



NAVY NEWS

June 2024

A lone submariner leans on the fin, taking in the sunset during a pause in trials as the Royal Navy's newest Astute-class submarine, HMS Anson, works her way to full operations
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KILLER INSTINCT

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WILDCAT AND MOUSE

THE HUNT IS ON IN THE NORWEGIAN FJORDS FOR 815 NAVAL AIR SQUADRON

FLYING above the maze of waterways that make up the Norwegian fjords, a Wildcat helicopter of 815 Naval Air Squadron is searching for its target.

On the water, Royal Navy P2000 patrol vessels use their skills and expertise to relay information to the eyes in the sky.

Tucked away and blending into the surrounding landscapes are Norwegian Skjold-class corvettes. Capable of 60 knots, the Skjolds are fast and stealthy and their crew know the area like the back of their hand.

These elements add up to the ultimate game of cat and mouse in waters off Bergen.

Exercise Tamber Shield gave the Royal Navy's Wildcat maritime attack helicopter the chance to demonstrate their ability to hunt down and engage enemy forces.

The Yeovilton-based squadron trained with four P2000s, two Norwegian corvettes and frigate HNoMS Roald Amundsen off Bergen, in one of the world's most challenging environments.

Alongside the P2000s, the Wildcats were tasked with finding and targeting the Skjold-class corvettes amongst the many inlets and narrow waterways of the fjords.

In one particular scenario, HMS Biter and HMS Exploit, part of the Royal Navy's Coastal Forces Squadron, headed north from Bergen, while fellow P2000s HMS Trumpeter and HMS Blazer headed south to use their skills and expertise to locate the Norwegian vessels before relaying that information to 815 NAS who were charged with making simulated attacks with their Martlet missile system.

Lieutenant Dave Guest, a pilot on 815 NAS, said:

"Being on this exercise is all about refining those tactics with our partner nations in order to improve them in what is a very challenging environment.

"Tactics we use are largely searching and tracking down those hard to find vessels, so smaller vessels that blend in quite well with scenery and operation in unfamiliar ways compared to us. It's all about diversifying our skillset in a challenging environment with a very busy airspace at times."

Another scenario saw the P2000s act as the target – this time the Wildcats had to use all their knowledge and expertise to locate, engage and "destroy" the vessels which are only 20m in length and often are able to hide from some radars.

"P2000s are quite tricky to find, they blend in well with other vessels and are nimble and manoeuvrable," Lt Guest added.

"There is also a lot to hide behind so it makes finding them quite tricky. They also don't show up that well on some radar systems as they have quite a small cross section. We have to alter our ways to find them."

Aircrew from 815 NAS were more than up for the challenge, employing newly developed tactics to fend off the fast attack craft threat.

Lieutenant Maxwell Randles-Hall, an 815 NAS Observer, said: "The Norwegian Fjords present a challenging and unforgiving operating area for aircraft.

"As a result, Wildcat crews must effectively employ every sensor and system to succeed in their mission and evade attack.

"The topography gifts a significant advantage to the opposition forces, played by the P2000s and



Skjolds, so crews must think extremely carefully about their every move, working as a team to methodically neutralise targets.”

Commander James Woods, Commanding Officer of 815 NAS, added: “Exercise Tamber Shield provides us with an excellent opportunity to hone our warfighting capability so that we remain ready to strike: 24 hours a day, 365 days a year across the globe.

“The west coast of Norway provides the perfect environment in which to sharpen the Wildcat’s already formidable teeth; combining geography with a highly capable partner to train with and against.

“In so doing, we continue to improve interoperability with our key NATO ally and JEF partner nation.”

The freezing conditions of Norway were not just a

good learning experience for the pilots and observers of the Wildcat helicopters.

It also set challenges for the squadron’s engineers. Leading Hand Clinton Townsend said: “The engineers are vital for the aircrew to fly the aircraft, if something goes wrong or they report a fault we will work through the night to get the aircraft serviceable. It can be hard work.

“The environment plays a lot in the maintenance needed. If we’re flying 500m over the sea then salt water has an effect on the aircraft and it will require more maintenance and husbandry.”

Operating as part of the Joint Expeditionary Force – a group of like-minded nations led by the UK – Exercise Tamber Shield provides extremely valuable training for the crews of the P2000s.

Made up of nations including the UK, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Sweden, the JEF reacts to events in northern Europe’s waters, ready to respond to crises and world events.

Lieutenant Sophie Tulloch, HMS Biter’s Commanding Officer, said: “We worked alongside HMS Exploit and a Wildcat helicopter to locate and destroy two of the Skjold Corvette-class ships which are hiding in a fjord. “We would make our way slowly up the fjord in order to identify them and send off their location to the Wildcat, so it can engage.

“A challenge from the exercise was for HMS Biter to safely navigate up the fjord. Due to the topography we are able to get quite close to the shoreline and remain in very deep water.”

She added: “The Skjolds are made to navigate within the fjords, they are very fast and have a top speed of 60 knots, whereas our top speed is 22 knots, so it is about having to plan around that and come up with a plan between HMS Biter, HMS Exploit and the Wildcat.

“There is a huge benefit to working with a Wildcat. On board HMS Biter we mainly rely on our lookouts, the capability the Wildcat brings increases the opportunity and possibility of locating the Skjolds.

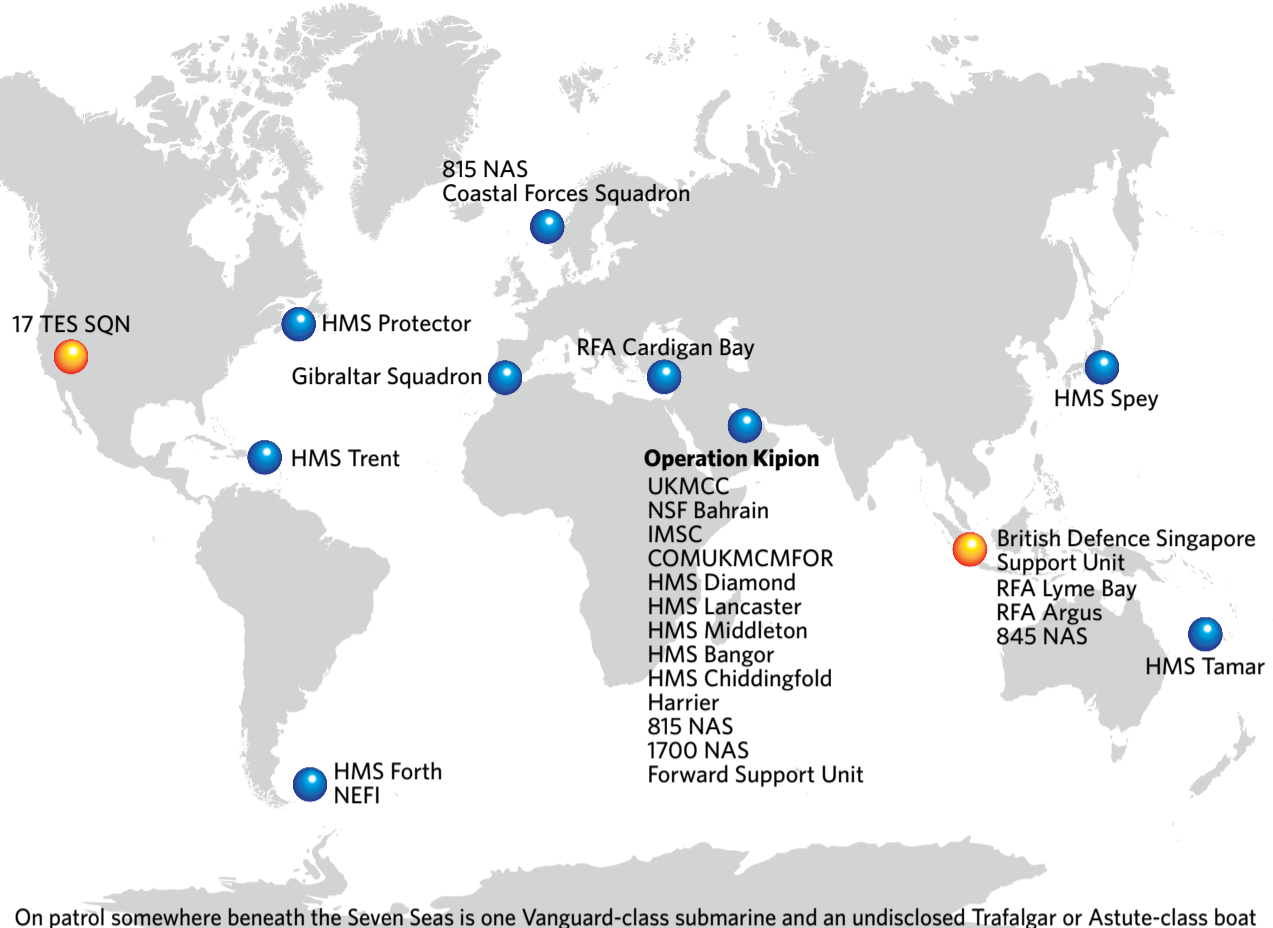
“They are very hard to spot, they are sneaky and camouflaged. For us it is a very much a real-life scenario in terms of operating in a new area, out of our comfort zone, just with the training that we have. “It is a very small team and we rely on the capabilities of our people to come up with dynamic solutions to

Training or on patrol around the UK

HMS Cattistock 824 NAS
 HMS Hurworth 825 NAS
 HMS Iron Duke 845 NAS
 HMS Severn 846 NAS
 HMS Tyne 847 NAS
 Coastal Forces Squadron RFA Tiderace
 XV Patrick Blackett RFA Stirling Castle
 Project Wilton RFA Proteus
 814 NAS DTXG
 815 NAS
 820 NAS



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



GLOBAL | MODERN | READY

Well that's half of 2024 done already. And the pace isn't slackening.

HMS Diamond remains in the Red Sea area protecting shipping – and remains in the danger zone. The effectiveness of Sea Viper was again proven, this time intercepting an incoming ballistic missile, the fastest target a Royal Navy warship has ever destroyed (see page 6).

HMS Anson is now in the operational mix having completed all her trials and training. The fifth Astute-class hunter killer crossed the pond to spend several months in the Americas working-up (see pages 20-1).

And on the hunt for boats like Anson, **HMS Portland** headed to the Greenland-Iceland-UK Gap high up in the North Atlantic to join NATO allies on the annual cold-water anti-submarine exercise, Dynamic Mongoose (see page 5).

A clutch of P2000 fast patrol boats should be in the eastern Baltic by the time you read this, ready to play their part in NATO's largest naval exercise in the region, Baltops (see page 22).

For the second consecutive year **815 Naval Air Squadron** and P2000s of the Coastal Forces Squadron converged on the waters and skies around Bergen in Norway to practise fast boat tactics/Martlet missile drills (see pages 2-3).

Remaining in Scandinavia, **45 Commando** have continued their training to remain at the tip of the spear of Royal Marine ops, this time with Swedish forces to test the latter's defences protecting the key port city of Gothenburg (see pages 16-17).

Closer to home, their **Commando Helicopter Force** air support could be found over Dartmoor early last month assisting the Army's huge outdoor challenge for the region's youth, Ten Tors, which, for once, was blessed with fine weather (and hence fine imagery too, see page 11).

The **RN Gibraltar Squadron** has been busy at home (hosting/training RNR personnel around the Rock) and abroad, making the round trip to Portugal for a short spell of training with the host nation's navy (see page 34).

Patrol ship **HMS Tamar** made a very long French connection (sorry) to take on replenishment of ammo in New Caledonia which, despite the name, is an overseas territory of La République. Thanks to Anglo-French interoperabilité, hundreds of rounds for the OPV's guns were delivered to stock-up the RN's vessels magazine (see page 7).

HMS Dragon now calls Wrexham her second home, formally tied with the Welsh town following a ceremony in Portsmouth (see page 19). Her former affiliate Cardiff will enjoy a long, rich association with her namesake Type 26 frigate when crew start joining.)

Portsmouth was also the location for the ceremony ushering in **HMS St Albans'** 'second life'. The upgraded frigate was rededicated in the presence of friends, family and VIPs, led by Sponsor Lady Essenhigh (see page 13).

Veteran minehunter **HMS Cattistock** made the short journey from her home base of Portsmouth to Poole, where she received the Freedom of the Borough (her namesake hunt/village is in Dorset, making Poole the closest port). See page 9.

Comprehensive training ensures RN warships navigate and negotiate challenging waters safely – training now bolstered by the introduction of £27m 3D/Virtual Reality bridge simulators at **BRNC, Faslane** and **HMS Collingwood** (see pages 14-15).

Our next issue will focus sharply on **D-Day 80th anniversary** events. Details of the latest plans can be found on page 30, while **HMS Glasgow's** crew have already toured Normandy, visiting sites associated with the wartime cruiser of the same name (see page 24).

And finally, we bid farewell to Fleet Air Arm legend **Commander Nigel 'Sharkey' Ward**, a man synonymous with the Falklands and the Sea Harrier, and a passionate advocate of naval aviation, who has died aged 80 (see page 13).

NEW SHIPS FOR ROYAL MARINES OPERATIONS

THE Royal Navy will have up to six new state-of-the-art amphibious ships to bring the punch of the Royal Marines Commandos ashore wherever in the world they are needed.

The new Multi Role Support Ships (MRSS) will replace HMS Albion and HMS Bulwark, the Royal Navy's current amphibious flagships which will remain in service until 2033/2034.

The MRSS will also take the place of the three Bay-class amphibious support vessel, RFAs Lyme Bay, Mounts Bay and Cardigan Bay and support ship RFA Argus.

MRSS will be extremely versatile warships, able to deploy on a wider variety of operations, and designed to carry vehicles, aircraft, insertion craft and a broad range of uncrewed systems for complicated missions. They will also be able to act as primary casualty receiving ships, providing urgent medical care to British forces wherever they are deployed.

The MOD has entered the first, or concept, phase of the MRSS Programme and will work with industry as part of early market engagement ahead of developing the vessel design.

MRSS Programme Director, Commander Alex Allen said: "As the son of a Royal Marine who fought in the Falklands War, I recognise the importance of this capability to a global navy.

"But these ships must be ready to meet a future threat where they will be required to exploit new technology and change roles quickly.

"Adaptability and flexibility will be central to the Multi Role Support Ship design, as will interoperability with our NATO allies.

"This announcement is a significant step in the programme bringing these ships into service and modernising the Royal Navy's littoral strike capability."

The First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Ben Key, said: "I am delighted that the Secretary of State has cemented the future of our Royal Marines by committing to this new class of up to six amphibious vessels.

"These will be the most capable amphibious warships the nation has ever owned, designed to be fully interchangeable with our closest allies in Europe, and in NATO."

In a host of announcements made by Defence Secretary Grant Shapps at the First Sea Lord's Sea Power Conference 2024 in London, it was also stated that two stalwart Type 23 frigates will be retired.

HMS Argyll has been sold to BAE Systems and will be used within the UK's shipbuilding sector, supporting apprentice training in line with the government's agenda on skills and shipbuilding capacity.

HMS Westminster will be decommissioned, but both ships depart as the next generation of frigates – the Type 26 and 31 – continue to be built.

The First Sea Lord said: "I pay tribute to the sterling service of the two Types 23 frigates that were announced for retirement today – collectively they have deployed worldwide, conducted dozens of live operations, and have



HMS Albion will stay in service

far surpassed their expected service life.

"While always sad to pay off such fine warships, their decommissioning marks the next stage of our reinvestment in new, more modern frigates."

At the Sea Power Conference at Lancaster House in London, the First Sea Lord and historian and Royal Navy Reserve honorary captain, Dan Snow, held a question and answer session, in which a wide range of relevant topics were discussed.

During the conversation, the pair chatted about the evolution of naval warfare, strategy in the digital age – and how the Royal Navy continues to adapt to new challenges, including the recent procurement of RFA Proteus – which was bought to monitor underwater infrastructure in areas of UK sovereign interest.

They also spoke about the successful deployment of HMS Diamond in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and looked forward to 2025 when the Royal Navy intends to once again sail a Carrier Strike Group into the Indo-Pacific.

On Diamond, the First Sea Lord said: "It's been fascinating to see just how well she has performed. It's reassuring and brilliant.

"It's combat intensity we've not experienced as a navy since 1982. She has performed really well and it's validated how we think about our training



First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Ben Key

and how we think about our weapons systems. We've also learnt a lot and are really encouraged by how the partnership with industry has moved quickly from a peacetime perspective into a combat, rapid response where we can identify where we can improve system performance, turn it around very quickly.

"We've also shared lessons with our European colleagues and we've got more to do.

"It's reaffirmed some of the old doctrinal truths and it's fascinating to see an organisation like the Houthis who have no maritime culture, no navy to speak of, effectively trying to seek sea control and denial and how we battle against it to give confidence back to shipping to use the Red Sea."



ON THE HUNT

ROYAL Navy submarine hunters joined forces with allies in Norway to test their individual and collective skills against threats on and beneath the waves.

Frigate HMS Portland, tanker RFA Tidesurge and Merlin helicopters from 814 Naval Air Squadron were joined by submarines, warships and aircraft from ten nations for Exercise Dynamic Mongoose.

Held in the harsh icy waters between Norway and Iceland, it is designed to prepare NATO countries for any type of threat from the seabed to space, giving



them the chance to adapt and prepare against hostile nations.

It is also an opportunity to train submarine crews from multiple countries to evade and respond from deep below the surface, while simultaneously training ships and aircraft to detect submarines and address threats below the waves.

Units from the UK worked with personnel from Canada, Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United States.

Type 23 frigate HMS Portland is one of the Royal Navy's experts in anti-submarine warfare and she was tasked with helping to defend against the underwater threat.

Her Commanding Officer, Commander Mat Court, said: "As a key player in the multi-national exercise Dynamic Mongoose 24, the UK demonstrates its unwavering dedication to upholding maritime security through close collaboration with our NATO partners.

"Our involvement highlights the UK's capability to operate seamlessly with allied forces, ensuring that we remain at the forefront of anti-submarine warfare and contribute effectively to the collective defence of the North Atlantic region.

"HMS Portland's participation underscores our commitment to maintaining a robust and agile force,

capable of responding to a wide range of threats and challenges in partnership with our allies."

Dynamic Mongoose included submarines from the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United States as well as aircraft from Canada, Germany, Norway, the UK and the US.

Units were also joined by ships of Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1) which typically patrols the north commanded by Spanish Navy Rear Admiral Joaquin Ruiz Escagedo aboard flagship ESPS Almirante Juan de Borbón.

It was also the first time Sweden has taken part in the wargames.

Commander Submarines NATO US Navy Rear Admiral Thomas Wall said: "We are excited to incorporate the stealth of one of Sweden's advanced, silent Gotland-class submarines into Dynamic Mongoose this year.

"We've been collaborating with the Swedish Navy for many years so the interoperability is already there.

"They bring the experience of a submarine crew well versed in shallow water operations so to have them in our Allied maritime force composition firmly enhances our collective defence in the region."

He added: "The crew of every single submarine, ship, and aircraft participating in this exercise bring a unique perspective and valuable capability to the table. I continue to be proud of the work they have done and now it's time to put it all into practice."



DIAMOND'S DYNAMITE

Never has a British ship, aircraft or otherwise engaged a target travelling so fast as the ballistic missile shot down by HMS Diamond in the Gulf of Aden.

The extremely well-drilled and battle-hardened sailors from Diamond once again wielded the Type 45 destroyer's Sea Viper missile system, shooting down an anti-ship ballistic missile launched by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen, which was travelling faster than the speed of sound towards shipping in the region.

The Portsmouth-based destroyer is currently deployed in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden to deter Houthi attacks, ensure freedom of navigation, and make international waters safer and more secure for merchant vessels.

This deployment is part of the UK's broader response to Houthi attacks, which has also included intercepting weapon-smuggling to Yemen, imposing sanctions on Houthi members and conducting proportionate and targeted strikes against Houthi military targets.

This latest engagement – also the first ballistic target ever shot down by the UK – adds to three separate attacks in which nine drones were downed by the destroyer in the first half of her deployment in December and January.

HMS Richmond took over from Diamond during a period of maintenance – the frigate used her Sea Ceptor missiles to shoot down two drones during her patrols, before Diamond returned to the front line in March.

Little more than a month later, Diamond shot down the ballistic missile – having just finished operating with the USS Eisenhower carrier strike group, which was working to keep the critical Bab al-Mendab straits open and flowing with trade.

Commander Peter Evans, the ship's Commanding Officer, explained the key to winning the engagement with the ballistic missile was "a lot of drilling and a lot of vigilance".

"Because of the speed and trajectory of ballistic targets, there are only a few seconds available to select the target, configure the system and then get missiles away," Cdr Evans explains.

The ship's company has been on an unrelenting, constant state of alert. To ensure they would not miss a beat

when the time came, sailors went through their procedures 160 times on their latest patrol alone, "so that when the real thing happened there was no delay and there were no errors," said Cdr Evans.

This rapid response – which the crew have nicknamed 'the fireball' – was developed to ensure they could react as fast as possible.

"Everyone on the ship has a part to play in an engagement, regardless of branch, rank or rate – you're all in it together on a ship," said Cdr Evans.

"But particular mention should go to Lieutenant Commander Matt Johnson, whose days of research allowed us to come up with our fireball tactics and whose relentless practicing in the operations room gave us the edge."

He added: "The problem is, there is no time to take in the tactical picture and no time to reach for anti-flash (protective clothing), so the ship is kept at an incredibly high state of readiness at all times."

"The concentration required is extraordinary and it can be tiring, especially in the heat of the middle-eastern summer."

"When the moment came, the ship's company were fantastic – calm, collected and professional – which meant we were able to defeat the target and, more importantly, reassure nearby merchant ships."

Defence Secretary Grant Shapps said: "I want to thank the brave crew of HMS Diamond for her vital role in saving innocent lives and protecting international shipping from illegal Houthi attacks."

"The UK continues to be at the forefront of the international response to the Iranian-backed Houthis' dangerous attacks on commercial vessels, which have claimed the lives of international mariners."

After shooting down the missile, HMS Diamond stopped for maintenance before heading back to sea to carry out counter-narcotics boardings with Combined Task Force 150 – a multinational task group fighting illegal activity in the Gulf.

The destroyer is also scheduled to take part in Exercise Khunjar Hadd – which translates as Sharp Dagger – and is a regular fixture on the Middle East naval calendar, bringing together allies in the region.



A Sea Viper missile launched from HMS Diamond's silos Image by: LPhot Chris Sellars



Mike Zarycki, who is the master of Maersk Yorktown, captures HMS Diamond soon after the Sea Viper missile is launched



HMS Diamond (right) conducting a replenishment at sea (RAS) with USNS Kanawha - a welcome top up of supplies Image by: LPhot Chris Sellars



Commanding Officer, Commander Peter Evans and Sub Lt James looking at the missile impact smoke in the sky Image by: LPhot Chris Sellars



HMS Diamond on patrol Image by: LPhot Chris Sellars

AMMO AMASS

LIBERTÉ, égalité, fraternité.

