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HELMAND REHEARSAL

BATTLE TESTS FOR MARINES AND MEDICS



Climbing thousands of feet above eastern England, Cdr Dave Lindsay's Harrier leaves vapour trails streaking across the sky. The Commanding Officer of 800 Naval Air Squadron was one of 16 Naval and RAF aviators who climbed into cockpits for the jump jet's final flight after more than 40 years' service. See the centre pages for more stunning images.

Picture: Jamie Hunter

FINAL FLIGHT



Fleet Focus

DIFFERENT year, same story.

In the Gulf. In Afghanistan. In the Indian Ocean. In the UK. 2011 opened with the men and women of the Royal Navy heavily committed in all these waters.

And it also opened with the aftershocks of October's defence review still rippling through the entire Senior Service.

The Harriers of **800 NAS** have flown for the last time (see the centre pages); **HMS Illustrious** will be decommissioned one year earlier than planned and **HMS Albion** mothballed (see right) – but not before the latter leads a task force to the Med and Middle East (see opposite).

The Sword of Damocles hangs over Type 22s **HMS Cumberland** and **Cornwall**, which will pay off once their current deployments end (as we write, their sisters **Chatham** and **Campbeltown** are paying farewell visits to affiliates in home waters before bowing out).

In **Cornwall's** case, her final tour of duty is chasing pirates (see page 19), while **Cumberland** is on Operation Telic duties (see pages 4-5).

The Fighting Sausage was one of around a dozen RN ships east of Suez at the turn of the year. Six of those vessels – **Cumberland** plus minehunters **Grimsby**, **Middleton**, **Chiddingfold** and **Pembroke**, and tanker **RFA Bayleaf** – spent the New Year in Dubai.

Homeward bound from the Gulf was **RFA Cardigan Bay**, whose mission training the Iraqi Navy has come to an end – as evidenced by the arrival of new fast patrol boats in Umm Qasr, home of the RN-led **I-TAM(N)** – **Iraq Training and Advisory Mission (Navy)** (see page 6).

HMS Ambush, the second of the seven-strong Astute-class submarines, has taken to the water after a formal naming ceremony in the cavernous dock hall in Barrow (see page 8).

As for the existing fleet of boats, **HMS Triumph** has been on Perisher duties in Scotland while her sister **Turbulent** received a glowing testimonial from those hard-to-please folk at FOST (see page 8).

In the world of the Type 45 destroyers, **HMS Dragon** has completed her sea trials while her older sister **Dauntless** is engaged on cold weather trials in Norway (see opposite).

Three ships are already bound for east of Suez – **HMS Iron Duke** heading to the Gulf for the first time (see page 7); **HMS Echo** to carry out survey work; and **HMS Richmond** to tackle pirates before making for the Far East (see page 6).

Pirate duties are finished for **HMS Montrose** (right), while MCM Crew 7's stint on **HMS Middleton** has come to an end; Crew 2 have taken charge of the minehunter in Bahrain, while Crew 7 are settling in on **HMS Ledbury** in Portsmouth (see page 6).

From the spring **3 Commando Brigade** will be the lead British formation on the ground in Afghanistan.

The brigade has been preparing methodically for the deployment: **45 Cdo** headed to a mock Afghan village in Norfolk (see pages 16-17); **naval medics** decamped to Chivenor for some (mock) bloody training (see page 15).

Already in theatre are **847 NAS** who've flown out with new Lynx to support their Commando Helicopter Force Sea King comrades (see opposite).

Sailors in the Falklands replaced the White Ensign on the wreck of **HMS Antelope**, sunk in the 1982 conflict (see page 10). Today's Naval guardian of the islands, **HMS Clyde**, took part in festive period events, including the Stanley raft race where, for once, they didn't win the wooden spoon (see page 42).

And finally, Britain's busiest Search and Rescue unit – **HMS Gannet** – began 2011 as it ended 2010... busy (see page 9).

Plus ça change...

Montrose's tangible impact on piracy

A HUG for **HMS Montrose's** ET(ME) Tom Hillman from family – a moment of warmth on an otherwise bitter winter's day in Devonport.

Montrose was the last ship to return from deployment – chasing pirates off Somalia – in 2010.

Temperatures were more Brrrr than Arrrgh in **Montrose's** native base, Devonport, but that did not stop a sizeable crowd of friends and family waiting in the cold to welcome the frigate home after five months east of Suez.

Since departing the West Country last summer, the frigate has been attached to a NATO task force executing Operation Shield, safeguarding merchantmen and putting Somali pirates under the knout.

There was quite a lot of the latter with 'Pirate Action Groups' – whalers and small skiffs packed with fuel and weapons – blown up and the freeing of the crew of the freighter MV *Beluga Fortune* in the wake of an abortive assault by the Somali brigands.

The ship's 815 Naval Air Squadron Lynx conducted scores of hours of surveillance flights along the coast of Somalia, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions of the known pirate camps to gather details for the coalition on the movements of the freebooters and their craft.

As well as policing the Horn of Africa and environs, **Montrose** also visited the Seychelles

and Tanzania to provide engineering support and training in board-and-search techniques so these nations' defence forces can take a greater role in anti-piracy operations.

"I am very proud of my ship's company for what they have achieved with tangible results after deterring pirate activity by our presence and by our actions," said the frigate's CO Cdr Jonathan Lett.

His marine engineer officer Lt Cdr Duncan Humphery added: "This was one of the most successful and enjoyable deployments I have been on in the Navy. Not only did we see and were able to measure the successful results of our counter-piracy action, but also visited some interesting countries when we had the chance of a break."

Robert Smith stepped off the gangway to be hugged by his partner Natalie, their baby son Kai and mother-in-law Jenny Williams who braved the snowy weather in Hull to make the 350-mile journey to Devonport.

"Robert has been longing to cuddle Kai who was only two weeks old when he sailed," said Natalie. "I have been sending him so many photos by email to keep him up to date with how Kai has changed."

Now the ship's company are back from leave there's some maintenance to carry out on the frigate, followed by a trip to Scotland to take part in the next Joint Warrior war game, then Operational Sea Training off Plymouth which will determine that **Montrose** is ready to deploy once again.

Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Hooper, FRPU West



Cuts details thrashed out

HMS Illustrious will be axed one year early and amphibious flagship **HMS Albion** will be mothballed in the autumn after details of the Strategic Defence and Security Review were thrashed out.

No Type 22 frigate will fly the White Ensign beyond April and three RFA support vessels are also being paid off that same month, Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox has told MPs.

His announcement follows October's review which warned that apart from **HMS Ark Royal** being decommissioned early, the axe would fall on all Type 22 frigates, one of two remaining carriers – either **Illustrious** or **Ocean** – and either **Albion** or **Bulwark** would be put into extended readiness.

The review also stated that one Bay class landing ship and other RFA vessels would leave service; a smaller Fleet meant fewer support ships would be required.

After two months' work, the fine details of the cuts have been worked out, Dr Fox said:

■ **HMS Illustrious**, currently in refit in Scotland, will run until 2014 when she will be decommissioned as **HMS Ocean** emerges from refit; the **Mighty O** will serve as the nation's on-call carrier until **HMS Queen Elizabeth** enters service in the middle of the decade.

■ **HMS Chatham**, **Campbeltown** and **Cumberland** (currently deployed in the Gulf) will all be out of service by April 1; **Cornwall** will pay off when she returns from her anti-piracy patrol in late April.

■ **HMS Albion** will enter extended readiness in the autumn when her sister **Bulwark** is declared fully operational after her refit; the two ships will trade places in 2016 when **Bulwark** enters refit again.

■ **RFA Largs Bay** will be withdrawn from service in April after just four and a half years' service.

■ Veteran tanker **RFA Bayleaf** and one-stop support ship **RFA Fort George** will also be paid off in April.



847 ready to make their Mark (9)

THE Jungly Lynx force are back in Afghanistan – this time with a new aircraft.

Since 847 Naval Air Squadron last deployed to Helmand in the winter of 2008-09, it has swapped the Lynx Mk7 for the Mk9 – better suited to the challenging Helmand environment.

It's got souped-up engines which can cope with 'hot and high' – allowing the Lynx force to fly throughout the Afghan summer.

In addition, the new Lynx has been equipped with a larger and more powerful 0.50 calibre machine gun for the door gunner.

As for the mission facing the 50 or so personnel deploying from RNAS Yeovilton, well that's pretty much as it was during the previous tour of duty in Helmand.

The main task is to ride shotgun for other Allied helicopters in theatre as they re-supply Forward Operating Bases.

The 847 aircrew are also likely to be called upon to conduct reconnaissance, convoy escort, airborne command and control, and fire support with artillery and fast jets.

All of which, of course, requires round-the-clock attention from engineers, technicians and support staff.

The squadron has undergone six months of training with the new Lynx to prepare them for this latest tour of duty, learning how to operate and maintain the Mk9.

Maj Dave Sutton RM of 847 B Flight said that although some of the personnel deploying were Afghan novices, others had "vast experience of operational deployments" and some had spent time on the ground in Afghanistan serving with Commando units.

"We have trained extremely hard for all eventualities and we are confident that we will provide both Coalition and Afghan allies with all that is required of us," he added.

Already in theatre are substantial elements of the rest of the front-line Commando Helicopter Force, the Jungly Sea Kings of 845 and 846 NAS, also based at Yeovilton.

Last chance for freedom

THE men and women of HMS Ark Royal will enjoy freedom for the final time on February 12.

The ship's company of the Navy's former flagship head to Leeds for a farewell visit to the city which has supported three generations of Ark Royals, going back to World War 2.

The latest bearer of the Ark Royal name has already made her final entry to Portsmouth. Her sailors have paraded through the heart of that city as part of the Mighty Ark's lengthy winding-down following October's shock decision to axe the famous carrier under the Strategic Defence and Security Review.

A 160-strong contingent is heading up the M1 for a series of farewell events over the weekend of February 11-13.

The sailors will meet numerous affiliates during their time in Leeds, including civic and business leaders, the Royal Armouries, local Sea Cadets and Leeds-based members of the Royal Naval Reserves.

The highlight of the weekend will be a 'goodbye parade' through Leeds city centre at 11am on the 12th when the Ark crew exercise their Freedom of the City.

The Band of HM Royal Marines Scotland will lead the parade, including an armed guard, Naval Colours and the ship's freedom scroll, from Leeds City Museum through the centre to the town hall, where the lord mayor will take the salute.

Roar of the Dragon



REMEMBER, remember the fifth of November.

Not for any of that Guy Fawkes malarkey, but for the day when HMS Dragon first put to sea.

After one month's trials off Western Scotland, allowing Dragon to clear her throat (literally in the case of her main gun), the ship has resumed fitting out and tests on the Clyde at Scotstoun with the engineers and ship's company more than pleased with her performance.

Indeed, the ship surpassed the 29kts top speed expected of her when the class was ordered a decade ago.

She 'throttled up' to reach 32 knots (37 mph) – although it doesn't make Dragon the fastest destroyer as veteran HMS York can manage nearly 35kts.

After reaching full whack, the Type 45 then applied the 'handbrake' and came to a stop in a little over 800 yards – less than half a mile.

After that it was time for the 45's party piece, heeling over 12° to carve a figure of eight in the relatively sheltered waters of the Firth of Clyde.

Thanks to the trail blazed by her three older sisters, Dragon put to sea with far fewer technical issues, improved software, tweaked machinery – and with her mixed RN/BAE ship's company aware of what the 45s can and cannot do.

The first fortnight at sea was used to test the basics – engines, rudder, comms, 'hotel services' (galley, fresh water production, sewage treatment) – before moving away from the relatively sheltered waters off Arran and Kintyre to flash up her weapons systems.

For that she had to make for the ranges off Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides, never the warmest place in the British Isles, and positively (or should that be negatively...) Siberian when Dragon arrived.

Time to warm things up with

some fire – the main 4.5in gun (pictured above, if you were wondering...) followed by the 30mm cannons and finally the machine-guns.

Dragon's Sampson radar was also flashed up off the Benbecula range; it was here that Dauntless fired the Sea Viper missile for the first time a couple of months earlier – and the ops room team found themselves tracking aircraft at ranges in excess of 200 miles, namely planes approaching Aberdeen, Glasgow and Belfast airports.

And the electro-optic sights and laser range finders were tested to assess Dragon's ability to engage targets at close range.

"I've been associated with the development of various parts of the Type 45's combat system for the past 15 years – it's very rewarding to see it coming to life onboard Dragon before my eyes," said Cdr Peter Frankham, the ship's weapon engineer officer.

There was also time to begin engendering Dragon's soul with some sport – volleyball, table tennis (!), bucket ball (basketball with a bucket, not a basket) and non-stop cricket in the 'Millennium Stadium' (aka hangar) – regular circuit training and a one-kilometre sponsored row.

The latter was the healthy side of fundraising for the Erskine House charity which provides care for veterans; the less healthy side came courtesy of sales from Drago's Snacks, the destroyer's tuck shop.

And evidently quite a lot of chocolate was munched because in all £1,800 was raised for the charity during Dragon's four-week stint at sea.

The adverse winter weather (you might have seen a bit about it in the media...) put the kibosh on a day at sea for VIPs, but



it didn't stop Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox joining Dragon to witness progress with the Type 45 programme, cross-decking from ballistic missile submarine HMS Vanguard as the latter returned from a deterrent patrol.

And that's just about it for now, although it won't be long (April) before D35 is back at sea. Between now and then

there's a lot of work to be carried out on her combat systems.

If the second spell of sea trials and final work on the ship go according to plan, Dragon will be handed over to the RN in September, by which time the fifth ship in the programme, Defender, should be ready for trials.

The sixth and final Type 45, HMS Duncan, is in the early stages of fitting out following her launch in October. She's not due to put to sea until 2012.

To coldly go where no 45 has been

WHILE HMS Dragon has been throwing herself around in the waters of western Scotland her older sister Dauntless headed even further north.

The second Type 45 destroyer is in Norwegian waters, first Bergen, then Tromsø (200 miles inside the Arctic Circle) to conduct cold weather trials (the lucky so-and-sos in HMS Daring got the plum job of warm weather trials...).

As well as testing the destroyer's ability to cope with the cold (according to the Type 45's specs the air conditioning should sustain temperatures at a very pleasant 25°C) the exercises around Norway should serve as a warm up (sorry) for Operational Sea Training...

...which should be kicking in off Plymouth in a matter of days.

Lessons learned during Daring's OST experience last spring have been passed on both to D33 and the FOSTies putting Dauntless through her paces.

Once through OST the destroyer's thrown straight into a Joint Warrior exercise (the twice-yearly international war games run from Faslane) – the first 45 to take part.

Thereafter there's a visit to Newcastle, Dauntless' affiliated city and, post Easter leave, the ship will work up with a US carrier battlegroup (like Daring before her) for what the RN calls 'Tier 2' training – basically 'super OST', testing a ship's ability to fight as part of a task group.

The ship's lined up to visit the DSEi defence exhibition in London's Docklands in September, a spot more training and a bit of maintenance, then a first deployment in early 2012.

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Flagship shipshape

BRITAIN'S flagship, HMS Albion, is in the throes of some top-up training to prepare her for the key deployment of 2011.

The assault ship is lined up to lead the Cougar task group – an amphibious task force which will exercise in the Mediterranean and east of Suez with Allied nations.

Albion's fairly-well worked-up already, having taken part in the Auriga deployment to the USA last year, which culminated in major amphibious landings along the Eastern Seaboard.

Amphibious skills can quickly fade, however, so there's a month-long Directed Continuous Training – basically a mini-OST organised by the Flag Officer Sea Training.

The FOSTies will test not only the ability of the sailors and Royal Marines of 6 Assault Squadron, Albion's permanent commando unit, to land and recover troops, but also deal with fire, flood, disaster relief and any other trials and tribulations the FOST staff can dream up.

And while all this is going on, the flagship is hosting 40 officer cadets from Dartmouth who are enjoying their first sustained period at sea aboard a British warship.

They're joining Albion for ten weeks to work alongside the ship's company before returning to BRNC to complete their officer training.

GLOBAL REACH

● A pair of US Coast Guard vessels pass in front of the Al Basrah terminal watched by HMS Cumberland and the USS O'Kane

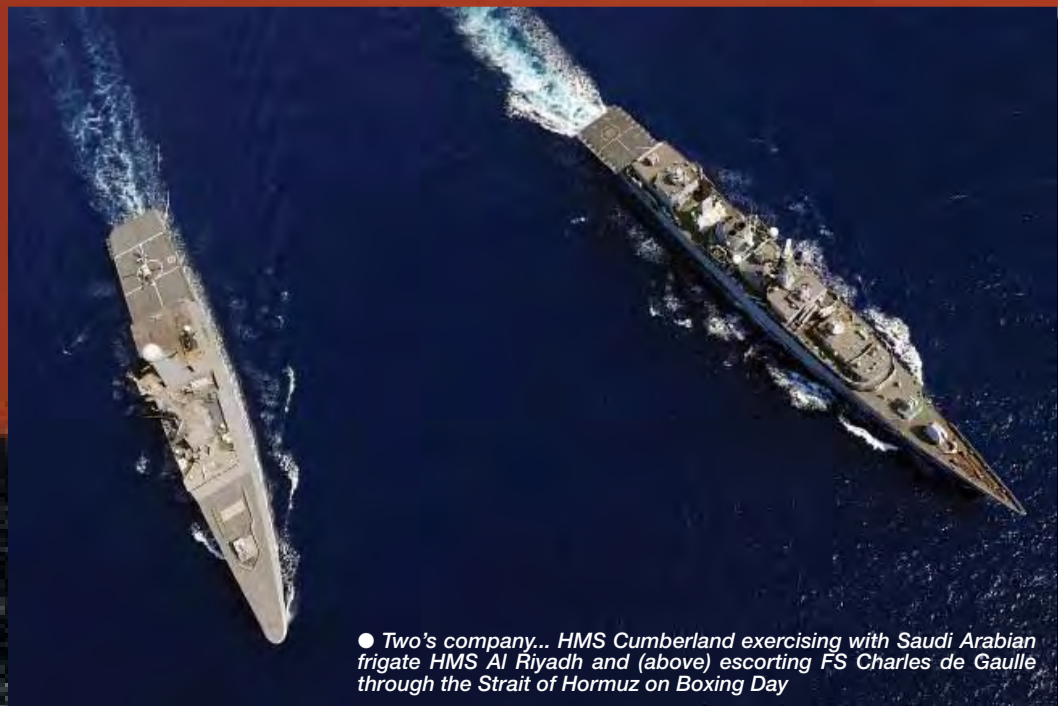


● A member of Cumberland's ship's company on watch as the Type 22 enters Bahrain

● A dhow entering Doha harbour – as seen from HMS Chiddingfold



pictures: la(phot) jay allen, frpu east



● Two's company... HMS Cumberland exercising with Saudi Arabian frigate HMS Al Riyadh and (above) escorting FS Charles de Gaulle through the Strait of Hormuz on Boxing Day

Christ

THE silhouette is unmistakable.

Yes, that's right, it's a Sandown-class minehunter. Her Majesty's Ship **Pembroke** to be precise.

The backdrop is quite eye-catching too: the impressive waterfront skyline of Dubai, dominated by the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building (2,717ft or 828 metres if you prefer metric).

Bahrain-based Pembroke was one of half a dozen Royal Navy vessels to New Year (*made-up verb - Ed*) in the Middle East's most popular holiday destination.

It's popular not least because it's toasty.

As Blighty was shivering in the coldest December in a century, Pembroke arrived in the UAE with temperatures touching 25°C (77°F).

She was joined in the Middle East metropolis by her sister **Grimsby**, plus Hunts **Chiddingfold** and **Middleton** which complete the quartet of RN mine warfare forces based in Bahrain. Just for good measures, **HMS Cumberland** and **RFA Bayleaf** also spent the turn of the year at Port Rashid, Dubai.

And what a way to see in 2011.

The Burj Khalifa served as the backdrop for one of the most stunning (and probably highest) fireworks displays which rang in the New Year around the globe.

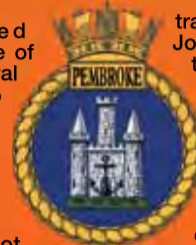
After that late night (and perhaps the

odd tipple), many of the sailors hit the beaches of Jumeirah – one of Dubai's most exclusive districts.

But after a busy 2010 we think it's only fair that the sailors were allowed three days' to let their (short) hair down.

In Pembroke's case, until just a few weeks ago, her crew were 'enjoying' the cooler climes of north-west Scotland aboard HMS Walney.

They carried out extensive training and took part in Joint Warrior war games, then decommissioned Walney, sailing her into Portsmouth for disposal, before a handful of days off and flying out to Bahrain to take charge of Pembroke as part of the latest rotation of crews.



FOR the Cheery Chid Dubai was the second visit to one of the Gulf's great cities in a fortnight.

Ten days before Christmas the minehunter paid a three-day 'working visit' to Doha, the Qatari capital still enjoying the international spotlight after being awarded the 2022 World Cup.

Within an hour of the lines and gangway going across, a class of 25 schoolchildren were filing aboard the Hunt-class warship.

The 13 and 14-year-olds from Park House English School were given a thorough tour of the ship, watching fire-fighting drills on the sweep deck with PO Miles and learning about the diving equipment with LD Binns.

Meanwhile in the wardroom... conversation revolved around Exercise Predatory Falcon, a major exercise with the Qatari Navy which in 2010 saw the RN commit the largest number of vessels. Half a dozen senior



Christmas presence

Qatari officers discussed the war games with the Chid team before receiving a tour of the ship.

Although this was a working visit, there was time for the ship's company to explore Doha and everything it has to offer. The Museum of Islamic Arts and souq market proved popular destinations for the Chids, who also witnessed Qatari National Day celebrations on December 18; the latter reached a stunning finale with a spectacular lighting and fountain display in Doha Bay.

A carefully-selected team of sailors trotted out on the turf of Doha Rugby Football Club for a clash with an expat side.

The experience of Chid's players varied from old hands to rugby virgins – so the 12-12 final result (including a 'man of the match' gong for AB(D) 'Dolly' Parton) was particularly satisfying, not least as the previous RN visitors to Doha had been trounced by the locals...

Back in Bahrain Chiddingfold and Grimsby played host to a succession of VIPs from senior US officers to representatives from Canada's upper house, the Senate, led by its Speaker, Noel Kinsella. The latter group was keen to learn about the international naval effort east of Suez – and about the RN's minehunting capability and its Seafox robot submersibles in particular.

The 100 (ish) sailors aboard Chiddingfold and Grimsby comprised 1/13th of Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel on duty east of Suez (we're discounting Afghanistan here...) as 2010 came to an end – in excess of 1,300 men and women in all.

ONE quarter of them could be found aboard the good ship Cumberland, which was accompanying France's flagship Charles de Gaulle while most of us were still sleeping off Christmas excesses.

Cumberland was at sea on December 25, but it didn't stop traditional festive fare on board.

Santa (who bore an uncanny resemblance to Executive Warrant Officer WO1 Johnny Lambert) still clambered down the funnel in company with his assistants (again *Doppelgängers*, this time for CPO(SC) Ali James and LPT Johnny Logan) and officers served ratings when it came to turkey, spuds, sprouts (the devil's vegetable) and all the trimmings.

All of which was but a distant memory by the morning of Boxing Day as the Type 22 frigate shepherded the 40,000-tonne carrier (or should that be *porte-avions*) through the Strait of Hormuz, the choke point at the entrance to/exist of the Gulf.

Over Christmas the de Gaulle was conducting air operations over Afghanistan from the Indian Ocean – as good an example of the potential of carrier strike as you'll find these days – with the Mighty Sausage (or is it the Fighting Sausage – we're never quite sure) as her chaperone.

We last caught up with Cumberland in the emirate of Ras al Khaimah – about 50 miles along the coast from Dubai – hosting guest of honour Sheikh Saud bin Saqr al Qasimi.

What we didn't tell you was that it was one of the first official functions for the sheikh, whose country had just emerged from official mourning following the

death of his father – at 92 the oldest and longest-serving monarch in the world.

And talking of long-serving monarchs... 130 miles to the south lies Abu Dhabi, where the Fighting Sausage could also be found in support of royal events.

Her sailors were on hand at various events involving the state visit of the Queen, Duke of Edinburgh and Duke of York.

Cumberland's appearance in Abu Dhabi wasn't purely cosmetic, however; she took part in Air Khandjar – an air-sea exercise with the RAF and the Emirati Air Force.

This is F85's final tour of duty in a career stretching back to the end of the 1980s.

Like her three sisters, she's a victim of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (ironically the ship's company learned Cumberland's fate the day the frigate entered the operational theatre).

"While it is a great sadness for the Navy to lose Cumberland, we've been determined to make her last deployment a fitting end to the ship's distinguished history," said Capt Steve Dainton, the 22's final Commanding Officer.

"She deserves a proud place in the history of the Navy.

"The events with which we will mark her passing when we get back to UK will be poignant, but also a celebration of a truly great ship."

Come the end of April there will no longer be any 22s on active service with Her Majesty's Navy, closing a 30-year chapter of RN history.

But it's not quite time to finish the chapter yet.

CUMBERLAND'S six-month tour

of duty is showing just how much the Gulf mission has evolved in the past few years.

No longer is it week upon week stooging around Iraq's two oil platforms.

Indeed, these days Iraq's sailors and marines carry out four-fifths of the protection mission for the Khawr al Amaya and Al Basrah terminals...

...and even a basic understanding of percentages tells you that there's still a job for Allied naval forces to carry out.

Hence the rather impressive shot of two US Coast Guard vessels preparing to pass in front of ABOT – as anyone who's served out here calls the Al Basrah platform – watched by HMS Cumberland and the American Arleigh Burke destroyer USS O'Kane.

The little photo opportunity for the forces of the RN-led Combined Task Force Iraqi Maritime was staged as Britain's second-most senior admiral visited the Gulf to thank sailors and marines for their continued service over the festive period.

The Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary currently have a dozen warships, survey vessels and auxiliaries deployed in the region, plus personnel at Umm Qasr, Bahrain and on the Iraqi oil platforms.

Admiral Sir Trevor Soar, Commander-in-Chief Fleet, paid his second visit of the year to the region, beginning his whistle-stop tour in Umm Qasr, home of the Iraqi Navy – and the joint UK/US team training its personnel.

The admiral toured the base and stepped aboard one of Iraq's new Swift-class patrol craft, the first of several boats which will eventually take full responsibility for protecting Iraqi

territorial waters.

Then it was on to the USS O'Kane off the Al Basrah platform to see the work done to safeguard this linchpin in Iraq's economy.

ABOT is the newer of two terminals off the Al Faw peninsula which disgorges upwards of three million barrels of oil a day into waiting tankers.

"The Iraqi Navy is making great progress and now has responsibility for some 80 per cent of all Iraqi territorial waters. I am delighted that Admiral Soar was able to see for himself the substantial contribution that personnel from the Royal Navy are making toward this achievement," said Cdre Tony Radakin, commander of Combined Task Force Iraqi Maritime.

Next stop for the admiral was Cumberland and a chance to chat with each of the ship's departments, plus the T22's Royal Marines boarding team.

Cumberland's mission is directed from Bahrain, the hub of Allied naval efforts in the region. It's home to the US Fifth Fleet headquarters and, in its grounds, the UK Maritime Component Command.

It's from here that RN and RM personnel choreograph the movements of vessels across 2½ million square miles of water east of Suez.

In addition, Admiral Soar also had time with a handful of Royal Navy personnel who occupy positions in the staff of Bahrain-based Combined Maritime Forces, a 25-nation naval partnership committed to maritime security in the Middle East through anti-piracy and counter-terrorism operations.

A few minutes' drive from the

UKMCC centre is Mina Salman, home to the four aforementioned minehunters, a team of engineers from the Fleet Support Unit, and RFA Lyme Bay which acts as the afloat headquarters for the Commander UK Mine Countermeasures Forces.

The final leg of C-in-C Fleet's visit was in the United Arab Emirates, where he visited survey ship HMS Enterprise, tanker RFA Bayleaf, which provides fuel to Allied warships in the region, RFA Fort Victoria, in port after a sustained – and successful – period hunting pirates in the Somali Basin.

"As people in Britain were enjoying their Christmas meal, I hope they spared a thought for the sailors, Royal Marines and support staff in the Gulf who were working for their interests over the festive period – as they do 365 days a year – in support of maritime security and freedom of the seas," said Admiral Soar.

"The Arabian Gulf contains some of the world's most important shipping lanes and energy related infrastructure. Stability and security in this region is directly connected to the UK's own wellbeing, as well as that of the international community."

Cdre Tim Fraser, UK Maritime Component Commander added:

"Alongside the nuclear deterrent and our efforts in Afghanistan, the Middle East maritime domain is surely one of our most important defence priorities.

"This is the second occasion in six months that Admiral Soar has visited us. I know the continuing attention and priority which he attaches to our work is greatly appreciated by the Royal Navy ships and personnel in this region."

■ **Cardigan Bay brings the curtain down on Gulf training mission, page 6**





7 (months) up for Middleton

ARRIVING in the UK just about now are the 40-plus men and women of HMS Middleton.

But if you're expecting to catch sight of M34 gliding past Round Tower, you've got a long wait – the ship herself is staying put in the Gulf.

