

OXFORD URNU ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

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SUMMER TERM REVIEW | JUNE 2017



HMS TRIUMPH Submarine Visit - Words OCdt Josh Hatcher:



OURNU was offered the rare opportunity of a tour on board the operational Trafalgar Class Submarine, HMS TRIUMPH in HMNB Devonport. After being greeted by the DWEO and descending into the Submarine, students carefully manoeuvred their way around each department of the boat with in-depth briefs on their specific roles at sea. With vital compartments such as the 'Bomb Shop', galley and mess decks available for viewing, students were able to fully comprehend the significant demands required as a Submariner. The day proved to be thoroughly enjoyable and enabled a fantastic insight into the conditions on board a Submarine.

Practical Leadership Tasks - Words OCdt John Hawke:



On Thu 8 Jun 17, the OCdts joined with the local branch of the Sea Cadet Corps to try their hand at 3 different practical leadership tasks, known as PLTs. These tasks are designed to test a range of skills, including timekeeping, problem solving and communication, both for the team leaders and members. The PLTs varied greatly, with one entailing the movement of water from one 'ship' (HMS Wheelie Bin) to another 'ship' (HMS Wheelie Bin II), and another the creation of an exact copy of a 'radar station' only from memory. The training evening was enjoyable for both the

OCdts and the Sea Cadets, who were also treated to a presentation on Gibraltar and its importance to the Armed Forces – including snippets narrated by the highly entertaining tones of the Pathé news man. The Unit looks forward to the next occasion on which we can host the Sea Cadets.

NATO Submarine Rescue System Visit - Words OCdt Ben Roberts:



Oxford URNU students, on our annual Phase 2 Easter Deployment, were given the rare privilege of visiting the NATO Submarine Rescue System based up at Faslane in Scotland. Before joining the Ship at HMNB Clyde the students were given an in depth look at how the world leading NATO Submarine Rescue System operates and were fortunate enough to meet the people who work on the system. On completion of a fascinating intro presentation the students were given the honour of meeting Tom, the senior operator of the submersible vehicle that physically rescues stricken submariners on the sea bed. After visiting all areas of the NATO Submarine Rescue System, the students left the facility

with a library of incredible stories but most importantly and real sense of respect for what the operators of this incredible system do for all submariners across the world.

Oxford URNU Annual Reception – Words OCdt Ben Fernando:

On 25 May 17 the staff and students of the Oxford URNU hosted a number of Armed Forces and civilian personnel at our Annual Reception in the Divinity School of the Bodleian Library. The evening included presentations from the Guest of Honour, Cdr Rimmer from HMS COLLINGWOOD, the Unit CO, Lt Will Jones RN who took the opportunity to thank everyone involved with assisting the Unit, and the SMid Emily O'Donovan who gave a presentation on the role of Women in the Royal Navy to mark 100 years of the WRNS. The event was thoroughly enjoyed by all, especially for Unit members leaving for their final deployment in the URNU where it was a chance to celebrate the friendships developed during their time in the Unit. After the Annual Reception had concluded, guests and officer cadets were invited to retire to the slightly more relaxed surrounding of the Wardroom at Falklands House.



BALTOPS - Words OCdt Ben Fernando: NATO's Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) is an annual scenario in the waters off Eastern Europe. This year, for the first time, HMS SMITER and URNU Students were invited to participate, with a delegation of students from Oxford, Glasgow and London URNUs. After travelling to Cuxhaven in Germany, we transited the Kiel Canal and began preparations for the exercise in the Danish port of Nakskov. A series of night-time operations followed, which saw us mooring alongside Lithuanian gunships, playing at being 'rebel forces' and 'attacking' the T23 Frigate HMS IRON DUKE, hunting down 'enemy' tankers in the middle of the night and participating in a giant PHOTEX alongside ships from 14 other nations. Overall it was a terrific deployment, giving us a real insight into the way in which the UK works with NATO to strengthen our security.



