THE CHANGES DESCRIBED in Section 3.1 have created a new, and single national collection now managed by the NMRN. For the first time the NMRN has a single Collecting Policy (see Section 7.1), and an agreed overarching ‘Master Narrative’ (see Section 7.2) with supporting ‘Service Narratives’ (see Sections 7.3-7.5) to direct future decisions on collecting and disposal.

The following sections describe the collections by individual type; Figure 2 which follows these sections summarises collection sizes and shows how they are currently spread across different NMRN sites.

3.2 Description of the Collections

3.2.1 SHIPS, BOATS AND OTHER CRAFT

Period 17th Century – 20th Century
Collection size [x]

The NMRN holds 20 historic ships. At the core of the collection are 10 vessels recognised by National Historic Ships as part of the National Historic Fleet (NHF): HMS Victory (1765) – first rate ship of the line, HMS Trincomalee (1817) – fifth rate frigate, HMS Warrior (1860) – iron-hulled frigate, Holland 1 (1901) – submarine, Steam Pinnace 199 (1911), HMS Caroline (1914) – light cruiser, HMS M.33 (1915) – monitor, H21 (1918) – sea-plane lighter, LCT 7074 (1944) – landing craft tank, HMS Alliance (1945) – submarine.

Inclusion in the NHF recognises the pre-eminent significance of a ship, and the NMRN’s collection includes; the world’s only surviving First Rate warship (HMS Victory), the Royal Navy’s first ever submarine (Holland 1), two of its three surviving First World War ships (HMS Caroline and HMS M.33), unique technological innovations like the seaplane lighter H21 and the Landing Craft Tank LCT 7074.

The collection includes two other vessels recognised as significant through inclusion on the National Register of Historic Ships (the Motor Torpedo Boat MTB 71 (1940) and the midget submarine X24 (1943). It also includes vessels which either do not meet the minimum size requirements or are too recently built for the National Register, but also have a high degree of technical significance or historical association. These are: King Charles II’s state barge (c.1660) used at Nelson’s funeral, X51 midget submarine (1954), the Landing Craft Vehicle and Personnel F7 (1965), a Rigid Raider as used by the Royal Marines, the underwater survey and repair submersible LR3 and the examples of human torpedoes the Maiale (1943) and Eiber 105 (1944).

The ships and vessels in the collection have significant historic associations as participants in naval actions including: the Battle of Trafalgar (1805), the Gallipoli Campaign (1915), the Battle of Jutland (1916), attacks in Norway (1942), the D-Day Landings (1944), Falklands Conflict (1982). These ships are often accompanied by significant collections of historic artefacts and archives, and the records of their conservation and restoration.

1. Sketch of the stern of HMS Victory made by John Livesay in December 1806 after the ship’s return to Portsmouth after the Battle of Trafalgar.

2. HMS Trincomalee in dry dock at Falmouth, around 1906.
3.2.2

SHIPS’ EQUIPMENT, DECORATION AND FURNITURE

Period 18th Century – 20th Century
Collection size Over 7,000

There is a wide collection of ships’ equipment and decorations across the NMRN. The bulk of this collection is centred around NMRN (P), which has a nationally important collection of figureheads and badges, along with bells, name boards and tred plates, primarily from post-1900 ships. There is also a very good selection of Honours Boards at both NMRN (P) and FAAM. Archaeological material salvaged from a number of wrecks is also held at NMRN (P) e.g. HMS Royal George (1782), HMS Invincible (1758), HMS Prince of Wales (1941). This has traditionally been a small area of collecting, but is now an area for development with material offered to the Museum through the Receiver of Wreck in the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, after the Ministry of Defence have confirmed ownership responsibility (see also Section 3.1.4). There is also a small but wide-ranging collection of shipborne furniture, dating mostly from the late 18th and early 19th centuries (although a few 20th century pieces such as the bridge chair from HMS Ark Royal have been acquired. These have particular associations with ships or individuals, the most notable pieces are Nelson’s furniture from his dining cabin on HMS Victory.
3.2.3 AIRCRAFT, AIRFRAMES AND EQUIPMENT

