

= HMS Woolwich ( F80 ) =

HMS Woolwich was a depot ship and destroyer tender built for the Royal Navy during the 1930s . The ship was initially deployed to support destroyers of the Mediterranean Fleet . During World War II , she was assigned to the Home , Mediterranean and Eastern Fleets . She briefly returned home in 1946 , but rejoined the Mediterranean Fleet the following year . Woolwich permanently returned to the United Kingdom in 1948 where she became a maintenance and accommodation ship . The ship was sold for scrap in 1962 .

= = Description = =

Woolwich had an overall length of 610 feet 3 inches ( 186 @. @ 0 m ) , a beam of 64 feet ( 19 @. @ 5 m ) , and a draught of 23 feet 3 inches ( 7 @. @ 1 m ) at deep load . She normally displaced 8 @, @ 750 long tons ( 8 @, @ 890 t ) and 15 @, @ 575 long tons ( 15 @, @ 825 t ) at ( full load ) . Each of the ship 's two sets of Parsons geared steam turbines drove one propeller shaft . Steam was supplied by four Admiralty three @- @ drum water @- @ tube boilers . The turbines were rated at 6 @, @ 500 shaft horsepower ( 4 @, @ 800 kW ) and gave Woolwich a speed of 15 @. @ 25 knots ( 28 @. @ 24 km / h ; 17 @. @ 55 mph ) . The ship carried 1 @, @ 112 long tons ( 1 @, @ 130 t ) of fuel oil , which gave her a range of 12 @, @ 000 nautical miles ( 22 @, @ 000 km ; 14 @, @ 000 mi ) at 10 knots ( 19 km / h ; 12 mph ) . Her crew numbered 666 officers and enlisted men .

She was initially armed with four quick @- @ firing ( QF ) four @- @ inch Mk V gun on single high @- @ angle mounts amidships . The four @- @ inch ( 102 mm ) gun mount had a maximum elevation of + 80 degrees , and the gun could fire a 31 lb ( 14 kg ) projectile with a muzzle velocity of 2 @, @ 387 ft / s ( 728 m / s ) to a maximum height of 31 @, @ 000 feet ( 9 @, @ 448 @. @ 8 m ) or a range of 16 @, @ 430 yards ( 15 @, @ 020 m ) . They had a rate of fire of about 15 rounds per minute . The guns were controlled by a High Angle Control System ( HACS ) fire @- @ control director mounted above the bridge . To resupply her destroyers , the ship carried seventy @- @ two 21 @- @ inch ( 533 mm ) torpedoes and 200 depth charges .

During World War II , Woolwich 's anti @- @ aircraft armament was reinforced by two QF two @- @ pounder light anti @- @ aircraft ( AA ) guns in single mounts on the forecastle . The gun fired a 40 @- @ millimetre ( 1 @. @ 6 in ) 2 @- @ pound ( 0 @. @ 91 kg ) shell at a muzzle velocity of 2 @, @ 400 ft / s ( 730 m / s ) to a distance of 6 @, @ 800 yards ( 6 @, @ 200 m ) . The gun 's rate of fire was approximately 96 ? 98 rounds per minute . Four Oerlikon 20 mm guns in single mounts were also fitted as well as two quadruple Vickers .50 machine gun mounts .

Several radars were added during the war . A Type 285 gunnery radar was mounted on top of the HACS director and a Type 271 / 73 surface search radar was installed abaft the two @- @ pounder guns on the forecastle .

Woolwich 's main deck consisted of one @- @ inch ( 25 mm ) armour plate over the machinery spaces and her platform deck was two inches ( 51 mm ) thick over the magazines .

= = Construction and service = =

The ship was ordered on 4 April 1933 as part of the 1932 Naval Construction Programme . She was laid down by Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Company in Govan on the River Clyde on 24 May 1933 . Woolwich was launched on 20 September 1934 and completed on 28 June 1935 . She was deployed to the Mediterranean after completion and was in Alexandria at the beginning of World War II in September 1939 . The ship returned home and was based at Scapa Flow supporting destroyers of the Home Fleet by mid @- @ 1940 . Woolwich sailed again for the Mediterranean in September ; while circumnavigating Africa , she had to put into Mombasa , Kenya for repairs to her boilers before she arrived in Alexandria in November .

In mid @- @ June 1942 , Vice @- @ Admiral Henry Harwood , Commander @- @ in @- @ Chief , Mediterranean Fleet , ordered all non @- @ essential ships to leave Alexandria as he was preparing to demolish the port facilities there to prevent their capture by the advancing Panzer Army Africa .

Woolwich and the repair ship HMS Resource , escorted by six destroyers , were transferred south of the Suez Canal until the victory at the Second Battle of El Alamein in October allowed them to return to Alexandria . She remained there until late 1943 when she was assigned to the Eastern Fleet and based at Trincomalee for the rest of the war .

Woolwich sailed back to England in 1946 , but rejoined the Mediterranean Fleet the following year where she served as flagship for the Flag Officer , Mediterranean Fleet Destroyers . The ship sailed from Valletta , Malta on 7 February 1948 for Harwich where she served as a maintenance and accommodation ship for reserve ships based there . Woolwich was refitted in Rosyth in 1952 and then transferred to Gare Loch to perform similar duties there . She was refitted again in Rosyth five years later and served as an accommodation ship in Devonport from 1958 ? 1962 . Woolwich was sold to Arnott Young in 1962 for scrap and arrived at Dalmuir , Scotland , on 18 October to be broken up .