

OCEAN WAVE

The newsletter of HMS Ocean

Oct 2015

From the Captain...



This has been tremendously busy period for OCEAN. Aside from the change of Commanding Officer, the Ship's Company have worked tirelessly to prepare OCEAN for her Autumn deployment and have ensured we sailed in the best possible material state. For me it is huge privilege to command OCEAN and witness first hand, day in day out, the commitment and passion shown by every single sailor in maintaining the Royal Navy's largest warship at high readiness.

As I write my first Ocean Wave introduction, we are catching our breath with a 4 day visit to Livorno in northern Italy. Running for the last month with over a thousand Ship's Company, we have an eclectic mix on board with personnel from the Royal Air Force, Army Air Corps, our own Royal Marines as well as Rear Admiral Radakin, the Commander of the UK Maritime Force and his 200 strong battle staff.

Our training programme has taken us from the south coast of England to the beaches of Corsica and we have been exercising with the US Marines Corps as well as the French Navy. As we prepare to commence the second phase of the deployment I would like to reiterate the words of Captain Tim Henry, my predecessor, and thank you for your continued support; you are the reason that OCEAN has an unrivalled reputation.

With my very best wishes, thank you.

Steve Moorhouse

'OSPREY' - A FIRST FOR MANY!

On the 28th September 2015 HMS Ocean sailed from Plymouth towards the Mediterranean as part of the Cougar 15 deployment. Over the past two weeks the ship has been very busy transiting through the Bay of Biscay and on through the straits of Gibraltar into the Med.

Ocean has embarked 12 Aircraft from all 3 services so both the flight deck and hangar are very busy places at the moment with all the flying serials going on.

Ocean was also visited by a US MV 22 'Osprey' for two days of Deck Landings prior to four of them returning later in the deployment. For many in the department this was the first time they had seen one close up!



Is it a bird or is it a plane? A US MV 22 'Osprey'

Despite a busy schedule we managed to organise a whole ships dodge ball competition on the flight deck. The competition allowed everyone some time off work to enjoy the sun and enjoy themselves.

From the 6-8th of October Ocean visited Toulon. During our time there members of the Air Department represented both the Ships Rugby and Football teams against French opposition. In both games Ocean was successful, winning 58-19 in the Rugby and 5-1 in football.

Post Toulon flying continues to be busy ahead of Ex Corsican Lion and a port visit of Livorno.

NA (AH)'Scotty' Scott

Time to see the world!

As a Warfare Specialist onboard HMS Ocean we have a lot to do providing hands for part of ship to let go all lines, as well as lads closed up in the Ops Room, providing vital collision avoidance information to the bridge team to make sure we get safely through the sound in Plymouth and begin our voyage on Cougar 15.



Tom 'closed up' in the Ops Room ready to sail

The day of sailing is a big day for all onboard whether it's fresh AB's excited to experience their first taste of being at sea or seasoned personnel who have done it all before. For myself, although I have been to sea before, I would say this is my first proper deployment and I was excited as it was my first chance to do what I joined up for, to see the world, with stops in France, Italy, Portugal and Gibraltar.

On Friday 2nd October the Warfare Department conducted training on GPMG and Mini Gun, this is important as you need to keep your drills sharp on the weapons to insure you keep both yourself and the ship safe.

During the early hours of Saturday 3rd October, the ship transited through the Straits of Gibraltar (STROG) accompanied by HMS Bulwark. The STROG is an important shipping route from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic and is a known choke point for cargo vessels. For the transit through the STROG the Warfare Department provided a force protection team, closed up on GPMG and Mini Guns, from forward to aft providing a deterrent.

On Tuesday 6th October HMS Ocean came alongside in Toulon, the ship company's first run a shore of the deployment and everyone was excited. After a store ship evolution, replenishing the ships store of fresh foods, the ship secured and other than the duty watch the ship's company proceeded ashore. During our stay in Toulon the ship's rugby team played against one of the French Navy's ships winning 58 – 18. Also Toulon played against an all star classic all blacks team for a Jerry Collins

Memorial Match and a lot of the department went to watch the game, it finished 68-21 - an absolute try fest!

