

# Sword & Shield

## HMS DEFENDER's Periodical Newsletter

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### A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER

As HMS DEFENDER undertakes her journey back to Portsmouth, I reflect on what has been a hugely challenging but successful deployment. We have worked with our allies including the USA, India and Australia, promoting the right to Freedom of Navigation by escorting multiple merchant vessels through the Straits of Hormuz. The Ship visited many ports within the UAE and further afield, conducting Defence Engagement events in order to strengthen international diplomatic relationships.

In January, I am sure you were aware of the heightened tensions in the region between the United States of America and Iran. HMS DEFENDER was ready in all respects to protect UK Forces, Allied Forces and our Nations Interests. Fortunately this was not required, however having witnessed the reaction on board from every single member of the Ship's Company, I have no doubt that we would have been able to deal with any potential threat successfully. Following this we conducted multiple counter-narcotics operations with huge success. Our boarding teams spent busy periods interrogating suspect vessels in the region, which resulted in large amounts of Class A and B narcotics being confiscated and destroyed.

The pace of this deployment has been relentless and I have demanded a great deal from the Ship and her crew, to which they have continuously delivered. I believe that only once we have safely returned to Portsmouth and they are enjoying some well earned downtime, will the magnitude of what they have achieved fully sink in. HMS DEFENDER is rightly regarded by many as the best Air Defence Warship in the world, a title that I feel has been justified over the past seven months time and time again. A Ship is nothing without its crew and I cannot put into words how proud I am of mine.

Commander Richard Hewitt MBE RN

## Marine Engineering

Throughout the deployment the Marine Engineering Department have cemented their reputation as one of the most hard working Departments on board. Due to the vital nature of the equipment under our care, not only have we worked hard at sea, but also had to carry out routine maintenance whilst the Ship is alongside. This hard work has shown results with the Department rectifying 62 Operational Defects, contributing to the ship losing zero days on operations due to defects so far, a first for a T45. Individual hard work has also been rewarded, with 8 members of the Department passing Provisional Examinations for promotion to the next rank or rate.

So now that DEFENDER is heading home, we will use some more of the 8 million litres of fuel that we have embarked (including during 11 Replenishments At Sea) – enough to fill the tanks of 153,180 family cars – in our two 21 MW Gas Turbine engines – enough to power 118,000 homes – to speed our way back to our friends and families.



# Warfare

Some would say that the day you are reunited with your friends and loved ones is the best day of any deployment. Whilst this will no doubt be the case for some, members of the Warfare Department have been asked to look back on their most memorable day of what has certainly been a varied eight months.

**AB(SEA) Branson**

*"Definitely the opportunity to celebrate New Year in Dubai. Considering I was working in Sainsbury's two years ago, it's something I never would've dreamed of."*

**AB(AWW) Rue-Mortimer**

*"I would certainly agree with New Year. Dubai surpassed all expectations."*

**PO(AWW) McDonnell**

*"NGS (Naval Gunfire Support) on my birthday. You can't beat that!"*

**AB(EW) Currie**

*"Cycling around the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Circuit – Jenson Button on two wheels."*

**AB(AWT) Foad**

*"Christmas Day at sea. Even though I wasn't with my family it felt like one big family onboard."*

**AB(SEA) Holt**

*"Manning a Flight Deck HMG whilst transiting the Strait of Hormuz is definitely something you don't get to do everyday. Having fighter jets and helicopters fly right over us is like nothing else I've experienced before."*

And finally, from the head of the Warfare Department, Lt Cdr Daniel Briscoe:

*"I would struggle to nail down one day in particular, but even when the going has been harder, the whole department have delivered to a level even they thought impossible. For all their hard work I am extremely grateful, and for the success we have generated on operations I am extremely proud."*



# Weapon Engineering

It has been an extremely productive deployment for the WE Department. Two ET2 have achieved promotion to ET1, 4 members of the department have been selected for promotion to LET or POET and by the time we get home 19 will have passed boards making them eligible for selection for promotion to the next higher rate. The department has completed 9,167 maintenance jobs and rectified 52 defects affecting operational capability, maintaining the highest possible levels of equipment availability. Our radars will have rotated nearly 39 million times, providing essential situational awareness; 7,582 signal messages and a total of 108 terabytes of data have been sent and received, communicating vital information; and our weapons have fired 64,852 rounds, ensuring the systems and operators remain ready to protect us should the need arise. After such achievements everyone is looking forward to reuniting with their families for a well deserved rest!





The Logistics Department is made up of Writers, Chefs, Stewards, Stores and Medics.