Period 20th Century – 21st Century
Collection size 102 (plus over 80 engines and over 10,000 parts)

The aircraft and airframe collection, housed at the Fleet Air Arm Museum is a key component of the NMRN collections and is regarded as a collection of national importance. It is particularly strong in aircraft from the 1940s to the 1960s. Comprising over 100 complete or incomplete airframes, there are 18 that would be regarded as unique or highly significant. Linked to this collection are over 80 aircraft engines and over 10,000 items of aircraft parts and equipment, maintenance tools and specialist equipment.

1. The Sopwith Baby was a First World War single seat scouting and bombing sea plane; the FAAM’s Baby was rebuilt from two surviving original aircraft.

2. Close up of the Albatross’s cockpit.

3. A wing panel from the FAAM’s Grumman Martlet AL246, which has undergone extensive conservation to understand its different paint schemes.
ART
Period 17th Century – 21st Century
Collection size Approximately 5,200

The art collections across the NMRN cover a wide variety of styles and techniques. The focus is the paintings, drawings and prints, numbering around 4,500 in number, which cover the late 17th century through to the present day. The variety of the subject matter is extensive including, portraiture and caricature, detailed uniform studies, records of naval operations and the Royal Marines Band Service. The oil paintings in the collection are publically accessible through the Public Catalogue Foundation project. See also ‘MOD Art Collection’.

3D material includes embroideries, ceramics, bronzes and silver dating from the 18th century onwards. The mess dining ware and presentation pieces predominate, although there are key, rare items of decorative art that has been collected from across the world by members of the Royal Navy during various conflicts. Representing periods of conflict, there is a varied collection of trench art, and art produced on board ship. There is also a representative collection of mid-19th century Staffordshire commemorative pottery.

Marble bust of Nelson by the sculptor Lawrence Gaaghagan, 1798.
The 1850s sketchbooks of Major W.G.R. Masters, Royal Marine Light Infantry.
Portrait in oils of Midshipman Arthur Weevil at the age of 16½, 1917.
A J-class submarine loading torpedo alongside HMS Lucia at Scapa Flow, 1917.

3.2.5 MANUSCRIPTS, DOCUMENTS & ARCHIVES

Period 18th Century – 21st Century
Collection size Approximately 300,000

The manuscript and document collections across the NMRN provide a rich resource for research and for interpretation of the long histories of the Royal Navy. The bulk of the collections are made up of personal papers from donation by ex-naval personnel or their families.

Topics covered include: personal experience, naval movements, operations, units, equipment, vehicles, uniforms, biographies, and awards as well as ceremonial, social, local and world events. Material in the collections includes items such as: diaries, letters, log books, certificates, Line Books, maps, reports, flying logs, technical drawings and plans. They are also a significant source of display material including: recruitment and propaganda posters, shipboard notices, broadsides, proclamations, printed games, advertising and packaging.

21 See M. Sheldon, Guide to the Manuscript Collections of the Royal Naval Museum, 1997

Notable parts of the collections include:

- Over 1,000 individual diaries from officers, men and women serving from the American War of Independence to Afghanistan
- Instow collection of trials reports and drawings for amphibious craft from 1943 to 1960
- Core collection of operational records of HMS Victory and personal papers of Horatio Nelson
- Key collections of notable Naval Officers and families including Admiral Frank Twiss and the Cochrane family
- First World War Royal Naval Air Service flying log books and diaries
- Documents relating to aircraft launch and recovery devices
- Unique collection of submariners’ personnel cards

