



NAVY NEWS

MAY 2023



HMS Mersey is bathed in the bright lights of Riga. The offshore patrol vessel docked in the Latvian capital after taking part in Operation Anglerfish, as part of the Joint Expeditionary Force of northern European nations.

See pages 2-3

Picture: LPhot Gareth Smith

NORTHERN LIGHTS

Inside: ■ Tamar and Lancaster in India ■ RM in Korea ■ Peregrine Trophy

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ON A grey late March day where the sleet has just given way to rain, but the icy wind still keeps temperature well below zero, HMS Mersey rolls with the swell off the Estonian coast.

The silhouettes of at least half a dozen tankers and merchant vessels litter the horizon, most heading east,

destination probably St Petersburg, the odd one making its way westwards into the wider Baltic.

It's fairly choppy, but far from severe enough to rule out sea boat operations.

One of Mersey's, callsign 'Shark' – a small black blob several hundred yards away which vanishes and then reappears with the rise and fall of the ocean – is out and calls 'mother' on the radio.

"We're in position off the ship whose name I cannot pronounce," says the voice.

It's the Kindral Kurvits – typically shortened to Kurvits, so actually not too much of a tongue-twister: think Kermit with 'v' replacing the 'm', then add an 's' at the end...

In one sense this is bread and butter for Mersey. For 20 years, on and off, she's been sending sea boats

out to vessels in lumpy seas.

And in another it is not. For those lumpy seas are the Baltic, not, say, the Bristol Channel.

It's not the first time the Portsmouth-based patrol ship has been sent beyond our shores – she's been to the Caribbean on hurricane/counter narcotics duties and conducted a humanitarian mission in the Med.

When the opportunity came for a short deployment to the Baltic – Operation Anglerfish – to give the Royal Navy experience in working with half the nations committed to the Joint Expeditionary Force, the UK-led partnership of northern European nations working together for collective security in the region, eyes fell upon Mersey.

Why? Well, almost all the Baltic navies are focused on coastal defence and security of national waters: patrol boats/corvettes, missile boats, minelayers/hunters.

That's why Lieutenant Commander James 'Mitch' Mitchell believes a

ship like Mersey is ideal for a mission like this – to build up understanding of operations around Baltic shores and closer understanding between the RN and navies which it doesn't work with as frequently as say the Americans, French or Dutch.

"When you consider the good work Mersey does around the UK – fishery protection, monitoring ships from foreign powers passing our shores, acting as the RN's eyes and ears – it's actually a very useful combination for an operation like this," he explains.

"It doesn't need a frigate or destroyer – leave them to submarine hunting or defending the carriers. When you're looking at a mission like here in the Baltic, who are you going to call? Us."

Bristling with missiles and weaponry Mersey is not. Nor packed with intelligence-gathering sensors or antennae.

A 20mm cannon, a couple of sea boats, small arms and 30-plus dedicated men and women.

But they bring with them a lot of experience. Experience of boarding/sea boat operations. Experience of operations in confined/coastal waters. Experience of 'pattern of life' movements (from observing

trawlers at work to looking out for small boats trying to ferry migrants across the Dover Strait). Experience of spotting anything unusual around the UK, the bridge – and the men and women upon it – is effectively the ops room.

The Gulf of Finland is very much the region's Strait of Dover: an area of water roughly one and half times the size of Wales with 40,000 shipping movements a year running largely east-west, plus 7,000 ferry movements north-south between Tallinn and Helsinki, Mersey's previous stop on this mini-deployment.

Estonia is one of the world's smaller nations (129th by area, 155th by population).

She does, however, possess a long and rugged coastline – about one third the length of the UK's – with a myriad inlets and bays, plus a good sprinkling of islands large and small, some inhabited, some not.

It's doubled the size of its navy in recent months – chiefly through incorporating the other maritime agencies and authorities: police, coastguard, border force – to safeguard its waters.

Among the vessels which now flies the naval ensign, the Kurvits, a small former border force/coast guard cutter (crew just 13).

We've spent the past couple of days in her company conducting general drills and manoeuvres. But now, with the head of the Estonian Navy, Commodore Yüri Saska, embarked on Mersey, the ultimate test.

Could the Kurvits (the goodies) locate HMS Mersey (the baddies)... and if the baddies continued to



act in a hostile manner... could the goodies call in an air strike.

Waiting to respond at Amari air base, RAF and allied Typhoons, deployed on NATO air policing duties to the region.

Baron One-Two. Ten miles out.

And before you know it there's a growing roar in the gun-metal sky as the jet descends below the flight deck for a show of force.

He makes six passes, each one at near-mast height just to reinforce the point (and perhaps to show off a little to the Estonian TV crews on board...).

It's the second interaction with the RAF in a matter of days – but only the first one Mersey's crew have actually seen.

Low cloud prevented anyone on board from catching a glimpse of the P8 Poseidon which made the effort to come all the way out to the Baltic to interact with Mersey.

The 2,000-plus-mile round-trip from Lossiemouth was a first for the maritime patrol aircraft, as was its interaction with Mersey.

Having established communication with HMS Mersey the two worked together to compile a complete picture of maritime activity in the region.

"The capabilities that Poseidon brings is impressive, especially on a foggy day like today when we struggle to identify shipping contacts," said Lt Cdr Mitchell.

"Operating together we were able to generate a recognised maritime picture of activity across the Baltic Sea region."

For Wing Commander Ben Livesey, the Officer Commanding CXX Squadron – who also flew on the sortie – the mission to the Baltic took his P8 to a new operating area and helped build up a bigger picture of life above and below the waves.

"Despite the poor weather, we were able to achieve our mission objectives

whilst conducting valuable training, which prepares us better for future challenges, whatever those may be."

This is all hugely beneficial for all participants. The RN is neither a frequent nor infrequent visitor to the Baltic – there are deployments this way maybe three or four times a year.

Each country visited by the ship – Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – got the thumbs up from the ship's company... and Mersey got the thumbs up from their various hosts. Take the Lithuanians (Klaipeda was the last port of call for Operation Anglerfish): "It is always a pleasure to see such well-equipped patrol vessels in our waters," they told the Mersey team. "We very much appreciate the British military presence in our region."

"There is a lot we can learn from the Baltic navies – they have different skillsets from us and they operate in a very different geopolitical sphere," says Lieutenant John Hawke, HMS Mersey's gunnery officer.

"Here the JEF is not something on paper, something ethereal, here it is something tangible. Here alliances and partnerships are working for real. It's exciting and it's fantastic to see."

As well as gunnery officer, he's also Mersey's bish, and one of her Officers of the Watch. And a divisional officer.

Life in the first-generation River

Here the Joint Expeditionary Force is not something on paper, something ethereal, here it is something tangible. Here alliances and partnerships are working for real.

LIEUTENANT JOHN HAWKE

class ships is life in the RN pared to the bone. With just 30 or so souls aboard most of the time, pretty much everyone has a second... or third job.

There's no space for the usual 'nice to haves'. There's no medical assistant. No writer (the coxswain steps in for some of the admin), no police officer, no logistics officer (the function is shared). Everyone queues for their meals (three a day, amazingly served up for £3.68 per head), everyone washes up.

And there's no call the hands, the shrill 7am pipe which has woken countless ship's companies down the years. These days, to prevent disrupting the sleep of watchkeepers – perhaps a quarter of Mersey's ship's company – it's at the discretion of the command team.

No-one seems to miss it – or miss their duties. A succession of mobile phone alarms go off anywhere between 6.30 and 7.45 rousing the ship's company.

Ordinarily life goes on like this for about a fortnight when half the crew disappear... replaced like-for-like by 15 shipmates on one of the three watches (red, white and blue) which ensure these ships are available for operations well over 300 days a year.

Typically that means changes of personnel in Harwich or Tynemouth, not Helsinki or Tallinn.

So Anglerfish has not only delivered interesting professional opportunities, but also great port

visits.

Helsinki was particularly enjoyable. Tallinn may have been even better – Estonian hospitality, the old town, the mediaeval-themed eateries, the nightlife, cheaper beer. It depends who you speak to and tales of their (mis)adventures...

A handful of the crew – like Leading Chef Ian O'Mahoney – have been this way before, though he's looking more at the culinary delights he might offer shipmates by stocking up in this part of the world: reindeer burgers, perhaps, or yellowfin tuna "lovely and fresh" he says.

"I love being in the Navy," he says. "As long as the ship's company are happy, I'm happy. That's what chefs are here for."

The only thing he's not keen on is breakfast ("cooking the same thing every morning..."). Today, as a lover of fish, he served up salmon, eggs and croissants.

Early risers would have wolfed down anything warm this morning to be honest. The wind chill took temperatures on the upper deck down to 10 below zero as hardy souls scraped the night's snowfall away.

Given the exotic locations some of the River class (the newer generation in particular) patrol, Anglerfish is Mersey's grab at 'a place in the sun'. Or rather snow.

"The weather conditions out here are challenging," says Lt Hawke. "Not what we're used to – although

we're well supplied with all the extra clothing we need."

Which is good. To a point. You still need bare fingers for a lot of the upper deck work. Ask Seaman Specialist Jordan Ralph, a 26-year-old Southender whose job it is to maintain weapons, safely operate Mersey's two sea boats, work on the bridge and the upper deck.

"Handling the ropes in these temperatures you have to be very careful to make sure you don't lose the feeling in your fingertips," he says.

Lose the feeling and the lines may not tighten properly around the bollards... and the ship isn't secure alongside.

With the wind relentlessly whipping in from the east, driving snow flurries which reduce visibility at times to barely half a mile, it's enough to take the fun out of life at sea... but there's sadly not enough snow to build a snowman on the forecastle à la RN vessels operating in Norway.

Still, there are always other ways to pass the time... or liven up, say, the middle watch. Lean crewed means most of the ship sleeps through the night – there's no main control room with engineers staring at dials and readouts and responding to buzzing bells and alarms.

The sensors all feed into a control system on the bridge, linked with CCTV which pans around key areas of the ship. The feed from the engine room is somewhat fuzzy. At times it looks like there's a spectral figure lurking in the bowels.

"We send the rookies down there to investigate in the middle of the night," says Lt Hawke.

Something strange in the engine room?

Who you gonna call?

Picture: LPhot Gareth Smith



BALTIC BLAST

Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Richmond
HMS Hurworth
HMS Tyne
HMS Mersey
HMS Severn
HMS Portland
HMS Dauntless
HMS Defender
Coastal Forces Squadron
XV Patrick Blackett

Project Wilton
814 NAS
815 NAS
824 NAS
825 NAS
RFA Tiderace
RFA Fort Victoria

45 CDO
HMS Prince of Wales
HMS Gannet
Lightning Force
40 CDO
CLR
DEVONPORT
CULDROSE
3 CDO BDE/
42 CDO
YEOVILTON

17 TES SQN

Commando Forces
Commando Helicopter Force
Coastal Forces Squadron
815 NAS

HMS Mersey

Gibraltar Squadron
HMS Trent
HMS Forth

HMS Duncan

Operation Kipion

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

British Defence Singapore
Support Unit

HMS Spey

HMS Protector

HMS Medway
NEFI

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



GLOBAL | MODERN | READY

BY THE time you read this the nation will be gearing up for the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles, with ceremonies involving 900 RN personnel in the UK alone.

And while preparations for the first such royal spectacle in more than seven decades got fully under way last month, His Majesty's Ships and Royal Marines have been heavily engaged safeguarding, promoting and representing this sceptred isle from the fringes of both polar regions to the tropics and Far East.

Indeed, not since the reign of the king's grandfather have Royal Marines been in Korea. They ended that very lengthy hiatus by joining the Republic of Korea and US Marine Corps during large-scale exercises in Pohang (see pages 14-15).

Commandos can work with pretty much anyone and train pretty much anywhere, of course. Say with the Norwegians in the Arctic (see opposite). Or perhaps on Dartmoor with the Dutch, where six would-be Korps Mariniers joined their British counterparts to complete the infamous 30 miler... and earn their green berets (see page 13) as part of 50th anniversary celebrations marking ties between the two Corps.

Elsewhere cover star HMS Mersey patrolled the Baltic for the first time in her 20-year history, working with partner nations committed to the Joint Expeditionary Force (see pages 2-3).

This month we say farewell – and thank-you – to HM Ships Enterprise and Montrose, both of which have bowed out of active duties. Enterprise's crew bade farewell to the folk of Tiverton (see page 23), while frigate Montrose decommissioned in Portsmouth (see page 11).

And we say 'hello' to HMS Birmingham, the fourth Type 26 frigate, whose construction has begun on the Clyde (see page 7).

And at the other end of the age spectrum... we have HMS Brocklesby, more than 40 years old and still going strong as she's entering refit. One of the last original pieces of equipment installed in the early 80s is finally being replaced, her Rover emergency power generator (see page 6).

From old school to leading-edge tech and HMS Eaglet in Liverpool is now crowned by what looks like a spinning shipping container – actually a unique turbine to cut the establishment's energy bills as part of a Navy-wide green drive (see page 28).

And while some of the Navy was winding down in the run-up to Easter, HMS Kent was winding up: ten intensive days of pre-deployment training to prepare for her next mission (see page 6).

Both HMS Lancaster and patrol ship HMS Tamar have been in India, the former working with the host nation's Navy off Konkan in the annual Anglo-Indo naval exercise which bears the name of the coastline, while Tamar's time around the sub-continent is drawing to a close with visits in the Bay of Bengal before she heads back into the Pacific (see the centre pages). The frigate was also treated to the very finest Indian cuisine when one of the country's top chefs took over the galley (see page 11).

Hunter-killer submarine HMS Audacious is back in the bosom of Clyde Naval Base, bringing the curtain down on her mammoth Mediterranean mission (which, with training, lasted well over 13 months – see page 19).

HMS Medway is settling in nicely to her duties in the South Atlantic and has already paid two visits to South Georgia in as many months (see page 9) as she steps into HMS Forth's shoes (undergoing refit in Gib).

815 Naval Air Squadron and the fast patrol boats of the Coastal Forces Squadron have just finished buzzing around the fjords near Bergen in the first annual exercise with the Norwegian Navy designed to hone tactics for dealing with small, fast, highly manoeuvrable craft (see page 6 – and we'll have a full report next month).

And finally, the finest imagery from the Fleet comes under the spotlight on pages 16 and 17 as we showcase the winning shots from the RN's annual photographic awards, known as the Peregrine Trophy.

THE relationship between the Royal Navy and NATO has 'never been closer' as the alliance marked 74 years since its inception amid continued global instability.

British warships spent nearly 10,000 hours – 60 weeks – on NATO operations in 2022 and that pace has continued unabated in the first four months of 2023.

The Royal Navy is at the heart of galvanised NATO efforts as Russia's unprovoked war in Ukraine continues, securing Europe's crucial waterways and chokepoints for the prosperity of allies and partners.

"While the Royal Navy has always supported NATO maritime operations, since the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia over a year ago, we have worked even more closely with our NATO allies at sea," said Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff at the Maritime Operations Centre in Northwood, Captain Steve Banfield, on NATO's birthday on April 4.

"Collaboration between NATO and the RN has never been closer; in particular in the execution of coordinated Maritime Security operations and exercises in the Norwegian Sea, North Sea, Baltic and the Mediterranean."

From the freezing Arctic and Baltic, to the endless grey of the North Atlantic and azure waters of the Mediterranean, Royal Navy warships, submarines and aircraft have operated side by side with allies and partners so far in 2023, supporting peace and prosperity in Europe.

Patrol ship HMS Mersey recently operated in the Baltic to ensure the security and stability of the region as part of the Joint Expeditionary Force, a multinational defence framework complementary to NATO which is committed to Euro-Atlantic security with the Baltic region as one of its focus areas.

Amphibious flagship HMS Albion, HMS Somerset and RFA Mounts Bay have just returned from the Arctic where they were at the heart of an allied task group working on Norwegian security and NATO's ability to protect its northern flank.

Elsewhere in the Arctic Circle, Royal Marines and Commando Helicopter Force operated



Above: the view from HMS Duncan during recent joint Med exercises. Left: HMS Audacious during their NATO mission. Far left: Royal Marines during a recent Arctic parachute drop

alongside allies – sharpening extreme cold weather warfare skills and honing joint tactics and sharing expertise for flying operations and combat in the unforgiving environment.

The small patrol ships of the Coastal Forces Squadron remain in Northern Norway after large-scale exercises in the region's fjords – taking on their most northerly deployment ever.

In the Mediterranean, destroyer HMS Duncan worked closely with NATO ships from France, Spain, the United States and Italy, in an exercise designed to test the French carrier strike group – centred around FS Charles de Gaulle – against a range of threats.

During exercises in Estonia, Royal Navy cyber

warfare experts fended off virtual attacks to 'national infrastructure' alongside NATO allies and with partners from across the globe.

Below the waves, HMS Audacious, one of the Royal Navy's newest and most advanced nuclear attack submarine, carried out NATO security patrols in the Mediterranean.

Submarine hunting frigate HMS Portland has been on patrol with the alliance's premier security task group in northern Europe, known as Standing NATO Maritime Task Group 1.

Royal Navy assets are lined up to take part in key NATO exercises in the remaining months of 2023, from missile defence, security in the Baltic and anti-submarine warfare.



COOL FOR CATS

WELL on the plus side at least it's not a Merlin...

The rotor blades of a Wildcat hurl tiny crystals of ice into the faces of a mobile air operations team (or MAOT) as the helicopter delivers supplies to a forward outpost in the wilds of the Norwegian Arctic.

This is bread and butter stuff for the Commando Helicopter Force - Royal Marines in the field need food, fuel, ammunition to sustain their operations... and CHF always deliver.

But in these temperatures, with a thick blanket of snow, limited hours of daylight, what is bread and butter in temperate climates in the High North is more like afternoon tea at the Ritz.

"Operating helicopters from an ice and snow-covered landscape with the temperature dipping to the low -20s is challenging for all squadron personnel," said Lieutenant Paul Smalley, Training Officer of 847 Naval Air Squadron which operates the battlefield Wildcat pictured here.

"Pilots need regular exposure to what we call the 'Degraded Visual Environment' presented by the snow covered landscape in Norway in order to maintain the skills required to operate their helicopter in the harshest of environments."

Of course, first you have to get there. Bardufoss, hub of Operation Clockwork this winter as it has been for many winters past, is a good 1,400 miles from CHF's home in Somerset.

Wildcats are small, light and foldable enough to be moved by RAF transporter.

But with transport space at a premium this winter due to other operations and commitments – notably the RAF delivering aid to Turkey after the terrible earthquake – the Wildcats flew up to Bardufoss instead.

That meant a demanding journey in legs of two hours or so at a time, hopping from airfield to airfield through England, Scotland, the Shetlands and then across the North Sea

to Norway, then up the west coast for a good 700 miles to their destination.

While Wildcat is fast and nimble thanks to being relatively lightweight, it also means it must avoid clouds in Norway where the threat of icing up is much greater than in more temperate UK skies.

Coupled with the ever-changing nature of weather in Norway, such environmental factors place higher demands on the aircrew than when in the UK.

Thanks to frequent bad weather, a journey which should have taken the fliers three days... took them eight.



"Operating helicopters from an ice and snow-covered landscape with the temperature dipping to the low -20s is challenging.

LIEUTENANT PAUL SMALLEY



The goal of Clockwork is to ensure Arctic rookies are able to live/fly/maintain/fight in this harshest of environments (temperatures of -30C at times, or lower) by day or night, so that can support commandos and their allies in most circumstances.

The Wildcats can find themselves acting as reconnaissance, moving personnel and kit around, calling in air, artillery and naval gunfire strikes, and gathering intelligence among other tasks.

To earn their Environmental Qualification, aircrew most complete a series of assessments covering mountain flying, cross-country navigation, and flying in pairs.

The landscape around Bardufoss is especially suited to Arctic/mountain training, with Istind rising 4,900ft just three miles south of the airfield.

Its impressive shape looms over Bardufoss and hides the low Arctic sunlight for much of the morning. As for the surrounding

fjords and valleys where the Royal Marines and amphibious ships conduct their winter training, they provide a challenging environment for safe navigation, where the difficulties of poor radio communications, power lines and inclement weather all place extra burdens on aircrew.

The bad weather which dogged the squadron flying out to Norway decided to stick around, but thanks to a concerted effort by fliers and engineers/technicians alike, the squadron achieved a record number of sorties/ flying time in a restricted period, ensuring four new pilots are

now trained in Arctic operations, alongside a new instructor.

Among those visiting the squadron were Norway's Crown Prince, Prince Haakon, Norway's Chief of Defence Staff General Eirik Kristoffersen, and the Commandant General Royal Marines, General Gwyn Jenkins.

As the deployment to Norway drew to a close, the weather brightened up considerably, allowing for more challenging training, notably ferrying supplies to remote locations in the field – slung in giant sacks beneath the helicopter: in this case, a large 300kg truck tyre.

The snow cloud builds significantly as the helicopter approaches for both the pickup and the drop-off, so the front and rear crews in the helicopter have to work seamlessly together to avoid hitting or injuring the MAOT, the ground crew responsible for attaching the strop to the load.

"Overall Operation Clockwork 23 has been

a challenging but rewarding deployment and shown that the squadron always comes together to face adversity and produce a solid output," said Captain Ralph Whyte, an Army Air Corps officer on exchange with 847 Squadron.

Clockwork runs side-by-side with – but separate from – the Royal Marines' annual winter deployment, this year named Joint Viking. The emphasis is getting 847's personnel Arctic trained... but if there's time and opportunity, the fliers will join in to provide support.

Lieutenant Mike Pengelly, normally 847's warfare instructor, swapped the skies for the seas and spent five days aboard the UK's amphibious flagship HMS Albion, advising on the scope of aviation support available to the Royal Marines of Yankee Company from Arbroath's 45 Commando, the troops on the ground.

