Greetings from the mighty ‘O’ in an OCEAN Wave that has seen us cover over 11,000 miles since our last edition. We last wrote to you after answering the call to carry out hurricane disaster operations on OP RUMAN. OP RUMAN became the biggest overseas deployment of the British military this year with over 2,000 military and civilian personnel. With OCEAN’s capability, that is her exceptional crew, her Landing craft and extra helicopter lift, we became a key part its success.

The devastation that hurricane Irma and Maria caused across the Caribbean was terrible. From the British Virgin Islands, to Turks and Caicos Islands, from Anguilla to Dominica the scenes that greeted us were more akin to a Hollywood disaster movie than the Caribbean paradise that existed just a couple of weeks previously. Dominica was especially hit by the second hurricane, Maria, and our arrival came at a key point. For Dominica and for all the islands that were helped our arrival and immediate spin into action saw us deliver a huge amount of disaster supplies, materials for reconstruction / immediate repairs, vehicles and other goods donated, many of which were by the kind people of Gibraltar from back home. Put this with the skill sets on board that our exceptional and people have, we helped fix Radars to School roofs, give medical aid and help restore medical centres, make government infrastructure workable and even tow damaged vessels to clear out harbour channels. That to name just a few on top of providing food and water in our round the clock activities. All this and then on top the human element. With this the compassion and enthusiasm that your sailors and marines brought to the operation, from the moment we were told we were going to the Caribbean till the day we left had a huge impact on all we were able to help. So often hope was restored and the energy to start again came with the arrival and help of our people.

As we move through the season of remembrance, back onto our previous tasking, we do so with pride and with the knowledge that our deployment will have already changed and saved the lives of so many.

As you will be aware, since the last edition of ‘Ocean Wave’, the Royal Navy’s Fleet Flagship has steamed thousands of miles and crossed the Atlantic Ocean. It is hard to convey all that OCEAN has accomplished in this period and most importantly what my Ship’s Company, your exceptional sailors have achieved. In the Royal Navy our people are our most precious resource and OCEAN’s Ship’s Company has certainly proven this again. Our sudden change of tasking to respond to the terrible damage wrought by Hurricane Irma further demonstrates the vital importance of warships, forward deployed and ready to respond to unforeseen crises. It is with considerable pride that I can say that my Ship’s Company conducted this important humanitarian mission with professionalism and compassion throughout. Whether rapidly loading vital aid into helicopters and landing craft, fixing damaged infrastructure, clearing debris, providing medical assistance or evacuating vulnerable persons, the Ship’s Company saved lives and lessened suffering. In total we conducted 12 days of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations across 4 Caribbean territories demonstrating the UK’s steadfast commitment to the region.

We have now assumed duties as a NATO Flagship in the Eastern Mediterranean and at this time of remembrance, we remember and honour the sacrifice of so many of our countrymen and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. I thank you once again for your stalwart support to HMS OCEAN and for the sacrifices you make, allowing us to conduct our operations far from home. Please be rest assured that this sacrifice continues to make a big difference and we very much look forward to welcoming you onboard OCEAN upon our return home next month.

Captain Robert Pedre RN
MURDER MOST VILE!

The ships live rendition of the classic board game Cluedo has continued its unsolvable mystery. The spate of seemingly senseless murders amongst the female ratings has set the ship a-tiz with rumour and speculation, with an increasingly large number of bizarre killings taking place throughout the ship leaving Command thoroughly perplexed. Although these assassinations have abated amongst the ladies in recent days, the Wardroom seems to have followed suit with similar copycat carnage; the most recent event being a deranged YO finishing off Commander F with a dog collar. The Bish, when questioned by the Joss as to how the officer in question was able to obtain the weapon, refused to comment. You will be pleased to know, avid readers, that the murderous YO has since been apprehended, and under interrogation by the Joss showed no remorse; SLt Elmore, 31 who is a “young” officer on BFT stated: “He had it coming, he took the last piece of brie and he’d do it all again!”. Despite his apprehension the regulating team are not convinced that this will be the end of the matter and are looking for the mastermind behind this spree of slaughter; the latest leads have pointed to the Medical Centre with allegations abound surrounding an LMA who cannot be named for legal reasons!

SLt Simon Elmore

DISASTER RELIEF ON THE GROUND

I stand on the British Virgin Island of Tortola with the hot midday sun beating down on the streets as I take in the disastrous scenery surrounding me. Standing in the middle of debris, rubble and trees that litter the area, it all feels like a nightmare as I can see what people had built and created had in a few short hours been decimated by the power of nature. Myself and 29 others in the group soon got stuck in to clearing main roads as this was paramount to getting travel links back up and running. This task involved 4 personnel on chainsaws and the rest of us lifting heavy debris and gathering it all together before it got taken away. Attributes gained from being a Writer enabled me to successfully prioritise tasks for the job in hand by making sharp decisions all whilst interacting with the local population finding out where our help was needed most. Prior to getting out on the ground the Ships Company were involved in Green Skills which involved basic first aid training and Marines teaching us key survival skills which were vital for us to be aware of in case of an emergency whilst in this area of operation. During this training period all of this preparation felt far from real but this soon changed on arriving to Tortola. Seeing first hand that people literally had nothing except the clothes that they were wearing. A moment that will stay with me is finding someone's wedding album in a storm drain, the happiest day of someone's life reduced to litter. When I signed up to join the RN one of the main pull factors was the opportunity to get involved with humanitarian aid, so to be able to say that I have been out on the ground helping a community who have been hit by Hurricane Irma, one of the strongest ever recorded hurricanes within the first 3 years of my Naval career easily stands out as the most rewarding part so far.

