



# NAVY NEWS

DECEMBER 2022



## Nordic Lightning

F35-B Lightning jets from 617 Squadron line up on the deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth as the Fleet Flagship heads north for her Operation Achillean deployment  
*See pages 2-3 and 14-15*

Picture: AS1 Natalie Adams RAF

Inside: ■ Frigates swap ■ New ships for RN ■ Royal Marines in Oman

ISSN 0028-1670 12

9 770028 167191

Off-sale date: DECEMBER 20, 2022  
**£3.50**





# FROM THE FJORDS TO

## TWO distinct task groups with one common goal.

A Royal Navy mission – codenamed Operation Achillean – has European security and prosperity at its heart and spans 2,000 miles from Oslo in the north to Alexandria in the southern reaches of the Mediterranean.

In the north, aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth leads a powerful Carrier Strike Group of warships, F-35B Lightning jets and helicopters and is operating closely with Joint Expeditionary Force allies.

In the south, amphibious flagship HMS Albion is at the head of the Littoral Response Group (North) that has been deployed since September operating with NATO allies and partners, visiting Libya, Cyprus, Turkey, Montenegro, Greece, Croatia, Albania and Egypt, with more stops and exercises to come.

This operation with its component parts of sailors, Royal Marines, warships, aircraft and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries are separated by thousands of miles by land and sea but serves one common purpose to underscore the UK's commitment to European security and forge closer bonds with nations across the continent.

### IN THE MED

Last month we left the Littoral Response Group in Cyprus, where Royal Marines had spearheaded amphibious warfare exercises alongside the Army and RAF.

Since then HMS Albion has led her task group, including

RFA Argus, RFA Mounts Bay and destroyer HMS Defender, into the Adriatic Sea where the Royal Navy completed its largest exercises in Montenegro since the Balkan nation joined NATO five years ago.

On entry into the Adriatic, the task group took part in multinational exercises that included NATO's leading Mediterranean security task force (Standing Maritime Task Group 2) and US Navy supercarrier USS George H W Bush and her escort ships. It was then into Montenegro to bring the militaries of both nations closer together, share knowledge and improve their ability to operate together.

Montenegro joined NATO in 2017 and has welcomed the Royal Navy on several occasions, but never on this scale – three ships, helicopter squadrons and more than a thousand sailors and Royal Marines converged on the country for a range of military exercises along the stunning coastlines and into the mountains.

It continues to develop ever-deepening bonds between the UK and Montenegro militarily, but also in trade, security and in the fight against serious organised crime.

Royal Marines – from 45 Commando, 42 Commando and 4 Assault Group – trained with Montenegrin forces in casualty evacuations, anti-armour tactics, close-quarters battle, countering improvised explosive devices, board and search and amphibious warfare tactics.

Eight days of exercises were highly fruitful for both allies. Captain Simon Kelly, Commander of the Response Force

and Commanding Officer of HMS Albion, said: "What a fantastic honour it has been to train alongside, shoulder to shoulder, with the Montenegrin Armed Forces.

"It's been a privilege to be here in Montenegro and to work with such an important NATO partner.

"My sailors and Royal Marines have learnt a great deal in partnership with the Montenegrin Armed Forces.

"The Montenegrins have welcomed us with open arms. We've trained in their mountains, we've trained in the air alongside them, and we've trained in their waters.

"In every way it has been land, air, and sea throughout. It's been a real pleasure to work with such a brilliant NATO partner."

HMS Albion, RFA Argus and RFA Mounts Bay were in the port of Bar in southern Montenegro at the end of the exercises, where the ships hosted Montenegro's Prime Minister Dritan Abazovic and UK Ambassador to Montenegro, Karen Maddocks, among other figureheads.

42 Commando – Royal Marines who are the specialists in maritime boarding operations – and Montenegrin counterparts laid on a thrilling demo of board and search and rescue operations.

Ambassador Maddocks said: "I'm delighted to welcome so many of our partners in Montenegro onto the ship to see some of her capabilities. We see HMS Albion and the other ships here as a powerful and very visible reminder of the UK's support for Montenegro, as a fellow NATO ally.

"I hope the UK has shown that we are committed to the stability and security of Montenegro and the Western Balkans region."

Rear Admiral Robert Pedre, Commander of the UK Strike Force, added: "It is great to be here in Montenegro, witnessing the Royal Navy and Royal Marines training alongside their colleagues within the Montenegrin Armed Forces as they celebrate the fifth anniversary of their joining NATO.

"Montenegro is an important ally and key partner for both the UK and the unified nations within NATO; I have been exceptionally fortunate to witness a cohesive and unified force working so seamlessly together."

Before Montenegro, Albion spent time in Alexandria before working alongside the Egyptian Navy.

The stop saw Albion host delegates while the ship's company got to see some of the country's famous landmarks.

Sailors visited the El Alamein War Cemetery for a service to remember all those who lost their lives in the Second Battle of El Alamein 80 years ago. Commemorations also took place at the German War Cemetery.

While in Egypt, the Devonport-based ship's sailors experienced ancient sites such as the Great Sphinx and the Great Pyramid of Giza.

On behalf of the British Embassy in Cairo, the amphibious ship hosted senior diplomatic and military personnel from





# THE PYRAMIDS

Egypt and other partner nations during a reception and capability demonstration.

Guests were shown around a Wildcat Maritime Attack helicopter, saw a Puma drone and were given a demonstration of a 'Dragon Runner' bomb disposal robot.

Shortly after leaving Alexandria Naval Base, HMS Albion worked alongside Egyptian frigate ENS Taba.

Able Seaman Kallum Connell said: "Working with other navies is always exciting, particularly ones I've not worked with or even seen before. Sailing alongside the Egyptian frigate was a really good way to round off the visit to Alexandria."

Prior to Egypt, Albion sailed to Izmir, Turkey, in the Aegean Sea and hosted staff from NATO Land Command, the headquarters of which is based in the city, for a discussion on littoral warfare, while also hosting Turkish dignitaries, supported by the British Embassy.

The visit forged closer bonds between the Royal Navy and Turkish Naval Forces after Albion worked with Turkish landing ship Bayraktar and her Seahawk helicopter as she left Izmir, while amphibious warfare staff from both nations shared knowledge from recent exercises, including those which recently took place in Cyprus and from Norwegian-led exercises in the Arctic in March and April.

"Given the strategic location of Turkey, I am delighted that Albion has been able to visit our important NATO partner and reaffirm the strong links between our navies,"

said Captain Kelly.

"The Turkish have gone out of their way to make us feel welcome and I found we had much to share, particularly where it comes to joint forces in conducting amphibious operations."

The planning officer for the Littoral Response Group deployment, Lieutenant Commander Matt Taborda, added: "This visit presented an ideal opportunity to reinforce the importance of securing sea lines of communication to our Turkish Naval colleagues and land focused NATO colleagues."

"The safe and secure delivery of large scale logistical shipping is a vital aspect to the sustainment of NATO's Land Command operations."

The visit included a ship's tour with various stances demonstrating firefighting and damage control, medical expertise and remotely-piloted air systems.

Visitors also got to visit the ship's vehicle deck to see Albion's specialist amphibious assault equipment.

At the same time, Type 45 destroyer HMS Defender, which is the Littoral Response Group North's powerful escort ship, was in Greece working with the Hellenic Navy.

## IN THE NORTH

The fleet flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth headed out of Portsmouth on November 10 bound north for Norway, having finished a period of maintenance after her high-profile visit to New York to host a UK-US security conference.

617 Squadron 'The Dambusters' and their F35-B Lightning jets arrived soon after, joining helicopters from 820, 845, 815 and 825 Naval Air Squadrons to conduct flying operations in the North Sea (see pages 14-15).

Queen Elizabeth's Carrier Strike Group is working closely with NATO and Joint Expeditionary Force allies as the UK underscores its commitment to safeguarding European security, just as the Littoral Response Group does the same in the Mediterranean.

Group Captain Phil Marr, Commander Lightning at RAF Marham said: "This latest deployment of 617 Squadron demonstrates once again that our personnel are equally at home conducting air operations from land or sea."

"The flexibility, precision and operational focus of the squadron, operating alongside our international allies, is something the UK can be immensely proud of – the F-35 is a formidable combat capability."

As *Navy News* went to print, Queen Elizabeth had just arrived in Oslo for three days of engagement with the Norwegians.

Given a plum berth next to the historic Akerhus fortress – just 15 minutes' walk from the heart of the city, this was the carrier's first visit to Norway's capital.

Norway is of enormous strategic importance to the UK, a key ally in NATO, and the flagship was granted a welcome according her status, hosting a string of VIPs, including the UK Defence Attache Lieutenant Colonel Richard Parvin RM,

Norwegian Chief of Defence, General Erik Kristofferson, Chief of the Norwegian Navy, Rear Admiral Rune Anderson and UK Ambassador Mr Richard Wood. They were hosted by Commodore Angus Essenhigh, the Commander of the UK Carrier Strike Group.

The strike group had been operating in the North Sea, as part of Achillean, with Queen Elizabeth one of five carriers from NATO nations which has been working in Atlantic-Mediterranean waters recently, including USS George H W Bush – on operations in the Adriatic, USS Gerald R Ford – which anchored in Stokes Bay, Gosport, on a short visit to Portsmouth, France's FS Charles de Gaulle and Italy's ITS Cavour – both in the Mediterranean.

Achillean plays its part in challenging adversaries attempting to fracture the international system and security architecture that have underpinned global security, stability, and prosperity since World War 2.

Deepening cooperation between allied Armed Forces is a key objective of Achillean.

The deployment adds to vital UK defence activity in the High North, deepening cooperation between navies and air forces.

It also builds on more than 50 year of training and exercises in Norway, especially for the helicopters of Commando Helicopter Force, which head for Exercise Clockwork in northern Norway every year, and Royal Marines who carry out winter training with the Norwegian Army.



## Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Queen Elizabeth 814 NAS  
 HMS Northumberland 815 NAS  
 HMS Hurworth 824 NAS  
 HMS Tyne 825 NAS  
 HMS Mersey RFA Tiderace  
 HMS Severn  
 Coastal Forces Sqn  
 XV Patrick Blackett  
 Project Wilton



17 TES SQN

HMS Medway

RFA Tideforce

HMS Scott

HMS Kent

HMS Somerset

Gibraltar Squadron

HMS Trent

HMS Montrose

HMS Albion  
 HMS Defender  
 RFA Mounts Bay  
 RFA Argus  
 RFA Tidesurge  
 845, 847, 815 NAS  
 45 Commando

HMS Tamar  
 HMS Spey

### Operation Kipion

UKMCC  
 NSF Bahrain  
 IMSC  
 COMUKMCMFOR  
 HMS Lancaster  
 HMS Middleton  
 HMS Bangor  
 HMS Chiddingfold  
 1700 NAS  
 RFA Cardigan Bay  
 Forward Support Unit

British Defence Singapore  
 Support Unit

HMS Forth  
 NEFI

HMS Protector

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



## GLOBAL | MODERN | READY

THE Carrier Strike Group and Littoral Response Group (North) were both in action as HMS Queen Elizabeth took part in Operation Achillean in the Atlantic and HMS Albion led operations in the Med (see pages 2-3)

Helicopters from 845 NAS and 847 NAS have also been at the heart of the deployment (see pages 14-15) playing a key role in Montenegro.

Royal Marines from 40 Commando have been at the centre of reinvigorated British efforts in the Gulf after rigorous joint exercises with Omani forces on the coast of one of the world's most vital waterway (see pages 16-17).

We take a peek at the new Weapons Loading System Trainer, which has been introduced at RNAS Yeovilton to prepare personnel for working with the Fleet Air Arm's next-generation missiles (see centre pages).

HMS Birmingham, Edinburgh, London, Newcastle, and Sheffield, will join Glasgow, Cardiff and Belfast in the vanguard of anti-submarine warfare after the MOD placed a £4.2bn order to complete the City Class of Type 26 frigates (see page 11).

Three new ships are to be built to support Royal Navy carrier operations into the second half of the 21st Century (see page 11). Wherever HMS Queen Elizabeth or HMS Prince of Wales go, they will be accompanied by one of three RFA 'solid support ships' – providing ammunition, spare parts and supplies to sustain the carriers and their task groups thousands of miles from the UK.

The RN is to continue permanently operating a major warship in the Gulf and Middle East after swapping vessels patrolling the region (see page 6). HMS Montrose, which left the UK in 2018, has been relieved by her sister ship HMS Lancaster to continue the key mission.

Staying in the Middle East and Royal Navy sailors and ships harnessed the tech of robot drones (see page 9) in a multi-national test of potential future naval operations. Seven ships – including RFA Cardigan Bay and minehunter HMS Bangor – headed for waters off the Saudi coast to put a flotilla of sail drones through their paces.

RN ships are now in the midst of a World Cup security mission, spending six weeks safeguarding the waters around host nation Qatar (see page 9). HMS Chiddingfold, Bangor and Middleton, plus RFA Cardigan Bay, have been tasked remain in and around Qatar and Central Gulf until Christmas.

Patrol ship HMS Medway and her US Coast Guard boarding team seized more than 400kg of cocaine worth around £24m on Britain's streets from a boat in the Caribbean (see page 5).

Survey ship HMS Protector has resumed her Antarctic scientific mission, beginning four months monitoring the impact of global warming and changes to the environment (see page 19).

Personnel from the Gibraltar Squadron are learning to master their new patrol craft, Cutlass and Dagger, for six months and are full of praise for the vessels (see page 7).

RFA Tideforce and her Wildcat helicopter completed a ten-day operation to help suppress gang violence in the Caribbean islands of Turks and Caicos (see page 5). The UK Government's support in the British Overseas Territory came following a spike in gun crime.

Frigate HMS Kent has undergone a 'MOT' to ensure she's ready for the next stage of her autumn operations (see page 19). The Portsmouth-based ship had a series of deep-dive checks at a NATO facility in Stavanger, Norway.

Sister ship HMS Somerset (see page 11) has completed a busy autumn patrol of northern European waters.

A new community hub for Royal Navy families was opened by the Princess Royal (see page 25). Funded by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, the hub will support more than 400 children in the Gosport and Fareham areas.

Petty Officer David Groves won a Pride of Britain award (see page 23) for saving 27 crew from a burning tanker. HMS Argyll was returning to Plymouth when she received a call for help from a cargo ship.

The Accelerated Officers Programme of 2022 culminated with a passing out parade at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth (see page 39), as 16 new officers commissioned into the Royal Naval Reserve and two members of the Cayman Islands Coast Guard returned as trained Midshipmen.

Finally, the Royal Marines Band are bidding for the Christmas No. 1 – helping to raise money for musicians with disabilities and honouring murdered MP David Amess (see page 38).

# Tributes paid to a great navy leader

THE Royal Navy has lost one of its great Cold War warriors and post-Cold War leaders with the passing of Admiral The Lord Boyce.

The former submariner, First Sea Lord and Chief of the Defence Staff died at the age of 79 having served the Royal Navy, nation and numerous good causes.

He championed the causes of young and old connected with the Royal Navy, from supporting Sea Cadets to keeping alive the memory of those involved in the Channel Dash.

And above all, he was a submariner through and through, spending the bulk of his operational career beneath the waves after beginning his naval career at Britannia Royal Naval College in 1961.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key said Admiral of the Fleet Lord Boyce had served the Royal Navy and the Nation with distinction for over four decades.

He continued: "From commanding three submarines and a frigate at the height of the Cold War, through to the highest level of command as First Sea Lord and then Chief of the Defence Staff, he was a deeply professional and respected military leader."

"However, his remarkable life's accomplishments spread far beyond Defence through the many organisations and causes he supported right through to his last days. The thoughts of the entire Royal Navy are with his family at this time."

Born in Cape Town in 1943, a young Michael Boyce opted for a career as a submariner and served in both conventional and nuclear-powered boats, commanding three – Oberon, Opossum and finally hunter-killer HMS Superb – as well as frigate HMS Brilliant as a captain in the mid-1980s.

Thereafter came a series of senior training and operational appointments: head of submarine training, Flag Officer Sea Training – responsible for preparing all RN ships for front-line duties – senior RN officer in the Middle East and Flag Officer Surface Flotilla.

Between 1995 and his retirement at the end of 2003, he held the three highest posts in the Royal Navy: Second Sea Lord, Commander-in-Chief, Fleet, and First Sea Lord, then the most senior military role in the UK, Chief of the Defence Staff, during military operations in Afghanistan, then the invasion of Iraq.

And he was the last naval officer – to date – to be promoted to the Royal Navy's highest



Pictured from top left, The Lord Boyce talks to the then Duke of Cambridge at the National Memorial Arboretum earlier this year; The Lord Boyce pictured in 2010; Addressing personnel aboard HMS Ocean off Iraq in 2003

rank, Admiral of the Fleet, appointed by Her Majesty the Queen in 2014.

The admiral was created a life peer – Baron Boyce of Pimlico – in 2003 and upon retirement from the military at the end of that year, succeeded The Queen Mother in the historic post of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. It was one of a string of posts and honorary positions which Lord Boyce held in retirement, among them chairman of the RNLI, Vice President of the White Ensign Association, trustee of the National Maritime Museum, president of the RN Submarine Museum in Gosport, and a patron of a string of worthy causes from the Trafalgar Woods initiative to various youth and military charities, plus the Submariners' Association.

Earlier this year, he greeted the then Duke of Cambridge, the honorary head of the Silent Service, at the unveiling of the new multi-million-pound monument to submariners

at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

Commodore Paul Dunn, the head of the Service, said submariners had lost one of the greatest members of their proud family.

"It is with deep sadness to the Submarine Service as we mourn the loss of Admiral of the Fleet the Lord Boyce," he added.

"An outstanding Naval Officer and inspirational leader who was a true advocate for and friend of the Submarine Service."

Among Lord Boyce's many other titles and positions were: Freeman of the City of London, Elder Brother of Trinity House, Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London and, only in December last year, he was given the honorary rank of Vice Admiral of the United Kingdom.

In amongst these many causes and activities he found time for his family, sport (Royal Navy squash especially), and opera and ballet.





*HMS Medway carry out gunnery exercises after a successful drugs bust, destroying a target vessel that was carrying £24m of cocaine*

# £24M COCAINE SEIZED

**A ROYAL Navy ship and US Coast Guard boarding team seized more than 400kg of cocaine worth around £24m on Britain's streets from a boat in the Caribbean.**

Caribbean-based patrol ship HMS Medway and her embarked US Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment spotted the vessel near the Dominican Republic with help from a patrol aircraft.

Following a tense chase, the vessel was boarded and the drugs discovered with three crew members detained.

"To secure an interdiction on our first day dedicated to this type of operation in this period has been tremendous," said Commander Chris Hollingworth, Commanding Officer of Medway.

"Everyone involved demonstrated their professionalism during a challenging pursuit. It might be the first, but we're going to make sure that it won't be the last, and I speak on behalf of everyone here in saying this has galvanised our determination to succeed."

The boat contained several large packages which were quickly confirmed as being cocaine prior to being seized and brought aboard the warship.

It's believed the boat had come from South America, a common route taken by smugglers at this time of year.

After an overnight operation to secure the contraband – estimated by the National Crime Agency to be worth around £24m, had those drugs reached the streets of the UK – and detain the crew, the vessel was sunk by Medway's gunnery team.

The destruction of the drugs smuggling vessel, which is normal for this type of operation, ensures it is no longer used for illegal activity while also providing valuable gunnery training.



*The target vessel is destroyed with HMS Medway's weaponry*



*The haul of drugs aboard HMS Medway following the drugs bust*

"Although we talk of these boats being commonplace in the Caribbean, that doesn't in any way diminish the achievement of landing a bust like this," said a member of the boarding team, US Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment 404, who wishes to remain anonymous.

"Together with our partners on board Medway and up in the skies above us, we're able to smash a hole in the supply chain and disrupt the movement of these harmful drugs before they have the chance to harm people at home and abroad."

Medway recently helped the people of the Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos in their recovery efforts following Hurricanes Ian and Fiona.

"It's a perfect example of Medway's versatility, and demonstrates my team's ability to shift from Disaster Relief Operations to Counter Illicit Trafficking Operations without missing a beat," added Cdr Hollingworth.

"I'm exceptionally proud of the collective effort of my ship's company and our colleagues from the US Coast Guard for their proactive attitude and total commitment to the task."



*A sailor takes aim at the target vessel as HMS Medway carries out gunnery exercises following a successful drugs bust*

## TIDEFORCE HELPS SUPPRESS GANG VIOLENCE SURGE

**A ROYAL Navy ship has been helping suppress gang-related violence in the Turks and Caicos Islands.**

Royal Fleet Auxiliary tanker Tideforce, with her embarked Wildcat helicopter from 815 Naval Air Squadron, were on operations supporting aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth in the North Atlantic when they were diverted to support a request from the Governor of the British Overseas Territory.

A violent upsurge in gang-related murders fuelled by drugs, weapons and turf-wars had created an unprecedented security situation.

Tideforce, with her specialist airborne capability, provided UK reassurance and commitment to the people of the Turks and Caicos through patrol, surveillance and reporting operations.

Lieutenant Commander Phil Barron, the ship's Flight Commander, said: "The Wildcat helicopter is able to use its array of sensors to conduct persistent surveillance and reconnaissance of a predetermined area chosen by the local policing effort."

"Using the radar and electro optical camera it was also possible to find and track suspect vessels at sea and report their location for onward interception and boarding."

"Overland, using the thermal and optical cameras, it is possible to provide imagery of sensitive areas within the gang territories or hideouts and report any suspicious activity to the police. Captured data can also be used as evidence to assist in criminal prosecutions."

These idyllic Caribbean islands therefore find themselves in the direct line of illegal gang, drugs, weapons, migrant and fishery exploitation activities.

Tideforce's operations were carried out in support of the Royal Turks and Caicos Islands Police Force's Marine Branch and the Governor – helping to protect their population and safeguard territorial waters from criminal challenges.

Captain Chris Clarke, Commanding Officer of RFA Tideforce, said: "This is the second time in a month that the RFA ship's company and embarked Royal Navy flight have supported the people and government of the Turks and Caicos Islands – firstly following the Category 3 Hurricane Fiona, and now in the important work to suppress the shocking level of gang-related violence facilitated by porous maritime borders."

"Through the combined efforts of everyone involved, all working in unison to support the Police Force: arrests, weapon and drug seizures have been made."

The Governor, Nigel Dakin, said: "The surveillance capability provided by Tideforce's helicopter provided perfect top-cover to muscular policing activity conducted by the Tactical Firearm's Unit of the Royal Turks and Caicos Islands Police Force, reinforced by similar specialist officers from the Bahamas."

"The same helicopter was invaluable in the aftermath of Hurricane Fiona."

"I was able to thank the Captain and crew personally – we remain extremely grateful here, to those who serve away from their families, as they protect ours."

