

= HMS Active (1869) =

HMS Active was a Volage class corvette built for the Royal Navy in the late 1860s . Launched in 1869 , she entered service in 1873 , and was the Commodore 's ship on the Cape of Good Hope and West Africa Station . Her crew served ashore in both the Third Anglo Ashanti and Zulu Wars . From 1885 to 1898 , the ship was the flagship of the Training Squadron . Active was sold for scrap in 1906 .

= Description =

Active was 270 feet (82 m) long between perpendiculars and had a beam of 42 feet 1 inch (12 m) . Forward the ship had a draught of 16 feet 5 inches (5 m) , but aft she drew 21 ft 5 in (6 m) . Active displaced 3 ,078 long tons (3 ,127 t) and had a burthen of 2 ,322 tons . Her iron hull was covered by a 3 -inch (76 mm) layer of oak that was sheathed with copper from the waterline down to prevent biofouling . Watertight transverse bulkheads subdivided the hull . Her crew consisted of 340 officers and enlisted men .

The ship had one 2 -cylinder horizontal return connecting rod steam engine made by Humphreys and Tennant driving a single 19 -foot (5 m) propeller . Five rectangular boilers provided steam to the engine at a working pressure of 30 psi (207 kPa ; 2 kgf / cm²) . The engine produced a total of 4 ,130 indicated horsepower (3 ,080 kW) which gave Active a maximum speed of 15 knots (28 km / h ; 17 mph) . The ship carried 410 long tons (420 t) of coal , enough to steam 2 ,000 nautical miles (3 ,700 km ; 2 ,300 mi) at 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) .

Active was ship rigged and had a sail area of 16 ,593 square feet (1 ,542 m²) . The lower masts were made of iron , but the other masts were wood . The ship 's best speed under sail alone was 12 m 5 knots (23 m 2 km / h ; 14 m 4 mph) . Her funnel was semi -retractable to reduce wind resistance and her propeller could be hoisted up into the stern of the ship to reduce drag while under sail .

The ship was initially armed with a mix of 7 -inch and 64 -pounder 64 cwt rifled muzzle loading guns . The six 7 -inch (178 mm) guns and two of the four 64 -pounders were mounted on the broadside while the other two were mounted on the forecastle and poop deck as chase guns . In 1879 , ten BL 6 -inch 80 -pounder breech loading guns replaced all the broadside weapons . Two carriages for 14 -inch (356 mm) torpedoes were added as well .

= Service =

HMS Active was laid down in 1867 and launched on 13 March 1869 . The ship was completed in March 1871 at a total cost of £ 126 ,156 . Of this , £ 85 ,795 was spent on her hull and £ 40 ,361 on her machinery . Unlike her sister ship Volage , Active was placed in reserve after completion until 1873 when she was commissioned to serve as the flagship of the Commander in Chief , Cape of Good Hope and West Coast of Africa Station , Commodore William Hewett . The ship participated in naval operations during the Third Anglo Ashanti War of 1874 and some of her crew were landed to reinforce the forces ashore . Commodore Francis Sullivan replaced Hewett in 1876 and he retained command until 1879 when the ship returned home to refit .

= Zulu War =

Between 19 November 1878 and 21 July 1879 , during the Anglo Zulu War , 173 men of Active (along with men from Tenedos , Shah and Boadicea) served ashore as part of an 858 -man naval brigade . The group from Active comprised 10 officers , 100 seamen , 5 idlers , 42 Marines , 14 Kroomen , and 2 medical attendants . In addition to small arms , they were equipped

with two 12 @-@ pounder breech @-@ loading guns , 24 @-@ pounder rockets , and a Gatling gun . The 12 @-@ pounders were exchanged for two of the Army 's 7 @-@ pounder mountain guns before entering Zululand .

Attached to the No.1 Column commanded by Colonel Charles Pearson , they crossed the Tugela River from Natal into Zululand on 12 January 1879 . On 22 January they saw action in the Battle of Inyezane , driving off an attacking force of Zulus with rockets , Martini @-@ Henry rifles and the Gatling gun . The same day the British main force was defeated at the Battle of Isandlwana , and so Pearson 's column advanced to Eshowe , where it was besieged for two months , until relieved on 3 April . During the campaign , Active 's crew suffered only one man killed , and nine wounded in action against the enemy , while nine died of disease during the siege , and one man drowned while crossing the Tugela . In 1881 the South Africa Medal was awarded to those members of Active 's crew that had served there .

= = = Training Squadron = = =

Active was rearmed and refitted in 1879 and placed in reserve until she was selected in 1885 to be the commodore 's flagship in the newly formed Training Squadron . Active was the last square @-@ rigged naval ship to leave Portsmouth Harbour under sail . She was paid off in 1898 and was sold for scrap on 10 July 1906 .

A memorial to the men of Active who lost their lives during the African campaigns can be found in Victoria Park , Portsmouth .