



NAVY NEWS

MAY 2022

Heat is on

A Royal Marine from Bravo Company, 40 Commando, on patrol in the jungle of Guam during joint exercises with the US Marines. (see page 17)

Inside: ■ Pacific sisters ■ Cold Response ■ NATO tasking ■ Perisher

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SISTERS



SOLOMON ISLANDS

PACIFIC sisters HMS Spey and HMS Tamar have completed their first major patrol of their new back yard, which has seen them lead a galvanised British effort in the Pacific Ocean.

Spey has been on a South Pacific island-hopping tour that has seen her support disaster-relief efforts in Tonga and deliver Covid vaccines to the Pitcairn Islands, before visits and operations around Fiji, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and eventually Papua New Guinea in March and April.

Tamar meanwhile led the UK involvement in Exercise Bersama Shield off the coast Malaysia, demonstrating Britain's ongoing commitment to the safety and security of the region in support of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) alongside a Royal Marines boarding team from 42 Commando and RAF personnel.

These missions are all part of the five-year Pacific deployment for Spey and Tamar, which started back in September 2021 and sees the pair deployed across vast areas, from the eastern shores of Africa to the west coast of the USA.

Spey upheld a tradition dating back to World War 1 on the latest stage of her island hop after spending a week in Fiji for a mix of military, civilian and ceremonial link-ups.

The crew say the welcome Fijians showed them has been the warmest Spey has yet received since leaving Portsmouth last September for the Indo-Pacific.

A military band lined the jetty in the capital Suva and the Fijian Navy greeted the ship with a ceremonial guard, in addition to the Fijian Police, Port Authorities, and members of the British High

Commission. That set the tone for every event attended or hosted, including a tour of the Fijian Navy Hydrographic Centre and a medal ceremony for members of the Fijian Military who trained at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and the Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth.

"It's really impressive that the Fijians managed over 250 days at sea conducting survey tasks last year; considering the small size of their Navy, they really do make the most of their personnel and equipment," said Lieutenant Mike Royle, Spey's Navigator.

And in Nakelo, just east of the capital, the sailors presented a fresh Union Flag, promptly raised during a traditional ceremony, celebrating the island's ties with the Royal Navy – and the village's in particular.

Back in 1915, cruiser HMS Encounter dropped anchor off Fiji as she searched the Pacific for German shipping in the opening months of the Great War.

The people of Nakelo provided assistance to the crew – and they thanked locals with a Union Flag, so it's become tradition for Royal Navy ships to replace the banner whenever they visit Fiji.

"It was great to see that this connection has been maintained; we were honoured to present a new Union Flag that is flown at the village and to take part in traditional Fijian ceremonies to learn about the wider culture," said Lieutenant Commander Bridget Macnae, HMS Spey's Executive Officer.

Spey sailed from Fiji with seven personnel from the Fijian police, navy, fishery agencies and customs deployed as the ship headed more than 2,400 miles west to Papua New Guinea via Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.

A Memorandum of Understanding was made between

VANUATU



MALAYSIA



PAPUA NEW GUINEA



S AT SEA

officials during Spey's visit to Suva, as the patrol ship completed a fruitful visit that concluded with patrols of coastal waters.

Fiji is made up of about 300 islands, only about 100 of which are inhabited, and its vast waters – some one million square miles of it – are policed by the Republic of Fiji Navy.

RFNS Savenaca, an Australian-built patrol boat, is the most recent addition to Fiji's fleet and met up with Spey to operate together and work on communications techniques used to control task groups.

The ships patrolled Fiji's coastal waters and completed complex exercises to increase their ability to work side by side.

Commanding Officer, Commander Mike Proudman, said: "It was great to be able to train alongside RFNS Savenaca, further building our strong ties with the Republic of Fiji Navy.

"The professionalism and capability that they demonstrated was impressive and we very much look forward to working together again in the future."

As she sailed west towards Papua New Guinea, Spey became the first Royal Navy ship in 46 years to visit the islands of Vanuatu.

It was January 29, 1976, when HMS Plymouth – a Rothesay-class frigate which was later involved in the Falklands War – visited the archipelago, which lies 1,090 miles east of Australia.

Spey ended that run and called in at Port Vila for a Covid-safe visit before work with patrol boat RVS Takuare in the vicinity of the capital and main trade hub before carrying out operations in the islands' waters to protect fisheries.

The island hopping continued to the Solomon Islands, passing through territorial waters and close to capital, Honiara, before carry out maritime surveillance and fishery protection work.

The patrol ship arrived in Papua New Guinea on 9 April to strengthen ties and work with the local community.

She held a church service alongside the British High

Commission and local government officials and later held a demonstration of the ship's capabilities.

Following time alongside, Spey will patrol Papua New Guinea's waters to help stop illegal fishing and forge closer bonds with the Forum Fisheries Agency, which coordinates the conservation of fish in the Pacific.

Tamar meanwhile was on Exercise Bersama Shield, which is the first of two exercises in 2022; in the autumn, Singapore will host Exercise Suman Protector.

During Bersama Shield, a joint naval task group trained closely together, working on surface and anti-air warfare techniques as well as live firing drills.

Tamar worked closely with Singapore's RSS Valour and Malaysia's KD Selangor, while Malaysian fast attack craft played the role of enemy during training to defend against attacks.

"The exercise has been a fantastic opportunity for Tamar to work with our FPDA partner navies, strengthening our relationships and building tactical integration between forces," said Tamar's Executive Officer Lieutenant Commander Matthew Millyard.

Tamar was joined by several RAF personnel who supported the aerial element of the exercise by providing logistics, intelligence, communications and flight operations expertise.

"I have had great opportunities to travel to some amazing places with the RAF Reserves already, and this is definitely up there with the best of them," said Flight Lieutenant Andrew Wolfe of Glasgow-based 602 Squadron.

"It was really rewarding to operate with nations I had not previously worked with, in a challenging exercise scenario, to provide logistics support to the Exercise. The issues faced by each nation were broadly similar, but the way in which they are tackled varied, and I learnt a lot from that."

A Royal Marines boarding team from 42 Commando were also deployed to work closely with counterparts from Singapore and Malaysia. Together they shared knowledge and expertise and laid plans for future boarding exercises and operations together countering illicit activity in the region.

Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Queen Elizabeth	HMS Magpie
HMS Portland	Project Wilton
HMS Argyll	814 NAS
HMS Tyne	815 NAS
HMS Mersey	824 NAS
HMS Severn	825 NAS



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



GLOBAL | MODERN | READY

ROYAL Marines joined their US counterparts for intensive jungle exercises on the Pacific island of Guam (see pages 1 and 17). Bravo Company from 40 Commando, alongside a detachment from 47 Commando and 29 Commando, met up with the USMC to work on their jungle skills.

Meanwhile marines from 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group took part in a raid from a Royal Navy submarine during Exercise Cold Response (see pages 20-21). The multinational exercise also saw 40 Commando's Charlie Company successfully 'attack' a fort held by 'enemy' systems.

HMS Prince Wales, which is the NATO command ship for Cold Response, also ventured deep inside the Arctic Circle for a rare visit to the Norwegian volcanic island of Jan Mayen, (see page 19).

Also flying the NATO flag is Type 45 destroyer HMS Diamond (see page 5) as she carried out air-defence training and patrols in the eastern Med as part of Standing NATO Maritime Group 2.

Pacific sisters HMS Spey and HMS Tamar have completed their first major patrol of their new back yard, which has seen them lead a galvanised British effort in the Pacific Ocean (see pages 2-3).

Fliers from 824 NAS linked up with an Astute-class submarine off the Scottish coast for the gruelling Perisher – the Submarine Command Course – (see page 9).

Down to the south coast of the UK and HMS Somerset headed out to sea for the first time in nearly four years following her refit (see page 7). The Type 23 frigate has a busy programme ahead to fully test the ship and her crew.

It was a case of farewell to the old and welcome to the new (see page 13) as the RN decommissioned patrol boats HMS Sabre and Scimitar. The pair have spent nearly 30 years in service, serving in Northern Ireland in their early career and as guard ships with the Gibraltar Squadron from 2003 to late 2020. Replacing them in Gib are HMS Cutlass and HMS Dagger, with the latter joining her sister on the Rock with the RN Gibraltar Squadron.

The life of one of the Royal Navy's stalwart warships symbolically ended as the bell from HMS Monmouth was donated to the people of her namesake town (see page 16). The frigate was decommissioned last summer and is currently awaiting her fate in Portsmouth Harbour.

Veteran minehunter HMS Cattistock marked her 40th anniversary in refit in Portsmouth (see page 6), part of a programme to keep the Hunt-class in service until the 2030s.

Drone experts from RNAS Culdrose have given HMS Protector 'eyes in the sky' to help the Antarctic research ship punch through polar ice (see page 11). Meanwhile the Royal Navy's drone experts 700X NAS welcomed industry experts to Culdrose to test two crewless aircraft (see page 11).

Sailors can now have more realistic training in chemical and radiation emergency situations thanks to a £600,000 investment (see pages 14-15). The Royal Navy's Protection Training Unit has spent three years planning and updating their facility in Portsmouth which teaches sailors in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence.

The Royal Navy's flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth made a four-day visit to Liverpool (see page 6) to forge closer ties between the Senior Service and the city.

Chris Terrill, anthropologist, filmmaker and author, has been making films and writing books about the Royal Navy and Royal Marines for over 25 years and has no plans to stop anytime soon. He explains to Navy News how it all started and describes his enduring 12-year love affair with HMS Queen Elizabeth (see page 27)

Memorial services were held in the Falklands and aboard HMS Forth for the six personnel who died when landing craft Foxtrot 4 was bombed 40 years ago (see page 16). Service personnel were joined by veterans and members of the Falkland Islands community in remembering the 'forgotten victim' of the 1982 conflict.

And in the UK, Royal Navy sailors and BAE Systems apprentices welcomed Falkland veterans to Glasgow to view the first Type 26 frigate, HMS Glasgow, which is currently under construction (see page 31). Many of the visiting veterans were from the HMS Glasgow Association.

For the first time in its 950-year history, a Royal Marine will take charge of London's most famous fortress (see page 16). From August 1, General Sir Gordon Messenger will become Constable of the Tower of London.

Finally, the Royal Navy's Catering Services team beat off competition from the Army and RAF to be crowned champions at Exercise Joint Caterer – for the first time in eight years (see page 23).

Former First Sea Lord sees a new generation of naval leaders pass out at BRNC and witnesses

Quite the transformation

BRITAIN'S most senior military figure welcomed more than 150 future leaders to the Royal Navy as they passed out from Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth.

Chief of the Defence Staff Admiral Sir Tony Radakin took the salute of the Easter Passing-Out Parade at the spiritual home of the Royal Navy's officer corps – 32 years after he graduated on the same parade ground.

The parade marked the end of initial training for 156 new Royal Navy Officers – including nearly three dozen promoted from the ranks as Senior Upper Yardmen and Warrant Officers – and 12 new officers for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, whose ships are crucial to supporting RN operations around the world.

In addition, five International Cadets from four countries – Bahrain, Qatar, Fiji and Ukraine – also completed their training.

In his passing-out speech to cadets, families and dignitaries, Admiral Radakin told the successful Ukrainian officer: "We are full of admiration for your nation's heroic struggle. The values you are defending – sovereignty, democracy, self-determination, human rights – are universal.

"The United Kingdom was the first European country to recognise your independence in 1991 and our commitment to your continued liberty has not, and will not, waiver."

The admiral was head of the Royal Navy as First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff from June 2019 until November 2021 when he took up the role of Chief of Defence Staff – the first sailor to hold the post in nearly two decades.

To those beginning their careers in the Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Admiral Radakin said: "Now you stand ready. Ready to wear this uniform. Ready to lead our Navy into the future. Ready to serve your country come what may.

"It's quite the transformation. And quite the commitment. Your families and friends should be proud. And they can be prouder still. Because this is just the start of your journey."

Officer Cadet Freddie Hoare, aged 23, from Cheshire is set for an engineering career in the Royal Navy having completed his 29 weeks at Dartmouth.

"The best part of training for me was Initial Sea Training," said Freddie, who's off to HMS Collingwood in Fareham next to begin his dedicated career training as a weapon engineering officer in submarines.

"The ability to work within the Fleet and seeing how our ships operate was both useful and enjoyable. I was exceptionally lucky to go aboard HMS Albion and HMS



Prince of Wales, giving me a wide view of the operational ability of the Royal Navy.

"My proudest moment must be passing the leadership exercise, it was a great morale boost and something I will remember for years to come."

Also passing out was 32-year-old Officer Cadet Nathan Chape from Blackpool, a trainee logistics officer.

"My proudest moment was passing the final exercise – it was then that it hit home that I was going to be an officer in the Royal Navy," he said.

"Having worked so hard for so long, the feeling of passing that last test and crossing that final hurdle was incredible.

"I wanted to go and serve at sea. During the sea training phase, it confirmed for me that sea time was exactly what I wanted as well as the opportunities to visit and see many different places. There are no careers like this one, in the Royal Navy, there is an exciting time ahead for me."

It was also the final passing out parade for Britannia's Commanding Officer, Captain Roger Readwin, who's been in charge of the world-renowned naval establishment for the past two and a half years.

"Britannia Royal Naval College has stood here for 116 years and when these young men and women go through the college's door and take their final rite of passage, they are



following the incredible generations who have gone before them," he said.

"The Fleet in which they will serve has modernised, it is changing, it is incredibly busy, so this is an exciting time for them to be joining the Royal Navy."

Pictures: Craig Keating, BRNC



HMS Diamond in the Mediterranean
Picture: LPhot Rory Arnold

NATO DUTIES FOR DIAMOND

DESTROYER HMS Diamond has carried out air-defence training and patrols in the eastern Mediterranean after joining a NATO task group.

The Portsmouth-based ship is currently part of Standing NATO Maritime Group 2, which provides security to and is ready to respond to threats in the region.

She has been working alongside ships and personnel from allies such as Italy, Spain, Turkey, Canada, Romania and Greece in her primary role as an air-defence destroyer.

Diamond sailed from Portsmouth last month and after enduring heavy seas in the Bay of Biscay, entered the Mediterranean Sea where she continued east through the Straits of Messina (between mainland Italy and Sicily).

After a quick port stop in Augusta, she joined up the task group's other units which sit under the command of Admiral Mauro Panebianco on flagship ITS Carlo Margottini.

Diamond's ship's company have been put through their paces since leaving the UK, continuously training across all aspects of life at

sea, including firefighting and damage control, first aid and machinery drills.

Her sailors have also practised working in a task group with replenishment-at-sea (RAS), close manoeuvring, helicopter operations and other aspects of war fighting.

The ship's embarked Wildcat from 815 Squadron, based at RNAS Yeovilton, has also been kept busy with their aircrew and maintenance deck



I am extremely proud of my team on board HMS Diamond

team completing a host of day and night flying serials.

The helicopter also adds extra fire power to Diamond's weaponry and the wider task group with the addition of Martlet lightweight missiles.

HMS Diamond's Commanding Officer, Commander Peter Barfoot, said: "I am extremely

proud of my team on board HMS Diamond for rising to the challenge when confronted by what has been a very short notice change to the ships programme, they have really stepped up to the mark.

"The transition from a scheduled maintenance period, post our extended 'out of area' operations as part of the UK's Carrier Strike Group (CSG21) deployment last year, to deploy on operations has been achieved in record time.

"Our integration as part of the NATO task group in the eastern Mediterranean has enhanced overall air defence capability, while supporting the NATO Alliance and allies to bolster maritime operations."

HMS Diamond returned to the UK in December last year after joining HMS Queen Elizabeth and the UK's Carrier Strike Group on a seven-month operational deployment.



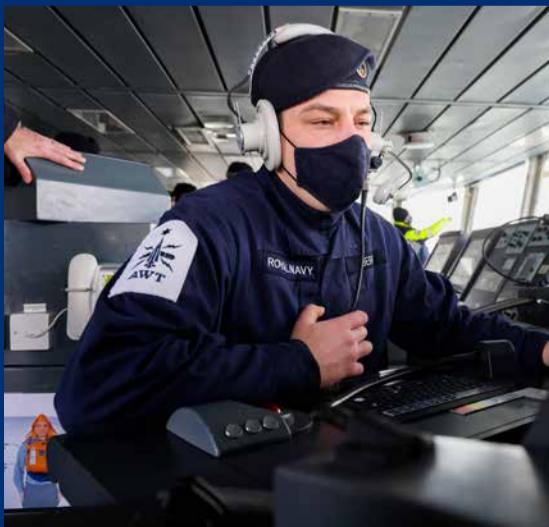
KEEP UP WITH THE SHIP

Follow HMS Diamond on Twitter at @hmsdiamond and the Royal Navy at @RoyalNavy



(Above): A sailor on HMS Diamond raises the NATO flag; (Below, left to right): A sailor on the destroyer's bridge; a Greek F-4E Phantom II Fighter jet during training; ship's company conduct a RAS; Diamond sails with NATO allies.

Pictures: LPhot Rory Arnold and Lt Cdr S Roster





Queen of the night

BIG ship. Big city. Big impression.

Captured on drone after nightfall on a perfect late winter's evening, the nation's flagship is stunningly lit – as is the neighbouring Liver Building – on the carrier's sojourn on the Mersey.

After a short visit to the newly-commissioned munitions jetty at Glen Mallan on Loch Long, HMS Queen Elizabeth spent four days on Merseyside's plum berth: the cruise liner terminal.

It's her sister ship Prince of Wales which enjoys an affiliation with Liverpool – and was overwhelmed by the response from Merseysiders.

Although her older sister's visit was a private affair (as private as parking a 65,000-tonne aircraft

carrier slap bang on the Liverpool waterfront can be), there was a large crowd waiting to watch tugs assist her berth.

Once the gangways were across, the ship's company began their engagement and bonding work with Liverpool's populace.

There was a rugby match against Birkenhead side Old Parkonians, cultural visits to civic museums and the city's historic waterfront.

Local youth groups and veterans were given tours of the bridge, operations room, flight deck and hangar on board the ship while alongside.

Visitors also came from across the north, with students from Hopwood Hall in Rochdale and Leeds City

College given the opportunity to learn about the variety of roles across the navy, while cadets from the Combined Cadet Forces were also shown around by sailors and officers under training.

"It is fantastic for the Fleet Flagship to be able to visit Liverpool – a city and region which were instrumental in the construction of both Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales," said Captain Ian Feasey, Queen Elizabeth's Commanding

"I hope that we have built upon the strong relationships forged by our sister ship during her visit in 2020 and that our visit goes some way to demonstrate to the people of Liverpool and Merseyside the importance the Royal Navy puts

on the bond between the Service and a city with such rich maritime heritage."

Commander Neil Twigg, Queen Elizabeth's 'wings', is a former University of Liverpool student.

He said: "I started my Royal Navy career as a midshipman in the Liverpool University Royal Navy Unit (URNU) back in 1995, sailing up and down the Mersey in HMS Charger.

"It feels very fitting to now return to a city for which I have such fond memories, as the Commander Air of the fleet flagship, co-ordinating flying operations."

Sub Lieutenant Ethan Starmer-Jones, a Young Officer under training, added: "My dad grew up in the suburbs of Liverpool, in Speke.

"It has been such a privilege to conduct training on the Fleet Flagship and then visit Liverpool where my uncles and aunts can come and see where I have been living and working for the last eight weeks.

"Showing Combined Cadet Forces cadets and students around the ship makes me proud of the career I have chosen and I hope that at least some of them might feel that a career in the Royal Navy is something they may also pursue and enjoy as much as me."

After a short spell back at sea, the carrier returned home to Portsmouth in time for Easter leave.

Flagship passion, see page 27
Picture: Stratus Imagery Limited/
www.stratusimagery.co.uk

Dock, 'stock and 40 smoking candles...

LIFE doesn't begin at 40 for HMS Cattistock... but life extension does.

The veteran minehunter marked the milestone in refit in Portsmouth – work which will take her to almost 50 years' service under the White Ensign.

Whereas few conventional RN ships last beyond 25-30 years, in theory the plastic-hulled Hunts could go on for decades – HMS Ledbury (in refit and the oldest operational warship) is 41 as is decommissioned HMS Brecon (used for training at HMS Raleigh) – as long as the machinery and systems within the hull is maintained.

Which is exactly what is taking place now, as the ship undergoes a refit period in dry dock in Portsmouth – part of a programme to keep the class in service until into the 2030s... and upwards of 50 years' service.

Work includes structural maintenance, a new modernised accommodation space and capability upgrades to improve her core ability to find and destroy sea mines.

Cattistock is expected to back in operational service early next year, re-joining the flotilla of Hunts under the banner of Portsmouth's 2nd Mine Countermeasures Squadron and



Surface Flotilla's Commodore Tim Neild presents Cattistock's Lieutenant Commander Daniel Lee with a memento of the ship's outstanding 40-year career

continue her work in developing and operating the latest mine hunting equipment.

Her current Crew, MCM2 Crew 6, celebrated the milestone in the refit complex with an event supported by BAE Systems and the RNRMC, including presentation of a framed photograph of the ship taken shortly after construction,

cake (naturally) and specially-commissioned 'HMS Cattistock ale' from Langdon Brewery.

Launched at the now-gone Vosper Thornycroft yard in Woolston in 1981 and commissioned the following March in Rosyth – her home until being transferred to Portsmouth – Cattistock is the third ship in her class... and the third warship

to bear the name of the Dorset hunt.

She is affiliated to Frome Valley Parish and Poole Borough Councils alongside a host of small establishments and organisations in the Cattistock area.

Her career over the last 40 years has been impressive and varied: battle honours for her action in the first Gulf War as part of patrol group X-Ray alongside her sisters Hurworth and Atherstone; numerous deployments with NATO's two mine warfare task groups in the Baltic/Northern Europe and Mediterranean; survived a major engine room fire in 1997 which put her out of action for 14 months; and, like the rest of the mine countermeasures flotilla, an extended spell in Bahrain supporting ongoing operations in the Gulf since 2007.

"It is an honour to celebrate Cattistock's achievements while marking this impressive milestone," said Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Daniel Lee.

"The hull may be aging, the equipment we operate in and from these ships is some of the newest, most capable in the Royal Navy and ensures we maintain our position as the best mine hunting force in the world."



