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The rough guide to Portland

DESPITE this wonderfully serene scene, one word sums up the first month of HMS Portland's tour of duty: roughers.

Bay of Biscay. Rough. Med. Very rough. Red Sea. Redders. Phew. But it's a long way from Devonport to the foot of the Red Sea – a good couple of thousand miles and that's a lot of ocean.

It began quite calmly, however, in the peaceful waters of the English Channel.

Except that they weren't actually that peaceful. Pirates (the RN's baddies *du jour*) had seized the trawler Terschelling and were holding the crew to ransom.

Good job there was a British warship nearby, then. And a Merlin helicopter. And a Royal Marines boarding party.

Portland, commanded by the jovial Cdr Tim Henry (see *bottom*

right), spent three days working up her board and search techniques (fittingly conducted off Portland) before heading south and then east.

Biscay offered the ship's company, in good RN euphemism, a chance to "earn their sea legs and experience some of what Mother Nature has to offer" in the words of Lt Cdr Mark Hocking, Portland's weapon engineer officer.

It was rough. So a bit of R&R was definitely the order of the day at the "famous crossroads of the seas" (Gibraltar).

And what better way to relax than catching the sights from top of the Rock... after you've run up it, of course.

A sizeable chunk of the ship's company were up at the crack of dawn for

the three-mile 'trot' to the top of the 1,340ft peak. First to the top was the marine engineer officer, Lt Cdr Kevin White, who reached Devil's Tower in 28m 33s.

Then it was straight back down again as Portland was only 'overnighting' in Gib – this was a pitstop for fuel.

Next stop was Soudha Bay in Crete for an equally swift pitstop.

Getting to Crete proved to be as much 'fun' as getting to Gib. The frigate sailed into a storm (Sea State 8, winds of 50kts).

Not that it deterred all the usual training and exercising for the sailors' impending maritime security mission, nor the growing number of 'hobby groups' flourishing aboard.

Some you might expect: fizz (or it might be 'phys', we've never seen it written down) – physical exercise.

And some you wouldn't: the guitar group and **S p a n i s h**

lessons. (*Ay, caramba! – Ed.*) The latter probably weren't much use in Soudha Bay, Crete (the local tongue is Greek, you see) where another overnight fuel stop was the order of the day.

Still, clubz had one third of the ship's company running around on the jetty next to Portland (not for masochistic reasons but for the annual fitness test; most passed).

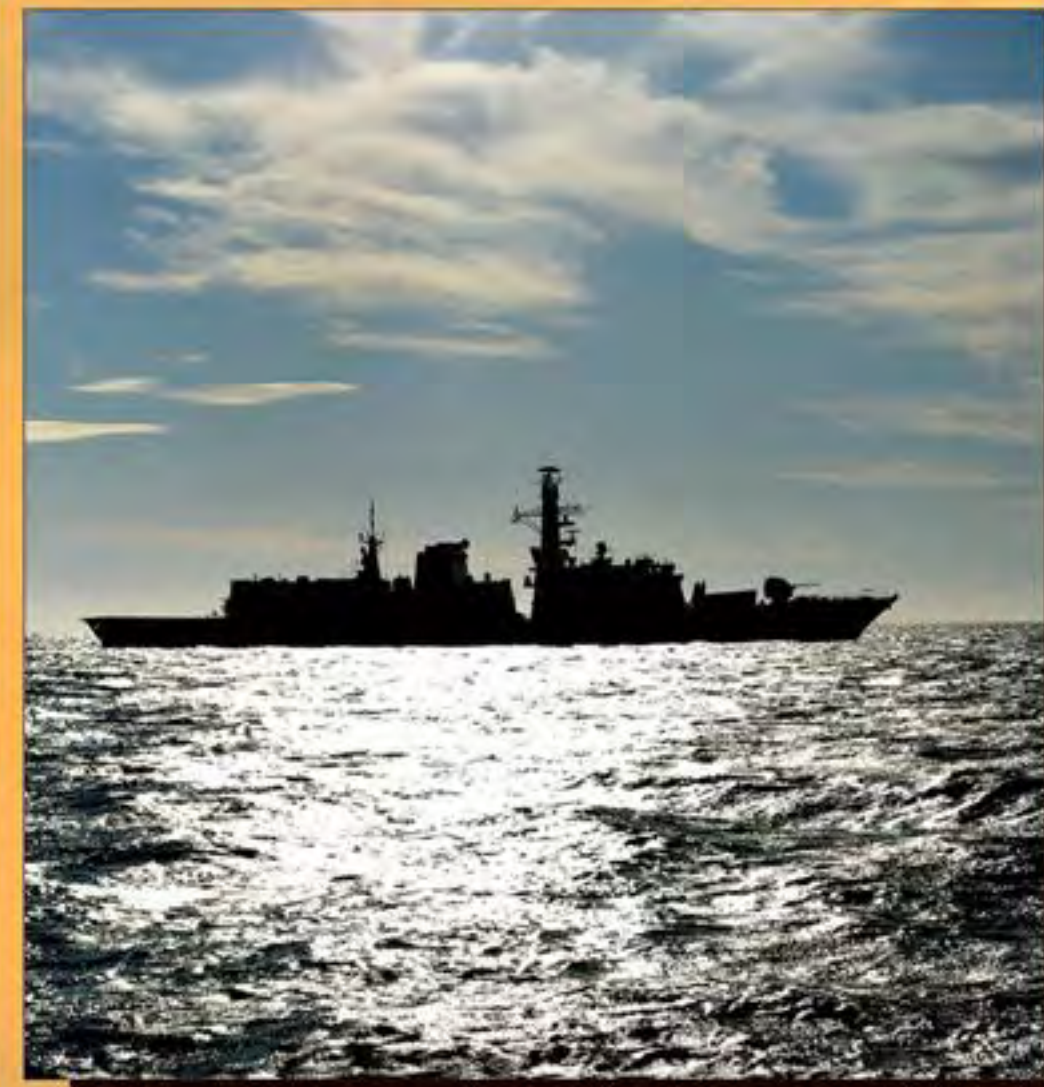
That was promptly followed by a five-a-side tournament with the 30-man mess under LS 'Scouse' Garvey triumphing in the final courtesy of a controversial 1-0 victory over the wardroom.

And somehow, many Portland sailors managed to find their way into Chania for a night out despite the brief visit.

Soudha was the last stop before Portland entered her operational theatre east of Suez.

The ship navigated the 100-mile (162km) canal in 14 hours and finally enjoyed some scorching weather in the Red Sea (high 20s).

Portland is now working with Coalition navies in support of the global naval campaign against piracy/terrorism/drug smuggling/people trafficking.



pictures: la(phot) alex cave, frpu east



Carriers hit by crunch

THE Navy will have to bear a significant burden of the 'credit crunch' hitting the UK.

The nation's financial troubles means three key naval programmes are being either delayed or shrunk.

Shipyards will slow down work on the RN's two future carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales – the backbone of the mid 21st-Century Navy – such that the vessels will enter service at least one and possibly two years later than currently planned.

Defence secretary John Hutton also told fellow MPs that he was putting on ice plans to replace some of the RFA's fleet tankers.

And the squeeze on the MOD budget also means that fewer Future Lynx will be ordered.

Sixty-two, not 70, of the latest version of the trusted naval and battlefield helicopter will be bought by Whitehall for the Fleet Air Arm and Army Air Corps.

There has been considerable speculation about the Future Lynx programme, but Mr Hutton said the MOD would buy the helicopter – and it would enter service in 2014.

The in-service dates of the replacement carriers are less certain, however.

Originally due to join the Fleet from 2012 under the Strategic Defence Review, that changed to 2014 and 2016 when the two flat-tops were ordered last year.

With the jet due to operate from it – the Joint Strike Fighter – unlikely to be available in time, Mr Hutton said the decision had been taken to delay the "in-service date of the new carriers by one or two years".

He continued: "Construction is already under way – and will continue.

"The programme will still provide stability for the core shipyard workforce, including 10,000 UK jobs."

The delays to and shrinkage of major RN projects are the result of a seven-month review by the MOD.

That review has also decided it is time to look again at the comprehensive project to replace a sizeable proportion of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary – the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability (MARS) programme.

Mr Hutton said there was "scope for considering alternative approaches to its procurement". That, the minister said, would probably mean delaying new fleet tankers.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band said all the RN's major projects had been preserved under the MOD review and that at a time when the nation faced "exceptionally difficult financial circumstances" preference had to be given to front-line operations rather than future projects.

The MOD is spending £70m providing a dozen upgraded Mk9 Lynx for Afghanistan.

Southampton enjoys T-time

NORMALLY home to liners, Southampton was graced with the rare presence of a nuclear submarine.

HMS Trafalgar spent five days at the port's Z Berth – a quay at the East Docks specially allocated for nuclear vessels – the first submarine to visit since her sister Tireless more than two years ago.

And talking of visits... 18 were squeezed in during the hunter-killer's stay with hundreds of Sea Cadets, Scouts and other youngsters given the chance to sample life on board a British boat.

College students hoping to enter public service and civic dignitaries from Hampshire and Southampton councils were also invited to tour the T-boat.

Going interNaTional

2009 is the year the nascent Iraqi Navy will come into its own after intensive training under the RN banner.

Iraqi sailors are gearing up for a 6,000-mile journey guiding the first of four new patrol ships from the Mediterranean to their future home in the Gulf.

It is a giant leap for a force which has existed barely five years, has rarely gone beyond home waters and never left the Gulf.

But under the guidance of the RN/RM-led Naval Transition Team (or NaTT) comprising four-score British and American sailors and marines, the 31 crew of 701 (the rather uninspired name given to the first of the quartet) are on the verge of taking their navy to the next level.

In a few weeks, the 31 crew will decamp with their NaTTers™ to La Spezia for three months of training. Then they sail the £14m 701 from Italy to Umm Qasr – a 6,000-mile voyage.

With that lengthy voyage in mind, the recent surge in visits by Allied ships to Umm Qasr has led to an increasing number of Iraqi sailors going to sea with rather more established navies.

There's not always a coalition vessel available, but that doesn't necessarily matter. "We sometimes have to improvise when it comes to practical work and demonstrations," explained engineering instructor CPO

Steve Ashcroft.

"This can be a real challenge, but when you see the Iraqis getting into it, it makes it all worthwhile."

And the Iraqis certainly feel they are 'getting into it'. "This is very exciting for us," enthused one coxswain (the men must remain anonymous to protect their lives). "We are a new navy but we are gaining more experience every day."

More experience and new experiences.

Like a flight in a Merlin. The Iraqi Navy doesn't have a 'Fleet Air Arm', let alone the world's number one sub-hunting helicopter.

But there's a good chance that they'll come to see that a helicopter is a fundamental part of 21st-Century naval operations.

And so three volunteers, future crew of 701, were winched from the foc's'le of their patrol boat into the Merlin of HMS Lancaster for a short flight around the northern Gulf (ten minutes). We'll assume they were winched back down again...

"Serials such as this give the Iraqis a real insight into wider naval operations – it's invaluable training which really expanded their capabilities," explained Lt Lee Vessey.

Not surprisingly, such exercises are "exactly the sort of training the Iraqis relish,"

says Capt Phil Warwick, the RN officer in charge of NaTT.

The Iraqi Navy is now 2,000 men strong, almost half of them marines – not in the green beret sense, more naval infantry.

And ultimately, it's the two battalions (cunningly, the 1st and 2nd) of marines who will bear the brunt of the security burden in the northern Gulf ultimately.

1st Battalion is deployed to the oil platforms, the other (2nd, if you were wondering) defends Umm Qasr port, town and environs.

And of those two battalions, 1st has a dual role: half the battalion protects the KAAOT and ABOT, the remainder conducts the board and search operations of tankers and other vessels using these waters.

Although those two roles have the same aim – security of the sprawling terminals – they are very different in execution.

The NaTT team want the men to be able to perform both distinct duties (multi-skilling in business speak), so last autumn Capt Andy Shaw RM introduced a new training regime to broaden the abilities of the Iraqi marines.

In the end, the aim is to ensure that any individual Iraqi marine is equally adept at defending the platforms or the port or conducting board and search operations.



● Iraqi and NaTT personnel on patrol in one of the Iraqi Navy's FABs

Picture: Capt Phil Warwick, NaTT



A feeling of déjà vu

STOP me if you think that you've heard this one before...

Hunt-class warship. Seafox mine disposal system. Trials. PO(MW) Antony 'Pinta' Beer.

Yes, back in November you'll recall that the senior rating and his shipmates were lauded for testing the new mine disposal system on HMS Chiddingfold.

And as part of the rotation of Hunt-class ship's companies through the Portsmouth-based fleet, team Cheery Chid are now on HMS Brocklesby.

She's just emerged from a spell of maintenance and overhaul. Among additions, aside from some fresh licks of paint, was Seafox as the ship bade farewell to the old remote-controlled mine disposal system.

"The new system's really good – much easier to use and much more effective than the old 'yellow submarines'," enthused Pinta. "I can't wait to get the new lads trained in how to use Seafox."

And nor, no doubt, can the ship's company. For some of the maintenance period was not entirely pleasurable.

The two engineering departments aboard were heavily involved in the overhaul.

The weapons engineers tweaked and installed the weaponry, stripping out and rebuilding the main magazine to install Seafox.

That was certainly more enjoyable than the task facing the marine engineers who, *inter alia*, cleaned all Brocklesby's internal storage areas from the fuel to sewage tanks.

Sounds like fun...

Life begins over 30

THE gauntlet has been thrust down.

Officially, Type 23 frigates can make 28kts.

HMS Sutherland has just achieved speeds "well in excess of 30kts" during high-speed trials, and challenges the rest of the Dukes to match it.

Some non-stick paint on the hull and a 'spoiler' on her stern did the trick (plus a good deal of effort by the marine engineering department).

And the latter were rather chuffed by the outcome.

"It made all the hard work through refit worthwhile – seeing the engines working at their limits," said deputy marine engineer officer Lt Sarah Wilkinson.

"I know the speed and weather made life a bit of a rollercoaster for the lads down below, but they are really proud of how well the ship performed in tough conditions."

Sutherland has just emerged from a year-long refit in Rosyth and is now in the hands of a 'brand new' ship's company, headed by CO Cdr John Payne who describes his ship as "one of the most modern and capable fighting units in the world".

His enthusiasm is matched by his 180 men and women. "It's great to be part of a new team, getting to know each other with a clean slate," said Sutherland's clubz LPT 'Arnie' Arnold.

The ship is now on work-up and training ahead of a drug-busting deployment to the Caribbean later in the year.

Ship of the month, page 12

The 'buck stops here

IT IS more than 66 years since the ill-fated raid on Dieppe.

And it is more than six decades since the Norman port was liberated by the Allies.

Yet despite the peaceful age since, the legacy of war hasn't yet loosened its grip on Dieppe – as the men of HMS Ledbury discovered.

A Dutch fishing vessel lost three crew back in 2005 when it hauled some unexploded ordnance aboard which then detonated.

A sweep of Channel waters was the last act for the Hunt-class ship during her spell attached to a NATO mine countermeasures task group, headed by HMS Roebuck.

The French asked the force to focus its efforts on the approaches to the ferry port – which they did, with Ledbury on a 'war footing'.

That meant six hours on, six hours off, for the ship's company so they could hunt mines around the clock.

And it paid off: a 500kg mine and 200kg bomb were picked up by the ship's sonar and identified either the old-fashioned way (by man) or the modern way (by machine).

Likewise, one was destroyed the old-fashioned way (AB(D) Toby Jones laid a plastic explosive charge next to the mine), the other bit the dust thanks to a 70kg charge dropped from a remote-controlled submersible driven by PO(MW) 'Ginge' Wilcockson.

Whether destroyed by man or machine, both devices sent huge plumes of water rising above the Channel.

"It was great for Ledbury and her people to carry out the ship's ultimate purpose: a mine hunter," said CO Lt Cdr Chris Nelson.

"We proved that Ledbury is more than capable of mounting round-the-clock mine warfare operations in testing conditions – and coming up with the goods.

"Going all the way and blowing up real mines

was the icing on the cake for our deployment with NATO."

Before grappling with UXBs and the like, the task group spent several days alongside in Dieppe.

The visit coincided with the annual herring festival (or *Foire aux Harengs* if you prefer the original French), a celebration of all things fishy which dates back half a millennium (although hopefully the fish on sale don't...).

Anyway, the smell of herring should have subsided by the time Roebuck and Ledbury returned to their respective ports (Devonport and Portsmouth), their time with the NATO group – Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1 – done.

Ledbury's attachment was relatively short (she joined the force in the summer).

Not so Roebuck, which was the flagship of the group since January (and with no rotation of crew unlike other survey ships, her sailors were – we think – deployed longer than any others in the RN last year).

"Everyone has been an excellent ambassador for the UK – and the RN in particular," said Cdr Chris Davies, task group commander.

"Roebuck and her ship's company have worked extremely hard to ensure that operations were carried out to the highest standards."

An 11-month deployment is pretty rare in modern-day RN annals, and though it might pale with the two-year-plus tours of duty the inter-war and post-war generation remember, Roebuck's CO Lt Cdr Matt Syrett said the sight of home (pictured below) had raised the hearts of all his 60 sailors.

"We worked hard, but knowing that our friends and families were waiting for us on the jetty made our day," he added.

"It is good to know that people in Plymouth are aware of the continuing work that the Royal Navy does around the world."

Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Winter, FRPU West



Sea King recognition

NINETY naval aviators and ground crew were recognised for their deeds large and small in the dust of Afghanistan.

Yeovilton hosted an official reception for men and women from 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons who spent six months supporting Allied ground troops in Kandahar and Helmand.

The 90 personnel were joined by three times as many friends and family and the head of the Fleet Air Arm, Rear Admiral Simon Charlier, for champagne, canapés and the formal presentation of Operational Service Medals (Afghanistan) to all who served in theatre.

"We don't get many opportunities to recognise our people's efforts – and equally important the efforts of those left behind when we go away," said Cdr Niall Griffin, 846's CO.

"This was one of those rare chances and I was delighted so many friends and family could join us."

Friends included six members of the Royal British Legion from just up the A303 in Wincanton. They donated cakes, sweets and games to the Sea King men and women – cakes, sweets and

games which have now arrived in Afghanistan as Christmas gifts from home.

Besides the operational medals for all, there was a special distinction for 846's Lt Ben Daniel. He earned a Joint Commander's Commendation certificate for coolness and skill under fire.

His Jungly came under fire from Taleban positions during a mission, but the decisions he made and the ability he demonstrated ensured men and machine accomplished their task safely.

Lt Daniel wasn't the only aviator singled out on the day: his 846 comrade Lt Rich Sturman was praised for nursing his badly-damaged Sea King to base at Camp Bastion.

The aircraft lost half its undercarriage – and portions of its rotor blades – during an abortive night landing in the desert.

He brought the Sea King back to base – where engineers had constructed a sandbag 'undercarriage' so Lt Sturman could set the helicopter down safely without it toppling over (you might remember the picture of it we featured in our October 2008 edition).



Severn go to Newcastle

TYPICALLY it's been HMS Tyne which has visited her namesake river during breaks from fishery protection patrols.

She doesn't own the North-East's great artery, and anything Tyne can do, so can her sisters.

And so it was that HMS Severn headed into Newcastle to take a break from a spell ensuring fishermen follow the rules.

Now we say 'break', but there really wasn't that much time to relax with a fairly busy programme lined up for the River-class vessel.

The crux of Severn's stay on the Tyne was devoted to the Prince's Trust and the charity's various officials and supporters in the region.

They were treated to a thorough tour of the 1,600-ton patrol ship, and a rather nice lunch courtesy of Severn's chefs (sorry, logisticians (catering services (delivery))).

The tour was the curtain-raiser to the Prince's

Trust Youth Week. Six youngsters (plus two supervisors) filed aboard for a day and night at sea, sailing with Severn out of the Tyne (witnessed from the bridge), before watching a series of drills and exercises aboard, including a mock fire.

The young visitors enjoyed the hospitality of the junior rates' mess, yet more fine food from the galley (described as a "hearty sailor's meal"), before enjoying film night and various games.

They departed Severn in Hartlepool. Well, actually, off Hartlepool. The ship's sea boats carried the eight visitors safely ashore.

The ship has had a fairly hectic few weeks, patrolling the Channel, visiting Newport in South Wales, her affiliated city, to take part in Remembrance Day ceremonies, and Weymouth for a crew change, which happened to coincide with firework night).

Picture: LA(Phot) Gary Weatherston, FRPU Clyde



Petty Officer Tony Newcombe has served his country for 18 years; he's currently training the next generation willing to do the same.

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Lord of the Hunt

IT'S not often that Her Majesty's Ship Cattistock hoists the flag of the First Sea Lord.

But she did as Britain's ranking sailor, his men and women and the good folk of Guernsey honoured the wartime generation.

The Hunt-class warship served as Admiral Sir Jonathon Band's flagship during the annual ceremony for the dead of HMS Charybdis and Limbourne, lost during a sortie to intercept a German surface raider in 1943.

Dead from the two ships were washed up on Guernsey, where islanders defied the Nazi authorities and attended the men's funerals.

Cattistock provided a Guard of Honour for the memorial parade, then hosted a reception and a briefing for members of the Charydis Association and community leaders to explain what the minehunter – and the RN – can do.

Temporary flagship duties complete, Cattistock left the Channel Islands for the western shores of England and Wales on fishery protection duties.

She's now undergoing a short spell in dry dock in Portsmouth for essential maintenance and some equipment upgrades.

771 NAS, the long rangers

TWO Sea Kings were scrambled on a rescue mission at extreme range – in extreme conditions.

More than 200 miles off Land's End, the 14,000-ton merchantman Best Star issued an SOS: a 48-year-old crewman had an open fracture to his thigh after falling through a vent shaft in the engine room.

771 NAS at Culdrose sent two of its Search and Rescue aloft, one to rescue, the second to provide top cover; both would operate at the limit of their range.

It took the first SAR helicopter, Rescue 193, two hours to reach the Best Star, having stopped on the Scilly Isles to refuel, and having battled through Force Eight winds with gusts of 40mph buffeting the Sea King.

The rescuers found the merchant ship moving wildly in 40ft seas (in time-honoured SAR understatement this was "not an easy rescue").

Paramedic CPO Dave Rigg was nevertheless safely winched down to the ship, and the Filipino casualty safely winched aboard Rescue 193, before the senior rate was recovered – via a dunking from a 40ft wave.

The injured sailor was flown to hospital in Truro where he's recovering.

Duncan has the bow factor

FOR the sixth and final time ship enthusiasts in Portsmouth and on the Clyde have witnessed the strange sight of a bow without a warship passing them.

The bow section of the sixth and last Type 45 destroyer, HMS Duncan, has been completed – and moved by barge from the Solent to the Clyde.

Also making its way on the same barge from BVT's yard in Portsmouth was Duncan's main mast (minus the spinning egg, the radar which sits on top of it).

Mast and bow are now at BVT's Govan works, waiting for the rest of the hull to be completed.

Four Ds are now in the water. Daring heads for Portsmouth for the first time at the end of this month (see opposite page), Dauntless has conducted initial trials, Diamond is being fitted out and Dragon has just been launched. Ship No.5, Defender, is now on the Govan slip and rapidly beginning to resemble her older sisters.



The seven ages of Ark

SEVEN decades after they first touched down on the hallowed deck of HMS Ark Royal, 820 Naval Air Squadron returned.

Admittedly the squadron's been back to Ark a few times in the intervening years, but it's still not a bad anniversary to commemorate.

Back in November 1938, the squadron joined the new carrier as its punch: torpedo strike courtesy of its Fairey Swordfish bombers.

In the years since, technology has moved on a little...

Today the Merlin helicopter is the latest aircraft in the squadron's inventory.

Three Merlins from the Culdrose-based squadron joined Ark (the fifth) for anti-submarine exercises in the Atlantic off the coast of Portugal,

interspersed with visits to Lisbon and Gibraltar.

In the latter, the airmen took part in a Remembrance Day parade, but even more poignant was a ceremony 30 miles away – over the wreck of Ark Royal III.

The carrier was torpedoed by Kapitänleutnant Friedrich Guggenberger in U81 in November 1941 and despite a concerted effort to save Ark (and an equally concerted effort to sink U81), the ship was lost (and U81 escaped).

The wreck wasn't discovered until 2002 (like the final resting place of many a great ship, Ark

doesn't quite lie where the records of the day suggest) and since then has, understandably, become a place of pilgrimage for Ark Royal V.

The ship's company and embarked squadron personnel gathered on the flight deck for a service of commemoration, before CO Capt John Clink cast a wreath into the ocean.

"It was a moving ceremony, made more so by being so close to Remembrance Sunday and the anniversary of the sinking," said Capt Clink.

"The ship's company of the third Ark were well known to have a fantastic attitude and will to win, known at the time as 'the Spirit of the Ark' – and this is still alive today in the amazing people that I am proud to command."

Picture: LA(Phot) Gregg Macready, HMS Ark Royal



You're hot then you're cold...

NO TWO ways about it, HMS Iron Duke experienced the highs and lows of naval life in 2008.

We're talking temperatures, of course.

Just a few months ago, they were in the 30s, now they're lucky if they reach double figures.

South Georgia isn't at the opposite end of the earth from the Caribbean, but it's not far from it.

For a start, you won't find bergs around the Indies – something you will find when you enter the Antarctic Convergence Zone.

To prevent any mishaps (iceberg + hull = bad), the frigate sent up her Lynx Mk3 to scout for hazards on twilight patrols, helping to ensure safe passage for the Iron Duke and her escorting tanker RFA Black Rover.

The warship patrolled Leith, Husvik and Stromness, before rejoining the tanker to enter Cumberland Bay on the island's north coast.

Iron Duke's bridge team then decided to make a close approach to Nordenskold glacier; the rocky shores around it ensured the ship's passage was, in time-honoured RN tradition, 'challenging'.

After the stress of sailing around the bay, what better than to relax around Grytviken, the island's 'capital' and enjoy the wildlife and scenery.

It was not a complete break from the rigours of deployment for the frigate, however: her Lynx



● C'mon lads, Navy News need yet another picture of us with a warship in the background... Iron Duke nestles between the bergs and mist-shrouded peaks of South Georgia

was aloft again, this time assisting South Georgia's British Antarctic Survey team conducting a study of the island from the air.

"Patrolling South Georgia has been wonderful. It is truly a magical place," enthused Iron Duke's Commanding Officer Cdr Mark Newland.

"My ship's company have worked incredibly hard over the last seven months.

He continued: "To expect a young sailor to have one job in our disaster relief organisation operations, a second role when conducting counter-drugs patrols, and at the same time retain

skills such as those that provide reassurance to the Falkland Islands is a big task and they have responded magnificently.

"To have been able to bring them to South Georgia is a wonderful reward for all their efforts."

Black Rover remains on station

in the South Atlantic. Iron Duke finally returned home to Portsmouth seven days shy of Christmas.

Heading in the opposite direction is RFA Largs Bay (plus a Lynx Mk3 from 815 NAS), paying her inaugural visit to Falklands.

The landing support ship is another vessel going from hot to cold – although it wasn't quite as hot in the Caribbean when she arrived (November) for a brief visit or quite as cold in the Falklands by the time she reached there (mid-December).

It's not merely the first time the auxiliary has been to the South Atlantic islands, it's the first time she's been across the Equator – and that, of course, demanded King Neptune hold court.

Neptune (Std – yes they're still stewards in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary – Tony Smyth) was not in a benevolent mood.

Not content with dunking CO Capt Ian Johnson, Neptune and his court also gave thorough soakings to the Judge (WO John Kelly), Davy Jones (XO Simon Cox) and navigator 2/O Ben Richards (to 'celebrate' promotion).

Neptune wasn't all nasty, however, permitting the flight deck to be used for a celebratory barbecue.

Now patrolling the islands, Largs is gearing up to support Exercise Cape Bayonet in mid-January – a major war game testing the ability of all three Services deployed in support of Britain's South Atlantic commitments to work together.

It's not an illusion, it's a Mirach



YOU may remember the impressive image of HMS Manchester's Sea Dart racing away from the destroyer on our November front cover.

Well, this little beastie was on the receiving end.

This is the Mirach Aerial Target Drone (the Mirage 100/5 to be precise) which was launched from the flight deck of the Busy Bee by the personnel of the RN's least-known squadron, 792.

It's the only RN unit you can fit in a mini bus, comprising a mere 15 men and women.

And four-fifths of those deploy every time the drones are needed to test part of Britain's aerial arsenal: two 'pilots' (not pilots in the traditional sense but controllers) and ten engineers to monitor and look after the mini jet.

(Beginning of the Top Trumps bit.)

The 13ft missile is launched courtesy of two booster rockets which generate around eight tons of

thrust each, plus a small internal jet engine, which takes the drone to speeds upwards of 530kts (more than 600mph).

The 'pilots' back at base steer the Mirach through the skies, from altitudes as low as 10ft, skimming the waves, to 40,000ft for up to 90 minutes.

It can carry flare dispensers to test heat-seeking missiles or tow a small target on the end a 100ft Kevlar cable.

(End of Top Trumps bit.)

Manchester was the most recent beneficiary of the tiny squadron's expertise as the destroyer tested her Sea Dart tracking and attacking capabilities, but the RN are not the sole users of 792.

The Culdrose-based unit has also recently been working on the Benbecula ranges in the Outer Hebrides on tests involving the missile systems of the RAF's new Typhoon fighters.



Got brass in bucket

A CAPITAL ship in the capital. Not an especially unusual sight – except for once it was not London graced by the presence of HMS Westminster.

No, the Duke-class frigate sailed up the Bristol Channel and moored at Britannia Quay in Cardiff for a three-day visit.

The ship and her sailors were in town to celebrate the national game (which in Wales means odd-shaped balls...) and 101 years of history between the rugby playing peoples of Wales and South Africa.

The Prince William Cup was introduced in 2006 by the namesake royal (who's Vice Patron of the Welsh Rugby Union) and is up for grabs each time the two nations clash – except during World Cup matches.

The Springboks bagged the trophy in its inaugural year. They held on to it in 2008 – just, squeezing home by 20-15.

The thrilling encounter was watched by a sizeable number of Westminster's ship's company – although it wasn't all about sitting back and lapping up the sporting atmosphere.

Around 40 sailors joined volunteers, the Army and RAF to raise money for Help for Heroes – which supports Servicemen and women wounded in the line of duty – plus the Royal British Legion.

The two good causes split the proceeds of the bucket collection at the Millennium Stadium 50-50 – more than £10,000 apiece.

The evening before the game the ship hosted a reception for around 120 members of the Welsh Rugby Union, giving them a tour around the frigate.

"It was truly a great honour to have been involved in what was a nail-biting match towards the end and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended," said Westminster's CO Cdr Ken Houlberg.

"I was incredibly proud to see my ship's company looking so smart in their Number 1s on the pitch and drumming up support and collecting."

Two big bangs in 24 hours

RN DIVERS north of the border dealt with two bombs in a day – on opposite coasts.

The experts from the Northern Diving Group based at Faslane faced the legacy of war off Largs and off Leith.

Civilian divers working at Largs promenade in Ayrshire found an unexploded device and immediately raised the alarm.

The five-strong team of RN bomb disposal specialists determined that the device found was an aerial-launched Mk11 depth charge – and still live.

It was brought to the surface and moved a safe distance from Largs before being blown up, although the operation did guillotine sailings in the area for a few hours.

Barely had the divers dried off and had a cup of tea back at base than they were heading to the Firth of Forth – their second call-out in 15 hours.

Fisherman had found a suspected bomb while trawling off Leith.

So decayed was the explosive that the dive team was unable to identify it, but they were able to safely neutralise it... by blowing it to kingdom come.

'Order to the seas...

BRITAIN is heading an international naval task force formed to tackle the scourge of piracy in the Indian Ocean.

Rear Admiral Phil Jones and his team based at Northwood have been charged with executing Operation Atalanta – the first naval mission ever carried out under the banner of the European Union.

EU Naval Force Somalia, comprising six warships, supported by surveillance aircraft, has the joint mission of patrolling one million square kilometres (386,000 square miles) of the sea in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean and safeguarding aid shipments of food to Somalia.

Besides warships, those aid vessels are also likely to receive armed guards.

Somali-based pirates attacked around ten boats/ships each month last year. In around 40 instances, their attacks succeeded.

British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said it was time to put a stop to their brigandage.

"This operation under British command will begin to establish international order in seas that are vital to trade right around the world," he stressed.

Rear Admiral Jones will oversee Atalanta from Northwood, with a commodore – currently Greece's Cdre Antonios Papaioannou – directing the international force, at sea.

The admiral said no-one should underestimate the scale and difficulty of the challenge facing his task group.

"The pirates are very agile, they learn quickly, they are adapting new tactics all the time," he warned. "We have got to be very agile too, to learn lessons from operations and deploy our forces accordingly."

The decision to formally create a task force to deal with the pirates comes on the back of a series of high-profile police actions by British and other warships in the region.

And the new emphasis on the anti-piracy mission has scuppered HMS Northumberland's dreams



● HMS Northumberland's boarding party inspects a suspicious vessel in the Indian Ocean while the frigate stands guard

of a 'partial global' deployment.

The Type 23's sailors were looking forward to three oceans, a trip around both capes, a bit of anti-terrorism, a bit of flying the flag, a few penguins, Panama Canal. Lovely jubbly.

Best laid plans and all that.

A couple of months down the line and the Type 23 frigate had completed the first bit, chasing pirates and other nasties around the Indian Ocean, and headed to the Seychelles for some R&R.

The R&R didn't last too long – but there was enough time for the ship's qualified bubbleheads (divers) to grow to 40 in number and for the maggots dangles (fishermen) to actually catch some fish – their first haul since leaving Devonport (for the record tuna, trevally and snapper); the secret, apparently, was to use pusser's bacon as bait.

The various sporting activities

were a little compensation for the ship's company who heard that their 'partial global' would become an 'even more partial global' and there would no visits to the South Atlantic or Pacific: the frigate would be committed on Operation Atalanta.

"The threat of piracy was just too great – and like it or not we were off to our old stomping ground in the Gulf of Aden," said Northumberland's Commanding Officer Cdr Martin Simpson. "As always in this job, anything can happen."

Every stick needs a carrot. There was the promise of four days in Eilat, the popular Israeli resort in the Gulf of Aqaba, plus Christmas in Dubai.

Before the carrot, there was another security patrol to conduct. Northumberland headed for the Horn of Africa to meet up with HM Ships Cumberland and Kent,

plus RFA Wave Knight.

A 'round robin' of stores and personnel ensued before the quartet split. Kent returned the Royal Marines boarding party she had 'borrowed' from Northumberland – much, apparently, to the delight of the female mess (*can't think why – Ed*) before heading for home. Cumberland and Wave Knight prowled the Gulf of Aden, and Northumberland made for the Red Sea.

Eilat last hosted the frigate in 2007 – and the ship was well remembered by the Israeli Navy which pulled out all the stops to accommodate the British warship.

The resort is a relatively short distance from some of the treasures of antiquity.

There was a day trip to Jerusalem via the Dead Sea where, says Cdr Simpson, "one of the more seasoned senior rates mentioned that he remembered visiting it many years ago when it was only sick."

And there was a day trip across the border into Jordan and the city carved into the stone, Petra (for the less-culturally minded, it's the city at the end of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*).

"Both were cracking days out – and for many the chance of a lifetime," said Cdr Simpson.

Carrots eaten, more sticks, and three weeks patrolling the Gulf of Aden looking for pirates, terrorists, smugglers and the like.

Still, Dubai for Christmas. It could have been worse...

✎ Kent gears up for anti-piracy patrol, pages 10-11

One of our buoys is missing

...BUT not any longer thanks to one man and his dog.

Let us explain... HMS Enterprise was carrying out detailed survey work off Belfast, including measuring the current flow in the North Channel and approaches to the port.

Her surveyors fixed a yellow buoy, a current meter, to the seabed and left it for several days.

Mother Nature had other plans.

The current ripped the buoy from the bed and carried it to the Isle of Man where it was found by Malcolm Hutton as he walked his dog along the beach.

Luckily, the Devonport-based hydrographic vessel was due to visit the island... and so was reunited with its errant gizmo.

Mr Hutton was invited aboard the ship, anchored off Peel Harbour on the west coast of Man, in gratitude for finding the buoy (sadly he didn't bring his pet with him).

He was given a tour of the hi-tech vessel and left clutching various gizmos, not least a ship's badge.

As for Enterprise, she resumed her survey work to update the charts and other environment data vital to the safe operation of Belfast port.

Daring days looming

THE future is no longer tomorrow. The future is today.

HMS Daring is no longer a ship of tomorrow's Navy, she's formally part of the Fleet.

The first of the Type 45 destroyers was officially handed over to her ship's company on December 10 and the White Ensign raised for the inaugural time.

It also meant an end to living in flats around Glasgow for her sailors, who have moved on board.

After Christmas leave, they will return this month to bring her down from the Clyde for the first time.

A fortnight (ish) of trials and tests will follow her departure from BVT's Scotstoun yard, followed by a lightning first visit to her affiliated island (Guernsey), then her first entry into her future home of Portsmouth.

Apparently only God himself can now prevent that as the arrival date of January 28 is 'concreted' in the ship's programme.



...We do not, as a rule, publish 'grip and grins'...

... AS IT says on page five of the Navy News handbook (no, really it does).

But in this case we'll make an exception.

This is a unique view of HMS Albion and the chap on the left, Capt Wayne Keble, is handing the keys of the assault ship to his deputy, Executive Officer Cdr Simon Turnbull.

He could, of course, have done this in his cabin. But this makes a rather more impressive sight: the bottom of the dry dock in Devonport where Albion is beginning an eight-month overhaul.

Albion is the first of the RN's amphibious assault ships to enter dry dock for a refit. She'll emerge next July after £25m of work,

including some fresh paint on her hull (which looks like it could do with it after a busy few years...), some TLC for her propeller shafts, upgrades to her weapons and sensors, and some much-needed maintenance on the upper decks.

In the meantime, her younger sister Bulwark is raising the amphibious flagship banner, with a familiar face in charge... Capt Keble has just assumed command of the ship from Jeremy Blunden.

He'll lead Bulwark into the Mediterranean next month for a major amphibious exercise involving Allied navies.

Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Hooper, HMS Albion

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Red (Rose) letter days

WITH a deafening blast of her horn, the world's most famous merchant ship acknowledged the cheers of 190 sailors.

Sailors cheered passengers – and passengers cheered sailors, waving heartily for the last time as the QE2 took her final bow in the sun-soaked Gulf.

With The World in the background – man-made islands shaped like the nations of the globe – HMS Lancaster took her place with vessels small (pleasure seekers, coastguard craft) and large (MV Dubai, the world's largest yacht, 80ft longer than the warship and yours for a 'mere' \$300m) to welcome the venerable cruise liner to her new home (pictured below, if you were wondering).

There's been a Lancastrian theme to the QE2's send-off: HMS Manchester escorted the liner on her final visit to the river of her birth, the Clyde.

Half a world away, Lancaster was charged with orchestrating the last act in the Cunard ship's seagoing career, serving as a communications hub for the many vessels bobbing around in the waters off Dubai for the QE2's last entry to port.

And then sailors donned their tropical uniforms, lined the frigate's upper decks under the blaze of the afternoon sun and paid their respects to the most famous merchant ship afloat one last time.

