



HMS ARROW

Commissioning Souvenir 1976



HMS, ARROW

Celeriter Certus.

Displacement 3300 tons

Length overall 384 ft.

Beam 41.75 ft.

Laid down 25 September 1972

Launched 5 February 1974

Commissioned into the Third Frigate Squadron at Sunderland
on 29 July 1976.

Armament

4.5 inch Mk. 8 gun

Quadruple Exocet (Surface/Surface Missiles)

Quadruple Seacat (Surface/Air Missiles)

2 sets of triple torpedo tubes (Not yet fitted)

2 x 20mm Oerlikon guns.

Helicopter (A Wasp to be replaced later by a Lynx)

Machinery

2 x Olympus Gas Turbines

2 x Tyne Gas Turbines.

Complement

13 Officers

167 Ratings.



THE SEVENTH HMS ARROW

The previous ARROW (1782 tons) was built by Vickers Armstrong and launched in August, 1929, the last of the "Acasta" class destroyers. Her Parsons I.R. turbines gave her a top speed of a little over 31 knots full load and her main armament included four 4.7 inch guns, two quadruple tubes for Mk. V torpedoes and a depth charge array of two throwers and four chutes. Later the "Y" turret was removed to allow extra depth charge throwers to be fitted, enhancing her antisubmarine capability considerably. Although she was placed in reserve for a few years ARROW was recommissioned at the beginning of the War and employed on escort duties in the Mediterranean. In the summer of 1942 she was involved in the invasion of Madagascar, then in the hands of the Vichy French.

On August 4th 1943, whilst in the Mediterranean again, Arrow went to the assistance of SS FORTE LA MONTEE, on fire in Algiers Harbour. The Portuguese ship blew up with ARROW alongside, causing heavy casualties. ARROW was repaired in Toronto but except for a short excursion remained there until the end of the war, and was scrapped in 1946.

Commanding Officers of the Seventh HMS ARROW (1930-43)

Lt Cdr A L Pears RN	23 April 1930 to 10 October 1930
Lt Cdr J G Bickford RN	10 October 1930 to 3 October 1932
Cdr R F Morice RN	3 October 1932 to 23 July 1935
Cdr G R Deverell RN	23 July 1935 to 7 July 1937

In reserve

Lt Cdr E V N Currey RN	28 February 1938 to 1 May 1939
Lt Cdr E V St J. Morgan RN	1 May 1939 to August 1939
Cdr H W Williams	August 1939 to 8 January 1941
Cdr AJ Baker Cresswell DSO RN	8 January 1941 to 26 February 1941
Cdr R E Hyde-Smith RN	February 1941 to 24 September 1941
Cdr A M McKillop RN	24 September 1941 to 16 March 1943
Lt Cdr W W Fitz Roy RN	16 March 1943 to October 1943



LAUNCHING OF HMS ARROW by LADY RAPER

wife of Vice-Admiral SIR GEORGE RAPER, Director General Ships at Scotstoun, Glasgow, on

5 FEBRUARY 1974



THE PRESENT HMS ARROW

The Type 21 Class originated from a joint design by Yarrow (Shipbuilders) Ltd. and Vosper Thornycroft, to meet a Ministry of Defence requirement for a Frigate of about 2,500 tons capable of effectively providing defence of a convoy or other force against attack from surface ship and submarines, and also to be fully capable of self-defence against aircraft, missiles or Fast Patrol Craft. In addition the Frigate required to match comparable contemporary foreign warships in battle and performance, and maintain all-weather patrol in a world wide environment.

HMS ARROW was laid down on 25th September, 1972 and launched on 5th February, 1974 by Lady Raper, wife of Vice Admiral Sir George Raper, KCB, FRINA, FIMEchE, the Director General Ships.