"I'm pleased to say that UK Police and the UK's National Crime Agency will be part of ongoing support to the islands, including deployments of firearms trainers, forensics experts and detectives."

Tideforce remained on notice in the Caribbean while she works with Royal Navy partners in the US Navy and Military Sealift Command. Tideforce completes her deployment and returns to the UK in December.



# Come in F236: your time is up!



IT'S amazing how time flies.

One minute you're leaving Devonport to deploy to the Gulf. The next you're leaving the Gulf heading for Devonport. In fact, some 1,478 days passed between the milestones. Indeed, when you think of what's happened since October 29 2018 when HMS Montrose last saw home shores, it seems an age has passed.

Theresa May was Prime Minister. Brexit hadn't happened. No-one had heard of Covid-19. You could still go on holiday with Thomas Cook. The Lancashire town of Bury still had a football team. Greggs hadn't gone veggie with their sausage rolls. And, of course, it was Her Majesty's Ship Montrose, not His, sailing down the Hamoaze.

And there's a lot as an operational front-line warship you can squeeze into four years.

Like 111 transits of the Strait of Hormuz, the chokepoint which is the narrow gateway to the Gulf, accompanying 132 merchant vessels in the process: supporting the safe passage of hundreds of thousands of tonnes of shipping carrying oil, gas, cars, electronics and other goods.

More than ten drugs busts. Over 16 tonnes of illegal narcotics seized (and then destroyed. At least £80m of cargo up in smoke, the proceeds never ending up in the hands of criminal or terrorist groups.

The bottom line. It's been a mission which has set the standard for long-term Royal Navy deployments.

When Montrose sailed (the 'wrong way' to the Gulf, via Panama and the Pacific) the concept of swapping the entire crew of a major warship thousands of miles from the UK every few months was new and untested.

Now it's the blueprint for roughly half of the worldwide operations carried out by the Fleet.

"When we started, the dual crew model was a trial. Today, it's no longer a trial – it's how a substantial part of the Royal Navy operates. It keeps ships on operations and, at the same time, people are able to

"When we started, the dual crew model was a trial. Today, it's no longer a trial – it's how a substantial part of the Royal Navy operates. It keeps ships on operations and, at the same time, people are able to plan their lives, their rest and relaxation, professional courses as well as training," said Commander Claire Thompson, Montrose's final Commanding Officer

As for the idea of basing a major warship in Bahrain, well... that now falls to Montrose's sister, HMS Lancaster.

The two swapped responsibilities during a short visit to the new port of Duqm, Oman (which is also becoming a key hub for RN operations in the region.)

It is a mission key to the UK's – and international – prosperity and security, safeguarding merchant shipping, tackling criminal and terrorist activity including smuggling arms and drugs, and working with allies across the region.

Indeed, Montrose proved her worth almost immediately. Just weeks after arriving in theatre in April 2019, she found herself at the heart of global events when tensions in the region led to threats and attacks on merchant shipping.

When tensions subsided, the frigate spent the bulk of her time east of Suez working with regional and international allies and has frequently been assigned to Combined Maritime Forces; the world's largest multi-national naval partnership, and specifically Combined Task Force 150, which conducts security patrols across vast swathes of the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea.

Her time with CTF 150 led to her string of successful drugs busts.

And in a first for the Royal Navy, HMS Montrose twice intercepted boats trying to ship high-tech weaponry, contravening a UN Security Council Resolution, seizing surface-to-air missiles and engines for cruise missiles in the process.

"Drugs busts and interceptions really allow the ship to show what she is capable of – whether you are part of the boarding teams, an engineer, a chef, it almost doesn't matter because everyone plays their part and everyone is filled with pride," said Commander Thompson.

"Thanks to media coverage these busts receive, it means

Sailed **134,389** nautical miles (two-thirds of the distance to the Moon)

Destroyed **16** tonnes of illegal narcotics in over **10** busts, denying criminal/terrorist groups of proceeds worth **£80M**

Seized illegal shipments of surface-to-air missiles and cruise missile engines

Conducted **378** days of patrols of the Arabian Sea/Indian Ocean

Passed through the Strait of Hormuz **111** and Bab al Mandeb **6** times, safely accompanying **132** merchantmen

Changed all **200** crew **11** times

Away from the UK over **1,500** days more than **1,350** of them in the Gulf

Chefs have prepared **864,000** meals

Crew have downed **288,000** cuppas



family and friends are also aware of what we've been doing – and that's really important."

To sustain Montrose in the harsh Gulf environment, maintenance work has been carried out at local shipyards, while every four months the entire crew of sailors, Royal Marines and aviators are swapped like-for-like with a second crew from the UK. Many of the crew of HMS Lancaster have previously served in the Gulf aboard Montrose.

The rotation of crew has spared the ship the month-long voyage to and from the Middle East at the beginning/end of a regular six or seven-month deployment, meant Montrose has been available for more operations, and allowed personnel to plan their lives with much greater certainty than other Royal Navy ships and operations.

"HMS Montrose is leaving the Gulf after four years away from home – I brought her out here as an able seaman," said warfare specialist Lewis Turnbull, who's since been promoted to the next rank, Leading Seaman.

"I am proud to now be part of her last ever crew, especially being the most operational Type 23 frigate for so long. But we are also all looking forward to seeing her back in the UK for Christmas."

Lieutenant Joe Stutchbury, who commands the ship's Royal Marines detachment, said the time aboard Montrose had been a "unique experience" for his commandos, who'd been at the forefront of a string of drugs busts.

"HMS Lancaster has some serious boots to fill as the next frigate deployed to the region," he added.

"As the national press have reported, HMS Montrose has made the biggest drugs busts in the history of Gulf operations – but I'm sure our colleagues will do their best to match our achievements and I hope they pull it off."

Upon her return to Devonport this month, HMS Montrose will undergo maintenance before a final spell of operational duties around the UK early in 2023 and a 'farewell tour' – including a visit to her namesake Scottish town – before the ship is formally decommissioned in the spring after 29 years' active service.

"Over 30 years a ship reflects all the ship's companies who have served in her. It's our home.

"Montrose has been away from the UK for four years, and some of us have spent two of those four years aboard – with all that entails: good times, hard times, families growing up, so it's a big part of our lives. We'll be sad to say goodbye to her, but we're also looking forward to moving on and new and exciting times in the Navy."





# ROCK SOLID

## CREWS PRAISE NEW PATROL SHIPS



### FASTER. Nimbler. Punchier. Gibraltar.

Royal Navy crews say the new fast patrol boats Cutlass and Dagger are a boost to safeguarding the Rock.

Six months into operations with the Royal Navy's Gibraltar Squadron, and the pair – which form the core of the squadron alongside a handful of RIBs – are making their presence felt locally... and are looking to stretch their legs beyond the western gateway to the Med.

Commissioned in May and July respectively, Cutlass and Dagger (pictured) are larger and more heavily armed than Scimitar and Sabre, and considerably faster than HMS Dasher and Pursuer which plugged the gap between the old boats and their permanent replacements.

The task remains the same: provide security in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters, keeping close watch over Gibraltar's shores, reassuring the Rock's 34,000 inhabitants, demonstrating UK sovereignty, exercising with local and visiting forces, and providing protection to visiting warships, submarines and support vessels alongside their civilian counterparts in the Gibraltar Defence Police force.

Three water jets power the boats through Gibraltar's waters at speeds up to 40kts.

The boats are fitted with 'high-shock' seating to ensure the bumps are more bearable for the crew when

Dagger and Cutlass are zipping along.

Surveillance cameras/sensors, including infra-red and laser tracking, help crew monitor the progress of suspicious contacts by day and night.

"The engines are jet-propelled – the first of their kind operated by the Royal Navy – and allow us to operate at speeds in excess of 40kts," explained Lieutenant Commander Ollie Barrett, Cutlass' Commanding Officer.

"It means we can be expected to escort similarly fast-moving vessels conducting illicit activities."

He's hoping to take his boat further afield – in the past Sabre and Scimitar occasionally made the passage to North Africa. Whilst not long range, Cutlass and Dagger do possess some creature comforts: there's a small galley and TV below.

"It's incredibly important for smaller vessels such as ours to conduct defence engagement, flying the flag for the Royal Navy in ports which the larger surface ships cannot get into," Lt Cdr Barrett added.

"So there are plans later this year for us to push out, beyond the three-mile limit which we normally patrol, carry out port visits, build up a rapport with other allied navies operating in the area."

The squadron operates from a dedicated facility and pontoons next to The Tower – British Forces HQ on the Rock – with personnel either living at the main military base at Devil's Camp, near the airport, or in some of Gib's family quarters.

Able Seaman Alex Mansell, Seaman Specialist/Navigator's Yeoman, enjoys the live hard/work hard experience of serving on the Rock.

He says the ship's company is "quite unique" due to the 365/24/7 demands on the squadron. "The roles can be really intense at times because we can be out on the water at many different times of the day."

"When I'm not at work, Gibraltar is fantastic. I can cross the border, travel, experience Andalusia and southern Spain."

Picture: Cpl Connor Payne RAF

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# THE PHANTOM ZONE

**ACTUALLY** it's not that scary. Just harnessing the tech of robot drones to make the Gulf a safer place for all mariners.

Royal Navy sailors were given a glimpse into the potential future of naval operations in the region in two multi-national tests of technology.

Flotillas of sail drones could serve as the 'eyes and ears' for larger warships, moving around the Gulf gathering intelligence, beaming it back in real time to ships and headquarters ashore.

Two exercises were run to begin pushing the boundaries: first Phantom Scope, then Phantom Shield – the former involving British and American ships and personnel, the latter

also involving the navies of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia to see how the drones might be exploited by a multi-national task group.

For Phantom Shield, seven ships – RFA Cardigan Bay, minehunter HMS Bangor (pictured inset left), two US Navy fast patrol ships USS Hurricane and Chinook, Bahrani missile boats Al-Manama and Al-Fateh, and Saudi patrol vessel HMS Khalid – headed for waters off Saudi Arabia.

There the US operated sail drones, launched from Cardigan Bay, which also served as the command ship for Bahrain-led Combined Task Force 152, one of four task forces organised under the Combined Maritime Forces.

The drones, which resemble sailboards but are

packed with sensors, do just that. Powered by the wind and the sun, they can remain at sea indefinitely – no need to refuel or refresh crew.

The RN initially worked with the sail drones back in March as part of a larger multi-national exercise, but the two autumn trials focused more on integrating the crewless and artificial intelligence systems with traditional warships, as well as staffs ashore in Bahrain.

Sensors on the robot craft were able to locate and identify training aides in the water and send imagery back to the operations rooms and headquarters with a view to using such crewless vessels in future to monitor regional waters.

Royal Navy officer Lieutenant Benjamin Carver has been working with the

US task group, CTF 59, formed specially to push the boundaries of tech in support of naval operations in the Gulf and relished the opportunity to take part in a live, large-scale, multi-national exercise to test the latest kit.

"I think autonomous systems are about to become a major aspect of the maritime world and it is really interesting to be here as they first hit the water," he explained.

"For this exercise we used some long-duration, wind-powered units that we deployed from crewed RN ships, and used them to feed back their imagery and data to ships around them and to control centres ashore, to build everyone's awareness of what's going on and what's out there in

these large tracts of sea."

Lt Carver and his US colleagues believe they are in the vanguard of future naval operations. "Working with autonomous technology feels like the early days of naval aviation, we don't know exactly what it's going to look like, but we know it's going to be huge."

Certainly Captain Rashed Al-Ameen, commander of CTF 152, was impressed by the insight into the potential of crewless technology to support regular operations in the region.

"It is so valuable to get these opportunities to really test how our forces from across different nations can work together with the uncrewed systems. It helps us better understand how to work with each other to boost regional security."



## Best defence at World Cup

ROYAL Navy warships are currently patrolling the waters off Qatar to ensure the 2022 World Cup runs smoothly.

Three minehunters, plus their mothership, have been tasked to remain in and around Qatar and the Central Gulf until Christmas as part of the Qatar-led international security effort, making sure the world's greatest festival of football is not ruined by a hostile act.

His Majesty's Ships Chiddingfold and Bangor will conduct round-the-clock patrols of the sea lanes leading to the Gulf state, using state-of-the-art sonar and underwater remote-controlled devices to locate and identify mines or bombs, and use either clearance divers or the Seafox submersible to render the contact harmless by safely blowing it up. HMS Middleton will remain on standby to provide additional support if needed.

The ships spent the weeks leading up to the tournament, which opened on November 20, accurately mapping key sea lanes – the sonar is powerful enough to pick out contacts as small as a can of cola – making it easier to identify any recent changes or anomalies.

Thereafter regular patrols have been conducted of those key sea lanes. Beyond looking for mines and other underwater devices, the ships are supporting the broader security mission at sea, generally keeping an eye out for suspicious or unusual activity.

Their actions are being directed from support vessel RFA Cardigan Bay, command ship throughout the tournament for the 200 RN personnel involved, with a specialist battle staff of minehunting experts embarked.

Commander Adrian Visram, who is overseeing the Royal Navy effort with his staff, said his team had a wealth of experience to draw upon to help ensure the tournament ran safely.

"Our minehunting force has been out here for 16 years keeping the sea routes open: the continuing flow of trade and energy during these tumultuous times is even more vital to UK interests," he added.

"It is an immense privilege to command the Royal Navy's support to the FIFA World Cup, building upon the strong defence relationship between Qatar and the UK. This demonstrates our commitment to working with international allies and partners to protect against threats overseas and promote our values."



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# BRING THEM ON...

## CONTRACT AWARDED TO COMPLETE TYPE 26 FLEET



BRING on the Birmingham. And the Sheffield, Newcastle, Edinburgh and London.

They will join His Majesty's Ships Glasgow, Cardiff and Belfast in the vanguard of anti-submarine warfare after the MOD placed a £4.2bn order to complete the City Class of Type 26 frigates.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace has awarded BAE Systems the contract to complete the eight-strong class of next-generation submarine hunters, investing in British shipbuilding and industry into the middle of the next decade, "galvanising the very best of British engineering, manufacturing and design" and ensuring the "Royal Navy maintains its world-leading capability to protect and defend our

nation at sea."

Vice Admiral Paul Marshall, Director General Ships for the MOD's Defence Equipment and Supply organisation, added: "The award of the Type 26 Batch 2 manufacture contract is another key milestone in the United Kingdom's shipbuilding programme, reaffirming our commitment, alongside our industrial partners, to deliver a highly effective anti-submarine frigate fleet for the Royal Navy."

Due to lessons in building the first batch of new frigates, plus improved assembly facilities – including a new undercover construction hall – the final five Type 26s will be built for around two-thirds the cost of the initial trio, and they will be built and delivered to the Fleet more

quickly.

The eight 26s replace the eight dedicated Type 23 anti-submarine frigates currently in service (five new Type 31 ships, the first under construction in Rosyth, will supplant the general duty 23s reaching the end of their lifespans) and are expected to serve for at least 25 years, taking the class into the 2060s.

Each 26 will be equipped with the Sea Ceptor missile defence system, a 5in medium calibre main gun, a Merlin or Wildcat helicopter, medium-range radar, powerful array sonars, a Mk41 vertical launch silo for missile systems, and a 'mission bay' allowing the ships to carry adaptable 'pods' for wide-ranging operations, such as disaster relief, drones, and mine warfare.

And the class will also embrace the latest environmental tech to make them as efficient and clean as possible, minimising emissions and any impact on nature.

Construction of Birmingham and her sisters will sustain around 1,700 jobs at BAE Systems yards in Govan and Scotstoun, plus 2,300 jobs across 120 suppliers and sub-contractors.

The first steel is due to be cut for Birmingham this winter, while HMS Glasgow will be moved from the standing at Govan where she's been sitting for nearly two years and into the Clyde via a specialist barge before the end of the year. Glasgow is due to be operational by the end of 2028.

## Trio of new ships to support carrier operations

THREE new ships are to be built to support Royal Navy carrier operations into the second half of the 21st Century.

Wherever HMS Queen Elizabeth or HMS Prince of Wales go, they will be accompanied by one of three 'solid support ships' – providing ammunition, spare parts and supplies to sustain the carriers and their task groups thousands of miles from the UK.

The Ministry of Defence has selected Team Resolute as the preferred bidder to construct the three vessels for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, the Royal Navy's indispensable supporting flotilla.

The consortium - comprising BMT, Harland & Wolff and Navantia UK – will be awarded a £1.6 billion contract (before inflation) to manufacture the vessels, subject to HM Treasury and Ministerial approval. The contract will create 1,200 UK shipyard jobs and a further 800 jobs across the UK supply chain.

Head of the RFA, Commodore David Eagles, said: "The Fleet Solid Support contract is a significant step towards the delivery of these ships that are a key part of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's continued growth and evolution."

At present, the RFA operates a solitary solid



support ship, RFA Fort Victoria. She was an integral member of HMS Queen Elizabeth's task group last year, but she's also almost 30 years old.

Her replacements will be designed and built to meet the needs of a fifth generation aircraft carrier and its fifth generation F-35 stealth fighters.

Designed to support Net Carbon Zero by the end of their 30-year service lives, the RFA vessels will be equipped with energy efficient technologies to reduce power demand and

will have the capability to reduce their carbon intensity by adopting low-carbon, non-fossil fuels and future energy sources.

Each vessel will be 216 metres long – making them the second longest ships in the Fleet – and 34.5 metres wide. They will move through the oceans at up to 19 knots. There will be cargo space for 9,000 square metres of stores.

Her flight deck will be able to host all the helicopters flown by the UK's armed forces and the hangar can accommodate two Royal Navy Merlins, with additional space for drones/

crewless systems.

The ships will require a crew of just 101, with accommodation available for an extra 80 personnel to support operations or embarked helicopters.

Vice Admiral Paul Marshall, DE&S Director General Ships, said: "FSS will deliver worldwide logistic and operational support to the Royal Navy, including the Maritime Strike Group on deployment."

"Significant investment in emerging shipyards across the UK will also strengthen and diversify our industrial base. Alongside our investment in the Type 26 and Type 31 frigate programmes, this breadth will be vital to grow and support a highly capable and modern Navy."

The contract will create 1,200 UK shipbuilding jobs as well as generate hundreds of graduate and apprentice opportunities, with Team Resolute pledging to invest £77 million to support the British shipbuilding sector.

The entire final assembly will be completed at Harland & Wolff's shipyard in Belfast. Blocks and modules for the ships' will be constructed at Harland & Wolff facilities in Belfast and Appledore in Devon. Build work will also take place at Navantia's shipyard in Cadiz in Spain.



## Frigate makes new friends in the north

HMS Somerset has completed a busy autumn patrol of northern European waters.

The Plymouth-based warship added more than 6,500 nautical miles to her odometer in just a couple of months – enough to take her to the Falklands.

Instead, Norway, the Netherlands and Germany were her destinations in between training, trials and busy maritime security duties.

She's one of two RN warships to make use of the NATO ranges at Stavanger (HMS Kent, her sister was the other) which allows crew to test and calibrate all the various sensors and systems aboard to make sure they behaving as specified.

The Norwegian port also offered superb adventurous training opportunities – stand-up paddleboard, kayaking, hill walking, and indoor climbing, led by trained RN instructors from Portsmouth.

Back at sea, Somerset's gunners flashed up the frigate's main 4.5in gun for the first time since 2018 (most of the intervening period was spent in refit), testing the weapon at various elevations and especially monitoring the barrel's recoil – too much can damage the gun. It passed the shoot with flying colours.

Another weapon system needing testing was SeaCeptor, Somerset's new air defence missile, fitted during refit. Its tracking system was thoroughly tested by engineers from MCTA, who used a live aircraft to calibrate it and follow the jet's movements.

Port visits have included Den Helder, home of the Dutch Navy, where crew took on a local rugby side (and won, celebrating with an evening of Abba and pickled herring)



and took the train into Amsterdam, and Hamburg... which was the last overseas port Somerset called upon ahead of her refit.

It took eight and a half hours to cover the 79 nautical mile transit from the mouth of the Elbe to the great harbour city – time spent by many of the crew in the hangar, running or rowing the distance as a physical challenge.

Enjoying a plum berth in the city near the philharmonic hall, pictured left, Somerset hosted a reception for a number of German officers and a Royal Marines colonel onboard.

Two crew missed out on Hamburg's hospitality to join affiliates from the Society of Apothecaries in London and their annual dinner. One of the largest livery companies, it helps to support medical students and its members carrying out medical research, such as helping develop the Covid vaccine.

All of this has been a new experience to communications specialist Engineering Technician Lucy Evans. "This was my first time on board a ship this has also been my first time away from home for a long period of time," she said.

"Patrols were such an amazing experience for me as I got to learn loads about the other cultures around the world and see some sights I never thought I ever could. The time away made me feel very proud as I felt as though I was giving something back after all my training and getting to put it into practice now at this point in my career."

Ship's doctor Surgeon Lieutenant Leo Potter added: "As a last-minute addition to the ship, this period has proved to be exciting and dynamic. Somerset has been at the forefront of defence operations, such a busy deployment has shown what can be achieved when we all pull together."





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**NEW MEN AT THE TOP:** King Charles III, above, becomes Captain General, following his son, Prince Harry, top right, and his father, the Duke of Edinburgh, middle right. General Gwyn Jenkins, bottom right, has recently been appointed Commandant General in a ceremony in Devon

# CHARLES IN CHARGE

THE KING BECOMES CAPTAIN GENERAL AS GENERAL JENKINS IS APPOINTED MILITARY HEAD OF THE CORPS

## THERE are two new leaders at the helm of the Royal Marines.

King Charles III has taken on the role of Captain General – a ceremonial position previously held by His Majesty's father, grandfather, great-grandfather and son, while General Gwyn Jenkins, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, becomes Commandant General – the military head of the Corps – after a ceremony in Devon.

In a message to mark the 358th anniversary of the Royal Marines, the King said: "It is the greatest possible pleasure to assume the role of your Captain General.

"I am exceptionally proud to follow in the footsteps of so many members of my family over the last three-and-a-half centuries, all of whom held the role with a deep sense of admiration.

"The Royal Marines have a distinguished and unparalleled history, both on land and at sea. I draw immense inspiration from your courage, determination, self-discipline, and a remarkable capacity to endure in the most extreme environments.

"I feel greatly honoured to become part of the Corps Family and very much look forward to meeting many of you in the near future. In the meantime, this comes with my heartfelt and special wishes for a very happy 358th birthday.

"Per Mare, Per Terram."

The King, who holds the rank of Admiral of the Fleet, assumes the role as the ceremonial head of the Corps, which his late father, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, held for more than 64 years – the longest serving of all Captain Generals.