In the latest turnaround of minehunter crews in the Gulf, Crew 7's time is up aboard the Hunt-class warship, Crew 2's stint is just beginning.

Crew 7 have been in charge of Middleton since last May – 216 days in all.

In that time the ship's mine clearance divers have carried out 102 exercises and spent more than 25 hours under water.

Their shipmates launched Seafox, the robot submarine which neutralises mines and explosive devices, more than 150 times as Middleton added 5,220 nautical miles (6,000 statute miles) to her odometer.

And all this in the ever-challenging weather conditions of the Gulf; in high summer, temperatures topped 55°C with 99 per cent humidity and 36°C sea water temperature... which is not a lot of fun to work in.

But work the Middletons did. The ship took part in a succession of exercises during the summer and autumn with local and international navies, often in company with the RN's other assets in the region – HMS Grimsby, Pembroke and Chiddingfold and mine warfare mother ship RFA Lyme Bay.

That force has ranged up and down the Gulf; in Middleton's case, she spent sufficient time operating off Iraq for her crew to earn the Operation Telic medal (which will be presented when they're back in the UK).

By November, three months of constant exercising in the harsh environment had taken its toll – the searing heat, sand and salt had all left their mark on the 26-year-old warship.

That prompted a five-week maintenance spell in Bahrain, assisted by the engineers of the Forward Support Unit.

By the time that was finished, it was almost Christmas, but that didn't stop M34 heading to sea again, this time for Dubai where she spent the New Year with a sizeable proportion of the RN forces east of Suez (see pages 4-5).

After another period of mine warfare exercises in the southern Gulf it was time to return to Bahrain and exchange places with Crew 2, fresh from HMS Ledbury (which will be Crew 7's home once they've enjoyed some well-deserved leave).

"The past seven months in the Arabian Gulf have provided a unique operational challenge for the ship and crew," said CO Lt Cdr Phil Dennis.

"I am immensely proud of the resolve and commitment my crew have displayed maintaining a high operational tempo in the unforgiving environment. They should be very proud of all they have achieved."

Pier review for Type 45s

WORK has begun on a new ammunition facility in Portsmouth Harbour to support the 21st-Century Fleet.

The existing pontoon/pier structure used by frigates and destroyers to load and offload missiles, shells and other ammo dates from the 1920s.

The pier, which extends from the munitions depot at Bridgemyr in Gosport, was originally used for coaling, before being converted to ammunition submarines and small warships.

It was overhauled 30 years ago to accommodate larger vessels, but years of exposure to the elements have taken their toll.

With a new facility required to support the Type 45 destroyers and their Aster missiles, builders VolkerStevin are erecting a replacement to the south-east of the existing structure, which will remain in use until 2012.



● Coats and Cardigan... A couple of well-cloaked early-risers on Round Tower watch RFA Cardigan Bay enter Portsmouth Harbour
Picture: LA(Phot) Claire Jones, FRPU

Cardigan wraps it up

MISSION accomplished.

That has a very satisfying ring to it.

After three years and two dozen patrols in the northern Gulf, RFA Cardigan Bay finished her extended stint in the region and sailed into Portsmouth Harbour.

Sadly, she didn't bring the Gulf weather with her: it was a cold, drizzly dawn as the amphibious support ship passed Round Tower.

In doing so she brought the curtain down not merely on her lengthy deployment, but one of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's core missions for much of the past decade.

Cardigan Bay, and before her RFAs Sir Bedivere and Diligence, served as the hub for training Iraqi sailors and marines.

She's also served as a 'lily pad' for Allied operations at the tip of the Gulf – offering fuel, sustenance, support to warships in

these waters and a flight deck for helicopters operating between the ships and Bahrain, the main naval base in the region.

The key role, however, was to prepare Iraqi marines and sailors for the challenging task of defending their territorial waters and their country's two oil platforms (see below).

Training is provided by a US-UK team in Iraq's main naval base, Umm Qasr, several hours' sailing up the Khawr abd Allah.

To cut down on that sailing time, Britain has stationed an RFA vessel at the head of the Gulf to maximise training opportunities for the Iraqis and their patrol boats.

Cardigan Bay was designed to support Royal Marines' amphibious operations, disgorging men and matériel on to foreign

shores by landing craft and helicopter.

That was put on the backburner for this mission; the ship served as a base for Iraqi boats, their crews and their tutors and instructors, as well as US Navy fast patrol craft covering the waters around the platforms.

Thanks to her special features, Cardigan Bay was also able to offer some unique training, such as flooding her loading dock to teach the Iraqis sea-survival techniques.

Although the mission for the past three years has been constant, the Bay-class ship's position has not; she's clocked up more than 71,000 miles since she sailed from the UK back in 2008, stopping off in Cyprus on the way home to pick up various military vehicles and ferry them to the mother country. No RFA is taking her place

in the Gulf; naval leaders have decided that it's one task which has now been completed (although the Umm Qasr team will remain in situ until next year).

Cardigan Bay's Commanding Officer Capt Paul Minter RFA said his ship had "secured her place in the history of Operation Telic and the history of the fledgling Iraqi Navy."

"It has been a demanding but rewarding role to provide support to such an important task, and has demonstrated the versatility of these capable ships."

After a spot of maintenance in Falmouth following her lengthy exertions in the harsh Gulf environment, the ship will return to the fold of the UK's amphibious forces taking part in exercises later this year.

She's due to return to Falmouth in August for a major refit similar to the one completed on her sister Mounts Bay last year.

Different year same tempo

BY THE time 2011 was one week old, two Royal Navy vessels had already slipped their moorings for lengthy deployments.

Both HMS Echo and HMS Richmond are bound east of Suez.

You won't see the latter till high summer. As for Echo, well Britain will be gearing up for the Olympics by the time she's back.

The survey ship will be away from her home port of Devonport for at least two years as she updates charts and gathers hydrographic data in the Red Sea, Gulf, Indian Ocean, Middle East and the Far East.

To that end she spent the tail end of the old year undergoing extensive training, six weeks of bespoke operational sea training for survey ships, and, just before the festive season, a fortnight of top-up training (which included battle training in addition to testing typical hydrographic and seafaring duties).

In the intervening periods when not under training the ship has been carrying out surveys of UK waters, including a spell in Cardigan Bay.

"2010 was an extremely challenging – and rewarding year – for Echo," said her XO Lt Cdr Trefor Fox.

"Everyone pulled together to complete the preparations required for such a long and wide ranging deployment."

Thanks to crew rotation, one third of the ship's company will always be home in the UK, either on training courses or on leave, allowing Echo to be away from the mother country for so long.

As for the families of Richmond's sailors, they 'only' have to wait seven months to see the frigate again.

The Type 23 sailed on probably the plum tour-of-duty today's Surface Fleet enjoys: the Far East deployment.

Before she gets there, however, there's the small matter of pirates to deal with.

The deployment begins in earnest off the Horn of Africa supporting the international effort to stamp out brigandage in the Somali basin and aid the delivery of food to Somalia under the World Food Programme.

Once counter-piracy work is done, Richmond heads to the Far East in support of UK military commitments such as the Five Powers Defence Agreement (FPDA), which will see her visiting Indonesia, Brunei and Singapore.

Fast forward for Iraqis

NO, IT'S not one of ours, though it is now prowling familiar waters.

This is Swift Patrol Boat P-301 of the Iraqi Navy, pictured here on trials but which has now carried out its first mission in territorial waters around the Al Basrah Oil Terminal (ABOT), the old stamping ground of many a Royal Navy warship in recent years.

And just to emphasise the significance of the event, it was scheduled for Iraqi National Army Day, January 7.

The inaugural patrol will have gladdened the hearts of the Royal Navy personnel who have been training Iraqi sailors in Umm Qasr as part of a coalition team since 2004, most recently specifically geared to the new patrol boat.

A joint Iraqi/Coalition team conducted the crew's final sea assessment, which the men of P-301 passed with flying colours before setting out on their first patrol.

P-301 will be joined by a further 14 of the 35-metre Swiftship-built boats over the coming year.

Capt Gary Sutton, Commanding Officer ITAM Navy (Umm Qasr), said: "Today the Iraqi Navy has made a huge step forward with the first Swiftship patrol of ABOT."

"I am proud of their accomplishment, but I would also like to acknowledge the achievements of the highly-professional training and advisory coalition team in ITAM-N whose training of the Iraqi Navy made this possible."



Saving Ryan's privates

COMMANDOS and sailors on patrol in Afghanistan have better protection against bombs thanks to special underwear being issued.

Some £10m has been spent by Whitehall on 'pelvic body armour' to mitigate the effects of improvised explosive devices – the insurgents' insidious weapon of choice in Helmand which has severely maimed scores of British servicemen.

The new body armour comprises protective underwear and detachable armoured modular trousers.

It balances protection with the necessary comfort and manoeuvrability which troops need on operations – they can wear one or more protective layers depending on the mission.

The first layer is a pair of silk shorts which provides protection against shrapnel.

Some 45,000 pairs have already been delivered to personnel on Operation Herrick and another 15,000 are being issued to men and women about to head to Helmand – such as 3 Commando Brigade which assumes the lead role in Afghanistan this spring.

Troops can wear a second layer of detachable pelvic body armour, which can be rolled up and clipped to a belt and then pulled through the legs to form a protective pouch – meaning mobility is not impeded.

It will be issued to all troops operating 'outside the wire' this spring.

Finally for personnel whose role demands even greater levels of protection – such as those searching for IEDs – there's a third layer covering the upper leg and wider abdominal region.

This last layer is in the final stages of being designed.

Preparing for Helmand mission, pages 15-17

Gulf debut for Iron Duke

IF IT were not for the sullen sky, this could almost be one of Her Majesty's ships passing Dubai's distinctive luxury waterfront hotel.

In fact it's one of Her Majesty's ships passing Portsmouth's distinctive (but not quite as luxurious) Spinnaker Tower.

Still it won't be long before HMS Iron Duke is within sight of the Dubai landmark.

The frigate was the third RN vessel in a week to depart these shores (see opposite), in F234's case a six-month tour of duty in the Gulf.

Iron Duke's taking over from HMS Cumberland, on her very final deployment, as Britain's major warship in the Gulf.

Although the deployment still falls under the Operation Telic banner, the mission has become much more varied in recent years to embrace wider maritime security in the region, rather than 'merely' protecting Iraq's two oil platforms.

The Iron Duck's task over the coming six months include counter-terrorism and anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, the protection of those platforms, exercises and operations with regional naval forces, and work promoting and supporting Britain's interests in the region.

Iron Duke has served her nation for nearly 20 years, but this will be her first appearance east of Suez.

Structural issues with the ship meant that she's deployed either to the North Atlantic or the South.

As they've now been resolved, courtesy of a year in the UK undergoing maintenance and specialist training, it means that she can head to the Type 23s' typical 'playground'.

Indeed, the ship and her 190 men and women are "perfectly matched" for the tasks which lie ahead according to her Commanding Officer, Cdr Nick Cooke-Priest.

"The experience is not with the ship, it's with the sailors – and 50 or 60 per cent of them have been to the Gulf before, so we sail confident of making a tangible and worthy contribution to security and stability in the region."



Picture: LA(Phot) Aaron Hoare, FRPU East

Penzance had a 'brilliant deployment'

ENJOYING the surroundings of Gareloch once more after six months on NATO duties around North-West Europe are the men of HMS Penzance.

The minehunter took over from her sister Walney (now paid off) as Britain's representative in NATO's Standing Mine Counter-Measures Group 1 in the Polish port of Gdynia, back in June.

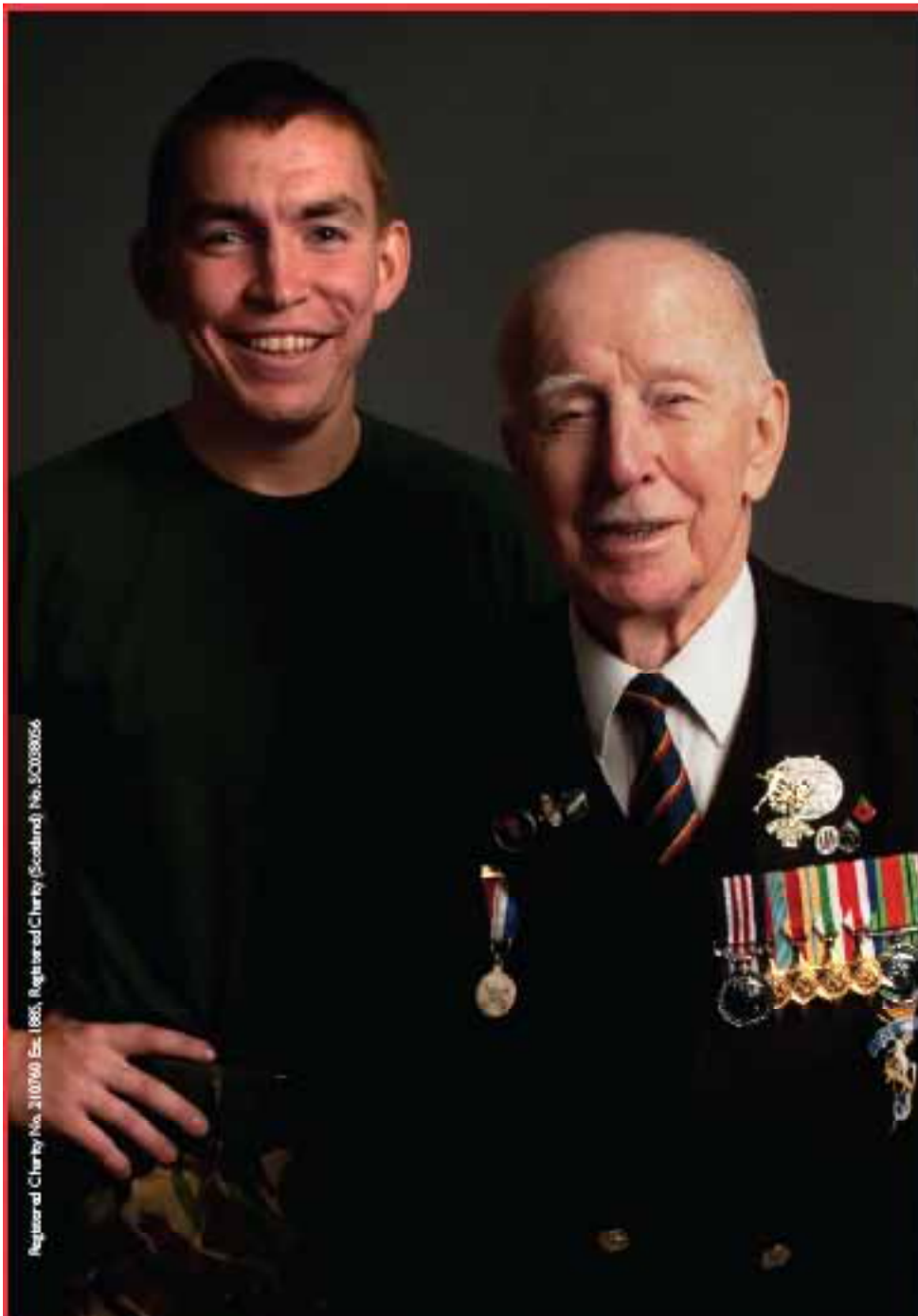
She was immediately thrust into Baltops (a contraction of Baltic Operations) with half a dozen Allied mine warfare vessels, elements of the US Sixth Fleet, plus military firepower from Germany, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Denmark, Poland, France, Sweden and Russia in the Gulf of Finland.

Since then M106 has enjoyed a whistle-stop tour of Europe dealing with dummy mines as well as the legacy of WW1 and WW2 in the waters of France, Poland, Finland, the Netherlands, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland (the NATO group joined larger Allied vessels for October's Joint Warrior war games).

"It was a brilliant deployment but hard work. Luckily we got to stop off at a good few places including Amsterdam, Hamburg and Finland. Still, it's really good to be home and to relax over Christmas," said AB John Kanuy.

His Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Steve Brown added: "The deployment was enormous fun and a hugely rewarding experience – our activities went a long way to making the seas safer."

"The navies who were involved in the NATO group are among the best mine counter-measures nations in the world, and competition was very stiff to claim first place."



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Ambush is out in the open

NO sooner was she out than she was in again.

HMS Ambush, that is – out of the dock hall and then into the water.

The reluctant submarine, second of the cutting-edge Astute class, failed to roll out of her shed at the end of last year when the low-loader transport system refused to budge.

But the roll-out ceremony went ahead almost as planned, as can be seen from the pictures on this page.

Large crowds gathered in the Devonshire Dock Hall at BAE Submarine Solutions' yard in Barrow to welcome Ambush, the 24th nuclear boat to be built at the end of the Furness peninsula.

Lady Soar, wife of Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar, 'launched' Ambush by releasing a bottle of champagne which duly shattered against the vessel's flank.

Many of the 2,000 or so who watched her have worked on the boat over the past seven years, and will continue to do in the coming months, as well as on the remaining five of class.

"The submarine looks impressive and powerful, however that sleek exterior hides an internal complexity of mind-boggling proportions," John Hudson, BAE Submarine Solutions Managing Director, reminded those sheltering in the 270,000 sq ft dock hall from the cold December wind.

Technically-advanced though she is, Ambush remained hostage to the more modest mechanics of the errant low-loader for a few days after the crowds dispersed, then inched out into the daylight for the first time.

Christmas and the New Year came and went before the next stage was achieved, and Ambush is now in her natural environment.



Thanks to a giant synchro-lift the 7,400-tonne £1bn boat was lowered gently into the water in the early part of January, then moved into the adjacent dock where she will remain firmly secured while the next battery of tests is carried

out and further work done on her interior.

There is a ship's company on watch around the clock from now on, and it is hoped that the Mighty Bush, as she has been dubbed, will put to sea for the first time before this year is out.

Meanwhile, construction on the third vessel of the class – Artful – is continuing, with the command deck in place and work on the hull almost completed.

The fourth boat, Audacious, is also taking shape after the keel was laid almost two years ago.

The ground work for boat five (Agamemnon) has started and materials for boat six (Anson), including her reactor core, have been ordered.

The seventh of the class, which was confirmed in last year's

● *Crowds gather in the Devonshire Dock Hall to see the launch of HMS Ambush (above), among whom were members of her new ship's company (right)*
Pictures: LA(Phot) Stu Hill

● *(Left) Ambush sits high and dry on the low-loader which delayed her emergence from the dock hall*

Picture: Andrew Linnett, DE&S Photographic Manager

Strategic Defence and Security Review, will be named Ajax.

More than 5,000 BAE personnel are working on the hi-tech programme, with a further 1,200 firms across the UK providing specialist parts and equipment.

And joy at her arrival on the scene was not confined to Barrow.

An MOD spokesman said: "Clyde Naval Base, the home of

the UK Submarine Service, will see all the Astute-class vessels berthed alongside along with the remaining Trafalgar-class submarines and the Royal Navy's Sandown-class mine hunters.

"It is always an exciting time when a new vessel is launched, and those working at Faslane are looking forward to welcoming Ambush to her new home."



High-speed Turbulent

HMS TURBULENT has stormed through a rapid-fire Basic Operational Sea Training (BOST), claiming a coveted 'Very Satisfactory' into the bargain.

CO Cdr Ryan Ramsey set a 27-day deadline, which meant running some serials

simultaneously rather than in sequence, putting extra pressure on the crew.

They rose to the challenge, winning words of praise from the Flag Officer Sea Training staff, which described them as a "well-led and highly-motivated team".

YOU might think that the life of a submariner could be a tad dull.

Day after day on patrol below the waves, the hours marked by the hands of a clock rather than the rising and setting of the sun (though there has not been much sun above the waves over the past few weeks either, admittedly).

But the depths of HMSTriumph might challenge that assumption – variety was very much the order of the day for them.

Last autumn saw the boat acting as a training platform for the latest Perisher course – otherwise known as the Submarine Command Course.

The students led Triumph through a series of demanding exercises, beginning with an intensive 'eyes only' phase, in which numerous surface ships or skimmers harass the boat at speed, with the students using only the periscope to keep Triumph safe.

The pressure is racked up over the remainder of the course, but Lt Cdrs Jeff Filmore, Dave Filtness and Dan Martyn, along with Lt Cdr Dan Reiss of the US Navy, demonstrated the skills necessary to undertake that most demanding of jobs – commander of a nuclear submarine.

A weekend of training with land forces, delivered by helicopter, was completed before the submarine left the environs of Faslane for open waters off the Scottish coast and Exercise Joint Warrior.

This saw Triumph integrated

Triumphant progress



● *Troops leap from a Chinook straight into a Scottish loch during exercises with HMS Triumph*

into task group operations and compete in tactical exercises against two other highly-capable submarines, the Norwegian conventional submarine HNoMS Ula and Triumph's sister boat HMS Turbulent.

The culmination of Perisher is the final inshore weekend where the boat steams south from the Hebrides back home to Faslane.

Opposition is provided by several Type 23 frigates and assorted aircraft, and the pressure is racked up as the students are watched closely by VIPs such as Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar and Rear Admiral Submarines Rear Admiral

Mark Anderson.

Of the final inshore weekend, Admiral Soar said: "I was impressed with all I saw during the final stages of Perisher, both capability and people."

He added: "HMS Triumph's support to the Submarine Command Course has been first class and I look forward to visiting the submarine again when possible."

With the newly-qualified captains delivered back to Faslane, Triumph made a surface transit to Den Helder in Holland for a rare foreign run ashore – the first the submarine has had in over six years.

Fixtures were arranged against local rugby and football teams, and a tour organised of the Amsterdam Arena stadium, home of the mighty Ajax football team, while some of the senior rates obtained tickets for an AZ match – the Eredivisie (Dutch premiership) club's stadium was within a two-minute walk of the sailors' hotel in Alkmaar.

Visit Liaison Officer Lt Nick Stone said: "The lads did an excellent job behaving themselves and making the most of every opportunity to have a good time."

"There really was something for everyone and we were hosted impeccably by the Dutch Navy."

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Normal service resumed

THE Royal Navy's distinctive red-and-grey rescue helicopters have been ranging far and wide from their base at HMS Gannet in the first days of 2011.

The duty Search and Rescue (SAR) Sea Kings headed to all points of the compass with seven calls in seven days in the first full week of the new year, resuming normal high levels of activity after a strangely-quiet Hogmanay period.

Christmas week – December 20-26 – brought the team, based at Prestwick, six emergencies, including one on Christmas Day and two on Boxing Day.

One job was to fly a teenager to hospital after a sledding accident at Ayr, a short hop for the aviators.

They landed on the golf course (pictured) and took the lad to Glasgow for observations, skirting snow showers along the way.

Three were for medical transfers from the Queen of the Hebrides, Islay, and the others included sorties to Lochgilphead and the Isle of Bute.

The following week was eerily quiet across Scotland, the North of England and Northern Ireland.

But the week beginning January 3 saw a resumption in normal business.

Six people were rescued in a total flying time of 13 hours, with sorties including:

The transfer of a casualty who had fallen from a boat in Argyll to hospital in Kilmarnock;

Flying a road traffic victim from Stirlingshire, at the

eastern limit of their 'patch' to hospital in Edinburgh; A search for two missing persons in Northern Ireland, the western limit on terra firma (their remit could take them hundreds of miles out into the Atlantic).

Saturday January 8 saw the duty crew really stretched, this time from north to south.

At 1.40pm they answered a call to help Fort William police search for and rescue two climbers who had fallen on Ben Nevis, at the extreme north of their coverage area.

This was the first major mountain job with the unit for aircrewman and paramedic Sgt Andy Dixon, on exchange from the RAF, and it wasn't an easy one.

On being winched down, he found the casualties were both French and spoke no English.

They were whisked from the mountain and into the care of an ambulance and mountain rescue team doctor.

After three hours aloft they returned to Prestwick – but an hour later they were off to the southern margin of their territory, the Lake District.

This time they were ready to pluck a climber from Great End on the Scafell massif, but on arrival they found the Keswick mountain rescue team had managed to find and rescue him, and were able to return to base for a well-earned break.

The hard-pressed crew at Gannet – the busiest SAR unit in the UK for the past two years – consisted of pilots Lt George 'Logie' Baird and Lt Andy Ellis, observer Lt Cdr Dave Reese and Sgt Andy Dixon RAF.



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● 42 Cdo's Capt Mackenzie Green sends a situation report as his men storm a Taleban compound near Kajaki in January 2007 – as captured by PO(Phot) Gaz Faulkner's iconic photograph

Afghan dits wanted

EXPERTS at the nation's most famous military museum want today's sailors and marines to provide their stories of conflict in Afghanistan.

The Imperial War Museum's 'War Story' initiative – which has the backing of the MOD – seeks to record first-hand experiences of 21st-Century combat from men and women who were there.

Their personal accounts from theatre, along with physical items, will help to tell the story of the conflict in Afghanistan and will feature in an exhibition at the museum's London headquarters.

With e-mails and 'blogs' – Internet-based diaries – replacing traditional letters and journals, historians fear that experiences and first-hand accounts of present-day conflict could be lost to future generations.

"We have tonnes of stuff from the World Wars 1 and 2 and the Falkland Islands but we realised there was a huge hole in contemporary material," said project manager Louise Skidmore.

"Most of the material now is digital and we know that it tends to disappear within a couple of years because people lose the data or change computers. Letters aren't just put in an attic like they used to be.

"War Story aims to overcome the short-term electronic nature of modern communication methods and provide current and future generations with a better idea of what serving on Operation Herrick is really like."

Any personnel signing up to the War Story project can use film, art, photography or the written word to capture their thoughts, feelings and experiences during their deployment.

The IWM team is hoping to provide a panoramic sweep of life in Afghanistan, from day-to-day life to combat operations, equipment, working with Allies, downtime, and keeping in touch with loved ones back in the UK.

In addition to these typical experiences of war, the historians are also interested in slightly unusual ephemera – anything from

iPod playlists and favourite video games to unit insignia and unusual gifts people return with.

In the case of the written word, the material can be logged directly on to the War Story website or handed over during post-tour workshops, the first of which involved personnel from 40 Commando who've recently returned from a tour of duty on Operation Herrick 12.

For more information about the project, visit www.iwm.org.uk/warstory or email warstory@iwm.org.uk.

Personnel should not include material which may breach operational security; if in doubt consult your chain of command.

■ THE museum's Great War galleries are undergoing a £29m revamp which will double the amount of material on display by the time of the 100th anniversary of the conflict's outbreak.

The existing display area features various galleries and cases charting the course of the 1914-18 war, through personal artefacts, uniforms, letters, photographs and films, plus the recreation of a trench.

The new galleries will feature more material, as well as additional interactive/multimedia displays to bring the stories of men and women caught up in WW1 to life.

The revamp is due to be complete by the summer of 2014 and is the first stage of a transformation of the London museum over the next decade.

By 2019, the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War 2, the galleries for the second global conflagration will also have been revamped, as well as the museum's enormous glass atrium (home presently to a Polaris missile, a 4in gun from a Great War destroyer and several tanks) and other exhibition spaces and grounds. The whole project is expected to cost around £71m, paid for by the public, businesses and benefactors.



The ensign flies again

IN THE murk of San Carlos Water, the White Ensign billows once more in the current swirling around HMS Antelope.

It's been four years since the Royal Navy's standard was last fixed to the wreck – courtesy of HMS Liverpool when she was on patrol in the Falklands.

This time it fell to an RN-led team of Service divers to head a few score feet down into the less-than-hospitable waters of San Carlos, the bleak anchorage which provided the springboard for the islands' liberation three decades ago.

Antelope was part of the shield for the invasion force which was subjected to furious Argentine air attack during the first five days of the landings; the confined waters became known as Bomb Alley.

The Type 21 frigate stood guard at the entrance to San Carlos Water on air defence duties. She was struck by two 1,000lb bombs on May 23 1982, which failed to explode, but did kill Std Mark Stephens.

As bomb disposal experts tried to disarm the explosives, one of the bombs triggered killing S/Sgt Jim Prescott and seriously injuring one of his colleagues.

The resulting explosions broke Antelope's back – and provided one of the iconic images of the conflict (above) – the ship eventually settling on the San Carlos sea bed some 80ft below.

Antelope – and other vessels lost during the 1982 war – is a designated war grave and is protected by law; permission has to be sought from the islands' governor to dive on her.

RN warships visiting these waters since have replaced the White Ensign on Antelope, but the demise of ship's divers means the task is performed infrequently.

So a team from the British Forces South Atlantic Islands led by the RN's Lt Roger Malone and including Cdre Rupert Wallace (Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla) and Lt Cdr Adrian Fryer, CO of HMS Clyde – the islands' permanent naval guardian – descended into the cold, murky waters.

"Dropping through the gloom on to the fo'c'sle, we found the wreck encrusted with marine life and upright but with a large list to port," said Lt Malone.

"Despite visibility being so bad that it was impossible to see from one end of her 4.5in gun to the other, the remains of the ensign flown by HMS Liverpool on Landing Day in 2006 were evident, draped over the barrel."

The dive team moved forward and secured the new ensign on to a fairlead on the starboard side to let it float freely in the current.

"The dive was challenging and navigating around the wreck was difficult not least due to the poor visibility but also the damage caused during her sinking and 28 years of her lying on the seabed," Lt Malone added.

"Many areas of the ship are unrecognisable – large holes are appearing in her hull and parts of the superstructure have collapsed in on themselves.