Extensive archival records, including discrete groups of personnel records, relate to the Submarine Service and the Fleet Air Arm. The Fleet Air Arm Museum has been appointed a Place of Deposit by the National Archive and holds ADM 335 (a collection of papers known as The State of The Art, drawn together by the Admiralty). The National Archives have also transferred a nationally important collection of wider Royal Navy personnel papers including Enlistment and Attestation papers, Muster Lists and RNR Ratings cards to the Museum. See also ‘Admiralty Library’.
PHOTOGRAPHS

Period 19th Century – 21st Century
Collection size Over 2,000,000

The photographic collections of the NMRN are extensive, including over 2,000,000 images of various types, from early Victorian daguerrotypes and ambrotypes to recent digital prints. The collection is well rounded depicting all aspects of naval life and is comprised from personal donation and collections of official naval photography. There is also a large collection of photographic albums from the 19th and 20th centuries which contain some of the most important documentary evidence of key Royal Naval actions. The vast bulk of the collections cover the 20th century.

Key collections include

- The Wright & Logan Collection. This is a self-contained record of the ships of the Royal Navy and of foreign navies present at Portsmouth from 1924-1998. Consisting of 22,000 negatives depicting around 5,000 vessels mostly on large format glass plate negatives up until the 1960s when a change was made to using film stock. This collection is an important archive and is well known around the world having been used extensively in publications as well as having provided souvenirs and keepsakes for the ship’s crews and families over the years.

- The Bruce-Leslie Collection. This consists of some 10,000 negatives together with their reference prints and substantial annotation. All are related to aviation in the First World War. This is a nationally important collection.

- The Pym-Trotter Collection. Glass plate negatives and copy negatives of ships.

- Photographs from the collection of HMS Ganges, relating to the history of the establishment.

- Collection of postcard-sized images, compiled by Captain J.H. Isherwood.

- The collected photographs of Harold Wylie.

- The Phoenix Collection, an unusual collection of images showing damage to ships.

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1. From an illustrated volume of plans of Portsmouth Dockyard, showing planned extensions, around 1786.
2. The records of Able Seaman Alfred Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve who served with the Hood Battalion in the Royal Naval Division.
3. One of a series of illustrated love letters sent from the China Station by Chief Stoker Walter Grainger to his sweetheart, 1896.
4. Ensign Popular reflex camera, tripod and original glass plate negatives used by Ordinary Telegraphist, 1916-1918.
5. Portrait photograph of Petty Officer 1st Class Albert George Horn.
3.2.7 FILM AND SOUND RECORDINGS

Period 20th Century – 21st Century
Collection size Approximately 1,500 (estimated)

Over 400 recordings of oral history have been collected by NMRN(I), and more exist at the other sites. There is a particularly strong focus on the Second World War period of the surface navy, and from 1990 to 2010, in the area of the Royal Marines. These cover the life and work of all ranks from the early 20th century to the present day.

Some key areas covered include, the WRNS, the Battle of the Atlantic, the Gulf War and Afghanistan. The collection is partly separated with the small collection of film being held at the Wessex Film and Sound Archive, with reference copies being held at the various sites.

3.2.8 LIBRARY

Period 16th Century – 21st Century
Collection size Approximately 25,000

The NMRN library covers all aspects of the history of the Royal Navy including specialist collections covering the Royal Marines, Royal Naval Air Service, Fleet Air Arm, and Submarines. Strengths of the collection include its focus on biography and operational history as well as some pieces of technology and naval architecture. The Library also holds a number of rare books and privately published works, alongside standard reference works, specialist periodicals and official publications.


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1 Cartoon drawn by Leading Wren Pauline Cummings showing 'The Foreign Service Wren - a snooty bird, note its characteristic attendant train of officers'.

2 Pastel and gouache drawing by Joyce Dennys (1893-1991) of a VAD nurse; many of the original Wrens had first joined the VAD.

