

The Maverick's Newsletter



A Message from the Commanding Officer



Hello again and Happy New Year from Bahrain! As I write this the Crew has hit her one-month mark for our return date. BROCKLESBY continues to set the example while deployed in the Gulf and flew the White Ensign over Christmas at sea. We hope you enjoyed the personal DVD's and the chance to FaceTime your loved ones overseas thanks to the ingenuity of the WEO onboard.

In this month's newsletter, we give you an insight into Christmas at Sea, our New Year celebrations, our continued 'Phys Yourself Home' efforts, our operational tasking, and some important visits to BROCKLESBY by Senior Command.

December has been hard for Ship's Company being away, especially over the festive period and the increased risk at home. However, we will be with you all again soon. Thank you for the love and support (and gifts!) you've given us over the last few months. I am pleased to say this will be our final update via newsletter from OP KIPION – the Mavericks will be home soon.

FIRST SEA LORD VISIT

The First Sea Lord (the professional head of the Royal Navy) visited Bahrain in December to answer questions from sailors onboard all four minehunting vessels deployed to the Gulf region.

Admiral Radakin gave a speech about the future of the Royal Navy – known as 'Transformation' – and his plans for the future of Mine Clearance, Carrier Strike, and the wider changes to the Service.

Admiral Radakin thanked the Crew for their ongoing efforts, particularly being deployed over the Christmas period.



END IN SIGHT...BUT STILL AT SEA!

At the time of writing, the Mavericks have two weeks left before flying home to the UK. Whilst the necessary preparations to ensure the Ship is ready in all respects to handover have commenced, we nevertheless need to remain ready for tasking and contribute to maintaining maritime security in the region.

December saw Crew 6 conduct their last period at sea supporting Operation Neptune Sceptre. As discussed previously, the main purpose of this is to ensure United Kingdom and coalition naval forces maintain a concise picture of what the underwater seabed and conditions are like in the area. This remains of great importance, especially in light of recent tensions in the region. With over 90% of global trade passing by sea, the Straits of Hormuz remain one of the most vital trade links for the United Kingdom and her allies. Much of our time at sea in January is devoted to unit level training—ensuring our Ship's Company is in date for all aspects of their training and maintaining operational capability. There was a heavy focus on



Gunnery, with living firings of our 50 calibre guns, Miniguns and 30mm cannon. The divers also carried out a live Dive Placed Charge detonation, practicing their ability to neutralise a mine threat. In preparation for some of our Young Officers' upcoming assessments, the Ship completed lots of Man Overboard Drills. The Mavericks are also set to do some exciting exercises with other Units in the area soon. This all ensures we are ready to return to Bahrain at the highest possible level. Although we hand over the Ship in late January, we will be returning to BROCKLESBY and Bahrain in June. To that end we conducted CO's rounds, which allows the Commanding Officer to inspect the material state of the Ship and ensure we hand her over in the best possible state.

The final weeks in Bahrain will be busy with preparations for the new Crew underway already.

PHYS YOURSELF HOME CONTINUES

Phys yourself home continues as we try to recreate the journey by land from the UK NSF in Bahrain back home to HMNB Portsmouth. Ship's Company can run, cycle, row or swim any distance to help achieve this monumental 6500km journey!

This competition is in aid of Southern Spinal Injuries Trust. With less than a quarter of the distance left to go, we are set to host a 'Phys Yourself Home Day' challenge to up our numbers on the 16th. Please continue to follow our journey on Twitter and if possible, give whatever you can by visit the following link:

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/crew-6-phys-home

WHO'S THAT SAILOR?



This month we feature the Gunnery Officer, Lt Chris Holt. Known as 'Guns', Chris hails from Fleet in Hampshire. Chris joined the Royal Navy in September 2015 (on his birthday) and he has a lot of experience in the Gulf already, with this being his third deployment to the region in his short naval career. One of his key roles is to ensure the Ship is safe from potential threats when proceeding in and out of Harbour, acting as what is known as the Weapon Director. His other main job is Officer of the Watch, the individual charged with safety of navigation onboard, holding watches of between eight and 12 hours a day depending on what the ship is doing. He's looking forward to a bit of rest and relaxation when he returns home!

CHRISTMAS AT SEA

Christmas at sea was a daunting prospect for many of the Ship's Company. Thankfully, we made the most of it and as you'll see – we even had some fun! With the creative thinking of the Chief Petty Officer Martin Craib we were also able to stay connected to many of you throughout the day and FaceTime our loved ones when possible.

The whole Ship made a fantastic effort to make an otherwise routine trip to sea a festive one. We played Christmas themed music in the mornings in the lead up to Christmas Day, we had our 'Operation Christmas Drop' boxes delivered to great praise, and we decorated the Mess spaces with tinsel. We even had our own Christmas tree!

The Chefs turned up in spades and cooked a delicious three course meal which we ate al fresco style in our papwell. This was followed by a cheeseboard in the evening, Christmas movies (if you count Frozen as a Christmas movie!) and the night culminated in a Christmas themed quiz which saw a narrow victory of just two points from the Wardroom.

All in all, the Ship's Company had a very merry Christmas at sea. Christmas day also marked one calendar month until our return – we will see you all soon.



UKMCC VISITS

This month also saw the United Kingdom Maritime Component Commander, Commodore Dean Basset visit BROCKLEBSY to thank the crew for their continued efforts. The visits, one alongside and one at sea with other members of his team, allowed the Commodore and those who support us to see the Crew in action and to hear their thoughts. Guests were given numerous demonstrations throughout the day, including two diving briefs, a tour of



the messes (communal recreation and living space), a visit to the Ops Room, and numerous conversations with members of the Ship's Company.

This was a very important opportunity for the UKMCC team; as a shoreside unit with a wide background (including aircraft engineers, medics, and a former submariner) they were given a glimpse of life at sea for a Mine Clearance Vessel, learning of the challenges we face. This allowed them to better understand how and what we do, and how we can support each other in the future. With clear skies and a smooth sea, we enjoyed showing them what the Mavericks can deliver.



HOMeward BOUND

The theme of this newsletter is twofold: first, December has been a busy month for us, with the Crew making the best of all circumstances and remaining professional and ready throughout tasking. The second, is we will be home with you all again soon. A feature discussion 'on watch' at the moment has been what we will do when we return to the UK – or more importantly – what type of curry our first takeaway home will be!

