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The HMS ST. ALBANS Newsletter

Issue 01 | November 2015



HERE WE GO, HERE WE GO, HERE WE GO!

After what seems an eternity of refitting and training, HMS ST. ALBANS is finally ready to leave Portsmouth on her next big adventure. At times it felt like the day would never arrive, and now it is just around the corner. But we don't want those who are left behind to feel left out. So over the coming months this newsletter will bring you photographs and news of what we've been up to as we make our way to the Gulf. You will get to hear where we've been and find out something of what it's like to live onboard a Royal Navy warship in the 21st century. And remember, when you've seen and read it here you will know that it is safe to share on social media.

SCHOOL VISIT

During our final week of training we were unexpectedly joined for a few hours by a school of dolphins who seemed to be having a lot of fun swimming through our wake.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CAPTAIN

Dear families and friends,

As you know ST ALBANS soon leaves Portsmouth for up to 9 months, so this is the first Newsletter to make contact before we go.

It's been an extremely busy few months for us all, both onboard and at home, but the Ship has reached the standard required for us to deploy for operations.

The future for us onboard will be hugely varied and exciting.

We have got a lot of new people and equipment added to our normal Ship's Company and kit, so we offer some great options for tasking that will be set as the government needs.

Whilst we have a broad idea of our programme already, expect it to change as events occur in the world. We'll let you know as much as security allows and as soon as we know!

Thank you for your support, we can't do it without you.

Yours faithfully,

Rich Hutchings

**Commander R P H Hutchings
Royal Navy, Commanding Officer
HMS ST ALBANS**





DOWNING STREET VISIT

On the 10th of September the Wardroom were invited to London to visit No 10 Downing Street by the European and Global Issues Secretariat (EGIS).

At the famous front door to No. 10 they were greeted by the Head of the Household staff who showed them round the main rooms, as well as the staircase which has the photo of every Prime Minister.

The tour culminated with in meeting Colonel Nick Parry, the Prime Minister's military advisor, in the Cabinet Room who explained more about his role and how highly the PM regards those that serve in the British Forces.

EAGLE EYE IN THE SKY

ST ALBANS is the most recent T23 to be fitted with the RN's ScanEagle Unmanned Air System.

It will allow ST ALBANS to see beyond the horizon extending the visual range of the Ship. ScanEagle has never before been operated alongside the recently upgraded Merlin Mk2, this presents ST ALBANS with a unique opportunity to develop the capability and to provide the command team with an enhanced level of situational awareness.

ScanEagle is best put to use to covertly track contacts of interest for an enduring period of time.

The ScanEagle system is manned by a team of 7, 1 Lt, 1 PO Aircraft Controller, 1 PO Air Engineering Technician and 4 American civilian contracts. The 4 Americans are all ex-service personnel with operational experience in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as previous experience deploying with either RN or US warships.



Launching ScanEagle



Eye of the Eagle

POSTAL ADDRESS

Just a reminder that if you want to send a letter or a parcel while we are away, the correct way to address it is:

Service Number
Rank, Name
Mess Deck
HMS ST ALBANS
Operation KIPION
BFPO 399

So it should look something like this –

*30001234
AB Joe Bloggs
42 Man Mess
HMS ST ALBANS
Operation KIPION
BFPO 399*

The good news is that if you take your letter or parcel into a Post Office you can send it completely free – but it might be as well to number them as there's no guarantee in what order they will arrive!

CHRISTMAS

All of us are sorry to be missing the Christmas and New Year festivities at home.

But we are planning to make the most of it with decorations throughout the Ship, Christmas Lunch, Carol Service and even a Nativity play!

It is a long standing tradition that the Officers serve Christmas dinner to the Ship's company and no exception will be made in ST. ALBANS. 94 turkey crowns are already packed in the freezer waiting to be cooked on the big day and will be served with traditional roast potatoes, pigs in blankets and more Brussels sprouts than there were cannon balls at Trafalgar!

Preparations for the Nativity play will begin as soon we deploy, so auditions for the First Lobster and other important roles will be held in the first few weeks away...

