

Local students inspired by transatlantic rowing feat of Royal Navy's all-female team during visit to NSSLGlobal

Royal Alexandra & Albert School students attended NSSLGlobal's Redhill HQ to meet members of *The Valkyries*, the trailblazing all-female Royal Navy crew that successfully took on the *World's Toughest Row*

24 FEBRUARY 2025, REDHILL – Students from the *Royal Alexandra & Albert School* were inspired by the seafaring feats of *The Valkyries*, the Royal Navy's first all-female crew that successfully rowed over 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean, at a Community Day celebrating their successful row and return organised by Surrey based communications company NSSLGlobal.

Visiting the Merstham headquarters of NSSLGlobal, a long-term sponsor of the Royal Navy's HMS Oardacious teams in the "World's Toughest Row", the students heard first-hand from the Valkyries, who in Norse mythology guarded the lives and ships of those they favoured, about what it was like to row non-stop amid huge waves in a small boat with a tiny cabin and no toilet! The remarkable voyage was part of the Atlantic Challenge, regarded as the "World's Toughest Row," from La Gomera in the Canary Islands to Nelson's Dockyard in Antigua. Students also had the chance to see the ocean rowing boat on display, bringing to life the scale of the challenge *The Valkyries* undertook.



The event also welcomed the Mayor of the Borough of Reigate & Banstead, Councillor Eddy Humphreys, who was hosted by Neil Fraser, NSSLGlobal's Director for Defence and Space, for a tour of the site, and then heard first-hand about *The Valkyries*' extraordinary achievement. The Mayor said: "I was inspired by the relentless determination of the Valkyries. We are reminded that the greatest journeys, whether across the ocean or in business, are conquered stroke by stroke, with resilience, teamwork, and focus."

Lieutenant Commander Ali Aindow described how along with Lieutenant Commander Nic Hall, Petty Officer Aaby Aldridge and Lieutenant Commander Izzy Rawlinson, they rowed in shifts of two hours on, two hours off, as they pushed their physical and mental endurance to the limit, enduring total isolation that ended in Antigua on 26th January this year after 46 days at sea.



Joining in with the celebrations, Lieutenant Commander Hugo Mitchell-Heggs, who was part of the 2019 and 2022 crew, instigated and has been involved in all four HMS Oardacious crossings, said: “We are so grateful to NSSLGlobal who have supported us through every single one of our four HMS Oardacious Atlantic Crossings; providing critical and welfare communications that have ensured the safety and success of each crossing. The team have shown us that sponsorship is so much more than advertising, it is a very special collaboration that allows us to deliver our impact.”



NSSLGlobal is locally based in Merstham but operates globally as a leading independent full-service project engineering, satcom and systems integrator that supported The Valkyries with 24/7 satellite communications services and technology, enabling them to keep in touch with race organisers, family and friends and to access all-important weather information during the voyage.

The company is a long-time supporter of Royal Navy challenges and is in its fifth year as a Gold-tier sponsor of HMS Oardacious.

Neil Fraser, NSSLGlobal, said: “It was great to see how fascinated students were when they learned first-hand about The Valkyries and their incredible feat of endurance. We are very proud to have supported HMS Oardacious for four years, and notably this year’s all female crew as NSSLGlobal is committed to diversity and have many women in leadership roles and throughout the company. Our staff took time to hold sessions with the students to explain the space and satellite sector and our most recent graduates and apprentices were on hand to answer questions on STEM subjects and routes to working in the technology sector.”

As well as hearing about The Valkyries' exploits during the community outreach day, students also learned from NSSLGlobal experts about space and the critical role of satellite communications at sea and in remote areas, and the role of the technology in emergencies such as earthquakes. There were demonstrations of satellite equipment, rowing machine challenges and the chance to learn about careers in satellite communications and IT management.

Polly Neath, Director of the Technology Faculty at the Royal Alexandra and Albert School said: "NSSLGlobal hosted a fantastic day for our school, enabling students to meet the Valkyries and the Mayor. The sessions were engaging as they were interactive, and we all got the opportunity handle the technology and ask questions directly to people working in the satcoms industry. Both the students and staff had a fantastic experience, and we truly appreciate the effort NSSLGlobal put into making it such a memorable visit. I hope we have the opportunity to do it again next year!"



HMS Oardacious, founded in 2019, raises funds for the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity and the Young Women's Trust. It also raises awareness of the importance of STEM subjects among students and has raised money for heritage charities. So far it has raised more than £1000,000.

NSSLGlobal has supported each HMS Oardacious team and many other expeditions and challenges undertaken by injured veterans with critical safety and welfare communications.

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Notes to Editors:

NSSLGlobal Group is a leading independent provider of project engineering, satellite communications, IT management and systems integration. With over 55 years of experience in government and maritime mobility, NSSLGlobal delivers best-in-class maritime technology and satellite solutions primarily across Geostationary and Low Earth Orbit networks, partnering with major satellite operators and wide supply chain of manufacturers.

NSSLGlobal provides assured multi-band and multi-constellation satellite solutions for commercial maritime and enterprise customers and for defence, government, responder and humanitarian

organisations operating at sea, on land, and in the air. The company supports patrol vessels to oil tankers, coastguard vessels to aircraft carriers - including safety, operational, IT and welfare communications; deployed land forces ranging from embassy staff to recce teams to field headquarters, and specialist aircraft. The group's Norway-based R&D division develops market-competitive IPTV and VSAT technology, including hubs and modems for mobility and fixed applications.

Headquartered in the UK, NSSLGlobal employs 250+ staff across Germany, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, Poland, Singapore and the USA. The company operates with integrity and strong ethical values, holding certifications in ISO 27001, 9001, 14001, 45001, and 44001.

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