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COMMANDER Kev Seymour of the Naval Strike Wing roars past HMS Illustrious in the Gulf of Oman. After their exertions in Afghanistan, the Fleet Air Arm Harriers deployed on the carrier for the first time in 12 months with the Navy's Orion 08 task force. See pages 10 and 23-26 for a comprehensive report on their activities.

Picture: LA(Phot) Des Wade, Naval Strike Wing

RAN POWER THE NAVAL STRIKE WING RETURNS TO ITS ROOTS



'death star' and her task force in the Gulf of Oman. But we'll come to HMS Illustrious later.

No, let us begin by thanking the men and women of **HMS Enterprise** who've completed a 19-month deployment surveying the waters of the world. And if you thought 19 months was a long time (and it is), well Enterprise's sister Echo has just departed on

a five-year survey mission (*turn to page 5*). Enterprise, rightly, received a warm welcome home, as did the ship's company of **HMS ArgyII**, back from a lengthy patrol of the

Royals of **40 Commando** whose tour of duty in Helmand has ended (see page 4) - but not before the insurgents claimed the lives of two more comrades.

While 40 Commando are celebrating being back in Blighty, some of their green-bereted comrades are still in theatre: the Armoured Support Group RM. We take a look at the training

The Royals have been bolstered by the arrival of 600 extra bodies with an Army battalion, **1 Rifles**, coming under **3 Commando Brigade's** control. The Marines took the soldiers to Belize for some jungle warfare training (see page 12). Right, back to the 'death star': **Illustrious** leads the Orion 08 task group **- MSK Workstminster** and **Edinburgh** (see page 10).

task group – HMS Westminster and Edinburgh (see page 10), HMS Trafalgar, RFAs Wave Knight and Fort Victoria, plus a smattering of foreign warships – in the Gulf of Oman and Indian Ocean. Lusty has been home to the Harriers of the Naval Strike Wing, at sea for the first time in a year, and the submarine-hunting Merlins of **814 NAS**. *Turn to page 23 for a four-page feature*. Frequently we're accused of being 'skimmer news' or 'carrier

news' - usually by those chaps who prowl beneath the ocean. Well, let us shed some light on the work of a strategic missile submarine, **HMS Vengeance**. We joined the 'bomber' on workup in Scotland (see pages 14-15).

There's more good news for the Silent Service this month with its latest missile, **Tomahawk Block IV**, cleared for action and **HMS Torbay** returning from refit (see page 4).

While we say 'hello' to Torbay, we say 'farewell' to **700M**, the dedicated Merlin evaluation squadron. The Culdrose fliers have squeezed just about all there is to squeeze out of the helicopter this past decade and have decommissioned (see page 4).

Merlin is at the cutting edge of anti-submarine warfare. So too is frigate **HMS Somerset** – providing her temperamental sonar isn't on the blink. Which it is. But that hasn't, of course, stopped her playing her full part in Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean (see right). HMS Nottingham's time in the South Atlantic has finally come

to an end (see page 6), while **HMS Liverpool**'s spell there is just beginning (see page 7).

Liverpool will soon meet up with HMS Clyde, on constant watch in the Falklands. She has been paying her respects to the men of 1982 (see page 13).

On the other side of the South Atlantic, RFA Lyme Bay and a team of engineers beat the elements and repaired the harbour facilities on the isolated island of Tristan da Cunha (see page 9).

HMS Manchester has passed the half-way point in her guardianship of the USS Harry S Truman (see page 6), while half a world away, Ark Royal has played host to the US Marine Corps off the Eastern Seaboard (see page 11). The work of NATO's minehunters - currently led by HMS

Roebuck with HMS Hurworth among her flock - often go

unsung. We take a look at their work on page 8. And finally... **HMS Quorn** and **Ledbury** bade farewell to fish after 14 years and resumed their core duties: hunting mines. No such escape from fish for **HMS Severn** but at least they can celebrate their efficacy at catching rogue trawlermen, earning the Jersev Cup for their deeds (see page 5).

Fleet Focus WE could begin our trawl of all things RN and RM with the DECIDENT OF COMPANY OF COMPANY.

• Somerset's flight deck team prepare the ship's Lynx 'Duke' for another day of sorties

Picture: PO(Phot) Tam McDonald, FRPU North

FROM sea vampires to blue whales, but this is no wildlife cruise for HMS Somerset. The last time we caught up with 'Super' Somerset (a recent-ish addition to the list of ships' sobriquets...) she was improvising in a 'battle' against submarines during Exercise Noble Manta, one of NATO's biggest underwater exercises. If coping with six diesel boats wasn't enough to keep the frigate on her toes, well there were even more threats to contend with in Turkev.

Turkey. The Devonport-based Type 23 frigate is currently attached to NATO's Standing Maritime Group 2 which prowls the Mediterranean

Act of solutions watching of the group 2 means provide an environs. The Turks had laid on quite an exercise, Mavi Balina (Blue Whale), for the group: a full-blown 'war' (minus the shooting) between the NATO force and the combined might of the Turkish Mediterranean Fleet and some Pakistani warships. Oh, and there was the small matter of F16 jets and several with

submarines to contend with. The latter would prove no problem, of course. Somerset would track them with her Sonar 2087 and pick them off long before the

submarines could close within firing range. The sonar proved to be somewhat temperamental during Noble Manta, until the weapon engineering department waved their

Marta, until the weapon ongnooning approximation of the magnetic wand.
For Mavi Balina, the towed array was lowered into the water once more and switched on.
"We fully expected the underwater picture to open up before us like Pandora's Box. Nothing. Zip. Nada," said a frustrated CO Cdr

Rob Wilson. The WE department waved their magic wand again. They rebooted the software, reset everything, studied every inch of the

sonar's wiring diagrams. The good news: they found the fault. The bad news: they couldn't fix it. The array will have to be changed... all 2,500 metres

of it.

Thankfully, Somerset's other weapons were fully functioning, which meant she escaped the 'clash' with the Turks and Pakistanis relatively unscathed, although her ship's company were tossed around a bit during some "hard and fast manoeuvring" at times. After Mavi Balina, the Type 23 headed to the Mediterranean as

the NATO force cast its 'net' from the seas off Crete in the north to Libya in the south and the emphasis switched to Operation Active

Endeavour once more. Somerset was at the bottom end of the 'net', patrolling the

waters off north Africa. "Active Endeavour is a very serious business," explained Cdr Wilson. "By vigilance and teamwork, various maritime and law

Wilson. "By vigilance and teamwork, various maritime and law enforcement agencies attempt to stem the flow of human traffic, drugs and contraband into mainland Europe. "The idea is to saturate a known 'trafficking' route with warships to build up the fullest picture of what is going on and, where necessary, to board or track anything suspicious." And if there's nothing suspicious out there on the high seas, then Somerset can practise her boarding skills against other ships in the task force – or she can play the part of the merchantman and allow the Allied solvers to board her.

allow the Allied sailors to board her. "For this our boarding officer assumes her thickest Scottish accent and, having mustered a few civilian-dressed scallywags to doesn't want the distraction of a NATO team visiting her steamer, said Cdr Wilson.

"We all enjoy the chance to ham it up a bit, but much can be gleaned from watching how other nations handle the challenge of negotiating a compliant boarding. It's a sophisticated and potentially hazardous business – and there's always something new to learn " new to learn.'

Although this is a lengthy deployment – Somerset will be away from Devonport until high summer – one plus for the ship's company is the frequency and variety of port visits as the NATO task group hops around the Mediterranean and Adriatic. There's no doubt what the highlight has been: Haifa in Israel, not an especially common port of call for one of Her Majesty's warshing, but one no man or woman on board will forget

warships... but one no man or woman on board will forget. "The things we saw – and the vast majority of the team got away to Jerusalem, the Dead Sea, or both – were breathtaking," said Cdr Wilson.

"Wherever you stand on Israel and the Middle East, there is absolutely no doubt that the obvious tension and undercurrent of danger gives Israeli society a zest for life that I have not felt anywhere else. The place is buzzing."



Big fish out of water

ROOF that from the right angle, with the right light and, of course, the right photographer, anyone, or for that matter anything, can be made to appear slim and attractive, these are the surprisingly sleek - and rarely seen - lines of HMS

Ocean. The 21,000-ton helicopter assault ship is currently 'docked down' in her native Devon, half-way through a major revamp.

Ocean, as these pages have recounted down the years, is not the most attractive of warships... more utilitarian. She is, however, the Royal Navy's biggest vessel, among its most useful,

After a decade of near-constant usage, the helicopter carrier needed a good deal of TLC.

She's getting it in spades: since October, she has been turned into a building site as teams from Babcock Marine and the ship's company carry out £30m improvements. On our last visit to Ocean we remarked that her engines particularly were in need of a good service and overhaul. Done.

'Hotel services' – mess decks, heads, showers, cabins, especially in the areas occupied by the embarked forces rather than the ship's company – are all receiving a 21st-Century

makeover too. And the chefs, sorry logisticians (catering services (preparation)) should be happy. The old galley is gone and a new one is taking its place. Much of the work has been conducted alongside in

Devonport. But for some of the work to her hull, a spell in dry

dock was inevitable. So now she sits high and dry, and will do so until

the summer. "She might look like a building site at present with "She might look like a building site at present with scaffolding and pipes and workers crawling all over her, but soon she'll be the potent force she was designed to be – only more so," said Commanding Officer Cdr David Salisbury. "She'll emerge, phoenix-like from the ashes, as the most powerful and capable 'multi tasking' ship in the Royal Navy." Once she emerges from her refit, she'll undergo sea trials and Operational Sea Training, before deploying at the beginning of 2009. A more extensive refit is planned in a few

A more extensive refit is planned in a few years to extend her life until at least 2022. Ark Royal is doubling up as a commando carrier while Ocean receives her makeover, a role she performed with distinction five years ago in the Iraq campaign.



A IV for good

AS the RAF celebrated its 90th birthday, the RN marked its own milestone in air power: its latest missile is ready for action – three months earlier than anticipated. Tomahawk IV (*pictured above*)

is the latest variant of the cruise missile which can strike ground targets hundreds of miles inland with pinpoint accuracy. Earlier versions of the missile have become a key weapon for the Silent Service, which has fired Tomahawks at targets in

Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo over the past decade. The latest Tomahawk has a

longer range than its predecessors (in excess of 1,000 miles), can be directed to a fresh target in midflight, and can also beam back images of the battlefield to its mother submarine. It will be fired from Trafalgar and new Astuteclass submarines.

HMS Trenchant successfully fired a Tomahawk IV at a test range in the USA last summer. Following that test and other trials, weapons experts have declared the improved missile fit for combat.

The RN ordered 64 of the enhanced missiles from the US Government four years ago for \pounds 70m. The first batch of new Tomahawks were delivered to the Submarine Service last autumn with the rest handed over by the summer of 2009.

Among the Block IV-readv boats is HMS Torbay which has finally completed her year-long revamp (officially a Revalidation Assisted Maintenance Period) in Faslane and returned where she

belongs, Devonport. Engineers and shipwrights on the Clyde fitted new communications - the boat can receive email and even access the internet whilst dived (albeit on a limited basis) - and upgraded her sonar.

They also ensured the boat kept her unique blue hue; Torbay was painted a different shade from the rest of the Fleet a couple of years ago – 'Single Colour Better Than Black' (Snappy title – Ed).

"It has been a long time coming, but I think I speak for all of the crew when I say how fantastic it is to be back in Devonport," said CO Cdr Chris Goodsell.

The Trafalgar-class boat is now undergoing thorough training ahead of a deployment later this year, by which time, says Cdr Goodsell, she will be "at the forefront of global submarine capability".

Carriers get a lift

ANOTHER piece in the jigsaw that is the Navy's future carriers has slotted into place with the ships' lifts being ordered in a

MacTaggart Scott of Loanhead in Scotland will build four huge lifts - two each for HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales - to ferry men and machines from the hangar deck to the flight deck.

The lifts will be capable of raising and lowering loads up to 70 tonnes - that's two Joint Strike Fighters, or half the ship's company of 1,450 souls.

The lifts themselves weigh around 500 tonnes and their platforms cover about 400 metres (almost the size of a tennis court) They will be in place throughout the ships' 50-year careers.

In all, orders worth f_{160m} have been placed for the two vessels which will be based in Portsmouth from the middle of next decade.



'Fighting men do not get any better...

AN embrace and a loving smile as the first Royal Marines of 40 Commando return to the UK after six months in Afghanistan.

The men of Bravo Company were among the first green berets home from Helmand, touching down at Exeter Airport to an unforgettable welcome from loved ones.

Bravo were deployed around the town of Sangin, once a Taleban stronghold and heartland of the insurgents' drug trade.

The result of their deployment? "The Taleban have been pushed out of the area almost completely," said Bravo's Officer Commanding Maj Dan Cheesman proudly. "There are now no safe havens within five

kilometers of the centre of Sangin in any direction – and it is almost never attacked." "Throughout the Marines of Bravo Company

have been magnificent. Fighting men, thinking soldiers, do not get any better." Hand-in-hand with taking the fight to the

enemy came restoring everyday life in Sangin – its market, its school, its amenities.

"We worked very hard and did a very worthwhile job," said Mne Michael Harding of his first operational tour of duty. "We have made things better in Sangin

we've provided security, people are coming we've provided security, people are coming back to live there, shops are opening, schools are opening and clinics are being set up – all with the Marines' help."
 Mne Tom Elliott of Bravo's Fire Support

Group added: "It was very full on at times. We made regular contact with the enemy and were fired on regularly.

"It was tough – as tough as I'd heard about, but Sangin is a much better place than when we got there."

3 Commando Brigade's CO, Brigadier David Capewell, who greeted the returning Royals on the Exeter tarmac, said 40 Cdo had "served

with distinction" in Helmand. He continued: "They have had a superb tour which has made a significant contribution to security and stability in Afghanistan and made a huge difference to the lives of the local "Ultimately, we will all be more secure as a result of the difficult job they have done."

2002.

Dave because of his ability to

lift his fellow green berets' spirits - joined the Corps in September

weapons anti-tank expert

"If any member of his troop

WO1 'Brum' Warrington, 40

were to find themselves in a

difficult and dangerous situation,

it was Dave Marsh they wanted

Cdo's assistant adjutant, added:

of devilment in him that kept

everyone on their toes. He loved

to play pranks on anyone who let

"He was the character that every

Royal Marine company needed

and every sergeant major loved to

have around. This man loved life

and everyone who knew him will

always smile at that thought.'

"Crazy Dave' had a streak

by their side."

their guard down.

but tears for two 'central characters'

A ROADSIDE bomb claimed the lives of two exemplary Royal Marines as 40 Commando came to the end of their tour of duty in Helmand. Lt John Thornton and Mne

David Marsh both died of their wounds despite frantic efforts by medical teams both at the scene and later at British headquarters in Camp Bastion. The two men were on patrol

with their comrades around Kajaki when insurgents detonated an explosive device as the marines rolled past in their vehicles.

Lt Thornton, known by friends as JT, yearned to be Royal Marine from the age of 13. His wish came true in 2005 when he earned the coveted green beret.

Since then the 22-year-old from Ferndown in Dorset has served on attachment to 1 Battalion The Devonshire and Dorset Light Infantry in Iraq and, since last autumn, with 40 Commando in Afghanistan.

'JT was a central character within the company – his good humour and ability to laugh at himself was balanced by high professional skills and a devotion



Irrespessable men who stood shoulder-to-shoulder... (above) Mne Dave Marsh and (right) Lt John Thornton

to the men under his command," to the men under his command," said his CO Major Duncan Manning, Officer Commanding Charlie Company. Comrades said the young officer

was inspirational at all times, even when the weather or the mood

was grim. "He was a true leader for his men – always ready to stand shoulder-to-shoulder. He will be sorely missed," said Sgt Darren 'Daz' Joyce, Charlie Company's Fire Support Group Troop



Sergeant

Killed alongside him was 23year-old Mne David Marsh, originally from Sheffield, but more recently living in Taunton.

"David went through life with a smile on his face, which will continue through our beautiful daughter Molly. The Royal Marines were his passion and love. He will always be our hero," said

known



It's goodnight from them...

ALMOST a decade of testing the Navy's newest helicopter has finally come to an end with the formal decommissioning of its trials squadron.

Back in March 1998, the first personnel began to arrive at RNAS Culdrose to form 700M NAS, the Merlin Operational Evaluation Unit – ten years after the helicopter itself first flew.

Since that date, the squadron has operated around the world: torpedo and sonar trials and noise ranging were conducted in Scotland, electronic warfare and sonar tests were conducted near Stavanger in Norway, and, for the ultimate in testing submarine hunting capability, the AUTEC ranges in the Bahamas.

Some 150 personnel from 700M's past and present gathered in the squadron's hangar at Culdrose, joined by Rear Admiral Simon Charlier, the Chief-of-Staff Aviation.

For half a century, 700 in its various guises has been used to test and evaluate new aircraft entering service with the Fleet Air Arm – Wasps, Wessexes, Buccaneers, Phantoms, Sea Kings, Sea Harriers, Lynx and finally Merlin (hence the 'M' tagged on to the end of the squadron's title).

The squadron now disappears from the Fleet Air Arm order of battle - but not for too long. It will re-form when the next chapter begins in the Merlin story, the arrival of the Mk 3.



... and from them too

AFTER 31¹/₂ years of providing daily support for the ships and submarines of the Royal Navy, the Royal Maritime Auxiliary Service is no more.

The service's anchor-defaced Blue Ensign (pictured above) was hauled down on the salvage vessel Moorhen as the strains of the Last Post from Royal Marines buglers drifted across Portsmouth Naval Base.

RMAS, which was formed in 1976 from various harbour and port organisations, ran a large fleet of harbour vessels in Portsmouth, Devonport and Faslane - tugs, lighters, barges ind the li

For the past dozen years marine services have been overseen by Serco Denholm.

As of April 1, Serco took on a 15-year contract to manage all RN marine services, which meant the end for the RMAS as a distinct branch of the service.

A message of gratitude from the Oueen was read out to some of RMAS' 266 personnel gathered for a disbanding ceremony in Portsmouth.

"While this is a sad day as we say farewell to the RMAS, I know that the Roval Navy remains in good hands because those who today work with us will provide the same excellent service in a different guise," Portsmouth Naval Base Commander Cdre David Steel said.

He served with distinction in 45 Commando in Northern Ireland, then was attached to Fleet Protection Group RM in Faslane, before specialising as a 'tankie' - a heavy in 2006.
 "For David, the glass was always half full - regardless of conditions he remained positive. His smile appeared to be ever-present," said Maj Manning.

his widow Claire.

Mne Marsh affectionately as Crazy or Comedy



Travellers through time

BACK in September 2006, the Space Shuttle Atlantis lifted off for the international space station.

International space station. 'Crocodile hunter' Steve Irwin shuffled off this mortal coil after a run-in with a stingray. Diminuitive *Top Gear* presenter Richard Hammond almost joined him after crashing a high-speed car. And Tony Blair (remember him?) was still the UK's prime minister. All of which made the headlines

All of which made the headlines. The departure of HMS Enterprise barely measured on the Fleet Street Barely measured on the Fleet Street Richter scale, if it nudged it at all. But for the past 19 months the survey ship has been steadily going about her business in one of the longest deployments by one of Her Majesty's warships in decades. It's also been one of the most varied. The first chunk of the marathon tour of duty was devoured by the waters off

of duty was devoured by the waters off West Africa

The Devonport-based hydrographic vessel collected oceanographic and meteorological data off Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon to help update mariners' charts.

Many of the charts of these waters had not been updated since the mid-19th Century, with huge areas of charts blank or at best based on out-of-date and inadequate information.

Also inadequate, perhaps surprisingly given the traffic in these waters, are existing charts of the tip of the Arabian Gulf.

Enterprise's sister Echo began the task of updating the maps of the area off Iraq, particularly around the two oil platforms

Enterprise picked up where she left off, spending six months steaming up and down the northern Gulf and approaches to the Shatt al Arab and Khawr Abd Allah, Iraq's principal

waterway Not all the survey work has been conducted at sea. The expert hydrographers hopped ashore in The Gambia to help locals with a coastal survey

The ship also surveyed the approaches to Sierra Leone, conducted harbour surveys in Cameroon, and deep water studies around the Sevchelles

Although Enterprise herself has been away for

19 months, her ship's company have not.

At any one time roughly one third of her sailors are back in the UK on leave or on courses.

Such is the rotation system that only one officer who sailed with the ship in the autumn of 2006 was still on board (although not continuously) when Enterprise returned, Lt Ben Barrett.

He was met on the quayside by his wife Anna, whom he married last May. "In all, during this deployment I have been at sea nine months and have seen Anna for only three months during our short married life," he said.

snort marned life," he said. His Commanding Officer, Cdr Cameron Robertson, said the ship and her crew had shown a "positive, enterprising spirit" and made "a telling contribution to improving the navigational safety of maritime trade, all conducted in harsh operational nvironments.

"Perhaps most significantly, HMS Enterprise helped ensure the safety of waters surrounding Iraqi oil platforms in the Northern Arabian Gulf." environments.

Arabian Gulf." As one mammoth survey journey ended, another epic one began, HMS Echo set off from Devonport on a five-year (yes, you read correctly) odyssey away from British waters. She is heading out to the Far East initially, calling at Algiers and Malta before passing through Suez and arriving at Bangladesh, where as guests of the Bangladeshi Navy she will conduct a survey of the port of Chittagong. During her deployment – the longest of any RN ship in recent history – she will gather valuable information on the oceans of the world, which will be relayed back to the UK Hydrographic Office to improve sea and shoreline charts. Upon arrival in the Far East, she will take up station in the South China Sea, supporting

up station in the South China Sea, supporting the Five Powers Defence Agreement and using Singpore as her base for maintenance.

Although the ship will spend five years away from home, like Enterprise no such burden is expected of her sailors – she operates a threewatch rotation system with only 48 of her 72 personnel on board at sea.

• N-n-n-nineteen... The sky and sea are tinted gold as HMS Enterprise returns to Devonport on a fine April morning after 19 months away Pictures: LA(Phot) Steve Johncock, FRPU West

The fish is o

FOURTEEN years to the day after it all began, the blue and yellow pennant of fishery protection has been taken down from HMS Quorn.

Quorn (*pictured below inspecting a Belgian trawler*) and sister ship HMS Ledbury have left behind their other lives in the 'cod squad' to return to the minehunting fold, while the Navy's newest River-class Patrol Vessels take up the mantle of guardians of the nation's fisheries. HMS Quorn has notched up an impressive tally during her time within the Fishery Protection squadron – she has:

■ covered the entirety of the British Fishery limits

completed 1,097 boardings
 given 19 written and 44 verbal warnings

 detained eight foreign fishing vessels
 encountered the fishermen of 38 British and European ports.

Quorn's commanding officer, Lt Cdr Matt Bowden, said: "HMS Quorn's 14 years 'on Fish' has ensured a high degree of expertise for the boarding teams and the sea-boat crews who have worked alongside many fishing vessels, in varying material states and in weather conditions that are often far from ideal.

"Over the period, together with HMS Chiddingfold, Quorn has held the Soberton Trophy – awarded to a Hunt-class MCMV for excellence in fishery protection – on more occasions than any other unit."

And the famous blue and yellow pennant? Presented by the ship's company to the CO to mark the end of an era. And talking of fish... The most coveted prize

for sailors who ensure our fishing stocks are preserved now sits in the trophy cabinet of **HMS** Severn

The River-class patrol ship earned the Jersey Cup, awarded to Her Majesty's Ship which has contributed most to fishery protection in UK waters.

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Severn's boarding party conducted one inspection a day during 2007. They found more than 50 infringements of European fishing regulations, nine serious enough to warrant the trawler being detained. All that effort – and it's representative of the

All that effort – and it's representative of the constant commitment of the fishery protection squadron – guaranteed the Jersey Cup for Severn, a trophy she collected fittingly in St Helier, capital of Jersey. The island's governor, Lt Gen Andrew Ridgeway, handed over the cup to Severn's CO Lt Cdr Graham Lovatt, thanking the officer and his team for their enduring commitment to

and his team for their enduring commitment to fishery protection. "The award of the Jersey Cup is an

achievement that the entire ship's company have worked hard for and are truly proud of," said Lt Cdr Lovatt.

The visit to Jersey allowed Severn's men and women to show off their vessel to local school children and Sea Cadets, while the sailors were invited on tours of the various bunkers and underground facilities built by the Nazis during their five-year occupation of the island.

The trophy safely stowed aboard, the Portsmouth-based patrol ship departed St Helier... and resumed her fish duties.



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Wingless wonders

THERE seems to be a couple of themes running through the pages of this month's paper. One is the readiness of our lads

to don dodgy permed wigs and fake moustaches (see page 10 and pages 20-21). The other is to craft elaborate

costumes and leap off the flight deck into the oggin (see page 10). Not sure about the former, but there was certainly plenty of the latter as HMS Nottingham made her way home across the Atlantic.

We last featured the Portsmouthbased destroyer soaking up the sun in Rio. Thankfully, the fine weather persisted as she headed north – allowing the ship's company to dress up for a birdman competition.

Superman (he gets around a bit) was among the contestants, although his legendary ability to fly seemed to desert him... and the other competitors as well. No aviator or aviatrix managed a flight of more than two metres (7ft) off the destroyer's flight deck, despite

various ingenious contraptions. But ET 'Taff' Claridge obviously impressed the judges and took the birdman title – and earned a flight in Nottingham's Lynx as his prize.

The first landfall for Nottingham after her three-week slog across the Atlantic was Cape Verde (visited five months earlier in the opening days of the destroyer's deployment).

The return visit was relatively brief, but it did allow the ship to host local law enforcement the Service.

agencies and discuss security on

the high seas. A large chunk of the destroyer's South Atlantic deployment was spent keeping an eye on movements by sea – particularly relevant in the mid-Atlantic where illegal trafficking of drugs and

people is not unusual. The destroyer and her team demonstrated how they would inspect a suspicious vessel, laying on a mock boarding operation involving their Lynx, their RIB and their boarding party, and the Cape Verde Coastguard cutter Espedarte, which was successfully inspected.

Then it was back to sea to the familiar surroundings of Gib for a pit-stop before the final leg home. In precisely six months and three days away, Nottingham steamed more than 25,000 miles, visited three continents and five different countries (including four separate visits to Brazil)

Highlights of the deployment included the wildlife and scenery of South Georgia and Rio where the ship helped to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Portuguese Royal Court's arrival in Brazil.

"The ship and her people have done magnificently in the wide range of operations they have been asked to do over the last six months," said CO Cdr Andrew Price. "They have been a credit to

Bulwark leads task group

AMPHIBIOUS flagship HMS Bulwark led British naval involvement

AMPHIBIOUS hagship hivs bulwark led britsh have hivs/ver in the first Neptune Warrior war game of 2008. More than 30 units from the UK, Germany, France, Turkey, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Poland and the USA were involved in the exercise – a test of Allied prowess by land, sea and air in a complex political and military environment.

Bulwark's impressive command suite was taken over by minewarfare experts, who used the nerve centre to direct their group of warships.

The Devonport-based assault ship also hosted a group of VIPs from the Scottish Parliament.

With Neptune Warrior done, Bulwark is heading first for Belfast then across the Irish Sea to Liverpool for a range of official events.

She's due to return to Devonport in the middle of this month for a brief period of maintenance before deploying to the Baltic and

Eureka moments

IT'S half time and Manchester are more than a match for their bigger, more youthful counterparts.

Not a football score, but a statement of fact as destroyer HMS Manchester moves into the second half of her challenging deployment

escorting the American aircraft carrier USS Harry S Truman. The Portsmouth-based warship sailed in November after being afforded the rare privilege of joining a US carrier strike group – the most potent task force on the Seven Seas - on a high-profile deployment

to the Gulf region. Four months down the line, the Busy Bee – the ship takes her nickname from her industrious crest - has slotted in neatly alongside 7,000 American and Canadian sailors (the Canadian warship Charlottetown is also attached to the force).

"For the Royal Navy, Manchester has proved that a UK escort – even an 'old girl' like us – can integrate into a thoroughly modern carrier group and do much much more than just 'tag along'," said Lt Cdr Warren Lee, Manchester's weapon engineer officer. Indeed she can. At times Manchester has been given

charge of security in the skies, ensuring Harry S Truman's impressive air wing conducts its business safely, and has hosted an American command staff at short notice.

"There have been many late nights when it seemed we would never achieve everything, then someone, somewhere would have a 'eureka moment' – and suddenly another piece of equipment was up and running," Lt Cdr Lee added.

"The final – and most important – part of the success story has to be the sailors of the strike group. Without the drive to make things work and the ability to learn new procedures and take on new roles, the equipment would be worthless.

BALLISTIC missile submarine HMS Vengeance headed to waters off Skye for five weeks of intensive training before beginning the Navy's No.1 mission. The V-boat's Starboard Crew took the 17,000-ton submarine to the BUTEC test ranges and beyond for Index (Independent Exercise) and BOST (Basic Operational Sea Training) – tests which any SSBN must pass ahead of a deterrence patrol. Because the Trident missile system is American, so Vengeance (*pictured below by PO(Phot) Mez Merrill*) must go through a 'mini demonstration and shakedown operation' – ensuring its *raison d'être* is fully functioning.

ensuring its *raison d'être* is fully functioning. The starboard team – each SSBN has two crews so the

bombers can maintain constant patrols – took charge of

Vengeance just before Christmas. For the next three to four months, the deeps brought the

boat – and the whole ship's company – up to the highest state of readiness, culminating in the five weeks at sea, followed by the patrol itself. "Little is heard about the Navy's four SSBNs – by

definition, their mission does not appear in the limelight like other elements of the Armed Forces," said Cdr Andrew McKendrick, Vengeance's Starboard CO. "The fact that they rarely feature in the press is testament to the effectiveness of the patrols they conduct".

conduct."

Considerable work was carried out by the Manchester team during a two-week stand-down in Abu Dhabi. Four months of Atlantic, Mediterannean and Gulf weather had taken

their toll of the Type 42 The whole upper deck received a washing in fresh water to rid it of the sand which numerous storms had deposited.

Manchester's engineers got to grips with various tweaks and overhauls required. Before leaving Pompey in November, they had crammed three sea containers with spares and other provisions...

all of which were waiting for the destroyer when she arrived in the UAE port. All work and no play makes Jack if not dull, then probably a

bit fed up. So there were numerous sporting activities arranged by the ship's clubz, LPT Lou Clarke organised a football match against a British school (won 5-0), a round of golf

on the Abu Dhabi National (which recently hosted the European PGA tour), and a cricket match against the Emirates Palace Hotel (lost by five wickets). The ship also hosted an official reception once thoroughly

spruced up, with guests including former premier Sir John Major and soldiers from the ship's affiliated regiment, 1st Lancashire King's, who were taking a break from a tour of duty in Basra

Manchester will remain in the Gulf attached to the Truman group until the summer.

• Angel on our shoulders... (I-r) Aviation Ordnancemen Joshua Olaiz, Kyle Blevins and Joshua Smith watch their constant guardian, Olaiz, Kyle Blevins and Josriua Simin watch then Constant gut HMS Manchester, from the flight deck of USS Harry S Truman



Bomber's away

Back to the Bosphorus

THE latest stage of HMS Exeter's varied spring programme (she's already been to Monaco and Sevastopol), took her to the cusp

of Europe and Asia. Upon leaving the Crimea, the Portsmouth-based destroyer made for Istanbul - to pay her second visit in six months

Her ship's company took full advantage of Istanbul's fusion of cultures with visits to historicallyrich sights, such as the Hagia Sophia, Blue Mosque and Roman Cistern.

The Turkish Bath Houses provided an attraction for some, looking for a 'relaxing' way to experience the unique culture. Others visited the Grand

Bazaar, in search of gizzets or presents for friends and family. Istanbul also provided a platform for a ski trip to Katepe,

south west of the city. That afforded some of the sailors the chance to try their

hand at a new sport, or for others the opportunity to refresh an existing interest. The standard varied wildly but the experience was unanimously enjoyed. And in Istanbul itself, the ship

hosted an official reception and a commanding officer's lunch, while her ship's company enjoyed the generous local hospitality of the Turkish Navy and British Consulate.

Now back in Blighty, Exeter has been celebrating her 30th birthday (she's the oldest surface ship and sole survivor of the Falklands still in service).

She hosted a dinner for former COs - an array of admirals, commodores, captains and commanders – and then took nine of them to sea as well as numerous affiliates: veterans of the WW2 Exeter (of Battle of the River Plate fame), RNA and RMA members, and staff from Exeter University and Exeter College, Oxford.

Birthday celebrations would not be complete without the families who have supported the ship – particularly in the past hectic 12 months – so a families' day around the Isle of Wight brought the 30th anniversary events to a close.

More Daring times at sea

BRITAIN'S most complex surface ship has returned to sea as HMS Daring undergoes a second series of extensive tests and trials. The Type 45 destroyer

exceeded expectations on her initial sea trials last summer. Those tests principally focused

on Daring's handling and her engineering. As well as her outstanding

manoeuvrability for a cruisersized warship, what impressed about the ship was her low fuel consumption rate - a quarter of that which would be consumed by an existing Type 42 destroyer. Once they were completed the 7,350-ton warship returned to BAE Systems' Scotstoun yard for

further fitting out. Now she's coming to the end

of five more weeks of trials in the waters of western Scotland this time testing some of her electronic and mechanical range radar and medium calibre guns, as well as to align various weapon systems and conduct endurance trials.

"Daring has already proved that she is a force to be reckoned with following her excellent performance last summer," said Vic Emery, head of BAE's surface fleet division.

"She's already exceeded many expectations and I hope that this set of trials will be an opportunity to build on that."

The ship will officially have her commanding officer, Capt Paul Bennett, shortly (her engineering officer Cdr David Shutts has been in charge of the vessel from since before her launch) and is due to hoist the White Ensign for the first time before the year's end.

"It's been a good deployment – but like most

of the Navy it was hard work." Jamie and his 180 shipmates had, said Cdr Pritchard, "met every demand made of them with resilience, commitment and a huge level of professionalism.

"They – and our friends and family who have supported them in their absence – can all be very proud of the effect of the deployment

- not least in support of the Iraqi people." After leave Argyll's ship's company have been conducting training around the UK and are preparing to bring their frigate to Portsmouth

for Meet Your Navy at the end of July. Meanwhile, heading in the opposite direction... HMS Montrose is taking over some of Argyll's duties (HMS Campbeltown is actually in the northern Gulf at present).

Unfortunately she timed her departure with the very worst of the winter storms. The sea state was six to seven as she left

Devonport. And then it got worse. The Bay of Biscay was particularly unforgiving on ship and sailors, the latter were left feeling rather green.

Thankfully, the storms eventually abated and Montrose entered the Mediterranean... where there were some man-made storms in

store The mobile Flag Officer Sea Training team flew on board to cause mayhem and ensure that the 180 sailors aboard the frigate were at

Argyll handed over duties to Montrose near Malta as she made a bee-line for Devonport, and then it was on to Crete for the Scottish warship for a brief visit, before making for Suez.

Passage from Soudha Bay to Egypt permitted some live firing exercises, notably the dropping of a depth charge by Montrose's Lynx - an impressive sight watched by many of the ship's company on the upper deck – followed by defensive flares dispensed to throw off any heat-seeking missiles.

The ship is now through the fabled canal which links the Mediterranean with the Red Sea and the world beyond and is conducting maritime security patrols searching for pirates, terrorists, drug traffickers, smugglers and other criminals using the high seas.

Also heading east of Suez is HMS Chatham, which blasted two aerial drones out of the sky in a final test of her Seawolf missiles in the Channel before making for Gibraltar.

She should be somewhere around Crete by the time you read this, conducting specialist

trials of her kit before heading east of Suez. "This is a long deployment and there will be times when it is hard on us and our families," said Chatham's Commanding Officer Cdr Martin Connell.

"But we also know that we are sailing to conduct one of the most important missions the Royal Navy is currently undertaking." Ship of the month, page 16

'Good but hard work'



NAVY NEWS, MAY 2008 7

GLOBAL REACH

I spy with my little eye, something beginning with S... HMS Southampton attempts to ram a hunter-killer submarine

Hunters and the hunted

BEARING down on the periscope of a submarine, this is HMS Southampton charging at a

Perisher student. The Type 42 destroyer was the prey of an attack submarine (we can't tell you which one for operational reasons) – but the Saint wasn't simply going to sit back and be torpedoed. So when the tell-tale sight of a periscope appeared on the

surface off the Scottish coast, Southampton immediately headed for it.

The submarine was hosting potential boat COs and XOs of the future during one of the practical phases of Perisher, the legendary course designed to test a future submariner commander's mettle

The boat and her students weren't the only deeps around however.

"Southampton's XO and EWO are both ex-submariners so the training presented them with the ideal opportunity to regale all – again – with their tales of underwater adventure, said Lt Cdr Alastair Macdonald, Southampton's weapon engineer officer

"On this occasion, the rest of the ship's company were able to see for themselves the truly exceptional capability of a submarine.

"Having had a 'fix' of submarine training, hopefully the XO's and EWO's submarine dits will abate for a brief period." Southampton visits Cardiff, page 22

Double delight in Merseyside

NOT one but two RN warships could be found in Liverpool over the first weekend in April. Frigate HMS Portland and fishery protection ship HMS

Mersey both berthed at the city's cruise liner terminal for a

four-day stay. Both hosted local children and VIPs – Mersey is affiliated with nearby Sefton Borough. Sea Cadets from the City of Liverace unit filed up

of Liverpool unit filed up Portland's brow, while 20 cadets from Bebington toured

Mersey. And while Mersey's sailors were litter picking with council workers in Sefton's North Park, Portland's football team grappled with Valentine's Over The Hill Mob at Aintree.

That very same weekend on ne other side of the Pennines, HMS Northumberland was paying her first visit to Tyneside in 14 months.

Northumberland was in the North East to receive the freedom of Castle Morpeth, with almost half the ship's company parading through the town's streets led by Morpeth Pipe Band.

Whilst in Morpeth, the sailors presided over the launch of the town's kayak club, celebrated by a six-a-side water polo match between the ship's company and locals.

The rest of the spring for the Devonport-based frigate will be devoured by operational sea training ahead of a sixmonth deployment beginning in September.

(see page 11) on the South Atlantic station. The operational theatre, however, stretches across the great ocean to West Africa, and also northwards to the Caribbean – part of Liverpool's deployment will be spent tackling drug runners.

Port visits will be spread across three continents, with stops in Portugal, Brazil, South Africa, Angola, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Senegal all lined up. The core of the deployment will be spent around the

Falklands.



"Argyll is a very good ship to serve in," enthused 19-year-old ET Jamie Annis. the very top of their game. **Fornado strikes Liverpool**

THERE was a loud roar over Portsmouth on an otherwise fairly drab April day as HMS Liverpool headed south.

A CROWD more than twice the size

of the ship's company gathered

on a fine spring morn in Devon to

welcome HMS Argyll home from

Some 500 friends and family were waiting

It was, Cdr Pritchard said, "a fantastic

He continued: "It matches the unwavering

support from those at home while we have

been away. "Sometimes six months can seem like a long

time away. But when we know we have this

backing many hundreds of miles away, it all

was, if not high profile, then at least highly

visible, with the ship steaming in the confined

waters around Iraq's oil platforms. Her RN/

RM boarding parties implemented many of the lessons from last year's HMS Cornwall

And much of Argyll's six-month deployment

was classified... but she did spent 52 days continuously at sea between January and

Much of Argyll's six-month deployment

on the jetty to cheer the frigate at the end of

what her CO Cdr Gavin Pritchard described

as an "intensive" tour of duty.

helps morale on board."

the Gulf.

welcome home"

incident.

March

of port at the beginning of a seven-month deployment. The RAF jet from 12 Sqn in Lossiemouth, Liverpool's affiliated air force unit, was nearby on a training mission and couldn't resist flying over (it's hidden in the Portsmouth

As for the ship, she's taking over from HMS Nottingham

A Tornado 'serenaded' the veteran Type 42 destroyer out

murk, sadly, in this photograph by LA(Phot) Caroline Davies of the destroyer's departure).

An explosive combination

AMID the waters of northern Europe, a small team of minehunters under British lead have been carrying out sterling work, ridding the seas of the dangerous remnants of

World Wars 1 and 2. HMS Roebuck is the command ship for the four international mine-hunters and minesweepers that make up Standing NATO Mine Counter Measures Group 1 – reduced to the slightly more palatable SNMCMG1. British MCMV HMS Hurworth

British MCMV HMS Hurworth has been joined by the Latvian LNVS Imanta, the German FGS Weilheim and the Belgian BNS Primula.

Since the current group assem-bled in Germany, the units have been involved in a number of multi-national exercises and operations, culminating in the clearance operations which resulted in the destruction of ten WW1 and WW2 mines as well as the rescue of one injured yachtsman.

The German Weilheim was work-ing with a Dutch minehunter HNLMS Schiedam when a mayday call came

schiedam when a mayoay call can in from the Waikiki. The European ships sent a par-amedic over to the 37-foot sailing vessel to help the injured man, who was later winched to safety by an RAF search and rescue ballcopter

by an RAF search and rescue helicopter. SNMCMG1 is one of the four Standing Maritime Groups under the NATO aegis, and later this year will form part of the NATO Reaction Force (NRF) – the quick-response maritime force (although offering no defence against a flood of acronyms – Ed). The minehunters have spent the first part of their deployment charged with clearing mines around the cold waters of northern Europe, with the month of May taking them into the



¥35

Baltic. Here the ships will continue with their role of locating, identifying and clearing the historic ordnance of earlier wars, although they are primarily set up for operations against modern buoyant and ground mines.

ground mines. Over the course of the year it is expected that the minehunting force will visit 30 ports in 14 dif-ferent NATO or partner countries, including the warmer waters of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic.

Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Cdr Chris Davies took over command of the NATO group in January this year, and his staff of 11 are embedded in the Group's flagship HMS Roebuck. Initial port visits featured the some-what local highlights of Belfast and Glasgow, but the Group has acknowl-edged its international flavour with stops at Stavanger in Norway, Frederikshavn, Aalborg and Aarhus in Denmark, Den Helder in the Netherlands, and Wilhelmshaven in Germany.

Netherlands, and Wilhelmshaven in Germany. Later this year the MCM group will take part in NATO exercise Loyal Mariner 2008, off the Spanish Coast in June, bringing together numerous ships, aircraft and submarines in a joint ercise





Zest for life

THE remote island of Tristan da Cunha in the midst of the South Atlantic Ocean enjoyed a massive influx of military personnel when sailors, soldiers and airmen arrived at its shores to repair the island's damaged main harbour.

Landing ship RFA Lyme Bay carried more than just men and women out to the remote island, she bore 400 tonnes of cement from the UK to mix with the islanders' own ready supply of crushed volcanic rock to make the concrete to rebuild the harbour. Operation Zest was despatched with provide the inland

Operation Zest was despatched with speed to the island in early February to shore up the island with emergency repairs before winter weather could bring all possibility of work to a halt.

Tasks included reinforcing the western breakwater with a large concrete slab, construction of a 20m wave wall, replacing the 'nib' – a short outcrop in the harbour used to shelter boats and a dredging platform, and repairing a void in the quay wall. Once the Task Force arrived in

Once the Task Force arrived in early March they began the work of rebuilding the harbour, under the command of Naval officer Capt Paddy McAlpine.

The small island's population boomed from its customary 270 with the arrival of the 150-strong team of men and women from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary 17 Port and Maritime Regiment Royal Logistics Corps, 34 Field Squadron (Air Support) Royal Engineers, and medics, both reservist and regular.

The Bay-class Royal Fleet Auxiliary offered an unparalleled platform for the essential work on the island, offering accommodation, storage, dock, cranes and communications.

Cock, cranes and communications. Expertise in shifting heavy equipment from ship to shore came in the form of the 17 Port and Maritime

Detachment. And the Royal Engineers are justly famed for their ability to take on almost any construction task. As winter in the southern hemisphere drew on, conditions became tougher for the military teams working on the island, and even though the work was completed by March 25, poor weather delayed the recovery of the final people and equipment for several days

equipment for several days. Work complete, Lyme Bay headed to South Africa's Cape Town where the majority of the Op Zest task force personnel boarded aircraft to return by the quick route to the UK. Capt McAlpine said: "Op Zest has been a complete success.

been a complete success. "It was a small, unique, classically joint operation. Five comparatively disparate groupings – a squadron of Royal Engineers, a brand new Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel, medics from across the Armed Forces, a 17 Port and Maritime Detachment and a command team from Fleet – quickly gelled into a cohesive team that worked effectively to complete the mission in 11 weeks.

mission in 11 weeks. "It has been a very rare privilege to work with and live alongside the Tristanians and our memories of their hospitality and their island will linger long in our minds."

The island is a UK overseas territory, and a dependency of St Helena, which lies 1,350 nautical miles to the north.

David Morley, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office appointed Island Administrator, said: "The work that the Joint Task Force has carried out has saved our harbour, and we are incredibly grateful.

incredibly grateful. "Not only have they worked long and hard hours without a complaint, they have created a real bond with the community who have taken them to their heart.

"Tristan Islanders have long memories and the wonderful relationship created between them and the Op Zest Joint Task Force will remain for years."



New Saab 9-3 Saloon range: Urban – from 16.7 (16.9) to 39.2 (7.2), Extra-urban – from 39.2 (7.2) to 64.2 (4.4), Combined – from 26.2 (10.8) to 52.3 (5.4). CO2 Emissions from 147 to 259g/km. New Saab 9-3 Convertible range: Urban – from 16.3 (17.3) to 36.7 (7.7), Extra-urban – from 36.7 (7.7) to 60.1 (4.7), Combined – from 25.4 (11.1) to 48.7 (5.8). CO2 Emissions from 154 to 266g/km. Model shown is Saloon Aero 1.9TTiD OTR £26.470 with optional ALU73 18" 10 spoke alloy wheels at £800. Military discounts are available to all serving members of UK Armed Forces, retired service personnel, MOD civilian personnel and HM Forces Reservists. The offer is also extended to the spouse/partner of the eligible applicant. No other marketing programmes apply. * New 9-3 Convertible Aero 1.9TTiD (180PS) auto.

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The good shepherd

THE youngest destroyer in Britain's military inventory (we're not counting the Type 45s yet as they're not operational) celebrated a milestone as she safeguarded HMS Illustrious 3,000 miles from home

The ship's company of HMS Edinburgh marked the Type 42's 25th birthday in the Gulf of Oman with a hands to bathe, sail past (by Edinburgh's RIB), and the parade of a brightly-coloured '25' banner

The Fortress of the Sea was launched in April 1983 at Cammell Laird's yard in Birkenhead and commissioned two years later. A quarter of a century later, the destroyer is Illustrious' guardian against possible air attack during the Orion 08 deployment (see

pages 23-26 for more details). Lusty turns for home this month, but not Edinburgh. She won't be back in Portsmouth until August after seven months.

So where is she going for the remainder of her deployment? Well, we're glad you asked... She's steaming east to Singapore and the Malay Peninsula to represent the UK at the Bersama Shield war games, regularly held by Commonwealth navies in the region. The voyage east will also permit her to pay her respects over the wrecks of HMS Prince of Wales and Repulse, sunk by the Japanese

in the opening days of the Pacific War. Taking part in Bersama Shield is not the sole 'breakaway' by

Edinburgh. She left Lusty briefly in March to bolster Combined Task Force 150, the Allied group of warships who patrol a vast area – the Gulfs of Aden and Oman, the Arabian Sea, Red Sea and the Indian Ocean - in search of pirates, terrorists, people- and drugtraffickers and other criminals.

And then she was back again at Illustrious' side, maintaining her watch of eternal vigilance.

With fairly lengthy spells between port visits (upwards of 30 days, no mean feat for a venerable Type 42), the ship's company have had to let their hair down at sea.

And that's something the RN's very good at. The fun committee aboard Edinburgh are (perhaps unsurprisingly) the POs' mess, who set about arranging a 'fish and chips night' (possibly with a fair bit of input from the galley...). Fish and chips would not, of course, be complete without curry sauce, pies and, for Edinburgh's Scottish contingent, battered sausages.

Suitably satiated, the sailors headed for the flight deck to belt out the hits with an evening of karaoke.



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Birdman, Batman and Borat

NOT three names you typically see in close proximity - and most definitely not in these pages. Until now.

All three could be found aboard Her Majesty's Ship Westminster one fine day in the Gulf of Aden. And Wonder Woman. And

And Wonder Woman. And Superman. Bananaman too. We have the petty officers' mess on the Type 23 frigate to thank for encouraging such a glittering array of superheroes to muster on the flight deck after organising a birdman contest. Some took Some took it seriously: PO(ACMN) Taff Davies – aka The Red Baron – went to

great lengths with his small red aircraft. Some didn't: a bloke wearing dodgy permed wig (worryingly a recurring theme this month...), fake 'tache, fake

hairy chest and a green sling bikini à *la* Borat really doesn't possess great aerodynamic properties And some really have too much time on their hands: POLOGS(SC) Robbie

Robertson clinched the birdman title... dressed as a birdman (covered from tip to toe in feathers, plus webbed feet – actually black rubber gloves).

gioves). "The amount of work some people put into their designs was incredible," said organiser PO John Hocking. "It was good to see everyone having fun." Now we don't want to give the impression that Westminster's ship's company enjov dressing up...

enjoy dressing up... ... But not long afterwards they were in fancy dress again as the frigate crossed the Equator.

So enter King Neptune (EWO WO1 Mark Hannibal), Queen Neptune (CPOET(WE) Pete Bolton) and baby Prince Neptune (CPOET(WE) Dave Haw) to preside over the Crossing the Line ceremony. No-one who had not sailed

over the Equator before was exempt from a ducking in the CO Cdr Ken Houlberg. There has been, of course, considerable work alongside

the play. The bulk of the ship's Orion

08 deployment is devoted to maritime security operations and – currently – anti-submarine exercises off India, Konkan. But enough of the serious stuff. Let's get back to the fun...

Westminster put into the Seychelles for a weekend, offering some amazing diving opportunities for the ship's company and football, rugby and cricket matches against local

opposition. And what would a trip east of Suez be without a spot of

skiing. Before joining Konkan off India, Westminster spent several days in Dubai for

her mid-deployment stand-off. The engineers got to grips with a few small problems which needed sorting, the logisticians carried fresh stores aboard and after three months away, Westminster received a fresh lick of paint on her hull.

There was a fair slice of downtime too – and there's probably nowhere better in the Gulf than Dubai to enjoy it. Some sailors headed to the

shopping centres, some popped along the coast to Abu Dhabi to watch the Red Bull air race, some headed into the desert to go dune buggy racing, some headed to the imposing Ski Dubai venue, and some went hash running (nothing to do with drugs, you will be pleased to hear, but a race involving running and drinking - not necessarily in

that order...). And sometimes you need to go no farther than your own mess to have some fun. Forces favourite Jim Davidson

came aboard the ship to raise a chortle, dining with the CO and visiting every mess to entertain the lads and lasses. He also invited Westminster's golfers to play a round on his local course (the comedian lives in Dubai).

Jack Tarred... PO Robbie Robertson flies to victory in the birdman contes





• ... and now the masters of flight show how it's done as Westminster's Merlin lifts off for another sortie





Corps values time with Ark

BROWN camouflage uniforms, high and tight haircuts and the American brogue could mean only one thing. Yes, HMS Ark Royal had arrived in the United

Yes, HMS Ark Royal had arrived in the United States and the US Marine Corps were aboard. With the snow and ice of Norway and Exercise Armatura Borealis in the past, the only chill now was from the shadow of USS George Washington, which

was berthed on the jetty opposite.
Ark was alongside in Norfolk Naval Base in Virginia
a dozen times larger than Pompey and six times bigger than Devonport – to begin loading US Navy and Marine Corps personnel and their equipment for Exercise Constant Alliance and acquainting them with unfamiliar surroundings.
As the carrier crossed the Atlantic, her sailors were

As the carrier crossed the Atlantic, her sailors were briefed on American terminology and exactly what all those stripes on their sleeves meant.