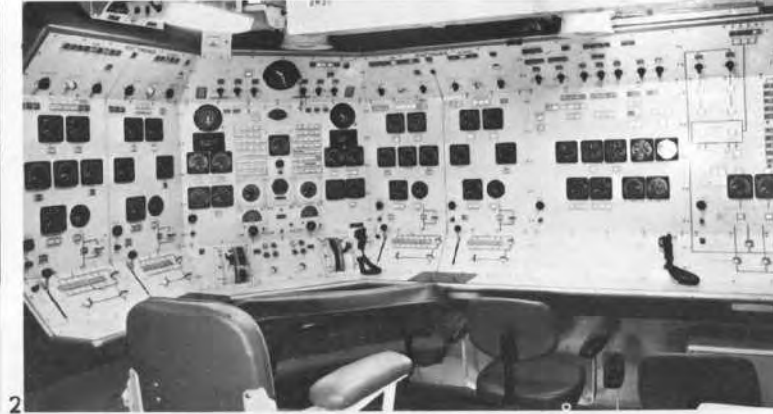
She is the second of the five Type 21 Frigates on order from Yarrow (Shipbuilders) Ltd. and the fifth of the total number (the others coming from Vosper Thornycroft Ltd.). Included in her affiliation are the Borough of Sunderland, the Red Arrows, Harrow

School, The Royal Company of Archers, TS Arrow and TS Blackcap (SCC Units), Sunderland Society of Mentally Handicapped Children, Sunderland Spina Bifida Group and St. John's C.E. School, Sunderland and the 15/1 9th Royal Hussars.

HMS ARROW has accommodation for 192 officers and ratings and all of the ship's company have an extremely high standard of accommodation including laundry, sick bay and recreational facilities consisting of television in each mess, library, sound reproduction equipment and cinema.

The canteen, galley, scullery, separate dining rooms for Senior and Junior Ratings and all stores including cool room, deep freeze and cold store and controlled temperature store for vegetables are grouped together and served by a vertical hoist, one of the innovations saving manpower.

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Enclosed Bridge | 3. Main Galley |
| 2. Ship Control Centre | 4. Seaman's Messdeck |



YARROW (SHIPBUILDERS) LTD

Yarrow's was founded in 1865 by Alfred Fernandez Yarrow when the original Shipyard was opened at Folly Wall on the Thames in the South of England. From 1865 to 1908 Yarrow flourished in the South of England, but in the early 1900's it became apparent that shipbuilding on the Thames was dying, and the decision to move to Scotland was made. In early 1908, therefore, the Thames shipyard was closed and the company moved to Scotland to their present site at Scotstoun on the River Clyde, where they have continued to flourish and have maintained a continuous policy of modernisation,

The name of Yarrow has always been associated with Naval Vessel construction, and the Company has concentrated its resources in producing Warships of the Corvette, Frigate and Destroyer types, together with other naval auxiliaries. During the first one hundred years of the Company's existence (1865-1965), it was their proud privilege to build 188 vessels for the Overseas Navies and 211 vessels for the British Royal Navy. The Company has also built well over 800 vessels of many different types for merchant fleets throughout the world in the same period.

The Company's shipbuilding capacity has been extended in recent years by the following additions -

- a) The construction of Covered Berths in which three frigates can be built simultaneously and under one roof.

The various trades have their own workshop in the wing galleries of the Covered Berth Building, thus allowing easy access to the place of work.

- b) A new Training Centre has been built, comprising a three storey building, enabling an intake of 200 apprentices per year.

- c) By the acquisition, of the adjoining Elderslie Dockyard in 1974, Yarrow have now more than doubled their working area. The Company can build and outfit much larger ships with the dockyard facilities now added, which comprise three large dry docks, a large wharfage and various service shops, etc.
- d) A completely new under cover facility is now being built in Yarrows to enable Glass Reinforced Plastic Ships to be built. Initially a new type of Mine Countermeasure Vessel for the Royal Navy will be built in this complex.

