

?Princess Royal visits sailing charity for injured veterans

Thursday 7 April, 2016

The Princess Royal has visited a sailing charity to meet staff, volunteers and beneficiaries and to mark the start of preparations of a bid to sail around Britain.

Princess Anne arrived at Pendennis Castle in Falmouth by helicopter before being ferried to Turn to Starboard's headquarters at Falmouth Marina by car.

She was met by Turn to Starboard Founder, RAF Squadron Leader (retired) Shaun Pascoe before chatting to civic dignitaries and some of the charity's trustees.

During the visit, the Princess Royal congratulated the charity on supporting injured veterans by teaching them to sail and gaining new qualifications. She then took a brief car journey to Pendennis Marina for a tour of a replica Tall Ship donated to the charity by the Prince's Trust.

While on board, Princess Anne presented certificates to two former Royal Marines, Dan Fielding and Stephen Spear, who said it was an honourable occasion.

Mr Fielding, 35, said: "It feels a great honour to be presented with my certificate to mark this milestone in my new chosen career. It will be a memory that will stay with me forever and can't thank the charity enough for believing in me and developing me to this level."

Turn to Starboard is run by a group of serving and retired Armed Forces personnel, civilian staff and volunteers who believe that sailing has a therapeutic and calming effect on participants. They help military personnel affected by operations to gain internationally recognised sailing qualifications to help start new careers anywhere in the world. They also offer sailing trips to Service families who have been affected by operations to spend time together on a skippered yacht.

Turn to Starboard founder RAF Squadron Leader (retired) Shaun Pascoe said he was delighted that Her Royal Highness had taken time to visit.

He said: "We feel privileged to be visited by The Princess Royal, particularly with her awarding two of our recent Yacht Masters their certificates. It was quite a special moment for them and for us, plus a boost to our participants who are preparing for the Round Britain Challenge."

The Princess Royal also met several beneficiaries preparing to sail around the British Isles in June. The Turn to Starboard Round Britain Challenge 2016 will see a crew of up to 30 veterans – many with little or no sailing experience – sail aboard the 'Spirit of Falmouth' for the complete voyage or smaller sections of the route.

The 2000-mile expedition is expected to take 8 weeks and is planned as a way to help participants gain new skills while highlighting the challenges some veterans face.

Civic dignitaries on hand to meet the Princess Royal included Falmouth mayor, Cllr John Body and Mrs Linda Body. Other dignitaries at the visit were local MP and charity patrons Sarah Newton MP and Sir Dusty Miller.

Staff and beneficiaries of The Poppy Factory, Richmond, are also due to visit Falmouth this weekend to sail aboard the "Spirit of Falmouth". The iconic charity provides employment support to disabled veterans and has recently worked with Turn to Starboard to provide opportunities for their veterans in the South West.

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