



Exocet warships

WITH THE advent of the surface-to-surface guided missile (SSM) in the late 1960s, the capability of a surface warship to strike 'over the horizon' was greatly increased. Surprisingly the Royal Navy was slow to take up the SSM and when, at last, they began to fit or refit warships, it was the French designed 'Exocet' system which was used.

The Royal Navy has plans to refit units of the 'County' and 'Leander' Classes with Exocet and to fit or refit all units of the 'Amazon' Class similarly. The Exocet missile is some 5.2 metres long with a range of over 38 kilometres; surface skimming to avoid detection, it has the useful feature of its storage containers also acting as launching tubes. It is currently in service with several Western Navies including the French, Hellenic and West German.

'Leander' Class

HMS *Cleopatra* (the only non-Greek name in the 26 strong 'Leander' Class) commenced trials late in 1975 after a two and a half year Exocet refit at Plymouth's Devonport. This made her the first of the eight or so Leanders scheduled to be so fitted with the Exocet in place of the 114 mm turret. Subsequently, it is understood, all the 10 broad-beam Leanders will be refitted with the SSM system.

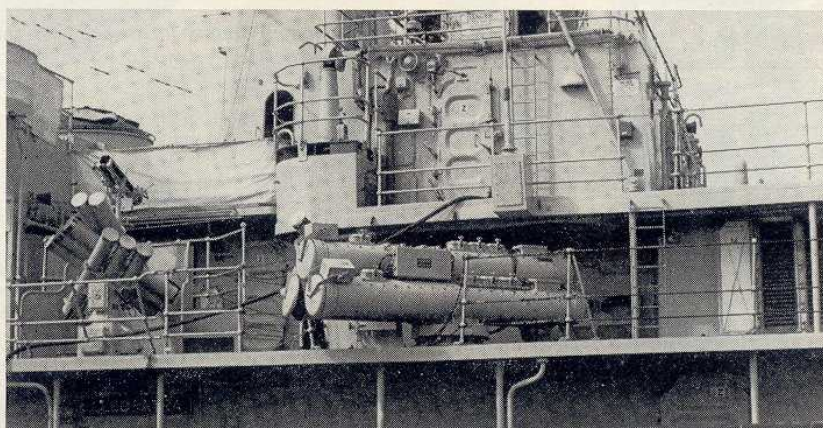
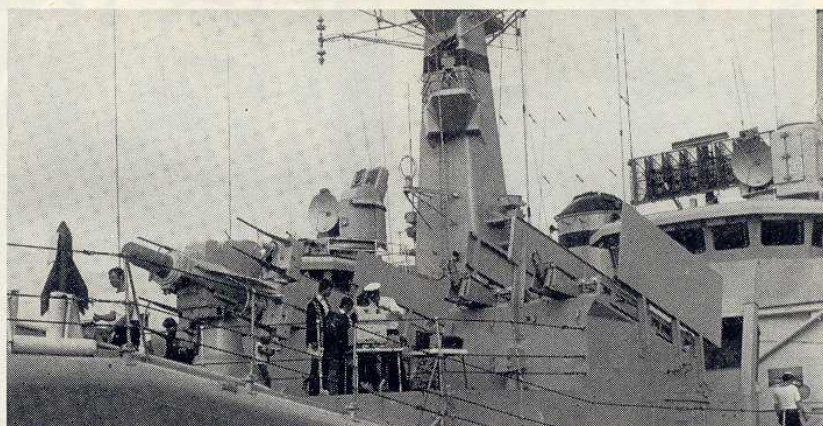
Pen No	Name	Refitting
F28	Cleopatra	1973-75
F40	Sirius	1977-78
F42	Phoebe	1975-77
F45	Minerva	1976-77
F47	Danae	1977-78
F52	Juno	1977-78
F104	Dido	1977-78

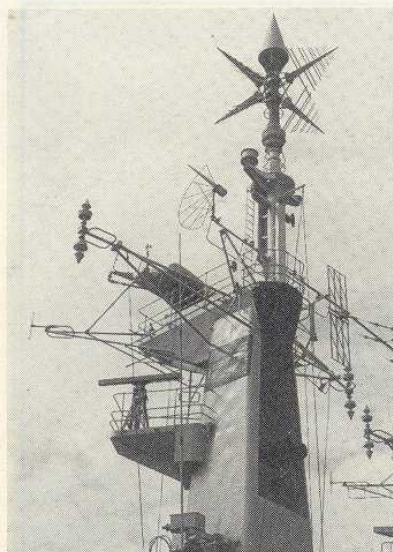
Top HMS *Cleopatra*, pictured off Portland in January 1976, was the Royal Navy's first Exocet equipped frigate of the 'Leander' Class. **Above right** The forward Seacat launcher and the Exocet SSM launchers of HMS *Cleopatra*. **Right** The ASW tubes newly fitted to *Cleopatra* during her Exocet refit (Photos: Royal Navy and Paul Beaver).



