



HMS Illustrious

in Liverpool

22 - 27 October 2009



HMS Illustrious, the Nation's Strike Carrier will be paying a high profile visit to Liverpool from 22 – 27 October 2009 as the centrepiece of the Royal Navy's continuing celebrations to mark this year's Centenary of Naval Aviation.

The ship, which will be moored at the Queen Elizabeth Cruise Liner berth close to the Royal Liver Building, will be taking part in a busy programme of events, the highlight of which will be a Centenary Fly Past over the Carrier on Friday 23 October 2009. The Fly Past will consist of 40 current and historic Naval aircraft including Merlin, Sea King, Lynx and Squirrel helicopters, Falcon and Hawk jets, 2 GR9 Harriers, 4 Fireflies and classic Naval favourites, the iconic Sea Vixen, Seafire and Sea Fury. The aircraft will pass over HMS Illustrious in a sequence of formations known as a Balbo – a large mixed formation of aircraft, named after the Italian General, Italo Balbo, who on several occasions flew large groups of flying boats across the Atlantic in the early 1930s.



"The Fleet Air Arm has strong connections with Liverpool" said Captain Ben Key, Commanding Officer of HMS Illustrious. "Much of the Battle of the Atlantic against the U-boats was fought and won from Liverpool. It is an honour for HMS Illustrious to visit Liverpool and for the Royal Navy to celebrate and promote the direct and important contribution that Naval aviation continues to make to our nation's security."

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// **Captain Ben Key Royal Navy
Commanding Officer HMS Illustrious**



The Fleet Air Arm Fly Past is expected to attract large crowds as it flies up the Mersey. His Royal Highness the Duke of York, KG, the Commodore-in-Chief of the Fleet Air Arm, will be guest of honour onboard the Carrier as the formation flies overhead. HMS Illustrious will be open to visitors on Sunday 25 October and Monday 26 October. Members of the public will also have the opportunity to see three exciting Royal Navy flying displays over the weekend and visit a static park of Naval aircraft in front of the Royal Liver Building. The static park will be open from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm daily from 23-26 October.





Fly Past

Friday 23 October



A Royal Navy Fly Past of over 40 current and historic rotary wing and fixed wing Naval aircraft will take place over Liverpool on Friday 23 October 2009 to celebrate 100 years of Naval aviation. The spectacular formation will be tiered at different heights and will fly the length of the River Mersey from south to north passing over HMS Illustrious moored at the Cruise Liner Berth, Pier Head at 2.00pm.

This year's Centenary of Naval aviation has been celebrated with several similar Fly Pasts. The first was over HMS Illustrious in London earlier this year on 7 May 2009, marking the date 100 years ago, when the Admiralty ordered its first airship.

"The Fly Navy 100 Balbo encompasses all that the Fleet Air Arm does so well," said Rear Admiral Simon Charlier, Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm. "It is innovative, every aircraft currently in service with the Fleet Air Arm is represented, together with our training aircraft and historic aircraft, and

the aircrew are a mix of current serving personnel, Royal Naval Reservists and civilian partners, all working together as a team. The Liverpool Fly Past will also include two GR9 Harriers of the Naval Strike Wing."

HMS Illustrious will be hosting a number of events onboard during her visit to Liverpool including a concert by the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines to raise money for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Desperate Times Call for Desperate Measures

The Battle of the Atlantic was the longest running campaign of the Second World War and it was one in which both Liverpool and the Fleet Air Arm played a vital part in Britain's survival and eventual victory.

Much of the Battle of the Atlantic against the U-boats was fought and won from Liverpool. From 1941 the headquarters of Britain's Western Approaches Command was established in Derby House, Liverpool and it was from there that the anti-submarine war was planned and executed. Pivotal to the campaign against the U-boats was convoy protection both by escort groups of corvettes, frigates and destroyers and the aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm.