By the time the deployment ended, missions to support Turkey's earthquake victims had tailed off, making transports available to bring the Wildcats home directly.

Pictures: PO(Phot) Kyle Heller, CHF



Kent ready for ops after emergency training



AT THE top of their game after ten days of the most intensive training the Royal Navy can offer are the crew of HMS Kent, ready for an impending deployment.

Kent has already passed Operational Sea Training – five or so weeks of demanding training and assessment off Plymouth determining whether a ship and her crew are ready to deploy on front-line duties.

But that was a while ago, and with changes in ship's company, a condensed, intensive package – known as Directed Readiness Training which effectively squeezes the key elements of five weeks' instruction into just ten days – was deemed just the ticket.

In this instance, the Portsmouth-based frigate was called on to enforce an exclusion zone separating two fictitious nations (Ginger and Brownia) who are at loggerheads.

It took exactly one day for hostilities to break out: ushering in non-stop action and tests of the ship's company: a surface warfare exercise, air defence, submarine hunt, battle damage (fire, flood, crashes, systems knocked out, engineers effecting makeshift repairs), widespread casualties, a spot of marine pollution, all-out war with simultaneous attacks above, on and below the waves, fire raging in the engine room putting Kent out of control, more floods.

It's about as intense as it can get aside from the real thing. While there's no real fire or water, there's a lot of simulated smoke, shouting and running around with heavy kit in cumbersome clothing such as the firefighting kit.

A lot of the burden of saving the ship in such circumstances falls upon the logistics department, more attuned to admin, bookkeeping and ensuring there are enough supplies (food, fuel, spare parts) to keep the ship running in regular circumstances.

"While every member of the ship's company is trained – and expected – to deal with the myriad of incidents which can arise at any time, it's perhaps the Logistics Department who most find their roles at action and emergency

stations to be a dramatic contrast from their daily tasks," explained Kent's Deputy Logistics Officer Lieutenant Richard Chapman.

In war he's put in charge of damage control in Kent's aft and his team become 'action logisticians' – far removed from the 'day job': firefighters, battle damage reporters, first aiders and stretcher bearers, providing the extra bodies needed to plug holes or shore up bulkheads, as well as rooting out replacement parts for damaged equipment.

Chefs too leave the galley and take up first-aid duties, but they are still expected to keep all 180 of their shipmates, preparing, cooking and delivering a hot meal – typically some form of pasta – before cleaning up, all inside 45 minutes... known as action messing.

"The experience has been phenomenal," said Able Seaman (Supply Chain) Jake Lloyd.

"It may mean long days, lots of admin and preparation, but we have been able to prove that HMS Kent's logistics department is critical to the ship's efforts.

"No fire will stop us, we Jack Dusties can don breathing apparatus and perform a 'face seal' check within world record times, diving head first into horrifying fires and floods to save the day."

Able Seaman (Supply Chain) Kayleigh Watson added: "This was a great chance to train up our newest member of stores and offered us – as seasoned bods – a chance to brush off the cobwebs," said. "Stores have once again proven themselves the dream team."

By the time of the final assessment – taking battle damage from a missile – her Commanding Officer Commander Jez Brettell said: "HMS Kent had proved that all the lessons learnt from training had been effectively put into practice to control the mayhem that was unleashed.

"With the final assessment of our training package passed with flying colours, Kent is now ready for her imminent operational deployment."



It's all Rover for trusty engine

AFTER more than 40 years' service the oldest engine in the Royal Navy has run for the last time.

With the return of HMS Brocklesby to Portsmouth after training and operations around the UK, it's finally time to retire the last Rover Salvage Generator in the Fleet.

The Rover is one of the last vestiges of the original systems and kit installed when the ship was under construction at the (long-gone) Vosper Thornycroft yard in Southampton in 1981-82 – making the generator older than the majority of the ship's crew.

Thanks to their glass fibre hulls, in theory minehunters like Brocklesby can run for decades – as long as the equipment aboard is maintained/upgraded/replaced when necessary. That days has come for both the generator and the ship which is now undergoing her first refit in seven years.

Located in a special purpose-built, weatherproof enclosure just behind the bridge, the generator provides back-up power to the command team to keep essential systems online in the event of an emergency. Should other generators and electrical systems fail, crew 'crank up' the Rover to guarantee power to key functions: steering, radar, degaussing, control and monitoring.

A similar, newer, more efficient motor, the Cat C4.4 from Finning, will replace it; Brocklesby will also undergo enhancements to embark autonomous and remote/offboard minehunting systems as

the Hunt-class modernise and lead the way with technological innovation.

For the past six months – as part of the rotation of minehunting crews – Crew 1 from Portsmouth's 2nd Mine Counter-Measures Squadron – looked after the 40-year-old warship.

As well as conducting tricky inshore survey work – made challenging by shallow waters and endless shipping – Crew 1 have flown the flag for the Royal Navy around the UK coast, embarking friends, families and Sea Cadets in ports around the UK to show the good work being carried out. Brocklesby has also trained personnel deploying on operations abroad and influenced future mine warfare generations with instruction closer to home.

The ship's last act before heading home for Portsmouth was taking part alongside NATO allies and other RN ships and assets on Exercise Joint Warrior.

That concluded in Campbeltown in Scotland, from where the order was given to fire up the Rover one last time and set the main engines 'Pompey Revs' (full speed for home).

Performing the honours was Petty Officer (Mine Warfare) Hayden 'Jimmy' Green who has served in Hunts (and before them Ton-class vessels) for 32 years. Recently selected for promotion to chief petty officer, Jimmy is bound for pastures new and will leave the Crew – and the Hunt class.





Battle for Bergen

THE fjords of Norway turn into a battleground between helicopters and fast boats for ten days as the Royal and Norwegian Navies introduce a new annual exercise.

Tamber Shield – hosted in the inlets and narrow waters around Bergen – will help both navies develop tactics for fighting in confined waters... including simulated strikes against fast-attack craft by Royal Navy Wildcat helicopters and Norwegian missile boats.

The many bays and jagged coast around fjords are perfect for hiding such craft – played for the sake of the exercise by Royal Navy P2000 and Norwegian Skjold-class patrol boats.

Both types are fast and highly-maneuvrable, making them ideal 'enemies'... but also perfect targets for the Wildcat, armed with the potent Martlet missile and the heavier, longer-range Sea Venom missile.

Four Wildcats have been

dispatched with air and ground crew from 815 Naval Air Squadron, based at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset, to Haakonsværn air base, from where they will scour the fjords in search of the boats.

The focus is on tactics – no live missiles are being fired on this particular exercise.

"Tamber Shield offers an outstanding opportunity for the squadron to enhance its warfighting capability and build upon the already devastating lethality of the Wildcat," said 815 NAS' Commanding Officer Commander Stu Crombie.

"Our personnel are all held at very high readiness to counter emergent threats, which makes exercises such as these vital in ensuring we can deliver the strike required by the Royal Navy, when it is required".

The small Royal Navy patrol boats participating – HMS Archer and Pursuer (pictured right arriving in



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Fjord transit

A HEARTY wave from sailors and a few soldiers on the flight deck of HMS Medway as the patrol ship departs South Georgia for the second time in as many months.

Yes, the Caribbean seems far away both in time and space for the Royal Navy patrol ship which is now into her fourth month providing reassurance to the Falkland Islands and environs.

She's relocated 6,000 miles from her regular stomping ground where she's spent the majority of her active life, as she stands in for her sister HMS Forth – the Royal Navy's regular presence in and around the Falklands is undergoing maintenance in Gibraltar.

"Many of the ship's company have never been to the Falkland Islands and quickly discovered the vast differences between the Caribbean and Falkland Islands," said Lieutenant Nico Melesi, HMS Medway's Marine Engineer Officer.

"Not many who joined the ship thought they would be swapping warm beaches, flip flops and shorts, for warm jackets, warm drinks and penguins."

The change of operating region meant a change of clothing for all aboard: insulated jackets and winter boots for all. Whilst owing to the colder sea temperature, some oils used in the ship's machinery have also been swapped to accommodate the changes in viscosity. The ship's heaters had also not been used much in the Caribbean, so these also needed testing prior to arrival; while the heavily-used air conditioning systems are enjoying a well-earned rest from the searing heat of the tropics.

The ship's mission is slightly different: on the one hand there's the constant task of supporting and reassuring British citizens in the Southern Hemisphere, but counter-narcotics and disaster relief operations are largely on hold.

The primary role of all UK military presence in the Falklands is that of deterrent, reassuring the local population, conducting patrols of sovereign waters, visiting islanders in some of most remote communities and providing monitoring duties in tandem with RAF assets.

In addition, there's combined training with the Roulement Infantry Company and the RAF to demonstrate the ability of all three Services to work

together seamlessly, in this instance training in and off West Falkland, the less populous of the two main islands.

For those who've not been, the Falklands are rather like patches of Cornwall... or Wales... or perhaps the Outer Hebrides: hilly, undulating, frequently marshy terrain, very green, sparsely populated and rather lacking in trees, yet with pristine beaches and clear, if very chilly waters.

They do not possess the rugged beauty of South Georgia which falls within the bailiwick of the South Atlantic patrol ship.

Passage by sea is the only way to make the 2,000-mile round trip and Medway paid two visits before winter begins to set in.

Once they'd arrived, crew got ashore to stretch their legs and get up close with the island's rich wildlife, notably king penguins, and fur seals, and filled their photo albums with snapshots as Medway sailed through the picture-postcard Drygalski Fjord near the southern tip of South Georgia.

"Coming to South Georgia is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and we've been lucky enough to do it twice in one month," said Able Seaman Hattie Haycock.

"The landscape and wildlife are absolutely breathtaking, and it was really interesting to learn about the history of South Georgia. I've never been to sea before and I feel incredibly fortunate to have had HMS Medway as my first ship."

Now back patrolling the main Falklands archipelago and working alongside both the RAF and Army, as well as island authorities such as Governor Alison Blake, who visited Medway upon her arrival and outlined the importance of the ship's presence and role.

"The past six months have been a very exciting time for HMS Medway; two hurricanes, a £24 million drugs bust and rescuing crew of a sinking tug," said Commanding Officer Commander Chris Hollingworth.

"Covering 6,000 miles from Florida to the South Atlantic is no mean feat, yet we've hit the ground running with two operational patrols to South Georgia. "This really demonstrates the exceptional capability and versatility of the South Atlantic Patrol Vessel."



Duchess's Daring debut

BECAUSE although she's followed the progress of her ship for nearly two decades – from the ship's launch on the Clyde in February 2006 through to her most recent update in Portsmouth in July 2021 – it's always been as the Countess of Wessex.

But since her husband was made Duke of Edinburgh earlier this year, HMS Daring's sponsor is now the Duchess of Edinburgh... seen here underneath the stern of the 8,500-tonne warship in Portsmouth's No.14 Dock.

The air defence destroyer is coming to the end of a lengthy refit and regeneration programme carried out both in the ship's native Portsmouth and at Birkenhead, where she became the second ship in her class to receive upgraded engines.

Daring returned to her home base at the beginning of the year, since then the Type 45 Refit Support Group, led by Lieutenant Commander Christopher

Shaw, has continued her regeneration for front-line operations.

His team hosted Her Royal Highness for a morning-long tour of the ship and dock facilities.

Her Royal Highness was provided with the full protective equipment (overalls, safety boots, helmet, glasses, gloves and a face mask) needed to enter a ship under upkeep.

"Following Her Royal Highness' last visit in July 2021, Daring has undertaken the first phase of her upkeep and has successfully completed her engine and power upgrades through the Propulsion Improvement Programme conducted in Cammell Laird, Birkenhead," Lt Cdr Shaw explained.

"Since the ship's return to Portsmouth earlier this year, the second phase to her upkeep has started in earnest with further capability upgrades taking place whilst in dock."

Picture: LPhot Unaisi Luke

From crown to Scottish castle

THE name for the mothership which will spearhead the Royal Navy drive towards autonomous systems and crewless mine warfare craft will be RFA Stirling Castle.

The vessel arrived in Plymouth earlier this year as the MV Island Crown and is undergoing conversion for military service.

When the work is complete later this year, the sixth Stirling Castle in RN service will have an RFA crew augmented by RN specialists operating various autonomous mine counter-measures systems and devices, drones and other robot systems to find and neutralise sea mines and other seabed threats around the UK.

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FAREWELL, FINE SHIP

AFTER a 30-year career serving her nation on the front line around the globe, HMS Montrose's active life came to an end in Portsmouth.

At 11.20am on Monday April 17 nearly 200 members of her ship's company turned to face the vessel as the White Ensign was lowered on her flight deck and the frigate passed into history.

Families, former crew, representatives of the warship's many affiliates, including from her namesake town in northeast Scotland, converged on Portsmouth Naval Base for the final act in the ship's career.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell was guest of honour at a short service, led by Royal Navy chaplain Tudor Thomas-Botwood, celebrating the deeds of Montrose and especially all those who served in her.

"It's been a truly special occasion officially decommissioning this fine ship after 30 years' service to both her monarchs and her country," said Montrose's final Commanding Officer Commander Claire Thompson.

"As the final ship's company it is with immense pride that we lowered the Ensign today and we did it on behalf of the thousands of men and women who have had the privilege of calling HMS Montrose home.

"It's been an honour to host the Second Sea Lord, the ship's affiliates, friends and family, and former shipmates during the ceremony and it has been a fitting end to very distinguished service."

Leading Engineering Technician Anthony Ball is Montrose's final 'sailor of the year', so the ship is fixed firmly in his heart.

"I joined HMS Montrose in January 2020 and I've done five tours of duty in Bahrain," said the marine engineer who was recognised, not least, for fixing the systems which kept the ship cool in the searing heat of the Middle East.

"It's a shame to see such a good ship come to the end of its Service but I'm proud to have served in her and I've had a great time with my shipmates in these three years.

"I've got loads of good memories from three visits to Dubai, including a New Year's Eve Party, a visit to Abu Dhabi and a special trip to the Seychelles on the ship's journey home to the UK."

Some crew will stay with Montrose through the decommissioning process as the ship is prepared for disposal – her ultimate fate has yet to be determined – while others are already dispersing around the Fleet.

Based in Plymouth for the vast majority of her career, Montrose was the seventh ship in the class of 16 Duke-class frigates to be laid down (back in 1989) and the eighth to be commissioned (1994).

Sponsored by the late Lady Rifkind, whose husband was Defence Secretary in the early 1990s, HMS Montrose has been commanded by 20 men and women since Commander John Arrow first took the reins back in 1993. Six returned to bid farewell, including Vice Admirals Sir Timothy Laurence, the Princess Royal's husband, and Tony Johnstone-Burt, who is Master of the Household for the Royal Households.

There are few parts of the world the frigate has not seen in her 29-year active life as she clocked up more than 400,000 miles on duties at home and overseas. Most recently she has spent four years constantly deployed on operations, almost exclusively in the Gulf/Indian Ocean.

As a general-duty frigate she will be replaced by one of the five Type 31 Inspiration-class frigates under construction in Rosyth. The first, HMS Venturer, is due in the water later this year.



Michelin-starred chef favours curry on Lancaster **£161m deal for F-35s until 2027**

ONE of India's top chefs gave the galley team on HMS Lancaster a break – and served up Michelin-starred scran for the 200 sailors and marines.

Suresh Pillai – generally known in the culinary world simply as Chef Pillai – is one of the world's best known and respected Anglo-Indian chefs, who's made his name in both Britain and his native land.

The 47-year-old former *Masterchef: The Professionals* contestant brought a team of ten chefs aboard the frigate when it became the first RN vessel to visit Kochi, in southwest India, in more than a dozen years.

The passageways of the Type 23 soon filled with the aroma of local spices as the chefs – who run a restaurant at the city's five-star Le Méridien hotel set to work.

Chef Pillai was determined not to serve "steaks or fish and chips" but some of his authentic local "spicy, tangy and delicious signature dishes": curries, breads, rice and salads.

The visit was organised by the British High Commission, who called on the chef's restaurant earlier this year and selected the dishes to serve.

Their selection did not disappoint: there were thumbs up all round from the ship's company for an authentic taste of India.

"It was a great pleasure to have Chef Pillai and his amazing team onboard Lancaster – the food they prepared was fabulous and was one of the highlights to our visits to Kochi," said Logistics Officer Lieutenant Commander Charlie Wilson.

And the verdict from his weapon engineering colleague, Lt Cdr Jonah Jones was simply: "That was amazing... can I have seconds please?"

As for the top chef himself, he described the chance to cook for 200 service personnel as "nirvana in a warship" and an "out of the world experience" for the ship's company. "One of the officers said in praise of the meal: This is Michelin-starred Indian cuisine," Chef Pillai beamed. "Thanks to the Royal Navy and British High Commission for this amazing opportunity."

In gratitude, his team was given a tour of the ship and a replica ship's crest as a memento.

Lancaster visited Kochi after taking part in the annual Anglo-Indian naval exercise Konkan (see the centre pages).



THE UK's fleet of F-35 Lightning fighter jets will have continued support thanks to a new contract to keep them ready for global operations.

The joint Royal Navy and RAF stealth jets - mainstay of UK carrier strike operations - will be maintained and supported under the £161m deal which investment sustains around 140 UK jobs.

The new contract comes as the previous agreement was due to end this year and was signed by the US Joint Program Office and Lockheed Martin as F-35 prime contractor, with BAE Systems to carry out the work as a sub-contractor.

Providing support to the F-35 fleet until 2027, the arrangement offers the UK more freedom to operate the aircraft, increases the number of flying hours available and delivers important mission planning, training, and maintenance capabilities to the jets which are flown and maintained by RN and RAF personnel based at RAF Marham.

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LEVEL PEAKS



Dutch Marines wear their green berets on the completion of their All-Arms Commando Course

Pictures by: LPhot Barry Swainsbury

PAIN AND PRIDE

DUTCH MARINES EARN THEIR GREEN BERETS

SIX Dutch Marines were presented with coveted Green Berets at the end of the infamous yomp across Dartmoor.

The '30 miler' – a march of eight hours or under across the moor in full fighting order and carrying kit in their Bergen rucksacks – is the final test of the All-Arms Commando Course, which must be completed to earn the coveted icon of cloak-and-dagger warfare.

As part of 50th anniversary celebrations of the UK and Netherlands Amphibious Force (UKNLAF), Lieutenant Colonel Oscar van der Veen of the Netherlands Marines Corps presented his countrymen and their fellow newly-qualified commandos with their green berets.

The two Marine Corps – and the Royal Navy and Royal Netherlands Navy – have deep ties which are embodied by the joint amphibious force, which was formed in 1973 and is Europe's oldest integrated force.

Joint training, shared values and equipment are all part of the UKNLAF – including a long history of Dutch Marines taking on the 13-week All-Arms Commando Course.

"It was 23 years ago when I was awarded my Green Beret," said Lt Col van der Veen.

"But the moment is the same for these young Marines, you can see it in their eyes, you can see the pain but also the pride they have for their achievements.

"It is humbling to look back on some of the images of what it was like 50 years ago when the UKNLAF was created.

"We had a Dutch Marines company integrated with Whisky Company, 45 Commando in Scotland. It was impressive to see what they were able to achieve alongside the Royal Marines.

"They trained and operated in the mountains, in Norway, in Arctic conditions and wherever the British went, they

were true pioneers for us.

"We are now a modern, fully-integrated and capable amphibious force, able to face all the new challenges that the world has to offer.

"The current series of exercises has seen Dutch and British Marines working ever closer together, we look at each other, we talk the same language always and know exactly what each other can do; we can trust each other."

"That bond goes even further back than the past 50 years, Dutch Commandos and Royal Marines fought side-by-side at Gibraltar in 1704, and during World War 2, when the Commandos were formed, there was a Dutch Troop No 2, as part of No 10 Commando.

"After WW2, Dutch Troop No 2 evolved into what is now Dutch Army Special Operations Forces (SOF).

"We have a long-distinguished and proud history together and we send people back to the Commando School at Lympstone on a very regular basis, you can't beat the original."

Lt Col Karl Johnston, Officer Commanding the Commando Training Wing at the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone, addressed those who had just completed the final test.

He said: "This year marks the 50th anniversary of the UKNLAF, Europe's oldest integrated military force. It is a real privilege to welcome you all to a special club – arguably the most exclusive and yet inclusive club in defence.

"Exclusive because the only entry point is passing those standards that you have all achieved, nobody gets the Green Beret without completing the professional and physical standards that we demand. But inclusive because clearly, we will welcome anyone with open arms if they can pass the Commando Tests."



The men are clapped in as they approach the end of the 30 miler



Lt Col Oscar van der Veen presents his countrymen with their green berets





BACK TO KOREA

ROYAL Marines deployed to the Korean peninsula for the first time since the Korean War to underscore bonds between long-standing allies during large-scale exercises.

Nearly 6,000 miles from their Somerset home, Taunton-based Bravo Company of 40 Commando were involved in training in crisis response, disaster relief, amphibious landings and coastal defence alongside the Republic of Korea Marine Corps and the US Marine Corps.

The exercise comes ahead of further deployments of Royal Marines across the Indo-Pacific – including exercises in Australia this summer – as part of ongoing Royal Navy efforts in the strategically important region, where the security situation is often challenging and complex.

Royal Navy offshore patrol ships HMS Tamar and HMS Spey have

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been on a long-term deployment across the vast region since late 2021, working with island communities and forging deeper bonds with allies and partners.

This year marks the 70th anniversary since the end of the Korean War, during which Royal Marines of 41 Independent Commando saw action as far north as Lake Chosin and carried out amphibious raids behind North Korean lines between 1950 and 1951.