The warship initially took up station behind the cruise liner, then conducted a sail past, which saw the QE2 dip her flag – and Lancaster dip her White Ensign in return as a mark of respect. Lancaster's

sailors then doffed caps, held them aloft and gave three cheers.

"I've done this kind of thing before, so what made this special?" said PO Anthony Greening. "I think the word is 'iconic'. The QE2's got such a history – and we in the Navy owe her our gratitude for all she did for us in the Falklands."

Back then the liner was hurriedly converted into a troopship, ferrying 5th Infantry Brigade to the South Atlantic; on her return journey she brought home survivors of HMS Ardent, lost to Argentine air raids during the San Carlos landings.

There aren't too many serving sailors who saw the liner in the Falklands. Among them is WO Chris Harden, Lancaster's executive warrant officer. As a JMEM (Junior Marine Engineering Mechanic for those not old enough to remember a now defunct rank) he helped guide HMS Herald safely to the Falklands – and saw a very different QE2 there.

A generation later, Skyhawks and Etendards had given way to a giant in the skies – a two-decker Airbus A380 jet roaring overhead – plus Lancaster's Merlin, surveying the scene and providing camera ace LA(Phot) Brian Douglas with a stunning vantage point.

Airborne or seaborne, the swansong of the liner was a day no-one who witnessed it will forget.

"It was quite a thrill to see the famous shape of the QE2 – to see her stack and superstructure

appearing out of the corner of my eye, to realise this was actually happening, and play a small part in the story of this great ship," said Surg Lt Nic 'The Doc' Dodds.

Barely had the cheers from F229 subsided than the ship's company were celebrating once more – in a rather more sedate manner.

As befits the ship's roots, work stopped the following day, glasses were raised and cups of Lancashire tea were downed by the sailors as a toast to Her Majesty (who is also Duke of Lancaster).

Unlike Yorkshire Day, invented by a bunch of Tykes in the mid-70s, Lancashire Day traces its heritage back more than seven centuries to November 27 1295 when the folk of England's greatest shire (*Hmmm... I'm detecting a slight Lancastrian bias here – Yorkshire Ed*) first sent representatives to Parliament.

It's not all tea and symphony for the Red Rose warship. She has, of course, been very busy protecting Iraq's two oil platforms, Khawr al Amaya and Al Basrah.

The Type 23 frigate has reached the half-way stage in her guardianship of the two terminals (and her men and women have completed sufficient time in defence watches at the tip of the Gulf to earn operational medals).

Part and parcel of safeguarding those rather higgledy-piggledy (*technical term – Ed*) structures is the ability to deploy the ship's 'hit squad'

rapidly.

Lancaster carries a small team of commandos from the Fleet Protection Group RM – the RN's specialists in boarding operations.

Normally they board in the traditional manner: from one of Lancaster's sea boats and up a ladder.

Sometimes speed is the essence (or a vessel isn't obliging to lower a ladder), so rapid roping is the order of the day: scurrying rapidly down, er, ropes (yes, the clue's in the title...) on to a deck.

It's a tricky operation at the best of times. Now try it from 60ft up on to a six-foot-wide walkway on KAAOT...

...Which, of course, the Royals have to be able to do... and so too the Merlin crew manoeuvring them into position.

"It's my main effort to keep the lads ready and honed for any eventuality – simulating this type of scenario is just one aspect of that training," said Capt Dan Pyke RM.

It's not just the commando detachment or the aircrew who've been kept on their toes, of course.

FOST's mobile team visited to satisfy themselves that all was running smoothly on the good ship Lancaster – and made a couple of suggestions which should make life aboard a little better and security ops even more on the button.

Also calling in was Cdre Mike Mansergh, the new Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla, who joined the ship's company for three days to see them in action – and take on board any queries.



pictures: la(photo) brian douglas, frpu clyde



● A Royal Marines boarding party races through the Northern Gulf in one of Lancaster's RIBs



● Lancaster's Merlin manoeuvres into position by the KAAOT terminal so commandos can rapid rope on to the platform



● Soldier trapped inside lamp shock horror... A marine manning a machine-gun is reflected in the façade of a searchlight



LINING the turf at the JJB Stadium, the men of Britain's oldest warship prepare to welcome the Premiership stars of Wigan Athletic and Stoke City.

The submariners were guests of honour at the ground – one of a string of high-profile events during a weekend in the affiliated North West town for HMS Sceptre.

Sadly for football fans, Sceptre's

appearance was probably the highlight of the afternoon.

Indeed, Wigan supremo Steve Bruce remarked post-match: "I think it will be the last game on *Match of the Day* and rightly so because it was not a classic." (It was indeed the last match aired...)

The hunter killer boat has been spliced with Wigan since she entered service in 1978 (the very year that Wigan Athletic entered the Football League).

That's plenty of time to build up strong ties with the town and its people, including Montrose School for children

with special needs. The deeps joined in lessons, chatted with pupils and generally helped out in classrooms.

As the poppies in the submariners' caps suggest, the visit coincided with Remembrance weekend.

Sceptre's men – and the 16,000-strong crowd – observed a two-minute silence before the 0-0 draw kicked off.

The following day, the submariners divided between Wigan and nearby Atherton to march and lay wreaths at the two towns' November ceremonies.

Men of Sceptre don't always have to go

to their affiliates; sometimes the mountain comes to Mohammed.

The veteran boat hosted nine members of the Scots Guard Association – whose organisation and Army unit are both affiliated with Sceptre.

Submarines are difficult to negotiate even for men in their prime, yet the oldest old soldier (a sprightly 93) had no trouble clambering up and down the boat's ladders.

The guardsmen were treated to traditional fare from the galley (ie curry), a tour of the boat and a presentation

explaining the role of Sceptre and her 116-strong complement.

As for the boat herself, she's recently emerged from an overhaul (or RAMP – Revalidation And Maintenance Period) which was followed by a test firing of a dummy Spearfish torpedo in Gareloch.

The impressive sight of the bright orange torpedo breaking the waves as it came to the surface was met by a round of applause by spectators on the nearby MOD Police launches which were patrolling the loch.

Picture: Bernard Platt

LIFE IN THE NAVY IS
EXCITING
 & REWARDING
 BUT IT CAN SOMETIMES BE
TOUGH
 & STRESSFUL

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IT'S not long gone 7am on a Saturday morning.

The shrill whistle of call the hands has barely faded over the main broadcast.

Tattooed senior rates wander along 2 Deck, towels wrapped firmly around their nether regions.

The loudspeaker crackles into life once more. The voice is that of Operations Officer Lt Cdr Mike Klidjian.

The ship is about to sweep the Indian Ocean for suspicious shipping.

The emphasis through this sweep's seven-year history has been anti-anti-terrorism: anti-arms smuggling, anti-drugs smuggling, and anti-people trafficking.

Now we're upping the anti (*groan - Ee*): anti-piracy.

Throughout those seven years, the pirates have been there. It's just that their attacks seem to be increasing - and increasingly brazen.

The time has come to do something about it.

"What we do today demands 100 per cent commitment from all of the ship," Lt Cdr Klidjian reminds his shipmates. "Things develop quickly and we must respond to them quickly."

"This is a very real threat. Take the fight to the enemy."

In fact, today there is no real enemy. Today, HMS Kent is practising for her anti-piracy patrol.

And a few things are worth pointing out before she does so.

For one thing, this wasn't part of her original Far East deployment. It's a detour on the long road home from Asia.

For another thing - and despite what you might read in the British media - the sweep is not suddenly just about pirates. We'd be rather remiss if we clamped down on pirates and let those drug-runners, people-smugglers and terrorists swan around unimpeded.

And then there are those 'pirates'. Banish all preconceptions of swash and buckle.

Pirates do not:

- (a) wear eye patches,
- (b) have parrots on their shoulders,
- (c) cry "Arr, Jim lad."

Pirates are, however:

- (a) well-armed,
- (b) well-informed and
- (c) well-organised.

They often use mother boats - large dhows towing smaller, faster craft. They are motivated by money - they are not necessarily prepared to die for their 'cause' like terrorists.

And they use our 'weapons' against us. The AIS system beloved by Allied ships to keep tabs on maritime trade is also beloved by the pirates (you can buy the kit on the internet cheaply enough...) to keep tabs on maritime trade so they can plan their attacks and pick high-value targets.



IN THE second of our features from HMS Kent, we follow the ship's company as they gear up to join the war against pirates in the Indian Ocean. **Richard Hargreaves** reports.



Which they did with worrying regularity in 2008. Attacks on a French luxury yacht and a merchantman carrying old tanks received widespread publicity. But the Malaysian vessels Bunga Melati Dua and Bunga Melati Lima, for example did not.

Pirates armed with pistols, rifles, bombs and grenade launchers seized the vessels, then held men and machines hostage for a good six weeks; the owners eventually paid an estimated US \$2m ransom. The marauders also made off with mobile phones, electronic goods, clothes, even football strips.

It's the cost of piracy which has brought it to the attention of national leaders.

Attacks = increased insurance costs = increased shipping costs = increased cost of goods in the shops = angry public = pressure on politicians = pressure on the military to do something.

Which is why first Cumberland and Northumberland, now Kent, and soon Portland are conducting patrols off the east coast of Africa.

Morally, the campaign against piracy is a black and white affair. Pirates = bad. Stopping them = good.

If only the reality was that simple.

For a start, who's responsible for Britain's piracy policy?

The Navy? Customs? Coastguard? Foreign Office? Home Office even? Nope, the Department of Transport. Trade on the high seas, you see.

And while the department believes mariners are right to be concerned about the piracy threat, it's worth putting the problem in perspective.

For every 16,000 vessels passing through the Gulf of Aden each year, 15,884 make it through safely.

What does worry Whitehall, however, is the growing number of attacks around Somalia.

"We cannot ignore the piracy threat," says Kent's Commanding Officer Cdr Simon Hopper. "It's a global issue - particularly in the current financial situation. I'm delighted that the UK has acknowledged there is a threat and that it has asked the military to look into dealing with it."

The RN hasn't really tackled pirates since the days of 'Arr, Jim lad'. There's not an 'anti-piracy handbook' to dig out (although there is a wealth of experience of other boarding operations to call upon).

If the pirates are fairly well informed about shipping movements, then thankfully the 'police' are well informed about dubious characters on the high seas.

For a start, the RN's Maritime Trade Operation in Dubai sends out constant reports and updates on pirate attacks to mariners.

Meanwhile in Bahrain, the Coalition Naval Headquarters produces a 'most wanted' list (officially 'Vessels Of Interest', or VOI) which it would welcome inspecting.

The first vessel we come across is the dhow Al Jask. It's not on the list. There's a brief chat with her, then she's allowed on her way. She's not to be contacted by another Allied warship for at least ten days - you don't want to irritate her captain.

The MV Luna is another proposition. She is on the list. As it happens,

she's not a pirate vessel but a suspected drug smuggler, and Bahrain wants her investigated.

Hailing - calling by radio - the Luna falls to AB(Sea) Nicola 'Mini' Cooper,

a sparky junior rating with a rather strong Geordie accent.

She's a veteran 'hailer' from a tour of duty in the northern Gulf, where the responses to her questions fluctuated from flattery and imitation to downright insulting.

"Sometimes the vessels cannot stand the fact you are a woman and will say quite bluntly: 'Your mother is a slut' or they'll refuse to talk to you and you have to get a man to speak to them," she explains.

"Other times, they'll imitate my accent or perhaps say: 'My last port of call, pretty lady, was...' They like the fact there's a female voice out there."

It can take Mini ten minutes or an hour to complete her hailing (and sometimes the vessels ignore the calls all day).

To a layman, the questions asked are pretty innocuous: the name of the ship, the name of the master, last port of call, next port of call, cargo. And, as this is an Allied effort, you ask whether they know about the Coalition mission and hearts and minds-related queries.

"We cannot ignore the piracy threat - it is a global issue."
- Cdr Simon Hopper

pictures: la(phot) owen king, frpu east

● AB(WS) Stu McLaughlin and AB(CIS) Matt Thomson stand guard during a boarding



NAVY NEWS
DEC 2008

PIRACY OFF THE HORN OF AFRICA
ROYAL NAVY TAKES

INDIAN OCEAN - BREAKING NEWS - ROYAL NAVY BOARDS SHIP

If the responses are hesitant, if fishing vessel X doesn't have its nets out or its gear looks rusty, or if the task force HQ wants the craft searched anyway... boarding party to red alert.

At present, the boarding team comprises solely of volunteers from the ship's company: chefs, stokers, sonar operators. When the operation begins in earnest, a specialist Royal Marines team joins.

The sailors can only carry out 'compliant' boardings (the merchantman is happy to have you aboard). 'Non compliant' boardings (the merchantman doesn't want you aboard) must be led by the commandos. 'Opposed' boardings (the merchantman will use lethal force to stop you) demand an even stronger response.

The MV Luna wants to be on her way, but her captain reluctantly agrees to allow HMS Kent's search team on board.

The frigate puts her two Pacific 24 sea boats, Pegasus and Stallion (in keeping with the horsey theme of the ship's badge), into the water before the boarding parties scramble down the rope ladders and jump into the craft.

Mounted on the front of each boat is a general purpose machine-gun - its presence is proof that Kent is now in a more threatening environment.

On the upper deck, sailors in helmets and flak jackets man the machine-guns and the mini gun. The weapons are loaded, as ample yellow signs - warning, gun loaded - attest. The guns are trained on the suspicious craft throughout the search.

Overhead, the ship's Lynx helicopter hovers in front of the dhow.

"The Luna's being compliant at the moment," officer of the watch Lt Giles Graddon reminds his bridge team. "She can turn on us at any moment."

Pegasus circles the Luna to inspect her from a safe distance, before the order is given to begin boarding.

The RIB races up to the wooden ladder thrown down by the merchant ship. The first boarder jumps across and scrambles up it, greeting the skipper at the top.

And at this moment, he is on his own. For while he hurries up the ladder, the sea boat breaks away briefly before making another pass to offload the next boarding team member.

In benign conditions, it can take a minute to put another man on the ladder; with less favourable weather and sea,

it can take considerably longer.

And then there's the human factor to consider.

"The first person up the ladder is the most vulnerable," Kent's XO Lt Cdr Mike Smith points out. "If something is going to happen, then it is going to happen to him - someone pushing him over, breaking the ladder as he climbs up."

Providing that doesn't happen, he's quickly followed up the ladder by two more shipmates, including PO 'Fozzy' Forrest, second in charge of the operation.

"I'm expendable," the senior rate jokes. Perhaps. Dependable, certainly. Expendable, definitely not.

Accompanied by two guards, Fozzy makes his way to the bridge to secure it - ensuring the vessel sticks to her course and her crew make no surprise moves.

When Fozzy is happy he radios Stallion that it's safe for the boarding officer, the very last man in the party, to come aboard.

Lt Stu Willmore carries no rifle - a sign both that he is an officer and that he is not a threatening presence.

He makes a bee-line for the skipper, shakes his hand firmly, and begins the search of the Luna in earnest.

"I would compare my manner to that of a nightclub bouncer - firm but polite," Lt Willmore explains.

"You go aboard expecting the worst, but you can quickly relax when you realise it is not. I would like to think our attitude in the RN is very human."

The lieutenant carries a series of language cards (complete with handy pronunciation hints) with the key questions to ask in a multitude of tongues.

He doesn't, however, have an interpreter.

"We're not going to be able to understand 90 per cent of the responses," says Lt Willmore. "But you can get the meaning from gestures and expressions."

And if the cards don't work, there's the universal language: the beautiful game.

"I've always found that chatting about football works wherever you are," says PO(UW) Andrew Cousins. "Talk about Man Utd, Chelsea, Arsenal, it breaks the ice."

You cannot, of course, talk football all day. You have to carry out that search of the vessel.

Half the boarding party begin to move around Luna's upper deck. Three men edge forward, a shield for the

boarding officer and the skipper; two men bringing up the rear facing backwards.

Luna's cargo comprises some goods declared - machinery parts - and some not - 200 bales of cotton, 50 chickens (not a typical combination) and a few parcels of narcotics.

"As a boarding team this is something we want to do," says POET(ME) David 'Dickie' Henderson who co-ordinates a search once on board a suspect vessel.

"I think everyone has had enough of the receptions and visits and wants to get stuck into operations."

The senior rate continues: "People back home hear talk about 'pirates, pirates, pirates' and want us to do something about it, but they don't really know what that means."

"The pirates have become bolder - they see there is money in this. They are well-equipped, well-armed, they know what to look for - their intelligence is very good."

LS Mark 'Bunny' Warren, normally a sonar specialist in the ops room, accepts the risks involved in the searches.

"We're all volunteers, we know the dangers," he says. "Doing boardings is less mundane, there's a bit of excitement, an adrenaline rush. If you stop things falling into the hands of the wrong people, even better."

And although it's the boarding party directly in the line of fire, ensuring they get across to the Luna and get back safely demands the entire ship's company: force protection teams on the upper deck, the flight deck team, RIB parties to launch and recover Stallion and Pegasus, standby boarding team waiting to relieve their shipmates if they become exhausted, comms personnel on the bridge maintaining constant contact with the boarders, the emergency party still ready in Kent's bowels to deal with any fire or flood.

And officers or ratings, they're a pretty young lot.

"There's a young bunch on board - a lot of very young junior rates," says Cdr Hopper.

"If you judge them by their age, then you decry their ability. Don't look at their youth, look at what they can do."

"It's those youngest men and women that I ask to man the guns, to make judgement calls. They know the difference between right and wrong, and they know that what these pirates do is wrong. We trust them to make the right decision."

The hour has come for those judgement calls.

● Kent's Lynx 'Charger' returns from a recce mission in search of suspicious vessels



● LS 'Bunny' Warren (centre) and Logs Wilcox (left) and Dawson make their way through MV Luna during their search





Clan-tastic voyage

NEW team, new ship.

Or should we say 'new clan'?

This is HMS Sutherland – The Fighting Clan – heading to sea for the first time in over a year after a £20m overhaul on the Forth which makes her Britain's most potent frigate.

With quite a few souped-up Type 23s already out there (Westminster and Somerset to name but two), that is a pretty bold claim.

But then they don't have the latest version of SeaWolf missile system. No-one does, apart from Sutherland.

The Fighting Clan was the first vessel in the Type 23/22 fleets to receive SWMLU (SeaWolf Medium-Life Upgrade) – an improved tracker and computer system which effectively doubles the range that a ship can track an incoming missile.

The refit by Babcock in Rosyth hasn't all been about SeaWolf, however. Engineers and shipwrights stripped

out much of Sutherland's stern, fitted the Merlin helicopter handling system, installed Sonar 2087, fitted a 'spoiler' (or transom flap) to improve the ship's speed, and applied special non-stick paint to the hull which will reduce friction as she powers through the water.

Gone is the bulbous 4.5in main gun. In its place sits the more angular (and improved) 'Kryten' which has a longer range (and is stealthier).

And talking of guns, there's a new automatic 30mm gun system installed to cope with the emerging threat from terrorists in small fast craft.

For the ship's company there's improved air conditioning (vital given the 23s are becoming the ship of choice in the northern Gulf) and more plugs and

sockets to power TVs, laptops, iPods and the like.

Electricians have also fitted more computers around the ship with email and internet access – something the ship's company could only have dreamed of when Sutherland was launched by Lady Christina Walmsley at the Yarrow yard on the Clyde back in March 1996.

In doing so, she launched the first warship to bear the name Sutherland in more than two centuries.

The Sutherland line began on the second day of 1716 when fourth-rate HMS Reserve was renamed. She ended her career as a hospital ship in the Mediterranean in the early

1740s before being broken up.

Just to confuse matters, as Sutherland I assumed hospital ship duties, Sutherland II was launched at Rotherhithe.

She too was a fourth-rate and she would earn all four of the ship's battle honours over a four-year spell on the opposite side of the Atlantic.

The frigate played important roles in the capture of the French fortress of Louisbourg (in Nova Scotia), followed by the capture of Quebec (Wolfe wrote his final letter aboard Sutherland), before being sent to the Caribbean, where yet more victories ensued: Dominica, Martinique and finally Havana.

After an eventful 29-year career, she was sold in the summer of 1770.

As befits the name, the ship is, of course, affiliated with the namesake Scottish county, its county town of Dornoch (and its golf course), as well as RAF Kinloss, The Highlanders (4th Battalion, Royal Regiment of Scotland).



Louisbourg.....1758
Quebec.....1759
Martinique.....1762
Havana.....1762

Class: Type 23 frigate
Pennant number: F81
Builder: Yarrow, Glasgow
Laid down: October 14 1993
Launched: March 9 1996
Commissioned: July 4 1997

Displacement: 4,200 tons
Length: 133 metres (436ft)
Beam: 16.1 metres (53ft)
Draught: 7.3 metres (24ft)
Speed: 28 knots
Complement: 181
Propulsion: 2 x Rolls-Royce Spey gas turbines generating 31,100hp; 4 x Paxman diesels generating 8,100hp
Armament: 8 x Harpoon anti-surface missiles; Stingray torpedoes; 32 x SeaWolf anti-air missiles; 1 x Mod 1 4.5 inch gun; 2 x 30mm close-range anti-surface/anti-aircraft guns; Seagnat and decoy launchers
Helicopter: 1 x Merlin or Lynx

Battle Honours

Facts and figures



THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

January 1969

THINGS that should float, things that can float and things that do so only in desperation feature in our lookback this month, beginning with the launch of HMS Achilles, number 23 (count 'em) of the Leander-class frigates, which hurried down the slipway at Yarrow's yard on the Clyde (pictured right). Lady Janvrin, the wife of Flag Officer Naval Air Command Vice Admiral Sir Hugh Janvrin, performed the honours, remarking: "Doesn't she look big."

January 1979

THE Sea King is a sturdy aircraft ('robust' would be the current buzzword), designed to float should it ditch. And it does, as fliers from 820 NAS discovered when they suffered a hitch during exercises in the Gulf of Mexico. Unable to take off again on one engine, the aircrew decided to steer the helicopter back to safety. Using the rotor disc they propelled the nine-ton Sea King at speeds of between five and ten knots back to mother ship HMS Blake. Four hours after ditching, the downed bird was hoisted safely aboard the helicopter cruiser.

January 1989

EIGHTEEN refugees from Vietnam owed their lives to the Outback 88 deployment – Ark Royal, Edinburgh and RFA Olwen. One of Ark's Sea Kings spied an open boat in the South China Sea crammed with people. Edinburgh moved in to investigate and found 18 people, including a baby and three children, who had fled Vietnam a month before and who had run out of food after two weeks. Three of the refugees had already died.



HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.57

Cdr Francis Goodhart, DSO, AM

THE sight of the stern of HMS Thetis forlornly sticking out of the Irish Sea is one of the most tragic in the history of the Silent Service.

Thetis foundered in barely 150ft of water, her crew so near, yet so far from salvation.

A generation before, their predecessors found themselves entombed in an 'iron coffin' in home waters – and salvation was even closer at hand.

So far HMS K13 had pretty much lived up to Admiralty expectations – unlike her troubled sisters, although the boats had still to earn their unfortunate moniker 'the calamitous Ks'.

But then in the opening month of 1917, K13 had yet to leave confined waters. She had conducted impressive speed trials on the Clyde (23½ kts), dived – and re-emerged – safely, and was now on the verge of being formally handed over to the Royal Navy by her builders, Fairfield's of Govan (today BVT Govan).

Lt Cdr Godfrey Herbert was all set to officially accept his boat from Fairfield's. Before he did, there would be one final dive. It would be K13's last.

The Ks were revolutionary. The idea – fast submarines able to keep up with the surface fleet – was not matched by technology, and would not be for another half century.

To keep pace with the cruisers and dreadnoughts, the Ks would be driven by steam on the surface.

Which was fine. With their top speed, the boats could indeed hold their own with the battlefleet.

But steam could not power them underwater, only slow electric motors with a limited life could.

Steam and electric were not good bedfellows. It took upwards of five minutes to retract the steam funnels and close all the various valves and vents before the Ks could dive. As veteran deeps warned, there were simply "too many damned holes".

There were. And when K13 disappeared beneath Gareloch on the afternoon of January 29 1917 on her third and final acceptance dive, not all of them were fully sealed.

The waters of the loch poured into the boiler room, then the aft torpedo compartment. K13 came to rest on the bed of the loch, no more than 50ft down.

By the time she settled on the seabed, 29 men had died inside the flooded compartments; two more evidently tried to swim to safety, but never made it.

And of those 31 victims, not all were submariners.

One in three men aboard HMS K13 was not ship's company. There were engineers and officials from her builder, a Clyde pilot, Admiralty officials.

And there was the Commanding Officer of HMS K14, still being built, one Cdr Francis

Goodhart, (pictured below, courtesy of the RN Submarine Museum) eager to see how these new boats performed.

Goodhart was a man of action – and his record showed it: In command of HMS E8 he had blown up – a torpedo detonated a magazine – the aged cruiser SMS Prinz Adalbert in the Baltic.

Now, with the air supply in K13 sufficient for no more than eight hours and no means of communicating with the outside world, Goodhart volunteered to flood the conning tower and swim to the surface.

He fixed a small tin cylinder to his belt containing instructions for any rescuers. "If I don't get up, the tin cylinder will," he assured K13's captain Lt Cdr Godfrey Herbert.

Neither cylinder nor Goodhart ever reached the surface. As the conning tower hatch was opened and Goodhart tried to make his exit, the air pressure flung him against the inner hull, killing him.

The pressure which killed Francis Goodhart saved K13, however. It carried Godfrey Herbert, who had helped to flood the tower, to the surface – involuntarily, admittedly.

In all, 48 men survived the tragedy – the last one was hauled out of the submarine 57 hours after she sank.

Francis Goodhart was posthumously awarded the Albert Medal. He

had displayed "extreme and heroic daring" – fully expecting to die in his desperate mission to raise the alarm.

K13 was resurrected – salvaged, to use the nautical term. The name was not. She rejoined the fleet as K22 and was finally scrapped in 1926.





● HMAS Sydney's forlorn X Turret, 8,000ft below the surface
Picture: London Legacy

Sad Sydney remembered

EIGHT Royal Navy sailors along with hundreds of Australian shipmates – and four score of their foe killed in the same battle – were honoured at a memorial service in London.

All 645 men aboard HMAS Sydney were killed when the cruiser was sunk off the west coast of Australia in November 1941.

But in an ironic twist of fate, Sydney dealt a mortal blow to her killer, the Kormoran; fires raged out of control on the Nazi ship and she too sank.

The Sydney's loss remains the worst tragedy in Australian naval history – but mystery surrounded her fate until as recently as last year.

It took several days in 1941 for the Australian government to realise that the warship had been lost, and only one body was ever recovered – washed up on Christmas Island, but never identified.

The cruiser's wreck was discovered last spring by explorer David Mearns, who also found HMS Hood's last resting place.

Not only did Mearns find the remains of Sydney (she most likely sank after her bow broke off) but he also found the Kormoran.

Eighty-three Germans were also killed in the battle; their shipmates abandoned ship and were eventually picked up.

All were remembered by more than 100 people, including relatives of the Sydney's sailors, plus representatives from the British, Australian and German naval forces, at St Clement Danes Church in London on the 67th anniversary of the cruiser's sinking.

Before the service the bells of St Clement's played the Australian National Anthem and following the service they played *Waltzing Matilda*.

Attending the ceremony was retired medical researcher Ruan McWilliam whose uncle, Lt Cdr Michael Singer, was one of the Royal Naval personnel killed on the Sydney and is one of 15 crew members whom experts believed could have been the mystery sailor.

Mr McWilliam provided DNA samples when efforts were underway to identify the sailor.

However, the result was a negative match and the sailor's identity remains unknown.

Mr McWilliam said despite the result he was amazed and thrilled by the recent discovery of Sydney's wreckage 8,000ft below the ocean's surface:

"All of a sudden the whole thing has come together. The whole story has been quite extraordinary," he added.

"This time a year ago it was just past history. We thought the whole thing had been laid to rest."

Sydney was built in Britain – she was laid down by Swan Hunter as HMS Phaeton but was bought by the Australians before she was launched.

Her wreck lies 128 miles north-west of the town of Geraldton (where a memorial to the Sydney was erected).

The cruiser's foe had been the scourge of merchant shipping in the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans, sinking ten vessels during a year-long 'cruise'.

Kormoran's wreck was found about a dozen miles from Sydney's remains.

The resting places of both vessels have been given formal protection by the Australian government.



● Catch me if you can... Lt Cdr Mike Lynch on a Pusser's Red tries to peddle away from PTI 'Paddy' Dowling on a new Pusser's Green (yes we know it looks black...)
Picture: LA(Phot) Carl Osmond, RNAS Culdrose

Retyrements and replacements

GREEN is the new red.

No, we've not gone all *Vogue* on you, we're talking bikes and the end of an era at Culdrose.

Pusser's Reds, the handy, no-frills red bikes used by personnel to get around the Cornish air station are no more.

Pusser's Greens are handy, slightly-more-frills green bikes... used by personnel to get around the Cornish air station.

Culdrose is one of the last bastions of the reds (which seem to have disappeared from the

rest of the RN), used by all ranks to scurry around the 1,000-acre establishment – rather than clambering into their cars.

The bikes are heavy, have very basic brakes, rock-hard seats and no gears and are built by some of the great names in British cycling: Raleigh, Pashley and even BSA (which haven't been around for half a century...).

In their place are 60 modern lightweight mountain bikes, green in colour and by their nature – marked with the

names of squadrons and various departments (just in case anyone pondered riding them home...).

The aim is the same: to encourage Culdrose personnel to ride rather than drive between the numerous buildings on the sprawling air station.

"I'm keen to encourage the use of pedal power wherever possible and reduce the use of cars," said Culdrose's Executive Officer Cdr Martin Roper.

"I hope the scheme will be another important initiative

in reducing the base's carbon footprint."

That's something Lt Cdr Michael Lynch has been doing for some time, now at Culdrose, previously at Devonport.

"Like most people I drive a car, but I cycle every day in my job," he said.

"I'll be sorry to see my red bike go."

The unwanted cycles have been handed to the MOD for disposal.

'...A long and proud history'

FOR more than six decades, Britons have commemorated VE Day.

This year, we will commemorate the previous date in the calendar as well: FN – Fly Navy – Day.

Thursday May 7 2009 will be the centrepiece of a year of celebrations and commemorations of Fly Navy 100, remembering a century of deeds by naval aviators.

Organisers plan a global tribute on May 7 itself, plus a series of events, public displays, services, concerts and shows studding the year from February until December.

May 7 has been chosen as it will be 100 years to the day that the Admiralty took the bold step to invest in aviation.

That very day in 1909, it committed £35,000 (around £2.6m today) to HM Airship No.1, nicknamed the Mayfly.

One hundred years on, HMS Illustrious will be moored in the Thames at Greenwich, hosting VIPs and Fleet Air Arm personnel past and present.

They will witness a centennial 'Balbo' flypast (an amorphous mass of aircraft from the annals of naval aviation to the present day).

Meanwhile, half way around the world, aviators with the RN's Taurus 09 amphibious task force will stage their own fly past – hopefully against the backdrop of the Singaporean skyline.

There will also be celebrations in the Gulf, the Caribbean and Afghanistan; FAA units in the latter will mark the anniversary, said Lt Cdr Graeme Spence of the Commando Helicopter Force, "in a sea of sand".

In fact, upwards of 70 per cent of naval aviation assets and personnel are expected to be deployed on operations on the branch's birthday.

And just so skimmers, deeps and Royals don't feel left out, the day will close with 'splice the mainbrace'.

On a more solemn note, the



following day there will be a service of thanksgiving for more than 6,000 naval aviators who have died in the service of their country.

Other events planned include: a garden party at Buckingham Palace, a flypast over Eastchurch on the Isle of Sheppey (home to the first naval air station), a memorial dedicated to the men of the Channel Dash, a flypast and reception involving HMS Illustrious again, this time in Liverpool, and a gala dinner in Greenwich.

Above all, organisers hope by the end of this year, the British people will have a better understanding of naval aviation – and the Navy as a whole.

"We have a long and proud history and a lot of people do not understand it," said Rear Admiral Simon Charlier, Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm.

"Our aim is to promote a proper understanding of naval aviation in defence – and remind people what defence gives them in an island nation.

"This is an ambitious programme to embrace as many people outside the defence world as possible and spread our message."

2009 should also be the year of the carrier: the first steel is due to be cut for the future flat-

tops, backbone of both the 21st-Century Fleet and 21st-Century Fleet Air Arm.

The two vessels – HM Ships Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales – will be the largest warships built for the RN, a £4bn investment in the Senior Service.

"We cannot not be complacent. We cannot be ignorant. Nor should we be apologetic about the future carriers," stresses Cdre Tom Cunningham, a former Sea King and Lynx observer, and now Commander UK Carrier Strike Group.

He hopes the entire RN will embrace the Fly Navy 100 message – and will bang the drum. For as he succinctly points out: "There is only one 100-year anniversary."

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Dust



● AN AIRCREWMAN STARES AT THE ARID KENYAN LANDSCAPE

Singapore. Montreal. Monaco. Bahrain. Sao Paolo. Shanghai.

All feature firmly on Bernie Ecclestone's grand prix map. Nanyuki, Kenya (pop. circa 32,000) probably doesn't.

But you don't need Lewis Hamilton and the Formula 1 boys to have a grand prix.

You do, however, need 45 naval aviators and a few Sea King Mk4s. And some squaddies. Plus the Army Air Corps.

Grand Prix 08 (no, we've no idea why it's called that either) was designed to train the Junglies for the impending rigours of Afghanistan and the 3rd Scots Battle Group - better known as the Black Watch - in the art of fighting and operating in a hot, dusty environment.

To take part in a grand prix, you have to get there. And Nanyuki isn't the easiest place to get to.

First there's a lengthy flight to Nairobi courtesy of Crab Air - described by the fliers as "uneventful and surprisingly comfortable".

...Something which couldn't be said for the six-hour 75-mile minibus ride (by my reckoning that's a little over six miles an hour - Ed) from the Kenyan capital to Nanyuki in the Rift Valley.

BUS RIDE

"The drive through the Nairobi suburbs allowed us to experience the more colourful side of the city: an interesting driving style (one bus routinely undertaking another on the single carriageway) with people walking, riding, sitting and selling on the roadside," said Lt Ben McGreal.

The latter did quite well from the fliers. The minibus stopped several times en route to Nanyuki so the airmen could buy souvenirs (aka 'tat').

Tat tucked away and minibus having safely negotiated the less-than-brilliant local roads, the Junglies finally arrived at their destination.

Nanyuki lies at the northwestern edge of Mount Kenya, some 6,295 feet above sea level, and straddles the equator.



● A SOLDIER TRIES TO PROTECT HIMSELF FROM THE DUST KICKED UP BY A JUNGLY AND (BELOW) TRUNK SHOW... ELEPHANTS YOUNG AND OLD ROAM AROUND IN THE KENYAN SCRUB



The scrubland around the market town is more steppe and savannah than jungle (but then despite their nickname, the Junglies very rarely operate in the jungle these days...).

Home for the seven-week exercise was the town's showground, taken over by the British Army Training Unit which stages more than half a dozen exercises each year.

Barely had the 845 team arrived than the camp was mobbed by locals... who were somewhat surprised to find the British Navy quite so far from the ocean. They hung around outside the showground gates, eager to sell their wares - they could knock-up pretty much anything the Brits desired.

WHIRLYBIRDS

There is something missing in all this. Helicopters. The Sea Kings turned up in the back of an Antonov transporter at Nairobi airport a few days later, giving the air and ground crews time to acclimatise, get to know the ground and (most importantly) find the best café in town, Barney's, which, we're told, did a roaring trade.

Barney's, fortuitously, was close to the civilian airfield - five miles south of Nanyuki and on the other side of the equator - which was home to the Sea Kings for the duration of Grand Prix.

Once re-assembled after their flight from Somerset, the helicopters' first sorties were desert landings, initially on large(ish) sites such as sports fields and expansive clearings, then smaller and smaller spots.

"To those not accustomed to landing in what are no more than small lumpy 'sandpits', the skill is more to 'drive' the aircraft down a recognised approach, culminating in a zero speed, zero height landing," explained Lt McGreal.

"The condition and amount of dust in the 'sandpit' determined when the visual references started to disappear - the pilot and aircrewman would really start earning their flying pay."



● THE BLACK WATCH BRAVE THE DUST TO FILE ABOARD

Devils



● A SMILE FROM ONE OF THE LOCAL YOUNGSTERS AS HE WATCHES THE JUNGLES AT WORK

All of which is challenging by day, now add darkness to the equation.

Night vision goggles are a long-standing part of the Junglies' armoury. They've evolved a bit over the years - the latest version issued to the Sea King fliers are display night vision goggles.

The 'display' in the title refers to all the vital flight data - altitude, engine temperature, waypoint details - beamed on to the goggles' lens, rather like a head-up display in a Harrier.

Fully worked up by night and day, the Junglies got down to the essence of Grand Prix, working with the ground troops plus the Army Lynx.

That meant visiting the various forward bases established by the Black Watch around Nanyuki, providing casualty evacuation, lifting loads and ferrying troops around - typical Jungly duties around the world.

Not a typical Jungly duty, however, is big game spotting: giraffes, elephants, waterbucks (*African antelope - Johnny Morris Ed*) and even the odd cheetah.

"When we approached the forward bases, we could see large game nearby and the ground troops were completely oblivious to this somewhat alarming fact," said Lt McGreal.



DUSTY

The setting nevertheless proved ideal training for impending deployment to Afghanistan - dusty bases, heat, rolling take-offs, formation flying and other drills and manoeuvres vital for operating in a hostile environment.

"The conditions in Kenya are the most challenging training environment with which both personnel and aircraft would have to cope," said Lt McGreal.

"What may have seemed like a welcome break for the busy men and women of the Commando Helicopter Force did not prove to be a safari holiday."

Well, actually, some of it was.



● RED DUST(ER)... SWIRLS OF ORANGE-RED DUST ARE THROWN UP BY A SEA KING

For once Grand Prix was over, the Junglies had almost a week before their return flight to enjoy the sights and adventurous sports offered by Mount Kenya: horse and camel safaris, whitewater rafting, climbing, and mountain biking.

And there was the challenge of climbing Mount Kenya (Africa's second-highest peak) itself. The trek began at 8,000ft and a pleasant 25°C. By the time the climbers had reached Austrian Hut (largely paid for by a generous Austrian...) at almost 16,000ft after three days on the move, the snow was falling.

Which was ideal preparation once again, really, because by the time the fliers returned to Yeovilton, the British winter was setting in.

Indeed the whole exercise was crucial for Junglies old and new, said Lt McGreal.

"The challenging conditions tested many of the skills required when operating in Afghanistan and, from an aircrew perspective, we were able to see how we and the aircraft performed in the intense, hot, high and dusty environment," he added.

PICTURES: LA(PHOT) STEVE JOHNCOCK, RNAS YEOVILTON



● SCRUB MISSION... TWO SOLDIERS CREEP ALONG AT SUNSET

 **A FORCE FOR GOOD**



It's that bear

NOVEMBER, that month of rain, chill and spotted bears, broke upon a waiting nation bringing forth a flood of silly, surreal and sustained fundraising for the BBC's Children in Need appeal.

