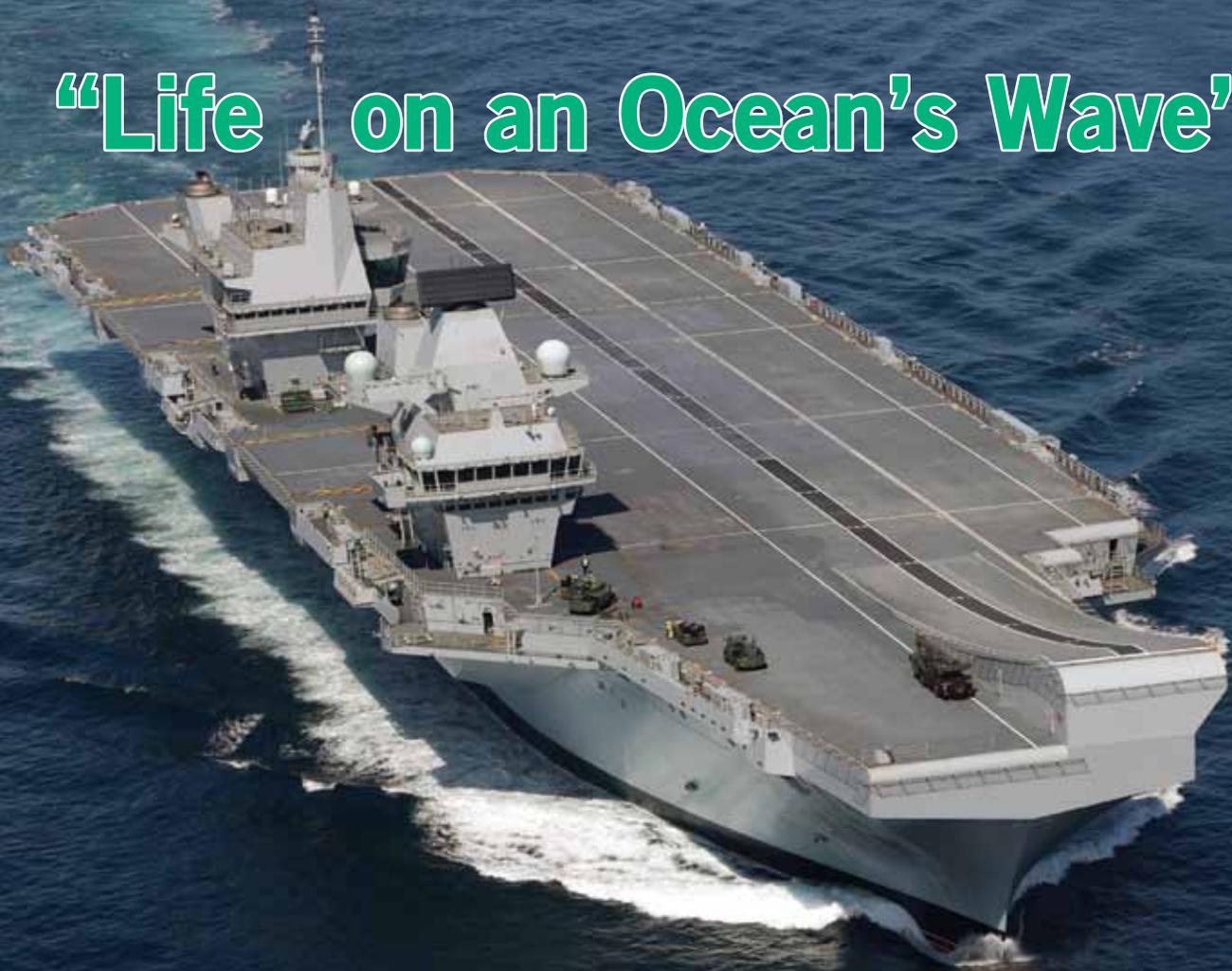


“Life on an Ocean’s Wave”



The Royal Navy’s new Carrier

Vayu’s UK correspondent Richard Gardner reports on the Royal Navy’s impending resurgence as a fixed-wing carrier operating force

The UK Royal Navy’s new aircraft carrier, HMS *Queen Elizabeth*, made a spectacular entrance to Portsmouth harbour on 16 August 2017, which is now her new home base. On this occasion, which marks a major step in the RN’s ambitious plan for the regeneration of strike carrier capability, the UK Prime Minister, Theresa May and Admiral Sir Philip Jones, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, underlined the intention to use the new carriers “to open a new era in global maritime power projection.”

Admiral Jones said, “These ships and our continued investment in a strong Royal Navy send an unmistakable message to friend and foe alike—the UK has both the intent and means to protect our interests, shoulder our responsibilities and advance our ambitions in an uncertain world.

Then Secretary of State for Defence, Sir Michael Fallon said, “As we look to life beyond the European Union, a global Britain won’t be stepping back; we’ll be stepping up to defend our shores and fight for the global good.”

The August edition of the RN’s *Navy News* carried a comment piece entitled, “Eastward, look, the land is bright”. It highlighted the UK Foreign Secretary’s recent remarks that Britain is back East of the Suez and is concerned with military expansionist activities by China from Djibouti to the South China Sea and recognises that the Asia Pacific region contains two of the world’s three largest economies and if the UK wishes to forge new partnerships beyond Europe then this is where it must be. The new aircraft carriers will be at the centre of a Carrier

Strike Group including escort surface ships, a submarine and supply ships, and will be expected to deploy on a global basis. New RN base facilities in Bahrain and Oman will act as springboards for more frequent deployments beyond the Gulf and the regeneration of a more globally focused fleet will help to develop closer UK links with allies in the region. The *Navy News* commentary suggests the Royal Navy will continue to maintain operations beyond the Gulf in the Indian Ocean, where for many years it has been part of the international effort to protect commercial shipping from pirate attacks. The availability, in the next decade, of a new Carrier Strike Group will represent a big increase in RN capability for long-range deployment which will have the support resources to provide a mobile forward air presence,