

= HMS Gipsy (H63) =

HMS Gipsy was a G class destroyer built for the Royal Navy during the 1930s . She spent most of the pre war period as part of the Mediterranean Fleet . The ship was transferred to the British Isles to escort shipping in local waters shortly after the beginning of World War II . Less than a month after her arrival she struck a mine outside Harwich and sank with the loss of 30 of her crew . Her wreck was salvaged and slowly scrapped over the course of the war .

= = Description = =

Gipsy 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 . Gipsy carried a maximum of 470 long tons (480 t) of fuel oil that gave 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 137 officers and men in peacetime .

The ship mounted four 45 calibre 4.7 inch (120 mm) Mark IX guns in single mounts . For anti aircraft defence Gipsy 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 rail and two depth charge throwers were fitted ; 20 depth charges were originally carried , but this increased to 35 shortly after the war began .

= = Service = =

Gipsy was laid down by the Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Company , at Govan , Scotland on 4 September 1934 , launched on 7 November 1935 and completed on 22 February 1936 . Excluding government furnished equipment like the armament , the ship cost £ 250,364 . Aside from a brief period assigned to the 20th Destroyer Flotilla of the Home Fleet after her commissioning , Gipsy spent the pre war period assigned to the 1st Destroyer Flotilla with the Mediterranean Fleet . She was refitted at Devonport Dockyard between 2 June and 30 July 1938 .

On the outbreak of war in September 1939 , Gipsy was deployed with the 1st Destroyer Flotilla for patrols and contraband control in the Eastern Mediterranean , based at Alexandria . Gipsy and her entire flotilla were transferred to the Western Approaches Command at Plymouth in October . On 12 November she collided with her sister ship , Greyhound , en route to Harwich , and her new assignment with the 22nd Destroyer Flotilla , but she was only slightly damaged . The ship rescued three German airmen outside Harwich harbour on 21 November and returned to port to turn them over to the army . Later that evening , Gipsy set out with destroyers Griffin , Keith and Boadicea to patrol in the North Sea . She struck a magnetic mine amidships outside the harbour , possibly laid by the aircraft whose crew she had rescued earlier that day , and sank . Thirty of her crew , including the captain , were killed . The 115 survivors were rescued by the other destroyers .

The ship 's wreck was upright on the seabed with only the bridge visible at high tide , but it blocked the channel . Only buckled plating amidships held the two main sections of the wreck together and they were cut by explosives when salvage began shortly after her sinking . The two halves were raised by pontoons , and were subsequently broken up . 750 long tons (760 t) of ferrous scrap and 38 long tons (39 t) of non ferrous metals were recovered between June 1940 and February 1944 .