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PRESS RELEASE: BRITISH HUMANITARIAN VESSEL DOCKS IN PORT OF SPAIN

RFA Lyme Bay

The RFA LYME BAY, which has just concluded humanitarian relief work on the island of Dominica following the aftermath of tropical storm Erika, will dock at the Port of Port of Spain on Thursday 17 September until Sunday 20 September, 2015. During her brief visit the ship's crew will undertake several coordinated exercises with the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (TTDF) to promote collaboration in the area of humanitarian response and defence relations.

RFA Lyme Bay





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LOA 176.6m Beam 28.6m Draft 6.0m Gross Tonnage 23569t
Ship's Compliment/Crew: Approx 85 RFA , 12 Flight Crew & 31 HADR Troop
Total: approx 130 pax



2 PAC 24 Boats

Ship's Capabilities
RFA LYME BAY is an amphibious landing support ship, designed to deploy troops of Royal Marines onto beaches and coastline. Her primary role means that she is also ideally suited to delivering humanitarian assistance. Her shallow draft allows her further inshore than other ships of her size; and once in position, she can deploy her flotilla of small craft from the internal dock. Her large flight deck allows continuous day and night helicopter operations, and she has the capacity within her dormitories, vehicle deck and container deck to contain the troops, stores, vehicles and medical equipment to sustain and rebuild a stricken community.

Flight Capabilities
The Ship's Embarked helicopter is a Royal Navy Lynx HMA Mk8 (Helicopter Maritime Attack), optimised for maritime search and prosecution of surface and sub-surface targets. It carries a Royal Marine Sniper team, and can be used to move small teams of personnel and light stores into remote and inaccessible landing sites. It is a radar-fitted helicopter capable of operating in all weather conditions, day and night, using Night Vision Goggles.



HADR Capabilities
LYME carries a 30-strong Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) Troop. This includes specialist drivers, artisan tradesmen (2 carpenters, an electrician, a plumber and a mechanical fitter), communications specialists, plant and vehicle mechanics and specialist boat operators. Vehicles carried include 4 Land rovers with trailers (including Fit for Radio, Field Repair and Battlefield Ambulance variants), 2 Pinzgauer, 4 MAN 6-tonne support vehicles and 1 JCB Light-wheeled Tractor. The RLC detachment also operates a 16-tonne truck with crane.



MAN Support Vehicle



Pinzgauer



Battlefield Ambulance



JCB Light Wheeled Tractor



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Background

The RFA Lyme Bay is deployed in the Caribbean over hurricane season as a main component of the UK's commitment to disaster management cooperation in the region. She will dock in Port of Spain 17-20 September to collaborate on community projects and build cooperation links with local agencies in the field of humanitarian assistance and disaster management.

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The crew of the RFA Lyme Bay has just completed lending assistance to the island of Dominica following Tropical Storm Erika. The vessel spent six days stationed off Dominica and achieved much following her short-notice rerouting to the island. The Royal Marines, Royal Engineers, Royal Logistic Corps, and REME troops worked alongside personnel from the RFA, US Coastguard, and local authorities in carrying out relief operations.

The Commanding Officer of RFA Lyme Bay, Captain Paul Minter (RFA), explained: *“The men and women of RFA Lyme Bay have been actively involved over the last week, both onboard and ashore, providing humanitarian and disaster relief to the island of Dominica after the devastating effects of Tropical Storm ERIKA.*



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The ship has provided a variety of services ranging from distributing much needed food and supplies to some of the more isolated and worst affected villages, to road clearance and clearing homes and community buildings buried under the mudslides which have caused so much damage.

I have been ashore to see for myself some of the damage that has been inflicted on the island, and to witness the results of all the hard work that has been completed by Lyme Bay to provide much needed assistance and restore a degree of normality. Our teams ashore have; amongst other projects; been successful in digging out vehicles, and clearing the school, church and communal washing facilities in the village of Coulibistri which was deluged by mudslides, whilst our teams onboard and ashore have produced and distributed over 6000 hot meals as well as other food and stores items to outlying communities.”

In addition to the immediate support offered to the communities of Coulibistrie, Colihaut, Dublanc and Bioche the ship's Royal Navy Lynx helicopter flew to the villages of Grand Bay, Campbell, Boetica, Delices and Petite Savanne to drop off supplies, conduct surveys and evacuate a medical patient. Over 25 resupply flights moved approx 2 tons of stores per day to these cut-off communities and allowed disaster managers and civil engineers to plan the continued recovery programme long after RFA Lyme Bay has departed.

In Trinidad & Tobago, the RFA Lyme Bay HADR Troop will work alongside the T&T First Engineer Battalion to refurbish the Secondary School in Valencia. They will also restore Commonwealth grave sites, participate in [boat drills] and share experience with the T&T Defence Force of their Dominica deployment and the HADR troop concept.



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Press contact: British High Commission Camille Bethel- 299 3718

Trinidad and Tobago Regiment Captain Stefan Affonso- 480-8519

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