

# DECOMMISSIONING



SEPTEMBER 2005

To commemorate  
the Decommissioning  
of  
HM SHIPS  
BRECON, COTTESMORE and DULVERTON





## Foreword

**Flag Officer,  
Scotland, Northern England and  
Northern Ireland**

**Rear Admiral Nick Harris, MBE**

This book commemorates the time spent in service of three fine fighting ships. Each has played her part in the history of the Royal Navy, and each was the combined product of all who served onboard. All have their tales to tell, and this book captures some of the facts behind those stories. It is also a tribute to each of their Ship's Companies, and commend it to you.

*Nick Harris*



# Brecon, the Navy's new super-ship BRECON, FIRST OF HER CLASS, IS LAUNCHED

By STUART BROWN

HMS Brecon was launched by the Duchess of Kent in the presence of the traditional champagne bottle-shattering ritual but with rather more of a thump than a bang.

—and her hull is made of . . . plastic!



HMS Brecon - her plastic hull is one of the features of her new class.

While the Duchess of Kent, who is the godmother of the ship, was the first to break the champagne bottle, the ship's hull was launched with a thump rather than a bang. The ship is the first of a new class of mine-hunters, and its hull is made of plastic. The ship is being launched from a dry dock at the Portsmouth Naval Dockyard.

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HMS Brecon, the first of the Royal Navy's new Hunt Class MCMVs, was launched from the Washland yard of Vesper Shipyard, a member of British Shipbuilders, by the Duchess of Kent.

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HMS Brecon, the first of the Hunt Class MCMVs, is the first time ever down the water. Vesper Shipyard's Washland yard is the first to launch a ship.

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Photo shows the Duchess of Kent, who is the godmother of the ship, at the launch ceremony.

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## New class of warship



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## Squadron decommissions

FRIENDS and family watched with pride and emotion as the ship's company of HMS Brecon, HMS Dufferin and HMS Cotnamore - the Northern Ireland Squadron - held a last Divisions and Decommissioning Ceremony at Clyde Naval Base.

Rear Admiral Michael Kimmons, Chief of Staff to the Second Sea Lord, said that their years of service resembled "one of the great maritime operations of recent times."

He added that the duties they had undertaken were "in the great Royal Naval tradition of seamanship, stamina and endurance."

The specially-converted Hunt-class vessels saw action far and wide, including the first Gulf War, before becoming the Northern Ireland Squadron.

Rear Admiral Kimmons said the ships were popular with the sailors who served on them. More importantly, they were technologically groundbreaking world leaders in their field.

HMS Brecon made the headlines 18 months ago when she became the first large RN warship to be commanded by a woman, then Lt Cdr Charlotte 'Charlie' Atkinson.

Only three months ago, HMS Dufferin made history by taking Surgeon Beattie's instruments from Glasgow to Portsmouth as part of the Trafalgar 200 celebrations.

HMS Cotnamore was in the headlines in the early 1990s when she was commanded by the Duke of York.



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## £25m PLASTIC MINE-HUNTER LAUNCHED

By DESMOND WETTERN



The decommissioning ceremony for the Northern Ireland Squadron at Clyde Naval Base, Faslane.

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## All Ships Facts and Figures

<b>Length:</b>	<b>60.3m</b>
<b>Beam:</b>	<b>10.4m</b>
<b>Displacement:</b>	<b>800 grt</b>
<b>Maximum Draught:</b>	<b>3.3m</b>
<b>Complement:</b>	<b>35</b>

### **BRECON:**

Total Distance Steamed:	339,244nm
Total Hours Underway:	44,100
Number of Different Ports visited:	105
Number of Different Countries visited:	28

### **COTTESMORE:**

Total Distance Steamed:	232,311 nm
Total Hours Underway:	26,216
Number of Different Ports visited:	116
Number of Different Countries visited:	31

### **DULVERTON:**

Total Distance Steamed:	256,664nm
Total Hours Underway:	22,106
Number of Different Ports visited:	
Number of Different Countries visited:	31