Summer Deployment Phase 1 - Words OCdt Tom Rayner (Devon URNU): Oxford URNU undertook their annual summer deployment in the Baltic Sea on board HMS SMITER. After flying into Hamburg, students from several URNUs travelled to the northern German city of Kiel to join HMS EXPLOIT, HMS RANGER and HMS ARCHER. Kiel Week festivities meant that it was very busy from the get-go, with students conducting tours of their respective ships, visiting various warships in the dockyard, paying our respects and laying a wreath at the Commonwealth war graves, visiting a U-boat and networking with matelots from various NATO navies at events such as the Young Officers reception. During our visit to Flensburg, we came alongside at the shoreside establishment of Murwick Naval Academy, Germany's Initial Naval Officer Training Centre, their equivalent of Britannia Royal Naval College. This visit was a personal highlight, with tours of the college, various acquaintances and events with the German officers keeping us very busy. The Phase flew by and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ship's Company of HMS SMITER and other present staff of 1PBS, the CO and Cox'n of both Oxford and Devon URNUs, as well as Bundeswehr, for what was a brilliant and unforgettable phase.

Summer Deployment Phase 2 and 3 - Words OCdt Claire Evans: Phase 2 began in Hamburg sailing for Wilhelmshaven, Germany's largest naval base. Next we continued over rough seas to Helgoland before sailing on to the Netherlands, and the small town of West Terschelling, home to the Maritime Institute Willem Barentsz, a renowned nautical college where many future officers study for degrees in courses such as the Maritime Officer Programme. Following 2 harbour days in Amsterdam, the four P2000s made their way to Antwerp, where representatives of the Belgian Navy welcomed us and provided not only information about the city but also free entry to Antwerp's cathedral and zoo. Leaving Belgium behind, we sailed on to Boulogne-sur-Mer, France's largest fishing port. The final harbour day of the Phase was spent exploring the walled Old Town before sailing to Dieppe the following day. Phase 3 began in Dieppe, sailing along the coast provided plenty of opportunities for students to practice visual fixing. In company with HMS RANGER and HMS EXPLOIT, we called in at Le Havre for a night on the way to the historic town of Honfleur, on the southern bank of the Seine estuary. As we were sailing into a French port on Bastille Day, each ship flew a French Tricolour (hastily crafted out of a former flag Tango). The national holiday meant that there was a lively atmosphere in the town, with an excellent firework display in the evening. Our next port was Caen, via the Caen canal, where we sailed past the Pegasus Bridge memorial. The Pegasus bridge, along with other nearby bridges, was a key objective during Operation Deadstick, part of Operation Tonga in the days leading up to the D-Day landings. After a harbour day in Caen, where some of us were able to visit the Caen Memorial, a museum and war memorial commemorating World War II and the Battle of Normandy, we sailed on to Cherbourg, the final French port of the Phase. Our final port was St Helier in Jersey, where the Ship's Company and OCdts all enjoyed an end-of-deployment meal before the OCdts departed the following day on a ferry back to Portsmouth.

Rifle Training - Words OCdt Nick Chrumka: It's not often that the URNU are able to undertake small arms training, so the Unit was delighted when we were given the chance courtesy of SSgt Starling of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. An initial brief on both the L85A2 and its LSW variant were given, with a full run down of the components of each and different options available for both weapon systems. The training then ran through the general operation of the weapon system and was followed by an opportunity for some light hearted competition. Two teams took it in turns in conducting the various drills learnt during the training with the threat of press ups for any errors in the drills. As an added twist to the proceedings cadets were paired with another in the opposing team and it was down to them to pick up on slip ups. Learning a new set of skills away from our usual training programme proved to be a very enjoyable experience. The overall response from the unit members was a good one with a unanimous verdict that we would all like to see more training like this in the future.



CO's Address: It's been a busy term with a variety of training opportunities and events taking place and it has been hugely pleasing to see Unit members getting stuck in with their characteristic enthusiasm. Next term marks a new academic year with a diverse and full training package ahead and I especially look forward to welcoming the next intake of Unit members.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Will Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Lt W Jones RN
CO OURNU