Most of the work of Yarrow (Shipbuilders) Ltd. is carried out for the British Ministry of Defence. Until recently, the standard frigate ordered for the Royal Navy was the Leander class, and Yarrows built more ships of that design than any other shipbuilder. In 1968 the MOD(N) accepted a joint tender from Yarrow (Shipbuilders) Ltd. and Vosper Thornycroft Ltd. for the design of a new frigate. Eight ships of this design were ordered, three from Vosper Thornycroft and five from Yarrow (Shipbuilders) Ltd. This frigate became the Type 21 and was the first major warship design from private shipbuilders to be accepted by the Royal Navy for a good many years.

Yarrow (Shipbuilders) Ltd. have now been appointed the lead Yard for the new Type 22 Frigate and have been given the order to construct the first two ships of this class.

Although the British Ministry of Defence has been the Company's largest single customer, Yarrows also carry out design and construction for the navies of other countries. Ships have recently been designed and built for Ghana, Malaysia, South Africa, Thailand, Chile and Iran.



GLASGOW - where 'Arrow' was built

For well over a century Glasgow called itself the Second City of the Empire. In the closing decade of the Victorian era it was one of the largest cities in Europe. Some said it was third, behind only London and Paris. That cannot be said now but Glasgow is still an important place, with its conurbation - that is to say, the neighbouring towns whose streets are continuous with its, or near enough as makes no difference - the population of Glasgow is approximately 2 1/2 million. Almost a million live within the city boundaries.

Glasgow has many aspects. It is one of the three British towns receiving most overseas visitors each year (the others are London and Edinburgh). It is the gateway to the Burns country and to the Western Highlands. Indeed, although it is located in the Lowlands many people living in Glasgow suppose that the Highlands really begin just beyond their back gardens. There are more Gaelic-speaking people in Glasgow than in any other city in the world. This is just one of many indications of its cosmopolitan make-up.

The river is the predominant feature of the district, economically as well as geographically. The Clyde has been Britain's third port and shipbuilding with its ancillaries, the industry which the world particularly associated with Glasgow.

The heavy industries still play a considerable part in the city's life, but little coal and ironstone is now mined in the vicinity. New manufacturing lines have replaced old with the emphasis being increasingly transferred to light mechanical and electrical engineering.

Clydeside's industries are, in fact, remarkably diversified, with textiles particularly noticeable. It is no longer said that almost everything manufactured in the rest of the world is made somewhere in or near Glasgow. But the range of its products remains much more extensive than realised.

That could be said too of its entertainments. Provision is made for every branch of sport, including association football, with three of the largest parks in Great Britain. Golf also receives enthusiastic support.

The city has several first-class hotels and more are being built, while there has been almost a proliferation of splendid restaurants. Critics are apt to say that Clydeside's great days are past. After the immense prosperity of the 1870-1920 period the depressed conditions which followed came as an anti-climax. Now a fresh phase is beginning. The redevelopment of the city continues on a scale scarcely to be matched elsewhere in Europe. Victorian tenements are being demolished and modern accommodation erected for a very considerable proportion of the populace.



Furthermore, it is not only the houses that are being rebuilt. So are the factories and offices.

Indeed, a new pattern can be discerned with large industries being located around the periphery, and with smaller factories being demolished in the city itself to make room for commercial and housing blocks. This partly explains why in the regrouping of local authorities the large local authority unit is being based on Glasgow, so giving a population total of 2 1/2 million. And that is a lot of people - in fact, almost half Scotland's total.

The tourist guide to the city proudly declares that Servicemen of two world wars voted Glasgow as the friendliest city, compassionate, cosmopolitan, welcoming and warm. Today's sailors, especially those serving at Yarrow's whole-heartedly agree!

SUNDERLAND - where 'ARROW' was commissioned

Shipbuilding, the industry for which Sunderland is best known, has been taking place on the River Wear since the early fourteenth century and at one time more of the World's shipping tonnage afloat had been built in Sunderland than anywhere else. Today, Sunderland is a metropolitan borough in one of the new county councils, with a population of nearly 300,000. As well as Sunderland it includes within its boundaries the townships of Hetton-le-Hole and Houghton-le-Spring and the rapidly developing town of Washington. Although known throughout the world as an industrial area based on coalmining and shipbuilding, Sunderland's origins lie deep in history. The ancient monastery at Monkwearmouth was established in 674 AD and was once famous as a seat of learning throughout the Christian World. It was here that the venerable Bede received his early training before moving on to a sister foundation at Jarrow. The settlement which grew up around the monastery eventually linked with one further inland called Bishopwearmouth and a fishing village at the mouth of the river. This was known as Sunderland, and in the course of time the name became generally adopted for the town as a whole.

