

The Saint

F 83 HMS ST ALBANS



The UK's Fleet Ready Escort

May 2017

I hope you had an enjoyable Easter. I know the team were very much re-charged by taking some leave and it was great to see so many smiles and hear about your Easter Breaks as we arrived back onboard with our bags packed ready to go. I think the break was all the more positive, given that we were not at the risk of immediate recall to sea, something I know we are all having to get used to. My own family appreciated having a degree of certainty and my full attention over leave! The ship has had a remarkable first quarter of the year and frankly exceeded everyone's expectations. Amidst all the hard work, we have enjoyed it. I have found it personally inspiring to see the attitude and energy of those younger members of the team who were at sea, and in many cases at work, for the first time.



I am writing to you to give you an update, as best I can within the bounds of security. As you will be aware, much of ST ALBANS activity and the work your loved ones are doing day to day is directly connected with the security and interests of the UK and as such we have to keep some of it to ourselves. That said, I know how hard it is when this affects normal family life and how frustrating it can be to both plan ahead and manage busy lives when we are absent. There are times when all I can do is apologise to my own family and so I must also offer that to you. What I can promise is that I personally work to make sure that what we are doing matters and makes a difference and that I do my best not to keep us away from home a minute longer than is necessary. As you would expect it is also important to me that we are good at what we do and that we are able to meet the expectations placed on us by the Royal Navy and the UK.



Those of you who follow our twitter feed and the ST ALBANS facebook community pages are aware of what we have done so far this year already. If you are on social media and aren't following us I would strongly recommend it. Where security allows, we post as much as possible and many find it of interest and some comfort to know what we are up to. One of my reasons for writing to you is that our current tasking prevents us doing this in the open media to the same degree. What I can say is that we have been active in guarding the security of our territorial waters and ensuring that our national interests at sea and ashore have remained protected. This has involved actively escorting vessels that compromise British interests and providing information vital to the Royal Navy and decision makers within our Government. Dashing 2090 miles in 8 days coordinating efforts of other RN units and those of our NATO allies has been exactly as busy as it sounds.





As I write this I have just received a message from our Operational Commander which goes some way to highlighting our contribution over the last two weeks;

Personal from Commander Operations; Whilst the UK and much of the Navy was able to enjoy a break this Bank Holiday weekend your Ships remained at sea on urgent tasking. Many thanks to you, your ships company and their families for the continued commitment and professionalism they have shown and continue to show during these essential operations. Whilst we are not able to make public the extent of your success, rest assured you are having a significant positive impact on opinion both at home and abroad. As operations continue keep your heads held high in the knowledge that you are playing a key role in preserving our Nations security and influence.



I am aware that when we returned to sea, somewhat earlier than expected, you expected us back after two or three weeks; at the time that was an accurate prediction. It is now highly likely we will be away for a while longer. I would stress that this is a matter of weeks rather than months! Much of that time we will be restricted in our ability to have normal communications to you. There are times when the team will be able to receive emails from you but not immediately reply. These emails and messages count for a great deal, even a short few words can allow us to re-connect for a brief time, reassure ourselves that our loved ones are ok and also prepare us for when we get back after time away. When we are in communications we will be limited in what we can discuss, as you would expect. I will try and give the team guidance on what they can tell you so at least you can appreciate some of what is going on.

I thought it vital to let you know, to provide some reassurance and to also re-advertise some of the support available. Some reminders of organisations and contact details are below. I know that absence will cause frustration and a degree of worry, those emotions will be present in me and my team also. It is important to me to minimise the effect of this onboard and to do my best to ensure you are able to get as much support as possible. You should also know that your loved one is in safe hands and very much valued in what they do.

Commander Chris Ansell Royal Navy, Captain

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News & updates from [HMS St Albans \(@HMSStAlbans\)](#)



[HMS ST ALBANS COMMUNITY](#)

SAVE THE DATE

HMS St Albans Ship's Company would love for you to join them at the Spinnaker Tower in Gunwharf Quays on Friday the 14th of July from 1930 onwards for Dinner, Drinks and Dancing. The following day (Sat 15Jul) the PORTSMOUTH FLOTILLA Families Open Day will be held in the dockyard with entertainment, Ship's Tours and a whole host of exciting activities. Further details will shortly be available and we look forward to seeing you there!



Our vision is for all Naval Service Families to be able to have their views heard by those in positions of power; feel valued and be treated with fairness and respect; and thrive in their communities of choice.

[Royal Navy Royal Marine Welfare](#)

The Royal Navy Royal Marines Welfare Team provide accessible support services that strengthen and enhance the resilience and resourcefulness of Naval Services personnel, their families and communities.



The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) is working in partnership with Relate to offer RNRMC Personnel (serving and former) and their families **free** access to counselling services.

[Reading Force](#)

Reading Force is **free** for all Service families. It is fun and easy to take part. Whether your family is at home together or apart because of deployment, training, or distance, taking part in Reading Force brings you closer together.



Storybook Waves helps members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines maintain the link with their children by recording a bedtime story for them to listen to when a parent is serving away from home.



Huggable Heroes reduce separation anxiety and reinforce the bond between parent and child while Mummy or Daddy is working away.

[Service Pupil Premium](#) – (England Only)

The Department for Education introduced the Service Pupil Premium (SPP) in April 2011 in recognition of the specific challenges children from Service families face and as part of the commitment to delivering the armed forces covenant. State schools, academies and free schools in England, which have children of Service families in school years Reception to Year 11 can receive the SPP funding. It is designed to assist the school

in providing the additional support that these children may need and is currently worth £300 per Service child who meets the eligibility criteria.

[Defence Discount Service](#)

The official Ministry of Defence discount service is available for all members of the Defence Community and you can join for **free** and start saving £100's a year.