Without a doubt the award for the most sustained fundraising must go to the Royal Navy Motor Cycle Club who year after year eat up the miles criss-crossing the south of the country collecting at Naval establishments and other bases.

Over the past 21 years the biker crew have raised £231,100, with the 2008 total boosting that even higher.

In just one day the riders managed to collect almost £3,000 from collections on the gates at Yeovilton (pictured right), then a trip to the Hydrographic Office in Taunton and the Met Office in Exeter.

The annual sponsored run by

the bikers on the airstrip at RNAS Culdrose (pictured top) hauled in another £1,500.

Fundraising totals at Culdrose were also boosted by a sponsored car wash (£207), a rowathon with 160 people racing 2,340km (£800), a big breakfast at the community centre (£210) and a cake and crafts sale (£115).

It might be fair to ascribe a touch of silliness to HMS Collingwood when fancy dress parades (£246) summoned up Pudsey Bear (of course), Robin Hood, Michael Jackson, a walking beer bottle, a ninja and Darth Vader (pictured middle right).

Who also popped across the water to form the surreal sight of a somewhat grim Star Wars frontline (pictured below - it was raining...) for the Royal Marines Musicians fancy-dress procession through HMS Nelson, playing and collecting as they marched.

(The very masculine Bunny Girls among the musical marchers from the Royal Marines School of Music were perhaps the most surreal...)

But charity fundraisers were also dropping from the skies in Portsmouth, with an abseiling challenge (£700) down the side of one of the accommodation blocks.

Organiser Logs Sam Dawes said: "I saw the TV adverts, sent off for a fundraising pack and then decided to arrange something suitably exciting to get involved with Children in Need."

"I've always wanted to do something for this charity, and am really pleased that my mates have supported the challenge." And from the smile on her face it seems that Logs Aitken (pictured top left) enjoyed the challenge too.

Be grateful for the somewhat sane cycle ride that took 12 Royal Naval cyclists (pictured right) from Navy Command Headquarters (Fleet HQ as was) to Brighton and back.

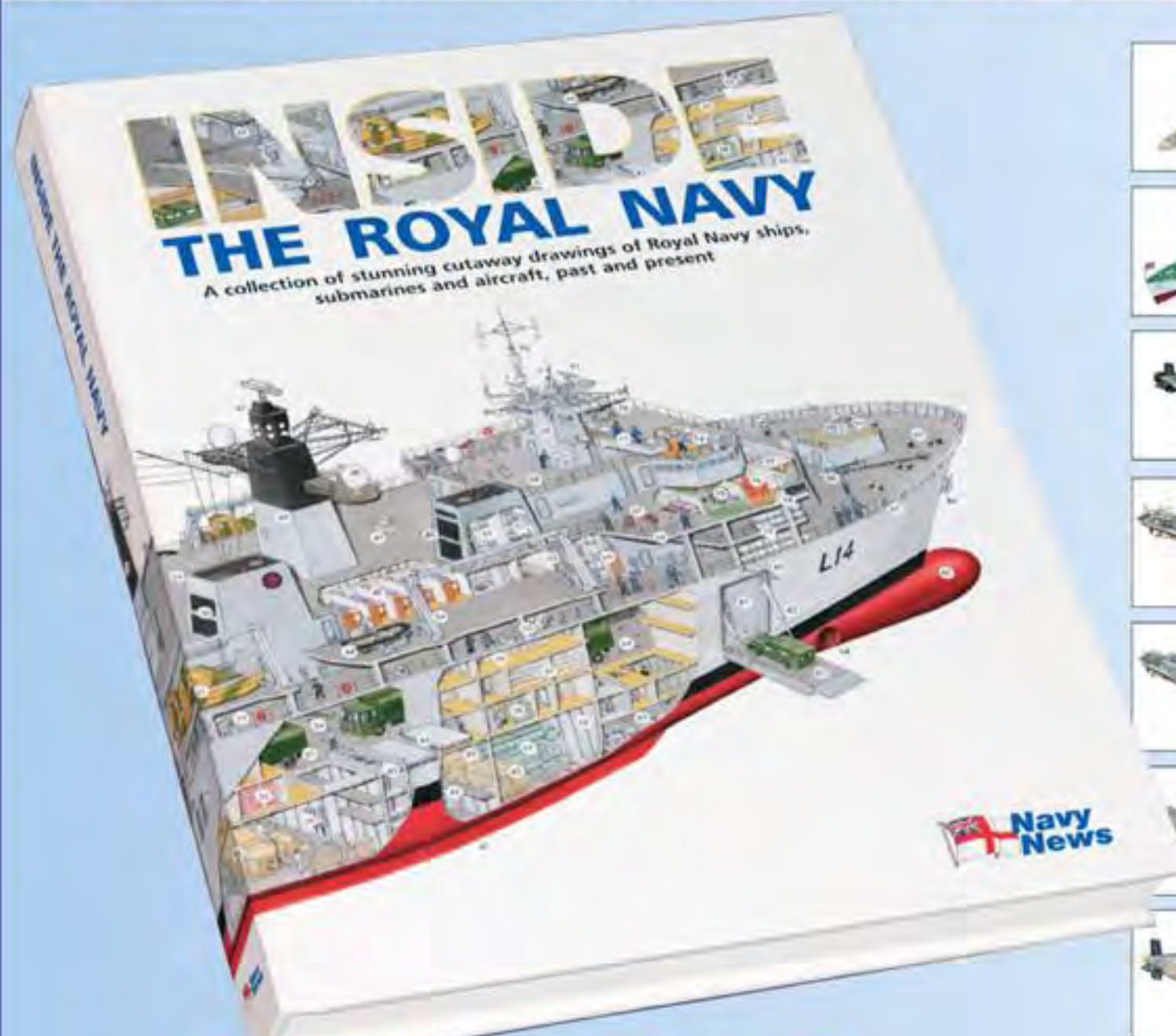
Organiser Lt Cdr Jon Pollard said: "We could not have hoped for a better day at this time of year, it was dry with no wind."

After six hours in the saddle, the 12 returned safely to Whale Island with £625 boosting Pudsey's coffers.



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Cheers for a chair

FORMER Navy man Ray Savage, aged 73, has been helped by the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust.

Raymond suffers from phlebitis in his legs which meant he struggled to get into and out of the chair in his warden-controlled flat due to swollen legs.

Following the advice of a therapist, Raymond contacted the RNBT to ask for help in buying a riser/recliner chair.

Despite initial reluctance, Ray eventually applied and the RNBT paid for his chair in full, allowing the former sailor to sit comfortably for the first time in years.

Ray said: "I didn't like asking for help, but I'm so glad I did."

"The chair has made a vast difference to me. Because my legs are raised, the swelling has reduced a lot and I can even fall asleep in my chair and know that I am safe in it."

If you would like to find out more, contact the RNBT on 023 9266 0296.

Bandsmen bounty

ROYAL Marines bandsmen from Stonehouse presented £6,000 raised through concerts and other events in Plymouth's Globe Theatre to four charities: Help for Heroes, the Plymouth Guild Fun, Ford Park Cemetery Fund and Friends and Families of Special Children.

The money was raised through the hard work of Carole Dinham, the commanding officer's personal assistant.

Carole said: "I am pleased that we can show our support for the local community in this small way. I would like to thank those who continue to attend concerts for their excellent support. In addition, may I thank the band for their excellent performances which make these events such a success."

Lt Col Martin Taylor, commanding officer of RM Stonehouse, said: "I hope that this money can provide real benefits to the local community and I look forward to donating to more charities next year."

"My thanks also go to Carole who without her hard work on these concerts, these donations would not have been possible."

'Tater time at Clyde

A NICE cuppa is not an unusual method of fundraising in the RN. We've also known bacon butties and big breakfasts. Cake bakes are a common sight. But baked potatoes are a new one on us...

But Clyde's Naval Base chaplaincy tempted many visitors for a baked potato lunch to raise money for charity.

The chaplaincy's Margaret Reid said: "The charity is still to be decided. But base workers can be sure that the money will go to a great cause."

"We're hoping to choose a charity to which we can donate the money received from now until Christmas, and then a different one for between Christmas and Easter."

The healthy lunches are prepared by Babcock's Ena Smith and Mairi Smith who have leant their cookery expertise to the charity drive.

■ SAILORS at Clyde set out to support fellow seamen by digging deep into their pockets to raise £100 for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI).

The HMS Neptune Administration Building's barbecue and charity raffle raised more than £100 for the RNLI.

Bring on Boxing Day

BEARD? Red suit? Sled? Rosy-cheeked smile? Reindeer? Red hat? One out of six... Nope, Ross Kemp makes a rubbish Santa.

However he does make a damn fine supporter of the UK4U Thanks Christmas Box campaign which seeks to make sure that each member of the Armed Forces serving abroad over Christmas gets a gift of thanks and support.

The actor and presenter arrived at the campaign launch at HMS President courtesy of a RIB (although the men in balaclavas don't look likely elves...) where he met with men and women from the Royal Navy, Army and RAF who were out in theatre over Christmas in 2007.

He said: "My time spent in Afghanistan has given me a great insight into what life is like for the men and women of our Armed Forces."

"The well-meaning things that are sent out to these guys make a massive difference."

"I know how much it will mean to them to receive these boxes, and the message of support and thanks from the public that comes with them," he added.

UK4U promised before Christmas that they will be sending 24,500 Christmas boxes all over the world to service personnel who will be away from their families and friends on Christmas Day.

Find out how to donate through their website www.uk4u.org or write to UK4U Thanks, The Old Granary, East Street, West Chiltington, West Sussex, RH20 2JY



Picture: PO(Phot) Terry Seward

Into the blue

FOR some it holds a primal fear.

For some it is sanctuary. For PO John Strutt it is the path to a better future for former Servicemen and women who have lost limbs while in the Armed Forces.

John, a qualified PADI instructor and member of Southsea Sub Aqua Club, was serving in Gibraltar and noticed the effect diving had on teenagers - who were convinced beforehand that they "couldn't do that".

The result was Operation Equilibrium - in the water, says John, everyone is equal - a weekend in the pool at HMS Collingwood for nine members of BLESMA, the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen Association.

The electronics warfare specialist organised a series of exercises from the basics - putting on scuba diving equipment and developing a good swimming stroke - to more challenging actions, such as removing a scuba mask under water (and putting it back on).

"If you do something you enjoy, you come back buzzing," says John. "Diving is something anyone can do - it just needs a little bit of awareness."

It took considerable organisation - and considerable support from John's COs in Gib and Collingwood, plus the sub aqua club - before the day finally came when the amputees donned flippers and jumped into the water.

Some had diving experience, some did not. None had dived since their amputations. All came out of the water at the end of the two days with a fresh outlook on life.



Pictures by Richard Hobson, Southsea Sub Aqua Club

"You saw over the weekend that they got a real sense of achievement out of it," said John. "One of the lads couldn't play football or rugby with his kids, but he could go swimming or diving with them."

"For me, it was great to finally realise the project - and it's given me added impetus. The requests and interest I have had from people since the weekend has been unbelievable."

The 'added impetus' is the

next 'mission' for Operation Equilibrium. The senior rate hopes to take up to a dozen amputees on a diving expedition to the western USA where, apart from a better climate, people are more geared up to supporting those with disabilities.

If you're interested in becoming involved in John's project, or want to run a similar scheme, you can contact the senior rate at john.strutt368@mod.uk or 01329 245077.

Calendar girls, guys and automobiles...



Psssst... Can we interest you in a calendar? Lads wearing very little, lasses wearing even less? It's all for charity...

For some reason, the scantily clad and calendars have long been synonymous; now add the military and charity to the mix.

The Help for Heroes 2009 double calendar features 24 pages of, we quote, "service boy and girls in and out of uniform".

Whereas Garrison Girls, fundraising for Help for Heroes and Combat Stress, features military wives who have bared all for their art (tastefully of course).

The photographs in Garrison Girls were taken by renowned photographer Mick Payton, who has a reputation across Europe for his sensuous images of nude women.

Army wife Sarah Bennett Thurston said: "We all worry in case one day our families need help, so it's reassuring to know Combat Stress and Help for Heroes are there. Besides, it's important that we aren't just the recipients of the help, I'm glad that we've been able to put something back."

Each photo has a military theme, including a Naval image, although no Naval wife decided to take part.

Buy online at www.garrisongirls.com or www.ebay.co.uk.



Hospice help from Senior Service

BOTH Sultan and Collingwood have been focusing their fundraising on a Purbrook hospice.

A night of horse-racing organised for students at the Engineering Technicians Initial Career Course at HMS Sultan raised £340 for the Rowans Hospice in Purbrook.

Not only was the evening for fundraising, but it gave the trainees a taste of future race nights while at sea.

People from the course visited the hospice in Purbrook to hand over their contribution to the site's ongoing care and support of patients with life-limiting illnesses.

Described as 'a halfway house to heaven' by a member of Sultan's staff, the visit to the hospice proved thought-provoking and sobering to the two trainees.

Whereas sailors and civilians from the Warfare Training Group in Collingwood raised £3,959 through a Charity Golf Day at Cam's Hall Golf Course and various local collections.

More information about the hospice at www.rowanshospice.co.uk

Raleigh name a happy ship

Sailors from HMS Raleigh visited Torpoint Infant and Nursery School for a ceremony to name the wooden ship built in the school grounds.

The ship, built by students with the assistance of Touchwood Enterprises, was formally named HMS Lowen by Capt Jonathan Woodcock.

Raleigh donated £115 to start off the fundraising at the start of this year.

And Lowen is the Cornish word for happy.

Boxes for children

THE 2008 Operation Christmas Child shoebox appeal at HMS Collingwood, organised by Lt Cdr Kirsten Brooks, netted a total of 50 shoe boxes all full of Christmas gifts for some of the world's most deprived children in Eastern Europe and beyond.

● Lt Cdr Kirsten Brooks, The Rev James Francis, AB Tony Wilson and AB Perry Jarrom loading the boxes into a car to go to a drop-in centre

BRNC fight back bramble

NINE Officer Cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College visited a special needs school in Dartington to deal with a variety of tasks.

Led by S/Lt 'Freddie' Huntley, the team volunteered to do jobs at Bidwell Brook School ranging from bramble clearing to bike refurbishment, pressure-hosing play equipment to safety-marking posts for visually-impaired students.

Schoolteacher Dave Cheshire said: "It is always a pleasure to welcome the Royal Navy to the school and to have an extra input of manpower is a real treat as suddenly the list of jobs to be done gets reduced."

Mop-tastic

TRAINEE submariners at HMS Raleigh picked up their mops for a cleaning competition, with each participant donating £1 to garner £82 for Seafarers UK.

Mackenzie Division instructor CPO Nick Carter said: "As we all know a clean ship is a happy ship."

"Mackenzie Squadron houses trainees in two blocks; as there is some friendly rivalry between the two areas, it was decided to use the mop, bucket and cloths to not only clean the areas but also to raise money for a worthy cause."



● PO(Phot) Tam McDonald at the Michaelhouse art gallery

Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill

Tam is top at Cambridge

AN EXHIBITION by Royal Naval photographer PO(Phot) Tam McDonald at the respected Michaelhouse art gallery at Cambridge University has proven a particular success.

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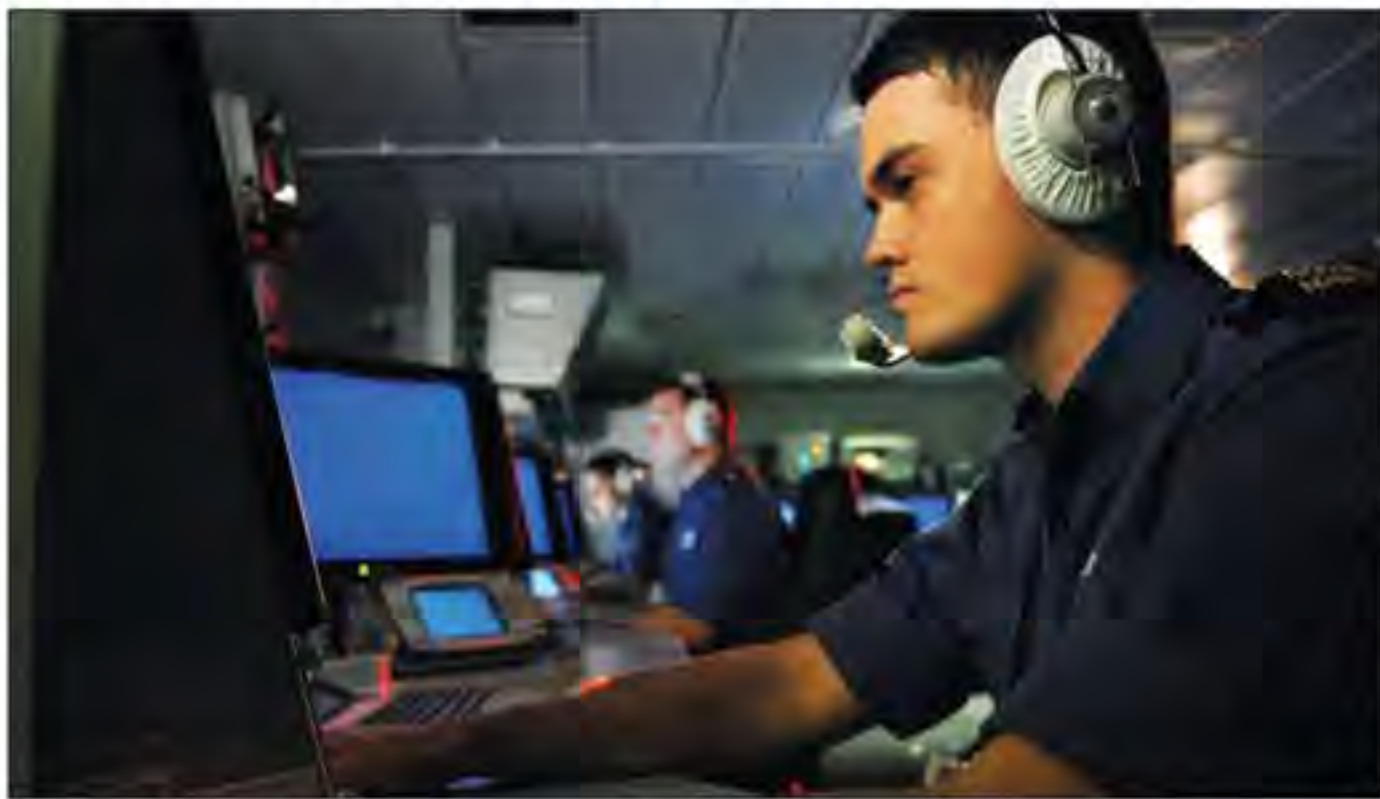
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● Members of Daring and Dauntless' crew being filmed on board the new Type 45s

Pictures: PO(Phot) Penny Taylor



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Jock, a Swordfish pilot himself, is a veteran of another memorable Fleet Air Arm attack from Ark Royal against the Bismarck, and is himself credited with the torpedo hit which crippled Hitler's flagship.

Jock stopped off at the RN Historic Flight to see the only remaining airworthy Swordfish in the world (see right).

But it wasn't just history for Jock as he also met aircrews from the current Fleet Air Arm – a service he left 62 years ago.

Cdr Mark Walker, Commander Air, said: "It was an enormous privilege for the officers of RNAS Yeovilton to meet and hear from one of their illustrious forebears talking about the great actions of the Fleet Air Arm of days past."

A fortnight later Neville Pinsent, the oldest surviving member of the RN Fighter Control Branch, returned to Yeovilton some 64 years after leaving it as a newly-qualified Fighter Direction Officer.

One important stop-off for Neville was the Fleet Air Arm Museum where he saw (and rode) the legendary 'Walls' ice-cream tricycle that was used effectively (and memorably) for training FDOs from 1941.

Neville also got a chance to meet current Fighter Control students and take a look at the modern equipment in use today (pictured right).

Lt Cdr Jo Logan, the officer in charge of the RN School of Fighter Control, said: "He saw at first hand that with the advance of technology, the fighter direction techniques had not changed that much in 64 years."



Picture: LA(Phot) Paul A'Barrow

Jack's jolly day

WHEN AB Jack 'Ben' Cartwright (right) got home from his ship's four month deployment with the NATO minehunting force SNMCMG1 he was able to tell his mum about an unusual celebration.

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In order to ensure that his 18th birthday was memorable in ways out of the norm, his CO Lt Cdr Chris Nelson had a surprise planned for the youngster.

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He said: "It was a bit of a shock, but it was nice. The captain took me around and showed me all the different responsibilities."

"I didn't think that there would be as much to deal with as there was. You need to know about absolutely everything on board."

He added: "This is my first ship. I joined it the day before we sailed, straight out of Raleigh. It wasn't what I was expecting at all – more friendly, but still hard work."

And his birthday? "Not a day I'm going to forget."



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Top Gear star in a reasonably dry car

WHEN considering the purchase of a new small car, there are certain questions you ask yourself: is it practical; is it easy to park; can I afford it?

But only on *Top Gear* would you ask: what if I'm asked to take part in a beach assault with the Royal Marines?

Step forward 1 Assault Group Royal Marines to answer just that question, calling upon the skills of 11 Squadron, 10 Squadron, 539 ASRM, 40 Commando and 847 Naval Air Squadron.

And so Instow beach became a filming location as Jeremy Clarkson gleefully drove a bright green Ford Fiesta from a landing craft to the shore ("oh, that's quite a lot deeper than I thought") amid supporting 'fire' from offshore raiding craft and 847's Lynx helicopters.

Of course, driving just any car into the sea off Devon isn't a great idea, so the experts of 11 Sqn (in full 11 Amphibious Trials and Training Squadron) spent some weeks in advance of the filming waterproofing and

rehearsing with one of the new Fords.

And naturally, once their star arrived, suiting him up to drive through the dip-tank (pictured below).

Maj John Lugg, OC of RM Instow, said: "The addition of water, it would appear, was a complete surprise to Jeremy Clarkson - he thought he was simply driving down a ramp and hacking around a beach.

"Our rehearsal resigned him to the fact that he was in for a cold, wet day."

It just goes to show the expertise available at Instow - despite the fact that, not surprisingly, the Ford Fiesta is not really designed to be driven off a steep ramp into two feet of water, their careful preparations meant that from first plunge to last (five takes in total on the day) the *Top Gear* Ford just kept going.

Keeping his target question in mind, presenter Jeremy Clarkson pointed out a number of handy benefits that came with the Ford: "Look at that! The smoke grenades fit perfectly into the cup-holders."

And the occasional drawback to his green-clad passengers: "The windscreen's

heated but not bullet-proof."

Once he'd pulled to a halt on the sandy beach to disgorge his Royal Marine cargo, he did however point out: "These carpets are excellent. No evidence at all of those Marines' muddy boots."

And so, the Ford Fiesta having proven its potential as a commando troop carrying small car, *Top Gear* retired from the beaches of north Devon leaving a group of tired but happy Marines, whose hard work had paid off with a successful day's filming for some top telly...

...And some successful training for men about to be heading out to the front line or solving the challenges brought back from the front line.

The pilots and door gunners from 847 NAS, with their team from the MAOT, practised tactical landings and troop drills which will be put to use in their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

And 40 Cdo's Capt Ramsey Waller RM said: "It was a great opportunity to showcase our core skills with the *Top Gear* team ahead of an amphibious deployment in 2009."



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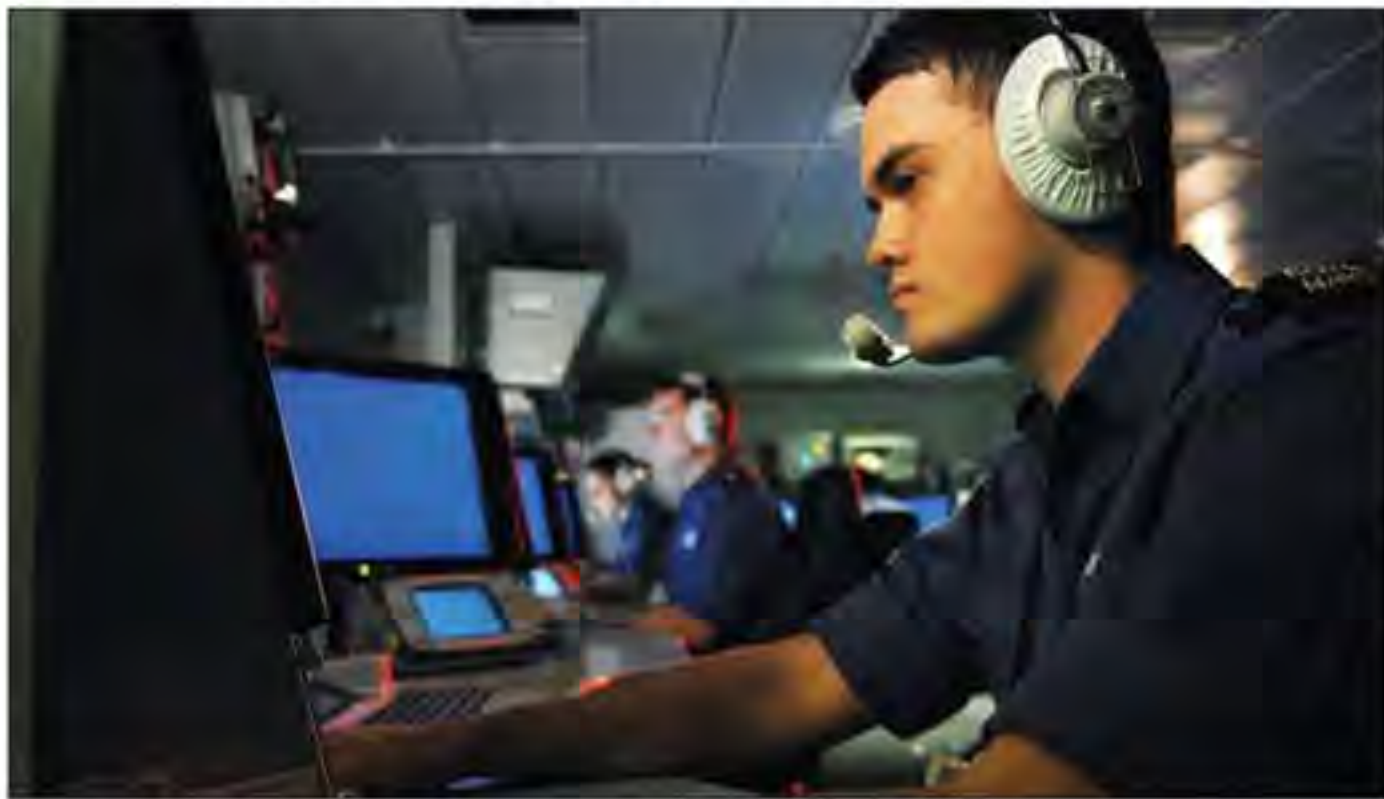
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Building snowmen

THIS is a landscape of broken buildings, twisted metal and skewed concrete. Clay bricks and corrugated iron punctuate the detritus of destruction. The cold air is sharp with the tang of explosive flares.

Royal Marines, eyes close to their gun-sights, in dusty combats clamber over the broken stones and await the sharp report of an explosive bang.

Yet oblivious sheep graze happily on the lush grass, and the cheerful ex-matrolot at the gate greets me with a melodic Welsh accent.

This is Caerwent, an abandoned RN propellant factory, now a training area in use by those infantry troops who seek to bring to life the realities of fighting in a built-up area and occasionally blowing things up.

It is not perhaps the natural environment that is summoned up by the name 'Royal Marines Mountain Leaders', but think about the name a bit more and it will start to make sense...

Some time in the 1970s the Royal Marine specialist Cliff Leaders became Mountain Leaders. So yes, at this point the experts in military climbing also became the experts in cold weather.

But it's not as if you send a Royal Marine off to climb a mountain just because it's there.

You send a Royal Marine off to climb a mountain to get to whoever is on the other side, to watch over whatever they are doing from the natural cover of the environment, to get word back to the command about the exact details that could turn a battle, and to fight their way out of a tight corner if they are discovered.

And so you have the Mountain Leaders – experts in climbing, experts in cold weather, who are also top notch in surveillance, in communications, in reconnaissance, in close-quarter battle.

No wonder they are looked upon with such respect even within a Corps which is held in such high respect.

Trainee ML officer Capt Ryan Kestle said: "It's the hardest and best course in the Corps. If you're a proper bootneck, then this is what you want to do."

"As an officer there are only six specialisations. For me this is the only one which is outstanding."

He admits: "When you get to the end of a training phase, you look back and think 'That's hoofing'."

"But it's getting harder and harder."

There are 11 Royal Marines being put through their paces in Caerwent midway through their ML2 course, the only intake for this year – some men have already gone by the wayside, more will drop before their gruelling nine months of training is done.

There are some 80 Mountain Leaders in the Royal Marines. Each year up to 20 men start down the road to join the elite band. Normally half of them fail.

Sgt James 'Grim' Liepa is watching over this phase of the training, scrutinising the men and challenging their decisions.

Their task has been to find and man an observation post overnight amid the alternately lush and scarred landscape.

The men had been split into three groups, each is tasked to explain to the others why they chose the building they did, what the advantages and disadvantages of each location were, and what they had to do to make the site work.

As we walk to the first post, a few glances are exchanged among the trainees.

Grim stops me and points to the grass before my feet. Baffled, I peer at the NCO who points again.

Suddenly, briefly, at the tip of his finger a fine slice of tripwire sharpens into focus before being lost again amid the green blur of the grass.

Not originally conceived as a trap for the unwitting journalist, it's one of the many methods – broken glass is another – of warning the marines in their

The Royal Marines Mountain Leaders course is tough, complex and formidable. As are the men who survive the challenge. Helen Craven takes a glimpse at their training.

observation post that it is perhaps not as covert as they had hoped.

Once the tripwire is deliberately broken, the flare bursts into noisy life as a garish Roman candle; its purpose to blind the enemy and warn the marines.

The point is to get away quietly into the night, unseen, not to come out fighting with all guns blazing.

The flare will tell the enemy there was someone there, but not when or how many. A noisy gun-fight would remove that aura of paranoid mystery.

Further around we clamber over a pile of collapsed masonry and bricks to look inside the next derelict building at an observation post. Except the pile of bricks is the observation post.

A sheet of corrugated iron feigning haphazard innocence is pulled aside to reveal the dark den within which two men could crawl, training their guns unseen upon the outside world.

Maj Dan Venables explains: "The Mountain Leader course has changed quite significantly over the years."

"The whole shift of balance has moved to teaching ISTAR within 3 Commando Brigade."

ISTAR, once unshackled from its acronyms, stands for Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance, and has assumed a central position at every level in operations.

The Mountain Leaders are now also running Combat Intelligence (CI) courses for CI specialisation Marines – these are the men who brief the troops on what to expect before they go out on the ground.

And specialist full-week courses for the Recce Operators showing them how to work in that environment.

Maj Venables speaks with pride: "Mountain Leaders have become the centre of excellence for ISTAR in 3 Commando Brigade."

He adds: "The other area that we are currently developing is urban climbing."

"This is to teach the skills necessary for vertical assault in urban areas – climbing drainpipes, using window ledges."

"Finding ways into places rather than blowing a way through walls."

"We can send forward a team to climb up the outside of the building, put snipers on the rooftop, and dominate the nearby area."

IT'S A matter of note that there is no equivalent to the Mountain Leaders in the whole of the British Armed Forces, no other experts in the specific challenges of military climbing.

Where once the Cliff Leaders excelled in beach assault – that defining tenet of Royal Marine life – when the Marines took up that historic protection of NATO's northern flank in Norway, climbing and cold weather became natural partners in expertise.

Still now whenever Army units or other outside bodies want to train in the extreme cold of

places like Norway, they need to take a Royal Marine Mountain Leader with them.

Maj Venables describes the ML2s as "the backbone of what we do".

The course begins amid the cliff faces of Cornwall. "At Land's End they start with vertical assault, coming in from the sea, learning everything there it to know about climbing in a military sense."

"Traditionally it is where we lose the largest number."

He's perfectly frank about the issues: "We do

always have injuries."

From Cornwall the ML2s move up to Wales and the peaks around Snowdon. Here the skills of mountain movement are honed, navigating amid rocky conditions by compass, learning to understand the vagaries of weather prediction.

The Welsh phase is brought to a challenging conclusion with the Aber March, a route-march across the three highest peaks in Wales in just 18 hours, testing all the techniques in vertical assault that the men have

so far been taught.

And then headfirst into the ISTAR section, a glimpse of which I have seen today, which pulls the men across the country from classroom work on doctrine to survival skills, driving skills, and urban skills out on the ground.

Those men still standing then face Scotland. "This", I am told, "is where it starts getting really quite cheeky."

"Really quite cheeky" from a Mountain Leader is something of an understatement.

Once mountain movement in the Highlands has been picked up, the wannabe MLs plunge into Gaelic Venture, carrying 100lb packs across 150km of Scotland over a period of just over two weeks.

"The idea is that we're then starting to really push them and assess their tactical competencies," explained Maj Venables.

The men are required to work in small teams at significant distances from the headquarters, setting up high-frequency communications back to HQ, taking photographs or sending information back without themselves being located.

"This is followed by an escape and evasion phase. They are expected to survive on whatever they can hunt and find."

He adds: "It's quite a demanding exercise. With the possibility of losing people." ('Losing people' means people dropping out rather than leaving potential MLs wandering the Scottish Highlands undiscovered... – Ed)

And only once each of these hurdles has been successfully crossed does the traditional realm of the Mountain Leader appear – Norway.

"Going to

This is where it starts getting really quite cheeky.

Most of us here have come from Afghanistan, and most of us will go straight back to Afghanistan.

It's not as if you send a Royal Marine off to climb a mountain just because it's there.

Finding ways into places rather than blowing a way through walls.

Norway is a particularly demanding environment. Some of the students haven't been to Norway.

"They have to pick up the skills very quickly."

"The Cold Weather Warfare Course has a week of range work in the snow using weapon systems and explosives. A week long skidoo course to use snowmobiles."

"We teach them to ice climb, avalanche rescue drills and avalanche awareness. And we really focus on the leadership side."

The final exercise, Norgi Finale, will see the men cover roughly 250km on skis, doing a similar sort of thing as in Scotland but in temperatures of down to -30°C.

Once through Norway the ML2s will finish off their last few pieces of training at Brize Norton, practising fast roping from helicopters, before being drafted into units.

"The cold weather expertise, which currently isn't as relevant as decades ago, could be equally relevant in ten years time. The military climbing and the ISTAR skills are."

Maj Venables points to the men stood around him: "Most of us here have come from Afghanistan, and most of us will go straight back to Afghanistan."

"I was on Op Jacana – five months carrying extremely heavy weights hunting down the Taleban through the mountains of Afghanistan."

"It's the hardest thing I've ever done with the Royal Marines."

"What we teach the guys here is very necessary."



● Mountain Leaders being trained in close quarter battle at Caerwent, and (left) Sgt Grim Liepa checks out a hidden observation post built from bricks and rubble
Pictures: LA(Phot) Andy Hibberd

Bearers of bad tidings

PAPERWORK. Forms. JPA. Let's be honest. No one particularly likes them. Everyone does their best to avoid them.

Problem is – that reluctant truth – they do exist for a reason.

Take that little cream-coloured card that you're given in the midst of all the bits of paper you're given when you join a ship.

It doesn't look like much. You probably glanced at it and then put it aside thinking "I'll fill that in later..."

Did you? That card (JPA P001) may not seem like much, but it's the thing that will stop your mother's heart breaking when the TV shatters her day with the news that someone has died in Afghanistan, or that a ship has hit a rock, or any one of a hundred news stories that feed the media.

Because on your ship or out on the ground you might well have more than enough happening around you to think about what's being said back in the UK.

But over here the 24-hour news

reports are inescapable – headlines blare out the bad news on an unending loop.

And all you have to do is fill in that card with your name, rank and service number and give it to the people who matter. Log in to JPA to check and update the details you have listed there for your emergency contact and next of kin.

If it's the ex-wife you haven't seen in three years, if it's the father who died two years back, if it's the boyfriend before you met your current fiancé, then change it. Within the Joint Casualty Compassionate Centre (JCCC) at Imjin Barracks, Innsworth, in Gloucestershire there is a dedicated team of Service personnel and civilians (part of the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency) whose job it is to reassure your next of kin and reduce their stress when times demand.

And your stress too. This hardworking team do not have perhaps the jolliest jobs out there – their remit includes the seriously ill, the injured, the dead – but they know that what they

are doing is truly worthwhile to any sailor, soldier or airman and their families.

Their job is not just about dealing with the injured serviceman, it can centre on getting the healthy service man or woman home to where their family need them.

Last year a petty officer in the Mediterranean received word via the JCCC that his father was very seriously ill in hospital in the early afternoon.

When news like that breaks, the sailor has too much going on to get bogged down in travel planning.

The JCCC arranged for a civilian flight back to the UK that evening, and for him on arrival in London to be met by someone and transferred on to a Hercules for travel to Scotland.

He arrived at his father's room in the hospital in the early hours – less than 12 hours after he'd heard how seriously ill his father was.

"The majority of calls are on the compassionate side. But we do pass on good news as well as bad," explains Dave Reid.

In the Ops Room, he looks over at the desks in front of him.

This room receives 3,500 calls each month – from families, from servicemen, from ships, from theatre, from distant corners of the world.

During the day there are eight staff here on duty, at weekends or nights it goes down to two. But there is always someone here, and there are people on standby to

be called up at need.

It is modern communications that allow word to speed back to this hub at Gloucester – but is the same communication that allow journalists to know of an event almost as soon as it happens.

"We have two TVs on all the time – not to keep people entertained but to watch Sky News and BBC News 24," explained Dave.

"We do have an agreement with the news media for a 24-hour delay once the next of kin have been informed."

"However informing the next of kin can throw up all sorts of problems. When a liaison officer goes through the door he has as much information as we have, up to the minute, up to the second," he says.

"The officer can come out and say 'I've told mum and dad, but they've asked me about the fiancée in Scotland. They've been together for five years and have an 18-month-old child.'"

"To us that is the most critical point – if the next of kin details are not up to date, we're stuffed."

He stresses: "That's our main problem. We think the word is getting out but we can't emphasise it too strongly."

"Check your details, make sure they're up to date. We know when you're going overseas that you have a lot on your mind.

Nowadays it is much easier to update your information through JPA."

Of course some incidents grab huge attention – look back at HMS Cornwall's experience.

When an event like this flares into public perception, a major incident centre (MIC) is set up calling on up to 30 volunteers at two hours notice from as far afield as Abbey Wood.

All families can phone this room directly to speak to people.

This is the number which flashes across your TV screen when the scale of an event grabs the media's attention.

CPO Graham Longhurst said: "We get a signal or phone call to the Ops Room. The duty head says 'get the major incident centre ready.'"

"We grab the list of names from JPA to fill in the MIC details."

"All ships maintain a list of souls on board. JPA can download a list of people onboard – names gathered by signal, by email, by phone."

"On a daily basis the Master at Arms sends a signal back here to register all on board a ship."

In the event of an incident, the cell will break into frenzied life: "Phone calls will come into here from family, public or media."

And this is where the JPA list of names is essential.

If you are caught up in an incident, taken seriously ill or worse on a foreign shore, the 'informing' process kicks off according to what you have registered on JPA.

