



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS DEFENDER (MCM-2)

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From: Commanding Officer, USS DEFENDER (MCM 2)

To: Director of Naval History (N09BH), Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC
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Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

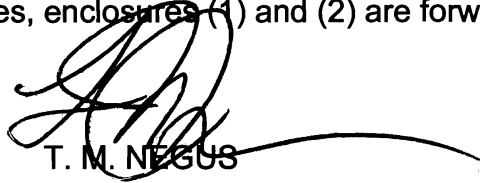
(b) Director, Naval Historical Center ltr of 5 Nov 1998

Encl: (1) 1995 Command History

(2) 1996 Command History

1995-1996

1. In accordance with reference (a) and in response to reference (b), your request for our 1995 and 1996 Command Histories, enclosures (1) and (2) are forwarded.


T. M. NEGUS

USS DEFENDER (MCM 2) 1995 Command History

1. Command Composition and Organization. USS DEFENDER (MCM 2) locates and neutralizes mines to provide safe passage for U.S. and Allied Naval and Merchant Shipping. Commanded by LCDR James D. Bradford, USS DEFENDER operates under the auspices of Commander, Mine Warfare Command. She is homeported in Ingleside, TX but deploys regularly to the European Theater where she operates with NATO and U.S. forces.

2. Chronology.

1995

01JAN	Holiday Upkeep in Ingleside, TX
24JAN	LCDR J.D. Bradford relieved CDR J.D. Muldoon of command of USS DEFENDER (MCM 2)
30JAN	Mine Readiness Certification Inspection (MRCI)
24FEB	Departed on MCM EURO 95' Deployment Enroute to Key West
28FEB	Arrived Key West
01MAR	Enroute to Charleston, SC
03MAR	Arrived Charleston, SC
16MAR	Completed degaussing and stray fields analysis
17MAR	Assigned to Commander, SECOND FLEET Enroute to Bermuda
21MAR	Arrived Bermuda
23MAR	Enroute Portsmouth, UK
10APR	Arrived Portsmouth, UK
18APR	Enroute to Aarhus, Denmark
21APR	Arrived Aarhus Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit Six Detachment embarked onboard
22APR	Enroute to Fredrickshavn, Denmark
23APR	Arrived Fredrickshavn Assigned to U.K. Naval Squadron MCM 1 (CTG 420.02)
25APR	Underway for NATO Exercise Blue Harrier 95'
29APR	Arrived Aalborg, Denmark
30APR	Underway for NATO Exercise Blue Harrier 95'
02MAY	Assigned to Commander in Chief, U.S. NAVAL FORCES EUROPE
03MAY	Arrived Aarhus Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit Six Detachment detached

Enclosure (1)

04MAY	Enroute Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK
08 MAY	Arrived Newcastle-upon-Tyne
12MAY	Enroute Brest, France
15MAY	Arrived Brest
29MAY	Enroute Lisbon, Portugal
01JUN	Arrived Lisbon
03JUN	Enroute Cartagena, Spain
06JUN	Arrived Cartagena
	Intermediate Maintenance Availability with USS SIMON LAKE
10JUN	Enroute to Palma-de-Mallorca, Spain
11JUN	Arrived Palma-de-Mallorca
13JUN	Assigned to Commander, STANDING NAVAL FORCES CHANNEL
	Underway for NATO Exercise Alcudra 95'
21JUN	Finished Exercise Alcudra 95'
22JUN	Enroute to La Maddalena, Italy
24JUN	Arrived La Maddalena
	Intermediate Maintenance Availability with USS SIMON LAKE
01JUL	Enroute to Rota, Spain
06JUL	Arrived Rota
10JUL	Enroute to Key West
	Assigned to Commander, MINE WARFARE COMMAND
29JUL	Arrived Key West
30JUL	Enroute Ingleside, TX
03AUG	Arrive Ingleside, TX
10OCT	Underway for Storm Evasion
12OCT	Returned to Ingleside
01NOV	Planned Maintenance Availability at Braswell Shipyard
16DEC	Holiday Stand-Down

3. Narrative. After the crew returned from Christmas leave, DEFENDER continued preparations for Mine Readiness Certification Inspection (MRCI) and deployment. In the midst of these preparations LCDR Bradford reported onboard and took command. The day after the change of command DEFENDER had minesweeping gear in the water when wood smoke was smelled in the vicinity of the stack. Investigations revealed a stack fire. Sweeping operations ceased as the ship dropped anchor to put the fire out. The fire was extinguished in short order and attention was focused on retrieving the magnetic and acoustic sweep gear which had become entangled as a result of the ship losing way through the water. By the next morning all equipment had been restored and DEFENDER returned to port on her own power.

