

HMS CHIDDINGFOLD

FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER – Lieutenant Commander James Baker RN

Welcome to our autumn newsletter, with the latest news from all of here in 'Cheery CHID'. Firstly I would like to introduce myself and my Crew, who took over the Ship in mid July. The RN continues to rotate Crews through the Ship as the most efficient means of maintaining a deployed Mine Countermeasures force here in the Gulf. My Crew (Crew 3) completed 6 months of intensive training prior to flying out to Bahrain to join CHID and we will remain with the Ship until the middle of January. Whilst I have not been fortunate enough to visit our affiliated village yet, a handful of my Crew have when previously serving in the Ship. Those of you who attended the Remembrance Service at St Mary's last year will have met some of my Crew then. I know how well they were hosted afterwards at the Crown Inn!



The main theme for us over the past few months has been learning to live and work in the extreme heat of the Gulf during the summer. The outside temperature during July and August peaks at 42-44 Celsius (110 Fahrenheit!) and our air conditioning systems manage to reduce this to 26-30 Celsius inside the ship. The temperature within the Engine room is often over 50 Celsius for much of the day. This has a significant effect both on man and machine. The Crew has to be extremely wary of heat exhaustion, even once acclimatised, and we seem to have been drinking (water!) almost constantly for the past few months. The Ship's machinery also struggles with the heat as much of it cooled with sea water which is 2-3 times hotter than in the UK. It takes all the skill and experience of my Engineers to keep the Ship in good order. As I write we are starting to see the first signs of autumn. I don't think we will be breaking out the woolly gloves just yet but the slight reduction in temperature is very welcome.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter which gives a flavour of what your affiliated Ship has been up to. Both I and my Crew are always glad to hear of village news and are very glad of your continued support.

With best wishes from us all here in 'Cheery CHID'

James

MINE HUNTING UNDER THE ARABIAN SUN

The 4 Ships of the UK MCM force have been exercising their core mine hunting roles in the Central Arabian Gulf.

Cheery CHID was joined by 3 other UK Mine Hunters (PENZANCE, BANGOR and MIDDLETON) to practice mine hunting skills during late July. They were joined by US Navy Mine Counter Measures (MCM) teams embarked in RFA LYME BAY which acts as the Command Ship for the force. The Ships used their sophisticated mine detection sonars to find dummy mines on the sea bed and their Remotely Operated Vehicles (SEAFOX) to practise neutralising the mines.



CHID searched over a square mile of seabed and found all of the dummy mines that had been hidden in the area. Mine Warfare Officer, Lt Ben Brown, said "MCM exercises such as this allow us to prove the effectiveness of our equipment and training. The Royal Navy's world class reputation for mine hunting is well deserved but is one that needs regular practice to maintain."

Photo: CHID waits her turn as HMS PENZANCE rafts up with RFA LYME BAY to take on fuel and stores in the Central Gulf.

A FAMILIAR LOOKING ARROW ALONGSIDE IN BAHRAIN

Lieutenant Greg Padden reports from the Pakistani Naval ship KHAIBAR – previously HMS ARROW.



The Type 21 Frigate PNS KHAIBAR visited Bahrain in August as the Pakistanian Navy took up Command of CTF 150 – a multinational force that promotes maritime security and combats illegal activity in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Gulf of Oman.

The ship was built on the River Clyde as HMS ARROW and served under the White Ensign of the Royal Navy until 1994. The ship distinguished itself during the Falklands War when she helped evacuate the Ship's Company of HMS SHEFFIELD after the ship had been hit by an Exocet Missile. ARROW was sold to the Pakistani Navy where she has been refitted with new weapons and sensors and found a second lease of life – some 40 years after first going to sea.

CHID's Officers were given a tour of the Ship and a brief on her new capabilities. In return CHID hosted junior Pakistani Officers who were fascinated by CHID's Mine Countermeasures (MCM) and Mine Clearance Diving (MCD) roles and equipment.

Photo: A hot and hazy day in Bahrain. CHID's XO (Lt Brown), Captain (Lt Cdr Baker) and Gunnery Officer (Lt Parsons) are given a tour of PNS KHAIBAR.

