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The HMS ST ALBANS Newsletter

Issue 03 | February 2016



WORKING HARD, PLAYING HARD

The last few weeks have been very busy aboard HMS ST ALBANS. We have escorted not one but TWO Aircraft carrier task groups, undertaken replenishment at sea (RAS-ing) and have transited into the Northern Arabian Gulf to help with celebrations for the liberation of Kuwait, host a sea day for the Kuwaiti Staff College before going alongside in Bahrain for additional training. But all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy (and Jenny a dull girl) so we took advantage of the facilities at Bahrain for retail therapy and a Whole Ship Sports Day where fun was had by all.

A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW XO



Dear families and friends,

It gives me great pleasure to borrow the Captain's Corner this month to write to you all. Joining ST ALBANS, a few weeks ago, in the Middle East after my last two years working on HMS PROTECTOR in Antarctica I was looking forward to clear skies, sunny weather and fair seas. Unfortunately the weather has been cold and windy (although not as bad as I hear it is at home!). As spring approaches we are looking forward to some better weather in the next month or so; we will then probably complain it is too hot!

Since the CO last wrote, the Ship has had a busy period at sea and alongside. This included a high profile visit to Kuwait to celebrate their liberation in 1991 and a visit to Bahrain where we met with the UK command team who direct our operations in the region.

Our current patrol supporting US and French Carrier operations against Daesh has kept us busy although we did manage to send the helicopter to Bahrain recently to pick up some stores, passengers and a very welcome 47 bags of mail! There was a tangible increase in morale that day – thank you all!

Details for flights for the mid-period leave should be published soon and we will pass these details on as soon as we have them.

Once again thank you all for your support from home – we genuinely couldn't do it without you.

Yours Aye,

Adam

Lt. Cdr. Adam Ballard RN



All Photos by PO Russell 'Dodge' Long

PLAYING THE GAME

Sometimes we have to conduct maintenance in difficult spaces. I was recently tasked with changing a cable harness on the ORBIT television satellite dish. This involved turning off all the transmitting and rotating equipment on the hanger roof so that it was safe to work in the area. Once the 'all clear' was given I had to enter the dome to gain access to the damaged cables that feed the ship with our television picture. Although this may not seem like an important job, with the 6 Nations Rugby Tournament just around the corner, the whole Ship's Company made it clear to me that it was vital to regain our television satellite services! While our global position meant that signal strength was poor, we still managed to resume services in time to watch England win their first match of the tournament at the cost of Scotland, and the draw between Wales and Ireland.

ET(WE) Jack 'Bomber' Mills



ST ALBANS COMMUNITY FACEBOOK GROUP

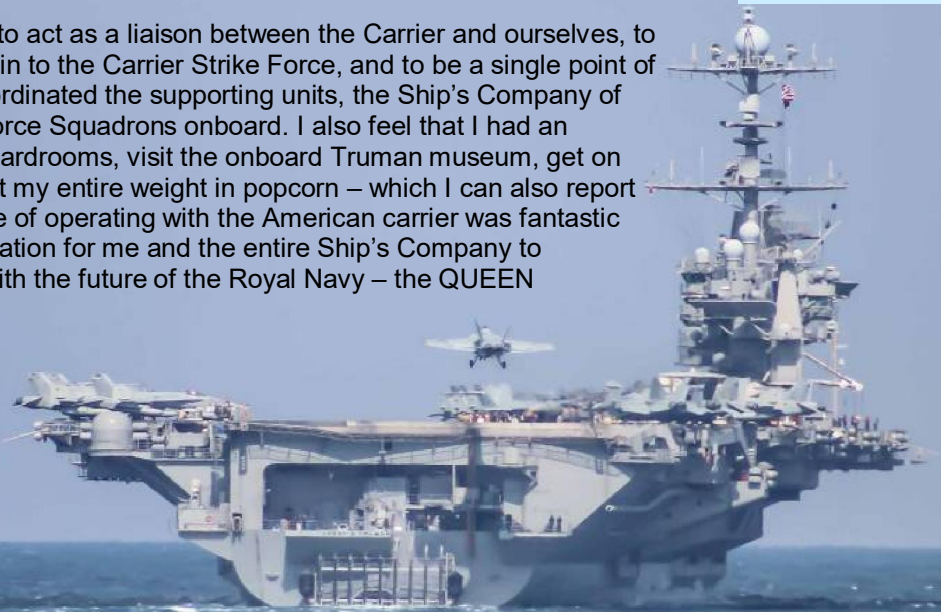
If you apply to join the community Facebook group, please let your loved ones onboard know and ask them to check the lists that regularly go round the messes of people requiring approval. The group posts official updates from ship and wider RN, online security advice relating to social media and acts as an online support network for those left behind to talk to others "in the same boat".

CLOUDS OVER HST

Waking up in the morning and finding out that you have to quickly pack a bag and "jump" ship is starting to feel like a normal occurrence in the HM branch (Hydrographic and Meteorological specialisation), it has happened to me no less than 3 times in the last year for "operational requirements". This time I was given the opportunity to represent HMS ST ALBANS and the Royal Navy onboard the "floating island" that is the USS HARRY S TRUMAN. She is over 105,000 tons, 333 metres in length, and capable of accommodating approximately 90 aircraft and has a flight deck of over 4.5 acres. Wow.

I was tasked by the Commanding Officer to act as a liaison between the Carrier and ourselves, to promote a smooth integration of our Ship in to the Carrier Strike Force, and to be a single point of contact for the DESRON 28 staff who coordinated the supporting units, the Ship's Company of the HARRY S TRUMAN and the Strike Force Squadrons onboard. I also feel that I had an assumed task to eat in all three of their Wardrooms, visit the onboard Truman museum, get on the flight deck for jet operations and to eat my entire weight in popcorn – which I can also report back to have been a success. The chance of operating with the American carrier was fantastic and the exercise has been brilliant preparation for me and the entire Ship's Company to experience what it will be like operating with the future of the Royal Navy – the QUEEN ELIZABETH Class.

Lt. Philippa Roessler RN (aka 'Clouds')



MASCOT OF THE MONTH

JOFLIE, belongs to Harrison Smith (1) and is a bear who is able to travel Time and Relative Dimensions in Space to ensure that he is simultaneously at home looking after Harri whilst Daddy (aka Navs) is away, whilst also bringing messages from Harri to Daddy and seeing all the adventures Daddy is getting up to for Harri.

Jolfie is seen here visiting RFA FORT VICTORIA during our ammunitioning RAS.