgrimage of 1928.
2019: D-Day 75 is marked by a seven-day cruise around the Channel with 255 veterans, their carers and support staff aboard the MV Boudicca, culminating in a service of thanksgiving on the beaches of Normandy.
2020: The Legion marks VE Day under lockdown with an online celebration.
2020: VJ Day 75 is marked by a magnificent ceremony at the National Memorial Arboretum attended by veterans and representatives from the 14th Army, the Gurkhas and prisoners of the Japanese. It was attended by the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall as well as the Prime Minister.
2020: The Legion's campaign Count Them In is successful and for the first time in the history of the census a question about the Armed Services will be included (for 2021).

The Armed Forces community are being encouraged to visit the RBL's Centenary Hub at www.rbl.org.uk to find out more about

Centenary of hope



THE Royal British Legion is celebrating its 100th Anniversary in 2021 with a special programme of activity, culminating in a Centenary Poppy Appeal.

Throughout the year the RBL will pay tribute to those who have contributed to its proud legacy and celebrate the communities in the UK and around the world which are at its heart.

The serving population has played a vital role throughout the RBL's history and the charity is urging all the Armed Forces community to host their own event over the summer as part of the celebrations.

The RBL's 100th birthday falls on May 15. On this day in 1921, representatives of the four national organisations of ex-Servicemen came together at the Cenotaph to create the British Legion. Born in the aftermath of World War 1, the charity's founding mission was to fight for the rights of those who had given so much and come back to so little.

Today, the RBL continues to stand with the Armed Forces community and challenge injustices to ensure all those who have served and sacrificed on our behalf get the fair treatment and recognition they deserve.

Over the past century the RBL has successfully campaigned for a series of landmark changes which have benefitted serving personnel and veterans.

Between the two world wars, it lobbied the government to provide for those who had been injured, disabled, widowed or orphaned as a result of active service.

More recently the charity has been at the forefront of calls for the Armed Forces Covenant to be enshrined in law.

For the first time in history, a military question was included in the Census in England and Wales this year after a successful campaign led by the RBL and Poppyscotland.

The addition of this question will provide a greater understanding about the Armed Forces community including where they are and the type of support they need.

The RBL is also calling for the UK Government to scrap the visa fees faced by Commonwealth veterans. Currently Commonwealth service personnel have to pay £2,389 each for the right to stay in the UK after serving their country. The RBL will continue to fight to improve the health, finances and well-being of the Armed Forces community in the years to come.

With 100 years of experience, the RBL provides lifelong care and support to all serving and ex-serving personnel and their families. This ranges from expert advice and guidance, to recovery and rehabilitation, through to transitioning to civilian life.

One of the RBL's earliest interventions after World War 1 treated tuberculosis, rheumatism and arthritis which were widespread among the veteran population.

In an age before the National Health Service, the British Legion implemented specialist treatment facilities for these conditions.

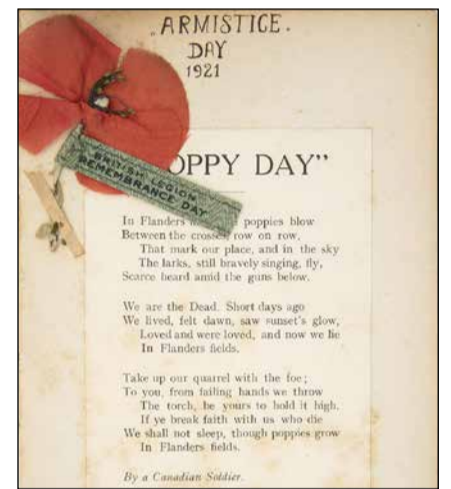
Twenty years later these hospitals and wards became some of the foundation building blocks of the newly established NHS.

At the height of more recent combat operations in 2011, the RBL opened its Battle Back Centre in Lilleshall to support wounded and injured service personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

That same year, the RBL also helped fund and establish the Centre for



Left Poppies being made in the 1950s; Right, the Field of Remembrance outside Westminster Abbey in 1930, both pictures courtesy of The Poppy Factory Archives



From left, Earl Haig at a Poppy factory in Richmond pre-1928; Poppy Sellers in 1923 (images courtesy of The Royal British Legion/Heather Anne Johnson/Gavin Kingcome); 1921 Mme Guerin poppy on a note, picture courtesy of Andy Chaloner/Gavin Kingcome



Left, the 2019 Pedal to Paris; Right, Royal Navy veteran Tony Snelling is pictured on the first day of the D-Day 75 voyage of remembrance

Blast Injury Studies at Imperial College London. This was the first collaboration of its kind, bringing together civilian engineers, medics and scientists to work alongside military doctors to reduce the effects of roadside bombs and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

The RBL Centre for Blast Injury Studies has a legacy which continues to benefit those serving today as well as those yet to join up; from armoured vehicle seating positions to stump skincare and advances in treating hearing loss.

In 2018 the Royal British Legion also funded the Complex Trauma Gym at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre, Stanford Hall. It is the largest of the DMRC's indoor spaces and the home to crucial recovery journeys. Here, patients with complex injuries are able to focus on regaining mobility, fitness and independence.

Many of today's Armed Forces community are struggling in the face of losses, hardships and challenges. The

RBL has pledged to be there for them, whenever and however they need help.

The Royal British Legion's Head of Armed Forces Engagement, Alexander Owen said: "Over the last 100 years the military community has helped the RBL build our proud legacy which continues to this day.

"In this special year we pay tribute to the passionate and dedicated support given to us by generations of serving personnel and their families.

"From volunteering during the Poppy Appeal, to taking on fundraising challenges or being a part of our Remembrance and commemorative events, these contributions help make the RBL what it is today.

"We are very grateful for the role the Armed Forces play and encourage the whole military community to come together to help us celebrate our proud history.

"For 100 years the Royal British Legion has been a symbol of hope for

the Armed Forces community.

"In our centenary year, we want to inspire the next generation of the serving community to be part of our future and continue our vital work in the years to come. We remain dedicated to our mission of creating better futures for all those who serve with the British Armed Forces."

The Armed Forces community are being encouraged to visit the RBL's Centenary Hub at www.rbl.org.uk to find out more about the charity's history and why, 100 years on, it still leads the way in providing support for the Armed Forces community.

There will also be a collection of personal stories and images which bring to life the history of the RBL's past 100 years. From silk poppies to acts of heroism, the story of the RBL reflects on a century supporting those who have served and sacrificed.

There will be a special commemorative service at Westminster

Abbey in October and centenary themed activity as part of the annual Poppy Appeal and Festival of Remembrance in November.

Two commemorative books are also being released.

We Are The Legion, The Royal British Legion at 100 by Julie Summers is the first book to look at the whole hundred years of the Royal British Legion, telling the extraordinary story of support to servicemen and women in the UK and around the world – from finding jobs and housing to healing the injuries and trauma of conflict. Richly illustrated with over 350 images, including an extraordinary collection of early poppy designs, Legion posters and unseen archive shots, the book, published by Profile Books, also includes original photography specially commissioned for the project. Publication date: May 6, priced £18.99

The second is *Cooking with Heroes*, for more details see page 47.

about the charity's history and why, 100 years on, it still leads the way in providing support for the Armed Forces community.

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100
YEARS OF SUPPORTING THE ARMED
FORCES COMMUNITY

Volunteers wanted for deep dive into Covid



NAVY divers are needed to help medics and scientists understand the long-term effects of Covid on the UK's military.

Experts at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre near Loughborough and Oxford University Hospitals are conducting a world-leading study into how coronavirus affects soldiers, sailors and aviators.

They perform two days of demanding mental and physical tests to make a thorough assessment of the health of subjects – and any lingering effects of the virus.

Around 100 personnel who've suffered from Covid at some stage over the past 12 months have volunteered for the study.

Divers are key to the study as they act as 'control' subjects – thanks to their general levels of fitness and comprehensive medical records given the extremely challenging nature of their job.

"Through generously giving up their time to participate in the study, military divers are turning their own misfortune in becoming infected with the virus into wider benefit for the diving community and beyond," said Surgeon Lieutenant Stuart McPhail.

"Data from the study should help those from all walks of life suffering with long term symptoms."

Able Seaman Diver Philip Newlove, pictured left, is one of the Royal Navy volunteers.

An expert in mine clearance/ordnance disposal with more than six years' service under his belt, he contracted

Covid last year while deployed to the USA.

He suffered the usual symptoms – coughing, exhaustion and a loss of taste/smell/appetite – for about three weeks, with the cough lingering for another five.

Thankfully, he's made a full recovery with no long-term symptoms and has returned to work having been declared fit to dive by Navy medics.

Philip spent a day at Stanford Hall in Nottinghamshire for various physical tests in the gym and in the lab, plus some assessment of his cognitive skills, before moving to John Radcliffe University Hospital in Oxford for MRI and CT scans, lung function tests and a monitored spell on an exercise bike.

"I volunteered for the study not only to aid research into better understand Covid and its effects on the body, but I also saw it as an excellent opportunity to get a very in-depth health check – almost like an MOT for the body – which would otherwise have cost a lot of money," he said.

"I was quite nervous about tests but the doctors were very understanding and explained exactly what was going to happen and what was expected of me throughout the whole process.

"I would encourage any other potential volunteers to go for it. You have nothing to lose, you're contributing to a good cause and getting a free health check.

What's not to like?"

Around half a dozen divers have come forward so far, but more are needed to ensure the results of the study – known as M-Covid – are based on firm foundations when they are made known later this year.

Any military diver who's recovered from the virus and wishes to take part, should contact Surg Lt Stuart McPhail at NAVYINM-UMDGD04@mod.gov.uk



Take a bow, HMS Glasgow

THIS is the future of the Royal Navy's frigate fleet for the next quarter of a century and beyond.

Rolled out of the construction hall where she has taken shape since the first steel was cut in July 2017, this is the bow section of HMS Glasgow, the lead ship of eight Type 26 frigates.

In a move which lasted 90 minutes, the forward section – which contains the bridge, operations room and accommodation spaces – was manoeuvred into position on the hardstand at BAE Systems' Govan yard where it will be joined by the aft section in the coming weeks.

Glasgow and her seven sisters will replace the 'souped up' Type 23 frigates which specialise in anti-submarine operations, working alongside five general-purpose Type 31 frigates replacing their equivalent Type 23 counterparts.

The 26s will incorporate some of the weapons and sensors from their predecessors – notably the Artisan radar and Sea Ceptor air defence missile – plus new systems and innovations, including a 5in main gun (instead

of the long-standing 4.5in) capable of hitting targets 22 miles away, towed array sensors for anti-submarine warfare and a 'mission bay' which can hold whatever is required for a specific mission: automated minehunters, drones, humanitarian aid.

Simon Lister, Managing Director of BAE Systems' Naval Ships, said the emergence of HMS Glasgow from the hall marked the end of construction of every section of the frigate.

"The roll out is a huge milestone for the Type 26 programme.

"It's evidence of our solid progress in building the first of a new class and presents an opportunity for us to celebrate the progress being made with our colleagues, our suppliers, our customer and the City of Glasgow," he added.

Of the eight ships in the class – each named after one of the UK's great cities and all to be built by BAE on the Clyde – the first three have been ordered.

Cardiff is roughly two years behind Glasgow, while the first steel on the new HMS Belfast is due to be cut later this year.

Contracts to support two weapon systems

THE guns which spew out an impenetrable wall of lead against incoming threats by sea and air will receive a £15m overhaul over the next two years.

Defence firm Babcock has been awarded a contract to provide continued support for the Phalanx Close-in Weapon System.

The automated Gatling guns – which served extensively defending UK bases in Iraq – can pump out up to 75 20mm rounds per second at missiles, aircraft or fast attack craft which might succeed in evading a ship or task force's outer defences.

Phalanx is fitted to the RN's carriers, assault ships, Type 45 destroyers and numerous RFA vessels.

Since 2006 the long-term support for the guns has been provided by Babcock, which

operates a specialist facility in Devonport. The contract covers upgrades, maintenance, and round-the-clock technical support for the guns into 2023.

Babcock have also been awarded a five year contract extension by the Ministry of Defence to continue in-service support to the Royal Navy's 4.5 Mk8 Medium Calibre Gun (MCG).

The agreement is worth c. £43m and will see the continuation of in-service support to the 4.5 MCG across 19 Type 23 Frigates and Type 45 Destroyers as well as HMS Collingwood. The continued collaboration between Babcock and BAE Systems, the Gun's designer, offers the capacity, proven capabilities and infrastructure to safely and effectively run in-service support.



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One giant leap for RFA

THE US military's unique aircraft-cum-helicopter has been training with amphibious ship RFA Mounts Bay – ready for further interaction in the Baltic this spring.

The US Air Force's 7th Special Operations Squadron dropped in on the support vessel off Portland with their MV-22 Osprey, the 'tiltrotor' which takes off and lands like a helicopter, then rotates its propellers to fly like a conventional aircraft.

Operated by the US Marine Corps and US Air Force, it's the main battlewagon for carrying American marines and related units into theatre.

Royal Marines rely on the Merlin Mk4 to carry 24 commandos into battle at

a time (based a short distance from Portland at RNAS Yeovilton with 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons).



The Osprey has a similar capacity (at a push you can squeeze an extra eight troops in the cabin), but can fly higher, further and faster than a helicopter, plus thanks to its tiltrotor design, can land in and take-off from tight spots.

It flew into Dorset from RAF Mildenhall in Suffolk, making use of the HeliOperations training facility in Portland – which occupies part of the old HMS Osprey site – as a lily pad (support/refuelling etc) while working with Mounts Bay.

The training – focused on safe

operations on and off the Bay-class ship's flight deck – gave Mounts Bay's aircraft handlers/air operations team their first chance to work with an Osprey.

The Ospreys have dropped in on Royal Navy flight decks over the past decade, but not on a Bay-class ship until now.

The vessels provide additional space to carry marines/troops and their equipment in support of Albion-class assault ships which spearhead any UK amphibious operation.

Further link ups are planned later this spring when Mounts Bay joins HMS Albion and the UK's Littoral Strike Group heads to the Baltic for exercises with US and NATO forces, including the

region's largest annual naval workout, Baltops.

Second Officer Jon Loughton, Mounts Bay's operations officer, said the American crew had "jumped at the task with open arms" and shared their experience and expertise with the RFA ship's sailors.

"I can say, without a doubt, this opportunity left a lasting impression on the crews embarked on RFA Mounts Bay," he added.

"We've taken a great leap in working towards approval to operate the Osprey on-board Bay-class vessels, again building on the strong interoperability that the USA and UK have."



New fast-patrol boats for Gib

A NEW Cutlass and Dagger will protect the people of Gibraltar and UK interests in the Rock's territorial waters.

The Queen has approved the names of two new £9.9m fast patrol which will form the backbone of the Royal Navy's Gibraltar Squadron.

They will provide 24/7/365 cover, racing through the waters around the territory at speeds up to 40kts, providing protection for Royal Navy and visiting allied warships with machine-guns and, potentially, heavy machine-guns.

The squadron currently patrols the territorial waters with HMS Dasher and Pursuer, plus several small Pacific 24 RIBs.

Dasher and Pursuer are temporary replacements for the squadron's long-standing guardians, fast patrol boats HMS Scimitar and Sabre, which returned to the UK last summer.

The new names have been chosen to reflect the history of their predecessors and their association with Gibraltar.

HMS Cutlass, the first of their permanent successors will be delivered to the Royal Navy this autumn, followed by HMS Dagger in the spring of 2022.

The MOD ordered the 19-metre boats from Merseyside-based Marine Specialised Technology last year.

Each with a crew of six sailors and operating out of the Naval Base in Gibraltar, the two boats will be the first vessels built for the Royal Navy on the Mersey in 30 years.

Dagger is a name new to the Royal Navy; it was due to have been assigned to a Weapon-class anti-submarine escort in late World War 2, but the conflict ended and the ship was cancelled.

Only one previous HMS Cutlass has served under the White Ensign. During the 1970s with her sisters Scimitar and Sabre – not the same vessels which later served in Gibraltar – she was used to train Royal Navy and NATO warships to deal with the threat of fast missile/torpedo craft as part of the 1st Fast Training Boat Squadron.

Intense training for HMS Dragon

HMS Dragon has been put through her paces with weeks of intense training as she builds up to operations.

The Portsmouth-based ship went through several challenging scenarios including simulated attacks from fast craft and from the air.

The Type 45 destroyer was tasked with protecting the fictitious Freeport – what Plymouth is known as during training exercises like this – from any danger during an intensive three weeks at sea.

Despite poor weather in the Channel, Dragon was able to complete a variety of serials, testing her abilities across all warfare disciplines.

In the ops room, the ship's company dealt with threats from surface combatant vessels, completed air defence exercises and tested their nerve against small fast attack craft.