Also *interopérabilité* and perhaps *deliveré*...

Thanks to some long-distance Anglo-French naval cooperation the guns of HMS Tamar are bristling with ammo once again.

For the first time the Royal Navy made use of the supply chain supporting its French counterpart to deliver ammunition to one of its patrol ships in the Pacific.

After considerable planning and a 14,000-mile journey, several thousand rounds of ammunition were handed over to HMS Tamar when the ship sailed into the French overseas territory of New Caledonia – half way between Fiji and Australia's Gold Coast.

Unlike, say, the Caribbean, Med or South Atlantic there's no UK territory in the South Pacific region which can serve as a hub to support front-line warship operations.

Regular supplies – food, fuel and spare parts – can be obtained locally, or shipped out by air freight... but that's not the case with ammunition; given safety and security issues, you cannot simply hand it over to international cargo firms.

And although Tamar hasn't fired her guns in anger, crew conduct regular training serials to maintain skills/marksmanship/routines... which denudes ammo stocks.

As well as the main 30mm gun, the ship is equipped with general purpose and heavy machine-guns as well as SA80 and small arms as personal weapons.

Thanks to the Anglo-French naval relationship and connections between London and Paris, the resupply was planned months in advance so that when Tamar arrived in New Caledonia after a few weeks' patrol around Fiji and Tonga, a comprehensive supply of ammunition was waiting in a container for the logistics team to load aboard.

With the ship coming up to the third anniversary of leaving Portsmouth, Tamar's Commanding Officer Commander



Tom Gell says "the foundation of this success story is a comprehensive support structure" which has allowed his ship – and HMS Spey operating in similar waters – to forge "ever-closer bonds with partner nations in the region".

He continued: "Getting munitions across the globe from the UK is a significant endeavour and having the ability to take ammunition in theatre is a massive enabler which has only been made possible as a result of our strong relationship with the French and the Marine Nationale.

"Although this move delivered a relatively small amount of munitions as proof of concept, it highlights greater potential for future sustainment options.

"The support we have received in New Caledonia from our French partners has been absolutely outstanding."

This was Tamar's first time calling on the French island during her long-term patrol of the Indo-Pacific region.

She was welcomed into the capital Nouméa by a French piper, which set the tone for the (entente) cordial nine-day visit, largely focused on diplomacy and interaction/cooperation with the French authorities, which also extended to providing the River-class ship with a spot of maintenance after several weeks of intensive patrolling.

Assisted by local authorities and an embarked boarding team of Royal New Zealand Navy personnel, Tamar's crew inspected 23 vessels to ensure they were abiding by Fiji's fishing regulations.

They found numerous discrepancies – from the number of hooks on the line, to trawlers exceeding quotas, thus risking the sustainability of their fishing practices.

While Tamar didn't encounter any major breaches, her efforts were hailed by islanders as an important ally in the fight against illegal fishing practices which cost small Pacific nations millions of pounds a year.

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Minehunter HMS Cattistock granted freedom honour

Poole parade



SAILORS and Royal Marines have paraded through the streets of Poole in Dorset, in celebration of the Royal Navy's HMS Cattistock being granted the freedom of the Borough of Poole.

More than 70 service personnel from HMS Cattistock and The Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines Plymouth, exercised their freedom by marching around the streets of Poole with 'Drums Beating, Bayonets Fixed and Colours Flying'.

Being awarded the Freedom of a Town or City is the highest honour that can be bestowed upon one of His Majesty's ships or a formed military unit, by a civic authority and is rarely given.

A Hunt-class minehunter, HMS Cattistock is affiliated to the town of Poole and the village of Cattistock, near Dorchester, and was berthed alongside Poole Quay where The Mayor of Poole, Councillor Jo Clements presented the ship's Casket Scroll.

Following the presentation the entire

ship's company, led by the Royal Marines band marched a circular route through the town, parading along The Quay past HMS Cattistock, up the high street and back to the departure point.

Lieutenant Commander Jonny Campbell, the Commanding Officer, said: "The affiliation between HMS Cattistock and the people of Poole and village of Cattistock is long established and remains an important link."

"In 1944 an earlier ship of the same name protected minesweepers in the days and hours before D-Day at Normandy, and now it is us who hunt and clear mines to protect our country.

"We have always been warmly welcomed by Poole and hugely enjoy visiting to see our friends including cadets, schools and the maritime community.

"I am really pleased that the ship can visit again and maintain the link between the British people and the Royal Navy. We cannot wait to return to our favourite port."

Cllr Jo Clements added: "The Royal Navy has always had a proud history of service in Poole and in 2010 the former Borough of Poole adopted HMS Cattistock as their

ship and have enjoyed a close working relationship over the last decade.

"The officers and crew have regularly supported Poole's Annual Service of Remembrance as well as forging strong links with the town's uniformed youth and veteran groups.

"When operationally possible the ship's company have also hosted visits from the Poole Sea Cadets, the RNLI Lifeboat volunteers and local veteran associations, demonstrating their commitment to fully engage with the community and residents of Poole.

"I am delighted that Poole Charter Trustees formally admitted the officers and crew of HMS Cattistock the Freedom of the Town of Poole, the first ship to be granted this honour."

The ship's homeport is Portsmouth, where she conducts her operations around the UK and deploys to clear the oceans of hidden dangers.

The third Royal Navy Ship to bear the name, she was launched in 1981 and commissioned in March 1982, the third of her class.

Pictures: LPhot Barry Swainsbury



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ON HAND AT TEN TORS



Pictures: POPhot Lee Blease

HERE'S something you don't see very often. Merlins in clear skies over Dartmoor.

For once, the annual challenge laid down before the nation's youth – to navigate their way around the bleak beauty of the national park – was not plagued by bad weather which has so often in the past dogged the Ten Tors.

Those foul conditions in previous years have frequently demanded the intervention of Commando Helicopter Force to assist.

This year, the Merlins were on hand again – it's an extremely useful training exercise for the wings of the Royal Marines – but without the need to perform dramatic rescues as the weekend was blessed with fine weather... permitting some fine pictures of Merlins in the field.

Tracing its history back to the late 1950s, the event has grown into one of

the largest outdoor activities in the UK.

Nearly 3,000 young people from all backgrounds and of all abilities responded to the challenge set by the British Army which runs the Ten Tors (officially Exercise Wyvern Tor).

Most – some 2,400 young people aged 14 and 19, drawn from schools, colleges and youth groups/organisations across the South West – converge on Okehampton to take on the two-day challenge.

Formed into teams of six, they tackle routes of 35, 45 or 55 miles (depending on their age), navigating their way around ten checkpoints or tors, hence the event's title, on the northern half of Dartmoor within two days.

In addition, around 400 youngsters with physical or educational needs – including a sizeable number of wheelchair users – take part in the shorter Jubilee Challenge

over courses up to 15 miles long.

All must complete their chosen routes, taking all they need to sustain them – food, fuel, tent, sleeping bag.

CHF are asked to help out with a myriad of tasks before and during the exercise – from delivering supplies and material to set up the check points, to standing by to evacuate casualties if necessary.

For the Yeovilton-base fliers and ground crew, Ten Tors is useful for training various skills: navigation over difficult terrain, low-flying, load lifting, transferring casualties from the battlefield, and generally operating in austere conditions far from a base.

The latter requires experts from the MAOT (Mobile Air Operations Team) to provide rudimentary facilities (not least food and fuel) in the wilds, while this year the helicopters themselves were provided by 846 Naval Air Squadron.



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Goodnight, 'Mr Sea Harrier'

INSPIRING. Dynamic. Outstanding. Determined. Brave. Passionate. Combative.

All could be ascribed to arguably the Navy's most famous aviator of the post-war era, Commander Nigel 'Sharkey' Ward who has died aged 80.

His name is inseparable both with the Sea Harrier and the battle for the skies of the Falklands 42 years ago, when the men he led – a latter-day 'few' – became the scourge of Argentine aviators.

Ward was the senior Harrier pilot deployed to the South Atlantic where the jet carved its name in aviation history in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds.

Convinced of the abilities of both his machine and the men who flew and maintained them, he fought two battles: one against naysayers in Whitehall and senior military figures, the other against Argentine aviators.

On the long journey to the Falklands he impressed upon the media that in the hands of his pilots, the Sea Harrier had a distinct edge over its foe – countering a narrative that, outnumbered ten to one by their opponent, three out of four jump jet pilots would not return home.

His confidence was well placed. On its first day in combat, Ward's squadron – which lived up to the motto it 'borrowed' from Marshal Petain at Verdun: On les aura, We'll get 'em – downed two Argentine Mirages and a Canberra.

Despite being widely hailed in the media and compared with legendary fighter pilots from the two World Wars, Sharkey Ward was not an 'ace' – the definition requires five air-to-air 'kills' – but he certainly possessed their traits.

The air war had been raging three weeks when Ward downed his first enemy, a Pucara twin-prop ground-attack aircraft, destroyed the 'old-fashioned way': by cannon.

That same day, May 21, while again providing cover for amphibious forces landing at San Carlos Bay, Ward (one) and his wingman Steve Thomas (two) downed three Argentine Daggers with Sidewinder missiles in an engagement lasting barely 60 seconds.

The squadron commander's final victory of the conflict was a Hercules transporter brought down by a combination of Sidewinder and cannon on June 1.

He flew more than 60 sorties during Operation Corporate, by day and night, often in bad weather – winter had set in by the time the conflict ended.

Thanks to the skill of pilots and the unique abilities of the Sea Harrier,

the jets downed 20 Argentine aircraft without loss in dogfights (two Harriers were lost to flak, four to accidents) earning them the nickname 'La Muerta Negra', the Black Death.

Ward clashed with task force commander Admiral Sir Sandy Woodward and his staff whose orders, in the Harrier pilot's eyes, "were totally nonsensical".

Sharkey Ward ignored them – the right thing to do, in hindsight, as Admiral Woodward conceded. Had he not "we might have lost the war".

Instead, the Sea Harrier commander was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for both his leadership ("inspiring and dynamic") and his deeds in Falklands skies as "an outstanding, successful Sea Harrier pilot" in the words of his citation.

The son of an RAF officer, Nigel Ward joined the Royal Navy in 1962 and spent the first four years of his career as a warfare officer, before undertaking fast jet pilot training.

Upon completion in 1969, he first flew Sea Vixen fighters, then the legendary F4 Phantom, rising to senior pilot of 892 Naval Air Squadron.

When his time on Phantoms ended, he was assigned to the MOD as a staff officer responsible for developing the naval variant of Britain's famous 'jump jet'.

It began a near decade-long association with the aircraft – earning a second nickname: Mr Sea Harrier – first as he helped to develop it as a naval fighter, then commanding the unit charged with introducing it into service and, once it was, eventually was named commanding officer of 801 Naval Air Squadron.

After the Falklands, Ward remained in the Service as an adviser on aerial warfare at the MOD before leaving the Royal Navy in 1985.

In civvy street he tried his hand at maritime security, tourism, wrote a best-selling memoir, Sea Harrier Over the Falklands, before eventually settling in Grenada from where he continued to argue the case for naval air power with vigour.

Today's head of the Fleet Air Arm, Rear Admiral Anthony Rimington, said Commander Ward had left his mark on the history of naval aviation.

"As well as being an outstanding fighter pilot, Commander Nigel 'Sharkey' Ward was the strongest of advocates of carrier-based power – and took the opportunity to practise what he preached to demonstrative effect, both during his service in the Falklands War and afterwards," he added.



You (S)ain't seen nothin' yet...

THERE'S plenty of life left in the Fleet's youngest frigate – acknowledged as HMS St Albans was formally welcomed back into the Fleet.

After five years out of action, the last Type 23 frigate built for the Royal Navy is almost ready to resume front-line duties.

Friends, family, former crew and affiliates gathered in Portsmouth for the rededication of 'The Saint', marking the beginning of her 'second life'.

The ship became the latest Type 23 to undergo the major LIFEX (LIFE EXtension) overhaul to allow the class to serve into the mid-2030s in the case of the younger Dukes, such as St Albans, while maintaining an edge over any adversary.

Several weapons and sensors have been upgraded – notably the now-battle-proven Sea Ceptor anti-air missile system and Martlet anti-ship missiles for when The Saint goes to sea with a Wildcat helicopter.

In addition, all four diesel engines have been replaced, and some 350 structural enhancements carried out to strengthen the frigate.

The ship returned to sea in March, since when she's been conducting trials and training.

They were paused long enough for the rededication in the presence of ship's sponsor, Lady Essenhigh, who launched HMS St Albans in Scotstoun back in May 2000 and has followed the deeds of ship and ship's company ever since.

She was joined by around 160 friends and family of sailors, many of whom were invited aboard the new-look ship post-ceremony.

"Rededicating HMS St Albans is a significant milestone in our regeneration journey, as we transition from engineering project to warship," said Commanding Officer Commander Helen Coxon (pictured below welcoming the sponsor aboard).

"Regenerating a frigate is a challenging time, with complex trials on cutting-edge equipment. But it is the people and the support from their loved ones that is central to our success.

"It was fantastic that affiliates, friends and families of our ship's company have been able to join the celebrations."

AB Ryan Keogh, the youngest sailor aboard, added: "It's been great to have family and friends join us for the rededication ceremony, showing them where we live and work whilst we're at sea regenerating for operations."

'Symbols of freedom...'

TWO iconic Royal Navy aircraft are now on an 8,000-mile journey to become centrepieces of a new museum in the Falklands.

A retired Sea Harrier jump jet and Lynx helicopter are being transferred to the South Atlantic as islanders create an exhibition dedicated to the men and women who liberated the Falklands from Argentine rule in 1982.

The museum in the capital Stanley has an existing gallery recounting the story of the conflict, but it is expanding it and adding a new hall for larger exhibits – including the two veteran aircraft.

Neither are able to fly to the Falklands, or be transported by air. By sea is the only option.

So the military's experts in such delicate moves – the Joint Aircraft Recovery and Transportation Squadron (JARTS), a combined RN-RAF unit at Boscombe Down in Wiltshire – were called in by RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset to disassemble the Harrier and transport the special load up the A303 back to their home.

Overseeing the move for JARTS is Chief Petty Officer Stewart Wright – a former Harrier engineer who maintained the aircraft at sea and on land, including tours of duty in Afghanistan.

"I began my career on Harriers so the aircraft means a lot to me and I'm just glad to be able to deliver this one back to the Falklands where it means so much to them," he said.

"We went to the Falklands to prepare the move and it's evident how passionate the islanders are and how much the Sea Harrier means to them – it's a symbol of their freedom, so they are really keen to have one on display."

Watching CPO Wright's team prepare the Harrier for moving by low-loader (the whole process took nearly 12 hours and ended after nightfall) was former jump jet pilot Lieutenant Commander Jason Flintham, who as commander of 727 Naval Air Squadron today assesses whether trainees possess what is needed to make it as aviators with the Royal Navy.

"It's amazing – and right – that there should be a Harrier in the Falklands. It will serve as a testament to those who flew it and a memorial to those who did not return," he said.

"The Harrier is of huge historical importance to the islands and I'm proud that this one is going

down there for all to see."

The final Sea Harriers were retired by the Royal Navy in 2006 after more than a quarter of a century's service.

Of the two aircraft selected for the museum, only the Lynx saw service in the 1982 campaign; the Sea Harrier, ZH801, was delivered to the Fleet Air Arm after the war and served until 2004 since when it's acted as a 'hangar guardian' on display at RAF Cottesmore (the Navy's Harrier force moved there when it merged with the Air Force) and more recently back at Yeovilton.

Before being shipped, the aircraft was given a thorough makeover; Chris Hodson, an engineer who built the very same aircraft at BAE's Dunsfold works in Surrey made the trip to Somerset to fit the pilot's ejector seat.

And the Fly Harrier Trust and Horizon Aircraft Services from St Athan provided a slew of parts and sections – weapons pylons, fuel tanks, panel sections – which had gone missing during the ZH801's two decades of inactivity.

Lynx XZ725 saw action in the Falklands – and served with distinction until the end of her active life.

Operating from frigate HMS Brilliant, she attacked and crippled the Argentine submarine Santa Fe in South Georgia during the opening moves of Britain's efforts to liberate its South Atlantic territories.

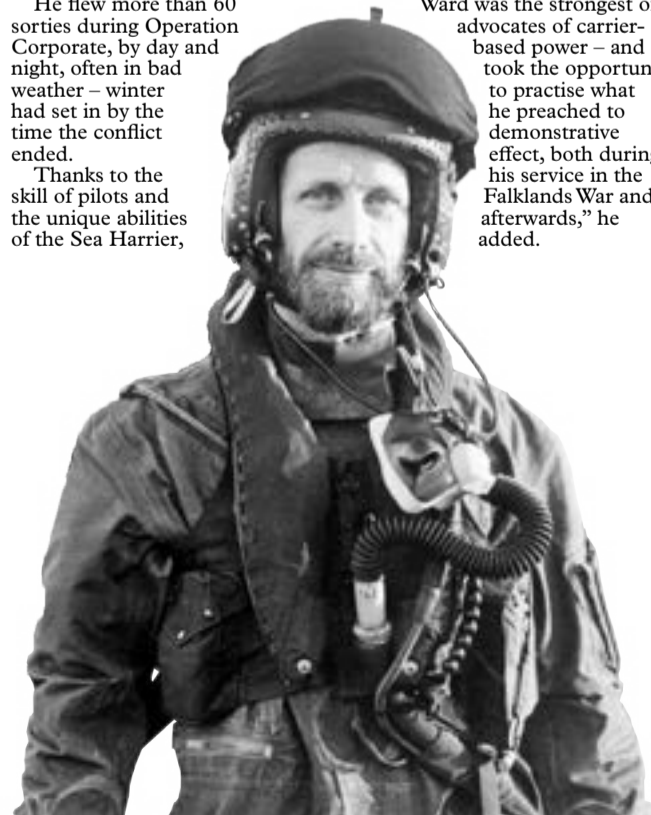
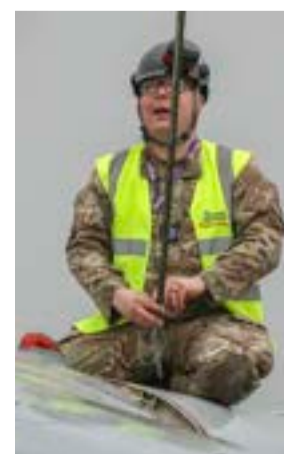
The helicopter was constantly upgraded and overhauled, evolving into a Lynx Mk8 which last flew from the deck of frigate HMS Iron Duke before being transferred to HMS Sultan in Gosport to serve as a training aid for air engineers.

From Boscombe Down both aircraft were moved by JARTS to Marchwood Military Port in Southampton Water for loading on to a Falklands-bound supply ship.

They are due to arrive in the Falklands in time for this month's liberation day events and will be kept in storage while the new exhibition hall is completed. It's due to open to the public in the spring of 2025.

Despite a population on the islands of under 3,000 – and most of those are centred in the capital – the Falklands' museum attracts 80,000 visitors a year, expected to rise to around 100,000 thanks to growing trade from cruise liners.

Pictures: LPhoto Dan Rosenbaum



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WATERS



THE floor is perfectly stable, so why do people have their legs apart, adjusting their gait as they move around or steadying themselves by holding on to something fixed like a desk or bulkhead?

There are no hydraulics here – not like, say, the Merlin simulator down at Culdrose.

This is purely down to the immersive experience, the power of the visuals to convince the brain HMS Lancaster is battling through 50 knot winds in the Solent.

And we've not touched on Virtual Reality yet.

Thanks to money (£27m) and computer boffins (Kongsberg and Metaverse VR), the Royal Navy now possesses nine new bridge simulators which take shore-based training for navigators, officers of the watch and bridge teams to the next level.

Day. Night. Fog and mist. Incoming weather. Snow flurries. Showers or deluges. Pretty much any external condition ('ephemerals' is the term used by instructors and students) can be recreated at the click of a mouse.

Ferries ply their trade in the Solent and Hamoaze. Merchantmen head up and down the Clyde. F-35s make a low pass of the Southsea seafront. A red flare – its smoke trail driven by the 'wind' – shows where a sailor has fallen in the ocean.

You might wish to avoid icebergs. Safely pass a cruise liner. You may want to take on fuel during a replenishment at sea.

The serials and training are as varied and variable as the capricious British weather.

The locations – for now – are largely British: Portsmouth, Plymouth, Portland, Faslane, Gib.

It's not video game 3D perfection. But it's not far off. The Spinnaker Tower stands out. Round Tower. Fort Blockhouse. Or the colourful tower blocks rising over Devonport, the breakwater, the Torpoint ferry.

In due course, other harbours and ports frequented by Royal Navy vessels will be added by Metaverse programmers: Bahrain – the hub of RN operations in the Middle East – the eastern Med, the Pacific.

And then we step on to the bridge wing. Put on the virtual reality headset and the bow and stern of the ship – not evident on the gigantic projection display – appear.

You might dismiss it was a gimmick. But no. Now you can practise a difficult (or easy) berthing or departure. Or a RAS. Or close manoeuvres. The hydrodynamics of how the ship reacts to the presence of a tanker or supply ship sailing on a parallel course just 50 metres away accurately recreated by the programmers.

The net result? You can train people in more complex scenarios, in all weathers, in all visibilities, at any time of day. There's no risk (except, perhaps, to personal pride if you make a pig's ear of a training serial or 'run').

(And before anyone asks, yes there's still plenty of at sea instruction – it's still fundamental to training – and the Navy still possesses a navigation training ship, HMS Severn).

But Severn is just one ship. There are nine new simulators – delivered by a consortium led by Capita, in partnership with Metaverse VR and serving Navy personnel – across the RN: two each at BRNC and Faslane, and five (count 'em) at HMS Collingwood as the home of warfare training.

Two large 'full mission' simulators grab the eye with their wrap-around hi-res projection display and virtual reality headsets; additionally, there's a smaller version with an LCD display and finally two small trainers – more akin to a video gaming set-up, but with the same features/accuracy as their full-size counterparts.

Each one is named after a fabled Royal Navy navigator: Ross (Arctic/Antarctic explorer), Parry (early 19th Century Arctic explorer), Bligh (of the Bounty), Fitzroy (father of the Met Office), and Flinders (the first person to circumnavigate/chart Australia).

The Royal Navy has been using digital bridge simulators for training for nearly 30 years.

The existing sims were installed in Collingwood in 2002 and though the software has been upgraded since, this is the first true 'reboot' in two decades.

Trainee warfare officer Sub Lieutenant Stephen Smallman, aged 28 from Plymouth, began learning his bridge skills on the old simulator – and completed his training on the new facility.

He said: "The old simulator was good, but you knew you were in a room with some screens. Here, you feel like you are stepping onto the bridge of a warship. It is very easy to become immersed in the situation – it makes everything feel much more real.

