



HMS CHATHAM



NEWS RELEASE 05/05

HMS CHATHAM CONTINUES TO PROVIDE SUPPORT IN BATTICALOA AND KALLAR

HMS CHATHAM remains in company with RFA DILIGENCE. Yesterday (9th Jan) she landed a work party of about 20 sailors into Batticaloa to continue with the task of cleaning wells in the devastated suburb of Kallady. This poor community is situated on a sand spit and took the full brunt of the tsunami, with many houses totally destroyed. The team remained ashore overnight, sleeping on the floor in a local army barracks in order to get an early start to their tasks this morning. They managed to complete repairs at an orphanage so that there is a safe play area for the children, and confirmed the water quality in a further ten wells, pumping and cleaning them where necessary. After two days hard work, they are now back onboard for a shower and rest.

HMS CHATHAM meanwhile sailed to Trincomalee, a port three hours away up the coast to refuel and take onboard some stores. She then sailed at 3am this morning (10th Jan) and, passing Batticaloa, came a further 20 miles south to anchor of the small community of Kallar where the wave was 30 feet high when it hit and caused extensive damage. Again a shore party was landed and working closely with local aid agencies, government officials and under direction from the UK department for International Development (DfID), managed to complete several tasks. The main one was to clear the local hospital which was devastated by flood water. This included cleaning and disinfecting the wards, drains and toilets. The well was started to be cleared and the Medical Officer and Chaplain visited some of the children who had survived. The ship's Lynx helicopters, having landed the working parties, then proceeded to fly in medical supplies and bottled water.

Captain Steve Chick, the Commanding Officer stated:

“Today we have had two parties working ashore, but twenty miles apart showing that we can support a wider area. Both have continued to do good work and when I was ashore today in Kallar, I saw just how important our support is. The sailors are working incredibly hard, and the team in Batticaloa stayed in very austere conditions, but to their credit they remain positive and keen to continue supporting these communities for as long as we can provide worthwhile support. Our plan is now to carry on in both areas, and also begin to recce to the north to investigate other areas that may need support.”

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