36 Fleet Air Arm Squadrons flew some of the most hazardous missions imaginable during the Battle of the Atlantic. The combination of the U-boats, and their eyes and ears, the German Condor bombers, were described by Churchill as 'The scourge of the Atlantic.' June 1942 was the worst month for the Allies with the loss of 830,000 tons of shipping. An area known as the mid-Atlantic gap where U-boats operated freely because Allied aircraft could not reach them was causing major problems for the convoys. The lack of escort carriers and the pressing need to provide air cover called for innovative and bold measures. The Fleet Air Arm rose to the challenge.

Under Churchill's direction, RAE Farnborough developed a rocket powered catapult capable of launching a fully armed and fuelled fighter from a merchant ship. These Catapult Armed Merchant (CAM) vessels and Naval



Fighter Catapult Ships became vital to the war effort but it was the courageous pilots, both Fleet Air Arm and RAF, who volunteered to undertake the task that turned the tide of the Condor threat. Pilots undertook their catapult training at Speke aerodrome near Liverpool. One brave naval pilot, Sub Lieutenant David Wright RNVF described his first launch as terrifying. "It was like sitting on an exploding bomb. The forward blast was so violent and the wallop so chest compressing that I realised afterwards I had not heard the bang of the rockets. I was ahead of the sound wave but the sound of a Hurricane engine at full revs is deafening enough."



The major draw back of CAM ships, however, was that once the pilots had completed their mission they had to bale out or ditch in the sea and rely on being picked up by one of the ships. The first pilot to successfully launch from such

a ship, shoot down a Condor and survive his subsequent ditching was Lieutenant Bob Everett RN who was awarded the DSO. 9 German aircraft were shot down between 1941-43 deterring and holding the Condor threat at bay until suitable escort carriers and their aircraft became available. Closing the mid-Atlantic gap in those critical weeks was an outstanding feat of airmanship and co-operation between the services.

To provide a more comprehensive anti-submarine effect whilst the new escort carriers were being prepared a further conversion of merchant ships was undertaken. These were called Merchant Aircraft Carriers (MAC) and were merchant navy tankers and grain ships with a flat top added and funnels repositioned on their starboard side so that aircraft could both take off and land back on in conventional aircraft carrier fashion. The misuse of the terms MAC ships has, over succeeding years, caused confusion with their CAM ship forebears whose pilots to this day still retain the distinction of needing neither wheels, skids or floats to fly aircraft. Adding to the many other Fleet Air Arm 'firsts' the 'Hurricat' pilots were also among the earliest men to have been rocket propelled into the sky. Not quite a Cape Kennedy spectacular, but at the time equally as adventurous.

Events

- Friday 23 October**
- 0900 Aircraft take off from HMS Illustrious in preparation for Fly Past
 - 1000-1600 Royal Navy Static Park open
 - 1400 Centenary Fly Past along The River Mersey
 - 1600 Royal Navy Helicopter Display Team 'The Black Cats' flying display in front of Albert Dock
 - 1630 Aircraft land back on HMS Illustrious following Fly Past
- Saturday 24 October**
- 1000-1600 Royal Navy Static Park open
 - 1430-1530 Flying Display in front of Albert Dock
- Sunday 25 October**
- 1000-1600 Royal Navy Static Park open
 - 1130-1230 Flying Display in front of Albert Dock
 - 1300-1700 HMS Illustrious open to members of the public
- Monday 26 October**
- 1000-1600 Royal Navy Static Park open
 - 1000-1600 HMS Illustrious open to members of the public



The Royal Navy has had a close affiliation with the City of Liverpool for many years. During the Second World War Liverpool was the home of the Western Approaches Command and the City played a central role in the Battle of the Atlantic. Operations were run from the secret HQ beneath Liverpool's Derby House. One of the most famous Royal Navy officers, who sank more U-Boats than any other British or Allied Commander, was Captain Frederic John Walker CB, DSO***, RN who spent much of his wartime career based in Liverpool and is commemorated by a statue at the Pier Head.

