

= HMS Cardiff (D108) =

HMS Cardiff was a British Type 42 destroyer and the third ship of the Royal Navy to be named in honour of the Welsh capital city of Cardiff . Construction was started by Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering in Barrow @-@ in @-@ Furness , Cumbria , and completed at Swan Hunter 's Hawthorn Leslie yard in Hebburn . Cardiff was launched on 22 February 1974 .

During her career , Cardiff served in the Falklands War , where she shot down the last Argentine aircraft of the conflict and accepted the surrender of a 700 @-@ strong garrison in the settlement of Port Howard . During the 1991 Gulf War , her Lynx helicopter sank two Iraqi minesweepers . She later participated in the build @-@ up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq as part of the Royal Navy 's constant Armilla patrol ; Cardiff thwarted attempts to smuggle oil out of the country , but was not involved in the actual invasion .

Cardiff was decommissioned in July 2005 , having earned two battle honours for service in the Falklands and Gulf wars . She was sent to Turkey for scrapping despite calls by former servicemen for her to be preserved as a museum ship and local tourist attraction in Cardiff .

= = Construction = =

The Type 42 destroyers (also known as the Sheffield class) were made in three batches ; Cardiff was built in the first . She cost over £ 30 million , which was double her original quoted price . Her keel was laid down on 6 November 1972 , at Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Ltd in Cumbria . The build was interrupted by a labour shortage at Vickers . To solve this problem , she was towed to Swan Hunter in Tyne and Wear and completed there .

Type 42s were designed as anti @-@ aircraft vessels primarily equipped with the Sea Dart , a surface @-@ to @-@ air missile system capable of hitting targets up to 56 kilometres (30 nmi) away . Cardiff 's secondary weapon system was a 4 @.@ 5 inch Mark 8 naval gun , capable of firing 21 @-@ kilogram (46 lb) shells to a range of 22 kilometres (12 nmi) . After the Falklands War , in which two Type 42s were sunk by enemy aircraft , the entire class was equipped with the Phalanx close @-@ in weapon system , a Gatling cannon that fires 3 @,@ 000 rounds per minute and is designed to shoot down anti @-@ ship missiles .

= = Operational history = =

= = = Early career = = =

Cardiff was launched on 22 February 1974 by Lady Caroline Gilmore . Following fitting @-@ out and sea trials , Cardiff commissioned on 24 September 1979 under command of Captain Barry Wilson . During the next 12 months of active service she steamed over 21 @,@ 000 kilometres (13 @,@ 000 mi) and undertook various duties . She returned to her place of construction , Tyne and Wear , so that the Swan Hunter crew who fitted her out could exhibit the warship to their families . In the spirit of establishing a firm association , Cardiff visited her namesake city and welcomed more than 7 @,@ 000 people on board . Her crew raised over £ 1 @,@ 000 for local charities by participating in sponsored bicycle rides and dinghy rows from Portsmouth and Newcastle upon Tyne . BBC Radio Wales based an entire programme on her and she appeared on the BBC and ITV national television channels . In November 1979 , Cardiff coordinated the search for survivors of the MV Pool Fisher , which sank off the Isle of Wight with the loss of most of her crew .

In 1980 , she attended the annual Navy Days event at Portsmouth and Portland Harbour , receiving a total of 17 @,@ 300 visitors . In October of the same year , she ventured abroad for the first time on a visit to Ghent , Belgium . She followed this with a fortnight of Sea Dart exercises on a range off Aberporth , in South Wales . Whilst in the region , the destroyer attended celebrations marking the 75th anniversary of Cardiff 's city status .

== = Falklands War (1982) = = =

On 2 April 1982 , the disputed British overseas territory of the Falkland Islands was invaded by neighbouring Argentina . The United Kingdom , nearly 13 @,@ 000 kilometres (8 @,@ 000 mi) away , assembled and dispatched a naval task force of 28 @,@ 000 troops to recapture the islands . The conflict ended that June with the surrender of the Argentine forces ; the battles fought on land , at sea , and in the air had cost the lives of some 900 British and Argentine servicemen .