"It was a great honour to be able to take part in this dive and remember those who perished during the conflict. It was an emotional moment watching the White Ensign fly over her again."

With the ensign changed, the divers surfaced where a sea boat was waiting for them from Clyde; its crew 'enjoyed' the Falklands weather while the frogmen were fixing the new flag in place.

Back on board HMS Clyde, there was a service of remembrance for the Type 21, before a wreath of poppies was cast into the silent waters.



● The replacement ensign 'flies' on Antelope



● Fit Lt John Raine approaches the White Ensign left by HMS Liverpool's divers in 2006 over Antelope's 4.5in gun and (below) another shot of the encrusted main gun listing to port

Diving pictures: Lt Roger Malone



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Keppel topples as Culdrose revamp ends

NOW there will be quite a few airmen who'd relish the chance to do this – take a swing to Culdrose's Keppel Block with a JCB.

But for the air station's Executive Officer there was a slight hint of sadness as he sat behind the wheel of a digger to begin pulling down the accommodation block.

Thirty years ago Cdr Jerry Ovens was among the first people to move into Keppel, built in the early 1970s for trainee officers as part of a massive redevelopment of the Cornish airbase to meet the demands of the day.

That £8m revamp took place when concrete was *de rigueur*, and the architects designing the new-look Culdrose promised they would use techniques to soften the exterior.

Fast forward 35 years and Keppel, like most concrete structures, is a drab grey... and the interior's spartan and basic.

The block is one of the few remaining relics of that 1970s modernisation of Culdrose; what sailors expect of accommodation has moved on once more... such as not wishing to walk half a block to the nearest heads or share shower/bath facilities.

So enter a 20-metre long-reach crushing machine, one XO (guided by a demolition expert) at the controls and Keppel's demise began. Within a few minutes much of the upper floor was lying on the ground.

Come July 2012 a brick block will have arisen on the site with en-suite facilities for its inhabitants; its designers promise that the replacement building will "create a pleasing environment in keeping with the rural surroundings".

When it is complete, it will conclude the current phase of modernisation at Culdrose.



Snow brings in dough

Up and at 'em one last time

JUST three months after HMS Chatham paid a final visit to her namesake town, more than 60 members of her ship's company will be in the Medway port to say their farewells on Saturday February 12.

They will close the book on an affiliation going back to the late 1980s when they paraded through the streets of Kent, exercising their right to the Freedom of the Borough of Medway for the final time.

As with her three older sisters, Chatham is being paid off early under October's defence review.

She's already said her goodbyes to the city of her birth, Newcastle – last month the frigate spent four days in North Shields, a few miles along the Tyne from the Swan Hunter yard where Chatham was built from 1986-89, before joining the Fleet the following year.

The freedom parade in Kent – with bayonets fixed and colours flying, all in time to the drum beat of the Royal Marines Band from HMS Collingwood – will begin in Chatham High Street at 11.30am and end at the Medway Council buildings, where officials will host a reception for the sailors.

"Although the day will be tinged with sadness, HMS Chatham has enjoyed more than 20 years of friendship and support from the local population and I'm certain that many happy memories of this special bond will remain long after the ship has gone," said Cdr Simon Huntingdon, the frigate's final Commanding Officer.

His ship was making her final entry into her home port of Devonport – flying a decommissioning pennant – as *Navy News* went to press.

A formal decommissioning ceremony occurs this month.

LAST year's snow may have brought the country to a halt, caused countless broken arms, wrists and legs, and cost the economy £700m...

...but this picture-postcard image of HMS Victory blanketed by the white stuff looks lovely and helped bring in thousands of pounds for Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard.

The heavy snowfall and cold snap at the beginning of 2010 forced staff to curb the opening hours of the site's numerous museums and attractions – and, understandably, kept the public away.

But the sight of the historic buildings – and Nelson's iconic flagship in particular – covered in snow brought photographers out in force.

The result, says dockyard marketer Melissa Gerbaldi, was an estimated £10,000 of free advertising as images of the snow-carpeted dockyard flashed around the world courtesy of print media, websites and specialist magazines.

As for this picture of Victory, well it graced the front of 10,000 Christmas cards, netting upwards of £5k.

With the fresh dump of snow just before the festive period, the photographers returned to the dockyard to update their image libraries and there are plans to produce more Victory Christmas cards for this year's yuletide...

... so that's just £699,985,000 the economy needs to claw back now...

The dockyard ended 2010 on a high with more than 23,500 people filing through its gates for its Victorian Christmas festival – a success which has prompted a re-run from November 25-27 this year.



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From September 1st, the IET will be launching new technician pricing for Armed Forces applicants: TMIET Membership fee will be £80. EngTech/ICTech application fee of £52 is waived.

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Jewel purpose

CURRENTLY enjoying a spot of training with those nice folk at FOST is the newest warship in the Fleet's inventory, HMS Diamond.

2011 is the year when the Type 45 destroyers come of age. Daring will deploy for the first time, Dauntless will be ready to deploy by the year's end, and Diamond, the third ship in the £6bn programme, won't be far behind her.

D34 begins and ends the year in the hands of the Flag Officer Sea Training (the second 'session' is for Operational Sea Training).

Between those bookends, there are the ship's final sea trials, her formal handing over to the Commander-in-Chief Fleet (the 'in-service date'), commissioning (in May) and the inaugural visit to one of her affiliated cities, Aberdeen (this month); she's also bound with Coventry, although getting 8,000 tonnes of Pusser's grey there might prove tricky.

Other relations to foster for the 190 or so Diamonds this year include the Worshipful Companies of Makers of Playing Cards (who also enjoy strong ties with submarine HMS Turbulent) and Barber-Surgeons – forerunners of today's naval medical branch, who've been going to sea since 1512...

...which pre-dates the first HMS Diamond by about seven decades.

The lineage begins with a Dartmouth cutter which served under Drake and helped defeat the Spanish Armada – the very first Naval battle honour awarded.

The second Diamond was built for Oliver Cromwell and served under the Commonwealth and later the King in the wars of the late 17th Century before she was captured by the French in 1693.

The third, fourth and fifth

Diamonds were fifth-rate frigates which served for most of the 18th Century. No.3 distinguished herself in the Caribbean, No.4 took part in the controversial Battle of Toulon, and No.5 fought in the American Wars of Independence.

The sixth Diamond was around for fewer than two years; an armed merchant brig, she was hired by the Navy from 1793-94.

Diamond No.7 served through the bulk of the Napoleonic Wars, helping to all but eliminate coastal traffic off the Normandy coast and even sneaking into Brest (the French Navy's counterpart of Plymouth or Portsmouth), before being broken up in 1812.

Her successor spent eight years incomplete because Europe was at peace. When finally finished, she served for only three years before being destroyed by an accidental fire in Portsmouth Harbour.

Now to the Far East and the brief career of Diamond No.9, a four-gun schooner hired in 1832 to chase down Malay pirates.

The final Diamond powered by sail served in the Mediterranean and was dispatched to the Black Sea during the Crimean War. She eventually became a training ship and was renamed Joseph Straker.

The first ironclad Diamond (No.11, if you've lost count) was an 1874 corvette which spent almost her entire 15-year career in the Far East and Australia.

Into the 20th Century and a Gem-class cruiser; she spent the bulk of the Great War attached to the Grand Fleet in home waters before being dispatched to the Mediterranean in the final months as a base ship for motor boats.

For four years (1915-19) there



● The tug Bustler accompanies Diamond out of Portsmouth on the destroyer's first trials under the White Ensign

Picture: LA(Phot) Kyle Heller, FRPU East

was also HMS Diamond II, a trawler commissioned by the Navy to tackle the U-boat menace.

The most recent Diamond to see action was No.14, a 1932 Defender-class destroyer which was heavily engaged in the Mediterranean when war came. She was lost to German dive-bombers while evacuating troops from Greece in April 1941 in company with HMS Wryneck at the cost of more than 900 lives.

The penultimate ship in this long line was the fifteenth Diamond, a 1952 D-class destroyer – hailed in their day as revolutionary warships. She ended her days as a training vessel for engineers in Portsmouth Harbour before being broken up in 1981.

That's not quite the end of the Diamond story, however, for there's the unusual tale of 'HMS Diamond Rock' – which began life as the French sloop Diamant.

She was captured by the British and pressed into service as a supply vessel for a garrison on Diamond Rock off Martinique in 1804-05. The small fort on the outcrop earned the nickname HMS Diamond Rock (although it was never commissioned as such) while the supply boat, renamed Fort Diamond, was retaken by the French after just three months in RN service. The fort itself held out for another year.



Armada.....	1588
Kentish Knock	1652
Portland	1653
Scheveningen	1653
Lowestoft.....	1665
Four Days' Battle.....	1666
Orfordness.....	1666
Solebay	1672
Schooneveld.....	1673
Texel.....	1673
Crimea.....	1854-55
Spartivento	1940
Mediterranean	1940
Malta Convoys.....	1941
Greece.....	1941

Class: Type 45 destroyer
 Pennant number: D34
 Motto: *Honor clarissima gemma* (honour is the brightest jewel)
 Builder: BAE Systems
 Laid down: February 25 2005
 Launched: November 27 2007
 Commissioned: May 2011
 Displacement: 8,000 tons
 Length: 500ft (152m)
 Beam: 70ft (21.2m)
 Draught: 24ft (7.4m)
 Speed: in excess of 30 knots
 Complement: 190 (can accommodate up to 235)
 Propulsion: 2 x Rolls Royce WR21 gas turbine-driven alternators; 2 x Wartsila diesel generators; 2 x Alstom electric propulsion motors
 Armament: Sea Viper anti-air missile system featuring Aster15 and Aster30 missiles held in SYLVER launcher; 1 x 4.5in Mk8 main gun; 2 x 30mm guns; Surface Ship Torpedo Defence system
 Helicopter: 1 x Lynx or 1 x Merlin

HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.82 – Sir Winston Spencer Churchill

THE date: Saturday January 30, 1965.

The location: Whitehall, London.

The occasion: the final chapter in the rich story of Sir Winston Churchill, the last commoner to receive a state funeral.

A 142-strong detail of sailors hauls the heavy lead-lined coffin of the Former Naval Person on a gun carriage, flanked by Royal Air Force personnel and Guardsmen in this rare colour image of the occasion from the photographic archive of the Imperial War Museum.

For three days the wartime premier's body had lain in state in Westminster Hall; more than 320,000 people filed past it to pay their last respects.

Sir Winston's health had been failing for several years; a frail figure had defiantly given his trademark V for victory sign at the window of his London home as crowds gathered to celebrate his 90th birthday in November 1964.

By January 1965, the spark of life was almost extinguished. On the tenth he suffered a stroke and spent the remaining 14 days of his life in a coma.

Prayers were offered. Harold Wilson and the Archbishop of Canterbury cancelled public engagements. For several days Britain was in limbo. The news brought the country to a standstill.

But it was not unexpected. Shortly after ascending the throne, the young Queen made it clear that when Churchill died he was to receive a funeral "on a scale befitting his position in history".

What followed were a dozen years of planning – the last draft of the elaborate arrangements was completed just two months before Sir Winston died – for an operation unofficially codenamed Operation Hope Not.

And so when the inevitable but unwanted day of the funeral finally came, everything was arranged to the minute.

Ten monarchs and heads of state and representatives from more than 100 nations attended proceedings which reached their



photographic memories

climax at St Paul's Cathedral, Chief of Defence Staff and former First Sea Lord Admiral of the Fleet Lord Mountbatten was among the pallbearers.

Three thousand mourners filled St Paul's. Millions more watched proceedings on television; the BBC had 40 cameras covering the progress of the cortège, the service, the launch carrying the coffin the short distance up the Thames from Tower Pier to Festival Pier and transfer to train from Waterloo for burial in Oxfordshire.

We could – and believe some people have done so – devote a book or two to the wartime premier, or even his leadership of the Royal Navy in two global conflagrations.

Churchill's Naval record is patchy. He advocated risky campaigns – the Dardanelles and Norway – which proved to be disastrous, both for the Navy and the nation.

But what was never in doubt was his passion for the Senior Service, "Britain's sure shield". He helped drag the Admiralty into the 20th Century, nurtured the fledgling naval air arm (learning to fly in the process), advocated the 15in gun and oil over coal as the fuel of choice for the Fleet.

A generation later, when appointed First Lord of the Admiralty – the political figure responsible for the Navy – for the second time the legendary signal 'Winston is back' flashed around the Fleet.

He found the Senior Service in 1939 to be "the finest tempered instrument of naval war in the world".

In turn, *Navy News'* editor of the day, Lt H R Berridge, eulogised that the Royal Navy had as much trust in its former leader as he had in it. The Fleet would, he said, "always remember him. He takes his place with all the other naval heroes – Nelson, Blake, Collingwood, Drake, Rodney, and so many others."

■ THIS photograph (RAF-T 5119) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@iwm.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.



● Merseysailors, led by AB(Sea) 'Doris' Day, try mountain biking in a Scottish forest

Fire, flood and hill-walking...

IT'S Operational; Sea Training, but not as we know it...

For the majority of the Fleet, OST is a necessary evil, complete with long hours, endless cleaning, and a drill for every conceivable scenario.

Unless, of course, you are part of the Fisheries Protection Squadron.

This year HMS Mersey had a new dimension added to her OST – Adventurous Training.

Mersey, like her sister River-class patrol vessels, operates a three-watch manning system, meaning that whilst the ship is at sea a third of her ship's company is on leave.

In order to replicate realistic manning demands, one of the three watches was landed for three days of AT, so whilst the 'on' watches were having fun fighting fire, floods and other exciting OST exercises, the 'off' watch didn't get the chance to put their feet up.

They threw themselves into hill walking, mountain biking, skiing and rock climbing, courtesy of Clyde Naval Base's well-equipped AT section.

Mersey's Executive Officer Lt Rob Lamb thought that the new addition to the program "made the OST serials far more realistic for the ship's company, as it emphasised the importance of the Command Aim in prioritising man (and woman) power to meet the needs of the mission."

A significant proportion of the landed watches were experiencing some of these activities for the first time, whilst for others this was a



● Members of the ship's company of HMS Mersey hill-walking in the Scottish Highlands

useful consolidation and exchange of new ideas.

Every member of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines is allowed a minimum of a week a year for AT, which is recognised by the Ministry of Defence as an important tool in the personal development of an individual, leading to investment in many high-class facilities such as the

centre at Faslane.

Details can be found in JSP 419 Joint Service Adventurous Training (JSAT) Scheme.

Mersey gained an almost unheard assessment at OST of "Very Satisfactory" overall, then dropped in on the city of Glasgow for a well-earned stand-off prior to returning to fishery protection duties.

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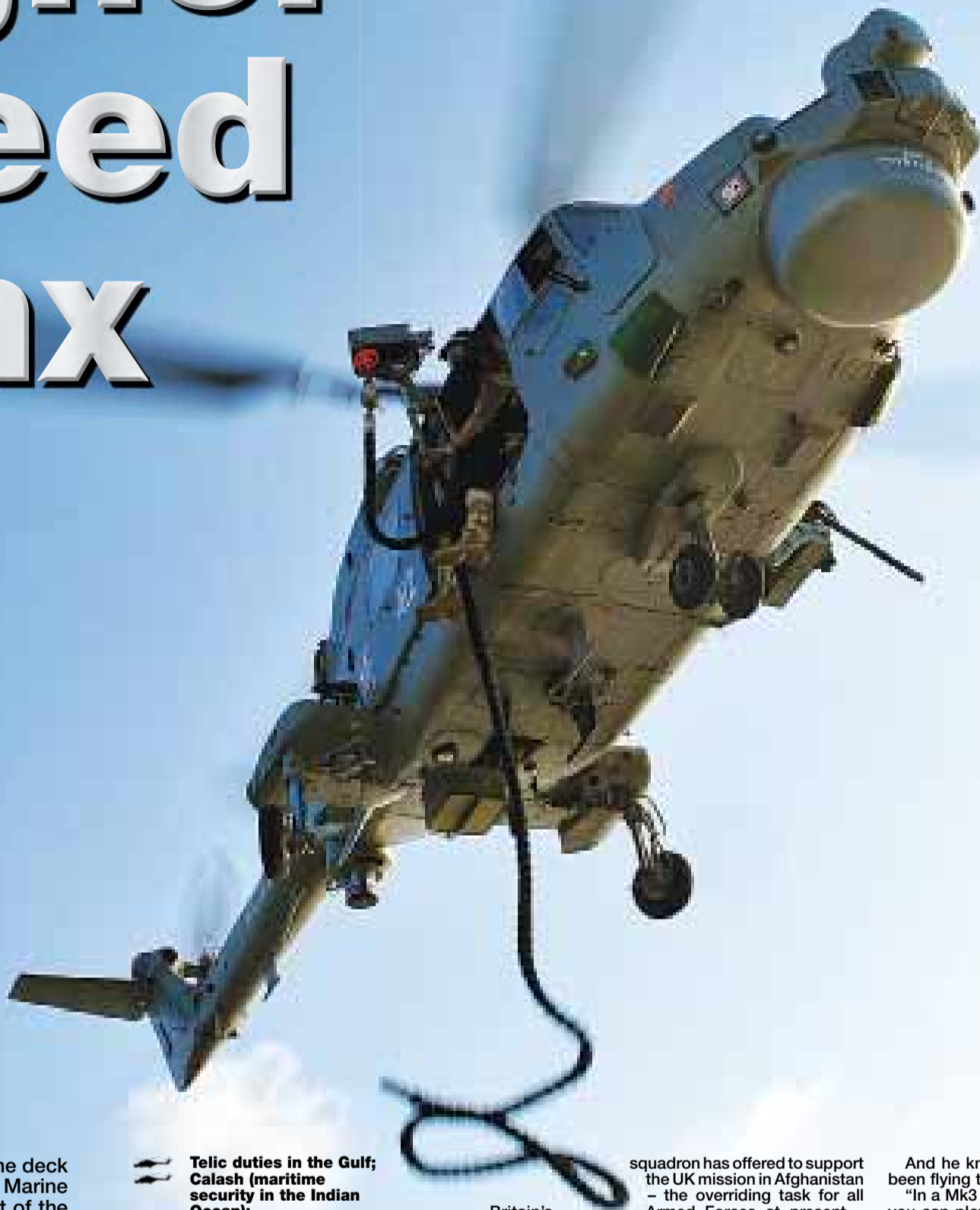
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INSPIRING LEARNING

Higher speed Lynx



picture: la(photo) dave jenkins, frpu east

ABOUT to rapid rope on to the deck of HMS Cornwall, a Royal Marine Commando casts a line out of the side of the ship's Lynx.

It's yet another drill for the Fighting 99 as she attempts to bring peace and security to the often hostile waters of the Somali Basin.

This is Cornwall's second pirate-chasing deployment in 12 months (it will be her last, too, as all the 22s are to go under last autumn's defence review).

With fewer vessels and, it seems, barely a lessening of commitments around the globe, the destroyer and frigate fleet is being pushed harder than ever as the gap between deployments shortens.

They're pushing the ships hard is a not uncommon remark in the Navy News offices.

We rather forget that *they're pushing the ship's flights hard too*.

Luckily, it's something the flight's parent unit, 815 Naval Air Squadron, doesn't forget.

Far from it. It's changing the way it does its business to keep up with the tempo of the destroyers and frigates which rely on its helicopters.

Not too long ago, ships could go up to 18 months between deployments; these days they can be sent away after fewer than six months back home in Portsmouth or Devonport.

If they're cutting down on the turnaround time between deployments, so too their flights.

"If that's what's needed, we will meet it," says 815's ops officer Lt Cdr Anthony Johnson. "It's all about the front line."

The Yeovilton-based Lynx unit proclaims itself to be the largest helicopter squadron in the world (300 or so technicians and maintainers, four dozen aircrew, a good two dozen aircraft).

Each ship's flight demands one Lynx and a team of ten men and women: two aircrew, one aircraft controller, seven engineers/technicians.

So on paper meeting its core tasks should be straightforward, given 815's size.

The squadron is expected to uphold at least half a dozen standing commitments, providing flights for:

- ✈ **Telic duties in the Gulf;**
- ✈ **Calash (maritime security in the Indian Ocean);**
- ✈ **NATO Maritime Group 2 (increasingly deployed east of Suez on counter-piracy work);**
- ✈ **Atlantic Patrol North;**
- ✈ **Atlantic Patrol South.**

In addition to ship's flights, 815's expected to support operations in home waters:

- ✈ **there are always two Lynx ready to scramble on counter-terrorism duties;**
- ✈ **one Lynx is always available should the Fleet Ready Escort – the on-call destroyer or frigate – need to put to sea.**

So that should account for, say, eight flights. Er, no.

A snapshot of late 2010 gives an idea of just how many 815 men and women (plus Lynx) are out there:

- ✈ **Telic: Somerset and Cumberland;**
- ✈ **Calash: Cornwall;**
- ✈ **NATO: Montrose;**
- ✈ **APT (North): Manchester;**
- ✈ **APT (South): Portland (returning); Gloucester (outward bound).**
- ✈ **One Lynx was on the back of HMS Daring on her mini-deployment to the USA;**
- ✈ **212 Flight – traditionally attached to HMS Endurance – went with HMS Ocean to South America.**

As for those standing commitments, each one requires not one but three flights each: one actually deployed, one at home in the UK recovering from its exertions, a third in preparation for deploying with a ship.

And we've not mentioned other vessels on exercise or work-up round the UK – Joint Warrior, Operational Sea Training.

Nor does the 815 workload stop there. The

squadron has offered to support the UK mission in Afghanistan – the overriding task for all Armed Forces at present – forward air controllers and taking the place of Apache gunships (very much in demand in Helmand...) during pre-deployment exercises for air and ground units about to head to theatre.

"At any one time there are about a dozen flights away – perhaps two thirds of the squadron is committed," says Lt Cdr Johnson.

"We work the aircraft hard, we work the people hard. We don't say 'no'. We can always manage – it's better to show that you are busy."

CURRENTLY in the regeneration phase is 207 Flight, preparing to join the Fortress of the Sea this summer.

HMS Edinburgh's likely to be a little rusty when it comes to aerial operations – she's been out of action for months courtesy of a £17.5m refit.

But 207 doesn't simply arrive on board the day the destroyer heads out of Portsmouth on deployment.

The Flight's been talking to – and working with – the Type 42 since the end of 2010.

"You build up strong ties with your ship," says Lt Ben Dando, flight observer. "You become a well-oiled machine."

His flight is among the last to convert from the venerable Mk3 Lynx (which can't go east of Suez – it doesn't have the latest communications equipment or defence aid suite) to the Mk8 (in very simplistic terms it's the one with all the gubbins on the nose such as the Gucci camera kit).

The Mk8 is the final variant of the helicopter before the Fleet Air Arm moves on to the next-generation Lynx, Wildcat, from 2015 (although 700W get to 'play' with it in 12 months' time...).

Progress with technology means that Wildcat will be available for roughly 30 per cent longer than the current breed of Lynx.

Right now, however, the Mk8 remains a very potent bit of kit.

"You have gone from Swordfish-esque technology, putting plots on acetates, working by torchlight, to hi-tech," says Cdr Paul 'Butch' Bowers, 815's out-going CO.

And he knows a thing or two about Lynx. He's been flying them for 20 years.

"In a Mk3 you could manage six plots, in a Mk8 you can plot everything from Portland to the Isle of Wight."

"Lynx crews are as busy as they have ever been, it's just that with the Mk 8, the system does it a lot more quickly."

In fact, it can do much more than it did three or four years ago when there was a real mish-mash of variants of Lynx: older Mk3s, newer Mk8s some with night-vision kit, some without. "There was a lot of juggling different aircraft," says Cdr Bowers.

These days 815 is much more homogenous. And that's not just good for the squadron and good for the Fleet, it also means the turn-around time for flights can be reduced dramatically.

Although a deployment typically lasts six months, the whole training and work-up package for the flight typically takes 15 months.

The 18-week 'regeneration' package – which includes top-up training, courses, pre-deployment training (previously known as OPTAG) – has now been pared down to five to nine weeks, thanks in part to the demise of Mk3s and hence no requirement for conversion any more.

There's a change too in platforms. Having worked with 22s and 42s since the 1970s, both of these will soon be gone and the maritime Lynx will operate almost exclusively from the back of Type 23s and 45s – although really, they're not overly bothered what the vessel is.

"There are plus points and minus points to every type of ship – but really it's the ship's company who make it," said senior maintenance rating CPO Pete Collins.

"That said, no-one is going to turn down an RFA..."

En suite cabins. Funny that...

"There are some people on the squadron who don't enjoy life on a 'small' ship," says CPO Si Barson, senior maintenance rating with the flight on HMS Chatham's most recent deployment.

"But 95 per cent of the guys enjoy it – you tend to see the same faces coming around."

And why not? For, as Cdr Bowers tells each flight before they embark on deployment: "You are so lucky, you have the best job."

Gore values



DON'T worry. It's not a real casualty.

But the mangled lower leg, fake blood – and a bit of (over)acting – make it seem very real.

And in a couple of months it will be very real for 200-plus naval medics when they deploy with 3 Commando Brigade to Afghanistan this spring.

The surgeons and medical assistants have spent the past six months preparing for their latest tour of duty in Helmand, forming the Close Support Medical Regiment, drawn from Royal Naval and Army units across the UK.

That training neared its climax in icy conditions at RM Chivenor in January, where the medics were joined by musicians from the Royal Marine Band Service who'll serve as ambulance drivers and casualty handlers (the modern term for stretcher bearers) and amputees to play the parts of the injured.

Also thrown into the mix were personnel from RNAS Yeovilton, commandos from CTCRM in Lympstone, 42 and 45 Commandos, 29 Commando Regiment RA, sailors from Portsmouth and Devonport, and medical staff from Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine in Birmingham.

Oh, and the Crabs turned up too, in the form of Chinook helicopters... as MA Morwenna Nichols discovered.

Covered in mud from crawling over the sodden North Devon terrain, impeded by her SA80 rifle, the young medic from MDHU Derriford struggled to communicate with comrades and a 'casualty' as a Wocka Wocka rumbled overhead carrying a Medical Emergency Response Team.

"There's only so much you can learn in a hospital," says MA Nichols for whom this will be her first deployment.

"I am looking forward to going to Afghanistan – this is exactly what we have trained for as medical assistants.

"I am keen to go to use my full skills, but I know it will be tough."

Beyond the very immediate task of trauma treatment, training for the latest Operation Herrick roulement has also involved paediatrics – the medical teams provide health care and advice to Helmand's civilian populace – and drawing up fitness and nutritional advice for the troops on the ground to improve their general health.

Each person in the medical regiment will spend two weeks training which reaches a climax with an intensive 40-hour final exercise.

"The medics will be going out on patrol on the front line in the arduous and dangerous conditions where they may have to defend themselves and their patients from the Taleban, so training has included learning basic infantry as well as medical skills," explained Lt Cdr Mark Middleton, Officer Commanding A Squadron.

"The training's peaking with them putting it all together – they have been practising their existing trauma skills in a stressful environment where we make it as realistic as possible.

"Ultimately their presence will give the combat troops the confidence to do their job properly knowing they will be looked after by skilled medics. In turn, the troops will look after the medics and ensure they are safe."

Picture: LA(Phot) Nicki Wilson, FRPU West

Realistic training for 45 Commando in Norfolk, see overleaf

INDEXATION CHANGE REDUCES ARMED FORCES PENSIONS

10% MANPOWER CUTS: what pension can you expect on redundancy?

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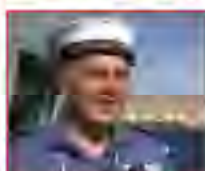
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● A member of Mortar Troop, 45 Cdo, cleans out a weapon during an exercise

Pictures: LA(Phot) Andy Laidlaw, 45 Cdo

(Middle

NORFOLK. Helmand Province. Not much difference there, then.

Well, not when you are patrolling a thriving bazaar, meeting Afghan elders and keeping an eye open for insurgents, all within a few miles of Thetford.

The Afghan village is part of the Stanford Training Area in East Anglia, a key element in the pre-deployment programme for troops bound for Helmand.

And so it was that some 600 Royal Marines from Arbroath-based 45 Commando headed south to undertake an arduous training exercise in Norfolk to help prepare them for a likely operational deployment to Afghanistan.

Exercise Pastun Panther was designed to test the essential skills that are required for operations in Helmand, and the 30,000-acre site – known as STANTA – provided the best environment in which to do this.

STANTA boasts an urban Middle East complex and a full mock-up Afghan village, built to the standards of a professional film set and opened in 2009.

The bazaars, shops and houses are all populated by real Afghan people and other volunteers playing the role of the local populace, insurgents and the occasional injured soldier or civilian – those roles may be played by amputees to make the situation even more realistic.

From the call to prayer heard across a busy marketplace to the noise of a bustling family home and the tension of a patrol in a network

of claustrophobic alleyways with high walls, the areas provide a complex and realistic way to train troops and test their skills under demanding conditions.

The fertile green zones of Helmand have been recreated, complete with deep irrigation ditches full of water, providing challenging obstacles for the Royals as they patrolled.

