

= HMS Implacable ( R86 ) =

HMS Implacable was an Implacable class aircraft carrier built for the Royal Navy during World War II . Upon completion in 1944 , she was initially assigned to the Home Fleet and attacked targets in Norway for the rest of the year . She was subsequently assigned to the British Pacific Fleet ( BPF ) where she attacked the Japanese naval base at Truk and targets in the Japanese Home Islands in 1945 . The ship was used to repatriate liberated Allied prisoners of war ( PoWs ) and soldiers after the Japanese surrender , for the rest of the year . Implacable returned home in 1946 and became the Home Fleet 's deck landing training carrier , a role that lasted until 1950 . She briefly served as the flagship of Home Fleet in 1950 . During this time she participated in many exercises and made a number of port visits in Western Europe . She was placed in reserve in 1950 and converted into a training ship in 1952 , and served as flagship of the Home Fleet Training Squadron . The ship was considered for a major modernisation in 1951 ? 52 , but this was rejected as too expensive and time consuming . Implacable was decommissioned in 1954 and sold for scrap the following year .

= = Design and description = =

The Implacable class had its origin as an improved version of the Illustrious class aircraft carriers for the 1938 Naval Programme . They were designed to be 2 knots ( 3 @ 7 km / h ; 2 @ 3 mph ) faster , and to carry an additional dozen aircraft at the expense of reduced armour protection to remain within the 23 @, 000 long tons ( 23 @, 000 t ) available from the tonnage allowed by the Washington Naval Treaty . Implacable was 766 feet 6 inches ( 233 @ 6 m ) long overall and 730 feet ( 222 @ 5 m ) at the waterline . Her beam was 95 feet 9 inches ( 29 @ 2 m ) at the waterline and she had a draught of 29 feet 4 inches ( 8 @ 9 m ) at deep load . The Implacable class ships were significantly overweight and displaced 32 @, 110 long tons ( 32 @, 630 t ) at deep load . The ships had metacentric heights of 4 @ 06 feet ( 1 @ 2 m ) at light load and 6 @ 91 feet ( 2 @ 1 m ) at deep load as completed . Implacable 's complement was approximately 2 @, 300 officers and enlisted men in 1945 .

The ships had four Parsons geared steam turbines , each driving one shaft , using steam supplied by eight Admiralty 3 @ drum boilers . The turbines were designed to produce a total of 148 @, 000 shp ( 110 @, 000 kW ) , enough to give them a maximum speed of 32 @ 5 knots ( 60 @ 2 km / h ; 37 @ 4 mph ) . On sea trials , Implacable reached speeds of 31 @ 89 knots ( 59 @ 06 km / h ; 36 @ 70 mph ) with 151 @, 200 shp ( 112 @, 700 kW ) . She carried a maximum of 4 @, 690 long tons ( 4 @, 770 t ) of fuel oil which gave her a range of 6 @, 720 nautical miles ( 12 @, 450 km ; 7 @, 730 mi ) at 20 knots ( 37 km / h ; 23 mph ) .

The 760 @ foot ( 231 @ 6 m ) armoured flight deck had a maximum width of 102 feet ( 31 @ 1 m ) . A single hydraulic aircraft catapult was fitted on the forward part of the flight deck . The Implacable class carriers were equipped with two lifts on the centreline , the forward of which measured 45 by 33 feet ( 13 @ 7 by 10 @ 1 m ) and served only the upper hangar , and the aft lift ( 45 by 22 feet ( 13 @ 7 by 6 @ 7 m ) ) which served both hangars . The upper hangar was 458 feet ( 139 @ 6 m ) long and the lower hangar was 208 feet ( 63 @ 4 m ) long ; both had a maximum width of 62 feet ( 18 @ 9 m ) . Both hangars had a height of only 14 feet which precluded storage of Lend @-@ Lease Vought F4U Corsair fighters as well as many post @-@ war aircraft and helicopters . Designed to stow 48 aircraft in their hangars , the use of a permanent deck park allowed the Implacable class to accommodate up to 81 aircraft . The additional crewmen , maintenance personnel and facilities needed to support these aircraft were housed in the lower hangar . The ships were provided with 94 @, 650 imperial gallons ( 430 @, 300 l ; 113 @, 670 US gal ) of aviation gasoline .

