On Sunday 9th November, despite being thousands of miles away, located somewhere in the Pacific Ocean, Iron Duke united with the rest of the country as it came together to remember our fallen forebears.

Attended by all available on the flight deck, the service, held by the Ship’s Church Officer Lt Cdr Gunnar Lux FGN, provided a reminder of the importance of Remembrance as we mark 100 years since the start of World War I.

Readings were conducted by the Captain, Cdr Tom Tredray, Surg Lt Rosie Miller and LET Neil Nelson, before the ship fell into silence as the Ship’s Company paused for 2 minutes of reflection.

A wreath was laid into the sea, carried by our youngest and most experienced members of the ships company, ET Conor David and WO1 Jon Tiller before the congregation gathered for a spot of Sunday tea and cake.

WE MOUST-ACHE YOU A QUESTION..........

......... does our ‘tache look big in this?!? Never one to miss out on events at home Iron Duke has been partaking in a spot of ‘Movember’. Now popular across the world, Movember takes place in November encouraging men to grow their upperlip facial hair all in the aid of raising money for Prostate Cancer. Participating members of Ship’s Company have paid £5, allowing them to cease shaving and cultivate their facial hair to a variety of weird and wonderful styles. We have had the ‘Ned Flanders’ sported by AB Ollie Threlfall, the ‘Village person’ worn wonderfully by PO Matthew ‘Soapy’ Watson, the ‘Gringo’ styled with ease by LS ‘Sally’ Gunnell and the ‘Weston-Smith’ fashioned by Lt Cdr Lee Vessey.

Not to be outdone and all in the name of equality and diversity, the minority females onboard have also jumped on the bandwagon. Cultivating their own ‘facial hair’, Lt Lauren Ruffell and Surg Lt Rosie Miller, sport their own impressive lip warmers, however encounters with drinks, food and general wear and tear means that their moustaches do not tend to last long after lunch and require a little top up.

The Executive Officer Lt Cdr Lyndsey Netherwood has found a more permanent solution, looking more ‘Piorot’ than XO (like what we did there?!) Lyndsey endured a stick on version which in the heat was nothing but uncomfortable, this impressive effort raised £50 alone as supportive members of the wardroom all chipped in.

Before you all get concerned that your loved ones will arrive home with a questionable new style, fear not, this is a one off, normal shaving resumed on the 1st December.
FLYING FLIPPERS!!

It was an average day at sea along the long passage up the South Pacific Ocean. At approximately 1600, watch handover time for many onboard, HMS Iron Duke were treated to a truly wonderful sight. A huge pod of Common dolphins approached the ship from approximately 4 nautical miles on the Ship’s head, on reaching us the dolphins turned around and proceeded to swim alongside both the port and starboard side of the ship.

The ship at the time was about 150 nautical miles off the coast of Peru as the dolphins approached, in the warm tropical waters favoured by the Dolphins. Common Dolphins can live in pods of hundreds and even thousands, adult dolphins range between 1.9-2.5m in length and can weigh anything between 80 to 150kgs. They are most notable for their unusual markings, their backs are dark and their bellies white. On each side is an hourglass pattern coloured light grey, yellow or gold and dirty grey in back. Particularly fast swimmers they can reach speeds up to 40mph and so easily matched Iron Duke’s leisurely 10 kts!!

Aerial acrobatics are common within the species of dolphin and Ship’s Company were treated to plenty of it, with plenty of graceful leaps and little spins as they exited the water. It truly was a jaw dropping spectacle and one we all agree we were very lucky to see.

LOGGY LIFE

Getting ashore and investigating the interesting ports is the highlight of any Naval deployment. Before going anywhere Ship’s Company need some local currency to spend on getting about and seeing the sights. Here is where the Ship’s Office are able to provide bank like facilities. The Writers, such as Wtr Mark Adams will take cheques made out from personnel in exchange for currency. In Panama the Ship used US Dollars, with a good exchange rate at $1.64 to the pound, most will get their money from the Ship’s Office. Over the course of the deployment up to £242,583.52 has been exchanged – and still counting!

