

11th Destroyer Flotilla

Leader – ROTHERHAM

Half-Leaders – ROEBUCK, RACEHORSE

The ROTHERHAM, or 'R' Class, fleet destroyers were ordered with the 4th Emergency Flotilla in May 1940

HMS ROTHERHAM (H09) – LEADER

R-Class Fleet Destroyer ordered from John Brown of Clydebank on 2nd April 1940. Due to the priority for repair of ships damaged during operations off Norway as well as during the evacuation of allied troops and civilians from the continent this ship was not laid down until 10th April 1941. She was launched on 21st March 1942 and was the first Royal Navy ship to bear the name of Captain Edward Rotherham who had commanded the 1st Rate ROYAL SOVEREIGN at the Battle of Trafalgar. It should be noted that the spelling of his surname differs from that used for this ship. Build was completed on 27th August 1942 and the design allowed for use as a Flotilla Leader. After a successful WARSHIP WEEK National Savings campaign in March 1942 this destroyer was adopted by the civil community of Rotherham, then in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

HMS ROTHERHAM remained at Singapore until 27th September 1945 when she returned to Trincomalee. On 2nd October she took passage to Portsmouth to Pay-Off into Reserve. The ship was sold in 1948 to India and formally transferred to the Indian Navy on 27th July 1949. She remained an active Fleet unit as INS RAJPUT until 1976 when placed on the Disposal List.

HMS RELENTLESS (H85)

R-Class Fleet Destroyer ordered from Fairfield Shipbuilders at Govan in May 1940. The build order was transferred to John Brown of Clydebank and construction was delayed due to the high priority being given to repair of ships damaged during operations in Norway and evacuation of troops from Channel ports. She was laid down on 20th June 1941 and launched on 15th July 1942 as the 2nd RN ship to carry this name. It had previously been used for a WW1 destroyer sold in 1926. Following a successful WARSHIP WEEK for National Savings in March 1942 she had been adopted by the London Borough of Fulham. Build was completed on 30th November 1942. HMS RELENTLESS took passage to return to UK in October 1945. She paid off into Reserve at Chatham on arrival in November. The ship was laid up in the Chatham Reserve Fleet until 1947 when she was transferred to Harwich. This destroyer and sister ship HMS ROCKET were selected to be prototypes for conversion to an Anti-submarine Frigates by Royal dockyards in 1949. The ship was towed to HM Dockyard Portsmouth for conversion to a Type 15 Frigate as part of a modernisation programme. The upper deck structure was completely redesigned and two anti-submarine mortars with new design ASDIC (Sonar) outfit were fitted. After the ship re-commissioning in July 1951 she served in the 3rd Training Flotilla and attended the Coronation Review in June 1953. She was involved

in collision with m Frigate VIGILANT off the west coast of Scotland in October 1954. When repaired by Scotts at Greenock she was placed in Reserve at Chatham. The ship remained in Reserve although refitted to maintain her availability. She re-commissioned on 27th June 1964 for service in the 29th Escort Squadron and later transferred to the 26th Escort Squadron. Paid off in 1968 she was laid up at Portsmouth. In 1970 after being placed on the Disposal List this warship was sold to J W Ward on 29th April 1971 and towed to Inverkeithing in June that year for demolition.

HMS ROEBUCK (H95) – HALF-LEADER

R-Class Fleet Destroyer ordered from Scotts of Greenock in May 1940. Construction was delayed because of priority for repair work. She was laid down on 19th June 1941 and launched on 10th December 1942 (See details below). After salvage work build was completed on 10th June 1943. Following a successful WARSHIP WEEK National Savings campaign in March 1942 this warship was 'adopted' by Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. She was the 15th RN ship to bear this name, last used for a pre-WW1 destroyer sold in 1919. A mercantile of this name fought against the Armada but it was first used for a warship in 1637.

HMS ROEBUCK sailed from Simonstown on 15th November 1945 on completion of post refit trials and arrived at Plymouth on 7th December. Early in 1946 she was deployed with the Local Flotilla after a period in 'Care and Maintenance'. This destroyer escorted HM Battleship DUKE OF YORK during a Royal Visit to the Channel Islands in June that year. Following the successful conversion of sister ships ROCKET and RELENTLESS she was selected for conversion to an Type 15 Anti-submarine Frigate. On completion in May 1953 she commissioned for service in the 5th Frigate Squadron, Mediterranean Fleet and served abroad till July 1956 when placed in Reserve at Plymouth. During 1957 she refitted for training duties and joined the Dartmouth Squadron. Re-commissioned in May 1960 she joined an Escort Squadron and remain on the operational list until returning to pay-off into Reserve at Plymouth in 1962. Before being placed on the Disposal List the ship was de-equipped in HM Dockyard at Devonport before being used for Underwater Explosion Trials at Rosyth by NCRE. Sold to BISCO for demolition by TW Ward she was towed to the breaker's yard at Inverkeithing on 8th August 1968.