On Thursday 8th October the ship sailed from Toulon to continue our training on Cougar 15, next stop Livorno, Italy...

AB Tom Watts

'STOKERS' DOWN AND DIRTY

On September 28th HMS Ocean departed Devonport, turned her nose south and started her journey towards the Mediterranean. With machinery breakdown drills (and the occasional genuine breakdown) and general day to day maintenance, the Marine Engineering department have had plenty to keep us occupied. The department practises the actions on something breaking regularly to allow us to take the right actions if and when it happens for real.

The second day into our voyage included a practice helicopter crash on the flight deck. The entire ship was piped to emergency stations as various secondary "fires" were discovered and brought under control. Emergency Stations is a method of accounting for all our people (we currently have 967 onboard) and manning our fire fighting and damage control posts. Living onboard we don't have the luxury of calling out the fire brigade. We provide it ourselves. Everyone onboard from the Captain to the most junior sailors undergo a 5 day fire fighting training package shoreside dealing with real fires.

Later that day, there was an oil spillage in one of the main engine spaces. All Marine Engineers (known as Stokers) were called to the space and the evening pulling up deck plates and cleaning up, with a gusto known only to Stokers!



'Sundowners' - Stokers Style

A few days later, we had our first bit of downtime in the form of a Stoker's Quiz night. The entire department (minus those on watch) crammed

themselves into the junior rates Mess (living room) for a few hours to join in.

Our first Sunday at sea was started off with a ME sponsored Church service, continued preparation for Captain's Rounds, and finished with a Dodge ball tournament and sunbathing on the flight deck. Last Monday we had our first set of Captain's Rounds. In order to make sure the ship remains, clean, tidy, secured for rough weather and everything working, the Captain conducts a set of formal checks. The owner of each compartment reports their space to the Captain and accompanies him on his checks. The Marine Engineers received a BZ (*naval slang for 'well done'*) for all of our spaces, with ME Sundowners (a gathering of the department on the upperdeck to enjoy some liquid replenishment) as a reward for all our hard work so far.

ET ME Isobel Sennett

Clubz Crossfit Crazy!



What Crossfit actually looks like!

It is important that all serving personnel on board HMS Ocean remain fit to fight and fit for whatever life on board might throw at them. It is the ships Physical Training Instructors Job to ensure this happens. Fitness circuits on board take place several times a day with between 10 and 50 personnel attending each one and usually having to share the hangar with the Apaches and other aircraft it can sometime be a squeeze!

It is important that the circuits are kept interesting and constantly varied. HMS Ocean is the only ship in the RN to be officially affiliated as a Crossfit Gym. This means we can carry the name Crossfit Amphib and compare ourselves to other Crossfit affiliates all around the world either entering competition or just keeping it fun and interesting.

Crossfit prepares the body for the unknown and the unknowable which is why it fits in perfectly with service life. The unique style of the workouts turn

each training session into a competition which can get pretty heated with the competitive personnel we have on board. The ship's company are looking leaner each week we are away which also has a great affect on ship stability!

CLUBZ – PO PT 'Ronny' Barker

LOGISTICS? YOU DO THE MATHS!

In the first 3 weeks of COUGAR 15 alone, the Galley has served over 26,000 meals and the crew on board HMS OCEAN have already eaten over 2.5 tonnes of meat, 4 tonnes of potatoes and drunk 1,250 litres of milk!

If you linked all the sausages eaten thus far during the deployment they would go around HMS OCEAN 1.5 times – that's a lot of bangers! In 24 hours alone, half of HMS OCEAN catering staff managed to provide 7 separate meal times for each of the embarked forces that are now living onboard, the Ship's Company, the Tailored Air Group, the Embarked Military Force, the Battle Staff and other guests. Almost 1000 people in all!