THE ENGINEERING CHALLENGE – KEEPING CHID IN FIGHTING TRIM

CHID's Marine Engineers completed 4 weeks of maintenance in Bahrain to make sure the Ship is ready for tasking.

Throughout August and into September CHID's Marine Engineers have been rolling up their sleeves to get up to date with the maintenance that the Ship requires. Although CHID is a relatively small ship she is absolutely packed with machinery that allows the Ship to do her very specialised job. Much of this machinery is now 30 years old and requires all the skill and experience of our Engineers to keep it working. The newest part of the Ship is her main engines. These were replaced in a refit with modern, fuel efficient diesel engines before the Ship sailed to the Gulf in 2014.

Photo (right): ET(ME) 'Spike' Hughes peeks out through an escape hatch whilst conducting maintenance in a very tight space.



The Marine Engineering department has 4 experienced Senior Ratings who lead a team of 7 Engineering Technicians (ETs). They are supported by another team of Engineers when we are in Bahrain who are able to bring specialist equipment and extra manpower to get the bigger maintenance jobs done.

Photo (left): ET(ME) 'Spoons' Spooner works on one of CHID's Caterpillar Main Engines .

ALL WORK AND NO PLAY MAKES 'JACK' A DULL BOY

After several weeks of hard work conducting maintenance and exercising at sea, CHID's sailors have been able to make the most of a visit to Muscat in the Sultanate of Oman. Lt David Hobby reports:

Sailors from both CHID and PENZANCE were able to enjoy a break from normal duties and participate in a range of Adventurous Training activities organised by visiting Royal Navy instructors in Oman. The country is renowned for its watersports and, in the heat of summer being in or on the water is the best place to be!

Photo (right): AB(Diver) '???' '?????' diving at the Daymaniat Islands which are rich with sea life including turtles and whale sharks.



200km South of Muscat is the strikingly beautiful Wadi Shab, a steep sided gorge with turquoise pools and streams running all the way to the Gulf of Oman. Groups from the two ships trekked the length of the gorge in the scorching September sun until the pools and streams became a deep river and there was only one way to continue; by swimming upstream into the cool refreshing water. Just when it seemed you couldn't go any further the AT instructors led the teams through a tiny crack in the rocks and into a deep natural sinkhole with a waterfall tumbling into it. AB(MW) 'Digger' Gardner said 'This was the chance of a lifetime to see the real side of Oman. Jumping and diving into the deep pools at Wadi Shab has been absolutely brilliant.'

Photo (left): Swimming inside the sinkhole at Wadi Shab.

CHID's Crew was also able to try their hand at Sea Kayaking and Stand Up Paddle boarding. The sailors took it in turns lead groups around the rocky cliffs and headlands surrounding Muscat. 'The wildlife we saw was a highlight for me, in particular the turtles and paddling through the middle of a shoal of flying fish' said ET(ME) Joe 'Spike' Hughes. 'The whole experience has been a welcome break from the Engine Room!'

Photo (right): AB(Diver) Fisher making paddle boarding look easy off the rocky headland at Muscat – it's harder than it looks!



The finale for the week was a sports competition at the beach. Teams competed in kayaking and paddle board races followed by a volleyball competition. Sadly it was PENZANCE that won on this occasion but there will be a re-match in due course!

Photo (left): AB(Sea) 'Pieces' Williams about to start the trek up Wadi Shab.

SAILOR OF THE MONTH

Every month the Command team picks a sailor or a team that has gone the 'extra mile'. The Executive Officer, Lt Ben Brown reports on those who have stood out over our first 3 months in the Gulf.

July Citation:

"This month it has been impossible to single out just one person, as the collective effort put in to bring CHID back into a sea going material condition has been huge. This group of sailors allow us to fight, float and move and over the past month they have tackled every challenge thrown at them with skill and vigour. Since getting off the plane they have worked extremely long hours, in sweat soaked overalls to work through the large number of defects in CHID. This month's Sailor of the Month Award is presented jointly to the Junior Ratings of the Marine Engineering Department. BZ"

Photo (right): The hard working team is presented with their Award by Captain Roger Readwin RN, who was visiting the UK MCM force deployed to the Gulf.