Did you know the highest exchange rate we’ve had was back in Guinea where we were buying 11,989.40 Guinean Francs to the pound. So for a short time the Ship was home to 180 millionaires!

A frightfully good night was had by all when the ship’s company enjoyed Halloween at sea. With fake blood and vampire teeth aplenty, there was an inter-mess competition full of Halloween themed games. The 39 man mess, excelling in ‘pin the teeth on the vampire’ and ‘wrap the mummy’ were the overall winners. The most challenging event proved to be apple bobbing, AB Ian Hutchinson in particular endured the ice-cold bucket of water, desperately trying to retrieve an apple only for it all to be in vain. There was an impressive variety of fancy-dress costumes however the ‘best-dressed’ prize went jointly to CPO Norman Brindley and CPO Robert Brown for their bat outfits. The prize, ‘a soak in the captains bath’ was then generously auctioned off; some suggested this was because although good friends, they would struggle to share a bath!

Members of the Ship’s Company pulling off scary with little effort!!

The visiting Dolphins are Common Dolphins native to the area

One half of the huge pod of Dolphins taken from the Port Side

LWtr Colin Lingwood (left) and Wtr Mark Adams – trusted with the money!
COOKERY CORNER

One lunch time meal that is absolutely guaranteed to raise morale is the glorious CHEESY WHAM BAM!!

Also known as the ‘Cheesy Hammy Eggy’, this is the Royal Navy’s take on the Croque Madame and normally served with chips and baked beans. The height of Naval Cuisine, it is simple, has an interesting name and is enjoyed from 1st Sea Lord to the newest AB at Raleigh. Give it a try, you won’t go back, Cheesy Wham Bams for all!! Thanks Chef Lewis Stafford for the recipe!

INGREDIENTS QUANTITIES (FOR 1) QUANTITIES (FOR 200)

• Grated Cheese 20g 10kg
• Sliced Ham 1 Slice 10kg
• Wholegrain Mustard 1 Small Dab 400gm
• Worcester Sauce 1 Dash ½ 150ml Bottle
• Eggs 1 200 (about 17 Dozen)
• Sliced Bread 1 Slice 200 Slices (about 15 loaves)

METHOD

1. First toast one side of the bread and allow to cool.
2. Mix the grated cheese with the mustard, Worcester sauce and a little egg to form a paste. (if you are making single wham bam it would be advisable to omit the egg in the paste)
3. On the uncooked side of the bread layer a slice of ham and cover by spreading over the cheese paste.
4. Place the Cheesy Hammy bread under the grill to melt while frying an egg, keeping the yolk runny.
5. Once the bread is sufficiently coloured place the fried egg on top.
6. Sit down and enjoy a naval taste sensation.
While away many of us miss the simple things, like ordering a pizza on a Saturday night, which is exactly why the 26 Man Logistics Mess (affectionately known and self-titled as the 26 Nations Mess) organised a pizza night. The Ship’s Company either pre-ordered or telephoned the galley to order from a selection of pizzas at the small price of £4. Takeaway menus were provided to each mess deck, some pizza favourites were available such as Ham and Pineapple or was that ‘Gammy and Pineapple’ renamed in a witty fashion after AB Greig Gammack. Served in a speedy fashion, pizzas arrived in their own personal pizza boxes to the individual in their mess deck (or place of work for those on watch) by delivery boys in fancy dress, some of whom were in more of a state of undress.

In total 166 pizzas were sold raising £666.00, split down to £300 for the welfare fund and £366 for ‘Friends and Family of Ocean Ward” a charity based at Southampton University Hospital. The charity cares for babies and children who have a congenital heart defect and also provides support for parents and siblings funded entirely from donations like this. The night was a great success and enjoyed by pizza makers, delivery boys and customers alike.

