



Ocean Wave

OLYMPIC SPECIAL NEWSLETTER

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HMS OCEAN supporting the London 2012 Olympic Games



Welcome to the latest addition of Ocean Wave. In this issue we will document yet another action packed and historic summer onboard the Royal Navy's largest warship.

A Family adventure back to Devonport for the "Mighty O"



Conducting live firings at sea proved to be very popular

Family members had another opportunity to experience life on board the "Mighty O" at the end of May when the ship conducted another of the highly popular Parents and Children at Sea (PACAS) events. Twenty seven relatives embarked in the Ship's affiliated city of Sunderland and sailed back to Devonport during a week in which they were given the opportunity to take part in a varied programme of Ship's activities.

Guests participated in everything ranging from conducting live firings of a 20mm canon and General Purpose Machine Gun with the Warfare Department to baking Pizzas in the Galley with the Logistics Department. Relatives lived alongside family members in their respective messes, getting a genuine insight on how their loved ones live and function at sea.

A fairly sedate sea state and decent weather meant a timely return to Plymouth Sound and to anchor at Charlie buoy to await the arrival of hundreds more friends and families in readiness for more family fun.



More Family Fun and an Old Friend Comes to Visit.



The amazing Sea Fury conducts a Fly-past of HMS OCEAN during Families Day.

On a hazy early summer's morning in June, OCEAN set sail from Plymouth Sound with over 200 family and friends embarked who would witness a very special spectacle. Sixty years ago a Sea Fury aircraft from the previous HMS OCEAN shot down a MIG jet fighter over the skies of Korea, becoming the first propeller driven aircraft ever to have outgunned a jet fighter and so writing itself into naval history. Sixty years on and those present for the Ship's Families Day were treated to an air display by a Sea Fury from the RN Historic Flight based at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset.

As well as the remarkable Sea Fury there was a display from the Royal Naval Lynx Helicopter Display Team known as "The Black Cats". The display was rounded off by an air defence exercise demonstration conducted by a Hawk from FRADU based at RNAS Culdrose.

Families and friends were given the opportunity to tour the Ship and take part in a number of interactive stances in both the Hangar and within the Vehicle Deck as well witness a capability demonstration in the Operations Room.





A frenzy of Olympic Preparations.



Five Lynx Mk 8 Helicopters of 815 NAS embark off the south coast for OP OLYMPIC

After a short period of leave, HMS OCEAN's Ship's Company returned to Devonport to prepare for an historic and totally unique period of operations. The next week would see a Tailored Air Group of over 200 personnel embark which would include representatives of all three Services. First to arrive were the RAF Regiment Snipers who, along with their Royal Marine counterparts would provide an essential part of the Olympic Air and Maritime Security Plan. Next came the Army, 5 Army Air Corps Lynx Mk7 helicopters from 661 Squadron joined the Ship in Devonport prior to sailing on 11th June. They were shortly followed by 5 Lynx MK8 helicopters of 815 Naval Air Squadron.

The Logistics Department had to coordinate this massive and essential uplift in personnel and their mass of associated stores. With a further 400 Venue Security Force personnel due to join the Ship in Greenwich it was certainly a phenomenal task to complete with a total of 1000 personnel due to be on-board.

Once successfully integrated into the Ship, it was straight down to business as all air and ground crews were required to conduct two days of intense aviation in order to be fully prepared for OCEAN's arrival on the Thames.

This highly successful period of preparations included numerous deck landings and practice emergencies to fine tune an already well prepared embarked air group.

Internally the integration of the embarked personnel continued with briefings taking place on a regular basis on every aspect of life on-board an RN warship.

Finally the "Mighty O" reached the Thames Estuary once more and began her transit up the river to take a now familiar place at Greenwich in readiness for the forthcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games.

An incredible feeling of anticipation was felt by all, but first OCEAN had a surprise up her sleeve.



A Lynx Mk 7 of 661 Squadron Army Air Corps embarks prior to sailing in Devonport.





Five More “Mighty O”s.



150 Members of OCEAN Ship's Company recreate the iconic Olympic Rings by the O2 Arena

And so HMS OCEAN returned to the Thames. First and foremost there was the small evolution of getting the Royal Navy's largest warship through the Thames Barrier once more.

