

COMUKMCMFOR Newsletter

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MWBS arrive in Theatre

A MESSAGE FROM COMUKMCMFOR

Everyone is excited to be operating in such a dynamic theatre of operations in such an important time, working with the coalition and multinational partners in the KIPION Operations Area. We can't wait to get out and do the job we have trained so hard for. It's a great chance to practice and hone our skills alongside our allies and co-operate all the nations represented in the Middle East.

I would also like to thank all you family and friends of my team for supporting us doing this important task. I understand it is a particularly difficult time around Christmas and New Year. Without your support we would not be able to do what we do. We will endeavour to keep you updated through our newsletters.

After leaving home very early in the morning we got to a frosty RAF Brize Norton at 4am, ready to check in. We got onboard the RAF's version of a commercial airbus to Akrotiri in Cyprus. After a brief stop off for fuel, the plane took off again and we got to Minhad in the UAE at 6pm. Unfortunately, the plane we were supposed to take to Bahrain had a defect and couldn't fly. So we ended up staying in Minhad, a coalition air base near Dubai, where we were accommodated by the Australians. To pass the time while we waited we caught up on our sleep, watched films and played table tennis. We eventually made the final leg of the journey on a commercial flight from Dubai. We arrived in Bahrain at 3:30am, three days later than planned. We were all expecting it to be hot, but instead pouring with rain and we got soaked! After an extremely busy day taking over from the previous battle staff, we were all ready to get down to the business of hunting mines!

Back to Sea

The battle staff have been enjoying their first period at sea integrating on RFA Cardigan Bay. It was busy, with replenishment serials and an American helicopter landing onboard.



American helicopter landing on the flight deck of RFA CARDIGAN BAY



RFA CARDIGAN BAY conducting a Replenishment at Sea of fuel with RFA FORT VICTORIA

SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND ADVICE

The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC). If there is a requirement for a sailor serving overseas to return to the UK for compassionate reasons, for example if a close relative becomes very seriously ill (normally life threatening) or dies, then it is the role of the JCCC to investigate the circumstances and make a recommendation as to whether compassionate travel should be granted. This telephone line is manned 24hrs a day. Communicating bad news directly to servicemen is not recommended. **+44 (0) 1452 519951.**

Royal Navy & Royal Marines Welfare. RNRMW provides a comprehensive social work service to all RN and RM personnel and their families. Its purpose is to support in peacetime and in times of crisis, to prevent or reduce the effects of personal difficulties especially those that arise as a result of Forces life. They offer counselling, practical and emotional support and advocacy services. Examples of the type of work undertaken include bereavement, relationship problems, debt, mental health, special needs and next of kin support for deployed personnel and their families. **+44 (0)23 9272 8777** or **@RNRMWelfare**

Naval Service Welfare Website. This website provides accessible support services that strengthen and enhance the resilience of Naval Service personnel, their families and communities. Check out the family support forums.

<http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/welfare/find-help>

Families & Friends of Deployed Units. A national programme of events for families and friends of a deployed loved one.

<http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/welfare/welfare-teams/fafdu>

The Naval Families Federation exists to give RN families an independent voice in government. I commend their website and services to you. <http://www.nff.org.uk>

Confidential Support Line. A confidential, impartial telephone listening/advice service offered by trained civilian advisers who will discuss any issue that may be causing concern or personal distress. They will endeavour to identify possible sources of support or resolution where necessary but no direct action will be taken by the Supportline. Callers may remain anonymous. The line operates 7 days a week from 1030 to 2230. Call **0800 731 4880**. Oversea call UK **+44 1980 630854**.

If you are concerned because of something unexpected you have learned about RFA Cardigan Bay from the media, you may obtain further information by calling the Confidential Support Line.