We have now completed our training programme and your ship is fully prepared for the operational challenges to come. Of course, this hasn’t been without considerable hard work and, the culmination of all that training came in late March and April.

As the last edition of OCEAN WAVE went to print Her Majesty the Queen visited us in Devonport and, for those of you who could make it on the day, I hope that you will agree that it was a glorious event with your ship’s company showing off your ship in its absolutely best light.

But being able to entertain Royalty (or any other important guests) is only one part of what OCEAN can do. You will read about some of the less visible but equally important members of the ship’s company who toil to ensure that this small town of ours is always able to respond to the challenges we have been set.

Now that our training is over, we will continue with our planned programme. But, as you saw with our sister Amphibious ship, HMS BULWARK, events can (and do) change ship’s programmes. I will ensure that should there be any changes (there are none as I go to print) these are explained as early as possible – and thank you as ever, for your continued support to us.

Tim Henry

Preparations for the event involved the entire ship’s company, be it: parade training; scrubbing the ship; liaison with the base and police; fielding the world’s press; preparing the food for both a reception for 400 people in the hangar and, for a lucky few, lunch in the Wardroom with Her Majesty. It was very much a red letter day; hard on the heels of the centenary of the sinking of the fourth HMS OCEAN at Gallipoli, of Her Majesty dining in the fifth HMS OCEAN in 1957 and with a partial eclipse of the sun to boot, we were also blessed by a glorious spring day. Divisions on the jetty went brilliantly and the atmosphere for the Royal walkabout among the families of the ship’s company was warm and welcoming. After lunch, Her Majesty left the ship to three rousing cheers before departing in a helicopter of the Queen’s Flight from the ship’s flight deck.

Cdr Mark Wooller
‘Check quarters, Check air lanes’: The View from the Bridge

Immediately on completion of Easter leave, the bridge and seamanship team got prepped for sea and stood ready to commence our biggest test yet – being ‘the flag ship’ for Joint Warrior 15. This meant we were often in charge of several units, ensuring they protected us and were ordered to the right place at the right time. HMS OCEAN had a full set of aircraft embarked, so we were also conducting flying 24/7. This combination of tasks made for busy watches for lookouts and helmsmen alike.

ABs Briggs and Batchelor were our key lookouts. AB Evans did particularly well to spot a potentially hazardous situation for an aircraft in good time, despite only having been onboard for only 2 weeks. Our Signal and Communications Officer also helped, by re-educating some of the bridge team to appreciate the difference between a boat and a helicopter (apparently some couldn’t tell which was which – S/Lt Broad)!

“Having been drafted from RNAS Culdrose to Fleet HMU in HMS Drake, I was both apprehensive and excited to be joining HMS Ocean for my first sea draft. At times challenging and tiring, these few weeks have also been hugely rewarding and the Met Office team have been great to work with through the highs and lows (groan), of the exercise.”

ABHM(M) Ollie Foot

ABHM(M)s Foot and Church take readings

Meanwhile, in the (engine) spaces

The Marine Engineering department has continued to work at full capacity over a long period of intense activity. With the port main engine back together, the ship sailed for Joint Warrior 15, falling into ‘Defence Watches’ (i.e. 8 hours on, 8 hours off). During this time the Stokers covered all our normal watch-keeping duties as well as maintaining the ship with a maximum of 50% of our teams available at one time. The sheer numbers of people onboard pushed our domestic systems to their limits – but they came through smelling of roses (most of the time!).

Lt Sam Fayers

WHERE TO FIND HELP AND SUPPORT...

For general welfare support call the RN/RM Welfare Portal on 02392 728777

Need your loved one back in an emergency? Call the Joint Casualty & Compassionate Cell on 01452 519951 or email HMS OCEAN’s Chaplain - The Revd Stu Hallam on HMSOCEA-EXEC-CHAPLAIN@mod.uk

Comments and suggests about the newsletter are always welcome, please email the Chaplain above!

‘And now down to 03-Deck for the weather…’

The role of the Hydrography and Meteorology (HM) team is to advise Command on what the impact of the environment is likely to be operations. An understanding of what the weather is likely to do is vital for making important decisions – rain, fog, ice, wind, an increased sea state or reduced night-time visibility – as any of these elements can have an affect. As it turned out, we were extremely lucky with the weather, which was unseasonably balmy most of the time, with the ‘Joint Warrior Low’ evading us.

Lt Cdr George Storton & LS(SEA) Alan ‘Buck’ Rogers

‘Having been drafted from RNAS Culdrose to Fleet HMU in HMS Drake, I was both apprehensive and excited to be joining HMS Ocean for my first sea draft. At times challenging and tiring, these few weeks have also been hugely rewarding and the Met Office team have been great to work with through the highs and lows (groan), of the exercise.”

ABHM(M) Mike Church

ABHM(M)s Foot and Church take readings

In other news this month, PO Mace our Yeoman has installed a new coffee machine bringing our bridge team into the 21st Century with Mochas and Skinny Lattes – vital for keeping awake during the long watches of the night!

Lt Cdr George Storton & LS(SEA) Alan ‘Buck’ Rogers
No War is Won without Logistics

5 tonnes of meat, 8 tonnes of potatoes and 555 gallons of milk is what it takes to fuel 900 people on an intense, multi-national military exercise.

Providing 4 nutritious meals a day is no small task but our team of 35 Chefs and Stewards, augmented by 10 Tri-Service personnel, set to work to ensure no-one went hungry. Over the 3 weeks, our catering team delivered 52,843 meals of an impressive quality! The Stewards meanwhile took expert care of the many officers embarked for the exercise, plus military observers and VIPs, managing an accommodation plot the size of a medium hotel!