Now the green berets have returned to Korean shores and worked with partners again, during exercises involving some 28,000 Korean and US sailors and marines, 30 warships, 70 aircraft and 50 amphibious assault vehicles.

The training – known as Exercise Ssangyong – was the largest amphibious activity for five years and took place near Pohang, a port city on the south-eastern coast of the Republic of Korea, around 160 miles from capital Seoul in the northwest.

Commandos operated as part of a combined surveillance team, helping exercise commanders make operational decisions through reconnaissance actions ashore, and directing strikes onto targets.

They also proved some of their new technology, including compact solar panels for charging tactical systems, and carried out integration training to develop their ability to operate as part of a combined force on the Korean peninsula, learning how each other operate and sharing expertise.

Major Aran Sandiford RM, in command of the Commando Forces on the exercise, said: "This deployment has provided a fantastic opportunity to further the Royal Marines' partnerships with the Republic of Korea Marine Corps and US Marine Corps; two of the foremost amphibious forces in the world.

"To have elements of Bravo Company embedded within both, really has been a privilege. Regional security in the Indo-Pacific

matters to all of us, including the UK, and this deployment of Commando Forces has provided an opportunity to reaffirm our shared values with two key regional allies.

"I'm looking forward to working with both organisations once again, on Exercise Talisman Sabre in Australia, this summer."

Over the last year, 40 Commando has often been attached to the US Marine Corps' forward deployed 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, which works across the Western Pacific and Southwest Asia.

Royal Marines themselves are now more often forward deployed as they continue their bold modernisation, which sees them develop new tactics and embrace new technologies, while forging stronger bonds with partners and allies across the globe.

"Ultimately, Royal Marines must be ready to deploy, sustain and fight anywhere in the world alongside our allies and partners," added Maj Sandiford.



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THROUGH THE

LENS

STUNNING images and video of Royal Navy operations around the globe have been celebrated at the Senior Services' annual photography competition.

The Peregrine Trophy is the yearly showcase of moving and still imagery that has stood out across the last 12 months of operations, ceremonial events and port visit.

Captured by 'The Photos' – the men and women of the Royal Navy's Photography Branch – the images scattered around these pages are true insight into the world of British sailors and Royal Marines as they carry out their duties on the front-line across all four corners of the globe.

Leading Photographer Finn Stainer-Hutchins scooped the Royal Navy Photographer of the Year award in this year's competition.

His exploits behind the camera included a deployment across the Mediterranean with HMS Albion, during which the amphibious flagship was at the heart of the Royal Navy's Littoral Response Group (North) that sailed nearly 50,000 miles and visited more than a dozen countries across three continents.

Finn said: "Everyday across the Royal Navy there are thousands of unique stories to tell.

"As a Royal Navy photographer you get the opportunity to record these stories through your lens.

"Each Royal Navy photographer takes thousands of images every year. Some of these images may be stunning standalone images but may not necessarily have a place in topical news and may not see the light of day in the public eye.

"The Peregrine Trophy gives a platform for strong standalone images showcasing the many unique stories told within the Royal Navy each and every day."

He added: "It's a great honour winning Peres and I look forward to capturing more images across the globe in the years to come."

This year's competition had over 475 image entries and 18 video submissions – an increase in both formats from previous years.



One of the winning images from Peregrine Trophy winners, Fleet Regional Photographic Unit East



One of the winning images from Peregrine Trophy winners, Fleet Regional Photographic Unit East

An awards ceremony will be held at the Royal Navy Museum in Portsmouth this summer where the winners will collect their prizes.

The judging for the competition took place in February by Harland Quarrington – Deputy Defence Imagery Editor, Panay Traintafillides – Defence Imagery Editor, Mark Davis – Freelance Editor, Visual Effects and Editor, Jason Bryant - Freelance, Press Photographer, Anthony Upton – Freelance, Press Photographer, Richard Pohle – Staff Photographer, The Times, Matt Powell – Great State, Lee Durant – BBC, Vince Knight – Vince Knight Productions, David Coombs – MOD Photographer and Idris Memon – Ernst And Young.



Part of the collection of Global Operations Portfolio Prize winners by LPhot Alker



The above four images made up the portfolio of Royal Navy Photographer of the Year, LPhot Stainer-Hutchins



One of the winning images from Peregrine Trophy winners, Fleet Regional Photographic Unit East



RNRMC Family and Friends Prize Public Under 18 years old won by OC Emily A'Barrow



One of the winning images from Peregrine Trophy winners, Fleet Regional Photographic Unit East



RNRMC Family and Friends Prize Professional winner by CPOPhot Cooban. The portrait version of this image also won the Diversity and Inclusion Prize



Maritime Air Portfolio Prize winner by LPhot Corbett



An image from The Commandant General Royal Marines' Portfolio Prize, which also won the The People's Choice Prize – by LPhot Johnson

THE WINNERS

The Peregrine Trophy
FRPU East
Royal Navy Photographer of the Year
LPhot Stainer-Hutchins
The Commandant General Royal Marines' Portfolio Prize
LPhot Johnson
Global Operations Portfolio Prize
LPhot Alker
Royal Navy Open Category Prize
LPhot Walton
Maritime Air Portfolio Prize
LPhot Corbett
RNRMC Family and Friends Prize Professional
CPOPhot Cooban
RNRMC Family and Friends Prize Amateur
Lt Cdr Roster
RNRMC Family and Friends Prize Public Under 18 years old
OC Emily A'Barrow
People at Work Prize
LPhot Stainer-Hutchins

Diversity and Inclusion Prize
CPOPhot Cooban
The People's Choice Prize
LPhot Johnson
RN Short Form Story Telling Video Prize
LPhot Clarke
Royal Navy Videographer of the Year 2022
CPOPhot Ethell
Royal Navy Amateur Photographer of the Year
Lt Duffield
Royal Navy Amateur Maritime Image Prize
Lt Duffield
Royal Navy Amateur Open Prize
Lt Duffield
Royal Naval Association Prize
LPhot Corbett
Royal Navy Amateur Videographer of the Year
Lt Duffield
Sea Cadet Amateur Photographer of the Year Under 18
Lyndia Bridge
Sea Cadet Amateur Photographer of the Year Over 18
David Pickles



Sea Cadet Amateur Photographer of the Year 2022 Over 18 was won by David Pickles



Sea Cadet Amateur Photographer of the Year 2022 Under 18 – Lyndia Bridge



RNRMC Family and Friends Prize Amateur winner by Lt Cdr Roster



People at Work Prize won by LPhot Stainer-Hutchins

Sea Cadet Amateur Photographer of the Year 2022 Under 18 – Lyndia Bridge



Royal Navy Open Category Prize winner by LPhot Walton



Royal Naval Association Prize winner by LPhot Corbett



An image from Royal Navy Amateur Photographer of the Year 2022, Lieutenant Andy Duffield. The pilot from 845 Naval Air Squadron also won the Royal Navy Amateur Maritime Image Prize, Royal Navy Amateur Open Prize and Royal Navy Amateur Videographer of the Year 2022

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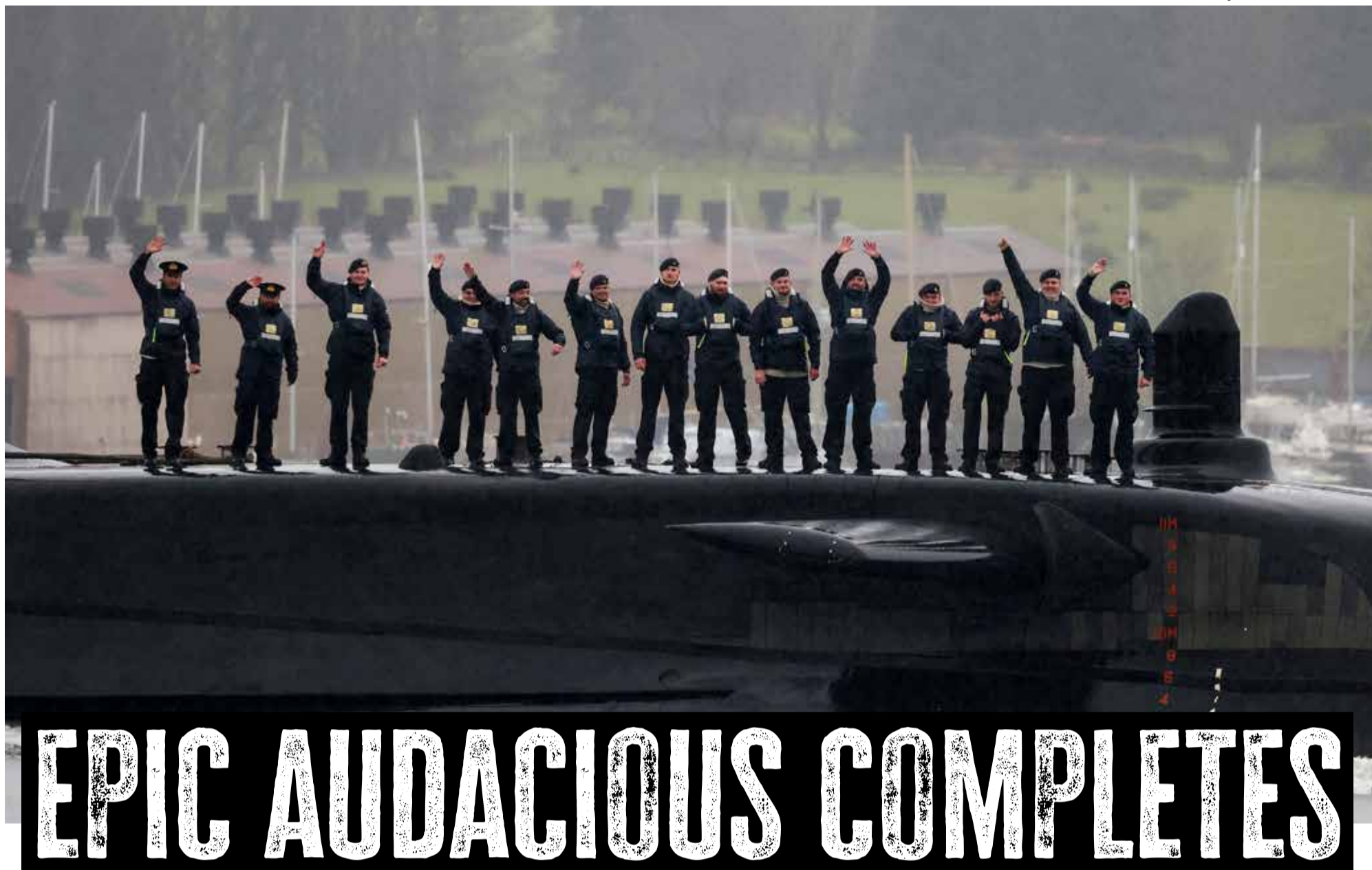
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BAE SYSTEMS



EPIC AUDACIOUS COMPLETES MARATHON MISSION

A ROYAL Navy submarine has returned home after completing an historic patrol of the Mediterranean.

The conventionally armed Hunter-killer submarine, HMS Audacious was on operations for two days short of a year – a mammoth 363 days away from her base on the Clyde, making it the longest ever deployment for any of the Royal Navy's new Astute-class submarines.

While the submarine itself remained poised for operations in the Mediterranean, Audacious' submariners made the most of opportunities associated with planned maintenance and crew rotation, taking periods of leave and seeing family over the festive period.

Commanding Officer of HMS Audacious, Commander James Howard, said: "My ship's company have delivered an unprecedented period of success on operations.

"We have maintained a highly capable and silent nuclear-powered, conventionally armed submarine at high readiness for almost a year. In doing so we've operated at arm's length from the UK, providing support to NATO and exercising with partners in the region.

"This has also proved that the UK has the capability to provide a stealthy, flexible, and proportional response to any situation, should that need arise.

"We could not have achieved this without the support of



NATO MISSION: Audacious during her deployment in the Mediterranean



ON THE CLYDE: Family members ready to welcome HMS Audacious home.

our families, and I look forward to being able to release my ship's company for a well-deserved break at home."

In March last year, she sailed from her home at HM Naval Base Clyde at Faslane in Scotland to the eastern reaches of the Mediterranean in response to Russian aggression in Ukraine.

The boat had just completed Operational Sea Training – winning the Valiant Trophy for exceptional performance during her certification for front-line duties.

Audacious spent 95 days under NATO command as she supported the alliance's efforts to combat illicit activity, people smuggling, and illegal trade in the Eastern Mediterranean.

In all, Audacious was away from her base port for 363 days, proving the Royal Navy's newest nuclear-powered submarines are capable for deploying for extended periods without support – as per their design.

In addition to the year on patrol, the 130-strong crew spent nearly three months preparing for the full range of submarine missions – so it was an emotional return to Faslane for many as families were reunited with loved ones after Audacious' long adventure.

Some 150 family members and loved-ones gathered at

Rhu Spit to wave to the vessel, before travelling on to HM Naval Base Clyde where they gave the crew a warm welcome home.

Keeping the submarine in peak condition for front-line operations during her gruelling schedule has proved a challenge for the engineering department.

Operating thousands of miles from the support structures at the UK's home of the Submarine Service at Faslane, Audacious' engineers worked with specialist divers from the Royal Navy's Diving Threat and Exploitation Group (DTXG), working seamlessly with the UK's allies and partners who enabled access to base services and logistics support at the numerous ports visited while away.

At Christmas, many of the ship's company were reunited at home or with their families in Cyprus, with loved ones flown out with the assistance of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

"It is difficult being out of contact during a deployment and not knowing where your loved-one is," said Helen Rouse who travelled with her family from Lancashire to Faslane to welcome son, Connor, home to the UK.

"Connor was deployed for the full 12-months except for

a very brief period at home," she said. "He joined the Royal Navy in 2019 and quickly decided that the Submarine Service was for him, so he is doing what he loves."

Connor's dad, Stuart, joked: "I think it was the extra pay that swung it, but there's no doubt he loves it. He's made some good friends and when he was away I even had the chance to speak with the Captain on the telephone during one of their stop-overs. He told me how well Connor was doing onboard which we really appreciated."

The family were at Rhu to wave to the submarine as she passed.

"I shouted at the submariners on the deck that we were Connor's family and they shouted back to tell us he loved us," said Stuart. "It was a really special moment."

Several members of Able Seaman (AB) Owen Currie's family also made the journey to Faslane. His partner, Julie, and his dad, Paul, travelled from Cambridgeshire, while his mum, Debbie, and sister, Amy, travelled from Birkenhead. Also there were Owen's stepdad Paul, his stepson Harrison, and Julie's parents Brian and Lynn.

Amy, who has decided to follow in her brother's footsteps, has already applied to join the Royal Navy.

"I originally wanted to join the Army, but after listening to Owen and learning more, I have been inspired to try for a career in the Submarine Service," she said. "I am looking forward to Owen being home for a while and us doing some fitness training together to get me ready for joining HMS Raleigh."

Owen's dad Paul said: "We really missed Owen, and not having regular contact takes a bit of getting used to. However, it makes you realise how important and special the job is."

Mum, Debbie, continued: "I know I will cry when I see him and all I can think about is giving him a hug and telling him how proud I am of the job he is doing."

Only one submariner was deployed for the entire 363 days. Lieutenant Greg Johnston, the Navigating Officer onboard HMS Audacious.

He said: "Whilst I haven't been able to go home for a year, the Royal Navy brought my home to me in Cyprus, giving my family and I a Christmas we will always remember."

"The separation has been difficult, each time I'm able to video message them I can't believe how much my daughter has grown."

"However, the challenge of delivering this unprecedented period of operations is one that I will look upon with the satisfaction of a job well done."



INDIAN INSIGHT

SAILING together, frigates HMS Lancaster and INS Trishul are a visual representation of the bonds between two nations.

The duo spent time conducting complex manoeuvres and a variety of training during Anglo-Indian exercises, known as Konkan.

It was aimed at underlining and enhancing the links – historical and present-day – between the two navies and the common goals of London and Delhi, namely security at sea.

The visit by Type 23 frigate Lancaster came as patrol ship HMS Tamar visited the other side of the sub-continent, heading to Indian cities not visited in several years by British warships.

Konkan takes its name from the 500-mile-long stretch of coastline along the western seaboard of India, where the exercise usually takes place - although occasionally the Royal Navy has hosted the workout when Indian vessels visit the UK.

Joining Lancaster – which is based in Bahrain on a three-year maritime security mission in the Middle East and surrounding waters – was Trishul ('Trident').

What followed was a series of combined manoeuvres and exercises – gunnery, submarine hunting, board and search, transfer of supplies between vessels (replenishment at sea) – with a dozen crew from each vessel trading places to experience life in the other's navy.

The main guns of both Lancaster (4.5in) and Trishul (3.9in) were trained on a 'killer tomato' (large red inflatable) target to hone marksmanship skills of gunnery teams, taking it in turns to pepper the tomato with rounds until it was obliterated.

Next up was submarine hunting as night descended on the Indian Ocean. Lancaster launched a robot submersible which simulates the actions of a submarine, then challenged the operations rooms of both warships – aided by their respective helicopters, Wildcat (UK), Helix (India).

Board and search operations are among Lancaster's core

duties in the region – she scored a notable success just weeks ago with a haul of illicit weaponry.

Members of each ship's company role played different scenarios including merchant sailors, fishermen, and smugglers as British and Indian board and search teams scoured the two vessels for 'suspicious cargo'.

Konkan closed with the two ships sailing just 50 yards apart – the standard distance for a replenishment at sea when fuel, food, ammunition, spare parts are passed between vessels on the move.

"It's been wonderful to be in India and to have been afforded the opportunity to work with our partners in the Indian Navy over the past week," said Lancaster's Commanding Officer, Commander Tom Johnson.

"All those we have worked with have been exceptionally welcoming and professional in getting us ready to continue our enduring mission in the region."

At the end of the exercise, Lancaster sailed into Kochi in southern India, where she was welcomed by a marching

band on the jetty.

The frigate hosted dignitaries and senior British representatives for a traditional sunset ceremony, while her sailors helped out at Kochi's oldest orphanage, dedicated to helping at-risk children, by playing various sports and games with youngsters and treating them to a variety of snacks from the ship.

On the opposite side of India, Tamar spent two weeks flying the flag for the UK and its industry, training with the host nation's Fleet and promoting diplomatic, political, military and cultural ties.

Tamar's visit to Chennai was the first for the Royal Navy since HMS Westminster in 2008.

Aside from a programme of official visits and tours, Tamar's cricketers combined with those from INS Car Nicobar for a match against the Prince of Arcot's XI. Played on the private ground at the Prince's palace, the joint naval team was ultimately saved by the rain and awarded the trophy in good faith at a reception hosted by the Prince



after play.

Tamar reciprocated hospitality by hosting a reception on behalf of the Deputy British High Commissioner for Chennai, attended by the State Minister for Finance, local dignitaries from government and industry, and colleagues from across India.

Before departing, the Indian Navy challenged Tamar to a sunrise game of beach volleyball, followed by a breakfast buffet featuring a selection of traditional food from across India.

"We are so familiar with the food because of its popularity in the UK – indeed it is one of so many aspects of culture and tradition the UK shares with India, which makes our relationship so strong and familiar, and a foundation for future success," said Lieutenant Leo Jeune, Tamar's correspondence officer.

Next up: Visakhapatnam – commonly shortened to Vizag – where Tamar hosted another reception on behalf of the British High Commission, as well as a trade and

investment lunch, and, most enjoyable of all, helping out at the Campus Challenge charity for disabled youngsters. Sailors helped re-paint the facility, plant saplings and challenge the children to games of cricket and volleyball.

Tamar's last stop in Indian waters will be a second visit to the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal – for this leg of the ship's five-year Indo-Pacific deployment.

Lieutenant Commander Matt Millyard said Tamar's sailors had thoroughly enjoyed their passage to India.

"Throughout, the ship's company have been made to feel at home and the exchange of knowledge, ideas and understanding has been mutually beneficial as the Royal Navy continues to strengthen its historic ties in the region.

"India is a valued partner of the UK and our two navies share deep ties and friendships. It's been great to be here, and we are very much looking forward to working ever more closely with our colleagues, as well as wider defence and industry partners."



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CAMBRIA'S PARÊD RHYDDID

MEN and women from the Royal Navy's home in Wales marched through the heart of the capital for the first time.

Although HMS Cambria – home to Reservists of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines – has been associated with the Cardiff area for three quarters of a century, only now have the city's leaders bestowed their highest honour upon the unit.

Cambria – based in a brand-new £11m facility in Cardiff Docks since July 2020 – joins a pantheon of just 62 individuals and 11 organisations, including Nelson Mandela, Dame Shirley Bassey, HMS Cardiff and HMS Dragon granted the Freedom of the City of Cardiff.

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor of Cardiff, Cllr Graham Hinchey, said: "I am honoured to be part of the celebration and to recognise the outstanding service, dedication, and commitment to duty of the men and women who serve as the Ship's Company in His Majesty's Ship Cambria."

"In conferring the Freedom of the City upon HMS Cambria, we recognise its long and distinguished history as the Royal Navy's home in Wales, and its pivotal role in training and deploying Royal Naval Reservists to support the Royal Navy at sea and ashore, at home and abroad."

The honour permits personnel from Cambria to march through Cardiff parading the Freedom Scroll with Colours flying and bayonets fixed, led by the Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines – embodied by musicians from the Commando Training Centre at Lymstone, near Exeter.

Lieutenant Nathan Duke, a Chartered Civil Engineer who has mobilised recently, was born and raised in Cardiff has served in the Maritime Reserve for the past 15 years. Nathan said: "It was a great honour for me to be selected as the Officer of the Guard for such a prestigious event which marks a significant milestone in HMS Cambria history."