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Recently the WE team has carried out some difficult fault finding and maintenance on the new long range search Radar. This involved CPO Paul Harris and ET Harry McHugh climbing up the inside of the foremast to the Crows Nest, the highest point on the ship at 30m above sea level. Once on top, they had to replace a couple of items with some small and fiddly screws which required plenty of patience!! It was then necessary to ensure that the Radar antenna was pointing in exactly the same direction as the radar display in the Operations Room. This was carried out using a specialist telescope attached to the antenna, using it to view a plate at the very front of the ship; corrections were painstakingly applied by hand. Despite high winds, fear of heights and not to mention the cold; admiring the outstanding views from the Crows Nest made it all worth while.

The locks themselves were a spectacle, ahead of Iron Duke were large merchant ships squeezing into the lock with less than 2ft clearance either side, Iron Duke looked positively lost with her 20ft clearance!! Locamotives known as ‘mules’ attached steel wires to the Ship and once attached pulled Iron Duke through the series of chambers.

With the transit time being 10 hours it was a very long day for some, including LPT ‘Jack’ Daniels who was closed up on the wheel for the duration and LReg Jodi Phillips who spent the day on standby in the emergency steering compartment. But it isn’t everyday a British warship gets to sail through. what is commonly referred to as the 8th wonder of the world.

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Every morning the OOW will provide Ship’s Company with a little update and try to improve morning spirits by providing facts or little teasers. This one was brought to us by SLt Jon Hotchkiss. He offered a Mars Bar to the first person who could answer the following teaser

What is special about the following sentence?

“A Man, A Plan, A Canal, Panama”

Quite obviously Jon cannot provide you guys with a Mars Bar, but he offers out a pat on the back. Answers on the last page of Iron Men Sports.
MEDICS AT WORK

Whilst in Haiti, Iron Duke’s medical team were asked to provide some disaster-relief training to community health workers. The team spent 2 hours teaching the Haitians about the ‘DR ABC’ method of initial assessment of a casualty. They then did a practical session on the recovery position before moving on to use of the triage sieve to rapidly assess and prioritise patients after a mass-casualty incident.

Haiti suffered from a devastating earthquake in 2010 that killed thousands of people. Hopefully the training Iron Duke’s medics did will never be used but if disaster strikes again, the community health workers of Cap Haitien will be prepared. Later on MAs Tom Cree and Dean Crompton’s DIY skills were used to build a chicken coop and Surg Lt Rosie Miller visited the ‘maison’ a home that provides respite care for disabled children.

ON GUARD!!!

During most of Iron Duke’s stops, the first night usually witnesses the Ship’s Company pull out all the stops as an Official Reception is hosted. This is gives local dignitaries, military and VIPs the opportunity to visit Iron Duke and witness demonstrations and briefs across key areas of the Ship.

An element of the evening that always receives applause is the Ceremonial Sunset. The Ceremonial Guard regularly train in order to make sure that the highest level of drill is conducted to carry out the ceremony with precision. Consisting of one Guard Officer and 5 Warfare ABs, this most traditional of ceremonies takes place as the Ship’s Ensign is lowered at the end of the day. The ABs carry rifles fitted with bayonets and the Guard Officer carries a ceremonial sword their entrance always provides an impressive sight.

CLUEO UPDATE!

There are 10 people left in the competition, the Captain met his doom, courtesy of a doctor rank slide, in the Catering Office by CPO Norman Brindley, who is the most prolific murderer with 12 kills!!!
VILLAGE FETE

As Iron Duke enjoyed the warm climates of the Caribbean, the summery feel onboard lent itself perfectly for a Village Fete to be held on the flight deck.

Each Mess provided a game for the afternoon including splat the rat, beat the buzzer and pin the tail on the donkey. Particular favourites were the POs ‘goal in the hole’ game, the highest scorer of which stood to win a ‘goldfish’ or was that an expertly crafted carrot? LS ‘Tex’ Marshall proved to have pinpoint accuracy and came top of the leader board.

