

HMS RELENTLESS

By Sam185

1960's COMMISSIONS

Last Updated 1ST December 2020



Pre-Commissioning

In 1960, RELENTLESS was in Category One Reserve in Chatham but with the announced closure of Chatham Dockyard, she was towed to Rosyth.

From 1960 until 1963 RELENTLESS remained in Reserve but in early-1964, she was taken in hand by Rosyth Dockyard and made ready for commissioning.

1964 - JUNE to SEPTEMBER

After re-commissioning in ROSYTH on 27th June 1964 as part of the 29th Escort Squadron, RELENTLESS (*Captain A G WATSON*, 2nd Leader, 29th ES) was in Portsmouth for the Home Fleet Review in August. The photo below shows RELENTLESS' 15-minutes of fame as she turns out of line during the Home Fleet sail past to go to the rescue of a motor cruiser which had managed to set itself on fire. The seaboat was lowered - you can see that the 'falls' are empty abaft the funnel - to rescue the occupants whilst the foc'sl party got a foam hose out to quell the fire. RELENTLESS received a "BZ" from C-in-C Home Fleet (Admiral Sir Charles Madden) who had been taking the salute. For fame, the event was captured by British Pathe News (Portsmouth. The Fleet's Out).



HMS RELENTLESS – Home Fleet Review, Portsmouth 31st August 1964

On the way from Portland the Captain had cleared lower deck to inform us that we would no longer be going out to the Far East with the rest of the 29th Escort Squadron. BOO! But instead we were deploying to the West Indies for Guardship duties. HURRAY!

Portland Work Up – as I remember it – CY Ken Read

We understood that as new boys for the workup at Portland all eyes would be on us, and that the ceremony of Colours in particular needed to be executed in a smart and seamanlike manner! I was on the Flagdeck at 0755 for the hoisting of Prep, with a communicator at the Jackstaff, and two at the Ensign Staff with the Ensign tucked into a canvas bag.

The Captain and Officers were lined up abaft the gun and overlooking the quarterdeck which had an awning rigged. The Ensign staff was very visible above the awning.

Prep came down, “Eight o’clock sir” “Make it so” Eight bells rung by the QM. A not so bright Bunting assumed that the Ensign would emerge from the bag when it was slowly and reverently hoisted, BUT IT DIDN’T!

Into the Officers’ view as they all saluted appeared the canvas bag being slowly and reverently hoisted on the Ensign Staff!

I could see the Captain’s neck, red and bulging with anger!

The Colour party realised what had not happened, lowered the bag and rehoisted the Ensign. I knew I was for the high jump, had thoughts of jumping over the side, or maybe running away, and I awaited my fate.

For a while nothing happened, then the Signal Officer S/Lt Steve Jackson called for me and advised that he had received the Captain’s displeasure and conveyed the message that “The Yeoman will attend the Quarterdeck daily in No.3’s and supervise Colours”

1964 - OCTOBER to DECEMBER

Following a successful "Work-Up" at Portland, RELENTLESS was in Devonport at the end of September.

After a whole week of recovery from Work Up and having feasted on pasties and scrumpy, the ship sailed for Londonderry. RELENTLESS took part in various exercises with the likes of the RHYL and LEANDER throughout October but by the beginning of November, the ship was in Greenock. It seems the exertion of throwing the ship around Portland and the Londonderry exercise areas had caused the 22-year old ship's side to 'spring a plate'. Don't forget that the ship had been built in 1942 with riveted plates, not the posh modern welded variety. The solution was to effect repairs in dry dock and so RELENTLESS was towed up the Clyde from Greenock to Govan.

In these days of a much reduced Navy, this trip up the misty Clyde actually provided sights to behold. Besides ships under construction, 3 ships were in the process of being fitted out. In that short stretch of water between Greenock and Govan, the INTREPID, NAIAD and PHOEBE were nearing completion.

As I remember it - Passage up the Clyde - CY Ken Read

The ship was being conned from the GDP (upper bridge) with a Pilot embarked. It was a quiet passage and I only had the International Code on the Bridge. Rounding a bend in the river, a new construction frigate came into view with F42 on the transom.