The Cardiff parade was the first and last for Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Buckley from North Cardiff. After 33 years' volunteering, the financial adviser is shortly retiring from the Royal Navy.

"It's been an enormous privilege to share the Freedom of Cardiff Parade with HMS Cambria Ship's Company and a fitting way to end my Royal Navy service."

Also taking part was Leading Hand Judith White from Swansea



who has been in the Reserves for 31 years. Judith is currently working in a large distribution warehouse for a global organisation and said: "The notability of HMS Cambria being given the Freedom of Cardiff and marching through the city was fantastic and such a huge privilege."

Since it was established, HMS Cambria has been based at several sites in South Wales.

In 1978, after its Cardiff base was earmarked for demolition, it was relocated to ex-army premises overlooking the sea in Sully and in subsequent years a number of attempts were made to bring it back to Cardiff.

However, it was not until 2018 that a site could be found and in July 2020 it moved into its current home in the heart of Cardiff Bay. Every week up to 80 Royal Navy and Royal Marines Reservists use the state-of-the-art facilities,

including training and classroom suites, a fitness room, a multi-purpose dining area and short-term accommodation as well as a rope training area and a parade ground.

Staff at HMS Cambria support Reservists and Student Naval Cadets studying at universities in Cardiff who, during the pandemic, helped the Welsh and UK governments in their response to Covid.

"HMS Cambria has had a long association with the City of Cardiff over 75 years. Reservists from the Unit have been actively mobilised in the local community throughout the decades, assisting civil authorities," said Commander Carolyn Jones, Cambria's Commanding Officer.

"To be granted the Freedom of the City is a great honour and we look forward to strengthening the relationship with the City in the coming years."

Pictures: LPhot Barry Swainsbury



FOR the first time in their boat's long and proud history, crew of HMS Triumph marched through the Devon market town of Newton Abbot.

A marching platoon of 25 submariners accompanied by up to 30 musicians from the Southwest Area Sea Cadets Band brought military pomp and ceremony to the streets, underscoring longstanding ties between the nuclear-powered submarine and the people of Newton Abbot.

Triumph has enjoyed a lengthy affiliation with the town, but it was only in 2019 that civic leaders decided to grant its highest honour of Freedom of the Town upon the boat – the first non-individual to be so decorated.

Covid then intervened and prevented a planned parade "with bayonets fixed, Colours flying and bands playing" ... until now.

The Freedom Scroll was presented by the Mayor, Councillor Carol Bunday, to Commander Shaun Southwood, representing Commander Scott Taylor, the T-boat's Commanding Officer.

In an address read out by Cdr Southwood, Triumph's skipper told townsfolk: "While saddened we are unable to join you on this most special of days, this sadness is offset by the pride and excitement we all feel in returning her to where she rightfully belongs, delivering on operations."

"While the history of the name HMS Triumph does not quite extend as far back as that of Newton Abbot, we do share a rich tapestry woven into the fabric of the region and I can only hope the future for HMS Triumph, and indeed our affiliation, is as illustrious as her past."

Cllr Bunday told the two dozen submariners lined up before her: "Today, as throughout our nation's history, we owe a debt of gratitude to our Armed Forces who serve their country and help to maintain our safety and security. We salute the crew of HMS Triumph and are delighted to offer them the freedom of our town."

Triumph is the last of seven Trafalgar-class hunter-killers still in service with the Silent Service – and the last boat still based in Devonport as the Submarine Flotilla concentrates in Faslane and completes its transition to the successor class of Astutes.

Pictures: Ian Caldwell

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'...The handbags and the liferafts...'

OLD liferafts are being turned into high-street fashion to raise money for Royal Navy families – and help give young people a fresh start in life.

Out-of-date rafts, fire hoses and other life-saving kit are being converted into up-market fashion accessories – handbags, sports bags, wallets – to raise money for the Service's premier charity.

Beyond helping the families of Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel, the project – known as 'upcycling' – ensures unwanted kit does not end up in landfill as it once did.

And, through Gosport-based charity Oarsome Chance, it's training disadvantaged young people from around the Portsmouth area, giving them design and manufacturing skills.

Through upcycling, the old kit receives a new lease of life, saves the MOD the time and cost of dumping, and encourages sailors to think about the environment, recycling and the 'throw-away culture' of developed nations like the UK.

"Not every project needs new technology, a huge investment or a massive efficiency. It's relatively small – but it makes a difference: reducing landfill, reducing cost, generating money for the Royal Navy's primary charity and supporting young people in the local community,"

said Warrant Officer 1 Lee Reeves, who's delighted to see the initiative come to fruition.

The project has been driven by

former warrant officer Bob Field who now works for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity in Portsmouth.

He noticed that the RNLI was turning some of its old kit into merchandise to raise money – and wondered if the Royal Navy could do likewise.

In WO1 Reeves Bob found someone in the Royal Navy thinking similarly... and in Oarsome Chance, which already 'upcycles' old sails, canvas, ropes and other seafaring items, crafting them into wallets, bags and bracelets, he found a local organisation able to make use of the unwanted survival equipment.

"I knew from my last job in the Royal Navy that the MOD disposed of disused items in varying ways, including some going to landfill at a cost," said Bob, who's the RNRMC's Head of Support Services and Engagement.

"With the help of my colleagues, I thought there's got to be a creative solution here. Through this project we've managed to take difficult or impossible to recycle materials, materials destined for a landfill, and make incredible products with new value. The value is not just funding for RNRMC, but also for the teams of young people who are helping make this happen.

"I believe this is just the tip of the iceberg – it would be excellent if this was the way forward with other pieces of kit across all of Defence."

It's taken four years to reach the point where the collection can be produced and sold in sufficient numbers – a trial run a couple of years ago led to the merchandise quickly being snapped up.

"This project is a great example of innovation, creativity and collaboration – all skills and qualities we aim to encourage and develop within the Royal Navy," said Rear Admiral Paul Beattie, who's in charge of the Navy's Climate Change and

Sustainability plan. "It's a shining light of how small projects can achieve benefit for many – within the Royal Navy but more broadly for charities, local people and of course, for the benefit of the planet."

Each accessory is unique – hand crafted from a different part of a raft or hose (or both). Items range from a passport holder (£20) through laptop case (£40) and various bags to a top-of-the-range rolltop backpack (£150).

Each accessory is unique – hand crafted from a different part of a raft or hose (or both). Items range from a passport holder (£20) through laptop case (£40) and various bags to a top-of-the-range rolltop backpack (£150).

Each accessory is unique – hand crafted from a different part of a raft or hose (or both). Items range from a passport holder (£20) through laptop case (£40) and various bags to a top-of-the-range rolltop backpack (£150).



One of the Oarsome Chance team begins cutting up the 'roof' fabric of a retired Royal Navy liferaft



£300k boost for neuro-diversity

THE Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust has awarded the RNRMC £300,000 to help with distributing and developing bespoke support around neurodiversity.

In recent years, the RNRMC has become aware of an increasing number of Royal Navy families looking for practical support to help navigate the additional challenges that can arise when living with additional needs like dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and autism.

In response to this increasing need, the RNRMC set about developing a new project to help naval families with a child with ADHD and/or autism.

This new project will work with Armed Forces families who have neuro-diverse children; where their needs may be hidden and the support that they receive can be experienced as inconsistent.

It will transform the way Royal Navy and Royal Marine families are supported by developing a 'community of experience', peer-to-peer support, navigation, practical support backed by a collaborative partnership using knowledge, evidence and the lived experience to drive ongoing, enduring improvement.

They will work with others to share the learning of their work; especially where this can help to improve outcomes for neuro diverse children within the wider service community.

"This is a collaborative, shared project, involving a range of organisations which have a passion to see families supported and make a real difference," said Mandy Harding, Head of Commissioning Grants at RNRMC.

"Raising the profile of our hidden neuro-diverse population matters. What matters even more is that we address needs and take action to improve life for our families and bring positive, sustainable change in the way we look after our people, enabling them to thrive."



Cake it easy

The RNRMC is inviting supporters to host a Stand Easy Coffee morning during Mental Health Awareness Week to raise funds to support mental health in the Naval community.

People are encouraged to get involved between May 15 and 21, whenever and wherever they can. The money raised through the Stand Easy campaign will help the RNRMC provide support to members of the Naval community who need it most.

"The Stand Easy was a brilliant way to get friends and neighbours together to raise money, whilst enjoying lots of cake, something that was accessible for everyone

to take part in," said Sarah-Jayne Craig, who held an event two years ago.

"Throughout the day we discovered a lot of the people we invited had a Naval connection that we weren't aware of until holding the Stand Easy, so it was a great way to raise awareness of the Charity and learn new things about people that we wouldn't have ordinarily known."

Anybody is welcome to take part by signing up here: www.rnrmc.org.uk/stand-easy.

Upon signing up, you'll have the opportunity to choose between a free physical or a digital fundraising pack.

Massed Bands' first UK tour

FOLLOWING their sell out performances at London's Royal Albert Hall in March 2023, the Massed Bands of His Majesty's Royal Marines are embarking on their first UK tour in September 2023.

With more than 100 musicians on stage and the world-famous Royal Marines Corps of Drums, these concerts showcase the outstanding musicianship and versatility of the world's finest military musicians.

Complete with special lighting effects, the spectacular concerts will also give audiences the opportunity to enjoy the traditional Naval Sunset finale.

- Thursday September 14: St David's Hall, Cardiff
- Friday 15: Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham
- Saturday 16: Bridgewater Hall, Manchester
- Thursday 28: De Montfort Hall, Leicester
- Friday 29: Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool
- Saturday 30: The Sage, Gateshead

For more details, see www.royalmarinesbands.co.uk/events

We can help with fees

RECOGNISING the benefits that being part of the naval community - past and present - since 2021 the RNRMC has subsidised membership fees to allow serving/ex-personnel to link up with shipmates in the Royal Naval Association - an institution which can become an integral part of life for some, as expressed here by a long-time RNA member:

"I came home on weekend leave in August 1976, and opposite the station I noticed an RNA Club, so on the Saturday morning I decided to investigate. The members there welcomed me with open arms and immediately enrolled me as a member. On my discharge in 1977 I got more involved with the Branch, I joined the Fire Service and was posted to the local fire station where I remained for the rest of my service.

"The RNA became a big part of my life as I really missed the Navy, I was persuaded to take on the role of Social Sec, then after some training I became the Branch Standard Bearer, attending many functions in London and the region. I attended over 15 Annual Conferences as Delegate and Standard Bearer throughout Wales, Scotland and England. I later became Branch Treasurer when each Branch had



its own Charity Number.

"I was honoured with Life Membership in 2000, but sadly shortly afterwards the Branch closed due to lack of members, however I still attend the RNA parade every two years and The Cenotaph each year.

"The RNA has now been a part of my life for 47 years, I have met

old shipmates and friends from all over the world, I have played golf at many RNA golf days, and indeed won the Rayleigh Branch RNA golf day over ten times in succession, to those that run the RNA, please keep up the good work because you have kept this 'Old Matelot' sane, safe and happy all these years."

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Going the extra mile...

AS PART of the militarisation pillar of their training, URNU Devon Officer Cadets' (OCs) expressed an interest in developing their green skills.

The unit's Commanding Officer, Lt Jamen Smith and Coxswain, CPO Carl Harris, subsequently organized the opportunity for them to attend The Green Mile Exercise, with an additional emphasis on building mental and physical resilience in a phase one training context.

The first exercise tested OCs' ability to acquire, retain, recall, and apply information during arduous conditions while conducting a navigation exercise.

OCs were taught the importance of pacing and were tasked with drawing a scale map of a route they took while carrying a 20kg burgen and under time pressures.

This experience also gave them the opportunity to practice their wet dry routine in the snowy Welsh weather.

Following this, OCs were taught the importance of controlled breathing and techniques to minimise heat loss, which was particularly testing in a 4C outdoor cold-water plunge.

The challenge was embraced by all as they demonstrated camaraderie by motivating and supporting each other along the way.

Having been instructed in line with phase one techniques and standards, OCs learnt how to safely attempt a variety of climbing techniques on the high ropes.

Testing physical strength and communication skills, OCs were taught casualty evacuation procedures in a simulated hostile environment which included a 3km run over mountainous terrain.

Racing against their peers and the clock, OCs completed the WW2 assault course, before their final lesson in bush craft, starting a fire using a flint. Finally, warming up by the fire and reflecting on the days training with scorched marshmallows.

Throughout the completion of the course OCs demonstrated their physical ability, mental resilience, and ability to work within a team.

Morale boosting was particularly prevalent during the assault course as OCs were physically and mentally exhausted, uncomfortable in their wet, muddy rig; and relied more heavily on their peers for motivation and encouragement.

Overall, the exercise tested OCs physically and mentally while encouraging effective communication during tough conditions.

The experience taught OCs a number of integral green skills in a practical and simulated exercise while providing an insight into Royal Navy life in a controlled and safe environment.

By stepping out of their comfort zones, the OCs have developed their physical and mental fortitude, proving their resilience to their peers, the staff, and most importantly, to themselves.

FreshStart such a success

THROUGHOUT the 2022/23 academic year, URNU East Scotland has had the privilege of representing the Royal Navy in working alongside our elected charity of the year FreshStart, helping them to achieve their mission of poverty alleviation, specifically within the transition from homelessness and temporary accommodation to a permanent place to call home.

The support URNU ES has provided ranges from organising 'hit squads', where a team of Officer Cadets paint walls of residents' homes and pack hampers, to equip new occupants with household and pantry essentials, to arranging goods collections, such as for their 'Festive Foods' campaign, where Officer Cadets joined together to gather festive items like Christmas puddings, cosy blankets and even a Christmas-tree-shaped tricolore pasta.

As part of its ongoing commitment to charity

work, URNU ES hosted a cocktail night, with alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks alike available. All the profits of which will be donated to FreshStart under their 'Fresh Starts for FreshStart' campaign, centred around creative ways to fundraise.

To finish the academic year this month, the most ardent Officer Cadets, along with staff, are to fundraise for Poppy Scotland in the Edinburgh Marathon Festival, extending the unit's efforts to another fantastic and deserving charity.

As exam season approaches and the year draws to a close, the unit as a whole can be proud of its accomplishments and dedication to its charitable work, while looking forward to the future and to finding a new worthy cause to sponsor in the coming academic year.

Officer Cadet Gabriel Barrett-Bunnage.
URNU East Scotland Charities Rep and first year Economics student at University of Edinburgh

University Royal Naval Units

Fantastic sporting opportunity

NOT every university student can say they've had the opportunity to travel to Germany and Austria to advance their skiing abilities with qualified instructors while gaining recognised skiing qualifications and absorbing German culture, free of charge... but the URNU can.

Two Liverpool URNU students were given the opportunity to experience legendary Navy PT for a week at the Naval Outdoor Centre Germany (NOCG).

A week skiing with free accommodation, transport, equipment hire, food, lift pass and lessons was simply impossible for the two of students to say 'no' to.

They were joined by four other URNU students from Bristol, East Midlands and Manchester as well as active service people from the Navy and Marines.

They collectively set off from Dover, enduring the 16-hour coach journey before arriving at the authentically Bavarian hotel that was rich with Germany culture and hospitality.

They were then assigned to their rooms and ski groups based on ability and experience, which would become their inner circle for the rest of the week.

Ski lessons consisted of the classic skiing



techniques from pole planting, carving, short turn skiing and backwards skiing, off-piste techniques and telemark skiing for the more advanced groups all taught by fantastic instructors.

Halfway through the week the students had the opportunity to visit a traditional European spa and indoor water park. This gave them the chance to rest sore muscles and let off some steam surviving the wave machine and high-speed slides.

Golden days for Glasgow



UNIVERSITY Royal Naval Unit (URNU) Glasgow recently hit gold when it marked its 50-year anniversary.

To celebrate the momentous occasion (albeit a couple of years later than originally planned), the unit hosted an event with local dignitaries and members of the Military Education Committee, as well as former Staff and Officer Cadets.

Lt Cdr Lynsey Youngson, Commanding Officer of URNU Glasgow, said: "It was great to see so many former staff and students and hear some great stories from years gone by.

"It was also a fantastic opportunity for our current Officer Cadets to hear about the careers of some of our former students, giving them an idea of future roles they could aspire to."

URNU Glasgow is now one of 17 Units around the UK, including one virtual unit, but back in 1971, it was only the third unit to be established. The organisation was originally founded in Aberdeen in 1967, and to this day, continues to develop leadership skills and provide maritime experiences to its members.

OCdt Archie Fergusson said: "As an Officer Cadet in the URNU, we gain skills that will help us in our future employment, no matter what career path we choose. These transferrable skills are learned in a variety of ways, through lessons taught at the unit, at sea on Royal Navy vessels, or out in the field during leadership exercises or Adventurous Training. Most recently, some of our cadets were given the opportunity to deploy on a Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship.

"If anyone is at or is about to start university, and is looking to do something a bit different, I would highly recommend the URNU to them."

If you are interested in joining one of the University Royal Naval Units, or you want to find out more, search "URNU" on the RN website.

Registered charity number: Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund 180182



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Beltin' link for Bolton with 820

FRED Dibnah. Vernon Kay. Peter Kay (no relation). Paddy McGuinness. Clive Myrie. Sara Cox.

And now the proud folk of Bolton can celebrate new heroes – thanks to an affiliation with the guardians of Britain's flagship, 820 Naval Air Squadron.

The Merlin Mk2 fliers and ground crew, based at RNAS Culdrose when ashore, on HMS Queen Elizabeth or Prince of Wales when at sea, are now formally bound with the town in Greater Manchester.

The squadron – whose role is to shield the carriers (and their task groups) from the prying eyes of hostile submarines and scour the skies for missile and aerial threats – established close ties with Bolton a few years ago.

The pandemic prevented those ties being formalised until now.

A signing ceremony was held in the town hall (which is a carbon copy of Portsmouth's Guildhall, except it wasn't bombed by the Luftwaffe) linking the town – not merely its council – with the Fleet Air Arm formation.

The agreement will help local schools, colleges and the university to work closely with the armed forces, gain valuable insights into their work and build links to the officer training school.

"I am delighted this affiliation has been formally established," said Commander Ian 'Reg' Varley, 820's Commanding Officer (pictured above on the town hall steps with squadron personnel and Bolton's Lord Mayor Councillor Akhtar Zaman).

"It takes forward a strong and fond legacy of this important town with the Royal Navy, previously held with HMS Dido, a World War 2 cruiser and latterly a Leander-class frigate, and most recently Type 22 frigate HMS Beaver.

"The squadron was warmly hosted by the mayor and town council officials during a two-day visit, and we look forward to a future opportunity to host some of Bolton's leading figures at our home in Culdrose."

The town already received regular updates from the squadron ahead of the formal link, particularly detailing the Merlins' activities with the carrier strike group deployment to the Pacific in 2021.

"Bolton is rightly proud of its historical connections with the Armed Forces, so it was an easy decision when we were asked to affiliate with a Royal Naval Air Squadron," said Bolton Council leader Cllr Martyn Cox.

"I look forward to local schools and other groups building strong links in the years to come."

Strategic talks back at BRNC

LECTURES at the spiritual home of the Officer Corps have returned after a lengthy hiatus.

The Britannia Lecture series tackles some of the most pressing global strategic issues and subjects of the day – with particular reference, understandably, to their impact on the Royal Navy.

The aim is to fire the imagination of the Navy's leaders of tomorrow.

Supported by the Naval Review and the Britannia Association and with Captain Sarah Oakley at the helm, the first of the revived addresses focused on the Royal Navy, China and National Strategy, attended by more than 100 people, including junior officers, invited guests and academics.

The keynote speaker was Sam Olsen of Evenstar Global, a former British Army Intelligence Officer who has previously served the US Senate working on China, trade and policy, and as an advisor on China to senior politicians in the UK and other allied countries.

He was joined by a discussion panel including Dr Jennifer Sauboorah Till, Operations Planner for the Indo-Pacific at PJHQ, and the College's Senior Lecturer in Strategic Studies, Mark Grove.

They explored several themes, including the Chinese

economy and structural influence in Southeast Asia, the People's Liberation Army Navy, and also the Royal Navy and British strategy in the region, prompting a thought-provoking and insightful panel discussion. Questions from cadets touched on subjects such as the UK's dependence on Chinese manufacturing and the associated implications.

The next lecture is lined up for Tuesday July 11.



Turbinator called in to save energy

THIS strange contraption being craned on to the roof of the Navy's HQ in Merseyside could be the future of cheap, sustainable, environmentally-friendly energy for military establishments.

The first wind turbine of its kind in Europe has been installed at HMS Eaglet.

Described as a 'turbine in a box', the unique system – which has just been singled out for an environmental award – is the first step in taking the establishment 'off the grid', ultimately generating its own electricity, saving thousands of pounds a year and dramatically reducing CO2 emissions.

The waterfront headquarters at Brunswick Dock, about a mile south of Liverpool city centre, is home to both the Navy's Regional Commander for the North-West and staff, as well as the area's Royal Navy and Royal Marines Reserves among 15 sub-units. It's used by 200 permanent staff and 1,000 full-time Service personnel, Reservists and civilians on a regular basis.

Eaglet was built in the 1990s, making it one of the newest establishments in the Navy, and features the energy saving standards of the day.

Twenty-five years on the building needed upgrading – dubbed Project Liverbird – as the Navy and Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for the North West of England and the Isle of Man strive for net zero emissions and reduced reliance on fossil fuels.

The Hover Wind-Powered Microgrid – described as a 'turbine in a box' and positioned on the roof of Eaglet – is the

brainchild of Dallas-based Hover Energy.