Wtr Jasmine Brent
TEAM HALO

Team Halo was a group of people led by The Reverend Paul Andrew to go out and assist communities affected by the devastation, hand out aid, clothing and toys and to reassure.

We started out on day 1 with a 4 man team with a plan to find out as much information as we could from the local families, the local firemen and police officers. We were on the ground to speak to the locals and give them reassurance that we were there to help them in any way we can. It was obvious from the first person we saw that our help was widely appreciated. On the 2nd day aid was given to a distribution centre to hand out to families which most required help, and visited a church on the eastern side of the Island and arranged to go back as guests to the service being held. On the 3rd and final day we visited the Baptist church as promised which had been severely damaged from Hurricane Irma, however even though the building was damaged a service was still put on and we were all privileged to be part of the service. After the service we handed out toys, bedding and clothes to the locals most affected from the Hurricane and had chance to spend time with the local children of the church. Seeing them having fun and playing with their new toys was great to see. We also worked with the Royal Engineers of the British Army by refitting the timber frame and removing the damaged sheet metal from the roof and cleaned up the debris on the church grounds. To be part of team Halo was an honour and a real eye opening experience.

Std Kyle Prendergast

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS

Keeping moral high on a Naval Deployment is a difficult task. Some have an alcoholic drink; some go to the gym twice a day. Others however, delve into a realm of imagination. Dungeons and Dragons, you may have heard of it, you may have even played it. But getting sailors to come out of their shell and band together for an adventure is quite a sizable task. I decided about running a Dungeons and Dragons group on board not long after I joined the ship and with a little help from Leading Writer Woodman I managed to scrape together 5 willing volunteers. News spread around the ship about the group and before long I had 8 people wanting to play including senior officers. With the intention of playing a short campaign (story in which the players are in) during the deployment we set about creating characters and the world they are in. The first meeting began not long after we left Plymouth and the group took well to each other. As they continued their adventure, the excitement around the group grew to a point where I had nearly a dozen people wanting to join in. Trying to manage 8 people was hard enough so the decision came that we had to split to group into two to make it more manageable. That is where Engineering Technician Marine Engineer Black came to hand. As one of the players and previous Dungeon Master (the person who tells the story) we devised a way for the story to be split into two stories. Since then we’ve had some of the ships company leave the ship making more room and thus more people join. So far we’ve had over 15 people who have played and more wanting to join. I think it’s safe to say it has been a success and we haven’t even finished yet.

ET Joshua MacDonald
Whilst anchored up in Aksaz, Turkey the XO (Cdr Wood) gave permission for ‘Hands to bathe’ much to the delight of the ships company. A chance for all to don their swimming gear and enjoy some much deserved down time, and also a great opportunity for the many marines on-board to flex their muscles. For an hour between 1000-1100 the vehicle ramp was lowered and a large pontoon was placed in the sea. Upon arrival to the vehicle deck ID cards were handed over to the RN Police to account for man power which were collected once their dip in the sea was complete. There was a safety boat driven by the Seaman Specialists out in the water in case anyone got into difficulty. Some people were a little too afraid to enter into the water and watched from a safe distance on the flight deck, resisting the urge to yell "SHARK"!! Many dives, belly flops and acrobatics were witnessed with surprisingly no injuries! Whilst many took the opportunity to lie in the water and catch some rays AET Abi Sondack had come excellently prepared with her lilo and snorkelling equipment!

A great morning enjoyed by all!

Wtr Hannah Morris
Those famous words that Jesus spoke to His followers ‘No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends,’ are words that become even more powerful when you serve in the military. The idea of giving up one’s life for another might seem alien, maybe even insane in any other environment than that of the military but when you serve with others you become part of a brotherhood, a family beyond many other normal relationships.

The bond is such that at many times and on many occasions people have not just laid down their lives as they have served for country but have done so for those they have served with. In actions that sought to save another life, keep others out of harms way they have made the ultimate sacrifice.

On Armistice Day and to coincide with the 11th hour of the 11th day timing back home, we met on the flight deck, some 500 + of us to remember the fallen. To remember those who had laid down their lives in service of our country. From those who fell at Pashendale in this 100th anniversary year of that terrible battle, to those who have sadly died in service this year.

In the calmness of a November day, under the sun of the Eastern Mediterranean we met for OCEAN’s last Remembrance day service to honour and remember the fallen. We did this with readings taken by people from across the ship, with prayers, reflection and the laying of poppy wreaths by the Commodore, Captain and as always our youngest Sailor and Royal Marine. Because “At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them”.

The Bish