King Charles served in the Royal Navy from 1971 to 1976, studying at Britannia Royal Naval College before training as a helicopter pilot at Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton and joining 845 Naval Air Squadron aboard HMS Hermes.

He served aboard the destroyer HMS Norfolk and frigates HMS Minerva and Jupiter before taking command of coastal minehunter HMS Bronington for his last months of active service.

His father's active naval career ended as a commander in January 1953, after almost 14 years. He was promoted to Honorary Admiral of the Fleet and added the title of Captain General in June of the same year, in succession to the late King George VI, King Charles III's grandfather.

It was a position The Duke held until December 2017, when King Charles III's son, Prince Harry, assumed the role – holding it for three years until February 2021.

The King's great-grandfather King George V also held the position for 35 years under its previous title, Colonel-in-Chief Royal Marines, from 1901 to 1936.

After the King was made Captain General, the new military head of the Royal Marines was appointed during a ceremony in Devon.

Lieutenant General Rob Magowan passed the role to Gen Jenkins at the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone.

It brings to an end Lt Gen Magowan's second stint at the helm after 18 months, handing the keys of Corps over to Gen Jenkins, as the most senior officer in the Corps.

Gen Jenkins takes charge as the Royal Marines continue to embrace new technologies and tactics and forge ahead with plans to be a constant presence in strategically important areas of the globe, something that is already coming to fruition through the deployment of the Royal Navy's Littoral Response Group (North) in the Mediterranean this autumn.

The ceremony at Lympstone was attended by First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Ben Key, Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral Andy Burns, Commandant General of the Netherlands Marine Corps, Brigadier General Jan Hut, and Royal Marines Reserve honorary Colonel Bear Grylls, among others.

Lt Gen Magowan stepped aside after taking the role in April 2021 for the second time, having done it for the first time from 2016-2018. He is the first to hold the position twice.

Gen Jenkins was commissioned into the Royal Marines in 1990. His time as a junior officer was spent in the Commando Logistics Regiment, later deploying on operations in Northern Ireland with 42 Commando.

He went on to serve as a Lieutenant Colonel overseeing global operations in PJHQ, before a Commanding Officer appointment in 2009.

On completion of his command tour he was promoted to Colonel and deployed for 12 months to Afghanistan, for which he was awarded an OBE, returning to the UK in 2012 as the Military Assistant to the Prime Minister in No. 10 Downing Street.

After two years in No. 10, he was promoted to

Brigadier and took up a 3\* civilian appointment in the Cabinet Office as Deputy National Security Advisor for Conflict, Stability and Defence.

In April 2017 he moved back to the military and took command of 3 Commando Brigade, before he was promoted to Major General in January 2019, in which rank he served first in the Royal Navy as the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff and subsequently commanded a tri-service organisation.

In August 2022 he was selected for the role of Vice Chief of the Defence Staff and promoted to General.

## The Captain General – a brief history

HRH The Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh was appointed Honorary Colonel of the Royal Marines in 1882.

After his death, HRH The Duke of Cornwall and York, later Prince of Wales, was appointed Colonel-in-Chief in 1901 and continued to hold the appointment when he ascended the throne as King George V.

King George VI assumed the title when he came to the throne in 1936 and in 1948 changed the title to Captain General.

In March 1952 an official submission was made to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II inviting her to assume the title of Captain General, but she deferred her decision until after the coronation.

On the occasion of her coronation, The Queen appointed HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, as Captain General on 1 June 1953.

He wore the uniform of a Royal Marines general officer with the badges of rank of a field marshal (crossed batons on a wreath of laurel with a crown above).

When The Duke of Edinburgh, aged 96, stood down from all formal duties following the Captain General's Parade at Buckingham Palace on 2 August 2017, Her Majesty approved the appointment of HRH Prince Henry of Wales, subsequently The Duke of Sussex, as Captain General Royal Marines on 19 December 2017.

Prince Harry wore the uniform of a Royal Marines general officer with the badges of rank of a colonel, in broad alignment with the honorary appointments of other younger members of The Royal Family.

# BLOUNT IN NATO ROLE

THE Royal Navy's Vice Admiral Keith Blount is to be appointed NATO's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR), demonstrating the UK's continued leadership in the Alliance.

For the past three years, he has been Commander of NATO's Maritime Command and this is the first time the position has been held by a member of the Royal Navy.

He will take up the new appointment in the rank of Admiral in succession to General Sir Tim Radford in July next.

Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe serves as the second in command to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe and concurrently as the deputy head of Allied Command Operations.

Vice Admiral Blount said: "It is an absolute honour to have been selected to succeed General Sir Tim Radford as the next Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

"He has been instrumental in guiding NATO's work at a critical time for the Alliance and its Partners and I look forward to maintaining the momentum.

"The strength of NATO lies with its people and we have a highly skilled and dedicated team that is laser focused on our collective defence."

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "I am delighted to congratulate Vice Admiral Keith Blount on his promotion to Admiral and appointment as Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

"His appointment demonstrates the United Kingdom's unwavering commitment to NATO and our leadership in European defence. I pay tribute to the contribution Vice Admiral Blount has made to the Royal Navy and the Alliance in his career to date.

"He brings extensive leadership experience and has served on operations across the globe along our allies and partners. I look forward to continuing to working with him and NATO.

"I would also like to take this opportunity to recognise all that General Sir Tim Radford has contributed during his time in the role."

Chief of the Defence Staff Admiral Sir Tony Radakin added: "Vice Admiral Blount's appointment as Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe is testament to his leadership of NATO's Maritime Forces at this pivotal time for European security.

"It also reflects the United Kingdom's commitment to the Alliance on land and in the air, our exceptional nuclear contribution, our growing cyber capabilities, and our pivotal role on NATO's northern flank, all of which make Britain the leading European ally."



Vice Admiral Keith Blount



# Herc practises fuelling around with Marines

It's a question we've all asked ourselves.

Can a Hercules get a Merlin out of a tight spot by refuelling it in the field?

Yes, yes it can, as the RAF joined forces with the wings of the Royal Marines to see how the two might link up on a future operation far from a standard air base.

The Commando Helicopter Force has specialists – Mobile Air Operations Teams – who set up forward ammo/refuelling bases to support their aircraft far from ships or air bases (*which they did in Montenegro, see right...*).

And so do the RAF. Its Brize Norton-based Air Mobility Force can call upon the Tactical Supply Wing.

It's actually bread and butter to the aviators. They've done this with Chinooks. And Sea Kings. But not the Royal Marines' latest battlewagon, the Merlin Mk4.

So to prove the concept a Herc flew into CHF's home of RNAS Yeovilton to set up what the RAF (for now) call the Air Landed Arming and Refuelling Point (ALARP).

Waiting to take on fuel, two turning and burning Merlin Mk4s which successfully took on black gold in an operation the RAF say ran "flawlessly despite torrential downpours".

The rather wet dry run in the otherwise benign surroundings of Yeovilton served as the perfect setting for testing the concept and giving Merlin air and ground crews an idea of what to expect were they to perform refuelling in the field...

... which is the next step in the training, whereby flat ground on Salisbury Plain or on the Otterburn ranges in Northumberland, or even a long stretch of beach could serve as the temporary landing site.

With the Hercules due to be retired by the end of March, the RAF is looking to its successor, the A400M, to provide a similar service, ALARS, the Air-Landed Aircraft Refuelling System.

Picture: LPhot Ben Corbett



WELL here's a first.

Commandos fliers help pave the way for international tourism boost.

We've had survey ships assist with the creation of new port/harbour facilities by accurately charting unknown waters.

And sailors and marines regularly help businesses and communities get back on their feet after natural disasters: the Boxing Day tsunami, Typhoon Haiyan, Caribbean hurricanes and so on.

But tourism?

We've saved a few visitors to Cornwall down the years on search-and-rescue duties.

And air shows at Culdrose and Yeovilton have pulled in thousands of punters in the summer.

How about the small Adriatic nation of Montenegro?

If you've never been, Montenegro is

- (1) Stunningly beautiful;
- (2) Very small (about the size of Northern Ireland);
- (3) Not very populous (600,000 people, with roughly half of them living in the capital Podgorica);
- (4) Very popular with tourists (over 2½ million every year before the pandemic)
- (5) The second newest member of NATO.

Being a very small country, its annual defence budget is just €61m - £53m, or less than 1 per cent of UK military spending.

There are just 2,500 personnel in its armed

forces and only six aircraft.

The crews of the latter are highly skilled... but lack experience over water.

So while they are regularly found in the mountains of Montenegro rescuing walkers and climbers who've got into difficulty, the country doesn't possess a maritime search-and-rescue capability... such that, apparently, many cruise ships will not, or are reluctant to, visit until they do.

Enter the commando fliers to help out.

Search and rescue is not a primary function of naval aviators any more (we stood down the last units at Culdrose and Gannet back in January 2016).

But given the nature of where the Royal Navy/Fleet Air Arm operate, it is an



# Nine go a-huntin'

NINE newly-qualified Merlin helicopter aircrew were handed their coveted wings at RNAS Culdrose's 824 Naval Air Squadron and are now ready to protect the Fleet from hostile submarines.

The pilots, observers and aircrewmen were handed the winged badges by Commodore Andrew Rose to show they have completed their operational conversion training, learning to master the world's best submarine hunting helicopter.

Family and friends watched with pride at a special parade held in the squadron's hangar.

The new aviators have all trained how to fly and operate the Merlin Mk2, spending many months in the classrooms and simulators as well as in Cornish skies.

The nine successful candidates will now move on to either 820 Squadron, dedicated to

protecting the nation's aircraft carriers/strike groups, or 814 ('The Flying Tigers') who perform all other Merlin front-line duties, including supplying Type 23 frigates with flights. They will not have to move far, for both formations are based at the same Cornish air station.

And the freshly-winged aviators were reminded of the long, proud heritage of the Service they have joined thanks to the presence of a vintage Fairey Swordfish torpedo bomber which flew in from its home at Yeovilton to join the Merlin in the parade hangar.

Eighty-two years ago Swordfish of 824 NAS helped cripple the kernel of the Italian Fleet in the fabled raid on Taranto naval base.

"Gaining their wings is a huge step forward in their careers with the Fleet Air Arm," 824's CO Commander Chris Jones told guests.

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indispensable part of their bag of tricks. Indeed, among the core functions of Commando Helicopter Force is rescuing downed aircrew at sea or over land.

Three Merlin Mk4s (845 Naval Air Squadron), two battlefield Wildcat AH1s and one maritime Wildcat HMA2 (847 Naval Air Squadron) embarked on RFA Argus as the Tailored Air Group for the Achillean deployment, supporting the Royal Marines on HMS Albion (see pages 2-3).

And the TAG's initial work as part of the visit to the small Adriatic nation – the week-long Exercise Lion Strike – was CHF bread and butter: insert troops (45 Commando and the Montenegrin Army) into the north of the country via Merlin, Wildcat and the hosts' Bell

412 Hueys.

It also allowed a run-out for the Mobile Air Operations Team to set up a forward refuelling point, extending the range of the helicopters to span the entire country.

And then the emphasis shifted to search and rescue, with Chief Petty Officer Rich 'Stocky' Stock, 845's squadron aircrewman instructor, leading the way with his knowledge of saving lives at sea.

Montenegrin aircrew began by learning the SAR basics in flights in the Merlin Mk4, operating to the flight deck of Argus out in the Adriatic.

They then progressed by doing the same, but this time in their own Bell 412.

And after Argus, the craft gradually

got ever smaller, until they were rescuing 'casualties' from HMS Albion's landing craft... or else plucking Fred, the accident-prone dummy, from the sea.

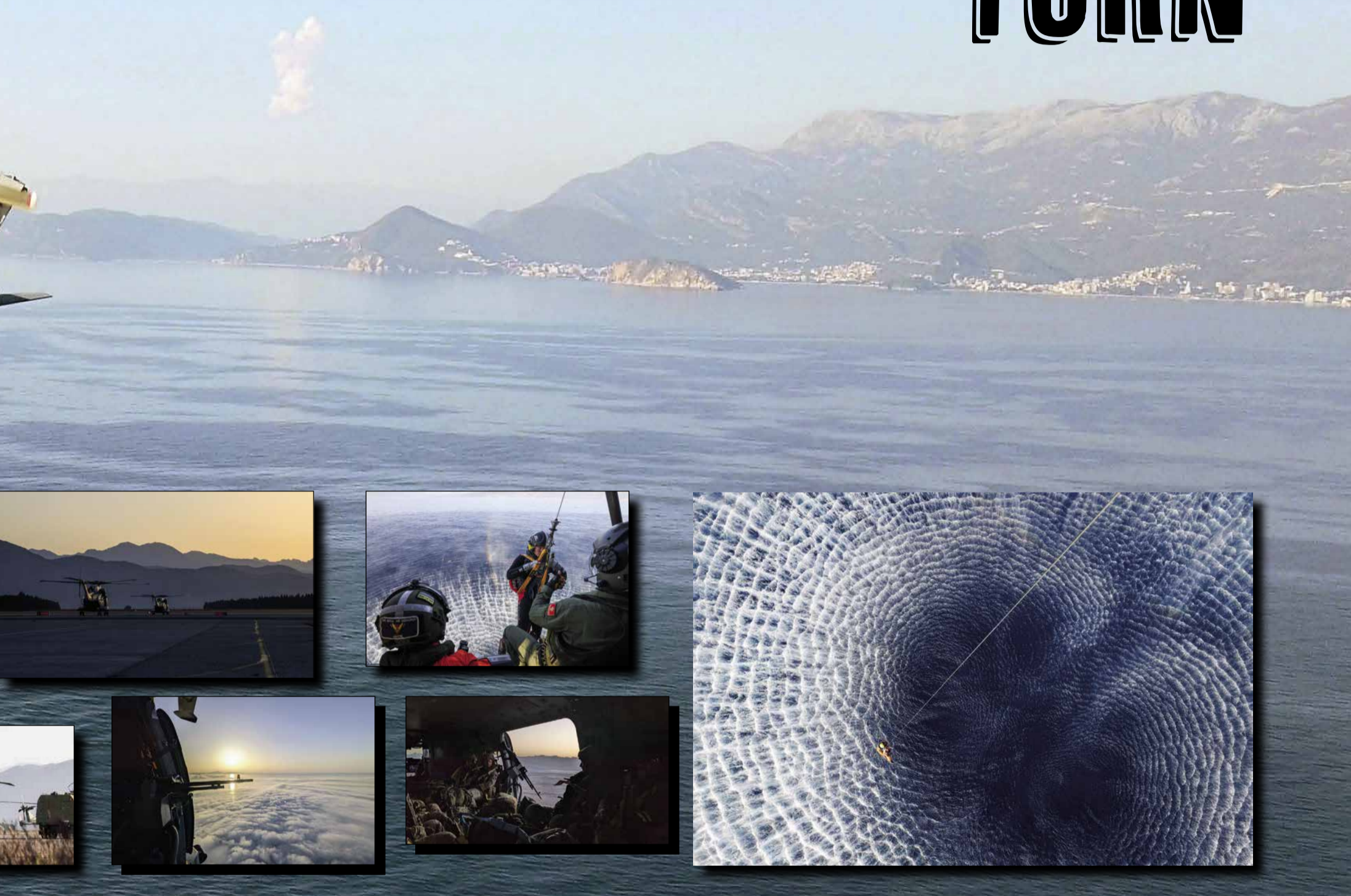
When Stocky and his colleagues were satisfied with the progress made, the Montenegrin fliers laid on a demonstration for their president, Milo Đukanović, to show off their new skill set.

"Being able to impart CHF's search-and-rescue knowledge and procedures to our new NATO partner has been a real honour and a great experience," said Stocky.

"I was truly blown away with the hospitality and receptiveness that they showed towards myself and the rest of the Tailored Air Group."

# ★ SAR ★

# TURN



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Royal Marines from 40 Commando operate with Omani forces during exercises around the craggy, mountainous shores of the top of the Arabian Peninsula

**ROYAL Marines assaulted the craggy, mountainous shores of the tip of the Arabian Peninsula as part of reinvigorated British training in the Gulf.**

Marines of Taunton-based 40 Commando joined Omani allies on the Musandam Peninsula for a series of rigorous joint exercises.

The sparsely-populated region juts out into the Strait of Hormuz – the narrow gateway to the Gulf and a chokepoint through which a third of the world's oil supplies passes every day.

That makes the peninsula, which covers an area half the size Hampshire, but is inhabited by little more than 30,000 people, of key strategic importance.

The aim of Exercise Musandam Fort, which also involved desert survival and mountain warfare training, was to bring Omani and British forces closer together and was part of a wider effort, which included more

than a thousand troops across the country.

The British Army operated with Omani forces in Duqm at the joint training area at the same time HMS Lancaster arrived in the Gulf to continue permanent Royal Navy operations in the Gulf and Middle East after HMS Montrose completed a four-year deployment there.

The training was a key moment as Royal Marines prepare to be persistently deployed in the Middle East region and beyond into the Indo-Pacific from next year. Being forward based, utilising the UK's Joint Logistics Support Base in Duqm, will allow them to work closely with allies and partners and react to emerging crises.

It's also a part of the UK's commitment to regional security and stability, especially around the Strait of Hormuz.

"The UK remains committed to security across the Gulf, and our engagement with Musandam Fort clearly

demonstrates our commitment to the Omanis as invaluable partners," said Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Dow, Commanding Officer of 40 Commando Royal Marines.

"It also enables us to sharpen our tactical edge through joint training and access to some world-leading exercise areas."

Marines of 40 Commando were joined by 59 Commando Squadron Royal Engineers – specialist combat engineers of 24 Commando – and operated closely with the Royal Army of Oman, Omani Special Forces and the Oman Parachute Regiment.

Together they learned to operate seamlessly together across the unforgiving landscape, working on tactics in amphibious and mountain warfare.

"Integrating with the Royal Army of Oman has provided a fantastic opportunity to work with our partners, developing our relationships and share tactical

knowledge," said Captain Bradley Jones, second in command of 40 Commando's Bravo Company.

"The opportunity to train in the mountains of the Musandam Peninsula is one I will never forget."

The joint commando and Omani force landed soon before sunrise on Musandam's shoreline, forging inland and living and operating together from a remote mountain base.

Tactical exercises started early each morning and increased in intensity each day, testing the combined forces across the difficult terrain.

It was a test of new communications equipment – which are designed to create powerful, secure networks anywhere in the world – as small teams of around 12 operated far from each other to complete objectives.

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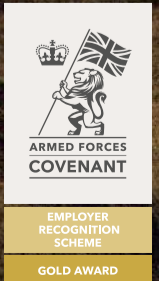
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LEVEL  
PEAKS







# The full Monte

MEDICAL officer Lt Cdr Kathryn Newlands pauses to reflect on the sacrifice made by Telegraphist Neville Milburn, one of 36 men killed serving in cruiser HMS Achilles in battle with the Graf Spee 83 years ago this month.

The 19-year-old New Zealander's grave was adorned with a wreath from the crew of HMS Protector as sailors from the ice ship honoured the fallen of the Battle of the River Plate, laid to rest in Montevideo's British cemetery.

The Uruguayan capital was the ice ship's last port of call before returning to the sub-zero wastes of the Antarctic Peninsula as summer once again extends to the fringes of the frozen continent.

Between now and March and the onset of autumn in the Southern Hemisphere, the Royal Navy's sole icebreaker is conducting her scientific mission once more, building on the work of the 2021-22 season.

The mission is largely the same: monitor the impact of global warming and changes to the environment, supported the work of British and international polar scientists, and update seafaring charts to the latest standards courtesy of her suite of sonars.

Protector spent the summer in Canada and the Caribbean – the latter working with the inhabitants and authorities in British

Overseas Territories in the region to prepare for the 2022 hurricane season.

Based in Plymouth when in the UK, but on a long-term mission which will keep her away from home for up to five years, Protector used the port facilities in Montevideo to prepare the ship and her machinery for the rigours of operating off Antarctica.

In addition to the maintenance work, her sailors and Royal Marines enjoyed the opportunity to experience one of South America's most vibrant cities, renew ties with the Armada Nacional (Uruguayan Navy), Antarctic Institute of Uruguay, schools, the AEDS (Uruguayan lifeboat organization – Protector's engineers provided some practical assistance) and the British community.

"I was lucky enough to visit various schools in Montevideo and speak to the students about the ship. They were excited to hear about the wildlife in Antarctica and the work we do there. In return, we were recommended the best places to go for a submarino [a mug of hot milk with dark chocolate] and some dulce de leche [caramelized milk]," said Sub Lieutenant Ollie Dean.

Sailors visited the country's Defence Academy to explain Protector's work and role to cadets, while officers hosted the head of the Uruguayan Navy Almirante Jorge Wilson and fellow leaders, for Trafalgar Night celebrations.

Protector's Commanding Officer, Captain Maryla Ingham, joined the UK Ambassador to Montevideo, Faye O'Connor, who hosted a Women in Leadership Forum, and championed the role of women in the armed forces.

The ship herself hosted school visits for local youngsters, ex-pats, Uruguayan sailors, British Embassy staff and loaded stores on behalf of the Antarctic Institute of Uruguay for transporting to their Antarctic base of Artigas. And in down time, crew were invited to a Uruguayan BBQ and watch a football match at the Estadio Centenario.

"I really enjoyed Montevideo, great food and friendly locals. A nice city to get ashore during a busy maintenance period and relax," said Petty Officer Daniel 'Tinks' Tinkler.

Leading Seaman Thomas 'Shakey' Stevens added: "Having spent the majority of my career in the Gulf, Montevideo was a fresh and exciting prospect for me. The people were friendly despite the language barrier and the restaurants were sublime."



## New kids on the OCCC

FRIGATE HMS Kent has undergone an 'MOT' to ensure she's ready for the next stage of her autumn operations. The Portsmouth-based ship had a series of deep-dive checks at a NATO facility in Stavanger.

The Norwegian port is home to one of three NATO Fleet Operational Readiness Accuracy Check Sites or FORACS (the others can be found in the Bahamas and Crete).

They allow for a series of Operational Capability Confidence Checks to make sure weapons, sensors, radars, navigation aids and other key operating systems are working and up to scratch.

Over the course of a week, the dynamic tests and trials were carried out in the picturesque fjords of Norway.

Kent's primary role is to conduct anti-submarine warfare and a major focus of the assessment was to ensure her cutting-edge submarine detection equipment remained fully capable.

Upon completion of the trials, the ship's company made best use of the weekend alongside in Stavanger to rest and recuperate after a busy first stage to the deployment.

Many of the team undertook the energetic four-hour hike to the top of iconic Pulpit Rock (Preikestolen, pictured below) which rises above Lysefjord about 15 miles from Stavanger.

Meanwhile, the ship's football team took on a Norwegian fourth division side, Hundvåg, and several others took the opportunity to watch an ice hockey game, cheering on local side The Oilers (Stavanger is the home of Norway's North Sea energy industry).

