

HMS WESTMINSTER

Family & Friends Newsletter

ISSUE 10 | May 2019



Dear Families and Friends,

As we get into our deployment with Standing NATO Maritime Group One (SNMG1), I wanted to write to you. I cannot overemphasise how important our mission of showing support to NATO partners and deterring aggression from other areas is and the vital role that your family member is playing in this hugely important UK task. NATO is of course even more important to the UK than it has ever been as the UK moves towards BREXIT.

I would like to thank you all for your ongoing support to us and thank those who were able to attend the farewell send off from Round Tower. Please do not underestimate what a lift it gave us all to see you all. We are in the preliminary stages of organising a similar event for our return and I hope to see as many of you as possible once again.

Although, for security reasons I cannot discuss in detail our tasking, I can inform you that HMS WESTMINSTER has a challenging yet rewarding time ahead which will see her operate with a number of NATO units in the Baltic and Northern Europe. At the time of writing, we are in the Baltic working as part of a NATO task group and I am pleased to say that the whole team are working hard and achieving all that could be asked of them. As you are all aware, by the nature of our role, plans can change. If they do, I will endeavour to ensure that the maximum notice is given and that you are made fully aware of any changes to the programme via the most suitable means of communication.



Wherever it is operationally possible, I will try to ensure that all forms of communication remain available, be that through email, internet, telephone calls and letters. There may be times when I have to restrict that access, so I ask that you please remain patient if making contact is difficult. I will try to keep you informed before any period where communications are restricted but sometimes this is just not possible. At the moment letters are free to send but there is a charge for parcels (£5.50 for up to 2 Kg), I am working to try and get this funded and will keep you updated as to how I am getting on.

As a husband and father to 2 young boys I understand that this is an extremely challenging time for you when we are away and would like to highlight some of the assistance that is available (please see fact sheet attached). HMS WESTMINSTER is on Twitter and there is an HMS WESTMINSTER Community page on Facebook. By using the Facebook page, I hope you will be able to keep up to date with our deployment, talk to each other and share information.

We are busy trying to organise for some family members to sail with us from London at the end of the deployment, back to Portsmouth, this will be a wonderful opportunity for people to get a taste of what life is like onboard. There will have to be some restrictions on numbers and ages to make sure we remain safe but the event has the makings of a good 24 hours. I will be in touch with more information when I have it.

Finally, let me once again thank you for all the support and assistance that you provide, please do not underestimate the impact of a letter, parcel or email. If there are any questions that you cannot get answered on the Facebook page, please get in touch and I will do my best to get you an answer.

Will Paston
Commanding Officer
HMSWSTR-CommandingOfficer@mod.uk

RECENT EVENTS



Setting sail from Portsmouth on 22 March, WSTR has enjoyed a busy first 6 weeks to her deployment. Joining SNMG1, WSTR travelled up to the West coast of Scotland, enjoying the sunrise as she navigated the firth of the River Clyde into Glasgow. Taking advantage of some of the unique facilities in the city, a group of Ship's Company shared the ice with Dumbrek Ladies Curling Club for a taster session at Braehead curling rink, resulting in some interesting bruises and uncalled for bragging.

Next, WSTR took part in JOINT WARRIOR, a multinational exercise involving more than 8,000 military personnel from 13 nations, 60 aircraft and more than 40 ships and submarines. Following on from these demanding 2 weeks, WSTR transited onwards to what has seemingly become her spiritual home, Gdynia, Poland. Sunshine and fair weather transformed the Polish coast into a very different setting to the one experienced last year and enjoyable trips to beach resort Sopot and cultural Gdansk ensued. Finishing off our time alongside with a successful 'Ship's Open to Visitors', Ship's Company left Poland refreshed and ready to rejoin the task group.

Continuing on into the Baltic, Ship's Company have made best use of the calm seas and sunny weather, with many getting involved in upper deck gym workouts, creating 'muscle glistening' scenes comparable to those found in Muscle Beach, Santa Monica. With Easter, came joy, as Catering Services spread morale around the Ship in the form of giant chocolate bunnies, immediately undoing any gains made from the previously mentioned workouts. Going into the middle part of the deployment, WSTR looks forward to an eventful few months filled with multinational exercises, capability demonstrations and Baltic port visits.

Article by Mid Naylor

MEET YOUR SHIP'S COMPANY

NAME	LET Jeacock
ROLE	Air Weapons LET
FAVOURITE WAY TO SPEND AN EVENING ONBOARD	Catching up on the latest Game of Thrones!
BIGGEST INSPIRATION	Great Uncle (Served in the RAF)
IRRATIONAL FEAR	Rough weather!