However, on that first day there were still a few puzzled faces: Is that a master gunnery sergeant ... or is it a first sergeant?

That was only the start of it: the USMC troops, 138 men of I Company 3/8 Marines, normally based at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, filed aboard and quickly settled down in their messes or 'staterooms'

as they prefer to call them. And now to sea. Ark was given command of a small task force off the Eastern Seaboard: cruiser USS Normandy and Arleigh Burke destroyer USS Mitscher.

Next came the helicopters: CH-46E Sea Knights (a mini Chinook) and MH-60S Knighthawks (the latest naval version of the legendary Blackhawk). The Sea Knights perform the same role as our

Junglie Sea Kings, while the Knighthawks act as combat search and rescue aircraft. Activity on the flight deck was frenetic as the

squadron pilots undertook a series of day and night deck landings to become qualified to operate from Ark. "Working with a variety of aircraft that were

unfamiliar with our aviation practices was both challenging and very, very satisfying," said Ark's Lt Damian Shields.

"It went like clockwork due to the support of a lot of brass and well-oiled wheels." Suitably acquainted with Ark, the fliers could move

on to the key part of Constant Alliance: restoring order in a fictional land plagued by a terrorist bombing campaign and pressure from neighbouring nations. The force faced numerous tests throughout the

exercise from remote-controlled fast inshore attack craft to F16s overhead. The tacticians and planners now started to earn

their money as the terrorists were tracked and conventional forces monitored.

It was also time to introduce the USMC to defence watches, carefully explaining to them the delight of having curry for breakfast.

But not for too long: they were soon deployed ashore to monitor the insurgents.

Which they did successfully before being brought back aboard Ark for Operation Dry Out: hot food and drinks handed out by the ship's company, while the marines exchanged damp clothes for dry overalls.

The 'media' reported the success of this initial raid, including a daily TV news bulletin produced by the young officers on board. As the tempo of operations increased and the

terrorists ashore appeared to be on the back foot, further reconnaissance missions were carried out before the main air assault was launched, depositing the entire company in the Camp Lejeune training area.

While the US Marines were enjoying life aboard a British warship, 69 of Ark's sailors hopped across to the Normandy for a day. "The crew of Normandy were glad to see us,

"The crew of Normandy were glad to see us, allowed us free rein of the ship and were happy to answer any question thrown at them, no matter how trivial or dumb," said POMEA Lane. "As far as I was concerned they destroyed any

"As far as I was concerned they destroyed any negative preconceptions I had about our American cousins. It was also reassuring to know that even though different ensigns fly from the quarterdeck, there isn't that much difference between us – apart from being dry ships of course."

As for Ark's command team, they too enjoyed the opportunity to work side-by-side with the Americans.

"It proved to be a most successful ten days, where achievements were reached beyond expectations," enthused Lt Col Mark Searight RM, Ark's Amphibious Operations Officer. "The amphibious role of HMS Ark Royal was tried

and tested and for the majority of I Coy 3/8, their first taste of amphibious training was on board a British carrier."

Ark's CO Capt Mike Mansergh added: "We have proved that we can operate in any environment as part of a multi-national force.

"Every exercise brings new challenges that cause us to raise the level of our game, personally and as a team.

"Constant Alliance provided us with an opportunity to show just how capable we are in the commando carrier role."

"The training value of the exercise far exceeded initial expectations and we are now very much looking forward to returning to work with US Forces during the major Joint Task Force Exercise this summer."

Indeed, Ark will be in these same waters in July for JTFX (Joint Task Force Exercise), run by the Americans.

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Where heroes once stepped

THE annual Achnacarry Commando Memorial Špeed March attracted competitors from across the Corps and the Army. The march replicates the route taken by the original commandos who were trained at Achnacarry in the 1940s.

On arrival at the station in Spean Bridge, recruits would be given 36lbs of equipment to carry and told they had 60 minutes to cover the seven miles

to Achnacarry. After that, the gates would be closed and anybody outside the camp would be returned to their parent unit having failed the initial entry criterion for

commando training. Given the challenging terrain and invariably inclement Scottish weather, it was no mean feat especially when you consider the fact that the men wore hobnail boots and ill-fitting webbing.

Around 200 competitors arrived at the isolated station in heavy rain for the 2008 race, including a team from Scotland's present-day commando unit, 45 based in Arbroath.

Among the runners for 45 Commando was Lt Harvie Montgomery RN, the unit's education officer.

Coming to the end of his spell at RM Condor, the green-bereted naval officer was determined to run the speed march – a personal crusade as his grandfather trained at Achnacarry before serving with the Royals in Normandy as a dispatch rider on D-Day. "The history attached to the

event certainly struck a chord with all the runners, and it was a humbling sight to see some former commandos who were part of those initially trained at Achnacarry present and walking the route," said Lt Montgomery.

The march begins with a 1¹/₂-mile climb up a "fairly cheeky" hill to the Commando Memorial. The march then descends past the various lochs which were used for the amphibious phases of original commando training.

The undulating route eventually arrives at the gates to Achnacarry Castle, with one more climb and just under a mile to go

to the finishing line. We'd love to tell you that the Royals won the march... but sadly the men with maroon caps seemed to be celebrating at the end.

Lt Montgomery upheld his family's proud tradition, crossing the line on 51m 29s – enough to claim an impressive third place overall.





THERE are 600 extra men in 3 Commando Brigade today - but they are not Royal Marines.

1 Battalion The Rifles, part of the Army's largest regiment, will provide Plymouth-based 3 Commando Brigade with what it calls 'a fourth manoeuvre unit' basically extra bodies on the ground to expand what it can do. 1 Rifles, located in Chepstow, are not commandos nor are they

commando trained – although its infantrymen can volunteer to take the All Arms Commando Course at Lympstone to earn their green berets. As part of 3 Commando Brigade, the soldiers do wear the distinctive commando dagger.

The Rifles – the modern-day successor to the regiment made famous by Sean Bean's Sharpe are currently in Belize undergoing jungle training. Over the next two years their

training will become increasingly

specialised to attune them to the Royal Marines' amphibious role. Maj Ben Tomkins, 1 Rifles Second-in-Command, added: "Our guys can see the benefits straight away – they get to learn new skills and they also have the

opportunity of going to new places usually only used by the Navy." 1 Rifles will bring extra firepower – a mortar platoon – extra mobility – Mastiff vehicles extra snipers and will provide additional 'mentors' for working

with the Afghan National Army when the brigade deploys to Helmand in the autumn as part of Britain's ongoing battle against the Taleban.

Until taking 1 Rifles under its wing, 3 Commando Brigade comprised three battalion-sized fighting formations, 40, 42 and 45 Commandos, plus supporting commando artillery, engineers, logisticians, signals troops and

HQ staff. "1 Rifles are not commando trained at the moment, but there are many constituent parts of the brigade that aren't necessarily all commando trained," said 3 Cdo Bde's Commanding Officer Brig David Capewell. "We will find demanding work." That "interesting and

That demanding work" attracted some of the men to 1 Rifles.

"Hopefully we'll get to go on the old big ships and have exercises that are a little bit different to what we're used to and a bit more out of reach, such as Norway, and a few farther reaches which we have not done," said Sgt Lee French.

Sgt Paul Jones added: "The lads are all geared up to join 3 Commando Brigade. The Marines have a great reputation and I can't wait to work alongside them, especially when we go to

Afghanistan later this year." 1 Rifles spent six weeks in Belize on jungle training ahead of ieir final a six-da

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ON

Tropical Storm, to challenge every man from the most junior rifleman to their CO.

That exercise enjoyed added realism thanks to Deployed Tactical Engagement Simulation...

or, put simply, lasers. Yes, think *Tin Can Alley* for the 21st Century: rifles equipped with lasers which replicate the trajectory of a bullet, while sensors on the 'enemy' will record whether the soldier has been killed or wounded.

The wizardry also 'tags' each soldier, sending back details of his position to those in control of the exercise.

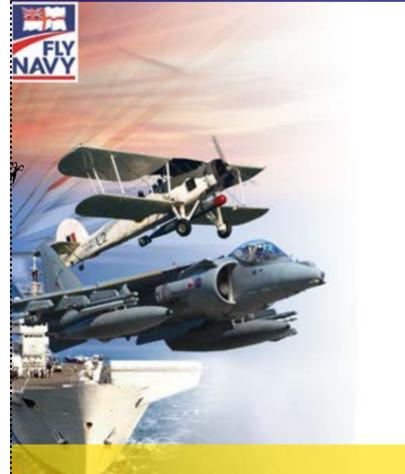
Such hi-tech kit is all very well and good, but fighting in the jungle is principally about physical endurance, coupled with first-rate navigational skills.

"The Belize jungle is a complex, arduous, physical environment with energy-sapping heat, teeming humidity and horrendous hills where mistakes with navigation can have disastrous consequences," explained Lt Col Peter Germain, in charge of the British Army Training Support Unit Belize. "If you can operate in the jungle,

you can operate anywhere. "Training in Belize is not all jungle-focussed – any unit sent out to this part of Central America will also find rocky pine savannah and hilly grassland, not dissimilar to parts of Wales or Scotland but significantly warmer.³

With thanks to Sgt Baz Shaw, 3 do Rde







May God bless all who 'seil on her..

ABSEILING down the hull of Britain's newest superliner, green berets Alistair Burton and Carl Thurgood make a dramatic entry at the naming ceremony of the Ventura.

The Royals jumped off the bridge of the 16,000-tonne queen of the seas, scurried down the side, then christened the liner by smashing champagne bottles in front of 1,500 VIPs in Southampton.

The last time there was a high-profile ship naming ceremony, the Duchess of Cornwall pressed a button, a bottle of champagne hurtled towards the hull of the Queen Victoria and ... it promptly bounced off it.

Well, we couldn't have a repeat of that, could we?

Now you could:

1. Use cava (the bubbles are bigger) . Score the bottle

3. Give it a bloody good shake beforehand 4. Smash it against the thickest part of the

hull

Or you could:

1. Get the Commando Display Team to abseil down the side of the ship and wallop the champers bottle against it.

The first option is, of course, easier. But the second is a damned sight more exciting. You cannot command the *Royal* Marines unless you have a Royal.

Enter Dame Helen Mirren, who bagged

an Oscar last year for her portrayal of Her Majesty. The actress was chosen by P&O to be Ventura's 'godmother'; she ordered the Royals from RNAS Yeovilton to carry out their 'Man from Milk Tray' mission.

"It's been quite different – quite different indeed from our time in Afghanistan," said Capt Rod Yapp, in charge of the display team. "It's also been quite daunting being in front of the world's press and dealing with so much media attention."

Suitably bathed in champers – with all the good luck that it brings - Ventura has now set off on her maiden voyage. Fully loaded, she can carry more than 3,500 passengers, and one third as many crew to cater for their needs.



• Clyde's sailors tidy up the memorial to HMS Coventry on Pebble

Echoes of heroes

AFTER completing the first major rotation of her sailors and an intensive period of operational training, the crew of Falkland Islands' patrol vessel HMS Clyde took some time out for reflection.

This month sees the 26th anniversary of the bitter battle for San Carlos Water for which the RN paid

heavily. A memorial overlooks these now peaceful waters, remembering the sacrifices made by Type 21 frigates

defence of the amphibious landings: HMS Ardent and Antelope were both lost to Argentine air

power that fateful May. And so it was that a quarter of a century later, sailors from HMS Clyde ascended

Campito to polish and tidy up the frigates' monument. Despite the at times harsh Falklands climate, the memorial remains in surprisingly good condition – as does that honouring

HMS Coventry. The Type 42 destroyer was bombed and sank in less than half an hour on May 25 after a day of sustained enemy attacks.

Her monument stands on nearby Pebble Island, another remote spot in the Falklands.

The visit to Coventry's cenotaph proved particularly poignant for Clyde's Coxswain, PO Simon Scott-Munden whose

fiancée's uncle, AB(EW) Adrian Sunderland, was lost on the destroyer.

"One of my aims whilst in the Falklands was to visit the memorial on behalf of my fiancée and her family, his memory both at home and in the Falklands will never be forgotten," said

Simon. Clyde herself has been patrolling some of the 200 islands which make up the Falklands and their extensive coastline.

The patrol vessel has also been working with the Army Roulement Infantry Company and Royal Air Force on exercise in San Carlos.

The exercise the warship covertly insert and extract elements of C Company, 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment using her Rigid Raider craft on the very beaches where the landings were made in 1982

made in 1982. "Both memorials remain in excellent condition and Clyde will visit them both again in the coming months," said Clyde's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr

Jonathan Lett. "Few of my crew are old enough to remember the Falklands War, so these visits are an excellent way of both identifying lessons from the past and remembering those of the Naval Service who made the ultimate sacrifice in 1982.

The Massed Bands of

HM Royal Marines

complete with Corps of Drums and fanfare

on the Ocean Wave, Sarie Marais and other marches. Plus the Band of HM Royal Marines School of Music in concert with further bugle marches and several well

Royal visitors in the West Country

WHILE one fictional queen was giving orders to Royal Marines, the true monarch was in Dartmouth inspecting the naval leaders of tomorrow.

The Queen was the guest of honour for the most prestigious of the six parades held at Britannia Royal Naval College, Lord High Admiral's Divisions.

There were 400 young officers marching before their Queen, some passing out of Dartmouth, others still undergoing their training at BRNC. And taking part for the first

time were two platoons of rating recruits from HMS Raleigh who had completed their nine-week

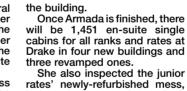
initial training course. They were inspected by the Duke of Edinburgh.

Her Majesty presented prizes to a variety of young officers in recognition of their outstanding performance during training, including 26-year-old Lt Gemma Britton, who earned the Queen's Binoculars.

Once the parade was over, the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh attended a celebratory reception for the officer cadets who had completed training and their families, then were guests of honour at a lunch party attended by the college community. It's been a decade since the Queen, Lord High Admiral of the RN, last attended her own divisions; in absentia, she can nominate a member of her family or a senior member of the Armed Forces to take the salute

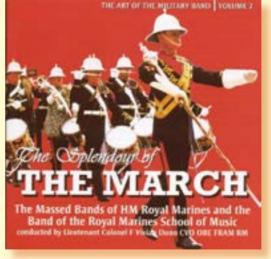
on her behalf. Further west, the Princess Royal was in Devonport to open the latest part of the multimillion-pound Armada project, which is replacing HMS Drake's 60s and 70s accommodation with 21st-Century single cabins. The newest block at Drake

to be inhabited, Cornwell VC, named after the Jutland hero, and some of its inhabitants met Princess Anne during a tour of



rates' newly-refurbished mess, before moving on to have a look at the new Maritime Composite Training System.

The hi-tech simulator, which recreates an operations room, is used to teach trainee and experienced warfare operators the art of fighting a high-tech war.



known marches. Spine tingling stuff! Compact Disc £12.00 incl p+p (worldwide) Make cheques payable to Eastney Collection - most major credit cards also accepted Eastney Collection, 60 Mayford Road, London SW12 8SN Tel: +44-(0)208-673-6157; Fax: +44-(0)207-772-9545; Email: eastneycol@aol.com

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• The Princess Royal shares a joke with Devonport Naval Base Commander Cdre Simon Lister and several female ratings

Picture: LA(Phot) Steve Johncock, FRPU West

trumpets in an historic live performance recording from the Royal Tournament at London's Earls Court arena, featuring fanfares, drum beatings, a 200 strong massed band on the march and including Sunset - played by 80 buglers - Rule Britannia, The National Anthem, A Life

SALES (

OU'VE got to hand it to the Americans.

Everything they do is bigger. Big steaks. Big hats. Big business. Big

Everything they do is bigger. Big steaks. Big hats. Big business. Big buildings. Big navy. A big navy needs a big playground. Submariners take their boats down to AUTEC, the Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Centre, 600 square miles of ocean in the Bahamas carved out of coral reef. It's pretty much devoid of other shipping. And the weather's nice. Bigger, of course, is not necessarily better... The Yanks have AUTEC. We've got BUTEC, the British Underwater Test and Evaluation Centre. It's not big – squeezed between the Isles of Skye, Raasay and the Highlands, the main range is just a mile long – it's home to quite a few fishing vessels (they are, of course, warned that submarines are operating) and most definitely not blessed by clement weather. But here every ballistic missile submarine must come before she sets off on a deterrence patrol

come before she sets off on a deterrence patrol somewhere, as we vaguely put it, beneath the Seven Seas.

She comes here for her aural examination. Noise is to a submarine what a heel is to Achilles.

The hull of HMS Vengeance, one of four 17,000-ton leviathans which prowl beneath the seas bearing Britain's ultimate deterrent, is peppered with sensors which listen for any undue emanations from the boat. As an additional precaution, an external

examination is always required, however. The BUTEC range, too, is peppered with It is also gridded into invisible boxes, each 50 metres across and labelled A to Z. The scientists expect a boat to drive straight down the middle of the range – boxes M or N – for accurate

recordings. Which is easy enough to do on the surface

SILENCE, so they say, is golden. Or perhaps also black. Richard Hargreaves joined ballistic missile submarine HMS Vengeance on noise-ranging trials ahead of an impending nuclear deterrence patrol upholding the right of the line.

- there are visual markers to follow. But at several hundred feet, it's down to some pretty skilful navigation.

Luckily the navigator is helped by an underwater telephone which links the submarine with the BUTEC boffins; they constantly report the boat's position.

"You're 24 metres off," a tinny Scottish voice feeds back after the first run.

"Buck up, Navs," operations officer Lt Cdr David 'Filthy' Filtness smiles at his navigator. The run done, there's a turning box for, er, turning, then it's time for another pass.

Up and down. Up and down.

Up and down. All night long at different speeds. The scientists listen for any undue noises being emitted by Vengeance's machinery – propulsion system, hydroplanes, communications buoy system, hydroplanes, communications buoy – as this juggernaut scythes through the waters of Inner Sound.

What they cannot account for, of course, is Jack. Throughout Vengeance there are posters: a woman pursing her lips urging the deeps to keep quiet, a cartoon admonishing crew not to stomp

up and down the ladders. "Our primary objective is to remain undetected," explains Lt Chris Cheater, known by his wardroom companions as Gorgeous on account, apparently, of his haircut.

"It is extremely difficult to locate a submarine – how do you find something that is doing its utmost

how do you find something that is doing its utmost not to be found?" Possibly by leaving a hammer or a wrench where it shouldn't be or slamming a door. Metal on metal is bad – particularly if it's knocking against the hull. The propulsion system sits on a bed of rubber supports to prevent just that. That, of course, does not mean that the Silent Service is silent. Submariners are not monks. Radios, DVDs, televisions all play (though not loudly, of course) and a trip to the engine compartment requires ear

compartment requires ear defenders – but all that noise is contained within

the hull, or at least should be. Measured tones dictate life aboard a submarine – much more so than in the surface fleet. The control room - a combination of operations room and bridge, minus the windows – is a very busy, cramped yet remarkably quiet place. Banter is kept to a minimum. There are no unnecessary

kept to a minimum. There are no unnecessary words, merely men staring at consoles or an array of buttons and switches. Nothing epitomises this more than the moment the waves wash over the hull and the leviathan slithers into the depths. I say 'slithers' for it is a gentle manoeuvre. No lurching. No sudden need to grasp the nearest rail. No, Vengeance settles slowly by the stern (you do not want your propeller sticking out of the water as it's the sole means of propulsion). as it's the sole means of propulsion). Weaned on Das Boot with its scenes of half-mad

bearded Germans spinning valves open, sliding down the ladder in grey sou'westers, spilling half the Atlantic on to the deck, it all seems a bit tame... until the CO points out that "you don't crash dive a 17,000-ton submarine". (A Type VII U-boat was nearly 20 times smaller than Vengeance.) Tame it might be, but it nevertheless remains an

impressive manoeuvre. "Diving now. Diving now."

The Inner Sound begins to lap over the casing a TV feed from the periscope to the control room allows you to watch – when a senior rating at a console calls out: "Contact, bearing three-five-five. Probably a fishing vessel." A lieutenant twiddles a joystick and the periscope scans the horizon. With the press of a button, the scope zooms in. "Nothing visual." The dive continues in the same quietly tense manner; it is a hazardous manoeuvre and there's nothing in 'skimmer world' with which to compare it. The only sounds are the beeps and whirrs of the various electronic wizardry and the constant blow of the air conditioning, interspersed by a few clipped commands. This is what Vengeance's captain, Cdr Andrew McKendrick, calls the 'choreography of effort': diving demands the efforts of almost the entire The Inner Sound begins to lap over the casing

ship's company. It should, however, only be done once on a patrol (followed eventually by surfacing). Once the bombers leave the Firth of Clyde and submerge they will not see daylight, they will not experience fresh air until they return from patrol several weeks later. And that's not natural. But then nor is asking 140 men to live in a 500ft

And that's not natural. But then nor is asking 140 men to live in a 500ft steel tube alongside a nuclear reactor and 16 tubes containing the ultimate weapon of destruction. Ah yes, the Trident missile, Vengeance's *raison d'etre*. Sixteen silos, eight on either side of the boat, which comprise the central section of a Vanguard-class submarine. "We don't really think about what's in the tubes," says CPO(ET) Peter Burton, a Strategic Weapons System technician. "You just know they're there as a deterrence."

as a deterrence The truth is that most of Vengeance's crew don't

The truth is that most of Vengeance's crew don't think about the missiles. Between and behind the tubes, you'll find gym kit, store rooms, the laundry, the NAAFI (actually a cupboard stocked with nutty and other 'essentials'), and the odd mess. An 18-man 'home' is slotted at the side of two tubes. To enter, first you must brush past the 'car wash' – towels and clothes drying at the entrance. Inside is compact, but not bijoux: two separate compartments shrouded in darkness (there's always someone off- duty sleeping). Nine men are

always someone off- duty sleeping). Nine men are stacked in three-deck bunks; the space is little more than 8ft square.

Yet by Silent Service standards, this is if not luxurious, then at least not minimal. There is no hot bunking on Vengeance. Senior ratings even get an en suite mess – Rose Cottage, the name apparently befits the age of its occupants – opposite the captain's cabin.

opposite the captain's cabin.
It's why the crew earn the dubious tag of 'bomber queens'. But by no means does that tag mean life aboard is easy.
For the duration of a patrol, the men of Vengeance work six hours on, six hours off (1pm-7pm, 7pm-1am, 1am-7am and 7am-1pm so that everyone catches breakfast, lunch and dinner while off duty).
That in itself is demanding enough – but something skimmers endure during defence watches.

Skimmers, however, are not cut off from the outside world for weeks on end. Bomber queens

are. Atop we take email, internet and satellite TV – little more than pipe dreams a decade ago – for granted. None of



130.7

Pholesnice

these are available to the men of Vengeance. The sole link with the outside world is a daily The sole mix with the outside world is a daily print-out of world news and sporting results, plus 60 words sent twice a week by loved ones. It's best not to put anything saucy in these 'familygrams' as the off-watch crew ashore reads the messages before they're sent and the CO reads every one once it arrives aboard. The odd horrow message might get through Bad

The odd horny message might get through. Bad news does not. If there are bad tidings to impart – deaths in the family, car crashes and the like – then these are imparted at the very end of the patrol, when the boat is about to return to Faslane.

If it sounds harsh it's because the mission is more important than the man. Nothing should stop a bomber completing its patrol. And that includes serious illness among the crew. Every bomber carries a doctor on patrol – unlike corresponding surface ships – who can carry out surgery in a makeshift operating room

carry out surgery in a makeshift operating room (actually the junior rates' mess). Such operations are, thankfully, rare. "Having been in the General Service, submariners seem to be pretty healthy," says PO(MA(SM)) Mark Chambers. "But if you get a cold then it can wipe out a third of the ship's company." Which isn't good. Even less so when you realise that the sickbay (aka God's waiting room) is pretty rudimentary (it's basically a bog-standard cabin with a bed and lots of medicine stashed in cabinets).

cabinets). But then that rather sums up life in a submarine.

It's the Navy stripped down to its bare essentials. "We sail with everything we need – albeit in basic form," says PO(ET) Paddy McAllister, a Strategic Weapons System technician. It's the job of Paddy and his SWS shipmates to keep constant watch on the missiles in their tubes

tubes. You see, you don't just load a Trident into its silo, sail off on patrol, then unload the missile back at Coulport. No, the missiles sit cocooned inside their tubes, umbilical cords reaching out to them feeding them

the data they require and sensors checking the temperature and humidity. Trident is powered by solid fuel rocket motors and that solid fuel really doesn't like getting damp (just watch the Youtube clip of HMS Gloucester's Sea Dart mis-fire to give you an idea of what could go wrang).

go wrong). So like nurses caring for incubated babies, the missile control team sit in, er, missile control and nurture their 'offspring'. Missile control, like the missiles and the silos and the firing system are all American, part of a long-time deal with our 'cousins' (the missile's nuclear warheads, however,

are very much our own). And when we say it's American, we mean it's American - there's no taking into account British sensibilities.

No, the computer cabinets are a light brown (instead of the turquoise which dominates the RN). The measurements are Imperial: all PSI and feet – whereas in the rest of the boat they're metric. And then there are the instruction manuals full of

rather strange negatives – 'hatch not shut' rather than the more natural 'hatch open'. Actually, Trident's not the only part of Vengeance with an American flavour... although the other one is not quite so large (or destructive).

Down in Manoeuvring – the submarine equivalent of the Ship Control Centre in skimmerland – engineers keep tabs on Vengeance's power source and everything which it drives.

source and everything wi The reactor/ engineering systems display is a glittering, well, colourful, array of lights and switches laid out in an easy-to-follow schematic diagram. There's no ship's telegraph in the traditionalsense.Asmall button marked 'accept' flashes when the

"A lot of people focus on 'that day' and the responsibility it entails. The responsibility is borne every day – the need for being ready to be ready. You to be able to launch at any time." - Cdr Andrew McKendrick

(submariners think in terms of rpm, not half speed, full ahead and the like).

like). And on top of the reactor 'throttle' which is used to adjust the position of the control rods is perched an eight ball. Thereby hangs a tale long and unprintable, but it does involve a pool table and a bar in the USA... and a bar in the USA... As for the reactor, don't expect to be wowed by this marvel of technology. Yes, it can drive the most complex machine man has ever built beneath the waves. Yes, it can power a large town. But to look at, it is, well, rather dull. Don't expect any flames. Don't expect any Promethean flashes or arcs of lightning. Don't even expect a pilot light

flashes when the control room demands

a change in revolutions

flame. No, all you can see, should you choose to look, are a few grey metal blocks. Not everything aboard Vengeance is at the cutting edge of technology, however. Amid the dials and displays, the coloured switches and readouts in the control room, there's a large funnel supersed between the planesmen's

a large funnel squeezed between the planesmen's

A voice pipe connects the control room with the fin. If you holler loudly enough the men topside should be able to hear you – and vice versa. It

The Martin of

should only be called upon if all else fails. And that neatly sums up Vengeance herself. She

should only ever be used *in extremis*. Lurking beneath the seas ready to lob a weapon of last resort on an enemy is not 'just a job'. Working on the supermarket tills is 'just a job'. The burden the men of the V boats bear has no comparison.

"A lot of people focus on 'that day' and e responsibility it entails," explains Cdr McKendrick.

"The greater responsibility is borne every day – the need for being ready to be ready. You have to be able to launch at any time. "If that order does come, then you know the decision has been made in the most extreme of

Instead,

There

the boat

are traditional

circumstances.'

To date on Vengeance's 16 patrols, those 'most extreme of circumstances' have mercifully never come to pass. greater has returned 16 times to Faslane with few outside the Silent Service aware of what she's done or where she's been. no

waving on the quayside – the RN, rightly, doesn't like to advertise its bomber movements.

Besides, it's not like a surface ship returning from deployment: the crew do not file off with their kit bags within minutes of the brow landing on the

quay. It takes 12 to 24 hours to shut down the reactor after the patrol. There's also a bit of de-storing to do. There's enough paperwork and data recordings from a mission to fill a Transit van. Everything in the control room is recorded – rather like the Black Box in an airliner – down to the conversations and chatter.

chatter. "Everything we do is analysed by a team – they go over everything and report to the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff about how effectively we maintained our patrol," Cdr McKendrick explains. "It's a level of scrutiny which no-one else has. It doesn't make us paranoid, but it does make us extremely honest." So, you live in a steel tube, you don't see daylight or experience fresh air for three months, you can't have a fag (smoking is now banned inside all submarines), you're completely out of contact with your families, your bunk is the size of a coffin

(but they do at least give you a light), you work abnormal hours, Big Brother's always listening, and you're able to unleash Armageddon. There have to be some pluses. Well, as of April 1, deeps on a boat have been require 25 even are doute components for such

receiving £5 extra per day to compensate for such conditions – but as CPO Burton, 22 years a 'bomber queen', points out "I've never met anyone in the Submarine Service who does it for the money." If it's not about the money, then it must be

something intangible. "Someone the other day said that getting your dolphins was similar to getting the green beret," CPO Burton adds.

Yes, it's about esprit de corps. "One boat, one team," Lt Cheater adds. "Everyone knows everybody else's job. It's a question of safety and it's why the dolphins mark us out from the rest of the Fleet."

That does not mean that Silent Service doesn't face the same problems as the surface fleet. It too suffers 'pinch points' and some submariners grumble about being bounced from boat to boat; as Britain's ultimate weapon, no bomber departs on patrol without 100 per cent of her crew. And we do ask a lot of these men of the deep.

From taking charge of the boat to the day they hand her over to her Port crew this summer, the Starboard team will have lived and breathed nothing but Vengeance, save for a few days at home, for seven or eight months. I spent but a day aboard Vengeance. The smell of fresh air and the sight of blue skies were most

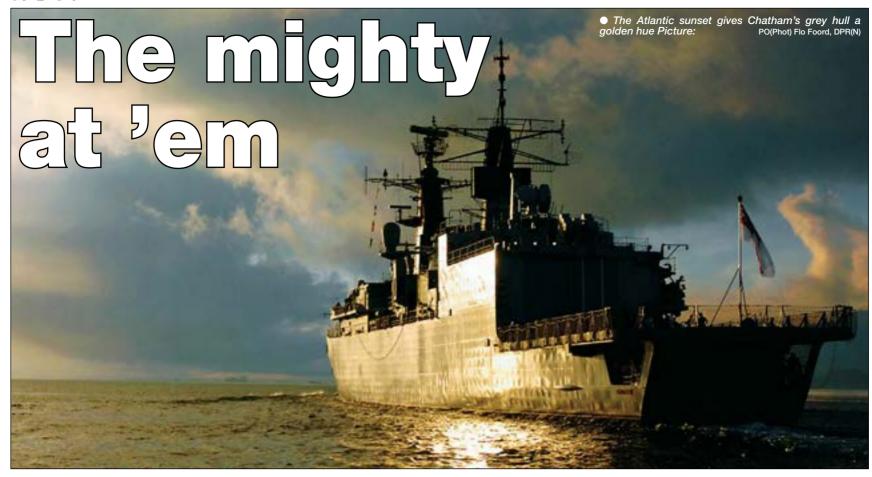
welcome. As I waited to clamber up a less-than-inviting

As I waited to clamber up a less-than-inviting vertical ladder on to the casing, a procession of submariners scurried down it: the men of FOST. For just as Vengeance has to go through the acoustic range before deploying, so her men must go through the mill of Operational Sea Training. Unlike their surface counterparts, the deep FOSTies come aboard and stay aboard; there's no boat transfer at the day's end back to base – these chaps are on for four weeks (they even have their own mess area).

"We actually find it works better," says Lt Kris Shields. "We get to see the human side of the

Shields. "We get to see the human side of the FOSTies living and working alongside them, getting the banter going." Banter yes, but remember that the man from FOST is always right. "I think we are all ready for the days ahead," Vengeance's XO Lt Cdr 'Billy' Dainty tells his shipmates over the intercom. "Remember: there is never an occasion to argue with the FOST staff. If there is any doubt, say 'Thank you very much, Sir, for your support.' Enjoy FOST and keep smiling."

SHIPS OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.630



the WILL require fortitude of 250 men and women to sustain HMS Chatham over the coming seven months. And one mouse.

The Type 22 frigate is now in

the Gulf region for the next five or so months supporting efforts to stabilise Iraq and nurture her oildriven economy by safeguarding country's offshore the platforms

There has been little rest for the

ship's company (or their newlyadopted mascot, Mighty Mouse, who recounts his escapades on the frigate for youngsters) since they returned from a Mediterranean deployment at the end of November. winter The was spent

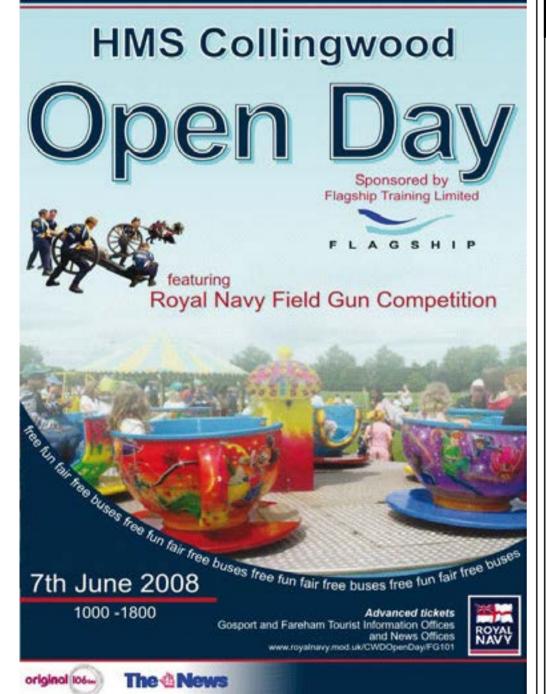
overhauling the warship ahead of her Gulf mission, including a tweak to her Seawolf missiles, the replacement of two engines and the addition of the WECDIS electronic chart system.

Thoroughly upgraded, the ship

then had the pleasure of 'top-up training' from FOST to prepare the ship's company for the Gulf; since Chatham's previous spell at FOST last May more than half the sailors aboard had changed.

The FOSTies also wanted to see how the ship's seamanship specialists coped with the larger and more powerful sea boat the frigate is now equipped with.

Until the present Chatham came along, there was no motto for the ship. The sailors borrowed a traditional cry from rugby grounds



along the Medway, up and at 'em, and promptly converted it into the more refined surge et vince.

Thirteen previous ships have borne the Chatham name, some with distinction, some briefly, but almost all in the days of sail. The Chatham story begins in

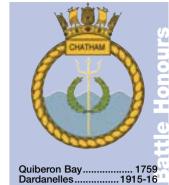
1666 when a small Dutch galley was captured. Since then there have been

Chatham sloops, Chatham yachts one such vacht had the sad duty of carrying Nelson's body from HMS Victory to Greenwich Hospital - hulks, survey ships,

captured vessels and transporters A fourth rate built in Portsmouth in 1758 earned the ship's first battle honour, Quiberon Bay, the following year.

It would be 150 years before another Chatham added a fresh honour, this time in the shape of a 1911 light cruiser. She saw action in the disastrous

Dardanelles campaign. Post-war she was loaned to New Zealand until she was broken up in 1926. After that the name Chatham disappeared for six decades until the current frigate came along.



Class: Type 22 frigate, Batch 3 Pennant Number: F87 Motto: Surge et vince (Arise and conquer) Based: Devonport

Builder: Swan Hunter, Wallsend Launched: January 20 1988 Commissioned: May 4 1990 Length: 148m (486ft) Beam: 14.8m (48ft 6in) Draft: 6.4m (21ft) Top speed: 30kts

Range: 4,500 nautical miles at 18kts Displacement: 4,900 tons Complement: 250 (can be Engines: 2 x Rolls-Royce Spey gas turbines; 2 x Rolls-Royce Tyne gas turbines

Weapons systems: Harpoon surface-to-surface missiles; fore and aft Seawolf air defence missile system; 1 x Mk8 4.5in main gun; 1 x

Goalkeeper 30mm automated machine-gun; 2 x 20mm close-range guns; Seagnat decoy

Sensors: Type 1007 navigation radar; Type 967 and 968 surveillance radars; 2 x Type 911 Seawolf tracking radars; UAT Electronic Surveillance System; Type 2050 active sona Aircraft: Up to 2 x Lynx armed with Sea Skua antiship missiles, Stingray anti-submarine torpedoes, Mk 11 depth charges or machine-guns Additional features: 1 x 8in

plastic mouse

HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.49 L/Cpl Walter Parker RM, VC

AT DUSK, the rain lashed the Gallipoli peninsula, gradually fading to a drizzle which persisted all night.

The marines filed up the steep slopes, laden with blankets, coats, food, ammunition, waterproof sheets and rifles. The eerie holler of Turkish bugles bounced

off the ravines. The crack of rifle fire pierced the night. Showers of mud, kicked up by machine-gun bullets striking the gulley parapets, showered the weary men.

After less than a week of battle, the Australians had already given names to various features in the Dardanelles terrain: MacLaurin's Hill, Wire Gully, Monash Valley and, more ominously, Dead Man's Ridge.

In seizing these points and others from 'Johnny Turk', the ANZACs had exhausted themselves. Now they were being hauled out of the line to rest. In their place came the Royal Naval Division.

'Line' was a rather grandiose term for the front at ANZAC Cove: in many places it was little more than a series of outposts, whose defenders were left to their own devices.

One such outpost was held by 18-year-old Lt R H W Empson and 60 comrades of the Portsmouth Battalion, Royal Marines Light Infantry. They had expected to find trenches. They

found holes barely two feet deep a good 350 yards from their closest comrades. They also found Johnny Turk determined to dislodge them.

In the small hours of May 1 1915, Empson sent word to his superiors: he needed ammunition,

water and medical supplies. Thirty-three-year-old L/Cpl Walter Parker, a former foundry worker from Nottinghamshire, volunteered to lead a party of stretcher-bearers with the relief mission.

The mission was a disaster. As soon as they emerged from cover, the marines were cut down by Turkish fire. Parker remained to care for one wounded marine while his comrades continued on to Empson's outpost.

Come dawn on May 1, Walter Parker decided to join them. To do so, he had to cross upwards of 400 yards of open ground strafed

by Turkish rifle and machine-gun fire. He charged down the slope, was struck at least twice by enemy bullets, and finally made the beleagured trench where he learned that not one of his fellow marines in the

relief party had got through. Despite his own wounds, the lance corporal set about treating Empson's men while the Turks charged the position.

Empson himself was killed and command fell to a Lt Alcock who decided the trench was untenable. On May 2, the Royals began to pull out, with Parker overseeing the evacuation of the wounded.

Evacuation was no less fraught with danger than had been the trench's occupation. Walter Parker was again wounded by Turkish fire as he directed the stretcher-bearers – so

gravely wounded in fact that he crawled the final few yards to safety.

The lance corporal never truly recovered from his wounds in Gallipoli and he was invalided out

of the Corps a year later. And it took another year for him to be gazetted for Britain's highest honour; there were few witnesses of his deeds on the turn of April-May 1915 and many senior officers had been wounded, so recommendations for awards were delayed until lune 1917 delayed until June 1917.

From his comrades, there was a more personal ign of gratitude: a marble and gilt clock and a cheque.

Museum is touched up

THE finishing touches are being applied to one of the more ornately-decorated museum ceilings in the British military. The Royal Marines Museum

in Southsea was once the officers' mess of Eastney Barracks. And back in the 1860s

with the British Empire at its grandest, there was evidently little expense spared. A century and a half later,

the ceiling of the minstrel's gallery needed some careful restoration work - the finelydetailed plaster was beginning to come away from the wooden laths it was attached to.

The museum called in experts from Cliveden Conservation to bind the ceiling together as well as to carry out any necessary re-painting and re-modelling work.

To do so, they needed to remove most of the paintings from the gallery (save for the picture of George III on horseback which was too large and had to be covered up instead), while countless boards on the floor above were lifted to give the conservators additional access. Lifting up those boards

opened up a timeline of history: workers found newspaper cuttings from 1976, notes and tools from when the building was wired up in 1923, and cigarette packets which would be worth a bob or two today.

"There is an enormous sense of pride in seeing such sensitive restoration taking place" said the museum's marketing manager Sandy Wilson, "and real enjoyment in discovering aspects of the building's life through our little discoveries.

"It really brings home the many people who have been involved with this wonderful building."

Freetown shakedown

FRIGATE HMS Kent has been busy helping the people of Freeport.

Freeport, Bahamas?

Freeport, Florida? Freeport, New York?

Nope, Freeport, Plymouth. Not somewhere you will find on the map, but a fictitious place in need of assistance as Kent

geared up for an impending deployment. The Portsmouth-based warship popped down the coast for some Operational Sea Training, which opened with a fortnight of 'directed shakedown'

That is intended to blow off any cobwebs in the ship and her 180 men and women – Kent has undergone some maintenance over the winter, including the change of two diesel generators.

The ship's marine engineering department and support firm FSL carefully extracted the old Paxman Valenta diesels... and carefully craned and manoeuvred the new ones into place.

Shakedown tested the machinery to ensure it is fit for the rigours of OST, while Kent's ship's company fought off 'enemy' aircraft and tackled 'fires' caused by those nice FOSTies.

And Freetown? Well, the fictional town was at the heart of the political tension which led to Kent being called into action.

Stories of swash and buckle... and Jedis



• Cutlas (sic) drill aboard a British battleship circa the turn of the 20th Century

ROYAL Navy football and rugby union have both celebrated their centenaries fairly recently.

But their 100 or so years of sporting achievement pale when compared with navy fencing which, in 2008, is celebrating its 75th birthday. The RN Amateur Fencing Association, which currently oversees

the sport in the Senior Service, has only been around since the end of WW1. But fencing in the RN traces its history back to 1733 and the

appointment of the first fencing master to the service at the Naval Academy (now the Old Naval Academy) in Portsmouth.

Among the luminaries who have picked up fencing swords in more recent history are Cdr Ferdinand Fielmann, a pioneering submariner and Olympic champion in 1908 and 1912, fellow Olympian Cdr E Brookfield who represented Britain at four games between 1908 and 1928, Lt Joe Field RM who coached the British team at the infamous Berlin games, and former British champion and Olympian Bob Anderson – the ex Royal went on to become a fight choreographer in Hollywood, advising on fight

scenes in *Highlander*, *Star Wars* and *Lord* of the *Rings*. To celebrate the anniversary, the RNAFA is staging a free exhibition at Westbury Manor Museum in Fareham between May

1 and 23 Among the items on display are all the main RN pattern swords since the first one was introduced in 1805, the original fencing manual of 1784 and various prints, photographs and weapons from the past three centuries.



crews.

adding:

to expect one so that there'

that this is the Service which put

Cdr Tall is in no doubt – there is a constant, common bond linking those men who volunteered for

HM Submarine No.1 107 years

ago and today's nuclear submarine

"Submariners always operate in a hostile environment. They are possessed by a desire to serve in

a team in a very technologically-

challenging environment," he says, adding: "There's a touch of the

pirate about any man who wears

the dolphins badge." The insignia is a relatively

recent addition to the Silent Service, but it's a mark of honour – and comradeship – which one

submariner likened to the green

beret (see our Vengeance feature on

pages 14 and 15). With and without that insignia,

Jeff Tall has lived and breathed nothing but submarines day in,

day out since entering Dartmouth

44 years ago. He commanded four boats, including a 'bomber' and also advised Sandy Woodward

during the Falklands conflict

sea

were

the 'great' in Great Britain."

READER, if you seek his legacy, look around vou. Those words, inscribed on the

tomb of Sir Christopher Wren, are an equally apt epitaph for Cdr Jeff Tall.

In 14 years at the helm of the Royal Navy Submarine Museum, the passionate deep has transformed and modernised this living monument to submariners past and present.

The title of Director of the RN Submarine Museum now belongs to Marion Budgett, who previously oversaw the national motor museum at Beaulieu and helped to run the RAF museum in Hendon. She inherits an organisation

very different from the one Jeff Tall took charge of some 14 years ago. The Royal Navy Submarine Museum, 1994 vintage, was a

small venture with a handful of prized exhibits and with a distinct 'family feeling'. The RN Submarine Museum

of 2008 is in many ways still the same – it's still run by a submarine 'family' who care passionately about their subject and there are still those prized exhibits. But whereas Holland I - the

Wright Flyer of the submarine world - was slowly dying of 'metal cancer', it is now preserved in perpetuity within a purpose-built exhibition hall.

And the "inadequate galleries" of 1994 have now been joined by the futuristic, bulbous

ĤMS Alliance. She still sits on her plinths above the water, but

Fieldhouse building. Time has not been quite so kind to

good news is that a $\pounds 4m$ package of work is under way to preserve her. The historic submarines are the jewels in the crown of the museum, but looking after them, as one of

the ravages of the elements and

pigeons have taken their toll. The

Cdr Tall's colleagues once pointed out, "is a road to hell paved with good intentions".

Machines, of course, are nothing without the men who operate them. One of the officer's proudest legacies is the garden of remembrance which lists the names of every submariner lost since 1901, in war or peace. Names were added as recently as March 2007 following the oxygen canister explosion aboard HMS Tireless.

The submarine museum is one of four telling the story of the Senior Service – the RN, Fleet Air Arm and Royal Marines museums complete the quartet. Each recount the deeds of their

particularly branch with aplomb, but it's difficult at times to see the bigger picture. The goal ultimately is to create

the National Museum of the Royal Navy, an umbrella organisation to oversee and advise the individual museums. The Imperial and Science Museums, for War example, operate numerous

Most of his days at

"Sailors deserve a national spent locked in an underwater museum and they have a right game of chess with the Soviet Navy a struggle whose importance few continuous story," says Cdr Tall. "I want to see the White Ensign people beyond the Submarine Service appreciate. flying proudly, celebrating the fact

"Our contribution to the Cold War was total and utter harassment of the Soviets. They tried to keep up with us with a massive building programme which eventually cost them the Cold War," he says.

"The world today is not a stable place. We need to maintain our national deterrent and we need forces which pack a big punch. I'm in no doubt that the submarine story will continue."

And it will – not least with input from Cdr Jeff Tall. He is now the Honorary Regimental Secretary for the Royal Navy Submarine Service – a newly-created post whose role is described as "keeping alive the vital link between 'badge wearers' and their heritage", in short ensuring the submarine family never forgets its own and is never forgotten. For like all in the RN, he views

our tradition as something to be proud of, something to build

"Unless you know where you have been, you don't know where you are going," he imparts.

> • Cdr Jeff Tall in front of the Fieldhouse Building at the RN Submarine Museum Picture: Portsmouth News

Top scran for top soldier

THE head of the British Army joined recruits at HMS Raleigh when he formally opened their

new dining facilities. General Sir Richard Dannatt, Chief of the General Staff, spent a day at the Torpoint establishment learning about its role as the home of basic entry training, the submarine school, the RN logistics school and boarding party tuition - among

other functions. He sat down with junior ratings in the new Victory Galley which is split for diners: one part caters for new-entry trainees, the other serves sailors posted to Raleigh for more specialist training.

Suitably satiated, the general headed on to the water to tour HMS Brecon in the River Lynher. The Huntclass minehunter now teaches rookie sailors about living in a confined space and more experienced ones about the arts of seamanship and force protection.

The general's visit ended with the weekly passing-out parade with Sir Richard taking the salute as 56 men and women successfully completed their nine-week initiation into the Senior Service

First Lynx's last flight

THE first Fleet Air Arm Lvnx to clock up 8,000 hours in the skies has flown for the final time.

XZ257 first took to the skies in <u>1</u>980.

Twenty-eight years later, 815 Naval Air Squadron's CO Cdr Alun Jones and veteran Lynx flier Lt Jerry Tribe climbed into the cockpit to ferry the venerable helicopter into storage.

It wasn't only XZ257 making and 3,300 flying hours in Lynx, Lt Tribe was also taking his last journey in the mainstay of the rigate and destroyer fleet. The helicopter will now be

used for parts under the Future Lvnx Project which will provide the Fleet Air Arm with the next-generation version of the aircraft from 2013.



Head Office, Weston Acres Woodmansterne Lane, Banstead

Tel: 01737 353763 Fax: 01737 362678

www.royalalfredseafarers.com



Lusty in the limelight

AFTER Shipmates and Commando, the spotlight falls upon HMS Illustrious now with a TV documentary dedicated to the ship's 2008 deployment.

Warship, which is due to air on Channel 5 this month - check TV listings as the date for the first programme has changed a few times already – charts the highs and lows of Lusty's year so far, from leaving Pompey and spending the first month or so stuck in UK waters for a variety of reasons, to visiting Malta and steaming to the Gulf of Oman with her Merlins and Harriers.

To produce the six-episode documentary, its makers Granada have lived and breathed Lusty like her ship's company (minus the No.8s and steaming bats, however), sending tape after tape back to the UK for a team in London to edit and put together into the finished programme, complete with narration.

For every 70 hours of film shot by the team, 69 have ended on the cutting room floor (that's two and a half weeks of footage recorded for the six-hour documentary)

What's made it difficult is that there's been a team of just three people on board - for a documentary of this scope and size you'd normally require three camera crews," explained producer/director Kate Jackson.

"But we've had amazing access to the ship and her sailors – we've done pretty much everything. "I hope that viewers find it as amazing an experience

as I have done. It's a unique environment." An amazing experience, but one not necessarily to be repeated by the documentary team. "Naval life never stops - you have no time to yourself and that's something that you really miss," said Kate.



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THE ROYAL ALFRED SEAFARERS' SOCIETY



PEOPLE



A surprisingly formal welcome for an 8inch rodent on to a warship
 Mighty Mouse makes a grand entrance on to HMS Chatham

The Mighty from **Blighty**

THE trouble with Navy News is that there's too much talk about ships and not enough about cheese

Yes, Mighty Mouse, the mascot of HMS Chatham, is back and he's been having a few adventures (as have, one might add, the frigate's ship's company...).

The 8in rodent joined the ship's company last autumn, in time for a NATO deployment to the Med and Adriatic, some time alongside in Devonport while the frigate was undergoing a short overhaul, and is now helping to keep morale up as Chatham heads to the Gulf for seven months (see page 16).

The diminutive mascot was introduced to Chatham to provide a link with families and schools, sending back regular reports on his activities, postcards from the Pyramids and Gib, and evading his feline arch enemies, Oil Can Harry and Julius Pinhead Schlabotka (*Hmmm*, the sailors seem to be taking this mascot lark far too seriously – Ed).

Youngsters can follow Mighty Mouse's escapades via Chatham's website at royalnavy.mod.uk/ server/show/nav.6527, where there's also a small gallery charting his global tour.

If that's not enough animal magic for this month's paper (lt's not – Ed), then enter sea lions Queenie and Billikins from the

RN Submarine Museum. The museum has teamed up with author David Wixon and illustrator Matt Jordan to bring the two legendary mammals back to life.

Nine decades ago in Britain's first struggle with the U-boat, the RN trained two sea lions, Queenie and Billikins, to find the German submarines.

The animals were never deployed on active service, but they became extremely popular among sailors of the day (so much so that to this day the Sea Lion Trophy is presented to the most successful submarine involved in torpedo exercises). Ninety years later, the museum

has produced a children's book celebrating the two creatures, which above all highlights our nation's continuing reliance on

the sea for our prosperity. And so the sea lions are joined by Connie the Container ship and her guardian, Sammy the Submarine, which keeps the sea lanes open for her.