August Citation:

"As a former professional footballer, you would think this sailor may be content to remain at home and enjoy the fruits of his profession. This is not the case, he has traded home for the heat of the Middle East and all of the challenges that brings. He has shown himself to not only be a shining example on the football field but also a natural leader to his peers and a model sailor. He has made a fantastic start to his career and has the potential to go far. This award for Sailor of the Month goes to AB(MW) MacNamee. BZ"

Photo (LEFT): The Commanding Officer presents the Sailor of the Month award to AB(MW) MacNamee

September Citation:

"Whilst a number of big ticket projects have been going on in Chid's engine spaces, this man has been working hard to ensure the day to day running of Chid's equipment continues uninterrupted. Additionally, he has taken the time to put together a proposal known as an 'Addition and Adjustment' to the Main Engine cooling system, incorporating a new backup mode of operation. In recognition of his initiative and hard work, September's Sailor of the Month award goes to ET(ME) Joseph 'Spike' Hughes. BZ."

Photo (RIGHT): The Commanding Officer presents the Sailor of the Month award to ET(ME) Hughes.



SPORTS NEWS

SLt Nathan Brearley brings you the latest reports from CHID's football team:

GOALS GALORE AS 'CHEERY CHID' TAKES ON PENZANCE

The team started their deployment 'season' with an emphatic win over HMS PENZANCE. The teams squared up to each other at the Bahrain Rugby Club on a sweltering, humid evening. The team was apprehensive as PENZ's matching yellow strip gave them a more professional appearance than CHID's cobbled together kit. Despite it being their first match the team worked well together from the start and managed to win the match 3 – 0.

Team Captain ET(ME) 'Spike' Hughes said:

"Despite not having any prior training we managed to pull together as a team. Every player worked hard but Man of the Match has to go to AB(MW) 'Digger' Gardiner who used his speed and agility to scored a hat trick."



DEFIANT IN DEFEAT AT BAHRAIN RFC



Having beaten PENZ, our team was then challenged by our hosts – Bahrain Rugby Club.

Now sporting a borrowed strip, the team looked the part as they ran out for their second match, albeit missing POET(ME) 'Monkey' Riley who was still on board fixing a defect! A break down in communication led to CHID going behind and the better organised Bahraini team built a lead. After this initial set back, CHID recovered with AB(Diver) 'Fish' Fisher, AB(Diver) 'Sandy' Sanderson and ex Scotland International AB(MW) 'Mac' MacNamee taking charge on the pitch. CHID rallied but ran out of

time to catch the hosts and the high scoring match ended with Bahrain RFC winning the match 9 – 6. After regaining his breath, Lt Ben Brown said: 'Despite the result we have enjoyed some excellent football and been hosted superbly here at Bahrain RFC. The evening has been extremely sociable and helped build links with this local club. I'm hoping for a re-match later in the year!'

KICKING UP A STORM IN MUSCAT

Whilst alongside in Muscat CHID played a hotly anticipated fixture against a team of Expats – 'Muscat Storm'. They had recently beaten 2 other UK MCM Crews, as well as the teams from an RN and an Australian frigate! CHID dominated the opening play and AB 'Digger' Gardner scored with a sublime lob to put CHID ahead and ET WE 'Laid Back' Jackson fired in a left footed free kick. CHID's team lost their shape after rotating substitutes to keep the team fresh which allowed Storm back into the game and at the half time whistle the honours were even at 2 – 2. The second half was neck and neck and despite fatigue setting in every ball was fought for and every run made with determination. With 5 minutes left on the clock Muscat Storm's chanced a shot from range which missed CHID's keeper's fingers by an inch. At the final whistle Muscat Storm prevailed 3 – 2 after 90 minutes of nip and tuck football. Muscat Storm's Captain summed the evening up "We went last season only losing one game, this season we are unbeaten so far. CHID really tested us tonight and it was great to be taken to the wire by a visiting RN team"



CHARITY NEWS

POET(WE)Pete 'Pedro' Spayne 'lifts the ship' for charity.

