

## **I was there many times – It was a!!!! Hole then and is still a!!!! Hole now.**

During my 25+ years in the British Merchant Navy, I was proud to have sailed on the largest Oil Tanker in the world at that time (1970's) the VLCC (Very Large Crude Carrier) **London Pride**, 250,000dtw. The ship was originally built for Hudson SS Co, they ran into financial problems. Our Company London & Overseas Freighters based off Park Lane London bought the ship.

Our 'carrot' to sail on the ship, knowing we wouldn't get ashore very often was:-  
A 25% uplift on salary of the 'Tanker' rate and we would work 4 months on and 4 months off on full pay.



We sailed mainly from the 'Persian Gulf' via the Cape of Good Hope (Cape Town) to Europort (Rotterdam) to 'Come-By-Chance' in Newfoundland.

Both routes were long sea journeys, depending on what the charterer required for speed anything up to 65 days at a time!

We had crew changes 'off' Cape Town by Helicopter (Picture above) Ras-Al-Khaima or Europort.

Now come to the nitty-gritty – Kharg Island – several times during the 1980's, I was on the 'London Pride' when we loaded at Kharg Island (Iran) – In the news currently.

- 1/ The Iranians would not allow post on/off ships (no internet in those days)!
- 2/ There were no medical facilities for seafarers (including dentist).
- 3/ There were no food, provisions or fresh water available.
- 4/ No one was allowed ashore (other than reading the ships draught).

I was there on 3 occasions whilst the Iraq/Iran war took place.

We received a 100% war bonus whilst the ship was in the Gulf area.

- 5/ We had no military escort or support what-so-ever!

To get around the above, we took stores, supplies and crew changes at Ras-Al-Khaima. We spent many months sometimes 'drifting' around in the area waiting for 'charters'

I don't care how many beautiful shopping centres, 5 star hotels the Arabian Gulf has to offer, these days – I certainly would not consider returning to the area.

By the way – I happened to be taking 'Red Cross' aid to Jordan after the 1974 war between Egypt and Israel – we past a place in the Gulf of Aqaba – called Sharm El Sheik which was a 'Goat Herders Village' and yes I/we did go there just the once (Hilton) on holiday.....

Reminiscing, some 50 years ago.....to me seems like yesterday.....

So do I feel for the hundreds/thousands of 'tax exile 'influencers' having to vacate their luxuries NO I don't....



©Google maps

Above showing The Persian/Arabian Gulf, on the right, The Strait of Hormuz is a strait between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

Below, Myself and Norris Jackson, Managing Director and Head Superintendent of LOF