Generations of Wearsiders have built ships and sailed them to all parts of the Globe, but today the industrial basis is much broader. As well as the traditional industries of coal and ships the Borough's other major industries include general engineering, electronics, ovenproof glass, paint, furniture, brewing, clothing, ropemaking, automotive parts, papermaking, television parts, records, weaving machinery, foundry work, printing and many more.

Originally a small haven, the port of Sunderland has developed over the years into an important ocean terminal accommodating large modern vessels and handling all descriptions of cargoes. It is administered by Sunderland Borough Council and its jurisdiction extends from the harbour entrance to Biddick Ford, a distance of about nine miles up river. The entrance to the harbour is protected by two granite faced piers each over half a mile long which sweep out into the sea in the form of two converging curves and enclosing a water area of about 130 acres. Within the protecting piers there are the old north and south piers on each side of the river entrance after passing which, vessels reach the lower harbour.

Sunderland is also much loved by the Royal Navy as one of the most hospitable "runs ashore" in the world, for not only do the people of Sunderland enjoy their football but they also have a great affection and admiration for the Royal Navy.



Commander N.J. Barker Royal Navy Commanding Officer HMS ARROW

Commander Barker was born in 1933 in Malta and entered the Royal Navy for National Service in 1951. He was educated at Wolborough Hill School and Canford School. He served as a midshipman in HMS ROYAL PRINCE and HMS BERMUDA, and then in the frigates HMS TERMAGANT, HMS CHICHESTER, HMS JEWEL and HMS LOCH FYNE. His previous commands include an FPB squadron in 1957-1958, a minehunter, HMS SQUIRREL and a minesweeper, HMS BRERETON. He served at HMS GANGES from 1967 to 1968 and was the First Lieutenant of HMS NUBIAN from then until 1970. It was while on the staff of Flag Officer Sea Training that he was promoted to Commander in 1972 and was then appointed as Deputy to the Commodore Superintendent of Contract Built Ships at Newcastle. Commander Barker was appointed to HMS ARROW in 1975, perhaps a "quirk of destiny" since it was in the previous HMS ARROW that he was christened in 1934!

By upbringing he is a Cornishman, is married and has four children, two boys and two girls who have all loved being "adopted" Geordies for the last three years. His family are living at Tynemouth although their own home is in Dorset. However, they would really like to live permanently in the North East. His interests include, shooting (game), fishing, golf and occasionally hockey, the fishing industry, current affairs, local customs, old houses, antiques and watching virtually any sport (now that he does not take part in rugby or soccer). He is also a younger brother of Trinity House.