Deployments provide the perfect opportunity to carry out fundraising for charity and 'Pedro' Spayne is making the most of it. Inspired by the care given to his son, Leo, by Queen Alexandra's Hospital in Portsmouth, he intends to lift the weight of the ship in free weights, a total of 750 tons! This means he will lift a 60kg bar 12,701 reps over 196 days – that's 66 lifts per day! Ickle Pickles, Pedro's chosen charity, support the NHS looking after 20,000 babies each year. Good luck Pedro! More information can be found at <https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/bigbenchpress#V3Pna7LJwok.facebook>



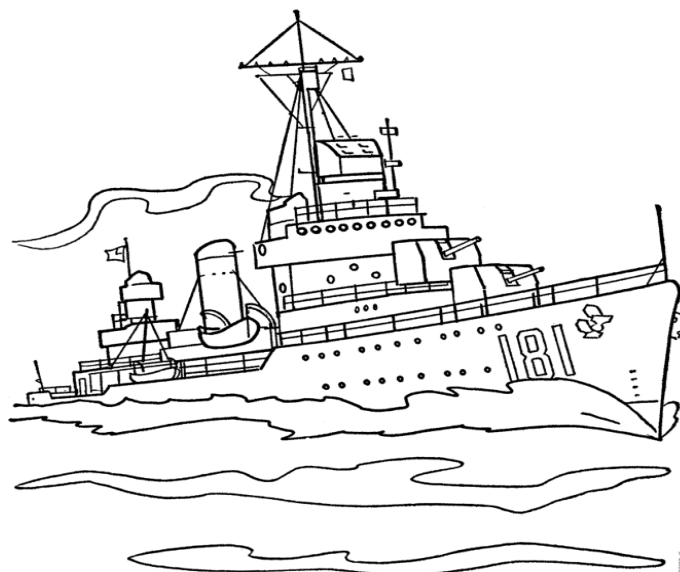
KID'S CORNER

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- SHIP
- CAMEL
- SANDSTORM
- SEA
- SUNSET
- SONAR
- NAVY
- FOOTBALL
- MARKET
- ENGINEER
- CAPTAIN
- DIVER
- BAHRAIN
- DUBAI
- CHIDDINGFOLD
- HUNT
- COMPASS

Colour the Ship!



Rea

THE ROYAL NAVY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Over the past decade, thousands of naval personnel have supported operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The UK's involvement in Iraq has now ended and personnel will steadily withdraw from Afghanistan over the next few years. However, the conclusion of these campaigns does not mean the end of the Royal Navy's involvement in the wider Middle East; frontline naval operations in the region continue, just as they have done for more than thirty years. This is not a surge or a standalone campaign, but an enduring commitment. Day in, day out, the Royal Navy protects our nation's interests, enhances maritime security and supports international diplomacy.



WHY ARE WE THERE?

We live in an increasingly interconnected world, where business, trade, travel, energy, communication and crime are global forces, free from the constraints of national borders. Consequently, events overseas can have a direct effect on our own security and prosperity at home.

The UK is an island nation, 95% of our trade comes via the sea; after spending the last 30 years as a net exporter of energy, we became a net importer in 2004. The Strategic Defence and Security Review recognises that we will face a range of risks in the future related to our ability to access secure, diverse and affordable supplies of energy, which are essential to economic security and growth.

In 2012 the UK imported over £400 Million worth of Crude Oil from the Middle East. In the same year almost 30% of the UK gas imports came by sea, as Liquefied Natural Gas, more than 97% came from Qatar and Egypt. (Source DECC)

The UK is connected to the Middle East through politics, history, economics and security. The Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Northern Arabian Sea and The Gulf contain some of the world's most important shipping lanes, linking the markets of China and the Far East with those of Europe and North America. The region also includes three narrow channels known as 'chokepoints' (the Suez Canal, the Bab-el-Mendib and the Strait of Hormuz) where ships have restricted manoeuvrability.

WHAT IS THE UKMCC?

The UK Maritime Component Command (UKMCC) is responsible for Royal Navy warships, aircraft and personnel deployed in the Middle East maritime theatre. Based in Bahrain, the UKMCC consists of a Royal Navy Commodore, supported by a staff of around 60. They fulfil a range of roles spanning operations, logistics and intelligence, together with providing specialist advice in legal, media, medical and diplomatic affairs. The continual presence of a senior naval officer in the region demonstrates the UK's long-term commitment to regional nations and enables us to work more closely with our allies.