= = = Armament , electronics and protection = = =

The ship 's main armament consisted of sixteen quick @-@ firing ( QF ) 4 @ 5 @-@ inch ( 110

mm ) dual 40 mm purpose guns in eight twin 40 mm gun turrets , four in sponsons on each side of the hull . Unlike the Illustrious class ships , the roofs of the gun turrets were flat and flush with the flight deck . The gun had a maximum range of 20,000 yards ( 18,000 m ) . Her light anti-aircraft defences included five octuple mounts for QF 2 pounder ( " pom pom " ) anti-aircraft ( AA ) guns , two on the flight deck forward of the island , one on the aft part of the island and two in sponsons on the port side of the hull . A single quadruple 2 pounder mount was also fitted on the port side of the hull . The 2 pounder gun had a maximum range of 6,000 yards ( 6,000 m ) . The ship was also fitted with 61 Oerlikon 20 mm autocannon in 19 single and 21 twin 40 mm gun mounts . These guns had a maximum range of 4,000 yards ( 4,000 m ) , but some were replaced by 40 mm Bofors AA guns when the ships were transferred to the Pacific Theater as the 20 mm shell was unlikely to destroy a kamikaze before it hit the ship . The Bofors gun had a maximum range of 10,000 yards ( 9,000 m ) . Two additional quadruple " pom pom " mounts were added to Implacable before she joined the British Pacific Fleet in 1945 . By the end of the war , she had 4 single Bofors guns , plus 17 twin and 17 single Oerlikon mounts . By April 1946 these had been reduced to 12 Bofors guns , 8 twin and 14 single Oerlikon guns .

The specifics of the Implacable class ships ' radar suite are not readily available . They were fitted with the Type 277 surface search / height finding radar on top of the bridge and a Type 293 target indicator radar on the foremast . The ships probably carried Type 279 and Type 281B early warning radars , based on the radars fitted aboard the Illustrious class carrier Victorious late in the war . In addition , Type 282 and Type 285 gunnery radars were mounted on the fire control directors .

The Implacable class ships had a flight deck protected by 3 inches ( 76 mm ) of armour . The sides of the hangars were either 1.5 inches ( 38 mm ) or 2 inches ( 51 mm ) . The ends of the hangars were protected by 2 inch bulkheads and the armour of the hangar deck ranged from 1.5 to 2.5 inches ( 38 to 64 mm ) in thickness . The waterline armour belt was 4.5 inches ( 114 mm ) thick , but only covered the central portion of the ship . The belt was closed by 1.5 to 2 inch transverse bulkheads fore and aft . The underwater defence system was a layered system of liquid- and air filled compartments as used in the Illustrious class . The magazines for the 4.5 inch guns lay outside the armoured citadel and were protected by 2 to 3 inch roofs , 4.5 inch sides and 1.5 to 2 inch ends .

= = Construction and service = =

Implacable was laid down by Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. at their shipyard in Clydeside on 21 February 1939 , as Yard Number 672 . Her construction was temporarily suspended in 1940 , in favour of higher priority ships needed to fight in the Battle of the Atlantic , before she was launched on 10 December 1942 by Queen Elizabeth . Captain Lachlan Mackintosh was appointed to command the ship in November 1943 . She was commissioned on 22 May 1944 , and began sea trials which revealed a significant number of problems that required rectification , so the ship was not formally completed until 28 August . Implacable was assigned to the Home Fleet and was working up over the next several months while the Fairey Fireflies of 1771 Squadron flew aboard on 10 September . The squadron was followed by the Fairey Barracuda torpedo bombers of 828 and 841 Squadrons that made up No. 2 Naval Torpedo Bomber Reconnaissance Wing later that month .

Her first mission was to locate the German battleship Tirpitz which had left its anchorage in Kaafjord in early October . Implacable departed Scapa Flow on 16 October , and a section of her Fireflies spotted the battleship off Håkøya Island near Tromsø two days later . No attack was mounted because the carrier lacked any single seat fighters aboard to escort the strike aircraft , although they did damage a cargo ship before returning home . On 16 October , the Supermarine Seafires of 887 and 894 Squadrons of No. 24 Naval Fighter Wing landed aboard . In late October she participated in Operation Athletic off the Norwegian coast , where her aircraft sank six ships and damaged a German submarine for the loss of one Barracuda , while conducting the Royal Navy 's

last wartime torpedo attack . On 1 November Captain Charles Hughes @-@ Hallett relieved Mackintosh and assumed command of the ship .

The Barracudas were replaced by the Seafires of No. 30 Naval Fighter Wing , which consisted of 801 and 880 Squadrons , on 8 November and the Seafires provided air cover for minelaying operations by escort carriers from 11 to 21 November . The next day , Admiral Sir Henry Ruthven Moore , Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief of the Home Fleet , hoisted his flag in Implacable and the ship set sail to hunt for a convoy that had been reported near Alsten Island ( Operation Provident ) with the Seafires and Fireflies of 801 , 880 , and 1771 Squadrons aboard . Bad weather prevented aircraft from being launched until 27 November , but they located the convoy and sank two merchantmen , including MS Rigel , and damaged six others . Upon her return to Scapa on 29 November , Moore lowered his flag , but Vice Admiral Sir Frederick Dalrymple @-@ Hamilton , second in command of Home Fleet , hoisted his flag on 6 December for Operation Urbane , another minelaying operation during which her Fireflies helped to sink a German minesweeper . Dalrymple @-@ Hamilton transferred his flag off Implacable when she returned to Scapa on 9 December . On 15 December she began a refit at Rosyth preparatory to her transfer to the British Pacific Fleet , which included augmenting her light AA armament .

