

= HMS Boadicea ( H65 ) =

HMS Boadicea was a B-class destroyer built for the Royal Navy ( RN ) around 1930 . Initially assigned to the Mediterranean Fleet , she was transferred to the Home Fleet in 1936 . Before her departure , the ship evacuated civilians from Spain during the beginning of the Spanish Civil War of 1936 ? 1939 . Boadicea later spent considerable time in Spanish waters , enforcing the arms blockade imposed by Britain and France on both sides of the conflict . During World War II , the ship spent the bulk of the war on convoy escort duty in British waters and participated in the Battle of the Atlantic , Operation Torch , the Russian Convoys , and in the Normandy landings . Badly damaged by German dive bombers in 1940 , she was sunk almost exactly four years later by aerial torpedoes .

= = Description = =

Boadicea displaced 1,360 long tons ( 1,380 t ) at standard load and 1,790 long tons ( 1,820 t ) at deep load . The ship had an overall length of 323 feet ( 98 .5 m ) , a beam of 32 feet 3 inches ( 9 .8 m ) and a draught of 12 feet 3 inches ( 3 .7 m ) . She was powered by Parsons geared steam turbines , driving two shafts , which developed a total of 34,000 shaft horsepower ( 25,000 kW ) and gave a maximum speed of 35 knots ( 65 km / h ; 40 mph ) . Steam for the turbines was provided by three Admiralty 3-drum boilers . Boadicea carried a maximum of 390 long tons ( 400 t ) of fuel oil that gave her a range of 4,800 nautical miles ( 8,900 km ; 5,500 mi ) at 15 knots ( 28 km / h ; 17 mph ) . The ship 's complement was 134 officers and enlisted men , although it increased to 142 during wartime .

The ship mounted four 45-calibre quick-firing ( QF ) 4 .7-inch Mk IX guns in single mounts , designated ' A ' , ' B ' , ' X ' , and ' Y ' from front to rear . For anti-aircraft ( AA ) defence , Boadicea had two 40-millimetre ( 1 .6 in ) QF 2-pounder Mk II AA guns mounted on a platform between her funnels . 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 originally carried , but this increased to 35 shortly after the war began . The ship was fitted with a Type 119 ASDIC set to detect submarines by reflections from sound waves beamed into the water .

By October 1940 , the ship 's anti-aircraft armament was increased when the rear set of torpedo tubes was replaced by a 3-inch ( 76 .2 mm ) ( 12-pounder ) AA gun . The ' Y ' gun was later removed to compensate for the additional depth charges added . When Boadicea was converted into an escort destroyer at the end of 1943 , her ' A ' gun was replaced by a Hedgehog anti-submarine spigot mortar and additional depth charge stowage replaced the 12-pounder high-angle gun . In addition , two QF 6-pounder Hotchkiss guns were added to deal with surfaced submarines at close range and the 2-pounder guns were replaced by 20-millimetre ( 0 .8 in ) Oerlikon autocannon and four additional Oerlikon guns were also added .

= = Construction and service = =

The ship was ordered on 4 March 1929 from Hawthorn Leslie , under the 1928 Naval Programme . She was laid down at Hebburn-on-Tyne on 11 July 1929 , and launched on 23 September 1930 , as the fifth RN ship to carry this name . Boadicea was completed on 9 April 1931 at a cost of £ 225,325 , excluding items supplied by the Admiralty such as guns , ammunition and communications equipment . After her commissioning , she was assigned to the 4th Destroyer Flotilla with the Mediterranean Fleet until 1936 . She was damaged whilst refuelling at sea with the battleship Revenge on 15 March 1935 ; her repairs lasted until 18 April . Later that year she was deployed to Famagusta , Cyprus , and Haifa , Palestine to assist British forces in putting down riots from December 1935 ? January 1936 . Boadicea had to return to Haifa in June to help put down the beginnings of the Arab Revolt . Afterwards the ship was deployed to Cartagena and Valencia to

evacuate civilians at the start of the Spanish Civil War before beginning a refit at Portsmouth that lasted until 26 September . She remained with the 4th Flotilla until January 1939 and made multiple deployments off the coast of Spain enforcing the embargo until April 1938 when she was again refitted . After leaving the 4th Flotilla , Boadicea served as the plane guard for the aircraft carriers of the Mediterranean Fleet for a few months until she became the emergency destroyer at the Nore . She was attached to the Reserve Fleet at Portland for the Fleet Review in August 1939 .

