

# Naval victory has seaman riding on crest of a wave

Putnoe sailor helps class win coveted Ganges Trophy

by Paul McNamara

A PUTNOE man has led his naval class to victory, winning the coveted Ganges Trophy for best marks during basic training.

Michael Whelan joined the Royal Navy in February and was selected soon after to lead his class during their nine-week initial training course at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall.

The 24-year-old said: "Completing training was one of the proudest days of my life. I intend to carry on trying as hard as possible throughout my career by putting 100 per cent into everything I do."

There are two classes in every Navy intake, and throughout basic training they compete against each other fiercely for the Ganges Trophy.

As leader of his class,



**AHOY THERE:** Royal Navy recruit, AB Michael Whelan, pictured right with Captain David Elford.

Pic: Dave Sherfield.

Able Rated (AB) Whelan's duties included taking charge of the group in the absence of their instructor, and leading his troops through the assault and obstacle courses in timed competition against the other class.

He also collected the trophy on behalf of the class during their passing-out parade.

The former Mark Rutherford Upper School pupil enlisted for the career opportunities and to travel the world.

He said: "I wanted to stretch myself beyond my limits and experience

things that I couldn't do as a civilian. I've enjoyed most aspects of training, from walking on Dartmoor to learning how to fight fires."

As a trainee communication and information systems specialist, AB Whelan is now heading for HMS Collingwood in Hampshire for his professional course. Once fully trained he will work at the heart of a ship's communications network, operating all the technology needed to communicate anything from battle orders to routine requests for supplies.



Picture by Pete Norton

**PRO DEAL:** Greg Taylor has been signed by Northampton

## Greg nets Cobblers deal

FORMER Goldington Middle and Mark Rutherford Upper School pupil Greg Taylor has scored his first professional football contract.

The 17-year-old midfielder is one of two Northampton Town youth team players to have been offered pro deals by the Cobblers.

Taylor, who was born in Bedford, moved to Sixfields two years ago having spent his early years at Rushden & Diamonds. He has been handed a first

team squad number of 24.

Northampton boss Stuart Gray said: "The hard work starts now.

"Earning your first professional contract is hard enough, but staying in the professional game is even harder and now they have to push on and continue to learn and develop.

"We have shown that we are willing to give opportunities to young players if they are prepared to earn them."

L  
I  
t  
C  
I  
L  
I  
z  
t  
a  
a  
t  
F  
a  
T  
o  
F  
le  
c  
a  
tr  
E  
r  
in  
w  
c  
—  
B  
B  
D  
S  
T  
si  
re  
ag  
M  
ba  
fr  
Sa  
no  
se  
sk  
PH  
rel  
M  
to  
he  
bu