Banshee is back

BANSHEES will howl into the second half of this decade as the Royal Navy continues its expanding use of robot aircraft.

Defence firm QinetiQ has been given £6m to help HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales train for real-world scenarios over the next four years through the use of Banshee Jet80 target drones.

The Banshees emulate cruise missiles and enemy fast jets which may be faced on mission.

They will also be used to develop technology and tactics when it comes to the broader use of drone systems in a variety of fields: intelligence gathering, surveillance, jamming, or acting as decoys.

Looking like a mini jet fighter, capable of reaching speeds of 400kts (460mph) and either skim the waves or reach altitudes up to 25,000ft, the Banshee was trialled aboard HMS Prince of Wales last year (pictured above).

It is hard to detect on radar and possesses many of the characteristics of an incoming missile, making it a realistic adversary for sailors to train in countering aerial threats.

The Banshee trials are part of wider trials and exercises involving drones and robot systems as the Fleet Air Arm looks to develop its Future Maritime Aviation Force – a mix of crewed and uncrewed systems, operating side-by-side on carrier flight decks from 2030.

HMS Somerset heads out to sea for the first time in nearly four years following her refit.

After more than one million hours of work by skilled engineers, technicians and shipwrights, the warship left Plymouth as the latest ship in her 12-strong class to complete a massive overhaul – known as LIFEX (life extension).

She has undergone maintenance, received updates and structural improvements to her hull and living spaces, and enhanced sensors and weapon systems led by the latest Sea Ceptor air defence missile system, replacing the obsolete Sea Wolf.

Additional upgrades to key electronic equipment, including communications, navigation and computer systems have been undertaken, ensuring the ship can operate against the latest threats well into the next decade.

Diesel generators have been replaced and the remainder of the propulsion system received an enhanced clean. Other key ancillary systems have been overhauled and updated.

The work allows these workhorses of the Fleet – designed in the 1980s and originally intended to serve for around 18 years – to remain in

the vanguard of naval warfare until their successor Type 26 and 31 frigates begin entering service later this decade and into the mid-2030s.

“This is HMS Somerset’s first time at sea under her own

power since a visit to Hamburg back in the spring of 2018,” said Commander Dave Mason, HMS Somerset’s Commanding Officer. “With a full complement of 176 sailors – many of whom are sailing today for the first time in their careers – everyone is looking forward to putting the ship through her paces.

“HMS Somerset has a busy programme ahead to fully test the ship and her crew over the coming weeks and months.”

Among the ‘first timers’ are communications specialists, Weapons Engineering Technicians Alys Wightman and Lucy Evans.

“Joining HMS Somerset gave me unique opportunities,” said Alys. “It’s enabled me to experience first-hand what it’s like to bring a ship out of refit, which has been extremely rewarding.”

Lucy added: “I have been a member of HMS Somerset since May 2021 supporting the rest of the ship’s company to get the ship to the required standard to sail. I’m really looking forward to sailing as this will be my first time at sea with the

Royal Navy.”

She and her 175 shipmates will spend the next few weeks off the South Coast conducting trials and training.

The trials bring the curtain down on work which began in the frigate complex in Devonport in November 2018 involving sailors, MOD personnel and industrial partners Babcock.

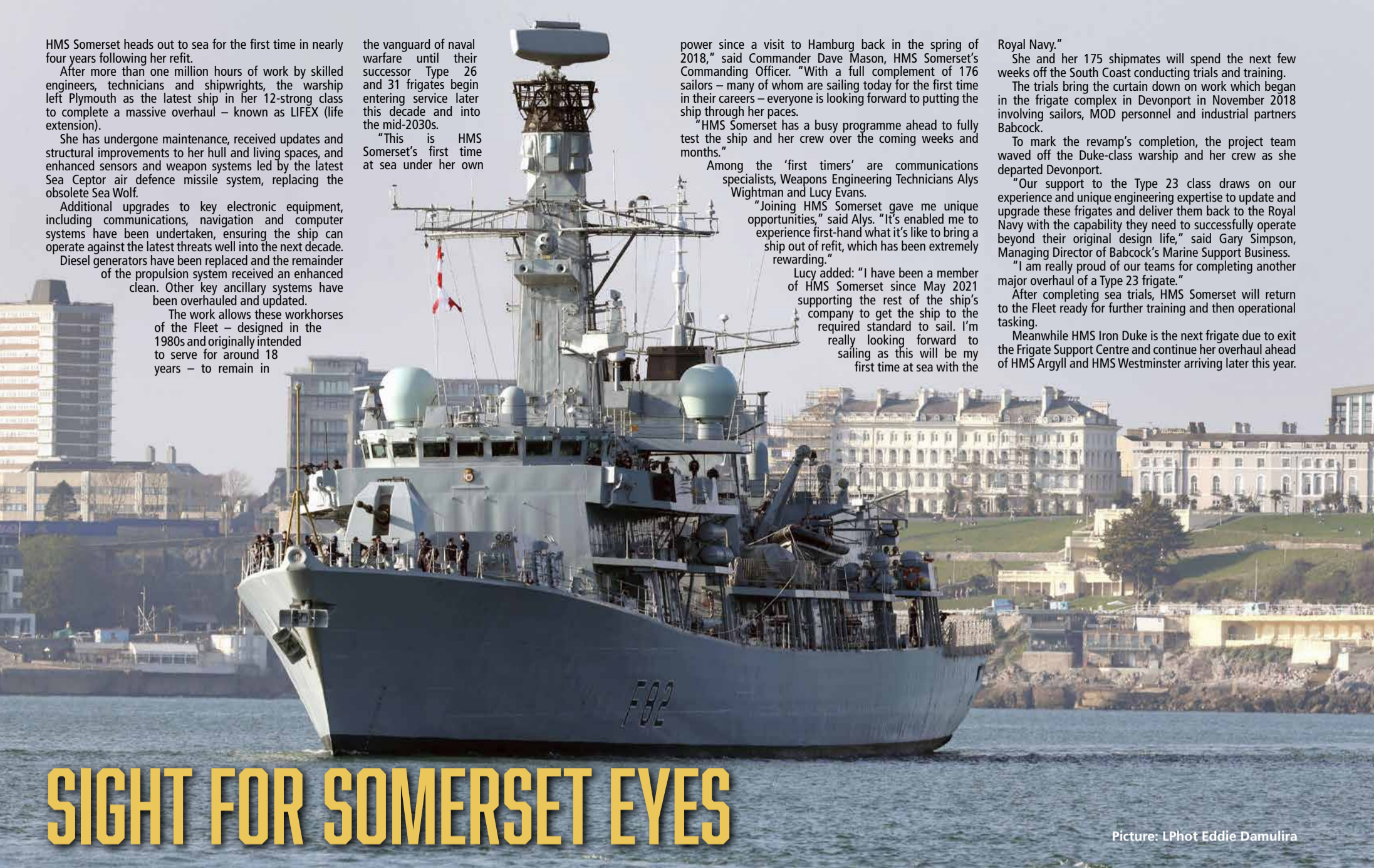
To mark the revamp’s completion, the project team waved off the Duke-class warship and her crew as she departed Devonport.

“Our support to the Type 23 class draws on our experience and unique engineering expertise to update and upgrade these frigates and deliver them back to the Royal Navy with the capability they need to successfully operate beyond their original design life,” said Gary Simpson, Managing Director of Babcock’s Marine Support Business.

“I am really proud of our teams for completing another major overhaul of a Type 23 frigate.”

After completing sea trials, HMS Somerset will return to the Fleet ready for further training and then operational tasking.

Meanwhile HMS Iron Duke is the next frigate due to exit the Frigate Support Centre and continue her overhaul ahead of HMS Argyll and HMS Westminster arriving later this year.



SIGHT FOR SOMERSET EYES

Picture: LPhot Eddie Damulira

In a time of pension transition and complexity, there is one way to avoid confusion.

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The implementation of the McCloud Remedy affecting all those serving on or before 31st March 2012 and on or after 1st April 2015 (including service leavers), will give you the choice between your legacy scheme pension entitlement and AFPS15 for the Remedy period.

Additionally, from this April, everyone still serving on AFPS 75 and 05 will be transferred to AFPS 15, involving further calculation complexity.

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This – personnel transfer between a helicopter and submarine – demands the real thing. Real submarine. Real helicopter. Real crews. Real danger. Real skill.

This is a manoeuvre rarely practised – and carried out for real even less frequently: winching an aircrewman from a helicopter to the fin of a Royal Navy submarine.

It's the fastest way to get someone on or off a boat at sea – typically casualties – although space is at a premium.

Thankfully, on an Astute-class boat the fin isn't cluttered with masts

and periscopes like its predecessors; they're all retractable.

That reduces snag hazards, but still there's little space for the aircrewman or submariners to work with.

It's a serial both submarine and aircrew must successfully complete to earn their operational spurs.

Aboard the A-boat: prospective submarine commanders undertaking the intense – and infamous – Perisher, the Submarine Command Course.

In the Merlin, trainee aircrew of 824 Naval Air Squadron approaching the end of their conversion course.

For both, live operations off the Scottish coast are the culmination of months of training.

The 824 fliers decamped from their home at RNAS Culdrose to the HMS Gannet at Prestwick, while the

submarine slipped away from its base at Faslane.

Lined up for both: the eternal game of cat and mouse as the prospective boat skippers demonstrated what they had learned in the classroom/simulator on Perisher.

Rooted in Silent Service history, for 105 years it has determined whether a person has the mettle to command a Royal Navy submarine – or one of our allies' boats, for exchange officers from other navies frequently join Brits on the course.

Successful candidates go on to become executive officers, the next step towards competing for command of their own boat.

While the Perisher students attempted to evade detection and carry out a series of missions, they were hunted by the helicopters

above, armed with powerful dipping-sonar and sonobuoys, peppering Scottish waters and listening for the tell-tale sounds of a boat moving through the depths.

"We took 12 trainees and two aircraft from our base at RNAS Culdrose to HMS Gannet at Prestwick for a week of live anti-submarine warfare exercises," explained Commander James Taylor, Commanding Officer of the Merlin training unit 824 Naval Air Squadron.

"For the trainees, this is the culmination of a long and demanding flying training pipeline. Having learnt how to fly and safely operate the aircraft as individuals, the detachment made them work together as a crew, to fight the Merlin Mk2 against live submarines.

"They've spent countless hours in the simulators and flying training

sorties, but this short, sharp period has taken their experience to a new level.

"Operating in an unpredictable environment forces them to deal with a myriad of real-world challenges – not least the changeable Scottish weather – having to constantly think on their feet and adapt their plans.

"None of our trainees had worked with a real submarine before. To pit themselves against the finest in the Submarine Service pushes them to become the Royal Navy's elite sub-hunters."

Successful aircrew will qualify for service with Culdrose's front-line Merlin squadrons, either protecting the UK's submarines (814 NAS) or defending the Royal Navy's aircraft carriers from underwater (820 NAS).

Picture: 824 NAS

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DRONES IN THE SNOW



DRONE experts from Culdrose have given the Royal Navy's Antarctic research ship 'eyes in the sky' to help HMS Protector punch through the polar ice.

Seventeen of the icebreaker's crew are now qualified in operating drones from the deck of the ship, which has just completed her stint around the frozen continent for this season.

It's Protector's task to update seafaring charts of Antarctic waters, deliver supplies and personnel to remote research stations, monitor wildlife and the environment and uphold the UK's long-standing responsibilities to this unique part of the world.

That mission, even at the height of the austral summer, often takes her through ice.

Although the ship has an extensive flight deck, she doesn't have a hangar and so deploys to polar regions without any air support – until the advent of drones.

700X's Petty Officer John Simpole and Marine Tom Salt spent six weeks on board Protector training crew in the use of 'off-the-shelf' drones.

The more adventurous sailors got to grips with Evolve Dynamics' Sky Mantis. It can cope with heavy rain and winds of up to 40kts/45mph, conducting flights lasting 60 minutes.

Other crew learned to operate smaller radio-controlled craft – all to the benefit of the ship's day-to-day operations in polar regions.

"A drone provides Protector with an additional tool to safely assess ice conditions around the vessel," explained Lieutenant Retallick, the ship's First Lieutenant.

"They can be used to identify areas of ice concentration and 'leads' – gaps – in the ice which help the ship to navigate through complex ice-infested waters."

The Sky Mantis has been used more widely; it's been flown from Protector to make assessments of nearby historic monuments, shoreline conditions for boat access and even conduct wildlife surveys. By using its 30x optical zoom camera, it can do so at a safe distance to ensure wildlife remains undisturbed.

To qualify as drone pilots, crew had to undergo several lessons – regulations,

meteorology and the use of aviation charts – and a theory exam, before conducting several live sorties during which were assessed.

"In spite of the sometimes-challenging environmental conditions and having to work around the ship's programme, we achieved everything we set out to do, as well as being able to train up extra personnel," said PO Simpole.

700X is the Royal Navy's dedicated drone squadron, working with the latest technologies, developing tactics and operational uses for small, remote-controlled aircraft, such as the Puma which has been used regularly around the globe over the past few years for reconnaissance and surveillance.

Pictures: LPhot Belinda Alker

CREWLESS AIRCRAFT IMPRESS IN LATEST TRIALS

THE Royal Navy has pushed two different drones to their limits to show how they could be used on front-line operations.

The navy's drone experts 700X Naval Air Squadron welcomed industry partners to their home base of RNAS Culdrose to test the two crewless aircraft.

It is the second time the drones have been trialled with initial testing last year the first step of showing how they could be utilised on operations.

Now, a second, more intense series of trials have taken place and both the Malloy Aeronautics T-600 quadcopter and Windracers Autonomous Systems' Ultra proved their abilities to carry heavy payloads of 100kg over long distance and more than 250kg over a shorter distance.

The Heavy

It aims to encourage industry partners to see what equipment they have which could be adapted for use by the Royal Navy to deliver supplies such as humanitarian stores, first aid, ammunition and spare parts to the front-line. Both Malloy and Windracers were given a £300,000 contract to further develop their drones.

And the aircraft impressed in the most recent trials which saw the Malloy T-600 fly with a 250kg payload while the fixed-wing Windracers Ultra dropped a 100kg payload 1,000km away to a platform replicating a Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carrier flight deck.

It was able to slow on approach and drop its package with pinpoint accuracy.

Brigadier Dan Cheesman, Royal Navy Chief Technology Officer, said: "The Heavy Lift Challenge is

surpassing all our expectations.

"This is a genuine, game-changing collaboration between the Royal Navy, DE&S' Future Capability Group and industry and has, so far, produced quite spectacular results – all inside the same commercial framework we are able to iterate as one-team.

"We are not there quite yet, but in perhaps as little as two months' time, we will have the final 'show don't tell' evidence

we need to commence scaling to the hands of the warfighter at unprecedented pace."

The Royal Navy Heavy Lift Challenge aims to increase the number of uncrewed aircraft systems available on the market, at a rapid pace.

This will enable the navy and DE&S to explore, understand, develop, and acquire autonomous systems to deliver heavy payloads in a range of environments.



Lift Challenge is a collaboration between 700X, the navy's Office of the Chief Technology Officer and Defence Equipment and Support's (DE&S) Future Capability Group.

Pictures: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum; DE&S



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Bittersweet farewell to two trusty servants



GOODBYE: The ship's company of both boats gather for a decommissioning ceremony in Portsmouth
Pictures by: LPhot Kevin Walton



BITTERSWEET: Lieutenant Chris Cotterill and Lieutenant Joshua Tyrie are the last Commanding Officers of Sabre and Scimitar respectively

THE Royal Navy has decommissioned patrol boats HMS Sabre and HMS Scimitar in a ceremony at Portsmouth Naval Base.

The pair have spent nearly 30 years in service, serving in Northern Ireland in their early career and as guard ships with the Gibraltar Squadron from 2003 to late 2020.

They returned to the UK two years ago from Gibraltar, with HMS Dasher and HMS Pursuer taking over duties around the Rock temporarily while two modern £5m boats, HMS Cutlass and HMS Dagger, worked towards full operations.

Since being back in home waters, Sabre and Scimitar have been used to give sailors in training valuable sea time as they learn essential naval skills that will provide a foundation for their careers.

The last sailors to serve on Sabre and Scimitar gathered at the base for the decommissioning

ceremony attended by affiliates and Royal Navy seniors. Commanding officer of Scimitar, Lieutenant Joshua Tyrie, said: "It's been an honour to be the last commanding officer of Scimitar. It's a bittersweet moment saying goodbye to the ship."

"Today is a sad day, we've put a lot of time and work into maintaining these ships making sure we can deliver on operations."

"It's now sadly time to say goodbye and it's the right time to do so but it tugs on the heartstrings, especially with the good work the ship's company has put in to keep them going over such a long career."

He added: "My highlight of my command was driving her under Tower Bridge in London and sail past HMS Belfast." Both HMS Sabre and Scimitar started off their service in the Royal Navy under different names.

Scimitar was known as Grey Fox while Sabre was known as Grey Wolf during their stint on operations in

Northern Ireland. They served as Royal Marines' patrol crafts having joined the Fleet in 1993.

Then almost a decade later, the pair were renamed and sent to Gibraltar, guarding the Rock's waters across 17 years.

Lieutenant Chris Cotterill, commanding officer of Sabre, said: "I feel somewhat emotion about being the last commanding officer of HMS Sabre based on the fact she's been in the water since before I was even born. There's a lot of history there."

"It means a lot for us to give her a proper send off today. We've been working hard these last weeks and months for the Coastal Forces Squadron, but making sure Sabre gets a proper send-off is very close to our hearts."

He added: "One of my highlights of my time with Sabre was last December escorting HMS Queen Elizabeth back in after her global deployment."

The first replacement, HMS Cutlass, was recently handed over to the Gibraltar Squadron after three months of trials ahead of being declared fully operational in this spring, while the second, HMS Dagger, is due to arrive later this year.

Together, they will be long-term replacements for Sabre and Scimitar and will be the backbone of the squadron, replacing P2000s Dasher and Pursuer.

With a top speed of 40 knots, the new boats – built by Merseyside-based Marine Specialised Technology – are twice as fast as the P2000s, smaller, nimbler and equipped with the latest optical and infra-red systems, enabling crew to identify and track potential threats at range.

And unlike Dasher and Pursuer – both nearly 35 years old – many of the systems on board are autonomous, helping the crew in her operation, maintenance and response to any unforeseen incidents.

Dagger sharpened for patrol work around Gibraltar

ROYAL Navy Gibraltar Squadron have taken delivery of their second new £5m patrol boat.

HMS Cutlass joins HMS Dagger for their role of 'guardians of the Rock', replacing HMS Sabre and Scimitar, which operated in Gibraltar's waters for nearly two decades.

Delivered by Marine Specialised Technology, Dagger and Cutlass will be based in HM Naval Base Gibraltar and used to patrol British Gibraltar Territorial Waters, support British exercises and operations in the area and will keep close watch over Gibraltar's shores.

Dagger must first undergo a rigorous set of sea trials and safety checks until she can fly a White Ensign. These trials are due to be complete in mid-2022.

Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Simon Holden said: "The arrival of HMS Dagger to the Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron is the culmination of many months of hard work by our commercial partners, Ministry of Defence and the Royal Navy."

"This is an incredibly proud moment for everyone

involved in the project and as her first Commanding Officer I am looking forward to putting HMS Dagger through her paces and getting her operational as soon as possible.

"She is now going to conduct several sea trials prior to raising the White Ensign in mid-2022."

Sabre and Scimitar returned to the UK in the summer of 2020, since when HMS Dasher and Pursuer acted as the principal Royal Navy presence around Gib, joining the squadron's Pacific 24 RIBs on patrols. Cutlass was handed over last year for trials ahead of being declared fully operational this spring.

The role of Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron is to conduct maritime operations in order to provide security in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters, to reassure the Gibraltarians and demonstrate UK sovereignty of Gibraltar.

They also provide force protection to visiting warships, submarines and auxiliary units alongside their civilian counterparts in the Gibraltar Defence Police force.

They perform this duty 365 days a year.



NEW: £5m patrol boat HMS Dagger has arrived in Gibraltar

More life-like training for hazardous material unit

Protection Training Unit gets £600,000 boost to update facility teaching chemical, biohazard, radiation and nuclear defence

SAILORS can now have more realistic training in chemical and radiation emergency situations thanks to a £600,000 investment.

The Royal Navy's Protection Training Unit has spent the past three years planning for and updating their facility in Portsmouth which teaches sailors in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) defence.

When at sea, personnel have to know how to react to any emergencies from fires and floods to deadly agents. And so the instructors at the Protection Training Unit are encouraging ship's companies to take time to visit and learn how to deal with a serious situation should it occur.

Thanks to the cash injection, the team were able to update a number of key details at the facility, from installing a modern comms and CCTV system to adding sounds and visuals that sailors would find on a ship.

The improvements to the facility mean the Protection Training Unit is already seeing interest from Army and RAF colleagues and other nations.

CPO Chris Erwich said: "This is a really exciting time for us. Two years ago I had the opportunity to sit down with a design team and we developed a new simulator starting with the concept: 'if we can do anything, what would we like this facility to do?'"

"Funding was approved and now we have the finished product which simulates conditions at sea as much as possible. It's probably the only facility of its kind and it is really great for CBRN training.

"It is designed for individual training or for ship's companies to come and train together – that's what we want to encourage now and what we'd like to see. The Royal Australian Navy are coming to visit the facility later this year and we are working to integrate closely with our colleagues from FOST."

One of the biggest updates is the type of ship they use in the simulation. Before, the set up was based on older platforms but now, it uses a graphic of a generic ship and a set-up which can work with any class from minehunters to the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers.

It is also future proofed with crews for the Type 26s and Type 31s currently in build able to train in the new simulator.

The new simulator includes 16 CCTV cameras which allows the instructors to see and hear everything throughout the training runs. They used to have to follow the sailors around but now, the trainees are left to deal with any crisis by themselves – with the instructors able to step in through the comms system if they need to.

Their main training area, which mimics a ship's deck, also has a cutting edge laser projector to simulate different scenarios. These can range from a port stop to rolling waves and choppy seas. The training team are also using footage of gunnery exercises and missile strikes giving an extra sense of realism, with the sailors having to learn to keep calm and not be distracted by loud noises and possible warfare while dealing with the CBRN emergency.

