A MESSAGE FROM THE CAPTAIN

The past two months have been heavily training focussed, and many of our Sailors have been involved in tasks that have put them out of their comfort zone. I am incredibly proud of my Ship’s Company, we have received high praise from our external training organisation, who commented specifically on our positive attitude and receptiveness to training. Everyone has played a part in getting us to where we are now, ready to carry out Fleet Duties. From seven months ago when we departed Portsmouth for sea trials, we have now proven we are ready to fight and win.

Cdr Simon P Kelly RN
Commanding Officer
HMS WESTMINSTER
‘For Nation and For Glory’

YOU’RE YACHT ALONE

HMS WESTMINSTER comes to the dramatic aid of stricken sailors in Solent.

On Tuesday 30th May, HMS WESTMINSTER was due to be carrying out a Man over Board exercise, which involves the Ship launching one of her Seaboats (a Pacific 24 rigid hull inflatable boat) to aid in the exercise by picking up the Man overboard, simulated by a “Ruth” floating dummy.

Just as the Seaboat crew were preparing for the man overboard, a Mayday signal came in to the bridge from a Belgian Yacht in distress. The yacht had been de-masted and was now drifting into the Nab Channel, a very busy area of shipping south of Portsmouth.

HMS WESTMINSTER sprung into action: Once the yacht was in sight, the Seaboat was launched and made its way over to the stricken vessel, The Seaboat crew was made up of Leading Seaman Specialist Dodds as the Seaboat Coxswain, Able Seaman Specialist James as the Bowman, SLt Burke (who was expecting to just be part of the man overboard exercise!) and the Chief Shipwright, Petty Officer Richardson, otherwise known as the “Chippy”: a marine engineer by trade who is responsible for the maintenance of Ship’s carpentry, metalwork and household services (amongst other things!). (continued on next page)
(Continued from page 1) Leading Seaman Dodds and AB James safely landed Chippy and Sub Lieutenant Burke onto the stricken yacht whilst they made their way back to WESTMINSTER to retrieve power tools and other equipment to help remove the mast from the yacht. The plan was for the yacht then to be towed by Selsey RNLI Lifeboat which was on its way.

Once the lifeboat had arrived, her crew along with the Chippy and Sub Lieutenant Burke managed to remove the mast from the yacht, which proved quite difficult in the fairly large swell that was developing. Leading Seaman Dodds made keeping the seaboat steady look easy, and she safely allowed the Chippy and Sub Lieutenant Burke to get back into the seaboat once the Lifeboat crew had the stricken yacht under tow. All in all, the rescue took a good couple of hours and the swell didn’t seem to sit well with the Chippy, however thanks to his expertise, the yacht was safely towed back to a safe area near the shore.

FROM THE HANGAR
Author: Lt Currie (P2)

On 7 June 17, 02 Flight of 829 Naval Air Squadron embarked in HMS WESTMINSTER for the first time post her re-fit, bringing with them a state of the art, submarine hunting, Merlin Mk 2 helicopter. Known to the Ship's company as 'Gatekeeper' the aircraft was the final piece in a jigsaw that delivers a serious Anti-Submarine Warfare capability.

A challenging 4 week BOST package saw the Ship build its operational capability. A relentless programme saw the Ship’s Company learning to fight the Ship in all threat environments whilst also recovering from the ‘battle damage’ instigated by the FOST Wreckers. Gatekeeper was heavily employed throughout, flying Anti Submarine and Anti Surface missions, procedural flying serials and helicopter delivery in support of humanitarian and disaster relief exercises.

Having built a solid foundation, HMS WESTMINSTER was ready to participate in Exercise GRAMPUS, a multinational Anti Submarine Warfare exercise off the west coast of Portugal. On route to areas Gatekeeper displayed her versatility, facilitating the transfer of a number of passengers into Lorient, France. However, it wasn’t until the start of the exercise that she really showed her worth. In 5 days Gatekeeper flew over 13 hours, tracking the opposition submarine using a combination of dipping sonar and sonobuoys, having first been cued by WESTMINSTER's towed array sonar.

