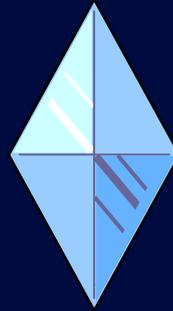


# DIAMOND *IN* *THE ROUGH*

The HMS DIAMOND Newsletter



Issue 01  
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## DIAMOND ASSUMES SNMG FLAGSHIP

As is the nature of the work that we do, this planning and preparation was very quickly put to the test. Having exited the English Channel, Diamond settled into her first watch routines and proceeded south on her journey across a choppy Bay of Biscay. Meanwhile, three thousand miles away on the other side of the Atlantic, Hurricane Irma tore a path through a significant portion of the Caribbean, including several British territories. The UK's response was to send HMS Ocean to support the relief effort. She had been due to take up the prestigious role as Flagship of Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2). As she was required on the other side of the world, this was not to be.

Signals indicating that this would fall to Diamond began trickling into the Ship shortly before we were due to come alongside in Gibraltar. Though this would temporarily put OP KIPION on hold, Diamond, fully worked up for deployment, was more than ready to accept this assignment. Tying up for a shortened Gibraltar visit, plans were finalised to embark the SNMG2 Battle Staff in Montenegro. Concurrently, the ship managed to squeeze in a reception for over fifty British Parliamentarians and other local dignitaries for the Gibraltar National Day celebrations. Sprinting east to rendezvous with the rest of the NATO group, Diamond sailed via Valetta, Malta, to pay a whistle stop visit. There to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the awarding of the George Cross to the Island, the Ship received the warmest of welcomes as we proudly entered the old home of the Royal Navy's Mediterranean Fleet.

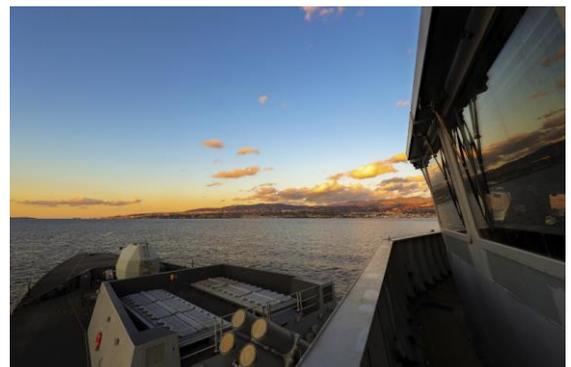
A few days later, Commodore James Morley, the Commander of SNMG2, hoisted his flag onboard Diamond alongside Bar, Montenegro. Embarking with a full, multinational battle staff, a brief but intense period of work saw the ship fitted with an extensive suite of command and control equipment suitable for leading NATO's immediate reaction maritime force in the Mediterranean. A permanently available response force, SNMG2 now sees Diamond operating in company and integrating with numerous other frigates and destroyers from other NATO navies.

### A MESSAGE FROM THE CAPTAIN

*It is a little over a month since the day we sailed from Portsmouth. Deployment day is always strange – a mix of emotions; sadness at leaving loved ones, trepidation (there is a large percentage of Ships Company who have never deployed), excitement and pride.*

*In the first month we have had a large change of tasking, 4 successful port visits, conducted operations in the Med and now are part of the largest NATO exercise of 2017 (Ex BRILLIANT MARINER). We will continue to the Middle East in November. The message your loved ones have heard me say many times before is of '3 Fs':*

- ◆ **Fighting.** *By being able to fight hard, we keep the peace. Every DMND sailor is an expert in their trade, and vital to the ship. I am proud of every one of them.*
- ◆ **Families.** *We have two families – the tightknit DIAMOND family, which looks after each other when we are down, and keeps us all safe to get home to you. We have our 'real' family, who have it much tougher than us, keeping everything together at home – we cannot do it without your support, so thank you.*
- ◆ **Fun.** *I am unashamed in this – we absolutely must have some fun over the next 8 months. Some of that fun we will share with you through this Newsletter, so enjoy the read!*





## ROUGH CUT LANDED

202Flt, from 815NAS based at RNAS Yeovilton, joined HMS DIAMOND back in February 2017.

202 joined DIAMOND for pre deployment training, returning to Yeovilton for the summer to conduct their own pre-deployment training and flew back on the day DMND sailed from Portsmouth – you might have seen them flying past as the ship passed Round Tower!

In April the flight conducted a naming competition for the 'Wildcat' helicopter and invited entries from around the ship. There were some great suggestions but the winner was 'Roughcut' - this is now our callsign for the deployment. Roughcut will be busy flying throughout the deployment on a range of tasks. Sometimes using the radar and camera to conduct long range surface searches ahead of the ship, other times providing overwatch for the boarding teams or flying people around the task group, their most important task is to collect the mail!

### REPLENISHMENT AT SEA

DIAMOND conducted a Replenishment at Sea (RAS) with FGS RHON to keep her fuelled without the need to come alongside.

The evolution requires delicate ship handling manoeuvres from the bridge to allow the engineering teams to transfer 500m<sup>3</sup> of fuel – That's enough fuel to fill a VW Golf 10,000 times!