BAKING WITH THE BEST - Lemon Tart with Blueberry Compote (suitable for Vegetarians)

Ingredients:

200 ml Cream
100g Caster Sugar
5 Lemons
50g Blueberries
20g Sugar
1 Pre Filled Tart Case with Sweet Paste Blind Baked

Recipe:

1. Add the cream and caster sugar to a thick bottomed saucepan and bring to the boil.
2. Add the lemon zest and juice to the mixture then simmer for 5 minutes or until reduced by 1 third.
3. In a different Sauce pan add the sugar to the blueberries and heat until the blueberries burst and sugar melts mix with a spoon until fully dissolved.
4. Place mix to the side to cool.
5. Pour the lemon Cream Mixture to the pre cooked pastry shell and set for 1 hour in the fridge.
6. Once set portion the tart by heating a large chefs knife and slicing the tart into suitable size.
7. Once you are ready to serve the dessert place a teaspoon of the blueberry compote on top of the centre of each portion

Recipe by Ch Hooper-Callcut and the WSTR galley team



EXERCISE JOINT WARRIOR

Exercise Joint Warrior is a multinational NATO exercise which encompasses all three arms of the UK Armed Forces (Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, British Army) along with other NATO allies. It is a two week exercise based predominantly around the North West coast of Scotland and was first formed in 1946 following the Second World War between the Royal Navy and the RAF. NATO nations that were involved in Joint Warrior 19 included Denmark, Germany, Norway, Poland, Spain, Turkey, UK and the USA to name a few.

Joint Warrior 19 had participation from the following Royal Navy units: HMS ALBION, CATTISTOCK, DEFENDER, KENT, MIDDLETON, and last but certainly not least WESTMINSTER. The exercise is initially based around peace-keeping roles, however as the exercise advances so does the 'threat' level requiring a more robust response from Royal Navy and NATO units. The exercise tests units in their response to Air, Surface, and Sub Surface threats utilising each department onboard to work together in reacting and responding to specified threats using individual Royal Navy and combined NATO assets to achieve the Command Aim.



WESTMINSTER not only had to respond to threats within the exercise with force, or simply be a deterrent presence, but also had to maintain a high level of sustainability whilst at sea. This included conducting several Replenishments at Sea (RAS), with NATO auxiliary tankers, a process which requires a whole ship effort to maintain safety throughout the serial.

What did WESTMINSTER do?

Throughout the duration of Joint Warrior 19, WESTMINSTER remained in Defence Watches which allow the Ships Company to react to threats 24 hours a day. Defence Watches can be quite testing on the crew, however, as always WESTMINSTER displayed the utmost professionalism in achieving the command aim and conducted serials correctly and safely.

WESTMINSTER conducted Air Defence serials, where RAF units including the fast jet, Typhoons act as hostile threats trying to engage the ship and the task force testing not only our defence strategies but those of all the units involved.



As WESTMINSTER is designed for Anti-Submarine warfare we spearheaded the CASEX serials where we actively hunted NATO units acting as hostile threats and we also used our sophisticated sonar systems to act as a guard ship for several 'High Value Units' within the exercise.

WESTMINSTER utilised the currently embarked aircraft, the Wildcat Mk II to assist in building intelligence and tactical pictures of the units involved. The aircraft was also used to assist during CASEX serials, and when the opportunity arose take some of WESTMINSTER's crew have been fortunate enough to experience flight in a military aircraft.

Finally, WESTMINSTER conducted several gunnery shoots throughout Joint Warrior 19, in order to ensure the crew's skills were tested and developed. The ship conducted 4.5 inch gun shoots, as well as Small Fire Arms at Sea (SAFAS). During one of the 'swarm' exercises where the threat was imposed by several fast incoming attack crafts (FIAC), the Ship's reactions were tested but not found wanting. In summary, Joint Warrior 19 was an intense yet successful exercise, which WESTMINSTER thoroughly enjoyed being a part of.

NATO



What is NATO?

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a group of like-minded countries who bring together their armed services to make a large military force. Having a larger military force available to the group allows the members to achieve far more than if any one of the member countries would be able to on their own.

NATO was started when the North Atlantic Treaty was signed by the founders in Washington, D.C., USA, on April 4, 1949 so it has been going strong for over 70 years. The UK has always been a member and contributes to NATO activities every year. We have representatives in the North Atlantic Council which makes the big decisions about what we should do with the large force. Whilst it is a team effort Britain (and all other countries) still has ultimate control over what our people do and where they go.

Who is NATO?

The countries that first got together and founded NATO are Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Other countries have since decided that being a part of this club is a good idea because it gives them protection from threats outside the group.