It was also a busy time for the Supply Chain team who dealt with 52 defects on the Task Group's main equipment, enabling units to remain ‘on task’ and effective.

Finally, the Ship’s Office had to monitor and account for over 500 personnel moves on and off the Ship – including many at short-notice. On top of their ‘core business’, the Writers have also been involved in a range of other tasks such as keeping a narrative of ongoing events in the Operations Room, assisting embarked Royal Marines and foreign land forces, and manning the upper-deck weapons.

Midshipman James Babington

Things that go ‘BANG!’

HMS Ocean boasts the biggest Weapon Engineering real estate afloat in the Royal Navy today, with many magazines for the storage of ammunition – the biggest being the size of 2 tennis courts!

During Ex Joint Warrior, Ocean’s WE Dept practiced resupplying the upper deck Force Protection weapons, GPMGs (General Purpose Machine Guns) and Mk 44 Miniguns, while the ship was at Action Stations. This labour-intensive task was achieved with the help of the FRPP Teams and 2 dedicated Weapons Lifts. We are proud to say it was achieved in record time as we supported largest single platform assault in over 5 years.

We also worked successfully alongside 656 Army Air Corps Apache Helicopter Squadron to support them as they fired their allocation of 30mm rounds and Hellfire missiles, which make one heck of a bang – mind you, so do the team after curry for breakfast at 0400 (oh, the joys of Defence Watches).

POET(WE) John Eagleson & LET(WE) Sean Ryan

Nutty, Dhobi and Gash

Often overlooked, the Canteen, the Laundry and the Gash-Compactor are 3 vital cogs in the wheel of a well-functioning ship. Throughout Joint Warrior these vital background services were at full-speed to support the nearly 1000 personnel embarked in OCEAN.

The ‘Can Man’, Mr Nigel Milton, leads a 4-strong NAAFI team who ensure the Ship’s Company has access to nutty (Jackspeak for chocolate, sweets and generally ‘a bit of morale’) and essentials such as toothpaste and toiletries.

No.1 Laundryman, Mr. Rajendra Rai, leads a 3-man team of ex-Ghurkas, working round-the-clock to wash and iron the mountain of dhobi (Jackspeak for laundry) required during a high-tempo exercise.

Last but by no means least, it is down to the tireless efforts of the ‘Gash Team’, led by POPT Marc Feighery, that the gash (Jackspeak for rubbish/waste) generated by those 1000 people is correctly sorted, compacted and disposed of.
9 ASRM – Going Dutch (and Belgian)!

Joint Warrior 15 was a chance once again to prove (and show off!) the Sqn's amphibious capability onboard HMS OCEAN. 9 ASRM played a major role in deploying marines from 45 Cdo on beach landings so that they could continue the fight on land and take it to the enemy.

We also had a great opportunity to work alongside Belgian and Dutch marines – a memorable experience! From the moment they boarded the LCVPs ready for the first serial, we were struck by their enthusiasm which never flagged despite the round-the-clock nature of the exercise. At the end of each stage they would simply return to the boats to continue their songs and shanties! All-in-all it was a successful and enjoyable experience for 9 ASRM and, as you would expect from the Corps, we're ready to roll straight into our next trip.

Mne ‘Wellsy’ Wells

The Mighty ‘O’ rolls on!

HMS Ocean’s rugby team thrashed Helensburgh RFC 2nds 28-8 in their first ‘away’ match of 2015.

With a full squad and a bus load of Ship’s Company cheering them on, Ocean were raring to go after three weeks in Defence Watches! Dressed to impress in their new kit (courtesy of RN Community Rugby) it was evident from their impressive warm-up that Ocean not only looked like the All Blacks but felt like them, too.

Despite a promising start, it was Helensburgh who got the first points on the board with a penalty following a series of scrum-mages. Ocean came roaring back; Scott, Duheaume and Smith winning territory without finding a way through. Eventually, a quick pop off the ground from Baillie found the hands of an Matanatabu. His pace and power gave the home defence no chance and he ran in the first try of the game under the posts. Isaksen’s conversion gave Ocean a 7-3 lead at half-time.

After the restart, Helensburgh scored in the corner to take an 8-7 lead but it was fresh legs and pace off the Ocean bench which would be the game-changing factor. Great running in the back line from Phillips set up another opportunity for Matanatabu who duly scored his second try of the game, converted by Cotzee. A penalty try made it 21-8 and Ocean weren’t finished yet. Their pace brought further rewards when fancy footwork from Barker drew in the Helensburgh defenders, creating an overlap for Scott who passed inside to Cotzee who went over to seal victory.

Man of the match was deservedly awarded to Tom Matanatabu, who also went on to win the drink off! Lastly, a huge thank you goes out to Helensburgh RFC for their hospitality, putting on a great post-match social for Ship’s Company to enjoy.

AB Caroline Penrose

Team: 1 PO AWT Bill Bailley, 2 PO AET Rob Jones, 3 PO SEA Jan Geldard, 4 AET Nath Trower, 5 Lt Cdr Edwin Adams, 6 PO Rob Fuca, 7 NA(AH) Cody Duheaume, 8 NA(AH) Tom Matanatabu, 9 AB Matty Tilmus, 10 AB Chris MacDonald, 11 NA(AH) Tom Scott, 12 AB Chad Smith, 13 Mne Kyle Cotzee, 14 Mne Stu Barker, 15 LAET Stu Isaksen. Subs: AB Phil Mitchell, PO Sticky Green, LA(AH) Dan Phillips, Lt Shane Miller, AB Sam Reeves, Capt Chris Viggars, LA(AH) Leo Sayer, S/Lt Jones, LH Calwyn Jones, AB Eddie Browes

Photos by POMA Kev Carlton, AB(WS) Ben Corbett and AC Jonny Todd (TS COMUS)