"The capability test package was essential and proves that Kent continues to be ready for operations," said Commander Jez Brettell, the frigate's Commanding Officer.

"This was also a great opportunity for the ship's company to explore the local area after a busy start to deployment."

HMS Kent's time in Norway comes after she took part in Joint Warrior – the UK's largest military exercise of the year. Kent was one of more than 20 ships, submarines and supporting vessels from Britain and nine NATO allies, plus over 30 aircraft and drones, Royal Marines and US Marines to take part in the exercise.







Pictures: PO(Phot) Des Wade and LPhot Chris Sellars





# ARMED & DANGEROUS



LOOKS the business, doesn't it?

This is a Wildcat HMA2 loaded up with Martlet missiles to put the 'attack' into Helicopter Maritime Attack.

And this is only half of what she's got. Each of those distinct 'weapons wings' can carry ten Martlets.

Or, in a couple of years' time you could add Sea Venom to deliver a sucker punch of light and heavy anti-surface missiles.

And you can still go 'old skool' and load Sting Ray torpedoes, one per wing, if your troubled by an enemy below.

The Navy has been arming its aircraft for combat for more than a century.

We've come a long way from crew simply dropping a bomb or grenade over the side by leaning out of the cockpit.

It takes two weeks' instruction to learn how to fully tool-up a Wildcat – instruction made considerably more authentic with the addition of an authentic new aid at the Wildcat Training Facility at RNAS Yeovilton: the Weapons Loading System Trainer.

It's been introduced specifically to prepare personnel for working with the Fleet Air Arm's next-generation missiles.

Martlet itself has been fired on several occasions – most recently against a target hulk during the Anglo-US Atlantic Thunder test of combined naval firepower (see below) – while over the summer extensive trials were carried out with Wildcat to see how the

helicopter handles with various weapon loads.

To date, the loading training has been conducted on an outdated rig which meets some of the needs... but isn't really suited to instructing engineers handling and preparing mid-21st Century missiles for battle.

If you're expecting some beat-up old hulk which vaguely resembles a front-line aircraft... Wrong: the weapons trainer is a converted Wildcat prototype.

As a result, the trainer is set up exactly like the real thing. Attach a weapon system incorrectly and it will inform you – or else the instructors can set various gremlins running to test the team.

Martlet (in service) and Sea Venom (in service in a couple of years' time) are considerably less complicated to fit to a helicopter than Sea Skua, the Fleet Air Arm's last air-to-surface missile which required a lot of preparations.

That said, it's not like, say simply plugging in a USB stick.

Take the weapons wings which carry the missiles/torpedo.

If you think it's a 'bit of plastic' you just slot on the side of a Wildcat... Wrong again. It's heavy – it takes four sailors to lift – and it's packed with cabling, wires, hydraulics and tech either feeding data to the weapons or as part of their release mechanisms.

Although the avionics experts are the leads, weapons loading/removing is a team effort. This is heavy, bulky kit, and there are plenty of opportunities to cause yourself injury, so an alert and eagle-eyed shipmate by your side is crucial.

A well-honed team should be able to prep Wildcat for a combat mission in under four hours. The wings are fitted in the hangar, the weapons installed on the flight deck for safety.

They undergo a nine-day course, from a

day of theory and safety and written exam, to practical training loading/unloading/arming/fault-finding with Martlet/Sea Venom/Sting Ray. The training also focuses on the defensive aids suite – chaff and flares – and the 50 cal heavy machine-gun.

Undergoing training on our visit are the men and women of 815 Naval Air Squadron's Rascal 1 Flight.

"I reckon once we have got through the training, we'll have something which is really quite slick," said Chief Petty Officer Kristoffer Martin, Senior Maintenance Rating (SMR).

He's a mechanical engineer, but as an SMR oversees the weapons load out, and therefore needs to know the fundamentals. This the fourth time he's been through the weapons loading training – but the first with the new replica.

"The whole set-up is fantastic – like dealing with a real aircraft."

At the moment two flights a month are undergoing the course with the new simulator.

"It's a great training aid – it really does enhance our training," said instructor Ryan Jackson, a former member of the Army Air Corps who worked on Apaches.

"The trainees who come through here are like sponges – they want to absorb knowledge. They want to make sure they are ready when the time comes. Train here, fight easily."

Lieutenant Commander Joe Keane, the Senior Naval Instructor at the Wildcat Training Centre, is delighted with the new addition to training (the other two replicas are dedicated for engineering and avionics instruction).

"It's a great asset – and it has greatly enhanced our training. When Flights move on to work on a live aircraft, they have seen it before. It fills them with confidence."

THE training aid wasn't available to the aircrew and engineers of Vengeance 2 Flight – the team who blooded Martlet against the hulk of American frigate USS Boone in the North Atlantic earlier this autumn.

A frigate is not what Martlet is designed to take out: Sea Venom with its 30kg explosive warhead is much better suited.

Martlet is intended to take out RIBs, jetskis, small craft.

Against a frigate, it's like firing a peashooter, right?

Wrong. Used cleverly it can wreak havoc against a very specific target.

The warhead is packed with ball bearings which are flung around at high velocity when it detonates, tearing through anything in the way.

Now imagine a Martlet penetrating a ship's bridge. Or an ops room. Or exploding a metre or so from a radar (Martlet can be programmed to detonate on impact, or explode in close proximity to its target – an air burst).

"Martlet cannot destroy a frigate – but it can, say, knock out its command and control structure with a strike to the bridge," explains Lieutenant Commander Ross Gallagher, in charge of Vengeance 2 Flight, who 'steered' two missiles into the bridge of the (USS) Boone, amid a panoply of firepower unleashed against the decommissioned frigate.

The pilot presses the trigger and there's a slight 'pop' as the missile leaves the tube. Martlet 'soft launches': it leaves the launcher quite gently initially before the missile's engine kicks in at a safe distance so as not to damage the Wildcat (it's the same principle as the Javelin anti-tank missile used by the commandos).

After that it's down to the



observer to keep the diamond-shape target indicator in the centre of the display screen – and the missile 'rides the laser beam' on to the target (Sea Venom is 'fire and forget' – once launched, there's no need to keep directing it on to its target).

And **BOOM.**

A lot of preparation went into Atlantic Thunder – by ground and aircrew alike, from fitting and removing the weapons wing on the original Wildcat, to modifying the aircraft and upgrading software for Martlet, flying around Yeovilton with a dummy missile loaded and regular visits to the South Coast exercise areas to practise target runs against unsuspecting shipping.

"Martlet is a lot simpler than, say, Sting Ray," said avionics

expert Petty Officer Dan Farrant who was part of the team who prepared, loaded and armed the missiles for the shoot.

"There's much less to worry about, especially if you are pressed for time. You can get it out there and loaded up a lot faster. Once the wings are on, you can quickly load and re-load."

Martlet gives Wildcat punch it hasn't had in its seven-year service to date. "It's an embryonic capability, but it's great to be at the forefront of things, really good," Lt Cdr Gallagher adds.

"Martlet gives us far greater utility, it's much better for task group protection, protecting vessels passing through choke points.

"And when it comes, Sea Venom is a much larger weapon, able to do much more."

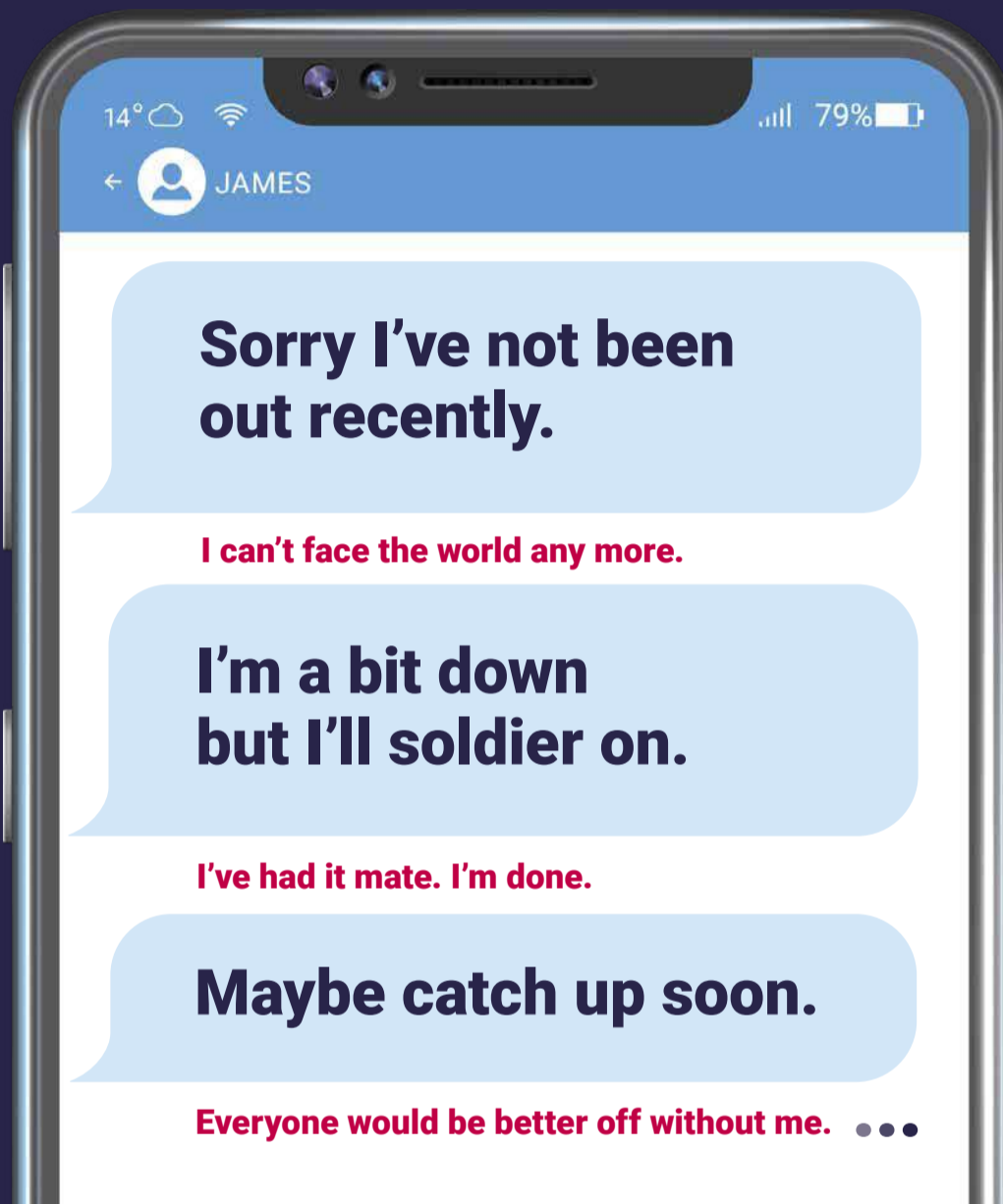
For the rest of the flight, Atlantic Thunder was equally satisfying. "Seeing the video, seeing our efforts had paid off, all the training, is incredibly rewarding. You know that if you were called upon for real, you could do it."





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# PRIDE OF THE RN - AND OF BRITAIN

A Royal Navy sailor won a Pride of Britain award for saving 27 crewmembers from a burning ship.

David Groves, 32, was presented with an outstanding bravery award from show hosts Carol Vorderman and Ashley Banjo.

HMS Argyll was returning to Plymouth following a nine-month tour of duty in the Pacific when they received a call for help.

The Royal Navy Type 23 frigate was travelling through a storm in the Bay of Biscay when it picked up a mayday call from the Grande America, a 28,000-tonne cargo ship which had caught fire 150 miles off the French coast.

Aboard the Argyll, Leading Seaman David Groves and Able Seaman Alex Harvey volunteered to enter the water in an eight metre rigid inflatable boat.

As they were lowered into the six-metre waves, David, now a Petty Officer, realised how extreme the situation had become.

As he explains: "One minute you could see a ship on fire, the next it was hidden by a wall of water. And the closer we got, the more engulfed we were in the smoke."

When the pair reached the merchant ship, they faced a lengthy wait as the crew struggled to launch their lifeboat. When it finally hit the water the impact disabled the engine, leaving the craft impossible to manoeuvre and drifting dangerously close to the burning ship.

Realising lives were at stake, David managed to bring his boat nose-to-nose with the lifeboat. With Alex on the bow judging the right moment as the two craft lurched up and down in the swell, four of the merchant crew jumped from a small hatch into Argyll's boat.

Alex, 28, from Hull, recalls: "It was rough - very rough. When the first guy jumped, I had to grab him to prevent him going overboard. I thought to myself: this is a bit hairy."

No more of the Grande America crew were able to leap between the two boats, and the waves snapped a tow rope, so David used his initiative and skill to nudge the lifeboat half a mile to the Argyll, where sailors and Royal Marines were waiting to haul the exhausted casualties to safety.

The pair spent four hours on towering seas to rescue every man aboard the stricken ship. Commanding Officer of HMS Argyll, Commander Toby Shaughnessy said: "Without doubt this was a near run thing. The conditions were on the limit for recovery, and this could easily have been a different result."

The judges spoke of their 'unbelievable courage... tenacity and creative thinking under pressure and in extreme circumstances, adding: "It's amazing that thanks to them, no lives were lost."



## Students retrace commando raid

STUDENTS and sailors hit the roads of France and Spain in the footsteps of wartime heroes to celebrate what is often regarded as the greatest commando raid.

Personnel from across the Royal Navy's university units – both full-time serving sailors and students – cycled more than 1,100 kilometres in just six days, following the escape routes taken by some of those involved in Operation Chariot.

The attack on the dock facilities in March 1942 was aimed at knocking them out to prevent the Germans using St Nazaire as a base for capital ships.

The attackers succeeded – ramming aged destroyer HMS Campbeltown into the dock gate, before vapourising her as German troops inspected the vessel.

Two thirds of the sailors and marines involved in the raid were killed or captured; others sought to escape through occupied France.

A small number of raid participants succeeded in reaching Gibraltar, having navigated their way through Nazi-occupied territory, crossed the Pyrenees and made it to the southern tip of the Iberian peninsula through neutral, but pro-German, Spain.

Among the escape routes followed was that taken by Lance Sergeant Arnold Howarth who, aided by a French family, made for Bordeaux initially but was captured by the police and spent the rest of the war in prison in Nice.

The cyclists were accompanied by historians to put the attempted and successful escapes in context, and allowed them to pay their respects to all those who took part in the raid, including placing a plaque in a Pyrenees mountain pass to acknowledge the sacrifices made by the escapers – and their helpers.

Lieutenant Saffron Davies, in charge of Wales URNU, said the Pyrenees posed a "formidable" challenge to the cyclists – just as they had to every serviceman striving for Gibraltar 80 years ago.

"We climbed numerous cols [mountain passes] – perhaps most famously the Col du Tourmalet and d'Aubisque, frequently used as climbs in the Tour de France and seen as some of the toughest around the world.

"Whether a seasoned cyclist and racing the clock or a novice on two wheels, each col represented a personal challenge and achievement."

University Royal Naval Units – URNUs – give undergraduates a taste of life in the Royal Navy in more than a dozen cities across the UK, making use of small P2000 patrol craft to give students seafaring experience.

The riders hoped their 1,150-kilometre ride – averaging 140km and climbing 3,000 metres daily – would raise £2,000 for the Royal Marines Charity in what is the 80th anniversary year both of Operation Chariot and the first Royal Marines Commandos being formed.

Despite their achievement, they are still a long way short of their financial target: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/rm-the-raid>



## Veteran wins coveted marksman title

ROYAL Navy hotshot WO1 Geoff Kendall is the service's top marksman – an accolade to mark his final year in service.

WO1 Kendall, who received his award from Prince Michael of Kent, first competed in the Advanced Marksmanship Programme back in 1983.

Eight out of the top 12 in this year's event were Royal Marines less than half his age. The Fleet Air Arm Reservist was also involved in the creation of HMS Pegasus.

The Queen's Medal (now King's Medal) is awarded each year to the highest performing marksmen in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Operational Shooting Competition (RNRMOSC) held at Bisley.

The arduous two-week advanced marksmanship course takes sailors and marines beyond basic training and pushes them to the limits of what is possible.

During the course competitors fired over a thousand rounds through service rifle and service pistol in high-tempo assessments at ranges from 3 to 500m while receiving the best coaching the service can provide.



Competition is used as a means to increase stress and drive every participant to achieve their personal best, not just a pass mark.

The medal awarded by the Sovereign recognises and promotes the importance of martial skills in the military. It is the highest honour for military skill and worn alongside other honours and awards on dress uniform.

Registered charity number: Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund 1160182

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# KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

THE Princess Royal opened a new community hub which will support more than 400 Royal Navy children and their families in Gosport and Fareham.

The hub, which was made possible by a £400,000 donation by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, will help 435 service children and is located at Brune Park Community School.

The Gosport Community Hub, a partnership with the Gosport and Fareham Multi Academy Trust (GFMAT), means these families have a dedicated space of their own to meet, socialise and find valuable peer support from those who share the unique challenges of having a parent in the Armed Forces.

The Princess Royal, who has been Patron of the RNRMC since 2007, was greeted by children from the area and met a number of Royal Navy families. She also discussed key ambitions for the community and visited the community walled garden project.

"As a Royal Navy veteran and Gosport resident of over 40 years, I am part of a proud and significant Royal Navy community in this area," said Mandy Lindley, Director of Relationships and Funding at the RNRMC.

"My husband and I both served, and my family have experienced some of the unique challenges and difficulties that come with service life, experiences shared by many families here in Gosport.

"Therefore, the creation of the Gosport Community Hub to support local Royal Navy families and the wider school community has personal significance for me, and I am proud that the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity has been at the forefront of delivering this milestone facility.

"However, it is the hard work and vision of Chris Willis and his team at the Gosport and Fareham Multi Academy Trust that have brought the Hub to life, and we know that under their stewardship it will be an invaluable resource for Gosport's children and their families for many years to come."

The hub, which is being used by 250 families, includes a kitchenette, meeting rooms, IT facilities and community space.

Chris Willis, Executive Headteacher at the GFMAT, who was crowned Income Innovator of the Year at the National School Awards 2021 for his involvement in this project, added: "The Hub is part of our wider Gosport community strategy, which focuses on raising the aspiration and engagement of our families and community partners across the town."

Pictures: Angus Rosier, RMRMC



The Princess Royal planted a tree in the community walled garden during her visit to open the Gosport Community Hub



## Aviators bid to fly to top of charts

TWO Royal Navy aviators are aiming to fly high in the music charts this Christmas.

Lieutenant Commander Dave Emery and Lieutenant Commander Phil Clark, both Merlin Mk2 observers, wrote *Sailing Home for Christmas* while serving on Fleet Flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth with 820 NAS last year.

"It's a song about returning home to your families at Christmas time after a long time away," said Lt Cdr Emery.

The pair decided to record the Christmas song with their band Little Red Ambulance after returning from the eight-month deployment to the Far East. They invited the Culdrose Military Wives Choir to sing on the song with them.

"The choir brought so much power and excitement to the song. Many of the wives' husbands were deployed as part of Operation Fortis so they could relate to the lyrics."

The Royal Navy & Royal Marine Charity are supporting their bid to get to Christmas number one by helping them record a music video.

"Both the RNRMC and Culdrose Military Wives Choir have been so supportive of us and our families while we were away. It is great to be able to give something back."

The song is being released in early December to raise money for the Culdrose Military Wives Choir and the RNRMC.



## Powering through fundraising target

ROYAL Navy powerlifter Wes McGuinness smashed his target at a fundraising event at HMNB Devonport.

PO(CS) McGuinness helped reach a final total of 165,425kg.

"This event was primarily about giving back to Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity who have supported my powerlifting journey over the years," said PO McGuinness.

"Yet at the same time it was about to raise awareness of physical and mental well-being and resilience, something our Armed Forces do on a regular basis.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that was involved in organising the event in particularly HMS Drake PT Department and to all who donated to this great cause.

"On the day we had the wide amount of support from the SMQ (South) students, civilian & MOD volunteers to members of HMS Drake's ship's company."



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# Royal Navy remembers

ACROSS the UK and the globe, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines stopped to remember those who have fallen in conflicts.

Both on Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday, personnel gathered to pay their respects and lay wreaths.

Services were held on deployed warships, UK bases and at war memorials in cities and towns.

Not least we remembered 21 members of the Naval family who passed away between November 15 last year and November 1 2022:

WO1 David Thompson (RNAS Culdrose); WO1 Charles Keith Lambert (HMS Nelson); Leading Chef Jordan Critchley RFA (RFA Cardigan Bay); AB1 Stephen Matthew Cashman (HMS Vengeance); CPO Steven Munday (CHF); CPO Paul Stephen Charles Gowlett (DSTL); Cdr Martin Andrew Keith Cropper (HMS Excellent); WO2 Lee Grant Revell Royal Marines (Commando Logistic Regiment); PO Niall Robinson (HMS Hibernia). AB1 Rohan Jeremiah Hicks (HMS Sultan); Marine Jake Elliott Morley (43 Commando); PO Daniel Hallas Cussans

(CHF); SG1A Roy Avery RFA; CPO Richard Mark Wilkinson (RNAS Culdrose); CPO Graham Mark Street (RNRC Hasler); Lt Paul Thomas Killpartrick (HMS Nelson); PO Robert Frederick Minshull (RNAS Culdrose); AB2 Kyran Philip Carney (HMS Raleigh); Lt Andrew Waddington (HMNB Clyde); CPO Jonathan David Bishop, HMS (Nelson); LET Benjamin Foley (HMS Vivid).

#### Pictures

*Main image:* The Royal Marines Band Corps Drums stand to attention by the war memorial on Plymouth Hoe.

*Left (top to bottom):*

1 Personnel from RNAS Yeovilton gathered to lay a wreath at the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church of St Bartholomew. LPhot Dan Rosenbaum.

1 Sailors attend a service at Southsea War Memorial in Portsmouth. LPhot Chris Sellars.

1 Sailors in Scotland at a ceremony in Glasgow's George Square. LPhot Bill Spurr

1 Royal Marines Band play at Guildhall Square in Portsmouth. LPhot Chris Sellars.

1 Sailors and Submariners from HM Naval Base Clyde attend Helensburgh Remembrance Service in Scotland. LH Stuart Dickson

1 The Submariner Remembrance Service in London. LPhot Chris Sellars

1 Remembrance Day Parade at the Cenotaph in London. LPhot Lee Blease

1 Personnel at HMS Sultan attended events in Gosport. POPhot Pepe Hogan.







## 'Great friends' hold key talks

THE heads of the US Navy, US Marine Corps and Royal Navy have pledged ever closer cooperation after a key meeting in Washington reaffirming the close bond between our forces.

Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Mike Gilday, Commandant Marine Corps, General David Berger, and First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Ben Key - pictured above walking through The Pentagon - met on the eve of the anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar to discuss operations and strategy as well as progress on closer cooperation over the next two years.

They are resolved to press ahead with joint operations, harnessing the white heat of the two nations' technology, working seamlessly side-by-side wherever they deploy around the globe and delivering combined seapower.

And that seamless cooperation fully embraces the US Marine Corps who will continue to work, train and develop tactics and ideas with the Royal Marines.

"It is a matter of enormous pride for me to visit the US and talk to my great friends and colleagues Admiral Mike Gilday and General David Berger. Once again we have reaffirmed the very close relationship between our two Nations and two Navies and our Marines," said Admiral Key.

"We have refreshed our long-standing commitment for us to work collaboratively across the world, from the Euro-Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific Regions, and to stand together to safeguard the use of the global maritime commons upon which our combined security and prosperity depend."

The discussions followed a call by Admiral Gilday last month for the United States and UK to lead the way in meeting the challenge posed by Russia and China and maintaining free navigation of the oceans.

"Our relationship with the Royal Navy is the bedrock of enduring maritime security, and a key enabler of integrated all-domain naval power," said Admiral Gilday.

"Nothing our armed forces accomplish day-in and day-out happens without working alongside close allies, and the US Navy has no closer ally than Admiral Key."

On the technological front, the navies have set up a joint think-tank, the Tech Bridge, to allow experts from both nations to share ideas and the latest equipment to the benefit of both.

And operationally, both navies work side-by-side on a daily basis in the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Middle East, while last year American personnel and equipment were vital to the success of HMS Queen Elizabeth's maiden operational deployment, which also underscored the UK's renewed interest in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

A US destroyer was attached to the carrier strike group throughout the six-month mission to the Indo-Pacific region, while F-35 Lightning jets from the US Marine Corps shared the carrier's flight deck and hangar with those of the RAF and Fleet Air Arm.

Both navies were delighted with the result of the deployment - so much so they are looking at even greater cooperation, not just on carrier strike missions, but also dominating the battlespace beneath the waves and amphibious/littoral operations.

In addition, the Royal Navy is now a regular participant in the US' biggest 'peace deployment' in the region, Pacific Partnership; patrol ships HMS Tamar and Spey take part in exercises almost monthly with the US Navy as part of their five-year mission in the region; Royal Marines make frequent use of US exercise areas, while the UK's commando forces have helped the US Marine Corps to develop cold weather warfare skills in the High North.

"The Marine Corps always welcomes opportunities to partner with our allies in the naval forces," said General Berger. "I look forward to continued dialogue and collaboration with the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines as we explore the full potential of Delivering Combined Seapower."



# Engineers: sign on here

THE head of the Royal Navy's school of engineering is urging more women to pursue a career in engineering.

Captain Jo Deakin is an air engineer with nearly 30 years' experience to her name, experience she is using to nurture the engineers of tomorrow as commanding officer of HMS Sultan, where thousands of sailors learn how to keep cutting-edge warships, submarines and aircraft ready for front-line action.

To mark National Engineering Day last month, Capt Deakin (pictured by LPhoto Mark Hogan chatting with trainees in one of Sultan's workshop classrooms) underlined the importance of engineers in the Senior Service - with new technology and warships providing fascinating challenges - and called on more women to get involved.

"National Engineering Day is so important as it's about breaking some of the stereotypes and celebrating people," she said.

"Engineering is about using our skills and knowledge to solve the problems of the world. It's a shame that many people still view it as being dirty, mechanical work but that's such a small part of it.

"Too often we think about equipment and technology as engineering but it's the people behind it who are problem-solving, analysing, diagnosing, repairing by using their skills and knowledge that are the heart of engineering.

"I want to use my platform, as Commanding Officer of HMS Sultan, to encourage more women to see engineering as a possible career.

"There's so many opportunities and incredible experiences that happen in the world of engineering."

HMS Sultan is home to the Defence School of Marine Engineering and the Royal Naval Air Engineering and Survival Equipment School.

From aircraft, ships and submarines, to weapons

and communications, engineers are essential to the navy's global operations.

Without them, the Royal Navy's maritime presence would literally grind to a halt.

Capt Deakin herself trained at Sultan in 1996 and her passion for engineering is as strong as ever.

"There's so much opportunity for people to jump into and it's such an exciting time," she said.

"There's automation, cyber technology, uncrewed vehicles above, on and below the sea, advanced materials, battery technology, synthetic fuels and sustainable solutions.

"As the Royal Navy embraces the digital era, there will always be a requirement for the precise motor and haptic skills that technology cannot replace.

"I am fortunate I have had such a varied and exciting career but it's just part of being an engineer. And at the heart of it is a wonderful group of people."

Just a few days earlier the RN's Deputy Chief Naval Engineer Officer, Commodore JJ Bailey, saw the next generation of engineering technicians as Guest of Honour at the establishment's Ceremonial Divisions.

"You represent the future of our engineering profession and, like me and many others before you, you are being trained to operate, maintain, diagnose and repair our Royal Navy, at reach, in adversity and possibly under fire," he told those on parade.

"As Royal Navy engineers and technicians we want you to be innovative, agile, skilled and professional.

"As professional engineers and technicians in the Royal Navy you have a unique set of skills and we will trust and enable you to engineer the Future Navy."



## Help if you are facing high bills

MANY RN personnel and families are likely to feel the effects of the ongoing cost of living crisis.

With not only energy bills on the rise but also food, petrol, and other essentials RN FPS, working closely with RN Charities, have pulled together some areas of support, some of which are specifically for you and your families as part of the wider Royal Navy family.

Read about these in full on the RN Forum (on the internet), where further support will be routinely added. Make sure you are a member and follow the 'Cost of Living' topics area.

## Get jabbed to fight off winter cold

IF YOU are eligible or if it's pertinent to your duties, make sure you've boosted your immune systems to fighting off Covid and flu this winter.

Protection provided by Covid vaccines decreases over time while flu viruses can change every year, so if you're 50 or over, in an at-risk group or pregnant, you are encouraged to get the COVID-19 booster and flu vaccine now.

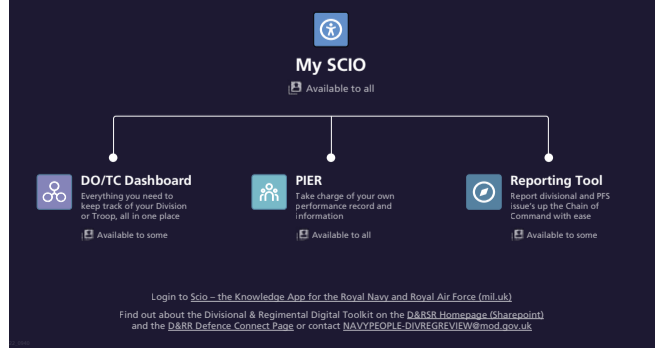
You can contact your Unit Medical centre, NHS GP centre or view the NHS website to see if you are eligible for a free flu vaccine or Covid booster jab.

2022DIN06-016 is the Defence Medical Services direction for immunisation against influenza during the 2022/2023 flu 'season' and includes detailed eligibility information.

The Defence Public Health Unit has also produced a respiratory illness advice and guidance factsheet, which provides useful details on Covid, influenza, ILI, outbreak management and immunisations to help raise awareness and to reduce the risk of disease transmission in the workplace.

# Digital toolkit is key to unlocking the new

## SCIO - The Divisional & Regimental Digital Toolkit



THE Divisional and Regimental Review is updating the system to better reflect the modern employer with new initiatives, technologies which improve transparency and training to support individuals through their careers.

Over the past 18 months we have developed and released a series of digital tools and initiatives which aim to provide an efficient, inclusive, and adaptive support structure, placing the individual's effectiveness, and thereby operational capability, at its heart.

One of the key developments is the Digital Toolkit which is hosted

on SCIO and will empower all RN/RM personnel to take ownership of their administrative processes and performance; it will enable them to gain appropriate recognition for their personal and performance development.

The Digital Toolkit comprises:

- JPA Data Check - a quick, digital replacement of the paper JPA Verification Check

The previous annual JPA check required both a hard and soft copy check. Additionally, the annual process of checking JPA information was time consuming, requiring signatures and submissions from the individual's IRO and UPO.

The JPA Data Check has been produced to eliminate the

requirement for paper copies and reduces the steps to successfully complete the annual check. A person's information is pulled from JPA and presented in My SCIO in a user-friendly format where the user will be able to check through their preferences, competencies, personal and professional details, concluding with a 'correct' confirmation.

While the capacity to edit the user's information on My SCIO is not yet available and any incorrect information must be edited using JPA, it is hoped that permissions will be obtained allowing users to amend incorrect data in SCIO and then these amendments will be drawn across into JPA.

Divisional Officers' / Troop

Commanders' Dashboard - a tool for DOs/Tp Cdrs to manage administration and structure of personnel in their division/troop

The dashboard simplifies the layout and presentation of information about the Division/Troop. The DO/TC can easily view all (non-sensitive) information about the personnel in their divisional chain or troop, to manage time-bound shortfalls or discrepancies in a timely manner.

The app will also show when an individual has been loaned or assigned to a course. This, combined with expected outward and inbound times for individuals leaving and joining a division/troop, makes future planning





## Herald's a new era for the RFA

A NEW committee has been formed to offer support and guidance to members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Herald is the new inclusivity committee and is open to all RFA seafarers and aims to offer a network of support and a platform for change.

The committee aims:

- to raise awareness and improve the understanding of equality, harassment, mental health, safeguarding and wellness within the Royal Fleet Auxiliary;
- to assist and contribute to discussions on issues of concern in relation to equality, both with the senior leadership team and all members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary;
- to assist and contribute to discussions on issues of concern in relation to harassment, both with the senior leadership team and all members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary;
- to assist the delivery of information and contribute to discussions on issues affecting mental health, safeguarding and wellness within the Royal Fleet Auxiliary;
- to develop and provide professional support and guidance for members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary in relation to equality;
- to contribute to the continuous professional development of all members of Herald and facilitate discussions and action aimed at improving retention.

Herald has a confidential email inbox [NAVYPEOPLE-RFAHERALD@MOD.GOV](mailto:NAVYPEOPLE-RFAHERALD@MOD.GOV). UK for any concerns which personnel do not feel able to discuss with their line manager or in circumstances where they are unsure where to go for help.

Herald also has a direct telephone number +447977022114 (held by the chair/deputy Chair) available between 0800-1700 Monday to Friday. A voicemail service allows messages to be left if no-one is available during this time or outside these hours.



Sailors and Royal Marines discuss plans for amphibious operations from HMS Albion during BALTOPS

Picture: LPhoto Robert Oates

# JIMC workout

DO SPECIALISTS in intelligence the Navy and Royal Marines collaborate enough with counterparts across defence?

The newly-created RN/RM Joint Intelligence Manager's Course (JIMC) aims to address this, with the most recent course having representation from the Royal Marines, the Royal Navy, and included two augmentees from the United States Marine Corps (USMC) who provided valuable input.

The new course has moved away from the tactical space, expanded beyond the land domain, and placed a greater emphasis on the concept of networking.

The main focus of the course is learning how to write a Long Intelligence Estimate, feeding the outputs into a comprehensive Intelligence Collection Plan (ICP), resourcing collection requirements against organic ISR platforms, tracking Requests for Information (RFIs) and liaising with sources and agencies.

The first exercise of the course, Swift Response, made students realise the complexity of the Intelligence Manager role they would be assessed on.

"One of the most significant points to highlight about the course was that, due to its joint nature, each student brought a unique professional skill-set, based on their own background and experiences," explained one Leading Hand Submariner.

"Although each student had at least five years of experience in the intelligence world, some had double that.

"Additionally, our combined experiences extended across

a broad range of intelligence disciplines, such as generic intelligence support to the maritime, air, ground and joint domains, and experience in imagery and open-source intelligence (IMINT & OSINT). Each student's training also varied depending on their service, whether RN, RM or USMC, which also contributed to the overall professional diversity of the course.

"The positive impacts that stemmed from this diversity abounded. There was a moment in the course when every student was turned to by the rest to offer their expertise in a given area.

"By understanding the professional qualities each member of the team brought, there was almost no challenge too difficult, as at least one student was adept in the relevant area."

Students were treated to a tour of the UK Intelligence Community, with visits to organisations and agencies across the country.

This was particularly relished by the two Americans, who benefitted from a unique Intelligence 'tourist' experience. Once they were able to navigate the 'traffic circles' (roundabouts) on the road, they were able to enjoy their surroundings.

Visits included: the Maritime Information Exploitation Group (MIXG), the Joint Maritime Security Centre (JMSC), Carrier Strike Force (CSF), the Maritime Operations Centre (MOC), Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), Defence Intelligence, the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC), and Joint Forces Intelligence Group (JFIG) at RAF Wyton, as well as various squadrons at both RAF

Waddington and RAF Digby.

These visits relate back to the networking aspect of Intelligence and allowed the course to gain a better understanding of the wider architecture – in particular how it is all linked together and the processes that govern it. Students also capitalised on the opportunity for a couple of 'outings' ashore to gather local Human Intelligence and knowledge.

The course closed with Exercise Constant Coverage at the Defence Intelligence Training Group, Chicksands, which was conducted in a state-of-the-art synthetic training environment emulating the J2 cell onboard an aircraft carrier.

The exercise was split into two phases: maritime and littoral, demanding expertise drawn from all areas. Run along similar lines to Exercise Swift Response ... but cameras and microphones recorded everything they said and did – or didn't say and do! There was even some targeting thrown in for good measure.

Overall, it was an extremely busy, and sometimes chaotic experience but by the end they managed to perform to the standard expected and everyone got the tick in the box.

In summary, it was a hugely beneficial experience for all involved and the course consensus is that they now feel ready in all respects to move into our new roles as professionals.

The success of the course all stems from its joint nature.

As professionals, they pride themselves on their distinct identity and self-sufficiency, but often forget that integration with partners and allies is critical to optimising operational effectiveness.



## Extra help for young families

SO THAT'S what Nelson looks like...

Youngsters in Devonport meet the mascot of the RN and RM Charity as the oversized naval cat raises morale in one of two new baby-friendly areas in HMS Drake.

Captain of the Base Captain David Preece performed the honours at both: the 'Bumps and Babies' room in the Chaplaincy's Haven building and the maternity fitness suite in the Wyvern Gym.

The former is a dedicated room for mothers and babies to relax. Well equipped with soft toys and child-friendly furnishings, it is a space where Service mums can gather and meet socially with others in similar circumstances.

And the maternity fitness suite features areas for babies to play while parents' exercise - including specially-planned classes organised by gym staff.

"It's truly been a big team effort pulling this all together, creating two fabulous new facilities here in Devonport," said Chief Petty Officer Miriam Charlton, the organiser and lead for the project. "Having these facilities has created more opportunities for parents and babies to meet each other and share experiences.

"It's taken a while to pull it all together, but I must thank everyone for coming along to support us and showing the enthusiasm for the Bumps and Babies Room and the fitness suite in the Gym complex, it is really heart-warming to create something which will benefit many people."

The facilities have been supported by the RNRMC, while gym staff created the fitness suite in their spare time.

Picture: LPhoto Eddie Damulira

## New no for hotline

THE Defence Accident notification number changes from January 1 to 01980 348622.

It's a new central number for all incidents across the Forces: air, land and sea.

The hotline, which operates 24/7/365, will be used to notify the Defence Accident Investigation Branch (DAIB) team of serious accidents, injuries, loss of life, near misses, or damage to the environment or equipment/capability.

When DAIB receives notification of an accident, it assesses the situation and, where appropriate, deploys immediately. The reports which result make targeted safety recommendations to prevent the recurrence of accidents.

When phoned, the team will take the details of the incident and make an initial assessment of whether they will deploy. See DIN 2022DIN06-020.



## Coin cast to mark armistice events

ALL 165 men and women of the Naval family who took part in this year's national act of remembrance in the capital received a unique commemorative coin.

Organised by the team in the RN's People & Training directorate and donated by Greenwich Hospital, the specially-cast coins were presented to all those who took part in the two days of ceremonies in London: the Lord Mayor's Show on Saturday morning, the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall that night, the formal act of commemoration in Whitehall the following morning.

This year 104 RN and RM personnel, ten members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and 51 RM Band Service musicians were on parade.

They were presented with the coins by the Director People & Training, Rear Admiral Jude Terry, and Andrew Turner, the interim Director of Greenwich Hospital, in the drill shed at HMS Excellent... the hub of preparations for WO1 'Eddie' Wearing, the State Ceremonial Training Officer, and his team.

The edge of each coin is inscribed: 'Greenwich Hospital - Supporting the Royal Navy since 1694'.

# Divisional and Regimental system

much easier

The handover functionality of the app allows a seamless transition for an individual from one Division/Troop to another. This allows individuals to be transferred between sub-units or units with the individual being appropriately notified and processed.

Pertinent information about an individual's career or wellbeing can also be communicated, with the new DO/TC having oversight of the individual's full career timeline and records of reporting history, but not specific SJARs/OJARs.

- Divisional and Regimental Reporting Tool - A digital ticketing system to raise personnel

issues, which can be resolved or escalated within the unit chain of command or beyond if required.

The Divisional and Regimental Tool hosted on SCIO is a communication system for Divisional Officers (DOs) and Troop Commanders (TCs), allowing individuals to raise queries (tickets), through the chain of command via their DO/TC and, if necessary, to Navy Command Headquarters policy desk to obtain a swift and authoritative answer to their questions.

The aim is to resolve tickets at the lowest level possible.

Tickets can be generated by the DO/TC on behalf of their Division/Troop for reporting any issue relevant to an individual.

Currently the categories and subgroups support Personal Function Standards (PFS) returns to better collate holistic data, but this could be expanded.

The 'Reporting Tool' should allow the collation and response of Divisional enquiries far quicker than previously experienced.

It will allow Command to view developments within the unit and the collation of qualitative Whole Force data for trend analysis across Commands for rapid policy improvement.

- Performance Improvement Empowerment Record (PIER) - A platform to record activities, generating an evidence portfolio and demonstrating performance development to ensure accurate

report writing

PIER enables individuals to set their own personal development tasks and activities and provide evidence of their endeavours to their reporting chain.

Documented activities will receive endorsement from line management and other suitable personnel to evaluate the output from an individual.

It will transform the performance development and reporting function within the D&RS, assisting with MPARs and report writing.

It will promote a cultural shift in empowering personnel to take responsibility for their own development, through increased engagement within the D&RS. PIER will facilitate

positive interaction between

Divisional/Regimental members, and Divisional Officers / Troop Commanders will come to know their people better, while supporting the empowerment of individuals and increasing trust and transparency in the Divisional/Regimental System.

Access to the tools is available across the RN. Virtual briefs are available, any individual, group or unit can email [NAVYPEOPLE-DIV REG REVIEW \(Multiuser\)](mailto:NAVYPEOPLE-DIV REG REVIEW (Multiuser)@mod.gov) to request the links for these briefs.

Any feedback from users is essential to further develop the applications to produce effective and relevant tools for the RN/RM.





## Glasgow help mark Gordon's milestone

MARKING his milestone 100 birthday surrounded by friends, fellow ex-matelots and local dignitaries is former AB Gordon Cowan.

His landmark celebration was attended by three City of Glasgow RNA Association members – Kenn McKinnon, Alex Thomas and Eddy Pollar – who were invited to join the staff guests and residents of David Walker Gardens Care Home in southeast Glasgow to honour the former sailor.

The WW2 veteran served in frigates HMS Capel and Zanzibar, as well as legendary liner Queen Mary – converted to a troopship during the conflict.

The Provost of Rutherglen Margaret Cooper presented Mr Cowan with a card from the King, and a fine bottle of whiskey.

The birthday party closed with entertainment from a singer and guests and residents took to the dance floor once they enjoyed their fill of food and drink.

## Submarine sacrifices honoured

SUBMARINERS in Blyth held their Remembrance Parade at the Tiptoe Anchor Memorial at the top of the town's market place.

It was attended by more than 100 Forces veterans, with 20 wreaths laid by participants from a variety of branches and arms of the military, as well as submariners and dignitaries, including Blyth's Lord Mayor.

Two buglers and ten standards were on parade alongside representatives from the Army, Navy, several local branches of the Royal Naval Associations and their Royal British Legion comrades, while the vicar from St Mary's, next to the cenotaph, led the service.

They were blessed by reasonable weather conditions after early showers and after proceedings, everyone retired to the nearby High Street Club where an excellent buffet had been laid on, while a raffle raised £569.

The small Northumberland town served as a key base for operations by Royal Navy submarines through both World Wars.

# Final chapter of Minky tales

A SOMEWHAT surprised Andy 'Minky' McKie acknowledges the applause of colleagues after his final flight after 46 years in military aviation.

The retired commander spent 31 years serving in the Fleet Air Arm... then another 15 helping to train future generations of naval aviators as a civilian pilot, most recently with 750 Naval Air Squadron.

As he left the cockpit of his Avenger trainer – it serves as a flying classroom for trainee Observers – for the final time on his 65th birthday, squadron staff were waiting to acknowledge Minky's outstanding career.

In a surprise treat, he was also allowed to take the controls of a Sea King once again in the helicopter simulator at RNAS Culdrose, thanks to company HeliOps. Joining him was another former pilot, Roger McDonald, who acted as his trusty co-pilot.

750 Naval Air Squadron commanding officer Lieutenant Commander Robert Crewdson said: "I am unsure of what one must achieve to qualify as a Fleet Air Arm 'legend', however Andy 'Minky' McKie most definitely fulfils the criteria in my book.

"Having flown Gazelle, Wessex, Sea King, Jetstream and Avenger from RNAS Culdrose alone and amassing more than a 'year in the air' of flying hours, his final landing marked the end of an illustrious career in naval aviation.

"There will be very few who have not received the benefit of his experience, mentorship or leadership at some point in their careers."

Cdr McKie joined the Royal Navy as a midshipman at the age of 18 in 1976. The following year he arrived at RNAS Culdrose for

helicopter training and after another year joined the frontline with 826 Naval Air Squadron, still as a midshipman.

Throughout his career he recorded around 5,000 hours in Gazelle, Griffin, Squirrel, Wessex and Sea King helicopters.

He rose to become the commanding officer of 849 Naval Air Squadron A-Flight, 820 Naval Air Squadron and Naval Flying Standards Flight before taking responsibility for the entire helicopter force at RNAS Culdrose in the role then known as Commander Sea King. This was followed by the role of Chief Flying Instructor Defence Helicopter Flying School.

Leaving the Royal Navy in 2007, Cdr McKie joined 750 NAS as a contract pilot, initially employed by Serco and latterly Ascent Flight Training. He clocked a further 1,000 hours in the Jetstream T2 and another 2,900 hours in the Avenger T1.