Upon its completion on 10 March 1945 , 801 , 828 , 880 , and 1771 Squadrons reembarked with a total strength of 48 Seafires , 21 Grumman TBF Avenger torpedo bombers and a dozen Fireflies , the largest air group aboard a British carrier thus far . Implacable departed six days later to join the BPF and arrived at Port Said , Egypt , on 25 March . While passing through the Suez Canal , a strong gust of wind forced her ashore and it took her escorting tugboats five hours to pull her off . Undamaged , she proceeded on her voyage and reached Sydney on 8 May 1945 ( V @-@ E Day ) .

Implacable arrived at the BPF 's main operating base at Manus Island , in the Admiralty Islands , on 29 May . A week later Rear Admiral Sir Patrick Brind hoisted his flag in preparation for Operation Inmate , an attack on the Japanese naval base at Truk in the Caroline Islands that began on 14 June . Having flown 113 offensive sorties over the two days of the attack , with only one loss of a Seafire to enemy action , the carrier and her escorts returned to Manus Island on 17 June . On 30 June No. 8 Carrier Air Group was formed , absorbing No. 24 Naval Fighter Wing , to control all of the air units aboard Implacable .

After working up , she sailed to join the main body of the BPF off the Japanese coast on 6 July , and rendezvoused with them ten days later . Implacable flew off eight Fireflies and a dozen Seafires against targets north of Tokyo on 17 July , but only the Fireflies were able to locate their targets because of bad weather . Eight Fireflies and twenty Seafires attacked targets near Tokyo the next day , before more bad weather halted flying operations until 24 ? 25 July , when the BPF 's aircraft attacked targets near Osaka and the Inland Sea , crippling the escort carrier Kaiyo . After replenishing , airstrikes resumed on 28 and 30 July , the British sinking the escort Okinawa near Maizuru . A combination of bad weather , refuelling requirements and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima delayed the resumption of air operations until 9 August . During the day , Implacable 's Seafires flew 94 sorties and her Fireflies flew 14 against targets in northern Honshu and southern Hokkaido for the loss of two Seafires . The attacks were repeated the next day , sinking two warships , numerous small merchantmen and destroying numerous railroad locomotives and parked aircraft . The BPF had been scheduled to withdraw after 10 August to prepare for Operation Olympic , the invasion of Kyushu scheduled for November , and the bulk of the force , including Implacable , departed for Manus on 12 August . Her aircraft flew over 1 @,@ 000 sorties since her arrival the previous month .

= = = Post War = = =

She arrived at Sydney on 24 August , and had her hangars refitted to accommodate Allied PoWs and soldiers for repatriation . Having left her air group behind to maximize the numbers of passengers she could carry , the ship arrived at Manila on 25 September , where she loaded over 2 @,@ 000 American and Canadian PoWs . She dropped off the Americans at Pearl Harbor on 5

October and continued on to deliver her Canadian passengers at Vancouver six days later . Opened for public tours , Implacable remained for a week before sailing to Hong Kong to pick up several hundred PoWs and continued onwards to Manila to load 2 @, @ 114 more passengers . She delivered them to Balikpapan , Borneo for transshipment to Britain . In their place the carrier embarked 2 @, @ 126 men of the 7th Australian Division , and their equipment , to return to Australia . She arrived at Sydney on 17 November and sailed on 8 December to load more returning troops from Papua New Guinea . Arriving back at Sydney before Christmas , the ship had her additional bunks , etc . , removed to return her to operational status .

In January 1946 her air group flew aboard , minus the disbanded 880 Squadron , and with 1790 Squadron replacing 1771 Squadron . After several days of flying exercises , Implacable made a port visit to Melbourne together with her sister Indefatigable and several other ships . She became the flagship of Vice Admiral Sir Philip Vian , the newly appointed second in command of the BPF on 31 January . She continued a relaxed schedule of training and port visits until she began a refit on 15 March in Sydney , that lasted until 29 April , when she put to sea to fly on her aircraft and to dump overboard the 16 Lend @-@ Lease Avengers belonging to 828 Squadron ( Britain had to either pay for them or dispose of them with the end of the war , and lacked the means to do the former ) . She sailed for home on 5 May and reached Devonport on 3 June , where Vian struck his flag .