It chooses the mix of power and can generate up to 100,000kWh of electricity a year – equivalent to what ten typical family homes would consume – as well storing and 'combining' renewable electricity with power from the main grid simultaneously, something no other behind-the-meter product in the world that can do this.

Aside from the turbine, other energy-saving measures introduced to are:

- 'air to air' source heating which converts free energy from the air and upgrades it to higher temperatures suitable for heating;
- 'air-to-water' heat pumps replacing the existing, inefficient oversize boiler, reducing gas use and wastage – saving over £12,000 every year;
- energy-efficient controls and heat reclaim to the ventilation system – saving £15,800 a year.
- heat pumps throughout to heat/cool the building – saving £1,700 and lower CO2 emissions
- LED lights, activated by motion sensors.
- Improved insulation throughout.

As a result of these improvements – recognised by an Innovation Award at the MOD Sanctuary Awards – Eaglet is generating nearly two thirds of the energy it consumes. The turbine alone has reduced CO2 emissions by 17 tonnes a year, the air source heat pumps an additional nine tonnes.

Warrant Officer 1 Mark Barker, who oversaw the revamp on behalf of the Navy,

said it made sense to incorporate "cutting-edge green energy efficient solutions" when the entire building was refurbished.

"These changes combine to create a huge reduction in carbon, energy and costs in an age of increasing gas and electric tariffs. The Hover wind turbine – a first in UK and Europe – will deliver the bulk of these savings," he added.

"On current data, it takes HMS Eaglet 'off grid' by a forecasted baseline of 63 per cent."

Embracing environmental technology had created a new-look headquarters more pleasant to work in, more useful to the wider Ministry of Defence as a regional hub in the North-West, at the same time as cutting bills and CO2 emissions.

Colonel Mark Underhill, Chief Executive of NW RFCA said: "The Hover Energy wind turbine at HMS Eaglet in Liverpool is incredibly important and extremely exciting; it represents a quantum leap in our green energy revolution.

"With solar panels and battery storage we will take the site completely off grid. These efficiencies will save a huge amount of taxpayers money and provide energy security at this major MOD site which plays an important role in working with civil authorities and emergency services."

Christopher Griffin, CEO and Co-Founder of Hover Energy LLC, added: "Hover is proud to be in unity with the MoD in its efforts to decarbonise each site and establish complete energy security. These joint efforts continue to encourage our relentless focus on sustainable energy design. And we know we are only just getting started, together."

The best of friends, littorally

THE Royal Navy and Royal Marines and the US Navy and the US Marines Corps have pledged to work even closer on littoral operations.

A Statement of Intent was signed at Admiralty House in Portsmouth Naval Base, paving the way for closer collaboration on complex operations around coastal zones and improve both nations' ability to operate across land, sea and air effectively.

Crucially, this will see more joint training and deployments for sailors and marines (such as 45 Commando pictured left training with a USMC Osprey tilt-rotor in Scotland in spring 2021), strengthening the UK and USA's already significant warfighting capability and enabling seamless relations between maritime forces.

This is all under the umbrella of Delivering Combined Seapower – the dialogue which has taken place since 2016 between the two nations to build and sustain close joint working.

It builds on successes identified through previous collaboration between the nations across concepts such as counter-reconnaissance and littoral strike.

Lieutenant General David Furness, Deputy Commandant, Plans, Policy and Operations US Marine Corps, and Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell, signed the document at the latter's official residence.

"I am delighted to sign this agreement that will see the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, US Navy and US Marine Corps work even

closer together as we continue our respective transformational journey," said Vice Admiral Connell.

Lt Gen Furness added: "We welcome the opportunity to build on the existing close relationship between the US and United Kingdom.

"Our forces only benefit when we share our knowledge and expertise with each other. We look forward to this even deeper collaboration with our Royal Navy and Royal Marine partners."

Under the agreement, opportunities will increase in areas such as computer simulation, overseas exercises, synthetic training, and wargaming.

Picture: LPhoto Matt Bradley



New badges issued for Coronation personnel

THESE are the badges which will be adorning the caps of Royal Navy personnel taking part in this month's Coronation parade – bearing His Majesty King Charles III's new crown and cypher.

Petty Officers, Chief Petty Officers, Warrant Officers and Officers, and Royal Marines equivalents, on parade during the historic May 6 event will all be issued caps with the new monarch's insignia.

"This will already be a proud moment for our sailors and Royal Marines Commandos, and it is made even more memorable with the addition of the new crown and cypher," said Warrant Officer First Class Eddie Wearing, the Royal Navy's State Ceremonial Training Officer.

The Royal cypher is a monogram-style design used by the reigning monarch, consisting typically of their initials and title, which are often

intertwined, with a crown sitting above.

Shortly after Her Majesty the Queen's death in September 2022, a tri-service team began planning the necessary changes, working closely with stakeholders and industry partners.

The King subsequently selected a Tudor Crown and cyphers from a series of designs, prepared by The College of Arms.

King Charles' cypher features his initial 'C' intertwined with the letter 'R' for Rex (Latin for King), with 'III' within the 'R' and the Tudor crown sitting above. It replaces the E II R of Queen Elizabeth II.

The Tudor crown will appear on cap badges and other adornments to Royal Navy uniforms, as well as on those of British Army and RAF personnel attending the coronation.

The King's cypher will also appear on government buildings, state documents and on some post boxes. It is used by

government departments and by the Royal Household for franking mail.

The College of Arms, which designed the cyphers, was founded in 1484 and is responsible for creating and maintaining official registers of coats of arms and pedigrees. The heralds who make up the College are members of the Royal Household, and act under Crown authority.

Sailors and Royal Marines involved in the Her Majesty the Queen's funeral have been honoured with special recognition for their roles on the day.

King Charles III bestowed the honours, named in the Honours List on the Demise of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

Personnel will receive the Royal Victorian Order or the Royal Victorian Medal (silver).

Last September, 98 sailors pulled the State Ceremonial Gun Carriage with another 40 marching behind the vehicle acting as human brakes.

Suite sensations

THERE'S now a bespoke pre- and post-natal exercise suite for personnel and families at RNAS Yeovilton.

An area of the Heron gym has been set aside for female personnel to work out before/after giving birth, plus a crèche where their children can play/be looked after while they exercise.

The facility has been supported by Royal Navy and Royal Marine Charity, Aggies and Royal Navy Family and People Support.

"I am definitely going to be using the facility a lot, especially getting back into fitness for the yearly Royal Navy Fitness Test," said AB Kacey Garbett who's expecting her first child.

"I was thinking about how I am not really going to want to go to the gym with everyone else and I am going to have to bring the baby with me. So, the fact this has opened has worked out really well for me."

Royal Marines musician Cpl Elizabeth Bowyer, expecting her second child, added: "I think it's good they have got a separate area for us, so it is less intimidating to access the right information so you're not just freelancing it downstairs. The fact you have a



crèche as well is very useful so you feel safe and secure for your child to come along."

The suite has specific guidance signage on exercises for each trimester of pregnancy and post pregnancy. There's additional information on pelvic floor and return-to-fitness programmes to help personnel.

And dedicated sessions will

be run for 90 minutes every Monday, with a qualified pre- and post-natal exercise instructor as well as a pastoral worker to support the crèche and running of the session.

"I hope everyone really enjoys the facility and people get the best out of it," said Leading Physical Trainer Bartholomew Thomas. "It's a huge step in the

right direction for Servicewomen, their return back to fitness and ultimately retention."

At HMS Sultan personnel were invited to sample the many extra-curricular activities and personal support services available via the base's Health and Wellbeing Fayre.

Judo, boxing, and hockey were just some of the physical activities that were on offer alongside stalls from clubs, forces' services and supporting charities.

In addition, there were also stalls promoting a healthy lifestyle with the trainees also able to enjoy fresh, nutritious food and smoothies.

"There are 42 recognised sports in the Navy and events like this – and the NAVYfit festivals – allow us to highlight the many opportunities," explained Sultan Physical Trainer Aaron Cook.

"Sports clubs are an extremely important part of our trainees' time here as they allow our personnel to try out new activities, develop their skills and for us to identify those with talent."

"The health fayre was really encouraging, as a lot of people coming in said that they never knew about all the opportunities for sport."

Another fine mess you've gotten me into...

TWO social areas for military personnel who live at HMS Collingwood have received much-needed overhauls to meet the expectations of 2023.

The Swanwick Suite was a former snooker and billiard room in the Warrant Officers' and Senior Rates' Mess, with décor that had seen better days.

It's been turned into a dedicated area for 200 RAF personnel to relax: 78 Squadron is

embedded with the London Area Control Centre at Swanwick (just down the M27 from Fareham) and the RAF personnel who work with civilian air traffic controllers live at Collingwood. A grant of £7,500 from the RNRMC has helped turn the suite into an RAF-themed mess.

If that sounds a bit Crabby... another part of the mess has been converted into the 'Pusser's Rum Tavern', linked with the RAF

suite by a memorial area to all those lost in the Falklands.

As for the tavern, again funded by a similar grant from the RNRMC, plus £3,500 from Pusser's Rum, it's been given a 'rustic pub' type feel. The walls are covered with many ships' crests which were formerly in storage before Sergeant Stephen Leonard gave up his spare time to display them and give them another lease of life.

"It has been a privilege to work alongside the Base Warrant Officer in this project," Stephen said. "The tavern bar has been created and dedicated for all mess members who live on board and who pass through HMS Collingwood."

"I am extremely proud of this project and would like to thank mess members, the committee and all who have helped throughout."

Looking for more action?

DO YOU fancy serving in an elite unit bringing a storm of steel raining down on our foes?

It's thanks to 148 (Meiktila) Battery Royal Artillery – an Army unit serving with the Royal Marines and comprising personnel from all three Services – that strikes from air, ground and naval forces land accurately on enemy positions in time of war.

The specialist unit, based in Poole, directs naval gunfire, artillery strikes and air power to support commando units, its personnel frequently operating behind enemy lines to observe enemy positions and call in the firepower.

The battery is currently aligned with the Royal Marines' Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron and has a team permanently on standby to deploy anywhere in the world.

The Royal Artillery provide special observers, the Royal Marines Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTAC) who direct air power) and Royal Navy craft operators who are responsible for the boats used for insertion/extraction.

Air Engineering Technician Sherriff was in last year's intake having come through the three-day aptitude test, split between Hamworthy Barracks and Oakhampton Battle Camp. Candidates face a series of physical tests, PT sessions, lectures on the battery's role as part of the UK Commando Force, see the boats the battery uses and chat to qualified operators about their work.

"Life in 148 Battery is active," the junior rate explained. "You can expect to be training in preparation for an exercise or attending development courses that increase your and the unit's capabilities such as Naval Gunfire Assistant, parachuting, medical courses, and cold weather warfare course."

"The Battery deploys regularly on exercise around the UK, in the USA, Norway, and the Far East working with foreign partners such as the Dutch Marines and US Marine Corps, meaning new opportunities are always available. A truly fantastic place to work with great people, I'd recommend it to anyone who is interested in a new challenge."

In his first seven months with the unit, AET Sherriff has undergone boat training in challenging sea conditions in Scotland, added remote and advanced medical skills to his repertoire, and mastered the small, nimble Inshore Raiding Craft (IRC) – "essentially the entry ticket to becoming a skilled craft operator".

For those who wish to progress – and push themselves further – there's the chance to become join a Surveillance Target and Acquisition (STA) team – who operate behind the lines. For that you'll need earn your green beret by completing the All-Arms Commando Course as well as Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) to become operationally deployable.

The next annual aptitude test for sailors – from able seaman up to chief petty officer – takes place on June 13-15 (see RNTM 026/23, or email 3CDOX-29CDO148BTYBTWO@mod.uk for additional details). Successful candidates will go into the training pipeline for at-reach small craft operations.



Caledonia is one of His Majesty's Ships again

WHAT once was HMS... then MOD... is now HMS once more as the huge naval support site at Rosyth reverts to the Royal Navy.

Since April 1, MOD Caledonia has once again been HMS Caledonia, transferred from the DIO to the Senior Service, the recommissioning approved by the king.

The move is driven by growing use of the site by the RN in recent years – and over the decade to come, notably the growing Royal Navy presence on the Forth and Clyde.

Scottish shipyards have orders to build 13 Royal Navy frigates – five Type 31s being built by Babcock at Rosyth.

And there are four Type 26 vessels under construction at BAE Systems on the Clyde, including the first of class, HMS Glasgow, with four more still to come.

HMS Caledonia will also

continue to support the Royal Navy Headquarters Scotland and Northern Ireland, Maritime Reserve units HMS Scotia and Royal Marines Reserve Scotland, the Royal Marine Scotland Band, the Royal Navy's Candidate Preparation Centre-North, as well as RN and RM Cadet training facilities and other Youth organisations.

The establishment will also continue to provide support to a range of critical resilience activities in support of the civil authorities, via the Joint Military Commander for Scotland, as it did throughout the pandemic.

It was originally commissioned in 1946 as an artificers' training establishment. The closure of Rosyth naval base in 1995, as well as its tender establishment HMS Cochrane, saw Caledonia become a RN Support Establishment to the naval activity in Rosyth Royal Dockyard.



Wansbeck turn out for George

WANSBECK RNA turned out in force to bid farewell to one of the branch's stalwarts.

S/M George Kirsopp, who succumbed to cancer at the age of 87, was associated with the branch for more than three decades... and was also known by nearby Tyne branch as well.

So shipmates from both formed a guard of honour at Blyth Crematorium, joining friends and relatives alike in given the ex-sailor a fine send-off.

They were surprised – and delighted – to see Wansbeck branch president Chris Craddock in attendance; illness has prevented him from attending many events since before the pandemic.

The man they gathered to honour served in the Royal Navy for 18 years, mainly on carriers HMS Eagle and Ark Royal.

Upon leaving the Service he joined Wansbeck branch and was a regular attendee for more than 30 years – 25 of them as secretary, before becoming branch vice president.

Illness in later life as his eyes and legs began to fail him limited his appearance at meetings, held twice monthly at Hirst Progressive Club in Ashington.

George is survived by his wife of more than 60 years, former Wren Margo, and his grandson Daniel who was also in the Royal Navy for 11 years.

£84k boost for LGBT+ veterans

FIGHTING With Pride, the charity which represents LGBT+ veterans, has been given an £84k grant to broaden its work with and network of employers and organisations who welcome and support former service personnel.

The cash from the Forces in Mind Trust will pay for a two-year programme to help business/organisations adopt the Pride in Veterans Standard (PiVS), developing inclusion and equality of treatment for LGBT+ veterans.

The standard is available to any organisation which provides veteran services or delivers veteran support and wants to demonstrate a commitment to providing an inclusive and welcoming service to LGBT+ veterans, Service personnel and their families.

Among the 30 or so institutions already approved – by demonstrating their understanding of the experiences of LGBT+ veterans, and how this impacts them when they access support – are Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue and Guy's & St Thomas NHS Foundation Trust

If you are interested in finding out more about the PiVS programme or how your organisation can support LGBT+ veterans, contact info@fightingwithpride.org.uk.

A month to remember

IF YOU'RE planning on heading to Liverpool this month to honour the men and women who defeated the U-boat, details of Battle of the Atlantic 80 events have now been finalised.

As the home of Western Approaches headquarters – as well as being a major port – the city's role in the battle was crucial... and hence the focal point for subsequent commemorations.

Ahead of the main anniversary events – concentrated over the weekend of May 26th-28th.

The Johnnie Walker Chamber – dedicated to the Naval captain who was scourge of German submarines – will be open to the public in Bootle Town Hall on the second and fourth Friday of May.

John Moores University is hosting a conference of leading scholars of the battle, plus serving RN officers, at Liverpool Maritime Museum, Royal Albert Dock, between 10am and 4pm. Entry is free... including lunch and refreshments, but tickets are extremely limited. Book via www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/battle-of-the-atlantic-80th-anniversary-conference-tickets-580438496167

From Wednesday May 24th until Friday 26th the story of the women of the Western Approaches Tactical Unit is told in drama form courtesy of the play *Blowing a Raspberry at Hitler*, staged at the John Foster Drama Studio, Hope Street from 7.30pm until 9pm. Again entry is free, but you must register in advance (www.eventbrite.com/e/blowing-a-raspberry-at-hitler-a-story-of-watu-the-wrns-and-the-war-at-sea-tickets-577374832667)

The service of thanksgiving for those who served in or supported the battle at St Nicholas' Parish Church on Friday May 26th, when a new memorial in the revamped gardens will be unveiled, is a guest-only affair, but the service itself is being recorded by BBC Radio Merseyside, due for broadcast on Sunday May 28th.

And at 12.15pm, the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight will pass over St Nicholas' and Pier Head, while the memorial garden will be opened to the public from 1pm.

The 'military village' – which will be the focal point of daytime events over the anniversary weekend, is open at Pier Head between 10am and 6pm on Saturday Sunday.

It will feature a 1940s-themed military village, Merchant Navy and Royal Navy ships open to visitors, flypasts by vintage aircraft, plenty of free family activities, charity stalls, food, cadet bands, 1940s music, dance, and other pop-up performances.

On Saturday evening (May 27th), His Majesty's Band of the Royal Marines host a concert at Liverpool Philharmonic, Hope Street from 7.30.

Tickets (priced £15-£30) are on sale via 0151 709 3789 on www.liverpoolphil.com/whats-on/all-shows/his-majestys-royal-marines-band-in-concert/5543

Commemorations reach their climax on Sunday May 28th with a drumhead service at Pier Head. Participants will begin mustering from 11am with the service itself taking place from noon until 12.30pm. There is very limited seating with priority for Battle of the Atlantic veterans. You are welcome to bring your own portable chairs or stools. And if you wish to lay a wreath, contact Ellen Shephard on Ellen.Shephard454@mod.gov.uk.

An hour after the service, there'll be a march through the city centre from Exchange Flags, down Castle Street, James Street, and The Strand towards the Cruise Liner Terminal at Pier Head involving serving personnel, veterans groups, Sea Cadets, RM Musicians.

Atlantic veterans will take the salute from a dais on Princes' Parade, before the march disperses on reaching William Jessop Way. (the total march distance is 1 mile approx.).

The weekend closes with the departure of all vessels attending the commemoration – warships and merchant vessels – will depart in a symbolic 'convoy' heading down the Mersey, accompanied by a flotilla of boats from both sides of the river. You're encouraged to gather from 5pm onwards, with the 'convoy' sailing at 7.43pm. There will be a simultaneous performance of Beat Retreat by the RM Band.

And finally... St Nicholas' also hosts the Cunard Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving between 11am and noon on Saturday (June 3rd June with the emphasis on the sacrifices of the Merchant Navy. All are welcome.

You can find more information on these events – and more – on the anniversary website: battleoftheatlantic.org/boam-events/ or follow Facebook @ [BattleAtlanticMemorial](https://www.facebook.com/BattleAtlanticMemorial) and Twitter @ [BoAtlantic80](https://twitter.com/BoAtlantic80)



Tireless tragedy remembered

THE impressive new monument to those who served beneath the waves was the fitting setting for a service remembering two young men whose lives were cut short by a tragic accident.

Weapons engineers Anthony Huntrod, aged 20, and 32-year-old Paul McCann were killed when oxygen generator candles exploded aboard HMS Tireless while the submarine was operating under the Arctic ice; a third member of the T-boat's crew was injured in the blast and subsequently airlifted to hospital.

Sixteen years after the tragedy, a short but poignant service was held at the National Arboretum, led by the Rev David Chadwick, in the presence of Anthony's parents, Alan Huntrod and Brenda Gooch, Paul's parents Brian and Pauline McCann, and family and friends from both families supported by members of the three North-East branches of the Submariners Association, the Derbyshire Submariners and the Royal Naval Association.

Anthony and Paul's former shipmates from Plymouth-based Tireless, which decommissioned in 2014, were also present.

The group travelled by coach, organised by the Sunderland Branch, with generous assistance from the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity, The Submarine Family and Keith's Coaches.

After an informal gathering at the Submarine Memorial – dedicated last year by the then Duke of Cambridge and whose design mirrors the conning tower of a T-boat – Rev Chadwick recalled the men's lives and Branch Standards were were dipped as a mark of respect in memory of both Anthony and Paul.



GIs clock up 900th milestone meeting

FOR the 900th time Royal Navy Gunnery Instructors' Association converged on their spiritual home to celebrate their trade – and its successors since 1975.

As the muzzle loader gave way to the breech loading gun and as their diversity, size, range and complexity increased in the Victorian Navy so did the requirement for specialist instructors on the subject.

In the 1850s the first Royal Naval shore training establishment was formed on Whale Island' in Portsmouth Harbour – later commissioned as HMS Excellent – supported by similar training establishments at Chatham and Devonport.

To become a Gunnery Instructor a man with suitable potential was selected for a nine-

month duration. Upon completion, he became a GI which placed him in the top 10 per cent of all gunnery senior ratings.

Traditional GIs have not been qualified since 1975 as gunnery/naval warfare has evolved.

So today, as well as existing GI's, the association draws its members from missile men and the present-day Above Water Warfare Weapons ratings – serving and retired.

The association started in January 1946 and met monthly at various venues until granted permission by Captain Power in 1966 to occupy its present location at Excellent.

It counts just over 200 members from USA to NZ, meets monthly (May's will be No.901...), produces a monthly magazine and organises a limited social programme.

"It's an amazing achievement for the association to reach this landmark number," said Association President WO2 Lee Baker.

"With so many other branch associations not having enjoyed the longevity of the GIs it is really important to recognise the significance of our 900th monthly meeting.

"The association welcomes all AWW ratings from Leading Hand upwards and it is my hope that with the continued support of our branch and club members we will continue to thrive in the future."