You can record three categories of contact: most importantly one emergency contact of your choice; also next of kin, in order spouse, children, parents, siblings; and you can add an additional nominee – perhaps your dad has a weak heart, perhaps your next of kin is a child.

The emergency contact will always be told what has happened (unless you ask otherwise at the time), and if the news is the worst, the JCCC will make sure your next of kin are told in the way in which such news should be.

There are three official categories: kinformed, kinnotformed, kinformed. Only once confirmation is received from the region through the visits officer is status updated to kinformed.

If a member of your family rings the MIC, their names and details will be recorded. If your JPA record is up to date, the MIC can check their details against your record – when those two records tally, news that you are fine can be passed on to the people who matter.

Filling in that paperwork matters...



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● A Royal Navy Sea King flies out of Sangin Forward Operating Base in southern Afghanistan
Picture: LA(Phot) Nick Tryon



Striking at the heart

ROYAL Marines Commandos have struck at the Taliban heartland in a series of airborne assaults.

The Royals of 42 Commando Group have pushed deep into rural Kandahar, in southern Afghanistan, using helicopters to hit insurgent positions in support of a Canadian initiative to redraw the boundaries of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) influence in the region.

The conventional tactic is to move into a location from secured flank areas, painstakingly clearing the way for ISAF troops.

But the Commando Group was flown in using waves of helicopters, swiftly striking at an area which has up to now been regarded by insurgents as a safe haven.

Using intelligence to pick out specific compounds in rural settlements, the green berets started the process of moving amongst

the local population, searching for insurgents' weapons and bomb-making equipment.

The initiative also demonstrated the group's ability to suddenly appear on the scene at a time and place of their choosing to disrupt Taliban activity.

The new tactics immediately yielded results.

A sensitive approach to the locals provided strong leads, and although a number of 'robust engagements with their foe' ensued as the Taliban sought to hang on to territory and materiel, the Royals rapidly gained control.

Vast amounts of explosives and associated equipment were seized over the following 36 hours, as well as valuable intelligence relating to the whole of southern Afghanistan, not just the province of Kandahar.

More than 600kg of home-made explosives and 3.8km of wire used for detonation was recovered, along with numerous mines, small arms and ammunition.

All was either removed from the area or destroyed.

Throughout the course of Operation Janubi Tapu - Southern Vulture - rapid helicopter hops and night infiltration meant the Commando was constantly one step ahead of the insurgents.

Ground manoeuvres were still vital - the men of L Company captured a motorbike-borne suicide bomber before he could detonate the explosives, saving the lives of both fellow Servicemen as well as local villagers.

The rapid movement and well-planned searches prevented insurgents from mounting a coherent response - testimony to the efficacy of the training carried out by the green berets over the summer.

Having secured the area, the Royals now move on to work with another national contingent within ISAF.

By dropping in to an area and immediately winning the confidence of local villagers, the commandos win themselves unprecedented freedom of movement to confront the Taliban and seize their arsenals.

Each deployment may last only a week or so,

but by breaking the grip of the insurgents on an area, ISAF troops can follow up to allow local reconstruction and development.

The Commanding Officer of 42 Cdo Group, Lt Col Charlie Stickland RM, said: "We sought to use true Commando tactics on this operation using a helicopter assault and light, agile forces to land into the heart of the insurgents' safe haven."

"I wanted to completely change the dynamics in the key area, and through rapid manoeuvre and the robust but culturally-sensitive approach of the Marines, we achieved our aim."

"Each time he took us on he lost; we detained some significant players with a supporting evidential chain and removed a huge quantity of munitions from the battlefield."

"Importantly, we also left the area having placed constant doubt in the insurgents' mind and reassured the locals that ISAF forces are fair, honest and targeted in what we do."

"An outstanding operation by the 'smiley boys' of 42 Commando."

Snapshots from

GREEN berets in arid landscapes, tramping through the dust and working their way through compounds.

We have seen the pictures, we have seen the video footage.

But how do the operations come together, and how are they carried through to a successful conclusion?

A sitrep from 42 Commando Royal Marines, Regional Battle Group South, gives an insight into the conditions they and their comrades in 45 Commando face as they seek to break the hold of the Taleban and help bring stability to the region.

42 Commando are based in Kandahar and are operating across Regional Command South, an area that includes Kandahar and Helmand provinces.

The ground that they have operated on varies from arid farm land criss-crossed by irrigation ditches and dotted with mud-walled compounds, to the green zone, naturally irrigated land covered with thick jungle like vegetation.

The temperature at the moment varies from 30°C to -5°C, easier conditions to deal with than the high temperatures of summer which rise to 50°C.

Although we should be entering the rainy season now there has been very little rain recently, Helmand in particular is experiencing a drought.

Wherever patrols go they encounter local nationals, usually farmers.

The men have all been trained to engage with the locals using their limited Pashtu and the local interpreters who accompany the patrols.

Although it is an alien environment, the patrols are very proactive and enthusiastic when meeting the locals.

Their reaction to the Royal Marines is invariably friendly, although 42 Commando's operations have all taken place in areas where ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) troops have never previously operated.

42 Commando's operations are all proactive, and preparation for them starts with a thorough appreciation of the situation, including the

distribution and inclination of local civilians and enemy forces in the area.

Following briefings, rehearsals will be conducted and the operation will be launched with an aviation assault.

Having secured initial objectives the unit will then conduct a series of patrols to get to know the locals and dominate the area.

The patrols last from one to seven hours and are usually conducted on foot from a temporary operating base.

Operations from the base can last up to two to three weeks, during which time the unit will be in field conditions living off ration packs, sleeping in bivouacs or compounds and washing when possible using local wells.

There will be a patrol on the ground at all times and when the guys are back in the base they can expect to be covering sentry duties and standing by to deploy as a Quick Reaction Force.



The operations are physically and mentally challenging, and on return to their base at Kandahar the Royals look forward unbroken sleep, showers and fresh food (though not necessarily in that order).

The unit has found its role challenging and immensely satisfying.

Like everyone on tour, though, the whole unit is looking forward to its R & R in the New Year.

And although certain home comforts may be lacking when the Royals are away from their base on operations, another part of 3 Commando Brigade are working hard to ensure that vital supplies get through.

From water and washers to bullets and boots, fuel and festive food, the Commando

Pictures: LA(Phot)s Gaz Faulkner (42 Cdo) and Nick Tryon (45 Cdo)



...in the front line



Logistic Regiment Royal Marines are keeping the supply routes in Afghanistan open.

The unit is working 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to keep 3 Commando Brigade supplied with everything they need.

And the regiment did not even take a break on Christmas Day.



sailors, soldiers, logisticians, mechanics, drivers, fighting troops and medics.

And, to get their job done, they battle through some of the toughest terrain in the world, consisting mostly of desert and mountains, as well as facing enemy attacks.

Col Andy Maynard, Commanding Officer of the Commando Logistic Regiment (CLR), said: "It may be approaching Christmas but we are part of a 24/7 operation keeping the wheels of the brigade turning over Christmas and New Year just as at any other time."

"Our plans are to grab some Christmas food, call home, but otherwise it's business as normal."

"The planning cycle for our operations is demanding and complex, with painstaking efforts taken to keep our men and women as safe as possible and ensure all our operations are a success, so we don't even break for December 25."

Helmand province is not well-suited to large road moves, yet the combat logistical patrols undertaken by the regiment can involve huge numbers of vehicles.

And, of course, there is an ever-present threat of enemy attack as NATO forces try to stabilise and rebuild Afghanistan in the face of insurgency.

Col Maynard added: "Accessing the furthest reaches of Helmand with as many as 150 large vehicles is not a simple matter of driving along well-maintained motorways."

"The combat logistical patrols have to cross some of the most arduous and hostile terrain in the world, a far cry from the tarmac roads most of us are used to."

"The patrols are huge and impressive beasts. It was estimated that to overtake one of our recent patrols would have taken 45 minutes..."

The complex patrols are heavily armed with their own force protection troops which are there specifically to keep the main body of the patrol safe and on course.

The planning and execution of these operations

is not just about road maps and guards – it also includes armoured support, international support, close air support, air surveillance, artillery, explosive ordnance demolition teams and Special Forces to ensure the stock carried makes it to its final destination.

The supplies that the Commando Logistic Regiment are delivering to the forward operating troops of 3 Commando Brigade are essential for them to continue their work in assisting the Afghanistan Government with bringing new security to the country.

And if it were not for the efforts of the men and women who plan, support, and run the patrols, the British battlegroups and the campaign to stabilise the region would quickly feel the pinch.

As Lt Col Steve Crouden, Second-in-Command of the CLR, put it: "With the tempo of operations as high as they are, the effectiveness and welfare of the forward troops would rapidly deteriorate, inhibiting their effect, the progress to date, and the overall campaign to bring stability as soon as possible."





● Sunrise over Cumberland Bay in South Georgia



● Endurance's Royal Marines detachment re-trace the Shackleton Walk from King Haakon Bay to Stromness Bay on South Georgia



● The view from the cockpit of Endurance's Lynx 435 as it soars over South Georgia



● If it's Endurance there must be penguins – gentoos gathered at the Argentine Almirante Brown base in Antarctica. The Royal Navy's ice patrol ship pays a visit

● Endurance's Lynx 434 shut down at Fortuna Glacier, where the Royal Marines following the Shackleton route on South Georgia set up camp. Among other items on board the helicopter were Haribo sweets to keep energy and morale levels up



**No
vacancies**

IT WAS not quite standing room only, but space was at a bit of a premium as HMS Endurance returned to South Georgia, carrying out a range of tasks for the various Service and civilian groups on board.

Whenever Endurance heads off on an Antarctic Operational Period (AOP), which usually last two to three weeks, she carries a number of people whose workplace is the wilderness.

On the most recent AOP there were so many on board that all the beds were full and some ended up sleeping in the library.

So what was everyone on board up to?

The British Antarctic Survey (BAS) has long worked with Endurance, and many scientists return time and again to carry out research in Antarctica and the surrounding islands.

This time there were seven scientists and support staff going to South Georgia, involved in different projects.

One scientist, Pete Bucktrout, was filming fur seals to estimate numbers – South Georgia has the greatest concentration of fur seals on earth.

Geologist Mike Curtis aimed to establish the geological history of South Georgia, while another team, including scientists Dom Hodgson and Steve Roberts, studied lake sediments to determine how the climate of the Antarctic Peninsula has varied.

Cartographer Alison Cook did a GPS survey across Thatcher Peninsula to create a new detailed topographic map of the area.

Some BAS staff were flown on and off Endurance to carry out their work, others used Endurance's boats to get to the island.

Some camped, some spent a few nights at the BAS base on South Georgia and some stayed mainly on board the ship.

The work in South Georgia was only the tip of the iceberg, as once they have collected their data most of the work is done back in the UK.

The largest group of people on Endurance for the transit to South Georgia was the British Schools Explorers Society (BSES) – 19 personnel, including accompanying experts, who conducted penguin and seal surveys and carried out glaciological studies.

Endurance took them to South Georgia and then flew them to their initial location, and although the group was fairly independent, Endurance made regular contact and was ready to assist quickly if any emergency arose.

Also on board were two film crews.

In South Georgia the BBC filmed from the air and underwater; their holy grail was a giant 'bait ball', a mass of krill created by tidal influences, which can be several miles in size attracting hundreds of predators including seals and whales, and which has never been filmed.

Spiderlight Films joined the ship two months ago and now feel like part of the ship's company.

They will be filming a documentary of the ship during the rest of the deployment, to be aired on Channel Five later this year.

Meanwhile HMS Endurance carried out her normal range of activities.

Survey work and magnetic studies took place most days – the area is now popular with cruise ships which need to navigate safely, and in such a remote area much of the ocean beds are unexplored, or have not been charted for decades.

The Royal Marines successfully recreated the walk that Shackleton and his men took across the island in order to get to the whaling station at Stromness.

This walk, often attempted by Royals, is usually curtailed by the weather; this time the

group of four beat poor conditions to complete it in four days.

Endurance's Lynx helicopters also assisted with the removal of several disused huts at a BAS base on South Georgia – only historically important man-made structures can remain.

South Georgia is very different from Antarctica – temperatures are warm enough for vegetation to grow and animals such as reindeer to survive.

This means precautions such as cleaning boots before stepping ashore need to be followed to prevent foreign vegetation contaminating native flora and fauna.

Endurance is currently under the command of Lt Cdr Tom Sharpe, her Executive Officer (XO).

This is the first time the XO has taken command on an AOP, but Endurance's CO, Capt Gavin Pritchard, returned to the UK for this period confident he was leaving his ship in good hands.

Lt Cdr Sharpe said: "Having all our civilian stakeholders on board means that HMS Endurance is now back to her full operational tasking pace this season, which is a satisfying feeling."

"Working with the scientists, other stakeholders and our own personnel in a safe manner is what the Royal Navy's ice patrol ship is for; doing all this tasking boosts moral on board, making everyone proud to be serving on a unique ship in such a remote environment."

The Hood and the Bismarck

AS A member of the Channel 4 team that found the wreck of HMS Hood, I must say I am baffled by the content – and the tone – of some of the remarks about Professor Eric Grove's concept of a second major explosion as the great ship sank.

There has to be some explanation as to how and why the 650 tons of the conning tower ended over a kilometre away from the main part of the ship to which it was attached, quite contrary to expectations if it simply detached on sinking; and a further cataclysmic event of some kind must be the best possible theory.

That is in fact supported by witness statements, as detailed by David Mearns in his and my book *Hood and Bismarck*.

The onus is on the two correspondents who so adamantly reject this idea to come up with a better theory to explain the final position of the conning tower.

Their outright rejection of it, without better refutation than some interesting but hardly conclusive technical arguments, means that the cul-de-sac mentioned in one of the letters is the place where they – not Professor Grove – currently find themselves.

– Rob White, Expedition Co-ordinator, *The Battle of Hood and Bismarck*, ITV News, London

...I FEAR your correspondents on the subject of an apparent carrier with Hood and the Prince of Wales have been misled by the photograph (*letters page*, November).

There was no British carrier in the Denmark Strait that morning. The nearest was HMS Victorious operating with King George V in the Iceland Faroes passage.

She did put in an attack on Bismarck but unfortunately with little result. The carrier Ark Royal of the Gibraltar-based Force H was, of course, later to inflict the crippling blow that led to the loss of the German battleship to the guns of KGV and Rodney and the torpedoes of Dorsetshire.

By May 1941 both Courageous and Glorious had sadly been long since sunk and Furious was engaged on operations ferrying Hurricanes to Malta. I think the carrier-like shape is a shell splash.

– Professor Eric Grove, University of Salford

Remembering Dennis

I READ with interest about the Iron Duke rededicating the grave of Dennis Spicer (November).

I was on HMS Delight at the time and the loss of Dennis made a big impression on the crew.

Dennis was a qualified diver. He was ashore the afternoon he died, on an organised expedition with the rest of the ship's dive team.

He was the second crew member to be killed that commission.

Able Seaman Fowler had been killed in Cyprus during operations, that loss was also deeply felt as his brother was also serving onboard Delight.

– Terry Gosling, ex ACCD2 Alford, Aberdeenshire

Smoke on the water

NO SOONER had November's *Navy News* hit our desks here at the Defence Diving School than we, the team responsible for supporting Naval Diver training, got into a debate about the image on the front cover.

HMS Manchester firing a Seadart skywards? Please tell us, has this picture been changed from the original in any way – maybe just to add impact to the image?

We got into the debate over the fact the missile is coming from midships and the seadart launcher is forward.

The ship is making no wash so appears stationary and though possibly a wind is blowing which may account for the smoke where it is, that picture must be only a

second after launch so the smoke has not had a chance to blow aft, plus the launcher forward does not appear to be facing correctly.

Can you shed any light and resolve our office debate, so we can get on with supporting our colleagues?

Many thanks from some sad old duffers at the DDS.

– Stephen Legg, Diving Training Support 2 Defence Diving School West, Horsea Island

Cdr Paul Beattie, Commanding Officer of HMS Manchester, told us: "Your readers have obviously been engaged in a very detailed debate. Hopefully I can quell any 'tampering'

or conspiracy theories. The photograph on the cover of *Navy News* was taken by HMS Manchester's Flight Observer (Lt Ed Barham) from his Lynx helicopter at 150ft.

"The missile firing took place in the northern Atlantic Ocean, to the west of Benbecula, in typically rough and windy conditions. The considerable wind across the deck, combined with the Sea Dart missile course correction, resulted in the e-flux cloud moving swiftly aft, thus covering the funnel."

"My sincere apologies to all conspiracy theorists."

And just to prove it, here seconds before is the Sea Dart racing away from its launcher on Manchester's forecastle.



All talk and no action?

THERE SEEMS to be a question running through the Royal Naval Association membership about conferences – whether they are worth the hassle and expense, and whether they really achieve anything?

Do we come away refreshed and better informed than we were when we went into the conference hall? Is there a sense of achievement that we have contributed towards the betterment of our association? Are motions put before the

membership properly dealt with without interference from the top? The legalities obviously have to be dealt with and rightly so, but all too often debate has been adversely influenced by the president and vice president.

It seems to me, and probably others too, that the top table have their own agenda. Perhaps the time has come to hold a conference about conferences, how we, the membership, wish to have business conducted and where we want to

hold conferences.

None of this will happen overnight, nor is it meant to, but it might well be thought-provoking and beneficial to the efficiency of the Association in the long run.

– S/M Mick Withington, Minster, Isle of Sheppey, Kent.

Paddy McLurg, General Secretary of the RNA, told *Navy News*: "The requirement for a conference is laid down in the Royal Charter which requires the association to hold one annually, but at intervals

which must not exceed 15 months and on a date and place decided two years in advance by a previous conference.

"The Standing Orders Committee is responsible for vetting any motion proposed by any branch. National Council members sit apart from the delegates and although they may be permitted to speak, they are not permitted to vote so actually have no influence over Conference decisions."

The bitter fate of Java Sea PoWs

IN NOVEMBER *Navy News* carried a story of the four survivors of the Java Sea battle from HMS Exeter.

Many of the survivors when the ship went down were picked up by the Japanese and became prisoners of war, and after the war it was HMS Maidstone that picked those poor souls up.

We were a submarine depot ship to the S-type submarines, and on this particular day were on our way from Hong Kong to the port of Fremantle in Australia, when we received orders to turn about and pick up these survivors.

As I was in the torpedo party I was the crane driver that helped these men aboard, and what a shocking condition they were in, some baring their wounds, scars and suffering from beri-beri, they were in an absolutely terrible state, so we got them aboard, about 450-500 of them, laid them out on the upper deck, gave them fags, and fitted them as best we could

with clothes from our lockers.

On no account were we to give them rum, but Jack being the lad he is, one or two tots appeared but it was only wiped across their lips.

We eventually arrived into Fremantle, and what a welcome we received, with brass bands playing, thousands on the dockside cheering and waving banners, we hardly saw the ship for the bunting.

Quite a few went straight into hospital, the rest of them sailed home aboard Maidstone.

Although my demob number was up I found myself with others drafted on to HMS Adamant, depot ship to the T-class submarines, and back to Hong Kong, which we had previously recaptured – but that's another story.

– S F Tiffin, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey

● Former PoWs and survivors of the Java Sea arrive in Fremantle on HMS Maidstone



opinion

PIRACY is an odious business but makes for a riveting story – look at the international media coverage of HMS Cumberland and her dealings with pirates off the coast of Somalia last autumn.

So the announcement that the European Union has assembled its first naval task force, with the job of combating piracy off the Horn of Africa, has probably been reported and read with more interest than many stories emanating from Brussels (except, perhaps, those concerning regulations about vegetable sizes and shapes).

It is good for the Royal Navy that a British officer, Rear Admiral Philip Jones, is commanding the task force, and good that one of our ships will be providing a high-profile, visible deterrent in the Gulf of Aden.

The views expressed in *Navy News* do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Defence

And although this European flotilla may be new, such patrols are not. To date, these 'routine' patrols performed by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines have lacked the media appeal and drama of thwarting brigands.

So the current Fleet Street frenzy surrounding all things piratical not only highlights the problem, but also the solution.

It demonstrates to the British taxpayer – at a time when the budget is being squeezed ever tighter – why we still need a Royal Navy.

Of course, *Navy News* readers require no such confirmation that the the RN is needed.

Hopefully the wider public will now recognise the Royal Navy's worth too.

Can we have our 23s back?

MY WIFE and I are taking a year out from our busy business lives to travel the world.

Catching up with October's *Navy News* I read the comments regarding the creaks and groans in the RN caused by overstretch, from the former First Sea Lords Admiral of the Fleet Sir Julian Oswald and Sir Jock Slater and former Commander-in-Chief Fleet Sir John Treacher.

I was sitting in my hotel room here in Valparaiso, I could see the main base for the Chilean Navy.

Looking more closely I could see not one, not even two, but three Type 23 frigates, formerly HM Ships Marlborough, Grafton and Norfolk.

I recall these ships being sold and the uproar their sales caused because of the overstretch, which has since got worse.

Since I have been here, four days thus far, these ships have not left their berth, and I don't know which is worse: the fact that the British government allowed them to be sold long before the end of their useful life with the Royal Navy, or that they are sitting alongside in Valparaiso gathering dust?

Perhaps I am being a bit unkind to the Chilean Navy, who I know are a close ally, but with all due respect to them, these ships don't appear to have anything like the buzz they would have if they still flew the White Ensign.

I wonder if their sale had a buy-back clause?

– Ian (Jock) Irvin, ex-AB(R) Edinburgh

Anyone for Second's?

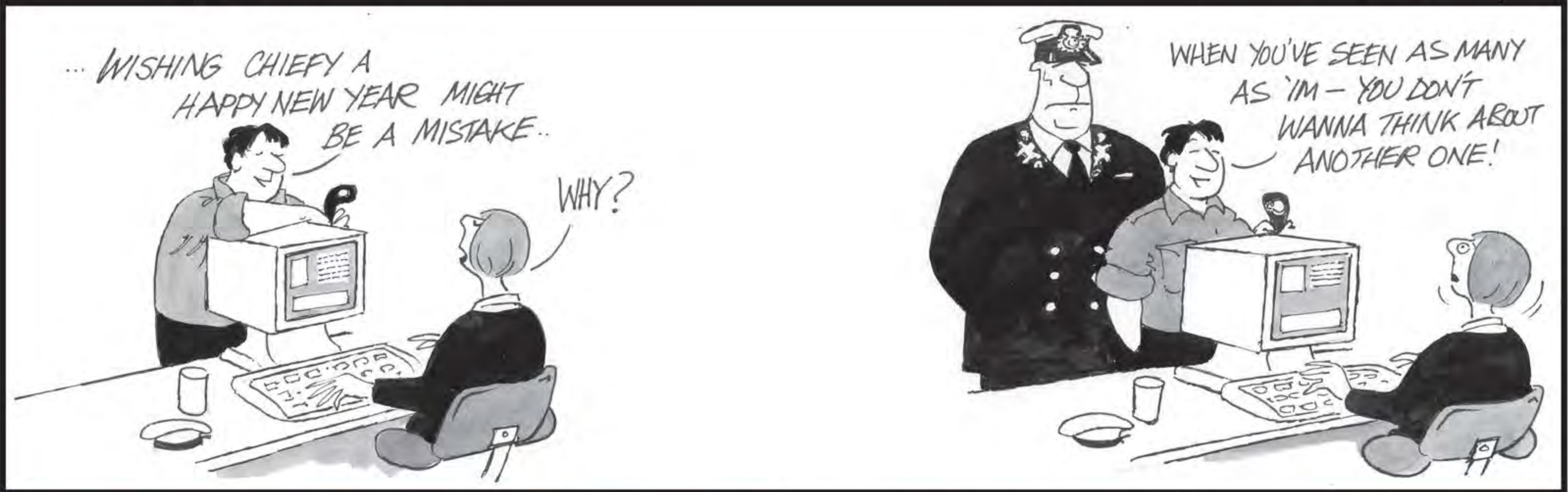
I SEEM to remember the Second Sea Lord some years ago saying that he would like all retired personnel to carry on wearing their uniforms for special occasions.

Did anything come of this and is it allowed today?

– David Hiron, Former WOCA

CLASSIC JACK

BY TUGS



A day of two Conquerors?

MY DAUGHTER and her husband bought a house in Ramsgate some seven years ago, and as part of the conditions of sale they had to keep displayed in the house three framed items which, if they should sell, were to remain there and be handed on to the next purchasers.

The items are: the proposed plans for the house, captioned 'plan for proposed house for Capt J V Wotton RN, 1937'; the bill of materials that went into the house; and the picture (above) which is exactly as printed in the November issue of *Navy News* in the *Der Tag* supplement on page 3.

On the back of the picture are the words 'photo taken in the Firth

of Forth 1918' and it lists the ships as Orion, Conqueror, Monarch and Thunderer, the first four of the 13.6in-gun dreadnoughts completed in 1911-12.

Captain Wotton retired from the Navy before WW2 and is then listed as a staff officer (Minesweeping) on the staff of CinC NORE from 1939-46. He is related to the family who were the local brewers in Ramsgate, Thompson and Wotton.

I looked for these four ships in the plan of the surrender of the German Fleet in the supplement but cannot find Conqueror, however there are two HMS Centurions being shown in the British Fleet, one three ships

behind the Orion and then another behind the Ajax.

Surely the one behind Orion was wrongly captioned, or did we actually have two battleships of the same name?

Can anyone tell me if this was a picture that was widely distributed, did it have a personal meaning for Capt Wotton and if so what was it?

And can anybody help me trace his career in the service? I know it is a long time ago but somebody might just have a clue and my daughter and her family would have the answers to as why the picture is there.

- Malcolm Milham, ex C/JX Able Seaman, Margate RNA

George's Swede nature

READING *The Time of Your Lives* (December) about rescuing the young woman in the harbour will give me something to talk about at my old ship reunion.

I was serving on HMS Sirius at the time and had gone on a run ashore in Gothenburg, Sweden, with the lads but everything was very expensive and we dwindled back onboard in dribs and drabs.

On the way back I came across a scene in the dockyard with lots of people shouting and a woman struggling in the water.

She was deaf and dumb and apparently it was a suicide bid. I did not think but just jumped in. It was quite high, but having done the pussers' diving course and jumped from heights I was used to it. I pulled her to the side and a couple of US sailors helped me get

her out of the water.

I just left the scene as others took over and I went back onboard. The fact that I was dripping wet did not seem to bother the gangway staff.


My boss, who was the PR officer, heard about it after somebody else asked who the mystery British sailor was.

He reported my name by signal and I was subsequently awarded the Royal Humane Society testimony on vellum. It still hangs on my mother's wall.

I do often wonder what happened to the young woman.

- George Malcolmson, Archivist, RN Submarine Museum, Gosport

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 which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it. Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in *Navy News*. We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images. We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues. The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



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'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Leamington strike gold twice in one week

ROYAL Leamington Spa branch bagged two gold awards in one week.

The first came in the form of a gold-standard rating following a hygiene inspection carried out by the Department of Environmental Health at Warwick District Council.

The council team carries out comprehensive inspections without giving prior warning of an assessment visit.

But that caused no concern to the Leamington shipmates, whose club achieved 'excellent' ratings in all three major categories.

But there was no time for the branch to rest on its laurels as attention turned to the Clubs category of the Royal Leamington Spa in Bloom competition.

The gold-medal floral displays were provided entirely by Mrs Shirley Badsey and her husband, S/M Brian Badsey.

Branch secretary S/M Maurice Williams said: "We are constantly improving and extending all aspects of our club, and with so many visitors – especially reunions – it is vital that standards are achieved and maintained."

"We are therefore delighted with our double golds and very grateful for the splendid efforts of all concerned."

Northern Light will be Arctic group's legacy

A NEW lifeboat funded by the North Russia Club has been named at the RNLI's headquarters in Poole.

The D-class inshore lifeboat, D-705, was named Northern Light after the club's former quarterly magazine.

The club was formed by ex-Servicemen who served at Royal Navy bases in Archangel and Murmansk during World War 2, and membership was extended to all who served in Arctic convoys to and from Russia.

The ball was set rolling by an appeal printed in *Navy News* in the early 1980s which asked for eligible veterans to get in touch; shortly after more than 30 men met in London and the club was formed.

Membership reached more than 2,500 at its peak, and several return visits were organised to Murmansk and Archangel.

But over the years membership dwindled, and when the time came to formally wind-up the organisation members decided to donate the balance of club funds to the RNLI.

Northern Light, which was named at a ceremony in the Sea



● D-class lifeboat D-705 is named Northern Light at RNLI headquarters in Poole

Picture: RNLI

Survival Centre at the RNLI's Lifeboat College, will be operated by a three-strong crew and has a top speed of 25 knots.

This small, manoeuvrable workhorse of the RNLI fleet

has evolved continually since its introduction some 40 years ago, and still proves its worth in hundreds of rescues close to shore in fair to moderate conditions.

Northern Light will join the

RNLI's relief fleet, which means she could see service at any of the 110 stations that use D-class boats at times when the station's own boat is under repair or maintenance.

Bridport clock up 70 years

BRIDPORT branch celebrated their 70th anniversary alongside Trafalgar Day commemorations with a parade and service.

The branch was formed on September 2 1938 as the Royal Naval Old Comrades Association with 16 members – the first branch in the West of England.

By the outbreak of World War 2 in September 1939 the membership had risen to 81.

The name was changed to the RNA when the bigger organisation was formed in 1950 and it was granted a Royal Charter in 1954.

No founder members survive, but amongst those proudly marching through the town were two long-serving shipmates, Eddie Warne (86) and Bob Collins (83).

S/M Bob was chairman of the branch on three occasions.

The parade was led by St Swithun's Silver Band, and included the RNA, RBL, Burma Star Association, RAFA, and Sea Cadets from TS Keppel.

The salute was taken by Capt John Bench RN, Bridport Town Mayor Martin Ray and S/M David White, RNA national chairman.

The service at St Mary's Church was followed by a buffet and cake-cutting in the church hall.

Eddy on Clyde

MEMBERS of the City of Glasgow branch were invited on board the 'Capital Ship' – HMS Edinburgh – during the destroyer's goodwill visit to the Clyde.

The shipmates were presented with a gift by the POs Mess of a picture of the warship, which will be displayed with pride at the club.

The crew also attended Remembrance Day services at Glasgow Cathedral and George Square, where they were invited to join the Lord Provost in the city chambers along with the veterans who attended the services.

Split duties

MAIDSTONE branch had the honour of attending two cenotaph parades on Remembrance Day.

A large contingent attended the parade in Maidstone, while a smaller group of members, on a weekend break, joined shipmates from Cromer branch for a parade at Northrepps, in Norfolk.

On Armistice Day another small group from Maidstone attended a service at the local parish church in Aylesford, in Kent.

Memories of Mauritius

VETERANS travelled to Chester from the four corners of the UK (and one from Canada) to recall their time on an island in the Indian Ocean.

The idea of a Mauritius reunion had first been mooted by Robert 'Charlie' Chase, and when the date finally arrived some 60 veterans gathered.

The main event took place on the Saturday evening, in the Joint

Services Club, with plenty of good food and dancing to songs from those memorable years on the tropical island.

Presentations were made to Ann Dodd, for arranging the event, and to Charlie Chase for setting up the website that was ultimately responsible for the event happening.

With a most enjoyable weekend over, most were committed to

a second reunion later this year – to be held on October 3 in Portsmouth – hopefully with a few more shipmates on board.

If you served at the shore base HMS Mauritius and would like to attend, or want details of the website, contact Charlie Chase on robertchase@btinternet.com

HMS Mauritius was the name of the RN radio station on the island, which commissioned in March 1962, ceased operations in November 1975.

It was not to be confused with the 1939 cruiser HMS Mauritius, which was broken up March 1965, and was latterly known as Mauritius (ship) to make the distinction.

A Naval radio station also operated on the island, south-east of Madagascar, during World War 1, closing down the transmitters in the summer of 1921.



● Lossiemouth branch president S/M Ian White (left) receives the Lord Lewin Award for Distinguished Service to the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society from president Admiral Sir Peter Abbott at a ceremony held in the Fishmongers' Hall in London. Ian has raised the profile of the society at Lossiemouth, where he is the harbourmaster, and over the past five years has generated vital publicity and funds

RN party joins in

A GROUP of officers from HMS Raleigh were on hand to make a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire by members of the HMS Diana Association a special occasion.

The shipmates were attending one of their biannual reunions in Birmingham when they took the opportunity to pay a visit to the 150-acre arboretum near Lichfield, established in part of the National Forest in 1997.

They attended the 11 o'clock church service, and the highlight of the visit was the laying of a

wreath of remembrance by the chairman and secretary of the association at the new Armed Forces Memorial.

They were joined by a party of serving officers from Torpoint who were there for the day, and whose escorting guide conducted the service.

Association secretary S/M John Fisher said: "On behalf of our association we would like to thank all the officers from HMS Raleigh for making the occasion very special."

"It was an excellent start to a fantastic reunion."



● S/M Dave Weaver, of Stourbridge branch, is pictured with the model of Type 45 destroyer HMS Diamond which he built from scratch using only six photos obtained from *Navy News*. S/M Dave also made the other models in the background, including HMS Hood (on left). The bridge, Pacific sea boats and helicopter hangar of the model Diamond are illuminated, and the radar aerial and helicopter blades rotate.



● River Plate veterans (from left) Sam Shale, Basil Trott, John Garrard and Bill Empson. Bill, a founder member of the HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans Association, died shortly after the reunion aged 88. He was in a turret of HMS Ajax at the battle, and attended all reunions

Picture: Cliff Hoppe

Naval Quirks

PRINCE RUPERT, THE DASHING CAVALIER CAVALRY GENERAL, WAS LATER A FAMOUS NAVAL COMMANDER...

..AT THE "FOUR DAYS" BATTLE AGAINST THE DUTCH IN 1666, HIS SQUADRON ARRIVED JUST IN TIME..



..TO SAVE MONK'S MAIN ENGLISH FLEET FROM DESTRUCTION!



Hurrah! The cavalry's here - Well the cavalry general anyway!

IT BEATS ME HOW HE MANAGED TO STAY ON HIS HORSE IN ROUGH SEAS..



Mayor tells of plans for Ajax celebrations

VETERANS from the first major British naval success of World War 2 gathered at Chatham to greet a special guest at their latest reunion.

Steve Parish, the mayor of the town of Ajax in Canada, and two of his colleagues told of the plans for this year's celebrations which will mark the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the River Plate – and the visitors extended an invitation to the veterans.

Ajax appeared in the early

1940s as a settlement around a new shell-filling plant, and took its names from the battle.

When the plant closed at the end of the war the town took on a life of its own, and now boasts more than 90,000 inhabitants and is a dormer town for Ontario.

The association is also keen to recruit from the Leander-class frigate HMS Ajax – if anyone is interested they should contact Ken Jones at 1 Coppergate, Hempstead, Gillingham, Kent ME7 3QN.

Funds are raised for puppy and poppies

THE Submariners Association (Derbyshire) took a break from their puppy project to handle their poppy project.

But with the Remembrance season over, it is full speed ahead again with the puppy – a guide dog puppy, to be precise.

Derbyshire shipmates saw the first money roll in on August 1 last year, and a further three months of dedication and effort from many people (including guide dogs and sea dogs) put the fund within touching distance of £2,000.

Collections for Derby the guide dog resumed last month, and, as *Navy News* went to press, it was hoped that the half-way mark would be reached just before Christmas.

The target is to hit the required £5,000 mark in time to make sure that Derby the guide dog will take pride of place at the launch of HMS Ambush at Barrow.

The association thanked everyone who has helped so far in the campaign to obtain a "walking memorial" to assist the less-fortunate.

Ongoing reports and acknowledgments of donations are available at www.submarinersassociation.co.uk/html/derby_news.html

Derby will be in very good company when he makes his debut – HMS Astute, sister to Ambush, had her own guide dog present when the Duchess of Cornwall launched her last summer.

Friends separate

FALLING membership has put paid to the Friends of HMS Crane 1943-62 Association.

Shipmates are asked to note that current membership of the Royal Maritime Club in Portsmouth expires on December 31 and will not be renewed, while the balance of admin funds – £370 – has been donated to the RNBT.

The association also point out that they should not be confused with the HMS Crane Association, based in Nottingham, which continues to be active.



● The Saracen memorial is dedicated in Corsica
Picture: Dannie Nicholas

Saracen remembered in Corsica

A WARTIME espionage mission in the Mediterranean is now recalled by a newly-built memorial at the beach where the agents went ashore.

On February 11 1943 HMS Saracen surfaced in Cupabia Bay, Corsica, to land the three agents on the island for a dangerous and ultimately successful spying mission.

Their bravery, and the part played by the boat, are retold on the memorial, which was dedicated on the 65th anniversary of the liberation of the island.

Among those attending were descendants of Saracen's crew.

One of them – Tina Minister, who never knew her grandfather Stoker William Holt, as he died in a PoW

camp in 1944 – laid a wreath on behalf of all the Saracen families among whom were Graham Raikes (relative of Lt Ivan Raikes) and Dannie Nicholas (son of PO Charles Nicholas).

Also present were a number of Corsican dignitaries, including the President of the Corsican Assembly.

The visit was organised by TV scriptwriter Terry Hodgkinson, whose sculptor wife designed and created part of the memorial.

Other appointments for the families included the unveiling of a further plaque to the Resistance and Saracen at Coti-Chiavari, and a visit to a further plaque commemorating the loss of the British submarine off Bastia on August 14 1943.

Double celebration

HARLOW branch staged a double celebration to mark their golden jubilee and the dedication of a new memorial standard.

The service was held at the church of St James with St Luke at Staple Tye in Harlow, conducted by branch chaplain Revd Jim Gill.

Music for the hour-long event, at which the old branch standard was laid up, came from the Epping Brass Band.

The lesson was read by Cdr Steve Deacon, Commanding Officer of 814 Naval Air Squadron, based at RN air station Culdrose in Cornwall.

Following the service the 23 standards which attended lined the entrance of the church to form a guard of honour for the new standard and guests through which to pass.

The standards then formed up under the watchful eye of parade marshal S/M Chris Durban, of Area 2, and marched to the front of the church where the new standard was trooped through the line of standards.

An RNA Harlow benefactor

Shipmates mourned

TWO members of Ipswich branch have crossed the bar in recent weeks.

S/M Bill Marsh, aged 79, was secretary of the branch, while founder member and former vice



● Standards on show outside the church of St James with St Luke in Harlow

subsequently presented the church with a new altar cloth to mark the church's 40th anniversary.

Among the principal guests

president S/M Wally Thompson died at the age of 96.

Bill was a Chief Engine Room Mechanician and served in HM ships Hermes, Tyne, Superb, Wild Goose, Virago, Bleasdale and Indefatigable.

Wally could count HM ships Calliope, Curlew, Pembroke, Valiant, Malcolm, Woolwich, St Angelo (Dundalk), Southampton, Excellent, Phoebe (wartime) and Vanguard amongst his old ships.

He was Chief of the Annex at HMS Ganges for three commissions, and ended his Naval service as a Chief Gunnery Instructor.

Winners go cruising

A REUNION gamble resulted in one couple being able to celebrate their wedding anniversary in style.

Keith and Sue Davies won the star prize at the Royal Navy Safety Equipment & Survival Association event, held at Bosworth Hall Hotel in Warwickshire.

