Dear Family and Friends,

We have now firmly established ourselves in the Gulf and after a number of successful patrols working with a host of different navies we begin to look ahead to our return to the UK. The tempo in the Gulf has remained high and our mid-deployment stand-down in Dubai was a welcome chance to recharge before shifting focus from supporting the US to the French aircraft carrier.

From the Commanding Officer

‘Our Kipion deployment is progressing at quite a pace and your loved ones continue to overcome all challenges put in front of them. They certainly earned their stand-down in Dubai and hit the ground running on our return to sea straight back into our important work supporting multinational operations with the French and US aircraft carriers. I hope you all remain well and are looking forward to our homecoming in the not too distant future.’

Cdr Adrian Fryer RN

So what have we been up to?

Mother’s Day

Members of the Ship’s Company including members of the Royal Marines Boarding Team took the opportunity to send a special Mother’s Day message back home to you. Both sailors and marines donned their white caps or green berets and formed up on the flight deck to spell out ‘MUM’ with the Royal Marines forming two kisses underneath (see right!). The photo was taken from, our Lynx Mark 8 helicopter as part of a training flight, with a tight schedule to get the team in their correct positions before clearing the decks to allow her to land.

Dubai Stand Down

We were host to several high profile visitors during our time alongside in Dubai, including the Deputy Commandant General Royal Marines Brigadier Richard Spencer OBE. Brigadier Spencer, the head of Royal Marines personnel, who visited the ship to meet the Royal Marines Boarding Team (RMBT) who are embarked to support our wider role carrying out Maritime Security Operations. MSO is a role we have been fulfilling throughout our time away. Embarking a RMBT gives us the capability to stop and board suspect vessels thought to be involved in smuggling or terrorist activities, helping to protect the vital Sea Lines of Communication the UK’s economy relies on across the globe.

It was not all hard work and we were able to enjoy the sights of Dubai including visits to the Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world standing at 830m (or around 5 and a half T45 destroyer lengths!) with 211 floors. Some also took the opportunity to venture out into the desert on a 4x4 excursion and the cycling club worked up a sweat taking on the local routes including the Al Qudra Cycle Path. A lucky group from the Ship managed to attend the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championship match between Andy Murray and Gilles Muller, which he won 6-4, 7-5. They had an opportunity to meet the Wimbledon Star after the game and presented him with a HMS Dauntless baseball cap.
Out on Operations

In a first for a T45 destroyer, we have been providing air defence to the 42,000 ton nuclear-powered French Navy aircraft carrier as her Rafale and Super Etendard fighter jets conduct strike missions against ISIL. We have been playing our part from the start, using our advanced radar systems to provide air defence cover and deconfliction of airspace for the Charles de Gaulle and her escort FS Chevalier Paul allowing them to fuel with their tanker the FS Meuse. The Chevalier Paul is a Horizon class air defence frigate similar to Dauntless (both ships started off on the same drawing board before the designs diverged later on) and both use the cutting-edge Aster missile system to provide protection to the ships around them from air threats.

Boarding training

In order to keep our skills at their peak we carry out training across the range of our capabilities, and our boarding team are no exception. They have been honing their skills to ensure they are ready to go at a moments notice, with the 'Blue' and 'Green' teams made up of sailor’s from the Ship’s Company and Royal Marines respectively have been working with their US counterparts, and are pictured here boarding an American Arleigh Burke class destroyer to practise their boarding and search techniques, as well as sharing their experiences and ideas.

Medal Presentation

Congratulations are due to LS Wallace, who has been presented with a Long Service and Good Conduct Medal while we have been away. The medal is awarded in recognition of 15 years unblemished service, and he is pictured here receiving it from the Commanding Officer.

Abu Dhabi

Our stop in Abu Dhabi saw a variety of sports fixtures including matches for the Netball and Football Teams as part of a 6 a side tournament. There were 4 teams of Dauntless ‘Centurians’ entered, overcoming all opposition to set up an all-Dauntless final in the Cooper & Marsh competition. The final finished 2-1 to Dauntless B and they became the first non UAE team to win the competition. A special mention goes to ET(ME)Marty Phillips who was top goal scorer at the competition.

There was also an opportunity for the Ship’s Company to run, walk or cycle around the Yas Marina Formula 1 circuit for free. The trip to the circuit was taken up by over a quarter of the Ship’s Company including the Ship’s cycling squad who are estimated to have competed 100 laps of the circuit (totalling around 300 miles!) between them, although not quite at the pace of the F1 drivers (despite what they might say!). All in all a great chance to stretch our legs after a patrol and see the sights of Abu Dhabi.

Parcel Reminder

We are still entitled to the Enduring Families Free Mail Service (EFFMS) until we pass back through Suez. Families and friends in UK and BFPOs can send packets up to 2 kg in weight, free of charge, to Service Personnel deployed on OP KIPION. Maximum length + depth + width = 900 mm width greatest single dimension not more than 600 mm. (Shoe box size is ideal). Aerosols, perishable goods, fragile Items and Alcohol should not be sent.

Legoland Windsor Families Event

Royal Navy and Royal Marines Welfare (RNRMW) are arranging a trip for families of deployed units to visit Legoland Windsor on 25th April. This will be a full day outing with a coach provided alongside corporate hospitality and the visit is fully funded through the ships Family Welfare Grant. There will be coach pick up points from the Naval Community Centres/SFA estates. Application forms can be emailed from the ship please contact your family member.

Homecoming

Planning is ongoing for our return to Portsmouth, and we urge you to ‘save the date’ as there will be special access to the dockyard for families to allow you to welcome your loved ones back as they cross the gangway. More details will follow soon along with how to register and the programme for the day.

Please keep an eye on http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/our-organisation/the-fighting-arms/surface-fleet/destroyers/hms-dauntless for our latest news. We thank you for your understanding in not discussing our programme on social media and wish you a Happy Easter.

From your Family and Friends in Team Dauntless