I knew that the Captain would want to know its identity, so on the Action Intercom to the Wireless office I said "Office; Bridge, look in the Visual callsign book and tell me who Foxtrot four two is"

The reply boomed out over the bridge "Yeo; Office, Foxtrot four two is HMS FOHB" "Thanks Office" I replied, it's pronounced FEE-BEE"

There was much laughter on the bridge and Captain Watson in rare jovial mood said that it reminded him of a wartime screen. The Yeoman was asked to identify a ship and replied "PENNY-LOPE Sir!" "That's PEN-ELOPEE Yeoman" advised the Captain.

Some time later the Yeoman was asked to identify another ship "ANT-TELL-OPEE Sir, I see it through my TELL-ESS-COPEE!"

Docked down from the 1st until the 11th November, the plate adjacent to the aft starboard fuel tank was removed, as was the port propeller, to facilitate repairs. Fit and ready to go, RELENTLESS was towed downstream to refuel and rearm and on the 13th, sailed for Douglas in the Isle of Man before a courtesy visit to Cork, in Ireland. Whilst the visit to Cork itself passed without problems, apart from some serious hangovers following visits to the local RNA Club and Cork Brewery, a surprise awaited RELENTLESS on departing Cork.

I was an RO3 and at this time had not specialised and so was 'serving my time' as a Bunting. Lined up as Special Sea Duty men on the starboard side of the Flag Deck with the killick bunting Dolly Gray and another RO3, Jake Kilkelly, we were swapping stories about the runs ashore when we heard a loud ping, followed quickly by another one, very close at hand. I have to say that we didn't think too much about it at the time but it transpired that a couple of disgruntled Irishmen had taken it upon themselves to open fire on RELENTLESS with a

rifle or 2. One round certainly hit the funnel (the first 'ping' we heard) and a second round somehow passed THROUGH the ship's side and was found lodged in the fan trunking in the 1st Lieutenant's cabin. This was the second shot we heard and it was only when we found out about this that the 3 of us realised these guys must have been shooting AT US because the Jimmy's cabin was directly under the Flag Deck. In fact, the hole made by the second round was only about 18 inches below Jake's feet.

It transpired that 10 or 12 shots had been fired at us and besides making newspaper headlines, there were Questions in Parliament as the following extract from Hansard confirms.

"H.M.S. "Relentless" (Incident) - HC Deb 30 November 1964 vol 703 cc24-524

[Captain Orr](#) asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the circumstances in which H.M.S. "Relentless" was fired upon in Cork Harbour on Saturday 21st November.

[Mr. Mayhew](#) H.M.S. "Relentless" was leaving Cork Harbour and was one mile upstream from Passage West when, at 8.35 a.m., at least two men opened fire on her from a range of about 400 yards using 0.303 or similar calibre rifles. About 10 rounds were fired but, I am glad to say, there were no casualties. The damage sustained amounted to one bullet hole and one dent.

[Captain Orr](#) What have the Eire Government to say about this? Who were the men?

[Mr. Mayhew](#) We have mentioned this to the Eire Government but I think that it is too minor an incident to expect a protest. [HON. MEMBERS: "oh."] A police cordon was set up to try to capture the two men but failed to do so, and we therefore do not know their names. Nevertheless, we should keep this in perspective. The action was outrageous but the Navy has faced more difficult engagements than this.

[Mr. Hay](#) Can the hon. Gentleman confirm or deny that there is no connection between this act and the 15 per cent. surcharge?

[Mr. Shinwel](#) Has my hon. Friend considered that it might be useful to have a declaration of war on Eire in order to satisfy Ulster?

[Mr. Mayhew](#) We must hope that the shooting would be better than missing a ship at 400 yards eight times out of ten. "

As I remember it - The Cork incident - CY Ken Read.

"I was on the bridge going down river. We had an Irish pilot. A shot rang out from the rushes to Stbd. The Captain remarked to the Pilot "Maybe someone shooting ducks" Just then another bullet whined over the bridge, and another struck the superstructure of the Ops room. The captain ordered an increase in speed and we were soon clear. I believe one of the bullets struck a 'waveguide' and disabled our surface radar for a while. It was on the TV news in UK that night, and my wife was a bit alarmed."

After Cork we headed back north to Londonderry for another couple of weeks in and around the exercise areas.