AB STD Marco Richards, LSTD 'Tiny' Tempura and AB STD 'Shandy' Shand still manage to look cool even in those hats!

The Medical team have seen 246 patients at fresh cases, issued 200 prescriptions, 720 Ibuprofen, 3800 Paracetamol, 640 sea sick tablets and 10m worth of Tubigrip. The Unit Pay Office has exchanged 10,000 Euros, and the Supply Chain has brought on 25,000 toilet rolls (enough said). All delivered by a Logistics team which consist of 5 Officers, 2 Warrant Officers 1s, 3 Chief Petty Officers, 8 Petty Officers, 30 Tri-Service Chefs, 18 Tri-Service Stewards, 6 Medics, 9 Writers and 16 Tri-Service Stores Clerks. What would we do without the Logistics Department!?

PO 'Mary' Whitehouse

ASRM to the Rescue...

So the count down to the last weekend before the ship sailed for COUGAR 15 began. Before we headed out to the Med we, as part of 9 ASRM had to 'WADE' 45 Commando's Whiskey Company along with their Recce Troop and elements of the HQ in the area of Pentewan, Cornwall. (WADE means getting from Ship to shore by air or sea.)



Wader Drills – the dry way!

A lot of the WADER packages were planned to be conducted via the aviation assets onboard, but for reasons unknown to the helicopters were incapable of dropping troops ashore. As usual Royal came to the rescue!

We were slightly under-manned as Mne 'Hobnob' Hobson had suffered a minor injury while conducting kedging drills, but despite all this we still cracked on. We would have probably felt sorry for ourselves, and maybe a little hard done by, if we hadn't have seen the faces on the 45 Commando lads after they had just done a wet beach landing and then spent a few hours bobbing about in pretty gopping conditions on an LCVP – a fair few threw up (over the side thankfully)!

Eventually 45 were back on board Ocean with (not many) smiles on there faces. However, after some hot scran and a good dhobi their morale soon returned to normal. *One thing I have learnt is when Bootnecks stop dripping then you know something is really wrong!*

Numerous other tasks where completed that week including the deployment of the stern ramp and the

ramp support pontoon (RSP), davit training, driver training and cross training with our HMS Bulwark counterparts. So, all in all, a good but busy week onboard Ocean. We were definitely looking forward to a late turn to on Monday morning prior to sailing for the Med!

LCpl 'Chewie' Barker

Engineering Training Squadron

We embarked on HMS Ocean on the 27th September as the ETS. 16 ET,s from Plymouth and Portsmouth with a variety of experience from fresh out of training to some of us having spent time onboard HMS Kent where we worked for 3 months managing to achieve ET 1 qualification.

As we all had different experience coming onboard there was a variety of different goals and targets for each individual, some wanted to progress in their task books and become operationally qualified, whilst for others it was their first time at sea.

On arrival we were split into small groups within the WE section, where the leading hands and senior rates were happy to assist us in undertaking tasks and jobs needed to attain the necessary signatures in the task books. Not only are we doing the WE side of things we are also getting involved in the whole ship drill such as dining hall party and 'gasho'. Each member of the ETS are either doing dishes or sorting out the gash for a week at a time to give us an insight into everyday ship life.

We have been lucky enough to have our first run ashore as a group and we look forward to many more in the future & would like to thank the Captain and the ships company of HMS Ocean for giving us this opportunity to progress in our careers.

ET WE Gibb



All smiles- much better learning on the job!

WHERE TO FIND HELP AND SUPPORT...

For general welfare support call the RN/RM Welfare Portal - 02392 728777

Need your loved on back in an emergency? Call the Joint Casualty & Compassionate Cell - 01452 519951

Or email HMS OCEAN's Chaplain- The Rev'd Stu Hallam on HMSOCEA-EXEC-CHAPLAIN@mod.uk

Comments and suggests about the newsletter are always welcome, please email the Chaplain above!