

Newsletter for COMUKMCMFOR

Issue 03 | July / August 2015



Lift the Ship 2015

The Staff will be taking part in a monstrous challenge, starting from the 7th to the 14th October 2015. As you know we are currently deployed and wondered how to pass our time productively and for a good cause. The challenge decided upon was to see if we could lift one of our Mine Hunters between us.

The challenge is to bench press the weight of a Royal Navy Mine Hunter. A HUNT Class weighs 615 tonnes, so it works out that the 16 Staff members will have to lift roughly 6000kgs a day each to achieve the goal. As you well know, we are not Marines and vary in age from 25 to 52, boys and girls, so this will not be easy.

To sponsor us please visit our page through Virgin Money Giving, donations will be quickly processed and passed to charities. Virgin Money Giving is a non profit organisation and will claim gift aid on a charity's behalf where the donor is eligible for this. We really appreciate all your support and thank you for any donations.

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/COMUKMCMFOR14>

COMBAT CAMERAMAN (COMCAM) The man behind the camera

Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Omar Dominquez from Odessa, Texas, USA has been deployed with the team.

As you can see from all the images within the newsletter, he is a valuable member of the team and has captured some amazing images. His role is to document TG 52.2 mission with photos and videos in an expeditionary fashion for present and future military exercises and operations.



(Above) Warrant Officer 2 Phil Leon, flight deck officer aboard RFA Cardigan Bay, gives direction to a Lynx MK8 helicopter, assigned to HMS RICHMOND

A MESSAGE FROM COMUKMCMFOR

Since our last news letter, RFA Cardigan Bay has transported us through the Arabian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, across the top of the Indian Ocean to the Gulf of Aden and finally into the Red Sea. This passage was conducted in very heavy weather as the region remains in the grip of the annual South Western Monsoon. You should be aware that some of the team have coped with sea state better than others!

As you'd expect, the majority of this time has been spent at sea, with few stops alongside. It is for this reason that mail has not been flowing to and from the ship but please rest assured that it will catch up with us once this period of intensive operations is over.

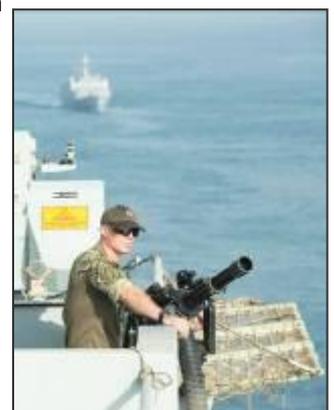
We are currently commanding a task group of 9 different units, comprising in total 500 people, distributed over three different seas! You can be very proud of your family member as they are doing an incredible job in supporting and managing a complex programme in a dynamic part of the world. .

As a final note, please remember you can always reach me or my team in the event of an emergency at home. The contact details on the last page give all the options available to support you or a loved one.

Thank you for your ongoing support. We could not do this without you.

Cdr Paul Ottewell RN

(Below) Royal Marine Alex Bryant, assigned to 40 Commando Royal Marines, stands watch whilst conduct operations in the Gulf of Oman





GULF OF OMAN (July 04, 2015) A Lynx MK8 helicopter, assigned to the HMS RICHMOND, conducts a flare (decoy) exercise. HMS RICHMOND is currently conducting maritime security operations in direct support of Commander, Task Force 150. RFA Cardigan Bay met up with her in the Gulf of Aden to support flying Operations and conduct a transfer of stores and personnel.

Avenger Class MCMV

(July 01, 2015) USS Gladiator (MCM11) prepares to come alongside Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship RFA Cardigan Bay to replenish fuel and stores. Cardigan Bay is currently operating under Cdr Ottewell as Commander Task Group 52.2, which conducts mine countermeasure, explosive ordnance disposal and maritime security operations throughout the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations.

There are 4 Avenger class mine hunters deployed to Bahrain 2 are currently in support of COMUKMCMFOR. Avenger-class ships are designed as mine hunter-killers, capable of finding, identifying, and destroying moored and bottom mines. These ships use sonar and video systems, cable cutters and a mine-detonating device that can be released and detonated by remote control. The hulls of the Avenger-class ships are constructed of wood with an external coat of glass reinforced plastic. The wood used is oak, Douglas fir and Nootka Cypress because of their flexibility, strength and low weight. This construction allows the hull to withstand a nearby blast from a mine and also gives the ship a low magnetic signature.

It has been great for the team to work with the wooden ships of the US Navy in our own Task Group.

UK/US relationship



Lt Cdr Alasdair Magill (left), Operations Officer UK Mine Countermeasure Force, speaks with Lt James Wightman (right), Operations Officer USS Gladiator (below), onboard RFA Cardigan Bay during a rafting evolution.

