Hello and welcome to Issue 6 of 'The Rose', the Official Newsletter of HMS MONTROSE. Well what a month for the ship - 30 days, 2 Oceans, 2 continents, 1 line! Needless to say our global deployment has gotten off to a great start. A short stop in Miami for Ship’s Company to enjoy some down time, preceded by an poignant remembrance service on the 11th day. From there, Montrose zipped around Cuba and the Caribbean en-route to the Panama Canal. An overnight transit through the Canal was ‘pumped up’ with a marathon 7 Hour CPR session to raise money for the British Heart Foundation. Once through of the canal, MONTORSE began the Pacific Ocean segment of the deployment; Working with an Allied task force in counter narcotics, as well as conducting her own ‘crossing the line’ ceremony before ending up in Chile for Expo Naval, and defence engagement work during the Chilean Navy’s 200th birthday celebrations.

When you read this, the UK will be well into the festive season, looking forward to a break for Christmas. We will be in the middle of the Pacific Ocean for the day itself, but we do our best to bring Christmas Cheers with us, as the Chefs ensure we have enough Turkeys to create a traditional meal, as well as other fare more appropriate to the climate. Naval tradition requires that the Officers serve dinner for everyone else on this day. We let the professionals continue with the cooking, though we assist with the washing up!

The mail has brought us lots of presents from home as well, which we are all grateful for and look forward to opening as a reminder of everyone back in the UK. We will get some time off over the period, and hopefully in some amazing places - there will be details of our celebrations in next month’s edition.

Christmas can be a busy and stressful time, especially when your loved one is away, but we are thinking of you all, and hope you have a great time over the holidays.

Cdr Conor O’Neill RN
We will remember them

Having nearly completed her Atlantic crossing at the beginning of her 7 month deployment, Ship’s Company of HMS Montrose arose to an early ‘Call the hands’ to align time zones for the announcement of the Armistice at the eleventh hour, on the eleventh day, of the eleventh month back in 1918.

The service was held to remember alongside families, friends and colleagues back home, the unimaginable sacrifice of so many for the causes of justice and peace. As the Ship’s Company made its commitment with one voice to remember the fallen in all wars and conflicts, a solitary blast of a gunnery whistle sounded and the silence was observed.

A second whistle blast was then followed by the scattering of one hundred poppies into the Atlantic Ocean by the Commanding Officer Cdr Conor O’Neill, and AB Mason McKenzie-Baldwin the youngest sailor on board.

Revd Peter Dixon the Chaplain on board HMS Montrose said “100 years on from the declaration of Armistice and the message of remembrance is still as poignant and emotive as ever. I speak on the behalf of many when I say to spend this momentous occasion at sea; in the Atlantic on board a deployed warship has been a true honour”

To mark this event at sea, a large poppy was built and placed on the Ships funnel which was then photographed using MTRO’s embarked Wildcat helicopter. Also prior to the Service of Remembrance, all shared in a ‘Remembrance Breakfast’, a bacon roll, being a symbolic reminder of the simple meal a ‘Tommy’ would have had before going into battle.
En route to Chile, HMS Montrose passed through one of the greatest engineering marvels of the 20th Century - The Panama Canal. At 51 miles long it is the largest man built waterway in the world connecting the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, and was the last obstacle left for HMS MONTROSE to tackle in the Atlantic. This maritime rite of passage was a busy day for the Seamanship and Navigation teams, as the ship had to be carefully driven into a series of narrow locks, and then carefully connecting to a series of small trains, known as “mules”, which pull ships through each of the locks. In between the locks the ships passed through the narrow waterways of the canal, through the lush jungle of Panama and the manmade Gatun Lake, before emerging into the busy container port of Balboa.

**Blowing out for BHF**

For those not directly involved in the transit, Montrose conducted a sponsored CPRathon, organised by the ship’s Medical Officer, Surgeon Lieutenant Adam Sales. The drive to train the entire Ship’s Company in effective CPR comes in preparation for the ship’s time in the South Pacific, where she will operate at times over two thousand nautical miles from any landmass. The ‘CPRathon’ provided the perfect opportunity to kick start this vital training, raise awareness in the public sphere of the importance of CPR, and fundraise for the British Heart Foundation and Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity.