There's also a short section in the book about life in the RN and

aboard a submarine. Queenie and Billikins Deliver the Goods is available from the submarine museum shop or online at www.submarinegifts. co.uk/acatalog/shop.htm, priced

£,5.99



■ AND on a final sad note, it's farewell to CPO(Dog) Flloyd (pictured above when he received his long service and good conduct medal), who retired from the RN back in 2006 after 14 years of dedicated gull- and rat-chasing service for the Navy in Gibraltar.

After just over 18 months of retirement back in Blighty in the loving care of the Todd family, the old seadog slipped his moorings for the last time and crossed the bar in February.

Bobby and Clyde

THERE was this policeman, a horse, a widow and a Mars bar.

Not a hoary old stand-up joke, but a life-saving deed courtesy of sailor-turned-bobby John Barron. John was patrolling the streets

of Hartlepool on his trusty steed Clyde when a frantic bus driver flagged him down.

Aboard was 72-year-old Joan Guthrie who had slipped into a coma.

John dismounted Clyde, leaving him in the capable hands of the driver, then attended to Mrs Guthrie.

Rifling through her handbag, he found details that suggested Mrs Guthrie was a diabetic and immediately dispatched a bus passenger to buy a Mars bar.

A few pieces of chocolate and some glucose tablets later, and the pensioner was coming around from her deep low blood sugar coma.

"I've never had to deal with a situation like that," said John, "but I thought if I looked in her bag it might give me an idea of what was wrong. Once I knew it was diabetes, it was OK, but I was glad to see the ambulance arrive.

John served in the RN as an OEM between 1979 and 1982, first with HMS Ashanti, then with HMS Tartar (known affectionately as the Rat-Rat) before joining the world of law enforcement in May 1982

Ordinarily, such a story prob-ably wouldn't have reached the ears of our newsdesk...

... but John has his old pal, fel-low law enforcer and ex-Bootie Tony Green to thank for that. He felt the former matelot deserved a little publicity outside Hartlepool, not least as he's well known by

Cleveland police colleagues for being "a bit of a character". As his friend was signing on the dotted line to become a bobby, Tony was locked in mortal combat with the Argies, storming Two



• Former Naval man John Barron with his police-horse Clyde and Joan Guthrie says Tony. He too became a truncheon

Sisters with 45 Commando in the final battles for Stanley. Actually, in fairness to John,

he did see the Falklands. Ashanti visited during a West African and South American deployment in 1979. "I never tire of telling him he was three years premature,

HMS Brilliant in the mid-80s and is currently an acting chief inspec-tor running police operations in Hartlepool. Picture: Hartlepool Mail Cut from the same cloth

wielder after a tour of duty with

Lt Cdr Lorraine England QARNNS

Farewell to the final midwife

THE last practising Royal Navy midwife has stepped down in

Naples. Lt Cdr Lorraine England QARNNS formally handed over the role to Kathy Gladwell, a SSAFA midwife, who will continue to provide midwifery services to the area. The senior nursing officer

AJFC Naples was the last appointment available to a Royal Naval midwife, since the gradual reduction in numbers following the decision in 2001 that recruitment of midwives into the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service would cease.

During the intervening years a number of midwifery appointments that had been held by QARNNS have been transferred to other agencies, such as SSAFA. Although Lt Cdr England is no

longer the midwife in the British Forces Clinic AJFC HQ Naples, she will remain there continuing in her second specialism of practice nursing and supporting the development of nursing services in the area.

A midwife in the QARNNS since 1993, it is estimated that Lt Cdr England has helped over 600 mothers during her career in the Royal Navy, which has included appointments to PJHQ Northwood, HMS Raleigh and RNH Gibraltar. The end of the era of Naval

midwifery was marked with a cake-cutting ceremony, attended by SSAFA midwife Kathy Gladwell and health visitor Dawn Baran to celebrate the start of an era for SSAFA.

These two will form a specialist peripatetic nursing team, spending some 60 per cent of their time in their home base of Naples, and the rest of their time moving between the other isolated commands and units of Valencia, Lisbon, Rome, Latina, Milan, Varase and Poggio.

Lancaster doubles up

FRIGATE HMS Lancaster's ship's company more than doubled in size when the Type 23 welcomed 200 friends and family on board for a bracing March families' day.

A particularly bracing day for AB(Sea) Jethro Hollet who endured a protracted swim during the ship's man overboard exercise – but was rewarded with warming cheers by all onboard. The inclement weather

prevented the ship heading out to sea, but other distractions were laid on with the ship's Pacific 24 whizzing around Lancaster at speed, breaking all the harbour's speed-limits - but with the Queen's Harbour Master's

permission, of course. Lt John Richardson said: "The day involved a good deal of organisation.

We had to be flexible to change at the last minute - but all the effort was worth it to see the enjoyment of people's families."





FATHERS and sons at sea aren't so unusual, but they are usually the result of a families' day out, not Drafty...

PO Kevin Stocker and his son AB Ollie Stocker (*pictured left in* Mala) are both serving together in HMS Illustrious. The two of them have drawn the

attention of the visiting Granada TV crew, who are making a six-part documentary on board the

strike carrier. Kevin said: "It's been good fun so far. We've got used to having a cameraman suddenly appear when we're doing something interesting.

"I'm looking forward to hearing what my wife thinks when she sees the programme. I've been telling her what life's like on board for 20 years - now she can see it!"

The programme, with the work-ing name of *Warship*, is due to be broadcast on Channel 5 this

spring. Meanwhile at HMS Raleigh twins Nick and Adam Crabtree (*bictured left*) have signed up for life as Naval divers.

The two celebrated their 18th birthdays in the midst of the first week of their nine-week initial training course.

Their big day began with a 5.45am start, followed by lessons in ironing, polishing boots and kit inspection.

Nick said: "If we were at home we'd probably meet up with some mates for our birthday.

"I never imagined that we would be marching around on our 18th,

but I'm glad we're here." The two will move on to their professional training next.

PEOPLE 🎽

A lift from

YACHTSMAN Jonny Malbon enjoyed a lift from a Lynx helicopter as part of his training for his upcoming solo transatlantic yacht race.

On board his life raft off Portland Harbour the Artemis Ocean Racing skipper released smoke flares, and the Naval Lynx from RNAS Yeovilton winched him to safety, all good training for both helicopter and yachtsman for rescue at sea. Jonny said: "I am very grateful

fo the Royal Navy for giving me the opportunity to practise an exercise that I hope I never have to experience for real.

"The RN provide an invaluable service to seafarers in international waters and I think it gives all sailors on the water some confidence knowing that they are watching over us."

The yachtsman should be confident in the RN – his father is Vice Admiral Sir Fabian Malbon, former Deputy Commander-in-Chief Fleet and now Lieutenant-Governor of Guernsey.

Cumbria calling

MEMBERS of HMS Cumberland's ship's company headed to Cumbria to cement the strong links between the Type 22 and the region.

The ship was in Newcastle for a four-day visit but the chance to head cross country to the Lake District was a powerful draw for the frigate's crew.

The ship was granted the Freedom of Cumbria ten years ago, and has close ties with the county, the Pride of Cumbria Air Ambulance and the Sea Cadet units in Whitehaven and in Gosforth.

Cdr Peter Sparkes Cumberland's commanding officer, said: "It is always a pleasure to visit Cumbria and to renew old friendships.

"Visits such as these allow us to give something back to and show our support for a community which in turn has shown us so much support over the years.

"It's a great way of saying thank you."

Bravo Briggs

HMS Bulwark's PO Ian 'Johnny' Briggs has been named Man of the Year for 2007.

PO Briggs was employed in the Weapon Engineering depart-ment, responsible for maintaining the Goalkeeper weapon system. At short notice he acted as the Weapons Group Head where he offered strong leadership and encouragement to the team.

Johnny described himself as "shocked to have won"

Clankies of a Lynx the future

HMS Sultan once more became an Aladdin's Cave for the young when schoolchildren from across the UK flocked to the Gosport training establishment to take part in this year's Young Engineers Challenge.

Operation Wave Rider drew 30 teams of youngsters down to the south coast as the children plotted the salvage of vital cargo from a merchant vessel capsized and sunk in the South Atlantic – or in fact, inside specially-constructed water tanks in the Gosport base.

The merchant vessel's cargo of containers were scattered along the shore or sunk within the shallows, and the crew of Type 45 HMS Defender called upon the young masterminds to find a means to recover these important containers.

Capt Stuart Ellins, CEO of the Young Engineers organisation, said: "The event certainly pro-vided the teams with a stiff challenge.

"Not only did they have to design and build their own radiocontrolled vessels to recover both floating and submerged containers, but their vessels had to have all terrain vehicles on board that could be disembarked onto the beach to recover washed-up containers.

"You only had to see the concentration on the faces of contest-ants and hear the whoops of joy when they succeeded to realise just how effective this event was in exciting young people about engineering." All the finalists in this year's

challenge got to enjoy a day at HMS Sultan and a flight over Portsmouth harbour and the

or police force. But music and performing had taken hold of Steve, and wouldn't let go. So in 2003 he

"The name comes from the firing ranges," says the former machine-gunner. "It'll probably be recognised in the military world by the whole of the British Forces.

ing parts of the rifle move forward into the

having a beer, me and my brother - I never had any intention of leaving to form a band then

"It's the word of command when the work-

"We came up with it one night when we were



Aspiring Young Engineers learn about science and technology at HMS Sultan

Solent in one of the Navy's Sea Kings. Kingston Grammar School from Surrey and John Hampden Grammar School in High Wycombe garnered the winner's

laurels on the day. Although the complexity of the task meant that prizes were given for a wide gamut of impressive performances in ingenuity, presentation and design.

Lt Andrew McAllister, one of the organising committee at the Sultan site, said: "What an amaz-

ing day it was. "The teamwork and ingenu-ity of the schools were excellent

Advance and be recognised

 exactly what the Royal Navy is all about."
 The Royal Naval Challenge is organised each year by the Young

Engineers and a Naval team. Find out more at www.youngeng.org. Meanwhile HMS Excellent was the home of the FaraDay Event, set up by the Institution Engineering and Technology (IET) to inspire a curiosity in sci-ence among schoolchildren.

The IET are staging a year-long Faraday programme with a dedi-cated website with videos, information and teaching resources.

Find out more at www.faraday. theiet.org.



It's uckers. Jamie. but not as we know it...

Mucking about with uckers

HOW can you improve on perfection?

For decades, there has been no finer way to pass the time aboard one of His or Her Majesty's warships than to roll those dice and settle down for a (sometimes heated) game of uckers. Until now perhaps.

For one officer has created the

ultimate uckers experience... Enter Maltese uckers 'muckers'), a game for not four but six players, spread across a lengthened uckers board with the

Maltese cross in the centre Muckers is the brainchild of S/Lt Jamie Soughton, attached to HMS Illustrious for four months as part

of his young officer training. The former architecture student wanted to "give something back" and began beavering away on his computer, determined to give uckers a 21st-Century tweak.

Shipmates dismissed the idea of uckers in 3D as too complicated. But uckers for six players - a beautifully-crafted board has been created by the sub-lieutenant and Lusty's chippy, complete with new colours, pink and pussers' grey – has received a rather warmer reception.

Not that anyone has been able to finish a game yet, however. "Normally uckers lasts half an hour or 45 minutes, but one game of muckers went on for 90 minutes with no result in sight,"

said Jamie. "Sadly, I've no time to play it myself, so I'll leave the board behind when I leave the ship."

There is an incentive for players, nevertheless. "You can have a mixiblob of

12 pieces – now that's something everyone wants to hit," Jamie added.

40 years in silence

AFTER almost 40 years in the Silent Service, submariner CPO Iain MacKenzie spoke of his pride in being a deep after collecting his MBE from the Queen at a ceremony at Buckingham Palace. Iain's wife Sheila and his mother-in-law Jessie Stewart were there to

see the submariner made a Member of the British Empire. He said: "I was keen to share my big day with them. Despite the inclement weather the pride I felt of being awarded the MBE could not

be dampened. "It was not until I was walking the corridors of Buckingham Palace that it really hit me what an honour had been bestowed upon me.³

The honour was in recognition of his years of unparalled service to the Navy's submarine fleet – a service that ended last month. He added: "The submarine service is everything to me – how could it

not be, it's been my life for nearly four decades.

"I look forward to giving something back to it in the form of the Submariners Association and the International Submariners Association I am an active member of both.



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– but the name stuck."

breech.'

• Capt Brian Shepherd, the commanding officer of the US Navy Supply Corps School, chats to junior officers who are undergoing training at the Defence Maritime Logistics School in HMS Raleigh

The band's logo might also be familiar to mili-tary sight – the Figure 12 target. WHEN Mne Steve Hernaman announced that he wanted to leave the Royal Marines, he was Steve's brother Chris Tillett, another former Marine, although not a musician himself, has told that he had the entire officers' mess talking about him and what he was going to do next... But he refused to tell them – until the final day been looking after the affairs of the band

when his commanding officer confronted him with "Come on, what are you going to do?" And Steve replied: "Well, I'm going to go into the music business." As career paths go, it was a bit of a break from the traditional Marine route of bodyguard or police force which has become an increasingly demanding task. Ease Springs have gone from strength to

strength, performing gigs across the south and in London to audiences of up to 22,000. Now Steve has his ambitions set on the V Festival, with votes needed to put Ease Springs on the Road to V competition.

He describes the music that the three-piece

play as alternate-pop-rock-indie; and he can be found centrestage as guitarist and lead-singer. Steve admits: "I would like to head out to the Middle East and perform for all the lads out there. I know that our type of music is what thand the for."

they'd really go for." Ease Springs' first single Somewhere in Between was released online on April 21, and is available for download from iTunes. Find out more about the band and get them on the Road to V through their website: www.

easesprings.com

methods."

HO in Andover.

America

calliny

THE commanding officer of the

US Navy Supply Corps School, Capt Brian Shepherd, spent the day at the Defence Maritime Logistics School to find out more about his British counterparts. Cdr Phil Waterhouse said: "The

RN and US Navy increasingly

operate together at sea and on land in areas such as Afghanistan

and Iraq. It is very useful to have an understanding of each other's

During his time in the UK, the

US officer also visited the Defence

College of Logistics and Personnel

Administration in Deepcut and the

Defence Equipment and Supplies









Similarities between Dorset and Helmand are not immediately apparent, writes Richard Hargreaves.

The countryside is lush. The climate is temperate. The rolling terrain is only a few score feet above sea level and liberally sprinkled with copses and clearings. Homes are made of brick. And the locals are relatively sedate.

But a square mile or so of Dorset is Helmand. The roads are dusty and littered with mines. Locals are agitated, excitable. Insurgents lie in wait in trucks packed with explosives or hide in the undergrowth with their RPGs. Homes are makeshift and rather less than solid. The countryside is still lush, however. And there's little we can do about the elevation

But here, at the southernmost tip of Bovington Camp, the spiritual home of the tank, is where we train Viking warriors. Not those of horned helmet and eyepatch variety à la Kirk Douglas, but men to man

the Royal Marines' weapon *du jour*. Except that it's no longer just the green berets' weapon du jour. The Army are now muscling in on Viking territory.

And that's not necessarily a bad thing. The Royals' Viking warriors need a break. The armoured vehicle is heavily in demand in Afghanistan – so heavily that the men are doing six months

in theatre, six months at home, then back again. "Everyone wants a piece of Viking," says Maj Doug Gilding, Officer Commanding Armoured Commanding Armoured

Support Company Royal Marines. "It's a victim of its own success."

It is. Just 108 of these vehicles were ordered from Swedish firm Hagglunds. At least half of them are now in Helmand – and they will stay there for the foreseeable future. They are in action daily.

"It's good that we're wanted, but it does put a strain on the lads because they do a cracking job, right in the thick of the fight," Maj Gilding adds.

his spring and summer that will change. The Vikings will stay. Their commando masters will return and a new breed of warriors – Rifles, Scots Guards, Queen's Royal Lancers will take over the vehicles.

That means a crash (or, more accurately, a hownot-to-crash) course in the art of Viking warfare from the commandos who have half a decade's experience to call upon.

Over four weeks, they impart their knowledge of maintenance, on and off-road driving, gunnery, and riverine operations (much of Viking's work is focused around the Helmand River), then test the two-man crews during a final week of drills and exercises.

That final week reaches its climax with the 'Battle Exercise', a Thursday War (but on a Wednesday) in miniature (it lasts about 45 minutes) waged over that pretty small battleground.

The looping, jinking course is nevertheless large enough to squeeze in a breakdown, a minefield, several streams, a checkpoint, an ambush, a suicide

bomber and some sheep. The sheep are, admittedly, not part of the exercise. It's all part of the rather surreal environment of rural England living side-by-side with an armoured warfare school.

"The battle exercise is about making decisions," explains Sgt 'H' Harrison RM. "These lads know how to shoot, for example. Now they have to decide when to shoot."

The soldiers saddle up in a leafy lane. Their assessors clamber into a 4x4 following behind the three Vikings under scrutiny. I climb into the righthand seat of the second Viking (these Swedish-built

vehicles are left-hand drive) and buckle up. Inside Viking is rudimentary – rather like a Land Rover. The controls are similar to a very basic car, too, even down to the dashboard indicators.

You steer using a wheel with a large black handle fixed to it (rather than left and right levers to push

the caterpillar tracks forward). There are windscreen wipers and washers (although the gutter is full of empty shell casings rather than dead flies and leaves).

There's no MP3 or CD player, but there is a radio (not for picking up Terry Wogan, of course). Behind the driver, the controller stands on a raised

platform, his arms and head popping through a hatch to man the machine-gun, Viking's principal weapon, and direct the vehicle's movements via constant radio

contact with his comrade below. The engine throbs, not as loudly as that of a helicopter, and we're off.

"In a Scimitar, you're chucked all over the place," our driver says. "The ride in these is so comfy." He's not wrong. We'd covered the course in an off-

roader beforehand and were thoroughly bumped and

bounced all over the place. By comparison, Viking almost glides over the potholes and bumps, it rattles through streams sending water cascading over the windshield before climbing the opposite bank effortlessly.

Onwards, onwards. The lead vehicle slows. Ours too. Ahead is an

Afghan village. I say 'Afghan' and 'village', but both words have

been rather loosely applied. Ahead are a few tents, a bit of corrugated iron, a small fire and some excitable inhabitants The local fancy dress shop has evidently been

doing good business: "Everyone wants a piece of Viking," says the Afghans are actually soldiers and marines wearing fake 'taches,

permed black wigs and garish clothes (the impression is rather more

Liverpool in the 1980s than Helmand in 2008). They wield long sticks with coloured scraps of cloth tied to the end and poke them at the Viking controller.

He's not amused.

The villagers persist. Back off!

The villagers still persist. A couple of rounds from his SA80 are fired into the air.

The villagers disperse. Our Viking 'breaks down'.

The driver is getting somewhat tense. "Come on," he mutters. "Get your skates on. We need to get the **** out of here." The controller of the lead Viking climbs down and

attaches a tow rope from the back of his vehicle (it looks rather like an enormous red elastic band) to the

front of ours. Onwards, onwards.

The column kicks up dust and pebbles as it twists and turns down the narrow track, then grinds to a halt on a bend (a small sign by the side of the road warns 'mine' although the Taleban are invariably not so obliging...)

The controller is expected to scramble down from his turret and sweep the road with a mine detector (think big black pretzel with a long rod attached to

So much for the theory. The cab in front decides not to bother and simply rolls forward again after a short pause.

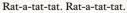
Bang. A soldier hiding by the side of the road tosses a grenade. Thick white smoke billows across the track, over the vehicle, through the controller's hatch and fills the cab. The driver reaches for the fan. In reality, he'd probably have been scrambling out of his door. After exercising caution for much of the ride, the

lead vehicle is now spoiling for a fight. Afghan National Army checkpoint ahead. Rat-a-tat-tat. Rat-a-tat-tat. Empty shell cases

bounce off the windscreen. An Afghan soldier (our Allies, remember)

theatrically throws himself to the ground. Wumm. Wumm. Wumm.

RPG!Ambush!





Taleban - or is it Scousers again? - roll on the ground The three vehicles race through, heading for the

safety of a wood. Suddenly, a white Toyota pick-up truck comes racing down a lane determined to ram the lead

Viking. Suicide bomber!

Rat-a-tat-tat. Rat-a-tat-tat.

The Toyota grinds to a halt. Well, white van man is a menace on the roads..

And then it's back to the start of the course. The debriefing should be interesting. One vehicle destroyed by mine and a friendly checkpoint wiped out. Still, one broken down Viking was recovered, an ambush was successfully negotiated and white van man was stopped dead in his tracks.

Barely have we dismounted than the next batch of Viking crew climb aboard ready for their final test: whereas it once was a steady flow of 30 or so green berets passing through Bovington every few weeks, that

figure has now swelled to more than 60 soldiers, a more challenging ratio for tutor and pupil alike. Luckily the squaddies prove as keen to get to grips with Viking as their RM forebears.

he soldiers driving Viking use adjectives like awesome, phenomenal, amazing – normally preceded by some choice Anglo-Saxon – to describe the vehicle.

tracks.

white van man stopped dead in his

"It's a phenomenal bit of kit - there's nothing in the Army which can beat it off-road," enthuses Viking instructor Cpl Joel Davison of The Rifles. They also quite like the Royals, too.

"The marines have made us very welcome – they've invited us into their little world," Joel adds. And what a strange world it is, too, full of strange

phrases.

"They'll ask us: 'Are you going ashore tonight?' No, we're already ashore," says Joel. (He has a point.) "We make a point of not using their language. Are you coming to the galley for scran? No, we're off to cookhouse for scoff."

The Army men volunteering for Viking duties are invariably not tank men. But then Viking is not a tank. It's not got a bloody great gun, nor is it cloaked by Chobham armour.

Nor does it wage armoured warfare in the traditional sense. There's no 'Boney' Fuller, no Monty, no Guderian to teach the men.

Only basic tactics are taught: never operate in a group of fewer than three vehicles. (Guderian would at least be happy: *clobber 'em, don't disperse* was always his watchword.)

Viking's not a BV either, the sturdy all-terrain

vehicle which has served Royal well for two decades. Yes, they're built by the same firm. Yes, outwardly they look same(ish). A BV is not armoured for a start - and

no two parts are the same in the two vehicles. Viking is, however, extremely manoeuvrable, extremely reliable – on any given day in Helmand 24 out of every 25 vehicles are fit for patrol – and it has most definitely saved lives.

It is not invulnerable, however. Nine have been lost to enemy action in Afghanistan - and so too some of the men they have carried.

Viking can handle most terrain (it can climb a 45° slope) and operate in temperatures over an incredible range (-46°C to +49°C without changing the lubricants or oil). It's also one of the few vehicles which can cope with the Afghan mud – the dust and fine sand turns to a hideous sludge in heavy rain (the technical RM term is 'gopping').

Vikings are on the road (and mostly off it) daily in Helmand. It took wheeled vehicles three and a half days to move the 100 kilometres (62 miles) from Camp Bastion to Garmsir

One vehicle destroyed by mine and a friendly checkpoint wiped out. Still, one broken down Viking recovered, an in the wet. Viking covered the same distance in four hours. ambush successfully negotiated and

The Helmand terrain and constant usage do take their toll, however. After 40 hours' action

their crew carry out a mini-service. But apart from that it's continually in use for five weeks before heading to Camp Bastion for

a ten-day overhaul. Then it's back out again. Not so for the Armoured Support Group RM – the front-line end of the Armoured Support Company

whose men return this month, while the soldiers heen watching at Bovington head in the opposite direction. Come high summer in Helmand, it will be 90 per

cent soldier, ten per cent Royal in command of the Vikings. And good as Viking is - and it is good - there's

one fundamental which goes back to the dawn of armoured warfare when marines rattled around in Peerless armoured cars on the Western Front.

"The vehicle is only as good as its crew," says Sgt Maj Simon Williams RM, chief instructor at Bovington.

• Pictures from top left on opposite page: the Vikings begin their journey through hostile Dorset countryside; 'Calm down, calm down', the natives are getting restless; One controller is clearly unimpressed by the native uprising; safe departure;

and the spacious interior of the Viking.
Pictures this page from top: the daunting sight of a Viking cavalcade rolling into town; road swept the mine detector is returned to the cab; and watching the road.





Pictures: PO(Phot) Sue Emery

Ten more wrecks gain legal protection

THE final resting places of more than 750 people who died at sea are now protected by the MOD. Additional legal protection has been extended to ten shipwrecks under the Protection of Military Remains Act (PMRA) 1986 to ensure the sites remain undisturbed by divers.

Designation as a protected place allows the site to be visited by divers on a 'look but don't touch or enter' basis.

Any physical disturbance of the wreck would require prior licensing by the MOD. The ten new designations came

into effect on May 1, adding to the existing 48 designated sites. The ten designated wrecks are: **U** HMS Amphion, the first

British warship lost in WW1, mined in the North Sea on August 6 1914 killing 169; Destroyer HMS Ghurka, mined off Dungeness on 8 February 1917. Only five of 75 survived;

Submarine HMS L24 sank off Portland on January 10 1924 after a collision while training, killing her crew of 36;

Destroyer HMS Delight – 19 died in an air attack off Portland on July 29 1940;

HMS Curacao collided with troop-carrying liner Queen Mary in the Atlantic during an anti-submarine manoeuvre on October 2 1942 – 338 men died; Destroyer HMS Penylan was torpedoed in the Channel by an E-boat on December 3 1942 whilst escorting a coastal convoy

38 of her crew of 155 died;
DEMS ship SS Storaa was sunk by E-boats whilst in convoy under RN escort off Hastings on November 3 1943 – 21 died; Minesweeper HMS Loyalty was torpedoed off the Isle of Wight by U480 on August 22 1944, with the loss of 20 men; German U-boat U714, sunk by depth charges from South African frigate HMSAS Natal near the Firth of Forth on March 14 1945 with the loss of 50 men; Cunard roll-on/roll-off container ship Atlantic Conveyor,

serving as an aircraft transport as part of the main task group east of the Falklands when she was struck by an Argentine Exocet on May 25 1982; 12 men died. PMRA 1986 allows the MOD

to protect from unauthorised interference the remains of aircraft and vessels that were in military service when lost. Shipwrecks are eligible for

designation if they lie in UK or international waters. In UK waters any military aircraft or vessel of any nationality

may be designated, but only aircraft or vessels belonging to the UK may be designated in international waters.

Unsung heroes – and campaign – saluted

THE culmination of a tenyear crusade saw the official launch of a book celebrating three unsung war heroes - and demonstrated the

power of the local press. *Tamworth Herald* deputy editor Phil Shanahan, who led the campaign, has written *The Beal Engine Hange* which The Real Enigma Heroes, which tells of the recovery of Enigma code material from a sinking U-boat and of the drive to win international recognition for the main players.

The three were AB Colin Grazier, from Tamworth, Lt Tony Fasson, a Scot, and Tommy Brown, a civilian canteen assistant from North Shields. On October 30 1942 their ship, HMS Petard, was one of

four RN warships harrying a German U-boat in the Eastern Mediterranean. After a ten-hour hunt, involving

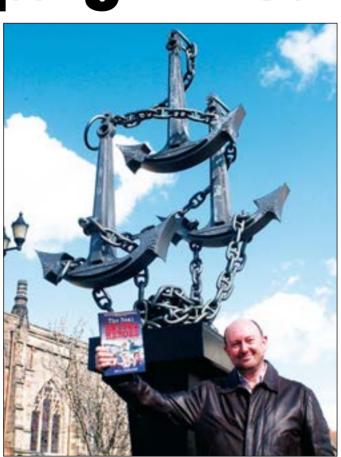
well over 100 depth charges, the crippled U559 was forced to surface and her crew abandoned her at once, expecting her to sink at any moment. But as they fled, Grazier

and Fasson swam towards her, clambered inside and hunted for useful material. What they found, and handed

to Brown on the conning tower, has been widely acknowledged to have given the Allies a telling advantage, and to have 'shortened the war' by months and possibly years.

The Enigma codebooks enabled Bletchley Park boffins full access to U-boat movements and strategies, which protected convoys and ensured the Nazi stranglehold of the North Atlantic was broken.

But none of this was known by Grazier or Fasson, who were



• Phil Shanahan with book in St Editha's Square, Tamworth, in front of the Petard heroes' sculpture

ships.'

autumn of 2009.

www.type45.com

dragged to their deaths when the U-boat suddenly sank, or by Brown, who died in a house-fire before the end of the war. The Official Secrets Act hid this stunning act of bravery from

the world for decades, and it was a chance remark to a Herald reporter which set Phil Shanahan on his quest.

From a modest start, the campaign gained unstoppable momentum, and not only achieved its aim of honouring the men, but also brought justified plaudits to both Phil, his team and the paper. One tangible result was the spectacular sculpture in St Editha's Square, consisting of three anchors

Defender is due to be launched on the Clyde in the

Walenty Pytel

Now comes the launch of Phil Shanahan's book, which intertwines the story of the heroes with the Herald campaign to mark

their place in history. The event saw 11 former sailors from HMS Petard gather at the Ballroom in Bletchley Park, Buckinghamshire, the heart of

British wartime cryptanalysis. Phil said of the campaign: "There was a serious wrong here

that needed to be righted. "These men were denied proper recognition - yet the whole free world should be grateful to them."

He also described Petard as "a

ship of heroes" Shadow defence minister Julian Lewis, introducing the book, said: "Phil Shanahan's book will be a source of great pride not only to the families of the men and the communities they came from, but to all those who revere the Royal Navy and its role in preserving our democracy against the evil of Nazism," he said.

Just weeks earlier Phil had officially opened the refurbished Hut 8 at Bletchley Park – the humble wooden building in which Enigma was cracked, allowing significant parts of the Nazis' signal traffic to be laid bare.

Among those in attendance were two of Colin Grazier's shipmates, Lt Cdr Robert de Pass and Reg Crang, and members of Tamworth RNA.

Exhibitions in Hut 8, renovated for around £500,000, recount the

£19.99, is published by Tempus, part of The History Press (ISBN 978-07524-4472-7).

www.thisistamworth.co.uk

and a chain, by renowned sculptor bows out on time Defender

THE bow section of the fifth Type 45 destroyer has been rolled out at Portsmouth Naval Base by VT Shipbuilding. The 1,000-tonne section of

HMS Defender was placed on the barge Woolston in a twohour operation.

That will be joined by the uptakes/downtakes and mast, and the whole lot floated up to Glasgow in the early summer for assembly by BAE Systems Surface Fleet Solutions – the first time all the main elements built at Portsmouth will be shipped north together. The bow section of Defender

took around 20 months to complete, and, like the previous units, has been fitted out to an advanced stage before assembly.

VT Type 45 project director John Richardson said: "We are on course to complete our part of the programme ahead of schedule with the final ship-set due to be in Glasgow before the end of the year. "The prog

"The programme has underlined the capability of our Portsmouth facility and our progress along the contract learning curve, with a reduction of more than 30 per cent in man

TOWN CLASS CRUISERS 1942

Replica models, measuring 10.5" long, hand cast in metal and hand painted, mounted on a wooden plinth 12" x 3" with brass nameplate. HMS Southampton, HMS Newcastle, HMS Birmingham, HMS Glasgow, HMS Manchester, HMS Gloucester, HMS Sheffield. Also available HMS Belfast 1943 and HMS Edinburgh 1940.



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Record beaten – but no laurels hours between the first and final

FIELD gunners from Devonport beat the record time for the Swartkop Challenge in South Africa – but still ended up in second place. The honours in the gruelling race up a boulder-strewn 45 degree slope above Ladysmith went to the First Bn Irish Guards B team, who completed the course in 16m 53.3s, while Devonport recorded 18m 12.60e. 12.69s, still well inside the previous benchmark of 20m 58s.

They also accepted the Freedom of Ladysmith on behalf of the RN.



Civilian workers and ship's company hold a tea party in the dry dock under HMS York

rea party in the dock

A TRADITIONAL tea party was held at Portsmouth Naval Base - underneath the hull of a destroyer. The party marked an important milestone in the refit of HMS York, as the Type 42 warship was left standing on huge 'stilts' in dry dock.

Workers from Fleet Support Ltd (FSL), who are carrying out the refit package, joined members of York's ship's company and personnel from the base's Superintendent Fleet Maintenance for tea and cakes. Lt Cdr Will Proctor, York's Senior Naval Officer, said: "It is impressive to see the ship out of the water and tea in the dock was a great way to mark this key

refit milestone.

The refit will include an overhaul of York's engines, weapons and computer systems, and she is due back with the Fleet in March next year. The MOD's Defence Equipment and Services has

commissioned a new Dry Dock Code of Practice as a safety initiative.

The code, produced by Gifford, BMT Marine Projects Ltd and FSL, is designed to ensure safe drydocking by the MOD, shipyards and other military and civilian organisations handling mono-hulled surface ships of over 500 tonnes.

Petard incident and the Herald's campaign for recognition. The Real Enigma Heroes, price

www.bletchleypark.org.uk www.thehistorypress.co.uk

Citizens of Cardiff welcome destroyer WARSHIP HMS Southampton has welcomed the citizens of Cardiff on board – and shown how she could help the city in a

crisis. The Type 42 destroyer spent a weekend alongside the Millennium Quay in Cardiff Bay, and among the hundreds of visitors was Welsh

First Minister Rhodri Morgan. Southampton was open to the public for around four hours on the Saturday.

On the following Monday the ship hosted a Maritime Resilience Capability Demonstration for the Welsh Resilience Forum, which is chaired by Mr Morgan. The event is a detailed

demonstration of the contribution the Royal Navy could make in the event of a large-scale incident or emergency in the region that would require co-operation from a number of different civil and military organisations.

Members of the Forum heard from the Naval Regional Commander, Cdre Jamie Miller, about how the Navy could help the civil authorities – as happened Gloucestershire during the floods last summer. Southampton's Commanding

Officer, Cdr Richard Morris, said: 'The visit to Cardiff is crucial to our relationship with the city and we want to demonstrate that as well as being a highly-capable warship we can also play a vital role in peacetime operations anywhere in the world."

Dive trial success

DEEP sea trials of a new NATO submarine rescue system have been declared a success.

The system, owned jointly by the UK, Norway and France, was tested off Bergen when the free-swimming rescue vehicle successfully 'mated' with successfully 'mated' with Norwegian submarine Uredd at 87 metres, then the submersible went on to complete a deep dive to 610 metres.

ITH a little jink of the joystick, the Harrier glides sideways over the flight deck of HMS Illustrious.

A couple of spots away, a helicopter of 814 Naval Air Squadron lifts off to begin another sweep for submarines lurking beneath the waves. It could be the Iceland Gap, circa 1925 circa 1985.

circa 1985. Except that the jets are bomber variants, not the justly-lauded FRS1. The helicopters doing the dipping are Merlins, still a twinkle in the Admiralty's eye two decades ago vo decades ago. And the temperature's in the

There's a distinctly Cold War feel to Orion 2008 – but with all the 21st-Century weaponry

all the 21st-Century weaponry and technology the Senior Service can muster. For the crux of the deployment is focused on the foe much of the Royal Navy was designed and built to contend with: the submarine. The world has moved on since the Soviet submarine fleet was our potential foe. fleet was our potential foe,

however. And that's reflected by the location, scope and mission of the Orion task force. For a start, the core of the deployment is spread across the Gulf of Oman and Indian Ocean Ocean.

The Merlins of 814 NAS, the legendary Flying Tigers, do not search the oceans purely for the threat *beneath* them, but the threats riding *on* them

but the threats hang too. The Harriers of the Naval Strike Wing – elements of 800 and 801 Naval Air Squadrons – are no longer interceptors; they take the fight to the enemy, as they have recently proven with aplomb in Afghanistan. And rather than lead a British battlegroup in the Atlantic, Lusty

heads an international task force: the USS Cole, Spain's SPS Mendez Nuñez, France's FS Jean Bart, alongside the home-grown 'talent' – Edinburgh, Westminster, Trafalgar, RFAs Wave Knight and Fort Victoria.

All-in-all, says the task group's Commanding Officer, Cdre Tom Cunningham, "Orion is a nice little package". There is something for everyone. For the Naval Strike Wing, there's the change to learn

For the Naval Strike Wing, there's the chance to learn about carrier life once again. Commitments in Afghanistan mean it is a year since RN fast jets last deployed at sea. For the Flying Tigers, it's the chance to deploy an entire Merlin squadron at sea for the

AS BRITAIN'S flagship deployment of 2008 reaches its climax, Richard Hargreaves reports from HMS Illustrious in the Gulf of Oman... and experiences a distinct feeling of déjà vu.

first time - six aircraft plus 140 men and women to look after them.

them. For Cdre Cunningham's staff there's the chance to brush up on skills needed to work with Allied navies whose language or working practices – or both – differ from their own. And for the men and women of Orion – there are well in excess of 1,500 British personnel committed to this exercise –

of 1,500 British personnel committed to this exercise – there's work. A lot of work. Orion had what Capt Steve Chick, Illustrious' CO, calls "a difficult gestation". Engineering and personnel issues dogged the first few weeks of the deployment (more on the former later on...).

later on...). Fast forward a couple of months, however, and Cdre Cunningham is convinced that the Orion jigsaw has come

together. "Things which were not natural when we left the UK are not

now," he explained. "A couple of days ago I was listening to the radio chatter in a Merlin while the Harriers were up bombing a splash target and

there were other warfare serials there were other warrare serials going on as well. Everything was working as it should in harmony." This concurrency of exercises typifies Orion. War rarely throws a single threat at you at once, so why should peacetime? There are if not constant, then at the very least frequent tests

at the very least frequent tests of Illustrious' readiness to cope h threats by air and

with threats by air and sea. Today, we're threatened by 'two bruisers' – the codename for a couple of jets bearing down on the flagship. The 'bruisers' are two Falcon jets, flown out from the UK to the Gulf of Oman for a week of trials with the task force (the Harriers of the Naval Strike Wing have also been called upon to 'bomb' the Orion group).

have also been called upon to 'bomb' the Orion group). Lusty has charged USS Cole and HMS Edinburgh with protecting her (something they were designed to do). In Lusty's ops room, a rather antiquated-looking light box flickers into life. A series of coloured lights outline the threat the carrier faces: air, sur[face], sub s[urface] and mine.

The white light adjacent to 'air' dies; the adjacent yellow light illuminates. The Falcons are still a good 25 miles away. There's nothing Illustrious can do at this range. For self-defence, the carrier relies on Goalkeeper, 20mm Oerlikons, a quartet of Miniguns and, *ultima ratio*, a clutch of ship's company blazing away with SA80s. All are weapons of last

All are weapons of last resort. Long before Goalkeeper engages, Edinburgh's Sea Dart or Cole's RIMs should have

taken down the aerial threat. But what if, as Stanley Baldwin once warned, 'the bomber

once warned, 'the bomber always get through'? Today, we're chiefly testing Goalkeeper – a seven-barrelled 30mm Gatling Gun capable of firing 70 rounds every second until its magazine runs out, having thrown up a supposedly impenetrable wall of steel hail. The weapon has to be fired

The weapon has to be fired every six months – and that demands a prey. There aren't too many volunteers, oddly, so a target is hauled on a 10,000-yard line to simulate an incoming missile.

"Because we fired Goalkeeper successfully just off the UK before we left, we know that it works. If it tells us it's locked on, then we know we've got it," explained CPO(ET(WE)) David

Henderson.

Goalkeeper only comes to life in the final moments of an attack. The gun has three modes:

automatic –
 Goalkeeper does everything itself;
 semi-automatic – the operator designates the target and Coalkeaper

deals with it; ● manual – the operator designates the target and fires the weapon.

Lusty is fitted with three Goalkeepers: one on the bow, one on the stern and a third on the superstructure between the funnels.

All three 'keepers talk to each other, so that no two guns aim at the same threat.

guns aim at the same threat. In the operations room, we see whatever each keeper sees thanks to a large grey console with three TV screens, one for each gun. As the Falcons close in on Lusty, the Goalkeeper director brings his weapon to life with the flick of a switch. On the grey console, the

On the grey console, the cameras suddenly start moving, roaming the skies. They find their prey – at this point an indistinct blur on the horizon. The camera hurriedly zooms in

Continued from page 23

The Falcon grows bigger and bigger until the fuselage all but fills the screen.

The director turns to the Principal Warfare Officer: "Forward assess kill." The Falcon is dead.

Of course, it isn't really. It continues on its path – but as it turns away, Goalkeeper loses interest. It decides the aircraft is no longer a threat and goes to sleep.

In the ops room, it's all rather clinical. The conversation is terse and perfunctory. The cameras zoom in on their prey. The director makes his assessment.

Top side, Goalkeeper is an entirely different kettle of fish. It's like a manic children's toy, nodding, swivelling, its barrel lifting up and down frantically as it tracks the incoming aircraft.

And then, threat gone, it goes back to sleep rather like Bagpuss.

n days of yore, 'Bagpuss' wouldn't have been woken; Lusty's Sea Harriers would have swept the foes from the skies.

Those days are gone. The carrier's Harriers these days have a largely offensive role. The Naval Strike Wing had barely returned to Rutland after four and a half months in Kandahar when they roared across Europe and the Arabian Peninsula to join Illustrious off Oman

Four jets, seven pilots and 60 engineers and technicans have embarked on the

carrier for Orion. The key aim has been to introduce – or re-introduce – the wing to its traditional role: operating from a carrier. There's one fundamental underpinning everything the Strike Wing does on

on It of Ve Lusty; whatever it can do at Kandahar or Cottesmore, it must be able to

achieve from a carrier as well. It's been 12 months since the Strike Wing was last at sea; it will be 12 or so months before it's back at sea again, so it's vital that man and machine squeeze as much as possible from this whirlwind spell

Harrison and the as possible from this white apoint aboard Illustrious. "For me, it's like riding a bike – I've done more than 300 deck landings," said Cdr Kev Seymour, Naval Strike Wing Commanding Officer. "For some of the pilots who've done 20 or 30 undiane than thou can suffer 'kkills fade' landings, then they can suffer 'skills fade

those 'getting back into the

been tough but, equally, very rewarding," he said.

"You have to manage your fuel and time meticulously – the ship has more going on than just flying, so you're given a specific time to land which you have to hit to the second."

Too little fuel and you won't make it back. Too much fuel and you'll be too heavy to land. "When you do finally make it alongside, you don't have long to stabilise, move across the deck and particular with the comeining ide to stabilize and land, normally with the remaining jets stacking up behind you, as well as lots of people watching - camera crews, photographers and the ship's captain. So, no pressure then..." Lt Bouyac added. It's not just the pilots under pressure. With a demanding sortie rate to maintain, the Strike Wing's

engineers have been working around the clock. "For everyone working on the deck, there are many more safety issues than when working on a land base," said Lt Cdr Jon Milsom, the wing's Air Engineer Officer.

"There is a lot of activity and everyone has to be vigilant, 100 per cent of the time. "There are lots of people doing important tasks

"If the groundcrew allow the pilot to do his engine checks at the wrong time, someone could get blown over the side of the ship.

blown over the side of the snip. "Safety is paramount, especially as this is the first time at sea for half of our engineers, so everyone has been working hard to achieve this." AET Jason 'Archie' Gemmell falls into the half

who have not been to sea before.

"There are many people in the same boat -inexperienced in life at sea. Once you've got into the ship's routine, it's not bad. And there's some enjoyment to be had - sundowners for example, he said.

"It's actually been more fun than I expected. There are fewer luxuries than in Afghanistan and you get less time to yourself, so some of the lads prefer it there.

AET Phil Palmer, who's served with Harriers at sea and in Kandahar, added: "What you find on a ship is that everything is much more time consuming. If you want to work on it in the hangar, you've got to move it off the deck, lower it on the lift, then shift

it off the lift and finally start work. Veteran or rookie, Cdr Seymour is delighted with the way his men have responded to the challenges of life at sea after a year ashore. "A key part of this deployment is naval

ethos, getting into the ship's routine and the like again. That's something

which the guys are not used to. "What is really pleasing is watching the young AETs develop – there's a really great quality among the guys coming through the system and that's particularly rewarding. It's good for the ship, it's good for the

squadron. The Strike Wing flew more than 300 missions

during its recent tour of duty in Afghanistan supporting Allied ground forces. "The idea was to use the jets' sheer presence as a deterrence," explained Lt Mike Gray of the wing's staff. "If that succeeded, then we were delighted. 'Our job is not to kill people. Our job is to help

the Afghans rebuild their country. Weapons are our last resort, but if we do need to call upon them then it's to get our guys out of trouble and we are very

effective at using them." The fliers called upon their 'last resort' on at least a dozen occasions.

The pilots were not the only men in the wing in "Kandahar is not a benign environment – it

suffers from rocket attacks," said Lt Gray. It also suffers from extremes of temperature: temperatures by day reached 35°C at their peak, but during the depths of winter they plummetted to

-15°C. Add the wind chill factor and it was closer to

"The good thing is that you get back into the swing of it very very quickly." Pilot Lt Dave Bouyac is among

swing'. "The flying has

-25°C. Now add dust, mud, ice and snow and you have an idea of the demands Afghanistan places upon our men and women.

So the air-conditioned comfort of Lusty must be a godsend by comparison – not least because, as Lt Gray says enthusiastically, "the ship has really welcomed us".

he Strike Wing aren't the only naval aviators adjusting to life at sea once more.

The last time 814 Naval Air Squadron

deployed en masse, they were flying Sea Kings. That was more than half a decade ago. Since then, the 'dipper' Sea Kings have gone to the great helicopter graveyard in the sky and the Flying Tigers have learned to master Merlin. 814's Merlins have been to sea before, but not

on this scale. The Flying Tigers hangars and offices at Culdrose are locked, the lights are off. There's nobody

home. Instead, all 140 personnel and six 'cabs' can be found aboard Illustrious. And that's a good thing, says the squadron's CO

And that's a good and of Cdr Steve Deacon. "With the jets on board as well it feels like a proper carrier air group, ust like 20 years ago when I joined the Ark Royal," he enthused. "It's good to get back to our core role and it's

good to be back on a carrier." 814 has concentrated

much of its sub-hunting activity to UK waters.

But what works off Blighty doesn't necessarily work half way around the world thanks to changes in climatic and sea conditions.

So why the emphasis for much of Orion on antisubmarine warfare?

"There has been a proliferation of diesel boats, midget submarines and the like around the world, explained Cdr Deacon.

One Merlin can cover roughly half the area a Nimrod patrols on a sortie and – perhaps more crucially – four times as much sea as the Sea King used to.

Its prey at present is HMS Trafalgar, but the T-boat was being joined by other boats at the end of last month for a major anti-submarine exercise off Goa.

"Expeditionary warfare needs anti-submarine warfare – you cannot ignore the submarine threat. If you do, you cannot enter a theatre," Cdr Deacon added.

Submarines are not necessarily an obvious threat

they're not easy to find.
 More prevalent – and more obvious in this part of the world – is the surface-borne threat.

If Kandahar was no benign environment for the Naval Strike Wing then the Indian Ocean is no benign environment for mariners.

The day before I visited Lusty, pirates had seized a luxury French yacht in the Gulf of Aden (there were more than two dozen similar incidents off the

Were more than two tober similar increasing on the Somali coast last year). "We forget, probably at our peril, how much merchant traffic passes through these waters – a lot of it directly affecting the UK." said Capt Chick. "If these two straits – the Bab el Mandeb and Hormuz – were closed, it would have an impact on trade...and upon the UK."

trade – and upon the UK." Cdre Cunningham added: "There's a level of lawlessness and anarchy on the sea which is unusual – all the time we've been out here there have been pirate attacks.

"It's not our job to weigh in like John Wayne and the 7th Cavalry. There are huge legal issues, but if it was a British

ship which was attacked then the taxpayer would expect us to do something - although the ultimate

decision rests with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office."

Legal issues may constrain what the task force can do, but it does not stop the ships and aircraft

keeping tabs on the seas. The buzzword in the RN these days is Maritime Security Operations – scouring the Seven Seas, looking for illegal activity and monitoring shipping movements.

Monitoring those movements has become considerably easier thanks to a ship's 'DNA'. Yes, (officially it's AIS – Automatic Identification System), constantly beaming details of its name, position, course and speed.

That data can be fed on to the console used by Merlin's observers.

"We can get a really good picture of the area, particularly thanks to the AIS - basically IFF for ships," explained 814's

Cdr Deacon. "It's good to get back to our "If there is a ship which is down there and core role and it's good to be doesn't give off a signal, back on a carrier. With the you immediately ask: what's going on?' jets on board as well it feels gadget which has proved to be a godsend over the oceans: Wescam, an electro-optic camera with thermal maging for like a proper carrier air group, just like 20 years ago when I joined the Ark Royal."

- Cdr Steve Deacon

Steve Deacon with thermal imaging for night vision. "To visually identify something, you have to get within a mile. With the camera, you can do the identification at ten times that range. It's a great piece of kit, we'd just like more of them," Cdr Deacon added. Proof of the increased interest in movements by sea comes 15 minutes into a flight from Lusty to Muscat. At first, the sea seems devoid of shipping.

There's

with thermal imaging for

another

.**D**,

shipping. Appearances invariably are

deceptive. The silvery ribbons meandering through the blue-grey of the Gulf of Oman are a tell-tale sign of a ship's

wake. For the ocean here is brimming with shipping (the Merlin's display is peppered with green dots thanks to AIS).

The aircrewman suddenly leans over a handful of passengers in the rear of the cab – never a

particularly encouraging sign. The passengers look up a little nervously. Their faces become even more tense when the aircrewman returns and again leans over for a

second look. He points downwards. There, racing across the

Gulf of Oman at high speed, is a speedboat. It may, of course, be entirely innocent, but something which would probably barely have registered five or ten years ago is now second nature.

This alertness is something I've not noticed before.

Before Telic, the entire task group was on its guard to be sure.

But for an apparently relatively routine exercise, it's proof that (a) we take the threat from suicide boats very seriously and (b) sailors are kept constantly on their toes.

Such as at 7.01 on a Monday morning.

How do I know it's 7.01am? Because the shrill bosun's call has barely faded over the tannov.

For exercise, for exercise, for exercise, Quickdraw, Quickdraw, Quickdraw. A mock attack by a FIAC - fast inshore

attack craft, basically a speed boat armed with guns or explosives.

One ship in the Orion task group needs no reminder of the threat such boats pose: the USS Cole was badly damaged by suicide bombers in Yemen eight years ago, costing 17 sailors their lives.

As with yesterday's air attack, so Cole and Edinburgh are expected to shield the carrier and prevent the go-fasts getting close. But as with air defence, Goalkeeper also proves

the weapon of last resort against seaborne targets bolstered by Lusty's 20mm and Miniguns blazing away. I assume the raiders were successfully thwarted.

hile hell rages outside, I enjoy a Hollywood dhoby (a longish, very hot shower). That I can do so is thanks to the carrier's

marine engineering department. Now I'll probably receive flak from the rest of the ship's company for saying this but... probably no-one aboard has worked harder during Orion to

make sure Lusty is (a) here and (b) fit to fight. As alluded to earlier, Illustrious' deployment didn't

begin in particularly auspicious circumstances. "People think that ships are like cars – you turn the ignition and go. They are not," Capt Chick stressed.

"Illustrious is a vintage car. She requires a little bit more to look after her and keep her running." Barely had she left Pompey than she was back again to fix a faulty 'fridge'... provoking much Schadenfreude in Fleet Street.

Let's get a few things straight.

This is not a Zanussi from Comet. In fact, it's not even a fridge. It's a freezer. And not one with a few Bird's Eye burgers,

a couple of loaves and some Mr Whippy. It's a freezer half the size the ward room crammed with £60,000 of food to keep 800 sailors happy for several weeks

The freezer was actually fixed by the engineers even before Lusty turned around and got back to Pompey. But the team needed to chip away at

18in of ice which had built up inside it as

18in of ice which had built up inside it as a result of the initial fault.
So that meant emptying the freezer, with a chain of sailors passing food down to a cold storage truck on the jetty, while the ice was burned away with blow torches.
"I don't think people comprehend how big the freezers are – they're huge, and this was our biggest," said Lt Cdr Helen Ashworth, Lusty's senior marine engineering officer. marine engineering officer.