They also took part in intelligence gathering exercises, culminating in the famous Royal Navy Thursday War, which sees the ship complete war-

fighting and damage control exercises.

All of this was part of HMS Dragon's FOST period. Fleet Operational Sea Training ensures the ship and her crew are ready for anything as they head on missions.



As part of the training, the ship faces a loss of capability to see how her sailors can adapt when radars, weapons or communications go down.

"It was a really challenging few weeks, particularly as I had never done FOST training before," AB Jade Anderton said.

"We had to work really hard to make sure the picture we were providing to command was accurate, especially when they started taking some of our radars away. It was great to feel that we'd improved as a team."

Along with showing their abilities to fight, the ship's company also had to show they could deal with other emergency situations including fires, medical incidents and floods.

Leading Writer Michael Smith said: "At action

and emergency, my role is to collect and maintain the picture of what is happening. It allows the person in charge of the Zone Control Points to see at a glance which issues fall under our responsibility.

"That allows them to prioritise critical incidents, for example magazine compartments and electrical supplies. At one point a fire below the bridge caused it to become cut off and the ZCP had to decide the best way to gain access using the picture and information I provided."

Logistics parties are also ready throughout the ship. The stores team are poised ready to provide stores and material as required to fix damage.

The sickbay team are ready to assist any wounded personnel – either from the sickbay itself or other first aid posts and the Catering Services team are often 'double-hatted', ready to respond to incidents at any time as part of the fire-fighting and first aid teams.

HMS Dragon is continuing with further training around the south coast.

■ TACKLING THE COLD:
Serbian forces are taught
by Royal Marines Mountain
Leader, Colour Sergeant
James Keenan



“The Serbians responded very well to our methods and were very interested to learn new tactics. They learnt how to ski off piste and through forests, how to ascend steep terrain with ski skins carrying weapons and equipment, in addition to learning about how the cold effects tactical considerations and how we counter this.”

Colour Sergeant James Keenan

SERBIANS GET ROYALS TREATMENT

ROYAL MARINES MOUNTAIN LEADER TEACHES ARCTIC TACTICS IN SERBIAN MOUNTAINS



A ROYAL Marines expert in cold weather and mountain warfare shared valuable expertise with troops in Serbia on a unique mission.

Colour Sergeant James Keenan is part of the specialist Royal Marines Mountain Leaders and led a small group from the UK to teach officers from the Serbian Military Academy.

Mountain Leaders are UK defence's specialists in Arctic and mountain warfare and are experts in amphibious operations, cliff assaults and reconnaissance.

Their secondary role is to train others in their unique skill set, which is why instructor C/Sgt Keenan headed for Serbia on a ten-day training mission joined by Army Instructors Captain Joel Turner and Sergeant Thomas Mawle of 6th Division. They shared winter warfare experiences and safety training, including avalanche awareness and crevasse rescue in the mountains around Kopaonik, a four-hour drive south of the capital Belgrade.

C/Sgt Keenan said: “The Serbians responded very well to our methods and were very interested to learn new tactics. They learnt how to ski off piste

and through forests, how to ascend steep terrain with ski skins carrying weapons and equipment, in addition to learning about how the cold effects tactical considerations and how we counter this.

“Working closely with the Army and Royal Marines is fantastic as it shows how two services can come together and identify lessons and solutions to deliver training of the highest level.”

Major General Bojan Zrnic, Commandant of the Military Academy, said: “Our goal is to improve the curriculum related to winter warfare training, so students can receive top training and prepare for these conditions.

“We saw equipment we have not encountered so far, which helped us to improve the quality of winter warfare training. It is important that both parties learn from each other.”

UK Defence Attaché in Belgrade, Colonel Nick Ilic, added: “We are pleased to have the opportunity to exchange experiences in cold-weather training because that is the most difficult way to train.

“I am glad that the training has been conducted despite difficult conditions caused not only by Covid restrictions, but also by adverse weather.”

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The Forth element

WHILE wispy föhn clouds hug the snow-capped peaks, patrol ship HMS Forth anchors in the inlet below with the guardian of South Georgia's fishing stocks, Pharos SG.

For the third time since deploying to the Falklands last year, the second-generation River class braved several hundred miles of open South Atlantic waters to visit the wildlife paradise on a ten-day environmental mission to ensure the pristine island chain remains a safe haven for all of God's creatures.

Continued overleaf 





➔ Continued from page 23

This was the final opportunity for Forth to call on the island before winter in the Southern Hemisphere sets in and ice makes the passage too dangerous.

The River-class patrol ship embarked an additional 40 personnel (nearly double that of her usual ship's company) taken from a variety of sections from Mount Pleasant Complex: Roulement Infantry Company composed of the 1st Battalion Irish Guards, Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians from the Royal Logistic Corps, chefs from the Army and RAF and the base support wing and a couple of Royal

Navy Reservists, all of whom made use of her 50-bed Embarked Military Forces mess deck to accommodate and feed the guests.

Before leaving her base in the Falklands, Forth received a briefing from members of the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI) about the importance of biosecurity measures.

This included a visit from Sammy, the rodent-sniffing dog, who conducted his own set of "rounds" of the ship to ensure there were no furry stowaways!

The ship's company and embarked forces were taught how to properly decontaminate their kit to remove seeds, spores and other foreign

objects which may damage the magnificent but delicate ecosystem of South Georgia. Biocide was on hand when going ashore to kill any remaining contaminants.

The journey put the guests' stomachs to the test as the ship encountered strong winds and heavy South Atlantic seas. The challenging weather made the arrival in South Georgia all the more attractive for those passengers who'd not got their 'sea legs' yet.

A meteorologist was on hand to deliver detailed and up-to-date forecasts to the ship's command team and bridge watchkeepers. Routine training continued during the voyage, with the ship exercising in machinery

and steering gear breakdown drills, a firefighting exercise, and boat drills.

Army and RAF chefs swapped their kitchens ashore for the ship's galley as they learned how Forth's catering services ratings operate at sea. The tri-service catering team worked together to cook around 240 meals a day: three meals a day for the 80 souls on board.

Once in South Georgia, the ship's company and embarked guests were offered several chances to stretch their legs ashore and get up close and personal with the island's stunning scenery and rich wildlife.

Personnel were ferried ashore in the patrol ship's two Pacific 24 seaboats King Edward Point near to

the British Antarctic Survey's South Georgia research station while further north smaller Rigid Raider craft landed personnel at Husvik harbour (another abandoned whaling station) for 72 hours of adventurous training in the harsh environment.

One of the main efforts of Forth's visit was to land Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians led by Sergeant Bethany Bray from the Royal Logistics Corps.

Their mission was to locate and deal with leftover historical munitions, in this case from the conflict in 1982.





The island was the first place occupied by Argentine forces in March 1982... and the first place liberated by British forces the following month, following a naval bombardment of the hills around Grytviken and an assault by Special Forces and Royal Marines, which led to a rapid surrender by the occupiers.

Nearly 40 years later and the disposal team, accompanied by Petty Officer 'Cat' Stephens and Able Seaman El-leigh Neale, returned to the scene of the barrage on the hills above Grytviken where they found and rocket motors which could have

posed a hazard to the British Antarctic Survey scientists who work there year-round, or to the seals, seabirds and penguins who call the island home.

AB Neale even had the chance to set off the detonation herself, and fittingly described the mission as "the bomb"! The success of the explosive ordnance disposal team means South Georgia is now safer for tourists, scientists and animals alike.

From booms to serenity and Grytviken church (which at 54 degrees South is one of the most southerly houses of worship in the world) hosted a service for the military personnel, led by Naval Chaplain Thomas Bakulumpagi, padre of Patrol

Ships, Underwater Exploitation and Diving vessels', which covers more than three dozen ships in the Inshore Patrol and Overseas Patrol, as well as the two Mine Countermeasures Squadrons.

At sea, Forth linked up with Pharos SG, the South Georgian fishery patrol vessel, to conduct joint training during the patrol. Pharos does what River-class ships do waters around the UK: ensures fishing vessels stick within the regulations.

South Georgian waters are home to lucrative stocks of Patagonian toothfish, cod icefish and krill – which can only be harvested in specific quantities and at certain times of the year.

Beyond a spot of joint boarding/ inspection training, the two vessels inspected Fortuna glacier which spills into the Atlantic on the island's north coast.

It's just one wall of ice encountered by Forth on her final visit of the Austral summer to South Georgia.

Overhead, support was given by the Royal Air Force's A400M "Grizzly" transporter from Mount Pleasant in the Falklands.

The aircraft flew a 1,700-nautical-mile round trip on a 'cold stare' mission – to identify large icebergs in Forth's path which may pose a hazard to the ship and her crew. This included the remnants of A68a which only a few months ago was the largest

iceberg in the world, and which recently grounded on South Georgia's continental shelf splitting into many smaller parts.

"The South Atlantic is a truly joint environment and this patrol is proof of that. Engineers, bomb disposal technicians, submariners, chefs, medics, civilians, infantry and sailors have come together to achieve a common goal," said Forth's Executive Officer, Lt Cdr Richard Attwater.

"This is my second time in South Georgia after 14 years and it remains a career highlight.

Pictures: Cdr Chris Hollingworth, Surg Lt Rory Goodenough, Sub Lt Owen Long LCH Mark Stokes-Lilley and AB El-Leigh Neale





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THE Executive Officer of HMS Tyne keeps a close watch on Russian warships in the Channel.

Tyne and her sister patrol vessels Mersey and Severn were called upon to monitor the presence of seven Russian Federation Navy vessels plus an Algerian submarine as they sailed past the British Isles.

The latter was tracked on the surface as it returned home to Africa by HMS Severn, which normally trains Royal Navy navigators but also acts as the eyes and ears of the Fleet in home waters.

"It has been a pleasant duty to welcome our Algerian friends for their transit of UK waters in great weather as they head home," said Commander Philip Harper, Severn's Commanding Officer.

Trainee officer Sub Lieutenant Lara Martin added: "This has been my first operation in the Royal Navy – I feel I have broadened my knowledge and experience tenfold within the last week of the role that we play in protecting our national interests."

Heading in the opposite direction, HMS Mersey met up with a trio of vessels – frigate Admiral

Kasatonov, a supporting tug Nikolay Chiker and tanker Vyazma – off Ushant in France and stayed with them through the Channel and Dover Strait and into the North Sea.

Her monitoring mission was made more challenging by adverse weather conditions such as high winds and large sea states which meant the Russian ships took longer than usual to pass through as they sheltered in more confined waters before resuming their journey.

Mersey's ship's company worked around the clock to ensure that the three Russian ships passed the area safely with navigating officer Lieutenant Thomas Bees saying that "the Russian Federation naval vessels operated in a safe and professional manner throughout their transit."

His Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Edward Munns added: "Mersey proved her flexibility once more in being able to react to a short notice tasking quickly and successfully. Throughout this tasking my ship's company displayed outstanding

professionalism to switch their mind set to National Tasking and dutifully ensured the safe transit of these vessels."

The primary role of the vessels is to ensure all fishing vessels operating in home waters abide by the rules and stick to UK regulations in the country's Exclusive Economic Zone on behalf of the Marine Management Organisation.

With the River class typically at sea for ten months of the year, they act as the eyes and ears of the Navy around the UK, keeping an eye on any suspicious activity as well as monitoring the presence of any warships from countries of interest to Britain and her NATO allies.

Before the Kasatonov group sailed through the Channel Mersey worked in tandem with HMS Tyne to keep constant watch on four Russian vessels sailing through the Channel towards the Atlantic.

The quartet – three Ropucha-class amphibious ships capable of landing tanks, Minsk, Kaliningrad and Korolev, and the frigate Boiky – were located in the North Sea and closely followed through the

Dover Strait and into the English Channel before reaching the open waters of the North Atlantic.

As part of the operation, the ships worked with several allied NATO ships and aircraft to ensure the Russian force was observed seamlessly.

Tyne's operations officer Lieutenant Justin Shirtcliff said: "All interaction with Russian units was safe and professional throughout the operation."

Lt Nicholas Ward, Tyne's executive officer, added: "Once again HMS Tyne demonstrated the fantastic capability that the River-class ships provide. We have quickly switched from conducting fishery protection to working with our NATO allies monitoring foreign warships operating close to the UK. We're all proud on Tyne to be part of the team protecting the nation's interests."



KEEP UP WITH THE SHIPS

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



Veteran ends FAA links after 41 years

FOR the past four decades, Andy Wardle has been a mainstay of ensuring Royal Navy helicopters are safe and ever-ready for front-line operations.

But no more as the chief petty officer retires after 42 years' service – 41 of them as a helicopter engineer.

Andy joined the Navy as an artificer apprentice, but switched to the Fleet Air Arm after 12 months and trained as an air engineering technician.

He learned everything he knows as an air engineer from an 'old and bold' Chief Petty Officer Jack Batty who started his career on Seafires (that's the Naval version of the Spitfire, retired in 1954).

Once qualified, Andy has deployed repeatedly with Lynx flights in support of front-line frigate and destroyer operations with 829 and 815 Naval Air Squadrons including (deep breath) HM Ships Argonaut, Sirius, Broadsword, Brave, Monmouth, Portland, Arrow, Sheffield, Avenger and Iron Duke.

In 2013 he received his Meritorious Service Medal in recognition of his long, valuable service with irreproachable conduct throughout.

And with the advent of the Lynx's successor Wildcat, he re-trained to maintain the Fleet Air Arm's newest helicopter.

With retirement looming, colleagues on front-line Wildcat squadron 815 Naval Air Squadron at Yeovilton asked Andy to recount his career in brief – he said he enough stories to fill an autobiography... but he did dig out one from his first deployment to the Baltic working as a Lynx mechanic.

"The aircrew decided that they wanted to 'snowball the bridge' during a routine sortie but unfortunately the only source of a snow was a nearby iceberg which was unsuitable for landing on," he explains.

"Rather than giving up, the crew elected to winch down the observer to collect a bag full of snow. Unfortunately, the recovery of the observer turned out to be rather tricky and almost resulted in the aircraft needing to return for fuel!

"Luckily the observer was recovered safely and all was well but certainly a story of a different generation!"

That first, eventful deployment was, says Andy, "the steepest learning curve you could ever have hoped for."

"I have to say a huge, heartfelt thank you to the ships' flight community, without whom I would never have grown into the man I am today."

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Trainee submariners pass first test on way to earning Dolphins

TWENTY-FOUR submariner trainees at HM Naval Base Clyde passed-out from the first phase of their Submarine Qualifying Course (SMQ).

The students – being trained for service on board Astute-class submarines – reached the culmination of their ten-week “dry phase”, the classroom part of the course conducted on dry land at Clyde’s Fleet Operational Sea Training (North) (FOST)(N).

The class of 24 students, the first Astute-class of 2021, graduated on the day with Commodore Jim Perks OBE, Commodore Submarine Service presenting each student with their certificates in

the HMS Neptune Supermess.

“The SMQ dry phase is an intensive course designed to test the mettle of the students and all those that are successful have achieved a great deal in a short space of time,” said SMQ Training Officer, Warrant Officer 1 Brown.

“They are now ready to be released to submarines and continue with their wet phase and subsequently earn their coveted Dolphins.”

The best student award was presented to Able Rating Chef Oliver Jenkins for delivering the best overall performance during the course. This award is based not only on the trainee’s

academic achievements but also on their attitude, commitment and, most importantly, their teamwork.

In addition to the passing-out, one of the SMQ instructors, Petty Officer (Communications and Information Systems Submarines) (PO (CISSM)) Thomas Reece was also awarded a Long Service and Good Conduct award to recognise 15 years of service.

PO(CISSM) Reece said: “It is a very proud day for myself. I remember passing out from SMQ(Dry) myself and it was also a very proud moment. All of these successful students will feel a

great deal of achievement.”

Prospective submariners join FOST (North) at HM Naval Base Clyde for the “dry phase” of their training. After successfully completing a final exam, oral board and walk-rounds of a nuclear submarine, they pass-out, eventually joining a nuclear submarine. It is there the second phase of training begins – known as the “wet phase”.

Students complete their SMQ training at sea on board a Royal Navy submarine and it is only then that they are entitled to wear the coveted Dolphins badge – the mark of a qualified submariner.

Magnificent seven for steady Eddy

SEVEN marathons in seven days is the effort made by Eddy Eggleton – inspired by the plight of Rugby League icon Rob Burrow.

The Portsmouth-based logistician is a Hull FC fan but was spurred into action by Rob’s very-publicly-documented struggle with motor neurone disease and a similar running challenge completed by his former Leeds Rhino teammate Kevin Sinfield earlier this year.

Kev’s ‘7in7’ challenge has so far raised more than £2.7m after completing seven marathons in northern England in as many days.

Able rating Eddy set himself a £1k target taking the same route from his workplace in the Waterfront Logistics Support Group to Fareham and back.

