



LADIES TOUR

By Musn Emma Dann CAMUS

12 ladies were selected for the 2017 Army Ladies Golf tour to Orlando and it started very early in the Virgin Atlantic Clubhouse at Gatwick. Virgin had very kindly allowed us complimentary entry and boy did we do the breakfast justice; well some of us did anyway.

Over the two weeks we played some of the best courses Orlando has to offer, in beautiful weather with highs of 39 degrees. Sun cream was a must especially for us paler members of the team. Some of the breathtaking courses including The Disney Magnolia, Shingle Creek and both PGA Orange County Courses; The Black Panther and The Crooked Cat. The two weeks of intensive golf was a great way to start pre-season training, with the aim being to improve and develop individual player's technique and skills ready for the golf season ahead. It was also a chance to play with new pairings in different formatted games, looking forward in preparation for the Inter Services in September. We were missing only a couple of the Army Team likely to be competing at Saunton who were unable to attend for various reasons. Happily this did not detract from the team ethos.

In a bid to facilitate team bonding both on and off the course, the group was split into

two teams of five with each team having team leader/adjudicator; Zoe Burrell-Knipe (team 1) Diane Walters (team 2). The Captains of the team being myself, team 1 and Kirsty Kennedy, team 2.

A number of tasks were set including a comprehensive "scavenger hunt" and points were gained throughout the 2 weeks, these added to the points earned on the course determined the winning team at the end of the tour. I'm sure some of these challenges are probably etched in the minds of every player when in fact they wish they could forget. Regardless, they will produce stories to tell for years to come! One of highlights was a trip to the 'Escape Rooms' where

both teams attempted a "prison break". Congratulations to Kirsty's team who escaped, as for my team; a lesson was learnt - always look under the carpet!

On the R&R days the team had the opportunity to explore Orlando and having split into a couple of groups visits were made to some of the theme parks and further afield to Daytona and the Harley Davison superstore. The whole team visited Miami for the middle weekend and while the accommodation was likened to the set of Orange is the new Black, everyone had a great time. Especially those who managed a game of Frisbee with Craig David on the beach. Amusingly none of them knew who he was until he'd left!

And so to the golf. We managed to secure rounds at some superb courses and much money was spent in the pro shops. Every player improved during the 2 weeks and the leaderboard displayed daily in our accommodation pushed everyone on to achieve the top spot of "Tour Champion". It was a very close run thing for most of the time but the old stalwart Lt Col (Retd) Mary Woollard MBE stole the crown on the last day. Well done to her.

Of the 3 matches we played, we managed 2 wins and a draw which against US handicaps and slope was a good indicator of how the team was performing overall.

The tour achieved what it was meant to and every member was geared up for the season ahead.

Finally, on behalf of the team, I would like to thank Diane Walters and Zoe Burrell-Knipe for organising a superbly run tour. We know that many hours of work were put in behind the scenes; everything planned to the finest of details making a very successful golf tour, so thank you and what a great way to start the 2017 season.