He said: "I've had a great time working on 750 Squadron. It's been a blast. I know it's a cliché to say it about the people you work with but that is certainly true, and I have worked with some wonderful people."

Fleet Air Arm Commodore Nick Walker praised his service and said: "Andy McKie has been a constant in the Fleet Air Arm for the last 46 years and is venerated by all who have had the pleasure of serving alongside him and benefitted from his enormous experience.

"Thank you for your true loyalty and dedication, Andy, and for the exceptionally positive, indelible impression you have left on so many naval aviators. I and all in the Fleet Air Arm wish you fair winds as you start new adventures."



## Ex-marines honour French WW2 victims

SIX former Royal Marines – all Falklands veterans – enjoyed a week's respite at Rochechouart, France, to mark the 40th anniversary of the conflict.

The cohort – Ged Herd, Vince Comb, Alex 'Jock' Heppburn, Terry Barnes, 'Jono' Johnson and Chris Pretty, all from 9 Troop, Charlie Company, 40 Commando – were involved in the first landings at San Carlos Bay and the last action on land during the war, a little-publicised firefight at Sappers Hill.

In France time was spent visiting local sites including laying a wreath at the village 'frozen in time': Oradour-sur-Glane, near Limoges.

It was destroyed and its inhabitants massacred by the

Nazis in June 1944. Some 643 French men, women and children were killed and the village has been left the way it was 80 years ago as a monument to the horrors of war.

For the Falklands veterans, the week in France was a chance to get away from everyday routines, relax and share dits; some hilarious, told in detail, by 'Jock' Heppburn.

Chris Pretty, a Lance Corporal in 1982, said: "A lot has changed in 40 years, but friendships made before and during the war were for a lifetime."

The veterans were supported by the Forward Assist Charity based in Northumberland. A special thanks goes to Tony Wright, CEO of the organisation.



March on the flags... the standards and ensign are brought on at the beginning of the evening's proceedings

## An immortal evening on the Costa Blanca

THEY don't, as a rule, celebrate Trafalgar Day in Spain... understandably.

But they do in Torrevieja on the Costa Blanca, thanks to the very active local branch of the RNA.

The biggest night in the naval calendar was celebrated in the city's Masa International Hotel by 90 members and guests, including mayor Eduardo Dolón Sanchez, Captain Stephen McGlory, Defence Attaché in Madrid, and the Embassy's Deputy Head of Mission Lt Cdr Edward Dunn, and senior representatives of the International Residents of the Torrevieja Ayuntamiento, plus a good smattering of veterans from the UK armed forces and uniformed services.

Snr Sanchez toasted King Felipe VI of Spain, Lt Cdr Dunn toasted King Charles III and then Capt McGlory followed with a well-versed and entertaining abridged life and career of Nelson, closing with the toast to the admiral's Immortal Memory.

Much dancing and merriment followed the meal, toasts, and traditional raffle, leaving ex-Royal Naval personnel and civilian members of the branch – and guests – already looking forward to repeating the event next year.

Although primarily founded for serving and retired Royal Naval personnel with the motto 'once navy always navy', it welcomes all serving/retired military personnel and civilians alike. The branch meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 5pm at Che Loco Restaurant, El Chaparral Urbanization, Calle Fray Angélico 11, 03184, Torrevieja.

Details from chairman Tony Jenkins, [Chairman.RNATB@mail.com](mailto:Chairman.RNATB@mail.com), tel +34693866709 or +4470576117222 (What's App), or vice chairman Dusty Miller, [ViceChairRNATB@mail.com](mailto:ViceChairRNATB@mail.com), tel +34711006670 (What's App).

## LGBT views sought

THE LGBT Veterans Review is assessing the impact of the pre-2000 ban on homosexuality upon the UK's Armed Forces.

It's helping the review team get as many responses as possible, from LGBT veterans to their family members, and organisations affected by or dealing with the ban's impact.

It is casting its net back to 1967 – when homosexuality was

legalised in the UK – until 2000, when the ban on homosexuals serving in the military was lifted.

Survey organisers – <https://smartsurvey.co.uk/s/LGBTVeteransReview> – also want to hear from non LGBT about the ban and its impact, especially those involved in implementing and enforcing the ban – military police, medical personnel and legal officials.





## £40k boost for Salford care village

BROUGHTON House Veteran Care Village in Salford has been given £40,000 for the care of those who served in the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines.

The charity, which has been supporting the Service community since 1916, today provides the first 'veteran care village' in the UK: a 64-bed care home and independent living apartments, an array of modern facilities, a museum and a support hub.

All benefit from a grant from the RNRMC's Through Life Pathway programme to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life of veterans living at Broughton House, and towards providing counselling and welfare benefits advice to those living in the community through its Armed Forces Support Hub.

Among the beneficiaries of the RNRMC's backing is Broughton House resident Andrew Dinning, 78.

He enlisted in the Royal Marines when he was just 17 and rose to the rank of major, serving in 3 Commando Brigade.

Andrew said: "My favourite thing about Broughton House is how the staff motivate us every day with quizzes and activities and encourage us to join in."

"They are a delight to be with and make sure that the home and our days here are really great."

Royal Navy and Royal Marines veterans who suffered life-changing injuries while serving in Afghanistan are among those to have received help from Broughton House's Armed Forces Support Hub.

Jim Legard, a support officer at the hub, said: "I'm in regular contact with them and have helped in relation to their benefits and medical assistance by signposting them to the relevant agencies, liaising with them and filling in forms."

"As a support hub, we try to be there for veterans whenever they need us, be it just as a friendly, non-judgemental ear, or to provide practical advice and support."

Broughton House' chief executive Karen Miller added: "We are incredibly pleased to once again be receiving a grant from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and Greenwich Hospital to enable us to continue to support our residents who served in the Royal Navy or Royal Marines."

"Our new Veteran Care Village allows us to provide care of the highest quality to the ex-forces community, and support from armed forces charities such as the RNRMC and Greenwich Hospital is crucial in ensuring that our work can continue. We are eternally grateful for their continued support."



# It's all go at new Jellicoe

**PROUDLY** showing off treasured family photos is Bill Sylvester, one of the first residents of a new state-of-the-art residential care and nursing home for naval veterans in Portsmouth.

The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust marked its 100th anniversary with the opening of Admiral Jellicoe House for RN and Royal Marines veterans and their spouses or widows/widowers.

The sister home to Pembroke House, in Chatham, Kent, Jellicoe House offers multiple levels of care and includes 66 ensuite rooms, a library, cinema room, bar, community dining and a balcony overlooking a neighbouring cricket ground.

The home also has a dedicated dementia unit, meeting the varied emotional and physiological needs of people on their dementia journey.

Within the home, there are two sensory destinations including a seaside destination with a mural of a beach scene, which features the sounds and smells of the sea, and a woodland destination with a mural and a park bench with birdsong and the sounds and smells of a wood.

Built to mark the centenary of the RNBT and in honour of Admiral and 1st Earl John Rushworth Jellicoe, the RNBT founder, Admiral Jellicoe House provides a familiar and welcoming environment to those who have served.

Rob Bosshardt, Chief



Residents of the new home relax in one of the lounge areas

Executive of RNBT said: "I am so proud of our achievement in delivering this project for naval veterans, despite the challenges of the pandemic. Our dedicated dementia unit is an example of how we should be supporting our incredible veterans, creating a safe space for them to reminisce on some of their proudest moments in life."

"Admiral Jellicoe House is a fabulous building, a really appropriate home for those who have served their country in peace and war, and a fitting and permanent symbol of RNBT's century of care and support for the naval community."

Guest of Honour, Nick Jellicoe, grandson of the RNBT's Founder, renowned naval author and broadcaster and the Vice-Patron of RNBT added: "John Jellicoe, my grandfather, the Trust's founder and first benefactor, would have been honoured – and touched – that such a worthy cause carries his name. It is a legacy to his humanity and his vision."

The opening ceremony included hoisting the White Ensign, by kind permission of the First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key, to illustrate the strong links between the Home and the Royal Navy.



Captain David Preece and Plymouth RNA members help WW2 veteran Captain Laurence Taylor celebrate his 100th birthday

## Team Plymouth help celebrate captain's remarkable career

DEVONPORT'S Captain of the Base and local veterans dropped in on WW2 and Cold War veteran Captain Laurence Taylor to mark his 100th birthday.

The centenarian served through most of WW2 as a junior seaman officer and is one of the dwindling number of men to have seen the last action of the Scharnhorst, sunk off the North Cape on Boxing Day 1943.

Capt Taylor was delighted to receive his visitors from the naval base and Plymouth RNA, sharing tales of a long and distinguished service career, which began in 1940 when he attended Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth.

He went on to survive the bombing of HMS Sussex in Glasgow, HMS Nelson, HMS Duncan and HMS Savage in the Arctic, then HMS Start Bay at the end of the war, serving in the Mediterranean, before leaving her in Gibraltar and taking up a position in Haifa as the RN Operations Officer. Service in HMS Fernie and HMS Bigbury Bay followed before returning to Greenwich in 1950 for the Naval Staff course.

He married Margaret in 1951 and was promoted to Lieutenant Commander and posted to HMS Tamar in Hong Kong as the Staff Officer Plans to the Commodore of Hong Kong.

He became responsible for the patrols of small warships to prevent illegal immigrants from China.

His time in Hong Kong ended with a journey home on the Empire Windrush and a decade of appointments in and around the UK, including First Lieutenant of HMS Decoy and Staff Operations Officer to Flag Officer Aircraft Carriers.

As a captain he served in Moscow as Naval Attaché during some of the coldest days of the Cold War... followed by a two-year stint as Naval Liaison Officer in Canberra, Australia, before his final appointment with the Royal Navy as the Queen's Harbour Master at Chatham (pictured inset).

Since leaving the RN in the early 70s, Capt Taylor worked in



marine services, volunteered as a church warden and was active in veterans' affairs through the Royal British Legion.

"I was absolutely delighted to be able to wish Captain Taylor happy birthday on such a landmark day. As well as congratulating him on behalf of the RN and RNA,

"It was a real privilege to have an insight into his very clear and fond memories of an amazing career," said Captain David Preece, Captain of the Base.

"I hope that our presence was a reminder to him and his family that they are still a part of the Naval family no matter how long since retiring."

Awarding Captain Taylor life membership in honour of his service to the Navy and nation, Plymouth RNA chairman Des McCarthy said it marked "the high degree of respect and esteem we hold for our wartime warriors and their generation."

## Dockyard extends discount

THERE'S half price entry to the museums, ships and attractions of Portsmouth Historic Dockyard over the winter – if you're a local resident.

It's offering discount tickets to visitors with PO and SO postcodes until March 31 2023 – and freezing the entry price for those who don't.

The Live Local/Explore Local initiative was run last winter, and exploited by nearly 3,000 people. Tickets grant access not just to the dockyard complex and its treasures such as HMS Victory, Mary Rose and the National Museum of the Royal Navy on the Portsmouth side of the harbour, but also the RN Submarine and naval firepower museums, Explosion, on the Gosport shoreline.

Depending on which ticket you buy, you could save £15 on individual passes, as much as £30 on family passes which give access to all attractions on both sides of the harbour. Valid proof of address is required at the cash desks of Explosion, the historic dockyard or Royal Navy Submarine Museum.

For details see [www.historicdockyard.co.uk/localoffer](http://www.historicdockyard.co.uk/localoffer)

## Time travel back to 1962

IF YOU fancy travelling back in time to Dartmouth as it was 60 years in glorious hi-definition Technicolor... you can, courtesy of the blu-ray issue of a nautical comedy.

The first half of *We Joined The Navy* was filmed extensively at and around Britannia Royal Naval College, with some of the biggest names in British cinema of the day appearing – Kenneth More, Dirk Bogarde, Sid James – as well as young actors who would go on to make their names on TV such as *Likely Lad* Rodney Bewes and Derek Fowlds (Basil Brush's



Mr Derek, later in *Yes, Minister* and *Heartbeat*).

The movie is based in part on the novel of the same name by naval officer/author/historian John Winton, featuring the efforts of an outspoken instructor (More) to train young midshipman. His trait of speaking truth to power ends him in hot water and an exchange spell in the US Navy in the Med and three of his least promising cadets.

The film has been remastered on blu-ray by Studiocanal and retails for £14.99. A download/digital version is also available via online entertainment sites.

## T21 Association out in force

THE Type 21 Association was represented nationally and internationally on Remembrance Sunday with the laying of wreaths bearing the association crest in memory of all those who lost their lives whilst serving on the popular class of frigates.

In the Falkland Islands a wreath was placed on Stanley War Memorial to commemorate those who died in HMS Ardent and Antelope while liberating the islands in 1982.

In the UK association members paid their respects with similar acts at The Cenotaph in Whitehall, the National Memorial Arboretum, at the Naval War Memorials in Portsmouth and Chatham, and at the South Atlantic 1982 Memorial in Plymouth, which was the class' home.

Led by Derek Ross, a platoon was on parade

Marching past The Cenotaph at the national act of commemoration.

At the arboretum in Staffordshire, there's a memorial bench as well as a full monument to the frigates – a granite block from one of the dry docks in Devonport Naval Base topped with a granite tablet engraved with the names of the eight ships around the Type 21 Club crest. Both can be found close to the main South Atlantic 1982 memorial.

"We have members in Australia, the Falklands, America and numerous other countries who all took time to remember lost comrades on Remembrance Sunday wherever they may be," said association spokesman Steve Parker.

Any current or former servicemen who served in 21s can join the Association via the website [www.type21club.org](http://www.type21club.org).





## Civic leader joins 80th anniversary celebrations

THE Mayor of Hillingdon, Councillor Becky Haggar, visited Ruislip Sea Cadets to mark 80 years since the Unit's foundation. The visit also marked 60 years since the official opening of its new headquarters in a refurbished former Air Ministry hut and its rededication as TS Pelican. The Mayor joined in activities and presented awards to many cadets including AC Josh, MC Joe, AJC Caitlin, OC William and Cdt

Rose. The staff trophy was won by PO Kim Finnis. The new Division Cup named in honour of former CO Lt-Cdr (SCC) Jim Budgen, MBE was won by the RMC detachment. Officer-in-Charge Sgt (SCC) Darell Letton said: "It was a great evening and the Mayor was so interested in everything that our cadets do and so encouraging both to them and to our staff." District Officer Lt-Cdr (SCC) Mark Purcell was also present.



## Dishing up Sunday treat for the elderly

WALTON-ON-THE-NAZE Sea Cadets served a Sunday roast meal to dozens of elderly people at risk of loneliness and social isolation at the national event, Silver Sunday – a special day to celebrate the older people of their community.

Sea cadets worked hard at helping out with setting the tables, meeting and greeting, escorting senior citizen to their tables, serving their food and clearing up the plates after the lunch.

The community came together and put in a great team effort, with Essex Association of Local Councils sponsoring the event, the care agency Home Instead helping to coordinate the day, the Rotary Club of Frinton-on-Sea providing transport, the Frinton Community Association (FCA) at Soken House hosting the meal at the Frinton Community Theatre and Walton sea cadets acting as waiting staff.

The elderly participants were entertained by the L.Walton Feel Good Choir and enjoyed some physical activities such as chair yoga and chair dance.

PO (SCC) Julie Sexton, Commanding Officer of Walton-on-the-Naze Sea Cadets Unit, said: "We were delighted to be approached to take part in Silver Sunday. I felt it was something that our cadets could support after many of our older generation had not had a chance to socialise due to restrictions brought about by the pandemic. We all enjoyed chatting with participants and joining in with old-time songs and other fun activities."

JCFC George, ten, said: "At first I felt quite shy, but by the end of the afternoon I was much more confident. I enjoyed talking to them about Sea Cadets and my love of football. I would like to do this again."

MC Bea, 14, said: "It was nice to see the older generation relax, meet up and talk over lunch in a warm and safe place."

"I enjoyed telling them about Sea Cadets and my time as a Marine Cadet and how much fun it is. Silver Sunday gave everyone a brilliant opportunity to chat as some of the people had not been able to get out since Covid-19."

Jo Thorne, Community Engagement officer at Home Instead, remarked: "It was especially lovely to see the Sea Cadets, our younger generation alongside our older generation."

Picture: Nigel Wood



# Charities get cadets out on the water

THE Teesside Charity and The Teesside Family Foundation have worked together to provide a combined grant to Hartlepool Sea Cadets to purchase on-water equipment.

Working collaboratively, both Teesside-based charities donated equal grants to Hartlepool Sea Cadets to enable them to add paddle boarding to their list of activities to attract and retain both young people and volunteers alike, to gain qualifications and life experiences.

Based at Hartlepool Marina, the Sea Cadets provide activities to young people between the ages of 10-18 years old, from sailing, windsurfing and powerboating to rock climbing, camping and music, all whilst gaining qualifications.

Following the recent addition of a paddle board instructor volunteer, they were keen to purchase equipment to add the water sport to the existing activities offered and allow participants to receive industry-recognised qualifications.

The £8,000 funding helped Hartlepool

Sea Cadets purchase six paddle boards and a Rigiflex safety boat.

Jane Fox, commanding officer of Hartlepool Sea Cadets, said: "The grant has helped massively, we have been able to add paddle boarding to our activities and our young people have already spent lots of time out on the water using the new equipment."

"This has exposed one of our cadets to equipment they otherwise wouldn't have access to and supported them in gaining an apprenticeship position with a local safety boat company."

The Teesside Charity financially supports community groups and charities based in Teesside that promote social well-being and provide support to those who find themselves at a disadvantage in the society they live in.

Speaking about the grant, Diane Williamson, charity manager of The Teesside Charity, said: "The Sea Cadets provide a wonderful insight into career opportunities on the water and allow young people an opportunity to gain valuable hands-on

experience.

"By providing financial support to the charity, we can help them expand what is already a valuable resource to young people within the coastal town of Hartlepool."

The Teesside Family Foundation supports and provides assistance to Teesside families and individuals who simply do not have the means, are underprivileged or have fallen on hard times due to ill health.

Michael Poole, chair of The Teesside Family Foundation Charity, said: "The Sea Cadets offer such a great opportunity for our youth to get involved in fantastic, trained adventures and water sports. We are more than pleased to be able to help in purchasing much needed new equipment."

The Hartlepool Sea Cadets are keen for volunteers and instructors to get involved with the charity, find out more here <https://www.sea-cadets.org/hartlepool/volunteer-with-us>.

<https://teessidecharity.org.uk/>  
<https://www.theteessidefamily.com/>



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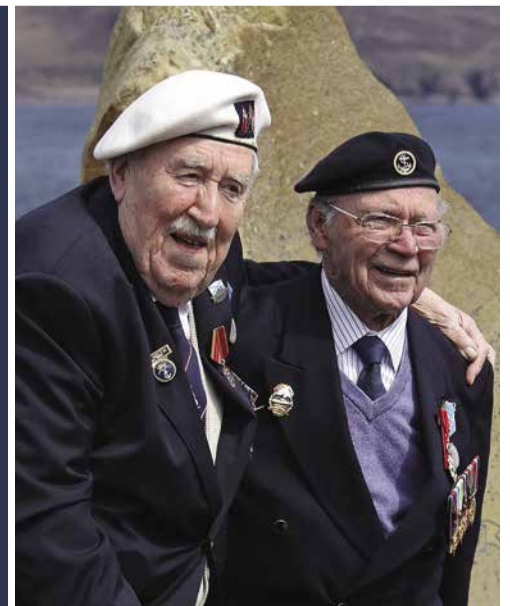
If you need help or would like to donate or volunteer contact RNBT.

The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO2 8RN

T: 02392 690112 E: [rnbt@rnbt.org.uk](mailto:rnbt@rnbt.org.uk)

[www.rnbt.org.uk](http://www.rnbt.org.uk)

Registered Charity Number 206243





# Great to be back marching the Mall

THOUSANDS of people gathered at Horse Guards Parade and The Mall towards Buckingham Palace to witness the Sea Cadets annual Trafalgar Day Parade.

Some 400 sea cadets from across the UK flocked to London to commemorate the Battle of Trafalgar and display their skills, teamwork and training at this colourful and historic event – the first large-scale event since 2019, before Covid-19 struck.

The Combined Cadet Force (Royal Navy), Royal Navy Volunteer Cadet Corps, Army Cadet Force and Royal Air Force Air Cadets also took part.

Commemorating Admiral Lord Nelson's victory at the Battle of Trafalgar on the 21st of October 1805, Trafalgar Day is the most important day in the Naval Calendar, defining British sailing for hundreds of years.

The programme kicked off with a solo performance by Sefton Sea Cadets volunteer, Louise Cowling in Trafalgar Square. This was followed by a physical training display which included club swinging, hornpipe and skipjump routines.

For fourteen-year-old Lexie from Fleetwood Unit, it was her first time in taking part in the Physical Training display.

"On the day, I was nervous but also very excited to perform," described Lexie. "The atmosphere was great, there were hundreds of people watching and they were really supportive, which pushed us to carry on. It was amazing to meet so many people and see what all the cadets taking part were able to achieve during the parade. Trafalgar Day is important to celebrate, it's how we remember how Britain triumphed in 1805, how important the Royal Navy is and how far they go to protect our country."

It was then the turn of the Massed Bands of the Sea Cadet Corps to perform, followed by the arrival of Escort to the Colour and a parade inspection by Rear Admiral Judith Terry OBE RN and Captain Sea Cadets, Captain Neil Downing RN.

"I felt so proud to be part of the band and to represent my unit in the Trafalgar event," said Cadet First Class Katie from Blackburn Unit. "This was my first time at Trafalgar and I already know I want to do it again next year!"

After the wreath-laying ceremony, the Last Post was sounded and a service was conducted by Reverend Andrew Schuman, Staff Chaplain of the Sea Cadet Corps. The programme concluded with a March Past. A reception was held at Wellington Barracks.



"Marching down the Mall and listening to the band was a highlight of the day for me," said Leading Cadet Amelia from Kettering Unit, Northamptonshire.

"We came [to London] on Thursday so we'd been preparing since then, but I've been a cadet for six years so I've trained quite a lot for this one moment."

Able Cadet Isobel from Loughborough Unit commented: "Marching past Buckingham Palace with the band and guards was the highlight. It was nerve-wracking

at first but it was incredibly enjoyable. The atmosphere was just brilliant. Everyone has been so supportive during the training and seeing it all come together is really good."

Able Cadet George from Padstow Unit said: "It's been an absolutely amazing experience – parading in central London, which hardly anyone gets to do. A massively proud day for all of us. I did it in the Horse Guards in 2019, which was a massive honour, but it's great to be back in Trafalgar Square which is so central to the occasion."



