

**Headquarters (Multi National Division) South East  
British Forces Post Office 641**

PRESS INFORMATION CENTRE

Telephone 00870 600 322 756

00870763 665 814

Mobile: 00965 9113350

Email: [picbasrah@defencemediaops.co.uk](mailto:picbasrah@defencemediaops.co.uk)

PRESS RELEASE

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**IRAQ – BROTHER AND SISTER REUNITED**

Every once in a while a cheerful story with a very happy ending occasionally comes to light in Iraq. During a phone call to his mother back in Britain, Signaller John Mudie from Sunderland found out that his sister Rebecca would be visiting Kuwait onboard the Type 23 Frigate HMS Norfolk; The Plymouth based ship is currently on Maritime Interdiction Operations in the Arabian Gulf.

Signaller Mudie (20) who is serving with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Light Infantry based at Maysan Province in Iraq brought this piece of news to the attention of his Commanding Officer. From that moment on a plan to get the brother and sister together was put into action. Phone calls and signals were sent to all the relevant units and within a matter of hours he was packing his Bergen (rucksack) and preparing to fly south.

Rebecca Mudie (18), or Becky as she is more affectionately known by her friends and family, works as a wardroom steward onboard the Gulf guard ship. She had been told originally that her brother would be coming down from Iraq when the ship came alongside earlier in the week. By the time all the logistics and security planning had been finalised and transport found, it would be a further three days before she would see him.

After planning the route very carefully to ensure maximum security, a Royal Air Force Chinook helicopter currently detached from RAF Odiham in Hampshire, flew John to the Press Information Centre at Basra International Airport. Standing by to continue the journey was an Army escort from the Multi National Division (South East) who drove him down as far as the Iraq / Kuwait border. The final part of the drive was undertaken by the Royal Navy who had the responsibility of getting him to the ship.

After three days of waiting and nearly four hours driving, John finally arrived at HMS Norfolk, berthed alongside in Shwaikh Port, Kuwait. As he drew up to the ship sister Becky was waiting patiently at the top of the gangway.

Apart from the odd day at home the pair had not really spent any time together since Becky joined the Royal Navy two years ago. Now that he had finally arrived the three days of waiting suddenly became unimportant. As soon as she saw John she rushed down the gangway and gave her big brother a long, welcoming hug.

They talked non stop for almost an hour about what they had both been up to and the work they had been involved in. Each had stories that would have to wait until another time but they did get long enough to exchange Christmas gifts. Becky was thrilled that her brother had actually remembered to buy a present this year!

Before the happy pair headed off in different directions once again, there were a couple of last minute surprises still to come. Firstly, Becky was unaware that she would be accompanying John back up to the border to meet his Army escorts. The thought of seeing a bit of the country and its culture, including camels, was a real treat for her. To round the story off completely a short satellite telephone call was made to Mum and Dad, Jane and Tony Mudie, back home in Sunderland. The thrilled parents were taken completely by surprise when the phone rang but were understandably overjoyed at being able to talk to both their children at the same time in the same place. Apart from little brother James (8) not being at home, four members of the Mudie Family had been reunited for a few precious minutes.

After a brief tour of the Iraq/Kuwait border, which included a look into the Demilitarized Zone and witnessing massive troop movements, Becky helped her brother get ready for the drive back up to Basra.

It may only have been for a few hours but these two North easterners had had a very special time together thanks to the help, support and co-operation of all their colleagues currently serving in Iraq.

ENDS

Useful contact numbers:

1. Lt Stuart Antrobus, OC Combat Camera Team Tel: 00965 9113348