I'd been in the Londonderry Squadron on the BLACKWOOD prior to joining RELENTLESS so although still only a baby sailor, I knew the sea could get a bit 'lumpy' thereabouts. The Type 15s however, were bigger, and more manoeuvrable than the single-shaft Type 14s.

However, on the way to Portsmouth it started to blow a hooley and we made heavy going of it as we got down towards Land's End and were grateful a brief respite in Devonport. We had hardly cleared the breakwater on the way back out when we received a distress signal from the Danish ship MV SCANTIC. The SCANTIC was in trouble up in the St Georges channel between Ireland and Wales, the same area we'd fought our way through a couple of days previously. Together with an RAF Shackleton and quite a few other - merchant - ships we went to her aid but in the end the crew, who had abandoned and were in a liferaft, were spotted by the Shackleton and rescued by the merchant ship ARTHUR ALLBRIGHT.

8 7/12/64

RESCUE SHIPS SAVE 5 ADRIFT IN GALE

7/12/64

IRISH SEA SURVIVORS TAKEN FROM DINGHY

DAILY TELEGRAPH REPORTER

FIVE men from the Danish cargo ship *Scantic*, 326 tons, abandoned in a gale 50 miles south-east of Cork, were rescued from a dinghy early to-day by the British vessel *Arthur Allbright*, 6,600 tons.

A message from St. Just coastguard station, Cornwall, alongside the dinghy and was said the *Arthur Allbright* was trying to take the five men aboard. Heavy seas delayed the rescue.

The British frigate *Relentless*, 2,200 tons, which put out from Plymouth, was also said to have reached the dinghy.

The dinghy had been sighted by an R.A.F. Shackleton at 11.10 p.m. A Ministry of Defence spokesman said just before midnight: "Ships are now trying to home on the dinghy's position."

The crew of the *Scantic* abandoned ship when a leak developed in the engine room. Ships and aircraft immediately went to the rescue after a distress call had been heard.

The *Scantic* was on her way from Preston to Poole, Dorset, with a cargo of chalk in bags. She was on charter to William Thomas and Co., Liverpool, shipbrokers and agents.

Her equipment included an orange-coloured dinghy 9ft. in diameter with rations, water and axes aboard, but no radio. It could survive in rough seas for several days.



The map shows the Irish Sea with labels for 'IRE', 'CORK', 'St. George's Channel', 'Bristol Channel', and 'Lands End'. A box labeled 'SCANTIC ABANDONED HERE' is located in the Irish Sea, and another box labeled 'SURVIVORS DRIFTING IN THIS AREA' is located in the Bristol Channel.

Crew of five saved from raft

Express Staff Reporter

A PARACHUTE flare last night lit up a rubber raft being battered by a gale—and a seven-hour air-sea search in the Atlantic was over.

Ten ships and an R.A.F. Shackleton had been searching for the raft after the five-man crew of the 326-ton Danish freighter *Scantic* abandoned ship when it sprang a leak.

The search began midway between Cork and Land's End. Then the plane spotted the raft among the giant waves below.

The storm forced even a British destroyer, the *Relentless*, to drop below full speed as she joined the rescue armada.

But the raft was only three miles away from two of the ten vessels which had answered the Mayday message—"Abandoning ship."

The merchant ship *Arthur Albright* reported later that she was alongside the raft and had picked up all five men.

HMS RELENTLESS - press cuttings from

Daily Telegraph and Daily Express 7th December 1964

I particularly like one quote "The storm forced even a British destroyer, the *Relentless*, to drop below full speed as she joined the rescue armada"

So, as 1964 came to a close, we could all look back on the first 6-months of the 2nd commission of the Type 15 RELENTLESS as being very satisfactory and quite exciting. In recruiting terms, we had been doing "what it says on the tin", and alongside in Devonport for Christmas Leave, we finalised our preparations for the rigours of a West Indies deployment ...

1965 - JANUARY to MARCH - THE WEST INDIES

I imagine that much to the chagrin of the married men and those with a serious 'pash' ashore, but to the great delight of us Nozzers, Monday the 18th January 1965 duly arrived. Under grey skies we left Portsmouth at 1324 and after a short diversion to Portland's anchorage, at 2009, RELENTLESS "Weighed anchor and proceeded on passage for W.I."