OFFICERS

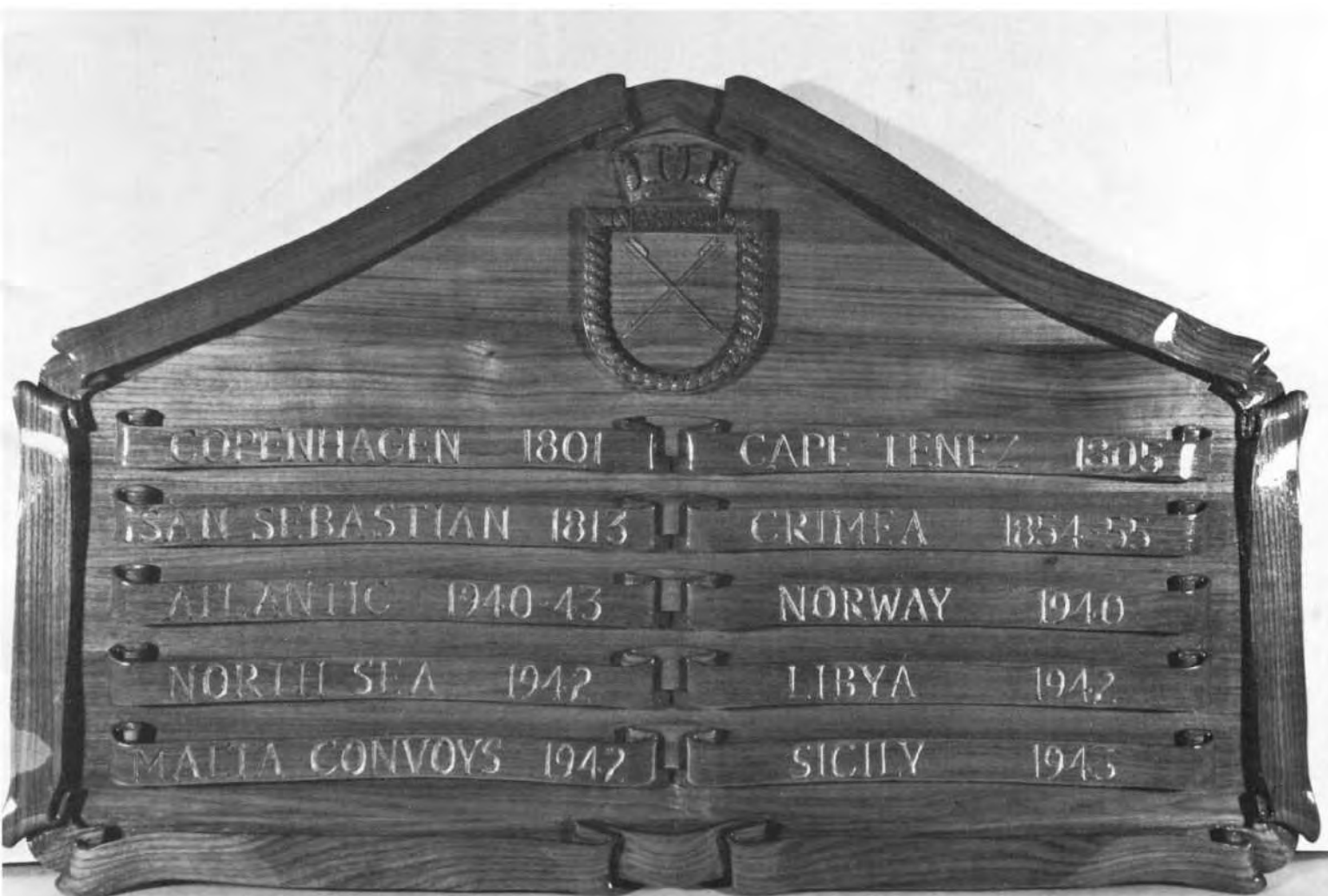
Lieutenant Commander	J.H.Collier	Executive Officer
Lieutenant Commander	R.D. Ferguson	Weapons Electrical Officer
Lieutenant Commander	M.T.H. Richards	Marine Engineer Officer
Lieutenant	A.C. Dyson	Supply Officer
Lieutenant	R.L. Guy	Principal Warfare Officer (U)
Lieutenant	A.K. Backus	Principal Warfare Officer (A)
Lieutenant	C.J. Durnford	Navigating Officer
Lieutenant	P.C. Manley	FlightCommander
Lieutenant	J.M.C. Maughan	Correspondence Officer
Lieutenant	M.J.G. Evans	Officer of the Watch
Lieutenant	J.W.Arrow	Diving Officer
Sublieutenant	W.J.Whelan	Communications Officer

