A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CAPTAIN

Dear Families and Friends,

As we draw to the close of what has been an exceptionally busy and demanding year for HMS WESTMINSTER, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for your patience and support during this period of high tempo operations where the programme has been fluid and often uncertain. I am very aware of how difficult this can be to manage for you at home and your understanding plays a significant role in our ability to operate as well as we have done: our successes over the past few months have been recognised nationally and I am immensely proud of the contribution from everyone on board.

We have spent much of the sea-going programme of 2018 on national tasking with our NATO allies and partner nations in the North Atlantic and also inside the Arctic Circle. We have also participated in a range of high level exercises, most notably Exercise TRIDENT JUNCTURE 18 (ExTJ18). This was the largest NATO exercise since the end of the Cold War with over 65 ships and over 50,000 personnel. Our role demonstrates the Royal Navy and the UK's ongoing commitment to our allies, ensuring NATO is a credible deterrent to our potential adversaries. I am glad to report that in true WESTMINSTER fashion we gave a good account of ourselves throughout which is, in no small part, a result of the level of support that we have at home.

Most recently, WESTMINSTER’s focus has shifted to an equally demanding period of Defence Engagement in Scandinavia and the Baltic region. We have visited Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Poland and Latvia. The aims of these visits were varied, but in sum contribute to the Government’s policy of re-establishing a global Britain and flying the Ensign in support of strengthening ties with our allies and partners in the region.

I am, along with the rest of the Ship’s Company, very much looking forward to returning in time for the festive period. The welfare of my Ship’s Company is at the forefront of my focus and I will endeavour to ensure that they are given the downtime they deserve in the New Year to ensure that they are fully refreshed and motivated to deploy with the Standing NATO Maritime Group One (SNMG1) in the Spring of 2019.

I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and I will be in touch again in the New Year.

Yours faithfully,

Will Paston

Commanding Officer HMS WESTMINSTER
RECENT EVENTS

Having left Portsmouth on the 15th October, Westminster sailed up the Irish Sea before hitting some very heavy seas as we entered the North Atlantic – there were some very green faces and short scran queues until we arrived in Iceland! Many Geysers, Spas and Souvenir shops later, the Ship departed in the direction of Norway accompanied by the Americans, Canadians, Danish and our sister Ship HMS NORTHUMBERLAND. Exercise Trident Juncture consisted of air defence and anti-submarine warfare exercises whilst also defending the amphibious assault conducted in the Fjords of Norway.

Following an intense two weeks, the Ship came alongside in Oslo for some well earned rest and recovery before making way for Riga. Undoubtedly, Riga will remain one of the Ships Company’s most memorable stops owing to the 100 years of independence celebrations in Latvia which consisted of numerous warships, a large military parade and a phenomenal fireworks display. A short transit later the Ship arrived in the beautiful Stockholm where the ships company were treated to a free tour of the city culminating in a trip to the wonders of the Vasa Museum.

These runs ashore haven’t just been fun and games however, with important Reception and Capability Demonstrations held in Reykjavik, Riga and Stockholm impressing numerous local and foreign dignitaries and a Ship Open to Visitors hosted as part of the Latvian Independence celebrations. Advent Calendars have now taken pride of place in the many mess decks and offices throughout HMS Westminster as the Ships Company begins the countdown to Christmas and subsequent return back to Portsmouth following the last few stops in our Baltic trip!

Article by SLt J Bones

BAKING WITH THE BEST - CARIBBEAN LEMONADE

Ingredients:
- Four Lemons
- Half a Cup of sugar
  (Sweetened to taste)
- Teaspoon of Vanilla Essence
- Litre of Cold Water
- A drop of Angostura Bitters

Recipe:
1. Fill a litre sized jug of cold water.
2. Squeeze the four lemons into the jug of water before adding the sugar, vanilla essence and Angostura Bitters.
3. Mix well and sweeten to taste.