CPO Erwich added: "These changes have made our training more innovative but the sailors are also enjoying it more and getting better benefits. It is a lot more realistic and ensures they are properly prepared should they face an emergency like this while at sea.

"Also, updates which allow us to simulate systems installed on any platform means we can adapt the training for their ship. It is designed to be more inclusive for the whole Fleet."

And for the sailors using the new training facility, they go away feeling more confident in being able to tackle any CBRN incident.

"This training gave me a good insight into what to expect in a situation like this," said LET Alex How, of MCM2 Squadron.

"The whole set-up tries to make it as realistic as possible which is what you want – you want to feel as prepared as possible."

Able Rate Daniel Collis (mine warfare) is on his Phase 2 training at HMS Collingwood. He added: "When on a ship, you do little scenarios to train but it's nothing like this. Seeing the mock ship's deck, the footage projecting on the wall – I would be prepared to go and use what I have learned and be ready for anything.

"I wasn't expecting it to be as realistic as it was. The whole environment is set up to ensure you can handle anything and be confident in it."

Protection Training Unit staff want to remind ships companies that all ships CBRN monitoring and decontamination teams should attend Phoenix for Ships Team Training yearly.

Ship's companies interested in using the new Protection Training Unit can email [\(MULTIUSER\)](mailto:NAVY_OP_TRG-MWS_EXC_CBRNDC_PTU) for details or search RNTMs for 'CBRND Ship Team Training' on Defnet. Bookings are made via the Course Booking Cell email [\(MULTIUSER\)](mailto:NAVY_PEOPLE-TRG_TMGC_CBC).

Pictures: Keith Woodland



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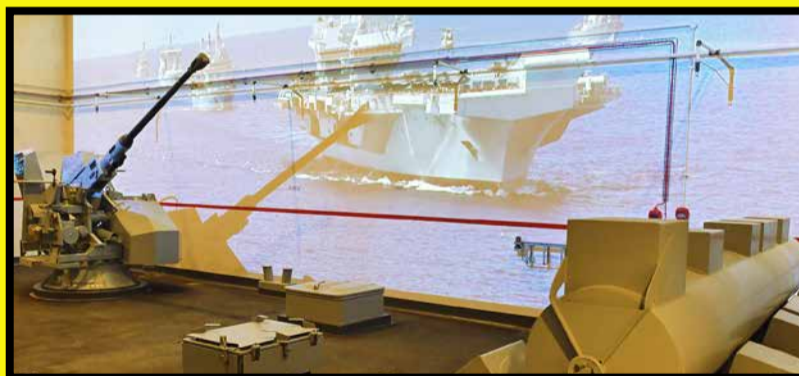
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Historic role for Royal

FOR the first time in its 950-year history, a Royal Marine will take charge of London's most famous fortress.

From August 1, General Sir Gordon Messenger will become Constable of the Tower of London, joining a list of some of the most famous figures and military leaders in British history.

He'll become the 161st custodian of the post, which dates back to 1068 and has been held solely by senior Army commanders since the late 18th Century, currently General The Lord Nicholas Houghton.

"I'm delighted to be appointed Constable of the Tower of London," General Messenger said. "This is a historic role and it will be an honour follow in the footsteps of some illustrious predecessors. The Tower has a truly remarkable history and remains a thriving visitor attraction today. I look forward to playing my part in its story."

The general served in the Corps for 36 years from 1983-2019, deploying to Kosovo, Iraq, Lebanon and Afghanistan. He commanded 3 Commando Brigade in Helmand in 2008/09, served as Deputy Commander of NATO's Allied Land Command, before returning to the MOD as Deputy and then Vice Chief of Defence Staff. Since retiring, he has served on a number of boards and most recently, was commissioned by the Government to lead a review into leadership and management in the Health and Social Care sectors.

He assumes the role of Constable – the most senior appointment at the Tower of London – at the approval of Her Majesty The Queen.

Previous incumbents have included St Thomas Becket, the Duke of Wellington and 20th Century leaders such as Field Marshals Alanbrooke and Alexander.

As Constable, General Messenger will be HM The Queen's representative at the Tower, and its formal Custodian. He will also become a Trustee of Historic Royal Palaces, the independent charity which manages the Tower of London and five other royal sites, including Kensington Palace and Hampton Court Palace.

"We are all delighted that General Sir Gordon Messenger has agreed to accept the appointment. He has an outstanding track record and will bring a wealth of leadership experience both to the Tower of London and to the board of," said Rupert Gavin, Chairman of Historic Royal Palaces.

General Messenger joins the Tower in a busy year which will see the famous fortress encircled by Superbloom, a field of flowers installed to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee.

Although officially his five-year tenure begins on August 1, General Messenger's formal installation ceremony will not take place until the autumn – a traditional ceremony within the Tower's walls, involving the Lord Chamberlain as the monarch's representative, handing the Tower's golden keys to the Constable, as a symbol of his custodianship.

Tribute to Foxtrot 4



Falklands landing craft tragedy remembered

PERSONNEL from across the Services, veterans and members of Falklands community joined the Royal Navy's Landing Craft community in remembering 'the forgotten victim' of the 1982 conflict.

Landing Craft (Utility) Foxtrot Four was the last Royal Navy vessel lost in the six-week war in the South Atlantic, attacked on the same day – June 8 – as the more well-known tragedy of Sir Galahad and Sir Tristram and the 200 casualties they suffered when bombed.

But in the Royal Marines and Royal Navy's Amphibious Warfare community, the loss of the 30-metre-long craft, with four Marines and two Sailors, resonates to this day.

A memorial service is held every year by 4th Assault Squadron Royal Marines, aboard the UK's amphibious flagship – currently HMS Albion – to mark the tragedy and honour the men lost.

Ahead of the impending 40th anniversary commemorations of the conflict, the memorial on Bertha's Beach in the Falkland Islands, dedicated to the memory of the crewmen was revamped ahead of a Service of Remembrance, and a wreath laid at sea from HMS Forth, the Royal Navy's permanent guardian of the Islands.

HMS Forth made the short voyage from her base in the islands to the spot where Foxtrot 4 was attacked late on June 8 1982 – near the mouth of Choiseul Sound about four miles southeast of Bertha's Beach on East Falkland.

There former HMS Fearless and 4th Assault Squadron landing craft officer Lieutenant Colonel Richard Thurstan cast a biodegradable poppy wreath into the cold South Atlantic after a service on the flight deck led by RAF padre Philip Johnson, and attended by the patrol ship's crew.

Forth then several more miles out to sea to the spot where the landing craft was last seen in 1982 following valiant efforts to salvage her, and the Still was piped in memory.

"There is nothing at the site – no wreck on the sea bed. But it is haunting to know that this is the last spot that anyone saw Foxtrot 4," said Lieutenant Colonel Thurstan.

LCU F4 was one of four landing craft assigned to



Left, Personnel attend a memorial service aboard HMS Forth; Above, Landing craft Foxtrot 4; Right, Colour Sergeant Brian Johnston RM



HMS Fearless with 4 Assault Squadron Royal Marines, designed to land commandos and their kit ashore... which they did from the moment the campaign to re-take the Falklands began with the landings at San Carlos on May 21.

But the large landing craft also saved many lives. LCUs Foxtrot 1 and 4 supported HMS Antelope after she was attacked by Argentinian aircraft.

The coxswain of Foxtrot 4 ignored orders to stay away from the fire-ravaged HMS Antelope after an unexploded bomb detonated. The rescue of many crewmen from HMS Antelope by the craft, under difficult conditions, earned Foxtrot 4's coxswain Colour Sergeant Brian Johnston RM the Queen's Gallantry Medal.

He never lived to collect it. On June 8 the craft was ferrying Land Rovers from Goose Green to Fitzroy to support the final push on Stanley and help bring the war to an end.

Moving slowly in open waters, she proved easy prey for Argentine aircraft. A 500lb bomb dropped by a Skyhawk destroyed the wheelhouse and stern section of the boat, killing six crew.

Despite efforts to take the stricken boat in tow, she was eventually cut adrift. The following morning Foxtrot 4 was nowhere to be seen. The wreck remains unlocated to this day.

A memorial was subsequently erected to the lost crewmen on Bertha's Beach – which remains a popular site with British personnel stationed in the Falklands.

Four decades on and thanks to money from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, and selfless work by Landing Craft coxswain Sergeant Dan Langley RM, Lieutenant Colonel Thurstan took a new memorial plaque to the site, dedicated by the RAF padre in the presence of islanders and veterans on the day after Forth's memorial service.

Veterans reunited, see page 31

HMS Monmouth passes into history

THE life of one of the Royal Navy's stalwart warships symbolically ended as the bell from HMS Monmouth was donated to the people of her namesake town.

Lieutenant Commander Steve Reah, the last Senior Naval Officer of the 'Black Duke' handed over the prized artefact to Councillor Terry Christopher, Mayor of Monmouth, as a token of appreciation for the Welsh town's support for the frigate.

Monmouth was decommissioned last summer and is currently awaiting her fate in Portsmouth Harbour.

Key equipment was removed, as well as some of the more treasured symbols and objects which are unique to a warship – badges, tampions, honours board and the ship's bell.

The brass bell was cast before the warship was commissioned in September 1993 and, although its role on board is largely traditional/symbolic – unlike in days of old they are no longer sounded to announce the change of watch aboard –

they remain a much-loved feature.

In keeping with Naval tradition, the names of children who have been baptised on board are engraved on the inside of the bell, which served as a baptismal font.

It has stayed with the ship throughout her time as a commissioned warship – 28 years, during which the Plymouth-based warship sailed in excess of half a million miles and visited over 200 ports.

Her last deployment was to accompany the Royal Navy's first fifth-generation aircraft carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth, in 2018 when she sailed to the East coast of the United States on trials.

"It gives me great pleasure to present the ship's bell from HMS Monmouth to the beautiful town of Monmouth," Lt Cdr Reah told Cllr Christopher.

"The Royal Navy and the thousands of Sailors that have served in HMS Monmouth thank the Town and associated affiliations for the extremely close bond that has existed, including being awarded the Freedom of the Town in 2004.

"The presentation of the Bell serves as a fitting memory of this 28-year relationship, and we hope Monmouth enjoys displaying it for many years into the future."

Lt Cdr Reah, who served in the frigate between 2002 and 2004, then returned for her final days said he "felt very much like the Grim Reaper" in preparing the ship for disposal and was determined the people of Monmouth had something to show for their long-standing support for the Type 23 and all who served in her.

"The freedom of Monmouth marches would have been a great highlight for anybody who served on board, the last was held in March 2019," he continued.

"The Navy follows strict gifting rules, including ship's bells, but we wanted to ensure this gift happened for Monmouth.

"I see it very much as a 'thank you' from the Royal Navy and more specifically her 2,000 former crew to a close-knit community which took The Black Duke into their hearts."





ON PATROL: Royal Marines and US Marines patrol through the jungle of Guam during joint training

GUAM FOR THE ROAD

IN sweltering tropical heat and punishing humidity, Royal Marines and their US counterparts have been on intensive jungle exercises on the Pacific island of Guam.

Bravo Company of 40 Commando, based in Taunton, plus detachments from Plymouth-based 47 Commando and 29 Commando met up with the US Marine Corps in the heat of Guam to work on jungle skills and experiment with new tactics.

Temperatures soared above 40°C and 79 per cent humidity as the commandos went on jungle ambushes, reconnaissance patrols, break contact drills and beach raids alongside Cherokee Company, Battalion Landing Team 1/5 of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

"This was all carried out using techniques from both sides of the Pond and we learned valuable lessons throughout," said Marine McDonnell from 40 Commando.

"It was mainly an experimental exercise involving jungle patrolling, contact drills, land-to-sea defensive techniques and working at reach with limited support."

The Bootnecks helped push the boundaries of American tactics – known as Expeditionary Advanced Based Operations – which sees small teams deployed with limited support

(something commandos are experts in) to islands or chokepoints for intelligence gathering and to restrict the movement of enemy forces in strategically-important areas.

Marine Ridgeway said: "We spent a few days in the jungles and hills of Guam practising USMC Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations tactics for locating and targeting enemy ships from ashore.

"We also carried out break contact, casualty evacuation drills alongside patrolling in small teams."

47 Commando – the raiding specialists of the UK's commando force – used a compound mocked up to replicate the tight surroundings of a ship to share knowledge and expertise in close-quarters battle and boarding and capturing ships, both at night and during the day.

The training also included small teams of Royal Marines integrating with USMC small boats and sharing expertise on amphibious beach raids, while the green berets also had a short stay on a US Navy ship.

It concluded with a fitness competition between USMC, US Navy and the Royal Marines, including a five-kilometre run, 400-metre open water swim and an obstacle course, before a Corps vs Corps football match, which ended in a 5-4 penalty shootout win for the British.



MUST DASH: A Bootneck in action during Guam training



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THE PRINCE AND...



...THE VOLCANO



BRITAIN'S biggest warship has ventured deep inside the Arctic Circle for a rare visit to the Norwegian volcanic island of Jan Mayen – as the UK underlines its commitment to security in the high north.

HMS Prince of Wales and her escort frigate HMS Richmond sailed to the frozen unpopulated outcrop – about 340 miles north of Iceland and roughly 280 miles east of Greenland – as the aircraft carrier goes through intensive exercises in operating in the harsh cold weather of the Arctic.

Seven sailors landed on Jan Mayen to meet the Norwegian personnel stationed there, in the shadow of the glacier-covered volcano Beerenberg and surrounded by dramatic views, to forge closer bonds between Norway and the UK.

HMS Richmond's commanding officer, Commander Chris L'Amie, said: "Having long studied and always been fascinated by the Arctic, it is a real privilege to step ashore in Jan Mayen, strengthening the ties between the UK and Norway, our NATO and Joint Expeditionary Force partner."

The aircraft carrier arrived at Jan Mayen – named after Dutch seafarer and explorer Jan Jacobszoon May van Schellinkhout – in the Arctic Ocean soon after a visit to Iceland and the largest military exercises in the Arctic since the Cold War alongside NATO allies and partners (read more on pages 20-21).

During the exercises in Norway, Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, visited HMS Prince of Wales to reaffirm the UK's commitment to security in the Arctic and announce regular Royal Navy and Royal Marines deployments to the high north.

Norwegian Navy Commander Thor Straten has been on board HMS Prince of Wales to work with the ship and share his extensive knowledge and experience of working in the Arctic and the effects of ice on ships.

He travelled to Jan Mayen with Prince of Wales's commanding officer, Captain Steve Higham, and Cdr L'Amie from Richmond, alongside four other sailors.

Petty Officer Luke Witts, part of the crew on Prince of Wales, was one of those selected to go ashore and spent his 33rd birthday on the island.

"It was probably the best birthday I've ever had, the whole experience flying from the ship and seeing the island was amazing," he said. "The food from the chefs was phenomenal and it was great to meet the people there."

After the port stop in Iceland, sailors on Prince of Wales paid their respects to their forebears – 80 years after a terrible battle which stunned the Navy and nation.

The crew of aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales held a service of thanksgiving for the men of HMS Hood over the battle-cruiser's wreck in the Denmark Strait.

More than 1,400 men were killed when the then pride of the Royal Navy joined battle with Hitler's flagship Bismarck on May 24 1941.

Just three of Hood's crew survived when she blew up – her magazine detonated by a German shell which tore the leviathan apart.

HMS Prince of Wales' predecessor – a then brand-new King George V-class battleship – was also damaged in the action, but not before her guns had struck the Bismarck.

The damaged caused cut short the German battleship's sortie and Bismarck

was sunk three days later after being crippled by Swordfish torpedo bombers, allowing the guns of the Home Fleet to finish the ship off.

More than 80 years on, today's HMS Prince of Wales sailed to Hood's wreck site around 300 miles west of Reykjavik to commemorate the Battle of the Denmark Strait and honour all the lives lost.

All of the ships company mustered in the hangar of the aircraft carrier for the service, led by the ship's Chaplain Mark Davidson, with Navigator Lieutenant Commander Chris Poulson outlining Hood's last moments and Prince of Wales' role in the action before a biodegradable wreath provided by the Royal British Legion was cast into the Atlantic.

Two messages of condolences accompanied the wreath, one from the captain and ship's company, the second from the HMS Hood Association.

"When Hood was lost, when Hood foundered, when Hood died, she had one friend, one oppo, one shipmate and that was Prince of Wales. That is why Prince of Wales is back here today, why we are back here today to remember our friend, our oppo, our shipmate HMS Hood," said Lieutenant Commander Poulson.

HMS Hood and her story is a core part of naval history, taught to all ratings and officers alike.

She was deemed one of the world's most powerful ships for over 20 years after her commissioning in 1920, her prestige earning her the name 'The Mighty Hood'.

Prior to the commissioning of the Queen Elizabeth class of carriers, Hood was the largest warship ever to sail under the White Ensign.



SUB-ZERO HEROES

AGAINST the backdrop of snow-covered mountains of a Norwegian fjord an elite team of commandos launch a raid in a small boat from a Royal Navy submarine.

UK forces used the largest winter exercise hosted in Norway in 30 years to demonstrate the unique combined capabilities of the Royal Marines and Submarine Service.

In Lyngenfjord, three dozen miles east of Tromsø deep inside the Arctic Circle, the Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron launched small teams from an Astute-class hunter-killer submarine from Faslane in Scotland for 'subsurface insertion' missions.

Their aim: reconnaissance missions on the rocky, icy shoreline in sub-zero temperatures while avoiding the multi-national 'enemy' force hunting them.

The Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron – drawn from Plymouth-based 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group – is a specialist team of commandos who forge the way ahead for their fellow green berets to follow.

They are trained to gather valuable information on the terrain, the enemy and suitable beach landing places for larger amphibious forces to come ashore, arriving by ski, snowmobile, boat, all-terrain vehicles, helicopter or parachute, depending on the situation and environment.

"Being able to move sub-surface gives us a discreet means of moving our specialist teams to any coastline in the world," explained the SRS team leader.

"Not only can we conduct operations in isolation but by accessing and reconnoitring these complex coastlines by small craft we can set the conditions for larger, more lethal follow on forces."

His deputy added: "Working alongside the submarine was a great opportunity for us. In addition to the submarine work we also took the opportunity to operate alongside our Norwegian colleagues.

"We used one of their larger, faster craft to access areas out of range of our small craft, an excellent example of working together to achieve a common aim."

Commodore Jim Perks, the head of the RN Submarine Service, said: "The ability to operate undetected for significant periods of time with top quality kit ensures that a submarine remains a formidable delivery mechanism, in this case enabling the covert deployment of the Surveillance and Reconnaissance team as showcased in the exercises off Norway.

"Our ability to work together highlights the remarkable attributes

of the team and the platforms in which we operate."

The training in Lyngenfjord – a small but important phase of the Cold Response 2022 exercise – proved the usefulness of using submarines to access strategically important-areas with small teams of highly-trained specialists without being detected.

It was also part of wider intensive raiding and reconnaissance operations the UK's commandos have been carrying out in northern Norway during Cold Response.

To the southwest, on Senja Island, 40 Commando – having launched from an amphibious task force spearheaded by HMS Albion – raided Skrolsvik Fort where 'enemy' systems were denying access to air support.

The Royal Marines 'destroyed' key infrastructure around the fort – which was built by the Nazis in the Second World War – and secured areas for allied forces to gain access and establish a launchpad to forge inland.

Cold Response is a biennial exercise designed to demonstrate NATO's collective Arctic war fighting capability and test their ability to protect Norway from modern threats.

This year's exercise is the largest of its kind for more than 30 years and has involved 30,000 military personnel from 27 nations including Norwegians, US, Dutch, French, Italians and Germans.

The UK is one of very few nations capable of operating in this demanding environment. The Royal Marines have been conducting cold weather training in Norway for over 50 years and are the UK's force of choice for the region.

Brigadier Rich Cantrill, in charge of the UK's commando forces, said: "Cold Response 22 provides an unparalleled opportunity to come together as a NATO force in the very harsh conditions of the high north and to operate across all the domains, land, air and sea. I know that after this exercise we will leave here better connected and more ready.

"Cold Response 22 offers an amazing opportunity to learn how to work together in a really harsh environment. When you are in the high north and when you are in the maritime or ashore, its real, you've got to cope with the environment first before you can then think about the adversary, and so there is no more realistic environment or harsh environment than up here, which is a huge opportunity for all of us."

Meanwhile, Britain's biggest warship completed the first phase of her historic deployment to the Arctic – underlining the UK and NATO's commitment to security in the High North.

Aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales led the way at the head of a



SUBWAY: An Astute-class submarine and Royal Marines carry out a 'subsurface insertion' during Exercise Cold Response in the Arctic Circle.

Picture by: LPhot Mark Johnson



COMMANDOS, SUBMARINERS AND SAILORS COLDLY GO INTO THE ICY ARCTIC CIRCLE...



SNOW WAY: HMS Prince of Wales' flight deck covered in snow during Exercise Cold Response.

Picture by: LPhot Ben Corbett

potent NATO task force designed to demonstrate that the alliance is ready and equipped to protect Norway and the Arctic from modern threats.

It was the first time one of the Royal Navy's new Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers has operated in the Arctic, with more than 1,000 sailors gaining their first experience of operating in the polar region.

The Arctic exercises emphasised the UK's commitment to security in the region as the government announced its defence strategy for the region, which will see the Royal Navy frequently deployed to the high north and Royal Marines continue honing the expertise they've nurtured over 50 years of operating in the Arctic Circle.

HMS Prince of Wales commanding officer, Captain Steve Higham, said: "As we continue to operate in and around the Arctic with our allies and partners, the sailors on HMS Prince of Wales are continuing to learn the skills, and build the experience that allow the Royal Navy to push the boundaries of UK carrier operations in the cold, harsh environment."

Prince of Wales' exercises in the Arctic pushed the boundaries of the UK carriers, working alongside a breadth of aircraft, including the unique Osprey MV22 tiltrotors and Sea Stallion helicopters of the US Marine Corps.

Operating in one of the world's harshest environments also demanded coping with nature, including dealing with snow and ice on the flight deck – with crew developing new methods of clearing them.

The deck was covered in a thick white blanket and most of the flight deck team couldn't help but think about a snowball fight or the idea of building a snowman mascot.

The flight deck snowball fight did come to fruition, but 30 minutes later serious business was afoot to clear and return the deck to full operating order.