Eddy, from Barton-Upon-Humber, had two marathons under his belt before deciding on this challenge and generally runs about 25 miles a week, but two days into his endeavour was finding the going tough.

“Whatever pain I went through during the seven days is nothing compared to what people with MND go through,” he said.

“I love what Rob Burrow brought to Rugby League, being a little man in a massive man’s game, and for someone with the heart of a lion to be debilitated with MND is awful.

“First day of running went really well, I ran it in four hours 17 minutes, took it easy before the end because I knew I had to do it over seven days so I slowed down a bit.

“Day 2 was a struggle; I’ve got a dodgy ankle so I had to take it a bit easier from then on, but I was determined to get through all seven.”

Support came from workmate Tom



Galloway, who cycled alongside Eddy carrying water and energy gels, and running back on to base by 3pm each day meant the runner could make a physio appointment and prepare for the following day’s marathon.

By Day 7 Eddy’s pace had slowed considerably. He finished his final 26-mile-plus slog in seven hours and 38 minutes,

having covered 652.88 miles in all over the week – enough to take him to Leipzig in Germany in one go.

More importantly, he’d smashed his target, raising over £3,500. To donate to the Motor Neurone Disease Association via Eddy’s efforts, go to justgiving.com and search for [Edward’s 7in7-Eddy](#)



Kent crew dig deep

WHILE HMS Kent has had a very busy last year preparing for the upcoming CSG21 deployment, the ship’s work in supporting its affiliated charity has continued at every opportunity.

Whether at sea, or in the T23’s home port of Portsmouth, neither the challenges of lockdown nor the high-tempo programme have prevented the sailors of the frigate from doing everything they can, as a family bubble of around 200, to continue to raise money for Demelza House Children’s Hospice, located in the ship’s home county of Kent.

Within the last 12-months, Kent has managed to raise in excess of £4,500 for Demelza House, through a number of initiatives and events.

A team of nine sailors kayaked from UK coast-to-coast, starting in Bristol and ending at the Thames, and the Warrant Officer’s and Chief Petty Officers’ Mess hosted a ‘horse racing’ night for the Ship’s Company.

Petty Officer (Catering Services) Theophilus Toney, 36, also took on the mantle of ship’s volunteer barber, for a small donation.

He said: ‘I feel really proud to have been able to contribute to supporting our ship’s charity. It’s important that we do everything we can and the barber role is something I enjoy.’

He added: “Any small contribution we can make has got to be a good thing, especially when so many charities are suffering as a result of Covid.”



Cheery farewell as trio depart RN

SAILORS and staff at HMS Collingwood have said goodbye to three senior officers as they move on to pastures new.

Commander Mark Walker, the Executive Officer, Surgeon Commander (Dentist) Julie Skelley, the Senior Dental Officer and Reverend Mike Meachin, all said goodbye to the site where they have served over the past two years, with them all now leaving the Royal Navy.

Cdr Walker, who has served for 41 years, specialised as a pilot and saw a model helicopter display had been arranged for his farewell.

Surgeon Commander (Dentist) Skelley has served at Collingwood several times and leaves the service after 30 years, and is planning on retiring quietly initially.

She said: “It’s been a fabulous 30 years, it’s gone so quickly. I have seen so much of the world. Thank you all very much.”

Reverend Mike Meachin leaves HMS Collingwood where his

most recent position was the Chaplaincy Team Leader.

His long and illustrious career spanning nearly 40 years in total with 24 years as a Chaplain has seen him serve with all fighting arms and with all branches of the Royal Navy.

He is now looking forward to being part of a team at QA Hospital in Portsmouth where he will continue to support military people and their families no doubt.

He said: “I’ve had a wonderful career. I’ve enjoyed meeting people. I couldn’t have done any of it without the support of Claire (my wife).”

The trio were escorted down the main road of the base, which was lined by ship’s company who gave them a resounding ‘three cheers’ as they passed by to thank them for their long service and commitment, not only to Collingwood but also to the wider Royal Navy.



MEET the Sentinels.

Not the new family who've just moved into the street but ten Royal Navy personnel at the heart of an international peacekeeping mission in Bahrain.

Alongside men and women from seven other nations, they run Coalition Task Force Sentinel, the military arm of the International Maritime Security Construct, formed nearly two years ago to ensure the free flow of trade through the key sea routes of the Middle East.

One in five posts at the command centre in the US Naval Base in Bahrain is filled by a Briton, working alongside colleagues from Albania, Bahrain, Estonia, Lithuania, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and the USA. Each one is known as a 'sentinel'.

Royal Navy personnel contribute to one in five positions in the organization's Bahrain-based headquarters including the one-star commander and several heads of department.

They perform varied duties on the round-the-clock operation: media engagement, operations, planning, communications or training, with responsibility for a force of international warships, some small ('sentries'), some large ('sentinels') on the front-line of the security mission.

Leading Hand Elliot Doe works on the watch floor, assisting with monitoring IMSC partner nation flagged merchant shipping.

His role includes liaising with external organisations in the region to ensure that any potential security incidents are quickly addressed.

"One of the organisations we work with, United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, provides a vital information service to the maritime industry," he explains. "This enables us to maintain effective communication between our watch floor and commercial ships at sea."

Commander Dave Norgan helped set up the mission in 2019 working in both communications and information operations roles, then came back last year in operations and planning roles.

"Having been a Sentinel at the very beginning of the operation when it was set up in a temporary tent, it's great to now see how established and accomplished the team has become," he said.

"With our Coalition partners we've built strong relationships within the headquarters and externally with industry, while maintaining a constant operational presence in the air and at sea in this globally important region."

More than 17,000 ships per year pass through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait at the foot of the Red Sea and in excess of 42,000 vessels enter or leave the Gulf via the Strait of Hormuz. As the recent blockage of Suez has shown any restrictions of these waterways results in international consequences, impacting economies all over the globe.

Part of the task force's mission is to reassure commercial shipping with warships such as HMS Montrose – the frigate (pictured) is the longest-serving Sentinel, involved from the task group's formation – patrolling key areas, ready to respond to any threat to the freedom of navigation.

The ships ensure their presence is known by broadcasting hourly over VHF radio.

"These calls ensure that commercial shipping knows what to do in the event they are targeted by malign activity and who to contact for assistance" explains Lieutenant Commander Dudley Malster, staff operations officer.

"Primarily the calls provide audible

assurance over VHF to transiting merchant vessels that active patrols are operating to challenge malign or threatening behaviour. This encourages merchant traffic to continue their passage in line with international law. Secondly, it allows other actors to hear the same message. This is an open and clear statement of intent that should threatening or malign action be made against transiting ships under an IMSC-flag we will respond and support."

AFTER overseeing the safe passage of more than 85 million tonnes of goods and fuel over the winter, Commodore Craig Wood has handed over leadership of Sentinel to his successor, fellow Briton Commodore Adrian Fryer.

Commodore Wood was able to call on 79 different ships from five nations during nearly five months at the helm.

Major warships ensured more than 900 merchant vessels registered with the eight IMSC safely passed through the Middle East's choke points.

As well as ships, air power – including long-range maritime patrol aircraft – flew more than 14,000 hours of reconnaissance missions keeping an eye on the crucial waterways.

Cdre Wood said interest in maritime security in the region from the merchant shipping industry was growing – as was the ability of the Operation Sentinel team and its partners in the Middle East to provide that security.

Vice Admiral Samuel Paparo, the senior US Navy officer in the region and commander of the US Fifth Fleet said Cdre Wood left Sentinel "a better, more effective task force and really ready to defend freedom of navigation through the personal touch and intellect, energy, dynamism, optimism."

Cdre Fryer has more than 30 years' experience in the Royal Navy under his belt, including command of three warships.

"The task force has demonstrated the ability to consistently deter state-sponsored malign activity in this region as shown by the fact that since its inception no IMSC-flagged commercial vessel has been substantially threatened or illegally boarded by an adversary," said Cdre Fryer.

Every month the mission provides overwatch to IMSC-flagged commercial ships with a combined carrying capacity of over 18 million tons.

The team also work hard to provide up-to-date guidance to merchant shipping companies and crews. Lieutenant Commander Sam Wicks, information officer said "We put together a number of products to assist merchant shipping. For example, our Bridge Reference Cards provide bridge teams a quick aide memoir to assist with situations that threaten a vessel's physical security. Working alongside our industry liaison officers we regularly refine these products to ensure they reflect the most up-to-date situations and threats."

Following the good work that IMSC has done to deter malign activity, there have been no successful attacks on IMSC-flagged merchant vessels in the area of operation.

However, the international shipping community cannot afford to be complacent; IMSC and CTF Sentinel will continue to maintain their ever-vigilant watch, ready to respond to any threat to the international trade on which our prosperity depends.



On Watch. Always

Life of Brian honoured at Dartmouth

A BOMB disposal expert decorated for his bravery at home and abroad has been honoured at Dartmouth, joining a pantheon of naval heroes including Sir Francis Drake.

Warrant officers attending Britannia Royal Naval Scheme as part of a new scheme to commission them as officers will complete their training with Dutton Division, named after a lieutenant commander who rose from the ranks in a remarkable career spanning nearly 40 years.

Brian Dutton (pictured), who died in 2018 aged 86, joined the Royal Navy as a 15 year-old boy seaman, crewed the forward 6in turret of HMS Belfast in the Korean War, became a PTI and ran on several occasions for Chatham in the Field Gun at the Royal Tournament in the 1950s, then was commissioned and specialised as a mine

clearance diving officer in 1969.

He was awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal in 1974 for a particularly difficult and dangerous operation rendering a German mine safe after it was scooped up by the dredger The Solent.

In the Falklands in 1982 he led Fleet Clearance Diving Team 1, dealing with unexploded Argentine bombs in the most challenging and sustained explosive ordnance disposal operation since WW2.

Lt Cdr Dutton led the team which removed a 1,000lb bomb lodged between missiles in the forward magazine of frigate HMS Argonaut – an operation which took a week to complete and earned the officer the Distinguished Service Order for displaying "staunch determination, steadfastness and courage of the highest

order" throughout.

He retired the following year, but continued in public service as council leader of East Hampshire and mayor of Petersfield.

BRNC staff wanted to acknowledge the route taken by those commissioning under the new warrant officer initiative – and recognise the experience brought to the officer cadre by commissioning sailors with long service as ratings.

They believe Lt Cdr Dutton is a "fitting figurehead" for warrant officers to look up to when they attend Dartmouth for three weeks, undertaking a series of academic lectures, intellectual forums and ceremonial training to support their transition to junior officers.



Where we're at and where we're going

As the Warrant Officer to the Royal Navy the past few months have been nothing short of fascinating.

Watching from the office of the First Sea Lord as the Integrated Review has developed from the talks and visions into the Defence Command Paper has been something that I never thought I would witness.

Announced by the Defence Secretary in March, the First Sea Lord followed up with a 'whole force' update to the Royal Navy on exactly what the Integrated Review meant to all of us.

So, Defence has clearly been invested in and that we as a Royal Navy have been backed by the government.

It is the first time since 1972 that we will have seven classes of ships in build and between 2015 and 2030 we will grow in tonnage terms by 50 per cent.

Mick will speak about the Fleet Commander's 'operational space' and some of that new capability and Rick will update you with his views of the Future Commando Force (FCF) and how our Royal Marines will be back in the maritime domain.

Steve will talk about fantastic efforts in the generating space by DE&S and Ian will pull all the jigsaw pieces together from the office of the Second Sea Lord. And on behalf of us all: a 'thank you' for the outstanding work by each one of you during COVID. The Royal Navy has delivered on operations around the world above and below the waves whilst reacting to this global pandemic and from our positions it really has been impressive to watch.

As a 'Global, Modern and Ready' Royal Navy the future looks very positive, if not amazing, but let's be honest: we will still have some 'here and now' challenges and that will be our biggest test in the next 18 months, while continuing to deliver on operations all over the world... which allows me to queue it up for Mick.

The Defence Command Plan highlights the remarkable investment in the Armed Forces and for us specifically, but with that comes the expectation of delivering Operational Capability.

Threat at sea is a multi-domain environment and consequently we are driving forward with new capabilities; Wildcats with Martlet and Sea Venom in the air, the Spearfish upgrade for the Submarine Service, Sea Ceptor providing a shield against airborne threats, future surface lethality with a strike capability to replace Harpoon and 'up-gunning' the Batch 2 Offshore Patrol Vessels.

This reflects our ambition as a modern maritime power around the world; able to provide a ready homeland defence and a persistent global presence, 'Protecting Our Nation's Interests'.

We have seen our ships, submarines and people regain Operational Advantage in the North Atlantic and maintain forward presence in the Gulf, Mediterranean and surrounding seas.

We are expanding the White Ensign globally and there has been real success with HMS Forth in the South Atlantic, HMS Medway in the Caribbean and HMS Trent has now sailed to take station in the Mediterranean and Atlantic, with further Asia-Pacific aspirations for HMS Tamar and Spey.

The 'Year of Delivery' will see Carrier Strike Group 21 come to fruition; this is not about a single ship, but the Strike Group influence that comes from the sheer might of having British warships deployed visibly representing the UK, the strength below the waves of having an unseen SSN in associated support, the ability to deploy Commando Forces to be in an aggressor's backyard and return before the echoes have faded and the ubiquity, speed and range that fixed and rotary wing aircraft can provide.

The Royal Navy is once again sailing the world's oceans, operationally ready to fight, providing maritime security, protecting our economy and fostering international partnerships. All combined this is: One team, one family, one fight, one Navy.

As already eluded to, the future for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines is bright and certainly in my time, the prospect of investment to secure and deliver the Future Commando Force as a Royal Navy priority is exciting, as we move from a concept to a funded programme, cementing the Royal Marines' offer to UK Defence and Allies.

This will inevitably take time to mature and there will be some hard decisions to be made in the near future to ensure we are able to invest in capabilities for tomorrow, whether that is 'on the man' kit and equipment, vehicles, RPAS, precision strike or indeed the aviation and surface lift for the future littoral environment.

Much work is still to be done to analyse how we are to use the current funding available but be reassured the teams will undertake due diligence to ensure that we improve the capability of the Commando Force and ensure that it is relevant and fit for purpose as we move forward.

Already, there has been considerable work done to identify and expedite the procurement of capabilities.

Much of this took place over the last year within 40 Commando, with other units of 3 Commando Brigade also trialling structures and novel ways to enhance the operational effectiveness of our Royal Marines and the Commando Force.

But let's not forget that our people – you – remain our most important asset.

We must therefore strive to deliver on the promise for the future and empower you to be the best you can possibly be.

I'm convinced that is what our Marines and other Service personnel want. Regardless of what capabilities are brought online, it is your professionalism that will always endure and fix Commando Forces in the mindset of UK Defence.

I think what Mick and Rick describe is very much (to quote the First Sea Lord's Integrated Review speech) some of the 'Jam today'.

Real, tangible operational stuff that we are delivering in the context of our 'Global' Royal Navy.

As the 'second line', supporting our outputs, much of what we will deliver in the future could be interpreted in many areas as the 'Jam tomorrow'.

There is much we are getting at to improve procurement and deliver and make better the 'lived experience' of our people, but to change our past 'cultural norms' on how we have conducted this business just takes time.

The problem with us as human beings is that we tend to focus in on specific areas, like jigsaw pieces, which affect us. It's not wrong to do so but can drive our way of thinking towards a grey perspective when we only look at the edges.

What do I mean by this? Speedy's comment – a front line focussed Royal Navy that is 'global, modern and ready' – to most translates as more time away!

This is when we must consider how a Branch structure, Unit Personnel List review coupled with a double crewed modelling of ships play into this.

All big moving pieces which once they start to join will show our people something that 'looks different' which will therefore 'feel different' and better and thus 'is different', which chimes with Mick's part of 'Year of Delivery'.

Providing our people with something they can touch, feel and see within our 'transformational' journey.

We will continue to improve this offer by getting after infrastructure; accommodation being one of the key tenants, a £1.5bn injection from the Integrated Review and £200m (£122m SFA and £78m for SLA) already funded to Project Speed to improve the SFA set against the trialling Future Accommodation Model will hopefully see a much-needed improvement.

With more to do in procurement and delivery of equipment and spares on time segue me neatly to hand over to Steve as the DE&S Ships Warrant Officer.

But before I do one thought: Reasonable challenge on our journey is good but continual 'Red teaming' every decision with no substance behind it just slows 'Your Navy, My Navy, Our Navy' down in moving forward.

Transformation (and it is a big beast) to me over the last year is

akin to ripping a plaster off: fast can be painful but is quick, slow drags the pain out and is uncomfortable for longer. I know which one I prefer.

DE&S Ships domain Command Warrant Officer, I support the Director General, Vice Admiral Chris Gardner, and his team in MoD Abbey Wood.

