HMS BERKELEY

Hunt Class Mine Counter Measures Vessel

THE SHIP

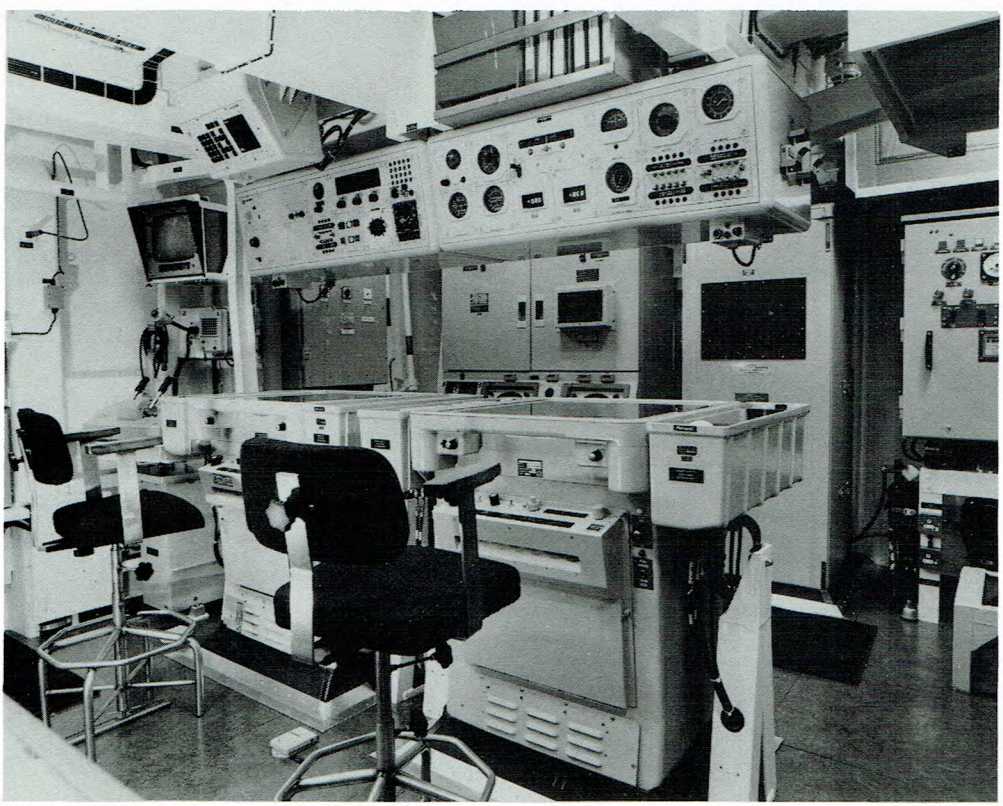
HMS BERKELEY is the twelfth ship of the thirteen belonging to the Hunt Class of Mine Counter Measures Vessels (MCMVs). These ships are the largest in the world to be built of Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP). Sixty metres in length and ten metres in breadth, they have a draught of three metres and displace 685 tonnes.

Hunt Class MCMVs have the ability to conduct both minesweeping and minehunting operations. They have seen service in the Falklands and the Gulf countering live mines. They destroy mines by sweeping them with towed wire or influence sweeps, both magnetic and acoustic, or hunt them using high definition sonar. Any mines detected by sonar are identified and destroyed either by diver or by the ship's Remote controlled Mine Disposal System (RCMDS). The addition of a 30 mm gun enables the Hunt Class MCMVs to function in their secondary role as Patrol Craft.

THE HULL

The hull and most of the superstructure are constructed from Glass Reinforced Plastic. Non-magnetic and strong enough to withstand the explosive shocks likely to be encountered in Mine Countermeasures activity, this revolutionary concept has demanded the development of entirely new skills and techniques in both ship building and ship husbandry.

The primary reason for having a GRP hull is to reduce to a minimum the ship's magnetic signature. Great care has been taken to measure and then annul the magnetic effect of all the machinery and stores within the ship. The ship's noise signature has also been reduced to a minimum by tuning and matching all the main machinery and by taking great care with all resilient mountings.



Ship's Operations Room

PROPULSION

The ship is powered by two Deltic diesel engines driving fixed propellers through ahead/astern clutches and reverse reduction gearboxes, and has a top speed of 15 knots. To facilitate the slow running necessary for mine warfare a third Deltic provides power via hydrostatic transmission systems, air clutches and main gearboxes. The problems of manoeuvring at slow speed are overcome by the use of a hydraulic bow thruster thus removing the requirement for the activated rudder system found in conventional minesweepers and hunters.

CAAIS

The Computer Assisted Action Information System makes use of the information provided by modern radars, gyro compasses, log, sonar, Decca, Hyperfix and other precise navigational systems to display up-to-date information required for accurate and thorough coverage of any area or shipping route required to be cleared of mines.

SWEEPING AND HUNTING

Hydraulic winches and davits enable the sweeps to be handled efficiently and quickly. The high definition sonar is capable of detecting small objects on the sea bed in greater depths and over longer ranges than previously achieved. The sonar also has in-built aids to help classify the nature of an object detected.