The team used a snowplough, manual de-icer pumps and plenty of shovels to clear the snow.

"With all hands on deck, we firstly, shovelled the top layer of snow off the side of the ship whilst the snowplough would follow us to remove the remaining snow," said Leading Airman Ritchie Ward.

"This went on from day to night, I had a cold outer shell and felt a sting to the face in the wind but with the stars out and some tone deaf singing as we worked, we 'dug out' till early hours of the morning.

"The next few days it was all about maintenance round the clock. Keeping the de-icer on the deck, especially the link plates so we are able to lash down any aircraft anywhere on deck.

"Till this day we have the equipment on standby to fight again if the snow comes back, if it does we are ready and we wouldn't mind getting our snowman back either."

And crew were also treated to nature's beauty, capturing stunning images of the Aurora Borealis shimmering over the flight deck – all part of the unique experience of operating in icy northern climes.

Now the aircraft carrier has just completed a four-day visit to Reykjavik to show off the UK's largest and most advanced warship to Iceland, a NATO ally and the newest member of the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force.

The ship hosted a reception of ministers and diplomats, while sailors took part in football and rugby matches against local sides as the two nations forge closer ties.

"Being the first fifth generation aircraft carrier to visit Iceland has been a proud moment for our ship's company as we continue our operations, alongside NATO Allies and JEF partners in the Arctic," added Capt Higham.

"Iceland and the people of the City of Reykjavik have been really welcoming to all of us, and, we are very grateful for the support we have received as we contribute to the delivery of the effects set out by the Defence Secretary in the new Arctic Strategy."

HMS Richmond joined Prince of Wales in Iceland fresh from operations in the Baltic that saw the Type 23 frigate escort British supply ships to resupply the NATO battlegroup in Estonia.

Richmond linked up with Joint Expeditionary Force and NATO allies during the Baltic mission, which saw vehicles and equipment delivered as the UK doubled the number of troops in Estonia as part of wider NATO efforts to strengthen eastern defences following Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

The Joint Expeditionary Force is a UK-led security coalition, which includes the UK, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway.

Richmond then joined the task force on Cold Response alongside fellow Type 23 frigate HMS Northumberland, Type 45 destroyer HMS Defender, tanker RFA Tidesurge, an Astute-class submarine and an amphibious task group led by HMS Albion and RFA Mounts Bay.

HMS Prince of Wales will remain in the Arctic alongside her escorts to complete exercises and operations designed to fully test the Queen Elizabeth-class carrier in extreme cold weather operations.

She recently visited Jan Mayen, a Norwegian volcanic island in the Arctic Ocean, see page 19.



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Town's cheers as Culdrose marks milestone



SCHOOLCHILDREN and members of the public lined the streets of Helston to cheer on the sailors of Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose.

Led by the HMS Seahawk Volunteer Band, around 150 personnel from the air station paraded to mark RNAS Culdrose's 75th anniversary.

They enacted the right of the Freedom of Helston, the highest honour that can be granted by a town to a military establishment, which allows them to march with swords drawn and bayonets fixed.

Helston mayor Councillor Tim Gratton-Kane welcomed RNAS Culdrose commanding officer Captain Stuart Finn and inspected the guard during a ceremony outside the Guildhall.

Coinagehall Street was lined with school children from the primary schools Nansloe, St Michael's, Parc Eglos and Wendon. Many of their parents were marching in the parade.

Captain Finn said: "We are delighted to be back in Helston having cancelled our community events for the past two years due to coronavirus restrictions.

"This year is especially important to us as we mark 75 years since the commissioning of RNAS Culdrose. A lot has happened in that time but the links and bonds between the air station and Helston are as strong as ever."



Cooking up a storm

Royal Navy crowned champions at Exercise Joint Caterer



ROYAL Navy chefs beat off competition from the Army and RAF to be crowned cookery champions – for the first time in eight years.

A 26-strong Catering Services team delivered a mouth-watering display of culinary art and fine-dining skill at the two-day Exercise Joint Caterer, held for the first time as part of the Public Sector Catering Expo at the NEC in Birmingham. The team returned with 32 medals and 15 best in class awards, picking up the team ethos award in the process.

Team captain, Warrant Officer 2 Si Geldart, said: "I'm immensely proud and humbled to have led such a professional and passionate team; whether preparing remarkable food in the kitchens or delivering outstanding service front of house they've all done incredibly well."

Commander Steve Harman, Fleet Logistics Officer, said: "I never ceased to be amazed by the quality of food

our catering services ratings provide, especially considering the unique challenges of cooking in warships and submarines.

"The team's recent success at Joint Caterer was a really clear reflection of the awesome talent and skill we are fortunate to have within the branch."

Chief Naval Logistics Officer, Rear Admiral Andy Kyte, praised the team's outstanding result as just rewards for all their hard work and a fantastic reflection of the immense talent that sits within the branch.

This year's Exercise Joint Caterer saw several changes to the way the competition was run.

One of the senior team members, Petty Officer Shaun Willis, who is normally an instructor at the Defence College of Logistics, Policing and Administration at Worthy Down in Hampshire, said: "This event is a great opportunity to

benchmark our high-end skills with the very best the hospitality industry has to offer.

"As we continually evolve the way the Royal Navy delivers Defence Engagement events, Mixology, including Mocktails, is just one of the latest things we're exploring so it's great to be competing these sorts of skills this year and really show what we can do."

One of the junior team members, AB (Catering Services) Molly Rowe, currently serving in HMS Prince of Wales, said: "I've loved my time at Exercise Joint Caterer. Not only have I seen amazing work produced but I've also learnt so many things in the short time we have had to train as a team.

"Being a competitor has definitely boosted my confidence; the whole experience has been nothing short of spectacular and I'd love to be part of the team again."

Iconic tower reopened in Gibraltar



BRITISH Forces Gibraltar staff gathered in The Tower to mark the official re-opening of the iconic building.

In attendance was the Commander British Forces, Commodore Steve Dainton, His Excellency the Governor, Vice Admiral Sir David Steel, and the Chief Minister, Fabian Picardo, all pictured left.

The Tower's distinctive uncoursed limestone facades have been a familiar landmark to sailors of the Royal Navy since its construction in 1905.

With the last major refurbishment of the Tower having taken place in 1989, the decision was made in 2019 to conduct an extensive remodelling and refurbishment of The Tower in order to bring it up to modern standards and create an office space fit for the 21st Century.

Works commenced in September 2020, which included stripping the building back to the walls and installing new walls, floors, ceilings, re-wiring and a modern fit out of the kitchens/utilities.

The outer façade was also washed and returned to its former glory. Works were completed in February 2022.

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

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Recreate yomp for marines charity

COMMANDOS hope you can help raise £56,000 in memory of comrades who fought in the Falklands.

They're organising a four-day physical challenge – and hope the public will join them for the final leg.

Back in 1982, Royal Marines yomped 56 miles across East Falkland to liberate the islands from Argentine occupation.

They faced bleak conditions – horrendous boggy terrain, wind, rain, sleet, low temperatures – not to mention a series of battles on hills outside the islands' capital Stanley before reaching their goal.

Today's generation of marines are performing the full march at establishments all around the UK, encouraging friends, family and the broader public to join them for the final tenth of the distance.

The Falklands 40 fundraiser is the brainchild of Lieutenant Colonel Gary Green, one of a handful of 1982 veterans still serving in today's Corps.

Aged 19, the then signaller with Kilo Company, 42 Commando, landed at San Carlos with his comrades. He missed the bulk of the march into Stanley, ferried forward to Mount Kent to support SAS troops observing Argentine forces around the Falklands' capital.

He landed in the middle of a firefight and, once British forces had secured the peak, spent another week in the open before the bulk of 42 Commando arrived. The Bickleigh unit then skilfully ousted Argentine defenders from Mount Harriet in one of the final set-piece actions of the war before marching into Stanley after the surrender.

Four decades later, Gary, who serves at the Maritime Warfare Centre in HMS Collingwood, hopes the Royal Marines family can join serving commandos for the final leg.

"We are asking our supporters to join in from wherever you are in the world," he said. "Take part anywhere by running, walking, or cycling 5.6 miles."

So far nearly £11,000 has been donated on behalf of the Royal Marines Charity, which supports marines and their families in times of need/hardship. Anyone who raises more than £25 will receive a unique Falklands 40 / RM Commando 80 commemorative coin.

To take part – or make a donation – visit: <https://rmatrnc.enthuse.com/cf/falklands-40>

RFA join RNRMC family

ROYAL Fleet Auxiliary sailors, their families and veterans will now benefit from the support of the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

The RFA is now affiliated with the leading charity for the Senior Service – meaning it receives the same support the Royal Navy and Royal Marines are afforded.

That includes welfare and family support and assistance after naval careers with transition to civilian life, including external employment, and into retirement.

In the unfortunate and rare occasion of a death in service, there is an immediate payment from the RNRMC of £15,000 to the next of kin.

RFA Head of Service, Commodore David Eagles, said: "I wish to acknowledge the extraordinary generosity of the RNRMC in welcoming the RFA into affiliation with the charity."

"I welcome integrating our service and people into the many and varied services the RNRMC provide and deliver across an incredible spectrum of activity."

Since 2007, the RNRMC Charity has funded projects and facilities that boost morale for those in service.

It also distributes millions of pounds annually to military

charities which care for children, families and veterans.

Through grants, the charity is able to support serving personnel, veterans and their families.

"I am delighted to welcome the RFA into the RNRMC," said the charity's chief executive Adrian Bell. "The RFA is an integral part of the Royal Navy, and its personnel are as deserving of the support and recognition from this charity as it affords to all its beneficiaries."

"This charity's commitment to helping alleviate the consequences of service to the nation, and honouring that service, is full-square behind all we do. The inclusion of the RFA now makes that commitment feel complete."

RFA veteran Chief Petty Officer Martin Etwell, who served for more than 50 years, said: "I have seen many changes in the RFA since the 1970s, working alongside Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel in all theatres of operations, during conflict and peace times."

"To now be invited to be a part of the RNRMC Charity recognises what the RFA delivers operationally and is a huge benefit to the workforce, especially for those in need."

I feel the need... the need for Steve

EIGHTY of the fastest, most expensive and most eye-catching cars on UK roads had jaws dropping at RNAS Yeovilton.

More than £100m of motors were on show at the unique 'Festival of Steve' – a fundraising event in memory of 846 Naval Air Squadron stalwart Chief Petty Officer Steve 'Happy' Munday.

The senior rating who died earlier this year after a brief illness was the driving force behind ensuring sailors rattled tins in the capital for London Poppy Day

(Steve is pictured inset at last year's collection) in the run-up to the Royal British Legion's annual Festival of Remembrance – and one reason the veterans' charity raised more than £8m over the past 11 years.

Friends and Commando Helicopter Force colleagues wanted to continue his fundraising efforts and came up with a rebranded 'Festival of Speed'.

The 80 cars comprised supercars of all marques, McLaren, Ferrari, Jaguar, Lamborghini, Porsche and Aston Martin, some classic cars and some one-offs like the Aston Martin Bulldog (£9.2m) and Formula World



Series Red Bull.

The latter team fired up the engine of their Formula World Series vehicle – loud enough to echo pretty much all around the base – while 846 personnel got the chance to view, sit in and start up some of supercars (total value circa £103m), while the motorists and families were treated to tours of Merlin and Sea King Mk4s and had a good look at the vintage Sea Fury.

All 220 guests received limited edition poppy pin badges which featured Mk4

Sea King and Merlin Mk4 – two helicopters Happy worked on.

Guests of honour were Happy's widow, Kerry and their three children aged nine through 15.

"The event was incredible!" said Kerry. "It takes very special people to make children happy during their darkest of days. I am – and I know Steven would be – forever grateful, not just for making three children very happy, but for raising funds for the Royal British Legion which will be used to support many others during their own difficult times."

"Steven would be in awe of everyone's generosity. It is hard for us to summarise our feelings for you all and what you did/continue to do for others – you truly are very special people."

Mrs Munday was presented with The National Certificate of Appreciation – the Legion's highest honour – in recognition of her late husband's dedication.

"Losing Steve was a huge shock to us all, and if I am honest I still can't quite believe he isn't with us anymore, there is a huge Steve-shaped hole in not only mine but the London Poppy

Day Family's lives and he is and always will be sorely missed," said Abigail Ball Station Commander of the London City East Sector for London Poppy Day.

Together with donations from Happy's former colleagues at Culdrose and CHF personnel deployed to Norway for winter training, more than £16,000 was raised for a special project at the RBL Dunkirk House in Taunton. Once complete a commemorative plaque will be mounted in Happy's name.

"To be able to make Happy's family's world stop spinning for a short while was worth all of the effort. Their smiles and seeing them amongst old and new friends was heart-warming and I know that the day will stay in their memories for a long time," said event organiser Warrant Officer 1st Class Baz Firth, former base warrant officer at Yeovilton, now serving with the RN Leadership Academy at BRNC Dartmouth.

"To see all the aircrew and engineers enjoy some time away from work with the cars and guests was also a welcome morale boost. Even the weather was perfect."



Naval spoke-men faster than horses



TWO Royal Navy officers cycled from Falmouth to London in just 36 hours – beating the time taken by coach and horse in 1805 to deliver news of victory at Trafalgar.

Commander Pascal Patterson and Lieutenant Commander Dan Waskett recreated the epic dash from Cornwall to the capital carried out by Lieutenant John Richards Lapenotière.

Averaging around seven miles an hour in legs of ten to 15 miles apiece between coaching inns, he arrived at the Admiralty in the heart of London after a journey of 304 miles in a succession of horse-drawn coaches after 38 hours, breathlessly announcing: "We have gained a great victory. But we have lost Lord Nelson."

Two centuries later, the two aviators – who joined the Royal Navy on the same day in 2005 and have been firm friends ever since – set out to beat his time to raise awareness of mental health in the Armed Forces.

Their 'race the messenger' ride followed the route Lapenotière took as much as possible – taking the cyclists through Truro, over Bodmin Moor, Okchampton, Exeter, Honiton, Bridport, Dorchester, Salisbury, Basingstoke and Staines, ending

in Whitehall some time before midnight on Saturday April 2.

They beat Lapenotière, arriving at the Old Admiralty Building (pictured left, with Pascal on the left) with a couple of hours to spare.

The pair cycled entirely unsupported – no back-up crew or vehicle. Just two men with all the supplies they would need on the way. And several Wetherspoon's mixed grills (other pub chains/meals are available) to 'refuel' en route.

"Ultra-endurance cycling is a long game, the key is to ride comfortably within yourself at a sustainable pace or else you will pay the price several days later in the ride," explained 40-year-old Pascal, who serves with the UK Strategic Command.

"The cycling equivalent of running a marathon is cycling 100 miles, we did almost three times that distance in a compressed timescale and without support."

Due to a fault with his bike's gears just 50 miles into the ride, he was restricted to under 16mph for the remainder of the ride – still faster than the coach and horses of 1805, as it turned out.

"It felt good to be following in the tracks of a genuine Royal Navy hero," Pascal added.

"We'd like to think that Lt Lapenotière would have approved of our efforts."

The two-day ride was the latest 'warm-up' for the duo's much greater challenge when they plan to pedal 5,000 kilometres across the USA this summer.

They've already completed Land's End to John O'Groats in a fortnight, and hope to cycle between San Diego in California and St Augustine in Florida in just 35 days with the goal of raising £35k for the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity, providing mental health support to serving personnel, veterans and their families.

"A great friend of mine died in military service not long ago, the charity offered wonderful support to his family, during what was an incredibly difficult time," said 39-year-old Dan, who trains Merlin observers with 824 Naval Air Squadron, based at Culdrose.

"I see the rides as my way of saying thank you, and hopefully helping them in turn to help someone else in need."

You can follow the two riders' ongoing efforts at www.starsandspokes.com or on Instagram: @starsandspokes.

And you can donate to their cause via www.justgiving.com/starsandspokes.



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Chris Terrill filming from a Royal Navy Merlin helicopter

SHOOTING SAILORS

FILMMAKER REFLECTS ON HIS PASSION FOR ROYAL NAVY



HMS Brilliant at sunset in front of Mount Etna in the Med and HMS Manchester chasing drug runners in the Caribbean



Chris Terrill filming with the Royal Marines at Commando Training Centre, Lympstone, and with the Royal Marines in Afghanistan



Chris Terrill aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth and right, filming from a Royal Navy Sea King helicopter in Helmand Province, Afghanistan



Chris has had a 12-year love affair with HMS Queen Elizabeth, left. Right, Chris with his proudest possession, his Royal Marines Green Beret



CHRIS TERRILL, anthropologist, filmmaker and author, has been making films and writing books about the Royal Navy and Royal Marines for over 25 years and has no plans to stop anytime soon. He explains to *Navy News* how it all started and describes his enduring 12-year love affair with HMS Queen Elizabeth.

It was a sun-drenched morning in the late summer of 1994 when I was ferried out to HMS Brilliant, a Type 22 Frigate anchored off the coast of Naples. She was heading to Spain to complete final exercises before deploying on operations and I was joining her briefly to determine whether she and her 250 strong crew were suitable subjects for a proposed BBC documentary.

I was instantly struck by the array of incredible larger than life characters on board and the very intimate sense of community on what they called their 'floating grey village'. Two in particular caught my attention: a wisecracking Leading Seaman called Micky Goble with a gift for the double-entendre and Lt Cdr Bob Hawkins, the jovial PWO known to all as 'Bob the Dog'. Matelots to the core, seawater coursed through their veins but both greeted me warmly.

Instantly captivated by life on this powerful yet compact 4,000-ton warship I disembarked in Barcelona, returned to London and told my bosses I thought the project was a 'goer'. Within a fortnight, camera rolling, we were sailing for a classified location in the eastern Adriatic codenamed 'Iceman Nine Zero'. For five months I followed the frigate's fortunes during some of the darkest days of the Yugoslavian War whilst she helped enforce the UN arms embargo on all the countries of the former Yugoslavia.

This meant sailing within the dangerous Serbian missile envelope in pursuit of gun runners and people smugglers. Soul sapping defence watches were rewarded with intermittent runs ashore in Crete and Italy ending with a knees-up in Istanbul from which I'm still recovering!

The upshot was a primetime series for BBC1 called simply, *HMS Brilliant*. The programmes, as much about life on board the frigate as her clandestine military mission, grabbed the public's imagination, averaged a whopping nine million viewers per show and won several awards. But TV ratings and gongs aside the experience sparked my own enduring fascination for the Royal Navy or the 'Mob' as I'd learned to call it.

A practicing anthropologist with a deep-rooted fascination for tribal cultures I'd carried out my doctoral research amongst the semi-nomadic tribes of war-torn Southern Sudan. This was about as far from the sea as you can get on planet earth but it primed me for my future career as a seaborne documentarian.

On HMS Brilliant the inherent tribalism of her sailors was clear to see. After all, a ship's company, though a microcosm of the country it defends and fights for, is self-contained, tightly woven, dynamic, diverse, largely inclusive and highly functional, contending as it does with the raging oceans and, potentially, the wrath of the enemy.

Furthermore, Navy people are bonded by a common heritage, united by rich traditions and defined by their place in a hierarchy prescribed by rank, merit and status.

They observe the same customs and rituals, share the same ethos and their identity is underpinned by a collective sense of humour and predisposition for body art, courtesy the tattooist's needle, as well as a colloquial language of their own; the colourfully coded

lingua franca known to all as 'Jackspeak'.

As with the tribes of South Sudan I quickly realised the only way to properly understand a ship's company was to become part of it, participate within it and view it through the eyes of the sailors themselves. Since my time on Brilliant I've been privileged to deploy countless times on Royal Navy warships all over the world and have amassed nearly three years of sea-time in the process. I was on HMS Chatham in 2004 when she responded to the desperate needs of the people of Sri Lanka in the wake of the Boxing Day Tsunami. In 2010 I sailed with HMS Manchester on counter narcotic operations and hurricane relief work in the Caribbean as well as her historic visit to Cuba – the first western warship to enter



Havana in 57 years. I've joined minesweepers and patrol boats guarding UK territorial waters as well as deploying many times with the navy's own sea soldiers, the Royal Marines, both on ships and ferocious land operations in Afghanistan.

In 2006/7 I took immersion to an even deeper level by going through the full 32 weeks of Royal Marines training at Lympstone. My challenge (this time for ITV) was to film a troop of new recruits from day one of basic training to their first taste of war in Afghanistan but I knew instinctively it wouldn't be enough to watch from the side lines.

To understand the Royal Marines mindset I had to endure the training myself. It was the toughest thing I'd ever attempted but with the support and encouragement of the training team and my 'fellow' recruits I won my own green beret – still my proudest possession.

I didn't think anything would top that experience but on July 7, 2009 I witnessed something that altered not only the course of my own maritime career but the trajectory of the Royal Navy itself. I'd been invited to Govan shipyard in Glasgow to witness Princess Anne ceremoniously cutting the first steel of HMS Queen Elizabeth – destined to become the biggest warship ever built for the Royal Navy. I knew straightaway this was a story I had to tell and so started a 12-year love affair with the QE as I followed her construction, first sea trials, first flight trials in the US and, last year, her first operational deployment to the South China Seas. This has resulted in two BBC series so far plus a best-selling book. A third series, the most ambitious of my career entitled *Strike Carrier*, will come out later this year.

On TV or the written page I've always endeavoured to tell it like it is, honestly and authentically. Whether about Jack, Jenny or Royal the stories I record are invariably exciting and action packed; some stupefying and unsettling; some bewildering and unnerving whilst others have been profound, hilarious, uplifting or incredibly moving.

Although proud to have made nearly 70 films and written four books about the Royal Navy since 1994, much more important to me are the enduring friendships I've made in that time.

Micky Goble and Bob Hawkins, who I met on HMS Brilliant over a quarter of a century ago, remain treasured friends. And I can say the same about many other marines, sailors and pilots who are now permanent fixtures in my life. It is these close bonds forged mostly at sea or on operations that are the true reward of my endeavours after 28 years inside the Mob. And counting.

Chris Terrill's new book, *How to Build an Aircraft Carrier*, published by Penguin, is now available.

RN coders hack to the future

INTELLIGENCE specialists across Defence showcased their analytical and coding skills at the OSINT Hackathon event at the Defence Battle Labs in Dorset.