Our responsibilities cover ship acquisition and through-life support from construction right through to disposal. DE&S is 'the force behind the Armed Forces', so we were naturally buoyed by the Government's recent Integrated Review and Defence Command Paper.

This was great news for the Royal Navy and will be part of the refreshed National Shipbuilding Strategy, which will update how the UK intends to continue transforming naval ship procurement as part of the wider government drive to grow the UK's maritime industry.

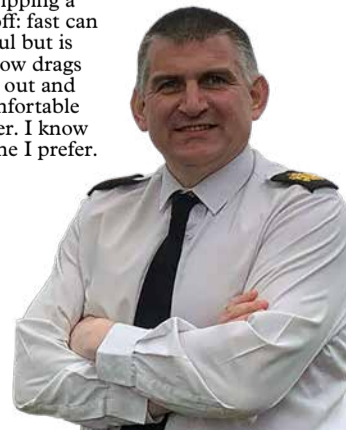
The command paper confirmed seven new classes of ship and in this 'Year of Delivery', three are of note: the future minehunting vessels have already been demonstrated, with a leap-forward in automated technology; the third Type 26, HMS Belfast, will start production; and the steel will be cut on the first Type 31 in Rosyth.

We can expect further engagement with industry on the Future Solid Support ships while conceptual work continues on the Multi-Role Ocean Surveillance Ship, Type 32 frigate and Type 83 destroyer.

All this gives long-term certainty to ship construction and commitment to the Senior Service.

Of course, all this modern kit needs highly trained and enthused personnel to operate it. A big part of my role is representing the air, marine and weapon engineers in my capacity as the Naval Engineering Warrant Officer, so I am excited by the fact that our engineers will continue to be afforded the opportunity to work with the cutting-edge science and technology.

The impressive financial investment in new classes of ships, submarines, equipment, digital and cyber technology commits to creating an Armed Forces that is prepared for warfighting and more persistent engagement worldwide.





● LSC Polite Yankey revises her 'My Supply Chain Brain' document in the new learning hub in Portsmouth

Picture: LSC Daniel Crawshaw



Hewson, we have a presentation...

Supplies surprise in Pompey shed

SUPPLY chain experts in Portsmouth have transformed their facilities – benefitting the branch and the service the city’s warships receive.

Surflot (E) Engineering Support, located in a red-brick warehouse next to D Lock, is the first port of call for Portsmouth’s destroyer, frigate and minehunter flotillas when they’re undergoing longer periods of maintenance (Fleet Time Support Period).

They turn to the team for all the replacement parts they’ll need to install, parts now neatly arrayed in lanes on the floor or shelves on the wall – for anywhere between 30 and 250 jobs which might need completing by the engineering teams – in a smart, clean, tidy warehouse where you’ll find plants adorning tables and desks... and even the heads.

It’s all part of the transformation the small unit – no more than 40 sailors – has undergone over the past 12 months, a transformation of ethos, facilities and team spirit which is benefitting front-line warships and the logistics branch.

At the beginning of last year Chief Petty Officer ‘Tally’ Tallentyre had a vision to make the support unit better for its users and those assigned to it.

Off their own back – and with no outside help or cash – the sailors turned the unassuming building into a clean, meticulously-organised space for parts.

And the mezzanine floor which served as a dumping ground for pallets and unwanted packaging and old racks has been cleared.

It’s now a mess deck/club house/learning hub, adorned with plants and flowers, mood lighting, rugs, historic photographs of the dockyard and inspirational RN figures.

Above all, at every turn, there’s logistic advice. Lots of it. On every subject matter. Coupled with an A4 lever-arch folder dubbed ‘My Supply Chain Brain’ which logistics personnel can pack with all the info they’ll need throughout their careers.

The result is a ‘one-stop shop’ for all things logistical on the upper floor of the warehouse, helping rookie logisticians in particular – and earning the praise of the Surface Flotilla Team.

“The main focus is getting young supply chain ratings to learn the job and prepare them for sea, while for us, passing on that knowledge is a really good refresher,” said Petty Officer Martin ‘Dave’ Royle.

“It’s also important to create a ship’s company ethos by creating our own mess, organising events for charity, doing things as a team. It makes going to sea for the first time a lot easier.”

Most junior ratings passing out of the logistics school – now based at Worthy Down – are sent to establishments throughout the Service, rather than ships, including RM establishments or even RAF bases.

Leading Supply Chain Daniel ‘Dingle’

Crawshaw’s first draft was to RAF Marham (home of the F-35 Lightning force for the carriers) which was “completely alien”.

He continues: “When I left, I had to re-learn to do things the Royal Navy way. It was like re-joining the Navy, so something like this would have really helped me.”

His colleague Leading Supply Chain ‘Otto’ Ottewill spent his first year with the Royal Marines “just moving boxes around” and similarly found returning to a dark blue world challenging – and he’s channelled that into the information available at the hub.

“We’ve drawn on our experience to provide the information that a supply chain rating might want to know,” says Otto.

“But it’s not just not just for junior rates. There are a lot of jobs that we’ll never deal with when we’re ashore so it’s very easy to suffer skills fade on subjects like ammunition or medical supplies.”

Coupled with command, leadership and management exercises, presentations, instructional videos, it also prepares personnel for promotion.

With the hub starting to make its mark, the team want to spread the word through the rest of the Supply Chain branch.

“There’s nothing like this in the rest of the Fleet that I know of,” said Otto.

“We’ve seen the difference it’s made to us and the ships. It’s making the team more efficient, more effective, it’s giving ships a better service.”

INTRODUCING the all-new ‘hold at arm’s length and grin’, mainstay of RN post-Covid presentations...

On the left doing the presenting is Commander FOST, Commodore Andrew Stacey.

And on the right is the ‘Chief Stoker of Chief Stokers’, the latest sailor to be recognised for his massive commitment to the Royal Navy.

Chief Petty Officer Kevin Hewson has spent more than 5,000 days separated from loved ones in a career which spans five decades.

That service, beginning in 1979 (Kevin’s pictured, right, at Raleigh), makes him the latest recipient of the LSA5K certificate (plus a financial reward) – presented to a very select group of matelots.

The award was introduced last year, one of a series of initiatives and rewards to better recognise the efforts of some of the stalwarts across the Royal Navy who go above and beyond every day.

The Longer Separation Allowance 5000 Days Award acknowledges any sailor who has spent more than 5,000 days (over 13½ years) away from their base port or unit.

The marine engineering mechanic (mechanical) – aka stoker – has experience under his belt which counterparts say make him the chief stoker of chief stokers.

Having clocked up service in HMS Rhyl, Juno, Norfolk (the destroyer, not the later frigate) and carrier Ark Royal and a rare operational tour ashore in Yemen, Kevin has completed five chief stoker drafts and acted as deputy CO of the marine engineering departments seven ships (deep breath: Her Majesty’s ships

Marlborough, Southampton, Gloucester, Richmond, Endurance, Monmouth, and Montrose).



Marlborough, Southampton, Gloucester, Richmond, Endurance, Monmouth, and Montrose).

He was one of the team responsible for saving Endurance when the ice ship almost sank when her engine room flooded off Chile in 2008.

His travels have taken him as far afield as the Great Lakes and down to the Antarctic, along with numerous deployments to the Gulf (including the first war in 1990-91).

A generation of marine engineering ratings have either worked with him in the ‘tanky section’ or have been quizzed by him during their seagoing engineering boards.

And as a fire-fighting and damage control expert – drawing on his first-hand experiences on Endurance – he passing on his knowledge as a ‘wrecker’ in the final 18 months of his career at Fleet Operational Sea Training (South) in Plymouth.

He’s still keen to add to his 5,000 days – and the RN will help him when they send Kevin back to the Gulf to train HMS Montrose’s crews in theatre.

Rewards and recognition

THIS month’s winners of the Senior Command Warrant Officers’ various rewards are:

Respite and Reward Breaks

China Fleet Country Club: CPOs Blayne and Silvester (both RNAs Culdrose)

Park Dean: PO Hardy (HMS Duncan); LH Newton (HMNB Portsmouth); Cpl Clements (CTCRM); CSgt Macfarlane and Cpl Colebrook (40 Cdo); Mne Dunn (42 Cdo); CPO Fletcher (HMS Drake); CPO Osborne (PCAP); CPO Goodgame (HMS Seahawk); Lt Spurgeon (Abbeywood); CPO Williams (Culdrose); Sgts Holness and Shaw (both 30 Cdo); PO Perrin (HMS Vigilant); PO Bennet

(RNRC Hasler); PO Porter (DITG Chicksands)

LSA5K Award

WO1 Simpson (MWS Phoenix); PO Bryant (HMS Medway)

Long Service Recognition Award

CPO Sinclair (MWS Phoenix); Cdr Ryan, Lt Cdr Greaves and CPO Wardle (RNR Air Branch)

Herbert Lott Awards

Lt Rogers, PO McAllister, LH Brown, ABs Bailey and Henderson (all MCM2 CDE); AB Smith (MCM CDE); AB Martin (HMS Collingwood); ET Davies (HMS Nelson); AB Dopwell (HMS Collingwood); ABs Edwards and Parker (HMS Prince of Wales)

Charles is advocate for RNR

CIVIL servant Charles Perrett from Naval Regional Command Eastern England has been appointed as the MOD Civil Service Reserves Advocate for the Royal Navy.

The 36-year-old who is also First Lieutenant of HMS President will act as central contact for queries, guidance and feedback on behalf of Civil Service/ Maritime Reserve colleagues.

The Civil Service awards reservists 15 days additional special paid leave to support reserve training, recognising the leadership, teamwork, and other skills that reservists bring back to the workplace. A study by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) showed that a company would have to spend £20,500 to deliver the training directly transferable to the civilian

workplace received by junior officers in the Royal Naval Reserve.

“The Royal Navy has civil servants volunteering in the Reserve Forces of all three Services, and it is great to see them supported from the very top of the organisation,” said Charles.

“I am honoured to have been asked to take on this role, and to be working with senior leaders who really understand the Reserves.”

If you’re a civil servant in the one of the Reserve Forces, line manage a reservist, or have questions about joining the Reserves contact Charles.

There is also a Civil Service Reserves Network which holds regular events and presentations, which can help support you.

Rock improvements

TWO NAAFI facilities in Gibraltar have reopened following extensive refurbishment.

NAAFI staff used the lockdown and socialising restrictions – and especially the enforced closure of bar/cafe facilities – on socialising to revamp its Devil’s Tower Camp and 4 Corner facilities.

At the former Boyd’s Bar and the neighbouring NAAFI shop have been turned into a modern high street commercial bar/restaurant with an adjacent smart retail outlet.

At the same time, facilities for families living at 4 Corners have been completely overhauled with a new retail space and combined bar/coffee shop in HELM Point.



New man at top of RNRMC

THE Board of Trustees of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity is delighted to announce that Dr Brian Gilvary will succeed Sir Bill Thomas as the new Chairman of the Charity when Sir Bill completes his six-year term of office in July 2021.

An exhaustive process to find the charity's next Chairman was led by Vice-Chairman Andrew Jameson in which over 150 potential candidates with a range of backgrounds in industry, the military and civil society were approached and whittled down to a high-calibre shortlist.

Brian was the unanimous choice to lead the Board and shares a deep personal commitment with the RNRMC's mission to champion and support the remarkable men and women of the Royal Navy, past and present, as well as their immediate families, particularly at a time when the demand signal for support in the wake of Covid-19 has never been greater.

Brian is Executive Chairman of Ineos Energy, a division of the INEOS Group focusing on oil and gas and the energy transition. Prior to this he was BP plc's Chief Financial Officer and Board Director from 2012-2020, having joined the company in 1986. During his time at the British multinational oil and gas company, Brian acted as BP's principal negotiator on a series of large transactions and complex legal matters.

Brian is also the senior independent director of Barclays plc; a non-executive director of Air Liquide SA, the Royal Navy and the Francis Crick Institute. Since April 2020 he has also served as a Trustee of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Born and raised in Liverpool, Brian was one of the few pupils at his state comprehensive school to gain a place at universities in Manchester and Sheffield, where he is now an Honorary Professor and Honorary Doctor of Science respectively. Brian has represented Great Britain at the last 5 Age Group ITU Triathlon World Championships (2015-19) having taken up the sport in 2014.

He said: "Throughout my life I have dedicated time and resources to causes that inspire me. It's an honour and privilege to take on the baton from Sir Bill and serve as the next Chairman of Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

"We are living with the continued impact of the global pandemic and the world is a different place. Our programmes, our fundraising, how we work with beneficiaries - there's much work to be done to ensure a safe, secure and bright future for the RNRMC - and most importantly for the naval communities it serves."

Personnel can park a holiday in the UK

THROUGH a new partnership with the RNRMC, Parkdean Resorts, the national holiday park operator with 67 family-friendly parks throughout the UK, will provide up to 145 holiday breaks between April and November this year at nine of its parks, including a disabled-access unit at Southview, Skegness.

The breaks will be awarded as recognition of not only the Service Person, but also the families supporting them, for the extraordinary sacrifices and encouragement they provide while their spouses/partners and loved ones are deployed around the globe.

The awards also aim to recognise families that may have gone or are going through difficult times and where time away may help.

Given the limited number of RNRMC Holiday Breaks available, a competitive application process has been set up which requires applicants to submit a written application endorsed by their Divisional Officer or civilian equivalent.

The application form is contained within a Royal Navy Temporary Memorandum (RNTM) which also details eligibility guidelines and the application process. The RNTM can be viewed in the Parkdean article (dated 17th March 2021) under the 'NEWS' section of the RNRMC website.

One of the first beneficiaries of the RNRMC's Reward and Recognition Holiday Break will be Chief Petty Officer Andy Stevenson and his family, based at HM Naval Base Devonport, Plymouth.

The Stevensons are off to a Parkdean holiday park in Newquay, Cornwall, in recognition of the challenges they have faced, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Younger daughter, Sable, seven, is one of a handful of children in the world with a rare, life-limiting genetic epilepsy called FGF12, and requires constant supervision and monitoring.

Elder daughter, Stella, also has a genetic condition, 2P13.2, linked to mental health issues, learning difficulties and autism, and requires one-to-one support in school.

The Parkdean Holiday Parks taking

part in the Award Scheme are Wemyss Bay in Renfrewshire, Ocean Edge, in Heysham, Lancashire, Skipsea Sands in Yorkshire, Vauxhall in Great Yarmouth, Camber Sands in Sussex, Sandford and Warmwell in Dorset, Lizard Point and Newquay in Cornwall, and Southview, Skegness.

Award recipients are eligible for up to 30 percent discount on food and soft drinks at the restaurant and bars at

participating Holiday Parks, as well as free entertainment passes during the break.

The First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Tony Radakin said: "I am delighted that the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity is able to provide these respite breaks through Parkdean Resorts.

"Our people and their families often make significant sacrifices in the service of our country, and it's fantastic we can recognise this by awarding holidays that help families re-connect and relax together. Thank you to Parkdean for such generosity."

Steve Richards, CEO, Parkdean Resorts, said: "We all admire the Armed Forces and the amazing sacrifices that our Service Personnel make, so it's an honour to be able to give back to them and their families through our partnership with the RNRMC and we look forward to welcoming them to our Holiday Parks this year.

"As a company, we can really benefit from the transferrable skills and qualities that the Armed Forces instill in its people, and we've already seen some really high-calibre applications from Service Leavers through the CTP."

Chief Petty Officer, Andy Stevenson, said: "I'm very grateful for the opportunity of a holiday for my family. We've had a tough time recently but got through it as a family, and we've had a lot of support from work as well.

"My Divisional Officer put me forward for a Parkdean break as he thought a change in scenery and a break would do our family the world of good, and it will be nice for the whole family to have an organised holiday away, with lots of entertainment for both the children."

Lifeline for Tony

Charity helps former Marine find a new career

THE impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been brutal and far-reaching, wreaking havoc on physical and mental health, as well as the economy.

This has led to many organisations tightening their belts and cutting staff, leaving a huge number of people out of work.

Throughout the crisis, military charities have continued to work together to help those in the naval community facing financial hardship and employment difficulties.

Royal Marines veteran, Tony Bruce, was one of the those hit by redundancy in the early part of last year's lockdown.

Tony spent five years as a Royal Marine, during which time he served in Sierra Leone, Northern Ireland and Iraq.

After leaving the military in 2004 he went on to work for a company supplying surveillance equipment to the MOD.

Like many who have served, he found that transition to civilian life had its challenges.

"It was tough at times. Civilian companies have different infrastructure to the military and certainly have a different way of interacting with each other. I found my sense of humour was lost on them a lot of the time. Military humour can be dark."

Once he adjusted to the cultural differences, Tony's working life in civvy street was steady. However, this all changed in 2020 when Tony found himself suddenly out of work.