Just over a month before the start of the war , Cardiff , under the command of Captain Michael Harris , had begun a six @-@ month deployment to the Persian Gulf with the Armilla Patrol . Cardiff had relieved her sister ship and class lead Sheffield of this posting , but was herself redeployed to the Falklands effort on 23 April . She sailed alone to Gibraltar and rendezvoused on 14 May with the Bristol group of British warships already heading south to the islands .

During the journey , Cardiff 's crew performed various training exercises , including defence against air attack (involving simulation runs by friendly Harrier and Jaguar aircraft) , nuclear , biological , and chemical weapons and Exocet anti @-@ ship missiles . All British Type 42 's involved in the war were instructed to paint two vertical black stripes down either side the middle of their ships . This would allow the Royal Navy submarines to distinguish them from the two Argentine Type 42 's . On 22 May , an Argentine reconnaissance Boeing 707 , no . TC @-@ 92 of the Argentine Air Force 's Grupo 1 , De Transporte Aereo Escuadron II (Spanish for " 2nd Air Transport Squadron , Group 1 ") , was fired on by Cardiff . The aircraft was detected while shadowing the Bristol group , and Cardiff was ordered to drop back and engage . The ship fired two Sea Darts at the aircraft at 11 : 40 (local time) from maximum range ; the first fell short and second missed due to evasive manoeuvres taken by the aircraft 's crew . After the attack , TC @-@ 92 dropped below radar level and returned to El Palomar . On 25 May , Cardiff was tasked with the recovery of four Special Air Service (SAS) troopers , who had parachuted from a C @-@ 130 Hercules passing over the destroyer .

The Bristol group met up with the main task force on 26 May . Cardiff 's arrival allowed the damaged Glasgow to return to the United Kingdom for repairs . Cardiff 's primary role was to form part of the anti @-@ aircraft warfare picket , protecting British ships from air attack and attempting to ambush Argentine aircraft that were re @-@ supplying Port Stanley Airport . She was also required to fire at enemy positions on the islands with her 4 @.@ 5 @-@ inch gun . In one engagement she fired 277 high @-@ explosive rounds .

Shortly after arrival , she was involved in the final Exocet raid against the aircraft carrier Invincible . In the early hours of 6 June , Cardiff shot down a friendly Army Air Corps Gazelle helicopter (no . XX377 of 656 Squadron) , in the belief it was a low flying enemy C @-@ 130 Hercules . All four on board were killed , the factors contributing to the accident were a poor level of communication between the army and navy , and the helicopter 's " Identification Friend or Foe " transmitter had been turned off due to it interfering with other equipment . However a board of inquiry recommended that neither negligence nor blame should be attributed to any individual and that no action should be taken against any individual . The number " 205 " was later painted at the crash site (51 @.@ 783600 ° S 58 @.@ 467786 ° W ? / -51.783600 ; -58.467786) as a memorial , the significance being that two of the helicopter 's passengers were from 205 Signal Squadron . Approximately an hour after the shoot down , Cardiff spotted four landing craft carrying troops from the 2nd Battalion , Scots Guards . Having been told there were no other British forces in the area , Cardiff 's crew assumed they were Argentine , and fired illuminating star shells over them in preparation to attack . When the Guards saw the star shells and realised Cardiff 's intentions , the officer in charge of the landing craft , Major Ewen Southby @-@ Tailyour , moved them to shallow water in an attempt to outrun her . Cardiff , still closing on the craft , signalled to them a single word " friend " via Aldis lamp , Southby @-@ Tailyour responded with " to which side " . At this point Cardiff " left them alone " , neither attacking or assisting them , nevertheless another " blue on blue " incident was avoided .

On the morning of 13 June , two Argentine Dagger aircraft attacked Cardiff 's Lynx helicopter , no . 335 of 829 NAS , while it was searching in the Falkland Sound area . Poor weather had forced the Argentine craft to abandon their original mission of bombing Mount Longdon , and the third Dagger of their formation had suffered a mechanical failure and returned to base . The Lynx began evasive

manoeuvres and dodged the attacks ; the pilot , Lieutenant Christopher Clayton , was mentioned in despatches for his efforts .