The prize? A £4,000 five-star Caribbean cruise holiday for two – and the cruise coincides with their Golden Wedding.

Another prize, won by Chris and Sue Cooke, was four tickets to any Manchester United game, with hospitality from RBS in their executive box.

For those who didn't bag a star prize, there was still the comfort of Tot Time, sponsored by Pusser's Rum.

The next Safety Equipment & Survival Association reunion will be held at Bosworth Hall, Market Bosworth, Leicestershire on October 23-25 this year.

Contact Gordon 'Pixie' Parkes on gordon.parkes@ntlworld.com or call 01483 823181. www.faasurvivalassociation.co.uk

were S/M Chas Claxton, Area 5 president, and S/M Jan King, Area 5 chairman.

Association standards present included Area 5, Aylesbury, Basildon, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Clacton, Walton and Frinton, Harlow, Hertford, Letchworth, Luton and

Dunstable, Roydon and Sudbury and District.

Other organisations which sent standards along to the ceremonies included Chelmsford RMA, Ipswich MN, Tilbury MN, Harlow Royal British Legion, Roydon RBL, Chelmsford RBL, Harlow NVA and Harlow RAFA.



● The Hood memorial at the National Arboretum

Arboretum hosts shrine to Hood

MEMBERS of the HMS Hood Association gathered at the National Memorial Arboretum for the dedication of a memorial to the 1,415 men lost in the ship when she was sunk in action with Bismarck on May 24 1941.

The famous battlecruiser has never had a formal memorial, and when association chairman S/M Peter Heys and Ken 'Nobby' Clark visited the arboretum in 2003 they decided that would be its natural home.

The result of much discussion, planning and budgeting was unveiled at a service made more sombre by the recent death of association president Ted Briggs, the last of the three men who survived the sinking.

Around 100 attended the ceremony, including three veterans who served in Hood – Ken 'Nobby' Clark, Cdr Keith Evans and Alec Kellaway.

Besides association members were representatives of the navies of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Poland, all paying respects to countrymen who died in the ship.

Standard bearers from the HMS Hood Association, Derby RNA and the Fleet Air Arm were also present.

Association chaplain the Ven Archdeacon John Green conducted the service, and Rear Admiral Philip Wilcocks, who lost his uncle in the sinking of Hood, unveiled the memorial.

Following the laying of wreaths, the National Anthem and the blessing, all returned to the shelter of the arboretum building to escape a biting wind, and a specially-decorated cake was cut.

Three men who took on the burden of creating the memorial and organising the day – Peter Heys, Keith Evans and Derick Collins – received a vote of thanks.

S/M Mike steps into the role of Nelson

BRANCH secretaries are generally a pretty versatile bunch – and York branch secretary S/M Mike Farrington proved the point by taking a Frenchman's musket ball in the line of duty.

The incident was far from fatal for Mike, although the original target, Lord Nelson, suffered a different outcome in 1805.

All were agreed that S/M Mike's 'death' on the deck was worth seeing as one of the highlights of the branch's Trafalgar Night dinners, also attended by friends and shipmates from Leeds, Driffild, Hull, Scarborough and other parts of Yorkshire.

The Ascot House Hotel was the venue for the Harrogate and District branch Trafalgar Night dinner, at which Association general secretary S/M Paddy McClurg was guest speaker.

Chairman S/M John Rushton welcomed the guests, S/M Mark Emmanuel proposed the toast to Absent Friends, S/M Richard Jones proposed the Loyal Toast, secretary Doug Pointon read the Trafalgar Epitaph and S/M David Porritt proposed the toast to the Immortal Memory.

Grace was said by branch chaplain S/M Rev Alan Robinson.

On completion of the speeches a presentation of a framed First Day Cover commemorating the 250th anniversary of the birth of Nelson was made to a very surprised S/M Doug Pointon in recognition of his services to the branch.

Selsey branch had to hold their dinner rather later than usual because they had to wait for a date at the only venue in the town big enough to cope with them all.

Almost 150 members and their guests sat down at the Solent View restaurant on the giant Bunn Leisure complex – a very different scene to 30 years ago, when just 36 people gathered in the Seagull club and the branch could not afford to invite a guest of honour.

This year's guest was Rear Admiral John Lippiett, chief executive of the Mary Rose Trust, who spoke on the Battle of Trafalgar and of the lessons learned by the demise of the Mary Rose centuries before.

Branch chairman S/M Fred Flood paid tribute to colleague S/M David Tindale, who is the main organiser of the event, and Fred also thanked members of the committees for their efforts.

Meanwhile, Gloucester members met 24 officers and ratings from their namesake destroyer at their Pickle Evening.

The following day the ship's company attended the city's Armistice service and a remembrance service for the men of cruiser HMS Gloucester, sunk off Crete in 1941.

New memorial is unveiled in Hull

A NEW RNA memorial has been dedicated and unveiled by the Lord Mayor of Kingston-upon-Hull and Admiral of the Humber.

Cllr Elaine Garland officiated at the ceremony, held at the city's cenotaph, which has recently undergone a £100,000 renovation – as part of the process, associations were invited to place new memorials.

The service was conducted by Hull branch's own padre, Revd Duncan Harris, and was witnessed by many branch members as well as the general public.

The Burma Star Association also dedicated their own memorial at the same time, and a joint reception was later held at the Royal Hotel, where the Lord Mayor presented the organiser, S/M Bob Reeves, with a silver crown in recognition of his efforts at arranging the event at short notice.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery submarine in our November edition (right) was RFA Wave Sovereign.

She was correctly identified by M Pullen, of Tavistock in Devon, who wins our £50 prize.

This month's ship (above), is pictured with submarines Andrew, Amphion and Ambush of the 7th Submarine Division.

What is the name of the ship, originally built as a tank landing craft?

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, *Navy News*, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.



Closing date for entries is February 9. More than one entry can be submitted, but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our March edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 167

Name

Address

My answer



Naval 'schoolies' take world class approach

JPA – all the help you need is there

Holiday scheme launched

THE Ministry of Defence and the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) are to run an activity holidays pilot scheme in August this year for bereaved Service families.

The 'FAB 09' holidays will be from August 1-8 at YHA Coverack in Cornwall and YHA Whitby in North Yorkshire.

Aimed at bereaved children and their parent or carer, the initiative will allow families with children under the age of 19 who have suffered the loss of either a mother or father to attend the camps.

Those who have lost a step-parent or another in a legal relationship are also eligible.

Only the head of the family will be charged – £50 for the week – and all other children will go free less spending money and certain optional activities.

The scheme is designed to allow families to enjoy an adventurous, safe and supportive environment, fostering self-confidence and friendship while having fun.

Early this year applications for each holiday will be made available from the Service widows' associations and other military and charity websites.

For further details contact project officer Maj Belinda Forsythe on 01722 437580 or email belinda.forsythe926@mod.uk

On top of the PT tree

THREE members of LPT Qualifying Course No 20 find themselves at the top of their profession 25 years on.

The trio – WOPT Ian Binks (Portsmouth), Lt Doug Wylie (Faslane) and WOPT Neal Frame (Devonport) – completed their gruelling course at the RN Physical Training School HMS Temeraire in August 1984.

Now, almost a quarter of a century on, they are delivering the PDev (Physical Development) agenda which comprises three pillars – sport, adventurous training and physical education – in their respective base port areas.

"This is a fantastic and exciting period in our careers, extolling the virtues of the benefits of participating in sport and recreation," said Doug.

"Not only are we interested in the delivery of many activities and pursuits at all levels, but we would like to see much more inter-part and grass-roots activities.

"The PDev agenda has backing from 2SL downwards and should be embraced by everyone to enhance their wellbeing and health."

He added: "All personnel of whatever ability should make full use of the fantastic sports facilities available in their respective establishments," noting that they are so much better than when he first qualified.

"Then you were lucky to have a decent range of weight training equipment, never mind the extensive CV equipment which is the norm today."

"WE HAD a grounding on board HMS Superb whilst dived.

"Although it was terrifying at the time, the training kicks in and you don't panic.

"You know those around you are not panicking; you get on with your drills and do what needs to be done.

"The submarine is your lifeline, so it is essential to know how to look after her in

an emergency."

That was just one day in the life of Lt Martyn Tait, a qualified submariner who works within the Naval Education and Training Service (NETS), part of Flag Officer Sea Training's Naval Core Training Stream, supporting personal and professional development at sea.

Martyn is a training manager – they're often called 'schoolies', but these days there's a lot more to the

specialisation than 'driving' classrooms, as he has discovered...

"I joined the specialisation in 2002," he said.

"One of the best things about being a training manager is the flexibility and opportunity to further professional and personal development."

His assignments to date have seen him go from engineering instructor and training designer at HMS Sultan to managing the requirement and acquisition of a training service for submariners manning the new Astute class, a role that saw him working at Abbey Wood, dealing with the application of cutting-edge simulation technology.

Currently serving as the NETS Ops Officer in Faslane, he is responsible for fulfilling the education, training and resettlement needs of personnel deployed in FASFL0T ships and submarines throughout the world – from the Falklands to Rio and Gibraltar to Bahrain – as well as looking after units in build closer to home in Glasgow and Barrow.

"Although personnel are deployed, they still want to further their personal and professional development and gain the qualifications necessary to advance their careers or to help smooth the transition to civilian life," he said.

Whilst on board Martyn will deliver presentations to the ship's company to make sure they are updated on the educational opportunities, entitlements and funding routes open to them for gaining qualifications or preparing themselves for resettlement.

Once everyone understands the basics, he will conduct one-to-one personal development interviews, discussing the individual's aspirations and goals



● Lt Martyn Tait

and producing a tailored plan to achieve them.

To do this for the whole crew may take several weeks if the NETSO is embarked in a larger vessel, and often the best time to visit is during a lengthy deployment when there is a captive audience.

Whilst on board the NETSO may also run a number of training workshops in areas such as coaching and mentoring, conducting training in the workplace, and listening skills.

Martyn spent several weeks on board Superb getting to know the crew and offering interviews and advice to all.

They were very appreciative of his efforts and, in the words of the XO, he provided a "dedicated and concentrated service that would have been impossible were we to rely solely upon ship's staff."

The finding of a recent study, accepted by the Second Sea Lord on behalf his RN colleagues, is that there will be an enduring requirement for the specialist skills of uniformed training managers in the Naval Service.

Whilst this might seem surprising in the light of the current programmes to 'contract out' more of the day-to-day shoreside training delivery services, these only serve to highlight the need for specialists who can ensure that our requirements are accurately identified and that delivery quality is maintained.

And, as Martyn's experiences show, the reality is that the traditional view of the schoolies' habitat being limited to a classroom became obsolete long ago.



● The Armed Forces Continuous

Attitude Survey (AFCAS) 2008, the Families CAS and the Reserves CAS were distributed in October/November. Thank you to all who completed and returned theirs. For those that have received a survey and are yet to complete it, remember this is your chance to have your say. These surveys are important sources of information that are used to argue your case at the highest level. Don't waste the opportunity to have your views heard. Further information from Paul Cox on 023 9262 5496 or paul.cox989@mod.uk

Chapman Centre opened

THE learning centre at RNAS Yeovilton has been rebuilt to meet the needs of the 4,500 people based at the air station – and has a new name.

The new building has been named the Chapman Centre in honour of Lt Cdr Darren Chapman, the CO of 847 NAS, who was killed in action in Iraq in 2006.

Darren was a regular attendee at the centre, and is fondly remembered by the staff.

The building includes an internet suite, an IT classroom, a computerised library, two classrooms with electronic 'smart boards' and several offices, and offers courses ranging from basic maths and English up to post-graduate management studies.

Darren's widow Liz, as guest of honour, formally opened the centre, accompanied by her daughter Chloe, sister Kate and Darren's father Don.

Moonlight (battle) and shadows

TROPHY 10999 (right) is an extract dated 1788 from the Captain's Standing Orders of the second HMS Andromeda, a 32-gun 5th rate frigate of 1784.

The previous Andromeda, a 28-gun 6th rate, had, in January 1780, been part of a squadron under the command of Admiral Sir George Rodney which defeated a Spanish fleet under Admiral Don Juan de Langara 12 miles south of Cape St Vincent in what became known as the Moonlight Battle.

During the War of American Independence, Rodney's squadron was tasked with escorting a relief convoy to Gibraltar and Minorca and to then sail to the West Indies.

Having captured a Spanish convoy of 22 ships off Cape Finisterre on January 8, eight days later he sighted a squadron of 11 Spanish ships off Cape St Vincent.

The enemy made for Cadiz, but Rodney gave chase and in the ensuing action one Spanish ship blew up and six were captured.

This was the first fleet action



to be fought by night and relieved considerable pressure on Gibraltar.

With the convoy safely delivered Rodney sailed to the Caribbean, but for Andromeda it was a one-way trip – she was lost in a hurricane in October off Martinique.

Trophy 23688 (right) is a crucifix made from the mast timbers of heavy cruiser HMS Exeter.

The base bears a brass plate indicating that the trophy was made to commemorate the Battle of the River Plate.

On December 13 1939 Exeter

and light cruisers HMS Ajax and HMNZS Achilles – Force G, under Cdre Henry Harwood – encountered German pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee off the River Plate in Argentina.

The German ship was armed with six 11in guns in triple turrets; Exeter's main armament was 8in calibre and the two light cruisers carried 6in guns.

Although outgunned the cruisers were able to split the enemy's fire and succeeded in hitting the German several times.

Exeter sustained most damage – two of her three turrets were put out of action while the third could only be operated by hand, and she had to use emergency steering, with helm orders being passed to the tiller flat by a line of sailors.

Unable to escape to sea, *Kapitän zur See* Hans Langsdorff took Graf Spee into neutral Montevideo for repairs, where her stay was limited by neutrality rules.

A successful British intelligence operation convinced Langsdorff that a carrier and battleship were

DID you know...

Leave:

From April this year your annual leave total on JPA will include public holidays to ensure those who are deployed get their full leave allowance (2008DIN01-247).

JPA leave facility is working properly and should be used to apply for all leave – if you do not think that your leave balance is correct, then speak to your unit HR office.

Expenses:

Struggling to understand the abbreviations, such as MMA at PCR(UK), when making expense claims?

The Self Service expenses pages in JPA will be changing in July this year to make claiming expenses more straightforward with clearer terminology.

If you are not sure whether or not you should be making a claim then speak to your unit HR office.

Help:

I don't know how to claim expenses on JPA!

Information to assist you in your use of JPA can be found in Self Service Guides and in the recently revamped Business Advice Guide (BAG).

Follow the JPA link on the left-hand side of RN Web to the JPA website, then look under 'Self Service'.

The Self Service Guides show you how to use JPA; the BAG shows who carries out the different JPA activities and links take you to how to do them.

You will find all sorts of useful information, from understanding your pay statement through to a user-friendly Self Service Assistance Guide.

And for those still wondering, 'MMA at PCR(UK)' stands for 'Motor Mileage Allowance at Private Car Rate (UK)' and applies to some journeys made using your own car – see JSP 752 and check with your unit HR Office before claiming.

Fresh ideas

A NEW cookbook aimed at military chefs (or logisticians (catering services (preparation and delivery))) backed by Gordon Ramsay has been launched.

It contains more than 50 recipe ideas for those on operations, and includes such modern classics as corned beef balti, spicy bean burgers and Italian tuna pie.



waiting to engage him, so having consulted Berlin, the Graf Spee was scuttled on December 17 1939, and Langsdorff committed suicide just days later.

Meanwhile the damaged Exeter had made her way to the Falkland Islands to effect her own repairs.





Service skills transformed into civvy qualifications



• Staff and graduates line up for the camera in Salisbury

SERVING and ex-RN senior and junior rates graduated at a ceremony at Salisbury Cathedral, having completed their Chartered Management (CMI) NVQ Levels 4 and 5 qualifications with Wiltshire College.

Five of the 14 students were from HMS Daring, so it was appropriate that the RN VIP helping to celebrate the event was the ship's CO, Capt Paul Bennett.

WO1 Dean Rogers, of 2SL's Divisional and Regimental Support Team and a member of the college teaching staff, said: "It's great to

see so many people benefiting from the excellent practical management experience that they have gained serving in the Royal Navy.

"All have worked hard towards winning this valuable qualification that can be used both inside and outside the Service.

"I am an extremely proud man today."

Another 17 who had completed their qualifications were unable to attend because they were deployed at sea, or had other commitments.

There are also another 50 all ranks

working on these qualifications, which transform their Service human resource and management skills, expertise and competence gained over many years into nationally-recognised and highly-valued civilian qualifications.

These then become the springboard for future employment, particularly for those nearing the end of their Service career.

Full use is made of the Enhanced Learning Credit scheme and the Standard Learning Credit to fund these qualifications.

Welfare fund will ease lot of troops

A NEW support package has been set up to ensure front-line forces get maximum benefit from donations.

The Operational Welfare Fund was initiated by the MOD in conjunction with SSAFA Forces Help.

It was designed to complement the MOD's comprehensive Deployment Welfare Package, which includes a free mail service, 30 minutes of telephone calls a week and Internet access, as there was a recognition that there were still areas where life could be improved.

The National Recognition Study highlighted the public desire to support our Armed Forces and particularly those serving on operations, but determined that the mechanisms allowing them to do so were limited.

The issue was exacerbated by the decision to discourage the public from sending unsolicited parcels out to operational theatres, especially at Christmas, in order to prevent delays to personal mail.

Donations can be made online, with links from both the SSAFA and the MOD website, on the phone by calling 020 7463 9225, or by sending cheques (made payable to the SSAFA Operational Welfare Fund) to SSAFA Forces Help, Freeport NAT 19507, London SE1 2BR.

The parameters for what the money from the fund can be spent on are being kept deliberately broad.

The intention, endorsed by SSAFA, is that the decisions on spending should be initiated by those in the theatre who will have the best feel for where the need is greatest.

That could range from the provision of decent coffee for those in transit right up to assistance with improving the facilities available in the welfare village once it comes on line.

Current priority may lie with improving the lot of those in the forward operating bases.

SSAFA's status as a tri-Service charity, and its track record, led to the MOD choosing the organisation to put the scheme into operation.

All donors will be given the option to Gift Aid their donation, allowing SSAFA to reclaim the tax.

For further details on this and any other aspects of the scheme, contact the SSAFA Fundraising Team, details of which are at www.ssafa.org.uk or see www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/Personnel/PublicSupportForOurService/Personnel/

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.



Stay in the loop – new 2-6 DVD is out

Direct approach proves its worth

WHO said direct entry into the clearance diving branch would never work?

Nine of the eleven warrant officers of the branch are direct entry, with a total of 242 years of service in branch between them.

The nine were gathered for the inaugural WO1(D) conference, the purpose of which was to try to identify problems within the clearance diving branch, come up with workable solutions and pass them up the chain of command to attempt to advise and influence policy.

It was also important to take away current information and disseminate it down through the ranks.

It was significant in that it ensured those attending had all the current information regarding relevant issues, rather than all the buzzes out on the water.

Therefore it was greatly appreciated to have the following subject matter experts to give comprehensive briefs on the following issues: CO (DDS Training), SofD (diving policy), Wing Cdr Hollis (joint EOD), Dave Cunningham (diving equipment and support), Cdr Atkinson (capability), CO FDS (branch/career manager manpower), WO Andy Rainey (Navywide issues) – and thanks to Capt Baun for sponsoring the conference Buzzes.

Don't know? Ask your DO!

WANT to know more about... Defence Internal Briefs

■ 24/08: Armed Forces Compensation Scheme: proposed increase to lump sum injury awards;

■ 22/08: New measures to support Service Personnel, their families and veterans.

And be aware of...

■ Galaxy 12/08 Enhanced harmony support to units when in base port;

■ Galaxy 04/08 Increase to commitment bonus and affordable home ownership.

See your Divisional Officer!

Learning environment

MORE than 300 delegates from across the Defence spectrum attended a modern learning symposium at HMS Sultan.

The event combined presentations with the opportunity to peruse an exhibition of 29 companies and organisations involved in modern learning.

Among the subjects covered were the implementation of elearning for LET training and the benefits of game-based learning.

Among the senior officers who visited was Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Alan Massey.

BLOCKBUSTER DVDs may be in short supply as distributors struggle in the credit crunch – but here is one that is out there and available.

Not *High School Musical* or *007*, but the latest offering for all you 2-6 fans.

Yes, it's the latest 2-6 DVD and Personnel Support Brief which are out on the streets, and can be picked up from your Divisional Officer or downloaded over the internet via www.rncom.mod.uk

The DVD contains the regular *On Ops* feature and *News belt* items on JPA Appraisal for ABs and Leading Hands, the Continuous Attitude Survey and free copies of *Navy News* for Naval Service units.

Scrubbing Out is also featured – but this time it is good news. If you want to know why, see the DVD for details.

And if you think the DVD is good, bad or indifferent, or you would like to see changes to its content, watch the feature on *Your Views*.

Why? Because we want your views on where to take the DVD – it's as simple as that.

For those who like the more adventurous things in life, LPT Jamie Buttle leads a *Your Shout* piece from Talybont explaining what they do up there and how it can benefit you.

The Personal Support Brief contains a raft of important

information, including briefs on financial education, the personnel package, adventurous training, Exercise Bavarian Surprise and the transition to the Naval Outdoor Centre Germany, the Naval

Families Federation and submarine communication with families.

So, if you want to be kept in the loop and not miss out, get access to a copy now.

If there are any queries

regarding any of this Internal Communication information, contact Lt Cdr Gregor Birse RN at Gregor.birse922@mod.uk or WO1 Baz Cooke at barrie.cooke731.mod.uk



• (Above and left) Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope addresses Navy Command HQ staff at Leach Building

CINC addresses Navy HQ staff

COMMANDER-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope gathered staff at Navy Command HQ during a clear lower deck to consider past achievements as well as look to the future.

The admiral spoke of the challenges and successes of 2008 and said he looked forward to supporting Fleet operations worldwide this year from his Leach Building headquarters on Whale Island.

If you can stand the heat...

THERE was plenty of support from the grandstand at Sandown Park racecourse, but there was not a horse in sight.

The cheering and banter was aimed at Services caterers, chefs and stewards (and, of course, logisticians (catering services (preparation and delivery))) (*Too many parentheses – Ed...*).

Forces foodmeisters locked horns at the 12th Combined Services Culinary Challenge.

And although the competition was as fierce as ever, the event brings universal benefits in terms of development of culinary skills, nurturing professional pride and building team spirit.

It also allows competitors to pick up new ideas and best practice from each other.

The middle day was dedicated to the Navy, with dark blue teams and individuals competing against each other, but other contests between the Services were played out over three days.

Onlookers could enjoy the drama of the live theatre, where Service and MOD staff competed against each other and the clock in various categories, the parade de chefs, where each day a single-Service team produced a VIP meal for 64, or the field team challenge, using kit and ingredients available on operations.

The static classes also gave the technicians a chance to shine through buffets, show plates and decorative cakes.



New Haven

SAILORS and other workers in HMS Nelson in Portsmouth have a new place to refresh body and soul - a former chapel in Rodney Block which has been transformed into a social centre, complete with big screen TV, books, and a pool table.

The old chapel fittings have been relocated and replaced with Ikea chairs and carpets to give them a relaxing place to chill out over a cup of coffee - the new centre is non-alcoholic.

Naval Chaplain the Rev Roland Wort said: "The old chapel was only used for ten minutes a week and we thought the space could be better employed, so we moved the chapel to a new site and turned this into a recreational centre where people could come and relax."

He added: "It opens every weekday and we might open in the evenings and at weekends if there is a demand."

"It's proving popular with Nelson personnel and bandies from the Royal Marine School of Music."

The Haven, as the new centre is called, was funded by the Local Amenities Fund, the Nuffield Trust and a contribution from the Naval Base Commander.

Cdre David Steel opened the centre as his last official engagement as Naval Base Commander, and also presented a commendation for Lt Gary Davies, officer-in-charge of the Recovery Cell in Portsmouth.

THE Project Fisher Geographical Squad Pooling trial was due to go live on January 1 2009.

The new initiative involves the six Type 23 frigates of the Portsmouth Flotilla and seeks to improve the quality of life for the ABs and LHs in the pool.

It will achieve this by providing them with known employment patterns, delivering greater variety of employment and better shore-side support, ideally mapped out beyond two to three years.

Held under the responsibility of COMPORFLOT and developed with the close involvement of the Waterfront Manning Office (WMO), the concept aims to manage JRs across all six ships, rather than with a squad for each unit.

A shore-based team, led by WO1 Vic Parsons, will plan the movements of the personnel and assume Divisional ownership of those assigned ashore.

A typical employment pattern will be as follows:

Personnel will be assigned into Pool by the WMO, and they will then join one of the Portsmouth-based Type 23 frigates.

Individuals will serve between 18-24 months in that unit, after which they will be assigned to the Shore Pool Element.

At this point divisional responsibility is transferred to the pool team.

RCM(X) also welcomes PO Amanda Thompson to the team.

Already settled into the world of a career manager, facing problems and difficult issues on a daily basis, but managing to keep smiling and thriving on the challenges it brings.

PO(SSM) Nick Nicholson has also just relieved PO(SSM) Colin Gibson after being in the chair for 30 months.

And finally PO(CIS) Buck Taylor has taken over the CIS and Seaman desk.

All of the RCM(X) Career Managers endeavour to 'career manage' all of our 12,104 personnel.

We have a number of issues to consider when achieving this, such as sea/shore service, preferences,



● AB ET(WE) Rogers being presented with her PORFLOT Type 23 cap tally by Cdre Mike Mansergh COMPORFLOT

During their time ashore, individuals will be able to take leave and training courses and be 'employed in gainful activities'.

What does this mean?

'Gainful activity' can be classed as any employment by which an individual is working to engender and support the military ethos and fighting spirit.

Examples of gainful employment are adventurous training, learning to drive, bespoke Command, Leadership and Management training and ECDL training.

Personnel can discuss these opportunities with the Pool Divisional Senior Rates.

The initial reaction to the trial has been very positive.

ET(WE) Rogers, who has just been assigned to the Pool, said: "It's great I still feel part of the team, but this gives me a period of time to really plan my life before going back to sea."

The initial review period for the trial is the middle of 2009 and it is expected that the trial will run until mid-2010.

Help is there for overseas victims

SERVICE personnel will be familiar with the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS).

However, the Ministry of Defence also runs a compensation scheme which can make awards to Service personnel and their dependents when serving overseas, if they are the innocent victims of crimes of violence.

This scheme - the Criminal Injuries Compensation (Overseas) or CIC(O) Scheme - mirrors a similar mechanism operated by the Ministry of Justice for victims of crime within the UK, and has offered compensation since its introduction in 1979.

CIC(O) is designed to ensure that Service personnel and their families are not disadvantaged compared to crime victims in the UK.

CIC(O) is separate from AFCS, which should be applied to if you suffer an injury as a direct result of service.

Free legal advice for applying to CIC(O) can also be obtained from Army Legal Assistance, the contact detail for which is printed below.

The CIC(O) scheme has recently been updated to reflect changes made to the UK-based scheme, and rules and application forms can be found at www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/Personnel/Pensions/ArmedForcesPensions/FindOutAboutTheCriminalInjuriesCompensationOverseasScheme.htm

New faces join the RCM(X) team

DURING the past few months there has been a considerable amount of change here at RCM(X).

The new faces on the team are: Cdr Stuart Barrand has moved from Leach Building to West Battery to take up the role of SO1 RCM(X).

His previous experience in DNPS will be invaluable to the RCM(X) team.

CPO Sally Armstrong is another recent addition to the team.

Coming from an HR Administrator's position, we are able to use her current HR knowledge.

She is enjoying learning a whole new area, dealing with 'people' issues - a refreshing change from 'pay' issues.

previous jobs, and therefore we are constantly attempting to balance the needs of the Service with the needs of the individual.

Any conflicts are usually resolved by consulting Fleet's Strategic Manning Priorities List (2008DIN01-202).

We are met by many challenges which include the requirement to fill Op Tours or sea service posts at short notice.

Whilst we endeavour to achieve PFS with the appropriate assignment notice, this is not always possible in today's manpower climate and the high tempo of operations.

Working in RCM(X) is both challenging and demanding and we regularly receive a wide range of questions in the process.

However, we would appreciate it if these questions were 'career management' related so that our time is not taken by questions that should be more appropriately directed to your HR administrators.

We receive an abundance of emails and try to reply as soon as we can in priority order.

We are not always able to answer our phones immediately, especially if we are in the process of assigning, discussing issues or on assignment visits; however, leave a message and we will return your call within 24 working hours.

We are now firmly established in our relatively new location of West Battery on Whale Island and

senior ratings and line managers are welcome to visit us - by prior appointment only.

During the course of our duties we receive some emails which are more challenging than others.

We would like to leave you with one particular email which was received from an individual that asked if his assignment to a particular ship could be changed, and this was the reason why:

"I know I originally asked for the HMS Dragon, but after Googling it I came to a startling realisation!

"The motto of HMS Dragon is *We yield but to St George*.
"Now, I'm all for a United Kingdom as such but I live in Scotland and my fellow countrymen

are under the impression that if there is any yielding to be done in Scotland then it will definitely be to St Andrew!

"Now, niff-naff and trivia involving ships' mottos wouldn't normally bother me but the punishment for unlawful yielding in accordance with the *Daily Record* are harrowing - to say the least.

"If my yielding is found anywhere out with St Andrews Division then I will consequently be stripped of my kilt, taken to the top of Ben Cleuch and be hung, drawn and quartered, but not before having a live wild haggis stuffed up my bottom to eat from the inside out!"

Any tips...?

INTRODUCING the new ratings Career Managers (Warfare), or RCM(X):

Cdr Stuart Barrand	SO1 RCM(X)	FLEET-DNPPERS NPT(X) RCM SO1 93832 8868
Lt Cdr John Beavis	RCM SO2 AIR	FLEET-DNPPERS NPT(X) RCM AIR 93832 8874
Lt Cdr David Green	RCM SO2 UW	FLEET-DNPPERS NPT(X) RCM UW SO2 93832 8892
Lt Cdr Bill Kerr	RCM SO2 AWW	FLEET-DNPPERS NPT(X) RCM AW SO2 93832 8875
CPO Sally Armstrong	Office Manager CM for EW Senior Ratings	FLEET-DNPPERS NPT(X) RCM CPO 93832 8882
PO Buck Taylor	CM for CIS and Seaman Senior Ratings	FLEET-DNPPERS NPT(X) RCM CEWSEA 93832 8872
PO Tug Wilson	CM for UW, MW Senior Ratings and all Divers	FLEET-DNPPERS NPT(X) RCM UW DMW 93832 8879
PO Sarah Redford (tbrb PO Jo Currie, Feb 09)	CM for Photographic and Air	FLEET-DNPPERS NPT(X) RCM AIR 93832 8878
PO Donna Hughes	CM for AWT, AWW and WA Senior Ratings	FLEET-DNPPERS NPT(X) AWWAWT 93832 8873
PO Amanda Thompson	CM for Regulators, PTIs, SR, HM and Metocs	FLEET-DNPPERS NPT(X) RCM SPPTSR 93832 8841
PO Nick Nicholson	CM for SM and CT	FLEET-DNPPERS NPT(X) RCM SM CT 93832 8941
Miss Debbie Urry	Administrator	FLEET-DNPPERS NPT(X) RCM ADMIN 93832 8881

photographic memories



ROYAL Navy bluejackets of HMS Terrible pose by an armoured train at Durban during the Boer War. Mounted on the flatbed carriage is an improvised signal lamp consisting of a searchlight and shutter mechanism, powered by a dynamo attached to the train. On November 9 1899 the train was dispatched from Durban to aid General Buller's army in the relief of the besieged town of Ladysmith as communication with the town was difficult. The train was sited at Frere and communication was restored. The preparation of this train along with the naval guns converted for land use which accompanied Buller was overseen by Capt (later Admiral) Percy Scott RN, commander of HMS Terrible, Military Commandant of Durban and foremost gunnery expert in the Royal Navy (Neg Q115145)

■ This photograph, and others, can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk or by emailing photos@iwm.org.uk

NOTICEBOARD

Reunions

FEBRUARY 2009
HMS Andromeda Association: Annual reunion to be held at the Britannia Hotel, Fairfax Street, Coventry from February 27 to March 1, all commissions and all ranks are most welcome. Full details from Birtle Caged at chrisaged@btinternet.com or tel: 01394 461082, Rick Matthews at rickmatthewsx@btinternet.com or tel: 07836 747070 or visit the website at <http://www.hms-andromeda.co.uk>

MARCH 2009
Second Submarine Squadron (The Sunshine Squadron): Reunion for 2009 will take place at the Weston Mill, Oak Villa Sports & Social Club, Camels Head, Plymouth, on March 7 commencing at 1200 until later. For further details contact Alan Jones at turgut.ramegas@hotmail.co.uk or tel: 01752 201583 or Nick Addison on 01579 346320 or write to Alan Jones, 101 York Road, Weston Mill, Plymouth, PL5 1AU.
HMS Bulwark 1961-63: If there is anyone from this commission who would like to join us in Weymouth for the weekend of March 20, please contact R Jones on 01621 891835 or M Mowlem on 07767 233917.

Verdala RN School Reunion: Thousands of the 'children of the navy' spent some of their schooldays in the 1950s, '60s and '70s at Verdala, the Royal Naval Primary School in Malta. On March 21, 2009 there will be a third reunion for the school, this time at the Manor Hotel, Yeovil, Somerset, and all former pupils and staff will be very welcome. Details from the organiser, Sue Adams at s.badams@btinternet.com

liscali.co.uk or tel: 01823 663195 or see the website at <http://www.verdala.com/>

HMS Diana: Reunion to be held at the Parkhouse Hotel, North Promenade, Blackpool, March 6-9. We have a wonderful friendly membership which is made up from members of all commissions. Come along and meet some old oppos. If not join us, and come along to the Sept 09 reunion in Birmingham. Application forms are available from John Fisher at johnjackie.fisher@virgin.net or tel: 01530 242850.

RNXS (East Anglia Group): 15th annual reunion will be at the Shipwreck, Shotley Marine (ex-Enwright Block, HMS Ganges) on March 29 from 1200 to 1500. Contact Peter Brooke, 7 Penn Close, Chapel St Mary, Ipswich, IP9 2UE or tel: 01473 310189.

APRIL 2009
HMS Danae First Commission: Reunion at the Park Inn, Northampton from April 3 to 4. Contact Dave 'Boots' Shoemaker at dtedcrusher25@hotmail.com, see the website at www.hms-danae.com or tel: 01665 714507.

LST & Landing Craft Association: Annual reunion at the Sand Bay Leisure Resort, Weston Super Mare from April 20 to 24. All welcome. Details from Mike Cresswell at mike@gannridding.freemove.co.uk, tel: 07717 038300 or write to Park View Farm, Broad Lane, Cawood, Selby, YO8 3UE.

HMS Peacock (U96, F96, P239): AGM and annual reunion at the RNA Club, Leamington Spa on April 18 at 12 noon, with a buffet and reception in the evening. Contact Dave

Pearson on 01442 862274 or Ted Collier on 01494 574241 for further details.

MAY 2009
HMS Tenby Association will be holding their 16th annual reunion at the Royal Court Hotel, Coventry, from May 1 to 4. All former 'Tenby's are welcome. Contact our secretary, Gary 'Buck' Taylor at garybucktaylor@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 0161 705 0173 for details.

HMS Solebay: 12th annual reunion will be held at the Redlea Hotel, Scarborough from May 22 to 24. All ex-Solebays, friends, relatives, or anyone interested in the ship is welcome. Contact Malcolm Clarke at malcolm@solebay.org or tel: 0117 962 2500.

JUNE 2009
HMS Diomedea (F16): The Communications Staff (1st/2nd Commissions) reunion will take place at the King Charles Hotel, Chatham from June 26 to 27. More details from Pete Legg at peter@leggppe.freemove.co.uk or tel: 01304 375465.

OCTOBER 2009
Royal Naval Electrical Branch Association: Reunion from October 2 to 5 at South Downs Holiday Village near Chichester. Great weekend planned. Full Board. Remembrance Service in St Anne's Church Portsmouth Dockyard. If you are ex Royal Naval Electrical Branch, this is where you should be. Further details on <http://www.rneba.org.uk>, contact Mike Brown at mike@rneba.org.uk or RNEBA, 7 Heath Road, Sandown, Isle of Wight, PO36 8PG.

Ask Jack

HMS Daedalus: I am trying to find anyone who might have known my father Edward Joseph Taber. In 1936 he was stationed in Malta, and in 1948 he was stationed at HMS Daedalus, Gosport, where I was born. If anyone has any information or old photos which they please get in touch with me as I have no photos of my father and would dearly love to have one. Thanks to anyone who can help. Contact Veronica Robinson at veronicarobinson19@hotmail.com or tel: 01806 522725.

HMS Drake: Arthur Slack is seeking information on his father, Stoker 1st Class, John Slack from Manchester. He served in Drake, Pembroke, Comorant, Ferret, Hornet, Girdleness, Cochran and Cheerful. Would especially like to hear from Samuel McGill who was best man at John's marriage to Hilda Brown in 1946. Please contact Arthur Slack at 20 Kingsley Avenue, Heaton Norris, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 1PW.

HMS Felixstowe: Douglas Purvis is searching for anyone who served on HMS Felixstowe, a minesweeper of Bangor class which was sunk on December 18 1943 off the coast of Maddalena. Contact Douglas at purvis579@btinternet.com or tel: 0191 257 0410.

Horace 'Sam' Hardy, Chief Yeoman: He served from 1932 to 1946 in Ganges, Renown, Shropshire, Royal Sovereign, Tempest, Harrier, Sharpshooter, Kelly, Sheba, Chelmer and Gozo. We are looking for anyone who may have served with him especially when he was in the last three from 1941 to 1946. Please contact Miss A Cant and Mrs J Emptage at alison.cant@talktalk.net or tel: 01795 844703.

HMS Hardy, AB Povey: Trying to find out more about Able Seaman Povey of HMS Hardy, 1940 (a pastle on paper portrait). Was he a survivor of the attack? Was he rewarded for his part in the action in any way, ie did he receive a medal? Is he still alive and can he be contacted? If you can help, contact Dr Michael Ward at michael.ward@nda.ox.ac.uk or fax: 01865 311125 or mob: 07831 410193.

HMS Illustrious: Derek is seeking

information regarding a sailor named Tony who visited South Africa in 1944. Derek's grandmother Mabel Thompson who lived at Olympus Road, Johannesburg, and a member of the Navy Ladies League in South Africa had opened her home to Navy personnel and one of the young men she took in was Tony. Illustrious was in Durban for repairs in 1944 and Tony had been given leave as his brother (think his name was Peter) was in Barragwanth Hospital suffering with TB and died while Tony was staying with my grandmother. I am led to believe that Peter was buried in West Park Cemetery, though date is not known. Also think that Tony and his brother may have been twins. I have undertaken to try and find his burial place to ensure that his grave is properly marked but without names and records it is difficult. If you have any suggestions please contact Derek Drannan at dwd@gearmweb.co.za or write to PO Box 15197, Farrarmere, Benoni, 1518, South Africa.