"Being unemployed during the pandemic was awful. I had never experienced it before, having always been employed since leaving the corps."

With rent and bills to pay Tony was anxious to get back into employment as quickly as possible, but being out of work gave him precious time to spend with his family and to contemplate his future.

"I have always had fascination for electronics", he said. "One of my former jobs since leaving the corps was installing security systems including CCTV and access control. I asked the company if they would send me on an electrical course so



that I could have a better understanding of the more complicated installations. They wouldn't pay for it, so I left it at that."

Out of work and with time on his hands, Tony decided that he would take this opportunity to re-train as an electrician, however he found that he did not meet the eligibility criteria for government-funded schemes. His thoughts then turned to the military charities and he decided to reach out for support. "I am a veteran, so I

thought, "Why not?" They could only say no."

It was at this point that Tony contacted the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity's Support Line.

Following this call, Tony was put in touch with the RFEA Ex-Forces Programme, which is part funded by the RNRMC. An RFEA advisor helped Tony build a strong application for support from the Royal British Legion (RBL), which

resulted in £1,000 of funding towards the course.

With the total cost for the course (Domestic Electrical Installation Level 2) standing at around £3,500, Tony still had to find the remainder of the fees. With further support from the RBL, additional Naval charities were contacted and the remainder of the course costs were eventually covered by The Royal Marines Charity and the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust.

This was a lifeline for Tony who was without an income as a result of the redundancy.

"I was ecstatic. I can't thank the charities enough for the way they helped me. They made everything very clear and didn't leave me with any false hope."

At the beginning of 2021, Tony finally undertook an intensive three-week training course and gained his necessary qualifications.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the experience", says Tony, who was able to stay with a relative close to the course location to save money.

Since qualifying, Tony has been working with his father as a domestic electrician. The course has also opened doors in the entertainment industry where he has found work on television and film sets.

"Production companies insist on seeing electrical qualifications which I never had before", Tony explains.

Like many, Tony has faced a year of turmoil and change, but thanks to the collaborative efforts of military charities he now has plenty to look forward to.

"2021 is looking bright. I have recently been accepted on a big movie that will keep me employed into the spring", says Tony. "I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the charities that helped me from start to finish."

If you need employment advice but don't know where to go, please get in touch with the RNRMC Support Line. Our staff will help guide you in the right direction and link you up with the appropriate support. Please call 023 9387 1568.

PLAIN SAILING

Words: Richard Hargreaves
Pictures: LPhoto Rory Arnold



A SLIGHTLY puzzled sailor stands in the middle of a Wiltshire field, scanning the rolling countryside all around and the woodland to the north and south.

He moves his compass across a laminated detail of a map.

"You need to be confident when you tell your troops: 'We're here'. Troops need morale, and if you don't know where you are, that saps morale," Leading Physical Trainer Gary Gibbs reminds the recruit.

"Bear 250 degrees for 150 yards."

"Sure?" clubz asks.

"Bear 250 degrees for 150 yards," the recruit says firmly, sticking to his guns.

Hi-ho, hi-ho it's up the hill we go...

Actually, there's no singing. Just 11 rating recruits in single file, yomping up a hillside on a spring day.

On their backs, a Bergen: Spare shirt. Spare trousers. Spare socks. Bivvy bag. Roll mat. Torch. Sleeping bag. Mess tins. Stove. Rations. Whistle. Shaving kit for the men. It's not as heavy as a commando's rucksack, but it's still weighty and definitely cumbersome.

This would be bread and butter to a marine. But to sailors, especially those who haven't studied geography or done a bit of orienteering...

There's no Google Maps or GPS

here. It's Ordnance Survey map, compass and dead reckoning (mixed with bit of common sense).

Today, it's all pretty simple. We've not strayed more than a kilometre from the barn. Tomorrow, a 25-kilometre slog around the exercise area in questionable weather without the instructors holding their hands at every turn.

Exercise Hidden Dragon is the second of three outdoor exercises included in the ten-week course converting civilians into sailors.

The course is traditionally the job of HMS Raleigh. But even with the Torpoint establishment at increased capacity, the RN still needs extra throughput to meet the requirement for more sailors over the next couple of years.

So in January it turned to Collingwood and for the first time in more than half a century, civilians turned up at the Fareham base's main gate to start their careers.

Given its location and role, Collingwood doesn't have the same facilities and access to Dartmoor. It does have a leadership academy, easy access to Portsmouth Harbour (where small patrol craft introduce recruits to the sea, rather than HMS Brecon) and Erlestone, a mix of rolling fields, copses and wooded hills on the northern edge of Salisbury Plain, substitutes for Gutter Tor.

"This is new to Collingwood,

but it's going smoothly and the recruits are doing well. We're getting positive feedback from the trainees – they seem to be enjoying," says Chief Petty Officer AJ Smith, a caterer by trade, but now part of the new training regime.

Seven weeks into their training, recruits are dispatched to the wilds to test their leadership and problem-solving skills, as well as instilling a bit of resilience and self-sufficiency.

At Raleigh, that means trekking over the wilds of Dartmoor. At Collingwood, they've chosen Erlestone (it's a favourite location used by the Leadership Academy for sailors on the leading hand promotion course... although the workout for the Phase 1 recruits is not quite as demanding).

They've trekked a few miles already to reach the exercise area at Erlestone – a large, open barn, some run-down buildings and a collection of shipping containers dumped on hardstanding... directly opposite a jail for lower-level prisoners.

They'll overnight in the barn (it'll stay just above freezing), with no running water, no electricity or gas, no food or drink beyond that which they carry, before heading off in the morning on a 25-kilometre hike with their kit... but without instructors holding their hands.

What do you need for a 25k trek? A leader, a good navigator, a pace

setter, someone who understands the terrain, how ground conditions and inclines affect the rate of march and exhaustion.

Instructors are looking for all these skills, plus determination, teamwork and encouragement.

"They've come from all over the country, from different backgrounds, they're different ages and they have to gel," says AJ. "There's no relying on mum here. You're relying on your oppos, people you only met a few weeks ago."

The Collingwood team are enjoying the rare opportunity to train a new generation of sailors.

"Hopefully we make an impression which stays with them. We need to be quick, to learn to adapt and to think back to went through basic training all those years ago and apply some of that too," said logistician Petty Officer Andrew Davey.

They've certainly made their mark on Luke Gaskin from Darlington. At just 17, the budding weapon engineer is among the youngest recruits.

"The staff have been great – they are really supportive and bring out the best in you.

"In fact, I can feel myself changing by the day, getting better and better, becoming a better person. I couldn't be more grateful," he said.

"I came in blind – I did some

research, but this is my first time away from home. So I found it quite hard to adapt to a military bearing. So it's been tough – but I've enjoyed it. And I made amazing friends here, people who will be mates for life.

"I've really enjoyed drill – it's the self-discipline, it makes you a much more disciplined individual."

At 30, Jasmine Savage is older than many of her colleagues on the course having already qualified as a nurse.

She decided she wanted to be a nurse in the Navy after hearing what her brother, a pilot with Commando Helicopter Force, did to help people in the Caribbean after Hurricane Irma.

"This may not be a natural environment for a nurse, but I love it. This is what I expected from training – experiences you cannot get in civilian life," she said.

"The training is hard, but you get through it. You take it as it comes. Everyone was particularly nervous about the stretcher run.

"But the sense of personal resilience and team work to get through something like that gives you a high. You bond as a team and you really get to know yourself and what pushes your buttons."

She, Luke and their nine shipmates in Perkins Division were due to pass out from Collingwood at the end of last month.



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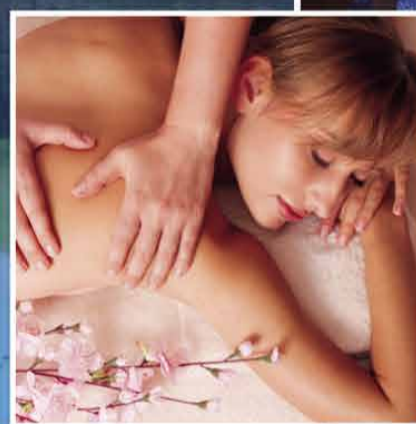
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Firsts for Spey

Patrol ship enjoys month marking milestones

IT HAS been a busy month of firsts for the Royal Navy's newest patrol ship. HMS Spey has spent the past few weeks at sea preparing for Basic Operational Sea Training and during that time, the vessel has ticked off milestone moments.

That includes the first time at sea for a number of her ship's company, the first helicopter landing on her flight deck courtesy of a Wildcat from 815 Naval Air Squadron, the first firing of all her weapons since officially joining the fleet and a maiden visit to Plymouth.

It was also the first time HMS Spey has trialled the three-watch manning system that will become standard procedure when she deploys.

On her way to Plymouth, the Offshore Patrol Vessel met up with her sister ships HMS Trent and Tamar.

Lieutenant Commander Ben Evans, Commanding Officer, said: "Our first few weeks at sea have enabled us to galvanise as a team and fully test our abilities and the capability of this modern and very capable ship.

"I am privileged to be in ship, and a great group achieved nothing but short time together.

"I am thankful to our who have supported us forward to achieving more as we look forward to an exciting deployment."

While in Plymouth, HMS Spey will undergo training under Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) to ensure she's ready for operations. To prepare for FOST, the ship and her sailors have been working hard to make sure they can face any situation they might face while deployed. The varied training package covered aviation, force protection, live firings, navigation, medical, and seamanship.

Engineering Technician (WE) "Dinger" Bell was at sea for the first time. He said: "This is my first time at sea in the Royal Navy after completing Phase 2 training which was extended due to COVID-19. I have found it to be fast paced, rewarding and I am really enjoying my time on board."

Once Spey has completed her BOST, she will continue preparations for deployment later this year.

She is the fifth and final Batch 2 River-class Offshore Patrol Vessels and joins sisters HMS Forth, Medway, Tamar and Trent.



command of such a fine of individuals who have success in our relatively

families and friends throughout, and look firsts in the coming weeks

exciting deployment."



● A Wildcat helicopter from 815 Naval Air Squadron lands on HMS Spey's flight deck for the first time (top); HMS Spey's weapons are fired during gunnery training (above).

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• A high-definition camera and display help surgeons working in a field facility set up at Bovington

RM medics test tech for operations

MEDICS who support Royal Marines on operations around the world are adopting new technology to ensure treatment is faster and more advanced than ever.

The Commando Forward Surgical Group (CFSG) go wherever Royal Marines deploy, no matter how extreme the environment.

Their responsibility is to treat casualties in the field and, as part of Future Commando Force developments, the medics are using new tech and practices to provide the best support possible.

With Royal Marines Commandos set to be more forward deployed around the world, the CFSG are tailoring their approach to be lighter and more agile, so they can keep up with fast-paced operations.

The group is made up of experienced practitioners who provide a Role 2 medical facility, which means they have limited hospital capability, plus resuscitation and surgical facilities.

Under Future Commando Force development, they will restructure into a Role 2 Forward. This means they are able to deliver the same treatment but will carry less kit and bring fewer personnel to the front line, making it easier to move to where they are needed most.

This facility is fitted with the latest telemedicine technologies – kit designed for remote diagnosis and treatment of patients using telecommunications technology – and digital innovations to enhance their capability.

Lieutenant Marc Dowling is the Royal Navy officer in charge of the CFSG and has overseen developments, which will see the use of Proximie telemedicine

– which allows clinicians to virtually share skills during live surgical procedures using cameras.

They are also using ‘Point of Care Ultra-Sound’, which means diagnosis can be made wherever the patient is being treated using portable ultrasound machines.

A WAT-01U2 high definition camera will be used to stream live imagery to clinical experts who can offer immediate input, enabling teams on the ground to better treat a casualty.

The Satcube – a satellite wifi system – carried by the CFSG means connection can be set up anywhere, even in remote locations.

All this new kit is designed to be quicker and better equipped to treat casualties.

“We have been showcasing all the telemedicine advances as part of the Forward Surgical Team capability,” said Lt Dowling, during an event related to the recent Defence Review.

“Proximie allows reach back to UK surgical consultants for real time in-depth analysis and advice.

“The CFSG can also be supported by remote radiologists who will use the ButterFly probe (a handheld wireless ultrasound) and a new point-of-care ultrasound.”

Using the technology to provide rapid analysis, the CFSG is also set-up to be streamlined. This enables an efficient through-flow of patients that means a greater number of casualties can get the right treatment as soon as possible.

Lt Dowling added: “When a patient arrives, the system flows in a 1-1-1 system; they arrive first at resuscitation, then go through to the Forward Surgical Team, and finalising at Intensive Treatment Unit.”



‘ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY’



A purl of a tribute

THESE are just a few of the 1,500 scarves knitted by Falklander Rachel Simons to thank the men and women who liberated her homeland nearly 40 years ago.

Rachel endured the Argentine occupation as an 11-year-old in the islands’ capital Stanley.

Forever grateful for peace and freedom, Rachel recently began making scarves in the colours of the South Atlantic medal ribbon, donating them to veterans of the 1982 campaign as a ‘thank-you’.

The idea soon caught on and the team of knitters/crocheters – collectively Scarves for Falklands Veterans – distribute the resulting products (including beanies and other woollen items) through a fast growing Facebook group with the same name.

Now working in partnership with Falklands Veterans Foundation, Rachel and her team of over 75 scarf makers have made and donated almost 1,500 scarves to holders of the South Atlantic Medal.

Zoom in on Christchurch

ZOOM meetings have enabled members of the **Christchurch and District** branch to stay connected during the past year.

S/M Rick Squibb is remaining as chairman for another year, with Tricia Lee as Secretary and Anne Theaker as Treasurer.

Derek Bunting will lead the sub-committee and Christine Payne will serve as public relations officer.

S/M Simon Meerza regularly contacts members by phone and will continue to fill the role.

In his report, S/M Rick listed many events which had been cancelled but reported that the Silent Sailor had been repaired and would be given a new site.

Several new members joined the branch during lockdown and shipmates are looking forward to meeting them in person, hopefully at Portfield Hall on June 24 at 11 am. All seagoers, veterans and serving and their families are welcome.

For details contact Christine Payne at 01202 474819 or email christinepayne3@btinternet.net.



• (Left to right) UKMCC Personnel Lieutenant Liam Humphries, Lieutenant Commander Sarah Vines, Captain Nick Wood, Corporal Jim Allan RLC, and Reverend Olusegun Balogun salute at AB Joe Sullivan’s grave in Bahrain

Tribute to Joe fulfils widow’s last wish

British personnel in Bahrain carried out the last wish of a sailor’s widow – 65 years to the day the couple were married.

June Daniels always wanted, but never managed to visit the grave of Able Seaman Joseph Sullivan, killed in a road crash in the Gulf kingdom in December 1957 after just 21 months of marriage.

June subsequently remarried, had two children and five grandchildren, living a full life in Walton-on-Thames in Surrey until her passing in February aged 82 – but it was also tinged with sadness at the loss of her first husband (pictured with her on the steps of a BOAC airliner arriving in Bahrain in 1956).

Even in her final days her family say she was still able to look at a photograph and say, “that’s my Joe”.

“Mum was married and widowed in less than 21 months, which was a sadness she kept to herself her whole life,” said her daughter Michele Weaver.

“Mum had a lifelong hope to one day visit Joe’s grave in Bahrain, but she sadly never managed it.”

She reached out to the Royal Navy via the War Graves Photographic Project, set up by retired sailor Steve Rogers to record the memorials of service personnel around the world.

And so on the Sullivans’ 65th wedding anniversary, Naval chaplain Reverend Olusegun Balogun led a service for the couple at Joe’s graveside in the Old Christian Cemetery in Bahrain, attended by the Royal Navy’s Deputy Commander in the region, Captain Nick Wood and Army Postal Courier Corporal Jim Allen.

Jim is performing the duty today which Joe carried out more than 60 years ago. After seven years in the Navy, the young able seaman arrived in Bahrain in 1956 to serve as the mailman, collecting and distributing post and parcels from Muharraq Airport to sailors based at HMS Jufair, the Royal Navy’s then base in the kingdom.

A keen sportsman, Joe played for the base’s football and cricket teams, while the couple settled into married life, enjoying spare time at Zellaq beach, Christmas (Joe is pictured right with shipmates in the wardroom garden) and other celebrations in the wardroom gardens including church fetes and BBQ’s.

That ended abruptly when Joe was killed aged just 23 in a lorry accident on December 17 1957. June returned to the UK as a young widow and enrolled on a nursing course to pick up the pieces of her life.

“It meant so much to me personally, to be able to fulfil June’s wishes and pay tribute to AB Sullivan and the valuable contribution he made to the Naval Service,” said Lieutenant Commander Sarah Vines from the staff of the UK Maritime Component Command, the Royal Navy’s HQ in the Middle East.

