MCM 1 CREW 3: Latest Updates From The Middle East

Issue 01 | August 2016

HMS Bangor and MCM 1 Crew 3 ready for the months ahead

LATEST NEWS FROM THE GULF

The last couple of weeks have seen the team continue their development and commitment to maritime security and operations overseas. The crew have been heavily involved in a multi national exercise which has tested both capability and ship. The hard work and determination shown, enabled the Ship to conduct a successful exercise along with the US Navy.

Amongst the hard work, there has been time for the crew to unwind and undertake Adventurous training in Muscat, Oman. Activities included kayaking, paddle boarding, surfing and a visit to the amazing Wadi Shab. The Ships’ football team also had the privilege of being hosted by local side, Muscat Storm who proved to be tough opposition. The game sadly ended in defeat after an exciting encounter.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CAPTAIN

Lt Cdr M Sykes

A warm (very warm as you’ll see below) welcome from HMS BANGOR and MCM1 Crew 3. Although this is our first newsletter since arriving at the start of the summer we are already well into our 6 month tour in the Middle East and by the time you read this will be at the halfway point. I am pleased to report that the Crew have settled in well, despite the extreme temperatures, and have been kept very busy making our contribution to the vital work the Royal Navy does in this important part of the world. On behalf of the whole Ship’s Company let me thank you for your continued support and I hope you find our news interesting.

SETTLING IN

There is nothing quite like the heat of the Middle East and the Crew certainly are showing it!

Temperatures have soared over the last couple of months and have reached in excess of 47 degrees Celsius. It has been a hard adjustment but makes a difference from the usual grey and gloomy skies of the UK. With that said, the amount of uniform and washing the crew are going through is at an alarming rate and may prove to be the biggest challenge so far!

The December homecoming will most likely be a shock to the system for many but the main point from the guys here at Crew 3 is that regardless of the hot and humid conditions, we are settling in well and are looking forward to seeing you all back home soon!
**OUR MISSION**

Our maritime presence is a demonstration of our continued commitment to enduring peace and stability, comprising: a command element, the United Kingdom Component Command (UKMCC), responsible for the wider region, across the Gulf and Indian Ocean, exercising command and control of the RN and RFA ships and cooperating within a 31-nation maritime force.

The Crew here at Bangor continues to work hard to ensure the Royal Navy and its presence is felt within the region. The UK has a responsibility to its citizens and its allies to endeavor and to safeguard the high seas. This is why the Royal Navy protects home and international waters – making sure the global trade that Britain and the world depend on can proceed without a hitch.

**KEEPING IN TOUCH**

Keep up to date with the Crew through the following:

**Website:** www.royalnavy.mod.uk/bangor
PROFILE OF THE MONTH

ETWE(CIS) Michael Hogg
Age – 27
Date Joined Crew – 08/02/2016
Born & Raised – Irvine/Prestwick

What do you do on HMS Bangor?
I help to maintain IT equipment and all communications on board, I manage signals and ensure the right people get the right information.

How long have you been part of the crew?
I have been part of the Royal Navy now for about 2 and half years

How are you finding the Deployment?
Challenging being away from friends and family, but extremely rewarding in terms of job experience and becoming more competent in my role on board. I am also proud to be able to serve my country.

Funniest Memory on board?
The day to day banter I have with one of my opposite numbers makes time on board a good laugh.

What do your family think of what you do?
My family are proud of my career in the RN, and consider it to be a good career path for me to follow.

What are you looking forward to most about going home?
Looking forward to seeing my family and friends again.

The sun sets on another day for Crew 3, ready to bring the challenges of the next.
"SQUADEX is a quarterly exercise that provides an opportunity for U.K. and U.S. assets to further develop and test their mine hunting capabilities," said Cmdr. David Morgan, commander of U.K. Mine Countermeasures Force.

As part of the exercise, participating MCM vessels set mine shapes in areas to test the efficiency of US and UK assets in mine detection, utilizing five difference sonars from surface platforms, divers and aircraft. This allowed participating ships to establish a more accurate timeline and data on how long it takes to clear an area of mines. U.S. and U.K. sailors conducted mine hunting in challenging environmental conditions including high sea temperatures and variable depths. With continued advances in technology in MCM operations, ships were able to use remote operated vehicles (ROVs), unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) and explosive ordnance disposal divers to assist in clearing areas.

The US and UK will continue to conduct joint training exercises to assess lessons learned from MCM operations in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations.

"The development of mine countermeasures techniques and technology is vital to the continued free flow of commerce," said Capt. Eric Wirstrom, commodore of Commander, Task Force (CTF) 52. "The cooperation demonstrated by U.S. and U.K. forces during SQUADEX attests to the shared interests our navies have in deterring threats to regional stability."

Sub-Lieutenant Mike Wafer, left and Able Seaman (Diver) Katherine Sutherest, assigned to the Sandown-class mine countermeasure ship HMS Bangor (M109), conduct a fire fighting drill in the Arabian Gulf, August 1, 2016 during SQUADEX 2016. SQUADEX 2016 demonstrates U.S. - UK mine detection capabilities in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations. (US Navy Combat Camera photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Blake Midnight)