HMS ROCKET (H92)

R-Class Fleet Destroyer ordered from Scotts of Greenock in May 1940. Construction was delayed until September because of priority for repair work. She was laid down on 14th March 1941. The ship was launched on 28th October 1942 as the 6th RN ship to carry the name, introduced in 1806 and previously used for a WW1 destroyer sold in 1926. Build was completed on 4th August 1943. Following a successful WARSHIP WEEK National Savings campaign in March 1942 she was adopted by Stepney In Greater London.

HMS ROCKET returned to Chatham and reduced to Reserve status in November 1945. During 1946 she was deployed with a reduced complement and modified at Chatham for use as an air target ship in the North Sea based at Rosyth until 1948. Placed in Reserve at Portsmouth this destroyer was selected with HMS RELENTLESS for conversion to a Type 15 Anti-submarine Frigate by HM Dockyard Devonport. On completion in May 1951 she joined the 3rd Frigate Flotilla based at Londonderry and visited the West Indies as well as taking part in the June 1953 Coronation Review. Paid off in 1954 the ship remained in Reserve until October 1960 when she re-

commissioned for service with the 6th Frigate Squadron in the Far East. Again placed in Reserve at the end of the commission she laid at Chatham until placed on the Disposal List in 1967. Sold to BISCO she was towed to Dalmuir for breaking-up by Arnott Young arriving at the breaker's yard in March 1967.

HMS RACEHORSE (H11) - HALF-LEADER

R-Class Fleet Destroyer ordered from John Brown, Clydebank in April 1940. Construction work was delayed until September because of priority for repair work in ships damaged earlier that year in Norway and at Dunkirk. The ship was launched on 1st June 1942 as the 11th RN ship to carry the name which was introduced in 1757 and last used by a pre WW1 destroyer sold in 1920. Build was completed in November 1942. After a successful WARSHIP WEEK for National Savings in March 1942 she had been 'adopted' by the civil community of Hackney, Greater London.

HMS RACEHORSE returned to UK after the occupation of Singapore and was reduced to Reserve status at Portsmouth. Laid up at Portsmouth she was selected for use as a ship target in trials at Gareloch. On completion in 1949 the ship was placed on the Disposal List and sold to The West of Scotland Shipbreakers on 8th Nov 1949. The ship arrived in tow at Troon for demolition on 8th December 1949.

HMS REDOUBT (H41)

R-Class Fleet Destroyer ordered from John Brown, Clydebank in April 1940. Construction was delayed because of priority for repair work and she was laid down on 19th June 1941. The ship was launched on 2nd May 1942 as the 3rd RN ship to carry this name, which had previously been used by a WW1 destroyer sold in 1921 and introduced in 1793. Build was completed on 1st October 1942 and the ship had been adopted by Willesden, Middlesex, now in the London Borough of Brent following a successful WARSHIP WEEK for National Savings in March 1942.

HMS REDOUBT returned to UK with Flotilla from Colombo on 22 September 1945. The ship was reduced to Reserve at Chatham during November that year. After being laid up at Chatham she transferred to the Harwich Division of the Reserve Fleet in 1947. During 1948 this destroyer was refitted prior to service with the Indian Navy. On completion the ship was formally handed over on 4 July 1949 and renamed INS RANJIT. She served in the operational Indian fleet until 1979 when placed on the Disposal List and scrapped.

S p e c i a l N o t e. Attention is also drawn to 99 YEARS OF NAVY by Sam Morley which describes the service of this ship from the time of commissioning and includes the period in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Some dates are at variance with other sources.

