



NAVY NEWS

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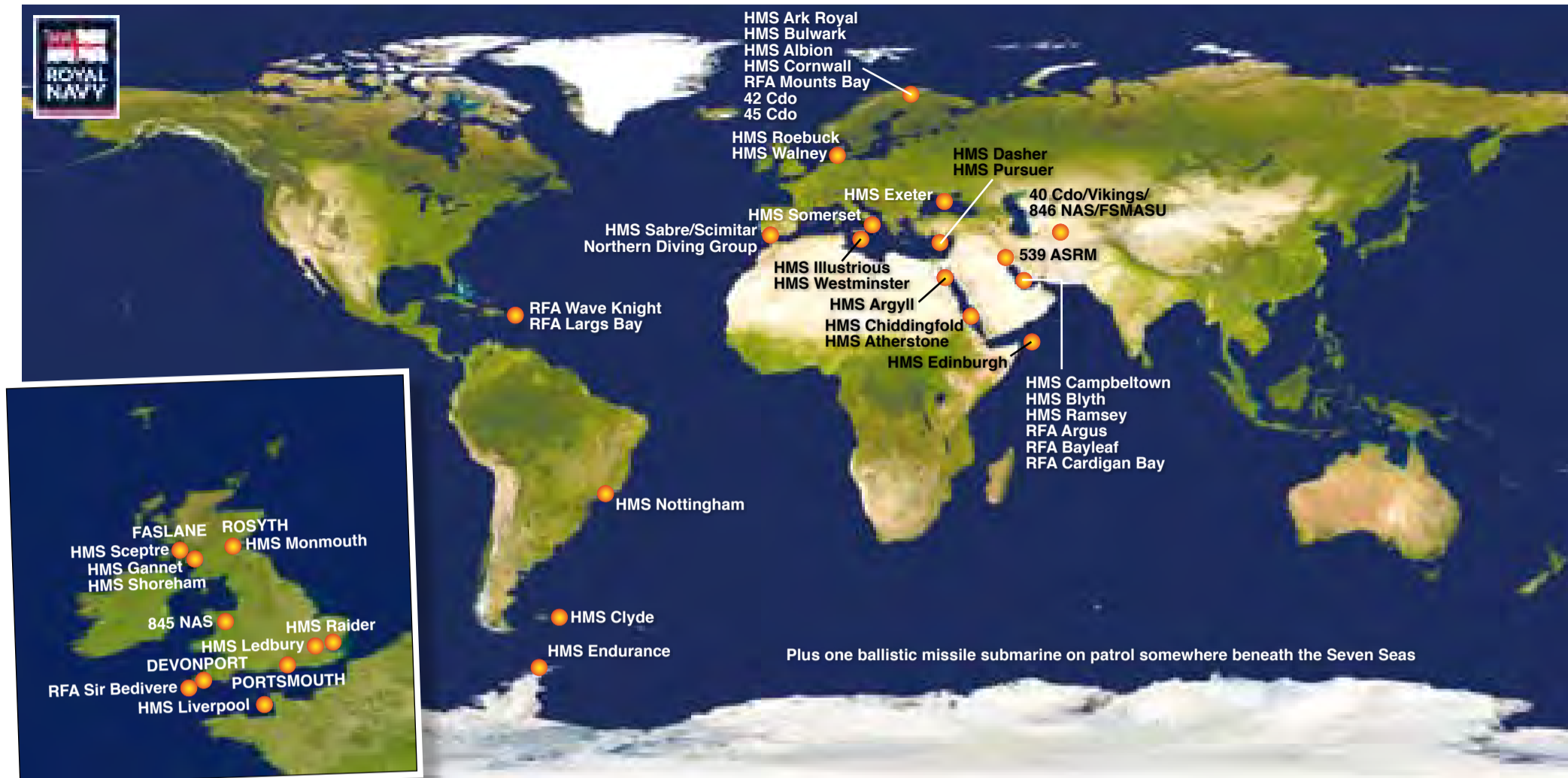
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THE Merlin of the 'capital ship', HMS Westminster, prepares for another sortie during the frigate's Orion 08 deployment. The Type 23 warship is providing anti-submarine escort for the task group, led by flagship HMS Illustrious, but has also demonstrated her prowess in downing threats in the air courtesy of her Seawolf missiles. *Turn to pages 10 and 11 for more from the task group.*

Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU (East)



EYE OF THE HUNTER



Fleet Focus

PHEW. We're amazed we managed to squeeze everything on to our map this month.

Yes the public and press may care little, but the men and women of the Senior Service have been exceptionally busy this spring.

Their efforts seem to be split between extremes of temperature. We'll begin where it's cold.

A sizeable task force and Royal Marine presence could be found clustered around Narvik and Harstad for Armatura Borealis: HM Ships **Albion**, **Bulwark**, **Cornwall** and **Ark Royal**, plus **RFA Mounts Bay**, and the green berets of **42** and **45 Commandos** were all involved in the Allied winter war games (see pages 25-28).

Those war games fortuitously coincided with the discovery by the Norwegians of the wartime destroyer **HMS Hunter**, lost near Narvik in 1940. Sixty-eight years later, the British and Norwegian navies paid their respects to her (see page 23).

Ice and snow are not, of course, the preserve of the Northern Hemisphere. **HMS Endurance** welcomed Britain's second most senior naval officer who paid a rare visit to the ice survey ship on operations around Antarctica (see page 22).

A short distance (relatively speaking) away, destroyer **HMS Nottingham** popped to South Georgia before heading to the warmth of Rio (see pages 8-9).

It can be cold in Scotland too (despite what we said in these pages a couple of months ago) as we found on a visit to Britain's No.1 Search And Rescue unit, **HMS Gannet** (see pages 16 and 17). Gannet's Sea Kings were also called upon during a joint exercise with **HMS Shoreham**, which was paying a visit to nearby Ayr (see page 4).

Minehunter **HMS Walney** stepped into the shoes of **HMS Roebuck** on NATO duties in the Kattegat and Skagerrak (see right) and possibly wished she hadn't as storm after storm lashed her for the better part of a month.

Right, that's enough of the cold, time for the warmth. The RN is back in charge of **Combined Task Force 158** in the northern Gulf... to which **HMS Campbeltown** is attached. She's taken over from **HMS Argyll**, currently enjoying the Egyptian sun after a mammoth patrol aided by **RFA Argus** and **Bayleaf**. At the tip of the Gulf, **RFA Cardigan Bay** is training Iraqi sailors and marines, while **HMS Blyth** and **Ramsey** have been operating alongside the Kuwaitis and Americans. Turn to page 7 for a round-up of operations in and around the Gulf.

Gulf-bound is the Orion 08 task force. Flagship **HMS Illustrious** belatedly made it to Malta (see page 10), accompanied by frigate **HMS Westminster** which has been blasting away with her Seawolf missiles (see page 11). Destroyer **HMS Edinburgh** broke off from the task group to tackle piracy (see page 4) and also operating semi independently are **HMS Atherstone** and **Chiddingfold**; the latter paid her respects to one of the doyens of the RN clearance diving branch (see pages 4 and 23).

In the Med, **HMS Somerset** has been hunting submarines (with varying degrees of success - see page 5) while destroyer **HMS Exeter** enjoyed the high life in Monaco before being given a rare glimpse inside a former top secret Soviet submarine base in the Crimea (see page 6).

845 NAS are gearing up for Afghanistan courtesy of some training in Snowdonia (see page 13). They will be joining their Commando Helicopter Force comrades of **846 NAS** already in theatre.

About to leave Helmand are the Royals of **40 Commando**. They will do so after a particularly successful series of operations around the town of Sangin, now firmly wrestled from Taleban control (see pages 14-15).

And finally... our ship of the month is not **HMS Richmond** (which appeared twice in the space of 90 days - instead of ten years - thanks to an administrative *faux pas*) but the much smaller university training boat **HMS Raider** (see page 12).



● A rare moment of serenity for HMS Walney (right) as she hands flagship duties back to HMS Roebuck (left) in the Danish port of Grenaa

Aal's well that ends well

IF THE sailors of HMS Walney were expecting a quiet winter, well they didn't get one.

With barely a week's notice, the Sandown-class warship was asked to stand in for HMS Roebuck on NATO duties in Norway and the Baltic for a month.

The Faslane-based mine countermeasures vessel was readying herself for impending Neptune Warrior war games and a package of pre-deployment training.

All those plans had to be thrown (temporarily) out of the window. The stores suddenly filled with cold weather clothing and the navigator clambered aboard clutching a bevy of charts of Norwegian waters.

He was followed by the command staff, who would direct the operations of NATO's Standing Mine Countermeasures

Group 1, which includes HMS Hurworth, over the weeks to come from their new flagship.

The task force had a fairly punishing schedule which waited for no man - irrespective of weather.

And if you think we've had a pretty rotten winter here in Blighty, well it's been far worse at sea... especially if you're a small minehunter.

The force was battered by an incessant procession of storms from which the fjords around Stavanger in Norway offered little protection.

Still it's not all been bad. As flagship of the NATO group, Walney hosted her fair share of

cocktail parties and had the honour of leading the Allied warships into the Danish port of Aalborg.

The town welcomed the visiting sailors with open arms... and Walney learned that Aalborg was very much a 'sailors' town', not least thanks to one street which boasted 198 clubs, pubs and restaurants.

Suitably recovered from their exertions in Aalborg, the ships moved to Fredrikshavn for the Danish-led exercise Aut Batt, a cross between a mine hunt and a Thursday war (with surface and aerial attacks thrown at the force).

There was, sadly, little chance for either; inclement weather brought the curtain down on Aut

Batt prematurely and the small ships returned to the sanctuary of port.

The good news about Aut Batt's demise, however, was that Walney could return to Faslane as Roebuck returned to the force to resume her flagship duties.

The bad news was that as soon as she sailed for home, she sailed into the teeth of a storm. Gusts battering the ship exceeded 50kts at times.

With the wind, the ship made 6kts more than her maximum speed but against it, as she rounded Cape Wrath, she lost 5kts.

After a three-day bruising, Walney sailed up the Clyde for home. Now alongside, it's off with the Norwegian and Danish charts and on with preparations for Neptune Warrior and pre-deployment training.



● *Thirtysomething...* Just days after her 30th birthday, hunter-killer submarine HMS Sceptre leaves Faslane bound for Loch Long to conduct trials.

The Barrow-built boat was commissioned on Valentine's Day 1978... that's 13 years before the youngest member of her ship's company came into this world. Actually, the average age of the crew is just one year older than Sceptre herself (the oldest deep aboard is 47).

All on board celebrated with a rather large cake (featuring, of course, the submariners' legendary dolphins crest) courtesy of the boat's catering department, chefs, sorry logisticians (catering services (preparation)) Tinker, Marshall and PO Boyle.

Despite her longevity, the Swiftsure-class submarine has a couple more years of service left in her; she's due to pay off in 2010.

Picture: LLogs Stu Hill, FRPU Clyde





Red Rose on Merseybeat

IF MOHAMMED can't get to the mountain, well you know the rest.

Frigate HMS Lancaster can't squeeze down the Lune to get to her namesake town.

She can, however, quite easily navigate the Mersey, where she was met by various affiliates during a stop in Liverpool.

The Type 23 has spent much of 2008 on principal warfare officer training, which meant lots of air attacks, boarding operations and anti-submarine exercises.

So a visit to the European Capital of Culture (*cough*, splutter – *Mancunian Assistant Ed*) was a welcome reprieve from war.

The ship's football sides took on various local teams, and the frigate herself hosted players from Premiership side Everton.

Then it was back to war, this time more training on passage to the northern Spanish port of Vigo.

Joining the Red Rose for the crossing from Merseyside to Spain were fathers and sons of various members of the ship's company.

Luckily for them, the Bay of Biscay was in a rather forgiving mood.

Liverpool goes to Guernsey

AFTER two months being given a thorough test, you would have thought HMS Liverpool was sick of the sight of naval trainers.

And probably they were. But it didn't stop a team from the Flag Officer Sea Training joining the destroyer yet again.

Liverpool has already passed through Operational Sea Training – the 'MOT' from the Admiralty which permits a ship to head off on a front-line deployment.

But the FOST team wanted to scrutinise the Portsmouth warship's sea safety training before Liverpool heads to the South Atlantic to replace her sister Nottingham.

They did so not in FOST's traditional playground off Plymouth but in and around Guernsey, where Liverpool spent three days conducting exercises, hosting local dignitaries, and also explaining to Channel Island emergency planners what the RN could offer in the event of a disaster striking the area.

Piratical move by Edinburgh

HMS Edinburgh broke off from the rest of the Orion 08 task force (*see page 10*) to put the boot into pirates in the Indian Ocean.

The destroyer joined Combined Task Force 150, a group of Allied warships which sweeps the waters from the Arabian Sea to the Horn of Africa and beyond for illegal activities.

That mission (nor the heat) did not stop the ship's company running around the upper deck in aid of Sport Relief.

Sailors opted to run one, three or seven miles for the charity – which meant, in turn, seven, 21 or 49 circuits of the Type 42's main deck. Each runner paid £5 for the 'privilege' of taking part with more than £100 raised for the good cause.

Knight out in Fowey

THE last of the 'Knights of the Round Table', RFA Sir Bedivere, paid her final visit to Fowey before bowing out of service.

The landing support ship has enjoyed a short but sweet affiliation with the people of the Cornish port, with whom she has been bound since 2005.

Sir Bedivere arrived off the town after a year-long stint in the Gulf training Iraqi sailors and marines.

A wee bit warmer...

DESPITE what Crowded House said, you cannot always take the weather with you.

And for that, the men of the Northern Diving Group are eternally grateful.

They left Faslane behind to carry out training missions at depth – something feasible in Scotland, but the cold and murk of the lochs cannot compete with the Mediterranean.

The divers borrowed kit from the Gibraltar Clearance Diving Unit – permanently based at The Rock to provide security in the harbour and to check visiting warships.

Ordinarily, NDG is on call to deal with explosive ordnance along 8,000 miles of coastline north of an imaginary line drawn from Liverpool to Hull.

Gibraltar cannot offer quite as much coastline (divide by 1,000

and you get the idea), but it can offer sparkling blue waters, warmth and consistency.

"Gibraltar offers us fantastic opportunities to conduct training uninterrupted by the weather," explained Lt Cdr Andrew Ward, CO of the Northern Diving Group.

"With two weeks here, we can take advantage of excellent facilities and achieve a very high level of work-up."

LS(D) Gary Shaw put it more simply: "It's just nice to be actually diving in warmer waters for a wee change. There's been good camaraderie with the lads and the Gibraltar diving squadron as well."

● Gibraltar-based AB(D) Richard Bailey shows the Scottish divers how it's done

Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU East



Rich pickings for Chid

DON'T worry, they got it in the end. It's just that a deflated red blob floating in the Gulf of Aden makes a less interesting picture than a giant inflatable red blob floating in the Gulf of Aden.

This is a 'killer tomato', a target dropped by minehunter HMS Chiddingfold, being straddled by rounds from the warship's 30mm main gun.

The tomato was 'rolled out' to test her gunners' prowess as the warship entered waters where attacks by pirates and terrorists on shipping can take place.

The gunnery team, directed by Lt Jon Campbell, blasted away at the tomato which was eventually recovered in a rather sorry state.

Chiddingfold is sailing in company with her sister Atherstone and 'mother ship' RFA Diligence, which carries stores and supplies for the much smaller Hunts.

The trio form the minehunting element of the much larger Orion 08 deployment which is dispersed across the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean.

■ Honouring Ginger's last wish, page 23

Something in the Ayr

TWO Scottish ports have been blessed by visits from Her Majesty's warships.

HMS Shoreham made the short hop along the Firth of Clyde from her home in Faslane to the seaside town of Ayr for a hospitality visit.

The Sandown-class mine countermeasures vessel spent a week in – and out – of the town conducting exercises, hosting locals and working on Search and Rescue and winching serials with a Sea King from HMS Gannet, based at Prestwick just outside Ayr.

The latter exercises were witnessed by students from Ayr Academy who were hosted for a day by Shoreham.

Others enjoying the mine countermeasures vessel's hospitality included the Sea Cadets of TS Mountbatten (Ayr), Gannet (Ardrossan), John Paul Jones (Stewarty) and Argyll (Irvine).

In keeping with the 'youth' theme, Shoreham hosted a careers' forum for head teachers and RN recruiters from across Ayrshire.

On the east coast, frigate HMS Monmouth was doing very much the same during a four-day spell at Ocean Terminal in Leith.

She also hosted a careers' forum and Sea Cadets – in this case TS Lochinvar (South Queensferry) – as well as members of the RNA from Edinburgh and West Lothian.

Also walking up the brow were new recruits from Edinburgh's RNR unit HMS Scotia and several hundred tourists (not at the same time, admittedly) who took advantage of an open afternoon.

From Leith, Monmouth headed to Cardiff so her ship's company could call in on their affiliated town and exercise their freedom of it for the first time.

The Black Duke has enjoyed the freedom of Monmouth for the past six years, but this was the first time her ship's company had exercised that right.

Seventy-five of them paraded through the county town during the five-day visit to Wales – a visit which found the country, and its capital especially, in festive mood as it coincided with the rugby union team's triumph in the Six Nations.

Modern life is rubbish

HELICOPTER carrier HMS Ocean is paving the way for the flat-tops of the future thanks to a revolutionary waste disposal system.

Ocean is in the latter stages of a year-long overhaul by Babcock Marine in Devonport.

Much of that revamp focuses on making the assault ship leaner and meaner.

But some of the work involves making Ocean kinder to the environment.

One such piece of kit (it's not big, but it is clever) is the pyrolysis waste disposal system – it basically turns gash into ash which saves space on the ship and is in line with the MOD's modern waste management thinking.

Ocean is the first RN vessel to receive this bit of waste wizardry; the same technology will be used in the next-generation carriers in a decade's time.

Other improvements to the 21,000-ton vessel – Britain's largest warship – include overhauling her machinery and engines, giving the living spaces a makeover, better comms kit, better aviation facilities to support Apache attack helicopters, more space to house the Royal Marines' equipment, more room for food storage and a re-built galley (which entailed, *inter alia*, replacing 25,000 ceramic tiles).

The work is due to be completed in August when Ocean returns to sea to conduct trials.



● HMS Somerset with elements of the NATO force in Albania. Next to her are Greece's HS Hydra (F452) and Turkey's TCG Zafer (F253)

Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Gallagher



Best laid plans

BUMMER. You're all set to go hunting submarines and then your sonar packs up. And so the hunter becomes the hunted...

The game of cat and mouse between frigate and submarine saw the balance tip decidedly in the mouse's favour as HMS Somerset exercised with a NATO task force off the east coast of Sicily.

The software which drives the world's best anti-submarine sonar, 2087, crashed.

Luckily, however, Somerset has more than

one way to skin a, er, mouse, and used her hull-mounted sonar rather than her towed array to go in search of her prey – then send the ship's Lynx helicopter, Duke, in for the kill.

An excellent Plan B. Except that Duke joined 2087 on the 'out of order' list.

Time for Plan C. Track the boat with your hull sonar, fire torpedoes at maximum range, then run like hell and fire decoys in a bid to escape the torpedoes the submarine has just fired.

Plan C, you will be relieved to hear, worked, although as Somerset's CO Cdr Rob Wilson admits, the frigate rather pushed her luck.

Thanks to some top engineering work both Duke and Sonar 2087 were quickly fixed by the ship's team, giving Somerset a definite advantage over her unnamed prey as Exercise Noble Manta progressed.

The results were outstanding: the prey was held at bay far outside the maximum range of its

weaponry, allowing Duke to move in for the kill.

"This exciting sonar equipment has the potential to change the rules of this deadly game, handing the initiative back to the warship from the submarine," said Cdr Wilson.

Somerset is attached to the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 which prowls the Mediterranean for illegal shipping and terrorist activity and is currently commanded by Turkey's Rear Admiral Ertugrul.

● A computer graphic of a Joint Strike Fighter on final approach to HMS Queen Elizabeth

Picture: Thales



Carriers' steel deal struck

MORE multi-million-pound orders have been placed for the 'jigsaw' which will eventually make up the Navy's future carriers.

Eighty thousand tons of steel which will form the hulls of HM Ships Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales will be supplied by works across the UK, with a small amount coming from the continent, at a cost of £65m.

Defence procurement minister Baroness Taylor also announced three smaller contracts, worth around £8m, for machinery and infrastructure to fit out the two 65,000-ton flat-tops.

Fife firm Brand Rex has won the £3m contract to provide optical cabling – which will carry reams of data between complex computer systems – for the sisters.

Rochdale-based Salt Separation Services has been given £1m to provide reverse osmosis plants for both ships; the plants will be capable of producing 500 tons of fresh water for the ship's company every day.

And Fluid Transfer International in Gloucestershire won the £4m contract for kit to fuel and 'de-fuel' the ships' mix of JSF fast jets and helicopters.

As for the steel, Corus (the successor to British Steel) with its sites in Scunthorpe, Motherwell and Teesside, and Dent Steel Services in Bradford will provide more than nine-tenths of the steel plates and bulb flats.

According to the boffins, the steel ordered is equivalent to the quantity needed to build Heathrow's

new Terminal 5 or sufficient to re-build Wembley Stadium three times over.

The ships will be built in segments, like the Type 45 destroyers, at yards in Glasgow, Barrow and Portsmouth, with the pieces of the jigsaw fitted together in Rosyth.

There's progress on the carrier escort front, too. HMS Duncan is no longer just a name on paper as the sixth of Britain's future destroyer fleet begins to slowly take shape after the first steel was cut on her.

Baroness Taylor and BAE Systems Scott Ballingall performed the honours at BAE's Govan yard on the Clyde, where four of Duncan's sisters have been or are being built.

The Type 45s are hailed as the world's most advanced air defence destroyer and will shield the fleet from missile and air attack well into the 21st Century.

Around 3,600 shipwrights, carpenters and electricians are working on the destroyers at BAE's two yards on the Clyde, as well as the VT Group's facility in Portsmouth where the bows and main masts are being built.

Duncan won't see active service until next decade; the oldest of her sisters, Daring, is less than two years away from joining the Fleet.

HMS Daring is gearing up to resume sea trials later this spring. Tests during her first spell at sea last summer around the Firth of Clyde exceeded expectations.

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Dee's death leaves 'a big void'

INSURGENTS in Afghanistan claimed the life of Royal Marine Cpl Damian 'Dee' Mulvihill in a bomb attack near the town of Sangin.

The 32-year-old NCO was killed instantly as he led his section on a sweep of the terrain around the Helmand town on February 20.

Cpl Mulvihill – known by comrades as 'The Bear' – and his men were carrying out a joint Allied-Afghan National Army operation to root out Taliban around Sangin and stop the insurgents from intimidating the local populace when an improvised explosive device was detonated.

"Dee was a unique individual who brought inspiration to all who knew him. He was admired by his peers and respected by his superiors," said Capt Mark Elliott RM, adjutant of 40 Commando.

"His never-ceasing smile and 'bear-like' handshake will always be remembered, as will his passion on the rugby pitch.

"The Royal Marines have lost a truly exceptional individual who will never be forgotten. It is an honour to call him a comrade and even more so a friend."

WO2 Andrew Brownrigg, Alpha Coy Sergeant Major, added: "His absence has left a big void within the company. He never had a bad word to say to anyone and nobody ever had a bad word to say about him.

"My lasting memory of him will be his cheerfulness and his ability to put a smile on people's faces."

Cpl Mulvihill joined the commandos in 1998 and served in Sierra Leone and Northern Ireland.

As well as being an exemplary green beret, he excelled at sport, representing the Corps at rugby union and the Combined Services at water polo.

He had been planning to move to CTCRM at Lymington at the end of 40 Commando's tour and tie the knot with his fiancée Lisa.

FOSTie period for frigates

FRIGATE Northumberland has returned to sea after a fairly lengthy spell alongside at home in Devonport receiving some TLC ahead of further exertions.

While the Type 23 warship was enjoying an overhaul, her ship's company scattered to the four corners of the UK... and beyond.

Most disappeared on various training courses, but 15 headed to Les Menuires in France to take part in the RN ski championships. Rather warmer climes beckoned for ten shipmates who flew to Dahab in Egypt for a diving expedition.

But now it's back to more mundane activities: damage control and fire-fighting training, seamanship drills and gunnery exercises before Northumberland joins the Flag Officer Sea Training in June for operational sea training to prepare her for deployment later in the year.

The FOST team have already put HMS Chatham through her paces in the less usual surroundings of Portland rather than Plymouth.

The Type 22 frigate spent three days in the Dorset port, where activities alternated between seamanship duties and routines, monitored closely by the FOSTies, and presentations to local dignitaries, associations and members of the public.



● The formerly top-secret underground submarine facility in Sevastopol, now on HMS Exeter's tourist trail

Tunnel visions

TWO tunnels, one known the world over, one hidden for half a century, have welcomed the men and women of HMS Exeter with open 'arms'.

We'll start with the famous one: the tunnel on Monaco's legendary Formula 1 Grand Prix circuit.

It's nearly two decades since a major British warship has visited the tiny principality on France's Mediterranean coast.

That last visitor was HMS Minerva with a young midshipman, Paul Brown, aboard enjoying the hospitality of the fabled resort of the rich and famous.

Eighteen years down the line and a now Cdr Paul Brown was in charge of Exeter as he brought her in to Monte Carlo.

Actually, first of all Exeter stopped at the idyllic town of Villefranche-Sur-Mer, a short hop along the Riviera. There the great and good of Monaco and some ex-pats climbed aboard and joined the ship for the trip along the coast to the principality.

The welcome there from ex-pats and Monegasques was as warm as any Exeter's ship's company had experienced.

More than 30 sailors couldn't resist the chance to drive the F1 circuit (not in F1 cars but a Porsche, Jaguar XKR and Bentley). Unsurprisingly, they didn't set any track records... but they did roar past the Monte Carlo Casino – 'Casino Royale' in the eponymous Bond novel – and through that tunnel.

It wasn't the only taste of the high life for the ship's company. Other sailors were invited aboard the superyacht Rio Rita (as used by, among others, the Duchess of Cornwall); sadly, the hire fee was a little beyond their grasp (£100,000 per week). And yet more took up an invite from the mayor of Monte Carlo to attend the carnival in Nice (think Rio carnival but in the south of France).

And then it was eastwards, through the Med, up the Dardanelles, into the Sea of Marmara, then through the Bosphorus – which few of the ship's company had sailed through before – then into the Black Sea.



Two decades ago, a Royal Navy warship pootling around the Black Sea would have drawn the attention of the Soviets' Black Sea Fleet.

Today, however, Allied navies are fostering ever closer relations with their Black Sea counterparts in the global fight against terrorist and criminal activities on the oceans.

Two Ukrainian naval officers joined Exeter for the passage from Monaco to the Crimean port of Sevastopol, via Constanta in Romania.

"One surprise, especially in Romania, was the unexpected but excellent command of English – almost everyone spoke it perfectly, more so than in some of the UK's closer European neighbours," said Weapon Engineer Officer Lt Cdr Peter Broadbent.

That wasn't the case across the Black Sea in Sevastopol, but the Ukrainians were no less hospitable.

One of the highlights of the visit to the peninsula was a chance to tour the battlefields of the Crimean War, including the valley where the Light Brigade thundered to their doom.

Sevastopol itself was later invested by the British and French, a battle which is depicted on a 360° panoramic painting (created over three years by 17 different artists).

From echoes of a distant war to echoes of the Cold War – and the second tunnel in this story.

The sailors were invited to tour Sevastopol's secret 'submarine factory' where the Red Fleet's boats were re-armed during the four-decade stand-off between East and West. Few people outside the military knew of the complex's existence; Sevastopol was a 'closed' city because of its importance as a naval base, but most of its inhabitants were not aware of the facility.

Of course, it's not all yachts, casinos and tunnels for the veteran destroyer – the sole active survivor of the Falklands War.

The key aim of her sortie into the Black Sea was to discuss operations in the Mediterranean that the Romanian and Ukrainian have been involved in already – and those they could be involved with in the future to counter illegal activities on the high seas.

● Exeter basks in the Mediterranean sunshine alongside in Monte Carlo



Astonishing achievement by Gannet

THE busiest Search and Rescue team in Britain received a thank-you from the top man in the military.

Defence Secretary Des Browne dropped in on HMS Gannet, the Prestwick-based Sea King Search and Rescue unit, to pay tribute to men and women who risk their lives so others may live.

The Sea Kings were scrambled 359 times in 2007 – 90 times more than the year before. In doing so they rescued 349 people – 286 of those were injured.

The previous rescue record was held by RAF Chivenor in 2006; its yellow Sea Kings responded to 293 call-outs.

The busy trend shows no sign of abating. The first eight weeks of 2008 have seen 50 people rescued by the Gannet team in 49 rescues, including the high-profile sortie to pluck people from the stricken ferry Riverdance off Blackpool during January's storms.

Operations over the sea are the exception rather than the rule for the Prestwick-based fliers; most of their rescue missions are conducted over the mountains of Scotland – Ben Nevis and Glencoe fall within the 98,000 square miles which are Gannet's domain.

"It's always nice to be able to hold a record, but for all of us here, it's not about that – it's about responding whenever we are needed to provide emergency support. No more, no less. That's our job and it's one we all love," said Gannet's CO Lt Cdr Brian Nicholas.

Mr Browne told the SAR team: "You're to be commended for the excellent work which you do above the land and sea of Scotland's west coast and the north of England.

"A call-out for almost every day of the year in 2007 is an astonishing statistic."

■ Kings of the mountains, pages 16-17

Ocean's Eight for Ledbury

MINEHUNTER HMS Ledbury spent three days in London sharing her knowledge of surveying and scouring the oceans to some of the world's top scientists.

The Hunt-class warship berthed at the ExCel Centre in the docklands for the duration of Oceanography International 08 – a conference and trade show for the marine science and ocean technology community.

Industry uses the exhibition to demonstrate the latest kit, while leading academics get together for conferences to discuss the study of the world's oceans.

Ledbury laid on various demonstrations of her sonar, minehunting and command systems kit to hundreds of visitors and delegates, alongside the French naval survey vessel BH Laplace.

"It was a very interesting exhibition – especially being able to see and compare the latest commercial diving technology," said PO(D) 'Eddy' Edmundson, Ledbury's coxswain.

It wasn't all technology, however, during the spell on the Thames. The ship hosted the Mayor of Ledbury, leading figures from local government and Trinity House, while the sailors visited the Tower of London in uniform as part of the 'RN in the Public Eye' initiative.

Members of the wardroom headed even further west, to Notting Hill, to dine at the top-rated Ledbury restaurant... in Ledbury Road. CO Lt Cdr Paul Russell left the chefs a ship's badge as a memento of the visit.

The minehunter is returning to her *raison d'être* after two years on Fishery Protection Duties. She is currently undergoing intensive training before joining a NATO minehunting force on patrol in European waters.

'A very important mission...'



● 'And so we're told this is the golden age'... Sea and sky blend into one as HMS Campbeltown heads to Bahrain during her Gulf patrol
Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Winter, FRPU East

THE small industrial port of Safaga is perhaps not everyone's ideal destination.

But to the men and women of HMS Argyll it was probably akin to Xanadu and the Garden of Eden rolled into one after one of the most demanding spells at sea in the frigate's history.

Last month we told you that we couldn't really tell you what Argyll had been up to.

And that remains the case. But we can tell you how long she's been doing what we can't tell you about... 52 days.

That's 52 days continually at sea in the Gulf and Indian Ocean (yes, we know submariners do a lot longer but their boats are designed for such sustained operations).

Argyll began her Gulf deployment in earnest with a 30-day spell safeguarding the Iraqi oil platforms – a pretty lengthy patrol in itself.

She handed over that duty to HMS Campbeltown, then popped into Bahrain to prepare herself for a marathon stint at sea.

"Sustaining a Type 23 frigate, which was designed for North Atlantic operations, off East Africa for such a period has been an immense task," said Cdr Gavin Pritchard, Argyll's Commanding Officer.

It took Royal Fleet Auxiliaries Argus and Bayleaf, plus the RFA's US equivalent, the USNS John Lenthal and Walter S Diehl, and a fair bit of resilience from Jack and Jenny to keep the Type 23 going for so long.

"It's testimony to high standards and hard work that we've been able to sustain our fighting capability and achieve everything that has been asked of us," Cdr Pritchard added.

"I am very proud of the whole ship's company for their professionalism throughout

a difficult and changing programme."

Argyll has been away from home in Devonport since the beginning of October and won't be home for some time yet as she continues anti-terror and security patrols east of Suez.

The good news for her crew, however, is that Argyll's days in the Middle East are numbered as her replacement is already Gulf-bound. Her sister HMS Montrose has left Devonport and is currently in the Med.

The current guardian of the oil platforms, HMS Campbeltown, was joined by 120 students from Kuwait's staff college over two days.

A packed programme of demonstrations was laid on for 60 Kuwaitis on each day: air defence exercises, Lynx operations, boarding operations and fast attack defence drills.

And talking of Kuwaitis... A dozen hopped aboard HMS Blyth during a combined exercise involving the British, US and Kuwaiti navies.

The ships of the Aintree task force, HMS Blyth and Ramsey, left Bahrain behind for a week or so to head north.

RN minehunting skills were instrumental in opening up the waters to Kuwait during the 1991 war with Iraq and clearing a path for humanitarian aid to Umm Qasr a dozen years later during the campaign to oust Saddam Hussein.

Several of Blyth and Ramsey's ship's companies served in the 1991 operation; many more took part in the 2003 conflict. They shared their experiences and expertise with their Kuwaiti counterparts during a week-long exercise.

They were joined by American diving experts (EODMU6), a dedicated US helicopter minehunting squadron (HM15)

and the USS Scout, a large minehunter (roughly twice the size of a Sandown-class ship).

Six Kuwaiti clearance divers joined HMS Blyth.

Their work with their opposite numbers from Britain was made considerably easier by the fact that their officer had trained at Dartmouth and several of the divers had undergone training on Horsea Island.

While Blyth focused her efforts on the UK-Kuwaiti diving team to cope with dummy mines in the northern Gulf, Ramsey was the 'disaster' ship – or, more accurately, the 'coping with disaster' ship.

A 'sick' American diver was cross-decked to the Sandown as part of a casualty exercise, before undergoing treatment in Ramsey's therapeutic recompression chamber.

As well as dealing with the mine threat, the ship's company also had to contend with firefighting and enemy attacks courtesy of demonstrations laid on for their Kuwaiti visitors.

A few miles away, off the coast of Iraq, amphibious support ship RFA Cardigan Bay became the saviour of Iraqi sailors when their ship sank in the northern Gulf.

The aged MV Nadi spent five days wallowing in the middle of the sea after breaking down as she headed from Umm Qasr to the United Arab Emirates to be sold off.

Her crew tried to radio for help but a combination of bad weather and faulty wireless kit meant their maydays went unanswered until the signal was finally picked up by tanker USNS Sacagawea.

The American auxiliary plucked the sailors from their sinking vessel, before ferrying them by helicopter to Cardigan Bay at the tip of the Gulf.

The RFA, which serves as a forward floating base for training Iraqi Navy sailors and

naval infantry, offered the ten mariners shelter and food and made arrangements for the men to be reunited with their families in Basra.

On a more permanent basis, Cardigan Bay is home to two fast craft from Inshore Boat Unit 22 and three Iraqi Navy patrol boats.

The former provide souped-up protection for Allied shipping in the northern Gulf; the latter are vital for training Iraqi sailors and marines in the art of boarding vessels, defending shipping from terrorist attack, and safeguarding the two oil terminals which pump Iraq's principal export into waiting tankers.

The RFA's vast loading dock also provides shelter for the patrol boats from the dust storms which whip up around here; on Cardigan

Bay's predecessor, veteran RFA Sir Bedivere (now paid off and awaiting her fate in Portsmouth Harbour), the craft were invariably exposed to the elements.

Keeping the boats in the flooded-up dock has also significantly reduced the time it takes for them to be launched for patrols.

Cardigan Bay is increasingly serving as the hub for naval operations in the northern Gulf – and not merely as a centre for training Iraqis.

The landing support ship is also the focal point for mail drops in the area, as well as transfers of personnel in and out of theatre by boat or helicopter.

The operations of Cardigan Bay and Campbeltown are now directed by a Brit once again with Cdre Duncan Potts stepping

into the shoes of Australian Commodore Allan du Toit at the helm of Combined Task Force 158.

CTF158 oversees the US-UK-Australian mission to protect Iraq's oil terminals and maintain security at sea in the northern Gulf, directing operations from a small control centre on the Khawr Al Amaya platform.

The three Allies take it in turns to oversee operations, with Cdre Potts in charge until August.

"We have a very important mission to conduct. I have the right people, ships and aircraft to achieve the level of stability that is needed," said Cdre Potts.

"Iraq's territorial waters may be small, but I see them as the umbilical cord which feeds much of the Iraqi economy."

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● Cutting edge... a rare view of the bow of HMS Argyll slicing through rather clear Gulf waters



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● Preen of the seas... A penguin cleans itself while HMS Nottingham anchors off Grytviken



The age of

IT'S been a case of 'out of the freezer and into the frying pan' for HMS Nottingham this past month as the destroyer experienced opposite ends of the temperature scale in the South Atlantic.

We will begin in the freezer – South Georgia, to be accurate.

Although it was still high summer in the Southern Hemisphere when the Type 42 warship arrived in this isolated cluster of islands, there was plenty of ice and snow on display for the ship's company.

There were plenty of icebergs too (one almost a mile in length) which were deftly avoided by the bridge team.

Nottingham lowered her anchor off King Edward Point, close to the South Georgian 'capital' Grytviken, permitting most of the ship's company to get ashore by boat.

Some sailors headed to the island's museum, others went in search of penguins (admittedly, they're not too hard to find as South Georgia is home to several large colonies).

Suitably chilled, the sailors decided some austral warmth was the order of the day and turned north towards South America in company with her tanker RFA Gold Rover.

She pumped 500 cubic tons of fuel into Nottingham's tanks during two replenishments at sea – enough to keep the average family car running for seven million miles, apparently.

And then it was on to warm climes. As temperatures topped 30°C, so Nottingham ground to a halt in the middle of the ocean and the cry 'Hands to bathe' echoed around the hallowed



passageways and mess decks.

Those warm waters eventually carried the destroyer to Rio de Janeiro, where the ship celebrated the Royal Navy's role in the foundation of the modern Brazilian nation.

Two hundred years ago the Royal Prince of Portugal and the Portuguese court arrived in Rio. They did so escorted by four of His Majesty's warships: Marlborough, Bedford, London and Monarch.

The arrival of the Portuguese royal family was a seminal moment in Brazilian history. The country's ports were opened to free trade with friendly countries and she began to take her place with the other nations of this world.

Two centuries later, the Brazilians marked the occasion in company with their British allies. Kim Howells, the Foreign Office minister for Latin America, flew to Rio to join the head of the Brazilian Navy for a celebration aboard HMS Nottingham.

It has, of course, not been all penguins, parties and dips in the ocean for the destroyer.

Nottingham is at the tail end of a six-month deployment to the South Atlantic, with principal responsibility for safeguarding the Falklands and environs.

To keep the team on their toes – and to offer some moral support – a string of senior visitors climbed aboard to chat with the sailors: Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, the UK National Hydrographer Rear Admiral Ian Moncrieff and Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla Cdre Andrew Cameron.

Such visits remind the ship's company that they are not forgotten about more than 8,000 miles from the UK, but they were not the sole reminder of home aboard.

These days, most RN surface ships are blessed with 'creature comforts' few, if any, could have dreamed of barely a decade ago.

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extremes

Certainly HMS Nottingham's Commanding Officer is impressed. He's keeping a regular internet diary or 'blog' as a result of all this technological wizardry.

"I don't want to appear a dinosaur, but I am amazed by the levels of connectivity we have on board – instant email, internet and phone calls to the UK," Cdr Andrew Price writes.

"Not long ago, news from home was all down to the normal mail and letter drops. News from home now comes quickly – world news from the internet and satellite TV which is piped around the messdecks."

Satellite TV has allowed the team to keep up with the latest sporting events, such as the Six Nations, the soaps, and dare we say it 'reality' television.

"No longer do I need to consider closing land to ensure that we can receive a half-decent television picture and no longer is the deputy weapons engineering officer forced to stand out in the cold on the bridge roof, clutching a superbly-engineered aerial array of wire coat hangers, whilst orders to go 'up a bit, right a bit' are shouted through three decks to achieve the best picture," Cdr Price adds in his blog.

Email, internet and satellite TV are not the only morale boosters aboard, there's also Nottingham's PTI Kev 'The Baby Faced Assassin' (a moniker from his boxing days) Green to organise various sporting events, as well as numerous contests and competitions to maintain the 250 sailors at a peak of fitness, body and soul.

Both body and soul were in harmony when Kev organised a Sport Relief mile for the international charity. Sailors raised £200 by completing seven laps of the upper deck.

Not all runs had such a pleasant ending.

No, 11 members of the ship's company visited the RAF dog section at Mount Pleasant in the Falklands – and found themselves 'volunteered' for demonstrations.

The dogs and their handlers conduct patrols, look for explosives and carry out search and rescue missions on the islands.

Thanks to their speed, agility and, above all, bite, (the dogs, not the handlers...) they can also bring criminals to a halt.

The Falklands are not renowned for criminal activity, so step forward 11 volunteers (who just happened to be HMS Nottingham sailors) to play the part of ne'er-do-wells.

Not surprisingly, they weren't able to outrun the attack dogs (whose rather sharp teeth you will be pleased to learn did not penetrate the thick protective suits the volunteers wore).

■ Read Cdr Price's blog at www.blogs.mod.uk/hms_nottingham/



● Nottingham leaves the Falklands bound for South Georgia

Pictures: LA(Phot) Alex Cave, FRPU East





Grand entrance

THE Orion 08 deployment is now in full swing as task group flagship HMS *Illustrious* and her escort made their way through the Mediterranean and through the Suez Canal.

Lusty had been delayed in UK waters to complete training and undertake engineering work, but was soon following in the wake of other Orion warships.

Accompanied by destroyer HMS *Edinburgh*, the carrier was given a three-gun salute as she entered Grand Harbour in Valletta – her first visit to Malta since 2005.

Lusty's links with the island fortress date back to World War 2, when the fourth HMS *Illustrious* was badly damaged on convoy duties to the island.

Whilst being repaired she was subject to more air attacks which killed and injured many local people.

The links were commemorated on this visit by a twinning ceremony, in which Lusty presented a hunting horn to each of the Three Cities which stand on the southern side of

Grand Harbour – Senglea, Vittoriosa and Cospicua, the heartland of the old Naval dockyards.

The three horns reflect those on the carrier's badge.

A service of remembrance for victims of wartime bombing was held at the Senglea memorial, and chaplain Fr David Yates said: "Laying the wreath at the memorial was a very moving experience for everyone involved."

"I think it is very important that we, of the present HMS *Illustrious*, remember our history and the tremendous support the people of Malta gave to our forebears and continue to give us today."

Sailors also competed with Maltese teams and colleagues from HMS *Edinburgh* on the sports fields, while others managed a little sightseeing.

LLogs 'Pat' Garrett said: "I've been around the world and seen some amazing places, but I always love coming back to Malta. The lads and lasses are always made to feel welcome and have a great time."

There was also charity work to be done; water pipes were fixed and a site cleared in Senglea, railings painted outside council offices, and a party also helped out at an animal park.

The Commanding Officer of HMS *Illustrious*, Capt Steve Chick, said: "The visit was a great success. The ship's company always enjoy coming to Malta as they are so well received."

"It is very humbling for us all to hear the stories of 1941, and I think the twinning ceremony will be a lasting memory for all who took part."

The multinational Orion task group, commanded by Cdre Tom Cunningham, consists of 13 vessels and more than 2,500 people, and will exercise with naval forces in the Indian Ocean before heading back to the UK in late spring.

Among the ships attached to the task group for various stages of the deployment are HMS *Westminster*, Spanish frigate *SNS Mendez Nuñez*, French frigate *FS Jean Bart* and American destroyer *USS Cole*.



● HMS *Illustrious*' starboard 20mm gun is fired during night gunnery exercises on the Orion 08 deployment



● HMS *Edinburgh* sails past the Valletta waterfront

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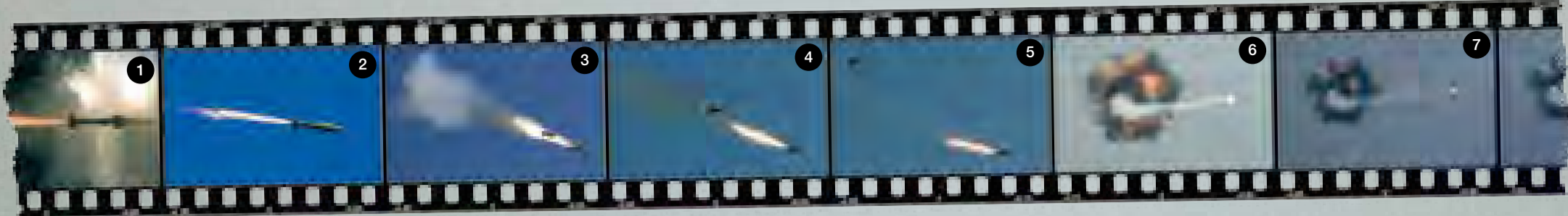


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Return of the big bad wolf



THIS is what happens when missile meets missile at a combined velocity of more than twice the speed of sound.

A drone target towed by a Falcon disintegrates as a Seawolf from HMS Westminster smashes into it low over the ocean.

Last month we featured successful Seawolf firings by HMS Somerset.

Well anything Somerset can do, her sister Westminster can do just as effectively.

Like Somerset, firing Seawolf was the final 'tick in the box' before Westminster was declared fully operational.

Unlike Somerset, we have a complete(ish) sequence of images charting Seawolf's destructive progress thanks to the photography of Lt Jon Wade and PO Bob Sharples, both of Westminster's 829 NAS flight.

Seawolf bursts out of its silo (1) (it's actually launched vertically, but the hole in the film strip was the wrong shape - Ed); races through the sky (2); the booster rocket drops away (3); Seawolf's secondary rocket motors kick in (4) and (5) to carry the missile towards its target at around Mach 2; and finally impact (6) and (7). It all lasts barely ten seconds.

Thanks to its two tracking radars, Seawolf can independently fire a salvo of missiles against two different targets.

With a drone being towed by a friendly aircraft, however, Seawolf was in human hands, not a computer's, for these test firings.

'Firing our Seawolf is always a privilege,' said Lt Cdr Mandy Miller, Westminster's Weapon Engineer Officer.

'It was very pleasing to have achieved our final preparation for the deployment in such style after much hard work from the whole team.'

Westminster is the anti-submarine escort for the Orion 08 deployment led by HMS Illustrious (see opposite), but she can also defend herself against aerial threats.

Should anything slip past Edinburgh's Sea Darts, Westminster's Seawolf missiles are the next line of defence for the carrier task group (the very last line is provided by Illustrious' Goalkeeper automated machine-guns).

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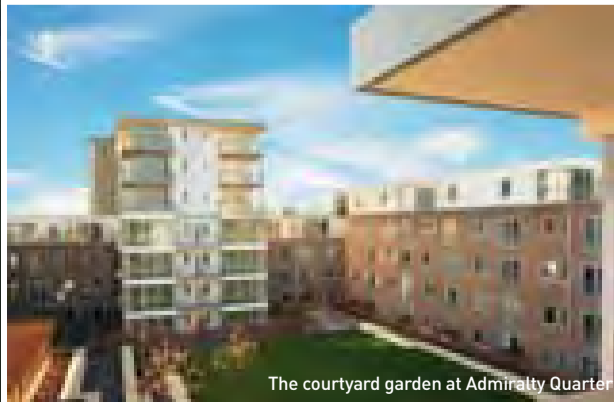
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Footlights and highlights

IF YOU were to walk east from Portsmouth, following the line of the shore like those chaps and chapeses of the TV programme *Coast*, you would not come across the home of a Royal Navy warship for a good while.

In fact, the name of the port might surprise you: Ipswich.

But the Suffolk town is home to HMS Raider, the small training and patrol craft which serves the various universities of East Anglia.

Raider is one of 14 Archer-class patrol craft attached to universities around the UK, aimed at introducing undergraduates to the world of the Senior Service – and giving them a bit of pocket money while studying.

Raider's offices can be found in Cambridge, but the University Royal Navy Unit also draws students from the University of East Anglia (Norwich) and Anglia Ruskin University (Cambridge and Chelmsford).

Although one of the smallest vessels in the RN, Raider cannot get down the rivers of East Anglia to reach Cambridge – not without losing her masts and antennae at any rate (she can, however, navigate as far as Wisbech on the Nene).

The winter months are used for training and a spell in a yard on Tyneside for repairs and maintenance, but with spring comes the busy season once again.

Last year saw Raider deploy around the North Sea, visiting Holland, Belgium and Germany,



● HMS Raider races through Sandown Bay off the Isle of Wight on a fine spring day

crewed by her complement of full-time RN personnel and students, accompanied by her sister ship HMS Tracker, which serves Oxford University.

This year Raider has taken part in high-profile commemorations of the Channel Dash off Deal

and spent Easter sailing around Belgium and Holland with her students aboard.

Raider was commissioned a decade ago, replacing HMS *Loyal Watcher* as Cambridge URNU's dedicated vessel.

She is one of two Batch 2 orders

for Archer-class boats (Tracker was the other); one notable feature of these improved Archers is their more powerful engines, allowing her to reach speeds of up to 25kts, not 20kts like her older sisters.

Two previous Raiders have hoisted the White Ensign.

The first HMS Raider was a Great War R-class destroyer which served for 11 years.

The second Raider had a particularly distinguished career in the Mediterranean and Far East.

All the ship's battle honours were earned by the second Raider



- Arctic..... 1942-43
- Sicily.....1943
- Salerno.....1943
- Mediterranean1943
- Sabang.....1944
- East Indies1944
- Burma..... 1944-45

Class: Archer class patrol and training vessel (batch 2)

Pennant number: P275
Builder: Ailsa, Troon
Commissioned: January 1988

Displacement: 54 tons
Length: 20.8 metres
Beam: 5.8 metres
Draught: 1.8 metres
Speed: 25 knots
Complement: 11
Propulsion: 2 x MTU Diesels generating 2,000hp
Range: 550 miles at 15kt
Armament: Fitted for but not with 1 x Oerlikon 20mm

Serves: Cambridge, University of East Anglia and Anglia Ruskin University
Based: Ipswich

– while her ship's company earned four Distinguished Service Medals and five Mentions in Dispatches.

She was sold to the Indian Navy after World War 2 and served her new owners admirably as INS Rana until 1976 before being broken up.

Facts and figures

WIN BEER FOR A YEAR WITH HELP FOR HEROES SPITFIRE ALE

Britain's oldest brewer, Shepherd Neame, has created a limited edition Help for Heroes Spitfire Ale to raise funds for the charity Help for Heroes.