## Twickenham unit presents wartime medal to museum

TWICKENHAM Sea Cadets visited Keogh Barracks and the Museum of Military Medicine near Camberley, Surrey, to present a wartime medal.

A past Commanding Officer of the Unit, Eddie Muggeridge had left items for the Unit in his will and PO Eugenie Brooks had found a Royal Red Cross Medal 1st Class in those items. Eugenie, pictured, is a battlefield Guide and keen historian and researched the medal.

The medal had been presented to Eddie's aunt, Staff Nurse Luisa Lillian Muggeridge in 1917 by King George 5th at Buckingham Palace.

The medal is awarded to fully trained nurses of an official recognised nursing service, military or civilian, who has shown exceptional devotion and competency in the performance of actual nursing duties, over a continuous and long period, or who has performed some very exceptional act of bravery and devotion at her post of duty.

It was introduced by Queen Victoria after she heard about her brave nurses during the Crime War.

With further research, Eugenie found out that Nurse Muggeridge has served on several hospital ships during the Great War as well as hospitals in Alexandria, Salonika and the military hospital in Grimsby. She had also been awarded the standard issue 1914-1915 Star, Victory Medal and War Medal.

It was felt that the correct place for this medal to be treasured and put on display was this Military Medicine Museum and contact was made with them. They were absolutely delighted to be gifted this medal along with pictures of the Nurse.

The Twickenham Sea Cadets had a guided tour of the Museum and then Sub Lieutenant (Acting CO) of Twickenham Unit Roger Middleton presented the Medal to the Museum Manager watched by friends of Eddie Muggeridge.



Staff Nurse Luisa Muggeridge and her Royal Red Cross Medal 1st Class

## Hull's happy campers

HULL Unit has been supported by North Atlantic Fishing Company on their four-day camping and sailing trip to Welton Water.

The long-standing relationship and annual sponsorship enabled 36 sea cadets from Hull Unit, to practice their sailing skills by day and their camping skills by night.

The trip has been running for two years at Welton Water, which is situated next to a scenic stretch of the Humber River, allowing the cadets to take part in a range of activities including, sailing, wind surfing, paddle boarding and rowing – encouraging them to spend time on the water and hopefully inspire their future careers.

The North Atlantic Fishing Company has a home port of Hull and owns and operates a fleet of British registered fishing vessels, including the Frank Bonefaas, Northern Joy and Wirons 5 and 6.

The company often partners with charities and organisations, providing fun and educational experiences for the younger generation that positively impact on their experience growing up in the maritime region of Hull and influence a future life at sea.

Earlier this year, the crew of the Frank Bonefaas hosted tours around the impressive vessel for the Hull Sea Cadets and Trinity House pupils in celebration of the Platinum Jubilee.

Sally Green, Staff Sergeant Instructor and Commanding Officer of Hull Sea Cadets, said: "I have been with the Sea Cadets since 2007 and have led the Hull Cadets since 2018 when I took over as Commanding Officer. We have been running this trip for two years and we all volunteer our time, but without the sponsorship from North Atlantic Fishing Company it would not be possible."

Jessica Case, age 14, member of the Cadets for 1 year and 2 months said: "I haven't been a member of Sea Cadets for as long as some others and when I started I was a little scared but everyone is so welcoming and I felt really comfortable straight away."

## Princess joins party to mark 80 years

THE Sea Cadet Corps celebrated its 80th anniversary in Northern Ireland through a special parade and event in Carrickfergus, County Antrim, attended by dignitaries and special guests, including the Admiral of the Sea Cadets Corps, The Princess Royal.

Dressed in full military uniform The Princess Royal performed the inspection of the Royal Guard. She addressed the cadets and volunteers present, in which she talked about the rich history of Sea Cadets in Northern Ireland, from the fledgling units that her grandfather, King George VI, met on his visit to Belfast in June 1942 to the polished and professional displays of today.

She also praised Sea Cadets volunteers who give up their time to instil the essential qualities of self-discipline and respect, while granting unique opportunities for fun and adventure.

The Princess Royal told the volunteers they are providing a great service to the people of Northern Ireland; producing fine young cadets who will fulfil their potential and serve their communities, and their country, with distinction.

The event was attended by the Lord-Lieutenant of County Antrim, Mr David McCorkell, the High

Sheriff of County Antrim, Mr John Lockett OBE, Deputy Mayor of Mid and East Antrim, Councillor Beth Adger, Brigadier James Senior Commander 38 (Irish) Brigade, as well as dignitaries and senior ranking uniformed guests from across Northern Ireland. Over 200 cadets took part in the parade, held indoors due to inclement weather.

The Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet for the City of Belfast, Able Cadet Alex, spoke at the event, telling the crowds about how she joined Sea Cadets as a child because of her passion for water-based activities. "[My unit] has provided me with a lifetime of memories, and numerous skills to equip me for adult life," she said. "I have gained qualifications in first aid, navigation, and catering, and I am now working towards my Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. Through the D of E, I have learnt new skills and become a more active member of my local community."

There are 12 Sea Cadets units in Northern Ireland, which give more than 220 cadets the opportunity to learn rowing, sailing, paddlesports, powerboating and much more; helping them to develop into resilient, confident young people who can launch well into life, whatever their background.







## Glimpse of the RN future for cadets

THE crew of HMS Glasgow were delighted to offer a glimpse of the future Royal Navy to three groups of Sea, Air, and Army Cadets, visiting from their parent units based in and around the Glasgow area.

The group of 40 cadets and their leaders were welcomed to the BAE Systems shipyard in Govan by HMS Glasgow's senior naval officer and Weapon Engineer officer, Commander Mark Quinn. The shipyard on the banks of the River Clyde is the site where the first of class Type 26 – HMS Glasgow – is currently being built.

The cadets were given an insight into the Type 26 programme and the capabilities that HMS Glasgow and her sister ships will deliver to the Royal Navy once they begin their operational service later this decade.

Following the brief and Q&A session, the groups had the opportunity to visit the state-of-the-art 3D visualisation suite and learn how the City-class frigates have been designed. The intricately detailed digital model allows engineers and designers to work collaboratively on the build, regardless of where they are physically located.

Next up was the chance to see how the ships are being built as they toured the Ship Build Outfit Hall to see the second of class, HMS Cardiff. The group then toured HMS Glasgow, seeing first-hand the extensive flight deck, hangar, and mission bay.

Commander Mark Quinn said: "On such an historic day in our maritime history, having the opportunity to show these young cadets the future capabilities that the Type 26 will deliver to the Royal Navy is particularly rewarding."

"Our visitors from the Air Cadets, TS Glasgow Sea Cadets, and Glasgow and Lanarkshire Bn Army Cadet Force have frequently travelled past the shipyard and seen HMS Glasgow from afar. They all commented on how excited they were to get a detailed insight into a key part of the future Royal Navy."



## Busy week for Maidstone

OUR school had an Extended Learning Week so we went to the Isle of Cumrae in Scotland to spend time on a Clyde Fleet Tender, writes PO Tom.

The first night was mostly spent unpacking and getting a lay of the island as well as walking to the local town of Millport to look around. Most notably the time was spent doing a PLT, trying to get the whole squad to stand on one small rock and watching some seals. We also saw a very old pair of Leading Lights, which would guide ships into the harbour.

The second day was the initial day of action. After breakfast, we met Pony and his crew of the SD Oronsay and we began working on our watches. Lt P divided us into three watches and we all had an hour at a time up in the wheelhouse helming the ship, navigating, being look out and the Officer of the Watch.

Everyone else began working through a yachting booklet as this contained valuable knowledge about boating and navigation. As the PO and squad IC, I took the opportunity to begin showing people chart work in an active setting, as being on an actual moving ship for once allowed us to triangulate our position as well as plan routes and then actually travel down them.

Then after arriving at Bute to look at the castle we navigated our way back to the island. After our meal we searched Cumrae for fun areas to do some rock pooling along the beach and began to traverse our way around the island.

The day after involved much of the same but with a stop off at the Troon RNLI station and a look around one of the active lifeboat services and seeing how they operate.

The evening was then most enjoyable as we took another drive around the island but this time with the goal of crab fishing, which was highly successful.

On our last day on the ship, the crew took the opportunity to give us some much more practical lessons such as fire service, first aid medical situations and man overboard drills.

We also got to see a school of dolphins playing off our bow and then they raced us out to sea.

Finally, we said goodbye to the crew of the Oronsay and the skipper, Pony.

Our last evening was spent down on the beach amusing ourselves along the shoreline: doing Drill knee deep in the water and having our Section Splash, which made our Section really gel.



# PADDY POWER

## CCF INSTRUCTOR INSPIRES CADETS



Top: Paddy in his inflatable kayak; Above left, Paddy on the Malvern Hills 9km challenge; Above right, on his bike; Below, certificates of his achievements

COMBINED Cadet Force Staff Sergeant Instructor Paddy Doyle continues to inspire cadets with his latest Guinness World Record fitness endurance challenges.

Paddy, who instructs at Streetly Academy School in Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, recently completed his 726th career sporting feat at the Help for Heroes Malvern Hills 9km short cross-country walking challenge. He completed the course in 2 hours, 21 mins, 02 seconds, carrying a 50lb back pack.

"I made sure I drank plenty of water as it was a hot morning, each hill was a test, but former fellow service personnel and civilian walkers carrying various weighted back packs were supporting each other all the way to the last check point. What made the day was being awarded a finishers' medal from the Malvern's Lord Mayor."

Three days later he was at the North Warwickshire Borough Council chambers, where he was presented with an honours certificate and special medal for recognition for his outstanding physical fitness feats throughout his career from the Mayor of North Warwickshire councillor Tony Clews.

Three weeks later Paddy was determined to increase his fitness endurance feats achieving nine short course river kayak records carrying 26lb of expedition kit in an inflatable kayak, bringing his fitness endurance challenges to 735. The venue was the River Leam Royal Leamington Spa Warwickshire.

"I was avoiding fallen trees and large branches from the recent winds and heavy rain, kayaking with expedition kit made me work harder. The support team made sure I reached each point, they took action photos and videoed were possible to authenticate the distances."

In October Paddy increased his career physical fitness challenges to 740 documented feats covering nine different sporting disciplines, completing five low technical mountain bike achievements carrying 25lb with added weight mountain bike leader kit over the Heart of England way footpath, Grand Union Canal and Rowington village footpaths south Warwickshire.

Pictures: David Hastings (Rugby Warwickshire UK)



## King's scoop Pringle Trophy

PREPARATION for the Sir Stuart Pringle Trophy began five weeks before the event.

Captain Bellfield RMR, in his 20th year of Pringle training, started the gruelling process of making sure the cadets were ready and committed for the formidable task that lay ahead: regaining the Pringle Trophy.

The training started with a week of morning drill training, practising the routine that would have to be performed at Lymstone in just four weeks.

The training then ramped up massively, with drill being pushed to any available slot in free time for us, as other stances took precedence.

We left for CTRM Lymstone on Friday and arrived there tentative and nervous. The mood quickly changed as we set up camp in the drill shed and headed to the galley. Once, in the galley, we saw the Marines and realised we had to try and emulate them to the best of our abilities to do well in the competition. We had a quick briefing and after a late night of going through stances for the next day, everyone headed to bed.

A 5am wake up, after practising some first aid, we were dialled in and ready to perform. The stances started off well in the Command Task. 2IC,

Max E, led the way with some brilliant military knowledge, while the rest of the team, led by IC Josh C, showed great rope knowledge.

The rest of the stances flowed well until Camouflage and Concealment which was a rough patch for the team. We knew we would have to pick it up going in Section Attacks which was the last stance of the day. After a textbook Right Flank, the Marines in charge were impressed, lifting the morale of the team heading into Day Two.

Following a late night of practising drill, and weapon cleaning, Sunday was upon us. Josh C held his nerve to lead the team through an immaculate Drill display which would end up Second Overall.

The team then turned their attention to the final stance, the Endurance Course.

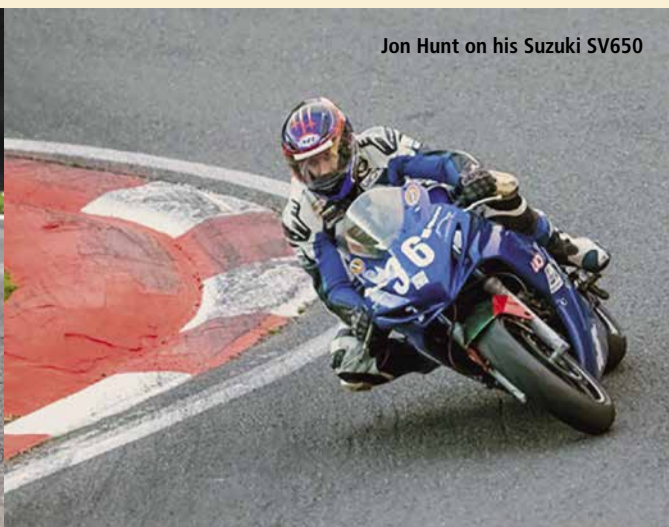
The prizewinning was a tense moment as we waited to find out if all the hours were worth it. When we were finally announced winners, the team were elated. Overall, we had won the navigation, section attacks, modern urban combat, endurance course and finally assault course stances, which had contributed to the win.

Report: Cadet CSgt Josh and Max, Kings College, Taunton





Team manager Brian Fuidge on his Kawasaki Ninja 600



Jon Hunt on his Suzuki SV650

# END OF AN ERA FOR RACERS

IT PROVED the end of an era for the Royal Navy Royal Marines Road Race Team at the last round of Thundersport GB at Cadwell Park, writes **AB Natalie Cro**.

As well as being the final fixture of the 2022 season, it marked the end of Thundersport GB, who had hosted the Inter-Services Championship for the last 12 years.

The weekend saw some last-minute changes of riders for various reasons. Adam Myhill (#764) was sadly unable to race but came along to slip back into his previous team role of pit crew, to assist the rest of us to get out on track and offer some mentoring.

Friday morning gave us a chilly early morning track walk but it was thankfully dry and sunny, having been forecast rain all weekend earlier in the week.

Testing went well for all riders, some just getting back into the saddle, and others looking to improve on when the team were last there in May.

Saturday started off threatening to be a wet one with heavy rainfall over night in the early hours, so the morning sessions forced a fitment of wet wheels as the track struggled to dry out. Thankfully after lunch the afternoon sun was out in its full glory so the dry wheels were

refitted for a much more comfortable afternoon of racing.

Team Captain, Max Wilmott on his Yamaha R6 (#75) had his second meet of the season due to injury and deployments, but had a fantastic time getting back into the swing of things.

His best moment of the weekend was pulling off a late move at Mansfield in the last lap of the Golden Era Super Sport race, making up several places at once.

Jon Hunt (#36) had a brilliant time on his Suzuki SV650, managing his second time of being fourth in class and getting a personal best around Cadwell Park.

Team manager Brian Fuidge (#56) managed to do the fastest lap time for the team in the Inter-services race, last thing on Saturday, on his Kawasaki Ninja 600.

Your humble writer (#999) on my Honda CB500, enjoyed my first-time racing without a novice bib, having now moved up to Clubman.

I had a rough time to start with, fighting the demons of my first ever crash at Cadwell back in May, but pulled my fastest ever lap out of the bag in the penultimate race on Sunday, only to beat it again by another four tenths of a second for the last race of the season, thanks to some mentoring and feedback from teammates over

the weekend.

Away from Cadwell Park, Charlie White (#44) who has spent this season riding for True Heroes Racing as part of the British Superbike championship, spent his weekend at Brands Hatch circuit at their final fixture.

He achieved a fantastic tenth place overall on the Ducati Panigale V4 as part of the Ducati Trioptions Cup. We are incredibly proud of him! It was with a very heavy heart that the team said goodbye to Thundersport GB and the community of marshals and officials, and thanked them for all their hard work over the years.

We hope to see as many of them as possible again in a different paddock for the 2023 season.

For now, the yearly rebuilds of our race machines begins, and the team has some winter training to look forward to. The first of which being a training camp at Andalucía circuit in southern Spain to keep our skills up over the winter and to get ready for next season. Here's to next year!

If you fancy joining us next season, visit [www.rnmrsa.co.uk/road-racing-team](http://www.rnmrsa.co.uk/road-racing-team) and get in touch.

Pictures: Jack Snaps



Team captain Max Wilmott on his Yamaha R6



Natalie Cro on her Honda CB500



## Medals haul for judo masters

A HOST of gold, silver, and bronze medals were secured by Royal Navy and Royal Marines judokas at the British Judo Masters National Championship held in Surrey sport centre in Guildford.

The team's entrants in the Kyu grades – blue belt and below – were first on, followed by the 1st Kyu and upward grades – brown and black – and LH Dale McDonald just missed out on a bronze medal, finishing fifth in the over 100kg Kyu Grades Masters contest.

Cpl Robert Hutton and PO Samuel Salmon faced off in an epic bout of determination and grit in the U66s both bringing home a silver and bronze medal.

The U60s followed with Sgt Colin Francis, who recently returned from the 2022 Judo World Veteran Championships with a Silver medal for the RN team. Sgt Francis, the RN judo team manager, demonstrated his skilled tenacity again and brought home a well-deserved gold medal.

This was promptly followed by an amalgamation of U60kgs and U66kgs and then U66kgs and U73kgs categories. A challenging day at the office to say the least but was met with drive, determination, and dedication for the sport.

AB Ken Harris held his own against some extremely skilled opponents and achieved a bronze medal in the U90kgs. Also representing the team was WO1 John Thacker.

The RN and RM Judo team threw some sensational Ippons, Waza-aris and acrobatics for bonus points. The collective effort earned them a total of five medals and five places on the British Masters squad.

## Small but mighty...

ROYAL Navy riders held their own in the final leg of the Loriners Inter-Service Team competition held during the RAF Championships at Sparsholt Equine College.

The Inter-Service team, consisting of S/Lt Katie McManus, S/Lt Abi Pearce, LH Robyn McFadden and LCpl Gill Fordem were tested in dressage and show jumping disciplines and they just squeezed ahead of the Army by four show jumping faults to win the leg.

This resulted in an overall season tie between the RN and Army and they could only be separated on a countback of top six placings during the year. It was incredibly close, but the RN narrowly conceded to the Army who retained the Loriners Trophy.

Despite the result, this was the RN's best performance in the RN Inter-Services Team challenge for many years – an achievement made even more impressive as 50 percent of most of the teams comprise of hireling horses.

Notable individual successes in Combined Training came from Lt Wendy Hems competing her horse for the first time at Prelim/70cm level to come third, Cdr Suzanne Clark was second in the Novice/90cm and LH Robyn McFadden placed second in the Novice/1.05cm Loriners Class.

In pure dressage Lt Cdr Jill Monnox came third in the medium class and Lt Cdr Hannah Lee placed second in her first ever competition in uniform. Miss Caitlyn Faull, of the Royal Navy Riding Club and riding as a dependant, came second in the 80cm class show jumping class – again at her first military competition.

The 1m 10 show-jumping qualifier to earn points to compete at the London International Horse Show this month saw PO Amy Taylor triumph. She and her horse Rumers Cascari will be the only Royal Navy competitor at the prestigious event.

Anyone interested in joining the team should email: [RNEquestrian@outlook.com](mailto:RNEquestrian@outlook.com).



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# Wicked adventures

ROYAL Navy personnel have been enjoying adventurous training expeditions in the Mojave Desert in the USA and the waters of the Mediterranean off Gibraltar.

Both packages were delivered by the Royal Navy Adventurous Training Team – their first for 17 Test and Evaluation Squadron at Edwards Air Force Base in California and, in the Med a return to sub-aqua diving after a break of three years.

In the USA, 36 ranks from the RN and RAF who work on the F-35B programme, went out into the desert for a campsite on the Colorado River.

"I see the purpose of AT is to push service people physically as well as bringing a sense of team cohesion; the 4 day experience more than delivered on all fronts with a positive effect on the Sqn from a mental health and wellbeing standpoint. The benefits of this AT expedition cannot be underestimated," said pilot Squadron Leader Hugh Williams.

The RNATT delivered stand up paddleboard (SUP), trekking, mountain biking (MTB) and horse trekking over a four-day period for each 12-person group.

With temperatures reaching 30 degrees for the trekking a visit to geothermal pools along the route was not that welcome. Trekking down a Colt Canyon which has been formed by water movement over many hundreds of years paid witness to the sheer ferocity and destruction of this flow.

A trekking experience down to the lower Hoover Dam was once again a significant challenge with one of the routes requiring multiple rope use. This once again, enabled the RN and RAF teams to join forces away from the engineering world and support one another to ensure safe passage.

The horse trekking brought about trepidation in many of the participants as it was for most their first exposure to this activity. The backdrop for the trek was the stunning Red Rock Canyon and a guided two-hour session bonded both rider and horse for most!

The MTB route along the Historical Railroad enabled riders to re-trace the steps of the Hoover Dam workers from the 1930s, of whom many sadly lost their lives building this phenomenal engineering feat.

CPO Andrew Wildfish said: "The downhill challenge at the end of the ride resulted in many laughs and was a great way to finish the exped."

Back in Europe and the RNATT held Exercise Great Siege, a two-week diving course attended by 12 novices.

CPOPT Barrie Chambers and C/Sgt Richard Hall oversaw the diving operations utilising the Joint Personnel Development Unit (JPDU) in Gibraltar.

AB Atlantis Wright said: "I've found a new sport that I love and can't wait to get back in the water already! From the get go, admin side of things, how the course was run and delivered, genuinely can't fault anything. I've had a wicked week."

The Rock provides easy access to wrecks and reefs which suit all grades of diver, including novices. Roman anchors and admiralty artifacts can be found among the wrecks and reefs which are now covered in marine life, it's a diver's playground.

Rosia Bay is a sheltered bay with the depth starting at just 2m and with it being only 12m at its deepest and a sandy bottom, making this site the perfect diver training location. This Bay was the victualling yard where Lord Admiral Nelson's body was brought ashore in HMS Victory after his triumph at the battle of Trafalgar.

SS Rosslyn is a very scenic wreck dive and at 3,679 tonnes and 340ft long it is the largest wreck in Gibraltar to explore and again accessible to all diver grades under the BSAC syllabus. She sank in 1916 and now lies at the bottom of the South mole just outside of the dockyard which is a five-minute boat transit from JPDU. She is covered in Anthias and Damsel fish sitting at about 21m.

In total during the two-week expedition the divers conducted a total of 144 dives totalling 96 hours under water with some finding artefacts dating over 200 years old.

During the expedition divers had to take a 24-hour decompression day prior to returning to the UK, they conducted tours of the rock tunnels to understand some of the important history from the Great Siege attempt in 1779.

AB Christian Briffa said: "The diving ex-ped in Gibraltar was amazing. It has been, by far the best week I've had in the Navy. AT gives me something to look forward to while improving my leadership, teamwork and social skills."