REMOTE CONTROLLED MINE DISPOSAL SYSTEM (RCMDS)

The system includes two unmanned submersibles, looking like miniature submarines, which are controlled from the ship. Each one is capable of laying explosive charges to detonate mines or can survey the sea bed using its television camera to relay pictures back to the ship.

HISTORY

The only previous HMS BERKELEY was a Type 1 Hunt Class Destroyer of 1000 tonnes displacement. She was laid down in June 1939 at Cammell Laird and Co. Ltd. of Birkenhead and launched on 29 January 1940. After completion in June 1940, she joined the First Destroyer Flotilla at Portsmouth and was involved in convoy protection duties and anti-shipping sweeps in the Channel and North Sea. During this period she discovered the debris of the ill fated aircraft flown by Amy Johnson in the Thames Estuary.

On 19 August 1942, she was heavily bombed whilst supporting the landings at Dieppe. After her survivors were rescued, she was sunk with torpedoes from a sister ship, HMS ALBRIGHTON. Several of the people who served in the previous HMS BERKELEY and HMS ALBRIGHTON attended the commissioning of the present HMS BERKELEY at Portsmouth in January 1988 and the ship continues to maintain contact with them.

BATTLE HONOURS

ENGLISH CHANNEL	1942
NORTH SEA	1942
DIEPPE	1942

Bridge interior (rear)

Bridge interior (front)

PRESENT HMS BERKELEY

HMS BERKELEY was built by Vosper Thorneycroft shipbuilders at Woolston, Southampton and launched on 3 December 1986 at Portsmouth Naval Base by Lady Gerken, the wife of Vice Admiral Sir Robert Gerken, KCB, CBE who retired from the Royal Navy as Flag Officer Plymouth. She was accepted into service on 20 November 1987 and commissioned at Portsmouth on 14 January 1988. After sea trials, she joined her sister ships of the First Mine Countermeasures Squadron based at Rosyth in Scotland.

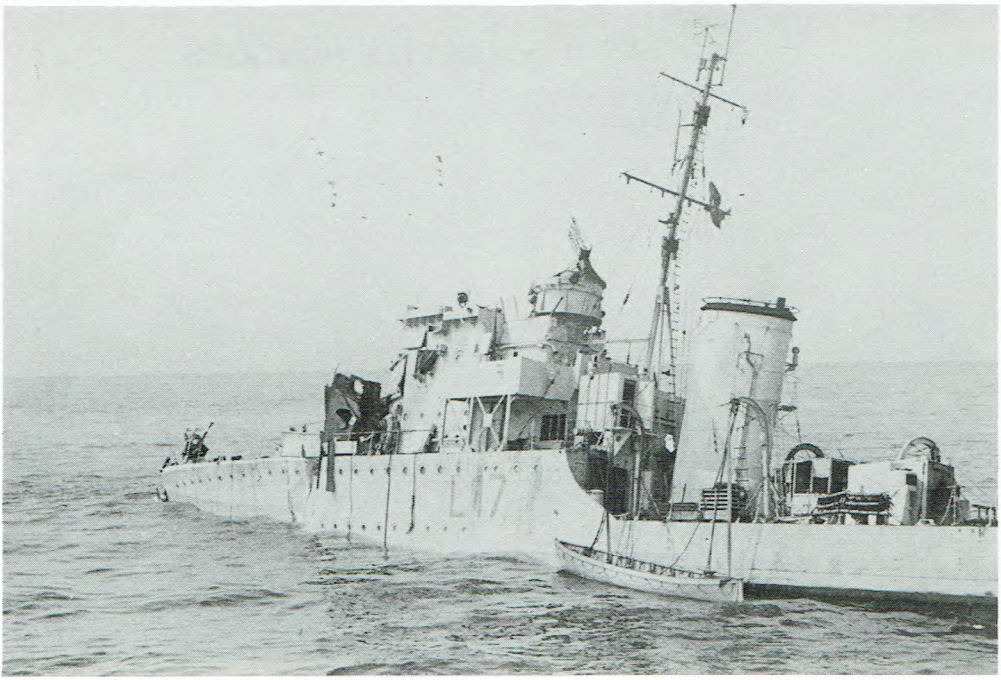
The ship has established links with the town of Berkeley in Gloucestershire and the Berkeley family which owns neighbouring Berkeley Castle and the Berkeley Hunt after which the ship is named. The ship is also affiliated with Berkeley Power Station and T S ROYAL FOREST, the Forest of Dean Sea Cadets Unit stationed at Lydney just across the River Severn from Berkeley. The ship publishes a regular newsletter to keep all her friends and affiliated bodies up to date with her activities.

SHIP'S DETAILS

LENGTH:	60 metres
BREADTH:	10 metres
DISPLACEMENT:	685 tonnes
COMPLEMENT:	5 Officers 9 Senior Rates 27 Junior Rates
ARMAMENT:	30 mm RCGS gun
PROPULSION:	Two DELTIC 9-59 K diesel engines (main drive) One DELTIC 9-59 K with hydraulics (slow speed drive and bow thrust)

If visiting the ship, we welcome you onboard and ask you to share our pride in her while respecting the fact that she is our home and certain areas will be closed to the public.

The Previous Berkeley



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