Help for Heroes is a new national charity which aids members of the armed forces who return wounded from tours of duty. The charity is working hard to raise funds to build a gym and swimming pool at the Defence Medical Services Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court, Epsom, Surrey.

Navy News and Help for Heroes have teamed up to give you the chance to win one of the two prizes of 288 25cl bottles of Help for Heroes Spitfire Ale. Answer the simple question below and get your entry off today.

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The closing date is 12:00hrs Friday May 9 2008. The decision of the judges is final and there is no alternative prize. Employees of Navy News are not eligible to enter this competition

HELP FOR HEROES COMPETITION

The Defence Medical Services Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court is located in which county?

Answer:

Address:

Post Code: Phone No:

E mail Address:

Post your entry to: Help for Heroes Competition, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, Hants PO1 3HH

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HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.48

Capt Bernard Armitage Warburton Warburton-Lee VC

All night till, on 21st April, Tuesday April 9 1940, British destroyers were hunting for the German raider.

"That very day German forces had occupied key points in Norway and Denmark within the very hours of the British. This is a gift from the Gods," the Nazi propagandist declared in his diary. "Churchill was expecting news of the English invasion – and these damned Germans had got there first."

History is almost inevitably followed by romance. In the home of the *Serpentisphindus*, the German Naval War Staff, a short distance from the Propaganda Ministry, there was no getting on.

The mood was a mixture of anxiety and rage. The Kriegsmarine's losses that Tuesday had been "catastrophic" but also "in proportion to the risk run". They would only grow heavier, the Chief of Staff Otto Schreyvogel framed, pouring over the radio messages, maps and reconnaissance reports. "Powerful and superior British and French naval forces" were mustering in the North Sea. This would make matters worse.

All decisions ground and indecision festered. Capt Bernard Armitage Warburton Warburton-Lee conferred with the senior officers of his 2nd Destroyer Flotilla about his flagship HMS Hardy in the West Indies.

The German battleships at Narvik were moving. The Admiralty commanded them to disengage – but no had no idea how strong the enemy was. "You must not judge whether attack should be made. We shall support whatever decision you take," Whitehall advised the destroyer captain.

After conferring with his commanders, Warburton-Lee withdrew to his cabin and pondered the fate of his flotilla of five destroyers. His mind made up, he emerged and ordered a signal sent to London: "Attack attacking at dawn."

Flotilla of five engaged with the Arctic leg as Warburton-Lee charged towards the port on part of Hardy. His guns roared fire, taking the sleeping Germans entirely by surprise.

The leading destroyer *Hendons* was crippled, torpedoed from Hardy's starboard into the destroyer *Agave* *Schind*, breaking her in two. She capsized and sank in a flash.

Smoke rained down on a third German destroyer. Its bow was inflamed around the turret (fuel pipes). Tankers and merchant ships were desperately avoided.

And then Warburton-Lee and his force retired to England.

It had been a classic destroyer action, but Warburton-Lee changed his tack and returned to defend the battered British flag.

And then his luck ran out. For the British system of destroyers emerged from the fight. Trying to escape for the open sea Hardy was hit by successive torpedoes.

One wiped out the entire bridge team, killing or wounding every man. More smashed the engine room. Hardy was disabled, her crew waded and swam to safety.

Sobering terror had seized Warburton-Lee. He stood up, shouting to the crew. His attention carefully caring him off the ship and on to a raft, but he died before he reached dry land.

The first signal flared by the 28-year-old Scotman was typical of his class and warlike: "Keep on engaging the enemy."

Warburton-Lee would become the first gallant naval VC of World War 2 (German Navy) earned his posthumously three days before, but it would be 1940 before his deeds were appreciated by his nation.

He had said his citation, shown "gallantry, enterprise and daring in execution". But the German invasion force at Narvik had been managed or destroyed by the class of two British destroyers.

He was laid to rest in Italianan cemetery... in Norway, his grave is regularly visited by British sailors who return to their waters, most among on... service.





To the ends of the earth

THE end of March was the start of something new for Commando Helicopter Force squadron, 845 NAS, who left their home base of Yeovilton behind to head out for the first time to the dry mountains of Afghanistan.

The Sea Kings of 845 have joined with their sister squadron 846 in the landlocked nation to take on the support helicopter role for the coalition forces.

Preparations for deployment take long enough under normal circumstances, but 845 NAS have had to squeeze a lot of work into a short amount of time – they only returned from Iraq four months and three days prior to heading out to Afghanistan on their latest operational stint in a new theatre.

Of course, as we reported last month, the HC4 Sea Kings had to be beefed up with a new design of rotor blades and tail rotor, avionics, radio and defensive aids suite. A comprehensive package of engineering and technical work that earned them the new title of HC4+.

Lt Ben McGreal said: "This work, running alongside other commitments elsewhere, placed

immense demands upon the engineers on the squadron.

"But working to an exceptionally tight schedule that left no margin for error, they did a sterling job to get the first batch aircraft ready to deploy on time."

And it was not just the machinery that had to be prepared for the new environment, as the men and women of 845 NAS had barely returned to British shores before they packed their bags and headed out to the cold of Norway for the annual Clockwork training in Bardufoss.

Lt McGreal said: "Even before extraction from Iraq, some elements of the squadron began survival training in Bardufoss."

"In early January most of the squadron joined them in northern Norway to conduct a specially-designed extreme cold weather flying course."

"Whilst it may seem strange to deploy to the frozen north of the Arctic Circle to conduct pre-deployment training for the desert, the re-circulating snow, mountains and brutal challenge of operating aircraft in extreme conditions provided exceptional training for Afghanistan."

There was little rest for the

members of C Flight on return from Norway, as they plunged headfirst into pre-deployment training, learning about the country in which they would soon be operating.

"This involved numerous lectures on the country, the threat, time on the range honing our weapon skills and eye-watering talks from the medics on what the local wildlife could do to the unsuspecting or lazy matelots," added Lt McGreal.

"For the aircrew there was an intense flying package designed to simulate the conditions, threats and mission pressure they were going to experience in country."

"This meant a lot of flying as well as crew contact drills designed to ensure that the aircrew knew what to do should they find themselves on the ground in Taliban-held territory."

Cdr Matt Briers, commanding officer of 845 NAS, commented: "Every single member of 845 NAS has worked exceptionally hard following our withdrawal from combat operations in Iraq to ensure the squadron is ready for this new challenge."

"The effort required to concurrently recover aircraft from Basra,

modify others to the HC4+ standard, conduct cold climate training and prepare people for a new war has been huge.

"That we have achieved this has been down to the commitment of each and every member of the squadron."

He concluded: "I am immensely privileged to command such people and know they will do a first-class job in theatre as everyone is relishing the chance to get involved and show what 845 NAS and the Commando Helicopter Force will do."

The arrival of 845 NAS in

theatre alongside 846 NAS will double the number of CHF personnel on Op Herrick, operating as part of the Joint Helicopter Force (Afghanistan).

The Lynx aircraft of 847 NAS are programmed to join their Sea King cousins in CHF later this year, meaning that the Fleet Air Arm will be the largest British military operator of aircraft in theatre.

● (top) The aurora borealis is a dramatic backdrop for the Sea Kings of 845 NAS

● (below) Cold weather training for 845 NAS aircrew in Norway



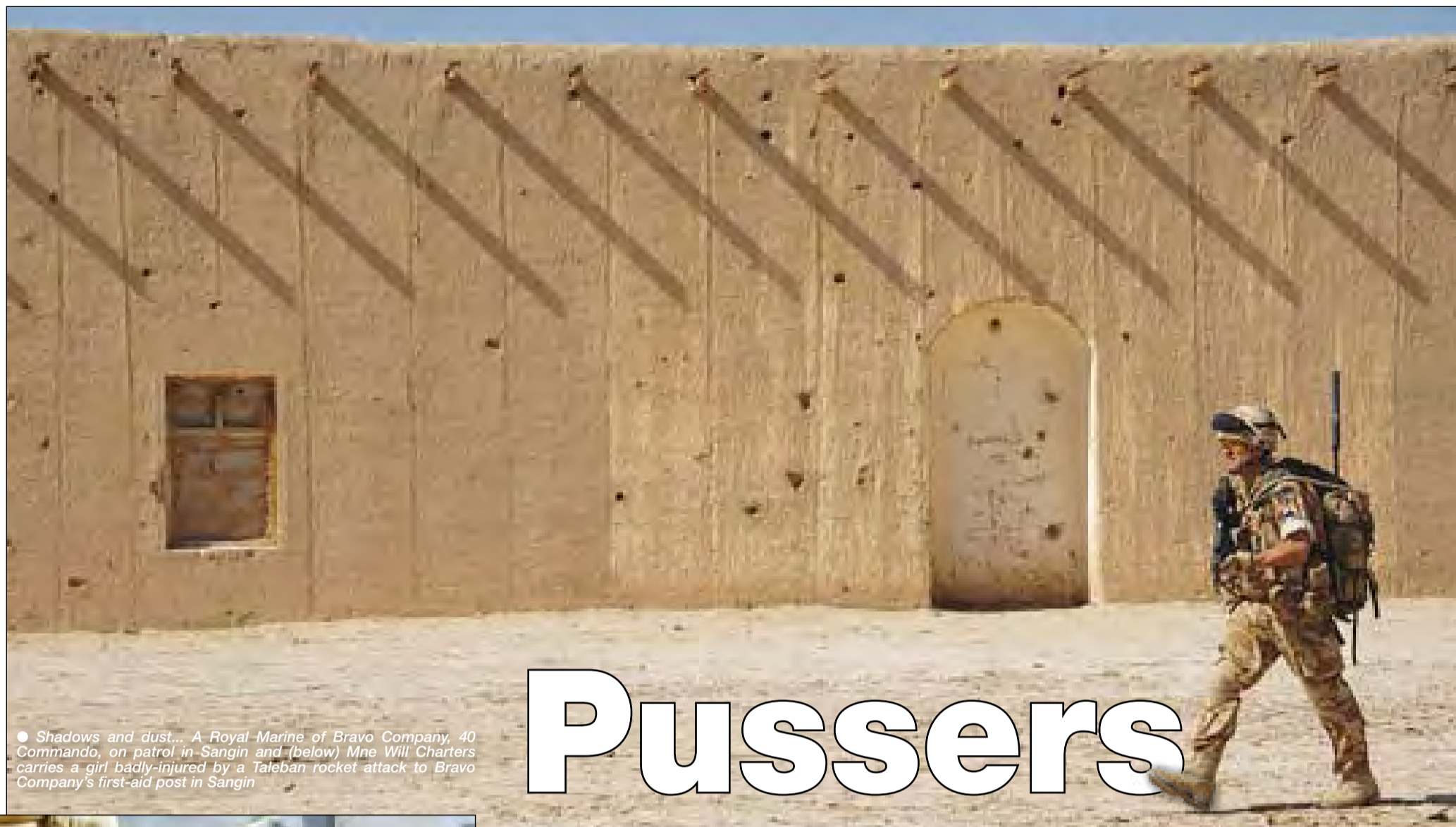


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● Shadows and dust... A Royal Marine of Bravo Company, 40 Commando, on patrol in Sangin and (below) Mne Will Charters carries a girl badly-injured by a Taliban rocket attack to Bravo Company's first-aid post in Sangin

Pussers



IF ANYWHERE in Afghanistan epitomises the odious nature of Taliban, it is the market town of Sangin.

For a decade, Sangin was a Taliban stronghold in name and nature. It was a heartland of fundamentalism, a hotbed of the opium trade, the last outpost of Taliban rule.

Yet if anywhere in Afghanistan epitomises what can be achieved in the absence of that evil regime, it is Sangin.

The Royal Marines of Bravo Company, 40 Commando, are the guardians of Sangin. Their comrades from the Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) team are the catalysts for its regeneration.

When the Taliban held sway in Sangin, normal life came to a halt. The market withered. The school closed. Only religious instruction was permitted under the fundamentalist regime.

Stagnation was compounded by destruction as fighting raged about the town.

"People had forgotten what Sangin should be like," said Capt Andy Goldsmith, head of 40 Commando's specialist Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) team in the town.

"Now we are finally starting to

see progress that people can buy into, and the feedback we are getting is very encouraging."

The authorities have a ten-year plan for the town, aided by the protection offered by Bravo Company, 40 Commando.

That protection has seen people return to Sangin in their droves (more than five million people have returned to Afghanistan from neighbouring states since the Taliban were ousted).

The bazaar now thrives once again. Teams of workers are clearing the rubble of buildings destroyed in the fighting for Sangin and a new tarmac road will soon be laid to the town's school.

That school was also damaged in the skirmishes – but the real damage was done long before, when the Taliban ruled the town.

Under their rule, girls aged eight and over were forbidden an education; those under eight could learn only the Qur'an. Female teachers were sacked. Anyone who broke these laws faced execution.

Although the Taliban were eventually driven from Sangin, their baleful influence has sadly

persisted.

Teachers remain wary of returning to school – they and their pupils still face intimidation from die-hard fundamentalists.

Mercifully, the desire to learn has proved too strong in the face of ignorance and repression.

Gurkha engineers helped to re-build part of the ten-classroom school – enough has been restored for lessons to resume for both girls and boys, with 65 children already on the school's books.

"We cannot underestimate the effect of hearing the sound of children playing in the school again," said Lt Pete Ryan, part of the CIMIC team.

"Many of the children have never been to school, but now they can pursue an education with confidence."

The school is, perhaps understandably, rather austere and lacking in almost all the basics which Britain's youngsters take for granted.



Thanks to efforts by children in 40 Commando's home town, some colour will return to the lives of Sangin's youths.

Pupils at Queen's College junior school in Taunton are donating sports equipment, drawings and art work and simple equipment so the school in Sangin can get back on its feet.

"It's fantastic that the pupils have taken this opportunity to exchange some of their artwork with the children of Sangin," said Capt Mark Elliott, 40 Cdo's adjutant – and a former Queen's College pupil.

"This adds a great new dimension to all the efforts that have been put into the area over the last four months."

Education will hopefully destroy the Taliban's roots and prevent them taking hold again in the future. For the present, the drugs trade is their lifeblood and Sangin was the epicentre of southern Afghanistan's opium market, followed by Musa Qaleh to the north.

The people grappling

I WORK in the Force Movements Control Centre and am responsible for the physical movement of passengers, mail and cargo within theatre, be that by road or air.

We are responsible for the surface lines of communication from Karachi to Kandahar or Kabul and air lines of communication within country.

I run the tactical air desks, ensuring that the theatre freight movement priorities list is adhered to as well as moving passengers and of course the ever important mail.

My main effort is currently focussed on the Relief in Place (RiP), where 16 Air Assault Brigade replaces 52 Brigade. This started on March 6 and will move 12,400 passengers between UK and Afghanistan.

This requires careful planning to ensure that the right number of passengers are allocated to each RAF Tristar, the strategic aircraft used to move all military passengers into theatre, and then the right number of C130 Hercules are available to move passengers

THE National Support Command HQ in Kandahar provides logistics, administrative, medical and personnel support to all UK troops throughout Afghanistan. At its heart is a 12-strong team of Royal Navy logisticians, writes the Deputy Commander, Capt David Marsh.

We sit alongside our RAF and Army counterparts in the Joint Force Support Headquarters. Beyond the more usual personnel, medical and joint supply chain responsibilities, the team is now involved in new areas such as

theatre container management, management of local contracts with Afghan contractors and the movement of stores, personnel and much more throughout this landlocked country.

I am delighted to report that the team is making a significant impact in Operation Herrick and enjoying the challenge enormously. This might seem an unlikely destination for the RN Logistics Branch but we stand ready to continue with this commitment for the foreseeable future. I will let a selection of the team tell their own story.

forward to Camp Bastion (the main UK base in Helmand) and beyond – so as you can see, I will be fairly busy.

Being in the centre is a very rewarding job which provides me with professional experience outside of the norm and I would strongly recommend this job to any RN logistician wishing to broaden their military and professional logistics knowledge.

– Lt Cdr Gary Manning

WHO would have imagined after 20 years in the RN that I would be in the middle of a desert in a landlocked country wearing desert camouflage uniform? Well that's

exactly what has happened. I'm now based at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan.

It's a Joint HQ and I'm in the J1 Branch – J1 looks after people – where we provide personnel and administrative support to all UK soldiers, sailors and airmen on Herrick, some 8,000 people, including 140 RN and 770 RM.

Already I have travelled to Camp Bastion, Lashkar Gar and Kabul, including frisky flights over the desert in Army Lynx, C130 hops, squeezing into the back of Saxons and driving through the streets of Kabul in armoured Landcruisers.

There are a huge range of personnel issues, ranging from the

strategic, where I ensure policies such as the Operational Welfare Package reaches our Forward Operating Bases, to the deeply tactical, where I take a personal interest in the welfare of specific individual cases where extra support is required.

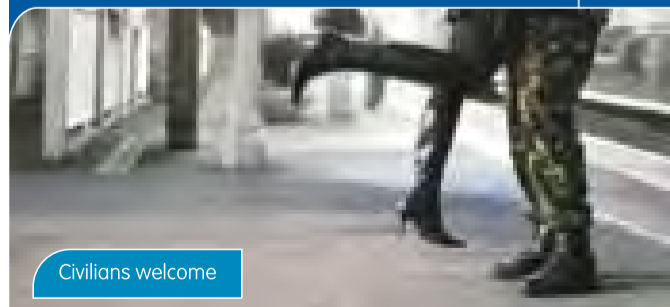
And most importantly there is the genuine ability to make a difference. I've had my fair share of challenge, responsibility and variety during my career in the RN, but this job takes the biscuit – for anyone out there who is interested, if you get the chance I recommend that you grab the opportunity.

It's hard work and you need to keep on your toes – but it's worth

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● Rolling thunder... Clouds of dust are kicked up by Royal Marine Vikings of the Armoured Support Company as they roar over the sandy terrain near Melmand

Pictures: LA(Phot) 'AJ' Macleod, 40 Commando



'n' booties

The insurgents were driven out of the latter town last year after ferocious fighting. Reports suggested some fled to the village of Sapwan Kala, outside Sangin.

If there was any doubt of the link between drugs and the Taliban, it was dispelled when Bravo Company entered the village during Operation Ghartse Dagger.

Conversations with locals suggested a series of compounds served as a drugs factory.

They did. They found a set-up intended to manufacture heroin on an industrial scale.

The Royals discovered more than 1½ tons of morphine base – used to produce heroin – plus sacks of chemicals, presses, ID cards, bank statements (some in English) and weapons.

"I can understand local people growing poppies because the economy here is limited and they need to make a living and feed their families," said Maj Dan Cheesman, Officer Commanding Bravo Company.

"The drugs factory was a case of the greedy, not the needy, however.

"Intelligence increasingly indicates that the Taliban and the

narcotics industry are in cahoots – where we find one, we find the other."

Neither greedy nor needy will ever use it again. Gurkha engineers attached to 40 Commando levelled the compounds.

The destruction of the drugs factory was followed by the second phase of Ghartse Dagger, an armoured thrust into the town of Melmand, east of Sangin.

The Royals in their Vikings were accompanied by Danes in their Piranha armoured vehicles, safeguarded overhead by an umbrella of Apache gunships.

There was no resistance; the Taliban melted away, allowing the Allies to drive into Malmand unopposed.

"Having dominated the Upper Sangin Valley for five months, it's become clear that the Taliban are running out of safe havens," said Maj Cheesman.

"We are now going out further than we have before – the principle being that we pick fights on our terms rather than waiting for them to come to us."

In fleeing once again, the insurgents left behind weapons, drugs and items used to make suicide bomber vests.

Despite these thrusts into Taliban country, the fundamentalists are still here, somewhere.

A distressed Afghani appeared at the gates of Bravo Company's headquarters in Sangin.

His two girls had been badly wounded by a rocket attack – an indiscriminate response by Taliban fighters to a patrol by the green berets.

First to respond to the pleas was Mne Will Charters, who carried one of the girls to the sick bay.

"I've seen casualties before, but it's horrible when children are involved," he said.

Medics at Sangin provided emergency aid to stabilise the children, while a Chinook flew in from Camp Bastion to take them to the main field hospital in Helmand.

There surgeons saved both girls' lives; one, however, lost an arm, the second remains in a serious condition with head wounds.

"What happened to these girls is tragic, but it's the reality of fighting against people who don't care who they attack," lamented Mne Martin McCaffrey, Bravo Company's medic who administered vital aid while waiting for the Chinook.



● Maj Jez Stemp RM directs Viking operations from the turret of his armoured vehicle

with the FOB of war

it. To be up close with what UK Forces are doing out here is an impressive and often humbling experience. It's reminded me why I joined up all those years ago."

– Cdr Craig Mearns

AS Lieutenant Commander Medical Operations in the Headquarters I am responsible for the day-to-day management of medical support to UK operations in Afghanistan.

In simple terms this means I need to be the 'jack' of all medical trades. I work closely to coordinate the UK medical effort and I am the HQ focal point for ensuring medical support of operations.

I even get to dabble with medical planning every now and again, working closely with the UK Joint Force Medical Group in Bastion which is responsible for delivering enhanced medical care in the recently-opened hospital that replaced the previous tented one.

As you can imagine it is extremely busy providing healthcare to at least the same standard, if not better than the

NHS back in the UK.

Issues surrounding medical logistics land on my desk and I am required to liaise with the Logistic Support section to ensure the smooth management of medical resupply (we're all loggies here)."

– Lt Cdr Al Murray

AS part of the Logistic Operations cell, I manage the priority and movement of equipment in order to meet the operational requirements, essentially ensuring there is a bang not a click when the soldier fires his weapon.

The equipment we move ranges from large armoured vehicles, aviation equipment, ammunition, medical supplies, engineering stores and material to the more unexpected requirements such as air-conditioned dog kennels. We move equipment using local national trucks (known as 'jinglies'), by C130 Hercules between Kandahar, Bastion and Kabul and by 'combat logistics patrols' across Kandahar and Helmand to all the major Forward Operating Bases (FOBs).

To re-supply our forward locations we also use Chinook support helicopters and we are currently introducing a contract civilian helicopter which has started operating a 'milk round' of the Helmand FOBs.

Finally we have air despatch for those 'impossible to reach' locations.

This job could not be done in isolation as it combines Army logistics and RAF movements with an RN Officer (me!) acting as the conduit to tie it all together.

I also have a secondary responsibility as the 'theatre container manager' and, as you can imagine, we have an awful lot of containers both here on the ground and somewhere between Felixstowe, Karachi and Helmand."

– Lt Rachael Cunnell

There is no doubt that the Logistic Support Branch (termed J4) is the heart beat of any logistics HQ and I have the role of co-ordinating the outputs of the various combat supplies desk officers as they make best use of 1st (front line), 2nd (Camp Bastion)

and 3rd-line stocks (in Kandahar or the UK) – to sustain UK Forces and our embedded nations across southern Afghanistan.

At the higher level, estimates on fuel and water requirements or the logistic impact of supporting other nations operating in Helmand, for example, have in this truly expeditionary and logistically-fragile part of the world, occupied much of our time.

At the more immediate end of the spectrum, during 'the middle watch' we have been making calls on whether to authorise an emergency air drop to sustain NATO regional operations to the north of Kandahar or move high-priority equipment forward from Kandahar to Bastion.

Neither circumstance, I hasten to add, was a product of bad logistical planning but a response to the pace of change on operations and the hostile environment.

Daily engagement with the other Services, coalition nations and organisations to deliver logistic effect is always interesting, hugely rewarding and even fun."

– Lt Cdr Charles Evans

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● A breath of fresh Ayr... Gannet's on-call Sea King conducts training near The Cobbler
Picture: LA(Phot) Del Trotter, FRPU Clyde

Like a muppet on a string...

YOU can see the attraction.

There is a wonderfully bleak beauty to this landscape.

Grouse dash up the slopes. Squirrels scurry between the bushes. Water rushes down gullies, tumbling over boulders, crashing into pools below.

It's clear why its beloved by climbers and hillwalkers.

But not today. I may have written previously that it wasn't particularly bad north of the border in 2007.

Allow me to retract that statement right now. For while it's a bright, if blustery, day at Prestwick, there's a storm raging amid the peaks and glens of Argyll.

At 2,000ft, the wind is gusting up to 50mph. Thanks to the skill of the pilots, you don't notice it too much in the back of the cab.

But stare out of the side door and you'll see horizontal sleet shooting past.

The pilot's not happy with the wind. Nor is LACMN Kev Regan. He fires an orange flare on to the mountainside around The Cobbler, a peak

rising 881 metres (2,900ft) above Loch Long. It's a common practice area for the Gannet team.

The flare fizzles for a few seconds before clouds of orange smoke billow and then hastily disperse and merge with the murk – revealing just how strong the wind is out there.

"I'm not happy with this," says Lt Cdr Lanni. "What about that rock over there?"

That rock over there.

To the uninitiated every rock, every little outcrop, every boulder surrounded by tufts of grass and piles of soft snow looks identical.

But these mountain men know their domain. That rock is different from this rock.

"Happy with that," says Kev.

The Sea King spins around the valley once, twice, perhaps three times as the flight crew assess wind speed and direction.

There's no point winching in perfect conditions off a nice, safe ledge.

This is a training mission – the duty crew

the winchman goes down first to show how it's done. Then it's time for the real dope on a rope...

Kev explains what is expected of me. Something to do with rock, mountainside, and avoiding the

tree. It's hard to understand above the roar of the Sea King's engines, which are also belching Avcat No.5 into the back of the helicopter.

Man is not meant to fly. And if he is, then he should stay in the vehicle at all times.

So while what I'm about to do is bread and butter for the Gannet guys, it's positively barking mad to a deskbound civvy (*Think Inaction Man – Ed*).

Who in their right mind hangs on a piece of wire less than an inch thick 3,000ft above a loch in a blizzard?

Kev hooks me up to the winch lead then moves to the motor lever; arrows next to it handily explain 'up' and 'down' – "so the Royals know how to use it".

First, very briefly, it's up and then it's down.

And once clear of the helicopter it's a wonderfully serene feeling – a bit like gliding or parachuting, with all God's wonders laid out before you: the valley, the craggy mountain tops, the wisps of grass, the rather weather-beaten trees. Arrochar nestles at the foot of the valley.

But this is not a smooth ride. The winch lurches. It spins. One minute you're facing the valley, the next the mountainside.

Nor do you drop vertically. You fall at an angle. You have no control. You are entirely in the hands of the men and women in the helicopter. You have no means of communication, save the odd hand signal.

Apparently, I was supposed to land on the side of mountain and walk down it, still attached to the winch, before being winched back up again.

Simple.

The only words to enter that pea-sized brain in my head evidently were 'winch', 'down', 'rock', 'back again'.

So for a couple of minutes, I bump along the damp grass, spin around, bump some more, look up at the helicopter, think "that's a long way up", and scrape along the rock, buckling my legs.

Clearly Kev realises he's dealing with an idiot, and flicks the 'up' lever on the winch.

It's all been a rather serene experience. But then it's not been a matter of life and death. No bones broken. No hypothermia setting in. No fog or mist shrouding the peaks.

But like all they have rescued before, I'm grateful to plonk myself down on the floor of the Sea King.



● A Girl Guide learns about radio at the RN Amateur Radio Society in HMS Collingwood

A Guide to the airwaves

'THINKING day on the air' drew Girl Guides and Brownies to HMS Collingwood to meet with the radio experts of the RN Amateur Radio Society, whose headquarters is appropriately enough in the Maritime Warfare School.

The girls made use of the radio equipment to make contact with other Guides and Brownies across the UK, and learn about mapping contacts and the use of the phonetic alphabet.

Morse code was taught in an unusual way as the girls spelt out their names on biscuits using icing paste and sweets.

The Senior Rates mess at Collingwood have also been making an effort to make life easier for local children.

The mess donated £1,000 to the Heathfield School in Fareham, which helps children with moderate learning disabilities.

PO Simon 'Nobby' Hall visited the school during an assembly to make the donation, which will go towards a cycle track.

■ And apologies to the Collingwood sailors of the System Engineering Management course who last month were assigned, in error, to HMS Sultan.

Partners in Clyde make the long run south

CREW and personnel connected to patrol ship HMS Clyde have packed their running shoes in preparation for the gruelling Stanley Marathon across the unforgiving Falkland Islands terrain, where steep gradients, high winds and the strange South-Atlantic climate of four seasons in one day make other marathons seem ordinary.

The ship's marine engineer officer Lt Cdr Paul Williams and gunnery officer Lt Andy Scorer are joined by VT Naval Support's George Jamieson, the senior systems manager on the ship, and Paul Blankley, who is based at Abbey Wood, to form the team 'Partners in Clyde'.

Their efforts will go to garner money for charity Seeing is Believing, which aims to restore the sight of people around the world through cataract operations, the training of eye doctors, and the building of vision centres.



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Craig saves lives in Ghana

A NURSING officer from Derriford Hospital in Plymouth led a team out to West Africa to set up a life-saving medical centre.

Lt Craig Brown, an operating theatre specialist at the military hospital unit and specialist adviser to the RN, led a team that headed out to Sekondi and Takoradi in Ghana.

This is the fifth time that the Royal Navy and QARNNS (Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service) have headed out to the African nation to offer their services in reducing the death toll of serious untreated hernias.

Once in country, Craig was in charge of a hernia clinic operating theatre – each five-day visit period draws an average of 140 cases for treatment at the Hernia Treatment Centre in Takoradi.

Craig said: "We are educating the Ghanaians in hernia surgery and they are learning our skills and operating theatre procedures.

"This is an important process because whereas 100 per cent of hernias diagnosed will be treated by operation in the UK, only less than 14 per cent will be treated by routine operation in Africa – and of those that are not treated there is a high mortality rate.

"The Operation Hernia team working with the Ghanaian doctors and nurses are seeking to reduce this mortality rate in this region dramatically."

Operation Hernia is a charity headed by Professor Andrew Kingsnorth, a colleague of Craig's at Derriford Hospital.

Craig added: "It is a very humbling experience seeing what the Ghanaians have to tolerate; they have so little resources and are so poorly equipped and funded.

"The team makes big differences by performing procedures, whilst teaching the local nurses, that we



● Lt Craig Brown, an operating theatre specialist at Derriford Hospital in Plymouth

Picture: LA(Phot) Ray Jones

take for granted in the UK."

The Operation Hernia foundation has built up strong links with the western region of the African country.

Achievements of the mission include educating the local health care professionals to reduce the spread of HIV and hepatitis, supplying equipment to the clinics, teaching patient-lifting and

handling techniques, and basic life support to reduce preventable deaths.

Craig is particularly keen to hear from ships that may be visiting the area to find ways to strengthen the links between the Royal Navy and the Ghanaian clinic.

Find out more on the official website www.operationhernia.org.uk.

Dibdobs and shrapnel

LEFT-OVER currency and nowhere to spend it led a sailor from Devonport ship HMS Northumberland to raise money for charity, Barnardo's.

LET Herewood Crane started the collection of coins from the many ports the warship visited during her four-month deployment in the Mediterranean.

Once he'd organised collecting tins and placed encouraging posters around the ship, Herewood set about pestering the ship's company to give him all their foreign change.

He said: "I decided to make this collection because I know charities collect foreign coins and with 160 people in the ship there were bound to be a lot of coins left over from our port visits.

"Choosing Barnardo's as the charity to receive the collection wasn't easy as a lot of charities deserve the same but I hope these coins make a real difference to the children."

The collection of £91 was presented to Sue Ferris, a representative for Barnardo's during the ship's recent maintenance period in Devonport.

...and a mission to Africa

THIS fallow period in the ship's sea-going life also offered the chance for seven sailors from HMS Northumberland's company to head out to Richard's Bay in South Africa to work on a children's orphanage as *Navy News* went to press.

The aim of the one-week mission is to improve the orphanage by refurbishing the kitchens, building a playground and laying paths to keep the children from walking on mud in winter.

Members of the team also gave practical lessons, ranging from health and hygiene issues to interactive dramas.

Fundraising went well with friends, family and the ship's company all giving very generously to raise £5,000 to buy the materials needed for the projects.

Project organiser Lt Cdr Stuart Somerville said: "Having returned from a civilian-run mission last year I realised what a fantastic undertaking this would be for the team in HMS Northumberland.

"The week is going to test our resilience, teamwork and organisation skills to the limit and in return I hope the experience is positive and life-changing for the team, the children, and the staff at the orphanage."

Follow their efforts online at www.southafricanprojectmar08.blogspot.com

A record racket

TWO records have been broken on the squash court at HMS Excellent, earning a place in the record books for two members of the Military Police Guard Service.

Pte Darrel Gilmore and L/Cpl Glen Dickson laboured long and hard under the watchful eye of MAA Gavin Moulds (pictured right) and two witnesses to achieve a record-breaking squash stint of 25 hours, 26 minutes.

Darrel said: "Once we got to 24 hours we knew we had secured a place in the Guinness Book of Records for the longest ever squash game, but we were told about the Racket Sports Record, so we continued on for another hour and 26 minutes in order to break another world record."

Fundraising from the squasha-thon will go to support the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).



Some va va voom on va va Victory



ALTHOUGH not the most mobile of Her Majesty's ships, Victory's crew are a little different – a team from the Flagship are determined to scale the mighty peaks of the four countries of Great Britain and Ireland in less than 48 hours.

The Va Va Victory team (pictured left) raised an impressive £31,500 last year, winning the trophy for the highest sum collected, and no doubt are determined to do even better this year. (Pledge your support online at www.justgiving.com/victory4peaks)

Although they might have some rivals; in amongst the 60 other teams competing to conquer the peaks of Ben Nevis, Helvellyn, Snowdon and Carantouhill are The Flyers, captained by former Royal Marine Terry Hislop, now a military consultant to the United Arab Emirates.

All money raised will go to Wooden Spoon, the rugby charity that is celebrating its silver jubilee in 2008 with fundraising events planned throughout the year. The charity is committed to helping mentally, physically and socially disadvantaged children.

Wooden Spoon are appealing for people to take part in this year's events. If a brisk walk doesn't suit you, then perhaps the traditional John O'Groats to Lands End cycle ride might appeal...

Find out more on www.spoonchallenges.com or 01889 582889.

Give as you live

THE Royal Navy has launched a new 'give as you earn scheme' to support all Naval Service charities through the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

In encouraging people to donate through their pay, the RN hopes to get as many people as possible giving monthly through their payroll to the Sports Amenities and Benevolence Scheme (SABS).

The slogan of the new scheme is "£1 per week – a lifetime of reward", because the money collected will benefit everyone in the wider Naval community, from serving people to veterans and their dependants.

If a serviceman or woman agrees to pay £1 a week, the actual cost to them is 78 pence, because the donation is deducted from their 'before-tax' pay.

Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns, Second Sea Lord, said at the scheme's launch: "If 75 per cent of serving people in the RN donated £1 a week to the SABS, we'd collect £1.5 million every year."

The three main areas to benefit from the scheme will be sport, amenities, and benevolence – financial help to those in need.

Money raised for sport will go on extras, such as equipment and coaching, and support to clubs and associations for serving people.

The amenities fund is designed to help service people relax when off-duty, and will pay for leisure items such as new televisions, media centres and games in ships and establishments. It will also help pay for Families' Days and activities which are not publicly funded.

The Benevolence fund will help both serving and ex-serving people and their dependants who find themselves in need.

It will also help casualties and their families and will be able to supplement the £10,000 charity grant which is currently paid immediately in the event of a death in service.

The scheme has already been rolled out in HMS Raleigh and BRNC Dartmouth, and representatives will be visiting other establishments to explain the benefits of the new system.

For further information contacts the SABS manager, Julie Behan, on 023 9281 6508 or the Fleet charities officer, Frank Ward, on 023 9262 5247.

'Still firing guns in sheer defiance'

TWO Naval veterans are not letting ill fate or illness daunt them as they take on fundraising challenges in the spirit of the military in which they have served.

After 17 years enjoyable service in the Royal Navy as a Marine Engineer, boiler specialist, Vaughan Williams was proud when his son Arthur signed up for the military life as an elite green beret.

However a serious car accident smashed his son's spine in several places leaving him partially paralysed, and necessitating four months in the Midlands Centre for Spinal Injuries at Oswestry.

Vaughan said: "Arthur is slowly getting his life back together and at the moment is still a Royal Marine."

"Both the Royal Marines and his ship HMS Albion have been of immense support to him over the last year."

"They have shown the truth of the statement that the Royal Marines are more than a career but a family that always do their best to look after their own."

Vaughan admits that the debt to Oswestry can never be repaid but he is determined to try – the veteran intends to walk from John O'Groats to Lands End to raise money for the spinal unit at Oswestry and Spirit, a charity that supports research into spinal injuries and their treatment.

Find out more online at www.vaughanscharitywalk.co.uk or pledge through www.justgiving.com/vaughanwilliams.

Spinal injury is all too familiar to another Naval veteran, Barry O'Connell, who after injuring his back falling from a ladder ended up at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital at Stanmore.



● Vaughan Williams as a 'baby Tiff' in 1965

Last year Barry went through a full major thoracic spine operation, one of the first carried out in this country, where he died twice yet, to use Barry's memorable phrase, "they got the old boilers fired up after quite a struggle."

He went on: "The plain fact was I was told the only reason they carried out my operation was that I was mega fit and it paid off, as my spine specialist said when he knew of my Naval background."

"He told me that he had seen the film of the Graf Spee battle and that I was just like HMS Exeter, 'you vanish in a load of smoke and the officers on the other ships were amazed to see Exeter come out badly damaged, on fire, smoke pouring out of her, but still firing her guns in sheer defiance.'"

"The specialist then asked me how I got away with it. I just smiled and said 'Lady Luck'."

Now clad in an exo-skeleton of

body armour, and fitted out with an impressive wheelchair that he has named the 'GR7 Harrier', the determined veteran has decided to raise money for the groups that have aided him in his injuries.

As *Navy News* went to press, Barry was due to take part in the Sport Relief mile, completing the distance in his GR7 Harrier while flying the White Ensign proudly at Colchester Garrison.

He said: "Being a Pongo area, I aim to represent the Senior Service by example leading from the front."

He is grateful for the support of his local RNA in Clacton, plus the RN and Fleet Air Arm who have provided him with clothing and stickers to keep the RN at the forefront of attention.

He added: "But one sticker says 'Hello sailor', which raises a few eyebrows – mind you, no ex-matlot has made an offer to me yet..."

As well as his fundraising efforts for the national Sport Relief charity, Barry has his eye set on bigger things: "If the Royals want me to assist them do various things like abseiling over bridges or down buildings, then count me in!"

"I am up for it in my wheelchair, I yearn for it and give me a chance to do something others say is impossible in the chair I will do."



● CPO David 'Tug' Wilson is cheered on by HMS Bulwark's commanding officer Capt Jeremy Blunden and shipmates

Tug rows, cycles and runs for lifeboat service

CPO David 'Tug' Wilson on board assault ship HMS Bulwark set himself a daunting challenge when he decided to complete a half-marathon in three separate disciplines – indoor rowing, cycling and running – in one marathon session.

Tug took on the commitment as part of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's 'Showing our support' national fundraising day.

Tug said: "As someone who works at sea, and also sails recreationally, the RNLI is an important charity to me."

"My brother is an ex-lifeboat crew member and now works full time for the RNLI so it is a charity that I have always supported."

"I am delighted to have been able to raise so much money for this very worthwhile cause and would like to thank everyone on board for their support throughout."

In total Tug has managed to raise over £1,048 – enough money to provide all the required safety and survival equipment for one lifeboat crew member.

Tug completed the challenge in four hours and 21 minutes, nine minutes inside his target time.



● Trainee Engineering Technician Brooke Wilson and her fellow trainees rub down the paintwork ready for repainting at Pengover Residential Home

Sailors head up the garden path

TRAINEE sailors from HMS Raleigh have visited a local residential home to create an inspirational and relaxing garden for residents.

The sailors began work at the home in January and Raleigh plans to send trainees to the home on a weekly basis over the next nine months.

The 'Up the garden path' project will see the sailors building a path, a dry stone wall and laying the foundations for a shed.

Hawke Division instructor PO Les Rust said:

"The trainees will probably have a maximum of two weeks with us before they start the next stage of their training, and during that time we look to put together a programme of activities to enhance the skills they have learned during basic training."

"Working at Pengover is an excellent way for them to put their team-working skills into practice while also interacting with the older people in the local community and helping to brighten their day."

Over 750 trainees will work on the project.

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75 YEARS OF SERVICE 1932 - 2007



● Rear Admiral Tony Johnstone-Burt receives his Junglie L-plates from 848 NAS instructor Capt Dave West RM Picture: PO Sue Emery

Veteran cab drivers

ALTHOUGH a pilot by trade, Rear Admiral Tony Johnstone-Burt had to pick up his L-plates when he went for an aviation refresher package at RNAS Yeovilton.

The admiral, who will soon be taking charge of the Joint Helicopter Command, spent some

Defence college in top ten

WELBECK, the Defence Sixth-form College, achieved a top ten rating from the A-level Performance System.

The independent body looked at the summer 2007 A-level results of students in 975 colleges and schools nationwide, and the defence college came tenth.

The college, which aims to educate students to become officers in the Armed Services or civil service, is the only college in the country where mathematics and physics are compulsory, and has only been at its new, purpose-build site in Leicestershire for two years.

time with the Sea King experts at 848 Naval Air Squadron – one of the four Commando Helicopter Force squadrons that will come under his control in the joint force.

The admiral flew the Sea King in general handling, and the more specialist Junglie aspects of low-level tactical navigation, confined areas, load-lifting and night vision goggle operations.

Rear Admiral Johnstone-Burt was heard to remark that it made a refreshing change from working in an office.

However one pilot at 848 NAS needs no refresher course – commanding officer Cdr Terry Tyack has notched up the impressive total of 4,000 hours of flying.

Since joining up in 1984, the officer has flown a range of aircraft types, including five different operational helicopters.

Upon landing after his 4,000th hour in the air the traditional celebration took place – a bottle of champagne and a ‘cooling-down’ from the squadron.

Celebrities hang out with the Navy

THE ROYAL Navy has been a bit of a media star in recent weeks. Ant and Dec paid a surprise visit to HMS Collingwood and children's TV presenter Andy Akinwolere tried his hand on the sinking ship simulator at HMS Raleigh.

Andy Akinwolere, from the BBC's *Blue Peter*, had the daunting task of facing the Royal Navy's multi-million pound simulator.

Andy joined recruits at HMS Raleigh for routine training on the simulator, known as Havoc. The training is part of the recruits' nine-week initial training course that helps prepare them for how to deal with floods and damage to the ship's hull.

During the training the simulator rocks from side to side and fills with water.

Before he stepped into the simulator Andy confessed to a fear of water, but the Navy won him over: "I get really nervous when I'm out of my depth. But I ended up having an exhilarating day.

"I learnt the importance of teamwork, and my team was exceptional," he said.

During the tough onslaught within Havoc, the trainees must work together to stem the flow of water through the breaches in the hull using wooden wedges and hammers.

They then have to shore up the bulkheads with timber to re-establish the watertight integrity of the ship.

CPO David Battersby, Havoc Senior Instructor, said: "The trainees and staff really enjoyed having Andy with us for the day; he did remarkably well in such a short period of time.

"During the exercise the simulator fills with around 70 tonnes of water and can tilt up to 20 degrees from vertical. Flooding on a ship at sea is one of the most dangerous situations to be in and this training is vital."

Ant and Dec have also been hanging out with the Navy

in practice for the *Ant vs Dec* challenge, in which they compete against each other in teams in the latest series of ITV's *Saturday Night Takeaway*.

They spent time in HMS Collingwood undergoing obstacle course training prior to tackling the real thing live on their show on the Saturday.

The celebrities – including Bonnie Langford, Debbie McGee, Melinda Messenger – tackled crossing over murky waters, climbing over a vertical wall, crawling through a dark tunnel and scrambling under and above a huge net.

Lt Steve Kelly, PTRO and organiser of the challenge said, "The whole experience was quite surreal.

"When the celebrities arrived at Collingwood on Tuesday, it was difficult to know how they would react to the challenge and the physical aspects involved.

"Fortunately we had great weather, which helped, and to their credit the teams cracked on and got stuck in, whether they were on the assault course or handling training on the field guns.

"Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and we gained an insight into what we were up against."

Saturday was a long day for everyone as it was spent rehearsing and making sure ITV were happy with the camera angles.

All their hard work paid off in the end as the whole event went smoothly and to plan.

Before they had to go out and compete against each other Ant and Dec watched clips from their training along with all the viewers of *Saturday Night Takeaway*.



● Dec (or is it Ant?) on the obstacle course at HMS Collingwood with actress Bonnie Langford Picture: ITV

The live competition in the studio car park ran perfectly with Dec's team winning the event and that vital point.

Two weeks later the lads and their celebrity teams were back

with the Royal Navy when they headed to Austria to join forces with the successful RN and RM Bobsleigh team for a white-knuckle ride with the winter-sports heroes (see page 51).

No1 in pen and clubz

HMS Monmouth's clubswinger LPT 'Pat' Patterson has been awarded the Tony Thyrritt-Bettridge Memorial trophy as the best PTI across all ranks.

And Logs Lucy Gilston of HMS Ocean – a Writer in old speak – won the Writer of the Year award 2006-07 for the best overall performance at Raleigh.

Logistician (Personnel (Admin)) of the Year doesn't have quite the same ring, does it? – Ed

Family ties

THE Navy is still a family affair with members meeting up around the globe.

Brothers AB(Sea) Lee and ET(ME) Steven Gilboy met while their ships (respectively Westminster and Edinburgh) were preparing for their transits south through the Suez Canal.

The brothers from St Athan in south Wales were thrilled to have the chance to spend some time together before setting off again with their deployments.

Lee said: "I knew we were both going to be deployed on Orion 08, but I never thought we'd get the chance to meet up. It was great showing my little brother around my new ship."

Meanwhile CPO Annette Laurie ended up training her son, AB Sam Furniss, at HMS Collingwood.

Annette was at the Fareham base for a short period, while her son Sam underwent operational training before joining colleagues in Iraq.

And down in HMS Raleigh in Cornwall, one trainee sailor had a surprise guest when he saw a very familiar face in the crowd.

Trainee AET Glenn Harris told his twin, Alex, that he would be unable to make it to his passing out parade, as he would be on duty at HMS Sultan in Gosport.

However, unbeknown to Alex, Glenn had obtained special permission from his instructors to travel back to HMS Raleigh to see his brother complete his training.

Glenn said: "It was fantastic to come back to Raleigh to surprise Alex. The look on his face when he saw me said everything."



● Steven and Lee Gilboy on HMS Westminster's forecastle



● Glenn and Alex Harris at HMS Raleigh

Picture: Dave Sherfield



The Band of HM Royal Marines School of Music
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Sure-footed at the AIB

NESTLING in a corner of HMS Sultan's site sits the Admiralty Interview Board – whenever in the past we've done features on the AIB, we've tended to focus on the aspiring candidates, wobbling their way over water-filled tanks.

But if you are in the Naval service right now, then there's a one in five chance you've been through it yourself.

However you may not know what it's like to sit on the other side of that daunting desk. And that desk places heavy demands on both perspectives.

Cdr John Warden, board president, said: "It's a huge responsibility here; the people that we recruit are the officers of the future."

Board member Lt Mark Hamilton said: "I enjoy it because I have an influence over the future officers of the Navy."

"I think it's exciting when you see a real star come through. You think to yourself 'Hmm, is that a future Nelson?'"

"This is not someone who is going to be a captain of industry, but a captain of one of our ships. That is so exciting."

Gruelling as the three days undoubtedly are for the candidates to become officers in the RN, RFA or RM, it is also hard work for the officers sitting in judgement who must be able to back up their conclusions with fact.

Cdr John Warden admits: "It's like doing a six-hour exam. We have to concentrate hard at every moment."

For candidates undertaking the AIB, little has changed on the surface – although the imminent arrival of a new computer-based psychometric test might surprise the old and bold officers out there.

The fundamental structure of the AIB is much the same: candidates arrive at HMS Sultan on the first evening, and board and bond together in the AIB's own specially-designed building.

The next day pulls them through a morning of psychometric tests, service knowledge questions and essay, before plunging them into the gym for the fitness trials of the bleep test and preparations for the next day's physical challenges of the practical leadership task (think wobbly bridges and water-filled tanks...).

The final day begins with the short, sharp, but hopefully dry, shock of the bridge-building and chasm-swinging leadership tests, before the scenario exercise puts them through their paces in quick thought and seeks out alert minds.

Individual interviews then allow each candidate to put forward their own examples of leadership,



● Board members Lt Mark Hamilton, Cdr John Warden and Lt Cdr Victoria Dale-Smith assess candidates at the AIB

Picture: LA(Phot) Judy Hurst

teamwork and motivation from the world outside of the AIB.

The officers' priority is to make sure that each candidate has equal chance to prove him or herself, that they treat each fairly and without favour.

Objectivity is key. The 'cut of his jib' is no longer a factor in officer selection.

The AIB brought in a rigorous competency-based system three years ago, and its success is now being proven in the hallways of Britannia Royal Naval College.

A recent validation process looked into Phase One training at Dartmouth and found a strong link between the AIB's scoring and BRNC performance.

This examination will take place again as successful AIB candidates go on to complete Phase Two training and move into their first jobs as Young Officers.

The competency-based approach is judged against a solid framework which analyses candidates' abilities in the areas of: effective intelligence; leadership potential; communication; courage and values; and motivation.

And in each of these areas, the candidates' have at least two chances to prove themselves to weed out the disastrous effects of one-off poor performance.

Each score is debated hotly among the three Naval

officers who sit in judgement. Rank, while respected, is not ruler here. Lieutenant can disagree with commander, provided there is solid evidence for the debate.

Each score, each point, has to be justified from this evidence of candidate's performance, not from perception.

All AIB officers undergo two days of intensive training by experts from Qinetiq to follow the strictures of evidence-based assessment.

Board president Cdr Mike Blowers admits: "When I came here I had to put aside my scepticism about competency-based assessment, but I was won over – as we all were."

"We all believe in the process. It is fair and it is consistent."

Lt Cdr Victoria Dale-Smith said: "At the start of the course I thought there was no way I could keep objective. But actually you do. Because you have to treat each candidate as an individual."

"For me it is now second nature, although I thought it would go against my own nature. But actually it is very easy to achieve – in here, you switch off all your opinions to assess that candidate."

"We need to be objective. Otherwise the board president or other board member will pick me up and get me to justify my opinions from what we've seen."

Cdr Warden added: "The key to objectivity is to stay competency-based, and now with the training, we can try to squeeze the subjectivity out of it."

"With three of us, if one forms an opinion, because the other two need to be convinced, that one has got to have the evidence to support it."

"The hardest part for me is not encouraging the candidates," commented Lt Cdr Dale-Smith, "We have to remain the grey men in the assessment."

"We're all enthusiastic people here, we want to see them pass. You want to encourage them, but the candidates have to show their own true colours."