Following a refuelling stop at Ponta Delgada in the Azores on the 22nd and an uneventful passage across the Atlantic, we entered harbour at the Ireland Island naval base in Bermuda on the morning of Thursday 28th January. We quickly realised this was not going to be a holiday cruise because by the time Bermuda was waking up on the Monday morning, we were already at sea and heading south for our first Bahamas Patrol, already breaking in the Pusser's sandals and shorts because at last, it was getting warmer.

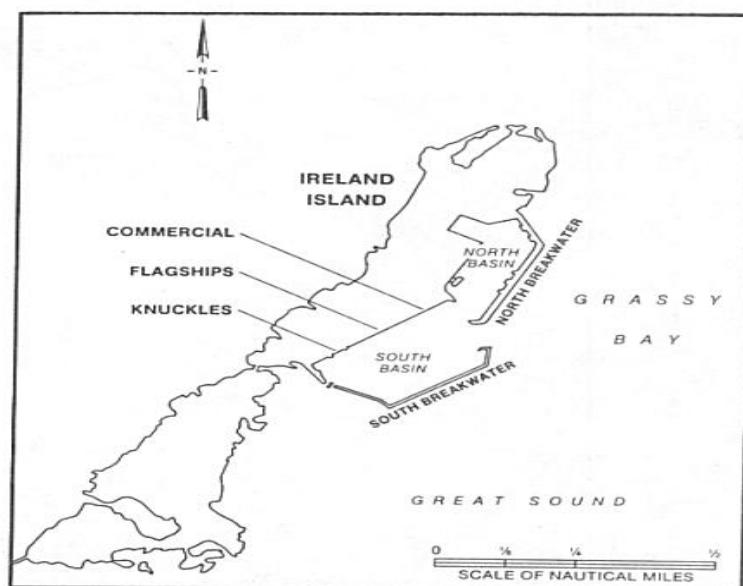


Figure XXII-5. The Ireland Island Dockyard.

A couple of days after leaving Bermuda, we anchored at Matthew Town, Great Inagua where we formally took over the role of BAHAMAS PATROL from DECOY. We sailed later that evening and the following day we anchored at Anguilla Cays.

Cays or Keys are basically small islands of sand on coral and very few of them have any fresh water and so the smaller ones are generally uninhabited. Besides Anguilla Cays, we would get to know the other islands in the area. Cay Sal, Elbow Cay, Lobos Cay, Guinchos Cay, Fish Cay, French Cay, Plana Cay, Crooked Island and Ragged Island would become our backyard in the ensuing months as we undertook four separate patrols totalling 90 days. It is interesting to look on a map to see just how close some of these islands are to Cuba - Lobos and Guinchos for instance.

Anguilla Cays - North and South - became our banyan island and we frequently anchored there during Bahamas Patrol for swimming, fishing and general R&R. Not that we were

there just for the R&R of course, a quick look at a map shows that these cays are pretty much in the centre of a triangle formed by Cuba to the south and west, Florida to the north and west, and the Bahamas to the east. So it was ideally situated for us to be able to run down any suspicious contacts reported to us by the air patrols or a stopping off point as we patrolled along the north coast of Cuba from Great Inagua in the south, across to Key West in the west and north and east to Nassau and Freeport.

Our first patrol was cut short on the 14th February after the ship developed some mechanical problems and after handing the patrol over to ROTHESAY, we returned to Bermuda. Within a few days, the ship's divers had discovered that the blades of one of our propellers had developed cracks and the only solution was to get into dry dock (again) and have a new one fitted. Thankfully of course, we wouldn't be going to anywhere as cold as Govan this time. Maybe it will be at the US Naval Base in Mayport, Florida, or the one in Norfolk Virginia? Perhaps it would be a civilian yard in Panama? We were quite buoyed up about a couple of weeks dry docked in any of those places.

How wrong can you be? Govan in November had been cold but our dry docking operation was deemed to be in Halifax, Nova Scotia and believe me, Canada in February is C O L D....

We left the relative warmth of Bermuda on the 21st Feb and on the night of the 22nd the ship came out of the protection of the Gulf Stream. I had the middle watch that night and even in the warmth of the Wireless Office you could feel the temperature drop within minutes. When the watch finished and I went down to the mess all my bedding had been nicked, everyone was huddled under as many blankets and burberry's as they could find. Anyway, the guys who had just gone on the morning watch wouldn't need theirs.....