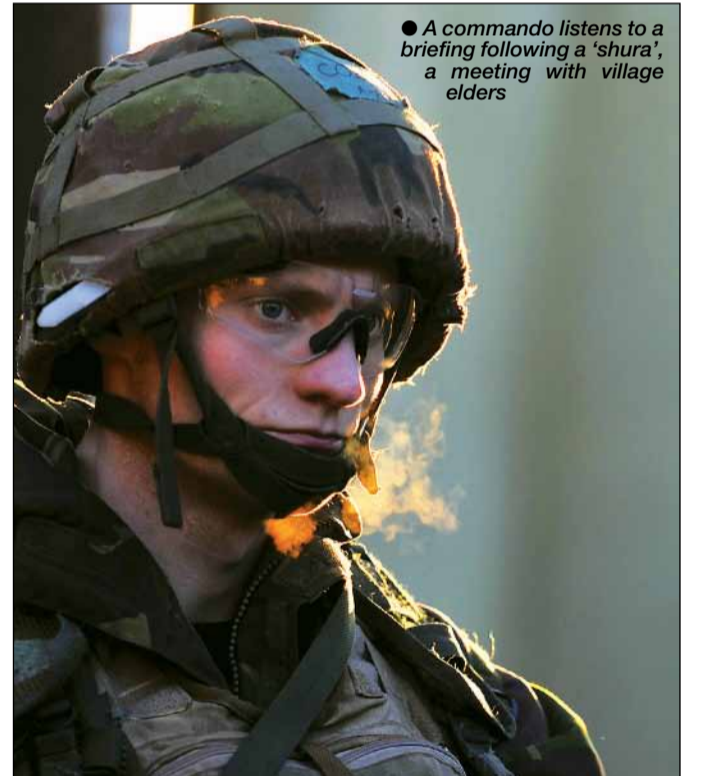
Realistic Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) have been constructed, with each one serving as a base for one of the four rifle companies of the Commando.

Throughout the exercise the Marines were tested on the different scenarios that they would face in Afghanistan.

Every opportunity to practise working alongside the Afghans was seized, and operations were conducted jointly with Afghan National Army/Police counterparts.

Meetings or *shuras* with local elders were conducted regularly, providing the officers and men of 45 Cdo with some valuable cultural experiences.

Aircraft were also flown over to provide fast air support to the companies or to respond to



● A commando listens to a briefing following a 'shura', a meeting with village elders

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● A member of X-Ray Coy peers through the sights of his light machine gun

(le) East Anglia



● A 'Vallon man' on Operation Barma (using a metal detector to ensure a safe path) leads colleagues from X-Ray Coy on patrol

medical emergencies within the exercise scenarios.

The commandos also had use of a fleet of Afghan-specific vehicles, allowing them to familiarise themselves with the exact kit currently used in theatre.

The Commanding Officer of 45 Cdo, Lt Col Oliver Lee, said: "This was an excellent week of realistic training.

"As always, the Commando rose admirably to every challenge it faced.

"We all drew great benefit from a tremendous training package."

The Stanford Training Area is used for both live firing and non-firing training for 350 days each year, with around 80,000 troops using the area annually.

In total some 43 square miles (124 sq km) is available for Service training, representing more than two per cent of the county of Norfolk.



● A Royal in the Ops Room monitors cameras which ring a Forward Operating Base



● A Royal keeps his machine gun dry during a river crossing

● Members of Mortar Troop, 45 Cdo, go through standard operating procedures with their weapon



● Two commandos on patrol make contact with the 'enemy'

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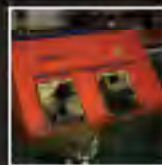
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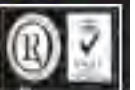
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Georgian romance

SPEED dating may be a relatively modern phenomenon, but the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth is offering an historic twist – Georgian speed dating.

On Saturday February 12 – just before Valentine's Day – the museum will be hosting a Georgian-masked event in one of its prestigious galleries.

The evening will include a drink on arrival, a live string quartet to accompany proceedings, the opportunity to view some of the museum's most romantic love letters – on display for the first time – and the chance to meet up to 50 like-minded single people.

The event will run from 7.30-10.30pm in the city's Historic Dockyard, and costs £30.

Booking is essential; for further details call 023 9272 7581 or email rowannah.martincottee@nmrn.org.uk

And bring your own mask...

Dream job

HISTORIAN and author Nick Hewitt is the new Head of Attractions and Collections at the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust.

Nick, who takes over from Frank Nowosielski, will be in overall charge of Action Stations and the Dockyard Apprentice exhibition in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, the Explosion Museum of Naval Firepower in Gosport and the Trust's collections.

He has previously worked at the Imperial War Museum, including spells on HMS Belfast, and has an MA in War Studies from King's College London.

Nick, who has regularly appeared on the TV and radio, said: "After 15 years combining the study of naval history with a museum career, coming to Portsmouth to take on such a varied and exciting role really is a dream come true for me."



Screen saver

MAKING her way aboard the nation's flagship last November, Her Majesty the Queen ascends the rather steep gangway of HMS Ark Royal.

Flanking the side of that gangway are two brand-new screens.

Nothing particularly unusual about that; the monarch's used to smell of fresh paint and the sight of gleaming new objects wherever she visits.

Except that these new screens are saving the Fleet, and therefore

the British taxpayer, thousands of pounds.

They're the brainchild of ex-senior rate 'George' Stewart, the senior sailmaking instructor with VT Flagship at HMS Raleigh, whose helped shave 90 per cent of the annual bill for replacing 'gangway screens', as they're known, and peribuys.

Traditionally, a peribuy – beloved by senior officers for those 'grip and grin' shots – would take around 12 hours to re-paint at a cost of around £850.

Or you can have one run off on PVC canvas in about 15

minutes for £17 courtesy of a computerised gizmo in Raleigh seamanship centre.

The idea was first mooted four years ago but not taken up. Thanks to George's perseverance, Raleigh eventually invested in a specialist printer and computer at a cost of £12,000 – a not inconsiderable sum.

"They'd paid for themselves within two and a half months," said Lt Andy Taylor, training group officer at the Seamanship Training Unit in Raleigh.

"I was astounded by how much the screens and peribuys used to cost."

Indeed, a pair of gangway screens would set a ship back around £1,500. From Raleigh, you can pick two up for £118.

As well as saving the RN thousands of pounds, the new set-up has earned George £1,000 under the GEMS scheme, which rewards personnel and employees for ideas which save the MOD money or make things more efficient.

The new screens and buoys

also mean there'll be a uniform look across the Fleet (branding these days is a big thing in the RN; there's even a guidebook on 'how to do it').

A quick walk around Devonport, Portsmouth and Faslane and you'll see a variety of screens – different fonts, different background colours and so on.

"You'll see red ones, blue ones, it just looks a bit amateurish. Now you can have uniformity – and that looks professional," says George.

The printer has also produced giant banners for the Royal Naval and Royal Marines Charity which were unfurled down the side of the Tower of London recently (courtesy of a couple of abseiling commandos).

But before you bemoan the demise of age-old skills in favour of 'click and print', well traditional methods are still taught by George and his shipmates at Raleigh.

"The skills are still here, if you're away and you have to repair one of these, then you'll have to do it manually," he adds.

Theatre stages Alliance benefit

WHERE might you go to spot a submarine these days?

Rhu Narrows, maybe, where you might be lucky enough to spot a boat coming from or returning to Clyde Naval Base.

Or Plymouth Hoe, where you would occasionally catch sight of a T-boat.

And how about at an Edwardian theatre in the heart of Southsea?

The Kings Theatre is staging a Submarine Day in aid of the HMS Alliance Appeal, and to publicise the event a model submarine dived into the flooded basement beneath the stage of the venerable old playhouse, in Albert Road.

Submarine Day itself is Wednesday February 9, which will begin with a talk by submariner guide Paul Cubitt, followed by a screening of the wartime submarine classic *We Dive at Dawn*, following the exploits of HMS Sea Tiger.

The evening highlight is a screening of the 1968 Beatles film *Yellow Submarine*, complete with a live concert by the Silver Beatles, once voted the second-best Beatles tribute band in the world.

Submariners will be on hand to answer questions about life in a long metal tube.

The theatre is also staging a photographic exhibition entitled *All Hands Onboard*, which depicts life on board a submarine, and which runs from January 31 to Thursday February 10.

The event will raise money for the HMS Alliance Appeal, which aims to help preserve the only British World War 2-era submarine open to the public in the UK.

One of the highlights of the Royal Navy Submarine Museum in Gosport, Alliance serves as a memorial to the 5,300 submariners who have given their lives in service to their country, and the appeal aims to raise £6.5 million to cover conservation costs.

Tickets for the Submarine Day are available from the Kings Theatre box office on 023 9282 8282, or online at www.kings-southsea.com

For more details on the Alliance appeal, see www.submarine-museum.co.uk or call 023 9251 0354 ext 244.

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Wraith rovers return



SCARY and creepy are not normally words associated with a premier tourist attraction (outside the London Dungeon and its ilk) but the Historic Dockyard Chatham is happy to bandy such terms around.

The former Royal Dockyard in Kent welcomes thrill seekers with the return of its popular Ghost Walks and Talks programme.

Twilight provides a suitably eerie atmosphere, and the historic buildings a perfect backdrop, for strange stories of "intrigue, murder and mystery mixed with a little adventure and romance" as costumed guides lead groups through the yard.

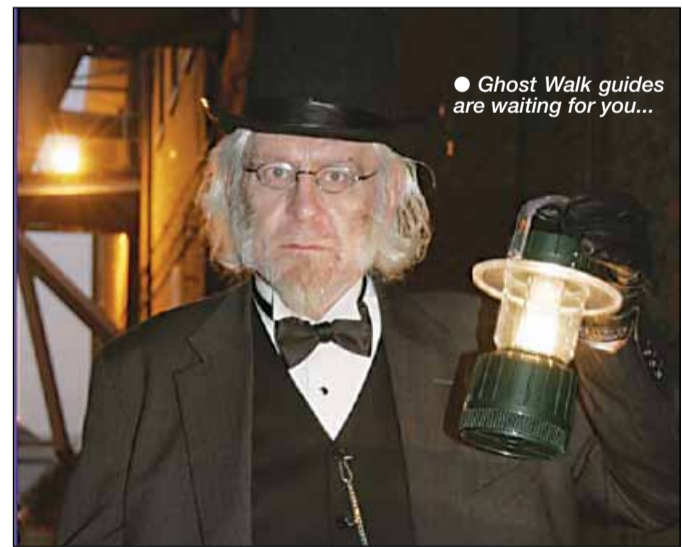
New for the season are two historical stories relating to No. 1 Smithery.

In 1866, a steam boiler exploded, killing two men and injuring others, and in 1940 a lone German aircraft attacked Chatham and dropped a bomb on the north end of the Smithery building, killing three men outright with two more dying later from their wounds.

Adults cost £10, including a glass of mulled wine, while teenagers aged 13-17 pay £8.

Ghost walks for adults are held on Wednesdays from February 16 to April 27 at 7pm and 7.30pm and last up to 1½ hours.

The minimum age is 13 years and teenagers must be accompanied by an adult at all times.



Other nights are available for private bookings, subject to availability of guides and a minimum of 15 people per booking.

For younger ghost hunters, in the shadows of the Ropery they can hear spine-tingling stories specially designed for 8-12-year-olds.

At the end they can make their own piece of rope and visit the quarter-mile-long Ropewalk in the dark.

Junior Ghost Walks, starting at 7pm will be held on Fridays February 18, March 18 and April 15, last 1¼ hours and cost £7 for children aged 8-12, £5 for adults. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Other nights are available on request for youth groups

and birthday parties, subject to availability of guides and a minimum of ten children per booking. One adult free per ten children.

Places on all Ghost Walks must be pre-booked and pre-paid by calling 01634 823815 or emailing ghostwalks@chdt.org.uk

See www.thedockyard.co.uk for full details.

There is also a full programme of activities over half-term, including the 'Shipwrecks and Rescues' programme held at the RNLI Historic Lifeboat Collection gallery.

Features such as an activity trail and a chance to build and test your own self-righting lifeboat are included in the normal admission prices for the event, which runs from February 19-27.



Routine business

THE festive season is a time for giving.

The good folk of RFA Diligence gave their comrades aboard HMS Cornwall the gifts of fuel and sustenance.

And in return the Fighting 99 gave Diligence lots of sewage.

Still, as they say, it's the thought that counts.

Warships are used to replenishing at sea from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, but Cornwall chose to 'raft up' for a day with Diligence in the Gulf - bringing the two ships side-by-side.

The tricky evolution is made easier thanks to the repair ship's series of thrusters, her pitch propeller and some hi-tech computer wizardry which choreograph all the propulsion.

The system - known as DP, or dynamic positioning - allows Diligence to manoeuvre forwards, astern or sideways with extreme precision. She can also 'hover', holding a specific position to within an accuracy of 50cm (20in) in winds up to Force 5.

It's all controlled by a joystick on a movable control panel on the bridge - a long lead allows the person in charge to wander around the bridge, or on to the bridge wing.

For the rafting, Diligence's navigator was in charge, stopping the repair vessel parallel to the frigate after judging her drift rate. Then Diligence slipped sideways with large rubber fenders out, and as the two vessels touched, wires and lines were passed then tightened and the RFA and HMS were bound.

And then it was time for the auxiliary to show off. For the next couple of miles, Diligence decided to 'side tow' Cornwall, before letting her DP system hold the duo in a hover.

Diligence offered her extensive repair facilities to the Type 22 frigate, which is carrying out anti-piracy patrols east of Suez, as well as topping up Cornwall's fuel tank and providing fresh water, while the warship offloaded some sullage into the RFA's slop tanks.

The Royal Marines took advantage of

Diligence's presence to carry out some boarding training, conducting searches of the ship and working with the repair ship's RN force protection team, P Squadron.

After all that exercise, a spot of tea was in order. Suitably satiated, the ships parted company and resumed their separate duties.

When not enjoying tea and stickies with Diligence, the Fighting 99 has been dividing her time between protecting merchantmen and sharing her expertise with Allied navies in the region.

Cornwall is the command ship for Combined Task Force 151 - a conglomeration of 25 nations committed to stamping out illegal activities on the high seas - currently led by Pakistan's Cdre Abdul Aleem.

He and his staff are making use of the Type 22's command facilities to co-ordinate the warships and aircraft monitoring activity in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman.

In Cornwall's case, the mission at present is focused on the 'Internationally Recognised Transit Corridor', an invisible sea lane covering around 5,000 square miles of ocean in the Gulf of Aden which shipping is advised to use because it is here that Allied warships offer protection.

"A routine quickly developed," Cornwall's Commanding Officer Cdr David Wilkinson explained.

"The ship's Lynx conducted daily surface search sorties to look for suspicious activity and some routine boarding operations, against the backdrop of an on-going internal training programme to maintain our levels of readiness and the gradual increase in understanding of the patterns of activity around the region."

To keep the rest of the ship's company on their toes, there have been mock galley fires and helicopter crashes on deck to contend with, some 4.5in gunnery, lots of training for the boarding team including fast roping practice, and a chance to exchange

personnel with the American destroyer USS Momsen.

At the same time, the F99's boarding team have built up a much better understanding of local fishermen's routines and ways of working by carrying out several 'assurance visits' - assuring the fishermen that the Allies are here to help.

So far, Cornwall's not come across any pirates... well, apart from those in her own mess decks.

The frigate staged a 'pirate night' on the flight deck complete with walking the plank, a selection of 'smelly pirate hookers' and a variety of piratical costumes ranging from the traditional to the more modern, complete with convincing RPGs.

Christmas was spent at sea in the protective corridor (although the tradition of officers serving dinner on December 25 was, of course, upheld).

At least New Year was spent alongside... although the Omani port of Salalah isn't quite Dubai (as enjoyed by many RN warships in the region - see pages 4-5).

Refreshed and re-stored, Cornwall was back at sea three days into 2011... and straight into counter-piracy boardings.

On the first day out of Salalah Cornwall encountered a suspicious-looking dhow... so the boarding team was dispatched.

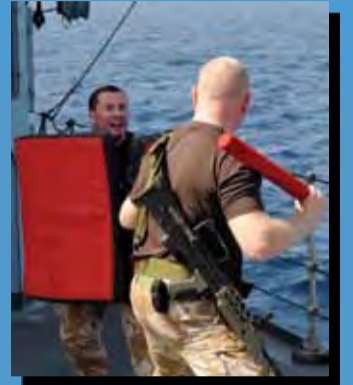
It turned out to be a genuine fishing boat which was coming to the end of a month at sea.

"This was not a wasted boarding," Cdr Wilkinson explained.

"Firstly it allowed us to gauge how positively our operations are viewed by locals, who are simply trying to earn a living from the sea.

"Also my team gained a very useful insight into the routines, equipment and way of life for a typical fishing dhow in these waters - all of which is very beneficial for our understanding of the area."

With a night-time 20mm shoot complete and a top-up of fuel courtesy of the USNS Amelia Earhart, the Fighting 99 continues to prowl.



pictures: la(phot) dave jenkins, frpu east



Sink or swim on



NAVY divers do some of the most dangerous work in the Service, but much of it goes unseen and unsung.

Why the low profile? Well, for one thing, working underneath the sea in zero visibility doesn't make for good pictures.

There are few photographs of divers at work, few books about them, and no memorable

film sequences, like the famous wartime footage of the Swordfish attacking the Bismarck, or ships in the Falklands campaign.

Then there's the nature of the job. Clearance diving is not just a wartime job, with all the publicity that follows. It is a daily tasking, although an equally hazardous one.

The Navy divers' main job is to carry out mine disposal on MCMs, and underwater engineering on ships and submarines. But they also work closely with civil authorities.

Day after day in peacetime, naval divers defuse explosive ordnance fetched up on beaches or fishing nets, mount search and recovery operations, and support maritime counter terrorism.

For all these reasons, divers (apart from the mysterious Buster Crabbe) have never had the public profile of pilots or skimmers. Even submariners probably get more publicity than they do. But they don't keep a modest profile out of choice.

"Divers aren't shrinking violets," said Cdr Tom Russell, Commanding Officer of the (Joint Service) Defence Diving School at Horsea Island, in Portsmouth.

He added: "In fact I've never seen such a bunch of people who like to be in the limelight."

Over the past year, Navy clearance divers have been taking their place alongside Army colleagues in Afghanistan, (as reported in *Navy News*) working with the Joint Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group.

But people looking at the pictures of the small team of Navy divers in Helmand Province might not realise which Service they belong to.

"We are a very small team and we tend to get on with the job and dip under the horizon," explained Cdr Russell.

"Unless a World War 2 bomb shuts down the Mersey, as happened a few years ago, we tend to stay below the radar."

He added: "When we blister ourselves onto other units and work in places like Afghanistan we don't look like sailors, and so we lose our identity."

Their public profile may not be high, but divers are a small and elite team.

If public recognition isn't the spur, there must be a magnet for a young sailor to want to spend his (or her) career under water, particularly in the dark, cold and murky waters in which most Navy divers work – deployments to the sports divers' playgrounds of clear,



blue, warm seas are sadly rare, and getting even rarer.

It becomes clear, visiting the Defence Diving School, that the magnet is the challenge of joining an exclusive club.

There is no such thing as a half-hearted military diver. Passing all the courses requires huge determination, plus physical fitness similar to a commando's.

"The Able Seaman Diver course is, without doubt, the most physically and mentally challenging ratings' course in the Royal Navy," said Cdr Russell.

He explained: "When they first arrive, everyone sets the highest of standards and we take our training very seriously."

"We're a very small, tight-knit community, so we all work for each other. Our team is something people want to join, when they see it they work doubly hard to try and get in."

The first step for potential Navy divers is to spend two-and-a-half days at Horsea island on a PEDAs – Pre-Entry Diving Assessment, in which they will do one 'try-dive' in a freshwater tank, and a second in Horsea Lake – in between series of tough physical training circuits to test their fitness.

This gives them a chance to experience life at the Defence Diving School and find out if they are really suited to the job – and for the school in turn to assess them.

Although the course is not pass or fail, promising candidates get a recommendation, which allows them to go to the next stage.

"What qualities are we looking for? We're looking for people who have get-up-and-go, who are self-starters, determined, bright, and focused on what they want to achieve," said Cdr Russell.

He added: "Society's changed since I joined the Navy. We're in an age of computers and home entertainment, where fewer kids are getting dirty playing out of doors and falling out of trees."

"We tend to get the ones who are still doing that, who fall out

of trees, bounce hard and dust themselves down.

"They're still out there – and standards have not fallen. The ones who pass are just as good as they ever were."

It also takes strong nerves to deal with bomb disposal. Cdr Russell said: "I think at the beginning you're imbued with a whole load of courage, because in your late teens and 20s you think you are invincible."

"In later life you realise you are not, and then it requires a different sort of courage."

He added: "But there is no greater buzz than walking up to a large piece of ordnance to try to dispose of it. You don't know what it is, you don't know where it is, but you feel alive – really alive!"

"You have one, single-minded purpose – to disarm it. Is there an element of thrill seeking? Yes – I have to admit there probably is."

The trainee divers recommended at the PEDAs go to HMS Raleigh, where they complete Phase One of basic training along with other recruits, before their next hurdle, week one of diving course, Initial Diving Training Selection week.

During this initial week they undertake intensive physical training sessions, including wet and dry circuits, a mud run and a night dive.

The physical standards required to pass are way above the RN Physical Fitness Test; all divers must successfully pass the Divers Physical Fitness Test (DPFT) which requires a mile-and-a-half run in under 10 minutes 30 seconds; 16 dips, eight heaves and 40 sit-ups, the latter in under a minute.

The mud run is famous among divers as one of the toughest tests of strength, stamina, and above all a determination to keep going in unpleasant circumstances.

Between Horsea Island and Portchester there are, (conveniently) tons of mud when the tide is out.

The hopeful divers on the PEDAs will find themselves doing regular mud runs if they get onto the ABs course, where trainees have to get across from Horsea to Portchester, a distance of half a mile.

It may not sound far, but there is no easy way to travel across deep mud – every step saps the strength.

And the distance can be further when an absent-minded instructor finds he's forgotten something and has to send them back to get it...

The infamous mud run is not a punishment, or a test of grit, but a necessary skill.

Lots of wartime ordnance gets washed up on to mud, and a clearance diver has to learn how to reach it, frequently walking through several hundred yards of thick mud with 55lb of equipment on his back.

Only the best ten who undertake the Initial Diving Training Selection week start the Able Seaman Diver course the following Monday.

In this 22-week course the students learn first aid, underwater engineering, sea bed searches, recompression chamber training, and – finally – two intensive weeks of Explosive Ordnance Disposal



toughest course

Training.

They are taught to operate three sets of diving equipment, starting with the SABA (Swimmers' Air Breathing Apparatus), which goes to a depth of 30 metres, and progressing to the Open Space Diving System, for depths of down to 50 metres, and the Clearance Divers' Life Support Equipment, a mixed gas system used for the really deep dives of 60 metres.

It's a demanding course with a drop-out rate of about 25 per cent.

Specialised and highly-technical classroom training is alternated with bouts of exercise to keep the divers alert and used to working when they are overwhelmingly tired – a realistic foretaste of what they can expect when they are doing it for real.

One of the ways of keeping the trainee divers on their toes is the shout of 'AWKWARD!' – at sea it is a recognised term to muster the team when the ship has been attacked by underwater swimmers.

At the school it is used as a quick-dress routine, sometimes almost daily. The trainees have to stop whatever they are doing, rush to the lake's edge and into their wetsuits, and jump into the water.

In the winter the water is freezing, in a hot summer the frequent circuits around the lake in wetsuits can be extremely tiring. It's easy to see why physical fitness is crucial.

Cdr Russell said: "Our young divers want to attain a goal, and we make it quite difficult for them to attain it."

"They need huge determination, and it's quite difficult to maintain that when it's 2am, it's minus two degrees on the surface, you've been under the water for an hour, and you come straight back up recharge your set and get back in the water."

He added: "You have to really want to be part of this team, and push yourself, physically and mentally, to join it."

"Everyone's fit, there are very few colds, or ailments."

The enthusiasm for 'phys' makes the school an enjoyable posting for the PTIs – it's one of those units where everyone shares their enthusiasm.

LPT Pete Sapey (pictured top left), who joined the school last May, said: "This is one of the fittest units I've ever worked in."

"I knew what divers were like because I'd worked in ships, but I didn't realise how good the school would be."

"The divers are working underwater for long periods with heavy hydraulics, and they're required to be in good condition all year round."

"Everyone supports PT and adventurous training, and everyone's up for sport and phys. I think it's the best job I've ever had as an LPT."

He added: "When I first got the draft I wasn't too sure what it would entail, but I soon realised it's more than taking wet circuits and phys with the divers – it's also integrating the school into the regional sports teams."

In the last year the school has shone at boxing, squash, rowing and a cliff and chasm competition,

a gruelling race with a heavy barrel around a series of obstacles.

One reason it has such a good sporting record is that it can enter mixed Army and Navy teams for events. Although it is a Navy establishment, part of the Maritime Warfare School at HMS Collingwood, it trains 200 Army and Navy divers a year.

In fact the development of military diving owes more to the Army than the Navy, as the father of military diving (whose portrait has pride of place on the staircase at the diving school) was a Royal Engineer, Gen Sir Charles William Pasley.

As Col Pasley, he became the first Service diver when he tested 'Mr Kemp's Diving Equipment' in 1838.

He trained his men to use it, sending them to demolish a wreck obstructing the Thames at Tilbury.

Within a short time divers of the Royal Sappers and Miners managed to lay underwater explosives and clear the remains.

Encouraged by this success, Col Pasley turned his attentions to the wreck of the Royal George at Spithead, bringing some valuable salvage to the surface, and so the tradition of military diving began.

In the 1880s the Royal Engineers built the torpedo test range at Horsea Island on behalf of the Admiralty.

After the World War 2 it became the diving lake, 1,115 yards long, 30ft deep in parts and stocked with submerged vehicles, a helicopter and wreck for the divers to train on.

Horsea Island is also the HQ of the Superintendent of Diving, an RN commander who is responsible for the overall safety and standards of diving in both the Royal Navy and Royal Engineers, and home to the Fleet Diving Squadron, responsible for diving, underwater engineering and bomb disposal in the UK and overseas.

So there is a sense of history coming full circle at Horsea Island, where the two Services have joined forces again at the Defence Diving School.

Command alternates between a Royal Navy commander and a Royal Engineers lieutenant colonel and although it is a joint school, the Army and Navy courses are run separately because the Services require different skills.

The principal task of an Army diver is to provide underwater combat engineering skills for the Field Army, particularly supporting the Royal Engineers in building bridges.

Army divers are trained to operate in lakes and rivers, where the soldiers learn fast-water skills, and they do not use the mixed gas kits which Navy divers use for deep-sea diving. Navy divers train in the Solent, working with tides and sea conditions.

Only one Navy instructor so far has crossed over to teach the Army trainees, and become the first to qualify in fast-water training.

Keith "Milky" Lister, said: "There's always been a bit of a divide between the Army and Navy as far as training goes, so working with the Army has given me the opportunity of finding out what the other side does."

"The Army do more engineering than we do, and it's given me the opportunity to work in fast water. But we use the same equipment – and we understand the same banter."

Troop commander Richard Lawrence said: "I joined the Royal Engineers because I wanted to dive. Why didn't I join the Navy? I didn't want to live in a tin can in the middle of the ocean."

Some divers take Army-Navy integration a step further.

The appropriately-named AB Jack Muddiman, 22, from Cornwall, currently on the AB Diver course, spent six years in the Coldstream Guards before he 'saw the light' as his naval instructors quipped, and crossed Services.

"Working with the Navy hasn't been too much of a shock, as members of my family have been in the Marines for years," he said. "It's a very enjoyable course – tough, but well worth it."

Army divers tend to be older than their Navy counterparts, as there are no direct entrants. They apply after serving for a couple of years in the Royal Engineers.

The Navy takes direct entrants, so trainees as young as 18 (the lower age limit; the upper is 36) can attend the Able Seaman Diver course.

Women are now eligible to train as clearance divers and (as *Navy News* reported in December) Lt Catherine Ker became the first female clearance diver when she qualified last November.

The branch also attracts civilian divers, either amateur or professional. ABs Peter Collins, 20, and Tom Hilder were both divers in the civilian world and decided to make a career of it.

"It's definitely a different form of diving from anything you do in the outside world," said AB Collins.

AB Hilder added: "I always wanted to join the Navy as I had been a sports diver, and this

seemed a natural progression. It's demanding but very rewarding as well."

WO1 Graham Haran, has been an instructor at the school for two-and-a-half years, and runs all the AB and PO courses.

He said: "I was in the Sea Cadets in Bradford and joined the Navy. I liked the idea of diving, and when I tried it, I loved it from the beginning."

He added: "The great things about diving is that you have a lot of responsibility, and every day is different."

Clearance diving is not a job with wide appeal. You'd have to love it to pass the course – and everyone at the Defence Diving School seems to love it.

Cdr Russell said: "Our training is distilled from hundreds of years of experience in the best practices. What we have is the best product."

"People here love their job and everyone has a smile on their face. There is a feeling of happiness at the school and it's infectious."



Pictures: K Woodland





● Final flight... Four specially-liveried Harrier GR9s in formation for the farewell sortie. Nearest the camera is 800 NAS, then 4 Sqn, 1 Sqn and finally a 1 Sqn jet painted in the original 1969 camouflage pattern.

