ALBION LETS GO ALL LINES

HMS ALBION marked a major milestone on 16 Jun, returning to active service and sailing for open sea for the first time in almost 6 years. Her crew jubilantly ‘let go all lines’ from her home alongside Weston Mill jetty, in Devonport’s Naval Base, heading for the English Channel to conclude trials.

The mid-life technical upgrade has been colossal and deliberately designed to see the ship operate well into the 2030s. New defensive weapons, state of the art combat system brain and sensors, together with improved cooling for the propulsion plant, together with over a hundred significant additions proves that the £90 million was well spent.

The ship’s Captain Tim Neild said: ‘My crew and I are extremely proud to take HMS ALBION back to sea. The ship looks amazing and is a credit to Babcock, the Defence Equipment and Support Organisation and the plethora of defence contractors. Becoming the UK’s very high readiness amphibious ship is tantalisingly close and we very much look forward to getting stuck in to the trials programme and rejoining the front line fleet’.

ALBION’s crew have been working tirelessly to breathe life back in to the ship and prepare her for rejoining the Fleet. This period at sea allows ALBION to prove her systems and operational capability pending tasking from the UK Government.

Personal from the Captain, Tim Neild

Dear family and friends,

A warm welcome to you all to the new look newsletter of the Ship - I very much look forward to sharing ALBION’s journey and adventures with you over the coming months.

I assumed Command in March and have been hugely impressed with how much the team has achieved. From moving out of the dock to our permanent berth in the dockyard (Amphib Alley!), completing our extensive refit, and breathing new life back in to this versatile warship that is the Swiss Army knife of the RN. We are now embarking on our next challenging adventure; proving equipment and the crew out at sea to earn our spurs as ‘The A-Team!’

The team have worked tirelessly over the past few months, however, there is a long road ahead before we can declare ourselves ready for operations. To that end, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to you all for your continued support. As a father and husband, I fully appreciate the pressures within a naval family, and as such will strive to return your commitment by supporting your loved ones in their personal endeavours as much as their professional endeavours. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at our families day in July. Tim

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Charities to help service personnel and their families’ on a wide range of issues
ROYAL TACKLES THE ISLES OF SCILLY

The Royal Marines from the Royal Navy's amphibious assault ship HMS ALBION deployed to the Isles of Scilly in their landing craft for specialist beach reconnaissance training, and to support and compete in the 28th World Pilot Gig Championships.

62 Commandos from 4 Assault Squadron Royal Marines (4ASRM) from HMS ALBION, based in Devonport deployed in May in 2 Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel (LCVP) and 2 Landing Craft Utility (LCU), for a major 1 week exercise in and around the Isles of Scilly. Their mission was Exercise MARY’S MARAUDER, a challenging test of the ship’s Commandos core amphibious skills. Operating autonomously from HMS ALBION and deployed at range with no external logistical support, they practised day and night navigation and pilotage.

In the unfamiliar and difficult tidal waters of the Isles of Scilly, they rehearsed tactical beach surveying and reconnaissance using the full range of specialised amphibious craft. Ashore, the Commandos controlled operations from a temporary forward operating base HQ at Porthmellon beach. The Exercise coincided with the 28th World Pilot Gig Championships, providing the additional opportunity for the Royal Marines to support the organisers as well as enter a 7 man gig team along side other boats from the 25 strong Tamar gig club.

ALBION PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES

Seven members of HMS ALBION recently took part in the 59th International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes, Southern France, led by the ship’s Chaplain, Revd Charles Bruzon RN. The Military Pilgrimage began as an act of reconciliation between French and German personnel in the aftermath of the Second World War and has now grown to encompass Armed Forces from most European nations as well as the United States, Canada and countries from all corners of the planet. This year the number of men and women in uniform who gathered at the Catholic shrine amounted to 20,000 with the Tri-Service British contingent numbering approximately 300, including an Army Band.

The British Military’s contingent and the ALBION group participated in a daily programme consisting of religious and ceremonial events and also had the opportunity to learn about the history of the Shrine and the origins of the Pilgrimage. It was remarked by all who attended that one of the highlights of the Pilgrimage was the strong spirit of international camaraderie with members of the military forces of other nations. This aspect came to the fore especially in the evenings with socialising in the many bars and cafes of the French town. Perhaps most importantly however the pilgrimage enabled all participants to renew their faith and to view one’s personal situations in a new light given that the sick and wounded, the VIPs of Lourdes, were a constant reminder of the courage, determination and commitment required to come to terms with difficult circumstances and move on in the journey of life.

It is hoped that ALBION will be represented at next year’s pilgrimage when an even larger British contingent is expected to attend on the gathering’s 60th anniversary.

‘Jack Speak’: ‘Goffer’; Naval name for a non-alcoholic drink, such as a coke or lemonade.

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