

HMS LANCASTER

NEWSLETTER

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @HMSLANCASTER

ISSUE 05 | APR 2021



CAPTAIN'S WELCOME

Well here we are again at the end of another term – and this one has been quite an adventure. Whilst COVID restrictions slowly ease ashore, we have been maintaining a 'clean bubble' onboard – achieved through a lengthy period of dispersed isolation and testing prior to embarkation in January. This was necessary for largely obvious reasons, and made all the more important this term as our 'Fleet Ready Escort' duty required the Ship to be at 24hrs notice to respond to short notice tasking throughout. We have completed a challenging operation in the Baltic and we returned to the Arctic, working closely with regional allies and at times up (very) close to our Russian counterparts. Despite a complete absence of time ashore, the Ship's Company have performed admirably (as you will see below); after all the challenges of the last year, LANCASTER has now fully proven herself on sustained, deployed, frontline operations – there is a genuine sense of pride onboard and we are all now looking forward to some time at home. We are also very excited to finally be able to announce plans for families and affiliates to visit the Ship at sea – details below!



WARFARE DEPARTMENT



The start of 2021 has seen Lancaster tested thoroughly on operations, on duty as the Fleet Ready Escort and conducting numerous missions across the North Atlantic and Northern Europe. We have worked with Ships from eight foreign nations, taken charge of two Task Groups, practiced gunnery just 3 miles from Russian territorial waters, been shadowed by Russian vessels, been overflowed by Russian jets, all whilst operating our Wildcat helicopter and trying to keep the upper deck maintained in sub-zero temperatures. Busy is an understatement!

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



We have operated in contested waters, facing the possibility of Russian interaction at any moment, and with a relatively junior department, we have met that challenge with real success. New members of the bridge team such as LS Watson, AB Walker and AB Collins have all stepped in straight away and proven their worth. In the Ops Room, we have 2 new PWOs (including our RNZN exchange officer Lt Crawford), LS Evans as a new ORS, and various additional new ABs who have quickly become part of the team.

We have conducted numerous seamanship serials this term – including Replenishments At Sea (RAS) with RFA Tiderace, including a double RAS with HMS Westminster and a rarely practiced light line transfer with foreign warships, all whilst battling through very cold weather and heavy seas. We also enjoyed a scenic trip through the sheltered Norwegian Fjords - challenging navigation but a welcome respite. The whole department should rightfully be very proud of what we have achieved over the past few months!



WEAPON ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT



Lancaster started this term in the midst a busy maintenance period which saw the WE department receive several equipment enhancements, most notably, the fitting of Heavy Machine Guns to the bridge wings for added lethality against small fast moving surface units. During February we commenced OP AUTOMA tasking and test fired our new weaponry, the difference in recoil between that and the GPMGs was apparent for all on lookers! Next on the agenda was the firing of our 4.5" Medium Calibre Gun in close proximity to Russian territorial waters in the Baltic Sea. As always, it drew plenty of attention from the newer members of the Ship's Company and made a satisfying amount of noise!

Training was once again high up on the WE Department agenda with numerous junior officers embarked to experience life at sea for the first time. During their WE acquaint they got first-hand experience of the Ship's weapons, sensors and communications equipment and were supervised in the conduct of live weapon firings. Throughout this term a large number of the WE Department have also completed their respective Professional Examinations which are key enablers on the route to advancement within the RN. The WE team has also welcomed a new Head of Department, Lt Cdr Adam Leveridge, and has been supported by additional Weapons Group personnel CPO Baker and LET Herbert. We have achieved a huge amount this term, BZ all round!



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

MARINE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Since the last newsletter the ME department has maintained its busy pace, preparing the Ship for operations in the extreme cold weather. During the period of operations, the department has maintained 100% availability of all of its critical machinery which provided the Command the speed, manoeuvring and systems to successfully achieve the mission. On top of the normal maintenance routines, cold weather preparations involved changing out the normal oils and greases used in our upper deck machinery, and procuring a special chemical additive for use within the Ship's rescue boats. This allowed us to protect the equipment from the temperatures that were regularly below freezing and with a wind chill down to -25°C . Another specific



area of focus was to ensure that all of the Ship's internal heaters were working correctly, a cold and miserable sailor inside the Ship is less likely to perform well when tasked to head outside into the Arctic cold...!

This period at sea also saw the embarkation of 11 sailors from the Engineering Training Squadron, these young Marine Engineers were in the early stages of their careers, and they came on board to gain value experience, in both what it is like to be at sea and the specifics of their chosen career path. This is designed to assist them with the completion of their task books and to ensure that they are effectively able to deliver when assigned to their first Ship for a period of 2-3 years. Coupled with this external training was a significant amount of internal training, and the department are extremely pleased that ET1(ME) Steele and ET1(ME) McGann-Underwood have passed their LET(ME) Provisional Examination boards. This is the final pre-requisite for promotion and no small feat to balance the preparation and revision for it whilst carrying out their normal duties.

LOGISTICS DEPARTMENT

A lot of new faces have joined the Logistics Department this term but the experienced hands welcomed them with open arms and old or new everyone has been kept busy. The Department came out of quarantine thanks to the help of our very own medical team, who with the assistance of medics ashore arranged for 600 COVID tests to make sure we could confidently sail COVID free. With a closed gangway since the 22nd January the Chefs and Caterers have been front and centre; they have kept the whole ship going and made sure morale has stayed high. They cooked 3 (sometimes 4) meals a day for 200 people and regardless of how big the waves got the food was always top line. Special mention must go to Chefs Marshall and Keating who completed their task books and passed their oral boards for advancement to AB1. BZ. The supply



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

chain department (the team working very hard behind the scenes to make sure we get everything we need) have been instrumental in keeping Lancaster at sea and fully operational. In March SC Neptune was the winner of the much coveted Golden Pallet Award for supply chain excellence – well deserved. Last but by no means least, the Writers have also had a busy few months; as well as keeping our various pay and allowances running smoothly, they also found time to organise another 'Blue Nose' ceremony for members of the Ship's Company who had yet to brave the cold and treacherous north. As we come to the end of this very busy term we say goodbye to PO Jim Gaskell who leaves Lancaster after two years for his next assignment. Thanks Jim for all your hard work, we wish you all the best for your next assignment. Finally, a big thank you to all the friends and families who have been supporting us from isolation in Portsmouth, to the Baltic sea, to the Arctic Circle and back again.



KIDS CLUB!!



Thank you all for your continued involvement - the latest colouring competition was hotly contested. In fact it was so tight we couldn't choose between the two top places so both got a prize! Congratulations to both winners who are now proud owners of a fluffy Corgi! We can't wait to see you all onboard soon – make sure you put Families' Day in the diary (12 Aug 21). In the meantime, you can keep up to date via our family Facebook Page and by following us on Twitter (@HMSLANCASTER).



FUTURE EVENTS

LANCASTER is now back in Portsmouth and will remain alongside until May. Following a short period at sea, she will return to base port for maintenance, before resuming duties at high readiness. Importantly (on the assumption that the national COVID roadmap continues as planned), we intend to host affiliates onboard for a day at sea on 11 August, and families for the same on 12 August – get the dates in your diary and we will be in touch soon with the detail. We are also hoping to visit Liverpool (and therefore the City of Lancaster) later in the year – plans are firming up and we will let you know as soon as we can to confirm. Sea you then!



Contact email: HMSLANC-PRO@mod.uk

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