Air, land and sea

compiled by the editor





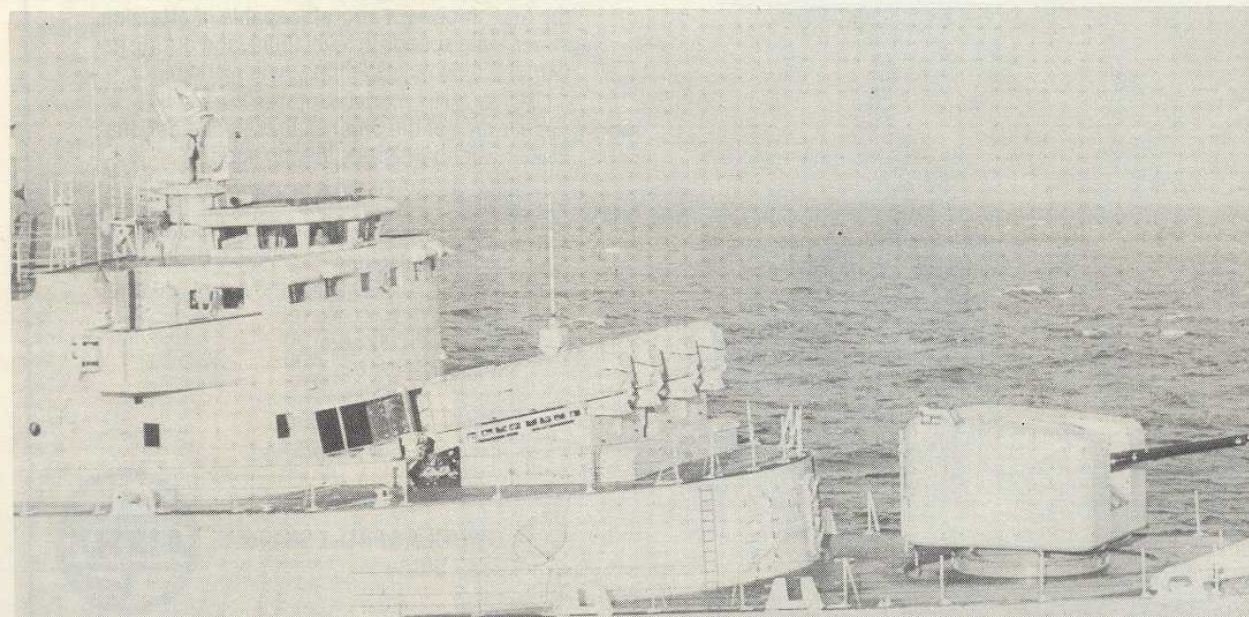
Above left Foremast aerial array on Cleopatra. **Above centre** A bow view of Cleopatra. **Above right** The 40/60 mm Bofors gun on her new spigons. **Below right** HMS Arrow (F173), one of the latest frigates in service.