"Because you can change the weather conditions, you can practise some very challenging manoeuvres without the real-world consequences.

"It's second-to-none, invaluable and it's great to see the Navy investing in us and our training so we can do our job to the highest standard."

While the realistic hydrodynamic modelling and 3D/Virtual Reality visuals may catch the eye, it's a hidden feature which truly benefits the Navy: every run is recorded. Every conversation on the bridge is recorded. All data captured.

Afterwards instructors can go through a run, fast forward to the moment things began to go wrong, then re-play and analyse the incident with students, ironing out mistakes – but also picking up on any potential trends which might be creeping into navigational/watchkeeping so they can be eradicated.

This debrief facility – replacing hastily-scribbled notes on a sheet of paper – is, says the Officer in Charge of the Navigational Training Unit, Lieutenant Commander Gavin Lowe, "a game changer when it comes to training navigators and bridge teams".

He was among the first trainees to go through the first-generation simulators two decades ago and has overseen juggling training sailors like Sub Lt Smallman on the outgoing system... while installing their replacements (the Fleet needs a constant supply of fresh navigators/officers of the watch).

"Over my time training the Royal Navy I've seen an uplift in technology, but this is a generational leap forward and frankly a different game entirely, he added.

"The more realistic the environment, the better the training we deliver. The Virtual Reality headsets allow us to 'step onto' a bridge wing. You can look all along the ship from bow to stern which is fantastic for training complex ship handling manoeuvres such as entering and leaving port."

They can be used not just by personnel under training but any ship's team which feels it would benefit from more navigational/bridge time.

There's also considerable potential offered by upgrades, from additional ports and harbours to broaden the portfolio to adding new ships (Type 26/31 frigates), tidal streams and linking the simulators at the different sites to train the bridge teams of entire task groups.

Former Royal Marine David Hook, now managing director at Capita Defence, believes we will only see more of such training in the years to come.

"I am proud that Capita has delivered state-of-the-art navigation simulators to the Navy that demonstrates a step change in training technology and delivery," he added.

"The simulators are an example of technology-enabled training facilities that will be a central part of the training transformation we are embedding in training."

No-one (we're told) has yet succumbed to seasickness but...

"It's quite good fun at the back of bridge watching fellow students moving around as if the ship is rolling," said Sub Lt Smallman.

"The floor doesn't move one bit. But that's the immersive nature of the facility, the quality of the graphics and the horizon apparently moving.

"You can become so immersed in it, you don't really realise you're in a simulator."

Pictures: LPhoto Dan Bladden

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GATEWAY TO

ROYAL Marines have tested Sweden's ability to defend a strategic archipelago at the gateway to the Baltic Sea as Britain forges even closer bonds with their newest NATO ally.

The Gothenburg Archipelago sits off the coast of Sweden's second largest city, which it takes its name from, and is in the stretch of water leading to the Baltic.

Protection of this area – and the rest of the Scandinavian nation's 2,000-mile coastline – rests with a dedicated force: 4th Amphibious Regiment, armed with area-denial weaponry, Hellfire missiles and sea mines, and based in Gothenburg.

In theory their firepower should decimate the ranks and cause untold chaos in any invading force attempting

an amphibious landing on Sweden's shores.

Royal Marines led by Arbroath-based 45 Commando shared vital knowledge and expertise of complex amphibious raiding operations, learned how to operate in the archipelago and finally became the fearsome mock adversary charged with testing Sweden's defences.

Exercise Borealis reached its climax with two realistic 'raids' as the 'opposing' forces went head-to-head.

The first saw 45 Commando's X-Ray Company, with help from assault engineers and sappers from 59 Commando Royal Engineers and a specialist reconnaissance team from 30 Commando, raid Gothenburg Port to

take out critical national infrastructure.

This was followed by a six-day battle in the northern area of Gothenburg Archipelago, with 45 Commando tasked with taking out defence systems to pave the way for a larger force to enter the area.

Major Luke Norkett, in command of X-Ray Company, said: "The final scenario is highly-relevant for the Royal Marines, mirroring the likely tasking in the event of large-scale warfare, acting as an advanced force to enable follow on forces with greater mass and capital ships entry into an area of operations.

"The deployment demonstrates the high value the UK places on its relationship with Sweden, understanding

TO THE BALTIC

and operating with an important Joint Expeditionary Force partner.

"Taking place almost immediately following Sweden's NATO membership approval it also served to highlight NATO's commitment to the security of the Baltic Sea."

He continued: "The exercise provided valuable lessons for both sides; highlighting complementary, as well as areas of development, of our respective capabilities."

For the first time, Sweden's impressive Combat Boat 90s – armed assault craft capable of carrying 18 troops and reaching speeds of nearly 50mph – and Royal Marines small inshore raiding craft (IRC) worked together to land troops

ashore.

The CB90s towed the smaller raiding craft for stealthy landings during long routes, before deploying the IRCs – which are controlled by small boat experts of 47 Commando's 4 Assault Squadron in the final stages of an infiltration.

Meanwhile, front-line medics – working in what is known as a pre-hospital treatment team – worked with the Swedish Hospital Group on moving casualties from the front to more comprehensive aid facilities, specifically looking at a mass-casualty scenario.

Borealis is a prelude to NATO's biggest annual exercise in the Baltic, known as Baltops, which takes place later this month.

Sweden is a long-standing ally of the UK and the two have operated closely for years as part of the Joint Expeditionary Force, which is a group of ten like-minded nations working together for the stability and security of northern Europe's waterways.

Sweden became a NATO member in March, but Royal Marines were already working closely with Stockholm's armed forces before that.

Last year, 45 Commando were involved in a national defence exercise around the capital and Swedish prime minister Ulf Kristersson stated then that he'd like the commandos in the country 'next year and every year'. That is now coming to fruition.



A HOME BRUN FOR SUM

YOU'VE heard of the Falklands, you've run ashore in Gib, but you've probably never heard of a former mining town in the South of the Netherlands, Brunssum. Brunssum is home to one of NATO's three Joint Force Commands, alongside Naples and Norfolk, Virginia.

There are currently just over 100 UK Service Personnel at JFCBS, including 30 RN and RM personnel. Why are these members of the Senior Service so far from the sea and what are they doing?

Well, 2024 has seen one of NATO's biggest exercises in decades, Steadfast Defender 2024 (STDE 24) and every single member of the Naval Service at JFCBS has been involved one way or another, from Intelligence Analysis to public affairs in Poland. In total STDE 24 has seen the involvement of 90,000 personnel across land, sea, air, space and cyber.

Everyone knows what NATO stands for and the organisation describes itself as working for peace, security and freedom for 1 billion people, but what does this actually mean in terms of day to day work and life?

Despite being a small cohort, there is a wide representation of branches and trades. Personnel are working both in their source branch and in more generalist appointments, broadening their skills and experience.

A prime example of this is CPO Calen Robinson, who is an Intelligence Specialist, working here as a Maritime Intelligence analyst.

Whilst he is working firmly within his trade, this role sees him routinely brief to a 1 and 2* audience, which is a fantastic opportunity to showcase both his knowledge, skills and experience, and the RN as well.

"I'm really enjoying what my new role in NATO has offered me and my family so far. In terms of work experience, this posting has provided me with a platform to enhance my leadership and

briefing capabilities, whilst also supporting my international NATO peers with larger exercises such as STDE 24," he said.

"Despite the decision to make the move to the Netherlands being a difficult one, it has afforded me and my wife some much-needed time together as a couple, something we have never really had the opportunity to seize before".

Beyond the professional satisfaction that working in a busy multinational HQ provides, there are also many benefits to be found outside of the working environment.

Lt Cdr James Smees is here with his wife and two young children.

"My family has loved being here and we have made sure that we explored the area as much as possible," said James.

"My kids have thrived in the school environment here, with small class sizes and a fantastically welcoming environment, not only to the British children, but to the international students who make up such a large part of this community.

"Penny, my wife, has worked at the British school during our posting and has gained a great deal of satisfaction from this and also her involvement in the Brunssum Military Wives Choir."

Soon to return the UK on completion of appointment, Lt Cdr Smees is clear that this time has been professionally rewarding too.

"I thought I knew plenty about NATO before joining JFCBS, but working here has given me a far deeper understanding of why NATO is so important and what we can achieve working together."

Also moving on from Brunssum this year is Lt Megan Burgoyne.

She said: "This has been an incredible experience for me. I've been working in Operational Exercise Support, which has been utilising my skills as a logistician to deliver real time effect to NATO exercises such as STJU23 AND STDE24."

Megan returns to the UK in the summer to be the CO of Edinburgh URNU.

"I am absolutely thrilled to be taking Command of the Edinburgh and East of Scotland URNU in the summer of 24," she said.

"It is an incredibly unique opportunity to not only educate young enthusiastic minds about the Royal Navy but also about what the British Military is doing on a global stage to maintain and enhance international peace, security, and interoperability.

"This job has gone a long way in exposing me to those themes and enhancing my understanding of our position on the world stage."

Megan is one of a number of UK Service Personnel in Brunssum who are unaccompanied.

"That was a little daunting at first to be in a flat on my own after being at sea and living in close proximity to so many other people, but we have a great social group here and I've been involved in a wide range of activities from playing rugby for a local side to travelling mainland Europe with my friends at weekends," she explains.

Commodore Gordon Ruddock, the senior Naval Officer at Brunssum, said: "For many Royal Navy personnel and their families, deployments mean going to sea for months at a time.

"Overseas tours such as Brunssum are less commonplace, but with NATO playing an ever more important part in the UK's Defence Strategy, the Navy can expect more of these kinds of roles to come up.

"The experience they give our people is being recognised back in the UK, not only for future reinvestment of that experience, but also at promotion boards which is a really positive step."



WELCOME TO



WREXHAM



The Wrexham Contingent with Commanding Officer of HMS Dragon, Commander Iain Giffin Image by LPhot Gareth Smith

FOR the first time since the Second World War a Royal Navy warship will be affiliated with Welsh city Wrexham.

Instantly recognisable by her roaring Welsh Dragons emblazoned across her bows, HMS Dragon became the fourth warship to be bonded to the city in a ceremony at her homeport of Portsmouth.

Officials gathered next to HMS Dragon – one the Royal Navy's advanced Type 45 air defence destroyers – to officially pass the affiliation from the Welsh capital Cardiff to Wrexham in the northeast of the country.

The ship's Commanding Officer, Commander Iain Giffin said: "HMS Dragon has enjoyed a proud and strong affiliation with the City of Cardiff for over twelve years. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the city's officials and residents for the hospitality and friendship they have extended to us as their affiliated warship.

"Cardiff has been an invaluable partner and we cherish the memories and relationships made over the years. We are pleased that the Royal Navy will maintain a close partnership with the City of Cardiff and wish them every success for their future affiliation with HMS Cardiff."

He continued: "HMS Dragon is immensely proud to be able to continue to abide by the fine traditions of our Welsh heritage, and to establish a new partnership and formal affiliation with the City of Wrexham. We are honoured that Wrexham has agreed to affiliate with HMS Dragon and are excited to establish a strong and enduring partnership with the City and its people.

Welcome aboard, Wrexham."

The previous affiliations to Wrexham stemmed from Warship Weeks – national campaigns in the Second World War with the aim of a city, town or village adopting a Royal Navy warship to



raise cash to fund a particular vessel. Wrexham County Borough adopted three ships during the war.

W-class destroyer HMS Veteran – sunk in 1942 by a German torpedo in the North Atlantic – was affiliated with Wrexham itself, while Flower-class corvette HMS Begonia – sold in 1946 – was associated with West Wrexham, while HMS Anemone – sold to Norway in 1949 – was affiliated to Rhosllanerchrugog, which sits in the Wrexham County Borough.

Alongside HMS Dragon in Portsmouth Naval Base were officials from the Cities of Cardiff and Wrexham, including the Mayor of Wrexham, Councillor Andy Williams and Council Leader Councillor Mark Pritchard as well as Wrexham Council's Armed Forces Champion, Councillor Beverley Parry-Jones.

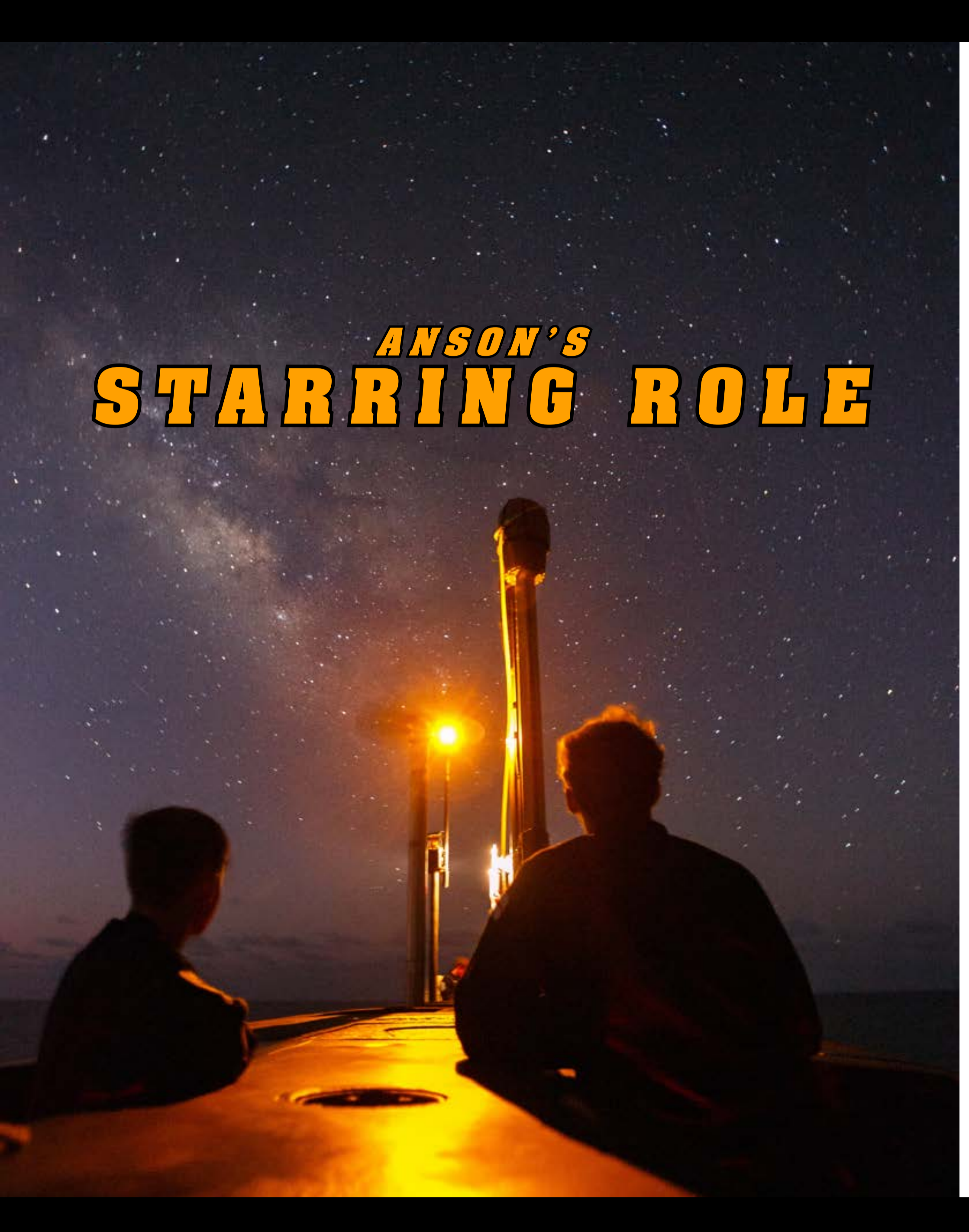
Cllr Parry-Jones said: "Wrexham has a long and proud affiliation with the armed forces, and this is a huge honour for the city. We're so proud to support the men and women who serve our country – they do an incredible job in keeping us safe, and it will be an immense honour to support HMS Dragon and everyone who serves on her.

"I am very much looking forward to meeting the ship's company and welcoming them to Wrexham at a later date."

HMS Dragon, currently undergoing the final phases of her refit in Portsmouth, is set to emerge in the coming months after upgrades to her engines, sensors and weapon systems, that will bolster her already world-leading capabilities.

Trials of HMS Dragon's systems are set to follow in the dockyard before she proceeds to conduct extensive sea trials along the south coast, to test her enhanced combat systems and power performances.

ANSON'S
STARRING ROLE



THE Royal Navy newest and most advanced hunter-killer submarine is now on the verge of joining the operational cycle following intensive tests in the Atlantic.

HMS Anson, the fifth of the Royal Navy's Astute-class boats, conducted trials off the east coast of the United States and in the Caribbean Sea, rigorously testing her state-of-the-art systems and weaponry.

The Astute-class nuclear-powered submarines are the largest and most advanced attack submarines ever operated by the navy, capable of launching long-range Tomahawk missiles to accurately hit land targets and lethal Spearfish torpedoes to defeat enemy submarines.

Coupled with that, Anson and her operational sisters – Astute, Ambush, Artful and Audacious – are capable of circumnavigating the globe while submerged, producing their own oxygen and drinking water to sustain the crews on arduous and lengthy deployments.

Therefore, this advanced submarine, which left the shipyard in Barrow-in-Furness in February last year – needs extremely thorough trials and tests before joining her sisters on operations.

Anson spent time in waters off the UK coast and then sailed further north of Scotland to test her weapons systems with successful firings of both Spearfish and Tomahawk test missiles.

The tests and trials intensified



into the Atlantic as Anson headed to the Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center (AUTC) in the waters around the Bahamas.

The US Navy's AUTC base gathers together world-leading experts and technology next to a natural wonder. The ranges off Andros Island – south-west of Nassau – are centred on a natural phenomenon, the Tongue of the Ocean, a huge deep-water bowl carved out of coral reef.

It's 20 miles wide, 150 miles long, some 6,000ft deep in places and crammed with sensors and hydrophones to record reams of data on how well a submarine, torpedo or sonar is performing.

Tests at AUTC are crucial to Anson's future operations, ensuring she can hunt adversary submarines without detection.

The sea trials also gave the crew the chance to get ashore to Andros Island.

"The opportunity for the majority of the ship's company to get spend a few days on Andros was fantastic," a submariner said. "This

afforded us a few days of rest from the sea trials we were conducting and allowed us to spend time on the beach in the sun relaxing and playing volleyball with base personnel."

Before heading home, she completed on further round of system testing.

There was also some downtime in this jam-packed schedule, with maintenance at US Navy submarine base at Kings Bay in Georgia.

Anson's crew got to meet and spend time with the company of a US Navy Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine.

One submariner said: "It was a great opportunity to see a new place and meet new people. I'd never been to the US before."

"It was great to be hosted by the boat, we were very grateful to be invited."

Meanwhile, 14 UK submariners visited US military college The Citadel in Charleston. Personnel met with the 4* US Marine Corps General and learnt about the close ties the college had with the Submarine Service following operations in the Second World War.

Being the first Royal Navy unit to visit since 1998, Anson conducted a memorial ceremony at the HMS Seraph Memorial on the College grounds.

And while in Caribbean waters Anson carried out a 'hands to bathe' as sailors stepped onto the submarine's hydroplanes and dived into the warm waters to sign off on a busy deployment.



**Anson on the verge
tests and trials put**

ONE SMALL STEP FOR DOCTOR ROSEMARY

FORMER Royal Navy Reservist Doctor Rosemary Coogan is one step closer to space after graduating from the European Space Agency Training.

She said she is proud of how far she has come after being selected as an ESA astronaut candidate in 2022, beating more than 22,500 applicants.

The 33-year-old from Belfast will now take part in operational tasks within ESA, which could include working in mission control or crew support, until she is assigned to a mission.

She said: "Graduating from astronaut basic training is an incredibly moving moment for me. From dreaming about space to now being one step closer to reaching it, I'm filled with gratitude and determination to make the most of this extraordinary opportunity."

"I'm proud to share this moment with my fellow astronaut graduates and of the commitment of our international team to exploration. Together, we stand ready to embrace the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, united by our shared passion for space."

Rosemary joined the Royal Navy Reserves at HMS Calliope in 2009 and joined HMS Example as an officer cadet before being promoted to Midshipman.

Previous to that, she would spend several weeks a year away from home on board training vessels and at bases as a Cadet Petty Officer with the Sea Cadets – who she spent seven years with.

Rosemary and her fellow graduates from the class of 2022 astronaut candidates were the first new recruits to ESA in 13 years.

She has been trained to conduct scientific experiments aboard the International Space Station, given medical training and studied astronomy, astrophysics, radiation physics and meteorology.

The astronauts have been trained in technical skills including spacecraft systems, flight engineering, robotics, and life support systems, giving them the necessary expertise for mission success.

Rosemary has undergone winter survival training in the snowy mountains of the Spanish Pyrenees and experienced the effects of hypoxia first-hand in a pressure chamber, enabling her to recognise symptoms and respond accordingly in low-oxygen environments in case of an air leak or reduced pressure in a spacecraft.

She has also experienced centrifuge rides to simulate high g-forces during rocket launches and zero-gravity flights to provide a taste of the unique challenges and sensations awaiting her in space.

Rosemary holds two master's degrees



from the University of Durham. She completed her undergraduate master's degree of Physics in 2013 which focused on physics, mathematics, computer programming and astronomy.

In 2015, she received her master's degree in Astronomy, where she conducted research on gamma-ray emission from black holes.

In 2019, she graduated with a doctorate in astronomy from the University of Sussex. During that time, she spent one year as a visiting scientist in Paris, two weeks as a visiting astronomer at a Hawaiian observatory and travelled to further countries to present her findings at several international conferences.

She speaks English, French and basic German.

Her training took her back to the United States when she was involved in a visit to NASA's facilities at the Johnson Space Centre in Houston, Texas, and scuba diving for spacewalk training under water in NASA's 12-meter-deep Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory (NBL).

This facility hosts a replica of the entire International Space Station, where astronauts can perform underwater simulations of spacewalks.

Dr Paul Bate, Chief Executive of the UK Space Agency, said: "Our congratulations across the UK space sector go to Rosemary on her graduation."

"Astronaut training is a rigorous process and Rosemary and her fellow astronauts have developed new skills and overcome intense challenges to graduate. This is an exciting step on her journey and we are very proud of what she has achieved."

Rosemary is now a certified ESA astronaut and ready to enter the next space station training phase called pre-assignment training.

She graduated alongside Sophie Adenot (France), Pablo Álvarez Fernández (Spain), Raphaël Liégeois (Belgium), Marco Sieber (Switzerland) and Australian Space Agency astronaut candidate Katherine Bennell-Pegg, who joined the group through a cooperation agreement with ESA.

CARDIGAN BAY HEADS FOR GAZA MISSION

SUPPORT ship RFA Cardigan Bay sailed from Cyprus to provide support to an international effort to build a temporary pier to allow delivery of humanitarian aid directly from the sea into Gaza.