### DEPARTMENTAL DIT – ME

This month's *departmental dit* is about the Marine Engineers (MEs)

The marine engineers worked **tirelessly** through a 5 week support period that ran over by a further 7 weeks in order to get the ship safely to sea.

To celebrate the monumental effort required to achieve this, the entire ME department went for a **Rocky Themed Run Ashore** in Gibraltar, DIAMOND's first port visit. The fancy dress event was organised by LET Phillips and was very well received by the department, the Ship and the general Gibraltar public.

### THE GREAT DIAMOND BAKE-OFF

In true DIAMOND style, the whole Ship's Company got together to show their support for Macmillan's Cancer Support last month. DMND hosted her own coffee morning some 2,500 nautical miles away from home. On the 26<sup>th</sup> September, just 3 days ahead of the pre-planned **world's biggest coffee morning**, we came together as a DMND family to nibble, natter and donate to a good cause.

The Commodore SNMG2, Commanding Officer and Executive Officer judged the Ship Company's cake making efforts and awarded SLt Bethany Ward as the days' **'Star Baker'**. Special mention to LS Clark for a cake that was almost solid, looked like a pad piece (wooden plank), and would swell approx 10 times if it came into contact with water!

Each complex utilised their own time and effort to prepare their own cake in the Ship's Galley onboard. A fun filled afternoon that saw the Ship raise a grand total of £310 to Macmillan's Cancer Support.



## ROYAL MARINES EMBARK

Since sailing from Portsmouth over a month ago DIAMOND's embarked Royal Marines Boarding Team (RMBT) have integrated into life on board ship and conducted a range of training serials to ensure their operational capability is maintained, as well as making the most of the different port visits around the Mediterranean. This training has ranged from a mock boarding exercise on a merchant vessel to casualty evacuation drills to intensive physical training.



Amongst the most worthwhile has been the simunition weapons training and maritime abseiling. Simunition is a type of non-lethal training ammunition in the form of paint-filled plastic projectiles which leaves a coloured mark at the point of impact. When fired from our personal weapons it enables realistic and safe advance Close Quarter Marksmanship drills to be conducted whilst aboard HMS DIAMOND. With some resourcefulness and ingenuity some target mounts on the ship's flight deck were constructed which provided the ideal space for our training, as well as a chance to top up the tan in the Mediterranean sun!



RMBT's have a host of equipment at their disposal to allow them to embark and disembark suspect vessels which they have been tasked to board. Amongst these are ropes and climbing equipment which provides them with the ability to abseil off down the side into awaiting rigid inflatable boats ready to collect the abseiler at the bottom. Much like with marksmanship and weapon's drills, this is a skill which requires continual practice to ensure that it can be performed in a safe manner and in potentially time sensitive circumstances. With this in mind, the RMBT have made use of HMS DIAMOND's upper deck for practice.

The RMBT's training will continue throughout HMS DIAMOND's nine month deployment during which they are held ready to conduct boarding operations at all times and at short notice.

### GUNEX – 4.5' AND 30MM

**During Ex Brilliant Mariner, a large multi national NATO exercise, the Gunnery teams onboard got to flex their muscles and demonstrate the fighting ability of the Ship.**

The 30mm cannons were up first and were tested against a floating target and also a low flying aircraft whilst other NATO Ship's in company also fired at the same target.

The teams practised locking onto the target using onboard lasers and cameras before then automatically training the weapons on and engaging the target at speed demonstrating the ability to defend the Ship from potential air and surface threats.

To continue building up gunnery expertise the Ship then increased the size of firepower and used the main gun onboard, 4.5", to engage a moving surface target simulating an enemy ship, which it successfully hit.





## FLIGHT DECK GAMES – BUCKET BALL

HMS Diamond was given a sports afternoon as down time, where everyone entered a Bucketball competition on the Flight Deck. This was organised and delivered by the LPT. 14 teams of 8 turned out in fancy dress, with some weird and wonderful inventions. The competition was run as a cup and plate, all the games were tough fought. The winners of the Cup were the Stokers and the Plate was the WE's. These competitions will be run throughout the deployment with each team collecting points for the over all prize of dinner in the Captains' cabin.



## DIAMOND RUGBY CLUB 15 – 20 MONTENGRIN OFFICERS

DIAMOND's first game of the term and first game of the deployment brought together a lot of new faces and a wealth of fresh talent. It was a rocky road getting to the game, the game had only been confirmed last minute, DMND had thrown a team together without any training or previous game-time and the referee pulled out on the day (Lt Ally Taylor having to stand in). However, what they lacked in cohesion they certainly made up for in enthusiasm, hard work and ferociousness as they entered the arena against a much better drilled outfit. Not a game for the feint hearted, with massive collisions, powerful rucking and a few blood injuries from the kick off. Unfortunately the game didn't go DIAMOND's way but despite the loss, this was a positive first game in a long time for HMS DIAMOND as there was a lot of buy-in from the players and supporters. There was some good rugby played throughout the match with some promising individual talent on display. With some consistent training and more regular matches DMND will improve on this performance and quickly become an extremely competitive Ship's team.

**Tryscorers: ET Burke, Mne Larkin, AB Kirwan**