The AIB recently came under the command of BRNC, but due to its nature, retains vital links with the Naval recruiters.

A move to the Dartmouth site is on the horizon once funding is found to bring all of the Board's essential infrastructure with them.

Cdr Warden concluded with absolute confidence: "I've been here five months. And I don't believe any candidate I have seen has gone away with the wrong result."



● Cdr Phil Waterhouse greets Cdr Mike Clarke (left) with other former COs of the Defence Maritime Logistics School

Picture: Dave Sherfield

Silver celebration at Logistics School

THERE was a certain silvering of the hair amongst the officers gathered at HMS Raleigh to celebrate 25 years of the Defence Maritime Logistics School.

Current commandant Cdr Phil Waterhouse – whose grey hairs aren't too obvious just yet – welcomed ten former commanding officers back to the establishment to see how the school has changed over the past decades.

When the school moved from its Chatham home to Raleigh in 1983 it was still known as the Royal Navy Supply and Secretariat School, training for Writers, Stores Accountants and Stewards.

Chef training moved from Aldershot to Raleigh just over a decade later to join with its natural allies in the supply branch.

Of course, these titles have recently been rebranded to Logisticians Personnel Administration, Supply Chain and Catering Services, for the sake of accuracy if not brevity.

Cdr Waterhouse said: "We now provide training in a modern and realistic environment to give our students the knowledge they need to meet

the challenge of today's operations.

"Ultimately we want them to reap the reward of a successful career in both the logistics branch and the Royal Navy."

"What hasn't changed over the past 25 years is the ethos of the school, its commitment to certain values and the standard we require."

"Regardless of their specialisation, we also seek to remind our students of their ultimate role – that is sailor first, ready to fight and win."

Among the former COs who had a chance to look over the developments at the school was Cdr Mike Clarke, the first CO at the Raleigh site.

He said: "Logistics training is in excellent hands and very much in tune with modern tri-Service thinking."

"The staff at every rank are thoroughly professional. They were also remarkably enthusiastic, self-possessed and personable."

"It was of tremendous interest to see how the school had evolved over the last quarter of a century."

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM
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- Genuine coin with a face value of £5 minted in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the birth of Lord Nelson, Britain's greatest naval hero

- The design features a portrait of Nelson from early in his career and he seldom appears on coins as a young officer: for this reason the coin is likely to attract considerable interest, not just from collectors.

- Although available for just £5, it has been struck to a very high specification and is intended as a collectors item

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● *Endurance passes one of two huge icebergs she encountered on transit from Signy Island where she had picked up scientists who were closing down their base for the winter*
 Picture: LA(Phot) Kaz Williams, HMS Endurance



A long way from home

TEN thousand miles, to be precise – as Britain's second most senior admiral discovered.

Numerous Commanders-in-Chief Fleet have attempted to visit HMS Endurance 'in the field' – but have been thwarted by distance and programmes.

Luckily, the latter fell into place for Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope – but the distance remained immense.

CinC Fleet makes a point of getting around as much of the RN and RM as possible to hear the views of men and women on the ground, assure them their deeds are valued, and to gain a better understanding of the Senior Service's manifold and varied global commitments.

None of those commitments adequately compares with the unique mission of the Red Plum.

And so the admiral flew to 67°S to the British Antarctic Survey base of Rothera to join the ice survey ship in the shadow of a glacier.

"It's hard to understand exactly what Endurance does unless you see her in her area of operations – her

remit is so large and complex," explained Surg Lt Cdr Matthew Turner, the ship's doctor.

Admiral Stanhope had just 48 hours to understand that complex remit. He began with a visit to Blaiklock Island, where BAS scientists are studying the long-term effects of climate change by analysing moss samples and the invertebrates which live in it. The admiral was also shown some minute larvae which had been found for the first time – and which may prove to be an entirely new species.

Blaiklock is home not merely to the humblest things that God, in his wisdom, has put upon this earth, but also to penguins, like much of the fringe of Antarctica. In Blaiklock's case, it's a colony of adelic penguins and at this time of year, the birds are moulting ready to spend the months of the austral winter in the sea.

And Blaiklock is home too to an old research hut, abandoned now save for fuel and supplies should any explorers or scientists become stranded on the island. It also houses a visitors' book with comments going back half a century. There is now a fresh entry:

21st Feb 2008. Commander-in Chief Fleet-UK Navy. A once-in-a-lifetime visit for someone in my position to ensure HMS Endurance continues to contribute to Science and Diplomacy in the Antarctic.

The trip to Blaiklock done, the admiral was flown over icebergs and the odd minke whale back to Rothera, where he was met by Lt Stuart Long and his team who had been conducting surveys of the waters around the base.

Then it was into the BAS base for a tour of the facilities – and especially the aquarium.

Thanks to the extreme cold and high oxygen levels in Antarctic waters, marine life here grows to giant proportions: a water louse can be as big as your hand, and water spiders and starfish are invariably huge.

After an evening back aboard Endurance chatting with the ship's company, Admiral Stanhope departed for his headquarters in Portsmouth.

And when he got there, he sent a signal to the Red Plum to thank the sailors and marines for their efforts:

I was truly impressed by the professional manner each and every task I witnessed was conducted from flying, through survey to scientific support and equally by your people conducting them.

The focus and enthusiasm for your business was very obvious in all to whom I spoke and the upbeat nature of your team was consequently of no surprise. It was great fun.

I know of no other CinC Fleet in the recent past to visit you in the Antarctic, although many have tried. I was most fortunate and privileged that it all came together.

The admiral is not the only one to leave the ice. The Red Plum has completed her spell in Antarctica for this season now.

She will, however, remain in the Southern Hemisphere throughout the austral winter, including paying a visit to South Africa, before resuming survey work around the frozen continent towards the end of the year.



● *Just chillin'... A couple of seals loll about on a small iceberg alongside a small colony of Emperor penguins*

Picture: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow, HMS Endurance

'Farewell, we'll meet again'



THE arrows and their crossbow are still discernible, the name HUNTER still legible, the final resting place of a British destroyer – lost off Narvik nearly 70 years ago – has been discovered by the Norwegian Navy.

Lying 300 metres (985ft) beneath the surface of Ofotfjord, half a dozen miles west of the Arctic port, Hunter entombs more than 100 men, killed when the ship clashed with German destroyers in these narrow waters on April 10 1940.

Hunter had charged into Narvik with four sisters, determined to oust the Germans who had occupied the town the day before.

They caught the enemy by surprise and raised hell for the first hour or so, but as the Kriegsmarine responded, so Hunter was crippled by the German destroyer George Thiele which pummeled the British warship at close range.

From 30kts, Hunter crashed to an immediate halt in the middle of the fjord at the mercy of the German guns.

She was probably already doomed, but ill-fortune now conspired with German gunnery. In the chaos of battle, HMS Hotspur suddenly found Hunter dead ahead.

Unable to avoid her sister, she sliced into Hunter with a sickening crunch which echoed around the fjord.

The mortally-wounded Hunter now began to sink rapidly. Her siren howled one last time as the boilers died and around 6.45am on that fateful Wednesday, the destroyer sank. Of her crew of 145, 108 were killed.

And there she has lain undisturbed and unlocated for more than six decades until HNOMS Tyr was surveying the fjord, looking for mines as part of major winter war games, Armatura Borealis (see the centre pages).

After 14 fruitless hours of searching, her echo sounder picked up the hull of a sunken vessel on the bed of Ofotfjord and she sent down her robot mini submarine to investigate.

The crystal-clear pictures the craft sent back confirmed the wreck was the Hunter.

Hunter was one of two British destroyers lost in the first Battle of Narvik.

HMS Hardy was also wrecked; her Commanding Officer Capt Bernard Warburton-Lee received the Victoria Cross posthumously for his leadership that day.

Sixty-eight years later, Warburton-Lee's last battle cry was hoisted aboard amphibious assault ship HMS Albion – Continue engaging the enemy – as a procession of Allied warships,

four British – HM Ships Albion, Bulwark, Cornwall and RFA Mounts Bay – and one Norwegian Coastguard vessel – NOCGV Andenes – formed a line and sailed past the wreck site, each ship paying her respects by casting wreaths into the icy waters and pouring a tot of rum over the side.

As the force left Ofotfjord behind, the Aldis lamps flashed into life as a final tribute: F A R E W E L L W E ' L L M E E T A G A I N.

"Finding HMS Hunter was a poignant moment and being able to pay our respects along with our Norwegian and Dutch allies is particularly fitting to those who lost their lives," said Major General Garry Robison RM, Commander of the UK's Amphibious Force.

"It was a very moving ceremony. Sadly, we were not able to bring over the three veterans that served on HMS Hunter. But we shall certainly take the opportunity to let them have the films and the photographs of that ceremony."

Former seaman Fred Ward (pictured, right, in his RN days), now aged 88, is one of those survivors.

"I have mixed emotions about the events of over 68 years ago and the loss of so many fine friends," he said.

"I now have a great sense of relief knowing the final resting place of my comrades and our ship. My only sadness is that I wasn't able to attend the ceremony to pay my own personal tribute."

Fellow former shipmate Able Seaman James Renshaw, today 89, added: "I lost 100 friends and 'family members' when she went down."

"Not a day has passed that I have not thought about her and the people we left behind."

Covered in oil, Hunter's survivors trod water in the bitterly-cold fjord until they were picked up by the Germans.

They were eventually repatriated – but only after signing an agreement not to take up arms against the Third Reich again.

The Norwegians had spent several years trying to find Hunter's wreck; now they have discovered it, it will be officially marked as a war grave.

Hunter was not the only loss of the ill-fated Norwegian campaign honoured by today's sailors during

● **Sailors and Marines line up on HMS Albion as they prepare to lay wreaths to the men of HMS Hunter**

Picture: Surg Lt Cdr Anthony Dew, HMS Albion

● **(Right) Hunter's ship's badge, still clearly identifiable after nearly seven decades below the water and (below right) a cluster of .5 calibre machine-guns point forlornly skywards on Hunter's wreck**

Video stills: Royal Norwegian Navy



Armatura Borealis.

Bound for northern Norway to take part in the exercise, HM Ships Bulwark and Cornwall and RFA Mounts Bay sailed over the wrecks of aircraft carrier Glorious and her escorting destroyers Ardent and Acasta.

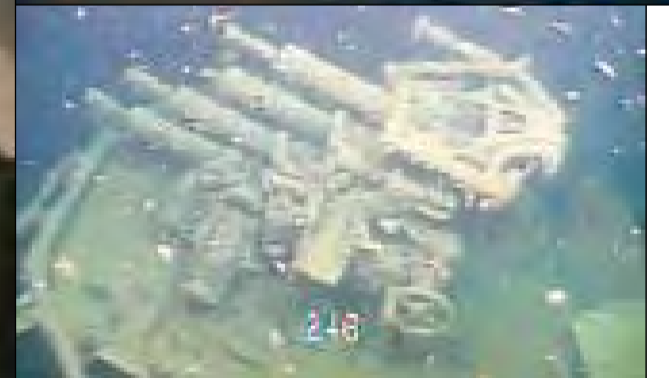
The trio were returning to the UK as British forces pulled out of Norway when they were pounced on by battle-cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau about 180 miles west of Harstad.

All three were sunk in a two-hour battle, although Acasta severely damaged Scharnhorst with a torpedo hit and both German ships were damaged by shellfire.

Of Ardent's and Acasta's ship's companies, only one man survived from each destroyer; barely 40 men were picked up from HMS Glorious.

On a freezing February day in 2008, Bulwark's ship's company mustered on the flight deck as the assault ship's senior rating, Executive Warrant Officer Russ Williams, dropped a wreath into the ocean and the ship's chaplain Tim Wilkinson led a service of remembrance.

■ **Heroes of the Royal Navy, page 12**



And farewell to Ginger too

CLEARANCE divers honoured the last wish of one of the doyens of their branch when they cast the ashes of Arthur 'Ginger' Bryant over the spot where his comrades lay.

The White Ensign on HMS Chiddingfold was lowered to half mast, Flag Alpha – 'I am conducting diving operations' – hoisted and the minehunter's crew lined the upper decks over the wreck of battleship HMS Barham.

Here, 66 years before Ginger had been one of 450 men rescued when the battleship was torpedoed by U331 in the eastern Mediterranean; 861 comrades were not so fortunate.

Chiddingfold's dive team embarked in the ship's RIB as the Still sounded over the water and Dvr Moger scattered Ginger's ashes before Lt Paul Hursthouse laid a wreath on the spot – all in accordance with Ginger's will.

When Barham sank, Ginger was a 20-year-old leading seaman who had been bombed, torpedoed and shipwrecked once before.

He would subsequently serve in the Atlantic and Arctic on convoy duties. It was only post war that he became a diver, subsequently being called upon to dive on the wreck of the submarine Affray.

In the mid-50s Ginger was in charge of the diving training centre on Horsea Island – a job which was interrupted by the Suez crisis; he headed to Egypt to salvage wrecks at Port Said.

He retired from the Senior Service as a chief petty officer in 1966 and ran a pub in Essex for the next 15 years, where his diver's helmet and boots enjoyed pride of place. He also swam regularly – he took his final dip at the age of 86 last summer.

Remembering today's dead

DOCUMENTARY makers are hoping family and friends of those lost in Iraq and Afghanistan will help them complete a three-hour film.

The BBC has commissioned the programme to honour the lives of the fallen through words, photographs, video footage and interviews with comrades, friends and relatives.

The programme makers intend to feature every serviceman and woman who has died in either conflict.

If family members, friends or former colleagues feel they can contribute in some way – there is no obligation to be involved in the actual film and conversations would be in confidence – they can contact Rachel Noar or David Brindley at Minnow Films on 0207 741 0105 or by email: david@minnowfilms.co.uk or rachel@minnowfilms.co.uk.

Serving personnel should seek permission from their COs if they wish to contribute.

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Chart and shoal of RN

IN MANY ways, it was something of a minor miracle that so many men o'war managed to negotiate Spithead or the Hamoaze in the days of sail.

For the surveyors who charted the safe passages through shoals and around headlands were not formally trained; they were taught their vital skills at sea by their elders (though not necessarily betters).

If you were lucky enough to have been tutored by James Cook or one of his talented proteges then there was a fair chance that the charts you produced would endure.

After all, some of Cook's charts of the South Pacific were still in use in the mid-20th century.

But the duffers at the other end of the scale might have better been left to plumb lines in the deep oceans, where they could not have caused much damage, rather than passing on their poor grasp of a complex subject.

The knowledge gained on an *ad hoc* basis by these budding hydrographers was limited compared to that possible in today's Hydrographic, Meteorological and Oceanographic Training Group (HMTG), and the technology available to modern surveyors would astonish Cook and his colleagues – indeed, the capability of a ship like HMS Scott in terms of data-gathering is astonishing whatever your perspective.

The deep ocean survey ship can cover 150 square kilometres an hour, following precise satellite-plotted survey lines hundreds of miles long before wheeling round to double back on a parallel path.

The value of the work done by Scott and her various sister ships to the Royal Navy, as well as the merchant fleets of the world, has always been immense, and that remains the case in 2008.

It was as a result of advances in technology during World War 2 that formal classroom training came into favour, allowing students to learn the theory before testing themselves on the water.

Hydrography is the measurement, study and analysis of bodies of water and the margins of land, particularly with regard to safe navigation.

Generally it includes the gathering of data about water depth, tides, currents, the nature of the sea bed and the measurement of prominent and relevant features ashore, either for navigational or military purposes.

Or, as Lt Cdr Pat Mowatt, Hydrographic Training Officer, put it: "This is a vital warfare specialisation. It is about gathering environmental data to optimise sensors and weapons."

He continued: "This is a very very useful skill, not just in a warfare sense, but generally."

"They are skills useful in military and wider aspects. And because we all speak the same language we can understand each other – these people are very employable outside."

"It is very attractive for a young person coming in from outside the branch – here is an opportunity to gain an excellent skill and external qualifications and spend some time in the RN and put it all into practice."

"Then, looking ahead, they can say: 'I am being provided with something which I could use further on in my life' – and many people do."

"A high proportion of surveyors and HMs leave and go to work for civilian organisations in similar fields."

"And look at the ships we have. Crews are rotated, they spend a lot of time away, it's very hi-tech, very comfortable, there are fantastic programmes, and you are right at the tip of exercises and operations."

Lt Cdr Mowatt added that he was not advocating training up then swiftly jumping ship.

"I cannot for the life of me understand why people want to leave – this branch offers everything that someone could want from the Navy," he said.

"Great visits, great ships, great skills. I think it's a fantastic way to go."

"Our ships haven't got the missile systems – they do not look like frigates or destroyers – but they are warships."

"These are military people doing military jobs – a vital part of the warfare environment."

Recognition of that fact came when the old Surveying Squadron colour scheme of white hulls and buff funnels was replaced by Pusser's grey, bringing them visibly into line with the rest of the Fleet.

The role of hydrography has been strengthened by the RN overhaul of amphibious capability over the past decade or so, allowing surveyors to prove their worth over and over again in recent times.

For example, in 2003 veteran coastal survey ship HMS Roebuck was approaching the end of a three-month deployment to the southern Gulf, and facing the axe on her return to the UK.

But as war loomed in the region, she was diverted to the northern Gulf and her deployment extended.

In less than six weeks the little ship surveyed the main amphibious landing zone – an area larger than Hampshire – and plotted everything on the sea bed larger than a coffee table.

Her crew continued to gather data until the day before the invasion, and with the ship able to produce her own paperwork, new sets of charts were printed on board and distributed to Allied warships as soon as the data had been analysed.

Hydrographers discovered deeper water inshore than older charts indicated, which meant that aircraft carriers and assault

ships could move closer in, reducing helicopter flight times by ten minutes and speeding up the airborne assault.

Roebuck later went on to clear the route to Umm Qasr for humanitarian aid, and surveyed the port itself – the first such work carried out in 40 years.

Even in the 21st century some RN survey work is pioneering in nature – no survey data has been gathered for sections of the African coast, for example, and part of the task of HMS Endurance is to probe the waters around Antarctica for hidden dangers, providing safe routes for the burgeoning deep-south cruise market.

The key to military success is preparation, and Lt Cdr David Wyatt, who is head of the Hydrographic Unit at the HMTG, cites the Australian experience in East Timor as a classic example of the important role his students will one day play in their navy.

"Going into East Timor was described as 'the biggest Australian amphibious operation since D-Day' by one of their admirals," said Lt Cdr Wyatt.

"They did all the planning, then checked the preferred beach and discovered that they could not use it."

"In just one night they found an alternative beach, surveyed it and allowed the amphibious force to go in without incident."

Apart from Endurance in the Southern Ocean, almost all the efforts of the rest of the survey ships are directly in support of military tasks, so newly-trained sailors and officers are genuinely one step from vital front-line duty when they emerge from the doors of the HMTG.

But it is not all about humming number-crunching computers in calm 'mission spaces' – lean-manned ships such as Echo and Enterprise still require some more traditional sailor skills such as watchkeeping, machine gunner and boat crew.



● (Above) Surveyor recorders set up a tide pole just off a shallow beach in Antarctica; HMS Endurance's motor boat James Caird can be seen in the background
Picture: PO(Phot) Chris Brick

● (Left) Pictured on Nimrod, one of Endurance's motor boats, LS(SR) Kerry Collins (left), LET 'Robbie' Robinson and AB(HM) Lee Churchill took data on tidal flows over a two-day period at the tricky entrance to Deception Island at the beginning of this year
Picture: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow

● (Below) CPO Dave Sharp carries out survey work at the British Antarctic Research Base Rothera earlier this year, with HMS Endurance far left of the picture
Picture: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow



**Next month
– Looking to
the skies**

Cold fleet

HMS CORNWALL is used to playing a supporting role.

She is a frigate, after all – and although as a Type 22 she is more than capable of acting as flagship (most recently for the Allied CTF 158 task force in the Gulf) she continues the RN tradition of frigates as workhorses of the Fleet.

But that is not the case with HMS Ark Royal.

She is a *bona fide* Death Star, the sobriquet given by smaller ships to the carriers, which suck in all the attention and leave others in their shadow.

But

this time the Ark is also playing a supporting role, as a helicopter carrier to the assault ship twins Albion and Bulwark which led Exercise Armatura Borealis along the coast of Norway.

While Bulwark was flagship for Commander Amphibious Task Group, Cdre Peter Hudson, Albion acted as command ship for the maritime component commander of the exercise, Maj Gen Gary Robison RM, Commander UK Amphibious Force.

So, a back seat for the Ark then?

Far from it. You name it, they got it – air attacks, fast boat attacks, submarine attacks; just about the only thing not thrown at the task group was a cavalry charge.

On top of that the carrier was supporting 824 Naval Air Squadron's operational training, so squadron engineers, aviators and the carrier's flight deck crew had to endure bitter cold and long dark hours while ensuring the aircraft were up to the task – and the Merlins, once airborne, played their part in tracking 'enemy' submarines and fast attack craft, as well as ferrying people.

One of those underwater threats was a British T-boat (main picture) which probed the task force's defences as the assault ships prepared to deliver their cargo of Royal Marines ashore.

So, back to Cornwall, given the job of supporting the landings, providing gunfire support and protecting the capital ships.

She was also a well-armed forward operating base for 3 Commando Brigade as she had her own force of 80 green berets – most accommodated on camp beds in the hangar.

It was quite a change from last year's eventful deployment to the Gulf, as noted by her CO, Cdr Jeremy Woods.

"The difference in conditions between our operations last year and on Exercise Armatura Borealis now could not be greater, but this really illustrates the flexibility of a capable ship such as HMS Cornwall, and the relevance of naval power in the modern world.

"We are just as at home up here, working close inshore, putting troops on the beach in the dead of night while fighting off an air raid, as we were protecting the oil platforms in the Gulf."

With the end of the exercise the 25 vessels of various nations went their separate ways.

For Ark that means a brief stopover in Scotland before she deploys to America to work with the US Marine Corps.

Pictures: PO(Phot) Jonathan Hamlet



● The Northern Lights illuminate Ark Royal



● HMS Cornwall in Norwegian waters

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Ice cold



DARKNESS rules. Distant lights of scattered houses struggle to punctuate the night sky that is rent by the milky-green slash of the Aurora Borealis.

A hand pressed to the window in Flyco can feel the warm air that slews down the glass to ward off a fractal screen of ice. HMS Bulwark is in Norway, along with her sister ships Albion, Ark Royal, Mounts Bay, and Cornwall, being put through her paces amid the fjords and mountainous isles of the Scandinavian country's Arctic north in Exercise Armatura Borealis.

Bulwark has emerged from the cocoon of refit to become the high readiness amphibious flagship and Norway is where she is testing her wings.

And it's not just the ship which is being brought back to speed. Almost three-quarters of the assault ship's company have joined the warship in her fallow period in the hands of DML at Devonport Naval Base – including her commanding officer Capt Jeremy Blunden.

"This is the first time I've been involved in amphibious warfare as commanding officer," he said.

"I've never done this sort of stuff before, so I'm learning as well – as much as the AB who joined the ship last week.

"We are new to the game, we are learning how to do this. This exercise is the final proving ground for HMS Bulwark as amphibious flagship. Out here we are proving to ourselves that we can maintain and sustain the ship in a higher state of readiness.

"We have had to hone our warfighting skills."

Heading up the ships involved in the wargames off the coast of Norway, Cdre Peter Hudson, Commander Amphibious Task Group, is no stranger to the Navy's newest assault ships.

He said: "Since I commanded HMS Albion there has been a staggering leap in capability in both Albion and Bulwark.

"This challenging environ-

ment allows us to really stretch these ships. And more lessons will continue to be learnt and these ships will continue to evolve."

Armatura Borealis has brought together four of the Royal Navy's weighty amphibious ships – HMS Bulwark, HMS Albion, RFA Mounts Bay and HMS Ark Royal (in her converted helicopter assault ship role), into the somewhat cramped confines of Norway's Arctic coastline.

The British amphibious ships are bolstered by various other nations, including a Dutch task group featuring HNLMS Rotterdam – the inspiration for the RFA's Bay class – and two Belgian minehunters.

In addition, a British and a Norwegian submarine patrol the clear waters and Type 22 HMS Cornwall bolsters the power of the Task Force.

Away from the ships, the shores of Norway throng with clusters of Royal Marines from many units, but predominantly 45 Commando – all enjoying the bracing pleasures of Arctic training in the Scandinavian ice and snow; and nestled amid the mountains beyond, the men and women of the Commando Helicopter Force are flourishing amid the rigours of their Clockwork deployment to Bardufoss' climactic challenges.

These weeks of exercises have brought almost 4,000 RN, RM and RFA personnel up to Harstad and its surrounding regions.

This is the first taste of the Arctic for many people on board Bulwark, and although the ship had played host to the battle staff 18 months earlier, it was in the very different conditions of the Gulf.

In fact, the warm seas of the Mediterranean and east of Suez are the expected environments of much of the Navy's fleet in current global operations, not the Arctic which recalls the legacy of the long-ended Cold War.

"It compels us to think harder, think deeper, think laterally," said Cdre Hudson.

He added: "We have an impressive amphibious task group, with elements of the

Although the Cold War is over, war in the cold is not. The Royal Navy and Marines are testing their skills. Exercise Armatura Borealis is the Navy's amphibious flagship HMS Bulwark as pace.

Royal Navy held at high readiness, at the forefront of contingent capability.

"If we are to keep that capability recharged and fresh, we need to do challenging exercises like this."

It's a point echoed by Bulwark's CO: "We are proving our ability to operate in cold climates.

"We are a worldwide Navy, capable of operating in all conditions, whether arctic, temperate or jungle. We are proving we have the full range of capabilities in those conditions.

"We are revisiting lessons from previous deployments, maintaining the level of experience across the Royal Navy – should we be called to a crisis to somewhere like this, we have a body of expertise that could mount any operation.

"These exercises are few and far between, we need to make use of training opportunities when they come up."

So up on the bridge of the assault ship the navigating team are working long hours keeping a wary eye on the 'opportunities' offered by the Narvik coastline.

To quote Douglas Adams' Slartibartfast, the "lovely crinkly edges" leave little room to manoeuvre for ships of the size of the amphibious task group – a fact cheerfully acknowledged by Bulwark's Navigator Lt Cdr Chris Nelson: "In the Channel if something happens you can simply turn right and head out to sea. You won't hit land for at least 20 miles."

He indicates the snow-covered land visible from each of bridge windows, "Here it's challenging because there simply isn't an escape route."

Lt Adam Ballard, the deputy navigator on board Bulwark,

pictures: la(phot) pepe hogan, po(phot) jonathan hogan





n Norway

ended over a decade still a theatre for which lines hone their fighting ra Borealis has drawn fighting forces up to the ven reports from assault the exercise gathers

admits: "It is very well charted up to ¼ mile off the beach. But that's where we like to go. And there are some uncharted small rocks out there..."

"It has very extreme polar weather," he added. "The visibility can be absolutely clear, but then ten minutes later, a massive snowstorm sweeps in and there's no visibility."

"We're suddenly confronted with the fact that we can't see anything."

"This is our first big tester," said Lt Cdr Nelson. "A significant number of senior people have changed around. But the sailors are on a four or five year draft to the ship - they have stacks of experience."

For now the exercise is in the Wader package, as movements and transfers are practised in advance of the onslaught of the Raider phase.

"It becomes less scripted - that's when we start earning our pay," commented Lt Cdr Nelson wryly.

Of course, the dramatic changes in weather are not just an issue for the navigators on board the warship; the challenges of the cold are a theme running through the heart of the ship, from the upper-deck and seaboard teams who operate in it, to the weapon engineers who require their equipment to operate in it, down to the chefs who have to cater for those who operate in it.

Not to mention the issues that come when a ship's company is practically doubled with an embarked military force (EMF) and battle-staff, all with specific physical and technical requirements.

"It's a really good test for all the equipment we have. The ship's company don't fully loadtest the system. When the

battlestaff arrive they push it to the limit," said deputy weapons engineering officer Lt Mark Quinn pragmatically.

"The key is good early communication and a lot of planning. The other big challenge for the team is getting the equipment downtime to maintain the kit with so many more users on board."

"There's a huge challenge involved," said Capt Blunden. "Reacting to the embarked staff and EMF, giving them the communications support that they need, a huge amount of IT support, that we can feed them and sustain them, operate the boat groups to land at a high tempo, logistics support to the EMF, medical and engineering support. Just keeping track of all this is task enough."

"It places quite a strain on certain parts of the ship, cooking for a larger number of people, sustaining them. It's feed, maintain, support - simple things like being able to provide enough hot water for them so that they can shower."

"Bringing the whole of that together is really quite a challenge. We're trying to plan ahead, think about all of the 'what ifs'."

"And so far it has worked extraordinarily well."

Planning began months before the assault ship headed north - lessons learnt from other ships in the Arctic were checked, a flurry of orders for protective cold-weather clothing despatched, the grease for the guns switched for a freeze-resistant brand, briefing on cold weather injuries, the list goes on...

But the fine detail of the preparations have paid off in the cold. CPO(AH) Andy Lewis looks out over his domain, Bulwark's flightdeck: "The cold conditions were a shock to the system, but we were well-briefed."

"Obviously it's a very tiring environment - an hour out here makes you incredibly tired. But with flight awareness, you have to stay alert all the time."

"But this is a close-knit team and we're all keeping an eye on one another."

Once the ship earned her 'blue

nose' on arrival in the Arctic, routines changed as the deck teams had to limit their exposure to the cold atmosphere and the galleys whacked up the number of warming hot meals.

These are the same logisticians who are dealing with a ship's company almost doubled with the EMF, and when absent from the galley or offices can be found monitoring the dock, hauling ropes as the ship comes alongside, or veiled by masks in firefighting gear.

WO Nick Battley, logistics officer catering services, admitted: "This stage of the exercise has a relatively stable notice of people moving. When it goes into free play, then it's all very short notice - and our numbers change dramatically."

"But the watchword of the catering services department is flexibility. Always has been, always will be."

Royal Marines being Royal Marines, the green berets of 4 Assault Squadron, Bulwark's resident landing craft unit, are relishing the Arctic experience.

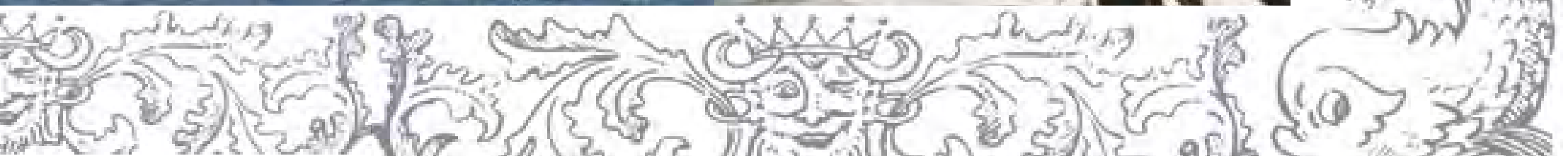
"I love it. Out here we get to do the things we're meant to do - hitting the beaches, getting the lads and vehicles ashore," said Mne Marty Barrett.

As the exercise draws on to the main drama, Bulwark's CO is clear on what it will show: "Bulwark is back in the front line as the high readiness LPD."

"Her company are well trained, well motivated and ready to undertake any task."

"That's what the Royal Navy does; that's what this ship is capable and ready to do."

● **Pictures from top left: A view from the cockpit over Norway; 4ASRM landing craft carry tracked vehicles to the Harstad shore; clearing snow from the flightdeck of Ark Royal; ET(WE) Sam Roberts wraps up warm to man the minigun on Ark Royal; RFA Mounts Bay, NOCGV Andenes, HMS Cornwall, HMS Bulwark and HMS Albion; the snow falling on Bulwark's flightdeck; and HMS Cornwall on officer of the watch manoeuvres**



42 and 45 at 30° below zero



● *Waders of the lost Arctic...* Royal Marines of 45 Commando conduct wader drills on an isolated Norwegian beach during *Armatura Borealis*
Picture: LA(Phot) Nick Tryon, 45 Cdo

WE HAVE deliberately chosen to focus on the 'skimmer' input to this year's exercises in the Arctic Circle rather than the Royal Marines who traditionally grab the headlines in Norway.

The Royals were there in force again in 2008 – a good 1,500 of them.

So it would be unfair and rather rude to ignore them. Plus they have big guns and wield daggers...

With 40 Commando locked in mortal combat with the Taleban, it fell to 42 and 45 Commandos to grapple with the joys of fighting in the most unforgiving of environments under the umbrella of their parent unit, 3 Commando Brigade.

Many of the green berets are Arctic veterans (some were on their tenth trip); others were Arctic virgins, which meant earning their blue noses and a bit more to boot.

Veterans need reminding and novices need teaching about living in such bitter cold, so training for the Royals was split into three distinct phases – survival, mobility and combat – in the three-week Cold Weather Warfare Course.

Survival comes first: experienced RM mountain leaders teach their 'flock' the basics of life in the Arctic, leaving weapons firmly at home. Avoiding cold-weather injuries such as frostbite, coping with avalanches, maintaining kit – all these nuggets of information based on more than half a century of operating in Norway were imparted by the mountainmen.



The ski (or pusser's plank) is key to mobility in the snow. It is not only man which moves by ski, but also much of his kit. Four-man teams haul the bare necessities – tents, stoves, food, fuel – on sledges, known as pulks. Pulks are heavy – and add to the commando's already onerous burden; the Bergen packs on the men's back can weigh up to 100lb fully loaded.

Luckily, there are man-made beasts to ease the burden. The BV tracked vehicles are tried and tested kit.

They can tow up to 16 men at a time in a manoeuvre known as 'ski jorring'.

So, we've mastered survival and moving, time for the fighting. Everything is slower and more cumbersome in the Arctic: breaking contact on skis, for example, is far more physically demanding than in a temperate environment. Still, by the end of three weeks of rigorous training, the Royals were able to conduct 'attacks' in company strength.

And as the old Royals' saying goes: If you can fight and survive in Norway, you can do it anywhere.

Of course, not all the Royals slither around on skis or skulk in foxholes carved out of the Norwegian snow.

There is a sizeable contingent with the amphibious force: Albion and Bulwark each have a permanent RM assault squadron.

Moving from ship to shore is always a challenge, a challenge which intensifies among the fjords in winter.

A small team is sent inshore initially in small boats to conduct a recce, which includes sending two swimmers into the water (briefly, admittedly, given the temperature in the Arctic).

Thanks to good charts, the Royals know the rough outline of the shore, but for accuracy manual soundings are needed from those swimmers.

Once they're happy, they mark up potential landing sites with white or infra-red lights.

"It's good to get on the beach and crack on.

Every situation is different, we've got to try to second guess what will be thrown at us every day," explained beach master C/Sgt David Bartholomew of 4 Assault Squadron RM.

"In five minutes it can close right down and potentially we're looking at a survival situation.

"Batteries, navigation aids, GPS – the cold sucks power straight out of them. We keep the vehicles running to keep the batteries charged."

● *Fire in the night...* The mortar troop of 42 Commando let rip with their weapon hauled on a BV trailer at the Porsangmoen range
Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Faulkner, 42 Cdo

Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Faulkner, 42 Cdo

Campaign keeps veterans informed

VETERANS from the South West – including former RAF serviceman Cllr David James, the Lord Mayor of Plymouth – were presented with Veterans Badges at a ceremony which launched a two-week campaign to publicise the work of the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency under the Veterans-UK name.

Veterans Minister Derek Twigg handed out badges at the presentation on board HMS Portland at Devonport Naval Base, accompanied by the Deputy Lieutenant of Devon, Lt Col Tim Courtenay, in the presence of over 30 representatives from local ex-Service organisations.

Veterans-UK was launched in April 2007 to provide a focal point for accessing services for veterans from the many different sources of help available.

The first services using the name are the Veterans-UK helpline, 0800 169 2277, and website www.veterans-uk.info – providing advice on issues such as disability pensions, benefits, housing, medals and much more.

The Veterans Welfare service is also available to provide one-to-one advice, in the home if needed, including liaising with local authorities, finding local support groups or even just helping with completing forms.

The Veterans Badge was launched in May 2004 for World War 1 and World War 2 veterans. Since then availability has been gradually extended.

Veterans wishing to apply for a badge should contact the Veterans-UK helpline on 0800 169 2277.

Postal applications go to Veterans Services, Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA), Norcross, Blackpool, FY5 3WP.

Applicants should provide their name, address, date of birth, service number, period of service and theatres of service.

Engineering firm marks bicentenary

ENGINEERING company D Napier and Son celebrates its bicentenary this year, one of the highlights being a special weekend display.

Napier produced many innovative designs, including stamp-perforating machines, cars and aero and rocket engines.

They also produced the Deltic engines which powered the Navy's Dark-class patrol boats.

For details of Napier Powerex 200 on June 21-22 at the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre at Quainton, see www.napierheritage.org.uk



The Buccaneer is nursed through the outskirts of Leicester in March 1988

Anniversaries for Buccaneer

TWO anniversaries for an iconic Naval aircraft have been celebrated at the Newark Air Museum.

A set of temporary markings has been unveiled on Blackburn Buccaneer S1 XN964 to highlight 50 years of the aircraft and 20 years since this particular machine came to Newark.

Originally owned by the Loughborough and Leicester Air Museum, it was bought by Newark and transferred as a wide load early on a Sunday morning in March 1988.

The temporary markings – an unusual departure for the museum – were designed by the man leading

the restoration team, Mick Coombes, and will stay in place for around three months until the bomber's original 801 NAS markings are reapplied.

The museum is also seeking information on a famous mission which XN964 was part of – the efforts to break up wrecked supertanker Torrey Canyon off Lands End in March 1967.

Records show the Buccaneer flew missions from RNAS Lossiemouth and RNAS Brawdy – if anyone has details or photographs, please contact Mick Coombes at Newark Air Museum, Winthorpe Showground, Newark NG24 2NY, tel 01636 707170.

USS Slater honours wartime RN frigates

A VETERAN was able to take a big step back in time when he and a colleague visited the United States for an ex-Service convention.

Don Hitchcock, chairman of the Captain Class Frigate Association, travelled with Association treasurer Ralph Parkes-Pfeil to Albany in New York State for the 32nd DESA (Destroyer Escort Sailors Association) Convention.

The event focussed on the USS Slater, the last remaining Destroyer Escort of the 563 built at yards around the US in 1943-45.

Of these, 78 were allocated to the RN under Lease-Lend, and were named after Nelson's captains.

As the RN ships did not have torpedo tubes (enabling them to carry more depth charges), they were reclassified as frigates.

Although some of the American ships went on to see service in the Korean War, Vietnam and the Cold War of the 1970s, the USS Slater is the last survivor of the design.

She had been sold to the Greeks in 1951, and with her active life over, she was the subject of an ambitious recovery programme by DESA.

She was towed from Greece to New York, where she underwent a transformation to take her back to her classic fighting configuration.

Original parts were found in Mexican scrapyards, and a team went south to fetch them back in two huge pantechinons – a 1,700-mile journey each way.

She now sits at Snow Dock on the Hudson River in Albany, but although she looks well, her hull is becoming increasingly fragile.

The cost of dry-docking and repair work is put at around \$3 million, and one aspect of the visit by the British pair was to help

raise the profile of the American heritage appeal – and to mark the overlap between the interests of DESA and the Captain Class Frigates Association (CCFA).

"By helping them we can help ourselves to have a visible memorial to all of the 78 frigates, the 17 we lost and over 700 British sailors who died and are now remembered on the CCFA Roll of Honour," said Don Hitchcock.

"I cherished the conducted tour of the USS Slater, and stepped back to being 19 years old again.

"The mess decks, the WT room – I was a coder there – the chart room with HF/DF in place, the original radar and simulated ASDIC had all the appearances of a World War 2 frigate.

"Time went into reverse and memories, stowed away for over 60 years, flooded back

"The USS Slater will be a permanent memorial to UK-US co-operation and the endeavour to protect seaborne trade during World War 2, and eventually to mount a return to the European mainland and secure the island bases in the Pacific theatre," added Mr Hitchcock.

As the representative of the CCFA, Mr Hitchcock was invited to speak to supportive Congressmen, to appear on TV and to address the AGM of the DESA.

He also invited DESA representatives to the annual CCFA reunion in Warwick, which takes place on the first weekend of this month.

The two Britons took part in a memorial service on board the Slater, dropping white carnations into the Hudson River in memory of Captain-class frigate sailors who died in the war.

As survivors from each of the lost American ships also dropped carnations into the river, a volley of rifle shots was followed by

a three-gun salute from Slater's main armament.

"The last time I had heard the 3/50s go off was in 1945 – a gap of 62 years," said Mr Hitchcock.

To support the USS Slater or send a donation, contact Mr Hitchcock at 101 Kenilworth Road, Balsall Common, Coventry CV7 7EU.



Big Cig is left out in the cold

HMS ENDURANCE has played her part in No Smoking Day by giving Big Cig the cold shoulder.

For Big Cig's third appearance with the RN he was escorted to the ice patrol ship by CINCFleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, who was visiting the Red Plum.

Once there he was dumped on

a passing iceberg by the ship's medical team, as pictured above.

Principal Medical Officer Surg Lt Cdr Matthew Turner thought Antarctica was an ideal place to quit.

"Either it's a crystal clear sunny day and it's almost criminal to pollute the environment with the

smoke, or it's blowing a gale and is -20°, and it's just too cold to stand shivering on deck," he said.

The Endurance picture was used by the No Smoking Day health charity in its annual publicity campaign.

Ten sailors on board Endurance have stopped smoking this year.

TRI-SERVICES AND FAMILIES HOLIDAY CENTRE

The Nuffield Centre is a Tri-Service personnel and families accommodation facility open to staff on a four to six month maximum stay. The centre is located at Linton 10 on the edge of Linton. The centre offers a range of services including a large restaurant, bar, and a large indoor swimming pool. The centre is open to all members of the Tri-Service community and their families. The centre offers a range of services including a large restaurant, bar, and a large indoor swimming pool. The centre is open to all members of the Tri-Service community and their families. The centre offers a range of services including a large restaurant, bar, and a large indoor swimming pool.

The Nuffield Centre also offers a range of leisure and recreational facilities for staff and their families. The centre offers a range of services including a large restaurant, bar, and a large indoor swimming pool. The centre is open to all members of the Tri-Service community and their families. The centre offers a range of services including a large restaurant, bar, and a large indoor swimming pool.

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TEL/FAX: 01248 718362 or mil 95581 7962

www.nuffieldanglesey.org.uk

email: facilities@nuffieldanglesey.org.uk

CLASSIC JACK

BY TUBS



● This watercolour, *Up Spirits*, was painted by Derek Norris, of King's Lynn, to celebrate the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar

On a string and a prayer

PERMIT me to continue the saga of the much-lamented demise of the Navy rum issue.

When I was a Telegraphist (S) at HMS Anderson in Ceylon in 1943-45, we had a novel way to make a glass for our tot, which, much to this ex-destroyer sailor's disgust, was made up of three parts water to one part of the real stuff.

We used a beer bottle, around which we wrapped a strong string or cord about halfway down. We saw-sawed the string back and forth until the glass got hot, then plunged the bottle into a bucket of cold water.

The glass snapped, and we had a glass for our daily 11 o'clock rum issue.

Since I was on the other side of the pond when some joker at the Admiralty decided to discontinue "Up Spirits," I never found out what was the rationale for this crime against a tradition that harks back to Nelson's days.

In my day, the only booze allowed on board, apart from our rum ration, went to the wardroom, for the use of officers only.

I never did figure out why officers could be trusted to imbibe the hard stuff and still carry out their duties on board, and we lower deck ratings could not.

— Kenneth A Tipper, Ocala, Florida

... MARY Holmes' letter (*January*) about her husband's misfortune with his tot tumbler brings back memories of my first tot (and that's all they are, just memories).

I was in Belfast when I went 'G'. At that 'tot time' there I was in the mess on my birthday, awaiting my first tot, when the Padre came visiting.

Everyone in the mess offered him a wet which he accepted, then it was my turn.

Grasping my tot in his hand the Padre wished me a "Happy Birthday" and saw it off in one amidst great merriment from the associated onlookers.

After he had atoned for his misdeed, and despite my being an atheist, he and I got on well together, sharing many quiet chuckles.

— Basil Hudson, Hanworth, Middlesex

... YOUR feature about HMS Sidon exploding (*December*) brought back memories.

We were doing sea training in HMS Porchester Castle, having completed training at HMS Ariel and one day six of us went over to HMS Maidstone to have a day out in a submarine.

Two of us went on HMS Untiring and two on HMS Sidon. The next day HMS Sidon sank! The two guys who went out in her counted their blessings they were not on board when that happened. I enjoyed my day out, my offside dropped his hat down the periscope well — which the Captain really liked.

I had my first drop of rum — when the rum came up we all hung around and as there was only one glass they filled it up and passed it round and when it got to me I said "I am UA." They said: "We are all in this boat together, so have a sip" and this went on till the fanny was empty and I was very happy.

— Robin H 'Slinger' Wood, Elizabeth South, South Australia

For the benefit of younger readers, 'UA' stood for under age, 'G' for grog, and 'T' for temperance, for which the non-partaking sailors got an allowance of 3d a day in lieu of the tot.

LETTERS to the editor should always be published.

accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information.

Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph that you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permissions for us to

publish it. Given the impressive volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

Please try to keep your submissions as brief as possible — our space is limited.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



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'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Nephew honours his brave uncle

THE nephew of a soldier who died in the withdrawal from Norway in 1940 is travelling to Scandinavia to pay tribute to his uncle.

Pte Andrew Lee was a 27-year-old bugler with the Hallamshire Battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment which had been trying to hold back the Nazis in Norway.

Andrew was one of the 36-man rearguard, the last of 5,400 British and French troops to be evacuated from Namsos.

A further 6,600 had already been plucked to safety from Åndalsnes, south of Trondheim.

Early on May 3 Andrew and his 35 companions trudged aboard destroyer HMS Afridi, the last escort to leave central Norway, but soon after dawn Allied ships came under attack.

Dive bombers struck the French destroyer Bison, and Afridi stopped to haul 69 survivors from the sea, the surface of which was covered in burning oil.

Two hours later the British ship was hit by two bombs, killing 53 of the ship's company, 35 Frenchmen and 13 soldiers – including Andrew.

Amemorial in Namsos, inscribed with the names of nine RN ships and three British regiments which suffered casualties, was unveiled by the British ambassador in 2000.

The Friends of Namsos War Memorial have taken part in ceremonies in Norway every year since 2000, including the Norwegian, French and Russian PoW memorials as well as the British version, and also joined Norwegians in their country's Constitution Day celebrations.

One of those making the trip across the North Sea this year will be George Lee, nephew of Andrew and himself a PO in the Fleet Air Arm during the war.

George, who will lay flowers on the memorial, said: "It was a very sad day when I learned of Andrew's death.

"But his family knew nothing about how he died until we heard recently about the memorial and I decided to come to Namsos with my son and his wife.

"I would like relatives of men in any of the Services who took part in the campaign in Norway to consider joining us in May."

For details of the annual visit contact the Friends of Namsos War Memorial at 72 Warwick Gardens, London W14 8PP, tel 0207 603 1396 or email aajg@btinternet.com

Gift Aid plea

RNA HQ feels that following the change from covenanting to Gift Aid, momentum on Gift Aid has been lost.

The number of Gift Aid forms, from a membership of 27,680 stands at a "modest" 3,500.

HQ reminds members that this is 'free money', which has helped to maintain the annual subscription at £10.

A blank Gift Aid form is included with the February Newsletter at Annex B, and once completed, a Gift Aid declaration lasts until it is rescinded.

CTCRM welcomes LST&LCA

A "MOST enjoyable" visit was undertaken by the Devon Regional Group of the LST and Landing Craft Association to the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) at Lympstone.

For most of the group it was their first glimpse of the establishment where those who aspire to wear the green beret undertake their gruelling training.

The three-hour visit started with a buffet lunch in the Sergeants' Mess, after which

there was a video presentation encompassing the many facets of the course undertaken by a Royal Marines Commando in training.

The visitors were then taken on a tour of the centre, including the CTCRM museum.

After a brief pause for light refreshments, the group dispersed for photographs and then headed for home.

Group chairman S/M Maurice Hillebrandt said: "Such was our pleasure at this event and the warm treatment we received from

all whom we met at CTCRM that it was felt that the occasion might be commemorated by presenting our group plaque for addition to many similar plaques embellishing the wall of the Sergeants' Mess.

"This was undertaken on February 26 when I and the Group Regional Representative, together with our wives, presented the plaque to the WO1 (RSM) in the presence of a couple of dozen or so sergeants assembled for the brief ceremony."

Blackpool gears up for Veterans Week

BLACKPOOL is gearing up to host a week of celebrations in honour of veterans.

Veterans Minister Derek Twigg announced at the end of January that the seaside town had beaten off stiff competition to win the event.

And now the local council, in partnership with the Fylde Ex-

Service Liaison Committee, has committed to "honour and unite all who served."

Building on the experience of the three previous events, Blackpool has unveiled an ambitious programme of events which will take place over nine days from Saturday June 21 to Sunday June 29.

While the veterans will take centre stage – whatever their age

– there will also be plenty to keep the rest of the public entertained.

The week will begin with military role demonstrations, exhibitions and recruitment opportunities – and it is hoped that one of the highlights will be a beach assault and landing by Royal Marines.

Throughout the week veterans will be invited to deliver talks and readings recounting their experiences, and a local cinema will be stage free screenings of films depicting life during World War 2.

The famous Pleasure Beach amusement park is planning – weather permitting – to hoist a huge banner on The Big One, Europe's tallest roller coaster, displaying the Veterans Helpline number.

The amusement park is also offering a two-for-one promotion for veterans during the week, helping to attract a younger audience.

Wednesday June 25 will see a veterans gala dinner, and there will also be air races, a golf day, cricket match and beach show all geared to veterans of all ages.

The town's Victorian North Pier will be the main focus for National Veterans Day itself – Friday June 27.

Golf buggies will help transport

veterans along the pier which will act as a centre for information, socialising and entertainment, while a stage and screen will be erected on the promenade close to the pier.

Announcing the decision in January to award the event to Blackpool, Derek Twigg said: "Veterans are of all ages with a variety of different backgrounds, and they all deserve our recognition.

"Not only have they honoured their commitment to defend our country's interests in service, they have also used their skills and experiences to enrich their local communities.

"With the establishment of an annual Veterans Day, each year June 27 is our chance to recognise the achievements of those veterans who live amongst us."

Southport will stage its own Veterans Day on Sunday June 29 in Princes Park, in conjunction with the Veterans Agency and the Veterans Fund.

The day will include contributions from Forces careers teams, cadets, bands, ex-Service associations and charities, with the RNA and Sea Cadets among them.

Organisers hope this will eventually become an annual event.

Time travellers

SHIPMATES from the Wetherby branch enjoyed a trip to a Heritage Weekend in the Portsmouth area.

Their itinerary gave them the opportunity to visit all the attractions in the Historic Dockyard in Portsmouth, and to venture across the water to Osborne House on the Isle of Wight.