This extremely difficult navigational feat had already been conducted twice before in May when the Ship visited to conduct the LIVEX in preparation for the Games. On that occasion it had been the focus of intense media attention and this would be the case once again, however, the “Mighty O” had a surprise up her sleeve.

As she emerged successfully once again from the gates of the barrier there was a burst of colour and activity on her Flight Deck.

First came a team of 30 dressed in black, shortly followed by teams wearing the four subsequent familiar colours of the Olympic Rings. With military timing and precision they assembled



A view of the Rings from FLYCO

themselves into pre-determined positions to recreate the iconic symbol that would become so familiar over the next fortnight.

As the Ship manoeuvred against a backdrop of some of London's most famous landmarks and skylines the team of 150 stood proud as the world's media once again focused its attention on the Royal Navy's finest fighting ship.

Finally the tugs helped OCEAN turn around near the O2 Arena and make her sternboard into position at Greenwich Pier adjacent to the Old Royal Naval College and Cutty Sark.

This was to be home for the next two months and would become an essential hub of activity for a multitude of Olympic tasking.



Approaching the Thames Barrier





Let The Games Begin!

And so months of preparation and dedication all built up to the London 2012 Olympic Games. Just like Team GB, Team OCEAN had been waiting for the big day to arrive as well.

From the moment the Ship arrived at Greenwich it was to play an essential part in the security of the Games. The Tailored Air Group and Air Department supported both the Air Security Plan and Maritime Security Plan; assisting the civil authorities in ensuring both the river and restricted airspace



The Venue Security Force Embark



The TAG provide support to Maritime and Air Security

were not in any way compromised. The Logistics Department fed, watered and accommodated the embarked Venue Security Force (VSF) as well as every other soul on board. The VSF itself provided the security to the Greenwich Park Equestrian Venue ensuring the multi-national spectators and participants felt safe and at ease.

The Ship also participated in a wide variety of Community engagement events including another two opportunities for the public to come on board during "Ship Open to Visitors" (SOTV) days.



Mne Adam Wenn helping members of the public feel the weight of a RM Bergen during SOTV.

Having already conducted a similar event in May which proved highly popular, OCEAN once again opened its doors to show the public exactly what goes on on-board the Royal Navy's largest warship. Once again Visitors queued in their thousands for the two events with many new friendships established.





Some Familiar Faces come to visit.

With the world's media fully focused on London 2012 it went without saying that a 22,700 ton warship would create somewhat of a stir. It seemed that everyone wished to see just what part OCEAN had to play in making the Games a success.

From TV celebrities to politicians, "The Mighty O" hosted them all. Prime Minister David Cameron dropped by to speak to members of all three Armed Services embarked and to gain an understanding of how they have all integrated into the Ship in support of the Olympics. Members of Team GB came along with their well earned medals including Royal Marine Chris Sherrington who spoke to members of the Ships Company about his Olympic success.

Piers Morgan and a crew from CNN came to highlight the assistance the military was giving to the civil authorities during the Games.



Prime Minister David Cameron meets members of 815 Naval Air Squadron



Team GB visit the Team OCEAN



Piers Morgan arrives onboard

He conducted interviews with the Commanding Officer Captain Andrew Betton and other key personnel during his visit. There was even BBC Breakfast weather broadcast from the "Mighty O"; Carol Kirkwood gave her forecast for the Games live from the Upper Decks of HMS OCEAN. Other well known names to visit included England Rugby Ace Ugo Monye as well as Government Ministers such as Phillip Hammond the Secretary of State for Defence.

The visits were on top of a heavy schedule of Public and community engagements and visits from the Ship's affiliated organisations and associations.

In total OCEAN hosted 54 high visibility visits and several hundred low level tours that ensured the Royal Navy's contribution and in particular the role of HMS OCEAN was understood by a large and wide-ranging audience.



Over to Carol with the weather





By Royal Appointment.