3 Memorial window to the WRNS made for Dockyard Chapel, Rosyth, 1945.
WOMEN’S ROYAL NAVAL SERVICE (WRNS) COLLECTION

Period 20th Century
Collection size Over 6,000

The basis of this collection is the ‘WRNS Historic Collection’, which was assembled in office of Director of WRNS Office and then transferred to the Royal Naval Museum from in 1987. Since this time the collection has been supplemented with private donations and transfers of material from other establishments and is now one of the largest in the country. The collection encompasses a variety of material including photographs, manuscript items, artefacts, uniform, paintings and drawings relating to the Women’s Royal Naval Service during the First and Second World Wars as well as the Permanent Service from 1947-1993 when WRNS became integrated fully into the Royal Navy.
3.2.10 PERSONAL EQUIPMENT AND EPHEMERA

Period 19th Century – 21st Century
Collection Size: Over 6,000

This an extremely varied area, including a wide variety of formally issued equipment alongside, privately purchased items, and personal items, like watches and jewellery, snuff boxes and cigarette cases. The issued equipment alone includes items as disparate as skis and snowshoes, diving equipment, kit bags, navigational tools and body armour. This section also includes musical instruments, representing the Royal Marines Band Service, including a Steinway piano from Queen Victoria’s Royal Yacht. There is also a strong representative collection of flags, ensigns and colours. Much of this material is supported with provenance, strong personal stories and links to other items in the collections from the same source, provide well rounded interpretive opportunities.

1. Decorated ivory made by a ‘Jim Freeman’, a ‘krouman’ from Sierra Leone, recruited to work locally with the Royal Navy Squadron, 1827.

2. Woolen picture made by Shipwright James Holmes showing two vessels dressed overall, made c.1855.

3. Violin taken to sea by Admiral John Harold Heffernan (1836-1921) during his naval service; he served on HMS Warrior, 1861-1868.

4. Coconut shell given as a sweetheart gift, made by Samuel Foubister during his service on HMS Formidable in 1783.
COSTUME

Period 18th Century – 21st Century
Collection Size Over 15,000

The NMRC hold an extensive collection of costume and textile items that are considered of national significance. Key items include rare examples of eighteenth century uniform, such as a bearskin mitre cap from the American War of Independence era, although there is a relative weakness in the area of early uniform which will be a key area of development.

The collections are very strong in post-Second World War uniform, with many Sealed Patterns entering the collection from the Defence Clothing and Textile Agency (DCTA), now incorporated into Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S). This relationship has also bolstered the collections of working dress, alongside more formal uniforms. There is a comprehensive collection of headwear and badges across the branches of the RN. The RNMS also hold a highly significant collection of ‘pirate rig’, reflecting the independence of submariners in this area.

5 Full dress 1868 pattern dress tunic belonging to Colour Sergeant Isaac Pippin, Royal Marine Light Infantry.

6 ‘Not wanted on voyage’, uniform tin case from Royal Navy Submarine Museum.

7 Pair of black leather, wool-lined arctic sea boots which belonged to Lieutenant Commander Peter Cree who served on Arctic Convoy duty during the Second World War.

8 Cocked hat which belonged to Admiral Arthur Hood (1824-1901).
3.2.12 \textbf{ORDERS, DECORATIONS AND MEDALS}

Period 18th Century – 21st Century
Collection Size Over 15,000

The orders, decorations and medals collection of the NMRN is broad and diverse in scope. With a well-provenanced background, it includes examples of almost every type of medal awarded to those that served in the Royal Navy.

Highlighted by the superb collection of 8,600 awards to the Royal Marines, including all 10 Victoria Crosses awarded to the Corps, and the exceptional examples of Naval General Service Medals, the collection totals over 15,000 individual pieces. There is a high proportion of senior gallantry awards across the collections and a significant variety of foreign awards to members of the Royal Navy, from countries covering the whole globe.

