

HMS LANCASTER

QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER

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CAPTAIN'S WELCOME

Welcome to the next edition of HMS LANCASTER's newsletter – designed to keep our wider family up to date on progress as we work hard to bring the Ship back to front line operations. I think we can all agree that the last few months have been somewhat unusual – I certainly hadn't ever imagined that I'd be dealing with the challenges of a global pandemic before I started this job! Whilst it has been a difficult time for many, there are silver linings too; we have discovered a much better way to run duty watch routines during long periods alongside which should improve our ability to plan time at home on an individual basis, and because we were forced to compress our June programme into one continuous period at sea we have completed our trials package whilst having enough time to enjoy some of the more unique aspects of life in a warship – like hands to bathe and flight deck BBQs. We can now proudly report that the flight deck has been re-commissioned, the primary weapons and sensors are all back online and as every day passes our confidence in the reliability of power, propulsion and 'hotel services' improves. I'm very conscious that our plans to get you all onboard were scuppered by CV19; we will find some new dates soon – I promise!



VE 75 DAY

This year marked 75 years since conflict amongst Europe came to an end on 8 May 1945. Victory in Europe Day, generally known as VE Day is a day to celebrate the formal acceptance by the Allies of World War II of Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces, bringing an end to the years of carnage and destruction which had encompassed the lives of millions throughout the war. To mark this occasion LANCASTER carried out her own commemorative celebration by asking all ship's company to raise a toast (of tea for the Duty Watch) to reflect on the enormous sacrifice, courage and determination of people from all walks of life who saw us through this dark period. In doing so they created a collage of the entire ship's complement from around the country, both from those onboard keeping duties to those at home currently following government guidelines.

LANCASTER also took part in the Shine a Line celebration, which is an audio and visual activity that marks the main historic events of the day in 1945. A two minute's silence was observed by all sailors in the dockyard at 11am before the ship's siren was sounded for a minute at 3pm to celebrate victory after Churchill's televised speech. Later in the evening, LANCASTER's crew took to the skies to shine their light, with their phones, torches and the ship's signal lamps directed to the night sky for five minutes.

FIRE AND FURY

HMS LANCASTER put her 4.5in gun through its paces as she carried out an Installation Test Firing in the South Coast Exercise Areas. Firing up to 24 rounds a minute the gun was fired at maximum elevation in depression and then a burst of 20 rounds. Shells leave the barrel at speeds in excess of twice the speed of sound and have a maximum range of 15 miles. PO Bates said "it was great to finally be back at sea and use the gun. Having joined LANCASTER over a year ago as the maintainer to get to function the gun was fantastic. A lot of the junior members of the crew have never heard or seen the gun fire, so it was a great introduction to the power it can deliver"



Nec Aspera Terrent - Difficulties be Damned
"The Queens Frigate"

VISIT BY 2SL AND SoS FOR DEFENCE

LANCASTER played host this month to Vice Admiral Nicholas Hine CB Second Sea Lord, and The Right Honourable Ben Wallace MP, Secretary of State for Defence as they met to discuss the availability of ships against today's Royal Navy's ongoing global commitments against upkeep periods and the arrival of the Type 26 Global Combat Ships.

Greeted onboard in LANCASTER's home port of Portsmouth by the ship's Commanding Officer, Commander Will Blackett and Executive Officer, Lieutenant-Commander Dave Mason. It comes after LANC's four-year refit period allowing the ship to prove her readiness to become one of the UK's high-readiness Frigates in 2021. Accompanied by the Second Sea Lord and Secretary of State for Defence was Vice-Admiral Paul Marshall who is the Senior Responsible Owner for delivery of the Type 26 and Type 31 programmes.



30th BIRTHDAY

This year marked a milestone birthday for the Queen's Frigate as she entered her third decade since being launched by her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 24 May 1990. Since the Duke of Lancaster is one of the Queen's subsidiary titles, the Monarch is the ship's very own sponsor and takes a keen interest in LANCASTER's activities across the globe.

In order to celebrate the occasion, the Ship's company gathered on the flight deck to mark the anniversary and tuck into the enormous cake baked onboard by the duty chefs. Despite her age, since entering front-line service in May 1992 shortly after her commissioning, LANCASTER has remained at the core of the Royal Navy's frigate fleet providing maritime security, war and peace-keeping activities across the globe.



HANDS TO BATHE AND BBQ

After a busy trials period the Ship's company took an evening off to unwind. LANC anchored near Dartmouth and the crew were allowed to go for a swim or 'hands to bathe', (with a safety boat on hand keep an eye on everyone). In the evening the POs Mess took charge – the chefs were given the night off and the POs cooked a BBQ on the flightdeck. Everyone enjoyed themselves and it was a great opportunity to recuperate after a busy period at sea. The next day LANCASTER then sailed to go into Plymouth for a short logistics stop before heading back to sea for more weapon and aviation training.



FUTURE EVENTS

LANCASTER's journey towards frontline operations will continue over the coming weeks and months; now that the majority of capabilities have been proven from a material perspective, the focus will shift to training. LANCASTER will manage her own training and maintenance schedule through July and August (including making a period of leave) before reporting to Plymouth for Basic Operational Sea Training (BOST) in September / October. Later in the year, LANCASTER looks forward to test firing her Sea Ceptor missiles before taking part in an exercise run by the Norwegian Navy.



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