“People are the Armed Forces most important asset, and whether past or present, they remain



part of the Forces family. It was a real honour to be able to pay our respects to Joe and his late wife.”

Sarah read a tribute to Joe, provided by the family, which was made even more moving as it came the day after June’s funeral in the UK, and fell on the date of their wedding, held 65 years earlier in South Shields.

Michele says her family has been deeply moved by the efforts of personnel in Bahrain.

“We feel very fortunate to have had the Royal Navy’s support in this tribute to them both and we feel at peace in the sense that Mum’s dear wish to mark Joe’s passing and remember their time together in Bahrain has been fulfilled,” she added.

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Farewell to Len, last of the COBUs

ANOTHER living link with the wartime generation has been sadly cut with the passing of Len Lloyd, 'last of the COBUs'.

As a member of the Combined Operations Bombardment Unit, Len guided the guns of the Fleet in three key amphibious operations in the Mediterranean theatre in 1943 and 1944.

According to association records Len, who died in January aged 96, was the last survivor of five COBUs formed in WW2 to support Allied operations around the globe.

He joined the RN as a telegraphist aged 17 and, having come top of his class at HMS Collingwood, he expected to be drafted to a ship. But as he described it, this was not to be:

Instead he was sent to HMS Dundonald at Troon in Ayrshire with a mix of artillerymen, sailors and Royal Marines.

"Our earlier expectations during Navy wireless training had produced visions of finding ourselves on the pitching decks of some kind of naval vessel, yet here we were in Dundonald, wearing khaki battledress, humping 18M sets on our backs, and having to take orders from Army officers," Len recalled.

The telegraphists underwent commando training at Inveraray and other locations around Scotland, inland wireless exercises, and the inevitable 'wet landings' on the beaches around Troon.

It was all to prepare the men for the rigours of helping to direct the fall of shot from the guns of warship – Naval Gunfire Support

as it is known today.

Having qualified, Len took part in three amphibious landings: Sicily with 1st Canadian Division and 41 and 42 RM Commandos under command in the Pachino sector near the southern tip of the island.

Two months later and Len's unit was in action again, this time the assault on the Italian mainland at Salerno, supporting 12 Army Commando and 41 RM Commando with 46th Division. The young rating had a narrow escape when his vehicle was wrecked by a mortar bomb.

Len's final amphibious operation was the ill-fated Anzio landings – intended to outflank the German defences south of Rome and clear the way to the eternal city.

After three weeks supporting 1st Battalion Scots Guards, Len's unit was transferred to the southern end of the beachhead at Nettuno with American VI Corps. He spent around three months ashore until the Allies broke out and liberated Rome.

That was his last front-line action. Len qualified as a parachutist and was assigned to COBUs ready for the final onslaught against Japan, but the atomic bombs ensured Operation Downfall never took place.

After the war, Len became a probation officer in the West Midlands and was a founder member of the Bombardment Units Association, attending every annual reunion from 1946 (when around 200 members attended an inaugural dinner at a London hotel) until a farewell lunch at the Union Jack Club in



● Len Lloyd (standing right, above) at a reunion of RN telegraphists who served with COBUs in the Med and (right, centre, on the grass) at COBU HQ in Scotland circa 1944



October 2010.

Len had a strong Christian faith and was a member of the choir of St Mary's Church, Tenbury Wells for many years and read the names of the fallen on Remembrance Day.

He had a fine baritone voice and needed no encouragement to exercise it over the phone and also to the checkout staff at his local supermarket in Dudley. Len and his wife, Louisa, celebrated their Golden Wedding in 1997. She died in 2004.

As for the COBUs, they were disbanded shortly after the end of

WW2, but live on today in the form of 148 (Meiktila) Commando Forward Observation Battery, a Royal Artillery unit serving 3 Commando Brigade which draws its personnel from the Army, Navy and Royal Marines.



Rallying round for volcano victims

THESE are the fruits of just one morning's collecting donations for the people of St Vincent.

The RNA HQ's Portsmouth-area minibus was half filled with vital supplies for the Caribbean – the result of a rapid-fire response from serving sailors, families and friends and Naval charities to help islanders.

They rallied together for a three-day collection of items to send to Commonwealth citizens affected by a volcanic eruption.

La Soufrière volcano on Saint Vincent burst furiously back in life on April 9 after lying mostly dormant for more than 40 years.

The sudden eruption left a thick layer of ash over houses and buildings across much of the island, causing the displacement of around 20,000 islanders from their homes to temporary camps.

Given the strong presence of sailors from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in today's Royal Navy – more than 500 personnel – a team of volunteers comprising serving personnel from the Commonwealth nation, plus friends and family joined forces with the Royal Naval Association plus charities at Castaway House, led by the RN Benevolent Trust, to respond to the crisis, coordinating a collection of much-needed relief items.

The RNA minibus trundled around Portsmouth and environs for three days, picking up donations, focusing on tinned/dry good, towels, bedding, basic medical supplies such as First Aid kits, facemasks/face shields and painkillers, baby formula, nappies and wipes, children's clothes, torches and batteries, cutlery and crockery.

One of the trustees of RNBT is Leading Steward Shamiann Alexander (pictured above filling the bus with RNBT chief executive Rob Bosshardt) who lives in Gosport but hails from St Vincent where she still has family.

"My family is currently in the green zone, which provides a little comfort, however it breaks my heart to see what is happening. I just wanted to help in any way I can, as a percentage of serving Royal Navy and retired naval personnel are from St Vincent."

Virtual Arctic victory memorial

A GHOSTLY convoy will appear at Loch Ewe this month as a virtual tribute to WW2 heroes who braved 'the worst journey in the world'.

A virtual memorial event is planned on the remote Scottish inlet, belatedly marking the 75th anniversary of the victory over Nazism which men on Arctic convoys helped deliver.

The sheltered waters of Loch Ewe to the west of Ullapool in northwest Scotland were a key staging post for convoys to the then Soviet Union between 1941 and 1945.

Today, still used by the Royal Navy for training, the loch is home to an Arctic convoy museum and, on the opposite shore at Cove, a memorial overlooking the inlet's mouth, which many ships and sailors passed through – never to return.

A memorial event for thousands of brave British and Allied seamen will go ahead this May, to honour those who travelled "the worst journey in the world" in WWII.

The event will honour sailors in the Arctic Convoys, who braved German U-Boat attacks, fields of ice, and sub-zero temperatures to transport food and other critical supplies to Britain's wartime ally, Russia. The shipments allowed Russia to resist the Nazi invasion of

the Soviet Union and were essential to the eventual defeat of Hitler.

The 75th anniversary commemorations last May would have seen 500 guests hear speeches from Churchill's granddaughter Celia Sandys, Prince Michael of Kent, and the Russian Consul General – but the pandemic pulled the rug from under proceedings.

A large-scale open air event is still planned at the site, earmarked for May 2022 hopefully when life has resumed some form of normality.

But at 2pm on May 9 this year, a virtual tribute will be staged – available for all to watch online via Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/RACMuseum/>) and YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/c/RacmpUKLochEwe>) – featuring roughly 200 silhouettes of merchant and warships of wartime vintage, each engraved with the name of a veteran, which you can add by making a donation to the museum via <https://shop.racmp.org/collections/sponsor-or-purchase-a-ship-silhouette>.

In addition, guest speakers including Prince Michael of Kent and Russia's Consul General in Edinburgh, Andrey Yakovlev, have filmed commemorations for the tribute, a bugler will perform live from the loch and there will be

a history of the bitter voyages to Murmansk and the Kola peninsula.

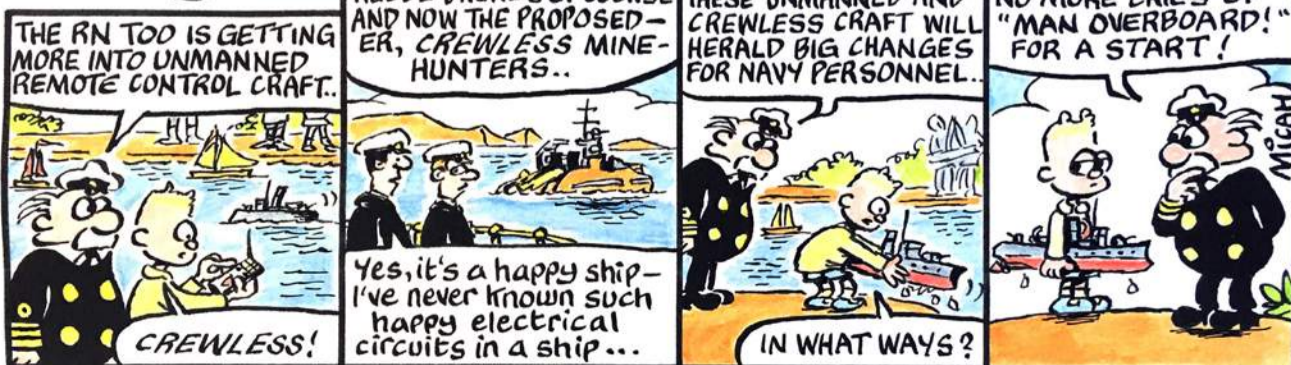
Between the summer of 1941 and the defeat of Germany in May 1945, 78 convoys delivered more than four million tonnes of supplies: tanks, fighters, trucks, fuel, ammunition and food.

The cost was the lives of more than 3,000 merchant and Royal Navy sailors. Some 85 merchant ships and 16 Royal Navy vessels were lost, running the gauntlet of the German surface fleet, U-boats and Luftwaffe, and contending with horrific weather. Small wonder it was branded "the worst journey in the world" by Churchill.

"These brave sailors, who endured unimaginable conditions, freezing weather and under almost constant enemy fire, deserve to be remembered for their heroism and sacrifice," said John Casson, co-chairman of the Russian Arctic Convoy Project and Museum, who is organising the memorial event.

"While our commemorations were halted in 2020, we are determined this year to honour the veterans and show our thanks to them and to their families for their incredible efforts. We will remember them."

Naval Quirks



Liverpool's Urchins mark milestone

THE Royal Naval Reserve Officers' Club, Liverpool – more commonly known as The Sea Urchins – celebrate their centenary this year.

At their AGM on 10 March the Members elected their President for the celebratory year (which runs until March 2022): Lieutenant Commander John Glover and their Vice President, Lieutenant Commander Frank Hogan.

Lt Cdr Glover served in the Royal Navy for 21 years and then another eight years in the Royal Naval Reserve at HMS Eaglet.

"We are planning a number of events during the year for our members and descendants of our Past Presidents to recognise the role in the volunteer ethos of

service in the Royal Navy and particularly in Liverpool," he said.

The club was formed in 1921 by a number of senior Royal Naval Reserve officers with the purpose of maintaining regular contact with each other as well as supporting the Naval family in the North West both by their presence and financially.

The club was awarded a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant which has enabled it to research and publish a book, *Hold Fast*, about its history and the lives of past presidents which can be found on its website, rnofficersclubliverpool.org. This has turned out to be a unique snapshot of a part of Liverpool's Maritime Heritage.

From Rushden to Tokyo

Cadets take on incredible Olympic challenge during the lockdown

YOUNGSTERS and staff from Rushden Sea Cadets are testing themselves in an Olympics-inspired challenge as they attempt to walk, run, cycle, row and swim the distance between their base in Rushden to the location of this summer's Games in Tokyo, Japan.

In all, their virtual challenge is taking them across 24 countries and 8,900 miles – see right for their route – and their plan is to go the distance before the opening ceremony on July 23.

The idea was part of World Health Day in April and was about keeping everyone connected to Rushden Sea Cadets active in a bid to improve physical and mental wellbeing while the Covid-19 lockdown continues to hamper their ability to do their normal activities.

Chairman of Rushden Sea Cadets and the challenge organiser David Pickles, said: "The main purpose of this challenge is to motivate people to get outside and keep active. The pandemic is having an impact on everybody's lives and regardless of age, this has been a challenge for many of us, including isolation from friends, being confined to our homes, or worries that family or friends might get sick, and all of this is naturally taking its toll on our wellbeing."

The Olympic Games is set to take place in Tokyo this summer after being postponed last year due to the pandemic.

As well as boosting their physical and mental wellbeing, the event is also raising sponsorship money to help fund a series of fun activities for the cadets once lockdown restrictions ease.

As with many charities, fund-raising opportunities have been extremely limited over the past 12-months and the group relies on donations to be able to keep supporting local youngsters.

They've raised almost £500 so far, but if you'd like to help them out you can visit their JustGiving page: [justgiving.com/crowdfunding/rushdenscolympicchallenge](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/rushdenscolympicchallenge)

Rushden Sea Cadets is part of the national Marine Society and Sea Cadets Charity – a youth organisation that provides a wide range of fun activities to over 15,000 youngsters between the age of 10-18, at almost 400 locations throughout the UK. There is so much more to Sea Cadets than you'd imagine – as well as getting involved in fun and challenging activities, such as sailing, windsurfing, rowing



OLYMPIC CHALLENGE: above is the challenge route for Rushden Cadets

and power boating, they also learn about aviation, cyber security, catering and many other activities – all whilst gaining confidence and learning skills for life. You can learn more about Rushden Sea Cadets by visiting their webpage: sea-cadets.org/rushden or find them on Facebook @SeaCadetsRushden or Instagram @SeaCadetsRushden.

Middlesbrough Sea Cadets are also taking on their own challenge: as a unit they are going to do a virtual sponsored walk from the unit's home in Middlesbrough to the Home of Royal Navy Basic training HMS Raleigh.

The total distance to cover is 467.2 miles and every mile covered by individual cadets will go towards the total

distance covered. Cadets will walk, jog, run, cycle or row to cover the miles. The unit is in Albert Park, Middlesbrough and has been subject to vandalism during lockdown. Most of the windows have been smashed and will need replacing before they can safely return to parading, so raising funds with challenges like this is important.



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OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE ROYAL NAVY

Sergeant Moses, a photographer and writer for the National Army Cadet Magazine got in touch with Navy News and 45 Commando during their recent Winter Deployment to Norway. She investigated the role of the elite Mountain Leaders and what it means to train as a Commando in the Arctic...

For many, the Arctic is seen as an inhospitable, barren landscape shrouded in mystery, and uncertainty.

To the Royal Marines, however, it is simply yet another terrain to conquer and adapt to something which they have been doing so for the past 50 years.

It is not just fundamental survival which the Marines intend to improve, but tactical movement, cross-country skiing, and patrols are all essential components of the Cold Weather Warfare Course.

The basic curriculum for is divided into three sections: Survive; Move; Fight - with each section designed to challenge the Commandos. This results in a commando that has mastered the basics and is now ready to deploy with the rest of the force. The duration of the course is three weeks, and is aimed at commandos in combat roles.

Captain Olly Frost, currently in charge of the 45 Commando RM Mountain Leaders, has given me an insight into their training. Used to working in technical terrain, or all weather environments, Frost enjoys leading Cold Weather training, despite the hostile conditions.

He explained: "For a novice, I imagine that they can't really see any pros to Arctic warfare. The environment is trying to kill you, it's dark most of the time, and skiing with weight on can feel like it is a death-defying activity in itself. However, once they develop and start to become more adapted to working in the Arctic, it can be an enjoyable environment to work in."

The course begins in the 'Survive' phase, which teaches the basic principles of cold weather warfare to the Unit, and allows the troop to adapt to the harsh conditions - undoubtedly a shock even for the Arbroath-based Unit. "The first enemy in the Arctic is the environment", Frost claims,

"The more proficient a team is at dealing with the weather, the more time and energy they can focus on the enemy. The main lessons that Commandos usually learn is that mobility is so much more difficult. In a warm environment, it might be a case of putting on boots and body armour, grabbing your rifle and walking or driving on patrol. Comparatively, the Arctic is more restricted and everything needs to be more deliberate."

Next is the 'Move' phase, which targets tactical movement, and a firm focus on instilling a broad skiing foundation within the troop.

Frost explained that the most important part of movement instruction is maximising the time available on the slopes, and using effective cross country techniques, so as to achieve a more efficient skier - with correct technical skills saving large amounts of energy, something which is paramount when skiing long distances with everything from mission kit to freeze dried rations on your back.

The final aspect of training is the 'Fight' phase - the culmination of all skills previously learnt, and concentrates on the application of the procedures covered in the course. The fully tactical exercise lasts from six to eight days, and includes revision of effective patrols and night time attacks.

It is not just technical skills which the Marines develop whilst in Norway, but resilience, unity, courage and commitment are all imperative to success.

Captain Frost added: "The training is physically extremely difficult but one of the main lasting effects is your mental capacity to suffer hardship. When pushed to extremes, the body can take an unthinkable amount of punishment.

"When it comes down to being successful at something that is at the limit of what is achievable, if the individual can overcome the urge to stop, or give up, then the body will take them further than they could've imagined. Easier said than done."

