HMS CHIDDINGFOLD

Return to Home Port

You will be aware that HMS Chiddingfold was activated at short notice in April to operate in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, along with United States Ships Sentry and Dextrous, and French Ship L’Aigle as part of Combined Task Force 52 maritime security patrol. HMS Chiddingfold has now completed her tasking and the long transit back to Bahrain via Muscat, Oman. Whilst it may not be home, the promise of Wifi and a few more of the creature comforts provided by the US naval base in Bahrain was enough to inject a sense of excitement amongst the Ship’s Company which could be mistaken for that of an actual homecoming. Not even the rough seas on the journey back could dampen the spirits of the crew and even the least seaworthy crew members were able to hold their stomachs down throughout. The ship’s arrival back in Bahrain marked almost one month until the crew returns home after 7 months away. Whilst everyone on board is no doubt looking forward to seeing their families and loved ones again, there is still a lot of work to do in this final month involving more tasking around the Arabian Gulf as well as preparing the ship to be handed over in the best state possible.

Our time deployed afield has been extremely valuable to the crew and to the Royal Navy as a whole. During this period we have developed our relationships with the French and US Navies as well as proving our ability to work independently for extended periods of time. We have provided a presence that has reassured the region of our enduring commitment to stability and demonstrated that we are a flexible force.

As a reward for a job well done, we took the opportunity to take advantage of the inviting 32°C water and enjoy “hands to bathe” - a naval tradition that many on board had not yet experienced.
Omani Run Ashore

On the transit back from Djibouti to Bahrain, the crew was lucky enough to spend a few days alongside in Muscat, Oman. After the initial shock of the 45°C temperatures ashore the Ship’s Company set about making the most of the opportunities on offer in and around Muscat. A particular highlight was the local pastime of ‘wadi-bashing’, which involves driving into the inhospitable rocky mountains in the desert outside the city in search of cool, deep, azure pools of water hidden away in green valleys populated by goats and date palms. The more adventurous members of the Ship’s Company dared to leap into these refreshing waters from great heights, much to the bemusement of the locals. Others pursued more leisurely activities at the impressive hotels on offer in the city, spending time by the pool and on the beach at the Grand Hyatt hotel and indulging in a quiet drink at the exotically named Safari Bar. Many took a final opportunity to replenish their stocks of nutty at the lavish Carrefour supermarket in order to maintain morale for the final few days of the transit back to Bahrain, while others explored the souk in search of traditional Omani souvenirs such as frankincense, spices, and camel t-shirts.

‘Nec Aspera Terrent - Difficulties be Damned’
Cheers, Royal!

Whilst deployed to Djibouti we embarked a Royal Marines Force Protection team headed by Lt Richard Longley. Rick and his team were flown out at very short notice to provide a round-the-clock reaction force allowing the rest of the crew to concentrate on the task in hand. The marines integrated quickly to make a fantastic addition to the crew, putting on a near-deadly physical training session each morning (that they all pretended was easy), improving morale and offering tricks of the trade and cutting-edge training to make our own weapons teams more proficient. Crew 8 extends its gratitude to 8 Troop, C Company, 40 Commando and we look forward to working with any of them in the future.

Sailor of the Month

A double this month as we make up for time away from home. Firstly, we recognise Leading Diver Oliver Penney (below right). As one of the more senior members of the diving branch on board, LD Penney ensures that all the diving equipment is ready to go at a moment’s notice (including the divers themselves). It is also his job to supervise divers who can draw from his vast wealth of professional knowledge on all matters. Last month in particular, Ollie went above and beyond the call of duty by stepping up to the role of the cox’n whilst PO(D) Bryant was away from the ship. A second award is given to AB(MW) Billy Furnell (below left). Billy is a relatively new member to the crew and in a short time has cemented his position as a dependable and enthusiastic member of the crew. Billy proved exactly how valuable he was as part of the mine warfare team when he correctly located a particularly difficult exercise mine shape on sonar while Chiddingfold was exercising with the French Navy off the coast of Djibouti.
Logistics!

They say the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach; that much is certainly true for our sailors! No matter what operations the ship is engaged in, everything always comes back to logistics as being the number one limiting factor as to whether the ship can accomplish her goals. The logistics department doesn’t do “for exercise”. Being the only department on board to get inspected by every member of the crew 3 times a day, they must be meticulous in maintaining the highest standards. It’s not all as simple as slapping some meat and tatties onto a plate and serving up though, the very core of the ship’s morale begins and ends in the galley. The challenge becomes trying to keep everyone happy all of the time which isn’t so easy with the varied tastes on board! It doesn’t just stop in the galley though, as they say a clean ship is a happy ship and the presence of Steward James Coombs was sorely missed on board as he returned home briefly to witness the birth of his son Zach.

The logistics department has excelled itself this month with the recent deployment to Djibouti and the extra challenges that came with it. First came the mammoth “store ship” in Bahrain before setting sail in which Leading Chef Michael “Sticky” Green had left nothing to chance in his order which, once it had all been loaded on board left the fridge and freezer bursting at the seams! Ordering further stores once in Djibouti proved to be another challenge as orders turned up incomplete and Chef Paddy Bidgood had to work his magic to ensure the Ship’s Company didn’t notice that it was living off an exclusive diet of beef and lion bar cereal for the next 60 days. The team has been tested to the extreme over the past month, hosting a dinner for the officers of FS L'Aigle for which they received numerous compliments and for His Excellency the Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain who remarked on how much he enjoyed the occasion.
Kid’s Corner

**HMS CHIDDINGFOLD WORDSEARCH**

Try and find these words:

- CAMEL
- GOAT
- MOUNTAIN
- MUSCAT
- OMAN
- PALM
- ROCK
- SULTANATE
- SWIMMING
- WADI

**COLOUR THE CHEF!**

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**Jokes**

Knock-Knock
Who’s there?
Orange!
Orange who?
Orange you going to let me in?

Knock-Knock
Who’s there?
Boo!
Boo who?
There’s no need to cry!

**Useful Contacts**

Royal Navy Royal Marines Welfare:
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RNRMW Information Support (HIVE):
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