As the ship approached the Atlantic entrance to the canal from the breakwater at the port of Colón, the dummy patient was set up in the midships cross passage, with the team from the sickbay ready to oversee the quality of the CPR being performed. At 1524, Medical Assistant Emma Southall was the first to assess the unresponsive casualty and initiate the chest compressions, followed by Leading Medical Assistant George Turnbull. From that point on, working in pairs, each member of the Ship’s Company involved in the attempt was required to carry out four minutes of CPR each, spurred on by music provided by the Leading Physical Trainer from the soundtrack normally used to motivate those attending circuit training.

Having entered the first set of locks, with a brief pause in the music requested by the Captain so he could concentrate on staying in the middle, the ship progressed quickly into the open water of the man-made Gatun Lake. After 150 minutes of continuous CPR, night started to fall, and the challenge continued in the darkness under the narrow beam of light provided by a single damage control lamp and at 2224 local time, after 7 hours of continuous CPR, the ship had arrived in the Pacific Ocean and the challenge was successfully completed.

Surgeon Lieutenant Adam Sales stated: “This was a fantastic event that could not have occurred without the support of both the Medical Team and the wider Ship’s Company. Today combined a crucial element of whole ship medical training with an important wider message: effective CPR saves lives; whether on a Warship in the Pacific or in the UK going to the shops, you never know when you may need to use it.”

At the time of writing, the ship had raised £685 including gift aid.

**2Deck – Above Water Warfare**

This edition introduces ‘2Deck’, named after the heart of activity on ship, in which we will look briefly at a number of sub-departments onboard and their roles. This month we are looking at the Above Water Warfare sub-department, also known as ‘The Gunners’. This team is responsible for the maintenance and operation of a number of weapons onboard, from the general purpose machine gun (GPMG) to the 30mm automated cannons (as mentioned in the article overleaf). When you need a team to respond to any surface engagements, they’re your team; if you ask them who the best shot onboard is? Well it’s a competition that’s been running since the ship first commissioned in 1993, with AB Kev “one shot” Leavy the current front runner.
On a grey and rough day, in a scene that could have been off the South Coast of England, two Type 23 Frigates; HMS MONTROSE and the Chilean Navy Ship ALMIRANTE CONDEL (ex HMS MARLBOROUGH), the USS Navy Ships SOMERSET and WAYNE E MEYER and a further Chilean Navy Ship CAPITAN PRAT conduct exercises together. This was all prior to the arrival of ships into Valparaiso for celebrations to mark the 200th Anniversary of the Chilean Navy.

The day saw a number of serials being completed as part of a Passage Exercise, including Officer of the Watch Manoeuvres, where the ships conducted various manoeuvres in close quarters with each other followed by a PHOTEX to capture the events.

An exchange of personnel also took place which saw an Officer and Senior Rate from USS SOMERSET join HMS MONTROSE for a few hours, while two members of HMS MONTROSE’s ships company travelled over to the USS SOMERSET via MONTROSE’s Wildcat Helicopter.

Chief Petty Officer Darren Richards went over to USS SOMERSET and commented “With HMS SOMERSET being a former ship of mine; it was a poignant exchange for me, where I learnt the capabilities of our Allied Ship and was most impressed by their Hospital Facilities.” As the Head of the Weapons Group on HMS MONTROSE, he added “It was extremely satisfying watching the successful firing of our Automatic Small Calibre Guns from the Bridge of the USS SOMERSET”.

HMS MONTROSE Commanding Officer, Commander Conor O’Neill summed up the day as “This was an excellent opportunity for us to interoperable with our allies and cement relationships ahead of our visit to Chile to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the Chilean Navy”.

Firing flares in preparation for night firings

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR, FROM ALL OF US AT HMS MONTROSE.