Falklands figures come to Pompey

THESE haunting silhouettes represent the 255 military personnel and three civilians who lost their lives in the Falklands War – and can be seen at the Royal Armouries in Portsmouth until July.

Fort Nelson on Portsdown Hill is the latest venue to host the impressive art installation *Standing with Giants*.

Created last year to mark the 40th anniversary of the conflict, the work by Oxfordshire artist Dan Barton and a group of volunteers uses recycled building materials.

It has previously been displayed at Thoresby Park, Nottinghamshire, and at the Bomber Command Centre near Lincoln.

Hand-in-hand with the artwork comes an exhibition on the role Portsmouth played in 1982.

Drawing on the image archive of the local paper and footage from the BBC in Southampton, plus interviews with veterans, the focus is on human stories of the homecoming of the fleet through the summer of 1982.

Admission to the art installation is free and included with admission to the museum, which is open between 10am and 5pm on Tuesdays through Sundays during school term time and daily during school and bank holidays. Admission is free.

The site has limited capacity, so Fort Nelson's bosses urge you book a place in advance of your visit via www.royalarmouries.org.



Seven O-boats berthed at HMS Dolphin/Fort Blockhouse, circa 1980s

Picture: Chris Groves

A new online archive/exhibition now tells the fascinating story of

A town and its boats

WHAT is it to be a submariner – and what does it mean to the spiritual home of the Silent Service?

Those are questions answered in an impressive online repository of interviews, photographs and memories of submariners – and their families – to bring the Service past and present to life... and shed light on its impact on Gosport.

For 95 years, the Hampshire town was regarded as the home of the Submarine Service with HMS Dolphin at Fort Blockhouse its *alma mater*.

Even when it closed in 1999, the association with boats continued through the escape training delivered at the SETT and the landmark tower on the sea front.

It closed in 2020 when replaced by the new emergency training complex in Faslane, the 21st Century home to the UK's submarine fleet.

That leaves just the Submarine Museum in Gosport... plus memories, which have been scooped up by the submarinersstories.uk project – a collaboration between the local council, historians from the National Museum of the Royal Navy and oral history experts Meeja.

They've recorded interviews with 15 people connected with the service, most of them from the local area, to preserve a vital part of Gosport history for future generations. They also collected personal and archive imagery and commissioned new portraits.

Subjects covered span all aspects of (unclassified) life in the Silent Service – from the isolation and separation from families to the bond between crew, the challenge of the Perisher command course and being in charge of a nuclear submarine, and differences with the Surface Fleet, to the importance of food on board (stressed by more than one interviewee).

"This is a superb local history resource which highlights HMS Dolphin's vital contribution to the defence of this country and – by training submariners from around the world – many other countries," said Councillor Peter Chegwyn, Leader of Gosport Borough Council.

"This story is a crucial part of our borough's rich military heritage, and this project will help to make sure it is never forgotten."

Lesley Ure who worked as a waitress at HMS Sultan as a teenager and vowed never to settle down with anyone from the military... fell in love with a submariner and found herself raising two children with a partner frequently deployed for long periods.

"There are massive highs and lows," she says of being a 'naval wife'. "It's like an emotional rollercoaster. I feel for me that's made us stronger. We're very close, we appreciate each other, we've never taken each other for granted."

Her husband Midge (not that one) spent 24



years as a marine engineer on boats and recounts at length life in the Service, some naughty goings on by the crew of HMS Superb in Diego Garcia (which apparently earned the boat an ASBO...), camaraderie and receiving good and bad news via terse 'familygrams' (40/80 word messages sent to crews on deterrent patrols).

Lieutenant Ami Burns – pictured left and who is still serving – was one of the first three female marine engineers in the Silent Service. She wondered if she and other female submariners would be accepted in a male-dominated world.

"All of those questions, and I think the anxiety was probably greater than the event because it transpires that submariners only care if you are competent at your job," she says.

"It's difficult physically because the long days, it's difficult mentally because you're away from your families, without contact from you to them, or sometimes without contact at all, depending on where you're operating."

Jim Perks joined the RN as a writer and ended up as head of the Submarine Service in a career spanning more than three dozen years. Gosport is intertwined with both his personal and professional lives – he married in Alverstoke, enjoyed his wedding reception in Dolphin's wardroom, loved his time on O-boats woperating out of Blockhouse, the anxiety/excitement of completing submarine escape training and the misery of being stuck in traffic on the A32.

He left the RN on the cusp of the deal with Australia to build a new generation of hunter-killer boats ('SSN-AUKUS') as the Astute programme draws to a close and the replacement for nuclear deterrent submarines, the new Dreadnought class, moves into full swing.

"It's going to take another ten to 15 years but we're on the up, we're on the ascendance again. So I see a bright future," he says.

"I think submariners past and present need to help in that journey and just telling people what it is that we do and how much fun it is and what great people we are and help that journey."

As for food, says Lt Burns, "it really is a source of morale, not only is it a source or morale, it's how you know what time of day it is. You might wake up because of the watch patterns and go, 'I don't know what day it is and I don't know what time it is' and you think 'OK, well there's a curry on so it's Wednesday teatime."

"And people look forward to it – it's part of the countdown for, seven fish Fridays until we get home."

As well as the website, the recordings will be held by Wessex Film and Sound Archive and the National Museum of the Royal Navy, while material from the project will soon be showcased on screens at the Submarine Museum.



Christine of Christchurch retires at 93

ON THE cusp of turning 93, one stalwart of the Royal Naval Association – both No.4 Area and Christchurch and District – is stepping down.

Christine Payne received a presentation and send-off from shipmates at her home branch – on top of the RNA Pennant she received at its annual general meeting for her service.

Christine moved to Christchurch 41 years ago and was introduced to the Royal Naval Association by branch founder members S/Ms Joe and Joan Waterman in June 2010 made an honorary member in return for help given.

As a ward councillor Christine was instrumental in getting Christchurch Borough Council to create a wheel-park on Somerford Recreation Ground – now named Waterman's Park.

Although never having served in the Navy herself, Christine held a number of roles within the association, initially as branch secretary and public relations officer and Area 4 deputy welfare rep – always on hand to look out for and care for others – and served on the Area 4 Committee until last year.

As the area's most senior committee member, her service has been exemplary and she was rightly awarded an RNA Certificate of Appreciation.

"I became a fully paid member about a year after being introduced and then became a committee member immediately as there was an essential need for a secretary – the Branch would have to close without one). I served in this post for about 12 years and as PRO until 2022," Christine said.

"It was at the vranch meetings that I met my partner, the late Dennis Morris, who was also branch president, when we both realised that I knew both his daughter and grandson through various political activities."

Study for a degree for free at OU

THERE are 50 places available for injured or disabled former sailors and Royal Marines to study with the Open University this autumn.

The Disabled Veterans' Scholarships Fund provides free education for personnel injured or disabled while serving.

Successful applicants will receive full fee waivers for 120 credits per year and up to 360 credits in total – equivalent to a full honour's degree.

It is deliberately flexible, and can be applied across undergraduate and post-graduate study, including access modules – the OU's short introductory courses.

Students will also have access to an expert team of specialist advisors who can help with disability and careers support.

Applications should be made before midnight on July 5 via www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/disabled-veterans-scholarship-fund



Captain Tim Davey, Collingwood's CO, drops in on veterans and their assistants from Project 71 enjoying nibbles with today's sailors

Picture: Keith Woodland, HMS Collingwood

A taste of today's Navy for veterans

SAILORS at HMS Collingwood hosted two groups of veterans keen to learn how the Navy of 2023 trains and prepares its men and women for front-line duties.

The Fareham establishment's Victory Squadron welcomed visitors from Project 71, a South Coast support group for World War 2 veterans, who came with their helpers.

Joining them were former serving personnel spending their twilight years at Tudor Lodge care home next to Collingwood. Regularly visited by personnel from the squadron, this time the serving sailors decided to turn the tables and invite the residents into their home.

All were treated to refreshments and a light lunch in Warrant Officers' and Senior Rates' Mess as the Victory Squadron sailors mingled with the veterans and were keen to hear their stories

and experiences of their wartime service.

Ninety-eight-year-old Jean Taylor and Poppy Sherman, aged 94, spent some time chatting with AB Francesca Lambert, 18.

Jean joined the Navy at the age of 17½ and was very keen to hear how life in the RN is now. She said "I was employed as a steward in the officers' mess during my three years, I absolutely loved it."

"It is so lovely to see that they are still wearing the same uniforms as back then. It is a joy to see them and a joy to be here."

Former Commander and Weapon Engineering Officer Brian Welch is now a resident at Tudor Lodge and was delighted to return to his alma mater. Having served at HMS Collingwood many times during his career, he was hosted by ABs Liam Cockrane and Ellen Mossman.

Harrogate's honours

HARROGATE Sea Cadets unit held its first annual awards night since March 2020, before the Covid-19 pandemic struck.

The event – held at the Assembly Room of Harrogate Ladies College and well-attended by family and local community members – saw awards, badges and qualifications handed out to the Harrogate-based sea cadets, ranging from Cadet of the Year and best all-round junior cadet to most improved in boating, best all-around band cadet and consistently best-dressed cadet.

It also included awards for best attitude to learning, most enthusiasm for community activities and best attitude to learning.

After a long period of online activities, the unit is now back to offering sailing, rowing, band practice, catering, marine engineering courses and drill practice for its young people.

The unit's Patron, the Mayor of Harrogate Councillor Victoria Oldham and special guest, Rear Admiral Edward Ahlgren OBE (Commander Operations, Royal Navy) presented the prizes to the cadets.

Rear Admiral Ahlgren, who was a cadet himself in the 1980s, said: "I was enormously honoured to present awards and promotions to such an impressive and enthusiastic group of sea cadets whose energy and commitment are unrivalled."

The Rear Admiral's ten-year-old son, Harry, has recently joined Harrogate Unit.

"It was great to be able to attend an event like this again after such a long time," said OC Piper, 14.

OC Finn, 15, said: "It was a brilliant evening and it was fantastic to celebrate everyone's achievements!"

Cdt Bea, 12, added: "It has inspired me to achieve even more for the year ahead."

"I hope to win the best cadet award in the future," said JC Stanley, 11.

The unit's Commanding Officer Lt Dan Wilding said: "The cadets have been amazingly resilient and loyal to the unit over the two years of Covid-19 restrictions and we are glad to reward them with a night like this. Sea Cadets offers so many opportunities to both adults and young people."

Party to help ill kids

CADETS from Sheffield put on their pyjamas and held a night filled with fun activities to raise money for Sheffield Children's Hospital.

The event was held at the Sheffield Unit's headquarters. Among the activities that sea cadets, Royal Marines cadets and juniors took part in was a QR code scavenger hunt.

The activities night raised over £150 for babies and children in need of critical care at the children's hospital.

"We chose to support the children's hospital as part of a community support activity, one of the main reasons for this was the necessity the hospital is to our great city and to show the cadets that's community spirit is a huge part of the cadet ethos and important to what we believe in at Sheffield Sea Cadets," said CPO (SCC) Craige Hammond-Kaye, Executive Officer at the unit.

"It was also to show the cadets that a little bit a silliness and uncomfortableness can make a difference to those most in need."

"Our donations for Sheffield Children's Hospitals helps to save children's lives," said Niamh, 12, who took part in the fundraiser.

"It was a lot of fun but at the same time we were helping children in need," said Leila, 14, who also participated.

If you would like to contribute to Sheffield Unit's fundraising efforts for the children's hospital, please visit <https://events.tchc.org.uk/fundraisers/sheffieldsccteamthespojday2023>

Vital cash for Ryde

THE Isle of Wight Foundation has awarded £4,435 to Ryde Sea Cadets to help their work in tackling social exclusion on the island.

This funding will enable the unit to greatly improve the accessibility and quality of the bathrooms as well as create some much-needed storage at their headquarters.

Ryde Sea Cadets' building is a former fire station.

"The premises are slowly being modernised and upgraded and these funds have assisted us to do much more than originally anticipated," said the UMT Chair of the unit and Deputy District Chair, Margaret Beacham.

CPO (SCC) Linden Softly, Commanding Officer of Ryde Unit said: "At Ryde Sea Cadets, the overall aim is to give young people an experience that will help them grow into the person they want to be, in a safe and friendly environment."

"For us to help them on that journey we need premises that are suitable and accessible, and the male and female toilet facilities are very much in need of an upgrade, so this grant is extremely welcome."



Magnificent mural captures fun on the water

PENZANCE Unit has had a striking marine-themed mural in their headquarters hall painted by a local artist Damien Dawes – which features the sea cadets themselves enjoying on the water activity.

The mural depicts the beautiful coast of Mount's Bay and was painted to mark the unit's 80th anniversary.

The hall was first painted with a mural in 1978 showing a maritime scene with a naval theme, but it had become very dated and faded.

The artist, who is also the uncle of two cadets from the unit, kept the original reference to the Audacious-class aircraft carrier, HMS Ark Royal, but brought the scene up to date by adding HMS Queen Elizabeth, TS Royalist, TS Jack Petchey and an offshore yacht, along with a sea cadet crew pulling a Trinity.

The artist also set about refreshing the scene by brightening the sky and sea as well as by adding some

local landscapes missing in the original work.

As well as capturing St Michael's Mount in the east, the mural also shows Mousehole and the Soloman Browne Lifeboat slip in the west.

The depiction of the Soloman Browne lifeboat in her boatshed is a poignant reminder of the Penlee Lifeboat disaster of 1981, when the vessel perished at sea with all crew lost. Penzance Sea Cadets are regular supporters of the yearly memorial service and opening of the old boathouse to the public.

The artist was interviewed recently on BBC Radio Cornwall to talk about how he helped transform the Penzance Sea Cadets Hall through his painting.

"My brother and step-children were all sea cadets and my nephews and nieces are currently at Penzance Sea Cadets," said Damien Dawes. "I love the fact that the painting is able to inspire those attending the unit,

and I've had several remarks of how much the cadets love it."

The unit's Officer in Charge, PO Juliette Scanlan said: "This is a great example of family and friends coming together to improve the unit. The mural has refreshed the space, it captures the imagination of the cadets and will hopefully help inspire them for years to come."

Cdt Chloe, 13, said: "I love it! It's very beautiful, and every time I look at it I see something new that I hadn't seen before. It's exactly like our coastline; it even has our beautiful flagship."

Jnr Cdt Niamh, 11, said: "It looks great! I really like the fact that you can see us rowing."

Penzance Unit are actively seeking new UMT and staff volunteers, please do get in touch with the unit if you are interested in finding out more.

Solid support crew



THE Forward Support Unit (FSU) based at HMNB Portsmouth offer Fleet Time Operational Engineering Support to HM Ships.

However, their support doesn't just stop with the RN – as a work package for the Maritime Society of Sea Cadets proved.

For the 2022/23 maintenance period five personnel from FSU(B) and one RNR LET under the leadership of POET Jones and ET Peterson, who has first-hand experience of these vessels from his time in the cadets, assisted civilian engineers with a vast range of tasks on all the offshore vessels.

Tasks undertaken comprised of engine and gearbox oil changes, fitment of new galley equipment and renewing hydraulic hoses onboard TS John Jerwood and hydraulic oil and filter changes on the steering gear of TS Royalist.

LET Cunningham (RNR) and LET Harris conducted annual engine servicing on both yachts City of London and Sir Stelios. The team wasn't complete there, tackling a list of defects to ensure that all the vessels would be ready for a busy training year ahead.

"To be able to support the Sea Cadets in preparation for this year's training, whilst also assisting RN Ships is something we have taken great pride in" said SLT Shaun Cubitt RN, OIC FSU(B).

"This is a partnership that has been conducted for a couple of seasons and will hopefully expand in the future. The ability to take on a multitude of tasks on these vessels shows the adaptability of our engineers."

The three-week package was enjoyed by the FSU team at Fort Blockhouse.

FSU will continue to provide assistance during Sea Acceptance Trials prior to the SCC training year.



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Hives help boost port's marine life

SEA cadets have installed a sea hive to benefit local marine life and biodiversity at the Sea Cadets Port Edgar Boat Station in South Queensferry, Edinburgh.

On a cold and overcast Saturday at the end of March, eight junior cadets – all aged between 10 and 12 from nearby Methil and Queensferry Sea Cadets units – gathered at the Firth of the Forth against the backdrop of the iconic three bridges, first to assemble and then to install the sea hive, under the guidance of David Francis of SeaHives Ltd.

“I measured the bolts used to fit the sea hive together,” one of the cadets, Jae, 10, proudly announced. “I put the shackles on, which were used to attach the sea hive to the pontoon,” said Addie, 11.

The sea cadets themselves have taken ownership of the exciting initiative, and not only with their hands-on approach in building and setting up the hive. The young people will be monitoring the variety and quantity of marine life that settles into their newly-installed hive over the coming months.

“We will be taking photos with an underwater camera once a week to see which marine life has moved in,” explains sea cadet Edward, 10.

“I am excited because it will bring in new marine life,” said Ella, 11.

Jude, 10, added that he is hoping plenty of fish and barnacles (sticky little crustaceans related to crabs, lobsters and shrimp) will decide to make the sea hive their home.

Sea hives are artificial reefs designed to resemble the marine environment, providing surfaces for marine to settle on.

Among the marine life that could decide to ‘move in’ are octopus, prawns, rock-dwelling fish and tube worms.

“We are really excited to be working with SeaHives Ltd on this venture, which started six months ago for us,” said Adam Ranklin, Boat Station Manager at the Sea Cadets Port Edgar Boat Station.

“It was great to see how fully engaged the cadets were in the set up and installation of the sea hive. They were very hands-on throughout,



using drills and tools as well as taking charge in making decisions about the sea hives. It was a new and very positive experience for our junior sea cadets.”

Mr Francis said: ‘What a great bunch of Sea Cadets there were at Port Edgar. They really know how to work as a team to get the job done.’

“Their boat station is an ideal location for a sea hive as it provides access to the plankton and nutrient rich waters of the North Sea, in an environment protected from extreme tidal and wave action.

“The sea hive will also provide shelter from predators for small fish and invertebrates like crabs and octopus to grow and breed.

“Sea hives are manufactured partly from processed and recycled fishing nets, an excellent

example of how plastic can be re-used with a positive purpose.”

The sea hive project follows local and national forums among the cadets, called Cadet Voice, where the young people decide on the issues closest to their hearts to action.

Being more environmentally responsible emerged as one of the young people’s top priorities.

Installation of sea hives will also take place at the Sea Cadets Thrapston Boat Station in Northamptonshire in April, with an eye to installing more sea hives at other Sea Cadets boat stations across the country.

As sea cadet Remy, 11, said: “Sea cadets spend many hours on the water – so it’s only right that we should look after our marine environment.”

Lord Lieutenant honour for Dyfed cadets

FOUR young people from Dyfed – three of them sea cadets – have been appointed as Lord-Lieutenant Cadets for 2023 at an awards ceremony in Carmarthen, south-west of Wales.

Leading Cadet Annis Henton of Fishguard Sea Cadet Corps, **Leading Cadet Ben Power** of Milford Haven Sea Cadet Corps, **Petty Officer Cadet Luke Coburn** of Tenby Sea Cadet Corps and **Staff Cadet Warrant Officer Charlie Edwards** of No 3 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets were presented with the badge of their appointment, which will last for a year.

They were appointed by the Lord-Lieutenant of Dyfed, Miss Sara Edwards, at an awards ceremony at Picton Barracks.

Some 90 people attended the event to mark the new appointments and celebrate high achievers from the reserve and cadet communities.

The four were selected for the prestigious Lord-Lieutenant’s cadet role after being put forward for nomination by cadet group leaders and the Reserve Forces’ and Cadets’ Association for Wales.

Annis, from Haverfordwest, is an exceptional cadet who always sets an excellent example to the younger cadets and hopes to join the Royal Navy as a commissioned officer. One of the highlights of her cadet career was taking part in the Commonwealth Games baton event in Fishguard.

Leading Cadet Henton said: “I am delighted to have been appointed in this role, I am very much looking forward to assisting the Lord-Lieutenant, which is such a huge honour.”

The Commanding Officer of Fishguard Unit, Lt (SCC) Chris Peake RNR said: “Annis is an absolute credit to the unit, thoroughly deserves this opportunity and 2023 will be an historic year to be in post, with the King’s Coronation being such a significant event.”

Ben, who is described as a “water baby”, raced at every level of the Sea Cadets regattas last year, where he was successful both at district and area



levels. In addition to his boating achievements, Ben, who attends Milford Haven School, has learnt how to deliver presentations, lead a team and work within a team. He also aspires to be part of the Royal Navy.

Luke, a pupil at Greenhill School, Tenby, enjoys activities on the water and in the air and is a keen power boater and rower. His greatest achievement has been winning his Bronze Aviation wings – the first ever Tenby sea cadet to achieve them, Luke hopes to either join the Royal Navy or the RAF as a pilot officer.

Charlie, 19, who is studying criminology and criminal psychology at Aberystwyth University, took on the responsibilities of Lord-Lieutenant Cadet when the 2022 candidate stood down at short notice last June and has been appointed for the next 12 months, as one of the four 2023/24 candidates. Flying solo after gaining a place on a prestigious Air Cadet Pilot Scheme has been a highlight of her cadet career.

The cadets will follow in the footsteps of Petty Officer Cadet Adam Hughes of Tenby Sea

Cadet Corps; Leading Cadet Maisie Millichip of Fishguard Sea Cadet Corps; Cadet Sergeant Martha Ashcroft of No 3 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets and Staff Cadet Warrant Officer Charlie Edwards of No 3 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets, who were awarded the Lord-Lieutenant’s Certificate and Badge for being the 2022 representatives.