US ships and personnel had begun construction of the temporary floating pier as part of ongoing work to significantly expand the delivery of lifesaving aid into Gaza.

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary landing ship provided accommodation for hundreds of US sailors and soldiers working to establish the pier. The pier, which is now complete, will initially facilitate the delivery of 90 truckloads of international aid into Gaza and scale to up to 150 truckloads once fully operational, according to US estimates.

The multinational maritime corridor initiative will see tens of thousands of tonnes of aid pre-screened in Cyprus and delivered directly to Gaza via the temporary pier being constructed off the coast or via Ashdod Port, which Israel has said it will open.

Commanding Officer, Captain Simon Herbet RFA, said: "RFA Cardigan Bay has shown her flexibility and agility by reconfiguring her role as an Afloat Forward Support Base for MCM Operations, to being ready to support the international effort to construct a temporary pier to expand the flow of aid to Gaza via a sea route."

"We have embarked personnel from the US Army and Navy as well as UK specialist teams to facilitate the construction and operation of the pier, and to operate as a Command and control platform. I have been impressed by the dedication and professionalism of all on-board in preparing for this important humanitarian task."

Specialist British military planning teams have been embedded with the US operational HQ in Tampa, Florida, as well as in Cyprus for several weeks to jointly develop the safest and most effective maritime route.

The UK Hydrographic Office has also shared analysis of the Gazan shore with US planners to develop the pier.

Supporting the Jordanian humanitarian land corridor from Amman into Gaza and in partnership with the World Food Programme, the UK's largest delivery of aid crossed the border on 13 March which saw more than 2,000 tonnes of food aid being distributed on the ground to families in need. Land deliveries will now be scaled up with the opening of the Erez crossing, which the UK wants to see reopened permanently.

The UK government is also doing everything possible to get more aid into Gaza by land and air. We trebled our humanitarian funding to the OPTs last financial year, delivering over £100 million of vital medical, shelter, nutrition and water/sanitation support. In recent weeks, the Royal Air Force has conducted nine airdrops along the coastline of Gaza, most recently on Thursday - safely delivering more than 85 tonnes of food supplies, including water and flour.

P2000s SWARM TO THE BALTIC SEA

THE Royal Navy's smallest ships will be swarming the Baltic Sea in the coming weeks as part of NATO's annual workout in the region.

Baltops is an exercise that brings together allies for the collective security of the Baltic's many strategically important waterways, bolstered now by the membership of Finland and Sweden to the alliance.

Royal Marines and seven P2000 patrol vessels of the Royal Navy's Coastal Forces Squadron will form the UK backbone on the exercise, working closely with allies to better operate across the complicated chokepoints and islands that make up the region.

Commander Richard Skelton, Commander of the Coastal Forces Squadron, said: "Baltops is an annual NATO-led exercise that draws together NATO Forces from the Baltic and beyond."

"As the Coastal Forces Squadron looks to operate in new and innovative ways it's a great pleasure to be involved; to learn from and to work with key international allies."

The Baltops deployment will continue to show how the Coastal Forces Squadron can operate in all range of environments – having just been in the fjords of Norway – and how they can be utilised in many different ways.

The P2000s can play the role of 'enemy' attack swarms, but also carry autonomous equipment and specialist personnel and their equipment – such as divers or minehunting experts.

P2000s usually carry five crew, but can carry up to 20 personnel for short periods while deployed depending on the task at hand.

This allows for training opportunities for personnel across the fleet.

This ranges from navigation experience for officers to general seamanship and engineering training for ratings. University Royal Navy Unit officers and University Cadet Entrant (UCE) Midshipman will also benefit from stints onboard the P2000s during the deployment.

The P2000s – HMS Ranger, Archer, Example, Explorer, Puncher, Pursuer and Express – have been making their way to the Baltic in stages and will operate in two distinct groups.

Explorer, Express and Pursuer left Portsmouth last week and will meet Puncher enroute to Oostende in Belgium, before sailing towards the Baltic.

Archer, Ranger and Example left a few days before, making their journey together north from Portsmouth.

Crews share the load for planning the logistical support throughout the deployment.

P2000s can operate alone and do so often, but operating in sub-groups on Baltops will allow ships to support each other, pool knowledge and experience, and work more dynamically to fulfil tasking.

Able Rating 2 (Above-water Warfare Tactical) Michael Betteridge is embarking on HMS Pursuer for wider professional development, and the trip will include his first foreign run ashore with the Navy.

He said: "Being onboard HMS Pursuer for Baltops offers me a unique opportunity to develop my maritime and seamanship skills. This also allows me to experience operating with NATO partners and have some great port visits."

FAREWELL TO EAGLES

THE Royal Navy has said farewell to the head of its crucial support arm after three and a half years at the helm.

Commodore David Eagles steered the Royal Fleet Auxiliary through most of the pandemic to the present day and oversaw the introduction of two entirely new types of ship into service.

He leaves after a seagoing career of 45 years, all but nine of them in the RFA which provides vital supplies – fuel, food, ammunition, spare parts – and support to key missions (amphibious operations, disaster relief, medical assistance and helicopter training).

To those largely traditional missions, under Cdre Eagles' tenure the RFA has also acquired two similar vessels to perform new roles: RFA Proteus, which will be used to monitor the nation's crucial underwater infrastructure, and RFA Stirling Castle, dedicated just a few weeks ago; she will act as mother ship to autonomous/remotely-operated minehunting systems around the UK – thus replacing several dedicated mine warfare vessels which have carried out the same duty in the past and, crucially, removing the need to risk sailors in a

minefield.

All of which is a far cry from the beginning of Cdre Eagles' seagoing career. Originally from Guildford, he spent nine years with BP sailing around the world in tankers.

Deciding that such a career wasn't sufficiently fulfilling, he switched to the RFA in 1988, beginning a career alternating between time at sea and important staff assignments, such as both Gulf wars and the conflict in Yugoslavia/Adriatic.

His RFA advice and knowledge was consulted by senior officers in carriers HMS Invincible and Illustrious while enforcing the no-fly zone of southern Iraq and by the amphibious task groups commanded by HMS Fearless between 1998 and 2000.

Aboard RFA vessels, Cdre Eagle has served extensively around the globe: the Gulf, Far East, Caribbean, South Atlantic, supporting counter-terrorism operations by international task forces in the Indian Ocean and, perhaps most famously, commanding RFA Argus to Freetown in 2014, helping to stem the spread of the deadly Ebola virus.

Before taking up his role as Commodore RFA in September 2020, a then Captain Eagles his final seagoing command was

captaining the 'floating warehouse' RFA Fort Victoria.

"My last day in uniform as head of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary allowed me to reflect on the huge honour and privilege it has been to lead the extraordinarily talented, committed and loyal workforce through a period of significant challenge but also one that has seen the introduction into service of two new capabilities and the RFA standing shoulder-to-shoulder with our Royal Navy and Royal Marine colleagues as we deliver for Defence across the globe," said the commodore, who lives in Devon.

"I am so very proud of our extraordinary people and Service."

He was presented a valedictory for his 36 years' service by Rear Admiral Anthony Rimington, the Navy's Director of Force Generation, who said the commodore "embodies the values and standards of the MOD, Royal Navy and RFA" throughout his extensive and varied career and could "immensely proud" of his accomplishments in uniform.

Captain Ali Clack RFA will serve as the acting head of the service until a permanent appointment to the post is announced.



Phoenix rises

F-35B squadron is reborn in Florida



Above: Personnel from both the UK's and Australian's 80 Squadrons at Eglin
Below: The boardwalks at Henderson Beach and at the nearby city of Destin



IT'S well known that the Royal Navy and RAF share F-35B squadrons but few have probably heard of the newest kid on the block, 80 Squadron.

But 54 years after they were disbanded, 80 Squadron RAF stood up alongside the Royal Australian Air Force in a joint ceremony at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

At the event the Chief of the Air Staff, Sir Rich Knighton, and Chief of the Australian Air Force Air Marshal Robert Chipman, formally awarded the dormant 80 Squadron numberplates for each service to their respective teams within the Australia, Canada and United Kingdom Reprogramming Laboratory.

Known as the ACURL, the multi-million-dollar, joint military data centre is designed to give each country's F-35 Lightning jets operational advantage in the most dangerous and demanding combat missions.

The Royal Navy accounts for half of the contingent of 80 Squadron and is blend of Fleet Air Arm and Surface Fleet backgrounds, with aircrew, air engineers and electronic warfare specialists all coming together with their RAF and RAAF colleagues to sharpen the tip of the spear.

Commander Chris Wilcox RN, who is the squadron's new commanding officer, said: "80 Squadron provides a unique opportunity for overseas service for those in the Royal Navy and the chance to work at the leading edge of software and data enabled weapons systems.

"We are in the enviable position of being autonomous in the way that we work, innovate and develop this capability for our warfighters."

Electronic Warfare Leading Hand Jeff Goodwin added: "Working overseas in Florida on F-35 mission data reprogramming has been a fantastic opportunity to both use and expand my EW knowledge as an LS EW in the

Royal Navy. Collaborating with US personnel as well as RAF & RAAF, along with getting the chance to participate in Exercise Pitch Black in Australia, where rapid reprogramming capabilities in a simulated war environment were tested, has been a particular highlight and very rewarding being that it is not something I would likely get to do outside of this role.

"Fifth-generation fighter jet experience is rare in my branch and is invaluable experience to take back into my next assignment."

As well as the two frontline F-35B squadrons, 617 and 809, RN and RAF personnel are also working together in the F-35B training and test squadrons.

Based in the Florida Panhandle, 80 Squadron operates as an air and space warfare centre squadron, part of the newly-formed Spectrum Warfare Division.

With a multi-million-dollar in-house laboratory at their disposal they have also driven the development of techniques and countermeasures now used by F-35 squadrons worldwide.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Knighton, said: "Central to our combat effectiveness will be the degree to which we can link our aircraft, and the digital and data connectivity which will give us the information and decision superiority over our adversaries.

"And critical to our success in future air warfare will be the degree to which we can gain and maintain both air superiority and spectrum superiority across the Electro-Magnetic Spectrum.

"As we consider current vectors in the evolution of warfare, our expert coders and programmers, our digital specialists and data scientists will be just as important, or even more so, than our aircrew.

"Number 80 Squadron enjoys the proudest of fighting traditions and is now forging a pathway to our future –

one which is international by design and where integration and interoperability form part of your DNA as aviators."

Eglin is a typically huge USA air base, covering more than 700 square miles and sharing the runway with Fort Walton Regional Airport. Personnel based at Eglin can enjoy the Emerald Coast, with the Gulf of Mexico's sugar-white sandy beaches on their doorstep during their downtime.

However, this dedicated team can routinely be found at Exercise Red Flag or Cobra Warrior for operations, at a deployed operating base or aboard a Queen Elizabeth-Class aircraft carrier.

They help to ensure that the F-35 lives up to their squadron motto and can 'Strike True'.

Formed in 1917, 80 Squadron RAF has been stationed across the world. After service over the Western Front and then Egypt during the First World War, it reformed in 1937 and returned to North Africa.

After service in the Eastern Mediterranean and Italy it returned to the UK in 1944 where 80 years ago it conducted fighter sweeps with Spitfires in preparation for D-Day.

The author Roald Dahl served in 80 Squadron during the Second World War.

Re-equipped with Tempests it flew armed reconnaissance missions over the continent for the remainder of hostilities.

Post-war it moved to Hong Kong and in 1955 it reformed in Germany with Canberra PR.7s which it operated until disbandment in 1969.

The RAAF 80 Squadron formed in 1943 and fought throughout the war in the Pacific theatre. Equipped with the P-40 Warhawk operations including covering Allied amphibious landings. It disbanded in 1946.

Thanks to Flt Lt Adam Holden, 80 Squadron RAF.



Cdr Chris Wilcox and Sir Rich Knighton meet a member of the RN contingent; RAAF Chief Air Marshal Robert Chipman and Sir Rich Knighton with the squadron crests; Sir Rich Knighton talks to one of the RN members of 80 SQN



Jacob's bell back to US

THE bell of one of the most notable US Navy shipwrecks in history has been returned to our closest allies.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Martin Connell formally handed back the iconic object, recovered from the wreck of the USS Jacob Jones – the first American destroyer to be lost to enemy action.

She was sunk by U-boat in December 1917 after completing a convoy escort with the loss of 64 lives.

The wreck was discovered some 375ft down, three-dozen miles south of the Scilly Isles in August 2021.

Despite the remoteness and depth of the destroyer, US authorities were concerned that unscrupulous salvage hunters might try to steal the bell and asked the UK government to recover it.

Defence Equipment & Support's Salvage and Marine Operations (SALMO) team used the commissioning trials of a state-of-the-art, remotely operated underwater vehicle (ROV) to bring the bell up from the seabed – placing the US flag on the wreck before coming back to the surface.

The First Sea Lord's annual seapower conference at London's Lancaster House was the venue for the formal return of the bell, with Admiral Connell's American counterpart, Admiral James W. Kilby, Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

The Second Sea Lord said the bell "serves as a vivid symbol of our mutual cooperation, enduring friendship and shared sacrifices".

Admiral Kilby added: "As the first US destroyer lost in combat, her crew's legacy will live on, their stories will be told and their loss will be remembered as we preserve this piece of our nation's story. Our Navy expresses our sincerest gratitude to those who made it possible to take this incredible artefact of sombre history back home."

ANZAC fliers recalled

WANSBECK RNA's Anzac Day Service and Parade took place at West Chevington Cemetery near Hadston, Northumberland.

The focus of the ceremony is not Gallipoli and the original ANZACs of WW1 rather those airmen and airwomen from both Australia and New Zealand who answered the call to fight Fascism and militarism a generation later – and lost their lives during WW2.

The day started off rather wet and very windy before and during the service.

Music was provided by Backworth Colliery Band and a very good bugler for the *Last Post / Reveille*.

Nine standards were on parade as well as the Union Flag, a 16-strong escort guard provided by 44 Squadron Northumbria Universities.

Fourteen wreaths were laid by representatives from Australian, New Zealand Air Forces, the RAF, RAFA (Newcastle and Gateshead branch), councillors, and the Local Residents Housing Association.

Also nine individual crosses were laid for named personnel by the RAF Cadets from Cramlington.

Norwegians honour lost destroyer

NORWEGIANS hope to erect a memorial to a Royal Navy warship sunk trying to prevent the invasion of their country in 1940.

HMS Glowworm was lost in the Norwegian Sea after a valiant but futile attempt to thwart superior German forces reaching Trondheim in the opening moves of Operation Weserübung.

The destroyer was patrolling off the Norwegian coast on the morning of April 8 1940 when she encountered two German destroyers – part of the covering screen for a naval force bound for Trondheim, led by the cruiser Admiral Hipper.

When Glowworm engaged the destroyers, they signalled the cruiser for help.

Though outnumbered and outgunned, Glowworm's Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Gerard Roope took the fight to the enemy.

Glowworm scored at least one hit on the Hipper, but the five torpedoes she fired at her foe all missed – and the German guns took a terrible toll of the destroyer: the bridge, engine room, captain's cabin and forward 4.7in gun were all wrecked.

While making smoke to buy time for a second torpedo attack, the destroyer was surprised by the Hipper emerging from the fog at near point-blank range, prompting Roope to decide to ram the cruiser as a last resort.

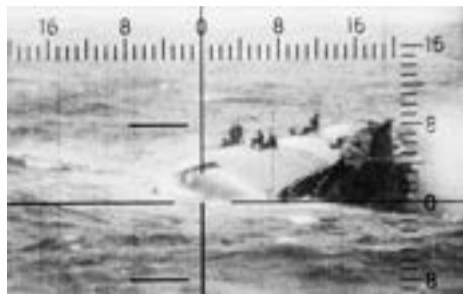
The impact ripped off Glowworm's bow – plus a 130ft of the cruiser's protective armoured belt. Hipper took on water which caused her to list slightly, but otherwise was unaffected, while the Glowworm began to sink rapidly.

At least 109 men went down with the crippled destroyer. The Germans picked up about 40 men, though around half a dozen subsequently died of their wounds.

Gerard Roope lost the strength to hold on to the rope as he was being hauled aboard the Hipper and drowned. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions – one of only three presented to participants of the ill-fated campaign in Norway.

It was an award made in part thanks to the recommendation of his foe; Hipper's skipper Hellmuth Heye praised Roope's bravery and conduct.

Largely undamaged, the German cruiser continued to Trondheim and the city was occupied the following day, April 9, as Nazi



Glowworm's survivors cling to the what remains of the ship after her encounter with the Hipper – as seen through the gun camera of the German cruiser

forces struck throughout Norway.

Due to the succession of blows and tragedies which befell Norway in 1940, plus the remoteness of the action, the clash between the Glowworm and the Hipper is largely unknown beyond the realm of historians.

The nearest land to the clash – the tiny, rocky island of Kya – was only inhabited by a handful of fishermen in 1940.

Today it's uninhabited and, despite its remoteness, popular with adventurous tourists and divers keen to experience its underwater wildlife.

Petter Krogstad, who is overseeing the memorial project, said it was important from his nation's perspective to remember Glowworm's "forgotten heroes" and make sure they received "the attention and honour they deserve".

"Britons interested in war are well aware of the story of Lieutenant Commander Roope and his brave men, but HMS Glowworm's heroic fight against an opponent ten times its size is sadly unknown in this country," said Petter Krogstad.

The form of the monument has yet to be decided, but the plan is to erect it on Kya's highest point, facing west towards the scene of the encounter, dedicating the memorial in the presence of VIPs 85 years to the day Glowworm was lost: April 25 2025.

As well as sorting out the design and funding, Mr Krogstad is keen to hear from any descendants of Glowworm's crew. He can be contacted at: petterkrogstad@hotmail.com.



Following the guns of Glasgow

CREW of Britain's new frigate followed in the footsteps of their D-Day forebears by visiting the sites where HMS Glasgow fought 80 years ago.

In 1944, the Town-class cruiser – sister ship of HMS Belfast, which also pounded German positions on June 6 – largely aided the efforts by US forces to storm Hitler's vaunted Fortress Europe.

On D-Day itself, Glasgow's 6in guns concentrated their firepower at Omaha Beach and subsequently shifted position as the campaign progressed to help American troops capture the Cotentin Peninsula and the key port of Cherbourg.

Just to the west of the city lies Querveville, heavily fortified in 1944 and subjected to a bombardment from HMS Glasgow – the cruiser's last action of the Normandy campaign.

It was there that the battlefield tour by crew of today's Glasgow – the Royal Navy's first Type 26 anti-submarine frigate, undergoing fitting out on the Clyde – and some of the shipwrights involved with building her concluded.

The team headed to France ahead of this month's international commemorations which will see world leaders converge on the shores of Normandy.

They followed not merely follow in the 'footsteps' of the old cruiser, but also Glaswegians who fought in Normandy, beginning at Sword Beach where Bill Millin famously piped commandos ashore amid the maelstrom of war.

Just a mile inland from the beach, the party paid tribute to the fallen who are laid to rest at Hermanville-sur-Mer Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery.

Marine engineer Lieutenant Lee Clemens led a short service of remembrance on behalf of the 900 souls buried there and placed a wreath (pictured above) on the grave of 21-year-old Lance Corporal Vincent Costello's from Nitshill, Glasgow, who died five days into the landings while fighting with 5th Battalion Black Watch.

The tour continued on to sites such as Pegasus Bridge, famously seized by airborne forces in the first minutes of D-Day, Caen – an objective for British forces on D-Day, but not captured until July – and the German gun emplacement, the Longues-sur-Mer battery.

At each historic site, the team were expected to outline what happened there in 1944, the effectiveness of naval gunfire – a key element of the tour was building up the research/presentational skills of participants as well as a deeper understanding of what it took to liberate Europe from the Nazi yoke.

"It was a fantastic opportunity for both ship's company and members of BAE Systems Maritime to learn about the history that the Royal Navy played during the D-Day events," said HMS Glasgow Commander Phil Burgess Senior Naval Officer.

"Hopefully this experience has helped bring both teams closer together and build that understanding and the importance that the navy played and continues to play in warfare."

Designers sought for new RM museum

THE hunt is on for leading architects and designers to transform an historic boathouse in Portsmouth to tell the story of the Navy and Royal Marines to a mid-21st Century audience.

The National Museum of the Royal Navy has laid down the gauntlet to exhibition designers and artisans to create an innovative gallery which will house temporary displays.

The new exhibition space is at the heart of the new £14m Royal Marines Museum.

The museum has been closed since 2017 as it moves from its long-standing home in Eastney to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

The project was put on hold when an initial bid for National Lottery funding was rejected, but – having redrawn the plans for the new-look story of 360 years of the Corps – a fresh bid is being submitted.

The result turns Boathouse No.6 into not just the new 'Royal Marines Experience Museum', but also has 400 square metres for temporary exhibitions. There'll also be a Commando-themed Laser Quest, plus a conference facility.

For nearly a quarter of century the building has housed the

Action Stations exhibit, which gives visitors a taste of life aboard and operations involving Royal Navy warships around the globe.

Its renovation and revamp will create the dockyard's first dedicated temporary exhibition space with the hope that changing displays – perhaps widening the 'menu' to the broader arts, culture and heritage beyond purely naval history – will pull in new visitors, boosting the 870,000 tourists drawn to the historic site annually.

"The Royal Marines story is central to the story of the Royal Navy and therefore to the purpose of the museum and we want to use the latest interpretative and digital techniques to really bring this story to life," explained Matthew Sheldon, interim director general of the NMRN.

"Our vision as a museum to connect navy with nation is never more evident than in this project."

The redevelopment of Boathouse No.6 is expected to cost £14m with around half the money raised already and bids in to raise the rest. If successful, the new Corps' museum / refurbished building will open in the summer of 2026.



1,000 MILES FOR MILES

IN THE sprawling landscape of charity challenges, there are few feats as remarkable as running 1,000 miles.

Meet Lieutenant Commander Alex Miles - a naval officer who began his career in 1999 serving in submarines and who is now about to take on an extraordinary mission.

He will be running from Land's End to John O'Groats in support of two charities which are very close to his heart.

Alex's story is not just one of endurance and physical prowess; it's a testament to the indomitable spirit of a man determined to make a difference.

On June 1, Alex set off from Land's End on what the race organiser, Run Britannia, describes as "the holy grail of UK adventures".

A fully supported, stunning 1000-mile, 70,000ft elevation running adventure, taking place over 37 days, that spans the entire length of the UK on a bespoke route designed to take in the most beautiful trails along the way.

The routine will comprise five consecutive days of running approximately 30 miles a day, followed by one rest day.

It's fair to say that this will not be for the faint-hearted, but Alex has put in hours of training - he has just completed the Isle of Arran Ultra, a 58-mile challenge taking place over two days on the small Scottish island.

He is supported by his wife, also a serving Lt Cdr in the Royal Navy, who is taking care of their two young children while he prepares for this epic journey.

