



Captain E. L. Alexander
Commanding Officer

Arabian Sea

18 December 2006

Dear MIDGETT Family and Friends,

The last few weeks have been packed. We started off leaving the Seychelles on a northbound transit coming into the port of Fujayrah in the United Arab Emirates to receive spare parts and repair our Ship's Service Generator. The engineers worked virtually around the clock to effect repairs, including modifying the block of the engine to adapt it to a replacement part that was designed for a newer model engine. So many times you hear of our exploits at sea but we would never be at sea if it were not for these engineers and others who keep the ship running. While in Fujayrah, (which is located just south of the Straits of Hormuz) it rained steady for two of the days we were there. The old timers could not remember so much rain. For this Seattle based Cutter we felt right at home.

After repairing the Generator we put to sea on a starry clear night with a light east breeze. There were over 100 ships anchored off the seaport and it was hard to tell where the land ended and the water began. It looked like a city afloat. The very next day we came across two Dhows. Category 1 Contacts of Interest, (COIs) meaning they were suspected of illegal activity and needed to be boarded. Both were suspected of smuggling but our boarding team found they were clean. It was assessed that they had already made their drop. Not more then 24 hours later we were put on the trail of two other smuggling vessels. Given only a relative position we plotted their probable smuggling course in a slow loop around the Arabian Peninsula and with the help of our helicopter we were alongside the first in less then a day. One of our ships (The Bunker Hill) found the second one. Finding them is only half the battle. Without exact intelligence it is difficult to determine what they are smuggling. Both vessels professed to be fishing but having traveled over 700 miles they had no fish nor had they stopped long enough to fish. Only one person on board had any type of an ID. We suspect that they are involved in human smuggling; illegal migrants, foreign fighters and terrorists use the water to get around. All we can do is compare the pictures we take with the data base back ashore to see if anyone may be wanted. While some of the people we deal with may be bad they are not dumb; this mission takes a lot of patience and good instinct.

Meanwhile everything on the ship is beginning to look a lot like Christmas. We started decorating doors yesterday (The Chiefs mess has a big Green Grinch on its door). Wrapping gifts, making candy, ginger bread houses and preparing the choir for Christmas Carols were other activities, and the MIDGETT Broadcasting System is starting to run the Christmas movies. We ordered some Christmas trees and are hoping they make it on the next replenishment at sea on Christmas Eve. You have not experienced Christmas at sea until you see a Christmas tree being hi-lined over from one ship to another. The wardroom is cooking Christmas Breakfast and Dinner for the crew, and the menu includes beef brisket, ham turkey and all the sides that make up a Christmas dinner. It's not the same as home cooking with the family around, but it's the next best thing.

No one out here, either at sea or on the ground truly wants to be away from home on Christmas. All the little things we do to dress the ship up only remind us more of home. In some ways though Christmas at sea (where there are no holiday pressures) gives you time for reflection. With this thought I want to tell you how proud I am of each and every one of this crew. They represent the best of America, as do you at home keeping everything running until our return.

Some of our families were hit hard by the recent storms in the Northwest. So far I have not received any word of injuries or great damage. For those of you who have lived without electricity for several days or sustained damage are prayers our with you. Contact the Ombudsman if you are having difficulty and we will get the word here.

Semper Paratus; Merry Christmas


E. L. ALEXANDER