On 29 August , Boadicea was assigned to the 19th Destroyer Flotilla based at Dover where she escorted the troopships of the British Expeditionary Force through October . The ship was then transferred to the 22nd Destroyer Flotilla at Harwich for two months before rejoining the 19th Flotilla where she escorted convoys through the English Channel . On 4 March 1940 , she towed the oil tanker Charles F. Meyer to Southampton Water after that ship struck a mine . Boadicea began a refit at Chatham Dockyard on 2 May and was not operational until she sailed for Le Havre , France on 9 June to assist in the evacuation of British troops before advancing German troops . The next afternoon , she was severely damaged by Junkers Ju 87 " Stuka " dive bombers that knocked out her engines and boilers . After all depth charges and torpedoes were jettisoned to reduce her topweight and temporary repairs made to the holes in her hull , Boadicea was towed by the destroyer Ambuscade and the tugboat Krooman to Dover .

Repairs at Portsmouth lasted until 14 February 1941 and included the installation of a Type 286 short @-@ range surface search radar . Upon completions , the ship was assigned to Home Fleet and participated in the search for the German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau which had broken out into the North Atlantic . In March , Boadicea was transferred to the 4th Escort Group at Greenock for convoy escort duties and remained with them until February 1942 when the group was disbanded . She was then assigned to the Western Approaches Command until July . The ship was detached to escort Convoys PQ 15 and Convoy QP 12 to and from Murmansk in April ? May . Boadicea was refitted between August and October , after which she escorted a convoy to Gibraltar as part of the preparations for Operation Torch , the invasion of French North Africa . She escorted British ships to Oran during the invasion and was struck by a shell from a French L 'Adroit @-@ class destroyer on 8 November that did little damage . Three days later , the ship was escorting the empty ocean liner RMS Viceroy of India when the latter ship was torpedoed . The destroyer attempted to take the troopship under tow , but was unable to save the ship . Boadicea rescued 449 passengers and crew and delivered them to Gibraltar . Upon her return home , the ship was assigned to the 20th Escort Group where she escorted Convoys JW 51A , JW 53 and RA 53 to and from Russia . She was badly damaged by sea ice during the latter convoy in March and required repairs that lasted until May .

Upon their completion , Boadicea was transferred to Freetown , Sierra Leone where she served as a local escort . On 19 July , she rescued 220 survivors from the torpedoed ocean liner MV Incomati . The ship returned to the Home Fleet in September and briefly assigned to the 8th Escort Group before she started her conversion into an escort destroyer in November . This included the addition of Type 271 target indication radar and the replacement of the Type 286 radar by a Type 290 . After this was completed in January 1944 , Boadicea rejoined the 8th Escort Group and escorted Convoys JW 57 , RA 58 and RA 59 to Russia from February through April . In preparation for Operation Overlord , the invasion of Normandy , she was transferred to Portsmouth where she escorted convoys arriving in England as well as the convoys across the Channel . Boadicea was sunk on 13 June off Portland Bill by two torpedoes dropped by Junkers Ju 88 medium bombers while escorting a convoy of merchant ships to France . The torpedoes caused a magazine explosion and Boadicea sank quickly , with only 12 of her crew of 182 surviving .

The ship is included on the Chatham Naval Memorial ; her wreck is 16 miles ( 26 km ) southwest of the Isle of Portland at 50 ° 28 ' 12 " N 02 ° 29 ' 30 " W in 53 metres ( 174 ft ) of water . Her bow is blown off forward of the engine rooms . Her stern section is upright and reasonably intact . The wreck site is designated as a protected place under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 .