

HMS Portland's visit to Cape Town inspires local community kids

The HMS Portland visited Cape Town between 4 to 7 April, three months into her seven-month deployment as the Royal Navy's Atlantic Patrol Ship, one of the most advanced frigates at sea today.

Throughout this deployment, she will undertake maritime security operations, including counter-narcotics and anti-piracy patrols, providing opportunities to work with other navies to strengthen ties and demonstrate the Royal Navy's commitment to the region. The Type 23 Frigate has visited Cape Verde, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, St Tome and Principe, Angola, Senegal, Namibia and now South Africa.



On arriving in Cape Town, Commander Sarah West, the first female captain of a British naval warship said, "We are extremely pleased to be in Cape Town. South Africa is the UK's main defence partner in the region. This was demonstrated yesterday when HMS Portland conducted exercises with the Submarine Charlotte Maxeke and will be further strengthened when Portland's Lynx helicopter operates with the South African Air Force during our time in this region. Of note, there are currently around 1,000 South African nationals serving with the UK Armed Forces."

Commander West and the British High Commissioner to South Africa, Judith Macgregor, hosted a reception on board HMS Portland on her first night at berth in Cape Town. Guests included representatives of the South African military, business, particularly the creative industries sector and media. The guests were treated to a capability demonstration by the ship's company, witnessing UK excellence in technology, innovation and design. And as part of the Great Britain brand, Jaguar Landrover displayed two of their new cars and the Bloodhound supersonic experience was at the berth for guests to test whether they are able to break the world land speed record, which the Bloodhound car will attempt to do in the Northern Cape desert next year. This unique platform showcased innovative British design to coincide with Cape Town as World Design Capital 2014.

Macgregor commented, "HMS Portland's visit forms part of the broader UK and South Africa relationship, strengthened recently on the defence side, but also being advanced across the broad spectrum of the bilateral relationship, including trade and investment, education and skills, science and technology, arts and culture, sports and entertainment and many more areas. The recent £100m investment by the UK into the Square Kilometre Array project is a demonstration of the deepening of the bilateral relationship."

Fives Futbol and British Consul inspire local community kids

HMS Portland's visit to Cape Town also included a sports and education outreach day to over 150 underprivileged children from township schools, hospitals and social projects. These included Capricorn Primary School, Grassroots Soccer and Oasis. Activities ranged from football on a blow-up five-a-side football pitch provided by Fives Futbol, to the Bloodhound Supersonic Experience. The children also had a tour of HMS Portland, being able to visit the bridge, sit in the Lynx helicopter and learn more about the ship's capability. A local children's brass band, the Izivunguvungu Foundation for Music played on board and were rewarded with British flagged backpacks.



HMS Portland's visit provided a state of the art platform to deepen our defence engagement with South Africa, also offering an opportunity to promote the UK's strengths in technology, innovation and design. The outreach to local children enabled them to learn about the UK and in turn allowed the ship's crew to engage with them and learn about their cultures and traditions.

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