

"HMS Somerset sits ready in all respects to provide the UK's contribution to NATO's maritime forces in the Mediterranean."
■ Somerset at Trafalgar ... see page 34

Coalition fleet seizes drugs

THE BRITISH-led international task group in the Middle East has intercepted a consignment of smuggled drugs weighing more than two tons.

French frigate FS Commandant Biron, operating under the control of Commander Task Force (CTF) 150, headed by Commodore Tony Rix, sent a boarding party on to the mv Safari during a routine visit to verify documents in international waters.

The party found hashish wrapped up in 105 bags, each containing 20 1kg bricks, weighing over 2.3 tons.

A French land-based maritime patrol aircraft also lent a hand, and the contraband, the smugglers and their boat were handed over to the USS O'Kane, another ship engaged in Operation Enduring Freedom, countering terrorism and providing security and stability in the busy sea lanes in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean.

Five days later German frigate FGS Karlsruhe rescued six mariners from the tug mv Sarah crippled by engine failure in the Arabian Sea.

Boat is back in the Vanguard

TRIDENT missile submarine HMS Vanguard is back with the Fleet after a three-year refit in Devonport.

The 16,000-ton Leviathan, one of four boats which carry the nation's nuclear deterrent, is the first of her class to undergo Long Overhaul Period (Retel), a 34-month process which was undertaken at Devonport and should see her remain operational for at least two more decades.

She entered refit in January 2002, returning to her home port of Faslane in Scotland just before Christmas, and has spent the beginning of this year conducting sea trials and basic training.

The rededication ceremony followed hard on the heels of the boat's Fleet Inspection Date, when she was formally accepted into the Fleet.

Proceedings started with a for-

mal Divisions for the ship's company, with an inspection conducted by the new Ship's Friend, Mrs Tracey Wilkinson, wife of Rear Admiral Peter Wilkinson, the third Commanding Officer of HMS Vanguard and her first patrol CO.

The boat's current CO, Capt Jake Moores, read the rededication letter from Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Jonathan Band, and praised those who had worked so hard to prepare the submarine.

The rededication cake was cut by Capt Moores' wife Julia and the youngest member of the crew, OM Woodcock.

Many families and friends braved poor weather to attend, and could at least shelter from the elements in the afternoon when families were shown around Vanguard.

The boat will now continue sea trials and the weapon certification process, culminating in a missile firing towards the end of the year

in the United States. She will then carry out further trials and final work-ups early next year before stepping back into the front line.

Frigate maintains busy schedule

HMS Cumberland is helping to maintain the reputation of the Type 22 frigates as hard-working warships.

Cumberland spent a good deal of last year in the Middle East region, and has picked up the pace again this year with a visit to Glasgow to support the First Sea Lord at a service to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar (see page 37).

She then went straight into

Neptune Warrior/JMC 052, joining almost 50 other ships on exercise in Scottish waters (see page 30).

A visit to her affiliated town, Barrow-in-Furness, was slotted in before she went to take part in the International Fleet Review and the International Festival of the Sea in Portsmouth.

Once the festivities are finished her ship's company can concentrate on her forthcoming deployment to the Caribbean.

BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR BICENTENARY Commemorative Products Selection

Copper Sheathing Plates from HMS Victory Herself

These plates were originally fitted below the waterline to reduce fouling and stop teredo worms from eating the timber. Each is unique, bearing the scars of age, battle and life at sea.

Limited edition of 500, mounted in frame measuring 21x15"

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Very nice Sub 2005.