Later that day , Cardiff shot down what would prove to be the last Argentine aircraft lost during the war , with a Sea Dart missile Canberra bomber B @-@ 108 of Grupo de Bombardeo 2 (" Bombing Group 2 ") en route to bomb Port Harriet House . The pilot , Captain Pastrán , managed to eject but the navigator , Captain Casado , (whose ejection seat may have been damaged by the missile) was killed . The remains of Captain Casado were discovered in 1986 , and identified by DNA testing in September 2008 .

Argentina surrendered on 14 June , and Cardiff was required to accept the surrender of a 700 @-@ strong Argentine garrison in the settlement of Port Howard on West Falkland a day later . Members of Cardiff 's crew were used to man a captured Argentine patrol boat , renamed HMS Tiger Bay , in Stanley . Cardiff spent the rest of June acting as the Landing Area Air Warfare Controller (LAAWC) around San Carlos .

Over the course of the war , Cardiff fired nine Sea Dart missiles and one Mk 46 torpedo . She returned to the United Kingdom on 28 July 1982 , having left the Falklands three weeks earlier along with Exeter and Yarmouth . Captain Michael Harris handed over command on 24 August 1982 , after the annual maintenance period . Following the war , all Type 42 destroyers were fitted with Oerlikon 30 mm twin cannons port and starboard , for protection against airborne threats . These were later replaced by the Phalanx close @-@ in weapon system .

= = = Gulf War (1990 ? 91) = = =

When Saddam Hussein 's Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990 , British Secretary of State for Defence Tom King soon announced that the UK military contribution to the region was to be increased . A coalition of nations was formed , and a combined naval force entered the Persian Gulf and sailed north , neutralising the Iraqi Navy as it went , and then began conducting naval gunfire support and mine counter @-@ measure missions in preparation for the main amphibious landing force .

Having returned from the Persian Gulf in May 1990 , after only a few months in UK Cardiff sailed again , as a reinforcement to Group X @-@ Ray , Brazen , London and Gloucester who had sailed to relieve Armilla Group Whiskey , which consisted of Battleaxe , Jupiter and York . Cardiff and Gloucester were to form part of the air defence barrier along with Bunker Hill , Princeton and Worden protecting three United States aircraft carriers : Midway , Ranger and Theodore Roosevelt . Cardiff had other responsibilities , including surface surveillance and boarding operations , to maintain the security around the task force .

Royal Navy Lynxes worked in combination with US Seahawks during the Gulf War . The American helicopters lacked an effective anti @-@ ship missile , but had superior surveillance capability compared to the British Lynx . They would locate hostile boats for the British helicopters , which would then attack the target with its Sea Skua missiles . In total , Lynx helicopters flew nearly 600 sorties during the Gulf War , while their crews and engineers maintained flying rates three times their norm .

Despite her parent ship dodging mines and maintaining the air defence line as the closest non @-@ US to Kuwait for the first 4 weeks of the 1991 War , Cardiff 's Lynx helicopter , no . 335 of 815 NAS , saw more of the combat in the Gulf War than Cardiff actually did . On 24 January 1991 , no . 335 spotted Iraqi minesweepers and landing craft going to support the Iraqi land operations of the Battle of Khafji . 335 attacked and sank one - the first successful British naval engagement of the war . Later that day , Qaruh Island was captured by coalition forces , becoming the first Kuwaiti territory to be liberated . Overnight five days later (30 ? 31 January 1991) with Lynxes from Gloucester and Brazen , no . 335 attacked at least two Iraqi missile firing fast patrol boats vessels exiting the Shatt Al Arab . Cardiff and 335 sank two more Iraqi ships in February . Cardiff and Brazen were relieved in mid February by Group Yankee , comprising Brave , Brilliant , Exeter and Manchester .

= = = Post Gulf War = = =

After the Gulf War , Cardiff 's assignments included a deployment with the Standing Naval Force Mediterranean , a post Cold War NATO immediate reaction force in the Mediterranean , and counter @-@ narcotics patrols in the West Indies , during which she also assisted with relief tasks on the island of Eleuthera in the wake of Hurricane Andrew .

Cardiff later returned to the Persian Gulf for seven months .

