

# THE FIGHTING 45

## Newsletter of HMS Defender

Issue 01 | October 2015



## DEFENDER SAILS FOR SECOND DEPLOYMENT

**HMS Defender sailed from Portsmouth on Monday 19 October on her second major deployment, to carry out security operations in the Middle East.**

The Type 45 destroyer will take over from sister ship HMS Duncan and spend nine months working with allies in the Mediterranean, Middle East and Gulf.

HMS Defender will carry a Lynx Mark 8 helicopter and a team from the Fleet Air Arm, as well as Royal Navy and Royal Marine boarding parties which can help to counter the threat from pirates, terrorists and smugglers.

### A MESSAGE FROM THE CAPTAIN – Cdr Stephen Higham

**HMS DEFENDER is the one of the Royal Navy's most powerful and capable warships. As such, we have a vital role in Britain's ongoing operations.**

We are deploying to a part of the world which in recent years has been the focus of war, terrorism, piracy and smuggling. By sending HMS DEFENDER to the eastern Mediterranean, Middle East, and the Gulf, the British Government and the Royal Navy is sending a powerful message to our allies that we stand with them in these difficult times, and to our enemies that Britain is ready to defend her interests against any potential aggression.

This is a challenging time for friends and family at home, who will be missing their loved ones. However, I hope you take heart from the fact that your husbands, wives, sons, daughters, fathers, mothers and friends are serving their country on one of the most important UK operations. Our work is directly contributing to keeping the UK safe, militarily and economically.

We in HMS DEFENDER take great pride in our capability to deliver all that is asked of us, and we are all grateful for the support of our friends and families which help make this possible.





## THE 'FIGHTING D' TURNS 6

**HMS DEFENDER** celebrated her sixth birthday on 21<sup>st</sup> October, on the 210<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

HMS Defender is the 5th and most powerful of the Royal Navy's 6 Type 45 Destroyers. She was launched by her sponsor, Lady Massey, on Trafalgar Day (21st October) 2009. She was commissioned on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

The ship was built in Glasgow, which remains one of HMS DEFENDER'S affiliated cities, along with Exeter. We have ties to many organisations in our affiliated cities, including schools, trade houses, and local charities.

## FLYING VISIT TO GIBRALTAR

The Royal Navy's premier Type 45 destroyer paid a passing visit to the British Overseas Territory of Gibraltar. Situated at the entrance to the Mediterranean, and looking across to the vast mountains of North Africa, the 6.8 square kilometre peninsular is home to over 30,000 Gibraltarians.

Having spent the last four days on transit from the UK, DEFENDER took time away from her busy work up period in order to conduct a Sovereignty Patrol of Gibraltarian territorial waters. Having launched her Mk8 Lynx Maritime Patrol Helicopter from 239 Flight of 818 Naval Air Squadron, the 'Fighting D' made her way into the Bay of Gibraltar in order to reassure the local population.

Commanding Officer Stephen Higham said "While this is routine business for us, we fully understand how reassured the people of Gibraltar are by the sight of a T45 flying the White Ensign on a patrol around the rock."

### DEFENDER WHO'S WHO

**Captain**  
Cdr Stephen Higham

**Executive Officer**  
Lt Cdr Jason Eacock

**Operations Officer**  
Lt Cdr Chris Hollingworth

**Logistics Officer**  
Lt Cdr Mark Toogood

**Mechanical Engineering Officer**  
Lt Cdr Victoria Percival

**Weapons Engineering Officer**  
Lt Cdr Sean Trevethen

**Families Officer**  
Lt Cdr Mike Proudman

**Chaplain**  
Rev Mike Meachin

**Newsletter Officer**  
Surg Lt Helen Preedy

### TRAFALGAR NIGHT AT SEA

**THE Officers of HMS Defender marked the 210<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar as the ship passed Cape Trafalgar on 21<sup>st</sup> October.**

They celebrated Nelson's great victory over Napoleon's French fleet with a traditional mess dinner, including speeches recounting the battle. HMS Defender's chefs rose to the occasion, providing the parade of beef and even producing a chocolate galleon for the table.

"It was very special to be able to commemorate Trafalgar night at the place the battle was fought. It was a double celebration for HMS Defender as it was also the ship's sixth birthday" said Lieutenant Commander Jason Eacock, the Executive Officer and Mess President. "Occasions like these are really important as they help to keep up morale when we are away from home."



# RUN-ASHORE IN RHODES

**HMS DEFENDER** visited Rhodes Town, the capital of the Greek island of Rhodes at the end of October. This was a chance for a well deserved break for the ship's company after a very busy trip from the UK.

The island is a popular tourist destination due to its beautiful scenery, great weather, welcoming locals, and fascinating history. Rhodes Old Town is a UNESCO World Heritage site. It is the oldest inhabited medieval town in the world and 5000 people still live within its walls. The town also boasts Roman and Ancient Greek temples, and Byzantine fortifications.

Some who wanted something more adventurous than visiting ancient cultural sites the island offers many adrenaline-fuelled opportunities. Members of the ships company tried their hand at various activities including scuba diving, kite surfing, and quad biking.

Many of the ship's company took the opportunity for some overnight leave in one of the islands many hotels, and all enjoyed the opportunity to step ashore to sample the local bars and restaurants.

Now back at work and fully refreshed, the ship's company are ready to take on the next stage of this challenging deployment as DEFENDER transits the Suez Canal into the Red Sea.

## DEFENDER EXCELS AT SEA TRIALS

**HMS DEFENDER** has once again proved her capability in a gruelling few days of sea trials with the Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) team.

