

= HMS Basilisk (H11) =

HMS Basilisk was a B-class destroyer built for the Royal Navy around 1930 . Initially assigned to the Mediterranean Fleet , she was transferred to the Home Fleet in 1936 . The ship escorted convoys and conducted anti-submarine patrols early in World War II before participating in the Norwegian Campaign . Basilisk was sunk by German aircraft during the Dunkirk evacuation in 1940 .

= = Description = =

Basilisk 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 Brown-Curtis 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 . Basilisk 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 QF 4 .7-inch Mk IX guns in single mounts . For anti-aircraft (AA) defence , Basilisk 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 .

= = Career = =

The ship was ordered on 4 March 1929 from John Brown & Company at Clydebank , Glasgow , under the 1928 Naval Programme . She was laid down on 19 August 1929 , and launched on 6 August 1930 , as the eighth RN ship to carry this name . Basilisk was completed on 4 March 1931 at a cost of £ 220 ,342 , 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 . The flotilla was reassigned to the Home Fleet in September 1936 .

In February 1937 Basilisk arrived at the port of Málaga , Spain , captured a few days before by the Franco 's forces in the Spanish Civil War . Basilisk 's captain gained the release of Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell , a British zoologist resident in Málaga , who was arrested by Franco 's troops due to his support of the Spanish Republic .

The ship became the emergency destroyer at Devonport in March 1939 and was assigned to the 19th Destroyer Flotilla when World War II began .

Basilisk spent the next two months escorting convoys and patrolling in the English Channel and the North Sea . The ship and her sister Blanche were escorting the minelayer Adventure on the morning of 13 November in the Thames Estuary when they entered a minefield laid the night before by several German destroyers . Adventure and Blanche both struck mines ; the latter lost all power and later capsized whilst under tow . Basilisk continued to escort convoys and patrol until April 1940 when the Norwegian Campaign began . On 24 April , the ship , together with the destroyers Wren and Hesperus , escorted the battleship Resolution to Narvik on 24 April . In early May , she escorted the troopship Empress of Australia to Norway . Basilisk supported the Allied landings on 12 ? 13 May at Bjerkvik during the Battle of Narvik .

The ship was transferred from the Western Approaches Command on 30 May to support the evacuation from Dunkirk . She made two trips to Dover during the following day and evacuated a

total of 695 men . Basilisk returned to La Panne to load more troops on the morning of 1 June and was attacked three times by German bombers . One bomb from the first wave detonated inside the No. 3 boiler room , killed all of her boiler and engine room personnel , fractured her steam lines and knocked out all her machinery . Near misses from the same attack buckled the sides of her hull and her upper deck . The ship 's torpedoes and depth charges were jettisoned to reduce topweight and the French fishing trawler Jolie Mascotte attempted to tow Basilisk . A second attack caused no further damage , but caused the French ship to drop the tow . The third attack around noon sank Basilisk in shallow water at 51 ° 08 ' 16 " N 02 ° 35 ' 06 " E. Jolie Mascotte and the destroyer Whitehall rescued eight officers and 123 crewmen from the ship . Whitehall then destroyed the wreck with gunfire and torpedoes .