As is common when both parents serve, there is an understanding that one parent may be taking the lion's share of the childcare at any one time and with his wife due to deploy for four months this summer, there's just enough time to squeeze in this challenge before he takes over as the main child carer in the household.

One of the driving forces behind Alex entering this race was the ability to fundraise for his chosen charities, the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) and Alabaré, a homelessness charity helping veterans, which receives funding



from RNRMC.

As the principal charity of the Royal Navy, Alex said that he wanted to give something back to RNRMC, an organisation which has supported his family and friends.

He said: "Over the last 24 years, the charity has supported me with numerous sporting ventures, as well as things such as Aggies Storybook Waves, where you can record a story for your little ones via voice recorder so that it brings it alive for them while you're deployed."

"These initiatives are definitely fundamental to having a better service family life."

He's also benefitted from the mess deck refurbishments provided by the charity too,

which he describes as making life "far more comfy and easier." Alex also described how difficult he finds it to see people sleeping rough.

"I find it hard seeing people on the street, whether they're young or old," he said.

"These people have served their country and whatever the reason, that should not be a thing. I know that RNRMC is also a big umbrella charity helping a lot of other organisations with funding and so I decided to split my fundraising between the two charities to try to help everybody out as best I can."

To donate to Alex's challenge, scan the QR code. You can also follow his journey on Instagram @alex_runsbritannia.

SUPPORTERS CELEBRATED AT RECEPTION FOR THEIR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION

SUPPORTERS of charity have been thanked and celebrated for their hard work and efforts.

The RNRMC hosted a Reward and Recognition reception at the Royal Maritime Club, in Portsmouth, thanking the charity's supporters in the region for their ongoing commitment to their mission to support sailors, marines and their families, for life.

The charity's chief executive Andrew Jameson welcomed guests including the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Tom Coles, and Lady Elly Key, representing Admiral Sir Ben Key, along with

trustees and many of the RNRMC's volunteers, fundraisers, local ambassadors and corporate partners.

The evening was an opportunity to recognise and pay tribute to the outstanding efforts of those who have gone above and beyond for the charity over the past 12 months.

Recognition certificates were awarded by the charity's Vice Chair of trustee Kate Phipps-Wiltshire.

"Thank you to all of those who attended, it was a wonderful evening of celebration," she said.



VETERAN THANKS CHARITY FOR HELP GETTING BACK TO SEA

A VETERAN has thanked a charity initiative for supporting her transition to civilian life and helping her get back to sea.

Janet joined the WRNs in 1990 and transferred to the Royal Navy four years later, excited to now be able to serve on ships.

In her early career, she witnessed a lot of death and destruction with her first ship HMS Westminster sailing straight to war-torn Sierra Leone.

This experience causes her to suffer from complex PTSD but despite this, she had had a fulfilling career in the Royal Navy.

In October 2006, she was drafted to Bagdad to serve with the British Army as Chief Clerk to the General.

The role required her to take regular trips from Camp Victory to the International Zone in a helicopter.

During one of these visits, she was travelling in a Black Hawk when the helicopter was brought down by small arms fire. This resulted in her right knee being badly damaged for which she was medically discharged in May 2008.

Upon leaving the service, Janet's knee continued to deteriorate until the decision was made by her medical team to amputate.

She said: "I was determined not to let my amputation stop me, and I was up and walking on a prosthetic leg within six months."

"I then threw myself into helping others and became a volunteer for BLESMA, (a military charity for limbless veterans) of which I am a member.

"I also decided to try and help civilians attending the Portsmouth Enablement Centre overcome amputation by offering swimming lessons.

"This is something I undertook as I felt that they did not have the same support as a military veteran."



Janet continued to support others and offer her time but she felt there was more she wanted to be doing.

"Although I kept myself busy, my love for the sea remained and I was struggling with my mental health, leaving me feeling that I had

no purpose or direction," she added.

"In 2019 while visiting a neighbour in hospital, I picked up a newspaper which had an article about a charity called Turn to Starboard offering opportunities for veterans to sail.

"Straight away I felt excitement, something I hadn't felt in a long time. I called the number and was greeted with a warm friendly voice on the other end of the phone."

Turn to Starboard uses Royal Yachting Association (RYA) sailing courses to support Armed Forces personnel who have been affected by military operations.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) provide funding to Turn to Starboard to enable them to provide this life-changing support to veterans like Janet.

In September 2023, RNRMC awarded Turn to Starboard £30,000. "The opportunities that Turn to Starboard have afforded me are mind blowing," Janet said.

"I cannot thank the Royal Navy and Royal Marines charity enough for funding such an incredible initiative.

"They have completely changed my life, giving me a sense of belonging and a purpose, while also giving me the opportunity to be back in my happy place."

"The team at Turn to Starboard have become like a family to me and when I speak of them, it is always with a smile on my face and a sense of warmth."

Submariners launch new project for children

AS PART of Month of the Military Child, HMS Oardacious is launching its new Huggable Heroes initiative in conjunction with a film highlighting some of the challenges faced by children with a submariner parent.

In the film, Sophie Fraser, families representative for the HMS Oardacious Management Committee, shares her experience as the spouse of a submariner with two young children.

She explains some of the ways that HMS Oardacious is working with other organisations and experts to advocate for this unique community.

Sophie's husband Callum Fraser rowed across the Atlantic in both the 2019 and 2022 HMS Oardacious teams, and Sophie has been intrinsically involved in the project since it was created in 2018.

HMS Oardacious' Submarine Service Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund pilot project has purchased 250 Huggable Heroes vouchers for the children of submariners currently assigned to submarines.

Huggable Heroes are cuddly toys printed with a photograph of their serving parent, aiming to help children deal with the challenges of separation during the deployment period.

During the trial project, those eligible will be contacted by the Royal Navy to provide more details on how to claim their voucher.

Sophie says: "Members of our organisation have each experienced many deployments and the impact these can have on mental health."

"As such, the team are incredibly passionate about being ambassadors for mental health and wellbeing for both serving personnel and their families and that it is as important to support the families as it is the serving personnel within the Royal Navy."

"One of the aims of the HMS Oardacious Submarine Service Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund is dedicated to finding ways to support children of serving personnel who can have varying reactions to a deployment."

"The Huggable Heroes® toys represent their parents and give children a tangible reminder of their parent looks like, so they can feel close to them even though in reality they're a long way away."

"As we celebrate Month of the Military Child, it was the perfect time to announce the pilot project."

Cdr Matthew Main, Marine Engineer Officer and Skipper of the HMS Oardacious 2023 Rowing Crew, explains the importance of supporting Submariner families.

"We're trained for it, when we deploy we're with other submariners who are literally in the same boat... but our families haven't signed up for it necessarily, certainly the children haven't," he said.

"Charities and organisations like HMS Oardacious are there helping to look after your family and to support them through a difficult period."

Sophie is joined in the film by Helen Mason, occupational and EMDR therapist and co-founder of The Submarine Mermaid Postal Service Project, a first of its kind project to support young children during submarine deployments where a parent, carer or relative is on deployment to contact the shore.

Helen's involvement highlights the importance of peer support and the resourcefulness of our submarine family's community.

The HMS Oardacious Submarine Service Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, supported by RNRMC, is committed to funding resources, projects and events that support the mental health and wellbeing of submariners and their families during the deployment cycle.

Visit hmsoardacious.com or huggableheroes.uk for more details.

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Yorkshire represented at A-boat naming

OFFICER Cadets from Yorkshire attended the naming ceremony of the sixth Astute-class hunter-killer submarine HMS Agamemnon.

The spectacular unveiling service was conducted at BAE Systems' yard in Barrow-in-Furness.

The ceremony led by "Aggies" Commanding Officer, Cdr David Crosby and boats sponsor, Lady Sedwill was attended by friends and family of the boat, BAE Systems staff and a number of affiliations from across the UK, which includes Yorkshire URNU.

The OC's had a fantastic view of the unveiling service held in the famous Devonshire Dock Hall. Afterwards they were invited to chat with the boat's crew, friends and family at the reception held at the nearby dock museum.

OC Hamza Shokat said: "We have had a fantastic day and feel very privileged to be invited to play a small part in the naming ceremony by our affiliate and friends onboard Aggie. I hope to join the submarine service in the future, so this opportunity has been invaluable."

Taste of life at sea

OFFICER Cadets from URNU East Scotland embarked on the P2000 HMS Archer.

The OCdts embarked at HMS Calliope and then got to experience life at sea as the boat proceeded through the English Channel for WW2 Commemorations in NW France, taking in the Isle of Wight and the Channel Islands on transits there and back.

OCdt Hamish Service, a second year Adult Nursing student at Edinburgh Napier University, said: "My highlight of the deployment was the two-days of ceremonial remembrance in Saint Nazaire for the 82nd anniversary of the raid there during WW2."

A/Mid Calvin Sunley, a final year Business Studies student at Dundee's Abertay University and SMid of the URNU, added: "Joining the crew of HMS Archer on their Op Chariot commemoration deployment was an enhancing experience."



CAUSEWAY HELPS DEVELOP TEAMWORK

THE huge contribution Northern Ireland has made to the maritime history of the UK was brought into focus for students from Solent URNU.

Cadets spent a week in the Province dipping into history recent and ancient as they spread around Northern Ireland in small groups, using the experience to develop teamwork and collaborative skills.

The Causeway Coast area of outstanding natural beauty and the Giant's Causeway itself are a major tourist draw.

Less well known is the fact that the surrounding cliffs served as 'look-out' posts for U-boats during the Great War in particular, when German submarines conducted operations close to the shoreline of the British Isles.

Thirty miles away the city of Londonderry played a key role in defeating the U-boats – but a generation later. Cadets learned of the role of HMS Ferret (1940-1947) in defeating the Germans and the geographical significance as the UK's most westerly port affording faster access to the Atlantic and prompt aid to convoys in or out of British harbours when they came under attack.

The history lesson did not end there: cadets enjoyed an exclusive tour around the walled city from a Caw Camp Captain and learned about the 1689 Siege of Derry and The Troubles among other major historical military events in Northern Ireland.

In Belfast, the history lessons began at the Titanic Experience to learn not just about the doomed liner, but also the city's legacy of shipbuilding (soon to be refreshed with Harland & Wolff working on the new solid support ships for the RFA).

Long associated with Belfast (but actually built in Birkenhead) HMS Caroline is the

sole surviving vessel of either the British or German fleets from Jutland in 1916. She's now a museum ship a stone's throw from where Titanic was built and cadets were given a personal tour of the light cruiser.

After further tours (Belfast Botanical Gardens, City Hall, the Marble Arch Caves in the Cuilcagh Lakelands), the time in Northern Ireland closed with a visit to the local URNU and a spot of sport (rugby for the more active, Uckers for the less).

As for Belfast's own URNU, its staff and cadets took part in the city's marathon with one eye fixed on the finishing line... the other on raising money for the Teenager Cancer Trust and the RMRNC.

Three relay teams of five and one steely solo runner (OC Dan Dickens in his first marathon) ran the 26.2 miles in excellent times and surprisingly clement weather (the relay teams also beat the two NI University Air Squadron relay teams' times).

"It really turned into an event the whole unit has rallied around and supported, as evidenced by the wonderful amount of money we have raised," said organiser OC Patrick Davis, a medical student at Queen's University Belfast.

"The causes of the Teenage Cancer Trust and RNRMC are close to the hearts of many in the URNU Belfast, especially due to the support the Teenage Cancer Trust provided to one of our colleagues in Liverpool URNU.

"Considering this year's success, we can't wait to run in 2025."

Linked with other (less strenuous) unit money-raising activities, notably quiz nights and raffles, the marathon raised around £3,300 (plus gift aid) with the funds being shared equally between the two worthy causes.



Rocking a great week

TWENTY-EIGHT staff members and officer cadets from Birmingham, Bristol, Wales, and Devon University Royal Navy Units (URNU) visited Gibraltar for a week-long programme.

The cadets, who are all university students, participate in a placement at the URNU for approximately three years where they are given the opportunity to gain Royal Navy insights such as navigation and leadership skills.

During the visit, the cadets took part in a Battlefield Tour in Buffadero Training Centre, explored the Royal Navy's connection to Gibraltar, visited HMS Scott and participated in helping to clean and conduct laborious tasks at Princess Anne's Battery, alongside the Gibraltar Heritage Trust.

When the cadets were not assisting at the Battery, they attempted the gruelling Mediterranean Steps, toured the tunnels and caves, and took part in a Rock Run, climbing the 426 metres to the top of the Rock of Gibraltar.

URNU Coxswain, Warrant Officer Class 1 Al Grover, who is responsible for the day to day running of the unit, said: "We came to Gibraltar last year and we were given such a warm welcome and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, so we knew we wanted to come back again."

"Giving the Officer Cadets a wider picture of the Royal Navy enables attraction to the Royal Navy as a potential full time career."



Wales are the victors

THE URNU held a WWE Regional Sports Competition at HMS Raleigh, led by URNU Bristol.

After weeks of planning, re-arranging and general last-minute issues all teams headed to HMS Raleigh for a weekend of sport, banter and region bonding.

Saturday saw the following sports take place: bucketball, volleyball, six-a-side football, netball, tug-o-war and brighter cricket.

There were some fantastic games throughout the day, especially with netball and bucketball which were extremely competitive.

Sunday saw the swimming gala take place, with freestyle, breaststroke, butterfly and backstroke events followed by a team relay and medley.

Saturday night saw URNU Bristol in the lead, however, URNU Wales displayed fantastic swimming prowess during the gala on the Sunday which gave them the edge in the final reckoning.

The weekend, hosted by URNU Bristol, was a resounding success with all competitors upholding the C2DRIL elements of the Naval Service.

Wales took the honours, followed by Bristol, Devon and Birmingham.

Active weekend in the Cairngorms



IN THE latest activity at URNU ES, 15 Officer Cadets and staff deployed to Pine Cottage in the Cairngorms for planned sport and activity.

On arrival, the team got straight into it with some curling at the Ice Centre in Aviemore, a first attempt at the activity for all those involved and hugely enjoyable as they competed against each other in small teams.

Day two was spent conducting archery, again a first for many of the team, while the afternoon was spent at the Zip Trek Adventure.

The final day involved a two-hour trek in the morning descending from Cairngorm Mountain Railway to Rothiemurchus Lodge through some stunning terrain and in fairly cold conditions.

It was an opportunity for cadets to hone their map reading and compass skills while taking in the flora and fauna the Cairngorms have to offer in abundance.

The afternoon was spent at TreeZone where again the OCs got the chance to negotiate some fun and tiring obstacles high up in the tree tops.

A/OCdt Anna Craig, a first year Medicine student at University of Edinburgh, said: "My first weekend away with the URNU allowed me to experience many different activities. I really enjoyed learning new sports like archery and curling, although my teams didn't end up being particularly successful."

Registered charity number: Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund 160382



Naval Children's Charity

Supporting children whose parents serve or have served in the Naval Service.



Naval Children's Charity
311 Twyford Avenue, Stamshaw,
Portsmouth, PO2 8RN

www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk
023 9263 9534
caseworkers@navalchildrenscharity.org.uk

'Outstanding and inspirational' Sir Clive

TRIBUTES have poured in from across the naval and defence 'family' for one of the leading figures in the 21st-Century Navy who died suddenly last month.

Vice Admiral Sir Clive Johnstone served nation and Navy for 35 years, taking part in – and later directing – key operations, then championed the cause of veterans when he retired from the service.

For the past 12 months he served as National President of the Royal British Legion and it was shortly after the end of its annual conference, held in Newport, South Wales, that he was taken ill and died.

Leading tributes First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key said Sir Clive was "an outstanding officer and inspirational individual who positively impacted the lives of so many."

"He will be sorely missed" while the RBL described him as "an extraordinary military leader and person of great integrity and intellect" who was passionate about the Legion ("the best and most amazing charity").

Clive Johnstone's career was as rich and varied as many whose time in the Navy

spanned the final years of the Cold War, through conflicts in the Adriatic and Middle East to global operations and most recently the resurgent challenge of Russia.

He joined the RN in 1985 after reading anthropology at Durham. After navigating Ton-class minehunters, he served in carrier HMS Invincible, as principal warfare officer in HMS Boxer during the early stages of the Balkan conflict and again on the staff of the 1st Frigate Squadron.

As First Lieutenant of the Royal Yacht, he took part in the final acts of Britannia's outstanding career: the Prince of Wales' historic visit to Northern Ireland, the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997, the final summer cruise of the Western Isles.

His first command was frigate HMS Iron Duke which supported operations in Kosovo in the late 90s and as the Fleet Programmer in the early 00s was involved in choreographing the navy's response to a string of events at home (the national firefighters' strike) and abroad (the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami).

The pace did not let up in command of the

nation's amphibious flagship, HMS Bulwark, which was thrust into the global media spotlight in the summer of 2006 when she coordinated the evacuation of British citizens and entitled civilians from the Lebanon.

Bulwark was Sir Clive's last permanent seagoing appointment, although as Flag Officer Sea Training he oversaw – and visited – scores of RN and allied vessels readying for deployment.

After two and a half years as Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff, Sir Clive was appointed as the Commander of NATO's Allied Maritime Command, based at Northwood, a post he held for three and half years.

Knighthood in the 2019 New Year's Honours, Sir Clive left the Royal Navy at beginning of 2020. Since then, Sir Clive has worked in the shipbuilding industry, volunteered as vice patron of the Battle of the Atlantic Memorial in Liverpool and chaired the Naval Review, the long-standing journal championing naval thinking for the betterment of the Senior Service.

Sir Clive leaves behind his widow Alison and their two daughters, Phoebe and Emily.



Admiral Sir Clive inspects crew of HMS Duncan as the destroyer stands down as NATO Maritime Group 2 flagship in Lisbon in 2018

Thank you for the MEWSIC

EXPERT operators and scientists have given the thumbs up to the Navy's next-generation electronic warfare system after testing the first version.

The Maritime Electronic Warfare Systems Integrated Capability (MEWSIC) will be the backbone of future operations, upgrading radar electronic support and electronic warfare Command and Control capabilities for the Fleet.

It's due to be fitted to the nation's two Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers, all six Type 45 destroyers, and the entire next-generation frigate force: eight Type 26 City-class sub-hunters, and the five Type 31 Inspiration-class general purpose warships.

Though rarely publicised, Electronic Warfare is – and will continue to be – the cornerstone of identifying enemy forces, equipment and movement to help the RN plan and conduct operations, along with the sharing of intelligence by exploiting electromagnetic energy.

A ten-strong team – six Royal Navy electronic warfare experts, two scientists from DSTL, the government's military labs, and two experts from Defence Equipment and Support – was invited to test the first software 'drop' of MEWSIC to give them an idea of the equipment they will be using and its capabilities – and its advantages over the existing EW systems when operating in a complex, congested electromagnetic environment.

What truly takes MEWSIC to the next level is EWC2 – Electromagnetic Warfare Command and Control. It's a new capability which allows the automatic fusing together of all the received electromagnetic emissions with the tactical picture to give the team in the ops room increased situational awareness, helping them to better understand the operational environment and deliver the right countermeasures at the right time to the right place.

It uses machine-readable tactics to lift the operator out from "being in the loop to being on the loop" in the decision-making process.

In conjunction with raising warfighting capabilities from the data to the Information layer, a set of extensive planning tools are provided to enable the operator to set up, configure, and update the system with the latest intelligence to rehearse scenarios before and on way to operational areas.

The testers were supervised by experts and engineers from Babcock and Elbit Systems, and offered their feedback throughout which will influence the next version of the software to improve both the user experience – and the effectiveness of MEWSIC.

The support and involvement of future users is vital to the continuous development of MEWSIC so that when it's rolled out to the Fleet operators can make maximum use of its potential.

"We found the system intuitive and very simple to operate. Moving forward, we welcome the opportunity to revisit the suppliers' facility to witness and interact with future system software 'drops' which will include additional capability, notably EWC2 and mission planning," said EW specialist Warrant Officer 2 Rob Nelson.



Extending Hans across the ocean...

THE Royal and German Navies are to step up their 66-year partnership preparing the latter's warships for front-line action worldwide.

And in return, the Royal Navy will benefit from the use of U-boats to train British – and other warships which make use of its world-renowned combat training organisation, FOST.

The German Fleet will also provide one of their auxiliary oilers such as FGS Berlin or Bonn when Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships are unavailable as the 'duty FOST tanker' due to other operational commitments.

Rear Admiral Axel Schulz, Commander German Navy's 2nd Flotilla based at Wilhelmshaven, visited frigate FGS Hamburg being put through her paces in the South Coast Exercise Areas off Plymouth before putting his signature next to that of Commodore Andrew Ingham, Commander FOST, on the new memorandum of understanding.

The result should be the increased ability of major German units to slot seamlessly into operations with the Royal Navy or NATO (and vice versa) and increased training capacity where exchange personnel are employed.

In its various incarnations



Tugs assist FGS Brandenburg up the Hamoaze as the German ship goes through FOST earlier this year

Picture: Ray Jones, FOST

and locations (presently Fleet Operational Standards and Training in Devonport Naval Base) FOST has been helping Hans... and Franz and, more recently, Hannah and Emilia, since 1958.

Some 50,000 *Matrosen* (German for matelots) and nearly 250 ships and units have been prepared for deployments with first the West German Bundesmarine and, since reunification Deutsche Marine tested on Operational Sea Training.

The German Navy operates its own counterpart to FOST,

the *Einsatzausbildungszentrum Schadensabwehr Marine* (EASZ M) – Combat Training Centre and Damage Control Navy – in the picture-postcard town of Neustadt on the Baltic coast between Kiel and Lübeck.

The training at FOST offers broader preparation – a bespoke workout for Royal Navy and allied ships featuring mock attacks by air and sea, disaster relief provision, complex multi-ship manoeuvres, operating alongside other NATO ships, as well as geo-political and environmental considerations for crews to bear in mind.

New break area saves trek for tea

THERE'S no long treks – by car, bike or foot – necessary any more for sailors in the Fleet Hydrography and Meteorological Unit in Devonport if they want a break for scrum or a coffee.

They been provided with a new rest area in their offices/HQ in Shackleton Building, courtesy of funding from NAAFI.

The FHMU HQ in the southern end of the naval base is more than a mile from Drake's junior/senior rates' mess/wardroom and the amenities in 'Drake village', so a ten-minute drive either way to eat into, er, eating/break time.

The existing downtime space, where they could relax and enjoy a coffee break and their lunch, wasn't especially welcoming... until the NAAFI Fund stepped in with a £3,245 donation.

The fund was set up in 2020 for such projects to make life better for serving personnel and their communities. So far it's handed out more than £3.5m to around 370 projects and causes.

"The furniture provided by the NAAFI fund has increased the use and comfort of our rec space, providing us with a far more relaxed area in the workplace and somewhere to relax during our mealtimes," said Petty Officer Ty Monks, one of the many users of the newly refurbished area.