Teams from the Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and STRATCOM, supported by industry experts, applied analytical and coding skills to high-priority regional scenarios.

The event was sponsored by a combination of Defence Intelligence and industry expertise including Microsoft, Tadaweb, ESRI, Elastic, CGI and Jane's. Outcomes were briefed to industry leaders and Defence VIPs, who judged the competition.

The rapidly-assembled RN team – comprising intelligence personnel from the Maritime Intelligence Fusion Cell (MIFC) and RNR intelligence specialists from HMS Ferret – exploited cutting-edge software and executed sound, time-pressured analysis to beat off the competition and win the event.

The RN's outstanding performance illustrated how its regular and reserve Intelligence specialists can adapt quickly to new technologies and successfully deliver operationally focussed outcomes; MIFC hopes to grow the capacity to provide this support to live ops on an enduring basis.

AB (Int) Liam Bell, key player of the RN contingent, said: "I really enjoyed the chance to work alongside key industry leaders to tackle enduring Defence priorities using new technologies."

"The Hackathon opened my eyes to resources that are available across industry and Defence and what a high-tempo joint deployment would feel like."

Army takes over centre

THE Joint Services Adventure Sail Training Centre has transferred command from the RN to the Army.

The reorganisation will still enable the centre to send personnel from all three armed services sailing around the world on global expeditions.

JSASTC has operated from Gosport since 1972 and remains one of the largest providers of sail training, teaching some 4,000 students each year on its fleet of 32 different classes of vessels.



Pictures: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow

Hawks pass into history

AIRCREW, engineers, and support staff were joined by their families and guests at Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose for the decommissioning ceremony of 736 Naval Air Squadron.

The last of the squadron's operational Hawk jets left the Cornish air station the week before – just one aircraft remained behind to be preserved for public display.

On a bright if bitterly cold March 31, a short ceremony was held at the squadron's now-empty hangar.

On parade were the squadron's military personnel with a guard of honour and HMS Seahawk Volunteer Band.

Guest of honour at the event was Commodore Mark Langrill, who afterwards cut a cake with the assistance of the squadron's commanding officer Lieutenant Commander Jason Flintham.

Commodore Langrill paid tribute to the professionalism of all those who have contributed to the squadron's exemplary reputation.

He said: "Today is a sad and poignant day, but it is an opportunity to recognise the achievements and recognise what 736 Naval Air Squadron is and has been throughout its history."

Lieutenant Commander Flintham said the spirit of 736 Naval Air Squadron would continue with three of his pilots going on to fly the latest generation of naval aircraft, the UK's F-35B Lightning stealth jets.

Captain Stuart Finn, the commanding officer of RNAS Culdrose, thanked the staff from industry partners Babcock International Group and Serco.

He added: "While this a poignant moment in the Fleet Air Arm's history, it has certainly been a team effort to keep these fine aircraft operating safely and professionally to deliver



maritime aggressor training. I wish to formally record my heartfelt appreciation."

The squadron has a history which dates back to 1943. It has been disbanded and formed a number of times and was most recently commissioned as a maritime aggressor squadron at Culdrose in 2013.

The Hawk T1 jets have been based at Culdrose since 1994. It was announced last year these veteran aircraft would be retired from service, with the RAF's 100 Squadron assuming the maritime role performed by 736's Hawks.

1982 barge honoured

FALKLANDS veterans spoke of their pride that an unsung workhorse of the 1982 conflict was formally honoured in Portsmouth.

Ocean-going tug RMAS Typhoon – crewed by a mix of civilians and Royal Navy personnel – performed numerous duties in the South Atlantic, from towing damaged/broken down vessels, to ferrying supplies and personnel around the task force.

To mark the 40th anniversary of the campaign, the new support barge/ship lift which was delivered to Portsmouth Naval Base earlier this year has been named in her memory.

Dubbed the 'jack-up barge' by naval base personnel, the £15m Dutch-built piece of kit is intended to revolutionise the way the city's extensive flotilla of ships – from mighty Queen Elizabeth-class carriers to River-class patrol vessels – are maintained.

The specialist vessel has four moveable legs which extend to the seabed allowing its large working platform to be lifted out of the water, creating a stable platform from which to carry out repairs and lift up machinery, even whole ships such as Hunt-class minehunter Ledbury.

The formal naming ceremony was attended by various VIPs, led by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key, as well as former Typhoon crew – the vessel was in Government service from 1960 for nearly 30 years – including one of her masters in the Falklands in 1982, Bruce Stephens.

"I am hugely honoured to be invited to this naming ceremony," said Bruce who, ever the mariner, today lives aboard a converted Dutch barge on the Trent in Nottinghamshire.

"I have very fond memories of serving in command of RMAS Typhoon, a fine Ocean Tug with a wonderful 'can do' crew."

Typhoon was the first ship to leave for the Falklands – ahead of the main task force dispatched to liberate the islands.

Once she reached the South Atlantic she was heavily engaged in supporting front-line operations, from delivering up to 18 tonnes of fresh water to ships and units, and loading elements of 17 Brigade aboard ferry-turned-troopship MV Norland ahead of the landings at San Carlos.

One week after the liberation of the islands, it was Typhoon's sad duty to tow the burned-out wreck of RFA Sir Galahad to open water, where she was scuttled by torpedoes from the submarine HMS Onyx.

Eight civilians make history qualifying as Physical Training Instructors

Clubz new entr

EIGHT sailors made history at HMS Temeraire – the first to qualify as Royal Navy physical training instructors straight from civilian life.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell presented coveted branch badges to the eight successful candidates – and their nine colleagues who passed out via the traditional route for joining the Navy's PT branch.

The latter began their Naval careers in other branches, such as engineering, warfare or logistics before deciding upon a change.

That route remains open to sailors who fancy switching branches, but now people can join the

RN directly as a clubz – as Physical Training Instructors are affectionately known – from civvy street.

Once they've completed their basic military training to convert them into sailors at HMS Raleigh in Torpoint, they head to the School of Physical Training at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth.

To mark completing the demanding 26-week Physical Training Qualifying Course to join a proud family, rich in tradition and tireless in the pursuit of excellence, the 17 successful candidates laid on a dazzling afternoon of acrobatics, club swinging, vaulting, rope climbing and even a short comedy sketch.

Around 100 family,

friends and Royal Navy VIPs attended the passing-out parade at the home of NAVYfit in Portsmouth, which started with a vibrant video clip showing the progression of the candidates from recruit to qualifying and ended with the award of certificates and prizes.

The thrilling displays showcased the physical excellence of the Service's PTIs – and what they had learned over their six months of instruction – before they go on to influence and inspire members of the RN throughout their careers, at sea and ashore.

"The display is a great way of showing families what they have been up

Green gong for pusser's grey

EFFORTS to recycle waste produced while maintaining and refitting warships in Devonport and five years of toil to make new patrol vessels the greenest Royal Navy ships since the days of sail were both highly commended in the annual Sanctuary Awards.

Now in their 30th year, the awards showcase military and civilian efforts to protect the environment and make the MOD more environmentally friendly.

At Devonport, Defence firm Babcock has changed the way it cleans the hulls of Royal Navy vessels, recycling the waste products rather than dumping them in landfill.

For years, the method of shot blasting – hurling large quantities of small sand-like particles at high pressure at a hull or section of a ship – has been used to clean or polish metal before it is painted.

The waste produced by the process – running into hundreds of tonnes a year – could not be re-used, so was transported by lorry to a dump 50 miles from Plymouth.

That's now all changed. The team at Devonport found a way to both recycle the waste – and make better use of the trucks delivering it to the naval base.

Now those same lorries take the waste away for recycling – cutting down on the use of vehicles/fuel.

The spent shot blast is taken to a site in Sheffield for reprocessing and use in refractory, asphalt production, industrial flooring or as ballast; most of the users are also found in this part of the country.

Meanwhile the green credentials of the Royal Navy's newest patrol vessels, HMS Tamar and Spey, have also been acknowledged by the awards.

Both ships are fitted with catalytic converters to reduce the emission of nitrous oxides – particularly harmful to the ozone layer – by as much as 99 per cent.

The results far exceed expectations, allowing both vessels to operate in protected waters around the world – especially important given their mission patrolling some of the distant island chains of the Indo-Pacific region.

Such is the success of the five years of hard work and collaboration between the Royal Navy, Defence Equipment and Support, the MOD and BAE Systems that the converter scheme has been broadened to include the new Type 26 frigates, spearheaded by HMS Glasgow.

after taking advantage of y rule

to over the last 26 weeks," explained course leader Petty Officer Physical Trainer Adrian Barker.

"It's been a privilege to watch the 17 qualifiers passing out grow over the past 26 weeks and I look forward to hearing about the great work they will no doubt get up to in the Fleet.

The newly-qualified clubz will now be assigned to bases, units and establishments throughout the UK.

The successful candidates were: LPTs Solomon, Makepeace, Benson, Everitt, Shannon, Neale, Molloy, French, Davis, Ryan, Blacklock, Utton-Smith, Hussell, Munden, Donaldson, Hutchin and Clark.

Picture: Keith Woodland



Naval Servicewoman of the Year Michelle Garrett is flanked by Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell and Nancy Hill of the Association of Wrens
Pictures: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum, RNAS Yeovilton

An unforgettable evening at RNAS Yeovilton celebrated the Royal Navy's

Winning women

A POLICE officer who helps service families in their darkest hour and a sailor who devised an app likely to be used across the Armed Forces were singled out at the Royal Navy's 'women of the year' awards.

Portsmouth-based police officer Petty Officer Michelle Garrett was named Servicewoman of the Year, one of 13 individuals and teams – men and women, serving personnel and civil servants – recognised by the Naval Servicewomen's Network at its third annual awards, held at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset.

The senior rating is the only scientific support manager in the Royal Navy, which includes repatriation and reuniting families with loved ones properly. Her work has been commended by coroners at inquests and by bereaved families.

In addition, she's frequently volunteered to help out fellow RN police and units at short notice, such as delivering vital equipment over leave periods, and ensure all deployed Royal Navy and Royal Marines ships and units have police support.

"It's hard work, can be very challenging but I really do love my job," she said.

Michelle is also a senior volunteer coach, and has been instrumental in helping to introduce a support team coaching 250 fellow RN police officers deployed around the globe.

And she somehow finds time to referee football matches, officiating not only at Armed Forces encounters, but was the FA's choice to oversee a high-level fixture between Chelsea FC's Women's Super League Academy and UK Armed Forces women.

All of which made her Servicewoman of the Year. "I am gobsmacked!" she said. "I'm still in shock. I really, really didn't think it was going to be me. I called my Mum and Dad to let them know and was still shaking."

And the ingenuity of Able Seaman Jessica Cornell based in Plymouth – a survey/hydrographic specialist – earned her the Innovation Award.

She developed a reporting tool as part of the MyNavy app – used across the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary – to support Service personnel



The full list of winners

Naval Servicewoman of the Year: Petty Officer (RN Police) Michelle Garrett (Portsmouth)

Emerging Talent Award (for outstanding personnel with under four years' Service): LET Siobhan Hodgson (HM Submarines)

Collaborative Working Award: Sub Lieutenant Olivia Brown (HMS Nelson)

Innovation Award: AB(HM) Jessica Cornell (HMS Drake) (pictured above)

Promotion of Gender Balance Award: Commander Mark Walker (HMS Vigilant)

Inspires Me Award: Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Ruth Guest (HMS Nelson)

Inclusive Teamwork Award: The Human Performance Team (Navy Command HQ)

Unsung Heroine: AB Halima Kahn (HMS Ceres)

Outstanding Contribution Award: CPO Collette Green (COMFASFLOT) (pictured below)



who have suffered as victims of sexual violence or abuse.

The project – Britannia Lantern – is now under development by the Royal Navy and is likely to be adopted across Defence.

"I didn't know whether to laugh, cry, smile or jump up and down but it felt just incredible," said Jessica, who came up with the idea in lockdown and spent over a year fine tuning it before suggesting it to developers.

"It is going to change people's lives for the better. It will help not just the victims or survivors of sexual abuse, bullying and harassment, but it will also support divisional officers, welfare and medical officers, the Royal Navy Police – it's going to have a major impact and help so many people."

Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Ruth Guest, who received the Inspires Me award for firing the imagination of fellow Service personnel, said:

"I was overwhelmingly surprised because I know just how many amazing women have been nominated for the awards, but I was also really happy to receive this award category

I am moving to an academic role next in Lichfield and hope I can take some more women's health projects moving further forward with the freedom that will give me."

Chief Petty Officer Collette Green received the Outstanding Contribution award for the significant impact she has made delivering parental coaching services and support to families – particularly apt as she's a new mother and brought her five-month-old daughter Olive to the ceremony.

"I look after the Northern region with responsibilities across maternity, paternity, shared parental leave and adoption, she explained.

"It's hard enough being a parent but when you add on Service life and perhaps two parents serving, it can get complicated and I want to help people navigate the challenges and make things easier for parents."

Commander Lucy Ottley, Chair of the Naval Servicewomen's Network said: "The awards reflect the achievements of our Servicewomen and workforce who are excelling across the Fleet and demonstrating extraordinary professionalism and commitment in their duties.

"We received many nominations which were all of high calibre and each nominee was worthy of an award."

The network has been running since 2013, dedicated to improving the lived experience of servicewomen in the Royal Navy.

Nine years later, its founder Commodore Ellie Ablett was thanked by her colleagues as she retires from the Navy.



An RAF fighter controller on exchange studies the aerial picture from HMS Queen Elizabeth's ops room
Picture: PO(Phot) Jay Allen

Global Modern Freddy

ROYAL Navy Fighter Controllers met at HMS Collingwood to discuss the latest threats, tactics and technology in the UK and around the world.

Given the current situation in Eastern Europe, it is critical that the controllers – employed across the Fleet, mostly on Type 45 destroyers and Queen Elizabeth-class carriers, but also on exchange with the RAF – maintain a fighting edge, building on knowledge and expanding opportunities for further integration across UK Defence and NATO.

Tactical Command and Control (TACC2) is central to the direction of air power, from the sea, in the air and on land.

The conference heard from all front-line units with an emphasis on the experiences learned on Operation Fortis, last year's carrier deployment to the Pacific Rim.

Qualified Weapon Instructors (QWIs), who graduated from the British equivalent of Top Gun, gave briefings on modern threats and tactics as well as an in-depth look at the modernisation of tactical data links used throughout the fleet.

Other guest speakers included those from the E7 Wedgetail squadron and a team from the ASOS, based in MOD Boscombe Down.

Both employ fighter controllers to coordinate and direct the air battle from both the air and from the ground, often integrating with NATO forces in a multi threat environment.

An update on Merlin Mk2 also gave FCs an insight into yet another asset they might use and employ during a fight – Observers at 820 NAS (the Baggers) are also trained in fighter control and direct jets from the back of the Merlin Mk 2 Crownsnest.

Doctrine and the work which the Maritime Warfare Centre is compiling from the lessons identified on Fortis were also briefed, giving fighter controllers an idea of tactical changes which

might be on the horizon.

Keeping fully abreast of the tactical doctrine and developments from around the fleet is critical to success as TACC2. The conference gave all fighter controllers – known as Freddies – the opportunity to learn something new and exchange ideas for future endeavours.

The symposium also hosted 617 Squadron personnel, the Dambusters squadron which embarked on HMS Queen Elizabeth throughout her maiden voyage. This liaison is key for both aircrew and controllers in order to maintain professional relationships, particularly on the back of the success of the inaugural carrier deployment.

"Having a day purely focussed on Fighter Control and Air Warfare was brilliant," said Lieutenant James Thompson, serving aboard HMS Prince of Wales.

"We all learned a great deal, particularly from those on exchange with the RAF. I would encourage all who have an interest in air warfare to attend in the summer."

Freddies have traditionally trained with the Hawks from 736 NAS, but since their retirement (see opposite) FA-20s from Draken Aviation provide most of the training for the front-line controllers as well as the students at the D-School, based in RNAS Yeovilton.

The next conference is scheduled for the end of next month. All those employed as air warfare tacticians and operators are encouraged to attend and anyone with an avid interest in air warfare (and wider warfare) or those who would like to understand more about Fighter Control should contact Lieutenant Dave Perry (Instructor 2).

The June conference aims to host intelligence briefings, threat briefings and QWI-led discussions on tactics and execution.

Extra support for sport

PERSONNEL can claim up to £100 to buy sports bras to ensure fitness sessions are not a pain.

Research by the Army shows that an ill-fitting bra can significantly impair support and breast health during arduous physical activity – with more than four out of five trainee soldiers found to be wearing the wrong sized bra.

With the RN requiring all personnel to maintain fitness and undertake regular physical exercise, all RN and RM personnel who require a sports bra for support during physical training, sport, physical education and the fitness test can claim the cost up to a maximum of £50 per bra via JPA. See RNTM 03-019/22.

In the long term a contract for a sports bra fitting service and supply of sports bras will be signed and established.



Were you involved in making this mace?

DO YOU know the story behind Fareham's most treasured item of regalia?

The mayoral mace is Item No.1 on the inventory of the council – lovingly produced by a skilled team of sailors at the town's naval establishment, HMS Collingwood.

Over the winter of 1973-1974 a team from Collingwood's Common Training Workshop Group comprising Lieutenant Tony Williams, Chief Ordnance Electrical Artificers Bernard Jones, Terry Peat and Brian Coe and Chief Electrical Artificer George Reed, toiled in their free periods to design, create a mock-up and finally the finished product.

The resulting mace is 1.2m (four feet) long – made of brass and lignum vitae with heavy silver and gold-plated accoutrements and weighs 26lbs.

The borough's coat of arms is inscribed on an enamel plate at the base of the mace which was presented at the inaugural meeting of the borough council and mayor-making ceremony on April 9 1974 by Collingwood's then captain, Captain A A Murphy.

As Fareham's first item of civic regalia the mace is carried by and used for all official occasions by Fareham's mayor to this day, including all council meetings.

With the 50th anniversary of the borough looming, its mayor, Cllr Pamela Bryant, as well as the Williams family, are keen to learn the story of the mace's creation.

Contemporary records and newspaper clippings provide some of the background story: Lt Williams was the overall designer and also produced a booklet detailing how to clean/repair the mace (the pamphlet has disappeared, sadly); CPO Reed made the Maltese Cross on the top, CPO Coe turned the wood, CPO Peat supervised the fitting and CPO Jones created the fins.

The Williams family were recently treated to a private viewing of the mace – when the mayor asked for help with the backstory.

"It was touching to see how much it is still valued within the mayoral team," said Lindsay Williams, Lt Williams' daughter-in-law.

"We would love to hear from any personnel or their families, who may recall the project during their time in HMS Collingwood.

"We believe there may be retired personnel who were in training in the workshops, who may well have anecdotes which would be wonderful to record for posterity."

The Williams can be contacted at: 35.Burnside@gmail.com



Memorial to sub tragedy

A PLAQUE in memory of those who lost their lives on HM Submarine H42 just off Europa Point in 1922 was unveiled in Gibraltar on the 100th anniversary of the tragedy.

The boat was taking part in exercises off the headland when she was accidentally run down by HMS Versatile having just surfaced.

H42 sank immediately with the loss of all 26 hands. The idea of honouring her and all aboard came from William Price, whose great uncle was the submarine's second-in-command, Lieutenant James Price DSC.

Commander British Forces Gibraltar, Commodore Steven Dainton, Father Danny Hernandez and Gibraltar Heritage Trust's Dr Ferrell joined family, friends and veterans at Europa Point for centenary memorial and plaque dedication.

"I am incredibly grateful for your willingness to commemorate H42," said Mr Price. "It means a very great deal. My great uncle has always been a legendary figure in our family."

"He has always been quite a big part of our family history and we have a couple of photographs of him dotted about the house as well as a portrait in oils that his father commissioned after his death."

Picture: Cpl Connor Payne RAF, HQBF Gibraltar



Tributes to the greatest raid

SAILORS and Royal Marines paid their respects to the ultimate commando raid in Falmouth – 80 years after the attackers sailed from the Cornish port.

The ships of Operation Chariot – codename for the attempt to destroy dock facilities at St Nazaire, then occupied by the Nazis – left the Fal in March 1942... and sailed into immortality.

Eight decades later, what became known as 'The greatest raid of all', was remembered as military personnel, council officials and members of the public gathered at the St Nazaire memorial on Prince of Wales Pier to pay their respect to courage and valour shown on what considered a certain suicide mission.

They were joined by a representative for the Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall and Mayors of Falmouth, Penryn and Helston, as well as the Royal Naval Regional Commander, Brigadier Jock Fraser Royal Marines, to remember the audacious raid.

Among the serving sailors present was Chief Petty Officer Lee Burkin, of P2000 patrol boat HMS Exploit. His Grandfather, Able Seaman Gerald Burkin, served in S-class submarine HMS Sturgeon which left Portsmouth ahead the main convoy of ships for the raid.

The boat's mission was to act as a navigational beacon, providing the exact position for entry to the Loire River, from where the raiding force was to make their run up the estuary.

Lee laid a wreath in honour of his grandfather and said: "I'm very proud of Gerald, my grandfather and his part in the St Nazaire raid onboard HMS Sturgeon. The Falmouth 80th Commemoration is a fitting tribute to the bravery of all the Sailors and Commandos of World War 2."

On March 26 1942, HMS Campbeltown accompanied by 16 motor launches packed full of Commandos and escorted by two destroyers, departed Falmouth with the intention of blocking the St Nazaire dock, rendering the port unusable by the German Navy – although it had already withdrawn its capital ships to home waters.

The raid was successful and Campbeltown, packed with explosives, rammed the dock (pictured inset) and exploded, destroying the gates and knocking the giant dry dock out of action for the rest of the war.

Meanwhile, commandos transported in the motor launches landed and destroyed dockside installations, as well as demolishing much of the



infrastructure around the port.

The cost of the raid was high. Of the 611 commandos and sailors who took part in Operation Chariot, 169 were killed and 200, mostly wounded, were taken prisoner.

Only 242 returned to Falmouth after the raid. Some of the dead lie in cemeteries in France, some were brought home to England, others have no known grave.

Only four of the motor launches made it home. Five Victoria Crosses were awarded, two of them posthumously.