Harrier twilight



● Last dawn... The Harriers are lined up on the standings at Cottesmore at first light on December 15

AND so Britain's 50-year love affair with the jump jet is over.

Shortly after 2.30pm on Wednesday December 15 2010 16 Harriers touched down on the tarmac at Cottesmore in Rutland.

They will fly no more. After a decade of development, 41 years of service – more than 30 of those with the Fleet Air Arm – the fabled fighter/bomber is condemned to the history books.

It means that today, for the first time in nearly a century, there are no front-line fixed-wing aircraft in the Royal Navy's inventory.

For a final time 16 Harrier two-seat trainers and GR9s – drawn from 800 Naval Air Squadron and the RAF's 1(F) and 4(F) Squadrons – flew in UK skies as operational aircraft before the axe of austerity, wielded by October's Strategic Defence and Security Review, fell on Joint Force Harrier.

The iconic aircraft, embodying the best of British aero engineering, began life in the early 1960s, entered service at the end of that decade, evolved into the Sea Harrier at the end of the '70s, guaranteed Britain's finest post-war hour in the skies of the Falklands and held the line in the skies of the Gulf and, latterly, Afghanistan.

The jets had already nodded their farewells to HMS Ark Royal and RNAS Yeovilton, home to the Sea Harrier throughout its career in two incarnations, before taking a bow over central and eastern England.

In a final flight of one hour and 45 minutes, the jets flew in formation at heights up to 30,000 ft, passing over ten RAF establishments, before landing back at Cottesmore.

When all 16 jets were safely on the ground and

taxied to their standings, the pilots were 'serenaded' down the tarmac by a pipe band as they walked away from their jets for the last time.

"The last flight was a very poignant moment in what is a very poignant day," said Cdr Dave 'Tinsel' Lindsay, the final Commanding Officer of 800 NAS in its current incarnation.

"It has been an enormous personal privilege and honour to have been involved with this wonderful aircraft for nearly 20 years, at sea and over land, at peace and in conflict."

"I will forever be immensely proud to be able to say I have been a Royal Navy Harrier squadron commander."

His comrade Capt Mike Carty RM added: "Britain can be proud of the legacy that the Harrier leaves behind. We feel very proud to have been part of that legacy."

For the past decade, his squadron has fallen under the umbrella of the combined Fleet Air Arm-RAF Joint Force Harrier. The Air Force, like the Navy, mourns its passing.

"The Harrier is a true icon and stands testament to the innovation and excellence of British design and engineering, and the skill and courage of our airmen," said Air Vice Marshal Greg Bagwell in command of No.1 Group – the RAF's fast jet arm.

"It has had a truly distinguished service with both the RAF and the Royal Navy, from the South Atlantic to the skies over Afghanistan. It now takes its place in history as one of aviation's greats."

For now, all 79 remaining Harriers in Britain's inventory go into storage as Whitehall seeks potential buyers.

As for the men who have crewed and maintained them, all the Harrier squadrons were disbanding at a formal ceremony at RAF Wittering – the Air Force's home to the jump jet since it entered service in 1969 – as *Navy News* went to press.



● All 16 Harriers in formation over the skies of eastern England for the final fly past and (above) the last Commanding Officer of 800 NAS, Cdr Dave Lindsay, carries out checks before take-off in his final time in a jump jet cockpit



pictures: la[phot] luis holden, 800 nas, cpl al crowe, sac mark dixon, jamie hunter



● HMSDML 3516 at Sheerness

Gunnery practice on the Gorgon

READING about HMS Medusa's refit and re-emergence (December, page 38) brought back vivid memories.

I served on her in 1958-60 when she was HMSDML 3516, attached to the East Coast of England Survey Unit which was based at Sheerness, though she only spent the winters there, most of the time we were in Harwich, Ramsgate, Lowestoft etc.

It was a very interesting time for me, as I joined her as an Able Seaman Gunner, replacing an AB Survey Recorder (SR).

The skipper, a lieutenant whose name I have forgotten, said as soon as I stepped aboard with a full kitbag: "I did not ask for a

gunner, I wanted a SR!"

Just then the Coxswain appeared and said: "I will look after him, sir" and the skipper's passing shot was "The only gun we have is a Very pistol so you are in charge of that."

My 18 months on her, though, turned out to be much more involved with the survey side, as when I left I was recommended to change to the SR branch, though once back in the clutches of the 'other navy' I was soon off to Whale Island for a gunnery course and the rest is history, as I ended up as a Chief Gunnery Instructor.

So much for career development!

— Ken Satterthwaite, King's Langley, Herts

Keys to Locksmith

YOUR article *Murdered Sailors Honoured in Berlin* (January, page 31) states that there are 17 servicemen honoured on the Sachsenhausen Memorial.

This is not correct, there are 20.

I did some research on Operation Checkmate and found a photo of the memorial with 20 names, 14 from Operations Checkmate and Musketoon, with seven men in each op.

As a former RN/RAN submariner, RN and Special Forces research is right up my alley and I had heard of Musketoon as it started from the F/French submarine Junon.

On Checkmate there were six RN personnel, S/Lt John Goodwin RNVR, POs Harold Hiscock and Alfred Roe, with OS Neville Burgess, Keith Mayor and Andrew West (they were all attached to No 14 (Arctic Commando) and Sgt Jack Cox (on loan from No 12 Commando).

Major Francis Suttill and Capt W Grover-Williams were both SOE agents captured in France.

There is a mention of Lt Cdr Claud Cumberledge in the article, and it says he remained behind in Greece in 1941 to conduct sabotage operations.

He sounds very much like Lt Cdr Mike Cumberledge, who is mentioned in Antony Beevor's book *Crete, the Battle and Resistance* where he was the skipper of a Greek caique that transported SOE agents to and from Crete as part of the Levant Schooner Flotilla, based in Palestine.

It also says: "...in late 1942, early 1943, Mike Cumberledge was captured in an attempt to sabotage the Corinth Canal and shot at Flossenburg Concentration camp in the last days of the war, two days before they surrendered."

Lt Cdr Cumberledge and his team of three men were all captured and taken initially to Vienna, before arriving at Sachsenhausen.

I have positively linked Sgt Thomas Handley and Czech Corporal Jan Kotbra (who used his wife's maiden name) to this operation and I believe that the fourth man could have been CSM James Steele (these four men make up the 20 names on the memorial).

If anyone can uncover any more information on Operation Locksmith, which was probably an SOE Op, I would be most interested.

— John Keating, Rockingham, Western Australia

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A FORCE FOR GOOD



White knight helps ward

IS ARK Royal's LAET Nigel White dazzled by the flash of the camera bulb... or possibly the 'colourful' shirt his CO, Capt John Clink, is wearing?

Even more dazzling than both, however, is the fact that the leading hand decided to donate some of his lottery winnings (being handed over in LA (Phot) Gregg Macready's photograph) to charity.

When Nigel won the ship's raffle (£4k) he immediately offered to give one quarter of the sum to the Children's Surgery Ward at Southampton General Hospital.

The reason why? Well, some 30 years ago baby Nigel received two life-saving operations at the hospital.

Following twice-yearly check-ups he was given the all-clear at the age of 13 and, aged 20, he fulfilled his ambition of following in his dad's footsteps and serving under the White Ensign.

Every year the air engineer donates toys and teddies to the ward, but has always wanted to make a more significant donation; his ticket being drawn out of the carrier's raffle during the Auriga deployment afforded him just such an opportunity.

"I owe so much to the hospital - and especially the children's ward," said Nigel. "I've never forgotten what they did for me and have always done what I can buying toys and the like - and I'll continue to do that - but it's just great to be able to do something like this."



● HMS Edinburgh's Santas all dressed up for the eponymous festive fun run in Southsea

All for a good Claus

YES, we know it's February.

But there's been so much Santa-related fundraising tomfoolery since our last issue we couldn't ignore it.

And besides, where else could you find a photograph of Santa in the back of a Royal Navy helicopter (try page 28 - ed).

We'll begin with the chaps and chapesses above from the good ship HMS Edinburgh, posing in front of Southsea's Pyramids Centre for the Santa Fun Run.

Ten ship's company from the destroyer volunteered for the charity race, led by their CO Cdr Paul Russell, and all donned appropriate festive fancy dress for the workout (no we have no idea why some are in blue rather than the more usual St Nick red...).

They joined around 1,000 other fun runners on the streets of Portsmouth and Southsea for the Believe and Achieve/Alexandra Sports event which didn't mind if competitors completed five or (the hardcore) ten kilometres walking or running - as long as they raised money for the local RNLI.

The ten matelots clocked up 85 kilometres (52 miles) between them and raised £134 for the lifeboat charity.

"It was such an enjoyable event for a really good cause that I'm thinking of doing my next half-ironman [cycle-swim-run] in a Santa suit," said Cdr Russell.

Aside from preparing for that, there's the small matter of getting the Fortress of the Sea through a spot of Operational Sea Training in Plymouth before Edinburgh deploys in the spring following her refit in Portsmouth.

To Culdrose now and the good folk of 820 Naval Air Squadron who delivered a special visitor to the children of Sennen Ward, Royal Cornwall Hospital Treleske (clue, he wears red and has a white beard).

While deployed in the Middle East and elsewhere, members of the Merlin squadron raised funds for the children's Christmas party at Paradise Park in Hayle.

AET Lucy Holt (also coincidentally a part-time elf) organised a number of events including a Halloween Fancy Dress Night and a beard-growing competition during the deployment.

In total, the men and women of 820 NAS raised £750 for the ward to help cover costs for presents and the party.

Lt Cdr Steve Thomas said: "820's long-standing affiliation with the ward is something we are very proud of, and the chance for us to bring some Christmas cheer to children unfortunate enough to be ill at this time of year was most welcome.

"To deliver Santa himself was a privilege that we simply couldn't pass up.

"Several members of the squadron have had children treated on the ward, so it is very close to both the squadron and



● It would be much more fun if I had a machine-gun like the chap on page 28... a pensive Santa on his way to visit ill youngsters at the Royal Cornwall Hospital - courtesy of 820 NAS

RNAS Culdrose's hearts."

Santa brought with him a sack stuffed full of teddy bears, courtesy of Bears on Location, for the children on Sennen and other wards around the hospital.

Not to be outdone in the Santa stakes were the Commando Helicopter Force who delivered Santa to two local schools (his sleigh obviously was proving more troublesome mechanically than a Sea King...).

A Jungly Mk 4 dropped in on schools in Chilton Cantelo, near Marston Magna, and Leweston, near Sherborne.

At Leweston the children gave shoe boxes to Santa which they had filled with gifts as an appeal to support children after the disaster in Haiti.

Santa's plans to visit Charlton Farm Children's Hospice South West at Wraxall were scuppered by weather, so the team from 848 Naval Air Squadron whisked Santa there by car.

Whilst at the hospice, the squadron presented a donation for over £1,000 raised through charitable events and coordinated by the Engineering Training Office.

Needy folk in Fareham and Gosport had a bumper Christmas thanks to personnel and VT Flagship staff at from HMS Collingwood.

People at the Fareham establishment spent the year filling hampers with anything from biscuits and exotic tea to children's toys, books, and health and beauty products.

Come December the thoroughly-stuffed hampers were

ready for handing over to Fareham and Gosport Adult Services Department.

And finally... A song, recorded at Camp Bastion last year, by two members of the Royal Navy has been raising money for Help for Heroes.

The song, *Maybe This Christmas!*, was written by S/Lt Dave Emery, who is the guitarist, and lead vocalist is Lt Phil Clark, both of whom met while on active duty with 857 Naval Air Squadron in Afghanistan.

Once back in the UK, the two joined forces with three of Dave's friends to create the band Little Red Ambulance.

Dave said: "We wanted to bring Christmas back! I wrote a song to conjure and inspire a warmth and Christmas spirit unravelled by recent Christmas releases.

"We identified that recent popular hits have either contained a token seasonal sound or been totally lacking in any relevance to Christmas at all!

"Looking at those tunes that are played year in year out as Christmas classics, they all have festive content in abundance."

Phil explained: "While the prospect of battling it out with established artists in the Christmas chart is hugely exciting for us all, we hope to maximise the money we can raise for Help for Heroes.

"It is such a valid and relevant cause especially for two of us who have witnessed firsthand the courage and commitment of the Servicemen and women on the front line. They deserve all the support they can get!"

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Severe run for Severn man

MOST people drafted to HMS Severn think one thing: fish.

But not CPO Ian 'Mac' McDougall. Assigned to the fishery protection ship as her assistant marine engineer officer, the senior rate was possessed by a single thought: to run the length of the namesake river.

In one go. That's 220 miles. Ian, a keen runner, has already completed several endurance events: 'ultra' marathons and the Grand Union Canal Race... covering the entire 145-mile-length of the manmade waterway from Birmingham to London.

But that's still 75 miles fewer than the length of the Severn. Oddly, there's no Severn Race... so the senior rate devised his own - following the Severn Way from the official mouth of the river (Severn Beach, just south of the new Severn crossing) to the source at Plynlimon, a dozen miles east of Aberystwyth, vowing to cover the distance in three days.

So on a cold winter's morning with a lightweight tent on his back, two fully-charged iPod shuffles to provide the entertainment, he set out.

After a day and a half pounding the trail, Ian reckoned he deserved a break, pitched tent and got his head down.

Once refreshed he was on his feet again for another lengthy stint. He stopped just once more - not through exhaustion but because



he wanted to complete the final ten miles of the odyssey in daylight (not least because the terrain in the Cambrian mountains was challenging).

And so he reached the source of the Severn in daylight (taking a self-portrait as proof) before a small six-mile run to meet his ride back to civilisation.

All this was done while the engineer was on watch leave; his ship was ploughing through UK waters, receiving regular updates on the chief's progress, and throwing money into the charity pot.

As Ian racked up the miles, so Severn and the rest of the Cod

Squad dipped into their pockets, raising £600.

That's been raised to £1,000 courtesy of profits from the newsagents Ian and his partner Jo run in Gosport, Queen's Parade News.

The fund-raising didn't stop there aboard Severn, however, which has staged pizza nights, fish racing nights (substituting fish for the more typical horses), beard-growing and collections, bringing the total collected by the River-class ship to £1,500.

The proceeds will be divided among Kids in Fareham, RNRMC, the Multiple Sclerosis Trust and Forrest Holm Cancer Hospice.



Surf's up for charity windsurfers

THE Navy, Army and RAF windsurfing teams set themselves the challenge to windsurf around the Isle of Wight.

Twenty people took up the trial, in a combination of relay teams and solo attempts.

In total, the challenge raised £20,000 for Help for Heroes, and £5,000 for each of the Service charities.

The day started out with a demanding Force 4 wind from the west, which meant that as a windsurfer cannot sail directly into the wind the straight-line distance of ten nautical miles would be at least half as much again.

This lost some of the challengers before the Needles, but those who got ahead of the tide and made it round had the benefit of the wind helping them along the south of the island.

Once this leg of 20 nautical miles was completed, the windsurfers passed St Catherine's Point; the windsurfing became trickier in light winds towards the East

Solent, with the wind dropping as the sun began to set.

The first entry to complete the challenge (without stopping or changing equipment) was the Royal Navy pair, Cdr Gerry Northwood and AB(Diver) Steve Roberts. The duo managed to complete their island lap in ten hours.

Two Army teams also completed the challenge, and an RAF team in a relay. The other members of the Navy team relayed to the halfway point, at which stage the wind died, bringing their attempt to a halt due to safety reasons.

The full Navy team were: Cdr Gerry Northwood, Lt Simon Cave, Lt Phil Bent, WO1 Dave Strudwick, PO Gav Nicolson, and AB(D) Steve Roberts.

Lt Phil Bent said: "The Forces Windsurfing Challenge certainly lived up to its name; 110 miles over 10 gruelling hours, it was the most demanding physical and mental challenge most windsurfers will ever have to complete."



Boosting the Bike Ride

TEAM FFB - the Fit, the Fat, and the Beautiful - are getting into training for this year's Big Battlefield Bike Ride 2011 in aid of Help for Heroes.

Royal Fleet Auxiliary Medical Technician Don Bradshaw (pictured above with his 'favourite exercise bike' on RFA Diligence east of Suez) has neglected to tell us whether he is fit, fat or beautiful, but did say that he was hoping to return to the UK in April "a lot lighter than I am now".

Don, who served in the Royal Navy for 23 years before signing up with the RFA, will be joined by his wife Pippa, who is still serving with the RN and about to join HMS Illustrious, and her brother Chris. (We're hoping for the sake of marital harmony that Pippa is the Beautiful in the team...)

If you would like to support Don in his fundraising and weightloss efforts, he can be reached at RFA Diligence, BFPO 438, or email 438-medtech@ad.ii.mod.uk.

Talent gives to Hope

THE MEN of Plymouth-based submarine HMS Talent headed north to their affiliated town of Shrewsbury to present funds to the Hope House Hospice.

The hospice is the submarine's official charity, and sailors raised £1,726 through horse-racing nights and raffles during their recent deployment.

Lt Greg Stopps said: "It was very thought-provoking and somewhat humbling to see the hard work that these care workers do in supporting the sick children in their time of need."

"The facilities are first rate and I am very pleased we could do our little bit in helping them raise some of the £5 million that it costs to fund the hospice for a year."

Motorcycle point to point

THE final presentation took place last month of the efforts of the RN and RAF Servicemen from RAF Cottesmore to completed the Point to Point round-Britain motorcycle ride.

The team completed a 3,500 mile ride over 14 days, with the support of some impressive sponsors including: Triumph UK, Nissan GB, and Direct CCTV.

In total, £15,458 was raised for Help for Heroes.

If you wish to support this event, you can online at www.helpforheroes-pointtopoint.webs.com.

Marathon Star needed

The Royal Star & Garter Homes for disabled ex-Service men and women are looking for a *Navy News* reader to run in this year's London Marathon.

If you would be interested, contact Susan Harley on 020 8439 8118 or sue.harley@starandgarter.org.

Marathon Mark runs for RNRMC

THIS year WO Mark Duffy of HMS Collingwood is tackling a mammoth challenge of nine half marathons and three full 26-mile slogs to raise money for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

The senior rate (pictured right), who is based at the Royal Navy Leadership Academy, is a keen runner.

He said: "The challenge, I feel, will be hard work over the period of 12 months, taking into account that with each event comes all the training required."

"But if every single member of the RN and RM donated £1 we would raise over £34,000 for the charity. But if I raise just £1 it would still be worthwhile for the sake of the RNRMC."

The races will summon the submariner around the country, visiting Chester, Oxford, Silverstone, Newcastle and various other places.

If you would like to show your support, please visit his website at www.virginmoneygiving.com/marc.duffy2.

THE RNRMC is the largest grant maker to the Naval Service. At the end of last year, two of its subsidiary charities agreed grants.

The Naval Service Amenity Fund provides grants for a range of activities focused entirely on the Service and on their families.

At its last meeting, the committee agreed the following grants:

- Half yearly grants to ships, RM units and other operational units' welfare funds - £126,000
- Allocation to the minor grant fund - £70,000
- Grants to support major projects - £166,200 including:
 - 45 Commando - refurbishment of the WO and Sergeant's mess - £9,500
 - Naval Outdoor Centre Germany - ongoing grant to support NOCG's activities - £20,000
 - Gibraltar - replacement fishing boat - £23,000
 - Rothiemurchus Lodge,



Cairngorms - upgrade heating and hot water systems - £27,000

■ RNSA - support entry to the 2011 Rolex Fastnet race - £10,000

■ International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes - enabling serving personnel to attend the 2011 pilgrimage - £11,000

■ HCPT Pilgrimage to Lourdes - to support children with learning difficulties to experience the pilgrimage - £20,000

■ HMS Nelson - Wifi enabling the Wardroom - £13,700

■ HMS Daring - upgrading the Wardroom and WO and SR Mess - £32,000

The committee of the Naval Service Benevolent Fund agreed grants to:

- Royal Naval Benevolent Trust - £100,000, including £30,000 towards replacing the boilers at the Pembroke House Care Home;
- Royal Navy and Royal Marine's Children's Fund - £100,000
- WRNS Benevolent Trust - £8,000
- Alabare Christian Care - £4,000
- Mutual Support - the Armed Forces Multiple Sclerosis Group - £5,000.



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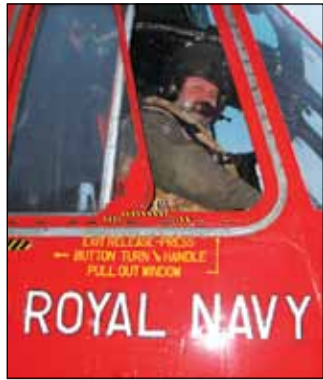
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● Lt Cdr Roger Stringer

Hectic return to Gannet

THE former boss of HMS Gannet returned to Prestwick just in time for one of the busiest weekends of the year.

Lt Cdr Roger Stringer is back at the UK's busiest search and rescue unit for his final job before retiring from the Navy – the fourth time in his career as a pilot that the officer has been based at Gannet.

But there was to be no gentle easing in, as the jobs just kept on coming on Friday and Saturday morning, his first duty back.

He and the duty crew carried out four call-outs, as well as a routine training sortie, in his first 24 hours back at the controls.

Roger said: "Coming to work at eight in the morning I thought that I might be fortunate enough to be afforded a more gentle transition into my new post rather than being in the cockpit for 12 hours, two thirds of which were at night and finishing at 2.30 the following morning!"

He added: "Despite having spent several years previously based at Prestwick I was still struck by the privilege that we enjoy in HMS Gannet, flying over one of the most beautiful and awe-inspiring parts of the country."

Current CO Lt Cdr Bhattacharya said: "I am thrilled that Roger has returned home to HMS Gannet."

"To have someone with his huge aviation experience and in-depth knowledge of the aircraft or crew room alongside our more junior aircrew creates fantastic learning opportunities for all involved."

"I am looking forward to many more flights with him but it would be nice if they weren't quite as hectically busy as it was today!"

Prize for musician

A YOUNG sailor from Sheffield who studied music at university has used his talents for the benefit of fellow trainees – and won an award in the bargain.

Wtr Jonathan Wragg, who joined up in May last year, has dedicated his free time to providing the musical accompaniment to the weekly church services at HMS Raleigh, and assembled a small, enthusiastic choral group for the establishment's carol service.

In recognition of his services Jonathan was presented with the Captain's Prize by Capt Steve Murdoch, the Commanding Officer of HMS Raleigh.

Jonathan, who aims to join the officer corps, took up music at the age of eight and is a grade 8 organist. He also sings and plays the piano.

"Receiving this award was a total surprise and I'm still a bit shocked," said the 23-year-old.

"I was looking for something fun to do which was outside of my training and this seemed perfect."

Chaplain Rev David Wylie said: "For us he has been a Godsend in helping us provide high-quality worship at a time when it has been difficult to recruit a dedicated organist."

"His commitment, humble and professional attitude and wholehearted support to the breadth and depth of Naval life make him a worthy example amongst his peers and beyond."

Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere RLC



Even Santa has to take precautions...

EVEN Santa Claus has to take reasonable precautions when delivering goodies around the hotspots of Helmand Province in Afghanistan.

Door gunner PO Richard Symonds, dressed for the occasion, is pictured in a Sea King distributing mail and presents to troops on the ground.

Servicemen and women in Afghanistan made the most of the festivities of Christmas Day, with a traditional dinner and plenty of seasonal pursuits.

The MOD sent over six tonnes of festive food to give British forces a taste of traditional Christmas

while on operations, including:

- Two tonnes of turkey;
- 1.5 tonnes of gammon;
- 1.5 tonnes of sprouts;
- 200kg of cranberry sauce;
- 1,000 iced Christmas cakes;
- One tonne of Christmas puddings;
- 15,000 mince pies;
- 45,000 After Eight mints.

Charity UK4U Thanks! became Santa's little helper as they provided 22,500 Christmas boxes to troops all over the world, containing a host of goodies bought with money donated from members of the public.

The presents were unwrapped by troops serving in Afghanistan

on Christmas Day.

While work continued for many of the troops, most had the chance to let their hair down a little with fun and games, sports competitions, and quizzes.

Church services were also held by the team of padres to ensure the true spirit of Christmas was not forgotten.

And everyone received an extra 30 minutes free time on their welfare phone card to ensure they could wish their family and friends a merry Christmas.

Members of the Parachute Regiment Band travelled around Helmand all Christmas Day to play at Christmas services and music for carol singing.



● Yes, we know it is now February and Christmas is old hat, but with the Type 22s taking their bow in the coming weeks we thought it only fair to record the odd milestone along the way – so here is the last group of sailors on Christmas duties on board HMS Campbelltown, complete with suitable headgear. AB(SC) Mel Haslam (kneeling, snowman hat) said they spent four hours on Christmas Eve making the hats while indulging in that festive favourite, a "good old game of Monopoly". Alongside Mel in PO(AWT) Lewis's picture, taken on Christmas Day, are (from left) ET(WE) Sam Holdroyd, AB(CIS) Andy Dawson, CH Phillip Mitchell, AB(CIS) Ryan Hopson and MA Donna Gale



Pilot Stan calls it a day

ONE of the Royal Navy's most experienced pilots has retired after 35 years service.

Lt Cdr Stan Burgess (above) joined the Navy in February 1976, to become a helicopter pilot.

On completion of flying training he was sent to Prestwick to become a Search and Rescue (SAR) pilot, so it is fitting that he leaves the Service having spent the last five years on 771 Naval Air Squadron in Cornwall, instructing the new generation of Naval SAR pilots.

Stan has flown over 100 rescue missions in Scotland and the South West, helping to save many lives.

While at Prestwick Stan also flew maritime counter terrorism missions, and was one of the pilots who recovered Lord Mountbatten and his family from Sligo to Dublin after the IRA bombing in 1979.

His prime operational flying was in the anti-submarine role, spending months in the North Atlantic and Arctic, flying from various ships including HMS Bulwark, Hermes and RFA Olmeda.

He has also flown in the Caribbean and Mediterranean, and spent two years on exchange with the Royal Australian Navy – and as part of RAN centenary celebrations, Stan was required to fly the RAN ensign, which was the size of a tennis court, at 200ft through the major cities and at all the major sporting venues including the Australian Grand Prix and Melbourne Cup.

For years Stan was involved in helicopter display flying for the Navy, and for two seasons led the Whales formation display team which used Sea King helicopters, displaying at many air shows around the UK and in Europe.

He was recognised as providing the best display at the 1994 Nantes Air Show in France and also organised and led the NATO helicopter flypast for the 50th Anniversary of D-Day.

Stan has flown over 7,000 hours in Gazelle, Squirrel, Wessex and Sea King helicopters, and was the personal pilot to the Prince of Wales between 1995 and 1998.

Between 1999 and 2001 Stan was CO of 705 Squadron, part of the Defence Helicopter Flying School.

Stan was a Naval Diving Officer for 17 years and a Mountain Expedition Leader.

He won several RN downhill medals, and although retiring from flying Stan will continue to instruct on the water, as he is a yacht and motor boat cruising instructor.

OBE for loyal Reservist

THE former Commanding Officer of reservist unit HMS Sherwood has been presented with his OBE by the Prince of Wales in London.

Capt Ian Robinson RNR was named in the Queen's Birthday Honours List last summer – and managed to make it to the ceremony at Buckingham Palace in mid-December despite the worst the weather could throw at him.

Capt Robinson has always been at the forefront of developments in the RNR to keep it relevant and usable by the future regular RN service.

He is currently undertaking duties in the MOD as part of the Future Reserves 2020 study team.



● Santa Jim Stevenson's ankle is plastered by LMA Michelle Trotter (right) and LS Chantal Smith

Joint operation

NOT a chimney in sight, but Santa still came a cropper when he visited HMS Scott.

Santa – who bears an uncanny resemblance to PO Jim Stevenson – missed his footing on the upper deck and broke his ankle.

Luckily help was on hand in the form of two members of the National Elf Service (who also looked remarkably like Jim's colleagues LMA Michelle Trotter and LS Chantal Smith...) who whisked Santa down to the ship's sick bay and put his foot in plaster.

After which festive frivolity resumed, including mince pies and carols, in near-tropical conditions.

Scott spent Christmas at Cape Town in South Africa as she prepared for her first stint in the Antarctic ice this austral summer.

The survey ship is filling in for HMS Endurance; her fate remains undecided in Portsmouth, two years after nearly foundering.

During her last deployment south, in the 2009-10 austral summer, Scott surveyed some 3,000 miles of ocean.



● John and Jack Hendren

Move on, it's Jack's Navy now

ONE out, one in – the torch has passed on from one generation to the next in a Naval family.

WO John Hendren, aged 51, has recently retired from the Senior Service after 34 years – just as his 19-year-old son Jack passed out of training at HMS Raleigh.

“The funny thing is,” said John, “that the final time I wore my uniform was a few weeks ago at Jack's passing-out parade.

“During the parade I suddenly realised I was standing on the spot I had first put on a Royal Navy uniform almost exactly 34 years later to the day.”

John can be sure that the family's reputation is in good hands as, during the passing out, Jack was presented with the prestigious Captain's Prize for Academic Achievement, awarded to the best sailor under training at Raleigh.

“I remember when I first joined and experienced sailors would tell me that the Navy wasn't what it used to be,” said John.

“But I think that sailors have always said that right back to the days of Nelson.