The freezers, like much of Illustrious, are ageing. The carrier is officially 26 years old, but some of the machinery which drives her dates back to the 1960s and '70s.

But it's not so much the age as the mileage which has taken its toll.

Illustrious has been worked hard - especially in the past two or three years since emerging from her most recent refit.

Last year was pretty much non-stop for the ship. 2008 is no different.

And when the ship does stop, the engineers do not. They must squeeze in all the work they can before Illustrious returns to sea.

As the nation's on-call strike carrier, the ship is at five days' notice to move ... constantly

"If maintenance is needed then it can't take more

than five days, which means five days of backto-back work, all hands to the pump," said Lt Cdr Ashworth.

"My team has worked extremely hard and their families have shown a great deal of patience.

The engineering department has been worked every bit as hard as the ship herself - not easy when it is short of one in five sailors.

"Our most valuable asset is our people and our workload has probably gone up three times in keeping a ship 26 years old going," said WO Ritchie Richmond.

"What this ship's company has achieved probably no other ship's company could have done. Although the problems in the ship are not our fault, we're the ones who fix it.

Port visits offer no respite for the engineers, but they do present evidence of the RN's 'can do' mentality.

In Muscat, the team needed to change an engine (a 24-hour-a-day job over four days). Volunteers from the rest of the ship's company stepped forward to help out and bear some of the burden - proof that they might not always voice their appreciation for the stokers and engineers, but they do at least

know what they've been through. "Illustrious is a classic car expected to do a Le Mans every day of the week," Lt Cdr Ashworth

added. "She's high profile - and she's expected to do

high-profile things. "If things go wrong, then they go wrong spectacularly because everyone's looking at us." She continued: "I can say with pride that my team

has pulled out all the stops." Back to that Hollywood dhoby. It's not for my benefit. Fresh water is not intended to keep the sailors clean or topped up with wets. It's there to wash the aircraft down (using salt water really isn't a good idea).

a good local. Air conditioning is not there for the benefit of the ship's company either. It's there to keep the machinery, particularly the computers, cool. Outside in April it's normally 36°C. Inside it's a pleasant 22°C (although it touches 50°C in some machinery spaces)

machinery spaces). Without air conditioning, Lusty would be warmer inside than outside. Computers would cook. So too

her crew. All of which you don't notice. No, all of which you

"Marine engineering is the unsexy part of the Navy," Lt Cdr Ashworth conceded. Unsexy, yes, but also fundamental. "There's professional pride and a feeling of 'don't to the betarde act yes down?

let the bastards get you down'. That's what keeps us going," said Lt Cdr Ashworth. _____ "I wanted a challenge – there are basically two

Type 42s worth of equipment in this ship and my department is the size of a ship's company on a

A 'challenge' (that finest of RN euphemisms) it has been and one which has at times driven many in the ME department to despair. Still, they carry on. "You cannot sit in a corner and start crying. You get on with it," said Ritchie.

There is, at least, some light relief to ease the

pain There are film nights for the wardroom where officers vote on the movie they wish to watch... and then someone else decides.

There are band and bingo nights (accompanied by the odd drop of alcohol).

The chefs, sorry logisticians (catering services (preparation)), provided a dial-a-pizza service (which proved immensely popular). There was hands to bathe (both accommodation ladders were lowered and sailors swam from one to the other successful provided the second

to the other, quite challenging as there was a bit a swell).

Continued on page 26

• A Merlin of 814 NAS – The Flying Tigers – lifts off from HMS Illustrious with her guardian angel HMS Edinburgh in the background

• HMS Illustrious leads the Orion task force in the Gulf of Oman. (L-R) SPS Mendez Nuñez, RFA Wave Knight, HMS Edinburgh and USS Cole and (above) top bombing... A Naval Strike Wing Harrier attacks a splash target trailed behind Illustrious

Continued from page 25 For those slightly less adventurous, there was a swimming pool on the quarterdeck (actually more

of a bubble-less jacuzzi filled with sea water). There was a birthday party, 800 NAS' 75th to be precise, which provided the perfect excuse for a cake and champagne (there needs to be an excuse for cake and champers? – Ed) with a flypast of Illustrious by two jets trailing vapour from

humour. Amid the usual admonishments about FOD,

it asks, prompting some choice graffiti: "Not in this cabin."

abandon ship splice the mainbrace

and you come to the heads, featuring a top tip to make Viz proud.

There's the handy two-step guide to getting rid of old loo rolls. First, take the old roll off its holder. Second, toss it in the bin. (Now I know where

l've been going wrong all these years – Ed.) You'll find culture in

.............................

the heads, too (of the

non bacterial variety...). Behind each door is a selection of poems. Not doggerels. Real poems. Coleridge, Betjeman, even Jose de Espronceda's *La Canción del Pirata* ('The Pirate's Song'). Fortunately for non hispanophones, there's an English translation provided (possibly by Lusty's Spanish exchange officer, 'Pedro the PWO').

Pedro isn't the only non-Brit aboard Illustrious for Orion.

Last year we commented on the international flavour of the aircraft aboard Lusty. Well, now the aircraft are British but the crew's rather

cosmopolitan. There's an American airman carrying out studies into the role of the future carriers.

There's a French air traffic controller.

There's a New Zealander. There's also a handful of RAF personnel, some with the Naval Strike Wing, some with the ship's company, some attached to the commodore's staff.

All of which helps towards the bigger picture, for Orion is, of course, more than just about Lusty. It's more than just about the RN – but it would be impossible without us.

"This is what the Royal Navy does," Cdre Cunningham stressed.

"You have to take the men and women away, show them a basic group in operation, show them RASing, routines, run a logistics chain half way across the world. You have to test the whole infrastructure - you can't do that off the Isle of

Wight. "Sending a force like this all the way out here is most definitely not a token gesture. There are not many navies who can do this, although there are many who aspire to it."

their wing tips. And there's Jack's ever-present sense of

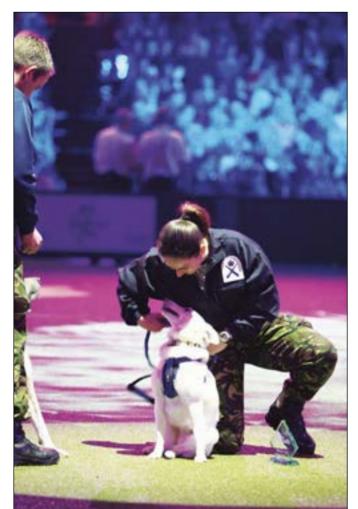
fatigue and cleanliness, a more esoteric poster on one cabin door. "Is there higher intelligence?"

A few doors down: Submarine watchkeeper resting. Wake only in the event of

submarine located

A few more doors down

Picture: LA(Phot) Gregg Macready



• Centre-stage at Crufts, POPT Lisa Farthing and Tali in the main

Best of breed

IN just over one year, dogs Nowzad and Tali have gone from being mongrels of the Afghan desert to become stars of the world's premier dog show as finalists for the

Friends for Life award. C/Sgt 'Penny' Farthing and his wife POPT Lisa set up charity Nowzad Dogs after rescuing the dogs from their previous life.

Lisa said: "Being stood in the main arena at Crufts, live on TV, just seemed completely mad. "Only 12 months ago the dogs were living out under the stars and fending for themselves and now they were having a weekend in the Hilton Hotel and stood in the main arena at one of the largest dog shows in the world."

The charity is funding a welfare programme for rescued animals in Afghanistan – support them online: www.nowzaddogs.co.uk.

Dancing the night away at Culdrose

EIGHT couples from RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall strapped on their dancing shoes for the air base's own version of BBC's *Strictly Come* Dancing

The officers took on the senior rates in a contest of cha-cha-cha,

jive and waltz to the tunes of the Culdrose Military Band. Bandmaster Dave Prentice, who organised the event, said: "I like to keep the Culdrose Volunteer band busy, so I decided to organise a dancing competition.

"The band love playing Big Band music, and have really risen to the challenge of learning so many new songs. "I was quite worried that I would not get any volunteers to dance

though. But I didn't need to pressgang anyone - before I knew it we had eight couples ready to learn how to dance."

The fundraising evening raised £1,163 to support the Precious Lives Appeal in aid of Children's Hospice South West.



• Trainee submarines from HMS Raleigh are helped by students from Torpoint Community College Picture: Dave Sh

diadi eep

TEN trainee submariners from HMS Raleigh headed over to Torpoint Community College to carry out a garden makeover.

Over three weeks the submariners, led by LWEA Daniel Fox, levelled and prepared the ground before laying out separate allotment plots for the students to use

The scheme is part of the wider Gardens for Life project, a community based project with links to schools in India and Sri Lanka.



HMS Ark Royal's crew dress up for the Sport Relief mile

The nautical mile

THE Sport Relief mile had Naval folk across the globe pulling on their running shoes to tackle a one-mile run to raise money for the charity.

On board the Navy's flagship HMS Ark Royal, 220 members of the ship's company – including the commanding officer Capt Mike Mansergh – ran four laps of the ship's flightdeck in a mid-Atlantic run.

Not everyone took the event entirely seriously, with an impressive array of fancy-dress on display and several people enjoying the benefits of a run from a wheelchair or stretcher, however the carrier's runners raised over £440 for their efforts.

CPOPT Mark Harrold said: "An event like this is an excellent way to get people out and exercising, whilst having fun at the same

time." All three services took part in a run at Brunssum in the Netherlands at the NATO Joint Force Command HQ. Despite a cold damp day, spirits remained high with several participants in fancy dress and military firefighters running in their breathing

apparatus. The event raised more than

£400 for Sport Relief. Over in HMS Collingwood, LPTs Shaun 'Mac' McDonald and Peter Sapey were helping the 1st Stubbington Beavers and Scouts warm up for their one mile run.

"I knew the Beavers could do it, and when they all crossed the finishing line, I was so proud of all of them," said Beaver Scout Leader Lt Darren 'Toad' Gosling. The Nimrod crews of RAF

Kinloss spread their mile-running madness overseas too, with personnel out in the Gulf organising runs of one, three and six miles - won 2-1 by the Royal Navy participants.

Finally in HMS Sultan the mile-runners let rip with their fertile imaginations, displaying an impressive array of sporting attire to demonstrate that Naval fitness and a good sense of humour are alive and well. Lt Cdr Richard Hanslip said:

"Fitness, fun and charity are all part of a sailor's make-up – and who would want to change that?"

Cheers to the Intterv

THE RN and RM Sports Lottery is keeping up the fluid levels of Naval trainees at HMS Raleigh.

The lottery has supplied water bottles for the recruits to use during their initial training, and Gortex sports jackets to keep the instructors warm and dry.

Divisional training officer Lt Wayne Ffoulkes said: "It is important that the recruits remain hydrated throughout the demanding initial training course and we are very grateful to the RN and RM Sports Lottery for the sup-

port they are providing." The Sports Lottery invests \pounds 1.8million each year into activities for ships, units, establishments and sports associations.



• Lt Damian Stafford-Shaw finished his mile last at HMS Sultan - but was the only participant to complete the course on a space-hopper

First for Commando March

THIS year's annual Commando March in the Scottish Highlands drew a team of four St Dunstaners to compete for the first time.

The four ex-Servicemen all blind or seriously visually impaired, were fomer Royal Marine Peter Lindsay, Gunner Colin Williamson, Sniper Craig Lundberg, and Sapper Peter Walker, all assisted by another former green beret Stan Bowers.

Craig was helped along the seven-mile path by Cadet Cpl McCarthy from Stokesley Detachment ACF running alongside him as guide. Craig said: "The course

really tested my stamina, and I'm delighted with the time we achieved."

At the awards ceremony after the march, the St Dunstaners were presented with a replica of the Commando Memorial statue and given a standing ovation in recognition of their exceptional performance.

To find out more about St Dunstans, visit www. st-dunstans.org.uk or

call 01993 770 605. **Education** in Naval racenights

OFFICERS on the Initial Command and Staff Course (Maritime) at Shrivenham made sure that they introduced their colleagues to a fine Naval tradition - horseracing night. Lt Chris Wood said: "Horses

such as Pongo's Pony and RAF Justice jostled at the starting line to negotiate tricky waterfeatures and jumps in their desperation to

be first past the post. "Racegoers from the other Services weren't quite sure what to make of this tradition RN spectacle – but they soon relaxed and had a flutter." He added: "The thunder of

flying hooves and cheers of the crowd were heard throughout the Joint Services Command and Staff College.

Lt Col Neil Bennett RM, director of the Royal Naval Division, said: "The evening was a great opportunity for officers on the course to relax a little and raise some money for a very worthwhile cause." The officers' efforts netted

£350 for the RNLI.



• The emergency services and armed forces joined together to raise money for injured military personnel at Selly Oak Hospital

orces excel at pu

SAILORS, marines, soldiers and airmen joined forces with the West Midlands Police and other emergency services to haul a passenger jet by hand at Birmingham airport. All their efforts were to raise money for the care of injured military personnel at Selly Oak Hospital.

Members of the military care team at Selly Oak

were joined by Royal Navy and Royal Marine Reservists based at HMS Forward in Birmingham and student nurses from the Defence School of Healthcare at Birmingham University for the weighty pull of the FlyBe jet plane. A somewhat lighter burden then took over for a 14-mile stretcher carry from the airport on to the hospital.

Pressure job

• The Forward lift driver trudges back through the snow on the flight deck of HMS Ark Royal during cold-weather exercises off Norway at the beginning of the year Picture: PO(Phot) Jonathan Hamlet

EVERYONE can forecast the weather to some degree or other.

LA LERA

Your bunions ache, or there is an evil black cloud blotting out the sun, or the cows are all lying down – a good chance of rain.

Red sky at night, or enough blue sky after rain to make a sailor a pair of trousers (bell-bottomed No 1s of course) and you have the makings of a decent day ahead.

That sort of stuff is not going to be terribly helpful to a Harrier pilot, the Weapon Engineer Officer of a destroyer or a squad of commandos bound for a hostile shore.

They would like more precision – and if the forecast is way out, it could result in the loss of an expensive aeroplane, a wasted shot from the 4.5in gun, or loss of life. Put into that context, the meteorological element of the

meteorological element of the Hydrographic, Meteorological and Oceanographic Training Group remit takes on a more serious outlook than the 'Professor Fog' jibes might suggest.

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We are talking a pressure job. Lt Cdr Andy Moys, Officer in Charge of the Meteorological Training Unit, said the Training Group prepares Naval personnel to forecast and take observations for ships, for aviators (whether carrierbased or small ships' flights) and for

RM boat drivers, among others. "It all depends upon the level required," said Lt Cdr Movs

"The 19-week course is a big one - it is at the highest level, and an internationally-recognised course.

"Royal Navy forecasters can hold their heads up high anywhere in the world.

"We teach to the level of civilian courses, and we do more practical work as well.

"Not just on land, but out in the middle of the sea as well. "It is very important – for

example, when looking at Naval gunfire, the atmosphere plays a major part on what the shell will hit.

hit. "The same goes for cruise missiles, and even as far as ballistic nuclear weapons – any airbornedelivered system will be affected by the weather, and aircraft are sensitive to weather too, of course." Among the main roles of

Met specialists is the service provided for an airfield such as Culdrose or Yeovilton, and forecasting on a carrier, looking at conditions in a column of air several hundred miles away from the ship.

"It requires in-depth meteorology – not just 'it's going to rain', but in terms of cloud type and cover, exactly when it is going to rain, what you can expect up to 30,000ft, turbulence, visibility and so on.

"Can the pilot see their target and deliver the weapon to best effect? "And can he or she land

back on the ship? "It is essential to realise we have a big role in getting the weapon system off the aircraft

and send it to the target. "It is efficient use of resources – there is no point sending aircraft if they cannot

achieve the mission. "You save an awful lot of money and fuel if they never takeoff because they cannot follow

through to the final objective. "A great number of missions fail because of the environment,

not because of technical failure. "That also goes for boats or landing craft – if you are running in to a beach, but you find more than 4ft of surf, you cannot get troops in."

Right throughout history the environment has had a habit of defeating armies and navies – and effective forecasting has prevented catastrophe.

Gp Capt James Stagg, having consulted his team of forecasters, advised Eisenhower to postpone Operation Neptune, the invasion of Normandy, from June 5 1944.

The invasion fleet was loaded and ready to go, but ships were recalled and the boffins again checked their charts before recommending the following day, June 6, should be D-Day.

The forecast of Stagg and his team was spot on - and fortune was with them; had they waited for the next favourable combination of tides, moon and visibility, the invasion fleet would have been battered by the worst weather in the Channel for 20 years.

By way of contrast, Napoleon could have done with a decent longrange forecast when he launched his invasion of Russia in 1812.

The French dictator failed to take sufficient notice of the extremes of weather along his invasion route, and having scorched during the summer (losing hundreds of horses and soldiers as a consequence), an early and particularly harsh winter turned a retreat into a disaster.

Hitler made the same error in 1941 – Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Russia, was delayed by six weeks for tactical reasons, which left ill-equipped troops to perish in the snow, their machinery unusable and the Russians, far more familiar with the conditions, picking them off at will.

Then there was Agincourt – steady rain bogged down heavilyarmoured French cavalry, making them easy targets for English archers.

Or the Spanish Armada in the summer of 1588 which, having received a mauling at the hands of Sir Francis Drake's fleet, tried to escape around Scotland and was smashed by summer storms.

In any case, 'good' or 'bad' weather is a subjective matter.

"People think of windy and wet

weather as bad weather, but what is a good day or a bad day?" said Lt Cdr Moys. "It depends on what you want

to achieve. "If it is sunny and bright, it is no good for a beach landing – you want low cloud and flat seas.

"For a reconnaissance aircraft, a clear sky can mean condensation trails, which make it highly visible. "Then there is diving visibility,

or the Special Forces guy who is swimming. "Can he be seen? Do you need

"Can he be seen? Do you need clear water or mucky water for covert operations?

"You might also be forecasting for currents – if

your team encounter a tidal stream, will they be able to get to the target, or will they be too tired?"

The training of forecasters and observers at the HMTG in Devonport taps into the topclass resources of the Met Office, including the HORACE global forecasting system.

Picking up data from satellite, ground stations and remote sites, the fledgling weathermen and women are trained to analyse charts, to understand what is

• A METOC rating taking readings on board HMS Albion during Exercise Neptune Warrior last year. Picture: LA(PHOT) Dan Hooper By way of contrast, Napoleon weather as bad weather, but what going on in the atmosphere, and

to produce an accurate forecast. This in turn allows matters such as radio and radar performance, wind forces, sea swells, night illumination and other phenomena to be factored in.

Many RN ships are designed to project power inshore to the hinterland, so a carrier would have two officers forecasting and four ratings, split into two cells for round-the-clock cover.

A smaller ship would have one officer and one rating to do the same job.

All seek to maximise their side's advantages and to blunt the ability of the enemy to see and attack.

"We teach them to look at the upper atmosphere – they can forecast maybe up to 400 or 500 miles away," said Lt Cdr Moys. It may be a Harrier sortie, or the

It may be a Harrier sortie, or the radar performance of an ASaC helicopter on the look-out for small boats or low-flying aircraft in the northern Gulf, or the range at which a ship's sensors spot an incoming missile.

Or it may be the guarantee to get an aircraft down after a sortie, or plan in a replenishment at sea – at the end of the day the safety and effectiveness of ships, aircraft and sailors depend on the forecasts.



Valiant memories

IN JANUARY you carried a letter from Torpedoman D Bott recounting HMS Valiant coming to grief in a float-ing dock in Trincomalee in 1944.

The dock had been towed into harbour in three sections and, over two or three weeks, assembled to form an expensive and useful facility.

I was an observer with 733 Squadron, a Fleet Requirements Unit, and our flight path enabled us to observe the events your correspondent describes.

On the morning after the calamity I was instructed to take a photograph but there was noth-ing above water except a couple of derricks at odd angles.

I have always thought the ship involved was Warspite but, if your correspondent was aboard, he should know!

I have been out of touch with the RN since those WW2 days but now receive Navy News courtesv of a granddaughter, Sarah Rushton, now serving in HMS Bulwark – which ship I was privi-leged to visit when she was alongside in Liverpool recently.

- John Driver. Laneshawbridge, Colne, Lancashire

...I WAS based on shore in Trincomalee in 1944 and we had a workshop on the jetty overlooking where the floating dock was moored.

We understood that this dock had been built in southern India and was brand new Two smaller ships had been in the dock before Valiant. We could see that there was trouble with lifting the Valiant.

Our camp was situated about one mile from our workshop, although we could not see the floating dock from our camp the noise kept us awake all night.

The next morning the dock had disappeared with the top of the cranes just visible above waterlevel

The Valiant was out by the harbour entrance, her bows very low in the water. We often wondered

what became of her. – S/M Basil Woodward, former CERA, Rustington, Littlehampton, West Sussex

.. I WAS a pom-pom crew member when the disaster happened. I was in the working party sent



as she almost capsized.

over to the dock to go below to the

pumping space to open up the sea-

cocks, the idea being to correct the

list and enable Valiant to slide out.

opened the order came to get out

and we made a hurried exit to the

ing section still afloat the crane

mentioned by D Bott missed us

the dock and swam ashore and were assisted over the rocks by

some squaddies from a local army

Adamant and the following morn-ing we were taken back to Valiant.

If anyone deserved a medal that night it was the crane driver who

remained at his post until the

Many weeks of hard work fol-

lowed, gun barrels, ammunition

and anything heavy was removed

and pumping went on day and

night. Also, diving parties worked

continuously. I was told that one tear on

Valiant's hull measured 27ft where

the concrete blocks ripped through

A cutter took us onboard HMS

As we headed for the remain-

We were ordered to abandon

upper deck.

by inches.

camp.

end.

When the sea-cocks were finally

The meat stores were holed and a working party was sent down to clear the rotten sides of beef. Despite wearing gas masks the work was most unpleasant and there were several near-fatal accidents. The meat was dumped outside the harbour where even the sharks swam off!

I attended the Court of Inquiry under Rear Admiral 'Hookie' Walker and our skipper, Capt O'Donnell, also attended.

All witnesses were warned not to talk about the event. There were rumours that Japanese frogmen were to blame, but these were later discounted.

Several hundred of the crew were sent to shore bases, others to ships. HMS Valiant took part in several bombardments, Salony and Surelaya included, but never went into the Pacific.

- David Wicking, Chatteris, Cambs

...I WAS serving in RN MTB 278 with the 16th Flotilla in Trinco in 1944, and as we were Indian Navy we were not in the main harbour, but up in Cod Bay, or China Bay, with HMIS Kedah.

Alongside the Kedah was a ship named Matiana, accommodated in which were a right motley crowd, who I'm sure had a marine escort each; these were the people who had come with a prefabricated floating dock in sections and who assembled it.

When it was completed, several smaller vessels were tested in it: tugs, submarines and destroyers, and also I think a cruiser.

About August I was on my way home to the UK aboard the troop-ship Strathaird. As a PO victualled in the RM Sergeants' Mess, who were from HMS Valiant, I heard from them of Valiant's disaster.

Whilst we were alongside Matiana in Kedah, the buzz was that all the docks assemblers had been dissident people who had been conscripted for the job. Makes you think, doesn't it? Like S/M Bett I have never heard anything at all about that event which occurred almost 64

years ago, although I have been

wondering about it for such a long time - J M McLean, Haslemere,

Surrey

Busman's holiday at the movies

ON EASTER day, in the comfort of my home, I watched In Which We Serve on TV. The previous time I had seen it was in January 1943 - 65 years earlier, in very different circumstances.

I was serving in the Hunt-class destroyer HMS Middleton, based at Scapa and much engaged in Arctic convoys. During one of our brief spells in harbour we heard there was a film, title unknown, being shown in our nearby depot ship, HMS Tyne.

In our nearby depot ship, HMS lyne. Although the weather was atrocious a party of us braved the rough sea and rain and went over in our ship's motor-boat. To our disappointment, indeed shock, we found it was, of all films, *In Which We Serve*! However, although much of the story is harrowing, we, as sailors, found plenty to amuse us and eagerly sought technical errors. There were in fact very few. The film actually provides a very good historical record of the Js and Ks, including a fleeting shot of HMS Kachmir (E12) at full steam ahead

Kashmir (F12) at full steam ahead. It was certainly a memorable occasion and on return to Middleton

our shipmates found it hilarious that we had braved a stormy trip just to watch... ourselves - Mike Alston, Association Secretary, HMS Middleton (L74)

Association, Maidenhead, Berks



Any familiar faces among these Naval Nurses? Old girls' network

THE girls of 'B' Class, State Enrolled Pupil Nurses, QARNNS, who started their training at RN Hospital Stonehouse, in Plymouth in October 1972, are planning their first reunion in Plymouth this October. I have spent several fascinating months tracing and finding my col-leagues and most of us had not spoken to, or met the others, in 30 years or more

So far I have found 18 out of 21 possible (three left the course early and are not sought) and I would like help in finding the final three who I believe may still live in the Plymouth area.

They are (maiden names) Jacqueline Henderson, fourth from right, back row, Sophie Ahmed, second from right, front row, and Margaret 'Maggie' Mooney, second from right, middle row.

Could they, or anyone knowing the 'missing' girls ask them to contact me by phone, 01482 781690, or email? – Penny Rawson (nee Bendall), late Assistant Head Naval Nurse,

QARNNS, email penny@sudcotes.karoo.co.uk Hull



AS A minor addition to your admirable piece An Immortal Deed (April), there were two sister ships taken up from trade as passage ferry boats on the Mersey – Iris and Daffodil.

I'm not sure whether they were mustered as HMS but it was HM himself – ie, King George V – who personally ordained that they be dubbed HMS Royal Iris and Royal Daffodil.

This became a tradition, and I hope one that the ferry fleet carries on. It's a small point, and erhaps a frivolous one, and it was a priceless gesture, and I would very much like to know if it is maintained

- Capt A B Sainsbury (Retd) London

Olympic guardship

WOULD their Lordships consider designating HMS Portland as the guardship for the 2012 Olympic Sailing events at Portland? I'm sure the people of

Weymouth and Portland would welcome their own ship back for this prestigious occasion.

Terry Why (former CPOWtr) Portland, Dorset

WHIATS ALL TELL NER TO STUDY OF A SAILOR VRITING A PRIVATE LETTER

• A Jack Kettle cartoon from pre-World War 2

ack's iokes on the boil

IN PURSUIT of my hobby of collecting pre-WW2 RN comic and patriotic postcards, I have come across cards by a person who signs himself Jack Kettle.

He is what I would call the between-wars Tugg and the humour in the cards can still be appreciated today. I wonder if any readers have any knowledge of who this person was? The ones I have are on photographic paper, not card, and

have not been posted, so I wonder if they were produced on board ships as souvenirs? Roger Newman, (RN 1959-82)

I couldn't find any mention of Jack Kettle in early copies of Navy News, but then we were not founded until 1954. Perhaps some of our readers can help? See page 45 for a review of Jack 'n'Royal, a book of cartoons from the 60s and 70s by Southsea artist Derek Crowter. - Ed



HMS Warspite in her later life in 1942

Warspite won the day

IT IS always a joy to read Navy News. But why oh why do the media always concentrate on the darker side of naval history?

Yes, despite the gallantry of Warburton Lee VC and the catastrophic defeat of his flotilla which takes pride of place in most of today's media, this tragic loss was more than compensated a few days later when HMS Warspite and her attendant destroyers took up the cudgels and in less than three hours, in a

fierce encounter which involved almost 20 warships firing at point-blank range in the narrow confined of Ofotfiord, destroyed the entire German force and left them as blazing wrecks in the Norwegian waters, and then retired to return to the Middle East to take up her duties as Cunningham's flagship. I know, because I was there.

- Bernard Hallas, RM, aged 90 (the oldest PRO in the RNA), York

- <u>LE</u>TTERS

On the ropes at **Pitt Street**

AS AN 88-year-old reader the news that the Pitt Street gym was to be demolished (March) brought a lump to my throat. Is nothing sacred these days?

My mind went back some 71 years to 1937 when I left HMS Ganges and found myself drafted to Victory with 119 other boys.

We were the nucleus of the RN Rope Climbing and Window Ladder Display Team for the 1937 Royal Tournament in London. It was a wonderful experience. Marching from barracks twice a

day, the PTIs were golden to us in the gymnasium, where we were split into groups of 16. For the first 15 minutes of any session we had the run of the gym with the trapeze over the pool. We trained hard for weeks and

at the end of May 1937 took the train up to London.

One week's practising, two weeks' show. The icing on the cake was being victualled by Lyons, big eats. Incidentally we got one shilling and sixpence a day extra.

My experience at Pitt Street was second-to-none, the train-ing and being part of the Royal Tournament helped me settle down to my life in the Navy.

I'm sure there are many more saddened on reading of the demise of Pitt Street

- Alf Fishlock, Bushbury, Wolverhampton

I WAS dismayed to see the photograph in your March edition of balloons being launched from HMS Ark Royal as the plans for Meet Your Navy were revealed.

Inevitably, many of these balloons will end up on the surface of the sea to be ingested by whales, dolphins, turtles and seabirds. Experts estimate that plastic bags (including balloons) kill 100,000 animals and a million seabirds every year.

It was recently reported that a mature, but dead, Cuviers beaked whale was washed up on the shore of Mull off the west coast of Scotland.

When it was opened up to establish the cause of death, its stomach was found to contain 23 plastic bags from silage, which it had ingested, mistaking these bags

for squid, its normal prey. It was recently announced that Portsmouth City Council has banned helium balloon releases from its land in order to protect wildlife.

The city council has banned mass balloon releases taking place on its land, including schools It is about time the Navy imposed a similar ban on this

practice which is so damaging to the environment.

- C J A Cope, Kings Nympton, Devon



• The launch of Meet Your Navy on the flightdeck of HMS Ark Royal in Portsmouth Naval Base in

Awe-inspiring Zeebrugge

THE excellent feature you published on the Zeebrugge Raid brought back a very memorable occasion for me.

Over the Easter period of 1966 and 67 HMS Northumbria (ex Quainton: CMS to Tyne Division RNR) escorted by other RNR Units conveyed some 150 survivors of the raid from Great Yarmouth to Zeebrugge to participate in the town's Anniversary Services of Remembrance.

Some 50 proud old warriors disembarked from Northumbria on to the Mole, and in remarkably fine fettle marched off with their walking sticks, crutches, wheelchairs and the like to the Cathedral and City Memorial.

The soundness of their tread as they returned along the Mole with bands playing and standards flying was a sight to behold.

At the RPC that followed I fell into conversation with a portly young-looking man, a bit more sprightly than the others, resting on his walking stick. He said he was 65 which, quickly calculated, made him 17 and celebrating his birthday as Vindictive secured to the Mole.

The Mole for anyone who has never seen it is a formidable piece of engineering. Besides its impressive length, and stone construction, it is the size of the tiers rising seawards that gives it a sense of oppression to normal piers.

The Germans knew Keyes was coming and had positioned machine guns on gun carriages hub-to-hub every 200 yards down the mile and a bit of the Mole. My new acquaintance, George (forgotten his

He made no mention of crossing a gangway. He recalled how he followed others across a plank and

those behind him, kept falling down. For the rest of the day he, and others he joined up with, fought their way down the Mole yard by yard. He could not recall the blowing up of the Viaduct at the base of the Mole, but on reaching it, they turned round and fought yard by yard all the way back to

Later that day as he stood in the gathering dusk as Vindictive limped home he reflected that he had not suffered a sprain, graze, bruise, cut, break or laceration of any sort whatsoever.

He confided to me that for the whole of that day he had had a peculiar sensation of being locked in a cocoon that gradually evaporated the closer they got to England, and had disappeared never to return on reaching Portsmouth.

As a young Lieutenant I was much affected by his story (as may be your readers) but I could not desist from asking what it had been like.

It seemed preposterous to hear him say, "Awful". "Yes," I said, "I see that. But what was it really like?" "Dreadful" he replied.

And so it went on: "Awful; dreadful; dreadful; awful." Until I realised (stupid bugger that I was) in the

pantheon of language they said it all. As I finish close to tears I hope George's passing

was as quiet and peaceful as his fight, for we remember each and every one of them - before and since – do we not? - Capt Fergus Maclaine RD RNR Retd, HMS

Calliope, Tyne Division RNR

Passing the 'buck

HMS ROEBUCK (Ship of the Month, January) was my first ship and I joined her in January 1962 in Guzz.

She was part of the Dartmouth Training Squadron and we did a couple of lovely trips to the West Indies and Scandinavia, in the few months I was in her.

I do, however, think she went to scrap, and not sold as stated, as I was part of the party that stripped her prior to her being scrapped. I have often wondered

what happened to her after I left to go to Dryad.

- Stan Gallon, Cape Town, South Africa

Ban the balloons Argyll's 'dog watch'

INYOUR article about HMS Argyll (April) spending 52 days at sea, you make it sound like a long time, well it's only a dog watch. I was on the Commando car-

rier HMS Bulwark from October 1967 to October 1969. From December 1967 to February 1968 we spent ten weeks (70 plus days) at sea, off the coast near Aden and up the Gulf.

We had a full ship's company, helicopter squadron and a full complement of Royal Marines. What a good way to spend Christmas! We had water shortages caused by jellyfish, and as we had 100 men on our messdeck we were showering four to a cubicle. That's when soap on a

rope comes in handy. We must have had 1,800-plus on board at the time. I wonder if the Argyll crew had the same problems, with their smaller crew

and a newer ship? Mind you, we had a blooming good run ashore in Singapore

when we got back. - R A (Bungy) Williams, REM1

Bring back the mighty Hood

I AM curious as to how names of new warships are chosen. For instance, the two new carriers that are to be built (hopefully) being named HMS

Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales. I can understand that they will be so called in honour of our

Queen and her eldest son. But what I cannot understand is why the people who name our warships have never resurrected the name which used to epitomise the strength of the Royal

Navy – namely HMS Hood. If they can resurrect the name of Prince of Wales (which after the action in which Hood was sunk was unfairly called 'the ship that ran away') then why not

Hood? I think it is time that a new capital ship was so named.
 – E Hills, Yaxley, Peterborough

.oo-se talk

ON MANY TV programmes and indeed news bulletins, when reference is made to sub-lieutenants, lieutenants or lieutenant commanders, there is a tendency to use the pronunciation leftenant whereas in my days in the RN the correct term was

lootenant Has there been a change in recent years? I'm intrigued... – Gordon Thomson, Redhill,

Rescue Ruler

Surrey

I NOTE that a name is being considered for the new submariner rescue submersible. As the system is being jointly operated by Norway, France and the UK, what about the Norse God Adgir – *Ruler of the Sea?* – Bill Chapman

What mixed messages our young people receive. The National Union of Teachers, at its Easter conference, criti-cised the MOD for bias in the information literature it sends to schools. The NUT must be very naïve if it thinks young people do not see the dangers of Armed Forces life every time they watch TV or open a newspaper.

nion

Now the Government has announced that it recognises the benefits to young people of joining cadet organisations. It is to fund an £800,000 pilot scheme to bring cadet units into

state schools in six areas of England and Wales. At the moment there are only 52 state schools which run a Combined Cadet Force, as opposed to 201 in the independent

sector. There is, of course, already an opportunity for state school pupils

The views expressed in Navy News do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Defence

Our Sea Cadet pages demonstrate, month after month, the range of activities offered by these units, and the benefits to young people of joining.

Their primary purpose is not recruiting, (standfast the NUT) but teaching practical skills, instilling the more abstract qualities of confidence, self-reliance and teamwork, and, one hopes, having fun. It is excellent news that the Government has recognised the ben-

efits which these organisations offer their young cadets. It would be even better news if they extended the funding to help existing units, which are currently funded by the hard-pressed MOD and frequently operate, with a lot of hard work and goodwill, under difficult financial circumstances.

-NAVY NEWS

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Editorial Editor: Sarah Fletcher Deputy Editor: Mike Gray **Assistant Editors:** Richard Hargreaves Helen Craven ☎ 023 9229 4228 ☎ 9380 24163 (Mil) Fax 023 9283 8845 e-mail: edit@navynews.co.uk

Subscriptions 023 9273 4448 e-mail: subscriptions@

Business

navynews.co.uk Accounts 023 9272 0686 Advertising 023 9272 5062 or 023 9275 6951 e-mail: advertising@ navvnews.co.uk Distribution 023 9282 9065

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surname), was in the third wave off Vindictive.

wondering why all those in front of him, and then all

Vindictive.

TRIBUND

• Not only did HMS Belfast live to tell the tale, but celebrated her 70th birthday in March with a party for members of the HMS Belfast Association (pictured above) and a rededication of her ship's bell, given by the City of Belfast. Picture: courtesy of the Imperial War Museum

Belfast's bash

BELFAST'S back again - contrary to many letters and books by amateur authors (and a letter in Navy News in January) ships do not 'hit' magnetic mines, nor do

the mines hit the ship. On November 21 1939 Belfast, in company with HMS Southampton and two destroyers, was proceeding to sea for gunnery practice.

While in the Firth of Forth off the Isle of May in 18 fathoms (108ft) the magnetic influence of Belfast triggered a magnetic mine as she passed over it. At the time, 10:52, no guns

were firing. Bibliography appears to be unknown to many authors

of these past events. I had a pint or so the other day with John Harrison, a former ordnance artificer who on the day

 $\mathbf{O}\mathbf{D}$

- Ted Hill, co-founder, HMS Belfast Association, Harold Wood, Essex .IN RESPONSE to Ken Buckingham's letter, although

HMS Belfast was attached to the Home Fleet at Scapa Flow during WW2, she was in fact leaving the Firth of Forth on November 21 1939, and struck a mine laid by U21. Her keel was buckled and she also suffered engine failure. She was towed down to Devonport

of the mining was in a turret of

Belfast. He suffered injuries and

wears his hurt certificate badge with pride. The account is also in

the Profile Book of HMS Belfast,

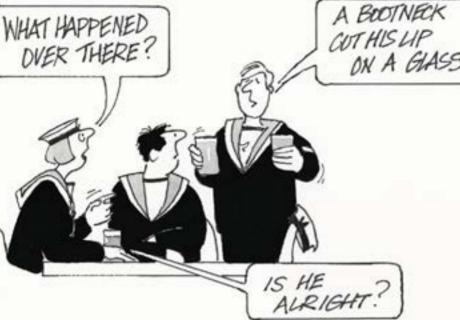
by John Wingate.

via the east coast and through the Solent. - David Hughes, Chairman,

RNA Orkney, Kirkwall, Orkney

The piece about "launched by a bomb" is some-thing I haven't heard about – if anyone could supply details I would be grateful. I have a shipmate in our RNA who was in Roebuck just before me.





Another mystery ship

AFTER the great response to the 'mystery ship' in front of the Doges' Palace, I wonder if your readers would be kind enough to identify this ship for me?

I had sent the photo to a friend, thinking it was HMS Emerald, but it wasn't. He suggested that it could be my brother's first ship, HMS York, but I know it was not that either.

I have searched through Jane's Fighting Ships but again I cannot trace it. I would be most grateful if anyone can come up with

the answer. - S/M Ron Whelan,

Hemel Hempstead, Herts

View hallo!

I HAVE seen the legendary hunt tattoo described in The Time of Your Lives (April). I joined my first ship, HMS

Wilkieston, in Famagusta in March 1959. I reached the messdeck when

the RO came down stripped off ready for a shower, and lo and behold, I saw the hunt as described in your article. He also had an eye tattooed on

each buttock, and over this was 1984 Big Brother is Watching You. I can't remember the RO's

name but what an introduction to the RN for a young REM straight from training at Collingwood.

- Brian Rayner, Wisbech, Cambs



No joy for **Killicks**

THE proudest moment of my RN career was passing my killick specs course (after CO's recommendation and passing an aptitude, both unnecessary now) and joining the Fleet as a Leading Seaman specialist. What a joy it was to join my next ship to start a new job, with newly-

earned respect and the pride of knowing that my role was vital to the

Ship's progress from port to port. Many an hour was spent behind the wheel of the seaboat whilst on patrol in the Northern Arabian Gulf, rigging for a RAS, or maintaining the SSE (Specialist Safety Equipment) sometimes bored, sometimes excited, but always necessary

How things have changed. My draft order has come in and I will fly out to join my next ship in the Gulf after completing my TAC COMMS (Tactical Communications) course, forced on me without consultation. This time however I am not qualified to drive the boats (not my

job any more, anyway) and will spend my action station and defence watch on the bridge, waving flags. It's enough to make me weep, a non-boat-driving, flag-waving killick spec. Joy!

I challenge the hierarchy to name one killick spec who is happy with the changes made to our once-respected branch. Maybe I'm just being bitter and hostile to change, but there will not be many.

I, for the first time, an dreading my next sea-draft and can only count away the days until I can leave the service. If I could put my notice in I most certainly would, unfortunately with a bitter taste and sad memories

of a once-great Navy. - Leading Seaman Gferer, DRSO, Portsmouth Naval Base

Harrier's first deck landing THE photo shows what I believe to be the first landing

at sea of the P1154 (Prototype Harrier) in 1966 onboard HMS Bulwark. This aircraft was piloted by a civilian test pilot. I remember the occasion well as the aircraft had only VHF comms aboard, and a frantic scrabble ensued to dust off and fire up the old 86m TxRx.

As you can see in the photo, there are plenty of goofers, and we were rewarded with what in those days seemed an impossible feat of flying.

- Barry Lazenbury (former POREL) Yate, South Gloucestershire



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 for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues. We particularly seek letters from serving personnel to open up debate on issues that

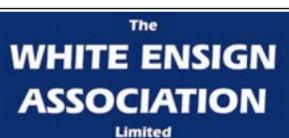
> Please try to keep your submis-sions as brief as possible our space is limited. The editor reserves the

right to edit your submissions.

NAVY NEWS, MAY 2008 31

LETTERS

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ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY



• S/M Rod Fraser

Woking's stalwart is in demand

S/M ROD Fraser may look a little lonely in the picture above – but then he is the last remaining founder member of Woking branch, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this month. More than 100 shipmates

and guests are expected at an anniversary dinner at the Holiday Inn in Woking, where the guest of honour will be the Mayor of the town, Cllr Bryan Cross.

S/M Rod is the branch's secretary and ceremonial officer, and his leadership and dedication have been vital in ensuring the branch has flourished.

Many local ex-Service associations also rely on the branch to organise parades and the like, such is Rod's administration ability, and they are guaranteed a good turn-out of eager Woking shipmates.

The branch is holding its third Veterans Day parade on June 27, and would like men and women recently returned from Iraq and Afghanistan to lead the parade.

Anyone who would like to participate, including ex-Service associations, should contact Rod on 01932 349928.

Poppy veteran

A STALWART poppy collector in the Midlands has been presented with a medal by the Royal British Legion

S/M Bill Wenlock, a Life Vice President of **Wigston** branch, was rewarded for 30 years of collecting

for the Poppy Appeal. The World War 2 veteran celebrated his diamond wedding last year, and he and his wife Frances collected $f_{.150}$ in donations instead of presents, which was donated to the Leicester Sea Cadets.

Farewell to John

BEXHILL-on-Sea branch bid farewell to much-loved colleague John Baber, who died in March aged 85.

John, who served from 1941-46, was a founder member and

RNA seeks deputy for **General Secretary**

THE RNA is seeking a deputy general secretary to help with major developments within the organisation.

An advertisement has been authorised by the National Council as part of the RNA's strategy for relocation to Portsmouth, and will appear in various publications.

The National Council has also notified the Employment Liaison Officer (Naval), the Naval Resettlement Information Officer and the White Ensign Association of the requirement.

The notice has been placed in the RNA's monthly circular, and in the HQ Roll Quarterly Newsletter.

The notice states that "the RNA is looking for a Deputy to its General Secretary (Chief Executive) to start by early summer 2008 and both set up a new Headquarters following the Association's decision to relocate and to help evolve the Association's links with the Royal Navy and its veterans in the 21st century.

"A competitive salary with attractive benefits is offered. "As a successful applicant you will have broad-based administrative skills (including being IT literate), be motivated to support the charity's 25,000 members, have experience of the Royal Navy and be in sympathy with the Association.

"This will be a busy appointment; enthusiasm for responsibility, a good sense of humour and the ability to manage subordinate members of staff are essential. "You will also deputise for the

General Secretary. "The Association is updating its image and this appointment includes regular contact with the membership (with some travel to

branch events including abroad); responsibility for the Association's correspondence and publications; Conference and event planning, office management and the formulation and delivery of some

training. "The Royal Naval Association website is at www.royal-navalassociation.co.uk

"Interested applicants should forward a letter of application, CV and the names of two referees to the General Secretary, the Royal Naval Association, 82 Chelsea Manor Street, London SW3 5QJ by May 16 2008."

Memorabilia is presented to museum

TWO Falklands veterans who served in ambulance ship HMS Hydra have presented memorabilia to the Falkland Islands Museum during a visit to the South Atlantic.

Peter 'Jan' Spray gave a limited edition print of an oil painting he commissioned of the survey ship at anchor in Stanley in 1982 immediately

after the conflict. The print was signed by some of the ship's company of the time, including Bob Stewart - a young lieutenant under training at the time, but now Captain HM and Hydrographer of the Navy. Other items were presented to Sian Davis of the musuum but labe

the museum by John 'Joe' Erskine, all to be included in the Falklands War section.

A good year in prospect

PLYMOUTH branch can look forward to another year of progress, sound finances, sound management and a hefty social and ceremonial diary. At the branch's AGM 75

members were able to celebrate another good year – and congratulate their president, Cdre Simon Lister, on his promotion to rear admiral, and his forthcoming appointment at the College of Defence Studies.

Branch chairman S/M Bob Palmer also welcomed chaplain Rev Gary Keith RN, who led the opening and closing prayers.

S/M Bob went on to congratulate members on their response to Gift Aid requests, and also for the branch charitable donations in support of Combat Stress, Joint Services Hosanna House and Sea Cadet units TS Golden Hind and TS Manadon.

Thanks were expressed for the efforts of the branch's hardworking social committee, the ceremonial parade marshall and standard bearer, the welfare officer, independent examiners, and the PR team for achieving 'excellent" press coverage.

Cdre Lister updated members on the future of Devonport Naval Base and the successful relocation of TS Golden Hind to HMS Vivid in South Yard.

The chairman rounded off the meeting by presenting Cdre Lister with an engraved crystal bowl to demonstrate the members' appreciation and to convey their best wishes for the future.

Further information on the branch is available from S/M Bob Palmer on 01752 509931 or from social secretary Sue Gutteridge on 01752 849176.

Mystery crest returned

A REUNION had unexpected

At a recent Navy Weekend on Hayling Island, with parallel reunions for shipmates of

the second crest and kept it as a souvenir. The crest remained in the

family for 50 years or so, until Barry's visit, when he mentioned the upcoming Loch Fada meet. Brian felt a twinge of conscience,

and felt it should be returned to its rightful place. And his brother Barry duly did

the honours, presenting the crest - still with screw holes - to the Loch Fada Association at their gala dinner.

Feathers pub in the borough.

The Plume of Feathers is considered to be the first pub in

Well-known by seamen,

the eastern hemisphere, being

just off the meridian line.

Greenwich keep the flag flying

GREENWICH branch held their Greenwich Seamen's Hospital and the old RN College. annual lunch at the Plume of

Although few in number, shipmates are determined to maintain a Naval presence in Greenwich, partly through services at the Pleasance, where sailors from Nelson's





• Mourners gather for the funeral of S/M Jack Beresford, of Lichfield branch

Branches mourn elders and respected man, sadly missed by all.

TWO branches are mourning the passing of elders – one of whom missed his 100th birthday by just two days.

S/M Dick Morris was the oldest member of

Dereham branch, and was within sight of his centenary when he died in January. It is believed that S/M Dick, along with branch president S/M Lambert, was a founder member of Dereham just over 50 years ago. In his boyhood, S/M Dick was a Barnardo Boy,

and did his early sea training at the Watts Naval Training School in Norfolk.

He spent the latter part of his life in Bintree, near Dereham, where he served many times on the local council, and his shipmates said he was a well-loved

Another much-loved shipmate who crossed the bar was S/M Jack Beresford RNVR, of Lichfield branch. S/M Jack served in corvettes with Atlantic convoys, was at D-Day on LSTs and was torpedoed in the Channel. He also served in the Far East. He was president of No 8 Area for some years, president of Lichfield branch and of Lichfield RBL, and a member of West Midlands Landing Craft Association.

He was also a founder member of his village cricket club, for whom he used to play regularly. At S/M Jack's funeral the village church was full to bursting with Naval and civilian friends wishing to

St Vincent boys meet 50 years on

pay their respects.

Vincent in Gosport to start their New Entry training in Duncan 11.

Five decades on, a lot older and hopefully a little wiser, a dozen of that group got back together to mark the occasion and take a brief glimpse down memory lane.

The day's activities started with a visit to HMS Excellent, where they were welcomed by First Lieutenant Lt Cdr Alan Cronin, himself a St Vincent boy.

They then took a trip across to the Royal Clarence Yard, where they had spent many a cold hour learning how to row and sail.

Then it was on to the old place itself, now St Vincent College, but still containing buildings they would recognise, plus a museum, situated in the old Chiefs' Mess. Next stop was HMS

FIFTY years ago a group of apprehensive teenagers passed under the Clock Tower of HMS St wardroom by Executive Officer wardroom by Executive Officer Cdr Allun Watts, followed by a tour of the training establishment.

Finally they returned to the Royal Maritime Club, where 'Up Spirits' and the Loyal Toast got the reunion dinner off to a fine start. The group is most grateful to

Malcolm Smith, the chairman of the St Vincent Association, for arranging what turned out to be a most memorable day.

New faces

S/M BRIAN Woodruff was elected branch secretary at the AGM of Beccles branch, while S/M Ted Thompson was re-elected chairman.

S/M Leo Whisstock takes over from S/M Len Manners as social secretary, and Len was thanked for all his hard work.

consequences for a ship's archives. Prior to 1953 HMS Loch Fada had two unofficial ship's crests, the first of which is well-documented. The second only appears very much out of focus in photographs taken at the time, and despite extensive research by the HMS

Loch Fada Association archivist, very little is known of it.

Loch Fada, the Loch Class Association, Duchess and South Kent Submariners Association, there was also a party from Wetherby RNA, including S/M Barry Hayes, recently returned from visiting his brother Brian in Australia.

Brian was a stoker on Loch Tralaig, part of the Derry Flotilla with Loch Fada, and one night,

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION 🚟

New man at the top - and cash boost for Scouts

EASTERN Cyprus branch have their first president. S/M Rev Eric Freeman took up

his new position at a ceremony in the WOs and Sgts Mess at Ayios Nikolaos.

The new president was formally welcomed by the branch chairman, S/M Eric Hirst.

The following day, in another part of the island, the Cyprus branch presented a cheque for 200 Euros to the 57th Troop of the Episkopi Sea Scouts. Scouts Daniel Marley and Ryan

Murray, accompanied by scout leader Jay O'Leary and chairman Brian Nicholle, were given the cheque by branch chairman S/M Nobby Hall.

Daniel and Ryan expressed their thanks, and gave the shipmates a description of their activities throughout last year and their plans for the coming year.

Those plans include an attempt to master dragon boat racing. S/M Nobby observed that the Sea Scouts are a great example of well-behaved modern youth.

Service for **D-Day landing** vessels

THE annual service of remembrance at the Normandy RN/RM Memorial at Sword Beach, Ouistreham is to be held at 11.45am on Friday June 6.