# HMS BRECON



## Ship's Company

**Commanding Officer - Lt Cdr C Atkinson RN**

### Officers

Executive Officer - Lt R Wickham RN

Navigating Officer - Lt T McPhail RN

Correspondence Officer - Lt T Westwood RN

Gunnery Officer - SLt R Bond RN

### Senior Rates

Marine Engineering Officer - WO2MEA S Charleston

Weapon Engineering Officer - CPOWEA R Gemmill

Deputy Marine Engineering Officer - CPOMEA I Liebnitz

Engine Room Petty Officer - POMEM(M/ M Cain

Naval Store Keeping Officer - POMEM D Metcalf

Coxswain - PO(M) A Jackson

### Junior Rates

LCH S Cadwell

LOM(MW) B Cashman

LMEM(M) C Hunter

LOM(MW) G Miller

LMEM(L) S McMullen

LOM(MW) M Ramsdale

LRO J Brown

OM(W) D Brain

OM(C) G Erskine

OM(C) D Galloway

OM(MW) A Hall

OM(MW) F Hendrie

OM(W) W Hughes

OM(W) I Lawrence

MEM M Lee

OM(W) J McGall

OM(AW) R McNally

OM(MW) L McDermott

STD S More

OM(W) G Mouat

MEM B Pike

MEM K Smith

OM(MW) R Thompson

CH J Taylor





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## Former Commanding Officers

Cdr J Birkett RN	02/10/78
Cdr P A Fish RN	28/04/81
Cdr N A Hoskin RN	23/02/83
Cdr J Rayner RN	13/03/85
Lt Cdr S J Gobey RN	06/10/86
Lt Cdr S B Lewis RN	25/04/88
Lt Cdr J R Staveley RN	05/04/90
Lt Cdr R L Bourne RN	05/05/92
Lt L M Miller RN	23/03/93
Lt Cdr The Hon. M C N Cochrane RN	02/10/93
Lt Cdr I D Hugo RN	23/05/95
Lt Cdr S P Williams RN	18/03/97
Lt A J T Bush RN	24/10/97
Lt C W R Steil RN	05/02/98
Lt S A Black RN	11/10/99
Lt A D H Rackham RN	22/05/00
Lt Cdr A A Jordan RN	16/10/01
Lt P A Stroude RN	30/07/02
Lt Cdr C P Atkinson RN	09/12/03



# History

## The First HMS BRECON

The first ship in the Royal Navy to bear the name HMS BRECON was a 'Hunt' class destroyer during the Second World War. Built by Thornycroft at Woolston, Southampton, she was completed in 1942 and sailed for the Mediterranean in June 1942 where she took part in the landings in Sicily (Operation Husky) and Salerno (Operation Avalanche).

She remained in the Mediterranean and in 1944, took part in the landings in southern France (Operation Dragoon) in August and was involved, with other destroyers, in sinking of two German U-boats, U-450 south west of Anzio in March and U-407 south of Melos in September. She subsequently played a successful part in operations in the Aegean before returning to the United Kingdom in December.

BRECON again sailed for the Mediterranean early in 1945, returned home again in June and sailed for the East Indies in July, subsequently proceeding to Singapore. She returned to the United Kingdom in September 1945, entered reserve and was scrapped at Faslane in 1962.



## The Second HMS BRECON

The second and current HMS BRECON was the first of the new class of Hunt Mine Counter Measures Vessels (MCMVs) and was the largest ship in the world to be constructed of Glass Reinforced Plastic. Like her predecessor, she was built at Woolston by Vosper Thornycroft and was launched by HRH The Duchess of Kent on 21 March 1980.

The remainder of 1980 and early 1981 were taken up with trials and setting to work, a long and at times arduous programme for a 'first of class' ship, which was conducted frequently in bad weather. The Commanding Officer of HMS BRECON assumed duties as Senior Officer First MCM Squadron on 29 May 1981 and the squadron deployed for a round of visits to Baltic ports in June and July, the first 'operational' employment and her first extended period in company.