NATO now has twenty-nine members; most of them are in Europe and North America.

Overall

NATO is a military alliance that the UK is a proud founding member of. It is a leading contributor to peace and security providing us with an umbrella of protection and reason to work with and develop relationships with partner nations. Through its crisis management operations, NATO demonstrates both willingness and ability to act as a positive force in the world in the 21st century.

Why is NATO?

After the Second World War a number of countries in Western Europe were worried about an attack from the East. These countries formed a group that would all look out for each other if any one of them was attacked. NATO was started when these western European countries joined up with other North Atlantic countries including the USA. NATO expanded over the years that followed and now gives an umbrella of protection for all of its members. An attack against on NATO member is an attack on all NATO countries. In addition, in more peaceful times NATO is able to turn its attention and capability toward humanitarian and disaster relief work where this military capability can make a positive impact on those in need.

Where is NATO?

NATO headquarters are in Brussels, Belgium. However, NATO does not just sit at home! NATO task groups can be found all over the globe. Some of the previous conflicts that NATO has been involved in include; Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Gulf of Aden and Libya. But it is not just about conflict, through peace keeping and humanitarian work NATO have helped save lives and bring about a stability to less fortunate countries in Europe, Africa and further afield.

HMS WESTMINSTER is currently part of the Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1) contributing the formidable presence a British Warship and remarkable skills of the Sailors aboard to the NATO effort.



Fun fact

The two official languages of NATO are English and French. The French for North Atlantic Treaty Organization is understandably different. Luckily the acronym for Organisation du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord; OTAN is NATO backwards.

Article by Surg Lt Loftus

MEET YOUR FLIGHT!

Job Title	Name	Nickname	Job Description	Actual Job Description	Favourite Film	If I was a food I would be...
Flight Commander	Neil	"Dockers"	In command of the flight, operates the aircraft's weapons and sensors when flying.	Takes pictures at jaunty angles for his Instagram account, stands around looking important.	Jerry Maguire <i>(because he has a 'man crush' on Tom Cruise)</i>	A pint of 2% skimmed milk
Flight Pilot	Trys	"Captain Cautious"	Divisional officer to the Flight, flies the aircraft.	Passionately spreads the message that custard is terrible.	Air Wolf <i>(because he has a genuine crush on the helicopter)</i>	Anything other than custard
Senior Maintenance Rating	Jim	"The BFG"	Most experienced person on the flight, manages the engineering of the aircraft.	Being incredibly calm about everything. Being able to hear tea being made at 1000 paces.	Old School	A parsnip
M1	Tony	"Arnie"	Lead expert on the aircraft's engines, fuselage and gearboxes.	Striking brooding poses for his adoring fans.	Terminator 2	A raspberry
AV1	Ash	"The Flash"	Lead expert on the aircraft's electronics, sensors and weapons.	Gets angry about things, is hungry or gets angry about being hungry.	Shawshank Redemption <i>(because he likes to cut his hair short)</i>	Some pork crackling
M2	Shane	"Speedie"	Expert on the aircraft's mechanical systems, drives the robot that pushes the aircraft out onto the flight deck.	In constant training for when we take the aircraft's robot to Robot Wars.	Stand By Me	A swede
AV2	Olly	"Trust Me"	Expert on the aircraft's avionics, maintains the aircrew flying equipment	Constantly plays pranks on other members of the Flight, including pouring cup-a-soup into people's tea.	Jackass the movie <i>(for inspiration)</i>	A pineapple <i>(Lauren said it first)</i>
M3	Phil	"The Greek"	Assists with the aircraft's mechanical systems.	Wears an incredible bobble hat on the Flight Deck.	My Big Fat Greek Wedding	Some feta cheese
AV3	Lauren	"Wreck it Ralph"	Assists with the aircraft's avionics systems.	Bouncing around the hangar, being unaccountably clumsy.	Mean Girls	A pineapple
MAV4	Conor	"The Worm"	Assists with all of the aircraft's systems and is the Flight's Search and Rescue winchman.	Autographs pictures of himself to handout to people who have heard of his heroic winchman deeds.	Bad Boys 2 <i>(because he plays by nobody's rules, not even his own)</i>	An overcooked Mushroom
Fast Track Rating	Sarah	"Brains"	Assists with all of the aircraft's systems.	Does all of the jobs that no one else wants to do, sort of like a House Elf.	Harry Potter <i>("Number 6 if you want specifics")</i>	A carrot
Aircraft Controller	Connor	"Stand By One"	Provides Air Traffic Control for the aircraft.	Very importantly sources the latest Game of Thrones episode for the Flight.	Game of Thrones The Film <i>(not yet released)</i>	A Hot Pie <i>(a Game of Thrones reference)</i>

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON!