The role of Lord-Lieutenant cadet includes attendance with the Lord-Lieutenant of Dyfed, who acts as the King’s representative, at a number of official engagements, including Remembrance events, royal visits and parades.

Two adult volunteers – Lieutenant (SCC) Christopher Harvey-Jones of Milford Haven Sea Cadet Corps and Chief Petty Officer Christopher Palmer of Aberystwyth Sea Cadet Corps – were also recognised for their outstanding service and devotion to duty and awarded the Lord-Lieutenant’s Certificate of Merit.

Christopher Harvey-Jones from Tenby is an ambassador for shooting and safe weapons handling within Sea Cadets and has demonstrated great leadership and commitment to the development of junior sea cadets.

Christopher Palmer, from Aberystwyth, has been a volunteer since 2010. He is a keen shot and encourages cadets to take part in inter-cadet activities and competitions.

There are nearly 5,000 cadets in Wales who gain skills and qualifications through working with local communities, charities and taking part in a variety of practical activities.

The cadet syllabus is delivered by 1,500 volunteering adult instructors and civilian assistants, who give up their spare time on weeknights and weekends.

The awards ceremony was organised by the Reserve Forces’ and Cadets’ Association for Wales, an organisation that has supported the Armed Forces for over 100 years.



You never forget your cadet years

TWO former Cadets from TS St Vincent, Brentwood Sea Cadets returned to their training ship to celebrate 80 years of success.

Eddie Carter (centre) and Roger Lyons (centre right) were Brentwood Sea Cadets between the mid-1950s and early 1960s and have never forgotten what a great start in life the training ship gave them. Both Eddie and Roger are still in contact with other shipmates from their time who now live in other countries around the world.

Eddie got in contact with the current Commanding Officer, SLT (SCC) Samantha Hayward RNR (left) a couple of years ago via social media and was invited to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the unit with the ship’s company.

Fellow shipmate of the time Roger was also invited, and the Commanding Officer was thrilled to learn that Roger had gone on to serve in the Royal Navy on HMS St Vincent as a Junior in 1962.

Later, Roger got engaged, and married Ann in 1969 in Brentwood. The couple held their wedding reception at the TS St Vincent Sea Cadet Unit.

Roger brought his and Ann’s wedding album to show the Commanding Officer who, when seeing the photos of the wedding reception said “This really is the icing on the cake – what a truly special evening this has turned out to be!” Roger retired from service with the Royal Navy in 1982 and has never forgotten all of the good times he’d had at the unit with his fellow cadets.

Also pictured is Able Junior Cadet Oliver and the Mayor of Brentwood, Cllr Olivia Francois.

Picture: SE Rowse

Happy 80th Belfast

EIGHTY is the magic number for TS Formidable (Belfast Unit) – this year they are celebrating their 80th anniversary, for which they hosted an anniversary event with 80 guests – and they are hoping to achieve 80 new qualifications for their cadets in 2023.

TS Formidable Sea Cadets recently hosted their 80th anniversary dinner at the Titanic Hotel, with guests flocking from across Northern Ireland and beyond. The Royal Marines Ceilidh Band and Drum Corps entertained the attendees.

The evening was also successful in raising £1,250 for the Royal Navy & the Royal Marines Charity.

Many former cadets were in attendance, sharing how being a cadet had such a positive impact on their life.

For example, former cadet Kelly Gordon highlighted how Sea Cadets gave her confidence and life skills needed for her work at the Ambulance Service’s control room, where she needs to think fast, remain calm under pressure and provide life-saving advice to people who call for help on the 999 emergency line.

The Lord-Lieutenant for the County Borough of Belfast, Dame Fionnuala Jay-O’Boyle DBE DStJ, commended the Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets for their outstanding work within the community as well as the high standards of dress they maintain.

She also told the guests that she had spoken to King Charles III about the unit’s anniversary celebrations, with His Majesty commenting that 80 years is an amazing achievement for any organisation. He passed on his best regards to Belfast Unit.

Over the years, Belfast Unit has helped more than 1,000 young people increase their skills and confidence.

PO nominated for award

PETTY Officer (SCC) Rowan Daly, First Lieutenant at Clydebank Sea Cadets Unit, says it was a “massive shock” to discover he had been picked as a finalist for the Volunteer Youth Worker award at YouthLink Scotland’s 2023 National Youth Work Awards.

“I knew absolutely nothing about it,” said Rowan. “It’s a huge privilege that the unit thinks that I deserve to be nominated...I wasn’t expecting it at all. Sometimes I don’t think you quite realise the impact you have on young people.”

“A lot of the kids who come to our unit use it as their ‘safe space’, and it’s really important to me that they do feel safe in our group. A big part of what I do is monitoring morale, and making sure the kids are getting the ‘Sea Cadets Experience’ – so, to be nominated, it’s given that a big tick that we are definitely meeting that standard.”

Rowan, 28, has been part of Clydebank Unit for 16 years, joining Sea Cadets at the age of 12.

“I think I just wanted somewhere to belong,” he recalls. “The cadets gave me that confidence and moulded me into the person I am today and that’s what I want to give back to the young people.”

The YouthLink Scotland Awards Dinner will be held in Glasgow on June 21.



Top Cadet POC Myron Ong from the CCF receiving the Daedalus trophy from Lt/ CDR (VCC) Chris Young with CNAC boss S/Lt Steve Cook

Team gets off to a flier

THE Cadet Naval Aviation team got off to a flying start with the first of this year's aviation courses.

Thirty two cadets from the CCF, SCC and VCC made up the largest Bronze Wing course to date run by the CNAC instructors under the command of S/Lt (SCC) Steve Cook RNR.

This year the course was based at HMS Raleigh, Cornwall where most of the classroom instruction took place.

The cadets studied a variety of subjects including avionics, communications, meteorology and navigation with a visit during the week to RNAS Culdrose where the staff made the cadets most welcome.

One of the highlights was a talk and look around 700X NAS who have a role in training members of the armed forces in operating remote piloted vehicles.

A busy week ended with the usual exams and all cadets were happy to hear they had gained their Bronze Wings.

Top cadet was POC Myron Ong CCF received The Daedalus trophy while LC Nyah Anderson SCC, pictured inset, was awarded best navigation student with presentations made by new team member Lt/Cdr Chris Young RNR.



Insight into Yeovilton

THE Taunton Combined Cadet Force visited RNAS Yeovilton to familiarise themselves with the Fleet Air Arm and gain an insight into the fully operational air station.

The 31-strong cadet force ranged in ages of 14-18 and visited three of the stations Naval Air Squadrons as well as several other departments across the station gaining a broad insight into how RNAS Yeovilton operates.

The morning included a brief and tour with 815 NAS an active front line Wildcat squadron ready to deploy at any notice as well as a brief and tour of 825 NAS, the Wildcat training squadron.

This was followed by a visit to the Underwater Escape Training Unit, where students got to witness service personnel undertake their underwater escape training as well as learn about sea survival equipment.

The afternoon included a visit to 727 squadron where they got to meet 4 trainee pilots and learn the process of how trainee pilots conduct their initial flight training.

The day ended with a tour of the historical Navy Wings hangar where they could see historic aircraft up close and personal while learning the history of the Fleet Air Arm.

Lt Thomas Dunn RNR (CCF) of Taunton School said: 'I wanted to say a huge thank you, it was an amazing day out and we all thoroughly enjoyed it.'

Learning about brave women



Above: Cadets at the Western Approaches Museum in Liverpool; Below, the Belvedere Corps of Drums



MEMBERS of England's first all-female CCF RN cadet contingent at the Belvedere Academy, Liverpool, were lucky enough to be part of celebrations marking the countdown to the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic.

The day began with a visit to the Academy by the Royal Marine Corps of Drums, who were kind enough to give an extremely impressive performance to both staff and students.

Cadets then enjoyed the privilege of being able to speak to members of the Corps and had the chance to ask questions.

The day continued with a visit to Liverpool's Western Approaches Museum which, in 1941, became home to Combined Operations to monitor German aircraft and U-boats attacking ships travelling from the continent.

Cadets were given a guided tour and information about the Battle of the Atlantic, in which Liverpool played a central role.

We learned that the Battle of the Atlantic was the longest continuous military campaign in World War 2, running from 1939 to the defeat of the Nazis in 1945.

The Royal Navy, the Royal Canadian, the US Navy and Allied merchant shipping were fighting against German U-Boats, Kriegsmarine and Luftwaffe, so this battle was extensive.

Liverpool played a vital role in the final defeat of the U-Boat, particularly under the leadership of Admiral Max Horton, who was the Commander-in-Chief of the Western Approaches from November 19 1942 until its closure on August 15 1945.

It made it so real to see the place where he led operations, including the room that he slept in which overlooked the operations room so that he could keep a close eye on what was happening in the Atlantic ocean.

One story also told of him attending the Operations Room in his pyjamas when responding to an emergency that unfolded while he was sleeping. Also within the Western Approaches HQ was the Western Approaches Tactical Unit, a British Naval Unit that was created to develop new tactics to counter the German submarine attacks on convoys.

Notably, this unit was largely staffed by the Wrens or Waafs, which is particularly important for the female members of our Contingent.

A massive 80 percent of the staff were women, many of which were the same age as our senior cadets,

The war effort of these courageous females serves as a constant reminder to us of the power and impact of women, and we all feel very inspired and lucky to be from a city in which the women had such a central role.

We ended our day by speaking about our experience of the day on BBC Radio Merseyside so that we could share how the Battle of the Atlantic and the operations that took place out of the Western Approaches are still of significance today and how CCF plays such a positive influence in our lives.

We hope that by celebrating this occasion on such a large scale, more attention can be brought to the Battle of the Atlantic, and each person can learn something new, just as our cadets did throughout the day.

CPO Eva W, Belvedere CCF RN

Old Boy Conor returns to inspect his former unit

CAPTAIN Conor O'Neill returned to his old school – King's College in Wimbledon – to be the Reviewing Officer at the CCF Contingent's Biennial inspection... 26 years after he was a Royal Navy cadet when the CCF was inspected by the late Lord Boyce, then Second Sea Lord.

Capt O'Neill inspected a tri-Service honour guard before meeting the school Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, the Head, Dr Anne Cotton, and parents of the cadets.

He was then guided through a working inspection which allowed

him to see the range of activities used to challenge today's cadets.

Capt O'Neill, a Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award holder, enjoyed comparing experiences with the current batch of DofE candidates.

He was also impressed with the modern offer of cadet Field Gun training, which provided a spectacle for visitors and was supported by CPOs Sam McGaw and Bomber Mills, instructors from CCF HQ.

As a schoolboy Capt O'Neill devised a naval wargame for Lord Boyce with task groups(?) in

separate rooms, and the current senior cadets reproduced it for him with a modern twist – out went the metal ship models, to be replaced by 3D-printed versions.

The final event was an inter-section simulated gun run – "physically demanding, executed with panache and grit, and resulting in a Navy win!"

Capt O'Neill, who's gone on to command several RN vessels, including frigate HMS Montrose, since his cadet days, found this generation of cadets to be bright

and enthusiastic. They eloquently expressed the challenges they had faced and the personal gains they had made overcoming them.

"It was a great pleasure for all of us to welcome Captain O'Neill back as our Reviewing Officer," said Commander Bob Mitchell CCF Contingent Commander.

"As an Old Boy of the school he has always been tremendously supportive of our CCF, returning to speak to cadets and to encourage them on some of our major occasions. They loved talking to

him at the inspection; he gently questioned, and obviously enjoyed being taken down memory lane."

At the final parade cadet CPO Greg Samodelov invited Captain O'Neill to address the contingent and guests.

He spoke about the obvious changes to the cadet world, but also the constants, and from the Naval Core values he drew attention to the commitment of the staff, not least the near 40 years that his former Chemistry teacher spent in a Royal Navy uniform.

FROM WREN TO COMMANDER

EQUESTRIAN LOOKS BACK ON HER 45-YEAR CAREER IN THE ROYAL NAVY

A ROYAL Naval Reservist leaves the service after 45 years in the Royal Navy and Royal Naval Reserve, climbing from Wren to Commander.

Suzanne Clark joined the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) as a young woman, at HMS Scotia, Rosyth in 1978.

She soon joined the Regular Royal Navy as a Wren (Radar) in 1981.

Rising through the ranks, she went on to become a commissioned Third Officer and left the Royal Navy as a Lieutenant Air Traffic Controller.

Her husband was also a Royal Navy air traffic controller, and they both worked unsociable hours.

Suzanne said: "It was obvious back in the 'dark ages', that remaining in the Service would be incompatible with a young family. Two watchkeepers requiring childcare well into the early mornings would stretch today's childcare, let alone in the early 90's!"

After leaving the Regular Royal Navy, she joined the RNR Air Branch in March of 1992.

More compatible with her change in lifestyle she went on to work part-time for several years at RNAS Portland and RNAS Yeovilton. Continuing her career as an air traffic controller, she covered for full time personnel who were on courses, annual leave, and sick leave. Suzanne spent many an hour as a trainer for revalidating and ab-initio air traffic controllers, generally working 2 to 3 days a week.

Suzanne said: "I was always destined to re-join the RNR, this time the RNR Air Branch, when I left full time Service."

When her children were older, she took a job as a Duty Flying Supervisor at RNAS Yeovilton as a civil servant (in uniform).

A conflict of interest was recognised, so it was decided that she needed a new RNR role. That was when she started to augment the Battle Staff (now COMUKSTRKFOR). Although sometimes out of her comfort zone, Suzanne found it was an exciting time, working in a variety of OPS Rooms in bunkers, tents and a mix of establishments both in the UK and abroad.

Suzanne also managed to be a Divisional Officer for one of the RNR Confirmation courses at HMS Raleigh.

Suzanne said: "It was an honour to lead the Platoon during the passing out parade despite not marching for over 20 years and had no idea what to do with a Sword, (WRNs Officers did not carry swords when I was at BRNC) but as always this offered opportunity to 'wing it' which is what the Air Branch is always good at."

A recent promotion to Cdr to be OPS Support SO1 has been an interesting challenge for Suzanne and given her a chance to work more with Maritime Reserves HQ and other Reserve organisations.

Alongside her working life in the RNR she managed to have some incredible adventures skiing with the Air Branch Team, expeditions and as part of the Royal Navy Equestrian Team, for over 20 years.

Competing for the RN at a variety of competitions in Dressage, Show Jumping and Eventing, culminating in being part of the Dressage Team to win the RN Sports Team of the Year 2021.



Top: Cdr Clark competing in dressage for the RN; Above left, where it all began with HMS Dauntless; Right, a young Suzanne at Dartmouth

In the same year the team also won the Inter-Services Loriner dressage leg of the competition. In crowning glory, Suzanne won the Royal Navy Equestrian Association's Kemble Plate Trophy for Dressage achievements. In 2022 the team were only just pipped to the post in the Inter-Services Loriner by the Royal Air Force Team to come joint second with the Army.

Suzanne said: "I have been very lucky with my horse, whose previous job was going fast over fixed fences, so dressage has been a big change for him."

Suzanne leaves the RNR at HMS Pegasus at the end of a career of service as a Regular and Reservist totalling 44 years 296 days with 30 years in the RNR Air Branch.



Serving up scran fit for submariners

BELFAST catering students pitted their culinary skills against Royal Navy Submariner Caterers during a "Cook and Serve" competition at the Belfast Met.

The Submarine Flotilla's Belfast Shield "Cook and Serve" competition provides students and submariner chefs the opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in front of a panel of judges.

Six teams from across Belfast came together to compete at the Belfast Met, going head-to-head with RN Submarine Flotilla Teams.

The challenge was to produce a delicious, high-quality, three-course meal, with "front of house" students also being tested on their knowledge and technical serving skills.

The teams were given a budget of £120 and worked under tight time constraints to come up with their creations.

Some of the delicious dishes the inventive chefs created for the competition included: honey-glazed duck breast, sous vide cod with curried mussels, pan fried saffron cod, and lamb rump with anchovy and wild garlic.

Chief Petty Officer Cartwright, who was part of the judging panel, said: "This has been a fantastic opportunity for Royal Navy Catering Services personnel to demonstrate their culinary skills and showcase their talents in hospitality, alongside the college teams."

"It was a pleasure to sample and judge the delicious dishes which were beautifully presented and served. The guests and judges were very impressed with the flair and professionalism demonstrated by the teams."

As well as cooking for the boat's crew while at sea, submariner chefs are also expected to be able to serve a fine dining experience.

Food is an enormous part of the morale on board as the crews are sometimes deployed for months at a time without surfacing.

Petty Officer Christopher Tarr, an experienced submariner chef who helped organise the cooking competition, said: "When at sea, people enjoy the meals they have at home – Sunday roasts, Friday's fish and chips, and of course theme-nights such as steak and chips, or curry and pizza nights."

"It is a close knit 'family' onboard and people have their core roles but can quickly switch to utilise their training to fulfil other duties. This can include firefighting, first aid, or even 'driving' the submarine."

"The chefs really look forward to opportunity such as this to showcase their full range culinary skills. Competitions like Cook and Serve are a great way of keeping skills honed."

Although training and development continues throughout a submariner chef's career, trainees complete ten weeks of basic training before going on to the Defence College of Logistics, Policing and Administration. This is followed by a further 11 weeks of submarine training where they learn about the vessels including warfare, weapons, propulsion, and escape training. After this they go to sea on a submarine before hopefully qualifying as a Royal Navy submariner.

The winner of the Belfast Cook and Serve competition was South Eastern Regional College, with South West College and Northern Regional College coming in second and third place respectively. The teams were presented with their gold, silver, and bronze place medals by Lady Mary Peters (RN Honorary Captain).



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HISTORY MAKERS

THE 2023 ski season is one the Royal Navy can reflect on with pride.

The Alpine Ski Team (RNAST) made skiing history - a first ever win at the Inter Service Snow Sports Championships (ISSSC) for the womans' team, and a dominant display by the men too hints at a bright future ahead.

This year's season began in the new year when the RNAST travelled to Les Deux Alpes to train and compete at the Royal Navy Snowsports Festival (RNSF). The first week comprised mainly race training whereas the second week saw more formal races in the disciplines of Slalom and Giant Slalom, and Super G, laid on by the RN Winter Sports Association Hill Team.

RNAST racers, James French and Liliias Hopkinson, became overall men's and woman's 'Navy Champions' of the festival but the event also affords the RNAST to recruit new talent through seeing new racers, several of which were pickup for additional training.

The team headed confidently into the third week of training, which focussed on 'speed' training and longer courses in the form of the Super G to prepare for the upcoming Downhill training in Serre Chevalier at the Army Championships.

Roll on to March and the RNAST were off to France again for the Inter-Service championships at Meribel.

The team trained for all disciplines from SL to DH throughout the week on a beautifully prepared race piste which had been used just a month prior for the biennial Ski World Championships.

The Army and RAF women's teams both looked strong with additions of ex-racers in their squads. Equally, the Army men always look strong due to their strength in depth afforded from such mass, and the RAF men had good pace too, although no talisman racer. The RN has its men's talisman in AET Graeme Price, an ex-GB Slalom racer.

In a change to the competition programme due to poor weather and slushy snow, the first event in the competition was Slalom. The consistent performances started to flow in from the RN

women with Liliias coming third, with improvement for all the women from their first to second run. Unfortunately, for the RN Men, Graeme and James straddled gates or lost skis meaning they were disqualified.

The Giant Slalom race followed on the next day's competition. The combined times of both runs put two of the women in the top five with Liliias taking her familiar position of third on the podium.

By the time the men's team got onto the course it had started to get rutted which saw a few of the best skiers from all teams taking a battering. Despite this, the RN men's podium domination was to begin with Graeme first and James in third.

The RAF men edged an overall team victory away from the RN men by some 0.4 seconds when the times of all four top men from each team were combined.

Snow conditions for the Super G had firmed up nicely for the race. This time the RN had three women within the top five, with Liliias third. Graeme and James took things up a notch, finishing first and second. With every member of the RN completing the run safely and with great pace, both Super G team events were taken by the RN; a first event win ever for the women and the first time in SG since 2011 for the men.

The final event on the calendar was Downhill. Graeme and James took first and second respectively, Graeme finishing in an incredible 1 minute 25seconds, and James approx 0.5 seconds behind. This led to a convincing team win for the RN men in the Downhill, a first since 2015.

The final day of competition came where a final Slalom run was offered to all finishers of the Downhill, in what is known as the 'Alpine Combined'. The times of the two runs are added together to effectively find the best all-rounder.

Graeme was the form favourite for the Slalom run and was absolutely flying, until another straddle. James this time was waiting in the wings to take his first Alpine victory of the champs.

Liliias taking her well-deserved position as third with Lara Martin in fourth.



Rowers prove sharp on Dart

THE Royal Navy Rowing squad took part in the South West's premier long-distance time trial competing against clubs from around the country over a tough 13km course from Totnes to Dartmouth.

It was the 51st year that the event has been run, through a collaboration between two civilian clubs, Dartmouth Rowing Club and Dart Totnes Rowing Club, with whom the RN maintains strong local links.

Ranks from RN and RM units around the region and further afield gathered for the weekend to train and race in a mixed eight (Musn Liz Painter, Bugler Nicola Perry, Lt Alice Demuth, WO1 Matt Sewell, OC Dylan Lewis, AB Paul Johansen, OC Laura Buchan, SLt Ollie Banks), a Mixed Quad (LET Tom Aindow, Lt Cdr Peter Schilt (Royal Netherlands Navy), AB Jennifer Neil, LS Gemma Brice) and a composite Masters Double (Lt Nick Howe) with a sculler from Dart Totnes RC.