A number of Royal Naval Air Stations were established in the North West during the Second World War from which operations were conducted against the U-boat threat. Although these stations are long gone, Merseyside's connections with the Fleet Air Arm remain strong – both HMS Illustrious and HMS Ark Royal have visited Liverpool over the

past 18 months. HMS Prince of Wales, one of the two new aircraft carriers will also be affiliated to Liverpool when she enters service in the next decade. Liverpool is also the base for the Naval Regional Headquarters responsible for all activities involving the Naval Service throughout the North of England and the Isle of Man. Located in Brunswick Dock, the Headquarters is home for HMS Eaglet, the Royal Naval Reserve unit in the North West and Royal Marines Reserve Merseyside: both units deploy personnel on operations around the world. The establishment also accommodates the Liverpool University Royal Navy Unit together with HM Ships Biter and Charger, as well as the HQ of the sixty Sea Cadet Units in the North West.

Many Royal Navy and foreign warships visit the Port of Liverpool every year. HMS Illustrious will be open to visitors over the weekend and flying demonstrations will take place each afternoon in front of the Albert Dock.

The Royal Navy



in Liverpool

Charity Concert

on board
HMS Illustrious

Cruise Liner Berth, Pier Head Liverpool

Saturday 24 October
19.30



The Band of Her Majesty's
Royal Marines Scotland
in aid of The Royal Navy
and Royal Marines Charity

Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity
Charity No. 1117794

SOLD OUT!



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The above is an exercise that tests some of the aptitudes you need to be a Royal Navy Pilot. Keeping the white plane away from the green shapes as they move around a screen. It sounds easy doesn't it? But are you good enough to be a Royal Navy Pilot?



Try the test for yourself
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 or call 08456 07 55 55



Flying fast jets is one of the most demanding and rewarding jobs in the Royal Navy. So what skills and qualities do you need to become a Pilot with the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm? Score well in our online test and there's a good chance you may have the spatial awareness and quick reaction times we're looking for. Operating from an aircraft carrier at sea is one of the greatest challenges in aviation. At 600 knots, a GR9 Harrier is covering over 1,000 feet per second. The only thing going faster will be your brain, taking in information,

weighing it up, making decisions and taking action quicker than thought itself. As well as an aptitude for flying you also need leadership potential and the ability to work in a team. Before you get to fly a Harrier, you'll learn to fly conventional prop driven aeroplanes. Then you will move on to your fast jet courses, culminating in Operational Flying Training when you will get to grips with the weapon systems and practice dog-fighting and flying at high speed and low level. Ready for take-off?



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Bringing service to life



Flying the Flag



The Hawk aircraft of the Fleet Requirements Air Direction Unit (FRADU) have been proudly flying the flag this year with spectacular Fly Navy 100 tail fins painted by Serco technicians. The Hawks, flown by Serco personnel, all ex military fast jet pilots, provide vital operational training for Flag Officer Sea Training as well as training for Fighter Controllers and Sea King ASaC Observers. Serco works in close partnership with the Fleet Air Arm at RNAS Culdrose and RNAS Yeovilton providing a wide range of services

including the provision of aircraft and engineers to Royal Naval Air Squadrons and training of future generations of aircraft engineers. Tom Burnet, Director of Serco's Defence Operations Business said "We are passionate about our support to the Fleet Air Arm and proud to play our part in maintaining the Royal Navy's operational capability. On behalf of Serco, I would like to offer my warmest congratulations on the 100th Anniversary of Naval Aviation."

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Construction begins on New Carriers

Construction has begun on HMS Queen Elizabeth, the first of the two new Aircraft Carriers. The first cut of steel was made at Govan on 7 July 2009. Speaking with apprentices after the ceremony, Admiral Sir Jonathon Band GCB ADC said "One of the great lessons of history is that sea power must be supported by air power. There can be no greater testimony to the enduring capability of Carrier aviation than cutting steel for new Carriers in our Centenary year."



HMS Queen Elizabeth and her sister ship, HMS Prince of Wales will provide the UK with a step change in military capability that can protect UK interests anywhere in the world. 'Find, Fix and Strike' are the words of the Fleet Air Arm motto and the new carriers will be equipped with Merlins, Sea King ASaCs and the new Joint Strike Fighter to fulfil each of these roles.