The tideless calm of the Baltic Sea was a welcome change to the rough weather of the UK. However, the pace of life on board did not match the more tranquil conditions. A last minute stop in Faslane gave WESTMINSTER the chance to take on stores and say a final goodbye to blighty. Bound for the Baltic, host turned guest, WESTMINSTER now had an exciting opportunity to represent the UK in defence engagement with a number of specially selected Baltic States, building diplomatic relations on behalf of NATO and the UK.

A look to the future of WESTMINSTER's tasking reveals some interesting and exciting challenges as well as the opportunity to gain some unique and invaluable experience. Having established her role as a key player in SNMG1, WESTMINSTER will have the chance to impress further her capability to a multinational audience of not just NATO allied forces. Operating in Polish waters there is sure to be some good exposure to local adversaries!

Alongside this unique opportunity will also be a chance for Ships Company to re-familiarise themselves with the delights of Northern European nations in the area. This opportunity for Ship's

Company to experience foreign 'runs ashore' as well as take part in defence engagement will be repeated throughout WESTMINSTER's time in the Baltic Sea. However, it is essential to maintain security, especially when operating in such a diplomatically sensitive area, therefore specific timings and locations cannot be revealed to the general public.

It can be said though that the mood onboard is exciting as many sailors go for 'round two' of the Baltic in little under 9 months. Opportunities to work alongside foreign allied navies in politically charged waters are certain to test the professionalism and quality of a confident and capable crew. A test which WESTMINSTER will no doubt pass with flying colours. Diplomatic events with foreign dignitaries will promote the UK's military and more importantly her Navy. Building relations is essential to improving the UK's military capability and reinforcing well established political and military links in a sensitive area is sure to be a benefit to the UK as a whole. New experiences in foreign ports lie ahead and are sure to live long in the memory of those adventurous enough to take them.

Article by SLt Burrows

HELPFUL CONTACTS

We understand that that having a loved one deployed for a significant length of time can be challenging. Please see the contact information and list of agencies below that are available to assist in times of need.

In an emergency please contact the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre +44 (0) 1452 51 99 51

The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) provides a focal point for casualty administration, notification and requests for compassionate travel (for those personnel serving overseas) for members of the British armed forces. JCCC also provides a compassionate casework service world-wide. If circumstances should arise, while a Service person is overseas, families and relatives can apply for her/his return on compassionate grounds - for example in the event of a death in the family, serious illness or serious family crisis.

All enquires will need to include the Name, Service Number and Ship of your loved one.

Royal Navy Royal Marines Welfare (RNRMW) – Supports Royal Navy, Royal Marines and their families in peacetime and war by helping prevent or reduce the effects of personal difficulties, especially those which arise as a result of Service life. Contact details can be found on the [Community and Support](#) section of the RN website. The [Deployment Support](#) section is extremely useful.

RNRMW Information Support Office – Provide information on services such as; housing, local facilities, Family Support , Discounts and deployment Support. RNRMW Information Support Officer: +44 (0) 023 9272 2151 / [Information Officers](#)

Naval Families Federation – Provides Royal Navy and Royal Marines' families an independent voice. NFF works with the Chain of Command, Service Providers and the Government to fully highlight the consequences of their policies and decisions.

Tel: +44 (0) 2392 65 43 74 / www.nff.org.uk

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) – Provide general and specific advice and support to service personnel and their dependants. Confidential Support Line: +44 (0) 1980 63 08 54 / www.ssafa.org.uk

Relate – Relationship counselling and advice.

www.relate.org.uk

Royal Navy and Royal Marine Welfare Charity (RNRMC) – The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity is the principal charity of the royal navy. We exist to support sailors, marines and their families, for life.

Tel: +44 (0) 23 9387 1520/ www.rnrmc.org.uk

The White Ensign Association – Provides advice on redundancy, resettlement, personal finance and employment. www.whiteensign.co.uk

Money Force – A web programme designed to improve the financial capabilities of members of the Armed Forces. www.moneyforce.org.uk

Story Book Waves

After a successful trial onboard WESTMINSTER, Story Book Waves is being rolled out across the entire Ship's Company. Storybook Waves provides facilities for anyone serving away from home to record a bedtime story for their child. Once recorded, trained volunteer editors add a soundtrack and create a personalised CD for each child so that he or she can listen to a parent's voice whenever they want. Each CD will be accompanied by a copy of the book so each child can read along with their deployed Mummy or Daddy. More Information is available at:

<http://www.aggies.org.uk/storybook-waves-2>



A FEW FINAL PHOTOS!

