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‘Help for Heroes’ Official Ambassador and motivational speaker, Tony Harris, to join Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines’ ‘D-Day Anniversary Cruise’ in 2014

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines is delighted to be welcoming Official Ambassador for the ‘Help for Heroes’ charity and motivational speaker, **Tony Harris**, on its very special seven-night [‘D-Day Anniversary Cruise’](#), M1415, aboard Braemar, departing from Harwich, Essex on 1st June 2014. This cruise will give guests the chance to pay their respects to the courage and valour of the British, American and Canadian Allied Forces who fought in the ‘D-Day’ Normandy Landings during World War II, which commenced on the five beaches of Normandy – ‘Gold’, ‘Sword’, ‘Juno’, ‘Omaha’ and ‘Utah’ – on 6th June 1944.

Tony Harris has raised over £1.2 million for service charities, such as Help for Heroes, The Soldiers Charity (The ABF) and SSAFA. He is also a trustee of the British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association (BLESMA).

Tony served as an Officer in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, an infantry regiment in the British Army, for ten years. Having served on operations in Northern Ireland and Iraq for almost 700 cumulative days, Tony led a Fire Support Group as part of the 2RIFLES Battle Group to Sangin, Helmand Province, Afghanistan in the summer of 2009.

In what was to become the bloodiest summer of the British military's operations in Afghanistan, Tony's vehicle was struck by an explosion in the remote desert east of Sangin whilst conducting operations against Taleban forces. The bomb blast threw Tony more than 20 metres from his vehicle, shattering both his feet and his left arm, although thankfully no one else was injured. In difficult surroundings and having just finished a fire fight with the enemy, Tony's soldiers set to work stabilising and preparing him for the emergency helicopter evacuation back to Camp Bastion. His second child, Emily, had been born just two weeks before and Tony still had not seen her.

After an emotional reunion with his young family, Tony underwent more than 20 operations due to chronic infection, over a nine-month period, to save his left foot, all to no avail. The pain, lack of mobility and haze of drugs reinforced the decision that Tony and his family would have to make together; in March 2010, Tony's left leg was amputated and his path to recovery began.

Climbing Pen-y-Fan in Wales just eight weeks after his amputation proved to Tony that he could still lead an active and rewarding life, but that he had limitations due to his injuries. Inspired to prove that injuries do not define an individual or their future, Tony and two of his friends began putting together a team to conquer the Atlantic Ocean. Row2Recovery was born.

This team of four other injured servicemen and two able-bodied veterans successfully completed their 3,000 mile challenge in January 2012 and raised over £1.2 million for service charities, proving that they could go beyond injury and achieve the extraordinary. Read more about this incredible journey at www.row2recovery.com

Meanwhile, Tony was setting up his own inspirational endeavour,

Race2Recovery. Together with other injured soldiers from the UK and US, they were set on becoming the first ever disability team to complete the world's hardest motor race – the Dakar Rally. Despite the very high attrition rate, the team succeeded in their goal of completing the race, inspiring others with their actions and demonstrating the teamwork and motivation required to push the boundaries of what is possible. To see more about the race and the team, visit www.race2recovery.com

Tony is continuing his work with Race2Recovery and is already planning his next assault on the Dakar, amongst other rallies. He is also now working as a motivational speaker, travelling to conferences and events all over the world, and is championing employment opportunities for injured service personnel and veterans. Tony was a keynote speaker at this year's ABTA Travel Convention in Dubrovnik, Croatia, where his drive and determination proved an inspiration to all those attending.

Tony was also privileged to have been chosen to drive the Royal Car during the London 2012 Paralympic Closing Ceremony, is confidently teaching his children that swimming in circles is definitely normal and is looking forward to his future endeavours.

On Fred. Olsen's 'D-Day Anniversary Cruise', *Braemar* calls first at **Zeebrugge**, Belgium (for Bruges), where guests can visit the poignant Tyne Cot Cemetery – the largest commonwealth cemetery in the world – and Memorial to remember those who lost their lives during the First World War. Located in the famous Cloth Hall, discover the In Flanders' Fields Museum, which presents the story of the First World War in the West Flanders front region.

From Zeebrugge, *Braemar* then returns to the UK, to **Portsmouth**. Here, guests can take a tour to visit the Southsea seafront to pay their respects to those who gave their lives at the tranquil war memorials, before stepping back in time and visiting the D-Day Museum.

The cruise then moves onto **Cherbourg**, France, whose capture by the US First Army was part of the 'Battle of Normandy' in the Second World War, before cruising onto **Le Havre** for an overnight stay, giving guests the opportunity to take a tour to the Allied landing areas on the 'Day of Remembrance' on 6th June 2014.

Dunkirk is the last port of call on this thought-provoking cruise; whilst here,

guests can take time to visit the Battle of Dunkirk Museum, which tells the story of the Allied evacuation from the town and documents the lead up to 'Operation Dynamo'. Guests can also pay their respects to those who gave their lives with a stop at the English Cemetery, or visit La Coupole, where they can discover the dark side of World War II in the gigantic underground bunker designed by the Nazis – a stark reminder of just how close the world came to being a very different place. *Braemar* then sets sail for Harwich.

Fred. Olsen is also proud to be welcoming nostalgic British 'Big Band' 'The New Squadronaires' on board this very special commemorative cruise, featuring the impressive vocal talents of Mark Porter. Fittingly, 'The New Squadronaires' are dressed in authentic RAF uniform; the band desks are motived with the RAF roundel and are in red white and blue, and the stage backdrop is a large RAF ensign flag.

Prices for this commemorative cruise start from £629 per person, based on two adults sharing a twin cabin, Grade 'I', and include accommodation, all meals and entertainment, and port dues.

Fred. Olsen was delighted to be voted 'Best Affordable Cruise Line' and runner-up 'Best Cruise Line' in the 'Cruise International Awards 2013', and 'Best Value for Money' in the Cruise Critic 'Editors' Picks UK Awards 2013'.

Fred. Olsen Cruise Line operates in the UK with four intimately sized ships for a more personal cruising experience.

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