There was also the ‘Iron Man’ contribution from the 39 Man Warfare Mess, which encouraged competitors to carry out small challenges in order to show ultimate strength and manliness. WO Darran Sullivan showed the young whippersnappers/gun bosuns how it was done taking the shock win.

There was also the classic opportunity to take members of the wardroom to the stocks. The Navigator, Lt James Mitchell proved a popular target and took a couple to the face. There were also the brave few that invited the Captain, Cdr Tom Tredray to take his place in the stocks. Others kindly threw some stray shots, some (no matter how hard she genuinely tried not to) hit directly on target….your cards are marked Lt Lauren Ruffell!!!!

SHIP’S CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

Throughout the Deployment, the Ship has been building to one of the most anticipated events – the draw of the Ship’s Christmas Raffle. With a brand new Vauxhall Corsa as the top prize, the suspense was palpable. The other prizes were not too shabby either, with cash prizes, Apple Macbook, Go Pro’s, Kindles, Garmin Sat Nav and SLR camera’s all up for grabs. There were several multiple winners, Lt Chris Boaden picked up three, bagging himself two cash prizes of £100 and a fine Jersey Pottery Crockery set. LStd Nigel George also saw a good return, as a one ticket punt got him a cash prize of £1,000. The night’s real winner was PO David ‘Tug’ Wilson who picked up 3 prizes AND the top prize of the car. All in all not a bad night for David!!

PO Martin Hill accepts the ‘Iron Man’

Each term, stand out members of each department are selected to be recognised for exemplary work. This term PO Martin Hill was give the ‘Iron Man’ accolade.

Selected due to his pivotal role within the Flight Department, Martin has shown dedication throughout the deployment frequently working long into the night in order to rectify defects.

A strong character, he has motivated on the Flight Deck, Rugby Pitch and as Neptune’s Police during the Crossing of the Line ceremony. A credit to Iron Duke, Martin is fully deserving of this term’s award.

POMPEY REVS!!

Did you know that there are actual buttons on the bridge that give the Ship extra ‘Pompey Revs’?! One click of these buttons and the Ship’s engines kick out magical extra knots.............honest! The Ship is currently using her Pompey Revs in earnest!
HELPING IN HAITI

Whilst in Cap Haitien, members of the Ship’s Company had opportunities to go ashore and assist in community projects. Led by CPO Gary ‘Chubbs’ Peterson, the team were taken to the main town square where they painted benches, walls and a band stand and gave the place a tidy up. As the work was carried out it provided the perfect opportunity to meet some of the local population who were intrigued by the work being carried out. The work on the town square took two days in total and the park although worn and tired finished looking clean, tidy and with new bright and revived colours.

Other work included a team of Ship’s Company painting a bridge. In a fairly residential area, this attracted a lot of local interest and residents were soon getting hold of paint brushes and taking part in the work themselves. As the work neared completion there were almost more locals painting the bridge then there were Ship’s Company!

With the majority of people in Haiti speaking Creole, it did mean that there was a slight language barrier between the locals and Ship’s Company, but it didn’t seem to matter too much and there was a good atmosphere across the different sites.

The work carried out was well received by Haitians, who were only slightly bemused by watching a load of UK sailors struggle in the blistering heat, it has been 30 years since a Royal Navy Warship has visited Haiti and so many of the locals were not sure what to expect. However it proved to be a satisfying experience for all involved and Ship’s Company in particular took a lot from the experience and found engaging with the locals particularly rewarding. Hopefully it won’t be long before another Royal Navy ship has chance to visit the island and its friendly people again.
HANDS TO BATHE

When the weather is hot, the sea becomes all the more inviting and so when conditions are just right, Iron Duke will come to a stop in the water and Ship’s Company are invited to participate in ‘Hands To Bathe’. This provides personnel an opportunity to jump directly off the Ship’s side into the warm tropical seas.

