

= HMS Harvester (H19) =

HMS Harvester was an H class destroyer originally ordered by the Brazilian Navy with the name Jurua in the late 1930s , but bought by the Royal Navy after the beginning of World War II in September 1939 . Almost immediately after commissioning , in May 1940 , the ship began evacuating Allied troops from Dunkirk and other locations in France . Afterwards she was assigned to the Western Approaches Command for convoy escort duties . Harvester and another destroyer sank a German submarine in October . She was briefly assigned to Force H in May 1941 , but her anti aircraft armament was deemed too weak and she was transferred to the Newfoundland Escort Force in June 1941 for escort duties in the North Atlantic . The ship was returned to the Western Approaches Command in October 1941 and was converted to an escort destroyer in early 1942 . Harvester was torpedoed and sunk in March 1943 by a German submarine after having rammed and sunk another submarine the previous day while escorting Convoy HX 228 .

= Description =

Harvester displaced 1,350 long tons (1,370 t) at standard load and 1,883 long tons (1,913 t) at deep load . The ship had an overall length of 323 feet (98 m) , a beam of 33 feet (10 m) and a draught of 12 feet 5 inches (3 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 36 knots (67 km / h ; 41 mph) . Steam for the turbines was provided by three Admiralty 3 drum water tube boilers . Harvester carried a maximum of 470 long tons (480 t) of fuel oil , giving 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 152 officers and men .

The vessel was designed for four 45 calibre 4.7 inch Mk IX guns in single mounts , designated ' A ' , ' B ' , ' X ' , and ' Y ' from front to rear , but ' Y ' gun was removed to compensate for the additional depth charges added . For anti aircraft (AA) defence , Harvester 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 originally fitted , but this was increased to three sets of rails and eight throwers while fitting out . The ship 's load of depth charges was also increased , from 20 to 110 .

= Wartime modifications =

Harvester had her rear torpedo tubes replaced by a 12 pounder AA gun after the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940 , but it is not known exactly when this modification was made . During her 1942 conversion to an escort destroyer , the ship 's short range AA armament had been augmented by two Oerlikon 20 mm guns on the wings of the ship 's bridge . The .50 calibre machine gun mounts were replaced by a pair of Oerlikons later . ' A ' gun was replaced by a Hedgehog anti submarine spigot mortar . The ship 's director control tower and rangefinder above the bridge were removed in exchange for a Type 271 target indication radar . A Type 286 short range surface search radar was probably also fitted mid way through the war . The ship also received a HF / DF radio direction finder mounted on a pole mainmast .

= Service =

Jurua was ordered by Brazil on 6 December 1937 from Vickers Armstrongs , Barrow in Furness . The ship was laid down on 3 June 1938 and she was purchased by the British on 5 September 1939 and renamed HMS Handy . The ship was launched on 29 September 1939 and renamed Harvester in January 1940 as her original name was thought too liable to be confused with Hardy . Harvester was commissioned on 23 May and briefly worked up at Portland Harbour before

she was assigned to the 9th Destroyer Flotilla .

The ship joined the Dunkirk evacuation on 29 May and returned 272 men to Dover during the day . However , the situation at Dunkirk soon became too dangerous to risk the larger and more modern destroyers , so Harvester made no attempt to evacuate any troops during daylight hours on 30 May . This decision was rescinded during the day on 30 May and the ship sailed for Dunkirk on the night of 30 / 31 May . En route she was narrowly missed by two torpedoes , but she rescued 1341 men in two trips on 31 May and an additional 576 on 1 June . Harvester was lightly damaged by strafing German aircraft that same day and required repairs that were made at Chatham . On 9 June the ship was ordered to Le Havre , France , to evacuate British troops , but none were to be found . She loaded 78 men at Saint @-@ Valery @-@ en @-@ Caux on 11 June . Later in the month she escorted ships evacuating refugees and troops from Saint @-@ Nazaire and St. Jean de Luz (Operation Ariel) .

From July to September , Harvester was assigned to convoy escort duties with the Western Approaches Command and she rescued 90 survivors from the armed merchant cruiser Dunvegan Castle in late August . The ship , together with five other destroyers of the 9th Flotilla , was assigned to Plymouth Command for anti @-@ invasion duties between 8 and 18 September before returning to her role as an escort vessel . On 30 October , with help from her sister Highlander , she sank the German submarine U @-@ 32 . Harvester rescued 19 survivors from the merchant vessel Silverpine on 5 December and 131 survivors from the Armed Boarding Vessel Crispin on 3 February 1941 . She rescued four survivors from a Royal Air Force Armstrong Whitworth Whitley bomber four days later .

The ship was refitted at Barrow between 18 March and 18 April and then was assigned to Force H in Gibraltar where she escorted ships during Operations Tiger and Splice in May . Harvester was transferred to the Newfoundland Escort Force in June as her anti @-@ aircraft capability was believed by Admiral James Somerville to be too weak . She was assigned to the 14th Escort Group upon her arrival at St. John 's on 1 July . The ship was transferred back to the Western Approaches Command three months later and assigned to the 9th Escort Group . Harvester was converted to an escort destroyer during a lengthy refit at Dundee , Scotland , from 30 January 1942 to 16 April . She conducted sea trials of her Type 271 radar during May and then resumed her escort duties in the North Atlantic as flagship of Mid @-@ Ocean Escort Force Escort Group B @-@ 3 .

The ship was refitted at Liverpool between 12 December and 11 February 1943 . Whilst defending Convoy HX 228 on 3 March , Harvester forced U @-@ 444 to the surface and then rammed it . She was badly damaged by the ramming , but she rescued five survivors after the submarine sank . The next day , Harvester was torpedoed by U @-@ 432 and broke in half . Nine officers and 136 ratings were lost , but the French corvette Aconit rammed and sank U @-@ 432 herself and then rescued Harvester 's few survivors .