The past two months have been highly productive with the Ship moving from being non-aviation capable to launching and recovering her helicopter at night, in the most challenging conditions, radio silent. HMS WESTMINSTER is now one of a select number of aviation-ready platforms, ready to respond to any tasking.

RAdm Yuen Visit
Phot taken by AB(WS) Cunningham

RAdm Yuen US Navy, the head of the US Navy Supply Corps (what the RN would call the Logistics branch) paid a visit to WSTR during OST, to see how Royal Navy Ships do business.

He was blown away by the welcome and since going back to the US, the Captain has received feedback that he has been showing colleagues pictures of the food he was served on his phone! Above you can see LCH Jackson, Galley Manager, talking to the Admiral whilst he was being shown around the galley.
Despite the busy programme, HMS WESTMINSTER remains motivated to take part in CLUBZ’ Circuits!

‘Workout Of The Month’ will take place during Circuits once a week, for those personnel who are interested in competing for a prize, by achieving the top score. Personnel taking part may only undertake the workout ONCE, where their score is then annotated on the leader board for the winner to be announced at the end of the month. THE CHALLENGE IS ON!

WORKOUT OF THE MONTH
‘Flight Deck Murph’

1 x Lap
10 x Press Ups
20 x Sit – Ups
30 x Squats

AB(WS) Hayes is an Underwater Warfare specialist, and has been in the Royal Navy for two years. In late July 17, HMS WESTMINSTER was involved in an anti-submarine warfare exercise called GRAMPUS. The French Navy were in charge and it included UK, US and Canadian assets. The main purpose of the exercise was to track a live submarine and improve interoperability between different Navies.

This was the first time AB Hayes was able to put her specialist underwater warfare training into practice and track a live submarine on Sonar. She had previously tracked simulated targets during her course but to have the opportunity to track a “real” contact was invaluable. She held the submarine in Active and Passive mode and put her skills into good use.

After her sterling efforts and dual tracking ability she has become known as “Jonesy” to her work colleagues, a character from a well known submarine film called “Hunt for Red October”.

In between her busy watches in the Sound Room she was also the Ship’s hairdresser. During the exercise, AB Hayes endured a heavy sea state which she had never experienced before. With the Ship rolling around she was a little concerned about cutting people’s hair and struggled to keep a steady hand, she never had this problem when working in a salon before joining the Royal Navy!

AB Hayes said on completion of the Exercise “not only have we proved to ourselves that we are capable operators, we have provided the Command with a valuable service”.

JACKSPEAK CORNER

Train tracks(n); Re-formed spicy “ribs”, sometimes disguised as “Chinese Sliders” these are similar to the famous McRib.

Hoofing(Adj); Excellent, good quality or fantastic e.g. “We had a hoofing run ashore in Gib”. Used mainly by Royal Marines.
Ship’s Company took part in a mock-up disaster relief exercise which involved bringing together the skills of the Fire Brigade, Thames River Police and the Royal Navy in the form of the mighty WESTMINSTER crew.

A recce team on site at Bullpoint, ready to come to the aid of the distressed villagers. (Phot: AB Cunningham)

The exercise formed part of the Operational Sea Training package, and involved around 70 Sailors being landed at a fictitious village in Plymouth Naval Base via seaboat to come to the rescue of distressed villagers who had been victims of a ‘tidal wave’, which had inflicted widespread damage to infrastructure and flooding.

The aim of this training was to expose the Ship’s team to as realistic environment as possible in order to prepare, plan and execute a complex, multi-disciplinary humanitarian assistance operation. This is a reality that Westminster could be asked to face up to at any point over the coming weeks and months.

Above: Leading Seaman Bowyer constructing a build to stop the flooding (Phot: AB Cunningham)

Above: Std Finch, Ch Francis and Ch O’Donnell investigate a casualty stuck in a building

Above: ET White manning comms between the disaster site and the Ship

Right: PO Richardson and LET Partington prepare to use some heavy equipment as part of the Marine Engineering Recce Team.