SENIOR RATINGS

ABRAHAMSEN	N.R.	Marine Engineering Artificer (Propulsion). Second Class.	HARDMAN	N.J.	Petty Officer Cook.
ATKINS	P.V.G.	Petty Officer Radio Electrician.	HARKIN	P.	Petty Officer Caterer.
ARCHBOLD	A.J.	Petty Officer (Missileman)	HARRIS	H.	Chief Petty Officer (Operations) (Missileman)
BAKER	W.J.	Radio Supervisor.	HOWELL	C.J.	Communications Yeoman.
BENDREY	D.S.	Marine Engineering Artificer (Propulsion). First Class.	JARRETT	O.	Petty Officer (Radar).
BIDDLECOMBE	E. P.	MASTER AT ARMS,	JONES	M. H.	Chief Control Electrical Artificer.
BUDGE	I. M.	Petty Officer Marine Engineering Mechanic.	LADD	D.H.	Petty Officer Aircraft Mechanician.
CARRINGTON	R.F.	Mechanician First Class,	LETFORD	M.F.	Petty Officer Radio Electrician.
CAVANAGH	P.T.	Mechanician First Class.	MOORE	R. E.	Ordnance Electrical Mechanician Second Class.
CHIN	R.W.K.	Air Mechanician (Aircraft Engineering) First Ciass.	MOULSON	G.W.T.	Petty Officer Physical Training Instructor.
CLARKE	J.T.D.	Petty Officer (Missileman)	NEWSTEAD	T.J.	Ordnance Electrical Artificer First Class.
CORNER	R.A.	Mechanician First Class	OWEN	M.	Petty Officer (Sonar)
CLEGG	R.J.	Marine Engineering Artificer (Propulsion). Second Class,	ROWLEY	J.W.	Control Electrical Mechanician First Class.
DELL	W.	Petty Officer Marine Engineering Mechanic.	SAUNDERS	E.	Chief Radio Electrical Mechanician.
DEWSHAM	R.	Chief Petty Officer Stores Accountant (Desig).	SHANAHAN	P.	Chief Marine Engineering Mechanic.
DICKENSON	J.M.	Radio Electrical Artificer First Class.	SPARKS	G. E.	Chief Petty Officer Stores Accountant.
DICKSON	J. P.	Radio Electrical Mechanician First Class.	STEPHENS	V.G.	Chief Petty Officer (Operations) (Radar)
DUNCAN	J. P.	Petty Officer (Radar).	STEWART	J.W.	Petty Officer Marine Engineering Mechanic.
EARL	R.J.	Marine Engineering Artificer (Hull) First Class,	THOMAS	D.R.	Control Electrical Mechanician First Class,
FISHER	A.	Chief Marine Engineering Artificer (Propulsion)	THOMPSON	W.	Petty Officer (Sonar)
FURY	G.L.E.	Petty Officer Ordnance Electrician.	TOBIN	W.R.	Air Mechanician (Aircraft Engineering) First Class.
GREENSMITH	J.H.A.	Petty Officer Marine Engineering Mechanic.	UPWARD	H.R.J.	Chief Ordnance Electrical Artificer.
			WALKER	M.H.	Petty Officer Steward.