Implacable became the deck @-@ landing training carrier for the Home Fleet when she next put to sea in August . On 25 September Captain Aubrey Mansergh assumed command of the ship . Two months later she participated in an exercise with the Home Fleet and was lightly damaged when she collided with the light carrier Vengeance while docking in Devonport on 7 November . On 1 February 1947 , she joined the other ships of the Home Fleet as they rendezvoused with the battleship Vanguard , which was serving as the royal yacht to escort King George VI as he set out for the first royal tour of South Africa . Implacable hosted the king and his family on 7 February , staging a small air show for them after which the queen addressed the crew . After leaving the royals , she made port visits at Freetown , Sierra Leone , and Dakar , Senegal before arriving in the Western Mediterranean for more training . Arriving home on 7 March , she began a lengthy refit at Rosyth on 17 April .

Upon its completion in October 1947 she embarked 813 Squadron , flying Blackburn Firebrand TF.5s , and resumed training . Captain John Stevens relieved Mansergh on 9 February 1948 , as the latter had been promoted . In June and July , the ship participated in a series of demonstrations for students in the Royal Navy 's staff college . Among these was the first carrier landing by a Gloster Meteor jet @-@ powered fighter , flown by Lieutenant @-@ Commander Eric Brown , landings by prototypes of the Westland Wyvern and Short Sturgeon , rocket firing by Fireflies and an " attack " on Implacable by motor torpedo boats . She completed a 10 @-@ week refit on 10 November and resumed deck @-@ landing practices . She sailed for Gibraltar on 27 February 1949 and 801 Squadron flew aboard on 5 March with its de Havilland Sea Hornets , the day after she arrived there . Admiral Sir Rhoderick McGrigor , commander @-@ in @-@ chief of Home Fleet , hoisted his flag aboard the carrier on 6 March before beginning a short exercise with some of the other ships of Home Fleet . She made port visits in Oslo and Bergen , Norway in June , hosting King Haakon VII . While berthed at Portsmouth , King Abdullah I of Jordan visited on 19 August and the Prime Minister , Clement Attlee visited 10 days later . 702 Squadron flew aboard with seven de Havilland Sea Vampires in September to conduct carrier evaluations with the new fighter jets that lasted until 11 November . McGrigor was relieved by Admiral Vian ten days later .

Implacable spent February and March 1950 training in the Western Mediterranean and Captain H. W. Briggs assumed command on 1 April . She resumed flight training in the Irish Sea and off the western coast of Scotland until she made a port visit to Copenhagen in mid @-@ July . King Frederick IX of Denmark inspected the ship on 18 July and Admiral Vian transferred his flag to Vanguard on 11 September . Two days later she was placed in reserve and slowly converted into a training ship by the addition of extra accommodation and classrooms . During this time she was considered for a major reconstruction that would combine her two hangars into a single hangar with a height of 17 feet 6 inches ( 5 @. @ 33 m ) and allow her to operate 30 @, @ 000 @-@ pound ( 14 @, @ 000 kg ) aircraft . In addition her armament would be modernised and the fuel supply for her

aircraft would be more than doubled . A similar reconstruction was then in progress for Victorious , but it proved to be much more expensive than planned and also took more time than had been estimated . Short of both time and money for the project , the Admiralty cancelled the modernisation in June 1952 .

Implacable was recommissioned on 16 January 1952 as the flagship of the Home Fleet Training Squadron . On 13 February she arrived at Dover to serve as the port 's guard ship before and after the state funeral of King George VI , to salute royalty and heads of state arriving by sea . After its conclusion , the ship sailed for the western Mediterranean to rendezvous with her sister for exercises . In June the two sisters represented a fast troop convoy being attacked by aircraft during an air defence exercise . They visited Copenhagen in the next month before returning home . Implacable sailed for Gibraltar on 25 September and made a port visit to Lisbon , Portugal before returning to Devonport for a refit . On 16 November she had an oil fire in her galley that damaged her electrical wiring badly enough to require extending her refit to 20 January 1953 . She spent most of February and March in the western Mediterranean together with her sister , participating in exercises before sailing to Southampton for a brief refit .

For the Coronation Fleet Review of Queen Elizabeth II on 15 June , she flew the flag of Vice Admiral John Stevens , her former commanding officer , now Flag Officer , Home Fleet Training Squadron . On 5 September Rear Admiral H. L. F. Adams relieved Stevens and the ship joined Indefatigable for fleet exercises off the Scilly Isles and in the Bristol Channel the following month . She ferried the 1st Battalion , Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders from Devonport to Trinidad in response to a crisis in British Guiana , and transported a battalion of the Royal Welch Fusiliers from Trinidad to Jamaica in October , returning home on 11 November . On 19 August 1954 , she was relieved as flagship by the light carrier Theseus .

= = = Decommissioning and disposal = = =

Implacable decommissioned on 1 September 1954 and was sold to Thomas W. Ward Ltd for breaking up on 27 October 1955 after being towed to Gareloch . Implacable was scrapped at Inverkeithing beginning the following month .

= = Squadrons embarked = =