After a frustrating year, it is clear that the Marines have enjoyed their time in the Arctic Circle, whilst staying safe.

Frost noted: "The Unit seems to have absorbed the restrictions well. We all understand the broader context of what the Government is trying to achieve, and we are always focussed on trying to keep our families and the community safe."

In order to adhere to Norway's current guidelines, the lead up to the training was different to usual.

Lt Elliott Millward RN, the Unit Media and Education Officer, said that: "It can be challenging for everyone to remain positive in this situation.

"We had to quarantine for a minimum of ten days and get tested regularly; however, it means we get to come out to Norway and work in a fantastic environment. The importance of training means the Unit has to generate solutions to overcome the hurdles presented by Covid-19. Things may be a bit more difficult, but it's not impossible."

The principles which the Marines depend on in the Arctic can be applied to everyday life - Courage; Commitment; Resilience; Trust. The tradition of Cold Weather Warfare training is long standing, and it's effectiveness is undisputed- how many forces are as efficient in a heatwave, as they are in a blizzard? This is why 45 Cdo stands ready to deploy anywhere in the world.

Pictures by PO Phot Si Ethell and LPhot James Clarke



SURVIVE, MOVE, FIGHT



CADET INVESTIGATES WHAT IT TAKES TO BECOME A FULLY TRAINED ARCTIC COMMANDO IN NORWAY...

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Tom's new top role

THERE'S a new man at the top of the Royal Naval Reserve Chaplaincy.

The Rev Tom Pyke VR took over the post from the Rev Simon Springett aboard HMS Express as she was moored alongside HMS President in London.

Tom, who joined the RNR in 2007, is the vicar of the parish church of London's Isle of Dogs.

His RNR service has taken him across the Atlantic and as far south as the waters around the Falklands Islands and South Georgia.

In his new role Tom is responsible for

delivering capable, well trained and highly-motivated chaplains ready to deploy on ships and with Royal Marines Units across the globe.

Navy chaplains have no military rank: by convention they are the same rank as the person they are speaking with.

Simon said: "Part-time service with the men and women of the Royal Navy is not only worthwhile and fulfilling; it also gives clergy a breadth and depth of experience which makes them more effective in their civilian ministry."

Tom, who set up a dynamic and effective

support network across the Isle of Dogs during the Covid-19 pandemic added: "The Navy have given me skills in leadership and management without which I simply would not have been able to harness the energy, love and compassion of the congregation and community in this way."

There are currently 19 chaplains, from across the denominational spectrum, serving in the Royal Navy Reserve, with a further four in training. Reserve chaplains serve for 24 days a year; split between regular training evenings and a two week "block" – which may well be on board a warship at sea.



Reservist volunteered to help pandemic fight

A ROYAL Naval Reservist from Plymouth put his university career on hold after volunteering for mobilisation as part of the UK government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sub Lieutenant Ben Peck is a member of Plymouth's HMS , who are based close to the dockyard in Devonport. Ben has served in the RNR for just under six years and is studying towards a BSc in Navigation and Maritime Science, at Plymouth University.

His goal is to qualify as a Merchant Navy Deck Officer and so far has completed four of the required 12 months of qualifying sea-time.

The pandemic changed university life completely for all students around the UK and Ben decided to take time out from his undergraduate studies to volunteer for mobilisation on Operation Rescript, the name given to the Military response. Until very recently he was working in the Joint Military Command for the South East (JMC SE) in Aldershot as an operational planner.

"Working within an Army Headquarters and understanding how all the military branches come together has been an amazing first mobilisation, and I have constantly felt like I'm making a difference to the current situation," said Ben. "Being part of the team who planned the testing of drivers and hauliers on Christmas Eve was a particular highlight, as well as looking at over 300 service people giving support to the NHS."

Ben missed Christmas with his family but there was never any doubt in his mind that he was where he should be over the festive period.

"I'm very proud to have contributed towards the fight against COVID-19, including NHS support and vaccination setup as well as preparations for the Brexit transition."

In Ben's Reservist role he works in the Mine Warfare branch, and will be mobilising for a second time this year and joining an offshore patrol vessel as a Tactical Fisheries Officer under the Marine Management Organisation.



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GOLD AWARD



Royal Navy indoor rowers are competing in challenges from home while looking forward to getting back to the big competitions, such as the WRIC World Championships, pictured

Challenging times

REGULAR readers will have noted that Royal Navy Indoor Rowing has made the most of virtual training and racing opportunities through the global pandemic.

Another aspect of indoor rowing that has kept the team 'honest' is participation in the eight monthly challenges of the global Indoor Rowers League (IRL), managed from France by Monsieur Sebastien Chaumiole for the past seven years.

The eight different challenges run from September through to April, in sequence: four mins/1,609m, (mile)/6,344m (Joe Simpson Challenge – Google it!)/5k/1min/2k/10k/500m.

Verified raw results are also processed to correct for: age, gender and heavyweight and lightweight.

Whilst not perfect, the corrected scores allow wider

and more equitable comparisons (eg Woman/55Kg/age 48 versus man/105Kg/age 25), providing additional motivation for all.

Many Royal Navy ergers are highly-placed in overall, uncorrected and corrected score categories with just the April 21 500m challenge to complete.

There is also a team competition, where the best eight corrected scores of teams of ten, including five Royal Navy-related teams are ranked in a league system.

The Royal Navy's Indoor Rowing Performance Programme (RNIRPP) competing as RN Nebula JT (homage to Cdr Jim Thomson (Navy PCAP) as coach) are the leading Service team, just ahead of RN DP NavyFit and POPT Chazz Charrett's Sultan MASSIVE – all featuring ergers who have developed performance through adherence

to long-term structured training programmes.

C/Sgt James Wade (30Cdo) sits solidly in second place overall of over 500 ergers and leads the 30-39 age group.

Lt Cdr Stu Moss (HMS Vanguard) is in fifth place overall and leads the 40-49 age group, just ahead of Col Tom Blythe (MOD).

Cdr Dan Connor (JHGS) is currently the top lightweight overall and leads the 50-59 lightweight category.

WO1 Shaun Gibbs (RNAS Yeovilton) leads the men's 40-49 standings, closely followed by Cdr Thomson, Major Alex Pickett (43Cdo), CPOPT Daz Hoare (HMS Queen Elizabeth) and Brigadier Matt Jackson ... the men's 40-49 category has very high numbers with the preceding six all in the top-12 places.

CPO Claire Drew (CNR) is vying for a top-three finish in the women's overall category with CPO Helen Richardson (Temeraire) similarly fighting for a top-ten finish.

The IRL Challenges ranging from 500m to 10k provide a range of demanding tests, related to strength and power at lower distances and increasing aerobic capacity at longer distances.

Trained ergers with an abundance of fast-twitch muscle fibres (eg Thomson) relish the shorter power-related challenges, those with a preponderance of low-twitch muscle fibres (eg Connor) are more suited to the longer distances.

A few (Wade, Moss and Drew) seem to perform equally well at any distance!

The highest IR- corrected score to date was recorded by Col Blythe

with his 98.56 for a men's 50-59 heavyweight 5K in 16 mins 55.9 secs, followed by Lt Cdr Moss with a 98.2 for a 2k of 6 mins 14.9 secs in the same category.

Cdr Connor earned 97.93 for his men's lightweight 50-59 5k in 17 mins 49.3 secs.

C/Sgt Wade has been consistently above 95 with a best of 97.34 for his 10k in 33 mins 56.9 secs.

CPO Drew's best score as the leading RN woman was 95.52 for her heavyweight 40-49 10k in 40 mins 05.6 secs.

All of those mentioned feature in the World 'Top 10' for 10k in their age/weight categories, noting that the current highest ranked RN performance in any World Ranking is Moss's fourth place with a men's heavyweight 50-59 2k of 6 mins 14.8 secs.

Report: Paul Winton



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BACK IN BUSINESS



BUT THEY NEED YOU



It has been three years since the Royal Navy Boxing Team were crowned winners in the UK Armed Forces Boxing Championships.

After a turbulent year for all sports, the team wants to start building on that success with the hope of again competing for the title.

Their 2018 win was 34 years in the waiting, something they do not want a repeat of.

Covid-19 and unit transfers have seen numbers dwindle but with lockdown easing, gyms opening and the possibility of future competitions, now is a great time for those interested to sign up.

To get back to those high standards of boxing, the Royal Navy team needs new recruits who have competed in a minimum of six bouts.

Head Coach Sergeant Wayne Brookes said: "The Royal Navy Boxing Team is a full-time sport and those who join have a chance of going full-time with the opportunity to compete all over the UK, with the possibility of also

competing around the world.

"We waited 34 years to win the UK Armed Forces Boxing Championships and we don't want to have to wait another 34 years to bring it back.

"It has been a difficult year but it's great that we can start building the team again. In the past, we've had a whole mix of characters from across the navy and marines so it would be great to have that again."

"Boxers from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines can sign up but they do need to have a level of experience before they join."

Boxing is among the most successful sports in the Royal Navy and offers a high standard of competition, with the chance to go on to

compete at a national level.

Royal Marine George Crotty is one example of the success joining the team can bring. He is hoping to have the chance to box for Team GB in the Tokyo Olympics this summer.

Sgt Brookes added: "You can go from grassroots levels within the Royal Navy to the Olympic team if you have got the attitude and the skill."

"The Boxing Team builds on the camaraderie that you already find in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines and there are the obvious benefits of getting fitter, stronger, and being part of a winning team."

“ ”

You can go from grassroots levels within the Royal Navy to the Olympic team if you have got the attitude and the skill

Sergeant Wayne Brookes

Interested?

To learn more about the Royal Navy Boxing Team or to sign up, email Sgt Brooks at wayne.brookes859@mod.gov.uk.

WINNING WAYS

FOR 34 years the Royal Navy Boxing Team had struggled to overcome their Army opponents.

But in 2018, their long wait for the Inter-Service Championship was over as they fought their way to the top of the sport among the UK Armed Forces.

Eight Royal Navy boxers competed in the respective weight categories against the RAF and Army at the competition in Aldershot.

And it was a night to remember for all those involved as the Army's dominance in the sport came to an end.

One of those to record a victory was AB (Diver) Robbie Matthews, who beat Gunner Ryan Fillingham from the Royal Artillery in the Light Welterweight division.

Speaking at the time, Matthews said: "Training has been really good this time around for us.

"We had a new coach come in and the training and nutrition packages meant that I got my weight down, which I always struggle with and that motivation made me want to train even harder.

"We came into this knowing we could win but then the RAF came in and got two wins which just tore up the script a little bit so it meant it was pretty tense towards the end."

Overall, the Royal Navy Boxing Team won four of the eight bouts, winning them the title and ending their three-decade long wait.

After the win, then Head Coach Sub Lieutenant Chris Smith said: "The last couple of months have been a long road, we've had our ups and downs with the squad but we've come through all of that and built confidence and a great training package.

"It is just a massive thing for UK Armed Forces boxing as a whole."



(main picture) AB Luke Fisher against a RAF opponent during the 2018 UK Armed Forces Boxing Championships. Picture: IPhoto Joe Cater; (top left) AB Chapman during a 2019 bout at the UK Armed Forces Combined Services Elite Boxing at HMS Nelson. Picture: IPhoto Barry Swainsbury; (top right) HMS Sultan Boxing Dinner Show 2017. Picture: POPhoto Nicola Harper.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the March edition of *Navy News* (right) was HMS Arethusa, the lead ship of her class of light cruisers, and is honoured by a memorial in Swansea.

Rosemary Davies, from Gwent, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (*above*) is the lead ship of five of Town-class light cruisers, which initially served as the flagship of the 2nd Cruiser Squadron during WW2.

1) What was her name and 2) which ship sank her in 1941?

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 May



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 June 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 July edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 315

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

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Talking Navy News

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in June's Noticeboard must be received by
MAY 13 2021

Deaths

Bill 'Gene' Harlow. Joined RN in 1938 as 17-year-old, trained at HMS Wildfire and HMS Dunedin before being posted to HMS Penelope on the 'Spanish patrol' in the Med and off Norway at the start of WW2. Then served with coastal forces for remainder of war before spending four years delivering training at HMS St Christopher and served as a motor launch instructor at HMS Benbow. De-mobbed in 1946, the petty officer then signed up for three consecutive tours of duty with the Royal Fleet Reserve, serving at HMS Victory, Osprey and Excellent, before finally retiring from the RN in 1957. Between 1961 and 67 Bill was an instructor with the Sea Cadets, serving at TS Orion on the Trent in Nottingham. He left the unit as XO to emigrate to Adelaide in Australia, continuing his Sea Cadet career as instructor, XO and CO of TS Adelaide, plus Deputy Staff Training Officer for South Australia. He finally retired in 1983. In 2010, at the age of 89, Bill was invited back to Lofoten for 70th anniversary commemorations of the 'naval base' at Skjelfjord. Bill, whose centenary featured in the February edition of *Navy News*, died March 20, aged 100 years and 26 days.

Tommy McFarland, signaller. Served from 1941 to 1946 on Motor Minesweeper 43 and HMS Cetoon Atlantic and Arctic convoy duties. After demob he returned to his home in Omagh Co. Tyrone on his old job, as a type setter for the local newspaper. In 1953 Tommy was recalled to duty, and served in HMS Rooke and in the destroyer HMS Sluys, until stood down in 1954 to RFR status. Member of Limavady branch of RNA. Died March 21, aged 100.

Lt Cdr David Merritt SD(E) (WE). Joined the RN as an artificer apprentice, series 24, in May 1955 at HMS Fisgard and continued training at HMS Collingwood. Ships served in included HMS Jutland, Palliser, Londonderry, Whitby and Nottingham. Served in shore bases at HMS Bellerophon (Reserve ships Portsmouth) and on the staff at HMS Collingwood, Lochinvar, COMCEN Whitehall, FMG Portsmouth and ARE Portsmouth. Retired in 1989. Died March 19, aged 81.

Lt Cdr Michael Hordern. 802 and 1850 NAS. Died March 8, aged 101.

Capt William M Howard MBE. HMS Heron,

Hermes, Daedalus, Ark Royal, Centurion. RNAY Belfast. BDLS India. Died March 14, aged 84.

Lt Cdr Michael F Lake. HMS Fearless, Osprey, Heron, Seahawk, Blake, A&AEE Boscombe Down, FONA. Died March 24.

Cdr Gerald P McMullan. HMS Andrew, Tiptoe, Subtle, Auriga. Died March 7, aged 90.

Col RM Michael J Reece OBE. HMS Heron, Seahawk, Saker, CTCRM, 848 NAS, 41 & 42 Cdo RM, NDC Latimer. Died March 21.

Lt Cdr Patrick H G Rogers. HMS Osprey, Sea Eagle, Bulwark, Heron, Seahawk. Died March 7, aged 89.

Cdr David R M Tuke. HMY Britannia, HMS Drake, President, Centurion, DGNMT, DNOR. Died February 25, aged 91.

Lt Cdr Neville R Williams. HMS Albatross, Albion, President. Died March 22.

Lt Cdr Bernard P De Salis. 846, 771, 829 NAS. Dartmouth Flt Cdr. Died February 14, aged 84.

Lt William H Hands. HMS Illustrious, Theseus, Queen Elizabeth. Died February 6.

David 'Dave' Stevenson, CPO Mech 1. Served with Fleet Air Arm from May 1962 to February 1984 and then with RN and RM Careers Service until December 1985. Served at HMS Raleigh, Daedalus (three times), Seahawk, Victorious, Goldcrest, Osprey (twice), Gurkha, Danae, Alacrity, Tamar, and Excellent. Died March 23.

CCA Lawes, Duncan Morrison. Joined Fleet Air Arm at HMS Concord, Arbroath as part of Jarvis intake. Served for 25 years, including in HMS Glory and Victorious and returning to Condor. Leaves three sons, Philip (former RAF), Duncan (Merchant Navy), and Robin (former Royal Signals). Died April 13, aged 91.

aged 96.

Lt Cdr RNR Ron P Gadd MBE RD. Severn Div RNR. Died March 6, aged 87.

Lt Cdr Anthony C Dyson. HMS Victorious, Excellent, Bulwark, Bristol, Arrow, Centurion, Pembroke, Fearless, BDLS Canberra, Hermes. Died March 2, aged 74.

Cdr Rupert T N Best. HMS Whitby, Sealion, Trump, Vernon, Courageous, Opportune, Ocelot, Sceptre, Saker, FOSM, CinC Fleet. Died February 3, aged 77.

Submariners' Association

Alan Jones WO.(MEM)(M). Served Feb 1962 to Jun 1992 in HM Submarines Seascout, Onslaught, Alaric, Resolution, Warspite, Splendid, Turbulent, and Trafalgar. Member of Plymouth Branch. Died March 7, aged 79.