In the afternoon of the 23rd we berthed alongside HMCS NIPIGON, just under the bridge in Halifax. Whilst it's not too much of a hike from the sea up the river to the Halifax Naval Base, Special Sea Duty men were closed up for quite some for entering harbour. It was during this run up river that the Shipwright ('Polly' Parrett), watching his anchor on the foc'sl, managed to get a frostbitten ear. Now there's a little question for you. How do you get frostbite on the West Indies station? You join RELENTLESS of course! I'm pretty sure the Chippy didn't see the funny side though as mentioned in The April 1965 edition of the Navy News.

It was so cold we borrowed hot air blowers from the NIPIGON and stuck the tubes down every hatch to try and keep the ship warm. Later on, in August, NIPIGON passed us as she entered the Canadian base in Bermuda and flashed us a signal asking if we wanted to borrow the hot air blowers again. I guess this brings a whole new meaning to the term 'blowing hot and cold'



Told you it was cold... Icers on the 20" Signal Projector (searchlight)

Away from UK, the Communications department was generally 'watch-on-stop-on' apart from when alongside in Bermuda. Our incoming signal traffic was by teleprinter broadcast from the Canadian Wireless Station in Halifax (callsign CFH) and depending on radio conditions, if we couldn't send our signal traffic directly to UK (by morse code) we invariably used Halifax. Whilst in Halifax therefore, we took the opportunity to visit the Canadian commcen to swop experiences and it proved to be a well worthwhile exercise in cooperation for CFH and G VXJ (Relentless' radio callsign) for the remainder of our deployment.

Memory tells me we were in Halifax longer than we actually were, probably because of the great hospitality we received there. However, after a day either side of 2 days in dry dock, we were up and running again and by 2nd March we had relieved ROTHE SAY and were in Freeport, Grand Bahama, back on Bahamas Patrol.

Relentless in winter's merciless grip

WHEN H.M.S. Relentless (Capt. A. G. Watson, R.N.), the fast anti-submarine frigate (ex-destroyer), one of the ships of the West Indies Squadron employed on duties as Bahamas Guardship, was in Bermuda recently, the ship's divers discovered a defect in one of the propellers. The only place a new propeller was readily available was Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Relentless was ordered to fit it.

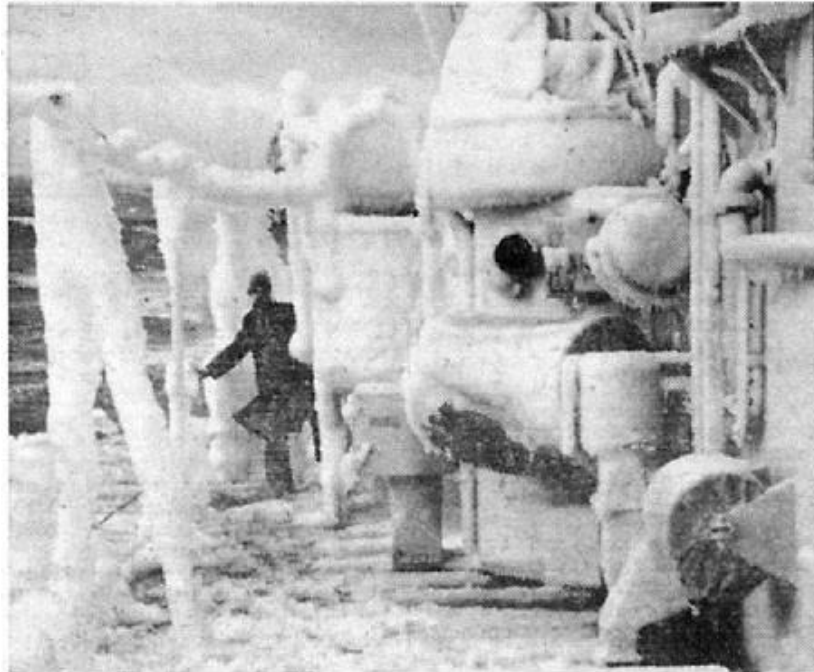
She left Bermuda on Sunday, February 21, when the sea temperature was some 76 degrees F. Thirty-six hours later, on leaving the warm waters of the Gulf Stream, the sea temperature had dropped by more than 40 degrees.