Brazilian Sailing Ship - Meet Your Navy 2008: I am a member of the RAW Samba band on the Isle of Wight. We played at the 'Meet Your Navy' event during the summer and were asked to play for the Brazilian sailing ship as she departed. I am told that the crew had tears in their eyes as they left and as we have now been asked by the Brazilian Naval Attaché to contact him with a view to playing on other occasions involving the Brazilian Navy, we are hoping to trace any photos that may have been taken of us playing as the ship departed. The tears were because we reminded them of home rather than because they thought we were awful. If you have any photographs please contact Dave Jones at jonaht62w@googlemail.com or tel: 01983 721217.

HMS Nightingale: A colleague's friend is searching for information about his father's career in the RN. He is stuck on HMS Nightingale circa 1947, which he seems to think was a minesweeper. The only information I can find is that she was attached to Vernon, possibly as a training vessel. Can anyone enlighten me please? If you can help contact Kevin 'Reggie' Perrin at

kperin@nli.org.uk or tel: 01642 750585.

HMS President: I'm trying to find some information about my grandfather Able Seaman John Graham. Details that I have so far are that he was born in Glasgow February 21 1921; he was a DEMS gunner attached to HMS President III which I believe is a land base on the Thames; he died according to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission on September 3 1943 and his name is displayed at Plymouth. I would like to find out if possible how and where he died and any ships he was on (my father mentioned the Ohio). Also where he would have done his training and any other relevant information or contacts that could send me in the right direction would be greatly appreciated. Please contact John Graham at scotl1478@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 07857 681552.

Pubs: Bill would like information on pubs of yore in Devonport and Plymouth, names and locations please. If you can help, contact Bill Campbell at william80.campbell@mypostoffice.co.uk or write to 45 Findon Gardens, Belfast, BT9 6CL.

Recipients of the RNKS Medal: If any member of the RNKS is known or remembered from the Commonwealth who served in the RNKS, Mr M P Cocker would be pleased to learn of their details. He is only aware of two, a Canadian Army Captain and a Lt Cdr in the RANVR, details of whose unit, Command area (Flag Officer) rank or rate, nothing further is known. Both served in WW2. If you have any information please contact Mr Cocker at 10 Ellerbeck Road, Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancs, FY5 1DH or tel: 01253 865038.

HMS St Vincent: I was interested to read in November 2008 issue of *Navy News* about the 'St Vincent Plaque is Rededicated'. HMS St Vincent and the association enjoyed close links with the town of Stone in Staffordshire. Could this be where the saying 'Stone Frigate' originated? Perhaps readers would know. Contact Mick Cobby, 10 Alverstone Road, Worthing West Sussex, BN11 2JR.

Deaths

Rear Admiral Sir Paul Woolven Greening. Educated at Pangbourne Nautical College before joining RN as a special entry cadet in 1946. His commands included Asheldam, the landing ship Messina, Lewiston, Jaguar and Aurora. His staff appointments included fleet plans officer for the Far East Fleet from 1969-70, Captain Naval Drafting 1971-74 and Captain of Dartmouth Naval College 1976-78; promoted to Rear Admiral 1979 and Naval Secretary. He became Flag Officer Royal Yachts, took command in 1981. One of his first challenges was the honeymoon voyage of the Prince and Princess of Wales; upon relinquishing his command in 1985, appointed KCVO. He was invited to become Master of the Royal Household, (1986-92) and was exceptionally advanced to GCVO. Council member of the Mission to Seafarers; Younger Brother of Trinity House. November 5, Aged 80.

Leslie Sayer DSM. CPO and wartime telegraphist air gunner. Joined Ganges as a boy seaman, selected for signalman. After serving in two cruisers he transferred to the FAA as a telegraphist air gunner in a Swordfish 'Stringbag'. Joined his first squadron 811 in Furious in 1937; promoted to PO, qualified as a TAG instructor and posted to 825 NAS and the carrier Victorious where he won the DSM for his part in the first carrier-borne aircraft attack on the Bismarck. He was on board Ark Royal when she was torpedoed by a U-Boat and after being reformed, 825 NAS was based at RAF Manston from where six Swordfish were dispatched to attack Scharnhorst and Gneisenau with the Prinz Eugen; all were shot down and only five of the 18 aircraft were recovered including Sayer. Later flew anti-submarine patrols from an escort carrier on convoys to Russia and his final posting was to 837 NAS in Glory (Far East). In 1947 he became the first chairman of the Telegraphist Air Gunners Association; he co-wrote with Vernon Ball a book *Tag in a Stringbag* in 1994. November 1, Aged 83.

Capt 'Alfie' Sutton DSC. Joined as a special entry cadet in 1930 and trained in Erebus then served in Renown, Repulse and Basilisk before specialising as a naval observer in 1937. Prior to the war he flew in Swordfish 823 and 825 NAS in Glorious and Illustrious. Last survivor of the attack on the Italian fleet at Taranto, where he won his first DSC flying Swordfish L5K. In 1940 he and 'Tiffy' Torrens-Spence led a dive-bombing raid on Rhodes, then while flying with Lt Cdr 'Ginger' Hale they led a torpedo strike against an enemy convoy off Sicily and a bombing raid over Tripoli; twice mentioned in dispatches for these operations. Became naval liaison officer in Greece, planning nightly operations by 815 NAS against Italian shipping from the Albanian mountains. Beachmaster at Sphakia, where the defeated Allied forces were evacuated and awarded a Bar to his DSC for his outstanding gallantry. As staff officer (air), Eastern Task Force during Operation Torch, he helped plan the taking of Algeria and Morocco; air staff officer of 846 NAS flying Avengers from Ravager (Battle of the Atlantic); operations officer in Implacable with Fireflys of 1771 NAS locating Tirpitz at Tromsø, and made the FAA's last airborne torpedo strike of the war. Commanded the frigate Bigbury Bay, chief staff officer of Squadron during the Suez invasion, and finished as Director of the RN Staff College, Greenwich 1962-65. He was aide-de-camp to the Queen in 1964 and appointed CBE. He held a unique record in having won the Admiralty's Naval History Prize essay competition in 1939, 1947, 1949 and 1956. Association of RN Officers. November 6, Aged 96.

Rear Admiral John Adams. Joined in 1936 and at outbreak of war was a sub-lieutenant in Walker, supporting attacks on Narvik. He joined Cleveland as 2iC providing support for the attack on the St Nazaire dock gates and in 1942 he was MID for action against E-boats in the Channel. Cleveland also took part in the Allied landings in North Africa and the invasion of Sicily. Qualified as a torpedo expert 1943 and joined the staff of Captain (Destroyers) Western Approaches. Post-war he became an anti-submarine specialist; then CO of Creol; joined HMV Britannia as the first executive officer in 1954. Although not a submariner he was selected to be captain of the 3rd Submarine Squadron and depot ship Adamant. From 1960-62 he was captain superintendent of the Admiralty Underwater Weapons Establishment at Portland. From 1964-66 he was CO of Albion operating between Aden, Singapore, Borneo and Sarawak, with more than 100 hours flying in helicopters. Final post was Assistant Chief Naval Staff (Policy) where he argued for command aircraft carriers with helicopters and VSTOL aircraft, much to the then 1SL's ire. He was appointed CB on leaving the Navy. November 3, Aged 89.

Capt Michael Charles Henry. Joined Dartmouth as a cadet aged 13 in 1942 and served as a midshipman in HMS Kenya (West Indies), followed by Birmingham. Qualifying as a submariner 1949 he joined the submarines Alcide and Sea Scout rising to 2iC of Talent and Trenchant (Home and

Mediterranean). Passing the CO's qualifying course in 1955 he then commanded Seraph and later Trump and promoted to commander in 1961; also appointed to the US-UK Polaris programme and became an expert in the DASO requirement. He was 2iC of London then did two patrols in Resolution, one of which coincided with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. During his command as CO of Resolution, she fired Britain's first Polaris missile at sea in 1968. He was selected for promotion to captain in late 1979. Tours as a captain included director of naval operations and trade, two years in command of the four-boat Polaris force and in command of Hampshire, retiring in 1978. Ships and submarines included: Frobisher, Birmingham, Kenya, Rochester, Forth, damant, Teazer, London, Hampshire, Tactician, Seneschal, Alcide, Trespasser, Seascope, Talent, Trenchant, Tiptoe, Seraph, Trump and Resolution. He was the naval regional officer for Scotland and Northern Ireland 1980-90 and for some years vice-president of the Submariners Association and president of the local Sea Cadets. He had been a case worker for SSAFA since 1991. Submariners Association, Scottish branch. Association of RN Officers. November 6, Aged 80.

Norman McElroy. CPO. Served in Armada, Angelo, Indefatigable, Jupiter, Barleycorn, Eastbourne, Sea Eagle, Maidstone, Theseus, Iron Duke, Affleck, Repulse, Ocean, Victory and BYMs 2055 and 2277. HMS Bruce Association. July 9, Aged 88.

Ronald West.CERA. Served 1937-61, ERA apprentice 1937-41, in Nelson, Oakley, Whitshed, Naden (Canada shore base), Mulla of Kintyre, Commonwealth Japan, Aurora (Victory), Suvia, Adamant (Reserve Fleet), Charity, Morecambe Bay, Hornet, Bellerophon, Loch Fada, Sultan and Victory. November 6, Aged 87.

Ernest George 'Boyo' Adams. AB Radar plot. Served 1941-46 at Raleigh, Victory Barracks, Sirius (1942-44 Operation Pedestal, Torch Landings, Sicily and Italian Landings and operations in the Dodecanese), Sphinx, Collingwood and Godwit (RNAS Hinstock). November 19.

Gordon 'Freddie' Glazier. AA1. A/E entry series 03. Served 1948-72 with 800, 1833, 1840, 803 and 892 Naval Air Squadrons and onboard Eagle, Victorious and Hermes; also RNATE Figsard, RNAS Condon, Ford, Bramcote, Lossiemouth, Lee-on-Solent and Yeovil. October 16, Aged 76.

John Hobbs. AB Radar Operator. Served in Onslow, Caesar, Norfolk. 6th Destroyer Flotilla Association, The North Russia Club and the Russian Convoy Club. November 23, Aged 82.

Chris Prince. O/S. Served in Plover, Vanguard, Solebay, Glasserton, Victorious, Aisne, Loch Fada and a member of Loch Fada Association. November 26.

Lt Cdr Colin McMillan. Served in Bulldog and was First Lt of Morecambe Bay Korea 1951-54; he spoke fluent Russian and proved that Russian pilots were flying MiGS in Korea. HMS Morecambe Bay Association. September, Aged 85.

Colin Scruton. St Vincent boy and shipmate of the Comus Association. November 13, Aged 73.

Christopher John Docherty. CPO Radio Electrical Artificer. Served 1951-65 in Comus, Victorious and Aurora. RN and Inter-Service track athlete. Medalist in 440yds, long hurdles and 880yds at RN events. RN Champion for 880yds 1957. PTO with MoD (Navy) 1973-95 at RNAD Cullinport, Mercury and Collingwood. Figsard Association. November 4, Aged 73.

Sid Bancroft. AB. Served in Hound, Algerines Association. November 16, Aged 84.

Kenneth Lowe. AB Radar. Served in Cardigan Bay 1945 and Forecastle, 5 Mess, Liverpool 1946-47, Cardigan Bay and Liverpool Associations. November 24, Aged 82.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
William 'Bill' Marsh. Chief Engine Room Mechanician. Served in Hermes, Tyne, Superb, Wild Goose, Sirago, Bleasdale and Indefatigable. Secretary Ipswich Branch. October 18, Aged 79.

Walter 'Wally' Thompson. Chief GI Instructor. Served 1927-56 Calliope, Curlew, Pembroke, Valiant, Malcolm, Woolwich, St Angelo (Dundalk), Southampton, Excellent, Phoebe (wartime) and Vanguard; was Chief of the Annex at Ganges for three commissions. Vice president and founder member Ipswich RNA, also treasurer and vice chairman Royal British Legion, Ipswich. September 17, Aged 96.

Bill 'Shorty' Empton (alias Poop Deck Pappie). CPO. Served 1936-61 in Ajax (as gunnery rating at Battle of River Plate), Falmouth, Dampier, Reclaim, Superb, Forth and Manxman. Visited the town of Ajax in Canada in which the town of Ajax has streets named after the crew of the ship and Bill was proud of his Empton Close and visited there several times with his ship's association. Margate RNA. November 7, Aged 88.

Ivy Findley. Associate member of Wigston

& District branch, on welfare and social committee, also audit team. November 10.

Albert 'Bert' Harris. AB. Served 1943-46 Burma, France and Italy, Battersea, Margate and Ramsgate RNA. November 14, Aged 82.

Douglas 'Doug' Coombes. L/Sea. Joined 1940 and served for four years in Argonaut damaged by enemy gunfire, Talbot and Russian convoys. Camberley branch. October 9, Aged 85.

Muriel Mary Cullimore. PO Wren Writer. Wartime service. Dursley & District branch. November 21.

Frank 'Scouse' Baines. Leading Air Mechanic. FAA. Served 1948-55 Royal Arthur and Lee-on-Solent, Halfar (Malta) and Lossiemouth Air Stations. Bathgate RNA. July 23.

Vernon 'Scotty' Scott. CPO. Served 1936-58 in Norfolk, Eagle and Russian convoys. November 10, Aged 90.

HMS ORION ASSOCIATION

Cdr Bill Brabrook. Associate member. Served in Hood. August 13 in Durban, South Africa. Aged 98.

Tom Bashford. Served aboard 1945-47 as Seaman AB. September 9.

Ron Cozens. Served aboard 1941-42 as PO Canteen Manager and 4th Port Ammo Hoist; also Bonaventure and Uganda. November 3 in Georgia, USA. Aged 85.

Dr Geoffrey R Kershaw. Served aboard 1942-43 and 1945 as a surgeon lieutenant. November 5.

ASSOCIATION OF RN OFFICERS

Lt Cdr E R Botting. Served in Victorious, Albion, Tamar, Raleigh, Figsard, Terror and Mercury.

Lt Cdr T W Bradley. Served in Falcon, Dryad, Black Prince, Harrier, Girdle Ness, Saker and Ark Royal.

Cdr R W Keogh. Served in Phoebe, Grenville, Launceston Castle, Helmsdale, St Brides Bay, Hornet, Collingwood, Mercury, Meon, Forth, Mauritius, Ulster, Zest, and Hermes.

Lt Cdr J B Orton. Served in Harrier, Ark Royal, Bermuda, Belfast, Dryad and Albion.

Cdr J Pearce. Served in Montclair, Maidstone, Mercury, Phoenicia, President, Terror and NATO.

Cdr H B Wise RNRV. Served in President 11.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION

P W 'Bill' Butters MID. Stoker 1. Served 1942-46 in submarines Otway and X-craft, Barrow Branch. Aged 84.

W A 'Bill' Hay MID. ERA. Served 1941-46 in submarines Clyde and Spark. Australia branch. Aged 87.

J 'BP' Belton-Perkin. CRS. Served 1953-57 in submarines Selene, Scythian, Subtle, Talent, Tally-ho, Tactician, Ambush, Tiptoe, Aeneas and Artemis. Dolphin and Southampton branches. Aged 73.

G 'George' Marré. Matelot (Torps). Served 1934-46 in French submarine Surcouf La Chaudière. Merseyside branch. Aged 87.

Sports lottery

22 November: £5,000 - Lt Cdr V R A Noyce, HMS York; £1,500 - ETME2 J M Thorne, HMS Kent; £500 - ETWE1 J D Hazelden, HMS Iron Duke.

29 November: £5,000 - Lt Cdr R A Forster, Fleet HQ Portsmouth; £1,500 - MEM2 J D Rastall, HMS Chatham; £500 - POLogs(CS) S T Reeves, HMS Endurance.

Where are you now?

848 NAS, Malaya Association: Seeking survivors of the original 'Junglies' who have not already joined the association. Contact the Secretary, Les Smith on 01584 711910.

HMS Ark Royal: I am trying to trace my cousin, Lynn Green, who I believe served on Ark Royal. His mother (my mother's sister) Violet Green and his sisters, Narelle and Lorne came out to live in South Africa for some time, but Violet and Narelle settled back in the UK during the 1960s. If you can help contact Barry Adamson at barry.adamson@fsmail.net or write to Telegraph Cottage, Market Street, East Harling, Norfolk, NR16 2AD.

Graham Finnis: Seeking Graham Finnis so that I can return the cap tallies of each ship that he served on. He was on the final voyage of the Ark Royal as well as many other ships. These items are for Graham only or a member of his family. It is believed that when Graham left the Navy he joined the Police Force and possibly joined the Hampshire Constabulary. If you know the whereabouts of Graham could you get him to contact Pat McGrath, New Orchard Farm, Upper Rodmersham, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 0QL.

HMS Bulwark, Albion & Centaur Association: Did you ever serve in Bulwark, Albion or Centaur? The association is open to anyone who served at any time on these ships. Magazine three times per year plus events including AGM/Social, sea-days and anniversary commemorations. Whilst our 'Home Port' is Pompey, this year's AGM and social will be at Sand Bay Holiday Village, Weston Super Mare. Membership is just £8 per annum. Enquiries to Leigh Easton at ngsfo@tiscali.co.uk or website <http://www.bulwarkassoc.plus.com> or write to Glenmoray, Hayford Place, Cambusbaron, Stirling, FK7 9JX.

HMS Crossbow: Shirley is looking for anyone who knew her late husband Tony Hammond. He was on Crossbow 1961-63 then went on to Protector. Contact Shirley at shirleyandtony@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 0121 360 7756 or write to 4 Sutherland Close, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 7LT.

HMS Fearless: Seeking any MEM, LMEM or POMEM who was onboard HMS Fearless during 1969-70 (the trip out to the Far East). There is a surprise party for two of the crew, William John 'Sooty' Sutton and David 'Smokey' Fagg, as they are 60 this year. If you were onboard at that time contact Mrs B J Fagg at casabev@ntlworld.com or tel: 07747 399369.

HMS Figsard, 743 entry: John Howe. Figsard entry 743, ex-Sovereign, Splendid and Scople. Calling anyone that is still around. I have been Stateside now for roughly 20 years, would like to talk to anyone on those boats and get any photos of the boats. I am sadly lacking in photos. I now live in Florida. I left as a CCMEA in 1991. Contact John at jshowe2@gmail.com or write to 2525 NW 21st Avenue, Gainesville, Florida, 32605, USA.

HMS Hermes: I am searching for long lost friend POPT Robin 'Pusser' Hill. He was onboard the Hermes in Plymouth, the last time I saw him in 1977, and would have left the Navy approximately 1980, having completed Pensionable Service. He qualified as a PTI in 1964. He lived in Cornwall with wife Margaret. I served with Robin at Yeovilton 1966-69 and he, like a lot of PTIs was responsible for shaping our lives for which I am eternally grateful. He was a great character and nothing would please me more than to meet up with him again. Anyone out there know where he is. Please contact Jack Halford at jackhalford@mac.com or tel: 07847 303236.

HMS Kenya: I am trying to trace anyone who knew Brian Franklin (born 1936) who served on HMS Kenya as well as Daring. I know he spent some time in Portsmouth. I am also trying to obtain a photo or postcard of this ship if anyone can help? Please contact Linda Dudzinski at ldudz@live.com, tel: 01803 328152 or mobile: 07849 770541.

HMS Orion: I would be interested to hear from anyone who served on HMS Orion, one of three ships moored together in Plymouth dockyard in the early sixties. I was a stoker awaiting draft after a two-year stint on Girdleness and was subsequently sent to serve on Exmouth doing anti-submarine exercises in the Irish sea as a stoker. Orion comprised of ships, Roberts (a shallow draft monitor with massive guns and a bulge surrounding the hull), the Zeebrugge (landing craft) and the Woolwich, a depot ship. We all lived on the Woolwich. I remember that the routine was quite relaxed with work allocated on various ships some of whom were 'mothballed'. I remember seeing a fast minelayer called Ariadne which could achieve incredible speed, faster than modern ships. On evening rounds nobody would go down below into the Roberts boiler or engine rooms because of a weird feeling and tales of dead dockyard 'mateys' trapped in tanks B below. Contact Paul McHugo at pauljm@hotmail.com or tel: 01244 812845.

HMS Raleigh: I did my National Service training at HMS Raleigh in December 1954. In my class was a young man named Alex Pringle who came from Hawick in Scotland. I'd like to contact him, I have some good photos of our graduating class along with some good memories. I was drafted out of Raleigh to HMS Birmingham for 18 months at Malta and the Med fleet. Stoker was my lofty rank. I look forward to reuniting with 'old ships', I am now retired in Victoria, Canada. Please contact Barry Phillips at redtape99@hotmail.com or write to 2463 Costa Vista Place, Victoria, BC, V8Z 6Y5, Canada.

HMS Valiant: My uncle Thomas Rigg served on the Valiant during the war. I wonder if anyone out there remembers him? He was born in Bootle, England. Please contact Ms Pamela Benich at pkegs@insightbb.com or write to 313 Whippoorwill Heights, New Albany, Indiana, 47150, USA.

HMS Walrus: Has anyone seen Stanley's brother, Peter Butler,

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to:
Subject:

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Royal New Zealand Navy

Kia Ora Shipmates

Greetings from the land of the long white cloud and boy has that cloud been full of rain, however the clouds are getting less and less and the golden thing in the sky is starting to warm the place up. Day to day life has now settled down with my son going to Takapuna Grammar School, studying for his end of year exams and my wife fully immersing herself in the Kiwi tradition of sampling good coffee and another surprising one, pies of various flavours and sizes, yummy.

I am currently posted to the Sea Safety Training Squadron as an NBCDI under training helping to instruct all aspects of Damage Control and Fire Fighting. It is a massively busy and rewarding job teaching and assessing all members of the Royal New Zealand Navy to enable their progression and promotion and I am privileged to work alongside many committed and professional people who are passionate about what they do, so no difference there.

The biggest difference is in family life, we are busy enjoying the many and varied activities both sporting and lifestyle orientated that we were too busy to contemplate in the UK, and our dog 'Scooby' is getting used to the taste of sea water from the fantastic beach walks. The sense of community is strong and values that our parents would have been used to are still relevant here, respect is still a valued trait. We have just booked our camping trip over the Christmas leave period when it seems the whole of Auckland disappears to various parts of the North Island for some well earned R and R.

The whole process from initial enquiry to the 5 day lateral Recruit Induction in HMNZS Philomel has enabled both me and my family fulfil a dream, and the process is controlled and managed by a helpful and friendly team who are able to guide and mentor you through the myriad of hoops you have to jump through. So if you are thinking of, or require any further information don't delay get in touch they will be able to help you to get on with 'Living the Dream' as we are.

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EDUCATION

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● Live theatre in this country has a bright future if the West Hill Park Preparatory School's production of **Bugsy Malone** is anything to go by. Alan Parker's tongue-in-cheek gangster musical offers slapstick, farce, panto, comedy, music and dancing as well as a fast-moving plot set in New York in 1929. With custard pies and splurge guns (above) the weapons of choice, and so much energy that it seemed like a cast of thousands (including gangsters, inept cops, speakeasy dancers, boxers and down-and-outs), there was plenty to keep the audiences rapt. See the school, based at Titchfield in Hampshire, in action for yourself – call 01329 842356 to arrange a visit

Plan early for relocation

RELOCATING can be a stressful time for any family and moving schools can be especially difficult for your children.

The Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) are here to offer you help and support with the issues around education and relocation.

It is advisable to start planning early to give more time to resolve problems. If your child is at a critical time in their education, ie GCSE, AS or A-level years, you may be able to retain your house in Service Families Accommodation.

Contact your housing provider for further information about the support for retention of quarters

that we may be able to offer

First Steps:

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The packs are available from the CEAS website or office.

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If possible, arrange to visit schools – inspection reports alone do not tell you whether the school will be suitable for your child.

Apply as soon as possible for your preferred school. Although the law in England allows you to state a preference, it does not require the Local Authority to allocate your preferred school.

Admission Appeals

CEAS can offer advice on the process of appealing or help in the wording of the appeal.

However, do look at the school being offered as it may satisfy your requirements.

Further Help

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Rural idyll exists

TO many people a boarding school in the English countryside conjures up scenes of a bygone age: misty mornings, healthy air, a place where children can climb trees, camp out and do the things that you read about in Enid Blyton books.

At Shebbear College we strive to have the best of the old but add to it the very best of the present.

Many parents feel that the essence of boarding in the UK is best captured in a rural setting.

The natural elements of peace and quiet, fresh air and space to play are combined with modern facilities in historic buildings.

Modern boarding houses offer comfortable 'home from home'

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A country setting provides an environment where children can be children.

Equally important are the members of staff that dedicate their time to help growing children.

Shielded from the dangers of city streets, pupils experience personal safety – a highly desirable prerequisite to learning.

Removed from the hurly-burly of the metropolis, pupils keep in touch through email and internet, allowing frequent communication with home. Parents can feel reassured that, in an increasingly hostile world, their children are in a safe, secure environment.

A liberating education for girls

TRURO High School provides a truly liberating education for girls in Cornwall (see right).

Whilst academic excellence is important – Truro High School topped the 2008 league tables in Cornwall for GCSE and A-level pass rates – it is the extraordinary personal touch which sets the school aside from its competitors.

"The staff really know my daughter – her strengths, her weaknesses, her hopes and aspirations – and the relationship between the staff and girls is very special," said one parent.

Headmistress Jane Abbotts said: "With teaching groups no bigger than 20, girls receive the individual attention they deserve.

"Whether gifted and talented or perhaps struggling a bit in a subject, we gear our teaching and learning to what girls need."

They are free to develop their own individual self-confidence without the distractions that can arise in co-educational schools, and it allows them to opt for subjects which are traditionally seen as more male without fear of appearing 'uncool'.

"Add to the timetable sport (an extraordinary 36 county titles over the past five years), music, drama, art, leadership opportunities and a real sense of fun, Truro High School girls are busy, happy, confident and purposeful," she added.

Truro High School constantly strives to develop its provision while keeping a mindful check on the importance of value for money.

Call Mrs Ellison on 01872 272830 to arrange a personal tour and taster day.



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Centenary celebrations

AT the heart of any good school lie high expectations – and the Duke of York's Royal Military School is proud that yet again last summer its pupils enjoyed success both in GCSEs and university applications.

Amongst our GCSE candidates, 94 per cent gained the Government's benchmark academic figure of five or more passes including Mathematics and English (the national average is 47 per cent, and in independent education 61 per cent) and just about all (97 per cent) Sixth Form leavers went on to university, the vast majority of them (96 per cent) being accepted at their university and course of first choice.

This year is a very important year for the Duke of York's as it celebrates the centenary of the school's escape from the pollution of London to Dover.

It was originally founded in 1801 for the children of soldiers



● The Duke of York's Military Band play at Lord's

who died fighting for their country, and now, fully funded by the MOD, is a boarding school for the children of Servicemen and women.

The children are looking forward to many special events to celebrate the centenary of the move, and the school marching band will be particularly active.

Boarding success

COMMODORE Chris Palmer, Commanding Officer of RNAS Yeovilton, and Gen Sir Alex Harvey, governor, were at Hazlegrove for the official opening of the third boarding house, reflecting the strong links the school enjoys with both the Royal Navy and the Army.

Headmaster Richard Fenwick said: "The boarding has grown steadily over the past five years, largely as a result of personal recommendation."

"It is a tribute to the commitment and dedication of the strong teaching team we have here at Hazlegrove."



Admiral's school still proud to serve

KELLY College, founded by Admiral Kelly in 1877, is proud of its 130 years of service to the Royal Navy.

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Kelly offers all the facilities of a larger school, while retaining the advantages in the individual care

and class size of a smaller school.

The Preparatory School is co-educational and has a further 200 pupils aged two to eleven, and it shares many of the facilities of the senior school, including boarding from Year 5.

Kelly enjoys good academic results (100 per cent pass rate at A-level for the past six years, with 65 per cent at grades A and B in 2008) and for its cultural and

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KING'S BRUTON

SERVING FAMILIES IN THE SOUTH WEST

RMVCC prepares trio for careers

THIS month sees two former members of the Portsmouth Royal Marines Volunteer Cadet Corps (RMVCC) start training with the Royal Marines at Lympstone – and they are in no doubt as to the value of the preparation they have had.

Cadet RSM Joe Bulbeck and CSM Chris Carr came first and fifth respectively in their intake assessment.

Their colleague, CSM Lauder, joined the Royal Navy as a survival specialist last October.

All the cadet sergeant majors agreed that aspects of the RMVCC, such as character-building activities, put them in an advantageous position.

The cadet corps stages weekend training exercises where cadets get to put into practice all the field survival skills they are taught at the regular bi-weekly sessions – opportunities which are hard to come by outside the RMVCC.

“They all feel that they have gained not only in confidence and leadership skills, but that they are now also competent and self-assured, qualities which will be essential as they begin their training,” said Recruiting Officer Bob Allan.

“It is interesting to note that Bulbeck, Carr and Lauder were all inspired to join the Services as a result of the staunch and companionable atmosphere, created by the instructors, most of whom have some military background, of the cadet unit as a whole.”

One highlight of their time with the RMVCC was their retracing of the Operation Frankton route – better known as the Cockleshell Heroes, who launched a commando raid against Nazi targets in the French port of Bordeaux in December 1942.

To prepare for the expedition, organised by WO2 Cooper in the summer of 2007, the three cadets undertook extensive kayak and swimming training, and it helped them gain their Duke of Edinburgh silver awards.

“All three found the experience one of the most significant in their lives to date, a culmination of their training and time as members of Portsmouth RMVCC,” said Bob.

“The three cadet sergeant majors bid a sad farewell to the RMVCC, but will take with them a wealth of experience and memories which they hope, as the badge says, will help them to ‘Be Worthy’ in their future careers.”

For more details on the RMVCC contact Bob on 023 9254 7495.

Formal occasion – ‘relax and have fun’

THE cadets of the Bristol (Avonmouth) unit, TS Enterprise, commemorated the 203rd anniversary of Admiral Nelson’s great naval victory and his 250th birthday at their annual Trafalgar Night mess dinner.

Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Barbara Hillier RNR said: “The cadets had been practising hard for the recent Festival of Remembrance at the Colston Hall and Remembrance Sunday parades.

“Whilst this was a formal occasion it gives them a chance to relax and dress up to the nines.”

She added: “The aim of the Sea Cadet Corps is to encourage valuable personal attributes and high standards of conduct, using a nautical theme based on the customs of the Royal Navy.

“That includes, of course, the fun parts!”

The dinner followed the traditional routine of shanties, parading the Roast Beef of Old England, grace and the spectacular parading of the chocolate

Tyne clean-up yields rubbish by the ton

MORE than a ton of debris and rubbish has been cleared from the Tyne waterfront at the headquarters of the Gateshead unit.

Cadets from TS Flamingo joined volunteers from Hexham Sub Aqua Club and the North Shields-based Maritime Volunteer Service to tackle the rubbish around Pipewellgate.

The work, carried out with Gateshead Council as part of the Clean Tyne project, was one of a number of ‘river bank raids’ which aims to clean up the river and raise awareness of environmental issues.

Focus of attention was on a slipway used by the cadets to launch boats, which was covered in all kinds of rubbish, including traffic cones and shopping trolleys.

The waterfront adjacent also had decades of detritus, including car tyres and industrial rubbish, some of it on thick, cloying mud which was removed by attaching lines and being hauled in by a debris collection vessel.

Everyone involved was given protective clothing and received extensive health and safety briefings before starting work.

As a result of their efforts, more than a ton of crud was removed.

Unit CO CPO (SCC) Lesley Somerville said: “This has been a valuable training exercise that has helped us to strengthen our practical maritime and team-working skills as well as bringing volunteers together from neighbouring maritime units to share knowledge and experiences.”



● Gateshead cadets on the bank of the Tyne during clean-up duties



● Cadets from the Parkstone (TS Drax) and Poole (TS Dolphin) units on duty for Remembrance Sunday. Five cadets from Parkstone and one from Poole formed the cenotaph guard in Poole Park, and Drax was also well-represented in the parade, with three cadets in the colour party and one laying a wreath

Picture: Sarah Burton (TS Drax admin officer)

ships-of-the-line, aflame with sparklers, under the watchful eye of Mess President LC London, aged 17.

The after-dinner speech, which on Trafalgar Night has a Nelson theme, was made by 16-year-old AC Capstick, and grace was said with aplomb by ten-year-old Junior Cadet Shaw.

PO (SCC) Christopher Batt said: “Anyone aged from ten to 18 who wants to know more about being a cadet call 0117 938 1845 or send me an email titled ‘let me join the fun’, to avonmouthsc@btinternet.com”

TS Enterprise is based in an old signal station by the River Avon.

It has an impressive track record, since 1942, of producing excellent opportunities, training, adventure and qualifications for the young people of south-west Bristol and north Somerset.

● A chocolate ship-of-the-line is paraded for cadets and guests of the Bristol (Avonmouth) unit at their Trafalgar Night dinner



Malta GC celebrates birth of Lord Nelson

MALTA GC unit celebrated the 250th anniversary of the birth of Lord Nelson in true Naval fashion.

The wardroom of TS St Paul staged a mess dinner in the exquisite dining hall of the historical Palazzo Capua in Sliema, where the officers, senior rates and non-commissioned officers ate a sumptuous meal served by the Sea and Marine Cadets themselves.

There was plenty of justification for the cadets serving up the meal – mess stewarding is part of the youngsters’ curriculum of training.

The evening started with the ship’s company parading on the hotel’s grounds, which became their main deck for the evening as they ‘piped the side’ when the Area Officer appointed by the MoD (Navy) responsible for the Malta GC Unit, Cdr Clive Smith, arrived ‘onboard’.

Cdr Smith and his wife Gill were guests of honour for the evening.

The food served was even named for the occasion.

As starters, Chef Montebello prepared a linguini with a julienne of zucchini, fresh chillies and cerna finished with rucola pesto, which, for the occasion, the wardroom christened ‘Remembering Lady Hamilton’.

For the main course, the diners ate oven-roasted pork loin stuffed with apricots and prunes and served with wholegrain mustard sauce, named in honour of Nelson’s parents, Edmund and Catherine Nelson.

The meal was finished with almond cake named ‘As Sweet as Horatia,’ in honour of Nelson’s daughter with Lady Hamilton, which the Chief Steward presented to the Mess President and all guests so as to see the printed image of Lord Nelson which formed part of the icing on the cake.

The wines chosen were French and Spanish in order to honour Nelson’s enemies of the time.

Port and marsala (marsala was used instead of madeira, as Nelson preferred it) decanters were passed around for the Loyal Toast, the Toast to the President of Malta GC and to honour the birth of the Immortal Memory.

Cdr Smith, in his after-dinner speech, thanked Mess President Sgt (SCC) Donald Montebello and made reference to Sgt Montebello’s forthcoming trip to the UK to sit for his Officer’s Selection Board to be promoted Lieutenant (SCC) Royal Marines Reserve.

The officer thanked the cadets, commending their impeccable service which would have “made any Royal Navy wardroom proud”.

The main speaker was Lt (SCC) James Davis RNR (retd), who recounted the life and battles of Nelson.

The Mess President announced that the portrait of Lord Nelson that the wardroom had commissioned specially for the evening was being presented to the Cadets Mess President to hang in the Cadets Mess.

The evening finished off with adult staff and guests playing traditional mess games.

Rescue is recounted

YEOVIL cadets were given a graphic account of the remarkable rescue of a Russian mini submarine and its crew of seven trapped in fishing nets off the eastern Kamchatka coast in 2003.

Cdr Ian Riches led the rescue team, and was awarded the Order of Maritime Achievement by President Vladimir Putin, and the OBE by the Queen.

Cdr Riches gave a talk about the rescue to more than 130 generous supporters of the Somerset and Dorset branch of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets at their annual general meeting and fundraising event, held at RNAS Yeovilton.

The cadets and their staff then gave a talk about their own achievements through the year, and had the opportunity afterwards to meet Cdr Riches.

Taking Pride in their work

IN ORDER to supplement the opportunities to go to sea in ‘their own ship’, cadets from West Wales and the Dartmouth unit spent a week in Devon waters on board the fleet tender Pride of Bristol, formerly Royal Marines fleet training ship Messina.

Operating from Britannia Royal Naval College’s Sand Quay on the River Dart, the cadets completed an action-packed week covering a number of aspects of life afloat.

The ship is additionally used for training Royal Naval Reserve crews from Plymouth, Cardiff and Bristol, and the cadets were complimented on their high levels of skills and abilities.

Many of the cadets are now looking forward to returning later this year to upgrade the qualifications which they have already achieved.

Area officer to retire

THE Severn branch of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC) held their annual mess dinner in the company of Guest of Honour Rear Admiral Morgan Morgan-Giles (president) and Cdr and Mrs Neil Hinch.

Cdr Hinch is shortly retiring from the Royal Navy and will no longer be the South West Area Officer for the Corps.

Many guests thanked the commander for his exceptional service to the Corps, and he was presented with a decanter by branch chairman Stephen Smith.

There was a further presentation by Lt Cdr Richard Tyrrell (District Officer Severn) of a silver salver.

Grant will help with travelling expenses

LOCHABER unit has been awarded a major grant which will help its team of volunteers.

Attracting such volunteers in a remote rural area, where long distances have to be covered, can be a problem.

In order to attend unit business, some staff and committee members have to make a round trip of up to 50 miles, including two ferry crossings.

Others do not have to contend with ferry timetables, but must still negotiate up to 25 miles each way on the busy A82 trunk road which snakes through the Great Glen, linking Fort William with Inverness and Glasgow.

Although they can cope with the weather, drivers have been badly hit by fuel costs.

Bearing this in mind, the unit management committee successfully applied for a Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland award to help support volunteers' expenses, for unit insurance and electricity costs – the result was a cheque for £5,530.

Unit chairman John Fotheringham said: "It is difficult to obtain adult volunteers, so this grant from the Lloyds TSB Foundation is extremely welcome.

"It is not an extraordinary amount of money, but it is certainly a welcome boost and should allow us to budget right through until next June.

"It will allow us to reimburse those who give up their time to help us. Yes, they are volunteers, but they shouldn't be out of pocket because of it.

"Many travel in from outside Fort William, including the Ardnamurchan peninsula, so it's hard for them."

One welcome consequence of the grant is that it releases reserve funds which can now be spent on providing the cadets with additional training opportunities.

Gosport get their hands on trophy



ALWAYS the bridesmaid, never the bride – until now.

After coming runners-up on more than one occasion, Gosport unit has finally bagged the coveted Lewington Trophy.

The cadets of TS Hornet took the cup for maximum overall sports participation in the Sea Cadet Central District.

Pictured left is Southern Area District Officer for the Corps, Lt Cdr Karen Kristiansen, presenting the trophy to Gosport's Commanding Officer, S/Lt Hilary Gilbert-Jones, at a special awards evening at the unit's headquarters in Cooperage Green, Royal Clarence Yard.

But the Lewington Trophy, which reflected Gosport's success in a whole raft of sporting

competitions over the past year, was not the only cause for pride that evening.

Principal guest Cdre Alan Rymer, of HMS Sultan, also handed over a burgee to S/Lt Gilbert-Jones, demonstrating that TS Hornet, as a result of its annual Naval inspection, is among the top 25 per cent of the 400 or so units across the country.