It may not seem it but it’s a long way down and it takes some a little more time to enter the water as they pluck up the courage, others take much pleasure out of performing wonderful acrobats into the water.

Whilst Hands to Bathe is conducted, the Bridge team remain closed up keeping a close look out, not only for ship’s but other unwelcome visitors….sharks!! It’s a good job we do! On our last Hand’s to Bathe adventure, the eagle eyes of Lt Steve Gowling spotted a fin and so the sound of the Ship’s siren signalled bathers that they needed to make their exit out of the water – sharpish!!! Luckily this was just a close call and all bathers survived, limbs intact!!!

PANAMA HATS

One item high on the shopping list on the recent visit to Panama was the famed Panama Hat! But imagine our surprise when we found out that the Panama Hat is not actually from Panama at all but in fact made in Ecuador! The scandal!

So the story – Ecuador started to produce the hats in the early 17th Century and like many South American goods in that time, they were shipped first to the Isthmus of Panama before sailing onto their destinations in Europe, the rest of the Americas and Asia. As the hat began to get international acclaim it subsequently acquired the name from their international origin – Panama. Not that the Panamanians have minded!!

Panama hats are light coloured, lightweight and breathable and are traditionally made of plaited leaves of Carludovica Palmata, ultra versatile, they can be rolled and stowed in your back pocket when not in use. They’re very in season…..according to this Ship’s Company!!

STOKER STORIES

When Iron Duke passed through the final lock of the Panama Canal its Diesel Generators, otherwise known as DGs, met their worst enemy - high sea water temperatures. High temperatures cause the DGs to overheat which only spells trouble.

Luckily for HMS Iron Duke, an expert team tackled the problem head on. The men, who include ET Dan Taft and CPO Michael Jeffrey recently spent 48 hours of hard sweaty work in the engine room which easily reaches temperatures of 40ºC, to get the ship back to full power.

When in high temperatures, the Ship will put limitations on the engines to stop them from overheating and it is a constant battle for our Marine Engineers to keep our engines ticking over. ET Alex “Mclovin” Gleed says “It’s really hot down the engine spaces, but when we finish a job we all high five and it feels like we’ve really achieved something”…..this is a direct quote…..according to PO Matthew Watson.

The temperatures will continue to challenge the Marine Engineers who will continue to battle and ensure they get the ship home safely to see their families in time for Christmas.
PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB

On realising that there was a mutual interest in photography, eight members of the Ship’s Company have formed the Iron Duke Photography club. Armed with a variety of cameras, from your standard point and press to some so complex it could be believed they could also make a cup of coffee whilst snapping a mean shot, the club have regular meetings where they discuss all things photography.

Chef Lewis Stafford has taken the natural lead of the club, having completed a course at college he has experience and some useful hints and tips. Such little get-togethers have allowed our ‘Photography Clubbers’ to take on new photographic challenges and move away from the auto presets. There have been some impressive outcomes and some probably best described as ‘experimental’. Since sailing in June approximately 4976 photos has been taken and an impressive collection have been formed, documenting our fascinating and varied deployment along the way. PO Wayne ‘Rocky’ Champs has been particularly prolific and can always be relied upon to turn up and capture worthwhile moments.

It was with all these photos in mind that the Ship’s Calendar was formed. Ship’s Company were encouraged to submit photos they had taken during the trip that they thought would best display the deployment. It was through this it became apparent that the Ship’s photography talent does not just lay within the Photography Club, there were some fantastic entrants and the Club had a hard time choosing the winning entrants. The chosen photos are particularly impressive and provide Iron Duke with a calendar which will remind all of our fantastic voyage to the South and back.