Recipe by LStd Bute, LStd Toney, Std Pemberton, Std Townsend and Std Stewart

MEET YOUR SHIP’S COMPANY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Collin Hardy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ROLE</td>
<td>AB Chef</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAVOURITE WAY TO SPEND AN EVENING ONBOARD</td>
<td>Listening to Country Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIGGEST INSPIRATION</td>
<td>Gordon Ramsey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRRATIONAL FEAR</td>
<td>Being cold</td>
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As the sun sets on 2018, the Year of Engineering, HMS WESTMINSTER returned to her familiar area of operations as part of Exercise Trident Juncture 2018. She has been operating in the North Atlantic and “high North” for much of the year, and up until the end of October 2018 has travelled the equivalent of 1.5 times around the world including a period of 5 weeks continuously at sea without sight of land. Throughout the year WSTR did not lose a single day of operations due to equipment defects paying testament to the Marine, Weapon and Air Engineers who have continuously delivered Operational Capability to the Commanding Officer, Cdr Will Paston.

WESTMINSTER has achieved some impressive engineering statistics over the year at one point travelling over 6000 nautical miles in one journey, firing over 63,000 rounds of ammunition during the year, and her Merlin Mk2 from 814 Naval Air Squadron has flown 135 hours amassing 133 deck landings in 2018. When equipment has misbehaved the engineers onboard have aggressively diagnosed and repaired the defects with a combined total in excess of 80 Operational Defects (ones which have an effect on the ship’s range of capabilities) fixed by the engineering teams onboard.

At one stage both WEs and MEs were working together to repair their Low Frequency Active Sonar in the high North, and combined teams also repaired an electrical isolation panel to restore helicopter servicing supplies essential to WESTMINSTER’s mission. During the year the engineering teams found solutions organically due to contact and advice with the UK not being possible. WESTMINSTER also produced innovative methods of protecting equipment from freezing in extreme cold conditions; this included the continued rotation of Navigation Radars while remaining in a covert condition.

The Marine Engineers were not to be out-done in the innovation stakes when during Exercise Trident Juncture 18 a major electrical distribution issue occurred which threatened the ship’s resilience. They delivered a novel procedure to ensure that WSTR maintained her station to effectively fight the multi-domain battle.

Article by Lt Cdr Howe
Exercise Trident Juncture In Pictures

From ASW...

...to a floodex...

...some Gunnery...

...and a RAS!
WHAT’S ON THE HORIZON!

Pompey Revs!

The Ship’s Company of HMS WESTMINSTER have been enjoying more regular port visits and time alongside in the past month. Having sailed into Stockholm, the Ship’s Company were in high spirits following a visit to the ABBA Museum, resulting in singing and dancing videos galore.

Our time in Gdynia for further displayed our ability to conduct influential Defence Engagement, capability demonstrations and host foreign dignitaries. The continued Ships Open to Visitors afternoons are also proving very popular with the local people in each country visited, allowing the public to step onboard and tour the Upper Deck, learning interesting facts from the Ship’s Company posted in various places.

There have also been numerous sporting events taking place, including a rugby match against Arka Gdynia Rugby Club on Saturday 1st December at Narodowy Stadion and a football match against the Polish Navy team at Gdynia National Football Stadium on Monday 3rd December. Both were played with high spirits and enjoyed by all. Cultural visits were also available to give the Ship’s Company a chance to experience the cities from a different perspective.

Finally, HMS WESTMINSTER will be returning home for Christmas and this time alongside will bring with it some long awaited leave for the Ship’s Company.

There are already snippets of Christmas songs emanating from the cabins and tinsel starting to appear around the Mess Decks. The Ship wishes you all a very Merry Christmas, a Happy and Healthy New Year and all the best for 2019.

It is essential to maintain security especially whilst operating in such a sensitive area, therefore specific timings and locations should not be released to the general public. Everyone is reminded to be discreet when planning family visits around the ship’s programme particularly with social media. A momentary lapse of concentration will put the whole visit in jeopardy

Due to the nature of operating in the Baltic, at times external communications may be restricted for unknown amounts of time. Wherever possible, advance warning will be given however unfortunately this isn’t always the case. Should the worst happen, mechanisms exist to contact the ship and arrange transfer ashore for personnel. In an emergency please contact either:

The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre: +44(0)1452 51 99 51;

Or

Royal Navy and Royal Marine Welfare: +44(0)2392 72 87 77

Article by Mid D Bamfield and SLt S Butler-Buy
A FEW FINAL PHOTOS!