

= HMS York (90) =

HMS York was the first of two York class heavy cruisers built for the Royal Navy in the late 1920s . She mostly served on the North America and West Indies Station before World War II . Early in the war the ship escorted convoys in the Atlantic and participated in the Norwegian Campaign in 1940 . York was transferred to the Mediterranean theatre in late 1940 where she escorted convoys and the larger ships of the Mediterranean Fleet . She was wrecked in an attack by Italian explosive motorboats of the 10th Flotilla MAS at Suda Bay , Crete in March 1941 . The ship 's wreck was salvaged in 1952 and scrapped in Bari .

= = Design and description = =

York 's design was based on the earlier County classes but was intended to be smaller and cheaper , although better armoured . She was easily distinguishable from her sister ship , Exeter , as the latter had straight masts and funnels , while those of York were angled to the rear . In addition , York also had a very tall bridge designed to clear the aircraft catapult originally planned to be carried on the superfiring (' B ') gun turret forward .

York displaced 8 , 250 long tons (8 , 380 t) at standard load and 10 , 620 long tons (10 , 790 t) at deep load . The ship had an overall length of 575 feet (175 . 3 m) , a beam of 57 feet (17 . 4 m) and a draught of 20 feet 3 inches (6 . 2 m) . She was powered by Parsons geared steam turbines , driving four shafts , which developed a total of 80 , 000 shaft horsepower (60 , 000 kW) and gave a maximum speed of 32 . 25 knots (59 . 73 km / h ; 37 . 11 mph) . Steam for the turbines was provided by eight Admiralty 3 - drum water tube boilers . York carried a maximum of 1 , 900 long tons (1 , 900 t) of fuel oil that gave her a range of 13 , 300 nautical miles (24 , 600 km ; 15 , 300 mi) at 12 knots (22 km / h ; 14 mph) . The ship 's complement was 628 officers and men .

The ship mounted six 50 - calibre 8 - inch (203 mm) guns in three twin turrets . Her secondary armament consisted of four QF 4 - inch (102 mm) Mk V anti - aircraft (AA) guns in single mounts . York mounted two single 2 - pounder (40 mm) light AA guns (" pom - poms ") . The ship carried two triple torpedo tube above - water mounts for 21 - inch (533 mm) torpedoes .

York lacked a full waterline armor belt . The sides of her boiler and engine rooms were protected by 3 inches (76 mm) of armour and sides of the magazines were protected by 4 . 375 inches (111 . 1 mm) of armour . The transverse bulkheads at the end of her machinery rooms were 3 . 5 inches (89 mm) thick . The top and ends of the magazines were three inches thick . The lower deck over the machinery spaces and steering gear had a thickness of 1 . 5 inches (38 mm) . Space and weight was reserved for one catapult and its seaplane , but they were not fitted until after she was completed . A second catapult , intended to be mounted on ' B ' turret , was deleted from the design during construction .

= = Service = =

York was laid down by Palmers Shipbuilding and Iron Company , Jarrow , on 18 May 1927 , launched on 17 July 1928 and was completed on 1 May 1930 . She became the flagship of the 2nd Cruiser Squadron of the Home Fleet upon commissioning . Between 1931 and 1934 she was commanded by Captain Richard Bevan . She served with the 8th Cruiser Squadron on the North America and West Indies Station , and was detached to the Mediterranean Fleet in 1935 and 1936 for the Second Italo - Abyssinian War , before returning to the American Station until the outbreak of war in September 1939 .

The ship was transferred to Halifax , Nova Scotia that same month for convoy escort duties . In October 1939 , York was assigned to Force F at Halifax , which was active in hunting for commerce raiders and protecting convoys . She was briefly refitted in Bermuda between 31 October and 22 November before she returned to Great Britain for a more thorough refit in December . Upon its

completion on 9 February York was assigned to the 1st Cruiser Squadron of Home Fleet . On 3 March 1940 the ship intercepted the German blockade runner Arucas in the Denmark Strait near Iceland , but she was scuttled by her own crew before she could be captured .

In early April 1940 , York , and the rest of her squadron , were assigned to carry troops under Plan R 4 , the British plan to invade Norway . The troops were disembarked on 8 April when the British learned of the imminent German invasion of Norway and the squadron , under the command of Vice @-@ Admiral John Cunningham , joined the bulk of the Home Fleet already at sea . On 10 April the destroyer HMS Eclipse was badly damaged by air attack and York was detailed to tow her to Lerwick for repairs . The ship , and the light cruisers HMS Manchester and HMS Birmingham , ferried the 1st Battalion of the Green Howards and other troops from Rosyth to Åndalsnes and Molde on 24 ? 25 April . York returned home on 26 April . York was one of the ships used to evacuate British and French troops from Namsos , along with three French transports and a number of British destroyers , on the evening of 1 / 2 May .

= = = In the Mediterranean = = =

In August 1940 York was assigned to the Mediterranean Fleet , joining the 3rd Cruiser Squadron in Alexandria in late September , after escorting a convoy around the Cape of Good Hope . Two days later she participated in Operation MB.5 , where the Mediterranean Fleet escorted the light cruisers HMS Liverpool and HMS Gloucester as they ferried troops to Malta . During the Battle of Cape Passero , York sank the disabled and abandoned destroyer Artigliere on 13 October after the destroyer 's engagement with the light cruiser HMS Ajax the previous evening . A month later York and the Mediterranean Fleet executed Operation MB8 , a complex series of manoeuvres , including Operation Judgement , where the ship escorted the aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious as her aircraft attacked the Italian Fleet at Taranto on the evening of 11 / 12 November . A few days later York ferried British troops from Alexandria , Egypt to Piraeus , Greece . On 26 November , York , and the rest of the 3rd Cruiser Squadron , covered a small convoy to Malta .

The Mediterranean Fleet , including York , sortied on 16 December to conduct air strikes on Italian shipping , airbases on Rhodes and to bombard Valona . In early January 1941 the ship escorted the tanker RFA Brambleleaf and four Flower @-@ class corvettes to Suda Bay , Crete and covered operations in the Eastern Mediterranean during Operation Excess . She arrived back at Alexandria on 16 January . York returned to Suda Bay in early February for operations against Italian shipping . During Operation Lustre in March , she protected troop convoys from Egypt to Greece .

= = = Fate = = =

York was disabled at Suda Bay in Crete by two Italian explosive motorboats of the Italian Regia Marina assault Flotilla Decima Flottiglia MAS , launched by the destroyers Crispi and Sella on 26 March 1941 ; the two old destroyers were fitted with special cranes to operate assault craft . Six motorboats entered the bay , led by Tenente di vascello Luigi Faggioni , and attacked three targets in pairs ; the first was York , second the tanker Pericles and last another ship at anchor . Three of the attacking boats had various problems , either mechanical or human , due to the extreme temperature conditions , but the other three successfully attacked their targets . Two motorboats , packed with 330 @-@ kilogram (730 lb) charges in the bows , struck York amidships , flooding both boiler rooms and one engine room . Two British seamen were killed . All Italian sailors survived the attack and fell into British hands . The ship was run aground to prevent her from sinking . The submarine HMS Rover was used to supply electrical power to operate the cruiser 's guns for anti @-@ aircraft defence , but she was later severely damaged by air attack and had to be towed away for repairs . On 18 May , further damage was inflicted by German bombers and the ship was damaged beyond repair . Her main guns were wrecked by demolition charges on 22 May 1941 when the Allies began to evacuate Crete . York 's wreck was salvaged in February 1952 and towed to Bari to be broken up , beginning on 3 March .