"Everyone gelled so well from the outset. We had to work as a team to get all of our equipment ready, get to our diving location and complete the dives. Without team work, none of this could've happened."

LNN Elizabeth Johnstone added: "The dive ex-ped in Gibraltar was incredible; the instructors were experienced, knowledgeable and patient with us as students, and it was clear how much work and effort had gone into planning such a brilliant trip."

"Morale was sky-high throughout the week by how well our team gelled as a group which made the experience all the better."

The Royal Navy Adventurous Training Team is a deployable team of Royal Navy/Royal Marines instructors whose main aim is the front-line delivery of Adventurous and Challenging activities to aid retention, improve morale and increase operational capability.





# Stand up if you are a novice

A FANTASTIC RNRMSA Beginner's Weekend took place Gwithian Beach, Cornwall, writes Lt Ryan Woodridge.

Everyone was looked after during two full days of instruction by instructors, qualified in both Surf Lifesaving and Surf Coaching from within the RNRMSA – WO1 Andy Williams, CPO Andy Byers and CPO Paul Stansby. They were supported by future coaches LH Matthew Gough and SLT Jacob Randle-Bissell.

Extra assistance was ably given by AB Jake Sage, AB Levi Jack, and the Association equipment team, by loading the surfboard and wetsuits, driving them to the beach and distributing out the kit.

Day one of the weekend was focused on getting into the water, beginning with a short lesson on the sand to teach the participants parts of the surfboard and how to position themselves on it, before getting stuck in and catching some white-water waves.

Then it was another lesson on standing on the board, and back into the water with everyone receiving bespoke coaching to refine their technique. Before lunch everyone had stood up at least once!

After lunch and another lesson on waves it was back in the water to practice with further coaching. It is safe to say that after a full day of tackling the waves, the



soon to be delivered RNRMSA-funded pizzas were essential!

Day two was another beautiful day with perfect surf. After a quick lesson on rip tides and beach flags the surfers were raring to go, having the beach mostly to themselves and building more confidence in the water for a few more hours.

Overall, this weekend gave the surfers the opportunity and experience to be introduced to surfing in a safe and controlled environment.

The £45 cost of the weekend includes not just the two days of surf coaching, but membership of the RNRMSA Surfing Association (usually £25 on its own) and a

social on the Saturday night with food provided.

As a member of the RNRMSA you have free access to all the kit in the Association store at RNAS Culdrose, and the opportunity to take part in heavily subsidised surf coaching events in the UK (including a programme of women-only events) as well as annual Overseas Training Camps (for example in Morocco), and the bi-annual Surf Tour (to places like South Africa or the Maldives).

There are three Beginner Weekends planned for 2023: May 6-7, June 2-3, and September 30 to October 1.

Picture: Ayesha Woodridge

# Marines ride waves of recovery

A GROUP of injured Commandos took part in a week of surfing as part of their ongoing road to recovery.

The Royal Marines, all from the Commando Logistics Regiment (CLR) based at RMB Chivenor near Barnstaple, spent a week overcoming their injuries to learn the intricacies of surfing with instructors from Bude Surf Veterans (BSV).

Arranging the event for HMS Drake's Personnel Support Group, (PSG) Chief Petty Officer Angie Cheal once again secured funding via the NAAFI Covenant Fund, making it the 12th event organised this year for medically downgraded service personnel.

Several of those now 'Surf Veterans' had themselves been on similar courses and spent time with the Royal Navy, Royal Marines Recovery Centre Hasler, based at HMS Drake.

One veteran, Kev Dring a former Naval rating, who struggled with his own health issues said: "In 2018 I started to feel more and more anxious, and it got to the point where I began to stutter, which only made my anxiety worse."

"I was moved to PSG to focus on my recovery, and there I met Angie who asked me if I would like to take part in a water activities week, for those who are medically downgraded. To my delight I found it really helped me relax. From there I was selected to take part in Op Surf, an event which Help for Heroes ran with the Operation Surf Charity from the United States.

"The week literally changed my life, as I fell in love with surfing. Now, five years later I have based my life around Bude and am a fully qualified surf coach. These weeks really mean a lot to me and my colleagues, there is something really special and rewarding about giving back to those who are going through the same thing that you have."

Commanding Officer of the Commando Logistics Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Liam Metcalfe, said: "Last year, the Regiment developed its own Rehabilitation Troop (Hellberg Troop) to provide support to its injured and downgraded Royal Marines, soldiers and sailors."

"Under the careful watch of their Troop HQ, the team receive excellent administrative, medical and physical rehabilitation support until they can resume full duties. The remedial training is demanding and can risk falling into a monotonous routine. The opportunity provided by the PSG alongside Bude Surf Veterans for our down-graded personnel is very welcome and well received."



# JUST SWELL AT CHAMPS



MORE than 45 Royal Navy and Royal Marine surfers travelled from units across the country to attend this year's RNRMSA Surfing Championships, held in Cornwall.

Due to very high surf, the competition was moved from its usual venue of Penhale Sands to Tolcarne Beach in the centre of Newquay, to take advantage of more sheltered conditions.

The competitors were a mix of male and female ranks and rates with a wide variety of abilities, styles and skills, surfing in one or more of the disciplines of shortboard open, stand-up paddleboarding surf, longboard, womens' open and bodyboard.

Day one commenced with a safety and competition brief, with the first heat in the water shortly afterwards in sunny but breezy weather.

A combined group effort of RNRMSA Committee members, competition co-ordinators and club members pulled together for the tasks of judging, time keeping, score tabulation, and spotting surfers in the water for a full 14 hours of surfing heats over two days.

Despite the surf conditions throughout the event remaining "solid, challenging and overhead", they were also "highly contestable!", particularly for the shortboarders who opened the competition on the first day.

Six exciting heats gave 27 competitors the opportunity to demonstrate their capability and skill amongst the challenging waves on offer.

In the afternoon, the longboarders took to the water. Sizable and arduous conditions led to some big, impressive turns and stylish talent on display over two rounds to select the finalists.

The day finished with a single, straight-to-final bodyboard heat with the small number of competitors giving a lively display while battling to get into the waves and show off some bold moves.

First place was awarded to Lt Ryan Woodridge, with Sgt Dan Lyness in second and AB Leni Milne in third.

Conditions on day two remained challenging, but still "contestable", so the morning kicked off with the SUP surf final – the smallest field compared to the other disciplines, but some

considerably sizable waves were caught, with impressive technique and agility shown, especially from LH Matt Gough who took the win.

The remaining rounds of the shortboard open then took place, leading to a final in which the level of talent was extremely high, and each competitor's performance was awesome for all to witness.

Competitors showed dexterity and skill, demonstrating a variation of style and manoeuvres in decent sized surf, battling not only for the prestige of a podium finish but a place on the RNRMSA Team for next year's Inter-Service competition.

The final was extremely close, but Mne Rhys Barfield just pipped AB Jake Sage to first place, with PO James Jervis in third.

Hot on the heels of the shortboard final, the ladies open heats took to the water.

Female competitors ranging in experience and skill battled with a strenuous paddle out before trying to catch as many waves as possible.

Again, the scores were very close across the majority of the field, and the final had the judges gripped until the last moments on the clock.

A fantastic effort was made by all, but the clear winner was AB Leni Milne, with AB Cara Jones in second and CPOPT Kelly Gooch in third separated by a very small margin.

Rounding out the two days of competition was the longboard final. Some impressive 'drop-knee' turns, trimming and cross-stepping took place in big waves in a final that didn't disappoint!

LH Matt Gough's place on the RNRMSA Team was doubly assured after he took his second win of the day, with C/Sgt John Caulfield taking second, and PO Si Parry in third.

The annual Surfing Championships are open to serving members of the RN/RM and full-time reservists.

Though it is the primary method of selection for the RNRMSA Interservices Team, it is truly an 'open' competition, welcoming any surfer of any ability, and is a great social as well as sporting event.

The champs are one of many events and trips held by the RNRMSA. To find out more and to become a member visit [www.surfnavy.com](http://www.surfnavy.com) or search for the **Surf Navy** group on Facebook.

Report: NN AB Jess King  
Pictures: Lt Rich Spindley  
(Instagram @richsclimbs)





# BANDIES BID TO BE NO.1...



THE Royal Marines Band are bidding for the Christmas No.1 – helping to raise money for disabled musicians and honouring murdered MP David Amess. *Music is Magic* – performed in public for the first time in November at the famous Painted Hall in Greenwich's Old Royal Naval College – will be released just nine days before December 25.

The single is the first link-up between the Navy's No.1 musicians and charity The Music Man Project, with proceeds supporting children and adults with learning disabilities across the UK.

"We couldn't be prouder of this unique collaboration," said Lieutenant Colonel Jason Burcham, Commanding Officer Royal Marines Band Service and its Principal Director of Music.

"Each performer radiates warmth, energy, and positivity. They are also incredibly talented musicians. Rehearsing and recording this single was a wonderful experience.

"Everyone at the Royal Marines Band Service looks forward to creating magic this Christmas with The Music Man Project."

The single was rehearsed at naval base HMS Collingwood and mastered at the University of Surrey.

"The single celebrates the power of music to bring people together and transform lives, no matter their background," explained David Stanley, founder of The Music Man Project.



"I hope our song can inspire people to put their differences aside this holiday season. Whilst our aim is to get the single to Christmas number one, showing the world that magic can happen when we work together is more important. Creating unity is the main aim of our collaboration with The Royal Marines Band Service."

The single is dedicated to charity's late patron, Southend MP Sir David Amess, murdered in October last year.

*Music is Magic* will be released on December 16 to download and stream on all major digital music stores and streaming services.

# ... AS THEY LAP UP THE PLAUDITS IN THE ALPS



ROYAL Marines brought the sound of music to the Alps when they thanked a small German town for its ongoing support for the Senior Service.

The Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines Scotland staged a benefit concert in Bad Hindelang, a small community in the Allgäu region about 80 miles southwest of Munich.

For nearly a decade it's been home to the Naval Outdoor Centre Germany which occupies an Alpine four-star hotel, from where instructors and staff have provided AT opportunities to thousands of Royal Navy personnel and their families: rock climbing, kayaking, mountain biking and klettersteiging in the summer, skiing in winter, for people of all abilities.

The latest beneficiaries of the centre, setting and its activities were the Rosyth-based band who swapped the Forth for the Allgäu for a week-long character-building package of adventurous training.

The musicians spent their days scaling rock faces and navigating rapids on the rivers... and their evenings rehearsing ahead of the final night of trip when they staged a concert for locals in the village's community centre/exhibition hall.

They drew an audience more than 300 strong and they were "stunned"

– according to the local newspaper, Allgäuer Zeitung (Allgäu News) by the subsequent performance.

The band performed a mix of traditional RN and British military tunes, German crowdpleasers, music from the world of film and TV and Celtic folk tunes.

The German review of the concert described performances as "flawless" and "exceptional" as the Navy's premier musicians built up to a rousing finale of military favourites – "a magnificent firework display of symphonic brass music" which filled the venue with "thunderous applause".

As well as surprising and delighting the Bad Hindelang populace, the band concert raised €2,200 (£1,921) which will be split between the local mountain rescue team and The Royal Marines Charity.

As for the centre, it's preparing for the winter season. Initially opened as an adventurous training base for Royal Marines back in 2004, since 2009 the Naval Outdoor Centre has offered activities all year round across the Naval service, including family skiing over Christmas and Easter.

For details on courses, accommodation and availability, visit [www.nocg.co.uk](http://www.nocg.co.uk).

Pictures: Wolfgang Kleiner



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Reference code: NAVY



## Deaths

**Peter Rose POMEM(L).** Served from 1958 to 1982 in HMS St Vincent, Collingwood, Hardy, Minor three, Victorious, Brighton, Wilton, Droxford, Mercury, Ark Royal, Diomed, and Vernon. Also deployed to Libya and St Angelo. Died September 9.  
**CPO Writer John Duncan Shipley.** Served 1947 to 1969 on HMS St George, Ceres, Liverpool, FO Malta, HMS Fierce, Recruit, DO St Angelo, HMS Dainty, Cochran, Bulwark, Calliope, RNO Nassau and Safeguard leadership school. Member of the Algerine Society. Died October 18, aged 93.  
**Capt Geoffrey H Bown.** HMS Dreadnought, Neptune, Swiftsure, Defiance, FOSM, DUWE, Canada NDC. Died October 4, aged 88.  
**Capt RM Victor Courtice.** ATURM. HMS Jufair. Died October 21, aged 81.  
**Capt Michael E Southgate CBE.** HMS Osprey, Saker, Defence Attache Caracas, DGA(Navy), Controller of Aircraft. MOD PE. Died September 25, aged 89.  
**Sub Lt RNVR John P Harris KC DSC.** Died

September 28, aged 97.  
**Cdr John F Lake.** HMS Ajax, Excellent, London, Tamar, Weapons Dept (N). Died October 9, aged 89.  
**Capt RM Alastair G H Mackie.** RM Eastney, 41 and 43 Cdo RM, HMS Ursa. Died September 22, aged 84.  
**Lt Cdr Robin G Mills.** HMS Romola, MSL252. Died October 27, aged 96.  
**Lt Charles Dwarika.** 893 809 891 766 and 890 NAS. Died September 22.  
**Cdr Robert V Adamson.** 814 800 767 NAS. FONAC. Died October 16.  
**CPO Les Shaw.** Fleet Air Arm 1947 – 1970. Served at many HMS Air Stations (including HMS Goldcrest where Les was known as 'Mr Brawdy') and on HMS Campania (Operation Hurricane). Died October 8, aged 92.  
**George H. Holden (Scouse) ERA1.** Served from 1954-1976. HMS.Fisgard, Caledonia, Tartar, Puma, Ariadne, K.D. Malaya, Loch Insh and Shoulton. Died November 1, aged 88.

**Larry Farrell, AB.** Served 1956-1998. Victory, Raleigh, Ocean, Corunna, Drake, Sea Eagle, Bellerophon, Agincourt, Neptune, Excellent, Cunard, QE2. Died October 24, aged 87.2

### Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC

**Lt Cdr John E C Rideal.** HMS Chieftain. 827 810 813 NAS.  
**Lt Robin Fayars.** HMS London, Phoenix, Nubian, Rooke, Rapid, Safeguard, Barnard.  
**Cdr John R Ducker.** HMS Dolphin, St Angelo, Centurion, London, DFSD. Died October 10, aged 90.  
**Lt Ian A G Mortimer.** HMS Dolphin, Acheron, Artemis, Glamorgan, Fisgard, Eastbourne.  
**Cdr David J Barr.** HMS Kuttabul, Albion, Blake, Coventry, Fisgard, Apollo.  
**Ch Officer Elizabeth M Sunley.** RM Deal, HMS Victory (RNB), Tamar, Dolphin, Neptune, Dautless, RAN, RNC Greenwich, VCDS.

## Ask Jack

**HMS COLLINGWOOD:** On 18 June 1943, two bombs were dropped on accommodation huts here, killing 33 young sailors and injuring 38 more. We're planning a special commemoration of the 80th anniversary of this tragedy next year and we're keen to hear from anyone who has any information, photos etc about any of those young sailors. Please help us to remember the individual lives lost and affected.

PR and Events Team, F31 Atlantic Building, HMS Collingwood, Newgate Lane, Fareham, Hampshire PO14 1AS  
 email: navyoptrg-cwdcorpcms@mod.gov.uk

**Exercise Purple Warrior 1987:** I am currently researching this exercise which was unique in the annals of recent British military history being a huge tri-service, non-NATO affair, carried out in part of the UK mainland (SW Scotland) in order to test lessons learned during the Falklands War. It involved 20,000 troops, 39 ships and 40 fixed wing aircraft yet there is precious little information on it. I would appeal to any of your readers who were involved and would be willing to share their reminiscences to contact me at [mbritton2@aol.com](mailto:mbritton2@aol.com).

Mick Britton

**HMS Plym:** I would like to trace the River-class frigate's unofficial timber crest. She left Devonport reserve

in 1951/2 and deployed on Operation Hurricane in the Monte Bello Islands of Western Australia, where she was destroyed in the UK's first nuclear weapon test. The ship was stripped beforehand and I have discovered an auction house sold a badge said to be from the frigate (K271) in 2007 but I believe it to be unofficial, something confirmed to me by Chatham Dockyard Historical Society. **Geoff Robinson**  
 7 Mountfield, Borough Green, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 8HX

**David McIntyre.** I am trying to find details about my birth father, who joined the Royal Navy in 1939 and lived in Southsea. He died in 1976. Priscilla Breakspear.  
[Priscillabreakspear0@gmail.com](mailto:Priscillabreakspear0@gmail.com)

**FRADU:** I would like to contact the following former Fleet Requirements and Air Direction Unit Hunter pilots who mounted detachments at RAF Gibraltar from 1980 to 1983: Tommy Thompson, Godfrey Underwood, Simon Willoughby and Derek Morter.  
**Tony Fairburn, Sqn Ldr (Rtd)**  
[tony.fairbairn@btinternet.com](mailto:tony.fairbairn@btinternet.com)

**STEAD:** Colleagues and friends of the late Lt Edward Keith Stead RCNC are asked to please contact his sister **Isobel Stead**  
[isobelstead@gmail.com](mailto:isobelstead@gmail.com)

## Reunions

**HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association:** The 2023 reunion is confirmed at the Queen's Hotel, Southsea, from May 12 to 15, 2023. Contact Secretary Denis Ashkam at 07773651213 or email [askhamd3@gmail.com](mailto:askhamd3@gmail.com)

**HMS Carysfort:** A reunion will be held at the Orida Hotel in Maidstone from May 19 to 22, 2023, in a joint venture with HMS Cavalier. Open to all who served in the ship throughout her seven commissions (1945-1969) and their wives/partners. Contact SF Events Ltd at The Withyholts, Paul Mead, Stroud Glous. GL6 6PG Tel: 01452 813713 or email [associationmembers@sarahfletcherrevents.co.uk](mailto:associationmembers@sarahfletcherrevents.co.uk) Details at [www.hmscarysfort.co.uk](http://www.hmscarysfort.co.uk) or email [hmscarysfort@gmail.com](mailto:hmscarysfort@gmail.com) Registration will close on January 31.

**HMS Mohawk Association:** Our next reunion will take place at Grand Atlantic Hotel, Weston-Super-Mare from March 31 to April 3, 2023. For details call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or contact Bob Proud via e-mail [rob.proud@mypostoffice.co.uk](mailto:rob.proud@mypostoffice.co.uk)

## £50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the October edition of *Navy News* (right) was survey ship HMS Vidal, which claimed Rockall for the UK.

Sandra Queen, from Somerset, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (above) is a Parthian-class submarine which was sunk by a mine in December 1941.

1. What was her name and
  2. Whose son was she named after?
- Please complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY.

We will also accept emailed entries to [sbs@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:sbs@royalnavymail.mod.uk) with **December Mystery Ship** in the header.



Coupons and emails giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Entries must be received by January 12.

More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned. The winner will be announced in our February edition.

### MYSTERY PICTURE 33A

Name .....

Address .....

My answers: (1) .....

(2) .....

### NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to - The Editor, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email: [news@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:news@royalnavymail.mod.uk) or editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk
- If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
- Please send in reunions at least two months (preferably three) before the month of the event. There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.
- Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.
- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

## ROYAL NAVY NAVY NEWS

Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY

DEC 2022 No. 821: Founded 1954

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**Peter Rose POMEM(L).** Served from 1958 to 1982 in HMS St Vincent, Collingwood, Hardy, Minor three, Victorious, Brighton, Wilton, Droxford, Mercury, Ark Royal, Diomed, and Vernon. Also deployed to Libya and St Angelo. Died September 9.  
 Mistrala Harries  
[sbs@royalnavymail.mod.uk](mailto:sbs@royalnavymail.mod.uk)

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD

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### Talking Navy News

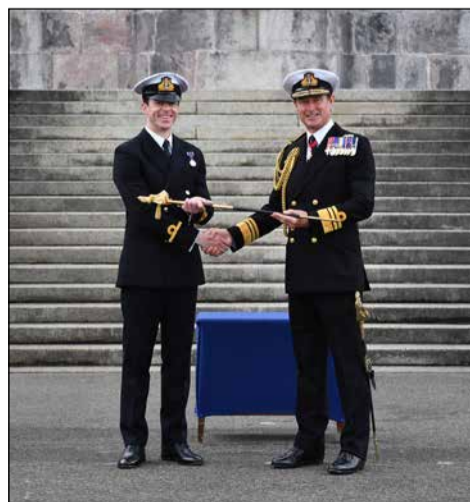
Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 07770 088388 and leave a message, or email [studio@patn.org.uk](mailto:studio@patn.org.uk) A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Ask Jack columns in next month's Noticeboard must be received by

DEC 2 2022



## New officers welcomed to the Reserves



SLt Matt Parsons receives the MacRobert Sword

THE Accelerated Officers Programme of 2022 culminated with a passing out parade at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, as 16 new officers commissioned into the Royal Naval Reserve and two Midshipmen of the Cayman Islands Coast Guard (CICG) returned to the Caribbean as trained Midshipmen.

Vice Admiral Andrew Burns, Fleet Commander, reviewed the parade, toned down in light of the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The culmination of nine weeks full-time training, the Parade at Britannia Royal Naval College was a proud day for the Midshipmen and their families, many of whom travelled to Dartmouth to watch them celebrate their success, including Commander Robert Scotland, the Commander of the Cayman Islands Coast Guard.

Giving the annual AOP an international flair for first time, two members of the newly-established CICG – Mid Christopher McTaggart and Mid Arianna Wheeler Seijas - completed the course alongside their Royal Naval Reserve counterparts.

Commander Robert Scotland, Commandant of the CICG, travelled from the Cayman Islands to Dartmouth to attend the Graduation Ceremony, and said: "I am delighted that two members of

the CICG were able to attend this year's AOP. The AOP provided an opportunity to learn the basics of seamanship, teamwork and leadership, all key skills for the CICG's future leaders, which provide a solid foundation on which we can begin to develop our Officer cadre.

"This year's AOP is just the beginning of what I'm sure will be a long and mutually beneficial partnership between the CICG and the Royal Navy. The friendships established this year at Britannia Royal Naval College between the Royal Naval Reserve Officers and our new Midshipmen will ultimately help to ensure that we, as a United Kingdom Overseas Territory, can continue to play an active role in helping to preserve the maritime safety and security of our Islands, while being ready to support our sister Overseas Territories during times of need."

SLt Matt Parsons from HMS President was awarded the MacRobert Sword for being Top Officer to complete Initial Naval Training throughout the year; AB John Dixon from HMS Ceres was awarded the MacRobert Bosun's Call for being Top Rating to complete Initial Naval Training throughout the year; Mid Rosie Spencer from HMS President was awarded the top student on AOP 22.



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