

= HMS Brilliant (H84) =

HMS Brilliant was a B-class destroyer built for the Royal Navy (RN) around 1930 . Initially assigned to the Mediterranean Fleet , she was transferred to the Home Fleet in 1936 . The ship then patrolled Spanish waters enforcing the arms blockade during the first year of the Spanish Civil War of 1936 - 39 . She spent most of World War II on convoy escort duties in the English Channel , and the North Atlantic , based at Dover , Gibraltar , and Freetown , Sierra Leone . During the war , Brilliant never destroyed a submarine , but did sink a Vichy French minesweeper during Operation Torch . She also intercepted two German supply ships and rescued survivors of two troopships that had been torpedoed by submarines . The ship became a target ship at the end of the war and was scrapped in 1948 .

= = Description = =

Brilliant 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 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 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 35 knots (65 km / h ; 40 mph) . Steam for the turbines was provided by three Admiralty 3-drum boilers . Brilliant 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 4.5-inch calibre quick-firing (QF) 4.7-inch Mk IX guns in single mounts , designated ' A ' , ' B ' , ' X ' , and ' Y ' from front to rear . For anti-aircraft (AA) defence , Brilliant 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 .

During a refit in March 1941 , Brilliant 's anti-aircraft armament was reinforced when the rear set of torpedo tubes was replaced by a 3-inch (76.2 mm) (12-pounder) AA gun and two 20-millimetre (0.8 in) Oerlikon autocannon were added . In addition , her depth charge stowage was increased to 60 . ' Y ' gun was removed to compensate for the additional weight and two more Oerlikons were added during a refit in April 1942 . When the ship was converted into an escort destroyer beginning in January 1943 , a split Hedgehog anti-submarine spigot mortar was installed on each side of ' A ' gun , the 3-inch AA gun was removed and the rear torpedo tubes reinstalled , and stowage was increased to 125 depth charges . By this time , the 2-pounders had been replaced by two additional Oerlikons , for a total of six .

= = Construction and career = =

The ship was ordered on 22 March 1929 from Swan Hunter , under the 1928 Naval Programme . She was laid down on 8 July 1929 , and launched on 9 October 1930 , as the seventh RN ship to carry this name . Brilliant was completed on 21 February 1931 at a cost of £ 221,638 , 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 September 1936 when it was transferred to Home Fleet . On 31 December 1935 , the Imperial Airways Short Calcutta flying boat City of Khartoum crashed just outside the port of Alexandria , Egypt . Brilliant rescued the sole survivor , the aircraft 's pilot , with the remaining three crew members and nine passengers killed . Brilliant was assigned as guard ship at Málaga

when the Spanish Civil War began in July 1936 . During the following winter , the ship enforced the arms blockade imposed by Britain and France on both sides by patrolling the Spanish ports on the Bay of Biscay .

At the outbreak of war in September 1939 , Brilliant was assigned to the 19th Destroyer Flotilla at Dover and spent the time before the Battle of France escorting convoys and minelaying operations . She collided with the breakwater at Dover on 12 September and required six weeks for repairs . On 12 May 1940 , the ship took part in Operation XD , the destruction of Dutch port facilities and returned with 100 evacuees aboard . On 15 May Brilliant collided with her sister ship Boreas en route for the Hook of Holland and was under repair at Sheerness Dockyard until 17 June . She was then transferred to the 1st Destroyer Flotilla at Dover , as the heavy losses suffered during the Dunkirk evacuation forced the disbandment of the 19th Flotilla . On 25 July , the ship engaged German E @-@ boats off Dover Harbour together with Boreas and was badly damaged by German Junkers Ju 87 " Stuka " dive bombers after she was ordered to withdraw . Brilliant was attacked by eight " Stuka " s and the ship was hit by two bombs that passed through the hull without exploding . No one was injured , but the steering gear was disabled and she stopped and flooded by the stern . The ship was lightened by jettisoning her aft guns and depth charges and was towed back to Dover . Brilliant was under repair at Chatham Dockyard until mid @-@ October .

Upon their completion , the ship was assigned to Home Fleet until February 1941 and was then refitted at Southampton in March . At this time she was fitted with a Type 286 short @-@ range surface search radar . On 12 May , Brilliant was sailed for Freetown , Sierra Leone where she served as a local escort and searched for German blockade runners and supply ships until returning home in April 1942 for a refit at Chatham . On 4 and 5 June , the ship , together with the light cruiser London , intercepted the oil tankers SS Esso Hamburg and SS Egerland , respectively . Both ships scuttled themselves to prevent their capture . Brilliant became leader of the 18th Destroyer Flotilla in August .

After the refit , the ship escorted a convoy to Durban , South Africa in May 1942 before returning to Freetown in August . On 9 October 1942 , she rescued 321 survivors from the troopship HMT Oronsay which was torpedoed by the Italian submarine Archimede . The following month , Brilliant was transferred to Force H during Operation Torch , the invasion of French North Africa , in November . She was tasked to provide naval gunfire support during the landings at Oran , Algeria . When the Vichy French minesweeper Surprise sortied to oppose the landing , Brilliant sank her and then rescued 21 survivors . The ship was transferred to the Gibraltar @-@ based Escort Group 61 and remained with them until January 1943 when she returned home to begin her conversion into an escort destroyer . In addition to the armament changes , a Type 271 target indication radar was installed above the bridge that replaced her director @-@ control tower and rangefinder during the conversion .

After working up , Brilliant was assigned to the 13th Destroyer Flotilla in Gibraltar in July 1943 and remained with them until September 1944 when she began a refit at Portsmouth . The ship was reassigned to the 1st Destroyer Flotilla in the English Channel in November . On 24 December 1944 , Brilliant was escorting the troopship Leopoldville when the ship was struck by a torpedo from U @-@ 486 , 5 ½ nautical miles off Cherbourg . Brilliant was able to rescue about 500 survivors from the damaged troopship , but due to various communication failures , no other vessels reached her before she sank and 764 died . The ship collided with the Canadian corvette Lindsay in dense fog on 21 January 1945 off the Isle of Wight . Brilliant 's bow was badly damaged and she was transferred to Antwerp , the Netherlands , for permanent repairs after emergency repairs were made at Portsmouth . They were not completed until 23 April and the ship returned to Portsmouth for conversion to a submarine target and escort vessel . This was completed on 26 May and Brilliant escorted the light cruiser Jamaica with King George VI aboard as he visited the Channel Islands on 7 June . From 13 June , based at Holy Loch , Scotland , she escorted surrendered U @-@ boats as part of Operation Deadlight before being paid off into reserve in November 1945 . Her radar and communications equipment was removed before the ship was reduced to Category C reserve at Holy Loch on 29 April 1946 . Brilliant was allocated to the Target Trials Committee on 11 September and was used evaluate the shock effects of a 1 @,@ 090 @-@ pound (490 kg) underwater

explosion in April 1947 . The ship was turned over to the British Iron and Steel Company for scrapping on 21 February 1948 . She was broken up beginning in April at Troon by the West of Scotland Shipbreaking Co .