The service, in honour of the landing vessels - ships, craft and barges - which took part in the D-Day Landings in 1944, will be conducted by Rev Martin Evans RN, and the parade will be under the operational control of 1 Assault Group RM.

The monument stands opposite the entrance to la gare maritime, at the Normandy terminal of the Portsmouth to Caen Brittany Ferries service.

Groups and individuals are welcome, said Maurice Hillebrandt, who can be contacted on 01395 442800.



• Members of Hull branch act as Grand Marshalls of the Veterans Day Parade in Charleston

Transatlantic visitors 'treated like royalty'

AGM in Blackpool.

Through him, a programme was worked out, and as a result the Veterans flew out ton Charleston, South Carolina.

Vince Johnson, their ex-US Marine contact, had taken care of all the arrangements, and the Brits' first meal set the tone - by the time they got to the till, all the meals and drinks had already been paid for.

Having slept off the effects of the flight at the Quality Street Convention Centre, the British visitors received their first official guests - a welcoming party that included two admirals, a colonel and representatives of North Charleston City Council. Among the other visits and events attended were:

A wreath-laying ceremony at the new River Front Park Naval Memorial;

A plantation visit; Patriots Point, including USS

Yorktown: The Fleet Navy and Marine Centre Submariners Association: Veterans of Foreign Wars Association;

A special graduation ceremony day at Paris Island as VIP guests of the colonel; A dinner dance back at USS

Yorktown; The American Legion at Goose

Creek and River Island; Special guests at the Marine

Corps Officers Annual Ball. The Hull members were made Grand Marshalls of the Veterans

Day Parade, leading the parade in World War 2 vehicles, they visited a US Veterans hospital, lunched with the colonel's Low Country Leathernecks, and received medals at the North Charleston City Council Veterans Ceremony.

By way of thanks, the British hosted a banquet for all the organisations and people who had contributed to the visit, presenting RNA, RM, Kingston-upon-Hull and various other plaques to the mayor and his staff, and certificates of appreciation to all others.

Bob Reeves, secretary of Hull branch, said: "Many gifts were taken out to the USA, however, many more came home with us

"Long and lasting relationships have been formed by all of our group and many, many people of Charleston.

"Personally, the highlight of an extraordinary visit for me was that I met up with an old buddy of mine who now lives in Pennsylvania and who m I had served with on HMS Victorious (1964-67) and had not seen since we both left the ship

"We are now in constant contact and will be visiting each other. "To sum up, we were treated like royalty wherever we went, transport and meals were paid for by various organisations and the city council, and the warm-hearted people went out of their way to greet us, especially our WW2 veterans."

Plans are now afoot for American veterans to make the return visit over Veterans Week in Hull.

THE mystery ship in our March edition (right) was HMS Echo – as identified by Mr J Hughes of Prestwood, who wins our £50

250 PRIZE PUZZLE

prize. This month's vessel was built during World War 2, and launched as a sloop at Dumbarton on November 9 1942, but was later

reclassified as a frigate. Can you name her? We have removed her pennant number

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 Closing date for entries is



A GROUP of members

from Hull branch built on

a friendship formed at a

reunion to visit the United

Veterans Group' had met a former US Marine, who now

owns a travel agency, at an LST

and Landing Craft Association

The 'Hull White Ensign

States.

be submitted, but photocopies ed. not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

MYSTERY PICTURE 159

Name

MORE details are emerging of plans for the wideranging nine-day National Veterans event in Blackpool next month.

One highlight of the festivities, which run from June 21-29, is a night-time parachute drop on to the mous sands.

All the Services will get a chance to demonstrate their prowess as there will be land, sea and air displays, and enthusiasts have promised to bring a range of vintage vehicles.

Veterans will be presented with medals, there will be an evening parade and events for families and schools.

The event is designed to bring together veterans of all ages, backgrounds and experiences, and to ensure there will be something for all ages to enjoy.

The military displays will take place on Saturday June 21 and Sunday June 22, with associated exhibitions transforming the promenade near the North Pier.

Royal Marines will stage a beach landing, while the Battle of Britain's Memorial Flight will bring some vintage World War aircraft to the skies, possibly including a Spitfire, Hurricane and Dakota.

The RAF Falcons parachute display team will drop in from 12,000ft, and search and rescue helicopter ams will demonstrate their skills.

Other aircraft which should be present include the

Hawk jet trainer and Tucano and Tutor planes. National Veterans Day itself, on Friday June 27, will feature a veterans parade through the town, and

as dusk falls the Red Devils parachute display team – members of the Parachute Regiment – will feature n a spectacular illuminated beach-landing. The grand finale will include a spectacular firework

display.

Throughout the nine days veterans will take part in the Badge Challenge, when they will collect their badges in unusual and daredevil ways.

This will demonstrate the transferable skills learned in the Forces, such as diving, climbing and abseiling.

One younger veteran is due to dive into the shark tank at the town's Sealife Centre to claim his badge on National Veterans Day.

June 29 has been designated Sporting Sunday, featuring a veterans golf tournament and veterans cricket match, both in Blackpool's Stanley Park.

Activities open to schools throughout the week include tree-planting in memory of conflicts, a schools Veterans Day tribute, school visits by veterans and a wartime cinema experience, featuring archive news footage of children being fitted for gas masks and a Laurel and Hardy film

Mayor praises civic links

LEAMINGTON Spa shipmates and their guests celebrated the branch's 60th anniversary with dinner dance in the club's ballroom.

The principal guest of honour was S/M Alwyn Jones and his wife Margaret – after 18 years as vice president, S/M Alwyn is now in his

seventh year as president. Also on hand was the Mayor of Royal Learnington Spa, Cllr David Greenwood, and his wife Margaret, honorary chaplain Arthur Webster and his wife Jane, Robert Coombes, president of Learnington branch of the RAF Association, and his wife Pamela, Association, and his wife Famela, and vice president Ron Capers and his wife Joan. The Mayor spoke of the excellent and valued relationship

between the town and the branch, and said he was pleased to accept a commemorative plaque marking the 60th anniversary, which will be sited adjacent to the town's war memorial.

He also said how impressed he was to learn of the work carried out each week by the Wednesday Working Party, using the knowledge and skills required in their previous occupations in the maintenance and improvement of the branch's property and facilities.

A happy birthday to York

MARCH was a typically busy month for the **York** branch of the RNA and RM Association.

But top of the agenda was the 30th birthday celebration, with veterans from all over the country helping to make it a memorable occasion.

This month representatives of the branch are due to attend the Graspan ceremony on Horse Guards Parade in London. It is expected that the massed

bands of the Royal Marines will add their usual panache and colour to the occasion.

Next month, on June 14, branch chairman S/M Peter Shepherd and secretary Mike Farrington will muster branch members around York city centre for the annual collection in aid of the Alexandra Rose Day charity.

Veteran collectors will include S/M Johnny Haigh, S/M Bill Sunderland (both of whom served on Arctic convoys) and S/M Bernard Hallas, who will be celebrating his 90th birthday.

The following day should see a service at the graveside of local hero Bdr Wilkinson, RM Artillery, who was awarded the Victoria Cross during the Crimea.

It is hoped that the chief executive of the RM Association will be able to attend.

Volunteer rewarded

S/M DAVID Fiander, secretary of the Maidstone branch, has been awarded a Highly Commended certificate at the 2007 Kent Volunteers Awards ceremony.

Presenting the certificate, Mike Hill of Kent County Council said: "In his capacity as secretary of Maidstone RNA for 24 years, David has carried out some wonderful work on behalf of ex-Servicemen and women.

"Many hours have been spent in travel and in paperwork in visiting and investigating cases of hardship and providing medical and financial aid as required, as well as providing a guard of honour for those members who have crossed the bar.

"A man who has truly provided service for the Services. ิล

Plans take shape

June 6. More than one entry can

The winner will be announced in

our July edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.



A charcoal drawing of Jack Mantle operating his 2 pounder pom-pom gun on board HMS Foylebank in Portland harbour, from the National Archives Art of War exhibition Picture courtesy of: The National Archives UK, ref: INF 3/414

Mantle Hall opens doors

A NEW Junior Rates accommodation block has opened at HMS Excellent, bearing the name of Victoria Cross hero Leading Seaman Jack Mantle. The new building, boasting 55 single-living accommodation rooms, has been designed to achieve

an excellent rating for environmental sustainability, as well as the hope of an excellent rating from the junior rates who will make it their home.

Built using the modular method – a familiar sight now to many who work around the Navy's establishments -100 per cent of the modular waste materials are recycled and over 33 tonnes of CO2 are saved in the construction process, the equivalent of driving 92,000 miles or around the world three and a half times.

Cdr Mike Phelps (Retd), the former Support Commander of Portsmouth Naval Base, opened the new block, saying: "This new accommodation is some of the best in the Royal Navy.

"It is especially significant to record the brave actions of LS Mantle and to encourage the young sailors living here to reflect upon his actions.'

Leading Seaman Jack Foreman Mantle won his Victoria Cross for his actions in Portland harbour on board the armed merchant cruiser HMS Foylebank. Mantle had previously been mentioned in despatches for shooting down a German raider using a Lewis light machine-gun from a French ship.

When the enemy Stuka dive bombers bore down upon Portland harbour in early July 1940, the 23year-old sailor was manning his starboard 20mm pom-pom gun on board Foylebank.

Against the onslaught of more than 20 Stukas, blasting away with their guns and dropping bombs, Mantle fired back in a seemingly unstoppable retort. The record in the London Gazette reads: "Early in

the action his left leg was shattered by a bomb, but he stood fast at his gun and went on firing with handgear only, for the ship's electric power had failed. "Almost at once he was wounded again in many

places. Between his bursts of fire he had time to reflect on the grievous injuries of which he was soon to die, but his great courage bore him up till the end of the fight, when he fell by the gun had so valiantly served.'



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Meeting in camera

WE'RE expecting to see an impressive array of photographs from a big Naval reunion taking place next month - although from our personal knowledge of the Photographers' branch not all of them will be publishable ...

It seems this is an event that has been on the cards for many years, but Danny du Feu of the Naval Photographers Assocation has finally taken his Phot brethren in hand to make the event a reality on June 6-8. But it's not just members of

the Photographic branch who are invited to the celebrations in Portsmouth and at Whale Island, the party is for anyone who has had anything to do with RN photography, with photographs from the Army, RAF and civil service equally welcome, and photographic sponsors, suppliers and associates.

Navy News staffers are wary of showing their faces for fear of a tide of complaints about lack of picture credits...

Saturday June 7 promises to be

with a variety of displays. Find out more by contacting Danny du Feu on 0116 289 8725, 07891 660715 or by email:

danny@ddf-photography.co.uk. **NOTICEBOARD**

Reunions

JUNE 2008 HMS Hood Memorial Service: Takes place on June 1 at St John the Baptist Church, Boldre at 1100. This year's guest preacher will be Revd Philip Elston RNR who last preached at the 1996 service. In attendance will be a contingent from HMS Collingwood led by the CO, Cdre Steve Kir-by RN. For more information contact Nigel Henley at nigel.henley@amficon.com or tel: 01590 678323.

Henley at nigel.henley@amficon.com or tel: 01590 678323. RN Photographers Association: RN Phots, serving and retired, are invited to come along to a fantastic social gathering at Whale Island, Portsmouth on June 7 from 1800. Photographs from the 2008 Peregrine Trophy will be on display alongside other material from photographic sponsors and from years gone by. There will also be an opportunity to catch up with friends and col-leagues on Friday 6th at the Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street, Portsmouth from 1930 and Sunday 8th at the Irish Club, Southsea from 1200. For full details of the reunion go to the RN Phot Association website at: http://www.rnpa.org.uk/ Tickets are avail-able from the Reunion Ticket co-ordinator and can be obtained by sending a SAE to Danny Du Feu, 57 Westover Road, Leicester, LE3 3DU, mobile: 07891 660715. Caterers Reunion Dinner: The 19th annu-al Caterers Reunion Dinner: The 19th annu-al Caterers Reunion Dinner: All ex-sen-ior rate caterers interested in attending this event, should contact Dave Byles at dave. byles180@mod.uk or tel: 023 9262 5802. JULY 2008 Cunningham 29: Chefs of Cunningham 29

bytest 80@mod.uk or tel: 023 9262 5802. JULY 2008 Cunningham 29: Chefs of Cunningham 29 the 1st Chefs Class at Aldershot (Sept 1983), 25th Anniversary Reunion on July 18 at the Olde House Hotel, Chesterfield, S40 4RN. If any WEMs of this entry are interested, you can also join us. Please contact Mike 'Taff' Spear at taff_spear@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 07789 550098 or write to 4 St Mary's Close, West Walton, Wisbech PE14 7EQ or contact Jim Davey at Jim.Davey@bbc.co.uk. Baghdad Support Unit: Andrew Bailes, ex Royal Artillary, is trying to organise a reunion for personnel who served at the Baghdad Support Unit: Andrew Bailes, ex Royal Artillary, is trying to organise a reunion for personnel who served at the Baghdad Support Unit from August 2003 to the present day. The reunion will take place towards the end of July and beginning of Au-gust, once returns have been received. If you are interested in this reunion, please contact Andrew Bailes at Andry-2008@fsmail.net or tel: 07515 175935. tel: 07515 175935.

AUGUST 2008 HMS Ma

HMS Manchester Association: Heunion and church service at St Ann's church, HM Dockyard, Portsmouth at 1000 on August 10, followed by a buffet lunch at the Holiday Inn. More details from M T Broad (secretary) on 023 9226 8696 or 2 Park Farm Road, Pur-

ok Portomouth . PO7 5HN

HMS Blackpool: A reunion will be held at

the Stretton Hotel, Blackpool, on the week-end August 29. All ex-crew members are welcome to attend. For booking information, costs and schedule of events, contact; Bob Jones at carol.bob77@ntlworld.com or tel: 023 9236 3752.

SEPTEMBER 2008 Friends of HMS Crane 1943-62: will hold their tenth reunion at the Royal Mari-time Club, Portsmouth, September 12-13. Contact Nobby Hall on 01797 364633 for details

details. HMS Nubian 1964-66 Commission: Reunion at the Russell Hotel, Weymouth, September 12-14. Book direct on 0845 8800211 or contact Jim Rotherham on 01246.433923.

BB00211 or contact Jim Hotherham on 01246 433923.
 14th Carrier Air Group Association: Reunion at the RNA Club, Leamington Spa on September 20. All who served with 804 and 812 NAS in HM Ships Glory, Ocean and Theseus or with either squadron at any time are invited to attend. Details from Ken Lam-bert at Kenneth.lambert1@btintemet.com or 17 Walgrave, Orton Malborne, Peterbor-ough, PE2 5NR or tel: 01733 234655.
 HMS Matchless Association 1942-46.
 Reunion for members of Matchless and other M-class destroyers of the flotilla are welcome to attend the 22nd annual reunion on September 20 at the Union Jack Club, London. Contact J Horton, 10 Finch Court, Coles Close, Ongar, Essex, CM5 0AY or tel: 01277 366617.
 River-class Frigate Association: 23d

01277 366617. River-class Frigate Association: 23rd annual reunion at the Royal Navy Club, Leamington Spa, on September 20. Muster 1100, lunch 1400. Castle-class frigates and Flower-class corvettes will also be welcome. Contact Ray Dodd, Clayleaches Farm, Arlies Lane, Stalybridge, Cheshire, SK15 3PZ or tel: 0161 338 4298.

HIMS Tartar Association: The solution of the Hotel Solution of the North Solution of the Solution of the North Solution of the North

OCTOBER 2008 HMS Exmouth 1968-71: Third reunion to be held at the King Charles Hotel, Brompton Road, Gillingham from October 3 to 4. Any-one wishing to attend should contact Mickey Dunne at michael.dunne7@ntlworld.com or tel: 01325 268193 01325 258193

Dunne at michael.dunne?@ntlworld.com or tel: 01325 258193. HMS Royal Oak: Annual memorial serv-ice for the lost crew of HMS Royal Oak will be held this year at the Church of St Bar-bara, HMS Excellent on October 4. For de-tails contact the Hon Sec on 01256 323444 or write to 5 Downsland Road, Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 8TU. HMS Superb (Cruiser) Association: Reunion on October 4 at the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham, Kent. Details from Fred Kinsey on 01223 871505. HMS Llandaff: Reunion at Eastbourne on October 10-13. This year we celebrate 50 years since the ship was first commissioned with the guest of honour, Rear Admiral David Snelson Rtd. Contact 'Slinger' Wood at kevin.wood@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 020 8581 5693 or see the website at http://www. hmslandaff.co.uk for more details. The Ton Class Association (coastal minesweepers and their auxiliaries): An-nual reunion and AGM, October 10-13, at the Trecarn Hotel, Babbacombe. All mem-bers welcome, contact Peter Harrison, at peterharrison_@eclipse.co.uk or write to

bers welcome, contact Peter Harrison, at peterharrison@eclipse.co.uk or write to Foxhollow, Shevioek, Torpoint, Cornwall, PL11 3EL, tel: 01503 230216. Not a mem-ber, then get in touch with Dennis Cook our membership secretary at denniscook@ fsmail.net or tel: 01909 4451745 or write to 5 Manvers St eet, Worksop, Notts, S80 1SD

Quizzing for cash

NAVAL veteran John King is calling upon ships, establishments and RNAs to don their thinking caps in aid of five children's charities.

John, who served from 1953 to 1977, left the service as a Chief Petty Officer Stoker, and knows from his time that quizzes are a popular staple of life on ship. Teams from RFA Fort Austin

and Cunningham Squadron in Dartmouth have already signed up to take part in the BigCharityQuiz, raising money for CGD Research Trust, Rainbow Trust Children's Charity, Spars, Whizz-Kidz and XLP Research Trust.

Keen quizmasters just need to get in touch with organiser Rosemarie Rymer to receive a complete quiz pack suitable for everyone of whatever age. Find out more by visiting www.

bigcharityquiz.co.uk or calling Rosemarie on 01725 517 977.

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, ww.mod.uk Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, ww.royalnavy.mod.uk Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www. steransagency.mod.uk Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600 RN and RM Service records: 023 9262 372

8672 Falklands 25: 0800 169 2277 (Veterans

Falklands 25: 0800 169 2277 (Veterans Agency), www.falklands25.com Royal Naval Association: 020 7352 6764, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk British Legion: 08457 725725, www. britishlegion.org.uk Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, www.ssafa.org.uk

ww.ssafa.org.uk Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, ww.royalnavalmuseum.org Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, ww.fleetairam.com Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, ww.royalmmarinesmuseum co.uk

www.royalmmarines.museum. u23 9281 9385, RN Submarine Museum: 023 9252 9217, www.rnsubmus.co.uk National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

Assignments

Lt A Dunn to MASF as CO on March 17, c be promoted Acting Lt Cdr. Cdr W M Durning to Fort Blockhouse - C&S as CO on April 3. Cdr N T Griffin to 846 NAS as CO on April 25

Lt Cdr B J Franklin to 829 NAS as CO August 5. Lt Cdr T C Green to HMS Blyth as CO on A on April 22

Swap drafts

LET(ME) Wilson. Draft: HMS Manchester.

Would like to swap for any non-deploying ship or shore draft. Contact: 331-letme3@ a.dii.mod.uk. LOG(Pers) Savory. Draft: HRTSG-Fleet COS P&S RNICG, current. Would like to swap for any Plymouth draft or surrounding area. Contact: 9380 20839.

Sports lottery

March 22: £5,000 - Cdr D J Swannick, MOD Main Building; £1,500 - Mne N J Hayward, 40 Cdo RM; £500 - Mne S K Percival, RMB Chivenor. March 29: £5,000 - Lt Cdr G A Richardson, 700 NAS, Culdrose; £1,500 - CPOMEM P J Bassett, HMS Argyl; £500 - Surg Lt N Dodds, BRNC Dartmouth. April 5: £5,000 - LAEA I L Canavan.

April 5: £5,000 - LAEA I L Canavan, RNAS Culdrose; £1,500 - POLogs(Pers) M E Vogel, MCTC Colchester; £500 - AET2 D F T Sowerby, CTS RAF Cottesmore. April 12: £5,000 - CPOWEA A M Tyerman, FSU01, Sail Loft; £1,500 - Lt J D Hackman, HMS Vanguard (S); £500 - Sub Lt N Horne, HMS Bulwark.

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

■ Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.

■ Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event. ■ There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

■ The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

HMS Galatea (The Black Pig) 1963-88: Calling all ex-crew members with a view to a reunion, especially members of the 1st and 2nd commissions. Anyone interested should contact Bill Davidson on 01322 221028 or Bob Almey at bobalmey1@tiscali. co.uk tel: 01485 540125 or Malcolm Yole at exkillickstoker@yole296.freeserve.co.uk also in touch with Fred Brooks, all 1st com-mission.

mission. Harcourt Place (Married Quarters) Hong Kong: Seeking anyone who lived here from 1981 to 1984 with a view to a reunion. Con-tact Rob Price at leeandrobp@hotmail.co.uk or tel: 01597 810927.

MAY 2008 HMS Hermione Association: AGM/Reun-ion takes place, May 16-18 at Regina Hotel, leper (Ypres), Belgium. Tel: 0032 57 21 88 88 or visit the website online at: http://www. hmshermione.co.uk for more information contact Mr E Usher on 01925 824504.



This will include the high-lights of the RN Peregrine Trophy Photographic exhibition, along



THE TIME OF

YOUR LIVES

NAVY NEWS looks back through its pages to recall some of the May headlines of past decades...

HMS Boxer in the Strait of Hormuz in 1988

A team of Naval frogmen – one officer and ten ratings – headed up to Staines to extract a jet engine from a gravel pit. The engine fell from a BOAC Boeing 707 airliner, which made a perfect land-

ing at Heathrow airport but then burst into flames. Remarkably all but five of 126 on board escaped.

Amateur ornithologist MAA Jim Scott made full use of his tour down to the Antarctic with HMS Endurance. It seemed that dur-

ing his deployment, Jim's cabin most resembled an aviary as the Master at Arms nursed no less than 11 birds back to health, with ailments ranging from frozen tails to exhaustion.

HMS Boxer went to the rescue of a Danish oil tanker in the Gulf. The Karame Maersk came under attack by an Iranian gunboat in the Strait of Hormuz, and was hit by rocket-launched grenades.

The tanker, carrying 350,000 tons of crude oil, was on fire with a

40 years ago

30 years ago

20 years ago

burning oil-slick around her.

Competition winners

Deaths

Lt John 'JT' Thornton RM. 40 Com-mando. Joined the Royal Marines in August 2004. On completion of commando train-ing, he was attached to the 1st Battalion the Devonshire and Dorset Light Infantry with whom he deployed to Iraq during Op Telic 8. His CO Lt Col Stuard Birrell RM said: "A conscientious and highly motivated man, he loved the life of a Royal Marine and he very quickly proved himself to be a talented and highly capable Commando officer. JT was al-ways to be found in the thick of the action; a courageous and brave commander he never asked his men to do anything that he would not do himself. He led from the front and pro-vided an outstanding example to his peers and his men alike; he was a resolute and formidable soldier in battle, a larger than life character who impressed all who met him." Killed during a patrol of Kajaki, Helmand province when the vehicle they were travel-ling in was caught in an explosion. March 30. Aged 23.

province when the vehicle they were travel-ling in was caught in an explosion. March 30. Aged 23. Marine David 'Dave' Marsh RM. 40 Com-mando. Joined the Royal Marines in Sep-tember 2002, and during commando training at CTCRM Lympstone, he was awarded the Commando Medal for displaying most con-sistently the RM Commando attributes. First posted to 45 Cdo in Scotland, he served with distinction in Northern Ireland; then Fleet Protection Group RM, before train-ing as an Anti-Tank specialist in 2006. He joined 40 Cdo RM in December 2006. Maj Duncan Manning RM, officer commanding Charlie Company, 40 Cdo, said: "He was an inspiration to the whole Company. For him the glass was always half full and regardless of conditions he remained positive. The one thing that always struck you when you saw Mne Marsh was his smile that appeared to be ever-present, lifting the morale for those around. His ready wit and good humour were balanced with high professional skills and a devotion to his chosen profession." Killed during a patrol of Kajaki, Helmand province when the vehicle they were travelling in was caught in an explosion. March 30. Aged 22. **Rear Admiral Alan George Watson CB.**

Area the vehicle trief were traveling in was caught in an explosion. March 30. Aged 22. Rear Admiral Alan George Watson CB. Joined training ship Worcester in 1937 aged 15, then BRNC Dartmouth; appointed to Valiant (Alexandria) as Midshipman where severe damage was caused by Italian frog-men; then Jaguar which was torpedoed with heavy casualties; joined new destroyer Swift (Arctic waters and D-Day landings) where she ran over a mine that broke her back; aircraft carrier Rajah (Pacific) until end of 1945; Snipe (America/West Indies station) then loan service with the Royal Australian Navy at HMAS Watson; two years with Ea-gle then 1954 another exchange to the USN training facility at NAS Glenview. Promoted to commander and CO of Salisbury, Dryad and Rooke (Gibraltar); captain in 1963 and commanded Relenties and Dryad for three years. Promoted to Rear Admiral and in 1977 received the CB; retired 1977. February 25. Aged 86. Capt Donald 'Don' Mitchell. Served 1953-92 in Ulster, Acheron ang as navi-

received the CB; retired 1977. February 25. Aged 86. Capt Donald 'Don' Mitchell. Served 1953-92 in Ulster, Acheron and as navi-gator in Maxton; submarines Truncheon, Thermopylae, Courageous and Swift-sure. Flag Officer Submarines (FOSM), USN exchange, CTF 311 (Falklands war), Collingwood as XO, MoD Foxhill as CSMA, FO Portsmouth staff and NATO Iberlant. January 14. Aged 70. Lt Cdr Harold 'Hookey' Walker. Joined Royal Navy at Ganges in 1936 as a Boy. Ships and establishments included: Iron Duke, Glasgow, Victory, Vimy, Auckland, Ver-non, King George V, Berwick, Vernon, Match-less, Victory (depot), Carysfort, Collingwood, Resource Snowball, Ceylon (Korea). Com-missioned Electrical Officer in 1952 then saw through build and commissioning Diana, Murray and Lion. Spent the last eight years of his RN career with the RN Training Team Kenya as Electrical and Communications Officer, developing the Electrical and Radio branches of the Kenya Navy, becoming Sen-ior Technical Officer. Left RN in 1973. March 3. Aged 88.

ior Technical Unicer. Lett first in Association 3. Aged 88. Bob Withers. CPO Radio Electrician. Served 1947-70 in Excalibur, Ariel, Fulmar, Peregrine, Nuthatch, Daedalus, Falcon, Ocean, Simbang, Blackcap, President,

Diock-ships Memorial Fund: Does any-one have any information about this fund. It has something to do with Zeebrugge and HMS Vindictive around 1918-19. Please con-tact Bob Swarbrick, High Meadow, 7 Church Lane, Grimston, Melton Mowbray, Leicester-shire, LE14 3BY.

HMS Euryalus: I am looking for anyone who might have information on the HMS Euryalus and those who served on her from July 1941 to January 1942. My great-uncle

July 1941 to January 1942. My great-uncle James Henry Lily was serving as an able seaman during this time and I am looking for anyone who might have relatives who were on board that may have known him or have pictures or information regarding the ship. Contact Darlene Ulvstal at jdcopper@pei. sympatico.ca or write to RR#1 Covehead Road, York, PE, COA 1P0, Canada. HMS Melbreak: Kirkgate Centre Museum display during June and wish to make a fea-ture of the association of the HMS Melbreak with Cockermouth. May we appeal to your readers for information of any kind, relevant to the ship and crew of HMS Melbreak. Any information to the Museum Group, Kirkgate Centre, Kirkgate, Cockermouth, Cumbria, CA13 9PJ. Field Gun Medal: In Boys' training at

Field Gun Medal: In Boys' training a

HMS Ganges Peter was in the winning field gun crew (boys). They won a silver and also a bronze medal for the fastest run and also

a bronze medal for the fastest run and also the fastest aggregate time, these were sto-len a number of years ago. He was P J Cook Boy/Tel, perhaps a collector out there has them now, that is a very slim chance, how-ever he would like to replace them if he can find out who was the supplier to Ganges at that time. Contact Peter at peter@talknor. freeserve.co.uk or tel: 01603 618806 or 07752 190495.

Navv News on tape

Navy News is available free of charge on tape from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number. No special equipment is needed to play the standard 90-minute cassettes.

Ask Jack

Centaur, Seahawk, Ark Royal and Osprey. March 16. Aged 78. Richard E Hotchkiss. Boy Telegraphist, Caledonia 1937. Served 1937-61 in Jackal, Greek destroyer Paul Kondouritus, Salerno, Beaufort and Tetocht, Falmouth WT Station, Obdurate, Hongkong W/T Stations, Kenya, Corunna, Boy's Instructor at Ganges, Sole-bay and Mercury. George Edward Houseman. POAM(E). Served 1940-47 in Pretoria Castle (Iceland convoy), Avenger, PQ18 (Russian convoy) and Furious; Home Fleet, five capital ships and 15 destroyers (North Sea/Norway); Vindex for U-Boat patrol and night flying. Mentioned in Dispatches 1945 whilst serving in Oakleaf. March 16. Aged 86. Geordie Colling. ERA. Joined RN during WW2 and served for five years in Berwick, Indefatigable, the British Pacific Fleet and Task Force 57 as part of the damage control group in operations off the island of Okinawa. HMS Indefatigable Association of Mariners Inc. March 25. Aged 88. Bob 'Topsy' Turner. L/S Asdic Chief O/M. Served 1941-46 in Ramillies and Widemouth Bay. Founder member and life president Widemouth Bay Association WB Shipmates. February 1. Aged 83. Brian Hooper. PO Elect. Served Ganges, Liverpool, Victory, Collingwood, Wakeful, Largs Bay, Creole, Albion, Pembroke, Wool-wich and Tyrian. HMS Ganges and HMS Bruce Associations. December 2 in Texas, USA. Aged 77. Robert James Mitchem. PO. Served

Bruce Associations. December 2 in Texas, USA. Aged 77. Robert James Mitchem. PO. Served in Duke of York, Daedalus, Theseus, Black Swan, Ceylon, Fleetwood, Venus, Excellent and St Vincent. HMS Bruce Association. February 14. Aged 77. Elizabeth Anne Witherall. WREN. Served at Vernon, Drake, Lochinvar and Daedalus. Veterans Association, and an associate member of HMS Bruce Association. March 17. Aged 76.

Veterans Association, and an associate member of HMS Bruce Association. March 17. Aged 76. Michael G 'Spike' Sullivan. Served 1930-54 in St Vincent as Boy Tel; Devonshire, Capetown, Robin, Cornwall and Walker (39-42). Seconded Royal Indian Navy in 1943 as Commissioned Communications Officer Kistna and was Staff Officer (Operations) to Naval Force Commander Andamans and Carnicobars. Last RN Officer-in-Charge Bombay Fort 1954. March 8 in Manila NSW, Australia. **Frank David 'Benny' Lynch**. CPO. Served 1949-56 in Illustrious (49-52 as Stoker). Was a Sea Cadet and continued his connection for over 40 years teaching sailing and first aid; St John S Ambulance, Officer of the Or-der of St John And Chairman HMS Illustrious Association. March 19. Aged 77. **Peter Little AB**. 1958 HMS Cheviot As-sociation. March 28. **ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION**

Peter Little AB, 1958 HMS Cheviot Association. March 28.
ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Captain Robert Franks DSO, DSC.
Joined Dartmouth 1926 then served as midshipman in Shropshire, Wren (China Station), Scimitar, Vivien, Greyhound (as No.2 involved in the Spanish Civil War), Searcher (Mediterranean Fleet), transferred to Comet, peacekeeping in the Mediterranean and Palestine patrols. Lieutenant of the destroyer Gipsy when war broke out and was mined off Harwich; he commanded Scimitar from 1940 (mentioned in dispatches twice). Spent six months behind enemy lines in Burma in command of Landing Craft – awarded DSO; CO of Paladin in the Mediterranean – awarded the DSC for his courage in operations clearing the Scheidt Estuary in Holland. During 1945-50 CO of destroyers Obdurate, St James and Vigo (Mediterranean). As captain in 1955 was put in command of the Amphibious Warfare Squadron; 1957-59 Captain of Ganges. Final command was Bulwark for its first commission as a commando carrier, en route to the Far East the ship carried out a Commandor landing in Kuwait, successfully preventing the SGanges Association and member of Dartmouth RNA. March 5. Aged 95.
Rafp Kirk, Leading Seaman. Served 1953-66 in Victory, Implacable, Pembroke, Centaur, Grenville, Duncan and Reserve Fleet Malta. Standard bearer and committee

HMS Alert 1961-63 Commission: Seek

HMS Alert 1961-63 Commission: Seek-ing members of this ship's company, in par-ticular 'Scribes' Drummond who have not yet attended the annual reunions. I may have some good news for you. Contact 'Doc' Bob Howard at robert.howard403@ntlworld.com or tel: 023 9279 9141. Dennis, Raymond Walter or Walter Ray-mond: Born December 9 1941 and served as a Senior Aircraftman. Could have changed his surmame to Weston. His cousin Shan is searching for him after the family lost con-tact some years ago. Contact can be made through the Family Tracing Service of the Salvation Army on 020 7367 4572 quoting reference 307/1433. HMS Alderney: Seeking anyone who served aboard the HMS Alderney in 1955 or early 1956. The Alderney docked in either Havana, Cuba or San Juan, Puerto Rico in 1955 or early 1956. Two submariners took myself and a fellow Marine on board for a tour and were most pleasant chaps. Contact Jerry Jernigan, former USMC at jojernigan@ bellsouth.net or write to 5420 Hanover Park Drive, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, USA. HMS Boston (J14) Bangor-class mine-

HMS Boston (J14) Bangor-class mine-sweeper: Jack Turner would like to hear from anyone who served aboard Boston between 1944-46. Contact Jack at 5 Trafalgar Quar-ters, Park Row, Greenwich, London, SE10 9NL or tel: 020 8305 2584. HMS Ganges 1966-68: Fred would like to hear form anyone who was with him at Shot-

hear from anyone who was with him at Shot-ley Gate 1966-68. He would especially like to hear from Dave Tucker and his wife Valerie,

who at some stage may have been living in Cambridge. Contact Fred 'Lofty' Munson, 59 Windy Nook Road, Sheriff Hill, Gateshead, NE9 6QP. LCT 1213: Seeking anyone who served with Lt Cdr William Algar Beardow (de-ceased) who commanded 72nd LCT 1213 vessel K Squardrom Strike Force W 1944-

45. His niece has two tapestries depicting the flags of vessel LCT 1213 and the 400th

anniversary of the Armada which she would

K Squadron, Strike Force W, 1944-

Where are you now?

4218

member Cromer branch; also served on the Cromer Lifeboat. January. Aged 72. Edward J Jordan. Beccles branch. March

member Cromer branch; also served on the Cromer Lifeboat. January. Aged 72. Edward J Jordan. Beccles branch. March 6. Aged 82. John Alan Hodge. AB. Served 1939-46 in Manxman, Sussex and Bittern. Greenwich branch. February. Aged 86. Ada Gaitley. Associate member. En-rolled at opening of Loughton branch and remained involved with social activities 18 years. March 11. Aged 88. Colin Whatford. Served FAA in WW2 and Victorious in the Far East. Bexhill-on-Sea branch. February 26. Aged 82. John Purfield. Seaman Diver. Served 1941-47 in Victory. Impulsive, Excellent, Aurora, Vindictive and Boom Defence Unit Gosport. Upon retirement joined the MoD Civilian Diving Team. Bexhill-on-Sea branch and Aurora Association. March 5. Aged 86. Lt John Bruggmann Baber RNVR, Joined as a seaman rising to lieutenant. Served 1941-46 in Raleigh, Newcastle (when E-boat S56 torpedoed her June 1942), BYMS 2087 and coastal forces. Founder member of Bexhill-on-Sea branch and twice chairman. March 6. Aged 85. James Frederick Bennett. Leading Wire-less Mechanic (L). Served 1940-46 in Lance, Stag, Vernon and Swiftsure. Kingston-upon-Thames branch. February 5. Aged 92. William George Fillmore. Able Seaman. Served 1942-46 in Ganges, Pembroke, Berry and Warren. Kingston-upon-Thames branch. March 26. Aged 85. Jack Whitehouse. Served in destroyers. Bromsgrove branch. March. Dennis 'Peter' Adkin. Able Seaman. Served 1941-46; final ship Bicester. HMS Ganges Association and Derby branch RNA. March 21. Aged 84. Oswald 'Ossie' Flowerdew. CPO Aircraft Fitter. Served 1935-39 as Bell Boy to Sen-ior Steward Union Castle Line. RN service 1939-53 in Hermes (survived sinking in 1942 spending ten hours in shark-infested waters prior to rescue), Ameer and Indefatigable; ai rstations Condor and Sea Eagle; FAA squad-rons 769, 835 and 804. President Enfield RNA. March 14. Aged 90. Lt Cdr J 'Jack' Beresford RNVR. Served in corvettes with Atlantic convoys and LSTs at D-Day landings and was torpedoed in the channel; also served in the Far East. Presi-

Lt Cdr J 'Jack' Beresford RNVR. Served in corvettes with Atlantic convoys and LSTs at D-Day landings and was torpedoed in the channel; also served in the Far East. Presi-dent No.8 Area for some years. President Li-chfield branch RNA, President Lichfield RBL and also a member of West Midlands Land-ing Craft Association. March 12. Aged 87. George Edward Chapman. AB. Served 1949-57 in King George V, Vanguard, Vic-torious, Scorpion, Chevron, Glasgow and MTBs. Lieutenant in Hertford and Ware Sea Cadets. Former secretary to Hatfield RNA (disbanded), former member Hertford RNA and former Standard Bearer Coastal Forces and former Standard Bearer Coastal Forces Southern branch. Christchurch RNA. March

21. Aged 76. Jack Thompson. EA4. Served 1943-46 in Vernon, Lanka, Sheba and Wayland. Life member Harrogate and District. March 9. Aged 84. Norman Pugsley. Bridgend branch. Aged 78.

78. Jackie Akerman. Bridgend branch. Aged

83 Dick Morris. Founder member of Dere-Dick Morris. Founder member of Dere-ham branch 50 years ago. In his boyhood he was a Barnardo Boy and did his early sea training at the Watts Naval Training School, County School, North Eimham, Norfolk. Aged 99.

Ronald 'Ron' William Harris. Stoker 1st class. Served 1941-46 in Victory, Boreas, Hind and Malta convoys. Held various posi-tions including social secretary at Croydon branch before moving to Cornwall where he joined the Looe branch. January 28. Aged 84. Ronald 'Ron' William Harris. Stoker 1st

84. Arthur Stuart. LCK(S). Served 1948-55 at Royal Arthur, Ceres, Pembroke and in An-son, Belfast (Korea) and Drake. January 22. Aged 77. Murray Rutherford. Associate member and secretary Stourbridge branch. RAF National Serviceman. Welfare work for both RNA and SSAFA taking over 100 cases last year alone. March 19. Aged 77. Lt Ron Hodgett RNVR. Served 1939-46.

Ordinary Seaman in Gibraltar area then com-missioned spending majority of WW2 com-manding landing craft as a lieutenant sailing across Atlantic from New Jersey shipyards, working them up and taking part in North Af-rica landings, Sicily and Italy. Returned to UK for D-Day landings. Buxton and High Peak RNA. Aged 93. **Ron Manning.** Served Mayina, Phoebe, Lanka, Highflyer, Bambara and Collingwood (Radio). Life member and former secretary and treasurer of Soham and District branch. April 5. Aged 85.

Ordinary Seaman in Gibraltar area then com

April 5. Aged 85. Harold Worsley. Trafford branch. Roy Fradley. Former member of Trafford and Chorley branches.

ASSOCIATION OF RN OFFICERS Lt Cdr G St J R Buxton. Served: Hickle-n, Tamar, Ajax and Cochrane Lt Cdr J A Clayton. Served: Gannet, Loch ore and Parcerine to

Lt Car J A Clayton. Served: Gannet, Loch More and Peregrine. Lt Cdr M F de Halpert DSC. Served: Seagull, Polruan, Diego Saurez, Vanquish-er, Terpsichore, Gosling, Newcastle, Loch Arkaig, Centaur, Rapid, Tuscan and Pickle. Lt Cdr J G C Harvey DSC. Served: Glory, Peregrine, Meon and Ark Royal. Rear Admiral T B Homan CB. Served: Norfolk, Duke of York, Tamar, Drake, Presi-dent, Cossack, Saker, Victorious, Terror and Pembroke.

Cdr D W Jackson. Served: Mercury, Mer-cury 11, Collingwood, Venus, Glasgow and

S

aintes. Lt Cdr R N Jackson. Served: Bermuda, hipe, Termagant, Manxman, President, Gir-e Ness and Osprey. Cdr B P McConnell. Served: Newcastle, heffield, President, Swiftsure and Saker. Sub Lt A P Pipe RNVR. Served: Byrsa. Cdr J R M Platt. Served: Barfleur, Philom-, President, Excellent, Devonshire, Kenya d St Angelo. onipe, Sł

Id St Angelo. Lt Cdr A J G Voysey RD* RNR

Lt Cdr Å J G Voysey RD* RNR SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION W A 'Bill' Ball. AB ST. Served 1941-46 in Unbending, L26 and Uii71. Central Lanca-shire branch. Aged 89. J 'Joe' Cole. AB LTO. Served 1942-46 in Statesman. Merseyside branch. Aged 87. S 'Stan' Longley, LSM. Served 1947-52 in Tactician, Taciturn, Trump and Alaric. Mer-seyside branch. Aged 87. J 'Jim' Rourke. ERA, Served 1942-46 in Una and Tiptoe. Scottish branch. Aged 86. R L 'Len' Terry. Tel. Served 1945-46 in Unsparing, Satyr and Tactician. Sussex branch. Aged 84. K S 'Ken' White. Sto. Mech. Served 1955-56 in Scythian. Sussex branch. Aged 73. LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION R S Hodgett. Served LCI(L) 246, LCTs 311, 384 and HMS Boreas. December 13. J A P Stone. Served LCAs and LCMs. January 28. Vancouver, Canada. M C S Porter. Served LCI(L) 97. January 29.

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A G Smith. Served LCI 176 and LCT 52. February 6. J Mewha. Served LCT 461 and LCT 2304. bruary 17. 2052 Feb

J W Beresford. Served LST 415. March 12

K M McCaw. Served LCTs 974, 1060 and 1111. March 17. H R Fradley. Served LCTs 384 and 586 and LCT(R). March 20.

HMS PEACOCK ASSOCIATION Frank Vallom. Sto.Mech. Served in Pea-ock 1945-46.

Henry Ginder. AB. Served in Peacock 1946-47.



Bill Butcher. AB. Served in Peacock 1944-46. 1944-46. Ernest Nicholson 'Lofty', Leading Sto. Mech. Served in Peacock 1944-47. Janu-ary 9. Ben Brierley. Leading Writer. Served in Peacock 1944-45. March 2. Aged 82.

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anniversary of the Armada which she would like to donate to anyone who may be inter-ested, ex-crew, family or museum. Contact Mrs A C Stevens, 48 St Audrey Avenue, Bex-leyheath, DA7 5BX. HMS Nigeria: Barry 'Darkie' Anthon (Mayor of Tintown) is seeking his best man at his wedding in South Africa in 1950 and a few mates, Jack Law, Taff Mutton, Fred Reynolds and anyone else who served in Contact Ollie Jones at bermuda_navy@ yahoo.co.uk or tel: 07879 816460. WT, Malta: Anyone from the old RN/WT Receiver station in Zebbug Malta still alive? Sid would like to hear from anyone from period 1961-63. Contact Sid Jacques at sid.jacques@wolsingham.plus.com or tel: 01388 526312. HMS Invincible: Tim Jenkins, Mick Kes-

sell and Wiggy Bennett are trying to find

HMS Nigeria. Darkie was a leading stoker. Contact Darkie at 32 Gee Lane, Winton, Ec-cles, Manchester, M30 8NH or tel: 0161 789

cles, Manchester, M30 8NH or tel: 0161 789 4218. John 'Jack' Donachie: Joined the Navy before 1948, aged 18-20. His cousin Eliza Maisie Annandale is looking for him. Jack lived with Maisie for a while when his parents separated, but joined the Navy before she emigrated to Montreal, Canada. She is try-ing to trace him for herself and his sister who is unwell. Contact: Eliza Maisie Annandale, 101-6645 Nelson Avenue, Horseshoe Bay, West Vancouver BC, Canada, VTW 2A5. HMS Raleigh: My husband Simon is try-ing to locate Calum Campbell. We all passed out of Raleigh November 23 2001. Calum and my husband were MEMs who both went to HMS Sultan to continue training and then served on board HMS Argyll. My husband left the Argyll and lost touch with Calum. Contact Louise Baines at louisebaines@ binternet.com or tel: 01484 418646. HMS Scarborough 1958-59: John and Margaret Stevens would love to hear from anyone who attended their wedding at the Church of the Holy Trinity, Sliema on May 24 1958. Contact John and Margaret at 463

Church of the Holy Trinity, Sliema on May 24 1958. Contact John and Margaret at 463 Stenson Road, Littleover, Derby, DE23 1LL or tel: 01332 272942. Association and Charitable Trust ASSOCIATION OF WRENS National Reunion at York for serving and retired commissioned officers of the RN, RM, OARNNS, the RNAS Sembawang 1963-64: Looking for CPOEI(A) Richard Bridge. Korean War veteran Richard served in 831 Naval Air Squadron, RNAS Culdrose in 1958-59 and Arga later bancel of Eingengem with bis form former WRNS and their Reserves. 22-24 August 2008 The ARNO Charitable Trust was later based at Singapore with his fam-ily. Please contact Michael Kerry nut.shell@ shaw.ca or write to 25-2058 Winfield Drive, Abbotsford, BC, Canada. provides advice and access to Friday Evening Welcome Buffet . charitable funds for those members. Saturday RM Assn. Band their wives, widows and dependents Concert & Re-dedication HMS Westminster: Searching for a LCH 'Flick' Leggings and a CH 'Sarah' McCann last known of on the Westminster and based who are in need and/or experience York visitor trips optional financial difficulties. Good accommodation on campus Membership Association subscription: £12 annually or a single at Nelson. If anyone knows of their wherea-bouts could you please contact me ex CH 'Ollie' Jones, formerly of 847 NAS, or anyone Expecting over 1,000 members, why not ioin us? that knows me please get in touch. Looking to get in touch before I leave the country. **REUNION HOTLINE 01489 505226** Not a member? Not a problem, contact 0207 9320111 wrensassoc@aol.com www.wrens.org.uk

Serving RN Women especially welcome!

Devon, PL6 5UP. HMS Victory, 1950s: William Leitch is trying to trace two old shipmates, Bob Gay from Wolverhampton and Joss O'Brien from Gosport. The three met at HMS Victory, Portsmouth, in the late 1950s and together were transferred to HMS Ceres at Wetherby for basic training. Contact William Leitch on 01506 410129, or sonnyconsort@btinternet. com.

William Bill Jones. We all served together on HMS Invincible as communicators dur-ing the Falklands 82. On return I got married and Mick, Wiggy and Bill attended. Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Bill or served on HMS Invincible during Falklands 82 please contact Tim Jenkins at gonzo bignose[®] centralpets.com or website http://www. freewebs.com/hica82 or tel: 01905 357753.
 Wrens: Seeking Jennifer Easton, the cousin of Allen Bailey. She joined the Wrens at 16 around 1966 and served in Gibrattar when she was 18. She lived in Plymouth when she joined the Navy. If anyone can help could they contact Mr Allen Bailey, 15 Epping Crescent, Austin Farm, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 5UP.
 HMS Victory, 1950s: William Leitch is



Ask me why

THE Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey for Spring 2008 will shortly be distributed.

This will be your opportunity to tell senior management about how you feel about life in the Royal Navy or Royal Marines. It covers such issues as:

How satisfied are you with your pay and benefits? How satisfied are you with the way in which your career is managed?

What do you thing about lengths of deployments? How is Service life affecting the amount of separation from your home and family? J How satisfied are you with the way the RN/RM is managed?

The 2008 survey has been revised to make sure that we are asking the right questions; the ones that our policymakers want the answers to and on the issues that are important to your life in the Service.

It is also aligned with the other Services to carry more weight on

big issues. The results are used to inform policy, to make sure that when decisions are made about personnel issues, the attitudes and opinions of those on the front line, and those supporting the front line, are taken into account.

The findings are reported to the Navy Board and are published in the House of Commons library, as well as being used by desk officers to shape and inform a myriad of personnel projects and strategic reviews.

For example, previous surveys have been used as evidence in some key pay reviews, including the review of the x-factor, the Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) and RM Financial Retention Incentive. So the questions are being

asked - and this really is your chance to have your say about the whys and wherefores of life in the Naval Service.

The survey will be distributed to a random sample of people between April and July, so if you receive a copy in the post, please take the time to complete it, as the more people that complete it, the more weight the results will carry

Completed responses are analysed by a dedicated set of researchers, and are not seen by the chain of command, so anything you say will be completely anonymous.

A summary of the results will be published later in the year in Navy News and Globe and Laurel, and the full reports will be published on the RN web.

For more information contact Rachel Tate, the HR Research Manager, on 93832 5495 (BT 02392 625495) or by email at Rachel.Tate644@mod.uk

It's your 2-6

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN? To feature in 2-6 contact Lt Cdr Gregor Birse (Fleet Media Ops), 93832 8809 or Lt Cdr Harvey Burwin (DPR(N)), 9621 85984.



ARMED Forces personnel with a household income of less than $\pounds 60,000$ a year are now able to apply for an extended range of affordable housing schemes across England under the Government's Key Worker status.

included in the Those scheme are all regular Service personnel, the MPGS and some MOD civilians - MOD Police, Fire Service and some clinical staff.

There are now three affordable housing schemes and one intermediate rent scheme. They are:

Shared equity arrangements under the New Build Homebuy; English Partnership's First Time Buyers Initiative;

Open Market Homebuy using one of three options to buy a property on the open market with the help of Government funding in addition to other lenders' loans; An intermediate rental scheme where the rent is set between social and full market rent.

The schemes are run on behalf of the Government by 'Homebuy Agents' - housing associations (otherwise known as Registered Social Landlords or RSLs) who run regional versions of a Key Worker Scheme in their areas of the country.

Worker Living (KWLP) was The Key Programme launched in 2004 to help specific public sector employees buy a home, upgrade a family home or rent a home at an affordable price.

The aim was to keep 'key workers' in the jobs for which they had trained. Initially the scheme was targeted

at workers in the London, South East and Eastern England, but from last December the net has been cast wider to all other regions that operate a regional version of the scheme.

There are a number of detailed criteria for those deemed eligible – full details are available from the JSHAO or the relevant Homebuy Agent. But among the basic

requirements are: The applicant must have at

least five years left to serve with the MOD;

Household income must be below £60,000;
The applicant's permanent duty station must be located in

England; L Any property bought under this scheme must be within reasonable travelling distance of the applicant's place of duty - as a guide, around 50 miles in distance

or 90 minutes travelling time. Details of the schemes are as follows: New Build Homebuy:

Under this scheme

purchasers can buy between 25 per cent and 75 per cent of a new build property (depending on what they can afford) on a they can anote leasehold basis. Time Initiative Buyers (FTBI): This aims to help eligible first time buyers to buy a new home with an affordable mortgage.

They must take out a mortgage for at least 50 per cent of the property purchase price, and English Partnerships will provide a contribution up to the

full purchase price. After living in the home for three years, buyers will pay a fee to English Partnerships based on a small percentage of its contribution. FTBI

News and information for serving personnel

FTBI homes will not immediately be available in all regions, but applicants can check on availability through their Homebuy Agents.