Nearly **1 Billion tons** of trade passed through the Suez Canal in 2012, everything from food, clothes, raw materials and over 140 millions tons of Oil. As an example of one 'chokepoint' on the maritime superhighway, unrestricted access through this and other thin passages of water is vital to UK and International trade. (Source: IHS Fairplay)

The breakdown of government in Somalia during the early 1990s has given rise to piracy, and if left unchecked, instability in Yemen and elsewhere also pose a risk to shipping. The security of these waters, and the countries that border them, is therefore critical to our own interests, as well as that of the wider international economy.

Piracy costs the international economy almost **£4 billion** in 2012, which is down £650 million from 2011. The efforts of the International community are working, as of May 2013, there has not been a single hijacked vessel in the previous 12 months. (Source: Oceans Beyond Piracy)

The Gulf States are key partners in efforts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and in the fight against international terrorism. The Royal Navy supports the UK Foreign Office's Gulf Initiative, co-operating with allies toward our common aim of regional security.

160,000 British nationals live and work in and around The Gulf and the UK exports **£15 billion** worth of goods and services to The Gulf each year. (Source: ACO)

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

The Royal Navy's presence in the Middle East reassures our allies and deters those who may threaten the security and stability of the region. Beyond the symbolism, warships are flexible and powerful tools, as capable of diplomatic and security missions as they are military tasks.

Preparing for contingencies

The year-round presence of high-readiness Royal Navy warships, submarines and helicopters provides the UK government with a choice of options in the event of a humanitarian crisis or a deterioration in regional security.

Disrupting piracy

Piracy threatens international shipping in the Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Horn of Africa and has a knock-on effect on the world economy. It also has a human cost for merchant seafarers and their families. Navies cannot stop piracy alone, as it has its roots in political instability ashore, but they can deter and disrupt attacks, making it harder for pirates to operate. The Royal Navy deploys frigates and Royal Fleet Auxiliary support ships, together with maritime patrol helicopters and Royal Marine boarding teams with medical backup. In addition, Royal Navy personnel often lead or augment command teams directing multi-national operations.

Preventing terrorism

The attacks on the MV Limburg by Al-Qaeda in 2002 and the MV M Star in 2010 demonstrate the continuing terrorist threat to international shipping. Many of our allies in the region face a growing threat from al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Royal Navy warships and helicopters continue to work alongside other nations to deter or disrupt terrorist attacks and prevent related illegal activities such as human trafficking and drug smuggling.

Surveying key waterways

A Royal Navy multi-role survey ship is normally deployed in the region to update much needed charts, which are of use to merchant seafarers and also identify 'no-go' areas for allied warships.



Developing mine hunting expertise

Mines are cheap, easy to use and have the potential to close important waterways. It is therefore essential that the UK has the capability to undertake mine hunting operations wherever there are large concentrations of shipping or international trade routes. However, factors such as water temperature and salinity can make mine hunting abroad different to the familiar cold and deep waters around the UK. Consequently, the Royal Navy permanently bases four mine hunters in Bahrain (rotating personnel every 6-8 months) to develop and retain expertise and experience in warm water operations. A Royal Fleet Auxiliary support ship is also based in Bahrain to serve as a floating headquarters for Commander UK Mine Countermeasures Force (COMUKMCMFOR) during large scale mine hunting exercises.



Supporting merchant shipping

The UK Maritime Trade Operation (UKMTO) is a small cell of Royal Navy personnel based in Dubai, which tracks shipping movements and runs a 24-hour reporting service to enable swift communication between merchant shipping and naval forces in the event of an attack or suspicious activity. They also visit ships in the nearby ports of Jebel Ali and Fujairah to provide advice on maritime security.

Promoting UK interests

As well as offering 'hard power' warfighting capabilities, the Royal Navy provides 'soft power' by supporting diplomacy and strengthening the UK's long-term relationships. This can take many forms, such as exercises with regional navies, hosting foreign VIPs and undertaking port visits and exchange programmes. Warships and naval personnel also work alongside regional nations to help them develop their own ability to contribute toward regional security needs.