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To Commemorate the Commissioning of

HMS INVINCIBLE

*in the presence of
Her Majesty The Queen*

11th of July 1980



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 was no permanent 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 a 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-keeper, and these included the Master, Boatswain, Carpenter and Cook, appointed 'by warrant' and analogous to ship 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 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 reading of the Commissioning warrant by the Captain to the Ship's company and the hoisting of the White Ensign for the first time, followed by the Gaelic blessing and responses of 1589, and finally, the traditional cutting of a cake by the Captain's wife and the youngest member of the Ship's company.



*Her Majesty
The Queen*



HMS INVINCIBLE, the largest warship to be built for the Royal Navy since the 1950s, and the sixth ship to bear the famous name, is designed to fulfil three major roles: to deploy anti-submarine helicopters and vertical/short take-off and landing aircraft in support of task forces at sea; to provide area and point defence for herself and other forces; to provide a platform and facilities for the command and control of maritime forces. In addition, she may be called upon to undertake the full range of peacetime tasks, including patrol, surveillance and disaster relief — whenever and wherever Her Majesty's Government may require.

The ship's primary armament consists of the versatile Sea King anti-submarine helicopter, the Sea Harrier vertical/short take-off and landing fighter, and the Sea Dart missile system. She is equipped with a range of modern sensors which supply information to the computer-driven command, control and information system. This system is backed by comprehensive modern communications, which include a satellite terminal. Installed in the vessel are over one million components, served by 1000 kilometres of cables and 100 kilometres of pipes.

The 1000 officers and men of the ship's company live in comfortable cabins, with modern furniture in contemporary styles and settings, and messes equipped to the latest standards. All living and operational spaces are fully air-conditioned.

The 19 810 tonnes warship is powered by four Rolls Royce Olympus gas turbines, produced for marine purposes from those designed for Concorde. Each of the ship's two propeller shafts is driven by two of these turbines, giving her a maximum speed of 28 knots, and a range at 18 knots of over 5000 miles. Her reverse reduction gearboxes are the largest and heaviest in naval service.

Overall, the ship is a powerful addition to the strength of the Royal Navy and the maritime security of the NATO Alliance. She provides the ability to respond swiftly and flexibly to the many and varied tasks and emergencies that the Royal Navy will face in the years ahead.

*«She is a prodigious fine ship,
and vastly large».*

L'INVINCIBLE

1747-58



The first INVINCIBLE was a prize taken from the French on May 3rd, 1747, when Vice-Admiral Anson defeated Admiral de la Jonquiere, 70 miles off Cape Finisterre. She was a 74-gun ship of 1836 tons; length 171ft, beam 49ft and draught 21ft, She had a crew of 700,

When the French Commodore, the Chevalier de St George, surrendered his sword to Anson onboard the Prince George, he remarked, in allusion to two of the captured ships being named La Glorie and L'Invincible, "Monsieur, vous avez vaincu l' Invincible', et La `Glorie' vous suit".

Writing of the Invincible Anson said: "She is a prodigious fine ship, and vastly large, I think she is longer than