Both man and machine were scrutinised by staff from the Plymouth based unit, through a number of rigorous serials which tested the ship's ability to deal with various threat and damage scenarios.

The report highlighted DEFENDER's strengths in communication and teamwork, with a number of exercises assessed as 'Very Satisfactory' and 'Good'.

"It's never an easy ride when FOST staff come onboard, but it was good to hear that they have the same confidence in our ability as we have. Now we can concentrate on doing the job for real" said Lt David Salberg of the Weapons Engineering section, a department which shone under particularly close scrutiny.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**PICKLE Night** – when the Senior Rates celebrate news of Admiral Nelson's victory at Trafalgar reaching Falmouth, brought by HMS PICKLE.

**Suez Transit** – HMS DEFENDER will pass through the Suez Canal on her way to operations in the Red Sea. She will be the first RN vessel to pass through the new two-way canal system.

**Official Receptions** – the ship will be hosting several functions during our upcoming port visits. These are an important part of the RN's role in building relationships with international partners and military allies, as well as being a chance for us to show off how capable DEFENDER is.

**Sports Fixtures** – the next rugby match will be against a French destroyer in the Red Sea.

## RHODES RUGBY CHALLENGE

**DEFENDER'S** newly formed rugby team took on Greek champions Rhodes Knights during the ship's port visit to Rhodes. The local team were last year's Greek amateur Rugby League Champions so were tough competition for the ship's first game.

The game took a slightly usual format with the first half being played by Union rules, before switching to League for the second half. The home side were an imposing team, including one player with some interesting facial tattoos. Defender's captain LS (EW) Josh Tetaur was heard to remark "I'm sure I was just tackled by a Minotaur!"

The mighty Defenders held their own against the Knights, scoring 3 tries in the first half. The second half was even harder as the hosts settled into their preferred game but the final score was a very credible 36-30 to the Rhodes Knights.

Despite some bone-crunching tackles from both sides there were no serious injuries from the match although there were plenty of sore heads the next day following the barbeque and social laid on by the host team.

## PADRE'S PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

The Flanders Poppy was first described as the "Flower of Remembrance" by Colonel John McCrae who, before the First World War, was a well known Professor of Medicine at McGill University in Montreal. He had previously served as a gunner in the South African War, and at the outbreak of the First World War decided to join the fighting ranks. However, the powers-that-be decided that his abilities could be used to better advantage, and so he landed in France as a Medical Officer with the first Canadian Army contingent. At the second battle of Ypres in 1915, when in charge of a small first-aid post and during a lull in the action, he wrote, in pencil, on a page torn from his despatch book, the following verses:

The verses were sent anonymously to "Punch" magazine and published under the title "In Flanders' Fields"

In May 1918 Colonel McCrae was brought as a stretcher case to one of the big hospitals on the channel coast of France. On the third evening he was wheeled to the balcony of his room to look over the sea towards the cliffs of Dover. The verses were obviously in his mind, for he told the doctor who was in charge of his case

"Tell them this, If ye break faith with us who die, we shall not sleep". The same night Colonel McCrae died. He was interred in a beautiful cemetery on rising ground above Wimereux, from where the cliffs of Dover are easily visible on sunny days.

An American lady, Miss Moina Michael, had read the poem and was greatly impressed, particularly by the last verse. The wearing of a poppy appeared to her to be the way to keep faith, and she wrote the reply:

On November 9th 1918, only two days before the Armistice was signed, Miss Michael was presented with a small gift of money by some of the overseas War Secretaries of the YMCA for whom she worked, and whose Conference was being held at her house.

She told them about the two poems, and announced that she was going to buy 25 red poppies with the money. This she did; she wore one herself, and each Secretary there bought one from her. It is claimed, probably rightly, that this was the first group selling of poppies.

Fighting can never be a good thing, the threat of combat can never be good, but it can be right if it is to further the aims of Freedom, Justice and Truth. The Poppy is a symbol of that goal and of not breaking faith as Lt Col McCrea begged and Moira Michael promised, with those who have done just that.

For Jesus said:

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Wearing our poppies is not a symbol of winning or losing- but of honouring that gift to us.

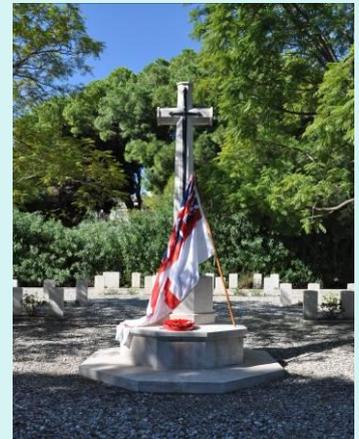
## "THE VICTORY EMBLEM"

*Oh! You who sleep in Flanders' fields,  
Sleep sweet - to arise anew;  
We caught the torch you threw,  
And holding high we kept  
The faith with those who died.*

*We cherish too, the Poppy red  
That grows on fields where valour led,  
It seems to signal to the skies*

*That blood of heroes never dies,  
But lends a lustre to the red  
Of the flower that blooms above the dead  
In Flanders' fields.*

*And now the torch and poppy red  
Wear in honour of our dead.  
Fear not that ye have died for naught:  
We've learned the lesson that ye taught  
In Flanders' fields.*



*In Flanders' fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place: and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly*

*Scarce heard amid the guns below.  
We are the dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders' fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe;  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high,  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies  
grow  
In Flanders' Fields.*