ADLEM	K.L.J.	Cook.	MALE	D.	Leading Seaman (Missileman).
ANDREWS	C.	Able Seaman (Sonar).	MACKAY	C. N.	Leading Marine Engineering Mechanic.
BADGER	S. L.	Leading Ordnance Electrical Mechanic.	MARSHALL	R. G.	Radio Operator (Tactical).
BAKER	J.S.	Leading Seaman (Missileman).	McCARTHEY	F.A.	Ordnance Electrical Mechanic First Class.
BANKS-POPPL	S. K.	Junior Seaman First Class (Missileman).	McDONALD	P. G.	Stores Accountant.
BEVAN	T. E.	Leading Radio Electrical Mechanic.	McGREGOR	D.J.B.	Able Seaman (Sonar).
BISSET	W. P.	Radio Electrical Mechanic Second Class.	McNAB	J.	Leading Ordnance Electrical Mechanic.
BLYTH	G.	Able Seaman (Radar).	MENDAY	L. R.	Junior Seaman (Missileman).
BOLDEN	G. P.	Leading Seaman (Sonar).	MONAGHAN	R.S.	Able Seaman (Radar).
BOND	J. P.	Leading Marine Engineering Mechanic.	MONK	T.L.	Marine Engineering Mechanic First Class.
BROOKMAN	G.F.R.	Marine Engineering Mechanic First Class.	MOORE	I.P.	Marine Engineering Mechanic First Class.
BRACK	C.	Cook.	NEWLANDS	D.	Radio Operator (General) Second Class.
BURROWS	B.	Marine Engineering Mechanic First Class.	NEWSOME	T.	Leading Cook.
CARLIN	J.	Able Seaman (Radar).	NICHOLLS	S. P.	Able Seaman (Radar).
CHAPMAN	R.C.	Marine Engineering Mechanic Second Class.	NORFOLK	M.J.	Leading Steward.
CHICK	A.J.	Cook	O'MALLEY	M.	Junior Ordnance Electrical Mechanic
CHICK	S. R.	Marine Engineering Mechanic First Class.	PARKIN	J.	Leading Stores Accountant.
CLOSE	N. M.	Junior Assistant Cook.	POWELL	G.W.	Marine Engineering Mechanic Second Class.
COOLBEAR	B.J.	Radio Electrical Mechanic First Class.	POYNTER	G.A.	Ordnance Electrical Mechanic First Class.
COOPER	L.F.	Ordnance Electrical Mechanic Second Class	PYKE	R.J.	Leading Seaman (Sonar).
CORNER		Junior Ordnance Electrical Mechanic.	RAMSAY	D.G.	Radio Operator (General) Second Class.
COSGROVE	J.J.	Junior Naval Airman First Class.	RANKIN	M.E.	Leading Cook.
COWPER	N. P.	Leading Control Electrical Mechanic.	RICHARDSON	T.	Leading Steward.
DAVIES	M. P.	Leading Radio Electrical Mechanic.	RIDSDALE	R.	Able Seaman (M.W.)
DENIEL	J.B.	Leading Ordnance Electrical Mechanic.	ROBINSON	D. H.	Radio Electrical Mechanic First Class.
DUCKETT	A.	Marine Engineering Mechanic First Class.	ROGERS	R. C.	Radio Operator (General) First Class.
DUNCAN	J.	Junior Radio Operator (Tactical).	SAVORY	P.	Leading Stores Accountant.
DURRANS	K.	Stores Accountant.	SCALES	T.G.	Able Seaman (Radar).
ELSON	L.	Leading Radio Electrical Mechanic.	SHEARSMITH	T.	Leading Writer.
FINDLAY	B.T.	Marine Engineering Mechanic First Class.	SIMM	A.W.	Ordnance Electrical Mechanic Second Class.
FLATMAN	G.P.R.	Leading Control Electrical Mechanic.	SKRZYPOAK	P. R.	Leading Radio Operator (General).
FRANCIS	P.R.	Able Seaman (Sonar).	SMITH	B.	Leading Seaman (Radar).
FRIAR	D.J.	Able Seaman (Radar).	STEPHENS	S.J.	Leading Seaman (Radar).
GALLACHER	T. E.	Leading Writer	STEVENSON	S.G.	Ordnance Electrical Mechanic.
GALLAGHER	S.	Junior Radio Operator.	STOCKDALE	S.	Ordnance Electrical Mechanic Second Class
GLOVER	G.	Junior Seaman (Missileman).	THIRKILL	R.	Radio Operator (Tactical) First Class.
GREEN	T.C.	Able Seaman (Radar).	THOMAS	G.A.	Naval Airman (Air Engineering) First Class.
GRIFFEN	J.G.	Able Seaman (Sonar).	THOMPSON	J. R.	Able Seaman (Missileman).
GUNN	G.	Junior Assistant Steward.	THOMPSON	N. B.	Leading Seaman (Radar).
HARRIS	C.	Able Seaman (Missileman).	THORNE	N.W.	Leading Seaman (Radar).
HARTLEY	M.R.	Ordnance Electrical Mechanic.	TOOTH	G. P.	Able Seaman (Sonar).
HENLY	M. D.	Leading Seaman (Sonar).	TOWNSEND	D.J.	Leading Regulator.
HOLLIDAY	A.	Able Seaman (Radar).	TURNBULL	J.R.	Leading Electrical Mechanic (Air).
HURST	S.	Able Seaman (Radar).	TURNER	G.E.	Leading Marine Engineering Mechanic.
HYDE	P. G.	Electrical Mechanician (Air) Second Class.	WAITES	S.	Radio Operator (General) First Class.
JEWELL	G.A.K.	Leading Marine Engineering Mechanic.	WEBB	N.S.	Leading Cook.
JOHN	G.	Able Seaman (Missileman).	WESTON	R. B.	Steward.
JOHNSON	D.J.	Leading Marine Engineering Mechanic.	WHITE	P.	Naval Airman Second Class.
JOHNSON	M. H.	Control Electrical Mechanic First Class.	WHITTINGHAM	R.	Leading Marine Engineering Mechanic.
JONES	G.R.	Marine Engineering Mechanic First Class.	WIGGINS	B.	Able Seaman (Radar).
JONES	H.R.N.	Able Seaman (Radar).	WILLIS	V.A.L	Leading Radio Electrical Mechanic (Air).
KAY	J. R.	Leading Ordnance Electrical Mechanic.	WILSON	R.C.	Cook.
KEARSAY	P.J.	Leading Seaman (Radar).	WINTER	D.I.	Radio Electrical Mechanic First Class.
KENNETT	M.	Marine Engineer Mechanic Second Class	WIRTH	W. S.	Marine Engineering Mechanic First Class.
KINDELAN	G.A.	Leading Seaman (Missileman).	WOOD	T.P.	Leading Radio Electrical Mechanic.
LAKE	L.M.	Able Seaman (Missileman).	WHENNALL	C.S.	Leading Seaman (Missileman).
LARVAN	M.H.	Junior Naval Airman.	WRIGHT	R.D.	Able Seaman (Sonar).
LEARY	J. C.	Leading Medical Assistant.	YOUNG	H.I.D.	Control Electrical Mechanic First Class.
LOVITT	L.	Marine Engineering Mechanic First Class.	YOUNG	M.A.	Radio Electrical Mechanic First Class.
LUCAS	R.	Leading Marine Engineering Mechanic.			