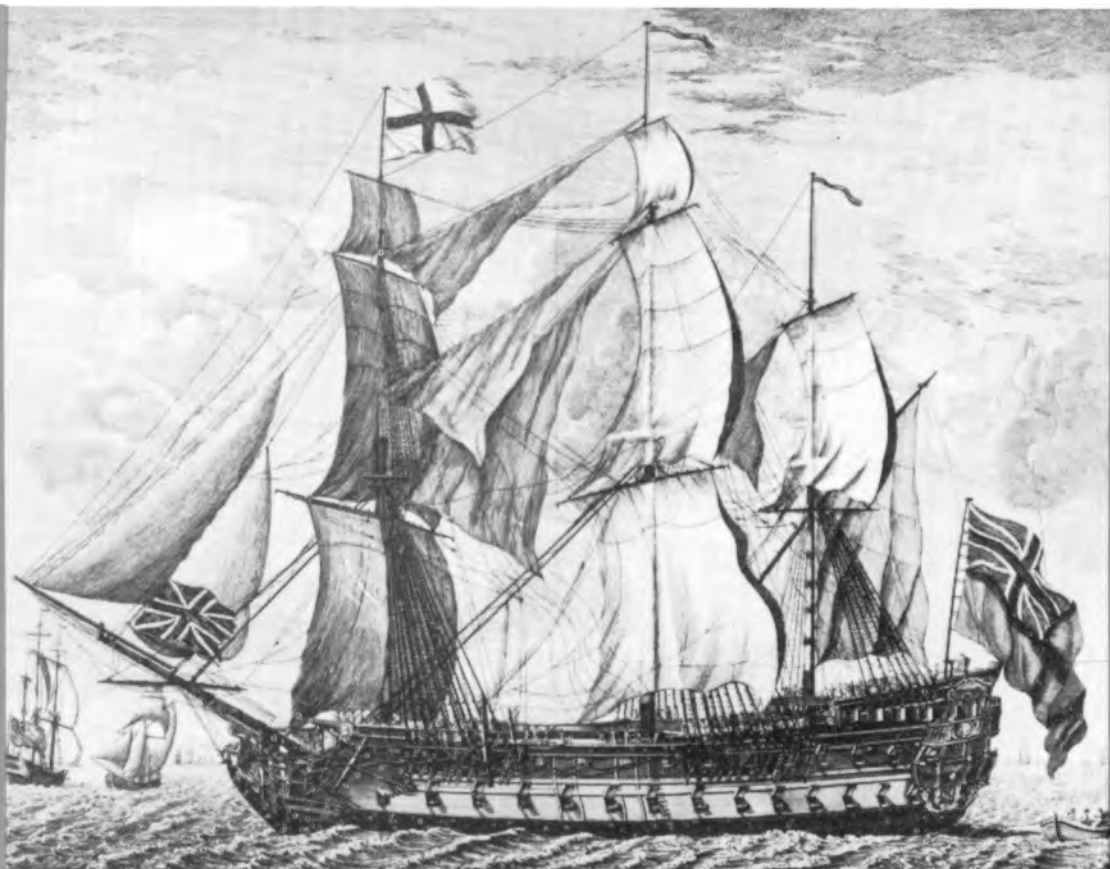
any ship in our fleet, and quite new",

On June 26th, 1749, whilst a guard ship at Portsmouth, a court-martial was held onboard the Invincible in connection with the mutiny of the Chesterfield on the west coast of Africa, Two Lieutenants of the Royal Marines, were shot and four seamen were hanged for leading the revolt.

Invincible was commissioned into the Royal Navy in January 1756, but in May the following year, lost her main and mizzen masts in a hurricane off Louisbourg.

On February 19th, 1758, commanded by Captain John Bentley, she set off in the expedition commanded by Admiral the Hon. Edward

Boscawen, which eventually captured Cape Breton Island, However, on the day of leaving, Invincible missed stays, ran ashore on the Ower's Shoal, and was a total loss. Fortunately no lives were lost,





Invincible 1765-1801

The second INVINCIBLE was a 74-gun ship, launched from the Well's Yard, Deptford, in 1765. She was of 1631 tons, and carried a crew of 600 men. Her length, beam and draught were 168ft, 47ft and 17ft.

Early in 1780, commanded by Captain Charles Saxton, she was in an English fleet of 32 ships, under Admiral Sir George Rodney. They sailed from Plymouth on December 29th, 1779, for Gibraltar and the West Indies. At daylight on January 8th, about 300 miles west of Cape Finisterre, twentytwo Spanish sail were sighted and immediately chased. After a few hours action they were all captured. On January 16th, close to St Vincent, another

smaller Spanish Squadron was sighted. The English fleet at once gave chase, and at 4 pm the leading ships were in action. A night action followed, and at 2 am the Spaniards surrendered. One Spanish ship was blown up and six captured, but of these, two drove ashore and were lost.

During April the same year, Invincible suffered the disgrace of a serious mutiny. The seamen had six months' wages due to them, and refused to weigh anchor until they were paid. No threats or promises would induce them to go to sea. They eventually effected their purpose, but four men were tried by court-martial, two of whom were

sentenced to 500 lashes.

In September 1781, the Invincible, again commanded by Captain Charles Saxton, was in a fleet of 27 ships under the command of Rear-Admiral Thomas Graves. This fleet fought a 24-ship French fleet, under Admiral Comte de Grasse, off the Chesapeake, towards the end of the war with the American colonies. Failure to defeat the French fleet had a great influence on the final outcome of the war with America.

