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The HMS ST ALBANS Newsletter

Issue 05 July 2016



TIP OF THE SPEAR

An important part of our role on this deployment has been Defence Engagement. During our recent visit to in Bahrain, the Royal Marines Boarding Team (RMBT) and Maritime Sniper Team (MST) disembarked to conduct training alongside the Bahraini Special Security Force Command (SSFC). The RM team was fully embedded with the SSFC, living and eating alongside them at their base.

The days tended to follow a regular pattern of working with the Training Office in the morning which is intending to develop a Commando style course of its own. The day normally started with physical training (always a favourite with Royal!) and a selection of 'green' based theory and practical lessons. After lunch they would then work alongside a group of officers from the 2nd Battalion SSFC. This was significant as this is the first time UK forces have trained a select group of officers and possibly also the first time the

TURNING THE CORNER

By the time you read this we will have set out on our voyage home. Many of you will have seen on Facebook that our relief HMS PORTLAND has sailed from the UK. We are already making a countdown of 'Fish Fridays' and 'Steak nights' until we are home again. In the last few weeks we have passed some significant milestones - 200 days at sea, celebrated St. Alban's Day, transited through the Straits of Hormuz for the last time and of course the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Jutland. Great plans are underway for our homecoming and to say we look forward to seeing you there would be the understatement of the year!



SSFC have ever requested training from foreign forces. This says a lot for the level of trust and high regard the SSFC now hold for Royal Marines particularly those from S Sqn, 43 Cdo. Training with the 2nd Battalion officers has been focused on their basic weapons handling

Sheikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad al Khalifa the second in line to the throne attended some of the training alongside 2 RN Officers from ST.ALBANS participating in a joint Bahraini and UK assault course on the Kingdom's Formula 1 track, followed by a firing range package the next day. This had a very positive impression on the SSFC reinforcing our credibility in Bahrain and reflecting well amongst senior Bahraini officers including Brig Gen Abdullah al-Zayed the officer in charge of the SSFC.

CAN WE FIX IT? YES WE CAN!

The Marine Engineering department were faced with a tough challenge when one of our Paxman Valenta diesel engines catastrophically failed. The diesel engines provide the main propulsion for HMS ST. ALBANS and when the inter-cooler of diesel F2 broke, the engine was flooded with salt water.

The engine was out of action until we could get alongside and take delivery of all the spare parts needed to completely rebuild it. The department worked 24 hours a day in shifts, six hours on, six off with temperatures in the engine space frequently approaching 40°C even with air conditioning. Meanwhile the team also had to continue all their routine duties including making fresh water, disposing of sullage, embarking fuel and keeping the lights on.

The task of stripping down the engine to its shell, overhauling the major components and rebuilding the engine was achieved in just two weeks – something of a record. Considering this was the first time such an extensive engine rebuild had been conducted in theatre without contractual support the whole department felt a tremendous sense of achievement when the work was completed. And the whole Ship's company felt a sense of relief that we could put to sea again and take the first steps on our journey home.



MASCOT OF THE MONTH

The eagle eyed among you will spot the months mascot in the picture above. Say hello to Fluffy who has been sent to Chief Petty Officer 'Bradders' Bradford by his son Ben from Wallisdean Infant School in Fareham. Fluffy was instructed to take part in 'adventures' and it doesn't get much more adventurous than working with the ME department!

A MESSAGE FROM THE CO

Looking forward to seeing people at homecoming, there's still plenty of work to be done but it's really not long now!

Yours sincerely,

Rich

Commander R P H Hutchings RN Commanding Officer HMS ST ALBANS