They also visited the most recent addition to the sights of Portsmouth, the Spinnaker Tower.

Supported by an Awards for All grant from the Big Lottery Fund, shipmates were able to share the experience with colleagues from Harrogate and Leeds branches.

The grant helped to cover transportation, accommodation and entrance fees.

Wetherby branch chairman S/M Fred Wake said: "We are not getting any younger and some are not able to visit the venues independently.

"The group supported each

other as required, reflecting the comradeship that our organisation fosters.

"The grant also enabled us to pick up locally and provide transport directly to the venues.

"We are most grateful for the support received from Awards for All."

Warwick seeks U-boat victims

WARWICK branch has been asked to help trace survivors from a ship sunk by a U-boat in 1942 – and which features in a bizarre wartime coincidence.

It has recently been established that the SS Warwick Castle, a troop transport of just over 20,000 tons, was torpedoed on November 14 some 200 miles north-west of Cape Espichel, Portugal by U413.

By a strange coincidence, this is the same submarine which sank HMS Warwick on February 20 1944 off the north coast of Cornwall.

The enemy boat survived a further six months before succumbing to depth charges off Brighton.

The management of Warwick Castle plan to plant an oak tree in the grounds of the castle in memory of the ship, and have asked Warwick branch for help in tracking down survivors of the troop ship, whichever Service they were in at the time.

Replies should be sent to AJ Coles, 41 Coventry Road, Warwick, CV34 5HN.

Writers compile list of victims

AT THEIR 18th annual reunion dinner, held in the WO&SR mess in HMS Drake, members of the Westcountry Association of RN Writers had an unusual addition to their toast to 'Absent Friends'.

Following the list of members unable to attend came the mention of those writers lost at sea.

Former Chief Writer Graham Jewell, the association's archivist, made the toast, having compiled the names of writers listed on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, showing all from the Devonport Division lost with no known grave.

Further research revealed details of the ships involved plus Christian names, official numbers, ages and where the sinkings occurred.

All told there were 107 of the branch named, from 1st Writer Riddells, who went down with HMS Monmouth at the Battle of Coronel in the early days of World War 1 to the loss of PO Writer Munn and Writer Edwards when HMS Saumarez struck a mine in the Adriatic in October 1946.

The list for World War 1 also included seven of the writers' predecessors, clerks and assistant clerks, a rank that was rendered obsolete by the formation of the Writers Branch in 1867.

A dozen writers from the Royal Australian Navy and two from the South African Naval Force are also remembered on the memorial.

Losses were not only from HM ships.

Four of the writers remembered were taking passage in troopships and another four died when the infamous unmarked Japanese ship Lisbon Maru, transporting Allied prisoners of war to slave labour in Japan, was torpedoed by the American submarine Grouper.

It is hoped that the RN Writers Association, which claims to be the world's oldest military association, having been established in 1887, can arrange for similar lists to be compiled for the memorials in Portsmouth and Chatham, now that the title of writer is no longer extant, having been superseded by logistician (personnel).

Token of gratitude

D BOAT Association secretary Mike Smith visited the Rev Albert Braithwaite at his home in Southsea to present him with an inscribed crystal decanter with the D Boats crest to thank him for 25 years loyal service to the Association.

The following day Association treasurer Jo Smith went to St Ann's Church in Portsmouth Naval Base to meet the Rev Martin Poll, who has agreed to become the D Boats' new chaplain.

Jo had made a kneeler with the D Boats crest and Silver Jubilee on the side.

The kneeler was presented to the church during the Sunday morning service.

SAMA plaque for Millom

MILLOM and District branch in Cumbria was presented with a SAMA 82 plaque at their branch meeting in January as a result of a fund-raising effort.

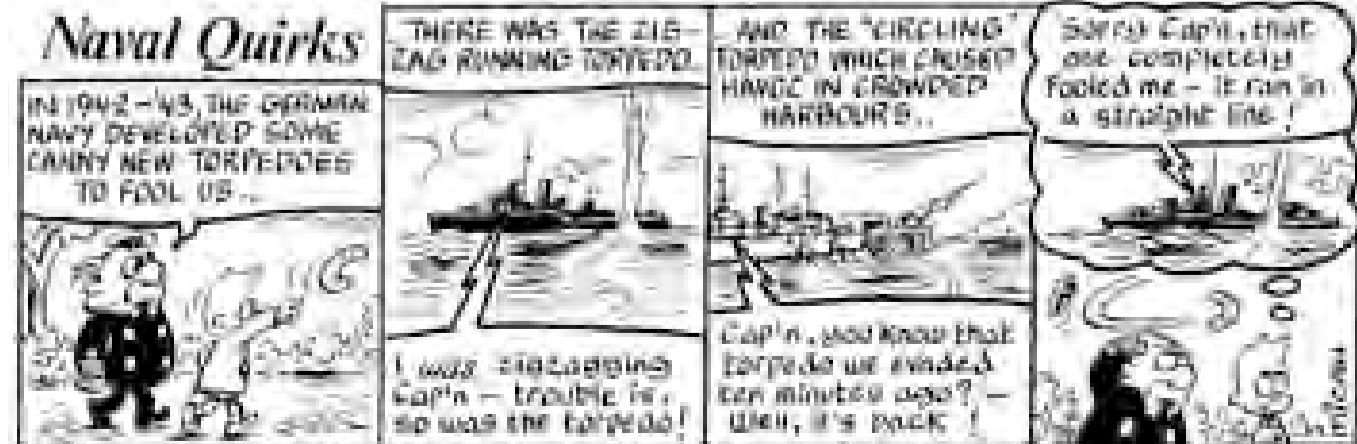
The plaque was presented to vice chairman S/M Liz Watson as a mark of appreciation for the £1,200 which the branch raised for SAMA 82 and the Falklands Veterans Foundation.

The money was raised during a dinner to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the South Atlantic war, and the evening culminated in an auction that raised even more cash.

Millom and District is only two years old, but has already raised more than £2,000 for ex-Service charities, air and army cadet forces and other local charities.



● Sport played a big part in the Naval career of World War 2 veteran Dave McGaw – but he has had to wait a long time for one of his greatest sporting achievements. The ex-PTI achieved his first hole-in-one at the age of 82 at the third hole of the Swinton Park course in Manchester. Dave joined the Navy in 1941 and served in HMS King George V until 1946, when he qualified as a clubswinger at Pitt Street in Portsmouth. He was also Senior Rating i/c Royal Tournament in 1961 and the Edinburgh Tattoo in 1962



Service recalls trench warfare

THE ANNUAL Collingwood Memorial Service will take place on Friday June 6 at the memorial in Blandford Camp, Dorset.

The trustees of the Collingwood Battalion Royal Naval Division Memorial and the president and members of the Blandford and District branch have once again invited those who wish to pay their respects to the gallant men of the Anson, Benbow, Collingwood, Drake, Howe, Hood, Nelson, Hawke Battalions and the Royal Marine Battalions of Portsmouth, Plymouth, Chatham and Deal who gave their lives in the service of their country.

The memorial, of polished marble, was originally unveiled to the memory of the captain, officers and men of the Collingwood Battalion who died at Gallipoli on June 4 1915.

Those who wish to attend should first notify Roy Adam at Camvere House, 3 Portman Road, Pimperne, Blandford, Dorset DT11 8UJ, tel 01258 453797, with details of car registration number.

Attendees will gather from midday onwards at the Anvil Hotel, Pimperne (on the A354) for introductions and lunch, and tea will be laid on afterwards at the HQ Mess Royal Signals, courtesy of the chairman of the North Dorset District Council and the Commander Blandford Garrison, Brig Ted Flint.

New chairman

BUXTON and High Peak branch have elected S/M Mike Evans as chairman in succession to S/M David Parker.

A new committee was also voted in to serve for the next 12 months.

The branch meets at the Working Men's Club in Lightwood Road, Buxton, on the first Thursday of every month at 8pm, and new members are always welcome.

Bridgend branch is forced to shut

BRIDGEND branch has been forced to close through lack of membership.

Former branch president S/M Thomas Naish announced the decision, noting with regret that the young sailor of today did not wish to support or join the association in the town.

"We had no choice but to end over 28 years service due to many of our members now being disabled or housebound," said S/M Naish.

The branch was formed in

October 1980, and the standard was dedicated in April 1983 at St Mary's Nolton church in Bridgend.

"It was only fitting that we should return our standard back to the same church for safekeeping," said S/M Naish.

"On Sunday February 17 an excellent ceremony took place with members from Lydney and Cheltenham, also local ex-Servicemen - Welsh Guards - and the WRNS standard-bearer was also present.

"The Revd Komor and others officiated and, as a life member

and ex-president of the church, I was able to thank, during my speech, all loyal members for their long service.

"During our time we made numerous friends and visited

other branches throughout the country.

"We also dedicated a lot of time and money to local charities for medical advancement - too many to mention by name."

'You may need us one day...'

A SHIPMATE from Kent is hoping to encourage serving sailors to support the Association.

S/M Mick Withington, of the Isle of Sheppey, said: "I wish many matelots would rid themselves of the concept that we are a bunch of bemedalled old chaps - I could put it in a matelot's colloquial terms but I do not think the editor would allow it.

"Well, yes, that is quite true, but we are not without a sense of humour and enjoy getting out and about together - the camaraderie that binds us together is our love of the Service.

"We all realise that the comparatively young man coming out of the Service today has nothing in common with us, bearing in mind the age difference and a young man's family commitments, but one day those will be a thing of the past.

"Although still attached to family you'll find you have time on your hands.

"Some sadly will be a widow

or widower, some will suffer from just plain loneliness, others will have to bear many aches and pains brought on by age.

"Oh yes - it happen to the fittest of us; it gradually creeps up on us.

"This is where you enjoy the association, because you will gradually build a circle of shipmates around you from far and wide simply by putting yourself out and joining in some of all that goes on and the discussions that take place.

"Do remember, oppos who are now in the Service, that you will be 'ex' one day.

"When you feel you are ready, join your nearest branch - come along.

"Because we are living longer many things beset us - you may well need us as just a friendly face to call and chat.

"You just don't know how good that can make you feel.

"Or think about being able to go to a reunion and lose yourself amongst your own."

S/M Withington cites the example of the biennial gathering/reunion of ex-matelots - no particular branch or ship - and their families and friends.

The Association takes over a holiday camp on Hayling Island from Friday afternoon until Monday morning, with entertainment laid on for all three days including an informal church service (no chaplain) with a parade of standards only in the auditorium where the entertainment takes place.

"Then, of course, there is 'Tot time', a Sods Opera, and lunch is served when we have finished," said S/M Withington.

"Then there is 'make and mend', with entertainment in the evening, finishing with great singalong, with everyone on the floor. All this for £90 - it can't be bad.

"At no time in all the years I have been going have I see anyone over the top with booze, although everyone thoroughly enjoys themselves, making great friends and looking forward to the next time."

Summing up, S/M Withington said: "There may come a time when you may well need us as a friendly face; a visit hospital or something just to stave off loneliness - there are many many reasons.

"I don't like being the prophet of doom but it could happen.

"The association will always be there for you - for £10 a year it can't be bad, can it?"

Helping heroes

ON READING about the 'Help for Heroes' charity in the January RNA circular, the Frinton and Walton branch have agreed to donate £250 to the cause, and stated that members were pleased that the National Council have adopted the charity for 2008.

Tribute to S/M Gordon

DURSLEY and District branch paraded their standard alongside that of No 7 Area to honour the passing of S/M William Gordon Taylor Harper.

Gordon was one of the stalwarts of the branch, which he joined in 1981, the year of its foundation.

Members formed an honour guard at St Bartholomew's Church in Lower Cam for the entry and exit of S/M Gordon's cortege in memory of "a wonderful shipmate who was always ready to serve the branch and always had a friendly word and smile for his shipmates."

D-Day memorial campaigner dies

WORLD War 2 veteran and memorial campaigner Billy Swift has died at the age of 85.

William Henry Swift, born in Hull in 1922, volunteered for the Royal Navy at the age of 18 in 1940.

As an HO (Hostilities Only) sailor, Billy managed to see action in many of the war's hot (and cold) spots.

He was on board the light cruiser HMS Cairo when it was sunk by the Italian submarine Axum during Operation Pedestal, the heroic and ultimately successful attempt to get food and supplies through to Malta in the summer of 1942. Billy was made an honorary citizen of Valletta in 2002.

He was on board the destroyer HMS Tuscan when she was badly damaged by a mine in the Bristol Channel in May 1943, after which he served in HMS Scourge (Russian convoys and D-Day) and HMS Bigbury Bay (Far East).

After the war Billy was instrumental in organising a number of reunions, including the 23rd Destroyer Flotilla.

As a result of this Billy and others began raising funds for a memorial to the men of the Royal Navy, Merchant Navy and Allied Navies who died during the invasion of Normandy. That memorial now stands at Hermanville.



● Billy Swift in front of his World War 2 Dodge command car in Normandy



The Royal Naval Association

Once Navy Always Navy

Unity, Loyalty, Patriotism and Comradship

Who can join?

- Full Members
Serving and Ex-Service members of RN, RM, QARNNS, WRNS, Reserves RFA and RNXS
- Associate members
Others in sympathy with our objects especially families

What does the Association do?

We:

- Support the Royal Navy
- Maintain Naval traditions
- Enjoy social activities
- Re-unite shipmates
- Remember the fallen
- Help the disabled
- Look after the needy
- Cheer up the distressed
- Stand together in unity

How to join

Write to RNA HQ
82 Chelsea Manor Street
London SW3 5QJ
Tel: 020 7352 6764
Fax: 020 7352 7385
www.royal-naval-association.co.uk



£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our February edition (right) was HMS Sabre, and the base was Gibraltar - as identified by Mr William Smith of Oxford, who wins our £50 prize.

This month's vessel was a versatile RNAS ship which first appeared in the early 1960s.

Can you name her, and name her sister ship which was launched at the same yard within three months of her? We have removed her name from the picture

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.



Closing date for entries is May 9. 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 June edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 158

Name

Address

My answers

Defence Academy links with Institute

MILITARY personnel going through the UK Defence Academy can now gain nationally-recognised management qualifications through a new partnership with the Chartered Management Institute.

The alliance means that students on the Advanced Command Staff Course (ACSC) achieve recognition for management and leadership skills through qualifications accepted by civilian and military employers.

The affiliation will benefit up to 330 ACSC students annually.

As part of the alliance, candidates on the ACSC will graduate with an Executive Diploma in Management, recognising their ability to manage performance as well as lead people and address challenges.

The partnership also gives many of the individuals the opportunity to secure the Institute's higher-level Executive Diploma in Strategic Management.

As a result of the collaboration, ACSC students will also have access to a wide range of resources designed to help develop their management and leadership skills.

Lt Col Dominic Evans, co-ordinator of ACSC, said: "The Joint Staff College strives to provide employees with development opportunities that will have mutual benefit."

"So while the management skills on the ACSC improve processes and procedures in the military, they also allow the individual to progress more quickly and confidently in their career path."

The 46-week ACSC at the Joint Services Command and Staff College at Shrivenham is designed for UK and international military officers as well as civil servants.

RN keen for uniform to be seen

INCIDENTS of abuse in Peterborough resulted in Service personnel at RAF Wittering being banned from wearing their uniform off-base – but the Royal Navy is still keen to see sailors wearing uniform ashore.

Airmen had reported being verbally abused and taunted by civilians in the nearby city, believed to be as a protest at UK involvement in the Middle East.

Strong moves have been made, championed by the National Recognition Study, to raise the profile of the Armed Forces by creating greater visibility of Service personnel in uniform.

The Naval Secretary, in support of this study, is leading on tri-Service work to define the circumstances in which uniform should be worn, and may or may not be worn in public.

The overall drive remains to strive for greater visibility of RN people in the public eye.

The key message from the office of the Naval Secretary is: "Whatever the outcome of the RAF Wittering issue, you are encouraged to continue the drive for higher visibility and to wear uniform in public."

Prime Minister Gordon Brown condemned the abuse, adding that personnel "should be encouraged to wear their uniform in public, they should be free to do so and the public will want to show their respect and gratitude."

Champions step up to find the answers

A TROUBLESHOOTER and a team of champions have been appointed to break the 'circle of death' which has frustrated users of the Armed Forces' pay and personnel system.

JPA – Joint Personnel Administration – had the tough job of replacing dozens of legacy systems, many of them bespoke and some on their last legs, to bring harmonisation and equality to pay, allowances and personnel practices across the three Services.

The £250 million system has been deemed an overall success by managers, and is now throwing up fewer problems than its predecessors.

There were problems with the first roll-out, with the RAF then the RN, partly because there was a decision to avoid overloading JPA with data from the existing systems.

Detailed information is becoming easier to extract, according to Col Jeremy Taylor, Assistant Director Military Services at the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA).

"Bringing all the systems together, we have one version of the truth," said Col Taylor.

"There is one single source of data, and we can identify how many people are in an area at a certain time, or how many – and who – are on a ship.

"We can track individuals – there is much greater visibility.

"There is also one set of training needed across the Services."

One problem which persists with JPA is not the hardware but the information which is being added – there is a greatly-increased responsibility on individuals to handle their own matters through the 'self-service' element.

"If the right data does not go in then we cannot crank the handle and get someone's pay in Euros in Germany, for example," said Col Taylor.

Some personnel have found themselves losing allowances once JPA went live, and this is in part down to the fact that there is less room for interpretation – JPA is "ruthless" in applying the relevant rules, according to Col Taylor.

"By and large we have sorted out most of the gremlins in the system," he said.

"Most of the problems are now down to human error or inputting error."

One example was the soldier who, as a result of a minor misdemeanour, was handed down a military fine in excess of £24 million – a clerical error by his unit meant the offender's eight-figure Service number had been entered into the field where the

fine should have gone.

This was picked up by the system, but it demonstrates how important it is to input the correct information.

Another, specific to the RN, concerns overpayment to Reservists, and in part appears to be down to multiple inputting of attendance claims in error.

But Col Taylor agreed that those who got stuck in the JPA's version of the doorknob runaround – bounced between their unit administrators and the JPA enquiry centre (JPAC) – were getting a rough deal.

Horror stories of people going without pay for months, or having allowances clawed back, hit the headlines.

Until now there was nowhere to go beyond the JPAC – with some turning to Forces publications or Internet message boards to vent their frustration.

But now Col Taylor said that two more elements had been added to the process, providing a safety net through which no one should now fall.

First is the Service Requirement Management Group (SRMG), which will act as a 'champion of the people.'

If a query or problem is getting bogged down, they will take the matter up on behalf of the individual – which will avoid the scenarios which saw combatants on the front line in Afghanistan using up precious phone-calls to sort out pay queries or placate bank managers.

The JPA system also now has an online BAG (Business Administration Guide) which means that many queries about allowances can be sorted with just four clicks of the mouse.

Primarily for the use of unit administrators and career managers, the BAG is a single source of up-to-date JPA information and advice.

And if all else fails, at the end of the line is a new JPA 'ombudsman' who will handle any formal complaints from individuals who are unhappy with the way they have been treated by JPA.

The Complaints Cell will not only deal with problems, but will be in a good position to spot trends and allow managers to tweak JPA as necessary, whether by means of training, software adjustments or information.

SPVA JPA service complaints are now dealt with by the SPVA

Pay Allowances Casework and Complaints Cell (PACCC).

If you are experiencing any JPA-related problems you must in the first instance contact your unit HR, who will either resolve the issue or advise you to contact the JPAC Enquiry Centre on freephone 0800 085 3600 (mil 94560 3600).

When you have exhausted all the avenues above, and if your issue has not been resolved to your satisfaction, then you may wish to submit a formal complaint in writing to the address below.

The following information must be included:

☐ Number, rank, name and Service,

☐ Your contact details (including telephone number and email address),

☐ Your unit HR contact details; Service Request or I-support number(s) and dates raised,

☐ A summary of your complaint with full supporting documentation.

The mail address is SPVA JPA Complaints, MP 600, Kentigern House, 65 Brown Street, Glasgow G2 8EX; by email to SPVA-JPA-Complaints@spva.mod.uk; or by fax to 94561 2605 (0141 224 2605).



Moving visit for civic party

SMART suits and gold chains are perhaps not the normal rig in the Damage Repair Instructional Unit (DRIU) at HMS Excellent, but then lord mayors are not usually members of damage control parties.

The Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Cllr Mike Blake, and Lady Mayoress Mrs Susie Sanderson paid an official visit to Whale Island, where they were given a tour of the training establishment, viewed the state gun carriage, and toured the facilities.

They were shown new accommodation blocks,

Phoenix Building and the Fire Fighting Training Unit.

The civic VIPs saw a practical demonstration on board a moving ship simulator at the DRIU (above).

Lt Greg Callis, RN Damage Control Officer, said: "The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress got to witness an element of the Sea Survival course in which damage control was carried out."

"This course encourages teamwork, which is important when dealing with incidents such as ships taking damage."

Painting depicts gallant Glowworm

TROPHY number 26066 depicts one of the most stirring actions by a Royal Navy ship in wartime – the ramming of German cruiser Admiral Hipper by destroyer HMS Glowworm on April 8 1940.

The encounter was by chance – Glowworm was part of a substantial force, but had turned back to search for a man overboard.

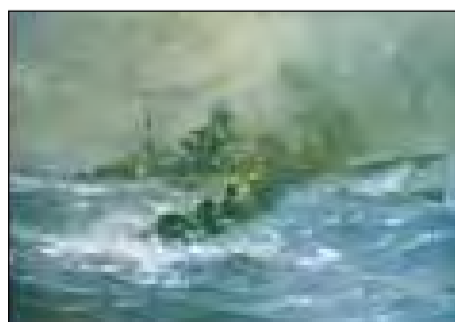
On spotting the Hipper, Lt Cdr Gerald Roope, the CO of Glowworm, made an unsuccessful torpedo attack.

With his ship severely damaged and little left in the weapons locker, Roope decided to use his ship as a weapon, ramming the German cruiser, as shown in the print (right) which is on the books of the RN Trophy Store.

Admiral Hipper was badly damaged by the Glowworm, putting her out of the war for several months.

Despite this her CO, Kapitän zur See Hellmuth Heye, was impressed by the British spirit and spent an hour rescuing more than 30 sailors who had survived the sinking of their destroyer, and ensuring they were well-treated.

Heye's respect for Roope's gallantry went further – he sent a message via the Red Cross recommending Roope for a decoration, and the British officer was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross – the first occasion the highest British military honour was awarded on the evidence and recommendation of the enemy.



● HMS Glowworm rams the Admiral Hipper



Have your shout on personnel matters

ARE you up to date with the latest personnel policy initiatives?

Have you heard about Project Fisher, the Key Worker Living Programme (KWLP), Post Operational Stress Management (POSM), the introduction of Recovery Cells, RN Fitness Test Reminder Cards, the replacement of the Naval Discipline Act by the Armed Forces Act 2006?

If not then you have probably not attended one of the Divisional Regimental Support Team (DRST) presentations or seen any of the Personnel Support Briefs (PSB) that are produced on a termly basis and distributed inside the cover of the 2-6 DVD.

You can also access a soft copy through the RNWeb intranet and via RNCom and Naval Families Federation websites on the Internet.

The DRST work from Fleet HQ and have been busy since their formation in December 2005 visiting approximately 200 units and establishments where RN and RM personnel are serving to bring them up to date with the latest information on personnel initiatives and more importantly receive feedback on your views on personnel matters.

Visits start with a half-hour Personnel Update presentation, followed by discussions in peer groups (officers, SRs, JRs) facilitated by a team member where you have an opportunity to express your opinions on what you like or dislike in the personnel field.

The discussion periods also provide an opportunity for the team to explain some of the detail and rationale of the initiatives being implemented.

Your feedback forms part of the evidence that is used to influence current and future personnel policy and to inform senior officers (the Navy Board, 2SL, CINCFleet, Heads of Fighting Arms) of the current perception of Naval Service personnel.

As an example of the effectiveness of such feedback, concerns regarding JPA in its early days were fed back and recognised at the highest level which resulted in the formation of the JPA Support Team to troubleshoot, providing extra training and guidance to administration staff and personnel managers as well as giving support to individuals by dealing directly with the JPAC Enquiry Centre (see main story, left).

In addition to going on the road, the Command WOs often accompany their respective head of fighting arm or other members of the Navy Board on visits to units and establishments, so look out for them – they are influential people and are always delighted to talk.

If you have any queries regarding personnel or executive issues and are not sure who to talk to then contact a member of the team – contact details are in all editions of the PSB – who will at least be able to put you in contact with the relevant person if they cannot answer the question themselves.

The DRST is also more than happy to present to family groups and hear their feedback – contact the team on 02392 625933 to arrange a visit.





Once upon a time at a base called Yeovilton...

MOST children enjoy a bedtime story with mum or dad, but that is not always possible in the world of Service children.

With parents employed on overseas detachment or living away from the family home, there is often something missing as the little ones snuggle up in bed.

But now a team based at RNAS Yeovilton have been working hard on a project that will hopefully make a difference to the children who face periods of separation from parents.

A recording studio has been available from the middle of last month enabling Service personnel to be recorded whilst telling a story with the use of a digital recorder.

The story is then downloaded to a computer and any mistakes are edited out.

Music and sound effects are added and the final story is put onto a CD.

A personal message can be included and the end product is a very professional-sounding story reading by the parent.

Children will be able to hear the voice of their parent whenever they want, and parents feel that they are doing something tangible for their children.

'Story Book Parents' can be a lifeline for families and could play a key role in helping to maintain the family unit during the period of separation.

Anyone going on deployment is encouraged to give the scheme a try.

The Yeovilton scheme is a version of the 'Story Book Dads' project that originated in Dartmoor Prison and has been in action for four years – that project is now a registered charity.

Dartmoor project managers have been supporting the Yeovilton venture and trained the HMS Heron team last month.

The fact that Yeovilton is leading the way in the Senior Service is down to Sarah Leach, who raised the issue after seeing an article about a similar Army project at Tidworth Garrison called 'Story Book Soldiers'.

The Heron version has been funded by the Annington Trust, which paid for the necessary equipment.

Big thanks are also due to Chaplaincy Team Leader Simon Beveridge, who agreed to the project team converting the sacristy room into the Story Book Parents recording studio.

Those involved in this project are community worker Tracey Hallett, Ruth David of the Education Centre, chaplain support worker David Garbett and Nicola Davidson, volunteer coordinator for the project.

Donations of surplus good-quality children's books are always gratefully received.

For more details about this project contact Tracey Hallett on 01935 841686.



● HMS Campbeltown, currently patrolling east of Suez

NETSO gain for deployed ships

THE RN, as a champion of Investors in People, is eager to get its people to invest in themselves.

So when HMS Campbeltown deployed to the Gulf last autumn, the frigate's Executive Officer, Lt Cdr Colin Williams, looked at options to help the ship's company do just that.

"We had had an Education Officer embarked with us during our earlier deployment to the Gulf who was received very well by the ship's company, and was deemed to be a very positive aspect of the trip," said Lt Cdr Williams.

"Naturally, when we were tasked to deploy again we were keen to get another Education Officer on board to provide the same service."

The request was put in, and during the first stages of the frigate's Operation Calash tour, Lt Andy Grierson, a Naval Education and Training Services Officer (NETSO), was embarked.

"As a NETSO my role is to support the work of the Education and Resettlement Officer on board front-line units such as HMS Campbeltown, and to provide a link to the services offered back in base port," said Lt Grierson.

"No two days on board are the same for me.

"I talk individually with up to ten members of the ship's company per day, who take the time out of their working day to see me.

"Together we look at ways that we can support their personal and professional development goals.

"This can vary from conducting Lantern exams [Literacy and Numeracy Testing and Education in the Royal Navy] to get people qualified for promotion, establishing GCSE courses on board, looking at the various civilian accreditation options available to personnel, arranging funding, arranging courses and, equally importantly, helping people to plan their resettlement.

"I also look to reinvigorate the educational system on board and, by running workshops on coaching, motivation and presentations, I help with the soft skills needed for divisional work.

"There's a misconception that Education Officers are only concerned with academic subjects, but some of the more interesting



● Lt Andy Grierson

courses I've been looking into recently for people on board include kite-surfing and belly-dancing.

"On HMS Campbeltown I have been very busy as everyone has their own personal goal that they'd like information on how to achieve.

"Another misconception is that deployments are not the best time to learn or study.

"In fact, deployments are a great time to do this. There are fewer distractions, people do find themselves with free time and there are lots of resources available.

"With increasing access to the Internet, help is just an email away.

"As well as the variety of people that I speak to, from the CO to the youngest sailor, I also get to visit the whole range of Devonport units, from the smaller Hydrographic units to the larger amphibious ships, submarines, frigates and satellite units.

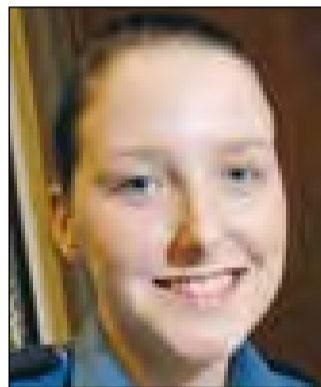
"Anywhere that there are RN personnel I am happy to go to offer my services."

Among those on board Campbeltown to have benefited from the NETSO's presence was Logs Rebecca Crowder, for whom it has opened up the prospect of advancement.

"Thanks to the NETSO I am now educationally-qualified to be promoted to leading hand – and he also helped arrange and fund a driving course for me," said Rebecca.

For AB(CIS) Amy Bennett the objective was a change of direction.

"I had been looking to branch transfer into the photographic specialisation for some time, and the NETSO was able to provide me



● Logs Rebecca Crowder

with all the appropriate information and arrange photography courses for me to study whilst I'm deployed," she said.

At the other end of his career is LS Oscar Wilde, who has almost completed 22 years in the Navy and is thinking of life outside.

"Without the advice of NETSO I would have missed out on a lot of my resettlement entitlement," he said.

"Together we have produced a plan for my resettlement that will help me in my future career."

Campbeltown's LRO, Lt Sweetman, is equally positive about the benefits of having a NETSO embarked.

"The NETSO is able to provide me with specialist advice and support that is necessary for the ship to have a well-run education department.

"He knows the ins and outs of



● LS Oscar Wilde – planning for resettlement

all of the procedures and is on top of all the latest developments.

"It is useful having a subject-matter expert to refer to when I am unsure."

Lt Grierson is part of a team of seven NETSOs, three based in Devonport, three in Portsmouth and one in Faslane.

"Over the past year we have been able to conduct over 60 visits to various units and interview over 2,000 RN personnel," said Lt Grierson.

"This demand is only set to increase as more and more ships and boats realise what services we offer and what benefits we can bring them.

"We're already getting repeat bookings as soon as we leave, sometimes up to a year in advance, as the ship wants to have us back."

That is something of which the Commanding Officer of HMS Campbeltown, Cdr Gordon Abernethy, is very much aware.

"I was very keen to have a NETSO on board for part of our deployment, just as I can understand why other units are keen to get them embarked," said Cdr Abernethy.

"They have been shown to raise the ship's morale, providing more motivated and trainable sailors, which in turn enhances operational capability."

The frigate is on a seven-month deployment which has seen her supporting Operation Calash east of Suez and combating piracy in the Red Sea before heading for the Northern Gulf in support of Operation Telic.

FOST tours US training facilities

FLAG Officer Sea Training (FOST) Rear Admiral Richard Ibbotson has had a week-long whistlestop tour of key US training and experimentation commands on the east coast of America.

At the US Naval College at Annapolis, the FOST party – which also included Commodore BRNC Cdre Martin Alabaster and Deputy FOST Cdre Nick Lambert – was hosted by the Superintendent, Vice Admiral Jeffrey Fowler USN and College Commandant Capt Margaret Klein USN.

One discussion centred on the current American focus on cultural and regional awareness training for all officers, an initiative which recognises that future leaders will often need to deploy to unfamiliar regions to undertake a wider range of tasks than has previously been needed – the Expeditionary Diplomat concept.

Admiral Ibbotson then travelled to Norfolk, Virginia, for further briefings at local commands, including a call on Commander US Second Fleet, Vice Admiral Marty Chanik USN.

One key meeting was with Rear Admiral Don Quinn, Commander Strike Force Training Atlantic, who is responsible for training and certification of carrier strike groups and ships deployed independently.

Admiral Quinn said he hopes to visit the UK soon to explore his interest in deploying US surface combatants for Operational Sea Training with FOST, particularly in FOST's tailored training for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as well as in the force protection serials.

Admiral Ibbotson called in at the new Navy Expeditionary Combat Command at Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base, and visited the Tactical Training Group Atlantic (TACTRAGRULANT) facilities in Dam Neck, where he was shown a student class undertaking 'Fleet Synthetic Training' – on the agenda were opportunities for greater integration of RN ships, submarines and aircraft into US battle group synthetic training.

Options were also explored for increased collaboration in the major certification exercises which all US strike groups must successfully complete before they deploy to the Med and Indian Ocean regions in support of Op Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and Active Endeavour, and in support of capacity building around the African continent.

During their visit to Second Fleet HQ the FOST team was hosted by Cdre Bob Mansergh, currently Deputy Director of Combined Joint Operations from the Sea Centre of Excellence.

FOST was briefed on the cutting-edge work conducted on a range of key issues including allied integration with the US Maritime HQ with Maritime Operations Centre (MOC) concept which rolls out across the USN this year.

This will provide a global network of MOCs monitoring all maritime activity and providing the backbone of Maritime Domain Awareness for the Americans.

He was also briefed on development on a range of initiatives aimed at assisting NATO's Allied Command Transformation to exploit the agility which maritime forces bring to global security operations more effectively.

After an exhausting week, FOST returned to the UK armed with a very wide range of things to think about as he and his senior staff consider the way ahead for individual and collective training in the RN.

EDUCATION

The Best Start In Life



Wonderful week at West Hill Park

WEST Hill Park School in Titchfield packs a full programme of activities into their weeks.

Recently six young orators distinguished themselves when they secured first and third places in the Fareham Rotary Youth Speaks public-speaking competition.

The school has won this prestigious contest four years out of five and headmaster Edward Hudson is justifiably proud of this record.

One team of articulate 11-year-olds spoke with passion against the mollycoddling 'Nanny State' which is making their childhood so miserable. They deplored being wrapped in cottonwool and demanded the right to play conkers without having to wear goggles.

The other team gave a 15-minute presentation on The Forgotten Heroes which secured the coveted trophy. The three spoke eloquently and passionately about the plight of the Armed Forces and their unheralded return to British shores.

The whole team, self-styled 'Service brats', told of their fears for the safety of their fathers when the latter undergo stints of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq.

As Edward Thicknesse said: "My father slipped back into the cycle of life without causing a single ripple." He reminded the audience that it was high time that we learned to separate our dislike of government policy from our

support of the Forces.

Popular author Robert Muchamore delivered a spirited talk to the pupils in Years 5, 6 and 7. Some of the children were lucky enough to be given a signed preview copy of his new book *The Sleepwalker*, the ninth in his successful *Cherub* series of spy novels.

Robert Muchamore spoke candidly about his life as a writer. His manner was easy and natural as he recalled the long journey to his present status as best-selling author. Since his visit the library has been bombarded with requests

for any of the *Cherub* series.

Year 5 pupils discovered dragons were alive and thriving following a visit by 'Reptile Celebrities' (pictured above). The children had the opportunity to meet Bearded Dragons, a Boa Constrictor and a Royal Python, and study the science surrounding their habitat and survival.

If you are looking for an independent coeducational preparatory school with an holistic approach to learning, West Hill Park would love to hear from you. Please contact the registrar on 01329 840400.

Harmony at Wells

WELLS is one of the oldest schools in England but has never been traditionalist and has always been enthusiastic to embrace new ideas.

In 1969 it became one of the first independent schools to become fully coeducational and even today Wells is one of the few coeducational schools that can claim to be genuinely 50/50. Similarly the staff structure reflects the school's commitment to equality.

The decision in the 1970s to incorporate the specialist music school means that Wells remains the only specialist music school to operate within the context of a conventional school. This remarkable innovation has contributed greatly to the special feel of Wells.

The Wells experience is founded on the principle that people should feel that they can be themselves, as long as this means thinking about other people first.

Significant emphasis is placed on acceptance. Wells is a community where people are accepted for who they are. For all, there is the chance to live in a world where being friends with extraordinary people is accepted as the norm. There is a refreshing sense of mutual respect between pupils whatever their talents.

The link with the Cathedral bestows upon the school an ethos where work, study and spirituality are combined in a creative mix that runs in harmony with the entire school family.

RM heads up Oratory

THE Oratory School is the only all boys' Catholic boarding and day school in the UK and educates boys of all backgrounds.

The school is housed in approximately 400 acres of beautiful Oxfordshire countryside close to the M4 and M40 with easy access to airports.

The Oratory has an international reputation for a first-class all-round education and as a school of only 400 boys, small classes and close supervision are provided.

At the heart of the school is the Christian vision of its founder, John Henry Cardinal Newman, the great 19th-Century thinker and writer. The school attracts boys locally and from all over the world both from Catholic families and other faiths.

The school motto of *cor ad cor loquitur* (heart speaking to heart) underlines the pastoral dimensions and caring community atmosphere of the school. Entry is invited at 11+, 13+ and into the Sixth Form.

The headmaster, Clive Dytor, a former Royal Marines Commando, believes that leadership skills play an important part in boys' education today. The school therefore offers a full range of extra-curricular activities including CCF, Duke of Edinburgh, Young Enterprise, Prefect Training, and Oxbridge preparation with 99 per cent of leavers obtaining their first choice of university.

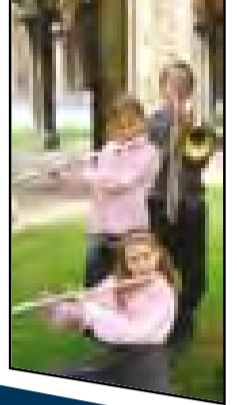
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Please contact the Registrar to arrange a visit 01329 840400

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"A thoroughly well rounded school in every respect"

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13 -18

KING'S BRUTON

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Foundation for life

Open Days - 2008

Saturday 10th May - Foundation stage & Pre-Prep (ages 3-6+) Open Morning

Saturday 7th June - Junior School Open Afternoon

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CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

For more information contact The Registrar on 01749 834200 or e-mail: admissions@wells-cathedral-school.com www.wells-cathedral-school.com

 **EDUCATION**



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- Full range of subjects following the Scottish educational system
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Visits to the School are welcome at any time

For a prospectus and further information, or an appointment, please contact:

Admission Secretary
Queen Victoria School
Dunblane
Perthshire
FK21 1JY

Tel: 01739 594247 Email: admissions@qvs.org.uk
Fax: 01739 594204 Website: www.qvs.org.uk



Apple of admiral's eye

KELLY College, founded by Admiral Kelly in 1877, is proud of its 130 years of service to the Royal Navy.

Kelly offers a co-educational full and weekly boarding, and day education for pupils aged 11-18. It is a school of 370 students of whom half are boarders. Kelly offers all the facilities of a larger school, while retaining the advantages in the individual care and class size of a smaller school.

The Preparatory School is co-educational and has a further 200 pupils. The Prep School shares many of the facilities of the senior school including boarding from Year 5.

Kelly provides a high-quality, well-balanced education with a strong commitment to a whole range of extracurricular activities. The staff are fully involved seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

The sporting record of the school is very strong; Kelly has a national reputation in swimming, rugby and athletics, while hockey and netball teams have achieved county and regional success.

At the same time, Kelly is particularly proud of its music and drama and delighted to be taking advantage of the new Performing Arts Centre which opened in July last year.

Diary focus at Rookesbury

PIPPA Harris-Burland, headmistress at Rookesbury Park School in Wickham, writes: "In my experience one of the most important, demanding and fulfilling roles in a school is that of a form tutor... if you do the job properly!

"The role of tutor means you may be required to be: counsellor, mother, father, friend, confidante, or Devil's advocate. If a child is not happy, he will not learn - it's simple. So let's KISS and Keep It Sweetly Simple!

"In my school we have tutor periods at the beginning and end of each day. The start of the day is crucial to how the rest of the day unfolds. If you haven't done your homework, or the dog ate it, you need to tell someone.

"This is a time to ensure the children in your class have everything they need for the day ahead, from exercise books to pencils. We always keep a supply of rulers in the teacher's desk. Give them out when they are needed. Every child has the right to learn.

"The end of the day is just as important. With a little help even the most disorganised child can keep their homework diary (most important book in the school bag) in the zipped top pocket.

"I ask the children to lay out their books on their desk, before transferring them into the bag. A laminated check list stuck on the front of the desk can work wonders. Ask the child to colour it in big bold colours, so he is involved in the process.

"One of the most important sharing activities is that of setting personal targets.

"When I asked my last Year 4 tutor group what they wanted to achieve, one came up with: 'Tie my shoe laces.' Another said: 'Get my spellings right every week.'

"These are great targets, but are worthless without a measurable and specific time set.

"Establish short and long term targets. And most importantly celebrate successes, in your assemblies, with parents, in the homework diary.

"We all love to hear something good. A phone call or a quick word at the end of the day means the world to a parent.

"Above all enjoy and have fun with them."

St John's scores highly

ST JOHN'S College in Southsea has been judged 'outstanding' by Ofsted, the official body for the inspection of UK schools, following a thorough inspection of the school's boarding provision.

The report rated the popular school's boarding service as 'exceptionally high quality'. In the inspection, the Ofsted team found St John's 'provides outstanding care to the boarders it accommodates'.

Areas of particular strength identified were; 'excellent relationships between staff and pupils', 'the young people are treated with respect and warmth' and described the boarders as 'confident, polite and outgoing'.

Also praised were the 'strong leadership' of the headmaster and senior staff; the 'excellent' policies, procedures and systems; the high standard of accommodation; and the large range of activities on offer.

Headmaster of St John's College, Nigel Thorne was delighted with the report and said: "We are all very proud with the outcome of the inspection.

"We work very hard to give every child a thoroughly rewarding, exciting, challenging and safe experience. The excellent report is a fine tribute to the enthusiasm and commitment of everyone involved - staff and pupils alike."

AN INDIVIDUAL APPROACH

co-educational boarding & day school for 3-19 years

Open Day
Monday 12th May
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6.00pm tour by appointment.
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Fee reductions for Service families

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www.kellycollege.com
Tavistock, Devon

Founded by Admiral Kelly in 1877 - celebrating 130 years of service to Naval families

Celebrate with Queen Victoria

ALTHOUGH Queen Victoria School in Scotland was officially opened on September 28 1909 by King Edward VII, the principles which led at the heart of the school's origins still prevail today.

To mark this occasion, QVS have numerous events planned over the year. These include:

■ Family fun day: taking place at the end of May, this fun-filled day aims to bring together all the students, parents and teachers of QVS and residents from the local community.

■ Grand Day passing out parade: this promises to be a prestigious occasion as students and teachers alike put on their ceremonial uniforms and parade in front of a very special guest (yet to be confirmed). This takes place on Friday, June 27, just before the summer break.

■ Parade Sunday: students don their ceremonial uniforms once again to mark the official opening of the school on Sunday September 28.

If you would like more information, please call 0131 310 2927 or visit www.qvs.org.uk.



St John's

An independent day & boarding school for boys & girls aged 2-18

Recently declared 'outstanding' for boarding by OFSTED

- ★ Academic excellence
- ★ Continuity
- ★ Firm foundations
- ★ Caring community
- ★ Sport for all
- ★ A chance to perform



Tel: 023 9281 5118 Visit our new website www.stjohnscollege.co.uk
St John's College, Grove Road South, Southsea, Hampshire PO5 3QW
Open Afternoon: 2:00pm - 3:30pm, Tuesday, 6 May 2008

Rookesbury Park School

Co-educational day and boarding 11-13 years, Wickham



- Balanced curriculum achieving academic excellence
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- Exceptional rural setting with easy access to M27 J10
- Excellent pupil-staff ratios and superb pastoral care
- After school provision from crèche to casual boarding
- Happy, confident and polite children

 01329 533168
secretary@rookesburypark.co.uk
<http://www.rookesburypark.co.uk>

Brontë backdrop for girls at Casterton

CASTERTON School has been established for nearly 200 years and its pupils have included Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë and cookery supremo Claire MacDonald.

Casterton continues to deserve its reputation as a leading academic girls boarding school and is a Top 20 Girls Boarding School, based on percentage of A and B grades at A-level in 2007. Intellectual rigour is at the heart of the curriculum, with intellectual character even more so. However, as an outstanding boarding school it also provides all girls with superb opportunities for sporting, artistic and cultural development. All girls receive an education which benefits from the 24 hour, seven days a week philosophy of a boarding school. It is one of the very few girls boarding schools which is full boarding from 12+ and there is a full programme of events every weekend.

Specialist speakers on a whole range of topics from careers talk about law, medicine and forensic science. Other speakers discuss a range of topics from cyber safety, to studying sport in the USA and enjoying wine at the Sixth Form Wine Society.

Trips and tours throughout the UK, Europe and further afield through sports tours to Barbados and Dubai ensure that all girls leave Casterton with the qualifications, courage, strength and creativity to face the adult world of work and life, with a life-long group of friendships.

Recent successes at the end of the Easter term have included:

- U18 tennis team are now in the Senior Girls National Finals, reaching the final eight. One of the eight is from a services family.

- The clarinet trio has reached the final of the National Pro-Corda Competition, to be held in March. Esther-Rose Bartholomew's father is in the Navy.

- Caroline Morphet has won the Living Edge Schools Competition at the Lowry Gallery in Manchester. Over 50 schools competed including the highly academic Manchester day schools. Caroline is from a forces family.

- Casterton has launched its specialist coaching courses to take place in the holidays. The coaching which begins with tennis at Easter and will feature international coaches in their sport and will be both day and residential for current and prospective pupils from 8-18.

For further details please contact Emma Clark on 015242 79299.

RHS pupils take up their oars

SIX pupils at the Royal Hospital School are taking part in two team challenges raising funds for Action Medical Research.

Matthew Jones, Michael Barker, Christopher Rigge and Huw Myatt were joined by former pupil Anna Rigge in the Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Marathon, as *Navy News* went to press.

Teachers at the school and team coaches Les Thompson and Lee Menday said: "This is more than a race - it is an adventure and the young people involved have an immense amount of determination and stamina."

"Crossing the finish line will give them an enormous amount of satisfaction and raising money for such a good cause makes it all the more worthwhile."

Joined by fellow climber Daniel McRink, four of the canoeists will be taking part in the Three Peaks Challenge in July. With the support of their driver and coach, the Royal Hospital School team will



● Canoeists from the Royal Hospital School in Suffolk

ascend and descend the highest peaks in Scotland, England and Wales in less than 24 hours.

Through sponsorship the teams hope to raise some £3,000 which will go towards vital research into areas such as premature birth, sickle cell disease and stroke.

Forging ahead at Duke of York's

VALLEY Forge Military Academy and College in Wayne, Pennsylvania, USA and the Duke of York's Royal Military school are delighted to announce the first fruits of their partnership.

Graham Sisson, a school prefect in his last year at the school in Dover, is to be the inaugural Duke of York's Fellow at Valley Forge. In this capacity Graham will spend a month at Valley Forge after the end of his studies in September 2008 acting as a staff instructor before going on to study politics provisionally at Exeter University.

Graham won this award in his capacity as Senior Under Officer in the Duke of York's unique ceremonial tradition, which stretches back to the foundation of the school in Chelsea in 1801 by the second son of George III, Field Marshal Frederick, Duke of York.

The school, along with its smaller sister school in Scotland, are the only schools in Britain which have the right to bear colours. Graham will preside over Grand Day in July 2008 when these colours will be trooped before an audience which has traditionally numbered royalty and leaders of the armed services.

Tony McGeorge, the President of Valley Forge and Charles Johnson, headmaster at Duke of York's, are keen to explore other links between the two institutions. Charles said: "I am conscious of the enormous shared history between our two great nations and their armed forces. We want to broaden the minds of our young people and increase their understanding of each other's nations."

CHILTON CANTELO SCHOOL

Chilton Cantelo, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 8BG

"The quality of the pastoral care provided by the school to promote all pupils well-being and development is outstanding"

Independent Schools Inspectorate 2006

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++ Small classes ++ excellent results ++ varied programme of weekday and weekend activities ++ Individual attention ++ stunning location ++

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CASTERTON SCHOOL

GSA BSA LEADING ACADEMIC BOARDING & DAY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS AGED 11-18

CASTERTON PREPARATORY SCHOOL: Boarding from 8+

- Casterton is one of the Top 20 Girls Boarding Schools in the UK BASED ON % OF A&B GRADES AT A LEVEL IN 2007

- Full and varied extra curricular programme seven days a week

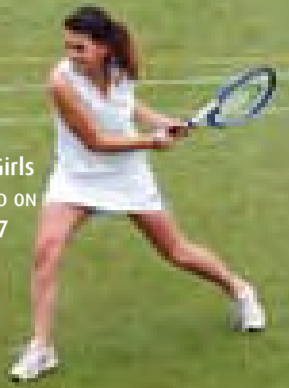
- Generous Forces Awards also available

'There is a real buzz about the place these days, a go-getting attitude'...The Good schools Guide 2008

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The Royal Hospital School

Set in 200 acres of stunning Suffolk countryside, the Royal Hospital School is a full boarding and day school offering exceptional academic and extra-curricular provision for girls and boys aged 11-18 years.



Supporting its established national reputation for musical excellence, the School has a new £3.5m state-of-the-art music school due for completion in September 2008. Every pupil also has the opportunity to enjoy the outstanding sports facilities, including RYA sailing tuition, and to pursue a huge range of interests and activities.

Fees for families claiming MOD CEA are set so that for 2007/08 parental contribution is just £1,704

Means-tested Bursaries for eligible seafaring families

Academic, Music, Art, Sport and Sailing Scholarships are also awarded

Open Morning

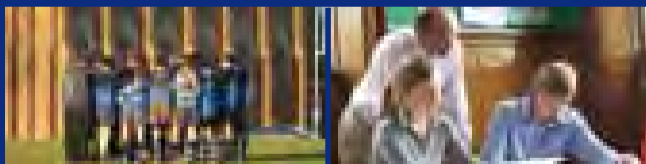
9.30am, Saturday 19th April

For further information please contact Sue Toner on 01473 326210 or admissions@royalhospitalschool.org

The Royal Hospital School, Holbrook Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 2RX

www.royalhospitalschool.org

OPENING MINDS...



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- Academic, all-rounder and music scholarships
- Entry at all ages 10 - 18 years
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Wellington
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www.wellington-school.org.uk

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E-mail: headmaster@doyrms.com Website: www.doyrms.mod.uk



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Colourful Hazlegrove

SET within 200 acres of parkland in Somerset, Hazlegrove is a splash of colour in an increasingly grey and conforming world.

It is a school that delights in children being children, it encourages individuality and it values honesty, integrity and initiative.