HMS OCEAN hosted two Royal visitors during the Olympics. Prince Michael of Kent spent time on-board meeting personnel, touring the ship and learning what OCEAN had achieved during both the Olympics and during the NATO mission off the coast of Libya last year. He also presented two Long Service and Good Conduct Medals during his stay. HMS OCEAN's Ship's Photographer and Ocean Wave Newsletter contributor Guy Pool was one of those to receive the medal from the Prince. He said: "Receiving the LSGC is a really big stepping stone in anyone's career, but to have it presented by the Prince made it even more special. The Prince, who



LA(PHOT) Guy Pool receives his LSGC Medal



CPO(AH) Steve Christie meets Prince Michael of Kent

is the Honorary Rear Admiral of the Maritime Reserve, met Reservists mobilised to serve in HMS OCEAN during the Olympics.

Next to visit was The Princess Royal. Princess Anne in company with her husband Admiral Tim Lawrence spent a great deal of time at Greenwich supporting the Princess Royal's daughter Zara Phillips in her successful quest for an Equestrian Olympic medal. With over 400 Venue Security Force personnel from OCEAN employed at Greenwich Park it was an ideal opportunity for the Royal visitors to meet members of the VSF as well as be given a demonstration and understanding of the other contributions that the "Mighty O" was providing to the Olympic security effort.



The Princess Royal chats with Captain Andrew Betton and Lt Cdr Paul Johnson





All the Bells and a Golden Ticket.....

HMS OCEAN joined thousands of campanologists, town criers and proud Olympic enthusiasts across the country as they rang as many bells as possible for three minutes to mark the opening day of the London 2012 Olympic Games at 0812 on 27th July 2012

The Ship's bell sounded eight times which traditionally signified the change of the watch before ringing for a further three minutes as part of the "All the Bells" project, a conceptual artwork co-ordinated by Turner Prize winner Martin Creed.

ETME Dale Sleeman was chosen to ring the Ship's bell in recognition of his services to RN Rugby. He said: "It feels great to be part of something so big".

Two further members of the Ship's Company, Wtr Turner and AB Gibson took part in the event at Big Ben as part of the project.

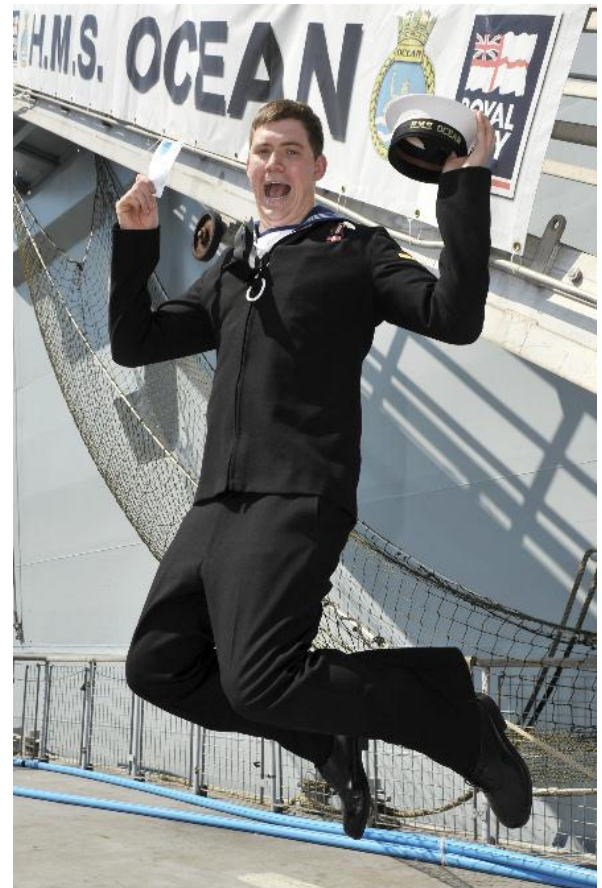


It was celebration time for one other member of Team OCEAN, Leading Seaman Luke Manley, who was the lucky recipient of the Olympic Golden Ticket which gave him a VIP seat for the Olympic Opening Ceremony.

The ticket was one of three made available by the Prime Minister's Office to members of all three Armed Services providing support to the London 2012 Games. The winners were selected after nominations were put forward by all units involved.