In the 18 hours steaming between the Gulf Stream and Halifax, Relent-

less shipped a tremendous amount of freezing spray and arrived at Halifax like a festooned Christmas tree. On arrival the air temperature was 60 degrees F., a drop of some 60 degrees in the two days since leaving Bermuda.

Life on a tropical station can still produce its surprises and the sailors rapidly adjusted themselves to wearing cold-weather clothing and headgear instead of their more usual shorts and sandals of the West Indies station.

It is also probably the only time in history where a ship serving on the West Indies has suffered a case of frost bite. Shipwright F. W. Parrett, who comes from Lochore, Fife, suffered frost bite on one ear while working on the forecabin as Relentless went into Halifax.



H.M.S. Relentless, like a festooned Christmas tree, on her way to Halifax.

Shortly after leaving Freeport, and just west of there, we picked up a very small radar contact and upon investigation we came across a small civilian submarine in need of assistance. A yellow submarine. Because this was 1965 and the Beatles didn't release their song until 1966 it wasn't as amusing then as it would have been a year or so later. Furthermore, it was called HYDRONAUT and as you may recall, there was a 1966 TV Series about a submarine called Hydronaut, starring Lloyd Bridges - "Around the World Under the Sea". Now, whether this submarine had anything to do with filming that series we never did find out but it's a bit TOO coincidental. Anyway, we hung around for a few hours until the US Coastguard came to their rescue.

Talking of filming, after we'd relieved ROTHESAY we both stayed around Nassau for three days filming the final scenes of the James Bond film "THUNDERBALL". The filming was done from RELENTLESS but I guess they picked ROTHESAY over RELENTLESS as the star of the show as they had a photogenic 4.5" turret on the front and we only had a 4" popgun on the back.

Meanwhile, the Beatles were in Nassau filming "HELP" about the same time but all we saw of it was Ringo's balloon (so to speak!).

After the submarine incident, the rest of the Bahamas patrol passed off without incident and on March 25th after being relieved by ROTHESAY we stopped off at Montserrat and refuelled in Barbados before arriving in Chaguaramas in Trinidad. Today, the port is a thriving marina but back in the day, there was only some small US presence and local defence forces in the old US Naval base. To us though, it was another new place to explore during our week long Assisted Maintenance Period (AMP). We went back down to 'Shaggers' for a longer AMP later in the deployment as well as a visit to Port of Spain and I seem to recall everyone was pretty happy being in Trinidad.

1965 - APRIL to JUNE – THE WEST INDIES

All good runs come to an end though and before we knew it, we were back off up to Great Inagua to take over the Bahamas Patrol from ROTHESAY. This time though, it was a bit different; we had the Senior Naval Officer West Indies (SNOWI) and his staff onboard. SNOWI (*Rear Admiral H H Dannreuther*) was generally based at HMS MALABAR, the naval base on Ireland Island in Bermuda, but every now and then he liked to join one of his ships for a few days to meet the men and throw his weight around.

As well he might in our case because it transpires that during the Second World War, a S/Lt Raymond Dannreuther was the assistant gunnery officer on an R Class destroyer, whilst his older brother Lt Hubert Dannreuther, was the gunnery officer on a Q Class destroyer. Coincidentally, both ships frequently operated together in the Far East during 1942-1944. Lt Hubert, now known to us all as SNOWI, served on the QUILLIAM and S/Lt Raymond, who nobody knew, served on RELENTLESS.....

What a small world – I wonder if he ever told the skipper?

Anyway, I digress...

Unfortunately, SNOWI and staff had left by the time RELENTLESS swung into action a week or so later on Easter Sunday. We had received reports of some unrest at Great Isaac Cay and after sending a couple of Geminis ashore with the Marines and the Bahamian Police they brought back 4 Cuban activists and their not inconsequential cache of arms and ammunition. Their boat was also confiscated and whilst they were handcuffed to the guardrails, their speed boat was hoisted onboard and we sailed for Freeport to hand them over to the authorities.

MORE TO COME....