“Today's Navy is a lot smaller than when I joined, but far more technologically advanced.

“The naval tradition passes on to the next generation and it becomes their Navy. Well, I guess it's Jack's navy now.”

Jack will now begin his training as a Royal Navy chef, a very different career path from his father, who spent the majority of his time in submarines.

John, who started in the old P-class HMS Walrus, was a key member of the inaugural crew on board the Navy's newest submarine, HMS Astute.



● 'Cags' Lacy during his days with 771 NAS

Picture: PO (Phot) Dave Gallagher

Air, sea rescues

TWO Navy ratings have been commended for carrying out rescues, one by swimming out into a heavy surf and the other by plucking the crew of a stricken trawler to safety in a helicopter.

When a fishing boat capsized in high seas outside Porthleven harbour in early October, LA Michael Arrowsmith knew exactly what to do.

The junior rate, who works at the fire station at RNAS Culdrose, had been walking with a friend near the pier when he saw the Donna Mary being hit by a huge wave, pitching two men into the sea.

LA Arrowsmith rushed to

collect a buoyancy aid from the pier and ran towards the beach to assist the first crew member, who had been washed ashore and was struggling in the surf.

The second crew member was still in the water some way off the beach and LA Arrowsmith attempted to wade into the surf to throw the buoyancy aid to him.

By now five people had gathered on the beach to hold the rescue line as the sailor tried to throw it to the fisherman, despite being knocked off his feet by waves.

Due to the wind and wave conditions it proved impossible to get the buoyancy aid to the stricken man, so LA Arrowsmith decided to swim out to him.

Placing the buoyancy aid around his shoulder he waded into the water but found he was continually knocked off his feet.

He dived in to try to make ground but found that the buoyancy of the ring forced him back.

After several attempts, and becoming increasingly exhausted, LA Arrowsmith got within ten feet of him, but unable to make further progress, the sailor risked his own safety by removing the buoyancy aid from his shoulder and throwing it to the man.

A large wave forced Arrowsmith under water and at this point he communicated to the group ashore that he was unable to continue.

Some 15 minutes later a rescue helicopter from 771 SAR squadron at Culdrose winched the man to safety.

The junior rate's actions, which were taken in the knowledge that he might be jeopardising his own



● LA Michael Arrowsmith

safety, resulted in the CO of RNAS Culdrose, Capt Toby Williamson, presenting LA Arrowsmith with the Captain's Award for bravery.

Capt Williamson said: “This is one of the most deserving awards I have ever given.

“Arrowsmith's action demonstrated real bravery in action and I am proud to have him with us at Culdrose.”

Meanwhile, for his part in a difficult rescue at sea, POACMN 'Cags' Lacy has been awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal, presented by the Prince of Wales at Buckingham Palace.

Late on New Year's Eve afternoon in 2009 Falmouth Coastguard received a mayday from trawler Trevesa, reporting a fire and loss of steering 50 miles south west of the Isles of Scilly, and that the four-man crew were abandoning ship.

Within an hour of the mayday, Rescue 193 arrived to be greeted by heavy rain, rough seas, 40-knot winds and pitch darkness.

The fishing vessel was dead in the water with no power so PO Lacy was lowered to the pitching deck to assess the situation.

On the first descent, PO Lacy managed to hook his heels over the guardrail, from where he tried to heave himself onto the deck, but a heavy swell caused the trawler to pitch and he fell backwards 20ft into the icy water.

'Cags' said: “I remember vividly looking up and seeing the green glow of the aircraft lights above me.

“In my headset I could hear someone onboard saying I was underwater. It was quite surreal.”

Submerged but still attached to the winch wire, he was recovered back into the helicopter.

PO Lacy decided to go back down for a further attempt to board the vessel and the aircraft was positioned for a second time.

This time a successful hi-line transfer was conducted and, despite the heavy and unpredictable roll of the vessel, PO Lacy co-ordinated the safe evacuation of all four men, which took some 50 minutes in the appalling conditions.

Cags has now left the RN and is working for AgustaWestland at Newquay Airport, where he is an instructor at the Operational Flying Training Centre.

He has maintained his links with the Navy as a member of the RNR Air Branch where he continues to provide part-time support to 771 Search and Rescue NAS.



● Cdr Dai Roberts (right) with Nebo of the US Navy

Dai's in Kabul, but Tenby's on his mind

DESPITE the absence of seas for hundreds of miles, despite below-freezing temperatures and despite a war going on around them, an intrepid few braved the icy waters for the Kabul Boxing Day Swim.

In fact it was more of a freezing cold bucket of water being thrown over their heads, but times are hard and conditions tough out there.

Cdr Dai Roberts managed yet again to complete his own Boxing Day swim.

For the previous ten years he has organised the Virginia Beach Tenby

Boxing Day Swim, mirroring the event in Wales, but last year he found himself in Kabul with NATO, providing security assistance to the Afghan government.

So as not to be thwarted he managed to persuade one other madman – 'Nebo' of the US Navy – to join him in this semblance of the swim, achieved using a bucket of cold water and a paddling pool.

Dai's family joined the real Tenby swim, and he hopes to join them next year in whatever country he finds himself.

Brothers at the double

TWO sets of brothers have been serving together in frigate HMS Northumberland.

For one pair it was their 'home' warship, as Richy and Paul Coleman (bottom right) hail from Longhoughton, in Northumberland.

Richy (on right), a leading engineer technician (marine engineer), said: “It's been great to catch up and serve with my older brother over the past three months since I joined the ship – he's been on board a lot longer and has completed the full eight months of the deployment.”

Paul is a petty officer (underwater weapons) in the frigate, and there is a third brother who goes to work in a dark blue suit – Mark, the third brother, is a leading engineer aircraft technician in the Fleet Air Arm.

Two more brothers-in-arms on board Northumberland were the Biggars (top right), from Glenrothes, who were reunited in the ship during the Calash 10 deployment.

Marc and Ryan joined the Royal Navy after attending Auchmuty High School and

now enjoy flourishing careers in the Royal Navy.

Marc (on right) is an able seaman (computer and information systems) rating, working in the main communications office.

He said: “It's great to catch up again with my little brother who has been serving in HMS Northumberland for the past eight months away from the UK.

“I've been ashore on crew rotation as my partner, Samantha, has just had our first child, Logan.”

Ryan, an engineer technician (marine engineer), said: “It's tough at times being below decks working in the ship's machinery spaces when we visit exotic places.

“But it's balanced with a decent amount of time off and I get the opportunity to play sport – I've played football for the Navy for the last two years as far afield as Dallas in Texas, and hope to go again this year.”

Northumberland returned to her home base of Devonport, Plymouth, at the end of last year.



BRNC has global appeal

A BRIEF glance at the list of visitors to Britannia Royal Naval College since September reveals a truly cosmopolitan range of both countries and cultures.

Setting aside the international officers on the RN Young Officers Course, which routinely embraces over 20 countries, Dartmouth staff and cadets have welcomed both junior and senior representatives from countries across the globe.

From Bangladesh to Peru and the United States to Korea there is considerable international interest in the training undertaken at BRNC.

Every term there are strong links fostered between BRNC and its French and German counterpart colleges, and there is a permanent presence from those nations with two liaison officers fully integrated on the staff.

Following a recent visit by the Commodore BRNC to the Dalian Academy of the People's Liberation Army (Navy) in China, it is hoped that during 2011 RN cadets will have the opportunity to experience training there and a small group of PLA(N) midshipmen will spend time at BRNC.

Fledgling aviators graduate

YEARS of hard work and effort finally came to fruition as one of the largest courses in recent years graduated with flying colours from 848 NAS at Yeovilton – the 'Jungle Training Academy'.

The day was all the more special for the students as the Duke of York – Commodore-in-Chief Fleet Air Arm and a former Navy pilot – presented their 'wings'.

Individual prizes were also awarded to the fledgling aviators, including the Westland's prize to Lt Wallace as best overall student and the Bill Murton trophy presented to Lt Bayliss, who best personified the Commando aviation ethos.

For the six pilots, the last eight months of Commando-role Sea King flying training at 848 NAS was the culmination of over two years of their lives, which included over six months in Lincolnshire flying the fixed-wing Firefly trainer, six months in Shropshire flying the Squirrel helicopter, as well as studying on a multitude of ground-based courses.

The story differs slightly for the three Commando Aircrewmen – their efforts at 848 NAS over the past 20 weeks were preceded by four weeks of aviation military skills training at RAF Henlow and RAF St Mawgan, five weeks initial flying grading, five weeks basic ground school and seven weeks navigation instruction at RAF Shawbury, followed by four weeks winchman training at RAF Valley.



'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Invitation to the parade

THE General Secretary of the RNA has issued an invitation to all associations and individuals with a Naval background to join shipmates on their big parade in London in September.

In his 'open letter from the RNA', S/M Paul Quinn says: "The Royal Naval Association will be holding its Biennial Parade at the Cenotaph at Whitehall on Sunday September 11 2011.

"Associations and individuals related to the Naval Service are cordially invited to march with their Shipmates and to parade their standards with the RNA National standard and RNA Area and Branch standards.

"Those interested should contact Nigel Huxtable on 023 9272 3747 or at nigel@royalnavalassoc.com or the General Secretary Capt Paul Quinn at paul@royalnavalassoc.com, who will provide more details.

"Yours in comradeship, Paul Quinn."

Legacy project

FILM company Legasee is seeking war veterans who would like their stories filmed for posterity as part of a social history project.

Legasee is developing an online resource of filmed interviews featuring ex-campaigners for use by schools, colleges, and members of the public.

Anyone interested should contact Legasee by phone, email or by letter, giving name, age, daytime phone number and brief details of wartime service.

Email dave@legasee.org.uk, telephone 01992 719363, or write to Legasee, 27 Government Row, Enfield Lock, London EN3 6JN.

The Legasee project is completely free of charge, with any travel expenses paid.

See www.legasee.org.uk for further information.

New advisor

SHIPMATE Mick Kieran has been elected as the National Ceremonial Advisor.

He will assume the full duties at the end of the conference parade and wreath-laying, and will understudy until then.

And talking of the conference, please remember that motions and amendments for debate should reach the General Secretary by February 11.

Service remembers victims of collision

MORE than 200 people turned up for the 61st memorial service for the 64 men who died when HMS Truculent sank in the Thames following a collision with a merchantman.

The service, at the St George's Centre, Chatham, was held on the

nearest Saturday to the anniversary of the sinking, January 12, to enable more people to attend – a decision which was justified by the numbers.

Truculent was lost when she collided with the Swedish tanker Divina eight miles off Sheerness on the evening of January 12 1950, a cold, clear night.

There was confusion over the lights carried by Divina, and by the time evasive action was taken it was too late.

The small tanker, carrying paraffin down the Thames, sliced into the T-boat, almost knocking her flat; the two vessels remained locked together for several seconds before Truculent sank.

The men on board who survived the initial collision waited in the dark on the sea bed until they believed it would be safe to escape, rescue vessels having been alerted.

But when they made their escape they found no alarm had been raised, and although Divina and another freighter, the Dutch ship Almdijk, picked up 20 men between them, another 57 were swept by their deaths by the strong, icy current.

A total of 64 men died – the crew had been augmented on that trial run by dockyard workers who had been involved in her refit at Chatham.

The ceremony also remembers the five-strong crew of a Coastal Command Lancaster patrol aircraft from RAF Kinloss which had been tasked to pick up divers for the subsequent rescue mission, but which crashed on take-off, killing all on board.

Organised by the Medway Towns branch of the Submariners Association, the event began with a piper – WO2 Kerr from the Royal Engineers Brompton Barracks – playing as the guests and congregation arrived.

Sea Cadets helped run an efficient car-parking operation, manned the doors and provided a guard at the entrance.

Guests included the Mayor of Medway David Brake and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Brig John Meardon.

A total of 18 standards were paraded, including the National Standard, standards from the Royal British Legion, the RAF, Royal Engineers, Merchant Navy and various Submariners Association branches, some of which were brought considerable distances to support the event.

The service was conducted by Rev David Preston, and the sermon given by Rev Gordon Warren RN.

Wreaths were laid, standards paraded and Medway Towns branch chairman S/M Archie Watt read the dedication.

The organist accompanied the ceremony in the manner in which submariners like to sing their hymns – swiftly and with gusto.

The service over, all headed to tables laden with food, prepared and supplied by the wives of branch members and the "tame Medway Towns branch chef", S/M Dave Scott.

There was, naturally, the obligatory tot or two alongside the other drinks.

And while eating, those who attended the service could contemplate a superb model of a submarine, made by Ernie Weeks and placed on an elevated table behind the food.

And the branch's artist, Bill Vowden – responsible for the painting of the Truculent which is used on the group's greetings cards – set up a number of tables from which he sold original paintings for the benefit of the Truculent Fund.

Plea for help with FitzRoy's tomb

THE final resting place of one of the Royal Navy's most influential sons is in need of refurbishment.

Paul Owens has contacted *Navy News* to raise awareness of an appeal to renovate the grave of Admiral Robert FitzRoy, the father of weather forecasting.

The tomb and memorial stone, lie in the churchyard of All Saints in Upper Norwood, London.

"Our church is sadly lacking funds and volunteers to assist in this project, and we thought it would be appropriate to contact *Navy News* to plead for any help from your readership," said Paul.

"Next year is the 150th anniversary of public weather forecasts and the Met Office will mark this with various events which will be widely reported in the press.

"We would like to offer *Navy News* and your readership an invite to join in and give the Admiral the recognition, and his grave the restored glory, he so richly deserves through his dedication to the Navy and public life."

FitzRoy was the CO of HMS Beagle for the voyage of discovery undertaken by Charles Darwin – but the Naval officer was just as active in the field of science.

He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, and was put in charge of a new department set up to gather weather data at sea – the forerunner of the Met Office.

The innovative FitzRoy advanced many initiatives which improved safety at sea, and was the first to formally forecast weather patterns.

He was also a hero to fishermen and other mariners through his pioneering storm-warning system.

Contact the appeal team at fitzroyappeal@yahoo.com



● Lt Noel Cashford praises the work of wartime comrades aboard HMS Belfast in 2009

Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill

UXB hero dies

THE Navy has lost a key link with its greatest generation with the death of legendary wartime bomb disposal officer Noel Cashford.

Lt Cashford, who has died aged 88, rendered more than 200 unexploded bombs and other devices safe during WW2 and its immediate aftermath.

He always played down his bravery saying simply: "I had my moments", but his selfless actions meant he was appointed an MBE at the war's end.

Although he left the Service in 1947 he remained passionate about the wartime work of his

comrades, supporting efforts to erect monuments, attending memorial services, giving speeches and compiling four books on the exploits of WW2 bomb disposal men.

"Today's generation should know about the heroes of yesteryear and those who do the same dangerous job today," he said at 70th anniversary commemorations of the first German magnetic mine being defused by his friend Lt Cdr John Ouvry.

Lt Cashford was believed to be the last surviving naval wartime bomb and mine disposal officer.

"Over the past ten years, I have come to rely on Noel as a living link with our wartime explosive ordnance disposal heritage and will dearly miss his friendship, knowledge and valuable advice," said Lt Cdr Rob Hoole, vice chairman of the Minewarfare and Clearance Diving Officers Association.

Protector date

THE HMS Protector Association annual reunion is to be held at the Royal Court Hotel, Coventry, from April 29 to May 2.

Further details from Doug Harris at dougatspindrift@aol.com, or see the website www.hmsprotector.org where you can also download booking forms.



● From left: Plymouth branch secretary Arthur Gutteridge, Lady Mayoress Kate Aspinall, Lord Mayor Mary Aspinall, Plymouth branch chairman Bob Palmer and mess vice president MAA Korina 'Jesse' James

Showcase event is a success

MORE than 200 members of Plymouth branch and their guests turned out in their finery for the showcase event of the year – the annual dinner and dance.

Among the guests were the Lord and Lady Mayoress of Plymouth, Mary and Kate Aspinall, RNA national vice president Cdre Adrian Nance and branch president Cdre Steve Dearden.

Branch chairman S/M Bob Palmer thanked staff

at the Warrant Officers and Senior Rates Mess at HMS Drake for their efforts, social secretary S/M Sue Gutteridge and her team for once again ticking all the boxes, and the Sea Cadets of TS Manadon and TS Golden Hind for their immaculate ceremonial turn-out, as well as mess president 'Dino' Lawson and his mess members for allowing the branch to use the superb venue.

NAVY NEWS

SHIP of the MONTH

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Naval Quirks

AN ENDURING IMAGE OF THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC IS A U-BOAT BEING RAMMED BY AN ESCORT..

BUT BY 1943 THE RN DISCOURAGED RAMMING IN FAVOUR OF USING SHALLOW DEPTH CHARGES AGAINST SURFACED SUBMARINES..

THE REASON BEING THAT RAMMING SO DAMAGED ESCORTS THAT THEY NEEDED, ON AVERAGE, 7-8 WEEKS REPAIRS!

Right! Book us into a Dry Dock and prepare to ram—in that order!

CAPTAIN WALKER GDNS

MICAH

New home opened in Weymouth

A NEW home for homeless and vulnerable ex-Servicemen and women has opened in Weymouth.

Alabaré's Weymouth Home for Veterans, situated in the Lodmoor area, is backed by the Royal British Legion.

It offers a combination of accommodation and support to ex-Service personnel who are struggling to adjust to civilian life, providing a safe environment in which veterans can rebuild their confidence and develop essential skills whilst working towards being able to live independently again.

Support will be provided in areas such as education, employment and housing, and veterans will be encouraged to access specialist help for issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, other mental health conditions or drug and alcohol addiction.

Veterans will also be able to develop life skills such as budgeting and maintaining a home, skills they may never have needed whilst serving in the Forces.

Figures from the RBL highlight the need that exists in Dorset for veterans' support; last year their records showed that in the county the number of veterans sleeping rough or in emergency temporary accommodation increased by almost 50 per cent.

The RBL's Director of Welfare, Sue Freeth, said: "Support to homeless veterans has been a priority for us for some time and this marks another step in increasing vital services in local hot spots."

The Legion awarded a grant of £180,000 over three years to the home, which is based on the model of the charity's Plymouth Home for Veterans, opened in partnership with the RBL in 2009.

Within its first week of opening the Plymouth project was full and demand for places has remained extremely high.

Alabaré also opened a Bristol Home for Veterans last November, and is hoping to open further similar projects across the South and South West.



● No gold at the end of this rainbow, according to S/M Eric Dempster of the HMS Ocean Association. S/M Eric headed across from Stirling to Glenmullan on Loch Long when he heard HMS Ark Royal was unloading ammunition at the facility. "The weather was foul, with wind, rain and mist on the hills, but coming down the hill from above the base there was an unexpected break in the cloud and the sun came out for approximately 15 minutes," said S/M Eric. "As it was still raining this produced an intense rainbow over the ship. There didn't seem to be anyone else taking shots and presumably on the ship they couldn't see the backdrop unfolding."

Corvette memorial is restored

A MEMORIAL plaque to a wartime corvette has been rededicated after it was destroyed by vandals on Armistice Day.

The plaque to Flower-class escort HMS Dahlia was part of the street name sign at the entrance to Dahlia Close in Cheshunt.

It was originally unveiled in 1997 as a reminder of the ship and her company – the corvette, which survived the war and was scrapped in 1948, had been adopted by Cheshunt and Waltham Cross during World War 2.

Members of Cheshunt branch, local residents and police officers watched as the Mayor of Broxbourne, Cllr Mark Mills-Bishop, conducted the dedication ceremony, though the two remaining crew members, S/Ms Bengy Benjamin and Neville Doyle, who were at the 1997 event, were unable to make it this time.

Cheshunt branch padre Rev 'Mother Jane' Dicker led the consecration service and blessed the plaque with holy water.

The Last Post and Reveille were sounded, and branch president S/M Peter Trigg made the remembrance address.

Taiwan POWs not forgotten

LAST year may have marked 65 years since the end of World War 2, but the pace is not slackening for one man.

S/M Michael Hurst heads the Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society, which aims to keep alive the memory of those held in Japanese camps on the island, and to continue to search for survivors from the period 1942-45.

The group also helps organise the memorial service at Jinguashi every November, and seeks to educate the people of the Republic of China over this little-known part of their history.

The society was approached last year by a film production company in Singapore to ask if S/M Hurst could help with a programme they were making on Taiwan for the History Channel, acting as consultant and film subject on the section on POWs.

S/M Hurst's contribution was to show the presenter, Anthony Morse, around the Heito Camp at PingTung, including the sugar factory and plantation where POWs were forced to clear the land for crops.

The remembrance week visit to Taiwan in November saw a group of 13 overseas guests travel to the Far East, most from the UK along with one from the USA and one from Australia – though

sadly there were no former POWs among them, age being something of a barrier to many.

Among the places visited were the site of the former Kinkaseki POW camp at Jinguashi and the mine in which the prisoners suffered at the hands of Japanese guards, as well as the port of Keelung, where POWs were landed and from where liberated men were evacuated at the end of the war.

Looking ahead, new monuments and features are planned at the Taiwan POW Memorial Park in Jinguashi, which S/M Hurst has been asked to help design.

These could include a polished black granite wall, similar to the Vietnam Wall in Washington DC, containing the names of all 4,365 Taiwan POWs, and a bronze statue of two POWs helping each other, entitled 'Mates'.

It is hoped the monuments will be ready for the remembrance visit in November this year.



● Robert Treadwell's medal and memorabilia concerning the rescue attempt on Chesil Beach

Former sailor's gallantry medal goes to museum

A RARE sea gallantry medal awarded posthumously in 1944 to a heroic coastguard was due to be presented to the National Museum of the Royal Navy as *Navy News* went to press.

The Silver Sea Gallantry Medal awarded to Coastguardsman Robert Treadwell in late 1944, along with extensive research notes, photographs and original documents, has been offered to the museum by Robert Treadwell's stepson Raymond Morris.

On October 13 1944 HMLCT(A) 2454 – a landing craft tank (armoured) – was battered by a Force 9 gale whilst en route from Dartmouth to Portland.

Her engine failed, and as she dragged her anchor and rescue teams prepared to help, she was dashed onto the shingle bank at Chesil Beach in Dorset, where she broke her back.

The local Coastguard Rocket Lifesaving Company, based at Wyke Regis, were already on the scene and managed to get lines across, but according to the official Board of Trade citation at the time ten of the crew of 12 were washed overboard, together with the lines, by 30ft waves crashing onto the beach and stricken landing craft.

Two of the sailors were plucked from the sea by the shore party, but the other eight drowned.

Two Coastguard officers, Cdr John Legh, Coastguard Inspector of the Southern Division, and Coastguardsman Treadwell, aged 35 – both former Royal Navy men – ran into the seething waves in an attempt to pass the lines by hand to the two sailors still on board the vessel, but both were dragged

from the beach by the surf and drowned.

Three of their colleagues tried again, but were beaten back.

In an amazing feat of stamina and fortitude, Auxiliary Coastguard George Brown endured the surf for more than 30 minutes and managed to get aboard the landing craft and pass lines to the two remaining crewmen.

Brown and one of the crew were hauled to safety, but the other line parted.

Albert Oldfield, another Auxiliary Coastguard, managed to get a line to the last crewman, who was also rescued.

Robert Treadwell's body was washed ashore in Chesil Cove the following day, and he was buried in the RN cemetery in Portland.

The Coastguardsman had served as a Signalman since 1925, and his service had ended on his 30th birthday – a few months before the outbreak of war, when he transferred to the Coastguard.

He and Cdr Legh were posthumously awarded the silver medal, as was George Brown, who was also awarded the Royal Humane Society Silver Medal and the Stanhope Gold Medal for the bravest rescue of 1944.

The Silver Sea Gallantry Medal is extremely rare – only seven were awarded between 1937 and 1947, and none have been awarded since at least 1974, though the bronze version was last awarded in 1989.

Former Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey, now Chief Executive of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, was scheduled to attend the ceremony in Portsmouth.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery submarine in our December edition (right) was HMS Porpoise.

The winner of our £50 prize was Mr M Green of Wallsend, Tyne and Wear, and the winner of the bottle of Wood's Old Navy Rum was Mr G Drake, of Castleford, West Yorkshire.

This month we have the name ship of her class (pictured above) which played a key role in the evacuation of a remote community in the South Atlantic following a volcanic eruption in the early 1960s.

What was her name, and what was the name of the island she helped?

We have removed her name and pennant number from the picture.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH.



Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is March 14 2011. 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 April edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.



● Essex FAAA branch chairman S/M Harry Bass is presented with a framed picture of a Merlin helicopter of 814 NAS by LAET Dan Macedo (left) and LAET Roy Ogonda

Taranto gathering

THE TOP man may have been missing, but there was still a strong team from the Navy's aviation arm at the Taranto Lunch staged by the Essex branch of the Fleet Air Arm Association.

Chief of Staff (Aviation and Carriers) Rear Admiral Tom Cunningham was called away on Service business at short notice.

But there was still Cdr Geoff Bowker, who recently joined the Military Aviation Authority, and LAET's Roy Ogonda and Daniel Meccedo, representing 814 Naval Air Squadron, which is affiliated to the Essex branch.

Branch chairman S/M Harry Bass gave a resumé of that famous battle where four Naval Air Squadrons flying from HMS Illustrious sank or crippled half of the Italian fleet in Taranto.

It is hoped that a framed picture of one of 814 Squadron's Merlins, presented by the LAETs, can be displayed in the RAF Association Club in Chelmsford, where Essex branch members meet.

Shipmates are now looking forward to events such as the annual Memorial Observation, at Eastchurch on Friday May 6 2011.

MYSTERY PICTURE 192

Name

Address

My answers

Pay Colonel briefs on allowances changes

where
to look

DEFENCE INTERNAL BRIEFS

02/11: Registering for Service Pupil Premium: On Monday December 13 2010 the Department for Education announced the details of the school funding settlement for 2011-12. This included details of the local authority Dedicated Schools Grant allocations and the level of the Pupil Premium.

03/11: Joint message from Chief of the Defence Staff and Permanent Under Secretary: Meeting the challenges of 2011. Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Sir David Richards and Permanent Under Secretary (PUS) Ursula Brennan, issued a joint message to all defence staff reflecting on progress made in 2010 and setting the priorities for the year ahead.

04/11: SDSR Implementation: Changes to Service Personnel Allowances: The Strategic Defence and Security Review set out a requirement to reduce expenditure on Service and Civil Service allowances amounting to some £300 million per year. Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, Andrew Robathan, announced the package of measures to be implemented for the Armed Forces.

GALAXY MESSAGES

Galaxy 01-2011: 1SL Strategic Priorities for the Naval Service 2011.

Galaxy 02-2011: CinCFleet's Direction and Guidance: CinCFleet issues his Direction and Guidance for 2011

Galaxy 03-2011: Second Sea Lord's priorities for the 2011 Spring term.

DEFENCE INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTICES

DIN2011 DIN01-019: JPA Appraisal: Non-Standard Appraisal Reports (NSARs)

DIN2011 DIN01-016: Naval Service Redundancy Programme - Excluded Cadres

DIN2011 DIN01-014: Pre-Deployment Fertility Preservation

DIN2011 DIN01-012: Tri-Service Fiji Support Network (FSN) brief for UK based Service personnel 7-11 February 7-11 2011

DIN2011 DIN07-022: Joint and Single Service Security, Language, Intelligence, Photographic and Geo-Spatial Training courses for TY 2011/12

DIN2011 DIN10-001: Royal Navy Show Jumping and Eventing Team - dates for team selection 2011

ROYAL NAVY TEMPORARY MEMORANDA

Issue 01/11 RNTM 001/11: The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity - Naval Service Amenity Fund approved grants

Issue 01/11 RNTM 002/11: The Royal Navy and Royal Marine Charity - Naval Service Amenity Fund

Issue 01/11 RNTM 003/11: Personnel wishing to leave the Naval Service early - Additional guidance for 2011

Issue 01/11 RNTM 007/11: Introduction of the Competitive Gliding Course (RN) June 12-17 2011

Issue 01/11 RNTM 009/11: Additional funding to State schools educating Service children - The Service Pupil Premium

Issue 01/11 RNTM 012/11: Management of leave in the Naval Service

Issue 01/11 RNTM 013/11: Additional Public Holiday for the Royal Wedding on April 29 2011

Issue 01/11 RNTM 014/11: HMS Chatham decommissioning and disposal

Issue 01/11 RNTM 015/11: Divisional training in the Royal Navy

Wikileaks wary

A REMINDER to people that due to the potential threat of malware staff are not to access or download on to official systems material originally leaked from Wikileaks.

This includes direct downloads and bringing the material in via email, discs or pensticks.

If you have a genuine business need, arrangements can be put in place to access the material.

CHANGES to Service Personnel Allowances - a message from the Royal Navy Pay Colonel, Capt John Lavery:

I am conscious that many readers will be aware of the recent announcements heralding adjustments to some elements of the pay and allowances of Service personnel.

The article below provides general details to add to the information already provided to our sailors and marines.

The language is somewhat formal but it is offered in such a way as to minimise any misunderstanding of the changes that all of us in uniform are about to experience.

Changes to the Service allowance package as a result of the requirement to achieve a significant reduction in the annual spend on allowances were recently announced in DIB 04/11, with the specific changes to Continuity of Education Allowances (CEA) announced in December in DIB 95/10.