On 3 May 1982, tentative planning began for a Hunt class deployment to the South Atlantic to conduct mine clearance operations in the wake of Operation Corporate. On 13 June BRECON sailed for the Falkland Islands in company with HMS LEDBURY and RMS ST HELENA as MCM Support Ship. BRECON arrived in the Falklands on 10 July 1982 and conducted clearance operations of Argentinean-laid mines, EOD Disposal, route clearance and located a number of wrecks including HMS COVENTRY. With all tasks completed, BRECON, LEDBURY and ST HELENA sailed from Port Stanley, arriving home on 16 September 1982.



A period of maintenance, exercises and general running in home waters then ensued and the ship was tasked with locating a number of ditched aircraft. On 28 March 1985, BRECON in company with HMS DULVERTON, COTTESMORE and CHIDDINGFOLD, sailed for the eastern seaboard of the USA for a period of visits and exercises, calling at Norfolk, Charleston and Washington. The forces sailed from the USA on 3 June, arriving in the UK on 25 June after a most successful deployment, which clearly demonstrated the RN's mine warfare expertise to the USN.

Following a long refit which ended in December 1986, BRECON remained in home waters until sailing on 8 May 1987 for Gibraltar, in company with COTTESMORE and BROCKLESBY for an exercise in the Mediterranean with

the French, Spanish, Italian and Greek navies. BRECON returned to the UK on 4 July and was again employed in home waters until the increasingly serious threat from Iranian mine laying during the Iran-Iraq War led to the dispatch of a RN MCM Force to the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman in September 1987.

After whirlwind preparations BRECON, with ABDIEL, BROCKLESBY, BICESTER and HURWORTH, sailed on 17 August, and arrived in the Gulf of Oman on 21 September to take part in Operation Cimnel. BRECON hunted the first mine of the operation on 13 October off Fujairah and subsequently increased her total to five. In November the force entered the Gulf and BRECON took part in successful team sweeps against two poised buoyant mines north of Qatar. There were no further live operations and the rest of the time in the area was spent in route survey work and port visits. BRECON sailed for the UK on 22 April 1988 and arrived in Rosyth after 249 days away from home covering 21,888 nm.

BRECON was due to return to the Gulf of Oman in March 1989, but following a cease-fire between Iraq and Iran in August 1988, it was decided that BRECON should conduct a four month deployment to the Mediterranean with some other MCM Units. The group sailed from the UK on 24 February and conducted a wide range of visits and exercises, returning on 23 June. BRECON again sailed to the Persian Gulf in 1991 to take part in mine clearance operations in the wake of Operation Granby, returning to the UK on 11 September 1991.

After these operations, BRECON was taken for a major

refit and was rededicated by HRH The Duchess of Kent in 1993. Between 1993 and 1998, BRECON conducted various MCM Exercises in Europe.

October 1998 saw BRECON transfer from her existing duties to Operation Sealion, the Northern Ireland Patrol, and with HMS COTTESMORE and DULVERTON maintained a continuous presence in the Province for 365 days a year. This became Operation Banner in 2002 until the final Patrol in March 2005. A Royal Marine detachment would embark for the duration of a patrol and together with some members of the Ship's Company, would board various vessels in the waters of Northern Ireland in search of contraband goods and terrorist munitions.

In March 2005, HMS BRECON then started her final six months in service with a number of port visits to Cardiff, Bristol, Swansea and Leith. She had various duties during the Trafalgar 200 International Fleet Review in June 2005 with the primary role as a Force Protection unit. She also conducted escort duties welcoming in the ships from across the globe.

A Combined Decommissioning Ceremony for BRECON, COTTESMORE and DULVERTON took place in HM Naval Base Clyde, Faslane on 14 July 2005 with many guests and families attending.

She sailed from her base port of Faslane on 12 September 2005 for her final Home-town visit to Swansea before meeting with the other former Northern Ireland Patrol Vessels in Caen, France. She entered Portsmouth on 28

September 2005 before being released from all operational duties by Commander-in-Chief Fleet on 30 September 2005.



#### **Battle Honours**

English Channel	1943
Salerno	1943
Sicily	1943
South France	1943
Mediterranean	1944
Aegean	1944
Atlantic	1944