'Amazon' Class

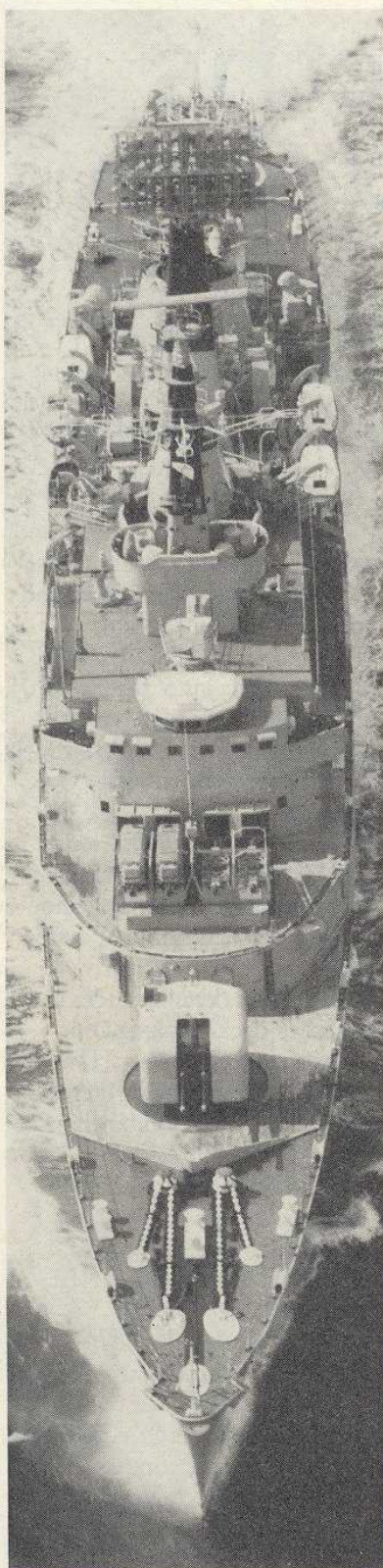
All eight ships of this general purpose frigate class are destined to receive the Exocet fittings just forward of the bridge. HMS Arrow (F173), commissioned as the fourth 'Amazon' Class in July 1976 and reviewed by the Queen at Spithead, was the first Type 21 in service with Exocet. Amazon, Ambuscade and Antelope will be refitted in due course. The four other units were equipped during building. The triple anti-submarine torpedo tubes supplied in the Airfix kit have also been fitted during this time.



Pen No	Name	Ship Status	Exocet Status	Pen No	Name	Ship Status	Exocet Status
F169	Amazon	In commission	To be fitted	F173	Arrow	In commission	Fitted
F170	Antelope	In commission	To be fitted	F174	Alacrity	In commission	Fitted
F171	Active	On trials	Fitted	F184	Ardent	In commission	Fitted
F172	Ambuscade	In commission	To be fitted	F185	Avenger	On trials	Fitted



HMS Norfolk was the first 'County' Class destroyer to be fitted with the Exocet system late in 1975.



A high level view of Antrim's four Exocet launcher tubes. The two port tubes have yet to be fitted in this April 1975 photograph, but the racks are visible (Royal Navy via Paul Beaver).

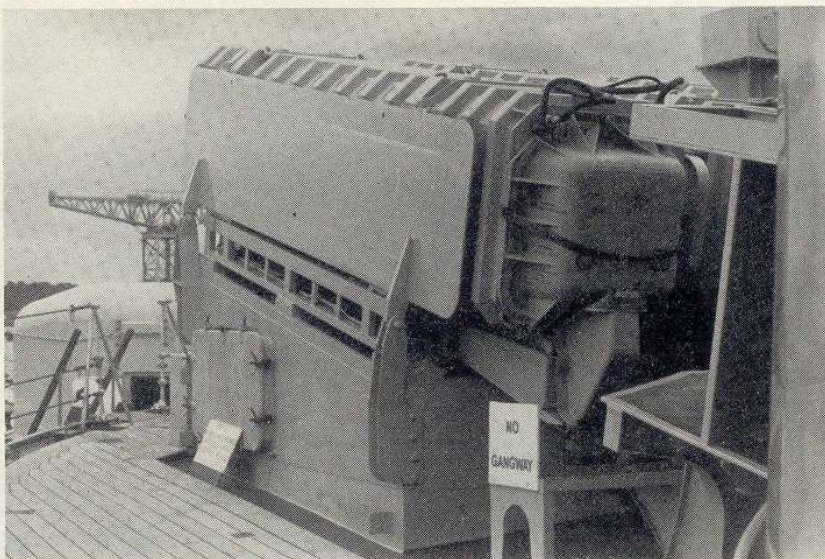
'County' Class

In fact, the batch-two County Class guided missile destroyers (DLG) were the first class of Royal Navy warship to be fitted with Exocet. HMS *Norfolk* (D21) staged the first firing trials in late 1974. Today all four of the batch-two units are so fitted with B turret removed and four launcher tubes in its place. The warships involved were HM Ships *Antrim* (D18), *Glamorgan* (D19), *Fife*

(D20) and *Norfolk* (D21). At this time it is not expected that the other three units of the class, in batch-one, will be fitted with the Exocet SSM. □

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Paul Beaver



Above Port side of the Exocet tubes on *Antrim*. **Below** Starboard side of HMS *Norfolk* showing Exocet and blast screen. **Bottom** *Antrim*'s main armament — Exocet SSM and 114 mm gun (Photos Paul Beaver).