William Bowyer BEM CPO ERA. Served 1953 to 1971 in HM Submarines Aeneas, Tabard, Thorough, Aurochs, Turpin, USS Sargo, USS Halibut, Dreadnought, and Valiant. Member of Scottish Branch. Died March 17, aged 89.

William Hyde LS UW2. Served 1954 to 1957 in HM Submarines Aleric (54-55) and Telemachus (55-57). Member of Eastern States Branch. Died March 17, aged 87.

William Hyde Mech1. Served May 1964 to Mar 1971 in HM Submarines Token, Repulse, and Dreadnought. Member of Morecambe Bay Branch. Died March 19, aged 81.

Peter Nash CPO MEM. Joined the RN at HMS Raleigh in January 1961 and served in HM Ships Scarborough and Venus before joining HM Submarines in 1964. Served in Anchorite and Andrew in the Far East during the Indonesian Confrontation 1964-1966. He then served in Ambush, Astute, Alcide and Resolution before taking over as FOSM's Coxswain and driver in 1980. He was still serving as such during the Falklands War. Left the RN in 1985 and was a long-time member of the International Submariners' Association and once Chairman of the London Branch of the Submariners' Association. Died March 23.

Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC

Cdr David I Aldrich. HMS Heron, Saker, President, Osprey, Malabar, Rooke. Weapon Dept (N). ACDS (OPS). Died March 12, aged 90.

Lt Cdr Roger Stewart. HMS Collingwood, Hampshire, Neptune, Norfolk, Rooke, Ark Royal, Raleigh. MOD Bath. AUWE. Died March 26, aged 79.

Cdr Peter Cave. HMS Cochrane, Saker, Weapon Dept (N). HM Dockyard Rosyth. Died March 21,

Ask Jack

HMS ROOKE: I served on HMS Cavalier doing a long refit at Gibraltar from 1964-65, and was billeted in the shore establishment of HMS Rooke, sadly which is no more. I have been trying to get some photographs of the establishment as I will hopefully be visiting in August. If any Navy News readers has pictures of Rooke from around that time that they could send me, it would be very much appreciated.

Sid Anning
53, The Queen Mother Court, Borstal Road, Rochester, Kent ME1 3JF.
sidanningd73@gmail.com
07592132614

HMS Raleigh - Drake 25s - 21st June 1977: Looking to contact fellow shipmates of the infamous class of Drake 25s and planning to have a reunion, after the dreadful COVID-19 epidemic. Already in contact with a number of classmates. Any members out there, that wishes to connect, please contact me directly.

David Cannon
dcannon8bells@outlook.com

Mick Pearce: I am trying to contact Mick, who got in touch about four years ago. Unfortunately I mislaid the envelope with the letter and photos but they turned up late last year. I have tried without success to contact Mick.

Tony Freshwater
Wellington NZ.
Facetime or Whatsapp on +6421384205 or tony.fresh2o@gmail.com

HMS Norfolk: I am after information about the ship's first commission. I was in the Royal Navy for six years, then in the RFA for seven. I joined Norfolk while she was being built at Swan Hunter on the Tyne in 1970 until 1972. When we arrived in Portsmouth in January 1972 I am sure we stayed alongside for about six months or so. The only time I recall us going to sea was for Sea Slug trials and a visit to Malta. We have a friendly debate about port visits every year at the County Class destroyer reunion. I would love to know where she did go.

Dennis Gilmore
dennisingilmore@live.co.uk

Ganges Class 283, January 2 1961: In January 2021 it was 60 years since we first met. I am in touch with a number of members and we are thinking of possibly meeting up in the Birmingham area. If there are any members who are interested in a class reunion, please contact me.

Alan Barry
Barryaj@virginmedia.com

Margaret Foster: She joined the Wrens in 1967 and I would like to get in contact with her.

Malcolm Henley
Malcolm73@msn.com or 07759818201

HMS Forest Moor - 1960 to 2003: I am researching HMS Forest Moor with a view to writing a book. I served there as the Engineer Officer from 1988 to 1991. I would greatly appreciate hearing from anybody who served there and for any information or photos.

Jerry Anderson
jerryjanderson@btinternet.com

Portsmouth barges: In 1972 I was a Leading Marine Engineer (Stoker) looking after the Commander in Chief's two barges at Admiralty House, Portsmouth. On a later visit for Navy Days there was no sign of them. Does anyone know what happened to them? One was a 45 footer and the other a 35 footer (old money) the engines were 2 Foden in the 45 and 2 Perkins in the 35.

John Pittock
Johngp46@yahoo.co.uk

Gerald Smith and James Murphy: I am trying to find out details about my grandfather who may have used two names, Gerald Horace Patrick Smith and James Michael Murphy. Gerald was born on August 4 1901 and died in February 1949. He served in the Royal Navy and when he died the doctor who certified his death said he was at least 20 years older than he claimed. Gerald, who was from Ireland, also said he had saved the life of a man called Fred Key while in service and they remained friends until he died. James was born May 5 1878 in Ireland but I cannot find a record of his death. I would appreciate any help in this search.

Kay Smith
Smith_kay@sky.com or 07887 872009.

HMS Valiant. My father Peter Berry served in the boat in the 1970s and 80s and I would like to have a copy of the original 'Skimmer Killer' drawing by Harry McGroarty, which features a shark jumping out of the water about to punch a frigate.

Juliet Berry
goolie40@hotmail.co.uk

Reunions

HMS Intrepid: A reunion takes place at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, on July 24, 2021. Contact Ian Richards at iansrich@outlook.com for booking form and itinerary.

738 Kings Squad, Royal Marines. Our reunion will take place from August 12 to 14 2021. I have contacted 18 members so far but are after details of the following: Andrewartha; Bateman; Cheney; Comper; Denver; Ellis; Graham; Lambert; Merry; McFarling; Plant; Saunders.

Roger 'Taff' Sheppard
01656 670224
shep9409@gmail.com

HMS Liverpool Association: Our reunion will be held on June 12. For membership details contact the secretary John Parker at info@hmsliverpoolassociation.org.uk or call 02392 521222.

HMS Cleopatra Old Shipmates Association: Our 36th AGM and reunion is planned at the Best 5-7 November 5 to 7. Contact the Honorary

Secretary Warwick Franklin at warwickfranklin@outlook.com or ring 01752 366611 for details.

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 Tenby Association. Our next reunion is planned at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, on September 24 to 27. Please contact David Macalister, Association Secretary. Email dmac121dm@gmail.com if you require more information.

BRNC Entry Sept 1980 40th anniversary reunion dinner, BRNC Dartmouth, planned for March 27, 2021, has been postponed. Details from Cdr N J 'Nobby' Hall, neil.hall324@mod.gov.uk

HMS Undaunted, Eagle and Yarmouth Associations: Annual reunion, Hallmark Hotel, Midland Road, Derby, October 28 to November 1, 2021. Contact Alan (Whiskey) Walker on 01268 548041, whiskey666@outlook.com

HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association:

The 2021 annual reunion at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, has been moved from May to August 13 to 16. Contact Secretary Denis Askham at 07773651213 or email askhamd3@gmail.com

HMS Londonderry: The re-arranged reunion planned for June 2021 (announced in December's *Navy News*) is now cancelled due to the company organising the event ceasing trading. No further reunions are planned.

HMS Tartar: Our reunion will take place at the Royal Maritime Hotel, Portsmouth, from October 1 to 4, 2021. For details contact Andy Eason on roseandandy12@gmail.com, telephone 07812 600568, or Linda Powell on linpowe25@gmail.com, telephone 07513 413460

HMS Troubridge Final Commission Association 1966-69: Our reunion will be at the Royal Beach Hotel, Portsmouth, from October 8 to 10 2021. Contact Bryan Pace at Romft1@GMail.com or our website HMSTroubridge.com.

Balkan mission impossible

IN THE spring of 1994 I had the great pleasure and privilege of being hosted in the carrier Ark Royal as she 'poised to protect' in the Adriatic off former Yugoslavia, supporting the no fly zone and providing options to support Britfor, the British contribution to UNPROFOR.

My task was to draft a book to mark the ship's forthcoming decommissioning. It was quite an experience, typing away as Sea Harriers fully bombed-up took off from the deck above, writes Professor Eric Grove.

My host on board was my good friend Jonathan Worthington but I could not have been made more welcome by the entire ship's company. At one point I was taken ashore with an UNPROFOR ID card and blue beret to explore the humanitarian aid route to Gornji Vakouf and the Britfor HQ at Vitez. Life was made easier by the recently-negotiated cease fire between the Croats and Bosnian Muslims.

THE GROVE REVIEW

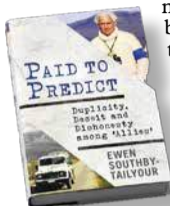
At Split, by sheer coincidence, we were at a Trogir fish restaurant where we met Ewen Southby-Tailyour, the distinguished recently-retired Lieutenant Colonel of Royal Marines and already an established author. Ewen mentions this meeting in this book which covers his frustrating experiences at this time as a monitor with the European Community Monitoring Commission in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia.

He had been asked by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to use this cover to report on Croat preparations to destroy the Serbian enclave of the Krajina on Croat Territory. He was also asked to keep an eye on one or two individuals for SIS.

As he puts in the initial notes:

"I was, in effect, being paid to help predict the future; a future that became more and more obvious as time went by. Most of us knew that the ethnic cleansing of 200,000 Krajina Serbs by Croatia would take place sometime and that this would be the result of the illegal breaking of United Nations Arms Embargo 713.... but although I, and a few other monitors, reported the situation, no one further up the European Community command chain, appeared to do anything for fear of United States recriminations....I never expected to be personally involved in such overt duplicity, deceit and dishonesty among so called European allies."

The prelude to this activity was a fascinating plan to command a Tank Landing Ship that would imprison Somali warlord Aideed for the UN in the Indian Ocean – if he was captured, which he was not. This led to appointment to the Monitoring Mission (ECMM) in November 1993. He soon found that this was a frustrating post. As he wrote in his diary: "All 'sides' are subject to UN Arms Embargo 713 but some European nations, that should be jointly enforcing its provisions, are themselves breaking them to support their various favourite or aligned Balkan states. Very puzzling that the very embargoes are being broken by the countries we represent – a cross section of European monitors- are supposed to be monitoring are being broken by the countries we represent. The main "criminals" in this respect seem to be the US, Italy, Germany, France and Greece plus of course some Middle East and North African countries such as Algeria and Iran – and Russia." Ewen was trapped between colleagues and



superiors who often had ulterior axes to grind.

Southby-Tailyour was clearly shocked at the way the German-supported Croats had adopted World War 2 symbols, including swastikas. He was also concerned with investigating a mysterious airfield on the island of Brac that it turned out was being prepared for American UAVs that were used to support the later Croat offensive.

The author's account of his difficulties and frustrations is frank, open and fascinating. From the naval point of view it is interesting to see the transmission of accusations that the embargo operations carried out by German and American ships was deliberately less thorough than those carried out by the RN and Dutch Navies.

Unsurprisingly the author saw little alternative to resignation from the frustrations of this post which he did shortly after we met. His experience had been profoundly disappointing. "After

32 extremely satisfying and professionally-sustaining years as a Royal Marine it was, perhaps a mistake to have thought such well commanded organisations existed in the multi-national, civilian world. It was clear, almost from my first day in Zagreb, that the cause for such inadequacy and internecine skulduggery was the mix of disparate European nations each with its own agenda and each fighting for some form of supremacy... The United Kingdom was an integral part of that mix... Every nation was at it!"

Paid to Predict: Duplicity, Deceit and Dishonesty among 'Allies' by Ewen Southby-Tailyour (Fonthill, £25 ISBN 978-1-78155-768-6) is a most enlightening book and essential reading on Operation Grapple.

■ We were informed of the sad news of Prof Grove's sudden death just before this edition went to press. We will pay tribute to our friend and great naval scholar next month.

100 meals, 100 chefs, 200 heroes

SAILORS and chefs have searched the Commonwealth for military heroes and culinary delights to compile a unique cookbook to mark the Royal British Legion's centenary (see pages 14-15).

Cooking With Heroes aims to highlight the work of today's Servicemen and women, the skill and range of military chefs and draw attention to some of Britain's forgotten heroes – all while putting a tasty meal on your table and raising money for the long-standing Forces charity.

Similar military cookbooks were produced by personnel in Afghanistan over a decade ago (raising £80k for Help for Heroes) and an RAF centennial collection of recipes brought in just short of £150k.

Cooking with Heroes splits the UK and Commonwealth into 100 regions, one for every year of the RBL's existence with 100 Service personnel selecting 100 heroes (from inspirational figures perhaps overlooked by history to well-

known names such as Channel Dash VC winner Eugene Esmonde, the South Yorkshire hero).

And for each region a chef – mostly military, but some celebrities too including Jamie Oliver, James Martin and the Hairy Bikers – has picked a dish to represent the area's culinary culture.

Some 28 Royal Navy/RFA chefs past and present have thrown their ingredients in the pot, alongside 13 men and women connected with the RN families recounting their service and selecting local heroes.

Veteran Sea King aviator Lt Cdr Dickie Lewis (pictured above right) who now trains Merlin crews at 824 NAS at Culdrose chose the Scilly Isles – a regular haunt for Helston-based aviators – and wartime hero Daniel Lomenech (pictured above far right).

The Frenchman escaped his occupied homeland and joined the RNVR, regularly crossing the Channel from the Scillies in disguised fishing boats so he



could mingle with the Breton fishermen to transport agents and build up an intelligence picture of Nazi coastal defences before D-Day.

As for the Scilly dish? Cornish chef Chief Petty Officer Russ Keitch, who's served around the globe feeding Culdrose's air squadrons and flights and taught new generations of caterers at the logistics school, and "wanted to create a recipe of a difference and with the

Isles of Scilly being just a stone's throw away this was a perfect choice – or so I thought.

"Looking into lost and forgotten food from the island it proved difficult to find a fitting recipe. I contacted the Isles of Scilly Museum for some advice or help."

It sent a book of local recipes and Russ' eye was caught by the line: "scads and tatties all week long and conger pie for Sunday."

That was the inspiration for his own version of scads and tatties: smoked fish, potato and spinach pie (you can have a crack at making your own below).

For a taste of the Commonwealth we turn to trainee Merlin observer Lt Aren Tingle from Birmingham and of Caribbean descent. His hero is Captain John 'Jack Punch' Perkins who served

the Royal Navy with distinction for 30 years at the same time and Nelson and became the first man of mixed race to be promoted captain and was a scourge of the French.

HMS Prince of Wales chef Kevin Cordice, originally from St Vincent, provides the Caribbean dish, inspired by the simple but tasty meals his father cooked while listening to reggae. Ital soup is a vegetarian broth ('ital' means natural/clean and as part of Rastafarian culture avoids killing God's creatures by consuming food grown from the earth around them).

The legion is hoping to raise £250,000 through sales and is already one fifth of the way to its target.

Cooking with Heroes is released on May 21, priced £19.95, from <https://stjames.org/product/cooking-with-heroes/>



Preparation Time: 20-30 minutes
Cooking Time: 60-80 minutes

Serves 4
10g unsalted butter
1 medium red onion, halved & sliced
700g (4 large) Maris Piper or Désirée potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
200g spinach
4 fillets (about 300g) smoked mackerel, skinned and flaked
50g frozen peas
1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves (or

1 tsp dried)
1 tbsp parsley, coarsely chopped
600ml double cream
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 lemon, zest and juice
1 tbsp creamed horseradish
1 slice of wholemeal bread, crumbed
75g medium cheddar, grated
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 150°C.
Melt the butter in a frying pan or saucepan over a

medium heat, add the onions and cook, stirring frequently for about 5 minutes until soft and translucent.

Lightly butter an ovenproof baking dish and spread a thin layer of the sliced potatoes on the bottom and season lightly with salt and black pepper.

Heat the spinach in a dry frying pan over a medium heat for 1½ – 2 minutes, stirring continuously, until wilted; set aside to cool slightly, squeeze out any excess liquid, season with salt and black pepper

and layer the spinach on top of the potatoes.

Mix the cooked onions, flaked smoked mackerel, peas, thyme, parsley and remaining potatoes together in a bowl season generously with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Bring the cream to a simmer in a saucepan over a medium heat, remove from the heat and stir in the garlic, lemon zest, juice and creamed horseradish; set aside to infuse for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile mix the breadcrumbs and grated cheese together.

Mix the infused cream with the potato and mackerel mix, check the seasoning and spread in an even layer over of the spinach, top with the cheese and breadcrumb mix, grind over a couple of twists of black pepper and bake in the preheated oven for between an hour and 1 hour 20 minutes or until the potatoes are soft and cooked through and the crumb is brown and crunchy.

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