At a separate ceremony in Falmouth cemetery, family members of Leading Seaman Bill Savage VC (MGB 314), and Motor Mechanic Tom Parker (MGB 477) laid wreaths at their graves.

"It is an honour to join the annual service of remembrance in Falmouth in commemoration of Operation Chariot, the St Nazaire raid," said Brigadier Fraser. "This commando raid holds a special place in the heritage of our nation's commando and amphibious forces."

"The dedication of the St Nazaire Society and Falmouth Town Council has once again enabled us to reflect together on the courage and commando spirit displayed by the 611 men who undertook the raid and to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice."

As well as inspiring future generations of commando raiders, Campbeltown's actions have earned the return of the ship's name as one of the five vessels in the Type 31 Inspiration class of next-generation frigates.

Picture: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum, RNAS Yeovilton

Dorsetshire's last fight remembered

MEMBERS of HMS Dorsetshire Association gathered on Plymouth Hoe at 1.50pm precisely on April 5, 80 years to the minute that the cruiser was sunk by Japanese aircraft.

The Devonport-based ship was pounced upon by three dozen enemy dive bombers in the Indian Ocean. Hit at least ten times, with one of the bombs detonating a magazine, the cruiser went down in about eight minutes.

HMS Cornwall was sunk in the same raid. Hit eight times, she disappeared by the bow about ten minutes later.

Although more than 1,100 men were saved, well over 400 went down with the two ships.

The Japanese compounded their triumph by sinking carrier HMS Hermes (also based in Devonport) a few days later.

Dorsetshire Association Vice President Admiral Sir Richard and Lady Ibbotson led a small group to the Naval Memorial on the Hoe to lay a wreath in memory of all those from the three ships.

All three sailed from Colombo in present-day Sri Lanka and to mark the milestone anniversary a local group led by retired Danish Army officer Henrik Melder, hired a small aircraft to fly over the shipwrecks and drop a wreath into the Indian Ocean to remember those lost.

As far as the association knows, there is one survivor of Dorsetshire still with us: 99-year-old John Cannon, who was the commander's messenger. He still lives in his own home in Paignton. He is also the last survivor of carrier HMS Courageous sunk in 1939 when he was just 16. If there are any other survivors of the above ships, the association would like to hear from them.

Big ask of little ship

EX-SAILORS Tony Bilson, Michael 'Jack' Hawkins, and Tom Morrison hope to sail Dunkirk 'little ship' Estrallita from the Norfolk Broads to Poole to raise money for SSAFA.

The trio – who served in HMS Bulwark in the 70s – planned the trip in 2020 to mark the anniversaries of VE/VJ Day and the Dunkirk, but lockdowns prevented the boat getting any further than Ramsgate.

Tony has restored the boat, which served through most of WW2 protecting Poole Harbour, and later was used as a yacht/ accommodation (it was home on the Thames to ITV *Opportunity Knocks* presenter Hughie Green in the 1960s) before she eventually fell into disrepair.

Estrallita begins her voyage on May 18. You can follow her progress on Twitter/ Instagram (@estrallita1934) and donate to SSAFA at: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/estrallita1934. The team hope to be in Portsmouth Harbour on May 29 for Gosport's Falklands 40 parade.



HMS Glasgow welcomes the 'luckiest men alive'

Chatham's 1982 role recalled

VETERANS of the 'luckiest ship alive' in the Falklands conflict were treated to a unique reunion by the team behind the latest Royal Navy ship to bear the name Glasgow.

Sailors and BAE staff at Govan invited 44 veterans of the Type 42 destroyer to Govan to see her 21st-Century successor under construction.

Many of the veterans were from The HMS Glasgow Association and were joined by Rear Admiral Paul Hoddinott, who commanded HMS Glasgow in 1982, as well as two other former Commanding Officers, Commodore (Retired) Dick Twitchen and Commander (Retired) Alistair Ireland.

Glasgow earned the tag 'luckiest ship alive' just 12 days into the conflict in the South Atlantic when she came under attack from Skyhawk jets in company with frigate HMS Brilliant after pummeling Argentine positions.

Glasgow's Sea Dart missile system suffered a technical failure and her main gun jammed after just eight rounds, but Brilliant's Sea Wolf missiles came to the rescue, knocking out two enemy jets, causing a third to crash into the Atlantic as it tried to avoid a missile.

The fourth A4 Skyhawk succeeded in dropping its bomb which struck the water, bounced off like a skipping stone, passed between two of Glasgow's masts and landed back in the ocean.

Shortly afterwards a second wave of Skyhawks appeared, their pilots using more skilful tactics, the ships' missiles bedevilled by technical problems.

Two jets succeeded in getting their bombs away. One bounced over Brilliant, the other struck Glasgow's stern.

On its lightning-fast journey through the hull, the bomb carried away an air compressor, some of the air intake trunks to the two Tyne engines, and the diesel generators' fuel tank before passing out the other side. The Atlantic was pouring in – about three feet deep, causing numerous electrical systems to short.

President of the HMS Glasgow Association, Gary Eaton, was a Marine Engineering Mechanic onboard the ship during the attack. On May 12 he was in his usual place in the After Auxiliary Machinery Room.

"The bomb entered the ship starboard side and travelled through the engine room on the port side, holing us just above the water line," said Gary.

"I didn't know what had happened at the time. I came to and found myself lying on the plates between two diesel generators."

His training kicking in, Gary quickly inspected the space finding the large hole behind the port distilling plant.

"I thought – 'I'm not supposed to see daylight and water there'," said Gary. "It soon dawned on me the reason why!"

Gary and the crew got to work temporarily plugging the hole with pieces of timber and mattresses – damage control methods used by the Royal Navy to this day – to keep the Atlantic at bay sufficiently for the ship to sail for more permanent repairs. It wasn't until afterwards that it hit home how close he had come to losing his life.

"Someone presented me with a valve which had flown through the air and penetrated the



Glasgow veterans pose with today's ship's company in front of the scaffold-clad new ship bearing the Scottish city's name

Pictures: LPhot Finn Stainer-Hutchins



Falklands veteran Gary Eaton (centre) points out where he was on the destroyer when the bomb struck to Leading Writer Hayden Palmer (left) and Leading Hand Samuela Halafiki (right) while (above right) a Skyhawk makes its wave-topping bombing run against HMS Glasgow on May 12 1982 – as seen from the flight deck of HMS Brilliant and (right) the Sunday Express hails the destroyer's return from the war in 1982.

bulkhead between two spaces. It had landed at the spot where I normally operated," he said.

The Falklands-era HMS Glasgow was a far cry from the modern warship currently under construction at BAE Systems' shipyard.

During the visit, the Association members had the opportunity to hear about the next generation capabilities that will make the new Type 26 one of the most formidable frigates in the fleet.

One of those who enjoyed the tour of the shipyard was Commander Ian Danbury. In 1982 he was an Officer under Training onboard HMS Glasgow.

"Forty years ago, HMS Glasgow became part of the remarkable history of the Falklands conflict and today, myself, and about 40 members of that 1982 ship's company, are privileged to see the new Glasgow take shape at Govan," said Ian.

"For all of us who sailed and fought in the old HMS Glasgow

this has been a very rewarding experience.

"The city of Glasgow is special to us for the outstanding support her people gave to the old HMS Glasgow throughout her commission and especially during the Falklands conflict. Visiting the new ship and her newly formed Ship's Company has been especially poignant."

He continued: "We all feel that the name HMS Glasgow will be in good hands as she takes shape and joins the Fleet. She proudly wears the Battle Honour 'Falkland Islands 1982' that we each had some small part in creating."

The highlight of the visit was when the veterans got up close to the new HMS Glasgow which is being worked on by BAE Systems' expert engineering staff at the Govan shipyard.

"It is an honour to host Falkland veterans, many of whom served in the previous HMS Glasgow," said Sir Simon Lister, BAE Systems, Naval Ships



Managing Director.

"Events such as this, where we are reminded of the risks the men and women of the Royal Navy take on our behalf, strengthens our resolve to deliver the next generation platforms and technologies that contribute to our national security and enable the Royal Navy to protect what matters most."

Commander Mark Quinn, the new Glasgow's first weapon engineering officer, said the growing ship's company of the new frigate enjoyed "a special link" with their predecessors.

He added: "To be able to offer them a glimpse of the next generation Type 26 frigate and the capabilities that it will afford the Royal Navy, particularly in this 40th anniversary year of the Falklands conflict, has really made it a day to remember."

The new Glasgow is the first of eight City-class multi-role frigates being built for the Royal Navy and is currently on the standings at BAE's Govan yard undergoing completion ahead of being lowered into the neighbouring Clyde.

DID you serve in Chatham dockyard – or on a Chatham-based ship – during the Falklands?

If you did, the town's historic dockyard wants to record your story for posterity as part of its commemorations of the 1982 conflict.

HMS Endurance, Plymouth, Courageous, Conqueror, Valiant, Herald, and Hydra were among vessels from the dockyard – which was slated for closure in 1984 under the 1981 Defence Review – which took part in Operate Corporate in the South Atlantic 40 years ago.

The historic dockyard trust is creating a digital exhibition of accounts from 1982 and wants to hear from those connected with the yard for 'In their own words', which will feature a series of voice recordings.

"The Dockyard played such a significant role in the conflict, providing support to the Royal Navy, and as home to the Stand-by Squadron, poised to replace warships allocated to the Falklands task force," said the Nick Ball, the dockyard trusts Collections, Galleries and Interpretation Manager.

"The Dockyard workforce worked 24 hours a day to prepare ships and submarines for recommissioning. Despite Government plans to close the Dockyard in 1981, the conflict meant that the Dockyard in fact stayed open until 1984."

The exhibition will be both online and available in the display gallery on the historic dockyard site. Contact info@chdt.org.uk if you're interested in recording your memoirs of 82.

And running until June 14 (the day the war ended) is a display of 40 photographs – some restored, others never published before – taken by journalist and Falklander Graham Bound who edited the islands' newspaper – which was immediately closed by the Argentine occupiers.

Instead, he documented the invasion and life in occupied Stanley, at first freely, later secretly as the conflict intensified.

Warrior all clean for tourists

A SEVEN-strong team of conservation experts from the National Museum of the Royal Navy at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard ensured the replica engines of HMS Warrior are spick and span for the 2022 tourist season.

They spent a week giving the engines, which cover an area of around 20 square metres and span two decks of the Victorian warship.

The replicas were installed as part of the massive refit of the ship in Hartlepool over 30 years ago, before she was moved to her current home in Portsmouth Harbour.

While they no longer operate as working engines, they are driven by an electric motor in the prop shaft tunnel and visitors love to watch how they would have worked when she dominated the seas in the early 1860s.

"It's a messy job but essential to keep the engines pristine," explained Morgan Creed, conservator at the NMRN.

"Because they are under the waterline, the conditions around the mechanism get humid. They also get dusty, and this can cause corrosion when dust gets trapped in the grease and coatings, which we apply to protect the engines from the high humidity and to keep them lubricated."

Every little helps as unit funds boosted

REDDITCH and Bromsgrove Sea Cadets have been named winners in the Tesco Community Grants scheme.

The unit were presented with a cheque for £1,500 by the Tesco Community Champion, Mary Gill to spend towards new technological equipment for their cadets as well as renovations to their headquarters.

Mary said: "The community champion job role allows me to help the local community with different projects in the name of Tesco.

"The sea cadets plan to use the money to buy new computer equipment to help the cadets to gain qualifications, update the mess hall so that the cadets have somewhere to be able to relax and modernise the classrooms with new tables, chairs and carpet."

Margaret Blizzard, Warwickshire District Chair for Sea Cadets, said: "The grant was originally applied for by our previous Commanding Officer in 2019 and we had given up hope of hearing anything. The impact of the pandemic meant schemes such as these had been put on hold and only opened again in mid-2021.

"We were delighted to receive notification that we had been

successful and that we would be receiving the award, which was fully dependent on the public voting.

"The funds we were awarded were also used for two training weekends for our junior cadets, the Junior Leaders Award and for a STEM badge course."

The Junior Leaders Award is an introduction into leadership for juniors, which aims to help them to develop organisation, communication and teamwork skills.

"I have gained confidence and gained new friends," commented one young participant, while another junior cadet said: "I have gained confidence to speak up and lead activities. I have a new understanding of how to lead games. I would really love to do this again."

During the STEM course, cadets got to make geodesic domes, slime, catapults and satellites. They also created tornadoes in a bottle, learnt about how salt changes the density of water and even had a go at making ancient compasses.

All the cadets who participated were successful in completing their Crest awards, while several cadets also completed their STEM proficiency badge.



Good drills for visit of Belgian Ambassador

STUDENTS at the Duke of York's Military School in Dover were joined by the Belgian Ambassador to the UK, His Excellency Mr Bruno van der Pluijm, for the annual Inter-House Drill Competition.

All students from Year 8 to 13 took part, representing their respective Houses. The competition winners, Marlborough House, will now have the honour of Trooping the Colour at the School's impressive Grand Day celebrations in July.

The Ambassador presented the Drill Competition Shield to

the winning House, and, in his speech to the School, underlined the important role of the young in carrying forward shared values in uncertain times.

Anamaria, JUO of Marlborough, was also awarded the Baroness Thatcher Sword of Honour for being judged best Junior Under Officer of the Year.

Alex Foreman, the School's Principal, said: "Great teamwork and precision are the hallmarks of our keenly contested Drill Competition which brings the School together to celebrate our military ethos and rich Dukie history."

Cash for boating gear floats cadets' boat

CADETS across the country will benefit greatly from the boats and equipment made available to them thanks to a significant donation of £800,000 from the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Officers' Association (RNVR).

A new boating hub in Wallasey (Merseyside), four RS21 keel boats to expand Sea Cadets' national fleet, 132 RS Zests, 120 kayaks, micro adventure grants to increase boating opportunities for cadets and a twin screw displacement vessel on the River Thames for training both cadets and seafarers.

These are just some of the items that sea cadets aged 10 to 18 will gain through RNVR's recent funding to the youth charity.

"We are extremely grateful to RNVR for their valuable support," said the CEO of Sea Cadets, Martin Coles CBE. "More modern boats means more boating opportunities for thousands of young people, which in turn broadens their horizons and

helps them to develop into resilient and confident young people who can launch well in life."

The Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve was first formed in 1873.

The Officers' Association established its premises in London in 1946, which closed down last year, after 75 years of service.

The RNVR made the donation to the youth charity by using proceeds from the sale of its Mayfair-based Naval Club.

The Chairman of the RNVR Officer's Association, Simon Wilson, said: "We are very pleased to make these resources available to Sea Cadets investing in young people's futures through nautical adventure, leadership opportunities and fun.

"Playing our part in boosting the confidence, inspiration and opportunities of cadets across the UK also means that our legacy will live on through them."

Sea Cadets are planning to name one of their

vessels in honour of RNVR as well as displaying plaques on four of the RS21s as a constant reminder of the association's generosity.

A plaque in the RNVR's honour will also be unveiled at the new Wallasey Boating Hub during an official opening ceremony later in the year.

Sea Cadets will also get involved in the Battle of the Atlantic (BoA) project to commemorate The Battle of the Atlantic, the longest campaign of World War II.

Liverpool was the command centre of the battle and a further RNVR donation is enabling plans to build a landscaped garden of reflection, an International Battle of the Atlantic Arboretum Centre and a permanent RNVR gallery to span both sides of the River Mersey.

The youth charity will also play an active role in the numerous events which will be held to honour the countless sailors and soldiers who fought so bravely and lost their lives to defend our country.



Celebrations at last

THE Volunteer Cadet Corps (VCC) celebrated 120 years since its formation in 1901. The pandemic prevented the organisation from holding any events during its anniversary year in 2021, but celebrated the milestone a year late.

The VCC paraded at HMS Excellent with over 250 cadets and adult volunteers from units across the UK (Portsmouth, Gosport, Fareham, Plymouth, Lymington, Arbroath and its newest unit Chivenor based in North Devon).

Among the array of VIPs and inspecting officers were Mr Nigel Atkinson (HM Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire), Rear Admiral Philip Hally CB MBE (Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Personnel Capability) and Honorary Captain VCC), and Brigadier Tony Turner ADC (Deputy Commandant General Royal Marines).

The VCC were joined by the Band of HM Royal Marines (Royal Marines School of Music) who provided the musical support throughout the event including performing *Dignus* for the march past - this is the Royal Marines Cadet march and takes its name from the Royal Marines Volunteer Cadet Corps motto 'Be Worthy'.

During the parade, the VCC presented WO2 (VCC) Jim Coomber from Portsmouth Division RMVCC his 4th Cadet Force Medal Clasp for 36 years' service and WO2 (VCC) Paul Holden from Lymington Division RMVCC his 3rd Cadet Force Medal Clasp for 30 years' service.

The VCC was also glad to welcome Mr Terry Wing and Mrs Shirley Wing to the parade. Terry was

Commander VCC until 2020 and was instrumental in making sure the VCC not only survived but thrived, gaining for the VCC full MOD sponsored status.

The VCC aims to develop young people into dependable and reliable members of society, prepare them for life, and offer them a cadet experience that augments and enhances what they learn at school.

A recent report by the University of Northampton found that joining the cadets offers a range of benefits to individuals and the wider community. Following research across the cadet forces, the report outlined the huge positive impact that they have on social inclusion, mobility and the mental wellbeing of young people.

Commenting after the parade, Lt Col (VCC) Chris Spratt (Commander VCC) said: "Whilst a year later than planned due to Covid, today's parade was a magnificent way to celebrate our 120th anniversary. I'm very proud of all of our cadets who paraded today, demonstrating the very best of our youth."

The VCC started with one unit at what was then the Royal Marines Artillery (RMA) barracks at Eastney in Portsmouth. First known as the Royal Marines Artillery Cadet Corps, not only was it the first cadet unit in what was to become the VCC but it was the first cadet unit formally established and recognised by the Admiralty.

Whilst the old Royal Marines barracks at Eastney is known as the ancestral home of the VCC, the first cadet night wasn't held there. In fact, for reasons that remain unknown, the enrolment night took place about a mile away in the Mission Hall at Prince

Albert Street (now known as Prince Albert Road).

It was in 1904 that the first Royal Naval Cadet unit was established at the then HMS Victory Royal Naval Barracks (now HMS Nelson). It was modelled on the RMA Cadets at Eastney and it was in this year that further RMA and Royal Marines Light Infantry (RMLI) cadets were stood up in Chatham and Plymouth.

Such was the success of these cadets' units, all sponsored and recognised by the Admiralty, more units were set up at HMS Excellent, Forton Barracks in Gosport and Royal Marines Deal in Kent, and later on at all the Royal Navy 'stone frigates' located in the Portsmouth area. It is not known when the title Volunteer Cadet Corps was first used but the earliest record we have is from a Navy List in 1913.

The word 'volunteer' was used a lot at the time especially in territorial units and indicates that the instructors were drawn from volunteers in their respective barracks, although perhaps they were 'volunteered' rather than being so willing.

Because of the way the VCC was set up back in the early 1900s the Cadet Corps has always been based within Royal Navy and Royal Marines establishments, unlike the majority of peer community cadet forces. This remains practice to this day, and while now open to young people from civilian families, the VCC still have a sizeable proportion of service children joining as cadets. Unit COs are now cadet force adult volunteers (CFAVs) but there is always someone from parent establishments appointed as liaison officer, retaining the important link between the cadets and the base that supports them.



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Royal launch

Princess inaugurates boat station



THE Princess Royal officially inaugurated the new Sea Cadets Port Edgar Boat Station in Edinburgh's picturesque Port Edgar Marina.

As Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps, the event provided the opportunity for The Princess Royal to meet with cadets and watch them as they paraded and got out on the water, enjoying boating, sailing, rowing and paddlesports activities.

In her speech, The Princess Royal commented that the new boat station was "an exceptional place" and expressed her hope that Port Edgar Boat Station "will be home for many generations of sea cadets."

She also praised the charity for the opportunities it offers to young people, telling the cadets: "Sea Cadets has quite a history – a history that you keep adding to."

"We are delighted to have welcomed HRH The Princess Royal to the opening of Port Edgar Boat Station and we see it as the first of many occasions our Admiral will be able to engage with cadets and support the

valuable work taking place within the charity to launch young people for life, whatever their background," said the CEO of Sea Cadets, Martin Coles CBE.

"Sea Cadets works with 14,000 young people across 400 units to broaden their horizons and create possibilities, helping young people to develop into resilient, confident young people.

"In the current climate of global conflict and economic strife, not to mention the impact of the pandemic, our young people are facing more challenges than ever before, so investing in their future has never been more crucial.

"Our new residential boat station will provide ample opportunities for even more young people to enjoy boating and water sports, earn qualifications and take part in courses such as first aid, navigation and meteorology held on site."

More than 80 cadets, including Royal Marines Cadets and junior cadets from across



Scotland, Northern Ireland and the north of England participated in the opening event.

Twelve cadets were able to represent the 'Cadet Voice' and discussed with their Admiral the issues that are most important to them.

Guests attending included Brigadier John Thomson QVRM TD PhD DL (Deputy Lieutenant of the City of Edinburgh), Captain Neil Downing (Captain Sea Cadets) and Admiral Sir Philip Jones GCB DL (President of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets), as well as representatives of the Royal Navy, youth, education and maritime sectors.

The Princess Royal has been an active supporter of the youth charity for many years, commissioning both the former and current Sea Cadets flagship, the TS Royalist.

The new Sea Cadets boat station in Port Edgar Marina is well located to serve young people across the region with good transport links and offers superb facilities both on and off the water.



Pioneering their way to a greener future

POOLE Sea Cadets are showing their commitment to protecting the environment by installing solar panels at their unit to provide clean energy and feed battery storage as well as replacing their existing lighting with a more environmentally-friendly option.

Through this 'green' energy project and focus on sustainability – which the cadets have named 'Project Liquid Sun' – the unit is hoping to set an example to launch similar projects across the Sea Cadet Corps.

"Our 60 cadets, aged 10-18, are very aware of environmental matters and want to use our resources in a responsible way," explains Poole Sea Cadets' Trustee, Lee Hardy.

These environmentally-friendly innovations follow a successful grant bid made to Low Carbon Dorset.

It is predicted that clean energy production will be 15.23 MWh, thereby removing 11.19 tonnes of CO2 per annum, which equates to five acres of trees absorbing CO2.

