



# HMS ECHO

## AUTUMN 2021 NEWSLETTER UPDATE



PROTECTING OUR NATION'S INTERESTS

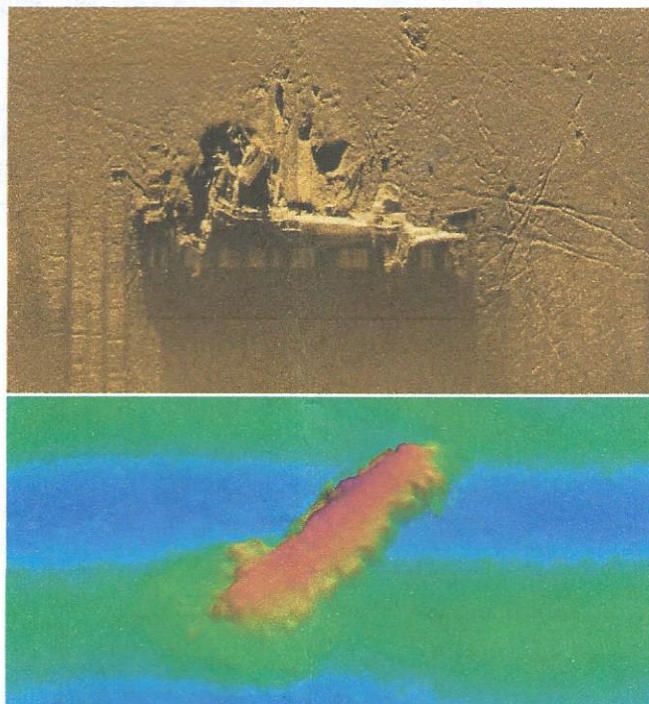


## What's New

Following a period of sea training off the South Coast, ECHO got the tick in the box that she is still safe to operate. She then deployed to the Arctic, conducting independent survey operations and national tasking in the high North. She also got her first foreign run ashore in a year and a half with a trip to Bergen, Norway. During the Winter season, ECHO is expecting to continue survey ops in the North Atlantic, and off Scotland.

## A Blue Nose

One of the many naval traditions, the origins of which are somewhat lost to time is the welcoming of sailors into the 'Order of the blue nose' when they cross into the Arctic Circle. During our recent operations ECHO had the privilege of welcoming many personnel into the domain of the polar bear for the first time. The ceremony, and a selection of fun games were hosted by our very own King Neptune. Operation in the Arctic circle also gave ECHO a new lick of paint, with her very own blue nose now on display.



## Arctic Convoys

Whilst operating in Arctic, ECHO was able to take time to remember the vessels lost as part of the Arctic convoys of WW2. The convoys were vital to ensuring essential supplies made it into the USSR as part of the lend lease programme. Although vital, it was the most dangerous route by which supplies could be transferred into the USSR.

ECHO conducted wreck investigations of the HMS TRINIDAD (scuttled 15 May 1942) and HMS EDINBURGH (scuttled 2 May 1942). The wreck of the EDINBURGH has been closely examined, as it sank with 465 gold ingots onboard, all but five have since been recovered. ECHO took this opportunity to pay her respects to those who lost their lives, in company with a shadowing Russian unit.





## Sea Training

During what seemed like the warmest week of the summer ECHO embarked a team from FOST to put us through our paces.

The programme consisted of a series of routine activities such as pilotage (navigation in restricted waters), breakdown drills to check we can fix any day to problems.

To the more dramatic Damage control exercises, with ECHO being required to demonstrate it could extinguish engine room fires, and deal with multiple floods/fires at once. We have to train for these scenarios as whilst we hope they never happen, there is no 999 service at sea.



## Gunnery

Another important aspect of training, ensuring our force protection teams and upper deck weapons crews are competent and well practised. ECHO as a survey vessel, is primarily outfitted for self protection only, with GPMG, Mk44 Mini-Guns and 20mm cannons. These were all fired in preparation for national tasking



## Wild-life on the Ocean Wave

Back with our now regular wildlife column.

Arctic waters presented an opportunity to see some new species. As well as a photography challenge as poor weather meant a very unstable platform to try and focus from.

The highlight for many was a pod of Orcas. Although there was some disappointment that no polar bears were spotted near bear island. Had any polar bears been sighted it is likely they would be near starving due to the lack of sea ice in the area of operation at this time of year; so arguable a positive sign.



We also saw the Northern lights on occasions when the cloud lifted; although they proved somewhat challenging to photograph.

## Find us on twitter.

If you want to keep up to date with our day to day activity, please follow us on twitter @HMS\_ECHO

