

= HMS Exmouth (H02) =

HMS Exmouth was an E-class destroyer flotilla leader built for the Royal Navy in the early 1930s . Although assigned to the Home Fleet upon completion , the ship was attached to the Mediterranean Fleet in 1935 ? 36 during the Abyssinia Crisis . During the Spanish Civil War of 1936 ? 1939 she spent considerable time in Spanish waters , enforcing the arms blockade imposed by Britain and France on both sides of the conflict . Exmouth was assigned to convoy escort and anti-submarine patrol duties in the Western Approaches when World War II began in September 1939 . She was sunk by a German submarine in January 1940 while escorting a merchant ship north of Scotland .

= = Description = =

Exmouth displaced 1,495 long tons (1,519 t) at standard load and 2,050 long tons (2,080 t) at deep load . The ship had an overall length of 343 feet (104 .5 m) , a beam of 33 feet 9 inches (10 .3 m) and a draught of 12 feet 6 inches (3 .8 m) . She was powered by two Parsons geared steam turbines , each driving one propeller shaft , using steam provided by three Admiralty three-drum boilers . The turbines developed a total of 38,000 shaft horsepower (28,000 kW) and gave a maximum speed of 36 knots (67 km / h ; 41 mph) . Exmouth carried a maximum of 470 long tons (480 t) of fuel oil that gave her a range of 6,350 nautical miles (11,760 km ; 7,310 mi) at 15 knots (28 km / h ; 17 mph) . The ship 's complement was 175 officers and ratings .

The ship mounted five 45-calibre 4 .7-inch (120 mm) Mark IX guns in single mounts . For anti-aircraft defence , Exmouth 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 originally carried , but this increased to 35 shortly after the war began .

= = Service = =

Exmouth was ordered on 1 November 1932 under the 1931 Naval Programme , and was laid down at Portsmouth Dockyard on 15 March 1933 . She was launched on 30 January 1934 , named the following day , and commissioned for service on 9 November 1934 . On commissioning , Exmouth was assigned as leader of the 5th Destroyer Flotilla of the Home Fleet . The increased tensions between Italy and Abyssinia ? eventually leading to the outbreak of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War ? caused the Admiralty to attach the flotilla to the Mediterranean Fleet from August 1935 to March 1936 , although Exmouth was refitted in Alexandria from 4 October 1935 to 5 January 1936 . The ship patrolled Spanish waters during the Spanish Civil War enforcing the edicts of the Non-Intervention Committee in between annual refits at Portsmouth between 17 November 1936 and 19 January 1937 and 21 November 1938 and 16 January 1939 . She returned to Britain in March and Exmouth was assigned to training duties and local flotilla work based at Portsmouth on 28 April . She carried out these duties until 2 August , when she was placed into full commission as the leader of the 12th Destroyer Flotilla .

Exmouth and her flotilla were initially assigned to the Home Fleet upon the outbreak of World War II in September 1939 . The ship and two of her flotilla mates , Eclipse and Echo , escorted the battlecruiser Hood as she searched for German commerce raiders south of Iceland in late November . In December , she was transferred to the Western Approaches Command to carry out patrols and escort convoys , but was transferred to Rosyth in January 1940 to carry out the same duties in the North Sea . She was escorting the merchant Cyprian Prince on 21 January 1940 when she was spotted by the German submarine U-22 , under the command of Karl-Heinrich Jenisch , and torpedoed at 05 : 35 . She sank with the loss of all hands . After sinking Exmouth , the submarine also fired on Cyprian Prince whose master deemed it too dangerous to pick up survivors

. Eighteen bodies were later found washed ashore by a schoolboy playing truant near Wick . They were buried with full military honours in the cemetery at Wick .

= = Aftermath = =

The wreck of Exmouth was discovered in the Moray Firth in July 2001 by an independent expedition , with their findings being verified by Historic Scotland . The wreck is one of those listed as a ' protected place ' under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 .