SALUTING HAITI

As HMS Iron Duke made her approach into Haiti, a 21 gun salute was fired in order to fully mark the occasion of a Royal Navy ship visiting the Caribbean Island for the first time in 30 years. Allowing gunners to do what they do best...make lots of noise, the saluting guns located centrally between the Ship’s two masts were used.

It was revealed to us by the British Ambassador, His Excellency Steven Fisher, that the mayor of Cap Haitien had been on the radio the previous day to warn residents that Iron Duke would arrive with a bang but not to be alarmed as the visit was to be a friendly one!

STAR GAZING

It might seem old fashioned to learn to navigate by the stars in the age of GPS but every Young Warfare Officer is taught this vital skill as part of their training. Should GPS ever be lost, be it in a wartime situation or lack of coverage and the ship be out of sight of land, then astro navigation would be the only way to find our position.

Since joining last month SLt Jon Hotchkiss has been using a sextant to take morning and evening star sights as well as the meridian passage of the sun and managed to find our position within a few miles of our actual location. It may sound like a lot but when in the middle of the ocean it’s not a bad start! As Jon says ‘GPS may fail but the stars will always be there’, this is one old school skill that is here to stay.

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Since the last Link Letter, the football team has been in high demand, with games in Panama, Haiti and Barbados. First up in Panama Iron Duke played HMS Dragon. The game got underway in 35 degrees of heat and it was Dragon who quickly settled in the conditions, playing some excellent football they soon found themselves 5-0 against Iron Duke, obviously our team acclimatised to the cold conditions of the Falklands!! The conditions unfortunately proved too much and with the heat effecting both sides, the match was abandoned, with Dragon the clear winners.

The following week the team arrived in Haiti and played against a local league side, Real Football Academy. The game was played at the local stadium with around 1000 spectators. Despite a couple of early chances for Iron Duke, it was Real who took a deserved lead much to the enjoyment of the home crowd. This quickly doubled and Real went on to create numerous chances. It could have been a lot worse but for the heroics of LS John ‘Scouse’ Haslam pulling off one world class save after the other. The second half continued in much the same vein with Real retaining large periods of possession and only central defender pairing of ET Stephen ‘Taff’ Carrington and AB Tom Rowley providing any real trouble. Eventually Real won 4-0 but Iron Duke were pleased to keep the score line low against far superior opponents.

The final fixture of the deployment saw the team against Barbados Master’s XI. Despite large periods of possession Iron Duke failed to create any real clear chances. It was the hosts that took the lead with an excellent long range effort which left Haslam with no chance. It was 10 minutes into the second half where SLt Dan ‘The Met Man’ Robbins unleashed a 30 yard rocket into the top corner, sparking the team into life. Some lovely flowing football allowed Robbins to complete his hat-trick in short order and Darnell quickly followed suit giving the visitors a 4-1 lead. A long cross from the opponents to the far post which was met by brilliant header from LET Luke ‘Multi’ Storey….straight into his own net, much to the amusement of himself and his team mates. Two further late goals from Robbins took his tally to five and ensured an emphatic win for Iron Duke’s final match of the deployment.

During the deployment, six members of the Ship’s Company have formed a boxing team, looking to compete in the Navy Novice Boxing Competition held at HMS Nelson in February next year.

The team have been trained by AB Greig Gammack and LS Dan Cook who both have considerable experience of Navy Boxing. They have put the team through their paces and have been training them hard with the aim to win and do Iron Duke proud.

Training has taken place in spare time and in a variety of climates. From enduring the baking heat of the flight deck, to seeking shelter in the Quarterdeck or in the Ship’s gym. Experience is varied, with some of the lads having never boxed before but their hard work is paying off and their training is seeing them coming on leaps and bounds. Iron Duke looks forward to cheering them on in February.
FLIGHT DECK SPORTS

With a spare afternoon at sea the Clubs, LPT Jack Daniels decided to challenge the Ship’s Company to a spot of volleyball for our flight deck sports. With the net raised and the ball attached to a long piece of string to stop it getting lost overboard, the stage was set.