The school aspires to, and works towards, success at all levels whether academic, sporting, musical or elsewhere, but not at the expense of balance, civility or a sense of wellbeing.

Staff believe that education should be broad and that it is as much about doing and thinking as it is about writing and remembering; attitudes and values are as important as knowledge and understanding and that the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils is fundamental.

St John's School inspires in Sidmouth

WITH its well respected educational heritage, its beautiful location and impressive range of facilities, St John's School in Sidmouth certainly provides a happy and inspiring environment for its pupils.

The school caters for children from the age of two in its nursery department right up to the age of 13 in the main school. The school also offers a range of boarding options from full boarding to flexi or even weekend boarding for day pupils, which many of the children really enjoy.

With a strong tradition of Forces children in the school, St John's believes it is well positioned to offer the very best all-round boarding solution to Forces families and has recently launched a special bursary for the Forces.

Importantly, the school is very

flexible about their approach to boarding. Headmistress Angel Parry-Davies said: "We understand that Forces families have particular needs - we try to be as flexible as possible to make sure that the whole boarding experience is as positive for parents as it is for our children."

"The school's capacity of around 200 day children and an additional 70 boarders makes it large enough to offer a broad study programme yet small enough to retain the special family feel that is so valued by everyone."

She explained: "We treat each child as an individual and aim to prepare our children to face the future with confidence and self-assurance."

"I am often asked by people what it is that make St John's different. We always encourage people to visit because we think they will feel what a special place it is."

Cranbrook has grown from poor beginning

CRANBROOK'S story is a remarkable one. It was established in 1518 as a free grammar school for the poor boys of Cranbrook, and it received a Royal Charter from Queen Elizabeth I in 1573.

It is now translated into a thriving Voluntary Aided coeducational, academic day and boarding School catering for the top 20 to 25 per cent of the ability range.

Boarding houses are in the care of resident staff with small dormitories or single study bedrooms and generous common rooms. Since boarding is on a termly basis, there are activities arranged for each weekend.

Cranbrook expects and obtains high standards of personal behaviour and self discipline. Day students live within 10km by road of the school and this produces a school with a close knit community.

The school is situated in the small Wealden market town of Cranbrook, in rural surroundings, but with the bonus of close road and rail links to major ports, airports and to London.

Specialists in Service education

THE Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) provides a high-quality service in response to any questions or concerns Service families may have about the education of their children.

CEAS is the focus for impartial advice and information regarding the education of Service children and is available to civilian partners as well as serving parents.

CEAS will respond to direct enquiries from Service families, and will also provide information to other organisations and support services that may be working with a Service family.

It has specific expertise in boarding school advice and special educational needs.

Contact CEAS for any advice relating to your children's education, telephone 01980 618244 or email enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk.

Secret of Somerset

ONE of Somerset's best kept secrets is a small (430-pupil), ISA accredited, 'family' day and boarding school for boys and girls aged seven to 16.

Set in 20 acres of Camelot countryside, only five miles from Yeovil and Sherborne, Chilton is an affordable, friendly, flexible school where all pupils achieve.

For further information contact the school on 01935 850555.

The new Special Bursary for Forces



With a strong tradition of forces children in the school, St John's offers the very best all-round boarding solution for boys and girls from 7 to 13. In a beautiful location and with extensive grounds and facilities, St John's children live life to the full.

- **Special Bursary for Forces**
- **Flexible boarding available**
- **Co-educational, ages 2-13**
- **Academic excellence**
- **Strong sporting tradition**
- **Regular activity weekends**
- **Beautiful, safe, Devon location**
- **20 mins from Exeter airport**

For details about the Special Bursary call Angela Parry-Davies on 01395 513984 or email her at info@stjohnsdevon.co.uk



St John's School
EDUCATION FOR LIFE

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www.stjohnsdevon.co.uk

This is an outstanding school.

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- 65% A/B grades at A level. 95% of students go on to University
- Performing Arts Centre, Sixth Form Centre
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- Weekend programmes with a wide range of outdoor pursuits
- Art, design, music and drama thrive
- 75 acres of grounds

Contact the Registrar at:

Cranbrook School, Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 3JD

Tel: 01580 711804 Fax: 01580 711828

E-mail: registrar@cranbrook.kent.sch.uk

www.cranbrookschool.co.uk

CRANBROOK SCHOOL
One of the most successful schools in Britain

Shelter at Shebbear

TO many people a boarding school in the English countryside conjures up scenes of a bygone age: misty, dewy mornings, a place where the air is healthy and good for you, where children can climb trees, camp out and do the things that you read about in the Enid Blyton books.

Shebbear College strives to have the best of the old but add to it the very best of the present.

Many parents feel that the essence of boarding in the United Kingdom is best captured in a rural setting. The natural elements of peace and quiet, fresh air and space to play are combined with modern facilities housed in historic buildings.



Children's Education Advisory Service

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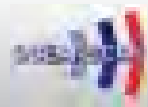
Mon 21 April 08: 1000 - 1200
 at Clyde Learning Centre,
 HMNB Clyde, Helensburgh.
 To register please contact
 Peter Shire on 01383 425225 or
 email: PShire@ctp.org.uk

Wed 23 April 08: 1000-1200
 at Regional Resettlement Centre
 Portsmouth, Rodney Block, HMS
 Nelson.
 To register please contact
 Grace Tyrrell on 02392 724595
 or email: GTyrrell@ctp.org.uk.

Thur 24 April 08: 1000-1200
 at Regional Resettlement Centre
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 To register please contact
 Chris Cowley on 01752 553409
 or email CCowley@ctp.org.uk

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The Chairman, 8 Hatherley Street, London SW1P 2YY.

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£25,134 - £30,913 pa | Ref: 2133-08-E

Southampton University's School of Civil Engineering and the Environment seeks to appoint an Experimental Officer to provide technical assistance with both its research and teaching activities. The post calls for familiarity with laboratory equipment and practice in the field of physical modelling in Hydraulic Engineering and Renewable Energy, including data acquisition and processing, model construction and operation and maintenance of tanks and other facilities used in hydraulics research.

You will be expected to contribute to the teaching and supervision of students, and assist in the preparation of proposals for funding in response to research initiatives and potential contracts. Working in close liaison with other Experimental Officers and technicians within the School's laboratories, you will also be required to ensure that research and teaching activities are performed safely and with maximum efficiency.

The School has a high level of research grant and contract income, and excellent collaborative links with industry and government. In Civil Engineering the School was awarded the highest grade (5*) in the last Research Assessment Exercise.

Requests for further details and informal enquiries should be made to Professor John Chaplin (+44 (0)23 8059 2843, j.r.chaplin@soton.ac.uk).

Please visit www.jobs.soton.ac.uk and apply on-line, or call: 023 8059 2750. The closing date for this position is 14 April 2008 at 12 noon. Please quote the reference number 2133-08-E.

www.jobs.soton.ac.uk

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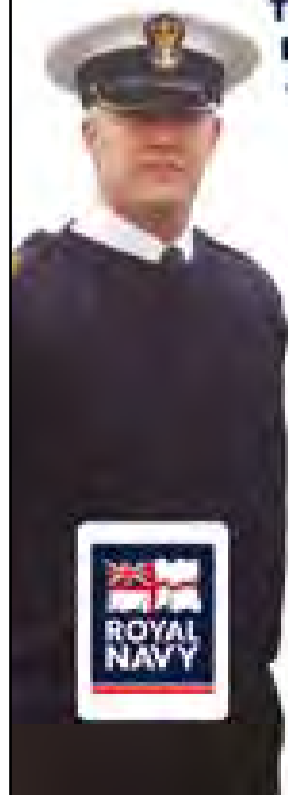
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- For 3 years with prospects for further 2 year commitments
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Pupils band together to raise funds for charity

CADETS from Lincolnshire have been raising funds for – and raising the profile of – Servicemen and women deployed in the war zones of the world.

A number of RN cadets at Stamford Endowed Schools CCF, along with a member of staff who served with the Scots Guards during the Falklands, created wristbands to raise cash for SSAFA and Combat Stress.

More than 2,000 bands have already been sold, contributing to the coffers of these Service charities.

But their creators also wanted to use them to increase awareness, and with a little help from some high-profile names, that is exactly what is being achieved.

A band was seen on the wrist of England captain Paul Collingwood during the Test matches and one-day internationals series in England, and the RAF Red Arrows lined up for the camera in front of their aircraft to publicise the campaign.

Bands have been ordered in the United States, Canada, Australia and Brunei, and Richard Brewster, from the school's CCF, said that they hope their small campaign will show that people do care about the troops in the front line, and show the troops that people back in the UK are thinking about them.

The RN section of the CCF is affiliated to HMS Nottingham, whose latest patrol has taken her to the South Atlantic.

Eastbourne and Gateshead close to prize

SEA Cadet units finished second and third in this year's St Dunstan's 'Go the Distance' challenge.

An Air Training Corps squadron from Jersey took top spot, just pipping the Eastbourne and Gateshead units to the honours.

Cadets and adult instructors from all three units are due to visit the National Training Centre in Ovingdean, near Brighton, this month, where they will receive their trophies from writer and broadcaster Peter Snow.

Also attending will be the Lieutenant Governor of Jersey, Lt Gen Andrew Ridgway.

The competition challenges cadets to cover the distance of a half marathon – 13.1 miles – in an imaginative and innovative way.

Jersey used a land/sea/air approach by walking, kayaking and flying; TS Eastbourne restored an old field gun and pulled it along the prom in their home town, and TS Flamingo pulled their boats up the River Tyne for the required distance.



● Work starts on the frame which will be used in the process to create the hull of the TS Jack Petchey

Work starts on new cadet training ship

THE contract for the new Marine Society and Sea Cadets training ship has been awarded to the Bridgend Boat Company Ltd of Plymouth.

TS Jack Petchey will take some two years to build, and the contract is for £2.5 million.

The Marine Society and Sea Cadets launched an appeal to build a 24-metre powered training craft in 2006 during the charity's 250th anniversary.

The target was reached in just over a year, thanks in no small part to a £1 million donation from the Jack Petchey Foundation.

And despite bids from yards around the world, it was a British company which came up trumps.

Work has already started on the initial frame construction, from which the yard will build the plug to create the hull.

Similar in design to the Corps' existing power training vessel, TS John Jerwood, the new ship will allow much more sea time for cadets on six-day voyages at sea.

Over her anticipated 25-year lifespan the TS Jack



● How the TS Jack Petchey will look

Picture: Houlder Ltd

Petchey will be home to around 16,000 people and 3,000 adult volunteers, and she will act as a platform for learning skills such as engineering, electronic communication and chart systems, cooking and stewarding, the need to be vigilant and keep watch, the value of living in a tidy and disciplined environment, and the need to employ sound social

and communication skills when working in a team.

Mike Cornish, chief executive of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, said: "We are delighted to have been able to award the contract for the TS Jack Petchey to a British shipyard as it contributes in a small way to ensuring those technical and boatbuilding skills for which Britain as a seafaring

nation can rightly be proud are kept alive."

Bridgend director Peter Humphrey said: "It's a large contract and will give the company a lot of stability."

TS Jack Petchey is expected to enter service in early 2010.

She will be based at the RN Reserve Training Centre at HMS President, close to Tower Bridge.

Corps supports Jersey inquiries

THE following statement has been issued by the Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC), the parent charity of the Sea Cadet Corps, regarding police investigations in Jersey:

"In relation to the ongoing enquiry into a number of allegations of historical sexual and physical abuse of children on the island, the States of Jersey Police have been investigating a number of individuals, some of whom had previously been connected with Jersey Sea Cadet unit.

"Both the current personnel at the Sea Cadet unit and the trustees of the parent charity, the Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC), in the UK have been fully supporting the investigation for some months and will continue to do so.

"The police have informed the MSSC that any connection to the unit is now playing a very minor part in the investigation.

"Assurances have also been received from the officer leading the investigation that there is no connection between the Sea Cadets and the current enquiries centred on Haut de la Garenne care home, which closed in 1987.

"Jersey Sea Cadet unit is a volunteer-led youth charity.

"The Marine Society and Sea Cadets takes its duty of care towards its young people very seriously and inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated.

"Procedures are regularly reviewed and robust child protection policies and processes are in place.

"All adult volunteers in the organisation are required to undergo a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) Disclosure before having unsupervised access to cadets.

"It is important to emphasise that the police enquiries are of an historical nature and relate to individuals rather than activities at the Sea Cadet unit.

"Safe training is continuing to take place very successfully under the current management at the unit, which is thriving and has recently been presented with a number of national and Area trophies."

Praise for TS Laforey

AN East Anglian unit has won praise at its biannual inspection for its all-round efforts.

Northampton and Wellingborough was described by Inspecting Officer Cdr Clive Smith as "literally bursting at the seams with cadets, and the dedicated supporters and staff work harmoniously to ensure the young people of Northampton and Wellingborough experience the very best of what the Sea Cadets has to offer."

Flipside of annual review



● Junior cadets from Hornchurch and Upminster display their decorated pancakes – alongside that of London Area Officer Cdr Paul Haines (on table)

THE new Area Officer for London, Cdr Paul Haines, visited the Hornchurch and Upminster Unit to carry out the units' Annual Review.

Cdr Haines was escorted by Acting CPO (SCC) Sarah Butcher, the new Officer in Charge of the unit – Sarah took over at the beginning of the year from Lt Cdr (SCC) Michael Chittock RNR, who has moved on to be Assistant District Officer for Essex District.

The commander was shown the various cadet classes taking place and saw cadets at work on their different subjects.

He was also given a comprehensive tour of the unit and its surrounding areas.

Cdr Haines was suitably impressed with what he saw, which further endorsed the unit as the 2007 winners of the Stephenson Trophy for the best unit within London Area.

Being Shrove Tuesday the Junior Cadets were busy decorating pancakes.

On the night the commander joined in the fun and decorated his own pancake.

A tale of two Bulwarks

AFTER years of following HMS Bulwark from design through to service, her namesake unit visited her for the first time while the ship was in Liverpool.

Suitable awed by the assault ship's size, the Buxton cadets were met by S/Lts Tom Horne and Jack

Bright, who took them on a guided tour from the cavernous dock through the ops room – which is bigger than TS Bulwark's main deck – to the bridge.

There was also a chance to examine the Goalkeeper point defence system before the cadets headed home.



Next month



Top bombing part 1 – a day with HMS Vengeance



Top bombing part 2 – the Naval Strike Wing return to sea



May the Norse be with you – the art of Viking warfare

Plus



Birth of a nation – the Navy in the Palestine emergency 60 years on



Lord's a-leaping



Sweet victory in the lion's den

YOU have to feel sorry for the French.

OK, actually you don't.

But losing on home turf twice in the space of 24 hours to their greatest rivals in rugby union must have been a bitter blow.

The second victory came courtesy – to a large extent – of the boot of Jonny Wilkinson.

The first, less-publicised triumph was no less sweet – and the home crowd no less hostile.

Twelve months ago, *Les Bleus* were toppled by a strong RN side in Portsmouth to lift the Babcock Challenge trophy.

This year, the fixture switched to Paris and the home of Stade Francais.

The right note was set from the outset, the French naval choir ensuring that an intimidating atmosphere was created as the final notes of *La Marseillaise* died away.

It was therefore perhaps no surprise that the Marine Nationale, playing in their traditional blue, were the stronger of the two sides in the early exchanges.

Their clever mix between hard forward-driving play and incisive lines from their back division ensured that the RN's defence was fully tested. However with 15 minutes gone, the only success for this early pressure was a sweetly-struck penalty.

Having weathered the early storm it was the turn of the British to exert pressure of their own, with the half-back pairing of 'Cowboy' John (Bulwark) and Rob Lloyd (42 Cdo) orchestrating the back play, forcing the French to show their mettle in defence.

However it wasn't long before the powerful running of the Navy's back three resulted in the first try for wing Josh Drauniniu (CTCRM) which was not converted.

Further pressure from the RN provided Rob Lloyd with the opportunity for an easy three points.

By now the Brits were playing with a

freedom and tempo that was a joy to watch.

Time and again they troubled the French by attacking from everywhere and keeping the ball alive and in hand even when under pressure.

Deft handling from the forwards ensured that the backs were often able to run at an unstructured defence and it was therefore no surprise when centre Callum McCrae (Cdo Logs Regt) picked a lovely, out-to-in angle to score a well-worked try close to the French posts. With the successful conversion from Lloyd, the RN were well placed at half time with a 15-3 lead and the local crowd largely silenced.

If the confident French crowd was quiet just before half time then the early play of the second half woke them up and reignited French hopes.

A lovely break down their right-hand 15m channel resulted in an excellent score wide out which unfortunately they couldn't convert.

The score was now 8-15, the crowd were cheering and singing for their beloved *Les Bleus* and the home team duly responded by raising the intensity of their game.

Further French pressure saw their forwards gaining just rewards for their efforts by driving over from short range to bring the scores even closer at 13-15.

The forward exchanges were such that the match referee, who was managing the game very well, decided that two of the front row needed some time for self reflection; a particularly fiercely-contested ruck had developed into a forwards' version of Entente Cordial.

With the momentum now fully with the French, the RN had to absorb sustained pressure on their own goal line.

Immense commitment from the pack ensured that the Royal Navy often had the nudge forward at a series of 5m scrums, whilst the second row pairing of Justin Doney (814 NAS) and Marsh Cormack (845 NAS) maintained an impressive work rate – an

outstanding performance given that these two players had only that week returned from deployment overseas.

Number 8 Matt Parker (CTCRM) merits special mention: he assumed the captaincy in the second half and his leadership was key in ensuring the RN's composure in the face of the French onslaught.

With the French storm blowing itself out, the Senior Service team showed that they were always awake to the opportunity of playing rugby with ball in hand.

In a rare foray into their opponent's half, they again busted the first line of defence and forced the penalty as the French tried in vain to slow down the play. Rob Lloyd landed the penalty to give the RN some breathing space as the clock ran down.

The final score of 18-13 meant that the Senior Service had become the first team to win away from home and successfully defend the trophy.

Though naturally jubilant with the victory, the Royal Navy team, through their President Admiral Neil Morissett, acknowledged it had been a very close contest.

The match had been superbly staged by the French Navy and match co-sponsors Thales and Babcock.

Everyone agreed that this was comfortably the best match thus far in the series and that the Marine Nationale continued to make rapid progress with their rugby, both on and off the field.

The reasons why they were French military champions were evident for all to see and they will undoubtedly mount a very strong challenge when the teams next meet, provisionally scheduled for April next year.

The annual challenge has quickly matured into an event that is eagerly anticipated by both teams who, although they share so many values as sailors, marines and sportsmen, know that for the 80 minutes of the Babcock Challenge there is no Entente Cordial but plenty of healthy respect.

HEADING the field at Sandown, the 'Galloping Padre' makes history as the first naval chaplain to race in the Grand Military Cup.

Sadly, shortly after LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins took this photograph, the Galloping Padre – aka Father Simon Beveridge – was run out of the race by two loose horses as he continued to head the pack past the grandstand at the famous course.

But the Bish, based at RNAS Yeovilton, is unbowed – and has entered his name in the RN history books on his mount Feeling Better.

"It was going very well until I got taken out by two loose horses and run into the rails," he said.

"I've come off horses before, but not in that way. It's not uncommon, but it can happen.

"I was really looking forward to the race – it's something I've been working towards for several years.

"While I'm very disappointed, I'm pleased that I'm still in one piece."

The padre has already made racing history as the first minister of the church to win a point-to-point – he enjoyed a 50-1 victory at Wadebridge in December.

Simon, who's been a naval chaplain for 15 years, developed a taste for horse racing while serving at Lympstone when he was introduced to a course and began riding for a local trainer.

By 2005 he had progressed sufficiently to complete his Amateur National Hunt Jockey's course at Newmarket and apply for his Category A racing licence.

"I've been racing for just one season, but I'd like to race some more," Simon added.

"I'm a chaplain, not a jockey, but racing is something I like to do."

When not seeing to the spiritual needs of personnel at Yeovilton, the padre can be found practising most weekends at John Ryall's farm in Rimpton.



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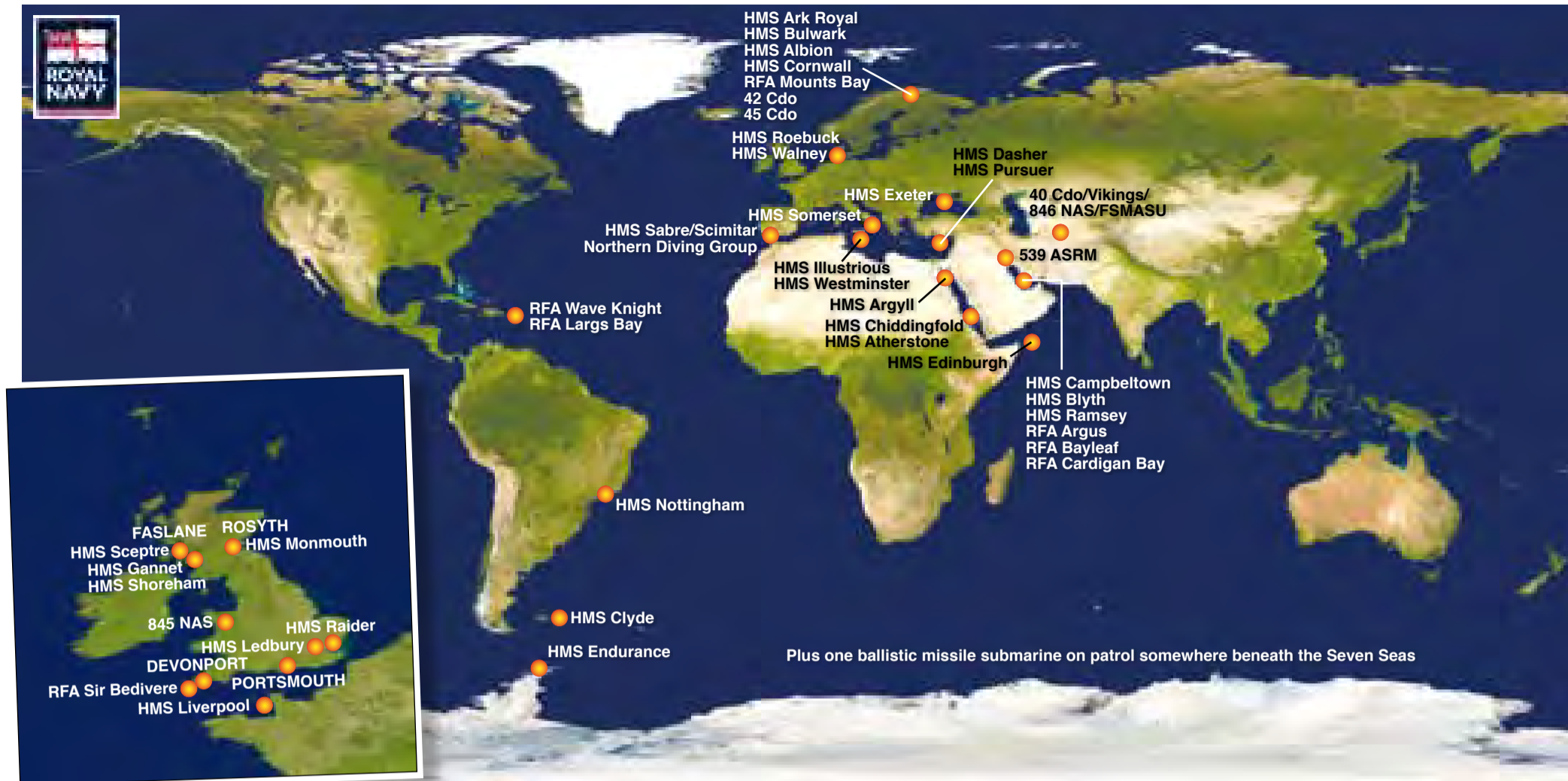
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THE Merlin of the 'capital ship', HMS Westminster, prepares for another sortie during the frigate's Orion 08 deployment. The Type 23 warship is providing anti-submarine escort for the task group, led by flagship HMS Illustrious, but has also demonstrated her prowess in downing threats in the air courtesy of her Seawolf missiles. *Turn to pages 10 and 11 for more from the task group.*

Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU (East)



EYE OF THE HUNTER



Fleet Focus

PHEW. We're amazed we managed to squeeze everything on to our map this month.

Yes the public and press may care little, but the men and women of the Senior Service have been exceptionally busy this spring.

Their efforts seem to be split between extremes of temperature. We'll begin where it's cold.

A sizeable task force and Royal Marine presence could be found clustered around Narvik and Harstad for Armatura Borealis: HM Ships **Albion**, **Bulwark**, **Cornwall** and **Ark Royal**, plus **RFA Mounts Bay**, and the green berets of **42** and **45 Commandos** were all involved in the Allied winter war games (see pages 25-28).

Those war games fortuitously coincided with the discovery by the Norwegians of the wartime destroyer **HMS Hunter**, lost near Narvik in 1940. Sixty-eight years later, the British and Norwegian navies paid their respects to her (see page 23).

Ice and snow are not, of course, the preserve of the Northern Hemisphere. **HMS Endurance** welcomed Britain's second most senior naval officer who paid a rare visit to the ice survey ship on operations around Antarctica (see page 22).

A short distance (relatively speaking) away, destroyer **HMS Nottingham** popped to South Georgia before heading to the warmth of Rio (see pages 8-9).

It can be cold in Scotland too (despite what we said in these pages a couple of months ago) as we found on a visit to Britain's No.1 Search And Rescue unit, **HMS Gannet** (see pages 16 and 17). Gannet's Sea Kings were also called upon during a joint exercise with **HMS Shoreham**, which was paying a visit to nearby Ayr (see page 4).

Minehunter **HMS Walney** stepped into the shoes of **HMS Roebuck** on NATO duties in the Kattegat and Skagerrak (see right) and possibly wished she hadn't as storm after storm lashed her for the better part of a month.

Right, that's enough of the cold, time for the warmth. The RN is back in charge of **Combined Task Force 158** in the northern Gulf... to which **HMS Campbeltown** is attached. She's taken over from **HMS Argyll**, currently enjoying the Egyptian sun after a mammoth patrol aided by **RFA Argus** and **Bayleaf**. At the tip of the Gulf, **RFA Cardigan Bay** is training Iraqi sailors and marines, while **HMS Blyth** and **Ramsey** have been operating alongside the Kuwaitis and Americans. Turn to page 7 for a round-up of operations in and around the Gulf.

Gulf-bound is the Orion 08 task force. Flagship **HMS Illustrious** belatedly made it to Malta (see page 10), accompanied by frigate **HMS Westminster** which has been blasting away with her **Seawolf** missiles (see page 11). Destroyer **HMS Edinburgh** broke off from the task group to tackle piracy (see page 4) and also operating semi independently are **HMS Atherstone** and **Chiddingfold**; the latter paid her respects to one of the doyens of the RN clearance diving branch (see pages 4 and 23).

In the Med, **HMS Somerset** has been hunting submarines (with varying degrees of success - see page 5) while destroyer **HMS Exeter** enjoyed the high life in Monaco before being given a rare glimpse inside a former top secret Soviet submarine base in the Crimea (see page 6).

845 NAS are gearing up for Afghanistan courtesy of some training in Snowdonia (see page 13). They will be joining their Commando Helicopter Force comrades of **846 NAS** already in theatre.

About to leave Helmand are the Royals of **40 Commando**. They will do so after a particularly successful series of operations around the town of Sangin, now firmly wrestled from Taleban control (see pages 14-15).

And finally... our ship of the month is not **HMS Richmond** (which appeared twice in the space of 90 days - instead of ten years - thanks to an administrative *faux pas*) but the much smaller university training boat **HMS Raider** (see page 12).



● A rare moment of serenity for **HMS Walney** (right) as she hands flagship duties back to **HMS Roebuck** (left) in the Danish port of Grenaa

Aal's well that ends well

IF THE sailors of **HMS Walney** were expecting a quiet winter, well they didn't get one.

With barely a week's notice, the Sandown-class warship was asked to stand in for **HMS Roebuck** on NATO duties in Norway and the Baltic for a month.

The Faslane-based mine countermeasures vessel was readying herself for impending Neptune Warrior war games and a package of pre-deployment training.

All those plans had to be thrown (temporarily) out of the window. The stores suddenly filled with cold weather clothing and the navigator clambered aboard clutching a bevy of charts of Norwegian waters.

He was followed by the command staff, who would direct the operations of NATO's Standing Mine Countermeasures

Group 1, which includes **HMS Hurworth**, over the weeks to come from their new flagship.

The task force had a fairly punishing schedule which waited for no man - irrespective of weather.

And if you think we've had a pretty rotten winter here in Blighty, well it's been far worse at sea... especially if you're a small minehunter.

The force was battered by an incessant procession of storms from which the fjords around Stavanger in Norway offered little protection.

Still it's not all been bad. As flagship of the NATO group, **Walney** hosted her fair share of

cocktail parties and had the honour of leading the Allied warships into the Danish port of Aalborg.

The town welcomed the visiting sailors with open arms... and **Walney** learned that Aalborg was very much a 'sailors' town', not least thanks to one street which boasted 198 clubs, pubs and restaurants.

Suitably recovered from their exertions in Aalborg, the ships moved to Fredrikshavn for the Danish-led exercise **Aut Batt**, a cross between a mine hunt and a Thursday war (with surface and aerial attacks thrown at the force).

There was, sadly, little chance for either; inclement weather brought the curtain down on **Aut**

Batt prematurely and the small ships returned to the sanctuary of port.

The good news about **Aut Batt**'s demise, however, was that **Walney** could return to Faslane as **Roebuck** returned to the force to resume her flagship duties.

The bad news was that as soon as she sailed for home, she sailed into the teeth of a storm. Gusts battering the ship exceeded 50kts at times.

With the wind, the ship made 6kts more than her maximum speed but against it, as she rounded Cape Wrath, she lost 5kts.

After a three-day bruising, **Walney** sailed up the Clyde for home. Now alongside, it's off with the Norwegian and Danish charts and on with preparations for **Neptune Warrior** and pre-deployment training.



● *Thirtysomething...* Just days after her 30th birthday, hunter-killer submarine HMS Sceptre leaves Faslane bound for Loch Long to conduct trials.

The Barrow-built boat was commissioned on Valentine's Day 1978... that's 13 years before the youngest member of her ship's company came into this world. Actually, the average age of the crew is just one year older than Sceptre herself (the oldest deep aboard is 47).

All on board celebrated with a rather large cake (featuring, of course, the submariners' legendary dolphins crest) courtesy of the boat's catering department, chefs, sorry logisticians (catering services (preparation)) Tinker, Marshall and PO Boyle.

Despite her longevity, the Swiftsure-class submarine has a couple more years of service left in her; she's due to pay off in 2010.

Picture: LLogs Stu Hill, FRPU Clyde





Red Rose on Merseybeat

IF MOHAMMED can't get to the mountain, well you know the rest.

Frigate HMS Lancaster can't squeeze down the Lune to get to her namesake town.

She can, however, quite easily navigate the Mersey, where she was met by various affiliates during a stop in Liverpool.

The Type 23 has spent much of 2008 on principal warfare officer training, which meant lots of air attacks, boarding operations and anti-submarine exercises.

So a visit to the European Capital of Culture (*cough*, splutter – *Mancunian Assistant Ed*) was a welcome reprieve from war.

The ship's football sides took on various local teams, and the frigate herself hosted players from Premiership side Everton.

Then it was back to war, this time more training on passage to the northern Spanish port of Vigo.

Joining the Red Rose for the crossing from Merseyside to Spain were fathers and sons of various members of the ship's company.

Luckily for them, the Bay of Biscay was in a rather forgiving mood.

Liverpool goes to Guernsey

AFTER two months being given a thorough test, you would have thought HMS Liverpool was sick of the sight of naval trainers.

And probably they were. But it didn't stop a team from the Flag Officer Sea Training joining the destroyer yet again.

Liverpool has already passed through Operational Sea Training – the 'MOT' from the Admiralty which permits a ship to head off on a front-line deployment.

But the FOST team wanted to scrutinise the Portsmouth warship's sea safety training before Liverpool heads to the South Atlantic to replace her sister Nottingham.

They did so not in FOST's traditional playground off Plymouth but in and around Guernsey, where Liverpool spent three days conducting exercises, hosting local dignitaries, and also explaining to Channel Island emergency planners what the RN could offer in the event of a disaster striking the area.

Piratical move by Edinburgh

HMS Edinburgh broke off from the rest of the Orion 08 task force (*see page 10*) to put the boot into pirates in the Indian Ocean.

The destroyer joined Combined Task Force 150, a group of Allied warships which sweeps the waters from the Arabian Sea to the Horn of Africa and beyond for illegal activities.

That mission (nor the heat) did not stop the ship's company running around the upper deck in aid of Sport Relief.

Sailors opted to run one, three or seven miles for the charity – which meant, in turn, seven, 21 or 49 circuits of the Type 42's main deck. Each runner paid £5 for the 'privilege' of taking part with more than £100 raised for the good cause.

Knight out in Fowey

THE last of the 'Knights of the Round Table', RFA Sir Bedivere, paid her final visit to Fowey before bowing out of service.

The landing support ship has enjoyed a short but sweet affiliation with the people of the Cornish port, with whom she has been bound since 2005.

Sir Bedivere arrived off the town after a year-long stint in the Gulf training Iraqi sailors and marines.

A wee bit warmer...

DESPITE what Crowded House said, you cannot always take the weather with you.

And for that, the men of the Northern Diving Group are eternally grateful.

They left Faslane behind to carry out training missions at depth – something feasible in Scotland, but the cold and murk of the lochs cannot compete with the Mediterranean.

The divers borrowed kit from the Gibraltar Clearance Diving Unit – permanently based at The Rock to provide security in the harbour and to check visiting warships.

Ordinarily, NDG is on call to deal with explosive ordnance along 8,000 miles of coastline north of an imaginary line drawn from Liverpool to Hull.

Gibraltar cannot offer quite as much coastline (divide by 1,000

and you get the idea), but it can offer sparkling blue waters, warmth and consistency.

"Gibraltar offers us fantastic opportunities to conduct training uninterrupted by the weather," explained Lt Cdr Andrew Ward, CO of the Northern Diving Group.

"With two weeks here, we can take advantage of excellent facilities and achieve a very high level of work-up."

LS(D) Gary Shaw put it more simply: "It's just nice to be actually diving in warmer waters for a wee change. There's been good camaraderie with the lads and the Gibraltar diving squadron as well."

● Gibraltar-based AB(D) Richard Bailey shows the Scottish divers how it's done

Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU East



Rich pickings for Chid

DON'T worry, they got it in the end. It's just that a deflated red blob floating in the Gulf of Aden makes a less interesting picture than a giant inflatable red blob floating in the Gulf of Aden.

This is a 'killer tomato', a target dropped by minehunter HMS Chiddingfold, being straddled by rounds from the warship's 30mm main gun.

The tomato was 'rolled out' to test her gunners' prowess as the warship entered waters where attacks by pirates and terrorists on shipping can take place.

The gunnery team, directed by Lt Jon Campbell, blasted away at the tomato which was eventually recovered in a rather sorry state.

Chiddingfold is sailing in company with her sister Atherstone and 'mother ship' RFA Diligence, which carries stores and supplies for the much smaller Hunts.

The trio form the minehunting element of the much larger Orion 08 deployment which is dispersed across the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean.

■ Honouring Ginger's last wish, page 23



Something in the Ayr

TWO Scottish ports have been blessed by visits from Her Majesty's warships.

HMS Shoreham made the short hop along the Firth of Clyde from her home in Faslane to the seaside town of Ayr for a hospitality visit.

The Sandown-class mine countermeasures vessel spent a week in – and out – of the town conducting exercises, hosting locals and working on Search and Rescue and winching serials with a Sea King from HMS Gannet, based at Prestwick just outside Ayr.

The latter exercises were witnessed by students from Ayr Academy who were hosted for a day by Shoreham.

Others enjoying the mine countermeasures vessel's hospitality included the Sea Cadets of TS Mountbatten (Ayr), Gannet (Ardrossan), John Paul Jones (Stewarty) and Argyll (Irvine).

In keeping with the 'youth' theme, Shoreham hosted a careers' forum for head teachers and RN recruiters from across Ayrshire.

On the east coast, frigate HMS Monmouth was doing very much the same during a four-day spell at Ocean Terminal in Leith.

She also hosted a careers' forum and Sea Cadets – in this case TS Lochinvar (South Queensferry) – as well as members of the RNA from Edinburgh and West Lothian.

Also walking up the brow were new recruits from Edinburgh's RNR unit HMS Scotia and several hundred tourists (not at the same time, admittedly) who took advantage of an open afternoon.

From Leith, Monmouth headed to Cardiff so her ship's company could call in on their affiliated town and exercise their freedom of it for the first time.

The Black Duke has enjoyed the freedom of Monmouth for the past six years, but this was the first time her ship's company had exercised that right.

Seventy-five of them paraded through the county town during the five-day visit to Wales – a visit which found the country, and its capital especially, in festive mood as it coincided with the rugby union team's triumph in the Six Nations.

Modern life is rubbish

HELICOPTER carrier HMS Ocean is paving the way for the flat-tops of the future thanks to a revolutionary waste disposal system.

Ocean is in the latter stages of a year-long overhaul by Babcock Marine in Devonport.

Much of that revamp focuses on making the assault ship leaner and meaner.

But some of the work involves making Ocean kinder to the environment.

One such piece of kit (it's not big, but it is clever) is the pyrolysis waste disposal system – it basically turns gash into ash which saves space on the ship and is in line with the MOD's modern waste management thinking.

Ocean is the first RN vessel to receive this bit of waste wizardry; the same technology will be used in the next-generation carriers in a decade's time.

Other improvements to the 21,000-ton vessel – Britain's largest warship – include overhauling her machinery and engines, giving the living spaces a makeover, better comms kit, better aviation facilities to support Apache attack helicopters, more space to house the Royal Marines' equipment, more room for food storage and a re-built galley (which entailed, *inter alia*, replacing 25,000 ceramic tiles).

The work is due to be completed in August when Ocean returns to sea to conduct trials.

● HMS Somerset with elements of the NATO force in Albania. Next to her are Greece's HS Hydra (F452) and Turkey's TCG Zafer (F253)

Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Gallagher



Best laid plans

BUMMER. You're all set to go hunting submarines and then your sonar packs up. And so the hunter becomes the hunted...

The game of cat and mouse between frigate and submarine saw the balance tip decidedly in the mouse's favour as HMS Somerset exercised with a NATO task force off the east coast of Sicily.

The software which drives the world's best anti-submarine sonar, 2087, crashed.

Luckily, however, Somerset has more than

one way to skin a, er, mouse, and used her hull-mounted sonar rather than her towed array to go in search of her prey – then send the ship's Lynx helicopter, Duke, in for the kill.

An excellent Plan B. Except that Duke joined 2087 on the 'out of order' list.

Time for Plan C. Track the boat with your hull sonar, fire torpedoes at maximum range, then run like hell and fire decoys in a bid to escape the torpedoes the submarine has just fired.

Plan C, you will be relieved to hear, worked, although as Somerset's CO Cdr Rob Wilson admits, the frigate rather pushed her luck.

Thanks to some top engineering work both Duke and Sonar 2087 were quickly fixed by the ship's team, giving Somerset a definite advantage over her unnamed prey as Exercise Noble Manta progressed.

The results were outstanding: the prey was held at bay far outside the maximum range of its

weaponry, allowing Duke to move in for the kill.

"This exciting sonar equipment has the potential to change the rules of this deadly game, handing the initiative back to the warship from the submarine," said Cdr Wilson.

Somerset is attached to the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 which prowls the Mediterranean for illegal shipping and terrorist activity and is currently commanded by Turkey's Rear Admiral Ertugrul.

● A computer graphic of a Joint Strike Fighter on final approach to HMS Queen Elizabeth

Picture: Thales



Carriers' steel deal struck

MORE multi-million-pound orders have been placed for the 'jigsaw' which will eventually make up the Navy's future carriers.

Eighty thousand tons of steel which will form the hulls of HM Ships Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales will be supplied by works across the UK, with a small amount coming from the continent, at a cost of £65m.

Defence procurement minister Baroness Taylor also announced three smaller contracts, worth around £8m, for machinery and infrastructure to fit out the two 65,000-ton flat-tops.

Fife firm Brand Rex has won the £3m contract to provide optical cabling – which will carry reams of data between complex computer systems – for the sisters.

Rochdale-based Salt Separation Services has been given £1m to provide reverse osmosis plants for both ships; the plants will be capable of producing 500 tons of fresh water for the ship's company every day.

And Fluid Transfer International in Gloucestershire won the £4m contract for kit to fuel and 'de-fuel' the ships' mix of JSF fast jets and helicopters.

As for the steel, Corus (the successor to British Steel) with its sites in Scunthorpe, Motherwell and Teesside, and Dent Steel Services in Bradford will provide more than nine-tenths of the steel plates and bulb flats.

According to the boffins, the steel ordered is equivalent to the quantity needed to build Heathrow's

new Terminal 5 or sufficient to re-build Wembley Stadium three times over.

The ships will be built in segments, like the Type 45 destroyers, at yards in Glasgow, Barrow and Portsmouth, with the pieces of the jigsaw fitted together in Rosyth.

There's progress on the carrier escort front, too. HMS Duncan is no longer just a name on paper as the sixth of Britain's future destroyer fleet begins to slowly take shape after the first steel was cut on her.

Baroness Taylor and BAE Systems Scott Ballingall performed the honours at BAE's Govan yard on the Clyde, where four of Duncan's sisters have been or are being built.

The Type 45s are hailed as the world's most advanced air defence destroyer and will shield the fleet from missile and air attack well into the 21st Century.

Around 3,600 shipwrights, carpenters and electricians are working on the destroyers at BAE's two yards on the Clyde, as well as the VT Group's facility in Portsmouth where the bows and main masts are being built.

Duncan won't see active service until next decade; the oldest of her sisters, Daring, is less than two years away from joining the Fleet.

HMS Daring is gearing up to resume sea trials later this spring. Tests during her first spell at sea last summer around the Firth of Clyde exceeded expectations.

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Dee's death leaves 'a big void'

INSURGENTS in Afghanistan claimed the life of Royal Marine Cpl Damian 'Dee' Mulvihill in a bomb attack near the town of Sangin.

The 32-year-old NCO was killed instantly as he led his section on a sweep of the terrain around the Helmand town on February 20.

Cpl Mulvihill – known by comrades as 'The Bear' – and his men were carrying out a joint Allied-Afghan National Army operation to root out Taliban around Sangin and stop the insurgents from intimidating the local populace when an improvised explosive device was detonated.

"Dee was a unique individual who brought inspiration to all who knew him. He was admired by his peers and respected by his superiors," said Capt Mark Elliott RM, adjutant of 40 Commando.

"His never-ceasing smile and 'bear-like' handshake will always be remembered, as will his passion on the rugby pitch.

"The Royal Marines have lost a truly exceptional individual who will never be forgotten. It is an honour to call him a comrade and even more so a friend."

WO2 Andrew Brownrigg, Alpha Coy Sergeant Major, added: "His absence has left a big void within the company. He never had a bad word to say to anyone and nobody ever had a bad word to say about him.

"My lasting memory of him will be his cheerfulness and his ability to put a smile on people's faces."

Cpl Mulvihill joined the commandos in 1998 and served in Sierra Leone and Northern Ireland.

As well as being an exemplary green beret, he excelled at sport, representing the Corps at rugby union and the Combined Services at water polo.

He had been planning to move to CTCRM at Lymington at the end of 40 Commando's tour and tie the knot with his fiancée Lisa.

FOSTie period for frigates

FRIGATE Northumberland has returned to sea after a fairly lengthy spell alongside at home in Devonport receiving some TLC ahead of further exertions.

While the Type 23 warship was enjoying an overhaul, her ship's company scattered to the four corners of the UK... and beyond.

Most disappeared on various training courses, but 15 headed to Les Menuires in France to take part in the RN ski championships. Rather warmer climes beckoned for ten shipmates who flew to Dahab in Egypt for a diving expedition.

But now it's back to more mundane activities: damage control and fire-fighting training, seamanship drills and gunnery exercises before Northumberland joins the Flag Officer Sea Training in June for operational sea training to prepare her for deployment later in the year.

The FOST team have already put HMS Chatham through her paces in the less usual surroundings of Portland rather than Plymouth.

The Type 22 frigate spent three days in the Dorset port, where activities alternated between seamanship duties and routines, monitored closely by the FOSTies, and presentations to local dignitaries, associations and members of the public.



● The formerly top-secret underground submarine facility in Sevastopol, now on HMS Exeter's tourist trail

Tunnel visions

TWO tunnels, one known the world over, one hidden for half a century, have welcomed the men and women of HMS Exeter with open 'arms'.

We'll start with the famous one: the tunnel on Monaco's legendary Formula 1 Grand Prix circuit.

It's nearly two decades since a major British warship has visited the tiny principality on France's Mediterranean coast.

That last visitor was HMS Minerva with a young midshipman, Paul Brown, aboard enjoying the hospitality of the fabled resort of the rich and famous.

Eighteen years down the line and a now Cdr Paul Brown was in charge of Exeter as he brought her in to Monte Carlo.

Actually, first of all Exeter stopped at the idyllic town of Villefranche-Sur-Mer, a short hop along the Riviera. There the great and good of Monaco and some ex-pats climbed aboard and joined the ship for the trip along the coast to the principality.

The welcome there from ex-pats and Monegasques was as warm as any Exeter's ship's company had experienced.

More than 30 sailors couldn't resist the chance to drive the F1 circuit (not in F1 cars but a Porsche, Jaguar XKR and Bentley). Unsurprisingly, they didn't set any track records... but they did roar past the Monte Carlo Casino – 'Casino Royale' in the eponymous Bond novel – and through that tunnel.

It wasn't the only taste of the high life for the ship's company. Other sailors were invited aboard the superyacht Rio Rita (as used by, among others, the Duchess of Cornwall); sadly, the hire fee was a little beyond their grasp (£100,000 per week). And yet more took up an invite from the mayor of Monte Carlo to attend the carnival in Nice (think Rio carnival but in the south of France).

And then it was eastwards, through the Med, up the Dardanelles, into the Sea of Marmara, then through the Bosphorus – which few of the ship's company had sailed through before – then into the Black Sea.



Two decades ago, a Royal Navy warship pootling around the Black Sea would have drawn the attention of the Soviets' Black Sea Fleet.

Today, however, Allied navies are fostering ever closer relations with their Black Sea counterparts in the global fight against terrorist and criminal activities on the oceans.

Two Ukrainian naval officers joined Exeter for the passage from Monaco to the Crimean port of Sevastopol, via Constanta in Romania.

"One surprise, especially in Romania, was the unexpected but excellent command of English – almost everyone spoke it perfectly, more so than in some of the UK's closer European neighbours," said Weapon Engineer Officer Lt Cdr Peter Broadbent.

That wasn't the case across the Black Sea in Sevastopol, but the Ukrainians were no less hospitable.

One of the highlights of the visit to the peninsula was a chance to tour the battlefields of the Crimean War, including the valley where the Light Brigade thundered to their doom.

Sevastopol itself was later invested by the British and French, a battle which is depicted on a 360° panoramic painting (created over three years by 17 different artists).

From echoes of a distant war to echoes of the Cold War – and the second tunnel in this story.

The sailors were invited to tour Sevastopol's secret 'submarine factory' where the Red Fleet's boats were re-armed during the four-decade stand-off between East and West. Few people outside the military knew of the complex's existence; Sevastopol was a 'closed' city because of its importance as a naval base, but most of its inhabitants were not aware of the facility.

Of course, it's not all yachts, casinos and tunnels for the veteran destroyer – the sole active survivor of the Falklands War.

The key aim of her sortie into the Black Sea was to discuss operations in the Mediterranean that the Romanian and Ukrainian have been involved in already – and those they could be involved with in the future to counter illegal activities on the high seas.

● Exeter basks in the Mediterranean sunshine alongside in Monte Carlo



Astonishing achievement by Gannet

THE busiest Search and Rescue team in Britain received a thank-you from the top man in the military.

Defence Secretary Des Browne dropped in on HMS Gannet, the Prestwick-based Sea King Search and Rescue unit, to pay tribute to men and women who risk their lives so others may live.

The Sea Kings were scrambled 359 times in 2007 – 90 times more than the year before. In doing so they rescued 349 people – 286 of those were injured.

The previous rescue record was held by RAF Chivenor in 2006; its yellow Sea Kings responded to 293 call-outs.

The busy trend shows no sign of abating. The first eight weeks of 2008 have seen 50 people rescued by the Gannet team in 49 rescues, including the high-profile sortie to pluck people from the stricken ferry Riverdance off Blackpool during January's storms.

Operations over the sea are the exception rather than the rule for the Prestwick-based fliers; most of their rescue missions are conducted over the mountains of Scotland – Ben Nevis and Glencoe fall within the 98,000 square miles which are Gannet's domain.

"It's always nice to be able to hold a record, but for all of us here, it's not about that – it's about responding whenever we are needed to provide emergency support. No more, no less. That's our job and it's one we all love," said Gannet's CO Lt Cdr Brian Nicholas.

Mr Browne told the SAR team: "You're to be commended for the excellent work which you do above the land and sea of Scotland's west coast and the north of England.

"A call-out for almost every day of the year in 2007 is an astonishing statistic."

■ Kings of the mountains, pages 16-17

Ocean's Eight for Ledbury

MINEHUNTER HMS Ledbury spent three days in London sharing her knowledge of surveying and scouring the oceans to some of the world's top scientists.

The Hunt-class warship berthed at the ExCel Centre in the docklands for the duration of Oceanography International 08 – a conference and trade show for the marine science and ocean technology community.

Industry uses the exhibition to demonstrate the latest kit, while leading academics get together for conferences to discuss the study of the world's oceans.

Ledbury laid on various demonstrations of her sonar, minehunting and command systems kit to hundreds of visitors and delegates, alongside the French naval survey vessel BH Laplace.

"It was a very interesting exhibition – especially being able to see and compare the latest commercial diving technology," said PO(D) 'Eddy' Edmundson, Ledbury's coxswain.

It wasn't all technology, however, during the spell on the Thames. The ship hosted the Mayor of Ledbury, leading figures from local government and Trinity House, while the sailors visited the Tower of London in uniform as part of the 'RN in the Public Eye' initiative.

Members of the wardroom headed even further west, to Notting Hill, to dine at the top-rated Ledbury restaurant... in Ledbury Road. CO Lt Cdr Paul Russell left the chefs a ship's badge as a memento of the visit.

The minehunter is returning to her *raison d'être* after two years on Fishery Protection Duties. She is currently undergoing intensive training before joining a NATO minehunting force on patrol in European waters.

'A very important mission...'



● 'And so we're told this is the golden age'... Sea and sky blend into one as HMS Campbeltown heads to Bahrain during her Gulf patrol
Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Winter, FRPU East

THE small industrial port of Safaga is perhaps not everyone's ideal destination.