1965 - JULY to OCTOBER – WEST INDIES

As I remember it - Anchoring in Anguilla - CY Ken Read

During one of the Bahamas patrols we anchored close to S. Anguilla, an uninhabited island that was often used for R & R. This time our stay was to be short, and Special Sea Dutymen, which included the f'c'stle party, were NOT fallen out.

However, the Cox'n in the wheelhouse with the QM and helmsman must have thought that SSD HAD fallen out, they hadn't heard the pipe, and had left the wheelhouse.

In due course the Captain gave the order to "Weigh" and when the anchor was aweigh ordered "Half ahead both engines, 70 revolutions, starboard ten" (or something similar!)

No response from the wheelhouse!

Order was repeated, still nothing from the Wheelhouse. A/B Cameron, the Navigator's Yeoman, was rushed down to the wheelhouse to man the wheel and telegraphs.

The Cox'n and SSD piped to man the wheelhouse at the double.

The Captain was very angry, threw his cap to the deck, uttered a few choice Anglo Saxon words with the ship not under control and possibly drifting towards the shore!

Control was soon regained and the Chief Bos'n's mate (CBM) was ordered to bring the Cox'n before the Captain as a defaulter!

1965 - NOVEMBER and DECEMBER – HOME FLEET

INCLUDING..... Were YOU one of the 5 POs and 33 ratings who all went on draft together?

1966



HMS RELENTLESS – 1967

Extract from Drafting Forecast published in the Navy News, NOVEMBER 1965

“RELENTLESS (A/S Frigate) March 17 at Devonport. General Service Commission (Phased) Home / W Indies /Home /W Indies. 8th Frigate Squadron. Transferred from 29th Escort Squadron. Home Base Port, Devonport”

However, a glimpse at the DECEMBER 1965 edition shows that the words “Home / W Indies /Home / W Indies” had been changed to “Home (Under consideration)”. So, “East of Suez” it is then!

The Third Commission of the Type 15 frigate HMS RELENTLESS formally started on 5th August 1966 with the Commissioning Ceremony in Devonport, the guest of honour being the Admiral Superintendent of HM Dockyard Devonport, Rear Admiral Cawthra.

However, after Captain AG Watson left the ship on 7th March the ship was re-commissioned under the command of Commander GTJO Dalton.



By Sir John Byng Freuchen, *Commander of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Admiral in Her Majesty's Fleet, and Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Ships and Vessels employed and to be employed in the Home Fleet.*

H.M.S. RELENTLESS — Commissioning Order

The Admiralty Board on behalf of the Defence Council having directed that Her Majesty's Ship Relentless is to be recommissioned at Devonport on the seventeenth day of March, 1966 or as soon afterwards as circumstances permit, you are to proceed forthwith to commission her for a General Service Commission on the Home, East of Suez and Mediterranean Stations.

On commissioning and until transferred East of Suez you will be under my full command. During this period you are to bring to my immediate notice, and to the notice of the appropriate local authority, anything which gives cause for dissatisfaction with the ship or any part of her and any other matters of importance, in particular those relating to the welfare of the Ship's Company.

Given under my hand this 25th day of February, 1966.

ADMIRAL
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

To: Lieutenant Commander G. T. J. O. Dalton, Royal Navy.

Copy to -
The Second Permanent Under Secretary of State (Royal Navy)
The Commander-in-Chief, Plymouth

Once the ship's programme was clarified and the "Under Consideration" element actually did become "East of Suez", RELENTLESS duly sailed from Devonport on 16th January 1967, almost two-years to the day since her last jaunt to the far reaches of the world.

After brief pit-stops in Gibraltar on the 21st/22 and in Malta on the 26th, RELENTLESS arrived at the north end of the Suez Canal on the 30th January. It had been touch-and-go as to whether the ship would actually transit the canal because tensions in the Middle East had been steadily rising. In any event, RELENTLESS did transit the Canal on the 31st and was the last RN ship to do so before the Canal was closed at the outbreak of The Six Day War.

February 3rd saw Relentless alongside in Aden but in view of the tensions, the ship went to Awkward State 3 with armed guards patrolling the ship's upper deck during the time alongside.

After a brief lunchtime visit from Rear Admiral Martin, the Flag Office Middle East, Relentless departed Aden on the 4th. A communal sigh of relief could be heard on leaving as the ship headed south towards Mombasa and the joys of a Beira Patrol.