The Logistics Mess went into the competition as favourites, what with their star player, Navy Volleyball player Std Keith Simon at the helm. They however met their match early on by being beaten by the CPOs mess, their superior height advantage lending nicely to the game, also their ability to bend the rules...a bit, won them a few sly points.

The CPOs remained dominant throughout powering through to the final. Played against the Warfare mess, the match was back and forth. The Warfare team paced themselves well, causing the CPOs to rush their game and make mistakes. The final whistle went giving the Warfare mess the match and the tournament – worthy victors of the latest flight deck sports!

AND BULLY’S SPECIAL PRIZE

Once leaving Barbados, the 30 Man ‘Stokers’ Mess, had some retro themed darts fun in store for Ship’s Company. With an 80’s themed darts night, the Ship’s Company were encouraged to dust off their loose fitting shirts, blazers complete with rolled up sleeves as well as leg warmers and crimped hair.

There was a full stage, tables and music – of the 80’s variety – providing some nostalgic beats. It was be enough to make Jim Bowen want to come out of retirement. And if that was not enough there were Chicken Nuggets and Chips for one whole English pound AND free ice cream.

Weeks before names were drawn from a hat and placed in a league table; there was a few preliminary rounds prior to the showcase that was the semis and final. AET Peter Crowe and LS ‘Sally’ Gunnell bowed out at the semis leaving AB Andrew Ridley and AB James Mason to battle it out at a tense final – AB James Mason took 5 straight games to be crowned Darts Champion, pocketing a cool £25.

An entry fee of £5 was paid by each player and in total the night raised an impressive £200 that was be split between the ships welfare fund, the winner and the nominated mess charity ‘Footprints’.

CLUBZ CIRCUIT!

Physical training in the military is vitally important for being ready for any task and to maintain excellent health. For 6 months LPT Jack Daniels has been pushing the Ship’s Company of HMS Iron Duke hard 3 times a day only giving them rest on Sunday’s. By using a protocol called General Physical Preparedness (GPP) he is able to cover; strength, flexibility, agility, cardiovascular conditioning, motor skills and core strength all in one 20 – 30 minute session.

Below is a typical circuit, give it a go your self and be ready for anything.

2 footed jumps forward for 100m
20 burpees
25 kettle bell swings
50 body weight squats
100 press ups
Half a mile run ( fast as you can )

Time limit of 25 minutes if you complete it within the time go round again until you reach the 25 minute mark.
RUGBY REPORT

Barbados RFU 44 - HMS Iron Duke 5
Iron Duke always knew they were going to face a tough challenge when they accepted a rugby match against the Barbados RFU. Unaccustomed to playing in 35°C, the 16 man Iron Duke squad battled through, not giving up until the final whistle. Captained by PO Martin Hill and coached by Lt Cdr Paul Laidler, the team started on the back foot, not quite realising the pace they were facing. The forwards were a pretty good match, but a couple of instances of committing too many men to the rucks meant that the back three of Lt Grant Milnes, AB Gary Russell and AB Mark Adams were left with overlaps and chasing people to the wrong try line. Fifteen minutes in and two tries down, Iron Duke didn’t drop their heads, after a challengeable restart from ETME Shaun Cotton, the ball was turned over and some great phase play led by LAC John Brindley forcing his way over the line for first try of the deployment. Belief returned to the team and some fancy footwork from ET Daniel Stephenson moved play into the oppositions 22, but the ball was recycled the wrong way, leading to a turn over and easy try for Barbados.
Iron Duke began the second half strongly moving from their own 22 up to the oppositions try line and controversially, LCH Victor Whiteman was judged by the referee to have dropped the ball over the line. Although Iron Duke never let up and pushed hard in their attack, it left them open to counter attack. Barbados broke through a few more times, ramping up the score.
The final score line does not do justice to the events of the day, Iron Duke fought well and did herself proud in the final game of the deployment.