Other VIP guests at the evening included the Mayor of Gosport, Cllr Derek Kimber, unit patron Lady Fieldhouse, unit president Rear Admiral Tony Whetstone, Sea Cadet Southern Area Officer Cdr Andy Giles, president of the Gosport Rotary Club Clive Evans, chairman of Gosport RNA branch S/M Chris Smith and chairman of the Consort Association S/M Peter Lee-Hale.

Six out seven for Norwich

NORWICH cadets almost swept the board at the annual East Anglia District drill and piping competition, held at TS St Edmund, Bury St Edmunds.

The team won six of the seven trophies available – best squad, best guard, best colour party, best team piping, best squad commander (LC Madie Fray) and best guard commander (LC Tom Hunt).

LC Tom Hunt and AC Martin Westgate were runners-up in the individual pipe competition.

The results were recognition for all the hard work and effort that the cadets and S/Lt (SCC) Spinks RNR and CPO (SCC) Massen have put into their training in the past few months.

The drill and pipe team members were LC Tom Hunt, LC George Fray, LC Madie Fray, AC Martin Westgate, AC Alex O'Connor, AC Amiee Harvey, AC Alan Middleton, OC Sebastian Harvey, OC Guy Beavan, Cadet Richard Lansdell, Cadet Leanne Parker, Cadet Ryan Yerrill and Cadet Mary Connelly.

Special thanks to Cdt Josh Hunt, who helped tremendously on the day and who stepped in at short notice as reserve during training sessions.

Double victory for Walton

WALTON-on-the-Naze unit has celebrated a double victory at the guard and piping competition held at the Martello Holiday Camp in Walton.

After many months of extra training and against strong opposition from Hornchurch unit, Walton's guard team lifted the trophy for the third consecutive year after an impressive display routine.

POC Jay Wacham was also rewarded for his outstanding efforts by winning the best guard commander trophy.

This year's individual pipers also made their mark, with OC Tom Horton taking second place, just one point behind the winner, while fellow cadet Casey Brown finished fourth.

Team pipers AC Linda Richards and OCs Grace Roper and Tom Horton finished second overall.

CO S/Lt Gary Dodd said: "This has really been our year.

"We are all very proud of the cadets – they have worked their socks off over the past year.

"The unit has attended every competition, with the cadets winning gold medals at shooting, athletics, pulling, seamanship and guard, and silver medals in sailing, swimming and piping."

Service dilemma

THE Sea Cadet Corps was well-represented at the Annual Service for Seafarers at St Paul's Cathedral in London – though for some it presented a quandary.

Cadets from the two closest units, Southwark and City of London, are involved every year, but several members from both have the dilemma of choosing between parading with the cadets or with the London Nautical School, barely 15 minutes walk from the cathedral.

For newly-qualified POC George Whitfield it had to be with the school this year as he has the role of Drill Master – he is also a cadet drill instructor at TS Cossack, the Southwark unit.

This year the Princess Royal attended with Vice Admiral Timothy Laurence, alongside Captain of the Corps Capt Jonathan Fry and London Area Officer Cdr Paul Haines.

Dive on Iveston

A SEA Cadet Corps diving team has inspected the hull of TS Iveston, and all seems well with the old minesweeper.

The Ton-class vessel was moored at Tilbury Docks in 1993, and six years later formally became part of the Thurrock unit.

The diving team, led by PO (SCC) Rob Waterfield, consisted of three Corps divers – Lt (SCC) June Sigley RNR (Perth), PO (SCC) Stuart McLaughlin (Tooting and Balham) and LC Frank O'Driscoll (Greenwich, Deptford and Rotherhithe) – and two sports divers from the Royal Navy who have close links with the ship, ETME(1)s Bill Gibson (HMS Nelson) and Luke Bailey (HMS Exeter).

Knowledge, skills and techniques gathered from various diving courses were put to the test during the exercise, with the all-important dose of reality giving some food for thought.

As PO Waterfield noted: "Doing searches and inspection in a training pool is all well and good, but actually attempting to inspect a ship's hull and seabed around the ship with visibility no more than 0.5m brings a completely new dimension to diving."

The Iveston dive was the culmination of a course of instruction, and also fulfilled a

long-held ambition by both serving sailors, former Hornchurch unit cadets, to take part in a dive to inspect the ship's hull.

As for the verdict, all appeared to be in order.

The dive showed that the hull appeared to be generally in good order, with nothing out of the ordinary to report.

The one proviso was that on the day of the dive, the Port of London Authority needed to pump water from the Thames into the dock, which gave problems with visibility.

Lt (SCC) George Wilson RNR, Executive Officer and Marine Engineer Officer of TS Iveston, said: "We hope to welcome the diving team back onboard Iveston in 2009 and hopefully make Iveston a permanent feature in the diving specialisation's diary."

Coastal minesweeper HMS Iveston (M1151) was built by the Philip and Son yard at Dartmouth and launched in the summer of 1955.

She was one of a numerous class of ship – more than 100 Tons were produced – built with a double mahogany hull on aluminium alloy frames to reduce the magnetic signature in their prime role as minesweepers, though they also served as patrol ships (particularly effectively in Hong Kong), and a variety of other roles.

● LC Frank O'Driscoll and ETME(1) Bill Gibson at TS Iveston's bow



Full diary for TS Laforey

THE calendar has been of particular significance for cadets of Northampton and Wellingborough unit of late.

Around £200 was raised at the unit's annual bonfire and fireworks party (which will be used for the replacement of training equipment), which fell in the same week as the Hallowe'en party.

As usual, guys (and the odd carved pumpkin) were burnt on the bonfire with all due ceremony, and the cadets entered into the spirit of things by dressing up, playing grisly games and attempting to scare each other.

They then threw their weight behind Remembrance ceremonies, helping the Royal British Legion to raise more than £600 for the Poppy Appeal, and attending parades in Northampton and Wellingborough.

Almost 60 cadets and 16 instructors from TS Laforey paraded in Northampton at the same time as 13 cadets and four instructors observed the two

minutes silence in their new home Rushden.

The cadets of the Wellingborough satellite unit then turned their minds to preparations for the visit by the Eastern Area Officer, Cdr Clive Smith, who (as *Navy News* went to press) was due to tour the unit and meet the cadets during his first visit to the new Rushden home.

Grants from the High Sheriff's Fund and the Inland Waterways Association helped buy new oars for unit rowing boats, which should get more cadets afloat during the 2009 boating season.

As well as the regular ceremonial events, cadet training carried on as normal, with local boat work training weekends and a group attending a week-long offshore cruise in the TS John Jerwood.

Unit footballers are looking forward to representing Northamptonshire in the regional competition in Cambridge – and there is also the small matter of the end-of-year carol service and the various festive parties and discos to consider as well.



● SEVEN new members were welcomed into the 1st Watchet Sea Scout Troop (RN Group 63) at a ceremony held in the middle of the Bristol Channel. The seven were part of a group of 12 which spent the afternoon on the 66ft traditional Danish sailing vessel *Josefine*, thanks to her owners. During their trip the scouts tested their knowledge on the use of sails as well as learning about navigating the wooden vessel. Five of the Watchet scouts are pictured above taking a well-earned break during a hard afternoon's sailing...

Good look at carrier

MEMBERS of the Chelmsford and Walton-on-the-Naze units jumped at the chance to join aircraft carrier HMS *Illustrious* as she sailed from Portsmouth to London.

The cadets spent two days on board, tramping the length and breadth of the ship from the galley to the bridge, taking in areas such as the sick bay and weaponry along the way.

Eating and sleeping on board gave the cadets of training ships Upholder and (appropriately enough) *Illustrious* an unrivalled view of life in the Senior Service and how the different specialisations go about their business.

Having sailed from Portsmouth on a Monday, the following day saw the carrier pass through the Thames

Barrier and continue upriver, past the Millennium Dome (now the O2) and, having turned around mid-stream, complete her journey stern-first.

A couple of hours before arriving at their final destination, Greenwich, the cadets joined the ship's company on the flight deck to line the side of the ship in traditional Royal Navy fashion – a very proud moment for the youngsters (pictured right).

The visitors reluctantly disembarked at Greenwich having had a busy and informative two days.

Both units were grateful for the opportunity to join the carrier, and passed on their thanks to the ship's Commanding Officer, Capt Steve Chick, and his "fantastic" ship's company.





Essex tyros shine

BRENTWOOD Junior Sea Cadets from Ark Royal division completed a successful year when they won the Essex District junior unarmed drill competition at Walton-on-the-Naze.

The latest success caps a good year for the youngsters, who have now won district trophies for athletics, pulling and drill.

They also represented Essex district at the London Area regatta at Royal Victoria Dock in London, where they again managed a podium finish, taking third place against some very strong competition.

Although Brentwood's Ark Royal junior division was only formed at the beginning of last year, they managed to finish an impressive second overall in all competitions out of 11 Essex units, and seem to have established themselves as one of the main junior contenders in the district, according to Officer-in-Charge Juniors PO Fred Ryder.

The successful drill team was JSCs 1st Class Joe Costerd, Terence Allen and Lili Nicholls, Leading Juniors Farrell Roberts and Andrew Manning (Drill Squad Commander).

Lindsey takes up new role

LC LINDSEY Fitzpatrick was straight in at the deep end when she assumed the mantle of Lord Lieutenant's Cadet.

The Leicester cadet travelled back from the unit's CUTT course at Inskip to attend the investiture ceremony, held at County Hall in Leicester, where she was appointed as one of the three Lord Lieutenant's Cadets for the coming year and presented with her badge.

Lindsey's first duty was to accompany the Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire, The Lady Gretton, to the Festival of Remembrance at the De Montfort Hall.

Lindsey said: "I am proud and honoured to be chosen as a Lord Lieutenant's Cadet and to represent my unit TS Tiger and the Sea Cadet Corps."

"In my role of Lord Lieutenant's Cadet, I am looking forward to participating in all my duties and responsibilities in the year ahead."

Lindsey took over from POC Mark O'Conner, of Hinckley unit.

Comrade ship

MEMBERS of the RN and RM Old Comrades' Association attended a presentation evening at Bristol (Filton) Sea Cadet unit's training ship TS Endurance, at Horfield Barracks in the city.

Awards were made by the Lord Mayor of Bristol, Cllr Christopher Davies, to the Sea and Marine Cadets present.

Unit pulls through

A GROUP of 18 cadets from Scarborough unit – six of them juniors – have raised almost £2,000 by pulling a gun and carriage through the town.

Starting at the lifeboat house, the group walked 13 miles dragging the kit – a miniature version of the Naval field gun weighing 120kg – and all participants, including a trio of ten-year-olds, completed the course.

During the walk, on ten occasions the gun and carriage had to be dismantled into seven sections to pass over stiles and gates.

Last year's gun pull raised £1,360, but this year £1,902 will be going towards the purchase of a Pico dinghy – a decision made by Officer-in-Charge CPO Julie Davies in consideration of the 1,000 cadet-hours spent on Wykeham Lakes gaining various qualifications.

● The Scarborough gun-pull crew make their presence felt



● Capt Jonathan Fry and Mne Cadet John Newbury check a basha watched by Sea and Marine Cadets from Yeovil and District unit. Capt Fry, the Captain of the Sea Cadet Corps and Director of Operations, visited the Yeovil contingent at Sutton Bigham reservoir where they were undergoing instruction. And although he watched the youngsters sailing and pulling on the reservoir and learning fieldcraft, and met with some of the parents, he also had a more formal duty to perform. Yeovil has retained burgee status, and Capt Fry was there to congratulate staff and cadets on another successful year, and to present individual awards.

Harlow heed call of the wild

A FAR-from-unlucky 13 have enjoyed an unforgettable trip to Canada.

The Harlow unit baker's dozen, accompanied by seven adults, flew to Toronto and settled in with host unit RCSCC Vanguard, whose members made the British visitors most welcome and provided their HQ for accommodation.

A packed programme began that evening with a social, and the following day visited Niagara Falls, taking a boat trip on the river and touring behind the falls.

On the way back there was time to enjoy a barbecue with relatives of Sarah Bourne, wife of officer-in-charge and tour leader S/Lt (SCC) Jack Bourne.

Day three of the trip saw the Harlow cadets bid farewell to their counterparts at Vanguard and head for Madawaska in Ontario – and specifically for a campsite resort run by a former member of the unit's staff, Ian Collins, and his family.

An area of the site had been set aside for the cadets, along with tents and the use of site facilities, including boats and canoes.

That evening was set aside for the cadets, along with several Canadian families, to experience the eerie sound of wolf howling, but the wolves were silent that night.

Day four was typically busy.

Staff and cadets trekked out to a beautiful viewpoint in the forest in the morning, taking in the local wildlife on the way – a colony of beavers and their dam caused



● Harlow cadets take to the water in Canada

plenty of excitement.

River kayaking and canoeing was on the agenda in the afternoon, and Ian and his sons passed on some of their bushcraft skills.

There were also chores to be done, and the evening finished with a quiz around the campfire.

More watersports were laid on the following day, starting with the construction of rafts to encourage team-building.

Using various bits and pieces to hand, the results were mixed; one sank upon hitting the water while another broke up mid-way, but the third made the grade.

There was then a chance to visit Barry's Bay, a nearby tourist town, for some sightseeing and shopping, while others explored the local

waterways in powerboats.

And that evening one of Ian's sons led the party to a particular spot where, with a little encouragement, the wolves did howl – a magical moment for the visitors.

Subsequent days saw a trail through part of the Algonquin Park to a lookout hill, and whitewater rafting – one of the highlights of the trip.

One of the party celebrated his birthday in style, and there was plenty more watersports – including a successful raft race (ie more than one raft floated) before it was time to strike camp and head back to the airport.

An open invitation has been extended to their Canadian hosts to reciprocate the visit.

Parade brings back memories

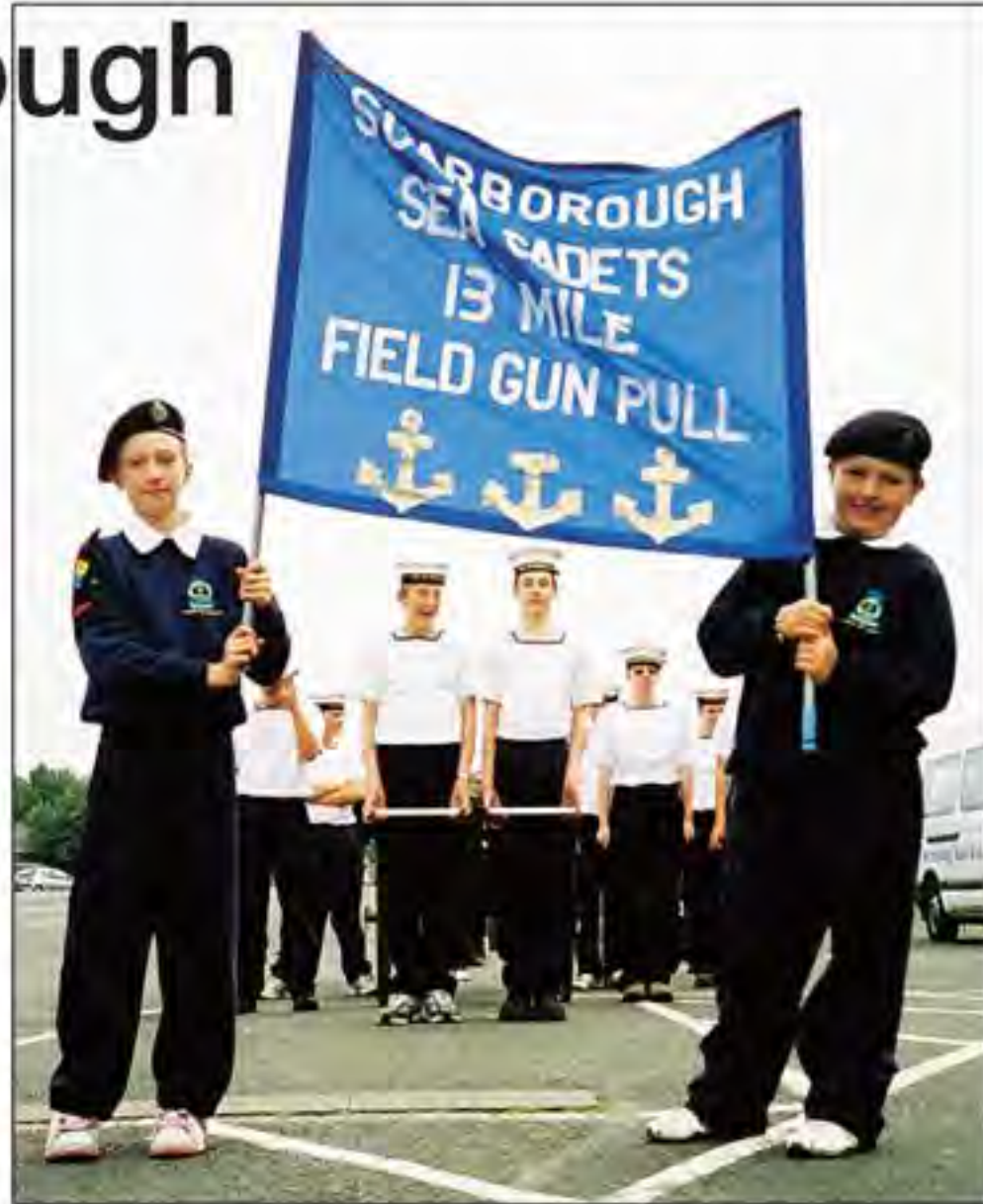
FIVE cadets from Flitwick and Ampthill unit travelled to Fort Blockhouse to join up with cadets from their district – Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire – and London area cadets to form the guard for the national Sea Cadet Parade in Trafalgar Square.

Staff and parents travelled to London to watch ACs Howe, Boxall, Newton and Bettle, and POC Fowler, of TS Leopold Muller, in the parade.

Unit Commanding Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Lisa Maynard said: "I remember being in this parade with a platoon of GNTC and today I am watching my son follow in my footsteps."

"I'm proud of him and all the cadets involved – they have worked hard and put on a good show."

"This is the first time they have paraded with these rifles."



Crew tours RNLI base

STORM clouds had a silver lining for cadets who were sailing TS Royalist along the South Coast.

While prevented from sailing from Poole by autumn gales, cadets and staff were given a conducted tour of the RNLI Training Centre and College in the town.

The group had their picture taken beside a 30-tonne Tamar-class lifeboat, the RNLI's newest class of vessel, which first entered service in 2006.

Cadets and staff were shown the various inshore and offshore craft and visited the workshops.

They also had a chance to inspect the new range of rescue equipment now used by the RNLI in support of the rescue services inland as well as the traditional service provided around the UK coastline.

Standard in honour of unit stalwart

THE focus of the Inverness annual fundraising party was the presentation of a standard in memory of a stalwart of the unit.

Some 60 guests watched as the Wedderburn Standard – in honour of Cdr Ian Wedderburn – was handed to the unit.

Cdr Wedderburn, who died in July last year, gave 30 years to TS Briton.

His son James made the presentation, watched by his mother Desire, who had been a Wren during the war and had met Ian when he came home after two years in the cruiser HMS Ajax.

Tim Honor, chairman of the unit, thanked the Wedderburn family for their generosity, and said the standard will be paraded with pride by the Inverness cadets whenever they take part in civic functions within the city.

He added it was appropriate that the standard would have its first outing at the Remembrance Parade at the Inverness Cenotaph.

The evening raised more than £12,000 for unit funds.

Chairman Tim has just returned from a reunion at Dartmouth with 52 of his fellow term-mates who joined the Royal Navy with him 50 years ago.

Whilst the reunion was fun in its own right, Tim said it was a huge bonus to be able to meet up again with Mid Matthew Stewart, who had been Chief Cadet of TS Briton and whose father, Ray, is the First Lieutenant of the unit.

Matthew, the first cadet from the unit to have joined the officer entry to BRNC, had only been at Dartmouth for four days when Tim met him on the Quarterdeck after attending church service.

Matthew joined the Inverness unit at the age of ten and rose to be best petty officer cadet in the Northern Area.

"It is a great accolade for all of us in the Inverness Sea Cadets, to have one of our cadets go to BRNC," said Tim.

"We are very proud of him and we wish him all the best in his chosen career."



● LC David Hewitt, of the Hartlepool unit, on duty at the launch of the Daring-class destroyer Dragon on the Clyde. Sea cadets from the north of England and Scotland played a prominent part in proceedings at the BAE Govan yard in Glasgow, including the provision of a guard of honour

Bonner, man of honour

CAST your mind back a few months to last spring.

Some 200,000 people poured on to the streets of Portsmouth (that's considerably more people than actually live on the island) to welcome the city's football team, newly-crowned winners of the FA Cup.

The players were hailed as 'heroes', their manager Harry Redknapp, the local newspaper proclaimed (with typical hyperbole as is its wont when Pompey are concerned) was deserving of a knighthood (he's still to be so honoured...).

How our perspectives have changed – and not for the better.

If you want a true hero, rummage through naval history. You'll find one Charles George 'Gus' Bonner, an unassuming man of honour, the son of a Staffordshire farmer.

In October 1917, there was a clamour in his native Aldridge, a town of some 3,000 folk, to welcome a returning war hero.

The noun is apt in this case. 'Gus' Bonner had just been awarded the VC.

His life is lovingly – and comprehensively – told by Sue Satterthwaite in *Bonner VC* (privately published, £19.99 – profits to the Royal British Legion – ISBN 978-0-955480-18).

Bonner (pictured, right) earned Britain's highest military decoration for his role in a 'Q ship' action, trying to lure U-boat UC71 to its doom.

Instead it was the killer-in-disguise, HMS *Dunraven*, which was mortally wounded in the battle in the Bay of Biscay in August 1917.

Bonner, *Dunraven's* first lieutenant, was knocked unconscious by a shell from UC71 which detonated a depth charge; the blast threw him across the deck, but he crawled "inch by inch" back to his 4in gun post.

His day did not get any better. The explosion sparked a fire which made the deck red hot and eventually spread to the *Dunraven's* magazine, blowing Bonner and his gun crew up in the air (as well as the gun and its shells).

Burned and covered in blood, Bonner once again crawled across the wrecked deck of the *Dunraven*, this time to bridge. With typical



● 'HMS *Dunraven* VC in action against the submarine that sank her, August 8 1917'... a painting by Charles Pears of the dramatic action in which Gus Bonner received Britain's highest honour

Picture: The Society of Marine Artists/IWM Art 5130 Collection/Bonner VC

sangfroid, he reported: "I am sorry, Sir, to leave the gun without permission, but I believe I was blown up."

It was this "consummate coolness", not to mention "conspicuous gallantry", which resulted in the award of the VC that autumn.

It is a story which has been told before in books about the Q ships, or naval VCs. But the author has been given unprecedented access to the family papers, not to obscure records and archives up and down the land (and beyond...).

In fact, it is less the VC action than the aftermath which is particularly uplifting.

The Bonner family home was besieged with reporters – they were "strange, pompous, untidy, dirty" (good to see things haven't changed – Ed).

And while contemporary newspapers were filled with adulation for Bonner's exploits, it's the personal congratulations which have the ability to move – letters from former headmasters, former shipmates, local councillors.

There were public meetings in his honour, a concert, a salver of a tea and coffee service presented, standing ovations and songs sung with gusto.

And most touching of all was a poem, *After the Strafe*, probably composed by his father. It is more McGonagall than McCrae, but it is especially touching nonetheless:

"They say it was a gory sight
After the brave explosion past
And your brave Uncle Gus
was found
Unconscious by the mast;
But things like this, you know,
must be
Ere men attain to the VC."

The man himself rarely talked about the deed which defined him in the eyes of the others, except on odd occasions in the bosom of his family.

"By every law and regulation [I] was killed on three different occasions, by shells and explosions," he wrote to his parents a few days after the battle. "Am feeling quite unkillable now,

though I don't want another dose quite so bad as that again."

Gus Bonner survived the war and became a leading salvage expert, ultimately overseeing the end of several dreadnoughts.

He died of cancer in 1951 and although he had lived for most of his later years in Edinburgh, Bonner's ashes were scattered in the Staffordshire town where he grew up.

Portsmouth hosted a parade in honour of its 'heroes' last May; the people of Aldridge parade each year to celebrate the life and achievements of Gus Bonner, more than 90 years after he won the Victoria Cross – and more than half a century after his death.

They seem to have their priorities right in Staffordshire...

■ Available from www.bonnervc.co.uk



That shrinking feeling

GIVEN the ever-shrinking RN, one day you'll probably be able to slip it in your pocket.

Until that day comes, you'll have to rely upon the ever-dependable pocket guide to the Senior Service, Steve Bush's *British Warships and Auxiliaries* (Maritime Books, £8.99 ISBN 978-1-904459-361).

Updated annually (now in its 30th year), it is 104 fact-filled pages on the state of the RN, RM, RFA, Fleet Air Arm and ancillary organisations.

Indeed those ancillary vessels – tugs, water carriers, aircrew training craft, range safety vessels – account for 23 pages, while the nuts and bolts (ie the surface and submarine fleet) account for 25.

The author paints a rather bleak view of RN present and future. Ten years on from the Strategic Defence Review, the overhaul of Britain's amphibious forces is "perhaps the single success story".

As for the rest... Type 45 destroyers will number six, not 12 and the replacement for the Type 22/23s, the 'Future Surface Combatant' won't be around until 2019 at the earliest – by which time the frigate/destroyer force will be 20-22 strong, at least ten fewer ships than planned under the 1998 review.

And then there's the global economic crisis squeezing the British – and hence the MOD's – budget. "The potential for cancellation is never far away and the RN remains vulnerable to further defence cuts," fears Bush.

So a happy 2009 to all...

The real scourge of Boney?

IN 1808 Vice Admiral Sir James Saumarez (the name is of Guernsey origin) was appointed to command the Baltic Fleet, a post he held for the following five years, flying his flag in HMS *Victory*.

During that time, although he never commanded in a fleet action he played an absolutely crucial role in defeating Napoleon, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

His defence of British trade in defiance of the French Empire's strategy of hitting the British economy by a general trade embargo and his careful handling of Sweden even when the once ally actually declared war on Britain (but did little about it) led the way to the peace concluded in July 1812 with both Sweden and Russia that began the final collapse of the French Empire.

Saumarez has had something of a bad press, largely because of his apparent unwillingness to attack the Russian fleet at Rogervik in 1808. The great American philosopher of sea power Alfred Thayer Mahan, who worshipped at the shrine of Nelsonian aggressiveness, was rather critical, damning Saumarez with faint praise.

The author of this new study – Admiral Saumarez Versus

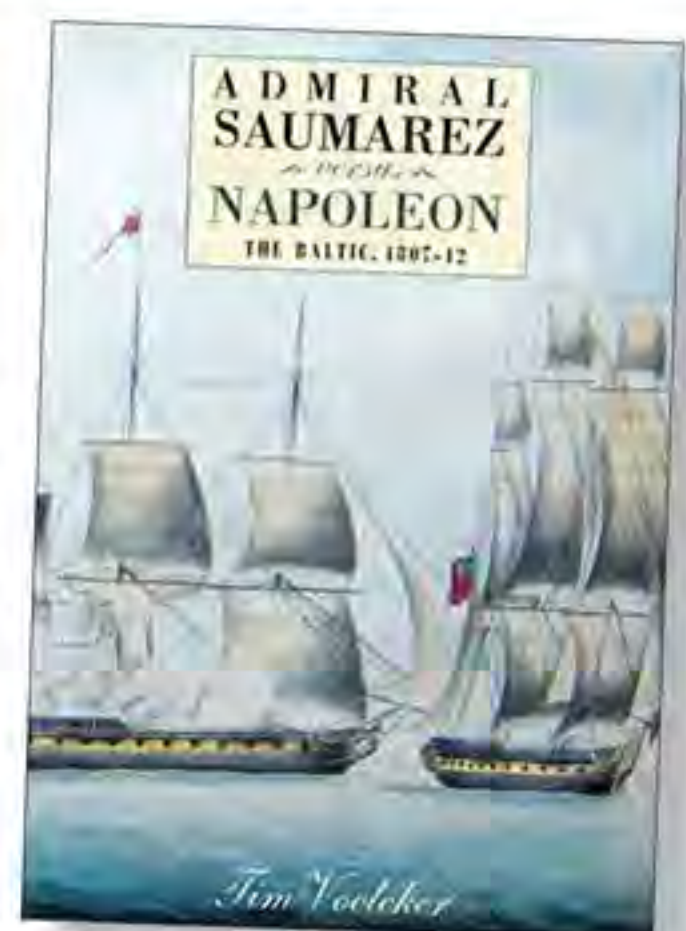
The Grove Review

Napoleon: The Baltic 1807-12 (Boydell, £45 ISBN 978-1-84383-431-1) – Tim Voelcker, puts up a stout defence of the British C-in-C pointing out that the risks of attack probably did outweigh the potential gains and that the Russian fleet in question played no more role in operations against the British.

After his decision to blockade rather than fight, Saumarez had the temerity to write to the Tsar to try to wean the latter away from his enforced but unnatural French alliance.

This was but a part of a policy of quiet diplomacy with the littoral powers, backed up by the power of his fleet, that sustained British interests rather better than the previous policy of terror and intimidation that had seen the burning down of Copenhagen in the infamous joint operation of 1807. This pushed Denmark into a hostility that lasted until the end of the war, despite the deleterious effects of war with Britain on such a maritime power. Britain suffered too; Danish raiders were one of Saumarez' greatest headaches.

Much was left to Saumarez by a London distracted by events



elsewhere – not least the opening of the Peninsular campaign that took attention away from the Baltic, the previously preferred point of application for British troops.

The policy of restraint came under particular strain when a significant number of British cargoes in Prussian flag ships were sequestered by the Swedes. The C-in-C was given authority to be more aggressive, if he thought it necessary, but eventually a settlement was reached on the basis of compensation.

Saumarez' judgement had been tested by the appointment of

the French Marshal Bernadotte as crown prince of Sweden. He might have prevented the marshal reaching his new realm to be, but did not – thereby ensuring a good relationship with the new regime that had replaced the pro-British, but erratic King Gustav. He could see that "a 'phony' war that allowed trade to continue" was so clearly the best policy for both countries that it would be the result.

Dr Voelcker paints an attractive picture of his subject, an officer of great humanity, honesty and integrity, whose conduct was guided by strong, quietly-held religious principles.

Saumarez seems to have been less concerned with the potential financial benefits of his position than many naval officers of his day and was more anxious that his subordinates received prize money than himself.

His close relationship with his wife produced a correspondence that was of great use to the author. Unlike his great contemporary Collingwood he was able to delegate and made full use of his distinguished subordinates such as Keats and Byam Martin.

Now we are post Trafalgar 200 it is important that the key role played by the Navy in the succeeding decade is given its due weight.

There is an argument to be

made that Saumarez was just as important in the final defeat of Napoleon as Collingwood or even Nelson. His careful management of the Baltic in the end forced Napoleon to make his greatest mistake, the disastrous 1812 Russian campaign the led to his final crushing defeats.

The story is well told by Dr Voelcker whose book is a model of careful scholarship. The book's only problem is its rather high price tag. Let us hope it soon appears in paperback. Its accessibility of style deserves a more reasonable price to give it the readership it deserves.

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Open waters for rowers

STEREOTYPICAL images of rowing include sleek and slender boats sprinting side-by-side down mirror-calm waters of a lake or river.

Conditions could hardly have been more different for the first RN competitors at the World Coastal Rowing Championships held off San Remo in Italy.

Up to 24 boats per event battled around an eight-kilometre open-water course, whipped into steep breaking waves by near gale-force winds, with a number of boats capsizing in conditions that were marginal, even for this extreme sport.

In the bow seat of the Mayflower offshore rowing club masters' (veterans) coxed quadruple scull, Cdr Alan Grant had to contend with waves breaking over his back as the boat pitched through the steep chop, while cox Lt Cdr Suzannah Curtis steered.

By the end of their first race, more than 100 litres of water had to be drained from the supposedly-watertight hull of their borrowed boat.

The next world championships will be held in Plymouth in October 2009 and it is intended that a number of Navy rowing crews will enter this highly-competitive event. Thanks to the Nuffield Trust and Babcock they will have their own state-of-the-art boat to race.

It is a fast-growing sport with Olympic aspirations.

Not quite such choppy conditions – but a strong tide – faced the rowers of Culdrose Gig Club, flying the flag for the far west in the Services Gig Regatta at Dartmouth.

Teams from BRNC, Raleigh, RAF St Morgan and the RFA were among those in the water.

Culdrose took first place in the opening event (finishing a minute ahead of their nearest rivals), then a one-two in the second race to ensure that the air station lifted the trophy for the third time.

The club is around two dozen rowers strong and intends to enter its two boats, Seahawk and Daedalus, in the world championships in the Scilly Isles next May.



Lung guns go for it

OLYMPIC gold medal winner Lt Peter Reed was put through the mill by his comrades – to see how he fared under pressure.

The junior officer, and fellow rowing gold medallist Andy Hodge, headed to the Institute of Naval Medicine and its unique environmental test chambers.

The chambers are typically used to see how Service personnel will respond in extreme environments, chiefly the desert and Arctic.

Peter and Andy (pictured left by LA(Phot) Pete Smith) – half of the coxless four who narrowly beat the Aussies to gold in Beijing – pounded the treadmill, had their lungs tested by a Vitalograph respiratory monitor and, of course, showed off their history-making skills on the Institute's rowing machine, on which Peter was impressively recorded inhaling more air than an elite athlete normally would.

Peter, a marine engineer, will be backed by the RN in his bid to hold on to gold at the 2012 games.

"We had a great day," the officer said. "Thanks to the Royal Navy's Institute of Naval Medicine for taking time to teach us more about our physiology."

"I am delighted that the RN is fully supporting me in international rowing until 2012. There is simply no way I would be an Olympic champion without them."

Naval air too strong for Royal Marines

FIVE teams competed in a slightly depleted Inter-Command squash championships held by CTCRM at Lympstone.

No commands were able to muster any female players, but men's teams represented were Royal Marines, Naval Air, Portsmouth, Plymouth and Scotland.

The championships included the majority of the RN's top male players distributed between the commands, yet on paper it was Naval Air Command and the Royal Marines that appeared to have the strongest squads.

Portsmouth included Lt Cdr Robin Young (Nelson), OM Richard Rowley

(Middleton), Navy captain WO Pete Berrow (Excellent) and Lt Matt Ellicott (ex Westminster), the RM fielded the current RN Champion, Capt Damien May RM (771 NAS), NAC boasted Lt Julian Crew (660 Sqn), POPT Jason Wallace, AET Stephen Wallace, Lt James Roue RN and POAEA Dave Armstrong (all Culdrose) and all RN representative players.

The President of the RNSRA, Cdre David Langbridge, turned out for Scotland in their last match and recorded a win over his Plymouth opponent.

There was some very good squash played

throughout the competition and most of the matches went according to expectations: the Royals made short work of Scotland and Plymouth, and Air Command dominated matches against Scotland and Plymouth.

Portsmouth gave the Royals a run for their money and just lost out 3-2 which saw the last match of the competition, RM vs NAC become the final.

Although May comfortably won his match at number one, Crew, Roue, J Wallace and Armstrong all overcame their opponents and secured victory by four matches to one to ensure NAC were the Inter-Command

champions for 2008.

Cdre Langbridge presented the Robin Bawtree trophy to POPT Wallace and medals to the winners and runners-up.

He thanked the Royal Marines for use of the facilities, Maj Paul Gellender (Chairman RMSRA), WO Stan Bloomer (Secretary RMSRA) and in particular Cpl 'Billy' Murphy for his efforts and meticulous planning to make the event so successful.

The President also thanked all players and officials for their participation in what has become a most enjoyable and important event in the RN squash calendar.

Run in the sun

MAD dogs and Englishmen go out in the mid-day sun.

And the dawn sun. And the late afternoon sun.

It took the men and women of HMS Kent 12h 19m 57s to complete the **Mike Till 100 x 1-mile relay** – one hundred different runners each completing a mile (seven laps) of the upper deck of the Type 23 frigate (the race is named in honour of the CPO and keen runner who was killed in HMS Sheffield in 1982).

Executive Officer Lt Cdr Mike Smith was the first out of the 'blocks', setting off as the sun rose over the Suez Canal.

By midday, the temperature was topping 30°C, but that didn't stop some of the ship's company donning fancy dress.

Lt Johnny Stanton RNZN was not one of them. He was, however, the fastest man of Kent, completing his requisite laps in 4m 54s.

Beyond raising body temperatures, the race generated £1,000 for Kent's various charities, bolstered by a further £1,300 donated during a horse-racing night (which wasn't quite as hot or physically demanding, but did prompt yet more fancy dress costumes).

● *My spidey senses are tingling... or it could be the sweat running down my face... AB Benbow runs his mile on Kent dressed as the webbed wonder*

Code determination

Continued from back page

were very much an unknown quantity. In imperious form and far better prepared for the climate, GB ran riot against the South Sea islanders, notching up 16 tries and 11 conversions. Once again the RN/RM were well represented in the points scorers, with a brace apiece for Jim Barnes, Lee Rossiter, Silivenusi Buinamasi as well as one for Kev Borwood. Played as a curtain raiser to the England vs New Zealand World Cup match, GBAF were urged on by England's 'Barmy Army' of travelling supporters to an 86-6 victory who, as history will reflect, had little else to cheer about on the day.

Moving some way inland to the Penrith Panthers' home ground, the Forces faced hosts Australia in the third clash.

By now confidence in the squad was high – especially as previous meetings between the sides had gone the way of the visitors.

This match was no exception: a powerful start had the hosts reeling and by half time GB were ahead by 20 points. The second half went the way of Australia early on seeing them pull back to 20-10 but GB were not to be beaten and a couple of late tries was enough to ease the GB nerves and the score line to 36-26.

RN points scorers were Dane Smallbone with four conversions and Jim Barnes continuing his fantastic scoring record with another try.

This victory effectively ensured GBAF qualified for the final but just to keep the momentum going, the side ground out a hard-earned victory in the extreme heat of an Aussie summer against the unfancied Cook Islands by 40-20.

So to the big one – the final against the Aussie DF.

It was played as a curtain-raiser to the World Cup semi between Australia and Fiji, so there was minimal support in the stands.

Before kick-off current Wigan coach and TV summariser Brian Noble passed on a few words of wisdom and encouragement.

Fired-up by the national anthem, GBAF

took the initiative early on in a defence dominated half but could not get clear of the battling Aussies, reflected in a 10-4 half time score line.

Early in the second half GB stretched the lead to 20-8, before the Aussies threw everything at the visitors.

Nerves and stamina held even when the home side came within 4 points at 20-16.

The match was effectively settled by a marvellous try at the death from RNRL Inter-Services skipper Sgt Jamie Goss and with the conversion GBAF were home at 26-16.

The final whistle signalled ecstatic scenes among the players and management.

Ray Unsworth congratulated his charges on their triumph: "These guys are a pleasure to be around. We all know how professional they are in their day-to-day attitude to the work they do and it's no different in sport."

Head coach Wayne Okell added: "Five games in 12 days and never having been behind on the scoreboard for one second. They are a credit to themselves, the British Armed Forces and their country."

To round off an amazing month, the squad was promptly named 2008's Combined Services sports team of the year.

And from 13 back to seven again...