With Mine Warfare Readiness Certification Inspection coming up in four days the crew rose to the occasion. Damages were repaired, equipment were refurbished, and gear was laid out, business as usual. DEFENDER subsequently became the first ship in months to complete MRCI in only one week. With deployment preparations complete, the crew had a well-deserved break before heading to Europe.

On 24FEB95, in company with USS GLADIATOR, USS WARRIOR, and USS PIONEER, USS DEFENDER left Ingleside, TX for a six-month deployment. With a brief stop in Key West, FL for fuel and a longer stop in Charleston, SC to degauss, DEFENDER and company were soon crossing the Atlantic. After a rendezvous with USS CARON, five astern refuelings, and 18 days of endless horizons, the coast of France was a welcomed sight. All hands took turns with lookout's binoculars. The English Channel gave way to the Portsmouth Channel and DEFENDER was soon tied up after a two-week voyage for repairs and sightseeing. Leaving Portsmouth much refreshed, the U.S. MCMs continued up the English Channel, cut across Germany to the Baltic via the Kiel Canal, and joined up with the USS CARON in Aarhus, Denmark before commencing Exercise Blue Harrier.

For the duration of Blue Harrier DEFENDER was assigned to United Kingdom Naval Squadron MCM 1 (CTG 420.02). The Squadron had a results oriented attitude which sat well with DEFENDER's crew. DEFENDER aggressively cleared her assigned area and was rewarded with a 24-hour port visit in Aalborg, Denmark. Going back out to work, DEFENDER was assigned to help HMS LEDBURY clear a particularly tenacious minefield. Initial efforts were frustrated, so new tactics had to be tried. DEFENDER carefully deployed her variable depth sonar in the shallow waters to get below the sound channel layer and successfully cleared the field, completing the exercise with a perfect record.

After a short debrief in Aarhus to wrap up Exercise Blue Harrier 95', DEFENDER headed to Newcastle-upon-Tyne for some rest and relaxation. Next on the schedule was a trip to Brest, France to join USS WARRIOR. Upon leaving Brest, DEFENDER and WARRIOR made a port visit to Lisbon before continuing for a week of Intermediate Maintenance Availability with the USS SIMON LAKE in Cartagena, Spain.

Leaving Cartagena, DEFENDER and WARRIOR joined up with STANAVFORCHAN in Palma de Mallorca for Exercise Alcudra 95'. The exercise commenced with team minesweeping. This was a new but successful experience for the DEFENDER crew, who swept all three of the moored mines in the assigned area. Efforts then focused on hunting bottom mines. During the exercise 1A MPDE suffered a casualty and was found to have a cracked block. This led to the decision to send DEFENDER to La Maddalena, Italy upon the completion of the exercise. In Italy DEFENDER joined the USS SIMON LAKE and changed out the engine block. In a record four days, the job was done and DEFENDER was again underway. DEFENDER regrouped with the other three MCMs in Rota, Spain for the transit back across the Atlantic.

After twenty days and two storm evading course changes, DEFENDER pulled back into Key West. Fuel tanks were topped off and the final leg of the journey home was begun with high spirits. On 03AUG95 DEFENDER tied up at Naval Station Ingleside, TX where more than one hundred ecstatic family members descended upon the crew.

On 10OCT95, Commander, Mine Countermeasures Squadron Two, CAPT O'Donnell, came onboard and DEFENDER became the flagship as the entire MCM fleet sortied to avoid Hurricane Roxanne. On 12OCT95 the storm headed north to Louisiana and the MCM fleet returned to Ingleside. On 01NOV95 DEFENDER went into a Planned Maintenance Availability at Braswell Shipyard, where she stayed for the remainder of the year.