

From Captain P A Stroude Royal Navy



Navy Command

**Commanding Officer
HMS PORTLAND
BFPO 361**

Nigel Rimmell
Vice Chairman

14 June 2017

Dear Nigel,

It is with particular sadness that I am writing to you for what will be my last occasion as the Commanding Officer of HMS PORTLAND. I hand over to my Executive Officer, Lieutenant Commander Thom Hobbs, on 15 June, who will be appointed Senior Naval Officer until the Ship enters a period of dormancy in mid-July.

HMS PORTLAND has enjoyed a demanding yet ultimately successful 18 months since I first wrote to introduce myself to you, and when I look back to consider all that we have achieved, it is little wonder that time appears to have passed so quickly. From joining with a new and inexperienced crew for the challenges of deployment preparations, operational sea training and weapons and sensor proving, through to a remarkably varied nine-month operational deployment, which encompassed four oceans, four continents and ranged from the heat and tempo of the Arabian Gulf to the very different challenges of ice in the South Atlantic, the pace has been relentless. I am delighted to say however, that throughout all activity, and in all environments, your affiliated Ship's Company consistently acquitted themselves hugely professionally, in keeping with the finest traditions of the Service and proving a credit to their country.

The Ship is now alongside in Devonport and is busily de-storing for dormancy in advance of starting her life extension refit programme in spring 2018. During this refit she will receive significant upgrades, including new navigation radars, new external communication and Command systems, installation of Sea Ceptor air defence missiles to replace Sea Wolf, and a medium range radar upgrade to Type 997 Artisan 3D. These changes, together with the preservation of the hull and superstructure, will ensure that your affiliated Ship will emerge in spring 2020 capable of protecting the United Kingdom's interests around the world for many more years to come. A new Captain and Ship's Company will join in advance of this date, and establish contact early to re-kindle the relationship with you as soon as possible.

It has been an immense privilege to serve as HMS PORTLAND's Captain, and at all times I have greatly valued the warm, loyal and enthusiastic support of our affiliates. May I take this opportunity to sincerely thank you, and to urge you to extend the same consideration to my successor, once nominated. I wish you and Portland Royal Naval Association all the very best for the future.

*Yours aye,
Paul Stroude*