FHMU's Warrant Officer 2 Chris Edmonds added: "The distance from our mess halls in HMS Drake and the conveniences in the dockyard highlight a lack of an area dedicated for us to enjoy breaks, whether it's a quick cuppa or lunch."

"We wanted to improve the recreation space by getting some suitable chairs, coffee tables, plants, and a coffee machine. These have vastly improved the unity and teamwork as well as reduce the stresses and strains of everyday life."

Ready to get stuck in on front-line units

NEARLY six months of demanding training and education ended for the aviation engineers with a pass-out parade in front of family, friends and colleagues at RNAS Yeovilton.

They are now 'qualified to maintain' Wildcat and Merlin helicopters (in the case of Air Engineering Technicians) or survival kit (Survival Equipment Technicians) – with the certificates to prove it, presented by Guest of Honour Captain Steven Skittrall.

"This signifies the conclusion of 23 weeks of rigorous study, exams, and hands-on evaluations. At this relatively junior point in their career – and for some at just 18 years old, – they are now entrusted with the immense responsibility of safely maintaining

some of the world's most advanced aircraft," said Engineering Training Officer, Lieutenant Richard Wilmot.

Air Engineering Technician families enjoyed a morning visiting 825 Naval Air Squadron and 846 Naval Air Squadron (the Maritime Wildcat and Commando Merlin units feeding front-line squadrons with trained personnel), experiencing squadron life and getting up close to the military helicopters their loved ones will soon be working on.

Families of the Survival Equipment Technicians viewed the impressive Underwater Escape Training Unit (aka 'Dunker') experiencing how their loved ones will support potential lifesaving training for personnel.

The morning was followed by the parade and presentation ceremony, including awards to top students.

The CHF Merlin SAFRAN Academic Trophy was awarded to AET Boyle; the Leonardo Helicopters Trophy to AET Aldom; the Commando Helicopter Force Trophy was awarded to AET Donaldson, the Wildcat Maritime Force Trophy to AET Deadman; the Neptune Trophy to SET Matthews' and the Yeovilton Core Values award went to AET Telfer.

Proceedings concluded with an impressive display in the air and on the ground from Commando Helicopter Force displaying the capability of a Merlin Mk4 helicopter.

Picture: LPhot Dan Rosenbaum



Activities to help your recovery

Fostering closer ties with Oz

FOLLOWING a review of the Royal Navy Recovery Pathway, the Recovery and Resilience Margins HQ (RRM HQ) was established to ensure that all medically non-deployable members of the RN and RM can access the support necessary to enhance their recovery journey.

Led by Commander Claire Lees, the HQ is responsible for the RN recovery policy, delivery of recovery activities – which are designed to offer holistic wellbeing benefits – along with overseeing Personnel Support Groups, Recovery Troops and the RN Recovery Centre Hasler (for complex medical needs).

“Becoming medically non-deployable, whether temporarily or long term, can have a massive impact on mental health,” Cdr Lees explained.

“By positively engaging with activities in a supportive environment with other people who are also experiencing the same challenges, we aim to empower our people to take charge of their own recovery.”

A recent uplift in staff means that the RRM HQ now has five full-time in-service personnel, and there are ten fully-staffed Personnel Support Groups and Recovery Troops across the country, as well as RNRC Hasler in Devonport.

Individuals do not need to be assigned to one of these units to undertake recovery activities



– they just need to be on the Recovery Pathway (they will have a temp JMES of M3/5/6 or L3/4/5/6 – see BR3 Chapter 33) and to have it recorded in their Individual Recovery Plan.

There are residential courses and retreats on offer and a wide variety of recovery activities including adaptive sports programmes, archery, wheelchair basketball, climbing,

golf, mountain biking, adaptive adventurous training, and personal coaching.

Major John Whiteman RM was assigned to a Recovery Troop following several seizures and a diagnosis of stress-based epilepsy, and has taken part in fishing (pictured), yoga, and surfing courses.

“The Recovery Team are ruthless in their pursuit of activities that will benefit those downgraded,” John said.

“The activities are amazing, but the thing I have noticed is that it is about the group of people you are with. We are all in the same boat and feel comfortable talking about our situations, which is therapy itself. I have also made some good friends and increased the network that I have of people to turn to if I am in trouble.”

“I want to reassure others that if you do end up on the RN Recovery Pathway long term it is not all over, and you are not the only one in this situation.”

“I cannot emphasise the benefit that I felt from attending these courses and I would encourage anyone downgraded give them a try.”

If you are on the recovery pathway and want more information about activities available to you, or if you wish to offer your services to deliver courses, email your local Personnel Support Group / Recovery Troop or [angie.cheal184@mod.gov.uk](mailto:cheal184@mod.gov.uk).

REAR Admiral Jude Terry, Director P&T, visited Australia to discuss how we can work together more closely and share good practice across all elements of the P&T portfolio.

A key theme throughout was the need for a more deliberate, strategic, and consistent approach, particularly in leveraging the RAN-RN Maritime Relationship Framework.

One area focused upon was meeting counterparts in the Royal Australian Navy and Australian Submarine Agency in support of the AUKUS agreement – the defence partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States to help Australia develop its nuclear submarine capability and promote stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Rear Admiral Terry took the opportunity to meet some of the Royal Navy exchange officers on assignment in Australia in both Canberra and Perth, listening to first-hand experiences and the benefits of strengthening UK-Australian ties. This included a tour of the submarine operating base at HMAS Stirling in Western Australia.

She also accompanied the British High Commissioner and Consul Generals in Melbourne and Perth.

This included taking part in the ANZAC Day dawn service in Melbourne alongside the British High Commissioner to Australia, Vicki Treadell, to pay tribute to those from Australia and New Zealand who lost their lives during the Great War and subsequent conflicts.

You Said, We Did ...

MIR Service Personnel will be disadvantaged by the government's proposed increase to the Minimum Income Requirement (MIR) to £29,000 to sponsor family members to enter, stay or settle in the UK

A lower MIR has been agreed for the Armed Forces to align with the salary threshold on completion of training. This bespoke MIR recognises the vital contribution that our personnel, including those from the Commonwealth and Nepal, have in defending the nation, alongside aligning with the Armed Forces Covenant.

There isn't enough variety of meals in establishments, and prices are set no matter how much you eat, meaning you

are penalised if you take less:

The New Defence-wide dining offer which was implemented on May 1 delivers significantly more meal choices and a better range of prices to suit all budgets. In simple terms, you will only pay for what you take.

Single/unmarried homeowners have to pay weeknight SLA/SSSA charges; married equivalents don't – it's unfair:

The SLA waiver has been extended to include unmarried homeowners. If you live in SLA/SSSA but maintain a home elsewhere and live beyond a reasonable daily commutable distance, you will be eligible to receive GYH(T) allowance and have your SLA costs waived.

Higher learning ops extended

NEW part-time funded undergraduate educational opportunities within the Royal Navy are now available from September.

The undergraduate education opportunity has been rolled out by the People Strategy & Policy Team and the Training Management Group under the P&T Directorate.

Until now, funded undergraduate degree opportunities within the Service were limited to certain criteria, but under the new scheme, the offer has been expanded to include all ranks and branches.

It is hoped the new scholarships will allow a wider range of individuals to be selected for a number of undergraduate degree courses as part of the Royal Navy's personal development provision.

There are three pathways:

- A Foundation Degree in Operation Management (five places).
- “Top-up” undergraduate scholarships for those who have been awarded a foundation degree via previous study (20 places).
- Undergraduate degree scholarship in any relevant subject (five places).

“I feel incredibly lucky to even have opportunities such as these,” said Merlin helicopter engineer CPOAET(AV) Ryan Gasson, who's applied for an Engineering Top-Up BSc.

“If I were to receive this scholarship it would not only re-affirm my unwavering loyalty to the RN, but also support my ongoing professional journey as I strive for Engineering excellence.”

A selection board will sit once a year and individuals can apply for the scheme through SCIO. For the September 2024 intake, the board sits this month, with the next opportunity open in the New Year.

“We get a lot of enquiries from our ratings for additional funding to complete in-service undergraduate degrees, which simply wasn't possible until this new scheme,” said Lieutenant Commander Jennifer Kedge, who set up the new scheme.

“We are always looking for ways to enhance the RN's personal development offer and ensuring that everyone, whatever their rank or profession, has the opportunity to be financially supported to undertake an academic qualification is just one way we can continue to support and develop our people.”

For further details see [DIN 2024DIN07-053](#).

Students sample service careers

MORE than 315 students converged on HMS Temeraire for a Royal Navy-led sports and careers day.

Aimed at providing 15-18-year-olds with an insight into life in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary, ten schools and colleges from across Portsmouth and Southampton attended the day, which provided information on the career pathways on offer and focused on the sports and adventurous training opportunities available.

On arrival, attendees were treated to a talk from Sergeant Adam Baird and Lance Corporal Taylor Lawrence van Pooss – both of whom are on the elite athlete programme with the GB bobsleigh team.

They shared details not only about their primary roles as Royal Marines Commandos, but how, having shown promise in sport, the RN supported their

journey to becoming Olympians.

Attendees were then split into teams to conduct a round-robin of activities including sports taster sessions (shooting, archery, fencing, hockey, rugby, boxing, weightlifting), an overview of today's Senior Service and careers brief, a Q&A session with young able seamen and marines, and a close-up look at a Wildcat helicopter from 825 NAS.

Also supporting the event were the Royal Navy's Recruit and Attract Team and RN Sports Associations, plus Recruiting Force, SATs, Attract, Positive Action, Department of the Corps Colonel, the Royal Marines Band Service, and Victory Squadron from HMS Collingwood.

Prizes were handed out to those students who most embodied the RN Values throughout the day, and Sergeant Kim Hare and her team from

the RM Band Corps of Drums put on an incredible display to close the event (pictured below).

Feedback from the day was extremely positive, with teachers describing the event as a fantastic way for their pupils to engage with what the Navy has to offer. One teacher simply stated: “You cannot put a value on an opportunity like this.”

With confirmation of applications being made by students to join the Royal Navy based on their experiences of the day, a repeat event is planned for next year.

If you are aware of any schools or colleges with students aged 15-18 in the Portsmouth/Southampton area that would like to take part, contact NAVYRA-RFLSEOUTREACHMAILBOX@mod.gov.uk



Normandy anniversary events largely confirmed

A SERIES of events spanning June 3-5 will be the focal point of national commemorations on this side of the Channel, before the focus shifts to Normandy and a string of acts of national and international remembrance from Pegasus Bridge in the east to the Cotentin Peninsula in the west.

Key to all events is passing the torch to a new generation so that the flame of freedom never dies out – the 80th is likely to be the last milestone anniversary marked in the presence of those who were there, the youngest of whom are now 98.

Despite the passing of years, many Normandy veterans are determined to make the pilgrimage either to Portsmouth or France for a last salute.

On June 3, they will share their stories with local schoolchildren as well as serving Royal Marines from 47 Commando – the UK's experts in amphibious operations in 2024 – as part

of a unique 'generational' event in Portsmouth.

Afterwards, the veterans will be shown around Southwick House – including its famous 'map room' – from where General Eisenhower directed operations back in 1944 and will be treated to a fly-past from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

The vintage aircraft will be back in the skies over Portsmouth the next morning, June 4, this time to salute a Brittany Ferries vessel carrying veterans over to France on behalf of the Royal British Legion to partake in anniversary events.

Simultaneously warships and merchant vessels in harbour will sound their sirens in tribute, while a flotilla of serving and vintage vessels – minehunter HMS Cattistock, patrol boats Trumpeter and Dasher, TS Royalist, WW2 motor

D-DAY 80

launch HMS Medusa and tugs – are due to accompany the ferry, with the three RN warships continuing across the Channel to the Caen Canal to support the Parachute Regiment and ceremonies at Pegasus Bridge, the Allies first objective on D-Day.

The trio and their sailors will remain in France to support other ceremonies, whose landing craft will deliver a piper to the beaches on D-Day itself, before offloading a troop of marines to yomp along the Normandy shore to Port-en-Bessin... the village/harbour liberated by

the unit's forebears in 1944.

Those veterans choosing to remain in the UK will be guests of honour at a multimedia celebration of the greatest generation and how they forced their way through Hitler's vaunted *Atlantikwall* on June 6.

Dame Helen Mirren will compare the show which will feature the testimonies of veterans, contemporary music performed by a 70-piece orchestra, a 40-strong choir and drummers from the Royal Marines Band, and involve more than 500 serving members of the Armed Forces, who will also form a guard of honour.

Both the VIP (for veterans and dignitaries) and public enclosures (for 6,000 people) to watch proceedings in the flesh on Southsea Common are full, but the event will be broadcast live on BBC1.

Later that day in Bayeux, the RBL will lead a service of commemoration at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery, attended by veterans, descendants and families.

On the evening of June 5, simultaneous light shows will take place in Portsmouth and Bayeux – again shown on the BBC.

Service of Commemoration, Bayeux War Cemetery.

On D-Day the main acts of commemoration are the joint RBL-MOD service (broadcast live by the BBC) from the British Normandy Memorial in Ver-sur-Mer at 10.30am.

For those unable to get to France, the RBL has arranged a second service in the UK from 2pm at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

And on a more local level, the D-Day Stone near Portsmouth's Canoe Lake will be the focal point for a June 6 service involving serving RN/RM personnel and veterans' groups, at 11am.



Culdrose welcome back SAR star

FORMER members of the Royal Navy search and rescue squadron 771 welcomed back one of their own to Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose.

Visiting the Helston air station was David 'Nick' Carter, who served as a chief petty officer aircrewman and search and rescue (SAR) diver during the 1970s and early 80s.

The 85-year-old, who lives in Hayle, is a veteran of the Falklands conflict, countless rescues off the coast of Cornwall and the 1979 Fastnet Race disaster – the UK's largest ever peacetime rescue operation.

He was greeted by current Royal Navy aircrew, including aircrewmen and a former SAR diver, who all also served on 771 Naval Air Squadron, which was only disbanded in 2016. They now serve with the air base's Merlin force, which still carries out search-and-rescue duties – but for the military; civilian rescues are now conducted by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Over a cup of tea in the Wardroom SAR Bar (dedicated to all things 771) and accompanied by his sons Stuart and Paul, Mr Carter was able to leaf through an archive of photographs and share tales of the arduous and demanding SAR roles, where Royal Navy helicopters crews saved innumerable lives – often pitted against appalling conditions at sea.

He joined the Royal Navy as a teenager in 1956, transferred to the Fleet Air Arm in 1971 and arrived at Culdrose the following year to train as an aircrewman with Whirlwind and then Wessex helicopters (pictured inset).

Mr Carter described how the aircrew used to wait in small room for a 'job' (an emergency call). One perk of the duty crew, he added, was being brought a free lunch.

His job was not without its difficult moments and he recalled recovering dead bodies from the sea. At the same time, it was shaped by that quiet



professionalism typical of the navy – and not without moments of dark humour too.

One moment of genuine terror was a training exercise when he jumped into the sea from a helicopter only to discover he was in the water amid circling basking sharks. He said the instructor later told him unconvincingly that he had not seen the (harmless) creatures.

His visit concluded with a visit to the station's Fastnet Race Disaster memorial and watching some of today's Merlin helicopters heading off on deployment and training sorties.

Mr Carter thanked all those involved, adding: "It's brought back a lot of memories. Culdrose seems to have changed completely."

Culdrose's Commanding Officer Captain Stuart Irwin added: "We were delighted to host Mr Carter and his sons and were pleased they enjoyed their visit."

"Search and rescue is still proudly remembered by the Royal Navy, especially by those serving personnel that performed the same demanding role. Their goodwill to Mr Carter was evident and his many years' of service mean he will always remain a part of the wider naval family"



Sicks of the best

MEDICAL Assistants pre-date Queen Victoria ascending to the throne, the birth of Royal Mail and the invention of photography.

But it's taken until 2024 for the first symposium and mess dinner for the branch – known as sick berth attendants for 132 of their 191-year existence.

Spread over two days at HMS Raleigh, the event opened with professional briefs from the branch and career managers, the submariner, Commando Forces and UKSF cadres, plus training, while all present learned that ratings can now become medical officers under new policy.

More than 90 people attended the symposium including MAs at all rates, plus Guest of Honour Captain Lee Hazard and Capt Faye, both former Petty Officer Medical Assistants.

That was followed by a dip into the long, proud history of medical assistants in the Senior Service by event organiser, Warrant Officer 2 Stuart 'Mac' Wells-McCulloch based at Yeovilton.

He's spent nine years studying the branch/cadre and its history – prompted by the fact that very few MAs, including Mac himself knew too much: "the medical assistant cadre seems to be mostly forgotten about unless in times of war and strife" (some 924 medical assistants have died in service). He hopes the symposium/mess dinner will forge a strong esprit de corps in his branch.

Mac ran through the birth of the branch to Operation Shader in Iraq,



The order from 1833 establishing the branch - back then Sick Berth Attendants and an inter-war cigarette card



Other veterans who attended served in the Falklands, Northern Ireland and the first Gulf War.

To reinforce the emphasis on the branch's proud history, each of the 11 tables at the mess dinner – where junior ratings were permitted to wear black tie and dinner suit/dress – was named after one of the most highly decorated

of 915 Gallantry and Honorary decorations earned by the MA Cadre including foreign decorations.

Everyone who attended was presented with an MA lapel pin and an etched whisky glass.

"Many old deployment friends met up to spin dits to each other and the new serving MAs," said Mac.

"New friends were also made keeping the legacy alive."

The gathering concluded on the second day with a briefing by serving MA Charlotte Henry (Yeovilton) and LMA Robbie Griffiths (CHF) on their recent deployment experiences with HMS Prince of Wales and the Commando Helicopter Force.

If you're interested in becoming an MA, you can either join the RN directly, or by side entry from other branches at AB. Contact Mac on Stuart.Wells-McCulloch945@mod.gov.uk for details.

Numbers on the up in Torrevieja

FOUR new shipmates (two new joiners, two guests) were welcomed by the Torrevieja Branch at their latest meeting.

There was also an amusing and educational recital from s/m Graham Shelton – known affectionately as ‘Schoolie’ – as he tried to unravel almost nonsensical unique language of the Royal Navy, Jackspeak.

The title of his rendition this month was ‘Women at Sea’ and charted some of the changes on military ships from under sail in Nelson’s time to the present day.

It followed one of the branch’s newer members, s/, Amanda Clancy, who served as a petty officer and gave a light-hearted summary of her time in the mob and the changes she experienced.

The meeting included the usual tot time, where the branch funds the traditional measure of rum to toast important occasions or historic events occurring in the month ahead and any birthdays of s/ms.

The branch meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 5pm at the Lakeview Bar and Restaurant, Calle Toledo 16, Ciudad Quesada 03170, Alicante. Contact ChairmanRNATB@gmail.com or see www.facebook.com/royalnavytorreviejabranch.



About a buoy

Do you know the story behind this lifebuoy?

Yes, it’s from HMS Yarmouth. But which one? And how did it end up in a museum in East Sussex?

Asking the questions is Allan Charles, a volunteer steward at Newhaven Museum... and a former radar operator on HMS Yarmouth (F101) between 1968 to 70.

To the best of his knowledge – and also any of the other custodians of the town museum – the frigate never visited the port.

The red/gold lettering (rather than the blue/gold Allan remembers) and style of the ship’s badge suggest the belt could be from the previous Yarmouth, a WW1-era light cruiser which served until the late 20s.

Anyone who can help Allan untangle the mystery should contact ar.charles.ac@gmail.com.

Relic restored from ‘greatest raid of all’

A relic from a legendary wartime commando raid discovered eight decades later now enjoys pride of place in a French museum.

Rusty, burned, slightly bent and buckled, and perforated by the German shells which struck it on March 28 1942, a hatch from the superstructure/central citadel of HMS Campbelltown has been partially restored and cleaned and can now be seen in an exhibition championing the deeds of those who attacked the docks at St Nazaire.

The raid on the French port, Operation Chariot, sought to deny the use of the huge Normandie dock by German capital ships.

Supported by a flotilla of smaller craft and commando raiders who caused havoc ashore, veteran destroyer Campbelltown rammed the dock entrance.

Several hours later the bow and forecastle of the destroyer were largely vaporised when several tonnes of explosive hidden aboard detonated as German personnel inspected the vessel.

Pretty much nothing remained of the forward section of the destroyer, the blast caused a tidal wave which swept through the dock, the caisson was wrecked, several hundred Germans were killed instantly and the dock put out of action till after the war.

Fast forward nearly eight decades and while ‘the greatest raid of all’ entered naval history with memorials and commemorative events on both sides of the Channel, workers upgrading the port facilities in St Nazaire unearthed a bulkhead door around 100 metres from the Joubert/Normandie Dock which HMS Campbelltown attacked.

It was put in storage while its origin was determined and a possible home was found for it.

Thanks to brothers Marc and Luc Braeuer, who run a museum in a former German bunker, and retired British Army officer Matt Minshall, a fitting home was found after the door was identified as coming from the destroyer.

The hatch was unveiled by sailors from patrol boats HMS Archer and Example, which have spent several weeks this spring operating along the French Atlantic coast.

Once cleaned, still legible on the door is the wording: DOOR NO.6. COLLISION. CLOSE AND DOG [CLIP] IMMEDIATELY.

Museum director Marc Braeuer said the survival of the door was a “fascinating story”.

He continued: “It was preserved by one of the port’s managers, who put it in storage pending a decision.

“We naturally stepped in to restore and display this historic vestige in its rightful place! We



The P2000 sailors with the hatch from HMS Campbelltown now on display in Le Grand Blockhaus and (right) a rare colour image showing the hatch open on the morning of the raid with the destroyer rammed into the dock gates

worked with Mr Minshall, who put together a team of history buffs to save this relic. The work bore fruit, and after historical research, the door was indeed identified as part of the glorious ship.”

Lieutenant Oliver Thomas, HMS Example’s Commanding Officer, said the two P2000s’ week-long visit to the Loire port had been packed with memorable occasions – and above all warmth from their hosts.

“It proved to be a very special week. We were thoroughly welcomed by the town of Saint Nazaire, St Nazaire society and Musée Le Grand Blockhaus.

“It was an honour and a privilege for us to represent the Royal Navy in commemorating Operation Chariot, remembering those who achieved the impossible, honouring the incredible bravery and sacrifice of sailors and soldiers.”

Acting Midshipman Calvin Sunley, a final year Business Studies student at Dundee’s Abertay University and the URNU’s Senior Midshipman, said the visit to St Nazaire was the highlight of a wholly enjoyable – and enlightening – deployment with Archer.

“Seeing and being a part of the Anglo-French diplomatic relationship, strengthening the



bond between both countries, was amazing, all while remembering the greatest raid of all time

“We had a really good tour explaining how and where the raid took place while being informed of the events that occurred. After that, we took part in official civic duties and ceremonies including a remembrance parade, visiting the Commonwealth War Graves and the unveiling of the hatch.”

