



‘Marcus Jones, Deck Cadet reviews First Sea-Phase Onboard the MV Barunawati’

My first trip to sea was of the best experiences of my life. On the 8th August I started my journey from London and flew out to Mumbai in India.

I'd never been to India before so I was really excited to see somewhere new. I was met by two local agents who were really friendly and took me to my hotel from which I was to join my ship the MT Barunawati 4 days later.

Whilst in Mumbai I got to see a whole new way of life. It was so busy everywhere my eyes couldn't stop moving, I didn't know what to look at first! Between people playing cricket in the streets and the cows roaming freely it was a real eye opening experience that I'll never forget.

On the 12th August I was picked up by the agents and taken to my place of work and home for the next four months. I was so excited the nerves never really had chance to kick in. I finally stepped on board and knew that it was that moment that was the start of my new career and a life at sea!

From the moment I stepped onboard everyone was so friendly and welcoming. I wasn't on my own for a single moment. I think the crew were just as excited to have new cadets as I was to be on their ship.

I joined during discharging operations and was thrown right into the thick of it and was out on deck within a few hours being shown how to take oil samples by a Chinese Cadet Fan who became a good friend of mine and throughout our time together showed me everything he knew.

As soon as the craziness of discharging was over I got taken around the ship on my Safety tour and learnt about all the life saving equipment, where it was, how to use it and when to use it.

For the first half of my trip we travelled between India and the Persian Gulf. I spent most of this time working out on deck with the Bosun, AB's, OS and Pumpman learning an endless number of new skills. I first learnt how to chip and paint but it wasn't long before the crew moved me onto new tasks such as assisting with cleaning of PV valves, assisting with the changing of expansion bellows to name but a few.



One thing I never thought I would learn whilst on board was how to weld but I got shown how to do horizontal and vertical electric welding as well as gas cutting. I really enjoyed doing this as it took a lot of concentration and skill to master (although I am far from being a master at it though ... maybe a few more practices needed yet!)

The first 2 months passed quickly and we next started a longer journey out of the gulf all the way to Korea. It was at this point where I started to do 2 bridge watches a day and the learning continued. I love being up on the bridge and getting involved with the navigation of the vessel.

I learnt how to use all the Navigational equipment on the bridge fairly quickly and really enjoyed keeping a lookout and notifying the duty officers of anything I'd seen. The Captain had asked me to learn all the Admiralty Bouyage system to help in identifying what I was seeing which was not only a lot of fun but hugely beneficial as I got to be on watch during the TSS of Singapore strait at night and day keeping a good look out not only for traffic but now I'd learnt the buoy's could start to recognize them and keep the officers informed.

Until you get behind the helm of a ship that size you can't begin to imagine what its like. It was such a mind blowing experience. For my course I got ten hours steering done and gained my steering certificate which I am very happy with. It was definitely a highlight.

I think one of my biggest highlights though was to get so involved during cargo operations as the Chief Officer always questioned me and the other cadets before he did something so we could try and work out why he was doing it. A great way to learn I felt.

For the rest of my trip I continued to ask questions and the crew, officers and masters alike all helped me with anything I didn't know. I was made to feel very at home. My cabin certainly wasn't the Ritz but it was perfect for what I needed and after a few photos had been put up on the bulkheads it definitely became my home away from home.

I was told before I went to sea that if there was one person to make friends with it was the Chief Cook. I now know why this is important as the Chief Cook and I became good buddies and he always went out of his way to give me something I liked even if it wasn't easy for him. Personally I liked just eating the local food as I love rice ... although I didn't expect to be eating it for breakfast as well!

Although the hours were long and sometimes home and loved ones seemed to get further and further away I can honestly say that I truly loved being at sea and can't wait for my next trip and all the new and exciting things I am going to get to see and do.