

Defender Biography

The beginning of the Defender story starts at the end of 1984 when Bart decided to leave Hammerhawk, his present band at that time. Together with Jack (roadie of this band and later 6th member of Defender) he started to make plans to form a new band. The first step was finding new members, which was a tough job at that time, because it was more popular to have a band that played covers of Wham, than playing in a metal band.

At a concert of Dio and Queensryche in Amsterdam Bart and Remco met eachother for the first time and started rehearsing the first songs. Soon after their first meeting Simon and Harm joined the band and after a couple of months this line-up recorded the "Tales of the unexpected" demo at the Oktopus studio in the beginning of 1985.

Immediately after recording this demo the band found a second guitarplayer: Jozzy and serious live action began. During 1985 and 1986 Defender played a lot of gigs in the Netherlands as headliner and together with Martyr, Allied Forces, Hammerhawk, Cyclone and Agent Steel. At the same time the demo was spreading all over the world and resulted in a wave of possitive reactions.

Due to all this attention several labels were very interested and this resulted in signing a contract with new metal-label "Metalloid". In the winter of 1985 test recordings were made at Silvox studio, but.....bad luck stroke! After releasing the new album of Martyr, Metalloid didn't have money to release Defender's debut album and stopped all their activities.

Despite this bad luck Defender kept possitive for the future, strenghtened by all mail received from all over the world. Unfortunately the stop of Metalloid became a turning point in the history of the band. Due to musical and personal differences the band decided quit working with Jozzy in the summer of 1986. Short after Jozzy left the band he was replaced by Stef, who was 15 years old at that time and already very talented.

In september of that year Bart played his last gig with the band, because he couldn't combine his work with the band activities. With only one guitarplayer and no contract Defender had to make up their mind and quit playing live for over year. It was very important to find a suitable replacement for Bart, so that the search for a record-deal could continue.

Autumn of 1986 a band called 'Angantyr' played live in a club in Alkmaar. A couple of members of Defender saw this band and were impressed by the skills and personality of Henk, one of the guitarplayers, and asked him to join the band. From this moment the band had a new, young, talented guitar duo and began writing songs the way they wanted: melodic up-tempo songs.

With only one demo-tape made the last two years it was very hard to get a record-deal, so the band financed studio time (actually Harm did!) to record five songs, asked a friend to paint a record sleeve and started to contact record labels. The band didn't have to wait that long for a deal: CBS-records wanted to release "City ad mortis" and after a year of rehearsing and recording Defender made their 'come-back' at a live show on Dutch National Radio, together with Jewel and Hammerhawk.

For Dutch metal standards at that time the record sold well and "City ad mortis" stood for almost a year in the top ten of best selling albums in Noord-Holland (one of the provences of the Netherlands). Almost every week the band performed live and there wasn't lack of media attention. Every musician knows that it takes a little bit more than only writing good songs and performing them well: you need the right people behind you to come further in the world called 'music'. This was something the band experienced after touring the Netherlands again for over a year.

It was a lot of fun on the road together with some good friends who always helped the band (Frank, José, Huib, Andre and Lennert), but after a couple of years playing in the Netherlands it would be nice if you can perform the songs somewhere else.

At that time the band thought that when they played more professional the right people will come sooner or later. A lot of agencies were contacted and bassplayer Harm was told that he should play more steady within half a year otherwise the band had to search for another bass-player.

The next months Harm put a lot of effort in his bassplaying, but in the eyes of the band it wasn't enough to reach the expected level, so he had to leave the band. Arwin, a friend of the band, replaced him and Harm even helped him out with practicing all numbers.

Well, what can we say.....again a fresh start, but now with a new bassplayer and again another feeling in the band. Always after a change in line-up it felt different, just like leaving your old girlfriend and starting a new life; good and bad emotions combined!

Arwin was a great guy and fitted well in the band. During the last months of Harm the band was again writing new songs and Arwin participated well in this progress. The musical style has changed in 1988 from bombastic songs to melodic speed metal. Defender wasn't a band that produced 10 songs a month, but wrote songs and keep changing them over and over again, until they had the feeling that it really was finished.

Sometimes it took 6 months to finish a song completely and other (older) songs were adjusted every year. After completing the songs 'The journey' and 'Tales of the unexpected' Defender started recordings at Silvox Studio's for the promotion single 'Journey to the unexpected'. Again it was a lot of fun in the studio and after 3 days the 2 songs were recorded and mixed.

At the same time 'Catch agency' was taking care of all bookings of the band and the first thing the band did together with this agency was the 'Hardrock can't tolerate facism' tour in Holland. Together with Jewel and a lot of other bands Defender played at the famous Dynamo club. Throughout 1989 the band did a lot of gigs together with Jewel. At the end of 1989 'Catch agency' managed, together with guys from 'Aardschok magazine', a tour together with Toxic.

Yeaaaah!! This was a band with the same style as Defender and were very popular these days. The tour began in January 1990 at the Scum-club in Katwijk (the same place Defender played together with Agent Steel a couple of years before). This place was very hard to play for Dutch bands, because the audience was spoiled with foreign bands every week, but Defender managed to reach the crowd and performed very well.

This was also the case at all other gigs together with Toxic. American musicians who came to watch their friends in Belgium thought it was unbelievable that Defender didn't had a record deal! It really was sex, drugs and rock and roll for almost 2 weeks. A lot of fun with the drummer and the guitarplayers of Toxic (the singer was a very frustrated musician, no fun and kicked out after the tour)

After this tour the band still didn't have a deal and the metal scene in Holland started to change very quickly. Death metal and grunge became important players in the field and the majority of these bands were willing to play for just a couple of beers. This was something Defender didn't wanted and after a couple of gigs the band came together for a tough

decision: Keep on playing with the change to become a frustrated band or quit and still have nice memories of the last 6 years.

Defender chose for the second option!

As you probably already know Defender released 'Remaining Tales' in the beginning of 2001 for one purpose: Availability of all their recorded material for the lowest price possible. A cd with 12 tracks, 20 page full colour booklet for only 12 Euro. This is the same price as a record in the early eighties! The band also told you that when this cd will sold more than 1000 copies, all members of the different line-ups will come together and record all songs which were left on the shelf. These songs are no poor left-overs, but Defender didn't have enough money to record them back then.

In the meantime Rusty Cage Records released a re-issue of "City ad mortis" with some extra bonus demo and live tracks. This album is part of the 'Dutch Metal Cult Series'. Defender wasn't very productive writing songs in the past and the same thing happens now with recording the new album. All members have a very busy live and musical projects besides Defender and have to put time in rehearsing the songs they will play in the upcoming gigs with 'Diamond Head' and labelmates 'Jewel'.

Recordings have been started, but the process takes time, so....please be patient...It will be worth it!!