But to the men and women of HMS Argyll it was probably akin to Xanadu and the Garden of Eden rolled into one after one of the most demanding spells at sea in the frigate's history.

Last month we told you that we couldn't really tell you what Argyll had been up to.

And that remains the case. But we can tell you how long she's been doing what we can't tell you about... 52 days.

That's 52 days continually at sea in the Gulf and Indian Ocean (yes, we know submariners do a lot longer but their boats are designed for such sustained operations).

Argyll began her Gulf deployment in earnest with a 30-day spell safeguarding the Iraqi oil platforms – a pretty lengthy patrol in itself.

She handed over that duty to HMS Campbeltown, then popped into Bahrain to prepare herself for a marathon stint at sea.

"Sustaining a Type 23 frigate, which was designed for North Atlantic operations, off East Africa for such a period has been an immense task," said Cdr Gavin Pritchard, Argyll's Commanding Officer.

It took Royal Fleet Auxiliaries Argus and Bayleaf, plus the RFA's US equivalent, the USNS John Lenthal and Walter S Diehl, and a fair bit of resilience from Jack and Jenny to keep the Type 23 going for so long.

"It's testimony to high standards and hard work that we've been able to sustain our fighting capability and achieve everything that has been asked of us," Cdr Pritchard added.

"I am very proud of the whole ship's company for their professionalism throughout

a difficult and changing programme."

Argyll has been away from home in Devonport since the beginning of October and won't be home for some time yet as she continues anti-terror and security patrols east of Suez.

The good news for her crew, however, is that Argyll's days in the Middle East are numbered as her replacement is already Gulf-bound. Her sister HMS Montrose has left Devonport and is currently in the Med.

The current guardian of the oil platforms, HMS Campbeltown, was joined by 120 students from Kuwait's staff college over two days.

A packed programme of demonstrations was laid on for 60 Kuwaitis on each day: air defence exercises, Lynx operations, boarding operations and fast attack defence drills.

And talking of Kuwaitis... A dozen hopped aboard HMS Blyth during a combined exercise involving the British, US and Kuwaiti navies.

The ships of the Aintree task force, HMS Blyth and Ramsey, left Bahrain behind for a week or so to head north.

RN minehunting skills were instrumental in opening up the waters to Kuwait during the 1991 war with Iraq and clearing a path for humanitarian aid to Umm Qasr a dozen years later during the campaign to oust Saddam Hussein.

Several of Blyth and Ramsey's ship's companies served in the 1991 operation; many more took part in the 2003 conflict. They shared their experiences and expertise with their Kuwaiti counterparts during a week-long exercise.

They were joined by American diving experts (EODMU6), a dedicated US helicopter minehunting squadron (HM15)

and the USS Scout, a large minehunter (roughly twice the size of a Sandown-class ship).

Six Kuwaiti clearance divers joined HMS Blyth.

Their work with their opposite numbers from Britain was made considerably easier by the fact that their officer had trained at Dartmouth and several of the divers had undergone training on Horsea Island.

While Blyth focused her efforts on the UK-Kuwaiti diving team to cope with dummy mines in the northern Gulf, Ramsey was the 'disaster' ship – or, more accurately, the 'coping with disaster' ship.

A 'sick' American diver was cross-decked to the Sandown as part of a casualty exercise, before undergoing treatment in Ramsey's therapeutic recompression chamber.

As well as dealing with the mine threat, the ship's company also had to contend with firefighting and enemy attacks courtesy of demonstrations laid on for their Kuwaiti visitors.

A few miles away, off the coast of Iraq, amphibious support ship RFA Cardigan Bay became the saviour of Iraqi sailors when their ship sank in the northern Gulf.

The aged MV Nadi spent five days wallowing in the middle of the sea after breaking down as she headed from Umm Qasr to the United Arab Emirates to be sold off.

Her crew tried to radio for help but a combination of bad weather and faulty wireless kit meant their maydays went unanswered until the signal was finally picked up by tanker USNS Sacagawea.

The American auxiliary plucked the sailors from their sinking vessel, before ferrying them by helicopter to Cardigan Bay at the tip of the Gulf.

The RFA, which serves as a forward floating base for training Iraqi Navy sailors and

naval infantry, offered the ten mariners shelter and food and made arrangements for the men to be reunited with their families in Basra.

On a more permanent basis, Cardigan Bay is home to two fast craft from Inshore Boat Unit 22 and three Iraqi Navy patrol boats.

The former provide souped-up protection for Allied shipping in the northern Gulf; the latter are vital for training Iraqi sailors and marines in the art of boarding vessels, defending shipping from terrorist attack, and safeguarding the two oil terminals which pump Iraq's principal export into waiting tankers.

The RFA's vast loading dock also provides shelter for the patrol boats from the dust storms which whip up around here; on Cardigan

Bay's predecessor, veteran RFA Sir Bedivere (now paid off and awaiting her fate in Portsmouth Harbour), the craft were invariably exposed to the elements.

Keeping the boats in the flooded-up dock has also significantly reduced the time it takes for them to be launched for patrols.

Cardigan Bay is increasingly serving as the hub for naval operations in the northern Gulf – and not merely as a centre for training Iraqis.

The landing support ship is also the focal point for mail drops in the area, as well as transfers of personnel in and out of theatre by boat or helicopter.

The operations of Cardigan Bay and Campbeltown are now directed by a Brit once again with Cdre Duncan Potts stepping

into the shoes of Australian Commodore Allan du Toit at the helm of Combined Task Force 158.

CTF158 oversees the US-UK-Australian mission to protect Iraq's oil terminals and maintain security at sea in the northern Gulf, directing operations from a small control centre on the Khawr Al Amaya platform.

The three Allies take it in turns to oversee operations, with Cdre Potts in charge until August.

"We have a very important mission to conduct. I have the right people, ships and aircraft to achieve the level of stability that is needed," said Cdre Potts.

"Iraq's territorial waters may be small, but I see them as the umbilical cord which feeds much of the Iraqi economy."

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● Cutting edge... a rare view of the bow of HMS Argyll slicing through rather clear Gulf waters



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● Preen of the seas... A penguin cleans itself while HMS Nottingham anchors off Grytviken



The age of

IT'S been a case of 'out of the freezer and into the frying pan' for HMS Nottingham this past month as the destroyer experienced opposite ends of the temperature scale in the South Atlantic.

We will begin in the freezer – South Georgia, to be accurate.

Although it was still high summer in the Southern Hemisphere when the Type 42 warship arrived in this isolated cluster of islands, there was plenty of ice and snow on display for the ship's company.

There were plenty of icebergs too (one almost a mile in length) which were deftly avoided by the bridge team.

Nottingham lowered her anchor off King Edward Point, close to the South Georgian 'capital' Grytviken, permitting most of the ship's company to get ashore by boat.

Some sailors headed to the island's museum, others went in search of penguins (admittedly, they're not too hard to find as South Georgia is home to several large colonies).

Suitably chilled, the sailors decided some austral warmth was the order of the day and turned north towards South America in company with her tanker RFA Gold Rover.

She pumped 500 cubic tons of fuel into Nottingham's tanks during two replenishments at sea – enough to keep the average family car running for seven million miles, apparently.

And then it was on to warm climes. As temperatures topped 30°C, so Nottingham ground to a halt in the middle of the ocean and the cry 'Hands to bathe' echoed around the hallowed



passageways and mess decks.

Those warm waters eventually carried the destroyer to Rio de Janeiro, where the ship celebrated the Royal Navy's role in the foundation of the modern Brazilian nation.

Two hundred years ago the Royal Prince of Portugal and the Portuguese court arrived in Rio. They did so escorted by four of His Majesty's warships: Marlborough, Bedford, London and Monarch.

The arrival of the Portuguese royal family was a seminal moment in Brazilian history. The country's ports were opened to free trade with friendly countries and she began to take her place with the other nations of this world.

Two centuries later, the Brazilians marked the occasion in company with their British allies. Kim Howells, the Foreign Office minister for Latin America, flew to Rio to join the head of the Brazilian Navy for a celebration aboard HMS Nottingham.

It has, of course, not been all penguins, parties and dips in the ocean for the destroyer.

Nottingham is at the tail end of a six-month deployment to the South Atlantic, with principal responsibility for safeguarding the Falklands and environs.

To keep the team on their toes – and to offer some moral support – a string of senior visitors climbed aboard to chat with the sailors: Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, the UK National Hydrographer Rear Admiral Ian Moncrieff and Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla Cdre Andrew Cameron.

Such visits remind the ship's company that they are not forgotten about more than 8,000 miles from the UK, but they were not the sole reminder of home aboard.

These days, most RN surface ships are blessed with 'creature comforts' few, if any, could have dreamed of barely a decade ago.

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extremes

Certainly HMS Nottingham's Commanding Officer is impressed. He's keeping a regular internet diary or 'blog' as a result of all this technological wizardry.

"I don't want to appear a dinosaur, but I am amazed by the levels of connectivity we have on board – instant email, internet and phone calls to the UK," Cdr Andrew Price writes.

"Not long ago, news from home was all down to the normal mail and letter drops. News from home now comes quickly – world news from the internet and satellite TV which is piped around the messdecks."

Satellite TV has allowed the team to keep up with the latest sporting events, such as the Six Nations, the soaps, and dare we say it 'reality' television.

"No longer do I need to consider closing land to ensure that we can receive a half-decent television picture and no longer is the deputy weapons engineering officer forced to stand out in the cold on the bridge roof, clutching a superbly-engineered aerial array of wire coat hangers, whilst orders to go 'up a bit, right a bit' are shouted through three decks to achieve the best picture," Cdr Price adds in his blog.

Email, internet and satellite TV are not the only morale boosters aboard, there's also Nottingham's PTI Kev 'The Baby Faced Assassin' (a moniker from his boxing days) Green to organise various sporting events, as well as numerous contests and competitions to maintain the 250 sailors at a peak of fitness, body and soul.

Both body and soul were in harmony when Kev organised a Sport Relief mile for the international charity. Sailors raised £200 by completing seven laps of the upper deck.

Not all runs had such a pleasant ending.

No, 11 members of the ship's company visited the RAF dog section at Mount Pleasant in the Falklands – and found themselves 'volunteered' for demonstrations.

The dogs and their handlers conduct patrols, look for explosives and carry out search and rescue missions on the islands.

Thanks to their speed, agility and, above all, bite, (the dogs, not the handlers...) they can also bring criminals to a halt.

The Falklands are not renowned for criminal activity, so step forward 11 volunteers (who just happened to be HMS Nottingham sailors) to play the part of ne'er-do-wells.

Not surprisingly, they weren't able to outrun the attack dogs (whose rather sharp teeth you will be pleased to learn did not penetrate the thick protective suits the volunteers wore).

■ Read Cdr Price's blog at www.blogs.mod.uk/hms_nottingham/



● Nottingham leaves the Falklands bound for South Georgia

Pictures: LA(Phot) Alex Cave, FRPU East





Grand entrance

THE Orion 08 deployment is now in full swing as task group flagship HMS *Illustrious* and her escort made their way through the Mediterranean and through the Suez Canal.

Lusty had been delayed in UK waters to complete training and undertake engineering work, but was soon following in the wake of other Orion warships.

Accompanied by destroyer HMS *Edinburgh*, the carrier was given a three-gun salute as she entered Grand Harbour in Valletta – her first visit to Malta since 2005.

Lusty's links with the island fortress date back to World War 2, when the fourth HMS *Illustrious* was badly damaged on convoy duties to the island.

Whilst being repaired she was subject to more air attacks which killed and injured many local people.

The links were commemorated on this visit by a twinning ceremony, in which Lusty presented a hunting horn to each of the Three Cities which stand on the southern side of

Grand Harbour – Senglea, Vittoriosa and Cospicua, the heartland of the old Naval dockyards.

The three horns reflect those on the carrier's badge.

A service of remembrance for victims of wartime bombing was held at the Senglea memorial, and chaplain Fr David Yates said: "Laying the wreath at the memorial was a very moving experience for everyone involved."

"I think it is very important that we, of the present HMS *Illustrious*, remember our history and the tremendous support the people of Malta gave to our forebears and continue to give us today."

Sailors also competed with Maltese teams and colleagues from HMS *Edinburgh* on the sports fields, while others managed a little sightseeing.

LLogs 'Pat' Garrett said: "I've been around the world and seen some amazing places, but I always love coming back to Malta. The lads and lasses are always made to feel welcome and have a great time."

There was also charity work to be done; water pipes were fixed and a site cleared in Senglea, railings painted outside council offices, and a party also helped out at an animal park.

The Commanding Officer of HMS *Illustrious*, Capt Steve Chick, said: "The visit was a great success. The ship's company always enjoy coming to Malta as they are so well received."

"It is very humbling for us all to hear the stories of 1941, and I think the twinning ceremony will be a lasting memory for all who took part."

The multinational Orion task group, commanded by Cdre Tom Cunningham, consists of 13 vessels and more than 2,500 people, and will exercise with naval forces in the Indian Ocean before heading back to the UK in late spring.

Among the ships attached to the task group for various stages of the deployment are HMS *Westminster*, Spanish frigate *SNS Mendez Nuñez*, French frigate *FS Jean Bart* and American destroyer *USS Cole*.

● HMS *Illustrious*' starboard 20mm gun is fired during night gunnery exercises on the Orion 08 deployment



● HMS *Edinburgh* sails past the Valletta waterfront

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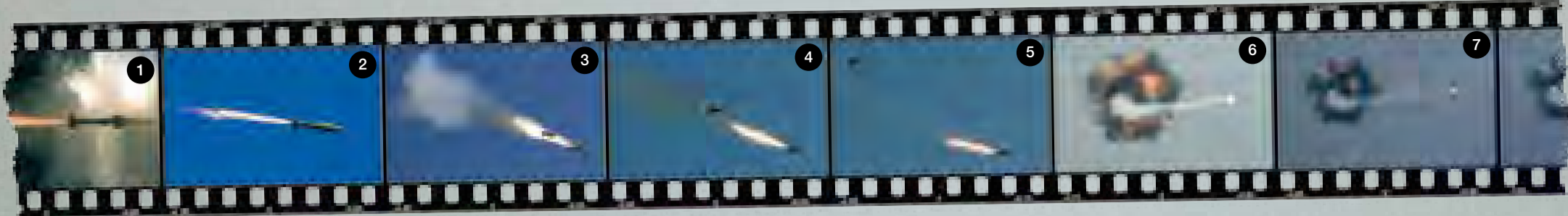


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Return of the big bad wolf



THIS is what happens when missile meets missile at a combined velocity of more than twice the speed of sound.

A drone target towed by a Falcon disintegrates as a Seawolf from HMS Westminster smashes into it low over the ocean.

Last month we featured successful Seawolf firings by HMS Somerset.

Well anything Somerset can do, her sister Westminster can do just as effectively.

Like Somerset, firing Seawolf was the final 'tick in the box' before Westminster was declared fully operational.

Unlike Somerset, we have a complete(ish) sequence of images charting Seawolf's destructive progress thanks to the photography of Lt Jon Wade and PO Bob Sharples, both of Westminster's 829 NAS flight.

Seawolf bursts out of its silo (1) (it's actually launched vertically, but the hole in the film strip was the wrong shape - Ed); races through the sky (2); the booster rocket drops away (3); Seawolf's secondary rocket motors kick in (4) and (5) to carry the missile towards its target at around Mach 2; and finally impact (6) and (7). It all lasts barely ten seconds.

Thanks to its two tracking radars, Seawolf can independently fire a salvo of missiles against two different targets.

With a drone being towed by a friendly aircraft, however, Seawolf was in human hands, not a computer's, for these test firings.

'Firing our Seawolf is always a privilege,' said Lt Cdr Mandy Miller, Westminster's Weapon Engineer Officer.

'It was very pleasing to have achieved our final preparation for the deployment in such style after much hard work from the whole team.'

Westminster is the anti-submarine escort for the Orion 08 deployment led by HMS Illustrious (see opposite), but she can also defend herself against aerial threats.

Should anything slip past Edinburgh's Sea Darts, Westminster's Seawolf missiles are the next line of defence for the carrier task group (the very last line is provided by Illustrious' Goalkeeper automated machine-guns).

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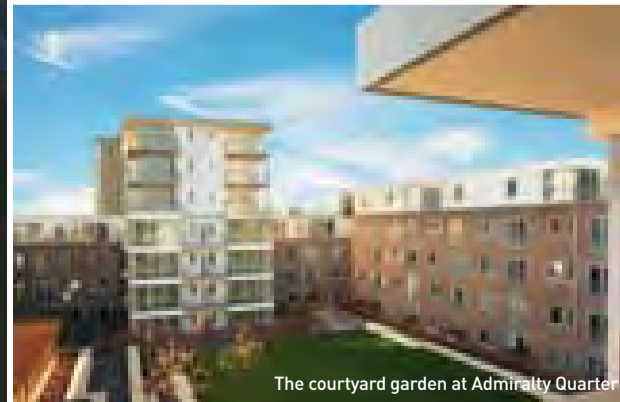
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Footlights and highlights

IF YOU were to walk east from Portsmouth, following the line of the shore like those chaps and chaperesses of the TV programme *Coast*, you would not come across the home of a Royal Navy warship for a good while.

In fact, the name of the port might surprise you: Ipswich.

But the Suffolk town is home to HMS Raider, the small training and patrol craft which serves the various universities of East Anglia.

Raider is one of 14 Archer-class patrol craft attached to universities around the UK, aimed at introducing undergraduates to the world of the Senior Service – and giving them a bit of pocket money while studying.

Raider's offices can be found in Cambridge, but the University Royal Navy Unit also draws students from the University of East Anglia (Norwich) and Anglia Ruskin University (Cambridge and Chelmsford).

Although one of the smallest vessels in the RN, Raider cannot get down the rivers of East Anglia to reach Cambridge – not without losing her masts and antennae at any rate (she can, however, navigate as far as Wisbech on the Nene).

The winter months are used for training and a spell in a yard on Tyneside for repairs and maintenance, but with spring comes the busy season once again.

Last year saw Raider deploy around the North Sea, visiting Holland, Belgium and Germany,



● HMS Raider races through Sandown Bay off the Isle of Wight on a fine spring day

crewed by her complement of full-time RN personnel and students, accompanied by her sister ship HMS Tracker, which serves Oxford University.

This year Raider has taken part in high-profile commemorations of the Channel Dash off Deal

and spent Easter sailing around Belgium and Holland with her students aboard.

Raider was commissioned a decade ago, replacing HMS *Loyal Watcher* as Cambridge URNU's dedicated vessel.

She is one of two Batch 2 orders

for Archer-class boats (Tracker was the other); one notable feature of these improved Archers is their more powerful engines, allowing her to reach speeds of up to 25kts, not 20kts like her older sisters.

Two previous Raiders have hoisted the White Ensign.

The first HMS Raider was a Great War R-class destroyer which served for 11 years.

The second Raider had a particularly distinguished career in the Mediterranean and Far East.

All the ship's battle honours were earned by the second Raider



- Arctic..... 1942-43
- Sicily..... 1943
- Salerno..... 1943
- Mediterranean 1943
- Sabang..... 1944
- East Indies 1944
- Burma..... 1944-45

Class: Archer class patrol and training vessel (batch 2)

Pennant number: P275
Builder: Ailsa, Troon
Commissioned: January 1988

Displacement: 54 tons
Length: 20.8 metres
Beam: 5.8 metres
Draught: 1.8 metres
Speed: 25 knots
Complement: 11
Propulsion: 2 x MTU Diesels generating 2,000hp
Range: 550 miles at 15kts
Armament: Fitted for but not with 1 x Oerlikon 20mm

Serves: Cambridge, University of East Anglia and Anglia Ruskin University
Based: Ipswich

– while her ship's company earned four Distinguished Service Medals and five Mentions in Dispatches.

She was sold to the Indian Navy after World War 2 and served her new owners admirably as INS Rana until 1976 before being broken up.

Facts and figures

WIN BEER FOR A YEAR WITH HELP FOR HEROES SPITFIRE ALE

Britain's oldest brewer, Shepherd Neame, has created a limited edition Help for Heroes Spitfire Ale to raise funds for the charity Help for Heroes.

Help for Heroes is a new national charity which aids members of the armed forces who return wounded from tours of duty. The charity is working hard to raise funds to build a gym and swimming pool at the Defence Medical Services Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court, Epsom, Surrey.

Navy News and Help for Heroes have teamed up to give you the chance to win one of the two prizes of 288 25cl bottles of Help for Heroes Spitfire Ale. Answer the simple question below and get your entry off today.

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The closing date is 12:00hrs Friday May 9 2008. The decision of the judges is final and there is no alternative prize. Employees of Navy News are not eligible to enter this competition

HELP FOR HEROES COMPETITION The Defence Medical Services Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court is located in which county?

Answer:

Address:

Post Code: Phone No:

E mail Address:

Post your entry to: Help for Heroes Competition, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, Hants PO1 3HH
or e mail your answer, full address and telephone number to marketing@navynews.co.uk



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HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.48

Capt Bernard Armitage Warburton Warburton-Lee VC

All night till on 21st April on Tuesday April 9 1941, British destroyers were hunting for the German raider.

"That very day German forces had occupied key points in Norway and Denmark under the very noses of the British. 'This is a gift from the Gods,' the Nazi propaganda screamed in its glory. 'Churchill was expecting news of the English invasion - and their damned Germans had got there first!'"

"Hurry is almost inevitably followed by mistakes. In the home of the Serenaplatitudes, the German Naval War Staff, a short distance from the Propaganda Ministry, there was no getting it right.

"The frigate was a mixture of anxiety and rage. The Kriegsmarine's losses had been 'great' but also 'in proportion to the risk run'. They would only grow heavier, the Chief of Staff Otto Schreyvogel framed, pouring over the radio messages, maps and reconnaissance reports. 'Powerful and superior British and French naval forces' were massing in the North Sea. They would strike before dawn.

All German hearts and stomachs heaved. Capt Bernard Armitage Warburton Warburton-Lee conferred with the senior officers of his 2nd Destroyer Flotilla about his flagship HMS Hardy in the west.

"The German battleships of the navy were being ordered. The Admiralty commanded them to be ready – but no had no idea how strong the enemy was. 'You must not judge whether attack should be made. We shall support whatever decision you take.' Whitehall captured the destroyer captain.

After conferring with his commanders, Warburton-Lee withdrew to his cabin and pondered the fate of his flotilla of five destroyers. His mind made up, he emerged and ordered a signal sent to London: 'Attack attacking at dawn.'

Fleets of ships engaged with the Arctic fog as Warburton-Lee slipped towards the port on part of Hardy. His guns roared first, taking the sleeping Germans entirely by surprise.

The leading British Hecla was crippled, torpedoed from Hardy crashed into the German Ajax. She was broken in two, the captain and crew in a flash.

Ships raked down on a third German destroyer. Its bows inflated around the turret (port side). Tankers and merchant ships were desperately avoided.

And then Warburton-Lee and his force retired to England.

It had been a classic destroyer action, but Warburton-Lee changed his luck and returned to dawn the battered German flag.

And then his luck ran well. For the British destroyers' destroyers emerged from the fog. Trying to escape for the open sea Hardy was hit by successive torpedoes.

Dew wiped out the entire bridge team, killing or wounding every man. After creating the engine room Hardy was disabled, her crew under attack from above.

Warburton-Lee found himself, found Warburton-Lee found himself and stood up, leaning to the stern. His destroyer carefully carried him off the ship and on to a raft, but he died before he reached dry land.

The first signal received by the 28-year-old Scotsman was typical of his class and was: 'Keep on engaging the enemy.'

Warburton-Lee would become the first gallant naval VC of World War 2 (General Flanagan earned his posthumously three days before, but it would be 1940 before his deeds were appreciated by his nation).

He had said his citation, shown 'gallantry enterprise and daring in execution'. But the German invasion force of Norway had been damaged or destroyed in the close of two British destroyers.

He was laid to rest in Italian waters – in Genoa, his grave to regularly visited by British sailors who return to their waters most often on a mission.





To the ends of the earth

THE end of March was the start of something new for Commando Helicopter Force squadron, 845 NAS, who left their home base of Yeovilton behind to head out for the first time to the dry mountains of Afghanistan.

The Sea Kings of 845 have joined with their sister squadron 846 in the landlocked nation to take on the support helicopter role for the coalition forces.

Preparations for deployment take long enough under normal circumstances, but 845 NAS have had to squeeze a lot of work into a short amount of time – they only returned from Iraq four months and three days prior to heading out to Afghanistan on their latest operational stint in a new theatre.

Of course, as we reported last month, the HC4 Sea Kings had to be beefed up with a new design of rotor blades and tail rotor, avionics, radio and defensive aids suite. A comprehensive package of engineering and technical work that earned them the new title of HC4+.

Lt Ben McGreal said: "This work, running alongside other commitments elsewhere, placed

immense demands upon the engineers on the squadron.

"But working to an exceptionally tight schedule that left no margin for error, they did a sterling job to get the first batch aircraft ready to deploy on time."

And it was not just the machinery that had to be prepared for the new environment, as the men and women of 845 NAS had barely returned to British shores before they packed their bags and headed out to the cold of Norway for the annual Clockwork training in Bardufoss.

Lt McGreal said: "Even before extraction from Iraq, some elements of the squadron began survival training in Bardufoss."

"In early January most of the squadron joined them in northern Norway to conduct a specially-designed extreme cold weather flying course."

"Whilst it may seem strange to deploy to the frozen north of the Arctic Circle to conduct pre-deployment training for the desert, the re-circulating snow, mountains and brutal challenge of operating aircraft in extreme conditions provided exceptional training for Afghanistan."

There was little rest for the

members of C Flight on return from Norway, as they plunged headfirst into pre-deployment training, learning about the country in which they would soon be operating.

"This involved numerous lectures on the country, the threat, time on the range honing our weapon skills and eye-watering talks from the medics on what the local wildlife could do to the unsuspecting or lazy matelots," added Lt McGreal.

"For the aircrew there was an intense flying package designed to simulate the conditions, threats and mission pressure they were going to experience in country."

"This meant a lot of flying as well as crew contact drills designed to ensure that the aircrew knew what to do should they find themselves on the ground in Taliban-held territory."

Cdr Matt Briers, commanding officer of 845 NAS, commented: "Every single member of 845 NAS has worked exceptionally hard following our withdrawal from combat operations in Iraq to ensure the squadron is ready for this new challenge."

"The effort required to concurrently recover aircraft from Basra,

modify others to the HC4+ standard, conduct cold climate training and prepare people for a new war has been huge.

"That we have achieved this has been down to the commitment of each and every member of the squadron."

He concluded: "I am immensely privileged to command such people and know they will do a first-class job in theatre as everyone is relishing the chance to get involved and show what 845 NAS and the Commando Helicopter Force will do."

The arrival of 845 NAS in

theatre alongside 846 NAS will double the number of CHF personnel on Op Herrick, operating as part of the Joint Helicopter Force (Afghanistan).

The Lynx aircraft of 847 NAS are programmed to join their Sea King cousins in CHF later this year, meaning that the Fleet Air Arm will be the largest British military operator of aircraft in theatre.

● (top) The aurora borealis is a dramatic backdrop for the Sea Kings of 845 NAS

● (below) Cold weather training for 845 NAS aircrew in Norway

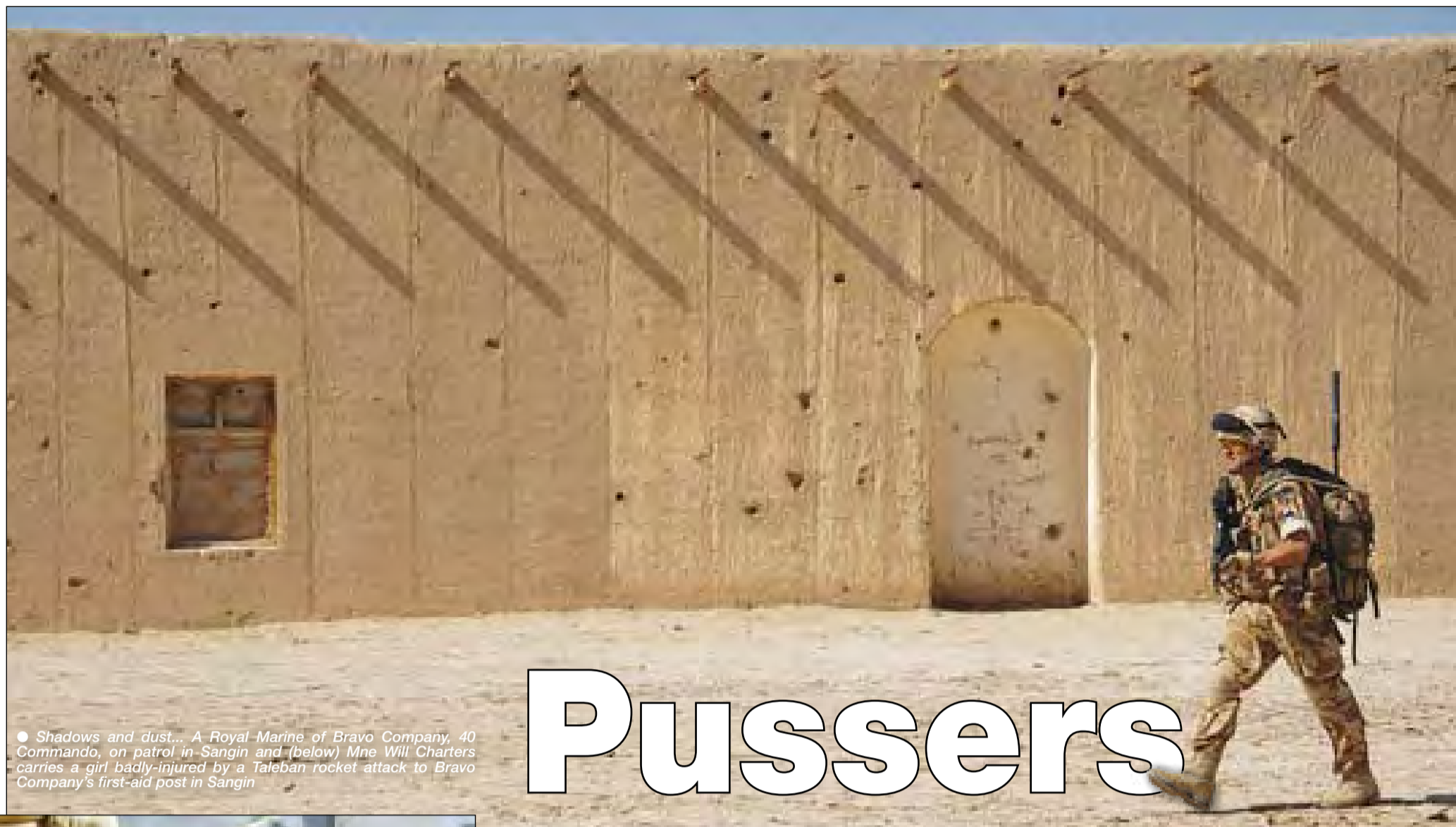


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● Shadows and dust... A Royal Marine of Bravo Company, 40 Commando, on patrol in Sangin and (below) Mne Will Charters carries a girl badly-injured by a Taliban rocket attack to Bravo Company's first-aid post in Sangin

Pussers



IF ANYWHERE in Afghanistan epitomises the odious nature of Taliban, it is the market town of Sangin.

For a decade, Sangin was a Taliban stronghold in name and nature. It was a heartland of fundamentalism, a hotbed of the opium trade, the last outpost of Taliban rule.

Yet if anywhere in Afghanistan epitomises what can be achieved in the absence of that evil regime, it is Sangin.

The Royal Marines of Bravo Company, 40 Commando, are the guardians of Sangin. Their comrades from the Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) team are the catalysts for its regeneration.

When the Taliban held sway in Sangin, normal life came to a halt. The market withered. The school closed. Only religious instruction was permitted under the fundamentalist regime.

Stagnation was compounded by destruction as fighting raged about the town.

"People had forgotten what Sangin should be like," said Capt Andy Goldsmith, head of 40 Commando's specialist Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) team in the town.

"Now we are finally starting to

see progress that people can buy into, and the feedback we are getting is very encouraging."

The authorities have a ten-year plan for the town, aided by the protection offered by Bravo Company, 40 Commando.

That protection has seen people return to Sangin in their droves (more than five million people have returned to Afghanistan from neighbouring states since the Taliban were ousted).

The bazaar now thrives once again. Teams of workers are clearing the rubble of buildings destroyed in the fighting for Sangin and a new tarmac road will soon be laid to the town's school.

That school was also damaged in the skirmishes – but the real damage was done long before, when the Taliban ruled the town.

Under their rule, girls aged eight and over were forbidden an education; those under eight could learn only the Qur'an. Female teachers were sacked. Anyone who broke these laws faced execution.

Although the Taliban were eventually driven from Sangin, their baleful influence has sadly

persisted.

Teachers remain wary of returning to school – they and their pupils still face intimidation from die-hard fundamentalists.

Mercifully, the desire to learn has proved too strong in the face of ignorance and repression.

Gurkha engineers helped to re-build part of the ten-classroom school – enough has been restored for lessons to resume for both girls and boys, with 65 children already on the school's books.

"We cannot underestimate the effect of hearing the sound of children playing in the school again," said Lt Pete Ryan, part of the CIMIC team.

"Many of the children have never been to school, but now they can pursue an education with confidence."

The school is, perhaps understandably, rather austere and lacking in almost all the basics which Britain's youngsters take for granted.



Thanks to efforts by children in 40 Commando's home town, some colour will return to the lives of Sangin's youths.

Pupils at Queen's College junior school in Taunton are donating sports equipment, drawings and art work and simple equipment so the school in Sangin can get back on its feet.

"It's fantastic that the pupils have taken this opportunity to exchange some of their artwork with the children of Sangin," said Capt Mark Elliott, 40 Cdo's adjutant – and a former Queen's College pupil.

"This adds a great new dimension to all the efforts that have been put into the area over the last four months."

Education will hopefully destroy the Taliban's roots and prevent them taking hold again in the future. For the present, the drugs trade is their lifeblood and Sangin was the epicentre of southern Afghanistan's opium market, followed by Musa Qaleh to the north.

The people grappling

I WORK in the Force Movements Control Centre and am responsible for the physical movement of passengers, mail and cargo within theatre, be that by road or air.

We are responsible for the surface lines of communication from Karachi to Kandahar or Kabul and air lines of communication within country.

I run the tactical air desks, ensuring that the theatre freight movement priorities list is adhered to as well as moving passengers and of course the ever important mail.

My main effort is currently focussed on the Relief in Place (RiP), where 16 Air Assault Brigade replaces 52 Brigade. This started on March 6 and will move 12,400 passengers between UK and Afghanistan.

This requires careful planning to ensure that the right number of passengers are allocated to each RAF Tristar, the strategic aircraft used to move all military passengers into theatre, and then the right number of C130 Hercules are available to move passengers

forward to Camp Bastion (the main UK base in Helmand) and beyond – so as you can see, I will be fairly busy.

Being in the centre is a very rewarding job which provides me with professional experience outside of the norm and I would strongly recommend this job to any RN logistician wishing to broaden their military and professional logistics knowledge.

– Lt Cdr Gary Manning

WHO would have imagined after 20 years in the RN that I would be in the middle of a desert in a landlocked country wearing desert camouflage uniform? Well that's

exactly what has happened. I'm now based at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan.

It's a Joint HQ and I'm in the J1 Branch – J1 looks after people – where we provide personnel and administrative support to all UK soldiers, sailors and airmen on Herrick, some 8,000 people, including 140 RN and 770 RM.

Already I have travelled to Camp Bastion, Lashkar Gar and Kabul, including frisky flights over the desert in Army Lynx, C130 hops, squeezing into the back of Saxons and driving through the streets of Kabul in armoured Landcruisers.

There are a huge range of personnel issues, ranging from the

theatre container management, management of local contracts with Afghan contractors and the movement of stores, personnel and much more throughout this landlocked country.

I am delighted to report that the team is making a significant impact in Operation Herrick and enjoying the challenge enormously. This might seem an unlikely destination for the RN Logistics Branch but we stand ready to continue with this commitment for the foreseeable future. I will let a selection of the team tell their own story.

strategic, where I ensure policies such as the Operational Welfare Package reaches our Forward Operating Bases, to the deeply tactical, where I take a personal interest in the welfare of specific individual cases where extra support is required.

And most importantly there is the genuine ability to make a difference. I've had my fair share of challenge, responsibility and variety during my career in the RN, but this job takes the biscuit – for anyone out there who is interested, if you get the chance I recommend that you grab the opportunity.

It's hard work and you need to keep on your toes – but it's worth

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● Rolling thunder... Clouds of dust are kicked up by Royal Marine Vikings of the Armoured Support Company as they roar over the sandy terrain near Melmand

Pictures: LA(Phot) 'AJ' Macleod, 40 Commando

'n' booties

The insurgents were driven out of the latter town last year after ferocious fighting. Reports suggested some fled to the village of Sapwan Kala, outside Sangin.

If there was any doubt of the link between drugs and the Taliban, it was dispelled when Bravo Company entered the village during Operation Ghartse Dagger.

Conversations with locals suggested a series of compounds served as a drugs factory.

They did. They found a set-up intended to manufacture heroin on an industrial scale.

The Royals discovered more than 1½ tons of morphine base – used to produce heroin – plus sacks of chemicals, presses, ID cards, bank statements (some in English) and weapons.

"I can understand local people growing poppies because the economy here is limited and they need to make a living and feed their families," said Maj Dan Cheesman, Officer Commanding Bravo Company.

"The drugs factory was a case of the greedy, not the needy, however.

"Intelligence increasingly indicates that the Taliban and the

narcotics industry are in cahoots – where we find one, we find the other."

Neither greedy nor needy will ever use it again. Gurkha engineers attached to 40 Commando levelled the compounds.

The destruction of the drugs factory was followed by the second phase of Ghartse Dagger, an armoured thrust into the town of Melmand, east of Sangin.

The Royals in their Vikings were accompanied by Danes in their Piranha armoured vehicles, safeguarded overhead by an umbrella of Apache gunships.

There was no resistance; the Taliban melted away, allowing the Allies to drive into Malmand unopposed.

"Having dominated the Upper Sangin Valley for five months, it's become clear that the Taliban are running out of safe havens," said Maj Cheesman.

"We are now going out further than we have before – the principle being that we pick fights on our terms rather than waiting for them to come to us."

In fleeing once again, the insurgents left behind weapons, drugs and items used to make suicide bomber vests.

Despite these thrusts into Taliban country, the fundamentalists are still here, somewhere.

A distressed Afghani appeared at the gates of Bravo Company's headquarters in Sangin.

His two girls had been badly wounded by a rocket attack – an indiscriminate response by Taliban fighters to a patrol by the green berets.

First to respond to the pleas was Mne Will Charters, who carried one of the girls to the sick bay.

"I've seen casualties before, but it's horrible when children are involved," he said.

Medics at Sangin provided emergency aid to stabilise the children, while a Chinook flew in from Camp Bastion to take them to the main field hospital in Helmand.

There surgeons saved both girls' lives; one, however, lost an arm, the second remains in a serious condition with head wounds.

"What happened to these girls is tragic, but it's the reality of fighting against people who don't care who they attack," lamented Mne Martin McCaffrey, Bravo Company's medic who administered vital aid while waiting for the Chinook.



● Maj Jez Stemp RM directs Viking operations from the turret of his armoured vehicle

with the FOB of war

it. To be up close with what UK Forces are doing out here is an impressive and often humbling experience. It's reminded me why I joined up all those years ago."

– Cdr Craig Mearns

AS Lieutenant Commander Medical Operations in the Headquarters I am responsible for the day-to-day management of medical support to UK operations in Afghanistan.

In simple terms this means I need to be the 'jack' of all medical trades. I work closely to coordinate the UK medical effort and I am the HQ focal point for ensuring medical support of operations.

I even get to dabble with medical planning every now and again, working closely with the UK Joint Force Medical Group in Bastion which is responsible for delivering enhanced medical care in the recently-opened hospital that replaced the previous tented one.

As you can imagine it is extremely busy providing healthcare to at least the same standard, if not better than the

NHS back in the UK.

Issues surrounding medical logistics land on my desk and I am required to liaise with the Logistic Support section to ensure the smooth management of medical resupply (we're all loggies here)."

– Lt Cdr Al Murray

AS part of the Logistic Operations cell, I manage the priority and movement of equipment in order to meet the operational requirements, essentially ensuring there is a bang not a click when the soldier fires his weapon.

The equipment we move ranges from large armoured vehicles, aviation equipment, ammunition, medical supplies, engineering stores and material to the more unexpected requirements such as air-conditioned dog kennels. We move equipment using local national trucks (known as 'jinglies'), by C130 Hercules between Kandahar, Bastion and Kabul and by 'combat logistics patrols' across Kandahar and Helmand to all the major Forward Operating Bases (FOBs).

To re-supply our forward locations we also use Chinook support helicopters and we are currently introducing a contract civilian helicopter which has started operating a 'milk round' of the Helmand FOBs.

Finally we have air despatch for those 'impossible to reach' locations.

This job could not be done in isolation as it combines Army logistics and RAF movements with an RN Officer (me!) acting as the conduit to tie it all together.

I also have a secondary responsibility as the 'theatre container manager' and, as you can imagine, we have an awful lot of containers both here on the ground and somewhere between Felixstowe, Karachi and Helmand."

– Lt Rachael Cunnell

There is no doubt that the Logistic Support Branch (termed J4) is the heart beat of any logistics HQ and I have the role of co-ordinating the outputs of the various combat supplies desk officers as they make best use of 1st (front line), 2nd (Camp Bastion)

and 3rd-line stocks (in Kandahar or the UK) – to sustain UK Forces and our embedded nations across southern Afghanistan.

At the higher level, estimates on fuel and water requirements or the logistic impact of supporting other nations operating in Helmand, for example, have in this truly expeditionary and logistically-fragile part of the world, occupied much of our time.

At the more immediate end of the spectrum, during 'the middle watch' we have been making calls on whether to authorise an emergency air drop to sustain NATO regional operations to the north of Kandahar or move high-priority equipment forward from Kandahar to Bastion.

Neither circumstance, I hasten to add, was a product of bad logistical planning but a response to the pace of change on operations and the hostile environment.

Daily engagement with the other Services, coalition nations and organisations to deliver logistic effect is always interesting, hugely rewarding and even fun."

– Lt Cdr Charles Evans

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● A breath of fresh Ayr... Gannet's on-call Sea King conducts training near The Cobbler
Picture: LA(Phot) Del Trotter, FRPU Clyde

Like a muppet on a string...

YOU can see the attraction.

There is a wonderfully bleak beauty to this landscape.

Grouse dash up the slopes. Squirrels scurry between the bushes. Water rushes down gullies, tumbling over boulders, crashing into pools below.

It's clear why its beloved by climbers and hillwalkers.

But not today. I may have written previously that it wasn't particularly bad north of the border in 2007.

Allow me to retract that statement right now. For while it's a bright, if blustery, day at Prestwick, there's a storm raging amid the peaks and glens of Argyll.

At 2,000ft, the wind is gusting up to 50mph. Thanks to the skill of the pilots, you don't notice it too much in the back of the cab.

But stare out of the side door and you'll see horizontal sleet shooting past.

The pilot's not happy with the wind. Nor is LACMN Kev Regan. He fires an orange flare on to the mountainside around The Cobbler, a peak

rising 881 metres (2,900ft) above Loch Long. It's a common practice area for the Gannet team.

The flare fizzles for a few seconds before clouds of orange smoke billow and then hastily disperse and merge with the murk – revealing just how strong the wind is out there.

"I'm not happy with this," says Lt Cdr Lanni. "What about that rock over there?"

That rock over there. To the uninitiated every rock, every little outcrop, every boulder surrounded by tufts of grass and piles of soft snow looks identical.

But these mountain men know their domain. That rock is different from this rock.

"Happy with that," says Kev. The Sea King spins around the valley once, twice, perhaps three times as the flight crew assess wind speed and direction.

There's no point winching in perfect conditions off a nice, safe ledge.

This is a training mission – the duty crew The winchman goes down first to show how it's done. Then it's time for the real dope on a rope...

Kev explains what is expected of me. Something to do with rock, mountainside, and avoiding the

tree. It's hard to understand above the roar of the Sea King's engines, which are also belching Avcat No.5 into the back of the helicopter.

Man is not meant to fly. And if he is, then he should stay in the vehicle at all times.

So while what I'm about to do is bread and butter for the Gannet guys, it's positively barking mad to a deskbound civvy (*Think Inaction Man – Ed*).

Who in their right mind hangs on a piece of wire less than an inch thick 3,000ft above a loch in a blizzard?

Kev hooks me up to the winch lead then moves to the motor lever; arrows next to it handily explain 'up' and 'down' – "so the Royals know how to use it".

First, very briefly, it's up and then it's down. And once clear of the helicopter it's a wonderfully serene feeling – a bit like gliding or parachuting, with all God's wonders laid out before you: the valley, the craggy mountain tops, the wisps of grass, the rather weather-beaten trees. Arrochar nestles at the foot of the valley.

But this is not a smooth ride. The winch lurches. It spins. One minute you're facing the valley, the next the mountainside.

Nor do you drop vertically. You fall at an angle. You have no control. You are entirely in the hands of the men and women in the helicopter. You have no means of communication, save the odd hand signal.

Apparently, I was supposed to land on the side of mountain and walk down it, still attached to the winch, before being winched back up again.

Simple. The only words to enter that pea-sized brain in my head evidently were 'winch', 'down', 'rock', 'back again'.

So for a couple of minutes, I bump along the damp grass, spin around, bump some more, look up at the helicopter, think "that's a long way up", and scrape along the rock, buckling my legs.

Clearly Kev realises he's dealing with an idiot, and flicks the 'up' lever on the winch.

It's all been a rather serene experience. But then it's not been a matter of life and death. No bones broken. No hypothermia setting in. No fog or mist shrouding the peaks.

But like all they have rescued before, I'm grateful to plonk myself down on the floor of the Sea King.



● A Girl Guide learns about radio at the RN Amateur Radio Society in HMS Collingwood

A Guide to the airwaves

'THINKING day on the air' drew Girl Guides and Brownies to HMS Collingwood to meet with the radio experts of the RN Amateur Radio Society, whose headquarters is appropriately enough in the Maritime Warfare School.

The girls made use of the radio equipment to make contact with other Guides and Brownies across the UK, and learn about mapping contacts and the use of the phonetic alphabet.

Morse code was taught in an unusual way as the girls spelt out their names on biscuits using icing paste and sweets.

The Senior Rates mess at Collingwood have also been making an effort to make life easier for local children.

The mess donated £1,000 to the Heathfield School in Fareham, which helps children with moderate learning disabilities.

PO Simon 'Nobby' Hall visited the school during an assembly to make the donation, which will go towards a cycle track.

■ And apologies to the Collingwood sailors of the System Engineering Management course who last month were assigned, in error, to HMS Sultan.

Partners in Clyde make the long run south

CREW and personnel connected to patrol ship HMS Clyde have packed their running shoes in preparation for the gruelling Stanley Marathon across the unforgiving Falkland Islands terrain, where steep gradients, high winds and the strange South-Atlantic climate of four seasons in one day make other marathons seem ordinary.

The ship's marine engineer officer Lt Cdr Paul Williams and gunnery officer Lt Andy Scorer are joined by VT Naval Support's George Jamieson, the senior systems manager on the ship, and Paul Blankley, who is based at Abbey Wood, to form the team 'Partners in Clyde'.

Their efforts will go to garner money for charity Seeing is Believing, which aims to restore the sight of people around the world through cataract operations, the training of eye doctors, and the building of vision centres.



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Telephone: 023 9263 9534
Fax: 023 9267 7574
Email: rnchildren@btconnect.com

Craig saves lives in Ghana

A NURSING officer from Derriford Hospital in Plymouth led a team out to West Africa to set up a life-saving medical centre.

Lt Craig Brown, an operating theatre specialist at the military hospital unit and specialist adviser to the RN, led a team that headed out to Sekondi and Takoradi in Ghana.

This is the fifth time that the Royal Navy and QARNNS (Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service) have headed out to the African nation to offer their services in reducing the death toll of serious untreated hernias.

Once in country, Craig was in charge of a hernia clinic operating theatre – each five-day visit period draws an average of 140 cases for treatment at the Hernia Treatment Centre in Takoradi.

Craig said: "We are educating the Ghanaians in hernia surgery and they are learning our skills and operating theatre procedures.

"This is an important process because whereas 100 per cent of hernias diagnosed will be treated by operation in the UK, only less than 14 per cent will be treated by routine operation in Africa – and of those that are not treated there is a high mortality rate.

"The Operation Hernia team working with the Ghanaian doctors and nurses are seeking to reduce this mortality rate in this region dramatically."

Operation Hernia is a charity headed by Professor Andrew Kingsnorth, a colleague of Craig's at Derriford Hospital.

Craig added: "It is a very humbling experience seeing what the Ghanaians have to tolerate; they have so little resources and are so poorly equipped and funded.

"The team makes big differences by performing procedures, whilst teaching the local nurses, that we



● Lt Craig Brown, an operating theatre specialist at Derriford Hospital in Plymouth

Picture: LA(Phot) Ray Jones

take for granted in the UK."

The Operation Hernia foundation has built up strong links with the western region of the African country.

Achievements of the mission include educating the local health care professionals to reduce the spread of HIV and hepatitis, supplying equipment to the clinics, teaching patient-lifting and

handling techniques, and basic life support to reduce preventable deaths.

Craig is particularly keen to hear from ships that may be visiting the area to find ways to strengthen the links between the Royal Navy and the Ghanaian clinic.

Find out more on the official website www.operationhernia.org.uk.

Dibdobs and shrapnel

LEFT-OVER currency and nowhere to spend it led a sailor from Devonport ship HMS Northumberland to raise money for charity, Barnardo's.

LET Herewood Crane started the collection of coins from the many ports the warship visited during her four-month deployment in the Mediterranean.

Once he'd organised collecting tins and placed encouraging posters around the ship, Herewood set about pestering the ship's company to give him all their foreign change.

He said: "I decided to make this collection because I know charities collect foreign coins and with 160 people in the ship there were bound to be a lot of coins left over from our port visits.

"Choosing Barnardo's as the charity to receive the collection wasn't easy as a lot of charities deserve the same but I hope these coins make a real difference to the children."

The collection of £91 was presented to Sue Ferris, a representative for Barnardo's during the ship's recent maintenance period in Devonport.

...and a mission to Africa

THIS fallow period in the ship's sea-going life also offered the chance for seven sailors from HMS Northumberland's company to head out to Richard's Bay in South Africa to work on a children's orphanage as *Navy News* went to press.

The aim of the one-week mission is to improve the orphanage by refurbishing the kitchens, building a playground and laying paths to keep the children from walking on mud in winter.

Members of the team also gave practical lessons, ranging from health and hygiene issues to interactive dramas.