In calm and sunny racing conditions, all crews put in a very strong effort, successfully navigating their way along the River Dart among the 75 boats on the water.

The mixed 4x overcame steering equipment challenges to finish in a time of 1 minute 01.19 seconds, while the 8+ completed the course in 51.22 seconds, finishing 10th out of 14 eights on the river, an impressive result against much more experienced crews.

The masters 2x finished as the fastest double of the day in a handicapped time of 47.00.

These results were all the more impressive considering they were achieved with only an hour's training the day before, up against crews who have been training and racing together for longer.

If you have previous rowing experience, or are interested in taking up the sport as a novice, you can find RN Rowing on Instagram or via the NAVYfit website.



CARIBBEAN DISCO



SEVENTEEN sailors from the Royal Naval Sailing Association (RNSA) left the not-so-sunny shores of the UK for Antigua, to take part in Exercise Roaring Antilles.

This two-week exercise saw the crew getting to grips with the Joint Services Challenge 72 Yacht, 'Discoverer of Hornet' and competing in the 14th Royal Ocean Racing Club's (RORC) Caribbean 600 Race which weaves around the Islands of the Caribbean and attracts amateur and professional sailors from around the world.

In the first week, the crew embarked on 'Discoverer' (affectionately shortened to 'Disco') for some boat familiarisation and training, heading out from Jolly Harbour, Antigua, to practice their tacking, gybing and spinnaker drills along with Man Overboard Exercises.

The latter were put to good use straight off the bat as the crew scrambled to successfully recover crewmate David Anderson's RNSA cap from the oggin!

The crew quickly acclimatised to the watch system, comprised of four-hour rotations on/off watch, with the third watch acting as 'Mother Watch' and keeping the boat ship shape and the crew 'victualled'.

This watch system enabled the RNSA team to practice sailing through the night, accompanied by shooting stars and incredible bioluminescence, ahead of the big race.

Training week wasn't all work and no play, however, with visits to the idyllic island of Les Saintes and Deshaies, Guadeloupe, giving the opportunity to practice coming to anchor and launching/recovering the tender ashore.

Deshaies was a particular favourite for many of the crew, who took the opportunity to visit the key sites from BBC's 'Death in Paradise', including Honoré Police Station. It's no wonder the programme's iconic theme tune became the soundtrack to the exercise!

Ahead of the race start, 'Disco' and crew returned to Antigua, this time to Falmouth Harbour, to reset and store ship. The crew embraced some naval heritage with a visit to Nelson's Dockyard in the nearby English Harbour, a former British Naval Dockyard which was later named after the famous sailor who served in Antigua between 1784 and 1787.

Race day was soon upon Discoverer and her crew, with an early departure from Antigua Yacht Club to approach the start line with 70 crews from 13 countries, finessing manoeuvres in the torrential rain along the way.

In the words of First Mate Mark Durkan: "The start was unlike any I have ever encountered. With the elite boats starting last, we had close encounters with yachts I never thought I'd see in action in real life, let alone two feet away!"

From this adrenaline packed start, Discoverer of Hornet followed the fleet to a mark off Barbuda, rounding St Kitts & Nevis, heading north round Saint Martin before heading down past Montserrat, rounding Guadeloupe and heading back up to Barbuda.

The final leg saw the RNSA crew rounding the tiny island of Redonda and finishing back off English Harbour at three minutes past midnight on the Friday morning.

Exhausted but incredibly proud, 'Disco' came back alongside in Falmouth Harbour to a warm reception from the RORC greeting party and celebrated their incredible accomplishment.

As crewmate George Santry summarised: "We all got pushed to our limits, but there was some incredible teamwork throughout the race and it's been such an amazing thing to be part of. The camaraderie between the boats before and after the race has been great, and overall it's been so rewarding."

The crew's Skipper, Andy Mullins, said: "It was cracking to see the crew come together during the first week, with experienced dinghy, yacht and novice sailors forming a competent team. As a group we could hold our heads high against serious full time professional racers; the F1 teams of the sailing world."

"The experience of racing against 70 other yachts, day and night, over four days is unforgettable, as is the sense of accomplishment crossing the finish line and savouring the welcome ashore. The fact that we also managed to visit a number of Caribbean islands, beaches and historical sites was a welcome bonus and adds to the RN retention factor."

Three of the boat's crew (Annabel Knott, George Santry, Lizzy Galloway) achieved their RYA 'Competent Crew' qualification.

This entry-level certificate reflects the breadth of experience gained by the sailors throughout the two weeks and reflects the opportunity for grassroots development of Service Personnel.

One of the main reasons RNSA wanted to come out and do the Caribbean 600 is to show others that the RN offers some great opportunities for both experienced sailors and novices alike.

Joint Services Adventurous Sail Training Centre offers a number of Offshore Sailing courses from Competent Crew through to Yachtmaster, and also advertises any expeditions or opportunities across the three Services (check out the webpage via DLE). We'd also recommend keeping your eyes out for any relevant RNTMs or DINs which outline Offshore Sailing schedules and AT expeditions. Don't be afraid to apply, and please reach out if you have any questions via <https://www.rnsa.org.uk/>.



Off to a flying start

THE 2023 season has kicked off for the Royal Navy Royal Marines Road Race Team, at a very wet Snetterton for round one.

This year sees us racing in a brand-new paddock for the first time in over 11 years, with No Limits Racing. This month's report follows our latest addition to the team this year from 820 NAS at RNAS Culdrose, AET Harry Morris, pictured.

"Overall, my first weekend with the team at Snetterton was very positive. The team made me feel welcome and right at home with a brilliant set of people making a great atmosphere within the paddock, and with Tiff [our team mum] sorting some class scran throughout the day. I'll definitely be making a return for future races."

Harry impressed the team by turning up ready to go, having done many track days before, and he had the pace to show this.

"Snetterton is a track I've ridden a few times, so I had an idea of what to expect going into the weekend, however the weather completely changed that with it raining the first two days creating some changing and difficult conditions. Despite that we still managed to put some decent results together with Alan [Curtis, #57] getting himself some great results standing on the podium twice.

"The other lesson coming from my two crashes in both qualifying sessions causing additional admin for little gain. I think the main reason for this was rushing myself and pushing too hard too soon rather than building pace lap after lap expecting to gain results instantly. Using what I've learnt from this weekend I now know where to spend time improving for the next round, and what to change in my riding to build on what I already know. I'm looking forward to the next round at Cadwell Park and seeing if what I've changed shows any improvements."

Ryan Hughes returned to the track after some time away, swapping his Yamaha R6 for the team's new BMW S1000RR and Team Captain Adam Myhill traded in his Honda CB500 for Ryan's R6, rebuilt by Adam. Both have made a big step up and made many improvements over the weekend including during the first round of the GB Racing UK Armed Forces Interservice Championships.

If you want to get involved with the team, either on or off the track, get in touch at Ryan.Hughes102@mod.gov.uk or search RNRMRRT on Facebook and Instagram to keep up to date with team news.

Prepped for the season

THE Royal Navy Cricket Association (RNCA) held a training and conditioning camp in Gibraltar to showcase their suitability for selection in their respective Inter Service tournament.

Five members of staff and 34 male and female players from various Royal Navy ships, air stations and RN/RM units bases attended the camp, where they held five days of training sessions at Europa Point Stadium, which provided representative



players with an excellent environment, both indoors and outdoors, from which they were able to develop their technical, tactical, physical and psychological disciplines.

The women's team played the Gibraltar Women's XI's, in a friendly spirited match, which ended in a win for the Gibraltar Women's XI by 47 runs.

This was followed the next day with a tightly-fought competition for the men's team against the Gibraltar Men's XI, resulting in a win for the

RN by 60 runs, who also displayed determined fielding and aggressive running between the wickets

Once all the training sessions and matches were complete, the team recovered by taking part in some fun water sports activities and treks across the Rock.

Lt Cdr Steve Blackburn said: "We have thoroughly enjoyed our time in Gibraltar, the weather has been absolutely perfect for outdoor training, coupled with the superb facilities at the Europa Point Stadium have resulted in an intensive and very positive training programme, helping us prepare for the upcoming season."

"We also greatly benefitted from two well fought matches against Gibraltar Cricket Club, and we very much would like to make this a regular training event."

SUBMARINER LEADS INVICTUS TEAM

A ROYAL Navy submariner is to captain Team UK at this year's Invictus Games.

Marine engineer Lieutenant Commander James Rogers lives with Ankylosing Spondylitis, a long-term autoimmune inflammatory arthritis condition, which affects his mobility, causing full-body pain and chronic fatigue.

He is returning for his second Invictus Games after competing in cycling and swimming events at The Hague in 2022.

James, who will lead the 59-strong team at the games in Dusseldorf in September, said: "A few years ago, I couldn't go to the park with my kids, so I want to show them what I'm able to achieve now."

"Representing my country, and the Armed Forces, and to top it all off, being selected as Team Captain is an absolute honour and privilege."

James took on cycling and swimming in the 2022 Games, where he took home a bronze medal in the cycling time trials. This year James wants to build on his achievements last year and continue being an inspiration to nine-year-old son Harry and six-year-old daughter Emily.

He will compete in cycling, indoor rowing, swimming and wheelchair basketball and will be joined by his older sister Rebecca, who is also competing for Team UK.

The Invictus Games, established in 2014, provides an opportunity for those



who have suffered illness or injury during or as a result of their service to compete in a sporting environment as part of their recovery journey.

The RBL has been involved in Team UK since 2016, when it started supporting the friends and families of participants on their journey to the Games.

This is the first year the charity is taking responsibility for delivering the whole team, participants included, to the Games alongside its partners, the MOD.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans, Dr Andrew Murrison MP said: "The Invictus Games is an inspiring example of how the resilience and discipline gained during a military career

can be applied to the sporting arena. "Being a part of Team UK is a rewarding opportunity for both our service personnel and Veterans who have all given so much to the Armed Forces community in keeping the nation safe."

Other RN athletes named in the team are:

- Leo Buscombe, 34, Sports: Table Tennis
 - Paul (Charlie) Charles, 45, (Royal Marines Veteran) Sports: Swimming
 - Kenetha (Frankie) Franklyn, 39, Sports: Archery, Indoor Rowing, Wheelchair Basketball, Wheelchair Rugby
 - Codey Morton, 28, Sports: Archery, Indoor Rowing, Sitting Volleyball
 - Jay Saunders, 54, (Navy Veteran) Sports: Archery, Table Tennis
 - Danielle (Dani) Stevens, 30, (Navy Veteran) Sports: Athletics, Powerlifting, Sitting Volleyball, Swimming
 - James Wren, 27, Sports: Athletics, Indoor Rowing, Sitting Volleyball, Wheelchair Basketball
 - Rebecca (Becky) York, 38, (Royal Marines Veteran) Sports: Cycling, Indoor Rowing, Powerlifting, Swimming
- Among the team's reserves are:
- Laura Brimson, 42, (Navy Veteran) Sports: Athletics, Indoor Rowing, Powerlifting
 - Nicholas McNally, 52, Sports: Archery, Cycling, Indoor Rowing



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Deaths

Warrant Officer (RS) Kenneth Lee. Served from June 21 1960 to December 20 1986 in HMS Collingwood, Mercury, Blake, Dryad, Terror, Victory, Cochrane, Tiger, Britannia, Dolphin, Royal Arthur, Minerva, Warrior, London, Drake, Norfolk, and Nelson. Awarded Borneo General Service Medal and LS&GC medal. Member of the RNCCA. Died March 23, aged 79.

Capt Peter R Broadbent OBE. HMS Zulu, Raleigh, Blake, London, Dryad, President, Lochinvar, DNSC, RCDS, CNH, CinC Fleet. Loan Nigeria. Died March 17, aged 89.

Lt Cdr William J E Brockman. HMS Corunna, Ark Royal, Excellent. Died March 2, aged 93.

Principal Nursing Officer CBE QARNNS Patricia Gould. Naval Hosp Haslar, Plymouth, M'Tarfa Malta GC. Surg Rear Admiral. HMS Centurion. Died February 24, aged 98.

Capt John P Gunning. 814, 815 NAS. HMS Seahawk, Chawton, Wiston, Jupiter, Nelson, Kent. Loan Oman. Def Intel Staff. Died March 6, aged 89.

Capt Anthony M Poulter OBE. HMS Dido, Excellent, Dolphin, Courageous, Ocelot, Sealion, Opportune, Opossum, Neptune, Conqueror. FOSM. Died March 10.

2/O WRNS Diana M Thurston. (widow of Maj J Hotchkiss RM). HMS Warrior, Dryad. NATO. D/WRNS. Died March 22.

Cdr Richard L Warren. HMS Albion, Sultan, Antrim, Dolphin, Southampton, Centurion, Nav Sec, Cin-C Fleet, FO Portsmouth, MOD Bath. Died March 10.

Lt Cdr John R Whitehead. HMS Heron, Goldcrest, Hermes, Seahawk, Albion, Bulwark, Daedalus, Osprey, Saker. Died March 19, aged 82.

George W Good, LS. Served January 1943 - June 1946. Gosport (training), HMS Curlew (Asdic, Cable Laying, Mine control), HMS Boscowan, Algiers - invasion of Sicily, Siracusa, HMS Quail, sunk off Toronto but picked up and back to Bari. June '44 Anzio. Sept '44 HMS Helvig. Nov '45 HMS Defiance. Demobbed June '46. Member of Bude Branch. Died April 15.

Alan Litchfield, RM. Served 08.04.43 - 06.46 at RMB Lymptone, Dalditch, HMS Wolverstone, Normandy, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Eastney for Demob June '46. Past President of Bude Branch R.N.A. and Pres. of R.B.L. Bude & Stratton Branch. One of life's true gentlemen and very generous with it! R.I.P. Alan, your watch is complete. Died April 13, aged 98.

Ask Jack

HMS Plym: I would like to trace the River-class frigate's unofficial timber crest. She left Devonport reserve in 1951/2 and deployed on Operation Hurricane in the Monte Bello Islands of Western Australia, where she was destroyed in the UK's first nuclear weapon test.

The ship was stripped beforehand and I have discovered an auction house sold a badge said to be from the frigate (K271) in 2007 but I believe it to be unofficial, something confirmed to me by Chatham Dockyard Historical Society.

Geoff Robinson

7 Mountfield, Borough Green, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 8HX

David McIntyre. I am trying to find details about my birth father, who joined the Royal Navy in 1939 and lived in Southsea. He died in 1976. Priscilla Breakspear.

Priscillabreakspear0@gmail.com

FRADU: I would like to contact the following former Fleet Requirements and Air Direction Unit Hunter pilots who mounted detachments at RAF

Gibraltar from 1980 to 1983: Tommy Thompson, Godfrey Underwood, Simon Willoughby and Derek Morter.

Tony Fairburn, Sqn Ldr (Rtd)
tony.fairbairn@btinternet.com

Johnny Craig: We are trying to contact Johnny for our 40th secondary school reunion. We know he joined the Royal Navy and served in submarines. He left St Columba's College in Dublin in 1982, aged around 18.

William Simpson
Whpsimpson@gmail.com

Reunions

HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association and HMS Tenby Association: The 2023 reunion is confirmed at the Queen's Hotel, Southsea, from May 12 to 15, 2023. Contact Secretary Denis Askham at 07773651213 or email askhamd3@gmail.com For HMS Tenby contact **David Macalister** at dmac121dm@gmail.com or call 07716 699308

HMS Carysfort: A reunion will be held at the Orida Hotel in Maidstone from May 19 to 22, 2023, in a joint venture with HMS Cavalier. The reunion is open to all who served in the ship throughout her seven commissions (1945-1969) and their wives/partners. Contact SF Events Ltd at The Withyholt, Paul Mead, Stroud Glous. GL6 6PG Tel: 01452 813173 or email associationmembers@sarahfletchervents.co.uk Details can also be found at www.hmscarysfort.co.uk or email hmscarysfort@gmail.com

S64 Artificer Apprentice entry: Our 55th reunion will be held in Warwick for those who joined at HMS Fisgard on September 9 1968. For details of the reunion held over the weekend of September 8 to 10 please call IOW Tours on 01983 405116 or contact Clive Adshead at [clive](mailto:clive.adshead@iowtours.co.uk).

adshead@virginmedia.com

HMS Troubridge: Final Commission Association 1966-69 2023 reunion will be at the North Euston Hotel, The Esplanade, Fleetwood FY7 6BN, September 25 to 29. Contact Bryan Pace at Romft1@GMail.com

Loch Class Frigates Association: Our final annual reunion takes place at the Royal Maritime Hotel and Club from October 6 to 8. Contact Andrew Nunn at andrew.nunn@blueyonder.co.uk, phone 0117 9505835 or visit www.lochclassfrigates.com

HMS Undaunted, Eagle and Yarmouth Association: The 2023 Reunion Dinner & Dance is confirmed at the Bournemouth Carlton Hotel, East Overcliff Drive, Bournemouth BH1 3DN from Friday October 20 to Monday October 23 2023. Contact Whiskey Walker on 01268 58041 or email: whiskey666@outlook.com or andyjmancini@gmail.com for further details.

Royal Navy Photographic Branch: Our reunion takes place at The Liner Hotel, Liverpool from Friday September 29 to Monday October 2. All former and serving photos plus wives/partners and

guests are very welcome to help celebrate 104 years since the branch was formed. Meet and greet on Friday evening. Saturday, visits and tours around Liverpool City & Royal Docks. Saturday evening consists of a Nautical Extravaganza experience, gala dinner & traditional 'Up Spirits' enactment, followed by dancing & entertainment. For further details please contact Danny du Feu. Email: ddf.photography@gmail.com; Tel: 07711 083465.

HMS Lowestoft Association: Our 2023 reunion will take place at the Alexandra House Hotel, Swindon SN4 0QJ from September 29 to October 1. All who served in Lowestoft during her RN service (1961-1985) are welcome to attend (including wives/partners/guests). Book direct with SF Events on 01452 813173, for further details and a booking form please email: admin@hmslowestoft.uk

HMS Ark Royal: A reunion is planned at the Wallasey branch of the RNA from Friday November 17 to Sunday November 19. For details please contact Gordon Weir at gordyweir@gmail.com or John Williams at jwillo85@gmail.com

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in the March edition of *Navy News* (right) was Oberon-class boat HMS Orpheus. Her hull was constructed from aluminium alloy.

Charles Cook from Bristol wins £50 for sending us the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship (above) is a J-class destroyer commissioned on June 10 1939 and was part of the 5th Destroyer Flotilla in 1940.

1. What was her name?
2. How did she lose both her bow and stern?

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



May Mystery Ship in the header. Coupons and emails giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Entries must be received by June 13.

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.

MYSTERY PICTURE 339

Name

Address

My answers: (1)

(2)

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

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ROYAL NAVY NAVY NEWS

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Editor: Lorraine Proudlock
Email: news@royalnavymail.mod.uk

Editorial	Business
News@royalnavymail.mod.uk	Business manager: Lisa Taw
Richard.Hargreaves@royalnavymail.mod.uk	bm@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Peter.Howard@royalnavymail.mod.uk	Mistrala Harries
Elisha.Quade@royalnavymail.mod.uk	subs@royalnavymail.mod.uk
Reprographics	www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navynews
Andrew.Brady150@mod.gov.uk	
General enquiries	Telephone 07773 155321
news@royalnavymail.mod.uk	

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Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Ask Jack columns in next month's Noticeboard must be received by

MAY 14 2023

Carrier's date for Bristol honour

THE people of Bristol have bestowed their highest honour on Britain's biggest warship.

When they return to the city this summer, sailors from aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales will be able to march through its streets "with drums beating, Colours flying and bayonets fixed".

Already affiliated with Bristol for the past seven years, the Portsmouth-based warship now enjoys the Freedom of the City of Bristol, awarded to the warship and her 650-plus men and women.

HMS Prince of Wales' Commanding Officer Captain Richard Hewitt accepted the honour on behalf of his ship at a ceremony in Bristol City Hall.

The official announcement will be followed by the formal presentation of the Freedom Scroll - which is paraded when a ship's company or military unit exercise their rights - when the carrier's sailors march through Bristol for the first time later in 2022.

Thanking civic leaders, Captain Hewitt spoke of a "true friendship" between his ship and the city.

"Being granted the Freedom of the City of Bristol is a huge and significant honour for us. Bristol has an industrious maritime heritage and I know our sailors are looking forward to exercising the Freedom of the City," he continued.

"This will support the continued strong relationships between generations of Royal Navy sailors in HMS Prince of Wales

and the City of Bristol over the next 50 years."

Lord Mayor of Bristol, Councillor Paula O'Rourke, told him: "Our affiliation with the ship and its crew is one we care about deeply and we hope that this honour serves as a reminder to all of the close bond we share with HMS Prince of Wales. As a proud naval city with a long maritime tradition, it's a particularly special privilege to be able to honour members of His Majesty's Naval Service with Bristol's highest civic award."

The ship - which is also affiliated with Liverpool - is the 66th military unit or individual to be so honoured by Bristol. The first recipient back in 1888 was His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales (and future King Edward VII).

Bristol-related activities with the carrier are managed and overseen by the HMS Prince of Wales Affiliation Board, led by the city's Lord Lieutenant and comprising business representatives, local organisations and civic leaders such as the council's Armed Forces Champion.

Several visits have taken place to the ship by members of the Affiliation Board over the last few years and there are plans to build relationships with local schools to promote science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) as well as sport.

Sailors represent the ship at key events such as Remembrance ceremonies and aboard the carrier there is a Bristol suite, decorated with reminders of the city.



The King's Coronation Collection



King Charles III Coronation Lapel Badge

Join the nation over three days of 'joyful celebration' in May with this exclusive high quality enamelled lapel badge depicting King Charles' Cypher.

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