The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) White Paper presented the Armed Forces with a challenging requirement to achieve £250 million savings from the current expenditure on Service allowances by April 2014.

In order to achieve this target, substantial changes to a number of allowances and other targeted pay measures are to be made this year and the year after.

The impact that these changes will have on many Service personnel and their families has been acknowledged by the Principal Personnel Officers, Service Chiefs and by the Secretary of State for Defence, however they have been recognised, and reluctantly accepted, as part of the wider savings that Defence has to make at this time.

Key changes to allowances as a result of the savings measures are summarised below, however personnel are encouraged to refer to the DIBs and, if at all unsure, or concerned about how the changes might affect them or their family, to seek further advice from Unit HR Administration staff, or the chain of command.

It is acknowledged that allowances policy is frequently complex, and therefore the detail of some of the measures below may be difficult to understand when viewed in isolation.

However, while further simplification of allowances remains an enduring theme within policy development, it is important to appreciate that many of the complex regulations have been put in place to ensure that reducing resources remain appropriately targeted.

Changes to allowances that will take place from May 1 2011 are as follows:

■ **Home to Duty Travel (Public) (HDT (Public)):** The personal contribution to HDT(Public) will be increased from one to nine

miles, aligning it with the level of contribution already made by claimants of HDT (Private).

The measure will be implemented in three stages over two years, and will increase from one mile to three miles from April 1 2011, from three to six miles from April 1 2012 and six to nine miles from April 1 2013.

This will mean that those Naval personnel who live in publicly funded accommodation (eg SLA, SSSA, SFA or SSFA) less than these distances from their Duty Station will be ineligible for financial support for their commute to and from work.

■ **Disturbance Allowance (DA):** The rates for Privately Owned and Privately Rented Accommodation will be aligned to the SFA rate. All DA rates will be reduced by 10 per cent, to £966 for SFA and £83 for SLA. The Child Element of DA will also reduce by 51 per cent to £75.

■ **Incidental Expenses (IE):** IE in the UK and overseas will be removed, except for those Service personnel hospitalised as in-patients.

■ **Day Subsistence (DS):** The upper limit for UK DS will be reduced from a capped maximum of £26.28 to £25 per day. Rates of overseas DS will be reduced by 4.9 per cent, which is proportionate to the reduction in UK DS.

■ **Local Overseas Allowance (LOA):** The changes to LOA which will take effect from May 1 2011 include the application of revised UK spend data to update the LOA rate tables; the removal of one set of three 'Bett Nights' worldwide from the LOA construct; the introduction of a revised Factor Plan, which will be based on three levels (or salary bands) of LOA for Main Stations, rather than the current 13 level LOA Factor Plan which is based on rank; a reduction in the rates of LOA paid to those personnel temporarily serving overseas on Exercise/Field Conditions from 50 per cent to 40 per cent and Temporary Duty or Seagoing LOA rates from 75 per cent to 60 per cent, and the removal of payment of this allowance in respect of dependant children over 18 or those who have completed the A-level stage of education.

A number of further changes will be made to the LOA rules, known as 'Conventions', globally on April 1 2012. Although the overall effect of these global changes to Conventions is that LOA rates in most LOA Main Station areas are likely to fall, the Conventions work is merely an update of current lifestyles abroad.

Additionally, a number of specific changes will be made to the application of the Conventions for LOA areas in North West Europe.

■ **Living Out Supplemented Rates of LOA (LOSLOA):** The rate calculation method will be changed, although recipients of this allowance will continue to

receive the appropriate rate of single/unaccompanied LOA.

Eligibility criteria will also be adjusted to ensure that maximum use of Service messing, if available at an individual's Duty Station, is made by those accommodated within a reasonable travelling distance.

■ **Continuity of Education Allowances (CEA):** Changes to the eligibility rules and the governance of claims for the allowance will be introduced with effect from April 1 2011.

The most significant change to the current rules withdraws the eligibility for CEA from personnel who serve unaccompanied by their families in some locations, principally MOD London, certain positions in JFHQ and in designated seagoing billets in ships and submarines.

Transitional arrangements have been put in place to ensure individuals who are currently drawing CEA under these 'involuntarily separated' rules will not be unfairly disadvantaged by the removal of this concession.

Further changes include an automatic review of entitlement after two assignments rather than three when the claimant's family home has not relocated, the removal of the 'Sibling Rule' and the aggregation of claims from the CEA regulations, and the establishment of a team to ensure compliance with the regulations.

In addition to the measures described above, the Secretary of State has directed that a review of CEA should be conducted given the current financial climate and the need to be clear that expenditure on this allowance is fully justified.

The review team are now entering a wide-ranging consultation phase and some Naval personnel may have already received a short e-survey for completion. This provides an opportunity for the RN to directly inform the review process. The results of this review will be announced in the spring.

■ **School Children's Visits (SCV):** The parental contribution to SCV will be increased from 50 miles to 100 miles per single journey and the allowance will be withdrawn for children who have completed the A-level stage of education, but are studying for a first degree.

■ **Motor Mileage Allowance (MMA):** The MMA Converted



Leave Rate (for leave travel) which is currently paid at 31p per mile, will be aligned with the MMA Private Car Rate (for duty travel) at the lower HMRC approved mileage rate, currently 25p per mile.

This will result in a reduction in MMA paid to recipients of Get You Home (Seagoers) and GYH (Early Years) of approximately 20 per cent. The MMA Official Duty Rate (ODR) will be removed from the regulations as it is rarely able to be used under Service regulations.

■ **Get You Home (GYH):** All GYH allowances are generated by MMA CLR and will reduce accordingly to 25p per mile (from 26p for GYH (Travel) and 31p for other GYH rates).

This will result in a reduction in rates of GYH (Travel) by approximately 4 per cent and GYH (Seagoers) and GYH (Early Years) by approximately 20 per cent.

■ **Get You Home (Early Years) (GYH (EY)) and (Early Years) (Overseas Assistance) (GYH (EY)(OA)):** Entitlement to these allowances will be removed at the end of Phase 1 Training or at the age of 18, whichever is the later.

■ **Get You Home (Seagoers):** Entitlement to this allowance will be reduced from 12 to ten journeys per leave year.

■ **Food and Incidentals Allowance (FIA):** FIA will be reduced from £12.41 to £8.50 per day following adjustment to the rate calculation methodology for this allowance.

As with LOSLOA, the eligibility criteria will also be adjusted to ensure that maximum use of Service messing, if available at an individual's Duty Station, is made by those who are accommodated within a reasonable travelling distance.

■ **Special Messing Allowance (SMA):** The rate calculation methodology for this subsistence allowance will be changed to 75 per cent of the relevant DS rate for the overseas country.

SMA is unlike DS, which sets a maximum but only allows for actual expenditure. In reality, like all of us, on some days individuals buy a cheap snack and on others they eat a more expensive meal.



Montrose is tops for stokers

THE Marine Engineers of HMS Montrose have notched up a top score, as they topped the tables in NVQ awards over the past academic year.

NVQs - or to give them their full name National Vocational Qualifications - are work-based awards achieved through assessment and training which require aspiring candidates to prove they have the ability to carry out their job to the required standard.

In conjunction with the Royal Naval School of Marine Engineering, the Engineering

Technicians (Marine Engineering) have been bagging NVQs through the academic year.

Even while enjoying the success of catching pirates on anti-piracy patrol off East Africa, the ship's ETMEs notched up two level 2 and two level 3 NVQs to add to the nine level 2 and two level 3s awarded over the previous 12 months.

Also, and rather handily, each NVQ earns HMS Montrose £250 for her Welfare Fund as part of the Fleet Award Scheme.

CMEM(M) 'Scotch' Bright said: "This is a great achievement

for the lads who are gaining recognisable qualifications for all their hard work."

CO Cdr Jonathan Lett added: "I am incredibly proud of the sheer number of NVQs achieved by the Marine Engineering Department. They may not have come face to face with many Somali pirates, but their professionalism has allowed me to keep the ship at sea for 85 per cent of the time in theatre."

"The fact that they have achieved so much training during what has been a very busy year is amazing."

● (left to right: front) ET(ME)s James Thorpe, Matthew Keylock, Thomas Baxter, Kieran Breen, David Gibson, (back) Omar Jack, Luke Taylor, Ben Rees, Daniel Butt, (back centre) CMEM(M) 'Scotch' Bright



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Donations welcomed by Buxton

BUXTON unit was delighted to receive donations of two items of equipment which have vastly improved their training capabilities.

Charles Kitchen, president of Buxton and District Lions Club, and Nick Townsend, chairman of their Charity Committee, presented the unit with an overhead projector, while Andrew Naden, director of AJ Naden Haulage Ltd, presented a laptop computer.

The combination of the projector and the laptop enables staff to give PowerPoint presentations to groups of cadets, and senior cadets can learn how to create and deliver PowerPoint presentations themselves.

As the unit carries out Royal Yachting Association training for Sea Cadets and for Errwood Sailing Club, it can now use DVDs which demonstrate a variety of skills.

The donors of the equipment were able to see it in use by enthusiastic cadets and were impressed with the results.

Buxton unit has also expressed its thanks to all the people who supported them in a bag pack at Morrisons, which raised £690, and in 'Community Matters' at Waitrose, which will result in a donation of £321.

Frigate offers sea-time for RM cadets

SIX members of the Lymstone Detachment of the Royal Marines Volunteer Cadet Corps recently experienced the open sea aboard HMS Campbelltown.

Meeting the frigate in Holyhead, North Wales, the cadets had a fun-packed programme, visiting many areas of the ship.

Hosted on board by Cdr Keri Harris, they were shown the engine rooms, participated in some first aid training, were given a comprehensive brief by 206 Flight, who were embarked with their Lynx, and were allowed to drive the ship – under the close direction of the Quartermaster and the Officer of the Watch.

There were two elements of the visit which the cadets would class as their highlight; one was firing a general purpose machine gun from the flight deck, and the other was being invited to have dinner with the Captain in his personal quarters.

HMS Campbelltown is to be decommissioned this year, so this was a real opportunity for the cadets to see life aboard a warship.

Poppy cash handed over

REPRESENTATIVES from Whitehaven unit were able to provide a cash boost of over £350 to the Poppy Appeal at the Kells, Whitehaven branch of the Royal British Legion.

The money was raised through a concert by the Royal Marines Band Scotland, held in the town's Civic Hall.

Speaking at the presentation the unit's vice chairman, David Abbott, said that it was a great pleasure for the Sea Cadets to make the donation to the appeal.

"We are honouring a promise we made that we would share the concert proceeds with the Legion," he said.

"It is a very great pleasure for us to be able to give a little bit back to our community, which has supported us so generously for many years."

The cheque was presented to Bill Mawson, chairman of the Kells Branch of the Legion, and secretary Alan Barnes by CPO (SCC) Maureen McEuan.



● Members of Bristol Avonmouth unit perform a hornpipe amidst the snow – real and fake – at the Victorian Festival of Christmas in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

A burst of publicity for frozen hornpipes

BRISTOL Avonmouth cadets kept the cold at bay with vigorous displays of the hornpipe at a festival in Portsmouth.

And their efforts, at the Historic Dockyard's Victorian Festival of Christmas, put the youngsters in the spotlight as almost 30,000 visitors turned up to enjoy traditional festive attractions.

The cadets of TS Enterprise were invited to bring their Hornpipe Display Team and a party of cadets to demonstrate the traditional form of naval exercise and entertainment.

They performed two displays in the main entertainment arena and a further eight displays up and down the 'Main Road'.

And whereas in previous years the event has relied on snow machines for a wintry appearance, this time there was real snow falling as the cadets showed off their skills.

AC Siobhan McAnaspie said: "It was really cold but the dancing kept you warm and the snow gave everything a real Christmas feel."

POC Ollie Hillier added: "It

was amazing the interest shown by the visitors.

"I don't think that I have ever been photographed so much in my life."

In between displays cadets and staff were able to visit permanent displays at the dockyard, including HMS Victory, Action Stations and Father Christmas' grotto on board HMS Warrior 1860.

The party was also given a tour of one of the Royal Navy's newest ships, Type 45 destroyer HMS Dauntless.

Avonmouth's Commanding Officer, Lt (SCC) Barbara Hiller RNR, said: "The cadets were, as always, brilliant and members of the public made numerous comments about the politeness and smartness of the cadets.

"Visits like this one are an excellent way of developing the confidence and interpersonal skills of our cadets in a fun and exciting environment.

"Many of our visits to sites like Portsmouth and London involve activities that you just could not do otherwise."

Lt Hiller continued: "We would like to thank the Commanding



● Bristol Avonmouth cadets with HMS Daring – sister ship of HMS Dauntless, which they visited – behind them

Officer and the ship's company of HMS Dauntless, Richmond Events Management, Terri at the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, our accommodation hosts and WO Bill Parr at AACTO, without whose help the visit could not

have taken place.

"A big thank-you must go to TS Hornet, the Gosport Sea Cadets, who quickly obtained a spare CD of the hornpipe music when ours became U/S on the way to Portsmouth."

Falls give unit a lift



● ACs Maisy Welsman and Jasmine Walker with Santa and Lauran the Elf

STAFF and a handful of hardy cadets from Canonteign unit attended the recent Canonteign Falls Estate Winter Country Fair, during which Father Christmas made a surprise visit.

Assisted by Lauran the Elf and two senior cadets, Father Christmas fielded requests and shopping lists from his young visitors while other cadets performed car parking duties and helped out in the estate's restaurant.

Unlike the other Service cadets forces, each Sea Cadet unit is an individual charity affiliated to the Marine Society and Sea Cadets; the units receive no direct Government funding but are logistically supported by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, so the trustees rely on partnership support from the local community, schools and businesses to keep the units going.

The trustees' chairman Nicholas Maylam – who mysteriously disappeared just before Father Christmas turned up – said: "Without the help and support of local businesses like Canonteign Falls we would be unable to provide Sea Cadet activities throughout Teignbridge. "We are happy to support those who support us and help out at events like this".

Canonteign Sea Cadets are in the process of finalising a number of major community projects supported by both Teignmouth Community College and Teign School and local statutory bodies which will enhance their ability to provide marine training to the youth of Teignbridge.

In addition these projects will provide practical support to pupils attending both schools and the wider community. If you are interested in finding out more, or in supporting the unit, please contact the unit chairman on 01626 879467 or the Officer in Charge, PO Julie Morrison, on 07590 994274.



● AC Michael Carroll

War poem strikes a chord

A CADET from Widnes unit was invited to recite a poem which he wrote on local radio in the North-West.

AC Michael Carroll's poem, The Last I Heard, portrays a soldier and his bride-to-be's perspective on war.

Michael gave the poem its first airing at the unit's annual inspection, but after the BBC obtained a copy they invited him to go into the studio to record an interview for the Roger Phillips Show on BBC Radio Merseyside, and to recite the poem himself.

On the day, Michael said: "You don't expect that someone from Widnes would get to be on the radio.

"It's a really nice surprise – and my mum is so excited!"

The Commanding Officer at TS Eskimo, Lt (SCC) Danny Yates RNR, said: "We're all really proud of Michael – this is such an achievement."

Michael's poem can be found on the Navy News website at www.navynews.co.uk/letters/420-the-last-i-heard.aspx

Corps supports Red Nose team

THE Sea Cadet Corps is teaming up with Comic Relief for Red Nose Day, Friday March 18.

The Red Nose Day team is working with youth groups across the UK, and is challenging every Sea Cadet unit to get involved.

To help units come up with good ideas there's a fundraising activity kit designed specifically for young people, available at www.rednoseday.com/youthgroups

To find out more about Sea Cadets teaming up with Comic Relief visit www.sea-cadets.org/comicrelief.aspx

Comic Relief was launched at a refugee camp in Sudan on Christmas Day in 1985 with a simple objective – comedians would make people laugh while raising money for good causes at home and in Africa.

Red Nose Day arrived in 1988, raising £15m that year and starting a tradition that has since raised more than £450m in total



● The spruced-up Medway Towns unit minibus

Smart set of wheels

THE Medway Towns unit minibus was donated by Chatham branch of the RNA and the RNBT in 2007, when it was already seven years old.

By 2010, after ten years service, the bus was beginning to look a little bit worn and drab.

But thanks to the Berkeley Group, they have a new spruced set of wheels following a full refresh of the livery, which tied

in with the new Sea Cadet branding.

Unit chairman Ian Spreadborough said: "It was good timing for us and we are very grateful to Berkeleys for their support.

"The Cadets always look the part, but we needed to smarten up our image when out and about in the community – and now heads turn wherever we go."



● Pat Goucher

East bids farewell to Pat

AN Eastern Area stalwart has retired after 31 years – and four years later than she could have done.

Patricia Goucher was also the longest-serving Marine Society and Sea Cadets MSSC staff member by six years.

Pat was with her husband, based at RAF Swinderby, when the job of part-time secretary came up.

She got the job and joined the Sea Cadets in RAF Swinderby on June 4 1979. A year later she became full-time secretary, and the rest is history.

When Pat joined the organisation, she worked on a manual typewriter, there was no such thing as a photocopier – all reproductions were done on a Gestetner duplicator – she used things like bottled Tipp-Ex to correct mistakes and all correspondence was conducted by phone or letter; very different to the instant communication of the world in which we now live.

Pat has seen a great many changes in her years and has 'trained' 12 Area officers.

She has also seen the Eastern Area HQ move on several occasions.

She started at RAF Swinderby in 1978, but the air station closed in 1983 so the HQ moved to RAF Scampton.

Scampton was earmarked for closure in 1997, and although the Corps was offered accommodation in Digby, the office went to a drill hall in Gainsborough.

After 12 years in the drill hall, the office is once again on the move, and Pat oversaw the set-up of the HQ in its new office at RAF Cranwell before Christmas.

Over the years Pat has thrown herself into her job and supported Sea Cadet events up and down the country.

She undertook several courses at weekends, was a great supporter of the Area regatta and used to help out when the Regatta was held in Ipswich.

Pat has been the tea lady for the past ten years, instrumental in ensuring all the staff workers tied to their posts running the event were fed and watered.

In 2004 Pat was awarded the MBE for her services to the Corps – though her extra voluntary work helped clinch the honour; she works tirelessly for the church and regularly on Sundays she is at the hospital supporting patients at the bedside.

Eastern Area dined Pat out to mark her retirement, with the Deputy Area Officer (East), Cdr S Watt, attending as guest speaker.

Caterham in 7

CATERHAM was one of seven Surrey District units to take part in a parade at Guildford Cathedral to mark the 150th anniversary of the Cadet movement.

Eight cadets from TS Zephyr, plus two instructors were included in the two Guard divisions for the event, which were inspected by the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, Sarah Goad.

Lt (SCC) Barry Mitchell RNR, First Lieutenant of Camberley unit was the Colour Officer.

Busy schedule for Navy Board cadet

LIFE as a Sea Cadet can be as busy and interesting as you want it to be.

There are plenty of opportunities to learn new skills, to compete at sports and to socialise at unit level.

And if you want to take it to another plane – literally, as well as figuratively-speaking – then let Annabel Broad be an example.

Annabel, a Petty Officer Cadet at Crewe unit, was last year's Navy Board Cadet for the North West – though the role was not on her radar until she was informed by the Area Officer that she could be a candidate.

Navy Board Cadets act as escorts for Navy Board members or other senior Royal Navy officers at appropriate official ceremonies or other such functions.

These would include royal visits, formal parades such as Remembrance Day and Trafalgar Day parades, presentations and awards, recruiting events, ship visits, opening ceremonies and cocktail parties.

Annabel's name duly went forward, and she got the job.

With it came a host of duties and experiences, such as:

■ Sailing around France and the Channel Islands;

■ Flying at RNAS Yeovilton;

■ Meeting the Prince of Wales and Earl of Wessex;

■ Meeting Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland, Rear Admiral Martin Alabaster, and sharing her views on the Corps with his;

■ Attending the launch of submarine HMS Ambush at Barrow.

Annabel, who is 18, has been a cadet for four years.

She is a keen sea kayaker – a skill in which she also instructs.

Annabel has passed her pre-selection course to be an officer in the Corps, and she also has an Admiralty Interview Board coming



● POC Annabel Broad (right) during the Sea Cadet aviation course phase two at RNAS Yeovilton. "We flew with 727 Squadron," said Annabel. "The man in the photo with me is Lt Jerry Tribe, who was second-in-command of 727 however has just retired. We spent a week there on our course and I achieved my silver wings and got one out of the three places for gold wings next year, which you have to be selected for. The course consisted of a navigation exercise, along with flying the plane and using the controls, talking to air traffic control and aerobatics. The photo was taken after I landed after my navigation exercise."

up in order to pursue her ambition to become a warfare officer.

And Annabel does have a life outside the Corps as well – she has just finished A-levels at college, being named student of the year, and does voluntary work teaching disabled children.

"One of the events I enjoyed the most was attending the Mountbatten Festival at the Royal Albert Hall and meeting the First Sea Lord," said Annabel.

"The concert alone was outstanding, but to meet the First Sea Lord and other admirals was

a fantastic experience.

"I am very grateful for the award and the opportunities it has given me, along with great friendship of my fellow Navy Board Cadets.

"The only thing I would like to see improved is the awareness of the award, as many cadets didn't know what the award was – it is a fairly new award and the opportunities that it gives are too good to miss.

"I can honestly say that I have had one of the most exciting and busiest years in 2010.

"I had the opportunity to go to

Buckingham Palace to meet Prince Charles and Prince Edward, which was amazing.

"It was lovely that my mum was invited as well to share my achievement and excitement."

Annabel's successor as Navy Board Cadet for the North West Area for 2011 is 17-year-old Cdt Sgt Chris Warren, from Fleetwood unit's Royal Marines Cadet detachment.

Chris, a motorcycle engineering student at Blackpool and the Fylde College, hopes to join the Army's Royal Military Police.



● Lt Cdr (SCC) Don Davies RNR

Officer's sterling service rewarded

A SEA Cadet stalwart has been awarded an MBE in the 2011 New Year's Honours Civil List for services to the Sea Cadets over a 35-year career.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Don Davies RNR Rtd joined as a Civilian Instructor in 1975, and during his time with the Sea Cadets, he has held almost every unit post there is, from Petty Officer Instructor to commanding officer and chairman – the latter at Dartford (TS Anson) and New Romney (TS Veteran).

He also had a distinguished career in the London Ambulance Service, particularly during the IRA bombings in the mid-70s and 80s, receiving several citations from the Royal Humane Society.

Don stood down as chairman of Dartford in 2002 and moved to New Romney for a restful retirement, but within months of settling in was getting involved with the local unit, and became Chairman within four months.

At the time TS Veteran was struggling to stay open and the unit was quite run down.

Don, along with his wife Hazel who became secretary, recruited new volunteers and started the rebuilding process.

Modest as ever Don paid tribute to the fellow volunteers and colleagues who have helped him to achieve what he has, and in particular thanked his wife Hazel for her unstinting support and patience.

Sea Cadets Area Chairman (South) Ivor Riddell said: "Don is the epitome of the service ethos that runs through our volunteer cadre within the Sea Cadet organisation and is fully deserving of this prestigious recognition.

"He has achieved all he has despite having serious health problems and many other challenges, and he continues to give his all in support of the young people in his community."

Beccles is best

BECCLES unit can now boast the title of best training organisation for 2010 in Eastern Area, awarded at the Area Sea Cadet conference held at Bishop Grossette College in Lincoln.

The training team at the unit comprises 13 members of adult staff, although special mention has to go to the unit's Training Officer, PO (SCC) Tony Easter, for all his hard work in making sure the cadets receive a wide variety of training both on and off the water.

Activities sampled by the cadets over the past year have included canoeing, sailing, the BTEC in Public Services, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, St John Ambulance first Aid, camping, chartwork, communications and much more.

Maritime past is celebrated

TWO cadets from Southwark unit joined colleagues from across the London area at a celebration of Britain's maritime history at the House of Lords.

LC Callum Malone and AC Ben Wood attended the Maritime Foundation event, which included a series of presentations on the importance of the Royal Navy's role in national defence, and a presentation on the history of the 16th Century Armada Tapestries, destroyed in the Great Fire of 1834 but now recreated in oil on canvas – the modern copies were also on display.



● Stonehaven members and their guests, the Rev David Stewart and Douglas Knox, at the unit's Cadet Mess Dinner

RN customs direct mess dinner

STONEHAVEN and District unit held their annual Cadet Mess Dinner at their High Street headquarters.

The cadets were joined by the President of the Stonehaven Rotary Club, Douglas Knox, unit chaplain Rev David Stewart and their own Mess President, POC Michael Smith, and Vice President, LC Michael Blacklaw.

The dinner followed the high standards of a traditional Royal Navy officers' mess dinner.

Guests and cadets were dressed in formal attire, were called to dinner by the buglers and were piped on board.

Grace was said by the chaplain, then everyone got stuck into a three-course meal followed by teas,

coffees and (non-alcoholic) port, which was passed around the table as custom dictated.

There was also a toast to the Queen, followed by a musical presentation by the unit bagpiper, OC Marcus Coolahan.

The formal part of the evening was rounded off by speeches from the main guests.

The dinner was organised by the Parents and Supporters Association, where the unit staff serve the cadets to give them a well-earned thanks for all their commitment, efforts and achievements during yet another very successful year for TS Carron.

During the course of the evening LC Heather Lawman was presented with her Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award by Douglas Knox.



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Award for unit's 'role model' PO

A MEMBER of Southwark unit has been publicly honoured with the Diana Award, a unique lifetime honour presented to young people for their compassion and outstanding selfless contribution to their communities.

These exceptional young people are positive role models for a generation by challenging negative stereotypes of young people.

Award holders automatically become members of the Diana Alumni programme, enabling them to continue their hard work and provide them with the skills to develop to their full potential.

PO George Whitfield has been chosen for the award because of his commitment and work with Southwark Sea Cadets, London Nautical School and the London Irish Rifles Association Band.

At the Surrey Square headquarters of TS. Cossack, Lt Cdr (SCC) Allan Phillips RNR said: "We at Southwark Sea Cadets are extremely proud of PO George Whitfield."

"This award will encourage him to continue his voluntary work in the local community, and will hopefully inspire others to get involved."

"George is honoured to receive such a fantastic award."

Maggie Turner, chief executive of the Diana Award, said: "This highly-prestigious award gives young people, of all abilities, circumstances and cultures, recognition at a time when their life choices are still to be made, enabling them to make a real positive difference to their communities."

"As individuals Award holders change lives, but as a group of community entrepreneurs they have the power and ambition to build the cohesive society in which we would all like to live."

For further information on the Diana Award, or to make a nomination, visit www.diana-award.org.uk

Book yourself an adventure

BOOK your place now for an amazing offshore opportunity.

The offshore season starts soon, and Sea Cadets has places available on several of its fleet.

Try your hand at sailing a 29-metre square-rigged tall ship or navigating the new power vessel TS Jack Petchey.

There is also the chance to sail a 35ft Tradewind yacht and progress your RYA qualifications.

You can book as an individual or part of a unit team, to find out full details call: 02392 765 512.

See next month's *Navy News* for further details of the offshore programme for this year.

Community stalwarts

TWO members of the Corps in the Midlands have won community awards at an event hosted and supported by their employers, St Andrew's Healthcare.

Lt (SCC) Marc Pether RMR and Lt (SCC) Sean 'Smudge' Smith RMR were awarded a Community Stars Award for their work with cadets.

Marc being the CO at **Kettering unit** and Sean is detachment commander at **Northampton**.

They each received £100 for their units, and Marc won the overall award, receiving another £250 for the unit and £250 in prize vouchers for himself.

Marc is the Operational Lead for hospital security at Northampton and Sean has organisational responsibility for management and leadership development.

They were chosen by a panel of employees from a number of nominations put forward, so they were delighted to both be recognised for the voluntary work they do.



● North West Area cadets at the wide open sands of Ainsdale Beach for their orienteering exercise

Pictures: Nigel Huxtable

CCF thrive down on the range

FOLLOWING on from the success of the first regional leadership weekend at RAF Wittering last spring, Combined Cadet Force members from the North-West of England got the chance to sample the delights of leadership training at an Army facility.

The Altcar range, near Formby on Merseyside, can accommodate hundreds of soldiers or cadets, but with the training being held over Remembrance weekend the camp and training area was practically deserted.

Apart from the 16 CCF cadets, of course – and the solitude added a special poignancy for those taking their drill assessment during the two minutes silence.

CPO Taff Urie and WO Andy Brownrigg, along with CCF officers from local schools, managed to include a seven-minute lesson into the weekend's

activities.

Those activities ranged from completing the local obstacle course to Command tasks in the Army gymnasium adjacent to the ranges.

Orienteering was carried out on the undulating dunes and wide-open sands of Ainsdale Beach, just down the coast from the Royal Birkdale golf course.

The cadets also had the opportunity to meet two Royal Marines from the RM Visibility Team.

Having completed the weekend successfully the cadets are all now ready to undertake the week-long leadership course at HMS Raleigh, at Torpoint in Cornwall.

They can take an alternative path by attempting a BTEC cadet qualification through their own schools.

● A North West area CCF cadet attempts the assault course at Altcar range training camp



Norfolk Broads flotilla

CADETS and staff from three units get their first taste of life on the water when they spent a week on the Norfolk Broads.

A total of 36 from training ships Dauntless (Gosforth unit), Zephyr (Caterham) and Donald O'Clark (Chester le Street) descended on the Broads for their annual camp.