1,2,3 . . . . . . . HEAVE!!!!
An age old Flight Deck sport is the solid favourite – the Tug of War. The classic of all military competitions, it provides sailors with an opportunity to compete as departments or messdecks in order to prove who are the real ‘Iron Men’ and unashamedly stroke some male egos. Perhaps unsurprisingly, like all sports carried out on a Warship, it comes with a twist. There isn’t much room on a flight deck and to have two teams fighting directly against each other is a bit dodgy. A sudden slip of the rope could well end up with one team in the Oggin! (that’s the sea – see this month’s Jack Speak). So when the Ship holds a Tug of War competition, some handy seamanship knowledge is put to good use and the rope is fed through a series of pulleys and shackles that allow the teams to put the fight to one another side by side.
This provides some interesting stare out tactics as teams can look over to one another during the competition. The CPO’s team proved victorious earlier in the deployment and the latest competition saw them come top again, dominating the field. More work to be had in the gym for the rest of the Ship it would seem!

BRAIN TEASER – THE ANSWER
The sentence is a Palindrome – therefore the sentence reads the same both forwards and backwards!
DEPLOYMENT FACTS!

DISTANCE TRAVELLED: 27,442nm – 1 ¼ times around the equator!!
AMOUNT OF WATER MADE: 7,000 tonnes
AMOUNT OF SHAFT REVS: 900,000 revs
NUMBER OF TIMES DIESEL GENERATORS HAVE BEEN STARTED: 389 times
AMOUNT OF POWER DIESEL GENERATORS HAVE PRODUCED: 296,258 joules – this is enough to power 4,942 lightbulbs for 4,368 hours, which is equal to 182 days – the length of this deployment!
AMOUNT OF FUEL USED: 2,352,000 litres – enough to fuel a 50ltr car 50,000 times!!
AMOUNT OF ROTATIONS BY 997 RADAR: 5,097,600 Revolutions.
AMOUNT OF SALUTING GUN ROUNDS FIRED: 57
NUMBER OF TIMES WEAPON ENGINEERING MESS HAS WATCHED PITCH PERFECT: 62
AMOUNT OF FLYING HOURS: 150
NUMBER OF HOURS FLIGHT HAVE SPENT INFORMING PEOPLE THEY ARE FLYING GODS: 2160 = 90 DAYS
AMOUNT OF MONEY RAISED FOR CHARITY: £1995.52. These include - RNRMC, MIND, Family and Friends of Ocean Ward Southampton Hospital and Smile for Wessex, Portsmouth Downs Syndrome Association.
AMOUNT OF GOALS SCORED BY THE FOOTBALL TEAM: 22 – Top Scorer Slt Dan ‘The Met Man Robbins with 13!
AMOUNT OF TRIES CONCEDED BY THE RUGBY TEAM: 98
AMOUNT OF RUM SOURS CONSUMED IN BARBADOS: Classified Information

SNAPSHOT CORNER

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SNAPSHOT CORNER
As the Deployment draws to an end and the Ship is on her final leg home it has given us all an opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved. Iron Duke’s journey began long before 20 June 2014 when she sailed from Portsmouth on her 6 month South Atlantic patrol. Bringing a Ship out of refit is never an easy task and Iron Duke’s regeneration was no exception, however the Ship’s Company worked tirelessly to bring her back into service on the front line and completed Sea Training at the start of this year with high standards of professionalism and great good humour.

The Deployment has been extremely successful and the impact that Iron Duke has had in the countries we have visited; supporting British diplomatic efforts abroad and providing reassurance to our allies around the world, will last long after we return home. This success is due to a lot of hard work and dedication from the Ship’s Company and I am very proud of what Iron Duke has achieved. I am also very grateful for the support, encouragement and understanding that we have received from family and friends throughout the ship’s regeneration and deployment which has meant so much to us all. Thank you; we could not have done this without you.