J Open Market Homebuy: This scheme enables key workers and other priority first time buyers to buy a property on the open market with the help of a Government-funded loan that can

be topped up with an additional loan from another lender. The Government loan is repaid

when the occupant can afford it or when the property is sold. The lender's loan allows for a five-year interest free period.

There are three variants of this scheme:

Covernment only loan: The purchaser can get a loan of around 17.5 per cent from the

Government which is interest free and is repaid when the property

is sold; Product in partnership with lender: the purchaser receives a 12.5 per cent interest-free Government loan which is topped up with another 12.5 per cent

from a commercial lender which is interest free for five years. Vorkshire Building Society product: this is similar to the product above but the Yorkshire BS will provide an equity loan

of up to 15 per cent alongside the Government's 17.5 per cent, giving an increased loan of up to 32.5 per cent of the market value of the prospective property. Intermediate Rent Scheme:

This is where accommodation provided by a registered social landlord.

The tenant is likely to pay between 75 per cent to 80 per cent of the local market rent for the type of property that they occupy. hey would have an assured short hold tenancy whilst they remain a kev worker.

"I decided to do this book as no

one had attempted it before and I thought, with my love of genealogy and RFA history, that this would be

"This work became a labour of love and one which will, I hope, be

a fitting memory for those who have

given the ultimate sacrifice in the service of the RFA."

RFA roll of honour presented

a "labour of love" by presenting a record of RFA sailors who have given their life in war or rescues to

years in the 1960s before joining

Register 1905-2005.

Chris said: "It was a great pleasure to present this roll of honour to Cdre Thornton on behalf of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service.

TRANSFORMATION

AUTHOR Chris White has concluded researching this work, often using English and foreign websites and

searching cemeteries trying to find deceased merchant seafarers and the Auxiliary. Chris served in the RFA for three noting those who had served with the RFA.

the Met Police for 22 years. The roll of honour is in the form of a book entitled **A Memorial**

"I have spent the past 14 months

Go and buy with a little Committee: Is it getting help from your friends better? MEMBERS of the Armed Forces

Defence

have been invited to offer their views direct to Parliament on recruitment and retention in a new web forum opened by the Commons Defence Select Committee.

The committee recently launched a new inquiry into the issues affecting recruitment and retention across the Services, and has invited key MOD officials and

commentators to give evidence. But it will also make use of a web-based system that allows MPs to hear views from the public using simple online web consultations.

Chairman James Arbuthnot said: "During this inquiry we want to hear views on recruitment and retention from former and current Service personnel and also from more diverse sources - religious leaders, parents and guardians, and careers guidance counsellors. We want to know what motivates some people but not others to join the services and what factors can affect people's desire to remain in

uniform over time. "We are especially keen to investigate the disconnect that exists in the number of recruits from ethnic minorities who choose to join the Services."

Recruitment and retention pressures were highlighted in the committee's recent report, MOD Annual Reports and Accounts 2006-07, and it is also concerned that most MOD diversity targets have also been missed.

Full anonymity is respected on the forum, which can be found at www.parliament.uk/defcom and will run until May 21.

Discount bonanza

MORE than 800 companies are showing support for the Armed Forces through special discounts, offers and benefits available in the new Defence Discount Directory. Call Clifford Rhodes on 0207

807 0016 for a copy, or go to www. forcesdiscounts-mod.co.uk

Project Darwin - that will shortly introduce

often mentioned - but all this has been done

without the need for either so far. Nor do

managers see any need for them in future. In view of the progress made Fleet took the time to have a strategic look at the

Transformation programme in March. This was led by DCINC himself who was

very pleased with what has been achieved.

the Transformation process, broadening the approach beyond simply looking for

post reductions, and moving towards the

development of organisational effectiveness.

as continuous improvement takes place, but

most of these will be recycled into areas

where it is clear that more posts are needed.

So in effect, Transformation events

will now focus on doing things

better, looking more deeply into processes, and working across

In doing this the aim is to start to introduce

What will you notice? If you are at sea

That does not mean false promises of

For those ashore, Transformation is about

If your life isn't better so far then use

a better way of doing things that actively

seeks to improve year on year - a culture of

it is hoped you will find that those ashore

continually try to improve the way they

loads of people and instant kit upgrades, but

it does mean everyone will strive to do their

making your work more straightforward.

Of course it will still be busy and at times

the opportunities this year to make that

boundaries where necessary.

continuous improvement, in the jargon.

help you and the service they provide.

best within the constraints

frustrating.

improvement.

A small number of posts will be removed

The time is now right to gently refocus

Redundancy or early release schemes are

targets for a reduction in posts.

Good progress – but looking to the future

TRANSFORMATION has now been running for some time, and has made considerable progress.

This is a good time to take stock of the initiative and see what the future holds. With change occurring across Defence,

the recent lessons from conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and the northern Gulf and the continuing need to make the most of the cash allocated to the RN there have been some pressing reasons to develop and adapt. Transformation has concentrated on improving the work done ashore, the aim being to improve support to the front line. By letting people within Fleet look at how they work and how what they do can be improved - 97 changes so far - there has been a huge amount of progress in many areas.

Individual changes and collective effect have both helped. So what has happened? Fleet promised to look at the way in which forces were generated for operations.

This has been done by strengthening what is now the commitments team in Northwood and at Fleet HQ, and adding the responsibility for long erm programming

Feedback from recent front-line experience is also important and so lessons drawn will be fed back through MWC into Fleet HQ to inform future planning and training.

The capability team in Fleet HQ has also been reorganised to remove artificial barriers between engineering, warfare and logistics. They also established Fleet Capability Integration Groups (FCIGs) to bring together

all who need to have a say in the planning of future capabilities and future deployments. It has also meant that those who represented Fleet in MOD have been better informed and able to fight the Fleet corner. The FCIG approach is not just for current

or near-future preparations and planning. They will also work closely with the Defence Equipment and Support Organisation (DE&S) on long term – actually through life - capability management.

This is the very long term management of capability that will draw on people's experience in the front line. Making the most of the money has also

been an important aim. An early change was to reorganise the resources and plans team and to introduce more transparency to the decisions on where money should be spent.

That was done in time for the current spending round work and it introduced 'decision conferencing' to the process,

that meaning decisions are made openly and together, ratified by the senior management and then put forward to MOD.

The great thing about this approach is people will know where money will be spent; and just as importantly where it won't. None of this works unless Fleet properly

ecruits, trains and manages people – and here there have been major changes too. Personnel management used to be split

between career managers in Portsmouth Naval Base and policy cells in Fleet HQ. Now career and branch managers are together working for the same captain, all in West Battery on Whale Island, bringing together those who manage people with those involved with policies, regulations and strategy.

Other, smaller changes have been equally helpful. The Recovery cells in each port area will assist those who are medically downgraded and help them recover much more rapidly by co-ordinating the effort to ensure all aspects of treatment or rehabilitation are managed well.

Formed from the old RFA Naval Support Unit (RFANSU) has been the Fleet-wide Maritime Aviation Support Group. Based at RNAS Culdrose it will organise

a task I would enjoy.

support for all detached aviation units. Training has also been split into five streams – Core (new entry, BRNC and Raleigh – see opposite), Submarines, Surface

Stream, Royal Marines and Aviation (much of it joint). Each will look after trainees from new

entry to the highly experienced just needing

top-up, continuing the theme of looking after people from recruiting to retirement. The chan change here has

probably been some of the most radical of all as the old FOTR organisation has now gone and has been amalgamated to become part of FOST.

In this area the message is 'so far, so

Finally, Fleet has been looking to save

This was partly to allow Fleet to stand up

good', but there will be further bedding-

in before the new organisation can be

military posts ashore wherever they have

posts in the front line, and partly because

the number of posts is higher than the

number of people available. So far this work has gone well. Some

800 posts had been marked for deletion by

the end of March (of which 39 were to be

civilianised), and 76 posts have been added

transferred out to commercial companies

so far 170 posts have gone from Fleet.

review this year and have a plan for change -

Civilian posts have also been removed or

The RFA have had their own strategic

considered to have settled down.

back to the front line.

News and information for serving personnel

been found to be no longer required.

NAVY NEWS, MAY 2008 37

Original wood is

valuable

IT MIGHT not be much to look

at, but Trophy No 27242 is almost certainly the oldest on the Navy's

It is a section of the original oak

used in the construction of HMS Victory, and it bears a small piece of the protective copper sheeting

Work on the hull began in mid-1759 at Chatham, and the ship

was eventually completed, after a

lull in the constant cycle of wars, at a cost of £63,176 (estimated to be around £50m today). Such oaks were usually felled around 15 years before they were

needed, and as this piece of timber

was worked it revealed more than 100 annular rings, meaning this trophy possibly dates from 1600

THE inaugural Joint Services Warrant Officers' Course (JSWOC) seminar is to be held at

JSWOC is a two-week course for warrant officers from all three

Services, aimed at developing their

awareness of joint, multinational

and multi-agency operations. The seminar, on July 30-31,

will build on that by updating

JSWOC graduates on current and

JSWOC

seminar

Shrivenham this summer.

and remnants of copper nails.

trophy

books.

or before.

News and information for serving personnel

Success at Learner **First** awards

THE Royal Navy was recognised for its commitment to training and learning at the National

Learner First Awards 2008. Sponsored by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the awards celebrate achievement in several areas, including apprenticeship, personal achievement and employer categories.

The Royal Naval Service was a finalist and runner-up for the employer award, and the prize was presented to Cdr Trevor Price by Chris Banks, chairman of the LSC, and former athlete Colin Jackson.

Also present was Paul Redstone (Regional Accreditation Manager FTL), WO1 Neil Langridge RM (CTCRM) and representatives from MWS, HMS Raleigh, HMS Sultan, RNAS Culdrose, RNAS Yeovilton and the Defence Medical Services Training Centre, Aldershot. The RN has been delivering

engineering NVQs since 1998 and full apprenticeship schemes since 2002.

It is RN policy that "all new entrants will be given an opportunity to gain an apprenticeship within three years of joining," and this policy differs from many employers who have a pre-selection requirement

This means some 2,500 personnel annually, and 12,000 in total, have engaged in the scheme since 2002.

This statistic has been recognised by the LSC, as is the 'all of one company' ethos and the considerable benefits structured learning and training bring to the individual and the Service.

This fact has proved to be a valuable recruiting tool for both RN and RM personnel, attracted by the training opportunities the Service has to offer.

Having signed the 'Skills Pledge', the RN is committed to delivering basic skills to all personnel.

The apprenticeship scheme is an ideal vehicle to support this pledge by delivering key skills as part of each apprenticeship framework.

Other elements of the apprenticeship include a technical certificate and work-based learning in the form of an NVQ.

Commitment bonus raised

THE maximum level of the commitment bonus (CB) is to rise from \pounds 5,500 to \pounds 15,000, and the scheme is to be made available, from next year, to all Other Ranks passing the fouryear service point.

CBs are paid to Other Ranks as an incentive to remain in the Services, and this increase is designed to encourage further retention in the critical four to eight years' service period. Currently the bonus tends to

be split into two parts, at five years and eight years, but under the new arrangements the later someone claims payment - and therefore the longer they have served – the higher the payment will be. The bonuses are taxable.

Those waiting until eight years to take their bonus will receive the $f_{15,000}$ maximum. Transition arrangements are

being finalised to ensure that no one is disadvantaged.

The scheme is aimed at Other Ranks as the same retention issues are not seen in officers at this stage of their careers

Personnel receiving a CB will need to serve at least a further 12 months to retain the cash.

The scheme will be up and running from next year, and once fully implemented the scheme will cost £80m a year.





• Initial Rating Training aims to embrace the needs of the future Navy as well as the spirit and ethos of the RN's heritage, taking civilians into Raleigh and sending out as trained and motivated sailors

New recruits are trained to the core

HOWEVER long ago you joined up, whether at HMS Raleigh or Dartmouth (or for our older shipmates, HMS Ganges), you almost won't certainly have

forgotten basic training. You may recall those days with a smile or a grimace, but most think we had it hardest and training was tougher then. In some areas this may be the case, but you can be assured that current Basic or Phase 1 training is preparing our future shipmates for the challenges that lie ahead on the RN's numerous front lines.

Firstly, in big handfuls – as a result of some timely Fleet Transformation work FOST, Rear Admiral Ibbotson, is now in charge

He is no longer solely responsible for the exciting Operational Sea Training we have all enjoyed, but is now charged with providing training at all levels, from the young person walking through the gates at Raleigh to ensuring that suitably-qualified officers are selected and trained to command our submarines.

A wide remit, you would be correct in thinking, which is why the responsibilities have been delegated to Training Stream Leaders.

These training streams cover RM, Aviation, Surface, Submarine

and Naval Core training. Cdre Alabaster (currently Commodore BRNC) is now the Naval Core Training Stream (NCTS) Leader, assisted by Capt Woodcock, and is responsible for all RN Phase 1 basic training. As a result, the NCTS command

straddles a number of sites and organisations.

The NCTS comprises Initial Officers'Training (IOT) and Initial Ratings'Training (IRT), at BRNC and HMS Raleigh respectively.

entitled.

Capt Woodcock remains in command of Raleigh, as the scale of work and complexities of such a large establishment demands the attentions of a suitably senior officer.

Other NCTS elements are the new RN Leadership Academies (RNLA) at BRNC and MWS CollingwoodthatdeliverCommand, Leadership and Management

(CLM) training across Fleet. Finally the Naval Education and Training Service (NETS), Admiralty Interview Board (AIB) and the 14 URNUs are also commanded by Cdre Alabaster and complete the NCTS estate.

The NCTS organisation is in place but what about the detail? What improvements have been made to Phase 1 training and leadership training as a result of the NCTS forming?

To answer this question we shall look at the two major output areas core training, IRT and IOT. All new rating entrants to the RN undertake nine weeks of Phase

training at Raleigh. Recruits can be aged between 16-36 and all join on a Sunday

afternoon in classes of up to 66. There are 41 entries per year, resulting in an annual throughout

of more than 2,500 individuals, who then progress to their Phase 2 (branch specialist) training. The overall aim of Phase 1

training is to turn civilians into military personnel against a backdrop of inculcating the Naval ethos and instilling the core values essential for service in the RN. The aim is to challenge the individual and offer a sense of

achievement. Many of the activities under taken in basic training, parade training for example, are common to IOT

and work is under way to exploit common resources within Raleigh and BRNC; this work is made easier now that the key players responsible for IOT and IRT are all on the same team.

opportunities.

other MOD-provided benefits, such as medical

and dental care and physical education

The calculator will also be a gateway for news and information on pay and allowances

It will provide easy access to other related



Phase 1 training was recently extended from eight to nine weeks and the new syllabus remains challenging but increasingly maritime in its focus and relevant to today's operational environment.

It introduces individuals to the team ethos and develops a sense of being part of the Naval family as well as helping them to appreciate the history of the Senior Service. The Recruit School is looking to

extend the nine week course to ten to incorporate additional training to enhance the moral component of operational capability. This will include development

of the fighting spirit and further exposure to Naval heritage; an initiative to involve RN veterans in Phase 1 from the RNA is under way and this will complement the recruit's understanding of the qualities a service career demands.

On the officers' side, like so many areas of the Service, there is much change at BRNC, the home of officers' basic training and the centre of excellence for all CLM development within the RN.

As the dust settles on the post-Transformation structure BRNC continues to be busy and vibrant.

There is a throughput of approximately 450 RN officers a year and 120 international officers

The college also runs a huge variety of routine and bespoke packages for the RN, RNR, RFA, "deliver courageous leaders with the spirit to fight and win".

In order to do this, he must

is not taught but demonstrated by

component of the training delivered and the quality of officers leaving BRNC is a direct reflection of the quality of the staff.

If you have any questions for the team, contact details are: OC(IOT): Lt Cdr Tim Wright, brnc-ociot@nrta.mod.uk;

OC(IRT): Lt Cdr Rich Marratt, raleigh-ocrs@nrta.mod.uk

Benefits: now you can work it out Placing the calculator on the Internet makes it available to the majority of Service personnel, at work and at home

> It is also available to another key target audience – potential recruits, who can work out the figures before deciding if they want to join. The Calculator can be accessed through RN Com; FLEETWEB; Armynet; RAF Portal Website; RAFCOM; AirSpace; A1 Branch Website; the Royal Navy, British Army, and Royal Air Force Websites; and single Service recruiting websites. www.mod-abc.co.uk/

from a variety of nations, including the Gulf States, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, and Caribbean nations.

foreign military and UK business. The mission of the Officer Commanding IOT's mission is to

make the training at BRNC challenging, front-line focussed and invest heavily in (and demand heavily from) the IOT staff. Much BRNC leadership training

staff in all they do. The staff remain the critical

future Service issues, and a formal mess dinner will be held. Among the speakers are Defence

Secretary Des Browne, Deputy Commander of Joint Operations, Maj Gen James Dutton, and Cdre Mark Sloane, Director Maritime DCDC. Attendance on the seminar is

limited to 170 places, on a firstcome, first-served basis, and is only open to graduates of the JSWOC.

For further details, and to reserve a place, contact JSWOC Admin on 96161 8854 (01793 788854).



News and information for serving personnel

matters.

topics such as Defence discounts (principally through the Defence Discount Scheme), The new initiative builds on the success of the Pension Calculator, and allows Servicemen financial information, and to third party and women to work out their total remuneration package, incorporating basic pay, specialist commercial sites offering financial products, some of which will be aimed specifically at pay, individual allowances, pension and other members of the Armed Forces.

benefits. Using the calculator, not only will personnel be able to work out the value of the whole package, but can also get information on

A NEW Internet-based calculator will help

Armed Forces personnel work out the benefits, allowances and discounts to which they are

So what has changed and how is Phase 1 training delivered today?

of all training within the RN.

News and information for serving personnel

Homing in on housing

Local paper seeks Armed **Forces hero**

A LOCAL newspaper is searching for a hero in the Armed Forces.

The Sentinel, based in Stokeon-Trent, seeks nominees for Servicemen and women who have done something beyond the call of duty – doing something amazing or leaving their mark in a positive way over a long period of time.

The people nominated should come from the paper's circulation area of North Staffordshire and South Cheshire.

A short written summary of what the nominee has done should be sent to Aimi Moores, The Sentinel, Sentinel House, Forge Lane, Etruria, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 5SS, tel 01782 602525. The deadline for nominations is

August 1 2008 **RNPT** dates

THE next RN Presentation Team vents are:

U Wednesday May 7 at the Suite, Broadway Broadway Broadway, Complex, 46Peterborough; Thursday May 8 at the Bedford

Swann Hotel, The Embankment, Bedford.

Anyone wanting to book a place at this presentation should contact the RNPT on 020 8833 8020 or email rnpt@gtnet.gov.uk





is attributed predominantly to the introduction of Housing Information Centres (HICs). Into 2008, it is still allocation and entitlement, but a new area is just raising its head - the standard of cleanliness of properties on

move in. Many of our success stories in the last six months have centred around housing.

The 'customer service' role has been very evident, with people coming to us because, having coming to us because, exhausted all other possibilities, they have no idea where else to go. The ability to resolve issues of

a housing nature would not be possible without a good working relationship with Defence Estates and Modern Housing Solutions, something we have all worked hard to achieve.

I have raised my housing concerns directly with Vice Admiral Tim Laurence, Chief Executive Defence Estates, who I found to be engaged and sympathetic about the issues affecting our families.

Effective, appropriate and timely communication has been and high on the agenda for the NFF since we opened for business

four years ago. With large numbers of our families spread across the country, it is vital if we are to ensure families in need are connected with the support or information they require. To this end I have kept the pressure on for a JPA compliant way of using Service person contact information to contact

families directly. When I saw the Minister in March I asked for reassurance that the priority for a necessary change was not so low that it would never be achieved.

I have since been told that there is an aspiration to achieve this by

November this year - so watch this space. Affordable, accessible childcare

has become a topic of interest. The introduction of the

Armed Forces Childcare Voucher Scheme has made a difference, but inconsistent cost and availability of childcare remains an issue for families.

I hope that the DIA audit of childcare in the Armed Forces will highlight the need for more support, including priority on waiting list and reducing cost for Service families using MODsponsored childcare facilities.

Again, watch this space ... As an organisation, the NFF is asked for feedback and views on

many different topics. There are a couple of initiatives under way where your view can really count.

One is the Service Command Paper, the other the Commons Defence Select Committee inquiry into Recruitment and Retention (see page 36).

For more information on these initiatives and how to register your comments, log on to our website www.nff.org.uk And now I need your help on

specific current areas of interest. Have you relocated in the last

two years and: Found it difficult to access local NHS dental care for your family? Had to go to appeal in order

to try to secure a school place for your child? Tried to secure IVF or other

specialist medical treatment without success?

Struggled to secure special needs support for your children? If the answer is 'yes' we would love to hear from you.

So, if housing, communication and childcare are not issues that you feel are affecting you directly

which ones are? Contact us at Castaway House 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth PO2 8RN, telephone 02392 654374

or email admin@nff.org.uk You could also log on to our website www.nff.org.uk and complete a feedback form.

Finally, for those of you who have raised the subject of the Salary Sacrifice Cycle to Work Scheme - I have registered your interest, and will keep you posted on progress.

Defence nurses praised

MILITARY and civilian nurses have been applauded for their life-saving work in Iraq and Afghanistan by the Government and the General Secretary of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN).

Around 150 defence nurses attended the reception at the RCN HQ in London, where their bravery, heroism, dedication and the valuable contribution they make to military personnel deployed on operations were celebrated.

The idea for the event came about after Dr Peter Carter, the RCN's general secretary, visited Iraq last year.

Addressing the nurses, Dr Carter said: "I was extremely impressed by the world-class standard of nursing care that I saw on my trip to Basra last year.

"Our members are working in some of the most difficult and complex situations that I have ever come across.

"What impressed me most was the immense bravery of both the troops and the health care professionals who are working alongside them.

"It is not until you see it for yourself that you can really acknowledge the difficult and traumatic situations that people are dealing with at all times and applaud the respect and dignity which they show in their work.

There was also recognition for the work defence nurses put into the NHS when not fulfilling their military remit.

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hot topic In 2007 the emphasis was on allocation and entitlement - this

(MHS),

progress

six-monthly

Federation.

you'.

report in Navy News has

come round, writes Kim

Richardson, chairperson

of the Naval Families

in November last year I

centred it around 'Who we

are', 'What we do' and 'How

So, this time I am going to

tell you about some of the things

we have been involved with over

the last few months and talk

about what sort of issues you are

The last year has felt particularly busy; this was confirmed when, after

checking our data, we found

our recorded issues have

Breaking this data down a little

further, we can demonstrate that

the biggest issue that families

raised with the NFF during that

An interesting statistic, of those entitled to Service Families

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maintenance and repair was the

have actually taken it up.

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40 NAVY NEWS, MAY 2008



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NAVY NEWS, MAY 2008 41

WWW.NAVYIEISUREWEAR.COM NO MINIMUM QUANTIES: Individual orders accepted. DISCOUNTS: For ship's crews on small quantity orders. SCREEN PRINTING: For your own t-shirt designs. EMAIL: info@navyleisurewear.com TEL: 01983 291744 SEA CADETS



• LC Becky Heywood **Becky** 'is an example to us all'

A BURNLEY cadet has been praised by her commanding officer as "truly as asset to the Sea Cadet Corps" after overcoming a serious

illness to gain promotion. Becky Heywood (15) had been a member of TS Lookout for two and a half years, gaining qualifications in campcraft, seamanship, engineering, first aid and swimming.

Then, last year, Becky was diagnosed with a brain tumour that required surgery and chemotherapy.

During that treatment, Becky was unable to take part in her usual activities, but she continued to attend the unit, helping to teach the junior cadets and passed on a great deal of her knowledge.

Once she had completed her treatment Becky returned to training, and in March this year she attended an advancement board and was promoted to Leading Cadet.

S/Lt Liz Jubb, the CO of TS Lookout, said: "Everyone at the unit is proud of Becky for achieving this promotion. "She has shown herself to

be incredibly strong and brave throughout her treatment and she is an example to us all.

"Becky is truly an asset to the Sea Cadet Corps."

Becky is looking to study at Burnley College after the summer, and hopes to join the Royal Navy.

Kendal establish top credentials

KENDAL unit has placed itself firmly among the elite by taking the McBeath Trophy for 2007.

The trophy, awarded annually to one of the best units in the country, acknowledges an excellent range of activities offered to its cadets and the range of qualifications gained by those cadets. In 2007 Kendal cadets attended

camps as far away as Gibraltar as well as numerous training centres throughout the country.

The unit is not resting on its laurels - it still has ambitious plans for other overseas trips in the coming 12 months.

Members have achieved qualifications in sailing, canoeing, powerboating, writer stores, cook steward, engineering, first aid, physical training and much more. The unit has won competitions throughout the north-west area, and is keen to encourage its cadets to reach their true potential through teamwork under the ethos of the Royal Navy.

The trophy was presented to the unit by Rowley McBeath, son of Admiral McBeath, who established the trophy, in front of an audience of invited guests and supporters at the unit headquarters. Admiral McBeath was Honorary

Commodore of the Sea Cadets for many years, and his trophy is a much-sought-after award by all of the units in the corps - currently totalling 400 units up and down the country.

The award of the trophy places TS Royalist in the top ten of units.

Commanding Officer S/Lt Clive Sumpter said it was a fantastic achievement for such a small unit and meant that all the hard work and dedication by a small staff of volunteers had been worthwhile.



• POC Jacqueline Ashcroft, one of the longest-serving cadets within TS Royalist, and Junior Rosanna Quinn, the youngest member of the unit (at ten years and one day) receive the McBeath Trophy from Rowley McBeath

"We are also very pleased with the amount of assistance we get from parents and supporters, and this award is also a testament to their help and involvement," said

S/Lt Sumpter. Mr McBeath said that he was immensely proud to carry on presenting the award instigated by his father and felt that Kendal were

worthy winners of the award. The current CO took charge of the unit in April 2003 with a complement of only 15 cadets. Royalist is now thriving, with a

ship's company of more than 40

girls and boys aged from ten to 17, and has ambitious plans to extend its current headquarters to be able to offer much more to youngsters from the South Lakeland area.

For more information about the unit call 01539 733440 on a Monday or Thursday night or contact the Commanding Officer on 07979626518. Alternatively access the unit's

own web site on http://units.ms-sc.org/kendal/Default The unit is also on the lookout for staff members - call the CO to

discuss at any time.

New boat and a second burgee

PROUD cadets from the **Hartlepool** unit are looking forward to getting on the water with a new boat obtained through a community fund. TS Trincomalee took

possession of the new rowing boat following a £12,000 grant from the Youth Opportunities Fund.

The 'Admiralty sailing craft' was blessed by the unit's chaplain, Ken Comforth, at a ceremony held at their marina headquarters.

Young grant-givers from the Youth Opportunities Fund, also known as Hartlepool GGs, were on hand to actually present the boat to the unit. Also watching was Hartlepool Borough Council

chairman Carl Richardson. The event was actually a double celebration, as the unit was also presented with a burgee for achieving more than 85 percent efficiency in its annual inspection - the

second time in two years. Eric Priest, chairman of the unit management committee, said the group had won the

award for their involvement in the local community, including its outstanding support to Hartlepool with civic duties and its work with HMS Trincomalee, the oldest floating warship in the world, which is based in the town.

He added: "The rowing boat will be used for extensive training.

"Waterborne training starts now, and we are dead keen to get involved with it and get practising. "It is something we really

needed - we are very happy. "Winning the burgee is down to CPO Steve Harvey and his staff, and the enthusiasm of the cadets.

"It is a big honour to get

one." The town's cadet unit, which celebrates its 80th anniversary in October, consists of both sea cadets and marine cadets. and has around 50 youngsters aged between ten and 18 as members.

Young challengers pick up their prizes

TWO Sea Cadet units were invited to Sussex to collect their prizes for a fund-raising challenge they undertook last year. Eastbourne unit was runner

up to the Jersey Air cadets in the 2007 St Dunstan's Go the

Distance Cadet Challenge, with Gateshead unit taking third. Historian and TV presenter Peter Snow presented the prizes

the St Dunstan's Centre in Ovingdean. The Jersey cadets won by dint of a air, land and sea assault.

Eastbourne unit pulled their newly-refurbished field gun along the town's seafront three

and a half times to complete the distance - the gun was refurbished with the help of St Dunstaner Gerry Jackson. Local station Radio Sovereign broadcast interviews throughout the day, reporting the cadets' progress in hourly bulletins, and hoteliers decked out their establishments with flags and bunting.

The band of TS Brilliant from Tunbridge Wells marched the last leg of the challenge with the young gunners.

TS Flamingo, the Gateshead unit, rowed the standard Corps boat from the mouth of the Tyne to Scotswood Bridge, 14 miles upstream.

Peter Snow said: "The Cadet Challenge is a wonderful scheme; not only is it testing the ingenuity and commitment of each of the cadets, it is also helping to break down their misconceptions about blindness and promote intergenerational understanding.

Coventry take the cup

SIX girls from Coventry unit struck gold at the Corps' national football championships at HMS Collingwood. Having beaten all local and

area teams to secure their place in the finals, the team was thev At

continued their winning ways, storming into the final where, in a very close contest against **Eastbourne**, they kept their nerve to not only take the women's trophy, but also to remain unbeaten at every step.

presented the awards to the team – Charlotte Burton (capt), Stevie-Rae Roberts, Natalie Brooks, Katie Scandrett, Katie Reilly and Elizabeth McCarthy. Coventry CO Lt Steve Warwick said: "Everyone is absolutely delighted with such

a great result for a great team. "The girls deserve their National Champions' title as reward for all their hard work they have put in, not just this year but in previous years as well.

"Most of this team have not lost a five-a-side football match in over three years.

Northern units take to the slopes of Cairngorm

PICTURED right are cadets and staff from Northern Ireland. Orkney, Thurso, Dundee and Chester Le Street, at the annual ski expedition in the Cairngorm mountains in Scotland.

Organised by Area Logistics Officer Lt Tommy Wallace RNR, this is the 18th year it has taken place.

One year was cancelled due to the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease, and one year there was no snow, but this year was superb. with the best snow conditions seen for the last ten years.

All of the cadets managed to learn to ski to varying degrees, with special mentions to Cadet Dean

Lynch, from Dundee, who picked up the skill of skiing very quickly, and to Cadet Aaron Brogan, from Portrush, who struggled at first but showed lots of perseverance and by the end of the week was zipping about with the rest of them.

Skiing is an arduous sport, especially in Scotland with the ever-changing weather conditions, and it certainly builds up an appetite – so a massive thank you went to chefs Lt Cdr Maggie Mons White (CO of Chester Le Street unit) and her daughter Liz, who made sure the skiers had great meals to come back to every evening.



'Home town' remembers HMS Laforey

Laforey, which then became the town's

Laforey was in the thick of the action, attempting to save the aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal from sinking in the Mediterranean in late 1941 and taking part in the heroic Operation Pedestal convoy to

Besides cadets from Northampton and Wellingborough, the units at Milton Keynes, Stevenage, Dunstable,

• Wreath-layers at the Northampton parade (left) and the Sea Cadet Corps guard of



confident of success. Collingwood

CADETS from the 'home town' of a destroyer sunk in action in World War 2 on parade. led a parade to commemorate the loss of the ship. Northampton raised a considerable sum of money during Warship Week in 1942 towards the cost of the destroyer HMS

> adopted warship. resupply Malta in the summer of 1942.

Loughborough, Leicester, Kettering and

honour (right)

Hinckley also had cadets taking part or

The parade was led by a massed band of 30 and a guard of honour, and the whole parade featured more than 150 cadets, who had worked hard to hone their skills.

in the unit, has joined the Royal Navy. Richard, who has a keen interest in parade and ceremonial and has helped train unit teams for ceremonial competitions, said: "I will miss the unit - but I will be

Cadets have also attended the unit's annual Easter Camp at the Sea Cadet Training Centre in Thrapston, where 30 cadets enjoyed powerboating, dinghy sailing and windsurfing.

This was the last parade for 21-year-old POC Richard Wilkins who, after ten years

back!"

Capt Jonathan Fry, the Captain of the Corps,

Buxton celebrate - after 60 years

BUXTON cadets are celebrating the award of the first burgee in their unit's 60-year history. The award of a burgee officially recognises the high standards achieved by the unit in all aspects

of its work, and the dedication and enthusiasm of its staff and cadets. Or, as Buxton themselves put it: "this establishes the Buxton unit in the Sea Cadet Corps equivalent

of the Premier Division." Following the visit by members of Buxton to HMS Bulwark in Liverpool, cadets have now been invited to sail with the assault ship from Liverpool to Devonport this month

And just to make sure everybody is busy, preparations were well under way, as *Navy News* went to press, for the start of the sailing season.

Any youngsters between the ages of ten and 18 who would like to join the unit and become involved in adventurous activities with a nautical twist, gaining Royal Yachting Association sailing qualifications, contact the Commanding Officer, Lt Bruce Luckman, on 01298 780092.

Lt Luckman would also like to hear from adult volunteers who would like to become instructors for the unit



• Hot heads: **Biggleswade** cadets look happy after their firefighting training – even those whose hard hats appear to be well alight. The cadets from TS Duchess attended the Continuation Unit Team Training (CUTT) course at HMS Raleigh, visiting HMS Montrose, undertaking fire-fighting training, swimming, playing sports, practising drill and learning about damage control and sea survival



Parliamentary privilege

MARCH saw a unique event in the life of the Sea Cadet Corps when the organisation was granted the rare and prestigious opportunity of holding a week-long exhibition in the Houses of Parliament.

One Sunday a group of cadets and adults from all over the UK arrived in London and settled into their accommodation on board HMS Belfast

If you had told them then the stories they would be recounting by the end of the week, they wouldn't have believed you...

Southern Area Navy Board Cadet Lisa Froment was taken for a personal tour and drink by her local MP, Sandra Gidley from Romsey, while Marine Cadet Declan Archer was told: "Gee, you sure look sharp in that uniform," by an American girl outside a nightclub. Lord Lieutenant's Cadet Haydn

Clarke had the great privilege of sitting in the public gallery for Prime Minister's Ouestions and the Budget, while Michael Godley, from **Folkestone** unit, led an impromptu drill display for some visiting A-level students, before both cadets were treated to some sage advice on universities and careers from Lord Kinnock.

Prize memento of the week was a Sea Cadet folder signed by the leaders of all three main parties.

The cadets and staff were able to speak to dozens of members of both Houses, as well as school

parties and other visitors. They came away encouraged at how many MPs already support their local units and understand the organisation's funding arrangements, but were also able to brief them on some of the other challenges facing the organisation.

Unit 'devastated' by death of Eve

THE Sea Cadet Corps has paid tribute to Eve Anderson, of the **Dundee** unit, who died during a training weekend.

Eve (14) was attending the Fife and Tayside District drill training weekend at RM Condor near Arbroath. Shortly after 11pm on Saturday

March 8, around 20 minutes after the cadets had retired to their

dormitory for the night, Eve was found to be seriously unwell.

She was known to have an asthma inhaler, and had taken her prescribed medication.

An ambulance was called immediately, and the volunteer Sea Cadet staff - who are first-aid trained - gave cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) prior to its arrival, but Eve died at the scene. The Commanding Officer of Dundee unit, Lt Cdr Bill Wylie



A GOSPORT cadet took the

chance to see the military aerospace

industry from the inside when he

undertook work experience with

the Service Modifications section

of DARA (Defence Aviation

Repair Agency) Fleetlands. AC Adam Kellie spent the

first few days of the period in

the Drawing Office, where he

learned the fundamentals of

CAD – computer-aided design

- and created the drawings for an

For the next six days Adam

spent was in the sheet metal and

mechanical workshops, working on

aluminium toolbox.

EIGHT cadets from Huyton with Roby and the City of Liverpool units used their communications training to unusual effect when they were invited to appear on the Paul O'Grady Show to teach the star how to sign in semaphore. The cadets signed the name of the show before teaching Paul and his guests to sign the word 'stop'. Inevitably the demonstration ended in chaos with an inflated lifejacket and water pistols. After the live show. Paul joined the cadets in the Green Room (above) to chat - including reminiscences of his time as a Marine Cadet

the construction of his toolbox. This required instruction in using industrial machines for cutting, bending, welding and riveting sheet metal.

The final stages of the work experience saw Adam in the electrical workshops where his skills were tested in the production of aircraft looms from wiring diagrams.

His lunchtimes were spent playing volleyball and football with the section's junior rates.

At the end of his time at Fleetlands, Adam was presented with his toolbox by the repair

RNR, said: "Eve Anderson had not been with us very long but she was a very, very good cadet.

"She was a bright and bubbly girl who got involved in everything that was going on and was popular with the other cadets.

"She was at a training camp for a drill competition. Drill is not everybody's cup of tea but she really wanted to do it. "We are all devastated – it is so,

so sad." A message on the unit's website states: "Our thoughts and prayers

are with Eve's family and we, like them, take great comfort from the messages of support from the Sea Cadet family throughout the United Kingdom." Social network site Bebo has

also carried messages of support from Eve's friends.

Mike Cornish, chief executive of the Marine Society & Sea Cadets, the Corps' parent charity, said: "It is clear that our adult volunteers all acquitted themselves with great professionalism under very difficult circumstances. "Our thoughts and deepest

sympathies are with Eve's family and friends in the Sea Cadet Corps at this time."

Aerospace from the inside manager, Lt Andy Stancliffe. Adam, who is 15, has been member of TS Hornet since January 2003, when he joined as a

junior cadet. Adam's specialisation communications and tactical

communications. He is currently waiting to take

his board to attain the rate of leading cadet – and his plan was to achieve that just about the same time as Navy News was published this month.

As for the future, not surprisingly the Royal Navy features large in Adam's plans...



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• Former RMVCC cadet Will Charters, as featured in last month's edition

Former cadet hits the headlines

A FORMER Lympstone RMVCC cadet has hit the headlines for his actions during a tour of duty in Afghanistan. Mne Will Charters was the man

who plucked two wounded girls to safety following a Taleban rocket attack at Sangin, as featured in last month's edition of *Navy News*.

The young marine's base had been targeted as a reprisal for a 40 Commando patrol, but the explosives had missed, falling among Afghan civilians.

The girls' uncle had gone to the gate of Bravo Company's base in Sangin, and Will ignored the

dangers to fetch both girls in to the camp's sick bay. Having been stabilised, the girls were flown by Chinook to the main field hospital at Camp Bastion.

One girl lost an arm while the other was treated for serious head injuries.

Will wanted to be a Royal Marine from an early age, and joined the RMVCC at ten, transferring into the Corps proper at 16.

A staff member of the Lympstone unit commented: "We may take them young and not be the biggest of units, but we can turn out excellent Royal Marines!"

The unit, along with Will's parents, were also reported to be "justifiably proud of him."

Kettering's big day

ARRANGEMENTS are being made for the presentation of the prestigious Indefatigable Cup to

The trophy, along with a sum of money, is awarded annually to the Sea Cadet unit which, in the eves of the Corps headquarters in London, has made the most progress over the past year.

The cup, formerly known as the Navy League Challenge Swimming Trophy, is a large silver trophy bearing an enamelled portrait of Nelson.

It was formerly competed for in an annual boat race on the Mersey between the Indefatigable and the Lancashire and National Sea Training Home.

It was won and given to Indefatigable in 1938 by the Navy League.

The presentation to TS Pytchley will take place on Tuesday June 17.

SEA CADETS

Hertford HQ is officially opened

HERTFORD and Ware unit has a new headquarters, thanks to a housing development in the heart of the town.

Weston Homes has built a waterside scheme of apartments, and as part of the firm's contribution to the community a new home for the unit was included in The Meads.

The new TS Dreadnought HQ contains sleeping accommodation, classrooms, offices, meetings rooms and other facilities, and there is also room for any future expansion in membership.

The HQ was formally opened by the Mayor of Hertford, Cllr Russell Radford, during a traditional naval ceremony and parade.

The chairman of the Hertford unit, Nicholas Wilson, said: "Weston Homes have very generously supported us by bringing this new building to fruition, which is designed to meet current requirements of health, safety and wellbeing for cadets. "This new facility will really

help our young people to become part of a team in the best traditions of the Royal Navy.'

Peter is ready for anything

THE Commanding Officer of the Whitehaven unit, Lt (SCC) Peter Lucas RNR, has been awarded a Master of Science degree in a ceremony held at the University of Leicester.

Peter, who is employed at Sellafield as Assistant Emergency Planning Officer, was awarded his MSc in Emergency Planning Management following a threeyear distance learning course run by the university.

Out of an initial intake of around 25 people, Peter was one of only six who successfully completed the course and received their degree.

Unit chairman Chas Tinkler said: "Peter has put in a lot of hard work and thoroughly deserves his

success. "We are extremely pleased for



• The Yorkshire cadets in cheerful mood as they tackle their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award expedition

Cadets make the cut

SIX cadets completed a 24-mile expedition over the wintry Easter period as part of their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award.

The cadets, from the Huddersfield and Wakefield units, set out to row from Wakefield to Mirfield and back as part of the award expedition section.

Early one Saturday the cadets set out with all their equipment in a 16ft pulling craft, ready to complete a course to Mirfield which included five locks along the Calder and Hebble Navigation in West Yorkshire.

The cadets saw plenty of evidence of the recent heavy rains in the region, including one large narrow boat still lying high and dry, completely blocking the towpath.

As darkness approached and temperatures dropped rapidly the cadets secured their craft at South Pennine Boat Club (SPBC), eager to pitch camp and eat their hot evening meal to keep warm.

early to avoid the coldest part of the night.

The clubhouse washing facilities were a real treat - probably as much to do with the heated building as the convenience of running water.

On Sunday morning, as the thin layer of overnight snow melted, the cadets left with a chorus of thanks to SPBC members for their hospitality.

The team pulled hard throughout the day and improved their efficiency through the locks, managing to pass through a double lock in around 15 minutes.

The expedition was declared a success as the crew pulled confidently alongside at Wakefield unit at 4pm. LC Danielle Johnson said:

"The expedition was fun but hard work

"I'd like to complete my silver expedition next, but preferably sleeping in a caravan, not a cold tent!'

LC Alice Holding thanked the expedition supervisors for providing the opportunity to



• Cadets open a lock gate on the Calder and Hebble Navigation

a team.

S/Lt (SCC) Craig Dawson iid: "The team performed said: exceptionally well throughout the venture, due to their training,

their expedition for a long time Everyone on camp turned in complete the venture. diligent equipment preparations explaining who they are. to come! Blizzards subside for birthday parade



• Rear Admiral Niall Kilgour chats to POC Byron Banthorpe of the Ipswich unit during Great Yarmouth's 70th anniversary celebrations

CADETS from across East Anglia fought their way through snow and hailstorms to help Great Yarmouth unit celebrate their

The unusual April cold snap, which brought snow and hail to most of the UK, didn't stop youngsters battling through nearblizzards, where visibility was reduced to 50 metres at times, slowing their progress towards Gorleston, just outside Great Yarmouth, where the TS Norfolk birthday parade was held.

remember.

freezing conditions, but the cadets were determined to hit the road. The weather decided to be warming everyone up for the march past.

Around 60 former cadets and staff of the unit also attended the

Rear Admiral Kilgour presented Cadet 'Danny' Dyball with his Amateur Radio Badge.



• Thumbs up from the Mayor and TS Norfolk cadets

Danny, who recently underwent the amateur radio foundation course, is now qualified to build his own radio transmitters and receivers, and is an active member of the unit's amateur radio section.

and their ability to bond well as

"I think they will remember

The youngest member of the unit, Lizzy Gilgil, assisted Mrs Jane Kilgour, wife of Admiral Kilgour, to cut the birthday cake. Great Yarmouth Unit was

Waltham **Forest are** gunning for cash

THE cadets of Waltham Forest, TS Acorn, helped raise more than £200 for the Royal British Legion by staging a charity gun pull alongside their RM counterparts.

The gun team, with trainer and leader TI (SCC) Andy Leaves alongside their Commanding Officer, Lt (SCC) Keith Coleman RNR and other staff members of TS Acorn, Dean Barnett and Koren Leaves, completed the three-mile route around Chingford led by the Scottish Pipers of the RBL to raise money for the Poppy Appeal.

Until recently, training for the team has been difficult due to the lack of space at TS Acorn.

However, Waltham Forest College recently took another step forward in bringing residents of the borough together by reestablishing links with the cadets of TS Acorn.

In June 2007, a team from the unit competed in the Centennial Gun Run against units from across the country, doing the area proud, despite being only able to train for a few hours.

However, the chance of achieving a top three place in next year's competition seemed unlikely without effective training facilities. That was until Robin Jones,

Acting Principal of Waltham Forest College, offered the parking area on a Sunday, after a conversation with trainer Andy Leaves. Now, the cadets stand a realistic

chance of top spot.

Wallasey's efforts are appreciated

WALLASEY cadets have received a letter of thanks from troops in Afghanistan after they sent parcels to the front line.

The members of TS Astute - formerly TS Revenge - sent sweets from their nutty supplies, then started to get a little more emblishing filling hence full of ambitious, filling boxes full of home comforts such as shower gel, soap, biscuits, toothpaste and brushes, and puzzle books.

The boxes were packed and posted by the wife of a committee member, Kay Hurst, who -with the help of the cadets, two local schools and the Ladybirds group, have sent well over 100 boxes. The cadets received a letter of thanks from Sgt Maj Sowerby, Welfare Officer Helmand Province, after the cadets put notes in their boxes,

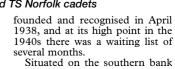
70th birthday.

It was a birthday party to

The parade formed up in kind and the sun came out later,

Guests of honour were Rear Admiral Niall Kilgour, representing First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band, and the Mayor of Great Yarmouth, Cllr Paul Garrod.

celebrations.



of the River Yare, the unit is often

seen at local events. TS Norfolk has been affiliated to warships HMS Yarmouth and HMS Norfolk, with many visits and plenty of sea time on both ships.

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<u>REVIEW 🏁</u>



The butcher's bill of Vimy

IN APRIL 1917, the Western Front was ablaze. The Royal Naval Division

stormed German lines outside Arras; the French attacked along the Chemin des Dames, an imposing ridge beyond Reims, intending to deliver the German Army a fatal blow; and in the skies, the Royal Naval Air Service was locked in mortal combat with its German foe. There were few reasons for the

Allies to cheer in 'Bloody April':

READERS who, like me,

previous sterling products

of Rob Gardner's previous

publishing efforts at Conway and Chatham will

be pleased to hear that he

is now operating under a

The first products I have received from the new publisher

- Seaforth Publishing, a subsidiary of the well-known Pen and Sword

Books – are two handsome, well-illustrated volumes that lend themselves to joint treatment, writes Prof Eric Grove of the

They overlap in a major way but remain complementary justifying

their publication side-by-side. The first is Anti-Submarine Warfare: An Illustrated History $(\pounds 25, ISBN 97-1-84415-703-7)$

by a generalist writer and journalist

writer – which is demonstrated in his easy and accessible style

historian and I am afraid it shows.

from its subject by taking too much

time with a not-too-well-informed

history of the submarine. A book on anti-submarine warfare (ASW) should be just that

on ASW not submarines.
 Such an effort might have been justified if the author was

summarising new work but he is

not. He ignores the important last

contribution to submarine history

by Richard Compton-Hall on

pretty conclusively that the Turtle

which is supposed to have attacked HMS Eagle in 1776 was a figment

This led me to inspect the bibliography and this demonstrated

there were other glaring lacunae in

There was no mention of the two vital books that have appeared

in the last few years George

Franklin's Britain's Anti-Submarine Capability 1919-1939 and Malcolm

Llewellyn-Jones, The Royal Navy

and Anti-Submarine Warfare 1917-

informed the analysis of pre-

war techniques in several useful ways. The latter would have

demonstrated to Mr Owen that

he should not have entitled his last

chapter on the campaign against

the U-boats 'Air Power Invincible':

the contribution of aircraft to

U-boat losses diminished late in

the war at the Germans stayed

to give even greater stress to the

revolution required in ASW not by

the nuclear submarine but by the

fast battery-driven boats evolved

by the Germans in World War 2

and copied by all the major powers

It would also have guided him

underwater more.

after 1945.

former

would

of American rebel propaganda.

demonstrated

early submarines.

Compton-Hall

the author's research.

1949.

The

but he is not a professional naval

Firstly the book wanders away

Mr Owen may be a professional

third imprint.

University of Salford.

David Owen.

appreciated the

have

Britain's diversionary attack at Arras failed to draw German reserves from the Chemin des Dames so the French offensive failed miserably; the French Army mutinied; and the RFC suffered horrendous casualties. The one bright spot, however,

was the capture of high ground to the north of Arras which offered a commanding view of Artois. The capture of Vimy Ridge was a decisive success - and one which has become a defining moment in Canada's national identity, for her men were at the forefront of the onslaught. Little space has been afforded to the defenders of Vimy ... until

In his unceasing efforts to give a voice to the men 'on the other side of the hill', Jack Sheldon has turned his attention to The German Army on Vimy Ridge 1914-1917 (Pen & Sword, £25,

ISBN 978-1844-156801). Few people are better qualified to offer an insight into 'Fritz' than the author whose trawl of the archives, regimental histories and countless first-hand accounts has already shed light where it is dark on the Somme and at Passchendaele.

His Vimy Ridge work continues in the same outstanding vein. Foe or not, it is hard not to feel sympathy for the German defenders – who have left us with some vivid, and incredibly haunting, first-hand accounts.

All survivors of the Easter battle of 1917 attest to a strangely mesmeric "thunderous hail of iron'

Feldwebel (Sergeant) Paul Radschun's regiment stood firm until "the last waves of the British burnt out and the dreadful storm of steel ebbed away", but at a

cost of nearly 900 men. "It had not yielded. It had defended its appointed place to the last drop of blood; worthy of its fathers; worthy of the heroic spirit of its beloved commander," he recalled.

The English-speaking focus is invariably on those fateful April days. But there were ferocious battles for the ridge, largely between Gaul and Teuton, in 1915

And while the warriors fought eath above, an armv tunnellers and counter-tunnellers burrowed beneath Vimy, determined to blow a gap in the enemy lines - or to bring their adversary's tunnel (or 'gallery') crashing down. There was no more horrible a fate on the Western Front.

One German engineer tried to rescue a comrade trapped by a British charge which had already killed a second miner.

We could hear the moans and groans of this unfortunate man, trapped by his legs which were gripped tight by the collapsed chalk walls," he recalled.

The unfortunate man was rescued – his legs had to be amputated, but that did not save him; he died shortly afterwards.

Sadly there are also one or two simple howlers. It is all too easy to get pictures Such was war on Vimy Ridge.



Men of the US Coast Guard cutter Spencer watch a depth charge sink U175, April 1943
 Picture: WO Jack/US National Archives 26-G-1517

The Grove Review

mixed up – as I know to my cost but on page 45 there is an extended caption trying to identify a boat with U1 on its conning tower as a German submarine.

It is clearly a British built Uclass boat, probably in Norwegian service. Then, rather strangely on page 165, a caption referring to Mk 24 homing torpedo is used for a well known picture of an Avenger being loaded with a

standard anti-ship weapon. Such small pr problems demonstrate that the book must be treated with a certain amount of care but it has its good points too. The diagrams of ASW tactics,

very ably drawn by the author, are most useful and make the book almost worth buying for them alone.

Many interested readers could get a lot out of this volume but it must be treated with caution and could have been so much better. David K Brown's work is a

contrast in many ways. A former senior member of the Corps of Naval Contructors and its official historian, Brown's prolific work is known for its professional authority.

