

= HMS Hardy (1936) =

HMS Hardy was the flotilla leader for the H class destroyers , built for the Royal Navy in the mid 1930s . During the Spanish Civil War of 1936 ? 1939 the ship spent considerable time in Spanish waters , enforcing the arms blockade imposed by Britain and France on both sides of the conflict . Hardy was transferred to Freetown , Sierra Leone , in October 1939 to hunt for German commerce raiders in the South Atlantic with Force K. After returning to the United Kingdom in early 1940 , the ship became flagship of the 2nd Destroyer Flotilla assigned to the Home Fleet . During the Norwegian campaign of 1940 , Hardy participated in the First Battle of Narvik where she sank one German destroyer . As the British ships were withdrawing , they were discovered by two other German destroyers that so badly damaged Hardy that she had to be run aground to stop her from sinking . The ship was lifted by a rising tide and eventually capsized .

= = Description = =

Hardy displaced 1,455 long tons (1,478 t) at standard load and 2,053 long tons (2,086 t) at deep load . The ship had an overall length of 337 feet (102.7 m) , a beam of 34 feet (10.4 m) and a draught of 12 feet 9 inches (3.9 m) . She was powered by Parsons geared steam turbines , driving two shafts , which developed a total of 38,000 shaft horsepower (28,000 kW) and gave a maximum speed of 36 knots (67 km / h ; 41 mph) . Steam for the turbines was provided by three Admiralty 3-drum water-tube boilers . Hardy carried a maximum of 470 long tons (480 t) of fuel oil that gave her a range of 5,530 nautical miles (10,240 km ; 6,360 mi) at 15 knots (28 km / h ; 17 mph) . The ship's complement was 175 officers and men .

The ship mounted five 45-calibre 4.7-inch (120 mm) Mark IX guns in single mounts . For anti-aircraft (AA) defence , Hardy had two quadruple Mark I mounts for the 0.5-inch Vickers Mark III machine gun . She was fitted with two above-water quadruple torpedo tube mounts for 21-inch (533 mm) torpedoes . One depth charge rail and two throwers were fitted ; 20 depth charges were carried originally , but this was increased to 35 shortly after the war began .

= = Service = =

Hardy was laid down by Cammell Laird and Company at Birkenhead on 30 May 1935 , launched on 7 April 1936 and commissioned on 11 December 1936 . Excluding government-furnished equipment like the armament , the ship cost £ 278,482 . The ship was assigned to the 2nd Destroyer Flotilla of the Mediterranean Fleet upon commissioning . Hardy patrolled Spanish waters from 1937 through 1939 during the Spanish Civil War enforcing the policies of the Non-Intervention Committee . After the destroyer HMS Hunter struck a mine off Almeria on 13 May 1937 , Hardy stood by in case Hunter needed further assistance . Hardy was berthed in Palma , Majorca on 23 May 1937 when that port was bombed by the Spanish Republican Air Force , but was not damaged . After the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939 , she began a refit in Devonport Dockyard between 2 June and 29 July . The ship was in Malta when World War II began in September .

In October Hardy (pennant no . H87) was transferred to Freetown , Sierra Leone , to hunt for German commerce raiders in the South Atlantic with Force K. The ship and her half-sisters HMS Hostile , HMS Hereward , and HMS Hasty rendezvoused with the battlecruiser HMS Renown , the aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal , and the light cruiser HMS Neptune on 17 December . They refuelled in Rio de Janeiro , Brazil before proceeding to the estuary of the River Plate in case the damaged German pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee attempted to escape from Montevideo , Uruguay , where she had taken refuge after losing the Battle of the River Plate . She was given a brief overhaul at Devonport between 25 January and 12 February 1940 and was then transferred to Greenock , Scotland for convoy escort duties . The ship rejoined the 2nd Destroyer Flotilla of the Home Fleet in Scapa Flow on 9 March and became its flagship .

On 6 April Hardy and the rest of the 2nd Destroyer Flotilla escorted the four destroyer minelayers of the 20th Destroyer Flotilla as they sailed to implement Operation Wilfred , an operation to lay mines in the Vestfjord to prevent the shipment of Swedish iron ore from Narvik to Germany . The mines were laid on the early morning of 8 April , before the Germans began their invasion , and the destroyers then joined the battlecruiser HMS Renown and her escorts .

The Admiralty ordered Captain Warburton @-@ Lee to attack German shipping in Narvik , Norway on 9 April . The following morning Hardy led four of her half @-@ sisters down Ofotfjord in a surprise dawn attack on Narvik harbour during a blinding snowstorm . A torpedo from Hardy blew off the stern of the German flagship , Z21 Wilhelm Heidkamp , and killed the German flotilla commander , Commodore Friedrich Bonte . Heidkamp sank the next day . Another hit a merchant ship in the stern . A second salvo of four torpedoes was fired at two other German destroyers , but missed and badly damaged the ore docks . After regrouping , Captain Warburton @-@ Lee led another attack on the harbour later that morning , but inflicted little additional damage due to poor visibility .

As the British destroyers completed their second attack , they were engaged by three more German destroyers . The British destroyers attempted to withdraw to the west , but were pursued by the German ships . Two additional German destroyers crossed the T of the British ships and quickly knocked out Hardy 's forward guns . More hits to the ship 's bridge and superstructure set her on fire , mortally wounded Captain Warburton @-@ Lee and killed or wounded all of the other officers on the bridge except Paymaster Lieutenant G.H. Stanning , the Captain 's Secretary . Although badly wounded , he took command and after several more hits disabled her boilers ordered her run aground at Vidrek . The First Lieutenant , who had not been present on the bridge , assumed command and ordered the ship abandoned . Some of the crew delayed doing so until the last torpedo was fruitlessly fired at a German ship and No. 4 gun fired until it was out of ammunition .

Captain Warburton @-@ Lee was brought ashore but died after an hour from his head wounds . 139 other men managed to get ashore , although 26 were seriously wounded . Captain Warburton @-@ Lee was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross . Hardy was lifted off the beach at high tide and drifted to the head of Skjomen fjord where she capsized in shallow waters . The wreck was still visible as late as 1963 .