The Ship's Office is home to the Writers. During this deployment they have issued out over £424,861.97 in cash! They have also arranged over 250 flights to transport the Ship's Company to and from the Ship, all over the globe.

Throughout the deployment, DEFENDER's chefs and stewards can proudly say they haven't stopped. From cooking up to 4 meals a day for 270 Ships Company, to entertaining high profile guests. As you can imagine the chefs get through A LOT of food, we have a very hungry Ship's Company! On this deployment so far we have consumed 17,180 sausages which put end to end would cover 1.07 miles! It doesn't stop there; we have consumed 26 tonnes of potatoes, 18 tonnes of meat and 30,000 eggs.

The Supply Chain's role is to keep the Ship sustainable and make sure it has everything we need when we need it; from bullets to boots. The Ships store room stock account is currently valued at £15 Million! During this deployment we have had over 1000 demands flown out to keep the ship operational and issued over 500 pairs of Action Coveralls to the Ship's Company in 3 hours!

Last but certainly not least we have the Medics who lead a team of first aiders to make sure the Ship's Company stay healthy. During this deployment our medics have issued 390 boxes of paracetamol, dealt with 20 patients in a D&V outbreak and delivered 180 meals on trays to patients!

## Logistics



## Flight

DEFENDER's deployment has been a busy and varied time for the Flight. We will be returning to the UK having flown over 220 hours with the aircraft engineers having worked some 3,300 hours in order to provide the Ship with the helicopter for the entirety of the deployment. The distance covered during these flights will roughly equate to flying around the world once or more than double the distance between London and Perth! We have fast roped Royal Marines down to the ship over 100 times and spent over 700 hours at a high alert state, ready to fly for any tasking which the Ship required. On our way home, the tempo of flying will reduce, however, the opportunity to conduct more varied training such as weapon loads, flare firing and winchman training will ensure that the flight on board DEFENDER continue to operate at the highest possible levels!



# Executive

The Exec department have been busy during the deployment. Commonly referred to as the glue holding the individual departments together the Exec team have worked hard as the main command element of HMS Defender to ensure every demand operationally and personally has been met for all members of the Ship's Company.

Executive Warrant Officer David Lloyd along with his already busy role on board, has constantly had the Ships Company's welfare at the fore front of his mind.

The RN Police department consisting of Petty Officer Police Charlene Groves and Leading Hand Police Andrew Huggins have enjoyed a relatively quiet deployment in the discipline area but have been pivotal in the handling and destroying of confiscated narcotics seized by the Royal Marines Boarding team.

Leading Physical Training Instructor Luke Warrington has worked hard to keep the ships company fighting fit whilst in defence watches often giving up his off watch to ensure everyone has the opportunity to improve themselves physically.

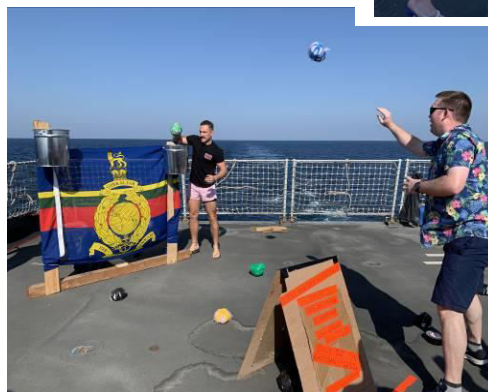
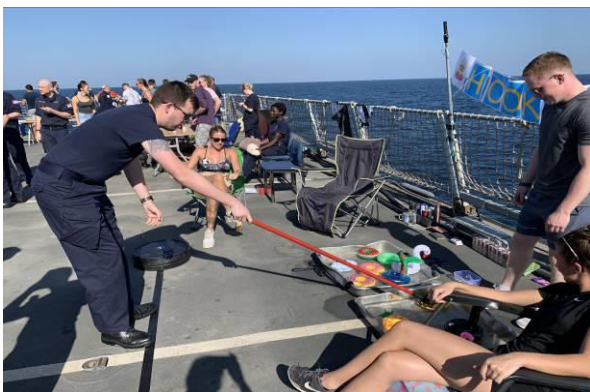


# Whole Ship

One of the highlights of our return leg of the deployment was a Whole Ship Fete organised by Petty Officer Smith. This involved many stalls made by the Ship's Company including "Hook a Duck", "Horse Racing", Weight lifting challenges and many more.

One of the highlights of the day was the stocks, where many members of the Wardroom including the CO and XO put themselves in the stocks, and the Ship's Company made a small charitable donation to throw wet sponges at them; needless to say there was quite a queue for some people!

The day was finished off with a BBQ sponsored by the Senior Rates Mess.



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