This is once more demonstrated in Atlantic Escorts: Ships, Weapons and Tactics in World War 2 (£19.99 ISBN-978-1-84415-702-0).

He provides a thorough and generally very well informed analytical survey from the superannuated veterans of World War 1 to the frigates of the late war period, both of domestic and transatlantic build.

particular interest considering its source is his final chapter – Evaluation: How Good Were They?

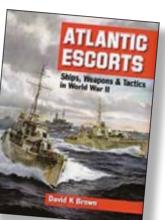
He is interesting in his critique of Franklin's defence of the Admiralty in the inter-war period, arguing that although there were convov exer there were not many and the lessons learnt do not seem to have reached the top.'

It is to be regretted therefore that there is no trace of Brown having consulted Llewellyn-Jones² more recent book, with which he might also have taken issue.

David follows the usual line rather condemning the deployment of fleet carriers on ASW patrols in 1939. Llewellvn-Iones offers an interesting justification.

On the whole, however, the author explains and justifies British escort policy. He argues that the main

constraints on escort building were the building of other types of ship, for which the needs seemed more pressing (and were pressing enough) as well as the



sheer inability to produce large turbine powered warships. Use of commercial facilities necessitated short ships and reciprocating engines for mass production. He argues that the failure

to develop an ahead-throwing weapon, a problem related to British ASW exercises being carried out in shallow water, "was the greatest failure of the pre-war Admiralty" (although it must be added it was not alone in that omission). Wartime developments in equipment were, however timely and correct."

Brown also has some interesting explanations for the success of Walker's Escort Group.

As well as its leader's own qualities it tended to be given priority in being sent to Uboat concentrations. It also was allocated the best personnel.

The author implies that this rather undermines arguments for the superiority of the Black Swan sloop (which equipped Walker's force) over other types; they cost over half as much again as a River-class frigate and used more skilled labour for little ASW performance advantage.

This is true but the Black Swans proved to be excellent colonial gunboats post-war with their powerful 4in armament.

In an interesting conclusion, the author considers what would have been the impact of the fast battery submar He believes that "they would

have been formidable opponents but would not have had it all their own way." Again, one regrets the lack of engagement with Llewellvn-Iones.

Books like the latter's, however, tend to cost the earth (£70-80 pounds no less) given their publisher's mistaken policy of only pointing them at the purely 'academic' market. Most interested readers have

to rely on more popularly-priced volumes such as those reviewed here

Both are worthy enough, attractively produced and good value, but it is such a pity that so much of the latest key research was not exploited, preventing it reaching the wider audience.

Birth of a formidable foe

SAY the words 'Red' and 'Fleet and to most people they will conjure images of Victors, Akulas, and Kilos.

But before the Cold War there was another Soviet fleet - and a not insubstantial one, as shown by an illustrated history from Vladimir Yakubov and Richard Worth, Raising the Red Banner: The Pictoral History of Stalin's Fleet (*Spellmount*, £20, ISBN 978-1-86227-450-1).

The Soviets inherited sizeable, if run-down, fleet from the Imperialist Navy – not least several dreadnoughts which were promptly given suitable Bolshevik names.

And they might have inherited much more had the Revolution not stopped a substantial Tsarist building programm in its tracks.

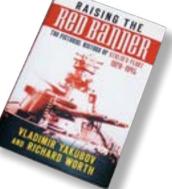
Instead, the Red Fleet dabbled with the battleship (six more were in various stages of completion when the Germans invaded in 1941).

In fairness, the big ships did not have a great war: they were mostly bottled up in the Baltic and Black Seas when war began - and suffered accordingly under the German bombs.

The Germans also bottled up most of the not insignificant Soviet submarine fleet (the Baltic force, for example, managed barely half a dozen attacks and no sinkings of enemy vessels over an 18-month period between 1942 and 1944).

But as the Red Army sowed the seeds for the future Cold War by swallowing up Eastern Europe in late 1944 and early 1945, so Soviet submarines showed what they could achieve when unleashed most famously with the torpedoing of the Wilhelm Gustloff, Goya and Steuben during the evacuation of Germany's Baltic shores.

The heart of this book - some 60



pages - is devoted to a submarine orce whose size was more than

twice that of its two nearest rivals. The authors have dug out some fascinating and, for the most part, unpublished images which leave the reader in no doubt that the Soviet Union possessed a potent Navy long before it was viewed as the West's principal opponent.

Perhaps most intriguing are Stalin's 'prize Navy' – the ships he captured or was donated, such as (loaned to Russia between 1944 and 1949 as Arkhangelsk) and a clutch of Italian and German ships acquired/seized as war booty.

Some of those vessels would help form the nucleus of the Russians' early Cold War fleet. Not among them, however, was the Graf Zeppelin, the Nazis

almost-finished aircraft carrier. It was scuttled in Stettin at the

war's end and subsequently raised by the Russians... who surrounded its fate with mystery for decades to unbalance the West.

She was, in fact, sunk by the Soviets shortly after the war's end.



"DARLING, I'M HOME"

Dark(y) waters paperback of 80 cartoons.

AFTER all these tales of war, how refreshing to find something lighthearted.

'Darky' Derek Crowter's distinctive cartoons regularly featured in these pages – and elsewhere – in the 60s and 70s.

Derek, who today lives in Southsea, served in both the RN and RM... which promptly gave him plenty of source material for Jack 'n' Royal (Serendipity, \pounds 12.95, ISBN 978-1-84394-283-2), a colourful, large format

This collection will probably largely appeal to sailors from the 50s through to the 70s – not least as some of the, admittedly gentle, humour is of that era (fearsome mothers-in-law, buxom barmaids and the like).

But there are some constant themes here too... the rivalry between RN and RM, the love of the odd pint and plenty of poking fun at overbearing officers and top brass.

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The RN on the charge – again – during the drubbing of the RAF

Dark blue rampant

THE 2008 Inter-Services **Rugby Union** championships got under way at Burnaby Road with one of the biggest defeats inflicted by the RN on its foe in light blue

It took a little while for the RN 1st XV to settle, but then: bang. After ten minutes Will Pilkington (CNR) opened the scoring when he cut a clean angle to score by the posts.

Four minutes later Andy Vance (MASU) was at the end of a crisp backs' move to squeeze into the right hand corner, soon followed on the opposite wing by Josh Drauniniu's (CTCRM) well-timed pass to put Greg Barden (RM Poole) through for an easy run in to the goal line. With Navy skipper Dave Pascoe (RFANSU) converting all three tries,

the Navy were 21-0 to the good with only 18 minutes played. The Navy never underestimate their opponents in light blue - and this

year was to be no exception. However, turned over possession allowed Navy lock Marsh Cormack (845 Sqn) to find Jamie Caruana (HMS Monmouth) who released Josh Drauniniu into space for a race to the corner to score the Navy's fourth try (unconverted)

Again the RAF came back and following a succession of penalties close to its line, the Navy found itself down to 14 men after a collapsed maul. With the advantage of the extra man, the RAF managed to drive over

the RN line – although it appeared to the largely partisan crowd that back row Les Dennis (HMS Nelson) had held up the score. With the conversion missed, the Navy went into half time with a

comfortable 26-5 lead. A quick penalty following the restart by Pascoe extended the Navy's lead before the RAF again punished the Navy for being a man down. Following a five-metre scrum, the RAF exploited the lack of back row cover and squeezed over for their second try, this time converted, to bring the score to 29-12 with 35 minutes to go. Would the RAF stage a dramatic comeback?

The answer was an emphatic 'no'. With the RN back to full strength, the RAF's defence was soon in disarray.

With 13 minutes of the second half gone, Andy Vance was once again set loose down the right wing, only to be tackled a metre short. With the ball recycled, Greg Barden was again on hand to literally fall over the line for the score: 34-12.

Three minutes later Vance was causing the light blues problems but this time the inside ball found the ever-present Les Dennis who put Tom O'Keeffe over for a well-worked try, marking his Inter Services debut in style

With the game now all but won, the play became a little loose, though nonetheless still absorbing. The RAF kept their heads up and continued to look for opportunities to attack from every angle.

Greg Barden bagged his third try (converted) to make it 46-12. He was shortly followed over the line by Josh Drauniniu (53-12)... and then Barden bagged his fourth.

The best was saved for last: try number five for Barden following some outstanding play from new cap scrum half Wayne 'Cowboy' John (HMS Collingwood) and Rob Lloyd (42 Cdo RM) at fly half; Rob enjoyed his best match to date in an RN shirt.

The enthusiastic crowd was jubilant at such a convincing win for the Navy, final score RN 67-RAF 12.

The ice men returneth

ICE hockey team the Royal Navy Destroyers have picked up where they left off last season by winning their three games against service and civilian opposition in April.

After a massively successful 2007 season when they were crowned the HM Forces Champions, the RN players were keen to show everyone that they would be ready to defend their title at the forthcoming Inter-Service Championships June 4-6 at Ice Sheffield.

RN team manager OM Kev Cave is confident his team will put up a strong defence of its hard-won 2007 trophy. He also expects the recreational side to improve on their third place finish of the last two years

"We are continuing to find good players throughout the Fleet and Corps," says Kev. "I've no doubt we have the quality and talent necessary to defeat the RAF and Army again this year at the representative level, and seriously challenge for the Inter-Services Command Trophy as well."

The combined Tri-Service and Inter-Command Championships is one of the largest ice hockey tournaments in the UK. The competition attracts 12 Service teams from all three Forces: six

RAF bases, four Army regimental over 150 players in all. In addition, the best players from each Service are selected to represent

their Forces for the main Tri-Service competition, won by the RN elite squad, the Kings, last year. The sport has grown substantially over the last three years and has

reached a level where all three Services have been invited to compete in the 2009 European Services Championships in Switzerland, a challenge all the RN players are looking forward to.

We hope to make a strong showing," says RNIHA Chairman Lt Cdr Alain Bernard, "with some luck, and the support of unit COs, I'm pretty sure we can put out the best squad of all three Services and strongly represent the RN. The prospect of competing at that level has helped raise the standard

of play of all our players, and we are aware that we will be venturing into a completely different level of hockey on the continent."

The RN team continue to train at the Link Centre, Swindon, every fortnight. Players serving elsewhere can attend training sessions hosted by the other Services.

The team is also keen to recruit new players, of all standards and is actively seeking senior rates and SNCOs to get involved.

Further details are available on the team's website www.rndestroyers. co.uk or by contacting Kev on cave903@hotmail.co.uk



• Nothing's going to stop me now... A Royal powers for the line during the Wigan Bowl at CTCRM

Picture: LA(Phot) Andy Hibberd, CTCRM

42 too strong for CHF

by 8-6.

ground being given by either side – evidenced by the score; 42 Cdo edged_out as eventual winners

Northwood's final game against

24 Regt showed the determination

of the new boys as they held the Chivenor team to 0-0.

The final game of the pool stage saw CTCRM beat CHF 8-6.

And so to the finals. The four

matches each team had played

had taken their toll and bruised and battered bodies took to the

The Plate Final was contested

between 24 Regt and CTCRM. The younger 24 Regt took the

game to the CTCRM side and only some stout defending from the Lympstone lads kept the Army

boys out. In the second half it was CTCRM turn to put the pressure

They were rewarded with three

During the pool stages 42 Cdo

But in the final the constantly-improving 42 Cdo showed their

skill and defensive resolve by

holding the powerful helicopter

tries, winning the game and the

field for one more game.

on the 24 Regt side.

had drawn 0-0 with CHF.

plate by 14-0.

FIVE sides competed for the honour of lifting the Wigan Bowl as CTCRM hosted the tenth RM Rugby League Championships.

42 Cdo, CTCRM itself, Commando Helicopter Force (CHF), 24 Regiment (RE) and, for the first time, the RM detachment from Joint Service Unit Northwood locked horns on the Devonshire turf.

The championships starter was the newly-named 24 Regt RE from Chivenor against CHF.

The Engineers looked a very capable side and set the standard by beating a well-drilled CHF team by 10-6.

Next up were the newbies from Northwood against a formidable 42 Cdo who boasted several RM/ RN players of both codes.

The Northwood team was under pressure from the start and conceded two tries very quickly. This didn't stop Northwood putting 42 Cdo under great pressure with the final score being 10-8 to 42 Cdo.

CTCRM then made their entry

the Inter-Services title on goal

difference - thanks to a last-ditch

The women came into their first

Inter-Services game in good

spirits after a training weekend in

Lilleshall which unearthed a new

striker in AB Sarah Mansfield

making her debut in this game.

The team were also boosted by the

release from their ships of LLogs

Lou Lee (HMS Exeter), AB Eddie

Edwards (HMS Kent) and ETWE

the RAF under pressure which led to a corner after five minutes. LPT

Nat Bavister delivered towards

the front post, POAEM Mariesaa

Dryhurst flicked the ball on to

LS Julie Hewitt, who managed to

The goal fired up the RAF who started to pass the ball well and

generated a couple of chances.

It was no surprise when they

equalised on 18 minutes following

Indeed the first half was dominated by scrappy play from

a mix-up in the RN defence.

The RN started well, putting

Lisa Lee (HMS Portland).

steer it into the net.

leveller from the Army.

RN Women 4 RAF 3

having within there team several old and bold players of the likes of WO2 Chris Richard, recently returned from the US. Chris showed that he has lost

none of his line-breaking power; it is just the pace and passing that lets him down nowadays. The

CTC team held the 24 Regt team to a 6-6 draw. With teams playing ten minutes each way they needed to get off to a good start to hold the

advantage. There was some great defensive play from all teams; this was particularly evident in the game between CHF and 42 Cdo which

ended up as a no-score draw. CTCRM followed with a 10-6 victory over the Northwood team. 42 Cdo had something to prove as the matched up against 24 Regt and showed skill in both defence and attack, running out winners by the biggest margin of the day, 20-0.

After two good games, Northwood faced an ever-improving CHF and lost by 18-0. The battle of the big two came next as CTCRM grappled with 42 Cdo.

It was a battle with little

No defeats... but no trophy UNBEATEN and unbowed, the **Onside with Capt Paul** RN Ladies only failed to clinch

Cunningham, RNFA NAVY

both teams, and the pattern was repeated on 41 minutes when we conceded a second sloppy goal. This seemed to act

for the RN who went straight up the other end and won a free kick on the right. The ball was delivered by Bayister and Edwards' shot took a deflection to find the bottom corner: 2-2 at half time.

Both managers were clearly unhappy as they went off for the half-time talk, with a 'Fergie hairdryer' for the Navy and the RAF women going back out on the pitch for extra drills.

The pep talks seemed to work and the second half was a different game, with both teams sharper in the tackle and tighter in their passing. This led to a much better contest, but after 54 minutes, an RAF free kick was quickly converted before the RN could prepare themselves. A very poor goal to give away.

The Navy went searching for the equaliser. On 62 minutes the pressure led to a free kick from Paristan de e right, wh into the area. Hewitt controlled the ball and fired her second goal of the game into the corner of the net.

The next 20 minutes provided chances at both ends, and some attractive football but as the clock ticked on, the RN kept up the pressure and with two minutes to go another corner to the near post was met by Edwards who rose to head the ball into the top corner - a great goal which was worthy of winning any game, and a fabulous result for the RN ladies.

RN Women 1 Army 1

The RN dominated this match but couldn't break the deadlock until the 38th minute when LPT Nat Bavister delivered the ball

in from the left, and a clearance

team who had the slope and the elements with them in the first period.

When they turned around 42 Cdo upped their game and showed that the fighting units still have the edge in fitness, winning the tenth RMRL Championship by 16 points to nil. The Wigan bowl was presented

to the captain of the 42 Cdo squad, L/Cpl Pete Greene, by CTCRM RSM Mark Wicks. Pete also picked up the Billy Boston Trophy for the player of

the championship. Again the Championship showed that there is a wealth of talent in the Corps and supporting units which bodes well for the forthcoming season.

The day also saw the presentation of the RMRL first life member to Mr Bill Bennett. Bill, a former Royal Marine, has been one of the Corps Rugby

League most loyal supporters. He has travelled the length and

breath of the country to watch and support the team. Bill works tirelessly in support of Corps RL and has attended most of the Championships over the past ten

found POPT Lisa Farthing (HMS Raleigh) who volleyed a looping shot into the top left corner, giving

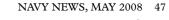
the Army keeper no chance. The second half followed the same pattern but our failure to convert chances proved to be our undoing when the Army equalised in the third minute of added time. Heartbreak for the Navy, who had played the better football and had created the better chance

The defence had been strong and committed, epitomised by NA(SE) Amy King (HMS Seahawk) who suffered an injury to her knee in the first half but played on – and ended the evening on crutches.

The final ten minutes saw the final appearance of PO Ann Jones in an RN shirt. The stalwart of Navy women's football is retiring after many years playing and running the squad, and it would have been a fitting end to her career if the ladies could have held out in injury time to rightfully claim their first IS Cup.

This season also sees the retirement of another founder of the RN(W), POPTI Mitch Bowen, who is hanging up her boots due to injury.





SPORT 🏁

Qualified ski instructors needed The (cycling)

team works THE RN had another successful year at the Combined Services Sports Awards.

Sponsored by SSVC and broadcast on BFBS, these prestigious awards were presented by the Duchess of Cornwall at the RAF Club in Piccadilly.

Navy nominees were CPOPT Sean Childs (Cycling) for Sportsman of the Year; LMA Mhairi Muir (Triathlon, Swimming and Cycling) for sportswoman; Lt Keith Burrows for sports official; and the Navy Time Trial Cycling Team for the Sports Team award.

Competition for these awards is intense – Dame Kelly Holmes is among previous winners - and the Navy did well to take the Sports Official award and the Team of the Year award.

Lt Burrows is not only an exceptional fencer and has captained the Combined Services team, but in addition he is an international fencing referee and tipped to be one of the British referees at the 2012 Olympics. His award was an acknowledgement of his impressive contribution to both Service and British fencing.

The Navy's Time Trial team gained their award for their complete domination of Inter-Service cycling competitions over the last three years and for their ranking at national level.

The team was ranked second nationally in 2005 and third in 2007 and this was against specially-formed cycle teams which included Olympic, Commonwealth and semiprofessional riders.

CPO Childs has led the team to these successes and his individual performance was such to justify his nomination for the Sportsman of the Year title.

Sean has completely dominated Navy and Inter-Service cycling over the last three years in the discipline of time trialling which has included all distances from ten miles to 12 hours. During this period he has been in the top ten in the British Best All-Rounder rankings.

In her short time in the Navy, Mhairi Muir is now one of the Navy's top performers in a range of sports. She won Inter-Service and GB Masters titles at swimming prior to moving to triathlon where she found her true potential. She is also women's Inter-Service Time Trial champion at ten and 25 miles.

THE biggest individual sporting event in the RN calendar are the Alpine ski and snowboarding championships. For the past five years, the event has been held at Les Menuires in the French Alps.

The championships are open to all members of the RNWSA (Royal Navy Winter Sports Association) which includes serving members of the RN, RM, and RNR, RMR,

URNU and their families. The main theme of the championships is racing and there is now a very comprehensive race training programme headed by ex-RN ski team captain Steve Cotton. There's also a 'learn to ski' programme

for beginners, intermediates and advanced skiers. The team who organise the event is on the

lookout for new instructors - they lose one or two every season as they get drafted or leave the RN. All are either Joint Service instructors or BASI Qualified (British Association of

Snowsport Instructors).

All also give up their leave to teach as volunteers - to dispel any myths, no-one gets paid; in fact., a couple of instructors who are now civvies and teach at Intermediate and advanced levels take unpaid leave.

If you fancy joining this good team no poseurs and no egos, just dedicated enthusiastic people who enjoy passing on great skills – then contact Lt (SCC) Tommy Wallace, Chief Instructor RNWSA, at HMS Caledonia on 9335 65045 or twallace@ ms-sc.org

Karts and (super) Novas

ON A very wet, windy and miserable day Barton Stacey Kart Circuit, near Hampshire Andover, hosted the first round of the 2008 season.

Some 29 teams turned up for the six hour endurance race, including Lt Kevin Westbrook (RNAS Yeovilton), representing the Royal Navy Automobile Club in the 'Teamworks' No 48 Kart. After a good qualifying session

Kevin put the Kart in ninth place on the grid; he slowly progressed through the field up to sixth in the torrential rain, spray, and high winds.

Having completed 90 minutes and 119 laps of racing, a very wet Lt Westbrook returned to the pits for a refuel and driver change.

The team were running in seventh place (second in the expert class) after $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours of racing when a clutch failed; many other teams were also really struggling with the difficult and changing weather conditions. Teamworks' finished in 19th

place and seventh in class (expert), despite not even completing the last half an hour of racing.

Also on the road, or rather turf, was Logs (Pers) Tracey Cotton (DCMC Whitehall), competing in the first round of the three-round SEGTO (South East Grass Track Organisation) championship at Standlake Arena near Oxford. Tracey took both her cars – a

1,300cc Prod B Nova, which she raced last year and her new motor, a 1,300cc Nova which has to run in the 1,450cc Hot Rods because of its carburettor and wheel size - to the meet, which began with the track carpetted with snow. Thankfully, it began to clear

quite quickly and as it melted, Tracey had both her cars scrutinised.

 Lt Kevin Westbrook races around the damp Barton Stacey track in Teamworks
 PO 'Dutchy' Holland, Phoe The Prod B was out first in the

heats and with ten cars running and 15 laps to do, the Nova was ready. Tracey took her place on the

grid, got off to a good start and sat in second place until lap ten when she started experiencing problems with the grip from the tyres on the back of the car. She managed to keep the Nova

going to the chequered flag to take fourth. Then it was straight out of the

Prod B and into the Hot Rod for the following race. There were only six racers

running in the class due to the non-attendance of several cars thanks to the snow. Tracey set off from the front of

the grid for the 15-lap race.

By lap 15 she was catching the car in front – until she realised it was the last of the back markers, and so she crossed the finishing line in first.

She followed this triumph with a double victory in the second series of heats, taking the chequered flag with both cars.

Next came the finals; after finishing top of the leaderboard in the Hot Rod heats and second in the Prod B, she had to begin from the back row of the grid.

Yet again the Prod B was out first, but Tracey struggled to find

and gaining points She fought her way to fourth

grip throughout the race, so she had to settle for trying to finish

place - and stayed there until the finish.

Then it was out of one Nova and into the other for the second

final The logistician really wasn't expecting much as the other drivers had experience in this

class After a bit of a disappointing start, Tracey managed to cling on to the leader.

When the two came up against a back marker five laps from the end, her nearest rival went for outside - leaving Tracey a gap on the inside, which she grabbed ... and held on to first place to the end.

"I have been racing for five years and I have never managed to do the triple – taking both heats wins and the final," the delighted racer said.

Tough times in Muscat

THEY'RE dancing in the streets of Petroleum Development after a gruelling series of fixtures for HMS Illustrious in Oman.

The carrier's sporting sides challenged the petrolheads to hockey, netball, cricket and

touch rugby. The day opened promisingly for the sailors, thanks to a 6-2 victory for the hockey side. The netballers were then

trounced 33-4 and the cricketers defeated by seven wickets.

The touch rugby squad managed to restore some pride with a 12-12 draw. "We expected to have a

quick game and then have a barbecue," said AB 'Tony' Blair. "Petroleum Development took it very seriously, so we

had to raise our game. "After running around for half an hour, I was knackered

- the final whistle couldn't have come soon enough." The full rugby side fared

considerably better in an exhilarating 45-21 victory over Muscat RFC in the searing Omani heat.

Also triumphant were Lusty's footballers, who put the British Embassy (5-3) and RAF Seeb (7-2) to the sword.

Illustrious' visit to Oman (see pages 23-26 for more details) also afforded time for some non-competitive sports for the ship's company including diving, canyoning and a wadi trek.

Putt for a good cause

SOUTHWICK Park golf club hosts the 5th annual charity match on Tuesday May 20. The day kicks off with breakfast, followed by a nine-

hole contest. Then it's back to the 19th for lunch before an 18-hole stableford in the afternoon, and then back to the 19th once

more for a curry supper. All standards are welcome, provided you pay the £55 entry ee, of course. Proceeds go to Cancer Research UK.

Details from Craig Beetlestone on 07886 030617 or craigbeetlestone@hotmail.



FOR the third year in succession Southwick Park provided a superb location for the annual Royal Navy Triathlon Association **duathlon** championships, offering a challenging course for athletes to test their mettle

The field again covered a broad spread of abilities, with several competitors trying a multi sport event for the first time, but despite some athletes finding the course a real test, all the competitors finished the course and made it safely back to the gym in time for a post race carbo load.

The race itself consisted of a 5km cross-country run followed immediately by

the local hills, finishing with another 5km run.

LAET Gosling from RNAS Culdrose posted an impressive first run but couldn't quite catch Cpl Wayne Dashper from CTCRM as they entered T1. Out on the bike Gosling came into his own and his

efforts were rewarded with a 50:26 bike split, making up four minutes on Dashper. Coming to T2 just behind Gosling, Mike White of

DSTL had also made up some ground out on the hills around Southwick and he was closely followed by Sgt Steve Lewis, one of Dashper's team mates.

The first lady into T1 was LMA Muir of DMSTC and it was a full three minutes before she was joined out on the road

a minute's lead over Jane Thomson of CTCRM. On the bike leg Muir was not to be caught by any

of the ladies, posting an impressive 57:29 split which was comfortably in the top third of all bike splits on the day.

competition with BRNC and SDU Plymouth teams

finish there was some

was over for another year, although the mud and hills were soon forgotten following a 'post race analysis' chat over tea and cake in the gym. The overall winner, LAET Gosling, completed the course in an impressive 1h 29m 4s, with the

first female home, LMA Muir, posting an equally impressive 1h 41m 49s. The event wouldn't have gone ahead was it not for

the considerable assistance of Lt Jack Frost, together with HMS Collingwood personnel; the RN Triathlon Association is extremely grateful to them.

For more details on duathlon – and its sister triathlon sport – see www.rnrmtri.co.uk



Enjoying a 'good to soft' run course for the second time, both Gosling and Muir held on to their leads with times close to their splits for the first run.

With four finishers in the top six, including the requisite two novices, CTCRM dominated the team

taking second and third. As the rest of the competitors arrived at the

Next month

SPORT



Ever active – on eternal watch in the Med with HMS Somerset



Mine's a hot one - the hunt goes on in the Gulf



Sand and deliver – how your parcels reach the front line

Plus

Win, lose or draw - all the action from Twickenham

And

Practice, not theory enjoying a big bang with Naval reservists





Double delight IT'S the centenary season of Army hockey. So what better way to mark the milestone than to dispatch the soldiers on their home turf and ensure the Inter-Services trophy remains in the RN cabinet? Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre was the venue for this year's championships with the troops determined to avenge their heavy defeats of the previous year against both the RN and the RAF. However, they were made to wait, as the Navy and the RAF faced off on the first day. The RAF boasted one of the strongest sides that they have

Mne Graham Smith (847 NAS) challenges the Army during the 3-1
victory as S/Lt Tim Lomas (BRNC) hooks his opponent's stick
Picture: Lt Col Charles Jackman

ever fielded, with quality players

in all position, whereas the RN were missing several key players

through operational deployment

and injury. As current champions,

the Navy were not going to give up

the title without a fight, however.

The game started at a frenetic pace, with both teams going at each other hammer and tongs. The

RAF won a penalty corner after

five minutes and their drag flicker deposited the ball at some velocity

For most of the rest of the first

half the RN were then under the

cosh, but defended with great spirit

with Lts Matt Wesson and Mark

Dixon soaking up the pressure. It was with some relief that

the half time whistle blew as it

provided a chance for the RN to

regroup. The second half saw the RN

playing much more positively and

creating several chances, none of

chances but were kept at bay by

a combination of some profligate

finishing and some outstanding

half, the RN won another penalty

corner, which was finally put away by Capt Richie Moore RM, capping an excellent performance

The end result was a 1-1 draw, which probably slightly flattered the RN on the day. A toss of a

coin then decided that the RN

would play first against the Army

Towards the end of the second

saves by LAEA Richie Potter.

The RAF also had their

which was converted.

by the Royal Marine.

into the top right-hand corner.

the following day. The Army were boasting a very strong side with two internationals and a plethora of national league players, but the RN came out with all guns blazing and had most of the possession and a lot of territory in the first half controlled by midfield general Surg Lt Dave Potter.

The Navy took the lead through LAEA Mark Stanton when he finally scored one of the chances that came his way.

The score was 1-0 at half time with the RN edgy despite dominating, as the Army were looking dangerous on the break.

Nerves were put at ease when a slick penalty corner move ended up with Dixon burying the ball in the bottom corner. However, the Army then hit back straight away with a breakaway goal unsettling the team.

This was manifested when discipline was lost and two players were sin-binned, leaving nine men to try to defend against a resurgent Army team.

The defence was nothing less than superb with everyone on the team working tirelessly for each other epitomising the team spirit that has seen the success over the previous four years.

The result was finally put to bed

when another penalty corner saw Dixon find the effervescent Potter

at the far post for a tap in. This left the final score at 3-1 for another RN win, but the Inter-

Service title then rested on the result of the Army-RAF clash. The Army, desperate to not get beaten twice on their own patch and in their centenary year, produced an excellent performance to beat the Air Force 1-0 and hence crown

the RN champions. This was also special as the RN completed the first double double – winning both indoor and outdoor championships back to back, particularly apt as they celebrate their centenary season

from the end of June. The women's team sadly did not fare as well as the men's, thanks in part to the struggle to find a full side – a common theme across all the teams and all the services.

Nevertheless, 13 players travelled to Aldershot to represent the RN.

The first match against the RAF started extremely well with the girls coming out fighting and the first 20 minutes was exceptional with the partnership of Lt Dee McKenna (HMS Portland) and Surg Lt Lara Herbert (RMB Chivenor) in the centre working well considering Lara was still

thawing out having returned two days before from a six-month deployment to Norway.

After some outstanding saves from CPOMEA Wendy Frame (MWC) in goal – a trend that carried into the second day – the inevitable happened and a wellworked goal from the RAF finished in the back of the net with another following shortly before half time.

With pressure mounting from the RAF they broke down our team play and the match ended 6-0.

The Army's frontal attack the following day put great pressure on the RN defence led by captain POAET George Patterson (HMS Heron) with some great support from Logs Laura Laing (HMS Neptune), Lt Cdr Kay Lewis (MWS) and S/Lt Rachael Rake

However the overload and good distribution of the ball secured the Army numerous opportunities with few in the back of the net.

The second half saw an improvement from the ladies which resulted in a lot of pressure in the attacking 25 with chances created by Lt Lucy Abel (HMS Sultan) for S/Lt Marion Taylor and POET

Ann Jones (HMS Drake). A conciliatory goal was just out of reach, especially with the loss of Lt McKenna who fell during a tackle

A big plus from this year's competition was the selection of five players – POET Patterson, CPOMEA Frame, Lt Abel, Surg Lt Herbert and Lt Imrie (HMS Daring) – for the Combined Services training camp, the most selected for many years.

Later this year the RNHA begins to celebrate the Centenary of Navy Hockey with a weekend of celebrations in Portsmouth following the annual Inter-Command tournament.

The women's team are already looking forward to fielding a good side against the Army again and – on home ground – to putting up a competitive fight.

We have great plans for next season and the team can only go from strength to strength.

THERE will be at least one Royal Navy sailor flying the flag for the Senior Service in

Beijing this summer. Lt Penny Clark will be racing on the water in the Laser Radial class. The 32-year-old officer earned her call-up following extended trials in which she and three other women were all vying for the single British place in the class.

Penny has already raced on the Olympic 'track' at Qingdao; two years ago she earned bronze at the 2006 Test Event.

She was nominated by the RYA's Olympic selectors for the most consistent performances – and best

berformances – and best overall results – during the second stage of the selection process which began at the 2007 ISAF World Championships and included the Miami Olympic Classes Regatta and the 2008 Laser Radial World Championships. "I'm really happy to have been selected, but for me it's just another hurdle towards the end goal, which has always been to get on that podium in China," said Penny, who claimed her first national title at the tender age of eight. The pressure is now on the

The pressure is now on the junior officer and her fellow sailors: the Team GB selection committee hopes the sailors will bring home at least three medals from China. "The selectors were impressed by the level of competition in the Laser Padial trials, whore all

Radial trials, where all four women have pushed themselves to increase themselves to increase Great Britain's chances of winning a medal at the 2008 Games," said Stephen Park, RYA Olympic Manager and sailing's Team Leader for the Beijing games. "The clock is ticking ever faster now as we

ever faster now as we enter the final phase of our preparations. Having now completed our line-up of sailors for Beijing, the team is focussing on delivering the goods in China, where we hope we can do the nation

proud once again." Sailing is the first discipline to complete its selection process for the Olympics. Still waiting for his Beijing call-up is **rower** Lt Peter Reed.

Peter has been a member of the GB Coxless Four for the past three years, during which time his boat has won the World Championship in

the World Championship in successive years. His RN career as an engineer is on hold while he trains daily for Beijing (he did allow himself a rest on Christmas Day). "Training is really tough - there are so many sports which have tough training regimes, but I think rowing -

regimes, but I think rowing – along with cycling and maybe swimming – has one of the most punishing programmes," Peter explained. His teammates refer to him as 'The Commander' – and

as 'The Commander' – and it's this camaraderie which Peter says bonds the team.

"We spend so much time together that if we didn't get on, it would be a very

get on, it would be a very miserable job," he explained. "We're all like-minded and get on very well." Both Penny and Peter have benefited from the RN's elite athlete programme which aims to produce the champions of tomorrow. "My colleagues are on the front line, fighting in wars and doing things that I signed up to. I've just got so much respect for that and I recognise that I'm very lucky," recognise that I'm very lucky," Peter added.



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NAVY NEWS

PALESTINE PAIROL 1945-1948

A Naval perspective

Ron had to run with half a haircut

RON Stoneham has vivid memories of his time in Haifa - he returned to his ship on one occasion with half a haircut.

Ron served in Algerine-class minesweeper HMS Welfare, and after a period of patrolling along the Palestine coast the ship put in to Haifa for supplies, giving some of her sailors the chance of a run ashore.

"We were given just two hours and warned that we must stay in groups of three," said Ron. "Haifa was under the military

and the Palestine Police at this time, and we had to post guards on our upper deck as look-outs with orders to shoot at anything that moved in the water around the ship.

"Oil drums, orange boxes and so on were all given close attention and were sent to the bottom.

Ron and his two mates set off at 2pm, having been given strict instructions to follow orders from the Redcaps [Army military police] and Palestine Police, and to be back by 4pm. After a short walk along the

main street of Haifa one of the three suggested a haircut would alleviate some of the heat, so they found a small Arab barber shop and went in.

The first sailor, Tiny Holt, had his hair cut, then Ron stepped up to the chair.

"It was my turn and the barber wrapped the towel around me and ran the clippers up one side of my head," he said.

"Then it happened. "In the street outside all hell was let loose - whistles blowing, brakes screaming, people shouting, and someone came in and said it was a raid, so the Arab barber disappeared out of the back door, leaving me with one side of my head shorn.

"My two shipmates rushed outside to see what was happening and I was left cuddling the .45 revolver.

"If the catch had been off I'd have blown a hole in my foot. "The next thing I recall was a 6ft 6in tall Redcap standing by my side saying 'What the blankety-blank are you doing

here? Outside, Navy!? "Then two more military police came into the shop with

guns at the ready, and my chums returned and let me know the score "As the raid was a search for

arms etc, we deemed it wiser to return to the ship.' With paratroopers and

Redcaps swarming around the place, the three matelots swiftly headed back to the dockvard and the security of their ship - although Ron, still sporting his half a haircut, had some explaining to do, and more than a little mirth to contend with before the haircut was put right



• Illegal immigrants are deloused with DDT on the cruiser HMS Phoebe as the Commanding Officer, Capt G Colville, looks on

Wartime promises led to peacetime friction

in ancient history across a region riven by upheaval.

A people scarred by industrial-scale mass-murder in a continent fractured and made bitter by war.

Two mutually-exclusive guarantees made to two peoples over the same land, both people with the profound belief - and sound reasons for believing - that the land is theirs.

And a flood of resolute immigrants in ramshackle ships bound for a hostile destination. Not the greatest political hand ever dealt, but one which fell to

Britain to play out. And if there's a thankless task to be done with humanity and efficiency, then the Royal Navy is as well-qualified as any organisation to shoulder the responsibility.

The Senior Service has fulfilled many such tasks for its political

masters over the centuries. Blockading the Dutch.

Blockading the French.

Blockading the Spanish.

Policing deadly, disease-ridden coasts in Africa and Asia. Long, tedious, often dangerous

patrols, usually carried out with professional skill and tact. The Palestine Patrol pretty much fitted the pattern – the exception being that this time there was no enemy, no war to be won, no honours to be gained but plenty of opprobrium to be garnered. It was not even a question of

simply turning away boats - most of those intercepted off the coast of

PROBLEM rooted Palestine were brought into Haifa, and most immigrants eventually entered through official channels. There was no enmity between

oarders and immigrants indeed, sailors felt sympathy boarders for the passengers, although the Jewish view was that the Navy was placing unreasonable barriers in the way of their journey home.

The absurdity of the situation was only to be expected when the antecedents are examined. The politics at the heart of the

Middle East seethed in the 1930s and 40s just as it did in Biblical times – and just as it does today.

The Biblical Diaspora, or scattering, of Jews started with conquests of the ancient Kingdom off Israel centuries before Christ.

Through expulsion and migration, displaced Jews spread across the world, setting up vibrant, thriving communities in Europe, Asia, Africa and beyond. Meanwhile Muslim Arabs

dominated the population of Palestine; in 1820 the Jewish cohort was around 12,000 in a land of 500,000 Arab Palestinians.

Persecution in Europe and Russia saw Jewish numbers swell to 50,000 by 1900, by which time Zionists were planning the establishment of a Jewish nation; attempts to deflect them to other areas, such as Africa, came to nought.

With the outbreak of war in 1914, British policy was to encourage Zionists – apart from genuine sympathy, there was also hard-nosed recognition that Jewish financial clout was essential

for the Allied cause. The Balfour Declaration of November 1917 stated: "His Government view Majesty's with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

But British encouragement to Zionists became problematic when considered against promises made to the Arabs – that they would rule land wrested from the Turks if they rose against the Ottoman regime. The policies were incompatible,

leading to bitterness on both sides. Indeed, the Arabs objected strongly when the British, having captured Jerusalem in late 1917, were in a position to facilitate the Jewish drive for nationhood.

In 1920 a strict quota was introduced allowing 1,000 Jewish immigrants a month; that same year it rose to 16,500 per annum. But Arab unrest continued, through 1922 when the League of Nations formalised British rule under a Mandate which required a preparation for self-rule.

Churchill, then Secretary of State for Colonies, issued a White Paper calling for Jewish immigra-tion based on "the economic ab-sorptive capacity" of the area. Article 6 of the Mandate stated:

"The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage, in co-operation with the Jewish agency referred to in Article 4, close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purpos

Jewish immigration gathered pace, and by 1929 Jews formed

20 per cent of the population. In the 1930s persecution across Europe further stimulated immigration, though the Royal Navy maintained a passive role in the Med, spotting suspect ships during normal exercises and patrols and reporting sightings to the Palestinian authorities.

By 1936, with Jews forming 30 per cent of the population, the Arabs rose in revolt, creating a problem which the small British Army presence could not handle. Two RN cruisers were sent to supply additional manpower ashore, dealing with arson attacks, providing howitzer and lorry gun crews and protecting Haifa, the only port of consequence along the exposed Palestinian coast.

Ships searched vessels for illegal arms, while 13 Royal Navy two-man train crews were selected; within three weeks they had sufficient skill to run railway trains, and colleagues manned signal boxes to keep the system open during a ten-day strike.

The following two years saw battlecruiser HMS Repulse in Haifa to fly the flag as well as supplying boots on the ground – at one point around half the ship's company was ashore.

At the outbreak of the war patrols off the Palestine coast were undertaken by Palestine Police craft, whose crews were given temporary RNVR status and their launches commissioned as HM ships - which led to the unusual sight of the White Ensign flying on vessels on the Sea of Galilee.

Illegal immigrants continued to head for Palestine, but the dangers were now manifold, as the sinking of the Struma by a Russian submarine in 1942 demonstrated; only one of the 769 passengers survived.

Another casualty, the 11,885-ton liner Patria, sank at her moorings in Haifa, killing 260 passengers after saboteurs from Haganah, a Jewish defence organisation, used too much explosive in a bid to prevent her from sailing to Mauritius.

Jewish persecution by the Third Reich prompted Britain in 1943 to decide that illegal immigrants would be permitted to stay and admitted as part of the quota system – setting a precedent that would cause serious problems in the aftermath of the war

Picture supplied by C Martin mess bills.

them from the replenishing barge in Haifa Bay – they could have been bombs.

"Then there was the panic when we were observing from Tel Aviv Bay on May 15 1948, the day Israel was

"It was payday, and hands were on the quarterdeck awaiting cash. We could see lots of movement on the "Action stations - you can

starboard and Charity went

was that the illegal had steel

wonderful; you needed a week before going back on patrol to get over it.

"When coming into Haifa harbour for provisions or fuel we generally picked up some pongoes and took them out for a day to give them a rest.



• John Roche (front right) with colleagues from the HMS Whitesand Bay boarding party



'Clandestine immigration ship' Paducah, an ex-cross Channel steamer of 915 tons carrying nearly 1,400 passengers, seen from HMS Mermaid in September 1947
 Picture supplied by Bernard Akerman

• Front page: A Royal Navy boarding party – possibly from HMS St Austell Bay – attempts to seize control of the San Miguel, carrying more than 900 immigrants in February 1947 Picture supplied by R Davies



On alert

recounts vignettes which sum up the time for him. "Memories include the collection of tinned food and American K rations from the upper deck of the ships after the illegals had bombarded us on our attempted run-

"They threw anything to hand – our skipper was safe, as he had wire netting spread over the bridge; not so the boarders or observers.

"Still, it made a good contribution to our canteen

Then there was dear old 'Buster' Crabb and his gang, who swept the bottom of our boats (I say boats being

a destroyer man) when we left Haifa after refuelling. "And Jimmy the One bending down and listening to see if sacks of spuds were ticking when we had loaded

"Also the smell if you got downwind of an illegal when attempting to board - phew!

founded.

shoreline when suddenly an aircraft flew out from shore. imagine the commotion. It

was a press plane... "The most memorable illegal was the President Warfield. The boarding had to be done by four of our flotilla. Chieftain went in

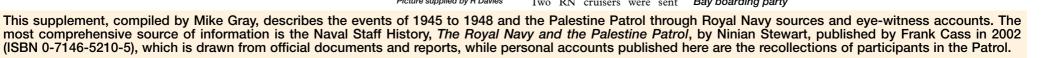
in port. "What we did not know girders mounted below the waterline, and they took a lot of our port side away, and

Charity's starboard side. "We spent two months in dry dock in Malta after that,

When on patrol we always, well, nearly always, had a week in Beirut, Lebanon, as a kind of rest

"We victualled them in various messes, which meant a tot each – how we prayed for roughers, or the

rum bosun did, anyway. "The snag was, if we got diverted to chase an illegal, the soldiers were stuck on board until we finished.'



Marines

train up

post-war routine.

skylark," said Ron.

boarders

THE Palestine Patrol came as an unpleasant shock for ships which had settled into a welcome low-key

John Roche was serving in HMSWhitesand Bay, and was one of around 30 detailed as boarding

party and sent to train for a week with the Royal Marines in Malta. "On arrival at their camp we soon found out that it was no

"We had to parade at 0800 with all our equipment for inspection

and spent the rest of the day on

the assault course. "If you failed the inspection you

got a remuster at 1700. "Our equipment included a pack with a pistol, Lanchester

[sub machine gun], ammunition, gas mask, lifebelt, boots, gaiters, shin pads, cricket boxes (the ladies

were not averse to giving you a good prod with a knitting needle),

"We spent many weary hours trailing these migrant ships along

the Mediterranean coast to Haifa.

in exercising the boarding party at any time of the day or night, and

even had us jumping over the side

to simulate being chucked over the side of one of these ships. "Our ship went into Malta

Dockyard to have wire netting fitted over the fo'c'sle to stop our

crew being hit with tins of corned

beef, tomatoes, fruit or any other missiles – including unsavoury

ones – being thrown at us."

"Our No 1 took great pleasure

tin hat, and truncheon.

Intelligence was key to tracking rogue ships

JOHN Evans was serving both at sea and ashore during the period of the Palestine Mandate.

"In 1946 I was serving on HMS Stormcloud, a minesweeper, when we were patrolling the Palestinian patroning the Palestinian coast to intercept ships which may be carrying illegal Jewish immigrants," said Mr Evans. "After a few months I

was drafted ashore to join Commodore Palestine's signal staff, based in what was a lighthouse on the top of Mount Carmel, near Haifa

"The small Naval contingent lived under canvas with an Army unit under the walls of the

monastery. "From the information we received from various sources we knew when and where ships were being bought for the purpose of blockade running. "We could then trace their

routes from port to port until they were loaded with would-be immigrants, and then follow their perilous voyage to Palestine. "The ships were generally in bad condition, often unseaworthy and vastly overloaded, and the conditions were appalling.

"Nevertheless, survivors of the horror that had been Europe came in their thousands, risking all to follow the Star of David and the hope of a new life in what they believed was the Promised Land.

"We also received secret information about the activities of the three Jewish terrorist organisations, among them Haganah and the Stern Gang.

"It is interesting to recall that chief among those on our most-wanted list were men who later formed the new Israeli

government. "There were many acts of terror committed against British forces who were, not for the first or last time, there only to keep the peace. There were shootings and bombings - our road down to town was mined on occasions.

"Late in March 1947 I left Haifa to join HMS Chaplet on Palestine patrols.

"The captain was Lt Cdr Gerry Forsberg. He was a great captain and ran a happy ship. "When out of sight of land

whilst on patrol on a calm day he would stop the ship, turn it broadside to the wind, launch the whaler and it was 'Hands to Bathe over the port side.³

"I did not know until I read his obituary in 2000 that he was a renowned swimmer.3

Mr Evans said the policy of shifting immigrants to Cyprus aroused sympathy: "It seemed very hard for those poor people who had endured so much to get there, and one could not but feel sympathy for them.

"However, the volume of would-be immigrants was far too great at that time to be manageable, and I think our government had no solution to the problem, so ultimately the State of Israel was declared and the British withdrew in 1948. The wisdom of this policy

can be judged by the state of the Middle East today..."

First order: **KUN IIKE NEII**

HUGH Logan remembers arriving in Haifa: "A petty officer handed over hammocks and kit – and told us to run like hell, there's a gun fight going on.'

Hugh and his shipmates were first billeted ashore, but were soon heading for Cyprus in a troopship. Back in Haifa, a terrorist group

threatened to bomb the ship, causing a night of constant patrols, but it proved to be a false alarm. Alf Booker, in HMS Peacock, also remembers the threats

- particularly unwelcome to the battle-fatigued. The war had not long finished

and we were lumbered, along with many others, to do this awful work," said Alf.

Birth, death and the creation of Israel

ITH the war over and the extent of the Holocaust revealed, pressure to allow displaced Jews to enter Palestine increased.

President Truman, with one eye on his electorate, called for 100,000 to be admitted immediately, a move which delighted Jews, enraged Arab states and prompted the threat of armed conflict.

Britain was by now seeking to pass on the thankless Mandate. America would not take it on, and some Britons believed a continued presence in such an oil-

rich region would be prudent. In the interim the quota of 1,500 immigrants per month was reinstated, agreed by Arabs but challenged by Jews as insufficient.

Meanwhile, with Europe struggling to rebuild, Jewish underground organisations were setting up a well-funded, efficient network of transit bases and transport routes to aid illegal immigration, even providing forgers to prepare travel papers. The Navy was to the fore simply

because the sea route, dangerous though it was, represented the best chance of reaching Palestine, whose land borders were shared with sympathetic Arab nations. The first months of peace saw

an upsurge in immigration, while Arabs and Jews waited to see what Britain proposed for their future.

Navy patrols on the Palestinian coast were set up by the Admiralty's Palestine Force, the official starting date being September 27 1945, with the RAF providing vital long-range reconnaissance.

At that time the Force consisted of a cruiser, five destroyers and a sloop, with minesweepers also

taking part at later stages. The coast was divided into 20-mile patrol zones, each named after an alcoholic drink, such as Scotch Whisky (the names were changed in May 1946 on the orders of a teetotal CINC Mediterranean).

At first the emphasis was on preventing ships leaving European ports (which were obliged to block the departure of unsafe or unsanitary ships, but rarely did), and the expectation was that runs would be made by small vessels.

Such ships could not be intercepted and boarded until they were within the Palestinian three-mile limit.

Intelligence of ship departures was usually effective, and such vessels were generally spotted well out to sea by the RAF, who homed RN ships in on their prey to shadow them towards the coast.

If they continued into Palestinian territorial waters, they would be challenged by a warship, sometimes with a burst of 20mm or 40mm gunfire across the bow.

The Smyrna gave British sailors a taste of things to come. The 760-ton caique with 1,700 refugees on board was stopped by

HMS Jervis, her report telling of "incredible overcrowding", "very primitive sanitary arrangements" and that water and food had run out days before. As ships were stopped, and

emotions ashore rose, so it became necessary for the Navy to protect against sabotage in Haifa The water around ships was

illuminated at night, explosive charges were dropped into the harbour to deter frogmen, propellers were turned so to wash away swimmers, and armed guards prowled the decks.

Sailors were also trained to act as divers, searching hulls for limpet mines or explosives; the highlysuccessful training programme was delivered by the talented maverick Lt Cdr Lionel 'Buster' Crabb, who also led many diving parties.

Reprisalattacksoninfrastructure and assets, such as coastal watch stations and harbour patrol launches, became commonplace.

Palestine The no-win nature of the British

position in Palestine was hardened at the start of 1946. Quotas had been agreed by the Arabs only until the end of 1945,

so the British decision to continue to allow 1,500 immigrants a month incensed them, while still not satisfying the Jews, who were keen on Truman's figure of 100,000. Bigger ships were now regularly

appearing on the horizon and the immigrant camp in Palestine was becoming swamped and vulnerable, so onward shipment of refugees to camps in Cyprus became the policy.

Though Cyprus was not ideal, the alternative – of returning immigrants to their points of departure ('refoulement') – was tried just once, with the President

Warfield (see pages iv-v). Interceptions came thick and fast in August; one, the Avanti, had apparently run out of water and was in a filthy state.

When boarders found a secret supply for the crew, there was a rush of passengers, with women and children being shoved aside.

According to Ninian Stewart, Lt Hicks-Beach, of HMS Volage, saw a pregnant woman being kicked aside, so he intervened by thumping the assailant.

As other passengers squared up, the officer's bodyguard, a rugged sailor, shouted "Lie down when the officer hits you!" and struck the assailant with his rifle butt, knocking the man into the hold. With the introduction of

transport to Cyprus came the end of token resistance, and boarding parties had to be better trained (by Royal Marines in Malta) and better equipped, wielding 2ft batons for defence or attack.

Boarders wore white helmets, for easier identification, hoses were used where possible to clear people from decks, and the cricket box became man's best friend as hat-pins were wielded in anger.

Kedge anchors, fired from epth-charge throwers, were found to be effective grappling hooks to secure ships, but guns were strictly to be used in self-defence.

The number of deaths among immigrants is virtually impossible to estimate with accuracy; some propagandists put it in the thousands, shot or drowned, but the majority of deaths were likely to have resulted from misadventure, such as sinkings, rather than action by RN boarders, who were praised for their forebearance by crews of illegal ships at reunions in Israel in the 1990s

On the Royal Navy side, three men died during the 1945-48 period, none as a direct consequence of fighting; an officer and two ratings from HMS St Brides Bay drowned when their whaler overturned.