Fundraising went well with friends, family and the ship's company all giving very generously to raise £5,000 to buy the materials needed for the projects.

Project organiser Lt Cdr Stuart Somerville said: "Having returned from a civilian-run mission last year I realised what a fantastic undertaking this would be for the team in HMS Northumberland.

"The week is going to test our resilience, teamwork and organisation skills to the limit and in return I hope the experience is positive and life-changing for the team, the children, and the staff at the orphanage."

Follow their efforts online at www.southafricanprojectmar08.blogspot.com

A record racket

TWO records have been broken on the squash court at HMS Excellent, earning a place in the record books for two members of the Military Police Guard Service.

Pte Darrel Gilmore and L/Cpl Glen Dickson laboured long and hard under the watchful eye of MAA Gavin Moulds (pictured right) and two witnesses to achieve a record-breaking squash stint of 25 hours, 26 minutes.

Darrel said: "Once we got to 24 hours we knew we had secured a place in the Guinness Book of Records for the longest ever squash game, but we were told about the Racket Sports Record, so we continued on for another hour and 26 minutes in order to break another world record."

Fundraising from the squasha-thon will go to support the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).



Some va va voom on va va Victory



ALTHOUGH not the most mobile of Her Majesty's ships, Victory's crew are a little different – a team from the Flagship are determined to scale the mighty peaks of the four countries of Great Britain and Ireland in less than 48 hours.

The Va Va Victory team (pictured left) raised an impressive £31,500 last year, winning the trophy for the highest sum collected, and no doubt are determined to do even better this year. (Pledge your support online at www.justgiving.com/victory4peaks)

Although they might have some rivals; in amongst the 60 other teams competing to conquer the peaks of Ben Nevis, Helvellyn, Snowdon and Carantouhill are The Flyers, captained by former Royal Marine Terry Hislop, now a military consultant to the United Arab Emirates.

All money raised will go to Wooden Spoon, the rugby charity that is celebrating its silver jubilee in 2008 with fundraising events planned throughout the year. The charity is committed to helping mentally, physically and socially disadvantaged children.

Wooden Spoon are appealing for people to take part in this year's events. If a brisk walk doesn't suit you, then perhaps the traditional John O'Groats to Lands End cycle ride might appeal...

Find out more on www.spoonchallenges.com or 01889 582889.

Give as you live

THE Royal Navy has launched a new 'give as you earn scheme' to support all Naval Service charities through the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

In encouraging people to donate through their pay, the RN hopes to get as many people as possible giving monthly through their payroll to the Sports Amenities and Benevolence Scheme (SABS).

The slogan of the new scheme is "£1 per week – a lifetime of reward", because the money collected will benefit everyone in the wider Naval community, from serving people to veterans and their dependants.

If a serviceman or woman agrees to pay £1 a week, the actual cost to them is 78 pence, because the donation is deducted from their 'before-tax' pay.

Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns, Second Sea Lord, said at the scheme's launch: "If 75 per cent of serving people in the RN donated £1 a week to the SABS, we'd collect £1.5 million every year."

The three main areas to benefit from the scheme will be sport, amenities, and benevolence – financial help to those in need.

Money raised for sport will go on extras, such as equipment and coaching, and support to clubs and associations for serving people.

The amenities fund is designed to help service people relax when off-duty, and will pay for leisure items such as new televisions, media centres and games in ships and establishments. It will also help pay for Families' Days and activities which are not publicly funded.

The Benevolence fund will help both serving and ex-serving people and their dependants who find themselves in need.

It will also help casualties and their families and will be able to supplement the £10,000 charity grant which is currently paid immediately in the event of a death in service.

The scheme has already been rolled out in HMS Raleigh and BRNC Dartmouth, and representatives will be visiting other establishments to explain the benefits of the new system.

For further information contacts the SABS manager, Julie Behan, on 023 9281 6508 or the Fleet charities officer, Frank Ward, on 023 9262 5247.

'Still firing guns in sheer defiance'

TWO Naval veterans are not letting ill fate or illness daunt them as they take on fundraising challenges in the spirit of the military in which they have served.

After 17 years enjoyable service in the Royal Navy as a Marine Engineer, boiler specialist, Vaughan Williams was proud when his son Arthur signed up for the military life as an elite green beret.

However a serious car accident smashed his son's spine in several places leaving him partially paralysed, and necessitating four months in the Midlands Centre for Spinal Injuries at Oswestry.

Vaughan said: "Arthur is slowly getting his life back together and at the moment is still a Royal Marine."

"Both the Royal Marines and his ship HMS Albion have been of immense support to him over the last year."

"They have shown the truth of the statement that the Royal Marines are more than a career but a family that always do their best to look after their own."

Vaughan admits that the debt to Oswestry can never be repaid but he is determined to try – the veteran intends to walk from John O'Groats to Lands End to raise money for the spinal unit at Oswestry and Spirit, a charity that supports research into spinal injuries and their treatment.

Find out more online at www.vaughanscharitywalk.co.uk or pledge through www.justgiving.com/vaughanwilliams.

Spinal injury is all too familiar to another Naval veteran, Barry O'Connell, who after injuring his back falling from a ladder ended up at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital at Stanmore.



● Vaughan Williams as a 'baby Tiff' in 1965

Last year Barry went through a full major thoracic spine operation, one of the first carried out in this country, where he died twice yet, to use Barry's memorable phrase, "they got the old boilers fired up after quite a struggle."

He went on: "The plain fact was I was told the only reason they carried out my operation was that I was mega fit and it paid off, as my spine specialist said when he knew of my Naval background."

"He told me that he had seen the film of the Graf Spee battle and that I was just like HMS Exeter, 'you vanish in a load of smoke and the officers on the other ships were amazed to see Exeter come out badly damaged, on fire, smoke pouring out of her, but still firing her guns in sheer defiance.'"

"The specialist then asked me how I got away with it. I just smiled and said 'Lady Luck'."

Now clad in an exo-skeleton of

body armour, and fitted out with an impressive wheelchair that he has named the 'GR7 Harrier', the determined veteran has decided to raise money for the groups that have aided him in his injuries.

As *Navy News* went to press, Barry was due to take part in the Sport Relief mile, completing the distance in his GR7 Harrier while flying the White Ensign proudly at Colchester Garrison.

He said: "Being a Pongo area, I aim to represent the Senior Service by example leading from the front."

He is grateful for the support of his local RNA in Clacton, plus the RN and Fleet Air Arm who have provided him with clothing and stickers to keep the RN at the forefront of attention.

He added: "But one sticker says 'Hello sailor', which raises a few eyebrows – mind you, no ex-matlot has made an offer to me yet..."

As well as his fundraising efforts for the national Sport Relief charity, Barry has his eye set on bigger things: "If the Royals want me to assist them do various things like abseiling over bridges or down buildings, then count me in!"

"I am up for it in my wheelchair, I yearn for it and give me a chance to do something others say is impossible in the chair I will do."



● CPO David 'Tug' Wilson is cheered on by HMS Bulwark's commanding officer Capt Jeremy Blunden and shipmates

Tug rows, cycles and runs for lifeboat service

CPO David 'Tug' Wilson on board assault ship HMS Bulwark set himself a daunting challenge when he decided to complete a half-marathon in three separate disciplines – indoor rowing, cycling and running – in one marathon session.

Tug took on the commitment as part of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's 'Showing our support' national fundraising day.

Tug said: "As someone who works at sea, and also sails recreationally, the RNLI is an important charity to me."

"My brother is an ex-lifeboat crew member and now works full time for the RNLI so it is a charity that I have always supported."

"I am delighted to have been able to raise so much money for this very worthwhile cause and would like to thank everyone on board for their support throughout."

In total Tug has managed to raise over £1,048 – enough money to provide all the required safety and survival equipment for one lifeboat crew member.

Tug completed the challenge in four hours and 21 minutes, nine minutes inside his target time.



● Trainee Engineering Technician Brooke Wilson and her fellow trainees rub down the paintwork ready for repainting at Pengover Residential Home

Sailors head up the garden path

TRAINEE sailors from HMS Raleigh have visited a local residential home to create an inspirational and relaxing garden for residents.

The sailors began work at the home in January and Raleigh plans to send trainees to the home on a weekly basis over the next nine months.

The 'Up the garden path' project will see the sailors building a path, a dry stone wall and laying the foundations for a shed.

Hawke Division instructor PO Les Rust said:

"The trainees will probably have a maximum of two weeks with us before they start the next stage of their training, and during that time we look to put together a programme of activities to enhance the skills they have learned during basic training."

"Working at Pengover is an excellent way for them to put their team-working skills into practice while also interacting with the older people in the local community and helping to brighten their day."

Over 750 trainees will work on the project.

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75 YEARS OF SERVICE 1932 - 2007



● Rear Admiral Tony Johnstone-Burt receives his Junglie L-plates from 848 NAS instructor Capt Dave West RM Picture: PO Sue Emery

Veteran cab drivers

ALTHOUGH a pilot by trade, Rear Admiral Tony Johnstone-Burt had to pick up his L-plates when he went for an aviation refresher package at RNAS Yeovilton.

The admiral, who will soon be taking charge of the Joint Helicopter Command, spent some

Defence college in top ten

WELBECK, the Defence Sixth-form College, achieved a top ten rating from the A-level Performance System.

The independent body looked at the summer 2007 A-level results of students in 975 colleges and schools nationwide, and the defence college came tenth.

The college, which aims to educate students to become officers in the Armed Services or civil service, is the only college in the country where mathematics and physics are compulsory, and has only been at its new, purpose-build site in Leicestershire for two years.

time with the Sea King experts at 848 Naval Air Squadron – one of the four Commando Helicopter Force squadrons that will come under his control in the joint force.

The admiral flew the Sea King in general handling, and the more specialist Junglie aspects of low-level tactical navigation, confined areas, load-lifting and night vision goggle operations.

Rear Admiral Johnstone-Burt was heard to remark that it made a refreshing change from working in an office.

However one pilot at 848 NAS needs no refresher course – commanding officer Cdr Terry Tyack has notched up the impressive total of 4,000 hours of flying.

Since joining up in 1984, the officer has flown a range of aircraft types, including five different operational helicopters.

Upon landing after his 4,000th hour in the air the traditional celebration took place – a bottle of champagne and a ‘cooling-down’ from the squadron.

Celebrities hang out with the Navy

THE ROYAL Navy has been a bit of a media star in recent weeks. Ant and Dec paid a surprise visit to HMS Collingwood and children's TV presenter Andy Akinwolere tried his hand on the sinking ship simulator at HMS Raleigh.

Andy Akinwolere, from the BBC's *Blue Peter*, had the daunting task of facing the Royal Navy's multi-million pound simulator.

Andy joined recruits at HMS Raleigh for routine training on the simulator, known as Havoc. The training is part of the recruits' nine-week initial training course that helps prepare them for how to deal with floods and damage to the ship's hull.

During the training the simulator rocks from side to side and fills with water.

Before he stepped into the simulator Andy confessed to a fear of water, but the Navy won him over: "I get really nervous when I'm out of my depth. But I ended up having an exhilarating day.

"I learnt the importance of teamwork, and my team was exceptional," he said.

During the tough onslaught within Havoc, the trainees must work together to stem the flow of water through the breaches in the hull using wooden wedges and hammers.

They then have to shore up the bulkheads with timber to re-establish the watertight integrity of the ship.

CPO David Battersby, Havoc Senior Instructor, said: "The trainees and staff really enjoyed having Andy with us for the day; he did remarkably well in such a short period of time.

"During the exercise the simulator fills with around 70 tonnes of water and can tilt up to 20 degrees from vertical. Flooding on a ship at sea is one of the most dangerous situations to be in and this training is vital."

Ant and Dec have also been hanging out with the Navy

in practice for the *Ant vs Dec* challenge, in which they compete against each other in teams in the latest series of ITV's *Saturday Night Takeaway*.

They spent time in HMS Collingwood undergoing obstacle course training prior to tackling the real thing live on their show on the Saturday.

The celebrities – including Bonnie Langford, Debbie McGee, Melinda Messenger – tackled crossing over murky waters, climbing over a vertical wall, crawling through a dark tunnel and scrambling under and above a huge net.

Lt Steve Kelly, PTRO and organiser of the challenge said, "The whole experience was quite surreal.

"When the celebrities arrived at Collingwood on Tuesday, it was difficult to know how they would react to the challenge and the physical aspects involved.

"Fortunately we had great weather, which helped, and to their credit the teams cracked on and got stuck in, whether they were on the assault course or handling training on the field guns.

"Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and we gained an insight into what we were up against."

Saturday was a long day for everyone as it was spent rehearsing and making sure ITV were happy with the camera angles.

All their hard work paid off in the end as the whole event went smoothly and to plan.

Before they had to go out and compete against each other Ant and Dec watched clips from their training along with all the viewers of *Saturday Night Takeaway*.



● Dec (or is it Ant?) on the obstacle course at HMS Collingwood with actress Bonnie Langford Picture: ITV

The live competition in the studio car park ran perfectly with Dec's team winning the event and that vital point.

Two weeks later the lads and their celebrity teams were back

with the Royal Navy when they headed to Austria to join forces with the successful RN and RM Bobsleigh team for a white-knuckle ride with the winter-sports heroes (see page 51).

No1 in pen and clubz

HMS Monmouth's clubswinger LPT 'Pat' Patterson has been awarded the Tony Thyrritt-Bettridge Memorial trophy as the best PTI across all ranks.

And Logs Lucy Gilston of HMS Ocean – a Writer in old speak – won the Writer of the Year award 2006-07 for the best overall performance at Raleigh.

Logistician (Personnel (Admin)) of the Year doesn't have quite the same ring, does it? – Ed

Family ties

THE Navy is still a family affair with members meeting up around the globe.

Brothers AB(Sea) Lee and ET(ME) Steven Gilboy met while their ships (respectively Westminster and Edinburgh) were preparing for their transits south through the Suez Canal.

The brothers from St Athan in south Wales were thrilled to have the chance to spend some time together before setting off again with their deployments.

Lee said: "I knew we were both going to be deployed on Orion 08, but I never thought we'd get the chance to meet up. It was great showing my little brother around my new ship."

Meanwhile CPO Annette Laurie ended up training her son, AB Sam Furniss, at HMS Collingwood.

Annette was at the Fareham base for a short period, while her son Sam underwent operational training before joining colleagues in Iraq.

And down in HMS Raleigh in Cornwall, one trainee sailor had a surprise guest when he saw a very familiar face in the crowd.

Trainee AET Glenn Harris told his twin, Alex, that he would be unable to make it to his passing out parade, as he would be on duty at HMS Sultan in Gosport.

However, unbeknown to Alex, Glenn had obtained special permission from his instructors to travel back to HMS Raleigh to see his brother complete his training.

Glenn said: "It was fantastic to come back to Raleigh to surprise Alex. The look on his face when he saw me said everything."



● Steven and Lee Gilboy on HMS Westminster's forecastle



● Glenn and Alex Harris at HMS Raleigh

Picture: Dave Sherfield



The Band of HM Royal Marines School of Music
conducted by Sir Vivian Dunn. The ever popular music by the two undisputed kings of march composition, John Philip Sousa and Kenneth J Alford. Included are *Colonel Bogey, The Thin Red Line, HM Jollies, The Standard of St George, On the Quarter Deck, The Great Little Army, Eagle Squadron, The Voice of the Gunn, King Cotton, The Thunderer, El Capitan, Solid Men in the Front, Sound Off, The National Game, The Gladiator, The Gridiron Club* and many others.
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Sure-footed at the AIB

NESTLING in a corner of HMS Sultan's site sits the Admiralty Interview Board – whenever in the past we've done features on the AIB, we've tended to focus on the aspiring candidates, wobbling their way over water-filled tanks.

But if you are in the Naval service right now, then there's a one in five chance you've been through it yourself.

However you may not know what it's like to sit on the other side of that daunting desk. And that desk places heavy demands on both perspectives.

Cdr John Warden, board president, said: "It's a huge responsibility here; the people that we recruit are the officers of the future."

Board member Lt Mark Hamilton said: "I enjoy it because I have an influence over the future officers of the Navy."

"I think it's exciting when you see a real star come through. You think to yourself 'Hmm, is that a future Nelson?'"

"This is not someone who is going to be a captain of industry, but a captain of one of our ships. That is so exciting."

Gruelling as the three days undoubtedly are for the candidates to become officers in the RN, RFA or RM, it is also hard work for the officers sitting in judgement who must be able to back up their conclusions with fact.

Cdr John Warden admits: "It's like doing a six-hour exam. We have to concentrate hard at every moment."

For candidates undertaking the AIB, little has changed on the surface – although the imminent arrival of a new computer-based psychometric test might surprise the old and bold officers out there.

The fundamental structure of the AIB is much the same: candidates arrive at HMS Sultan on the first evening, and board and bond together in the AIB's own specially-designed building.

The next day pulls them through a morning of psychometric tests, service knowledge questions and essay, before plunging them into the gym for the fitness trials of the bleep test and preparations for the next day's physical challenges of the practical leadership task (think wobbly bridges and water-filled tanks...).

The final day begins with the short, sharp, but hopefully dry, shock of the bridge-building and chasm-swinging leadership tests, before the scenario exercise puts them through their paces in quick thought and seeks out alert minds.

Individual interviews then allow each candidate to put forward their own examples of leadership,



● Board members Lt Mark Hamilton, Cdr John Warden and Lt Cdr Victoria Dale-Smith assess candidates at the AIB

Picture: LA(Phot) Judy Hurst

teamwork and motivation from the world outside of the AIB.

The officers' priority is to make sure that each candidate has equal chance to prove him or herself, that they treat each fairly and without favour.

Objectivity is key. The 'cut of his jib' is no longer a factor in officer selection.

The AIB brought in a rigorous competency-based system three years ago, and its success is now being proven in the hallways of Britannia Royal Naval College.

A recent validation process looked into Phase One training at Dartmouth and found a strong link between the AIB's scoring and BRNC performance.

This examination will take place again as successful AIB candidates go on to complete Phase Two training and move into their first jobs as Young Officers.

The competency-based approach is judged against a solid framework which analyses candidates' abilities in the areas of: effective intelligence; leadership potential; communication; courage and values; and motivation.

And in each of these areas, the candidates' have at least two chances to prove themselves to weed out the disastrous effects of one-off poor performance.

Each score is debated hotly among the three Naval

officers who sit in judgement. Rank, while respected, is not ruler here. Lieutenant can disagree with commander, provided there is solid evidence for the debate.

Each score, each point, has to be justified from this evidence of candidate's performance, not from perception.

All AIB officers undergo two days of intensive training by experts from Qinetiq to follow the strictures of evidence-based assessment.

Board president Cdr Mike Blowers admits: "When I came here I had to put aside my scepticism about competency-based assessment, but I was won over – as we all were."

"We all believe in the process. It is fair and it is consistent."

Lt Cdr Victoria Dale-Smith said: "At the start of the course I thought there was no way I could keep objective. But actually you do. Because you have to treat each candidate as an individual."

"For me it is now second nature, although I thought it would go against my own nature. But actually it is very easy to achieve – in here, you switch off all your opinions to assess that candidate."

"We need to be objective. Otherwise the board president or other board member will pick me up and get me to justify my opinions from what we've seen."

Cdr Warden added: "The key to objectivity is to stay competency-based, and now with the training, we can try to squeeze the subjectivity out of it."

"With three of us, if one forms an opinion, because the other two need to be convinced, that one has got to have the evidence to support it."

"The hardest part for me is not encouraging the candidates," commented Lt Cdr Dale-Smith, "We have to remain the grey men in the assessment."

"We're all enthusiastic people here, we want to see them pass. You want to encourage them, but the candidates have to show their own true colours."

The AIB recently came under the command of BRNC, but due to its nature, retains vital links with the Naval recruiters.

A move to the Dartmouth site is on the horizon once funding is found to bring all of the Board's essential infrastructure with them.

Cdr Warden concluded with absolute confidence: "I've been here five months. And I don't believe any candidate I have seen has gone away with the wrong result."



● Cdr Phil Waterhouse greets Cdr Mike Clarke (left) with other former COs of the Defence Maritime Logistics School
Picture: Dave Sherfield

Silver celebration at Logistics School

THERE was a certain silvering of the hair amongst the officers gathered at HMS Raleigh to celebrate 25 years of the Defence Maritime Logistics School.

Current commandant Cdr Phil Waterhouse – whose grey hairs aren't too obvious just yet – welcomed ten former commanding officers back to the establishment to see how the school has changed over the past decades.

When the school moved from its Chatham home to Raleigh in 1983 it was still known as the Royal Navy Supply and Secretariat School, training for Writers, Stores Accountants and Stewards.

Chef training moved from Aldershot to Raleigh just over a decade later to join with its natural allies in the supply branch.

Of course, these titles have recently been rebranded to Logisticians Personnel Administration, Supply Chain and Catering Services, for the sake of accuracy if not brevity.

Cdr Waterhouse said: "We now provide training in a modern and realistic environment to give our students the knowledge they need to meet

the challenge of today's operations.

"Ultimately we want them to reap the reward of a successful career in both the logistics branch and the Royal Navy."

"What hasn't changed over the past 25 years is the ethos of the school, its commitment to certain values and the standard we require."

"Regardless of their specialisation, we also seek to remind our students of their ultimate role – that is sailor first, ready to fight and win."

Among the former COs who had a chance to look over the developments at the school was Cdr Mike Clarke, the first CO at the Raleigh site.

He said: "Logistics training is in excellent hands and very much in tune with modern tri-Service thinking."

"The staff at every rank are thoroughly professional. They were also remarkably enthusiastic, self-possessed and personable."

"It was of tremendous interest to see how the school had evolved over the last quarter of a century."

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE LONDON MINT OFFICE

Genuine coin with a face value of £5 minted in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the birth of Lord Nelson, Britain's greatest naval hero

The design features a portrait of Nelson from early in his career and he seldom appears on coins as a young officer: for this reason the coin is likely to attract considerable interest, not just from collectors.

Although available for just £5, it has been struck to a very high specification and is intended as a collectors item

Surrender it for £5 at any time in the future with The London Mint Office should you no longer wish to own it



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● *Endurance passes one of two huge icebergs she encountered on transit from Signy Island where she had picked up scientists who were closing down their base for the winter*
 Picture: LA(Phot) Kaz Williams, HMS Endurance



A long way from home

TEN thousand miles, to be precise – as Britain's second most senior admiral discovered.

Numerous Commanders-in-Chief Fleet have attempted to visit HMS Endurance 'in the field' – but have been thwarted by distance and programmes.

Luckily, the latter fell into place for Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope – but the distance remained immense.

CinC Fleet makes a point of getting around as much of the RN and RM as possible to hear the views of men and women on the ground, assure them their deeds are valued, and to gain a better understanding of the Senior Service's manifold and varied global commitments.

None of those commitments adequately compares with the unique mission of the Red Plum.

And so the admiral flew to 67°S to the British Antarctic Survey base of Rothera to join the ice survey ship in the shadow of a glacier.

"It's hard to understand exactly what Endurance does unless you see her in her area of operations – her

remit is so large and complex," explained Surg Lt Cdr Matthew Turner, the ship's doctor.

Admiral Stanhope had just 48 hours to understand that complex remit. He began with a visit to Blaiklock Island, where BAS scientists are studying the long-term effects of climate change by analysing moss samples and the invertebrates which live in it. The admiral was also shown some minute larvae which had been found for the first time – and which may prove to be an entirely new species.

Blaiklock is home not merely to the humblest things that God, in his wisdom, has put upon this earth, but also to penguins, like much of the fringe of Antarctica. In Blaiklock's case, it's a colony of adelic penguins and at this time of year, the birds are moulting ready to spend the months of the austral winter in the sea.

And Blaiklock is home too to an old research hut, abandoned now save for fuel and supplies should any explorers or scientists become stranded on the island. It also houses a visitors' book with comments going back half a century. There is now a fresh entry:

21st Feb 2008. Commander-in Chief Fleet-UK Navy. A once-in-a-lifetime visit for someone in my position to ensure HMS Endurance continues to contribute to Science and Diplomacy in the Antarctic.

The trip to Blaiklock done, the admiral was flown over icebergs and the odd minke whale back to Rothera, where he was met by Lt Stuart Long and his team who had been conducting surveys of the waters around the base.

Then it was into the BAS base for a tour of the facilities – and especially the aquarium.

Thanks to the extreme cold and high oxygen levels in Antarctic waters, marine life here grows to giant proportions: a water louse can be as big as your hand, and water spiders and starfish are invariably huge.

After an evening back aboard Endurance chatting with the ship's company, Admiral Stanhope departed for his headquarters in Portsmouth.

And when he got there, he sent a signal to the Red Plum to thank the sailors and marines for their efforts:

I was truly impressed by the professional manner each and every task I witnessed was conducted from flying, through survey to scientific support and equally by your people conducting them.

The focus and enthusiasm for your business was very obvious in all to whom I spoke and the upbeat nature of your team was consequently of no surprise. It was great fun.

I know of no other CinC Fleet in the recent past to visit you in the Antarctic, although many have tried. I was most fortunate and privileged that it all came together.

The admiral is not the only one to leave the ice. The Red Plum has completed her spell in Antarctica for this season now.

She will, however, remain in the Southern Hemisphere throughout the austral winter, including paying a visit to South Africa, before resuming survey work around the frozen continent towards the end of the year.



● *Just chillin'... A couple of seals loll about on a small iceberg alongside a small colony of Emperor penguins*

Picture: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow, HMS Endurance

'Farewell, we'll meet again'



THE arrows and their crossbow are still discernible, the name HUNTER still legible, the final resting place of a British destroyer – lost off Narvik nearly 70 years ago – has been discovered by the Norwegian Navy.

Lying 300 metres (985ft) beneath the surface of Ofotfjord, half a dozen miles west of the Arctic port, Hunter entombs more than 100 men, killed when the ship clashed with German destroyers in these narrow waters on April 10 1940.

Hunter had charged into Narvik with four sisters, determined to oust the Germans who had occupied the town the day before.

They caught the enemy by surprise and raised hell for the first hour or so, but as the Kriegsmarine responded, so Hunter was crippled by the German destroyer George Thiele which pummeled the British warship at close range.

From 30kts, Hunter crashed to an immediate halt in the middle of the fjord at the mercy of the German guns.

She was probably already doomed, but ill-fortune now conspired with German gunnery. In the chaos of battle, HMS Hotspur suddenly found Hunter dead ahead.

Unable to avoid her sister, she sliced into Hunter with a sickening crunch which echoed around the fjord.

The mortally-wounded Hunter now began to sink rapidly. Her siren howled one last time as the boilers died and around 6.45am on that fateful Wednesday, the destroyer sank. Of her crew of 145, 108 were killed.

And there she has lain undisturbed and unlocated for more than six decades until HNOMS Tyr was surveying the fjord, looking for mines as part of major winter war games, Armatura Borealis (see the centre pages).

After 14 fruitless hours of searching, her echo sounder picked up the hull of a sunken vessel on the bed of Ofotfjord and she sent down her robot mini submarine to investigate.

The crystal-clear pictures the craft sent back confirmed the wreck was the Hunter.

Hunter was one of two British destroyers lost in the first Battle of Narvik.

HMS Hardy was also wrecked; her Commanding Officer Capt Bernard Warburton-Lee received the Victoria Cross posthumously for his leadership that day.

Sixty-eight years later, Warburton-Lee's last battle cry was hoisted aboard amphibious assault ship HMS Albion – Continue engaging the enemy – as a procession of Allied warships,

four British – HM Ships Albion, Bulwark, Cornwall and RFA Mounts Bay – and one Norwegian Coastguard vessel – NOCGV Andenes – formed a line and sailed past the wreck site, each ship paying her respects by casting wreaths into the icy waters and pouring a tot of rum over the side.

As the force left Ofotfjord behind, the Aldis lamps flashed into life as a final tribute: F A R E W E L L W E ' L L M E E T A G A I N.

"Finding HMS Hunter was a poignant moment and being able to pay our respects along with our Norwegian and Dutch allies is particularly fitting to those who lost their lives," said Major General Garry Robison RM, Commander of the UK's Amphibious Force.

"It was a very moving ceremony. Sadly, we were not able to bring over the three veterans that served on HMS Hunter. But we shall certainly take the opportunity to let them have the films and the photographs of that ceremony."

Former seaman Fred Ward (pictured, right, in his RN days), now aged 88, is one of those survivors.

"I have mixed emotions about the events of over 68 years ago and the loss of so many fine friends," he said.

"I now have a great sense of relief knowing the final resting place of my comrades and our ship. My only sadness is that I wasn't able to attend the ceremony to pay my own personal tribute."

Fellow former shipmate Able Seaman James Renshaw, today 89, added: "I lost 100 friends and 'family members' when she went down."

"Not a day has passed that I have not thought about her and the people we left behind."

Covered in oil, Hunter's survivors trod water in the bitterly-cold fjord until they were picked up by the Germans.

They were eventually repatriated – but only after signing an agreement not to take up arms against the Third Reich again.

The Norwegians had spent several years trying to find Hunter's wreck; now they have discovered it, it will be officially marked as a war grave.

Hunter was not the only loss of the ill-fated Norwegian campaign honoured by today's sailors during

● **Sailors and Marines line up on HMS Albion as they prepare to lay wreaths to the men of HMS Hunter**

Picture: Surg Lt Cdr Anthony Dew, HMS Albion

● **(Right) Hunter's ship's badge, still clearly identifiable after nearly seven decades below the water and (below right) a cluster of .5 calibre machine-guns point forlornly skywards on Hunter's wreck**

Video stills: Royal Norwegian Navy



Armatura Borealis.

Bound for northern Norway to take part in the exercise, HM Ships Bulwark and Cornwall and RFA Mounts Bay sailed over the wrecks of aircraft carrier Glorious and her escorting destroyers Ardent and Acasta.

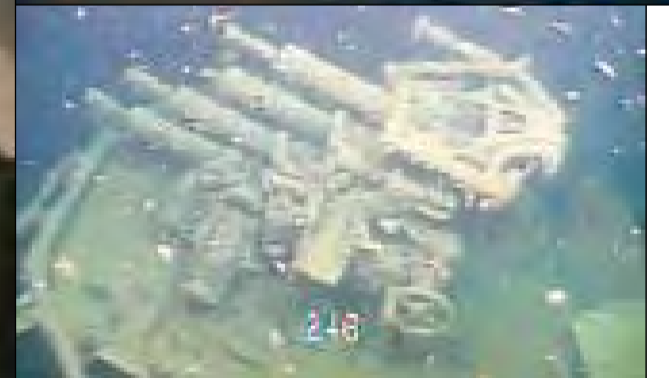
The trio were returning to the UK as British forces pulled out of Norway when they were pounced on by battle-cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau about 180 miles west of Harstad.

All three were sunk in a two-hour battle, although Acasta severely damaged Scharnhorst with a torpedo hit and both German ships were damaged by shellfire.

Of Ardent's and Acasta's ship's companies, only one man survived from each destroyer; barely 40 men were picked up from HMS Glorious.

On a freezing February day in 2008, Bulwark's ship's company mustered on the flight deck as the assault ship's senior rating, Executive Warrant Officer Russ Williams, dropped a wreath into the ocean and the ship's chaplain Tim Wilkinson led a service of remembrance.

■ **Heroes of the Royal Navy, page 12**



And farewell to Ginger too

CLEARANCE divers honoured the last wish of one of the doyens of their branch when they cast the ashes of Arthur 'Ginger' Bryant over the spot where his comrades lay.

The White Ensign on HMS Chiddingfold was lowered to half mast, Flag Alpha – 'I am conducting diving operations' – hoisted and the minehunter's crew lined the upper decks over the wreck of battleship HMS Barham.

Here, 66 years before Ginger had been one of 450 men rescued when the battleship was torpedoed by U331 in the eastern Mediterranean; 861 comrades were not so fortunate.

Chiddingfold's dive team embarked in the ship's RIB as the Still sounded over the water and Dvr Moger scattered Ginger's ashes before Lt Paul Hursthouse laid a wreath on the spot – all in accordance with Ginger's will.

When Barham sank, Ginger was a 20-year-old leading seaman who had been bombed, torpedoed and shipwrecked once before.

He would subsequently serve in the Atlantic and Arctic on convoy duties. It was only post war that he became a diver, subsequently being called upon to dive on the wreck of the submarine Affray.

In the mid-50s Ginger was in charge of the diving training centre on Horsea Island – a job which was interrupted by the Suez crisis; he headed to Egypt to salvage wrecks at Port Said.

He retired from the Senior Service as a chief petty officer in 1966 and ran a pub in Essex for the next 15 years, where his diver's helmet and boots enjoyed pride of place. He also swam regularly – he took his final dip at the age of 86 last summer.

Remembering today's dead

DOCUMENTARY makers are hoping family and friends of those lost in Iraq and Afghanistan will help them complete a three-hour film.

The BBC has commissioned the programme to honour the lives of the fallen through words, photographs, video footage and interviews with comrades, friends and relatives.

The programme makers intend to feature every serviceman and woman who has died in either conflict.

If family members, friends or former colleagues feel they can contribute in some way – there is no obligation to be involved in the actual film and conversations would be in confidence – they can contact Rachel Noar or David Brindley at Minnow Films on 0207 741 0105 or by email: david@minnowfilms.co.uk or rachel@minnowfilms.co.uk.

Serving personnel should seek permission from their COs if they wish to contribute.

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Chart and shoal of RN

IN MANY ways, it was something of a minor miracle that so many men o'war managed to negotiate Spithead or the Hamoaze in the days of sail.

For the surveyors who charted the safe passages through shoals and around headlands were not formally trained; they were taught their vital skills at sea by their elders (though not necessarily betters).

If you were lucky enough to have been tutored by James Cook or one of his talented proteges then there was a fair chance that the charts you produced would endure.

After all, some of Cook's charts of the South Pacific were still in use in the mid-20th century.

But the duffers at the other end of the scale might have better been left to plumb lines in the deep oceans, where they could not have caused much damage, rather than passing on their poor grasp of a complex subject.

The knowledge gained on an *ad hoc* basis by these budding hydrographers was limited compared to that possible in today's Hydrographic, Meteorological and Oceanographic Training Group (HMTG), and the technology available to modern surveyors would astonish Cook and his colleagues – indeed, the capability of a ship like HMS Scott in terms of data-gathering is astonishing whatever your perspective.

The deep ocean survey ship can cover 150 square kilometres an hour, following precise satellite-plotted survey lines hundreds of miles long before wheeling round to double back on a parallel path.

The value of the work done by Scott and her various sister ships to the Royal Navy, as well as the merchant fleets of the world, has always been immense, and that remains the case in 2008.

It was as a result of advances in technology during World War 2 that formal classroom training came into favour, allowing students to learn the theory before testing themselves on the water.

Hydrography is the measurement, study and analysis of bodies of water and the margins of land, particularly with regard to safe navigation.

Generally it includes the gathering of data about water depth, tides, currents, the nature of the sea bed and the measurement of prominent and relevant features ashore, either for navigational or military purposes.

Or, as Lt Cdr Pat Mowatt, Hydrographic Training Officer, put it: "This is a vital warfare specialisation. It is about gathering environmental data to optimise sensors and weapons."

He continued: "This is a very very useful skill, not just in a warfare sense, but generally."

"They are skills useful in military and wider aspects. And because we all speak the same language we can understand each other – these people are very employable outside."

"It is very attractive for a young person coming in from outside the branch – here is an opportunity to gain an excellent skill and external qualifications and spend some time in the RN and put it all into practice."

"Then, looking ahead, they can say: 'I am being provided with something which I could use further on in my life' – and many people do."

"A high proportion of surveyors and HMs leave and go to work for civilian organisations in similar fields."

"And look at the ships we have. Crews are rotated, they spend a lot of time away, it's very hi-tech, very comfortable, there are fantastic programmes, and you are right at the tip of exercises and operations."

Lt Cdr Mowatt added that he was not advocating training up then swiftly jumping ship.

"I cannot for the life of me understand why people want to leave – this branch offers everything that someone could want from the Navy," he said.

"Great visits, great ships, great skills. I think it's a fantastic way to go."

"Our ships haven't got the missile systems – they do not look like frigates or destroyers – but they are warships."

"These are military people doing military jobs – a vital part of the warfare environment."

Recognition of that fact came when the old Surveying Squadron colour scheme of white hulls and buff funnels was replaced by Pusser's grey, bringing them visibly into line with the rest of the Fleet.

The role of hydrography has been strengthened by the RN overhaul of amphibious capability over the past decade or so, allowing surveyors to prove their worth over and over again in recent times.

For example, in 2003 veteran coastal survey ship HMS Roebuck was approaching the end of a three-month deployment to the southern Gulf, and facing the axe on her return to the UK.

But as war loomed in the region, she was diverted to the northern Gulf and her deployment extended.

In less than six weeks the little ship surveyed the main amphibious landing zone – an area larger than Hampshire – and plotted everything on the sea bed larger than a coffee table.

Her crew continued to gather data until the day before the invasion, and with the ship able to produce her own paperwork, new sets of charts were printed on board and distributed to Allied warships as soon as the data had been analysed.

Hydrographers discovered deeper water inshore than older charts indicated, which meant that aircraft carriers and assault

ships could move closer in, reducing helicopter flight times by ten minutes and speeding up the airborne assault.

Roebuck later went on to clear the route to Umm Qasr for humanitarian aid, and surveyed the port itself – the first such work carried out in 40 years.

Even in the 21st century some RN survey work is pioneering in nature – no survey data has been gathered for sections of the African coast, for example, and part of the task of HMS Endurance is to probe the waters around Antarctica for hidden dangers, providing safe routes for the burgeoning deep-south cruise market.

The key to military success is preparation, and Lt Cdr David Wyatt, who is head of the Hydrographic Unit at the HMTG, cites the Australian experience in East Timor as a classic example of the important role his students will one day play in their navy.

"Going into East Timor was described as 'the biggest Australian amphibious operation since D-Day' by one of their admirals," said Lt Cdr Wyatt.

"They did all the planning, then checked the preferred beach and discovered that they could not use it."

"In just one night they found an alternative beach, surveyed it and allowed the amphibious force to go in without incident."

Apart from Endurance in the Southern Ocean, almost all the efforts of the rest of the survey ships are directly in support of military tasks, so newly-trained sailors and officers are genuinely one step from vital front-line duty when they emerge from the doors of the HMTG.

But it is not all about humming number-crunching computers in calm 'mission spaces' – lean-manned ships such as Echo and Enterprise still require some more traditional sailor skills such as watchkeeping, machine gunner and boat crew.



● (Above) Surveyor recorders set up a tide pole just off a shallow beach in Antarctica; HMS Endurance's motor boat James Caird can be seen in the background
Picture: PO(Phot) Chris Brick

● (Left) Pictured on Nimrod, one of Endurance's motor boats, LS(SR) Kerry Collins (left), LET 'Robbie' Robinson and AB(HM) Lee Churchill took data on tidal flows over a two-day period at the tricky entrance to Deception Island at the beginning of this year
Picture: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow

● (Below) CPO Dave Sharp carries out survey work at the British Antarctic Research Base Rothera earlier this year, with HMS Endurance far left of the picture
Picture: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow



**Next month
– Looking to
the skies**

Cold fleet

HMS CORNWALL is used to playing a supporting role.

She is a frigate, after all – and although as a Type 22 she is more than capable of acting as flagship (most recently for the Allied CTF 158 task force in the Gulf) she continues the RN tradition of frigates as workhorses of the Fleet.

But that is not the case with HMS Ark Royal.

She is a *bona fide* Death Star, the soubriquet given by smaller ships to the carriers, which suck in all the attention and leave others in their shadow.

But

this time the Ark is also playing a supporting role, as a helicopter carrier to the assault ship twins Albion and Bulwark which led Exercise Armatura Borealis along the coast of Norway.

While Bulwark was flagship for Commander Amphibious Task Group, Cdre Peter Hudson, Albion acted as command ship for the maritime component commander of the exercise, Maj Gen Gary Robison RM, Commander UK Amphibious Force.

So, a back seat for the Ark then?

Far from it. You name it, they got it – air attacks, fast boat attacks, submarine attacks; just about the only thing not thrown at the task group was a cavalry charge.

On top of that the carrier was supporting 824 Naval Air Squadron's operational training, so squadron engineers, aviators and the carrier's flight deck crew had to endure bitter cold and long dark hours while ensuring the aircraft were up to the task – and the Merlins, once airborne, played their part in tracking 'enemy' submarines and fast attack craft, as well as ferrying people.

One of those underwater threats was a British T-boat (main picture) which probed the task force's defences as the assault ships prepared to deliver their cargo of Royal Marines ashore.

So, back to Cornwall, given the job of supporting the landings, providing gunfire support and protecting the capital ships.

She was also a well-armed forward operating base for 3 Commando Brigade as she had her own force of 80 green berets – most accommodated on camp beds in the hangar.

It was quite a change from last year's eventful deployment to the Gulf, as noted by her CO, Cdr Jeremy Woods.

"The difference in conditions between our operations last year and on Exercise Armatura Borealis now could not be greater, but this really illustrates the flexibility of a capable ship such as HMS Cornwall, and the relevance of naval power in the modern world.

"We are just as at home up here, working close inshore, putting troops on the beach in the dead of night while fighting off an air raid, as we were protecting the oil platforms in the Gulf."

With the end of the exercise the 25 vessels of various nations went their separate ways.

For Ark that means a brief stopover in Scotland before she deploys to America to work with the US Marine Corps.

Pictures: PO(Phot) Jonathan Hamlet



● The Northern Lights illuminate Ark Royal



● HMS Cornwall in Norwegian waters

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Ice cold



DARKNESS rules. Distant lights of scattered houses struggle to punctuate the night sky that is rent by the milky-green slash of the Aurora Borealis.

A hand pressed to the window in Flyco can feel the warm air that slews down the glass to ward off a fractal screen of ice. HMS Bulwark is in Norway, along with her sister ships Albion, Ark Royal, Mounts Bay, and Cornwall, being put through her paces amid the fjords and mountainous isles of the Scandinavian country's Arctic north in Exercise Armatura Borealis.

Bulwark has emerged from the cocoon of refit to become the high readiness amphibious flagship and Norway is where she is testing her wings.

And it's not just the ship which is being brought back to speed. Almost three-quarters of the assault ship's company have joined the warship in her fallow period in the hands of DML at Devonport Naval Base – including her commanding officer Capt Jeremy Blunden.

"This is the first time I've been involved in amphibious warfare as commanding officer," he said.

"I've never done this sort of stuff before, so I'm learning as well – as much as the AB who joined the ship last week.

"We are new to the game, we are learning how to do this. This exercise is the final proving ground for HMS Bulwark as amphibious flagship. Out here we are proving to ourselves that we can maintain and sustain the ship in a higher state of readiness.

"We have had to hone our warfighting skills."

Heading up the ships involved in the wargames off the coast of Norway, Cdre Peter Hudson, Commander Amphibious Task Group, is no stranger to the Navy's newest assault ships.

He said: "Since I commanded HMS Albion there has been a staggering leap in capability in both Albion and Bulwark.

"This challenging environ-

ment allows us to really stretch these ships. And more lessons will continue to be learnt and these ships will continue to evolve."

Armatura Borealis has brought together four of the Royal Navy's weighty amphibious ships – HMS Bulwark, HMS Albion, RFA Mounts Bay and HMS Ark Royal (in her converted helicopter assault ship role), into the somewhat cramped confines of Norway's Arctic coastline.

The British amphibious ships are bolstered by various other nations, including a Dutch task group featuring HNLMS Rotterdam – the inspiration for the RFA's Bay class – and two Belgian minehunters.

In addition, a British and a Norwegian submarine patrol the clear waters and Type 22 HMS Cornwall bolsters the power of the Task Force.

Away from the ships, the shores of Norway throng with clusters of Royal Marines from many units, but predominantly 45 Commando – all enjoying the bracing pleasures of Arctic training in the Scandinavian ice and snow; and nestled amid the mountains beyond, the men and women of the Commando Helicopter Force are flourishing amid the rigours of their Clockwork deployment to Bardufoss' climactic challenges.

These weeks of exercises have brought almost 4,000 RN, RM and RFA personnel up to Harstad and its surrounding regions.

This is the first taste of the Arctic for many people on board Bulwark, and although the ship had played host to the battle staff 18 months earlier, it was in the very different conditions of the Gulf.

In fact, the warm seas of the Mediterranean and east of Suez are the expected environments of much of the Navy's fleet in current global operations, not the Arctic which recalls the legacy of the long-ended Cold War.

"It compels us to think harder, think deeper, think laterally," said Cdre Hudson.

He added: "We have an impressive amphibious task group, with elements of the

Although the Cold War ago, war in the cold is: the Royal Navy and Marines skills. Exercise Armatura Borealis the Navy's amphibious flagship HMS Bulwark as pace.

Royal Navy held at high readiness, at the forefront of contingent capability.

"If we are to keep that capability recharged and fresh, we need to do challenging exercises like this."

It's a point echoed by Bulwark's CO: "We are proving our ability to operate in cold climates.

"We are a worldwide Navy, capable of operating in all conditions, whether arctic, temperate or jungle. We are proving we have the full range of capabilities in those conditions.

"We are revisiting lessons from previous deployments, maintaining the level of experience across the Royal Navy – should we be called to a crisis to somewhere like this, we have a body of expertise that could mount any operation.

"These exercises are few and far between, we need to make use of training opportunities when they come up."

So up on the bridge of the assault ship the navigating team are working long hours keeping a wary eye on the 'opportunities' offered by the Narvik coastline.

To quote Douglas Adams' Slartibartfast, the "lovely crinkly edges" leave little room to manoeuvre for ships of the size of the amphibious task group – a fact cheerfully acknowledged by Bulwark's Navigator Lt Cdr Chris Nelson: "In the Channel if something happens you can simply turn right and head out to sea. You won't hit land for at least 20 miles."

He indicates the snow-covered land visible from each of bridge windows, "Here it's challenging because there simply isn't an escape route."

Lt Adam Ballard, the deputy navigator on board Bulwark,

pictures: la(phot) pepe hogan, po(phot) jonathan hogan





n Norway

ended over a decade still a theatre for which lines hone their fighting ra Borealis has drawn fighting forces up to the ven reports from assault the exercise gathers

admits: "It is very well charted up to ¼ mile off the beach. But that's where we like to go. And there are some uncharted small rocks out there..."

"It has very extreme polar weather," he added. "The visibility can be absolutely clear, but then ten minutes later, a massive snowstorm sweeps in and there's no visibility."

"We're suddenly confronted with the fact that we can't see anything."

"This is our first big tester," said Lt Cdr Nelson. "A significant number of senior people have changed around. But the sailors are on a four or five year draft to the ship - they have stacks of experience."

For now the exercise is in the Wader package, as movements and transfers are practised in advance of the onslaught of the Raider phase.

"It becomes less scripted - that's when we start earning our pay," commented Lt Cdr Nelson wryly.

Of course, the dramatic changes in weather are not just an issue for the navigators on board the warship; the challenges of the cold are a theme running through the heart of the ship, from the upper-deck and seaboard teams who operate in it, to the weapon engineers who require their equipment to operate in it, down to the chefs who have to cater for those who operate in it.

Not to mention the issues that come when a ship's company is practically doubled with an embarked military force (EMF) and battle-staff, all with specific physical and technical requirements.

"It's a really good test for all the equipment we have. The ship's company don't fully loadtest the system. When the

battlestaff arrive they push it to the limit," said deputy weapons engineering officer Lt Mark Quinn pragmatically.

"The key is good early communication and a lot of planning. The other big challenge for the team is getting the equipment downtime to maintain the kit with so many more users on board."

"There's a huge challenge involved," said Capt Blunden. "Reacting to the embarked staff and EMF, giving them the communications support that they need, a huge amount of IT support, that we can feed them and sustain them, operate the boat groups to land at a high tempo, logistics support to the EMF, medical and engineering support. Just keeping track of all this is task enough."

"It places quite a strain on certain parts of the ship, cooking for a larger number of people, sustaining them. It's feed, maintain, support - simple things like being able to provide enough hot water for them so that they can shower."

"Bringing the whole of that together is really quite a challenge. We're trying to plan ahead, think about all of the 'what ifs'."

"And so far it has worked extraordinarily well."

Planning began months before the assault ship headed north - lessons learnt from other ships in the Arctic were checked, a flurry of orders for protective cold-weather clothing despatched, the grease for the guns switched for a freeze-resistant brand, briefing on cold weather injuries, the list goes on...

But the fine detail of the preparations have paid off in the cold. CPO(AH) Andy Lewis looks out over his domain, Bulwark's flightdeck: "The cold conditions were a shock to the system, but we were well-briefed."

"Obviously it's a very tiring environment - an hour out here makes you incredibly tired. But with flight awareness, you have to stay alert all the time."

"But this is a close-knit team and we're all keeping an eye on one another."

Once the ship earned her 'blue

nose' on arrival in the Arctic, routines changed as the deck teams had to limit their exposure to the cold atmosphere and the galleys whacked up the number of warming hot meals.

These are the same logisticians who are dealing with a ship's company almost doubled with the EMF, and when absent from the galley or offices can be found monitoring the dock, hauling ropes as the ship comes alongside, or veiled by masks in firefighting gear.

WO Nick Battley, logistics officer catering services, admitted: "This stage of the exercise has a relatively stable notice of people moving. When it goes into free play, then it's all very short notice - and our numbers change dramatically."

"But the watchword of the catering services department is flexibility. Always has been, always will be."

Royal Marines being Royal Marines, the green berets of 4 Assault Squadron, Bulwark's resident landing craft unit, are relishing the Arctic experience.

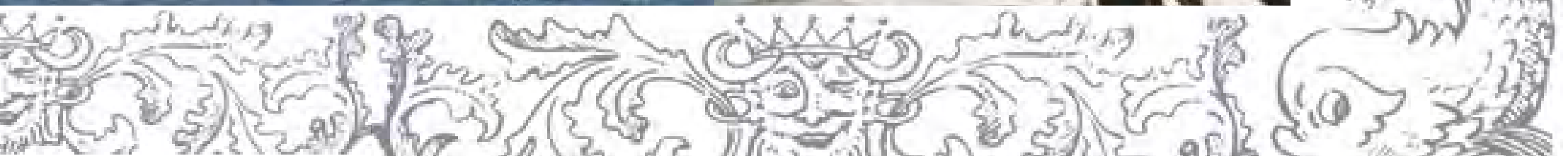
"I love it. Out here we get to do the things we're meant to do - hitting the beaches, getting the lads and vehicles ashore," said Mne Marty Barrett.

As the exercise draws on to the main drama, Bulwark's CO is clear on what it will show: "Bulwark is back in the front line as the high readiness LPD."

"Her company are well trained, well motivated and ready to undertake any task."

"That's what the Royal Navy does; that's what this ship is capable and ready to do."