Poole Sea Cadets' HQ building is 83 years old and formerly had to pay a high monthly electricity bill. Replacing their lighting to a more sustainable option will also mean they will have more funds to invest directly in its cadets. They are also planning to sell spare electricity back to the grid. The new installation are set to be completed by the end of this summer.

Poole Sea Cadets are grateful to Low Carbon Dorset which backs a programme of activities on behalf of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) with the aim of stimulating growth in Dorset's low carbon economy. The programme is run by Dorset Council and the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Community are reunited

A CIVIC celebration was held at All Saints Church in March to celebrate the work of the community in Marlow, Buckinghamshire, with Marlow Unit also invited to attend.

Hosted by Marlow Mayor Richard Scott, it was the first time in two years since a civic service had been held due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Invited guests included the Lord Lieutenant, Countess Howe, the High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire Mr George Anson, and the Chair of Buckinghamshire Council, Councillor Zahir Mohamed.

The mayors from Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and deputy mayor of High Wycombe Lesley Clarke were also in attendance.

Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Nick Jones of the Marlow Sea Cadets was invited to speak. He addressed the audience on how the unit had been actively seeking cadets in a bid to build up numbers after not being able to hold any activities during the pandemic.

"The cadets are very much part of the community and help out at events whenever possible," Lt. Jones said. "Being part of the cadets helps to form them as responsible and caring adults through their various activities."

The Mayor of Marlow, Richard Scott, said: "The service was called a civic celebration to reflect on the last two years of the pandemic and that hopefully the worst was over but also to reach out to our wider community.

"There have been many examples of the community in Marlow coming together, not least of which a food distribution service to the vulnerable, housebound and health service workers was established."

Cadets join tribute to Duke of Edinburgh

SEA CADETS and Duke of Edinburgh gold award winners lined the entrance to Westminster Abbey in a nod to some of Prince Philip's greatest passions – the empowerment of young people and the Royal Navy. A marching band from the Royal Marines also played as the 1,800 guests arrived to attend the service.

The Queen made her first public appearance in more than five months as she entered the abbey where she had been crowned and later married Prince Philip. Senior royals in attendance at the memorial

included the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall, the Princess Royal, Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence, the Duke of York, The Earl of Wessex, the Countess of Wessex, Lady Louise Mountbatten-Windsor and Viscount Severn. The service was also attended by around 30 foreign royals.

Nine cadets and two volunteers attended the service to pay respects to the Duke of Edinburgh who gave 40 years of dedicated service to Sea Cadets as the former Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps.

The memorial included several elements

the Duke had planned for his funeral at St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle in April last year.

The Dean of Windsor paid tribute to Philip's intellect, work ethic, sense of humour and devotion to his family. The Right Reverend David Conner described the duke as a "remarkable man" who was committed to "a host of down-to-earth enterprises".

Sea Cadets around the country salute the passing of our former Admiral, remembering with great affection his deep interest in our work.



Bronze Wings reward for 14

FOURTEEN sea cadets from across the country were awarded their Bronze Wings at a ceremony in Weymouth, Dorset.

The awards follow the cadets' successful completion of the Aviation Foundation Course last week, which included subjects like principles of flight, air engineering, how to navigate a plane, meteorology and aviation law. The 2022 course was the first event to take place face-to-face since 2019, due to Covid-19.

"The aviation course is extremely popular, with hundreds of cadets aged 15-17 sending in their application to express their interest in taking part," said the Course Director, Sub-Lieutenant Steve Cook RNR, who is Sea Cadets' National Staff Officer for Aviation. "Out of these, the top 20 cadets from the Combined Cadet Force are selected, based on the strength of the application."

The aviation courses run by the youth charity, Sea Cadets, provide a valuable opportunity for cadets to gain experience in the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm and the flying of aircraft.

The course was set up and endorsed by the Royal Navy to offer cadets an opportunity to take part in a Flying Scholarship programme. The syllabus – compiled in conjunction with qualified flying instructors – aims to develop young people's confidence and sense of responsibility. It also opens up career possibilities into both civil and military aviation for the cadets.

As part of the course, cadets get to spend a day at RNAS Yeovilton

in Somerset, which is one of the Royal Navy's principal air bases. Covering an area of around 1,400 acres, it is home to more than 100 aircraft and one of the busiest military airfields in the UK.

"The cadets visited the 727 Squadron and the Royal Navy Historic Flight charity, Navy Wings," said Steve. "They got to meet the squadron commander and instructors as well as students undertaking current RN screening for flying training."

"I am very proud of the cadets who worked very hard during the course. It's fantastic that all the 20 cadets passed and have been awarded their Bronze Wings. Our sincere thanks to Pooleys Flight Equipment Ltd for sponsoring the training materials and prizes for our cadets."

One cadet described the course as "challenging but very rewarding" while another said: "Not only has it broadened my scope of knowledge in areas I otherwise would not have looked into, it has helped to develop me as a person for my future endeavours."

At the event, Ordinary Cadet Poppy Richardson from Bristol Knowle Sea Cadets Unit won the top place on this year's course, while Able Cadet Amelia Harrison from Kettering Sea Cadets Unit won the prize as the most improved student.

The top 12 cadets from this year's Bronze Wings course will go on to take part in the Silver Wings programme later in the year, where they will receive in-flight training as part of their course.



Reservist flies flag for RN on NATO ops

A Royal Navy Reservist from Plymouth has returned from mobilisation to Offshore Patrol Vessel HMS Trent as the media officer to Standing NATO Maritime Group Two while the ship patrolled the Eastern Mediterranean.



Serving alongside other reservist and regular personnel in the ship's company, plastics scientist Imogen Napper was mobilised from her role at Plymouth University to coordinate HMS Trent's media relations activity.

HMS Trent, the third vessel of her class, is deployed to the Mediterranean to support NATO on its international security mission.

An expedition scientist and specialist in plastic pollution in her day job, Imogen holds a doctorate in understanding the sources and fate of pollution in the world's oceans.

Imogen, who was deployed for four weeks, said: "I joined the Royal Naval Reserves after hearing stories from my family who had served in the Royal Navy."

"The camaraderie of the ship, being at sea and being part of a team working towards a shared goal is a completely unique experience."



"I'm able to use the skills that I have learnt in my civilian life and use them to promote the work the Royal Navy is doing."

"We worked alongside ships, submarines and aircraft from seven NATO nations. I'm extremely proud to represent the Royal Naval Reserve on the global stage."

Commander Tom Knott, Commanding Officer of HMS Trent, said: "Royal Naval Reservists bring specialist skills that can be integral to our tasking."

"On joining HMS Trent's ship's company, Reservists immediately enhance our capacity, fulfil bespoke roles and broaden our diversity."

"HMS Trent has been permanently conducting forward deployed operations since March 2021 with reservists embarked throughout that time."

"We intend to maximise our deployed operational capability through continuous augmentation of Royal Naval Reservists where, in turn, they will be professionally challenged and personally thrive."



THERE were celebrations all round at the home of the Royal Navy in Wales as standout individuals – and the unit itself – were honoured.

HMS Cambria is to be granted the Freedom of Cardiff in recognition of its support to the city – and nation – across three quarters of a century.

Civic leaders agreed to bestow the highest honour they can award to individuals or organisations – a select group of 62 people and 11 institutions, including Nelson Mandela, Princess Diana, Dame Shirley Bassey and destroyer HMS Cardiff – as the Cardiff Bay-based unit mustered for its first Winter Divisions/awards evening in two years.

The Lord Mayor of Cardiff Councillor Rod McKerlich and the Lady Mayoress Sue McKerlich were guests of honour, with the former presenting trophies to Cambria-based personnel who have performed at the highest standards, inspiring others with their loyalty, integrity, and overall professionalism over the past two years.

"2022 is a going to be great year for the Unit as we celebrate our 75th anniversary and look forward to us all coming together, with Cambrian veterans, to celebrate once again," said Commanding Officer Commander Carolyn Jones.

"Everyone appreciates what a rare and special accolade the



Freedom of Cardiff is for HMS Cambria and is a wonderful way to acknowledge our 75th anniversary.

"I feel we really have made a huge contribution to Cardiff in many different ways, not least in supporting many people from the city who have gone on to long and successful careers in the Royal Navy."

"Our new unit here is an amazing facility and I hope this will be our home for many years to come."

Cambria started life in the city in the immediate aftermath of WW2 and has been associated with the Welsh capital ever since – although the base itself has moved to sites outside Cardiff during its 75-year existence.

The unit made a clear statement



of intent and commitment to Cardiff with a new £11m purpose-built complex which was formally dedicated last year.

The facility in Cardiff Bay is used by up to 80 reservists every week.

Council leader Cllr Huw Thomas said that HMS Cambria had "made an outstanding contribution to the life of Cardiff since it was founded in Cardiff in 1947, when it was based in a former foundry on the western side of East Dock."

"In the years since, it has played a pivotal role in training and deploying Royal Naval Reservists at sea and ashore, at home and abroad."

Personnel awarded during the Divisions evening were:

■ The Hassle Free Trophy

presented to the Division that has caused the least hassle within the last 12 months – Awarded to CPO Gary Porter and the New Entry Training Branch

- Best New Entry 2020 – Awarded to SLt Sam Murkin RNR
- Best New Entry 2021 – Awarded to AB Tom Oliver
- Best Rating 2020 – Awarded to PO Dean Thomas
- Best Rating 2021 – Awarded to AB Isobel Stead
- The British Warships Assn 'Inspire Award' 2020 – Awarded to PO Wilfred 'Paul' Rabone
- The British Warships Assn 'Inspire Award' 2021 – Awarded to

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Tributes to Reserve Diving Group

TRIBUTES were paid as the Reserve Diving Group conducted their final training session.

After final administration and briefings there was an opportunity for the team to conduct a Tri-dive under the auspices of the Historical Dive Society on a volunteer basis, so the team could have a final dive at Horsea Island lake, pictured right.

The Historical Diving Society are a group of enthusiasts whose aim is to preserve and protect diving heritage and is a registered charity.

The team dived the Standard Diving Equipment which the helmet has been the branch badge of the RN and RNR Branch.

It was a fitting end to RDG's service by supporting various niche diving activities.

The Royal Navy has an obligation to regularly review the operational capabilities provided by the Maritime Reserves and these remain under constant review in order to focus on the frontline and deliver value for money by maximising efficiencies.

The divers of the Royal Naval Reserve Diving Branch have added considerable value to the Royal Navy and Defence over the years, but the Regular Service can now assume responsibility for the tasks previously undertaken by the Reserve divers.

Reserve Diving Group have since 2017 had

a 12-man team continually on High Readiness Reserves (HRR) supporting NATO Submarine Rescue System, Transfer Under Pressure System (TUP) which supports SMERAS for UK, France and Norway.

RDG provided 60 per cent of the UK component of personnel along with Fleet Diving Squadron (now named Diving & Threat Exploitation Group (DTXG)). RDG have been the only RNR unit on HRR duties.

Captain Peter Laughton MBE Head Military Diving Capability Cell (MDCC) visited the team at Horsea Island to thank RDG on their great and valued contribution to Royal Navy Diving.

All eligible personnel have been offered alternative employment within the new Maritime Reserve General Warfare Branch to continue their Reserve Service.

Commander Richard "Soapy" Watson SO1 RNR Diving Policy said: "It has been a true honour to serve with such a fine team of highly capable divers who have remained fully committed to their responsibilities."

"This has been a celebration of our capability where we showed true resilience to the RN, especially during the pandemic."



NOT SO EASY FOR RIDERS



SEVENTEEN cyclists from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Cycling Association (RNRMCA) braved steep climbs, challenging descents and a variety of weather conditions during a week of gruelling training at a bespoke mountain bike training facility in the Alpujarras region of the Sierra Nevada foothills.

Traditionally, cycling teams conduct training camps in the winter in order to give a strong start to the form building process of physiological adaptation, prior to the race calendar commencing.

This training camp aimed to prepare and develop both established and developing racing members of the Association from all MTB disciplines who will participate in the Inter-Service and National Gravity Enduro, Downhill and Cross-Country competitions.

Structured pre-season training is essential in both maintaining the level of skill and fitness of the association's top athletes and nurturing new talent into the discipline of training for excellence.

Following an early start, the teams eagerly prepared themselves and their bikes for an intensive week of cycling training on arduous terrain not available in the UK.

Each day began with a hearty breakfast to ready the teams for a challenging day in the saddle. All athletes are aware of the importance of good nutrition and hydration, with the Spanish cuisine being enthusiastically received by all.

The RNRMCA arranged the training camp via Ride Southern Spain, who provided excellent accommodation and post-ride recuperation in the form of an outdoor swimming pool and entertaining pet donkey! All resources



proved to be invaluable when recovering from a particularly intensive ride or an awkward fall during training.

Those personnel specialising in Cross-Country rode in excess of 200km off-road in a single week, with others completing over 16 miles of downhill track riding per day.

Ever keen to foster international relations, the RNRMCA had the opportunity to train with a range of European cyclists from a range of mountain bike disciplines. The Gravity Enduro team had

the opportunity to train using international competition standard race tracks; an experience which will prove to be invaluable during the upcoming UK race season. The Cross-Country team were able to train at altitude, with the Downhill race team proving the accuracy of their name.

Whilst the training camp aims to develop team spirit within the RNRMCA, it also aims to provide a reward in the form of a unique training opportunity to individuals who will represent the RNRMCA as part of the Teams in 2022.

Team members of all disciplines can expect to race both military and civilian personnel at a national level in the UK. Ten of the attendees at the 2022 training camp had never attended a previous RNRMCA camp, and the association continues to welcome new members.

Those wishing to join the RNRMCA to take advantage of opportunities such as this and the many discounts available should visit navycycling.co.uk



Engineering a(n) ice time

RESERVIST Simon Cataldo was chosen to represent the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Bobsleigh Team at the Inter-Service Ice Championships.

The 41-year-old aircraft engineering technician took part in the championships, which incorporates bobsleigh, luge and skeleton, at Innsbruck in Austria.

Si, a member of the Royal Naval Reserve Air Branch, is a self-employed first aid and fire safety trainer based in Durham and a member of HMS Calliope in Gateshead.

"What I love the most is the pure adrenaline rush and the teamwork that goes into the sport," he said.

His proudest moment was winning the RNRM Winter Sports Association Chairman's Trophy in 2018. His other sports and hobbies include cycling and outdoor sports, especially water sports. He even took up skydiving to replace the buzz of bobsleigh during the summer months.

A former member of the Regulars, serving full time in the Royal Navy from 2009 to 2017, Si was based at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall, and onboard HMS Illustrious.

During his career, he worked as an Air Engineering Technician on Sea King Mk7 Airborne Surveillance and Control helicopters on 849 Squadron and Sea King Mk5 Search and Rescue helicopters on 771 Squadron. His career also took him onboard HMS Illustrious as part of the ship's company on the Air Weapon Supply / Boarding Team. He completed his career at RNAS Culdrose working in the Adventurous Training Department.

Getting ready for Lord's

ROYAL Navy cricketers are preparing for the Armed Forces cricket showdown at Lord's in June.

The T-20 match takes place on Thursday June 16 and tickets are now on sale at £20 for adults, over-65s £10, and under-16s £5. Under-14s must be accompanied by an adult.

For details and to buy tickets visit tickets.lords.org and interservicest20.co.uk

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Record breaker...



A FORMER Royal Navy submariner has broken a 65-year-old record on the famous Cresta Run in Switzerland.

Lieutenant Commander (retired) Andrew Mills broke the record set in 1956 by Spanish aristocrat and sporting star Alfonso, the Marques de Portago.

The run is the oldest sporting ice sculpture in the world and one of only two made of natural ice. It is one Andrew knows well after he attempted the St Moritz track for the first time in 1992.

And 30 years later, he was back again after the St Moritz Tobogganing Club decided to hold a mass attempt to allow non-elite athletes the chance at breaking the Marques de Portago's time of 28.90 seconds.

In relatively cold and soft conditions, Andrew broke the record coming in at 28.61 seconds.

"Having travelled the world with my career and also during my many leave periods, St Moritz has become a place of great affection for me," said the 58-year-old, from Lancashire.

"When it was announced by the Secretary that I had broken the 65-year-old record, it was a truly special moment.

"To think that my Personal Best was also a World Record was a moment of huge emotion for me. Although my parents are dead, they had both seen me ride several times.

"This was my 30th season in the amazing winter sports valley that is St Moritz. It has become a very special place in my life and where many, many of my global friendships have

been made and developed."

Andrew managed to break the record before an aspiring Swiss Skeleton Olympian recorded the fastest run of the day.

He added: "With the intense competition on the day, one of the later riders was a young aspirant Swiss Skeleton Olympian, who ended up the fastest of the unique morning of competition and he now holds the World Record.

"This means, of course, I will have to train all summer to win back the honour for the Royal Navy and the United Kingdom."

Andrew joined the Royal Navy in 1981 at Britannia Royal Naval College, in Dartmouth, and served for a full commission of just over 26 years.

His career saw him join a Trafalgar-class submarine in Devonport, train operational submariners in the Devonport Command Team Trainer before a spell in Faslane on a Swiftsure-class submarine, followed by being a staff officer in the First Submarine Squadron, recruiting in the North of England.

Finally, he worked as staff at the Submarine Escape Trainer in Gosport.

He then retired and joined the Royal Naval Reserve in Media Operations and has since completed tours in Afghanistan, Bahrain, Africa and at sea on aircraft carriers, minesweepers and submarines.

Andrew added: "Qualifying as a nuclear submarine weapon engineer officer opened doors, whilst demanding much of my 20s and 30s, either at sea or on duty and yet I have also been

fortunate to represent the Royal Navy at football, cricket and tennis.

"Riding the Cresta Run began for me in 1992. I first rode as a developing member of the RN team for four seasons and then took over as Team Captain.

"Having retired from my regular commission in 2007, I was offered a position on the staff of the St Moritz Tobogganing Club, the original, most famous and most high profile of all the winter sports."

Stretching three quarters of a mile down the valley and with a drop of just over 500 feet, the Cresta Run was first built in 1884 by the people of St. Moritz at the request of British aristocratic winter visitors.

The rider goes down as an individual on a toboggan in a lying position, head-first and at speeds of up to 80 mph.

The Cresta Run is the birthplace of modern day skeleton.





...and team success

THE Royal Navy's Cresta Team picked up silverware during a two-week visit to Switzerland.

Athletes from all branches of the service spent time at St Moritz honing their skills and getting used to the pace and corners of the icy track, ensuring they were ready for race day.

The RN ladies team maintained their undefeated run with PO Sarah Belcher and MA Faye Gardiner setting all sorts of records on their way to victory.

MA Gardiner was awarded the trophy for the Outstanding Military Rider for her outstanding example of Top Riding.

The men's team had equal success in the Harland Trophy.

Lt Charlie Homer, of 824 Naval Air Squadron, based at RNAS Culdrose, came first with a total run time of 163.84 - five seconds ahead of second place runner Capt Hector Bevan RM.

Lt George Alldridge RN came third with a total

run time of 170.51 seconds.

The first six riders in each of the three services compete for the Prince Phillip Trophy.

The race is staged over three courses and riders must complete all three courses for their times to count towards the team aggregate.

The Royal Navy were pipped by a fraction of a second into second place.

The Army finished top with a grand total of 710.19 with the navy's total 711.03.

Lt Col Jamie Summers RM was the outstanding navy rider, carrying the team with his fastest ever times. Lt Craig Birkby was also outstanding with his fastest ever riding.

The racing in St Moritz was also a farewell event for President of Royal Navy Cresta Colonel Kev Oliver.

Anyone interested in joining the cresta team should contact Surg Cdr Dave Potter on Davidpotter1@nhs.net.



Skeleton returns

THE Royal Navy's skeleton team got back to competing with a series of races in Austria.

The athletes had to take a break from the sport last year but spent the 12 months bringing new people into the team.

To maintain interest in the winter sport during the 2021 'non-season' the team delivered sessions, giving Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel the opportunity to try their hand at the University of Bath - home of British Skeleton. Of the 40 participants who attended, several showed potential to perform within the sport and four men and two women were selected to join the team.

And they did not have long to wait with the team going to the Olympic track in Igls, Austria where they faced 1,400m of ice, 14 bends and a 124m vertical drop.

After setting up athletes with kit, equipment and instructing all elements of the sport, all were given their first experience of skeleton.

To maintain a safe return to sliding, all athletes start at a lower point of the track to get familiarised with the feel and techniques.

Through daily coaching, athletes made tailored adjustments to improve their times and week two culminated in the RN Skeleton championships.

AET Kane Boyle came in first in the men's competition (and also recorded the fastest single run of 56.25 secs) while AET Marcus Or and LS Brendan McKenna finished second and third. LET(ME) Daron Shallow recorded the fastest start of 5.05 secs and LS McKenna picked up the fastest speed of 112kph.

In the women's contest, Lt Sian Lewis finished top and recorded the fastest speed of 113kph and the fastest single run of 57.31 secs. LMA Chloe Elcock finished second (and also the fastest start of 5.83 secs) while Musn Caitlyn Meynell came third.

The Inter Service championship then took place with separate races for development athletes with two years or less experience and senior athletes with three years or more.

In the Development Men's Race, AET Kane Boyle took first place for the Royal Navy while AET Marcus Or came second. The RAF's SAC Toby Edghill finished third. Meanwhile, in the women's competition, LET(ME) Rachel White took another first place for the RN while Fg Off Nicole Burger and SAC Sam Russell came second and third for the RAF.

The Royal Navy's women competitors did equally as well in the Senior Race with Lt Sian Lewis taking top spot. SAC Chelsea Ainsley and Sgt Lou Webb, both of the RAF, came second and third.

In the men's race, the RAF took all three top spots thanks to Fg Off Rhys Thornbury, SAC Benji Fulker and SAC Rob Vickerman.

Personnel prepare for Invictus Games

SERVING and veteran Royal Navy personnel are among the 59-strong Team UK competing at this year's Invictus Games.

The games, which are being held at The Hague, began as *Navy News* went to print and return following the pandemic.

The games, which were established by the Duke of Sussex in 2014, aim to provide an opportunity for wounded, injured and sick service personnel and veterans to compete in sport.

The first Invictus Games were held in London, with events then held in Orlando, Toronto and Sydney.