The CO of Dauntless, CPO (SCC) Chris Healy, said: "The units spent the week living and working aboard four cruisers hired from Stalham, travelling each day to a new location."

"It was an excellent opportunity for them to put into practice the theory they've learnt on land, and for some this was their first experience of being in a powerboat, where they could put to the test their seamanship, marine engineering and cook steward skills, with the added incentive of knowing that if they got it wrong the boats will be in trouble or the cadets will go hungry!"

There was much interest from



● Cadets from three units – Gosforth (nearest camera), Caterham and Chester le Street – with their vessels on the Norfolk Broads

members of the public and fellow boaties as the cadets wore uniform with white caps for the week.

POC Jacob Cole, of Dauntless, said: "We were given a round of applause as we left Oulton Broad by the people on the shore –

this made all the cadets feel very happy and proud."

CPO Healy and his opposite number from Caterham, S/Lt (SCC) Aaron Clarke, have already finalised plans for the next trip and the deposits are flooding in.



● Lt Col John Davies RM presents the Stephenson Trophy to Barrow CO Lt (SCC) Ted Creighton RNR

First-time win for Barrow

BARROW cadets hosted a visit by the Captain of Sea Cadets and the North West Area Officer, who had a very special duty to perform.

Capt Mark Windsor and Lt Col John Davies RM called in at the Barrow-in-Furness unit for an informal visit while cadets were undertaking their normal training.

At the end of the evening the unit Commanding Officer, Lt Ted Creighton, received the Stephenson Trophy for the best unit in the North West Area, watched by all the cadets and staff – the first time the unit has won it in the 54 years the trophy has been presented.

This came as a great shock and unsurprisingly had completely stunned the unit staff – and made everyone feel proud of TS Sovereign's achievement.

The North West Area covers 58 units from Carlisle in the north to Stafford in the south, Buxton in the east to Holyhead in the west.

Winning this award is a culmination of a great deal of effort from all who are currently associated with the Barrow unit and many who have helped put the unit on such a good footing over the past 20 years with the development of key facilities and equipment.

This includes committee members, the Parents and Supporters Association, the uniformed and civilian staff and, crucially, the cadets who have applied themselves professionally and with such passion.

The assessment process is conducted throughout the year and covers all aspects of the unit, including performance of the committee, effectiveness of the parents association, the building fabric and training equipment, the training planning as well as achievements in cadet advancements, specialisations achievements and proficiencies, uniform dress and bearing and involvement in the community.

The visitors also viewed the unit's impressive facilities and sailing centre.

NW Area celebrates award scheme success

CADETS and volunteers celebrated their Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) Award achievements at the inaugural presentation evening for the North West Area, held at Naval Regional HQ Merseyside.

More than 40 awards – gold, silver and bronze – were handed out, as well as certificates marking their years of service to the awards scheme, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2006.

Of particular note was a certificate for 44 years of service, presented to Lt (SCC) John Hithersay of Bolton unit.

John reckons he has helped more than 200 cadets attain a DoE award over more than four decades.

After being presented with his own award, the officer said: "I was very honoured to receive my certificate – it was unexpected and I am very proud."

Guests at the ceremony were

also treated to performances by the Corps of Drums from Ellesmere Port and a hornpipe demonstration by the cadets of Kendal unit.

Senior Staff Officer for the North West, Cdr (SCC) Janet Evans RNR, who handed out silver awards to 12 cadets, said of their achievements: "It is great to see youngsters having their individual achievements recognised in this way as it is truly youth at its best, achieving DoE awards for their efforts in community, service, skills and expedition elements."

"I sincerely hope this type of evening will be an annual event."

Some 275,000 young people are on the scheme at any time in the UK, with more than 4.5 million participating since 1956.

The volunteering part of the programme is estimated to be worth more than £19 million to society each year.



● Mne Adrian Thorn makes the most of the surf on his waxeski

Picture: SAC David Johnson

Kayakers edged out

SUNNY skies greeted the RN Kayak Association when it arrived at Saunton Sands to face the Army and RAF for the Inter-Services competition.

The surf was small but adequate for the competition making it quite difficult to get a good long run to impress the judges – picking the right wave was of utmost importance.

For the first time in several years (and assisted by one particularly long journey by several methods of transport from somewhere in Northern Scotland) the RN/RM were able to field a full team.

There were several notable individual performances.

POET (ME) 'JC' Cowell was fourth in the high performance class, Mne Adrian Thorn was placed second and CPO Andy Vine fourth in the waxeski class.

The ladies team had a fantastic competition with Lt Helen Coxon placed first followed by Lt Cdr Charlie Atkinson in third and Lt Hazel Pyke fourth.

However, the final results are only half of the story and some sterling performances by the rest of the team (some in their first Inter-Services competition), racked up points for the Navy.

The overall result was very close: the RAF won with 109 points, three points ahead of the RN.

Nor is this the end of the success story for the championships. Thanks to the coaching organised by the surf secretary, WO2 'Batch' Batchelor RM, and provided by Andy McCulloch (English Surf Kayak Team) nine competitors gained their BCU 3* Surf Kayak Award.

Thoughts have already turned to this year and improving on the 2010 result.

The RN/RM Surf Kayak and Waxeski team are on the look-out for new members. Contact surf@rnka.co.uk or visit www.rnka.co.uk.



Clyde's hard (g)raft

HERE'S a rare sight.

Yes, that's right, blue sky in the Falklands.

Taking advantage of reasonable Falklands weather, sailors from HMS Clyde entered the New Year's Day raft race in Stanley.

It's the fourth year running a team from the islands' permanent patrol ship has thrust its oars into the natural harbour – and Clyde hasn't exactly covered herself in glory so far: one last place, two 'did not finish'.

So for the 2011 contest, the ship determined it was time to reverse this trend.

A dedicated team from the marine engineering department, led by WO Mike French, set about designing a race-winning raft.

Construction progressed apace, with raft-building squeezed in around the ship's busy maintenance program.

A comprehensive testing regime ensured the validity of the design (it was heaved over the side in Mare Harbour and six sailors clambered aboard to establish if it was going to float!). After final

modifications it was ready for the big day.

Stanley was treated to near-perfect conditions for the race – bright sunshine and a stiff breeze blowing down the length of the course.

With around one dozen rafts entering the competition, Clyde's team took to the water.

After a gruelling race over nearly a mile of the harbour the valiant efforts of the raft's crew saw Clyde finishing in a respectable third place.

The rafters emerged from the water having learned a good few lessons (not least that a sail would have been a valuable addition to the design).

The race isn't the only sport the patrol ship's crew enjoyed over the festive period.

Boxing Day races are a traditional fixture in Stanley and a sizeable number of locals and personnel from the Mount Pleasant military complex/Mare Harbour (Clyde's home when she's not prowling around the archipelago) attended the 2010 meet.

Peelers skinned Satans smitten

THE RN Ice Hockey Association started 2011 with a journey to Slough to face the Metropolitan Police at the now-traditional late-night time slot.

When we arrived, there were some slight concerns that the police were practising their pursuit driving skills as we were met with the sight of four go-karts tearing around on the ice, writes Lt Adam Lappin.

It turned out to be an endurance race and delayed the face-off time until midnight (!).

When the team finally stepped on to the ice it was time to renew 'friendly' rivalry between the Senior Service and the Met Police Peelers (in the previous meeting more than a year ago the coppers lost three players to injury for a few weeks).

The game started well as the Navy had a reasonably full bench for an away game: 13 players and two goalkeepers.

An incisive breakaway from Mne B Hubbs (40 Cdo) led to the opening goal. Before ten minutes were up the RN had a 4-0 lead courtesy of manager Kev Cave, Lt Cdr Al Bernard (UKHO) and another strike from Hubbs.

The police were a little slow to respond to this assault on their goalkeeper and this allowed LS D Smalley (MCM2) to skate through the constables' line and fire the Navy's fifth goal of the period in to the net.

The second period opened with the police seemingly still on a coffee break as Kev Cave scored his second early on, finishing off a fine move practised many times in training sessions.

Mne Hubbs latched on to a lazy clearance by the opposition goalie to squeeze the puck between the post and the keeper's shoulder from the narrowest of angles for his hat trick.

PO Tugg Wilson (Chatham) added his first of the night and the eighth for the RN before the police eventually scored their first goal of the game.

Kev Cave continued his run of memorable howlers after receiving a long pass up the ice for a breakaway on the police goal.

He managed to successfully 'deke' the goalie to send him the wrong way and only had fresh air to beat...



● A slap shot from the Navy's S Baker during the drubbing of the Met Police Peelers

Picture: Chris Dickens, mjdphoto.biz

...and managed to finish what was a good move by hitting the post from one yard out, before allowing the defence to get back to help their goalkeeper.

Kev did, however, redeem himself not two minutes later when he scored his hat trick goal to round off yet another well-worked team play to move the puck around the police zone using all five Navy players on the ice before putting the puck into the police net.

The period finished with the RN leading 10-1 as the ice was resurfaced for the third and last session.

The Peelers came out fighting in the final period and scored two quick-fire goals to make it 10-3 but in what had become a personal battle, Cave and Hubbs each added another goal to their tallies to give them four apiece.

Making a rare start as a forward – he played the previous three games in goal – AET D Jones (702 NAS) showed a good turn of pace and some quick hands to finish a good solo effort to put the puck past the now-subdued Peelers' goalkeeper.

goalkeeper.

The Navy slapped the cuffs on the Peelers towards the end of the game to add two more goals to the scoresheet, but not before a few lapses in concentration from the RN defensive players.

The first was a clearance from behind the RN goal. Under no pressure it went straight to a Met Police forward to score and the second was a moment of madness from the RN goalie, who decided to make snow angels just as the police forward came towards him...

Needless to say that the forward skated around the floundering keeper to put the puck in the net to make the final score 15-5 to the RN.

The RNHIA left the scene of the crime rather sharpish (at 3am!!) to avoid any retribution in the form of parking tickets and 'on the spot fines' and left the game referee to call CSI Slough to help the Met Police Peelers analyse what had just happened.

The second clash of the month was another away game at Slough

Ice Arena, this time against the local side, the Satans.

This resulted in a not-so-close game, probably due to a lack of available players on the part of the Satans, ending 22-5 in the Navy's favour.

For the record, the RN scorers included: Mne Hubbs (two goals, two assists); AET Jones (four and three); Sgt J Throop (RMR) (two and three); Kev Cave (four and four); Lt Cdr Bernard (one and three).

There's a return fixture with Satans in Gosport on February 5 which should prove to be a more even contest with a better flow to the game.

The team are always on the look-out for new players and will be holding a grass roots event in 2011 with MWS Collingwood at Planet Ice in Gosport on March 15.

More details from manager@miha.org.uk, m-admin@miha.org.uk and treasurer@miha.org.uk or pop along to a training session in Gosport every Tuesday evening at 10.30pm.

Sun and snow for squash players

The RN squash season opened with a training camp in Gibraltar, which proved to be extremely successful.

Eleven players made the trip, were accommodated in Service accommodation and given full use of the facilities at the Gibraltar Squash Club for training and routines every day, writes Lt Cdr David Cooke.

The club also provided opposition for two evening matches and a third evening match was arranged against a Gibraltar Combined Services team.

Events at home started with a match against a touring Australian Defence Force side which proved to be too strong for the RN, but who had a very close match against a CS team at Temeraire.

The fixture was part of an annual quadrangular competition and although the Australians won overall, the Royal Navy came a creditable second against opposition from the Jesters and Escorts squash clubs.

Lt Matt Ellicott (HMS Liverpool) led a team to the Channel Islands to take part in the Jersey festival, a highly-competitive event which attracts sides from all over Great Britain.

The Navy were placed in League One and found the opposition very strong; although they gave a good account of themselves, they did not feature in the presentation ceremonies at the end.

The 2010 Combined Services individual championships were held at Temeraire,

attracting the top players from all three Forces.

In the seniors' competition Ellicott won his way through to the semi-finals only to come up against his old adversary Damien May, who until March 2010 was an RM Captain but is now an RAF Flt Lt.

May was too sharp for Ellicott on the day and the RN man had to resort to a third/fourth-place play-off, while May received a sound beating by the Army number one (27-1) in the final.

In the U25 competition, last year's champion, Mne Nick Jezeph (RM Poole), breezed his way to the final without breaking into a sweat.

Against a very polished Army player, he sustained an injury in the second game, played on for a short time, aggravated the injury but finally, against his wishes, conceded at the beginning of the fourth game.

AET Stephen Wallace (Culdrose) reached the semi-final, but after taking the first game against the eventual champion, lost the next three – a creditable performance nevertheless.

A low-key Inter-Command tournament was held in November, with Scotland withdrawing beforehand and poor turn-outs from Naval Air and Portsmouth.

The Royal Marines, as usual, came in strength and convincingly won the competition with Plymouth Command runners-up.

The RN Championships scheduled for December had to be postponed because of inclement weather conditions (snow).

They were due to take place as *Navy News*

went to press, ahead of the Inter-Service contest at Temeraire from February 8-10.

Meanwhile the RN knockout cup had been running since September and the semi-finals and finals were held at Temeraire just before Christmas.

Teams from BRNC, Sultan, Heron and Drake had won their way through, all of whom produced some exciting and enthusiastic squash. Sultan, with an ex-RN U25 player and a current RN Veteran in their ranks, looked the strongest team on paper and indeed that proved to be the case as they eased their way to take the trophy.

BRNC came a most creditable second with Drake hot on their heels in third place.

England Squash, the governing body of the sport, has now incorporated the sport of racket ball within their auspices and are extremely keen to promote this fastest growing sport in the UK.

The organisation's official website – www.englishsquashandracketball.com – provides a lot of information on rules, news, clubs, coaching and much more and should be visited.

It's proving to be a very popular game and the RNSRA are equally interested in getting as many sailors as possible playing this racket sport.

Ships, establishments and units should contact the RN/RM Sports Lottery Manager, Lt Cdr Robin Young, on 02392 723806 or lotman@fleetfost.mod.uk for further information.



Money for old rope climbing

ROYAL, climb that 30ft rope.

Roger.

And again.

Roger.

Ok, another 98 times now.

Er, roger.

PTI Sgt Sam Sheriff (pictured here by LA (Phot) Andy Laidlaw) did just that, scaling 3,000ft in 100 stages using a 30ft-rope in the gym of 45 Cdo in Arbroath.

It took the NCO three minutes shy of 11 hours to complete the challenge – and enter the record books.

One week before the 30-year-old from Bridlington completed his marathon climb he could be found in the chimpanzee enclosure of Edinburgh Zoo (yes, really...) where he received one or two theory lessons from some undisputed masters of rope climbing.

He may also have picked up some dietary tips during this visit because when climbing, Sam maintained his energy levels by eating large quantities of bananas and sweet potatoes.

As well as staking his place in the record books, the key aim of Sam's climb was to honour his fellow Royals.

The event was the latest staged by the men of 45 to raise money for the Woodlands Garden Project, converting part of the RM Condor site into a focal point for remembrance and reflection in the Commando.

The intention is to strike the right balance between commemoration and celebration and it has an area that is suitable for young children, some of whom have lost their fathers.

It will also provide an invaluable tranquil location for those carrying unseen mental scars to reflect and adjust to life back home after operational tours.

The downside is that the Arbroath commandos require around £175,000 to complete the garden; Sam's exertions have managed to shave nearly £3k off that total.

"This was a tremendous feat of endurance and a truly remarkable achievement," enthused 45's Commanding Officer Lt Col Oliver Lee.

"Work has now started on the Woodlands Garden and this fundraising activity, and many like it, continue to make a significant contribution to this project."

If you'd like to support the project, visit www.bmycharity/100ropes.



Setting new benchmarks

BRITAIN'S former strongest man Neil Elliott demonstrates the push element of a record-breaking 'push-pull' weightlifting event at Faslane.

The base's Sportsdrome was the setting for the RN's first 'push-pull' competition north of the border, with Mr Elliott – also 14-time Scottish shot put and discus champion – guest of honour, kicking (or rather lifting) off proceedings.

Ten competitors lined up for two events – the bench press and the dead lift, each contest split into weight and gender categories.

It was the ladies who began the bench press with LPT Reggie Cawley setting an RN record in the 63kg class after she managed to lift 50kg.

LWtr Eloise Smith in the 80kg class soon followed Reggie's example and set a record for her weight and junior age group by lifting 30kg. Meanwhile AB Michelle Brennan made it a hat-trick for the ladies with a 40kg lift.

The women's achievement was made all the more impressive by the fact that none of them had much previous lifting experience.

Next it was the men's turn in the bench press and AB Andy Burn kept the momentum going with a 100kg lift in the 67.5kg category – another RN record for a junior lifter.

Although the sailor's achievements were impressive, it was left to strongman Neil to demonstrate how a professional does it. Giving an exhibition lift, he pressed an enormous 210kg in the 125kg class, leaving the spectators agog.

Even though the dead-lift event was new to many of the athletes taking part, all of them put in a sterling effort. Both LWtr Smith and AB Brennan stepped up to the mark and set RN records.

The competition was rounded-off by another exhibition from Mr Elliott who pulled an amazing 280kg in the dead-lift.

Picture: LA(Phot) Stu Hill, FRPU North

Cumberland's magnificent 7s

WHILE Britain froze HMS Cumberland's rugby side headed to the greenest part of the UAE to take part in the Al Ain 7s Classic Competition.

Under coach CPO Dave Sibson, the frigate's team, the Fighting Sausages were drawn in a group with Dubai Harlequins and Dubai Wasps, beginning the tournament against the former.

The game started at a frantic pace with Cumberland settling in early to the quicker paced game and scored no fewer than three tries in quick succession.

The second half began with Harlequins scoring first with a good breakaway try, however this was answered with a further two tries from Cumberland to make the final score 31-7.

Next up the Wasps, whose team included former Samoa and London Wasps prop Trevor Leota; heavier than he was at his prime the ex-international bounced off a few tackles and showed deft skills however the youth and power of the now-gelling Cumberland squad produced a good all round performance with the game ending 57-0.

This meant a top-place finish in the group, lining up a semi-final against Dubai Exiles as the contest moved into the knockout phase.

After a nervous start, Cumberland were 5-0 up at the break. Good pressure ended with a score for AB(CIS) Taff Hughes.

Nerves now settled, the second half saw the experience of Cumberland's Navy Squad members ET(ME) Sleeman and LS Nial Copeland come to the fore as the scores came thick and fast, zeroing the Exiles whilst amassing 24 points.

To the main pitch and the Classic Cup Final against the Dubai Hurricanes, a very well drilled and young side used to the weather and conditions

A ten-minute first half brought a brace for Cumberland one each



● S/Lt Josh Gorst breaks away from the Dubai Harlequins in the opening round of the Al Ain 7s

Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen, FRPU East

for Copeland and ET(ME) Ryan Lovett without reply from the Hurricanes, but they were far from done.

Two unanswered tries in the second period levelled the game at 14-14 and the tension rose.

Great work and inter-passing between ETME 'Gail' Porter, PO (AWT) 'Taff' Newall, S/Lt Josh Gorst and ET(ME) 'Lily' Allan saw Lovett score the winner in the corner – and hence win the tournament; Lovett was also named player of the tournament award.

This was not the only representation from Cumberland in the contest. Praise is due to the Cumberland Social side which struggled in the early exchanges but persevered to reach the bowl final where Trevor Leota's Dubai Wasps proved too strong.

Back in the UK, 2010 closed with RNRU seniority looking to the Inter-Service championship. There was an abundance of rugby success that posed selection headaches for the Senior XV coaches to ponder before the first fixture away to Oxford University on February 2.

The successful U23 team completed a hard-fought victory

the Corps' right wing along with the eagerly-anticipated duel between young loosehead Mne Josh Terry propping against Naval Air Command's experienced John Court, who was returning from a lengthy lay-off.

None disappointed and although current Navy loosehead Kyle Mason made an impact when coming off the bench, he knows that the current crop of young props like Terry, Tom Blackburn and Kye Beazley are developing into real contenders for Senior representative honours.

With Navy and Combined Services lock forward Marsh Cormack missing the Command final, U23 captain Mne Dennis Scotthorne took the opportunity to enhance his growing reputation with a very effective partnership with Stu McLaren in the Royal Marines' second row.

Their strong lineout and work in the loose ensured that the Corps spent most of the game on the front foot. This in turn allowed one of Naval Air Command's U23 backs, Aaron Hunt, to demonstrate that his defence has improved and could prove to be the physical presence that the Navy has looked for either in midfield or on the wings.

The marines ran out victors on the night and are the 2010 Inter Command (Inverdale Cup) Champions.

Finally – and coming full circle – RNRU's success was completed in Dubai where England 7s and Navy flanker Greg Barden contributed to England's tournament success.

Not to be outdone on the international front, the Navy women saw 'Charlie' Lewis selected for Scotland against Spain.

With such a number of players obviously in good form it is hoped that 2011 will see RN rugby continue to produce exciting and winning rugby on the field as it seeks to defend the Senior Inter-Service title and look to build on the very promising performance by the women's team.

Chance to sail in Scotland

THERE'S the chance to sail a yacht around the stunning waters of western Scotland through the spring and summer.

Joint Service Sailing Exercise Scotwest 2011 allows personnel from all three Forces to gain experience, training and qualifications in a Contessa 38 yacht, HMSTC Gawaine.

The yacht's based in Faslane and it is from there that the exercise, run over 13 legs each of a week's duration, begins on May 30 and ends on August 28.

The first and last legs are 'delivery trips'.

In between, Gawaine will spend the bulk of her time between Ardfern Yacht Centre on Loch Craignish and Kyle of Lochalsh – regarded as one of the finest sailing areas in Europe.

The yacht will be used to provide training to RYA standards from 'competent crew' to 'yachtmaster offshore'.

Scotwest runs every year; in 2010 74 personnel took advantage of Gawaine – 37 gained yachting experience, ten achieved day skipper qualifications and 27 received a 'competent crew' certificate.

There's more info in DIN 2011DIN07-013, or contact PO Stephen Smith, Clyde Sailing Centre Manager, on 93255 3519.

Beware the deadly shins

THE RN ladies triumphed over Weymouth in their third representative match of the 2010-11 football season.

Despite dominating the game – and playing some first-class footie – the women missed a host of chances... until a fluke four minutes from time sealed a 1-0 win.

Albion's CPO Becky Brown met a cross from PO(PT) Lisa Farthing. The Weymouth keeper flung herself across the goal to stop the ball, but fortunately for Brown, it came off her shin and went unintentionally in the opposite direction and into the goal.

This was by far the ladies' best performance of the season with some great individual performances by a number of players old and new – and just the boost the team needed.

Next month



Plain talking - 3 Commando Brigade's final workout before returning to Helmand



Last man in Basra - the only British serviceman in Iraq's second city



Second-generation wizardry - inside the Merlin Mk2

Plus

The long walk - farewell parades for Ark Royal, Chatham and 800 NAS



SPORT



● The ever-reliable PO Micky Warriner blocks a strike from the RAF's Rob Machin in the RN's 9-4 drubbing of the airmen as the Senior Service took the indoor title

Magnificent Micky keeps Army at bay

THE Navy men lifted the Inter-Services indoor hockey title after two thrilling encounters with the Army and RAF.

The team took to the 'pitch' against the latter with the airmen already a match down; they lost 2-0 in the opener against the Army, writes *Lt Cdr Alan Walker, RNHA.*

That opener probably took a fair bit out of RAF legs because before the first ten minutes were up, the Navy had put four goals past the RAF keeper for no reply courtesy of a brace from Mark Dixon and a strike apiece from Danny Makaruk and Mark Stanton.

By now the RN were stroking it about full of confidence, wondering if and when the RAF were going to turn up.

With six minutes of the half remaining the RAF came out with all guns blazing. A fierce shot hit the RN post, then another strike produced a great save from Warriner in the Navy goal. The RN coach sensed that the besieged were coming out to fight and called time out.

From the restart, the Senior Service reasserted themselves when superb work by Lee Milton - the RN U23 skipper in another incarnation - won a corner after a splendid tussle with the RAF's non-sense Sagrott; it was well saved by the RAF keeper.

The time-out appeared to have nipped the RAF revival in the bud as the clock ticked down the final three minutes but with around 60 seconds left, the Air Force's Ben Lowe pulled one back.

With just 20 seconds on the clock, the airmen had halved the deficit to add an element of respectability to a scoreline which

did not reflect the overwhelming balance of play to the Navy

Sailor beware: if they can score two in a minute, they might do it again...

The second period began as the first ended; an unstoppable shot from the Light Blues and it was 4-3 to the RN.

This was the critical point of the match; if the RAF had equalised they might have dragged their weary legs to score more.

As it was the Navy restored their two goal lead with 16 minutes left. Two minutes later it was 6-3 courtesy of a Makaruk strike from a corner won by Stanton.

The latter sealed his hat-trick with nine minutes left, before two more strikes - Dixon also completing a hat-trick, while Tim Lomas stuffed the ball past the despairing keeper; the RN had an unassailable 9-3 lead.

The Navy clearly thought they had done enough with two minutes left and let the end go a bit.

The ever-dangerous Sagrott had the final, defiant word for the Air Force, slotting past Warriner to close out the game at 9-4 to the Senior Service.

The deciding clash with the Army began quietly enough until, out of the blue, Adam Duke ran through from the back to lift the ball over the keeper to give the Navy a 1-0 lead.

Three minutes later the soldiers were on level terms when the outstanding Shane Vincent put away the Army's first corner.

Two Navy corners in rapid succession brought brilliant saves from Dan Cattermole in the Army goal.

As usual RN skipper Stanton was on fire and won a corner which Makaruk dispatched in the usual style for a 2-1 advantage.

It was soon 3-1 courtesy of a

first goal in RN colours for Richard Jenkin. He trebled his tally before the break in a blistering seven-minute spell which gave the Navy a 5-1 lead over the soldiers at half-time.

The final 20 minutes of the championships began with lots of RN pressure on the Army goal which eventually ended with Jenkin slamming a short corner into the roof for his fourth.

The soldiers struck back through Vincent - 6-2 to the RN; no-one knew it yet but this game was only just getting going.

A short corner certain goal was stopped on the line by Duke. Unfortunately he got a bobble and another short corner, leading to a penalty stroke which Vincent put in the roof again for his hat-trick.

The Army now had their tails up and won three short corners on the trot.

All were saved by the unbelievable Warriner, before a Navy break-out produced a near miss from Jenkin up the other end.

In return, the troops forced another short corner; inevitably the bright young Vincent roofed again - 6-4 to the Navy.

There was still time for Vincent to score his fifth and pull the Army back to within a goal of the sailors.

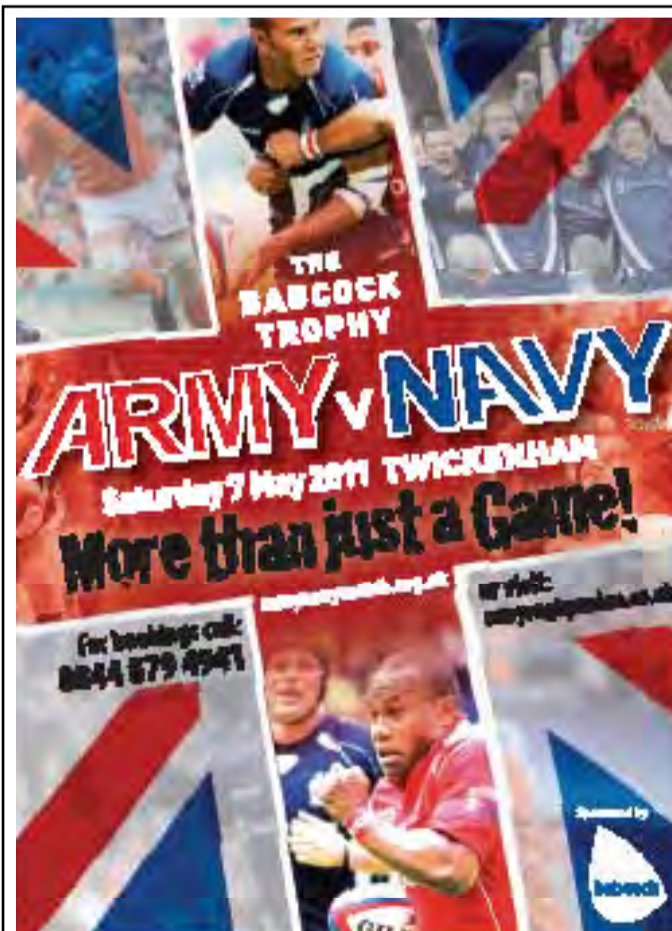
The next goal was going to be crucial: Jenkin knew it more than most as he tried a shot - and missed.

Quick as a flash he regained possession and aided by a great advantage from the umpire made no mistake in putting the ball past Cattermole on the deck in the Army goal for 7-5 to the RN.

With two minutes left, the Navy called a time-out: the need for cool heads was never so important.

Attack became the best form of defence for both teams. Micky Warriner was still keeping the Army out as the final whistle went - and the sailors were crowned Inter-Services indoor champions for 2010.

Sadly the ladies were unable to match the men's achievements; they suffered heavy defeats at the hands of both the RAF (6-2) and Army (5-0). The soldiers lifted the ladies' cup after a tight victory over the Air Force.



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