

# THE FIGHTING 45

## Newsletter of HMS DEFENDER

Issue 07 | May 2016



## DEFENDER CONTROLS THE SKIES

**During the last month DEFENDER has been working with the United States Navy to support air strikes in Iraq and Syria.**

Having been deployed as the UK's principle maritime asset in the Arabian Gulf for over seven months, DEFENDER continues to operate as part of the USS HARRY S TRUMAN Carrier Strike Group deployed as part of OP INHERENT RESOLVE - the US military intervention against Daesh in Iraq and in Syria.

During this time DEFENDER has provided round the clock coverage acting as the Air Defence Commander offering safety services, and command and control of complex operations involving the co-ordination of multiple air defence assets and aircraft types.

DEFENDER has also acted as the Air Control Unit during which her Fighter Controllers have provided tactical control to various US fighter aircraft acting in direct protection to the Carrier Strike Group. These have include F18 Super Hornets, F15 Strike Eagles, and most recently, F22 Raptors – the worlds most advanced Air Superiority Fighter; a privilege and responsibility that is rarely handed to a non-US maritime platform.

### SAILORS VISIT US SHIPS

Whilst working alongside the US Carrier Strike Group, some lucky members of the ship's company have had the opportunity to visit the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman. They were treated to a guided tour of the ship, including the chance to see aircraft taking off and landing from the famous 'Vultures Row' viewing deck overlooking the flight deck of the carrier.

Other members of the ship's company visited the USS Ramage, an Arleigh-Burke destroyer working as part of the task group.

HMS DEFENDER returned the favour, hosting several groups of US Service personnel from the USS Harry S. Truman, the USS Ramage, and the USS Anzio.

Whilst these visits were hugely enjoyable for those lucky enough to go, they also provide the important function of building trust and furthering interoperability between the Royal Navy and the US Navy, which is vital for ongoing operations in the Gulf.





## Charity Update

DEFENDER is still working hard towards achieving our aim of raising £10,000 for the RNRMC. Recent events have included the Road to Twickenham Challenge, and a beard growing contest.

So far the total stands at **£5442.87**

There are lots more events planned onboard for the last 6 weeks of the deployment. If you would like to donate or hold your own fundraising event at home please contact the Charities rep, RPO Murphy at:

[HMSDFND-Exec-RNPoliceSectHead@mod.uk](mailto:HMSDFND-Exec-RNPoliceSectHead@mod.uk)

## DEFENDER GETS PHYSICAL IN ABU DHABI

Abu Dhabi saw a collection of different sporting activities for the Ship's Company to enjoy. There was cycling, cricket, basketball and football.

On our first day in there was a small group of cyclists who went out early in the morning, trying to escape the heat of the day, and met a local club at 0630. The club were very welcoming and guided us on a tour of Yas Island completing 40 miles in total. It was finished off with a welcome coffee break and getting to know our guides, who were all from the UK. This was all before the day had even started and we had returned by 1000.

Later that day there was a cricket match arranged against the British Schools, a team consisting of ex-pats who were teaching out in Abu Dhabi. The game was very exciting with the British Schools taking the first bat and scoring 174. We as Defender were then chasing, needing 175 to win. After a brilliant innings from ETME Kohler Cadmore things took a turn for the worse and it was looking like the win would be going to the British Schools. This was until a new player to the team stepped up, LET Beard (Beardy), who smashed everything he could for 6. It was down to the last over and Defender was still behind, but a slow bowl saw Beardy clear the boundary and The British Schools dropped to their knees in horror as we secured the win.

In the evening of our first day it had been arranged for the Ship's Company to cycle around the Abu Dhabi's premier F1 track. This was enjoyed by over 50 Defender personnel, running and cycling. The bikes were free to hire and the track was open for 4 hours, with some members of Defender riding over 25 miles on the track. That was something you certainly don't get to do everyday.

The following day Defender were down to play basketball, again against the British Schools and football, where we had entered a local tournament. The basketball was played at Zayed Sports City which is a fantastic venue; unfortunately this didn't do our team any good and from the off we were behind. The game wasn't a total washout and after we found our feet Defender put up a great fight with a final score of 46 - 21 to the British Schools.

The football tournament was a great laugh, it was 6 a-side and there would be five 15 min games to play against all the locals. It was the first time this team had been together and the first game we lost, along with the second. It was obvious we were getting better drawing the next match. Then getting to understand each other we won our penultimate game. Unfortunately we didn't manage to hold it together and the last game was given away to the opposition. It wasn't all lost though, with the man of the tournament going to Defender's very own Clubswinger, LPT Scrivener.

The football concluded a great few days of sport and it was topped off with one of the ex-pats there, Richard, offering the use of his bar to rehydrate. The football and basketball team met up at Richards bar and enjoyed some well earned beverages. Perfect!