It wasn't just Greg and Josh on international duty in Dubai: thanks to the energy of HMS Lancaster's clubz LPT Daz Hoare, the Type 23 also asked to enter the Dubai 7s.

Daz was told there was a huge waiting list but as the Red Rose prowled the Gulf, an email landed in his in-tray. "It was better then Charlie finding the last gold ticket for the Willy Wonka factory," he said (and the XO apparently jumped somersaults in his cabin...).

A rigorous training regime ensued with clubz waking the players up at 6am for SAQ (Speed, Agility and Quickness) drills plus burpees competitions.

Once in Dubai, the city's legendary/infamous traffic almost conspired to

prevent Lancaster entering the contest (they registered with five minutes to spare).

First up were the RAF. They had 41,000 personnel to call upon to provide a 7s team. Lancaster had 190.

So the final score of 47-0 to the Crabs wasn't entirely surprising, but Daz says his men "never let their heads down once".

Next came the Pyrenees (a French national division two team, not the mountain range) who had already lifted the 7s trophy twice (and finished runners-up twice too). Again all Lancaster's efforts came to naught, with the French clocking up 69 points with none in reply from the sailors.

A day's break gave Lancaster a chance to rest, soak up some of the other matches being played. The lay-up worked, for the Lancastrians trotted on to the pitch for the clash with Vauxhall Motors from one of the Midlands leagues fired-up.

After a ding-dong first period, the Red Rose were 14-10 to the good. They held off the Midlanders' fightback in the second half and a breakaway try with seconds to go sealed a famous 21-10 victory akin, says Daz, to "David beating Goliath".

The victory ensured a place in the plate quarter-finals against CSG Old Boys from Wales.

It would prove to be the end of the road for the Lancastrians. A mad minute in the second period turned the score from 14-7 in the Welshmen's favour to 28-7.

The sailors fought back to 28-12, but the gap was too great and the team's involvement in the 7s came to an end.

"When you think that all the other teams were gearing up for these championships, training day-in day-out and our guys were doing defence watches, seven on, seven off, five on, five off, and they never complained of being tired, they did HMS Lancaster, the RN and themselves proud," said Daz.

"The team played with heart, pride and a desire to win: you could see their will to win as soon as they stepped on the park – they wanted to win even to the very end."



● Penalty cause... Youngsters from the British School in Salalah take spot kicks against HMS Cumberland's keeper

Our men in Oman

PLAYERS from HMS Cumberland's football team hosted a coaching session for school children whilst in Salalah, Oman during an operational stand-off.

The team coached 30 youngsters aged four to 11 from the British School in the city.

Eight members of the ship's company each ran a fun training stance focusing on a different aspect of the game, ranging from dribbling and passing to taking penalties against the frigate's goalkeeper.

"It's great to get the chance to do something different from our normal operational work and to give something back to the communities we visit," said LPT Si Backhouse, Cumberland's clubz and organiser of the training session.

"The kids seemed to really enjoy it and we had a fabulous time teaching them. There's a wide age range here so the idea was to make it fun, I hope the kids enjoyed it as much as we did."

After the session, Chris Peedell, the school's headteacher, was presented with a picture of Cumberland, while his pupils were each given junior England football shirts, donated by the Royal Navy Football Association, as well as mementoes from the ship.

The frigate is now back at sea conducting counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.

Five-star Lucy

THE RN's top female boxer – Lt Lucy Abel – is now the fifth finest pugilist in the world.

The junior officer – ABA title and European Union Gold medal holder – headed to China and the World Women's Boxing Championships.

Lucy was part of a four-strong England squad taking on the best boxers in the world.

In all, 250 female fighters from 48 nations donned gloves for the largest world championships to date.

Having won her preliminary bouts, Lucy faced the Hungarian champion in the quarter finals. Despite stamping her authority

early in the bout, her shots failed to catch the judge's eye.

Desperately playing catch-up for the remaining rounds, she was unable to defeat her opponent and missed out on a championship medal by a single point.

Despite missing the podium, Lucy is now ranked number five in the world in her weight class and number three in Europe – and this is all in just her third season of competitive boxing.

With the likely inclusion of female boxing in the Olympic Games in 2012, Lucy will look to prepare for a position in the Olympic squad after a well-deserved Christmas rest.



● Lord of leaping... Lt Mark Dixon (HMS Victorious) jumps as he blocks a shot from RAF Cpl Simon Beech while keeper Lt John Bishop (HMS Sultan) lunges and Lt Adam Duke (deputy AEO 771 NAS) guards the goal
Pictures: Keith Woodland, HMS Collingwood

Indoor fireworks

HMS Collingwood took centre stage hosting the Inter-Service indoor hockey championship with the RN's men's senior side attempting to win the coveted title for the third consecutive year.

The women's team also had high hopes of improving on the last two year's successes against the RAF. The U23 men, who'd won six IS indoor titles in the last eight years, were hopeful of a 'seventh in nine' and Portsmouth or the Royal Marines were confident of reaching the West finals for a sixth successive year by winning the colocated tri-Service IS Inter Command Competition (ISICT).

With the RAF and Army keen to spoil the show, the first men's game pitched the RN against the boys in light blue, writes Lt Cdr Alan Walker, RNHA.

A frenetic pace was set as the teams felt each other out, with the RAF opening the scoring, despite several opportunities for the RN.

Sustained pressure eventually resulted in a mistake and the RN equalised through POAEA Mark Stanton. This served as a springboard for the team, who then started to find their range whilst comfortably defending against the skilful RAF front line.

This saw the RN take a 5-1 lead (with Stanton burying another three) into the final four minutes. The RAF then finally stepped up a gear and some thrilling attacks saw the score close to 5-4 with only 30 seconds remaining. However, superb defence from the team as a whole managed to close the game out, although not without several frayed nerves from coaches and supporters.

Winning this game allowed the RN a long break and the chance to watch the RAF and Army play a thrilling 6-6 draw.

The RN took the 'pitch' against the soldiers and, despite facing a strong Army side with international pedigree, exuded confidence from the outset. Penetrating attacks from the two defensive stalwarts, Lt Adam Duke (771 NAS) and Lt Mark Dixon (Victorious), caused many problems in the Army defence, whilst

LPT Sam Howard (SHAPE) and skipper LET Danny Makaruk (Illustrious) were waspish in defence and decisive and creative in attack.

A comfortable lead was opened up, with more devastating finishing from the fired-up Stanton (seven) leaving the RN 8-1 up with five minutes to go.

In the space of 90 seconds, however, the Army, led by Olympian Guy Fordham managed to claw back four goals.

The frayed nerves were evident again, but great composure and team spirit held, and a beautifully-finished goal by Lt Sean Trevelyan from Makaruk's mazy run and pass ended the Army comeback.

This score line also allowed for a cameo appearance from veteran Lt Matty Wesson, who is still adjusting to his "more coaching and less playing" role. With the final score at 9-5, the RN had retained the Indoor championship and they were crowned 'Indoor kings' for the third consecutive year.

Lt John Bishop, a newcomer in the RN goal looks as if he will be giving the selectors a headache when the IS outdoors take place in March.

The women's team worked extremely hard to prepare for the contest and the first match against the RAF saw coach Shawn Hall's formula work to best effect.

The team confidently moved the ball around with the forwards opening up great space and creating many chances. The first of two goals came from a well-taken short corner with POAEA Kate 'Bob' Newcombe (Illustrious) putting away a drag flick.

After continuing to pile on the pressure a goal came from open play with a superb run from CPO Susie Bythell (MASU) taking on two defenders and allowing skipper Lt Sam Imrie (Daring) to sweep a well-placed cross into the goal.

The match ended 2-0 with the RAF never coming close.

The Army proceeded to destroy the RAF, so the soldiers and sailors were determine where the trophy would end up.

The RN started extremely well and the game was very even until, on eight minutes, a gap in

the Army defence opened up and PO Fi Devlin was allowed a bit of space to reverse push a rebound into the goal. One up for the first time in many years, the atmosphere in Collingwood gym lifted significantly.

The Army came back strongly and levelled the score, adding another one before half time with goalkeeper, former Scottish international CPOMEA Wendy Frame (Dauntless), soaking up a great deal of pressure.

Another two Army goals were responded to by a converted Navy short corner and another goal from open play.

Even leading 5-3 the soldiers still didn't look comfortable, and with the Army bench awarded a yellow card resulting them being reduced to five players on the pitch, the RN ladies thought the tables had turned.

The team were unable to capitalise on this advantage and the Army ended the match 6-3 winners.

This was the best result the RN ladies team have had for a decade – and a third successive second place overall.

The U23 men meanwhile were in all sorts of trouble: no goalkeeper, two of the expected starting team unable to travel, never mind the four Royals in Afghanistan...

With the squad down to the bare six – all outfield players, it was fortunate that three weeks earlier, in one of Collingwood's recreation periods, RN coaches had identified two young men (awaiting draft) who showed a bit of promise for the future – and one of them was a goalie.

The upshot was that both young men played and visibly improved as the contest progressed.

Unfortunately, the RN U23 lost 4-2 to an unconvincing RAF and then allowed an ordinary Army outfit to win 6-7 – it could and should have been so different.

There was no such drama in the ISICT competition: Portsmouth Command qualified comfortably, taking time out to defeat the RAF North in the Services Final.

The team has therefore reached the West of England finals, the sixth successive year that a Navy Command team has done so.

Summit to be proud about

THE RN and RM Mountaineering Club celebrated 60 years of peak action when nearly 100 members met for an anniversary weekend in north Wales.

Despite wet autumnal weather, the climbers enjoyed an active weekend trekking, climbing and scrambling, plus a celebratory dinner.

That evening saw various presentations from leading lights in the club's proud history, including recollections from its inaugural events courtesy of founder member Bob Higgins.

Membership of the club is open to all Royal Navy/Royal Marines personnel, including reserves, irrespective of their mountaineering experience.

A series of weekend meets are organised throughout the year, as well as a programme of indoor climbing training and competition and a number of overseas climbing expeditions.

More details from membership@climbnavy.com

● RNRM mountaineers pose in front of 'Adam and Eve', the two distinctive rocks atop the 3,000ft Tryfan in Snowdonia



● CPO(AEA) Susie Bythell (MASU), left, and team captain Lt Sam Imrie (HMS Daring) celebrate scoring against the RAF



**Ultimate IV
- stunning
cutaway
poster of the
legendary
Ark Royal**



**Capital gains
- in the big
smoke with
Westminster**



**Been busy?
No rest
for HMS
Endurance**



**Testing time
- a pilot's
view of the
Joint Strike
Fighter**



● Chef Josh Drauniniu evades an All Black lunge to score in the Dubai 7s against New Zealand
Picture: Warren Little/Getty Images

Code determination

MAINSTAYS of Navy rugby powered Britain to one final and one groundbreaking victory on foreign soil in the sport's two codes.

Two rugby union stalwarts were at the heart of a 7s team in Dubai, while RN/RM players formed the spine of a rugby league squad fighting for the nation's honour in Australia.

Twelve months ago Chef Josh Drauniniu was part of the successful Navy Sharks team which lifted the Dubai International Overseas trophy for the second time in three years, writes Lt Cdr Geraint Ashton Jones, director of rugby RNRU.

Knowing that the Sharks were not due to enter the 2008 tournament he probably doubted that he would return to Dubai so soon.

However along with Navy Rugby colleague, Cpl Greg Barden, Josh returned to make his international debut for the England 7s team at Dubai in the first leg of the IRB World 7s Series.

Both will also be hoping that they return to Dubai in March as part of the England 7 competing in the World Cup 7s 2009.

Followers of RNRU will be familiar with both players - and their style. Greg is known for his powerful, direct running and strength in the tackle which led to five tries against the RAF in the 2008 Inter Service Tournament. Josh's pace and elusive style has been the talk on many a messdeck after his exploits in the famous Navy Blue shirt. The question was could both players take their Navy form on to the international stage.

The answer: a resounding yes! England were drawn to play against Portugal in the first pool



● Meet the natives.. AET Lewis Taylor runs into fierce Aussie opposition during the military Rugby League World Cup Down Under

game. With barely 20 seconds on the clock Josh received the ball ten metres from his own goal line, made the line break and ran the try in from 90 metres. A try on his debut.

"My first try against Portugal felt fantastic and I really felt proud to be wearing the England shirt. When I got the call up from England I couldn't believe it and to score on my debut just topped it off," Josh enthused.

Not to be outdone, Greg came

on as a replacement and with his first touch of the ball crashed over to score (from a distance significantly less than 90 metres) - again try on debut.

"This is what I expected from England 7s and it's amazing. Whether on the bench or starting it's all about the team," said Greg.

England topped their group after wins against USA and Fiji before meeting Argentina in the quarter finals.

Both players contributed fully

to the win, which put England through to a semi final against New Zealand.

On the same day that the England XV were losing out at Twickenham to the All Blacks, a try from Josh - his third of the tournament - helped England to a 21-19 triumph and a meeting with South Africa in the final.

Unfortunately the final hurdle proved too high and England had to be content with the runners up spot to a very physical South African team. However for both players the whole experience had been immense.

Reflecting on the two days England head coach Ben Ryan said: "We want to be the best 7s side in the world and that means being World Series champions.

"Our team's learning but I've got to say I'm very proud of them and feel we have turned a corner."

Also very gratified was Lt Cdr Ashton Jones.

"Everyone at Navy Rugby was very proud of both Greg and Josh's call up.

"Both players work extremely hard on their game with their civilian clubs, Bristol and Exeter Chiefs and when they are with the Navy team.

"I am sure they will bring their experiences back into the squad which will only help the Navy team to build on last season's performances."

He continued: "They will also serve as an inspiration to our other talented players that they should never sell themselves short but remain ambitious and keep striving to be the best they can.

"It is also very pleasing to receive feedback from England as to how much both players had contributed, on and off the field, to the squad. It seems that the Navy's and the Corps' values are in international demand."

From seven to 13...

While the performance of the national teams in the Rugby League World Cup Down Under proved largely disappointing, not so the RN-led Service side dispatched to Australia for the inaugural Armed Forces World Cup.

In a twelve day period the squad played five matches - at times in 35°C temperatures - overcoming jet lag, travelling between venues and, of course, native hostility from the home side who felt by turning up the trophy would be theirs, writes WO1 Keith Humpleby, RNRL spokesman.

One in three of the 27-strong squad was drawn from the RN/RM, with head coach WOPT Wayne Okell and highly-respected civilian coach Ray Unsworth plotting the downfall of the various opponents.

After a minimal three days to overcome jet lag, GBAF met the New Zealand Defence Force in the opening match.

Facing down the Kiwi's 'Haka' prior to kick-off GBAF left the opposition in no doubt as to the task that faced them.

This was reinforced barely three minutes into the match when RN prop AET Lewis Taylor broke the Kiwi line and sprinted 40 metres before offloading to see the RAF's Dale Jinks score under the posts.

The conversion was scored by RN full back Dane Smallbone who carried on where he had left off in the Inter-Services, bagging six conversions in a 100 per cent performance on the night.

While the second half saw the All Blacks fight back as the GB side began to tire there was never any real danger and a 36-26 score line represented a very satisfactory start to the competition.

The second group match saw Great Britain face a Papua New Guinea squad which

Continued on page 46

100% NEW LIFESTYLE. NEW ZEALAND. NAVY

See page 38 for information on the exciting new opportunities available now.



2008

a Naval retrospective

● HMS Gloucester turns at speed during Staff College Sea Days off Plymouth in October



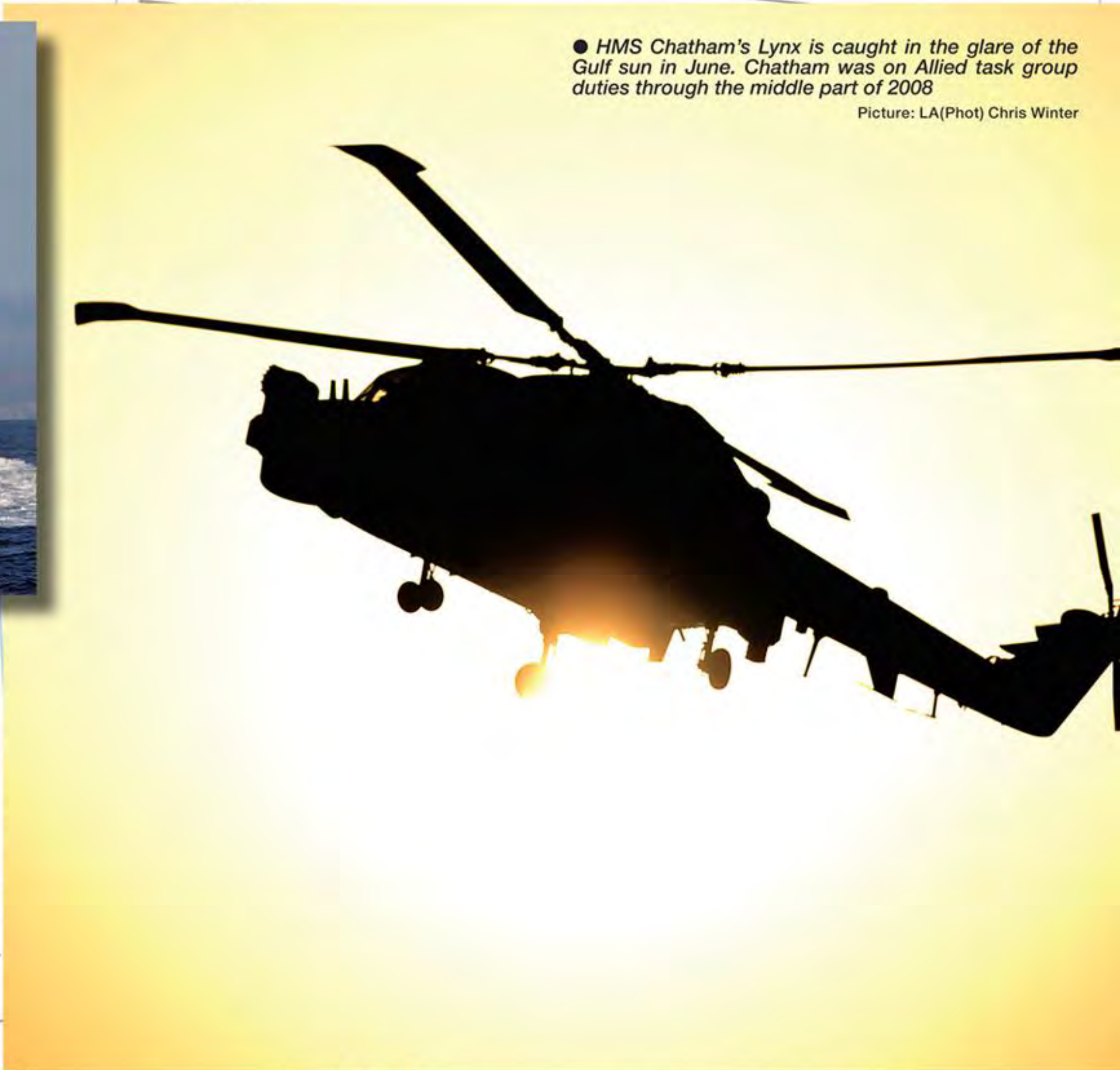
● New Type 45 destroyer Dauntless sails from Faslane after a fleeting visit to the base in December.

Picture: PO(Phot) Tam McDonald



● HMS Chatham's Lynx is caught in the glare of the Gulf sun in June. Chatham was on Allied task group duties through the middle part of 2008

Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Winter



● Remembrance Sunday on Plymouth Hoe - this year the nation marked the 90th anniversary of the end of World War 1

Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Winter



● A Harrier drops flares as it roars past HMS Illustrious during the Orion C6 deployment in April



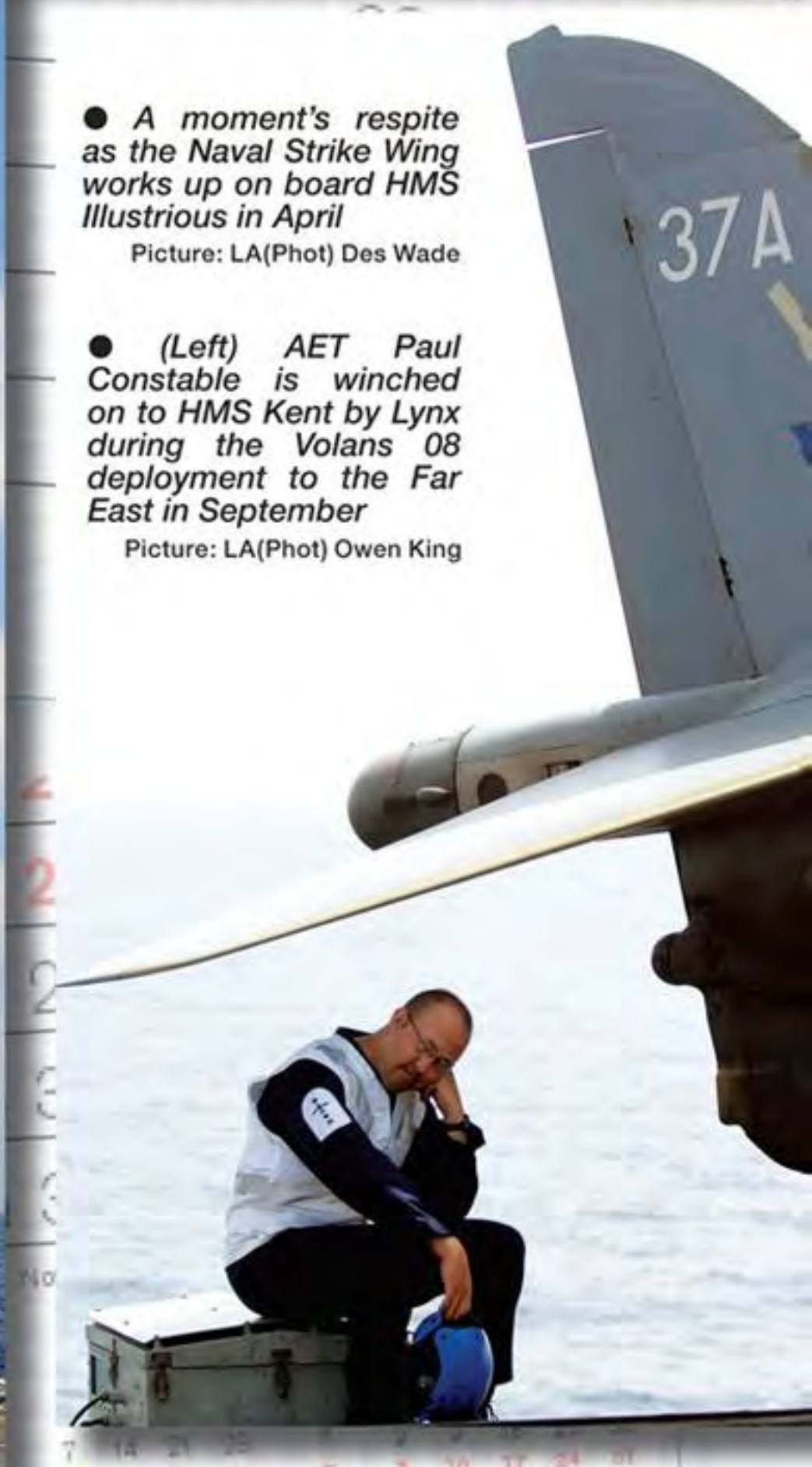
● A moment's respite as the Naval Strike Wing works up on board HMS Illustrious in April

Picture: LA(Phot) Des Wade



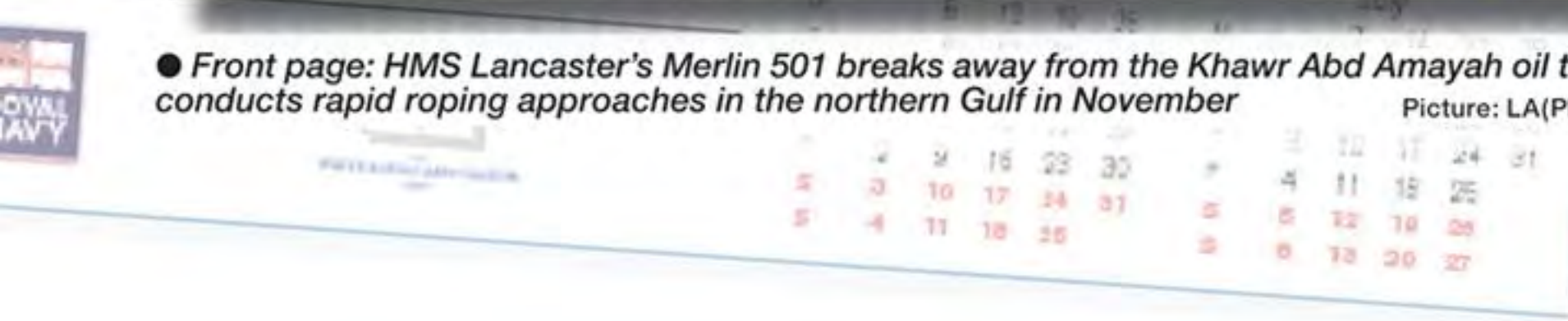
● (Left) AET Paul Constable is winched on to HMS Kent by Lynx during the Volans 08 deployment to the Far East in September

Picture: LA(Phot) Owen King



● Front page: HMS Lancaster's Merlin 501 breaks away from the Khawr Abd Amayah oil terminal as she conducts rapid roping approaches in the northern Gulf in November

Picture: LA(Phot) Brian Douglas

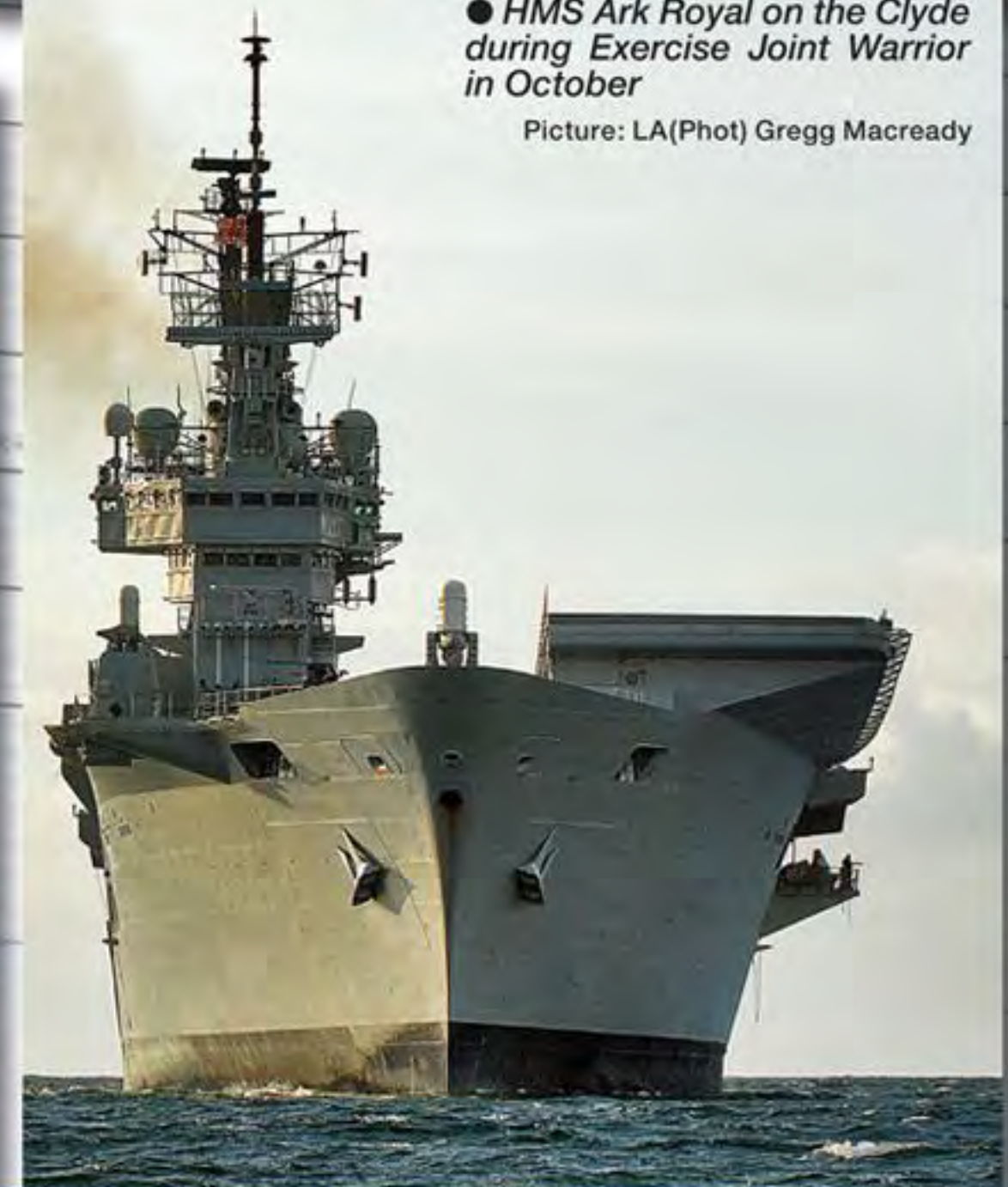




● HMS Nottingham off South Georgia in February during her stint on Atlantic Patrol Tasking (South)
Picture: LA(Phot) Alex Cave



● HMS Campbeltown guards an Iraqi oil platform in the northern Gulf in March
Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Winter



● HMS Ark Royal on the Clyde during Exercise Joint Warrior in October
Picture: LA(Phot) Gregg Macready



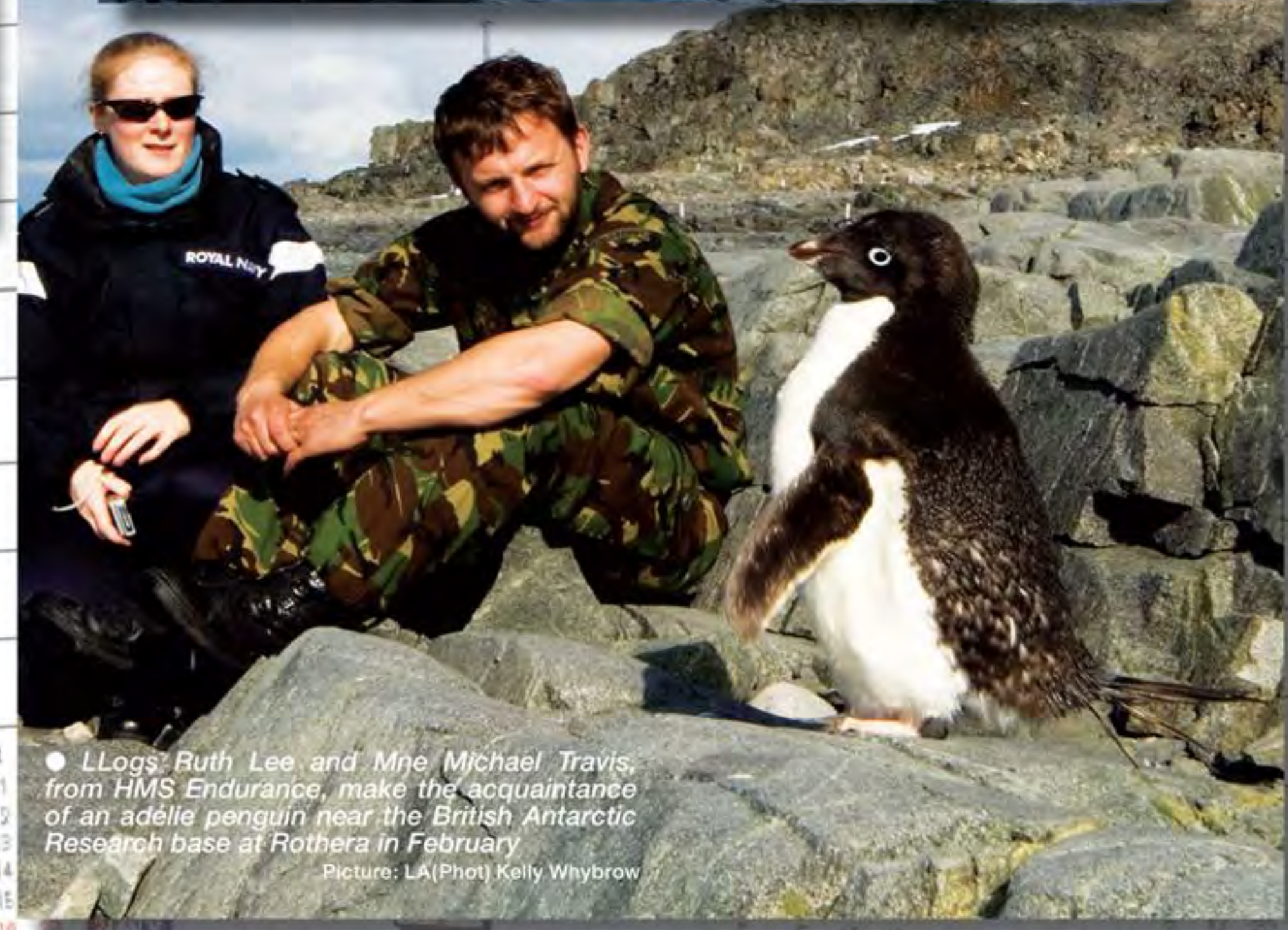
● HMS Shoreham works up on the Gareloch near Faslane in February
Picture: LLogs (CS) Stu Hill



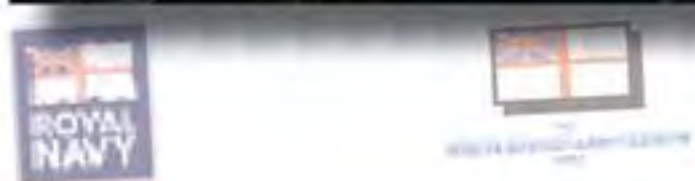
● HMS Victorious returns to Faslane in July after a three-year overhaul in Devonport
Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill



● RFA Wave Ruler and HMS Iron Duke carry out a replenishment at sea in the Caribbean in August
Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen



● LLogs Ruth Lee and Mne Michael Travis from HMS Endurance make the acquaintance of an adélie penguin near the British Antarctic Research base at Rothera in February
Picture: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow



● Royal Marines of 42 Commando on deployment in Kandahar province in December. Operation Janubi Tapu was designed to clear Taliban strongholds of danger, allowing locals to start rebuilding their lives. 42 Cdo officially took over duties in Afghanistan in September, their colleagues from 45 Cdo flew out for their third tour of duty shortly afterwards

Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Faulkner



ROYAL NAVY

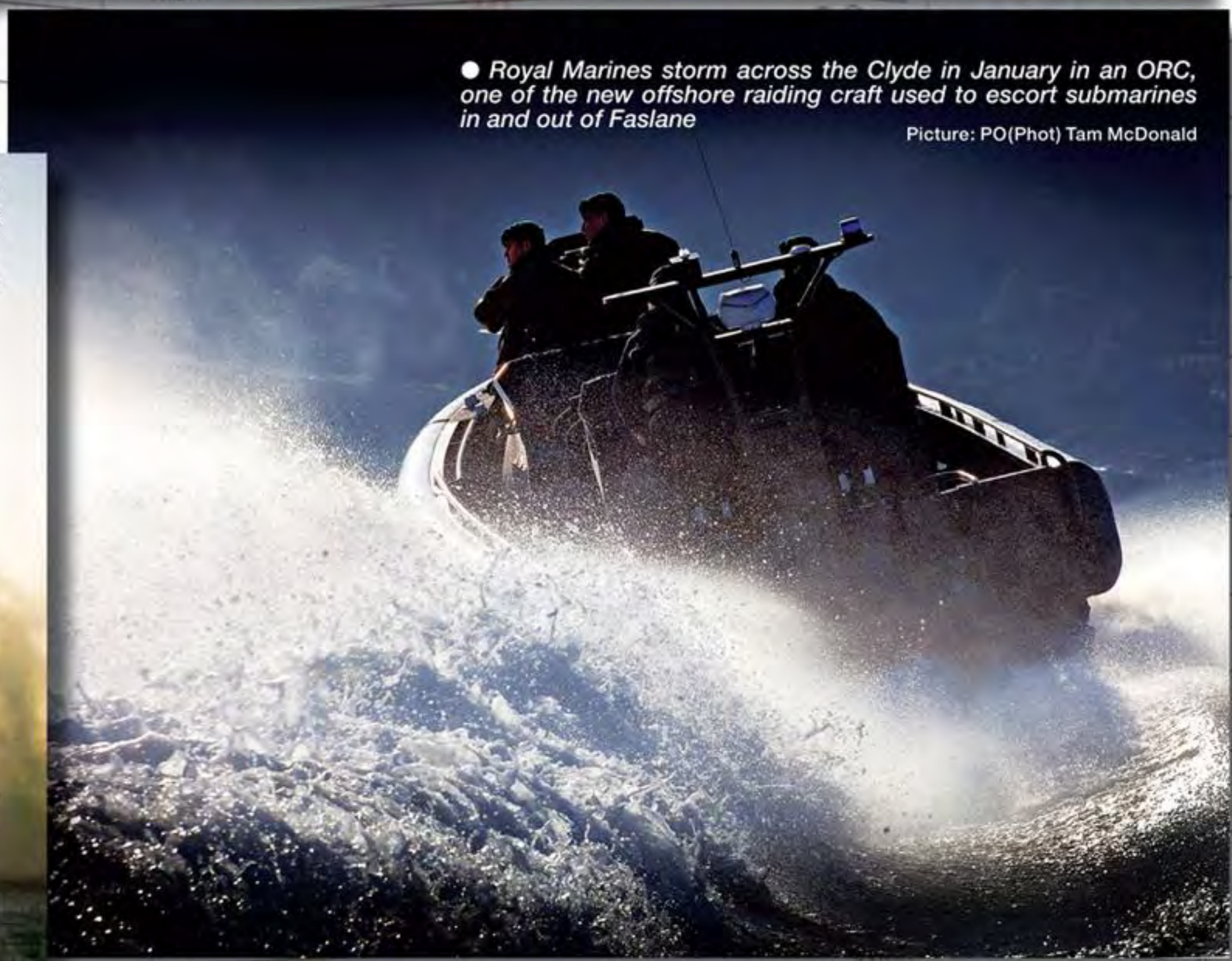


● Royal Marines from the HMS Endurance detachment complete a four-day walk across South Georgia in December, following the route Shackleton took more than 90 years before

Picture: LA(Phot) Kaz Williams



● One of HMS Bulwark's landing craft disgorges a BV 206D amphibious transport at Harstad in Norway during Exercise Armatura Borealis in March



● Royal Marines storm across the Clyde in January in an ORC, one of the new offshore raiding craft used to escort submarines in and out of Faslane

Picture: PO(Phot) Tam McDonald



● Royal Marines of 42 Cdo begin their first operation of Herrick 9 in Afghanistan in November with the help of a Chinook, setting out as part of an international force to disrupt the Taliban in Kandahar

Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Faulkner

Calendar sidebar with days of the week and dates: Tue 1, Wed 2, Thu 3, Fri 4, Sat, Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat 5, Sun 6, Sun 1, Sun 1, Mon 14, Tue 15, Wed 16

Small calendar grid at the bottom left showing dates from 21 to 26.

Sun 16

Small calendar grid at the bottom right showing dates from 1 to 27.