The hatch, as well as a wider display on Operation Chariot, can be seen at the Musée le Grand Blockhaus in Batz-sur-Mer, a dozen miles west of St Nazaire,

where there are also displays on the sinking of the troopship Lancastria – lost off St Nazaire in June 1940 and the worst disaster in British maritime history – and events in and around the French port in World War 2.

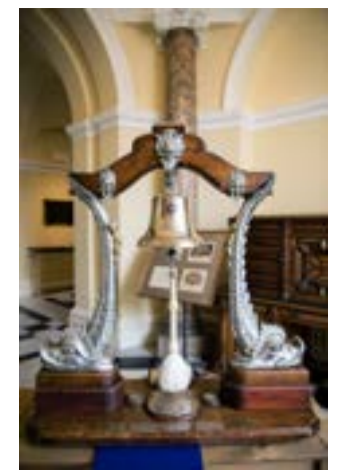
Portland dish out dosh

FOR the 68th time shipmates from Portland’s RNA branch gathered for their annual dinner.

Fifty-three shipmates and guests gathered at Portland Masonic Hall for a four-course dinner and entertainment with Mike Walker.

Guests of honour were the Commanding Officer of TS Penn, Portland Sea Cadets, Lt (SCC) Rachael Harris and CPO (SCC) Nicky Lee.

After dinner and speeches, both were presented with spirit



Bell marks RN’s ties with Bath

A bell mounted on two historic brass dolphins from the Victorian sloop HMS Dolphin 1882 has been officially unveiled at the Guildhall in Bath to mark the city’s long relationship with the Royal Navy.

For years it served symbol of the city’s White Ensign Old Comrades Association after being donated in 1941 by the son of John Luce, who commanded HMS Dolphin as a sail training brig at Edward VII’s Coronation Naval Review at Spithead in 1902.

More recently it was looked after by Bath Submariners Group who asked civic authorities to put the historic item on display.

The bell is now on permanent display at the Guildhall and commemorates not only the City of Bath’s long-standing relationship with the Royal Navy, but also the granting of the Freedom of the City to the Royal Navy 25 years ago. Its full history is displayed alongside the bell.

“We are thrilled that the council has agreed to display this historical mascot in the Guildhall, as a reminder of both the history and the enduring friendship between the Royal Navy, including the Submarine Service, and the people of Bath,” said Commodore Andrew McFarlane, president of Bath Submariners Group, who unveiled the bell in its new home with Bath’s council leader, Councillor Kevin Guy.

“We hope that many people will be able to see it and read its fascinating history.”

Councillor Guy added: “This remarkable mascot is an important tribute to the naval community and the Royal Navy’s connection to our wonderful city. As a former member of the Royal Navy this continued connection with the senior service and Bath is something I am personally very proud of.”

tumblers of a nautical theme by branch chairman Dusty Miller.

They took back a cheque for £850 to their unit, cash raised by branch members at monthly meeting raffles and donations over the past year.

To round off the evening, the giving continued with s/m Karen Miller, receiving a Certificate of Appreciation from branch treasurer, Pete Shoemith in recognition of her outstanding work as membership secretary and fundraiser.

Blitz tragedy remembered

PERSONNEL from HMS Drake remembered those who died in Devonport’s Royal Naval Barracks when their accommodation, Boscawen Block, was bombed during the Blitz.

Captain of the Base Captain David Preece, laid a wreath to remember 113 sailors killed on April 21 1941.

The block was set ablaze by an incendiary, fires raged out of control and high explosive bombs added to the carnage, causing a wall to collapse.

Winston Churchill and First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Dudley Pound visited the barracks in May 1941 and met 40 injured survivors.



CADETS IMPRESS AT COMPETITION WATCHED BY PRINCESS ROYAL...



SEA Cadets from across the UK assembled at HMS Raleigh for the National Drill and Piping Competition.

For the first time, they were joined by their Admiral, HRH The Princess Royal, who enjoyed demonstrations of both drill and piping.

She also presented the winners with their gold medals and took the salute of all the cadets during the closing March Past (pictured middle right).

Addressing 400 competitors, volunteers and guests in the West Drill Shed arena, Her Royal Highness congratulated all the cadets who took part on reaching a very high level of skill and precision – “a testament to many hours of hard work and attention to detail.”

The Princess Royal then explained why the competition is such a vital part of the Sea Cadets calendar, as a means of “developing key values of teamwork, self-discipline and commitment.”

While all the cadets put on exceptional displays over the two days, Eastern Area’s team showed remarkable consistency in finishing as overall winners, thanks to victories from Lincoln Unit’s impeccable Unarmed Squad; Hull Royal Marines Cadets Detachment’s dominant RMC Guard (with Cadet Corporal Oliver also taking gold for best Guard Commander) and Flitwick & Amptill Unit’s magnificent Individual Piper, Lance Corporal Rafael.

“All the hard work was worth it,” said Cdt Cpl Oliver, 16.

“Plus receiving our medals from HRH The Princess Royal made it a very special day with memories to match. A massive thank you to the detachment staff and my fellow cadets who took part and brought the trophies home.”

Meanwhile, for Lincoln’s Squad Commander, 15-year-old Leading Cadet Darcie, the victory was even sweeter, after the disappointment of coming a close second in 2023.

She said: “Winning was a completely surreal and rewarding experience, and one that not many can say they’ve had.

“It has given me a chance to make my unit and past members of the team proud, and I’m grateful for the opportunities brought to me by my

Commanding Officer and the staff around me.”

Eastern Area also finished just one point behind the winners of the Team Piping, where the honours went to Twickenham Unit – holders of the Canada Trophy as the UK’s most efficient unit.

Meanwhile, Southern Area also put on a tremendous performance for the last national competition of their Area Officer, Commander Trevor Price RN.

Their Armed Guard team from Wessex District were winners by an impressive points margin (pictured top right), helped by their outstanding gold medal-winning Guard Commander Able Cadet Jameson, aged 15, of Parkstone Unit (pictured bottom right).

He said: “Gratitude filled my heart as I received my medals from HRH The Princess Royal, a testament to the dedication of my team who stood by me on this incredible journey.

“Together, we soared as a guard, embodying the true spirit of a sea cadet, proudly under the roof of the Royal Navy.”

Southern Area enjoyed a second triumph in the Colour Party thanks to a great showing from Southampton Unit, while for South West Area, Torpoint Unit followed up their 2023 win by once again taking gold in the Continuity Drill with another polished and entertaining routine (pictured middle left).

In the words of team trainer, Lieutenant Rhys Tanner RN: “The cadets pulled it out of the bag to deliver a mesmerising display with immaculate drill.”

During the weekend, another special presentation saw a small number of cadets awarded the Kings Coronation Medal from MSSC President Admiral Sir Philip Jones, in recognition of their part in coronation celebrations.

Fittingly, these included Miss Sara Yasin (pictured middle left), formerly of Southampton Unit, who was the Sea Cadets Coronation Standard Bearer in Parliament Square, having won a Colour Party Gold in the 2022 National Drill & Piping Competition.

For all of the competitors, Sara is an example of where the dedication needed for drill success can lead.



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...AS HRH ALSO OFFICIALLY OPENS NEW HOME FOR STONEHAVEN

IN HER second Sea Cadets engagement of the spring, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal officially opened the new Stonehaven & District Sea Cadets Unit premises.

Arriving in her capacity as Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps, The Princess Royal was welcomed by Alastair Macphie, the Lord Lieutenant of Kincardineshire, before receiving a Royal Salute from 70 enthusiastic cadets – with Stonehaven’s contingent joined by cadets from Aberdeen, Bridge of Don, Fraserburgh and Peterhead Units, as well as the Band of HM Royal Marines (Scotland).

After the Royal inspection of the parade, and a blessing of the unit by Rev Canon Mary Jepp, The Princess Royal and a combined audience of over 300 cadets, guests and supporters then heard just how important a thriving Sea Cadets unit is to local young people.

“TS Carron has helped me make lifelong friends and given me memories which will stay with me always,” said Able Cadet Daniel, 15.

“When I finish my journey as a cadet, I want to become an instructor, and help others find their passions and

achieve their potential.”

Daniel also noted the strategic location of the new building, adding: “The unit is ideally placed right next to the harbour, and in the summer our goal is to get on the water as much and as quickly as possible.”

Stonehaven Unit Chairman, Mike Park, spoke on the importance of the new building to the town’s future:

He said: “Our new headquarters will be the perfect platform for Stonehaven’s youngsters to enjoy boating activities across a range of disciplines, including rowing, sailing, kayaking and paddle boarding.

“And we’re creating a virtuous circle here today, because those coming decades will see many hundreds of skilled and motivated young people emerge from this building and give back to this community.”

After paying tribute to the unit’s volunteers, cadets and management team, The Princess Royal then embarked on a tour of the new building escorted by the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander (SCC) Michael Blacklaw RNR.

During the tour, Her Royal Highness spoke to stalwart volunteers who had played a major role in making the dream of a new building a reality – one of whom, Bill Lawson, was an original cadet from the formation of Stonehaven Unit in 1954 and has remained involved ever since.

The day’s celebrations concluded with The Princess Royal joining cadets to cut a ceremonial cake on the Main Deck before unveiling a commemorative plaque on the parade ground.

The new building means Stonehaven Sea Cadets can now support and develop 60 local young people, compared with 40 pre-Covid.

The unit is also set to begin a trial for a Royal Marines Cadets detachment, as part of the wider range of training activities and opportunities now on offer.

The new TS Carron has been embraced by the community too, with local dance, drama, yoga and martial arts groups all benefiting from the building, which also provides a meeting space for the Pillar Kincardine mental health support group.

The unit had been in its previous building – a somewhat neglected 1846 Episcopalian school on the town’s High Street – since January 1959.

But despite the best efforts of volunteers and parents to modernise facilities, their council lease prevented them from making the major alterations needed to provide a safe and welcoming learning environment.

Deciding they needed to own their new home outright, and debt-free, volunteers began a decade of tireless fundraising which ensured a steady flow of donations from local groups, individuals and businesses.

Their project to convert a listed boatshed on the harbour front began in 2018 and continued throughout the pandemic, with the building work carried out by unit volunteers themselves – many of whom had been cadets when Stonehaven Sea Cadets was first established in the 1950s.

The official opening ceremony was also a celebration of the 70th anniversary of the formation of the Stonehaven Unit.

World Earth Day inspires youngsters to go green



SEA Cadets were delighted to celebrate World Earth Day by launching a new learning module written by one of their own junior members.

The ‘Where Does Our Waste Go’ Earthshot session aims to make juniors aware of how long different types of rubbish take to break down, while helping them work towards a waste-free world.

The module’s author, South Central District cadet Christopher (12), had the idea while taking part in a Junior Sea Cadets session on the environmental impact of sending waste to landfill.

He said: “After learning that it could take over 100,000 years for a plastic water bottle to break down into the ground, I decided that it was something everyone should know and realise when using single-use water bottles.”

The new module inspired units around the UK to take practical steps to reduce litter and waste or organise activities to promote Earth Day.

Warsash Sea Cadets made a huge improvement to their local environment by organising a massive beach clean along the Solent Way, from the Warsash Sailing Club to the Hamble Spit (pictured above).

Elsewhere, Dartford & Crayford Unit junior cadets discussed the importance of protecting the environment, painting mini planet Earths before attaching heart-shaped notes on how we can do more to love our home planet.

Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale Unit were one of many who chose to make wildflower ‘seed bombs’ to help pollinators – decorated to celebrate the blue and green beauty of our planet.

Sea Cadets learn life-saving skill thanks to charity support

TS TIGER Leicester Sea Cadets have teamed up with a heart disease charity to provide young people and volunteers with the opportunity to complete defibrillator familiarisation training as part of their first aid courses.

The partnership between the Sea Cadet group and The Joe Humphries Memorial Trust will ensure youngsters learn life-saving skills and feel comfortable if they ever had to use them.

Various levels of training is already offered to cadets and adults from the Call Push Rescue award to the Level 3 First Aid at Work qualification.

The additional support from the charity meant the unit were able to buy new equipment to help with the training.

Commanding Officer SLT (SCC) Sam Clayton RNR said: “We are so grateful to the JHMT for their generous grant of £300

which has enabled the purchase of seven mini training AEDs.

“They have enabled us to meet the required ratio of equipment for the number of learners we can instruct at a time.

“These will be used to support our cadets and adult volunteers with their first aid training by enabling them to practise attaching the AED pads to CPR mannequins and following the voice commands to perform effective CPR.”

The JHMT was set up in memory of Leicester teenager Joe Humphries who suddenly collapsed and died in October 2012, aged 14, while out jogging near his family home in Rothley, Leicestershire.

Joe was a victim of sudden arrhythmic death syndrome (SADS) – a group of lethal heart diseases which can cause sudden cardiac death in young people.

The JHMT provides free CPR training, helps to fund community defibrillators and campaigns for better understanding of SADS, as well as running the Inspire Awards small grants scheme to support young people.

Dr Mike Ferguson, JHMT Trustee, said: “A cardiac arrest is when the heart stops beating. It occurs suddenly, has no warning signs and is painless.

“Without a beating heart a person will die within 10 minutes. Every week in the UK a witnessed cardiac arrest happens every 20 minutes and 12 people under the age of 35 die from unsuspected heart disease.

“A rapid response will give a collapsed person a greater chance of living and cut the mortality rate in half. It is impressive that the Leicester Sea Cadets are offering life-saving skills: CPR buys invaluable time to get hold of and use a defibrillator.”



RESERVES ROCK...



RESERVISTS hit the waters of the Rock making use of the RN's Gibraltar Squadron to enhance their seafaring skills.

Ten coxswains and bowmen, accompanied by Maritime Reserves Headquarters training staff, integrated with the squadron, making use of its Pacific 24 boats.

The squadron – comprising two new fast patrol boats, HMS Dagger and Cutlass and several Pacific 24 sea boats – is one of the busiest units in the Navy, on the water daily, operating in narrow waters and what can be challenging geo-political conditions.

The squadron is charged with protecting major RN and allied vessels visiting the naval base and protecting the integrity of British Gibraltar Territorial Waters – and regularly draws some of its personnel from the Royal Naval Reserve.

The visitors possessed a range of experience between them from recently-qualified bowmen who'd not been back in a sea boat since their courses, through to veteran coxswains with years of service at sea under their belts looking to refresh.

Not 30 minutes after arriving in the Med, the reservists were on the water – setting the pace for a busy week of training.

The Reservists used the mornings to refresh their basic drills, such as confined



manoeuvring, man overboard exercises and coastal navigation techniques.

And then the afternoons saw the Pacific 24s joined by Dagger for pacing drills, practising the skill of coming alongside a ship on the move.

As well as skills on the water, the Reservists also had an opportunity to conduct leadership and seamanship briefs, as well as take in some of the historical sites around Gibraltar.

At the end, the team were qualified either to mobilise to join the five River-class ships deployed around the globe

on ops – or be drafted to the Gibraltar Squadron.

Around one in six personnel serving with the squadron is a Reservist, so Lieutenant Henry Kilby, HMS Dagger's Commanding Officer, said the team were only too glad to support their training.

"To ensure that our Reservists are ready to mobilise, there's no better training than at sea alongside Regular shipmates. We train as we fight – and that is together," he said.

"To any onlooker, you would never know the difference – Reservists do the

same job as their Regular counterparts and wear the same uniform; I could not achieve my mission without them. I am delighted that we have this relationship with the general warfare team to deliver training weeks for sea boat coxswains."

The training was witnessed by the Commander Maritime Reserves, Commodore Jo Adey, who also caught up with the full-time Reservists currently assigned to the Gib Squadron.

"It's been really beneficial to see and hear first-hand how Reservists are making a difference here in Gibraltar,"

she said. "Reservists filling full-time roles in the squadron, or deploying to sea as integral and integrated members of an Offshore Patrol Ship's crew, is part of the reason the Reserve exists."

"I am always impressed by the way Reservists quickly become part of the team, but just as much by how obvious it is that the Reservist's contribution is valued both by the Reservist but also their full-time commanders at sea."

It's the fourth time that the squadron has hosted this training and the commodore hopes it will be a calendar fixture long into the future to the benefit of all.

"Coming to Gibraltar means we can maximise the time spent on the water as well as practise operating alongside a warship, and in an operational environment," she added.

"In just a few short days, the Reservists gained valuable experience in boat handling and increased their confidence as coxswains. The opportunity to take the knowledge and skills developed on courses and Royal Naval Reserves sea training weekends and put the theory into practice can't be underestimated."

"I'm very grateful to everyone at the Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron for their ongoing support in helping us to develop this package."

Pictures: Cpl Dave Blackburn

...AS DOES THE GIBRALTAR SQUADRON



ORDINARILY, we wouldn't get too excited about a 400-mile round trip by a Royal Navy warship.

But when you normally rarely stray more than half a dozen miles from your home base, it's a welcome change of scene.

HMS Cutlass was invited to join the Portuguese Navy for two days of training off the Algarve coast – more used to pleasure boats, waterskiers and swimmers than men o'war as the country's most popular tourist destination.

She's typically found patrolling Gibraltar's

Territorial Waters with her sister HMS Dagger and the Pacific 24 RIBs of the RN Gibraltar Squadron 24/7/365.

After a slightly bumpy transit through the Strait of Gibraltar, then across the Bay of Cadiz, Cutlass joined Portuguese vessels NRP Cassiopeia and NRP Hydra and a boarding team of Portuguese marines.

The combined training included simulated Fast Inshore Attack Craft attacks, officer of the watch manoeuvres, towing, man overboard recovery drills and gunnery.

Prior to this exercise, the furthest the squadron had gone beyond the Rock was a first visit to Tangier in Morocco last May, although in previous incarnations the squadron regularly exercised with its NATO ally off the Algarve coast.

"The Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron used to visit Portugal frequently, but due to Covid and the work getting the Cutlass-class to full operational capability, we haven't visited the region since 2018 in HMS Scimitar," explained Cutlass' Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander

Cameron Walters.

"The deployment has been very important for the Squadron to prove the range of the Cutlass-class while also visiting somewhere different and working alongside our friends in the Portuguese Navy.

"It was fantastic to share tactics and procedures with a fellow NATO ally by training together; our hosts from the Southern Maritime Zone Command could not have been more welcoming and we very much look forward to returning in the future."

GETTING IN THE HOURS

WITH the International Road Race Championships due to start imminently, the Royal Navy Royal Marines Road Racing Team have been getting in their hours on the courses.

WO2 Brian Fuidge reflects on their first of two preparation events held at Oliver's Mount.

After some gearbox issues that side-lined the ZX6R at the first of the Inter Services rounds, it was a desperate rush to get the new gearbox fitted the night before heading to the event.

After a late-night finish and an early start, we were finally set up and through technical inspection by the Friday evening.

Saturday morning started early with the riders' brief, after which I was surprised to be invited to take out some of the newcomers to the event, on their sighting laps.

This was an interesting prospect as it is the first outing on the circuit, and I would be watched like a hawk by the riders.

With the laps done it was time to concentrate on my own efforts. Practice laps done it was into qualifying, which meant both bikes needed to be on point.

The pit crew were working hard, and it was out on the twin first. Unfortunately, I missed qualifying for the twin race by 0.2 seconds, which put me in the support race on the twin.

The 600 was a much better showing, with my best time getting me qualified into the Superspot A race.

Race 1 of the day for me was the Superspot A. I was starting at the back of a very strong grid, and with a good start was able to hold onto the back group for the first two laps before getting gapped. I finished in 20th after two riders retired.



Race 2 was the support race with me starting in Pole position on the Super Twin (even with a stock engine).

The start was a bit of a mess, and I lost three places into the first corner. It was then into the monument section where I made the first pass, taking one rider.

I then managed to get the next rider into the final hairpin bend meaning I was in 2nd at the end of the first lap. I held this until the last lap where I saw the pit crew waving like mad. Not knowing until after the rider in 1st had a five-second penalty. So, Race 2 was 2nd place by 0.2 seconds, if only we had a pit board out.

Race 3 was back on the 600 directly after the support race. With a better start I managed to hold on a little longer this time, however only managed 17th.

Sunday started with sunshine and smiles from everyone, even though I had been dropped into the Superspot B race due to others posting better times, it did mean I was on the third row in 5th for the start.

Race 1 for me was the Super sport race. The start was manic with everyone trying to get through the first corner in one piece. I managed to hold position and had a great battle with the riders both ahead and behind.

I was content to finish in 5th, only to be surprised about 30 minutes post-race to find out I had actually finished in 3rd after the two front runners took each other out.

Race 2 and time out for the twin. Starting on 2nd this time it was again dash to start but managed to get back in the lead by the end of lap one. This was held till the chequered flag for the win.

Race 3 and the final Supersport ride for the day. A great start saw me grab 5th place and after an epic race long battle it was in the final corner just 100m from the finish that the rider in front snapped his chain, narrowly avoiding him I crossed the line in 4th.

Race 4 and it was the twin out again. I managed to hold first place all the way to the second last corner where I made a mistake and ended the race in 2nd.

It was a very successful weekend before we head to Europe and the start of the IRR.



HOTTING UP

THE last warm up event before the International Road Race Championships (IRRC) was the Cookstown 100, writes WO2 Brian Fuidge, about an hour west of Belfast.

After a smooth sailing from Liverpool, we were set up and had the bikes ready on the Thursday, awaiting the madness that is Irish road racing.

For those who have not seen road racing in Ireland, the events are held on public roads, usually A and B roads with lanes interconnecting.

This particular 2.1-mile course runs between lanes around a farm and an adjoining A road.

Having never been to the circuit, I was back in an orange newcomers bib and having to learn the course very rapidly. Having driven around the course a few times in a van it was baffling to think how we would be zooming round in an average of 70 to 80mph.

A wet Friday morning early start had us in the technical control queue at 0700.

By 0800 the sun was out, and we were in the queue to sign on when it then decided that hail was the order of the day.

At 1000, the sun was back out for the bus trip round the course for all the newcomers - only to be stopped halfway round when a local decided to drive into the back of the medical van on the course.

Mayhem over and it was time for the control laps for us newbies behind an instructor. Got to love a new course, wet/dry track and now the wind decided it wanted some action.

The first lap was definitely an eyes-on-stalks moment, but as always quick adaption and with the roads closed the racing line proved to be a much easier task.

Getting the jumps right was key, along with threading the needle in some places where the blind crests hid the direction change of the road.

Qualifying for everyone is a five lap dash, so luckily I was entered in three categories, Junior Support, Senior Support and Supertwin.

Out on the Twin and in wet conditions I managed a best time of 2:07. This qualified me in the Supertwin B (11th) and the Junior Support B (1st) races.

It was then time to get on the 600 with the track drying and it still very cold. The decision was to stay on the wet tires, which lucky almost everyone else did too. I decided to just ride as best I could and with a clear dry line go a respectable 1:45 and 13th on the grid for the Senior Support.

The Supertwin B race was run on the Friday, which meant it was race action for me on the first day. With the sun low in the sky it was revs up, flag dropped, and we were tearing down to the first corner in two waves.

