

# Call to recruit 10,000 more sailors

By Jamie Merrill

THE captain of Britain's new aircraft carrier has said he would like to see the Royal Navy recruit an extra 10,000 new sailors to bring the fleet up to strength.

With more than 32,000 personnel making up the full-time strength of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, Captain Jerry Kyd, the commander of aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, the Royal Navy's largest and most powerful warship, said retention and recruitment were a "constant battle" for senior officers. Speaking after Gavin

Williamson, the Defence Secretary, visited the carrier during its week-long visit to New York, Captain Kyd said it would be "lovely" to increase the size of the Royal Navy by 10,000 sailors over the coming years.

"This again is why we are looking at innovative manning," he said. "It is a constant battle - you have to have a strategy which balances your ends, ways and means."

"It would be lovely if we had another 10,000 people in the Navy ... we are OK, we are balanced, we are getting back into balance." His comments, which come as he hands over command of

HMS Queen Elizabeth on Wednesday, follow new figures from the Ministry of Defence which revealed that a lack of sailors has meant four British warships have not spent a day at sea in 2018.

Responding to a parliamentary question last week, the MoD released figures showing a drop in activity for the Royal Navy's fleet of Type 23 frigates due to ageing hulls and undermanning.

A National Audit Office report in April showed that the Royal Navy suffered a manpower shortage of 16 per cent in 2016-17.

Captain Kyd said the biggest challenge for the Royal Navy "is making

sure there is balance across different branches" of the force, as it adds new vessels to the fleet and adapts to new challenges.

He said: "It is not numbers as such, it is the right quality of people in the right numbers in the right areas."

Captain Kyd also revealed that HMS Prince of Wales, the sister ship of HMS Queen Elizabeth, was "on the gradual build-up" with more than 500 personnel forming the ship's company so far.

With HMS Queen Elizabeth due to enter operational service in 2021, he said the combination of aircraft carriers, cutting-edge jets, Type 45 destroy-

ers and Astute class submarines would probably mean it was the "most potent a military task group we will have put together since 1982". He added: "It is a strategic and political tool ... it is all about deterrence."

Speaking on a visit to the ship on Saturday, Mr Williamson said the warship was a "clear sign and clear demonstration" of Britain's capability.

"It is quite obvious to me that she is going to be an enormous asset to the Royal Navy, and really is an outward sign of rebirth of the Royal Navy, and actually a much more global Navy," he said.

## Virgin plane within 10ft of hitting drone over London

By Daily Telegraph Reporter

A VIRGIN Atlantic plane was just 10ft from hitting a drone in the closest near-miss involving a passenger jet and one of the gadgets in UK airspace.

If happened as the Virgin Atlantic jet passed over central London, flying at around 250mph at 3,200ft on its approach to land at Heathrow.

The B787-9 Dreamliner, carrying up to 264 passengers, was passing over residential streets north of Clapham Common when it almost hit the drone.

A report by the UK Airprox Board (UKAB), which investigates near

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The number of near misses reported between aircraft and drone-like craft in the UK last year, up from 29 in 2015

misses, said that the "drone-like object was seen to pass just below the plane's right wing, avoiding impact with the engine by an estimated 10ft". It landed safely after the incident on June 25.

Air traffic controllers were informed, but police did not find any trace of the drone operator who was flying the device at eight times the legal height.

The Civil Aviation Authority said the near-miss was believed to be the closest call ever between a drone and a commercial airliner over the UK.

Last March it was revealed that the number of near misses had tripled from 29 in 2015 to 92 last year.

Last month it was reported that a drone being flown at three miles high came within 100ft of hitting an Airbus A321 over South Yorkshire.



**Check point** Riders of foldable bikes competed for glory in the Brompton World Championship held in Bern, Switzerland, yesterday. Participants in the 10km (6 mile) race, now in its 10th year, follow a strict dress code including suit, shirt and tie.

## NEWS BULLETIN

### Mechanic killed when crushed by motor home

A mechanic died in a "freak accident" after he was crushed when a motor home fell on top of him.

Tomas Shackson, 27, is understood to have been working on the vehicle when he became trapped underneath.

Susan Nicholas, his mother, said he was badly injured in the "horrific freak accident" and died five days later.

Emergency services were called to the scene in Llanbradach, Caerphilly on Oct 8.

Mr Shackson was in intensive care at University Hospital Wales, Cardiff, but died from his injuries.

Gwent Police said they were not treating the death as suspicious and officers were supporting his family.

### £400,000 bill after thieves steal church roof

A church has been left with a bill for £400,000 after thieves stole the Grade I-listed building's lead roof in its entirety.

The theft of around 20 tonnes of the valuable metal from All Saint's Church, Houghton Conquest, near Bedford, has been described as "one of the worst" by a church architect.

Churchgoers are now trying to raise funds towards the replacement as only £15,000 is expected to be paid by insurance.

The theft was discovered at the start of the month. Michael Dales, a church architect who assessed the damage, said: "This is one of the worst lead thefts I have encountered."

### Anger at school's 'silence between classes' rule

A West Midlands school is facing criticism over a policy reportedly insisting on silence between classes. Ninestiles School, in Acocks Green, Birmingham, said pupils who broke the "silent corridor" rule would be given a 20-minute detention, a letter to parents revealed.

Acting heads of school Alex Hughes and Andrea Stephens said the policy would "ensure students arrive calmly and ready to learn", according to the letter. But the move has left some people puzzled, with one Twitter user saying: "I'm baffled ... punishing all students because some won't stop talking."

### Music boss given driving ban after Ferrari crash

A music manager who worked with the Pet Shop Boys and David Gray has been banned from driving after he left a pub and crashed his £225,000 Ferrari.

Robert Holden's 208mph Ferrari FF supercar careered 150 metres down the road on three wheels after it collided with a Peugeot 206.

A court heard an initial breath test

Illegal streaming sites