

DEPLOY

DUNCAN IN THE BLACK SEA

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An RAF Typhoon and two Romanian Mig-21s join us for Ex SEA SHIELD

GOODBYE BLACK SEA

May has been another busy month for DUNCAN's Ship' Company, with several port stops, a major exercise, and time operating off Syria, it has left no rest for the team on board. The return to the Black Sea at the beginning of May bought with it a major exercise in partnership with Romania, named Exercise SEA SHIELD. The exercise involved the majority of the Romanian Navy, as well as participation from Turkish, Bulgarian and Spanish partners and included ships and aircraft. SEA SHIELD once again has demonstrated the skill of DUNCAN's Ship's Company, and the unity and strength of NATO in the Black Sea region. A visit to the aspiring NATO country of Georgia and the port of Poti followed and we were warmly welcomed after a 17 year gap since the last NATO ship. The locals put on music, food, and a beer festival, and hosted other events aimed at fostering goodwill and cooperation between NATO and Georgia. DUNCAN left Georgia with a fond memory of the country and its people in their interesting East meets West country.

Following the departure from the Black Sea for the final time, DUNCAN was then once again deployed just off the coast of Syria in order to conduct operational tasking. This, once again, demonstrates the resolve and skill of both DUNCAN and her SNMG2 partners in contributing to Allied efforts in to provide maritime security in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The month closed with a visit to Haifa, Israel, where the Ship's Company enjoyed the opportunity to visit Jerusalem and play Rugby with the locals.

As DUNCAN sailed west from Haifa on 29 May, she finally began her 3,000 mile journey closer to the UK. The excitement of homecoming is gradually building each day and with each mile that the ship covers on her return journey a step closer to seeing loved ones and family in July.

SPORT IN GEORGIA

When HMS DUNCAN's Rugby Team took to the pitch it was like a scene from an international fixture. Facing strong competition, DUNCAN fought hard against a fine-tuned competitor with a final score of 51 Georgia – 12 DUNCAN. This was DUNCAN's second match of the deployment and the team continue to grow in confidence and ability. This match typified the role sport has in Defence Engagement as we earned the respect of our Georgian colleagues and made many new friends. Few in DUNCAN had ever played in front of such a crowd or in such a facility.

HMS DUNCAN's Football Team also enjoyed a local fixture and started with a good pace and had a couple of early chances. For the most part they dominated the possession, closest chance came with a crisp left footed volley from AB Rocke who hit the post and at half time the score was 0-0. The second half was a more even game with the Georgian team starting better and missing a couple of clear cut chances with CPO Dunnachie making some "De Gea-esque" saves to keep Duncan in the game.

In the early stages of extra time PO Templeton scored a very unfortunate own goal. The Georgian team then managed to capitalise by scoring a further 2 goals making it 3-0 before AB Rocke managed to snatch a late consolation goal. It was great to have the opportunity to get off the Ship and enjoy some football with a local team who were very welcoming and hospitable!



Jerusalem Visit LET(ME) Mark Wilson

Whilst in Israel, many of us enjoyed a tour to the 'Holy Land' of Jerusalem with our guide, Yosi.

Yosi pointed out the Jewish and Palestinian communities on the outskirts of the city. Considering the media depiction, everyone appeared to be living together peacefully. We visited the Mount of Olives where Jesus and his Disciples spent the week before the crucifixion. Then we went to the Church of Gethsemane which was built where Jesus prayed before his arrest by the Romans.

For lunch we enjoyed a kosher meal (due to Saturday being the Jewish Sabbath) and had a view of Bethlehem before arriving at the Old City. It was an impressive site as we entered through Zion Gate and walked the narrow streets into the Jewish Quarter. We saw the Western (Wailing) Wall with many people praying and placing notes into the wall. We walked through the Christian Quarter which was the route Jesus walked whilst carrying the cross. It was busy with pilgrims around this route and all the way to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built in the 4th Century. Here we saw the spot the Crucifixion was carried out, the Anointing Stone where Christ's body was cleansed and the Tomb of Jesus.

It was a very enjoyable day for religious and non-religious people. As Yosi had said on the bus, his aim was to refresh our memories from what we had learnt when we were younger and help us understand the stories. He did this very well and it was surprising how much we knew about Judaism and Christianity.

We all agreed it had been a very interesting trip that was well worth making.

LOGS UPDATE

Since sailing from Portsmouth DUNCAN has consumed

- 906 2.5 kilo tins of Baked Beans (2265 Kg total)
- 755 Gallons of Soup
- An egg estimated 27,180 eggs boiled, poached, fried and scrambled.

The Ship's Company has enjoyed 34 theme nights at dinner including Indian, Chinese, Nandos, Gambian, Italian and Argentinean.

If we lined every snorker (RN term for a sausage) that the Ship's Company has eaten end to end, it would be the same height as the New One World Trade Centre Tower in New York!

Follow our Journey ...



A MESSAGE FROM THE CAPTAIN

This month we have bid farewell to the Black Sea for the last time and several colleagues that we have worked with during our time in the area. Our tasking has been high-paced but rewarding, with everyone pulling their weight. Some interesting and unusual port visits have allowed the team time to explore somewhere new and learn more about the world.

DUNCAN has spent a significant amount of time in State Two/Defence Watch Manning this month. This has put significant pressure on my team as the work rate has been high, the sleep windows are shortened, and the social side of life on board is reduced. I am proud that my Ship's Company has remained positive and hard working throughout, remaining flexible for the ever-changing programme that comes with being an operational Warship.

DUNCAN is now en route to Portugal for a maintenance period before completing our final Exercise as Flagship to COMSNMG2. From there we will commence our journey home to see you all with our return date now confirmed as **Friday 13th July**. Plans are now underway for our Homecoming and we very much look forward to seeing you there as we proudly sail our Ship back to loved ones and families. Hopefully you will be able to join us to celebrate our return.



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