Very few people had anticipated that Egypt would close the Suez Canal but indeed they did, from 5th June 1967 until 5th June 1975.

In world economic terms, it was little short of a disaster. In JACK terms it meant the ship would have to take the long way home around the Cape of Good Hope and that would mean there was an unexpected run ashore in Capetown to look forward to!

Much to do before then of course and on arrival in Mombasa on the 8th the ship went alongside to refuel before spending the next couple of days tied up to buoys at Hunt Trot in Kilindini harbour. All good runs ashore come to an end at some stage and on Saturday the 11th Feb, Relentless slipped from the buoys and headed farther south.

On station off Beira on the 14th, Relentless topped off her fuel tanks from RFA TIDEREACH and relieved DIANA to start her first two-week Beira Patrol.

For more information on the origins and joys of Beira Patrol, have a look at the History tab under 'Reference'

March 4th saw Relentless back alongside at Shimanzi jetty in Mombasa for a fortnight before heading back south to Beira on the 18th. One of the very rare highlights was a Boarding exercise with RFA TIDEREACH (called Exercise Artois in later years) when their motor whaler broke down and the boarding party had to be returned onboard by Jackstay transfer.

This second patrol also passed without incident, and on the 6th April Relentless went to Diego Suarez, on the northern tip of Madagascar for a week's break.

When	Where
January 1967	16 th - Sailed Devonport, 21 st Gibraltar, 26 th Malta, 30 th Port Said, 31 st Suez Canal transit
February	3 rd Aden, 7 th Crossed the Equator, 8 th Mombasa, 14 th First Beira Patrol
March	4 th Mombasa, 18 th Second Beira Patrol
April	6 th Diego Suarez, 12 th Third Beira Patrol
May	1 st Mombasa, 13 th Fourth Beira Patrol, 27 th Mombasa
June	19 th Fifth Beira Patrol
July	10 th – 17 th Mauritius (D Quay, Port Louis), 17 th Sixth Beira Patrol
August	7 th – 9 th Mombasa, 15 th in and out of Gan (swimming leave only) (no more info for August) Arr Singapore about 21 st ? AMP alongside TRIUMPH for 23 days
September	Left Singapore 18 th , Back in 21 st dep 24 th for HK 27 th Hong Kong
October	Dep Hong Kong 10 th Oct, Arr 13 th Singapore dep 16 th Arr Gan ? Dep by 22 nd ? enroute Mombasa by 24 th . Mombasa 30 th ?
November	Simonstown, Freetown, Gibraltar, Devonport 30 th
December	

During the period 16th January to 30th November 1967, RELENTLESS spent 195 days at sea and 124 in harbour. Between 11th February and 7th August, 114 days were spent at sea on patrol, or on passage to and from the patrol areas. The ship spent 55 days in harbour, the longest stretch being a 23-day Assisted Maintenance Period (AMP) alongside HMS TRIUMPH in Singapore.

When the ship arrived back in UK, she had steamed 58,355 miles (some 14,129 of those miles being accounted for in the Hong Kong to Devonport leg). The mileage however, came at some cost. The 41 refuelling events accounting for 15,667 tons of Furnace Fuel Oil (FFO) and 282 tons of Diesel oil.

Commander Dalton left the ship in August 67 to take up a post at HMS Temeraire, in Portsmouth. He was succeeded by Commander Ashby on 8th August prior sailing for Gan.

MORE TO COME...

1968

THE END

Berthed at 9 Wharf in Devonport Dockyard, RELENTLESS became non-operational on 6th August 1968. She was eventually laid up in Portsmouth and was placed on the Disposal list in 1970.

HMS RELENTLESS was sold to T W Ward & Co. on 29th April 1971 and she was subsequently towed to Inverkeithing and scrapped.

EPILOGUE



HMS RELENTLESS – at the scrapyard, 1971

“...they think it’s all over! It is now.”

When The First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Terence Lewin was CINCPACFLT, based in Portsmouth in the mid-70s, he had the pennant numbers painted out of all the ships lying up in Fareham Creek in order to preserve their dignity.

No one wants to identify a corroding hulk as a ship that was once their home.

RIP H85 / F185