Included in the collection are a number of early, privately minted examples, such as Boulton’s Nile and Trafalgar medals, pre-dating the first medals officially produced by the Royal Navy. This is one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of Royal Navy medals in the World, holding examples of almost every type of medal awarded to members of the Royal Navy.
Belgian Order of Queen Elizabeth awarded to Dorothy Porch for her work as a VAD nurse at the Anglo American Hospital 1916-1917. She later joined the WRNS.

Naval General Service Medal with Trafalgar clasp awarded to Midshipman Alexander Brenan who served on HMS Temeraire.

The Victoria Cross awarded to Bombardier Thomas Wilkinson for his gallantry under fire during the siege of Sebastopol, 1855.

Death plaque commemorating Lance Corporal Alec James Knight, Royal Marines Light Infantry, killed in action, France, 23 March 1918.
3.2.13 WEAPONS

Period 18th Century – 21st Century
Collection Size Over 4,000

The weapons collection is based around the core collections at Explosion Museum of Naval Firepower. This focuses on large naval weaponry, from the surface fleet, these include examples of guns, missiles and torpedoes, as well as the equipment used to operate them. The collection also includes a selection of torpedoes and depth charges representing underwater warfare recently relocated from the Royal Navy Submarine Museum.

The Fleet Air Arm Museum holds types of aircraft weapons, primarily missiles and bombs, alongside a small number of air-launched torpedoes. A large collection of small arms and edged weapons extends across the whole NMRN, although is a key component of the Royal Marines history. There are also different types of weapon included, such as presentation swords, standard issued firearms and foreign weapons collected from war zones.

1. 4.5 inch shells in store at Explosion Museum of Naval Firepower.
2. From the collection at the Royal Marines Museum.
3. Sword presented to Midshipman Alexander Brenan for service at the Battle of Trafalgar. This was not an official award, but a gift from friends in Dublin in 1806.
MODELS
Period 18th Century – 21st Century
Collection Size Over 1,000
This collection covers all aspects of the Royal Navy from surface ships to landing craft and submarines to aircraft. The highlights include: a collection of extremely high quality large builders models, received from the Imperial War Museum; approximately 60 medium to large ship models of display level quality at NMRN(P); and the Elsmore collection of around 60 individual models of aircraft at FAAM. There is an extensive collection of over 750 individual ship models at NMRN(P), many being small-scale models depicting classes of ships at particular periods. The models are of various different types, ranging from kit built models, to entirely bespoke ‘home-made’ examples.

Model of the river gunboat HMS Falcon made as a gift by a Chinese crew member whilst in service on the Yangtse, 1938.
The wheelhouse of the sea plane carrier HMS Ark Royal, 1914.
German builder’s model of the German cruiser SMS Schamholtz, 1907.
3.2.15 TROPHIES

Period 19th Century – 21st Century
Collection Size Over 6,000

This collection includes a number of aspects and material. A key part is foreign equipment, weapons and clothing from across the world, claimed as battlefield trophies. These sit beside elements of memorial, such as altar crosses and plaques from the First World War. Shrapnel and pieces of the battlefield environments have also been collected, such as damaged parts from the battleships that fought at Jutland.

Alongside this sits a selection of items made by members of the Royal Navy as trophies of their wartime experiences. Central among these is the nationally significant collection of ‘Jolly Roger’ flags, created by members of the Submarine Service.

Often from more peaceful times, there is a large collection of sporting trophies and associated memorabilia including cups and shields, national and RN sports caps, medals, equipment and clothing.

1. Silver Cup presented by Admiral Rodney to surgeon John Drysdale for his treatment of yellow fever in the West Indies, 1782.

2. Glass rummer made for Lieutenant Commander Brown to toast success to the sloop HMS Lynx (1794).

3. A baby’s robe from the Dervish people of modern-day Sudan by a Royal Marine.

This table is drawn from the detailed ‘Collection Map, version 4’, created across the NMRN’s sites in 2014 which breaks collections into 32 types; the totals have been adjusted for recent collection transfers.

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<th>At RNSM</th>
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<th>At Explosion</th>
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