

HMS SEVERN



HMS SEVERN is the ninth RN vessel to bear this name. The first was built in 1695. The 7th SEVERN was a monitor built for the Brazilian Navy but taken over by the RN in 1914 and involved in the sinking of the German cruiser KÖNIGSBERG in 1916. The last SEVERN, a Vickers built submarine, was launched in 1934. Her wartime service started in the South Atlantic before transferring to the Nor-



wegian campaign in which she sank the SS MONARK, then deploying to Nova Scotia as a convoy escort. She was then based in Gibraltar, and in June 1941 sank the Italian SS POLINNIA and UGO BASSI. In 1943 she was based in Algiers helping with special operations in Sardinia and Sicily (OPERATION HUSKY). She then transferred to the Far East where she took part in interception patrols. She had the nickname 'Lucky SEVERN'.

The current SEVERN is an Offshore Patrol Vessel built in Southampton by Vosper Thorneycroft in December 2002. Commissioned into the Royal Navy in July 2003, she was initially leased from VT (now BAE CLS). In September 2012 Severn was purchased by the RN.

She is 80 metres in length and displaces 1850 tons, has a top speed of 20 knots and a range of 5,500 nautical miles. SEVERN's primary role is a combination of navigation training, protection of UK waters and fishery protection. She has a crew of 45, a third of whom are on leave at any one time. Being 'three watch manned' allows the ship to continue operations indefinitely and be operationally available for up to 320 days every year.

SEVERN was the first OPV to be deployed to the Caribbean. During the first six months of 2014 she conducted counter narcotics operations, defence engagement and disaster relief.



SEVERN was decommissioned in October 2017 following 14 years of service. In November 2018 it was announced that funds from the EU Exit Preparedness fund would preserve SEVERN and she underwent refit in May 2020. Returning to operational service in July 2020 she was re-commissioned 28 August 2021—the first ship the RN has re-commissioned since the Falklands War.

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The Western Approaches Paint Scheme

SEVERN's unique paint scheme is an adaptation of the Western Approaches camouflage paint scheme first applied to HMS BROKE in 1940. It was designed by the painter, naturalist and naval officer Sir Peter Scott (son of Scott of the Antarctic).



RN ships adopted widely varying camouflage patterns in WWII. Lord Mountbatten painted his destroyers a shade of mauve known as "Mountbatten Pink"! The Western Approaches scheme was widely adopted after a collision in which the captain of HMS VERITY claimed he never saw BROKE! While official Admiralty camouflage patterns were established after 1941, many captains used their discretion to paint their ships in a way they considered best for local conditions. Natural variation in the manufacture and mixing of paint also resulted in considerable variation in colours and shades.

SEVERN's scheme is a modern interpretation of that widely applied to the smaller ships of the Battle of the Atlantic, which often comprised of blue-grey and green-grey on a background of white and light grey. SEVERN is the first vessel to wear the Western Approaches scheme since WWII. While radar makes the use of maritime camouflage mostly irrelevant, the paint scheme is a tribute to our heritage as a fighting service, and particularly to the British and Canadian sailors who served in the Battle of the Atlantic.

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