BATTLE HONOURS



THE COMMISSIONING

The commissioning of ships for service with the Royal Navy has roots dating back to the time when all ships sailing under the English flag were liable to be called up for service under the King to pursue some military object. Prior to the reign of Henry VIII there were no permanent military Naval "presence" and the King relied upon the commitment of ships by private shipowners in the event of a national emergency.

The term "commission" implied that the ship, crew, or particular officer was under orders from the King for some purpose. Henry VIII acquired a large, permanent Fleet which was administered by a "Navy Board", who were responsible for the provision of ships, their stores and personnel as and when required by the King. There were "standing officers" attached to each ship who acted as ship-keepers, and these included the Master, Boatswain, Carpenter and cooks, appointed "by warrant" and analogous to ships fittings in their permanency. The rest of the crew were hired for the period of a particular venture and dismissed when the ship was laid up, or "put in ordinary" which, as they termed it later, meant being "taken out of commission". Originally, the preparation of a ship for service was initiated by the appointment of King's officers with the King's commission to direct the military preparation of the ship, while the navigation and the administration of the individual ship was the responsibility of the Master and the standing officers.

Today, the Commissioning ceremony marks the climax of all the varied aspects of completion, fitting out, the drafting and training of the crew and the appointment of the officers. The Commissioning Warrant is the authority for the Captain to Commission the ship, and command her and the Ship's Company. The ceremony itself has evolved over many years and consists of a non-denominational religious service which includes the Gaelic blessing and responses of 1589, followed by the reading of the Commissioning Warrant by the Captain to the Ship's company, the hoisting of the White Ensign and the Commissioning pendant, and, finally, the traditional cutting of a cake by the Captain's wife and the youngest member of the Ship's Company.