He said: "It was a fantastic shock when I received a phone call from the ship to say that I had been nominated. Although the lads down the mess have congratulated me, they have been ribbing me about what a lucky so and so I am, but I don't care."

He added: "I never ever thought that I would get to see the whole show, and as a VIP, it's mind-boggling. It really is the highlight of my naval career to represent the Royal Navy at such an historic event.





The Paralympic Games.

With a highly successful Olympic Games complete, our attention turned to the Paralympics. HMS OCEAN was to maintain her presence at Greenwich throughout the period and although her contribution to the Air Security Plan was complete, aviation support to the Maritime Security Plan continued. 3 Lynx Mk8 helicopters of 815 NAS remained to fly in support of the civilian authorities patrolling the Thames. The logistical support also remained with the number of Venue Security Force increased on-board to 450. Members of the Ship's Company were also involved in the Paralympic Torch Relay which left Greenwich Pier by launch and



The Paralympic Torch Relay passes the Cutty Sark at Greenwich

crossed the river past HMS OCEAN flanked by a flotilla of RN & RM vessels made up of a P2000, the HMS PRESIDENT launch and a Landing Craft from HMS OCEAN. Although running slightly behind schedule, the torch safely arrived at the Olympic Park in time for yet another historic evening.

A number of the Ship's Company were present at the Opening Ceremony of the Paralympic Games after tickets were made available by LOCOG for them to attend.



The Paralympic Torch Relay becomes waterborne as it passes the Mighty "O" at Greenwich

And so yet another busy episode in the life of HMS OCEAN drew to a close. She proved herself to be the Royal Navy's finest warship; adaptable, capable and always there to deliver what is required of her. One more transit through the Thames Barrier and then into the open sea leaving long-lasting memories of her participation in the London 2012 experience. Captain Betton summed up the feelings of all on-board: "After two months moored on the River Thames supporting the Olympic and Paralympic Games, our return home to Plymouth closes another chapter in the Ship's life. HMS OCEAN has provided a fully equipped base for Royal Navy and Army helicopters, accommodating more than 1000 military personnel from all 3 Services working in support of the Games. Whilst moored in London we have welcomed over 20,000 visitors onboard and it has been a fantastic and thoroughly rewarding experience to have played our part in this fabulous summer of sporting endeavour."





A Dutch Farewell.



HMS OCEAN squeezes through the lock into Amsterdam

tic opportunity for the Minister to see at first hand just what OCEAN could do.

The Ambassador was here to host an Official Reception for over 200 guests including members of the Dutch Olympic Squad. Guests from the Dutch military, police and local authority officials were entertained by accompanying music from the Band of the Royal Artillery. A ceremonial sunset was also conducted and guests had the opportunity to take a tour of the ship. Olympic Mascots, Wenlock and Mandeville were presented to Amsterdam's Alderman for Sport, Eric van den Burg by the Ambassador in the presence of the Dutch sailing bronze medallist, Lobke Berkhaut.



HM Ambassador Arkwright presents the Olympic Mascots to Alderman van den Burg.

After a textbook transit out of the Thames Barrier there was the small obstacle of navigating the lock that leads into the waterways of Amsterdam. With only a few metres to spare, the Royal Navy's largest warship majestically made her way to her berth at the Amsterdam Passenger Terminal right in the heart of the city itself.

A busy schedule awaited on her first day in port. Firstly a visit from the Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Mr Hans Hillen. He was accompanied by the British Ambassador, Mr Paul Arkwright and Vice Admiral Matthieu Borsboom who is Commander of the Netherlands Royal Navy. It was a fantas-



The Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (far right).

On Sunday 16th September, the Ship entered two teams in the unique "Urbanathlon". This massive charity event had been organised by Men's Health Magazine and had over 9,000 entrants. The race itself was started close to the Ship and each competitor covered a distance of 14.5 km. During the race they encountered 20 obscure and totally urban obstacles such as road blocks, a tram and ISO containers. All of the Ship's Company who entered did Team OCEAN very proud indeed. And so OCEAN leaves for Devonport to return for much needed refit. She will emerge once more to take up the baton from HMS IL-LUSTRIOUS in 2014.



This will be the final edition of Ocean Wave until the Ship emerges from her refit in late 2013. Thank you to all our readers.