● *Pictures from top left: A view from the cockpit over Norway; 4ASRM landing craft carry tracked vehicles to the Harstad shore; clearing snow from the flightdeck of Ark Royal; ET(WE) Sam Roberts wraps up warm to man the minigun on Ark Royal; RFA Mounts Bay, NOCGV Andenes, HMS Cornwall, HMS Bulwark and HMS Albion; the snow falling on Bulwark's flightdeck; and HMS Cornwall on officer of the watch manoeuvres*



42 and 45 at 30° below zero



● *Waders of the lost Arctic... Royal Marines of 45 Commando conduct wader drills on an isolated Norwegian beach during Armatura Borealis*
Picture: LA(Phot) Nick Tryon, 45 Cdo

WE HAVE deliberately chosen to focus on the 'skimmer' input to this year's exercises in the Arctic Circle rather than the Royal Marines who traditionally grab the headlines in Norway.

The Royals were there in force again in 2008 – a good 1,500 of them.

So it would be unfair and rather rude to ignore them. Plus they have big guns and wield daggers...

With 40 Commando locked in mortal combat with the Taleban, it fell to 42 and 45 Commandos to grapple with the joys of fighting in the most unforgiving of environments under the umbrella of their parent unit, 3 Commando Brigade.

Many of the green berets are Arctic veterans (some were on their tenth trip); others were Arctic virgins, which meant earning their blue noses and a bit more to boot.

Veterans need reminding and novices need teaching about living in such bitter cold, so training for the Royals was split into three distinct phases – survival, mobility and combat – in the three-week Cold Weather Warfare Course.

Survival comes first: experienced RM mountain leaders teach their 'flock' the basics of life in the Arctic, leaving weapons firmly at home. Avoiding cold-weather injuries such as frostbite, coping with avalanches, maintaining kit – all these nuggets of information based on more than half a century of operating in Norway were imparted by the mountainmen.



The ski (or pusser's plank) is key to mobility in the snow. It is not only man which moves by ski, but also much of his kit. Four-man teams haul the bare necessities – tents, stoves, food, fuel – on sledges, known as pulks. Pulks are heavy – and add to the commando's already onerous burden; the Bergen packs on the men's back can weigh up to 100lb fully loaded.

Luckily, there are man-made beasts to ease the burden. The BV tracked vehicles are tried and tested kit.

They can tow up to 16 men at a time in a manoeuvre known as 'ski jorring'.

So, we've mastered survival and moving, time for the fighting. Everything is slower and more cumbersome in the Arctic: breaking contact on skis, for example, is far more physically demanding than in a temperate environment. Still, by the end of three weeks of rigorous training, the Royals were able to conduct 'attacks' in company strength.

And as the old Royals' saying goes: If you can fight and survive in Norway, you can do it anywhere.

Of course, not all the Royals slither around on skis or skulk in foxholes carved out of the Norwegian snow.

There is a sizeable contingent with the amphibious force: Albion and Bulwark each have a permanent RM assault squadron.

Moving from ship to shore is always a challenge, a challenge which intensifies among the fjords in winter.

A small team is sent inshore initially in small boats to conduct a recce, which includes sending two swimmers into the water (briefly, admittedly, given the temperature in the Arctic).

Thanks to good charts, the Royals know the rough outline of the shore, but for accuracy manual soundings are needed from those swimmers.

Once they're happy, they mark up potential landing sites with white or infra-red lights.

"It's good to get on the beach and crack on.

Every situation is different, we've got to try to second guess what will be thrown at us every day," explained beach master C/Sgt David Bartholomew of 4 Assault Squadron RM.

"In five minutes it can close right down and potentially we're looking at a survival situation.

"Batteries, navigation aids, GPS – the cold sucks power straight out of them. We keep the vehicles running to keep the batteries charged."

● *Fire in the night... The mortar troop of 42 Commando let rip with their weapon hauled on a BV trailer at the Porsangmoen range*
Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Faulkner, 42 Cdo

Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Faulkner, 42 Cdo

CLASSIC JACK

BY TUBS



● This watercolour, *Up Spirits*, was painted by Derek Norris, of King's Lynn, to celebrate the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar

On a string and a prayer

PERMIT me to continue the saga of the much-lamented demise of the Navy rum issue.

When I was a Telegraphist (S) at HMS Anderson in Ceylon in 1943-45, we had a novel way to make a glass for our tot, which, much to this ex-destroyer sailor's disgust, was made up of three parts water to one part of the real stuff.

We used a beer bottle, around which we wrapped a strong string or cord about halfway down. We saw-sawed the string back and forth until the glass got hot, then plunged the bottle into a bucket of cold water.

The glass snapped, and we had a glass for our daily 11 o'clock rum issue.

Since I was on the other side of the pond when some joker at the Admiralty decided to discontinue "Up Spirits," I never found out what was the rationale for this crime against a tradition that harks back to Nelson's days.

In my day, the only booze allowed on board, apart from our rum ration, went to the wardroom, for the use of officers only.

I never did figure out why officers could be trusted to imbibe the hard stuff and still carry out their duties on board, and we lower deck ratings could not.

— Kenneth A Tipper, Ocala, Florida

... MARY Holmes' letter (*January*) about her husband's misfortune with his tot tumbler brings back memories of my first tot (and that's all they are, just memories).

I was in Belfast when I went 'G'. At that 'tot time' there I was in the mess on my birthday, awaiting my first tot, when the Padre came visiting.

Everyone in the mess offered him a wet which he accepted, then it was my turn.

Grasping my tot in his hand the Padre wished me a "Happy Birthday" and saw it off in one amidst great merriment from the associated onlookers.

After he had atoned for his misdeed, and despite my being an atheist, he and I got on well together, sharing many quiet chuckles.

— Basil Hudson, Hanworth, Middlesex

... YOUR feature about HMS Sidon exploding (*December*) brought back memories.

We were doing sea training in HMS Porchester Castle, having completed training at HMS Ariel and one day six of us went over to HMS Maidstone to have a day out in a submarine.

Two of us went on HMS Untiring and two on HMS Sidon. The next day HMS Sidon sank! The two guys who went out in her counted their blessings they were not on board when that happened. I enjoyed my day out, my offsider dropped his hat down the periscope well — which the Captain really liked.

I had my first drop of rum — when the rum came up we all hung around and as there was only one glass they filled it up and passed it round and when it got to me I said "I am UA." They said: "We are all in this boat together, so have a sip" and this went on till the fanny was empty and I was very happy.

— Robin H 'Slinger' Wood, Elizabeth South, South Australia

For the benefit of younger readers, 'UA' stood for under age, 'G' for grog, and 'T' for temperance, for which the non-partaking sailors got an allowance of 3d a day in lieu of the tot.

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information.

Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph that you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permissions for us to

publish it.

Given the impressive volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

Please try to keep your submissions as brief as possible — our space is limited.

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Once upon a time at a base called Yeovilton...

MOST children enjoy a bedtime story with mum or dad, but that is not always possible in the world of Service children.

With parents employed on overseas detachment or living away from the family home, there is often something missing as the little ones snuggle up in bed.

But now a team based at RNAS Yeovilton have been working hard on a project that will hopefully make a difference to the children who face periods of separation from parents.

A recording studio has been available from the middle of last month enabling Service personnel to be recorded whilst telling a story with the use of a digital recorder.

The story is then downloaded to a computer and any mistakes are edited out.

Music and sound effects are added and the final story is put onto a CD.

A personal message can be included and the end product is a very professional-sounding story reading by the parent.

Children will be able to hear the voice of their parent whenever they want, and parents feel that they are doing something tangible for their children.

'Story Book Parents' can be a lifeline for families and could play a key role in helping to maintain the family unit during the period of separation.

Anyone going on deployment is encouraged to give the scheme a try.

The Yeovilton scheme is a version of the 'Story Book Dads' project that originated in Dartmoor Prison and has been in action for four years – that project is now a registered charity.

Dartmoor project managers have been supporting the Yeovilton venture and trained the HMS Heron team last month.

The fact that Yeovilton is leading the way in the Senior Service is down to Sarah Leach, who raised the issue after seeing an article about a similar Army project at Tidworth Garrison called 'Story Book Soldiers'.

The Heron version has been funded by the Annington Trust, which paid for the necessary equipment.

Big thanks are also due to Chaplaincy Team Leader Simon Beveridge, who agreed to the project team converting the sacristy room into the Story Book Parents recording studio.

Those involved in this project are community worker Tracey Hallett, Ruth David of the Education Centre, chaplain support worker David Garbett and Nicola Davidson, volunteer coordinator for the project.

Donations of surplus good-quality children's books are always gratefully received.

For more details about this project contact Tracey Hallett on 01935 841686.



HMS Campbeltown, currently patrolling east of Suez

NETSO gain for deployed ships

THE RN, as a champion of Investors in People, is eager to get its people to invest in themselves.

So when HMS Campbeltown deployed to the Gulf last autumn, the frigate's Executive Officer, Lt Cdr Colin Williams, looked at options to help the ship's company do just that.

"We had had an Education Officer embarked with us during our earlier deployment to the Gulf who was received very well by the ship's company, and was deemed to be a very positive aspect of the trip," said Lt Cdr Williams.

"Naturally, when we were tasked to deploy again we were keen to get another Education Officer on board to provide the same service."

The request was put in, and during the first stages of the frigate's Operation Calash tour, Lt Andy Grierson, a Naval Education and Training Services Officer (NETSO), was embarked.

"As a NETSO my role is to support the work of the Education and Resettlement Officer on board front-line units such as HMS Campbeltown, and to provide a link to the services offered back in base port," said Lt Grierson.

"No two days on board are the same for me.

"I talk individually with up to ten members of the ship's company per day, who take the time out of their working day to see me.

"Together we look at ways that we can support their personal and professional development goals.

"This can vary from conducting Lantern exams [Literacy and Numeracy Testing and Education in the Royal Navy] to get people qualified for promotion, establishing GCSE courses on board, looking at the various civilian accreditation options available to personnel, arranging funding, arranging courses and, equally importantly, helping people to plan their resettlement.

"I also look to reinvigorate the educational system on board and, by running workshops on coaching, motivation and presentations, I help with the soft skills needed for divisional work.

"There's a misconception that Education Officers are only concerned with academic subjects, but some of the more interesting



Lt Andy Grierson

courses I've been looking into recently for people on board include kite-surfing and belly-dancing.

"On HMS Campbeltown I have been very busy as everyone has their own personal goal that they'd like information on how to achieve.

"Another misconception is that deployments are not the best time to learn or study.

"In fact, deployments are a great time to do this. There are fewer distractions, people do find themselves with free time and there are lots of resources available.

"With increasing access to the Internet, help is just an email away.

"As well as the variety of people that I speak to, from the CO to the youngest sailor, I also get to visit the whole range of Devonport units, from the smaller Hydrographic units to the larger amphibious ships, submarines, frigates and satellite units.

"Anywhere that there are RN personnel I am happy to go to offer my services."

Among those on board Campbeltown to have benefited from the NETSO's presence was Logs Rebecca Crowder, for whom it has opened up the prospect of advancement.

"Thanks to the NETSO I am now educationally-qualified to be promoted to leading hand – and he also helped arrange and fund a driving course for me," said Rebecca.

For AB(CIS) Amy Bennett the objective was a change of direction.

"I had been looking to branch transfer into the photographic specialisation for some time, and the NETSO was able to provide me



Logs Rebecca Crowder

with all the appropriate information and arrange photography courses for me to study whilst I'm deployed," she said.

At the other end of his career is LS Oscar Wilde, who has almost completed 22 years in the Navy and is thinking of life outside.

"Without the advice of NETSO I would have missed out on a lot of my resettlement entitlement," he said.

"Together we have produced a plan for my resettlement that will help me in my future career."

Campbeltown's LRO, Lt Sweetman, is equally positive about the benefits of having a NETSO embarked.

"The NETSO is able to provide me with specialist advice and support that is necessary for the ship to have a well-run education department.

"He knows the ins and outs of



LS Oscar Wilde – planning for resettlement

FOST tours US training facilities

FLAG Officer Sea Training (FOST) Rear Admiral Richard Ibbotson has had a week-long whistlestop tour of key US training and experimentation commands on the east coast of America.

At the US Naval College at Annapolis, the FOST party – which also included Commodore BRNC Cdre Martin Alabaster and Deputy FOST Cdre Nick Lambert – was hosted by the Superintendent, Vice Admiral Jeffrey Fowler USN and College Commandant Capt Margaret Klein USN.

One discussion centred on the current American focus on cultural and regional awareness training for all officers, an initiative which recognises that future leaders will often need to deploy to unfamiliar regions to undertake a wider range of tasks than has previously been needed – the Expeditionary Diplomat concept.

Admiral Ibbotson then travelled to Norfolk, Virginia, for further briefings at local commands, including a call on Commander US Second Fleet, Vice Admiral Marty Chanik USN.

One key meeting was with Rear Admiral Don Quinn, Commander Strike Force Training Atlantic, who is responsible for training and certification of carrier strike groups and ships deployed independently.

Admiral Quinn said he hopes to visit the UK soon to explore his interest in deploying US surface combatants for Operational Sea Training with FOST, particularly in FOST's tailored training for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as well as in the force protection serials.

Admiral Ibbotson called in at the new Navy Expeditionary Combat Command at Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base, and visited the Tactical Training Group Atlantic (TACTRAGRULANT) facilities in Dam Neck, where he was shown a student class undertaking 'Fleet Synthetic Training' – on the agenda were opportunities for greater integration of RN ships, submarines and aircraft into US battle group synthetic training.

Options were also explored for increased collaboration in the major certification exercises which all US strike groups must successfully complete before they deploy to the Med and Indian Ocean regions in support of Op Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and Active Endeavour, and in support of capacity building around the African continent.

During their visit to Second Fleet HQ the FOST team was hosted by Cdre Bob Mansergh, currently Deputy Director of Combined Joint Operations from the Sea Centre of Excellence.

FOST was briefed on the cutting-edge work conducted on a range of key issues including allied integration with the US Maritime HQ with Maritime Operations Centre (MOC) concept which rolls out across the USN this year.

This will provide a global network of MOCs monitoring all maritime activity and providing the backbone of Maritime Domain Awareness for the Americans.

He was also briefed on development on a range of initiatives aimed at assisting NATO's Allied Command Transformation to exploit the agility which maritime forces bring to global security operations more effectively.

After an exhausting week, FOST returned to the UK armed with a very wide range of things to think about as he and his senior staff consider the way ahead for individual and collective training in the RN.

EDUCATION

The Best Start In Life



Wonderful week at West Hill Park

WEST Hill Park School in Titchfield packs a full programme of activities into their weeks.

Recently six young orators distinguished themselves when they secured first and third places in the Fareham Rotary Youth Speaks public-speaking competition.

The school has won this prestigious contest four years out of five and headmaster Edward Hudson is justifiably proud of this record.

One team of articulate 11-year-olds spoke with passion against the mollycoddling 'Nanny State' which is making their childhood so miserable. They deplored being wrapped in cottonwool and demanded the right to play conkers without having to wear goggles.

The other team gave a 15-minute presentation on The Forgotten Heroes which secured the coveted trophy. The three spoke eloquently and passionately about the plight of the Armed Forces and their unheralded return to British shores.

The whole team, self-styled 'Service brats', told of their fears for the safety of their fathers when the latter undergo stints of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq.

As Edward Thicknesse said: "My father slipped back into the cycle of life without causing a single ripple." He reminded the audience that it was high time that we learned to separate our dislike of government policy from our

support of the Forces.

Popular author Robert Muchamore delivered a spirited talk to the pupils in Years 5, 6 and 7. Some of the children were lucky enough to be given a signed preview copy of his new book *The Sleepwalker*, the ninth in his successful *Cherub* series of spy novels.

Robert Muchamore spoke candidly about his life as a writer. His manner was easy and natural as he recalled the long journey to his present status as best-selling author. Since his visit the library has been bombarded with requests

for any of the *Cherub* series.

Year 5 pupils discovered dragons were alive and thriving following a visit by 'Reptile Celebrities' (pictured above). The children had the opportunity to meet Bearded Dragons, a Boa Constrictor and a Royal Python, and study the science surrounding their habitat and survival.

If you are looking for an independent coeducational preparatory school with an holistic approach to learning, West Hill Park would love to hear from you. Please contact the registrar on 01329 840400.

Harmony at Wells

WELLS is one of the oldest schools in England but has never been traditionalist and has always been enthusiastic to embrace new ideas.

In 1969 it became one of the first independent schools to become fully coeducational and even today Wells is one of the few coeducational schools that can claim to be genuinely 50/50. Similarly the staff structure reflects the school's commitment to equality.

The decision in the 1970s to incorporate the specialist music school means that Wells remains the only specialist music school to operate within the context of a conventional school. This remarkable innovation has contributed greatly to the special feel of Wells.

The Wells experience is founded on the principle that people should feel that they can be themselves, as long as this means thinking about other people first.

Significant emphasis is placed on acceptance. Wells is a community where people are accepted for who they are. For all, there is the chance to live in a world where being friends with extraordinary people is accepted as the norm. There is a refreshing sense of mutual respect between pupils whatever their talents.

The link with the Cathedral bestows upon the school an ethos where work, study and spirituality are combined in a creative mix that runs in harmony with the entire school family.

RM heads up Oratory

THE Oratory School is the only all boys' Catholic boarding and day school in the UK and educates boys of all backgrounds.

The school is housed in approximately 400 acres of beautiful Oxfordshire countryside close to the M4 and M40 with easy access to airports.

The Oratory has an international reputation for a first-class all-round education and as a school of only 400 boys, small classes and close supervision are provided.

At the heart of the school is the Christian vision of its founder, John Henry Cardinal Newman, the great 19th-Century thinker and writer. The school attracts boys locally and from all over the world both from Catholic families and other faiths.

The school motto of *cor ad cor loquitur* (heart speaking to heart) underlines the pastoral dimensions and caring community atmosphere of the school. Entry is invited at 11+, 13+ and into the Sixth Form.

The headmaster, Clive Dytor, a former Royal Marines Commando, believes that leadership skills play an important part in boys' education today. The school therefore offers a full range of extra-curricular activities including CCF, Duke of Edinburgh, Young Enterprise, Prefect Training, and Oxbridge preparation with 99 per cent of leavers obtaining their first choice of university.

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Tel: 01738 394247 Email: admissions@qvs.org.uk
Fax: 01738 394204 Website: www.qvs.org.uk



Apple of admiral's eye

KELLY College, founded by Admiral Kelly in 1877, is proud of its 130 years of service to the Royal Navy.

Kelly offers a co-educational full and weekly boarding, and day education for pupils aged 11-18. It is a school of 370 students of whom half are boarders. Kelly offers all the facilities of a larger school, while retaining the advantages in the individual care and class size of a smaller school.

The Preparatory School is co-educational and has a further 200 pupils. The Prep School shares many of the facilities of the senior school including boarding from Year 5.

Kelly provides a high-quality, well-balanced education with a strong commitment to a whole range of extracurricular activities. The staff are fully involved seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

The sporting record of the school is very strong; Kelly has a national reputation in swimming, rugby and athletics, while hockey and netball teams have achieved county and regional success.

At the same time, Kelly is particularly proud of its music and drama and delighted to be taking advantage of the new Performing Arts Centre which opened in July last year.

Diary focus at Rookesbury

PIPPA Harris-Burland, headmistress at Rookesbury Park School in Wickham, writes: "In my experience one of the most important, demanding and fulfilling roles in a school is that of a form tutor... if you do the job properly!

"The role of tutor means you may be required to be: counsellor, mother, father, friend, confidante, or Devil's advocate. If a child is not happy, he will not learn - it's simple. So let's KISS and Keep It Sweetly Simple!

"In my school we have tutor periods at the beginning and end of each day. The start of the day is crucial to how the rest of the day unfolds. If you haven't done your homework, or the dog ate it, you need to tell someone.

"This is a time to ensure the children in your class have everything they need for the day ahead, from exercise books to pencils. We always keep a supply of rulers in the teacher's desk. Give them out when they are needed. Every child has the right to learn.

"The end of the day is just as important. With a little help even the most disorganised child can keep their homework diary (most important book in the school bag) in the zipped top pocket.

"I ask the children to lay out their books on their desk, before transferring them into the bag. A laminated check list stuck on the front of the desk can work wonders. Ask the child to colour it in big bold colours, so he is involved in the process.

"One of the most important sharing activities is that of setting personal targets.

"When I asked my last Year 4 tutor group what they wanted to achieve, one came up with: 'Tie my shoe laces.' Another said: 'Get my spellings right every week.'

"These are great targets, but are worthless without a measurable and specific time set.

"Establish short and long term targets. And most importantly celebrate successes, in your assemblies, with parents, in the homework diary.

"We all love to hear something good. A phone call or a quick word at the end of the day means the world to a parent.

"Above all enjoy and have fun with them."

St John's scores highly

ST JOHN'S College in Southsea has been judged 'outstanding' by Ofsted, the official body for the inspection of UK schools, following a thorough inspection of the school's boarding provision.

The report rated the popular school's boarding service as 'exceptionally high quality'. In the inspection, the Ofsted team found St John's 'provides outstanding care to the boarders it accommodates'.

Areas of particular strength identified were; 'excellent relationships between staff and pupils', 'the young people are treated with respect and warmth' and described the boarders as 'confident, polite and outgoing'.

Also praised were the 'strong leadership' of the headmaster and senior staff; the 'excellent' policies, procedures and systems; the high standard of accommodation; and the large range of activities on offer.

Headmaster of St John's College, Nigel Thorne was delighted with the report and said: "We are all very proud with the outcome of the inspection.

"We work very hard to give every child a thoroughly rewarding, exciting, challenging and safe experience. The excellent report is a fine tribute to the enthusiasm and commitment of everyone involved - staff and pupils alike."

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Celebrate with Queen Victoria

ALTHOUGH Queen Victoria School in Scotland was officially opened on September 28 1909 by King Edward VII, the principles which led at the heart of the school's origins still prevail today.

To mark this occasion, QVS have numerous events planned over the year. These include:

Family fun day: taking place at the end of May, this fun-filled day aims to bring together all the students, parents and teachers of QVS and residents from the local community.

Grand Day passing out parade: this promises to be a prestigious occasion as students and teachers alike put on their ceremonial uniforms and parade in front of a very special guest (yet to be confirmed). This takes place on Friday, June 27, just before the summer break.

Parade Sunday: students don their ceremonial uniforms once again to mark the official opening of the school on Sunday September 28.

If you would like more information, please call 0131 310 2927 or visit www.qvs.org.uk.



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Brontë backdrop for girls at Casterton

CASTERTON School has been established for nearly 200 years and its pupils have included Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë and cookery supremo Claire MacDonald.

Casterton continues to deserve its reputation as a leading academic girls boarding school and is a Top 20 Girls Boarding School, based on percentage of A and B grades at A-level in 2007. Intellectual rigour is at the heart of the curriculum, with intellectual character even more so. However, as an outstanding boarding school it also provides all girls with superb opportunities for sporting, artistic and cultural development. All girls receive an education which benefits from the 24 hour, seven days a week philosophy of a boarding school. It is one of the very few girls boarding schools which is full boarding from 12+ and there is a full programme of events every weekend.

Specialist speakers on a whole range of topics from careers talk about law, medicine and forensic science. Other speakers discuss a range of topics from cyber safety, to studying sport in the USA and enjoying wine at the Sixth Form Wine Society.

Trips and tours throughout the UK, Europe and further afield through sports tours to Barbados and Dubai ensure that all girls leave Casterton with the qualifications, courage, strength and creativity to face the adult world of work and life, with a life-long group of friendships.

Recent successes at the end of the Easter term have included:

U18 tennis team are now in the Senior Girls National Finals, reaching the final eight. One of the eight is from a services family.

The clarinet trio has reached the final of the National Pro-Corda Competition, to be held in March. Esther-Rose Bartholomew's father is in the Navy.

Caroline Morphet has won the Living Edge Schools Competition at the Lowry Gallery in Manchester. Over 50 schools competed including the highly academic Manchester day schools. Caroline is from a forces family.

Casterton has launched its specialist coaching courses to take place in the holidays. The coaching which begins with tennis at Easter and will feature international coaches in their sport and will be both day and residential for current and prospective pupils from 8-18.

For further details please contact Emma Clark on 015242 79299.

RHS pupils take up their oars

SIX pupils at the Royal Hospital School are taking part in two team challenges raising funds for Action Medical Research.

Matthew Jones, Michael Barker, Christopher Rigge and Huw Myatt were joined by former pupil Anna Rigge in the Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Marathon, as *Navy News* went to press.

Teachers at the school and team coaches Les Thompson and Lee Menday said: "This is more than a race - it is an adventure and the young people involved have an immense amount of determination and stamina."

"Crossing the finish line will give them an enormous amount of satisfaction and raising money for such a good cause makes it all the more worthwhile."

Joined by fellow climber Daniel McRink, four of the canoeists will be taking part in the Three Peaks Challenge in July. With the support of their driver and coach, the Royal Hospital School team will



Canoeists from the Royal Hospital School in Suffolk

ascend and descend the highest peaks in Scotland, England and Wales in less than 24 hours.

Through sponsorship the teams hope to raise some £3,000 which will go towards vital research into areas such as premature birth, sickle cell disease and stroke.

Forging ahead at Duke of York's

VALLEY Forge Military Academy and College in Wayne, Pennsylvania, USA and the Duke of York's Royal Military school are delighted to announce the first fruits of their partnership.

Graham Sisson, a school prefect in his last year at the school in Dover, is to be the inaugural Duke of York's Fellow at Valley Forge. In this capacity Graham will spend a month at Valley Forge after the end of his studies in September 2008 acting as a staff instructor before going on to study politics provisionally at Exeter University.

Graham won this award in his capacity as Senior Under Officer in the Duke of York's unique ceremonial tradition, which stretches back to the foundation of the school in Chelsea in 1801 by the second son of George III, Field Marshal Frederick, Duke of York.

The school, along with its smaller sister school in Scotland, are the only schools in Britain which have the right to bear colours. Graham will preside over Grand Day in July 2008 when these colours will be trooped before an audience which has traditionally numbered royalty and leaders of the armed services.

Tony McGeorge, the President of Valley Forge and Charles Johnson, headmaster at Duke of York's, are keen to explore other links between the two institutions. Charles said: "I am conscious of the enormous shared history between our two great nations and their armed forces. We want to broaden the minds of our young people and increase their understanding of each other's nations."

CHILTON CANTELO SCHOOL

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Set in 200 acres of stunning Suffolk countryside, the Royal Hospital School is a full boarding and day school offering exceptional academic and extra-curricular provision for girls and boys aged 11-18 years.

Supporting its established national reputation for musical excellence, the School has a new £3.5m state-of-the-art music school due for completion in September 2008. Every pupil also has the opportunity to enjoy the outstanding sports facilities, including RYA sailing tuition, and to pursue a huge range of interests and activities.

Open Morning

9.30am, Saturday 19th April

For further information please contact Sue Toner on 01473 326210 or admissions@royalhospitalschool.org

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Colourful Hazlegrove

SET within 200 acres of parkland in Somerset, Hazlegrove is a splash of colour in an increasingly grey and conforming world.

It is a school that delights in children being children, it encourages individuality and it values honesty, integrity and initiative.

The school aspires to, and works towards, success at all levels whether academic, sporting, musical or elsewhere, but not at the expense of balance, civility or a sense of wellbeing.

Staff believe that education should be broad and that it is as much about doing and thinking as it is about writing and remembering; attitudes and values are as important as knowledge and understanding and that the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils is fundamental.

St John's School inspires in Sidmouth

WITH its well respected educational heritage, its beautiful location and impressive range of facilities, St John's School in Sidmouth certainly provides a happy and inspiring environment for its pupils.

The school caters for children from the age of two in its nursery department right up to the age of 13 in the main school. The school also offers a range of boarding options from full boarding to flexi or even weekend boarding for day pupils, which many of the children really enjoy.

With a strong tradition of Forces children in the school, St John's believes it is well positioned to offer the very best all-round boarding solution to Forces families and has recently launched a special bursary for the Forces.

Importantly, the school is very

flexible about their approach to boarding. Headmistress Angel Parry-Davies said: "We understand that Forces families have particular needs - we try to be as flexible as possible to make sure that the whole boarding experience is as positive for parents as it is for our children."

"The school's capacity of around 200 day children and an additional 70 boarders makes it large enough to offer a broad study programme yet small enough to retain the special family feel that is so valued by everyone."

She explained: "We treat each child as an individual and aim to prepare our children to face the future with confidence and self-assurance."

"I am often asked by people what it is that make St John's different. We always encourage people to visit because we think they will feel what a special place it is."

Shelter at Shebbear

TO many people a boarding school in the English countryside conjures up scenes of a bygone age: misty, dewy mornings, a place where the air is healthy and good for you, where children can climb trees, camp out and do the things that you read about in the Enid Blyton books.

Shebbear College strives to have the best of the old but add to it the very best of the present.

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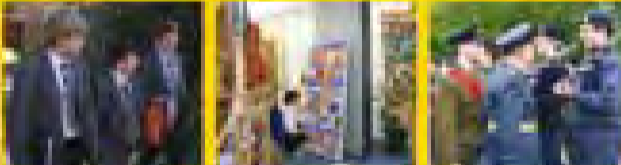
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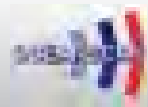
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Requests for further details and informal enquiries should be made to Professor John Chaplin (+44 (0)23 8059 2843, j.r.chaplin@soton.ac.uk).

Please visit www.jobs.soton.ac.uk and apply on-line, or call: 023 8059 2750. The closing date for this position is 14 April 2008 at 12 noon. Please quote the reference number 2133-08-E.

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Pupils band together to raise funds for charity

CADETS from Lincolnshire have been raising funds for – and raising the profile of – Servicemen and women deployed in the war zones of the world.

A number of RN cadets at Stamford Endowed Schools CCF, along with a member of staff who served with the Scots Guards during the Falklands, created wristbands to raise cash for SSAFA and Combat Stress.

More than 2,000 bands have already been sold, contributing to the coffers of these Service charities.

But their creators also wanted to use them to increase awareness, and with a little help from some high-profile names, that is exactly what is being achieved.

A band was seen on the wrist of England captain Paul Collingwood during the Test matches and one-day internationals series in England, and the RAF Red Arrows lined up for the camera in front of their aircraft to publicise the campaign.

Bands have been ordered in the United States, Canada, Australia and Brunei, and Richard Brewster, from the school's CCF, said that they hope their small campaign will show that people do care about the troops in the front line, and show the troops that people back in the UK are thinking about them.

The RN section of the CCF is affiliated to HMS Nottingham, whose latest patrol has taken her to the South Atlantic.

Eastbourne and Gateshead close to prize

SEA Cadet units finished second and third in this year's St Dunstan's 'Go the Distance' challenge.

An Air Training Corps squadron from Jersey took top spot, just pipping the Eastbourne and Gateshead units to the honours.

Cadets and adult instructors from all three units are due to visit the National Training Centre in Ovingdean, near Brighton, this month, where they will receive their trophies from writer and broadcaster Peter Snow.

Also attending will be the Lieutenant Governor of Jersey, Lt Gen Andrew Ridgway.

The competition challenges cadets to cover the distance of a half marathon – 13.1 miles – in an imaginative and innovative way.

Jersey used a land/sea/air approach by walking, kayaking and flying; TS Eastbourne restored an old field gun and pulled it along the prom in their home town, and TS Flamingo pulled their boats up the River Tyne for the required distance.



● Work starts on the frame which will be used in the process to create the hull of the TS Jack Petchey

Work starts on new cadet training ship

THE contract for the new Marine Society and Sea Cadets training ship has been awarded to the Bridgend Boat Company Ltd of Plymouth.

TS Jack Petchey will take some two years to build, and the contract is for £2.5 million.

The Marine Society and Sea Cadets launched an appeal to build a 24-metre powered training craft in 2006 during the charity's 250th anniversary.

The target was reached in just over a year, thanks in no small part to a £1 million donation from the Jack Petchey Foundation.

And despite bids from yards around the world, it was a British company which came up trumps.

Work has already started on the initial frame construction, from which the yard will build the plug to create the hull.

Similar in design to the Corps' existing power training vessel, TS John Jerwood, the new ship will allow much more sea time for cadets on six-day voyages at sea.

Over her anticipated 25-year lifespan the TS Jack



● How the TS Jack Petchey will look

Picture: Houlder Ltd

Petchey will be home to around 16,000 people and 3,000 adult volunteers, and she will act as a platform for learning skills such as engineering, electronic communication and chart systems, cooking and stewarding, the need to be vigilant and keep watch, the value of living in a tidy and disciplined environment, and the need to employ sound social

and communication skills when working in a team.

Mike Cornish, chief executive of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, said: "We are delighted to have been able to award the contract for the TS Jack Petchey to a British shipyard as it contributes in a small way to ensuring those technical and boatbuilding skills for which Britain as a seafaring

nation can rightly be proud are kept alive."

Bridgend director Peter Humphrey said: "It's a large contract and will give the company a lot of stability."

TS Jack Petchey is expected to enter service in early 2010.

She will be based at the RN Reserve Training Centre at HMS President, close to Tower Bridge.

Corps supports Jersey inquiries

THE following statement has been issued by the Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC), the parent charity of the Sea Cadet Corps, regarding police investigations in Jersey:

"In relation to the ongoing enquiry into a number of allegations of historical sexual and physical abuse of children on the island, the States of Jersey Police have been investigating a number of individuals, some of whom had previously been connected with Jersey Sea Cadet unit.

"Both the current personnel at the Sea Cadet unit and the trustees of the parent charity, the Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC), in the UK have been fully supporting the investigation for some months and will continue to do so.

"The police have informed the MSSC that any connection to the unit is now playing a very minor part in the investigation.

"Assurances have also been received from the officer leading the investigation that there is no connection between the Sea Cadets and the current enquiries centred on Haut de la Garenne care home, which closed in 1987.

"Jersey Sea Cadet unit is a volunteer-led youth charity.

"The Marine Society and Sea Cadets takes its duty of care towards its young people very seriously and inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated.

"Procedures are regularly reviewed and robust child protection policies and processes are in place.

"All adult volunteers in the organisation are required to undergo a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) Disclosure before having unsupervised access to cadets.

"It is important to emphasise that the police enquiries are of an historical nature and relate to individuals rather than activities at the Sea Cadet unit.

"Safe training is continuing to take place very successfully under the current management at the unit, which is thriving and has recently been presented with a number of national and Area trophies."

Praise for TS Laforey

AN East Anglian unit has won praise at its biannual inspection for its all-round efforts.

Northampton and Wellingborough was described by Inspecting Officer Cdr Clive Smith as "literally bursting at the seams with cadets, and the dedicated supporters and staff work harmoniously to ensure the young people of Northampton and Wellingborough experience the very best of what the Sea Cadets has to offer."

Flipside of annual review



● Junior cadets from Hornchurch and Upminster display their decorated pancakes – alongside that of London Area Officer Cdr Paul Haines (on table)

THE new Area Officer for London, Cdr Paul Haines, visited the Hornchurch and Upminster Unit to carry out the units' Annual Review.

Cdr Haines was escorted by Acting CPO (SCC) Sarah Butcher, the new Officer in Charge of the unit – Sarah took over at the beginning of the year from Lt Cdr (SCC) Michael Chittock RNR, who has moved on to be Assistant District Officer for Essex District.

The commander was shown the various cadet classes taking place and saw cadets at work on their different subjects.

He was also given a comprehensive tour of the unit and its surrounding areas.

Cdr Haines was suitably impressed with what he saw, which further endorsed the unit as the 2007 winners of the Stephenson Trophy for the best unit within London Area.

Being Shrove Tuesday the Junior Cadets were busy decorating pancakes.

On the night the commander joined in the fun and decorated his own pancake.

A tale of two Bulwarks

AFTER years of following HMS Bulwark from design through to service, her namesake unit visited her for the first time while the ship was in Liverpool.

Suitable awed by the assault ship's size, the Buxton cadets were met by S/Lts Tom Horne and Jack

Bright, who took them on a guided tour from the cavernous dock through the ops room – which is bigger than TS Bulwark's main deck – to the bridge.

There was also a chance to examine the Goalkeeper point defence system before the cadets headed home.





CPO 'Bomber' Mills grapples with his opponent in the wrestling discipline under the watchful eye of the referee

Caber intensive

THERE are some mighty tossers aboard HMS Campbeltown.

They're also not bad at tug-of-war, truck pulling, and traditional wrestling as the frigate's ship's company learned in Bahrain at a rather unusual sports day.

Campbeltown was invited to take part in the **Gaelic Games** – a sort of Highland Games but in the sand and dust of the Gulf rather than amid the glens and peaks of Scotland.

'Clan Campbeltown' were placed third after demonstrating their prowess in tossing the caber, shot putt, tug-of-war, wrestling, and hauling trucks – the latter two events proved particularly popular (and demanding). "I'm going to struggle when I get back on board, I can feel the aches and pains already but it has been a fantastic day," enthused CPO(ET(ME)) 'Bomber' Mills.

The ship's most senior rating, Executive Warrant Officer Jim Mustard, said the games had proved a good morale booster and a welcome change from the more typical games of rugby and football.

"It's been a great day, hard work but lots of fun and great to do something different," he added.

The sailors celebrated their third place in traditional style: a barbecue and a few cold beers.



Two climbers struggle up the imposing slopes of Makalu

'One of the hardest propositions of all'

AFTER four years of planning, they're off.

While fellow Britons were heading to church on Easter Sunday or perhaps enjoying a lazy day, 42 Service personnel, drawn from all arms of the Forces, headed to Nepal to grapple with one of the most demanding mountains on the planet: Makalu.

Fewer than 250 people have made the summit of the Himalayan peak since it was first scaled in 1955 (the same number climb Everest every year) and just two have reached it via the perilous south-east ridge. The late Sir Edmund Hillary branded the mountain: "One of the hardest propositions of all."

The 2008 military expedition is attempting a world-first traverse of Makalu, although there are four separate strands to the assault on the mountain. A main team will attempt the summit; a subsidiary main team will back up the leaders; a high-altitude development team will aim to stretch potential future main team members; and a junior team is taking on a safer but

nonetheless demanding goal – the highest trekking hill in the Himalayas.

More than 170 personnel from the three Services applied to take part, 80 were selected for a series of training sessions and camps, and just 42 were selected for the final four teams.

By the time you read this, the team should be establishing their base camp and getting accustomed to extreme altitudes, before beginning the attempt on the summit which rises 7,800m (26,000ft) above the earth.

The most demanding part of the climb will be overcoming a four-mile knife-edge ridge, known as the Black Gendarme, in bitter cold and howling winds.

"It's like scaling the Rock of Gibraltar with high altitude boots on, thick mittens, and about half the oxygen. It's pretty full-on," said expedition leader Sqn Ldr David Tait.

You can learn more about the expedition and its members at www.makalu2008.org

The RN challenge for the ball against the Army during the 1-1 draw at Aldershot

Picture: Graeme Main, Soldier Magazine



RAF outclass RN

CONGRATULATIONS to the Royal Air Force who are the Seniors Inter Service champions for 2008 – thanks to a victory on RN home soil.

This year's contest opened with the RN and Army clashing at the ground of Blue Square Premier's Aldershot Town.

The Army took the lead on 20 minutes, but ten minutes later the RN equalised through POET (WE) Phil Archbold (HMS Collingwood), who was our best player on the night.

So it stayed until the final score, marking a good Navy performance and extending their unbeaten run to eight matches.

A week later, the RAF beat the Army 3-0 – and by all accounts they played really well and thoroughly deserved the emphatic win.

That left the airmen against the sailors as the decider, with the RN needing to win.

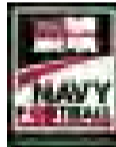
The match had to be moved from Fratton Park as Pompey were directed to play a league match so a couple of hundred of us gathered at Burnaby Road in quiet expectation.

Unfortunately our boys were completely outplayed on the night and the RAF ran out deserved 2-0 winners, with goals in either half.

The first, on 20 minutes, was an absolute screamer from outside the box, following good link-up play down the left wing.

The Navy were disappointed that they hadn't given a good performance, and to be honest they never looked like scoring.

All in all though, it has been a good season (won five, drew two, lost two) for this squad that is still



Inside with Capt Paul Cunningham, RNFA

improving under the management of WO Ian Binks and Capt Steve Marr RM.

With the emergence of quality youngsters, thanks to the good work being done at youth level, we all hope we can get our hands on that Inter Services cup soon.

RN Seniors 3 Cornwall 3 (South West Counties Cup).

This was an impressive fight-back for the RN, who were punished for some mistakes in the first hour of the match and were 3-0 down with twenty minutes to go.

But two goals from towering centre back AET Tom Ardley (HMS Heron) and a late equaliser from ET(ME) Danny Kerr (our best player on the day) was enough to give us a creditable draw.

Cpl Lee Farrell (CTCRM) also played really well and deserves mention.

If Devon beat Cornwall in the last game to be played (after *Navy News* went to press), then the Navy will have won the cup, otherwise we will be runners-up.

RN U23s 1 London University 1

On a bright afternoon in Fulham the RN U23s played their final warm-up game before the Inter Services.

With LMA Keating (HMS Drake) and MEA Hodgson (HMS Sultan) making their full debuts, the RN side started brightly, playing at a high tempo and creating regular chances from OM

McEvoy (HMS Collingwood) and WEA O'Neil which the home goalkeeper did well to keep out.

On 22 minutes Mne Rule (RM Poole) drove forward and smashed a shot from 30 yards that thumped against the crossbar and bounced out to MEA Hodgson (HMS Sultan) who headed the rebound against the post before WEA O'Neil (HMS Collingwood) drove the ball high into the net.

The Navy side continued to push forward and only an acrobatic save from the University keeper from an ET(WE) Farnsworth shot kept the score down to 1-0 at half time.

The second half started brightly but although the RN were continuing to create chances, they couldn't find the second goal.

WEA Ritchie (HMS Collingwood) missed a great opportunity from a corner when he found himself unmarked at the far post but headed wide.

With ten minutes left WEA Ritchie found himself isolated with the University striker in the RN goalmouth and conceded a penalty which the London striker duly dispatched past the RN keeper WEA Barker (HMS Collingwood).

The Navy continued to press for the winner and it almost came when, from a free kick, the ball was headed back across the goal for NA Card (HMS Ocean) to smash over the bar from four yards. MEM Kerr (HMS Exeter)

then hit a half volley from the edge of the area which the University again turned over the bar.

RN U23s 2 RAF 0

The Navy lads were in confident mood prior to their first Inter Service game v RAF away at Cosford.

After a frenetic opening, the RN began to impose themselves on the game, with both AET Brookes and OM McEvoy (HMS Collingwood) dictating the pace of the game from the centre of midfield.

MEM Davidson (HMS Lancaster) and WEA Ritchie (HMS Collingwood) were rocks at the heart of the defence.

After 17 minutes OM McEvoy played a slide-rule pass through for MEA Hodgson (HMS Sultan) to coolly finish.

The second half started slowly for us, as the RAF had the wind at their backs. They almost grabbed an equaliser within 15 seconds of the re-start were it not for the athleticism of MEM Keneally (HMS Bristol) who dived low to turn a shot on to the post.

This galvanised the Navy side and on 70 minutes an RN free kick from ET(WE) Farnsworth was curled in for WEA O'Neil (HMS Collingwood) to head our second goal.

Last month, we reported that free tickets were available to personnel based in the Portsmouth area for certain Pompey home games (the next one is the clash with Blackburn Rovers on April 26). Only Nelson-based personnel should contact their PTI staff. Sailors and marines based at Sultan and Collingwood should get in touch with their respective PTIs.

Sunseekers head to Dorset

SID Lawrence and his merry band of volunteers from the **RN Automobile Club** once again supported this year's Rallye Sunseeker held in Bournemouth.

In a case of *déjà vu*, the RN motoring buffs served as marshals on Post 15, situated in Ringwood South, making sure racers and spectators were safe.

Competitors raced past at roughly 60-second intervals during two stages, one in the morning, one in late afternoon.

During the morning stage Sid and his crew had to put their firefighting skills to good use when a Subaru Impreza caught fire between post 14 and 15 with a blown turbo; the connecting rod also decided it was going to exit the top of the engine.

The 2008 event saw the MG Metro 6R4 Owners' Club celebrating the 21st anniversary of the victory of Malcolm Wilson

and the late Nigel Harris on the Citroen Winter Rally Round 1 of the National Rally Championship. A generation later, the Rallye Sunseeker is the first-round race.

The MG buffs were in attendance in numbers; some 25 6R4s was the biggest gathering for some time and 16 gave demonstration runs around part of the Somerley House stage.

Again there was a good showing from competitors: 96 entrants competed over 70 miles of Dorset and Hampshire, with stages taking place in Bournemouth, Wareham, Uddens Forest, copses north and south of Ringwood, and within the grounds of Somerley House.

The weather was fine and dry with slight showers later in the day.

As for the RNAC enthusiasts, their morale was maintained all day long thanks to regular supplies of refreshments from Sid's kitchen.



Mud on the road... An Impreza WRC kicks up the dirt during the Rallye Sunseeker

Picture: PO 'Dutchy' Holland, Phoenix CBRN DC

Next month



**Top bombing
part 1 –
a day with
HMS
Vengeance**



**Top bombing
part 2 –
the Naval
Strike Wing
return to sea**



**May the
Norse be
with you
– the art
of Viking
warfare**

Plus



**Birth of a
nation – the
Navy in the
Palestine
emergency
60 years on**



Lord's a-leaping



Sweet victory in the lion's den

YOU have to feel sorry for the French.

OK, actually you don't.

But losing on home turf twice in the space of 24 hours to their greatest rivals in rugby union must have been a bitter blow.

The second victory came courtesy – to a large extent – of the boot of Jonny Wilkinson.

The first, less-publicised triumph was no less sweet – and the home crowd no less hostile.

Twelve months ago, *Les Bleus* were toppled by a strong RN side in Portsmouth to lift the Babcock Challenge trophy.

This year, the fixture switched to Paris and the home of Stade Francais.

The right note was set from the outset, the French naval choir ensuring that an intimidating atmosphere was created as the final notes of *La Marseillaise* died away.

It was therefore perhaps no surprise that the Marine Nationale, playing in their traditional blue, were the stronger of the two sides in the early exchanges.

Their clever mix between hard forward-driving play and incisive lines from their back division ensured that the RN's defence was fully tested. However with 15 minutes gone, the only success for this early pressure was a sweetly-struck penalty.

Having weathered the early storm it was the turn of the British to exert pressure of their own, with the half-back pairing of 'Cowboy' John (Bulwark) and Rob Lloyd (42 Cdo) orchestrating the back play, forcing the French to show their mettle in defence.

However it wasn't long before the powerful running of the Navy's back three resulted in the first try for wing Josh Drauniniu (CTCRM) which was not converted.

Further pressure from the RN provided Rob Lloyd with the opportunity for an easy three points.

By now the Brits were playing with a

freedom and tempo that was a joy to watch.

Time and again they troubled the French by attacking from everywhere and keeping the ball alive and in hand even when under pressure.

Deft handling from the forwards ensured that the backs were often able to run at an unstructured defence and it was therefore no surprise when centre Callum McCrae (Cdo Logs Regt) picked a lovely, out-to-in angle to score a well-worked try close to the French posts. With the successful conversion from Lloyd, the RN were well placed at half time with a 15-3 lead and the local crowd largely silenced.

If the confident French crowd was quiet just before half time then the early play of the second half woke them up and reignited French hopes.

A lovely break down their right-hand 15m channel resulted in an excellent score wide out which unfortunately they couldn't convert.

The score was now 8-15, the crowd were cheering and singing for their beloved *Les Bleus* and the home team duly responded by raising the intensity of their game.

Further French pressure saw their forwards gaining just rewards for their efforts by driving over from short range to bring the scores even closer at 13-15.

The forward exchanges were such that the match referee, who was managing the game very well, decided that two of the front row needed some time for self reflection; a particularly fiercely-contested ruck had developed into a forwards' version of Entente Cordial.

With the momentum now fully with the French, the RN had to absorb sustained pressure on their own goal line.

Immense commitment from the pack ensured that the Royal Navy often had the nudge forward at a series of 5m scrums, whilst the second row pairing of Justin Doney (814 NAS) and Marsh Cormack (845 NAS) maintained an impressive work rate – an

outstanding performance given that these two players had only that week returned from deployment overseas.

Number 8 Matt Parker (CTCRM) merits special mention: he assumed the captaincy in the second half and his leadership was key in ensuring the RN's composure in the face of the French onslaught.

With the French storm blowing itself out, the Senior Service team showed that they were always awake to the opportunity of playing rugby with ball in hand.

In a rare foray into their opponent's half, they again busted the first line of defence and forced the penalty as the French tried in vain to slow down the play. Rob Lloyd landed the penalty to give the RN some breathing space as the clock ran down.

The final score of 18-13 meant that the Senior Service had become the first team to win away from home and successfully defend the trophy.

Though naturally jubilant with the victory, the Royal Navy team, through their President Admiral Neil Morissett, acknowledged it had been a very close contest.

The match had been superbly staged by the French Navy and match co-sponsors Thales and Babcock.

Everyone agreed that this was comfortably the best match thus far in the series and that the Marine Nationale continued to make rapid progress with their rugby, both on and off the field.

The reasons why they were French military champions were evident for all to see and they will undoubtedly mount a very strong challenge when the teams next meet, provisionally scheduled for April next year.

The annual challenge has quickly matured into an event that is eagerly anticipated by both teams who, although they share so many values as sailors, marines and sportsmen, know that for the 80 minutes of the Babcock Challenge there is no Entente Cordial but plenty of healthy respect.

HEADING the field at Sandown, the 'Galloping Padre' makes history as the first naval chaplain to race in the Grand Military Cup.

Sadly, shortly after LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins took this photograph, the Galloping Padre – aka Father Simon Beveridge – was run out of the race by two loose horses as he continued to head the pack past the grandstand at the famous course.

But the Bish, based at RNAS Yeovilton, is unbowed – and has entered his name in the RN history books on his mount Feeling Better.

"It was going very well until I got taken out by two loose horses and run into the rails," he said.

"I've come off horses before, but not in that way. It's not uncommon, but it can happen.

"I was really looking forward to the race – it's something I've been working towards for several years.

"While I'm very disappointed, I'm pleased that I'm still in one piece."

The padre has already made racing history as the first minister of the church to win a point-to-point – he enjoyed a 50-1 victory at Wadebridge in December.

Simon, who's been a naval chaplain for 15 years, developed a taste for horse racing while serving at Lympstone when he was introduced to a course and began riding for a local trainer.

By 2005 he had progressed sufficiently to complete his Amateur National Hunt Jockey's course at Newmarket and apply for his Category A racing licence.

"I've been racing for just one season, but I'd like to race some more," Simon added.

"I'm a chaplain, not a jockey, but racing is something I like to do."

When not seeing to the spiritual needs of personnel at Yeovilton, the padre can be found practising most weekends at John Ryall's farm in Rimpleton.



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