HMS RAIDER (H15)

R-Class Fleet Destroyer ordered from Cammell Laird at Birkenhead on 2nd April 1940. The ship was laid down on 16th April 1941, but construction was delayed during May 1940 and did not recommence until September because of the priority given to repair of destroyers during operations off Norway and in the Channel. She was launched on 1st April 1942 as the 2nd RN ship to carry the name,

previously borne by a destroyer built in 1916 and sold in 1927. Build was completed on 16th November 1942. Following a successful WARSHIP WEEK National Savings campaign in February 1942 this warship was adopted by Romford, Essex. HMS RAIDER returned to UK via Trincomalee with ships of Flotilla after release from service with East Indies Fleet. She was placed in Reserve at Devonport in January 1946 and was recommissioned for service in the Mediterranean on 6th May that year. The ship was extensively deployed for Plane Guard duties with aircraft carriers and took part in Fleet exercises. She returned to UK in August 1947 and reduced to Reserve status. Placed on the Sales List this destroyer was sold to India in 1948 and after refit was formally transferred as INS RANA the next year. The ship remained on the Active List until 1976 and was sold for demolition in 1979.

HMS RAPID (H32)

R-Class Fleet Destroyer ordered from Cammell Laird at Birkenhead on 1st April 1940. Construction was delayed until September because of priority for repair work. The ship was laid down as Job No 1065 on 16th June 1941 and launched on 16th July 1942 as the 8th RN ship to carry this name. It was introduced in 1804 and was last used for a WW1 built destroyer sold in 1927. Her build was completed in 1943 and she had been adopted by Sutton and Cheam in Surrey following a successful WARSHIP WEEK National Savings campaign in March 1942.

(Ron Anderson >>>) I served in RAPID in the early 1950s. The Captain was Lt Cdr 'Dickie' Dumas RN - a fine seaman. I was a mere Signalman.

I had served for a short time in HMS OPPORTUNE - having joined her in June 1950, at Milford Haven where she had been engaged, for some time, with Naval Air Stations in the West Country. We sailed to Rosyth where, at the end of July 1950, the full Ship's Company of HMS OPPORTUNE exchanged place with the complement of HMS RAPID. Of course, RAPID changed her Port Division too and became a 'Pompey' ship. HMS OPPORTUNE transferred to Chatham Port Division.

From that moment, RAPID was used as Crash boat for various Naval Air Stations and carriers. She operated largely out of Invergordon, Rosyth and the bleak but beautiful Dornoch Firth. Various Air Stations were 'serviced', and RAPID worked as 'Crash Boat' for HMS INDOMITABLE, HMS ILLUSTRIOUS and, also, HMAS SYDNEY. (RAPID took part in the first 'landing exercises on a Carrier', with a jet-engined 'plane. These 'tests' were 'shambolic'!!) Finally, she went to Belfast, where she repaired some extensive damage due to traversing the Pentlands and Cape Wrath in atrocious conditions (in company with a carrier) and sailed to Gibraltar where she conducted exercises with NATO ships in the Med. HMS RAPID returned to Pompey and, in about April, she was decommissioned and I was drafted to the 4th Minesweeping Flotilla in RINALDO - the half-leader. I understand RAPID was re-fitted and adapted as an Anti-submarine Frigate and, thereafter, led another useful life

SHIP	Builder	Laid Down	Launched	Sponsor	Commissioned	Fate	Disposition *
RACEHORSE	John Brown	25 Jun 1941	1 Jun 1942	Hackney	30 Oct 1942	Scrapped	SC Dec 1949
RAIDER	Cammell-Laird	16 Apr 1941	1 Apr 1942	Romford	16 Nov 1942	Sold to India in 1949 as RANA	SC 1979
RAPID	Cammell-Laird	16 Jun 1941	16 Jul 1942	Sutton & Cheam	20 Feb 1943	Converted to Type 15 in 1953	SU 13 Sep 1981
REDOUBT	John Brown	19 Jun 1941	2 May 1942	Willesden	1 Oct 1942	Sold to India in 1949 as RANJIT	SC 1979
RELENTLESS	John Brown	20 Jun 1941	15 Jul 1942	Fulham	30 Nov 1942	Converted to Type 15 in July 1951	SC 29 Apr 1971
ROCKET	Scotts	14 Mar 1941	28 Oct 1942	Stepney	4 Aug 1943	Converted to Type 15 in	SC Mar 1967
ROEBUCK	Scotts	19 Jun 1941	10 Dec 1942	Wycombe	10 Jun 1943	Converted to Type 15 in May 1953	SC 8 Aug 1968
ROTHERHAM	John Brown	10 Apr 1941	21 Mar 1942	Rotherham	27 Aug 1942	Sold to India in 1949 as RAJPUT	SC 1976

SC = Scrapped

SU = Sunk as target