With only having a stock engine I was having to work hard to stay with the group in front, while still trying to work out the braking points.

I was pleased to see that I was able to carry more corner speed and outbreak the faster bikes, which meant I was in the game. I managed to get past a good few riders, when one rider overcooked one of the tight right turns in front of me and was left lying in the road.

I was able to avoid him, and the inevitable red flag was out (rider OK). Back to the start and we were off again in a shortened race.

This one was uneventful, but I did manage a 9th place in the end.

Race day, and again an early start as we were out in Race 1 of the day in the Senior support race.

Once on the grid in 13th place, I had a good friend sat in 14th and the banter was already going. This was going to be interesting.

First time out on slick tyres, sun was beaming down and now we were about to pull the trigger and head into the first corner with not knowing the braking point.

Flag dropped and all that went asunder, and we were at 120 mph in a gaggle with the who's going to blink first moment approaching.

Hard on the brakes and we all converged on the first corner. With great skill we all made it through, and it was game on.

Hedge to fence, then over the blind jumps and into tight lanes with just inches between us. In my wave I was pushed back to 5th and was lining up the rider in front of me when one of the riders ahead out-braked himself and had to take the run-off.

This meant that when we got to the mile long straight, I was in the back of the train. I managed to get a great exit and by the time we got to the braking point was alongside two others.

I decided it was time to brake and they waited a split second longer, which meant both ran on, I only just managed to make the corner. From there it was a train to the end but having managed to get my lap time down to a 1:37 I was not going to complain. What a rollercoaster of a course.

The next and last race for me was the Junior Support B where I was on pole position. The start on my twin has always been a difficult one, firstly the counterweight on the top is not as light as it should be and the engine is built more for long sweeping races.

Once the flag dropped it was a rider from the second row who swept past and by the time we got to the first corner I was squeezed back to 4th. Again, I was able to get great drive out the last corner and slipstreamed the rider in front.

I then out-braked both riders to gain 2nd place. For the next six laps it was work to hit my markers and reel in the leader. Gaining two seconds a lap, each lap.

This meant that on the last lap I was right behind him. He made a mistake on the second-to-last corner which meant I was able to get alongside going into the last chicane, where he did not know I was on his inside.

He turned in and finally saw me but held his line which forced me to have to back off a little. Through the last corner I tried everything to tuck in and slipstream, but he just had enough on me to beat me to the line by 0.2 of a second. What a way to get 2nd place!

All-in-all it was a great weekend and having done some good preparation I'm feeling confident and ready to head into Europe with a chance to see what we can achieve in the IRR.

Thanks go to WO1 Wayne Sear for his hard work as pit crew and all the racing friends that also pitched in to get us all through safely.

If you want to get involved with motorcycle road racing, contact the team through social media @RNRMRRT or email RNRMRRT@hotmail.com.



IT'S ALL DOWN HILL

A FEW BALE OUTS, BUT A GREAT CAMPAIGN

IT WAS another successful season in St. Moritz for the Royal Navy Cresta Team as they trained six new beginners and won the inaugural Women's Top Race.

The Cresta Run near St Moritz, Switzerland, consists of three quarters of a mile of hand carved ice winding down a hill side from the hamlet of Cresta to the charming village of Celerina. Similar to skeleton, riders lie face down on a toboggan weighing 40kg and negotiate the ten bends as fast as possible finishing at over 75mph.

However, unlike skeleton it is possible to fall out of the run at certain bends requiring the rider to steer the toboggan with a significant degree of strength and skill.

PONN Sarah Belcher, the Women's Team Captain, ran the development week for the beginners taken from all ranks and rates from across the RN and RM, starting at Junction, the "halfway house" to enable novices to develop the necessary skills to undertake the steeper turns from Top, with POAET Jen Borland demonstrating considerable ability completing the full three weeks and achieving one of her Top qualifying runs.

The Prince Philip Trophy is the Men's Inter-Service Championship, comprising of the six fastest Top Riders from each of the three services racing over three courses with cumulative times aggregated.

This year saw returning novice Lt Matt O'Brien making the team after an astonishing season, converting to a Flat Top, the faster more technical toboggan and demonstrating the keen reaction times and hand-eye coordination essential for his pilot career path.

Unfortunately, a second-place finish for the Navy in the Men's Championship, but Race Day this year saw a number of successes for the Navy Team.

In the Silver Spoon, the Junction Race for Present and Past service personnel, MA Faye Gardiner placed fifth overall and was the fastest Woman.

The Harland Trophy, the Top race for Present and Past service personnel, saw a fiercely contested battle between Surg Lt Cdr Alex Ward and an RAF rider resulting in a second place finish by only three tenths of a second.

This race also provided a special opportunity for father and son Col Kevin Oliver RM and SLt Cormac Oliver to race together after Col Oliver was his Son's Top Guru the day before.

The inaugural Inter-Service Women's Top Race was held this year with PONN Sarah Belcher and MA Libby Bund riding, with PO Belcher claiming the trophy and the fastest time of the race.

It wasn't all disappointment in the Men's Race with Surg Cdr Dave Potter winning not only the Lord Trenchard Trophy, prize for the cumulative fastest three times as well as the Auty Speed Cup for the single fastest ride of the Day, despite clipping a stray squirrel that had found its way into the run. Prizes were awarded by fellow team member RAdm Angus Essenhigh.

Although the Navy team were saddened to have missed out on the Inter-Services title this year, the season has been a great success with exceptional progress from all involved.

If you are available in January 2025 and think you have the determination, courage and physical robustness to throw yourself down a Swiss hillside at over 75mph with your chin two inches from the ice, please contact PONN Sarah Belcher sarah.belcher102@mod.gov.uk or Surg Lt Cdr Alex Ward alex.ward104@mod.gov.uk



Instructor completes fitness feats

A COMBINED Cadet Force instructor is well on his way to completing 1,000 fitness endurance feats after taking part in a further eight this year - bring his current tally to 848.

Streetly Academy School instructor Paddy Doyle recently reached the 848 mark in his Career Strength, Speed, Stamina Challenge and world record attempt.

So far this year he has completed nine gym and outdoor physical fitness challenges.

He has two years to reach the magic number of 1,000 feats covering 11 different disciplines.

Paddy has already beaten Russian, Chechen Republic and Swiss strength athletes World Records.

He said: "My training programme consists of endurance fitness workouts six days per week and I aim to beat many of my rivals' titles this year.

"I am also lucky to have a great support team who help out with the timekeeping, checking routes and collecting photographic and film evidence for the World Record Holders Associations."

Paddy's 2024 achievements to date are:

- Forward hold strength challenge (standing position arms locked out) holding 35lb backpack. Achieved in 2mins:41.13secs.

- 6km cross-country run/walk carrying 35lb backpack. Achieved in 1hr:08 min:59secs.

- 3.5km mountain bike cross-country challenge carrying mountain bike instructor expedition kit (with extra added weight) totalling 40lbs. Achieved in 19mins:21.38secs.

- 4km mountain bike cross-country challenge carrying mountain bike expedition instructor kit (with extra added weight) totalling 40lbs. Achieved in 24mins:22.32secs.

- 7km mountain bike cross-country challenge carrying mountain bike expedition instructor kit (with extra added weight) totalling 40lbs. Achieved in 33mins:44 secs.

- 7.5km mountain bike cross-country challenge carrying mountain bike expedition instructor kit (with extra added weight) totalling 40lbs. Achieved in 37mins:42 sec.

- Most number of weightlifting repetitions, lifting a total 32kg in one minute. Total 102 reps.

- Most 10 kg (x 2) dumbbell bench presses (from floor position) in 10 minutes. Total 324 lifts.

- Most cumulative bench presses (floor position) in five minutes holding two 5kg dumbbells. Total 242 reps.



TRIUMPHANT DOWN UNDER

SOME 10 years since the last visit, RN Rugby League made a triumphant return to Australia climaxing in a fourth consecutive victory over the Royal Australian Navy Tridents.

Commander Sean Heaton led the tour party consisting of 26 players plus support staff on what turned out to be a memorable two weeks both on and off the field.

The playing squad was a mixture of RN and RM Senior and Academy players who had swept the board at last season's Inter Services competition, achieving unprecedented back-to-back triumphs at both grades.

Based at the Australian Defence Force facility at Randwick the squad had three days of intense preparation for the first hit up against local side Renown United.

The fixture with Renown has become a traditional opener for touring RNRL sides going back to the first tour in 2002.

Led on the field by CPOAET Ben Taylor, RNRL hit the ground running getting the tour off to the perfect start on the pitch with a comfortable 36-18 win.

Besides the six try's scored, Mne Rhys Joel was on target with the boot putting over a perfect six out of six conversions.

Next up another local side, Coogee Dolphins, this time Coach CPO Darren Bamford's men came up just short going down 10-12 in an incident packed match which included heavy rain, strong winds and a floodlight failure.

Despite this setback the squad were in a good place going into training ahead of the final match of the tour against the Royal Australian Navy 'Tridents'.

The tour had been organised, from UK, by Lt Cdr Jason Steele to coincide with the Australian nations ANZAC Day commemorations so it was an early 'call the hands' on April 25 for the tour party to attend a dawn service at the Coogee Bay memorial.

All across Australia and New Zealand similar ANZAC ceremonies took place to remember those who had lost their lives in conflict since the Gallipoli campaign in 1915.

The inter service match was staged at the Brookvale Oval, home to NRL club the Manly Sea Eagles, as a curtain raiser to their match against the Parramatta Eels.

The traditional pre-match shirt presentation for this game was made even more special with former St Helens and GB Rugby league legend James Graham joining the squad to present the shirts and offer some words of advice and encouragement.

This in itself was a massive boost to the players, if one was needed, ahead of kick off.

Coach Bamford had done his homework ahead of the game and having seen the oppositions warm up game he selected his 20-man squad accordingly. This research paid off as the RNRL Brothers took command of the game from the eighth minute with a try for prop forward and man of the match MNE Dave Brown.

This opened the floodgates with RNRL totally



dominating the first half notching up a total of 34 unanswered points.

The second half began better for the Tridents as they managed a converted try of their own but RNRL struck back almost immediately.

LPT James Teixeira on the back of an RN penalty motored 40 metres through the Tridents defence to touch down for his second of the day.

The relentless pressure by the RN was rewarded with further scores against a tiring Tridents side, AET Jack Bartlett crossing for the last RN try with Mne Rhys Joel converting for his 8th of the game.

Final score RNRL 52-6 RAN, what a result to round off the tour on the pitch giving the Brothers a 5-3 lead in games played between the two sides since 2002.

After the match RNRL Chairman Cdr Sean Heaton RN MBE congratulated the squad on the victory.

"I have no words to say how proud I am of this group of players," he said.

"Professional, dedicated and loyal to the core. We came here to show that we are the best sports team in Royal Navy, and on ANZAC weekend we did not disappoint."

Despite the busy playing schedule, the group enjoyed the hospitality of the local NRL clubs as well as visiting the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) to watch an AFL 'Aussie Rules' match.

Prior to leaving there was time for the traditional photo shoot back at the SCG probably the most iconic Sports stadium in the country.

RNRL vice chairman Cdr Mat Gee RN reflected on an incredible two weeks in Sydney. He said: "With a very successful and memorable Royal Navy Rugby League Tour to Sydney complete it is time to return home.

"Thank you, Randwick Army Barracks, Royal Australian Navy Rugby League, Renown Utd, Coogee Dolphins, Manly Sea Eagles, Sydney Roosters, the Sydney Cricket Ground.

"To all those RNRL personnel who toured you demonstrated the RN ethos and were exemplars of professionalism and team work. This has been the very best tour.

"Big shout out to the RNRL tour sponsors APCL Group and the Royal British Legion, as well as the Royal Navy Sports Lottery."

For more detail and match reports visit royalnavyrugbyleague.com/

YOUTH PROJECT FOR CHILDREN

THE Royal Naval Sailing Association (RNSA) is delighted to have launched its Youth Crew programme.

The idea is to make sailing fun and accessible to the families of Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel based across the UK.

Aimed towards children aged 11 to 17, no previous experience is necessary with all training and certification provided free of charge thanks to the generous funding of Greenwich Hospital.

The courses are delivered through the not-for-profit Andrew Simpson Foundation, and the first sailing weeks were held during the Easter holidays at centres in Portsmouth, Portland and Plymouth.

Sailing is widely acknowledged to provide a great vehicle to develop life skills in young people, including self-confidence, team working, communication skills, resilience, a willingness to try new things and making friends.

The first block of sailing weeks covered sessions of RYA Youth Sailing Stage 1 & 2, plus Swim England water safety sessions.

Future Sailing weeks will take part from across the UK, including sites in Devon, Scotland, Dorset, Berkshire, Hampshire and the West Midlands.

All specialist sailing equipment, wetsuits and buoyancy aids are provided.

RNSA's Chief Executive Officer, Philip Warwick said: "I am so excited about this

opportunity to encourage sailing by Service personnel and their families.

"The Youth Crew programme sits alongside our Sail Together initiative as we work to embed sailing and its many benefits as a life-long pastime for the Naval community.

"I am hugely grateful to Greenwich Hospital for their funding and energy, the RYA for their strong support and to Andrew Simpson Foundation for their expertise and close partnership work."

RNSA's Youth Sailing Coordinator, Josh Atherton said: "So far the opening Sailing weeks have been fantastic, getting to see young people out and about on the water is really exciting, and there's been a great



ON THE WAVES DAWN TO DUSK

THE Royal Navy Surfing Association (RNSA) dispatched 15 men and women on a week-long training camp to Portugal, with an aim of honing their competition skillset ahead of the Inter-Service Surfing Championships.

The camp took place in Peniche, one of the best surf spots in Europe, allowing the team to experience conditions conducive to sustained practice and progression.

Peniche is known for its consistent swells and diverse surf breaks; the perfect training ground for surfers of all levels.

From the world-famous "Supertubos" to the hidden gems along the coast, each spot presented its own unique challenge, pushing the surfers' skills to new heights.

The team wasted no time, waking up early each day to get into the waves for a sunrise surf and staying at the beach until the sunset made for a stunning backdrop while they braved the Atlantic swells.

Weather conditions for the week were warm but overcast – comfortable but preventing the embarrassment of a "wetsuit tan"! The surf itself ranged between 3-5ft on smaller days to 'overhead' 8-10ft on bigger days, providing a real challenge for the more experienced team members. On the one day of the trip that conditions were not suitable for training, the team took the chance to visit infamous Big Wave spot Nazare, to see some genuine monsters

rolling in. The team were accommodated at Ride Surf Lodge, central to local surf spots and the town centre and offering a steam room and sauna facilities to rest and recover between training sessions.

The Lodge also boasted a surf skate park which assisted with "dry drills" on technique technique, allowing the less experienced members of the group some invaluable feedback from those more seasoned.

Evenings were spent recounting the day's adventures and of course sampling (and occasionally overindulging in!) a variety of Portuguese cuisine; much needed after long days in the water.

As the training week drew to a close, the RNSA team left Peniche with a sense of accomplishment and a renewed passion for the sport. Overall, Portugal not only provided incredible surfing conditions and amazing training opportunities but allowed the team to share knowledge and coaching tips, improve surfing ability and strengthen team cohesion. BZ Capt Jacob Randle-Bissell RM for organising the OSTC, and good luck to all those competing in the Inter-service Championships.

The camp is one of many regular trips and events put on by the RNSA, such as beginner weekends, intermediate training sessions, and other surf camps/tours abroad.

To find out more and to become a member visit surfnavy.com or search for the Surf Navy group on Facebook.



Help sought over find for charity store

Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY

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The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD



I LIVE in New Zealand and work voluntarily for a charity, helping to identify and value unusual donated items for sale in their Op shop.

Recently donated were a pair of heavy Sterling silver Napkin Rings engraved HMS Heron October 23rd 1965 and with a capital W in a beautiful script style. The rings are hallmarked with the Crown for Sheffield and the date letter W for 1964.

They are stamped C B & S for Cooper Brothers and Sons, Sheffield Silversmiths and weigh 46 grams.

If anyone is able to let me know the significance of the date and the W initial, I would be grateful.

Chris Morgan
chrisandsandra@gmail.com



Deaths

Alan Cotton, LPM. Served between 1947 and 1956 - HMS Ganges, HMS Drake, HMS Howe, HMS Sultan, HMS Tamar, HMS Unicorn, HMS Goldcrest, HMS Excellent and HMS Sea Eagle. Died April 21, aged 93.
George William Crawley, TEL. Joined RN in 1941 and served in HMS Rodney before joining the 10th Submarine Flotilla in Malta from 1942 to 1944. Served in Ultimatum, Uproar, Olympus, and the Free French submarine Curie. Awarded Malta Medal

and Legion d'Honneur by Brigadier General Herbé Bizeul on behalf of France's President Macron. Later in the war, he returned to British boats, serving in HM Submarines Universal, Medway and Upstart. He was also posted to HMS Elfin at Blyth where, over Christmas 1944, he got to know Freda while delivering signals to her office. In August 1945, the couple tied the knot. George died on April 19.
Hammond (née Richards), Linda J,

Superintending Nursing Officer, ARRC QARNNS. Served in RNH Haslar, Mtafa, School of Nursing, RNH Stonehouse. Died April 25, aged 79.
MacCartan-Ward, Commander Nigel David DSC AFC. Known as 'Sharkey'. Served Surface Fleet 1962-66, then Fleet Air Arm until 1985, in Sea Vixens, Phantoms and Sea Harriers, notably as CO 801 NAS in the Falklands. Died May 17, aged 80. See page 13 for his obituary.

Ask Jack

RUSSELL 'Westy' West: I am trying to track down Westy, who joined the RN along with me in 1979. Our first ship was HMS Rothesay, which we both joined together at Chatham in 1980.
Mike 'Arty' Shaw. Methanmike@yahoo.co.uk

Warship World: 162 copies of the magazine from 1985-2016 in mint condition seeking an appreciative home ideally in the Havant-Waterloo-Portsmouth area if you able to collect. Call Ex CPO(TASI) Terry 'Dodger' Long on 02 9271 2555.

HMS Lord Austin: I am seeking family or friends of sailors who served on the trawler which was sunk in the Seine Bay on June 24 1944. Seven crew were lost

and the remainder were rescued by US Coast Guard Rescue Flotilla One cutter USCG 56. My cousin Jess Alton Gipson was a crew member of USCG 56 which rescued survivors. I am in contact with the daughter of the Commander and the son of one of the crew of USCG 56 and we want to share information with any of the survivors' families about their rescue. If anyone has information, please email sggipson@msn.com.

Gary Gipson

Vicky Grosvenor. Your friend from the 1990s, Colette 'Letty' Leydon, is interested in getting back in touch. Originally from Windsor, where she worked in a veterinary practice and volunteered as a Special Constable with Thames Valley Police, Vicky

joined HMS Raleigh in 1998 as a Wren Writer 2nd Class. The two friends maintained contact via letter for a while, but eventually lost contact. Contact colettel1000@yahoo.co.uk

RFA Tidepool: I served on RFA Tidepool during the Falklands Conflict as 3rd Engineer Officer. After the end of the conflict we were escorted around Cape Horn to Chile to hand the ship back over to them as they had allowed us to 'borrow' it back following its sale to them earlier in the year. Is anyone able to provide details of the RN ship escorted which us back round the Cape to Punta Arenas as I have lost my records of that passage.
Norman Killin,
killinclan@talktalk.net

Reunions

HMS Troubridge (Final Commission) Association 1966-69. The 2024 reunion will be at The Queens Hotel, Osborne Road, Southsea, Portsmouth PO5 3LJ October 7-11. Contact Bryan Pace at Romft1@GMail.com.

Royal Navy Photographic Branch: - Week-end Reunion at The Doubletree By Hilton Hotel, Bristol from October 4 to 7. After the very successful Reunion in Liverpool last year, - All 'Ex & Serving Photos' plus wives/partners & guests are very welcome to help celebrate 105 years since the Branch was formed. Meet and greet on Friday evening. Saturday, visits and tours around Bristol City & SS Great Britain. Saturday evening consists of a nautical extravaganza experience, gala dinner and traditional Up Spirits enactment, in the Southville Suite followed by dancing & entertainment.

For further details please contact Social Secretary: Danny du Feu, email: ddf.photography@gmail.com; Tel: 07711 083465.

HMS Undaunted, Eagle and Yarmouth Association: The final reunion will take place from Friday 25 October to Monday 28 October 2024 at the Derby Mickleover Hotel, Etwell Road, Derby

DE3 0XX. Sadly this will be the final reunion due to dwindling numbers. Cost for 3 nights is £420 for a double room or £140 per night. Further details available from Alan (Whiskey) Walker by email whiskey666@outlook.com Tel: 01268 548041. Come and join us for the final bash.

HMS Medway Queen. Are you connected with the Medway Queen - one of the last large ships involved with the Dunkirk evacuation still with us? The team lovingly restoring the paddle steamer want to celebrate her 100th birthday this year by involving every one who has played a part in bringing her back to life. As well as carrying hundreds of thousands of tourists from the Medway to Southend, Herne Bay and Clacton on pleasure cruises, she was pressed into service as a minesweeper in WW2.

In May 1940 she was sent across the Channel and brought back around 7,000 troops from Dunkirk, securing her place in naval history. 100th birthday plans include a memorial service at Rochester Cathedral on April 21 2024. Former crew, staff, anyone involved in the long restoration of the ship or has a story to tell about the ship and their experiences aboard, especially families

of Dunkirk veterans saved by the ship should contact Pam Bathurst of the preservation society (pambathurst@sky.com) or Medway Queen Preservation Society, Gillingham Pier, Pier Approach Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 1RX).

Friends of HMS Eagle. Reunion weekend will be held at the Inn at Charlestown, Fife Friday Oct 25 to Sun 27. All Commissions, plus wives/partners & guests welcome to help celebrate 52 years since HMS Eagle was decommissioned in Portsmouth. Meet & Greet Friday; Saturday, Visits & Tours around Charlestown, Dunfermline & Edinburgh. Nautical Gala Dinner & traditional 'Up Spirits' enactment & followed by dancing & entertainment in the ballroom Saturday evening. For details contact Danny du Feu, Email: ddf.photography@gmail.com. Mob: 07711 083465.

HMS Lowestoft Association: The 2024 reunion will take place at the Queens Hotel, Southsea POS 3LJ on Tues/Wed 15/16 October. All who served in Lowestoft during her RN service (1961-1985) are welcome (including wives/partners/guests). Bookings direct with Events at the Queens Hotel on 02392 822466, for further details and a booking form please email: admin@hmslowestoft.uk

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

■ Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to - The Editor, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email: news@royalnavymail.mod.uk or editor@royalnavymail.mod.uk

■ If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

■ Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.

■ Please send in reunions at least two months (preferably three) before the month of the event. There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

■ Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

■ The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

Talking Navy News

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 07770 088388 and leave a message, or email studio@patn.org.uk A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Ask Jack columns in next month's Noticeboard must be received by June 15 2024

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