Once opposition had died down in a boarding, relationships could be quite cordial.

When the Lochita was intercepted in November 1946, an immigrant was found to have fallen overboard; HMS Brissenden went back to search for the man, who was found having swum for an hour in the hope of rescue.

On another occasion, a baby girl was successfully delivered on the Merica by a gunner's mate and leading stoker from the appropriately-named HMS Welfare, taking directions from medical manuals scanned by the leading sick berth attendant and relayed to the impromptu midwives by Aldis lamp.

Severe winter weather prevented further sailings until early 1947.

The Guardian, with 2,622 on board, offered stiff resistance in April 1947, with four immigrants being fatally shot, but then a masterful piece of seamanship by the CO of HMS Octavia prevented the Guardian being driven ashore in a gale, saving many lives.

At this time attempts to mediate between Arabs and Jews had stalled, so the matter was referred to the fledgling United Nations.

Potential overcrowding of the camp in Cyprus led to the President Warfield incident, but with the UN report on September came the recommendation that the Mandate be terminated and Palestine be partitioned yet remain an economic union.

This was greeted with dismay by all parties – and as the British regarded it as unenforceable there

advised that if she hung about for a couple of days just outside the Palestinian limit, she could then "The British were unpopular please herself what she did. in equal measure with both the But the master chose to sail to Cyprus, so that the ship was Arabs and Jews," said Mr Murray. heading in the wrong direction as the state of Israel came into The perk was a plentiful supply of Jaffa oranges "escaping from wagons in the railway yard." being.

Picture supplied by John Evans

completely by August 1. The volatile situation – requiring Naval parties to restore order in places such as Aden – could have been made so much worse by the arrival of 15,000 immigrants on Pan Crescent, but in a triumph of

With American opposition to clandestine voyages hardening, the stream of ships began to falter, and Jews and Arabs became more concerned with gun-running in preparations for the end of the

Boardings in 1948 tended to be issued to immigrants before the

vessels intercepted between 1945

• HMS Childers (R91) approaches an unidentified Jewish immigrant ship in order to send a boarding party across Picture supplied by Bill Atkinson

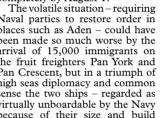


• The sails of a caique are picked out by the searchlight of a Royal Navy warship during a patrol off

the fruit freighters Pan York and high seas diplomacy and common sense the two ships – regarded as virtually unboardable by the Navy because of their size and build

Mandate than immigration. quieter affairs, and there was even time for health and safety issues to be raised - Lt Gill was concerned at the passengers of the Abdul Hamid crowding along the deck to watch a boarding from HMS Childers when some received minor injuries, and he suggested a verbal warning in future about the dangers of standing too close to the action be

on May 15 1948 and withdraw



were diverted to Cyprus.

warships went alongside. Bizarrely, the last of almost 50 and 1948 (the Borea with 243 immigrants) was stopped by HMS Chieftain on May 13, and was

'I'm here – what now?'

DES Amor arrived in Palestine just after New Year 1947 and remained until November – but on arrival he had no idea what his duties were to be, only that he was assigned to HMS Stag. That turned out to be the Naval

HQ in Haifa, but his first thoughts were: "No ship, no establishment – so where was I going?

"Into a truck we were packed, off down the road about a mile and a half and into the barracks of the Airborne, where two huts were made available to us. "So there we were at HMS

Stag – 50 ratings, 15 POs and one CPO. "Next morning it was back to

the docks where we found we were replacements for the boats crews. "We patrolled inside the harbour at all times, day and night,

watching out for people who could cause damage to ships." Even-handed

AS A signalman in HMS Liverpool, Mr E Murray remembers RN platoons helping Army units deal with the regular outbreaks of violence in town – and a rare perk.

Exodus ends in far-from

F ONE single incident from the Palestine Patrol struck a chord which was heard around the world, it was the interception of the President Warfield and the destiny of her 4,554 passengers.

The President Warfield, later to gain fame – or notoriety – as Exodus 1947 - was launched in 1928 as a passenger steamer in Chesapeake Bay.

The 330ft flagship of the Old Bay Line went to war in 1942, requisitioned by the US Government and sailed across the Atlantic by a British crew.

She acted as harbour control vessel off Omaha Beach in 1944, and later transported American

troops up the Seine. She returned to Norfolk, Virginia, at the end of the war, but her previous trade had all but dried up

and she was put up for sale. She was bought by Haganah through a network of false firms, and although the British were receiving no official intelligence help from the States, they were soon fully aware of the plans her new owners had for the ship.

President Warfield made her third transatlantic crossing via the Azores to Marseilles, being shadowed by a British warship from the Strait of Gibraltar to the French city.

With the British taking a close interest, and putting pressure on the French to prevent illegal immigration ships sailing from their ports, President Warfield moved on to Porto Venere in Italy, arriving on April 24 1947.

But the Italians were toeing the line on barring the sailing of such voyages from its ports, so the American ship sailed again on June 12 to Port de Bouc in France with a crew of 58, no passengers and a Royal Navy shadow close by.

Ostensibly set for a voyage to the Black Sea, she sailed from Port de Bouc but put in to Sète, berthing in the Outer Harbour, where she quickly embarked almost 4,230 people, many from Eastern Europe.

The British protested, and the French authorities attempted to block the ship from sailing, but in the small hours of July 11 she cut her moorings and moved off.

grounding slightly as she went. HMS Mermaid was the first to tail the renegade vessel, which was capable of 16 knots, and she and RAF patrol aircraft kept her in sight until she was relieved by HMS Cheviot.

Cheviot in turn was joined by HMS Ajax out of Malta on July 13, and all the while arrangements were being made in Palestine for the biggest passenger ships to be stocked and ready for a full complement of illegal immigrants. The following day Cheviot was replaced by HMS Childers, and the men of Ajax were told to start

The voyage of the President Warfield from France to Palestine, and the diversion of her passengers to Germany, was a pivotal episode in the Palestine Patrol and the Mandate itself - and once again it was the Royal Navy in the harsh spotlight of world opinion

preparing the President Warfield's passengers for arrival in Palestine by telling them (in numerous languages)

they would not be able to stay. As the Senior Service followed President Warfield, officers and men planned a boarding, poring over drawings of the ship provided by the Admiralty and factoring in observations from HMS Childers.

Using these facts, Lt Cdr Bailey constructed a boarding platform at bridge level on Childers, proposing to use that and the Flag Deck below as jumping-off points.

More RN ships joined the flotilla as the Egyptian coast was passed (HM ships Chequers, Charity and Cardigan Bay) and each closed in on the President Warfield at various times to familiarise themselves with the American ship's layout, moving away again to construct their own boarding platforms on their blind

Although the weather was not ideal - a Force Four wind and a swell - Capt Watson (Commodore Palestine embarked in HMS Chequers) decided that the best approach was to put as many boarders across as possible in a short space of time, going for a quick capture.

Childers and Chieftain took extra boarding parties from Ajax to boost their numbers, and were then to stand by on either side of the President Warfield as Charity and Chequers attempted to get their

own teams on board. The slower Cardigan Bay also had boarding parties ready, but her main role was to mop up, recovering men who had fallen in the water, stopping boats getting away and, if no minesweeper turned up, towing the boarded vessel into Haifa.

Ajax was to be the last line of defence, standing between the President Warfield and the Palestine coast to prevent the blockaderunner from beaching herself. As night fell, the RN flotilla

darkened ship and the destroyers started making probes, wearing down the alertness of the defenders.

Although sea conditions were slightly better, they were still not what Capt Watson would have wished for – but his orders were that if the illegal immigrants got ashore there could be serious political repercussions and disorder, and that neither danger to man nor

machine should put him off. Just before 0300 on July 18, approaching Palestinian territorial waters, the warships moved in - but the skill of the helmsman of the President Warfield, who slowed as they closed in, meant that Chieftain

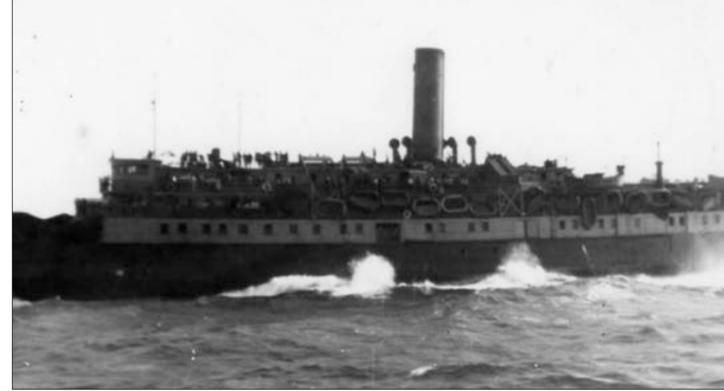
could not get anyone away while Childers sped past her. President Warfield then accelerated and started a series of violent turns, making the task of getting alongside her almost impossible in the swell.

At 0305 Childers tried again; the first 'storming party' of one officer and 15 men on the Flag Deck were prevented from crossing by wire netting along the deck of the bay steamer, while only one officer and five ratings managed to negotiate the boarding platform higher up the destroyer and get on board the President Warfield.

With Childers swinging away again, and no hope of immediate reinforcements, the six sailors forced their way to the wheelhouse, wielding batons to clear a path throught the passengers as missiles



HMS Mermaid's boarding party at the Commando Training Centre in Malta - Valentine Smith is middle row, third from the left



rained down on their tin hats. They briefly gained control of the ship, but in a planned counter, the master took over the steering from a position aft.

In the first sally, one rating was injured and the sole officer, Acting Lt Shallow, estimated that up to 20 people on the President Warfield

could be counted as casualties. One American, William Bernstein, attacked the sailors with a fire extinguisher and sustained head injuries which later killed him.

An attempt to break through the wooden decking of the wheelhouse, during which the British sailors were fired on, ended when the fire was returned.

By this time Childers had managed to put a sub-lieutenant and two ratings across, but they were forced to take shelter in a cabin, and were then escorted away by an influential American named

Royal Marine jumped from Childers on her second approach at 0332 and they were also forced to take refuge in cabins as the scale of the opposition caught them by surprise.

Ninian Stewart's book states that "large rafts and the lifeboats were dropped on to the destroyers and the immigrants attacked boarders with 12ft iron scaffolding poles, crow bars, oars, horsewhips, axes, coshes, sticks and buckets, as well as throwing a rain of missiles – nuts, bolts and tins of all descriptions,

including whole cases of food. "The food could be put to some use, and the messman from Childers's Chief Petty Officers mess was seen gathering in this manna."

Distress flares and tear gas grenades were also used, and Stewart notes that "the principal belligerents were youths, based in upper deck cabins, many between the ages of 16 and 18."

Chieftain's fourth and only augmented the boarding force by one (he was quickly overpowered) before she had to withdraw, having sustained damage, at around 0415.

She had fired on the President Warfield twice, the first time being a revolver shot at an immigrant reportedly wielding an axe and

threatening to behead a boarder. HMS Chequers now took Chieftain's place, but met with no more success, her first run putting three men across who were quickly surrounded.

One was hit by an axe and jumped overboard, followed by a colleague, but the third man was beaten into semi-consciousness and was saved by American crewmen, who prevented further attacks by the immigrants and took him to the sick bay.

A group of boarders from the wheelhouse made a foray below decks to find the engine room and steering space, and they were said to have noted that most people below decks had taken no part in the fighting and did not know what was happening around them.

With the engine room securely locked and the steering position behind barbed wire, the Royal Navy team fell back to the wheelhouse.

By this time all the main participants – the four British destroyers as well as President Warfield – had been damaged.

The warships had buckled plates and were leaking, while the American ship was not only severely battered but her low freeboard meant every approach by a destroyer washed more seawater on board. Shortly after 0430, with concern

growing for passengers' safety and some urgently needing hospital treatment – a plea to allow the ship to head straight for shore was refused by the British.

With little information about the success or otherwise of the boarding parties, Capt Watson signalled Ajax to move in and act as a buffer as Chequers got ready to put boarders across, but by the time they were ready they had received a signal from President Warfield saying that resistance was over and the ship

was prepared to head for Haifa. The immigrant ship stopped shortly after and a Naval doctor, Surg Lt Bett, and Sick Berth Attendant, went over Chequers to aid the injured. from

Three men aboard the President Warfield died in the fighting, and the Naval doctor assessed fewer than ten further cases as being serious as a result of the interception.

However, there were already a large number of sick passengers on board, well beyond the capabilities of the well-organised sick bay and three Jewish doctors.

Surg Lt Bett signalled that there were a further 200 cases needing proper nursing assistance, and more medics were called in from Ajax with medical supplies, while the sailors of the boarding parties were now able to help immigrants by applying first aid.

The engines also needed nursing as the rudimentary boilers were in a bit of a state, but with the help of a friendly American engineer crewman named Sol, and with the decks patrolled to prevent groups gathering, the President Warfield (or Exodus 1947, as the immigrants dubbed her) steamed into Haifa at 1545 with the Zionist flag flying above her wheelhouse.

Capt Watson noted that despite the inability to get large numbers of men on board quickly, the venture had succeeded because of the boarding platforms and the fine ship-handling of the destroyer COs, who were attempting to close

• The President Warfield - or Exodus 1947 - before (above) and after (right) clashes with Royal Navy destroyers



in while the President Warfield was steering erratically.

He also noted the need for better protection of the warships' open bridges. by means of wire netting, the provision of grappling devices to prevent the target breaking away, and bolt-cutters or other such kit to break into strongholds.

It was apparent that had the President Warfield not been so strongly built, the encounters with the destroyers could have ended in tragedy, with the ship holed and sinking.

HMS Charity had been so badly bent on her one run that she was forced to undergo extensive repairs, and her ship's company transferred en masse to HMS Volage, herself only recently repaired.

Once President Warfield had docked, the casualties were whisked off to hospital and the remaining immigrants were divided between three British transport vessels, Empire Rival, Ocean Vigour and Runnymede Park.

Local reports of violence by British military men and the use of rifle butts were strongly refuted - and at that point the immigrants would have believed their destination to be Cyprus, offering a relatively quick return to Palestine as 'gatecrashers' through the monthly quota system.

The three ships sailed on July 19 at 0600 with orders from the British Government to head for Port de Bouc.

Escorting the slow-moving

Grauel.

Four more sailors and a

-promised land



convov were HM ships Ajax. Providence and Cardigan Bay, which sent medical staff over on occasions to deal with emergencies such as the birth of a baby on the Runnymede Park.

HMS Brissenden took over from Providence, and Ajax was released on the arrival of HMS Troubridge, which was well-stocked with

which was well-stocked with medical supplies. Brissenden was replaced by minesweepers Welfare and Skipjack at Malta, and Cardigan Bay steamed on ahead to help with arrangements for the convoy's arrival in France.

the French authorities But proved lukewarm at best, and were keen to keep numbers disembarking as low as possible; with a small fishing boat hired by Jewish organisation Mossad encouraging, via loudspeaker, immigrants to stay on board, a stand-off ensued.

Some immigrants who wished to land were prevented by extremists on board and by the thought of confronting Jews ashore who were

desperate to travel the other way. After a week, by August 5, fewer than 100 volunteers had disembarked, many of the rest

believing a return to Cyprus was the likeliest outcome. By that time most avenues had been exhausted and the British government sought a place to put

the immigrants as a temporary measure.

After dismissing a number of locations around the British Empire, it was decided that Displaced Persons Camps in the British zone of occupation in Germany would

be just the ticket, with a promise of travel back overland to France.

The public relations aspect of such a decision – effectively transporting Jews back to the heartland of the Holocaust – had escaped those who made the decision, so the convoy sailed once more on August 22, having left just 130 immigrants behind with almost 4,300 still in transit (most regarding the news that they were headed for Germany as too

ridiculous to be true). For their part, British politicians argued that Jewish organisations could have persuaded the immigrants to leave in France, avoiding the trip to Germany, and reiterated that under their Mandate the British were obliged to maintain the balance of population in Palestine – the arrival of so many disruption – and they were also obliged to try to avoid sparking further clashes and bloodshed

between Jews and Arabs. The RN warships which had prowled just outside French territorial waters took up escort duties again – by this time the ships involved were HM ships Phoebe, Chevron and St Bride's Bay.

A resupply stop at Gibraltar on August 26 (when a bid to damage the cruiser with explosives was foiled) saw frigates HMS Burghead Bay and Tremadoc Bay, plus destroyer HMS Finisterre, allow the other three ships to remain on station in the Mediterranean, and there followed a low-key passage the Bay through the Channel, with just one stop for 30 minutes to mark the funeral at sea of a baby less than a day old; colours were lowered to half mast and the escorts closed in as a mark of respect.

HM ships Zest, Bicester and Bleasdale assumed escort duties in the Channel and saw the transports to the Elbe, arriving on September 6 and 7.

Underthegazeoftheinternational press and humanitarian disembarkation organisations, began on September 8, with Ocean Park's immigrants offering very little resistance - just ten objected strongly, and one ended up with slight head injuries.

The following day Empire Rival

was swiftly cleared with no trouble at all, leaving time to attend to the Runnymede Park, which was recognised as having a strong leadership.

Damage was caused, and 22 people injured, but it was felt that the links formed by British soldiers who had been on board all three ships from Palestine was a factor in quelling trouble. An Army report tells of some

distance.

inexperienced soldiers

over-reacting; a journalist who observed it said there had been "no reprisals."

The speedy evacuation of the Empire Rival aroused the suspicions

of one Army officer, and a search revealed a bomb brought on board off the French coast and timed to explode once passengers had left. A Royal Navy team removed the device and detonated it at a safe

The aftermath of the Exodus

1947 affair saw Zionists gain much support and Britain berated for transporting concentration camp survivors away from the Promised Land and back to the country which caused their suffering.

This simplistic view does not account for the fact that 'gatecrashers' were attempting to thwart a quota system which was widely known and generally backed by the international community by way of the League of Nations, the authority behind the original Mandate, and then its post-war successor, the United Nations.

Those who sought to gate-crash the quota system were, in effect, simply pushing qualifying legal immigrants to the back of the aueue.

The immigrants had also had the chance to leave the ships in France, but through personal choice or the threat of violence, had decided to stay on board

Hull damage was 'self-inflicted'

VALENTINE Smith was an able seaman in HMS Mermaid at the start of the Exodus episode.

"I was the radar plotter aboard HMS Mermaid when the President Warfield, the real Exodus, was lying at Sète, near Marseilles, and was the first to see her, like a glowing grain of rice, on the PPI tube when she moved off," he said.

"We shadowed her for seven days till we approached Haifa, when she struck her flag of convenience, ran up the Star of David and put up a board marked Exodus 1947.

Also on board Mermaid at the time was Bernard Akerman. "It was at Sète, near the Spanish border, that we 'picked up' the Warfield,"

said Bernard.

"Mermaid shadowed her for a week or perhaps a little longer.

"Each morning we 'closed' her and had a good look, taking photographs and recording information "If we got too close we were pelted with

nuts and bolts and tins of bully beef. "During this passage the Warfield was news headlines, became a political

hot potato and received international publicity, becoming known as Exodus. "As we neared Palestine, Mermaid fell

away and the patrolling destroyers took over and did the subsequent boarding." The intelligence-gathering role became

something of a speciality of the Mermaid as a sloop, she was similar in size to a destroyer but her anti-submarine role meant she was not built for the extra speed, and as such sloops and frigates were better suited to the initial stages while the faster, nimble destroyers were preferred for the interception

Mermaid also shadowed the Paducah for a period, but her routine normally involved "a six-week patrol off Palestine,



from France to Palestine

immigrants in Southern Europe and shadowing them on their journey east," said Bernard

Kenneth Jones served in HMS Aiax under Capt de Courcy-Ireland when the ship shadowed and intercepted the Exodus.

Two photographs show the former President Warfield before and after she was damaged in close manoeuvres with Royal Navy warships – manoeuvres which some in the Zionist movement claimed

were deliberate rammings. "The damage was self-inflicted," said Kenneth.

"When our destroyers went alongside her to get boarding parties on her, she turned sharply to throw them off on more than one occasion – hence the damage. "I with many others used to watch this

vessel day and night when off duty. The final part that I remember was

followed by a welcome week's lay-off in when I was on watch in the after engine bridge for full steam ahead.

'The throttles were opened wide and it was the fastest I had known the Ajax to go.

'In the engine room we knew very little and the message came down from the bridge to say the Exodus had raised the white flag.'

Horace Adams was on board HMS Finisterre when she escorted the three old coal-burning cargo vessels Runnymede Park, Ocean Vigour and Empire Rival, which transported illegal immigrants from

the President Warfield to Hamburg. "One unfortunate Jew died as we steamed slowly - possibly at eight knots - through the Bay of Biscay, and we hove to for a burial at sea," said Horace.

"Otherwise I do not recall any problems.'

Newborn baby left ship in shoebox

BRIAN Purrott was a boy seaman drafted to HMS Phoebe in October 1947, and he still recalls the squalor of the vessels which his cruiser intercepted. "My first memory of Palestine

was intercepting a ship called the Pan Crescent when she entered the limit off Haifa," said Brian. "There were 7,500 illegal

immigrants aboard, and we sent a boarding party of 30 ratings and two officers to take over the ship. "The living conditions were terrible, but even worse were the smaller ships

"The Abdul Hamid was an unseaworthy wooden vessel which had been at sea for two weeks. "They were packed in so tight

that they had to stay in the same place during the entire trip. "Babies were born during the

trip, and we brought one out in a shoebox.' Once in Haifa the Phoebe tied up alongside transport ship Ocean Vigour, with Abdul Hamid

outboard of the cruiser. "The immigrants transferred to the Phoebe, going aft to be deloused and the luggage went

forward," said Brian. "My first job was emptying the luggage; the items went into three

piles – jewellery, knives and tinned food. The jewellery was for resale,

the knives for protection - and the

tinned food to throw at us. "Although they were half-starved, they did not open the tinned food.

"The only clothing they had was what they stood up in.

"I couldn't hazard a guess at the value of the jewellery, but I should imagine it was millions in today's money. "Three items came to mind

which I emptied out of bags - one gross of metal cigarette lighters, one gross of condoms and one gross of small brown vials which, I think, were morphine - these were obviously for resale. "All the sacks containing

jewellery etc were passed to the captain of the Ocean Vigour."

Gangway was clear

NOT all boardings featured vicious fights, injuries and the risk of death.

Bill Jackson, who was a member of the boarding party of HMS Mauritius, recalls the interception of the Pan York on New Year' Eve in 1947 – "for once we were allowed up the gangway," he said. Mr C Martin took part in several patrols in HMS Phoebe,

recounting how the ship lay in wait in Suda Bay in Crete before intercepting ships off Palestine. Scaffolding was rigged on the fo'c'sle of the ship, creating a

boarding platform for sailors to use once their ship had gone alongside the target.

The ships were then escorted to Famagusta or Limassol in Cyprus and the immigrants were transferred to Phoebe's quarterdeck, where they were deloused with DDT powder sprays - there were literally thousands crowded on the merchant ships,' said Mr Martin.

Veterans meet

VETERANS of the British Mandate in Palestine will be holding their annual reunion at Eden Camp Museum in Malton, Yorkshire, in the autumn.

The event is on Saturday October 18, from 10am until 5pm. Any British military personnel

and members of the Palestine Police who served until the end of the Mandate are welcome. And on Saturday May 10 the

Palestine Veterans' Association will hold a wreath-laying ceremony at 1pm in the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to mark the 60th anniversary of the British withdrawal from Palestine Details from Derek Windmill, tel: 0115 9322419.



• The decrepit immigrant ship Moledet lists heavily to port as Royal Navy warships stand by to take passengers off and pump out water Picture supplied by C Milner

Narrow escape on rust bucket

HE ships of the Royal Navy were, naturally, regarded as 'the opposition' by those on board the blockaderunners, but hundreds of immigrants owed their lives to the Senior Service.

One such cohort was aboard the Moledet (also known as the San Phillipo), an ancient, decrepit 750-ton wooden steamer struggling towards Palestine with around 1,600 souls on board.

She was spotted by a patrolling RAF aircraft on March 29 1947 and HMS Charity intercepted her almost 90 miles north-west of Haifa, with HMS Haydon joining

Charity later the same day. The Moledet was clearly in trouble, being dangerously unstable, but although the crew said there were defects and there was no master, the ship refused help - and as she was in international waters, the two warships dropped back and kept watch.

But early next morning an SOS was picked up by a shore station, saying the Moledet was taking on water, so the Navy closed in.

Haydon sent over a pump and salvage party, while a boarding party also boarded the 71-yearold ship; they found there was

to Palestine.

1946.

an 18 degree list to port which suddenly became a 23 degree list to starboard, with water pouring in through insecure scuttles.

In 90 minutes the salvage party had cleared engine spaces of water, which caused the Moledet to list even further, leaving a partial evacuation as the only prospect of easing the situation.

With HM ships St Brides Bay and Octavia (a minesweeper) now in attendance, there was fighting between immigrants, some trying

to prevent others from leaving. But eventually 550 immigrants – including 49 pregnant women and 18 children – transferred to the Charity and 265 to St Brides Bay via Octavia; all were fed and quickly settled down.

There was still a significant risk of capsizing, but Octavia managed to set up a tow and slowly nursed the old steamer into Haifa, where she was arrested.

C Milner was a rating on board the Charity, and was struck by the absurdity of the situation. "I never thought, coming

through all of World War 2, that I could get my 'come uppance' trying to help people," he said. On arrival in Haifa, a delegation

of immigrants – mainly northern Europeans who had set out from Stockholm – thanked Cdr Mowlem, the Commanding Officer of Haydon, for saving their lives and their treatment while in the warship.

with a rescue, as did Greek warships

RAF aircraft dropped food, clothing

accommodation until a more chivalrous

approach was introduced by the sailors).

and the Palestine Patrol, notes that

most seemed to be genuine refugees,

with a large proportion being "modest,

middle-aged men and women" and

"many children and old men, all still

dazed from their ordeal and grateful for

Ninian Stewart, in The Royal Navy

Themistocles and Aegean.



• An illegal Jewish immigrant is carried from HMS Phoebe on to transport ship Ocean Vigour at Haifa Picture supplied by Brian Purrott

Cdr Mowlem later said: "There is no doubt in my mind that the ship was in grave danger of sinking and that those responsible for her loading were nearly accessories to mass murder.³

Observing that those on the

Moledet had no knowledge of seamanship, he added that the British sailors in all the warships had been "magnificent, good-humoured, tireless and humane."



being rescued."

A deputation of passengers called on the captain to take them straight to Palestine, but the ship sailed through more rough weather to Cyprus - and to make their point, ringleaders ensured that hundreds of items of crockery were smashed and bedding was soaked and damaged, though the bill for vandalism was footed by the Jewish Agency.

Activists stopped the bulk of passengers disembarking, so tear gas was used, and a shot had to be fired at the legs of 30 men who suddenly and viciously attacked two isolated sailors.

The captain of escort vessel HMS Stevenstone, Lt Cdr Owen, later reported that illegal immigrants should never be trusted as when roused they could become "utterly ruthless."

Chicken wire was ships' new defence

DAVE Wallace was a sparker in HMS Troubridge during1947-9, and took part in various interceptions and boardings.

"Because of the resistance to being boarded we had to acquire and rig up wire netting – chicken wire – along the sides of our ship to protect ourselves from ragged opened tin cans and other objects thrown at us from the people on

their decks," he said. "We also had to acquire and wear cricket batsmen's testicle protectors when boarding after a rating was attacked by a woman with knitting needles through his testicles when he boarded from HMS St Brides Bay.

"We had strict instructions not to shoot unless shot at.

"These ships, being overcrowded with people, were dangerous and top-heavy, and it required two RN ships, one either side at the same would have capsized them. "Boarding them was also

difficult, as when you jumped you could only land on top of the people lying or sitting on their decks."

Mr R Pote, who served in HMS Venus, also remembers the Heath Robinson boarding platforms rigged from scaffolding poles and

"They enabled the boarding party to be more or less level with the bridge of the Jewish immigrant

ship," said Mr Pote. "The reason was that, owing to international law, we were not allowed to board until inside the

three-mile zone. "They would go at full speed when near the coast, so boarding parties had to be quick in taking over the wheel and engine room controls."

Diving legend spotted on jetty at Haifa

'STOKES' Petts, of HMS Peacock, recalls three men from his ship being run down in a whaler by a Bulgarian Landing Ship Tank when they crossed its

"The whaler went under the LST and came out of the stern," said Mr Petts.

A CPO was badly hurt, while one of the other two men - an officer and an AB - said he saw all of the ship's bottom as it passed over.

Stokes also remembers picking a body out of Haifa Bay and taking it to the quay. "The officer on the quay had

very distinctive sideburns," he said. "Some time later, when I was back in civvies, a Russian ship paid a visit to Portsmouth and a Cdr Crabb, a frogman, disappeared, later found dead.

"There was a photo in the paper and it was the same officer I saw on the quay in Haifa.

"Frogmen used to check the bottom of the ship in case somebody had stuck something nasty on to it.

Film-maker seeks **Exodus contacts**

RESEARCHER Tal Mandel is working on an Israeli documentary film about the Exodus 1947 operation, and is looking for Royal Navy personnel and Royal Marines who took part.

Tal is keen to contact anybody serving in the ships which shadowed the President Warfield from Sète to Haifa, or was on one of the transport ships Ocean Vigour, Runnymede Park and Empire Rival which carried the immigrants to Hamburg via France, or one of the 11 ships which accompanied them. Contact Tal on +33 617 865980

refugees were exposed by those who and medical supplies until the survivors chartered ships and organised passages could be taken off by boat - an arduous and tricky operation in poor conditions. On arrival in Crete they were transferred One example is that of the Athina, which sailed from Yugoslavia with some to a Landing Ship Tank (LST 3016), where hot food and bedding awaited them on the tank deck (and it was noted that 800 Jews on board in late November the men were quick to grab the best

Taking shelter in the lee of the island of Sirina during a storm on December 7, the 270-ton ship hit rocks and sank within an hour.

COMPLAINTS against the treatment

of immigrants by the British stand in stark contrast to the dangers to which

Eight immigrants drowned before they reached land - three of them children

Survivors found the only inhabitants were a Greek farmer and his family.

HM ships Chevron and Providence raced through rough seas to help

Journalists 'encouraged violence' in skirmishes

ERNEST Grayston was a leading signalman in HMS Chequers and HMS Troubridge between March 1946 and July 1947, and witnessed the apprehension of a number of illegal immigrant ships. Arya, Alma and Anal were

three Ernest remembers, as well as the heavily-listing San Dimitrio, which was 30 degrees off trim and in great danger of capsizing with over 1,000 people on board (see picture below).

"We received intelligence of all the expected ships, the date of sailing and routing," he said.

"The Lancasters of Coastal Command patrolled out to 200 miles, and there was a continuous patrol, by vessels, along the coast. 'We were only allowed to board

the vessels when they entered the three-mile limit. That left little time and room to board them. "Even so, the paratroopers

would be lined up on the beach, so they had no chance." Ernest continued: "We rarely

had trouble with the immigrants, except when American Jewish newspapermen were on board, encouraged violence and

hoped we would retaliate. "HMS Chivalrous – I cannot remember the date – encountered severe violence when trying to board a vessel.

"It was very hard for Capt Ruck-Keene not to order force." There was also a need for vigilance against sabotage.

"When at anchor at night there was the danger of frogmen attaching limpet mines to the

hull," he said. "Motor boats kept circling, dropping explosive charges. This had a disruptive effect on sleep. "Mind you, in 1946, the jellyfish

were breeding in Haifa Bay, and that would hamper any frogman. "One time we had to urgently take on fuel at the fuelling jetty whilst a bomb disposal team were trying to disarm a 500lb bomb.

There was a collective sigh of relief when we disengaged from the fuelling jetty -I think that was when we had to intercept the

Alma off Beirut."



• Two illegal Jewish immigrants from a blockade-runner ship intercepted by cruiser HMS Mauritius Picture supplied by Bill Garner

BILL Garner was a boy seaman serving in cruiser HMS Mauritius at the time of the Palestine Patrol.

'We had the job of searching all the baggage that came aboard from the immigrant boats," recalled Bill. "Not a very pleasant job, but better than chipping paintwork

etc. "We had quite a few births on the quarterdeck due to the that heavily-pregnant women that came aboard.

"All the men and women were sprayed with DDT or the like to get rid of lice etc.

"They were then trans-shipped to another ship bound for Cyprus and placed in a transit camp."

Bill remembers one immigrant boat holding not far off 1,000 people in poor conditions. Half the passengers were above deck and half below, and

"they were rotated when needed - lavatorially," according to Bill. Also serving in Mauritius was Leslie Wilcox, who had been a bosun's mate in the cruiser for

less than a month when she sailed from Piraeus to join the Patrol. He had already been equipped

with a cricket box for protection, but fortunately it was not needed when the overloaded Pan York and Pan Crescent were boarded and escorted to Cyprus.

Leslie went back home in the troopship MV Georgic, leaving Malta on May 8 1948. "She was the last such ship out

of Egypt and Palestine, carrying, amongst others, members of the Palestine Police following their disbandment, most of whom had received death threats," he recalled.

The reality of the plight of the illegal immigrants was brought home to Mr W Cox, who was aboard HMS Virago and spotted an old ship full of people, which he reported to the captain.

"As we got closer to her I could

see clearly she was full of women, children, young and old men, packed together it was not a pretty sight," he said. "We escorted her into Haifa.

I still wonder what happened to them." Geoffrey Hale, as a boy seaman on the carrier HMS Ocean,

remembers dealing with the crucial signals as the ship witnessed the end of the Mandate.

"As a side boy my duty was on the bridge," said Geoffrey. "I well remember the clacking of the Gestetner machine and the

acrid smell it gave off. "Once a pile of signals was gathered it was my job to dash

around the ship delivering these to heads of departments, and I had to know every officer, every cabin and every desk minutely. "In Bighi Bay, Malta, to enable us to ease away from St Angelo, the captain used all the engines

from the lined-up aircraft to ease us out from the breakwater. "I wondered what the Commander (Air) thought of all

the wear and tear on his precious engines!" On the cat-and-mouse manoeuvres, Geoffrey said: "The confrontations at sea between

the 'liberty ships' crowded with refugees and skippered by the

Americans was very hazardous, especially if there was a swell. "The boarding party, fraught with danger, would find themselves manoeuvred on the bows of the other ship after the hump alongside other ship after the bump alongside, and all kinds of missiles were thrown by the incensed Jews, and quite a few casualties were caused.

"They were determined to get ashore, and we were determined not to let them." Mr J Stringer tells of a shipmate from HMS Charity who was hit

over the head by a bottle of whisky during a boarding – fortunately he was wearing a helmet. "He came back on board next day stinking of it," said Mr

Stringer.



• Bill Atkinson, togged out for boarding operations

Hours of boredom on patrol

BILL Atkinson's recollection "we seemed to spend is that hours of boredom and minutes of 'excitement' tracking and intercepting these unfortunate immigrants on their way to Palestine.'

Bill was a radio operator in HMS Volage in 1946, and after the Corfu Incident (in which Volage was seriously damaged by a mine off Albania) he transferred to HMS Verulam. "Prior to the Corfu Incident I

remember another close call for Volage when the tanker Empire Cross exploded in flames when anchored close by in Haifa Bay,' said Bill.

"I had never left my hammock so quickly during my three years' service on destroyers.

"Occasional trips ashore in Haifa and those tasty 'late-night melons' at the waterside will not be forgotten!

Kindness left lasting impression

FOR some immigrants, their contact with the British military was not a cause for anger.

Mr J Smith was a seaman on board the cruiser HMS Newcastle, and some years after the Patrol had ended he spotted an appeal in the Daily Express from a woman who, as a seven-year-old girl, had travelled on one of the illegal immigrant ships with her family to Palestine.

The family had been interned in one of the transit camps in Cyprus, but the woman had been so struck by the kindness shown to her by British soldiers that she wished to trace any of them.

With no names or regiments to work on, Mr Smith set out to find some answers, and discovered that the unit was probably the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.

After seven years Mr Smith managed to track down one of the soldiers, and not only did that man establish contact with Miriam, the woman in question, but also travelled to Israel to meet her again.

A similar story is recounted by another former Newcastle sail

Ken Chatters. At a reunion, Ken met a woman

who, as a baby, had been brought on board the cruiser from one of

the immigrant ships. The woman had travelled from America to attend the Newcastle get-together.

• The heavily-listing San Dimitrio is towed towards Haifa in October 1946. The tow was quickly abandoned as too dangerous and the old lake steamer limped into port under her own steam. Standing by is Algerine-class minesweeper HMS Providence **Beware terrorists – and clumsy matelots**

JIM Spray had been looking forward to a trip to Japan in HMS Whitesand Bay when a diamond around the Anal and escorted the Admiralty directed the frigate to the Palestine Patro

In March 1947 the Bay-class warship was in Hong Kong, but her next destination was to be Malta, in company with Bigbury Bay. The frigates reached Valletta on April

22. "After working up in Malta for the next three weeks, we were dispatched to Palermo in Italy to shadow one fast illegal immigrant

"She was the old coal-burner by the name of SS Anal; she was, by the way, skippered by a woman. On arrival at Palermo we entered

harbour just as she was leaving - and she cheekily dipped her ensign as we passed. We turned and followed her at a distance of 5,000 yards (see Jim Spray's picture right).

'After three days we were relieved by HMS Talvbont, and we returned to Malta. "Then, on May 23, we left Malta to catch

up with Talybont and Anal. "On May 30, in company with HMS

a diamond around the Anal and escorted her into Haifa. week we natrolled up and "For the nex

down the Palestine coastline between Port Said, Jaffa, Haifa and Famagusta. We then had some time in Beirut, after

which we returned to Haifa and continued our patrol."

Whitesand Bay's involvement ended when she returned to Malta for a period in dry dock. Bill Murrell was serving in minesweeper

HMS Welfare in February 1947, patrolling the waters between Jaffa and Haifa. "My duties were that of Ch/Quartermaster

- I must admit, quite a change from minesweeping," said Bill. "At approximately 0200 a small ship was

sighted to seaward of our station. We closed to investigate to find she was

a steamer, heavily laden with human cargo of at least 600. She had been steaming for several days to avoid capture.

Once she was inside the three-mile limit our boarding party then boarded her.

hoses were used to make way for the lads to board.' Mr R Davies served in HMS Talvbont

during the Palestine Patrol, and said there were plenty of happy memories as well as more serious moments.

"We weren't allowed to dock in Haifa as the Stern Gang was active and frogmen were present," he recalled. 'The drill was to throw a 2lb charge over

the side. "One rating threw the charge,

but it hit the guard rail on the fo'c'sle and came towards us like a tin can.

Picture supplied by Bill Garner

"It exploded outside the skipper's cabin – not a very happy skipper..." William Vine was in the thick

of things while serving as a signalman in HMS Chequers.

The highest-profile incident was that of the President

Warfield, but an interception a couple of months later, in

"It was not an easy task - high-pressure September 1947, had a greater impact on

that particular destroyer. "The ex-landing craft Despite was carrying approximately immigrants," said William.

"Boarding was carried out by HM ships Chequers and Talybont, and during this operation Despite rammed the stern of Chequers, causing some minor damage requiring attention in Haifa dockvard.

While we were there the Haifa police station was blown up."



Clandestine immigrant ship SS Anal

Booty in the middle

A booklet compiled by the Intelligence Section of 40 Cdo RM as a souvenir of their last few weeks in the Holy Land illustrates the problems faced by British troops as the Mandate ended.

THE LAST unit to leave the nascent state of Israel was 40 Commando Royal Marines.

"We were called upon to take over the internal security of Haifa Port at an extremely tense period in Jewish-Arab relationship (sic)," wrote 'AH' in the booklet.

"The whole country was seething with racial hatred, and Haifa was well to the fore in open acts of violence. "Unfortunately, British soldiers,

as independent arbitrators, were inevitably involved in these racial disputes. "They were the scapegoats of

both Jew and Arab; each side accused them of being prejudiced in favour of the other, and each side was quick to blame them for

its own shortcomings. "In this difficult atmosphere of hatred, suspicion and violence, we took over our duties.'

The advance party arrived in January 1948, and there was a warm welcome on the unit's first official day of duty, February 3.

A bomb shook the town, the first of many over subsequent weeks, and an hour later two British policemen – former Royals – were shot outside No 3 Gate.

Members of 40 Cdo recovered the bodies and closed the gate against a crowd of angry Arabs. The Commando manned the

port's six gates, and part of their task was to stamp out pilfering - with a particular emphasis on racketeers who stole on a grand scale with breathtaking audacity. A typical attempt, foiled in early

March, saw a train searched as it attempted to leave the port. With only one unsealed wagon

containing goods, suspicions were aroused - rightly so, as the engine was surreptitiously uncoupled and began to slip away, until the driver was threatened with guns.

On another occasion men using a crane to load steel plates from a lighter on to a truck were challenged by a 40 Cdo patrol, and were found to be thieves.

Another task was to escort illegal Jewish immigrants from Haifa to Cyprus, a duty which they undertook on six occasions.

The usual procedure was to secure the illegal ship alongside a British cruiser (ships were normally berthed stern on) and transfer the passengers to the cruiser for screening and questioning.

If they had clear records they joined a transport ship on the other side of the cruiser for passage to Cyprus, guarded by Royals. On February 27 green berets

were called to quell fighting between Jewish emigrants, defying

The British military packs up and prepares to leave the port of Haifa in the new state of Israel in June 1948 Haganah's ban on Jews of military his men," states the booklet.

age leaving the country, and a group of Haganah zealots. The emigrants were allowed on their ship, but zealots continued the fight on board, forcing Royals to keep order until the ship sailed.

Military vehicles were stolen at an "alarming" rate for use as lorry bombs, but the Commando did not lose a single vehicle.

As the evacuation of people and equipment gathered pace, antilooting measures were beefed up, with some success.

Late March brought an intense period of violence, with persistent sniping and mortar and bomb explosions, killing and injuring Arabs, Jews and Britons.

Early April saw the Commando instigate its own port security pass regime, replacing a chaotic system which seemed to have as many types of passes as there were people in the port.

Around the same time the distance between 40 Cdo sites became unworkable, so the main HQ, a mile outside the port, joined Kingsway Camp inside the wall, a "dismal" place "in great need of repair" following a bomb

explosion close by. The tactical HQ and officers' mess were established in West Camp; the only other Royals were two fighting troops and the mortar group at East Camp.

At this time the Commando made the acquaintance of George, a local Arab military leader whose patch was close to Kingsway.

"Before moving into Kingsway Camp a meeting was arranged with George, who proved to be extremely co-operative and promised faithfully that the unit

could fear no attack from him or "He was very open-handed and conducted the CO around

his positions, and lived up to his promise. "On one occasion he called on the Commando to provide an

escort for the funeral of one of his men killed by a Jewish sniper. "At this time the Arab cemetery

was under heavy fire, and George reasoned that the presence of British troops would hold the Jewish hand long enough for him to bury his dead. "The escort was provided,

and the dead man was buried in peace.' But a local truce did not end

the risk; bullets still rattled through Kingsway Camp and mortars landed close to East Camp.

The rise in activity coincided with the withdrawal of Coldstream Guards from Haifa on April 20, leaving only evacuation routes and areas under British control. On the same day the Commando

left a small guard and tactical HQ at Kingsway and moved into new accommodation – packing sheds. During the night green berets

moved to strategic points and buildings on the port approaches. April 21 saw the first casualty in 40 Cdo, when Lt Seed RM was

wounded in the head and back by a burst from a Jewish bren gun. These were the opening sallies in the 'Battle of Haifa', which almost became a massacre when Arabs from the Souk, under heavy mortar

and gunfire from high ground, sought refuge at No 3 Gate. 'Battle-crazed" Jewish snipers fired into the crowd, and as the Royals returned fire the Arabs

women and children first – were taken to safety at the Cargo Jetty. The encounter also resulted

• Members of 40 Commando Royal Marines watch from HMS Striker as the Union Jack is lowered in the Port of Haifa on June 30 1948, marking the final British military withdrawal from Palestine and Israel



Contributors

Horace Adams, Bernard Akerman, R Amis, Des Amor, Bill Atkinson, Frederick Bardell, Bill Atkinson, Frederick Bardell, Frank Barnes, John Barrett, Alf Booker, C Brown, K Chatters, Eric Clayton, W Cox, R Davies, Eric Drummond, John Evans, George Francis, N Fry, Bill Garner, Ernest Grayston, Geoffrey Hale, Jack Henley, Bill Jackson, John Johnson, Kenneth Jonas Hurth Jonan Bill Jackson, John Johnson, Kenneth Jones, Hugh Logan, G McDonnell, C Martin, C Milner, Mrs L Moore, E Murray, Bill Murrell, 'Stokes' Petts, R Pote, Sam Preece, Ted Priest, Brian Purrott, John Roche, J Smith, Valentine Smith, Emma Soames, Jim Spray, Len Stokes, Boo Stonaham Ernia Stringer Soames, Jim Spray, Len Stokes, Ron Stoneham, Ernie Stringer, Bob Swarbrick, William Vine, Dave Wallace, Grahame White, Leslie Wilcox. Navy News drew extensively on the official and commercial control Staff

extensively on the official and comprehensive Naval Staff History, The Royal Navy and the Palestine Patrol, by Ninian Stewart, published by Frank Cass in 2002 (ISBN 0-7146-5210-5).

Thanks also to the Naval Historical Branch.

within the port, and on Z-1 the port was closed to all Jews except a handful of officials.

Z-1 was one of the busiest days for the Commando, with a constant stream of men and

machinery embarking. Reveille on Z Day was at 0400, and the Commando was ready for

action at 0530 in case of trouble. Coldstream, Grenadier and Dragoon Guards and 42 Cdo had all passed through the security cordon by 0900, and tactical HQ also withdrew to the fast-shrinking military zone - effectively a small area of jetty around the Landing Ship Tank (LST) HMS Striker.

With the withdrawal of the Brigade Commander of 1 Guards Bde, the CO of 40 Cdo, Lt Col Houghton RM, took control of British troops ashore, and all ships except Striker moved off.

With the simple radio signal "F3, F4, F5 withdraw," the Royals pulled back, covering each other as they left the gates.

Sweeping the area to ensure no stragglers had been missed, they boarded Striker as the mortar group set up in the fo'c'sle in case covering fire was needed.

The booklet notes: "At 1248, the CO reported to Lt Gen MacMillan, General Officer Commanding Palestine: 'Withdrawal of British troops in Palestine completed; 40 Cdo RM, last unit to leave, is now

embarked.' "With a word of thanks from the GOC, the CO stepped on to the ramp of HMS Striker – 40 Cdo's tour of duty in Palestine was completed."

The troops witnessed the final act as Striker pulled away. A small detachment of Royals

from HMS Phoebe – the GOC's personal bodyguard – stood by as the Union Jack was lowered from the Port Office while a Royal Marines bugler sounded *Still*, General Salute and Carry On.

The GOC – the last British soldier to leave the Holy Land – stepped from a deserted jetty into a motor boat and embarked in HMS Phoebe, with three cheers ringing in his ears as he passed Striker

stay in Haifa", according to the Commando record. The odd situation - the port remained under British control, though the town was now part of Israel – led to tension.

in the Commando's only other

casualties - Lt Pitman RM was hit

twice in the leg by a sniper as he held back men to make way for the

women and children, and Surg Lt

Cox RNVR was shot in the thigh as he tended wounded Palestinians.

the Royals had to control a tide of humanity flooding the port in a bid

to flee to Acre, across Haifa Bay -

hundreds had to be fed and bedded

down, and more refugees dealt with

slightly, some 12,000 Arabs were

evacuated by the Commando,

most by sea but some by road to Acre and the Syrian border.

During the evacuation, a

Royal jumped into rough

seas to save a mother and

child who had fallen while

transferring between boats.

flew in for a short stay, relieving

colleagues at Kingsway; 42 Cdo also passed through, having covered the withdrawal of the

High Commissioner, Gen Sir Alan

tour came on May 14 when Gen Cunningham, guarded by 40 Cdo, declared the termination of the

British Mandate. With the gates of the port locked until the general

boarded HMS Euryalus, the Royals

were still on duty as the State of Israel came into being at midnight. There followed something of

an anti-climax; there was more

time for relaxation, duty hours

were shorter, conditions improved

slightly, "but this period before

the final withdrawal operation was

the most depressing during our

The ceremonial highlight of the

Cunningham, from Jerusalem.

On May 1 and 2 45 Cdo

As the level of violence fell

for several days afterwards.

With the Arabs beaten in Haifa,

An American ship, the Marine Carp, had been boarded by armed Arabs in Beirut, who forced 63 Iewish men to disembark. Jewish leaders planned force Arab passengers

off the ship in Haifa, but were sent packing by the Royals, and a Commando guard placed on the ship. All the while the British military evacuation was under way, with up to

in the port each day. The King's birthday was celebrated on June 10, when the Commando apart from guards and the emergency section, marched through the

port. Impressed by such a fine display, an Arab

1,420 tons being loaded

in the port fire brigade volunteered to join up,

FREDERICK Bardell witnessed the "On May 14 1948 we were anchored outside the port of Haifa," said Mr Bardell.

while troops taking part were offered free beer by the Jewish

A truce between Jews and

Arabs, brokered by the UN, came

into effect on June 11, and five days later the advance party of 40 Cdo departed on the troopship

The following day the American fleet auxiliary USS Marquette arrived with men and equipment

for the UN truce mediation effort.

"Her stay was quite short but she left her mark on the port,"

comments the Commando diary.

"On her way out she rammed the end of the oiling jetty, causing

considerable damage to the jetty

and also to her own bows." The most daring theft attempt

came in June, when it was discovered

that five wagons of full jerrycans of petrol, plus a full rail tanker

British troops in Palestine - were

Col Farley, Port Commandant,

led an armed party in a shunting

engine in pursuit of the stolen wagons," recounts the booklet.

careful check of the way points were set enabled him to track down

the stolen property to a sidings at

Nesher, about five miles outside

the missing stores, plus a Jewish

main line engine used by the thieves, who numbered seven."

day, on June 26, night water patrols

were stepped up and charges were

dropped into the harbour every 20

Security zones were set up

Witness to history

off coast of Haifa

minutes to deter saboteurs.

Four days before evacuation (Z)

"Col Farley returned with all

the British enclave to the east.

"A correct appreciation and a

missing from the port.

the 50,000-gallon fuel reserve for

"An hour after the discovery

labour leader.

Samaria for Malta.

"Att 11.15pm the cruiser HMS Euryalus – with the High Commissioner for Palestine, Lt Gen Sir Alan Cunningham, on the quarterdeck - left Haifa and both ships sailed for the three-mile limit, where we stopped.

"The Ocean was surrounded by five ships, HM ships Cheviot, Chevron, Childers, Volage and Widemouth Bay, who all illuminated the flight deck of Ocean.

'The ship's company were all dressed in their white uniforms and lined the edge of the flight deck.

"As midnight approached, we sang Auld Lang Syne followed by the National Anthem, played by the Irish Guards pipe band.

"Eight bells rang out, signifying final hours of the British Mandate in Palestine from carrier HMS Ocean. midnight, and at that moment a new nation – Israel – was born. "I felt privileged to have witnessed

an historic occasion such as this. "Three rousing cheers were raised to the now ex-Commissioner of Palestine, we sang Auld Lang Syne again, and then all the searchlights over the carrier were switched off and the ships sailed for Malta.

"At that time we were acting as the 'mother ship' to the five warships which were engaged in intercepting illegal immigrants from entering Palestine, breaking the guota laid down by Lord Balfour.

"We took over the boats' wireless offices in order to prevent them from warning others.

"Inevitably fights broke out – they were armed with revolvers, rifles and knives. The women had long hat pins and we know where they intended to use them