

Royal couple to unveil St Nazaire memorial

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THE bravery of the men responsible for one of the major victories of World War Two will be remembered in Falmouth tomorrow when the Duke and Duchess of York unveil a newly upgraded memorial.

The St Nazaire Raid, code-named Operation Chariot, was seen by many as the turning point in the war, but 169 men were killed and 200 taken prisoner.

The Chariot Force left Falmouth for France on March 26, 1942. HMS *Campbeltown* was packed with explosives and her aim was to destroy the dry-dock at St Nazaire.

The mission was a success, but the cost was high. Five Victoria Crosses were subsequently awarded.

Each year a memorial service is held in Falmouth, until now at a modest granite memorial in Church Street car park.

It was decided earlier this year to relocate the existing memorial to The Prince of Wales Pier and supplement it with seven seats, topped with poignant inscriptions, and five Victoria Crosses embedded in the ground.

The new memorial will be unveiled tomorrow by the Duke and Duchess in the presence of at least seven veterans

from the raid and also the son of the commander of HMS *Campbeltown*, Nicholas Beattie.

Among the veterans will be Lt Colonel Bob Montgomery, joint president of the St Nazaire Society, who was a fellow prisoner of war with the Duchess of Cornwall's father.

The roads around The Prince of Wales Pier will be closed to traffic between 10.30am and 12.30pm.

The royal couple will arrive from St Mawes by ferry and will be greeted by the sound of Pendennis Brass.

They will meet local dignitaries before making their way to the new memorial to meet the veterans.

The Rev Barrington Bennets will then lead a short service of dedication which will be followed by a reading by veteran, Major General Corran Purdon.

The memorial will then be unveiled and the Duke and Duchess will meet the design and project team and Commander Gordon Abernethy, the captain of the present-day HMS *Campbeltown*.

On leaving the pier, the



couple will meet the assembled crowd of on-lookers before heading for the Coastguard station where they will meet staff, including watch keepers, a group of Radio Beacon registry staff and surveyors.

They will also meet representatives from the RNLI, 771 Squadron RNAS Cudrose and RAF Chivenor.

Their visit will end with a fly-past from a helicopter from 771 Squadron and a sail-past by the emergency towing vessel with its fire monitor display.



■ Above: a computer-generated impression of the new St Nazaire memorial, designed by Mor Design Ltd. Right: some of the text on the new 'seats' which form part of the memorial.