On 14 October 1994 , in response to renewed Iraqi deployment of troops near the Kuwaiti border , the US @-@ led Operation Vigilant Warrior began . The operation was designed to deter Saddam 's " sabre @-@ rattling " by sending large amounts of allied military forces to Kuwait ; Cornwall and Cardiff were the UK contribution . The operation ended on 21 December 1994 , when Saddam pulled back his forces .

Upon her return to the UK from Operation Vigilant Warrior , Cardiff participated in the 1995 NATO exercise " Strong Resolve " , a training exercise conducted every four years in dual crisis management . The ship next underwent Operational Sea Training (OST) at Portland , in preparation for assuming the duty of Fleet Ready Escort , which required a ship to be available to deploy anywhere in the world at short notice . After completing OST , she attended the 50th VE Day anniversary in Copenhagen and Oslo and provided navigational sea training for frigate and destroyer navigating officer candidates . A visit to her namesake city of Cardiff for VJ Day celebrations followed , after which she sailed to Plymouth for a trials and weapon training programme . She then took part in Operation Bright Star , a multi @-@ national exercise conducted every two years in Egypt . In November , Cardiff became the first Royal Navy ship to enter the Lebanese capital of Beirut in 27 years , spurring the creation of the Beirut Phoenicians Rugby Club , followed by visits to Tunisia and Gibraltar .

In 2000 , as part of the Royal Navy 's Atlantic Patrol Task North , Cardiff spent six months in the Caribbean with RFA Black Rover . They provided relief aid to the island of Caye Caulker , near Belize , in the wake of Hurricane Keith . In addition to clearing routes , distributing supplies , and making buildings and electrical cables safe , Cardiff 's surgeon and medical team monitored sanitation . In October , they also took part in the NATO exercise " Unified Spirit " , held off the east coast of the United States . " Unified Spirit " is a training exercise conducted every four years in NATO @-@ led " out @-@ of @-@ area " UN peace support operations . In the same year she participated in the US Navy Fleet Battle Exercise after her combat system was integrated into the Digital Fires Network .

Cardiff conducted her last Armilla patrol in early 2003 . During her time in the Persian Gulf , Cardiff prevented more than £ 2 million of illegal cargo from being smuggled out of Iraq , inspected 178 vessels , and seized more than 25 @,@ 000 tonnes of oil . The destroyer was relieved by Richmond before the beginning of the Iraq War and returned to Portsmouth on 4 April 2003 . In late 2003 , the ship was involved in the annual Sea Days demonstration exercise , and in October was used for tests of QinetiQ 's Maritime Tactical Network .

In 2005 , she participated in the Trafalgar 200 International Fleet Review , just two weeks before she was decommissioned . In this post Gulf War period , the Royal Navy 's first female chaplain also served on board .

= = Decommissioning and fate = =

Cardiff was originally to be replaced in 2009 by Daring , the first of the Royal Navy 's next generation Type 45 destroyers . However , it was announced in July 2004 that she would be one of a number of ships withdrawn from service early , in accordance with the " Delivering Security in a Changing World " white paper on the British military .

Cardiff was decommissioned on 14 July 2005 , after making a final visit to her namesake city , where members of the public were allowed on board . She then stayed in Portsmouth Harbour at Fareham Creek (50 @.@ 818486 ° N 1 @.@ 130644 ° W ? / 50 @.@ 818486 ; -1.130644) alongside sister ship Newcastle , where both were heavily cannibalised to keep the remaining Type

42 Destroyers running .

On 21 November 2008 , the two ships left Portsmouth for the last time for Aliağa , Turkey under tow . Scrapping took place in the same yard which was scrapping the Tuxedo Princess , a former ferry and floating nightclub that had been berthed underneath the Tyne Bridge . Following a decommissioning ceremony at Cardiff city hall , her bell was removed and is now mounted in the north aisle of St John 's Parish Church in Cardiff . Calls were made for the conversion of the ship into a Cardiff tourist attraction by a Member of the National Assembly for Wales and former naval servicemen .

Dragon , a Type 45 destroyer , has been assigned as the current Royal Navy ship to be affiliated with the city of Cardiff .