Rear-Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, commanding a fleet of 30 ships, including the Invincible, put to sea on 23rd January 1782 to meet

a French fleet said to be close to St Kitts in the West Indies. The fleets sighted each other on January 25th and, following a days furious action, Sir Samuel Hood was left in possession of the roadstead at St Kitts until he sailed after dark on February 13th, having given the French a severe check.

On February 19th, 1783, still under the command of Captain Saxton, the *Invincible* chased, and recaptured from the French, the British 44-gun frigate *Argo*, which the French had captured three days previously.

Off Ushant on May 5th, 1794 the *Invincible*, commanded by Captain the Hon. Thomas Pakenham, in a large fleet under Admiral Earl Howe, was searching for a similarly large French fleet, under Rear-Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse. The French were sighted on May 28th, and at once chased. A partial action began at 5 pm; *Invincible* exchanged broadsides with the enemy. On May 29th a further action took place in which the French were badly mauled. On

June 1st the British stood over to the attack, the action beginning at 9.30 am. *Invincible* engaged the '*Juste*' and forced her to bear up. When meeting the fire of the '*Queen Charlotte*', the '*Juste*' struck. *Invincible* was badly damaged and Lord Howe sent two frigates to tow her out of the line. When the frigates arrived, Captain Pakenham refused a tow rope and directed the frigates to tow the '*Caesar*' into the line!

By 11.30 the action was practically over. *Invincible* had her fore and main masts shot through, and lost her main topmast, but to prove she was ready for any service, Captain Pakenham sent a boat to the flagship '*Queen Charlotte*' inviting Lord Howe to hoist his flag in the *Invincible*, if his ship were too crippled to continue the fight. *Invincible* lost 14 killed and 31 wounded on this, the *Glorious First of June*, 1794.

In February 1797 *Invincible*, captained by George William Cayley, was in a fleet of 12 ships, under the command of Rear-Admiral Henry Harvey, which

sailed to successfully capture Trinidad on February 17th. The fleet then proceeded to take Puerto Rico, and followed this by bombarding San Juan. In August 1799, in a squadron of nine vessels commanded by Vice-Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour, *Invincible* assisted in the capture of the Dutch colony of Surinam,

Sailing for the Baltic on 16th March, 1801, commanded by Captain John Rennie, and flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Totty, *Invincible* was wrecked and lost on *Hammonds Knowl* off the coast of Norfolk. She was going 9 knots as she grounded and struck violently at 2.30 pm. In order to lighten her as much as possible, the yards and top masts were struck and some of the provisions thrown overboard. At 5.30 pm the masts were cut away and the ship drifted off into 17 fathoms of water and was anchored. At daybreak next morning she suddenly began to sink and went down almost immediately. Captain Rennie and about 400 men were drowned: only the Rear-Admiral and about 160 men were saved.

Invincible 1808-61

INVINCIBLE number three was a 74-gun ship, launched at Woolwich in 1808. She was of 1674 tons, and carried a crew of 590 men. Her length, beam and draught were 170ft, 48ft and 18ft.

In 1810 and 1811, *Invincible*, commanded by Captain Charles Adam, assisted the Spanish patriots against the French by defending *Matagorda Fort* on the outskirts of Cadiz. She also assisted in the defence of *Tarragona* against the French army under Marshal Suchet.

In 1813, a detachment of her seamen, under Lieutenant Corbyn, assisted at the reduction of *Percello*, and in the capture of two French privateers at *Ampolla*. In June 1814, *Invincible* assisted in the reduction of *Fort St Philip* in the *Col de Balageur*, after a siege replete with arduous service.

During her final years, *Invincible* acted first as a powder vessel, and then as a coal depot ship at *Devonport*. She was broken up in 1861.





INVINCIBLE



Length overall	209
Length on waterline	192
Breadth (flight deck)	31
Draught	6
Displacement, deep	19 810 to

Battle Honours

St Vincent	1780
Chesapeake	1781
St Kitts	1782
Glorious First of June	1794
Trinidad	1797
Alexandria	1882
Heligoland	1914
Falkland Islands	1914
Jutland	1916