Lieutenant Commander Richard Gray, who will captain the cycling team, wants to use the games to show others that they too can achieve in the face of adversity.

"To have my children see me wearing the Invictus Team UK colours with all that they represent will prove to them that daddy is the master of his own destiny," said the 42-year-old, who will take part in the time trials and criterium, as well as the 50m and 100m freestyle swimming events.

"Invictus reminded me that after all I have been through, the two most important things in my life never gave up on me, my children.

"I made a promise then to never give up for them. I want to find out what I can do and how hard I can push myself to be the best version of me I can be."

Lieutenant Commander James Rogers, who is also competing in the same events as Lt Cdr Gray, added: "I

will be incredibly proud to represent Team UK at the Invictus Games in The Hague.

"Pride has not been an easy emotion over recent years as I have struggled to come to terms with my newly inhibited life.

"I am certain that the focused training will continue to aid my physical recovery and, as a positive consequence, improve my resilience to dealing with the inevitable bad days."

The 35-year-old completed in a 270km virtual cycle from Calais to The Hague and cycled from Land's End to John O'Groats.

They will be joined by RN veterans including:

- Former RN Leading Hand Russell Hunt, 35, will compete in the cycling, indoor rowing and is a member of the rugby squad.

- Former RN aircraft handler Stuart Padley will compete in the archery and indoor rowing events.

- Fellow veteran Jonathan Platt was selected for the shot putt and long jump, as well as cycling and powerlifting events.

- Nigel White, who left the RN in September last year after 25 years with the Fleet Air Arm, will take part in discus, cycling, indoor rowing and powerlifting events.

Former Royal Marines Lance Corporals Paul Hartley and Paul Gray are both in the wheelchair rugby squad.

In addition, Lt Col Scott Wallace RM supports Team UK as a Wheelchair Basketball coach.



Northumberland team return to rugby action

HMS Northumberland's rugby team played their first match in more than two years when they took on a side from Trondheim.

The ship, which was taking part in Exercise Cold Response 22, took 28 players to the Koteng Arena to face Trondheim Rugby Klubb.

Prior to the match, head coach POSSC Vinnie Bainitubua took the players through their war-up.

Northumberland started the game heading into a strong wind but showed some strong running, particularly from LET Brad Acott and LH Scotty Scott.

A penalty to the visitors saw captain LS Frank Gallagher opt to kick for touch for a line-out inside their own half.

Pinpoint accuracy from hooker LAC Finch saw the ball down for a maul, which Lt Henny Looze controlled from the rear.

A long pass from scrum-half LS Brandon Lee for a planned move from fly half LCS Smudge Smith put centre LS Gallagher through a hole in the midfield.

He then got to the opposition fullback to beat him with ease after a beautiful sidestep, the defence was slowly gaining on him until he got five metres from the try line, when in the tackle he offloaded to supporting runner LS Lee to score the first try taking the score to 0-5, but was unable to make the conversion.

With confidence running through the team it was then Northumberland's turn to do some defending and some great defensive work was happening by all, but the stand-out was LS Jack Last whose numerous big hits sent Trondheim backwards.

A huge break off the line from flanker LS Ben Borman got the travelling support excited but with slow support a turnover was then conceded.

A couple of missed tackles led to Trondheim centre breaking through the defence but a cover tackle by Fullback LET Tommy Cueto denied him from crossing the line, instead tackling him into touch for a Northumberland lineout which then gave them

chance to clear their lines.

With half time approaching and a lineout for Trondheim on the halfway line it was Northumberland's intention to just see the half out without conceding any points.

Some good play from the opposition sent the ball along to their winger who ran hard into LS Gallagher who then stripped the ball off him in the tackle and bumped off numerous defenders to burst his way over the try line, sending Northumberland into half time 0-10 up after another conversion was missed.

Numerous changes were made over half time. The second half started with a bang after a great restart kick-off by LCS Smith, the player catching the ball got caught out by a tackle by LET Fincham, which resulted in a turnover and a Northumberland put-in at the scrum.

From this scrum there was another strong carry from LET Acott, who once again crossed the gain line with ease.

Gradually as the second half was ongoing, Trondheim began to get some momentum and started to string several phases together, resulting in Northumberland being scrambled at the back.

A great turnover won by Northumberland in their own 22 was then used to take a quick tap penalty, but within one pass this turned into a bad idea as a drop ball was picked up by the opposing centre who ran in under the posts. Despite the try being scored, this conversion was also missed, making the score now 5-10 with 15 minutes remaining.

The game became a bit scrappy with penalties and scrums given to both sides and not much exciting action happening, until the referee awarded a penalty for Trondheim and an alert fly half, seeing the retiring players with their backs turned, took a quick penalty and made a break into a two-on-one, which saw the Trondheim flanker under the posts for their second try. This conversion was also missed, taking the score to 10-10, which is how the game finished.

Montrose pitch in to take the honours

IT was a case of the blues v the reds when HMS Montrose's cricketers took on a side in Bahrain.

Personnel from the frigate took advantage of time alongside to take on the Red Cricket side at Bahrain Rugby Club.

Captained by Lt Cdr Ayers, some of the players were making their cricketing debut, and had no time to warm up before going into bat first.

ET Bowman and SC Westfield offered their services as openers to hopefully get Montrose the strong start they needed.

SC Westfield batted superbly throughout and retired on 23* off 19 balls. ET Bowman and ET Carmalt were unlucky and left the field early.

LS Geggus was next in to bat and a very confident innings saw him eventually give away an easy catch to the slips but a well-respected 15 off 12 balls kept Montrose ticking over.

In next was ET Yates, having started his cricket career at the same Bahraini venue in 2003 and this being the final time he would visit the ground. Big things were expected but fate had other plans and he was out early doors.

In next was the skipper Lt Cdr Ayers who steadied the innings superbly and was 18* off 25 balls at the end of the innings.

PO Wormall, ET Tribe and LS Terry all chipped in with valuable fours each to continue the batting display. PO Thurgood also found the boundary (losing the



ball in the process!) before LS Scott came in last. He performed brilliantly, scoring his runs faster than any other player and was not out at the end with a huge 17* from 11 balls (scoring three fours in the process) and led Montrose off the pitch alongside Lt Cdr Ayers with a very respectable 140 runs off their 20 overs.

It was now the turn of Red Cricket to bat, but it was the Montrose bowlers who seized the initiative.

Early wickets by LS Geggus started the Montrose charge. ET Bowman drew some laughs with his fielding, as he dropped his first effort, flew backwards, caught the ball again only to drop it once more and leave all the players in hysterics.

The pick of the bowlers was ET Yates who got 4-8 off two overs, including two wickets in a row.

The last over came and Montrose felt confident going in with the skipper bowling. Red Cricket needing 18 runs off the over and they gave it their all - by the last ball they only needed three to win.

Lt Cdr Ayers composed himself and bowled it straight, Montrose's fielding limiting Red Cricket to a single run. This left them on 138 off their 20 overs, two short of Montrose's innings score. The Montrose team were ecstatic, victorious in their first proper match together.

Player of the Match was a close shout between SC Westfield with 23* retired and ET Yates with his 4-8 off 2. ET Yates edged it and collected his tankard prize to the applause of all present.

Report: ET Yates, HMS Montrose

Debut to treasure



THE new season has begun for members of the Royal Navy Royal Marines Road Race Team. New team rider **AB Alex Skegg** was in action for the start at Brands Hatch.

I have been part of the RNRMRRT since July 2021 and started out working as pit crew, helping the other riders get out to races on time.

The pit work has always been great but the itch to be a rider and get out on track has been eating at me for a long time.

I decided to stop holding off and jump in by completing my ACU racing license and buying myself a rough conditioned CBR600.

Over the Christmas period I spent every night in the workshop stripping the whole bike and getting it to a race-worthy condition. Many weeks of blood, sweat and tears later just weeks before I put my entry in to my first race, the bike was done. It wouldn't have been possible without the support and tips from the rest of the team.

We arrived to a pitch black Brands Hatch. Unloading the bike, not knowing what the weekend would hold.

Friday morning we went for a track walk to assess the conditions and learn the best

lines/brake points before my first ever test session.

Each lap I rode filled me with more confidence and I learnt better lines to take through the corners, slowly reducing my lap times until I managed a decent 56 second lap.

Saturday was race day and to say I was nervous is an understatement. I've learnt now there's nothing worse than getting your leathers on before a race and realising you need yet another nervous wee!

Qualifying 23rd out of 24 didn't put me off as for my first ever race I just wanted to finish in one piece.

Hurling down the main straight past the chequered flag was a feeling I'll never forget even if it was in last place. The main thing was I was getting track time and experience.

The third race of the weekend was when things really turned around for me after I

finished fourth in class, narrowly missing a thirdplace podium by just 0.1 seconds! An incredible achievement that I will treasure, and hopefully improve next round.

After finishing the final race just three seconds behind the leader of my class I was able to kick back and relax with a big grin on my face.

The most enjoyable race for me was the Military InterServices race between the Navy, Army, and the Royal Air Force. Having our own little competition going on between myself and a fellow navy rider, it was an exiting game of cat-and-mouse until I developed a fuelling issue and had to retire from the race.

Now I have fixed the problem, and I am looking forward to the next race meeting where I hope to be even faster and hopefully come home with a trophy.



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£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the March edition of *Navy News* (right) was TS Warspite, the WW1 cruiser formerly known as HMS Hermione, which became a training ship for the Marine Society



May Mystery Ship in the email header.

Coupons and emails giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Entries must be received by June 14.

More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted.

Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned. The winner will be announced in our July edition.

A Roberts, from Cornwall, wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (*above*) was built at Cowes on the Isle of Wight, commissioned on April 15 1941, and served the RN during WW2 in the Mediterranean Fleet in 1941 and 1943.

1. What was her name? and 2. What happened to her?

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 subs@royalnavymail.mod.uk with

MYSTERY PICTURE 327

Name _____

Address _____

My answers: (1) _____

(2) _____

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Ask Jack columns in June's Noticeboard must be received by

May 12 2022

Deaths



Arthur Castle, Fleet CPO Cook.

Served from 1949 to 1986 in HMS Vanguard (cook), Implacable (leading cook), Crane (leading cook), Tiree (leading cook), Scarborough (petty officer cook), Leopard (PO Ck), Maidstone (PO Ck), Forth (CPO Ck), Triumph (CPO Ck), Tiger (Fleet CPO Ck), Drake (Fleet CPO Ck), Ark Royal (Fleet CPO Ck), and Hermes (Fleet CPO Ck). Awarded Long Service and Good conduct Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, South Atlantic Medal, Near East Medal, Korea Medal and United Nations Korea Medal. Died March 13, aged 90.

John Stuart Johnson. Vice President Ton Class Association. Joined HMS Fisgard as Artificer Apprentice in September 1953. Served in HMS Concord, Crane, Gambia, Houghton, Aberford (delivery to Kenya Navy), Vidal, Antrim, and Dundas. In 1969/71 Stuart was based at HMS Osprey at Portland on the staff of Flag Officer Sea Training as a Sea Rider for Damage Control Training. Was Chairman of the HMS Crane Association and was TCA Treasurer 2000-2021. Died March 14, aged 83.

Len Dyer, former chairman Wansbeck and District RNA. April 5, aged 82.

Gerald Kirkham, LMEM. Served from 1975 to 1985 in HMS Hermes, Dido and Antrim during Falklands Conflict, and then HMS Nelson. Died March 10, aged 64.

Cdr Timothy J W Hale. HMS Tiptoe, Artemis, Warspite, Forth, Neptune, Swiftsure, Dolphin, Fearless. Died Feb 26.

Cdr Michael B S Higham CVO. HMS President, Drake, Triumph, Cochrane, Warrior. Died Mar 4, aged 85.

Cdr John S Holmes. HMS Collingwood, Triumph, Eagle, Galatea, Polaris Executive. Died Mar 16, aged 90.

Lt Cdr Keith Miller. HMS Mercury, Albion, Devonshire. Died Feb 28, aged 93.

Lt John E Nicholls. HMS Seahawk, Hermes, Tartar. Died Mar 8, aged 83.

Cdre Bryan D Salwey. HMS President, Sea Eagle, Hermes, Mercury, Nelson, Seahawk, NATO, CNSO. Died Feb 19.

Capt John F S Trinder CBE. HMS Rothesay, Scarborough, Dryad, Forth, Eagle, Saker, Achilles, Warrior, Euryalus. FOST. Capt FPS. ACR. Died Mar 23, aged 85.

Cdr James (Jim) Hall. Served from 1949 to 1983 in numerous ships, including HMS Victorious, winning medals for service in the Suez Canal zone and the Malay Peninsula. As a Weapons Electrical Officer he had a

long association with HMS Collingwood. He also served at ASWE (on Portsdown Hill), on HMS Excellence at Whale Island, Portsmouth and at MOD at Bath.

His final appointment was as HMS Vernon's Establishment Engineer Officer in Portsmouth which included the preparation and dispatch of the minesweepers for the Falkland Island's war. He undertook radar projects at ASWE on Portsdown Hill and in the Netherlands before his final two-year posting to HMS Vernon. He ended his Royal Navy commission in 1983 to take up a civilian appointment as Site Services Manager at Marconi Underwater Systems in Waterlooville before leaving after five years to set up his own engineering consultancy. He retired in October 2002. Was a recipient of Fareham's Citizen of Honour award in May 2019 in recognition of his contribution to life in Wallington village. Died aged 90.

Association of Royal Navy Officers and RNOC

Lt John Packard. HMS Excellent, Exmouth, Warrior, Beachampton, C-in-C Fleet. Died March 30, aged 78.



Capt John CW Lock. HMS Agincourt, Kent, Dryad, Brighton, Tiger, Euryalus, Hermes. RAN Melbourne. NDC Latimer. Died March 17, aged 85.

Cdr Martin A K Cropper. HMS Pembroke, Cleopatra, Tireless, Sirius, Neptune, Drake, SM2. Died March 12, aged 64.

Cdr James W Hall. HMS Mercury, Argonaut, Victory RNB, Excellent, Kent, Vernon. DG Supply. Died March 8, aged 90.

Lt RNVR J Bird. Died March 22, aged 104.

Cdr Michael B S Higham CVO. HMS President, Drake, Triumph, Cochrane, Warrior.

Lt Cdr (Reg) Ronald EH Childs. Served from 1947-1982 in HMS Duke of York, Victorious, Drake, Illustrious, Unicorn, Terror, Victory, Collingwood, Excellent, Tyen, Sultan, Daedalus, Tamar, Osprey, President, Nelson, and Vernon. Died April 4, aged 93.

HMS Tenby Association J34 and F56

Ron Gumery, Engine Room F65, served from 1969 to 1973.

John Finlayson, Comms Yeo F65. Served from 1969 to 1970.

Robert 'Bob' Marshall, Seaman F65. Served from 1963 to 1964. Jo Leigh, F65.

John Jackson, J34. Served 1943 to 1946.

Reunions

HMS Nottingham: A reunion for ship's company 2000-02. at RNR Eaglet, Liverpool Docks. Saturday May 7 at 1430 for 1500 start. Full details from Alan.Murrell535@mod.gov.uk. £10 per head.

HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association: The 2022 annual reunion takes place at the Red Lea Hotel in Scarborough, from May 13 to 16. Contact Secretary Denis Askham at 07773651213 or email askhamd3@gmail.com

Fulmar Mountaineering Club: A reunion of the RNAS Lossiemouth-based club takes place at The Palace Hotel, Buxton, Derbyshire, from May 13-16. Contact Bud and Lin Abbott on linwhis5@gmail.com

Royal Navy Field Gun: Annual reunion takes place at Tiffany's Hotel, Blackpool, from May 20 to May 23. Please book directly with the hotel at www.tiffanyshotel.co.uk, or call 01253 313414.

HMS Cleopatra Old Shipmates Association: Our 37th AGM and Reunion takes place on May 20-23 at the Sketchley Grange Hotel, Hinckley The weekend includes the AGM, gala dinner and a visit to the National Arboretum. Contact Honorary Secretary Warwick Franklin on 01752 366611 or warwickfranklin@outlook.com

HMS Fearless: 40th anniversary reunion takes place in Portsmouth from May 28 to 29. Tickets for the gala dinner at the Royal Maritime Club need to be booked in advance and are £60 per head. Book viz: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hms-fearless-82-40th-anniversary-reunion-tickets-189862392527>. On May 29 we muster at Gosport bus station at 9.45am ahead of a service at 11am and a parade via Gosport High Street to a reception at Walpole Park. Details on Fearless Old Boys Facebook page or SAMA82 website.

HMS Aisne Last Commision 1966 to 68: A reunion is planned at the Best Western Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea, from June 10 to 13. Contact the hotel or NigelJest@hotmail.co.uk

HMS Troubridge: Final Commission Association 1966-69 2022 reunion will be at the North Euston Hotel, The Esplanade, Fleetwood FY7 6BN October 3 to 7, 2022. Contact Bryan Pace at Romf1@GMail.com or visit <http://HMSTroubridge.com>

HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans Association: Reunion and annual meeting takes place at the Union Jack Club in London from October 7 to 9. For details email: h.m.s.ajax.rpv@gmail.com

Loch Class Frigates Association: Annual reunion takes place at The Sketchley Grange Hotel, Hinckley,

Leicestershire, from October 7 to 9. For details please contact Andrew Nunn Hon. Sec. LCFA Email: andrew.nunn@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 0117-9505835. Membership is open to all who served on any of the Loch Class ships or their variants (Bay Class, Admirals Yachts, survey ships and repair ships). Some of these types of ships have their own 'Associations' but you can always join both.

Undaunted/Yarmouth/Eagle Association: Annual Dinner and Dance Reunion 2022 will be held from October 28 to October 31 at the Holiday Inn Hotel, Castle Road, Cardiff, CF10 1XD. For further details contact Alan (Whiskey) Walker on 01268 548041 or email: whiskey666@outlook.com.

Royal Navy Photography Branch: Reunion planned for Friday November 4 to Monday November 7 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea. All ex and serving photos, plus partners, welcome to mark the 103rd anniversary of the branch formation. Weekend includes tours of Portsmouth and the naval base, a gala dinner, and an annual meeting. Contact Danny du Feu. ddf.photography@gmail.com; Tel: 07711 083465.

HMS Ganges: A 60th anniversary celebration is planned for 54 Recruitment November 1962 Hawke 291 and 292 classes at Chatham in November. Any old boys who are interested please contact Robin Potter at r.potter60@talktalk.net

Ask Jack

HMS Dainty: My father is trying to contact Dave Irwin and 'Crash Carl', with whom he served with aboard HMS Dainty. My dad's name is Reg Grogan.
Lisa Hughes
07834269050

PITTOCK: I have two grandparents who died in action during WW1 and WW2 and cannot obtain photographs of them. One was AB James Arthur Pittock P/SSX5991, who died April 8 1940 on HMS Glowworm. The other was Stoker John Cooper 5685s who died on HMS Vanguard, on July 9 1917. I have tried all records with a nil result so can any of your readers help?

John Pittock
ex Leading Stoker
johngp46@yahoo.co.uk

Admiralty Civilian Shore Wireless Service: My father Dermod Kirwan worked for the service during WW2 at the wireless stations in Lydd, Cooling Marshes, HMS Flowerdown, Wick, and Jamaica. Does anyone know anything about the Jamaica one?

Michael Kirwan
MichaelKirwan53@gmail.com

HMS Matchless: My step father served on the Matchless and ran the Matchless Association until his death a few years ago. We still have 2 of the association's ties and wondered if you might have any suggestions as to how we might reach any of the veterans still alive (or their relatives) who might treasure one?

Norman.haynes@ntlworld.com

Charity Front Line Naval Chaplain: We are for information about a WW2 'bish', the Rev Martin Martin-Harvey DSC. Records about Martin-Harvey, a temporary RNVR chaplain, are incomplete.

So far researchers have pieced together that he served in the Pedestal convoy to Malta in 1942. Later, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for actions while serving in the cruiser HMS Sirius.

He went ashore on D-Day, having "had the good sense to take off his clothes and carry them on his head while wading ashore, thus ensuring a dry ship-shape condition in which to engage the enemy" - he was possibly serving with the Royal Marines at the time - he is listed at Bickleigh in 1946. After the war he became the chaplain of St Lawrence College, Ramsgate.
Simon Springett
frontlinebish@gmail.com

School support

WARRANT Officer Allister Brown, from HMS Collingwood, took a team to Elson Junior School to deliver a selection of Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) based activities to pupils.

Beki Hull, from the school, said: "The aim of the project is to raise the self-esteem and aspirations of children through problem-solving and practical tasks. The involvement with Service personnel is a powerful way to reinforce the importance of respect and boundaries."

Allister said: "I enjoy conducting these fun STEM sessions which challenge the children to use their imagination to successfully complete various different tasks."

"This is my second visit to Elson Junior School with this particular group of children and it is great to see them growing in confidence and throwing themselves into the activities."

Gibraltar bound

ARMED Forces veterans and their families are urged to take part in the Veterans' Banger Rally later this year.

Driving from Dover to Gibraltar in a banger worth up to £500, all money will go to SSAFA.

The rally, which was delayed from last year, starts in Dover on September 13 and organiser John McGowan said: "The older and more knackered the car, the better. Cover the rust and cracks with stickers and gaffer tape or black nasty, customise to your heart's desire, obtain sponsorship for your chosen charity (military or non-military), and away we go."

The entry fee is £300 per team, which can consist of two-to-four people. The vehicle must be fully insured for all drivers, and must have valid tax and a current MOT. John also advises that teams take out breakdown recovery.

Visit veteransbangerrally.co.uk for full details, route, rules and regulations, and how to sign up.

Seriously fun

PERSONNEL from HMS Sultan took part in a fun run in aid of Red Nose Day and Comic Relief.

Around 290 runners gathered in the rain for a run around the technical side of the establishment on a course which included an off-road trek, slip and slide round Fort Rowner.

Physical Training Instructor Joe Collin, who helped organise the run, said: "Physical training is an important part of military life and we're really happy that we've been able to show our support for Comic Relief by hosting the fun run today, it allows the trainees to have fun whilst exercising, which in turns helps the Mental and physical fitness of the recruits."

"It's been raining from start to finish, which added to the soapy slip and slides, but it's been a lot of fun and everyone has really into the spirit of things, for a worthy cause."

